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Changing Representations of Contemporary Mainland Women in Hong Kong Cinema: 1979~2009
香港電影中當代大陸女性形象的變遷：1979～2009

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Abstract

This thesis studies the representation of mainland women in the last thirty years of Hong Kong cinema. Since 1980s, a number of Hong Kong films started to feature mainlanders, as the 1997 issue forced Hong Kong people to rethink their relationship with mainland China. Among these films, mainland women function quite differently to mainland men and in particular act as the "Other" in Hong Kong. As few researches notice this marginal group, I argue that they actually play a significant role and reflect how Hong Kong defines itself and mainland China when facing the power of the latter. Along with the development of both mainland and Hong Kong societies and the change of their power balance, the representations of mainland women vary. This thesis takes the representation of mainland women as the object of study, examining how it changes cinematically under different historical circumstance. Through gender study, culture study and cinematic language analysis, this thesis will investigate the cultural and gender politics behind the image of mainland women, fill the gap in the academic study and break a new path in the interpretation Hong Kong cinema.

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Introduction

In late the 1970s and early 1980s, the emerging 1997 issue caused a serious identity crisis in Hong Kong. The previous British colony, was, as Abbas observes, "now faced with the uncomfortable possibility of an alien identity about to be imposed on it from China" and experienced "a kind of last-minute collective search for a more definite identity" (1997, p.4). In searching for resolutions to the identity problems like the uncertainty of nationality and ethnicity, Hong Kong cinema started to redefine Hong Kong's relationship with mainland China and reconfigure "mainlander" characters. Not surprisingly, while constituting the dialectic of seeing and being seen, Hong Kong cinema treats its own people as the subjective Self, who watch the mainlanders as the estranged Other. Meanwhile, however, mainlanders have long been gazing at Hong Kong: envying its financial prosperity and metropolitan life, admiring its free access to western cultures and territories, and longing to make it part of their own territory. The mutual gaze results in what scholars often call the "China Syndrome" (Lu, 2005, p.298), which has colored perceptions of kinship and affinity with undertones of political anxiety and fear (Teo, 1997, p.207).

Among films depicting mainlanders, a remarkable repertoire has interesting portrayals of mainland women in leading or supporting roles. Although this repertoire does not constitute the mainstream of Hong Kong cinema, it is notable and has been carried through the past three decades, during which the image of mainland women have gone through a series of changes under different historical circumstance. Interestingly, while feminist film criticism claims that in the cinema, the image of man underwent rapid differentiation while the primitive stereotyping of women remained with limited modifications (Johnston, 1999, p. 31), the situation in this small stream of Hong Kong cinema is just the opposite: while mainland male characters have been constrained in a few stereotypes, the image of mainland female characters have become much more complicated. Why is this the case? What kind of

roles can mainland women play in Hong Kong cinema to effectively reflect its search for identity? These are the main research questions of this thesis.

Most studies on the representation of mainland characters are "gender-blind," overlooking the gender dimension of cultural politics while writing political and cultural history (Yuval-Davis, 1997, pp. 2-3). As "the category of gender itself was never distinct from national, class/caste, and racial categories" (Sinha, 1995, p. 11), gender is an important factor in constructing the socio-cultural identity of Hong Kong.

In a small number of existing studies, however, scholars have noticed the strong presence of mainland women in some films. Cheng Yu (1997) identifies three types mainland characters appearing in 1980s' Hong Kong films: *Ah Caan*[1] (Country Joe), violent criminals ("Big Circle"), and illegal female immigrants (pp.98-100). He notices that only the third type was portrayed in a more humanistic way. Limited to film made in the 1980s, however, Cheng's classification seems quite general. Esther Yau (1994) also notes that when describing male and female mainlanders, Hong Kong cinema adopts different attitudes. She studies the narrative point of view in *Long Arm of the Law* (*Sheng gang qibing*, 1984) and *Homecoming* as "differentiated by a masculine versus a feminine perspective," indicating Hong Kong's mixed feelings towards mainland China—fear and empathy are interwoven (1994, p. 198). Both Li Cheuk-to (1994) and Leung Noong-kong (1997) analyzed *Homecoming* (*Sishui liunian*, 1984) and point out the different character settings for Hong Kong and mainland women represents a value dichotomy between the two territories—capitalism vs. socialism, modern vs. traditional, urban vs. rural, and the film seems to favor values attached to mainland. Among various representations, the rustic and comedic *biu ze* (female cousin) characters have also caught much attention (V. Lee, 2006; Shih, 2007; Chang, 2009). Vivian Lee sees the image of female cousin as capturing "new perceptions of mainland 'new comers' that go beyond the aggressor ("Big Circle")/victim (*Ah Caan*) binary" (p.158). Shih Shu-mei

[1] Please refer to the Glossary of Chinese on page 101 for explanation of Chinese terms.

takes *Her Fatal Ways* (*Biaojie ni hao ye*, 1990) as an example and finds that by feminizing the mainland public security officer, Hong Kong shows its desire to reduce the dominance of mainland China (2007, pp. 103-13).

I find that even within the engendered studies of mainland characters, there is an inclination of reading them as a unified collective. Namely, mainland women in Hong Kong cinema are either studied as just mainlanders (as in examination of the China syndrome) or just women (as in analysis of gender representation). For instance, Jenny Lau and Augusta Lee (2003) study five "women-centered" films made in the 1990's Hong Kong and treat the analysis of Li Hong of *Farewell China* (*Ai zai biexiang de jijie*, 1990), who comes from Guangdong, as just another Hong Kong woman character as those in the four other films. Native female researchers from Hong Kong often focus on native Hong Kong women characters and pay little attention to non-native women in the city, especially in the discourse of native feminism.[2] These researchers do not strike a balance between their feminist standpoint and mainland women's threat (which will be discussed later in Chapter 2), and it is hard for them to avoid the prejudice of regional protectionism (Shih, 2007, p. 89).

This thesis will take both the China syndrome and engender representations into consideration, aiming at both a larger picture of mainland women representations in Hong Kong cinema and a series of close-readings to explore the cultural/political indications of such representations. "Mainland women" in this research mainly refers to contemporary women born and raised in the mainland environment and with the values of most mainland Chinese. (Pseudo) historical women characters in dynasty dramas and those "new women" characters emerged and prevailed in Shanghai films before PRC was established in 1949 will not be the focus of the study. The notion of "Hong Kong film" in this research follows the standard of

[2] These studies are mostly about gender in Kung fu films, martial arts films or gender-bending films. See "Gendered and Sexualized Bodies in Hong Kong Cinema" in Esther Cheung & Chu Yiu-wai, 2004; Pang Laikwan & Wong Kit-mui, 2005. Luo Feng, 2005; Yau Ching, 2005.

Hong Kong Film Awards, which is widely accepted by the film industry. A "Hong Kong Film" must "meet with at least two of the following criteria:"

A. The film director must be a Hong Kong resident and hold a Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card.
B. At least one film company is legally registered in Hong Kong SAR.
C. At least EIGHT people in the production crew are Hong Kong residents and hold a Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card. Count on the working positions of the following 15 awards: Producer (Best Film), Screenplay, Actor in a leading role, Actress in a leading role, Supporting Actor, Supporting Actress, Cinematography, Film Editing, Art Direction, Costume & Make Up Design, Action Choreography, Original Film Score, Original Film Song, Sound Design and Visual Effects.[3]

This study mainly concerns Hong Kong films made after 1979, since the search for self-identity of Hong Kong cinema began with New Wave cinema and 1979 marks the starting point of New Wave. As Abbas points out, New Wave cinema has finally found a worthy subject—it has found Hong Kong itself as a subject (1997, p. 23).[4] In other words, Abbas recognizes the characteristic of the new cinema as taking "Hong Kong itself as its privileged subject of interest and inquiry" (p. 24).

Historically, the new Hong Kong cinema differentiated itself from all films made in Hong Kong during the three previous decades. The new cinema no longer featured *Zhong-yuan* (the central plains of China) and *Jiang-nan* (the south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River) cultures promoted in the Shaw Brothers's productions, especially through their *huangmei diao* opera films and martial arts dramas from the 1950s throughout the 1970s. It also breaks away from values presented in the modern-day melodrama aimed at the middle-class audience and mainly produced by Motion Picture & General Investment from the late 1950s to the 1960s. Films produced after 1979 bear a more distinct Hong Kong quality and are

[3] *Hong Kong Film Awards*. Rules of Election. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from http://www.hkfaa.com/nominee/regulation_e.html
[4] Abbas mistakes the beginning of New Wave cinema as in 1982, but in actual fact it began in 1979, as pointed out by Law Kar (1999, pp. 48-49).

widely referred to as "*gong caan pin*" (in Mandarin, *gang chan pian*). Thanks to Hong Kong's rapid economic growth in the 1970s, its local consciousness was born. Filmmakers who emerged during and after the New Wave are mostly second-generation immigrants from the mainland and elsewhere, grew up in Hong Kong after 1949, and who were without the nostalgic mindset of their parents' generation. They cared more about the city where they grew up than the motherland, and started to "seriously re-consider their identity and their kinship to the motherland" (Law, 1999, p. 46). Only by contextualizing the study in this concept of "Hong Kong cinema" can we explore the identity crisis and self-discovery of Hong Kong.

The films chosen for case study here are either critically acclaimed or commercially successful, including the most significant films centered on mainland women characters in the past three decades of Hong Kong cinema. Some of them are by respected directors, while others are generally considered as trashy commercial films. Although the former are often praised and the latter criticized, the overt commercialism of Hong Kong cinema that "often exploits gender stereotypes and hierarchy unabashedly" (Pang & Wong, 2005, p. 2) lays a common ground for studying these films side by side. Together, these films demonstrate how images of mainland women are constructed and transformed in Hong Kong cinema. As V. Lee points out, the changing images reveal "a pattern of adaptation and psychological adjustment that nonetheless echoes similar concerns in the sociopolitical domain" (2006, p. 155).

According to Sheldon Lu, three historical events have greatly influenced the construction of place, self, and nationality in Hong Kong's filmic discourse: the signing of the Joint Sino-British Declaration in 1984, the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, and the 1997 handover of sovereignty to the People's Republic of China (2005, p. 298). These historical events affected the balance of power between Hong Kong and mainland China, which is reflected by the different representations of mainland women in cinema. Following this chronology, however, the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, the implementation of CEPA (*Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement*) in 2004, and the Chinese economic boom in the new

millennium also severely affected the Hong Kong film industry. I will argue that the "China syndrome" did not fade after 1997 and it is important for Hong Kong film studies to take into account post-1997 examples.

Motivated by the changing political and social practices and attitudes, as well as the patriarchal demands of Hong Kong film industry, a wide variety of mainland women images have been generated and the tendency of representation leans towards recurring patterns. Chapter 1 will summarize the stereotypes of mainland women in Hong Kong films and explore the ideology behind these stereotypes. It will also identify one main characteristic which mainland women share—floating. Chapter 2 will classify six specific character types including: 1) the victimized mainland woman, who embodies Hong Kong's sympathy and recognition of mainland Chinese; 2) the feminized and ridiculed policewoman, who represents the reconfigured authority of mainland China; 3) the eroticized mainland woman, who "helps" Hong Kong to reaffirm its masculinity; 4) and 5) the violent mainland women and seductive mainland women, who respectively represent a metaphor for the threat and temptation the mainland brings to Hong Kong; and, 6) the mainland Chinese gold digger, who embodies Hong Kong's fear of losing economic superiority. I will argue that each of these "types" echoes a certain social and historical prejudice, which is supported by a plot pattern. The order in which these five types will be discussed is according to their first appearance on the Hong Kong screen. After the analysis of cinematic representation of mainland women, the last chapter will turn to the Hong Kong film industry itself and discuss the role that mainland actresses play in it. As film co-production between Hong Kong and the mainland has become more prevalent, mainland women in the industry are an important group that cannot be ignored.

Chapter 1

Stereotypical Roles of Mainland Women in Hong Kong Cinema

In *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera*, Kaplan observes that in Hollywood film, "Women, in being relegated to absence, silence, and marginality, have thereby also to a degree been relegated to the outskirts of historical discourse, if not to a position totally outside of history (and of culture)" (1990, p. 2). Within both the commercial paradigm and cultural patriarchy, Hong Kong cinema shares this dismissal of women with Hollywood. Reviewing the history of Hong Kong film since the 1970s, we can see the domination of popular genres like martial arts movies, *kung-fu* movies, hero movies and comedies. All these genres focus on men's world and are aimed mainly for the male audience. This masculine domination can be traced back to the "masculine aesthetic" put forward by Chang Cheh in the late 1960s against various female orientated films produced by the Shaw Brothers and MP&GI.

In the masculine film world, man is the subject while woman the object; man acts while woman watches; woman is subordinate to the male hero, if not completely absent. In the hierarchy of power, the man stands high above the women; in the priority of emotion, male bonding always comes before male-female romance. The emotion of woman and female bonding are pushed to the margins. "Silence, absence, and marginality" are shared destinies of most female characters in Hong Kong cinema, and there is little exception to those from mainland China.

1.1 A Brief Overview of Mainland Female Characters in Hong Kong Cinema before 1979

Mainland female characters have played leading roles in a small number of films since the 1980s. In films concerned with social problems or disadvantaged groups, mainland women, like prostitutes from the north (—known as *bak gu*) and new immigrants, often play

the supporting roles or act as a foil, as an inseparable part of Hong Kong society. The appearance of mainland women undoubtedly enriches Hong Kong cinema, but not surprisingly, "very few movies bothered to look into the inner worlds of such characters or to adopt positions from their perspectives" (Cheng, 1997, p. 98). Most of the time, they are used—and often in a degrading way—to entertain the Hong Kong audience and are relegated to the margins of Hong Kong culture.

In earlier Hong Kong films, however, the nativism of the city had not yet been established, and mainland female characters were not presented in that way. A popular comedy genre called "North-South Pow-wow" (in Mandarin, *nan bei he*)[5] in the 1960s, for instance, responded to the stream of refugees flowing into Hong Kong after the foundation of the People's Republic of China and exploited the humor inherent in the cultural diversity between local Hong Kong residents and those from "other provinces" (*wai sheng ren*). In these movies, mainland women are not different from local women (Illustration 1), wearing fashionable dresses, living a modern life, frequenting cinemas and upscale restaurants. The only difference is the language spoken by them. Although the cultural and linguistic differences may cause misunderstandings and conflicts, the plots of these films "inevitably concluded with a harmonious resolution of differences with both 'outsiders' and locals united in realization that

Illustration 1 left: Hong Kong girl (played by Pai Lu-Ming) right: mainland girl (played by Ting Hao) in *The Greatest Civil War on Earth*

[5] Such as *The Greatest Civil War on Earth* (*Nan bei he*, 1961); *When the Poles Meet* (*Nan bei yinyuan,* 1961); *The Greatest Wedding on Earth* (*Nan bei yijia qin*, 1962); *The Greatest Love Affair on Earth* (*Nan bei xi xiangfeng*, 1964); *A Happy Union of North and South* (*Nan bei liang qinjia*, 1964).

they are all Chinese" (Cheng, 1997, p. 98). The "North-South Pow-wow" genre disappeared in 1970s, as those "outsiders" were localized and integrated into the "Hong Konger" category.

It was after the Anti-colonial riots of the 1960s and during the rapid economic growth of the 1970s that Hong Kong's nativism was more solidly established. The term "Hong Kongers", which identified people who were enjoying an advanced economy, legal system and a higher degree of freedom, became a point of pride to Hong Kong residents who shared the same language (Cantonese), local culture (Canton Pop, TV, and film) and collective memory (For example, the riots of May 1967, The Diaoyu Island Student Movement, and the inception of the Independent Commission Against Corruption). Hence, when the stream of refugees began to flow into Hong Kong from mainland China in the late 1970s, they could no longer integrate easily into Hong Kong and were viewed as "Other" by xenophobic Hong Kong residents. Under these circumstances, when mainland female characters came back to Hong Kong screens, they were not treated as equal to local as they had been before.

1.2 Established Stereotypes for Mainland Women in Hong Kong Cinema

While Communist China preoccupied itself with a series of political movements from the 1950s to the late 1970s, her small neighbor Hong Kong welcomed the 1960s' industrial restructuring and the 1970s' economic take-off under British rule. It was not until 1979 that China reopened her doors and shifted focus to economic development. By that time, Hong Kong had already become an international city and one of Asia's "four little dragons." By this time, the economic and cultural gap between Hong Kong and mainland China was obvious: People in Hong Kong enjoyed a much higher standard of living and were comparatively well educated and had free access to information from around the world. This led Hong Kong people to develop a patronizing and superior attitude to their mainland "compatriots".

It is common for Hong Kong locals to use special terms when talking about mainland Chinese: male mainlanders are called "*Ah Caan*" or "*biu go*" (meaning male cousin), and

mainland women had more "names"— from "*biu ze*" (meaning female cousin), "*bak gu*" (prostitutes from the north), "*caan moi*" (Sister Caan), to "*dai lu moi*" (girls from mainland), most of which are disparaging.

Edward Said studies the act of "naming" in his *Orientalism*, stating that the West constructs the East by legitimating a vocabulary, "a universe of representative discourse peculiar to the discussion and understanding" of the East recreated (1977, p. 72). Such a process of naming also describes the situation of mainland women in the discourse of Hong Kong. When "*dai lu moi*" terms are employed, they will designate, name, point to, and fix what the user is talking or thinking about—generalizations even stereotypes of mainland women, and these words will be "considered either to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality" (Said, 1977, p. 72). As such, mainland women are not really themselves any more, but constructed by the discourse of Hong Kong, or rather, the stereotype from Hong Kong.

Stereotype is a belief about people that "1) is wholly derived from membership in a special group; 2) disregards the variability within the group; 3) is accompanied and sustained by negative affect" (Schul and Zukier, 1999, p. 33). Although the image of mainland women in Hong Kong cinema is changing, a number of stereotypes remain with little modification. These stereotypes are not based on age, occupation, or the period in which mainland women exist, but on Hong Kong's unchangeable "belief" and generalization about them.

1.2.1 As Old-fashioned Women with Traditional Virtues

In Hong Kong's popular consciousness, those who come from China, are often old-fashioned, and possess a very limited outlook. As the result of this long-held viewpoint, Hong Kong cinema also portrays mainland women in such ways. Upon arrival, they are simply dressed like country girls and do not fit in with the metropolitan surroundings. Si Sun in *Hong Kong, Hong Kong* (*Nan yu nü*, 1983), Kwong Sun in *A Hearty Response* (*Yi gai yun tian*, 1986), Chow Ying in *The Girls from China* (*Wo laizi Beijing*, 1993) and Ah Hung in *Gigolo*

and Whore (*Ji ya lian*, 1994) are such examples. Not surprisingly, they are often judged by their appearances. Kwong Sun in *A Hearty Response*, an illegal immigrant with rustic clothes, for instance, draws a policeman's attention. The policeman comes close and asks her to show her Hong Kong Identity Card. Kwong Sun's Hong Kong friends rescue her at the critical moment and explain to her that she "… must wear modern clothes, otherwise you will easily recognized as a mainlander!". Later in the abovementioned films, all the mainland characters adopt Hong Kong women's fashionable dress and makeup, and soon resemble Hong Kong women in appearance—they are "modernized" by Hong Kong's value system.

If this kind of portrayal can be defined as neutral, there are other films, which are much more colorful, where the rustic image of mainland women is playfully mocked. In *Her Fatal Ways*, the female *gung on* (means public security officer) Cheng Shih-nan wears thick-rimmed glasses and a white shirt, with shoulder-length hair cut straight, an image that is derived from Hong Kong people's typical impression of mainland women (Illustration 2).

Illustration 2 *Her Fatal Ways*

In addition, after she comes to Hong Kong, in her ignorance she makes lots of funny mistakes. When she visits the computer center of the Hong Kong Police Force, she is told that with the newest computer, "a 3-day investigation can be done in half day now." Her reply is, "So what do you do in that two and a half days?" When she arrives at the love hotel and sees the round luxurious bed, she sighs, "Dining table converted into a bed. What an idea!" It is not only her

appearance, but also her narrow views as a mainland woman that make her the laughingstock of the film.

In *My Dream Girl* (*Paozhi nüpengyou*, 2003), the filmmakers intend to reform the countrified mainland woman, by setting the heroine Ning (played by Vicki Zhao) initially as a character with bad manners. She has unkempt hair and apparently no bathing habits, just like a beggar, but eventually will be changed to a perfect princess by the Hong Kong image consultant Joe (played by Ekin Cheng). The metaphor is obvious here, and such configuration continued into the 21st century.

It should be noted, however, that in spite of the negative affect bore on the group, the stereotypical belief itself also might be positive (for example, the case of "Jews are shrewd businessmen" (Schul and Zukier, 1999, p. 33)). Found in Hong Kong cinema, although women from mainland China are old-fashioned, they usually possess some good old virtues, which are seldom found in modern Hong Kong women. These include innocence, perseverance, and other qualities traditionally attributed to a woman. To Hong Kong people, the mainland China-Hong Kong divide is not only Socialism against Capitalism but also a contrast of an agricultural society against a commercial society. Having not been polluted by mammonism and materialism, women from the mainland "must" lack sophistication and worldliness. They come to Hong Kong to earn money, simply in search for a better life.

For instance, Si Sun in *Hong Kong, Hong Kong* marries an old man and intends to give birth to his child just for the right of legal abode, but she still seems naïve and what she has done would not antagonize the audiences. Another example also can be found in *Mary from Beijing* (*Meng xing shifen*, 1992). The mainland girl Ma Li meets the rich young man in his watch shop when she arrives in Hong Kong and looks for a job. Then she becomes his girlfriend and lives off of him, like a canary in a cage. She has an easy time, with luxury goods and a high standard of living, but she is not satisfied with this "perfect" life and wants to be "independent". She plans to go out and find a job, simply because, as she says, "it's for

my self-respect and self-confidence." Although idealized by the filmmaker, this mainland woman character shows some qualities that are lacking in but still appreciated by Hong Kong society.

Another perceived virtue is the perseverance of mainland women. Both Li Qiao in *Comrades: Almost a Love Story* (*Tian mimi*, 1996) and Faye in *My Name is Fame* (*Wo yao chengming*, 2006) fall down many times but always pick themselves up again. Li Qiao gets many part-time jobs at one time, working virtually around the clock until she saves enough money to own a small business herself, selling superstar singer Teresa Tang's tapes. Although she fails in this business and her capital shrinks, she does not give up and starts all over again. She eventually achieves what she wishes and moves up in the social circles. Faye is new to acting at the beginning of the film, determined to realize her dream, and tries everything, including wire work, jumping into the sea, and tumbling over a dozen times. Even being a stand-in without dialogue, she puts her best foot forward. With this perseverance, her efforts finally pay off. She makes a name for herself step by step, eventually winning the award for Best Actress. Another remarkable character is Happy (Misia Chan) in *Whispers and Moans* (*Xing gongzuo zhe shiri tan*, 2007), who is a righteous and optimistic *bak gu*, with her famous words, "I've been doing this for seven years. It's the professional spirit that keeps me going." Happy, a mainland prostitute, is so tough and energetic that she even makes local prostitutes learn how to respect their jobs.

