

Chinese Face / Off

THE TRANSNATIONAL
POPULAR CULTURE
OF HONG KONG

KWAI-CHEUNG LO

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Introduction: The Chineseness of Hong Kong's Transnational Culture in Today's World

"HONG KONG SHOULD BECOME the Switzerland of Asia," said Wang Zhan, director of the Shanghai Municipal Government Development Research Center, an influential government think tank, when a Hong Kong journalist asked him to comment on the future of postcolonial Hong Kong (Lu and Lu 2002, 49). Could the Special Administrative Region (SAR) of Hong Kong, returned to the People's Republic of China (PRC) after 150 years of British colonial rule, manage to transform itself into an entity as internationalized as Switzerland? There is no lack of advice as to what post-1997 Hong Kong should do to redefine and rejuvenate itself. Some believe that the best future for the city involves improved integration with China; that is to say, further sinicization would be the path to tread.¹ Others insist that the very strength and uniqueness of Hong Kong depend on its autonomy and rule of law, which keep China at a safe distance. People from many different fields hope to see Hong Kong transform itself into a regional center, dominating the areas of high technology, logistics, tourism, and academic research and maintaining its key position as a bridge between China and the West. Advice from Shanghai, Hong Kong's greatest potential competitor in the twenty-first century, could have a questionable motivation. "If Hong Kong becomes increasingly sinicized, it will only face more competition from other mainland cities and may even become another Shanghai," Wang Zhan elaborated in the interview (50). Wang may have strong reasons to encourage Hong Kong not to imitate and compete with Shanghai but to shape its postcolonial future as the Switzerland of Asia.

Switzerland is a small nation-state sandwiched among its powerful neighbors. But when the great European countries do business, Switzerland is able

to serve as an intermediary for their dialogue. As an Asian economic tiger, Hong Kong has striven to be a leading international financial hub and a commercial center for Asia and the Pacific Rim. The prolonged economic downturn triggered in 1997 by Asian financial turmoil was a terrible blow to the people of Hong Kong. The postcolonial city has been struggling with a domestic crisis of confidence. The capability and leadership of the SAR government to guide Hong Kong into the twenty-first century have been questioned. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Hong Kong media trumpeted Wang's words. Nowadays an insecure Hong Kong is receptive to advice as to how it should readjust its own position. It may be too early to tell whether Hong Kong can become the Switzerland of Asia. Perhaps it is simply wrong to urge Hong Kong to do so, since the city has been playing such a role for quite some time. Does it make sense to say one should become what one already is? In any case, the mention of the Swiss experience by a mainland Chinese scholar may reveal, or even underscore, Hong Kong's relationship to its neighboring powers, not only economically but also culturally.

Swiss culture is renowned for its international flavor and its simultaneous assimilation of the adjacent German, French, and Italian cultures and distinction from them. Like Switzerland, which is in Europe but not the European Union, Hong Kong is both inside and outside of China. Its porous borders (to capital, information, and travelers) and special status (once a British colonial outpost and now a Chinese SAR) historically have enabled Hong Kong to achieve a mission impossible elsewhere. Exposed to many foreign influences, Hong Kong also promotes the flourishing of a modern Chinese popular culture that has been in virtual hibernation in mainland China. For decades, this colonial city, once second only to the United States in film export, has been a prolific production center of Chinese diaspora culture and one of the most important platforms for Chinese-Western cultural mediation. Precisely because Hong Kong has played a major role in the representation of modern popular Chinese culture throughout the world, I would argue that the contemporary meanings of being Chinese are revealed by studying the city's culture, which would provide a new understanding of Chineseness and its interplay with today's world.

A Transgression Inherent in the Meaning of Chineseness

My study, unlike many previous scholarly works,² does not intend to assert the uniqueness of Hong Kong culture, which is actually an untenable posi-

tion. I am far more interested in the ways in which that culture could be used to actualize its potential Chineseness within the symbolic structure. Presumably, it is the culture, rather than simply ethnicity, that figures prominently in defining Chineseness. Such a unified culture, in terms of beliefs, rituals, behaviors, worldviews, written script, socioeconomic institutions, and practices, shared by the Han Chinese with a common ancestry, is said to have successfully assimilated the small proportion of non-Han racial groups within the homogeneous nation. The myth goes so far that the tremendous modernization of social and economic life in various Chinese societies, ranging from the mainland to diasporic communities all over the world, would even enhance rather than weaken such unique cultural characteristics.

To many foreign visitors, Hong Kong already appears to be a very “Chinese” city.³ It was used to exhibit Chineseness when the “real” China could not be accessed. In fact, the returned Hong Kong may serve as an exemplar of Chineseness not because the colonial city disassociated from Chinese culture in order to produce a Hong Kong identity, but because it has been producing and reshaping Chineseness since the early colonial era. For decades, Hong Kong’s popular culture has succeeded in creating and perpetuating an abstract kind of Chinese nationalism and identity for a global audience.⁴ The Chinese nationalism expressed through Hong Kong kung fu films exported to the Chinese diaspora, however, carries no political substance. At various times, Hong Kong popular culture has even gone so far as to disavow and negate its Chineseness in order to make itself less parochial and more modern—that is to say, westernized. But, in other historical moments, film and other carriers of culture produced in the colonial city have manifested strong patriotic feelings and nostalgic sentiments for China.

Hong Kong’s position toward Chineseness has often shifted. Sometimes Hong Kong provides a safe haven for sinicist ideology; many exiles and émigrés from the mainland expressed in their Hong Kong works nationalistic and melancholic imaginations, especially prior to the 1970s (Tan 2001). At other times Hong Kong appropriates Chineseness as a means to realize its own identity formation. For example, in the 1940s some Hong Kong filmmakers used Chinese nationalism to conjure a hybrid local identity (Fu 2000a). Sometimes the sinicist ideology enables the Chinese culture to realize its full potential. And very often Hong Kong ruthlessly exploits Chineseness for commercial purposes. These shifts comprise an all-encompassing space in which socio-political tensions between different Chinese societies might be obliterated and in which members of various communities might somehow relate and recognize themselves as Chinese. In this sense, Hong Kong’s Chineseness offers

the broadest representativeness, not because it typifies the majority of the Chinese population, nor because it occupies a premier place in the Chinese cultural hierarchy, but because it has no proper place within that hierarchy and thus constitutes a site of conflicting determinations of the contemporary meaning of Chineseness.

Elizabeth Sinn, a Hong Kong historian, has claimed, “Hong Kong is a window to the world for China, as well as one for the world to look into China. In Hong Kong, the Chinese, the foreign, the new, the old, the orthodox, and the unorthodox are mixed in a melting pot, with various contradictions acting as a catalyst, out of which arises a pluralistic, fluid, exuberant cultural uniqueness” (Sinn 1995, iv). Hong Kong’s Chineseness is a site of performative contradictions. It is like a crack in the edifice of Chineseness. Its existence is simply a living and contingent contradiction, in the sense that the city’s culture both exaggerates and negates Chineseness in the vicissitudes of its sociopolitical milieu. However, this contradiction actually embodies the fundamental imbalance and inconsistency of the cultural totality of contemporary China. Hong Kong culture may appear to be an obstacle to the full actualization of the Chinese subject. What should not be overlooked is that the contradiction or “defect” constitutive of Hong Kong’s Chineseness is effectively the Chinese subject itself in the contemporary world.

This may be why I do not argue for the existence of “Hong Kong-ness,” although works that attempt to affirm the uniqueness of Hong Kong continue to appear. If there is such a thing, it operates according to the logic of a fantasy that affirms the ideological power of what it means to be Chinese, rather than any determinate local position.⁵ The subject of Hong Kong emerges only at the moment that it fails to be “subjectivized” (in both senses—that is, to be its own agent as well as to be a member of the Chinese state) within the traditional Chinese symbolic order. Perhaps Hong Kong should willingly assume its own “nonexistence.” It would no longer be so easy to declare its so-called uniqueness to be in opposition to the Chineseness of (mainland) China. My study of Hong Kong is not exactly a search for a unique Hong Kong subjectivity. Instead, I consider how Hong Kong culture operates as an articulation of “transitional Chineseness.” Rather than consciously aiming at a construction of a particular local identity, the popular culture in and of Hong Kong moves toward or away from Chineseness at different historical moments in order to accommodate the changing needs of different ideological groups. The Chineseness of Hong Kong culture itself is by no means fixed. It is instead a process of becoming, generated by various national forces and interests rather than by a single origin. It is especially true that after being colonized by the British, Hong Kong

would never relate to Chinese sovereignty as simply another version of the colonial narrative. The new horizon confronted by the postcolonial city is instead the possibility of redefining its own position in relation to nationalism. The complex connection between Hong Kong's historical development with that of China in a way denies the facile kind of postmodern arguments that designate the city a site of timelessness and placelessness. The process of becoming, on the other hand, entails a mutual transformation of the two parties involved: Hong Kong and Chineseness. Hong Kong cannot become Chinese without the Chinese changing into something else. The post-1997 subjectivization of the Hong Kong people as Chinese nationals demonstrates that a different notion of Chineseness can always gratify new demands and that the return of the colony to its motherland might present a challenging perspective from which to examine the supposedly incontestable status of national identity.

However, the Chineseness with which Hong Kong has been grappling does not necessarily coincide with the multiple and hybrid kinds of Chineseness described and promoted by critics who defy the notion of a monolithic Chinese identity. Tu Wei-ming, a neo-Confucian scholar, argues, in his overarching tripartite division of "cultural China," that, while Chinese culture is disintegrating at the center, which consists of mainland China and other societies populated predominantly by ethnic Chinese, it will be the periphery, composed of diasporic Chinese communities throughout the world and individuals who try to understand China intellectually, that will set the economic and cultural agendas in the twenty-first century (Tu 1994). But Rey Chow has already pointedly questioned the validity of such promotion of the pluralization of Chinese identity: "[S]hould we from now on simply speak of Chineseness in the plural—as so many kinds of Chineseness-es, so many Chinese identities? Should Chineseness from now on be understood no longer as a traceable origin but in terms of an ongoing history of dispersal, its reality always already displaced from what are imaginary, fantastic roots? As is evident in other intellectual movements, the course of progressivist antiessentialism comprises many surprising twists and turns, and the problem of Chineseness is, one suspects, not likely to be resolved simply by way of the act of pluralizing" (Chow 2000, 18).⁶ In my view, it is not exactly pluralization that allows Chineseness to become an open signifier, able to anchor all kinds of meaning. In fact, a multi- or trans-Chinese vision generated from such multiplicity may only help to make the cultural and national ideology of Chineseness more powerful, oppressive, and dominating. Precisely by emphasizing that "it is living and changeable" and that it is a "product of a shared experience whose record has continu-

ally influenced its growth,” as Wang Gungwu did in “The Chineseness of China,” Chineseness always “would be distinctively and recognizably Chinese and that may be all that matters” (Wang Gungwu 1991b, 31, 34).

In this sense, a postmodern politics of plural or multiple identities or subjectivities, or a reversal of center-periphery hierarchy will never be political enough since it collaborates with more than subverts the domination mechanism. There have been—and likely will continue to be—many attempts by local and foreign scholars to describe the specificity of Hong Kong in terms of the development of its culture, identity, and local consciousness. These scholars agree that the specificity of Hong Kong culture is complex and difficult to describe in any coherent and unitary form. So for some cultural and literary critics, the amorphous, elusive, hybrid, slippery, and inconsistent nature of Hong Kong culture becomes its only consistent, identifiable characteristic. The very elusiveness and ambiguity of Hong Kong’s specificity might not contribute to the formation of its own unique identity. Instead, it paradoxically smoothens the process of Hong Kong’s reintegration with China and facilitates its convergence with the global economy in such a way that its cultural specificity as an indefinably multiple entity would easily give way to any kind of larger system.

My understanding of Hong Kong’s Chineseness tells a different story about the openness of Chineseness. Chineseness, as examined through Hong Kong culture, is the master signifier of the Chinese nation—nothing but an empty sign standing for an impossible fullness of meaning, insofar as there is no way for its content to be positivized. The pluralism or multiplicity of Chinese identities only presents more choices for a general idea of “Chineseness,” which, instead of providing anything precise, simply conceals the fact that “Chineseness” is an empty term.

I argue that rather than appearing as a plurality or as one among many species, Hong Kong represents an “inherent transgression” of Chineseness itself.⁷ That which has been publicly disavowed is actually the ultimate support of the existing order. From the orthodox perspective of earlier Chinese Communist officials, the colonial enclave had indulged moneymaking, class exploitation, drugs, gambling, prostitution, gangs, and unrestrained freedoms that not only offended socialist principles but also violated traditional Chinese moral values. But far from being subversive to the social and cultural order of China, the disavowed “dirty” freedoms enjoyed by the Hong Kong Chinese community actually helped define what it means to be Chinese in today’s world. It is this “obscene” side of Chineseness found in Hong Kong that sustains a positive notion of Chinese cultural identity. Hong Kong cul-

ture is “good” for Chinese identity insofar as it is “bad” and belongs primarily to the realm of “low” culture; as China said repeatedly before the hand-over, in support of Hong Kong’s autonomy and its lifestyle, *wu zhao tiao, ma zhao pao* (literally, “keep on dancing, keep on horse racing”). In the eyes of the Chinese Communist Party, legalized gambling and prostitution epitomize the corrupt lifestyle of the capitalist colony.

Having been designated the bad, contaminating element, Hong Kong culture generates a certain degree of distancing or disidentification from the symbolic structure of China, thereby implicitly supporting the power of the great, proper Chinese tradition. After 1949 the colonial rule of Hong Kong obviously would not have been possible without the consent of Communist China.⁸ The Chinese tolerance of such a capitalist enclave under British rule cannot be explained merely by economic and strategic factors. In a public address, Li Ruihuan, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, once described Hong Kong as a hundred-year-old teapot from Yixing, the value of which lies solely in the residual sediments inside of it. Tea drinkers know that the real value of the teapot is in the residue of tea leaves lining its interior. Should a well-intentioned person come along and scrub the stains from the vessel, the cleaning would destroy the teapot’s worth to its owner. Li Ruihuan implies that Chinese authorities are well aware of the fact that Hong Kong’s value to China resides chiefly in its lingering taint. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to take this idea one step further and to say that the authoritative power itself relies on its bad and obscene side in order to legitimize and maintain itself. The transgression is actually inherent in the edifice, although it is always dismissed or kept hidden. Hong Kong serves precisely this function for China at a time when the nation desperately needs a culturally cohesive force to maintain its power.

