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Recent Hong Kong Cinema and the Generic Role of Film Noir in Relation to the Politics of Identity and Difference

Doctor of Philosophy
Kim-mui E. Chan

THESIS CONTAINS
CD/DVD

Abstract

This thesis identifies a connection in Hong Kong cinema with classical Hollywood film noir and examines what it will call a 'reinvestment' in film noir in recent films. It will show that this reinvestment is a discursive strategy that both engages the spectator-subject in the cinematic practice and disengages him or her from the hegemony of the discourse by decentring the narrative. The thesis argues that a cinematic practice has occurred in the recent reinvestment of film noir in Hong Kong, which restages the intertextual relay of the historical genre that gives rise to an expectation of ideas about social instability. The noir vision that is seen as related to the fixed categories of film narratives, characterizations and visual styles is reassessed in the course of the thesis using Derridian theory. The focus of analysis is the way in which the constitution of meanings is dependent on generic characteristics that are different. Key to the phenomenon is a film strategy that destabilizes, differs and defers the interpretation of crises—personal, social, political and/or cultural—by soliciting self-conscious re-reading of suffering, evil, fate, chance and fortune. It will be argued that such a strategy evokes the genre expectation as the film invokes a network of ideas regarding a world perceived by the audience in association with the noirish moods of claustrophobia, paranoia, despair and nihilism. The noir vision is thus mutated and transformed when the film device differs and defers the conception of the crises as tragic in nature by exposing the workings of the genre amalgamation and the ideological function of the cinematic discourse. Thus, noirishness becomes both an affect and an agent that contrives a self-reflexive re-reading of the tragic vision and of the conventional comprehension of reality within the discursive practice.

The film strategy, as an agent that problematizes the film form and narrative, gives rise to what I call a politics of difference, which may also be understood as the Lyotardian 'language game' or a practice of 'pastiche' in Jameson's terminology. Under the influence of the film strategy, the spectator is enabled to negotiate his or her understanding of recent Hong Kong cinema diegetically and extra-diegetically by traversing different positions of cinematic identification. When the practice of genre amalgamation adopts the visual impact of the noirish film form, the film turns itself into a playing field of 'fatal' misrecognition or a site of question. Through cinematic identification and alienation from the identification, the spectator-subject is enabled to experience the misrecognition as the film slowly foregrounds the way in which the viewer's presence is implicated in the narrative. This thesis demonstrates that certain contemporary Hong Kong films introduce this self-conscious mode of explication and interpretation, which solicits the spectator to negotiate his or her subject-position in the course of viewing. The notions of identity and subjectivity under scrutiny will thus be reread. With reference to *The Private Eye Blue*, *Swordsman II*, *City of Glass* and *Happy Together*, the thesis shall explore the ways in which the Hong Kong films enable and facilitate a negotiation of cultural identity.

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Chapter One
Crisis and Politics of Identity

There is a considerable amount of controversy among film critics and scholars about the nature of film noir and the distinctive qualities of those films which are known to have constituted this unique category. This chapter proposes to reread the significance of the generic connections between classical Hollywood cinema and contemporary Hong Kong cinema in terms of a cinematic practice that appropriates the classical elements of film noir in the local cinema. Such discussion gives rise to a reconsideration of the assumptions that fixed rules of genre are indisputably relevant to the analysis of film and that the conventional understanding of genre is necessarily of significance in grouping works.

This chapter will review various instances of Hong Kong cinema that give rise to the formulation of what I shall call ideologically complicit pleasure, and will analyze the workings of ideology in cinema as a form of discursive practice that sustains the pleasure. A diachronic review of Hong Kong films in which the ideologically complicit text is structured within a construct of self-other relation is compared and contrasted with the text of a type of gangster film that uses and/or re-uses noirish elements consistently in cinema. Through the way in which cinema produces the film characters relationally against a background of socio-political changes at different periods of time, I hope to develop an understanding of how and why the city of Hong Kong is frequently portrayed in noir cinematography as a place undergoing crises. This chapter serves to arouse critical attention on the role of film noir and its relation to Hong Kong cinema. There is a focus on a specific film strategy that marks a distinctive quality of the cinema as ideologically self-conscious that rereads, critiques and contests the cinematic conventions. Special attention will be given to critical writings on the portrayal of changes regarding the changeover of the sovereign right of Hong Kong from Britain to China as a crisis in cinema.

Pleasure and Self-reflexivity

The specific reason for my engagement in the discussion of the discursive practice of cinema is that there is, firstly, a necessity to examine the way in which recent Hong Kong cinema portrays personal and social identity crises—before and after Hong Kong's reunification with China—in the cinematic and textual systems that are known as noirish. Therefore, in this chapter, I shall look at the situation in which the spectator is engaged in the cinematic activity and is subjected to the dominant ideologies as ideologically complicit. Secondly, my discussion of the discursive practice of recent Hong Kong cinema that disrupts the conventional cinematic devices aims to draw critical attention to the way in which the films open new avenues to critique the constitution of identity and subjectivity. This new practice is carried out by exposing the workings of ideology and soliciting self-conscious rereading of the ideological nature of the works.

Heather Dubrow explains in a study of the history of genre theory (1) that there are four stages of generic criticism during which genre is respectively seen as rules, species, patterns of textual features and reader conventions. The first three areas of discussion regarding the structure of genre that constitutes a system of category will be addressed critically in the second chapter. Also in this chapter the conventional way of understanding film noir as a category—theme, movement, style, cycle and mode of production—will be reread. In the present chapter, I shall explore the conditions that facilitate the production of the category with regard to generic criticism. These conditions are the ideological nature of genre and the discursive practice of generic production.

Many Hong Kong films that were made from the '80s till the end of the century portray the colonial city as a problematic place undergoing a crisis, and the citizens or residents of Hong Kong as people who suffer from the events related to or the consequences of the crisis. Hence, the crisis is mostly analyzed as a recurrent theme which considers Hong Kong as a manifestation of the responsiveness to the social change of the city. The city, which is portrayed as a place undergoing a crisis in the films, has recently been characterized by recognizable visual styles of classical film noir such as the chiaroscuro effect that creates a sharp contrast of light and shadow, deep-focus cinematography that imparts a strong sense of hidden danger, the use of odd camera angles that imparts an overwhelming sense of claustrophobia, etc. The following discussion seeks to explore whether it is the continued vitality of the form of classical film noir that clarifies a vision of moral ambivalence of the protagonists and of their ill-fated relationships with a society that is guilty of corruption and criminality. A straight-forward delineation of the ideological function of the cinema is that the description of the city as a place of moral ambiguity and/or criminal violence would enable the viewer to derive feelings of anguish and insecurity. Such an observation begs the question why the audience would make the effort and pay the price to go to the cinema that offers him or her bad experiences. A more logical explanation is that the cinema offers pleasure in the viewing. This requires further probing due to the fact that what the cinema frequently portrays as bad and sad, such as social or political crises, paradoxically give rise to pleasure of viewing. To what extent is the audience passively engaged in the pleasurable viewing? Or would the overwhelming sense of the noir vision solicit active interpretation which may give rise to a pleasure of self-reflexivity? This chapter seeks to develop an understanding of the re-use of noir themes and noir stylistics in the cinema that puts the contemporary Hong Kong audience on the threshold of something exciting and new, which refers to the formulation of a vision beyond the imaginary relation of the spectator-subject to the real-life situation that has been installed ideologically.

The pleasure of seeing a tragedy, for instance, is usually registered by the spectator-subject when he or she is removed from life into a comfortable fatalism in classical cinema. If there is a film form that may confound generic expectation, there is a possibility that the ideologically complicit notion of providence or fate, or in other words the tragic vision, can be reread in a different way. This gives rise to a question of whether pleasure may come from the film if the film form unconventionally defeats the generic expectation. Prior to my examination of cinema which breaks from the convention by redeploying classical elements, I shall discuss the way in which an ideologically complicit text works. This refers to an aspect of the ideological structure of an interpellative discourse.

In Louis Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus,' he posits ideologies as systems of meanings that install people in imaginary relations to the real-life situation in which they are engaged every day. He explains that this is conducted through a mechanism of recognition that calls an individual into place and confers on him or her an identity through interpellation. He describes,

> "...ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals...or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects ...by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'....the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversation, he becomes a *subject.* Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was 'really' addressed to him, and that 'it was *really him* who was hailed' (and not someone else.)" (2)

That is to say, there is material existence of the subject whose consciousness is constructed through speech acts or discourse. In the course of being hailed, especially at the moment of the interpellated subject's recognition of the hail, a speech act between the person and the cultural agent takes place. As a result of ideological subjection, the person is solicited to assume a role that is known to be legitimate within the discourse which actually defines the person's identity. This aspect of ideological identification is central to understanding the type of ideologically complicit pleasure that is intrinsic to sustaining the pleasure of viewing of many conventional mainstream films including classical films noirs.

Kaja Silverman suggests that Althusser's concept of interpellation is not only significant for understanding the process of imaginary subjection (3) but it also opens up new avenues for analyzing textual identification. (4) That is to say, ideological identification is the basis of cinematic identification. She states that when readers assume the roles that the literary texts present, a similar process of ideological identification takes place. Similarly, spectatorial identification takes place within mainstream cinema that engages the spectator in an illusion of perspectival space. This belief in the transparency of the apparatus becomes the basis on which many film critics develop their theories which seek to explain the relation between the spectator-subject and the screen-text. I suggest that the pleasure of this type of spectatorial identification is ideologically complicit, allowing the spectator-subject to enjoy the persistence of an idea of self.

The protagonists of films noirs are usually presented as being driven into crisis situations or being situated in surrounding circumstances amidst people who are undergoing crises. The crisis of masculinity, for example, described in many films noirs is always given a resolution in a narrative closure when the film reveals the punishment for the fatal woman character who leads the male protagonist astray. Under such a circumstance, the ideological impact of classical film noir on the audience is found deeply rooted in a sense of misogyny which sustains a form of cultural hegemony in a dominance-submission pattern. My later discussion about the way in which recent Hong Kong cinema draws on the generic characteristics of film noir that describe the relation between the noir hero and the femme fatale as symbolic aims to examine whether the cinema reinforces or differs/defers the ideological effect upon the audience. Such analysis looks at a particular type of film strategy, used in recent Hong Kong cinema that evokes a noir vision of tragic sensibility by first invoking the classical film form and narrative and soliciting cinematic identification; and later alienating the spectator-subject from cinematic identification with the protagonists.

Baudry is among the first film theorists who suggest that the cinematic apparatus has an ideological effect upon the spectator. (5) Mary Ann Doane comments that he activates "an ideological analysis of the cinema at the cost of reducing vision to geometric perspective and theorizing history as a trap". Thus the spectator is seen as being stuck at that ideal point of illusory mastery. (6) Christian Metz describes the film-viewing situation as a voyeuristic dream state. In his use of metaphor, Metz states that in the social life of our age, the fiction film enters into functional competition with the daydream. (7) This claim establishes grounds for psychoanalytical enquiry of film as dream and as projection of thought on screen.

Metz rightly points to the role of disavowal in organizing spectatorial belief and pleasure in film—in addition to ideas of identification and voyeurism—and argues that 'cinematic signifier' is a 'fetish' and that the spectator-film relationship is comparable to that between the fetishist and his or her object. (8)

Metz played a key role in the development of new psychoanalytical film theory between the '70s and '80s by synthesizing psychoanalysis and the apparatus theory. His assertion on the sender-receiver relation is largely dependent on an assumption that the spectator takes pleasure primarily from their voyeuristic viewing position that is indicative of their absence from the scene portrayed in the film. The engagement of the voyeur in the act of cinematic identification through a process of imaginary subjection is seen as ideologically complicit as long as the spectator is a passive viewer. In my examination of the new noirish tendency in recent Hong Kong cinema, I propose to look at the fact that pleasure may be derived from the spectator's positioning of self as a voyeur as well as a self-conscious reader. Such discussion seeks to develop an understanding of the redeployment of the noir stylistics and themes which first solicits a form of passive viewing, and disrupts it later by alerting the spectator to his or her presence inside the cinema as a viewing-subject. That is to say, the subject is enabled to enjoy the voyeuristic pleasure in the first place and eventually solicited to take on a mode of self-reflexivity. The cinematic activity begs to question whether self-conscious rereading of the film is possible within the cinema which is conventionally organized across discourses in relation to power and cultural hegemony.

Genre, Ideology and Subject Positioning

Ideology is, for Althusser, a matter of the lived relation between men and their world, and of the relation between them and their conditions of existence. It is his work on the ideological practices of subjection that brings new ground in defining ideology as imaginary. Drawing upon his work, I attempt to develop an understanding on a form of complicit pleasure that is derived from assuming an imaginary position predetermined by the interpellative discourse. What may be established from Althusser's theory of subjection is a perspective to examine the way in which the audience is persuaded to stray away from the subjection. What my discussion seeks to examine is whether there is any possibility that pleasure may be derived if the subject withholds an act of subjection through a non-ideologically complicit decision. Or, how far does Hong Kong cinema offer a form of pleasure of self-reflexivity that may give rise to a situation of negotiation for new ways of interpretation?

Foucault's studies, which detail certain practices of subjection in relation to power within the cultural hegemony, make important advances in discerning the contestable nature of ideological discourse. His theory of discursive or ideological subjection gives new insights to unfolding the 'formidable materiality' (9) of discourse that may also apply to the analysis of the discursive practice of cinema. His work makes a tremendous contribution in examining the effects of discourse in terms of subjection. In the early '80s, Foucault described that the goal of his work for twenty years has not been to 'analyze the phenomenon of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis.' He explains,

"My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects." (10)

Foucault suggests that the key to deciphering the materiality of discourse lies in the way in which a person identifies the struggles that compose the discourse. He states that discourses are produced as 'history' constantly 'teaches us.' He says,

"Discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle." (11)

In the light of Foucault's analysis, the discursive practice which formulates the base of the ideological constraint of the cinema may be seen as a site of struggle or question. Therefore, it becomes important to examine the ideological nature of the cinematic practice in terms of the positioning of the spectator-subject. His work tells us little about discourse which may give rise to dis-identification. Michel Pêcheux proposes to explore a mode of dis-identification, which brings a new dimension to the academic enquiry into critical discourse analysis. He identifies three mechanisms through which subjects may be constructed. They are the identification, counter-identification and dis-identification. (12) The first two modes form symmetry which, in effect, support each other. Pêcheux explains that the subject that is constructed in the mode of identification is a good subject who freely consents to the image held out to them, whereas the one that is constructed in the mode of counter-identification is a bad subject who is a trouble-maker. Apart from these two modes, Pêcheux posits a third one that he calls dis-identification. The subject that is constituted through the mode of dis-identification is put in a different position where the subject is transformed and displaced under an ideological effect of working 'on and against' the prevailing practices of ideological subjection.

Pêcheux's assumption of the differences between the three mechanisms according to MacDonell, appears to be too general and requires further specification. (13) Pêcheux's discussion, however, remains noteworthy since it arouses critical attention on the question of whether a self-reflexive discourse that reveals the workings of the discursive function of a film text may subject people when the film also entails ideologically complicit pleasure. This aspect of the discursive practice of dis-identification that engages the contemporary audience in a process of self-conscious rereading of the act of subjection is indicative of the new tendency of Hong Kong cinema that appropriates the classical elements of film noir. Should there be a necessity to explore the type of discursive strategy that not only engages the spectator-subject in the imaginary subjection but also alienates, there is also a necessity to ask if classical genre theory is able to account for the complexity of genre mixing of Hong Kong cinema. Do the generic markers indicate the unclassificability of the cross-genre practice?

In addition to my agenda to examine the ideological construct of genre as a discourse, there is another aspect of discourse analysis that my discussion seeks to unfold. Semioticians explain that discourse—as an operation of enunciation—is produced in a speech situation involving people using verb tenses that function as indices of place and time. Film semioticians take on this concept of enunciation in analysing cinema's audio-visual representations of time and space and the spectatorial response toward the cinematic representation. The Metzian concept of discourse opens roads to new developments of psychoanalysis, semiology and narratology in relation to film studies as he provides justification for the complete absence of enunciative marks in the film language. The defining quality of traditional film for Metz is that it effaces all marks of enunciation and disguises itself as *histoire*. He says,

> "In Emile Benveniste's terms, the traditional film is presented as story, and not as discourse. And yet it is discourse....but the basic characteristic of this kind of discourse, and the very principle of its effectiveness as discourse, is precisely that it obliterates all traces of the enunciation, and masquerades as story. The tense of story is of course always the 'past definite'..." (14)

Contrary to the concept of the 'past definite' is what Fredric Jameson describes as the 'perpetual present,' that I shall thoroughly discuss later. He denounces the idea of 'perpetual present' due to the fact that it gives rise to a culture of historical depthlessness in which the spectator-subject may not be able to enjoy the sense of absence there and then in the 'past definite.' Film semioticians presume that the manipulation of the spectator within the system of cinematic pleasure is highly dependent on the spectator-subject's absence from the place where the story portrayed in the film took place. Such presumption is aligned with Laura Mulvey's (15) delineation of the subject-position of the spectator of mainstream cinema as that of a passive receiver. Her premise is that cinema is explicitly a male industry that idealises heroes in the course of movie-making. The hero, played by a male artist, is conventionally posited as the active subject of the narrative and with whom a male spectator narcissistically identifies. A woman, however, is supposedly seen as passive sexual spectacle or the object of the spectator's gaze.

Drawing on the Lacanian theory of gaze and the Derridian notion of supplementarity in a later chapter, I shall, however, demonstrate that some recent Hong Kong films embrace a type of spectator-text relation in which the spectator is solicited to adopt a more self-conscious subject-position. Such discussion seeks to explore the way in which the appropriation of the classical elements of film noir exposes the workings of the dominant ideologies and hence problematizes the imaginary subjection of the spectator to the ideologically complicit text. Central to the inquiry is a discussion that focuses on the relation of the spectator-subject to the narrative time, the time of narrativization and the time of the critique of the structural analysis. That is to say, apart from the story time and discourse time, an aspect of 'dis-emplotment'—breaking away from an understanding of the film narrative in the story-like coherence—is key to understanding the way in which the cinema engages the spectator diegetically and extra-diegetically in reading and rereading the situations of crises. The descriptions of these crises are visually and emotionally intensified by the redeployment of the noir themes and stylistics.

Some film critics like Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni (16) differentiate between 'classical' and 'progressive' film texts on the basis of whether films reveal certain discursive properties. One of the criteria of differentiation refers to the use of a narrative device that erases enunciative marks, poses story as *histoire*, and positions the spectator as a passive reader. However, one grey area is that some popular forms of cinema that mingle both the classical and progressive qualities are not classified or classifiable. How far do the classical genre theory and film theory sustain a discussion on such a popular form of culture that enables the self-conscious audience to enjoy the films?

A critique of the function of discourse as an operation of enunciation is required. Could self-reflexivity be enhanced in cinema through a tactic which enables the enunciative marks to mark the present-tenseness? A re-examination of the fact that the tense of 'story' is seen as the 'past definite' becomes necessary. Such discussion will give insight to identifying the textual intention of the film narrative that blends the form of historiography and that of fiction, the old cinematic styles and the new ones, the past and the present, etc.

Crisis and Disemplotment

In the following, a general opinion on the 'history' of Hong Kong that is given in a series of critical writings on the cinema is reviewed. It can be seen that the film critics and scholars position the Hong Kong spectator-subject relationally against a background of socio-political change before and after the changeover of the sovereignty of Hong Kong from Britain to China. The purpose of reviewing these articles is to unfold the conventional theoretical paradigm that delimits the ideological nature of the historical narrative and/or the film narrative. Many critical analyses of recent Hong Kong cinema project a linear view of the causal relation between the historical changeover and the psychological re-adjustment of the understanding of the changing cultural identity as a crisis that points to a change of emotion toward deterioration or recuperation. The diegetic description of the crisis is usually known as being shaped in the collective imaginary of Hong Kong in the years before and after the 1997 changeover as a reflection of the social psyche in the critical writing. Some discussions on the textual intention of the films which enable the re-mapping and/or re-construction of the cultural identity also suggest a linear progression from what is deconstructed to what is reconstructed. My discussion suggests a different reading which is concerned about a ceaseless contestation of the formation of cultural identity.

Audrey Yue says that Hong Kong's transition culture is situated around a consciousness contained within a politics of 're-turn' and emphasizes that this politics is illustrated by a turn away from the 'motherland' towards a 'migratory movement of mobility and transformation.' (17) She explains that the film narrative not only uses the tactic of intersection (18) to inscribe post-Declaration Hong Kong's history of transition, but it also enables a 're-turn' to a questioning of the meaning of 'place.' In her discussion of Kar-wai Wong's *In the Mood for Love*, she extends an idea of 'pre-post-1997 consciousness' (19) in her essay to describe a longer period of transition of Hong Kong—'pre-1997 to Chinese rule and post-1997 in the following fifty years of the unique "one country, two systems" administration.' (20) This idea is more thoroughly stated in an earlier article, "Migration-as-Transition: Pre-Post-1997 Hong Kong Culture in Clara Law's *Autumn Moon,*" also written by her.

The colonial history of Hong Kong that began in 1842 after China's defeat in what is commonly referred to as the Opium War is essential to the understanding of the 're-turn.' As a result of the signing of some 'unequal treaties' between the two nations after the war, Hong Kong became the first British possession in China. Since part of the colony is a peninsula, comprising Kowloon and the New Territories, which is adjacent to the southern part of China, the close proximity of Hong Kong with the mainland allowed Hong

Kong people to maintain a close connection with the mother country at first. At that time, there was less restriction for Chinese nationals and British citizens of Hong Kong to traverse the border in the first part of the 20th century, during and after the Second World War. Many people from China found refuge in Hong Kong. It was not until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in China that Hong Kong citizens were not encouraged to maintain close contact with the leftists. From then onwards, the colony remained estranged from the mother country economically, socially, culturally and politically. Taking advantage of an influx of capital brought by businessmen and industrialists from Shanghai and of the new pool of workers from different parts of China after the war, Hong Kong developed a successful and thriving manufacturing industry. Towards the 1970s, Hong Kong developed its financial and banking industries and became one of the largest economies in the world. While most Hong Kong people were enjoying economic success, an imminent sense of socio-political change was imposed on them as soon as the British government of Margaret Thatcher decided to negotiate the question of the sovereignty of Hong Kong in the early '80s due to the fact that the lease on the New Territories would terminate soon. An agreement known as the Sino-British Joint Declaration was eventually signed by the People's Republic of China on 19 December, 1984, which stipulated that, under the 'One Country, Two Systems' policy, Hong Kong's long-established capitalist system and life style would remain unchanged for at least 50 years. Hence, the changeover of the sovereign right of Hong Kong is conceived as a psychological 're-turn' to the mother country, which is not only an issue of socio-political change of society but also a rereading of the cultural and historical significance of the colony's relation with the mother country. Yue posits the 're-turn' as 'a process of deconstruction and reconstruction,' and says,

"The re-turn to place is thus a process of deconstruction and reconstruction, opening up and remapping the coordinates of the territory's spatialisation. The location of 'place' is crucial to the narrative of transition because 'place' is imagined when people lay claim to a territory, construct and reconstruct the meaning of 'place'." (21)

With a spatial model characterized as a narrative of transition, Yue describes the 'place' as constructed and reconstructed by articulating the 'pre' in the time of 'post.' Hence, the pre-post 1997 transition is also defined as a 'time-space' of the transition. (22) That is to say, it is a site of mediation or, in Yue's terminology, a time-space of translation formulated in a narrative mode. Such 'postcolonial translation, intervention and reformulation' are mediated by displacement and examined as "an intra sensibility produced by rendering the 'place'...as a 'place' of position, movement and subjectivity." (23) Such mediation enables the subject to reorder 'chronology to map a new topography delineated by the formation of pre-post-1997.' (24) Yue says,

> "Hong Kong's transition culture is situated around a pre-post-1997 consciousness, a consciousness contained within a politics of re-turn....After 150 years of British colonial rule, Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 is situated around the time-space nexus mapped by a movement forward in time and backwards in space: that is, to move forward in time towards 1997 is a re-turn to a questioning of the meaning of 'place'." (25)

It can be seen that Yue's discussion refers to the spectatorial reconstruction of the meaning of a 'place.' This kind of configurating activity of the spectator-subject's mind is dominated by the mediating function of a narrative plot, or 'emplotment,' which seeks to reflect and resolve the paradox of time.

Yue's 'politics of transnationality' rightly points out that a film may produce 'a space of regionality.' (26) The act of 're-mapping' that re-asserts or re-constructs a concept of positionality refers to an understanding of the history of Hong Kong through what Ricoeur would call a process of emplotment. This concept of emplotment is intrinsic to Yue's idea of 'a mood of claustrophobia' that is noted as an effect of the inscription of phobic spaces, which revolves around the relation between the text and the author. (27) According to Yue, an idea of personal crisis is mediated through the events presented within the claustrophobic framing that signifies social order and disorder. (28) What is noteworthy about Yue's analysis is that it is based on a logic of narratological causality. Therefore, the concept of the 'process of deconstruction and reconstruction' is still rendered in the conventional paradigm of an order of linearity and progression as she presumes that a new idea of history can be finally reconstituted when the time-space nexus is re-configured in the mind of the audience, and that the time-space structure can be re-configured as a result of 're-mapping.' The question of the paradox of time that refers to the pre-post 1997 transition is to be resolved through the reconstitution of 'the coordinates of the territory's spatialization' as soon as the meaning of the 'place' is fixed. This observation gives rise to questions regarding whether the 'remapping' pins down a meaning rather than contests it, whether an interpretation of the crisis situation can be resolved by the constitution of a new meaning, and how far the new interpretation can be legitimized.

Yue's discussion also begs to question if the remapping would solicit another cycle of emplotment of the understanding of the relation between the person and society. Would the emplotment of a different idea about the crisis bring the understanding to a new horizon? Therefore, a few questions on the effect of dis-emplotment are required. Is it possible that self-conscious repositioning of the subject can be derived during the disruption of the mimetic meaning of the crisis within the film narrative? Is it possible for the subject to derive pleasure from the dis-emplotment of the understanding of the crisis? What I want to explore further is whether a film may engage the spectator in a process of cinematic identification while it disrupts and/or interrupts the spectatorial identification. By dis-emplotment, I shall find out if a film may defer and differ an understanding of the socio-political change—as a crisis—without entirely forcing the spectator-subject out of the process of cinematic identification. I shall explain in later chapters that when the classical elements of film noir are incorporated in contemporary Hong Kong cinema, the workings of the ideology are exposed in a process of pastiche. My analysis of the disruptive film strategy will henceforth demonstrate a type of ideologically self-conscious reading of the cinema that is not facilitated under the conventional structure of emplotment, but rather dis-emplotment.

Yue's configuration of the 'third time-space of transition' which refers to the spectator's mediation between the text and the contemporary experience is described as 'a form of belated panic consciousness' that results from the socio-political change. (29) Further examination of the relation between the 'panic consciousness' and the subject is required if the focus of analysis is the 'remapping' of subject position in the midst of a crisis situation. What I suggest examining further is a filmic strategy of ceaseless contestation of meanings, which enhances the interaction between the viewing subject and the film text by re-investing classical elements of film noir in recent Hong Kong cinema.

A different focus on an aspect of the cinematic practice that portrays crises in film as intrinsic to the formulation of a playful attitude or a reflexive mode is suggested in later chapters. Since the psychological formulation of the spectator-subject may take place during an interplay of signs and/or styles, the film can be seen as the supplement that 'comes in the place of a lapse, a nonsignified or a nonrepresented, a nonpresence,' (30) which creates a pleasure of self-reflexivity.

Roland Barthes' account of the pleasure of text and his observation on the relation between the 'writerly' (31) text and historical subject is drawn upon herein to characterize such a discussion on the cinematic practice. In Barthes' *S/Z: An Essay*, he considers the text's unity as being always re-established by its composition. In the course of reading a text, the reader not only passively reads but also actively writes. He describes that the writerly text is '*ourselves writing*, before the infinite play of the world...is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system....' (32) In the light of Barthes' notion of the 'writerly' text, the experience of self-reflexivity is blissful. That is to say, the historical subject of the film text of self-reflexivity can be understood as the 'body of bliss.' (33) Through an 'articulation of the body' in the engagement of a kind of reflexive strategy of the cinema (34), that is a kind of re-assurance of the presence of the body, the subject is enabled to assert self-consciously his or her own 'individuality.' (35) My focus of analysis is the interplay of social (or cultural) pleasure—which is a type of complicit pleasure that may reinforce a fixed subject position—and 'bliss'—which allows the spectator/reader to break out of the subject position. This is what he suggests *plaisir* gives rise to, which is drawn upon in this discussion of the interplay of a form of social pleasure and (36) 'bliss' that recent Hong Kong films enable.

This interplay is a process through which the spectator-subject is solicited to reread his or her subject-position and the relation between the audience and the text after he or she is engaged in a passive viewing position where imaginary subjection takes place. Essential to the understanding of the interplay is the psychological formulation achieved by shifting cinematic identification. Yue's articulation of the positionality that is exemplified as the location occupied by the subject also leads to a discussion of psychological formulation. Her emphasis is on the re-constitution of subjectivity. (37) My discussion, however, revolves around a different aspect of the narrative, which enables the spectator-subject to destabilize and shift the cinematic identification diegetically and extra-diegetically. My focus of analysis is that films which demystify fiction and our naive faith in fiction, may allow the spectator to self-consciously reread the concepts of history, self and identity.

The role of film noir is related to the contestation of meanings or of ideological representations. The portrayal of crises—personal, social and/or political—in a film can be seen as an essential component of the deconstructive tactic of self-reflexivity that discloses the materiality of the film, enabling the spectator-subject to search for new ways of presentation or to re-narrativize. The re-narrativization is not only considered as a means of re-presenting the crisis but also a means of imparting a stronger sense of the unrepresented. If the emplotment of tragic sensibility, for instance, is disrupted within the film narrative, then the understanding of the film story about the crisis that functions as a parallel to what Hong Kong people experience in the run-up to 1997 and after the colony's reunification with China may be undercut, contested and re-defined. The spectator-subject is not only disoriented from the conventional understandings of the crisis situation and of the problematic identity but he or she is also enabled to negotiate his or her role as a film viewer, a historical subject, and a citizen. In most cases when the representation of crises of the cinema is seen purely as a reflection of the social psyche, discussion on the issue of negotiation will less likely be emphasized.

Film commentaries and critical writings on *Boat People* (Ann Hui, 1982) and on *Bullet in the Head* (John Woo, 1990) focused mainly on the use of an allegory or metaphor that describes the way in which the films reveal indirectly the emotional feelings of the Hong Kong audience in response to two influential historical incidents—the signing of the Joint Declaration and the June 4th Incident.

Unlike many film critics, Ann Hui, in her autobiography (38) does not reinforce the idea that *Boat People*—which tells a tragic story of post-war Vietnam under the rule of the Communist party—has marked a negative impression on the People's Republic of China. Cheuk-to Li, however, suggests that post-liberation Vietnam 'was tantamount to post-1997 Hong Kong.' He says,

"From the local history of Hong Kong and Chinese tradition in general, Ann Hui has progressed naturally to the reality of China—the China factor—in Hong Kong's affairs, not least because of the 1997 issue. The metaphorical approach of *Boat People* enabled the film to escape censorship and thereby to speak to the collective anxiety of Hong Kong residents in the early 1980s." (39)

Other established scholars like Ping-kwan Leung and Patricia Brett Erens also consider the film as an allegorical representation of the future condition of Hong Kong. Erens states that local audiences saw 'an analogy between Vietnam and Hong Kong under Communism.' (40) Leung further elaborates on the use of allegory in *Boat People*. He describes,

"In the period between the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984 and the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, some of the anxiety and uncertainty was expressed in films which treat the city allegorically, and try to project the mixed and undefined sentiments into a tangible narrative form. *The Boat People* (*Touben nuhai*), originally produced by the leftist film company, The Sil-Metropole Organization Ltd., in the early 1980s in compliance with the Chinese foreign policy at that time to condemn the Hanoi government, eventually metamorphosed in the hands of director Ann Hui and script writer Qiu Gangjian into a film showing the pathos of people living under a totalitarian government." (41) Their discussions assume that the spectatorial interpretation—resulting in a straightforward manner from the reading of the allegorical representation—helps preserve a text by applying it to contemporary circumstances. They do not consider the possibility that the Hong Kong audience may actively mediate between cinematic experience and corresponding life experience. Furthermore, when the text and the audience's impression of the text are pre-determined as the same, the analyses may fail to critique the representation and the act of spectating under which interpretation and understanding may take place.

Julian Stringer's delineation of *Boat People* as 'a self-aware political spectacle and public event' (42) does not seem to presume that the spectator is a type of active viewer who would mediate independently between the text and real-life experience. Modifying an idea shared among many western critics who describe the film as 'a lurid exposé of Communist brutalists and hypocrisies,' (43) he looks at the film as a medium that is used by the director to 'foreground social and political themes.' (44) His argument is in line with that of Claudia Springer who explains that the spectator is 'typically' positioned 'in the role of cultural outsider by virtue of techniques that encourage identification with the reporter protagonist' in her commentary on *Boat People*. (45) That is to say, the discussion on cinematic identification pre-supposes a form of passive engagement of the audience in the course of viewing.

In John Zou's commentary on *A Chinese Ghost Story* (1987), he proposes to explore some tangible means that critically engage the political and psychological subject and assess the formative input upon 'colonial Hong Kong imagination.' (46) He similarly delimits the film as a text which rhetorically constitutes the audience in a position of anticipation of the colonial city's traumatic repatriation in 1997. His theoretical proposition thus brings forth more questions than resolutions. When the audience is defined as an object being constituted in the text rather than the subject of interpretation, the spectator is hence considered as a passive viewer as if he or she is not able to contest and negotiate his or her position in the course of the 'colonial Hong Kong imagination.' My later discussion, which revolves around stories that reassert—explicitly and/or implicitly—a similar kind of connection between the colony and China, will consider the re-narrativization of the crises as essential to the renewal of the spectator's understanding of the personal, social, political and/or historical identities. It will look at the relation between the text and a type of self-conscious spectator with reference to some aberrant film strategies.

In her essay on Kar-wai Wong's films, Janice Tong comments on a type of aberrant narrative strategy that does not allow a story to unfold in the logic of linearity and progression. Drawing on Deleuze's idea of 'time-images,' she speaks of a filmic device that does not sustain the narrative in a cohesive structure, and describes a kind of disruptive use of fragmented images as 'aberrant and ambiguous.' (47) Near the end of the essay, she mentions that she hopes to demonstrate how the viewer may experience the substance of the cinematic time and consider the spectator's experience of temporal incongruity as nostalgic 'yearning for a history that has disappeared…' (48)

There is always a challenge to writing about the destabilizing tactic of films which are about historical incidents and are structured to be known as history. The challenge lies where the critical discourse is dependent on the historical discourse which functions to stabilize an idea of history and defines the citizens' identity. In Tong's analysis of the destabilizing tactic of a Hong Kong film, her theory of history seems to assume a stable relation between the historical narrative and the historical subject. Tong says,

"A shroud of uncertainty has bathed the city-state since the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration returning Hong Kong to China. But even before this, the history of Hong Kong has always reflected a city in flux....With its return to mainland China in 1997, instability and indeterminacy advances on its citizens....This experience of flux is reflected in Wong's destabilising cinematographic self-image of Hong Kong." (49)

Tong's concept of the role of the narrative text—filmic or historical—thus refers to a designated function that seeks to reflect the imagination and the experience of Hong Kong people. The presumption of the relations between the film text and history, and between the spectator and the text become stabilized as soon as the nostalgic 'yearning for a history' is pursued. Thus, the discussion does not give much room for a critique of the ideological representation of the history and the crises portrayed in the films. A more challenging approach that examines the way in which the cinema foregrounds the problems of nostalgia and of falling into nostalgia should therefore be considered. The reflection of the city in flux has also occurred over some time in other Hong Kong films that are constituted in a structure of self-other relation, which becomes the base of the discussion of the cinema as a socially symbolic act. Tong is right that the image of the city which is derived from the symbolic act requires critical attention.

James Steintrager attempts to use one of John Woo's action films, *Bullet in the Head*, to probe the psychic wounds left in the wake of the historical incident that occurred in Tiananmen Square on June 4th, 1989, which is negatively known as a 'massacre'. John Woo himself has described his making of *Bullet in the Head* as a response to the political event of the June 4th incident in which the discontent of the political dissidents was suppressed. (50) Steintrager justifies his analysis by explaining that Woo's choice of narrative mode is an allegory which avoids talking about the 'massacre' by claiming that, for the audience of Hong Kong, the specific anxiety about identity is mediated in the film through the portrayal of violence. He says,

"...we might say absurd or even obscene—about using an action film to probe the psychic wounds left in the wake of massacre. In a related vein, theorists of the Holocaust have often inveighed against attempts to represent the unrepresentable. Perhaps this is why Woo chose allegory as the mode of narrative, since it represents only indirectly. Yet at least since the Vietnam War, it has become clear that it is scarcely possible to avoid the spectacular mediation of terror....we might see in *Bullet in the Head* a contingent function: to mediate for the viewer the traumas of Tiananmen and anxieties..." (51)

To arrive at an understanding of how *Bullet in the Head* functions as mediation, he addresses an issue of cinematic identification in his examination of how the cinematic violence of Hong Kong action films in general is used. He explains that 'suture'—which is a filmic technique that establishes point of view via shot-reverse-shot editing—is the process by which the viewer's gaze is fixed on that of a specific character, which enhances the cinematic identification of the spectator with the protagonist. His discussion is based on an assumption that recent Hong Kong cinema is dependent on a device, like an allegory, which reinforces cinematic identification. Since this observation is based on an assumption that the system of suturing functions stably, it begs to question what changes to the process of cinematic identification would be made when the system is disrupted. The scope of discussion may therefore be extended to cover an aspect of cinema as a medium that enables the audience to negotiate their experience self-consciously in the wake of the 'massacre.' Thus the representation of crises—social, political, cultural and personal—should be reread under such circumstances.

My focus of analysis is the re-use of the noirish elements in recent Hong Kong cinema that gives rise to a cinematic experience through which the local audience is enabled to re-interpret the crisis situation and negotiate their understanding of subjectivity and identity. Would there be a type of film device that may differ and defer the spectator's interpretation of the crisis as an intolerable experience? My approach draws on Derrida's account of *différance* in order to develop an understanding of the legitimacy of a disruptive device that facilitates a movement of psychological detour through which the spectator is enabled to reread what is noted as a problem of identity or a crisis.

Crisis and Pleasures

Anticipating the creation of new possibilities of subjectivity in Hong Kong, many critical writings on Hong Kong cinema seek to examine the issue of the cultural identity of Hong Kong people during the last decade of the 20th century. The expansive works on this issue that I shall discuss in my thesis seem to converge on three points of observation which consider the spectator as a passive receiver of the ideologically complicit text of recent Hong Kong cinema, the process of the discursive constitution of subjectivity as temporary, and the spectator-subject as not being able to resist the subject-position created by the film text.

I shall begin my discussion by giving an overview of Hong Kong films that represent Hong Kong as a city going through changes and/or crises throughout the second half of the last century. During this period of time, Hong Kong has undergone the most significant changes in its entire history before and after

British colonial rule. My concern herein is the common strategy of the mainstream cinema that has engaged the audience of Hong Kong throughout the years in a discourse of crisis which gives pleasures that I would posit as ideologically complicit. Firstly, after identifying the convention, my discussion will differentiate a recent variation of the cinematic practice that gives pleasures of a subversive nature. My focus in this section is to re-examine the portrayals of crises that are recurrent in recent Hong Kong cinema especially during the last two decades of the last century.

During the 1980's when Britain and China had started to discuss the issue of the change of the sovereignty of Hong Kong, Hong Kong cinema came to be analyzed as a site where a crisis of cultural identity was revealed. It was widely argued that Hong Kong people were developing an acute sense of anxiety in the run up to the changeover in 1997 (52) because of the imminent socio-political change. The June 4th incident at Tiananmen Square, Beijing, in 1989 was noted to have intensified Hong Kong people's fear of future uncertainty. Thus Hong Kong films became the medium of the constitution of a narrative of the past that positions the spectator as a historical subject. Critical discussion of these films has assumed that while society is impacting the cinema in both of the areas of production of meaning and production of value for consumption, the films also reflect the life and the social psyche of the people. Therefore, many critics explicate the cinematic activity in causal relations between the socio-political crisis of the colony and the resultant formulation of an identity crisis of the people, and between Hong Kong people's feeling of anxiety and the representation of this feeling in films. In this chapter, before clarifying a crucial point which shows that this casual relation does not apply to all types of spectator-screen relations in a straightforward manner, I hope to quickly outline a number of ways in which Hong Kong cinema demonstrates its perceptions of social and political change. I shall prove in later chapters—with films which incorporate elements of classical film noir—that if the popular form of narrative may reflect people's lives, it may also evaluate, critique and contest. I shall not only examine the cinematic practice as a process of one-way communication initiated by the sender of message or narrativization, but also as a practice of re-narrativization through which the audience is engaged in a process of negotiation of meaning rather than subjection to the dominant ideology throughout the course of the constitution of meaning. In the following, I shall survey the ways in which social and political crises are conventionally represented in Hong Kong cinema at different periods of time, and describe different types of representations of the people's responses to social and political crises in films.

What is noteworthy is the transformation of the image of the city that is represented in the films from an insignificant place of exile to a home during the '70s. That was the period in which the economy of Hong Kong achieved thriving success. Subsequent to this discussion is an analysis of the way in which the image of the city is transformed again from a comfortable home to an insecure place that was to be returned to China in 1997.

The following discussion of the way in which the films describe a city from the '50s onwards aims to trace the ideologically complicit representations of the city-dwellers of Hong Kong at different periods of time. The quick review of the cinematic representations of Hongkongers seeks to reveal the structure of the symbolic order of social relation between the self and the other, which entails a type of social pleasure, or what I call the ideologically complicit pleasure. The description of the cinematic representations below unfolds the changing concept of the colonial self. Essential to the formulation of the concept is the self-other dichotomy that sustains a form of pleasure which allows the spectator-subject to enjoy the persistence of an idea of self.

Hong Kong, before and during WWII, was poverty-stricken and was also portrayed as such in the realist cinema of the '50s and '60s. In films that describe the colony's slow recovery after the war, the role of the British government in helping the citizens of Hong Kong was seldom mentioned. Most of the heroes and heroines in local films find comfort and solace within a small community which was comprised of local people and people who had just moved to Hong Kong from China. In the middle of the last century, Hong Kong people were not portrayed as those who would make Hong Kong their home. In reality, a significant portion of the population of Hong Kong was made up of migrants from mainland China, who eventually settled down and raised their children in the British colony. Making Hong Kong home was, however, never a popular theme; the city was also not portrayed in films as a nice place that might give the city-dwellers a sense of belonging throughout the '50s. The protagonists always maintained that they could always return to their mother country across the border between the colony and China. Living in Hong Kong at that time was not described as the only choice available to people. A kind of 'refugee' mentality preoccupied the minds of these newcomers, according to these films.

For instance, *In the Face of Demolition* (Tie Li, 1953) depicts the life of the lower-class people of Hong Kong as they assist one another with the ordeals that they must face constantly. The film centres on the livelihood of the poverty-stricken tenants of a selfish landlord who refuses to maintain the decrepit, old building which houses them. In the midst of a big storm, the building collapses and the miserable dwellers of the house become homeless. Striving to survive, they eventually establish a sense of belonging among themselves within the small community after assisting one another during the disaster. Near the end of the film, a young man gives his blood to save the life of an ailing neighbour at the hospital. This not only wins him friendship, but demonstrates brotherly love that is treasured by the people. Here, fraternal love is shown as the major social force which engages the males who have been portrayed as the vanguard of good moral and social well-being. The essence of pleasurable viewing lies in identifying with the male protagonists who believe that they and their families can meet the challenges of life, with the help of friends and good neighbours at times of mishap and misfortune.

The portrayal of the self-other relation in these films is constituted by signifying the Northerners as evil, crooked, and dishonest, or in other words the *other*, while the local or Southerners as the *self*. A binary system of signs between good and bad, rich and poor, can easily be identified in most of the films of the same period. The Northerners are always depicted as rich and/or bad people who take advantage of the poorer Southerners or local people in the colony. In *In the Face of Demolition* (1953), the loan shark and his spouse from the northern part of China, who take away the other tenants' hard-earned money, are finally punished when they do not manage to leave the collapsing building safely. On the other hand, the local people or Southerners, all manage to escape.

This symbolic order of social relation between the Southerners and Northerners is recurrent in many Hong Kong films. Many of them are melodramas like *Tragedy in Canton* (Dun Lu, 1951), *Tragedy on the Pearl River* (Weiyi Wang, 1950), *The Guiding Light* (Jian Qin, 1953) or *The Kid* (Feng Feng, 1950). During and after the war, melodrama was one of the most resilient forms of entertainment due to the fact that they engaged the audience who might identify themselves with the heroes who survived though faced with difficult and/or hopeless situations.

The description of the self-other relation is also featured in one of the longest-running film series about a Cantonese martial arts hero, starring Tak-hing Kwan as Fei-Hung Wong, who is not only famous for his kung-fu knowledge through which he strengthens his body, but also his teaching of good morals. These films include *The Duel Against the Black Rascal* (Fung Wong, 1968). Starring Kin Shek as a wayward young man from the north, the film tells a story of the newcomer who is warmly received by Fei-hung Wong in Canton and is impressed by Wong's teaching at first. He later strays and joins a gang of outlaws in materializing evil plans that impair the community. The description of the Northerners as the other, however, became less significant towards the '70s. In the meantime, films of the same period also began to convey the idea that local people were making Hong Kong their home. (53)

Films of the '70s, which portray the lives of the descendants of the Chinese migrants who were born and raised in Hong Kong after the war, do not deny the fact that the new generation of Hong Kong people had made Hong Kong their home. Actually Hong Kong people had derived a sense of belonging and were gradually accepting Hong Kong as home in the '70s. This is due to the fact that Hong Kong people were ready to claim ownership for their diligence and hard work that had turned the territory from an insignificant fishing port to one of the most important financial centres in the world. In Michael Hui's films, it can be seen that Hong Kong people acknowledge the city as their hometown. These films include huge box-office successes like *Games Gamblers Play* (Michael Hui, 1974), *The Last Message* (Michael Hui, 1975), *The Private Eyes* (Michael Hui, 1976), *The Pilferers' Progress* (Michael Hui, 1977), and *The Contract* (Michael Hui, 1978). His films are seen as works that reflect the social psyche of the people of the working class in the '70s, who strive to survive in a fast changing city which has attained thriving economic success. An ideology of capitalism is described as overwhelmingly influential to Hong Kong businessmen who maximize their profits by exploiting their employees. The relationship between capitalists and people of the working class, in Hui's film, is also constituted in a self-other dichotomy. Although Hui's comedy seeks to critique the attitude of selfish employers, as his films portray the way in which the employees succumb to the dominant ideology of capitalism, the symbolic order of social relation is reinforced. The people of the working class, or the other, refer to the weaker, the poorer, the disadvantaged, and the less privileged.

Hong Kong in the '80s, however, is shown to have serious crime issues depicted by gunfire and bloodshed in films. People can easily recall names of underworld heroes who are willing to sacrifice their lives as tragic heroes in rescuing friends in films. *A Better Tomorrow* (John Woo, 1986) and its two sequels are some prominent examples of gangster films that portray Hong Kong as a dangerous place while the city was, in reality, home to people who had been enjoying fabulous economical success during the '80s. *Long Arm of the Law* (Johnny Mak, 1984) and its sequels, *Young and Dangerous* (Wai-keung Lau, 1996) and its sequels, and Johnny To's dark trilogy that I shall review below, add to the repertoire of successful gangster films which adopt a similar approach in describing Hong Kong as a corrupt and insecure place. Critics usually analyze this as a result of Hong Kong people's fear or anxiety regarding the colony's reunification with China. (54) *Long Arm of the Law* was a trend-setting film that depicts the mainlanders from China as the originators of crime. In the film, a group of men from the mainland illegally enter Hong Kong and quickly form a triad gang inside the notorious 'Walled City' of Hong Kong. After robbing a jewelry shop, the illegal immigrants refuse to return to China as they had originally planned in the hope of pursuing a better quality of life in Hong Kong. Their attempt to start a new life is in vain when the police confront them in a final shootout. Pleasure from viewing may be derived from delimiting the illegal immigrants or gangsters as the other and positioning oneself in relation to the devices of social control through the process of cinematic identification. This form of pleasure is ideologically complicit, allowing the spectator-subject to enjoy the persistence of an idea of self. The self-other dichotomy constituted in the symbolic order of social relation in film reveals a complacent idea of the self that remains intact from the challenge of the other. The above-mentioned idea of the self can be seen as a concept of colonial self that is at stake in the run-up to 1997 when the sovereignty of Hong Kong was due to be returned to China. 1997 is not only recognized as a time when the reunification takes place, but also a dividing line that demarcates two historical periods—colonial and post-colonial. Local critics are keen on discussing the film in relation to the socio-political change of Hong Kong but there has not been enough discussion of the use of noir cinematography and its relation to the cinematic representation of social instability.

Some Hong Kong film critics suggest that Hong Kong people's fear of uncertainty is allegorized in various films, for example ghost films, in which the impact of crisis is either mitigated and/or displaced. In Cheuk-to Lee's introduction for *Phantoms of the Hong Kong Cinema*, an anthology that marked the Hong Kong International Film Festival organized by the government of Hong Kong in 1989, he says, "...quite a few commentators have remarked on the coincidence of the Horror genre's resurgence with the territory's preoccupation with its future and the question of China taking over control in 1997." (55) That is to say, film is considered as a reflection of people's mindset. The rising popularity of ghost films suggests that a type of complicit pleasure may be derived from seeing crisis as something that can be contained like the demons which are exorcised or punished in the films.

A Chinese Ghost Story (Siu-tung Ching, 1987) is a remake of *Enchanting Shadow* (Han Hsiang Li, 1960) which was originally adapted from Pu Song-ling's *The Magic Sword.* The story is about Xiao-qian, the forlorn ghost who is under the control of a tree demon, Lao Lao. She is forced to lure young, masculine travellers and snare them for Lao Lao as food. One day, a hapless tax collector, Cai-chen, who wanders into town collecting taxes, passes by Lan Yeuk temple where Xiao-qian is based. When rain ruins his record book, he is forced to seek shelter at the temple, and hence he meets with the beautiful ghost, Xiao-qian. Since the ghost has fallen in love with her mortal victim, she can no longer assist the tree demon. After Cai-chen has discovered Xiao-qian's true identity as a ghost, he does not leave her but promises to save her from the tree demon. The film, *A Chinese Ghost Story*, diverges from its source material by changing the original happy ending where Cai-chen and Xiao-qian get married and bring up their children together. In the denouement of the recent film, an exorcist, a friend of Cai-chen, successfully suppresses the tree demon (56) so that Cai-chen is able to free Xiao-qian from the demon's control. Attending to Xiao-qian's wish to pursue reincarnation, Cai-chen properly buries her cremated bones, and hence relieves her from wandering the Earth for eternity. I would describe the text of the film as ideologically complicit by referring to the theme, which is recurrent in its sequels, of restoring the order of the world.

While the evil force of the dark world is described as overwhelmingly destructive and uncontrollable, men's physical strength and will-power are portrayed as the determining factors that prevail and thus ensure the dissipation of this dark force. The tree demon is originally characterized as a middle-aged woman in the novel. In the film, he/she is presented as an androgynous creature played by an actor called Siu-ming Lau, whose voice switches between that of a man and a woman in the film. This demon drinks the male victims' blood using an enormously long tongue which is described as an 'oversized penis' by John Zou who suggests that the 'swimming tongue' is a 'metaphor of masculinity.' (57) Drawing on this idea of metaphor, I suggest herein that the demonification of androgyny, in its manifestation of destroying an innocent man, speaks of a crisis of masculinity that is restored as soon as the deadly and ethereal fox spirit is tamed and the tree demon is suppressed. Hence, the dichotomy of self-other relation is sustained in the cinematic discourse, which nurtures a fixed sense of self that delimits all the ghostly objects as the other. This type of cinematic practice not only assures the containment of the otherness within the diegesis and the discursive structure of the film narrative but also produces a form of ideologically complicit pleasure. What is at stake, therefore, is not the implied crisis of masculinity, which is deemed to be resolved diegetically and discursively in the closure (58) but the legitimation of the ideological structure that formulates the closure of the popular text. Furthermore, the cross-genre practice of horror film regarding the way in which noir cinematography is related to the allegory does not receive much criticism.

In a special issue of New Literary History entitled *Rethinking Tragedy* published in 2004, Elisabeth Bronfen contests the contemporary usage of tragic sensibility and a way to discuss the genre—film noir—which is usually ignored by tragic theorists. (59) Bronfen resists the idea that tragedy is necessarily an enactment of the fatal consequences of refusing recognition of the other and of the self. I shall take on her theme of 'misrecognition' that the femme fatale or the male protagonist of the tragedy is not merely a stereotype or symptom of dangerous sexuality but rather the subject of the narrative, and the authentic modern hero/heroine. (60) My discussion aims to find out whether the re-use of the classical elements of film noir in recent Hong Kong cinema demonstrates that all the protagonists of the selected films, including *The Private Eye Blue* (Eddie Fong, 1995), *Swordsman II* (Siu-tung Ching, 1991), *City of Glass* (Mabel Cheung, 1998), and *Happy Together* (Kar-wai Wong, 1997), serve to engage the spectator in an 'enactment not of fate but of responsibility.' (61) I also wish to discuss whether the cinema may facilitate negotiation for a new vision of culture that redefines the significance of the crises.

Tragic Sensibility and Noir Stylistics

In *The Immediate Experience: Movies, Comics, Theatre and Other Aspects of Popular Culture* (62), Robert Warshow speaks of a possible way of deriving what I would call complicit pleasure from reading a story of a tragic hero. He draws on T.S. Eliot's view of a number of Shakespeare's tragic heroes which claims that the heroes enjoy a 'trick of looking at themselves dramatically.' (63) The dramatic disposition of self is thus not a man, but a style of life, or a kind of meaning. Hence, their true identities that are destroyed when they die is something outside themselves. Warshow applies this observation to his understanding of the character of gangster heroes. He delimits a gangster hero as a tragic hero, and explains that 'the successful man is an outlaw,' and the gangster's whole life is an effort to assert himself as an individual and to draw himself out of the crowd. He says,

"At bottom, the gangster is doomed because he is under the obligation to succeed, not because the means he employs are unlawful. In the deeper layers of the modern consciousness, *all* means are unlawful, every attempt to succeed is an act of aggression, leaving one alone and guilty and defenceless among enemies: one is *punished* for success. This is our intolerable dilemma: that failure is a kind of death and success is evil and dangerous, is—ultimately—impossible. The effect of the gangster film is to embody this dilemma in the person of the gangster and resolve it by his death. The dilemma is resolved because it is *his* death, not ours. We are safe; for the moment, we can acquiesce in our failure, we can choose to fail." (64)

In light of Warshow's interpretation of gangster films, it can be seen that complicit pleasure may result from the emplotment of a film which enables the narrative to initially embody an intolerable dilemma of human experience, and then resolves the dilemma by the death of the tragic hero in the end. Such a dilemma is created whereby the hero knows that the consequence of failure is death, but success is also impossible. The dilemma is resolved in the course of voyeuristic viewing because it is the gangster hero's death rather than that of the audience. That is to say, it is the gangster hero who dies for being successful rather than the audience. Warshow supposes that the audience may enjoy the same degree of complacency in real life by distancing themselves from the diegesis, which gives them a sense of relief from matters regarding failure that they do not want to face and success that they may not attain. From the '80s onwards, Hong Kong has been producing a considerable number of gambling films and gangster films, in particular, which use a noirish visual style to varying degrees. Below I shall focus on the relation between the noirish or noir-related film form and the portrayals of gamblers, criminals and gangster heroes as tragic heroes in three different aspects.

(1) Low-key visual style as a cinematic convention

Hong Kong has a long history of importing the latest innovation, including cinematographic skills from the west. The manifestation of low-key visual effects, which first became popular in Europe and America respectively, in monochrome and colour films at different periods of time in the local cinema proves that the technical know-how was imported. With increasing influence from Hollywood on the local culture, it cannot be denied that spectatorial expectation or consciousness of certain film genres has been gradually established. What I want to stress is that the examination of Hong Kong noirish films should move beyond the presumption that noirish or noir-related films of Hong Kong are entirely a re-creation of the American genre. Rather, the cross-genre practice is actually a consequence of genre transculturation and the re-use of noirish elements can be seen as a tactic that 'troubles' or defers the spectatorial expectation that I shall examine in later chapters.

Film noir firstly appeared to revitalize the American cinema with its unique characters, dark and ambiguous settings, and anti-traditional cinematography, which realistically examines the flaws inherent in every human being. Location filming was, therefore, emphasized in the course of the production. Although the making of night-for-night scene and the practice of location filming should not be seen as components unique to film noir, the realistic approach used for describing the dark side of the underworld and gangster activities is essential to the formulation of the noirish or noir-related characteristics of Hong Kong realist cinema since the '80s. Prior to a discussion of the more conscious use of noir cinematography, I explain below that the noirish visual effect employed in many local films is not used as if it is necessarily related to the original form and narrative of classical film noir. Sometimes, the cinematography is borrowed as a technique rather than being employed as the style of the films. The genreric field is chosen as the focus of the analysis below because the cinematography of noirish cinema is the aspect of classical Hollywood cinema that is most frequently re-used/used in Hong Kong especially in the recent making of gangster films.

In *No Risk, No Gain* (Jing Wong, 1990), a professional Chinese gambler who is based in America is challenged by a rich man from Taiwan who wants to beat him in a card game. Although the noir-related cinematography is employed in one of the fighting scenes in the film, the visual style does not generally apply to the whole film including the most significant gambling scene in the denouement. However, in many gambling scenes of Hong Kong films, low-key lighting is used as if it is a cinematic convention to enhance an overwhelming sense of social malaise and a heroic image of the male protagonist who is represented as triumphant after experiencing crises.

In the thriller-cum-gangster film *God of Gamblers II* (Jing Wong, 1994), Chun Ko played by Yun-Fatt Chow as the God of Gamblers, has retired to France with his heavily pregnant wife where they find peace. One day, his rival Xing-go Wu lures him into a gambling match to determine who the world's best gambler is. Wu also tortures Ko by murdering his wife. Ko returns home to find that his wife has been brutally disembowelled and that the unborn baby has been removed and placed in a specimen jar. A year passes, before Ko is ready to avenge the deaths of his wife and child. He challenges Wu to a final showdown. The low-key visual effect of the final gambling scene, employed both in the wide and close shots, is noir-related. Hence, the story of conspiracy and corruption is brought to a climax under the intense atmosphere of unforeseen danger and uncertainty. The characteristics of the visual effect are not demonstrated in the rest of the film. There are more films in which noir cinematography is not used for the purpose of reviving the original form and narrative of American film noir in its entirety.

In *Fight Back to School III* (Jing Wong, 1993), detective Star Chow, played by Stephen Chow, does not go undercover as a student as in the previous films. He is instead forced to take on a dangerous mission and pretend to be the husband of Judy, the prime suspect in the murder of a well-respected rich man Million Wong. Since Chow bears a resemblance to Wong, Chow is used in this case to make Judy believe that her husband is still alive. After becoming close to Judy by posing as her husband, Chow finally discovers that she is actually innocent, and that her lesbian girlfriend is the true murderer. Near the end of the film, when Judy's girlfriend attempts to attack Chow with an ice-pick, the use of noir cinematography enhances the representation of the femme fatale. Like the fatal woman of classical film noir, the female murderer is also punished so as to resolve the threat that is posed to the men in the film. Although noir-cinematography is borrowed, the film does not generally take on the visual motif of the noirish Hollywood film, *Basic Instinct,* until it comes to the end. The purpose of re-using the noirish elements is to establish genre consciousness of the cinematic convention and to parody the cinematic representation of the masochistic male.

(2) More conscious use of the chiaroscuro effect and other noirish elements in the gangster films

Low-key lighting is, relatively speaking, more frequently used in gangster films from the '80s onwards when this type of film became popular in Hong Kong. It can be seen on many occasions that noirish cinematography is employed to intensify the drama rather than re-establish noir themes or the original form of film noir. The use of the noirish elements in the gangster films of Hong Kong discussed in this section is not intended to be 'anti-traditional' as it would be used in classical film noir. Rather, the noirish elements are used as if they are part of a cinematic convention. When the local cinema slowly develops the skill to perfect the chiaroscuro effect on colour film, the realistic approach of the films effectively enhances a kind of tragic sensibility regarding longing, corruption and fatal decision. Looking at some popular gangster films in which the use of chiaroscuro effect, setting and plot structure in the films portray Hong Kong as a dark city, I shall describe how the contemporary use of the cinematic elements is visually akin to that of classical film noir. This discussion paves the way for a later examination of the way in which local noirish cinema deviates from the original form of the classical genre, and the way in which it invokes a noir-consciousness with a purpose of communicating a nuance of the conventional way of seeing the films. That is to say, the portrayal of social and personal crises in contemporary Hong Kong films will not only be seen as a mere reflection on the dominant ideologies which subject the audience to an ideologically complicit understanding of self and identity, but also as a critique of the representation.

In *Long Arm of the Law* that I introduced earlier on, the description of the alleys of the old 'Walled City' (65) of Hong Kong demonstrates the technical artistry of the noirish form that deals with a timeless issue of human fallibility. The visual motifs of film noir offer insight into the crime committed by the illegal immigrants from mainland China as a perception of the reality. For instance, in an abduction scene planned by the illegal immigrants, the people from mainland China are seen as the originators of crime bringing danger to the citizens of Hong Kong. Inside a taxi, the claustrophobic framing of the camera that is set at the front seat of the car captures a gangster's intense struggle to get away from his place of captivity. The car first speeds inside a dimly lit car park and is later set on fire. At a low camera position, the fast paced sequence creates an overwhelming sense of suffering. The unconventional camera set-ups for the depiction of the foggy and narrow alleys of the 'Walled City,' where the final battle between the police and the illegal immigrants takes place, establishes a noirish style of cinematography. The omniscient point of view of the camera that reveals the activity of the protagonist who flees across the alleys offers a harsh sense of fatalism. The low-key lighting effect enhances the impact created by the panicked movement of the body inside the 'Walled City.' The claustrophobic framing contributes to the portrayal of a crisis situation in which the illegal immigrants are under threat of a forceful crackdown launched by the Hong Kong police force. The dim electric lighting shed on the inner-city slum not only reveals a labyrinth of dark alleyways but also a sense of urban darkness as the root of evil.

A Better Tomorrow (John Woo, 1986) also demonstrates a more conscious use of the noirish elements alongside the glorious traditions of heroism and loyalty canonized in the collaboration between John Woo and Yun-fatt Chow. The film thus sets the trend of incorporating noirish cinematography, character types and narrative structure in Hong Kong for the making of gangster films. Wai-keung Lau's *Young and Dangerous* series and Johnny To's dark trilogy owe much to Woo's innovative input in the cinema in the previous decade. My discussion in this section looks at the noirish cinematography that reinforces an ideologically complicit representation of the characters that offer skewed perspectives of society and morality. The noirish visual style can be seen as essential to the cinematic convention that solicits the audience to see the world from the perspectives of the protagonists diegetically.

A Better Tomorrow is a dark tale of revenge and redemption. Chow plays Mark, tragic hero in this film. Ho, a good friend of Mark and a one-time leader in the Hong Kong underground, is sent to Taiwan to conduct some business along with a new triad member called Shing. In the restaurant scene, the trio—Shing, Ho and his best friend Mark—vow their friendship and loyalty to one another. The low-key visual style creates a dramatic highlight on this event that paves the way for the description of Shing's betrayal of Ho and Mark later in the film. Ho's trip turns out to be a set-up organized by Shing. While he is away, Ho's enemies attack his disabled father. When the assault takes place, the light in the sitting room is switched off by someone in the film diegetically. The lighting that is cast from the side forming angular shadows creates a tragic mood. Kit, who is Ho's brother and a policeman, holds him responsible for the death of their father after the attack. After three years in jail, Ho is determined to avenge his personal and family tragedy by bringing down Shing with Mark's assistance. In a gun battle at a container port where Shing confronts his old friends, Mark as the tragic hero who bears a pessimistic world view of inexorable doom, dies heroically after he convinces Kit to join hands with his brother, Ho. At the end, Kit, finally violates the principles of his position as a policeman, and as a brother lends his gun to Ho who uses it to kill Shing. When the moody and menacing low-key lighting effect of the container port scene creates a sense of inevitability of the protagonist's doom, the film not only blurs the boundary between the villainous and the righteous, but also solicits spectatorial identification with the tragic hero, Mark, who dies in the course of protecting his friends. The film demonstrates diegetically a form of redemption of human fallibility through Mark's death, who lives up to the morals he teaches Kit and dies heroically. Kit, the policeman, eventually shares Mark's idea of fraternal love and righteousness and forgives his brother. In the end, they collaborate to fight against their common enemy, Shing.

Wicked City (Tai Kit Mak, 1992) produced by Hark Tsui, (66) which incorporates the visual and narrative style of film noir, is a story about a tragic hero that takes place in a futuristic Hong Kong. A race of monsters (also known as raptors) are involved in drug trafficking. The film starts with an image of the hellish environment of the neon-lit city offering an apocalyptic vision of a dark world. The drug Happiness, like opium, is not only highly detrimental to health, but is also used by the raptors as the secret tool to gain control of the human world by enslaving the drug addicts. In the course of tracking the criminal activities of the raptors, Detective Lung has just narrowly escaped from an attack. A femme fatale who reveals her identity as a raptor seduces and attempts to kill Lung inside a small room of a love hotel. Lung's dangerous mission portrayed predominantly in noir cinematography is enhanced by the use of claustrophobic framing, jarring camera movement, fast-paced editing and all-intrusive shafts of light. Ying, a half-raptor, and Lung, a human being, are the policemen assigned to destroy the whole race of raptors. At the end of the mission, Ying, as a tragic hero, dies trying to save mankind from a bleak future of enslavement by the villainous monsters.

Many recent noirish films produced and/or directed by Johnny To also delineate moving stories of tragic heroes. *The Longest Night* (Tat-chi Yau, 1997), *A Hero Never Dies* (Johnny To, 1998), and *The Mission* (Johnny To,1999) produced/and or directed by Johnny To are a group of films that are known as his dark trilogy. Using noirish film form, these films speak of melancholy, alienation, bleakness, disillusionment, disenchantment, pessimism, ambiguity, moral corruption, evil, guilt, desperation and paranoia like many other films noirs. Although the gangster heroes are morally ambiguous, they are likeable characters because of their loyalty to their friends. They are praised for their high level of integrity as people who are willing to sacrifice their lives for friends. The pleasure that may come from seeing a tragic hero who dies is due to the fact that the spectator may distance themselves from the tragedy as an overseer who is voyeuristic in nature. This can also be seen as a type of ideologically complicit pleasure that may be derived from the cinematic identification as soon as the spectator assumes the role of the hero in the course of viewing the film.

The release of a group of 10 gangster films that revolve around the story of a fictitious gangster hero character called Ho-nam Chan, which include the prequels and sequels of *Young and Dangerous* (67) between 1996 and 2000, is considered as a successful attempt to revive the popular form of local gangster films of the '80s. Cheuk-to Li suggests that the swift development of the film series into a trend is due to the '1997 factor,' although he does not further explain the relation between the films and the reunification of Hong Kong with China. He says, "The time for a trend to develop is getting shorter and it is a phenomenon experienced elsewhere in the world. Hong Kong cinema is probably in the dubious first position in this respect because of the 1997 factor." (68) He explains that the success of the films is due to the 'rehashing of the conventions in the traditional gangster genre.' (69) Though the element of noirishness is not mentioned in his discussion, what he describes as the 'subtle' quality of the films is intrinsic to the realistic approach that is also employed in many films noirs. What is of significance in my discussion of the more conscious use of the noirish element in the late 20th century is that the noirish devices enhance a description of a crisis situation that is seen as related to the issue of the changeover. In some later chapters, I shall examine other noirish films that critique and contest the representation of the *fin-de-siècle* Hong Kong society on the verge of 1997. Exploring the redeployment of the classical elements as an aberrant film strategy, I shall consider film as a medium of social repercussion through which the spectator may reread and/or re-narrativize self-consciously his or her understanding of self and identity.

Set in contemporary Hong Kong, the *Young and Dangerous* series feature stories of violence, greed and struggles for power in terms of the rule of the criminal *jianghu,* or the self-contained world of the triads, without stylised action scenes. In the films, the life of the young triad members, who are called "*gu huo zi,*" (70) revolves around events and activities that take place in the neon-lit city centre, bars, saunas, casinos, nightclubs, night markets, back alleyways, bridges, etc. The plot structure of these films is established on the rival relationship between two sections within a gang or between two gangs that have conflicts of interest. In adverse situations, the gangster heroes are portrayed as people who overcome extreme difficulties by taking on an attitude of pragmatism that enables them to achieve their goals—righteous or evil—by any and all means. The noir cinematography that refers to low-angle shooting and expressionistic technique of low-key visual effect turns these places into starkly lit stage sets. The noirish productions do not only represent this society in microcosm but also position the gangster heroes amidst situations of crises in which things go dangerously awry. The desperation of the incidents of gang-fights, murder, violent attacks, rape and blackmail appear to portray the city as manifested and pre-occupied by the values of the Chinese triad world. The noirish production that takes on a realistic approach thus solicits spectatorial identification with the gangster hero for an ideologically complicit understanding of the moral of the film.

The *mise-en-scène* of Johnny To's *A Hero Never Dies* is more stylised. The film features the story of two rival factions of gangsters constantly at war in Hong Kong. The film opens with a lengthy pan-shot of a dark alleyway where the protagonists' favourite pub is located. When the camera moves in to a close shot, the details of the pub are slowly revealed in a claustrophobic frame. The silhouette of part of a tree in front of the pub's window creates a sense of alienation. It also creates a contrast between the movement of the dancing bodies inside and the steadiness of the tree outside. Then, the pan shot is powerfully dissolved into another close shot of a bottle of red wine left idle on a shelf marked as belonging to the two protagonists, Jack and Martin, who are both friends and enemies. When the film proceeds to the next scene that takes place in Thailand, the incidents that led to the shelving of the wine at the pub is presented in flashback illustrating the love-hate relationship between them.

Jack and Martin, the top marksmen of the two respective gangs, are not only rivals but also friends who always share red wine together in their favourite pub. The film's portrayal of Martin's first stunning appearance inside a parked car wearing a cowboy outfit, by a rain-washed highway after a gun battle at night, sets out to handle the protagonists' tragedy in a noirish style. In Thailand, they meet again when the two gangs confront each other in a gun battle where they finally shoot each other through a wall until they both collapse. After Martin has just lost consciousness, his boss secretly comes in and attempts to kill him. Lying on the floor next to Martin, before he himself loses consciousness, Jack finally understands that they were both set up by their own bosses who let them kill each other. Later, Jack's boss hires some people to kill him at the hospital where he is in a coma. Knowing that Jack is in danger, Jack's girlfriend takes him to the morgue where she hides him inside one of the drawers. When the killers set the room ablaze, Jack manages to survive but his girlfriend is seriously burnt. Martin has given up his gangster hero life after losing both legs after the incident. His girlfriend, therefore, takes Martin back to Hong Kong and confronts his former boss. Outside a nightclub in Hong Kong, Martin witnesses his former boss's fatal cold-blooded attack on his girlfriend during the confrontation. With a desire for vengeance, he begins training in a deserted warehouse. As a sniper, Martin hopes to get this revenge by shooting the boss from a building opposite the boss's workplace. He dies after being discovered and hurt by the boss's bodyguards. Revenge is eventually taken when Jack returns and kills the boss in front of Martin's corpse which has been nicely dressed in his favourite cowboy outfit, as if he were still alive, and taken on to the pub in a wheelchair. In the finale, Jack dies heroically after he has avenged his friend's death according to his own form of justice. In this type of gangster film tragic heroes die heroically. The retro stylishness of these noirish films does not create a critique of the heroic representation and does not engage the spectator self-consciously. Some noirish films that I shall discuss in the next section, however, parody the representation of the heroic figures.

(3) The re-use of noirish elements as a parody

There are many forms of parodic use of noirish elements that critique the cinematic conventions. *Men Suddenly in Black* (Ho-cheung Pang, 2003) is about four men who betray their spouses while they are away on holiday. Enjoying themselves immensely, they spare a moment to visit a good friend, Uncle Nine, who used to frequent night clubs with them and now stays at home because of his jealous wife. While they are at the peak of enjoyment, they suddenly realise that their spouses are returning. The most interesting thing about the confrontation between the husbands and wives is that they are portrayed as if they were gangster rivals. The representation of the cheating men as 'gangsters' is not only constituted through the noir cinematography but also through the dialogue between the protagonists, the use of language, body gesture and posture. There is a playful use of chiaroscuro effect that brings back the cinematic form of noirish gangster film. It can thus be seen as a spoof of the ideological representation of the gangster heroes as tragic heroes. The scene of reunion between Uncle Nine and the friends that takes place at Uncle Nine's home is portrayed as if it were an interview inside a prison between Uncle Nine as the prisoner and his friends as his visitors. Sitting on opposite sides of a table, they inform one another about their most recent activities as if it were a progress report to a 'gang leader.' Sitting in front of a Venetian blind that allows a small amount of light to come in and slices the room with horizontal strata of light, Uncle Nine, like a leader of the gang blesses them before they venture out. The way in which Uncle Nine sacrifices himself to save his friends from the embarrassment of their spouses' criticism contributes to the formulation of a spoof of the conventional portrayal of a gangster hero. The men leave the house in anticipation of avenging Uncle Nine's misfortune of not being able to enjoy the freedom of casual sex as they do. In the finale, during a confrontation between a couple—a faithful wife is at odds with her unfaithful husband—inside a sitting room that is poorly lit by the fleeting light emitted from a small television screen, a soundtrack of Chinese music with a repercussive effect in the style of martial arts films is employed. Posing subtly as the challenger and the defender, the couple's gestures and behaviour as rivals, like martial arts heroes and gangsters, give rise to a spoof of the noirish form of cinematography and of the representation of the gangster hero.

My Schoolmate the Barbarian (Siu-hung Cheung and Jing Wong, 2001) is about a student 'fight club' of a problematic secondary school that meets regularly at a dark, dusty and deserted classroom of the top floor of the school building whenever they need to resolve their differences. The film opens with a wrestling scene in which all the students' desks are re-arranged to form a raised platform in the middle of the classroom for a duel between two student fighters. According to the protocol of the 'fight club,' the first one who falls onto the ground is the loser. When the combat commences, the old electric fans are switched on and the three fast spinning blades of each fan not only limit tremendously the space for the participants' movement but also create danger. A sense of claustrophobia is thus created with only a small amount of light coming into the small room, which makes the venue appear to be more restrictive.

As the film moves on, a story unfolds of an educated young man who is mistakenly sent to the problematic school and coerced to conform to the culture of the 'fight club.' The social values and norms reflected in the culture are akin to that of the gangster world shared among gangster heroes in film. What is of significance to note is the hybrid form of the iconography of the hero that not only comprises elements of noirish cinema but also the aesthetic style of the local city comics, which eventually undercuts the cinematic convention of realism.

While sometimes the noir convention is not borrowed consciously throughout the cinematic history of Hong Kong, the '80s saw the wider use of noirish elements in gangster film that enabled the cinema to take on a more realistic approach in depicting the underworld of Hong Kong. This observation does not rule out other forms of appropriation of the classical elements in local cinema. The parodic treatment of the noirish elements that I discuss above may be better described as a phenomenon of 'transculturation,' which is an idea that Sojoung Kim derives from her reading of Korean action films that are born into a 'contact zone' saturated with the generic elements of Japanese '*hwalkuk*,' or

'Western action in the Japanese context.' (71) Kim resists the 'territorial nation-bound claims....about the genre' and proposes to remove the analysis of the films from the constraints of genre analysis. (72) She draws on Mary Louise Pratt's work on the phenomenon of cultural transformation and explains that the 'contact zone' refers to a site where subordinated or marginal groups of people select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. (73) To a large extent, the cinema of Hong Kong is also situated in this 'contact zone' where 'transculturation'—the re-investment of noirish elements—of some classical elements of Hollywood cinema may take place. What I want to further develop from Kim's analysis of genre as the 'contact zone' is that the role of subordination of a local culture may be contested, transformed and reversed through a process of re-narrativization in a hybrid form of cinema that I shall further discuss in the next chapter.

In the last two decades of the 20th century, after the question of Hong Kong's reunification with China had been raised, the noirish elements were mostly employed in three popular categories of films—ghost films, as a hybrid of horror and kung-fu films; gangster films, as a hybrid of Hong Kong action film and American film noir; and films that embody fantastic elements as a hybrid of detective films, kung-fu films, melodrama and film noir. I shall further explore the first and third categories in later chapters in terms of the generic instability that is intrinsic to the hybridization of the film forms and narratives. My contention is that it is of more importance to identify and examine the incorporation of elements of classical film noir which blurs the distinctive characteristics of the films. This is in order to supplement the study of noirish Hong Kong films with a diachronic review of the way in which the noirish elements are reinvested rather than re-produced, and to explore the significance of hybridizing generic elements of mainstream film narrative as a practice that offers a nuance of the audience's reception of the ideologically complicit text. This not only solicits them to reread the films but also contests the constitution of the cinematic convention.

Hong Kong cinema has never borrowed classical film noir in its entirety; however, noirish elements have been used or re-used in various ways. Offering a diachronic review of the ways in which the generic elements are most widely used in the next chapter, I attempt to develop an understanding of the differences that are adopted in local cinema with the generic markers. Such discussion points to a direction of exploring a new tendency of recent Hong Kong cinema that features stories regarding situations of crises—personal, social and/or political—in a noirish film form, and a film strategy of a subversive nature that enhances the creative potential of reflexivity which solicits the active collaboration of the spectator in negotiating the possibility of self-understanding as the subject of the operation of knowing and evaluating.