It is interesting that audiences seldom find a lazy mainland woman in Hong Kong films, the stereotype born perhaps from the common idea that it is natural that people from backward areas, like mainland China, to be used to enduring hardship.

1.2.2 As a Marginal Group in Hong Kong's Space

One significant cinematic stereotype of mainland women in Hong Kong cinema is their marginal "place" in this city. Hong Kong is a city sensitive to spatial issues. Residents here

are well aware of the division and boundaries between the rich and the poor. Thus, the "placing" of mainland women reflects Hong Kong's attitude towards them in its own social structure. As Löw (2006) analyzes, it is the genderization of perception that leads, in the sense of an embodiment of social order, to a choice of place and a placing practice that reproduces the structural principles of society (p. 129).

Illustration 3 *A Hearty Response*

Mainland women are often placed in several kinds of spaces in Hong Kong. Firstly, they are in the margin of the highly urbanized modern space. Upon their arrival in Hong Kong, the camera often follows them walking between the high buildings and large mansions. The frame shows their figures in full, giving prominence to their puniness, like Kwong Sun in *A Hearty Response* (see illustration 3). The street she is walking on is within one of the busiest districts in Hong Kong, Tsim Sha Tsui, with the five-star hotel the Peninsula on her left and the landmark Planetarium in the background. The modern buildings take up most of the frame while Kwong is put in the margin. Another instance is at the very beginning of *Hong Kong, Hong Kong*. There is a minute-long take that first encompasses the full span of Victoria Harbor, the most famous view of Hong Kong,

Illustration 4 The long take in *Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

then pans to the concrete jungle and zooms in, seemingly at random, finally focusing on an ant-size figure—our protagonist Si Sun, who has just arrived in Hong Kong (see Illustration 4). The long shot takes a deity's view, gazing upon mortal beings and their tragedies in this city. Si Sun is just one of them, tiny and unobtrusive, a nobody like thousands of other female illegal immigrants in Hong Kong. They are inexperienced in this modern city and feel a novelty about everything in this new environment that is inconceivable to them compared to their undeveloped homeland. Through the eyes of these newcomers, the modernity and advancement of Hong Kong is being reconfirmed, satisfying Hong Kong's self-congratulation and narcissism.

Another symbol for Hong Kong's modern urban space is the road on which streams of cars belt along. When mainland women first come to Hong Kong, they do not often know how to cross busy streets. For example, in *Gigolo and Whore* Ah Hung does not use the zebra crossing to cross the road and as a result finds herself stuck in the middle of the road. Cars have to brake sharply to avoid hitting her. Finally she cannot do anything but run to the other side. The same situation also happens to Si Sun in *Hong Kong, Hong Kong* and Chow Ying in *The Girls from China*. These scenes imply that in the imagination of Hong Kong people, mainlanders are not used to automobiles and the developed traffic system, as the main vehicle of transportation is the bicycle in underdeveloped mainland China. Cars and traffic, as a symbol of modernization, represent the urban landscape of this highly developed city, as well as the superiority of Hong Kong.

Sometimes the mansions and cars are combined to construct an urban space for mainland women in a film. In *Comrades: Almost a Love Story*, one impressive scene depicts the female protagonist Li Qiao sitting on the back seat of Li Xiaojun's bike and they are cycling on a busy Hong Kong street, passing lots of buildings and weaving in and out of the traffic. Amongst the stream of cars, the two on the bike do not fit with the environment, though they are still enjoying themselves and start to sing the song *Tian Mimi*. Though the

high contrast between the protagonists on the bike and the modern background may seem romantic, the director highlights the difference using the backdrop of the metropolis to emphasize this.

Second, mainland women are marginalized in the local cultural spaces. In *Mary from Beijing*, Ma Li is rejected by the Immigration Office in her application for a Hong Kong Identity Card; she is seen wandering aimlessly on the street. There is a shot in which she is surrounded by the old style signboards of Hong Kong, which form part of the famous landscape (Illustration 5). The signboards here, as a symbol of traditional Hong Kong and local culture, form a circle around Ma Li, bringing invisible pressure to bear on her. Being a mainlander in Hong Kong, Ma Li is surrounded by the local culture but is incapable of integration into it. At a loss, she just stands in the middle of the road and does not know where to turn.

Illustration 5 *Mary from Beijing*

Third, mainland women are positioned at the bottom of Hong Kong's social space. As mainland women always belong to the disadvantaged group in society, their living space and scope of action is also portrayed in the fringes. In *One Night in Mongkok* (*Wangjiao heiye*, 2004), the protagonist Dan, a prostitute from the mainland, is seen in peripheral places such as a brothel, a cheap hotel, a scavenging lane, shabby backstreet or in the red-light district of Mongkok, the hotbed of illicit activity in Hong Kong (Illustration 6). In *True Women for Sale* (*Wo bu maishen, wo mai zigong*, 2008),

Illustration 6 *One Night in Mongkok*

Lotus, a penniless new immigrant who, with her young daughter, has to live in an aging tenement building in Sham Shui Po, which is one of the poorest districts of Hong Kong. Her neighborhood is occupied by prostitutes who do business in their flats, which are not sound-proofed. We can therefore see that for not only Dan and Lotus, most of the mainland female characters in Hong Kong cinema are cinematically placed in the city's underprivileged areas such as Mongkok, Yau Ma Tei, Sham Shui Po and Tin Shui Wai district. They are seldom placed in other districts (for example rich communities like Mid-Levels and Central) or some high-class places, which implies their social status in their new reality. Hence, their marginality makes a symbol of outlying groups and those at the bottom of the social ladder.

A fourth type of space for mainland women in Hong Kong cinema is the "heterotopias of deviation", defined by Foucault (1986), where "individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (p. 25).[6] Here, "the norm" is Hong Kong's social and cultural order, standard or regulation. Individuals and social groups who do not fit into the norm are deviant and are viewed as the "Other". Spaces marked by the presence of the deviants would be spatially isolated from society, in forbidden sites, both clandestine and perilous.

In *Dumplings* (*Jiaozi*, 2004), the protagonist Mei lives in is one such "heterotopia of deviation" (*ibid*) in Hong Kong. The mysterious mainland woman Mei makes a living by selling dumplings made from human fetuses, and where she lives is a strange community. As the film omits the exact location and the surrounding environment, the community becomes an abstract space, like a mysterious castle. People who live there seem weird, like the old man who silently looks into the distance and the old woman who is always helping younger women to remove their facial hair by using threads. The whole community, housing those deviants including the wicked Mei, is outside the norm of Hong Kong. As it is the place Mei lives, the heterotopia of deviation easily elicits the association with mainland China.

[6] Such as rest homes, prisons and psychiatric hospitals. See Foucault, 1986, pp. 22-27.

There are other examples that point to the mainland more clearly. In *Her Fatal Ways*, the mainland police officer, Cheng Shih-nan and her Hong Kong partner Inspector Wu hunt for a fugitive and follow him to a squatter district. All the people there are immigrants from mainland China, and the place is called "little mainland." When the Hong Kong police ask the residents about the convict, they respond, "Hong Kong police? Big deal!" which implies that none of the residents want to help them to catch the criminal, until Cheng speaks with her mainland dialect with them and shares her mutual experience of homesickness. They enjoy a lively conversation, invite Cheng to their home for a local specialty, and finally provide information about the criminal. In this squatter area, mainland Chinese construct a heterotopia of deviation with its own language, culture and identity, making it the "little mainland" inside of Hong Kong. This is a deviant space ghettoized by the dominant configurations of social space and the resistant locality, at the same time one which excludes Hong Kong people. It reverses the normal power structure of Hong Kong society where locals are superior to newcomers, however in this space, the newcomers become dominant. In *Hong Kong, Hong Kong*, the squatter area Si Sun resides in is also reflects the same situation. To Hong Kong people, these "cities within the city" are marginal places and strange foreign lands shrouded in mystery, and mainland women there also become deviant in the mindset of Hong Kong people.

1.2.3 As Speakers of Socialist Jargon and Bad Cantonese

After 1949, China became a highly centralized regime under the one-party dictatorship, while Hong Kong developed to a multifaceted political society. Different education systems and formative backgrounds result in very different mentalities. The long separation makes the mutual understanding between Hong Kong and mainland difficult, especially when Hong Kong, as the British colony, is greatly influenced by Western media, which portrays the

Communist regime as depriving people's human rights and democracy. Consequently, Hong Kong people's fear of the mainland's political system was exaggerated in films.

In many films political slogans and socialist jargons spill out whenever a mainlander opens his mouth. In *Her Fatal Ways*, the female *gung on* Cheng Shih-nan uses a lot of political jargon. She calls everyone "comrade"[7] in the Hong Kong Police Station, and calls the criminal "enemy": "We cannot show mercy in front of the enemy," she shouts at the criminal, "Honesty deserves leniency, resistance is futile!" (In Mandarin, *tan bai cong kuan, kang ju cong yan.*) When the criminal escapes, she insists she catch the criminal herself to "show that socialism is superior." Even when the local inspector Wu Wei-kuo (Tony Leung Ka Fai) takes her out on a date, she cannot relax: "I'm enjoying the Capitalist view of Hong Kong's night as a part of my assignment." In *Dumplings*, the protagonist Mei, a former abortionist who aborted numerous babies under the Birth Control (*jihua shengyu*) policy set by the mainland government, calls her work "serving people" (*wei renmin fuwu*)—a famous phrase coined by Mao Zedong.

Apart from political slogans, mainland women's attitude towards the 1997 handover is portrayed as very different from that of Hong Kong people. Being afraid of an unpredictable future, mainland women are often connected to the 1997 issue. At the end of *Police Story III* (*Jincha gushi san*, 1992), Jackie Chan and Michelle Yeoh solve a criminal case and all the money seized is given to the public treasury. Michelle Yeoh, playing a *gung on*, insists that, "The money belongs to all our Chinese people." Jackie Chan, for the Hong Kong police, responds, "Let our Hong Kong government keep it temporarily. We'll also become Chinese people after 1997. Then the money will be yours, too." In *Little Cheung* (*Xi lu xiang*, 1999), even Ah Fan, a nine-year-old illegal immigrant from mainland China, tells the local boy that

[7] Comrade (in Mandarin, *tongzhi*), literally meaning "people with the same spirit, goal and ambition", is a term with political usage in China. At first all who believe in Communism would call each other "comrade". But after the foundation of the People's Republic of China, it became a title for basically anyone in mainland China. Hong Kong does not have this term in its popular vernacular due to its different paradigm. The English title of *Tianmimi* (*Comrade: Almost a Love Story*) just uses this term to indicate the relationship between the two lovers from mainland.

"Hong Kong will belong to us when Chairman Jiang Zemin comes. Hong Kong is ours!" These settings indicate Hong Kong people's subconscious fear of the coming political change.

Furthermore, political songs, which are also part of the political discourse, are frequently heard in Hong Kong movies sung by mainland women: "My Motherland" ("*wo de zuguo*") is sung by Li Hong (*Farewell China*) and "Lake Hong Waters Are Rough" ("*Honghushui langdalang"*) by Mei (*Dumplings*). These political songs with nationalist or communist themes are used to complete the symbolization of mainland women.

Besides socialist jargon, another stereotype of mainland women's language is their accent when they speak Cantonese. In Hong Kong, a city with strong nativism, Cantonese is the most widely used language and represents the local public. It is common that newcomers are unfamiliar with the local language, but by dramatizing and exaggerating the language issues, Hong Kong cinema draws a clear boundary between "self" and "other" and in doing so stereotypes mainland women.

Mainland women may resemble local women in appearance, but speaking Cantonese with an accent directly reveals their identity as outsiders. It is quite usual that you hear nonstandard Cantonese from mainland woman characters in Hong Kong cinema. In *High Noon* (*Lieri dang kong*, 2008), Cui Bo plays the role of a new immigrant wife. When she meets her stepson's teacher in his school, her halting Cantonese embarrasses the stepson and their relationship deteriorates. In the beginning of *Gigolo and Whore*, when Ah Hung has recently arrived in Hong Kong, she takes part in a tongue twister game in a restaurant where the outcome is a prize of a bowl of noodles. Her strange Cantonese is laughed at by waiters and clients, and as a result, she loses. Later in the film, when she can speak fluent Cantonese (i.e. has been "Hong Kongnized"), she comes back to this restaurant and wins the game. Her perfect Cantonese even draws enthusiastic applause from waitresses and clients, which symbolizes that she has been successfully converted by Hong Kong society, portraying that language exemplifies an entry permit to local society.

More importantly, Hong Kong cinema also portrays mainland women as speaking Cantonese with a "sexy" accent. Those *bak gu* roles especially are depicted as always speaking more or less nonstandard Cantonese to solicit customers. In *Golden Chicken* (*Jin ji*, 2002), a local costumer asks a fresh *bak gu* what she did before coming to Hong Kong. She responds in Cantonese and mistakes "saleswomen" as "blowjob", which amuses all the costumers. Later in another scene, Professor Chan (played by Tony Leung Ka Fai), teaches mainland *bak gu* how to pronounce Cantonese, like using "Boss" to call the customer. Nevertheless, everything they say, with their "sexy" accent, sounds like a sexual invitation. Such examples can also be found in *Durian Durian* (*Liulian piaopiao*, 2000), *Whispers and Moans*, and other *bak gu* films. The language used becomes a symbol of these prostitutes, implying a sexual meaning, and this also applies to some other mainland woman characters. In *Simply Actors* (*Xi wang zhi wang*, 2007), Dan Dan (played by Charlene Choi) is a soft-core porn actress who comes from northeast China. She speaks Cantonese with a flirty intonation, as if she is like acting in a soft-core porn movie. As a native Cantonese speaker, Choi changed her pure Cantonese to a strong and sexy accent in the movie, which was recognized as such a vivid performance that she received a nomination for Best Actress in the 27th Hong Kong Film Awards. By dramatizing the language use, Hong Kong cinema stereotypes mainland women, sometimes even degrading them into speaking sex dolls.

These configurations of mainland women provide Hong Kong audiences with the basic framework upon which to examine the narrative about mainland women. Based on these stereotypes, mainland women in Hong Kong cinema generally share a main characteristic: floating.

1.3 The Floating Status of Mainland Women in Hong Kong Cinema

Hong Kong is often conceived as a "floating city," a city drifting politically and culturally between two worlds: the colonial Britain and the socialist China. Woman writer Xi

Xi has compared Hong Kong to "a hydrogen balloon" hanging "in the air in full public gaze...on a fine, clear day, many, many years ago." In her story, Hong Kong's emergence was only witnessed by "the grandparents of our grandparents," whose "descendants" gradually "settled down in the floating city and gradually adapted themselves to its conditions." She claims "most people believed that the floating city would continue hanging steadily in the air, neither rising nor sinking forever" (1997, p. 1)

"The grandparents of our grandparents" refer to those immigrants who mostly came from the Pearl River Delta of China to Hong Kong, exploring the new world further south which had just been ceded to Britain by the Qing government. 1842 was the starting point when Hong Kong emerged from a fishing village to the international metropolis it is today. In 1842, the number of natives was only around 7,000. Today, the populations of 7 million people are immigrants or descendants of immigrants. The history of migration easily produces the sense of "rootless duckweeds."

Caught between China and Britain, the position of the Hong Kong population is also floating. Resisting foreign and colonial oppression but also disbelieving communism, many Hong Kongers are never sure which side they are on and who exactly they are. As Abbas says, it is never the case that "if you scratch the surface of a Hong Kong person you will find a Chinese identity waiting to be reborn" (1997, p. 2), nor will be found a British one. Thus there is always a "strange dialectic between autonomy and dependency that we see in Hong Kong's relation both to Britain and China" (p. 4). Hong Kong is a city that absorbed influences from Britain and the West and went on to localize and indigenize foreign cultures, as well as a Chinese community that had strong links with the mother culture. Hong Kong floats between Britain and China, East and West, in terms of life style, politics, culture, and as well as identity.

Reflecting this subconscious instability, "floating" becomes a popular theme in Hong Kong cinema. Lots of Hong Kong films tell stories about "floating", such as *An Autumn's*

Tale (*Qiutian de tonghua*, 1987), *Song Of the Exile* (*Ke tu qiu hen*, 1990) and *Happy Together* (*Chunguang zha xie*, 1997), to name a few. In this genre, some films feature mainland woman as the protagonist who is also floating and embodying the city myth of Hong Kong, even an allegory of the whole nation.

1.3.1 Mainland Women's Border Crossing

As most Hong Kong films about mainland women take not mainland China but Hong Kong itself as the subject and tell stories that happen in Hong Kong, mainland women therein "need" to bear the border-crossing experience (in the narrative or story background), passing the Sino-Hong Kong border from north to south, finally arriving at their destination, Hong Kong.

One cinematic representation of mainland women depicts that they arrive only for a sojourn with a definite purpose, be it earning money (*bak gu*), investigating criminal cases (*gung on*), finding career opportunities (mainland actresses), or doing business (career women). As soon as they accomplish their goals, they leave Hong Kong. Qin Yan of *Durian Durian* (2000), who makes money as a prostitute in Hong Kong, goes back to her hometown in northeast China with her hard-won earnings, planning to run a Karaoke bar and start a new life. Tong Tong in *Hollywood Hong-Kong* (2001), who comes from Shanghai with the dream of going to Hollywood, uses Hong Kong as a springboard, while making her fortune by extorting the Hong Kong men who have had sex with her. She finally realizes her dream of reaching Hollywood. In *My Name is Fame* (2006), mainland actress Faye comes to Hong Kong with the dream of becoming a movie star. After practicing her acting and getting opportunities in the Hong Kong film industry with the help of local actor Ka Fai (played by Lau Ching Wan), she finally makes a name for herself and then decides to change her stage to Japan. For Faye, Hong Kong is a transfer point; for Hong Kong, these mainland Fayes are just passers-by.

This kind of portrayal reflects part of the subconscious of Hong Kong, or what Abbas calls "port mentality": "much of the population was made up of refugees or expatriates who thought of Hong Kong as a temporary stop, no matter how long they stay" (Abbas, 1997, p. 4), not to mention these newcomers who indeed arrive for but a short stay. Another reason for this port mentality is related to the position of Hong Kong in regional economic and trade activity: it has long been a transshipping port, in particular acting as the gateway to mainland China. Cargos and travelers pass by, treating Hong Kong as an intermediary, a city of transients: "everything is provisional, ad hoc; everything floats—currencies, values, human relations", and identities (Abbas, 1997, p. 4). All is temporary, in this in-between state. It could well be this port mentality that constructed a city myth has given Hong Kong its "negative capability" of adapting so easily to different regimes (either colonial Britain or socialist China) and situations, but at the same time, also contributed to the tenuous sense of belonging, the feeling of not adhering fully to any regime, history, and cultural tradition. Abbas discussed that such a mentality as only viable before 1997 or even before the events at Tiananmen Square in 1989, but it still exists to this day. The portrayal of mainland women as passers-by reflects only a small aspect of it.

Another representation is of mainland women who come to Hong Kong for permanent residency. Immigration from China has always been a sensitive issue in Hong Kong since it became a dependent territory of Britain. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, hundreds of thousands of mainlanders, for economic or political reasons, immigrated to Hong Kong, the legendary paradise, to look for a better future. As newcomers and Hong Kong-citizens-to-be, these immigrants retained their mainland characteristics and displayed differences from local people, while gradually merging into the local community. The ambiguity of their identities raises concerns, especially in Hong Kong films, when Hong Kong needs to deal with its own identity problem.

There was a cluster of Hong Kong films portraying female illegal immigrants in the

1980s. The protagonists in films, such as Si Sun (played by Cherie Chung) in *Hong Kong, Hong Kong* (1983), or Ah Ling (played by Chu Hai-Ling) in *Home at Hong Kong* (*Jia zai xianggang*, 1983), as well as Kwong Sun (played by Joey Wong) in *A Hearty Response* (1986), arrive in Hong Kong by swimming across the sea, scrabbling through the forest along the border, or paying a "snakehead" (in Mandarin, *she tou*, who arranges illegal immigration). After arriving in Hong Kong, they need to evade deportation to the mainland, while struggling to get the permanent right of abode. Si Sun marries an old local carpenter who promises to help her becoming a legal Hong Konger once she gives birth to a son. Her desire to get a Hong Kong identity is so strong that when the hen lays an egg, she happily labels it with words: "This egg is born in Hong Kong. It is to prove that it has the right to stay here." Though she is later pregnant, the life does not lead to happiness as she wishes: an accident happens and she rolls down the stairs, bathed in blood and miscarries the baby. Even in this critical moment she does not call the Emergency Centre for help because in that case she will be found out as an illegal immigrant. She crawls back home and tries to medicate herself, but massive bleeding threatens her life. In the end Si Sun's lover ultimately decides to call for help, and the last shot of film freezes on the desperate couple, covered in blood waiting by the road. Off-screen is the sound of the ambulance (which also sounds like a police car), implying that Si Sun's illegal identity will be found out and she will no longer be able to stay in Hong Kong. "Identity" is the keyword in these illegal immigrants' floating life, causing them to pay high prices, either physically—rape (*A Hearty Response*), abortion, even the risk of life, or mentally (*Home at Hong Kong*). No matter what efforts they make, it seems that there is no place for them in Hong Kong: they cannot avoid being repatriated back to the mainland, which is their inevitable destiny. [8]

The trend of portraying female illegal immigrants rose in the 1980s, when Hong Kong

[8] Except Kwong Sun in *A Hearty Response*, who finally gets the right to Hong Kong residence, but only after paying the price: she is cruelly raped by the "snakehead".

met serious immigrant problems. There was not only an influx of illegal immigrants from the mainland (more than 200,000 between 1979-1980[9]), but also the flow of Vietnamese refugees beginning in 1979.[10] After the rise of Hong Kong's native sense in the 1970s, the 1980s was the time when Hong Kong's nativism was in upsurge. With problems from both inside and outside, the "Hong Kong identity" was challenged, causing Hong Kong to unconsciously adopt a new attitude in looking at these outsiders. Though the tragic stories of female illegal immigrants aroused the sympathy of Hong Kong audiences, their illegality, indicates their destiny in this city: they are not accepted here; it is not a place belonging to them and they ultimately have to go back to where they come from.

