TSUI HARK'S
Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain

Andrew Schroeder

HKU PRESS
香港大學出版社

Hong Kong University Press
The University of Hong Kong
Pokfulam Road
Hong Kong
www.hkupress.org

© 2004 Hong Kong University Press

ISBN 978-962-209-651-6

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound by Caritas Printing Training Centre, Hong Kong, China

Contents

1

Seeing Past the Future:
An Introduction to *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain*

Among the many great films of the Hong Kong New Wave, few were more unusual in concept, scope, or eventual patterns of influence than Tsui Hark's *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain*. Released in 1983, it was quickly dubbed Hong Kong's version of *Star Wars*. The comparison was both a form of praise and of blame, of hope and of resignation, of modernization and capitulation. As such, many critics rightly interpreted *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* as a key document of Hong Kong's conflicted construction of a new social identity in between colonialism and globalism during its post-colonial and post-industrial transitions.

Despite the film's backward-looking mythology, *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* pitched itself as a forward-looking intervention into the debates over the politics of Hong Kong's transitional identity. As the critic Lisa Morton writes, "*Zu* is sometimes referred to as the Chinese *Star Wars*, but where George Lucas' space fantasy reaffirms existing values ... *Zu* is a far more

complex social document."[1] In the most congratulatory interpretations of the film's contribution to Hong Kong's contemporary cultural scene, *Zu* was a pop-political allegory par excellence. It signified the remarkable capacity of Hong Kong cinema to employ big-screen commercial spectacle, including such lowbrow fare as Hollywood special effects technologies and comic-book storytelling, for the sake of complex and sophisticated social ideas.

At the same time, many interpretations of *Zu: Warriors*, especially those situating the film within the context of Tsui Hark's career as a whole, have downplayed it as an example of what David Bordwell calls the "lost promise" of the Hong Kong New Wave. For some, the more invidious comparisons to *Star Wars*, or of Tsui himself to Steven Spielberg, persist even in the face of *Zu*'s manifest economic failure and its general inability to spark a similarly rapid and immediate technological mutation in Hong Kong cinema to what Lucas and Spielberg achieved in Hollywood. Strangely, many current reviewers tend to assume without proof that *Zu: Warriors* must have been a financial success given its close cultural association with films of such gargantuan financial proportions and questionable narrative depth. According to Bordwell, this kind of interpretation argues that, "Tsui lost interest in social provocation and channeled his energies into noisy lowbrow entertainment. He recycled old movies and tired genres while shamelessly copying Hollywood trends."[2] In those terms, *Zu*'s overtures to globally popular cultural trends took Hong Kong cinema further and further away from the serious social and cultural possibilities of the New Wave while making Hong Kong cinema safe in the long run for the full-frontal incursion of global Hollywood.

Neither of these interpretations is entirely true, nor entirely wrong, yet each is equally incomplete. One way to frame the broad aim of this book is to say that it carves a path between them in order to re-describe *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* as a

key moment in much larger historical trends. *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* played an important role in the transnationalization and, for want of a better word, the "technologization" of Hong Kong cinema during the 1980s and 1990s.[3] It worked more than most other films of its moment to usher Hong Kong cinema in and through the age of postmodern culture, toward the age of digital composition, global sovereignty, and transnational flow. It is in that sense important to recall that *Zu: Warriors* was the first film produced locally in Hong Kong to employ Hollywood-based special effects talent directly, in sharp contrast to common subsequent perceptions of a primarily East-to-West labor migration. *Zu* may thus have paved the way for some of the most far-reaching changes in global popular culture of the 1990s, but not necessarily in the ways its makers may have expected or intended.

Of course, employment of such expensive forms of cultural labor within the confines of established Hong Kong studio hierarchies inflated the film's budget to unprecedented levels and helped to secure the film's notoriety as an especially high-profile instance of popular cinema as financial crisis during the inflation of Hong Kong's bubble economy in the1980s. But the bursting of that speculative bubble was also a productive event. The experience of making and being criticized for *Zu: Warriors* contributed no small part to Tsui Hark's desire to found and develop Film Workshop and Cinefex, his own personal efforts to modernize Hong Kong cinema. These independent institutions, while producing many of the definitive films of their time, pushed him ultimately towards small-batch, "boutique" production of digital visual effects for the sake of local and regional competition in world cultural markets.