The inherent transgression of a Hong Kong that lends its obscene support to Chinese cultural coherence no longer goes unnoticed. Indeed, China today is far more “obscene” than Hong Kong in terms of its relentless capitalization, cruel exploitation of its working class, unlawful business transactions, fraud and false accounting, government corruption, drugs, gambling, prostitution, gangs, and other “capitalist” crimes. This capitalization is the emblematic showcase of the violent return of the repressed in Communist China that has to take place in order for the existing power structure to justify itself. China’s increasing integration with global capitalism severely undermines the homogenization and essentialization of its national and cultural identity. The only way that the given reality of contemporary China can achieve its unity is through the agency of an exceptional signifier—a signifier

that is not part of its reality but that can provide a point of reference for the unity and identity of a certain national and cultural ideological experience. Historical circumstances have always enabled Hong Kong to enjoy exceptional rights, to transcend national boundaries and engage in things that many Chinese can only fantasize about. A typical example would be the return of Dr. Li Shaomin to Hong Kong in 2001. Li, a U.S. citizen teaching at the City University of Hong Kong, had been convicted of spying for Taiwan and deported to the United States. Soon after his deportation, however, Li was allowed to return to his home and his teaching job in Hong Kong. The scholar's return demonstrates Hong Kong's autonomy under the "one country, two systems" arrangement. In addition, Hong Kong is still the only piece of Chinese soil on which the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre can be publicly commemorated. Insofar as the appearance of integrity, unity, and order of Chineseness has not been encroached, Hong Kong is permitted an "obscene underside." As an exception, Hong Kong is structurally necessary to the domain of Chineseness. It is always the singular exception that enables one to formulate the totality as such.

Hong Kong's Chineseness is not one of the particular Chineseness-es to struggle with the origin by displacing it in its own specific ways. By no means is my study an empirical search for and attempted generalization or representation of "real" Chineseness. I argue instead that only what is exceptional and singular, such as Hong Kong's Chineseness, will help establish the cultural norm. The Chineseness of Hong Kong emerges as a correlative to some traumatic remainder or to some excess that cannot easily be integrated into Chinese symbolic space. Its very negativity signals the presence and actuality of a positive, definitive meaning of Chineseness. Precisely because Hong Kong culture does not present distinct national characteristics (because of its transnational character and its lack of immediate political threat), it can refer to an abstract wholeness that is implied by a singular element that is structurally displaced and out of joint. Within a given cultural totality, it is precisely that exceptional element that stands for that culture's all-encompassing dimension.

The Changing Gaze of China in a Global World

Dismissed for decades as a "cultural desert" and a place insensitive to "high" culture as well as indifferent to political ideologies, Hong Kong today is increasingly sought by its critics and by sinologists to mediate the relations

between China and the world. Compared to China, Hong Kong seems too small to produce any enduring cultural effects. But because of its smallness, this most westernized of Chinese cities could project images of grandiose national fantasies. The widely acclaimed Shanghai writer Yu Qiuyu has argued that, contrary to popular opinion, Hong Kong has never been a cultural desert. At a seminar organized by the Hong Kong SAR government a few years after the historic handover, Yu claimed that “Shanghai has never been able to compete [with] Hong Kong’s culture, [which] is so diverse and sensitive to both Chinese and Western cultures, and it serves as a bridge between the two” (A. Leung 2001).⁹ Since the people of Hong Kong have felt increasingly threatened by the revival of Shanghai’s cultural and economic status, Yu’s remarks might have brought relief to the city. However, the description of Hong Kong as a bridge between Chinese and Western cultures is of course clichéd; Hong Kong locals have heard it for years and repeated it to themselves over and over like a mantra. But a cliché, paradoxically, can say something “original,” if it has reached the point at which its concept reflects back only on itself. Perhaps what is novel about this description is not what it says about Hong Kong’s role with regard to China and the West, but rather how it attests to a recognition of that role on the part of mainland Chinese intellectuals. Before that, mainland intellectuals had rarely used this “bridge” idea to describe the colonial city. Even while the impact that the handover has had on Hong Kong is being examined, China itself is undergoing fundamental cultural changes in the process of modernization.¹⁰

Reflecting on the conditions of contemporary Chinese culture, Wang Shuo, a popular mainland writer and pioneer of Chinese “hoodlum literature” (*pizi wenxue*),¹¹ frankly and sardonically acknowledges the major vicissitudes in China’s reception of Hong Kong culture over the last two decades of the twentieth century:

Twenty years ago we said that Hong Kong was a “cultural desert” whenever the place came up in conversation. Saying this helped us to maintain some sort of psychological balance in the face of the city’s prosperous economy and enviable standard of living. At that time, the image of the Hong Konger in my eyes was someone who was loud, loquacious and vulgar. . . . The commercial activities that today are called our lifestyle or our mode of consumption first arrived with a remarkable Hong Kong chop. In those days I had no idea that these things could be culture: live performances in restaurants developing into karaoke and live bands; pop music broadcast over cabbie radio exclusively for car owners; popular magazines, pirated discs and pirated computer software sold at the clothing market; prostitutes directly creating the prosperity of night

clubs, saunas, and beauty salons; and more importantly, the gossip topics provided by tabloids and fashion magazines. . . . Hong Kong's and Taiwan's cultures are openly integrated parts of Chinese culture. They are the successors of Chinese entertainment culture, its *legitimate inheritors*, or in fact *its authentic roots*. After 1949, the revolutionary culture overwhelmed us here. The leisure and the “Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies” of old China went over there. Over the years, they ceaselessly continued to merge traditional Chinese, Japanese and the Japanese-mediated Western cultures into a culture that was institutionalized, industrialized and serialized. Now they return to give us make-up classes. Shouldn't we be happy? . . . At least we are fortunate enough to see the old culture—I shouldn't use this term because it sounds so derogatory—at least we can witness *the traditional Chinese culture . . . that has been entirely restored in China these days*. (Wang Shuo 2000, 2–3, 42; my emphases)

Ah Cheng, another mainland writer of the school of root-searching literature (*xungen wenxue*), also sees Hong Kong as an oasis of the Chinese secular and people-oriented culture that is repressed on the mainland. Without Wang's sarcasm, he comments on this in a rather embarrassingly eulogistic way:

My first visit to Hong Kong was in 1985. I immediately liked the place because I liked its unrestrained secular culture and its bustling energy. . . . The colors of Hong Kong restaurants are sharp reds, greens, golds and silvers. The restaurants are very noisy. Northern Chinese find it too rude and tasteless. But if you have read Tang poetry, you could recognize this secular culture, which is extravagant but lively. Hong Kongers enjoy good food and colorful clothing. They don't care whether it is Chinese or Western. Neither do they boast about their Chinese culture. Such attitudes reproduce the vigor and openness of the Tang dynasty. . . . Mainlanders always say Hong Kong is a cultural desert. I don't agree. Hong Kong has everything. It just depends on what kind of thing you want. . . . There were large numbers of mainlanders living in Hong Kong after 1949. They preserved their lifestyle in spite of migrating there. The secular high culture that disappeared on the mainland was able to survive in Hong Kong, and in a lively form. (Ah Cheng 1994, 83, 85–86)

The Tang dynasty occupies a significant place in the Chinese psyche. It was a time when China achieved greatness in its civilization and was remarkably open to foreign culture and trade. While the great China was in hibernation, the tiny Hong Kong, westernized through colonialism, occupied a retrospective space in the Chinese imagination. Hong Kong is imagined by some mainland intellectuals to be a Xanadu-like place safeguarding traditional Chinese

culture otherwise damaged by political turmoil on the mainland. Once a reminder of the humiliating history of the colonial experience and comprador-capitalism, Hong Kong grew to be one of the driving forces of China's modernization and nationalization. The city evolved from disseminator of low culture to preserver of the essence of Chinese identity, transforming itself dramatically under the gaze of a changing China.

Ironically, the colonial city has become a stand-in for the Chinese identity lost to the motherland. It is not unlike the fantasy created by the Nationalist government that fled to Taiwan in 1949: the mainland was turned into the so-called "Communist areas," and Taiwan, the temporary home of "Free China," upheld itself as the legitimate place of "real Chineseness" in response to the threats of the Communist mainland and of the Taiwanese independence movement. Precisely because Taiwan has made a claim for the agency of "genuine Chineseness" before, the island has been progressively developing its separate identity. Hong Kong movies could be given the privileges and favors by the Taiwan government to be categorized as the "national cinema" (*guopian*), which helped the industry to dominate the Taiwanese market until the 1990s, since Taiwan had a strict quota on foreign films. But, while Taiwan's role as a repository of traditional Chinese culture diminished by the end of the twentieth century, how could Hong Kong, this colonial enclave, suddenly have become a protector of Chinese civilization or Chineseness in general? How did this port city help to restore cultural order and virtue to a motherland that has suffered years of political chaos and social decay? At a time when Communism no longer has a powerful ideological grip on mainland China and nationalism has risen to fill the moral vacuum, Hong Kong, as an international Chinese city, may have become an illuminating model for compatriots seeking to understand what it means to be "Chinese" in a global age. China has been obsessed with its glorious past, which could conceivably affect its future rise to global prominence. Recent Chinese media coverage of the discovery of a community of Chinese with blond hair and big noses, thought to be the descendants of Romans (Liu 2001, 10); the excavation of Caucasian mummies in the Taklimakan desert of northwest China (Halbertsma 2001); and the controversy over the construction in Beijing's Tiananmen Square of a futuristic opera house designed by a French architect all demonstrate contemporary China's enthusiasm for globalization and its longing to reclaim its position in the international community.¹² The Chineseness preserved and reconstituted in Hong Kong is a light at the end of the tunnel for China, demonstrating how global and internationalized the

Chinese people can be, seemingly without losing any of their national and cultural essence.

As a transnationalized metropolis that is efficiently incorporated into global capitalism, Hong Kong is generally understood to be a portent of the future of many other Chinese cities. In Hong Kong, China's influence is more pervasive than the West's; strong Chinese characteristics linger throughout its cosmopolitan culture. Some critics believe that, as China's most affluent and diverse city, Hong Kong has created new traditions for all Chinese people. But this Chinese aspect of Hong Kong is conditioned by a certain kind of marginality. The postcolonial scholar Gayatri Spivak writes, "The center wants an identifiable margin[;] claims for marginality assure validation from the center" (Spivak 1990, 221). Many scholarly studies emphasize the positive contribution to the center made by this identifiable margin. Helen Siu, an anthropologist from Hong Kong, has asserted that "Hong Kong's cosmopolitan city-life and associated Western civic values are posed against a reified 'Chineseness.' . . . What Hong Kong has offered in this unique position has fueled China's reentry into the world community" (Siu 1999, 108, 110). One critic even states that Hong Kong's hybrid culture is an imaginative new source of Chinese culture: "Every old civilization needs a 'savage' to rejuvenate itself. It is what Africa means for modern European arts, what the West means for American spirit . . . what Hong Kong means for China, and what 'bantangan' [half-Chinese and half-Western] means for Hong Kong" (Chan Koon-Chung 1997).¹³ However, what I am trying to argue in this book is not simply that the eclecticism or bricolage of Hong Kong culture provides China with an example of how to face the challenges of modernity. Rather, I point to the fact that the totem of Chineseness—this totem is more a token—created in Hong Kong is a fake or approximation, concealing the structural inconsistency of Chineseness itself. With the advent of globalization, the conventional senses of Chineseness have been severely undermined even in China. Hong Kong is both a remedy for and an obstacle inherent in the Chinese symbolic order of cultural and national identification, making such identification possible even as it blocks its actualization from within.

Western Representations of the Free-Floating City

Hong Kong's strategic role in the construction of Chineseness in the contemporary world, however, does not stop at the nation's borders. The dialectical role of Hong Kong's Chineseness may contribute to a more sophisticated

understanding of the function of racial differentiation and national identity in a global society in which conventional borders no longer hold; that is to say, Hong Kong's Chineseness obscures its problematic nature, or its presence conceals its absence. The Chineseness of Hong Kong culture has been perceived by non-Chinese as an object of fantasy or a semblance of being that demarcates the world. In the eyes of the West, the significance of Hong Kong lies precisely in the challenge it poses to China;¹⁴ at the same time, the city is living proof of the aggressive expansion of the Chinese cultural zone—the “clash of civilizations,” in the words of Samuel Huntington. Huntington points out that even before 1997, Hong Kong, as one of the “few small imperial remnants” of the West, was becoming increasingly oriented toward, involved in, and dependent on mainland China—a potential threat to the Western domination. “A Chinese cultural nationalism,” says Huntington, “is thus emerging, epitomized in the words of one Hong Kong leader in 1994: ‘We Chinese feel nationalist which we never felt before. We are Chinese and feel proud in that.’ . . . There developed a ‘popular desire to return to what is authentically Chinese, which often is patriarchal, nativistic, and authoritarian. Democracy, in this historical reemergence, is discredited, as is Leninism, as just another foreign imposition’” (Huntington 1996, 106).

The signifier “Hong Kong” indicates far more than the place itself. China’s assumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong after 1997 has never been regarded simply as a “Chinese national event.” Rather, it has been seen as a critical test for China as well as a criterion by which to measure how the rising China might challenge the hegemony of the West. As Michael Yahuda summarizes it, “a display of tolerance for an autonomous Hong Kong would consolidate its new relations with the Chinese communities outside China, strengthen Beijing’s stance regarding Taiwan, reduce anxieties in Southeast Asia, ease China’s relations with the USA and Japan, enhance the process of China’s integration with the Asia-Pacific region, and improve China’s international standing generally” (Yahuda 1996, 1). The Hong Kong issue, when put in the context of international politics, is never confined to a local or national problem but is conceived in terms of a “global design” for the re-making of the power hierarchy in the world.