Another focus on the "struggling for identity" is portrayed by the representation of "new (legal) immigrants." In Hong Kong, new immigrants are mostly those who were born in China, have indicated their nationality as Chinese, and have resided in Hong Kong for less than 7 years at the time of the census. Unlike illegal immigrants, new immigrants are recognized as Hong Kong residents by law, but local people still do not consider them as "Hong Kongers." While waiting for permanent identity in terms of legality, they also need social recognitions. A remarkable film that tells the bittersweet story of new immigrants is *Comrades: Almost a Love Story* (1996). Li Qiao, the heroine played by Maggie Cheung, represents the diligent and dynamic new immigrants who want to become real Hong Kongers and get rich in this "city of gold." As she can speak perfect Cantonese, she pretends to be a Hong Konger in front of her mainland compatriots and feels comfortable with this fake

[9] There were three peaks of illegal mainland immigration in the history of Hong Kong. The first one was in the 1950s, facilitated by the founding of the Communist PRC. The second wave was between 1967 and 1973, and came as a result of the Cultural Revolution in mainland China. Later, at the end of the Cultural Revolution, mainland people lost confidence in the central government and the gap between the rich Hong Kong and a poor mainland was growing. Following the open door policy of mainland China in 1978 and the subsequent withdrawal of its People's Liberation Army from the Sino-Hong Kong border under the tensions with Vietnam, the third influx, including more than 200,000 illegal immigrants, inundated the colony. According to Cheung, 1995.

[10] There are also a few Hong Kong films about Vietnamese refugees, such as Ann Hui's "Vietnamese Trilogy": *From Vietnam* (*Laike*, 1978), *The Story of Woo Viet* (*Huyue de gushi*, 1981), and *Boat People* (*Touben nuhai*, 1982).

identity until her love for Teresa Tang's songs reveals her true identity: "if you are a fan of Teresa Tang, everyone will know you're a mainlander." The collective culture is a label of one's identity. When the male protagonist Li Xiaojun finds out that she is actually from Guangzhou, he said happily, "So we are comrades!" But Qiao vehemently denies, "We are not! We Guangdong people speak Cantonese. We watch Hong Kong TV. We drink Vita milk. We are so much closer to Hong Kong!" Although her legal nationality is Chinese, her cultural identity obviously leans towards Hong Kong, which makes her reaction so strong against the label of "comrades." Meanwhile, the mainland culture, unconsciously but deeply rooted in Qiao's identity is with her all the time, whether she admits to it or not. In the end, it is the Tang's song *Tianmimi* that brings her to her long-separated lover on the busy streets of New York. It is the end of the film, but not the end of her journey to find a stable identity.

One more example is *Mary from Beijing* (1992). Ma Li (acted by Gong Li) has two dreams, one is to get her Hong Kong Identity Card (HKID), and the other is to marry her Hong Kong boyfriend, a jeweler's son. Obtaining a permanent HKID, however, is not easy, and getting her boyfriend to introduce her to his upper-class family is even more difficult. Ma Li is pretty and elegant and with the luxury goods her boyfriend bought her, looks just like any high-class local women in appearance. Her identity as a new immigrant, however, keeps her from appearing in public: she is like a kept mistress. Her boyfriend asks her to learn English and pretend to come back from Britain, which will "help" her to be accepted by his family more easily. Ma Li refuses, breaks up with the man, and starts to earn her own living. While the English title of the film makes Ma Li's identity stand out, the Chinese title, *Meng Xing Shi Fen*, meaning "Time to Wake up from a Dream," points to what new immigrants have to face.

In recent years, the issue of new immigrants has focused on the new immigrant wife. Soon after the mainland government opened its doors for economic development and after the signing of Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, there was a massive relocation of industrial

activities from Hong Kong to the Pearl River Delta in southern China. Such industrial relocation has accentuated the trend of marriage between Hong Kong working-class men and Mainland women (So, 2002). After 1997, more and more wives and children came to Hong Kong for family reunions, and these newcomers made up the majority proportion of new immigrants. From 1997 to 2007, the average annual population of new immigrants (beyond the age of 15) was 30,000, in which new immigrant wives accounted for 60 percent, up to 18,000 of the total (X. H. He, 2007). They have been blamed for increasing the taxpayers' burden and competing for social resources with locals. While the mass media plays up sensational news of new immigrant wives, such as domestic violence and murder, Hong Kong cinema gazes at them in a dissimilar way. Both Herman Yau's *True Women for Sale* (2008) and Ann Hui's *Night and Fog* (*Tianshuiwei de ri yu ye*, 2009) tell stories about young and beautiful mainland women who marry older Hong Kong men and come to this city. They try hard to survive, but their lives are anything but easy. In Yau's film, the husband of Lotus (acted by Race Wong) dies, leaving her alone with her young daughter and another child on the way. She asks her husband's insurance agent, social worker and the government for help to get the permanent residency, but no one can help until she gives birth on a bus and causes a media sensation. Ironically, her identity problem then is soon resolved by the government and she even gets public housing. In *Night and Fog*, Ling (acted by Zhang Jingchu) luckily meets no HKID problem, but she suffers from domestic violence and is finally killed by her jealous husband. Both directors deal with the issues of new immigrant wives in an objective and humane way, and appear concerned about the plight of the socially deprived lower class. If contextualized within the wider background, these issues also "highlight the increasingly prevalent interactions between Hong Kong and post-1997 Mainland" ("The Introduction," 2009).

Perfect Life: Interwoven Hong Kong and Mainland China

Illustration 7 the poster of *Perfect Life*

A film that reveals this kind of interaction much more clearly is *Perfect Life* (*Wanmei shenghuo*, 2008). It mixes fiction and documentary forms, cross-cutting the two genres to reveal parallels and contrasts between a working-class girl (Li Yueying) in Northeast China and a new immigrant wife (Jenny) in Hong Kong. The fictional segment traces the footsteps of Li Yueying from north to south, from her hometown to Shenzhen, with Hong Kong in sight, as she starts an affair with a Hong Kong man at the end of the film. Every move in Yueying's journey is influenced by the man she meets. The documentary part focuses on Jenny, who grew up in a mainland village and came to Shenzhen to find work. There she met her future husband, a Hong Kong chef, and moved to Hong Kong. These back-stories are told by Jenny herself, who is undergoing a bitter divorce and attempting to support her two daughters. The camera watches Jenny's hard life in Hong Kong as a new immigrant, records the moment she cries for her rugged destiny, and also follows her visit to her sister in Shenzhen. In a grocery store in Shenzhen, Jenny and Yueying have a brief conversation and pass by each other: their parallel destinies meet as the fiction and documentary parts converge. It is apparent that the filmmaker intends to interweave two protagonists' destinies, in which way Yueying might be Jenny's past, and Jenny could be Yueying's future. The movie poster of *Perfect Life* is composed of two parts, the upper half is Yueying, with the background is the heavy industrial area of northeast China, which is developing; the lower half shows Jenny, with the background of the night view of Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong, which is in stark contrast to the upper half (Illustration 7). Through the

image, much more obviously, Yueying/mainland and Jenny/Hong Kong look like mirror images, even reincarnations of each other.

Previously a new immigrant but now a permanent Hong Kong resident herself, the director of *Perfect Life*, Tang Xiaobai, views the new immigrant issue within the wider context of China's on-going process of modernization and globalization, in which the population's mobility between districts is inevitable. The former identities of Dongbeinese, Sichuanese or Hunanese are not as stable as before. Bigger cities like Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing are crowded with immigrants. People leave their hometowns and flood into the cities in need of jobs.

During the migration, the self-identifications of immigrants are challenged and they often feel lost in the city they sojourn in. Although Jenny can speak Cantonese as well as a native speaker after living in Hong Kong for some time, she cannot write traditional Chinese characters as a result of her mainland education. When she applies for a job in a local restaurant, this detail reveals her identity as an immigrant and denies her chance to get the job. The past mainland/hometown years still persist like a mark throughout her current life. Jenny, standing on the busy street, with no idea where to go, is just like hundreds of thousands of new immigrants in this metropolis and even more internal migrants in other Chinese cities. The identity crisis now belongs not only to Hong Kong people, but also to their mainland "compatriots". In some ways, the two once distant communities now bear a surprisingly close resemblance to each other. Their destinies are interwoven, and they are sharing the same uprooted, floating sense of being.

1.3.2 Mainland Women's Ocean Crossing

In addition to mainland women in Hong Kong films who are moving within Greater China, there are representations of mainland women who migrate internationally. These women, along with women from Hong Kong and Taiwan, become a metaphor for Hong

Kong itself, telling stories of women in the Chinese Diaspora striving to make a living in a foreign country.

It is intriguing that filmmakers often set the story in New York. *Full Moon in New York* (*Ren zai Niuyue*, 1989), *Farewell China* (1990) and the last part of *Comrades: Almost a Love Story* (1996) all take place in this city, in the promised land of the United States. In *Full Moon in New York*, Maggie Cheung, Sylvia Chang and Siqin Gaowa play three Chinese women, each from a different region of "Greater China"—Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the mainland. They meet in New York, sharing their Chinese roots and experiencing the city from their individual perspectives. In *Farewell China*, Li Hong (played by Maggie Cheung) leaves her son with her husband and parents, and emigrates to the U.S in search of a better life. She struggles to survive in the crime-ridden streets of New York. When her husband finally meets her there, she has already gone mad. Another example is *Comrades: Almost a Love Story*, in which, after twisting and turning through many places, Li Qiao arrives in New York and finally meets her lover in the street, and are stunned by the news of singer Teresa Tang's sudden death. It is not surprising that Hong Kong cinema gives such special concern to New York, another international metropolis and immigrant city, which has much in common with Hong Kong and portrays the mirror image of Hong Kong. As 1997 approached, all stories about Hong Kong "tended to turn into stories about somewhere else," because Hong Kong politics "expresses itself best when expressed indirectly" (Abbas, 1997, p. 25, 28). When Hong Kong needs to express itself indirectly, New York readily serves as its reflection.

Chinese women in the above mentioned films leave China determined, believing that the United States is the place where they can find happiness. Settling down in a foreign country, they find their love for their home country is much stronger than they imagined, while the Diaspora experience does not bring happiness as supposed but instead, psychic trauma. Siqin Gaowa in *Full Moon in New York* is unaccustomed to living abroad, and the

only thing she can do to blow off repressed emotion, is engage in drinking and singing Chinese songs with her Taiwanese and Hong Kong "compatriots" on the midnight streets of New York. Li Hong bids farewell to China as she wished, yet, in her "dream country," unthinkable suffering leads her to become mentally deranged. When she is out of her mind, what is left to her memory is "My Motherland" ("*Wo de zuguo*"), a patriotic Chinese song. Li Qiao drifts from Guangdong to Hong Kong, and then from Hong Kong to the United States, and finally arrives in New York, but what she intends to do next is get a green card and then go back to China.

The case of these overseas Chinese women reminds us of a complex that Freud calls "Fort-da," meaning gone-there. It is a game his grandson invented to symbolize disappearance and return, allowing himself to manage his anxiety about the absences of mother (1922, pp. 14-16). One example of "Fort-da" is that children like playing a game to hide themselves from their mother and wait for mother to find them, through which process they feel excited about the game and also nervous that mother will not be able to find them and therefore abandon them; if they wait for too long, they cannot help but run out and "reunite" with their mother. This is the same as overseas Chinese women's painful experience of loss and reunion with the motherland. Like children repeating the "Fort-da" game, these overseas Chinese repeat the cycle of leaving home—homesick—returning home (either in imagination or in reality)—then leaving again, in both suffering and enjoyment. Leaving is painful, but returning is happy; leaving is for return, after the return comes leaving again. Through the game, children/overseas Chinese vent their negative feelings of being ignored, and take revenge on the absence of mother/motherland.

This ambivalence can also be seen as a reflection of Hong Kong's feelings towards its "mother country" China. To retaliate on China's long absence as the motherland, Hong Kong hides itself from the China-centered discourse of nationalism, identifying itself as a city-state. Yet, in the meantime, the psychology of "Fort-da" makes Hong Kong also want to

draw China's attention and earn its respect, such as Hong Kong people's protest against the PRC government and request for democracy during the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. While hiding, Hong Kong is still looking for a relationship with China, historically and culturally. Similar to children's desire of hiding/finding, is Hong Kong's dichotomy of keeping a distance while getting closer to its estranged motherland, China.

The absence of motherland is that China cannot make a comfortable home for its citizens—it is a criticism of so-called "motherland" from these Hong Kong films. The ideological premise of these films is that the backward and closed nature of China, as well as its "bad policies and malpractices" (Lu, 2000, p. 284) are indeed the cause of its innocent, powerless citizens' misfortunes. At the end of *Farewell China*, the husband is killed by the insane wife in front of the replica statue of "Goddess of Democracy" that used to stand in 1989's Tiananmen Square, which is a metaphor of the massacre, and an allegory of Chinese tragedy. The film condemns that "it is the Chinese state that has caused indescribable, horrible catastrophes in the lives of its nationals both inside and outside China" (*Ibid*). Following Chinese citizens, Hong Kongers might also become the victims. The mainland Chinese's destiny leads to Hong Kong people's fear. As Peter Chan, the director of *Comrades, Almost a Love Story*, says in an interview, the immigrants in the film actually have a lot in common with the natives of Hong Kong, "I realize that the main characters in the film are not that different from the rest of us who are Hong Kong natives. They may be different in terms of language, culture and attitude, but the rootlessness they feel are shared by us all" (Tsui, 1997, pp. 26-27). These mainland Chinese migrate overseas for a better life, and then return to China for the same reason, as China is going through an economic boom. This is exactly what a lot of native Hong Kong people are undergoing: they immigrated to North America or Australia under the pressure of the 1997 handover, but after becoming naturalized citizens there, the first thing they do is to come back to Hong Kong. The circular journey is shared by both Chinese and Hong Kong immigrants. Therefore, Peter Chan

reveals the deeper meaning of his film *Comrades*: it "started out innocently as a story about two immigrants from China", but it "turned out to be my story, my friends' story and most probably the story of a large proportion of the Chinese people" (Tsui, 1997, pp. 26-27). The same allegory also lies in the plot of *Full Moon in New York*, *Farewell China* and other immigrant films.

1.3.3 A City Myth Turned "National Allegory"

Hong Kong films about floating mainland women are not only a city myth of identity crisis but are also a "national allegory" in Jameson's term. According to Jameson, all Third World literatures are necessarily collective stories about a life-and-death struggle in the political situation, which is also valid for other cultural expression such as films (Jameson 2000, pp. 315-39). This theory is often used in the analysis of the Fifth Generation films of mainland China, whose main characteristics include an ambiguous ideology that was rarely seen in early Chinese films. As Hong Kong's relation to China is uncertain, Hong Kong films often maintain an ambiguous attitude towards China, swinging regularly between personal trauma and collective memories, between the longing to reunite with the mother and the fear that the mother cannot provide a comfortable home. Thus, Hong Kong's citizens often feeling compelled to leave for other places in search of a better life.

"Other places", however, are not dreamlands either. For either passers-by or immigrants, Hong Kong is not the paradise they had imagined, and it can never become their home. After the *bak gu* Dan (*One Night in Mongkok*) experiences prostitution, violence, rape and witnesses the male protagonist's death, she leaves Hong Kong. When she passes the departure counter, she said to the immigration official, "I'll never come to Hong Kong again," sadly, also surely. For Si Sun (*Hong Kong, Hong Kong*), her old Hong Kong husband cannot bring happiness to her, nor the right of abode. It turns out that there is no place for her in Hong Kong, and she is repatriated to mainland. This is also the destiny of Ah Ling (*Home at*

Hong Kong). Ma Li (*Mary from Beijing*) used to dream of marrying her Hong Kong boyfriend, but when awakening from the dream, she finds that Kwok-Wai, the man who has come back from the U.K., fits her better. Jenny's tears may represent thousands of new immigrants in Hong Kong (*Perfect Life*), such as Lotus (*True Women for Sale*) and Ling (*Night and Fog*) who leave a backward hometown for the more advanced Hong Kong, and finally find their former identities as lower class citizens never change, and life is much harder in Hong Kong. Some characters go even further, crossing not the Lo Wu border but the Pacific Ocean, to New York. Yet, that city also proves to be less than a home (*Full Moon in New York*, *Farewell China*, and *Comrades, Almost a Love Story*). From one perspective, not only Hong Kong but also China becomes floating, and the contemporary Chinese often feel rootless. Viewed another way, it suggests a more flexible identity among them. As Sheldon Lu points out, "in the age of transnational capitalism, mobile investment, flexible accumulation, and global postmodernity," the Chinese renegotiate "a flexible set of spatial, geographic, economic and cultural considerations in the identity formation process" (2000, p. 285).

Chapter 2

Extreme Roles of Mainland Women in Hong Kong Cinema

2.1 Undermining the Power of Mainland China

Although mainland women are generally portrayed as floating, in different historical circumstances, the specific depiction of them in Hong Kong films varies. Interestingly, in the relation with Hong Kong people, mainland women are often positioned in two extreme poles of power balance, reflecting the variable contest of strength between mainland China and Hong Kong. One typical portrayal of mainland women is to place them in a weaker position or situation, which affirms Hong Kong people's superiority and satisfies their nativism. Such a presentation indicates Hong Kongers' subconscious expectation in the relationship with mainland China, when facing China's increasing power.

2.1.1 Victimizing Mainland Women for Sympathy and Recognition: *A Hearty Response*

In earlier discussion, I have mentioned how the "China Syndrome" was played out in 1980s' Hong Kong cinema in an ambivalent way with different depictions of male and female mainlanders. Male roles include the stereotypes of *Ah Caan*—a country bumpkin who is the laughingstock in the urban city—and "Big Circles"—those violent criminals who invade Hong Kong to commit crimes and kill people; while female mainlanders are often beautified to be the incarnations of truth, goodness and grace, such as Ah Ling in *Home at Hong Kong* (1983) who purifies the souls of the male protagonist Ah Leun (played by Andy Lau). In this gender binarism, Hong Kong filmmakers seem to adopt a "more sympathetic" and "humanist" attitude towards female mainlanders (Cheng, 1997, p.100). In other words, Hong Kong filmmakers treat mainland characters with more of a love-hate ambivalence than a self-contradiction: there is fear and repulsion of the mainlanders' "intrusion," as well as sympathy

and recognition attributed to the same ethnic lines, cultural inheritance, and the realization that Hong Kong's destiny is very much connected to that of mainland China.

As exemplified by the like the "North-South Pow-wow" genre in the 1960s, Hong Kong had once welcomed the integration of immigrants from other Chinese provinces after 1949. After more than another decade of separation in all respect of development due to China's Cultural Revolution and Hong Kong's economic boom, there exists an inevitable gap between the two societies. Hong Kong and mainland citizens may not feel the same about the country's political leadership, but it is not impossible for them to live together in an "imagined community"—in Anderson's term (1991), which is the Greater China/*Da zhonghua*. This is a lasting concept that stands independent of political regime, economical system, and even geographical divisions. As one responds to the call of China and identifies with its nationhood, "the similarities and differences among the histories and lives of the peoples otherwise distinguished by region, dialect, class, gender, generation, and so on become integral parts of a totality" (E. Yau, 1994, p. 182). Holding in their minds a mental image of their affinity, Hong Kong and mainland Chinese people may eventually find reconciliation.

In Yim Ho's *Homecoming* (1984), the protagonist Shan Shan (played by Josephine Koo) lives a frustrated life in Hong Kong and returns to her hometown in Guangdong for a temporary respite. In a small village there, lives her childhood friend Zhen. Separated for twenty years, Shan Shan and Zhen are different in many ways, respectively standing for two styles of lives—one is urban, modern, capitalist, and filled with anxiety, the other rural, traditional, socialist, and filled with peace. Reminiscing about the shared childhood with Zhen and comforted by the idyllic village life, the depressed Shan Shan is healed and completes her journey of self-discovery. The film draws a picture of China as the good old home instead of a strange regime, leading to a conclusion that "Love for one's home village and friendship can overcome all differences" (Li, 1994, p. 169). Released at the beginning of the countdown to

1997 but a few years before 1989, the film reaffirmed the kinship between Hong Kong and mainland China, and emphasized the recognition of each other, presenting a situation in which all the contradictions between the two could be solved.

To call forth the recognition, Hong Kong cinema even dramatizes the tragic experience of mainland women to arouse local people's emotional affiliation to these mainland compatriots. In *A Hearty Response* (1986) (later *Hearty*), Taiwanese actress Joey Wong plays a mainland girl, Kwong Sun, who slips across the border into Hong Kong. By accident, she is injured by two bumbling cops Bon (Chow Yun-Fat) and Man (Lui Fong). When she comes to her senses in the hospital, she fakes amnesia to protect her illegal identity. Ridden by the guilt, Bon takes her back home and becomes her savior. Eventually, they fall in love. The romance is soon interrupted by a sleazy snakehead who met Kwong earlier. He kidnaps and rapes her, leading to the bloody revenge of Kwong in the end. Quite different from many mainland women in Hong Kong cinema, Kwong is lovable and endearing. Even when she is penniless and shoplifts in the supermarket, the cinematic portrayal does not arouse disgust among Hong Kong audiences. On the contrary, she wins the sympathy and even recognition of the audience, not only thanks to the charisma of Joey Wong, but also the character setting and film narrative.

Of significance is that Kwong was born in Hong Kong. As her family later moved to Guangzhou and lost her birth certificate, Kwong cannot get the right for Hong Kong's residency and has to stow away. In that way, her "illegal" immigration to Hong Kong becomes a reasonable "homecoming", and her effort to recover the lost certificate also becomes understandable. Unlike those who are pure mainlanders, Kwong has an authentic claim to be a Hong Konger, making her less "foreign." Even her name, literally meaning "born in Hong Kong," helps her to get more favorable impression from the local audiences. Besides, Kwong is pretty, kind, innocent, with all the good virtues of a woman in Chinese tradition, which are lacking in modern Hong Kong women. Once she arrives at Bon's home,

she takes up all housework including cooking and ironing, and gets on very well with Bon's mother. In contrast, Bon's girlfriend Judy, a modern Hong Kong woman, is overbearing and self-centered; she is rude to Bon's mother and never does a stitch of work. It is not surprising that Kwong wins Bon's heart and Judy is abandoned by him. Kwong and Judy, respectively standing for traditional and modern woman, form a striking contrast that indicates the value orientation of the film, that the former is appreciated while the latter is criticized. Such a dilemma here reflects Hong Kong's roots in traditional Chinese values.