Maybe it was inevitable, given *Zu's* place in the evolving conjuncture of forces in Hong Kong cinema, that in the late 1990s Tsui Hark would pursue the making of a digitized successor to *Zu:*

Warriors — the interesting but flawed *Legends of Zu* — at the same time that Hollywood was greedily absorbing Hong Kong action choreography into some of its most successful blockbusters. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to equate *Zu: Warriors* purely and simply with the technoculture of globalizing capitalism. *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* also represented one of the earliest expressions of what Steven Teo and other scholars of the Hong Kong New Wave have described as Tsui's personal search for post-colonial identity in Hong Kong. That tendency came to its fullest fruition nearly a decade later in the *Once Upon a Time in China* series, where Hong Kong's autonomy blurred with a hopeful reading of Chinese national sovereignty. In comparison to that landmark series of films, *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* has received scant critical scrutiny. Through it, perhaps more so than most films by Tsui Hark, we can detect a strange new cultural alchemy, persistently articulating autonomous locality in the midst of the emergent transnational. In *Zu: Warriors*, technology and nationality, mythology and politics constantly interpenetrate and lend meanings to one another.

My aim in this book is to understand the ways that *Zu: Warriors* occupied a series of historical crossroads that have not yet been adequately connected. The tendencies represented by Tsui Hark's efforts on *Zu: Warriors*, and the later *Legend of Zu*, need to be placed among the most significant material and allegorical axes in the transformation of the Hong Kong action cinema during the late twentieth century. To put it in the baldest binary fashion, *Zu* both witnessed and leveraged Hong Kong cinema from its "territorialized" phase, focused on local identities, small-scale means of production, and an uneven mixture of optical and corporeal technologies, to its "deterritorialized" phase, associated with the production of transnational identities, global financing structures, and increasingly monolithic digital visual technologies.

The methodological approach of this book is to cover these

ideas from an interdisciplinary standpoint, integrating diverse contexts into a large framework for understanding the film's meanings. This book does not discuss separately the means of production and the plotting or content of the film, or concerns such as the performance of local and regional identities. Instead, it looks to describe points of mutual implication and interaction: to show how, for instance, technological transformation has been bound up at several points with the production of identity and the financing of culture. In that way we can re-describe *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* as a much more important film than it normally gets credit for within major narratives of the Hong Kong film industry, and even within depictions of Tsui's own career. The chapters have been organized in sequence to illustrate the film's aesthetic, political, economic, and technological navigation of the passage from postmodernism to globalism, or what Negri and Hardt have recently called "Empire." By thinking through these sorts of integrated critical frameworks we can begin to understand the real centrality of *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* to the transformation of commercial cinematic production in Hong Kong since the late-1970s, across the transnational networks that increasingly define both the limits and the possibilities of Hong Kong's locality.

Chapter 2 sets *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* within the context of Hong Kong's early-1980s political struggles over the formation of an "autonomous" post-colonial identity, in between British colonialism, Chinese nationalism, and capitalist globalism. I argue that the narrative of *Zu: Warriors* was an anticipatory act of social imagination. Its important intervention into the debates over Hong Kong's distinctive form of post-coloniality worked not by recovering images of an essential national subject but by imagining a more fluid and horizontal form of social order immanent to civil society itself. In doing so, *Zu* did not simply leap into the abyss of abstract cultural and political fantasy. It moved

forward by looking backward. It revived the mythic form of the *wuxia* story as the means by which to look beyond the futures projected by the forces vying for control of Hong Kong in the early 1980s. Neither was this merely nostalgia. Tsui turned out *wuxia* tales with a twist. He sharply accentuated the genre's tendency to play with gender roles as a way to modernize the narrative and represent a self-conscious awareness of the problems presented by the pull within Hong Kong's cultural politics toward what we might call, following Akbar Abbas, the lures of localism, marginality, and cosmopolitanism. Standing between these tendencies, *Zu* staked an audacious bet on negation, ambivalence, and ambiguity. In that sense we might say that *Zu*'s subversive gender play literally became its anticipatory figure of Hong Kong's autonomous post-colonial identity.