Long before the 1997 handover, when I was still living in the United States, the American media seemed to have a strong interest in the news in Hong Kong. Just one year after the June 4, 1989, incident in Tiananmen Square and Hong Kong’s million-citizen demonstration in response to it, Western correspondents presented Hong Kong as distinct from China. The American audience was shown news coverage of numerous issues, including the cor-

relation of Hong Kong's Hang Seng stock index to the political fluctuations of mainland China, and especially to the health of then-premier Deng Xiaoping; Chris Patten, Hong Kong's last colonial governor and a self-proclaimed champion of democracy, in heated disputes with the Chinese officials over the democratization of the colony; the question of whether the candle-light commemoration of June 4, held annually in Victoria Park since 1989, could continue after the transfer of sovereignty; a fatal stampede on New Year's Eve 1992 in Lang Kwai Fong, an entertainment district frequented by Westerners and expatriates; a donation of one hundred million U.S. dollars to Princeton University by Gordon Wu, a Hong Kong businessman; and the brain drain from the Hong Kong film industry to Hollywood. But the various stories about Hong Kong always boiled down to a single event: the 1997 hand-over. "The Hand-over: they called it the Chinese Take-away and it was now the old refrain," writes Paul Theroux in his novel *Kowloon Tong*, which itself does not avoid the old refrain: "It was the only news in Hong Kong—and news related to it, the economy, land reclamation, sales of commercial property, the price of petrol, the new airport, the noisy fears of anxious politicians, all of it was tied to the Hand-over" (Theroux 1997, 6).

When Hong Kong does make itself heard in the West, it is monotonously univocal. If the chance arises for Hong Kong to speak, its voice is allowed to resonate only with the tone set by dominant groups. So my point is not that Hong Kong as subject has been silenced, neglected, erased, or constructed as absent in various discourses; rather, within the dominant conceptualization of the East-West binarism, its voice remains muffled and unexpressed. Thus, its inclusion only underscores the violence of its effacement. Apparently, Hong Kong became an interesting—and at the same time flat and hackneyed—object for the Western media at the time of the city's historic transition from a colonial port under British rule to a Special Administrative Region under Communist China. The passage was considered bizarre because this advanced capitalist free port was handed over by a Western democratic country—albeit one that had practiced imperialism in the past—to an Asian Communist regime that came to power through repressive force rather than by direct election. The world has continued to watch this unprecedented transition, not to observe how the laboratory idea of "one country, two systems" could work in practice, but to see how it might fail. This kind of watching is not uncommon in our international community. The fall of Communism in Eastern Europe once attracted the eager attention of Western media. According to Slavoj Žižek, what initially fascinated the West about that disintegration was the reinvention of Western democracy: "[It was] as if democracy,

which in the West shows more and more signs of decay and crisis and is lost in bureaucratic routine and publicity-style election campaigns, [was] being rediscovered in Eastern Europe in all its freshness and novelty” (Žižek 1993, 200). However, after witnessing the necessary evils—such as high unemployment and crime rates, financial turmoil, and moral chaos—brought about by the liberalization of the political and economic systems, and after observing the growth of ultranationalism within the Eastern European states, the West gradually gave up its enthusiastic anticipation of the re-idealization and recreation of its own image there.

In comparison to the conversion of the ex-Communist countries to liberal-capitalist nations modeled on Western democratic systems, Hong Kong’s story is one of transition as well as of transnationalism. The significance of Hong Kong for the West lies in its challenging or subverting of an emerging China and also in its mirroring of a superior Western cultural identity and values. The former British colony is a potential trump card, allowing the West some control over China’s domestic affairs in terms of preventing human rights violations in Hong Kong or protecting the city’s autonomy, which was promised by the Sino-British Joint Declaration of December 1984. Hong Kong has also been upheld as a symbol of Western strength that is supposed to prevail along with a system of Western values, institutions, civil liberties, and democracy. On the one hand, the example of Hong Kong runs counter to the “Asian values” promoted by many authoritative Asian leaders. Hong Kong’s success is a slap in the face to those who reject Western ideals and insist on Asian cultural advantage. On the other hand, the growing visibility of Chineseness in Hong Kong as perceived by the West could be manipulated to support the notion of “essential cultural differences”: collectivism versus individualism; the values of authority and hierarchy versus liberty, equality, and democracy; and the supremacy of the state versus the propensity to distrust government and oppose authority. The idea of Hong Kong perpetuates the East-West binarism in today’s world, although such a culturally essentialist structure should have been seriously questioned long ago.

The Collaboration of Nationalization and Globalization

To call attention to the Western “globalization” of the Hong Kong issue is definitely not to suggest that the question of Hong Kong should be grasped beyond the framework of the dichotomy between China and the West; hence the “correct” notion of the city lies in its cultural and sociopolitical particu-

larities (neither does the conventional differentiation between East and West offer any help). My insistence not on Hong Kong-ness but on Hong Kong's role in constructing Chineseness in the global age could be understood as a way to lay bare not only the ideological mechanism of cultural and national identification but also the void of subjectivity that such an ideological force attempts to conceal.

In this book I describe the popular culture in or of Hong Kong that is spread as transnational culture throughout Chinese and other ethnic communities. Hong Kong's transnational culture refers to the cultural impacts of the movement of the Chinese population and capital not only within mainland China but also to other countries. The Chinese diaspora has not necessarily created a mutant culture of dislocations and discontinuities. On the contrary, the encounters of the diasporic Chinese with their adopted countries constantly remind them of the differences of their locations and of the boundaries separating them from those countries.¹⁵ These differences end up producing a strong desire on the part of Chinese emigrants to hold on to their ethnic culture and to derive from it a sense of certainty and security. It is not at all surprising that the Hong Kong emigrants who left the city a decade or more ago still largely depend on Hong Kong's popular cultural products for their daily entertainment and spiritual consolation. Popular culture is a kind of empowering force for the diasporic Hong Kong Chinese in foreign environments.¹⁶

The Chineseness of Hong Kong's transnational culture not only serves a purpose for China and the Chinese diaspora; it also plays a supporting role in the multiple processes of globalization, and not simply because its mechanism of constructing a hybrid and fluid identity operates beyond the nation-state and is not bound by any geographical region. Insofar as it effectively reterritorializes the ongoing process of deterritorialization, the flexible and reproducible Chineseness of Hong Kong's transnational culture acts as a seal that fills the void of nationality and cultural unity resulting from a global economy and the self-initiating circulation of capital. Because global capitalism is only an inconsistent amalgam of diverse elements, national and cultural direction will continue to be sought as part of an attempt to secure identities and political positions on what has become slippery ground. The Chineseness is a veil to cover up the loss of substantial national particularity in a world operating with the logic of global capitalism. As Žižek argues, "[the] very reference to a particular cultural [background] is a screen for the universal anonymity of Capital. The true horror lies not in the particular content hidden beneath the universality of global Capital but, rather, in the fact

that Capital is effectively an anonymous global machine blindly running its course; that there is in fact no particular Secret Agent animating it. The horror is not the (particular living) ghost in the (dead universal) machine, but the (dead universal) machine in the very heart of each (particular living) ghost” (Žižek 1999, 218).

In a world where homogeneity is becoming the norm, the global circulation and consumption of Hong Kong popular culture could serve as a comforting sign to make believe that cultural difference is still safely in place. As a culture of obsolescence, a throwaway culture especially designed not to endure, Hong Kong’s transnational culture, with its fluid and malleable nature, is well suited to contribute significantly to the creation of a global culture that poses no threat to any states. Furthermore, the Chineseness established by the worldwide popularity of Hong Kong culture may present a distinguished point of identification for the East’s constitution of its national positions and for the West’s reestablishment of a racial other. Even though Hong Kong popular culture is not exactly “indigenous” to other Asian countries—and many of them are generally hostile to Chineseness—it can still articulate the Asian experience of adapting to a westernized modernity in common terms. Compared to white American celebrities, Hong Kong stars are definitely more stimulating to Asian viewers, because these viewers can more “closely” identify with them. Although Hollywood’s assimilation of Hong Kong Chinese filmmakers and movie stars—such as John Woo, Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Chow Yun Fat, and Michelle Yeoh—might demonstrate the adaptability of the global entertainment syndicate to alien cultures, more essentially (through the popular cinematic representations of their Chineseness with possible racist, if not racist, undertones), a significant ethnic difference could be reintroduced to designate how “foreign” the Asian minority groups are in order to delineate a sharper identity in the eyes of the mainstream white American. The Hollywood film *Kiss of the Dragon* (2001) presents Jet Li as a superhero who can destroy an entire police station with his bare hands, just as Schwarzenegger did in *The Terminator* (1984). This kind of trendy, “Hongkongified” movie glorifying a small Chinese martial artist actually contributes to a legitimization of the white supremacy and racism being acted out not on screen but on the streets; now white people could have their liberal conscience firmly supported in this type of hyperbolic action film, which is seemingly good enough to offer glamorous but mythologized representations of the ethnic minority without really changing the existing racist fantasy.

Since the mechanism of global capitalism provides human beings with no directions and no goals (or, too many directions and goals, giving rise to

unwanted confusions and chaos), racial and cultural distinctions appear to be a means for preventing the horrible collapse of the symbolic order of a world that is still categorized by racial, cultural, and national identities. The production of Hong Kong–styled Chineseness in transnational popular culture, along with the surge of other nationalisms and ethnic identities, can be viewed as an attempt to reestablish some kind of order in a universe governed by the logic of global capitalism, and to find a frame of reference that would lend the world a cognitive mapping in the face of its possible total breakdown. Perhaps, in this sense, Hong Kong’s Chineseness serves as the appearance as appearance—it is nothing but its own surface, pretending that there must be some reality behind it. It is still the appearance, not any substantial content, that helps establish the distinction between the self and the other. Such a Chineseness is an illusory feature that accounts for the essential difference of the identity.

However, I would like to emphasize that the Chineseness produced by Hong Kong’s transnational culture underscores the fact that the external difference (the so-called clash of civilizations) is actually an internal one; there are always more clashes within a culture than among cultures. Self-contained cultural unity is basically impossible, as differences can always be found within. The external limitation of cultural unity is indeed reflected from within and is manifested by a culture’s inherent inability to become fully itself. The manifest Chineseness of the looming Chinese century is in fact the expression of its exact opposite—a total release of an ideological and political grip that would govern people’s minds. In this sense, Hong Kong culture acts like the child in Andersen’s “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” openly announcing the illusory nature of Chineseness, or any kinds of national and cultural identity, while others only whisper about it in secret.

Structure

This book is divided into three parts. Part 1 focuses on language—the ways in which written and spoken Chinese languages have been reshaped in Hong Kong popular culture. Part 2 deals with images—the production of cinematic images in relation to the (re)construction and identification of Chineseness. Part 3 concerns objects—the real and imaginary objects found in the post-colonial city’s theme parks.

Chapter 1 looks at local Chinese print culture, focusing on local newspaper columns in order to examine how the “Hong Kong way of life”—which

China politically and emphatically promised would continue after the hand-over—has been shaped, policed, and protected by the columns. The local newspapers' perpetuation of a so-called Hong Kong lifestyle is in fact an illusion that conceals the city's very lack of a political identity. The column writing found in the Hong Kong dailies has the potential to subvert the cultural and national totality. To a certain extent, column writing follows the model posited in Chinese book culture, but it also transgresses that model by moving away from its breeding ground of subject formation and into an economy of prodigal self-dispersion.

Chapter 2 examines subtitles in Hong Kong cinema and television and explores the relationship between globalization and cultural particularism, on the one hand, and the construction of cultural identity within a trans-Chinese context, on the other. I consider the Chinese subtitling in Chinese films and TV programs to be a visual articulation of a split in the national forms of speech, both spoken and written, that defies any easy identification. I present three interrelated instances of Hong Kong subtitling that illustrate how the assimilation of the particular into something much larger—say, the national or global—always yields some leftover that eventually nullifies the assimilating system. These are the English subtitles in Hong Kong cinema prepared for Western audiences; the standard, written Chinese subtitles in television programs prepared for the Hong Kong viewership; and the Cantonese subtitles of films and TV broadcasts prepared for the local audience. I argue that the clumsy English subtitles that attempt to represent a certain cultural specificity or designate certain ethnic characteristics are a hindrance that—paradoxically—facilitates globalization. The renaturalization of capitalism through the very reference to Chinese nationalization is borne out by a close look at the Western reception of subtitled Hong Kong cinema. I attempt to document the politics of the subtitles by pointing to the subtle form of power manipulation that occurs when the radical ambiguity of the voice is eliminated in its translation into a “comprehensible” and “readable” written text. My reading suggests that, if hearing oneself speak implies an experience of immediate, transparent self-presence, the local audience hears and sees itself speaking, although what it hears and sees is never fully itself but an alien body at its very heart.

Chapter 3 addresses the muscular body as seen in Hong Kong popular cultural forms such as the action movie and kung fu comics. I concentrate on how the failure of representation, which is essentially inscribed in Hong Kong subject formation, simultaneously contributes to and subverts the heroic and nationalist Chinese masculine body. By its very insufficiency, the

logic of the sublime embodies the negativity of the idea of Chineseness that prevails in the world of global capitalism and according to which a deep nihilistic void is always present in our being. Chapter 4 examines the way in which the recent “Asianization” of Hong Kong cinema is simply a strategy of “global localization” or “glocalization.” It looks back at the films of the 1990s in order to emphasize that although Hong Kong appears to address its differences from others, the city is actually struggling with itself, with its place in the world, and with its own invented sense of Chineseness. The depiction of localism in Hong Kong films proves to be a circular journey in which the more globalized localism becomes, the more it is nationalized—or relocated. However, it never returns to its starting point because the so-called national or ethnic point of origin is continually differentiated.