Hearty was produced in the mid-1980s, just after the surge of Hong Kong's localization and the arousal of the "China Syndrome". The appreciation and recognition of traditional Chinese values in the mainland girl Kwong implies Hong Kong's cultural identification with Chinese traditions. In the film, Kwong is always in a vulnerable position, constantly insulted by local people. Upon her arrival, she seeks refuge with her aunt—her only relative in Hong Kong, but her aunt just turns her away with some money. Meanwhile, her uncle-in-law even flirts with her. Having her own sense of integrity, Kwong does not accept the money. Later she finds a dishwasher job and works hard. On her payday, other local employees conspire to pretend that immigration officials arrive to check their IDs. Kwong is scared away and her hard-earned money is divided up by the locals, who happily conclude that "if you want to get rich, find more mainland girls." Homeless and penniless, Kwoneg has to sleep out on the street, exposed to the wind and rain, until Bon finds her and offers her help. When they are shopping, they run into Judy who bears a grudge against Kwong. Judy humiliates Kwong in public and even slaps her. Once Judy knows that Kwong is an illegal immigrant, she threatens to report her to the police unless Bon apologizes. When Kwong and Bon finally get together, her misfortune does not end. She is kidnapped by the snakehead. Bon comes to rescue her, but the tragedy has already happened: the snakehead has abused her, tattooed an ugly snake on her delicate back, and raped her. Although the scoundrel is shot dead by Kwong in the end, her mental damage is permanent. As rape is the

primary offense against women, it has long been a dictum in films that rape can make women the best victim (Haskell, 1987). The rape scene of *Hearty* is immoderate, having a great impact and represents the climax of the victimization of Kwong.

Throughout the film, Kwong is a victim while other Hong Kongers (except Bon and his mother) are assailants. The mainlander/victim and Hong Konger/assailant relation represent Hong Kong as the strong party and the mainland as the weak one, which is also affirmed by Bon's rescue of Kwong. By such a power relation, Hong Kong entrenches itself in the power balance with the mainland. The simplicity and innocence of Kwong represents the agricultural/backward mainland, while the snobbery and viciousness of Hong Kongers stand for the industrial/advanced Hong Kong. The dichotomy reveals an unconscious self-critique of Hong Kong, that the materialism and utilitarianism of industrial society distort human nature. The beautification of mainland woman in both *Hearty* and *Homecoming* reveals Hong Kong's nostalgia of mainland China as an uncontaminated space. As Kwong's identity implies a blood link between mainland and Hong Kong, the Hong Kong audience can feel sympathetic for the mainland Chinese people's undeveloped conditions of life and their desire to seek a better life in Hong Kong. The alliance of Bon and Kwong in the end of film points to the interwoven destiny between Hong Kong people and mainland Chinese and a positive future, on the premise that Hong Kong takes the dominant position. When mainland compatriots are in trouble, Hong Kong people, as the film title implies, will give "a hearty response".

2.1.2 Reconfiguring the Authority of Mainland China: *Her Fatal Ways*

The rosy prospect of mutual understanding and recognition in the mid-1980s, however, was soon damaged by the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. Starting in April 1989, sparked by the death of a pro-democracy and anti-corruption official, Hu Yaobang, students and intellectuals gathered in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, protesting against the PRC government's

authoritarianism, voicing anti-corruption calls and demanding democratic reform. Soon large-scale protests also occurred in cities throughout China. People in Hong Kong also reacted and expressed their support for the students, in the hope of making an impact on the PRC government. On 27 May 1989, a gathering called "Democratic songs dedicated for China" was held at Happy Valley Racecourse and over 300,000 Hong Kong people attended. The following day, a procession of 1.5 million people, one fourth of Hong Kong's population, paraded through Hong Kong Island. There were large numbers of protest actions organized by different social groups in Hong Kong. The spirit of the time was captured in the editorial of a local paper: "In supporting the Beijing student movement, the people of Hong Kong had identified themselves completely with it. The recent marches, [fund-raising] concerts, sit-ins, and hunger-strikers have reflected the Hong Kong people's yearning for liberal-democracy—both for China and Hong Kong" ("Editorial," 1989). Hong Kong people became emotionally committed, just as Steve Tsang observes,

> They swiftly shifted from a position of wanting to forestall PRC interference in Hong Kong affairs to wanting to play a meaningful though essentially supportive role in the Chinese "democracy movement"… When they stood behind the students they felt they were not just Hong Kong citizens, but Chinese ones as well. It made them feel righteous about demanding change within the PRC in 1989. (2004, p. 247)

Then the massacre on June 4th 1989 occurred. Armed forces of the PRC government killed many students, intellectuals and citizens, arrested protesters and their supporters, and violently cracked down on other protests around China, inevitably and decisively defeating Hong Kong's fantasy about democratizing the PRC government. For many Hong Kong people, the incident strikes harder than the actual signing of the Joint Declaration (Marchetti 2006, p. 7). After initial shock, horror and disbelief, despair began to creep over the entire Hong Kong society, as well as antipathy and fear of the authority of mainland China. This

authority had displayed its strength and unchallengeable power during the incident, which felt would be exerted on Hong Kong soon. Anxieties increased and emigration figures soared.

Hong Kong cinema, as a commercial and cultural force, started to respond to the historical event and cater to the psychology of audiences. Tsui Hark's *Better Tomorrow III: Love and Death in Saigon* (*Yingxiong ben se III,* 1989) and John Woo's *Bullet in the Head* (*Die xue jietou*, 1990) both set the story in Communist Vietnam, which are actually attacking the Communist China by innuendo. If these films explicitly express the hope for escape from the authority of the Communist, another type of Hong Kong film intended to reconfigure with the mainland authority. This includes a number of films taking *gung on* (a name for policeman or "public security officer") as the protagonists and telling stories of their coming to Hong Kong to handle criminal cases. *Gung on* is a term mostly used by Hong Kong people in reference to mainland police, while they call their own police "*ging caat*" or "*ah* sir". Within China, mainland people themselves seldom call the police *jing cha* rather than *gung on*. It is obvious that in Hong Kong these two distinct terms indicate a clear boundary between the public force of mainland/communist and that of itself/capitalism, thus the term *gung on* seems to carry stronger emotional overtones, as a state apparatus helping the communists to maintain socialist order by force. In short, "*gung on*" embodies the communist party and its authority.

Her Fatal Ways (1990) was perhaps the *gung on* film that was a box-office hit. The female *gung on* Cheng Shih-nan is a die-hard Communist who escorts a criminal to Hong Kong. During her stay in Hong Kong, she makes lots of funny mistakes as she carries different cultural and political baggage. Her socialist temperament makes her a laughingstock and her occupation *gung on*, as the symbol of state apparatus even the authority of communism, is mocked playfully. The film was commercially successful[11] and three sequels

[11] The box office earnings of *Her Fatal Ways* was $20,476,919 and ranked the seventh in the list of highest box office successes that year, according to the database of Hong Kong Film Archive (http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/HKFA/en/6.php).

(*Her Fatal Ways II* (1991), *III* (1992), *IV* (1994)) were produced. Following this film, Jackie Chan's blockbuster sequel, *Police Story III* (*Jingcha gushi III*, 1992), also featuring a female *gung on* Inspector Yang (played by Michelle Yeoh) fighting along his side (Illustration 8). Although this character, without detailed representation as a mainlander, is little more than a symbol of the mainland, it appeals to audiences and the director Stanley Tong made a sequel especially for her, *Project S* (*Chaoji jihua*, 1993).

Illustration 8 left: the female gung on played by Michelle Yeoh in *Police Story III*

Other films focus on male *gung on*, such as *His Fatal Ways* (*Lao biao ni hao ye*, 1991), *The Trail* (*Da lu*, 1993), *The Bodyguard from Beijing* (*Zhongnanhai baobiao*, 1994), *From Beijing with Love* (*Guochan ling ling qi*, 1994) and *My Father Is a Hero* (*Gei baba de xin*, 1995), among others. Male *gung on* films, however, are not as popular as female *gung on* ones. For example, *His Fatal Ways* takes the supporting character in *Her Fatal Ways*, Ah Shing (who is the nephew of Cheng Shih-nan), as the leading character and the whole story centers around him. It is evident that after filmmakers had benefited so greatly from *Her Fatal Way*, they wanted to reproduce its success. Unfortunately it did not work, as the box office earnings of *His Fatal Ways* turned out to be just two fifths of *Her Fatal Way*'s. Other male *gung on* films also share the same destiny.[12]

[12] The box office of *His Fatal Ways* was $8,353,688, *The Trail* just $506,616, *The Bodyguard from Beijing* which stars Jet Li gain $11,193,177, while *Her Fatal Ways II* $25,209,488, which is even more successful than I. Almost all of the male gung on films proved less popular than female ones, with only one exception, From *Beijing with Love*. Under the charisma of bankable star Stephen Chow, it earned $37,523,850, according to the database of the Hong Kong Film Archive.

The discrepancy between treatments of female and male *gung on* films indicates a hidden gender ideology in Hong Kong cinema. *Gung on*, as a functionary of the state apparatus with its dominant authority and great power, implies masculinity, as Connell pinpoints, "The coercive and infrastructural apparatus is strongly 'masculinized' in its ideology and practice ... The point is obvious in the case of armies and police forces" (1990, p. 524). When the role of *gung on* is played by a man, the masculinity of *gung on* is so solidly confirmed that the mocking of him may directly offend the authority of the patriarchal state, mainland China. This is unacceptable, as the Hong Kong censorship rules state that film contents "should not break the good relationship with neighboring regions." That is why almost all of male *gung on* films treat their protagonist seriously even fawningly.[13] In these films male *gung on* are portrayed as "practical, efficient, heroic" and even "superman" like (Cheuk, 1994, p. 139). Yet, the glorified *gung on* cannot arouse much interest from the audiences who were wounded emotionally by the authority of mainland China in 1989. "There is a great gap between this glorified image and reality and the audience cannot accept such discrepancy" (Cheuk, 1994, p. 139). On the contrary, when the role is played by a woman, the masculinity and strength of *gung on* is reduced. Ridiculing female *gung on* in films poses less offense to mainland China and also makes the political conflict less aggressive. *Her Fatal Ways* (here and after, *Fatal*) stands as an example of how Hong Kong cinema skillfully reduces the threat of mainland China by reconfiguring its authority in post-1989 eras, that is, feminizing and ridiculing its political symbol, *gung on*.

Feminizing and Ridiculing **Gung on**

Shih Shu-mei notes that when Cheng Shih-nan (played by Carol Cheng) comes to Hong Kong from the mainland, her signs of femininity and sexuality are almost erased. As

13 One exception, Stephen Chow's *From Beijing with Love*, makes fun of male *gung on* and even touches on the issue of the corruption in this group, which resulted in the film being banned in mainland China.

"she walks a wide, masculine gait, speaks in a loud voice of authority, and spews official party rhetoric" (2007, p. 109), her image of a masculine party cadre meets the expectation of the Hong Kong audience. Cheng's Hong Kong peers do not treat her like a woman either. They bring her to a love hotel and make her share the room with her nephew, which is improper and ignores the common sense of "men and women are different" (*nan nü you bie*). Later when she is accommodated in the apartment of Inspector Wu, the arrangement is the same. Cheng also arms herself with guns and is very good at shooting. The gun is a phallic symbol associated with masculine power. When Cheng carries guns, these masculine symbols reinforce her masculinity.

This masculine image of mainland woman is derived from the Iron Girl in the new classical revolutionary cinematic narrative of mainland China during 1949~1979. After the founding of the PRC, Mao claimed: "The times are different, men and women are now the same," "Anything a male comrade can do, a female comrade can do as well." On one hand, this official ideological discourse "vigorously expedited and safeguarded sexual equality" (Dai, 2002, p. 102); on the other hand, the gender-based differences were also erased and overlooked. Women were supposed to act and work like men. Not only in daily life but also in film representation, women were neutralized, even masculinized, "ceasing to exist as gender group distinct from men" (Dai, 2002, p. 102). One classical masculine image of women can be found in *The Red Detachment of Women* (*Hongse niangzi jun*, 1961), in which women are unified into an army to fight in the war.[14] From mistreated and oppressed girls to female soldiers, their growing-up story is a process of losing femininity. While the Iron Girl image faded out on the screen of mainland films after 1979, it was "reborn" in Hong Kong cinema, as a continuation of Hong Kong's stereotype to the mainland. Also a cultural and political symbol of communist ideology, this masculine mainland woman is given "back" her femininity by Hong Kong after she enters this seductive, capitalist metropolis.

[14] See Dai, 2002, pp. 99-150.

Illustration 9 *Her Fatal Ways*

Through *Her Fatal Ways* and its three sequels, Cheng's suppressed, private self is gradually awakened. She desires and tries to become feminine, not only by applying lipstick, wearing dresses, and falling in love with Hong Kong men in every sequel, but also, as Shih observes,

> Her appearance changes accordingly: her thick, dark-rimmed glasses and long straight hair are continuously modified in the four films into thin-rimmed glasses and slightly wavy hair; her loud, masculine voice softens into a gentle, feminine one; and her wide, dramatic gait gives way to sensual steps. With the prospect of marrying a local man, her 'Hong Kong-ization' can be said to be complete. What Hong Kong does to her is to arouse in her the 'universal' longings of a woman and *regenders* her into a true, feminine self. (2007, p. 111)

Obviously, the feminization (also 'Hong Kong-ization') of Cheng (Illustration 9) is in accordance with Hong Kong's values about woman: that only sophisticated makeup, low-cut dresses, high heels and stylish hair are pretty, and that tenderly longing for love is feminine. Reforming an out-dated and conservative socialist mainland woman into a fashionable and bourgeois lady, Hong Kong's (capitalist) culture is confirmed as superior and more universal. As Cheng represents mainland China, feminizing Cheng is actually an optimistic assimilation expected by Hong Kong people: "China will become more and more capitalistic in the Hong Kong mould and may eventually eschew monolithic communist rule" (Shih, 2007, p. 113).

On the premise that both mainland China and Hong Kong are patriarchal societies, in terms of history or current power hierarchy, they are just like the father and the son in a patrilineal clan; when the masculine image of Cheng represents China—the father, Hong Kong or the son finally turns "him" "back" to "her," as well as reducing "his" power. Does it not indicate the success of Hong Kong in the struggle of two patriarchal ideologies? I find Connell's comments on engendered state appropriate in depicting HK's situation:

> Is the state patriarchal? Yes, beyond any argument, on the evidence discussed above… Rather the state is historically patriarchal, patriarchal as a matter of concrete social practices. State structures in recent history institutionalize the European equation between authority and a dominating masculinity; they are effectively controlled by men; and they operate with a massive bias towards heterosexual men's interests. (Connell, 1990, p. 29)

Undoubtedly, the state (always or necessarily) acts as an agent of male domination, for which neither China nor Hong Kong can make an exception. Consequently, to feminize a state, is virtually to reduce its power and grade in patriarchy. As a result, the authority of "father" is challenged, as it has been changed to "female," and the "son" who was previously under the threat of father, turns out to be superior, and is still "male." In this way, feminizing *gung on* in Hong Kong film is to reduce the threat and fear the authority of mainland China.

Another evidence of *Fatal*'s feminizing *gung on* is when the Chief Inspector asks Cheng to disarm herself and give up her guns, because it is not permitted that she bear arms in Hong Kong. Cheng obliges and relinquishes her weapons. This can be interpreted as a metaphor of castration, which deprives Cheng of her masculinity, leading to her feminization, as well as changing her from powerful to vulnerable. Furthermore, it also can be taken as a metaphor for Hong Kong's imagination that the weapons of China, which have killed the innocent students and intellectuals and will probably be used against Hong Kong people in the near future, are disarmed, too. Finally, the threat of force the mainland brings to Hong Kong

is overcome, and Hong Kong defends its freedom and carries on the work of peace. Although near the end of the film, in the scene of fighting against local criminals, Cheng turns out to be still secretly carrying a gun, it is accepted by her Hong Kong counterparts because her force is used to cooperate with the Hong Kong police and crack down on crime. Finally, the criminals are caught and the cooperation is successful, implying the force of mainland China can become a help to Hong Kong's social order, under the premise of "cooperation."

Besides, the erasing and returning of femininity in Cheng's character are both to achieve humorous effect. Cheng's mainland traits, her countrified appearance, inappropriate behaviors, and political identities are all dramatized and mocked, adding to the comic effect.

The first scene of the film begins with a running bus, with a Mandarin revolutionary song "My Motherland" ("*wo de zu guo*") in the soundtrack in praise of the great socialist motherland. Then the camera shows a rustic face of a woman who is singing the song. Her thick-rimmed glasses, shoulder-length straight haircut and old-fashioned shirt present a general stereotype of mainland women (discussed in Chapter One) and immediately call attention to her difference from local women. She said to her sidekick and nephew Ah Sheng, "I've brought you out to bring honor for our country." Later audiences would know that she is the heroine Cheng Shih-nan, who is a *gung on* escorting a criminal to Hong Kong. The next hilarious spitting scene shows that "the mainlander's otherness is exploited and ridiculed as an entertaining spectacle" (Chang, 2009, 183): When an elderly passenger coughs and accidentally spits on Ah Sheng's shoe, the upset Ah Sheng tells and shows him that one should spit on the floor, not on someone's shoes. Cheng corrects and educates Ah Sheng that both of them are wrong, because the right way is spitting out the window, and she does it. A motorcycle driver happens to be close to the bus, and unfortunately, the phlegm is spat into his open mouth.

The first scene sets the tone of the whole film, and the comic effects come from three facets: Cheng's rustic appearance, her lack of proper etiquette and "ideological

malapropisms" (Shih, 2007, p. 109) of her behavior and language in the context of Hong Kong. In the rest of the film and its sequels, the comic materials for the audiences follow this set, such as Cheng singing revolutionary songs in a karaoke bar with such devotion that her high notes shatter glass; when she needs to disguise herself to lure a criminal, she puts on makeup like "the Red Detachment of Women", shocking everyone. Exaggerated cultural and political conflicts and misunderstandings between Hong Kong and mainland China personify her as a laughingstock. As V. Lee (2006) analyzes, "strictly speaking, this series (*Fatal*) belongs to the popular comedy genre. It is neither ambitious nor critical of the changing political environment of the territory but skillfully plays into the political tunes of the time for maximum comic effect" (p.158). When "Hong Kong people needed some kind of therapy to overcome the shock and the trauma" (Marchetti, 2006. p.17) after the Tiananmen Incident, owing to comedies like *Fatal*, "they ran away from reality and vented their frustration in senseless laughter" (Marchetti, 2006, p.17).

Comedy, as Sutton has analyzed in her book *The Catharsis of Comedy*, is a certain process of ridicule that arouses laughter, through which the audience can be purged from bad feelings that are provoked by the repression of authority figures or societal institutions (Sutton, 1994). Sutton proposes two keywords in the process whereby comedy facilitates catharsis: a surrogate and a target. A surrogate is the ridiculous person, thing, situation or idea shown on screen, which represents a special target in the real society, such as a contemptible authority, a repressive institution, or an unpleasant situation in the off-stage world (Sutton, 1994, p. 49). These societal agents can threaten audiences and provoke their anxiety, hostility, resentment, frustration and other unpleasant responses. Under the hegemony, these feelings are "socially inappropriate, impermissible, or taboo" (Sutton, 1994, p. 99) and are amassed in audiences' minds, eventually becoming repressed psychic energy, which is waiting to be clarified.

In *Fatal* and its sequels, Cheng Shih-nan plays the role of surrogate, while mainland China is the target: their likeness can be easily perceived by audiences from Hong Kong's general public. Cheng herself even says that she is representing mainland China when she drinks with Uncle Wu who is a Kuomintang veteran (Then she proposes toasts to the Communists, the Chairman, to the Central Military Committee and State Council of the PRC). During the Tiananmen Incident, Hong Kong people came to the realization that they cannot exert any influence on the PRC government and could possibly be deprived of democracy and freedom just as those students were. Under the circumstance that destiny cannot be self-determined and the Communist regime of the PRC government will finally be their overlord, it was inevitable that unpleasant feelings were provoked. Hong Kong's feelings are, as Sutton summarizes, "pain and frustration caused by the repression of strong feelings towards impossible action", "repressed desire for greater personal freedom", "hostile resentment of those who deprive [the spectator] of the freedom" and "guilt for having such impossible feelings"(Sutton, 1994, p. 100). While all these were repressed in Hong Kong people's minds, comedies like *Fatal* provided an opportunity for audiences to be purged (momentarily) from these bad feelings.

Guided by the awareness of the likeness between surrogate (the female *gung on* Cheng Shih-nan) and target (mainland China), there are two processes of transferring in clarification: the audiences' feelings toward the target are transferred to its surrogate; in the meantime their attitude towards the surrogate is transferred back to the target. In the first process, when Hong Kong audiences recognize the referential meaning of the surrogate/Cheng, their taboo feelings toward the target/mainland China, which are repressed in the off-stage world, are shifted to the on-stage surrogate/Cheng, under "emotionally safe conditions" (Sutton 1994, p. 43). When audiences laugh at the ridiculousness of Cheng, their laughter cleanses them from the bad feelings aroused by their perception of mainland China, which thus performs "a healthy therapeutic function" (Sutton, 1994, p. 99), resulting in

bringing catharsis to the audience. Then in the latter process, when Hong Kong audiences laugh at Cheng's awkward behavior, political slogans and socialist beliefs, they adopt a superior attitude to her. After they realize that the surrogate/Cheng is a comically distorted imitation of the target, mainland China, they will shift the teasing attitude to the actual target, completing the process of catharsis.

Except for the purging of bad feelings, laughter also has another function, as Rowe (1995) points out, to "attempt a liberation from authority" (p. 44). In the *Fatal* series, the female *gung on* Cheng, representing the authority figure of mainland China, is designed to poke fun at mainland officialdom by showing that its members are not immune to entanglement in the ridiculous. With this representation, the authority of mainland China is reconfigured by Hong Kong film. The former power and prestige of mainland China, which have been shown in the Tiananmen Incident to stabilize the regime of the Communist Party, are now deconstructed. The popularity and box office success of the *Fatal* series proves the wide acceptance of this comedic strategy in local audiences. Hong Kong cinema succeeds in exploiting comedy's double allegiance to anarchy and order: its assault on authority (the mainland government) and its cohesion in community (the local community of Hong Kong).

2.1.3 Eroticizing Mainland Women to Make Hong Kong Masculinity: *The Girls from China*

Paralleling the strategy of reducing the power of mainland authority in Hong Kong cinema, is the building of Hong Kong's masculinity by eroticizing mainland women. After the Tiananmen Incident, in the early 1990s, a trend of erotic films appeared. Starting with *Temptation Summary* (*San du youhuo*, 1990), which grossed more than ten million HKD from the local box office, the number of erotic films surged. At the height of the boom, roughly

half of Hong Kong theatrical features were Category III films.[15] In Hong Kong's rating system, "Category III" became an umbrella for the rapid growth of low-budget films about sex, violence and horror, such as pornographic and cult films. In the early 1990s, many erotic films cater for the collective fear of Hong Kong society when the masculinity of Hong Kong is threatened, as erotic film is "a convenient solution to the problem of a shortage of hot chicks to help men do masculinity. Mass-produced images of women in submissive, subordinating, often violently denigrating poses offer men a pictorial medium they can vicariously do masculinity and experience manhood" (Schacht and Ewing, 2004, p. 81).