Following the above review of the more conscious application of the noirish elements in recent Hong Kong cinema, I propose to further examine the significance of the generic workings with reference to the hybrid form of the cinema that gives rise to new ways of presentation. It can be seen from the use and reuse of the filmic device in recent Hong Kong cinema that there is something typically noirish and profoundly non-American. This is the permeation of the social vision that results from a film strategy that solicits self-conscious reflection on the relation between an individual and society; between the historical narrative and the historical subject; and between the text and the spectator. This is achieved by the reinvestment of noirish elements that initially functions as a disguise to facilitate genre expectation by addressing the weakness of the citizenry feeling through the noir cinematography of the 'dark' city. The noirish cinematography plays an important role in constituting the diegetic representation of the city as increasingly divorced from the stable social structure. This lures the spectator into assuming a position—or letting the spectator be fixed into a viewing position—in the course of his or her understanding of the social malaise and the crises. When the spectator is exposed to the workings of the filmic and cinematic structure in a process that I shall describe as pastiche, they are also disoriented from the cinematic identification with the heroes and/or heroines. This can also be seen as a process of demystification of fictional films. That is to say, after the noirish form of the cinema has established a crisis situation in which the viewer is interpellated to take up a position as a subject of colonial history, a detour of cinematic identification also takes place. By both engaging and disengaging the spectator, certain films solicit the viewing subject to shift or change his or her subjective position. I shall explain in later chapters that this phenomenon results from a process of pastiche, through which the spectator-subject is situated at a precise point where sense is not produced in the conventional way.

Through the examination of the way in which the contemporary use of the popular form is differed and deferred, I want to find out if a kind of self-reflexive spectatorial response may be derived. In my later discussion, recent Hong Kong cinema will not be viewed as the medium that consolidates or fixes a pre-determined subject position for the spectator. It is, however, taken seriously as the medium that facilitates an endless process of contestation which enhances the possibility of negotiating the positioning of the spectator-subject.

Critical Writings on Identity and Crisis

Stokes and Hoover introduce the idea that *Swordsman II* alludes to Hong Kong people's despair regarding Hong Kong's reunification with the mother country after the dreadful June 4th Incident in 1989 in Beijing. They say, "Like those in the colony swept up by the Tiananmen Square effect, a manic condition that had people looking for any exit, Asia's suicide symbolizes her desire to get out no matter what the price." (74) Chun-bong Ng purports that Hong Kong people's disillusionment with the socio-political transformation scheduled for 1997 was reflected in Hong Kong films as he posits the cinema as a cultural product that explicates a social phenomenon. New themes were therefore derived regarding the imminent socio-political change of Hong Kong, the bleak future of the city, and the anxiety about the future of the city under a new government. (75) Ain-ling Wong describes *A Hero Never Dies*, the last film from the dark trilogy of Johnnie To and Ka-fai Wai, as a vivid expression of the identity crisis of Hong Kong people, which articulates feelings of despair, pessimism and anguish. (76) Cheuk-to Li states that recent Hong Kong cinema conveys a sense of hopelessness in response to the changeover through cinematic genre practices. For him, the use of police and gangster thrillers for this purpose was notable in 1996. (77) He says,

"In fact, as the 1997 deadline closes in, Hong Kong cinema was closing in on Hong Kong itself, increasingly focusing on the theme of an almost desperate hopelessness in films....The Log unfolds over New Year's Eve 1996, ending in tragedy. The allegorical intent evident in the theme of limited time is unmistakable. The allegory in *Beyond Hypothermia* sticks out even more, in the scene where the killer pursues the heroine in the back alleyways, she counts the bullets, emphasizing the digits "nine", "seven", "six", "four" (referring to 1997 and the June-Fourth Incident). The climatic scene of bloodletting is even more hysterical, all pointing to a fatalistic theme of no escape. Both films were somewhat incompatible with the tenor of the times and seemed anachronistic." (78)

The above quotation represents one of many regarding the changeover and the 1997 problem that were not only seen by the critic as a socio-political crisis but also a fatal event or tragedy. For them the mainstream cinema, to a large extent, reflects the social psyche of the people in relation to the socio-political change that causes anxiety. When the critics posit the cinema as a medium that is passively reflecting the social psyche, they nurture a presumption that the cinematic practice is causally related to the change, and that this process reflects a linear construction of the concept of time. In other words, they have not considered thoroughly that the cinematic activity may discursively deconstruct representations and negotiate meanings. In most of the critical writings on recent Hong Kong cinema, the discussion revolves around two types of emotional responses from the film characters to the alarming socio-political change. The above quotation reveals Li's thoughts regarding the cinematic representation of Hong Kong people's more negative response toward the colony's reunification with its mother country. In the same discussion, Li also quotes examples of people's more positive reactions. For instance, he describes *Big Bullet* (1996) and *First Option* (1996) as part of a group of films that confirm 'Hong Kong's status in 1996 and make a positive response to Hong Kong's future post-1997.' (79) Stephen Teo also expresses a similar idea regarding a positive portrayal of the changeover. He quoted a review by Tin Long in "Current Reviews" published by the Hong Kong Film Critics Society (80), which suggests that the animated *Chinese Ghost Story* (1997) produced by Hark Tsui is an allegory of Hong Kong people's changing attitude towards the 1997 issue. This citation reveals that the critic agrees that Hong Kong people are 'resuming their rightful identities' in the course of the changeover and has noted that the film is a remark on the people of Hong Kong who have come to terms with the transformation. Passing 1997, Teo explains that Tsui no longer sees the 1997 issue as a problem but Tsui ponders the possible problems that lie ahead. Teo describes,

> '1997 being the year of the handover, the event did not go unnoticed as fodder for allegory in a motley [sic] of films released before and after the handover....As the event passed into reality and things since then have not lived up to predictions, whatever allegory was intended got lost amidst the hoopla and sententiousness. Still, one critic had this to say about the animated *A Chinese Ghost Story*, for example: "Retreating from the Door of Reincarnation is indeed obvious (Hong Kong Chinese giving up on immigration and resuming their rightful identities), and (Tsui Hark's) intent can also be seen in the frolicking Hades (isn't Hong Kong's prosperity also transient?), the Black Mountain Monster (Big Shot from the north) who demands worship (the ghost of Mao?) and the people who would rather walk with ghosts." Tsui himself has said, "Now, it's no longer a question of 1997 but more a question of our future.' (81)

The reason why I cite these critical writings at length is that they demonstrate four preconceptions regarding Hong Kong cinema that may be seen as flawed. Firstly, the critics' observations place excessive emphasis on the directors' creative input. Hence, the empirical observation of the directors' intentions and thoughts are subsequently taken as equivalent to that of the Hong Kong audience in general. This presumption easily leads to the second one, which sees the crisis represented or allegorized in the films as the spectator-subjects' own predicament that they also experience in real life. Thirdly, many critics consider the subject of the film text and the spectator-subject as stable. Their *apriori* theory of subject is questionable as it assumes that the subject is completely determined by an outside force, and that the subject constituted socially is not capable of resistance. It therefore begs the question of whether subjectivity is stable by its very nature. Lastly, their discussions assume a pre-established unity between the cinematic representation and the audience's interpretation, which rules out the possibility that there may be different ways of seeing the films. In the subsequent chapters, I shall look at the issue of cultural identity crisis and its relation to recent Hong Kong cinema from a different point of view.

I take on two aspects of Foucault's idea of subject, which refers to, firstly, a passive role of subjugation; and secondly, an active role of the subject in the production of one's own subjectivity. Margaret A. McLaren notes that in French the words Foucault uses for subject—*sujet* and *assujettissement*—throughout *History of Sexuality Vol. 1,* have the dual meaning of subjecting and subjugating, and of constraining and compelling. (82) Taking on Foucault's analysis on the constitution of subject and his critical approach which posits the subject as actively performing the subjugation, I propose to re-examine the notion of identity here, and in the following chapters I shall explore a concept of *différance* and critique the category of identity. My premise is that identity is a locus of multiple and variable positions which are made available in the social field by historical process. This implies extrinsic reasons, forces or factors that exist outside the subject who may reformulate his or her conception of self from time to time. The historical understanding of identity involved should be seen as a consequence of subjectification through which a person assumes subjectivity discursively in the form of political consciousness. If the conception of a particular historical event or time is taken as a variable, it may change in accordance with the mutable notion of self. Under such circumstances, the subject involved is never entirely passively engaged in making sense of the self. The issue of identity crisis should, therefore, not be addressed as a one-way process as if the subject did not resist any established thoughts. I shall purport that subjectification is a complex experience of determination and struggles, and a process of continuing negotiation of external pressures and internal resistance. The reason why film text is chosen for this discussion is that I propose a model of human subject that posits acts of self-narration as fundamental to the emergence and reality of that subject. Paul Ricoeur's explanation of the relation between narrative and self in *Philosophy Today* brings forth an essential point of the question about the self as subject. He says

"…our own existence cannot be separated from the account we can give of ourselves. It is in telling our own stories that we give ourselves an identity. We recognize ourselves in the stories we tell about ourselves. It makes little difference whether these stories are true or false, fiction as well as verifiable history provides us with an identity." (83)

Ricoeur's emphasis, as Anthony Paul Kerby explains, is that the self is a being of reflexivity coming to him/herself in narrational acts. (84) What I seek to examine is not merely the way in which the human subject finds expression for him/herself in language or narrative. Rather, I shall devote considerable space to discuss a special type of narrative of recent Hong Kong cinema in which self is enabled to negotiate meaning and identity. Since the constitution of identity is not achieved outside the mediated expression of self within the narrative, there is no room for any negotiation except by deconstruction of the film text. That is to say, only by being engaged in a process of disillusionment with the old way of knowing and expressing the self, can the subject be more open to new insights into the question of identity. Self, as Kerby suggests, is not some precultural or presymbolic entity that is unchangeable. Rather, 'self' is a ceaseless becoming which requires many positions that the discoursing subject may occupy and therefore effect differences to the discursive practice. In the following, I start the inquiry in relation to two questions. Firstly, what gives the people of Hong Kong their essential nature, and thus their continuity through time? Secondly, what makes Hong Kong people appear to be the same or different in cinematic representations before and after decolonization?

Many people residing in Hong Kong in the middle of the last century were not natives. They either moved to Hong Kong from mainland China after the Second World War or during the Cultural Revolution, or they were/are born to the Chinese families that had crossed the border from China to the colony. For a long time, the people who immigrated to Hong Kong did not think of Hong Kong as home, and they did not develop or adopt a Hong Kong Chinese identity immediately. Before the Japanese invasion of China prior to 1941, there were lots of films produced in Hong Kong that promoted patriotism and reinforced a Chinese national identity instead of a colonial one. It was not until the '50s, in films such as *In the Face of Demolition* (1953), that some films began to solicit people to embrace Hong Kong as home and move on with their lives. Hong Kong films might not reflect the patriotic fervour in full detail, however, news about the activists' political movements in Hong Kong revealed the love of many Hong Kong people for their mother country during the '50s and the '60s. Issues about Chinese identity surfaced when the colonial government suppressed the nationalistic movements in the '60s and the '70s that called on overseas support, respectively, for the Chinese Cultural Revolution and for the protection of Chinese national integrity when Japan confiscated a Chinese island called Diaoyutai. After the colonial government's intervention, Hong Kong people pulled away from a Chinese mainland identity to a Hong Kong Chinese identity. As generations passed the old immigrants became deeply rooted in Hong Kong and the booming economy brought prosperity and stability. As a result, a cultural identity for Hong Kong people gradually took shape. Hong Kong people began to acknowledge one shared culture around the '70s. Borrowing Stuart Hall's terminology, I shall describe this cultural identity as 'a sort of collective "one true self", hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.' (85) The shared history, I want to stress, is the colonial history.

It can be seen that Hong Kong people had been taking on new identities in the second half of the 20th century—a Chinese national, a British citizen, a colonial subject, and a Hong Kong Chinese. The cultural identities of Hong Kong people have been undergoing transformations since the Second World War. Such changes were largely due to the fact that the people need to re-position themselves in the narratives of the past. After all, in recent history, the changeover of the sovereignty of Hong Kong from Britain to China scheduled for 1997 was the most influential incident in Hong Kong's history that the people had ever experienced. In the '80s, as soon as the Joint Declaration between Britain and China had laid out a blueprint for the changeover, Hong Kong people started to negotiate their cultural identity in the run up to 1997. In the last two decades of the last century, Hong Kong people were driven to reflect on their colonial experiences and have granted the notion of identity a sense of continuity through time. When the people acknowledge the national and colonial history, it suggests that the readers of history have identified with the historical subject noted in the historical narrative. Similarly, the people's identification with the historical subject of a story told in a film, the news, a history book, or a television documentary is also an act to assume the identity embodied in the subject.

My discussion of the negotiation of the cultural identity in Hong Kong shall demonstrate that the positioning of Hong Kong 'Chineseness' should not be seen as fixed. Kwai-cheung Lo interestingly develops a theory of 'double negation' which argues that the formation of local identity in the Hong Kong cinema results from a process of double negation in which change is eventually impossible. Lo says,

"What I mean by negation of negation in the process of Hong Kong identity reformation is not exactly that of a loss and its recuperation...the particularity of the Hong Kong subject has been evacuated in the postcolonial era, this vacuity therefore provides the best opportunity for the regaining of the unique self. Rather, double negation changes almost nothing in itself, but it only self-referentially repeats what it already was in itself. By negation, the symbolic Hong Kong subject portrays itself as something beyond Chinese national identity and then holds onto this negative position. Yet reunification with China makes the Hong Kong subject aware that such position is no longer tangible [sic]." (86)

Lo considers the constitution of the cultural identity as part of the event of the changeover, which took place in line with the socio-political transformation of Hong Kong. He argues that Hong Kong people, who had developed a negative response towards the imminent change, negated the Chinese national identity that the changeover implied. The purpose of the first negation, therefore, served to develop a more complacent sense of cultural identity distinct from the Chinese national identity. The second negation is a consequence of the first one, which happens after the people are disillusioned by the fact that the 'symbolic' identity that was assumed to be something more than the Chinese national identity is not 'tangible'. The process of the double negation, according to Lo, reveals a vain hope to resolve the situation of crisis.

Lo's theory prompts me to raise a few questions: whether the constitution of a cultural identity is continuous; whether an established sense of self disappears at times of change; and whether a newer identity can completely replace an older one. In the limited space above, I have already traced the development of the cultural identity of Hong Kong after the Second World War. It can be seen that the cultural identity has been multi-faceted, heterogeneous and ever-changing. I shall argue that the constitution of cultural identity is a process of ceaseless becoming. This contradicts Lo's idea of 'vacuity' which refers to a state of mind of Hong Kong people in which they momentarily do not register any sense of cultural identity. Since the formulation of an identity always takes place through a unifying action of narration within a discursive construct, as long as people communicate through forms of language, sign or code, the process of ideological representation of the identity always goes on. Under such circumstances, a 'vacuity' would be very unlikely to derive. I shall propose to modify Lo's theory of negation that should be taken as a force of resistance and a part of the process of ceaseless becoming. If Lo's scenario of negation is a valid description of the process through which the cultural identity is constituted, the act of canceling a former identity will be exclusionary. What the exclusionary practice achieves is that it ties categories to one's identity. As a result, it constitutes ideas of sameness or homogeneity. To avoid seeing the subject as a single category, I shall propose an alternative way to examine the constitution of subjectivity (or the process of subjectification) as a ceaseless act of contestation that invests on an idea of *differance.* (87)

The authors of *City on Fire*, Lisa Odham Stokes and Michael Hoover, speak of a type of Hong Kong film that deploys a deconstructed narrative to blur character identities and merges character perspectives in order to question the stable notion of identity. (88) What must be addressed is the purpose of destabilization rather than the destabilized object. Examination of the film strategy and the resultant spectatorial response will thus be a pivotal concern throughout the later chapters. Such investigation begs to question whether the deconstruction of narrative is correlated with the constitution of cultural identity. What is so complex and intriguing about this discussion is that disruption may be paradoxically intrinsic to the process of creation of the film text. The issue of disruptive strategy immediately involves an important aspect of the cinema in my discussion, which is the spectator-screen relation. I shall argue that the purpose of deconstruction of narrative is deferral of the normal course of the act of spectating that enables the spectator-subject to reread the ideologically complicit text in a self-conscious way. This film strategy offers space for an act of contestation, which constantly critiques the notions of history, self and identity. This implies that the constitution of cultural identity by its very nature may not be a smooth and linear process. Therefore, the changeability and flexibility of the process of repositioning the self is better described by another word, negotiation, rather than constitution. By negotiation, I refer to an act of self-introspection that is engaged in an aberrant cinematic practice that enables the spectator-subject to reread the representation of identity and its constitution.

In the run up to 1997, the cinema in Hong Kong employed the recurrent theme of diminishing sense of self. Films in which characters confront situations of crises have been selected for my discussion. Three of the films—*City of Glass*, *The Private Eye Blue*, and *Happy Together*—are set in Hong Kong as it faces the challenges of the changeover. Hong Kong people's feelings of uncertainty and anxiety in the face of the socio-political change are mostly described as an irresolvable problem. For instance, losing faith, the noir heroes of *The Private Eye Blue* and *Happy Together* have withdrawn from their normal city life in the hope of forgetting their problems. They do not realize, almost until it is too late, that their only recourse is to reposition their identities—personal, social and historical. The mother and the daughter of *City of Glass*, at the turning point of the colonial history of Hong Kong, are both confused about their historical identities as ethnic Chinese and British subjects. Other films that I shall examine, like *92 Legendary La Rose Noir* (Joseph Chan,1992) and *Swordsman II*, also describe identity crises. They include the crises of a modern social warrior, who has lost her memory; and of a transvestite-transsexual swordsman of ancient China, who struggles to surrender his male identity because of love. Examining these films in the following chapters, I shall first question the ideologically complicit discourse of identity that suppresses difference; and then raise concerns about the strategy which defers and critiques the meaning of self. I shall purport that the diegetic description of the socio-political crisis is interwoven into the films under the manifestation of the strategy, which does not reinforce the concept of crisis as negative. I shall examine this film strategy in greater detail with reference to a discursive practice that defers and differs meanings in *The Private Eye Blue*. This strategy, I shall explain, not only admits the return of the repressed but also critiques representations that constitute ideologically complicit text. It adopts a tactic that seeks to present the unrepresented and resist the master-narrative. In my later explanation, the unrepresented is known as the 'dangerous supplement' that comes back from the margin to challenge the centre. Also the cinematic practice shall be described as a play on genre expectation and a play on spectatorial identification.

The reuse of the generic elements of film noir is seen as essential in each one of these cases in which appropriation of the classical elements defer/differ spectatorial identification by blurring the temporal, spatial, generic and/or gender boundaries. My contention is that the conventional understanding of film noir as a narrowly defined classical film genre should be re-examined. The way in which the hybridization of the classical elements, that crosses generic, discursive and national boundaries in Hong Kong cinema raises questions about many film noir critics' presumption that film noir is a distinct category. I shall demonstrate that the re-investment of film noir in recent Hong Kong cinema is a much more complex phenomenon which engages the contemporary Hong Kong audience firstly in identifying with the protagonists who are seen as 'symptoms' (89) in the classical genre. Then, the films alienate them from the cinematic identification in order to solicit a self-reflexive reading of the cinema and of the concepts of identity and history. When the spectator is solicited and enabled to reread the film text, he or she is enabled to negotiate the sense of self and identity.

The above-mentioned cinematic practice not only opens new avenues of self-conscious reading of the film text but also increases the spectator's awareness of self by offering him or her a choice of not complying with the normal course of cinematic identification. In my discussion of *The Private Eye Blue* in Chapter Four, I shall take on Lacan's notion of gaze and suggest that the spectators may negotiate and shift their positions of identification in what I shall call a 'third place'. Such analysis will serve as the basis of my discussion on a case of misrecognition demonstrated in my review of *Swordsman II* in Chapter Five. In Chapter Six, I shall introduce the term 'dis-emplotment' and describe how the film strategy shatters the complacency of the centred subject and frees the spectator-subject from being passively engaged in the ideologically complicit text.

Normally, the cinema of ideologically complicit text lifts up unpleasant feelings that result from some intolerable experience for the protagonists—and the spectator in the course of cinematic identification—to overcome the impact of the crisis. A different situation may arise if the illusive impression fabricated by the story does not take effect under the influence of the aberrant film strategy. In such a case, the spectator of these films may face the socio-political crisis portrayed in the film head on when the ideological complicit narrative does not function in a conventional way. Without expecting it, they are once again exposed to the situation that they want to evade, and must negotiate meanings and identities for as long as they are still engaged in the cinematic practice. Kerby speaks of a type of situation that inspires this kind of self-understanding, which is a crisis situation that challenges the subject to face questions of identity. (90) The return of the repressed feelings resulting from the impact of the crisis is what I would describe, in Kerby's terminology, as a turning point in our routine behaviour at which the cinematic practice calls for self-appraisal. I shall discuss this new tendency of cinema as an effect of dis-identification, which prompts the spectator-subject to shift positions of identification freely between the diegetic and the extradiegetic levels. In Chapter Four, my discussion of the 'third place' will demonstrate the way in which the spectator-subject is interpellated to traverse the extra-diegetic space and hence negotiate meanings and identities. With *Swordsman II* in Chapter Five, I shall further discuss the properties of the 'third place.' The deployment of a star image that confuses the placing of the spectators in relation to a character by emphasizing the extra-diegetic spectator-star identification within the diegesis in *Swordsman II* is considered as another example which interpellates the spectator-subject to traverse the extra-diegetic space for the same purpose.

In Kerby's discussion of the relation between self and narrative, he sees human existence as temporal because human beings are collectively and individually embedded in an ongoing history. He argues that the meaning of the past is not something fixed and final but is something continually refigured and updated in the present. He stresses that if we need to grasp an understanding of our existence, we must consider rereading the concepts of temporality and history. (91) It is, therefore, through a unifying action of narration, which relates an understanding of self to his or her experiences in the past and the expectations for the future, that meanings and concepts of identity are produced. The focus of my analysis, however, is not on understanding human experience and historical reality which is represented in a linear order of temporality. Rather, my film analyses offer a new way of rereading history as fragments of 'perpetual present.' (92) Presenting a case of dis-emplotment, in contrast with Paul Riceour's idea of emplotment, I shall argue against Jameson's proposition which states that postmodern cinema—in the disappearance of the sense of history—is leading the spectator-subject astray by allowing him or her to surrender the capacity of retaining his or her own past. The film strategy of *City of Glass* that critiques the ideological representation of history (93) will be seen as a means to differ and defer meanings rather than a means of destroying the history of human civilization. This strategy does not aim to destroy history, but delegitimizes it; it does not constrain interpretation, but contests it; it does not negate identities, but negotiates them.

In my analysis of *Happy Together* in Chapter Seven, I resist an idea that is shared among Hong Kong critics (94) who give disproportionate emphasis to the significance of the nostalgic elements of Hong Kong films in achieving a goal of 'reconstructing identities.' For instance, Natalia Sui-hung Chan stresses that nostalgia 'awakens the sense of social belonging as well as the search for cultural identity.' (95) In her conception of subject, she has assumed that the film viewers are passively engaged in cinematic activity in which they 'derive a certain kind of satisfaction when they come across, struggle [sic], and finally overcome the difficulties of the past as it is projected on the flat screen.' (96) She continues to explain that 'the nostalgic past that is stylized in the films shows the audience who they are, what they are about and whither they go.' (97) It is not clear whether the spectator-subject rewrites the 'history of the past,' or the films do.

In claiming that self is a product of action, my analysis shall purport that the cinema actively involves the spectator-subject in its aberrant discursive strategy, which solicits the subject to reread meanings and identities. Reconstitution, or what I prefer to call negotiation, of identities thus arises from an act of contestation produced by this discursive practice. Instead of the notion of nostalgia, my focus of analysis will be the present act of recollection which relates our past to our present and future. By the term pastiche I shall explain, contrary to Jameson's negative stance, that this cinematic device revamps the conventional understanding of temporality by compressing different temporal entities built in to the narrative and by blurring the temporal boundaries. That is to say, the cinema not only recovers the past, but it also increases awareness of the present that makes self-introspection and reflection possible. Such a discursive practice allows the subject to break through, differ and defer their ideologically complicit understanding of self. My understanding of pastiche is the basis on which I shall demonstrate that the aberrant strategy—which considers history as fragmentation of time or a series of 'perpetual presents'—contributes positively to the negotiation of self and identity. Since the experience of temporal disunification frees the subject of history from the narrative of the ideologically complicit text, the spectator-subject not only becomes aware of the illusory representation of history but also the processes of signification and interpretation. From Chapter Four onwards, this thesis shall explore the spectator-screen relation that derives an ideologically self-conscious reading of cinema.

In the next chapter, I shall discuss the use and re-use of the noirish elements in Hong Kong cinema as a consequence of generic transculturation. The cinematic form of film noir has been malleable since its inception. The main challenge of discussing the generic role of the classical cinematic elements is that the concept of 'noir' as a category remains contestable. While it is almost impossible to qualify film noir as a distinct genre, it is also impossible to deny that the cinema audience may derive a sense of expectation regarding the cluster of filmic characteristics that were dominant and/or recurrent. Although it seems that there is an order of genre that manifests itself, the specific structure of the form and narrative or the law of the genre has never been concretized. My following discussion will revolve around the fact that films noirs do not transform according to a similar order as if there were a rule of law of film production. This avoids creating a misunderstanding that Hong Kong noirish films are made in an American style.

Notes

1 Heather Dubrow, *Genre*, (New York: Methuen, 1982)

2 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, (London: NLB, 1971), p. 163

3 Both the Althuserrian concept of interpellation and psychoanalytical film theory are based on an analysis of the act of spectatorship which results from narcissistic self-idealization and misrecognition of an infant in front of a mirror that reflects his/her image. Although I draw on the theory of identification, I do not agree that the infant's first psychological experience of self-misrecognition recurs each time the act of spectating takes place. Rather, the reader and/or the spectator are reminded of the experience.

4 Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.48-49

5 Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus", and "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema", ed. Philip Rosen, in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp.286-318

6 "Across the two essays by Baudry, there are, in effect, two subjects of the apparatus which would seem to be in conflict. On the one hand, the first article, 'Ideological Effects,'....The Renaissance perspective of that image ensures the positioning of the subject as point of control. This spectator, prey to the illusions of the ego, is a post-Oedipal subject. In this way, the cinema acts as an ideological instrument for the perpetuation of a subject situated as a stable, transcendental gaze. The second essay, 'The Apparatus,' on the other hand, in its attempt to explicate the power and fascination of the cinema, posits a pre-Oedipal subject, a subject who regresses to the point where differentiation and distance are no longer feasible. This is the effect of the 'more-than-real' which Baudry allies with both the cinema and the dream. The subject is not the unified origin of its own dream—or even an onlooker. Rather, the dream envelops the subject just as the child is enveloped by its world." [p. 85] See Mary Ann Doane, "Remembering Women: Psychical and Historical Constructions in Film Theory," in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p. 86.

7 Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier. Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, trans. by Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster and Alfred Guzzetti (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 129; or *Le signifiant imaginaire. Psychanalyze et cinéma* (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1977)

8 Ibid., p.69-78

9 Ibid., p.52

10 Michel Foucault, "Afterword: The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p.208

11 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p.52-3

12 Michel Pêcheux, *Language, Semantics and Ideology: Stating the Obvious* [1975], trans. Harbans Nagpal, (London: Macmillan, 1982), p.158-9, 162-3

13 Diane MacDonell, *Theories of Discourse,* p.40

14 Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier,* p.91

15 Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989)

16 Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," in *Movies and Methods Vol. I*, ed. Bill Nichols, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985), p.25 and 27

17 Audrey Yue, "Migration-as-Transition: Pre-Post-1997 Hong Kong Culture in Clara Law's *Autumn Moon*," *Intersections*, No.4, September, 2000, p. 251-263; *wwwsshe.murdoch.edu.au/intersections*, para. 5. This article will be known as "Migration-as-Transition" hereafter.

18 Yue draws on Ackbar Abbas' idea of 'metonymic substitution,' which refers to 'a device of doubling where characters are interchangeable in a narrative cycle of repetition', and further explains the device of intersection with reference to Kar-wai Wong's films. In "*In the Mood for Love*: Intersections of Hong Kong Modernity," she speaks of the intersections between, "triad big brother Ah Wah and his younger buddy-lackey, Fly, in *As Tears Go By*; teddy boy Yuddy and the cop-sailor in *Days of Being Wild*; cop 663 and 223's relationships with their respective lovers in *Chungking Express*; the hit man and his assistant in *Fallen Angels*; Evil East and Poison West in *Ashes of Time*; and Yiu Fai and Bo Wing in *Happy Together*." See *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry, (London: British Film Institute, 2003), p.128.

19 Audrey Yue, "*In The Mood for Love*: Intersections of Hong Kong Modernity," in *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry, (London: British Film Institute, 2003). This article will be known as "In the Mood for Love" hereafter.

20 Yue has also written elsewhere about how Hong Kong cinema expresses this temporality of pre-post-1997 as a culture that simultaneously forecasts and recollects. See "Preposterous Hong Kong Horror: Rouge's (be) hindsight and A (sodomitical) Chinese Ghost Story," in *The Horror Reader*, ed. Ken Gelder, (New York: Routledge, 2000) p.365-399. (ie: The title of this article is also noted by Yue as "Preposterous Horror: On *Rouge*, *A Chinese Ghost Story* and Nostalgia"); and "What's So Queer About *Happy Together*? Aka Queer (N) Asian: Interface, Mobility, Belonging," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Journal* 1, No.2 (2000), p.251-263.

21 "Migration-as-Transition," para. 5

22 Ibid., para. 36

23 Ibid., para. 7

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., para 5

26 "*In the Mood for Love*" p.131

27 Ibid. Yue sees Kar-wai Wong as a transnational film-maker whose film reflects his experience as a migrant from Shanghai in the '60s.

28 Ibid.

29 "Migration-as-Transition," para. 36

30 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p.303

31 Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974)

32 Ibid., P.5

33 Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller, (New York: The Noonday Press, 1989), p.62

34 Ibid. p.66

35 Ibid. p.62

36 Ibid.

37 “Migration-as-Transition,” see the 19th paragraph which describes that the film narrative of *Autumn Moon* oscillates, within the diegesis, between the subjective points-of-view of the fictional characters in the film and of the camcorder of a film character who is diegetically making a video.

38 許鞍華, *許鞍華說許鞍華*, 鄺保威編, (香港：鄺保威, 1998), p.21-25
An-hua Xu, , *Xu An Hua Shuo Xu An Hua*, ed. Bao-wei Kuang, (Xiang Gang: Kuang Bao Wei, 1998), p.21-25

39 Cheuk To Li, “The Return of the Father: Hong Kong New Wave and its Chinese Context in the 1980s,” in *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics*, eds. Nick Browne, Paul G. Pickowicz, Vivian Sobchack and Esther Yau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.167-8

40 Patricia Brett Erens, “The Film Work of Ann Hui,” in *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*, eds., Poshek Fu and David Desser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.183 & 192

41 Ping-kwan Leung, “Urban Cinema and the Cultural Identity of Hong Kong,” in *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*, eds., Poshek Fu and David Desser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.242

42 Julian Stringer, “*Boat People*: Second Thoughts on Text and Context,” in *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry, (London: British Film Institute, 2003), p.21). This article will be known as “Boat People” hereafter.

43 Tony Rayns, “Chinese Changes,” *Sight and Sound* 54, No.1 (1984/5), p.27

44 “*Boat People*,” p.20

45 Claudia Springer, “Comprehension and Crisis: Reporter Films and the Third World,” in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, ed. Lester D. Friedman (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.168

46 John Zou, “*A Chinese Ghost Story*: Ghostly Counsel and Innocent Man,” in *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry, (London: British Film Institute, 2003), p.39

47 Janice Tong, “*Chungking Express*: Time and its Displacements,” in *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry, (London: British Film Institute, 2003), P.48

48 Ibid., p.53

49 Ibid., p.48

50 The name of the interviewer is not given in the article. John Woo's speeches are transcribed and/or translated by Terence Chang. See John Woo, "Woo in Interview," *Sight and Sound*, Vol.3, No. 5, May 1993, p.25.

51 James Steintrager, "*Bullet in the Head*: Trauma, Identity, and Violent Spectacle," in *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry, (London: British Film Institute, 2003), p.28

52 See appendix (iii) for some newspaper cuttings about surveys conducted by *Sing Tao Daily* in 1994, which unfold Hong Kong people's attitudes toward the changeover of sovereignty of Hong Kong from Britain to China and their opinions on the practice of the 'one country two systems' in Hong Kong after 1997.

53 From a sociological point of view, this can be seen as a logical result of a series of incidents. After the 1967 riots in Hong Kong, with the leftists' involvement in rallying support for the Cultural Revolution in China, the Hong Kong government remained estranged from the political incident and did not encourage cross-border communication between the citizens of the colony and the Chinese nationals.

Tai-lok Lui comments that the formulation of a 'home-in-Hong Kong mentality' was due to the government's housing policy introduced in the '60s which ensured a greater number of people homes in public housing estates. Tai-lok Lui, "Home at Hong Kong," in *Changes in Hong Kong Society through Cinema*, the 12th Hong Kong International Film Festival, eds. Cheuk-to Li and Stephen Teo (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1988)

54 Johnny Mak, the screenwriter of *Long Arm of the Law* (1984), was the first person who portrayed Chinese mainlanders as the origin of crimes. See 默志，〝九七電影的先鋒——「省港奇兵 III」〞，*電影雙周刊*，256期. Zhi Mo, "Jiu Qi Dian Ying De Xian Feng--Sheng Gang Qi Bing III," Dian Ying Shuang Zhou Kan, No. 256

55 Cheuk-to Lee ed., *Phantoms of the Hong Kong Cinema*, The 13th Hong Kong International Film Festival, (Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1989), p.9

56 In each one of the sequels of the film, the tree demon is always punished and is finally killed in the finale.

57 John Zou, "*A Chinese Ghost Story*: Ghostly Counsel and Innocent Man," *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry, (London: BFI, 2003), p.45

58 I do not deny the possibility of subversive pleasure that may come from seeing a woman's revenge on men before the closure. See Meagan Morris, "Banality in Cultural Studies," in *Logics of Television*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p.21.

59 Elisabeth Bronfen, "Femme Fatale—Negotiations of Tragic Desire," *New Literary History*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Winter 2004. This is a citation of the abstract.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid., para. 6

62 Robert Warshow, *The Immediate Experience: Movies, Comics, Theatre and Other Aspects of Popular Culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2001, p.103

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 The Kowloon Walled City (九龍城寨) was an anomaly in Hong Kong's colonial history. China's tiny enclave in the middle of British Hong Kong for decades, it had a colorful existence until it was finally torn down in 1993.

The Walled City (known as *Kowloon* then) was originally a single fort built in the mid-1800s on the site of an earlier 17th century watchpost on the Kowloon Peninsula of Hong Kong. After the ceding of Hong Kong Island to Britain in 1842 (Treaty of Nanjing), Qing (Chinese) authorities felt it necessary for them to establish a military-cum-administrative post to rule the area and to check further British influence in the area.
The 1898 Convention which handed additional parts of Hong Kong (the New Territories) to Britain for 99 years excluded the Walled City, with a population of roughly 700, and stated that China could continue to keep troops there, so long as they did not interfere with Britain's temporary rule. Britain quickly went back on this unofficial part of the agreement, attacking the Kowloon Walled City in 1899, only to find it deserted. They did nothing with it nor to the outpost, and thus put the ownership of Kowloon Walled City's firmly into the question. The outpost consisted of a yamen, as well as other buildings (which eventually grew into a low-lying, densely packed neighbourhood within the walls), in the era between the 1890s and the 1940s. The above text is retrieved from the following website:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kowloon_Walled_City#History

66 Hark Tsui not only makes his mark on films he directs but also on the ones he produces. Mike Bracken says, '(w)hether directing his own films or producing the films of maverick young directors through his Film Workshop studio, Tsui has left an indelible print on the Hong Kong cinescape.'
(See *http://www.culturedose.net/review.php?rid=10003165*)

67 *Young & Dangerous 古惑仔之人在江湖* (1996), *Young & Dangerous 2 古惑仔 2 之猛龍過江* (1996), *Young & Dangerous 3 古惑仔 3 之雙手遮天* (1996), *Young & Dangerous 4* 97 *古惑仔戰無不勝* (1997), *Young & Dangerous 5* 98 *古惑仔之龍爭虎鬥* (1998), *Portland Street Blues 古惑仔情義篇之洪興十三妹* (1998), *Young & Dangerous: The Prequel 新古惑仔之少年激鬥篇* (1998), *Legendary Tai Fei 古惑仔激情篇洪興大飛哥* (1999), *Those Were the Days 友情歲月山雞故事* (2000), *Born to be King 勝者為王* (2000)

68 Cheuk-to Li, "*Young and Dangerous* and the 1997 Deadline," in *Hong Kong Panorama 96 - 97*, The 21st Hong Kong International Film Festival, ed., Linda Lai and Stephen Teo, trans., Stephen Teo, (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1997), p.10

69 Ibid.

70 Or, "*goo wat jai*" (古惑仔) in Cantonese

71 Soyoung Kim, "Genre as Contact Zone: Hong Kong Action and Korean Hualkuk," in *Hong Kong Connections: Transnational Imagination in Action Cinema*, eds. Meaghan Morris, Siu Leung Li and Stephen Ching-kiu Chan, (Durbam, London and Hong Kong: Duke University Press and Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p.101

72 Ibid., p.102

73 Ibid., p.101

74 Lisa Odham Stokes and Michael Hoover, *City on Fire: Hong Kong Cinema*, (London: Verso, 1999), p.105, hereafter, *City on Fire*. With reference to Mark Roberti's book entitled *The Fall of Hong Kong: China's Triumph and Britain's Betrayal* published in New York in 1996, they substantiate their claim and note that 'Hong Kongers sought residency in countries such as Gambia, Jamaica, and Tonga—over forty countries in all.'

75 Chun-Bong Ng a.k.a. Ng Ho or Wu Hao (吳昊) discusses Hong Kong films which were produced during crisis situations. See page 128 of the book, *亂世電影研究*，舒牧編，(香港：次文化有限公司，1999), for his discussion of the June-4th incident that happened in Beijing in 1989 and its impact on the local cinema. Ng Ho, *Luan Shi Dian Ying Yan Jiu*, ed. Shu Mu, (Xiang Gang or Hong Kong: Ci Wen Hua You Xian Gong Si, 1999), p.128

76 Ain-ling Wong, "A Hero Never Dies: The End of Destiny," in *Hong Kong Panorama 98-99*, The 23rd Hong Kong International Film Festival, ed. Evelyn Chan, trans. Sam Ho, (Hong Kong: The Provisional Urban Council, 1999), p.78

77 See the original Chinese version of "*Young and Dangerous* and the 1997 Deadline," written by Cheuk-to Li in *Hong Kong Panorama 96-97*, The 21st Hong Kong International Film Festival, eds. Linda Lai and Stephen Teo, trans. Stephen Teo, (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1997), p.9

78 Cheuk-to Li, "*Young and Dangerous* and the 1997 Deadline," in *Hong Kong Panorama 96-97*, The 21st Hong Kong International Film Festival, eds. Linda Lai and Stephen Teo, trans. Stephen Teo, (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1997), p.11

79 Ibid.

80 Webpage of *http:/filmcritics.org.hk*

81 Stephen Teo, "Sinking into Creative Depths: Hong Kong Cinema in 1997," *Hong Kong Panorama 97-98*, 22nd Hong Kong International Film Festival, eds. Kar Law and Stephen Teo, trans. Sam Ho, (Hong Kong: The Provisional Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1998), p.11

82 Margaret A. McLaren, *Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p.189

83 Paul Ricoeur, "History as Narrative and Practice. Peter Kemp Talks to Paul Ricoeur in Copenhagen," *Philosophy Today*, Fall 1985, p.214

84 Anthony Paul Kerby, *Narrative and the Self*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p.41

85 Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p.223

86 Kwai-cheung Lo, "Double Negations: Hong Kong Cultural Identity in Hollywood's Transnational Representations," *Cultural Studies*, 15(3/4) 2001, p. 467

87 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, (London and New York: Routledge, 1978), p.xviii

88 See *City on Fire*, p.188. Stokes and Hoover cite one of Kar-wai Wong's films, *Ashes of Time*, as an example to illustrate their point of deconstructed text.

89 Elisabeth Bronfen, *Femme Fatale—Negotiations of Tragic Desire*, New Literary History, Vol. 35, No. 1, Winter 2004. It describes that the femme fatale of classical film noir is seen as 'a symptom of patriarchal anxiety' and as 'a symptom for the ambivalence in feeling on the part of

the noir hero and his retreat from the death drive.'

90 Kerby, *Narrative and the Self*, p.6-7

91 Ibid., p.7

92 Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *The Anti-Aesthetics: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, (Seattle and Washington: Bay Press, 1983), p.125

93 Cultural critics, at the heart of postmodernism, would question whether the idea of knowable past is valid; whether the reasoning that enables histoires to explain the past is truthful; and whether the authoritative role of history is unshakable.

94 My own thesis here is developed from my M. Phil dissertation of 1995. A few examples of the use of the terms 'nostalgia' and 'nostalgic' in Chinese critical writings on recent Hong Kong cinema are listed below:
〝《玫瑰玫瑰我愛你》已見劉鎮偉淪於自我抄襲，《新難兄難弟》與《92 黑玫瑰》更大規模地向粵語陳片取材，重構一個舊電影人物（不分演員與角色）與今日社會人物共存的類像世界或超真實的空間；卻偏偏欠缺那份遊戲的情懷，機心算盡努力堆砌懷舊和溫情，亦只覺貌合神離。〞李焯桃，引玉篇，（香港：次文化堂，1996），第 8 頁

〝新導演陳善之的《九二黑玫瑰對黑玫瑰》不是真正重拍六十年代賣座的楚原粵語片《黑玫瑰》，而是一部懷舊狂想曲…向當年各式粵語片開開玩笑…〞石琪，石琪影話集：從興盛到危機 (香港：次文化堂，1999)，第 279 頁

〝在這四部回歸電影當中，我認爲《玻璃之城》突出之處，是有一部份是刻意去懷念殖民地時期。〞紀陶於香港電影一九九八全年現象討論大會中發表。看列孚編，1998 香港電影回顧，（香港：香港電影評論學會，2000），第 297 頁

English translation:
"In *Rose, Rose I Love You*, we see Jeffrey Lau self-plagiarizing himself. Looking at large-scale production such as *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Father* and *92 Legendary La Rose Noire* that combine a character (making no distinction between the actor and the roles he played) from classic Cantonese films, and modern day personalities to create an imaginary world or hyper-reality. Although the film does not become a complete farce, it diligently builds in both nostalgic and sentimental elements." Li zhuo-tao, *Yin Yu Pian*, (Xiang Gang: Ci Wen Hua Tang, 1996), p. 8

"New director, Peter Chan's *92 Legendary La Rose Noire* is not a remake of the 60's Cantonese classic *Black Rose*, but is a rhapsody of nostalgia ... poking fun at all the Cantonese films of the time." Shi Qi, *Shi Qi Ying Hua Ji: Cong Xing Sheng Dao Wei Ji*, (Xiang Gang: Ci Wen Hua Tang, 1999), P.279

"Of the four films about the changeover, I think that the aspect that makes *City of Glass* stand out is that the film also depicts fond memories of colonial times." Lie Fu ed., *1998 Xiang Gang Dian Ying Hui Gu*, (Xiang Gang: Xiang Gang Dian Ying Ping Lun Xue Hui, 2000), p.297

95 Natalia Sui-hung Chan, "Rewriting History: Hong Kong Nostalgia Cinema and Its Social Practice," in *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*, eds., Po Shek Fu and David Desser, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.269

96 Ibid., p.265

97 Ibid.

Chapter Two

Hong Kong Cinema and Its Reinvestment of Film Noir

The subject of film noir has preoccupied a formidable range of Anglo-American critics in debates on the nature of classical film noir as a genre, cycle, movement, style and mode of production. This chapter shall offer a diachronic review of these debates and reassess the influence of foreign hard-boiled fiction, which also influenced American cinema, on Chinese culture. Such discussion paves the way for an analysis of the complex phenomenon of genre transculturation in China and Hong Kong throughout the last century. Starting from an observation that classical genre theory delimits a genre within the constraints of that specific genre, I shall contest the presumption that the noirish cinema of Hong Kong is a single phenomenon derived from American cinema and that the generic distinction of a film text determines the meaning(s) of the text.

My contention is that classical generic categories that are brought into an order of the same are constituted within a convention or through a consensus which eventually establishes a tendency of stabilizing meanings. Film noir that is seen as related to a fixed category of film narratives, characterizations and visual styles will be reassessed in later chapters in terms of the operation of *différance*—which refers to the way in which the constitution of meanings is dependent on generic characteristics that are different.

Such a perspective gives rise to a new way of understanding film noir as a cinematic form that allows the signifiers to supplement and give meanings that are not entailed by the original structure. In accordance with the practice of reusing classical noirish elements, this approach may look at the meanings 'to come' that have been deferred. I propose to examine this aspect of the cinematic practice in particular, as it reveals that there is instability within the practice. Such instability, which has been fundamental, founding and irreducible to the formulation of American film noir since its birth, gives insight into the politics of difference that is key to understanding the re-use of the noirish elements in contemporary Hong Kong cinema.

American film noir has established an immediate narrative process of expectation and anticipation by circulating narrative images, styles and mood. Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton would describe the process as 'disorienting'. In "Towards a Definition of Film Noir," (1) they say that all the components of film noir yield the same result, which is 'disorienting the spectator, who can no longer find the familiar reference points,' from the conventions of the American films. Essential to the 'disorienting' effect of the historical genre that was characteristic of the cinema's response to the unstable social and cultural atmosphere of the American postwar period is the playing movement. The 'disorienting' effect is invoked in recent Hong Kong cinema and it produces differences which give rise to the conception of the feelings of anxiety and fear. The effect refers to the intertextual inferences drawn by and on classical film noir that differs the understanding of films under the effect of cinematic conventions such as a logical development of the action, a clear distinction between good and evil, well-defined characters, a beautiful heroine and an honest hero, as Borde and Chaumeton cite. (2) This chapter seeks to identify or trace the various ways at different periods of time, that Hong Kong cinema borrows noirish elements in mainstream cinema and creates another type of disorienting effect. I consider that the term 'disorienting' requires further probing. Prior to or during 'disorienting,' does the cinema engage the audience in identifying themselves with the protagonists? To what extent does cinematic identification give pleasure if the spectator-subject is ultimately disoriented? What is the textual intention of 'disorienting?'

The diegetic description of the crisis is usually known as being shaped in the collective imaginary of Hong Kong in the years before and after the 1997 changeover as a reflection of the social psyche or of displeasure in the critical writings. My discussion suggests a different reading which suggests a different angle for rereading the function of noirish cinema as a generic marker. Key to understanding the phenomenon is a film strategy that destabilizes, differs and defers the interpretation of crises—personal, social, political and/or cultural—by soliciting self-conscious rereading of suffering, evil, fate, chance and fortune. This interpretation is enhanced by the noirish representation, and actually amounts to a critique of the representation and an act of negotiation of the meaning. That is to say, such a strategy simultaneously evokes genre expectation as the film invokes noir stylistics and themes, and then differs and defers the conception of the crises as tragic in nature by exposing the workings of the genre amalgamation and the ideological function of the cinematic discourse. The tragic vision of films noirs has been incorporated, and henceforth mutated and transformed in the reuse of noirish elements in recent Hong Kong cinema. It invokes a network of ideas regarding a world perceived by the audience in association with the moods of claustrophobia, paranoia, despair and nihilism. In the meantime, such preconceived ideas about the historical genre are evoked by the appropriation of noir stylistics and themes. Therefore, noirishness, as it will be explained from Chapter Four onwards, is both an affect and an agent that contrives a self-reflexive rereading of the tragic vision and of the conventional comprehension of reality. When the practice of genre amalgamation adopts the visual impact of the noirish film form, the film turns itself into a playing field of 'fatal' misrecognition or a site of question. The experience of misrecognition is derived by the spectator when he or she is both engaged in the cinematic identification and is also allowed to stray away from and come back to the point of identification. This experience foregrounds the way in which the viewer's presence is implicated in the narrative when the protagonists accept the tragic consequences of their actions and become figures *par excellence* for negotiation of a new vision of culture. Such discussion paves the way for a discussion on the film strategy as a reinvestment of film noir, which restages the intertextual relay of film noir in the form of a play of difference. The play of intertextuality of recent Hong Kong cinema is more complicated than that of classical film noir. While the latter has been analyzed extensively in terms of its textual interplay between the generic differences of classical Hollywood cinema, nevertheless, the complex mixing of genres in Hong Kong cinema requires more critical attention on the changing relations between the texts of the cinemas—the global and the local—and between the audiences and the texts due to the fact that the mixing not only crosses national boundaries but also cultural boundaries. This discussion opens avenues to explore the possibility of developing a new understanding of Hong Kong Culture in the anticipation of 1997.

Genre and the Generic

In the following discussion of genre transculturation, I shall draw upon Derrida's account to support the particular approach to generic stability and instability that I am exploring in Hong Kong 'noirish' cinema. When Derrida says repeatedly that 'genres are not to be mixed,' what he stresses is that the word genre should not be mentioned as if it is a legitimate framework that endows meanings. Key to the analysis of the role of genre in culture becomes the choice of interpretive options rather than the formulation of a particular framework. For Derrida, a method of classification or of the fixing of a genre is merely hypothetical. He explains,

> "As long as I release these utterances (which others might call speech acts) in a form yet scarcely determined, given the open context out of which I have just let them be grasped from 'my' language—as long as I do this, you may find it difficult to choose among several interpretative options. They are legion....They form an open and essentially unpredictable series....you may be tempted by two different genres of hypothesis....As soon as the word 'genre' is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and interdictions are not far behind... 'Do not' say 'genre,' the word 'genre,' the figure, the voice, or the law of genre. And this can be said of genre in all genres, be it a question of a generic or a general determination of what one calls 'nature'..." (3)

Derrida describes the interpretive options of the term genre as 'legion' or 'essentially unpredictable' because the law of genre is after all a 'hypothesis.' Since the mentioning of the term genre—as soon as the word genre is uttered—refers to an act of classification or sorting, the term implies a pre-dominating use value that defines the generic. That is to say, by the time a rule of genre or classification is legitimized, the genre prohibits. When genre and order exist as cultural truth, the order becomes undeniably arbitrary, and hence the law of genre always invites the question of textual integrity. That is to say, by the time the relation between the generic and the order is fixed, the rule of genre becomes qestionable.

Tzvetan Todorov's understanding of genres as different combinations of speech acts converges with Derrida's theoretical proposition. Thomas O. Beebee also explains that the myriad of generic elements should be taken as a form which designates 'relations between texts.' (4) The most significant point to note about these relations is that most works can be 'analyzed in more than one generic way in order for their messages to have any effective meaning or value.' (5) That is to say, the idea of genre is changeable over time. Todorov explains that the concept of genre is malleable because the system of genres operates in relation to the dominant ideology. He says,

> "Genres communicate with the society in which they flourish by means of institutionalization....for the historian: each era has its own system of genres, which is in relation with the dominant ideology, etc. Genres, like any other institution, reveal the constitutive traits of the society to which they belong." (6)

That is to say, the theory of genre is institutionalized, which leads to an understanding of the relationships between texts as stable. The purpose of genre criticism should not, however, be confined to categories of classification and the relationships that exist between generic elements and between texts. Along this line of thinking Northrop Frye mentions an essential aspect of genre studies, which is the relation between the author and the reader. He says,

> "The basis of generic distinctions in literature appears to be the radical of presentation....The basis of generic criticism in any case is rhetorical, in the sense that the genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public." (7)

Although Frye speaks of the basis of generic distinction in literature, his main point about the 'radical of presentation' applies to analyses of the texts of other cultural genres. His work grounds generic distinction on the established link between the author and the reader, and gives an insight into the formulation of an analytical framework that moves the discussion from the formal features of a cultural genre to the audience-text relations. Such concern about the spectator-screen relation poses a challenge to the basis of generic distinction that generalizes the generic activity in a global context.

Discussion on film noir as a global genre that establishes a stable relationship with its audiences around the globe may overlook issues like the permutations of the film form and narrative that cross national boundaries and the changing relationships between film texts and audiences. Since the American noirish film form and narrative have recently been more explicitly used in some recent Hong Kong gangster films, this new tendency of cinema has received more attention from critics like David Desser and Man-hung Sze, who categorize these films in an order of the same in their analyses that I shall later discuss. Their assertions raise the question of whether Hong Kong noirish films are simply copies of American film noir. My approach, therefore, seeks to develop a thorough understanding of genre transculturation by examining the relation of the cinematic practice to a type of French detective novel and Shanghai detective fiction. It is noted that the influence of dectective fiction was passed on to the cinema across the boundaries of nations and cultural genres. Such an observation suggests an alternative—possibly but not necessarily—trajectory of the transformation of the popular narrative form rather than a direct borrowing of the American genre in Hong Kong. As Todorov suggests, the concept of genre is changeable over time due to the fact that the system of genres operates in relation to the dominant ideology. This chapter shall, therefore, attempt to focus on the changing relations between the generic elements and ideological representations, and between film text and audience.

Film Noir as a Cinematic Form

There has not been much discussion on film noir in Hong Kong although there have been quite a number of noir-related films produced since the '50s. This is due to the fact that classical film noir has never been faithfully borrowed as a distinct genre in Hong Kong. Neither have the Hong Kong film industry nor the producers adopted the term spontaneously in the industry since the birth of the American film form. This oversight towards the noirish tendency of Hong Kong cinema also results from discussing or presuming film noir as a single phenomenon that has a homogenous pattern of cinematic practice. Under such circumstances, the cultural significance of the cinematic practice that demonstrates a certain degree of generic instability is neglected. This chapter proposes to look at film noir as a cinematic mode that operates beyond the conventional conceptual framework that delimits the genre as a fixed and stable category and the origin of the genre as pure. Genre criticism (8) and auteur theory (9) have been widely applied in critical writing on Hong Kong cinema for almost half a century. In Hong Kong, both of the approaches serve to delineate the relationship between the genres and film, and categorize films according to a group of common generic dominants as if the generic patterns are all predictable. Under such circumstances, many noir-related films do not receive enough criticism in Hong Kong, although the cinematic practice has remained culturally significant, especially during the '90s and at the turn of the century. Therefore, the hybrid form of cinematic activity requires further examination. The discussion of cinematic practice below begins with the etymology of the term *noir*. It can be seen from a diachronic review of the debates that the conception of films noirs as a distinct category is always considered as problematic.

Noir is a French word which means the colour black. The history of the word *noir* can be traced back to the 18th century when *roman noir*—also a French term that describes Gothic or terror novels—became popular. The novels were used to deal with social taboos through comparison of the present and the past, morality and immorality, open space and confinement, reality and unreality. The employment of the elements of terror in these novels sought to create doubt about the future of a world that contained both good and evil. Within the English language, the classification of the usage of the word *noir* has been a critical category.

Film noir was a French term first designated to describe a group of Hollywood films released in the '40s that include *The Maltese Falcon*; *Double Indemnity*; *Laura*; *Murder, My Sweet* and *The Lost Weekend*. (10) From the very beginning, it has been a problematic term. Significant writings on American noir began to appear in French film journals in the '40s (11). They specified that the American films which were not released in France during the Second World War displayed a new mood of cynicism, pessimism and darkness. Nino Frank was one of the French critics who first spoke of the dark cinema in 1946. His notion of *noir* referred to a police genre. (12) Frank, together with Raymond

Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, were among the most influential French writers. (13) In their book-length study of film noir, *Panorama Du Film Noir Amèricain* (14), published in 1955, they purported that film noir was a series that could be defined as 'a group of motion pictures from one country sharing certain traits (style, atmosphere, subject matter...) strongly enough to mark them unequivocally and to give them, over time, an unmistakable character.' (15) This idea of film noir was challenged in many ways in the latter part of the century. It would not be easy for any one of the critics from the '50s to anticipate then the repercussion that the problematic term would instigate afterwards.

While French critics like Nino Frank, Jean Pierre Chatier, Borde and Chaumeton had more investment in the thematic approach of analysis, *Positif*, a French left-wing journal, had a deep cultural understanding and evaluation of film noir, and presupposed that the 'dark cinema' had a political agenda that challenged the dominant social conservatism of the American entertainment movie. *Movie*, a British journal, was among the first in film circles which began to look at film noir as a genre. This was important; for the way in which their critics emphasized that genre was a practice of film making made possible the personal expression of directors. (16) The genre approach was once of interest to many critics in considering film noir as a distinct genre. The theory finally failed to categorise the extraordinarily amorphous body of film noir as its many characteristic devices were already conventional to quite a number of American genres. For instance, the convoluted narrative structure was akin to that of American crime fiction and drama of the '30s and '40s. Furthermore, film noir's atmosphere of fear and psychological ambiguity had already been conventionalized in psychological thrillers. Similarly, low-key lighting was already a staple of horror films. When the term 'film noir' emerged in Europe, most American movie-goers were not aware of the critical nomenclature and the industry was not using the term in the processes of film production and marketing. (17)

In the early '70s, some critics still focused their investigations on genre studies on the sociological and thematic issues of film noir. Others argued that film noir was not a distinct genre or series but a 'transgeneric influence' on films, or a 'mood,' which was known to be an emotional and tonal overlay to a generic text. (18) Also in 1970, Raymond Durgnat who wrote for a British Journal, *Cinema*, proposed a formalistic approach that delimited film noir as a motif and a tone. He argued that film noir was not a genre, unlike the Western and gangster films. One of his strongest points about film noir is that it takes us into the realm of classification by motif and tone. (19) In his influential essay, "Paint it Black: The Family Tree of the Film Noir," he advanced some major characteristics of classical film noir. The dominant cycles or motifs, which he described as the outcome of 'inevitably imperfect schematizations,' were 11 groups of essential film characters and elements. They included crime (as the apparent centre of focus), gangster elements, adventures of private eyes and fugitive criminals, middle class murders, plays on facial and bodily resemblances, psychopathological behaviours, hostages, blacks and reds, and horror and fantasy. In the same year, Paul Schrader also wrote the first important American discussion of film noir. Published a year later, his widely influential essay, "Notes of Film Noir," (20) theorized film noir as a style, which was a slight but important modification of Durgnat's position.

Schrader asserted that film noir was not defined 'by conventions of setting and conflict' or 'genre' but rather by 'the most subtle qualities of tone and mood.' (21) Therefore, he refused to argue one critic's descriptive definition against another's. Instead, he suggested four catalytic elements from which the distinctly noir tonality was drawn. They were post-war disillusionment, post-war realism, German expressionism, and the American hard-boiled tradition. One of the purposes of his argument was to negate the assumption that film noir was necessarily related to crime and corruption. Schrader's unwillingness to delimit film noir as 'conventions of setting' is shared in my analysis which seeks to explore the infinite excess of the possibilities of genre mixing. Key to the legitimation of the genre analysis is the recognition of the intertextual relation of the distinctly noir tonality to the visual style and narrative structure that may find roots in German Expressionism, the American hard-boiled tradition, etc. The same concern applies to the way in which the appropriation of classical film noir in recent Hong Kong cinema is analyzed. If film noir is, say for instance, purely characteristic of the depictions of crime and corruption and thus the deciding criteria of the genre is the generic markers of gangster films, the discussion will beg the question of whether the rule of classification eliminates any possibility of variation. While the challenge to the generic classification remains robust, it remains important to identify the noir tonality and mood of disillusionment that mark the visual style of the cinema as unique in the development of American cinema.

Schrader's other contribution of note in the film noir discussion was his consideration of film noir as an art form, which enabled the film noir debate to go beyond the assumption of a simple sociological reflection. His effort also displaced the temporal constraint that the thematic and genre approaches had imposed on the debate and thus made it possible for the discussion to move beyond an idea of periodization that conventionally considered 1953 as the end of the noir period. He said,

"Film noir attacked and interpreted its sociological conditions, and, by the close of the noir period, created a new artistic world which went beyond a simple sociological reflection, a nightmarish world of American mannerism which was by far more a creation than a reflection." (22)

Schrader's insightful writing on the style of the film form did not, however, conclude the debate on the nature of the dark cinema, and the term 'film noir' remains problematic. Rather, his work moves the discussion beyond an analysis of periodization that predetermined 1953 as the end of the noir period and the making of noirish films.

Recently, Manthia Diawara offered an overview of the diversified accounts of the noir phenomenon in Joan Copjec's anthology, *Shades of Noir*. (23) Among the different methods of formalist criticism, Diawara comments on feminist criticism in particular. (24) He points out the limitation of the methodology which reduces noir criticism to a critique of capitalism or of patriarchy. He says,

"It is clear therefore that formalist criticism of the *noir* genre runs the risk of reducing *films noirs* by *noirs* to a critique of patriarchy or of capitalism, and thus of minimizing on the one hand the deconstruction of racism in the renewed genre, and on the other hand a delineation of a black way of life in America." (25)

Diawara's main concern is to critique an oversight of the issue of race in the process by which white critics adopt the term noir. In the same essay he also critiques that formalism is leading feminist criticism astray and narrowing its scope of analysis. Recently, the text-based approach of feminist criticism has come under scrutiny. In "Genre Theory in the Context of the Noir and Post-Noir Film," Christopher Orr looks at the potential problem of the critical writings which discuss film noir texts according to the theme of male masochism. He critiques the way in which Krutnik's textual analysis of classical film noir is grounded in feminist theory of the '70s and '80s; which can be seen as an 'ahistorical' approach that revolves around the issue of problematized masculinity. It is said that such an approach begs the question of whether the contemporary critic has imposed 'ideological bias' upon the original audience of film noir. (26) The question of whether an 'ahistorical' approach is required remains unresolved due to the fact that the crisis of masculinity that was associated with the sociological setting of America in the middle of the last century applies to the analysis of national cinema. This, however, raises the question of whether the same approach applies to the analysis of cross-genre practice regarding the appropriation of the noirish elements in another national cinema. Thus, more in-depth analysis on the changing audience-text relation is required.

While David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson purport that films noirs are the most deeply problematic group of films produced in Hollywood, they introduce a very important issue of transgression and subversion that was not covered in the early theories of film noir. They specify that "(i)ssues of transgression and subversion, stylization and realism, foreign influence and domestic genre intersect in that body of work known as film noir." (27) I agree that genre transgression refers to the way in which a historical genre is developed and transformed within the national cinema. When the generic elements of American films are appropriated in Hong Kong, the transgeneric activity, however, should not be noted as a type of genre transgression as if the American genre was fully adopted in Hong Kong a long time ago and further developed in the local cinema. The emergence of the noir-related films in Hong Kong should be specified as a transgression of cultural genres from fiction imported from France, Britain and America to Chinese fiction, and from Chinese fiction to the local cinema.

Stephen Neale redefines genre as an instance of the classical Hollywood system par excellence. For him, genres should not be seen as simply as a category but 'modes of this narrative system, regulated orders of its potentiality.' (28) His theory offers instead a notion of classical textual system that is produced from a volatile combination of 'disequilibrium' and 'equilibrium.' (29) Neale's recognition of the dialectic of disequilibrium (elements of excess and difference, and equilibrium (elements of containment and repetition), not only refreshes our understanding of the essential function of the overall system, but also the subversive nature of any cross-genre practice that modifies the system. His suggestion that the subversive nature of a genre can be measured by referring to the films' anti-classical formal attitudes remains influential. His discussion opens new avenues for further exploration of the variation of films noirs that is integral to the textual economy of the generic system. His observation on the 'volatile combination of "disequilibrium" and "equilibrium" of the classical textual system is key to understanding the dynamic of genre amalgamation which destabilizes as a concept of genre is fixed. Therefore, rereading of the concept of genre as both regularized and non-regularized is deemed necessary.

Genre criticism that emphasizes the shared generic settings and conventions seeks to classify genres into meaningful, mutually exclusive, and exhaustive categories. Genre mixing, however, cannot be analyzed in such a way which theoretically presumes an idea of genre purity. Therefore, a change of direction in genre criticism that deals with genre affiliation, unconventional genrification process, and changing audience expectations, is required.

Rick Altman capitalizes on the tensions existing in current generic criticism. In his synthesis of two categories of generic analyses—the syntactic and semantic approaches—he considers a genre as a semantic field or series of paradigms articulated by syntaxes of individual texts. (30) The primary linguistic elements of all texts are, therefore, subjected to a syntactic redetermination. He posits that generic meaning comes into being through the repeated deployment of substantially the same syntactic strategies. Altman's presumption regarding the operation of genrification as a coherent and predictable process raises the question of whether the reordering of the semantic/syntactic features in a system of meaning and the process of narrative regulation assume an active and transformative function. Barton Palmer agrees that film noir is, to some degree, characterized by the evolution of specific and popular syntaxes. Meanwhile, he critiques Altman's model as a simplistic one that seems to have been based on a model of the cinema as a relatively independent area of cultural production, rather than the site of a textual construction pre-determined by a number of other forces. (31) Altman, however, believes that his new model will provide answers for many of the questions traditional to genre study. His syntactic structures can be described as patterns that should be seen as principles of regulation and structuration. For him, any reordering of the pretexts that furnish the raw material of the narrative structure reveals importance in patterns. Altman's theory thus may not create enough space for a discussion of some unconventional practices in which transgeneric differences are demonstrated in the course of genre amalgamation. Rather, a theory that analyzes a practice of pastiche, which I shall discuss in the next chapter, may compliment what the conventional genre approach lacks.

Since the delineation of the nature of noirish cinema as a genre, series, mood, tone, style or movement still remains contested, critics have become hesitant about summarizing the noir phenomenon in a word or two. The question they are asking is whether it is possible to resort to a method that may embrace all sorts of explanations of American dark cinema while film noir has been considered as a film form of categorical instability since its inception. Jon Tuska, however, comments on the most endurable and consistent characteristic of film noir, which is the particular world view or tragic vision that the dark cinema embodies. He says in his introduction to his book *Dark Cinema: American Film Noir in Cultural Perspective* that '...film noir is a mood, a tone, a play of shadows and light, and beyond all of these a visual consideration that in its narrative structures embodies a world-view.' (32) Fred Pfeil shifts the focus away from the intrinsic questions that dealt with classical film noir as a genre, a style or a movement and proposes to look at some extrinsic questions, like social transformation and gender relationships, that film noir criticism has raised. He says,

"...critics and theorists have been arguing about what *film noir* is, which films the term includes, and what social or psychic processes it engages. Does *film noir* constitute a genre; or a style that can be deployed across generic boundaries; or a historically specific movement within Hollywood cinema?" (33) Pfeil's question is about film noir's relationships to other, non-cinematic social transformation, especially shifts in gender identities and relationships in the USA after World War Two. Similar extrinsic questions should be raised when the phenomenon of a cross-cultural or cross-genre practice involves the appropriation of noirish elements in another national cinema.

Many critics still define genres by identifying a common trait that is present in a given body of texts. This is done by assuming that the common trait is the functioning element that substantiates the operation of the generic dominant and performs the characteristic feature of the text as a trademark of the particular genre. Tony Bennett, (34) however, speaks of a different approach which is described as audience-based. The approach holds that genres cannot be defined in terms of a dominant formal property but are instead institutions which organize a framework of expectations. Since cultural reading and viewing practices determine generic belongingness, the framework of expectations is to a large extent justified by the audience. Bennett's effort in asserting the importance of the audience's role in the process of genrification is highly significant. His approach poses questions like what determines generic belongingness, what kind of cultural reading or viewing practices give rise to the formulation of generic belongingness, and whether cultural differences play a role in enhancing a different understanding of the generic belongingness. All these concerns are related to an issue of changing spectator-screen relation that is essential to my later discussion of recent Hong Kong cinema's negotiation for a new vision of culture in anticipation of 1997.

J.P. Tellotte attempts to categorize the amorphous body of films noirs into groups of discrete narrative practices by examining the formal characteristic of the cinema as a form of darkness (35). He summarises that classical film noir is fundamentally about violations, namely, vice, corruption, unrestrained desire, and abrogation of the American dream's most basic promises of hope, prosperity, and safety. The challenge he faces is akin to the one that is posed to the critics who deal with generic impurities by policing the boundaries among generic categories. The challenge lies where the hybridity of the film text makes the task of categorization difficult. Subject to the various influences from hard-boiled fiction, gothic tradition, German Impressionism, gangster films, private detective films, etc., classical film noir should not be seen as a filmic and textual system that has necessarily organized the properties of the film text around a stable generic dominant. (36) In my analysis of the appropriation of the noirish elements in recent Hong Kong cinema, my focus lies not with the similarities of generic elements privileged by most critics but with the variations in the dominant generic boundaries. Should the genre transformation of film noir be seen as entirely a process of continual stability, there would be no need for further discussion on the variation of the film form that occurred at different periods of times and places, and no need for discussion of any culturally significant changes in the spectator-screen relations. Tellotte does not overlook the importance of audience-text relation. Unlike the majority of critics who examine classical film noir as if it is a pathological form, Tellotte posits film noir as a medium that enacts a 'talking cure.' He says,

"In discussing the relation between language and psychoanalytic practice, Jacques Lacan notes that verbalization might hold a 'cure' for hysteria .... In trying to articulate our personal and cultural anxieties, the *film noir* similarly works out such a 'cure,' offering us a better sense of ourselves, or at least a clearer notion of who we are individually and socially." (37)

His description of film noir as essentially a genre of life presumes that the cinema lets difference speak. Discussing the radical validity of signifiers in the regime of difference and repetition, Tellotte identifies anti-classical attitudes and deformative textual tendencies, which are based on an understanding of classical film noir as self-conscious. This is a kind of textual analyses that requires more critical attention. My focus of analysis is a particular type of audience-text relation of recent Hong Kong cinema that reveals a process of generic self-consciousness. This new aspect of Hong Kong cinema will be analyzed as closely related to what Leighton Grist describes as a new mode of representation—'a process of quotation and combination of past styles, images, and stereotypes, an undifferentiated eclecticism within an ahistorical perceptual present' (38)—which undermines the conventional understanding of the temporal-spatial continuity of the films by mixing the old styles and the new styles, the historical and the contemporary. The new mode of representation thus gives rise to a possibility of deriving a new relation between the audience and the text when the audience expectation is defamiliarized, differed and/or deferred. Positioning my analysis away from the centre of the dominant to the margin of the generic boundaries, I seek to explore film noir as a cultural phenomenon that manifests itself both within and beyond generic conventions.

The Re-use of Noirish Elements and Transculturation

While many local critics in Hong Kong tend to presume that the noir phenomenon results from an imitation of classical film noir, I propose to examine in the noirish tendency of Hong Kong cinema a unique act of cross-cultural practice that may find its roots in the Chinese culture. The cinematic form will be critically examined as a hybrid amalgam in my later analysis of the cinema's discursive practice regarding the re-use—'re-investment'—in the generic possibilities of film noir as a self-conscious device that renews the generic role of film noir and transforms the spectator-screen relation. This chapter hereby examines contemporary cinema in terms of genre transculturation which took shape as soon as Chinese hard-boiled fiction and American noirish cinema began to influence the development of film form respectively and simultaneously during the first half of the last century. The following discussion on Chinese detective fiction demonstrates an attempt to develop an understanding of the influence of Chinese fiction on the noirish cinema of Hong Kong.

Detective fiction was imported from France, Britain and America from the early 20th century after the Opium War. (39) There were four major writers of detective fiction whose works were translated and published in Chinese. They include British writer, Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930); French writer, Maurice Leblanc (1864-1941) Arséne Lupin; and American writers, Earl Derr Biggers (1884-1933) and Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). Cheng Hiao Qing (程小青) was one of the most influential figures of the period, starting his career as a translator of western detective fiction in the early 20th century. Later, he became a novelist of Chinese detective fiction modelled after Arthur Conan Doyle's work after the revolution of 1911. (40) His work on a fictional character, a Chinese detective called Huo Sang (霍桑), became one of the longest running series of modern Chinese short story. While Cheng's Huo Sang is an imitation of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes character; Sun Liao Hong (孫了紅) (41), an equally influential writer of modern Chinese fiction during the same period composed stories about Lu Ping (魯平), a character who is widely known as an imitation of Leblanc's Arsene Lupin character. Since the early 20th century, works about Cheng and Sun have become prototypes for Chinese detective novels. The British and French influences on Chinese hard-boiled fiction were essential to the formulation of detective stories in China, which gave rise to a transformation of the formal and structural paradigms of Chinese literature. For instance, before the emergence of Chinese detective fiction, dynamic relationships between the private detective (私家偵探) and the police, and the social hero/robber (俠盗) and the police had not been depicted in any form of cultural genre in China and Hong Kong. The main characteristic of modern detective Chinese novels is seen as the mixed use of the style of modern Chinese writing and that of classical Chinese fiction. This type of modern Chinese fiction, alongside the modern Chinese martial arts novel, is categorized as the works of *Yuan Yang Hu Die Pai* (鴛鴦蝴蝶派), (42) which is widely known among Chinese critics as the prototype for modern Chinese literature that breaks from classical Chinese literature, by incorporating the vernacular language in the writings. These early works of modern Chinese detective fiction which became an integral part of contemporary Chinese literary writing, categorized as *Yuan Yang Hu Die Pai,* may be considered as the cultural origin—that came into existence before the birth of American film noir—of Hong Kong noirish films.

In the following, I shall draw on the work of Chun-bong Ng, an established scholar of Chinese literature and a film critic, who traces the origin of the noirish cinema of Hong Kong. (43) In his forthcoming study of Hong Kong detective novels of the '50s, he suggests that this type of fiction which first came to prominence in Shanghai had significantly influenced Hong Kong cinema. He states that detective novels became popular in Shanghai in the '20s long before this type of Chinese fiction was imported to Hong Kong in the '50s. (44) He gives evidence of the French influence on the formulation of the literary form in Shanghai (known as *Yuan Yang Hu Die Pai)* when the Chinese hard-boiled tradition slowly took shape. For instance, the Chinese version of *Arsène Lupin Gentleman Cambrioleur* (1907), a classical French detective novel (45), was already widely circulated in Shanghai by 1925. In the process of genre transgression across national boundaries from this type of French fiction to Chinese fiction, conventional male social heroes were replaced by heroines. Such a syntactic transformation took place respectively in Shanghai and Hong Kong, in both movies and novels. The female protagonists led double lives as ordinary women and social heroines who robbed the upper class hypocrites for the poor. Such chivalrous characters became prototypes of the noir fiction of Shanghai in the '40s, which was later introduced to Hong Kong in the '50s. Throughout the next half century, these 'ordinary' women as social warriors of justice continued to creep under the fabric of social malaise and rectified the problems of human iniquity and corruption. In contemporary Hong Kong cinema, these enigmatic heroines appear frequently in noirish or noir-related film productions.

Ng explains in an interview that this type of fiction revealed women's fantasy to claim equal status alongside their male counterparts where sexual discrimination was rampant in feudal society. There was also a second reason behind the new tendency to represent contemporary social warriors as females. The rising importance and social status of women in Shanghai before the outbreak of the Second World War gave rise to this phenomenon. After the success of the national revolution in 1911 and the nationwide May 4th movement in 1919 women, of Shanghai in particular, who enjoyed the privilege of a higher education compared with women living in other parts of China, were active in society and also in politics. (46) Ng purports that the rising power of these women in society posed a threat to men in Shanghai who were therefore described as victims entrapped by irresistibly beautiful and dangerous women in the novels.

Ng says noirish elements had already been an integral part of the literary genre in Shanghai in the '40s and the literary genre in Hong Kong in the '50s before these elements became more obviously employed in the cinema in the '60s. Since Chinese noir fiction emerged almost at the same period as American dark cinema did, it is hard to prove that the noir phenomenon of Chinese cinema was entirely derived from American film noir rather than from Chinese hard-boiled fiction. What we can confirm now is that most of the foreign films were imported to China through Shanghai, which was already an affluent metropolis. Hong Kong in the '40s, however, was more a village than a city, where foreign goods and new forms of entertainment from abroad were not easily accessible. Therefore, I suggest that the earliest form of noir stylistics, which first appeared in local hard-boiled fiction, may have come to Hong Kong through Shanghai. With regard to a stronger linkage between local fiction and the cinema, it may be suggested that American dark cinema was not the only or the primary source of influence on Hong Kong noir-related films. Such an observation does not, however, reject the idea that classical film noir had a significant contribution to the local noir phenomenon. For instance, Ng explains in his essay that there are quite a few common characteristics between Chinese hard-boiled fiction and American films noirs that co-existed in the same period of time. They included portrayals about the urban world of neurotic entrapment leading to delirium. In both of the cultural genres, dark cities were homes to luminescent and enigmatic goddesses who were sexy, dangerous and manipulative. The inhabitation of a treacherous urban terrain was filled with deceiving promise, crime and corruption. (47)

In Ng's study of the relation between the early form of Chinese hard-boiled fiction and noirish films, he stresses that the noir themes and cinematic stylistics were adopted slowly at first. Ng describes that all Hong Kong noir fiction of the '50s written by Xiao Ping (48) display a type of ***mise-en-scène*** that is typical of American detective and crime thrillers. (49) For instance, the masked social heroines in the novel—all identifying themselves as Ung Wong—fight in the dark city until near death, yet always manage to narrowly escape from danger in the end. The element of suspense that was central to sustaining the drama in the novels was not fully employed in Hong Kong cinema until the '50s. In the initial ten attempted adaptations between 1959 and 1962 (50), the screen representations of the social heroines appeared to be different from that of the novels. At that time, the cinema tended to reproduce the woman icon superficially rather than faithfully adopt the hard-boiled narrative. In Johnny To's *The Heroic Trio* and *Executioner*, however, the noir stylistics are more obviously reused. Before I suggest an alternative approach below to look at the noirish tendency of the cinema as an integral part of Chinese culture, I want to emphasize that there is a common practice of using and re-using noirish elements throughout the cinema history of Hong Kong, which refers to the fact that noirish elements are always used outside the narrative and social contexts of classical film noir. That is to say, noirish elements do not exist in local cinema as if they are distinctive generic properties that would sustain the formulation of an American cinematic form in its entirety in Hong Kong.