Chapter 3 takes up the question of special effects technology and the connections between *Zu: Warriors* and popular Hollywood cinema of the late-1970s and early-1980s in the economic context of Hong Kong's "bubble economy." There is little question that *Zu* was lauded at the time primarily for its innovations in visual effects technology and its exploratory interfacing with international effects producers, having imported a number of prominent effects designers from the US. At the same time that special effects drove the film's budget skyward, they could not save it from financial disaster. *Zu: Warriors* became something of a cautionary parable for Hong Kong's film producers of the apparent dangers of speculative finance. The story did not end there though. For within the images produced by Tsui Hark for *Zu: Warriors* lay a fluid visual imagination far in advance of the dominant applications of special effects technologies at the time. By linking these technologies into new kinds of mixed technological economies, along with the more traditional forms of cinematic wire-work and Cantonese stage choreographies, *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* pre-visualized the continuous, highly mobile spatial imagination that

defined the next stage of digital effects production and the increasingly cozy relationship between Hong Kong and Hollywood in the 1990s. It was, in all of these senses, both an example of the global postmodern and a glimpse beyond.

Chapter 4 looks beyond *Zu: Warriors* toward the fallout from its financial failure and its legacies for the newly technologized Hong Kong cinema of the 1990s. Initially, that fallout drifted toward Tsui Hark's new production company, Film Workshop, and its special effects production wing, Cinefex Workshop, founded in 1986. The success of Tsui's films made through Film Workshop gave him the opportunity to make significant technology purchases and to keep up with many of the changes in special effects design during the remarkable worldwide transition to digital compositing and 3-D animation in the early 1990s. At the same time, Hong Kong action cinema was discovered by Hollywood directors, effects producers, and cinematographers in search of a means to represent fluid martial choreographies commensurate to the newly mutable technologies of digital object design. This was a pathway already charted by Tsui Hark, although he was not given the credit he deserved for it. While many of his contemporaries aggressively deterritorialized their careers, becoming global stars, Tsui failed to catch on in Hollywood and veered back by the end of the 1990s to a re-exploration of the world he had conjured in *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain*. By the end of the decade he had poured enough of his own resources back into Film Workshop and Cinefex that he could spearhead the making of a digital successor, *Legend of Zu*. On that film one can track the continuing changes in Tsui's perception of Hong Kong's post-coloniality as he veers back toward a re-imagination of the problem of transnational sovereignty in a way that has been articulated best by the recent work of Antoni Negri and Michael Hardt's concept of "Empire." At a moment when films like *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *The Matrix* seem to portend a final deterritorialization of Hong Kong's cinematic

style, Tsui Hark's narratives and his means of production have offered significant, if not always immediately successful, alternative frameworks to imagine the dimensions and the drawbacks of Hong Kong's uneven patterns of post-coloniality amid the uncharted realms of transnational sovereignty.

5

Conclusion

The Meanings of *Zu*

In the wake of the extraordinary worldwide success of Ang Lee's *wuxia* epic, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, critics and representatives of the Hong Kong Film industry felt equally justified in heaving a collective sigh of relief. Who could blame them? After all, the industry had just been through one of the worst downturns in its history following the currency crisis and the Chinese handover in 1997. Surely, an international hit on the magnitude of *Crouching Tiger* was just what it needed to make the case for its continuing creative and commercial vitality. It was not too long before studio executives began to crow about the ways that *Crouching Tiger* marked the beginning of a new era in Hong Kong cinema, defined by increasing exports of Chinese culture, integration of pan-Chinese ethnicities, and the final adoption of Hollywood's disciplined and rationalized mode of production by Hong Kong's notoriously anarchic production houses. There is no question that the local box office has recovered from its low point of five years past. Yet, the failure to follow up on the success of *Crouching Tiger* in any

notable way, up to and including the inability of Tsui Hark to generate much audience interest outside Hong Kong itself in *Legend of Zu*, poses a continuing dilemma for the industry as a whole.

Arguably, much of the late-1990s wave of excitement over Hong Kong action cinema has also died down substantially. Of course there will be a prequel to *Crouching Tiger*. John Woo will remain near the A-list of Hollywood directors despite the *Windtalkers* fiasco. Jackie Chan remains an institution whose recent mastery of the biracial buddy picture caps an illustrious career. The *Matrix* sequels will keep Yuen Woo-ping in the limelight for all of 2003, and likely for some time to come. Yet, there is a palpable sense right now that much of the recent wave of Hong Kong's influence over the global imaginary has been more-or-less absorbed into the day-to-day mechanics of Hollywood.