It is noteworthy that among these erotic films, a popular sub-genre focuses on mainland women as protagonists and tells stories about their prostitution in Hong Kong. In a narrow sense, prostitution means women selling their bodies; but in a broader sense, prostitution also can refer to women's activity that exchanges their body with any profit. According to Kimmel and Aronson, prostitution is: "an extreme manifestation of traditional gender relations, in which women are subordinate to men and sexually objectified by men. The existence of prostitution provides men with an arena in which they can reaffirm their masculinity, by satisfying their 'need' for sex or their desire for a certain type of sex with a certain type of women" (2004, p. 642). In this flux of erotic Hong Kong films, the "certain type of women" comes from the mainland, and their purpose may not be money only, but power or position in Hong Kong. No matter in which sense, these mainland women have one thing in common: they are portrayed as lustful beings.

Illustration 7 *The Legend of an Erotic Movie Star*

[15] Hong Kong motion picture rating system was established in 1988, which created three levels of main ratings for film censorship: Category I: Suitable for all ages; Category II: Not suitable for children; Category III: Persons aged 18 and above only.

In this line of films, there are *Rogues from the North* (*Bei mei chuanqi*, 1992), *The Legend of an Erotic Movie Star* (*Bei mei huanghou*, 1993) (Illustration 10), *Whores from the North* (*Bei mei*, 1993), and *The Girls from China* (*Wo laizi Beijing*, 1993), all of which are of low taste and sensory stimuli, following the usual soft porn requirements for sexual intercourse and gang rape. In these erotic films, the story becomes less important, consisting of little more than the mainland women's former hard life in mainland and their present prostitution life in Hong Kong. Their bodies, the physical forms of these women from mainland China, become undoubtedly the selling point. Their mainland identity, however, makes these films no longer simply about sexuality, but about sexuality charged with political frustration. Through the form of erotic films and the content of prostitution, Hong Kong cinema conquers mainland women and ultimately recovers Hong Kong's masculinity, which has been "weakened" by mainland Chinese influences.

In *The Girls from China* (1993) (here and after, *Girls*), the voyeurism of Hong Kong is very clear. The protagonist Chow Ying is a Beijing girl who arrives in Hong Kong, and proceeds to be preyed upon by all manner of local males. She shacks up with Ken who owns a studio, but after one night of passion, she leaves him for her "dream" to have a career in the city. Her fortunes change dramatically when she starts selling insurance. Her methods of gaining friends and clients have much to do with use of feminine charms and wiles. Exchanging her body with insurance contracts, Ying becomes rich and edges herself into the upper class of local society. In the end of the film, she even successfully gets married to a rich young man.

Through the whole film, the mainland woman Chow Ying, just as the traditional exhibitionist female role is a "code for strong visual and erotic impact to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey 1989, p. 19), is under the gaze of Hong Kong men. The gaze, as

Kaplan (1990) defines, has three levels.[16] In *Girls*, first, as the photographer and director are male, they are using a camera to look at and film Ying, the female, for the benefit of the male audience who watch her on the big screen. Second, in the film text, Ying is gazed upon by the Hong Kong men around her, such as her cousin, neighbor, boss, Ken, her insurance clients and her fiancé, all of whom have stared her up and down flirtatiously. One plot that highlights the gaze is that Ken likes filming Ying with his camera. The first time he shoots her, she is laughing and posing before the camera. The second time, when they have sex, he shoots the whole process and plays it on the TV wall over his bed. Ying's body is represented as an object of visual penetration, vulnerably exposed for the masculine gaze. Later, after Ying leaves him and engages with a rich young man, Ken even uses the tape to blackmail Ying and ask her to come back. As the camera turns the Ying into an object, distancing viewer and viewed, it helps Ken to become a voyeur. At the same time, Ken, the photographer, has power over the person in front of the lens. With a camera, Ken represents a controlling gaze to Ying. In this way, the gaze of Hong Kong men toward mainland woman is much more evident.

Third, male audiences in Hong Kong also can identify with those male gazes and look at Ying. For example, there is one scene that when Ying takes a shower in the public bath, a male neighbor is spying on her through a hole on the door. The first shot is a full shot where the man is peeping, and the next is a close-up of his eye behind the hole, both of which are objective shots. Then the third shot shows what he sees through the hole—Ying is bathing naked, and her body is sexy. The shot stays long and gives details of Ying's nudity. The peeper is obviously stimulated and says himself, "I'll sacrifice everything just to make love with her." It is a subjective shot of the peeper, and also a cinematic apparatus that

[16] Kaplan (1990) points out that there are three looks in the cinema: a. within the film text itself, men gaze at women, who become objects of the gaze; b. the spectator, in turn, is made to identify with this male gaze, and to objectify the women on the screen; and c. the camera's original "gaze" comes into play in the very act of filming. (p. 14)

substitutes film audiences into the place of the peeper: now the audience also peeps at Ying and get sexual gratification in the process. Chow Ying becomes an erotic object "for the characters within the screen story" and "for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen" (Mulvey, 1989, p.19). Then the shot goes back to a side shot of the peeper, which is an objective shot and changes the place of audiences from peeper to observer. When audiences sit in front of the screen they see both naked Ying and the peeper. The audiences are thus placed in a superior, hypocritical position: they can enjoy what the peeper is enjoying while at the same time condemning him. They know that they will not be punished for gazing at Ying's body, because Ying, who is being peeped on, does not know of their existence.

Yet, providing sexual gratification is not the ultimate purpose. The deeper meaning of voyeurism, as Kaplan summarizes, is "linked to disparagement, has a sadistic side, and is involved with pleasure through control of domination and with punishing the woman" (1990, p. 31). This means that while engaging in this voyeuristic activity, Hong Kong audiences not only look and imagine, but also exert a dominating power over mainland women, which carries with it authority and a sense of superiority. Considering that voyeurism here is a process of the male gaze, and adapting Kaplan's theory about gaze, we can see that there are also three "dominating powers" in voyeurism, along with the three gazes. First, the camera frames mainland women while male Hong Kong directors behind the camera decide mainland women characters' every move and destiny. Second, in the film text, Hong Kong men, such as the mainland woman's lovers, clients or pimps, possess mainland women and control them to satisfy themselves physically or benefit economically. Third, male audiences identify with the male roles in films, dominating and enjoying mainland women, and finally completing the voyeuristic process. Mainland women in these erotic films, similar to their roles as the surrogate in comedies as discussed above, also function as substitutes for mainland China. When their mainland Chinese identities are emphasized during the

storytelling, such as the repeated theme song of *Girls* "I Was Born in Beijing", audiences can easily associate these women with their homeland, mainland China. These linkages are common and effective strategies that enable audiences to transfer their feelings of domination toward mainland women to mainland China, recalling in Hong Kong audiences the power that has been lost. Through eroticizing mainland women, Hong Kong audiences/Hong Kong released the castration anxiety aroused by the mainland and retrieved their masculinity.

However, as an orientation in Hong Kong cinema, this eroticizing of mainland women did not last long. One reason is that the whole soft-core pornography industry has withered with the general decline of the Hong Kong film market and the wider availability of pornography in home video formats since 1993 (Bordwell, 2000, p. 76). Another reason is that these gimmicks are very well known by audiences and quickly become stale. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's wishful superiority over the mainland became increasingly unrealistic as the return of Hong Kong's sovereignty to the PRC approached. After the 1997 handover, mainland China would be the master of Hong Kong's destiny, and China would take the position of superiority. Under the threat of mainland China's power, Hong Kong's anxiety changed to another form—Hong Kong cannot control mainland women any more, conversely, Hong Kong people become the victims of mainland women in film.

2.2 In Fear of the Power of Mainland China

During the Cold War between the capitalist West and the Soviet Union and socialism in general, socialism/communism was depicted negatively in Western media. This was not only a propaganda strategy of competition, but also a reaction to socialism's dictatorship and concentration of power, which were unacceptable, even unthinkable in the democratic West. Influenced by Western media, in the British colony Hong Kong, most of Hong Kong people (except for the left wing) have little good feeling to communism and the Communist Party.

Some Hong Kongers even immigrated to Hong Kong to escape political persecution from the mainland authorities. Their attitude is later elevated to antipathy, after several communist atrocities, such as the Cultural Revolution in China, the repressive regime of Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and wars waged by the Viet Cong in Vietnam, during which millions of people died and thousands fled to Hong Kong. Communists were seen as violent and cruel, and this vision was later confirmed by the Tiananmen Incident of 1989. Hong Kong's hope for a bright future was replaced by a nightmare—a nightmare full of killing, blood and death, a nightmare directly related to mainland China and its Communist Party.

Hong Kong's attitude to mainland China is paradoxical. On one hand, Hong Kong believes in its own superiority through its capitalist system, developed society and advanced economy. By victimizing, ridiculing, feminizing and eroticizing mainland women in films, Hong Kong affirms this superficial dominance. On the other hand, the return of Hong Kong's sovereignty to the Chinese government in 1997 put mainland China into the position of control. The fear of losing superiority and the worry about an unpredictable future caused collective anxiety in Hong Kong society. Embodying this anxiety, a number of Hong Kong films portray mainlanders as invaders and Hong Kong as victims.

In *Long Arm of the Law* (1984), a group of mainland gangsters illegally come down to Hong Kong and commit robberies, killings, smuggling and drug trafficking, disturbing the peace and order of local society. These "Big Circle" characters were once Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution and now converge on Hong Kong, planning a hit on a jewelry store, and leaving a trail of violence behind them with the police forced trying to catch up. After the film's success, two sequels were produced in 1987 and 1989, in which the mainland gangsters' cruelty increase. This trilogy tends to "underscore the worst prejudices of Hong Kong people regarding Mainland Chinese: they are seen as misfits, outsiders and worse of all, murderous criminals" (Teo, 1997, p. 232). "Big Circle" gangsters present the most infamous

images of mainlanders in Hong Kong cinema,[17] which can still be found in recent films produced by Milkyway Image.[18] This representation plays up Hong Kong people's collective sense of fear, as Li analyzes,

> [Hong Kong and mainland's] differences create a standoff and a feeling of animosity between the two worlds. Hong Kong people in general have been very vocal in their complaints against the entry not only of Vietnamese refugees but of illegal immigrants from the mainland. There is a strong perception that these unwanted guests will seriously harm the territory's flaunted sense of "stability and prosperity" (1994, p. 172).

What is even more fearful, is that the characterization of "Big Circles" is not completely flat, there is also the "mythologizing" of their behavior: "savages too have their own code of honor….the code is *yi*, where personal loyalties count more than any law" (Teo, 1997, p. 233). These loyal figures are set in sharp contrast with local gangsters and policemen, who are selfish and perfidious. This contrast indicates a kind of "self-indictment" (E. Yau, 1994, p. 188) of Hong Kong. While "Big Circle" films are discussed often, few researchers notice that the representation of female mainland invaders also reflects Hong Kong's subconscious fear and rejection of mainland China, in an even more extreme way: they are often demonized.

The representation of female invaders from mainland China goes through two stages. Before 1997, "female invader" films emphasized mainland women's violent criminality, in which they were assailants, cruel and coldblooded, killing people without scruples, such as in *Fatal Encounter* (Duoming jiechu, 1994), *The Six Devil Women* (Liu monü, 1996) and *Intruder* (Kongbu ji, 1997). In post-97 films, the violent image is adjusted to another form, that of the villainess, whose weapons are not arms and violence but temptation and sexuality,

[17] See Cheng, 1990; E. Yau, 1994; S. Teo, 1997, Chapter 15 "Bad Customers and Big Timers"; V. Lee, 2006.
[18] Such as *Expect the Unexpected* (*Feichang turan*, 1998), *Breaking New* (*Da shijian*, 2004) and *Tactical Unit-Comrades in Arms* (*Jidong budui zhi tongpao*, 2009).

such as *The Lion Roars* (He dong shi hou, 2002), *Beyond Our Ken* (Gongzhu fuchou ji, 2004), *Dumplings* (2004) and *Drink Drank Drunk* (Qian bei bu zui, 2005). While the assailant and villainess images both mix danger with luring and share some similarities such as the evil and destructive power mainland women possess, the "assailant" image emphasizes the physical destruction they bring to Hong Kong people, while the "villainess" image stresses their temptation and enticement, which is psychological.

2.2.1 Violent Mainland Women: *Intruder*

In cinema, this anxiety and fear of the power of mainland were explored by filmmakers with a sense of unease. In the orientation that demonizes mainland women, represented by *Fatal Encounter*, *The Six Devil Women* and *Intruder*, each and every mainland woman is extremely desperate and wicked, murdering Hong Kong people without mercy. "Fatal", "devil", "intruder" are words used to manifest some popular local attitudes towards mainlanders. In *Fatal Encounter*, Wah, a Hong Kong truck driver who is newlywed and has became a father, meets a seductive prostitute Ah Hung during a long haul job in the mainland and through his encounter with her, becomes infected with HIV. The virus also transfers to his son and causes the little boy's death; his wife collapses and the whole family breaks down. Ah Hung even comes to Hong Kong and bites people everywhere; she is finally shot dead by the Hong Kong police. How "fatal" the encounter with mainland woman can be is shown obviously in the film. Similarly, in *The Six Devil Women*, mainland women are depicted in the same way. The story is about a vicious crime gang composed of ten men and six women from the mainland countryside. The six sexy women pretend to be hitchhikers and seduce men on the highway, and then other ten partners kill these men and steal their money. Before the police catch them, they commit a roster of appalling crimes.

Intruder, a 1997 film, reveals the culmination of Hong Kong's fear and anxiety. The film tells a story about a mainland woman Yan (played by Taiwanese actress Wu Chien-lien),

a wanted criminal who has murdered a prostitute in Shenzhen and assumed her identity to enter Hong Kong. As she also wants to get a Hong Kong ID for her husband, who is still in mainland China, she finds an out-of-work cab driver who is divorced and lives alone in the suburbs. This man mistakes her for a prostitute, and takes her home. To his great misfortune, one night's affair turns into several days of imprisonment, violence and torture. When the poor Hong Kong man Chi Min is kidnapped by Yan, he begs for a chance to live and offers his bankbook to her, but she shows no interest in it. On the contrary, she takes great interest in his whole life story, like when and where he was born, which schools he attended, and how many family members he has. After a series of inhuman treatments (the violence is exaggerated by the filmmakers and is very hard to swallow), Chi Min is driven crazy and shouts, "What do you want from me? Why don't you just kill me?" It is not only his bewilderment but also the audiences'. Ultimately, the puzzle is uncovered—What Yan wants is Chi Min's "fresh" hands (Illustration 11), which are later transplanted to her husband, then her husband can use Chi Min's fingerprint to pass the authentication of Registration of Persons Offices, successfully replacing Chi Min and obtaining a Hong Kong Identity Card. Chi Min's own ID with his photo is burned by the couple, visually representing identity loss. After his whole life experience is assimilated, as well identity card is assumed, Chi Min, the Hong Konger, will be completely replaced by Yan's husband, the mainlander.

Illustration 8 the victim Chi Min in *Intruder*

To demonize Yan, filmmakers use some cinematic devices. First, they create a filthy environment, in which it is raining heavily throughout, with frequent thunder and lightning, and the entire outdoor scenes are muddy and rain-drenched. It is a habitat of demons, as demons are manifestation of ritual pollution, they prefer to live outside the ritually clean and purified community (Befu, 1990, p. 21). These elements not only establish a perilous atmosphere, but also reflect Yan's dark inside. Second, the filmmakers use low-key lighting schemes to produce stark contrasts and dramatic shadow patterning. Yan's face is always partially or wholly obscured by darkness, making her much more mysterious and ghostly (Illustration 12). No one can read her inner thoughts, nor predict her next violent action. Third, the space has been carefully designed and there are two major locations in the film where most violent sequences take place: one is Chi Min's house; the other is the surrounding wood. The former is an indoor scene, confined and repressive, which implies Chi Min's predicament. The latter is an outdoor scene, as woods suggest, raw or primitive domains, the habitat of wild beasts, associated with the bestiality of Yan.

Interestingly, Wu Chien-lien, the actress who plays Yan, is frequently typecast as a sweet romantic heroine or melodramatic victim.[19] Although sometimes her characters are tough, it does not change her role of being protected and rescued by male characters. Suddenly, the angel transforms to a demon—a weak woman who needs man's protection turns out to be a violent and powerful demon who tortures and kills a man with unimaginable cruelty. As the disguise of her sweet and vulnerable appearances turns to danger, the threat (to man) is unexpected and unprepared. In *Fatal Encounter* and *The Six Devil Women*, the evil women also disguise themselves using tenderness and catch the men off guard, then lure them into the abyss. Step by step, mainland women are successfully demonized by Hong Kong filmmakers, indicating Hong Kong's fear and anxiety.

[19] See her representative films like *A Moment of Romance* (*Tian ruo you qing*) serials—I (1990), II (1993), III (1996) and *Eighteen Springs* (*Bansheng yuan*, 1997).

Illustration 9 Yan obscured by darkness in *Intruder*

Intruder was shot before July 1, 1997, and released in November of that year, revealing Hong Kong society's collective subconscious fear toward the approaching handover deadline. The whole film is permeated with the fear of losing identity and being replaced by mainlanders, and every turn in the plot is around the keyword, identity—whether Yan steals the identity of the prostitute to enter Hong Kong, or her husband assumes Chi Min's identity to stay in Hong Kong. It is not the Yan couple but the victims who pay the price. Both the prostitute and Chi Ming die, furthermore, they are extinguished as if they had never existed in the world. To Hong Kong audiences, it was their ultimate fear for the future.

Although mainland China proposes "One Country, Two Systems" which will last at least fifty years and promises that Hong Kong will enjoy a high degree of autonomy, Hong Kong people still have doubts and lack confidence in mainland China. What will happen after Hong Kong's sovereignty is handed over to China? Would the communist atrocities also visit Hong Kong, as there will be a Peoples' Liberation Army Garrison in Hong Kong after the handover, even though China promised military forces stationed in Hong Kong would not interfere in local affairs? Would Hong Kong be occupied by China and will mainland Chinese become the masters? Will the Hong Kong identity therefore be replaced? Referring to Yan's "honest" explanation to Chi Min, "after killing the prostitute and using her identity to enter Hong Kong, I found it's not difficult to replace a person," the answer to these questions can

be found by audiences, "it's not difficult" for mainlanders to replace Hong Konger's identity, it is easy, probable and therefore coming soon.

In the face of the mainlanders' invasion, audiences are wondering who can protect Hong Kong. The film gives a negative and desperate answer: no one. To Hong Kong people, the Hong Kong-China border is the front line of defense at which the immigration ordinance can legally exclude certain immigrants who are considered dangerous to Hong Kong. But in *Intruder*, the border is vanishing. On one hand, mainlanders can illegally enter Hong Kong as if there is no border at all. Demonstrating this, Yan's husband stows away on a boat. On the other hand, even the legal border is useless, as mainland criminals also can use a legal passport to cross the border, endangering at will the security of Hong Kong. In the film, Yan kills the prostitute Siqin, then disguises herself as Siqin and assumes her identity to get into Hong Kong. When at customs, the official asks her name and compares her with Siqin's photo on the passport. In this scene, the shots create an atmosphere of tension, which is crosscut several times the close-up of Yan's self-possessed expression with the sign of "Custom" on the background and a medium shot of the official who is examining Yan's passport. The suspense is built around whether Yan can bluff her way through. It turns out that she succeeds, and in the next close-up of the passport with Siqin's photo, the official stamps the entry permit on it, with a sound effect "bang". The shot with Yan's face on the foreground and the sign of "Custom" on the background creates an ironic effect, that the custom as Hong Kong's front line of defense is ineffectual. After the front line of defense is breached, there is a second one, the Immigration Office. In the next scene in the film, Yan arrives in Hong Kong and goes to Hong Kong Immigration Office to apply for a temporary Identity Card. Without difficulties, she gets the temporary ID as well as the right of legal abode, essentially permission to stay. Hong Kong's second line which is supposed to maintain the "purity" of Hong Kong residents also turns out to be ineffective. The last hope may be the police, whom Hong Kong citizens usually count on for their security, but they are useless too.

Later in the film after Yan successfully gets the permanent ID, she encounter two policemen on the street and they ask her to show her ID, and she does. The policemen do not notice anything unusual and just let Yan go. Once again, Yan prevails. There are indeed several chances to penetrate Yan's disguise, but every law-enforcing department in Hong Kong fails. The mainland criminal remains untouched while Hong Kong people are completely vulnerable and helpless. Hong Kong people's fear of mainland China as well as the distrust of the colonial government is displayed clearly. In the face of mainlanders' "invasion" (the 1997 handover), Hong Kong has no one to depend on.

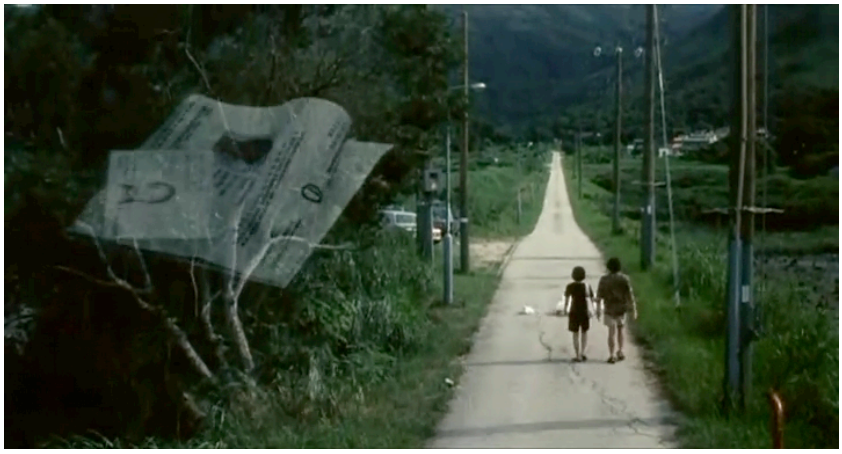

Illustration 10 The last scene of *Intruder*

This fear and anxiety is heightened to such an extent that a catharsis is impossible. Towards the end of *Intruder*, the crime is exposed but the Hong Kong police still cannot catch Yan and her husband. The couple is not only free but also walking hand in hand forward along a straight road, a metaphor for a positive, unpredictable future (Illustration 13). Yan says, "We failed because I became kind for a moment. I'm not bad and ruthless enough. But it doesn't matter, I can do it better the next time," with an implication that she may continue committing crimes. Hong Kong people and Hong Kong are still under the threat of "demonic" mainland women and mainland China, and there is no release even after they cross the "deadline", 1997.

2.2.2 Seductive Mainland Women: *Dumplings*

After 1997, understandably, it is impossible for Hong Kong cinema to express its negative feeling to mainland China in such a frank way as *Intruder* did. Meanwhile, it seemed like mainland China did not bring calamity to Hong Kong as predicted, on the contrary, the PRC government even helped Hong Kong through the difficulty of the Asian Financial Crisis which happened soon after the handover. The "smooth transition" which the PRC government promised was really underway; the PLA garrison in Hong Kong proved their fine style of work and strict discipline, in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Law; the memory of killing, blood and death was fading, so too the fear of violent demons. Hong Kong's wariness and suspicion of mainland China, however, still exists. Under the rapid economic growth of China and the frequent intercommunications between the two regions, new social, economic and political challenges arose in endless succession. Under this situation, the danger and lure of mainland China is embodied in another form, the villainess.