In the early '50s, it can be seen that the chiaroscuro effect was used in film melodrama in Hong Kong. *Mysterious Murder* (Dei-sheng Tang, Hong Kong, 1951), for instance, is about the life of a woman of humble origin, who suffers from her strained relationships with her tyrannical father-in-law and malicious sisters-in-law after marrying into a rich family. Her life remains miserable even after her sexually impotent husband passes away because remarriage during the time was highly contentious. A commentary on the film noted in the catalogue of the 10th Hong Kong International Film Festival, which describes it as "near-expressionistic" and "close to Hollywood film noir," (51) is largely a comment on the formal features of the film. It can be seen that the kinship between classical film noir and the film was limited to the visual style rather than the narrative structure. In Ain-ling Wong's essay that examines the representation of women in Hong Kong cinema, she acknowledges the uniqueness of the femme fatale as a character type consistently employed in film noir of the '40s, but she stresses that the female character of *Mysterious Murder* remains as a stereotypical character of a subservient woman who succumbs to the patriarchal power of society. (52)

In the '60s a kinship between cinema and Chinese hard-boiled fiction was seen. With Yuen Chu's trilogy of action thrillers—*Black Rose* (1965), *Spy with My Face* (1966), and *To Rose with Love* (1967)—the cinematic productions managed to create the suspense that was integral to hard-boiled fiction. The image of the female social heroine is similar to that of Hong Kong noir fiction according to Ng. This woman representation refers to a masked lady wearing a tight-fitting black outfit parachuting from high-rise buildings and treading on thin cables suspended in the air. The films did not, however, display a noir mood. *Violet Girl* (Yuen Chu, Hong Kong, 1966) a psycho-thriller-cum-family-melodrama directed by the same director was a more significant attempt to appropriate the essential noir stylistics—the form and narrative. The film's convoluted plot and its portrayal of the tragedy of a 'fatal' woman transformed a simple story about a lady losing her younger brother in a fatal incident into a more complicated one. With its noirish outlook, the film tells the story of an enigmatic young lady 'ensnaring' a young man and then leading him astray while she struggles to evade the terror of losing her favourite brother to an accidental drowning.

David has just started a new job in a hotel as a telephone operator and Jenny calls David every night to ask him out. Having never met her, David is curious to find out how she keeps track of him. Determined to discover who she is, he ventures out to the places Jenny suggests he go. Strange things happen each time at these meeting places. Having been beaten up a couple of times by strangers yet not actually having seen the enigmatic lady, David gives up until one day Jenny shows up at the hotel. Thereafter, Jenny drives David to the remote countryside almost daily in her beautiful sports car. Gradually, they fall in love. Although Jenny does not reveal her true identity, David assumes that she has a legitimate reason for her very strange behaviour. He thinks she may be under mafia influence. Eventually, David is invited to have dinner with Jenny's parents and friends. In a beautiful mansion, David is introduced to people who claim to be his parents and relatives. No matter how hard he tries to clarify his identity, they ignore his explanations. After the meal, Jenny takes David to her summerhouse, telling him that they used to dance there. They hold each other tight and dance. Jenny seems to recall more about her past, and asks David to go to a beach nearby with her. There, under a tree, she asks David to kiss her. When a little boy from the neighbourhood suddenly appears, and starts teasing them, Jenny becomes so terrified that she has a nervous breakdown. When Jenny's doctor, who was one of the guests in the dinner earlier on, is about to take her back to the hospital, Jenny's parents begin to tell David the truth. They apologize and tell him that they have been using him to help Jenny recover her lost memory. She had been suffering from mental illness and had mistaken David for her former fiancée who has the same name. The dinner was merely a set-up in a bid to help cure Jenny of her amnesia. However, the little boy's impromptu appearance reminded Jenny of her little brother's death the night she met her fiancée by the beach, and as a result, Jenny is traumatised. When David meets Jenny again in the psychiatric ward, he is sad to discover that she is not able to recall who he is and that they were once in love.

Though *Violet Girl* could be better analyzed as a film that deviates from the noir tradition, the film's convoluted narrative structure is similar to that of classical film noir. The film's style of cinematography and *mise-en-scène* are also noirish. In the opening scene of the telephone conversations in which Jenny cold-calls David many times, Jenny as the mysterious lady is consistently blocked by the furniture on the set. Sometimes, the framing of the shot itself creates the same effect. For instance, there is a medium shot from an angle that captures only the lower part of the lady's face while the rest of her face is not revealed. She is also shot from the back so that her identity is not disclosed. In addition to the suspenseful treatment, the claustrophobic framing creates a sense of danger. Later in the scene in the summerhouse, Jenny, reminiscing about her early romantic experience with her former lover, switches off most of the lights inside the lounge and immerses herself in the sweet memory. At the doorway when she turns off one of the wall lamps, natural light suddenly enters in from outside and transforms her body under her dark evening dress into a silhouette. She throws herself into David's arms and then takes steps with him in a slow dance in the room that is barely lit by a weak chandelier far behind them. While the lady in the man's arms is still kept in the dark, half of the male protagonist's face is consistently revealed in low-key lighting.

It is an interesting point to note that in classical film noir, the situation was reversed. Within the practice of classical film noir, the female protagonist is usually deeply side-lit with the back light striking her shoulders. Feminist critics argue that this is a tactic to reveal the women in film noir as objects of desire. The reversal of the object place, in *Violet Girl*, from that of the female to that of the male is more than just a renewal of the woman representation in the local cinema. Rather, it is a tactic that communicates a nuance of the spectatorial expectation of what the historical genre would conventionally offer. In the scene where David and Jenny meet again in the psychiatric ward in the finale, in depth of focus, the details of the foreground and background inside the private ward are displayed simultaneously. A deep-focus long shot depicts David's lonely walk down a hallway which has iron bars installed at the far end. These images give the environment a greater weight than both the actor and actress, creating a fatalistic and hopeless mood that is typical of classical film noir. The melodramatic portrayal of the family-loving girl who appears like a fatal woman in the film, however, is not intrinsic to the classical genre. The tragic sensibility of classical film noir is never satiated in the context of the local cinema as the icon of the fatal woman is mixed and re-mixed, which renders the full adoption of the classical generic characteristic impossible.

While Yuen Chu confirmed in a telephone interview (53) that he was aware of the noir stylistics that he had employed in making *Violet Girl*, King Hu was not as conscious of the noirish technique that he had incoporated in his internationally acclaimed *A Touch of Zen* (King Hu, Hong Kong, 1968-1970). The film was originally a two-part film produced between 1968 and 1970 (54). It was later re-edited into a shorter version with a runtime of approximately 2 hours for its entrance to the Cannes Film Festival. In many local and international reviews, critics focused mainly on the way in which the film refreshed the martial arts genre by creating a new persona of the Chinese 'swordswoman'. Only recently have critics started to examine the film as a cross-genre practice. Stephen Teo suggests that the film borrows some elements from American westerns. He describes that the mood and the characters of *A Touch of Zen* recall 'Nicholas Ray's *Johnny Guitar* (1954), where the baroque touches perfectly mirror the mythical world of lonely gunfighters, boss-ladies, outlaws and lynchmob posses in the Western genre.' (55) In many cases, critics do not associate *A Touch of Zen* with classical film noir (56) in their analyses.

Adapted from Song Ling Po's classical Chinese terror novel, *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* (聊齋誌異), the film tells the tale of an enigmatic female swordswoman who disguises herself as a shy and meek village girl called Xu Feng. Residing inside a deserted fortress in the countryside, the mysterious lady and her female companion live like hermits. The beauty of the lady and the unusual behaviours of the pair attract the attention of a Chinese scholar-painter, Gu Sheng Zhai, who lives next to the fortress with his aged mother. Not fearing the fortress which is believed to be haunted, Gu pays an impromptu visit to Xu Feng, and gradually falls in love with her. One night after a romantic encounter in the backyard, they sleep together and Xu Feng becomes pregnant with Gu's baby. Before Gu is able to plan for their future, Xu Feng's enemies find her. Fending off her enemies, Xu Feng finally discloses to Gu her real identity as Yang Hui Zhen, the child of a political dissident executed by a powerful eunuch who has sent a killer to the village to kill Yang. Yang (or Xu Feng), who decides to confront her deadly enemies, manages to defeat the intruders in the fortress with hidden traps and hand-made weapons. After the turmoil, for the sake of her lover's safety, she secretly leaves the village and goes to a quiet place where nobody can find her.

The plot of this film is as complicated as the allusive image of a spider creeping on its web that appears in the opening of the film. For instance, the main thread of the plot concerning Yang's father, a minister of the Ming dynasty who is killed in a power struggle with a group of eunuchs within the imperial court, is not revealed early in the film. Neither are the true identities of the fugitives—Yang and her female companion—revealed early, which keeps the enigma of the swordswoman unresolved and creates a lot of suspense. A prowling camera that is following the mysterious loner marks the first ten minutes of the film. The man who appears in Gu's small town makes his approach before Gu. Then, this stranger patronizes Gu's shop where Gu works as a scribe and painter. After the brief encounter, the perception of the visitor is presented from Gu's point of view as Gu tries to follow him in town. Gu discovers that this visitor has enemies waiting to attack in a corner. While the camera continues to follow Gu, the film reveals that a mysterious monk subdues the loner's enemies and saves him. While Gu is still struggling to decipher the entangled and hostile relationships among all these people, he meets Yang (or Xu Feng) who has moved into the deserted fortress. He does not fathom that Yang's misfortune is actually related to the earlier incident which happened in the town. Teo describes the convoluted plot of *A Touch of Zen* as 'overly expository', he says,

> "The film moves from one level of mystery to another, its narrative operating like a spider's web that weaves inexorably, enmeshing each episode and its characters in an intricate maze-like pattern... Despite the overly expository nature of these opening scenes, the pace is perfectly calculated by Hu to evoke mystery and adventure." (57)

Teo might not have appreciated that the role of Gu is like that of a private investigator of classical film noir. The detailed descriptions of Gu's discovery in town are essential in building up a sense of suspense. In both film noir and hard-boiled fiction, private investigators negotiate mazes—the cities in which they were ensnared—and seek to crack the secret codes of corruption. Michael Eaton describes that this generic field originated in the early half of the 19th century alongside the growth of the modern, anonymous metropolis where prior community values were dissolved. (58) The small town and the locality of the ruined fortress are both an allusion to this type of corrupted city where no man seems to know his neighbour and where criminal acts can be committed without ever being noticed. *A Touch of Zen* appropriates the noirish feature and unfolds the story of Yang through the eyes of Gu who behaves like an investigator. Hence, slowly the veil over the most heinous of atrocities is lifted. Gu's role functions like a key to the enigma of the film and is crucial to the development of the noir mood in the film.

The Chinese title of the film, *Xia Nu* (俠女), which means female knight-errant, displays the film's intention to compose a saga of a swordswoman. It can be seen that the representation of the woman in the film was innovative and crucial to the development of the plot. Female knight-errants are frequently portrayed in classical Chinese fiction. None of these characters, however, kills as ruthlessly as Yang does in *A Touch of Zen*. It can be seen that Yang's role, which is closer to that of the beautiful and fatal femme fatale in film noir, is new to the cinema. Inside the ruined fortress, Yang kills a soldier who is begging for mercy in order to prove that she is as capable as a man. This aspect, together with her portrayal as a chaste woman conversant in the arts of song and poetry, in the meantime, makes her personality all the more problematic.

What the film could easily derive from this character is an anti-classical attitude that critiques the conventional representation of Confucian womanhood. Whether or not the new image of Chinese woman in the martial arts sword-fighting play was subversive in the '60s, the Hong Kong martial arts genre became well-known with its representation of woman as a deadly swordswoman after the screen success of *A Touch of Zen*.

The representation of the fatal woman demonstrated in the characterization of the swordswoman is an element of storytelling that is shared by many other genres. It is not that the nature of the woman being 'fatal' is seen as noirish, but the way in which the recurrent noirish iconography is related to the melodramatic portrayal of the revengeful swordswoman is an aspect of storytelling that is worth noting. Central to the discussion of the narrative structure of *A Touch of Zen* is the way in which a tragic sense is implied in the story of Yang, and the way in which the archetypal character of femme fatale is mixed and remixed in the local cinema. The noir cinematography (59) of *A Touch of Zen* also revamps the look of the martial arts genre. The martial arts world conventionally portrayed in classical Chinese martial arts novel is orderly. Social aberrations are temporary and quickly righted by the martial arts hero. Like a film noir, *A Touch of Zen* replaces the predictably orderly world with a corrupt and chaotic world in which the greatest asset of the martial arts heroine is the sheer ability to survive with a shred of dignity. The film depicts a world of unresolved chaos, violence and paranoia in noir style. For instance, deep focus or depth staging is used in the film for the portrayal of the corrupted world. In the battle scene inside the ruined fortress, (60) the claustrophobic framing of a dingy room in the fortress reveals the deadly traps that are being set up by Yang, Gu and loyalists of Yang's late-father. The darker tone of the photography and the use of deep focus reveal both objects at the extreme foregrounds and in the distance. These objects form oblique lines that seem to splinter the screen. The compositional imbalance of each frame unnerves and creates what I would call a noirish mood that enhances an acute sense of danger. King Hu's concept of the unstable and menacing world of *Wu Xia* (武俠) (or a world ruled under a code of righteousness that is manifested by kung fu and good faith) that is portrayed in a noir mood transforms the conventional figure of female knight-errant into a fatal woman. The addition of the convoluted plot about the Chinese scholar's investigation of the enigmatic woman not only creates suspense by revealing the chivalrous woman's character and identity slowly, but it also slowly shatters the conventional image of female-knight errant as a loving person, who seeks to materialize her plan of revenge without any consideration for the feelings and safety of her lover and baby. This aspect of storytelling, which demonstrates an anti-classical attitude, is seen as intrinsic to the formulation of classical film noir. In the contemporary appropriation of this aspect of storytelling, the subversive nature of cinema is established through the way in which recent Hong Kong cinema destabilizes spectatorial expectation. This gives rise to new interpretations of the factor of social instability diegetically and extradiegetically. I shall further explore the significance of this type of re-use of noirish elements with reference to *Swordsman II* (a film produced by Hark Tsui) in a later chapter.

I consider that the reuse of the archetypal film noir character—femme fatale—in recent Hong Kong cinema may be analyzed alongside an application of the archetypal characters of chivalrous women which appear both in Chinese martial arts novels and modern Chinese detective novels. These novels are grouped under the umbrella term of *Yuan Yang Hu Die Pai* as a category of modern Chinese literature. What I want to suggest is that the Chinese fiction of *Yuan Yang Hu Die Pai* should not be denied as one of the cultural origins of film that contributes to the recent noirish tendency of Hong Kong cinema. This account of the development of modern Chinese fiction herein serves to point out that the noirish films of Hong Kong have always been a product of cultural amalgam. The woman icon, for instance, is a hybrid form of characters of chivalrous woman, fatal woman and mother. Apart from the influence of Shanghainese or Hong Kong hard-boiled fiction, this narrative tradition may also be traced back to a folktale of the Tang Dynasty, *Red Thread Steals a Precious Box* (紅線) (61), which is about a swordswoman who leads a double life as a maid of a warlord and a 'xia' (俠), or chivalrous woman, at night to give assistance to people in need of help in the neighbourhood. It is interesting to note that the hybrid form of the cinema is associated with the use or re-use of noirish elements in Hong Kong cinema which is saturated with films about tragic heroes and/or fatal women striving to survive or reposition themselves in a corrupted and hopeless city or martial arts world, and with stories about crises of personal and social identities including the crisis of masculinity. What becomes compelling to contemporary Hong Kong audience is that recent Hong Kong noirish films imply that the crises portrayed—personal, social, cultural and/or political—are emblematic of events or activities leading up to 1997 regarding the changeover of the sovereignty of Hong Kong.

A series of questions should be raised on cinematic practice in relation to transgeneric practice that crosses the boundaries of fiction and film and of nations. Is it important to see beyond the cultural significance and development of the cinematic form and to examine the transformation of the spectator-screen relation in the course of the transgeneric practice?

My examination of the generic role of classical film noir is an attempt to remove the analysis from the conventional framework of genre studies that identifies classical Hollywood cinema with a set of self-evident categories. It does not consider classical Hollywood cinema as a distinct genre that local cinema would adopt in its pure form. Man-hung Sze, an established critic and the Chairman of the Hong Kong Film Critics' Association, however, treasures an idea of fully inheriting the American genre. In his recent essay on noirish films of Hong Kong, which is the first full-length article on the recent noir phenomenon in Hong Kong, Sze considers classical film noir as a distinct genre, and denounces Hong Kong cinema for not being able to faithfully adopt the American film form. He raises his concern about aspects which have hampered the production of films noirs in Hong Kong so far. Firstly, the dominance-submission pattern between man and woman that is conventional to Hong Kong cinema does not facilitate representations of the prototypically noirish masochistic male and dangerous femme fatale. Secondly, Hong Kong films have little room for detailed descriptions of noir criminals' motives and their criminal acts. (62) Sze's analysis of films noirs seems to be closely in line with the early film noir criticism that I introduced at the beginning of this chapter. What is of more relevance to the current discussion here is his observation of the co-relation between the use of noirish elements in the cinema and the economic downturn of Hong Kong after 1997. He speaks highly of noirish films like Patrick Yau's *The Longest Nite* (Hong Kong, 1997) and *Expect the Unexpected* (Hong Kong, 1998), and Johnnie To's *A Hero Never Dies* (Hong Kong, 1998) as being 'subversive' and 'artistic,' (63) which reveal the distress and haplessness of Hong Kong after 1997. (64) In his discussion of the new tendency in recent Hong Kong cinema, Sze expresses his strong preference for a revival of classical film noir. What he means by the 'subversive mode of production' refers to the anti-classical attitude that classical film noir demonstrated within the film text in the '40s and '50s. (65) In my examination of the re-use of the classical elements in Hong Kong noirish cinema, however, the most subversive or anti-traditional qualities demonstrated within the cinema are not seen as resulting from the direct adoption of classical and contemporary American cinema (or neo-noir films). Films produced and directed by Tsui, for example, are essential components of Hong Kong cinema that demonstrate an interesting and innovative appropriation of the generic elements. Below, I shall give a brief account of the hybrid form of noirish films since the '70s.

Tsui Hark's debut, *The Butterfly Murder,* is a thriller-cum-swordplay set in ancient China, which demonstrates an interesting appropriation of the classical elements including noir cinematography and narrative device. As hard-boiled fiction, it opens with the question of 'whodunnit' (or who the murderer is). The narrator, Hong-ye Fong, in the film is also a diarist who carefully takes note of the minute details of social and political incidents that happen around him. After 30 years of the Quiet Era, he describes that the country is approaching the New Era. In the 24th year of the New Era, the clan leaders strive to gain power over one another within the country. Coincidentally, a series of mysterious events occur, including the brutal murder of many people by butterflies at Castle Shen, the residence of Lord Shen. Before Lord Shen is also savaged to death by the butterflies, the local printer is killed and a few pages of Fong's historical writing are stolen. Feelings of tension and horror build up gradually in scenes where butterflies dart around under the blue skies and lurk in silhouette. The noir cinematography not only contributes to the visual style of the crime scenes that refer to various locations including a printing room, a dungeon and a cave, but it also enhances the convoluted plot that delves further into the mysterious murder. Low-key lighting is consistently used in all scenes of the congregation of the renowned martial artists who join hands to investigate the murder, which enables the film to establish a contemplative mood. The plot becomes more convoluted when it is revealed that Lord Shen is still alive, and that he is also the mastermind behind the brutal killing. *The Butterfly Murders* (Hark Tsui, 1979) is a film about the dark side of a chaotic world, which becomes a recurrent theme of many films directed and produced by Hark Tsui. The chaos is always represented as a crisis diegetically in his films. For instance, in *We're Going to Eat You* (Hark Tsui, 1980), a socio-political crisis that results from the broken relationship between two places can be seen as emblematic of the broken diplomatic relationship between China and the colony in the '70s after the Cultural Revolution. (66)

In the '70s, *We Are Going to Eat You* was seen as outstandingly original and experimental as it hybridizes noir cinematography with the film forms of a horror film and a thriller. It has a simple story that is unfolded slowly with a convoluted plot about a detective tracking down a criminal called Security Agent 999 in a remote village. The detective finally discovers a greater crime of a brutal killing and cannibalism committed by a large community. The film begins with a few mysterious men, wearing aprons and leatherface masks, who abduct and kill passers-by with cleavers near their village. After removing the victims' bodies secretly, they place them on a big table and cut the bodies in half using a huge saw in a quiet corner of the village. An immense sense of claustrophobia is created not only due to the depiction of gore but also the style of cinematography that is pre-determined by the setting of the film. The sets include the long and narrow aisles with tall walls on either side and the small and dark apartments of the villagers. Low-key lighting is used in the scenes of the darkened rooms that are moon-lit and/or candle-lit. The contrast between the strong light from the sun and the elongated shadows of the walls that are cast on the people is created to emphasize the rival relationship between the killers and the victims, the detective and the fugitive. With the use of noir cinematography, life in the cannibal 'paradise' where the people have no jobs and no work is overshadowed in the film by an overwhelming sense of anxiety, restlessness and hopelessness.

At the turn of the century, there were more and more films that appropriated noir cinematography and other noirish styles and themes in their portrayals of cities that undergo social and/or political crises, such as *Wicked City* (Tai-kit Mak, 1992), *Executioner* (Siu-tung Ching and Johnny To,1993), *The Private Eye Blue* (Eddie Fong, 1995) *City of Glass* (Mabel Cheung, 1998), etc. These descriptions of crises are seen as emblematic of the situation of Hong Kong before and after 1997. Therefore, more questions should be asked regarding the reason for the re-use of noirish styles and themes in relation to the description of the crisis situations. What has been portrayed in the conventional sense that forms traces of the past in actuality? What has been emplotted and troped that ultimately reflects a choice or an interpretation—the 'framed' historicized past, a definition of subjectivity, an understanding of self? Is there any possibility that the interpretation of meaning can be negotiated? Is it possible that pleasure may be derived by the spectator-subject in the course of negotiation?

Before a question of negotiation is raised, there is an important point to ponder about what and where the text and the discourse are. Hong Kong people are not a text. The crisis is not a discourse. However, what trivializes the feeling of fear and anxiety can be seen as the text. Under such circumstances, both the experiences of the people or the audience of Hong Kong and the film characters become textual. A proper survey on the audience-text relation and the intertextuality of the cinema is thus required. What is chosen for further discussion hereby is the hybridity of the film form and narrative that reveals a thinking of time and history that exceeds the political and sociological seizure of the 'real'. The following description of a noirish futuristic film, *Executioner* (Siu-tung Ching and Johnny To, 1993), which is a sequel of *The Heroic Trio* (Johnny To, 1993), serves to highlight the significance of the analysis.

The story of *Executioner* is set in an unknown country ravaged by a nuclear holocaust. The ruined and decadent city plagued by crimes is represented in panoramic scenes of the misty and murky city centre. Under a chiaroscuro effect, in some dark corners, human suffering resulting from a scarcity of resources is recorded. While the country is recovering from the disaster, it runs out of clean water. An evil person, who was deformed after being exposed to radiation during the holocaust, has derived an idea about taking over the world. After blocking the only source of clean water from going into the country, he claims that his company, Clean Water Corporation, can provide the only uncontaminated water. There are scenes showing individually packed water being disseminated by Invisible Woman, Thief Catcher exploring a new source of clean water inside a dark and wet tunnel, and Wonder Woman struggling to resume her identity as a crime fighter rather than a subservient wife to save the country. The visual impact of the noir cinematography not only vividly depicts the country in moments of crisis, but also signifies that the protagonists are actually confined to unique situations of crisis. When the power-hungry monster plots to kill the President of the country, the three chivalrous women finally reunite in a quest to break the tyrant's stronghold on the water supply. The appropriation of classical elements of film noir in recent Hong Kong cinema becomes more interesting when noirishness is associated with the self-critical portrayals of tragedies and/or crises that are emblematic of the crisis experienced by Hong Kong audience in real life.

The film tactfully mingles the archetype of femme fatale with that of Chinese chivalrous woman. They are hybrids of classical and contemporary cinema. For instance, *Executioner*, the sequel to *The Heroic Trio*, features a story of three modern chivalrous women, namely, Wonder Woman played by Anita Mui, Thief Catcher played by Maggie Cheung, and Invisible Woman played by Michelle Yeoh. Thief Catcher is a femme fatale who is sexy, dangerous, injudicious and is driven by greed. The Invisible Woman works with a bodyguard alongside her as a masked guardian angel character. Wonder Woman—a mother and a happily married woman—is retired and refuses to fight crime in the sequel until her husband is murdered, and she reclaims her old identity hoping to avenge his death. In classical Chinese martial arts novels, these Chinese chivalrous women are portrayed as martial arts warriors leading double lives as subservient housewives during the day and secretly as female knight-errants at night. The characterization of this type of fighter, for example, offers an infinite excess of possibilities of interpretation. The interminable indeterminacy of the moral decision points not only to a single discourse but is something like a game that simultaneously enables the cinematic identification and alienation of the audience. The spectator's experience of indecision on coming into a position of cinematic identification may give rise to a change of perspective and a new way of interpretation.

The formal and narrative devices that facilitate the hydridization of the classical elements is seen as a type of 'specificity of Hong Kong cinema' (67), which is not included as one of the components of 'global noir' in David Desser's discussion on Hong Kong neo-noir films. He acknowledges his interest in studying the kind of mediascape that not only links 'divergent peoples and cultures, but enables diverse cultures to be assimilated alongside and in conjunction with more strictly local or regional ideas, images, and ideologies.' (68) Thus, he chooses to examine a type of Hong Kong neo-noir films with the 'plot of the heist-gone-wrong' and the 'themes of male camaraderie, loyalty, and betrayal.' (69) These include the mid-eighties Hong Kong heroic bloodshed films including John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* (1986) and Ringo Lam's *City on Fire* (1987). For him, the cinematic particularities of Hong Kong neo-noir films, like 'violent street crime in Hong Kong, including intentional homicide, assault, rape, robbery and theft,' (70) have been internationalized, and emerge as integral elements of global cinema. He mentions that there are three strands of neo-noir (71): firstly, 'the Stranger and the Femme Fatale;' secondly, 'the couple on the run;' and thirdly, 'the heist gone bad.' Among them, only the last one fits into his category of global noir, which concerns him. The reason behind his concern, as he states, is that he does not want to reproduce any of the criticism of Hong Kong cinema, which 'reads much of its post-1984 output in the light of "crisis" or of "*déjà disparu*".' The first two aspects of the noirish cinema that Desser does not discuss are, for me, related to an important issue of the reinvestment of classical film noir in local cinema. My contention is that the rendering of tragic sensibility that intensifies portrayals of crises for the purpose of contesting the constitution of meaning, belief and value is a new tendency. Such a critique of cinematic representation will be analyzed in terms of a new vision of culture. The vision is derived from a self-conscious rereading of the original understanding of crisis and tragedy as an active response to social change, necessity, evil, fear and anxiety. Engaging the spectator in a type of self-reflexive text, the films thus enable the spectator to re-consider how the people—the fictional characters and the spectator-subject—face and try to name what is happening to them. This will be known as an act of negotiation of self and cultural identity which marks the difference of recent Hong Kong films that incorporate noir themes and stylistics. Unlike Desser, I shall not describe this group of films by using the term neo-noir so as to avoid formulating an impression that the cinematic practice is an imitation of contemporary American cinema.

There have been quite a number of terms invented, which refer to the contemporary form of films noirs released from the 1960s onwards. Among these terms, 'neo-noir' is the most popular one. Two of the recently influential film noir readers, namely *Film Noir Reader* and *Shades of Noir* edited by Alain Silver and Joan Copjec respectively, have very different approaches in their examinations of the more recent films. Writers of *Shades of Noir* do not adopt the term neo-noir in a straightforward way. Rather, they seek to re-examine the issue of film noir more critically. Silver Alain uses the term to refer to films noirs produced from the 1970s onwards. He says,

"From the late 1970s to [sic] present, in a 'Neo-*Noir*' period, many of the productions that recreate the *noir* mood, whether in remakes or new narratives, have been undertaken by filmmakers cognizant of a heritage and intent on placing their own interpretation on it." (72)

The neologism of 'neo-noir' was introduced by Todd Erickson in his 1990 thesis *Evidence of Film Noir in Contemporary American Cinema* and popularized by Alain Silver in his essay on neo-noir for the third edition of *Film Noir: An Encyclopaedic Reference to the American Style*. (73) Erickson explains that the term for this new body of films should be '*neo-noir*' because these films are still essentially films noirs, but a new type of noirish film. He says that neo-noir is 'one which effectively incorporates and projects the narrative and stylistic conventions of its progenitor onto a contemporary cinematic canvas. *Neo-noir* is, quite simply, a contemporary rendering of the *film noir* sensibility.' (74)

Nevertheless, Noel Carroll does not use the term. He prefers to say that *Body Heat*, which is usually considered to be an example of 'neo-noir,' reveals an appropriation of an archaic style of film noir. (75) Talking about redeployments of noir techniques and themes in films of the 1980s, Robert Crooks uses terms like 'retro noir' and 'future noir' under an umbrella term of 'neo-noir.' (76) Paul Sammon (77) uses the term future noir for his discussion on *Blade Runner*.

(78) While neo-noir is a more general term that groups all types of new films noirs, I shall avoid using this terminology since it delimits particular ways in which films noirs are categorized.

Journalist, Ruby Rich, not only differentiates classical film noir from the contemporary one, but she also speaks of sub-categories of neo-noir. She says, "*Neo-Noir* picks up on the irrational universe embedded in these demonic narratives as fertile ground for the post-modern cultivation of our own *fin-de-siécle* nightmares." (79)

Neo-noir is one of the many terms that are used to categorize American film genres. Some critics, like David Cook, would rather drop the term of neologism and describe the group of films as 'new film noir' (80)—'another adult genre that appeared in the second half of the decade.' In his writing on the history of narrative film, he assumes that film noir underwent changes in the '60s and has developed a few sub-categories (81) like sardonic noir, (82) futuristic film noir, (83) and sexually provocative *film noir*. (84) Critics have different ways to categorize and chart the development of new film noir. Todd Erickson suggests that there are two streams of new film-noir productions. He speaks of understanding the new cinema on two distinct planes: firstly, as an overall cinematic movement that has modified classical film noir; and secondly as a new genre that utilizes the subject matter that is at the very core of the existence of classical film noir.

Gerald Mast does not adopt the idea of neologism in reviewing the history of Hollywood. In *A Short History of Movies*, he considers *Chinatown* (1974), a prominent example of neo-noir that many critics would suggest, as a film of 'genre genre.' Mast is conscious of the dawning of a new Hollywood and explains that the emergence of genre genre is 'a new use of the traditional themes and images of American literature and American film.' (85) This is, in other words, a practice of genre transgression, which presumes that film noir was a distinct genre before it transgressed generic and/or national boundaries. That is to say, these discussions are conducted in a historical context which demonstrates the American experiences as powerful instances of historical film noir. (86) What I want to stress, however, is that classical film noir was, to a large extent, already a phenomenon of genre amalgamation at its birth in Hollywood.

I have listed a number of terms that represent different views—positive and negative—on the re-use of the classical elements of film noir in American cinema. To differentiate the noir phenomenon of Hong Kong as a unique cultural event, I shall refrain from adopting the terminology of neo-logism. What I want to specify is that the anti-classical attitude originally embodied in classical film noir may interact well with other properties of classical Hollywood genres in contemporary cinema. Unlike the situation of American cinema in which neo-noir was derived as a means to refresh the already exhausted film form around the '70s (87), the reason for the re-use of noirish elements in recent Hong Kong cinema has a different bearing. John Cawelti asserts that '(g)eneric exhaustion is a common phenomenon in the history of culture.' (88) The appropriation of noirish themes and stylistics in local cinema is a more progressive approach which seeks to give new insight into the culture.

The above critics speak of the genre transgression of American films noirs as a historical event, which is applicable to the analysis of film noir as a type of national cinema. My discussion, however, seeks to move beyond such a historical narrative that delimits films noirs as a historical genre. In the above diachronic review of the genre amalgamation, I have demonstrated that Hong Kong cinema has been employing noir themes and stylistics by mixing classical generic elements with that of Chinese fiction. My contention is that the recent hybrid form of noirish films of Hong Kong should not be simply analyzed as a pure transgression from the American genre. Rather, I shall describe, in later chapters, the cinematic practice of appropriating classical elements of film noir in recent Hong Kong cinema as a process of pastiche, which mingles styles of the past and the present and of the east and the west. The noir phenomenon will be described as a new tendency to relate the traditional to the creative mode of burlesque or parody in which a well-established set of conventions or styles is subject to some form of ironic exploitation. The practice of pastiche will be related to a discursive strategy that combines cinematic codes of one type with another so as to construct, deconstruct, and critique the meaning and the referential system of interpretation. (89)

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Notes

1 Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, "Towards a Definition of Film Noir," in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999), p.24

2 Ibid.

3 Jacques Derrida, *The Law of Genre*, Critical Inquiry, Vol.7, Issue 1, Autumn,1980, p.55-6. See also *The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability*, Thomas O. Beebee sees genre as a form of ideology that predetermines rules of classification within formidable constraints. Under such a presumption, any struggle against or deviation from genre are 'ideological struggles.' Thomas O. Beebee, *The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability*, (USA:The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p.19

4 Thomas O Beebee, *The Ideology of Genre*, (USA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p.283

5 Ibid., p.265

6 Tzvetan Todorov, "The Origin of Genres," *New Literary History*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Autumn, 1976, p.163

7 Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, (Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), p.246-247

8 The annual publication of the Hong Kong International Film Festival, which reviewed Hong Kong films in retrospect, adopted a genre approach.

9 *Film Bi-weekly* edited by Cheuk-to Li in the '70s applied the auteur theory in analysing a group of directorial debuts by some young, local directors. With the concerted efforts of other writers of the magazine, auteur theory was widely used.

10 *Postman Always Rings Twice* and *Citizen Kane* were later categorised as films noirs alongside the initial group of the five films noirs. The prototypical members of the emergent category of film noir also include *Woman in the Window* for the French critics.

11 James Naremore speaks of some influential publications on American film noir in his "American Film Noir: The History of an Idea," *Film Quarterly*, Vol.49, No.2 Winter, 1995-96, p. 17, and traces that Nino Frank's "Un nouveau genre policier: Láventure criminelle," was published in the socialist *L'Ecran Francais* in August 1946. Then, three months later in the more conservative *Revene du cinéma*, the ancestor of *Cahiers du cinéma*, Jean Pierre Chartier published "Les Americans aussi font des films 'noirs' "

12 In "Towards a Definition of Film Noir," Raymond Borde and Etienne

Chaumeton cite from Ecran Francais. No. 61, Aug 28, 1946 Nino Frank's definition of film noir, "[these films] belong to what we used to call the police genre but that we should more appropriately describe from now on by the term 're criminal adventure' or, better still, 're criminal psychology'." See "Towards a Definition of Film Noir," in *Film Noir Reader*, written by Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999), p. 17.

13 Ibid.

14 R. Barton Palmer noted that *Panorama Du Film Noir Américain* is the most important book ever written on dark cinema. See R. Barton Palmer's *Hollywood's Dark Cinema: The American Film Noir*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), p.17.

15 Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, "Towards a Definition of Film Noir" in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999), p. 17. James Naremore noted in "American Film Noir: The History of an Idea," in *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No.2 Winter, 1995-1996, that Borde and Chaumeton had been inconsistent in the usage of a few analytical terms. Naremore says, "At various points they discuss film noir as a series, a cycle, a genre, a mood, and a Zeitgeist." p.18

16 The Cahiers circle developed better interest in auteur theory while it published dismissive review essays on some book-length studies of the noir phenomenon.

17 There was a minority of film producers or makers who seemed to have prior knowledge of films noirs. For instance, Robert Aldrich, the producer-director of *Kiss Me Deadly* posed with Borde and Chaumeton's book entitled *Panorama Du Film Noir Américain* on the set of *Attack!* in 1956. See Alain Silver's introduction to *Film Noir Reader* on page 10. Generally speaking, the term film noir was not in use in America until the '70s. Eddie Muller explains, "When these images and motives flooded America's movie screens there was no such animal as film noir. Cinéastes hadn't yet bestowed the academic nomenclature. At the picture factories in Los Angeles, and in the boardrooms of the Wall Street underwriters, these movies were known simply as 'crime dramas'." See Eddie Muller's *Dark City: The Lost World of Film Noir*, (London: Titan Books, 1998), p.21.

18 American critics were very slow to adopt the term film noir in the past. According to Todd Erickson, there were no English language books using the term before Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg's *Hollywood in the Forties*, which was published in 1968. See Todd Erickson, "Kill Me Again: Movement Becomes Genre," in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999), p. 307. It is indeed not easy to date the beginning of the usage of the term in the States. Foster Hirsch explains, "*Film Noir* became an accepted critical term in America only in the late sixties, at a time when Americans themselves began to take American films more seriously.

Contemporary reviews of *film noir* were not, on the whole, either favorable or enlightened." See Foster Hirsch's *Film Noir: The Dark Side of The Screen*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1981), p.9.

19 Raymond Durgnat, "Paint it Black: The Family Tree of the Film Noir," in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999), p. 38

20 Paul Schrader, "Notes on Film Noir," *Film Comment* 8, No. 1, 1972, p. 8-13

21 Ibid., p.8, or *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999), p.53-54

22 *Film Noir Reader*, p.63

23 Manthia Diawara, "Noir by Noirs: Toward a New Realism in Black Cinema," in *Shades of Noir*, ed. Joan Copjec, (London and New York: Verso, 1996) p.261

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p.263

26 Christopher Orr, "Genre Theory in the Context of the Noir and Post-Noir Film," *Film Criticism*, Vol.22(1), Sep 1997, p.22

27 David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*, (London: Routledge, 1985), p.74-75

28 Stephen Neale, *Genre*, (London: BFI, 1980), p. 20

29 Ibid.

30 Jean Mitry and Marc Vernet, for instance, used to master this approach which is traditionally a method to analyze the film text according to some cinematic vocabulary. The analysis is based on the presence or absence of easily identifiable elements. For example, in the case of Western films, these elements are earth, dust, water and leather. Jim Kitses and John Cawelti used to master the syntactic approach, which puts emphasis on the relationship linking lexical elements instead. For example the dialectics between culture and nature, community and individual, future and past, etc.

31 R. Barton Palmer, "*Film Noir* and the Genre Continuum: Process, Product, and *the Big Clock*," *Persistence of Vision*, No.3/4, 1986, p.51

32 Jon Tuska, *Dark Cinema: American Film Noir in Cultural Perspective*, (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), p.xvi

33 Fred Pfeil, "Home Fires Burning: Family *Noir* in *Blue Velvet* and *Terminators 2*," in *Shades of Noir*, ed. Joan Copjec, (London and New

York: Verso, 1993) p.227

34 Tony Bennett, *Outside Literature*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990)

35 J.P.Telotte, *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989)

36 "Indeed much of the trouble plaguing scholars attempting to deal with the film noir as a genre stems from the fact that it stands somewhere between a historical and a theoretical genre. While critics today may identify a particular American film as noir, the only indication of any commercial awareness of it is the occasional use of the terms "thriller" or "psychological thriller" by the Hollywood journals of that era to describe some titles now generally recognized as being films noirs. I would hardly dispute the validity of the term as a critical distinction, but its status as a genre is muddied by the fact that the film noir drew from so many different genres (the topical film, the gangster film, the private detective film) that there appears to be no single example of it which is not transgeneric." Robert Gerald Porfirio, *The Dark Age of American Film: A Study of the American 'Film Noir'(1940-1960) Vol.1,* (England : Ann Arbor, 1985,) p.9

37 Ibid., p.222

38 Leighton Grist, "Moving Targets and Black Widows: Film Noir in Modern Hollywood," in *The Movie Book of Film Noir*, ed. Ian Cameron, (London: Studio Vista, 1992) p. 274

39 魏紹昌著，*我看鴛鴦蝴蝶派*，（香港中華書局 [香港] 有限公司，1990）第 197-201 頁. Wei Shao Chang, *Wo Kan Yuan Yang Hu Die Pai*, (Xiang Gang: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Xiang Gang You Xian Gong Si, 1990), p. 197-201

40 范伯群，〝論程小青的《霍桑探案》〞，程小青著，*程小青文集：霍桑探案選*，（北京：中國文聯出版公司，1986），第 2, 4, 16 頁. Fan Bo Qun, "Lun Cheng Xiao Qi De 《Huo San Tan An》," in *Cheng Xiao Qing Wen Ji: Huo Sang Tan An Xuan*, (Beijing: Zhong Guo Wen Lian Chu Ban Gong Si, 1986), p.2, 4, 16.

41 魏紹昌著，*我看鴛鴦蝴蝶派*, 第 200 頁. Wei Shao Chang, *Wo Kan Yuan Yang Hu Die Pai*, p. 200

42 范伯群主編，*中國偵探小說家宗匠——程小青*，（中國：南京出版社，1994），第 頁 2-4 頁. Fan Bo Qun ed., *Zhong Guo Zhen Tan Xiao Shuo Jia Zong Jiang—Cheng Xiao Qing*, (Zhong Huo or China: Nan Jing Chu Ban She, 1994), p. 2-4

43 Chun-bong Ng also teaches at Hong Kong Baptist University as an associate professor in the Department of Cinema and Television. He is also an official advisor of the Hong Kong International Film Festival,

Hong Kong Film Archive, and the Hong Kong Museum of History, etc.

44 Page 2 of an unpublished paper written by Ng in 1999 entitled “Hong Kong Detective Novels of the ’50s”(or “論五十年代香港偵探小說”)

45 Ng’s manuscript of the unpublished paper, p. 9

46 A telephone interview with Ng conducted in Sep, 2004 after he had written his book on representations of Chinese women that will soon be published. See also Ng’s manuscript, p.10. By the ’30s, Ng purports in his paper, women’s increasing formal and informal power in society posed a threat to men. Therefore, male writers alluded to women as ‘human leopards who would choke their male enemies to death’ in the detective novels.

47 Ibid., p.4-7

48 Ng shared in the telephone interview that Xiao Ping was a crippled man who lived his whole live in Shanghai. His novels were always sent to Hong Kong in the post during the ’50s until one day he disappeared in China. Thereafter, a number of Hong Kong writers using the name of Xiao Ping as an alias continued to submit their works of hard-boiled fiction to the same publisher.

49 Ibid., p.15

50 Ng provides a list of the titles on p.16 of his manuscript. What the adaptation achieved was, in Ng’s impression, merely replacing the conventional martial arts hero, Wong Fei Hung of a popular kung-fu film series, with the heroines in the mixed-genre productions.

51 Cheuk-to Li and Ain-lin Wong eds., *Cantonese Melodrama 1950-1969*, The 10th Hong Kong International Film Festival, revised edition, (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1997, p.107

52 Ain-ling Wong, “Our Frail Beauty,” in *Cantonese Melodrama 1950-1969*, The 10th Hong Kong International Film Festival, revised edition, eds. Cheuk-to Li and Ain-Ling Wong, (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1997), p.29

53 An interview I conducted over the telephone in May, 1999

54 At Cannes Film Festival, the re-edited version won a technical achievement award.

55 Stephen Teo, “Only the Valiant: King Hu and His *Cinema Opera*,” *Transcending the Times: King Hu and Eileen Chang*, The 22nd International Film Festival, eds. Kar Law and Stephen Teo, (Hong Kong: The Provisional Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1998), p. 19. See also other articles on *A Touch of Zen* and King Hu’s films in the same anthology.

56 *Johnny Guitar* is usually understood as a noir Western. Therefore, when Stephen Teo invokes it, he indicates that he is aware of the noir elements in *A Touch of Zen*. The mixing of film noir with Western also took place in Hollywood during the classical period. When Raymond Durgnat wrote about one of the dominant motifs of film noir, he describes that Huston's great film noir, *The Treasure of Siera Madre*, as a Western. See Raymond Durgnat's "Paint It Black: The Family Tree of the *Film Noir*," in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999), p.46.

57 Teo, "Only the Valiant: King Hu and His Cinema Opera," p. 21

58 Michael Eaton, *Chinatown*, (London: BFI, 1997), p.17

59 King Hu himself may not be entirely conscious of the visual style of his film that is akin to the noir stylistic. In an interview, he once recalled his hesitation about endorsing the darker tone of the courtship scene after his director of photography had finished setting up. In the battle scene inside the fortress, however, Hu incorporated the noirish style of photography himself. The use of noir cinematography could be, therefore, a coincidence. Or, perhaps it is due to the fact that Hu spontaneously adopted the visual style without noticing it. See 山田宏一及宇田川幸洋著，*胡金銓武俠電影作法*，厲河及馬宋藝譯，(香港：正文社出版有限公司，1998） Shan Tian Hong Yi and Yu Tian Chuan Xing Yang, *Hu Jin Quan Wu Xia Dian Ying Zuo Fa*, trans. Li He and Ma Song Yi, (Xiang Gang or Hong Kong: Zheng Wen She Chu Ban You Xian Gong Si, 1998)

60 It was also King Hu's recurrent idea to stage a small and enclosed space for conflicts and combat among warriors, killers, corrupted government officials and spies. See other King Hu's films like *Dragon Inn* (1968).

61 Nien-tung Lin, "The Martial Arts Hero," in *A Study of the Hong Kong Swordplay Film (1945-1980)*, The 5th Hong Kong International Film Festival, revised edition, eds. Shing-hon Lau and Mo-ling Leong, (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1996, p.6

62 Page 3 of Sze's manuscript of his unpublished essay written in 2000 on films noirs of Hong Kong entitled "The Formal Sturcture of Contemporary Hong Kong Film Noir," (〝香港現今黑色電影之形態〞)

63 Ibid., p.7, 10

64 Ibid., p.10.

65 Ibid., p. 7. What Sze delimits as the noirish elements can be found in To's films and include, firstly, the dark vision of the noir world that is full of inescapable fatal coincidence. Secondly, the noir personae that is no longer restricted within the old boundaries of moral convention as in *Double Indemnity* and *The Asphalt Jungle*. Lastly, the noir cinematography that is typical of Orson Welles' *The Lady of Shanghai*

and *The Touch of Evil*, for instance, the claustrophobic portrayal of enclosed spaces, symbolic use of night scenes, low-key lighting, contrasting colour schemes, and bizarre compositions, etc. I do not agree that Johnny To's films are akin to classical film noir in terms of the narrative structure. Rather, they are closer to the form and narrative of American neo-noir films like *Pulp Fiction* and *Reservoir Dogs*. Nevertheless, quite a number of films directed and produced are widely know as noirish. Patrick Yau's *The Longest Nite* (1997) and *Expect the Unexpected* (1998) and Johnnie To's *A Hero Never Dies* (1998) are grouped together as the dark trilogy in Bryan Chang's "The Man Pushes On: The Burden of Pain and Mistakes in Johnnie To's Cinema," in *Hong Kong Panorama 98-99*, The 23rd Hong Kong International Film Festival, ed. Evelyn Chan, trans. Sam Ho, (Hong Kong: The Provisional Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1999), p.75. He says, " ...in 1998, he [Johnnie To] made [directed and produced] what can be considered the Dark Trilogy....A stable social structure has disappeared and his heroes are isolated..."

66 The English subtitles of *We're Going to Eat You* regarding the conversation between a detective and a visitor, who are heading for the village in the film, is noted below:
Detective: Where are you from?
Visitor: Don't you see that I am from Hong Kong
Detective: The two places have very strict emigration policy.
Visitor: Trains and boats are carefully interrupted [sic].
Detective: How could you get out?
Visitor: Don't be stupid....walked to Canton first, then came here.

67 David Desser, "Global Noir: Genre Film in the Age of Transnationalism," in *Film Genre Reader III*, ed. Barry Keith Grant, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), p.526

68 Ibid., p.534

69 Ibid., p.530

70 Ibid., p.526. This is Desser's citation of Stokes and Hoover's *City on Fire*, p.67

71 Ibid.

72 Alain Silver, "Son of *Noir*: Neo-*Film Noir* and the Neo-B picture," in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999,) p.331

73 Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward eds., *Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 1992)

74 Todd Erickson, "Kill Me Again: Movement Becomes Genre," in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1998), p.321

75 Noel Carroll, "The Future of Allusion: Hollywood in the Seventies (and Beyond)," *October* 20, Spring, 1982, p.69

76 Robert Crooks, "Retro *Noir*, Future *Noir*: *Body Heat, Blade Runner*, and Neo-conservative Paranoia," *Film and Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 1994, p.105

77 Paul M. Sammon, *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner*, (UK: Orion Media, 1996)

78 Scott Bukatman describes the film's look of the future in his *Blade Runner*, (London: British Film Institute, 1997), see p.19-33

79 B. Ruby Rich, "Dumb Lugs and Femmes Fatales," *Sight and Sound*, Nov. 1995, p.8

80 He describes the new noir phenomenon with reference to a number of titles: "...this film type had its first eighties venue in the steamy and very nearly perfect *Body Heat* (1981), written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan....After a lull of several years, *film noir* came back into its own in such well-made and intelligent films as *Black Widow* (Bob Rafelson, 1986), *Angel Heart* (Alan Parker, 1987), *Manhunter* (Michael Mann, 1987), *No Way Out* (Roger Donaldson, 1987), *Best Seller* (John Flynn, 1987), *Fatal Attraction* (Adrian Lyne, 1987), *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Ridley Scott, 1987), *House of Games* (David Mamet,, 1987), *Frantic* (Roman Polanski, 1988), *Masquerade* (Bob Swaim, 1988), *The House on Carroll Street* (Peter Yates, 1988), *D.O.A.* (Rocky Morton, 1988), and *Into the Fire* (1989)" See David A. Cook's *A History of Narrative Film*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), p.901

81 David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film*, (New York and London: W.W.Norton & Company, 1990)

82 Ibid., p.502. For example, Robert Aldrich's *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962), and *Hush, Hush Sweet Charlotte* (1964)

83 Ibid., p.602. For example, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982)

84 Ibid., p.603. For example, Adrian Lyne's *9 ½ Weeks* and *Fatal Attraction*, 1987

85 Gerald Mast, *A Short History of the Movies*, (New York and London: Macmillan, 1986), p.428-429

86 See *Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style*, eds. Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward (New York: The Overlook Press, 1992), p.398

87 James Naremore purports that both classical film noir and neo-noir are works influenced by European talents. He describes, "...American film

noir of the 'historical' period was largely a product of ideas and talent appropriated from Europe, and neo-noir emerged during a renaissance of the European art film, when America was relatively open to imported culture. The second of these two phases was affected not only by the French and German New Waves, but also by an Italian tradition of philosophical noir—as in Antonioni's pop-art *Blowup* and Bertolucci's retro-styled *The Conformist* (1971). It was also strongly influenced by European directors who made English-language thrillers that were aimed partly at the American market: not only Antonioni, but also Polanski (*Repulsion*), Boorman (*Point Blank*), and eventually even Wenders (*Hammett*)." See Naremore's *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998), p.203, hereafter *More than Night*. Although Naremore agrees that Germany had a crucially important influence on historical film noir, he takes note of Wim Wenders' contrasting remark on films noirs. Wim Wender says that he was unable to make 'any connections between the films Fritz Lang made in America and the ones he made in Germany.' For Wender, 'noir was a Hollywood invention, associated with the flood of American pop culture that spread throughout Germany at the end of the war.' See *More Than Night*, p.303.

Robert Gerald Porfirio explains that films noirs may not necessarily be an American creation. He says, "This will permit me to view what I believe are the cycles' two major "sources"—German Expression and the hard-boiled tradition—from a single vantage point and to attempt to demonstrate the transformations necessary to generate the film noir. These two broadly-conceived sources were in turn directly related to that twin infusion of talent experienced by Hollywood in the 1930s and early 1940s—the so-called 'Germanic' émigrés and what I have termed the domestic émigrés (writers and theatrical personnel from the east)—of which the noir cycle was the principal beneficiary. And while care must be taken to point out that these two groups came from very different traditions and hardly formed a cohesive colony of "exiles" within the Hollywood community, they did enjoy a mutual sensitivity to 'liberal' causes and a certain disaffiliation from the mainstream of American culture.' See Porfirio's *The Dark Age of American Film: A Study of the American 'Film Noir' (1940-1960)*, (England: Ann Arbor, 1985), Vol. 1, p.19.

88 John G. Cawelti, "Chinatown and Generic Transformation in Recent American Films," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.578

89 This is what Christian Metz would call the meta-cinematic which is achieved through the manifestation of two inter-codical syntagms. The manifestation refers to the positioning of an extradiegetic and paradigmatic reference and an inter-textual reference. Metz points out that when a film makes it apparent that it is making references to itself, for itself, the film text becomes potentially disruptive. See Metz's *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, trans. Michael Taylor, (USA: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

Chapter Three
Pastiche and Postmodernism

This chapter develops an analysis of the reinvestment of film noir in Hong Kong cinema as a practice of transculturation with an account of the hybridity of Hong Kong cinema in terms of pastiche as a positive device in representation. It therefore takes issue with Fredric Jameson's dismissal of pastiche and postmodern culture. The discussion seeks to clarify that postmodern culture refers to the renewed spectator-screen relation with which the spectator-subject is enabled to register self-consciously the instability of the symbol-forming, subject-constituting and interpellative practices of the cinema; and that the process of cultural hybridization gives rise to new possibilities of negotiation of meaning and representation.

Reviewing the contemporary use of the term postmodernism in film noir criticism, this chapter also looks at the cinematic practice that contemporary critics would call postmodernist. Jameson's negative view on the 'postmodern' that substantiates his global perspective of the cultural logic of late capitalism will be subject to scrutiny under the challenge posed by Lyotard's question regarding 'incredulity towards metanarratives.' The discussion on postmodernism seeks to examine critically discursive practices of cinema that focus on two different aspects of the temporal relation between the spectator and the text. They are the repression of historical contradictions through a process of socially symbolic acts and fragmentation of the temporal experience as the 'perpetual present.' The former refers to the delineation of the temporal experience in a linear order that gives rise to the constitution of a meta-narrative which sustains a coherent understanding of human existence as truth and reality. The latter is seen as an effect of pastiche that is denounced by Jameson. The major characteristic of this device will be explained as fragmentation of the order of temporality which solicits ideologically self-conscious reading of the text without entirely forcing the spectator out of his or her position of cinematic identification.

Pastiche is normally taken as a term that refers to a postmodern feature of contemporary culture. Jameson is one of the first critics who has used the word pastiche in this sense in a full length article on postmodern culture. His essay, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," (1) was influential in the '80s and many American critics adopted the term thereafter. Unlike his followers, Jameson's use of the term postmodern is essentially negative. In this essay and later his book, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, he argues that the emergence of postmodernism is causing an adverse effect on the contemporary social system as a consequence of the disappearance of the sense of history. His standpoint is not attuned to Hal Foster's more positive approach that does not reject the postmodern as a practice which seeks new strategy in the face of a culture of reaction. (2) Since the issue of postmodernism is central to my later discussion of a noir phenomenon of Hong Kong cinema, in this chapter I shall clarify Jameson's notion of pastiche and a few critics' application of Jameson's theory that create a discrepancy in the usual understanding of the postmodern.

The French word, pastiche, has an Italian origin, which means 'pie of meat, macaroni'. The etymology of the term stems from the Italian pastry chef's habit of combining various ingredients into one whole taste. In contemporary art history, it refers to an aesthetic of appropriation of styles of the past, or a play of random stylistic allusion. The term also refers to a technique of cannibalization which blurs the boundaries between high art and popular art; high culture and junk culture; the orthodox and the heterodox; or the past and the present. In this chapter, the positive application of the term refers to a practice of generic transgression through which the creative act of cinematic art is allowed to cross national, generic and cultural boundaries. Fredric Jameson, however, denounces the way in which architects deploy the idea of pastiche in postmodern architecture. He says,

"As I have already observed, the architects use this (exceedingly polysemous) word for the complacent eclecticism of postmodern architecture, which randomly and without principle but with gusto cannibalizes all the architectural styles of the past and combines them in overestimating ensembles." (3)

Jameson's dislike of postmodern art is due to the fact that the cannibalization of the old styles creates an 'ideological mirage,' (4) which does not enable the historical subject to make concrete and coherent sense of human existence in relation to one's own past experience. Before I explain that recent Hong Kong cinema adopts a postmodern strategy which forms an interplay of signs by appropriating noirish elements, I shall clarify two notions of postmodernism that Jameson strives to differentiate in his works. Many critics have drawn on Jameson's notion of pastiche in a positive sense, as if Jameson is satisfied with the postmodern culture.

Two Kinds of Postmodernism

(a) Jameson's Notions of Postmodernism and Theory of Subject

Ihab Hassan traced the term postmodernism to Federico de Onis' use of the term in his *Antología de la Poesía Espanola e Hispanoamericana* in 1934, and described it as a minor reaction to modernism. (5) Later, Tonybee coined the term postmodernity to designate a new trend in western civilisation in 1947. A letter from Charles Jencks to the Times Literary Supplement, 12 March 1993, pointed out that the term was used by a British artist John Watkins Chapman in the 1870s, and in 1917 by Rudolf Pannwitz. In the same essay, Hassan argues that the word postmodernism implied that one had gone beyond the 'clearly inadequate' world-view of modernism.

The term postmodernism entered Anglo-American critical discourse in the '50s, and only in a significant way in the '60s. At first it seemed to indicate a new periodization of art or culture that broke with modernist techniques and conventions without reverting to realist or premodernist positions. Before long, however, critics had started to use the term to refer to particular cultural, artistic and social characteristics. Mike Featherstone notes that the artistic use of the term gained priority over the epochal use, as it became popular in the '60s. He summarizes that the term was used in the United States by young artists such as Rauschenberg, Cage, Burroughs and Barthelme, and by critics such as Fiedler, Hassan, and Sontag to refer to a movement beyond the 'exhausted' high modernism. The term postmodernism is typically used in a rather wider sense than modernism. In the late '70s, the term underwent a rapid series of mutations as it was exported to France and adopted by critics such as Kristeva and Lyotard. It was then exported back to the United States largely in the form of Derrida's poststructuralist deconstructionism. The term was also exported to Germany and assumed by Habermas at the same period of time. Hence, the term has developed a very strong philosophical context which refers to theories concerning demystification, decanonization, and decentring. Under the influence of Lyotard, the debates of postmodernism have moved beyond humanistic notions of subject and object and the modern project of Enlightenment. This has introduced a linguistic turn in the postmodern debate in which language is deeply involved in the study of the social construction of reality. (6)

Habermas pointed out in his 1980 Adorno prize essay that postmodernism was an inadequate term to describe contemporary culture. He asserted that modernism was an uncompleted project due to the fact that the very idea of a holistic modernity and of a totalizing view of history had become anathema in the '70s. Theoreticians of culture promoted the decentring of traditional notions of identity, the fight of women and gays for a legitimate social and sexual identity outside the parameters of male and heterosexual vision, and the search for alternatives in our relationship with nature, including the nature of our own bodies. (7) Lyotard, in opposition to Habermas, suggests that the postmodern may be part of the modern in its nascent state. However, he stresses that postmodernism is not modernism at its end in his report on the state of knowledge in the western world. (8) After Lyotard's book *The Postmodern Condition*, the term postmodernism has been used to refer to a general human condition, or society at large, as much as to art or culture.

For Lyotard, postmodernity is a condition of knowledge. He argues that there is a legitimation crisis of the older cognitive and epistemological scientific world-view, which can also be known as a crisis of representation. Therefore, he openly questions any metanarratives which deny the specificality of the local in the interests of a global homogeneity. He defines the postmodern as 'incredulity toward metanarratives,' (9) and suggests a wider historical situation of postmodernity, which refers to the fading of modernity marked by distinctive ideological, philosophical, cultural, social and technological circumstances.

Lyotard conceives of the postmodern, as Peter Nicholls describes, as a disruption of the discursive systems on which modernity depends. Lyotard's sense of the postmodern is a mode rather than an epoch. Disruption is therefore seen as the opening of an alterity or 'other' within language, whereas the postmodern is the moment which registers the instability of the discourse of modernism or the discourse of a subject who achieves autonomy by understanding itself as the narrator of history. (10)

For Nicholls, Jameson seems to consistently misinterpret Lyotard's proposal, which Jameson sees as simply invoking 'a return to the older critical high modernism' (11) Unlike Jameson, Lyotard has no sense of an epochal modernism or postmodernism because the 'post' of postmodernism does not signify a movement, but rather a process of the order of analysis. For Lyotard, the postmodern does not signal a dialectical move toward synthesis but an internal displacement—spatial and temporal—against a system of meanings. With reference to *Le Postmoderne expliqué aux enfants* (12), Nicholls explains that Lyotard's idea of displacement is an association with Freud's concept of 'working through' (*Durcharbeitung*). Laplanche and Pontalis describe the Freudian concept as 'a sort of psychical work which allows the subject to accept certain repressed elements and to free himself from the grip of mechanisms of repetition.' (13) The spatial and temporal displacement within the system of meanings is the idea of postmodernism on which my thesis draws.

Douglas Kellner interprets Jameson's confrontation with postmodernism as implying a turn from literary theory to more cultural theory. Jameson's theory was truthfully an expansion of cultural theory and politics beyond concern with literature (14) because he speaks of postmodernity as the culture produced by multinational capitalism. For Jameson, the postmodern refers to the cultural dominant of the logic of late capitalism, which is not just an emergent feature of a new type of culture. (15) He explains that the cultural dominant is part of the relationship between the new configurations of the economy and culture. Many critics opine that Jameson's methodology is a totalising and periodizing attempt to globally characterize an entire epoch known as the stage of multinational capitalism. They denounce his theory as meagre elaboration of the supposedly new stage of multinational capitalism that results from a totalized concept. Kellner agrees that Jameson's work was not substantiated with a systematic analysis of the political economy of the present age. This part of Jameson's work is known to be its weakest point. (16)

Admitting that his approach is a totalizing one, Jameson argues that his assertion about the global characterizations and hypothesis was always a radical intervention in the here-and-now. (17) He explains that postmodernism is a notion of a mode of production which lies in 'the seeming contradiction between the attempt to unify a field and to posit the hidden identities that course through it and the logic of the very impulses of this field, which postmodernist theory itself openly characterizes as a logic of difference or differentiation.' (18) That is to say, the contradictory method is for Jameson indispensable. In response to the criticism, Jameson mostly draws critics' attention to the historical value of his theory rather than its totalizing effect. Jane Flax remarks in a review in *History and Theory* that the historical applicability of Marxism has never been questioned in Jameson's work. (19) The singular logic of his theory of History, as I have already explained, undermines his theory on postmodernism. Nevertheless, he remains one of the most important figures in the debates on postmodernism.

Jameson obviously seeks to 'dominate' the postmodern (20) by reducing its play of difference, and enforcing 'some new conceptual conformity over its pluralistic subjects', though he seems to be aware of the foreseeable violation of the spirit of postmodernism by such action. Opposing the idea of postmodernism, he says,

"Objections to the global concept of postmodernism in this sense seem to me to recapitulate, in other terms, the classical objections to the concept of capitalism itself—something scarcely surprising from our perspective here, which consistently affirms the identity of postmodernism with capitalism itself in the latest systematic mutation." (21)

Jameson's objection to the global concept of postmodernism demonstrates his intention to dominate over the postmodern or the cultural mode of production of late capitalism. Hence, he proposes to raise up a collective subject who is supposed to regain a capacity to act and struggle. He therefore launches an idea of cognitive mapping which allows one to grasp his or her positioning as an individual and collective subject. Otherwise, he warns that the popular cultural logic of late capitalism only naturally gives rise to a 'non-subject of the fragmented or schizophrenic self', or 'non-centred subject' (22), and he denounces the postmodern subject as malfunctioning.

Jameson posits that the postmodern is a culture dominated by space and spatial logic, and he describes postmodern cultural productions as 'heaps of fragments,' or 'a practice of the randomly heterogeneous and fragmentary and the aleatory.' (23) He explains that the subject of the culture has lost the capacity to organize his or her past and future into coherent experience. For him, this is a 'crisis in historicity' (24) that raises questions on the issue of temporal organization.

Jameson's theory of subject is a synthesis of that of Althusser and Lacan. He shares Althusser's notion of the specular structure of ideology and suggests that it has omitted the dimension of the Lacanian symbolic. (25) He asserts that a return to the Lacanian underpinnings of Althusser's theory can afford some useful and suggestive methodological enrichment. Therefore, he characterizes the subject of the postmodern as 'schizophrenic' and assumes an adverse effect on the culture that is dominated by the 'non-centred subject.' Using a psycho-pathological term, 'schizophrenia', to describe the postmodern subject, Jameson is obviously not in favour of the postmodern. Not using it in a clinical sense, Jameson stresses that the term 'schizophrenia' is entirely used as a description of an aesthetic model which reveals 'a breakdown of temporality' and releases the 'present of time' that suddenly engulfs the subject with indescribable vividness of the material signifier in isolation. Weighing the pros and cons of the aesthetic value of the model, he says,

"This present of the world or material signifier comes before the subject with heightened intensity, bearing a mysterious charge of affect, here described in the negative terms of anxiety and loss of reality, but which one could just as well imagine in the positive terms of euphoria, a high, an intoxicatory or hallucinogenic intensity." (26)

Schizophrenia is used to describe a social pathology revealed by art forms of temporal discontinuity. He says,

"If we are unable to unify the past, present, and future of the sentence, then we are similarly unable to unify the past, present, and future of our own biographical experience or psychic life." (27)

His major concern of analysis is that the aesthetic model allows the postmodern subject to forget history. The postmodern condition is therefore, for Jameson, unfavourable when the subject is unable to unify the past, the present and the future. Jameson's confrontation with postmodernism is global. He does not speak of a personal crisis, rather a global crisis that the postmodern subject undergoes. The aim of his analysis is to raise a question of problematic subjectivity and to inspire a reaction in the contemporary world to seek a dialectical resolution toward a synthesis that will derive a new form of art to replace the postmodern. He henceforth proposes new political art, which he claims as genuinely 'postmodernist.' The new art form is meant to be an activity organized by a collective subject who acts and struggles in the latest stage of capitalism for the betterment of the world. This is a single logic within which a collective self is supposed to be derived to resist confusion brought forth by the postmodern. Jane Flax argues that postmodernists do not adopt any singular logic. Neither do they believe in a single organizing social relation or human activity. She says, "Beliefs in or wishes for such a logic are metaphysical; they are the secular versions of...transcendental Reason." (28) I shall leave open the question of whether Jameson's version of postmodernism revealed in his launch of the new political art is genuinely 'postmodernist' or not. What is more essential to my discussion is the paradox created by many critics' examination of the relation between film noir and postmodernism, who are applying Jameson's negative description of the postmodern culture in a positive manner. Such usage of the term in the contradictory sense raises a question of misrepresentation of the conception of the postmodern. I shall, therefore, explore the issue of postmodernism in the following, which not only seeks to resolve the controversy of film noir criticism, but it also assesses Jameson's rejection of postmodernism and of postmodern cinema as a form of mass culture.

(b) Postmodernism and Film Noir Criticism

In Jameson's discussion, there are obviously two kinds of postmodernism described in two major forms of artefacts. They include, firstly, the mass culture dominated by a 'schizophrenic' or de-centred subject who is allured to forget history, and secondly the new political art mastered by a centred-subject who reacts against the mass culture. I have already discussed at length Jameson's theoretical background and have traced the reason for his choice of cultural model. In discussing the type of postmodernism that he rejects in the following, I need to clarify that many critical writings on films noirs involve citations of Jameson's theory of the postmodern in a paradoxically positive sense.

E. Ann Kaplan proclaims in her introduction to the revised and expanded edition of *Women in Film Noir* in 1998 that American cinema in the '90s, in the filmic and generic return of film noir, saw a 'postmodern moment'. She cites one of Jameson's 1985 publications (29) as the source of reference for her assertion that Jameson's notion of the 'postmodern' is classic. What she interprets as postmodern is derived from her tentatively positive understanding of pastiche as a style that 'recirculates past aesthetic and cultural modes in a way that is neither irony nor satire.' (30) Describing the latest noir phenomenon as a trend of repeating nostalgically 'a cultural mode from another era,' Kaplan does not explain that Jameson has indeed disapproved of the sense of pastness conveyed in the style of pastiche as 'pseudohistorical depth.' (31) Kaplan is not alone in using Jameson's ideas about the postmodern without specifying Jameson's rejections of the mass culture and the idea of postmodernism. Kate Stables sees the postmodern cinema as important because its 'polysemic nature allows films to accommodate and privilege radically opposing discourses at the same time' while it expresses and reproduces dominant ideologies. (32) While she approves of Jameson's theory of the postmodern in her article (33), she contradicts Jameson's idea which seeks to denounce the postmodern 'ideological mirage.' (34)

Richard Martin and Leighton Grist, however, take on Jameson's line of argument respectively. In *Mean Streets and Raging Bulls*, Martin has a chapter entitled "Eighties Pastiche" in which he argues that American films noirs of the '80s are merely 'evocation of the iconography, narrative patterns, and character types of classic film noir.' He denounces those films as 'little more than a superficial, primarily visual re-creation of film noir rather than the dynamic thematic reinvention of the genre.' (35) Grist also shows his discontent with postmodernism in his discussion of *Body Heat*. In his citation of Jameson's view on the film, he draws on Jameson's idea of history and rejects the postmodern for its 'innate conservatism...underlined by its tacit denial of history.' He notes that *Body Heat* is a self-conscious use of noir conventions, which is 'superficial rather than analytical.' (36)

James Naremore is aware of Jameson's assertion about the alarming and pathological symptoms of society that has become incapable of dealing with time and history. (37) Naremore considers Jameson's work as overly pessimistic. (38) Jameson has described postmodern films as nostalgic many times. What I want to clarify here is that nostalgia is not an essential feature of the postmodern. James Collins argues ironically in *Screen* that being nostalgic may be more of a problem for Jameson. He says,

"By reconsidering postmodernism, then, not as a menace to society, but as a thorough-going attempt to understand the semiotic basis of cultural activity we can escape the iron cage not only of modernism, but of the ideological analysis founded on the same presuppositions regarding cultural production. Jameson's, Eagleton's and Foster's critiques of postmodernism, like Adorno's attack on the 'culture industry' that so clearly informs them, are themselves written in a 'nostalgic mode', essentially a nostalgia for a culture where the oppositional version of 'the best that has been thought and said' is easily located." (39)

This thesis sees beyond the negative assumptions on postmodernism one finds in Jameson's writings. In addition to Jameson's two versions of postmodernism, it is perhaps necessary to offer a more neutral stance in reconsidering the postmodern culture. What this thesis remains suspicious of is the master-narratives, models and paradigms that suppress difference in order to legitimate a homogeneous vision of reality. Therefore, my discussion shall seek to produce diverse diagnoses and interpretations of the phenomenon rather than a dialectical resolution. It henceforth surveys the distinctive aspect of recent Hong Kong cinema that allows the spectator-subject to reread history and to search for a larger framework of meaning. My focus of analysis in the following is the various ways through which the cinema enables the spectator to negotiate the ideas of self, identity and subjectivity by contrasting the concept of temporal unity with that of the 'perpetual present', identification with de-identification, and centred subject with a mutable self derived from a de-centred narrative.

There is still one more related aspect of the postmodern culture that this chapter needs to address, which is the way in which the cinema as a site of intersecting modes of representation promotes an ideologically self-conscious reading of the cinematic text. While Jameson denounces the postmodern as a form of narativization that disorients the subject from his or her coherent understanding of the historical self, I shall describe the de-centred narrative and its disruptive narrative strategy positively as a play or a game. I draw on Lyotard's ideas that we should not 'supply reality' but 'put forward the unpresentable in presentation.' Lyotard considers the postmodern as a strategy that puts forward the unpresented. Thus, what was once unpresentable may find an alternative way of expression within a heterogeneous and changing language structure. Lyotard describes this process of presentation as a 'game' which is, in other words, a process of re-narativization. Re-narativization of the text, which begins as a language game that is sustained by the subject's self-conscious reading, thus appears to be a more promising avenue of investigation. Since the tactic of re-narativization is to deny 'the solace of good forms' of the original text, (40) postmodernity in this context refers to an effort to search for 'new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable.'

With reference to Lyotard's idea that '*post modern* would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (*post*) anterior (*modo*),' (41) I shall discuss an essential aspect of the postmodern that is not embodied in Jameson's spatial model—a geopolitical aesthetic that inspires the subject to 'grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle.' (42) My discussion shall examine a cinematic practice that plays on the notions of temporality and narrativity by exposing the materiality of metanarrative, for example history, for a critique of representation and of the truth-claims that are interwoven within the narrative structure. This practice introduces to the subject a sense of the incommensurability of time and space that gives rise to the formulation of new ideas on human experiences and insights into what Jameson critiques as the socially symbolic act.

A Critique of Jameson's Theory of History

The social symbolic act that I discuss here technically refers to the portrayals of human experiences in terms of a self-other dichotomy, as I have laid out in an earlier chapter. This in turn constitutes the notions of subjectivity and identity by demarcating the conception of self in the representation of the local people and the conception of the other in the representation of the northerners; the rich as the self, and the poor employees as the other; and Hong Kong citizens as the self and the criminals from mainland China as the other. Such a device offers ideologically complicit pleasure in a form of narrative closure that resolves the social and cultural differences of the people. I shall draw on Jameson's critical comment on the mechanism of the symbolic act which represses historical contradictions. Jameson says,

> "The assertion of a political unconscious proposes that we undertake just such a final analysis and explore the multiple paths that lead to the unmasking of cultural artifacts as socially symbolic acts." (43)

One aspect on which I disagree with Jameson is his theory of history that describes human destiny in a 'single vast plot' through which problems and difference are to be resolved by resorting to an eternal struggle or revolution. For Jameson, a socially symbolic act is sustained by a mode of consciousness that renders the action, which is specifically historical in nature, possible. Jameson's theory of history, or narratological causality, refers to a seizing of the past by consciousness in such a way as to make of the present a fulfilment rather than an effect. White further shows that Jameson's notion of causation implies a story that is charged with the task of realizing the possibilities inherent within the 'plot' that links a beginning of a process to its conclusion. (44) In this analysis, White clarifies that Jameson's theory is grounded on a structural representation of history that I shall contest below.

For Jameson, History, with a capital letter, is the absent cause (45) of the collective repression, which refers to some intolerable experience and unacceptable wishes. The aim of his project is to promote a type of 'collective struggle' (46) to better the future of human beings by unmasking the underlying factor of a cultural psyche that avoids representing intolerable memories or experiences of the past in full, so as to make human existence more bearable. Therefore, he speaks of experiencing the 'absent cause' as an inevitable consequence of the development of 'History' like a single vast unfinished plot of the story of humanity. (47) 'History,' also as the consequence of its development, becomes a reason for taking up a position to refuse the collective repression, that is a reaction against the socially symbolic act that appears to resolve conflicts and despair passively by repressing those intolerable experiences and unacceptable wishes. In his already condensed description of 'History,' he advances one more aspect of 'History,' which is its inaccessibility except in textual form. Since he assumes that 'History' is a progression of political struggle, he envisages it as a form of cultural artefact that offers a dialectically new framework that brings understanding of humanity to a new 'horizon'. (48)

The reason for the emergence of collective repression, for Jameson, is that 'History hurts'. (49) It hurts because it must be something intolerable to the collective mind, for instance, the underlying conditions of exploitation and oppression which 'refuses desire and sets inexorable limits to individual as well as collective praxis.' (50) Narrative text, according to Jameson, is not History. It reveals merely an effect of History that represents the returning to the consciousness of the politically repressed material which had previously been confined to the unconscious. In his project, he proposes to detect the 'single vast plot' (51) that is hidden in the politically repressed material, and is represented only in a disguise or a distorted manner in the narrative text. The aim of Jameson's project is to detect traces of the politically repressed material in order to encourage a confrontation with the complacent illusions of ideology. My approach which draws upon the central premise of Jameson's project also seeks to identify the particular film strategy of Hong Kong cinema which critiques the ideologically complicit text.

William Dowling comments that Jameson's doctrine of the political unconscious is not a loose adaptation from Freudian psychoanalytical theory. What Jameson means by the unconscious, or by the collective denial or repression of underlying historical contradictions by human societies, is well grounded in psychoanalytic theory. Alongside Jameson, critics believe that when unacceptable wishes are expelled from the conscious, the unconscious is created as a repository of repressed psychical material that can only return to the conscious in a distorted form. (52) Jameson points out a very important issue about the distorted form of representation that is derived from narrativization, which conceals the politically repressed material. This is the socially symbolic act that Jameson critiques in his project. For Hong Kong people, what is repressed has varied from the period of colonization to that of decolonization. After colonization, the desire to be Chinese—the ethnic origin of Hong Kong Chinese—was suppressed. During the process of decolonization, the desire to remain as a British subject was also repressed. These desires are interwoven into the socially symbolic act that conceals the politically repressed material in a narrative and hence represents a distorted reality in a form of ideology that is politically correct. Jameson brings out a very important point about resisting the socially symbolic act that I shall discuss in some later chapters. The symbolic act refers to a practice of fabricating ideologically complicit narrative text. I shall explore a disruptive film strategy which enables recent Hong Kong cinema to contest the symbolic act.

Synthesizing Marxist and Freudian theories, Jameson speaks of the eternal struggle of the oppressed and the oppressor, and places emphasis on political rather than sexual repression in *The Political Unconscious*. For Jameson, as Dowling explains, it is 'revolution' that has been repressed (53) and it is the collective repression that should be refused. The reason for the revolution refers to the revolutionary spirit that is denied during the process of political repression. Repressing intolerable experience of conflicts, for instance, or unacceptable wishes to struggle at times becomes a means of survival. Revolution becomes Jameson's ultimate resolution through which he supposes that the people may impose radical change on society. His critical approach can, therefore, be seen as a way to resolve differences using a radical process of negation.

In the following, I shall take on Jameson's project of political unconsciousness for a critique of the socially symbolic act. I shall not, however, adopt his agenda for the progressive recuperation of the repressed story of humanity and his structuralist approach in expressing human existence in terms of 'History' as a single plot of historical linearity. Contrary to Jameson's presumption of linear historicity, I shall look at the delegitimation of the concept of causality that is used to build up the relation of past events, subjects and society. My later analysis that is established on my critique of Jameson's theory will reveal the way in which recent Hong Kong cinema unconventionally replaces the linear expression of history with a concept of the 'perpetual present' and refuses the usual understanding of Hong Kong films as nostalgic. Therefore, I shall take *92 Legendary La Rose Noire* as an example below and illustrate how the film critiques the old concept of history. Pastiche as a cinematic device shall be explained as the major avenue through which the film strategy disrupts the course of passive viewing by renewing the temporal-spatial relation of the film.