Hong Kong is not elsewhere anymore it is everywhere, blasted throughout the circuitry of the global mediasphere. Martial arts aesthetics in mainstream commercial cinema are becoming more and more the products of simulation than of the years of physical training, undergone by people such as Yuen Biao and Sammo Hung, making them even more accessible to choreographers and film directors from outside Hong Kong. Tsui Hark has contributed as much as anyone, for better or worse, to the current state of affairs, yet despite the critical accolades bestowed on *Time and Tide*, he remains primarily a niche phenomenon. Often, he functions more as the poster child for the crisis itself, a sort of spectre of cultural mistranslation and global disjunction. To many aficionados, this remains one of the central ongoing mysteries of the past two decades in Hong Kong cinema.

To some degree, Tsui's long-term standing as a doubled symbol of creation and crisis in Hong Kong cinema really began with *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain*, and came full circle with *Legend of Zu*. Indeed, considering its pedigree no one should be too surprised that *Legend of Zu* failed to catch the tailwinds of

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon and *The Matrix*. Hand wringing over profits and loss is the easy part though. The more difficult task consists of returning to *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* with an eye on the basic shifts in the cultural and cinematic imaginary of Hong Kong that it was trying to effect, as a way of returning to the present with viable categories for understanding the possible aftermath of the current crisis. In that context it is important to recall that Tsui's strategy on *Zu: Warriors* was far from conservative. *Zu: Warriors* aimed to make connections which others were either unwilling to try or unable to see. It is in that sense of its constructive connections that we can now retrospectively call *Zu: Warriors* an "anticipatory" work of popular culture. It articulated networks and pathways, pried open genres, gambled on strategies, forced untried collisions, and mixed explosive compounds. The fact that not all of them worked out immediately should deter no one from considering their ultimate dimensions. For, from its crisis, at least in part, emerged both the golden age of Hong Kong cinema and the emergent problems of global cultural, technological, and financial integration as the future horizons of Hong Kong cinema.

In the end, how should we best understand the long-term outcome of *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain*? There are at least two general routes, although these two contain multitudes, some parts intended, others not. We might describe all of them as variations on hostility to binary patterns of imagination. On the one hand, it made the leap into direct contestation with mainstream Hollywood without sacrificing either its political and intellectual savvy or its local and regional roots. This means that it refused the binary opposition between Hollywood and Hong Kong, or more abstractly, between the global and the local. To a certain extent, this type of refusal was already a hallmark of the postmodern Hong Kong cinema, which set the stage for *Zu: Warriors* by establishing as normal industrial routine the practices of both citational and

non-citational cross-cultural "borrowing." However, *Zu: Warriors* took it a major step further by building in a self-reflexive discourse on its own conventions and elevating the narrative into an allegorical articulation of Hong Kong's post-colonial predicament by clearing space between globality and nationality for social autonomy. One needn't evacuate the local in order to participate in the global. It was more than a little bit appropriate then, given Tsui's hostility toward binary oppositions of all kinds, that the form of such a complex social allegory took shape at the intersection of deceptively simple genres like Wuxia and the pseudo-Hollywood special effects blockbuster. It is also in that anti-binary context that Tsui's repeated gender subversions make their most sense as much larger allegorical figures.

On the other hand, in a related fashion, *Zu: Warriors* effectively refuted the idea that traditional martial arts choreography could not coexist with the sorts of optical illusions being pumped out by Hollywood's newly invigorated special effects teams. In fact, it proved quite the opposite. By merging the capacities of optical effects technologies to represent fluid changes in state over time with the capacities of martial arts choreography to represent fluid bodily motion across three dimensions within the cinematic frame, *Zu: Warriors* produced a new type of dynamic and fluid cinematic space. To an increasing degree over the next two decades, that type of cinematic space gained ground as the dominant visual imagination of the emergent digital effects technologies, paving the way eventually, for better or worse, for the technical and stylistic merger between Hong Kong and Hollywood action cinemas in the mid-1990s. At the same time, Tsui insisted on developing his own local effects production house, allowing him to continue working in the future outside of a relation of dependency on US-based design houses, a tendency which has proved anticipatory in the age of runaway effects production, from the US toward the other side of the Pacific Rim, in the first years of the twenty-first century. Once

again, desire for an autonomous locality returns from within the heart of global culture, without necessarily sacrificing its place in the network of global relations.