In *Beyond Our Ken* (2004), local girl Ching (Gillian Chung) who has been spurned by Ken (Daniel Wu) makes an alliance with his current lover Shirley (played mainland actress Tao Hong) from the mainland, to take revenge for Ken's practice of posting nude photos of his girlfriends on the Internet. Beneath the surface of their female bonding, Ching and Shirley battle against each other in various ways, for the attention of the insidious but charming Ken, showing audiences an intense conflict. Finally, both of them find that they have been betrayed by the other and there is no true victor. In *Drink Drank Drunk* (2005), the handsome Daniel Wu (who plays the role of Mike) once again becomes the focus of attention. In this film local woman Siu-Man (played by Miriam Yeung) also wages war with a mainland woman Zhao Jie (played by mainland actress Hu Jing) who takes a fancy to Daniel and intervenes in the couple's relationship. Although Daniel has been lured away by an ideal career Hu offers to him, he finally discovers Hu's true colors and comes back to Miriam, who loves him

intensely. The battle between local and mainland women also extends to costume films, such as *The Lion Roars* (2002), where local actress Cecilia Cheung plays a sassy girl Moth Liu who falls in love with talented poet Seasonal Chan (Louis Koo) and marries him. The couple has a lovely time until one day the wife needs to go on a trip and the husband is targeted for seduction by a princess, played by mainland actress Fan Bingbing. (Illustration 14) The couple's marriage is damaged and Liu even drinks "Forget Love" potion to forget both Chan and the pain his affair brought upon her. The princess entices Chan to marry her, but she fails. Chan goes through great hardships, finally recalls Liu's memory, and the couple embraces in a happy ending.

Illustration 11 The seduction scene in *The Lion Roars*

The portrayal of the mainland villainess, who seduces Hong Kong man and damages his relationship with the local woman, taking away what local woman "owns," echoes one of the social realities of Hong Kong. Statistics consistently show that in Hong Kong there are more unmarried females than unmarried males in the prime marriageable ages of 20 – 49. In 2003, the number of unmarried females was 225,000 more than unmarried males, and in 2006, that discrepancy rose to 317,000. Projected to 2036, the situation will be that for every 10 Hong Kong women there will be only 7 Hong Kong men, and nearly one third of women will not be able to find a spouse ("Gender Imbalance," 2007). As the Census and Statistics

Department points out, one of the main causes of gender imbalance among the never married population is that there is an increasing trend of males from Hong Kong marrying females from the mainland of China (*Ibid*). Since mainland China opened its doors and the exchange through visits, trade and economic cooperation between Hong Kong and mainland increased, marriages between Hong Kong working-class men and mainland women have become popular. In 2006 alone, the number of Hong Kong men marrying mainland women grew to 28,145, up from 15,776 in 1986 ("Hong Kong People," 2007). During last 20 years, the total number could be nearly 480,000 (Census and Statistics Department, 2007, p. FB8-FB9). As Hong Kong women already outnumber Hong Kong men, it is much more difficult for women to find a spouse when more and more Hong Kong men go north to get married. In marriage, mainland women "rob" local women of the chance to marry and become their strong competition.

Moreover, the cross-border keeping of mistresses (in Cantonese, *yi naai*; in Mandarin, *er nai*) by local men is also a crucial issue in Hong Kong society. Public discourse in Hong Kong portrayed the legal wives, the local Hong Kong women, as "gradually neglected their looks and turned into non-attractive, dull and dumb housewives…(They) are characterized to have bad tastes for fashion, narrow visions of life, bad manners, big bellies, greed, and a habit of gambling", while mainland mistresses are "more beautiful and presentable than Hong Kong wives" (So, 2002, p.14). According to a survey, in 1996, it was estimated that out of the approximately two million married couples in Hong Kong, about three hundred thousand husbands had mistresses in China (M. L. Ng, 2001, p.20). If unfaithful wives and those husbands who have mistresses in Hong Kong or practice casual sex are included, it is reasonable to estimate that at least about one third of the married couples are or have been unfaithful to their spouses (Rosenthal, 1999). The percentage of unfaithful couples could be more striking when brought up to date (Tam & Liong, 2005). In Shenzhen, there are many mansions and villages called "*yi naai* village" as thousands of Hong Kong men's mistresses

and children are presumed to live there. It is Hong Kong men's "second family" outside Hong Kong. The problem of mainland mistress-keeping is so widespread that in 2009, local wives even organized a demonstration to ask the government legislate against it ("Hong Kong Women," 2009).

Evidently, these issues with mainland women weigh heavily on local sensitivities, especially on the minds of local women. Mainland women's migration into their midst, cross-border marriage, as well as the opportunities they pose for adulterous Hong Kong men working or taking their leisure on the mainland, have seriously threatened the interests of local women. These situations with mainland women cause the Hong Kong woman to lose their sense of security and superiority. *The Lion Roars*, *Beyond Our Ken* and *Drink Drank Drunk* are films mirroring local women's situations in the society. They cannot maintain their positions anymore, as mainland women, the villainesses, use their charms to seduce the Hong Kong husbands/boyfriends and damage the Hong Kong women's happiness. Mainland women invade Hong Kong, and this time, the weapon is feminine charm.

What appears as a battle between women from two regions, fighting for men, for love and control of men's libido can in fact be viewed as an allegory of the peculiar economic and geopolitical relationship between mainland China and Hong Kong. This allegory is deeply ingrained in the narrative of *Dumplings* (2004). In this film, the mainland minx Mei (played by Bai Ling) is a Pandora, bringing temptation to both Hong Kong woman (Mrs. Lee, played by Miriam Yeung) and a Hong Kong man (Mr. Lee, played by Tony Leung Ka Fai).

The film *Dumplings* is adapted from the bestselling woman writer Lee Pik-Wah's novel of the same title. In the original novel by Lee, Mei is living in Shenzhen and Mrs. Lee is a Taiwanese star who goes to Hong Kong for career development. But in the film, the director Fruit Chan changes the character setting: Mei is living in Hong Kong and Mrs. Lee is an authentic Hong Konger. This change of location has a profound meaning. Mei no longer stays in her own territory but steps beyond the boundary and lives in the same city with the Lee's.

In the novel, nothing happens between Mei and Mr. Lee, while in the film, she seduces him and they have an affair. Lee Pik-Wah's concern is mainly the relationship between man and woman, but the director Fruit Chan highlights the tension between mainland China and Hong Kong.

The first scene of *Dumplings* is at the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border, where the heroine Mei is waiting to enter Hong Kong. A close-up shows a red enamel lunch-box in one of her hands. In the next shot she and her lunch-box easily pass though the security inspection. Later in the film, the audience will see that in the lunchbox are dumplings, dumplings made from unborn fetuses. As the north and south have distinct cuisines in China, dumplings can be taken as a symbolic representation of "the north." Geographically, to the Chinese, the "north" refers to that above the Yangtze River; but to Hong Kong, "the north" is the vast area of mainland China. The dumplings, products of the north, are filled with temptation, evil and danger, and are carried by Mei from north to south, easily crossing the border of Lo Wu and finally arriving in Hong Kong.

Illustration 12 Mei is making dumplings in *Dumplings*.

There are three main characters in the film: Mei, Mrs. Lee and Mr. Lee. Mei used to be a midwife in mainland and has terminated numerous pregnancies under the mainland Birth Control (*jihua shengyu*) policy of "one family only can have one child", and she calls her work "serving the people" (*wei renmin fuwu*). To get the right of abode in Hong Kong, she married an uneducated chef. After getting her HKID, she divorced the chef and makes her living preparing "special" dumplings (Illustration 15) for those who want rejuvenation, with the secret formula. At intervals she goes to Shenzhen's hospital and gets the "raw materials".

Although living in Hong Kong, Mei still retains her mainland habits, such as speaking in Mandarin and hanging the portrait of Chairman Mao and her certificates of former merit on the wall. She sings her favorite revolutionary songs "Lake Hong Waters Are Rough" ("*Honghushui langdalang"*) for customers, and makes a clear distinction between "left" and "right", insisting that the customer should sit on the left. As in contemporary political discourse "left" usually means socialist, it is a political implication of the ideology Mei believes in.

One of Mei's customers is Mrs. Lee. At twenty and the summit of her stardom she met Mr. Lee and got married. Time has aged the woman, who feels a loss of her advantage and her husband's interest. She is so afraid and anxious that she tries all means possible to delay the inevitable aging process and restore the vigor of her youth, even if it means to eat dumplings made of unborn fetus—which Mei claims is the best thing in the world for rejuvenation. To accelerate the process, Mrs. Lee eats a five-month fetus aborted from a 15-year-old girl who has been raped by her father. As she wishes, the dumplings work effectively, enabling her husband to rediscover her sexual appeal. She also pays the price: the fetus of incest causes her to smell and erupt in a red rash. Even so, with her burning desire for renewed youth, she cannot help eating more dumplings. At the end of the film, after Mei refuses to help her further, Mrs. Lee aborts her husband's mistress and makes the fetus into dumplings herself, ingesting her husband's child.

Mr. Lee, a rich, middle-aged merchant, is still quite active sexually (with his mistress) and apparently fortifies his libido by eating fertilized egg with a chick in it, which is said to reinforce sexual energy. Curious at what happens to his wife, Mr. Lee pays a visit to Mei, eats her dumplings, and cannot help making love to Mei, whom he later finds out to be 64, but with the body of a slender 35-year-old. Here Mei, the mainland woman, brings temptation to both Hong Kong woman and Hong Kong man. To the former, Mei offers the secret formula to renew her youth; the latter Mei seduces with her sex appeal. The process that Mei and Mrs.

Lee's trade relation changes into a sexual rivalry seems to echo the social reality of Hong Kong—the competition between mainland women and local women. Moreover, the temptation Mei brings to Mrs. Lee and Mr. Lee is a metaphor for the relation between mainland China and Hong Kong.

While Mei bares obvious mainland Chinese characteristics, Mrs. Lee, who loses the perceived advantages of youth and beauty, represents Hong Kong losing its economic edge. When China secluded itself from the outside world after 1949, Hong Kong's highly favorable geographical and political position made it the only access to China. All the import and export trade with the mainland passed through Hong Kong, providing abundant trading opportunities. Hong Kong soon developed into a large entrepot, and transportation became one of its pillar industries. After China's economic reforms and opening up after 1978, however, Hong Kong gradually lost its geographical advantage since other coastal cities of China were opened for trade and costs there were much lower. Another pillar of Hong Kong industry, manufacturing, has moved northward to the Pearl River Delta since the 1980s, also as the result of the lower production costs in mainland China. A series of industries would be influenced by these changes, such as services, banking and insurance. The anxiety of losing its former status grew in Hong Kong, especially after the 1997 economic crisis, when competing entities in mainland China, like Shanghai, Shenzhen and Beijing were clearly coming to the fore. Questions such as "How to preserve Hong Kong's advantages?" and "Can Hong Kong restore its former prosperity?" are widely discussed in local society.[20] Hong Kong, just like Mrs. Lee in the film, craves rejuvenation and struggles to restore its former splendor. Meanwhile, Mr. Lee, who still has energy, in his case, sexual energy, can be taken as a positive symbol of Hong Kong. Although the metropolis loses some economic status, it nonetheless has advantages over mainland Chinese cities such as free circulation of capital, a stable and mature legal system, and low taxes, among others. There is hope that Hong Kong

[20] See "Hong Kong's Ten Years," 2007; "Hong Kong: Irreplaceable Role," 2007; Y. L. Liu, 1999.

can retain the generative capacity of capital, just as Mr. Lee still displays his reproductive ability.

Negative or positive in its effect, Hong Kong needs to confront the temptation from mainland China. In the film, although Mr. and Mrs. Lee are in the different situations, they share a common interest—sex appeal and vitality. That is why both of them desire Mei's magic dumplings. The raw material of the dumplings comes from the mainland, which is later processed by Mei, the mainland woman. This is meaningful in that it is the product of mainland China that tempts the Lees. It is perhaps a metaphor of the reality—the low cost, huge market and preferential policy provided by the mainland which provides temptations to Hong Kong's economy. Yet, under the increasingly close relation between the two, Hong Kong may be affected by mainland China's negative sides, such as the corruption among public officials, widespread practice of *guanxi* (a form of Chinese favoritism), and undeveloped legal and economic systems. Also the film evidences a process of change of Hong Kong's attitude to the temptation, from resistance to resignation and acceptance. At first, Mrs. Lee cannot swallow the dumplings. She peeps at Mei's kitchen and sees the fetus, becomes appalled and runs away. Then she has second thoughts, and returns, eventually she takes eating dumplings as her custom. This attitude finally becomes one of initiative, when at the end of the film: Mrs. Lee learns how to make the dumplings herself. Indeed Hong Kong may also in the end learn from and adapt to the "mainland style".

There is one key element which runs through the whole film, the romantic revolutionary song "Lake Hong Waters Are Rough". This is the theme song of *Honghu Chi Wei Dui* (*The Red Guards of Honghu*), a mainland Chinese revolutionary musical made in 1958. Mei says, "it's a song from my youth" and she likes it very much. Every time her customers are eating dumplings, she sings the song for them. Besides implying Mei's actual age and mainland identity, the song also carries deep meaning in the metaphor of economic

activities between mainland and Hong Kong. In one scene, while Mrs. Lee is swallowing dumplings one by one, Mei sings the song:

> "Lake Hong waters are rough.
> At the shore is my home.
> At dawn, boats go out with nets.
> At dust, they return loaded with fish.
> Wild ducks and lotus roots are here.
> Autumns are bountiful with rice.
> They say heaven is beautiful.
> How can it compare with Lake Hong? "[21]

It sounds like a song of peaceful and Arcadian country life. Yet, while portraying Lake Hong as an earthly paradise, it also describes the entire process of an economic activity. "At dawn, boats go out with nets" and "At dust, they return loaded with fish" shows the activity's beginning (looking for economic interest) and ending (gaining said economic interest). While the song is sung, there are close-ups of Mrs. Lee's throat swallowing dumplings. Then the shot pans back to her face that is rosy with a lively sheen—the dumplings begin to take effect. The shots also show the process of how Mrs. Lee pursues and achieves her aim. Combining audio and visual language, Lake Hong here can be easily associated with mainland China. It is actually a process that shows how Mrs. Lee/Hong Kong goes out (to mainland) with "nets" (money/the investment), returns (to Hong Kong) loaded with "fish" (youth and beauty/the benefit), and finally becomes "bountiful with rice" (rejuvenation/economic prosperity). In this respect, Lake Hong and by association, mainland China can be seen as "heaven".

Ironically, what is performed onscreen in time of the romantic song is a dark act, the eating of human flesh. The self-serving action of Mrs. Lee and thus Hong Kong is illegal, and the implication is that the true cost of their rejuvenation is moral corruption, even their dehumanization. The film creators' attitude to the relation between Hong Kong and mainland

[21] See Appendix 1 for the original Chinese lyrics.

is obviously negative. Actually, Mei only sings half of *Lake Hong Waters Are Rough*, the other half, which is familiar to any Chinese who has grown up in mainland, is the chanting Communist part: "The kindness of the Communist Party is deeper than the East Sea; fishermen's prospects are getting better year by year."[22] Understandably, if this part were also sung, the ironic critique (to mainland even Communist Party) would be too explicit and offensive, which might explain its omission by the film creators. The end of the film resembles the end of *Intruder*: the Hong Kong police again fails to catch the mainland criminal. Mei, the villainess, is not apprehended and returns to Shenzhen, to continue her dumpling business. To those who want rejuvenation/Hong Kong, the temptation and evil of Mei/mainland still exist, and are quite near at hand.

Either as violent assailants or seductive villainesses, mainland women in these films are demonized. A demon, as Befu (1999) defines, is "a concrete manifestation of immorality and evil…part-human, arouses dread, fear and horror" (p. 17). Mainland women, as the representative form of mainland China, are portrayed as vicious creatures who have a human body but an inhuman heart and cause dread and fear to Hong Kong and its people. "To demonize a human is to strip a person or a group of persons of moral pulchritude entirely" (Befu, 1999, p. 26). Mainland women, who are outsiders and do not share the same political and moral code with Hong Kong people, become targets of demonization. It is not surprising that Hong Kong cinema chooses the demonized mainland woman as a metaphor of mainland China. Befu (1999) points out:

> The devil appearing in the form of a beautiful woman is a common sight in the demonological landscape of world ethnography…. This phenomenon is closely related to the ritually rationalized notion of pollution and religiously justified

[22] At the official celebration ceremony of Hong Kong's return on July 1 1997, the famous star Faye Wong also sang this song that is full of political meaning. When TVB televised the party, it stopped displaying the subtitle when the song came to this chanting Communist part.

> sinfulness of women, which legitimizes the inferior cultural position that women occupy in many societies. (p. 18)

Kapferer (1991) also claims that "the symbolic identity of women, and the logic of its constitution in the culture, as critical in accounting for the frequency of their demonic attack and exorcist treatment relative to men" (p. 128), and he has further related to this ideology about demonizing women as a gender issue:

> Women are sensitive to disorders in the world extending around them. They are likely to comprehend their experience of disorder, or to integrate to their experience the disorders which attach to others, because of the way their being is culturally constituted. The symbolic identity of women is such that men, for example, can play on to women disorders which men experience in the cultural world of social action, disorders which the demonic can acutely symbolize. (p. 153)

According to women's cultural identity, the society, i.e. the society dominated by men, puts the responsibility of disorder onto women. As women's position is inferior in culture, taking them as demons is legitimized and safe. The same goes for mainland women as seen by Hong Kong audiences. Through their representation as demons, Hong Kong filmmakers shift the responsibility of insecurity, which is evoked by the overwhelming power (either political or economical) of China, to mainland women. Their gender and their individual identities make women from the mainland much more inferior in Hong Kong culture and society, promising more legitimacy and safety for this cinematic demonization.

In addition, using mainland women characters in film can also create a striking contrast to manifest them and the country behind them as more demonic. It is noticeable that mainland women in these films are all beautiful and charming, unrecognizable as demons in appearance, either by other characters in the films or by the audience. That is because, as Befu (1999) analyzes, "demons, on the other hand, may assume a form which totally conceals their

evilness, representing the opposite of their heinous character. The heinousness of the demon lies precisely in its treachery, in the ability to disguise itself in an innocent or even a noble character" (p. 18). In both the general mindset and in previous Hong Kong films, mainland women were often portrayed as innocent and simple, sometimes even silly, as discussed in Chapter One. When there is evil intent underneath the vulnerable appearance of a mainland woman, and she has the ability to transfigure herself freely and completely from one form to another, she can totally deceive the unsuspecting Hong Kong audiences. The power of this transformational ability is threatening and terrifying.

Through the processes of demonization of mainland women, the purpose of these films will be achieved. They enhance Hong Kong's self-perception as victims of mainland China, and solidify the Hong Kong community against a common enemy—the one who brings both danger and lures, the one who disturbs the peace of Hong Kong and causes a nightmare.

2.2.3 Gold-Digging Mainland Women: *Hollywood Hong-Kong*

If violent mainland women present the threat of mainland China to Hong Kong's security, and seductive mainland women are threats to local women's libido, in Hong Kong cinema there is another type of mainland women who is portrayed as a threat to Hong Kong's property, the gold digger. As this image is not as extreme as the former two, it still embodies Hong Kong's fear of mainland China and is represented negatively. It is understandable that migration often relates to economic considerations, as migrants are motivated by higher incomes and a better quality of life. The situation of mainland Chinese women who migrate is no exception. In Hong Kong cinema, the reason most mainland women come to Hong Kong is to search for money or a better life, which is accepted by both local characters on screen and audiences off screen, even sympathized with (*A Hearty Response* (1986)) or supported (*Comrades: Almost a Love Story* (1996)). However, the

attitude of Hong Kong audiences to these mainland gold diggers later changes to subconscious hostility, which is the result of the economic dilemma of Hong Kong itself after 1997.

In 1997, shortly after the handover, the Asian financial crisis struck, starting off in Thailand and quickly sweeping through the rest of South East Asia. Hong Kong, a significant player in the financial system and a regional financial centre, had no immunity. Hong Kong's economy suffered huge losses and experienced a slump. Unemployment increased from 2.2% to 6.3%; the stock markets became volatile and the Hang Seng Index even dropped to 6,544 points in August of 1998, reaching a five-year low. The property market in Hong Kong declined and nearly 200,000 residents applied for bankruptcy ("Effects," 2009). Although the financial crisis was over in 1999 and the Hong Kong economy was recovering, shortly afterwards the burst of the dot-com bubble in 2000, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001 and the SARS outbreak in 2003 severely damaged Hong Kong's economic prospects. (Table 1)

Table 1:

1996~2003: Hong Kong Real GDP Increases by Percentage, Inflation by Percentage[23]

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Real GDP	4.19	5.06	-6.03	2.56	7.95	0.50	1.84	3.01
Inflation	6.27	5.90	2.83	-3.96	-3.76	-1.58	-3.12	-2.54

This series of economic crises traumatized Hong Kong, not only economically, but also psychologically, amplifying Hong Kong people's anxiety of losing economic status in the region and the fear that Hong Kong could not recover its former glory (as partly discussed in

[23] See "GDP," 2009.

last part). One mental projection of that fear and anxiety frequently shown in Hong Kong cinema is that the local prostitutes are always usurped by *bak gu* from mainland China.