Jameson does not speak of pastiche as a device of the postmodern culture in a positive sense. He differentiates pastiche from parody by pin-pointing its blank parodic function. Parody, according to him, is a feature of modernism while pastiche is a feature of postmodernism in which parody is drained of its power to mock. He describes,

"Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something *normal* compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humor...." (54)

That is to say, pastiche as blank parody is not equivalent to parody which first appeared in literature. Having an origin in classic drama, a parody was a comic interlude in between acts. Blank parody, however, is neither humorous nor critical because it has deviated from its conventional trajectory to mock and negate in a burlesque form of text. For Jameson, pastiche is a strategy that conspires to blur the sense of contemporaneity and makes it possible for the viewer to receive the narrative as if it were set in the past. He characterizes pastiche as a formal feature of postmodern culture that reflects the way in which the 'contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past.' (55) What Jameson wants to demonstrate through his discussion on postmodern culture is that the sense of history disappears in the text as a result of the deployment of pastiche. He opines that pastiche is a play of connotations, which is 'activated by complex (but purely formal) allusions to the institution of the star system.' (56) When it opens up the possibility of a play of historical allusions to much older roles, it creates a pseudohistorical depth that displaces 'real' history. This is what Jameson describes as the new connotation of 'pastness', or the 'waning of our historicity,' in which the speaking subject of the text is dead, and is therefore incapable of fashioning representation of our own current experience. (57) The 'death of the subject', Jameson explains, refers to 'the end of the autonomous individual.' What Jameson considers as a dead end is actually, for me, a new beginning at which the subject is de-centred and thus he or she is enabled to find new avenues for an exploration of fresh ways of understanding human activities and existence. From a more positive point of view, I do not consider the historical subject of postmodern culture as being entirely deprived of the opportunity of making a sense of self in terms of history.

In the practice of pastiche, as I shall explain below, intertextual references are made so that the past experiences and occurrences of the film characters are appropriated extra-diegetically to embrace the past as well as the present. Thus, the histories of the cultural genres, film characters and the audience may be conjoined. Under such circumstances, the audience is not enabled or required to differentiate the past from the present, the diegetic from the extra-diegetic, the old from the new. Jameson obviously refuses such a practice and denounces the idea of the incommensurability of time and space that is embraced by postmodern cultural artefacts as cultural depthlessness. Contrary to Jameson's criticism of postmodern culture, I consider that the creation of depthlessness renders possible an act of negotiation which gives new insights into life.

Jameson acknowledges that postmodernism is a fashionable topic in contemporary theory, and remarks squarely in his book, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, that he inclines toward the old historicist conception of centred self. He sees the poststructuralist position of subject as radical under an assumption that the subject never exists in the first place, and denounces the post-structuralist text which constitutes an 'ideological mirage' (58) that causes the disappearance of the sense of history he prefers. What constitutes Jameson's theoretical construct is a belief that only the dialectic provides a way for transcending the 'ethical' in the direction of the political and the collective. (59) That is to say, he does not agree that postmodernism embraces his agenda of seeking a dialectical resolution.

Central to my thesis is a theory that Jameson would oppose. Contrary to Jameson's disapproval of the function of decentring the subject, I suggest that the blank parodic function of pastiche that works through a complex allusion, or a play of connotations, positively provides the viewing subject with multiple positions in which they may reread critically the stereotypical portrayals of self and history from different perspectives. Being solicited to shift the positions of identification, the subject is never restricted to just observing the 'ideological mirage.' Each one of the participants of postmodern culture, however, is engaged in the re-newed spectator-screen relationship in which they are enabled to reread the past self-consciously. Hence, the spectator-subject is able to experience history in fresh and more active ways. Jameson obviously dislikes the poststructuralist change motivated by the mental excursion of the de-centered subject. He explains that the postmodern device confines the subject to a life of the 'perpetual present' (60) in which 'perpetual change' consequentially obliterates traditions. Jameson's discontent about the 'change' is not justified, however, because pastiche—I shall demonstrate—does not disown traditions. Neither does the postmodern device refuse any of the good old values of the past. It does not even truthfully parody because, as Jameson himself has argued, it merely parodies without the connotations of ironic mimicry or negative allegiance. Pastiche is a device that allows the subject to go through the old conceptions of history, self, identity, etc., in order to derive new insights into life. With reference to *92 Legendary La Rose Noire*, I shall demonstrate the way in which pastiche offers a new outlook of the temporal-spatial relation through which the spectator-subject is enabled to obtain an alternative perspective of history and thus of identity and subjectivity.

92 Legendary La Rose Noire (1992) is about a naive female screenwriter who, with a female friend, has mistakenly trespassed on some private property. The people inside the house are fervently involved in an argument, and do not notice the ladies' unauthorised entry. In a quiet corner, the pair unexpectedly witness a triad assassination. After the killer has left the crime scene, the writer, in misguided inspiration, leaves a note and implies jokingly that the assassin is 'Black Rose' (a legendary heroine depicted in some '60s films entitled *Black Rose*, *Spy with My Face*, and *To Rose With Love*.) From a fingerprint left at the crime scene, the police identify the two ladies. When it is announced that they are prime suspects wanted by the police, they run away. The writer's secret admirer, Kei, who is a dim-witted and old-fashioned detective, comes to help only to find that 'Black Rose' has abducted them. To the captives' surprise, Black Rose is a real-life personality who imparts virtue and martial arts skills to two female students. The fake 'Black Rose' is one of the two disciples who are working together to clear their late-teacher's name. The disciples—one kind-hearted and one wicked—are behaving strangely all the time. The kind disciple, suffering from a loss of short-term memory, can barely manage everyday life without her fellow student's help. Meanwhile, the wicked disciple who daydreams too much about reuniting with her former lover is leading a dysfunctional life. As soon as the writer's admirer arrives at the mansion which houses Black Rose's successors to rescue his loved one, the wicked woman catches him. A weird period of courtship between the detective and the wicked disciple commences due to the fact that she creates chaos by setting everybody up in the house so as to win the heart of the man. Eventually, the detective agrees to marry her on condition that she releases the writer. Before the marriage is consummated, the triad killer arrives with his hitmen hoping to eliminate the writer and her friend, who are witnesses to his heinous crime. The police also reach the mansion at this time to confront the gangster, only to find themselves out-numbered. At the most critical moment, the kind-hearted disciple suddenly recovers from her amnesia and regains her faculties and strength. Excelling over the police and Kei, she dispatches the criminals and rescues the innocent ladies.

Pastiche is the dominant device of *92 Legendary La Rose Noire*, which mixes the styles of '60s noirish films of Hong Kong and that of a number of other genre films, such as martial arts films and melodramas that were popular in the '60s. I shall refer to a courtyard scene of the film in the following to demonstrate the way in which pastiche as a postmodern device enables the contemporary spectator to re-examine the past as the 'perpetual present.' Conjoining various spatial representations—the spaces for creating and making the film, the diegetic space and the viewing space—the film challenges the conventional frameworks of meanings that draw boundaries between different spatial entities. The purpose of compressing the signifiers of space, I shall explain, is to juxtapose the ideas of centred-self that are central to the constitution of each one of the spatial entities. This device allows the spectator-subject to transgress boundaries of meanings so as to negotiate a new subject position and a new sense of subject identity after the conventional concept of causality is shattered. Key to understanding the discursive function of the 'perpetual present' is a strategy that invokes a sense of nostalgia for the purpose of exposing the materiality of the structure of the narrative that gives rise to a nostalgic mood, which eventually defers and differs the ideological function of the cinematic practice. That is to say, the collapsing of the boundaries noted above enables the production of new ideas by both embracing and resisting established norms, which makes new moves in creating a type of game that questions the legitimation of a genre convention and its cultural significance within the system. In other words, the strategy enables the system to turn the framework of ideological representation around so as to embrace a mode of critique that takes shape by firstly engaging the spectator subject in enjoying the complacent illusion of ideological representation, and then alienating him or her from the interpretation without forcing him or her out of the position of cinematic identification. This is a process that I shall call ceaseless contestation of meaning that results from the use of pastiche.

The courtyard scene of *92 Legendary La Rose Noire* demonstrates the use of pastiche in an attempt to problematize the conventional perception of the cinematic temporal-spatial relation. This is achieved by disrupting the course of the act of spectating that originally sustained a sense of spatial continuity within a coherent diegesis. When pastiche enables the film to take on and express ideas intertextually and extradiegetically, the spectator is encouraged to traverse various spatial entities and to understand that meanings are no longer registered chronologically on a timeline. The content of the courtyard scene is simply about the wicked disciple of Black Rose who enjoys a childish outdoor game of catching a paper butterfly with her much younger fiancée. The detective who will be forced to marry her soon is thinking miserably of the writer who is her captive. In the courtyard, he is sitting on the wall like Humpty-Dumpty holding an apparatus that has a paper butterfly attached. At the most joyous moment of the game of catching this butterfly, the disciple sings a love song to the detective. Because of his plan to save the writer, the detective has to pretend that he loves her too and thus he sings along. The complicated spatial disposition of the scene cannot be explained as a singular plot. There are at least four levels of diegetic and extra-diegetic spaces that the spectators are encouraged to traverse.

The spectators' first mental excursion is a psychological journey between the historical planes of the '90s and the '60s. The '90s effeminate detective, called Kei, bears the same name of a very popular actor who used to play roles of educated and faithful young lovers to innocent young ladies in the '60s. In the contemporary comic imitation of the old role, the '90s actor styles his hair like the '60s actor, strikes poses similar to those from the old films, and dresses like him as well. Since people of Hong Kong from all age groups are familiar with these '60s films that are shown almost daily on television in the afternoon and late at night, the majority of the Hong Kong audience would not miss the re-deployment of the old iconography in the contemporary film text. Contemporary Hong Kong audience are also familiar with the representation of courtyards which are always the places where the couples exchange vows of love in these '60s films. Alluding to the old films, *92 Legendary La Rose Noire*'s portrayal of the detective in the new courtyard scene is a spoof of the roles that Kei played as a smart and trendy guy in the old Hong Kong films.

The reason why the unrealistic approach successfully engages the spectator is that the film recycles an earlier cinematic representation of a faithful and moral man that the contemporary audience may now treasures. Since the old virtue is fading away in real-life, the old icon is what the audience has missed from the '70s onwards. Hence, traversing between the historical spaces, the contemporary viewers are allowed to review and/or reconsider the older social values.

The diegetic space is the second strata. A conception of time as a linear representation of past and present events is solicited in a few inserts or flashbacks that enable the spectator to realign some separate instances in a chronological order. In a realistic approach, the spectator is given a vantage point of view to see the way in which the detective used to wait lovingly in secret for the writer near her home. In the flashbacks, the spectator is also enabled to see how the detective was beaten up for the writer's sake in an unfortunate incident, and how spontaneously and secretively he tried to stay close to her whenever she was in trouble. At this point of the film, the spectator is solicited to identify with the detective who occupies the centre stage. In the meantime, however, the narrativization of the detective's love saga in the conventional spatial-temporal structure and the spectator's engagement in it are disrupted by a discursive device that blends the melodrama with a musical episode. Before the spectator is able to detect the change of film forms, within seconds, the film undermines the impact of the film as a love drama and presents the lady's love vow in the form of a '60s musical performance. This is the third instance in the mental excursion for the spectators in which they are allowed to traverse various strata of space including historical, social, narrative and psychological space.

Lastly, the courtyard scene switches from making intertextual references to extra-diegetic references by seemingly turning the cinema into a karaoke venue, where the participants can sing along with the film. As soon as an old tune from the '60s that is familiar to the Hong Kong audience is played, the lyrics of the song are also superimposed on the screen word by word in the format of a karaoke video for the participants to sing along. Therefore, the same audience inside the cinema is solicited to either recall past experiences of listening to the old canto-pop song or of singing karaoke in real-life. Under such a circumstance, the participating viewer is no longer encouraged to assume any role but to sing or hum the old tune. The film thus takes the spectator away from the diegetic space. This is also a moment when the ideologically complicit text loses its control over the spectator as spectatorial identification is interrupted or disrupted. A process of re-interpretation of the conceptions of self, identity and history may commence in the midst of the spectator-subject's fast-paced journey into the film world and then back to reality.

It can be seen that the film acknowledges and values previous achievements of Hong Kong cinema by the way in which it incorporates the sufficiently familiar yet distinctive elements of the popular film genres of the past. After the discursive device has led the spectator to assume various centred positions of self that are integral to the '60s films and the '90s film, they are also given an additional choice to re-think that of their own—contemporary—sense of self. Conjoining the conceptions of space in mind by making intertextual and extra-diegetic references, pastiche conjures up an 'ideological mirage' in which the spectator-subject is enabled to negotiate the idea of self and identity self-consciously. In the process of re-defining the idea of self and its relation to personal and social history, etc., the spectator-subject is allowed to remain independent from any 'made identities' that are previously imposed on them. The discursive practice that critiques the concept of identity without forcing the subject out of his or her situation in which he or she acquires a sense of self is essential to the operation of the postmodern strategy. I consider identity as a locus of multiple and variable positions that are made available in everyday life by a process in which one may come to assume subjectivity in a form of political consciousness. Therefore, in this discussion of the ideologically complicit nature of the concept of identity, I reveal the way in which the postmodern device ruptures the base of the collective view of the idea of self. The reason for the critique of the ideologically complicit representation of self is to identify the function of the disruptive discursive strategy that allows contemporary Hong Kong audience to reread self-consciously the 'made identities'. The major characteristic of this strategy, as I shall propose to examine in the forthcoming chapters, is that it never stops challenging the established norms and beliefs, and opens new avenues to explore alternative ways of interpretation.

When the sense of self is refreshed, the spectator is able to reread history more consciously and actively. The 'made identities' made available in *92 Legendary La Rose Noire*—for example, the honourable and faithful man, the woman who still believes in marriage, and the person (the spectator) who sings along with the film and recalls an old sense of identity or self—not only engage the film in the practice of pastiche, but also beg the question of interpretation. With the aberrant film strategy, the spectator may disagree as to the deliberation or intentionality of the director's incorporation of the filmic elements. In the process of renewing past understandings of the self and the world, the spectator may also critique the representation and the convention.

Pastiche and the Noir Phenomenon

Many critics, like Natalia Chan and Cheuk-to Li (61), employ Jameson's term, pastiche, in their writings on contemporary films. In many of these cases, the term pastiche is used loosely as a term of generic element, technique, or style of films. Along the line of discussion on postmodernism, their definitions of pastiche are similar but not quite equivalent to the Jamesean idea which specifies that pastiche is a blank parody. William Bennett JR. Covey suggests a term 'postmodern pastiche' (62); for him pastiche is a parody which is characterized by humour and homage. In describing pastiche as central to neo-noir filmmaking, he says that '(r)eferencing the past for humor's sake continues throughout the history of parodic neo-noir filmmaking....Postmodern theorists describe this practice as pastiche,' (63) In his thesis, he speaks of three elements of neo-noir which include 'pastiche', 'homage' and 'nostalgia'. It is yet unclear whether both pastiche and parody are features of neo-noir, or whether parody is an element of pastiche. He writes,

"Despite the fact that some parodies revel in a kind of anarchic postmodern pastiche and some homages do reflect noir social concerns, most of the above-mentioned films are content to reference old film noirs for nostalgia's sake and thus are best described as wonder bread neo-noirs." (64)

In Covey's terminology, 'parodic film noir' is more or less equivalent to 'film noir parody,' therefore, it remains undefined whether parodic neo-noir is one kind of neo-noir or whether parody is an element of neo-noir. On the one hand, he says that a parody is characteristic of 'pastiche;' on the other hand, he stresses that parody and pastiche are two separate elements that create 'anarchic humor' of 'neo-noir.' (65) Central to his discussion of pastiche is a point of anarchic humour that results from a fusion of contradictory codes. He explains,

"Few neo-noir critics recognize the anarchic humor of many of the pastiches and parodies that covertly illustrate cultural spaces where neo-noirs can make fun of the white male hardboiled detective's machismo and persona." (66)

He therefore speaks of 'parodic character' as an example of pastiche. His purpose of analysis is to critique the conventional representation of white investigators whose sense of masculinity is traditionally defined by their skills with machinery and their physical prowess. The parodic function is achieved, according to him, by mixing the elements of the conventional persona of male investigator with that of an effeminate character who is engaged in cross-dressing, dancing to pop music, wearing women's shoes, etc. (67)

In my discussion of *92 Legendary La Rose Noire* earlier on, I have also proposed that the portrayal of the effeminate detective leads to a critique of representation that results from the use of pastiche in the film text. I do not, however, intend to delimit pastiche as merely a rhetorical device. In my examination of the contemporary film noir, pastiche is taken as a process of installation of undecidable alterations of meaning between the structure and what is repressed in the text. The interplay of signs derived in the course of the practice of pastiche is not only a matter of imitation of a 'dead style' or 'dead language' but also an active agent of the discursive strategy that engages or draws on the spectator in a process of retrospection and self-introspection. I shall further develop this analysis in later chapters.

James Naremore, too, agrees that pastiche is different from parody. He explains that pastiche is a 'more blank-toned cousin' of parody; and that parody 'has less to do with the ridicule of a dead style,' (68) but rather is just an attempt to capitalize on a popular trend. It is obvious that Naremore's idea of pastiche is very close to that of Jameson's (69). In Naremore's discussion, he stresses pastiche's 'non-comic approach to old-fashioned noir,' which does not make the spectator laugh at the things that it imitates; this is in contrast to even the most conservative comic parody. (70) The narrative, cinematography and iconography of classical film noir are examples of the dead languages or the dead styles that are reinvested in contemporary cinema. For instance, they include the dead detective languages Michael Douglas and his colleagues master in *Basic Instinct*, the old noir heroes' black suits of *Men in Black*, the chiaroscuro effect of *Terminator II*, and the urban corruption described in *The Matrix*. These characteristics are all appropriated from historical film noir.

The trajectory of the redeployment of dead languages and dead styles lies on a horizon of expectation of the spectator that is formed by recognizable conventions of genre, style, or form, which is then destablized and dismantled. The spectator's interpretation of the spoof without the ulterior motive of parody is central to the operation of pastiche, which both inscribes and subverts the notions of self and identity. Redefining the relation between ideology and subjectivity, the postmodern device critiques both the process of subject formation and the temptation of easy accommodation to the power of interpellation. Thus, the use of pastiche not only exposes the workings of ideological representation, but also ruptures the ideological structure of the text so as to allow repressed meanings to surface. While modernism investigates the grounding of experience in the self and searches for integration and wholeness of personality, postmodernism works outside the humanist framework and brings challenges to the humanist concept of a coherent, continuous and autonomous individual.

Postmodernism is mostly delimited as a historical period or an aesthetic quality. These views result from an oversight of the postmodern as a critique of the modern episteme and as criticism against the project of Enlightenment. When the term postmodernism induced debates on the end of ideology in the field of sociology in the 1970s, there was a demand for a demystifying force that reveals and unmasks ideology. Postmodernism became a school of thought that took up, and still does, an anti-Enlightenment position initiating debates that question totalizing systems of reasoning and concepts of knowledge.

Commissioned by the Council of Universities of Quebec in the late '70s, Jean-Francois Lyotard examines the state of knowledge of the western world. He discovers that Enlightenment reason, which has been organizing our lives, operates like a master-narrative. Meta-narratives are grand and large-scale theories such as history and science that justify the knowability of everything in a system of truth-claims. Lyotard disagrees that these kinds of beliefs should be considered as the only explanation or representation of human existence or experience. He is much more alert to difference, diversity and the incompatibility of our aspirations and beliefs. To deal with the totalizing concept of the master-narrative, there is a shift from the paradigm of consciousness to that of language in contemporary philosophy. This shift of paradigm has the effect of enlarging the size of each one of the interrogated epistemic units by decentring the focus from the episteme subject to the signifying activities of a collection of subjects. For example, an epistemic unit can now refer to a sign which has three-fold characters comprising signifier, signified and interpretant; to language and *parole*; and to language games. Since the identity of the epistemic subject is considered as changeable, the bearer of the sign is no longer an isolated self. The bearers of the signs are a community of selves whose identities may extend as far as their horizon of interpretation expands.

This change of theoretical paradigm is of significance to my analysis of the way in which production of meaning may be differed and deferred, which renders the negotiation of subjectivity and identity possible. Such discussion is facilitated when critical attention on the process of signification is expanded from a single episteme to the oppositions and differences that formulate a critique of the constitution of subjectivity. While the critique proclaims the demise of grand narrative, it also begs to question what forms the basis of legitimation in society if an overarching meta-narrative is to be rejected. For Lyotard, Wittgenstein's notion of 'language games' (71) provides an answer.

'Language games' refers to the little narratives explicating the limited context of the life of people and their localized roles, that do not comply with prescribed behaviour according to a kind of total philosophical context, like Marxism. Key to the operation of the 'language game' is an observation of how well the little narrative enables a person to perform in a just system of legitimation that emphasizes diversity and encourages new insights into life without recourse to a meta-narrative.

Although the major goal of Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition* is to examine how knowledge becomes legitimated in cybernetic society and to critique the way in which cybernetics has come to dominate society and economics, the influence of his work may extend to discussion on other forms of analytical discourses, for example the theory of genre. The dilemma of genre criticism is that as soon as a legitimation strategy is formulated to examine the role of the work of the cultural artefact, the strategy begs to question what legitimates the work of the cultural analysis. This is due to the fact that a system of analysis is established to sustain a truth-claim and delimit a particular genre in a universal order of the same. The function of such an analytical framework is not distinct from that of the grand narrative.

Under the challenge posed by Lyotard on the legitimacy of knowledge, the practice of deconstruction that is short of creative and productive insights is also under criticism. In order to address this challenge, my thesis poses a question on the politics of identity and difference, and tackles a phenomenon of a complex conception of subjectivity multiply organized across positions on several axes of difference and across discourses. This discursive practice will be explained in the next chapter in light of the Derridian concept of *différance*. The purpose of the discussion is to locate the playing field on which recent Hong Kong cinema searches for a new form of expression of identity and an interrogative stance to reread subjectivity formation. The focus of analysis does not lie in the form and content of the films which are categorized in an order of the same according to the conventional theory of genre. Rather, special attention will be paid to a kind of creative and productive resistance to a totalizing structure of analysis that ceaselessly contests ideological representation and gives rise to new perspectives on the nature of the culture and its changing relation with the cinema audience.

Notes

1 Jameson's article is part of Hal Foster's anthology on Postmodern culture, which is one of the first anthologies that focuses on postmodern culture. See Jameson's "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, (Seattle and Washington: Bay Press, 1983) p. 111-125

2 Hal Foster, *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, (Seattle and Washington: Bay Press, 1983, hereafter *The Anti-Aesthetic*

3 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p.18-9

4 Ibid., p.15

5 Ihad Hassan, "The Culture of Postmodernism," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 2(3), 1985

6 Jameson considers Lyotard as a pioneer in this new way of thinking and his methodological perspective as very striking because narrative is affirmed not merely as 'a significant new field of research, but well beyond that as a central instance of the human mind and a mode of thinking as legitimate as that of abstract logic.' See Jameson's foreword for Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (UK: Manchester University Press, 1984), hereafter, *The Postmodern Condition.*

7 Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press,1986), p.175

8 *The Postmodern Condition*, p.79. Lyotard's research was conducted at the request of Coneil des Universities of the government of Quebec.

9 *The Postmodern Condition*, p.xxiv

10 Peter Nicholls, "Divergences: Modernism, Postmodernism, Jameson and Lyotard," *Critical Quarterly*, Vol.33, No.3, Autumn 1991, p.4, hereafter, "Divergences"

11 "Divergences," p.5; *The Postmodern Condition*, p.xvi-xvii. See also Jameson's *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p.60 for Jameson's comment on Lyotard's conception of the postmodern as the 'triumphant reappearance of some new high modernism.'

12 "Divergences," p.5. Nicholls's source of reference is *Le Postmoderne expliqué aux enfants*, p.125-126

13 "Divergences," p.5. Nicholls's sources of reference are J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Book), p.488, and Freud's main essay on the topic is "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through," *Standard Edition*, 24 vols, (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-74), XII, p.147-56

14 Douglas Kellner ed., *Postmodernism, Jameson, Critique*, (Washington: Maisonneuve Press, 1989), p. 21

15 *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p.46

16 Douglas Kellner "Jameson, Marxism, and Postmodernism," in *Postmodernism, Jameson, Critique*, ed. Douglas Kellner (Washington: Maisonneuve Press, 1989), p.28

17 Fredric Jameson "Afterword—Marxism and Postmodernism," in *Postmodernism, Jameson, Critique*, ed. Douglas Kellner (Washington: Maisonneuve Press, 1989), p.371-2

18 Ibid., p.372

19 Martin Jay and Jane Flax, "Forum: Martin Jay and Jane Flax on Postmodernism," *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History*, Vol. 32, 1993, hereafter, Forum on Postmodernism

20 *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p.342

21 Ibid., p.343

22 Ibid., p.345

23 Ibid., p.25

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p.53. Jameson attempts to bring together within one explanatory framework the classical Marxist theory of ideology, which posits that ideology presents a distorted picture of the world from the viewpoint of a ruling class. For him, the specular structure of ideology affirms the significance of the constituting category of the subject as a critical element contributing to the existence of ideology and the definition of ideology.

26 Ibid., p.27-28

27 Ibid., p.27

28 Forum on Postmodernism, p.307

29 The title of Jameson's publication is not noted in E. Ann Kaplan's bibliography. Jameson's work on the idea of pastiche, as we know, was published as early as 1983 in Hal Foster's anthology, *The Anti-Aesthetic*

30 See *Women in Film Noir*, introduced and edited by E. Ann Kaplan, (London: British Film Institute, 1998), p.1, 13

31 *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p.20

32 Kate Stables, "*The Postmodern Always Rings Twice:* Constructing the Femme Fatale in 90s cinema," in *Women in Film Noir*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan, (London: British Film Institute, 1998) p.166

33 *Women in Film Noir*, p.179

34 *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p.15

35 Richard Martin, *Mean Streets and Raging Bulls: The Legacy of Film Noir in Contemporary American Cinema*, (Lanhaam, Maryland and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1999), p.91

36 Leighton Grist, "Moving Targets and Black Widows: Film Noir in Modern Hollywood," *Movie Book of Film Noir,* ed. Ian Cameron, (London: Movie, 1992), p.274

37 *More than Night*, p.211

38 Ibid. Naremore does not offer criticism at the heart of the problem which is the issue regarding Jameson's idea of history. Nevertheless, he gives an alternative view on nostalgic films saying that 'nostalgia may be pervasive in the new film noir, but it is also a theme in the "original" pictures.'

39 James Collins, "Postmodernism and Cultural Practice: Redefining the Parameters," *Screen*, Vol. 28, No.2, Spring, 1987, p.26

40 *Postmodern Condition*, p.81

41 Ibid.

42 *Posmtodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p.54

43 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 20, hereafter, *The Political Unconscious*

44 Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and*

Historical Representation, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), p.149-150, hereafter, *The Content of the Form*

45 *The Political Unconscious*, p.55,102

46 Jameson's idea of History is borrowed from Karl Marx. For Jameson, History is 'the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity.' See Karl Marx's *Capital* (New York: International Publishers, 1977), III, p.820 for Karl Marx's explanation of the terms Necessity and Freedom; or Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*, p.19. The scenario of the collective struggle ambitiously forms the content of the plot of world history. Jameson's quotation of "*The Communist Manifesto*" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels reveals that History is like 'a single vast unfinished plot' of the story of humanity:

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles: freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman—in a word, oppressor and oppressed—stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of contending classes."

See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, p. 20. Jameson's source of reference is noted as Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels's, *"The Communist Manifesto,"* in Karl Marx, *On Revolution*, ed. and trans. S. K. Padover, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), p.81. This citation indicates that Jameson shares the same notion of causation Marx did. Hayden White comments that the causality revealed in the plot is indeed the outcome of a 'blind play of chance and contingency,' and that the Marxist scenario is merely a master-narrative. See Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*, p.150. It is the idea of the 'single vast story', which is a concept of totality that has exposed Jameson to grave criticism.

See comment from William. C. Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx: An Introduction to the Political Unconscious*, (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), p.53-4, hereafter *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*. Jameson is aware that the Marxist perspective of salvational history, like other ideologies he critiqued—religious, mythological or philosophical systems—is just another master-narrative which maintains a notion of coherence for upholding a scenario that makes human existence tolerable. Nevertheless, Jameson maintains that the Marxist scenario as the mystery of the cultural past is indispensable.

47 *The Political Unconscious*, p.20

48 Jameson speaks of three horizons of the interpretive system, which is an idea borrowed ultimately from classical phenomenology, but more immediately from Gadamer. See Dowing's *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, p.127 On the first horizon, text is an individual text grasped as symbolic act. On the second horizon, when political allegory is used

for the representation of the social, the individual text is transformed into collective discourses that should be grasped as socially symbolic act. On the final horizon, cultural artifact is the equivalent within the dialectically new framework of the objects of the first two horizons. The narrative is grasped here as the ideology of form, which means that 'the symbolic messages transmitted to us by the coexistence of various sign systems...are themselves traces or anticipations of modes of production.' See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, p.76. Jameson envisions that social order is something always constituted by a class struggle between a dominant and a labouring class. Dowling says, "Jameson's system demands that we reconceive the social order at the cultural level in the form of a dialogue between the antagonistic *class discourses*, which now become the categories within which a Marxist interpretation will rewrite individual texts." See *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, p.128.

49 *The Political Unconscious*, p.102

50 Ibid.

51 Hayden White explains in *The Content of the Form* that Jameson describes to narrative as a 'socially symbolic act' which derives from his conviction of the narrativity of the historical process itself. White speaks of Jameson's theory of history as a master narrative, and as a claim to realism and truthfulness derived by virtue of its adequacy in representing of the structure (or 'plot') of that process. See *The Content of the Form*, p.148.

52 Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.165

53 Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, p.117

54 Jameson, "Postmodernsim and Consumer Society," in *The Anti-Aesthetics: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, (Seattle and Washington: Bay Press, 1983) p.114

55 Ibid., p. 125

56 Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p.20

57 Ibid., p.20-1

58 Ibid., p.15

59 *The Political Unconscious*, p. 60

60 *"Postmodernism and Consumer Society,"* p. 125

61 Natalia Chan, "Rewriting History: Hong Kong Nostalgia Cinema and Its Social Practice," in *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*, eds. Po Shek Fu and David Desser, (UK: Cambridge

University Press, 2000), p.258-259

62 See William Bennett JR Covey's PhD dissertation entitled *Compromising Positions: Theorizing American Neo-Noir Film*, Purdue University, 1996, p.111

63 Covey, ibid., p.129-130

64 Covey, ibid., p.132

65 Covey, ibid., p.137

66 Covey, ibid., p.137

67 Covey, ibid., p.139

68 James Naremore, *More Than Night*, p.196, 200

69 Jameson's notion of pastiche is borrowed from T.W. Adorno. With reference to Adorno's account of the fate of 'style' in contemporary literature and music, Jameson explains that pastiche must be radically distinguished from parody in Adorno's sense. Adorno's main concern in proposing the concept of pastiche is to describe the recourse of Stravinsky, Joyce, or Thomas Mann to dead styles and artistic languages of the past as vehicles for new works. See Jameson's *Signature of the Visible*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p.82

70 *More Than Night*, p.215

71 Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans., Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (UK: Manchester University Press, 1984), p.9-10

Chapter Four
The Act of Spectating and *Différance*

This chapter shall examine a practice of genre fusion in recent Hong Kong cinema, which reveals an aspect of subversiveness of the cinema in terms of a particular type of spectator-screen relation. What is important to recognize in the genre amalgamation is an issue of generic incongruity that is intrinsic to the reinvestment of classical film noir. My focus of analysis in this chapter is the way in which the film, *The Private Eye Blue*, produces an act of supplementarity that transforms the spectator-screen relation by consistently deferring and differing the formulation of meaning and interpretation. My discussion seeks to explore the film strategy in terms of Derrida's concept, *différance,* which demonstrates an unconceptualizable and unperceivable dimension in language in which the film may defer the thinking of difference without bringing the concept into an order of the same. This film strategy, firstly, specifies a gap of interpretation in the course of cinematic identification. Secondly, it challenges hierarchical gender construction and instigates a re-definition of the boundaries between the feminine and the masculine, identities and communities. The cinematic practice not only undercuts conventional representations of gender roles in films noirs, but also instigates an event of ideological and psychological introspection amongst the spectators by conflating different concepts of identity. What emerges from the practice, I shall demonstrate, is a deferral of meaning.

Central to the agenda of deferral/differing is a discursive practice that creates a psychological lapse as a site of critical and self-conscious reading of the film. I am concerned with the ways in which the film seeks to, firstly, interrupt the normal course of cinematic identification; and secondly, promote a type of self-conscious rereading and re-interpretation of the relation between space and self. This chapter proposes to examine the formulation of a psychological space created as a site for self-conscious critiques of cinematic identification. I shall look at the way in which *The Private Eye Blue* revises a classical shot/reverse-shot sequence for the constitution of the interplay of gazes which include the gaze of the spectator subject, the gaze of the film characters, and the projection of the spectator subject as a virtual subject within the film.

Genre Amalgamation as Movement of Supplemantarity

Although *The Private Eye Blue* projects a noirish spectacle of urban degeneracy in all strata of society, the film strategy does not demonstrate a straightforward adoption of film noir. Rather, it reinvests the classical genre. From a murky street to a home, from a political arena to a children's playground, and from government to a family, *The Private Eye Blue* re-uses noir themes and stylistics in order to evoke the tragic sensibility of films noirs. The genre amalgamation not only enables local cinema to re-stage the dramatic sense of social instability that is intrinsic to the historical genre, but also supplements the tragic vision with different views that are traditionally formulated in other genres. Below, I shall explore the impact of genre amalgamation on the act of spectating in recent Hong Kong cinema.

The dynamism of film-making sometimes lies in its ability to refresh the standard generic structure by constantly mixing generic elements with the major paradigm. The making of a film, therefore, is not confined to and does not work within a single generic tradition. In his study of genrification process Altman claims that film genres are perpetually caught up in a process of becoming. (1) That is to say, a genre is always in the process of creation. I shall further explain that the audience's participation is part of the genrification process because genre expectation is intrinsic to the process of becoming. Such discussion posits the theoretical viewpoint of the stability of film noir as problematic due to the fact that genre is a concept that is always changing over time. Altman also traces back to Hollywood's golden age, in which there was a period of intense genre amalgamation for promoting the marketability of films. He shows that throughout its history Hollywood has developed techniques that make genre mixing not only easy, but also virtually obligatory. (2)

At the level of production, genre mixing is facilitated by a deployment of easily recognizable semantic genre cues. For instance, the sexy and dangerous image of a femme fatale as one of the most prominent types of film noir iconography, and the dark and murky urban street as a symbolic reflection of a corrupt society are some easily identifiable semantic elements of the classical genre of film. The semantic approach to genre study, however, does not tackle issues regarding the dialectic relationships of the cinematic lexical elements. A syntactic approach, therefore, comes into place, which looks at the relationships between these semantic elements that are subject to the ideological determination of generic meanings. It alone, however, can hardly substantiate a full analysis of the practice of genre amalgamation. Rick Altman believes that the combined effort of both the semantic and syntactic methods (3) can answer many traditional questions in genre study. He posits the structural approach as fundamental for a form of analytical framework that explains the way in which one kind of meaning 'contributes to and eventually establishes meanings of another.' (4)

A certain degree of genre transgression was made possible in the golden age of Hollywood largely as a result of the careful calculation of cinematic appeal to the majority of the audience. That is to say, films were always classified mechanically according to their resemblance to the classical genres in form and content. In this situation, any element that appears to be unfamiliar is not considered to be substantial or clear enough to substantiate a category. As a result, acknowledgement of a genre category largely depends upon whether critics have noticed the existence of the most dominantly recognizable generic elements. In other words, this system of genre mechanism derives a film category by denying the role of less dominant generic elements as contributing factors to the formulation of the main structure of the film. Yet these generic factors may not be less essential in the account of the films. The methodology of negation embraced by the conventional genre approach delimits some of the existing criteria of generic concerns as irrelevant. Hence, it overlooks an important generic function that is concerned with recycling pre-existing generic elements that are outside the core structure.

Altman's contribution in the area of genre spectatorship shifts critical attention from the studio to the site of film consumption. In his study of the process of generification, he discusses an idea of a generic 'crossroad,' which gives insight into the spectatorial response to genre amalgamation. (5) A crossroad or fork road is an analogy he uses to specify the site where the audience negotiates genre pleasure. His analysis of the activity of genre amalgamation is drawn upon in order to develop an understanding of an aspect of negotiation of meaning. This refers to a process in which the subject consciously and continuously rereads cinematic practice and the spectator-screen relation by both embracing and contesting the additional cinematic elements that are incorporated in the film proper. Moving beyond an analysis of the film text at the semantic and syntactic levels, I shall look at the way in which the discursive practice plays on the meaning of the text or the production of meaning, which does not sustain the idea of the origin by casting out the non-core elements as the other. In this respect, the use of core and non-core generic elements in the cinema can be seen as an effect of supplementarity, which shall be discussed below.

The appropriation of classical elements as supplements is seen as a strategy that disrupts the course of cinematic identification within a system of suturing. Based on this, I shall further examine the significance of the play of supplementarity that renews the spectator-screen relation. Easily identifiable generic elements are cited in the following for an explanation of the symbiotic relationship between two of the most prominent stock characters of classical film noir, namely, the tough noir hero and the femme fatale. The focus of my analysis is not only the fatal attraction that usually leads to a tragedy, but also the dynamism of the symbiotic relationship between the male and the female protagonist who react under the influence of the disruptive film strategy. The consequence of such disruption is that representation is proven as never absolute and cinematic identification as changeable.

The relationship between the victimized hero and the wicked femme fatale has never been constructed in polar opposition. Rather, they are in a relationship of symbiosis. Critics tend to analyze the portrayal of the conflicting or passionate emotionally-charged interaction between them as an issue of problematized masculinity. (6) The masculinity crisis noted as the consequence of self-pity and low self-esteem is more vividly shown not when he is on his own but when he is interacting with the femme fatale—the sexy and dangerous woman to whom he is attracted. Since he encountered the independent and aggressive woman, his life has seemed to be suddenly very uncontrollable. He is driven into fulfilling her evil wish according to her malicious agenda which eventually causes the hero's degeneration.

According to Krutnik, the crisis of masculinity in films noirs undercuts normative values that maintain the cultural hierarchy of the male and the female. The dominance-submission pattern is usually played down in most of the films noirs. Therefore, the hegemonic cultural disposition of the hierarchical positions of the two genders becomes less effective. My focus of attention is less on the gender construction. Rather, I put emphasis on a discursive strategy employed by recent Hong Kong cinema that subverts the two-tier gender hierarchy for a more objective and progressive exploration of subjectivity formation. The strategy refers to a process of a critique of subjectivity formation in relation to resistance, contestation and re-interpretation of the self-other relation portrayed in the cinema. The self-other dichotomy that has been sustaining the conventional conception of the notions of subject and identity is seen as essential to the fabrication of the crises—social, political and/or cultural, in the cinema. What I want to further explore in the following is the way in which *The Private Eye Blue* opens new avenues to redefine and reinterpret the concepts of identity and subjectivity in a critique of the representation of crises.

The theme of masculinity crisis has been recurrent in a number of recent Hong Kong films. One common quality of male leading characters shared by classical Hollywood cinema and Hong Kong cinema refers to the portrayal of the masochistic male. The difference is that the stability of masculine identity is recuperated in classical film noir while the issue of identity crisis remains unresolved in Hong Kong cinema. The point to ponder over is not how widely or intensively the film further develops an old theme or feature. Rather, and more importantly, the borrowing of the semantic and syntactic components from classical film noir instigates the development of a new type of spectator-screen relation through which the spectator-subject may reflect on the ideological representations of the masochistic male and femme fatale more self-consciously. The crisis of masculinity portrayed in *The Private Eye Blue* is paralleled by that of cultural identity, which is instigated by a form of reflection on the historical event of the changeover. Since the history of Hong Kong is what Blanche Chu would describe as ambivalent, reflection on subjectivity formation is complex. In her "The Ambivalence of History: Nostalgia Films as Meta-Narratives in the Post-Colonial Context," Chu says,

"...the past is evoked only to give a vague historical ambiance or background for the dramatic actions in contemporary contexts and sensibilities, rather than any objective exploration of the social reality of the past." (7)

For Chu, history should be understood within the parametres of the status-quo imaginary which is revealed in the way in which Hong Kong people abide by the colonial regimes of power. She explains that Hong Kong people—who are also described as 'rootless'—did not have a concrete idea of a 'pre-colonized' identity for the establishment of a political disavowal against the colonial government so that the people resorted to a self-sufficient equilibrium of status-quo imaginary. Since such an imaginary blurred 'the binarism of colonizer/colonized, colonial/native, oppressor/oppressed, etc,' (8) Hong Kong people were prone to a cultural identity crisis when the changeover of the sovereign right of the colony suggested a possible change of the status quo and when the socio-political change reminded the citizens of their pre-colonial status. (9) Esther Cheung elaborates that the imaginary is related to a presentation of Hong Kong's 'prosperity and stability.' She says,

"This collective imaginary triggered off by Hong Kong's inevitable retrocession to Chinese sovereignty, manifests the desire for a presentation of Hong Kong's 'prosperity and stability' and more precisely the paranoia for 'the end of capitalist Hong Kong.' Undoubtedly, this imaginary has been a very powerful force in shaping the collective experience of the Hong Kong people not only in the years between 1984 and 1997 but also after." (10)

Thus, probing the crisis of masculinity with regard to *The Private Eye Blue* is key not only to the exploration of the maleness or femaleness but to the nature of the history and cultural identity of Hong Kong people diegetically and extra-diegetically.

The Private Eye Blue is a mixed genre film in which some of the essential film noir paradigms are maintained. The film tells a story of a young and immature Chinese girl who has healing and extra-sensory psychic power to foretell the future. Being used by her country, she has been kept under the government's protective custody since she was a child. Her talent has been used, for political reasons, to keep an old patriarch in good health. Getting bored of her monotonous and controlled life, the girl sneaks out of her country and comes to Hong Kong in high and adventurous spirits. On her arrival, she quickly contacts her cousin from whom she expects assistance in the colony. To her disappointment, her cousin just wants to exploit her. News about her disappearance is spread immediately across the country. Because of her healing power that has been helping keep the ailing political leader of China alive, the governments of China, Britain and Hong Kong respectively are determined to hunt her down. The row between these powerful countries over the custody of the missing girl draws the interest of triad societies in Hong Kong. They, therefore, also join in the hunt for the girl. In the meantime, a private detective is contracted by an unknown source to capture this girl whose life becomes problematically entangled with his from then on. In a gun battle, the private detective takes pity on the girl and saves her from the hands of those who are trying to capture her. Escaping to an unknown beach at sunset, she confesses to the private detective her true identity as the therapist of her country's ailing patriarch. She also reveals her inadequacy in performing her duty as her supernatural power has sometimes failed her in recent years. Crying out loud to express her feelings of distress, she speaks about her fear of returning to her home country where she is supervised and treated like a guinea pig in numerous experiments conducted by the government. She admits that she is perplexed about her strange feeling of lacking a national identity as a fugitive. Inspired by the girl's effort to overcome her troubles, the private detective begins to consider resolving his own family problem. The private detective (or the noir hero) holds her in his arms and comforts her like a brother when he convinces her to leave him as soon as possible. Having betrayed his client who has paid him to hand over the girl, he anticipates that it will be dangerous for her to stay with him. When they are about to depart, they are shocked to discover that an anonymous Chinese politician has kidnapped the beloved daughter of the noir hero. Abandoning the plan to leave Hong Kong, the girl applies herself, in turn, to the freeing of her friend's daughter. The event finally ends in chaos, and the girl is caught in a car explosion while she is fleeing for her life. After a period of time, when everyone believes that the girl has died, she sends her greetings over the phone to the happily reunited family from an unknown place.

Throughout the film, the names of the male and female leading characters are never used. Instead, the different ways in which they address each other adds comic relief to their intense relationship. In a strong northerner accent, she addresses the private detective as 'lo bang' in a colloquial way, which means, literally, 'a piece of old cake.' She uses this to address him as a means to degrade him, as a fossil that does not fit in with the fast-changing modern world. Whereas, the private detective addresses the girl as 'lang mui,' which means young girl in Cantonese, calling into question her ability to take proper care of herself.

The role of the 'lo bang' has a lot of resemblance to the hero of classical film noir, whereas the character of 'lang mui' is to a certain extent similar to that of the femme fatale. Like most of the films noirs, the male leading character of *The Private Eye Blue*, though for different reasons, also has problems in relating to the female leading character. Conventionally, the sexual over-valuation of the femme fatale is one of the major causes of anxiety for the noir hero. When the hero is very much attracted to the sexy femme fatale, and succumbs to her agenda, the danger of losing control of his own life looms large. In *The Private Eye Blue*, an issue of identity replaces that of sexuality. The hero is not attracted to the girl. He is interested in resolving the enigma that is related to her mysterious identity. The quintessential similarity between these characters of classical and recent cinema demonstrates a generic transgression of paradigmatic elements from one cinema to another across time. I shall argue later that the film installs these pre-existing generic elements for a critique of representation.

The story of the film begins, like many classical films noirs, at the moment when the private detective is given a mission by a client. It is typical that this kind of mission is a deceptive one. Not surprisingly, he is not only deceived by his client about the true identity of the girl, but is also misled by his own cousin who is his business partner. What the private detective encounters is not what he first envisaged. His original task of keeping an eye on the young girl who is visiting the colony is very complicated. After his car has been burnt and his apartment ransacked, and having been attacked and blackmailed by different people, he comes to understand that he is caught up in a maze of troubles. The violent activities to hunt down the girl, as he gradually observes, are organized respectively by powerful political leaders and different groups of people from the underworld. Like other noir heroes, he discovers that wealthy and respectable people are co-operating with gangsters and politicians in a corrupt society where the official machinery of law enforcement is not able to bring about justice.

While the film noir paradigm is sustained in the film, the generic re-workings of the film also reveal that the classical generic elements are not brought into an order of the same in Hong Kong cinema. Thus the classical character types, namely, the noir hero and the femme fatale in *The Private Eye Blue* are neither structured as the same in the categories nor as different. When the sense of difference is deferred, the system that pre-determines the difference is thus problematized. I borrow the Derridian concept of '*différance*' for this description of the status of the supplementary elements that are added to the original structure of classical film noir in the practice of genre amalgamation in recent Hong Kong cinema. Genre mixing in this chapter refers to a tactic that defers meanings in an act of supplementarity and challenges the origin of meaning. (11)

The very idea of supplementarity, according to Derrida, has suffered tremendously in the hands of philosophers of the Enlightenment, like Rousseau. They conceived an idea of the origin, which casts out the margin as the other. The nature of the supplement was defined as 'dangerous', something that was added from the outside to contaminate the whole, and as something that creates imbalance and brings the proper to an excess. Derrida critiques this concept of supplement. He says, '(m)an *calls himself* man only by drawing limits excluding his other from the play of supplementarity.' (12) He explains that the 'approach to these limits is at once feared as a threat of death...' (13) He rejects this assumption for the idea of supplementarity, and asserts that there should not be an idea of origin in the first place. He claims that the supplement should take the place of the centre, and that 'supplement is always the supplement of a supplement.' (14) That is to say, everything is a supplement of another supplement. He says,

"Thus supplementarity makes possible all that constitutes the property of man: speech, society, passion, etc. But what is this property [*propre*] of man? On the one hand, it is that of which the possibility must be thought before man, and outside of him. Man allows himself to be announced to himself after the fact of supplementarity, which is thus not an attribute—accidental and essential—of man. For on the other hand, supplementarity, which is *nothing*, neither a presence nor an absence, is neither a substance nor an essence of man. It is precisely the play of presence and absence, the opening of this play that no metaphysical or ontological concept can comprehend. Therefore this property [*propre*] of man is not a property of man: it is the very dislocation of the proper in general: it is the dislocation of the characteristic, the proper in general, the impossibility—and therefore the desire—of self-proximity; the impossibility and therefore the desire of pure presence." (15)

He refutes the idea of origin, which deduces the subject's 'presence' by suggesting the absence of the supplement, for instance, the absence of animality, primitivism, childhood and madness. That is to say, for Derrida the act of supplementarity, according to the philosophy of the Enlightenment, oversimplified the nature of human beings. Derrida refrains from crystallizing the idea of a centre in a privileging structure. Therefore, he speaks of the 'absence of centre' in his concept of supplementarity. He launches a re-definition of the status of supplements, which delegitimates the binary opposition of the centre and the margin. This new perception of meaning, or the production of meaning, challenges the totality of the fundamental paradigm of thought and knowledge as it allows the supplement to take the place of the centre, and alternatively undercuts the pre-determined larger order of meaning.

Derrida's concept of supplementarity enables me to articulate the role of genre amalgamation in the parodic re-investment of noirish elements. I will explore the coalescence of the classical noirish character types in *The Private Eye Blue* as an act of supplementarity, which refers to the old generic forms that are themselves pre-existing supplements. Film noir itself is a supplement of the detective or crime films of the '40s. In terms of the classical character types, the noir hero as a marginal individual, who is not a moral character, serves as a supplement to the role of the conventional hard-boiled detective. The dangerous and independent image of the femme fatale also functions as a supplement to most of the genre films in which women are usually submissive to dominant male characters. In *The Private Eye Blue*, these character types—the supplements—are parodied and transformed into supplements of the supplements. The melodramatic and comic elements that are mixed into the film noir structure shall be described as the major factors that trigger this act of supplementarity.

I shall explain that the constitution of meaning in *The Private Eye Blue* is intrinsically a playful movement of supplementarity. The play is achieved by, first, delegitimating the centre of the structure of meaning; and, secondly, by using supplements to suggest an unending roll of references and connections to other supplements. Hence, a deferral of the production of meaning may result from the play of the presence and the absence of pre-dominant representations. This playful movement of supplementarity seeks to free the spectator-subject from the conventional way of seeing the film. My purpose here in studying the process of genrification as an act of supplementarity is to avoid over-concentration on the core generic elements. I suggest this alternative approach to genre criticism by resisting negligence in attending to details of the important representative difference made to the film text at the margins of different genres in the course of amalgamation.

Limits of Paradigmatic Range and Classical Roles

The focus of my investigation here is the role of making pure and direct references in the body of the film while the film also inverts and resists the references. In the following, I outline the film's cross-generic references, which are essential to the critique of generic conventions that I set out to study. The dynamics of supplementarity are not only about construction of meaning, but more importantly they are part of a play of representations. The Derridian term of *différance* will be applied here to enhance understanding of the film's discursive strategy that produces the deferral of meaning and cinematic identification for the purpose of re-formulating the spectator-screen relation.

In classical film noir, family activities are seldom portrayed. Eventhough a film suggests a domestic setting, classical film noir usually unfolds a story of a couple who are falling apart, like the couples appeared in *The Stranger on the Train*, *Double Indemnity*, etc. Under such a circumstance, children seldom appear in film noir. The existence of the sexually independent film noir woman, usually the femme fatale, not only challenges the value of family, but it is also the cause of social instability and of the male protagonist's crisis of masculinity.

In the beginning of *The Private Eye Blue*, the girl appears as enigmatic, mysterious, sexy and dangerous like most of the femmes fatales. As the story slowly unfolds, however, the female leading role turns out to be an innocent young girl whose character is, to a large extent, contrary to that of the classical femme fatale. When the film starts, the girl is known to be the grand-daughter of the most powerful patriarch of China. However, her identity becomes an enigma. While the noir hero thinks that his job is a straightforward one, to keep track of the girl's daily activity for her relatives who care about her, he is surprised to find that she is hardly an innocent girl. While the private detective is waiting inside his car, the girl suddenly gets into the vehicle and introduces herself. More intriguingly, she reveals that she can tell the future, stating that the two of them are meant for each other for life.

The private detective as the noir hero alternates between defensive suspicion and somber defeatism as he staggers under the barrage of attacks by all those who attempt to abduct the girl. At first, he turns the girl in to a senior Chinese communist who has not only threatened to destroy his properties and his career in the hope of regaining a quiet life at that moment. Later when he realizes that his action has fueled the ulterior motives of the criminals who are in competition for the girl, he is determined to save her, and his conscience. In a dark alleyway one night, both of the protagonists are nearly killed in the gun-totting row between these different groups of abductors. Like other noir heroes, the private detective in *The Private Eye Blue* is portrayed as a tragic hero who is caught in a vice between impulse and guilt, and is unable to control the evil forces around him.

Adopting a sexy and dangerous image, the girl harbours a kind of threat to the noir hero in the first half of the film that is not entirely discernable, predictable or manageable. The threat of the film noir woman like this is always transformed into a secret which is something that must be aggressively revealed. Trying to unmask the young lady's true identity, the noir hero hopes to understand the danger she poses to him by locking her away and tying her up for interrogation. Like many femmes fatales, her sexuality is a site of question because of her ambiguous character. What is so controversial about the role is that it embodies two types of conflicting essences. On the one hand, the body of the character is over-represented as a mysterious source of 'sinful' power that poses a threat to the noir hero. On the other hand, the femme fatale also exhibits fear and anxiety.

Femme fatale used to be an indication of the extent of fear and anxiety prompted by the understanding of sexual difference in the late 19th Century. In art, literature and philosophy, the feminine body is insistently allegorized as excess. In cinema, her appearance marks the confluence of modernity and urbanization. Lucy Fischer tells us that the femme fatale character finds its roots in 19th century art. It did not, however, come to the limelight until the '20s and '30s of the 20th century when actresses like Garbo personified the concept of the sexually liberated woman. (16) The femme fatale in film noir is constantly portrayed as evil and is usually punished or killed at the end of the film. For instance, Janey Place describes the character as the 'dark lady, the spider woman, the evil seductress.' (17)

The major reason why female sexuality is always at stake in film noir is that the representation of film noir women reveals the problematized masculinity of noir heroes. The descriptions of the noir heroes' favour towards and hostility against the fatal women can be seen as resulting from a displacement of a negative sentiment that refers to a diminishing sense of self-worth in men. In Karen Hollinger's psychoanalytic analysis of film noir, femaleness is seen as 'simply insufficiency or excess in comparison to maleness.' (18) Deborah Thomas writes in her essay, "How Hollywood deals with the Deviant Male," that many sociological analyses posit the cause for film noir's antagonism to woman as the temporary but widespread introduction of woman into the American force during the World War II. (19) The resentment is also explained as the displacement of hostility from foreigners on to women and the underworld. (20) With regard to film noir's depiction of the male psyche, Thomas suggests a psychoanalytical approach to look at the representation of women as the other in terms of psychological projection. This account of the dominance-submission pattern does not describe the relationship between noir heroes and film noir women because the subservient side of the femme fatale characters are never dominant in the classical genre. Furthermore, the most controversial aspect of the relationship between the male and female protagonists of film noir is the disruption of the conventional hierarchy between man and woman rather than an exacerbation of a kind of polemical relationship.

The mysterious power endowed by the femme fatale is described as independent from the control of the male protagonist, who is irreversibly drawn to her. According to Krutnik's observation of the most popular type of noir hero who is described as 'tough', the male character's extreme affection for the film noir woman is a projection of male masochism. (21) Krutnik purports that noir 'tough' thrillers reveal an obsession with male figures who are both internally divided and alienated from the culturally permissible parameters of masculine identities, desire and achievement. My explication of the relationship between the male and female figures draws on Krutnik's analysis of the 'tough' noir hero's psychology. The way in which the sexy and dangerous woman poses a threat to the male protagonist psychologically is related to a resultant erosion of confidence in the course of structuring the masculine role.

The problematized masculinity, in its most elaborate form, is found in, firstly, the male character's over-valuation of the female as a loved object; and secondly, his de-valuation of her subjectivity as the other or alien. The instability of masculine identity and/or masculine role is always described as the origin of the question of feminine sexuality in film noir. This is how female sexuality becomes the site where the male protagonist struggles to stabilize his identity. The femme fatale figure as a sign of fear and anxiety and of the force of the world of duplicity and dissemination has long had a place in spelling out the crisis of masculinity.

In *The Private Eye Blue*, the film noir woman figure is also a sign of fear and anxiety. Nevertheless, her feminine sexuality is hardly over-valued. In most of the films noirs, the body of the femme fatale is emphasized as sexy, powerful and dangerous to facilitate the masochistic hero's extreme romantic idealization. Although the young girl has a strong desire for the noir hero, it is apparent that she is ignorant of sex. In one of her tricks to bring the noir hero under her seductive influence, she takes him to a cinema to see a pornographic film. Not being sexually excited herself, she also fails to seduce the noir hero who has just had sex with his wife. Unlike classical film noir, this film obviously does not over-value the young girl's sexuality in the context of the description of the legitimate sexual relationship between husband and wife. Neither is her subjectivity devalued like other femmes fatales nor her female sexuality explicated as transgressive.

Female Sexuality and Melodrama

The relation between the two protagonists is the object of study for the rest of this chapter. In the following, the discussion of the representation of the film noir woman is essential to the examination of the symbiotic relation between the enigmatic girl and the seemingly masochistic noir hero. Unlike the convention, the two protagonists are drawn together in the film not because of a desire to establish a physical relationship but due to the likeness of their personalities. When they both lose direction in their lives under crises of identity, they find comfort and solace from each other. Against the background of the conventional limits of the paradigmatic range of films noirs, I shall explore the significance of the deferral of difference displayed through the practice of generic amalgamation, which blatantly portrays the film noir woman of *The Private Eye Blue* in an unconventional way. Firstly, my discussion will focus on the incorporation of the fantastic elements in the film. This not only revamps the formal structure of the classical genre, but also undermines the classical narrative system's potential to create a narrative stasis. Secondly, my investigation of the appropriation of the melodramatic elements in the film will explore the possibility of the creation of a psychological space in which the film may enable the spectator to re-evaluate and reread the spectator-screen relation.

a) Femininity and Fantastic Expression

The Private Eye Blue is largely shaped by a structure of film noir in which the bleak evocation of characters is driven by suspicion and by obsessive preoccupation with the past and with that which is mysterious or unknown. Normally, the hero of film noir starts out investigating crimes but ends up investigating the woman who poses a threat to him. (22) The fear and anxiety that the hero experiences are pre-determined by a structure which highlights an issue of crisis of masculinity. Although the hero does not enjoy peace in his life of turmoil, film noir usually produces a state of stasis in the end by eliminating the deadly film noir woman. (23) Although she does not require masculine control, the aim of the narrative is to kill or punish her for the restoration of the male order. The impact that such narrative structure creates is what I would call the stasis. Thomas Sobchack synthesizes Aristotle's theory of stasis in his description of genre spectatorship. He says,

> "If spectators identify strongly with the figures of the drama, feeling pity and fear as drawn out by the activities going on before their eyes and ears, then, when properly concluded, given the appropriate ending, these emotions are dissipated, leaving viewers in a state of calm, a state of stasis in which they can think rationally and clearly." (24)

I take on Sobchack's idea of stasis for an analysis of the film's sadistic closure shown at the end, prior to the epilogue. This form of narrative closure that punishes the deadly women can be seen as a pseudo resolution for the masculinity crisis in classical film noir. (25) It leaves the spectators in a state of stasis in which they may mistakenly assume that the crisis has been resolved. This kind of narrative strategy only aims to passively contain the threat posed by the fetishized female object of desire. The private detective in *The Private Eye Blue*, however, does not tackle his desire in the same way as his predecessors. Unlike many films noirs, *The Private Eye Blue* demonstrates that the hero resolves his family and identity crises by an alternative method.

Classical film noir basically devalues film noir woman as an object of desire—a female who is endowed with a body of depravity and dissipation—rather than as a subject of individuality and integrity. *The Private Eye Blue*, however, breaks the boundaries that demarcate the two film noir icons as the subject and object. Hence, the film perpetuates the quality of the fatal woman without suppressing it. When the film opens, the noir hero attempts to understand the enigma that is related to the film noir woman but he ends up understanding more of his own problem. Since he becomes less involved in his problematic life style later in the film, he regains strength to relate to his family and friends, including the film noir woman. However, the question of any fixed sense of self and identity are resisted in the course of the appropriation of the noirish style which is playful. The epilogue is not seen as non-noirish. Rather, the noirishness—the dangerous sexuality that is intrinsic to the fabrication of the symbolic relation between the femme fatale and the masochistic male—is invoked to contest the constitution of a fixed identity. When the noir hero resumes a normal relationship with people around him in a form of narrative closure in the epilogue, his stable relationship with his family is challenged when the film noir woman claims that she will come back. Finally, the threat posed by the fatal woman character lingers in the ending.

The playfulness of the film strategy is also demonstrated in its incorporation of fantastic elements through which the young girl is also exempted from the narrative obligation predetermined for the conventional role of the femme fatale. The supernatural power that she professes is described in the film as extra-sensory power, the power of healing and the supernatural strength that protects her from danger. With such super-human qualities, the film noir woman is represented as the counterpart of the noir hero, who is as good as she is. Firstly, they are portrayed as equally strong in terms of their psychological strength and physical prowess. It can be seen that the conventional film noir hero is interestingly free of bullet wounds in times of danger. The film noir woman's supernatural ability is just a fantastical version of the prowess that the noir hero usually embodies in the classical genre. Secondly, their characters are depicted as equally flawed. At times, the young girl's power fails her, which makes her as vulnerable as the noir hero who is not able to cope with his family crisis. When they assist one another on the run, they acquire a sense of likeness. When the film noir hero discovers the film noir woman's problematic identity, he is impressed by her action to undermine the unlawful detention orchestrated against her by the state. As soon as the noir hero identifies himself with this film noir woman who tries to resolve her identity crisis, he realizes that he is also engaged in one since he is required by China (the mother country of Hong Kong people), Britain (the ruling country), and the Hong Kong government to turn in the girl. Like the young girl, he is disillusioned by the fact that he has been used as a political tool. When the film noir woman is seen as equivalent to the noir hero in the sense that they both seek to reread their problematic identities and take control of their lives, the social boundaries between them are broken. This arrangement also confirms that the two characters are unconventionally communicating on an equal footing in *The Private Eye Blue*.

Heartwarming scenes of confession and farewell between the noir hero and the film noir woman of *The Private Eye Blue* are unconventional in two ways. Unaccountable attraction is basically intrinsic to the relation between the noir hero and femme fatale in classical film noir. The glamour of the independence and courage of the beautiful and dangerous film noir woman always draws the noir hero to her side. The hero, being very much attracted to the female figure, cannot refrain from following and executing the wicked woman's evil agenda. *The Private Eye Blue*, however, conjures up an entirely different picture. It is the young girl who is attracted to the hero but not vice versa. Their encounters lack a sense of romantic intimacy because what arises from the girl's affection towards the private detective is merely infatuation.

The most intriguing point about their relationship is that the noir hero sympathizes and identifies with the young girl. Evidence for this observation can be found later in the film when the noir hero meditates, in the finale, on the young girl's courageous action to resolve the trouble, which is related to her problematic identity, at the risk of losing her own life. Inspired by the girl, he finally acquires a new outlook on life. His fruitful transformation into a more responsible man in the family demonstrates his new attitude towards life.

The reconciliation between the noir hero and the film noir woman disrupts the narrative stasis that sustains the conventional male order of the classical genre. At this point, the film also brings in a sense of disillusionment because the noir hero can no longer evade the question of problematic masculinity. It is very interesting to note that, right at this moment of disillusionment, the feeling of fear and anxiety arising from the identity crisis is intensified significantly and deliberately in the film. I shall develop this point of argument later in this chapter.

b) Manifestation of the Melodramatic Elements

While the female leading role deviates from her femme fatale trajectory, the film unfolds an unconceptualizable and unperceivable dimension of film language that the conventional scope of genre criticism does not cover. I shall explain this observation in terms of Derrida's concept of *différance.* The neologism of the term is untranslated. Alan Bass, the translator of *Writing and Difference*, explains that Derrida not only combines, with the term *différance,* the meaning of the word difference that is registered as spatial form or content and the sense of deferral in time (26), but also plays on both of the meanings. The playful nature of the film strategy is noted in its practice that disrupts cinematic identification and reformulates spectator-screen relation through and against generic conventions. Below I trace back to the part of the story that reveals the young girl's first visit to the hero's family for further discussion on the disruptive function of the film's discursive strategy.

Before their reconciliation, when the noir hero first surrenders the girl who is leading him astray, the two become friends after being caught in furious gunfire where various groups of people are all fighting against one another to capture the girl. Saving the girl in the midst of the violence, the private detective takes her to his wife's quiet country house that is believed to be a temporary safe haven for the girl. The noir hero's beloved little daughter receives them cautiously for fear of upsetting her mother who is divorcing her father and would not welcome him. No matter how much the wife still loves her husband, she does not want to see him. Neither does she want to comply with the noir hero's request to keep the girl under her roof. While the couple is arguing, the young girl searches the wife's wardrobe, puts on her sexy lingerie without permission, and then childishly demonstrates her new look in front of her friend. The angry wife does not calm down until she is told of the rumour about the girl's secret identity as the Patriarch's runaway 'grand-daughter'. She and her husband then tie the girl up and interrogate her. The teenage girl neither admits nor denies their false impression of her. Though the couple intimidates her, she fearlessly pokes fun at them. Judging from her insider knowledge about the old political leader's private life, they release the girl assuming that she is a relative of the old patriarch. Inviting her to join the family for a sumptuous breakfast at a table set against a peaceful country view, the family petitions the girl on behalf of Hong Kong people to influence her 'grand-father' to safeguard the city's prosperity and stability after the changeover. In response, the girl strangely suggests that she should date the private detective. After the meal, the noir hero leaves his friend and family to plan for the girl's return journey to mainland China. Later the wife secretly arranges an interview with the girl, which is telecast locally. Thus, the girl's hiding place is exposed.

I shall look at two points of generic discrepancy that explain the way in which the representation of the film noir woman is related to that of the family. The young girl of *The Private Eye Blue* appears at first to be the femme fatale who initially leads the noir hero astray in the film. However, as her story unfolds a different trajectory from that of the conventional femme fatale emerges. Firstly, as a hapless orphan who had an unhappy childhood, she is portrayed as a parallel of the child—the noir hero's lonely daughter who is living with her single working mother. Gradually throughout the film, her childish behaviour phases out any sign of dangerous sexuality that the spectator previously had expected. Secondly, though the young girl appears to bear a visual resemblance to her femme fatale predecessors, she is not defined in *The Private Eye Blue* as a person who is as sexual as other femmes fatales. As an innocent youngster who is described as unattractive to the noir hero, her female sexuality is not comparable to that of other femmes fatales. Furthermore, the wife, rather than the fatal woman character, is the person with whom the noir hero is in love. One of the major tasks of the noir hero of *The Private Eye Blue* is mending the broken relationship between himself and his wife.

John Blaser describes film noir as part of post-war American cinema that introduced a different visual and narrative style, which confronts a range of social values that affirmed marriage and the family. Although he emphasizes that classical film noir does not focus exclusively on the family, and in many films noirs the issue of criminal justice is emphasized instead, films noirs do not reject the family altogether. (27) His viewpoint on an attitude of scepticism toward the family and the values that classical Hollywood cinema supports converges with Sylvia Harvey's comment on film noir's treatment of the family and family relations. She says,

"The repressed presence of intolerable contradictions, and the sense of uncertainty and confusion about the smooth functioning of the social environment, present at the level of style in film noir, can be seen also in the treatment of social institutions at the thematic level, and most notably in the treatment of the family." (28)

Along Harvey's line of argument, on the thematic level, Blaser proposes to examine two types of noir endings that contradict the style and content of films noirs. They are the ending about restoring family value by punishing the woman who transgresses the boundaries of normal family relations and the unrealistic happy ending about the hero marrying the nurturing woman or even a converted femme fatale. A film noir of the historical genre usually formulates the closure in one way or another. It can be seen, however, that the film tactic of *The Private Eye Blue* disrupts the structures of the narrative closures of classical film noir by mixing the two types of narrative closure. The film thus gives rise to a critique of the cinema, firstly, through a new way of reading film noir in a domestic setting. It critiques, secondly, by reviving the thematic structure of film melodrama; and thirdly, by turning around the conventional ending of films noirs without completely negating the conventional narrative structure of film noir.

The use of femme fatale iconography in *The Private Eye Blue* is by definition opposed to domesticity. However, *The Private Eye Blue* in a dominantly noirish narrative structure demonstrates a revival of the old melodramatic paradigm. When the young girl who has lived her whole life as an orphan envies the child who has two parents, the film quickly recalls a popular old soap opera theme, which depicts lonely children who yearn for motherly love. The way in which the young girl communicates her understanding of the value of family to the little child upsets the dramatic mode of film noir that does not conventionally celebrate domesticity and the love for family.

I purport that the melodramatic paradigm comes back in a playful manner as the supplement of supplement, which seizes the centre-stage that is previously occupied by another source of supplement. This is what Derrida would explain as the supplement that 'is neither simply the signifier nor simply the representer, does not take the place of the signified or a represented, as is prescribed by the concepts of signification or representation….' (29) In the present case of the reinvestment of the iconography of femme fatale in *The Private Eye Blue*, the play is a loop of the intermittent presence of two classical types of woman icons. Or, in Derrida's words, it is a play of absence and presence. When the presence of the film noir woman does not imply any limit that is drawn to exclude the dramatic quality of the female soap opera character, the icon of sexy and dangerous woman creates a sharp contrast to the melodramatic representation of woman. Under such circumstances, neither the film noir woman nor the loving mother is signified in a straightforward manner in the course of the film. That is to say, the broken movement of signification that constitutes the elliptical connotation of the classical Hollywood female role becomes a play of absence and presence.

The play of representation is a movement of supplementarity that enables the film to position the film noir woman continuously within the profusion of the classical generic conventions. While the dress, actions and speech of the female protagonist and the events of the film declare noirishness for the character, the film defers and differs the generic quality. On the one hand, the film defers the generic function in the sense that both the impressions of devil and goddess are never easily imposed on the protagonist in the course of signification. On the other hand, the film differs in the sense that the explication of the woman representation is opened up for the spectator's interpretation within and outside the signification process. The first sign of deferral arises from the film's manipulation of generic expectation. This can be seen in the finale of *The Private Eye Blue*.

Through the image of a seemingly strong, active and sexually expressive young girl, the film displays a sense of ideological contradiction that poses a threat to the male protagonist and probably the male audience as well. In relation to the challenge, what classical film noir usually offers the genre spectator is a sadistic closure that contains the controversy created by the dangerous female sexuality. *The Private Eye Blue* appears to make a difference to the convention of classical film noir by disorienting or deferring the genre expectation.

As the genre system always provides information with which the audience is familiar, it draws on and feeds into their knowledge of stereotypes. The viewing pleasure that is attached to particular film categories is in the minds of the cinema-goers. Expectation is, therefore, in play before the audience enters the dark auditorium to watch the film. Deferral of the production of meaning that enhances the expectation may be achieved, however, through creating a lapse in the interpretations of time and space. The finale of *The Private Eye Blue* is a clear example of the temporal and spatial lapse. In the finale and the epilogue, there are two temporal spectrums displayed in events that take shape in three places respectively. At the end of the film, when the noir hero fails to save the young girl from her abductors, she drives a car desperately towards the end of an unfinished broken bridge and plunges with the speeding vehicle into the water. The last slow motion close shot of the finale showing the young girl's seemingly suicidal action is presented as if it is a conventional narrative closure of film noir. This type of sadistic ending is used as a device to contain the threat posed by the female character. The passing down of the convention to contemporary cinema offers the spectator a glimpse of an old ideologically complicit message explaining that female sexuality is dangerous. What is subsequently presented in the epilogue of *The Private Eye Blue*, however, conveys a contrasting concept of woman (see appendix ii). Key to the conventional epilogue is the characterization of the fatal woman whose position in the film fundamentally opposes the domestic woman.

After the finale there is a cut out to a black frame, an off-screen sound effect of a mobile phone being dialed appears to suggest that the film does not end there. The transitional black frame creates temporal and spatial lapses and implies an occurrence of an ongoing event which takes place sometime later somewhere. Before the mysterious dialing tone dies, the black frame cuts into a medium shot of the mother and the child holding tightly the father who has just answered the unexpected phone call. This is the first time ever in the film that the three members of the family are portrayed as having a close relationship within a frame. Against a background of an area with a holiday resort, they are supposed to have been surprised by the phone call while they are happily enjoying an outing together. A later shot of a scene of the family reunion at a sunny beach gives the spectator the impression that the father and the mother are a loving couple, who are committed to their family. In "Melodrama as Formula," E. F. Bargainier describes that the most popular of the melodramatic types is domestic drama. These dramas consistently offer stories of reunited families and new life beginnings. (30) Crucial to the coalescence of contrasting elements at the end of *The Private Eye Blue* is a feeling of confusion constituted by the women representation. In addition to the depiction of the femme fatale, the portrayal of the domestic woman in the epilogue seems to celebrate a female's all-embracing love for her child and husband. The paradox created by the epilogue, which depicts female sexuality as both dangerous and lovable or safe, not only disrupts the narrative closure but also renders any decision on either type of closure impossible and creates a lapse of understanding. The way in which the epilogue comes in the place of a lapse that defers and differs the constitution of meaning is what I call an act of supplementarity.

What I want to demonstrate here is that the film's creation of the lapses in time and space is a play, or an act of continual deferral and difference. The passage of time from a gloomy evening of gun violence to an unknown happy sunny day at the site of a holiday resort indicates that the family has already recovered from the turmoil related to the tragedy of their girl friend. The scene of family reunion seemingly suggests a happy new beginning for the family free from the influence of the film noir woman. That is to say, the film allows the spectator to adopt the narrative resolution and to think that the problem has been resolved. Such an arrangement seems to suggest that the noir hero has finally resolved his crises of masculinity and identity after a passage of time that is not specified in the film—or what I call the temporal lapse. Again in the epilogue, the presentation of the joyful family outing at an unknown place—the spatial lapse—implies the cessation of the film noir woman's threat against the domestic woman and the noir hero.

The imposition of the epilogue marks a difference in the signification process. According to what the film offers in the transition from the finale to the epilogue, the film seems to deliver a scenario that cannot be fully explained. The film does not go into detail in describing the noir hero's transformation into a family man. From what the epilogue presents, the noir hero seems to have recovered from his problematized masculinity for some reason that the film has not specified diegetically. In terms of signification, as soon as the noir hero appears to have resolved his masculinity crisis and re-established normal relationships with people around him, the signified noir hero is bereft of its signifier—that is the masochistic male. Instead, the family man of stable identity fills the gap. No matter how implicitly the supplement of the melodramatic element creates an impact through the establishment of the temporal and spatial lapses, it damages the signifying chain and challenges the formulation of meaning and interpretation.

The addition of the epilogue implies a scenario of a family merrily celebrating their delivery from the traumatic turmoil that has eventually strengthened the characters of the protagonists and reaffirmed their identities in family and society. This type of melodramatic scene reasserts a family value that film noir usually does not deliver. The epilogue thus defers what a noirish narrative conventionally seeks to convey about the crisis of masculinity. That is to say, the act of supplementarity allows the spectator to reconsider and redefine the limits of the paradigmatic range of film noir. Since the course of representation has been interrupted, signification is eventually delayed, twisted and/or extended. Although the film seems to submit the spectator to the ideologically complicit readings of both the melodramatic and noirish elements at first, he or she is not subject to a constitution of a meaning that is fixed and finite.

As Derrida describes, the 'supplement comes in the place of a lapse, a nonsignified or a nonrepresented, a nonpresence.' (31) All of the possibilities of deferral and difference take place in a lapse, a conceptual place without the presence of any forbidden or unconceivable ideas, or a site of actively free-flowing ideas originating from a conscious self. All meanings that are deferred are 'non-represented' explications, which have been previously unspeakable, unfathomable and unthinkable. A mark of *différance* is non-representation. It can never be registered in a normal course of signification because it only reveals itself in a form of the non-signified. It takes shape in the movement of supplementarity to the breaking point of the signifying chain when the arbitrary relationship of the signifier and the signified collapses. In the following, I shall explain this aspect of supplementarity which allows representation to be broken down into 'non-representation'.

While the film seems to punish the film noir woman in the finale, it has already planned for her comeback in the epilogue. Revealing the happy family in the epilogue, the film enables the spectator to assume that all troubles have disappeared and a new page of life is underway. As soon as the exuberant young girl surprisingly reappears, the film undercuts the spectatorial expectation regarding the confinement of the sexy and dangerous woman. Furthermore, in the telephone conversation, the enigmatic girl reinstates her desire for the private detective and thus her threat to the domestic woman. As soon as the epilogue makes it clear that the film noir woman is not dead, the spectator comes to realize that the punishment of the film noir woman is deferred and that her absence is merely a guise at the narrative level. At the representation level, the appearance and reappearance of the young girl create a conceptual lapse of making sense of the signified film noir woman. I use the term 'non-representation' to describe this status of the sign that the film noir woman demonstrates. For a critical reading of genre reinvestment in *The Private Eye Blue*, I examine this facet of signification in which the signifier is disassociated with its signified creating a conceptual lapse. In a later chapter about *Happy Together*, I shall come back to the discussion of another aspect of the non-representation in which the signifier is either intertwined with another signified borrowed from other sources, or the signifier is bereft of its signified. The young girl of *The Private Eye Blue*, as the enigma of the film, demonstrates the 'non-representation' which refers to the non-presence, absence and reappearance of the icon of femme fatale, and to the deferral of signification.

It can be seen that the icon of femme fatale is always incomplete in the film because the sexy and dangerous woman is also innocent and naive. The presence of the femme fatale in the narrative is therefore ambiguous. The femme fatale's presence is always related to a sense of threat that is deemed to be resolved in the narrative closure in which the femme fatale is killed or punished. In line with the audience's expectation in the finale, the sexy and dangerous woman is eliminated suggesting that the threat is dissipated. The subsequent melodramatic narrative closure that confirms the absence of the film noir woman implies that the domestic woman dominates the scene. The signifier of the femme fatale thus loses grip on its position when the narrative mode shifts from being noirish to being melodramatic. This is due to the fact that the signifier is not tied down to its signified when two types of narrative closures are placed together generating confusion in deciphering the film noir icon. The final reappearance of the young girl in the epilogue further complicates the effect created by the conceptual lapse when the threat posed by the film noir woman is revived, unconventionally showing that the threat is not contained.

Since the construction of meaning can never be finite, interpretation is never fixed. In the constant deferral of the signification, the film celebrates the supplement over the origin. The young girl—the supplement of the supplement—who takes the center-stage, brings excess and imbalance. At the close of the film, the reappearance of this unconventional film noir woman contaminates the whole and the complete order of the finale. Traditionally, the sadistic closure of classical film noir is incorporated to draw all threatening scenes into a controlling order of masculine sexuality. That is, to contain the threat posed by the sexy and dangerous woman. The act of supplementarity demonstrated in *The Private Eye Blue*, however, corrupts the narrative closure by disrupting the construction of phallocentric order. Since the supplementary positioning of the female protagonist enables the film to question the hegemonic disempowering of the film noir woman, the film subjects the spectator to a rereading of phallocentrism.