The pattern of opposition to simple oppositions continued in *Legend of Zu*, although the preoccupation with space was transferred to a concern with time. Concerns over a singular, timeless existence, one that denied desire to the subject insofar as it negated the possibility of transformation, limitation, and death, played out across a hyperkinetic succession of digital composites. Fluid change of states, erasing perceptions of actually diverse origins, enabled by digital visual technologies, became a cry for the friction and heft of history amid the weightlessness of a virtual culture. Yet the only way Tsui seems to know how to work is from the inside out, in this case producing a version of the weightless virtual even as he registers its dangers and frustrations. In that sense, the final evasion might be of the traditional dictates of politicized aesthetics. Rather than producing an actual counter-discourse, Tsui revels in the play of negation, ambivalence, and ambiguity itself. The new transnational culture and politics, which forms the background to *Legend of Zu*'s production and its narrative, is not something to oppose or to support, but simply a new context for action. Tsui Hark is simply relaying to us ways that that context might be made more socially navigable. The outcome of his labors ought to be measured in the capillary streams branching off from his images and his practices, in the future mutations derived afterward, not necessarily in the internal virtues of the works themselves. And in that exact sense, the twenty-year old-question of *Zu*'s success or failure, measured strictly in terms of the financial health and well-being of the Hong Kong film industry, is finally beside the point.

Notes

Chapter 1 Seeing Past the Future

1 Lisa Morton, *The Cinema of Tsui Hark* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2001), p. 50.
2 David Bordwell, Planet Hong Kong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 136.
3 This basic narrative is framed well by recent publications and exhibitions at the Hong Kong Film Archive. See, for instance, Law Kar and Winnie Fu, eds., *Hong Kong Cinema: From Handicraft to High Tech* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2000). On Tsui Hark more specifically, see Sam Ho, ed., *The Swordsman and His Jiang Hu: Tsui Hark and Hong Kong Film* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2001).

Chapter 2 Speeding Towards Autonomy

1 Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 4.

2 On the debate over post-colonial narrative and the question of "national allegory" see Frederic Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital," *Social Text*, Fall 1986, pp. 65–88, and the response by Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'," in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (New York: Verso, 1992), pp. 95–122.

3 Observations of Tsui's so-called nationalism range from the classic work of Steven Teo in *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* (London: BFI Press, 1997), to Lisa Stokes and Michael Hoover, *City on Fire* (New York: Verso, 1998), to an intriguing recent article by Cindy Chan Shu-ching, "Colonial Modernity: A Study of Tsui Hark's Production and Films," *E-Journal of Hong Kong Cultural and Social Studies*, March 2002, http://www.hku.hk/hkcsp/ccex/ehkcss01, where she argues that Tsui Hark's working methods are defined by community bonds echoing a model of the Confucian family.

4 Abbas, *Hong Kong*, pp. 10–15.

5 On the politics of the Hong Kong New Wave see the essays by Law and Hector Rodriguez in Esther Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

6 On the history of Hong Kong's post-colonial transition see Jan Morris, *Hong Kong: Epilogue to an Empire*. Revised ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1997) and Steven Tsang, *Hong Kong: An Appointment with China* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1997).

7 Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Anthony King, *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy: Cultural and Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

8 Teo himself has led the way towards such a re-formulation, as we can see in the differences between his interpretation of Tsui Hark's "nationalism" in *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* (London: BFI Press, 1997) and his more recent article, "Tsui Hark: National Style and Polemic" from Esther Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). In the earlier version he understands Tsui

Hark's worldview in rather strictly nationalism terms. "Tsui depicts the mythic world of the martial arts as a time when China's sciences and inventions were at their peak. This notion of Chinese science and military prowess, combined with popular mythologising of the martial arts, form the substance of Tsui's nationalist theme." (p. 163) However, in the later essay, Teo argues that Tsui's "notion of speed overrides the theme of nationalism" (p. 147).