Chapters 5 and 6 explore new possibilities of representing Chineseness by discussing the “Hongkongification” of Hollywood films, especially those of Jackie Chan, John Woo, and Jet Li. I argue that the transnational dissemination of Hollywood by members of the Hong Kong film industry provides a justification for continued domination and exploitation by the Western (global) entertainment industry; but I assert that it also initiates a negation of the symbolic realm of Chineseness. The transnational intersection of Hong Kong cinema with Hollywood may produce something that could generate a new and useful reading of cultural globalization, yet it also could reveal the absurdity of identity formation at large. The Chineseness in Hollywood films is stereotyped in order to assert its dominant (American) self. Hong Kong audiences may be offended by such portrayals of Chineseness, but they forget that their so-called authentic identity is no less artificial. If the Chineseness constructed in local Hong Kong film is an empty notion without a specific ethnic object, then Hollywood–Hong Kong film is the ethnic object without a proper notion of Chinese national identity. Losing one’s memory, mixing with or even becoming part of another ethnic group, and selectively deploying Chineseness in order to advance one’s own interests are the characteristics of some of the heroes of these Hollywood–Hong Kong films. All of them suggest that a transnational Chinese hero should rejuvenate himself by symbolically cutting himself off from his past and repositioning himself as a subject with a fluid identity within a global economy. The issue of racial passing comes up in these films, which construct the fantasy of transgressing a stable Chinese racial authority and which rewrite racial identity so that it can easily move between Chineseness and any other kind of ethnicity. The Chinese person who “passes” can always find a way to return, paralleling the movement of capital in the Pacific Rim. These “Hong Kong films” of the new Hollywood

help to reinforce visible ethnic distinctions at the same time that they further affirm whiteness as natural, de-localized, and universal.

Chapter 7 is dedicated to Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and takes up the issue of appearance in a discussion of what I call transitional Chineseness. This film, the highest-grossing Chinese-language film in the West, is a strong indication of a Chinese cultural diaspora and represents the extremely fluid spatiality of Chineseness, although Chinese critics in particular have complained that the film's content is too westernized. Drawing on the conceits of film noir, I argue that the opposition of false appearance and hidden truth is itself deceptive, and that the film's ethnic appearance, beyond being sheer illusion, is, in accordance with the logic of global capitalism, devoid of substance. The so-called mystery behind the appearance is itself a phantasmic deceit. The theme of the discovery of an inner truth in Lee's blockbuster is probably a reflection of its exact opposite, namely, the growing loss of a hidden dimension of an authentic cultural or national self. The appearance of Chineseness throughout the film signifies something beyond superficial phenomena and conceals the fact that there may be nothing inside.

The final chapter looks at how postcolonial Hong Kong is turning itself not only into a fantasy of its own, but also into a fantasy of the mainland's, as evidenced by the construction of theme parks and the importation of both real and phantasmic animals such as Ocean Park's giant panda and Disneyland's Mickey Mouse. By attempting to fill the void created by its new subjectivity and erase the antagonism of its past experience of modernity with the magical effects of new fantasy objects, Hong Kong unwittingly exposes the internal contradictions in the modernity of the Chinese nation-state. In its circularity, the fantasy of post-1997 Hong Kong fills the gap it opens up by bearing witness to what it is supposed to cover. The advent of "Disneyfication," heralded by Hong Kong's Disney theme park, is viewed by the mainland Chinese government as a way of sorting out the internal problems of modernity and of helping to integrate its economy into the global system through a neutralization of the political dimensions of social life. By becoming the theme-park city of China, Hong Kong serves to shield the naked truth that virtual reality has already permeated a country with both a Communist name and pervasive commodification. Thus, the theme parks of Hong Kong are designed to allow China to (re)locate its Chineseness and its position within the new global picture. Probably the ultimate mission of the small Hong Kong is to provide this transitional Chineseness for its great motherland.

Notes

Introduction

1. For instance, the avowed globalist and internationally acclaimed management guru Kenichi Ohmae said that Hong Kong should benefit from the “Commonwealth of Chungwa (or Chinese),” that is, greater China’s economy, by enforcing a “Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement” with mainland China, treating upper-middle-class Chinese as customers, and positioning itself as a hub for professional services in China (J. Lo 2003).

2. The scholarly works I refer to here are mainly those by scholars and critics in Hong Kong and published in Chinese. See, for instance, Lui (1983, 1997); P. Leung (1993, 1995); Ng and Sze (1993); F. Lok (1995); S. Chan (1997); Chan, Li, and Wong (1997); C. Ng (1996b, 1997); Ma Kwok-ming (1998); Ng and Cheung (2001); and Chu (2002).

3. For Western writers like Jan Morris, Chinese culture is ubiquitous in and fundamental to Hong Kong. She writes, “Hong Kong is in China, if not entirely of it, and after nearly 150 years of British rule the background to all its wonders remains its Chineseness. . . . The very smells are Chinese smells—oily, laced with duck-mess and gasoline,” and “the British Empire at its most tremendous failed to make much impression upon this down-to-earth genius, and the mass in Hong Kong today are not a jot less Chinese because they live beneath the Union Jack. A surprising number, after 150 years of British rule, still speak no English.” Furthermore, Morris underscores “the reluctance of the vast majority of Chinese in Hong Kong to become in the least Anglicized” (Morris 1990, 38, 130).

4. The Chineseness constructed in Hong Kong is not confined to the realm of popular culture. There were a number of Chinese scholars and philosophers, such as Qian Mu, Luo Xianglin, Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi, and Xu Fuguan, who were

associated with the prominent “new Confucianism” and who took refuge in Hong Kong after 1949. They published their major works in the intellectual oasis that colonial Hong Kong provided, training a generation of scholars and philosophers in the local universities.

5. Indeed, it is never an easy task to map out even a “local” position for Hong Kong, since the construction of Hong Kong identity always involves class differentiation (Wong and Lui 1993; Siu 1996), gender division, sexual orientation, Chinese and non-Chinese ethnicities, and tensions between natives and new immigrants and urban and rural cultures (Hung 2001). If there is a “unique Hong Kong identity,” it is by no means a product of multiple subjectivities or an entity of negotiation. A discussion of Hong Kong identity cannot perpetuate a postmodern identity politics of multiple, particular lifestyles. Rather, it has to acknowledge a particular identity that claims to articulate impossible universal demands and to bear the dimensions of political struggle and confrontation.

6. In an interview, Chow said that instead of multiplying or pluralizing Chineseness, she prefers not to be a “full-time” Chinese (Yuen 1998, 30); in this sense, reducing or negating half of one’s Chineseness may appear to be an effective strategy for addressing a nationalist discourse about Chinese identity.

7. For more on the concept of inherent transgression, see Slavoj Žižek (2000a, 2000b).

8. Denis Bray, a former senior Hong Kong civil servant, suggested in 1971 that the stability of the Hong Kong colony’s way of life rested on a tripod of consents of China, Britain, and Hong Kong (Miners 1991, 251). During his visit to the colony in 1982, the British minister of state, Lord Belstead, used the term “three-legged stool” to describe how things can go smoothly only when China, Britain, and Hong Kong are in agreement (Tang and Ching 1996, 42).

9. Yu was so enthusiastic about Hong Kong’s role in Chinese culture that he even urged leading Hong Kong academics to consolidate their efforts and form schools like the Frankfurt school (A. Leung 2001). See also “Xunzhao duhui he tadewenhua” [In Search of the Metropolis and Its Culture], *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, August 1, 2001, 32.

10. For surveys of the cultural changes within post-Mao China, see, for instance, Zha (1995a), J. Wang (1996), X. Zhang (1997), Huot (2000), X. Tang (2000), and S. Lu (2001).

11. The phrase literally means punk, hoodlum, or hooligan literature. The Chinese authorities have deemed Wang Shuo a source of “spiritual pollution,” since his characters, which indulge in drinking, gambling, and promiscuity, are bad role models for his readers. His works occasionally have been banned in China. At the same time, he is a best-selling author there, with over twenty novels and ten million copies in print, and his work appeals to audiences across multiple social strata. For more on the Wang Shuo phenomenon in China, the reader can consult J. Wang (1996, 261–86).

12. Compared with advanced capitalist countries, China still has a long way to go.

However, Chinese-made products have penetrated every corner of the world. In 2001, China's export commodities reached US\$266 billion, of which 90 percent were industrial manufactured products. At the same time, 80 percent of the world's top 500 transnational enterprises have entered China, and 390,000 foreign-funded enterprises have been operating in China. China has rocketed to second place in the absorption of foreign direct investment. Because of its cheap labor, China has been depicted as the "world factory" by Western media and as a major factor contributing to the worldwide deflation of the prices of some consumer goods.

13. Chan is the founder of Hong Kong's "Yuppies" magazine *City Magazine*, which advocates the use of hybrid language, a combination of Cantonese and English, in written texts. Its style of writing has been characterized as a major feature of Hong Kong culture. On Chan and his cultural enterprise, see J. Zha (1995b).

14. The challenge to China figures in the subtitle of Michael Yahuda's book, *Hong Kong: China's Challenge* (Yahuda 1996).

15. For instance, the influx of Hong Kong Chinese immigrants and capitalism into North America was not particularly welcomed. See K. Mitchell (1995, 1996).

16. The flood of Chinese immigrants in the United States and Canada has radically changed the cultural landscape of the North American suburb. The downtowns are full of signs in Chinese and Chinese stores in which Hong Kong videos and publications are widely available. Monterey Park in California became America's first majority-Chinese town in the 1980s. At least seven nearby towns also attained majority or near-majority Chinese populations in the 1990s (Piore 2001).

Chapter 1: Much Ado about the Ordinary in Newspaper-Column and Book Culture

1. The Official Languages Ordinance was passed in 1974 to promote the parity of Chinese and English, but the civil service has been slow to use Chinese in administrative practice. The majority of secondary schools continued to use English as the primary language of instruction even after 1997, because general opinion still held that the English language was of greater value than the Chinese language in terms of career success. On the other hand, in the Official Languages Ordinance, what the term "Chinese" means—whether it is standard Chinese (Putonghua) or Cantonese—was never specified, leaving some kind of fuzziness surrounding the term "Chinese language" in Hong Kong.

2. Rey Chow has lucidly described her experience of high school education in colonial Hong Kong: "What needs to be emphasized is that Chinese culture was never eradicated tout court but always accorded a special status—and that this was actually the more effective way to govern. During the era when I was in secondary school (1970s), for instance, English was the mandatory medium of instruction in Hong Kong's Anglo-Chinese schools (there were also Chinese schools where Cantonese was the medium of instruction), but Chinese language and literature and Chinese his-

tory were also possible subjects (for public examinations). The native culture, in other words, continued to be taught (all the way to university and postgraduate levels) and allowed a certain role in the colonized citizens' education. Rather than being erased, its value became specialized and ghettoized over time precisely through the very opportunities to learn it that were made available. Albeit not a popular one, the study of Chinese remained an option. It was in this manner that British colonialism avoided the drastic or extremist path of cultural genocide (which would have been far too costly) and created a social stable situation based on the pragmatist hierarchization of cultures, with the British on top and the Chinese beneath them. . . . Racism was, indeed, very much in operation, but it was a racism that had turned race and culture into *class* distinctions so that, in order to head toward the upper echelons of society, one would, even (and especially) if one was a member of the colonized race, have no choice but to collaborate with the racist strategies that were already built into the stratification informing the distribution and consumption of knowledge as well as its compensation" (Rey Chow 2002, 11–12).

3. There are occasionally idiosyncratic, stylish supplements in Hong Kong Chinese-language dailies, such as the "Magpaper," which ran in the *Hong Kong Daily News* from June 3, 1996, to September 30, 1997. But stylistic experiments in the supplements generally have not been well received by readers.

4. Clement Y. K. So has done a comparative survey on the supplement sections of Hong Kong's *Mingpao Daily*, Taiwan's *China Times Daily*, China's *People's Daily*, and the *New York Times*. He finds that although all papers have supplement sections, columns make up 29.5 percent of the content of Hong Kong dailies, the highest of all. See So (1999).

5. For a more detailed look at the *Apple Daily*, see So (1997a). The tabloid's preoccupation with the downfall of celebrities may reflect not only the traditional content of tragedy (as one critic points out [Simon 1999]), but also upon the psyche of its readership, which, in the context of a transitional Hong Kong, is obsessed with the potential reversal of prosperity.

6. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri would say, this new globalism, which they call "Empire," makes conquests beyond imperialism and the nation-state, in the guise of peacemaking and local incorporation (Hardt and Negri 2000).

7. For more on this rumor, see Evans (1997).

8. Studies of Hong Kong newspaper columns are numerous, but academic treatments of the subject still are rare. For the general comments on columns, see, for instance, "Zhuanlan yu wenxue zuotanhui" [Forum on Column and Literature], *Kung Kao Po*, September 5, 1986; "Special Issue on the Column," *Boyi* 9 (1988); Lian Xihua, "Zhuanlan yi" [Column 1], *Lianhe wenxue* [Unitas] 94 (1992): 29–30; Chen Huiyang, "Zhuanlan er" [Column 2], *Lianhe wenxue* [Unitas] 94 (1992): 31–32; Karen Chan, "Tuojie zhuanlan" [Columns Not in Sync with Times], *Hong Kong Cultural Studies Bulletin* 2 (April 1995): 48–49; Xie Xiwei, "Shuxie yu jilu zhijian: lun baozhi fukannei de zhuanlan" [Between Writing and Recording: On Columns in Newspaper Supple-

ment], *Hong Kong Cultural Studies Bulletin* 2 (April 1995): 50–51; Feng Weicai, “Xianggang de zhuanlan wenhua” [Hong Kong’s Column Culture], *Dushu ren* [Readers] 6 (1995): 97–102; Li Zhanpeng, “Fukan, wenxue, xie” [Column, Literature, Writing], *Mingpao*, November 19, 1997; Huang Canran, “Baozhi fukan de zhuanji” [A Favorable Turn for the Newspaper Supplement], *Mingpao*, December 30, 1997; Ma Ka-fai, “Zhuanlan shuxie yu quanli caozuo” [Column Writing and Power Manipulation], paper presented at Hong Kong Culture Conference, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, October 8–9, 1999.