What is so interesting about the act of supplementarity in *The Private Eye Blue* is that it installs ideologically complicit ideas as much as it critiques them. For instance, the idea of phallocentric order is cherished in the sadistic closure, and the system of patriarchy is celebrated in the epilogue. No matter how much the incorporation of the melodramatic scene looks awkward in the noirish narrative, the explication of the man's transformation is communicated to the spectator in temporal and spatial lapses. Although the happy family scene is brief, it shows that the noir hero has been transformed into a family man. The portrayal of the noir hero in the epilogue as a caring father and loving husband is very much contrary to the masochistic noir hero persona fabricated throughout the film. When the film noir woman reappears in the epilogue, the spectator is reminded of the identity crisis the noir hero experienced when he tried to escape from his masculine regimentation. The film challenges the concept of stable identity in the epilogue.

The incorporation of the narrative modes of film noir and film melodrama in *The Private Eye Blue* offers a nuance of genre expectation. In conjunction with the two narrative modes, the film breaks open the closed text of patriarchy by making the spectator conscious of his or her act of spectating and the ideologically complicit reading of the text. Taking part in the process in which the old concepts are critiqued, the spectator becomes more self-conscious and manages to negotiate his or her identity which is at stake since the conventional spectator-screen relation is disrupted.

In the following, I shall suggest that the negotiation of subjectivity is set in motion through a challenge against the convention of masculine centrality. Therefore, a thorough investigation into cinematic identification and its disruption which creates an extra-diegetic space in which the spectator-subject may read the film outside and within the filmic, narrative and cinematic constructs will be carried out. My application of the term of *différance* in this analysis continues to give insight into the creative portrayal of *The Private Eye Blue* which suggests new ways of reading the generic convention. I shall purport that the site of cinematic identification is also a site of psychological rupture in which the conventional moral containment of the female sexuality in film noir is destabilized. A psychoanalytic analysis of the aberrant film strategy of *The Private Eye Blue* is required, allowing the spectator to re-define the boundaries of bodies and discourses, and of identities and communities.

A Scenario of Desire and Cinematic Identification

The challenge in examining *The Private Eye Blue* is not only about the film's discursive practice that resists ideological manifestation of meaning but also about its ambition to reformulate the spectator-screen relation. A psychoanalytical approach is adopted here for an exploration of spectatorial reaction to the discursive construction of subjectivity. Not only does this chapter examine the dominant subject positionality that the conventional cinema predetermines, but it also investigates the possibility of resistance against the system of power relations that delimits the positioning.

Since Laura Mulvey (32) pioneered a series of discussions on sexual identification, cinematic image has been seen as both the model of and term for a process of representation through which sexual difference is constructed and maintained. Starting from an influential article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", psychoanalytical film theory unfolded a debate on sexuality.

Mulvey speaks of cinematic identification by focusing on two models, namely, voyeurism and fetishism. Her essay presumes a dominant male viewing position with which female spectators presumably should align their views by submitting to male dominance. The polarized gender structure between the passive female and the active male suggested in this article, however, may not apply on many occasions. Kaja Silverman describes Rita Hayworth's strip tease in *Gilda* (33) as an act of resistance against the patriarchal myth by flaunting the otherness of female sexuality and openly incriminating herself to hurt her husband's pride. The spectator's identification with the female protagonist in this case is not related to submission to male fantasy. Six years after the publication of "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Mulvey modified her claim regarding the dominance-submission pattern between the masculine and the feminine by delimiting her area of study as the 'masculinization' of the spectator position (34) rather than the originally broader scope of cinematic identification in general. Although she argued that such a discussion did not depend on the biological sex of the real live movie-goer, she did not rectify an oversight regarding the desire of female spectators. Her theory still depends on an over-arching binary schema which registers the spectator's positioning as either the feminine or the masculine. David Norman Rodowick (35) agrees that the analyses of forms of enunciation or points of view in fiction films may tell a great deal about ideological representations of gender difference. He stresses that they, however, delineate nothing definitive about forms of sexual identification, or potential meanings, produced with respect to the spectators. Meanwhile, he argues that each encounter between text and subject is historically contingent and unpredictable.

The polemic of Mulvey has met with a great deal of critical response. Kaja Silverman and G. Studlar (36) describe cinema as essentially a masochistic structure in which viewers derive pleasure through submission or passivity. Both Mary Ann Doane (37) and Elizabeth Cowie argue that the spectator is not so rigidly positioned in relation to sexual identities. Central to these works is the discussion of the point-of-view shot structure, which is seen as the locus of the strategy of narration that solicits cinematic identification. Elizabeth Cowie explains in "Strategems of Identification" that cinematic identification has been centrally discussed in terms of the look which seems to have been characterized by its ability to show an absent world recorded in an image. She argues that, more importantly in cinema, "specific narrative form comes into existence when the series of 'views' becomes organised as a structure of *looks*." (38) With reference to Dryer's *Gertrude*, she demonstrates an organization of desire in the film that breaks through what is conventional by resorting to aberrant strategies of narration, which shift identifications between categories of sexual difference.

Many discussions on forms of enunciation or conventional organization of shots are related to the psychoanalytical framework formulated by Mulvey, which is a system that ascribes the process of cinematic identification to a manifestation of desire. This forms a tradition to anthologize the act of spectating in a scenario of desire which predetermines the relation between the subject and the object in line with the controlling gaze and the one being gazed at. Essential to her theory is that the looks of the subject and the object are subordinated to either the desire for the other or the phallus. From a position of pleasure, Mulvey presumes that subjectivity installed in a process of self-identification operates without any disruption. This chapter, however, looks at the issue of identification from a different angle which examines other potentials of cinematic identification. My focus of analysis is the negotiation of subjectivity, which commences when the process of cinematic identification is interrupted.

Suture and the Gaze of the other

Cowie chooses a modernist film for her analysis of a type of aberrant strategy that is rarely used in mainstream film. My concern is to examine the possible appearance of such a strategy in mainstream cinema, for example, *The Private Eye Blue*, which might be described as postmodern. My discussion seeks to demonstrate the way in which the application of the same type of aberrant narrative strategy, or more appropriately as a discursive strategy, upsets cinematic identification in popular cinema. In "Strategems of Identification", Cowie states that identification is with multiple positions and in relation to a scenario of desire. (39) Such a scenario refers to the fantasy of a viewing subject's identification with the female protagonist's desire for love, and also the viewing subject's fantasy to be desired by her.

I draw on Cowie's approach to tackle the issue of shifting identification by questioning the theory of the gender-specific act of spectating that conventionally assumes identification of female spectators with female film figures and male spectators with male film figures. I take on her assertion that not only are the conventional structures of point of view and shot structure central to cinematic identification, but the undermining of the structures is also just as essential. I propose to focus on the spectator's responses between instances of shifted identification, which are moments of displeasure. Sharing Cowie's premise, I shall show how in *The Private Eye Blue* the shifts of identification are achieved by disrupting classical editing. I describe the rupture or the shifting of identification as a self-reflexive moment at which the subject is lured by the film text to redefine the notion of self. In Lacan's terminology, this is a moment of anamorphosis (40), which is an instant of self-reflexive revelation of the function and the operation of the gaze. I shall explain that the realization of the gaze takes place when the spectator becomes aware of the act of looking and the gaze of the Other upon him or her.

Psychoanalytic film criticism after Mulvey mostly focuses on the issue of the gendering of the gaze, which is an area of Lacanian film theory that Joan Copjec describes as a site of great conceptual confusion. (41) Dylan Evans explains that the confusion is caused by the way in which critics have conflated Lacan's concept of the gaze with the Sartrean concept of it. (42) Like Sartre, most of the critics conflate the gaze with the act of looking. Mulvey's idea about the controlling male gaze through which the male spectator identifies with the male protagonist is a Sartrean concept of gaze. In Lacan's account, the person who looks does not hold the gaze. He says,

"You never look at me from the place from which I see you." (43)

That is to say, the object never looks at the subject from the place at which the subject sees the object. Rather, the gaze is always from outside and on the side of the object. In other words, the gaze is the object of the act of looking from the perspective of the subject, and therefore, the subject is always watched by something or someone in the field of the Other. Evan describes,

"When the subject looks at an object, the object is always already gazing back at the subject, but from a point at which the subject cannot see it." (44)

It can be seen that the relationship between the subject and the gaze described in the film theory is different from that in Lacanian theory. My concern in this thesis is with two aspects of cinematic identification that are seldom explored in depth. Firstly, the gaze is not always a controlling gaze that predetermines the look (45) as it is presupposed by film theory. Secondly, the unfathomable gaze of the Other is a perspective that film theory has not yet fully examined. Psychoanalytical film theory has put immense effort into analyzing the act of cinematic identification with a focus on '*objet petit a*' as the cause of desire from a position of pleasure. I suggest that the over-concentration on the function of the gaze of the other precipitates an oversight, and propose to re-examine the gaze of the Other. Lacan points out that the gaze that he encounters is 'not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other.' (46) My focus of analysis here is the gaze of the Other upon the spectator and its relation to the looks of the camera and the spectator in the realm of the Other.

Slavoj Zizek says that imaginary identification is always identification on behalf of a certain gaze in the Other. At the diegetic level, Zizek's notion of the gaze of the Other refers to an impression of an object looking back like the phantasmatic gaze of the house in *Psycho* that overlooks the motel. He also comments on the cinematic device of the gaze which stands for 'the blind spot in the field of the visible from which the picture itself photographs the spectator.' (47) On top of this basic function of the gaze of the Other that I share with Zizek, I want to highlight one more aspect of the gaze that Zizek purports as a hypothetical extra-diegetic view through which the contemporary audience may take on in the act of spectating. He says,

"What we really see, when we watch a *film noir*, is this gaze of the other: we are fascinated by the gaze of the mythic 'naïve' spectator, the one who was 'still able to take it seriously,' in other words, the one who 'believes in it' for us, in place of us. For that reason, our relation to a *film noir* is always divided, split between fascination and ironic distance: ironic distance toward its diegetic reality, fascination with the gaze." (48)

Here he suggests that in nostalgia the audience adopts a dual positionality to view from inside the fascinating diegetic world, or to see the fictional world from a critical distance. He assumes that the viewer is conscious of himself or herself as a historical spectator who is not under the same course of passive cinematic identification to which the audience of classical cinema would succumb. He describes the audience of the '40s as 'naive' with regard to their fascination for the cinema and their immediate and relatively passive act of spectating. The contemporary audience, however, are people who are not ignorant of the process in which film engenders subject identification. The difference in the experiences of the two types of spectatorships at different periods of time is created by both assuming, and not assuming, the fatal ironic distance between the screen and the viewing subject. What Zizek emphasizes is that the contemporary spectator consciously sees through the eyes of the fantasized '40s audience and then nostalgically rereads the 'present' represented in the film as if it were part of the 'mythic' past. The observation on the impact of the films begs the question of whether cinema lures the audience into an illusory reality as efficiently as it releases them from the imagined world and alerts them to acknowledge that they do not physically exist in their imagination.

Like Zizek, in my discussion of contemporary Hong Kong films, I also suppose that the majority of the Hong Kong audience has developed an informed knowledge of the visual and narrative forms of films after many years of exposure to western culture and especially to Hollywood cinema. Zizek's critical comment on the conventional spectator-screen relation deals with the fact that audiences may enjoy a relation with cinema from an ironic distance towards the diegetic reality. What I want to highlight in the discussion is that the spectator-screen relation is malleable and sometimes unstable. From the point of identification to that of de-identification, I shall illustrate that the film allows the spectator to shift the point of cinematic identification so as to negotiate their identities. The rest of this chapter will examine the way in which *The Private Eye Blue* instigates such a moment of de-identification which first engages the subject in considering the illusory reality by seemingly perpetuating the use of some classical generic elements for the establishment of genre expectation and then disorienting him or her from the previous point of cinematic identification. Hence, the spectator is free to traverse to and from the spiritual realm so as to enjoy a pleasure of reflexivity by critiquing the symbolic register of human existence portrayed at an extra-diegetic level. The stability of the generic element is seen as supplementing the effect of de-identification, which gives rise to a dynamics of contestation that resists any form of legitimation of meta-narrative. Lastly, it is seen as a moment when the film leads the subject on to a spiritual realm where an ironic distance is established between the subject and the screen.

My focus of analysis is a discursive strategy used in *The Private Eye Blue* that first conceals and later reveals the perceptual distance between the places where the subject-spectator and the film characters look by disrupting a shot/reverse-shot structure. With this strategy, the film starts to distance the spectator from the film reality that he or she assumes, and gradually unfolds the conceptual distances between the spectator and the camera, and the camera and the film image. This is the way in which the spectator is offered what he or she is seeing. Being self-aware, the spectator becomes accountable to his or her acts of spectating and identification. What is so unique about this aberrant strategy is that the distancing effect is not conducted at first in an obviously noticeable way. Rather, it is installed quietly to solicit cinematic identification before the system is mobilized to critique the act of identification.

The way in which the discursive device of *The Private Eye Blue* does not totally impair the function of identification demonstrates that it is not the film's purpose to simply substitute the classical narrative structure with a framework. The film strategy seeks to disrupt or subvert the norm of spectating. The interruption of the classical construction that results from the act of supplementarity aims to differ and defer the constitution of meaning so as to enhance a critique of representation. Such interruption is most vividly displayed in a scene of confrontation in the middle of the film. My focus of analysis is a shot/reverse-shot device that has appeared only once in the entire film. For the rest of the film, the cinematic space is not organized in the classical way. By the incorporation of this shot/reverse-shot structure, I shall demonstrate that the film seeks to contest the conventional conceptions of self and space; and that the film not only defers the spectator's understanding of the concepts, but it also continuously changes the meaning that is derived from the filmic language by problematizing the Hollywood convention.

The Private Eye Blue is dominantly structured through a series of travelling shots. Instead of entailing a space offscreen in a shot and then revealing the field of absence in the next shot, what *The Private Eye Blue* does alternatively is to join the two spaces together in a long shot after travelling from behind one protagonist to another. In the travelling shot sequence, the protagonists who are standing opposite or close to each other are always captured in a view from the characters' shoulders, until they are revealed together from one angle within the same frame. The visual field behind the camera in this case is never shown. When the camera is sometimes motionless, and the protagonists are presented respectively in two scenographic spaces with their eyelines matched, the protagonists under such circumstances are always viewed by the camera from a low angle or a high angle. Likewise, the space behind the camera is concealed. That is to say, the film does not disguise the camera's point of view as that of the protagonists'. Although the camera is independent from the characters' looks, it remains largely invisible within the diegesis except in the scene of confrontation.

The confrontation is about a battle for protective custody for the young girl among powerful people and politicians from China, Britain and Hong Kong. A meeting is held in a restaurant where the hero tries to save the girl from being taken by any one of them. When they cannot reach a compromise, they resort to gun violence to resolve their conflict. While they are on the brink of opening fire against one another, an old Chinese communist phones up to join the battle. Instead of blackmailing the hero to turn in the girl, he offers to pay a good price for buying his way to get the girl. After knowing about the old Chinese man's scheme, the other people in the meeting offer higher prices in the scramble for the girl. In the end, everybody is facing the guns of the members of opposite parties. As soon as an innocent waitress enters the room to deliver a pot of tea, they break the truce.

Although the coverage of the confrontation by an omniscient camera offers views from visually bizarre angles, the narrative manages to proceed smoothly without identifying the role and the positions of the camera. The *mise-en-scène* constitutes a concept of contiguous spaces that establish a sense of total space. The characters' glances are still used for the construction of eyeline match, which give cues to link shots, although their matched eyelines are seen through a tilted camera which may suggest that the reverse-shot does not reveal what the character has just seen. Under such circumstances, in the midst of the effect of the omniscient narration, the camera largely remains invisible. The spectator's vantage point of view does not distance them from the film, but draws their attention to the part of the film salient to the plot. The disruptive device of the aberrant discursive strategy does not fully take effect until the end of this scene when a waitress enters the room at the climatic moment of the confrontation. There is a 7-shot sequence at the end that puts the conventional process of cinematic identification in question. The sequence can be divided into two parts. The first three shots are basically structured in shot/reverse-shot pattern in a conventional system of continuity that pretends to have created an invisible camera that follows the spectator's attention. The last five shots, however, influence the spectator's point of view differently.

The film appropriates the classical shot/reverse-shot device in a relatively straightforward fashion in planning the first three shots of the 7-shot sequence (see appendix ii). What the 3-shot structure aims to achieve is to reverse the waitress's point of view to that of the hero's. As we have seen from the first shot, the waitress is entering the meeting room from the hero's point of view, the second one is a reverse-angle shot revealing that the hero is gesturing her to leave since guns are pointing at her. The third shot portrays the waitress' reaction. When the 3-shot pattern is observed closely, it can be seen that the device is made slightly different from the classical shot/reverse-shot structure. For instance, the use of a wide-angle lens for the close shots is not typical in the classical device. Furthermore, the camera is marked by being tilted, which implicitly undermines the predetermined invisibility of the camera of the classical continuity system and the camera's function to relate the protagonists' looks. The difference, however, has not yet alerted the spectator at this point. The continuity editing continues to join shots of the protagonists who are facing each other. It also solicits the spectator to identify with the characters and experience the hardships they are undergoing.

The function of the 3-shot organization is to constitute the spatial positionings of the hero and the waitress, which are sustained by different concepts of ideological positioning. My discussion here seeks to explore the film's formulation of new ways of understanding the recent socio-political change of Hong Kong in relation to a concept of crisis. The new ways of seeing will be discussed in terms of ceaseless contestation which critiques the representation of crisis. In this chapter, the way in which a disruptive film strategy disorients the spectator from a point of cinematic identification will be analyzed in depth with reference to the operation of the conventional suturing system that technically stitches the spectator-subject in a position. I shall demonstrate how the film strategy deconstructs the cinematic structure so as to decentre the subject's positioning for a play of signification that gives rise to new insights into understanding the film text and its relation to the spectator-subject.

The restaurant as the venue for the private meeting is originally reserved for a group of close friends, including the hero, before politicians, government officials and members of the triad societies join in. It is supposed to be a site of cohesive community with friendly males seated around a large Chinese round table in the middle of the room. Comfortably seated around the table, the hero's friends are from diverse backgrounds and appear to be unified in his presence. But when their ulterior motives are revealed, the friends split up. The circle of friends and the circle formed by the table seem to define the spatial limits of the hero. The way in which the weaponless hero is given an appearance of power more than that of other men who wield power with their guns creates a hierarchy of masculinity. The ideological positioning of the hero and the spatial positioning of the waitress are in marked contrast. Although the shot/reverse-shot structure is brief, a hierarchy of gender difference has been clearly demonstrated in the binary opposition between the masculine and the feminine. As a female without a gun, the waitress does not have a place in the meeting in the midst of the phallic presence of the masculine. On the periphery of the confrontation, she is entirely a stranger and her action is confined to the doorway. The spatial positioning of the female figure seems to deprive her of a positive portrayal of femininity. Like a social outcast, standing alone at the doorway, she is not even given a chance to speak her mind. In fear, her immediate response to the gun threat is to scream at the top of her voice. The film delineates at this moment a merely clichéd figure of vulnerable and terrified femininity.

Cinematic identification is initially encouraged by a suturing system that is installed in the shot/reverse-shot structure. The spectator shares the hero's sadness and disappointment of being betrayed by close friends, and also his poignant feeling of not being considered as part of the communities of the Hong Kong Chinese, and the Mainland Chinese and of not being protected by the British government. Hence, the spectator can easily make sense of his dilemma of being a person who lacks a sense of home and belonging. In the act of cinematic identification, the spectator who assumes the waitress's point of view is prone to be terrified by the guns aimed at her. This is what the suturing system has achieved by bringing the spectator's attention to the off-screen space which would not be revealed if the joining of shots had not demonstrated an exchange of points of view between the film figures. In other words, this is the way in which the spectator is stitched into the filmic discourse by allowing him or her to assume the spatial positionings of the film characters. Eyeline matching and shot/reverse-shot structure are known as the key devices of classical narrative film and are also widely employed in contemporary cinema. The psychoanalytic definition of suture is offered by Jacques-Alain Miller whose work is based on the original work of Lacan's published and unpublished notes of his seminars. Miller explains that suture is a concept which accounts for the means by which the subject emerges within a discourse at the moment when the subject inserts himself or herself into the symbolic register and gains meaning at the expense of the being. He writes,

> "Suture names the relation of the subject to the chain of its discourse...it figures there as the element which is lacking, in the form of a stand-in. For, while there lacking, it is not purely and simply absent. Suture, by extension—the general relation of lack to the structure of which it is an element, inasmuch as it implies the position of a taking-the-place-of." (49)

In other words, the emergence of the subject in a discourse results from his or her disguise as a signifier that gains access to the symbolic order of the linked shots. The signifying chain sustains the order of symbolic meaning that in the end constitutes the subject's identity. Theoreticians of cinematic suture agree that films are articulated and that the viewing subject is spoken to by means of interlocking shots. The relationship between shots is seen as the equivalent of the syntactic relationship in the linguistic discourse described above. Oudart and Dayan (50) both find that shot/reverse-shot formation is virtually synonymous with the operation of suture. The theory of cinematic suture concentrates on the relation of representation to the fictional characters on the level of enunciation and of fiction. This chapter proposes, however, to examine the relation of the viewing subject to the film text especially during the moment when the film distracts or disorients the spectator from stitching in or taking up the position of a signifier.

My thesis draws on Oudart's assumption on the inter-relation between the spaces portrayed within the frames of the shot and the reverse-angle shot. According to Oudart, suture is an effect of filmic codes which, firstly, guides the spectator to make sense of the off-screen spaces revealed in the background of the film protagonists in their act of viewing. (51) Then, the system of suture stitches the spectator back into the film text with reference to the coherent spatial-temporal relation that the device has established. While suture theoreticians including Stephen Heath and Kaja Silverman focus on the way in which the system stitches, I explore, like Oudart, the way in which the system breaks as soon as the time of the shot hesitates beyond the time of its narrative specifications.

Dayan suggests that the system of suture renders the film's signifying practices invisible and describes that the system of cinematic suture allows the ideological effect of the film to slip by unnoticed. (52) That is to say, he assumes that the spectator's ability to decode a filmic discourse or the spectator's action to interpret is progressively linked to a pleasure-oriented construction of meaning. Oudart looks at the same suturing process, however, from a different angle.

Oudart firstly speaks of a 'frozen production of the spectator's imaginary,' which refers to a suturing effect that transposes the spectator from the Imaginary to the Symbolic and thus fixes the subject's idealized image of self immediately in a shot/reverse-shot structure. The spectator's imaginary is thus 'frozen' because as soon as subjectivity is coined in the Symbolic, what has passed through the Imaginary cannot be altered. He says,

"...the Absent One, this frozen production of the spectator's imaginary, manifests itself between two moments: one, when the cinema's speech is abolished in the spectator's cosmomorphic *jouissance*, and the other, when that speech traverses the spectator. In between these two moments the spectator recuperates his difference, an operation by which he is himself placed outside the frame, by positioning the Absent One as the subject of a vision which is not his own, and the image as the signifier of absence." (53)

Equally impressively, he describes the possibility of a free-functioning imaginary that is experienced by a decentred subject who sojourns in an interval of displeasure. He believes that cinematic signification depends entirely upon a moment of displeasure in which the viewing subject perceives that the filmic discourse is lacking something. He has an assumption of an absent cinematic field in the act of spectating, which is the cause of a feeling of discomfort. This moment of unease occurs at the joining of shots before the reverse-angle shot has unfolded the absent field for the subject. Only until after the erasing of the absence, which is supposed to be demonstrated in the reverse-angle shot, by the presence of the other character on the other side of the camera can the feeling of displeasure be eliminated. He explains,

> "Only during the intervals of such borderline moments is the spectator's imaginary able to function freely, and hence to occupy the place—evidenced by its spatial obliqueness—of a vanishing subject, decentred from a discourse which is closing itself, and suturing itself in it, and which the subject can only assume in the Imaginary, that is at once during the interval when he disappears as subject, and when he recuperates his difference, and from a place which is neither the place where the character is positioned by the spectator's imagination—a character who is no more the spectator than he is the subject of the image as fictive image—(hence the unease produced by a shot/reverse-shot...where the camera often actually occupies the place of the character in that position); nor is it an arbitrary position forcing the spectator to posit perpetually the Absent One as the fictitious subject of a vision which is not his own and on which his imagination would stop short." (54)

The reconstruction of this absent cinematic field may be pleasure-oriented, which facilitates identification. Before the reconstruction, however, in the middle of the operation of suture, there is an interval at which the subject is placed outside any of the frames under a pressure of losing the spatial and temporal positionings of self provided to him or her in the previous shot. This idea of the interval of unease is essential to my analysis of the aberrant strategy of *The Private Eye Blue*, which critiques cinematic identification.

This chapter examines the way in which *The Private Eye Blue* incorporates the shot/reverse-shot device and invests in raising self-consciousness that leads to the instance of displeasure through which the film does not stitch the spectator-subject into the signifying chain. My focus of analysis is that *The Private Eye Blue* solicits the spectator to abandon the old point of identification at which he or she has acknowledged the positioning of self that is predetermined by the ideologically complicit text. When the film successfully relieves the spectator-subject from the previous viewing position, the spectator is driven back to the site of conjunction of the Imaginary and the Symbolic where meaning has not yet been fixed. This point of conjunction is what I call the psychological juncture. It refers to a gap opened up as a result of the breach in the conventional conception of identity. I propose here to examine the special moment when the spectator is enabled by the discursive practice to reread his or her old conceptions of self and identity at this point of psychological juncture.

With reference to the 7-shot sequence, I shall demonstrate that the gesture of hesitation is characterized in the film at the moment when the subject retreats from the Symbolic and reflects on his or her subject identification. At the conjunction of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, the subject is hardly occupying any position. That is to say, the spectator does not identify with any film characters in the midst of the operation of suture. In Oudart's terminology, the psychological juncture is a position that is out of alignment with both the character and the 'Absent One' (55). The absent person in the absent field only exists in the Imaginary when the character is not in the frame of the other shot. The consequence of the subject's hesitation in taking up either of the spatial positionings defined in the screen spaces is that the film may undermine the suturing effect. Hence, the illusory representation created during the process of the ideologically complicit signification can be demystified. I shall demonstrate below the way in which the film delivers the spectator from predetermined positionings, and takes them to the horizon of self-introspection which is, in Oudart's terminology, a zone of free-functioning Imaginary. It is also a place for a vanishing subject 'decentred from a discourse which is closing itself, and suturing itself in it.' (56)

In the film's appropriation of the shot/reverse-shot device, the 4th shot of the sequence—following after the previous shot/reverse shots—does not reveal the owner of the glance previously portrayed in the 3rd shot of the same sequence. That is to say, the 'pure field of absence' on the fourth side behind the camera is not shown according to the convention. Rather, an extremely high-angle wide shot is used to capture the full view of the meeting room showing vividly the confrontation between all parties with guns pointing at one another. The screaming voice of the waitress—in the last shot of the shot/reverse-shot structure—lingers throughout the rest of this sequence. The fifth shot of the sequence is a cut-away close-up shot of a wineglass which is breaking dramatically under the impact of a high-pitch vibration. Finally, the medium shot of the panic-stricken waitress comes back on screen which is once again followed by the extremely high-angle wide shot showing that all of the people in the room are beginning to fight against each other. In the following, I shall discuss the way in which the film sequence contests the ideologically complicit structure of meaning. Crucial to this discussion are two instances of discursive transgression that expose the spectator to the possibility of multiple and fractured identification. The first instance refers to the initial use of the wide-angle camera at a high position in this sequence that not only disrupts the linking of shots previously joined by looks, but also transposes the spectator from the predetermined spatial positionings and delivers them from the trajectory of closed narrative. The second instance refers to the creation of an extra-diegetic and self-conscious reading by a cut-away shot placed near the end of the sequence.

Prior to the last wide-angle shot from a higher position is a medium shot of the waitress. The cameo figure appears as an outsider to the confrontation. The focus of her performance, however, reveals her special status in the development of the plot. Her position as a peaceful passer-by who stops by and is caught up in the terror is akin to that of the spectator's. What the spectator shares is the shock of violence she receives from a throng of armed males during their confrontation. It can be seen that the waitress is the object of the hero's look at first. The spectator is encouraged to assume the hero's point of view throughout the confrontation while he remains the centre of attention. Later, the spectator is encouraged to shift or take up more positions when the extremely wide-angle shot is added to the shot/reverse-shot structure. This is the moment when the image of the hero is not reversed from the waitress's point of view. Instead, the extremely wide-angle shot that captures the meeting room and its furious occupants from a higher camera position takes its place. The wide shot seems to enhance a better understanding of the terror that the people are experiencing in the scene. More significantly, the spectator is motivated at this moment to assume more roles than purely that of the hero and the heroine.

In the midst of the renewed relationship seen through the conjoined looks, not only is the spectator's preconception of the looks of the hero and the waitress problemaitzed, but the traumatic experiences that the film characters derive from the crisis situations are also shared by the spectator. The hero questions his own identity as a colonial subject as soon as his Hong Kong Chinese friends and the British government betray him. As for the waitress, from being a complacent outsider to being a victimized personality under gunpoint, the way in which she stretches her voice to scream suggests that she denies her status as the potential object of the gunfire.

What is important about the new alignment of looks is that a distance is imposed between the character and the camera through which the invisible camera becomes noticeable at the point of the rupture within the suturing system. At first, two character-centred points of view with which the spectators may identify in the shot/reverse-shot structure have established an original alignment of the looks in a conventional way. At this moment, neither the distance between the spectator and the camera, nor the one between the camera and the characters are revealed. When the high-angle wide shot of the entire meeting room from behind the waitress near the doorway is added, however, the spectator is offered a vantage point of view to see the distance between the camera and the characters. This is also the crucial moment at which the spectator begins to notice that he or she is seeing at a higher position from behind the people inside the meeting room. What this shot offers is the look of the camera that displays a spectator-centred point of view. The high-angle wide shot does not stitch the spectator back to the filmic and the discursive discourses. At this moment the look of the camera does not become gender specific due to the fact that the camera is not in a position to simulate any one of the character's viewpoints.

Consequently, the subject-object relations between the dominant male(s) and the submissive woman; the customers and the service provider; the gunmen and the victim under gunpoint; the constituent authority and the citizens; the political giant and the common people; and the colonizer and the colonized are all undermined. Thus, the spectator is set free from the previous framework of understanding of the notion of self. In psychoanalytical terms, the spectator is drawn back to revisit the juncture of the Imaginary and the Symbolic where meanings can be reformulated.

I have demonstrated that the aberrant strategy is not applied to create any transcendental meaning or to unveil the director's point of view. The principle of the strategy opposes the construction of fixed and finite ideologically complicit meaning in the process of signification. The practice, therefore, guarantees an opportunity to critique representation and reconstitute meaning rather than to produce meaning. Replacing the character-centred and gender-specific reverse-shot by the spectator-centred and non-gender-identified shot, the film not only disrupts the system of suturing that sustains the patriarchy in the film, but the discursive practice also opens up a psychological space for the spectating subject to reassess the conceptions of the historical, colonial and cultural identities.

I would describe the above-mentioned gap of signifying chain opened up by the strategy which disrupts the suturing function of the shot/reverse shot as a third place. It is a position not occupied by any of the film figures at the representational level. Oudart speaks of the significance of creating a cinematic field beyond the film discourse. He says,

"...we look to that speech to recreate not an object but a site, a cinematic field which will be no longer the privileged means of embodying a fiction, but that for cinema's speech to unfold itself according to its properties, since it is through space that the cinema is born into the order of discourse, and it is from the place whose absence it evokes that it is designated as a speech and that its imaginary is displayed." (57)

What Oudart describes is a conception of psychological space where the subject may negotiate his or her identity by proclaiming his or her presence in a discourse. What I posit as the third place is a site where the spectator is placed in between and/or outside frames, and a gateway to the psychological space where the spectator is offered by the film to sojourn in the realm of introspection and reflection. The film's investment in the third place is based on the ideologically self-conscious reading of the notion of subject. The third place comes into existence only when the spectating subject is solicited to assume various subject positions. Therefore, its formation not only depends on the use of the omniscient camera and disruptive strategy to undermine the suturing function, but it also relies on the active involvement of the spectator in the process of rereading the notion of self by shifting identification.

Crucial to the discussion of the capacity of the self-conscious reading is the possibility that the cinema endows the spectator with the freedom to think critically. Therefore, examination on the cinematic identification and the disruptive strategy that redefines the act of spectating is of significance. What is essential to the execution of this strategy is the revelation of the gaze of the Other during the interruption of the suturing effect.

The presence of a gaze (58) is not felt until the subject has begun to invest in their imagination on a glance from the field of absence behind the wide focus, high-angle position of the camera. My focus of attention here is the significance and the way in which the gaze of the Other is sensed in the scene of confrontation. The first point I make here refers to the joining of the medium shots that reveals the panic-stricken waitress' scream and the wide shot of the entire meeting room behind and above the waitress through the doorway. At the conjunction of these two shots, the spectator is merely offered to share the look of the camera, which captures a vantage point of view. A gaze in the field of the Other has not yet been recognized by the subject as long as the split between the eyes of the spectator and the camera does not take place.

The gaze I discuss here is the Lacanian gaze rather than the 'gaze' that is substantiated in psychoanalytic film theory. In the film theory, the subject identifies with the 'gaze' as the signified of an image, whereas in Lacanian theory, the subject identifies with the gaze as the signifier of the lack that causes the image to languish. Unlike the 'gaze 'of the film theory, the Lacanian gaze is not possessed by the subject. Lacan describes that there is a separation between the subject and the gaze. Therefore, the gaze is always outside. He says,

"...in the scopic field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture...the gaze is the instrument through which...I am *photo-graphed.*" (59)

Lacan does not theorize the visual field of the gaze in terms of geometral law. The legitimate construction of the geometral space does not offer him the relation of the spectator to the screen. That is to say, the structure of the visual domain of the Lacanian gaze is not related to the law of optics. It is the signifier that makes the vision of the gaze possible. The gaze is not a seen gaze, but a gaze that is imagined by the subject. In terms of cinematic identification, when the spectator begins to recognize the presence of the gaze, he or she is assuming that somebody or something is gazing back on the fourth side behind the camera that has not been or cannot be displayed within the frame in the scenographic space.

As I have explained earlier, upon the creation of the third place under the interruption of the suturing effect, the spectator is offered a view to see the way in which the spectator perceives of himself or herself in the previous positions of identification. Such a vantage point of view provided by the high-angle wide shot is the threshold to the realm of self-introspection or reflection, which is the 'space of the spiritual,' or what Oudart would describe as the zone of free-functioning imaginary. This self-conscious rereading of the notion of self, beginning from the moment when the subject has entered the third place, refers to all of the mental activities of the spectator that are conducted at the juncture of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. That is to say, instead of merely assuming different roles in the flow of the narrative, the subject's repositioning of the ideas of self and identity implies a decision to negotiate or resist an ideological understanding of self. (60)

When *The Private Eye Blue* inserts a cutaway shot of a wineglass breaking, which is a close-up shot captured at eye level, the spectator begins to feel the presence of the field of the Other upon him or her as he or she reshuffles the subject positions actively. The cut-away shot is presented with an off-screen voice, which is the screaming of the waitress. The way in which the motionless wineglass is broken by itself without being hit by any external object may imply that the incident is caused by high-pitch vibration. The breaking of the wineglass, however, is not presented with substantial contextual reference, and does not unfold its relation to the screaming within the diegesis. As a result, the spectator is not only carried away by the insertion of the close-up shot, but is also put in a difficult situation in which he or she is solicited to decipher the conventionally unidentified temporal-spatial relation.

This scenario of the wineglass breaking refers extra-diegetically to the comic and ironic treatment of a very popular television commercial for a traditional cough syrup recipe. The television commercial shows an ailing female vocalist recovering from a sore throat as a result of having taken the cough syrup. Her singing not only impresses her audience, but when she hits the highest note the singing also creates a high-pitch vibration that shakes up everything nearby and far away. At the climax of the advert, wineglasses are breaking one by one in the same manner that is depicted in the cut-away shot of *The Private Eye Blue*. The advert makes a deep impression about the results of the therapeutic relief that come from having the syrup on the level of representation. No scientific evidence is presented to prove that the vibration was the cause of the wineglass breaking in the advert.

Whether the spectator has assumed a particular spatial and temporal relation between the scream and the wineglass breaking, or whether he or she takes it simply as an exaggeration of reality, the appropriation of the idea of the operatic singing and the relation of the power of a voice to destroy in a single frame is a reference to the original television commercial. When the film invokes the reference generically to the television advert identification, it introduces an extra-diegetic dimension that breaks open the enclosed narrative world of the film, and introduces the spectator to the relatively boundless world of imagination outside the diegesis.

From the scenographic space to the psychological space, the subject is enabled to sojourn in a multi-dimensional space. That is to say, not only is the fourth side of the screen behind the camera implicated in this psychological space, but an interactive space is also unfolded, in which the subject ponders over the presence of the gaze and the idea of being looked at in his or her imagination. Hence, the spectator may respond to this gaze in the field of the Other. The subject's understanding of this interactive space is enhanced by the depiction of the screaming voice at three levels, namely, the diegetic, the non-diegetic, and the extra-diegetic.

It is interesting to note that the psychological space is defined in terms of the audible, but not the visible. I have already explained that spaces depicted in the film sequence are hierarchized in the service of the representational illusion. For instance, the visible spaces of the meeting room, the doorway of the room, and the hidden space of the area outside the room in the restaurant, are presented coherently in the shot/reverse-shot to build up the spatial relation between the masculine and the feminine. The subject-object relation between them is constructed under the manifestation of ideologically complicit signification. With reference to the relation of the screaming voice to the body, I propose to examine the strategy for deployment of the voice and sound image in the film that unfolds the psychological space, and for the arrangement and the activity of the inter-penetration of the voice in various spaces.

The film spatializes the screaming voice at first in the shot/reverse shot by localizing the sound that reaches the four corners of the meeting room. The film thus establishes the sound-image relation in line with what has been perceived and described as the virtual reality. This sound-image relation is disturbed by the incongruity between the voice-off and the voice-over, which enables the spectator to sign off the diegetic space and begin to traverse freely in at least four spaces. They include the screen space, the off-screen space, the space of the cinema, and lastly the psychological space. I describe the disunity of the spaces marked by the voice-off and the voice-over as an interplay of gazing orders. By positioning the waitress as an outsider coming from an area that has not been exposed to the noise inside the room, the organization of the visual space of the room ascertains that the waitress, as an object, is external to the subject. It is not until the introduction of the high-angle wide shot that the spectator is offered an alternative perspective to re-evaluate the significance of the voice-off of the act of screaming. In this shot, the waitress's body facing the opposite side of the camera masks her own face in front of the camera and her voice-off—the screaming—does not concretize the diegetic space. As soon as the voice-off shot is connected to a cutaway shot of the wineglass breaking, the film no longer presents the off-screen space as related to the screen space. That is to say, at this moment the voice-off is given an extra-diegetic dimension in the sound-image relation which suggests that the off-screen screaming voice may or may not be generated from the VIP room. As soon as the voice-off and voice-over of the shots are displayed, the film enables the spectator to recognize the optical view of the camera and to re-assess their mental understanding of the optical view. When the omniscient narration of the high-angle wide shot is repeated once again at the end of the sequence, the shot marks the ruptured shot/reverse-shot structure. Hence, it refrains from pinning the spectator-subject down to the conventional spatial concept. As a result, the film allows the spectator-subject to traverse between spaces: the diegetic and the extra-diegetic.

When the spectator shifts identification and assumes the role of the waitress more freely who is posed within the screen space on the same side of the camera, her body is released from the confinement as an object of desire in the diegesis. While the externalizing of the female body as an object is possible for a centred-subject, there is an equal opportunity for the decentred subject—any spectator who is disoriented from the conventional optical view established by the shot/reverse-shot structure—to internalize the voice. In case of identification being shifted from the hero to the panic-stricken lady, it is possible that the hearing of the scream of displeasure can be internalized. At the juncture of the voice-off shot and voice-over shot in the middle of the sequence, the spectator may deny the frame as an indicator of a spatial limit.

By the sound-image relation, I demonstrate here that the spectator is made aware of the omnipresence of the big Other after the internalization of the female voice. The internalization of the screaming body and/or the screaming voice in the psychological space is evidence of an act of delegitimizing the ideological representation. This is achieved when the film suggests that the big Other is gazing back. Thus, in the screaming voice's presence at the diegetic and the extra-diegetic levels, the film begins to convey a sense of denial of the conventional spatial positionings. In other words, the psychological space is produced to enable a negotiation of subjectivity. As soon as the ideological manifestation loses its credibility, the film defers and differs the ideologically complicit conceptions of self and identity.

What I want to stress in this chapter is that the aberrant discursive device does not seek to establish a fixed notion of subjectivity. Rather, the device disperses the idea of subjectivity in a strategy of deferral and differing that does not sustain the conception of self in an order of the same. In a loss of stable boundaries of bodies and discourses, and of identities and communities that this strategy instigates, *The Private Eye Blue* creates a psychological space in which the spectators are mentally involved in critiquing representation and contesting subjectivity. The disruptive effect of such a discursive device then takes the subject to a new horizon of cinematic identification, which is the psychological space where negotiation of subjectivity takes place. Crucial to the device is, first, the interruption of the shot/reverse-shot structure; secondly, the deployment of a screaming voice in four forms of space; thirdly, use of an omnipresent camera; and lastly, the arrangement of extradiegetic references to television commercial identification. This device opens up a gap in the signifying chain and interrupts the process through which the spectator-subject is supposed to be sutured into the narrative discourse. After this discursive intervention, the film introduces the spectating subject to a psychological space where the very possibility of subjectivity is challenged. Essential to this practice is that the film allows the spectator-subject to traverse the conventional boundaries of identities. I have argued that the construction of a third place at the shot/reverse-shot juncture establishes a gateway to the psychological space. The viewing subject who traverses from the scenographic space to the psychological space is becoming aware of the material existence of spectatorship. My major concern here is that the act of cinematic identification is transformed into an act of negotiation of self-identification when the film motivates the spectator-subject to contest the old concepts of self and identity in light of the gaze of the Other. In the next chapter, I shall further explore the significance of the shifting cinematic identification in terms of a culture of vision that renews diegetically and extra-diegetically the spectator-subject's understanding of crises.

Notes

1 Rick Altman, *Film/Genre*, (London: British Film Institute, 1999), p.140

2 Ibid., p.132

3 Rick Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," in *Film Genre Reader*, ed., Barry Keith Grant, (U.S.A.: University of Texas Press, 1986), p.31-32

4 Ibid., p.38

5 Altman, *Film/Genre*, p.145

6 Frank Krutnik, *In A Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991)

7 Blanche Chu, "The Ambivalence of History: Nostalgia Films as Meta-Narratives in the Post-Colonial Context," *Hong Kong Cultural Studies Bulletin*, No.8-9, Spring/Simmer, 1998, p.43

8 Ibid., p.41

9 Ibid.

10 Esther M.K. Cheung, "The Hi/stories of Hong Kong," *Cultural Studies*, 15(3/4), July/Oct 2001, p.565-566

11 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans., Alan Bass, (London and New York: Routledge, 1978) p.xviii

12 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p.244

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p.304

15 Ibid., p.244

16 Lucy Fischer, *Designing Women: Cinema, Art Deco and the Female Form*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Fischer tells us that the femme fatale character has roots in 19th century art. It was not popularized until the '20s and '30s of the 20th century when actresses like Garbo personified the concept of the sexually liberated woman to a nation that was still getting used to women's suffrage. This book is introduced by *Culture and Thought,* University of Pittsburgh, and the above information was retrieved from: *www.pitt.edu/~excelres/research_areas/pdf/refigure.pdf*

17 Janey Place, "Women in Film Noir," in *Women in Film Noir*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan, (London: British Film Institute, 1998), p.47

18 Karen Hollinger says, "Approached from a psychoanalytic perspective, the male confessing/investigating figures of *film noir* and the paternal figures who often listen to their stories consistently try to interpret the meaning of femaleness by male standards—from the point of view of the phallus. In these terms, femaleness is always judged as excess or lack from the perspective of male normalcy....In this phallic economy, femaleness becomes simply insufficiency or excess in comparison to maleness, and real difference is masked under a discourse that approaches understanding only of this limited conception of truth." See Karen Hollinger, "Film Noir, Voice-over and the Femme Fatale," in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999), p.245

19 Deborah Thomas, "How Hollywood Deals with the Deviant Male,"in *Movie Book of Film Noir*, ed. Ian Cameron, (London: Movie, 1992), p.62

20 Ibid.

21 Krutnik, *In a Lonely Street*, p.85

22 "The hero of these films...was the investigator.... the investigator of the noir movie was himself less than perfect, frequently neurotic, sometimes paranoid, and often managed to re-establish a stable world in the film only by imposing an arbitrary resolution of the other characters." See Richard Maltby, "Film Noir: The Politics of the Maladjusted Text," *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1984), p.53.

23 Elizabeth Cowie, "Film Noir and Women," in *Shades of Noir*, ed. Joan Copjec, (London and New York: Verso, 1993), p.125

24 Thomas Sobchack, "Genre Film: A Classical Experience," in *Film Genre Reader*, ed. Barry Keith Grant, (U.S.A.: University of Texas Press, 1986), p. 109

25 According to Krutnik's study of masochism and its relation to the behaviour of the film noir heroes, most of the film noir heroes have extreme romantic idealization, which enables them to escape from the regimentation of masculinity by over-valuing and de-valuing their objects of desire.

26 Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p.xviii

27 The article written by John Blaser who posted and updated his work on January 1996 and April 1999 respectively can be retrieved from *http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/noir/np01intr.html.* This site is currently hosted by the Media Resources Center, University of California Berkeley.

28 Sylvia Harvey, "Woman's Place: The Absent Family of Film Noir," in *Women in Film Noir*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan, (London: British Film Institute, 1998), p. 36

29 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.303

30 Earl F. Bargainnir, "Melodrama as Formula," *Journal of Popular Culture* 9, 1975, p.726-33

31 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.303

32 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," (1975) in *Visual and Other Pleasures*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989)

33 Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.231

34 Laura Mulvey, "Mulvey on Duel in the Sun: Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Framework* 15-17, 1981, p. 12

35 David Norman Rodowick, *The Difficulty of Difference: Psychoanalysis, Sexual Difference, and Film Theory*, (London: Routledge, 1991)

36 Kaja Silverman, "Masochism and Subjectivity," *Framework*, No. 12, 1980; and Studlar, Gaylyn, "Masochism and the Perverse Pleasures of the Cinema," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Fall, 1984

37 Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," *Screen* 23, No.3-4, Sep-Oct, 1982

38 Cowie, Elizabeth, "Strategems of Identification," *Oxford Literary Review* 8, No.1-2 (1986), p.66

39 Ibid., p.74

40 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*, ed., Jacques-Alain Miller, trans., Alain Sheridan, (England: Penguin, 1979), p.84-5, hereafter, *Four Fundamental Concepts*

41 Joan Copjec, 'The Orthopsychic Subject: Film Theory and the Reception of Lacan,' *October* 49, Summer 1989, p.53-71

42 Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.72

43 Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p.103

44 Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, p.72

45 The term 'look' is used interchangeably with another word 'view' in a general way. Elizabeth Cowie explains in her *Representing the Women: Cinema and Psychoanalysis* that the gaze is not the look, for 'to look is merely to see.' See page 288 of her book. In *Visual and Other Pleasures*, one of Laura Mulvey's assertions about three different 'looks' suggests that the 'look' refers to the way in which the object of gaze is built into the spectacle of cinema. This idea of the 'look' is not related to Lacan's concept of the gaze as *objet à* as Cowie explains. Mulvey's idea of the three 'looks' is spelled out as follows:

Firstly, the look of the camera can be seen as the camera-centred view demonstrated within cinematic practice; secondly, there is the look of the audience as the audience-centred view; and lastly, the look of the character as the character-centred view. See page 25 of Mulvey's book.

Mulvey mentions that the conventions of narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third. My work makes reference to the Lacanian gaze and develops a different argument which looks at an aberrant film strategy that enables the spectator to reflect on the three 'looks' self-consciously.

46 Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p.84

47 Slavoj Zizek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), p.201

48 Slavoj Zizek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, (Cambridge, London and Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991)

49 Jacques-Alain Miller, "Suture (Elements of the Logic of the Signifier)," *Screen*, Vol. 18, No.4 (1977/78), p.25-26

50 Daniel Dayan, "The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema," in *Movies and Methods, Vol. 1*, ed. Bill Nichols, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1976

51 Jean-Pierre Oudart, "Cinema and Suture," *Screen*, Vol.18 No.4 Winter, 1977/78, p. 35-47

52 Dayan, "The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema," p.447

53 Oudart, "Cinema and Suture," p. 45

54 Ibid., p.45-6

55 Ibid., p.45

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., p.46

58 The subject who finds himself or herself gazed at is decentred. He or she is posed as non-sovereign and non-unified.

59 Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p.106

60 The spectator-subject is, therefore, hardly the centred subject described in the psychoanalytic film theory.

Chapter Five
Gender, Star Influence and Misrecognition

This chapter looks at the film strategy of a martial arts film, *Swordsman II*, which turns itself into a playing field of 'fatal' misrecognition or a site of question through a practice of genre amalgamation that gives rise to a process of negotiation of identity both diegetically and extr-diegetically. It can be seen that a tragic vision is enhanced by the depiction of a crisis of the *jianghu* (martial arts world) which evokes the visual impact of film noir. The 'fatal' misrecognition refers to the way in which the spectator is engaged in assuming the identity crisis of the fatal woman character in *Swordsman II* under the influence of the transgender performance of Chin-hsia Lin, and the way in which the engagement is simultaneously deferred by the film. The experience of misrecognition that I shall explain foregrounds the fact that the viewer's presence is implicated in the narrative when the protagonists accept the tragic consequences of their actions and become *figures par excellence* for negotiating a new vision. Below, I shall firstly look at the re-use of the noirish elements in the film and its significance; then, the way in which the dangerous sexuality of a 'femme-fatale' character, who performs a tragic acceptance by assuming responsibility for his/her fate, gives rise to an effect of dis-identification or deferral of cinematic identification. This effect will be seen as a consequence of Chin-hsia Lin's transgender performance which invokes a type of *wen-wu* (literary-martial) quality in relation to a Chinese convention of *fanchuen* (cross-gender performance), as a supplement, in a play of the contestation of masculinity that enables the experience of misrecognition.

The reason why *Swordsman II* is chosen for the discussion is due to the fact that the film is often seen as a symbolic text which reflects the social psyche of Hong Kong people in the face of the socio-political change in the last decade of the last century. (1) Moving beyond the analysis that the film is purely a symbolic text, I shall demonstrate that it also actively engages the spectator-subject in rereading the film text, the cinematic convention and the concepts of history and identity diegetically and extra-diegetically. Essential to understanding the filmic device is an insight into the way in which Lin's transgender performance leads to a deferral of spectatorial identification. I posit the portrayal of the protagonist's masculinity crisis, which is visually and thematically enhanced by the re-use of the noir theme and stylistics, as a trope which sustains this device. In a process of mistaken recognition of gender that results from the nuance created by Chin-hsia Lin's transgender performance, the spectator-subject is solicited to more self-consciously reread the notions of identity and crisis.

In *Swordsman II*, a sinister swordsman called the Invincible East, who cross-dresses as a woman, is paradoxically played by a famous actress Chin-hsia Lin who is well-known across China, Taiwan and many countries in Southeast Asia. The representation of the docile body of the swordsman not only blurs the socio-sexual boundaries but also destabilizes the spectator-subject's way of seeing the film and identification with the Invincible East. Although the spectator may not be able to discern and may not expect Chin-hsia Lin's role to be that of a male in the beginning, the spectator-star identification is disrupted later in the film when the protagonist's gender identity is revealed. Going through a process of mistaken recognition of identity, the spectator-subject is given an opportunity to experience what the Invincible East is coping with, which may be termed as a crisis of masculinity or a crisis of identity. His sexual ambiguity puts his identity as the martial arts leader of a male dominant world in dispute. Falling in love with another man, he is torn between two roles as a man who wants power and a 'woman' who wants love. I shall explain that the crisis of masculinity set out in association with Lin's transgender performance prompts the spectator-subject to assume a crisis situation. The crisis then engages the spectator in a process of 'fatal' misrecognition in order to solicit him or her to negotiate identities diegetically and extra-diegetically.

The story of *Swordsman II* is set in the Ming Dynasty of China where Chinese martial art is practized not only for self-defence but also for fulfillment of an ambition to control the world. In a period of political instability, the chief eunuch betrays the puppet emperor and allies himself with the Sun Moon Sect, an ethnic minority group. At this time, a rebellious male leader known as the Invincible East has taken over the Sect after a power struggle. Hoping to also dominate the world, the Invincible East plans to steal a mythical book of *Kwai* in the form of a scroll which is about a sinister form of kung fu. Striving to excel in martial arts, the Invincible East also plans to gain power over the chief eunuch in his quest for control of the country. Practising the kung fu, the Invincible East behaves like a demon. He also loses his masculine characteristics after the castration required by the practice. One day Ling, a peace-loving martial-arts hero, meets this monstrous human accidentally near a lake when he is about to withdraw from the martial arts world. Ling is very attracted to the Invincible East, and befriends him. Later, falling in love with Ling, the Invincible East wants to deceive Ling into thinking that he is a woman. Therefore, during Ling's impromptu visit one evening, the Invincible East conspires to let his wife sleep with Ling for the night. Preferring Ling's love, the Invincible East later gives up his martial arts career for Ling. Dressed up as a woman and confronted by his enemies on the mountain, the Invincible East does not want to win for power but for Ling's heart. Attempting to test Ling, the Invincible East threatens to kill Ying, a girlfriend of Ling, and himself. He jumps down the mountain cliff with Ying and hopes that Ling will rescue him rather than Ying. When Ling quickly reaches out for Ying's vulnerable body, he breaks the heart of the transvestite/transsexual. In the end, the Invincible East decides to leave everything behind him and disappears from the world.

The storyline about the Invincible East's quest for the secret scroll that holds the key to world domination starting from his first appearance on screen is convoluted. It is developed alongside the storyline about Ling's intention to withdraw from the martial arts world or *jianghu* (literally, rivers and lakes). This is an allegorical world, according to Stephen Ching-kiu Chan, that serves to 'engender a critical landscape on which to map the collective experiences of success, failure, hope and despair.' (2) Chan posits the description of *jianghu* as a type of 'cultural imagination' and films about *jianghu* as a type of 'cultural mediation' (3) through which the spectator is given time and space to realize that he or she is part of the 'imaginary collective.' (4) The '*jianghu*' consistently portrayed in *Swordsman II* as a chaotic and corrupt world under a chiaroscuro effect can be seen as a metaphor of the crisis situation of Hong Kong. Chan describes Ling's withdrawal from the martial arts world as a 'symbolic escape' (5) when he relates the plot to an observation of Hong Kong people's dilemma in the face of the changeover. He says,

> "Stay and [sic] corrupt, or leave at your own risk, was the historic logic at the threshold of the 1997 social imaginary." (6)

The logic refers to a mentality of crisis management that is supposed to be applicable in many situations including the socio-political change that Hong Kong people experienced at the turn of the century. In addition to Chan's observation of the imaginary '*jianghu*' in his examination of *Swordsman II*, I suggest that the redeployment of noir stylistics in the film not only highlights the crisis situation experienced by the protagonist as dangerous but it also gives rise to a critical assessment of the perception of the world. Steffan Hantke explains that the way in which film noir consistently attains 'a panoramic view of the noir universe is a crucial way of launching a critique about it.' He says,

> "..the world of film noir is conventionally described as bleak and claustrophobic. Given these characteristics, the idea that the inhabitants would want or plan to escape from this universe, with whatever results, seems like one of its obvious inbuilt features. To this end, film noir mobilizes an inventory of narrative strategies, of recurring themes, and of spatial tropes, which all address the diegetic totality of the noir universe and attempt to map out…a space 'outside'…" (7)

The '*jianghu*' portrayed under the redeployment of noir stylistics in *Swordsman II* is like a noir world. Unlike many American films noirs, however, the noir cinematography of *Swordsman II* does not depict a place of rain-washed roads and dark alleyways. Rather, the natural chiaroscuro of the place, which is known diegetically as the martial arts world, is revealed in the film's depiction about the hidden danger of the forest. For instance, the film demonstrates a perfect manifestation of low-key lighting effect by contrasting the shafts of light radiating in the distance with the silhouette of a tall tree and the shadows of the ninjas or Japanese assassins. This kind of visual style is used consistently throughout the film which highlights the area of Wah Mountain as the centre-stage of a political struggle within a chaotic martial arts world. It is here that Ling and other martial artists prepare to retire to seclusion after getting tired of the corrupt politics of the martial arts world. One day before their hermitage, the swordsmen are drawn into the power struggle between the Invincible East, the daughter of the former leader of the Sun Moon Sect and a group of Japanese expatriates. After combat with some mysterious attackers, Ling and his schoolmate escape to the mountain top where they bury, and take time to mourn for, the horse which sacrificed its life for them in the attack. Ling then sings a satirical song that illustrates his feeling of frustration in face of the power struggle. From this point, the film slowly unfolds to a panoramic view of the Wah Mountain with a lot of clouds in the sky captured from a higher camera position. The melancholic portrayal of the beautifully moon-lit mountain is connected to a long take that depicts the hiding place of the people of the Sun Moon Sect, who are striving to survive the ordeal of the power struggle. The camera's pan movement not only seamlessly joins the scenographic space of the two shots, but it also offers a perspective to look at the details of the ruined house of the community in long shots that comprise noirish characteristics. With the use of deep-focus cinematography, the film offers both a full view of the place and a detailed survey of some parts of the premise at the foreground. The noir cinematography is not only employed in night scenes but also in daylight scenes. The use of low camera positions not only transfers the image of the protagonist into a silhouette, but also enables the camera to capture the movement of a thin layer of dust at the foreground each time the horses approach the camera and run off-screen. Through this technique the film imparts a strong sense of hidden danger.

What is interesting about the appropriation of noirish elements is that the film's convoluted plot is initially established to evoke genre expectation by preparing the spectator to consider the enigmatic character played by Lin as a femme fatale. The generic convention that does not allow the fatal woman character to escape the punitive resolution of film noir is, however, turned around by a disruptive film strategy that I shall thoroughly explain later in this chapter. In the middle of the film, there is a closet scene during Ling's impromptu visit to the Invincible East. In the scene, although Lin is a male martial artist, he is represented like a femme fatale in low-key lighting while he is waiting inside the room that is dimly lit by a few oil lamps. Preparing to fight against the intruder at any time, he does not know that the person he is expecting at the moment is actually Ling. Outside with a friend, Ling is discussing and planning strategically before he launches the attack. From a lower camera position, the tight framing of the two friends in a long shot imparts a strong sense of claustrophobia. It can be seen that they occupy the foreground and their images are slightly enlarged. In low key-lighting, only half of their faces are exposed in the light while the misty background behind them is revealed vividly to create an overwhelming sense of danger. The chiaroscuro effect is further enhanced as soon as a group of fighters come out from the dark with their shadows lurking in the subdued light. Inside, also in low key lighting, the Invincible East is sitting close to a paper lamp in which a moth is fidgeting in the light. The close shots of the silhouette of the dying insect, inserted to punctuate the shot of the Invincible East's long wait, suggests that there is hidden danger inside though the protagonist remains calm.

In a medium shot, with a tilted camera angle, the film reveals the dangerous sexuality of the transvestite/transsexual character. When the light flickers, the femme fatale-like figure of the Invincible East attacks Ling with needles and thread conventionally used by women. In that split second, he realizes that the intruder is Ling and regrets that the weapons might hurt. With the Invincible East's long hair softly blowing in the wind, his image as a femme fatale becomes more obvious. When he pulls back the thread, his welcoming smile depicted in the chiaroscuro effect beckons Ling. Using light and shadow in contrast, the couple put aside their differences under an assumption that the 'lady' in the room requires Ling's protection and comfort. Taking away the thread that the Invincible East used to lead Ling astray, Ling mistakenly takes off the Invincible East's outer coat revealing his bare shoulder. The sinister kung-fu master's sexuality is further problematized by Lin's transgender performance. The male martial artist is represented as feminine and is portrayed as sexy and dangerous.

It is not until the middle of the film in a later closet scene that the spectator is enabled to overhear a conversation between the Invincible East and his wife and thus comes to understand that Lin has been playing a male role prior to Ling's impromptu visit discussed above. Before the closet scene, the sexuality of Lin's role was not clarified diegetically. That is to say, the audience was deprived of a clear definition of the transvestite/transsexual character's sexuality since his/her first appearance in the film. The sexuality of Lin's role, in fact, remains a question throughout the whole film. I shall examine the issue of sexuality at stake, not only as a question for the martial artist who is required to constantly reflect on his gender identity, but also as a question of the audience who are solicited to take on different viewing positions. There are at least three viewing positions. They include, firstly, the spectator's point of view; secondly, the view that is shared by the spectator and the character; and thirdly, the view outside the narrative that refers to the spectator's non-passionate involvement in a subject position, or in other words, a non-camera centred subject position. When the spectator is enabled to freely traverse the viewing positions, he or she is also engaged in a process of gender misrecognition.

The identity of the problematic character played by Lin is portrayed as enigmatic. The Invincible East, a male swordsman, is a sexually enigmatic character from the outset in the film. Audrey Yue offers a macro view in her analysis of the cultural significance of this character. She says, "...the transsexual martial artist ...exemplifies the deployment of 'transsexuality' and 'Asia' to highlight the cinema as a cultural model that experienced both British and Chinese modernities, combining and reconfiguring the contingencies and contiguities of West/East, capitalism/communism, and pluralism/autocracy." (8) Key to an understanding of the significance of the sexually ambiguous character is a factor about a convention of cross-dressing in Chinese opera. See-kam Tan's micro view on the cross-gender performance (or *fanchuan*) gives insight into a study of the performance as a form of queer art. (9) Later in this chapter, I shall offer an in-depth analysis of the significance of Chin-hsia Lin's transgender performance as key to the redeployment of the noirish themes and stylistics.

Swordsman II is not the first-time adaptation of the martial arts novel. The Hong Kong Repertory Theatre had already brought the same story on to the stage in Hong Kong. In this stage performance, the male role of the Invincible East was assigned to an actor according to the novel. Against the audience's expectation, the same male role in Siu-tung Ching's *Swordsman II* is not played by an actor. More interestingly, in this screen adaptation, the love story between Ling and the Invincible East of the same biological sex is additional. A description of the same-sex desire does not actually exist in the original novel. In the film, however, the sexual ambiguity of Lin's character problematizes the binary understanding of masculinity and femininity, which eventually misleads or enables the spectator to adopt multiple viewing positions. Thus he or she is able to shift the cinematic identification and negotiate his or her understanding of sexuality and identity. Before I move on to such a discussion, I shall examine the constitution and the concept of masculine behaviour in Chinese culture below.

In "Muscles and Subjectivity: A Short History of the Masculine Body in Hong Kong Popular Culture," Kwai-cheung Lo proposes to examine the articulation of the cultural identity of Hong Kong through a survey on the representation of the male body in the cinema. He is critical of Matthew Turner's understanding of the image of the Hong Kong body in positive terms. (10) According to Turner, the personages of *Fei Jai* (or rebellious teddy boy) of the '60s and Mr. Hong Kong (or the winner of muscle-building competition), are images 'designed to fit the modern Western mode of health, posture and physique.' (11) Lo argues, however, that the cultural identity of Hong Kong might be determined by a series of 'negativities and contradictory properties.' (12) He says,

> "The sublimity of the muscular body thus creates an initially empty place for the emergence of the Hong Kong subject, which is correlatively embedded in this "hole" of identification. The body may fail to offer a completely coherent representation corresponding to Hong Kong subject formation, but its inadequate presentation constitutes the real dimension of this subjectivity." (13)

Lo's survey revolves around Hong Kong masculine-macho films (*yang gang dian ying*) and argues that the filmic image of Bruce Lee, who was American Chinese, does not convey a pure sense of 'Chineseness.' (14) Siu-leung Li (15) describes Lo's assertion of Chinese masculinity as insightful as it moves beyond Stephen Teo's analysis of the kungfu body from a nationalistic stance. (16)

In *Theorizing Chinese Masculinity* (17), Kam Louie emphasizes the importance of giving up the Western analytical framework for an understanding of the notion of Chinese masculinity. His analysis of *wen-wu* (or literary-martial), which suggests 'the dichotomy between cultural and martial accomplishments, mental and physical attainments' (18) is key to understanding the conventional portrayal of Chinese masculinity. He explains that the unique maleness of the *wen-wu* dichotomy becomes apparent when it is juxtaposed with the concept of *yin-yang*. Yiyan Wang takes on the analytical paradigm and proposes to examine the idea of 'soft' masculinity that gives insight into the reading of Lin's persona in *Swordsman II*. According to Louie, *wen* is a concept that refers to a unique education system of Ancient China. *Wen*, or the cultural attainment of a Chinese scholar, can therefore be seen as 'a feature that has popular appeal to a Chinese electorate because it symbolizes the "right to power".' (19) *Wu* power, as Louie describes, is manifest in the course of battles and wars.

In addition to Louie's description of the hierarchical structure of *wen-wu*, Wang points out that the structure is in favour of *wen* historically, which embraces a type of 'soft' masculinity. He examines the role of 'soft' masculinity in Chinese culture with reference to the narrative structure of Chinese literature and the tradition of Chinese opera that promotes cross-gender performance by casting an actress for a male role or vice versa.

Both Louie and Wang agree that Chinese masculinity comprises both *wen* and *wu* and that a scholar (or a type of male role called *xiaosheng* in Chinese opera) is not seen as less masculine than a soldier. An effeminate and talented scholar in the scholar-beauty romance genre of Chinese literature, for instance, has more political influence in the community than a soldier does. Wang says,

"...in the classical novels, the figure of feminine male stood for civility, better education and higher social status." (20)

In a cross-gender performance, when an actress is conventionally assigned to play the male role as a *xiaosheng*, according to Wang, the feminine characteristics of the actress are considered in the Chinese culture as an element more suited for the depiction of the tenderness and sentimentality of this type of 'talented young man' or 'feminine male.' Louie has an interesting observation on the cross-gender performances regarding the civil role (*xiaosheng*) and the military role (*wusheng*). They include two Chinese female fictional characters, Yin-tai Zhu and Mulan in his analysis, who are diegetically required to pretend to be a male scholar and a soldier, respectively, and therefore cross-dress as men in some parts of the stories. He speaks of the disappearance of their *wen-wu* attributes when they put on the feminine outfit. Louis describes,

"...women such as Zhu Yintai who tried to get recognition for *wen* accomplishments by sitting for the civil service examinations had to do so dressed as men. And the woman warrior Mulan also had to conceal her femininity while she took part in military exploits. Once these women put on rouge and satin clothing again, all their *wen-wu* attributes disappear." (21)

The disappearance of the *wen, wu* or *wen-wu* quality conventionally serves to rectify the situation of gender ambiguity previously suggested by the act of cross-dressing. That is to say the disappearance of the *wen, wu* or *wen-wu* quality occurs at the point of departure of the 'queering'. By 'queering', I refer to the effect of destabilization, which blurs categories of gender and sexuality as soon as cross-dressing is diegetically required. In contrast with what usually happens in Chinese opera, when the Invincible East cross-dresses as a woman, the actress, Lin, ceases to be a cross-dresser at the performance level, while the *wen, wu* or *wen-wu* quality remains prominent extra-diegetically. The extra-diegetic reference is an element of acting that is intrinsic to Lin's transgender performance. This is related to a type of 'soft' masculinity that is embodied in Lin's transgender performance. That is to say, Lin's performance invokes the 'soft' masculinity that is conventionally associated with the mainstream cross-gender performance in Chinese opera. Before I elaborate further on the *wen, wu* or *wen-wu* quality and its relation to the 'soft' masculinity that is incorporated in the film's appropriation of the archetypal femme fatale character, I shall need to review a few points on gender identification that are raised in some critical writings on the film.

In Ching Yau's analysis, she posits that a kind of queer pleasure is derived from a '(temporary) suspension of seamlessly gendered identification' as a consequence of 'the spectator's simultaneous recognition of the actress's female body and the character's male body.' With reference to Lin's transgender performance at the end of the film when the 'gender discrepancy' between the actress and the character becomes 'less intelligible,' Ching Yau describes that the queer pleasure that may come from the viewing of the transgender performance diminishes. That is the moment when Lin as an actress literally ceases to cross-dress while the protagonist, her character in the film, also puts on a woman's dress and stylizes him/herself as if he were a woman. (22) Wah-shan Chou's analysis has a slightly different focus. He describes that the Invincible East and Ling are 'clearly homosexual lovers,' and mentions that the sense of homophobia is eliminated because of Lin's cross-gender performance. He says, "Casting the beautiful actress Brigitte Lin in the role completely takes away the shock and anxiety a male actor would inspire in playing that role." (23)

Helen Hok-sze Leung acknowledges that there is a tendency in critical works to view the cross-gender description as a disruption of the binary gender system, and as queer destabilization of gendered spectatorship. In her own examination of *Swordsman II*, she addresses the issue of the formation of transgender subjectivity that does not receive enough criticism. Referring to transgender subjection, she speaks of 'the conditions in which transgender subjects may emerge on screen, not as symbols but as agents of his or her specific narrative of transgender embodiment.' She emphasizes that her understanding of the film is not about an assertion of masculinity under siege. Rather, she considers that the film offers a 'spectacular display of transsexual femininity that has successfully eclipsed the centrality of masculine heroism in the genre.' (24)

My contention is that the conundrum created by the transgender performance does not merely facilitate the formulation of queer pleasure or of a fixed point of cinematic identification that leads to the subjectivity formation of a fixed gender identity. What I want to add to Leung's assertion on the demise of masculine heroism in the genre is that the defeat of the Invincible East should not be interpreted as a closure or resolution of the problem raised by the dangerous sexuality of the Invincible East. Rather, it is a play of absence and presence where the centrality of masculine heroism is highlighted and contested after the *wen*, *wu* or *wen-wu* quality is invoked, as a supplement, through the transgender performance of the femme fatale character. The type of 'female masculinity' demonstrated by the femme fatale character of *Swordsman II* should not be seen as 'a force of opposition to the masculine norm.' (25) Rather, it is a supplement that serves to expose the limitation of the conception of masculinity. Neither does the connotation of 'soft' masculinity that is established through Lin's star personage and transgender performance function to play down the notion of transgender femininity. Rather, its dominant role as a femme-fatale character establishes a sense of tragic sensibility that is intrinsic to the depiction of the crisis of masculinity throughout the film.

The term 'femme fatale' or fatal woman, who is sexy and dangerous, is historically and culturally associated with the styles of Art Nouveau. In the second half of the 19th century, there was a proliferation of the iconographies of femmes fatales in European art and literature. (26) Patrick Bade describes that they also appeared with alarming frequency in poetry, plays, novels and operas. By the end of the century the icons were even found on necklaces, advertisement hoardings, perched on ashtrays and inkwells. Film, or classical film noir in particular, is one of the most popular genres in which the archetypal character is used to portray a symbiotic relation between the fatal woman and the masochistic male. From a sociological point of view, the femme fatale in a film noir is a distillation of masculine anxieties about the 'liberated woman' after WW II. Janey Place describes a femme fatale as the 'dark lady,' 'spider woman,' and 'deadly seductress'. (27) While she speaks of the tendency of popular culture to create narratives in which male fears are concretized in sexually aggressive women who must be destroyed in general, she acknowledges that the character type of femme fatale is unique in classical film noir. She says,

"...a fuller explanation for the current surge of interest in film noir must acknowledge its uniquely sensual visual style which often overwhelms (or at least acts upon) the narrative so compellingly that it stands as the only period in American film in which women are deadly but sexy, exciting and strong." (28)

Molly Haskell states that the 1940s noir femme fatale has been described as an object of a universal male fantasy. (29) For instance, the femme fatale is iconographically distinguished as a sexual object by suggestive costuming, seductive lighting and the 'phallic' accessories of cigarettes and guns. That is to say, the femme fatale is a perversely dominant trope used in classical film noir that has been described as a 'masculine genre'. (30) I shall explain in the last section of this chapter that the use of the femme-fatale figure in *Swordsman II*, however, deviates from the generic tradition by instigating a crisis of masculinity rather than resolving it.

Essential to the narrative function of the character type in classical film noir is that a femme fatale is defined by her dangerous sexuality and that the character type is defined in relation to men. Haskel describes that 'her power to destroy was a projection of man's feeling of impotence.' (31) The existence of this type of sexually expressive woman, however, enhances the feeling of misogyny deep-rooted in classical cinema. Usually, at the closure of films, the femme fatale is punished. (32) The sadistic concept of the sex role is thus taken as dominant. However, Place emphasizes that the most impressive aspect of the female archetype is not her demise, but rather her 'exciting sexuality'. (33) What I want to emphasize in the following is what Mary Ann Doane describes as the 'discursive unease' (34) that the figure creates. Doane says, "For her most striking characteristic, perhaps, is the fact that she never really is what she seems to be. She harbors a threat which is not entirely legible, predictable, or manageable." (35)

In the case of *Swordsman II*, like other films noirs, the femme fatale character is delineated within the diegesis in terms of location, lighting, costuming and sexual activity. The discourse allies this transvestite/transsexual character with deception and secrecy by introducing the character as a masked martial artist at the beginning of the film. This is Lin's first appearance in a close-up shot as part of the opening of the film. The voice-over of the shot, which is supposedly the voice of Lin's character, indicates that the character is effeminate. As the mask blocks the spectator's view of the character, it also acknowledges the precariousness of the spectator's vision of the character. Thus, the film simultaneously enables the spectator to focus more on the character. This chapter examines the discursive unease and some of the more disruptive connotations of Lin's transgender performance through a critical survey on, firstly, the physical and psychological trauma associated with the femme fatale character; and secondly, the shifting cinematic identification that the film strategy enables.

In the following, I shall explore the way in which the film makes use of this enigmatic role in the swordplay to create dilemmas of identification diegetically and extra-diegetically. John Ellis suggests that two forms of identification—one associated with fantasy and the other with narcissism—are involved in entertainment cinema, and argues that identification is never simply a matter of men identifying with male figures on the screen and women with female figures. He explains that 'the situation is more complex than this, as identification involves both the recognition of self in the image on the screen...and the identification of self with the various positions that are involved in the fictional narration.' (36) His assertion on self-recognition as an essential aspect of the act of cinematic identification is of significance to my discussion of identification as multiple and fluid. In the Invincible East's four-phase trajectory of his identity transformation, the spectator who is involved in the process of identification is encouraged to shift and take up different positions in many ways. This trajectory refers to, firstly, a well-known woman actress playing a powerful warrior who seeks to become world-dominant. Secondly, this film character derives his power from his castration through which he forgoes his masculinity. Thirdly, he comes to enjoy and desire being feminine. Lastly, he forfeits his wish to dominate the world and chooses to love Ling.

I shall demonstrate that the spectatorial identification may not be moving in tandem with the Invincible East's transformation. There are at least three possible situations in which the spectator is distracted from the normal course of identification. When the film opens, the spectator is not immediately given the vantage point of view to see the character of the Invincible East as male. Since the modified Japanese style of his clothing is not gender specific and the figure is always masked in the beginning of the film, the spectator can easily identify the warrior as feminine by the sexual gender of the actress, Chin-Hsia Lin. It is not until the male identity of the role is disclosed diegetically that the spectator is enabled to adjust his or her understanding of the enigmatic role. That is to say, before the first two steps of the above-mentioned trajectory, the film has allowed the spectator to formulate a preconceived idea that the film figure is female. The misconception and/or pre-conception hence serve as a basis for the film to defamiliarize the object of identification and defer the normal process of identification. It seems that as soon as the spectator corrects his or her thought and identifies with the Invincible East as the male leader of his Sect in the film, the spectator's position of viewing remains intact. A third situation arises which puts the spectator into a difficult situation. When the Invincible East desires to be feminine after his castration, the film demonstrates that the sexually ambiguous figure is as feminine as the actress herself in real life. At this point of the film, the taboo regarding the problematic sexuality of the protagonist is mitigated because the graphical representation of the Invincible East as feminine matches Lin's gender role in real life. That is to say, the spectator is no longer discouraged to consider the sexually ambiguous figure as feminine. This also opens an option in which the spectator is allowed to shift his or her position of identification from assuming the sexual identity of the protagonist to that of the star, and vice versa. I shall explore an issue of deviation of the normal course of identification through an examination of the transgender performance of Lin. My discussion in this chapter shall revolve around the docile body of the sinister swordsman, the Invincible East, whose sexually ambiguous role in the film has distinguished him from other martial arts heroes. Essential to the performance is that it defamiliarizes the object of identification and destabilizes the cinematic identification.

Identification and the Body

Chinese film rarely characterizes a male kung fu master in a female form of body. *Swordsman II* is an exception in which the constructed persona of Lin is not only used for making a difference in the cinematic representation of a swordsman, but also for deconstructing the cinematic representation. The discussion which posits Lin's transsexual role-playing as performative is complex due to the fact that the film solicits gendered and transgendered subject re-positioning by invoking the convention of cross-gender performance in Chinese Opera. In *Cross-Dressing in Chinese Opera*, Siu-leung Li explains that the tradition of cross-dressing refers to a practice of assigning female players to play male roles on stage. Such a practice has had unique significance in Chinese opera from the time of the Yuen Dynasty (1271-1368). Li has traced the history of the Chinese convention and found that the earliest recorded instance of female cross-dressing is found in the 8th century in the time of Tang emperor Suzong (reign 756-763). (37) Cross-dressing is not new to Chinese cinema. One of the most popular texts is the tragic love story of Shan-bo Liang and Yin-tai Zhu (or The Butterfly Lovers), which has been adapted to various forms of culture since the Yuan Dynasty. (38) This is a story about Yin-tai Zhu, a female scholar from a rich family, who fakes her identity in order to receive an education. The most recent cinematic adaptation of the legendary romance is Hark Tsui's *The Lovers* in 1994. On other occasions, cross-dressing for an actor may be required in the cinema for the purpose of creating comic effect. Such figures are usually cast as minor characters in the film, who are not diegetically indispensable. (39) In some special occasions, cross-dressing that is required by the characterization of a tree demon in a horror picture such as *A Chinese Ghost Story* deviates from the tradition. The female character Lao Lao, played by an actor, Siu-ming Lau, is not simply a monstrous-feminine character. Audrey Yue describes this dominatrix pimp-tree monster as a 'homoerotic' figure who has both female and male voices and bears a fifty-five foot phallic tongue that wraps around her male victim. The demon also penetrates his or her tongue into the victim's mouth before she kills each time. (40)

The act of cross-dressing in *Swordsman II* deviates from the convention and creates a conundrum of the issues of sexuality or identity, rather than comic effect, in three ways. Firstly, the actress cross-dresses as a man while the character is a man. Secondly, the character cross-dresses as a woman while the actress is a woman. Lastly, the character becomes a woman while the actress is a woman. The crux of the matter is that the sexual ambiguity of the character is created for the purpose of differing implications and affiliations of identities and of deferring cinematic identification. What is so intriguing about the issue of sexuality is that the film purposefully alienates the spectator from a preconceived idea of gender and sex while it also solicits spectatorial identification with the femme fatale character—the Invincible East. Such a nuance is created by a disruptive filmic device which enables the spectator—male or female—to assume the feminine role through cinematic identification and allows the spectator to self-consciously notice that the issue of sexuality is at stake.