9 On Bruce Lee and cultural modernity see Jachinson Chan, *Chinese American Masculinities: From Fu Manchu to Bruce Lee* (New York: Routledge, 2001), Tony Rayns, "Bruce Lee: Narcissism and Nationalism" from *A Study of the Hong Kong Martial Arts Film* (Hong Kong International Film Festival Publications) pp. 109–12, and Steven Teo, "Narcissus and the Little Dragon," in *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions*.

10 Lisa Morton, *The Cinema of Tsui Hark*, p. 13.

11 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p. 7.

12 On Spivak and the concept of "erasure" see her introduction to Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

13 David Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong*, p. 12.

14 Akbar Abbas, *Hong Kong*, pp. 12–14.

Chapter 3 Uneven Developments

1 Frederic Jameson, "Culture and Finance Capital," in *The Cultural Turn* (New York: Verso, 1998), pp. 136–161.

2 Evans Chan, "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema," in Arif Dirlik and Xudong Zhang, eds., *Postmodernism and China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 294–322.

3 "In this passage to a space whose curvature is no longer that of the real, nor of truth, the age of simulation thus begins with a liquidation of all referentials — worse: by their artificial resurrection in systems of signs, which are a more ductile material than meaning, in that they lend themselves to all systems of equivalence, all binary oppositions and all combinatory algebra. It is no longer a question of imitation,

nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself; that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine which provides all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes. Never again will the real have to be produced: this is the vital function of the model in a system of death, or rather of anticipated resurrection which no longer leaves any chance even in the event of death. A hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and the simulated generation of difference." Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulations*, in Mark Poster, ed., *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988) pp. 166–184.

4 Jameson, "Culture and Finance Capital."

5 On the phantasmagoria, cinema and special effects, see Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), p. 296. Also see Walter Benjamin's writings on the Parisian arcades of the nineteenth century as immersive phantasmagoria in his *The Arcades Project*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

6 There is an excellent passage in Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt's *Empire* that makes the case for a "phantasmagoric" image of global cultural and capital flow quite persuasively by linking it with Guy Debord's theory of "spectacle." In their chapter on the "Mixed Constitution" of Empire they write, "In effect, the glue that holds together the diverse functions and bodies of the hybrid constitution is what Guy Debord called the spectacle, an integrated and diffuse apparatus of images and ideas that produces and regulates public discourse and opinion. In the society of the spectacle, what was once imagined as the public sphere, the open terrain of political exchange and participation, completely evaporates. The spectacle destroys any collective form of sociality – individualizing social actors in their separate automobiles and in front of separate video screens – and at the same time imposes a new mass sociality, a new uniformity of action and thought. On this spectacular terrain, tradition forms of struggle

over the constitution become inconceivable." Negri and Hardt, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

7 See Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

8 On theories of "proto-simulation" and immersion see Marie-Laure Ryan, "Immersion v. Interactivity: Virtual Reality and Literary Theory," *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 5, no. 1, September, 1994, and Scott Bukatman, "Terminal Penetration," in *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

9 On the New Hollywood and blockbuster economics see Janet Wasko, Hollywood in the Information Age, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1994) and "Adjusting to the New Global Economy: Hollywood in the 1990s," in Albert Moran, ed., *Film Policy: International, National and Regional Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

10 The "bubble economy" is normally defined as a macro-economic condition in which asset prices, such as stocks and real estate, rise at a rate much higher than might be predicted based upon "economic fundamentals" such as productivity and output. This sort of condition is commonly associated with a frenzied pace of speculative buying, or purchases of stocks and real estate on the basis of unrealized future value rather than existing present value. Hong Kong's rise as a financial capital, along with the Japan's economy in the 1980s and the US tech economy in the 1990s are all good examples of "bubble economies."

11 See <http://www.hkmdb.com/hk/awards/hkfa_nom-83.html>.

12 There are some sporadic signs that *Zu: Warriors From the Magic Mountain* played a role in the visual imaginations of certain Hollywood directors and art designers during the 1980s. Sam Raimi, director of the *Evil Dead* series and recently of *Spiderman*, cited *Zu: Warriors* during interviews in the 1980s as one of his inspirations for the cheap but effective visual effects on *Evil Dead*. Even more directly, John Carpenter cited it as the film most responsible for his visual design on *Big Trouble in Little China*.