9. See, for instance, Karen Chan (1994, 39), He Liangmao (1997, 48–52).

10. For such a sociological perspective, see So (1997b, 1999).

11. For a discussion of the role of the column in Hong Kong literature, see, for example, Yip (2000); Wong Yan Wan (1997); “Wenxue fukan sheng yu si” [The Life and Death of the Literary Supplement], *Mingpao*, August 26–27, 1997; Huang Canran, “Baozhi yu wenxue” [Newspapers and Literature], *Mingpao*, February 22, 2000; Ye Si, “Zhuanlan yu xingxing” [Columns and the New Sensibility], *Boyi* 9 (1988): 154–157; “Zhuanlan yu wenxue zuotanhui” [Forum on Column and Literature] (1986); Ye Si, “Zai Xianggang xie zhuanlan” [Writing Columns in Hong Kong], *Literary Quarterly* 5 (March 1983): 51–53.

12. For English translations of the works of these Hong Kong writers, see M. Cheung (1998), Tam, Yip, and Dissanayake (1999).

13. The Sino-British Declaration states that “Hong Kong’s previous capitalist system and life-style shall remain unchanged for 50 years.” For a discussion on the political implications of the Hong Kong lifestyle, see Turner (1995).

14. There is a Chinese phrase, *luoye guigen*, that metaphorically characterizes Chinese emigrants as “fallen leaves that will return to their roots” in the soil of China.

15. What I mean by “book” here is different from Derrida’s concept of the book as a metaphor of God’s writing, the book of Nature, the divine inscription in the heart and the soul, or the determination of absolute presence. Although my concept of “book” is strictly that of an artificial human product, I agree with Derrida that the idea of the book is the idea of totality. See Derrida (1976, 18).

Chapter 2: Leftovers of Film and Television Subtitles in a Transnational Context

Portions of this chapter appeared, in a different form, as “Look Who’s Talking: The Politics of Orality in Transnational Hong Kong Mass Culture” in “Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory: Reimagining a Field,” ed. Rey Chow, special issue, *Boundary 2* 25.3 (1998): 151–68.

1. Some viewers prefer subtitled films because they find the out-of-sync dialogue in dubbed movies irritating, while others like dubbed versions since they feel subtitles disrupt the visual experience of a film. American audiences see subtitled foreign

films in “art-house theaters,” whereas Hong Kong audiences usually enjoy subtitled Hollywood blockbusters in mainstream theaters. Recently Hong Kong film distributors have begun to release both dubbed and subtitled versions of foreign movies—mainly animated Disney features, Japanese anime, and children’s films like *Harry Potter*—to accommodate the different needs of local audiences.

2. More than three hundred Chaozhouese-speaking and two hundred Amoy-dialect films were made in Hong Kong over those two decades (*Fifty Years of the Hong Kong Film Production* 1997).

3. I thank Law Kar, renowned Hong Kong film critic and programmer of the Hong Kong Film Archive, for providing this information.

4. For more comprehensive and detailed historical accounts of the developments of Hong Kong’s Cantonese and Mandarin cinemas and their interconnection, see Fu (2000), Stokes and Hoover (1999a), Teo (1997, 2000), Fonoroff (1997), Armes (1987, 158–61), and Jarvie (1977).

5. Shohat and Stam write, “For those familiar with both source and target language, subtitles offer the pretext for a linguistic game of ‘spot the error’” (Shohat and Stam 1985, 46).

6. See Shohat and Stam (1985, 48), Nornes (1999, 30, 34 n. 39), and Bordwell (2000b, 87). Such practice could also be considered as a situationist exercise of “détournement” that reuses the preexisting elements in a new ensemble.

7. Shu Kei, the director of *Sunless Day* (1990) and *Hu-Du-Men* (1996), observes that the post-synch shooting of most Hong Kong films encourages extraordinarily quick editing: “Editing with sound you would realize film can be slowed down a little, and you can play more with the rhythm of not only sound but also visuals. Actually, the sound slows up the rhythm of the visuals. But without it you tend to do everything in a very fast way, and I think this is something that is very subconscious that the [Hong Kong] filmmakers do not realize” (qtd. in Wood 1998, 114).

8. Michel Chion argues that an audiovisual analysis aims to understand the interplay of sound and images in film. But in audiovisual media, such a combination is always a forced marriage (Chion 1994). For other comprehensive studies on the topic, see Weis and Belton (1985).

9. By the end of 2003, English subtitles had become mandatory on news, weather, and current affairs shows and emergency announcements on Hong Kong English language channels in order to help local audiences to improve their English. As a member of the Subsidized Secondary Schools Council said, “Many students are turned off because the dialogue in some English programs is spoken too fast or they don’t understand the accent, even though they know the words. If students can read and hear the words, it would definitely help in learning” (A. Lo 2002).

10. The Broadcasting Authority regularly receives complaints from local TV viewers about Chinese words that have been misused or mistyped in the subtitles. The complaints reveal that TV viewers do read the subtitles, and that they enjoy picking out mistakes in them.

11. The advent of VCD and DVD technology could allow a viewer either to tune into a Mandarin or Cantonese soundtrack or to select subtitles in different languages.

12. On the other hand, American film critics are also able to appreciate the spectacle of Hong Kong film's reinvention of an "apocalyptic crisis cinema" with political, historical, and cultural density. See, for instance, Williams (1997). Because of the 1997 handover, Hong Kong films have largely been received in the West as an allegory of the city's sociohistorical situation. The political relevance and the function of cinematic production as a collective mode of social expression, which has vanished in Hollywood, suddenly is relevant to Hong Kong filmmaking. The growing popularity of Hong Kong movies in the West may say more about current conditions in the West than of those in Hong Kong. Perhaps, far from being the other of the West, Hong Kong cinema embodies the West in its otherness.

13. For a detailed description of the subtitling routine, see Bordwell (2000b, 126–27). In order to improve the quality of the subtitles, the Chinese University of Hong Kong has announced recently that its translation department will teach courses on film subtitling.

14. Obviously, not all Western viewers like the dubbed versions of Hong Kong action cinema. Some would prefer to see the original with the subtitles. An American critic, while reviewing the DVD version of *Contract Killer* (1998), starring Jet Li, laments that "*Contract Killer* is a completely different film at the same time, simply because the DVD is dubbed. And although your stereotypical Ugly American may not like to read and watch films at the same time, the fact that the subtitles option isn't even offered by Columbia Tristar is an immense disservice to the genre, the actors, and their skills. Contrary to what the market may dictate when it comes to action cinema—especially anything originating somewhere else besides the States—film is not exclusively a visual medium. And although Jet Li may not be Hong Kong's finest actor (even within the action genre, which he more or less owns), the fact that you can't *listen* to him do his job devalues what the guy has to offer" (Thill 2002).

15. Bordwell explains that "there are subtitles straight out of Raymond Roussel, passed happily around the world through e-mail: 'I am damn unsatisfied to be killed in this way.' 'Same old rules: no eyes, no groin.' 'I have been scared shitless too much lately.' 'How can you use my intestines as a gift?' 'You always use violence. I should've ordered glutinous rice chicken.'" (Bordwell 2000b, 91). Indeed, quotations of fractured English subtitles in Hong Kong film saturate the Internet.

16. As Bordwell points out, Western admirers of Hong Kong cinema "tend to offer rhapsody rather than analysis" of their favorite flicks. They dismiss the question of the appealing power of Hong Kong film as "academic" (Bordwell 2000b, 96).

17. Quoted from the back cover of David Bordwell's *Planet Hong Kong*.

18. This is a term I borrow from Roland Barthes, who defines it as something manifest, stubborn, and beyond the meaning of the words. See Barthes (1977).

19. Bordwell observes that, like "Japanese anime, Indian melodramas, Italian horror, Mexican masked-wrestler films, Indonesian fantasies, and other off-center me-

dia materials from various countries,” Hong Kong cinema is a form of ethnic culture and “a local cinema [that] has achieved international reach by becoming a subcultural cinema” in the United States, having become “so powerful that it can seize Hollywood’s attention” (Bordwell 2000b, 96).

20. There are always exceptions. The protagonist of Ng Hui Bun’s epistolary story, “Xin” (Letters), works for a Hong Kong television station translating American programs such as *Quincy* and *The A-Team*. He is so sensitive to language that he can’t help changing his translations in order to resist the ideology spread by those programs. For instance, when a U.S. documentary says “the benightedness and ignorance of the Third World deter it from receiving advanced technology,” he creatively renders it, “those Anglo-American technologies may not be appropriate to resolve the poverty and disasters of the Third World” (Ng Hui Bun 1987, 143).

21. Canto-pop refers to the Hong Kong popular music in Cantonese dialect. The Canto-pop boom began in the early 1970s. The music industry continued to expand throughout the 1980s by producing stars and products cheaply and quickly, until it was hit hard by piracy. In the 1990s, Canto-pop stars began to record Mandarin-language versions of their hits and even entire Mando-pop albums. The mainland market offers an unprecedented new world for Canto-pop (which could easily evolve into Mando-pop) to conquer.

22. By “modern concepts of the sign,” I mean those proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, and Emile Benveniste. See, for example, de Saussure (1966), Jakobson (1956), Lacan (1977), Barthes (1973), and Benveniste (1971).

23. In order to attain “reconciliation,” we do not have to “overcome” the scission between the two parties. We only need to construct a new frame of reference and place the conflicting parties in a new symbolic order.

24. According to Matthew Turner, the so-called Hong Kong identity was carefully designed by the British colonial government to alienate the Chinese population from Communist China after the 1967 anticolonial riot. Because of social and political changes that have taken place in the last two decades, the Hong Kong lifestyle has been displacing traditional cultural attachments to China. In the mid-1980s a majority of the local population identified themselves as “Hong Kong people,” not “Chinese people.” The return of sovereignty to China has forced Hong Kong people to rethink their identity and their relation to China. See Turner (1995).

25. See, for example, Anderson (1983, 41–49).

26. When the documentary was released on video compact disc (VCD) in 1997 by the Guangdong Haiyan Audio-Visual Company, it was retitled *Xianggang Bainian*.

27. This notion of subject formation, according to Judith Butler, is full of religious implications. The interpellating call comes from God and is a command to align oneself with the law through the appropriation of guilt. The submission to the law is necessary to prove one’s innocence in the face of accusation. Butler points out: “To

become a ‘subject’ is thus to have been presumed guilty, then tried and declared innocent” (Butler 1997, 118).

28. It is a written language that combines Cantonese, classical Chinese, and standard Chinese. Standard Chinese usually dominates in such a text while classical Chinese and Cantonese are used only at certain points for emphasis. The origin of the term *saam kap dai* has been explained differently. Some believe it is derived from the Chinese classical examination system. The top three places of the classical examination, in Cantonese, are known as *saam yun kap dai*, or *saam kap dai*, for short. Others point out there is a kind of porridge in Canton that is made with three different kinds of pig innards. The porridge is called *saam kap dai juk*. Parents bring their children to eat such porridge in the hope that the kids will score well in the examination as the top three of the classical examination system (Snow 1991; Huang 2002).

29. *Her Fatal Ways IV* (Biaojie, Ni Haoye! 4 zhi Qingbuzijin) was directed by Alfred Cheung Kin-Ting and released in 1994. The Chinese title means “Cousin Sister, You’re Great Stuff! 4: Uncontrollable Love.” For a detailed analysis of the series in terms of China-Hong Kong relations, see Shih (1999).

30. The mainland Chinese policewoman is called “Miss Cheng” while the name of the Scottish character is “John” in the movie. In the following table, the right-hand column shows the English and Chinese subtitles seen onscreen (the English errors are printed as such). The left-hand column tells the language(s) the characters choose to speak in the scene. The Cantonese phrases are transliterated in Yale romanization while the standard Chinese is in pinyin:

John (speaks in English)	hai [Cantonese] Hi.
Cheng (speaks in English)	hai [Cantonese] Hi.
John (in English)	hai [Cantonese] Hi. néih yiu ngh yiu joh hah? [Cantonese] Do you want to sit down?
Cheng (in English)	ng h gò [Cantonese] Oh, thank you. néih jùng yi sihk taat? [Cantonese] You like tarts?
John (in English)	haih a, ngóh jùng yi sihk taat, daahn haih jhng haih jùng yi hèung góng gei taat. [Cantonese] Yes, I like tarts, but I only like Hong Kong tarts.

- ngóh làm go go dòu jùng yi sihk, haih mài a?
[Cantonese]
I think everybody does, right?
- Cheng
(in English) haih a [Cantonese]
Yes.
- John
(in English) ngóh juhng yáuh léuhng go, néih juhng sihk ngh
sihk? [Cantonese]
I still have two left; would you like one?
nàh, béi yāt go néih. [Cantonese]
Here we go, one for you,
néih go ngóh gei. [Cantonese]
And one for me.
- ngóh móuh làm gwo néih gám jùng yi sihk
taat gà [Cantonese]
I didn't think you like tarts so much.
néih yiu jí gán màh? [Cantonese]
You want a tissue?
- Cheng
(in English) ngh gòì [Cantonese]
Thank you.
néih jùng yi cheung gō gà? [Cantonese]
You like sing song?
- John
(in English) haih [Cantonese]
Yes.
- Cheng
(in English) néih cheung di mé gō gà? [Cantonese]
What song you sing?
- John
(speaks in English
except for the term
"Cantonese song"
in Cantonese) dò sok ying màhn gō [Cantonese]
I sing mostly English.
ngóh dòu hó yíh cheung yāt di gwóng dùng
gō [Cantonese]
But I can also sing a little bit of Cantonese song.
- Cheng
(in English) jàn gà? me gō a? [Cantonese]
Oh, really? What song?
- John
(in English) ngóh sīk cheung yāt sáu sihm yún jùng
sing [Cantonese]
I can sing one called "Sim Yuen Chung Sing."
- Cheng
(in English) ching néih cheung béi ngóh ting ngò? [Cantonese]
Please sing.