The assumption of femaleness takes effect during the cinematic activity at two levels: viewing the film independently of the effect derived from the mimetic operation of the plot structure and understanding the film passively according to the plot. That is to say, the two ways of seeing involve extra-diegetic and diegetic interpretations respectively. At the first level, the spectator would be very unlikely to reject the idea of cross-dressing or at some point they may not even be conscious of the act of cross-dressing when Lin, as an actress, is playing the role of a character who desires to be feminine. At the second level, however, according to the plot, the spectator would be enabled to impose judgment against sex changes as they follow the story where the Invincible East is seen as perverted by his followers, friends and enemies.

The film seems to align abusive comments against the Invincible East's behaviour by describing the other film characters' disapproval of his act of self-castration. However, the discursive structure of the film, that engages a female persona, does not seek to undermine or denounce the idea of homosexuality diegetically. Neither does it wholeheartedly facilitate any allegations against the homosexual behaviour of the Invincible East. The actress's performance actually endows the character of the Invincible East with a beautiful 'female soul'. That is to say, the reading of the moral judgment against the 'deviant' sexual behaviour is never straightforward. What is important to note is that the spectator is not only solicited to consider the enigmatic character as inferior or iniquitous but also the sexuality as problematic. This is due to the fact that the film employs the female persona of Lin to blur the boundaries between the normal and the abnormal, and the feminine and the masculine. When the spectator is allowed to transgress the boundaries, he or she is enabled to establish multiple viewing positions. As a result, the film enables the spectator-subject to freely shift his or her points of cinematic identification. I shall explain later in this chapter that this aspect of spectator-screen relation foregrounds a question of identity crisis in relation to an issue of homophobia. The film is not preaching a theory of homophobia. Rather, the film seeks to destabilize the conventional understanding of gender and sexuality. Thus, the crisis of masculinity is associated with various instances of gender misrecognition that are, I shall explain, carefully fabricated diegetically and suggested extra-diegetically. Essential to the formulation of the mistaken recognition of gender, which allows the spectator to shift the subject positioning, is that the whole process is inspired by Lin's transgender performance. This opens avenues for the spectator-subject to negotiate an understanding of identity, sexuality and subjectivity.

Analysis of Lin's transgender performance not only requires definitive ideological determination of codes that represent the body in a paradigmatic form of textual organization, but also an understanding of Lin's act of performing gender roles. Butler's analysis on the act of performing gender roles that constitutes an identity offers a perspective to reread the Invincible East's problematic identity and sexuality in a series of acts regarding Lin's transgender performance. Gender is seen as changeable in different contexts and at different times as Butler argues that belief in stable identities and gender difference are compelled by social convention and taboo and that gender roles are actually performed. She says, "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed." (41) Identity, for Butler, is a description of the retro-enactment of a gender role. In other words, a gender role—masculine or feminine—can be seen as a re-enactment of a particular role like any other role. Her assertion renews the old understanding of social reality as given and opens new avenues for rereading the reality as continually created by the retro-active performance 'through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign.' (42) In Butler's perspective, the gender roles are merely pre-conceived ideas that are socially inscribed. Hence, retro-enactment of a dominant gender role refers to the act of performing the role that is ideologically represented as legitimate. Lin's role as the male martial artist who desires to be feminine can be analyzed from Butler's point of view at three levels. Firstly, the Invincible East, as a man who takes on feminine behaviour, is a form of retro-enactment. Secondly, Lin, as an actress who is re-enacting the feminine role that is desired by the male martial artist in the film, is not only handling the role-playing of a feminine character in a straightforward manner, but she qualifies the transvestite/transsexual role by performing the gender role as a woman. That is to say, the actress actually takes on the feminine behaviour as if she were a man desiring to be feminine in the film. Thirdly, I shall draw on Butler's theory in examining the way in which the convention of cross-dressing in Chinese opera is invoked in Lin's transgender performance. In the finale, when the Invincible East's problematic sexuality is denounced by other film characters diegetically, what the transvestite/transsexual is expected to do is to resume his/her role of the effeminate man that appeared earlier on in the film. The interpellation suggests that a 'retro-enactment' of the male role is preferred. Essential to this male role is the form of 'soft' masculinity that is manifested by Lin in her cross-gender performance in the first half of the film. In Chinese opera, this form of masculinity is derived from a convention of cross-dressing as a convention. The convention refers to assigning an actress to play a male role which is civil and/or military. The actress or *fanchuan* performer, as Seekam Tan stresses, 'should be distinguished from other types of cross-dressers in opera/films.' She says,

> "Firstly, *fanchuan* performers are not only specialist gender-benders but, according to their professional calling, also 'full-time' cross-dressers. As such they are not cameo-drags; that is, performers who, throughout their career, play an *occasional* gender-bending role or two. By contrast, for the *fanchuan* performers, doing cross-gender impersonations *is* their career." (43)

She emphasizes that the traditional cross-gender performance is less a case of gender confusion; and that a *fanchuan* performer is neither a drag who pretends to be the opposite sex, nor a transvestite who has a 'fetish' for sartorial disguise. The sense of 'soft' masculinity demonstrated by the *fanchuan* performer should be seen as an aspect of performing art that manifests itself through the traditional cross-gender performance. It is delivered by formally trained artists who have perfected the skill of imitating masculine behaviour on stage as to how an action is performed and how a line of a script is spoken. Signs of performance, for Richard Dyer, which include facial expression, voice, gestures, body posture, and body movement (44), contribute to the act of performing the convention of reality.

In Butler's discussion on performance, she focuses on the live experience and questions the belief that concretizes certain gendered behaviours as natural or legitimate. What she means by 'performance' is the learned performance of gendered behaviour that is imposed on us by normative heterosexuality. Therefore, she differentiates performance and performativity by stating that 'the former presumes a subject, but the latter contests the very notion of the subject.' (45) By performativity, she gives new insight into examining the discursive practice or 'performative' (46) that assumes a stable subjectivity. I shall take on this perspective to look at the way in which the transvestite/transsexual or the femme fatale figure performs gender reality, which prompts the spectator-subject to shift his or her position of identification and critique the notion of identity.

The actress, Lin, is first assigned to play a male role and is later required diegetically to be disguised as a woman. Lin's performance is actually a type of transgender performance that deviates from the tradition when the act of cross-dressing constitutes an idea of same-sex desire. What I want to stress here is that Lin's performance is not confined to the imitation of masculine behaviour but also of feminine behaviour. When the actress is required to play down the masculine role and to take on a feminine identity by putting on a woman's dress, the transgender performance exposes the materiality of the discursive practice, which refers to the act of performing the gender roles. Central to the discursive practice that fabricates the story of the Invincible East's crisis of masculinity is the film's portrayal of the dangerous sexuality of Lin's role and appropriation of the archetypal femme fatale. At the end of the film when the Invincible East's feminine behaviour—which is a form of 'retro-enactment' of the gender role—is disapproved of, the act of cross-dressing that has been visually intelligible invokes the sense of 'soft' masculinity that Lin's performance previously demonstrates. Such an idea of 'soft' masculinity remains as a diegetic reference when the main protagonist is forced to resume his status as a male martial artist that refers to the image of an effeminate man. The idea of 'soft' masculinity is also an extra-diegetic reference because Lin's performance of the effeminate man is akin to the traditional cross-gender performance in Chinese opera for the civil, military or civil-military roles to which contemporary Hong Kong audience may easily make reference.

In light of the visual and conceptual conundrums created by the implication of the 'soft' masculinity that is incorporated in the film's appropriation of the archetypal femme fatale character, it can be seen that the cinema is a work of deconstruction or subversion of the dominant codes of representation and narrativity. The performativity of the gender role discussed here becomes key to understanding the discursive practice that I call the play between identification and dis-identification with the femme fatale character; and the play of absence and presence of the crisis of masculinity. The play which is constituted through a strategy of *différance* is a kind of acknowledgement of the profound limits of reason. When Lin's transgender performance and the archetypal femme fatale character converge through a process of pastiche, the film not only gives rise to the misrecognition of gender, but also opens new avenues for constitution of a vision that facilitates negotiation of gender and cultural identity extra-diegetically.

It can be seen that, in the course of negotiation, there is a kind of tragic sensibility that sustains a vision of culture, which involves two basic elements—suffering and courage. Such a vision embraced by the film, as I shall demonstrate in this and later chapters, requires a ceaseless contestation of the established belief, convention and ways of seeing the world. Lin's transgender performance of the femme fatale role that facilitates the negotiation for a self-conscious understanding of identity and identification contributes to the formulation of the vision.

The dangerous femininity, which is demonstrated by the Invincible East's femme-fatale figure, reveals a sentiment that I call tragic acceptance. This idea is drawn on in Elisabeth Bronfen's rereading of the significance of the femme-fatale archetype in classical film noir in terms of 'negotiations of tragic desire.' (47) Unlike other feminist readings of the archetypal character listed earlier on, Bronfen emphasizes that a femme fatale may assume full responsibility for her own fate. According to Bronfen, a femme fatale is able to manipulate the outcome of the fatal meeting with the hero. She says,

"From the moment the hero catches sight of the femme fatale, both find themselves caught in a sequence of events which can go only one way. Both are tragically framed with a narrative of fate and can only come to accept the law of causation. Yet if the contingent turn from free choice to inevitability is aligned with a masculine gaze appropriating a seductive feminine body, one must not overlook the fact that as bearer of the hero's look, it is the femme fatale who manipulates the outcome of their fatal meeting." (48)

Bronfen proposes to reread the seductive feminine body of the femme fatale character from a masculine gaze. She suggests that although the noir hero may be the bearer of the look, what he may see remains an outcome that is manipulated by the femme fatale. In the light of Bronfen's perspective, Lin's transgender performance and the way in which the character finds freedom in the act of performing the genders demonstrates that the Invincible East is able to assume responsibility and that he/she has been manipulating the outcome of the fatal meeting with Ling. I shall demonstrate in the rest of the chapters that the conviction of such tragic acceptance has been solicited in recent Hong Kong cinema through a disruptive strategy that situates cinematic spectatorship in the context of a play of shifting identification and dis-identification. The play refers to a process of misrecognition of gender through which the spectator is enabled to identify with the Invincible East and comes to discover freedom in the act of performing the gender roles. I shall explain in the following that the spectator is enabled to understand that identity and identification can be negotiated.

Rolanda Chu also presumes that the casting of the famous actress for the male role is a strategy. In her essay, "*Swordsman II* and *The East is Red*: The 'Hong Kong Film,' Entertainment, and Gender," she draws on Annette Kuhn's usage of two concepts--the 'view behind' the narrative and the 'view with' the characters—borrowed from Tzvetan Todoro. The former refers to the spectator's vantage point of view, whereas the latter refers to another viewing position of the spectator, which is more or less equivalent to that of the characters. Apart from these two viewing positions, she proposes to study the reason for the spectator's active explication of the star persona and its significance in the course of the film. In Chu's terminology, the spectator's gaze at Lin's persona is a viewing position 'outside' the narrative. She says,

'Tsui's clever usage of Lin moves beyond the dynamic of Kuhn's "view behind," functioning instead as what I would term a "view outside." The purpose here is not to see behind the garb, but to look beyond the narrative completely, in order to know it is Lin Ching-Hsia, the famous Hong Kong actress.' (49)

This 'view outside,' which results from a non-passionate involvement in a subject viewing position, enables the spectator-subject to interpret the film beyond the narrative. Chu assumes that before the protagonist's enigmatic identity is revealed within the diegesis, the spectator has been constantly solicited to resolve the enigma by resorting to his or her prior knowledge of Lin as an actress, which is ostensibly irrelevant to the understanding of the film story. She purports that the film leads the spectator to ponder over the biological sex of Lin, while the film also clarifies that the identity of the character she plays is male.

I agree that the 'view outside' refers to the spectator's immediate response to the actress' transgender performance. The star persona of Lin is the base of a self-conscious reading as the film successfully engages the spectator in a viewing position which is linked up with his or her knowledge of Lin as a female artist rather than a male. As I have suggested earlier on, from the moment the idea of casting Lin for the enigmatic role was conceived, the film orchestrated this self-conscious reading of the performance. What Chu has not made clear is that there are some pre-requisites for the formulation of this 'view outside'.

The 'view outside' does not exist on its own. To understand this, I would like to draw upon Richard Allen's critique of Christian Metz's assumption that character-centred identification is also spectator-centred. Metz sees an act of looking as a camera-centred perception through which the spectator is to identify with what is viewed. Allen argues firstly that a spectator may not occupy the perceptual point of view of the camera. Secondly, the spectator-centred identification may deviate from the character's point of view. (50) Therefore, the 'view outside' should refer to the extra-filmic references derived from the gaze that a non-camera-centred subject-position of the spectator affords. With reference to this aspect of the spectator-screen relation, I shall further examine an issue of mistaken recognition of gender.

Mistaken Recognition of Gender

Chu emphasizes a case of mistaken identification of gender in her analysis of *Swordsman II.* I shall demonstrate that she has merely dealt with a case of mistaken identity. The crux of the matter of the problematic issue of identification is, however, related to the mistaken recognition of gender. She firstly speaks of the boundary-breaking pleasure that the spectator of *Swordsman II* can derive from being deceived or deprived of the full knowledge of the sexual identity of the transvestite character played by Lin in the first half of the film. Then she claims that the spectator's misunderstanding of the sexual identity of the Invincible East is integral to the narrative structure. That is to say, the spectator's prior knowledge of the biological sex of the actress is required, and his or her insight into the film-text with reference to the real-life experience is indispensable. Chu postulates,

"...(the) spectator is deliberately set-up to misrecognize, to mistake Fong's (the Invincible East's) identity of gender as female, just as the Ling character does in the narrative." (51)

According to Chu, the spectator is deprived of a view which allows him or her to decode accurately the Invincible East's sexual identity within the narrative, hence the spectator resorts to his or her prior knowledge and tends to think that the male character is female. Similarly, Ling does not have a clear view of the Invincible East when they first meet at the lake. Therefore, he judges from the feminine appearance of the body of the Invincible East and presumes that he is 'female'.

It is true that the spectator is not fully informed of the background of the enigmatic character, but he or she is never deceived. Nor does he or she misidentify the transvestite as a female in exactly the same way Ling does in the film. The film merely distracts the spectator from figuring out that the Invincible East is male. I have explained earlier on that the film achieves this effect by problematizing the outfit of the film character, which functions as one of the major cultural codes that denotes the class and gender of the people of ancient China. For similar reasons, therefore, both the spectator and Ling misrecognize at the beginning that the Invincible East is female. However, the spectator does not mistake the sexual identity of the character in exactly the same way Ling does in the course of the film. From the outset, the film hints that there is a problematic issue about gender and sexuality. In an array of traces of the Invincible East's transvestitism, the spectator's straightforward understanding of the character as a female is not unchallenged. For instance, although Lin as a female plays the male role, the film character appears to have a male voice. Furthermore, in the first half of the film, the character dresses consistently in clothes that are not traditionally worn by a Chinese woman. The film not only provides sufficient clues which suggest that the character is not an ordinary woman, but it also prevents the spectator from deciphering both the genders that Lin's persona demonstrates.

The sexual identity of the character is revealed to the spectator in the middle of the film. In an intimate conversation between the Invincible East and his wife, not knowing that he castrated himself half a year ago, the wife complains innocently about the husband's total abstinence from sex. The spectator is then assured of his sexual identity. Unlike the spectator who has the vantage point of view to grasp the truth, Ling remains ignorant of the Invincible East's true identity at this stage. Later in the film, Ling is even driven to believe that the Invincible East is the woman with whom he has had sex due to the fact that the Invincible East has made his wife substitute for himself without alerting Ling.

Chu seems to suggest in her essay that the spectator has a single perspective to resolve the blurred duality of the feminine and the masculine. However, I suggest that the spectator enjoys multiple viewing positions, which are derived from a narrative schema of the film that requires him or her to move from different viewing positions in resolving the enigma of the film. That is to say, when the spectator follows the plot to understand the internal and external struggles of the transvestite/transsexual character, he or she is enabled to assume many roles at the same time and/or different times. The understanding of the character of the Invincible East is not pinned down to a single perspective because the spectator is neither forced to uphold the assumption of female identity in accordance with the female body form, nor is he or she entirely tied to Ling's initial viewpoint to see Lin's role as female. Chu has obviously omitted a possibility that the spectator can engage a text in alternative ways.

Crucial to my discussion of the mistaken recognition of gender is the spectator's active involvement in two of these viewing positions. They are, firstly, the position of the cinema audience when they draw upon non-diegetic references in understanding the enigmatic character; and secondly, the position of the audience as they identify with the transvestite/transsexual character who assumes for himself a female identity. Crossing between these two positions, the spectator is faced with a dilemma of identification, in which he or she is torn between the two choices of being estranged from or identifying with the transvestite/transsexual character. My contention is to examine the discursive strategy that engages the spectator in constructing a mutable spectator-screen relation in which the meaning of self and the ways to interpret the film text are not fixed.

Before I proceed with the discussion, I want to clarify the etymology of the word 'identification' used in psychoanalytic film theory. According to the classical psychoanalytic perception of spectatorship, identification is classified into two categories. For both Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz, primary cinematic identification refers to the spectator's adoption of the point of view of the camera, and secondary cinematic identification is concerned with the spectator's emotional attachment to the content of what is viewed (52). This concept of identification is frequently discussed in psychoanalytic film theory in relation to a thesis of mirror misrecognition. The film theory assumes that the spectator's identification with a film character and with what is seen in a film presupposes the spectator's identification with the camera. The situation of primary cinematic identification resembles that of a six-month old infant's encounter with an adult who carries him or her in front of a mirror, where he or she starts to alienate from himself or herself by submitting the idea of self to an imaginary and symbolic order. (53)

For Metz, the cinema cannot recreate the mirror phase in the spectator because the experience of the infant is long gone. (54) Moving beyond the theory of primary cinematic identification, he considers the spectator-subject as a kind of transcendental subject who is all-perceiving. Elizabeth Cowie takes issue with the theory of subject and argues that camera-centred identification does not necessarily require transcendental identification. (55) She gives evidence that the viewing subject is not a unified subject as the viewer is allowed to shift the point of identification in the course of spectating. She says,

"...identification—the mechanism which constitutes the subject as such—also allows the subject to take up the position of another object, or look....The imaginary, then, is characterized not by a full, unified subject, but by a subject already divided....It is not signification or representation as such that is imaginary, but the relationship constructed for and in the spectator." (56)

Cowie's assertion on the nature of shifting cinematic identification and her critique of the assumption of transcendental subjectivity are keys to an understanding of the influence of a kind of disruptive film strategy that has been used in Hong Kong cinema recently. Her analysis gives insight into the corollary of the process of cinematic identification such as self-alienation of the subject in the moment of its precipitation as subject that I shall demonstrate below.

Like Metz and Cowie, Richard Allen does not entirely agree with the thesis of mirror misrecognition. He believes that spectatorial experience recalls a person's first experience of identification in front of a mirror. However, he opposes the linear reading of the film theory which presumes that primary identification is a pre-requisite of the spectator's identification with a film character. He claims that he takes proper account of the place of consciousness in the spectator's experience of a film and emphasizes two aspects of spectatorship. He says,

"The failure within psychoanalytic film theory to draw a distinction between emotional response predicated on the act of looking (spectator-centred identification) and emotional response predicated upon identification with character (character-centered identification) has misled a whole generation of film theorists. Since projective illusion involves both forms of identification, it is not inherently voyeuristic, but it does afford the possibility of voyeurism. Voyeurism is predicated upon the experience of spectator-centered projective illusion, where the body or body part of a character is displayed for us in a manner such that we are detached from the feelings of that character, as is characteristic of certain depictions of sexuality (particularly female sexuality) and violence." (57)

The crux of the matter about voyeurism that Allen purports is that spectator-centred identification may not be character-centred. My discussion shall focus on two instances of cinematic identification to which Allen's assertion applies. Firstly, it applies to the situation in which the film viewer critiques the cinematic representation after being distracted from the act of identification. Without engaging the spectator in misrecognizing the gender of the enigmatic role of the Invincible East in the first place, the film will not be able to offer the spectator-centred viewpoint that gives rise to the self-conscious reading of the film text. Secondly, in the alteration of the normal course of identification, the spectator is not only allowed to assume the Invincible East's double roles of the male kung-fu master and the transvestite, but he or she is also solicited to alienate himself or herself from the character. The text created by the ensemble of the transgender performance is also open to free association. My concern here is that the spectatorial response is a two-fold process which results from an act of vacillation. This is what I describe as dilemmas of identification experienced by the spectators.

Making extra-diegetic references that are related to the star persona, the film creates the dilemmas of identification. Such dilemmas are experienced by a unique group of audience, which comprises the members of Hong Kong society. The spectator's involvement in the extra-diegetic interpretation of the act and behaviour of the Invincible East, I shall explain, is related to the film figure's female body form. The on-screen persona of Lin demonstrates a kind of charisma that is essential to the formulation of the character in this enigmatic role. (58) When the genders of the actress and the enigmatic film figure of the Invincible East are both misrecognized and the enigmatic film figure is given a female body form in the film, two conditions of viewing pleasure are created. The spectators may enjoy Lin's performance as a powerful woman, or enjoy seeing the Invincible East as a powerful woman. Within the same narrative schema, after the true identity of the Invincible East and the issue of transsexualism are disclosed, dilemmas emerge. The spectator may continue to enjoy Lin's performance as a powerful woman by drawing upon the extra-diegetic reference of the artist's gender. In this case, the female body form has endowed the sexually ambiguous figure with a more concrete image of a loving woman that the role of the castrated man does not embody. The spectator may also take up a different position to enjoy seeing the Invincible East as a powerful man who desires to be feminine and gives up his power for another man. The female body form thereby mitigates the moral and cultural references that the acts of homosexuality and transsexualism may imply. The same-sex desire that is mentioned in the film is never visually intelligible because the gay couple is played by an actor and an actress respectively.

A Crisis of Masculinity

In this section, I consider the mistaken recognition of gender experienced by the spectator not merely as a deferral of the spectator's identification with the specular image of the female star but also as a stimulant of a crisis of masculinity. It is important to note that the *jianghu* in crisis which is visually represented in a noirish style does not merely function to solicit an understanding of the social malaise of the dark world. The crisis is portrayed as a situation that is further problematized by an enigmatic femme-fatale character whose sexuality brings forth many questions—about being castrated, being effeminate, bearing a type of 'soft' masculinity, desiring to be female, and being homosexual. I shall demonstrate in this section that the crisis of masculinity is not a consequence of homophobia, but it is a trope employed in the film to formulate a nuance of the conventional practice of spectatorial identification. Essential to the creation of the nuance is the film's textual intention to destabilize gendered identification so as to create possibilities of shifting identifications through Lin's transgender performance of the fatal woman. The portrayal of the dangerous sexuality of the femme fatale in the film deviates from the generic field of classical film noir. Unlike what is usually depicted in the narrative closure of many classical films noirs, the fatal woman character of *Swordsman II*—the transvestite/transsexual—is never punished for the recuperation of masculinity. Hence, the crisis of masculinity not only lingers, but is further intensified. The crisis serves to mitigate and/or disrupt the spectator's experience of recognition in order to create possibilities of shifting viewpoints and standpoints in the course of re-positioning a historical, social and/or political identity.

The notion of feminine sexuality laid out by the narrative schema of *Swordsman II* is a break from Chinese convention. In most Chinese films, females of old China are portrayed as subservient, gentle and weak. Their role in feudal society is described as dutiful. They merely serve to give birth to and raise children for the dominant males. When a woman is represented as quiet, subordinate, and without individuality, a binary opposition of dominance and submission—which organizes an idea of hierarchy that presumes a pattern of male subjectivity and female objectivity—is always prominent. However, with the blurred duality of the feminine and the masculine demonstrated by the body of the transvestite/transsexual character, the spectator's polemical preconception of gender roles is rendered unsuitable. The powerful image of a dominant male embodied in a female body form contests the cinematic representation that equates femininity with subservience, subordination and inferiority. The female star persona, which embraces self-assured maleness, obliterates the cinematic practice that objectifies the woman image. The narrative schema, which contributes to the idealization of femininity, seems to comply with the convention that represents woman as an object of desire. The film strategy which orchestrates the misrecognition of gender diegetically and extra-diegetically, however, reveals that the film not only critiques the representation of woman, but also resists the conventional portrayal of masculinity.

Traditionally, martial arts heroes are depicted as faithful and moral. They spend most of their time with male friends and fellow martial artists and demonstrate their dedication to the martial arts career by containing their excessive sexual desire. Louie says,

> "Containment of excessive and extended use of force, and containment of excessive sexual drives, form a dominant part of the discourses of masculinity in China." (59)

According to this logic, Ling's reputation is ruined by his emotional attachment to the Invincible East and by his indirect involvement in the Invincible East's insidious quest for a female identity. The same-sex desire demonstrated in Lin's transgender performance, however, is not entirely denounced despite the fact that the Invincible East is described as sinful, immoral and revengeful. In the film, he is also described as faithful to Ling and his love for him is treasured. While Ling strays and has other lady friends to please, the Invincible East gives up his wife and his martial arts career in the hope of winning Ling's heart. The transvestite/transsexual character's fidelity is not only shown in the courtship but also in the last battle between him and all his enemies, in which he discovers that Ling has not been faithful. Conventionally, devout kung-fu masters think highly of abstinence from sex and detachment from romance as acts of dedication to their martial arts career. When Ling has sex with a woman whom he does not even know, his masculine identity as a martial arts hero is undermined and he is described as imprudent since he delays going to save his friends while he takes time to enjoy the sex act. Despite the fact that Ling is misled to believe that the woman is the Invincible East, his promiscuous behaviour is not justified in the film. That is to say, the film paradoxically denounces Ling's conduct which is a kind of normative heterosexual behaviour, while the film makes the spectator sympathetic to the Invincible East's love for Ling, which results from a type of same-sex desire. By the way in which the film subjects Ling's behaviour to scrutiny, the film also critiques his genteel status as a martial arts leader. Such a negative representation of a martial arts hero as the protagonist of a film is rare within the generic convention. Against the spectator's expectation, the film blurs the boundary between the moral and the evil. Since the conventionally righteous character is not considered to be respectable, the spectator is led to question the conventional notion of masculinity. When identification with the hero may be delayed until the spectator comes to terms with the unconventional image of the disgraceful hero, he or she is solicited to believe that a hero is not necessarily a superhuman being.

Similarly, the films' delineation of the problematic issue of transsexualism seeks to critique the idea of heterosexism and resist the conventional conception of sexuality and gender. I shall argue that the spectator's contestation of these ideas is solicited by the film strategy that has carefully involved the spectator in traversing the fictional world and the real world constantly and allows him or her to reread the screen text self-consciously. Though some characters in the film are described as homophobic, the narrative schema gives rise to a new understanding of heterosexism at the extra-diegetic level, which makes the spectator aware of the fact that stigmatization of homosexuality is a consequence of ideologically complicit reading of the text.

While most of the film characters—major and minor—levy harsh comments and moral judgment against the illicit love affair between the Invincible East and Ling, the film does not convey an idea of homophobia throughout the portrayal of the love life between the protagonists. If an actor was assigned to play the transvestite role, the sense of homophobia may become explicit. When Lin, as a woman, plays the role, the description of the homophobic feeling is deferred. Since the Invincible East and Ling are visually a heterosexual couple on the screen, the sense of homophobia is not derived in a straightforward manner. Although the story of the illicit love affair is between two men, the roles being played by an actor and actress respectively undercut the effect of homophobia.

The homophobic sensation, I argue, is not even constituted within the diegesis. This is because when most of the film characters launch negative opinions on the illicit relationship between Ling and the Invincible East, the female persona of the transvestite/transsexual character does not visually facilitate the description of the immoral behaviour that the film claims. On the contrary, the fear of homophobia is to a certain extent eased by the appearance of the Invincible East in a female body form throughout the film.

The female body form displayed in the star persona extends the space of interpretation beyond the fictional world. The body becomes one of the major extra-filmic elements that exercises influence on the audience's perception. For instance, when the film shows that the Invincible East and his wife enjoy physical intimacy, the spectator is virtually seeing two women caressing each other. Hence, to the spectator who is more heterosexist, the feeling of homophobia created by the performances of the two actresses may be more intense. Relatively speaking, it is more comfortable for the same group of spectators to accept the Invincible East's same-sex desire for Ling. The casting of two actresses for the husband and wife characters creates a vivid visual impact that has a bearing on lesbianism. Homophobia, however, is not derived from the spectator's mental perception of the diegetic love relationship between the two male characters, but from the extra-diegetic perception of the intimate relationship between the heterosexual couple played by the two actresses. What is more significant about the connotation of homophobia briefly suggested in the middle of the film is that it serves to increase the awareness of heterosexism and of coming to a position to endorse heterosexism. Hence, the materiality of the act of viewing is exposed as soon as the spectator becomes more self-conscious of the gendered spectatorship.

That is to say, the sense of homophobia is neither a cause nor a consequence of the Invincible East's crisis of masculinity, and the narrative schema of *Swordsman II* does not seek to sustain a normative gender structure. Rather, the crisis serves to destabilize the established notion of gender and identity diegetically and gives rise to a contestation of meanings and of the act of spectating. In the final combat scene (see appendix ii), the transvestite/transsexual attempts to kill Ling's female friend by pushing her off a cliff while he himself is pretending to commit suicide by diving down the same mountain. When the lady requires a rescuer and Ling responds, the film offers a glimpse of a stronger man saving a weaker woman. The brief reference to the patriarchal hierarchy between the rescuer and the victims does not, however, function to reinforce the established sense of masculinity that is usually described in the genre of Chinese swordplay. As soon as the Invincible East becomes disillusioned with his quest for power and love, he formulates an idea of ruining the friendship and destroying the world. Finally, his dilemma of desiring to be loved like a woman as a man becomes a point of identification and dis-identification.

Central to the dilemma of identification and alienation is a film strategy that misleads the spectator to misrecognize the gender of the Invincible East. Hence, the spectator is entrapped in the situation in which he or she needs to traverse the boundaries of the fictional world and the real world. That is to say, the narrative and Lin's transgender performance not only come together to tell a love story but they also seek to inspire the spectator to read the film critically at the extra-diegetical level. The spectator may not share the actual experience of gender confusion that is experienced diegetically by the protagonist. The experience of mistaken recognition of gender and the dilemmas of identification that the spectator has gone through in the course of the film, however, place him or her in a similar position to negotiate meanings and identities like the transvestite/transsexual character.

When the narrative schema deprives the spectator, from the very beginning, of full knowledge of the male identity of the role that Lin plays, the spectator is pre-occupied by the personage of Lin whose enigmatic role engages him or her in a process of mistaken recognition of gender. I have argued that the mistaken experience eventually leads the spectator to traverse between the fictional world and the conscious world in order to resolve the enigma. The spectator's misrecognition of Lin's role as female in the first place creates a nuance of understanding the enigmatic character and thus a greater possibility for him or her to identify with and/or distance from the Invincible East later in the film. When the spectator is perplexed by the aberrant cinematic strategy, he or she may also oscillate between two moods and attitudes regarding the assumptions of the male role of the Invincible East and the female star persona of Lin. It can be seen, therefore, that the star persona in *Swordsman II* creates an extra-diegetic space of interpretation and re-interpretation for the spectator to take issue with Lin's transgender performance self-consciously.

It is important to note that at the crossroads of identification and dis-identification the spectator may traverse between the fictional and real worlds. The contemporary Hong Kong audience is thus enabled to activate and escalate the 'social imaginary' or 'cultural imagination' (60) regarding the real life situation that is also interpreted as a crisis—the fear and anxiety that are associated with Hong Kong's reunification with China before and after 1997. The representation of the *jianghu* in crisis, an imaginary dark world of crime, corruption and chaos, may hence sustain and facilitate the imagination or self-reflexive association of the fictitious crisis with that of the city in transition. This takes place as the film opens a gateway for a critical understanding of identity and identification through the reinvestment of classical generic elements of film noir in *Swordsman II.*

identity and identification through the reinvestment of classical generic elements of film noir in *Swordsman II.*

Notes

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4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p.496

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15 Siu-leung Li, "*Kung Fu: Negotiating Nationalism and Modernity*," *Cultural Studies*, 15(3/4) 2001

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19 Iibid., p.5

20 Yiyan Wang, "Mr. Butterfly in Defunct Capital: 'soft' masculinity and (Mis)engendering China," in *Asian Masculinities: The Meaning and Practice of Manhood in China and Japan*, eds. Kam Louie and Morris Low, (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p.43

21 Kam Louie, "Chinese, Japanese and Global Masculine Identities," p. 4

22 The Chinese text written by Ching Yau is cited from *Ling Qi Lu Zao* and translated by Leung. See Helen Hok-sze Leung, "Unsung Heroes: Reading Transgender Subjectivities in Hong Kong Action Cinema," in *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema*, eds. Laikwan Pang and Day Wong, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p.87; and Ching Yau, *Ling Qi Lu Zao*, (Hong Kong: Youth Literary Bookstore, 1996), p.165

23 The Chinese text written by Wah-shan Chou is cited from *Tong Zhi Lun* and translated by Leung. See Helen Hok-sze Leung, "Unsung Heroes: Reading Transgender Subjectivities in Hong Kong Action Cinema," in *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema*, eds.Laikwan Pang and Day Wong, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p.87; and Wah-shan Chou, *Tong Zhi Lun*, (Hong Kong: Tongzhi Yanjiu she, 1995), p.300. Brigitte Lam is also known as Chin-hsia Lin.

24 Helen Hok-sze Leung, "Unsung Heroes: Reading Transgender Subjectivities in Hong Kong Action Cinema," in *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema*, eds. Laikwan Pang and Day Wong, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p.83, 90

25 "At first glance, female masculinity is only one of many versions of masculinity, albeit a relatively subordinate one, which is perhaps not much different to queer masculinity. Its existence is recognized but merely as one that is passive. Yet, female masculinity could have the potential to produce, through perverse reiteration, unconventional formulations of masculinity that expose its limited and exclusionary features at the same time that the female version mobilizes a new set of

demands. Female masculinity should not be understood as a force of opposition to the masculine norm, because the very opposition is merely an instrument through which the power of the dominant masculinity operates." See Kwai-cheung Lo, "Fighting Female Masculinity: Women Warriors and Their Foreignness in Hong Kong Action Cinema of the 1980s," in *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema*, eds. Laikwan Pang and Day Wong, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p.143.

26 Patrick Bade, *Femme Fatale: Images of Evil and Fascinating Women*, (New York: Mayflower Books, Inc., 1979), p.1

27 Janey Place, "Women in Film Noir," in *Women in Film Noir*, ed. Ann Kaplan, (London: British Film Institute, 1998), p.47, 53, 63

28 Ibid., p.63

29 Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.190

30 Ibid., p. 207

31 Ibid., p.191

32 Elizabeth Cowie, "Film Noir and Women," in *Shades of Noir*, ed. Joan Copjec, (London and New York: Verso, 1993

33 Janey Place, "Women in Film Noir," p.48

34 Mary Ann Doane, "Deadly Women, Epistemology, and Film Theory," *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p.3

35 Ibid., p. 1

36 John Ellis, *Visible Fictions*, (London: Routledge, 1992), p.43

37 Siu-leung Li, *Cross-dressing in Chinese Opera*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), p.2, 33

38 Siu-leung Li says, "The legendary romance has been repeatedly retold in popular cultural forms from Yuan-Ming plays to various traditional and modern cultural forms, including prose narrative, folk ballad, regional theatre, classical poetry, modern novel, film, musical, concerto, ballet, modern dance, comics, and TV drama, and the list could go on." See *Cross-dressing in Chinese Opera*, p.109.

39 In the '20s, Minwei Li—the first Chinese film director—cast himself in a woman's role as formally trained actresses were not as available then as they are now for the contemporary cinema. Until the early 20th century, ladies from good families customarily spent their life within the confines of their homes in order to maintain a good reputation. Woman artists who performed in public areas like restaurants and streets were normally considered as disgraceful because in many cases these women, like a Geisha in Japan, had to sell their bodies in China. Later in the first half of the last century, female artists were allowed to perform in Chinese opera and costume film. They were, however, not cast for female roles but male ones in the old days. They proved themselves equally capable in taking up the roles as their male counterparts.

40 Audrey Yue, "Preposterous Hong Kong Horror: *Rouge*'s (Be)Hindsight and a (Sodomitical) *Chinese Ghost Story*," in *The Horror Reader*, ed. Ken Gelder, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) p.371. (ie: The title of this article is also noted by Yue as "Preposterous Horror: On *Rouge*, *A Chinese Ghost Story* and Nostalgia")

41 Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), p.278

42 Ibid., p.270

43 See-kam Tan, *Queer Asian Cinema: Shadows in the Shade*, Andrew Grossman, (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2000), p.209

44 Richard Dyer, *Stars*, (London: British Film Insttitute, 1979), p.151

45 Judith Butler, "Gender as Performance," ed. Peter Osborne, in *A Critical Sense: Interviews with Intellectuals,* (England, USA, Canada: Routledge, 1996), p.112

46 Butler, Judith, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), p.13

47 Elisabeth Bronfen, "Femme Fatale—Negotiations of Tragic Desire," *New Literary History*, Vol. 35, No.1, Winter 2004

48 Ibid., 7th paragraph

49 Rolanda Chu, "Swordsman II and The East is Red: The 'Hong Kong Film,' Entertainment, and Gender," *Bright Lights: Film Journal,* No. 13, 1994, p.33, hereafter, "*Swordsman II* and *The East is Red*." Rolanda Chu co-edits Hong Kong Film Monthly in San Francisco with Grant Forester

50 Richard Allen, 'Cinema, Psychoanalysis, and the Film Spectator,' *Persistence of Vision*, no.10, 1993, p.15

51 Chu, "*Swordsman II* and *The East is Red*," p. 34

52 Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed., Phillip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 286-98; and Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster and Alfred Guzzetti, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p.3-87

53 The first experience of the formation of ego for a person is the result of identifying with one's own specular image. I posit that subjectivity formation, which results from film viewing, is a process of identification similar to this very first experience of mirror misrecognition.

54 Christian Metz, "The Imaginary Signifier,' *Screen*, Vol.16, No.2, 1975, or *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster and Alfred Guzzetti, trans., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982)

55 Elizabeth Cowie, "*Underworld USA*: Psychoanalysis and Film Theory in the 1980s," in *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds*, ed. James Donald, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p.113

56 Ibid.

57 Allen, "Cinema, Psychoanalysis, and the Film Spectator," p.16

58 The Hong Kong Film Archive published an anthology which studies Tsui's work and his contribution to the Hong Kong film Industry. It is said that most of the martial arts films after *Swordsman II* borrowed the female persona of the Invincible East. Among them, *The Bride with White Hair* (1993) and *Fire Dragon* (1994) were played by the same artist—Chin-hsia Lin. See "Re-interpreting Classics: Tsui Hark's Screenwriting Style and Its Influence," written by Po Fung in *The Swordsman and His Jiang Hu: Tsui Hark and Hong Kong Film*, eds by Sam Ho and Wai-leng Ho, trans. Christine Chan, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2002) p.67.

59 Kam Louie, "Chinese, Japanese and Global Masculine Identities," p.7

60 Stephen Chan, "Figures of Hope"

Chapter Six

Memory, History and the City

This chapter examines the way in which *City of Glass* fabricates a historical world by reusing noir cinematography and discusses a film strategy which enables the film to critique the representation of historical reality. *City of Glass* is set against a background of the recent socio-political change in Hong Kong which is described diegetically as a situation of crisis in which Hong Kong people experience a sense of fear and anxiety. The film's appropriation of noir cinematography is manifest especially in the scenes of Victoria Harbour and a university campus that demonstrate a microcosm of the colonial city. It not only expresses a pessimistic world view but also offers a vision of culture with which the spectator is solicited to contest the world view and reread the conventional conceptions of history and identity.

My discussion shall revolve around a film strategy that attests a gap of interpretation, which is usually not distinguished within an ideologically complicit text like a story that teaches a moral. The fact that the gap is exposed when the forms of historiography and fiction are juxtaposed in the film, and that the gap may give rise to the formulation of substances which remain unrepresented, are essential aspects of the film strategy. Later in this chapter, I shall take on Paul Ricoeur's idea of the temporal character of plot that he uses to systemically unfold the mental activity of a reader/spectator with regard to his or her reception of a kind of narrative text. Then I shall propose to critique such discursive practice by examining the textual intention of *City of Glass*. My focus of analysis is the film's intention to invite critical attention to the formulation of subjectivity and conception of identity by appropriating noir cinematography for the purpose of exposing the workings of historiography and fiction. Through a process of unlearning the knowledge of human existence by dis-emploting the temporal character of plot, the film enables the spectator-subject to derive new understanding of life, truth and history.

Integral to the structure of City of Glass is a narrative device that solicits the spectator to derive new insights from an interrogation of the conventional way of narrating or writing the history of Hong Kong. Thus, inquiry into the relation of the film to historiography and historical writing is required. Hayden White's influential *Metahistory* looks at the rhetorical convention of historical writing and emphasizes that the writing is a form of literary production. His analysis thus converges with Jameson's criticism against the ideological nature of narrative text that represses historical contradictions, and with Lyotard who poses a question on the incredulity towards meta-narrative that also applies to the critique of the narrative construction of fiction and historical writing. White's large-scale mapping of the linguistic geography of historical and fictional language classifies historical writing according to twelve stylistic permutations and four underlying tropes. (1) His works on trope structure and narrative construction (2) enhance an understanding of the way in which Western culture is constructed around the tensions of truth-claiming narratives. Key to his discussion is the representation of the world in the form of a narrative, which questions the different ways of narrating history and the past. For Ricouer, histories resemble novels due to the fact that both are speaking figuratively. His reworking of the concept of mimesis shows how a discourse, which is cast in the form of a narrative, can be both symbolic and realistic. Thus, his work is essential to my later analysis of a film strategy of disemplotment that destabilizes what he describes as the interpretation of human activities in story-like coherence. (3) According to White's understanding of Ricouer's *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur's overarching thesis is that 'temporality is "the structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity" and that narrativity is "the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent".'(4)

Ricoeur's influential work gives rise to a question on whether the distinction between literary fiction and historiography can be entirely erased as the notions of temporality and narrativity are correlated. White confesses that Ricoeur and he are accused of not demarcating the narrative forms of literary fiction and historiography, while the difference between their contentions on the narrative form of historiography actually lies elsewhere. White disagrees with Ricoeur who sees the sign of narrative history's weakness as its strength. White is more concerned about the tension between the two forms of narratives that claim to represent reality. In this respect, White briefly suggests that there is a possibility of dis-emplotment, which may give rise to an alternative way of analyzing human activities. (5) Johannes Fabian's notion of 'embodied time' is another approach that critiques the rigid interpretation of human existence in terms of the relation between time and narrative. (6) His concern is that human experience of time is conceptualized in a form of narrative. He says,

"A few months ago, Hayden White told me that he had decided that there was no time, only aging. I can still only guess what exactly *he* meant by his remark. I would translate it as: There is no time for us except embodied time. Disembodied maps and schemes don't catch time except when they become embodied or experienced. This invites a thought experiment." (7)

Fabian resists the idea that time is a territory that people can contemplate. (8) Even if the conception of time is deconstructed, the notion of time cannot be grasped. This poses a challenge to all structuralist methodologies which predetermine that meaning is constituted through classification and representation through structures (9), and also to the methodology of deconstruction. In light of Fabian's challenge, what a contemporary reader may derive from 'mapping' time or making sense of the human experience of time in terms of history does not necessarily sustain a truth claim. Moreover, deconstructing the representation does not guarantee a better explication of the reality. Key to an efficient way of deciphering human experience, I shall propose, is negotiation rather than negation. This chapter looks at the negotiation as a major aspect of an aberrant film strategy. The strategy not only deconstructs narrative histories as allegories of temporality, but also explores new avenues for rereading the truth-claims of histories.

For White, the truth of histories also resides in the people's faithfulness to the vision of human life which informs 'the poetic genre of tragedy.' (10) In this respect, White says that the symbolic content of narrative history—the content of its form—is the 'tragic vision' itself. I shall look at a vision of culture that is demonstrated in *City of Glass*. This vision explicates the human experience of time as the fact of human existence under the influence of socio-political changes that is symbolically suggested as tragic in nature. With a tropological treatment of crises—historical, social, political and cultural—or a description of the crisis situations as tragic, the film will be seen as an open text that enables the spectator-subject to negotiate his or her presence in real life and representation in the media.

To begin the discussion, I shall propose to explore an enigma of the film demonstrated by a woman whose mysterious death in an accident has deprived her of the opportunity to defend her act of adultery. The film's narrative through which the enigma is created displays an interruption of the normal course of the constitution of meaning and historical reality. This raises the question of narrative competence that refers to use of both historical and fictional elements within the same film text.

The description of the 'city of glass'—or Hong Kong—in the visual style of noir cinematography will be analyzed as a treatment of historical reality, which posits the city as a site of question. While the film sets out to trace the history of the protagonists who die in a car accident, the film also contests the history by exposing an unstable state of the historical representation that conflates the definitive nature of story and the facts about the historical past of the lovers. With the film's emphasis on exposing the textual exigencies of various forms of historical narratives, the diegetic reference of the family crisis thus finds a parallel to that of the crisis of Hong Kong in relation to the socio-political situation before and after the changeover. The following discussion not only examines the textual representation of the city as noirish or a dark city undergoing a crisis, but it also looks at the textual intention of the film that disrupts the stable notion of history by redeploying noir cinematography. While the cinematography of the film is seen as noirish, describing the dark city as corrupt, the textual intention of the noirish representation does not seek to stabilize the quality of noirishness. Rather, the film differs and defers the sense of crisis by revealing the intertextual relation between the visual style and the different forms of historical narratives. In other words, the film seeks to communicate a nuance through the noirish representation of the crisis situation for the purpose of creating new avenues for the audience to reread the concept of history, the function of the narrative and the content of the colonial history of Hong Kong.

Death, Adultery and The Void

City of Glass opens in the present in London on New Year's Eve, just before 1997. Two lovers, Raphael and Vivian, are happily hurrying for the countdown to midnight in Trafalgar Square. At the peak of the most joyous moment of the festivities, a tragic car crash kills them both. It is not yet known to the audience that their love affair was adulterous. After the accident, however, the film takes the spectator to a family room in New York where a mother and son shockingly learn from watching the news that their loved one—Raphael—is one of the victims in the car accident. The rest of the story revolves around the way in which the son of the male victim and the daughter of the female victim seek to unveil the mystery of their parents' deaths until they eventually discover the secret between them. Interviewing their old friends and relatives, visiting places their parents used to go and live, the children not only come to understand their parents' hardships in life and the challenges posed to them by the fast changing city between the '70s and the '90s, but they are also convinced that they need to strive to survive, like their parents, the trials of the socio-political transformation before and after Hong Kong's reunification with China. The name of the son who was born in France and raised in New York, and that of the daughter who lived her whole life in Hong Kong, are not mentioned until the end of the film. Although the two families were not in touch for almost twenty years, the two young people surprisingly find out in the end that their parents gave them the same name.

The structure of the film is complex due to the fact that it juxtaposes different viewpoints on the histories of the protagonists and the city. Throughout the lovers' son and daughter's inquiry into the car accident, the film reveals a sense of indecision regarding the choice of taking views of certain historical understanding and also enables the spectator-subject to raise questions rather than adopt a truth-claim. There are not only two accounts or two versions. Rather, the difference between accounts and their incommensurability create possible new understandings. Here Lyotard's concept of the *différend* is drawn upon in order to develop an understanding of the film strategy that forbids reconciliation of the difference between the accounts. Although two stories, two accounts of the truth are given in the story of the film, the solution is not a decision in favour of one over the other, but an understanding of why each has arisen and, therefore, of how 'stories' of the truth and their potency as well as pertinence for a community are founded. The aim of the narrative device that compares and contrasts the two roles of the mother and the daughter, which contests the truth-claim of the historical narratives, is to avoid the formulation of a closed text that concretizes an ideological representation of the dead woman who is not able to speak for herself. The purpose of such a device can be described as attesting the *différend* or giving evidence of the gap between interpretations regarding the woman's image as sinful or not.

The predominantly noirish style of cinematography, as I shall explain below, seems to reinforce a sense of past-tenseness. As the film moves on, it can be seen that it undermines the narrative construct by juxtaposing the flashbacks with events that take place in the present. Questions that revolve around the purpose of narrating the history and the film's intention to interpret or report may be raised in the form of a critique of the histories being told. I shall demonstrate later in this chapter that the existence of the female protagonist as an enigma creates a site of question which is paralleled by the diegetic description of Hong Kong as a problematic place in transition.

With reference to a scene where Raphael's wife rebukes her son for his interpretation of the news about her husband's death, I shall explain that from the outset of the film, the response of the wife formulates a negative impression of the female victim, Vivian. The wife refuses to accept the fact that her husband has cheated on her. Her woe implies that the intimate relationship between Raphael and Vivian was extra-marital. The saga of the illegitimate relationship is further unveiled in the following scene in which the daughter and the son are summoned to London to collect their parents' bodies and personal possessions. The more defensive and embarrassed the daughter of Vivian appears, the poorer the image of Vivian becomes as the film progresses. When a British officer, who gives them assistance, reveals that Raphael and Vivian co-owned a house in Hong Kong, the nature of the illegitimate relationship becomes more obvious to the spectator. It can be seen that the film solicits the spectator from the outset to formulate a preconception that Vivian was a shameful woman who had led a good man astray, away from his happy family.

The negative impression of the dead woman, who was not able to defend herself throughout the film, as a bad and adulterous person, does not create much discontent among the audience of Hong Kong. Condemnation of the adulterous woman in Hong Kong cinema is not uncommon. In the film, at the lovers' property, Vivian's daughter meets a potential buyer who tries to bargain down the price of the house by describing it as the hideaway of an adulterous woman. The daughter takes offence as soon as the buyer utters the words 'yi lai' (二奶). The term in Cantonese means mistress, and is a term of denigration for a woman. In the film, therefore, the young and impulsive girl rudely dismisses her visitors. In her overreaction to the stranger's opinion, she reveals that she too has viewed her mother as a disgraced woman. The negative portrayal of Vivian as shameful implies that the film is partial to Raphael. While he was also committing the same sin of adultery, he is not similarly critiqued.

The daughter's unruly behaviour is a parallel to her mother's rebelliousness in the '70s. In the film, after being scorned by Vivian's daughter outside the airport in Hong Kong for not being able to converse fluently in Cantonese, Raphael's son laments in English on his way to the house co-owned by his father and Vivian in a taxi. He says,

"I hate that girl. I hate this city. What the hell am I doing here anyway? That girl is just like this city, a bunch of flashes, inside nothing. Gotta finish everything as soon as possible and get the hell out of here. Hong Kong, my ass."

The negative feeling of the fast changing city is compared to the bad image of the rebellious young woman, Vivian's daughter, which, in turn, converges to the criticism against the adulterous woman, Vivian. In the course of viewing the accident that happened in London and the way in which Vivian is condemned as sinful, the spectator is not given an alternative way to understand the film character differently. The noirish opening evokes, to a certain extent, an expectation of viewing how the film concretizes the description of the fate of the fatal woman in a conventional narrative closure. Thus, in the very beginning, the spectator becomes less aware that he or she may deny the ideological effect of the noirish opening until the supplementarity of the classical element creates more obvious nuances of the conventional ways of reading the film and the history.

Since the beginning of the film, the use of the high contrast lighting effect in its description of the ticking clock of Big Ben, the busy traffic of London Bridge, the fireworks over the River Thames, and the claustrophobic framing of the people who are celebrating New Year imparts a strong sense of fatalism. When the film opens, it fades in and slowly reveals a group of children happily dashing away on the river bank opposite the Houses of Parliament at sunset. When a lighting effect is not applied in this shot to better reveal the images of the children, the monument of the parliament building shines in the background. It is important to note that this image of the colonial building is invoked later as the film depicts the main building of the University of Hong Kong in the same cinematographic style. The style refers to the way in which the monument is lit up and also to the use of a similar camera angle.

There is a moment of peace and happiness before the car crash. In the run up to the fatal incident, the film enhances a tragic mood by imposing a fast-paced montage of closer and closer shots of the wheel and the hubcap of the speeding car, of the clock face of Big Ben, and of the fast-moving speedometer. Big Ben chimes while the lovers are on their way to celebrate New Year's Eve at Trafalgar Square. The wide-angle shot in which the solitary Big Ben solemnly chimes beside the River Thames not only predicts danger ahead but also marks the end of an era. This shot gradually dissolves with an extreme close-up shot of a Hong Kong electronic display board which says 'Happy New Year 1997'. The dark image not only draws a parallel between the two cities—London and Hong Kong—but it also connotes that 1997 is the end of borrowed time when Hong Kong ceases to be a place lent to Britain.

Low-key lighting effect is also explicitly used in identifying some key moments of the car accident, which suggests that danger is so close that it is just around the corner in the dark city. When part of the vehicle falls into the river after the car crash, it breaks through the dead silence of the river. When the object creates some ripples on the surface of the water, it blurs the already vague reflection of a building that quietly overlooks the river. Then, the ripple dissolves to a close shot of the neglected and dying flame of the fireworks. In the next medium shot, Big Ben is shown upside down when the image dissolves to a close shot of the above-mentioned 'Happy New Year 1997' neon sign. The subsequent travelling shot reveals that the car is turned upside down after the crash using low-key lighting. The meaning of happiness suggested by the sequence creates a conundrum of the existence of suffering during the celebration. As soon as the protagonists' dying bodies trapped inside the car are finally revealed, the shot is punctuated by an insert of the Houses of Parliament which is shown upside down in the film. It is interesting to note that the monument is not seen diegetically as upside down from the protagonists' point of view as the film suggests. Rather, the image of the inverted image of the monument is an impression of the film director. The camera-centred or spectator-centred view of this monument is employed to echo the later portrayal of the University of Hong Kong in the film. It is also intriguing that the university campus and the university life of the young lovers are mostly portrayed in the same kind of visual style.

When the flashbacks seem to unfold the story of the lovers in a chronological order as past events, the film, nonetheless, punctuates them by juxtaposing the life of the son and daughter of the '90s. Apart from the claustrophobic description of Hong Kong in the present as packed with modern glass skyscrapers, there is one more dominant visual characteristic of the place that is emphasized throughout the film. The portrayal of the beautiful 19th-century architecture of the main building of the University of Hong Kong, which is metaphorically a microcosm of the city—as noirish and historical—finds a parallel to the celebration scenes of the new year marking 1997, and of the changeover celebration that happened in the same year. The film not only marks the difference between the noirish flashbacks of Vivian and Raphael's love life at the university and the recent encounter of the son and the daughter in the present. It can be seen later in the film that the appropriation of the noirish style also blurs the boundary between the past and the present.

The basic interpretation of the colonial history of Hong Kong demonstrated in the film will be briefly outlined below and further elaborated before the discussion moves on to the way in which the film subjects the historiography to scrutiny. Edward Wang's understanding of Chinese historical thinking is of significance here in deciphering the film's treatment of the colonial history of Hong Kong. Two points from Wang's findings are noted below for quick reference. In "History, Space, and Ethnicity: The Chinese Worldview," (11) Wang suggests that ethnicity is one of the factors that influenced the Chinese world view since the beginning of history-writing in China. This was related to the way in which Han Chinese perceived the world hierarchically in the constitution of the ideas of *zhongguo* (or the centre) and *tianxia* (or the world) that sustain the 'dynamic centre-periphery relation' between the capital and all the other states. The philosophy behind the history-writing is *wenjiao* (education through culture) that was adopted by the Han Chinese as part of Confucian teachings. The ethnic attachment to the Chinese world view had almost disappeared by the Qing dynasty according to Wang.

Wang also examines a type of Occidental discourse and speaks of the East-West dichotomy in "Encountering the World: China and Its Other(s) in Historical Narratives, 1949-89." (12) His analysis of modern Chinese historiography focuses on two instances, namely, 'Othering the west' and 'othering the west.' The former refers to the demarcation of Western historiography and the Marxist historiography, and the latter refers to younger scholars' inspiration to expand their academic horizons in experimenting with new theories from the West in their engagement in critical reflections of Chinese historiography.

What I want to note at the outset is that the task of *wenjiao* and the attitude of 'othering' the west are evoked, reviewed and critiqued when the film portrays part of the colonial history of Hong Kong by paralleling the history to that of the protagonists' life throughout a time span of 40 years. I shall demonstrate that while the film seems to resort to a type of narrative that is the integral message of the history, it also de-mystifies the histories that are conveyed in the news reports of journalists and the memories of contemporary people who witness the historical incidents. The purpose of the film strategy is not to give an account of the reality but to reveal how historical writing or historical discourse can be seen as ultimately ideological.

When the film enhances nationalism in its portrayal of the protagonists' feeling of patriotism, the film does not attempt to concretize an idea of nation-ness or cultural identity. Rather, the film seeks to reveal that a nation is invented and that the cultural or national identity is changing across time due to the fact that it is socially or ideologically constructed. Similar to what Benedict Anderson asserts in his *Imagined Communities*, 'nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that world's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts.' (13) *City of Glass* posits Chineseness and Hong Kong Chineseness as 'invented' or 'imagined,' more or less, along the same line of argument. Anderson suggests that 'the creation of these artefacts' was the spontaneous distillation of a complex ' "crossing" of discrete historical forces.' (14) That is to say, he considers how an artefact has come into historical being, in what ways the meaning of historical existence has changed over time, and why the constitution of the meaning commands profound emotional legitimacy. Similarly, *City of Glass* contests the meaning that the experience of time endows. That is to say, the film seeks to explore the very idea that the narrative is fabricated, and the way in which the present experience and new interpretation of the experience always change people's understanding of the past.

My analysis of *City of Glass* will demonstrate that it is not the film's ultimate goal to entirely embrace an ideologically structured historical narrative. Rather, it seeks to 'attest to the unrepresentable.' (15) That is to say, the film strategy in practice refers to the revealing of the uncrossable limits of the presentable by juxtaposing an array of narratives that represents the past. Revealing the limits, the strategy also refuses the consolation of the correct form of narrating history. The major goal of the strategy, as I shall explain, is not only about giving pleasure but also producing the feeling that there is something unpresented. Key to understanding the device is the arrangement to open the film by describing the fatal woman as dead and therefore unable to speak for herself.

Such an arrangement highlights the limits of the truth-claims of the woman's story or history as told by other people. The inquiry of the woman's daughter into what happened gives rise to a possibility of what Lyotard would describe as an activation of the *différend.* Attesting the *différend* means giving evidence of the 'infinite gap between ideality and any empirical substantiation that constitutes the *unrepresentable.*' (16) Lyotard says,

"We have paid dearly for our nostalgia for the all and the one, for a reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, for a transparent and communicable experience. Beneath the general demand for relaxation and appeasement, we hear murmurings of the desire to reinstitute terror and fulfil the fantasm of taking possession of reality. The answer is: war on totality. Let us attest to the unpresentable, let us activate the *différends* and save the honour of the name." (17)

Attesting the *différend*, in my analysis of *City of Glass*, refers to the way in which the film exposes the materiality of the ideological structure of the narratives. This becomes a reason for the film to interweave the stories of the mother and the daughter. The daughter, whose role is depicted as a parallel to her mother's, significantly engages the spectator to think about the enigma of the film that is related to the dead woman throughout in the process of the daughter's investigation of Vivian's secret life. The absence of Vivian, whose voice is silenced by fate, is key to the film's strategy to attest the *différend.* Since Vivian—a dead person who is absent from the scene—cannot defend herself, the enigma in the narrative remains unresolved throughout the film. The role of the daughter functions diegetically to trace back to many records regarding Vivian's personal life and deeds. Thus, her investigation of Vivian's history is paralleled by that of the history of Hong Kong, when she discovers that Vivian and her lover participated in a political uprising that is not often written about in historical writing. The daughter, who goes to the same university more than twenty years later, is also staying in the same student hall. Life is, therefore, described as a cycle in the film, and hence each woman is implied to be going through similar challenges and temptations during their university days respectively.

Unlike the structure of conventional historical-writing, the film's structure produces a sense of a void, of an absent and missing explanation, which functions as a gap. This gap is signaled by the narrative's insufficiency to prove Vivian's 'innocence' in her absence. The ones who show disparagement are heard at the beginning of the film, but the one who is allegedly sinful is reduced to silence. Vivian is the essential figure that allows the enigma to remain unresolved. The narrative strategy that creates the enigma and the sense of void in the course of the daughter's investigation into her mother's secret and of the re-assessment of history not only clears Vivian's name eventually, but also traces the collective memory of Hong Kong people about their own past that must be put into words and cannot yet be. My focus of analysis is the way in which what is unrepresented from the historical discourses about the city and the people is mediated through a critique of the representation of the woman in the film. Below, I shall review the film's first description of the death of the woman and also the first symbolic representation of the death of the colonial city. At the peak of the celebrations, there comes the fatal sound of the off-screen car crash. Then, the death of the lovers is announced in the news headlines in New York, as I described earlier.

While the diegesis of the film seems to resolve the enigma that is created by the mysterious death of Vivian, the narrative strategy enables the film to place the dead woman's daughter at centre-stage. The daughter, who seeks to re-assess the history of her guilt-ridden mother, reveals that the ultimate goal of the film is to critique the ideological representation of the adulterous woman so as to defend the unrepresented. In the rest of the film, when the daughter speaks for the dead woman who is deprived of a chance to defend herself, the film sustains rather than resolves the gap in understanding the enigma. The dead woman's inability to clear up her tarnished name reveals that the silence of the dead is a voice of the unrepresented. Thus, a sense of a void is expressed through the daughter's quest for an understanding of the double life her mother led. A convoluted plot is used in the film to purposefully undercut the linear reading of history. The narrative device does not facilitate a film form that unfolds the story smoothly in a chronological manner. Instead, the film constantly punctuates the story of the '90s with flashbacks by going back to the years between the '70s and the '90s.

The film does not employ a simple narrative structure in unfolding the story or the history. Either the events that take place in the present intervene, or a flashback is punctuated by another flashback. The film's intervention in the temporal structure is achieved by employing filmic and narrative devices in the following four ways. Firstly, although the noir cinematography seemingly visually demarcates the flashbacks from the current events in part of the film, *City of Glass* realigns the noirish scenes later in the film to create a sense of temporal simultaneity that eventually problematizes the constitution of a history. Secondly, the love story that happened in the past is never unfolded without contemporary people's interrogation, recollection, criticism and comments. For instance, a significant portion of the university life of the lovers is narrated by their old schoolmate, Derek, in a sequence of flashbacks. The friend's memory is meanwhile negotiated by the son and the daughter. Other comments or criticisms about the lovers are also given by Raphael's wife, the security guard of Ho Tung Hall, Vivian's mother, etc. Thirdly, the film also punctuates a flashback sequence by inserting another flashback sequence that had happened even earlier. For instance, five years after Vivian and Raphael met again in their middle age, they painfully talk about putting an end to the extra-marital affair at a school reunion party. The chronology of this flashback sequence is interrupted by the insertion of another flashback about the lovers' lives when they are first reunited five years earlier. Fourthly, the gradual development of the love affair between Vivian and Raphael is carefully paralleled by that of the love relationship between the son and the daughter. This arrangement not only juxtaposes two love stories but also two types of value judgment and two perspectives on the historical narrative—the colonial and the post-colonial.

The narrative structure that embraces different levels of historicity establishes possibilities for formulating and linking traces and signs of the past that obstructs the spectator from accessing the history of the dead woman in a straightforward way. Hence, history ceases to be an illusion of linear succession and of idealistic continuity. I shall suggest that the sense of a void is set up to be disclosed in a process of dynamic reading in which the spectator is firstly driven to position him/herself according to the historical narrative that defines the characters prior to the reassessment of the history conducted by the daughter and the son. The spectator is later solicited to withdraw from this narrative framework and to contest the history that has been ideologically constructed. By calling into question the way in which the 'historical events' are constituted, the film undermines the idea of 'factuality,' and as such, in the end blurs the boundary between fact and fiction. When the boundaries between fact and fiction, the past and the present are blurred, the constitution of a coherent sense of history is rendered impossible. This consequence is what Jameson would denounce as a 'practice of the randomly heterogeneous and fragmentary and the aleatory,' (18) and what he would describe as a crisis in historicity due to the fact that the subject is deemed to lose its capacity to make sense of the human experience as a historical subject across a span of time. For Jameson, as I have explained earlier in Chapter Three, a historical subject is better constituted within a single vast plot in which he or she may organize the past and future into a coherent experience. The historical subject of Audrey Yue's pre-post-1997 consciousness (19) is engaged in a similar type of mapping, or remapping in her words, of the changing relationship between "places" and "cultures", as I explained in Chapter One, and is not entirely freed from this pre-conception of the temporal character of history. In both cases of mapping and remapping, the subject is required to articulate human existence in terms of a fixed and stable positionality. Unlike Yue, Jeremy Tambling indicates his interest in the postcolonial narrative of the cinema that disrupts a normal sense of history in his book on Wong Kar-wai's *Happy Together*. He receives, "(b)oth the sense of Hong Kong as a British colony, or as a city about to come under Chinese influence, and the sense of Hong Kong 'nationalism'—which would feed drives towards post-colonial art...." My discussion of Hong Kong's recent past also revolves around the disruption of the sense of history. (20) Stephen Teo's historiography, however, has a different focus which describes Hong Kong cinema as pathological and as paralleled by the undesirable socio-political change of Hong Kong. He says,

"The decline of Hong Kong cinema is the symptom of a larger malaise with economic and political dimensions, which befell Hong Kong in the final decade of the last century." (21)

His view on the relation between the cinema and society is pessimistic, which delimits that 'the issue of 1997' affects both individuals and families by generating 'insecurity and anxiety, a crisis of identity and a pervading sense of psychological malaise.' (22) *City of Glass* is seen as demonstrating a different relation between the cinema and society. Key to understanding the new tendency of the cinema is the spectator-screen relation which is constituted when *City of Glass* contests an understanding of historical writing as the primary holder of the content of historical truth.

History and Popular Memory

In expressing the sense of a void, the film revisits the older part of the colonial city in a series of flashbacks. Highlighting the historic monuments of the University of Hong Kong in some acts of reminiscence, the film symbolically brings back to life the fading sense of Hong Kong Chineseness in the run up to 1997. The most frequently portrayed monument is the main building of the university, the architecture of which is adapted from the British Victorian style. The three-storey building decorated with ecclesiastic verandas and classical pillars and porticos demonstrates a hybrid culture that marks the period of Hong Kong's colonial history. The portrayal of the historic building also creates a sharp contrast to the modern buildings of the city, which signifies the passing of time and the expectation of a new beginning. When the film surveys Vivian's time there, it shows that her best years were spent at the university, and it also looks at her complex identity as a Hong Kong Chinese that is distinct from the other Chinese people who live across the border and/or the strait.

The beautiful architecture contributes to the formulation of the narrative labyrinth. During a scene in which Raphael and Vivian secretly meet up in a quiet corner of the university, the low-key lighting allows the darkness to engulf the lovers. The high contrast effect also creates a shadowy pavement that symbolizes the barriers of time and space that will destroy their love. Furthermore, all the spectacular celebrations for the historical events in Hong Kong, like the New Year's Eve and changeover ceremonies, are held at night. The beautiful fireworks, for instance, do not add to the event in a positive way.

Rather, they suggest a sense of apocalypse, which indicates a feeling of uncertainty about the future beyond the events. There are also paradoxical juxtapositions of celebrations and tragic occurrences, including the deadly car crash and a ritual in which the cremated ashes of Raphael and Vivian are mixed with the explosives of the fireworks that are eventually set off to light up the skyline. They do not suggest peace and joy but danger which awaits at dark corners to trouble every passer-by. The lyrical daylight scenes are not merrier. The claustrophobic framing of the glass buildings of the modern city deprives the spectators of a clear full view of the city, which intensifies a sense of uncertainty.

Although the film delimits the 'city of glass' as a place of sin and corruption in the voice-over of Raphael's son and of hidden danger in its dark representation, the symbolic beauty of Hong Kong is unveiled in the film's description of the central building of the University of Hong Kong, whose appearance between the past of the '70s and the present of the '90s survives a time span of more than 20 years. The high contrast lighting that shines upon the beautifully crafted corridors and porticos which lead to the hallowed halls of learning reveals a sign of history as a stand-in for the colonial city's past. Incoming students of the university were subjected to the "leadership" of the head of the hall residents, who was called *Dai Sin* in Cantonese, referring to the student of higher seniority in the '70s.

As revealed in one of the flashback sequences narrated by Uncle Derek, Vivian is punished by one of these *Dai Sins* and is given an impossible mission. In an evening, Vivian is told to buy and deliver an ice-cream cone in its entirety back to the university from town. Her long venture becomes enjoyable when Raphael comes by and gives her a lift on his bicycle. The romantic encounter is thus portrayed in full and wide shots in which the colonial buildings near and inside the university campus are beautifully captured. There is a sharp contrast of the colour tones within each of the shots in the sequence. The yellowish soft lighting bouncing on the brick walls and the balconies of the building creates a warm feeling, while the shadows created by the lighting effect undermine the more positive impression. The moonlit road is quiet and beautiful, however, a sense of melancholy offered by the low-key lighting effect counteracts with the happy mood that is suggested diegetically in the scene of romantic encounter.

In the middle of the film, it flashes back to a party held at University Hall, which is also a historical monument belonging to the university. In a close shot against a dark background, the young lovers are shown as being intimate when they are enjoying the atmosphere and a slow dance. At the peak of emotion, Raphael takes Vivian away to the main campus to pursue physical intimacy. Again the chiaroscuro effect sustains the establishment of a sense of secret venture, guilt and fatalism. Near the lily pond, in low-key lighting, the faces of the lovers, who are kissing, are barely revealed until Vivian brings the action to a halt. It can be seen in the subsequent shots that the young couple is speechless, lost and sorry for their behaviour. Vivian's feeling of self-denial suggests that the behaviour is contestable. Then, Raphael takes Vivian further down the dark corridor next to the garden in a full shot, which puts an end to the sequence. Thus, the audience is deprived of further information about the evening venture. When this shot of the flashback reappears in the finale and freezes at the end of the film, which I shall explain later in the chapter, the audience is solicited to reread the story and the history self-consciously.

It can be seen that the film opens up many ways of interpreting university life by employing the noirish lighting effect rather than stabilizing one way of understanding or another. The visual style offers a nuance of the tragic sensibility that is created by noir cinematography. It not only enables the spectator to reread the place as a site of question, the origin of sin, and the beginning of the tragedy of two families, but also as a place of joy, hope and happiness that university life is meant to be, diegetically. The university is basically portrayed as a paradise of higher education for the luckiest or the most privileged and talented young people, to develop their intellectual prowess. The university is also the breeding ground of a political movement that involves a group of university students including Raphael and Vivian who later regret their participation. With such a historical background, the film transforms the monument into a symbolic space that demonstrates the cultural construct of young Hong Kong Chinese people who struggle to acquire a sense of cultural identity.

It can be seen that the film selects and redefines some timely events so as to signify that they were moments of change through which Hong Kong people—as historical beings—had acquired and denied at once the sense of Chineseness. These events include the university students' participation in a riot in 1977 against Japan's confiscation of a Chinese island called Diaoyudai, and a student reunion that commemorates the demolition of the historic building of the University of Hong Kong where the protagonists met and fell in love. I shall suggest that the film has given up the realistic approach for a more dramatic depiction of the events, and that this strategy reveals the formulation of the colonial subject's mediation of history.

The transformation of the historical monument into a symbolic space where imaginary and factual events can be intermingled aids an understanding of the dynamics of the intertextuality of the historical narratives demonstrated in the film. The making of intertextual reference using the narrative device is not simply confined to stating and relating the facts that occur in different periods of time. Rather, it undercuts the function of the cognitive matrices that brings meaningful cohesion to past events. The narrative strategy will be explored later in terms of a disruptive device of dis-emplotment that differs and defers the mimetic function of the conventional narrative.

City of Glass starts to tell the tale of the lovers who have died in a car crash shortly after the film has begun. The flashbacks are not shown in temporal order but they include temporal markers that allow the spectators to reconstruct time in the course of viewing. High table dinner is an official meeting of all traditional student halls of the University of Hong Kong. The purpose of the event is to establish a sense of the virtue of learning in a western mode that upholds the values of truth and knowledge. Ho Tung Hall, the residential hall of both Vivian and her daughter, is one of these older halls in which the convention still survives. The students' attitude toward attending the meeting, however, has changed recently. It can be seen that the unappreciative students of the younger generation do not treasure the custom in the '90s and are wearing modern jeans and T-shirts for the event. In a flashback, the film contrasts the way in which the students of the '70s and the '90s dress differently for the same event during the span of thirty years. From a full shot of the contemporary students who are walking down the stairs in casual wear, the camera follows their steps and pans to focus on the way in which they enter the dining hall in their jeans and sports shoes. The camera also travels with them at a higher camera position until it reaches a long curtain that blocks the view of the students. Hence, the shot is smoothly dissolved into the flashback that also begins with a travelling shot with a view of the students entering the hall in black gowns and black shoes who are initially blocked by a curtain of similar size. As the camera moves forward towards the doorway of the dining hall, it shows that the students of the '70s are all formally dressed for the traditional school function. The flashback not only reveals the sharp contrast of the different ways of life but also the ways of seeing Chineseness.

In the flashback to Vivian's younger days, a lady who was educated in the west came to give a speech entitled 'The Dilemma of a Modern Educated Woman in an Ever Changing Society' at a high table dinner in Ho Tung Hall. The students' very personal and critical comments on the speaker seem to convey a paradoxical message of 'Othering' and 'othering' the west, which refers to ways of positioning the historical subject in a system of East-West dichotomy that Edward Wang describes. The students are firstly placed in an environment in which they may learn to conform to western culture, which demonstrates an attitude of 'othering the west.' Paradoxically, the private conversation in the audience at the dinning hall, which reveals a feeling of anti-culture, establishes a critique of the westernized way of life. This can be seen as an attitude that resists the practice or idea of othering the west. For instance, the speaker is harshly described among the students as pretentious (假道學) and she is accused of being a hypocrite who does not practise what she has been sharing during the evening. They criticize the female role of the Chinese speaker within their scintillating conversation using refined Chinese language (23). This reveals that they do not whole-heartedly adopt the western mode of education. The high table dinner event that seems to demonstrate a hybrid culture actually offers a critique against the principle of borrowing from the western way of life.

Similarly, the film places tremendous effort in expressing a notion of Chineseness through a riot involving angry and ethnocentric youngsters. As I mentioned briefly earlier on, the incident refers to a heated protest against the Japanese confiscation of an island called Diaoyudai which was China's sovereign territory in the '70s. High profile discussion of the incident that demonstrated a strong degree of nationalistic sentiment was never encouraged during British rule. For those who identified themselves as more Chinese, they might be eager to prove that they had their roots in China through their participation in the event. Hong Kong people's actions to defend their Chinese cultural identity had never been recorded as part of the official history of Hong Kong. Rather, recollections of these past events are merely known in popular memory. Therefore, the popular memory about the event has never been formally recognized as part of the history of Hong Kong in writing.

Since history is always in favour of the ruler but not the political dissidents, unless the people have successfully overthrown the ruler and claimed sovereignty for themselves, popular memory—a real threat to the ruler—is not publicly recognized. *City of Glass*, however, daringly presents the popular struggle as part of the history of Hong Kong. News clips or photographs and other forms of historical record about the popular struggle, kept on microfilm or slides, are integrated with the re-enactment of the past event that reveals the involvement of the students in the 1977 riot which took place in Victoria Park. The discursive practice of historicizing the popular struggle is what I describe as the legitimization of popular memory, which seeks to critique the formal historiography of Hong Kong constituted under British rule.

The film critiques the conventional method of history-writing that represents the city's past by delving into the intertextual relation of the historical narratives. What the representations of the past—in the form of fictional element, of re-enactment of history, and of historiography—successfully connote at the same narrative level is scepticism. The film's deliberate conflation of the fictional and historical narratives calls into question the spectator's mundane understanding of history in everyday life, especially that of the colonial history of Hong Kong. The film, with the main plot of the story that takes place between New Year's Day in 1997 and the historical changeover of sovereignty, suggests a connection between its story of two lovers and of two territories—China and Hong Kong. The historical event of the changeover seems to be merely a backdrop in the beginning. Later, the film foregrounds a critique of the historiographical representation of the city. The purpose of the narrative device is to resist the formulation of the history into a narrative closure or what Edward Wang would call *wenjiao* (文教). Unlike *wenjiao* that used to be one of the major principles of Chinese historiography that teaches the readers a moral according to an interpretation of the past in particular, the film describes the past in an open narrative that enables the spectator to reread the history. For instance, within the diegesis, the two younger protagonists, who are determined to find out what happened to their parents in their younger days and the historical incident in which they were involved, visit the university library and go through news clips on microfilm for more information about the political event. The film also re-defines the significance of the changeover as a life-changing moment for the people of the younger generation who grasp a new understanding of self and their cultural origins.

There is a moment in the film when some ethnocentric young adults—arrested after the student pledge to protect Diaoyudai in the '70s—finally gave up their political agenda. The principle of *wenjiao* can be partly applied here as an explanation of the way in which the film describes that the lovers, Raphael and Vivian, have learned a lesson and have finally given up their political convictions after Raphael was put in jail. They are also portrayed as being satisfied with life and focus more on their families and careers. The film, however, topples the homogeneity of narrative space and time and problematizes the constitution of colonial history by intertwining the history of the '70s with that of the '90s. The purpose of this device is to undermine the truth-claim of history.