Bak gu (in Mandarin, *bei gu*, meaning "northern women"), sometimes *bak moi/bei mei* (or "northern girls"), is a derogatory term referring to prostitutes from the mainland. In the early 1990s, many mainland women began to move to Hong Kong and engage in prostitution (Yang, 2006, p.145). One cinematic depiction of this takes place in *Golden Chicken* (2002), a film about a Hong Kong prostitute's life. It describes the sudden influx of prostitutes from the mainland. In one scene, the heroine Ah Kam says, "Three inventions affected us most in the 90's. One was the invention of mobile phone. The second on was Karaoke. And the third, the most influential one, were the women pouring in from Mainland China." *Bak gu* with "bad Cantonese, big boobs and bad makeup" crowded out the local girls and became common in Hong Kong society. Later in the film, Ah Kam has to face the fact that she cannot compete with her mainland "colleagues", and then she quit the nightclub where she worked. She says, "We Hong Kong people are proud and finicky. How can we defeat those *bak gu*?" Local prostitute Chung Chung and her "sisters" in *True Women for Sale* (2008) also meet the same challenge. They even wish that the Lo Wu border could be closed so that mainland prostitutes cannot come to Hong Kong to take the bread out of their mouths. Another example is *Whispers and Moans* (2007), which shows that the decline of the local nightclub industry is partly because of the massive "invasion" of *bak gu*. *Bak gu* are young, beautiful and diligent, offering freshness (according to their high mobility) and broader range of choice (according to their large number and diverse origins) to clients, and most importantly, they are much cheaper. It is easy and frequent in Hong Kong film that *bak gu* steal away business from local prostitutes—also a metaphor for Hong Kong's awkward situation after the series of economic crises since 1997. Hong Kong cannot maintain its

former position and is exposed to the challenges of competitors in the region, particularly those from mainland China.[24]

Thus Hong Kong cinema tries to ascribe Hong Kong's economic lethargy to the competition from the mainland. In films, *bak gu*, representing the mainland, defeat local prostitutes and despoil Hong Kong's fortune, while their quest for money is highlighted and exaggerated. Examples also can be seen in *Durian Durian* (2000), *Hollywood Hong-Kong* (2001) and *The Moss* (2008). Qin Yan (played by Qin Hailu) in *Durian Durian* leaves her hometown Mudanjiang for Hong Kong. To earn as much money as she can, she services as many as 38 clients in a day. With the money from her prostitution, Yan returns to her hometown and brings honor to her family. Then she starts to plan her future business, and of course no one knows how she really earned her money. In *Hollywood Hong-Kong*, Tong Tong (Zhou Xun), the pretty but mysterious mainland prostitute, extorts money from clients to further her dream of going to the real Hollywood. In *The Moss*, Ah Fa, a little mainland girl who is just eleven, also intends to be a prostitute to make a fortune in Hong Kong. A killer kindly rescues her from the brothel, but she tries hard to go back, "You are not rescuing me but ruining me! I come here out of great trials and tribulations for money. But you screw it up!" Unlike previous Hong Kong films that focus on *bak gu*'s sexual attractiveness (as discussed in "Eroticizing Mainland Women" part), these films concentrate on pecuniary factors, showing how strong mainland women's desire for money is and how seriously Hong Kong's prosperity is imperiled.

The "gold digger" representation is emblematic of Hong Kong's economic condition since the 1997 financial crisis. On one hand, considering these newcomers as gold diggers reflects how Hong Kong sees itself, that the metropolis is still a gold mine with abundant

[24] Such as Shanghai, the main economic center of China, aims at regain its position as one of the leading cities in the world urban system as it was in the late 19th and early 20th century, and catching up with Hong Kong by the year 2010 (Richardson & Bae 2005, p.249). And the eventual projection is that China will be Asia's most prosperous economy by 2040 (Shao, 1999).

wealth for the taking. It indicates Hong Kong's confidence and superiority concerning its capitalism, which is marked by free trade in labor and capital, as well as in women. As Campbell (2006) says, the free trade in bodies and sex, such as in prostitution, may "even be a mark of a flourishing, liberal society" (p. 382). Being a liberal, capitalist society, Hong Kong still has advantages. Even after a series of economic crises, Hong Kong is "the major nodal point in the translocal and transnational trafficking" (Lu, 2009, p. 13) and this is shown by the steady flow of border-crossing *bak gu* and the prospering sex trade in this city. Regardless of the reality, in film, as Lu (2009) points out, "although it has to compete with emergent global cities from China such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen in the post-1997 period, Hong Kong continues to serve as a premier site in the global and regional circulation of people, libido, and service" (p. 13).

On the other hand, the portrayal of the "gold digger" indicates Hong Kong's subconscious hostility to those outsiders. As Hong Kong has already been embroiled in economic dilemma, *bak gu*, who move into Hong Kong in search of wealth, pose a threat to the local economy. They do not create productive forces for Hong Kong. On the contrary, they profit from Hong Kong and put Hong Kong people, namely Hong Kong men's money in their own pockets, then leave. As the prosperity of Hong Kong is taken up by the outsiders, hostility is naturally stirred up in the local population. Fruit Chan, the director of *Hollywood Hong-Kong* said himself, "In the past, Hong Kong men swarmed across the border to fool around, now the scales are tipped, and it's the mainland girls who're raiding Hong Kong" (B. Chang, 2002, p. 87). The word "raid" clearly indicates Hong Kong's hostile attitude to these mainland gold diggers. A transparent reference can be found in *Hollywood Hong-Kong* (2001, later *Hollywood*).

In *Hollywood,* Chu is a local butcher and runs a barbecue pork restaurant in Tai Hom Village. He and his two sons, Tiny and Ming, are as obese as the pigs they barbecue, living unhappily and hopelessly until one day a pretty and innocent girl Tong Tong appears in the

village. Being a refreshing and happy presence that is welcome in the boring and depressing Chu family, Tong Tong brightens up their lives. She makes friends with Tiny, brings laughter and vitality to Chu, and even has sex with Ming who is sexually repressed. This sweetie soon turns out to be poison, as Tong Tong is revealed as a mainland prostitute. She blackmails Ming for a significant sum of money, threatening to turn him in to the authorities, claiming that she is under 16, and sex with her is a criminal offense that carries at least a five-year prison term. It is destructive to the family. Chu suffers great losses, and finally they all need to move away from the place they have lived for fifty years. With her ill-gotten money, Tong Tong makes her way to Hollywood, her dream city, leaving Chu family with their predicament.

The image of the mainland gold digger in *Hollywood* is much more "evolutional" than that in *Durian, Durian* (2000), another film from the director Fruit Chan, In the latter film, although the character Qin Yan develops her self-determination deciding to come to Hong Kong and be a prostitute, she still needs to rely on local pimps to protect her and introduce her to clients. In *Hollywood,* Tong Tong is completely independent. She posts her pictures on erotic websites, picks her clients, also her victims herself, cooperates with an unscrupulous lawyer to extort money from the clients, and gives him a hint to hire hooligans to "punish" those who do not pay. At first, Tong Tong entertains the hope that the lawyer Peter can take her to the U.S.A., but later she gives up this fantasy and makes her own way to Hollywood. In the film, Tong Tong is not controlled by anyone; she controls her own destiny, and even that of her clients. All local men, Chu, Ming, Tiny and the youngster Wong Chi-Keung are fascinated and dominated by her. Unlike Qin Yan who is restricted by the visa limit and has to leave Hong Kong within its validity dates, Tong Tong comes and goes freely. No one knows how she comes to Hong Kong, or how she goes to Hollywood. She even

assumes different identities and different names (Tong Tong, Fung Fung and Hung Hung[25]), and nobody knows who she really is. In the film, she is the most dominant character.

One significant symbol in the film is the "Mountain Five-Fingers", the Hollywood luxury apartments with five high-rises blocks, which stands by the Tai Hom Village that makes an explicit comparison. There is one scene where after Tong Tong and Wong Chi-Keung have the sex, she points to the buildings and says, and "It's 'Mountain Five-Fingers'. I live there." Then she extends her five fingers to imitate the buildings. In the Chinese classical novel *A Journey to the West* (*Xi You Ji*), "Mountain Five-Fingers" is a transformation of Buddha's hand to trap the naughty Monkey King, meaning that even if he flies 108, 000 li, he still cannot jump out of Buddha's palm. Later under the "Mountain Five-Fingers", the Monkey King is trapped for five hundreds years. Thus "Mountain Five-Fingers" becomes a symbol of Buddha's omnipotence. When Tong Tong uses her hand to intimate it and actually lives in it, she becomes the embodiment of "Mountain Five-Fingers", under which the Tai Hom Village and inhabitants like the Chu family and Wong Chi-Keung are visually pinned down and allegorically trapped (Illustration 16). Through this symbolism, the dominance of Tong Tong is expressly manifested.

Illustration 13 The Mountain Five-Fingers and the Tai Hom Village under it in *Hollywood Hong-Kong*

[25] Connecting her three names, it is "Tong Fung Hung" (*dong fang hong*), which literally means "The East Is Red", a classical Chinese revolutionary song that chants achievements of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party. This political metaphor has further proved the allegory between mainland and Hong Kong in *Hollywood Hong-Kong*.

Under the dominant power of the mainland woman Tong Tong, the local women become absent. There is no Hong Kong woman in the film and all the female characters are from mainland China. Besides Tong Tong, there are Doctor Lui who plans to do an experiment to place a human embryo inside a pig, Chu's maid who has an affair with Chu and the new immigrant Ah Lui who also lives from prostitution. These Mainland women have surrounded the local men. The only Hong Kong "female" is a fat sow in the Chu family, whose sole function is producing more pigs. In addition to this, local males in the film are impotent. Given the condition that their Tai Hom Village will be pulled down (implying the economic position of Hong Kong cannot be maintained), these Hong Kong men do not make any effort but are still infatuated by sex. In the end, their male power is castrated by the mainland woman, the Chu family suffers property loss and Wong Chi-Keung even has his right hand chopped off, which is a much more obvious metaphor for castration.

The allegory of *Hollywood* indicates Hong Kong people's, and in particular, Hong Kong men's anxiety of losing economic superiority. It is reported that the economic crisis has much greater impact on men, as they have heavier financial and family burdens. It is such an affront that even Hong Kong's suicide rate rises during economic hardship, especially among men aged between 30 and 59 (T. Ng, 2008). In this period, men in some Hong Kong films such as Milkyway Image films, "were often put under the spell of some omnipotent forces; slowly and brutally the male protagonists were made to struggle and look, often in vain, for ways out of their predicament", even they were "deprived of full confidence with regard to the opposite sex" (Pang, 2005, p. 36). While the Hong Kong man's world is full of anxiety, disturbance and insecurity, these mainland women, the gold diggers, on the contrary, gain their economic independence. Hence, the male authority is threatened.

The same situation also transpired in the 1930s' United States after the Great Depression, when men lost their jobs or their incomes were affected, there were many

prostitute characters as gold diggers appearing on the screen, which reflected men's fear of women slipping out of male control in the patriarchy, as Campbell (2006) analyzes:

> [T]he Gold Digger is the figure on whom male insecurities about the female—about her sexual independence, in particular—are condensed. She is a provocation of the highest order, the woman who exploits men's natural sexual desires to effect a redistribution of wealth in her favor. Painted, therefore, as morally corrupt, very frequently beyond all redemption, she is an object of misogynist contempt—sometimes mixed with sneaking admiration for her chutzpah. (pp. 148-149)

Thus the gold digger image is not only dealing with economic status, but also with the gender power balance. These mainland women come to Hong Kong and depend on Hong Kong men for their living; after they have earned the money, they gain independence and Hong Kong men cannot control them any more. The characters Qin Yan and Tong Tong are finally free to do anything they want, running business or going to their dream country. As Campbell (2006) claims, the acquisition of money may also mean a shift in the established power balance in gender relationships and the chance to achieve upward social mobility (p. 152). With the mobility, Tong Tong/mainland woman laughs and walks breezily in front of Hollywood Mountain in the end of the film, while the Chu family and its Hong Kong men are still trapped in the dilemma and continue their lives like pigs.

Besides conveying these profound anxieties about masculinity, the gold digger image is also a cultural projection that reveals the larger economic climate. Similar to Hong Kong, mid-1990s' Taiwan also experienced this mainland women's supposed fortune hunting, when mainland women poured in, entering Taiwan through marriage, fake marriage or other illegal means. Many of them made a living from prostitution, and Taiwan mass media also depicted

them as gold diggers, calling them *dalumei* (*dalu* means mainland and *mei* means sister).[26] Shih (2007) has explored the ideology hidden in this representation:

> [They] represented as a sexualized body hungry for economic gain, hence exploitable and prone to the sexual conquest of Taiwan men, reflected a fantasy of Taiwan's economic power, translated into sexual power…. She was not merely a threat to Taiwan men's pocketbooks, but a generalized threat to Taiwan capital and industrial advantage as Taiwan becoming more and more dependent on Chinese labor and market. (p. 101)

The ideology towards mainland women in Taiwan also can be applied to their status in Hong Kong. In *Hollywood*, the sexual power of Tong Tong represents the economic power of mainland China, and the domination of her in the film reflects that of mainland China in the reality. China holds the economic upper hand. During the 1997 financial crisis, it was only with the mainland Chinese government's help that Hong Kong could survive the storm. In recent years, the economy of Hong Kong still cannot recover its earlier prosperity, while mainland China is developing rapidly and playing a growing dominant role in the regional and world economies. Hong Kong, which was for a long time more advanced than mainland China, now depends on China's enormous market and economic policy. This gradually reversed status issue with the mainland is for Hong Kong a challenge and threat. The anxiety of losing prosperity and economic position manifested in films is that mainlanders earn a fortune while Hong Kongers suffer losses, and Hong Kong sets itself the position as victim and mainland the inflictor. This ideology is common in Hong Kong films even after years of Chinese rule over the region, showing that in Hong Kong's process of identity negotiation, nativism still gains the upper hand.

[26] Shih has given detailed analysis of *dalumei* representation in Taiwan's mass media. See "Sexualizing the 'Mainland Sister'" in Shih 2007, pp. 94-103.

Chapter Three

Mainland Actresses in Hong Kong's Film Industry

3.1 Actresses Who Play Mainland Women

Interestingly, in Hong Kong cinema, actresses who play the role of mainland women are often not from the mainland. From the 1980s to 1997, only famous mainland actresses like Liu Xiaoqing (*Reign behind a Curtain* (*Chui lian ting zheng*, 1983)), Siqin Gaowa (*Homecoming*), and Gong Li (*Mary from Beijing*, *A Terracotta Warrior/Qinyong* (1989), *Flirting Scholar/Tang Bohu dian Qiuxiang* (1993)) had the opportunities of appearing on the Hong Kong screen. One reason is that the collaboration between Hong Kong and mainland film industries was not close. More importantly, Hong Kong cinema at that time mainly focused on its local audience, as well as the audiences of Taiwan and Southeast Asia. Mainland actresses could not sell in these territories, while actresses who had some box-office influence were mostly from Hong Kong. These actresses become the first choice of film productions, like Maggie Cheung (*Comrades: Almost a Love Story* and *Farewell China*).

Some actresses from Taiwan and Malaysia were also in high demand in films about mainland women. Michelle Yeoh from Malaysia (*Police Story 3*, *The Stunt Women/Ah Kam* (1996), etc.), Joey Wong (*A Hearty Response*, *The Reincarnation of Golden Lotus/Pan Jinlian zhi qianshi jinsheng*, (1989), etc.), Wu Chien-lien (*Intruder*) and Sylvia Chang (*Eight Tales of Gold* (*Ba liang jin*, 1989)) from Taiwan were popular names. Hong Kong actresses, like Carina Lau (*Gigolo and Whore*) and Pauline Chan (*Rogues from the North*, *The Girls from China*) who were born in mainland China and immigrated to Hong Kong in their teens, were also popular. To Hong Kong filmmakers and audiences, these actresses are foreign, but not as distanced as real mainland actresses, just appropriately and perfectly exotic. Although they are "fake" mainlanders their exotic otherness appealed to Hong Kong audiences. It was especially after CEPA (*the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement*), with the exchange

between the film industries in Hong Kong and mainland became substantial, that mainland female characters in Hong Kong cinema were played by mainland actresses themselves.

In reality, mainland actresses have been kept on the margins of Hong Kong cinema. For a long time, few studies have been attributed to them. That is why in the 27th Hong Kong Film Awards Presentation Ceremony (13th April, 2008), when Siqin Gaowa held up the award of Best Actress, the realization seemed sudden: mainland actresses had already occupied this honor for a consecutive four-year period.[27] Looking back to blockbuster films such as *Perhaps Love* (*Ruguo ai*, 2005), *Battle of Wits* (*Mo gong*, 2006), *The Warlords* (*Tou ming zhuang*, 2007), *Red Cliff* (*Chi bi*, 2008) and *Painted Skin* (*Hua pi*, 2008) produced in recent years, Hong Kong actresses are simply absent. Instead, the names of mainland actresses like Zhou Xun, Xu Jinglei, Li Bingbing and Fan Bingbing are were now familiar to Hong Kong audiences. This role reversal leads many to ponder what happened to the Hong Kong film industry and why it seems no longer to favor its local female talent.

3.2 The Policy Needs: CEPA

The increasing frequency of appearances by mainland actresses in Hong Kong cinema is partially the result of the CEPA.[28] Signed in June 2003 and implemented in January 2004, this policy is hailed by Hong Kong government officials and analysts as the most significant and positive development for the Hong Kong economy during the period of economic malaise. Thanks to the efforts of Hong Kong film workers[29] the CEPA also includes Hong Kong films

[27] Best Actress of Hong Kong Film Awards:
2005: Zhang Ziyi (*2046*). 2006: Zhou xun (*Perhaps Love*). 2007: Gong Li (*The City of Golden Armor*). 2008: Siqin Gaowa (*The Aunt's Postmodern Life*).

[28] Under CEPA, or the *Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement*, the agreement signed between China and Hong Kong, 273 categories of products made in Hong Kong will now have unrestricted access to the mainland market, freeing them from various quotas systems at least four years in advance of China's WTO commitments, thus giving Hong Kong an advantage over international competitors. The agreement covers an estimated 67 percent of Hong Kong's total exports to the mainland.

[29] Formerly, the CEPA did not include films. The delegation of Hong Kong film workers, leaded by Ng See-Yuen and supported by Chief Executive Tung Chee-Hwa, went to Beijing and negotiated with the government several times. Finally, they succeed. According to Ng See-yuen, 2004.

and grants them preferential access to mainland China. Except for this preferential policy for distribution and investment, the part of CEPA that has the greatest impact on Hong Kong cinema is where it governs production:

> [O]fficial Hong Kong-China co-productions will be considered domestic even when filming takes place outside of the mainland, which means that most local movies will no longer be subject to the punishing import quota of 20 non-Chinese films a year. The new qualifications for joint productions also relax the minimum ratio of Hong Kong to mainland crewmembers from 3:7 to 5:5, and allow a non-mainland focus for stories. In addition to all of this, under CEPA even Hong Kong films that do not qualify as domestic will have more access to the mainland market than movies from other countries. (Sala, 2003, p. 75)

The policy sounds like positive news, as the huge market of China with a population of 1.3 billion opened its doors to Hong Kong films and offered to throw new light on the declining Hong Kong film industry, which had struggled in the local market and shrinking regional market since the early 1990s. "Hong Kong only has 7 million people. The market is quite limited. But the mainland offers a perfect marketplace for Hong Kong film firms. It has a 1.3 billion population and many of its youths are fans of Hong Kong movies and stars," according to one local filmmaker (L. Lau, 2005). His optimism is shared by the industry as a whole. Although there are still some filmmakers like Ann Hui who persist in focusing on the local market and retaining their artistic style, it is an irreversible tendency for Hong Kong cinema to expand into the new market of mainland China, in the form of co-production.[30]

Of course, co-production films did not begin with CEPA. As early as the 1980s, when China began reforming and opening up, Hong Kong film companies were already exploring

[30] In the 10th Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong Director Conference (*Liangan Sandi Daoyan Hui*) held in January 2009, Hong Kong, more than 200 film directors from mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong held seminars and discussed topics about the mainland film market for two days. After several speeches made by directors, film scholars, film officials, such as Feng Xiaogang, Peter Chan, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Zheng Dongtian and Fung Wing etc., the consensus that not only Hong Kong films' future but also Chinese-language films' will chiefly depend on mainland market, is firmed.

opportunities in the mainland and cooperating with its film studios. A series of films with enormous success were produced, like *The Shaolin Temple* (*Shaolin si*, 1982), *The Burning of Yuan Ming Yuan* (*Huoshao Yuan Ming Yuan*, 1983) *and Reign behind a Curtain* (*Chuilian tingzheng*, 1983). This trend of co-production reached a peak in the early 1990s with blockbusters such as *Once Upon a Time in China* (*Huang Feihong*, 1991) and *New Dragon Inn* (*Xin longmen kezhan*, 1993). During this period, the Hong Kong film industry just took advantage of mainland China's picturesque landscapes and cheap labor. As the Southeast Asian, Taiwan and Korean markets were flourishing enough to support Hong Kong cinema, the mainland market was not taken seriously into account. It was only after 1997 that Hong Kong cinema began to realize the significance of the mainland market (Yu, 2004, p. 8), a wisdom derived from the financial crisis in Southeast Asia and China's gradually relaxing policy towards Hong Kong after the handover. But the real breakthrough for co-produced films came only after CEPA was in effect from 2004. In 2003, the box office revenue of co-produced films was only 200 million Hong Kong dollars, but in 2004, the first year of CEPA, that number more than doubled and reached 550 million, and this record is continually being surpassed. Along with the rapid growth of China's film market,[31] some striking commercial successes of co-produced films have proven the advantage of CEPA. Taking 2008 as an example, the top 3 domestic films gauged on yearly box office rankings were co-produced under the policy of CEPA: *Red Cliff*, *Painted Skin* and *CJ7* (*Changjiang qihao*, 2008), with the respective box office record of 302, 229 and 194 million RMB. Besides these big-budget films, middle-budget co-produced films also increased their revenue in the mainland, for example *Connected* (*Baochi tonghua*, 2008), with a box office revenue of 44 million RMB in mainland compared to 13.5 million in the Hong Kong market ("China's 2008 Box Office," 2009). In terms of financial gain, these are quite stark contrasts. Undoubtedly, owing to

[31] China film market totaled 4.3 billion in 2008, up by 30.48 percent over the pervious year, which is the highest growth rate in the world. According to "Spokesman Zhu Hong's Answers," 2009.

CEPA, targeting films in mainland China becomes an enticing prospect for the Hong Kong cinema industry.

While almost all of Hong Kong filmmakers gaze wide-eyed and open-mouthed at the burgeoning mainland film market, at the same time they realize that they are not totally free, as some restrictions exist. One such restriction is the requirement that mainland talent must account for no less than one third of the major roles. Therefore, along with the increasing number of co-productions, more and more mainland faces appear in Hong Kong cinema, especially the faces of mainland actresses such as Xu Jinglei in *Heroic Duo* (*Shuang xiong*, 2003), *Confession of Pain* (*Shang cheng*, 2006) and *The Warlord*; Zhou Xun in *Perhaps Love*, *Painted Skin*, and *All About Women* (Nvren buhuai, 2008); Fan Bingbing in *The Lion Roars*, *A Chinese Tall Story* (*Qing dian dasheng*, 2005), *Battle of Wits, and Flash Point* (*Daohuo xian*, 2007); Huang Shengyi in *Kung Fu Hustle* (*Gongfu*, 2004); Sun Li in *Fearless* (*Huo Yuanjia*, 2006); and Gao Yuanyuan in *Rob-B-Hood* (*Baobei jihua*, 2006). Almost all the major mainland actresses have appeared in Hong Kong cinema, respectively gaining themselves remuneration, fame and film awards.