- John
(sings in English) hou ngò [Cantonese]
Ok.
“ngóh heui gài síh máaih sung” [Cantonese]
I went shopping in the market.
“seung máaih di mihn bāau síhk hah” [Cantonese]
Wanted to buy some bread and food to eat.
“ngóh dāk yāt hòuh jí” [Cantonese]
I had 10 cents
“daahn di síhk maht maaih léuhng hòuh
jí” [Cantonese]
But the food was 20 cents.
“ngóh mé dòu máaih ngh dou, wái yáuh fán ngük
kéih” [Cantonese]
There was nothing for me to do but to return home.
dou néih là, dāk meih? [Cantonese]
Your turn; are you ready?
- Cheng
(sings in English) hóu. [Cantonese]
Ok.
“chàhm yaht, gám yaht, ting yaht, ting máahn,
sing kèih luhk” [Cantonese]
Yesterday, today, tomorrow, tonight, Saturday
“sing kèih yāt, sing kèih yih” [Cantonese]
Monday, Tuesday
“sing kèih yaht wúih Ok” [Cantonese]
Sunday it will be . . . Ok.
“múih yaht dòu haih hóu yaht jí” [Cantonese]
Everyday is good day, good day.
- John
(speaks in English) cheung dāk hóu hóu a. [Cantonese]
Very good.
- Cheng
(in English) duō xiè [Cantonese]
Thank you.
nǐ kě yī wéi wǒ chàng shǒu gē ma? [Cantonese]
Can you sing song for me?
- John
(in English) wǒ yǒu yī shǒu gē shì sòng gěi nǐ dì [Cantonese]
Yes, I have one for you.
- Cheng
(speaks in Cantonese) hóu a [Cantonese]
Great.
- John
(sings in English) wǒ yī zhī yī wéi wǒ dì shēng mìng yǐ jīng wú quē
[standard Chinese]

I always thought my life complete.

wǒ bù yǐ wéi huán yǒu shèn mó xū yào
[standard Chinese]

Never thought I'd need anything more.

gōng zuò hé péng yǒu wǒ chuī shǒu kē dé
[standard Chinese]

Work and friends were always there for me.

méi xiǎng dào wǒ huán quē shǎo lǎo shèn mó
[standard Chinese]

Never thought that I might be needing
something more.

zhí zhì wǒ kān jiàn nǐ nà zhāng qiào liǎn
[standard Chinese]

Until the first time I saw your lovely face.

wǒ kān jiàn nǐ zuò zhuó, chōng mǎn ài yuàn dì yǎn
jīng [standard Chinese]

I saw you sitting there with despair in your eyes.

wǒ cái zhī dào wǒ men liǎ yǒng bù néng tuǒ xié
[standard Chinese]

I know then that you and I could never compromise.

kéuih gám yuehng jough, haih ngh jīk haih deui ngóh
yáuh yi sì nèih? [Cantonese]

Isn't it a sign of love?

Cheng
(speaks to herself
in Cantonese)

wǒ dì shū nǚ ā, qǐng dá yīng wǒ, zuò wǒ dì nǚ rén
[standard Chinese]

My lady, please say yes, please be mine, please
be mine.

John
(sings in English)

ràng wǒ lìng nǐ dì shēng mìng dé yǐ biàn dé
chóng gāo [standard Chinese]

Let me make your life sublime.

nǐ xǐ huān ma? [standard Chinese]

Do you like it?

Cheng
(speaks in English)

héi fùn [Cantonese]

Oh, yes.

John
(in English)

je sáu gō ngóh dahk yi waih néih
sé dik [Cantonese]

I write this song specially for you.

néih gok dāk láahng a? [Cantonese]

You feeling cold?

- hóu yāt dím a? [Cantonese]
 Is it better?
- Cheng
 (speaks the first
 line in English,
 then the rest in
 Cantonese)
- ngóh di ying màhn ngh haih géi hou
 [Cantonese]
 My English is not so . . . so good.
- só yíh [Cantonese]
 So . . .
- júng jì nèih jauh . . . [Cantonese]
 Anyway . . .
- néih haih daih yāt go waih ngóh jok yāt sáu gō
 gei yàhn là [Cantonese]
 You are the first one who has composed a
 song for me.
- sèui yìhn ngóh ngh haih hou jì douh di noi h yùhng
 góng mé yéh [Cantonese]
 Although I don't quite understand the content.
- bāt gwo ngóh dòu hou . . . [Cantonese]
 I . . . I am very . . .
- (speaks the word
 "Touch" in English)
- hou gám duhng [Cantonese]
 Touch.
- ngóh háng dihg nèih néih jauh haih géi héi fùn
 ngóh gà là [Cantonese]
 I am sure you like me.
- daahn haih ngóh jauh meih hàng dihg jih géi haih
 me ngoi seuhng néih [Cantonese]
 But I am not sure whether I have fallen for you
 or not.
- bāt gwo nèih, ngóh jauh deui néih yáuh hóu
 gám [Cantonese]
 But, I like you.
- ngóh juhng haih yuhk nǚ lai h gà, wah béi néih ting
 dòu ngh pa là [Cantonese]
 I am still virgin, I am not afraid of telling you.
- bāt gwo néih dòu ngh mihng ngóh góng mé yéh
 [Cantonese]
 But, you won't understand what I am talking.
- júng jì nèih, ngóh jauh ngh haih go di hóu chèuih
 bihn gei néuih yàhn là [Cantonese]
 Anyway, I am not an easy-going woman.

	ngóh góng gám dò yéih néih dòu haih ngh mihng gà là [Cantonese] You won't understand.
(speaks the last two lines in English again)	dím dòu hou, baai baai [Cantonese] Anyway, bye bye. dò jeh néih sáu gō [Cantonese] Thank you for your song.
John (speaks in Cantonese)	mài jyuh [Cantonese] Wait.
Cheng (speaks in Cantonese)	hàh? mài jyuh? [Cantonese] What? Wait?
John (in Cantonese)	kèih saht néih tàuh sin góng gei yéih nèih [Cantonese] In fact, all you have just talked ngóh chyùhn bouh dòu mihng baahk [Cantonese] I understand all.
Cheng (in Cantonese)	hóu cháu a [Cantonese] How shameful!
John (in Cantonese)	síu sàm di a [Cantonese] Be careful. ngóh yáuh móuh mouh faahn néih a? [Cantonese] Did I offend you?
Cheng (in Cantonese)	néih jough mé ngh wah béi ngóh ting néih sīk jung màhn gà? [Cantonese] Why don't you tell me you know Chinese?
John (in Cantonese)	néih yauh móuh mahn dou [Cantonese] You didn't ask me. yāt hòi chí dòu haih néih góng ying màhn sin gei [Cantonese] You speak English first.

31. Cantonese subtitling did draw criticism from Chinese audiences abroad. For example, a Taiwanese reviewer complains that his DVD copy of *Days of Thunder* (1990), starring Tom Cruise, carries only Cantonese subtitles. As his English-language proficiency does not allow him to understand the original dialogue, he has no choice but to read the Cantonese subtitles. However, he could not comprehend some of the Hong Kong car racing idioms; thus, he prefers to turn off the subtitling (see <http://www.dng.idv.tw/dvdreviews/tom_dvd/day_of_t.htm>, accessed January 12, 2003).

Chapter 3: Hong Kong Muscles and Sublime Chinese Subjectivity

An earlier version of this chapter appeared as “Muscles and Subjectivity: A Short History of the Masculine Body in Hong Kong Popular Culture,” *Camera Obscura* 39 (1996): 105–25.

1. But for the pro-China nationalists, the Hong Kong Olympic victory was simply interpreted as a token gift and part of the celebration of the city’s return to its Chinese motherland.

2. Probably because of lingering colonial influence, Hong Kong sports fans are also used to following English soccer and have displayed a strong passion for the national soccer team of England even after 1997.

3. The sublime has been an important topic in Western aesthetics and philosophy. The earliest conceptualization of the sublime is ascribed to Longinus (first century A.D.). In modern times, the sublime was given prominent consideration by Burke in his “Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful” (1756), in which the sublime, caused by a mode of terror or pain, is contrasted with the beautiful. In Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, the sublime applies to the mind but not to the object. It is a feeling brought about by objects that are infinitely large or overwhelmingly powerful. Kant distinguishes between a mathematical sublime of extension in space or time and a dynamical sublime of power. There is a great deal of contemporary scholarship on this issue. The “postmodern sublime” has become a basis for contemplation of art, literature, and philosophy. While beauty is associated with a form that can be apprehended, the sublime is connected with the formless and unrepresentable. The sublime is also given a political meaning, understood as a resistance to rule and as that which marks the limits of representational thinking, while beauty is associated with a conservative acceptance of existing social structures. *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question* (Courtine 1993), an anthology of essays by Lacoue-Labarthe, Lyotard, Nancy, Rogozinski, and others, is one recent outstanding example of this scholarship. While grounded in this intellectual history, my invocation of the notion of the sublime primarily stems from a colloquial understanding of the term in order to develop a specific concept that helps us to better understand the cultural identity of Hong Kong.

4. The impossible representation of Hong Kong identity has been keenly discussed by a number of critics. See, for instance, Rey Chow (1992, 1995), Abbas (1997), and P. Leung (1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c).

5. For a critique of such an ahistorical Western reception of Hong Kong cinema, see Stringer (1997).

6. See, for instance, Eizykman (1976). See also Kaminsky (1984, 73–80), Polan (1986, 167–69), and Sandell (1997, 23–34). However, Yvonne Tasker argues that the juxtaposition of Chinese martial arts and dance in Western culture carries the kind of feminized association that the Western imaginary has long ascribed to the East, since “dance

offers the possibility of occupying a feminine position that involves, as with the martial arts film, an explicit location of the male body on display” (Tasker 1997, 320).

7. The Western scholarship on Hong Kong cinema, and on John Woo’s movies in particular, in the 1990s tends to see the cinematic body of work as responsive to the political crisis of 1997. Hence, the cinema is regarded as a means for expressing the Hong Kong people’s anxiety, uncertainty, and vulnerability in the face of the Chinese government’s takeover. See Stringer (1997) and Williams (1997). Like Matthew Turner, these critics, though offering interesting readings of Woo’s films, tend to overemphasize the direct historical reflexivity of Hong Kong cinema.

8. Although Hong Kong people are Cantonese speaking, a lot of Mandarin films were produced in Hong Kong following the 1950s, nearly extinguishing Cantonese cinema in the early 1970s (only one Cantonese film was made in 1971–72). At the time, Mandarin films were more cosmopolitan, technically sophisticated, and related to the modern urban world. Cantonese films, with their lower budgets, were considered to be too parochial and of poor quality.

9. Lee was able to complete only four features in the three years before his untimely death in 1973. They are *The Big Boss*, *Fist of Fury* (also titled as *The Chinese Connection*), *The Way of the Dragon*, and *Enter the Dragon*.

10. When Cantonese cinema revived and swept away the entire Mandarin film industry, Golden Harvest redubbed Bruce Lee’s movies in Cantonese. As a child, Bruce Lee had starred in several Cantonese films, such as *My Son Ah Cheung* (1950), *Thunder Storm* (1957), and *The Orphan* (1961). For biographical studies of Bruce Lee, consult Thomas (1994), J. Wen (1992), Linda Lee (1989), and Clouse (1988).

11. One critic even argues that the popularity of Bruce Lee is intimately associated with the Chinese “Boxer Rebellion idea” and anti-Western and anti-imperialist attitudes of that time. See Cheng Yu (1984).

12. Many studies on the meaning or the ideological content of Bruce Lee’s films decode him as either a nationalist or a narcissist. See, for instance, Rayns (1980, 110–12) and Teo (1991, 70–80).

13. This American connection of Lee is played up in the Hollywood film *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* (1993), starring Jason Scott Lee, which obviously attempts to reclaim Bruce Lee’s body as an incarnation of the myth of the American dream. In the film, Lee is portrayed as a struggling immigrant who is able to overcome racial discrimination, smoothly developing a harmonious relationship with other racial minorities, fighting against the conservative Chinese, and making his dream of success come true at the end. He is also described as a faithful husband and a responsible father, upholding American family values.

14. While this phenomenon is probably an effect of the technical problems of the post-synched soundtrack, I believe its significance extends well beyond the technical dimension.

15. It is locally called “fighting manhua.” For a brief history and colorful graphics of the Hong Kong violent action comics, see W. Wong (2002, 100–131).

16. Anti-Japanese sentiment has been a dominant theme in Hong Kong kung fu cinema and comics, even though, ironically, they are heavily influenced by Japanese popular culture.

17. The techniques indebted to cinema used in the comics include closeups, special angles, various depths of field focus, and other frame-size changes.

18. For descriptions of the Hong Kong comics market in the 1970s and 80s, see Lau Ting-kin (1993).

19. Ma's two major comics have already been adapted into big-budget Hong Kong movies. They are *The Stormriders* (1998) and *A Man Called Hero* (1999).

20. See Wong Yuk Long's own memoirs, *Longzhonghu* (The Tiger in Jail) (Wong Yuk Long 1994a) and *Shiyi fuhuameng* (The Dream of a Billion Dollars) (Wong Yuk Long 1994b). Note that Wong refers to himself here as "Tiger."

21. Jackie Chan came from a poor family. His parents once offered to sell him for twenty-six dollars to a British doctor, and they later left him in a Beijing Opera training school for ten years when they migrated to Australia. He never received any formal education and only learned English in Los Angeles when he was sent by Golden Harvest to crack the American market in 1979. For the early history of Jackie Chan, see *Cheng Long* (Taipei: Linba chubanshe, 1981) and his autobiography (1998).

22. It has already been widely adopted by Hollywood movies to merge with the blooper-show tradition.

23. The term "MacGuffin" figured in a joke told by Alfred Hitchcock in an interview with François Truffaut. The joke goes as follows: MacGuffin is a Scottish name that relates to a story about two men on a train. One man says, "What's that package up there in the baggage rack?" The other man answers, "Oh, that is a MacGuffin." The first one asks, "What's a MacGuffin?" "Well," the other man says, "it's an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands." The first man says, "But there are no lions in the Scottish Highland." The other one answers, "Well, then that is no MacGuffin!" (Truffaut 1985, 138).

24. When he refers to Hong Kong culture as "a culture of disappearance," Abbas does not merely mean that its cultural specificity is going to be extinct after the handover to China in 1997. "Disappearance" is understood as a kind of pathology of cultural presence that no familiar modes of representation can contain. Abbas believes that filmmakers such as Stanley Kwan and Wong Kar-wai are able to work with disappearance and invent a form of visuality that problematizes the visual itself. See Abbas (1997).