In the late '90s, inside a sleazy flat, the student residents and friends are taking turns confessing how they lost their virginity. Raphael's son and Vivian's daughter also participate. In a quiet corner of the flat away from the buzz of excitement, a deserted television is showing a documentary programme of a group of Hong Kong people protesting against Japan's confiscation of the Chinese island called Diaoyudai at Victoria Park in Hong Kong. While a guest speaker on the programme is comparing and contrasting acts of the popular struggle that were taking place in the city at the time, the genuine documentary footage of the past event dissolves into re-enacted shots of the historical incident. Replacing the documentary image, the dramatic representation reveals that Raphael, as one of the student leaders accompanied by Vivian, is passionately involved in the protest. After a vicious confrontation between the police and the dissidents, the riot is suppressed by force. Luckily Vivian escapes and returns home after the turmoil. Resting in front of a television set, she is upset by the news report that discloses the list of those arrested, which includes that of Raphael. In distress, she dashes out of the flat.

The juxtaposition of the authentic news footage of the political event with the re-enactment involving the participation of Raphael and Vivian in the riot performed by well-known contemporary artists, Leon Lai and Qi Shu, begs to question whether the spectator may be distracted from the historical reality firstly formulated as a consequence of *wenjiao*. When the artists' take part in the re-enactment of the protest whose spatial and temporal continuity matches that of the original news footage, the inauthenticity of the fake documentary footage is exposed. When the factual and the fictional elements intermingle and the formal discrepancy of the visual presentations catches the attention of the spectator, the film opens new avenues for the spectator to reread his or her act of spectating. In an environment that encourages more self-conscious viewing, the spectator is therefore allowed to decipher more actively the performative gestures that the fictitious elements foreground. It can be seen that the film also merges the narrative space with the spectator's viewing space. The diegetic sound track of a television news broadcast appearing as voice-over and voice-off in the flashback, through which Vivian knows that Raphael is among the arrested, is re-enacted and reproduced to include the male protagonist's name. Among the names that are announced in the news programme on the day of the riot, there are some names, apart from that of the protagonist, that are familiar to local spectator in real life. They are the names of contemporary celebrities that include Kin-fun Shum, who is a famous actor-producer of many well-acclaimed local films; Chiu-yu Mok, who is a curator; and Ling-ling Chung, who is a popular Hong Kong writer. Although they might have been involved in the '70s event, the fact that they were involved did not become widely known to the majority of the local people.

It is very important to look at the spectator's understanding of these names in the film. Unlike its depiction in the film's plot, the popular struggle has not been included in formal history. Therefore, in reality, most of the audience do not remember all of the names of the arrested since much time has passed. The abrupt emphasis on the factuality of the riot and the mentioning of the involvement of some celebrities disengage the spectator in considering historicity in the conventional way. At the conjuncture of the fictional and the historical narratives, when the similarities between the two forms of narrative are juxtaposed, the film gives the spectator an insight into the structure of the story. When the film portrays those fictitious political dissidents as historical personalities by associating them with the names of celebrities who are well known to the Hong Kong audience in real life, the film implicates the presence of the spectator-subject into the narrative text by implying that the spectator is a historical subject.

My concern here is the interaction between the two narrative forms—fictional and historical. Central to the discussion is the challenge posed by the film's discursive strategy to the spectator-subject, who is exposed to the mixed narrative, that questions the status of history in the narrative text as truth. Under this circumstance, historicity is probed as a problem. The representation of the fictitious personalities—Raphael and Vivian—as the ones who appear in real life, is a tactic to urge the spectator to question the processes with which the film represents the world. This is due to the conflicting and complimentary elements of the factual and the fictional that predetermine the nature of the historical act and the performance within the film. When the fictional re-enactment which dramatizes the historical event, is shown after the documentary footage, the performative gesture revealed in the depiction plays down the physical traces of the event. Later, when the names of the '90s celebrities are announced diegetically in the '70s news programme, the film offers an impression that the fictional characters are also historical personalities. Hence, the film seeks to juxtapose and also blend the factual and fictional elements that reverberate with each other and to reveal that history is conveyed through a narrative like a story. As a result, the spectator may be awakened to the fact that cultural meanings and all conceptions of cultural identity are being produced.

Dis-emplotment and History Revisioning

I have argued that the integration of the fictional elements in the description of the historical past of Raphael and Vivian not only makes transparent the constitution of history and the way in which meaning is endowed to the narrative of history, but it also moves beyond the realistic approach in order to embrace a disruptive mode of narrative. To develop this argument, I shall introduce a notion of dis-emplotment in terms of the temporal character of plot, which is based on Ricoeur's understanding of the narrative as 'the destiny of a prefigured time that becomes a refigured time through the mediation of a configured time.' (24)

Ricoeur's terminology of emplotment is borrowed for the following discussion of a film strategy of dis-emplotment. I shall demonstrate the strategy by making reference to the finale of *City of Glass* which is a montage sequence (see appendix ii), realigned as a series of fragmented flashbacks from the love life of Raphael and Vivian. They include images of their younger days of innocence, the romantic reunion between the couple in middle-age, and the tragic car crash in which Raphael catches a last glimpse of Vivian before he dies. There are also brief inserts of the live telecast from the speeches of Prince Charles and Zhe-min Jiang presented at the handover ceremony.

The symbolic lowering of the British Hong Kong flag and the raising of a new Hong Kong flag against a dark background under high-contrast lighting effect create a melancholic mood. The flashbacks of the two tower clocks that chimed respectively in London and Hong Kong evoke memories of the fatal car crash of the lovers. Whether the chiming of the bells marks a new era or not, it alerts the spectator to look ahead as much as to reminisce. In the middle of the finale, the fireworks extravaganza, which is part of the changeover celebration in July 1997, not only lights up the night skies of Hong Kong, but also creates a strong sense of fatalism. The film thus invites the spectator once again to ponder the unforgettable love and the tragedy of love between Vivian and Raphael, which are paralleled by the historical moment of the reunification celebration of Hong Kong with China.

The noirish flashbacks that are mingled with the noirish portrayal of the celebration of the changeover as a current event no longer sustain the sense of linear history. Unlike the previous part of the film, the flashbacks are not juxtaposed by activities that take place in the present shot in daylight. The past-tenseness of the flashbacks becomes less distinct. The montage sequence highlights the shocked faces of Vivian and Raphael a few seconds before the car crash in two separate shots, when the red neonlit signboard that reads 1997 dissolves into and between the two shots. Then, there comes a close shot of the lovers' romantic encounter in the midst of a slow dance in their younger days, which is juxtaposed with another medium shot of them dancing closely in a secluded villa after 20 years. The fireworks that signify the historical moment of the changeover subsequently punctuates the flashbacks. Shortly after engaging the spectator in the time frame of 1997 once again, the film quickly brings the spectator back to the very incident of the lovers' reunion in a restaurant. Thereafter, a flashback of the lovers' first kiss in the '70s is followed by a close shot of their first kiss after their reunion in the '90s. The subsequent montage of Raphael's last glimpse of his loved one before his tragic death and the exciting fireworks does not bring an end to the finale. There is also a juxtaposition of the panorama of the beautiful scenery of Hong Kong with the younger Vivian and Raphael bidding good-bye to each other in the '70s and the panorama of the fireworks against the skyline of Hong Kong during the changeover ceremony. Lastly, a brief scene of an empty university campus of the '70s appears. At the far corner of the beautifully moon-lit passageway, the young lovers, Vivian and Raphael, dash away into an off-screen space. Then, the film freezes and ends quietly at the close of this shot.

In the following discussion, I shall explain that the montage sequence creates an effect that delegitimizes the logic, linearity, progression and closing as ways of rendering the past. By pushing beyond the confines of the representation of temporal reality, the film introduces an interactive type of spectator-screen relation through which the spectator is encouraged to critique the colonial history shared among the Hong Kong audience and the personal history of the lovers described in the film both diegetically and extra-diegetically. I suggest that the purpose of the strategy is to enhance a critical reading of the film narrative by remarking negatively that historiography should be perpetually subject to scrutiny.

It can be seen in the course of the film that the strategy takes effect when history, being prefigured, is not configured in the film story. I shall describe this method that twists the emplotment of the film as the strategy of dis-emplotment. It initially involves a revision of the history of Vivian and Raphael from different points of view from the couple's close friends and relatives. When the film starts with the car crash that claims the life of Raphael and Vivian and then with the investigation into the couple's secret, it seems that the son and the daughter are attempting to clear the names of the dead within the diegesis. At the narrative level, the act of revisiting the past events has a temporal dimension that the film seeks to undermine. I want to look at this temporal dimension of emplotment and shall demonstrate the way in which the film critiques the emplotment. In the following, the main construct of the emplotment will be illustrated with reference to three components of mimesis—Mimesis 1 (or M1), Mimesis 2 (or M2) and Mimesis 3 (or M3)—in Ricoeur's terminology. (25)

Ricouer's conception of emplotment is a synthesis of Augustine's theory of time and Aristotle's definition of mimesis. Ricoeur's concern is to resolve the paradox of *intentio* and *distenti*, or the paradox of temporality, which revolves around an issue that meaning comes from movement. The intention of *intentio* is a motivating force of the mind that animates meaning. *Distentio* is a state of mind being distended in comprehension of human time according to a notion of the 'threefold present' (26)—the past and the future exist in the mind through memory on the one hand and expectation on the other. Augustine's thesis of *Intentio in distentio* therefore refers to the paradox of the intention of mind towards stillness and the distention of the mind that constitutes its movement in time. Assuming that meaning is produced and understood within time, Ricoeur also draws on Aristotles's antithesis between *muthos* and *peripeteia* and suggests that mimesis is a threefold process. Supplementing the Aristotelian formula with the temporal characteristics, Ricoeur refreshes the concept of 'concordant discordance', or the configurating activity in the mind that dominates the constitution of the mediating function of a narrative plot. He asserts that 'the operation of emplotment both...reflects the Augustinian paradox of time and...resolves it, not in a speculative but rather in a poetic mode.' (27) That is to say, Ricouer's poetic solution to the paradox of distention and intention (or of temporality) lies in the 'followability' of a story. He says, '(t)he fact that story can be followed converts the paradox into a living dialectic.' (28) Central to Ricoeur's argument is the act of emplotment, which 'by mediating between the two poles of event and story' brings to the paradox a solution that is the poetic act itself.

Ricoeur describes this process as a hermeneutic spiral viewed from the top that loops from M1 to M2, on to M3, and so on, passing through the same point at different levels. With reference to the concept of the threefold present, let me explain that M1 is a preconception or memory that we bring to the narrative in order to understand it. M3 is an expectation we derive after reading the narrative. Hence, M2 is the emplotment that mediates between the past and the future that exists in our mind.

In the beginning of the film, there is depiction about Vivian as a disgraceful woman whose name has yet to be cleared during the course of the film as her daughter discovers various mitigating factors for an alternative viewpoint. In terms of the hermeneutic spiral, the conception of Vivian as an adulterous woman at the beginning of the film should be described as an idea formulated at the end of the mimetic cycle—M3—that is ready to enter a new mimetic cycle at a different level. Ricoeur's theory of narrative composition refers to an enterprise of thinking about Augustine's *distentio animi* and Aristotle's tragic *muthos* as one. Deploying Aristotles' theory of mimesis, Ricoeur proposes to re-consider narrative as a 'play of discordance internal to concordance' rather than the more simplistic model of concordance. I take on Ricouer's argument on the deployment of mimesis and shall explain that the renewal of this prejudiced view against Vivian—that is the change of the negative impression of her as a sinful woman—is the consequence of the movements of the mimetic cycle from one level to another. What I add to Ricouer's observation is my analysis of a discursive practice of dis-emplotment that disrupts the configuration of the plot. Such an act of disruption undercuts the constitutive dynamism of the narrative configuration by confusing the spectating subject when he or she mediates the events that are originally presumed to be incidents that happened within a single time spectrum. Taking the spectator in and out of the diegetic time frame, the film distracts him or her from following the paradigm of the temporal order. This is a device that I describe as dis-emplotment.

By dis-emplotment, I refer to an interplay that is derived from an act of interpretation in which the spectator-subject is involved in the role of mediation of the time of emplotment between two temporal aspects. These aspects include the concept of time prefigured and the refiguration of the temporal experience within the understanding of the configured time. Unlike the theory of emplotment which presumes that a spectator may make sense of the narrative time and space within a mimetic cycle, the strategy of dis-emplotment disorients the spectator by differing, deferring and delegitimizing his or her understanding of the configured time within the narrative and of the representation of temporal reality. This happens when the narrative lifts the mimetic cycle to a different level.

I shall illustrate the strategy of dis-emplotment with reference to the finale of *City of Glass*. Near the end, the film depicts an event in which the young people mix the ashes of Vivian and Raphael with some explosive which is later used in the fireworks for the changeover ceremony over Victoria Harbour. This ritual of spreading the ashes over the harbour is not only symbolic of a wish for the lovers to enjoy an afterlife together (29), but also associated with Hong Kong's reunification with China. Central to the issue of the symbolism is that the visual and structural styles of the finale have interrupted the straightforward way of deciphering the history and the story. I shall explain that the most significant impact created by the film strategy is the disruption of the temporal linearity originally sustained by the mimetic cycle.

The monotone of the chiming of Big Ben at the hour is not only melancholic but also perturbing, which suggests that time is alarmingly short. The text of the flashbacks, which are not organized in chronological order, does not relate Big Ben directly to the car crash in the finale. The montage herein renews the connotations of these images that are previously presented at the beginning of the film. When the image of Big Ben matches the clock tower of Hong Kong and the bell chimes at midnight ringing in 1997, the film allows the spectator to traverse various temporal planes across time. The image and the sound of the bell reminds the spectator of the tragic car crash, and the montage of the two clock towers solicits the spectator, in the context of the handover ceremony, to reflect on the immediate future of Hong Kong as part of China. Hence, the diegetic present-tenseness of the changeover ceremony within the story, the extra-diegetic past-tenseness of the changeover event, and the unknown time of the future are all blended into the film text. The discursive strategy therefore challenges the existing construction of temporal reality that sustains the knowledge of the world in accordance with the old conception of linear historicity.

In viewing the film and re-visiting the historic changeover ceremony that happened not long ago in real life, the Hong Kong audience is not only reminded of the socio-political change, but also the unresolved feeling of anxiety regarding its changing cultural identity. As I described earlier on, it is not until the moment when the spectator's presence is unsettlingly implicated in the narrative that the spectator becomes more self-conscious. The spectator's understanding of the history or the story is disrupted as soon as the mimetic trinity of the three temporal dimensions collapses. As the spectator plunges into a conceptual anarchy created by the mixing of the fictional and factual elements, he or she may notice that the temporal characteristics of the past-tenseness, present-tenseness and future-tenseness are blurred. Hence, the spectator is no longer enabled to read the film text exclusively within the same mimetic plane of reflective thought. He or she may perceive or experience time otherwise when enabled to traverse between the diegetic and extra-diegetic worlds, through the process I am calling dis-emplotment.

In the middle of the finale, the red neon-lit signboard that reads 1997 dissolves in and dissects two close-shots of Vivian and Raphael who are about to die in the car crash. The dissolve combines two temporal planes and opens an option for the spectator to experience a temporal discordance. The two temporal dimensions refer to the diegetic past-tenseness of the car accident and the extra-diegetic present-tenseness of viewing because of the issue of 1997. According to the plot, the romance of Raphael and Vivian is unrelated to the challenge of the socio-political change of Hong Kong. 1997 is just the year in which the lovers die. Like many people in Hong Kong, they do not have any political role or involvement in the event. The way in which the tragedy is presented here is, however, symbolically connected to the real challenge that the spectator is experiencing in real life. Hence, the film disengages the original configurating activity from the limiting constraints that the linear temporal qualities have implied in the process of the emplotment. That is to say, the purpose of repeating the two close-shots of the lovers in the end is different from the purpose of showing them in the beginning. At the outset, the accident is diegetically related to the celebration of the new year. The intensive portrayal of the issue of 1997 in the midst of the flashback of the moment before the car crash, however, changes the course of the mediating function of the plot.

I shall demonstrate the way in which the disruption of the configuration of time is materialized. According to Ricoeur, M1 is the work of prefiguration, which is the pre-understanding of narrative. For Ricoeur, the richness of the meaning of M1 is achieved by representing action symbolically as temporality. He says, 'To imitate or represent action is first to preunderstand what human acting is, in its semantics, its symbolic system, its temporality.' (30) M2 is the work of configuration, or of emplotment, which organizes the various elements of a narrative into 'an intelligible whole' (31) and brings the spectators to M3. M3 is the work of refiguration, which marks 'the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader.' (32)

City of Glass is a story looking back from an end-point which I would describe as a point of M3 in Ricoeur's terminology. Therefore, at the outset of the film, or the end-point of a mimetic cycle, a moral has already been taught through the tragic death of the lovers there. According to the teaching, it is obvious that adultery is taken as immoral and contestable from the beginning of the film. However, what the investigation of the son and the daughter brings forth is a new perspective which starts a new cycle of understanding. The new understanding derived by them becomes quite contrary to the moral thinking that has been presented at the beginning of the film. This is due to the fact that the film enables what was understood to be reassessed by the protagonists diegetically and by the spectator extra-diegetically in the course of the film.

Since the temporal configuration of the plot of *City of Glass* is interrupted time and again throughout the film, the delivery of the mimetic message regarding the judgmental comment of Vivian is hampered. This is achieved by the way in which the film deliberately obscures the boundary between the diegetic and extradiegetic worlds. Hence, what is prefigured to be signified in the course of the film may not be refigured in the spectator's understanding. As a result, the derivation of an alternative understanding of the story becomes possible.

In the finale, the spectator is further astounded when he or she is no longer encouraged to look at the history of the lovers from a critical distance, but is enabled to reread the story with close reference to his or her own cultural history. In the rest of the finale, the film continues to allow the spectator to revisit the scenes of the lovers' first romantic encounter, their reunion, and the other meetings throughout their relationship. Being punctuated consistently by the eye-catching fireworks, the sentimental montage sequence still goes through persistently, in a disordered time, the most intimate and memorable moments of the secret life of Raphael and Vivian in the time span of more than 20 years. The montage sequence creates feelings of *déjà vu* by structuring the flashbacks in the form of fond memories. While the film is realigning the good old memories of the couple, the film solicits the spectator to assume the places of the protagonists in reminiscence of the history. In this process of cinematic identification, the film also allows him or her to recollect the past of Raphael and Vivian as if the memories belong to the spectator. The spectator is not disoriented from his or her assumption of the first-person narrative until the film inserts an image of the son and the daughter in front of the fireworks near the end. The inserts reiterate the passing of time and the issue of the changeover that is still affecting the audience. This is due to the fact that he or she becomes conscious of his or her status as a spectator. Traversing between the diegetic and extra-diegetic worlds when the film draws the spectator into the diegetic world and also alienates him or her at some points, the spectator becomes aware of the exigencies of emplotment. This is what I call a process of dis-emplotment in which the mimetic mediation is disrupted and/or interrupted.

This chapter suggests that the spectator-subject, who is deprived of an uninterrupted ideologically complicit reading of the film text in the finale, is offered a chance to review and/or renew his or her conception of identity and history. The above discussion on the disruption of the function of the mimetic cycle is essential to the premise of my assertion. With regard to a self-conscious act of spectating that is solicited by a device which destabilizes the complicit pleasure that is related to an expectation of seeing a narrative closure, I demonstrates that the device challenges the spectating subject's preconception of the socio-political crisis of the city that has been previously established from a cohesive understanding of time and history in a linear order. I suggest that the disruption of the temporal configuration of time in the emplotment is there to question the old conception of self. The disruptive strategy or disemplotment thus transforms the spectator-screen relation so that the notion of self and the perception of the crisis may be deciphered differently.

The remainder of my discussion in this chapter shall revolve around the last shot of *City of Glass*, which closes the film in slow motion and finally a freeze frame. After the deep rumination of the son and the daughter on the extravagant fireworks for the changeover ceremony of the '90s in the second last shot of the montage, the very last shot of the film takes the spectators back to the '70s once again. In a long-take, Vivian and Raphael happily dash across a passageway and disappear into an off-screen space. The repeated shot of the passageway not only implies a trace of the past but also addresses a moment in the present that is a point at which the spectator meditates on his or her old conception of the notion of history in the course of viewing and remembering. The notion of stillness of the freeze frame in the moving picture shifts the spectators' attention on the camera-centred viewpoint of the lonely corner of the university. Meanwhile, the reiteration of the image of the secret passageway to the courtyard reminds the spectator of the romance between Raphael and Vivian over 20 years ago. The way in which the film repeats and freezes the shot at the end, however, undermines the temporal character of the plot about the romance. The freeze frame not only solicits the spectator's self-conscious participation in the introspection of the history, but the film also invites the spectator to ponder over his/her act of reading and/or rereading history as soon as the fictional and historical elements are blended for an optimum effect of disruption to the temporal linearity of the plot. While history, for Ricoeur, is to be understood as a form of narrative, *City of Glass* interrupts the spectator from grasping the narrative and following the story of the film.

What the '70s scene hereby offers to the spectator is an illusion of *déjà vu*. The entirety of the shot as part of a university party scene has already been shown earlier in the film. The repeat of the shot, this time in slow motion however, does not include other shots on the activities of the evening, for instance, their romantic encounter by the side of the courtyard. That is to say, it does not solicit the spectator to trace the context of the representation of the incident. When the image of this very last shot freezes, it not only foregrounds a notion of stillness in the moving picture, but also the status of the shot that requires more active involvement of the spectator in the process of constitution of meaning. The freeze frame not only revives once again the memory of the '70s but also the judgmental opinions against the female protagonist as disgraceful and adulterous. The last shot, therefore, invites the more self-conscious spectator to reread the representation of the dead woman as sinful and guilty.

Repeating the flashback in the last shot also gives rise to a feeling of '*déjà disparu*,' which is an idea articulated by Ackbar Abbas in his book on recent Hong Kong films that takes Hong Kong seriously as a subject. The notion refers to a 'feeling that what is new and unique about the situation is always already gone, and we are left holding a handful of clichés, or a cluster of memories of what has never been.' (33) Abbas' observation is true to a certain extent in explaining the complicated psychology of Hong Kong people in rereading their cultural identity. When they had just begun to treasure the Hong Kong Chinese identity near 1997, it had already disappeared. Also they think that they have memories of their cultural identity as Chinese, yet they never considered themselves as purely Chinese during the entire colonial period of Hong Kong. This dilemma is vividly depicted in *City of Glass* as the problematic perceptions of the cultural identity of Raphael and Vivian. There is one more point to draw out from Abbas's conception of time that starts from a presumption that there are gaps (aporias) in the understanding of time. As time is a series of 'nows,' whenever the subject says now, the time that is identified as now has already gone. The problem of how the present is perceived refers to the paradox of time implied in Abbas's theory, which indicates that the present does not exist. His assertion is based on an understanding that the point which is called now is infinitely small with no possibility of extension.

Augustine tries to resolve this paradox by a notion of the 'threefold present': past and future exist in the mind through memory on the one hand, and expectation on the other. His formula is that the lack of extension of the present can be overcome by the distention of the mind. As I explained earlier on, Ricoeur draws on this formula to develop a theory of emplotment in resolving the problem of time. This resolution is important for Ricoeur as he believes that there is still such a thing as historical truth, and that the truths of history are important truths. The major concern of my analysis, however, is to examine the disruptive operation of a discursive strategy used in *City of Glass* which challenges history as the absolute truth and hence the old conception of self that is implicated in the understanding of history.

What are unique about the last shot of *City of Glass* are the camera-centred portrayal of the historical building and the notion of stillness conveyed in the moving picture. The notion of stillness conveyed at the end of the shot refers to an active inactivity through which a para-structure of time is constructed to facilitate the constitution of a sense of presence for the spectating subject. The frozen image of the empty passageway of the historical building not only allows the spectator to review the past-tenseness of the saga, but it also enables the spectator to recognize his or her act of viewing in the present. The sense of presence is intrinsic to the act of self-introspection that paves the way for the spectator-subject's negotiation for a new sense of self with regard to the disrupted narrative. This sense of presence gives rise to a contestation of the way in which history is constructed and seen. When the last shot freezes, the film solicits an extra-diegetic reading and/or rereading of the mimetic and/or historical explications. That is to say, the subject is free to reposition or shift his or her viewing positions inside and outside the mimetic cycles.

The incorporation of many noirish flashbacks in the finale enhances the potentiality of temporal simultaneity, which begs to question the truth-claim of linear history. Although the incidents and events took place at different periods of time, they are reassessed one after another at the end of the film. Such an arrangement gives rise to a more critical rereading of the narrative text. The flashbacks reveal a repertoire of memories of the son and the daughter, the spouses of the protagonists, relatives and friends, and of the historical records reviewed by reporters and the news programme host. What I want to stress at the end of this discussion is that the film does not deny or embrace anyone of the above-mentioned forms of historical representation. Rather, it aims to defer and differ the understanding of the representation and attest the unrepresented—the dead, the weak, the punished or the other—in an open text by renewing the spectator-screen relation and subjecting the conventional historical narratives to scrutiny. Key to understanding the renewed spectator-screen relation is the appropriation of noir cinematography that plays an important role in enhancing and intensifying the description of the crisis situations at first by associating the socio-political change of Hong Kong with the tragic accident. Later, moving beyond the textual reference of the noirish device, *City of Glass* reveals also the intertextual reference made by the device that eventually communicates a nuance of temporality of the film. Appropriating the noirish elements, *City of Glass* destabilizes the status of truth-claim that is conventionally constituted within the historical narrative. The film also delegitimizes the mimetic function of historical-writing which usually establish a fixed sense of self and identity. As a result, the idea of crisis that is usually predetermined within a closed narrative can be reread, resisted and contested.

Notes

1 John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, (Harlow, London and New York: Longman, 1999)

2 Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973)

3 This means 'lives that have the coherency of emplotted stories.' See Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), p.173. This title will be noted as *The Content of the Form* hereafter.

4 Ibid., p.171, or Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," *Critical Inquiry* 7, No.1, 1980, p.169

5 Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*, p.173, 175

6 This is a citation from Fabian's review essay on Eviatar Zerubavel's *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* entitled "If It is Time, Can it be Mapped?" See *History and Theory* 44, Feb 2005, p.113-120.

7 Ibid., p.119. Fabian notes that White graciously authorized him to quote this remark when they last met in Berlin. Fabian did not know then that White had written an enthusiastic endorsement of Time Maps. For the two problems which remain unresolved by Zerubavel's structuralist approach in Fabian's view, please refer to the concluding paragraph of Fabian's essay.

8 Ibid., p.120

9 Ibid., p.119

10 White, *The Content of the Form*, p.181

11 Edward Wang, "History, Space, and Ethnicity: The Chinese Worldview," *Journal of World History*, Vol.10, No.2, 1999

12 Edward Wang, "Encountering the World: China and its Other(s) in Historical Narratives, 1949-89," *Journal of World History*, Vol.14, No.3, 2003

13 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p.4

14 Ibid.

15 Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children*, (London: Turnaround, 1992), p.24-5

16 Keith Jenkins, *Why History? Ethics and Postmodernity*, (London and New York, Routledge, 1999), p.73

17 Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children*, p.24-5

18 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p.25

19 Audrey Yue, "Migration-as-Transition: Pre-Post-1997 Hong Kong Culture in Clara Law's Autumn Moon," *Intersections*, no.4, September, 2000, p. 251-263. This article is also retreivable on: wwwsshe.murdoch.edu.au/intersections

20 Jeremy Tambling, *Wong Kar-Wai's Happy Together*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), p.20

21 Stephen Teo, *Wong Kar-Wai*, (London: British Film Institute, 2005), p.165

22 Ibid., p161

23 The way in which the old Chinese language is used by the '70s students in the film in the way contemporary English-speaking people would incorporate Shakespearean English into their conversation.

24 Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Vol. 1*, trans., Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, (Chicago and London, The University Press of Chicago, 1984), p.54, hereafter, *Time and Narrative, Vol. 1*

25 Ibid., p. 54-71

26 Ibid., p.12

27 Ibid., p. 66

28 Ibid., p.67

29 Spreading the ashes of the dead is acceptable in a Chinese funeral, but it is not popular nowadays. The mixing of two people's ashes can be seen as less contestable. In the film, the way in which the lovers' ashes are mixed and spread together is not a usual practice in Chinese funerals in real life.

30 *Time and Narrative, Vol. 1*, p.64

31 Ibid., p.65

32 Ibid., 71

33 Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997), p.25

Chapter Seven
De-centring and Negotiation of Subjectivity

In its examination of *Happy Together*, this chapter will suggest that the film produces a complication in identity politics in relation to the cultural identity of contemporary Hong Kong. It will demonstrate the ways in which the film's discursive strategy problematizes the conventional conception of identity by celebrating moments of indetermination in the process of shifting spectatorial identification. I shall demonstrate that the spectator passes through detours of signification in my analysis of a trope of the picturesque that decentres the film narrative, and foregrounds the problem of nostalgia and of falling into nostalgia. The film strategy seeks to firstly destabilize the chronology of time by supplementing the film narrative with classical elements of film noir, and secondly, plays on the constitution of the sense of present-tenseness. The deferral of the process of signification enables the film to disengage the spectator-subject from the hegemony of the master-narrative that predetermines the ideological formulation of an identity.

Happy Together is about a gay couple, Fai and Bo-wing, who has broken up many times and reunited. Embarking on a journey to Argentina, they are not only celebrating their recent reunion, but are also striving to mend their heavily scarred relationship. In flashbacks punctuated by Fai's monologues, it can be seen that the couple lose their direction on their way to the Iguazu Falls. After many futile attempts to find the route, Bo-wing becomes disenchanted with Fai as a result of the frustration generated. When the money, which Fai has stolen from a friend of his family, runs short, they begin to quarrel and eventually break up. As they part, each of them begins a new life in their country of exile. Running short of money, Fai works as a receptionist at a local bar. The busiest part of the working day is the evening when Chinese tourists from Taiwan usually patronize the establishment. Bo-wing in contrast, lives a more complacent life as one of his lovers is supporting him financially. When Fai and Bo-wing bump into each other at the bar one busy evening, Bo-wing asks to see Fai again. Later, Fai resists his impromptu visits and clarifies that there is no chance of reunion until one day Bo-wing, who has been heavily beaten, calls at Fai's place in desperation. Fai attends to Bo-wing, takes him to the hospital and brings him back to his place. With both his hands in plaster, Bo-wing becomes physically dependent on Fai. Fai gets a new job in a Chinese restaurant and meets a young male holiday-maker from Taiwan, Cheng. Fai sees himself in Cheng, as Fai also used to be a free man who travelled a lot. Their brief encounter inspires Fai to regain both his own lost identity as an active tourist, and also his youth after identifying with this young and energetic Taiwanese man. After Cheng decides to leave Argentina, Fai abandons Bo-wing and prepares to go home. Henceforth, he works hard and remains busy every day, freeing himself from the bondage of his sad memories. Before he finally leaves for home, he visits the picturesque waterfall on his own to complete his symbolic soul-searching journey and to overcome his desire for his former lover. Stopping over in Taiwan on his way back, he pays tribute to his friendship with Cheng by visiting the place where Cheng's family works and lives.

Happy Together demonstrates the way in which the film's protagonists take on foreign cultural experience and a traveller's viewpoint along their journeys that gives rise to a critique of their original sense of identity. Identity also presupposes difference, as well as the suppression of difference. The falsely spiritual and romanticized experience that the gay couple enjoys during the journey reveals an immense suppression of difference between the two characters: one prudent and the other wayward. The main protagonists are presented as the metonyms of nomadic subjectivity that vacillate between other subject positions when they run into troubles on their journey. Such a description of their crises is intensified in a device that I call the reinvestment of noirish elements. What is most interesting about this strategy is that it appropriates classical elements, which eventually disrupts the narrative structure of the road movie and thus engages the spectators in a process of self-conscious rereading of the notions of identity and identification.

Detour or Death

The plot of *Happy Together* is centred on Fai's previously aborted trip from Argentina to Taiwan and Hong Kong. It can be seen that the motif of the journey is a vehicle for investigation of the metaphysical question of the purpose of life. The film's investment in the theme of travel creates an opportunity for the protagonists, and in due course for the spectators, to explore the transformation of landscapes, situations and personalities. In this multi-location film, the roads, highways and railways are themselves transformative elements. It can be seen that the film opens in the style of a national road movie and gradually moves closer to a style of transnational road movie.

When the straight and boundless highway seemingly opens the film with a sense of freedom and an opportunity to reinvent life, the gay lovers who traverse the Argentinian expanse in a private car become paradoxically lost and trapped in the urban wilderness of highways. On the first impression, the journey seems to be about the couple's escape from Hong Kong. Halfway into the film, it can be seen that the physical excursion is also a psychological journey for Fai who is coming to terms with his unrealizable hope of a reunion with his lover, his sexual orientation, his perceived betrayal of his family, and his confused cultural identity as a Hong Kong Chinese person living in a foreign country. The outlook of the journey in the second half of the film is demonstrated in a completely different style. It is no longer an aimless journey of outcasts who are travelling within the enclosed boundary of a nation. Fai's determination to leave Argentina is symbolic of his endeavour to break out of his old way of life and thinking. His subsequent journey back home via Taipei displays a beautiful mosaic of nations, cultures, languages and roads which are all separated by geographical, political and economic boundaries, and customs. The crossing of national borders not only presents different cultures, but also different notions of self and identity that the protagonist appropriates in each one of the places he visits. The traversing of different socio-economic and physical landscapes, from the deprived areas of a developing country to the wealthy areas of the metropolises, not only symbolizes transformation, but also spiritual awakening, which results from Fai's redefinition of self.

The mobility expressed in the activity of border crossing in *Happy Together* highlights issues of changing nationality and culture, and of the consequential transformation of the travelling subject's own identity. My focus of analysis is the representation of the act of travelling that is intrinsic to the protagonists' transnational urban journey, which qualifies the film with a notion of changing social and cultural identity. This chapter seeks to determine to what extent the complex question of movement demonstrated in the film has engendered a critical rereading of personal and social, national and transnational, as well as colonial and post-colonial identities. In the following discussion of the mobility of the travelling subject, my focus of attention is the constitution of the narrative identity that results from the protagonist's mediation through the enormous spectrum of social, political and cultural relations.

With reference to *Happy Together,* I shall initiate a parallel examination of the protagonist's psychological response to the detour in his own journey, and the spectator's response to the screen representation of the detour. It can be seen that when the protagonist's disrupted journey contributes to his negotiation of identity psychologically, the film narrative also establishes a situation for the Hong Kong audience, with which they may negotiate their cultural identity in the course of viewing. That is to say, each individual self-consciously rereads his or her act of identification with the travelling subject in light of the disruptive film strategy.

The film shows that the main protagonist, Fai, makes his way to the waterfall twice. While the lovers' first attempt to see the site is depicted as a failure, Fai's second attempt to see the site near the end of the film on his own is a happy and life-changing experience. I shall demonstrate below that Fai's second embarkation on the journey to the waterfall, as the beginning of a homeward and boundary-crossing journey, brings him to self-critique. Thus, the visit to the waterfall can be seen as a conceptual process in which the conventional way of reasoning and the existing course of thinking are diverted or disrupted through shifting cinematic identification. No matter how distracted the protagonist or the spectator-subject may be, their engagement in this psychological detour is an uplifting experience of transformation that adversely thrives in a state of disorder of identity.

In *The Road Movie Book*, Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark describe film **noir as** a unique post-war cinematic phenomenon which gives rise to the first of the three cycles of outlaw-rebel road films. (1) My discussion of the cross-genre practice below regarding the link between the noirish elements and the road movie will revolve around a trope of the picturesque employed in *Happy Together* that destabilizes what many road movies promote as a male escapist fantasy. The fantasy, according to Timothy Corrigan, is conventionally seen as resistant to, and also paradoxically contained by the responsibilities of domesticity, for instance, responsibilities at home, marriage, and employment. (2) My analysis seeks to unfold the way in which the film strategy deconstructs the cinematic convention and solicits a self-conscious reading of the film.

Jeremy Tambling describes, in his book-length examination on *Happy Together*, that the status of being on the road is marginal and delimits that the act of sojourning is a rejection of the politics of home by going outside the boundaries of heterosexual society. From Tambling's point of view, a 'desire for death' (3) is related to this road movie about the excursion of Bo-wing and Fai in Buenos Aires. I shall demonstrate below, however, that the appropriation of the noirish elements enables the film to resist the thematic paradigm of the 'desire for death.' Foster Hirsh describes in *Detours and Lost Highways: A Map of Neo-Noir*, that the open environments portrayed in road movies like 'the canyons of big-city side streets' can be seen as 'places without exit.' I shall demonstrate below that the portrayals about the journeys—unaccomplished and accomplished—to the Iguazu Falls in the film invokes noir and that noir cinematography manifests itself in the black-and-white film sequences which punctuate the film. Unlike the conventional representation of open environments, which is associated with ideas about death and tragic experience in 'places without exit,' the trope of the picturesque is seen as key to understanding the way in which one of the main protagonists, Fai, turns around the tragic experience and resolves his crisis of identity. Though his journey to the Iguazu Falls entraps him initially, he finds a psychological way out after his final visit to the picturesque site.

The trope of the picturesque, which is formulated by images that are directly or indirectly related to the natural landscape of the Iguazu waterfall, will be explained as a visual reference that demonstrates a complex relation between time and narrative. Iguazu is not only mentioned literally in the voice-over of Fai who explains how their trip to the waterfall has been the cause of a fight between the lovers. The beautiful landscape of the natural feature is also shown in colour in the middle of the flashback near the beginning of the film. Many times throughout the sequence, the image of the waterfall is also captured: on the surface of a souvenir lampshade on a side table of a love hotel, and later on Fai's desk beside his bed. The most picturesque depiction of the waterfall in this sequence is doubtlessly the colour image, filmed in fast speed by a moving camera over the feature. The slow motion of the powerful movement of the waterfall is a 'trademark' shot of Kar-wai Wong's film according to his cinematographer, Christopher Doyle. This kind of 'empty shot', Doyle says, is different from the conventional establishing shot which gives a spatial dimension of the film set for enhancing the sense of continuity of time and space. Rather, the shot is about creating an atmosphere by the use of metaphor. (4) My contention is that the device of adding the picturesque depiction intensifies the impact of the noirish portrayal of the city.

The most significantly noirish style of cinematography is demonstrated in the scenes of Bar Sur and the surrounding areas. Tambling describes the scenes as having a 'film noir-like atmosphere.' (5) The cobbled road quietly reflects the moonlight against a dark background where most of the shops on the same road are closed. A taxi pulls in and brings Bo-wing and his acquaintance to the centre-stage for a tango show to be held inside the bar. In the middle of the party, from a close shot of a kissing scene between Bo-wing and the man, who are in shadow against the rest of the guests enjoying the show in the bright room, the camera pans to reveal Fai who is surveying Bo-wing's activity from outside. Inside the bar, in front of a big glass window on which the words Bar Sur can be read in reverse, it can be seen that Fai looks tiny on the other side of the glass window. Outside the bar, standing on the road in the dark, Fai is engulfed by a feeling of emptiness. The contrast between the light inside the bar and the dark street creates an overwhelming sense of loneliness, which is further enhanced in the low-key lighting effect that is frequently used in the film. For instance, inside the toilet of Sur Bar, after brushing shoulders with Bo-wing, half of Fai's face and later his whole body, are revealed as vulnerably immersed into a shadowy corner of the place. From the back seat inside a taxi in which Bo-wing travels, a high-speed camera captures that Fai, in slow motion, is seeing Bo-wing off alone secretly in a dark corner of the road. After a slightly pan movement within the same shot, Bo-wing appears at the foreground while the car is pulling away. Bo-wing's indifference to Fai is enhanced in the low-key lighting effect especially when he turns around to look at Fai and then engages himself in a deep thought.

The Trope of the Picturesque

The black-and-white prologue of a sex scene between the gay couple in a love hotel, and the brief portrayal of their conflict on highways where they have lost their way to the waterfall, are followed by the colourful depiction of the picturesque landscape. This colourful image of the waterfall punctuates the chronological flashback which unveils the complicated relationship of the lovers. It can be seen that the slow motion portrayal of the bird-eye view of the waterfall is not presented in the same way as planned in the original working script prepared before the filming. The script reads as follows:

> "The blue/green magnificence of the Iguazu Waterfall. Pull back to reveal the image is in fact a souvenir lampshade by a messy bed in a tacky love hotel. Two silhouettes overshadow the falls and the desolate room." (6)

Appearing in full-colour in the main body of the film narrative, the image of the waterfall (see appendix ii) sustains a superseding value over other visual factors. This image not only represents the destination of the lovers' trip but also seeks to define the lovers' aspiration to enjoy their relationship. It demonstrates a challenge of spatial limits by its remote location beyond the boundless highways. While the movement of the powerful waterfall displays a sense of life force that is by nature not submissive to any form of human control, the slow motion and the claustrophobic framing of the image signifies a more overwhelming sense of restraint and constraint. In the eyes of travellers, for instance the protagonists or the seers, the object of the waterfall is merely an impression of the landscape awaiting completion by the act of viewing. My focus of analysis here is to explore the way in which the trope of the picturesque is manifested in the *mise-en-scène* of the film.

The claustrophobic framing of the waterfall that deprives the spectator of a wider view of its exhilarating beauty not only gives rise to a sense of uncertainty and anxiety, but also offers a vista of wild extremes of physical existence where human achievement is dwarfed by nature. The juxtaposition of the image of the waterfall and the mundane human activities that take place in the gay lovers' small world creates a contrast between the large-scale portrayal of the landscape and the depiction of the mediocrity of low-quality city life. The stunning movement of the waterfall presented in slow motion and the pan movement of the camera around the oval-shaped geographical feature suggests notions of an incredible history and an unpredictable future. The vivid splashes of liquid blue and green on the waterfall only emerge to then quickly disappear into the unknown. From the camera's perspective of the natural world, imploding streams of water from the edge of the fall not only demonstrate a resurgence of energy, but imply a feeling of absurd incongruity in life. This feeling, therefore, gives rise to a sense that something is about to happen, which is what I refer to as a sense of the present. The film's depictions of the immaterial value of the geological feature, the depth of colour, and the unknown space under the water, launch an investigation of the void—the sense of the present—which is beyond physical beauty and simple explanation. The sudden and powerful movements of the waterfall in the midst of the flashback create a sense of disorientation when they catch the spectator's attention. The punctuation of the colourful shot of real and apparent movement in this slow-paced black-and-white sequence creates a striking optical effect. The discursive strategy, which disturbs coherence of the sense of the past, makes allowances for a glimpse of the present. The more the structure of the linear historicity is ruptured, the more the sense of the present is burst open to create suspense. Essential to the *mise-en-scène* of the film is the emphasis on two levels of temporality displayed through the two iconographic forms of image of the waterfall, namely the colour geographical representation of the waterfall on the one hand, and on the other hand the simulation of the image of the Iguazu Falls as the blue and green picture on the lampshade. The latter serves to subject the sense of past-tenseness to scrutiny and puts forward a question of present-tenseness of the representation of the waterfall within the narrative.

In "Happy Alone? Sad Young Men in East Asian Gay Cinema," Chris Berry states that the representation of the Iguazu Falls has more significance than a tourist snapshot due to the fact that it offers itself up for interpretation as a metaphor for Hong Kong's status as a place of transit. He says,

"As with Wong's other films, *Happy Together* is dominated by medium shots and close-ups. The few other long shots are mostly empty shots of the flatlands the couple drive through when unsuccessfully trying to reach the waterfall together. The dynamic bird-eye long shot of the falls is therefore singularized, and its repetition turns it into a motif further drawing attention to it and suggesting it has more significance than as a tourist snapshot." (7)

In "What's So Queer about *Happy Together*," Audrey Yue discusses the relationship between the real Iguazu Falls and their reproduction on the lampshade. Her focus of analysis is on the spatial significance of the waterfall which is situated on the border between Brazil and Argentina. The waterfall, as she argues, is the 'contact zone' metonymically occupied by Hong Kong. When the lampshade—the icon of the waterfall projected from the negative image fixed on a carousel (or the reel) that is built in the lamp—introduces a destabilizing ambiguity into the real object, it reveals the difference between a copy and the original. The ambiguity thus opens up a 'critical distance that is constituted in the differential repetition between the reel and the real, and highlights the emergence of identity.' (8)

Moving beyond the discussion on the spatial relation between the text and the audience, my analysis of the description of the picturesque shall revolve around its temporal relation to the film narrative and the protagonists. In addition to the binary system of signs that is sustained by the two forms of representations of 'the reel and the real,' I shall propose to examine the function of the colour representation of the natural feature as additional to the black-and-white sequence. The black-and-white sequence not only disrupts the chronology of the flashback but also enables the film to defer and differ the nostalgic mood that may be derived from a conventional way of seeing a flashback. The understanding about the natural feature as the object of the recollection of the unsuccessful attempt to visit the site does not stabilize the historical narrative. The insert of the natural feature as part of a larger device serves to disrupt the relation between the object of nostalgia—the simulation of the image of the waterfall on the lampshade—and the protagonists. Similarly, the flashback sequence that appears to be noirish is formulated for the purpose of revealing the two levels of temporality and of destabilizing the chronology that is inevitably deduced by the spectator in the course of deciphering the story of the gay couple in the conventional way.

From the natural form to the geometric form of expression, from full-colour to monochrome, I shall explain that the film purposefully depicts the waterfall in changing forms and shapes; and that there is, alongside the trope of the picturesque, a discursive strategy that de-centres the narrative. Not only is the protagonist, Fai, involved diegetically in the transformation of his personal identity, but the spectator-subject is also engaged by this strategy of deconstruction that allows him or her to redefine the concept of self.

The waterfall is initially supposed to be the destination of an excursion where the gay couple are to celebrate their reunion. The unfulfilled agenda of visiting the waterfall and of enhancing the joy of being happily together later transforms this innocent hope into regret. Their plan to visit the waterfall has never been simply a travel itinerary. The waterfall has represented something larger than it should be. Firstly, it was a symbol of reunion and later it became the hope of re-establishing the reunion. Near the end of the film, Fai finally visits the waterfall alone in order to resolve his feelings for Bo-wing before he embarks on his journey home and to start a new life. I explained earlier on that the sense of the present produced by the image of the waterfall is vivid for the spectator when the natural feature is portrayed in its most vibrantly active form. This colour shot as a realistic portrayal of the landscape, however, does not exist in Fai's account of his story. The protagonist is also absent from this scene. As a matter of fact, the color shot is an insert that punctuates the flashback. That is to say, the waterfall scene is a scene of presence that is not included at the same level of temporality in Fai's flashback. As soon as Fai turns the natural object into a conceptual object of nostalgia, he transposes the emotional content from his perception of the landscape to the physical inscription of the picturesque on the surface of the souvenir lampshade. The image of the waterfall projected from the lamp is therefore a product of the film's strategy to defer the sense of the present. I shall discuss the purpose and significance of the deferral of the present-tenseness below.

Fai's final journey to the waterfall is worth noting. There are 5 lengthy jump-cuts (see appendix ii) revealing the highways from the driver's point of view in the black-and-white film stock. The black-and-white sequence is inserted into the film near the end where the film is mostly presented in colour mode. Like a turning point of the film, the series of jump-cuts is introduced prior to the film's decription of Bo-wing's life that has been turned upside down when Fai decides to leave Buenos Aires. All the 5 jump-cuts feature the road leading to the waterfall. The reverse-angle shot of Fai driving is not available until after the fifth black-and-white jump-cut. The last jump-cut of the sequence quickly zooms into the farther end of the road before it fades into white and then reveals the image of Fai in a reverse-angle shot. The over-exposed image of the road at the end of the jump-cut sequence is connected to a night-for-night scene which depicts that Fai is driving in a medium shot. After this shot, the chiaroscuro effect once again dominates the film which describes the symbiotic relation between the gay couple. What follows is that, outside Bar Sur and inside Fai's flat, in low-key lighting effect, Bo-wing in turn becomes masochistic and also appears to be fatally in love with Fai who has left him and has led him astray. I shall further elaborate on the significance of the reversal of the two archetypal character types of film noir—masochistic male and homme fatale—and their relation to the disruptive film strategy later in this chapter.

What I want to stress here is that the re-use of noir cinematography, which functions as an act of supplementarity, plays upon the senses of past-tenseness and present-tenseness. The showing of the 5 jump-cuts in black-and-white film stock can be seen as paradoxical. It seems that the 5-shot sequence projects a picture of Fai's ongoing trip as he is heading for the waterfall, but it also suggests a sense of past-tenseness. The sequence should not simply be taken as the nostalgic representation of Fai's impression of the visit or the melancholic reading of Fai's past experience in the country. Rather, the jump-cuts are placed there to alienate the spectator so as to divert the course of cinematic identification and to differ the sense of past-tenseness. The sequence, in other words, plays upon the past-tenseness and problematizes the film's narrative and form. The subsequent reverse-angle shot features Fai in a low-key lighting effect, driving on the road. Shadows are cast on Fai's face as the car moves between the street lights. The beautiful colour picture thus allows the sense of present-tenseness to surface. Jeremy Tambling describes Fai's journey to the waterfall in association with a notion of death. He says,

> "It gives an image of absence and also implies that the end of narrative he has desired by making this journey is a form of death." (9)

Tambling justifies his observation by referring to the final appearance of the waterfall in a sequence that lasts for 2 minutes as a symbol of a completion of a quest. As the water is 'disappearing into a vast hole,' Tambling explains that the film suggests that Fai 'has reached a point of stasis—no more deferral, no more delays—so that the position is truly one of death.' (10) Tambling's assertion does not describe whether Fai has come to acknowledge his responsibility for his fate at all. I shall argue that as soon as Fai comes to understand that he is fated, he realizes that he can turn what is inevitable into a source of power and negotiate to formulate an alternative understanding of his social, cultural and political identities. Such a powerful way of thinking is echoed by the picturesque image of the waterfall. His determination and action in returning to the waterfall demonstrate a form of 'intelligence to liberate' himself. (11) In the new phase of the journey, he has a chance to negotiate his identity. I shall not, therefore, delimit Fai's journey in a pessimistic way. Rather, I shall re-examine the tragic sensibility of the film in terms of its strategy that decentres the narrative and facilitates the negotiation for a rereading of the old understanding of identity and history.

What I want to further discuss is that the issue of the changeover is associated with Fai's return journey to Hong Kong. The descriptions about Hong Kong in the film that I want to point out include Fai's unnecessary synchronization of his waking hours with that of Hong Kong, the film's visualization of Fai's impression of the city that is turned upside down, the announcement of the death of Xiao-ping Deng who was the master-mind of the historical reunification of Hong Kong with China, and the mentioning of the time reference as January 1997 that is heard in the voice-over of Chang when Chang reaches the lighthouse at Ushuaia. Stephen Teo describes the association of the issue of the changeover with the film as prominent. He stresses that Wong makes a point about the socio-political ramifications of 1997 through the film. He says,

"...to concretise the 1997 issue by depicting two Hong Kong men consciously escaping from the contemporary time-reality of Hong Kong by depositing themselves in another time, another place. The further away that Wong travels, the more 1997 and Hong Kong become visible issues..." (12)

Teo describes that the theme of exile is connected to the '1997 deadline that was casting a shadow over many Hong Kong lives'. (13) His discussion of the film in relation to the changeover requires further inquiry into whether we should see the film as nostalgically related to the socio-political issue of the reunification. Audrey Yue posits Fai as 'nostalgic' as he is the more responsible of the two Hong Kong protagonists and it is he who ultimately reaches the Iguazu Falls; and Bo-wing as 'less nostalgic' because his aspiration to return to Hong Kong and to reach the waterfall is pettier. (14) Rey Chow also purports that the relation is nostalgically formulated. Tambling describes Chow's viewpoint before he proposes to address the issue of nostalgia from a different perspective. He says,

"Rey Chow thinks the film is nostalgic towards Hong Kong and she makes the claim that it is subtended by a desire towards a primal—she calls it primeval—union which she thinks the film most openly gestures towards in the vision of the Iguazu Falls." (15)

Tambling suggests that Chow's reading of the film as nostalgic needs probing for the reason that the fragmented form of *Happy Together* 'negates the possibility of reading the subject in a single way.' Chow's concept of nostalgia, as Tambling elaborates, 'depends upon a prior belief in the integrity of the self.' (16) For him, however, a fixed notion of subjectivity is what the film lacks. I agree with Tambling that the film does not facilitate the formulation of a stable sense of self, either diegetically or extradiegetically.

Hutcheon suggests that the meaning of the term nostalgia is less about the past than the present although the medical-pathological definition of the term has been used to negatively denote a form of mental illness (17). She explains that nostalgia works through what Mikhail Bakhtin called an 'historical inversion'—an ideal that is not being lived now is projected into the past. (18) Such experience results from a discourse that exiles the historical subject from the present as it brings the imagined past near by both distancing and proximating the subject. She also cites Susan Stewart's provocative study (19), which suggests that nostalgia implicates the idealized past into the site of immediacy, presence and authenticity. In her study, Hutcheon looks at the significance of evoking an imaginary style of the real past or the reproduction of an image that is related to things that happened or existed in the past. For her, nostalgia may be invoked and ironized. She says,

"The ironizing of nostalgia, in the very act of its invoking, may be one way the postmodern has of taking responsibility for such responses by creating a small part of the distance necessary for reflective thought about the present as well as the past." (20)

Hutcheon's assertion on the reflective thought is what I want to draw on in my discussion of *Happy Together*. It refers to an idea about the 'interpretive confusion' (21) created by postmodern artifacts, which solicits active participation of the reader/audience—both intellectual and affective. I shall suggest that *Happy Together* should not simply be seen as nostalgic. Essential to the film is a tactic that invokes a sense of past-tenseness by appropriating the classical elements of film noir—the cinematography and the character types in particular—in a fragmented narrative that disrupts the linear order of temporality. The purpose of the device is to enhance a re-interpretation of the relations between time and narrative, and the representations of history and identity. Drawing on Hutcheon's rereading of the theory of nostalgia, I would describe the effect of the tactic as a 'twin evocation' (22) that is derived from distancing and proximating the spectator-subject simultaneously. That is to say, the tactic gives rise to a situation of the 'perpetual present' in which an urge for re-interpretation, contestation and re-narrativization is immediate as soon as the spectator-subject is enabled to see the necessity and possibility of changing viewpoints for better understanding of the culture. In Jameson's explanation of pastiche as an essential feature of postmodern culture, he complains that the cultural form allows the reader to lose his or her capacity to retain his or her own past as if he or she is living in the 'perpetual present' in which 'a sense of history' has disappeared. Unlike Jameson, I suggest that a process of perpetual change is essential to the establishment of critical understanding and appreciation of the tradition that earlier social formations have preserved. Thus, the sense of history has not disappeared. Rather, the understanding of 'history' is expanded to new horizons when the reader/spectator is given the choice of reading and rereading the text from various angles in different ways.

The above-mentioned portrayal of the waterfall is not the only colour representation in the flashback. In the middle of the sequence, there is a 2-shot colour sequence (see appendix ii), which portrays a dimly neon-lit hotel called Cosmos located in the middle of nowhere. The colour representation interrupts the black-and-white sequence of the flashback describing the lovers' row and confrontation: Fai is taken by surprise when Bo-wing phones up and then visits unexpectedly, which is not directly related to the colour shot of the love hotel shown earlier on. The colour visual image of the hotel does not indicate any time reference. Neither does it signify that the event in the flashback takes place there and then. When the fragmented structure of the narrative does not endow the image of the hotel with a coherent sense of existence in an order of linear history, the sense of present-tenseness is established. When the colour shot reveals an element of present-tenseness, it does not correlate with the other incidents mentioned in the flashback sequence. The significance of this tactic is that it defers and differs both the senses of the past-tenseness and present-tenseness, and solicits reflective thoughts on or re-narrativization of the relation between the present and the past.

It is worth noting that the sense of the present is ambiguous at first as the film places the images of the waterfall and the hotel deliberately outside the time frame of Fai's flashback by presenting them inexplicably in full-colour. After the very lengthy flashback sequence, the film still moves on in black-and-white film stock until it switches its colour tone powerfully and beautifully after the hospital scene. Peter Brunette explains that colour plays 'a somber but richly expressionistic role.' He says,

> "A powerfully haunting shot will suddenly appear—for example, of the couple in the back seat of a taxi, on the drive from the hospital—that achieves much of its effect through its deep brown hue, with Po-wing's bandaged hands plaintively and uselessly extended in front of him." (23)

It is not until Fai returns with Bo-wing after his medical treatment at the hospital that the film fully attains the colour that signifies the present. The turning point of the film from monotone to full-colour is the moment when the weary Bo-wing falls asleep on Fai's shoulder in a gesture of intimacy in the taxi on their way home from the hospital. As soon as the colour tone of the film changes, the film also slows down the motion of the shot to magnify and emphasize the romance between the lovers who seem to have come back together and continue their journey in Argentina after a long break. As the film continues to proceed smoothly in colour, noir cinematography is invoked time and again to disrupt or defer the spectator from coming to a fixed position of identification. In the above discussion, I have demonstrated that the plot arrangement of Fai's final excursion to the waterfall does not show that Fai is approaching a tragic ending to his life. As soon as Fai has decided to leave Buenos Aires for Hong Kong, he phones home and writes a card to his father whom he has betrayed. He works every night and even during holidays so that he may organize his life according to the time in Hong Kong. After returning Bo-wing's passport to him, Fai embarks on a journey to return home via Taiwan. Before he leaves Buenos Aires, he takes a trip to see the waterfall. Fai's excursion to the picturesque site is a vivid visual reference of his reflective thoughts about the past and the present, which also creates an impact on the spectator-subject extra-diegetically.

The Act of Identifying and Contestation

Rey Chow introduces an interestingly complicated model which suggests that *Happy Together* is a nostalgia film. In a structuralist approach, she demonstrates the way in which *Happy Together* can be seen as nostalgic through the handling of "the series of black-and-white shots" (24). She derives this from Lacan's analysis of structure as an inmixing of an Otherness prerequisite to any subjects. (25) That is, in Chow's interpretation, a way to decipher a structure as a temporal process governed by difference. Although she does not demonstrate the mechanism of this structure, she has related it to the structure of difference. She emphasizes that this structure 'must be understood to be the effect of retroaction—a belated conferral of meaning on an event (such as the number 1), which does not have a meaning until it has been repeated to an other [sic], subsequent event, (the number 2).' (26) The formula of an integer—*n plus one*—is therefore used as an allegory to demonstrate that the relationship between the gay couple portrayed in *Happy Together* is a nostalgic representation. She draws a parallel between the integration of 'n' and 'one' appearing in the structure of an integer and the reunion between the gay couple. She then elaborates that the meaning of their reunion is never determined until after they have separated. She also relates her observation of the status of number 'one' as an integral part of the narrative structure to Derrida's notion of supplementarity to develop an examination of the nostalgic element that is always repressed or restricted in a normative understanding of structure. Chow uses the number 'one' as an element that is repeated in the structure of every integer in her illustration of the nostalgic that is 'always already a reiteration, which makes sense only in the supplementarity of 1+.' (27) Nostalgia in *Happy Together* for her is not an emotion attached to a concretely experienced and chronological past, rather 'it is attached to a fantasized state of oneness, to a time of absolute coupling and indifferentiation that may, nonetheless, appear in the guise of an intense, indeed delirious, memory.' (28)

Chow's focus of analysis is the nostalgic element, which is reflected in a structure of narrative that represses or restricts any expression of its existence. In the course of developing a model for her analysis of Wong Ka Wai's object of nostalgia, Chow constitutes a structuralist examination of the concept of nostalgia. As she elaborates on the characteristic nature of nostalgia with reference to some concrete places, times and events in *Happy Together* that are structurally traceable, she steps back from the two positions which she commenced from. The two stances are supposed to be Lacan's approach to reinvest the genesis of number to critique the conception of structure and Derrida's exploration of the manifestation of supplementarity. In the course of her discussion, however, she does not follow Lacan to problematize the unity or oneness attributed to structure. Neither does she follow Derrida to problematize the notions of origin and centre. What is essential to the analysis of *Happy Together* in accordance with the Derridean logic of destabilization introduced in his theory of supplementarity is the way in which the accredited and authorized relationship between cinematic representation and the spectator-subject is deformed and transformed. The expression of difference noted in the analysis of *Happy Together* (29), therefore, should not be employed inclusively to characterize the notion of nostalgia as Chow has accounted for it. I shall come back to the discussion on *différance* with reference to the same film that renews the spectator-screen relation in which the spectator-subject is enabled to reread the cinematic text self-consciously.

Natalia Chan's concept of nostalgia noted in the second argument of her essay entitled 'Rewriting History: Hong Kong Nostalgia Cinema and Its Social Practice' (30) also creates theoretical conundrums. Firstly, the spectator-subject, who is described as a passive participant in the cinematic activity, is paradoxically expected to actively 'reconstruct the collective identities and memories of the society.' (31) Chan cites Fred Davis' work which states that 'nostalgia is one of the mean [sic]...we employ in the never ending work of constructing, maintaining, and reconstructing our identities.' (32) If 'nostalgia cinema' is a medium which engages the spectator in the task of reconstructing meanings, the cinema's expectation that the spectator may negotiate his or her identity as a passive receiver will become a vain hope. It can be seen, however, that Chan considers the cinematic text as ideologically complicit and the spectator as a type of passive receiver. She says, "moviegoers derive a certain kind of satisfaction when they come across, struggle, and finally overcome the difficulties of the past as it is projected on the flat screen." She continues to explain that '(t)he nostalgic past that is stylized in the films shows the audience who they are, what they are about, and whither they go.' (33) What I want to emphasize here is that the cinema does not rewrite history unless it actively engages the spectator who is supposed to negotiate identity in the course of viewing.

Secondly, Chan's idea of history that sustains her argument of 'nostalgia cinema' is problematic. Opposing Jameson in the first half of her essay, she sees the waning of historicity as essentially positive by implying 'a new reading of the past in the present' (34). This contests the idea of temporality assumed by the conventional concept of history on the one hand. On the other hand, in the second half of her essay, she states that Hong Kong cinema takes on the convention. She says, "...in Jameson's words, Hong Kong nostalgia films return to the past to escape the unpleasant present and the uncertain future. It is a past that had been [sic] overcome by the Hong Kong people. No matter how bitter and difficult it was, it was gone. As described by Davis, nostalgia is always tinged with a certain sadness or melancholy, that is, 'a nice sort of sadness—bittersweet'." (35) Re-adopting Jameson's concept of history in the second part of her essay and qualifying 'nostalgia cinema' with a sense of escapism, Chan contradicts her previous argument that Hong Kong cinema has actively constituted a new reading of the ideas of identity and history.

Central to understanding *Happy Together* is the movement of signification, which is evidence of an important sense of the present that keeps within itself a mark of the past element. This sense of the present also highlights the mark of its relation to the future element. The focus of my analysis is that while the reinvestment of noirish elements destabilized the relationship between the spectator and the screen, the spectator is enabled with reason to consider an alternative way to re-interpret the notions of identity and identification.

This chapter looks at the discursive strategy in *Happy Together* that creates an experience of psychological detours away from the normal practice of cinematic identification, which differs and defers the conventional way of production of meaning. The transformed conception of identification is inextricably and interminably bound to supplementarity. Derrida's concept delimits the act of identification as always entailing the logic of 'adding on' as a result of challenging the legitimacy of the centre or the original. The act of supplementarity, in other words, dislocates, de-sediments, and disorganizes the original constitution of the notion of self. To further illustrate this discursive strategy that assigns the main protagonist of *Happy Together* as acting against his culturally and socially ascribed roles, I refer back to my earlier discussion on the Derridean term of *différance* and posit *différance* as the negative 'origin' of difference, which is not simply a concept but a conceptual process and system in general. The deferral of signification that I shall discuss results from the subject's exposure to the possibility of conceptuality, and of discerning and differentiating difference. Hence, the psychological detour instigated by the film strategy is seen as a concerted effort in breaking through norms and boundaries of interpretation for a critical rereading of the concept of self through the reflexive power of being self-conscious.

Derrida argues in *Monolingualism of the Other; or the Prosthesis of Origin* that it is futile to pursue the 'problems of identity' (36) without realizing that the resolution indeed lies in an acknowledgement and acceptance of an indispensable disorder of identity. That is to say, there is no identity without a disorder of identity. Derrida's concern is to argue that an identity is never given, received, or attained. Rather, there is no identity but identification. What he emphasizes is that it is not the content analysis of an identity but one of the most essential processes of the structural formation of an identity that should be termed as identifying. It is an act that entails a logic of supplementarity that is implied in an invisible system of function that is always ready to make up for, or even write off, the previously formulated identity. That is to say, this act of identification will also be contested. Since the act presumes an interactive relation of the subject with his or her conception of self, this act incurs a ceaseless contestation of the conception. I refer to Foucault's idea of contestation here. He says,

"Contestation does not imply a generalized negation, but an affirmation that affirms nothing, a radical break of transitivity. Rather than being a process of thought for denying existences or values, contestation is the act which carries them all to their limits and, from there, to the Limit where an ontological decision achieves its end..." (37)

The effect of contestation is akin to that of the playful movement of supplementarity laid out in the Derridian concept of *differance* that I have discussed in the previous chapter. As I have explained, the nature of the supplement was defined as 'dangerous' by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, who conceived an idea of origin that casts out the margin as the other. Derrida rejects the old concept of supplementarity, and considers an alternative way of thinking *differance* which allows the supplement to come back from the periphery to the centre-stage. Thus a critique of the legitimacy of the status of the origin is made possible.

Taking on Foucault's assumptions that the notion of self should be subject to scrutiny and that the analysis of the subject need not necessarily be seen in positive terms, this chapter positions the subject as an effect of discourse. Subjectivity is noted in this chapter as socially constituted and historically variable. The process of scrutiny, through which the film solicits the spectator-subject to revamp his or her understanding of self, is a cycle of movement. The film seeks to critique the language system that sustains the predominant ideological thinking and to transgress limits in the language. That is to say, the transgressive movement takes effect in the midst of the interaction between the acts of identifying and spectating. The force of transgression embodied in the act of contestation never dies because it reacts to the dynamics of the deficiency and excessiveness of representation created in the narrative discourse disrupted by the film strategy. It is deficient because it escapes representation in language, and it is excessive because it implies a potentially infinite number of permutations of meaning. This playful movement of signification is essential to the film strategy of *Happy Together*, which is explained below.

The story of *Happy Together* is not simply about love, the reunion, and the separation of the gay couple—Fai and Bo-wing. I shall demonstrate in this chapter that the film engages Hong Kong audience in a process of ceaseless contestation of the notion of subjectivity by constantly deferring and differing the signification of the meanings of self and identity. The director of the film, Kar-wai Wong, admits that the film is about Hong Kong when he explains that "the further away I go, the more I look back to Hong Kong." (38) Chiao analyzes that although the colonial city is almost absent in the film, the audience can find its existence everywhere. She substantiates her observation about the implied presence of Hong Kong by quoting Wong who says, "We have rebuilt a Hong Kong in Buenos Aires." (39) Chiao obviously assumes that *Happy Together* has a political agenda as she explains that,

"...this film is actually a 'tale of three cities'; love is discussed, using the breaking up, reunion and awkward complications of two lovers. The underlying truth is the mass departures from Hong Kong, its 1997 anxieties. The love, the desolation and the breaking-up of the lovers contains profound significance in the complicated relationship between Beijing-Taipei-Hong Kong. Although Wong Kar-wai's political message is extremely subtle and intricate, nevertheless to present *Happy Together* on the eve of the 1997 takeover, was undoubtedly not an accident." (40)

What is more intriguing about the significance of the connotation of the colonial city in a film set entirely in Argentina is not whether there is a political message. Rather, the film's strategy that subtly and intricately describes the reunification of the city with China near the end of the film has channeled my interest to investigate the correlation between dwelling places and formulation of a sense of self.

From the outset, the film has already started to depict Fai's psychological predicament and the deteriorating relationship between him and his gay lover. As soon as the film starts, after a pre-credit sequence of good sex between Fai and Bo-wing, Fai begins his account of the love affair, of how they had broken up and then bumped into each other again. It can, however, be deduced in the narrative that the gay lovers must have had good time and had enjoyed their trip together in Argentina before they broke up again. Thus, the most interesting thing about the reunion for me is that they both take travelling as a mind-renewing experience and that they derive from it a sense of becoming which fuels a hope for the future. What is so refreshing about travelling in a foreign country, therefore, is that it entails an endless search for cultural authenticity. This allows the seeing subject to freely adopt extra knowledge of the identities of the local people that he meets on the way. Both of the protagonists as active tourists suffer from a setback when their imagination becomes saturated. That is to say, when the travelling subject does not manage to take on any more new ideas, the subject may experience frustration and confusion that result from his or her temporary inefficiency in shifting back to the original self-identity, and from the urge to recuperate the sense of becoming. I shall come back to this point of becoming later in this chapter when discussing Fai's experiences of shifting identification throughout his journeys.

It can be seen that the relationship between the protagonists remains stable as long as they enjoy the sightseeing. During the period that they are lost on the highway, their relationship sours. At the point of the lovers' separation, therefore, there is a deep sense of loss as they are forced to remain in a city that they do not want to stay in and explore further. If funds were sufficient, they might have chosen to go home under such circumstances. The fact that they cannot afford their return journey to Hong Kong has driven them into a difficult situation. As a result, they have to stay in a place where they do not belong. For both of them, adapting to a more stable life in Argentina begs the question of identity.

At some points, Fai, as a narrator of the film, reveals that he undergoes a crisis of identity, which is intensified in two situations of dilemma. What is essential to my discussion of Fai's psychology is the act of travelling that brings him to a point of shifting identification. His psychology refers to his negotiation of self-identity in moments of dilemma when he vacillates between the decision to stay in Argentina as a visitor, although money for the holiday has run short; or to go home and reconsider his roles as a son who loves his parents and as a contributing member of Hong Kong society.

Decentring of the Narrative

By revealing the way in which the discursive strategy of *Happy Together* allows the sense of the present to overshadow the nostalgic mood, I have suggested that *Happy Together* should not be seen as simply nostalgic. In my discussion here, I examine the sense of the present as a tense and the presence of being present. The film's manifestation of the different senses of the present disrupts the chronology of time and memory that fundamentally constitutes a coherent sense of self. The disruptive strategy of the film is a means to allow the spectator to detour away from the path of temporal linearity initially established in Fai's narration in the beginning of the film. It is true that the historical representation produced by the flashback builds up a repertoire of past events. More significant to note from the act of reminiscence in the opening sequence is that it displays the crisis of identity that the main protagonist, Fai, undergoes after he has failed to leave Argentina for home immediately. When he remains in the foreign country, he conforms to the local culture and speaks the Argentinian language. This act of conformity, however, does not win him a local identity or a sense of belonging. From the monotone of Fai's voice in his monologue throughout the flashback sequence, it can be seen that Fai has developed an attitude of indifference to whatever he has been engaged in, in Argentina. That is to say, he hardly recounts his story with an attitude that he cherishes his memories.

I suggest herein that the formulation of the narrative structure which orchestrates Fai's act of reminiscence is part of the film strategy that paves the way for the disruption of the coherence of the historical narrative proper. Central to the strategy are the inserts of the colour shots which solicit the spectator to interpret the flashback at three levels of temporality—the past, the present and an unspecified time. While the act of reminiscence is not configured in its full sense of past-tenseness, it is intertwined with a sense of the present-tenseness. Under the exposure to the extra dimension of temporality, the unspecified time, the film allows the spectator to traverse the boundaries of the past and the present. While the colour shots are inserted into the narrative proper of the flashback, the film defers both the senses of the past-tenseness and present-tenseness, allowing the spectator-subject an opportunity to negotiate the conceptions of self and subjectivity that are originally sustained by a narrative in which temporality is represented as linear. When Fai is portrayed as being obsessed with the image of the waterfall (or the object of nostalgia), and with his lover (or the object of desire), the film not only solicits the spectator to reread the relation of Fai's existence to the notion of time but also to the notion of self within the narrative. The emphasis of the flashback sequence is, I suggest, not the nostalgic recollection of the couple's history but Fai's negotiation of his personal, social and cultural identities. Key to the negotiation, therefore, is the film's strategy that defines identity as mutable and always subject to change.

Decentring of the narrative commences as soon as the film disrupts the narrative's portrayal of Fai's stable state of being. I shall explain that this is firstly brought about by the disruption of the main protagonist's first person narration. Lastly, the film narrative embraces a broken signifying chain that conflates the roles of the homme fatale and the victimized hero diegetically. This leads to Fai's appropriation of his friend's identity and his reassessment of his own social and cultural identities as soon as Fai reviews and critiques his past understanding of self in the midst of the dilemma of identity confusion.

a. the structure of voice-over narration

Fai is the narrator in the first half of the film, but Cheng, a young holiday-maker from Taiwan comes into place as the second narrator alongside Fai in the second half of the film. At first, when Fai's narration dominates, the spectator is welcomed to remain dependent on Fai's recollection and interpretation of all of the past events about himself and his lover. His coherent disposition is disrupted as soon as the film introduces one more narrator into the film. With Cheng's appearance and voice-over, the spectator is offered an alternative point of view. The spectator is thus given an extra dimension to study Fai's character according to Cheng's third person narration. Henceforth, Fai's narration is interwoven with that of Cheng's and continues to serve as a gateway for the spectator to enter his inner world. By shifting identification with both Fai and Cheng, the previous mode of cinematic identification is disrupted and transformed. What is noteworthy about the intersection of the two levels of narration is that the spectator is actively involved in the course of the film to piece together the non-chronological fragments of memories, thoughts and actions. This is what I shall describe as a conceptual activity resulting from the discursive practice that decentres the narrative.

A third-person perspective on Fai has not been available in the voice-over until Cheng is introduced to the film. When Cheng speaks of his idea about Fai's conversation with Fai's loved one over the phone at the back of the kitchen of the restaurant, the spectator is quickly solicited to adopt a third-person view of Fai's behaviour. What seems unclear for Cheng about the identity of the person with whom Fai is talking over the phone has been, however, fully informed to the spectator from the viewer's vantage point of view. That is to say, when the film presents Cheng's heartfelt monologue about his view of Fai in an additional narrative dimension, it unveils an additional aspect of the narrative identity of Fai. The incorporation of this extra narrative dimension is not primarily for the purpose of deciphering and developing the emploted story about Fai and Bo-wing. Rather, Cheng's narration is meant to be a disruptive element that undercuts the coherence of the idea of self that the film has established through Fai's monologue. Essential to the disruptive strategy is the interruption of the spectator's identification with the narrative identity of Fai that is offered in the main plot throughout the first half of the film, mainly according to Fai's account of his experiences.

b. deconstruction of the signifying chain

In the first half of the film, Fai does not take part in re-defining his own identity diegetically. Later on, however, the film offers a repertoire of narratives that are historically and culturally specific in nature. The spectator-subject may thus rework his or her impression of the protagonists' narrative identities. This is what I would describe as a strategy to reinvest film noir by breaking the signifying chain of the classical generic composition. In addition, the swapping of the diegetic roles of the homme fatale and the noir hero demonstrates a play of signs in which the protagonists reinvest the notions of self.

The mixing and swapping of two character-types that are key to the symbiotic relation between the noir hero and the femme-fatale is what I describe as a process of pastiche. The discursive practice of the film parodies the archetypal character types without the satirical impulse. That is to say, the blank parody that results from the practice is not an irony. It is part of the strategy of *différance*, which enables the spectator to derive a vision of culture that functions as a ceaseless contestation of meaning. I shall later explain this point with reference to a plot structure of the film that suggests a reversal of the roles of the masochistic male and the homme fatale. Fai who appears to be a masochistic male in the beginning turns himself into an homme-fatale later.

Keeping Bo-wing's passport so that he cannot leave the country freely, Fai becomes an evil seductress. The reversal of the roles not only disrupts the cinematic identification but also defers the process through which the spectator comes to a position of identification. The film strategy thus deconstructs the old reading of the symbiotic relationship and solicits a self-conscious rereading, as I shall explain later, of the ideological representation of an identity—social, cultural and/or political—diegetically and/or extra-diegetically.

Taking the place of the femme fatale in leading the hero astray, Bo-wing, as an homme fatale in *Happy Together*, brings forth the threat of the dangerous object of sexual desire to its fullest. In the middle of the film, there is a turning point in the plot when Fai assumes his lover's aggressive position. This is a moment of complicated psychological response on the part of Fai. Since Bo-wing is getting bored with him and is leaving him again, Fai is tempted to avenge his hurt feelings and is about to jeopardize Bo-wing's smooth return journey to Hong Kong by hiding his passport. Adopting Bo-wing's lifestyle, Fai becomes promiscuous and goes out seeking sexual partners in public toilets.

Bo-wing's original role, in the beginning of the film, is what can be described as that of an homme fatale as he has led Fai astray. Fai has been drawn into committing a criminal offence in Hong Kong to obtain the money for their overseas travel, and into traumatic financial and emotional difficulties in Argentina. The obvious consequence of the film's diegetic improvisation to allow Fai to switch roles is an interesting amalgamation of the representations of evil and innocence. The most innovative part of the appropriation can be seen later in the film when Bo-wing, as an homme fatale has, in turn, taken on Fai's character to treasure, reminisce over and regret the broken relationship. After Fai has left Argentina, Bo-wing, near the end of the film, chooses to rent Fai's old flat. Living there in the same way Fai used to, he organizes everything in the same way Fai preferred. From his habit of arranging cigarettes above a small cupboard, to the way in which Fai makes his bed, Bo-wing re-enacts everything accordingly. When he reminiscences on the good old days, Bo-wing's occasional cry is like a moaning wind around the lonely corners of the room.