13 Tsui himself both acknowledges and downplays their influence in current interviews. "We also had some people out from L.A., who had

done *Star Wars*, and they gave us a lot of information and knowledge about the way we handled some of the shots." Quoted from Lisa Morton, *The Cinema of Tsui Hark* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2001), p. 53. In this quote Tsui makes clear that these workers played merely an advisory role, while flattening their individual contributions and muting some of their connections to the leading technical tendencies of the moment.

14 Tsui Hark quoted from Lisa Morton, *The Cinema of Tsui Hark*, p. 53.

15 Max Fleischer's second series, *Out of the Inkwell* (1919) was the first to combine hand-drawn animation and photographic images. On Fleischer and the rotoscope see Richard Rickitt, *Special Effects: The History and Technique* (New York: Billboard Books, 2000).

16 Michelle Pierson, *Special Effects: Still in Search of Wonder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

17 Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, fourth edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), p. 117.

18 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991).

19 On Melies see Elizabeth Ezra, *Georges Melies: The Birth of the Auteur* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000).

20 On Virilio and the concept of "real time" see "The Perspective of Real Time" in Paul Virilio, *Open Sky* (New York: Verso, 1997).

Chapter 4 Technologies of Transnationalism

1 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 346.

2 Among the few sites available on the Web distributing information about *Zu: Time Warriors* is the following: <http://www.brns.com/pages4/7fort57.html>.

3 Cinema City was founded in 1980 by Karl Maka, Dean Shek and Raymond Wong. Their primary interest as independent producers was to make a series of madcap comedies in the tradition of Michael Hui. Their greatest commercial success was the *Aces Go Places* series, which put them into close contact with Tsui Hark. After the founding of Film

Workshop, the two companies worked together on many of Film Workshop's seminal early films, such as *Shanghai Blues*.

4 On the concept of "auteurism" and its material role both in Hollywood and in other world cinemas see Timothy Corrigan, "Auteurs in the New Hollywood," in Jon Lewis, ed., *The New American Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

5 <http://www.filmworkshop.net>.

6 On the history of Industrial Light and Magic see Mark Cotta Vaz and Patricia Rose Duignan, *Industrial Light and Magic: Into the Digital Realm* (New York: Ballantine, 1996).

7 See "The New International Division of Hollywood Labor," in Toby Miller, ed., *Global Hollywood* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

8 *Logik: For the Digitally Correct* (Discreet Logic, Inc. Newsletter), Issue no. 3, 1995.

9 See *Hong Kong Cinema: From Handicraft to High Tech* (Hong Kong Film Archive, 2001).

10 On personalism and Tsui Hark's working methods see Cindy Chan Shu-ching, "Colonial Modernity: A Study of Tsui Hark's Production and Films," *E-Journal of Hong Kong Cultural and Social Studies*, March 2002,< http://www.hku.hk/hkcsp/ccex/ehkcss01>.

11 This section is based upon work presented at the Center for Asian Studies in December of 2001, and published in the *E-Journal of Hong Kong Cultural and Social Studies*, Issue 1, February 2002. <http://www.hku.hk/hkcsp/ccex/ehkcss01/a_pdf12.htm>.

12 Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001) pp. 136–60.

13 On "bullet-time" and special effects in *The Matrix* see Kevin H. Martin, "Jacking Into The Matrix," *Cinefex*, no. 79, May 1999.

14 There are a couple of scenes early in Olivier Assayas's film *Irma Vep* where the French crew coordinating Maggie Cheung's performance, including a director clearly intended as a play on Luc Besson, rhapsodize about the ballistic beauty of John Woo. These scenes pretty much encapsulate this idea.

15 Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong*, p. 220.

16 On the historical cosmopolitanism of Hollywood see Saverio

Giovacchini, *Hollywood Modernism* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001).

17 See Toby Miller, ed., *Global Hollywood* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

18 Paul Virilio, "Speed and Information: Cyberspace Alarm!", *Ctheory.net*, August, 1995.

19 See Negri and Hardt, *Empire*, Part 2.

20 On time, globalism and virtuality, see Paul Virilio, "Continental Drift," in *Open Sky* (New York: Verso 1997).