25. This costume martial arts movie is about a man who, in order to learn a powerful fighting skill, pays the price of emasculating himself and being transformed into a woman. Although the film implies that the foundation of phallic power is paradoxically based on the loss of the penis, and the fluid sexual identity displayed by the film also reveals the gender confusion of today, I still think a feminist critique of the film is valid. For a direct criticism of the film, see T. Cheung (1993, 182–88). Cheung fails to offer a sophisticated reading of the film, but she has surveyed more than one hundred Hong Kong films made between 1989 and early 1993, and she comes to the

conclusion that, despite the increasing physical strength of the female roles on screen, women continue to be subordinate to men and are portrayed as those who are better at using their fists than their brains.

26. For further discussion of Tsui Hark's movies, see my "Once Upon a Time: Technology Comes to Presence in China" (K. Lo 1993).

27. Ironically, Jackie Chan collaborated with Spielberg's production company DreamWorks on *Tuxedo* (2002), an action movie full of special effects.

28. Another popular, heavily digitized Hong Kong movie is Stephen Chiau's *Shaolin Soccer* (2001), a comedy in which Shaolin monks play soccer as if performing supernatural kung fu.

29. For more detailed discussion on Hong Kong action heroines, see Logan (1995), Ciecko and Lu (1999), Giukin (2001).

30. Referring to Kazuo Ishiguro's "more English than the English" novel, *The Remains of the Day*, Ma Sheng-mei states that "postethnicity seems to be an excess indulged in only by those who have already made it, partly by virtue of their ethnicity" (Ma Sheng-mei 2000, 150).

Chapter 4: Transnationalization of the Local in a Circular Structure

This chapter has been greatly modified from an essay published as "Transnationalization of the Local in Hong Kong Cinema" in *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*, ed. Esther C. M. Yau (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 261–76.

1. See Hu (1997).
2. Hong Kong films are considered by the Taiwan government as "domestic products" that could be exempted from the quota restriction on foreign-made movies. See Liang (1997, 163).
3. For the history of Taiwan's investment in Hong Kong cinema, see Liang (1997, 158–63) and Shen (1995, 4–12).
4. Other Hong Kong directors make similar claims. For example, Gordon Chan says: "To survive in the market place, Hong Kong cinema must cast off its local, inward-looking tendency. I very much want to make Asian films" (Li Cheuk-to 2000, 65). Teddy Chen, in explaining his *Purple Storm* (1999), explains: "We just didn't want to make an action film that's too localized. We wanted a more international Hong Kong film and we looked for terrorists with interesting backgrounds. . . . After some work, we decided on Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge" (Ho 2000, 60). And Johnnie To, in referring to his *Full-time Killer*, presented in a mixture of Japanese, English, and Putonghua, says: "We are hoping it will be viewed as an Asian movie. When we were making it, there was a strong reminiscence of old European movies where the action takes place from Rome, to Paris and Switzerland. *Fulltime Killer* takes place in Hong Kong, Macau and Japan. This is like a half-way point; maybe later we might make a movie that's fully in English. The market is in a moulding stage and everyone can try anything with it. Co-operating with

Thailand, Singapore, Korea or Japan is inevitable. In many aspects it's for our mutual interest. If my actors and your actors work together, we win markets on both sides. There's nothing new about the concept" (Chung 2001).

5. As history has proved, the European model with multiple languages and multi-national crews could hardly compete with the one-dominant-language Hollywood model that absorbs talents from different places. Indeed, the European model in the 1950s was primarily Franco-Italian coproductions. The French then came to coproduce with Americans, forming a new genre of film called Euro-American art cinema. In order to remain internationally competitive, the French were willing to make English-language films, imitating Hollywood formulae and even financing films like *Terminator 2* and *J.F.K.*, evincing the failure of the European model in filmmaking (Nowell-Smith and Ricci 1998; Kuisel 2000).

6. Such "Asianization" is not a Lee Kuan Yew (the founding father of the Singapore republic) kind of reactionary search for shared Asian values such as Confucianism, discipline, and collectivism, all of which are opposed to Western individualism, hedonism, and democratic spirit. Rather, the Asianization referred to here is more of a "forward-thinking" entity than something nostalgic. It is "primarily articulated through a shared pursuit of urban consumption, of Americanized (westernized) popular culture" (Iwabuchi 1999, 192). See also Iwabuchi (2002).

7. Surveys show that there is a rise of (racial) discrimination cases in the post-1997 Hong Kong, especially against the new immigrants from mainland China, and increasingly there have been assaults against maidservants from the Philippines and Indonesia. The SAR government has been strongly urged to legislate against discrimination on the grounds of race.

8. For studies on the transnational and transcultural dimensions of Hong Kong cinema, see, for instance, S. Lu (1997, 2001), Teo (1997), Stokes and Hoover (1999a), Bordwell (2000b), Fu and Desser (2000), Law (2000), Yau (2001), and Y. Zhang (2002).

9. For a detailed study of the New Wave auteurs in Hong Kong cinema, see Teo (1997), especially "Part Three: Path Breakers."

10. For a discussion of diasporic Chinese culture, see the special issue entitled "The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today," *Daedalus* 120.2 (Spring 1991). For a pointed and rigorous critique of Chinese centrism, see Rey Chow (1993).

11. For the discussion on the new American global cinema, see Polan (1996).

12. It was a production of Media Asia, a Hong Kong company founded in the 1990s.

13. *First Option* was another production by Media Asia and was a box-office hit.

14. After a long lapse, the deceased Teresa Teng was recently appropriated by the Hong Kong Tourism Board as one of the major "local" icons to attract tourists.

Chapter 5: Charlie Chan Reborn as Jackie Chan in Hollywood–Hong Kong Representations

Portions of this chapter appeared as "Double Negations: Hong Kong Cultural Identity in Hollywood's Transnational Representations" in "Becoming Hong Kong in

Postcolonial Times,” ed. John Nguyet Erni, special issue, *Cultural Studies* 15,3/4 (2001): 464–85.

1. Ironically, in *Blade Runner* the company that produces the replicants promotes its product as “more human than human.” In his analysis of the film, Slavoj Žižek argues that only when the replicant assumes his replicant-status does he become a truly human subject. “I am a replicant,” according to Žižek, is the statement of the subject in its purest—the same as in Althusser’s theory of ideology, where the statement “I am in ideology” is the only way for me to truly avoid the vicious circle of ideology (Žižek 1993, 41). The question, however, is whether the negation of the negation can really result in a positive way out.

2. When asked how he feels about the fact that American stunt coordinators copy a lot from his movies, Jackie Chan responds humbly that for a long time he has also learned from American stuntmen: “When I looked at Spielberg’s *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, I see that he totally copied my bicycle sequence from *Project A*; I used a bicycle, he used a motorcycle. But I’m so happy that even the biggest director has learned something from me! . . . But I have also learned from other movies. . . . *I think that in the world of movies everybody copies everybody*” (Little and Wong 1999, 135; my emphasis).

3. Perhaps one of the reasons that Hong Kong film talents are courted by Hollywood studios is precisely because Hong Kong movies imitate Hollywood. In Hong Kong cinema, Hollywood rediscovers its own lost energy and seeks its own lost original experience of what a film should be.

4. This negation of Chineseness is not a denial of Chinese origin but rather an articulation of the difference within Chinese identity. As one critic has argued, Hong Kong identity is never constituted by a stable narrative, but instead emerges out of a clash of discourses. “It was precisely the inability to articulate identity . . . along any stable narrative that marked out Hong Kong people from Chinese on the mainland or Taiwan” (Turner 1995, 20).

5. In 1973, American audiences were entranced by a number of Hong Kong action films besides those starring Bruce Lee. In May of that year, three Hong Kong kung fu movies, *Fist of Fury*, *Deep Thrust—the Hand of Death*, and *Five Fingers of Death*, were listed, respectively, at positions 1, 2, and 3 on *Variety*’s list of the weekly top box-office draws. In the following month, no less than five Hong Kong kung fu movies appeared in the American top fifty list. See Desser (2000).

6. Chan made several U.S. films between 1980 and 1985. He starred in *The Big Brawl* (1980) and in *The Protector* (1985) and had a minor role in *Cannonball Run* (1981) and its sequel (1983). All these American productions only led him back to making his own action films in Hong Kong, where he could have full control.

7. Some critics have suggested that the success of *Rumble in the Bronx* represents an attempt to redefine global cinema as something other than the U.S.-produced and English-speaking Hollywood entertainment film. But this interpretation is too eagerly optimistic. See for instance Fore (1997) on Jackie Chan’s impact on global en-

tainment. *Rumble in the Bronx* opened nationwide in the United States in February 1996 and quickly become the top box-office draw of the month. It grossed US\$32 million total. But the box-office performance of Chan's subsequent Hong Kong films declined consistently. *Supercop* grossed less than *Rumble*, at US\$16 million, and *First Strike* grossed less than *Supercop*, at US\$14 million.

8. Unlike many action films that do great business in the first week but quickly exhaust their young-male audience base, *Rush Hour* was able to continuously find new fans. In its first seventeen days it amassed US\$84 million, and overall it grossed US\$244 million (including \$141.2 million in the United States and \$102.8 million overseas). Its sequel, *Rush Hour 2*, grossed US\$67.4 million in its first three days, which is a record for a comedy in the United States.

9. For a detailed study on Yeoh, see Williams (2001).

10. The Hollywood filmography of these Hong Kong directors includes: *Maximum Risk* (Columbia Pictures, 1996), directed by Ringo Lam; *Double Team* (Columbia Pictures, 1997), directed by Tsui Hark; *Mr. Magoo* (Walt Disney Pictures, 1997), directed by Stanley Tong; *Warriors of Virtue* (MGM, 1997), directed by Ronny Yu; *The Big Hit* (Tristar Pictures, 1998), directed by Chek-Kirk Wong; *Bride of Chucky* (Universal, 1998), directed by Ronny Yu; *Knock-Off* (Tristar Pictures, 1998), directed by Tsui Hark; *The Love Letter* (DreamWorks, 1999), directed by Peter Chan; and *Freddy vs. Jason* (Warner, 2003), directed by Ronny Yu.

11. Compared to Hollywood, Hong Kong cinema is more capable of blending into Asian countries, taking into account the local characteristics of Asian markets and yielding to its other. For this reason Hong Kong movies are able to compete with Hollywood in Asia. See Lii (1998). However, Lii's binary model of Hollywood films on the one hand and Hong Kong films on the other hand is too rigid for understanding the Hollywood tactics of absorbing overseas talent in their productions.

12. Under CEPA, Hong Kong-produced films can be exempt from the annual twenty-film foreign production quota. Hong Kong investors can hold a majority stake/management control in mainland cinemas, and there is no restriction on China-wide distribution of Hong Kong Chinese coproductions. The agreement also provides opportunities for overseas companies to collaborate with Hong Kong film companies to explore the mainland market.

13. For a positive view of the Chinese diaspora, see for instance A. Ong (1993) and Ong and Nonini (1997).

14. There have been some studies of Asian representations in Hollywood films, for instance E. Wong (1978), Law (1992), and Marchetti (1993). But an Asian-white dichotomy could hardly occupy the center stage of American racial conflict.

15. "The two movie capitals [Hong Kong and Hollywood] have a great deal in common," writes Fredric Dannen, "in fact, Hong Kong is often called *Dongfang Haolaiwu*, the Hollywood of the East. . . . Perhaps the best way to describe the Hong Kong genre is to speak of its comic-book aesthetic: it is a cinema of incessant action, eye-popping effects, and cartoon-like violence" (Dannen and Long 1997, 5).

16. Peter Chan admits in an interview that Hollywood hires him and other Hong Kong directors because they are skilled craftsmen. Peter Chan, interview with Stella Sze, *Dream Factory*, RTHK, ATV Home Channel, Hong Kong, July 3, 1999.

17. The arrival of Hong Kong stars within the American mainstream media may stir up the debate, among Asian Americanists, about whether the focus of research should shift from a claiming of America (which would assert the American identity and root of Asian minorities) to a denationalization or globalization of Asian American studies. Undeniably, Asian Americans can to some extent identify with the success of Hong Kong film people in Hollywood. As MTV's Chinese American video jockey, Allan Wu, comments, "Growing up in the U.S., I only saw Asian actors in stereotype roles. . . . People like Jackie Chan and Chow Yun-Fat busted their asses getting to where they are today and Hollywood is beginning to see Asian actors on a wider scope and not just as a token." Wu admits that the representation of Asians in the United States is moving in the right direction, although it is still difficult for Asian American actors to get mainstream roles that are not stereotypical. For this reason Asian Americans try to use the images of Hong Kong stars to transform their own subject positions in the States. See "VJ Hunk Allan Eyes Film Career," *South China Morning Post*, September 24, 1999, 20.

18. Although the story of *Rush Hour 2* begins in Hong Kong, a number of scenes, such as the one in the massage parlor, were actually shot in Thailand. In this way, Hong Kong as a place is reduced to a mere name or sign with which Hong Kong locals find it hard to relate.

19. I am referring to those popular films such as *All for the Winner* (1990), *God of Gamblers II* (1990), *God of Gamblers III: Back to Shanghai* (1991), *From Beijing with Love* (1994), all starring Stephen Chiau Sing-Chi, and *Her Fatal Ways* and its three sequels (1990–94), starring Do Do Cheng.

20. To use the Althusserian term, this can be understood as the way in which an individual relates to the conditions of his existence, understands his specifically designated place in a sociopolitical formation as natural, and is thereby interpellated as a subject.

21. For an innovative and provocative interpretation of Zhang's exhibitionism, see Rey Chow (1995a).

22. Historically, Hollywood's portrayal of the East-West encounter has taken the form of an interaction between a white protagonist and an Asian sidekick or opponent, from *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960) to *Year of the Dragon* (1985).

23. Typical of these ultra-cynical characters is the persona played by Stephen Chiau Sing-Chi in his *mou lei-tau* (nonsense slapstick) comedies of the early 1990s.