As soon as the film interweaves characteristics of the homme fatale with the victimized hero, the original chain of signification is broken. The signifier of the sexy and dangerous could then never smoothly and straightforwardly match up with the signified of the evil character. Fai has turned into an homme fatale-like person who now embodies the mixed qualities of the evil and the good. Diegetically, this leads Fai to betray and hurt his loved one just as he has been hurt. While the first half of the film has offered no hint to prepare the spectator for this reversal, the plot arrangement shakes the spectator-subject from his or her place of identification that refers to Fai's old position as a victimized hero. Such a reversal of plot with Fai's transformation to a wayward man distracts the spectator-subject from his or her identification with Fai. Henceforth, the spectator is exposed to a conceptual lapse in which he or she may experience both the impacts of the ideologically complicit identification with the character of the victimized hero and of the ideologically self-conscious distancing from the character who possesses both evil and good qualities. It is at this exciting moment of change that Fai's dramatic adoption of Bo-wing's behaviour has instituted new understanding of the identity for the spectator-subject. The film's sentimental denouement is about Bo-wing's decision to withdraw from his wayward behaviour and mourn the beloved past in Argentina. The way in which Bo-wing lives in Fai's flat is a repetition of Fai's old life style. The cause—which is obsession—of Fai's previous inflexible attitude when faced with challenges from the world also leads Bo-wing astray. The interesting contrast between the introverted character of the transformed homme fatale, Bo-wing, and the extroverted character of Fai in the course of becoming a more courageous person near the end of the film serves to discourage closure and completion. When the film compares and contrasts the life of the two protagonists, it demonstrates a play of signification in which the spectator-subject may also join the protagonist—Fai—in critiquing his or her own idea of self and explore new positionality of identity. Under such circumstances, the spectator is aware of the potentiality of reinventing the self conception.

I have discussed the strategy of *Happy Together* that swaps the roles of the homme fatale and the noir hero in the middle of the film for a critical inquiry into the process of subjectification that the two protagonists experience in the course of the film. By subjectification, I refer to the active constitution of the protagonists who turn themselves into subjects that take part in transforming their notions of self and identity. The noir hero, as a loser in love, struggles to overcome his pain by assuming, paradoxically, the homme fatale's wayward personality. Hence, he negotiates his identities as a gay lover, a man's son, and a Hong Kong Chinese in a different position. The homme fatale, who regrets giving up on the relationship, moves into the noir hero's abandoned flat and take on the noir hero's attitudes and behaviours. It can be seen that human experiences are represented symbolically as a life-cycle in the film: when the attribute of faithfulness in love reaches its limits, it turns into waywardness; and vice versa. The end of the film as the finishing point of the cycle that will go round again is in actuality the same point where a new round of the cycle begins again. Love is also a cycle. The film opens with the event in which the two gay lovers have reunited and then broken up on their trip to Argentina from Hong Kong, and closes with an open ending that implies a new start at the same point of the cycle. At the end of the film, Fai physically embarks on a journey again to seek spiritual revival and Bo-wing regains the mood for reunion.

When *Happy Together* plays on the idea of cycle, it highlights a sense of temporal ambiguity. The conventional framework of understanding self and identity fails when the film disrupts the temporal logic that represents the noir hero as a coherent subject. In the second half of the film, when Fai decides to release himself from the captivity of his old memories, he appears to be a different person. Hence, the spectator's cinematic-identification with the hero is problematized. The film also disrupts the representation of history which is constituted in terms of temporal linearity. It decentres the narrative by confusing the present-tenseness of storytelling and the past-tenseness of flashbacks. The two conceptions of time refer respectively to the moment at which a personal identity is defined under an effect of temporal unification of past and future with one's present; and the moment at which the sense of temporality is broken down to create an impact of temporal disjunction. The condition of temporal disunification is akin to a linguistic malfunction in which the signifier is isolated in the function of the discursive strategy. When the noir hero frees himself from the memories of the heartbreaking experiences and refuses to be defined by his past, he obtains a 'free-standing isolation' (41) from the historical representation of identity. In other words, the film offers a nuance of the sense of past-tenseness, the sense of being present, and the sense of present-tenseness from the past activities in order to create an immediate effect of temporal disjunction. Hence, the nuance suddenly engulfs the subject with the undescribable vividness of the materiality of perception. The sense of the present, that I have discussed, is related to the tension of the conflicting effects of the temporal unification and disjunction. While the emplotment of the story of the gay couple initially embraces the concept of unified temporality, the interplay of signs creates a situation of temporal disjunction. Through this disjunction, both the main protagonists and the spectator-subject may traverse boundaries of temporality and identities and hence negotiate the conceptions of self. What I want to stress is that such an act of negotiating the identity also takes place at the extra-diegetic level, because the spectator is engaged in the interplay of multiple and mutable roles in the course of the film through shifting identification. Hence, the film may disengage the subject from the hegemony of the narrative discourse. This subsequently provides an opportunity for the spectator-subject to negotiate for himself or herself new subject positions. This is the interactive aspect of the spectator-screen relation that this chapter has examined. The interactive process is enhanced through, as I have explained, an appropriation of noirish elements as supplements which disrupt, destabilize, differ and defer the description of human experience or existence.

Notes

1 Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, *The Road Movie Book*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)

2 Timothy Corrigan, *A Cinema without Walls: Movies and Culture after Vietnam*, (London: Routledge, 1991)

3 Jeremy Tambling, *Happy Together*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), p.36

4 Christopher Doyle, *Don't Cry for Me Argentina: Photographic Journal*, (Hong Kong: City Entertainment, 1997)

5 Jeremy Tambling, *Happy Together*, p. 42

6 Christopher Dolye's *Photographic Journal*, p. 1

7 Chris Berry, "Happy Alone? Sad Young Men in East Asian Gay Cinema," *Journal of Homosexulaity*, Vol. 39, No. 3/4, 2000, p.194-195

8 Audrey Yue, "What's So Queer About *Happy Together*? A.k.a. Queer (N) Asian: Interface, Community, Belonging," Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2000, p.257. Hereafter, this title is noted as "What's So Queer About *Happy Together?"*

9 Jeremy Tambling, *Wong Kar-wai's Happy Together*, p.60

10 Ibid.

11 Elisabeth Bronfen, "Femme Fatale—Negotiations of Tragic Desire," *New Literary History*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Winter 2004, 7th paragraph. She says, "...the classic femme fatale has enjoyed ...popularity because she is not only sexually uninhibited, but also unabashedly independent and ruthlessly ambitious, using her seductive charms and her intelligence to liberate herself from the imprisonment of an unfulfilling marriage."

12 Stephen Teo, *Wong Kar-Wai*, (London: British Film Institute, 2005), p.100

13 Ibid., p.99

14 Yue, "What's So Queer About *Happy Together?"* p.255

15 Tambling, *Wong Kar-wai's Happy Together*, p.83

16 Ibid., p.88-89

17 Linda Hutcheon's "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern," last modified on January 19, 1998, retrievable on *library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp.html* Tracing the etymology of the term, Hutcheon goes through the works of Johannes Hofer, Phillip Pinel and B. Ruml for an understanding of the medical-pathological use of the term. She says, "(w)ith its Greek roots—*nostos*, meaning "to return home" and *algos*, meaning "pain"—this word sounds so familiar to us that we may forget that it is a relatively new word, as words go. It was coined in 1688 by a 19-year old Swiss student in his medical dissertation as a sophisticated (or perhaps pedantic) way to talk about a literally lethal kind of severe homesickness (of Swiss mercenaries far from their mountainous home.)" See Johannes Hofer's *Dissertatio medica de nostalgia, oder Heimwehe*, translated in *The Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine* 7, 1934, p. 379-91.

18 Hutcheon notes the source of reference as M.M. Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1881), p.147

19 Hutcheon notes the source of reference as Susan Stewart's *On Longing: Narrative of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1984), p.23

20 Hutcheon, "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern," p.8

21 Ibid., p.5

22 Ibid.

23 Peter Brunette, *Wong Kar-wai*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005, p.78 ('Po-wing' is known as 'Bo-wing' in this chapter.)

24 Rey Chow, "Nostalgia of the New Wave: Structure in Wong Kar-wai's *Happy Together*," *Camera Obscura*, No.42, Sep, 1999, p.34, hereafter, "Nostalgia of the New Wave"

25 Ibid., p.31 and p.46

26 Ibid., p.32

27 Ibid., 34

28 Ibid., p.35

29 Ibid., p.32

30 Natalia Sui-hung Chan, "Rewriting History: Hong Kong Nostalgia Cinema and Its Social Practice," in *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*, ed. Po Shek Fu and David Desser, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

31 Ibid., p.265

32 Ibid., p.264. See also Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, (New York: The Free Press, 1979), p.31.

33 Ibid., p.265

34 Ibid., p.263

35 Ibid., p.265

36 Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other or The Prosthesis of Origin*, trans., Patrick Mensah, (Stanford and California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.10

37 Michel Foucault, "Preface to Transgression," in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald.F. Bouchard (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 36

38 Peggy Hsiung-ping Chiao, "*Happy Together*: Hong Kong's Absence," *Cinemaya* 38, 1997, p.17

39 Ibid. p.18

40 Ibid.

41 I borrow this term from Jameson's description of the postmodern feature that he coins as 'schizophrenia'. What he implies with the pathological term is his rejection of postmodernism according to an assumption that the sense of history is disappearing as the postmodern does not enable the subject to relate to his or her own experience properly. I demonstrate in this thesis the way in which the subject critiques and embraces history when the sense of temporal linearity is broken down in the act of contestation. See Jameson's *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, p.28.

Chapter Eight
Negotiation of Identity

Many Hong Kong film critics have assumed the causal relation between the socio-political changes brought about by the changeover of sovereignty of Hong Kong from Britain to China and the representation of cultural identity crisis in the cinema. My thesis, however, has not adopted the sociological viewpoint and empirical observation of the cinema. Rather, it has posited the portrayal of the crisis in films as part of a strategy that deconstructs the filmic textual system. I am concerned with demonstrating ways in which Hong Kong contemporary cinema has adopted narrative and stylistic strategies, which engage the spectator to re-examine and re-experience his or her identity as a spectator, as a gendered subject, and as a citizen. I have explored this thesis in relation to specific films and the development of concepts to effectively articulate the specific textual processes which enable this 'renewal' of film spectatorship. My film analyses are used to demonstrate a certain 'troubling' of form and narrative, which I characterize through the conceptual frame that I set out. The re-use—'re-investment'—in the generic possibilities of film noir is central to these strategies through the process of pastiche and reference with difference such that the spectator must both recognize the same, and the difference, introduced. I have examined these processes in relation to the positioning of the Hong Kong spectator as a subject of identity and identifications in relation to gender and citizenship, that is cultural identity. Both of these involve shifting identities and identifications, as well as the interrelation of extra-diegetic and diegetic elements. In Christian Metz's terminology, this cinematic practice can be described as the interrelation of the filmic textual system—the film—with the extra filmic but cinematic (the classical style of film noir, Hong Kong film production, and history), and with the extra cinematic (social conventions that are related to gender and homophobia, the history of Hong Kong, and everything that is not specific to cinema or to the film). (1)

My thesis has shown the displacement of, and consequent scope for, re-working of given identities and identifications in Hong Kong contemporary cinema as a result of its specific uses of genre, form and narrative. It is a work of deconstruction, of a reading which shows the processes of differing/deferral and supplementarity that are produced as a result of the strategies of noir re-investment and gender play in these films. Thus the fixed notions of identity are not only critiqued but they are also destabilized when the film solicits the spectator to give up, as well as to reconsider, occupying a particular type of subject position for self-conscious understanding of the capacity and operation of the cinematic representation and the act of identification. Hong Kong films' emphasis on suspense in relation to physical danger and to situations of crises builds up the inner dynamic of the narrative, which blends conflicting ideas—of maintaining and of deconstructing the centred position of subjectivity. My thesis looks at the effects of differing/deferral of the film narrative that pose challenges to the legitimacy of the cinematic representation and increase the possibility that the films may refresh the spectator's view of his or her conception of self. This is carried out through a strategy which evokes genre expectation and invokes the form and narrative of film noir.

I have demonstrated the interplay of diegetic and non-diegetic in these films, of social convention, historical and political determinations, in relation to each film I have discussed. As methodological background here, I have outlined the approaches which draw on Jameson, and his notion of history, nostalgia and pastiche, but have argued that these are inadequate. I have shown the grounds on which I critique these and argue instead that history is present and critiqued in these films in a very different way than nostalgia. I have critiqued Jameson's disapproval of the effect of pastiche as an outcome of 'ideological mirage.' Putting emphasis on the blank parodic function of pastiche that works through a complex allusion, or a play of connotations, I have argued that the effect of pastiche provides the viewing subject with multiple positions through which he or she may reread critically the stereotypical portrayals of self and history from different points of view. I have explained that the spectator-subject is engaged in the renewed spectator-screen relationship in which he or she is encouraged to reread the notion of the past self-consciously by shifting the positions of identification. My thesis has also shown the grounds on which I critique the notions of nostalgia and history. The role of nostalgia and the way in which the noirish Hong Kong films contest it are examined in my analysis of *Happy Together* which is evidence of an important sense of the present that keeps within itself a mark of the past element; and that connects, disconnects and/or re-connects with the mark of its relation to the future and other elements. Drawing on the theories of Derrida, Lyotard and Lacan, I have specifically explored in terms of the 're-investment' of film noir which constitutes a particular field of 'play' in relation to the generic assumptions and their transformations, reversals and renewals in a number of films. These include *The Private Eye Blue, City of Glass, Swordsman II* and *Happy Together.* My analyses demonstrate that the films turn themselves into a playing field of 'fatal' misrecognition or a site of question, through which noirishness becomes both an affect and an agent that contrives a self-reflexive re-reading of tragic vision and of the Hong Kong audience's comprehension of identity crisis.

Using the work of Ricoeur and his notion of emplotment, I have extended this to a notion of dis-emplotment, in my discussion of *City of Glass,* through which the coherent subjectivity of ideologically complicit emplotment is disturbed. The role of the extra-filmic—star personas and gender—is examined with reference to *Swordsman II* and *The Private Eye Blue* as it functions in relation to genre, both film noir and melodrama. Though some films noirs take on a form of melodrama, I discuss in *The Private Eye Blue* the form of domestic melodrama, rather than romantic melodrama which is more typical of the classical genre.

My thesis has also shown how a process of deferral of meaning, of enigma and supplementation—of a surplus which becomes a necessary addition—is demonstrated as arising in *The Private Eye Blue.* The spectator encounters this as a disruption to conventional identity and identification. I have demonstrated how the problem and the question of identity are handled in *Happy Together* in the analysis of the cinematic device that decentres the narrative in a play of signification. This enables the noir hero and the homme fatale to exchange roles in the middle of the film, and consequently problematizes the act of spectatorial identification. Hence, negotiation of identity for the spectator within this act not only becomes indispensable but is also necessary.

Notes

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吳昊，“廿載風流夢：香港戲院鉤沉錄，”*戰後國、*
yuè yǔ piàn bǐ jiào yán jiū zhū shí lín qín jiàn děng zuò pǐn huí gù dì qī jiè xiāng
粵語片比較研究—朱石麟、秦劍等作品回顧，第七屆香
gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié shū qí jí gāo sī yǎ biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú
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吳昊，“胡金銓的電影空間美學，”*超前與跨越：胡金*
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吳昊，“重入江湖—武俠片的初步探討，”*香港武俠電*
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吳昊，“時代的創傷：馬徐維邦，”*香港靈幻電影*
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回顧，第十三屆香港國際電影節，李焯桃及張建德
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jié lǐ chāo táo jí zhāng jiàn dé biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
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呂大樂，〝家在香港，〞*香港電影與社會變遷*，第十
èr jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié lǐ chāo táo jí zhāng jiàn dé biān xiāng
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呂大樂，〝家在香港〞，李焯桃、張健德編，*香港電影與社*
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李焯桃，〝「六四」意象與第五代的前途〞，*觀逆集：中外*
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李焯桃，〝92-93香港電影的後現代轉折〞，*觀逆集：*
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李焯桃，〝九七港片的97情懷，〞*香港電影面面觀*
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97-98，第廿二屆香港國際電影節，羅卡及張建德編，
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峰論一百年電影，〞*香港電影面面觀一九九0至*
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代：六十年代粵片新星，第二十屆香港國際電影
jié luó kǎ jí zhāng jiàn dé biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
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林年同，〝前記－關於‘戰後香港電影回顧：1946-1968’

de jǐ diǎn shuō míng zhàn hòu xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng huí gù yī jiǔ sì liù zhì yī
的幾點說明，〝*戰後香港電影回顧(一九四六至一*
jiǔ liù bā dì sān jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié lín nián tóng jí tāng ní léi
九六八)，第三屆香港國際電影節，林年同及湯尼雷
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香港電影回顧(一九四六至一九六八)，第三屆香港
guó jì diàn yǐng jié lín nián tóng jí tāng ní léi ēn biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng
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林年同，〝譚俠，〞*香港武俠電影研究(一九四五至一九*
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八0)，第五屆香港國際電影節，劉成漢及梁慕齡
biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
編，(香港：香港市政局，1996)

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móu zhōng huá diàn yǐng jīng diǎn zhǎn dì niàn wǔ jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng
眸：中華電影經典展，第廿五屆香港國際電影
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節，蒲鋒及何思穎編，(香港：康樂及文化事務署，2001)

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胡金銓，〝和胡金銓最後的訪談，〞*超前與跨越：胡金銓*
yǔ zhāng ài líng dì niàn èr jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié shān tián hóng
與張愛玲，第廿二屆香港國際電影節，山田宏
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韋家輝，〝〈一個字頭的誕生〉：訪問韋家輝，〞*香港電*
yǐng miàn miàn guān dì niàn èr jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié luó kǎ jí
影面面觀97-98，第廿二屆香港國際電影節，羅卡及
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gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng zī liào guǎn
港：香港電影資料館，2002)

fù bǎo shí yú lè zhì shàng lún xiàn shí qī shàng hǎi diàn yǐng zhèng zhì de yǐn
傅葆石，〝娛樂至上：淪陷時期上海電影政治的隱
huì xìng xiāng gǎng shàng hǎi diàn yǐng shuāng chéng dì shí bā jiè xiāng gǎng
晦性，〞*香港—上海：電影雙城*，第十八屆香港
guó jì diàn yǐng jié luó kǎ jí chén shù zhēn biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng
國際電影節，羅卡及陳樹貞編，(香港：香港市政
jú
局，1994)

fù huì yí biān xiāng gǎng yǐng piàn dà quán dì èr juàn yī jiǔ sì èr zhì yī jiǔ sì
傅慧儀編，*香港影片大全第二卷(一九四二至一九四*

jiǔ xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng lín shí fú zhèng jú yī jiǔ jiǔ bā
九)，(香港：香港臨時市政局一九九八)

yóu dá zhì fēi cháng tū rán àn huā yóu dá zhì de rì jù xiāng gǎng
游達志，〝《非常突然》、《暗花》－游達志的日劇Feel，〞*香港*
diàn yǐng miàn miàn guān dì niàn sān jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié chén
電影面面觀98-99，第廿三屆香港國際電影節，陳
huì míng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng lín shí fú zhèng jú
惠明編，(香港：香港臨時市政局，1999)

jiāo xióng píng tái gǎng diàn yǐng zhōng de zuò zhě yǔ lèi xíng tái wān yuǎn liú
焦雄屏，*台港電影中的作者與類型*，(台灣：遠流
chū bǎn gōng sī
出版公司，1991)

jiāo xióng píng biān zhù xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng fēng mào tái wān shí bào wén huà
焦雄屏編著，*香港電影風貌*，(台灣：時報文化
chū bǎn qǐ yè xiàn gōng sī
出版企業限公司，1987)

dēng tú cóng bì xuè jīn chāi bì yǎn mó nü kàn shǎo xiá de pàn nì gè xìng
登徒，〝從《碧血金釵》《碧眼魔女》看少俠的叛逆個性，〞
zào dòng de yī dài liù shí nián dài yuè piàn xīn xīng dì èr shí jiè xiāng gǎng
躁動的一代：六十年代粵片新星，第二十屆香港
guó jì diàn yǐng jié luó kǎ jí zhāng jiàn dé biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng
國際電影節，羅卡及張建德編，(香港：香港市政
jú
局，1996)

dēng tú àn huā xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng miàn miàn guān dì niàn sān jiè xiāng
登徒，〝暗花〞，*香港電影面面觀98-99*，第廿三屆香
gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié chén huì míng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng lín shí fú
港國際電影節，陳惠明編，(香港：香港臨時市
zhèng jú huò tū zhōu kān yī jiǔ jiǔ bā nián yī yuè
政局，1999)；或凸週刊，一九九八年一月

dēng tú zhǔ biān xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng huí gù xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng
登徒主編，*1996香港電影回顧*，(香港：香港電影
píng lùn xué huì
評論學會，1997)

sù mǐ biān zhù huā yàng nián huá wáng jiā wèi zhōng guó zhōng guó wén xué
粟米編著，*花樣年華：王家衛*，(中國：中國文學
chū bǎn shè
出版社，2001)

shū qí liù shí nián dài yuè yǔ diàn yǐng huí gù hòu jì liù shí nián dài yuè yǔ
舒琪，〝六十年代粵語電影回顧」後記，〞*六十年代粵語*
diàn yǐng huí gù dì liù jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié shū qí jí liáng
電影回顧(1960-69)，第六屆香港國際電影節，舒琪及梁
mù líng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
慕齡編，(香港：香港市政局，1996)

shū qí zhǔ biān xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng huí gù xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng
舒琪主編，*1994香港電影回顧*，(香港：香港電影
píng lùn xué huì
評論學會，1996)

shū qí zhǔ biān xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng huí gù xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng
舒琪主編，*1995香港電影回顧*，(香港：香港電影
píng lùn xué huì
評論學會，1997)

huáng guó zhào jí nián jiàn xiǎo zǔ biān xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng xiāng
黃國兆及年鑑小組編，*香港電影1997-1998*，(香
gǎng xiāng gǎng yǐng yè xié huì
港：香港影業協會，1999)

huáng shū xián xiāng gǎng yǐng piàn dà quán dì yī juàn yī jiǔ yī sān zhì yī
黃淑嫻編，*香港影片大全第一卷(一九一三至一*
jiǔ sì yī xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú yī jiǔ jiǔ qī
九四一)，(香港：香港市政局，一九九七)

huáng ài líng zhēn xīn yīng xióng yīng xióng de mò lù xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng miàn
黃愛玲，〝真心英雄：英雄的末路，〞*香港電影面*
miàn guān dì niàn sān jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié chén huì míng
面觀98-99，第廿三屆香港國際電影節，陳惠明
biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng lín shí fú zhèng jú huò xìn bào yī jiǔ jiǔ bā
編，(香港：香港臨時市政局，1999)；或信報一九九八
nián shí yuè shí liù rì
年十月十六日

huáng ài líng jí shí qí zhēn xīn yīng xióng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng huí gù liè
黃愛玲及石琪，〝真心英雄，〞*1998香港電影回顧*，列
fú biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng píng lùn xué huì
孚編，(香港：香港電影評論學會，2000)

huáng wù lán zhǔ biān dāng dài zhōng guó diàn yǐng yī jiǔ jiǔ bā tái wān shí bào
黃寤蘭主編，*當代中國電影：一九九八*，(台灣：時報
wén huà chū bǎn qǐ yè gǔ fèn yǒu xiàn gōng sī
文化出版企業股份有限公司，1999)

chuán bǎo shí kàng zhàn shí qī xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng chū tàn zao qī xiāng gǎng
傳葆石，〝抗戰時期香港電影初探，〞*早期香港*
zhōng guó yǐng xiàng dì shí jiǔ jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié luó kǎ jí zhāng
中國影象，第十九屆香港國際電影節，羅卡及張
jiàn dé biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
建德編，(香港：香港市政局，1995)

chǔ yuán fǎng wèn chǔ yuán diàn yǐng zhōng de hǎi wài huá rén xíng xiàng dì
楚原，〝訪問楚原，〞*電影中的海外華人形象*，第
shí liù jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié luó kǎ jí zhāng
十六屆香港國際電影節，羅卡及張
jiàn dé biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
建德編，(香港：香港市政局1992)

yè yuè yú wú suǒ bù zài xú kè de diàn yǐng yīn yuè jiàn xiào jiāng hú xú kè
葉月瑜，〝無所不在：徐克的電影音樂，〞*劍嘯江湖：徐克*
yǔ xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng hé sī yǐng jí hé
與香港電影，何思穎及何
huì líng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng zī liào guǎn
慧玲編，(香港：香港電影資料館，2002)

yè niàn chēn ā fēi zhèng zhuàn liù shí nián dài de shí jiāo cuò shì jì huí
葉念琛，〝《阿飛正傳》六十年代的虛實交錯，〞*世紀回*
móu zhōng huá diàn yǐng jīng diǎn zhǎn dì niàn wǔ jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng
眸：中華電影經典展，第廿五屆香港國際電影
jié pú fēng jí hé sī yǐng biān xiāng gǎng kāng lè jí wén huà shì wù shǔ
節，蒲鋒及何思穎編，(香港：康樂及文化事務署，2001)

léi ēn tāng ní hú jīn quán lóng xiáng fèng wǔ xiāng gǎng gōng fu diàn yǐng
雷恩，湯尼，〝胡金銓：龍翔鳳舞，〞*香港功夫電影*
yán jiū dì sì jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié liú chéng hàn jí tāng ní léi ēn
研究，第四屆香港國際電影節，劉成漢及湯尼雷恩
děng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
等編，(香港：香港市政局1980)

pú fēng jīng diǎn fān xīn zài quán shì jiàn xiào jiāng hú xú kè yǔ xiāng gǎng diàn
蒲鋒，〝經典翻新再詮釋，〞*劍嘯江湖：徐克與香港電*
yǐng hé sī yǐng jí hé huì líng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng zī liào guǎn
影，何思穎及何慧玲編，(香港：香港電影資料館，

2002)

pú fēng biān xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng huí gù xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng píng
蒲鋒編，*1997香港電影回顧*，(香港：香港電影評
lùn xué huì
論學會，1999)

liú da□ mù wǔ xiá piàn yǔ shén huà yán jiū chū tàn zhàn hòu xiāng gǎng diàn
劉大木，〝武俠片與神話研究初探，〞*戰後香港電*
yǐng huí gù yī jiǔ sì liù zhì yī jiǔ liù bā dì sān jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng
影回顧(一九四六至一九六八)，第三屆香港國際電影
jié lín nián tóng jí tāng ní léi ēn biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
節，林年同及湯尼雷恩編，(香港：香港市政局，1979)

liú dà mù tiǎo dēng kàn jiàn suǒ mèng huí sì shí nián lái wǔ dǎ piàn yǔ shè huì
劉大木，〝挑燈看劍索夢回—四十年來武打片與社會
shì jiàn de duì huà diàn yǐng kǒu shù lì shǐ zhǎn lǎn zhī zài xiàn jiāng hú lín
事件的對話，〞*電影口述歷史展覽之《再現江湖》*，林
huì xián biān xiāng gǎng lín shí fú zhèng jú
慧賢編，(香港：臨時市政局，1999)

liú dà mù cóng wǔ xiá xiǎo shuō dào diàn yǐng xiāng gǎng wǔ xiá diàn yǐng yán
劉大木，〝從武俠小說到電影，〞*香港武俠電影研*
jiū yī jiǔ sì wǔ zhì yī jiǔ bā dì wǔ jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié liú
究(一九四五至一九八0)，第五屆香港國際電影節，劉
chéng hàn jí liáng mù líng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
成漢及梁慕齡編，(香港：香港市政局，1996)

liú dà mù gōng chóu jiāo cuò huà dà xiá jiàn xiào jiāng hú xú kè yǔ xiāng gǎng
劉大木，〝觥籌交錯話大俠，〞*劍嘯江湖:徐克與香港*
diàn yǐng hé sī yǐng jí hé huì líng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng zī liào
電影，何思穎及何慧玲編，(香港：香港電影資料
guǎn
館，2002)

liú chéng hàn wǔ liù shí nián dài xiāng gǎng xǐ jù de qíng jié hé biǎo xiàn shǒu
劉成漢，〝五、六十年代香港喜劇的情節和表現手
fǎ xiāng gǎng xǐ jù diàn yǐng de chuán tǒng dì jiǔ jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn
法，〞*香港喜劇電影的傳統*，第九屆香港國際電
yǐng jié lǐ chāo táo jí lín xīn xīn biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
影節，李焯桃及林心心編，(香港：香港市政局，1985)

liú chéng hàn wǔ xiá diàn yǐng de fù bǐ xìng yì shù xiāng gǎng wǔ xiá diàn yǐng
劉成漢，〝武俠電影的賦比興藝術，〞*香港武俠電影*
yán jiū yī jiǔ sì wǔ zhì yī jiǔ bā dì wǔ jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié liú
研究(一九四五至一九八0)，第五屆香港國際電影節，劉
chéng hàn jí liáng mù líng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
成漢及梁慕齡編，(香港：香港市政局，1996)

liú chéng hàn zhāng chè de sān bù làng màn bào lì bēi jù xiāng gǎng gōng fu
劉成漢，〝張徹的三部浪漫暴力悲劇，〞*香港功夫*
diàn yǐng yán jiū dì sì jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié
電影研究，第四屆香港國際電影節，
liú chéng hàn jí tāng ní léi ēn děng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
劉成漢及湯尼雷恩等編，(香港：香港市政局1980)

chéng yǔ xiǎo rén wù kàn shì jiè yuè yǔ xǐ jù piàn de yì shí xíng tài xiāng
澄雨，〝小人物看世界—粵語喜劇片的意識形態，〞*香*
gǎng xǐ jù diàn yǐng de chuán tǒng dì jiǔ jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié lǐ
港喜劇電影的傳統，第九屆香港國際電影節，李
chāo táo jí lín xīn xīn biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
焯桃及林心心編，(香港：香港市政局，1985)

chéng yǔ lǐ xiǎo lóng shén huà huán yuán qī shí nián dài xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng
澄雨，〝李小龍：神話還原，〞*七十年代香港電影*
yán jiū dì bā jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié lǐ chāo táo lín mài kè jí liáng
研究，第八屆香港國際電影節，李焯桃，林邁克及梁
mù líng biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
慕齡編，(香港：香港市政局1984)

cài kè jiàn biān liù shí nián dài yuè yǔ piàn hóng xīng zhǎn lǎn xiāng gǎng xiāng
蔡克健編，*六十年代粵語片紅星展覽*，(香港：香
gǎng diàn yǐng zī liào guǎn
港電影資料館，1996)

lí jié jīn rì kàn liù shí nián dài yuè yǔ piàn liù shí nián dài yuè yǔ diàn yǐng
黎傑，〝今日看六十年代粵語片，〞*六十年代粵語電影*
huí gù dì liù jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié shū qí jí liáng mù líng
回顧(1960-69)，第六屆香港國際電影節，舒琪及梁慕齡
biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
編，(香港：香港市政局，1996)

mò zhì   jiǔ qī diàn yǐng de xiān fēng   shěng gǎng qí bīng   diàn yǐng shuāng
默志，〝九七電影的先鋒—「省港奇兵III」〞，*電影雙*
zhōu kān   qī
周刊，256期

bào dé wēi ěr dà wèi bù zú zhōng jiàn fēng shèng hú jīn quán jīng hóng yī piē
鮑德威爾，大衛，〝不足中見豐盛：胡金銓驚鴻一瞥，〞
chāo qián yǔ kuà yuè hú jīn quán yǔ zhāng ài líng dì niàn èr jiè xiāng gǎng guó
超前與跨越：胡金銓與張愛玲，第廿二屆香港國
jì diàn yǐng jié luó kǎ jí zhāng jiàn dé biān   xiāng gǎng   xiāng gǎng lín shí fú
際電影節，羅卡及張建德編，(香港：香港臨時市
zhèng jú
政局，1998)

lán tiān yún shí qí liè fú jí pí yà   bō lí zhī che ng   xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng
藍天雲，石琪，列孚及皮亞，〝玻璃之城，〞*1998香港電影*
huí gù liè fú biān   xiāng gǎng   xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng píng lùn xué huì
回顧，列孚編，(香港：香港電影評論學會，2000)

luó kǎ   wēi jī yǔ zhuǎn jī xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng de kuā jiè fā zhǎn sì shí zhì qī
羅卡，〝危機與轉機：香港電影的跨界發展，四十至七
shí nián dài   kuà jiè de xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng dì niàn sì jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn
十年代，〞*跨界的香港電影*，第廿四屆香港國際電
yǐng jié   xiāng gǎng   kāng lè jí wén huà shì wù shǔ
影節，(香港：康樂及文化事務署，2000)

luó kǎ   xīng xiàng yǔ jǐng guān liù shí nián dài yuè yǔ piàn yī piē   zào dòng de
羅卡，〝星象與景觀—六十年代粵語片一瞥，〞*躁動的*
yī dài liù shí nián dài yuè piàn xīn xīng   dì
一代：六十年代粵片新星，第
èr shí jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié luo kǎ jí zhāng jiàn dé biān   xiāng
二十屆香港國際電影節，羅卡及張建德編，(香
gǎng   xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
港：香港市政局，1996)

luó kǎ   yuán xíng yǔ biàn yì   duì liù bù yuè yǔ wén yì piàn de guān chá   yuè
羅卡，〝原型與變異—對六部粵語文藝片的觀察，〞*粵*
yǔ wén yì piàn huí gù   dì shí jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié lǐ chāo
語文藝片回顧1950-1969，第十屆香港國際電影節，李焯
táo jí huáng ài líng biān   xiāng gǎng   xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
桃及黃愛玲編，(香港：香港市政局，1997)

luó kǎ   chén bǎo zhū guǎng dōng nù xìng xīn xíng xiàng   liù shí nián dài yuè yǔ
羅卡，〝陳寶珠：廣東女性新形象，〞*六十年代粵語*
diàn yǐng huí gù   dì liù jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié shū qí jí liáng
電影回顧(1960-69)，第六屆香港國際電影節，舒琪及梁
mù líng biān   xiāng gǎng   xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
慕齡編，(香港：香港市政局，1996)

luó kǎ   jīng jì lā gāo xióng mò kāng shí   xiāng gǎng xǐ jù diàn yǐng de chuán
羅卡，〝經紀拉、高雄、莫康時，〞*香港喜劇電影的傳*
tǒng   dì jiǔ jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié   lǐ chāo táo jí lín xīn xīn biān
統，第九屆香港國際電影節，李焯桃及林心心編，

xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
(香港：香港市政局，1985)

luó kǎ zhāng jiàn dé jí chén huì míng biān xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng xīn làng cháo èr
羅卡，張建德及陳惠明編，*香港電影新浪潮：二*
shí nián hòu de huí gù dì niàn sān jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié xiāng
十年後的回顧，第廿三屆香港國際電影節，(香
gǎng xiāng gǎng lín shí fú zhèng jú
港：香港臨時市政局，1999)

luó kǎ zhāng jiàn dé jí yáng xiù huì biān xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng xīn làng cháo èr
羅卡、張建德及楊秀慧編，*香港電影新浪潮：二*
shí nián hòu de huí gù dì niàn sān jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié xiāng
十年後的回顧，第廿三屆香港國際電影節，(香
gǎng xiāng gǎng lín shí fú zhèng jú
港：香港臨時市政局，1999)

luó kǎ biān guó yǔ piàn yǔ shí dài qū sì shí zhì liù shí nián dài dì shí qī jiè
羅卡編，*國語片與時代曲(四十至六十年代)*，第十七屆
xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
香港國際電影節，(香港：香港市政局，1993)

wèi shào chāng wǒ kàn yuān yāng hú hú pài xiāng gǎng zhōng huá shū jú xiāng
魏紹昌，*我看鴛鴦蝴蝶派*，(香港：中華書局[香
gǎng yǒu xiàn gōng sī
港]有限公司，1990)

tán chūn fā shàng hǎi yǐng rén rù gǎng yǔ xiāng gǎng diàn yǐng xiāng gǎng
譚春發，〝上海影人入港與香港電影，〞*香港－*
shàng hǎi diàn yǐng shuāng chéng dì shí bā jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié luó
上海：電影雙城，第十八屆香港國際電影節，羅
kǎ jí chén shù zhēn biān xiāng gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
卡及陳樹貞編，(香港：香港市政局，1994)

gōng qǐ shèng wǔ shí nián dài guó yuè yǔ xiě shí diàn yǐng zhōng de shè huì xiàn
龔啓聖，〝五十年代國、粵語寫實電影中的「社會現
shí zhàn hòu guó yuè yǔ bǐ jiào yán jiū zhū shí lín qín jiàn děng zuò pǐn huí
實」，〞*戰後國、粵語比較研究－朱石麟、秦劍等作品回*
gù dì qī jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié shū qí jí gāo sī yǎ biān xiāng
顧，第七屆香港國際電影節，舒琪及高思雅編，(香
gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
港：香港市政局，1983)

ài líng ruò zhì pīng tíng huà nu liú yuè yǔ wén yì piàn huí gù dì
黃愛玲，〝弱質娉婷話女流，〞*粵語文藝片回顧1950-1969*，第
shí jiè xiāng gǎng guó jì diàn yǐng jié lǐ chāo táo jí huáng ài líng biān xiāng
十屆香港國際電影節，李焯桃及黃愛玲編，(香
gǎng xiāng gǎng fú zhèng jú
港：香港市政局，1997)

appendix i

Filmography (on selected titles/information retrieved from *www.imdb.com*)

A Chinese Ghost Story (1987)

Directed by: Siu-Tung Ching; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Songling Pu (novel), Kai-Chi Yun; **Cast (in credits order):** Leslie Cheung (Caichen or Ling Choi Sin), Joey Wong, (Xiaoqian or Lit Sin Seen), Ma Wu (Yin Chek Hsia); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Dawei Hu (Jin Jiang), Wai Lam (Hsia-hou), Siu-Ming Lau (Lao Lao or Tree Devil), Elvis Tsui, Jing Wong (as Jing Wang), Zhilun Xue (Ching)

Produced by: Claudie Chung Chun (producer), Qianqing Liu (assistant producer), Hark Tsui (producer), Zhong Zheng (executive producer); **Original Music by:** Romeo Díaz, James Wong; **Cinematography by:** Yongheng Huang, Tom Lau, Sander Lee, Jiaogao Li, Putang Liu, Hang-Sang Poon, Wing-Hung Wong; **Film Editing by:** David Wu; **Production Design by:** Zhongwen Xi; **Art Direction by:** Chung Man Yee; **Costume Design by:** Gufang Chen, Huiying He; **Makeup Department:** Renming Wen (makeup artist); **Production Management:** Jiawen Wen (production manager), Gouzhong Zhou (post-production supervisor); **Second Unit Director or Assistant Director:** Shaolin Shi (assistant director); **Sound Department:** Dawei Hu (sound), Cheng Xiaolong (sound), Qun Xue (sound); **Other crew:** Simon Broderick (colorist), Siu-Tung Ching (martial arts director), Tsui Chung Shun (martial arts director) , Jin Guo (martial arts director), Zhilong Hu (martial arts director), Shijie Huang (camera operator), Zhiwei Huang (camera operator), Zinian Liang (camera operator), Cangxian Lin (production coordinator), Zhihao Liu (martial arts director), Zhenhua Ruan (camera operator), Kwok Soo (martial arts director), Lau Tsi Hoo (martial arts director), Zhongxin Xu (martial arts director), Dai Zhang (effects photography)

Also Known As: Sin nui yau wan; **Runtime:** 98 min / USA: 92 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

A Hero Never Dies (1998)

Directed by: Johnny To; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Kam-Yuen Szeto, Nai-Hoi Yau; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Henry Fong, Leon Lai (Jack), Michael Lam, Suet Lam, Ching Wan Lau (Martin), Fiona Leung (Martin's girlfriend), YoYo Mung (Jack's girlfriend), Keiji Sato, Shi-Kwan Yen, Bun Yuen

Produced by: Daniel Lam (executive producer), Johnny To (producer), Ka-Fai Wai (producer), Danny Wang (executive producer); **Original Music by:** Raymond Wong; **Cinematography by:** Siu-keung Cheng; **Art Direction by:** Bruce Yu; **Production Management:** Catherine Chan (production manager); **Sound Department:** Martin Richard Chappell (location sound), Martin Richard Chappell (sound effects editor); **Other crew:** Bun Yuen (action choreographer)

Also Known As: Zhen xin ying xiong (China: Mandarin title) (Hong Kong: Mandarin title), Chan sam ying hung (Hong Kong: Cantaonese title); **Runtime:** 86 min; Country: Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Boat People (1982)

Directed by: Ann Hui; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Tai An-Ping Chiu (as Tai An-Ping Yau); **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Paul Chiang, Meiying Jia, George Lam (Shiomi Akutagawa), Andy Lau (To Minh), Season Ma (Cam Nuong), Cora Miao (Nguyen's Mistress)

Produced by: Meng Xia (producer); **Original Music by:** Wing-fai Law; **Cinematography by:** David Chung, Zong Ji Huang, Chung Kay Wong; **Film Editing by:** Kin Kin; **Production Design by:** Tony Au; **Sound Department:** Markus Braack (sound mixer: foreign version)

Also Known As: Tou bun no hoi, T'ou pen hu hai; **Runtime:** 111 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Bullet in the Head (1990)

Directed by: John Woo; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Janet Chun, Patrick Leung, John Woo; **Cast (in credits order):** Tony Leung Chiu Wai (Ben/Ah Bee), Jacky Cheung (Frank/Fai), Waise Lee (Paul/Little Wing), Simon Yam (Luke), Fennie Yuen (Jane), Yolinda Yam (Sally Yen); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Chung Lam (Y.S. Leong), Shek Yin Lau (Fatso), John Woo (Police inspector)

Produced by: Wan Allen (associate producer: Thailand), Catherine Lau (associate producer), Patrick Leung (associate producer), John Woo (producer); **Original Music by:** Romeo Díaz, James Wong; **Cinematography by:** Wilson Chan, Ardy Lam, Chai Kittikum Som, Wing-Hung Wong; **Film Editing by:** John Woo, David Wu; **Production Design by:** James Leung; **Costume Design by:** Bruce Yiu; **Other crew:** Simon Broderick (colorist)

Also Known As: Bloodshed in the Streets (Hong Kong: English title) (literal title), Die xue jie tou, **Runtime:** 136 min / Australia: 126 min / New Zealand: 125 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese / English / Vietnamese / French; **Color:** Color

Chungking Express (1994)

Directed by: Kar-Wai Wong; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Kar-Wai Wong; **Cast (in credits order):** complete, awaiting verification, Brigitte Lin (Woman in blonde wig (as Ching-hsia Lin aka Chin-Hsia Lin)), Tony Leung Chiu Wai (Cop 633), Faye Wong (Faye), Takeshi Kaneshiro (He Zhiwu, Cop 223), Valerie Chow (Air Hostess), Chen Jinquan (Manager of 'Midnight Express), Lee-na Kwan (Richard (as Guan Lina)), Huang Zhiming (Man), Liang Zhen (The 2nd May), Zuo Songshen (Man); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Lynne Langdon (Complaining customer (uncredited))

Produced by: Pui-wah Chan (executive producer), Yi-kan Chan (producer); **Original Music by:** Frankie Chan, Michael Galasso, Roel A. García; **Non-Original Music by:** Noel Hogan, Dolores O'Riordan (theme song"Dreams"), John Phillips (song "California Dreaming") (uncredited), Michelle Phillips (song "California Dreaming") (uncredited); **Cinematography by:** Christopher Doyle, Wai-Keung Lau; **Film Editing by:** William Chang, Kit-Wai Kai, Chi-Leung Kwong; **Production Design by:** William Chang; **Art Direction by:** Qiu Weiming; **Costume Design by:** William Chang; **Makeup Department:** Lee-na Kwan (makeup artist (as Guan Lina)), Zhenglin Li (hair stylist), Yuhao Wu (hair stylist); **Production Management:** Jacky Pang (production supervisor); **Second Unit Director or Assistant Director:** Zeng Shaoting (assistant director), Jiang Yuecheng (assistant director); **Special Effects by:** Deng Weijue (special effects); Ding Yunda (special effects); **Visual Effects by:** Cheng Xiaolong (visual effects); **Other crew:** Faye Wong (singer: "Know Oneself And Each Other" and "Dream Person")

Also Known As: Chong qing sen lin (Hong Kong: Mandarin title), Chung hing sam lam (Hong Kong: Cantonese title), Chungking Jungle (literal English title), Hong Kong Express (Europe: English title); **MPAA:** Rated PG-13 for some violence, sexuality and drug content; **Runtime:** USA: 102 min / Hong Kong: 98 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Hindi / Japanese / Mandarin / Cantonese / English; **Color:** Color

City of Glass (1998)

Directed by: Mabel Cheung; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Alex Law; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Eason Chan, Nicola Cheung (the daughter), Vincent Kok (David), Leon Lai (Raphael), Audrey Mak (Tiger Sing), Qi Shu (Vivian), Daniel Wu (the son), Pauline Yam

Cinematography by: Jingle Ma; **Production Design by:** Bruce Yu

Also Known As: City of Glass (International: English title) (literal title), Boli zhi cheng; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** English / Mandarin / Cantonese; **Color:** Color

City on Fire (1987)

Directed by: Ringo Lam; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Ringo Lam (story), Jack Maeby (English version), Tommy Sham; **Cast (in credits order):** Yun-Fat Chow, (Ko Chow (as Chow Yun Fat)), Danny Lee (Fu), Yueh Sun (Inspector Lau/Uncle Kung), Carrie Ng (Huong), Roy Cheung (John Chan), **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Jessica Chau, Maria Cordero (Lounge Singer), Victor Hon (Bill), Tom Konkle, (Fu (voice: English version)), Kong Lau (Inspector Chow), Elvis Tsui (Chan Kam-Wah), Kwong Leung Wong (Kwong), Parkman Wong (Ah Man), Mengxia Zheng (as Mang-ha Cheung)

Produced by: Ringo Lam (producer), Karl Maka (producer); **Original Music by:** Jim Klein (English version), Teddy Robin Kwan, Greg Morgenstein; **Cinematography by:** Wai-Keung Lau; **Film Editing by:** Ming Lam Wong; **Production Design by:** Chi Fung Lok; **Costume Design by:** Bruce Yiu; **Sound Department:** Trip Brock (supervising sound editor (2000 English soundtrack)), Patrick Giraudi (sound re-recording mixer: English dubbing), Kurt Thum (sound effects editor: remastered version), Kelly Vandever (sound re-recording mixer: English dubbing); **Other crew:** Masaki Yokochi (title designer: main and end titles)

Also Known As: Lung fu fong wan, Long hu feng yun (Hong Kong: Mandarin title); **MPAA:** Rated R for strong violence; **Runtime:** UK: 101 min; **Country:** Hong Kong ; **Language:** Cantonese / Mandarin; **Color:** Color

Election (2005)

Directed by: Johnny To; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Nai-Hoi Yau, Tin-Shing Yip; **Cast (in credits order):** Simon Yam (Lok), Tony Leung Ka Fai (Big D), Louis Koo (Jimmy), Nick Cheung (Jet), Siu-Fai Cheung (Mr. So (as Eddie Cheung)), Suet Lam (Big Head), Ka Tung Lam (Kun), Tian-lin Wang (Uncle Teng (as Tin Lam Wong)), Maggie Siu (Mrs. Big D); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Yuen Bo (Dinosaur), Biu Law Che (Tally), David Chiang (Chief Superintendent Hui), Fung Kwok (Fish Ball), Hoi-Pang Lo (voice), Ting Yip Ng (Senior Inspector Tad), Andy On, Ping-Man Tam (Uncle Cocky), Chung Wang (Whistle (as Chung Wong)), Ho-Yin Wong (Detective Wong), Cherrie Ying, Yong You (China Police Captain), Bun Yuen (Incense Master)

Produced by: Dennis Law (producer), Johnny To (producer); **Original Music by:** Tayu Lo; **Cinematography by:** Siu-keung Cheng; **Film Editing by:** Patrick Tam; **Production Design by:** Tony Yu; **Art Direction by:** Tony Yu

Also Known As: Election (International: English title), Hak seh wui; **Runtime:** China: 85 min (cut version) / France: 101 min (Cannes Film Festival); **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese / Mandarin; **Color:** Color

Executioners (1993)

Directed by: Siu-Tung Ching, Johnny To; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Susanne Chan, Sandy Shaw (story); **Cast (in credits order):** Michelle Yeoh (Ching), Anita Mui (Tung Lau/ Wonder Woman), Maggie Cheung (Thief Catcher Chat), Damian Lau (Comissioner Lau); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Paul Chu (Colonel), Takeshi Kaneshiro (Chong Hon), Eddy Ko (The President's Deputy), San Kwan (The President), Ching Wan Lau (Tak), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Kau)

Produced by: Siu-Tung Ching (producer), Johnny To (producer); **Original Music by:** Cacine Wong; **Cinematography by:** Hang-Sang Poon; **Production Design by:** Catherine Hun; **Second Unit Director or Assistant Director:** Raymond Cheng (assistant director), Kim Wah Lo (assistant director)

Also Known As: Xian dai hao xia zhuan, Heroic Trio 2: Executioners, Modern Day Wonder Heroes Legend (literal English title), Yin doi ho hap juen (China: Cantonese title); **Runtime:** UK: 101 min / USA: 97 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Fallen Angels (1995)

Directed by: Kar-Wai Wong; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Kar-Wai Wong; **Cast (in credits order):** Leon Lai (Wong Chi-Ming/Killer); Michelle Reis (The Killer's Agent (as Michele Reis)); Takeshi Kaneshiro (He Zhiwu); Charlie Yeung (Charlie/Cherry); Karen Mok (Punkie/Blondie/Baby); Fai-hung Chan (the man forced to eat ice cream); Man-Lei Chan (He Zhiwu's father (as Chen Man Lei)); Toru Saito (Sato); To-hoi Kong (Ah-hoi); Lee-na Kwan (the woman pressed to buy vegetables), Yuk-ho Wu (the man forced to have his clothes washed)

Produced by: Jeffrey Lau (producer), Norman Law (associate producer), Jacky Pang Yee Wah (executive producer), Kar-Wai Wong (executive producer); **Original Music by:** Frankie Chan, Roel A. García; Shirley Kwan (song "Wang Ji Ta"); **Cinematography by:** Christopher Doyle; **Film Editing by:** William Chang, Ming Lam Wong; **Production Design by:** William Chang; **Costume Design by:** William Chang; **Makeup Department:** Lee-na Kwan (makeup artist), Wu Xuhao (hair stylist); **Production Management:** Carly Wong Tung Fa (executive production manager), Agnes Leung (assistant production manager), Jacky Pang Yee Wah (production manager). **Second Unit Director or Assistant Director:** Johnny Kwong (assistant director); **Sound Department:** Cameron Hamza (sound mixer), Raymond Mak (sound mixer), Leung Tai (sound recordist), Cheng Xiaolong (sound effects); **Stunts:** Kin-Kwan Poon (stunt coordinator); **Other crew:** Chen Guanghong (camera operator: second unit), Pin Bing Lee (camera operator: second unit), Wong Chi Ming (gaffer), Robison Randriaharimalala (singer), Ming Lam Wong (assistant editor)

Also Known As: Duoluo tianshi (Hong Kong: Cantonese title), Fallen Angels (USA); **Runtime:** 90 min / France: 96 min / Germany: 96 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Fight Back to School 3 (1993)

Directed by: Jing Wong; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Jing Wong; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Pak-cheung Chan (Man's Cousin), Philip Chan (Officer Chan), Man Cheung (Man), John Ching (Devil of Gamblers), Kathy Chow (Man Ching), Stephen Chow (Star Chow, Million Wong), Paul Chu (Mr. Hung 'King of Gamblers'), Ka-Yan Leung (Officer Lai), Anita Mui (Judy Tong Wong), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Tailor Lam)

Also Known As: Tao xue wei long zhi long guo ji nian; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

God of Gamblers 2 (1994)

Directed by: Jing Wong; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Jing Wong; **Cast (in credits order):** Charles Heung (Lung Wu/'Dragon'); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Man Cheung (Yau), Yun-Fatt Chow (Ko Chun (as Chow Yun Fat)), Paul Chu, Law Hang Kang (Condor), Sau Leung 'Blacky' Ko (Hoi On (as Blackie Ko)), Tony Leung Ka Fai (Siu Fong-fong/'Little Trumpet'), Ken Lo (Hoi's Man), Hon-Lam Pau (Chan Kam-Shing), Miu Tse (Hoi Yuen), Elvis Tsui (Kok Ching-Chung (Police Captain)), Kam-Kong Wong (Cheung Po-Sing), Chien-lien Wu (Siu Yiu-yiu), Hsing-kuo Wu (Chao Siu Chi/Devil of Gamblers), Chingmy Yau (Hoi Tong)

Second Unit Director or Assistant Director: Sylvia Liu (first assistant director)

Also Known As: Du shen xu ji, God of Gamblers Returns, God of Gamblers' Return; The Return of the God of Gamblers (Australia) (DVD title); **Runtime:** 126 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese / English / French / Mandarin; **Color:** Color

Happy Together (1997)

Directed by: Kar-Wai Wong; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Kar-Wai Wong; **Cast (in credits order):** Leslie Cheung (Ho Bo-wing or Ho Po-wing), Tony Leung Chiu Wai (Lai Yiu-fai), Chen Chang (Chang); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Gregory Dayton (Lover), Shirley Kwan (scenes cut)

Produced by: Ye-cheng Chan (producer), Kar-Wai Wong (executive producer), Chan Yecheng (producer); **Original Music by:** Danny Chung, Frank Zappa (songs); **Cinematography by:** Christopher Doyle; **Film Editing by:** William Chang, Ming Lam Wong; **Production Design by:** William Chang; **Second Unit Director or Assistant Director:** Johnny Kwong (assistant director); **Sound Department:** Chi-tat Leung (sound); Du-Che Tu (sound); **Special Effects by:** Tom Cundom (special effects); **Other crew:** Danny Chung (music supervisor), Juan Carlos Copes (choreographer), Caetano Veloso (performer)

Also Known As: Cheun gwong tsa sit (Hong Kong: Cantonese title) (USA), Buenos Aires Affair (International: English title), Chun guang zha xie (Hong Kong: Mandarin title), Happy; **Runtime:** 96 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Mandarin / Cantonese / Spanish; **Color:** Black and White / Color

Long Arm of the Law (1984)

Directed by: Johnny Mak; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Philip Chan; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Jing Chen (Rooster), Jian Huang (Chubby), Lung Jiang (Chung), Ben Lam (Cop), Wai Lam (Tung), Wai Shum (Tai), Kwong Leung Wong (Cop)

Produced by: Sammo Hung Kam-Bo (producer), Johnny Mak (executive producer); **Original Music by:** Mahmood Rumajahn; **Cinematography by:** Kwok Wah Koo; **Film Editing by:** Peter Cheung; **Production Management:** James Mou (unit manager)

Also Known As: Sheng gang qi bing; **Runtime:** Hong Kong: 100 min (dvd release); **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Also Known As: Xianggang zhizao; **Runtime:** 108 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Men Suddenly in Black (2003)

Directed by: Ho-Cheung Pang; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Patrick Kong, Erica Lee, Ho-Cheung Pang; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Spirit Blue (Paul), Ellen Chan, Jordan Chan (Cheung), Pak-cheung Chan, Stephanie Che, Tat-Ming Cheung, Coco Chiang, Sui-man Chim, Kar Lok Chin, Donna Chu, Maria Cordero, Belinda Hamnett, Sammo Hung Kam-Bo, Eric Kot, Suet Lam, Annabelle Lau, Tiffany Lee, Tony Leung Ka Fai, Candy Lo (Anna), Teresa Mak, Teresa Mo, Sandra Ng Kwan Yue, Jenny Raven (Young JoJo), Alan Tam, Chapman To (Chao), Eric Tsang (Tin), Ken Wong, Yat Tung Wong, Courtney Wu (Womanizer), Marsha Yuen

Produced by: Pak-cheung Chan (producer), Bruce Ren (producer), Eric Tsang (producer)

Also Known As: Daai cheung foo, Da zhang fu (Hong Kong: Mandarin title); **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

My Schoolmate the Barbarian (2001)

Directed by: Siu-Hung Cheung (as Billy Chung), Jing Wong; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Jing Wong; **Cast (in credits order):** Nicholas Tse (Stone), Stephen Fung (Edward), Joey Yung (Phoenix), Samuel Pang (Mantis), Serena Po (Edward's Mom), Ken Chung (Tiger), Hyper BB (Pork Bun), Ka Ho Yu (Big Mouth), Chi Hung Ng (Phoenix's Dad)

Produced by: Jing Wong (producer); **Stunts:** Siu-Tung Ching (stunt director (as Tony Ching))

Also Known As: Ngo dik yeh man tung hok, Wo de ye man tong xue (China: Mandarin title); **Runtime:** 94 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

No Risk, No Gain (1990)

Directed by: Jing Wong, Taylor Wong; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Pak-cheung Chan (Mao/Leslie), Sung Young Chen (Cheung Shan-Ho), Andy Lau (Big Dee), May Lo Mei-Mei (Miss Tsang), Siu-Wai Mui (Sexy), Christine Ng (Maureen), Michelle Reis (Winnie). Fui-On Shing (Big Fool), Alan Tam (Ray), Feng Tien (Yeung Chun), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Yeung Sing)

Also Known As: Zhi zun ji zhuang yuan cai; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese

Swordsman II (1991)

Directed by: Siu-Tung Ching, Stanley Tong; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Louis Cha (novel), Hanson Chan, Jack Maeby (English version), Pik-yin Tang, Hark Tsui; **Cast (in credits order):** Jet Li (Ling Wu Chung), Brigitte Lin (aka Chin-Hsia Lin) (the Invincible East or Dong Fang Bu Bai), Michelle Reis (Kiddo), Waise Lee (Hattori), Rosamund Kwan (Ren Ying Ying), Kar Lok Chin (Saru), Fennie Yuen (Blue Phoenix), Yee Kwan Yan (Wu); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Kwok Leung Cheung (Eunuch Hong), Shun Lau (Zen), Audrey Wasilewski (Blue Phoenix (Voice)), Chi Yeung Wong (Interpreter), On-on Yu (Cici)

Produced by: Hark Tsui (producer); **Original Music by:** Richard Yuen; **Cinematography by:** Moon-Tong Lau; **Film Editing by:** Marco Mak (as Chi-Sin Mak); **Production Design by:** Yee-Fung Chung, James Leung; **Sound Department:** Steven Avila (sound editor: 2002 US release), Michael J. Fox (supervising sound editor); **Other crew:** Yiu-Sing Cheung (action choreographer), Siu-Tung Ching (action choreographer), Masaki Yokochi (title designer: main and end titles), Bun Yuen (action choreographer)

Also Known As: Xiao ao jiang hu zhi dong fang bu bai, The Legend of the Swordsman (USA) (new title); **Runtime:** 110 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Security Unlimited (1981)

Directed by: Michael Hui; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Michael Hui; **Cast (in credits order):** Michael Hui (Chou Sai-Cheong), Sam Hui (Sam), Ricky Hui (Bruce Tang), Shui-Fan Fung (Fan), Hoi San Lee (Armored Car Robber), Bill Tung (Racetrack Announcer).

Produced by: Raymond Chow (producer); **Original Music by:** Sam Hui; **Cinematography by:** Tom Lau; **Film Editing by:** Chang Yao Chang.

Also Known As: Mo deng bao biao; **Runtime:** 90 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

The Butterfly Murders (1979)

Directed by: Hark Tsui; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Lum Chi-Ming, Fan Lin; **Cast (in credits order):** Siu-Ming Lau, (Fang Hongye), Michelle Mee (Green Shadow), Shu Tong Wong (Tian Feng (as Shutang Huang)), Guozhu Zhang (Shen Qing), Qiqi Chen (Lady Shen), Jiang Wang (Li, 'The Thousand Hands'), Eddy Ko (Guo, 'The Magic Fire' (as Xiong Gao)), Xiaoling Xu (Ah Zhi), Kuang-li Hsia (No.10 of the Red Flags (as Jiangli Xia)); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Junhui Liu, Chen Tien Loong (Thousand Hands Li Kim), Feng Qiao, Ma Saan Shut, Xieqi Zhou

Produced by: See-Yuen Ng (producer), Sijian Wu (producer), Quan Zhang (producer); **Original Music by:** Frankie Chan, Piu Chan; **Cinematography by:** Jinyu Fan; **Film Editing by:** Zhixiong Huang, David Wu; **Production Design by:** Quankai Kong; **Other crew:** Chen Tien Loong (action director), Jiang Wang (assistant martial arts director), Shu Tong Wong (martial arts director), Runjian Zhou (assistant martial arts director)

Also Known As: Die bian; **Runtime:** 88 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color (Eastmancolor)

The Heroic Trio (1993)

Directed by: Johnny To; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Susanne Chan, Jack Maeby (English version), Sandy Shaw; **Cast (in credits order):** Michelle Yeoh (Ching/Invisible Woman/Number 3), Anita Mui (Tung/Wonder Woman/Shadow Fox), Maggie Cheung (Chat/Thief Catcher/Mercy), Damian Lau (Insp. Lau), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Kau), Paul Chu (Chief of Police (as Pei Chun)), James Pak (Inventor), Yee Kwan Yan (Evil Master); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Zhuoxin Chen, Haowen Jiang, Siu-Kei Lee (Leader of robbers at chemical factory (as Zhaoji Li)), Zhaoxiang Ruan, Yut Fei Wong (Car thief (as Yifei Huang)), Tao Xu, Sai-kun Yam (The Demon), Ruisheng Zheng, Mimi Zhu

Produced by: Siu-Tung Ching (producer), Johnny To (producer), Kwok-fai Yeung (producer), Brian Yip (associate producer), Jianmei Zheng (associate producer), Jianping Zheng (executive producer); **Original Music by:** William Wu; **Cinematography by:** Tom Lau, Hang-Sang Poon; **Film Editing by:** Kam Wah Ng; **Production Design by:** Pui-wah Chan, Catherine Hun; **Art Direction by:** Bruce Yu; **Makeup Department:** Lianti Li (hair stylist), Xianling Wen (makeup artist), Yuhao Wu (hair stylist), Fengyan Zheng (makeup artist); **Production Management:** Peihua Chen (production manager), Catherine Ta (production manager); **Second Unit Director or Assistant Director:** Raymond Cheng (assistant director), Jinhua Lao (assistant director); **Art Department:** Raymond Chan (set designer); **Sound Department:** Patrick Giraudi (sound re-recording mixer: English dubbing), Thanos Kazakos (adr recordist/adr editor: English dubbing), Guohua Wu (sound effects); **Special Effects by:** Le Bai (special effects); **Other crew:** Siu-Tung Ching (action choreographer), Chik Lam (lyricist), Dion Lam (fight choreographer (as Lam dik on)), Helen Li (assistant costume designer (as Chi Pui Li))

Also Known As: Dong fang san xia (China: Mandarin title) (Hong Kong: Mandarin title), Dung fong saam hap (Hong Kong: Cantonese title), Eastern Three Heroes (International: English title) (literal title), The Heroic Trio; **Runtime:** 88 min / USA: 86 min (edited version); **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

The Longest Nite (1997)

Directed by: Tat-Chi Yau (as Patrick Yau); **Writing credits:** Nai-Hoi Yau & Kam-Yuen Szeto; **Cast (in credits order):** Tony Leung Chiu Wai (Sam), Ching Wan Lau (Tony), Maggie Siu (Maggie), Fong Lung (Mr. Lung), Hoi-Pang Lo, Siu-Lung Ching, Mark Cheng (Mark); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Sunny Fang (Informer), Chak Shun Ha, Suet Lam (Cafe Owner's Assistant), Tian-lin Wang (as Tin Lam Wong), Chi-Lung Wu, Bun Yuen (Sam's Cop Buddy)

Also Known As: An hua (China: Mandarin title) (Hong Kong: Mandarin title) , Aau dut (Hong Kong: Cantonese title), Dark Flowers (USA) (literal English title), The Longest Nite (Hong Kong: English title); **Runtime:** Japan: 81 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

The Private Eyes (1976)

Directed by: Michael Hui; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Michael Hui; **Cast (in credits order):** Michael Hui (Joseph Wong), Sam Hui (Lee Kwok-kit), Ricky Hui (Pighead), Angie Chiu (Jacky), Richard Ng (Police Officer), Kien Shih (Gang Leader), Mu Zhu; **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Sammo Hung Kam-Bo, Eddy Ko; **Produced by:** Raymond Chow (producer); **Original Music by:** Sam Hui; **Cinematography by:** Chang Yao Chu; **Film Editing by:** Peter Cheung; **Other crew:** Sammo Hung Kam-Bo (action director).

Also Known As: Ban jin ba liang; **Runtime:** 94 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

The Private Eye Blue (1995)

Directed by: Eddie Ling-Ching Fong; **Writing credits:** Eddie Ling-Ching Fong; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Jacky Cheung (Detective), Frankie Chin (Bodyguard), Ho Chin (Shenzhen Mad Dog), Kathy Chow (Detective's Wife), Mavis Fan (Girl), Hiu-tung Lee, Tian-lin Wang (Fat Comrade), Bobby Yip (Ugly Triad); **Produced by:** Teddy Robin Kwan (producer); **Original Music by:** Michael Au, Teddy Robin Kwan, John Landon; **Cinematography by:** Jingle Ma; Sound Department: Lisa Bate (sound editor), Martin Bayley (sound editor), Paul Pirola (sound mixer), Roger Savage (sound mixer); **Other crew:** Jacky Cheung (singer: "Summer Days", "Loving Once Is Not Enough"), Andrew W. Morse (investors representative), Faye Wong (singer: "Summer Days", "Loving Once Is Not Enough").

Also Known As: Fei chang zhen tan (Hong Kong: Mandarin title), The Private Eyes Blues; Country: Hong Kong

We're Going to Eat You (1980)

Directed by: Hark Tsui; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Roy Szeto; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Norman Chu (Agent 999 (as Norman Tsui Sui-Keung)), Kwok-choi Han, Eddy Ko (The Chief (as Hung Gao)), Melvin Wong (Rolex (as Kam-seng Wong)), David Wu (Bisected Victim)

Produced by: Kuen Cheung (producer), See-Yuen Ng (producer); **Cinematography by:** Hung Chuen Lau; **Other crew:** Corey Yuen (martial arts choreographer)

Also Known As: Diyu wu men, Hell Has No Gates, Kung Fu Cannibals, No Door to Hell; **Runtime:** Finland: 87 min (25 fps); **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Wicked City (1992)

Directed by: Tai Kit Mak (as Peter Mak); **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Hark Tsui; **Cast (in alphabetical order):** Jacky Cheung (Ying or Ken Kai), Roy Cheung (Shudo), Leon Lai (Lung or Renzaburô Taki), Carman Lee (Loh/Shira/Orchid), Tatsuya Nakadai (Daishu (Yuen Tai Chung)), Michelle Reis (Windy (Gaye)), Woo-ping Yuen (Sergeant Kayama)

Produced by: Hark Tsui (producer); **Original Music by:** Richard Yuen

Also Known As: Yao shou du shi; **Runtime:** Germany: 87 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Young and Dangerous 1 (1996)

Directed by: Wai-Keung Lau; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Manfred Wong and Mei Ngo Hui; **Cast (in credits order):** Ekin Cheng (Chan Ho-Nam), Jordan Chan (Chicken Chiu), Gigi Lai (Smartie/Stammer), Karen Mok (Shuk-Fan), Jerry Lamb (Pou-Pan), Michael Tse (Dai Tin-Yee), Simon Yam (Chiang Tin-Sung), Roy Cheung (Crow), Chi Hung Ng (Tiger), Spencer Lam (Father Lam), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Tai Fai), Wai-Man Chan (Camel Lok), Sau Leung 'Blacky' Ko (Blackie Koh Chi-Wah), Halina Tam (K.K.), Chun Yung Ng, Lan Law (Granny), Victor Hon (Uncle Eight Fingers), Chingmy Yau; **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Siu-Kei Lee (Key), Sammuel Leung

Original Music by: Clarence Hui; **Cinematography by:** Wai-Keung Lau; **Film Editing by:** Ko Ma; **Production Design by:** Kim Hung Ho; **Costume Design by:** Pik Kwan Lee; **Sound Department:** Tom Tholen (production sound mixer), Gaby de Haan (sound assistant); Other crew: Dion Lam (action director).

Also Known As: Gu huo zi zhi ren zai jiang hu, Goo waak chai ji yan joi kong woo (Hong Kong: Cantonese title); **Runtime:** 97 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Young and Dangerous 2 (1996)

Directed by: Wai-Keung Lau; **Cast (in credits order):** Ekin Cheng (Ho Nam), Jordan Chan (Chicken); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Moses Chan (Ko Chi), Kelly Lai Chen, Sau Leung 'Blacky' Ko (Blackie Koh Chi-Wah), Gigi Lai (Smartie/Stammer), Jerry Lamb (Pou-Pan), Spencer Lam (Father Lam), Halina Tam (K.K.), Michael Tse (Dai Tin-Yee), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Tai Fai), Simon Yam (Chiang Tin-Sung), Chingmy Yau (Ting Siu-Yiu).

Other crew: Dion Lam (action director).

Also Known As: Goo waak chai ji maang lung goh kong, Gu huo zi 2 zhi meng long guo jiang (Hong Kong: Mandarin title); **Country:** Hong Kong

Young and Dangerous 3 (1996)

Directed by: Wai-Keung Lau; **Writing credits (in alphabetical order):** Mei Ngo Hui; **Cast (in credits order):** Ekin Cheng (Chan Ho-Nam), Jordan Chan (Chicken Chiu), Gigi Lai (Smartie/Stammer), Karen Mok (Shuk-Fan), Jerry Lamb (Pou-Pan), Michael Tse (Dai Tin-Yee), Simon Yam (Chiang Tin-Sung), Roy Cheung (Crow), Chi Hung Ng (Tiger), Spencer Lam (Father Lam), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Tai Fai), Wai-Man Chan (Camel Lok), Sau Leung 'Blacky' Ko (Blackie Koh Chi-Wah), Halina Tam (K.K.), Chun Yung Ng, Lan Law (Granny), Victor Hon (Uncle Eight Fingers), Chingmy Yau; **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Siu-Kei Lee (Key), Sammuel Leung

Original Music by: Clarence Hui; **Cinematography by:** Wai-Keung Lau; **Film Editing by:** Ko Ma; **Production Design by:** Kim Hung Ho; **Costume Design by:** Pik Kwan Lee; **Sound Department:** Tom Tholen (production sound mixer), Gaby de Haan (sound assistant); **Other crew:** Dion Lam (action director)

Also Known As: Gu huo zai san; **Runtime:** 98 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Young and Dangerous 4 (1997)

Directed by: Wai-Keung Lau; **Cast (in credits order):** Ekin Cheng (Ho Nam), Jordan Chan (Chicken); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Pinky Cheung (K.K.), Roy Cheung (Lui Yiu-Yeung/Thunder Tiger), Jason Chu (Banana Skin), Jerry Lamb (Pou-Pan), Spencer Lam (Father Lam), Siu-Kei Lee (Key), Sammuel Leung, Ken Lo (Prince), Alex Man (Chiang Tin-Yeung), Karen Mok (Lam Suk-Fan/Wasabi), Chi Hung Ng (Tiger), Sandra Ng Kwan Yue (Sister Thirteen), Michelle Reis (Lee Yan-Kin), Michael Tse (Dai Tin-Yee), Yeung Ming Wan (Ben Hon), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Tai Fai), Ronald Wong (Superman)

Also Known As: 97 goo waak jai jin mo bat sing

Young and Dangerous 5 (1998)

Directed by: Wai-Keung Lau; **Cast (in credits order):** Paul Chiang (Datuk Chan); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Ekin Cheng (Chan Ho-Nam (as Dior Cheng)), Mark Cheng (Szeto Ho-Nam), Man Cheung, Kar Lok Chin (Big Head), Jason Chu (Banana Skin), Paul Chu, Jerry Lamb (Pou-pan), Danny Lee (Inspector Lee), Alex Man (Chiang Tin-yeung), Sandra Ng Kwan Yue (Sister 13), Qi Shu (Mei Ling), Yeung Ming Wan (Ben Hon), Anthony Wong Chau-Sang (Tai Fei), Chi Yeung Wong

Original Music by: Kwong Wing Chan

Also Known As: 98 goo waak chai ji lung chang foo dau, 98 Wise Guys: Dragon Struggle Tiger Fight (literal English title), 98 gu huo zai zhi long zheng hu dou (Hong Kong: Mandarin title); **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

Young and Dangerous 6 (2000)

Directed by: Wai-Keung Lau; **Writing credits:** Manfred Wong; **Credited cast:** Ekin Cheng (Chan Ho-Nam), Jordan Chan (Chicken), Sonny Chiba (Isako Kusaraki), Qi Shu (Mei Ling), Peter Ho (Lui), Gigi Lai (Rong Yu), Michael Tse (Michael), Sandra Ng Kwan Yue (Sister 13), Jerry Lamb

(Pou-pan), Kar Lok Chin (Big Head), Jason Chu (Jason), Roy Cheung (Akira Kusaraki), Anya (Nanako); **Rest of cast listed alphabetically:** Sung Young Chen (Brave), Beverly Hotsprings (Torch Singer), Shi-Jye Jin, Sau Leung 'Blacky' Ko

Also Known As: Sheng zhe wei wang, Born to Be King (International: English title); **Runtime:** 118 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color

92 Legendary La Rose Noire (1992)

Credited Cast (in alphabetical order): Lawrence Ah Mon (Interviewer), Man-Biao Bak (Elder at wedding Banquet), Fai-hung Chan, Kwok Leung Cheung (Leung), Ying Choi Cheung, Bo-bo Fung (Piu-hung), Tong Ka-Fei Leung (Kei Lui), Teresa Mo (Wai-kuen Chow), Maggie Siu (writer or Butterfly Wong), Wah Lung Szema (Elder at wedding banquet), Wan-si Wong (Yim-fan), Wing-cho Yip (Insurance Agency Boss); **Produced by:** Laura Fu; **Original Music by:** Lowell Lo; **Film Editing by:** Kit-wai Kai; **Other crew:** Tony Siu-hung Leung (action choreographer)

Also Known As: 92 Black Rose vs. Black Rose (literal English title), 92 Legendary La Rose Noire, 92 hei mei gui dui hei mei gui (China: Mandarin title); **Runtime:** 100 min; **Country:** Hong Kong; **Language:** Cantonese; **Color:** Color *appendix ii* (film clips)

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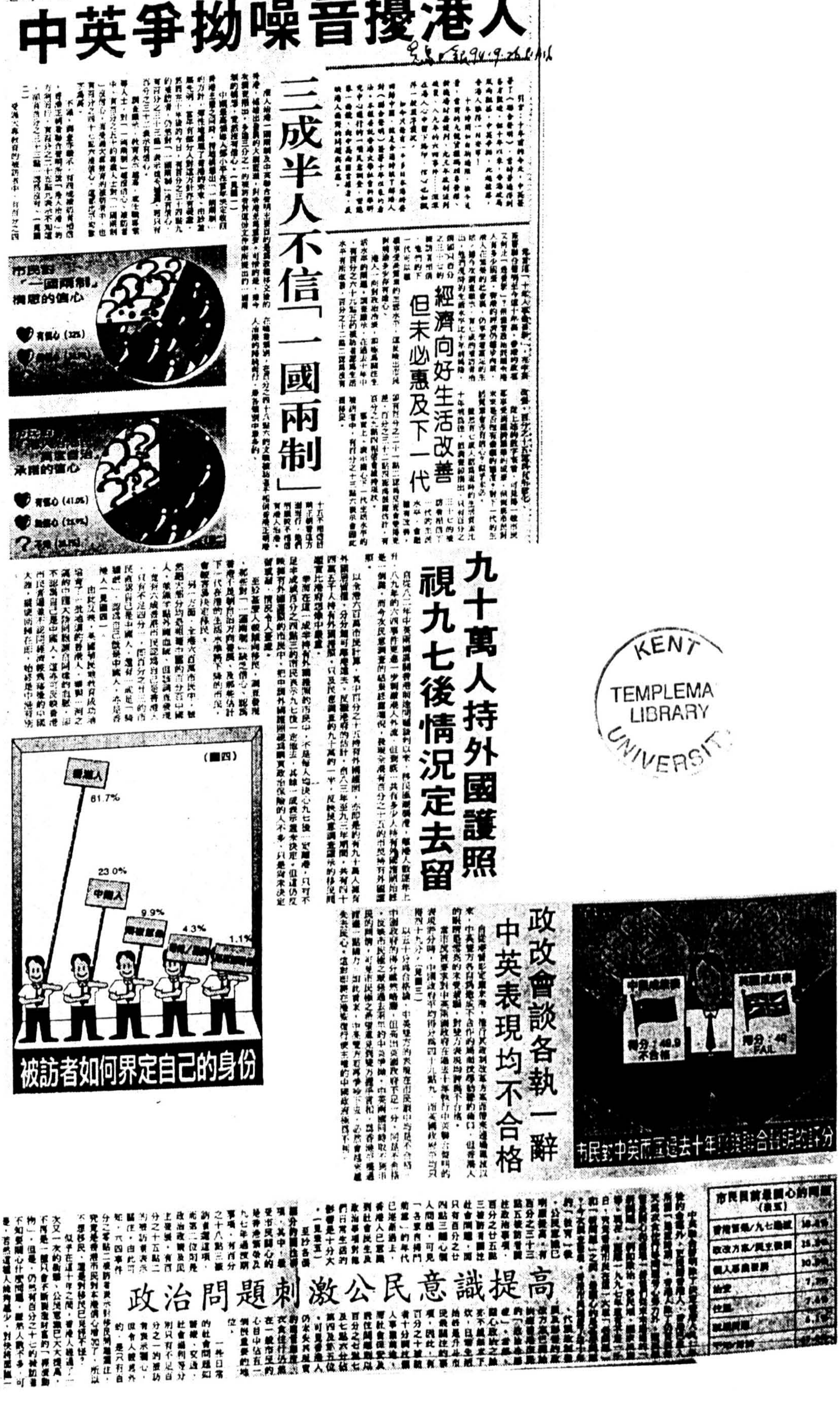
appendix iii (newspaper cutting)

星島日報，一九九四年九月二十六日，頁A16。



中英爭拗噪音擾港人

星島日報94.9.26 A16

三成半人不信「一國兩制」

市民對「一國兩制」構思的信心

有信心 (32%)

承諾的信心

有信心 (41.0%)

經濟向好生活改善 但未必惠及下一代

九十萬人持外國護照 視九七後情況定去留

(圖四)

香港人 61.7%

中國人 23.0%

9.9%

4.3%

1.1%

被訪者如何界定自己的身份

政改會談各執一辭 中英表現均不合格

得分：48.9 不合格

得分：49 FAIL

市民對中英兩國過去十年實踐聯合聲明的評分

政治問題刺激公民意識提高

市民目前最關心的問題 (表五)	
香港前途/九七過渡	[illegible]
政改方案/民主發展	[illegible]
個人事業發展	[illegible]
治安	[illegible]
住屋	[illegible]
就業問題	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]

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