In fact, as early as the 1980s, many mainland actresses have given successful and famed performances in Hong Kong cinema, Liu Xiaoqing in *Reign Behind a Curtain*, Siqin Gaowa in *Homecoming* and Gong Li in *Flirting Scholar* to name three. In these films, they appear more like guest actresses, and did not have any major impact on the Hong Kong film industry. Only with the CEPA did the conditions change fundamentally and did mainland actresses start to exert greater influence over the Hong Kong film industry. While mainland actresses have had more opportunities in Hong Kong cinema, the job market for local actresses has been shrinking. It is noteworthy that "Hong Kong actor + mainland actress" has increasingly become a standard model, as with Tony Leung Chiu Wai + Xu Jinglei in *Confession of Pain*, Louis Koo + Fan Bingbing in *Flash Point*, Jackie Chan + Gao Yuanyuan in *Rob-B-Hood*, Daniel Wu + Zhang Jingchu in *Protégé* (*Men tu*, 2007). Thus the situation

has arisen where mainland actresses "rob" not only the opportunity of local actresses but also win the awards. Mainland actresses' powerful momentum fuels the anxiety that "mainland actresses have invaded in Hong Kong cinema!"[32] Before the 28th Hong Kong Film Awards, the Hong Kong actress Sandra Ng even attacked mainland actresses on her TV talk show *Club Sparkle* (Mak, 2009), reminding audiences that Best Actress awards have been won by mainland actresses for four years running. She showed her discontent and raised a question, "are mainland actresses really better than local ones?" This aroused widespread debate in the media.[33] Gordon Chan, the chairman of Hong Kong Film Awards, gave his answer:

> Nowadays, it's general that the leading actor of a blockbuster is from Hong Kong, and the leading actress is from mainland. Because the number of co-production films is increasing, and the co-production requires certain proportion of mainland cast. Hong Kong actors are more appealing and the major box office must depend on these bankable actors. That's why co-production films usually choose Hong Kong actors as leading roles. And then, the female major role can only leave to mainland actress, for catering to CEPA request. ("Interview with Gordon," 2009)

This seems to be the case. While those Hong Kong actors who rose to stardom in the 1980s are still in demand today, such as Tong Leung Chiu Wai, Andy Lau, Stephen Chow and Jackie Chan, Hong Kong actresses of the same generation are fading away. Maggie Cheung and Carina Lau seldom act in films now; Anita Mui has passed away; the two Taiwanese actresses Brigitte Lin and Joey Wong, who starred in numerous Hong Kong films, are now retired. The new generation of female stars, like Sammi Cheng and Miriam Yeung, has seen their peak, leaving the newest generation such as Cecilia Cheung and Gillian Chung beset by

[32] As early as in the 25th Hong Kong Film Awards, people began to realize the trend of "invasion" by mainland actresses. Some film magazine took Zhou Xun in *Perhaps Love* as an instance, said, "The focus of this year is that Mainland actresses are invading in strength" (Xiao, 2006). And in reports of 2008's HKAF, words "mainland actresses invade Hong Kong cinema" are used widely by mainstream Internet media like Sina, Sohu and Tencent, and adjectives are often "in strength" and "by force". See Zhao, 2008; "Cooperating," 2009.

[33] Both mainland and Hong Kong media have a wide debate about this topic, seeing *Guangzhou Daily* (2009, 14 April); *Chongqing Evening News* (2009, 15 April); *Strait News* (2009, 16 April); *Wenwei Po* (2009, 15 April); *TaKung Pao* (2009, 15 April).

socialite complications, and others still who cannot hoist the banner. CEPA is partially but not totally responsible for this recession of Hong Kong female acting talent. Reacting to the temporary shortage of local actresses, it is natural for Hong Kong filmmakers to shift their casting to actresses from the north, with the added benefit that many mainland actresses can attract audiences in part based on their fame in the mainland.

3.3 Roles for Mainland Actresses

There is a gender ideology hidden in the mode of "Hong Kong actor + mainland actress", which can actually be more clearly described as, "Hong Kong leading actor + mainland supporting actress". Mainland actresses rarely act in leading roles in Hong Kong cinema. They are usually subsidiary in the narrative, even dismissed as passive foils. Of such co-produced films with mainland actress, one prime example is *The Warlord*, which is absolutely a masculine drama, telling stories about three brothers (Jet Li, Andy Lau and Takeshi Kaneshiro), with Xu Jinglei as the foil character, an outsider to the brotherhood. Even the director Peter Chan admitted that Xu is a "vase" in the film: her character must be marginal to make room for the male bonding (personal communication, November 30, 2008). Fan Bingbing in *Flash Point*, also plays the role of Louis Koo's girlfriend and has no great impact on the development of the story. Also, Huang Shengyi in *Kung Fu Hustle*, Sun Li in *Fearless* and Gao Yuanyuan in *Rob-B-Hood* are all subsidiary to the male characters (Stephen Chow, Jet Li and Jackie Chan). Their characters function as pretty dolls and are of little importance. Similar examples can be found in other co-produced films, in which mainland actresses could be easily replaced by Hong Kong actresses or Taiwan actresses, without significantly affecting the story. Mainland actresses in Hong Kong cinema become in this respect a tool to fulfill the co-production policy. They are mostly playing supporting and subsidiary roles, not only because the male dominated Hong Kong cinema is used to

"relegating women to absence, silence, and marginality" (Kaplan, 1990, p. 5), but also according to mainland actresses' cultural identity as the "female other" to Hong Kong cinema.

As the leading role is the dominant player in the film, it is hard for Hong Kong cinema to accept an "other" to take the place of prominence; neither is this acceptable for Hong Kong audiences. *Linger* (*Hudie fei*, 2008), which casts Li Bingbing as the heroine, resulted in a box office failure (1.2 million) in Hong Kong, even though the director was the renowned Johnnie To. Another famous director Tsui Hark's film, *All about Women*, which stars two mainland actresses (Zhou Xun and Zhang Yuqi) and one Taiwan actress (Guey Lun-mei), earned less than 1 million. These numbers show the reduced marketability and cultural acceptability of these "others" to Hong Kong audiences. As mainland actresses cannot assure a box office success, taking Hong Kong actors who have proved bankable in leading roles is a necessity. Moreover, through the balance of gender power, "Hong Kong leading actor + mainland supporting actress" confirms the dominance of the Hong Kong male actor in co-produced films, which further implies Hong Kong film industry's dominance in cooperation with the mainland. Therefore, the superiority of Hong Kong cinema/Hong Kong is seen to have been protected.

While mainland actresses "satisfy" Hong Kong cinema in many ways, it is noticeable that mainland actors seldom appear on the screen of Hong Kong cinema. When they do, they often only play supporting roles, unlike some of their female compatriots who do have limited castings in leading roles. Although mainland actors and actresses are both the "other" to Hong Kong, the former do not have as many opportunities as the latter in Hong Kong cinema, not only because local actors are flourishing, but also as the result of mainland actors' masculinity. Once they become leading roles, mainland actors, the outsiders, will be dominant in the film, which would challenge the authority of Hong Kong cinema's masculinity. Hence, only mainland actresses become the best choice for Hong Kong cinema, in the era of co-produced films.

3.4 Hong Kong "Flavor"?

While mainland actresses show their advantages and have become prevalent in Hong Kong cinema, what has been widely found is that mainland actresses cannot fit into the temperament of Hong Kong cinema, and are even seen as damaging the Hong Kong "flavor". An authoritative film journal in the mainland, *Film Art*, has run a special issue on co-produced films in 2004. Articles in this issue and other discussions about co-productions (Hu & Liu, 2007; M. He, 2008) have all noted the awkward position of mainland actresses/actors, pointing out that they cannot be compatible with Hong Kong cinema and become vases, even affecting the Hong Kong characteristics. As Chan Pak Sang, the editor-in-chief of *Film Biweekly* and founder of Hong Kong Film Awards, described in an interview with *Xinmin Weekly*:

> *Confession of Pain* has no Hong Kong flavor. The performance of Xu Jinlei is unintelligible. And her temperament is quite different with Hong Kong. *Confession of Pain* is a typical co-production film, and embodies the dualism of Hong Kong and mainland China from the investment, production group to performers. It's a story just set in Hong Kong. Is it still the same as Hong Kong films we are familiar with? It is doubtful. But it's undoubting that the role of Xu Jinglei was discomfited in Hong Kong. (W. Wang, 2007)

"Hong Kong flavor" here, can be understood as the cultural identity of Hong Kong cinema. As noticed, with the participation of mainland actresses, Hong Kong cinema becomes a hybrid, and the cultural identity reflects more and more impurities.

As Chu Yiu-wai (2005) claims, the hybridization of Hong Kong cinema is most obviously represented by the language of non-Hong Kong acting talent. He studies the cases of Shu Qi, Takeshi Kaneshiro and Li Kangsheng in three films from the 1990's and points out that they play the role of native Hong Kongers but their Cantonese is poor or even

dubbed. They are "acting as 'authentic' Hong Kong characters in films that place heavy emphasis on cinematic verisimilitude in the representation of Hong Kong history" (Chu, 2005, p. 314), and "the 'impure' representation of Hong Kong identity can be expounded in terms of market consideration" (p. 319), which is the result of postmodern commercialism. The same goes for mainland actresses in co-production films made under the CEPA.[34] To take this character/actor analysis one step further, there are three situations that concern their language and character:

1. A native Hong Konger who speaks Cantonese with an accent. Examples can be found in *The Beast Stalker* (*Zhengren*, 2008), in which Zhang Jingchu acts as a native procurator and the film offers no explanation why she speaks non-native language—although Zhang has tried hard, her Cantonese retains a Mandarin accent. However, this is taken for granted in the film.
2. A native Hong Konger with dubbed dialogue, such as Xu Jinglei in *Confession of Pain*, Li Bingbing in *Linger* and Miao Pu in *The Beast Stalker*, among others. The dubbing seems unnatural, as the result of problematic lip synchronization and audiences' understanding that these actresses are not local.
3. A character who speaks Mandarin but may or may not come from mainland, such as Gao Yuanyuan in *Rob-B-Hood*, Hu Jing in *Drink Drank Drunk*, Tao Hong in *Beyond Our Ken*, Ning Jing in *Divergence* (*San cha kou*, 2005). Some films provide the explanation that the character comes to Hong Kong from mainland China, like Gao Yuanyuan (who has arrived for nursing practice), though the reason seems perfunctory; others do not give any explanation for why they are in Hong Kong and where they actually come from, and just take their Mandarin language as matter-of-

[34] The co-production films in this discussion only include those set in Hong Kong, excluding those happen in mainland China, which just count a very small proportion of the works.

fact, which brings a strange feeling to audiences while watching the film, and results in the confusion of their true identity.

All of these situations conceivably imbibe a perplexity and ambiguity of a character's identity. This less-than-authentic identity (a mixed Hong Konger-mainlander, or even neither Hong Konger nor mainlander) in co-produced films pose important questions to the concept of "Hong Konger", and this directly relates to the problem of "Hong Kong flavor," the cultural identity of Hong Kong cinema. Apparently, the former local imagination of cultural identity cannot cover the mobility and flexibility of contemporary "Hong Konger" any more. It needs to be seen as a much more open signifier, along with the increasing dynamics of trans-regional and transnational film industry, which is, essentially, the economic cooperation unfolding in today's Greater China. As Cheah (1997) says, "postcolonial national identity-formation is in part a response to neocolonial economic globalization" (p. 181).

Interestingly, this ambiguous Hong Kong identity not only manifests on the screen but also off-screen. Through the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), which is a points-based immigration system in Hong Kong, several mainland actresses have been admitted to residence in Hong Kong and received a Hong Kong Identity Card, such as Zhang Ziyi, Tang Wei, Zhou Xun and Zhang Jingchu. As Zhou Xun said, "to get a HKID is a job demand and brings operational convenience, the focus of my work will still be in mainland" ("Zhou Xun," 2009). The border-crossing experience of Zhou Xun recalls us to mind the character she plays in *Hollywood-Hong Kong*, who comes to Hong Kong from Shanghai and assumes multiple identities. It is understandable why these actresses make such choices, taking into account the advantages of Hong Kong residency, such as the ability to visit more than 80 countries without applying for a visa, which is valuable for these frequent-flying stars.

Conveniently, these actresses no longer take up the quota of mainland portion in CEPA, giving both the co-produced films and themselves additional freedom. Here more questions are raised. Legally, they have become Hong Kong residents, but culturally, are they real Hong Kongers? More ambiguously, are they still mainlanders if they hold Hong Kong passports but live and work in mainland? Controversy has arisen on the Internet, with some mainland web citizens branding them "fake foreigners:" "shame on those who made their fortunes in China but got their residencies elsewhere" ("An Actress," 2009). These mainland actresses are put in an awkward position, both in mainland China and Hong Kong, with their ambiguous identity. Meanwhile, the problem of the mobility and flexibility of contemporary "Hong Kongers" can be taken one step further to the problem of the mobility and flexibility of contemporary "Chineseness," which will be more and more common in the age of global capitalism, resulting in that "Chineseness should be seen as an 'open signifier'" (Chu, 2005, p. 325) as well. As Lu claims, "identity is no longer defined in terms of some original nation-state, but implies local participation and global imagination. Chineseness still matters, but does not mean fixed geographic origin and strict affiliation with some nation-state. Identity-formation is a fluid, deterritorialized, flexible mechanism" (2005, pp. 300-301). Both classifications of Chineseness, which is accustomed to stability, and Hong Konger, are and will be undergoing a series of transformation. Zhang Ziyi, Tang Wei, Zhou Xun and Zhang Jingchu can perhaps be seen as precursory imaginaries of future Hong Kong and Chinese identity formation. With them, Hong Kong cinema will continue its hybridization, too. Under this circumstance, can it still be called "Hong Kong cinema"?

Conclusion

Besides the "inauthentic" Hong Kong identity of these actresses, another crucial element that causes Hong Kong cinema to cease being "Hong Kong cinema" is, again, language. As Stephen Teo says, Cantonese is "the dialect that has made Hong Kong cinema unique and given it its identity," but it seems that under the irresistible trend of co-production and dependence on the mainland market, "Mandarin will clearly replace Cantonese as the preferred screen language, although dubbing into Cantonese may remain an option to placate Hong Kong's domestic market" (Teo, 1997, p. 254). It means that Hong Kong audiences will need to accept and get used to mainland actresses' impure Cantonese and even characters presented fully in Mandarin. Increasingly, co-produced films do not even dub the Mandarin into Cantonese, such as *The Warlords*, *Painted Skin*, *Red Cliff*, and *Assassins and Bodyguards* (*Shiyue weicheng*, 2009). These films are not labeled as "Hong Kong cinema" but as "Chinese-language cinema" (*huayu dianying*), even though they meet the standard of "Hong Kong cinema" in the definition of the Hong Kong Film Award. This kind of "Chinese-language cinema" is predicted to become more prevalent in the near future (Manfred Wong, personal communication, January 11, 2009).

More importantly, as the mainland China market holds prospects for Hong Kong cinema, the production of films becomes mainland orientated. Some directors like Peter Chan and Tsui Hark have already moved their studios to Beijing. More and more Hong Kong filmmakers start to focus on creating stories for mainland audiences instead of for local ones. Some of them even hire mainland scriptwriters to write the script for them (Yip Wai Man, personal communication, March 15, 2009). Aubrey Lam, a veteran scriptwriter in Hong Kong, confirms in an interview that most filmmakers in Hong Kong now mainly make films for the mainland audiences. The practice is to hire younger writers from mainland to write

the first draft, and Hong Kong scriptwriters would restructure the draft into the commercially acceptable screenplays (Yang and Wei, 2009, p.339).

Under this situation, is there "Hong Kong cinema"? As early as 1997, Teo (1997) predicted that Hong Kong cinema would come to an end after 1997, and "Hong Kong post-1997 will strive to find new cinematic paradigms as it gropes all over again to find another identity within the embrace of the great China dragon" (p. 254). When it comes to today, the opinion that "Hong Kong cinema has died off" becomes prevalent in the industry (Lam, 2009) and has been widely discussed. Even Yee Tung-Shing, who was given a shot in the mainland market but did not succeed, also shows his pessimism:

> About half a year ago, I still though that the mainland market is big enough to contain various kind of films, and the 'pure' Hong Kong cinema' can hang on a bit longer to five years. But after *Painted Skin*, I think the rest of time is shortened to three years. It the circuit in Guangdong province can be developed well, Cantonese film may be preserved. But Hong Kong film which audiences used to like, may not exist any more. ("Yee Tung-Shing," 2009)

Looking forward with either optimism or pessimism, it remains to be seen what will come. Mainland actresses, who have taken part in the process of Hong Kong cinema's transformation, will continue to witness the development of the local, even the transnational film industry.

Appendix I

The Chinese Lyrics of *Lake Hong Water Are Rough*:

洪湖水浪打浪

洪湖水，浪打浪
洪湖岸邊是家鄉
清早船兒去撒網
晚上回來魚滿倉
四處野鴨與菱藕
秋收滿舨稻穀香
人人都說天堂美
怎比洪湖魚米鄉

洪湖水，長又長
太陽一出閃金光
共產黨的恩情
比那東海深
漁民的光景
一年更比一年強

Glossary of Chinese

This glossary includes all Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese) names and special terms mentioned in the thesis. Entries are alphabetized.

Ah Caan	阿璨
Ah Fa	阿花
Ah Fan	阿芬
Ah Hung	阿紅
Ah Kam	阿金
Ah Leun	阿倫
Ah Ling	阿玲
Ah Lui	阿女
Allen Fong	方育平
Andy Lau	劉德華
Anita Mui	梅艷芳
Ann Hui	許鞍華
Ah Shing	阿勝
Bai Ling	白靈
bak gu	北姑
bak moi/bei mei	北妹
Beijing	北京
biu go	表哥
biu ze	表姐
Bon	邦
Brigitte Lin	林青霞
caan moi	璨妹
Carina Lau	劉嘉玲
Cecilia Cheung	張柏芝
Chan	陳
Chan Pak Sang	陳柏生
Chang Cheh	張徹
Charlene Choi	蔡卓妍
Cheng Shih-nan	鄭勝男
Cherie Chung	鍾楚紅
Chi Min	啓明
Ching	貞
Chow Ying	周英

Chow Yun-Fat	周潤發
Chu	朱
Chu Hai-Ling	朱海玲
Chung Chung	鍾鍾
Cui Bo	崔波
da quan zai	大圈仔
dai lu moi/ dalumei	大陸妹
Dan	丹
Dan Dan	丹丹
Daniel Wu	吳彥祖
dong fang hong/ Tong Fung Hung	東方紅
Ekin Cheng	鄭伊健
Fan Bingbing	範冰冰
Feng Xiaogang	馮小剛
Fruit Chan	陳果
Fung Fung	芳芳
Fung Wing	馮永
Gao Yuanyuan	高圓圓
Gillian Chung	鍾欣桐
ging caat/ jing cha	警察
Guangdong	廣東
Guangzhou	廣州
guanxi	關係
gung on/gong an	公安
gong caan pin/gang chan pian	港產片
Gong Li	鞏俐
Gordon Chan	陳嘉上
Guey Lun-mei	桂綸鎂
Herman Yau	邱禮濤
Honghu Chi Wei Dui	洪湖赤衛隊
Honghushui langdalang	洪湖水浪打浪
Hou Hsiao-hsien	侯孝賢
Hua-nan	華南
huayu dianying	華語電影
huangmei diao	黃梅調
Hu Jing	胡靜
Hu Yaobang	胡耀邦
Huang Shengyi	黃聖依

Hung Hung	紅紅
Huo Siyan	霍思燕
Jackie Chan	成龍
Jet Li	李連杰
Jiang-nan	江南
Jiang Zemin	江澤民
jihua shengyu	計劃生育
Joey Wong	王祖賢
John Woo	吳宇森
Johnny To	杜琪峯
Josephine Koo	顧美華
Ka Fai	家輝
kung-fu	功夫
Kuomintang	國民黨
Kwok-Wai	國威
kwong sun/ gang sheng	港生
Lau Ching Wan	劉青雲
Lee	李
Lee Pik-Wah	李碧華
Li Bingbing	李冰冰
Li Hong	李紅
Li Kangsheng	李康生
Li Qiao	李翹
Li Xiaojun	黎小軍
Li Yueying	李月穎
Liangan Sandi Daoyan Hui	兩岸三地導演會
Ling	玲
Liu	柳
Liu Xiaoqing	劉曉慶
Lo Wu	羅湖
Louis Koo	古天樂
Lui	呂
Lui Fong	呂方
Ma Li	馬莉
Maggie Cheung	張曼玉
Manfred Wong	文雋
Mao	毛
Mao Zedong	毛澤東

Mei	媚
Michelle Yeoh	楊紫瓊
Ming	明
Miriam Yeung	楊千嬅
Misia Chan	陳葦葶
Mongkok	旺角
Mudanjiang	牡丹江
nan bei he	南北和
nan nü you bie	男女有別
Ng See-Yuen	吳思遠
Ning	寧
Ning Jing	寧靜
Pai Lu-Ming	白露明
Pauline Chan	陳寶蓮
Peter Chan	陳可辛
Qin Hailu	秦海璐
Qin Yan	秦燕
Race Wong	黃婉伶
Sammi Cheng	鄭秀文
Sandra Ng	吳君如
Sham Shui Po	深水埗
Shan Shan	珊珊
Shanghai	上海
she tou	蛇頭
Shenzhen	深圳
Shu Qi	舒淇
Si Sun	思晨
Siqin	斯琴
Siqin Gaowa	斯琴高娃
Siu-Man	小敏
Stephen Chow	周星馳
Sun Li	孫儷
Sylvia Chang	張艾嘉
Takeshi Kaneshiro	金城武
tan bai cong kuan, kang ju cong yan	坦白從寬，抗拒從嚴
Tang Xiaobai	唐曉白
Tang Wei	湯唯
Tai Hom	大磡

Tao Hong	陶紅
Teresa Tang	鄧麗君
Tiananmen	天安門
Tianmimi	甜蜜蜜
Tin Shui Wai	天水圍
Ting Hao	丁皓
Tong Tong	東東
tongzhi	同志
Tony Leung Chiu Wai	梁朝偉
Tony Leung Ka Fai	梁家輝
Tsim Sha Tsui	尖沙咀
Tsui Hark	徐克
Tung Chee-Hwa	董建華
Vicki Zhao	趙薇
Wah	華
wai sheng ren	外省人
wei renmin fuwu	為人民服務
wo de zuguo	我的祖國
Wong Chi-Keung	黃志強
Wong Fei-Hung	黃飛鴻
Wu	伍
Wu Chien-lien	吳倩蓮
Wu Wei-Kuo	伍衛國
Xi You Ji	《西遊記》
Xu Jinglei	徐靜蕾
Yan	雁
Yang	楊
Yau Ma Tei	油麻地
Yee Tung-Shing	爾冬陞
yi	義
yi naai/er nai	二奶
Yip Wai Man	葉偉民
Zhang Jingchu	張靜初
Zhang Yuqi	張雨綺
Zhang Ziyi	章子怡
Zhao Jie	趙潔
Zhen	珍
Zheng Dongtian	鄭洞天

zhong hua	中華
Zhong-yuan	中原
Zhou Xun	周迅

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