24. Chan has starred in a movie called *Mr. Nice Guy* (1997), directed by Sammo Hung.

25. As Jacques Lacan writes, "It is in the name of the father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law" (Lacan 1977, 67). A father figure is never

missing from Chan's films. Bill Tung, playing Chan's boss, uncle, or his senior, has a small part in virtually every Chan movie in order to represent the father's law, to which the action hero can resort in the final moment.

26. Chan's "semblance play" with the father of Law is further evidenced by his scandalous extramarital affair with the ex-beauty queen Ellen Ng, who gave birth to his daughter in late 1999. Chan described the affair, after it was long over, as a "playful act" with "shameful" consequences.

27. This is probably due to the outtakes seen at the end of the film, since the closing credits in all of Jackie Chan's Hong Kong productions feature multiple outtakes that show him missing on stunts and hurting himself.

28. There is a scene in which Lee, escaping from Carter, jumps from a double-decker bus and hangs on to a Hollywood Boulevard sign. Chan told a reporter that "[t]he director had me hanging off a Sunset Boulevard sign . . . and I asked him if I could change it to a Hollywood sign. That sign has meaning to the Chinese. It's like I grab Hollywood." See Richard Corliss, "King of America," *Time* (Asian edition), October 19, 1998, 54–55.

29. The cultural prejudice according to which an Asian man is assumed as a submissive Oriental woman by the white man is exemplified in David Henry Hwang's play *M. Butterfly* (1988). Rey Chow argues, in a different context (1991), that Hollywood's reception of ethnic culture reproduces it as a feminized spectacle.

30. See for instance Tasker (1993), Bogle (1994), and Yearwood (1982). There is also the stereotype that constructs the black hero as abnormally libidinous and hypersexual. Carter obviously does not belong to this type but is designated as a "castrated" comic figure.

31. For a chronological study of the Charlie Chan series, see Hanke (1989) and C. Mitchell (1999).

32. Ironically, those Asian American actors who had played Charlie Chan's sons, such as Keye Luke, Victor Sen Yung, Benon Fong, Philip Ahn, and James Hong, all ended up appearing in the pilot of *Kung Fu* (1972–75), a television series first conceived and developed by Bruce Lee, who wanted to play the lead role.

33. The comic aspect is apparent because the Charlie Chan character is always played by a Caucasian actor. Among the white men who played the Chinese detective, Warner Oland was the most popular Charlie Chan. Born in Sweden to Swedish and Russian parents, he was considered to have an exotic look, and with the addition of an Oriental-style mustache and goatee, the transformation was complete. Oland said that "I owe my Chinese appearance to the Mongol invasion" (Hanke 1989, 1).

34. Both Chan and Tucker's characters are smart, brave, and cerebral when it comes to solving crimes. These traits present the audience with the familiar image of a Western hero. At the same time, Tucker's outrageously fast talk and super-sassy derisiveness, along with Chan's reticence and fascinating acrobatic skills, together are reminiscent of an old-fashioned, exotic minstrel show. One British reviewer, for instance, writes that "Tucker's Eddie Murphy-ish schtick, all jive-ass mockery

and shrill falsetto disbelief, plays off divertingly against Chan's self-deprecating humor, and their scenes together convey a genuine sense of mutual enjoyment" (Kemp 1998, 61).

35. The complete title of the book is *Charlie Chan Is Dead: An Anthology of Contemporary Asian American Fiction*, edited by Jessica Hagedorn, preface by Elaine Kim (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Eng.: Penguin, 1993).

36. For a discussion of the effects of the outtakes in Jackie Chan's films, see chapter 3.

37. For a thought-provoking analysis of the difference between Hollywood and Hong Kong action cinemas, see Bordwell (1997).

38. The Hong Kong box-office earnings of the two U.S. blockbusters *Rush Hour* and *Rush Hour 2*, though not bad at all in a time when the city has been struggling to recover from recession, could hardly compete with those of any of Jackie Chan's local productions.

39. Neither Chow Yun Fat in *Anna and the King* nor Jet Li in *Kiss of the Dragon* got to kiss their white female leads, Jodie Foster and Bridget Fonda, respectively. Chan's romantic act with Roselyn Sanchez in *Rush Hour 2*, by contrast, is a notable exception that implies the breaking of the cultural taboo forbidding a white woman's sexual attraction to an Asian man, although Sanchez is Argentine and not exactly Anglo-Saxon.

40. Following Singapore's example, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government under Chinese rule is attempting to further integrate its culture and economy with global capitalism while paradoxically enhancing an appreciation of traditional Chinese values. This contradictory combination of globalized economic logic and traditional Asian ethics is what Žižek means by globalization without universalism—a system that aims at precluding any political dimension of social life. See Žižek (1998).

41. Gina Marchetti remarks in a footnote that, traditionally, Hong Kong cinema appropriated this "pan-Chineseness" in order to make its way in the lucrative overseas Chinese markets. But I disagree with her claim that the past success of Hong Kong cinema in the overseas Chinese market took place at the expense of a uniquely Hong Kong voice. See Marchetti (1998, 72).

Chapter 6: Racial Passing and Face Swapping in the Wild, Wild West

A short version of this chapter was published as "Pacific Asia's Drive to Hollywood and Back: The *Jouissance* of California Hong Kong Movies," (*a*)—*a Journal of Culture and the Unconscious* 1.1 (2002): 47–58.

1. The first Wong Fei-hung film series was directed by Hu Peng. Since then, films and television shows about the kung fu master continued to be made in Hong Kong.

Even Jackie Chan has played the young Wong Fei-hung in the kung fu comedy *Drunken Master* (1979), which immediately turned him into a star.

2. More than one hundred films featuring Wong Fei-hung have been produced since 1949 by the Hong Kong film industry. Seventy-seven of them starred Kwan Tak Hing, who became identified with the role. For a complete filmography of the series that were released from 1949 to 1995, see *Wong Fei Hung: The Invincible Master* (1996). For more detailed discussion on this film series, see Yu (1980), Rodriguez (1997), and Williams (1998).

3. Although the original film series may sound traditional, moral, and parochial, Hector Rodriguez points out that the movies have “even incorporated narrative norms and situations from popular Hollywood films, especially the Saloon fight characteristic of countless Westerns, transplanted in various [Wong Fei-hung] installments to the more indigenous setting of a dim sum restaurant” (Rodriguez 1997, 3).

4. Lisa Odham Stokes and Michael Hoover argue that in the film “Wong Fei-hung is twice marginalized, first for his Chineseness and second for identifying with Native Americans. Unfortunately, the film fails to draw out the implications of the two peoples’ marginalized histories. . . . [T]he genocidal treatment of Native Americans is reduced to the comment that ‘we were forced off our land’ and a Mel Brooks–type scene in which three are forced to ‘dance’ when bigoted whites fire bullets at their feet” (Stokes and Hoover 1999a, 97).

5. The overwhelming majority of Hong Kong business people and middle-class professionals have foreign passports and have established rights to foreign domicile, especially in Canada, the United States, and Australia.

6. For the discussion on the cross-identification between African American and Asian American in terms of hip-hop or kung fu, see Ongiri (2002) and Sunaina (2000).

7. In a parallel fashion, many members of Hong Kong society choose to stay and to migrate at the same time in order to cope with the return of Hong Kong sovereignty to China. While maintaining their livelihoods in Hong Kong, they spread assets and family members around the world. For instance, they buy houses in Canada, invest in the mainland and Southeast Asia, send their children to British boarding schools, and hold Australian passports.

8. The lines of course remind audiences of Rudyard Kipling’s famous verses, “Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, / Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat.”

9. A. O. Scott, “Mission? Improbable, but the Pigeons Are Nifty,” *New York Times on the Web*, May 24, 2000 <http://www.rottentomatoes.com/movies/titles/mission_impossible_2/click.php?review=77>

10. In *The Tuxedo* (2002), Jackie Chan wears not a mask but a special high-tech tuxedo owned by a secret agent to convert himself into a Bond-like superhero. The film is not simply about a man wearing a costume that gives him extraordinary power, but also about a Chinese minority putting on the Caucasian master’s suit, assuming his identity, and finally gaining the recognition from the white folks.

11. See Ong's chapter "'A Better Tomorrow'? The Struggle for Global Visibility" (A. Ong 1999, 164). There, Ong primarily uses Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* and its sequels as examples for illustrating how these Hong Kong action films hold on to Chinese values in the chaotic world of Asian capitalism. But she also adds that "[i]t is no secret that John Woo, like film directors the world over, honed his skills by studying American movies and in the process picked up techniques as well as modernist themes. . . . Western themes include the importance of male bonding for surviving in a lawless world, men fighting for a space in which domesticity is safe, and making a last stand against outsiders and authorities. These good, old-fashioned American frontier values are transposed or rather merged with representations of ethnic-Chinese fraternal culture" (165–66).

12. See, for instance, Timothy P. Fong's "Charlie Chan No More: Asian Americans and the Media" (Fong 1998, 180). The trend of "Asian filmmakers and actors such as John Woo and Jackie Chan, who are literally marching or hurtling into Hollywood . . . [may] represent future directions for the booming Asian American cinema" (Jun King 1998, 28).

13. Peter Feng writes, "Hong Kong directors have also helmed diverse mainstream productions, including Stanley Tong's *Mr. Magoo* (1997), Ronnie Yu's *Bride of Chucky* (1998), and Peter Chan's *The Love Letter* (1999). . . . While these films represent a marriage of Hong Kong and Hollywood production styles, none of them tells a story about Asian Americans, any more than Fritz Lang's *Fury* (1936) was a German American film." But like other Asian Americanists, Feng also identifies Woo as an Asian American filmmaker. See P. Feng (1999, 20–21).

14. Major figures such as Sam Peckinpah, Martin Scorsese, Stanley Kubrick, Jean-Pierre Melville, and John Ford are said to have inspired Woo to build his own style.

15. According to many Western depictions, Woo grew up on the streets and in the shacks of Hong Kong, where he was exposed to crime and drugs. Just before he almost joined a street gang, the Christian church helped him and his family. An American family sent money through the church to support his education. At one point, Woo even considered becoming a minister. A Christian magazine comments, "Many Christians have problems with the very genre of the violent action picture, but Mr. Woo insists that his movies bolster his own strong family values. His heroes are 'always reaching out a helping hand,' he points out, 'even sometimes sacrific[ing] himself for the others.' Though Mr. Woo's vocation lies in making movies that are primarily exciting, rather than theological, he demonstrates the value of saving pennies to send overseas." See Pamela Johnson, "John Woo: Training up a Director," *World Magazine* 12.13 (1997), <http://www.worldmag.com/world/issue/07-26-97/cultural_3.asp>, accessed August 2, 1997. Woo also emphasizes his close American connection to his Western interviewers. For instance, he says, "My wife is an American citizen and two of my kids were born here. . . . I also received so much support from the film community in the United States. A producer once told me that nobody in the film industry was jealous of me. Every-

one seemed very excited about me to come here. Everybody wanted me to be successful, and no one wanted to see me fail” (Singer 1998, 322, 323).

16. Balibar also tells us that the word “subject” is a translation of the Latin word *subjectus*—“a political and juridical term, which refers to subjection or submission.” See Balibar (1994, 8–9).

17. Another Asian director who has excelled in Hollywood recently is M. Night Shyamalan, whose features *The Sixth Sense* (1999), starring Bruce Willis and Haley Joel Osment, and *Signs* (2002), starring Mel Gibson, became the blockbusters of those years. But unlike Wayne Wang, Ang Lee, and Joan Chen (whose Hollywood directorial debut was *Autumn in New York* [2000], starring Richard Gere and Winona Ryder), who are immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China respectively, Shyamalan is an American-born Indian. On the other hand, Shekhar Kapur, the Indian director from Asia, also managed to make the leap from Bollywood to Hollywood with his Oscar-nominated feature *Elizabeth* (1998) and with *The Four Feathers* (2002).

18. See, for instance, Havis (1998, 16). Woo’s business partner and producer, Terence Chang, also commented that “a lot of people said [*Hard Target*] is a Hong Kong movie in English” (Dannen and Long 1997, 152). It apparently makes no difference to American audiences whether Woo’s first American film is a “Hong Kong” movie or a “Chinese” movie in English, although it is Terence Chang who qualifies it with the Hong Kong identity.

19. “New brutalism” is a term used by Annette Hill to refer to *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), and the like, which—according to the audience—provide “realistic” representations of violence, in contrast to Hollywood action movies, such as the *Die Hard* series (1988, 1990, 1995) or *Terminator 2* (1991), which are just “fun, playful and unrealistic.” See Hill (1999).

20. *Face/Off* was at first a sci-fi film. But Woo told the producers that he wasn’t any good at making sci-fi movies. So the producers had a rewrite done to lessen the sci-fi aspect and to enhance the characters and the drama according to Woo’s wishes. See Stokes and Hoover (1999b, 37).

21. In Woo’s own words, “My movies have a lot of heart, passion, and emotion. They aren’t only about violence. I try to show something good and pure about the human spirit in them. Qualities like loyalty, honor, dignity, and a spirit of chivalry that has disappeared” (Havis 1998, 12–13); see also Server (1999, 32).

22. This is an argument made by Susan Jeffords when she talks about *Kindergarten Cop* (1990), *Robocop 2* (1990), *Terminator 2* (1991), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), and *Switch* (1991). See Jeffords (1993).

23. For the idea of “Pacific Rim Discourse,” and “Asia-Pacific Idea,” see Connery (1995, 1996), Cumings (1998), Dirlík (1998).

24. For the discussion on the Asian American subject’s symbolizing the shifting identities of Asian transnational diasporas, see Palumbo-Liu (1999).

25. John Huang, a Democratic Party employee, was accused of bringing in some illegal donations from Asian Americans and some Asian companies. The fund-raising event Huang organized in a Buddhist temple near Los Angeles was charged by the Republicans as a Clinton-Gore campaign money laundry. For more detailed coverage of the incident, see Brooks Jackson, “Democrats Have to Give Back More Money,” *All Politics*, <<http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1996/news/9610/18/soft.money/index.shtml>>, accessed February 4, 2003.

26. Elaine Shannon, a *Time* correspondent, found that the American media had played a major role in Wen Ho Lee case. The reason the FBI confronted Lee in 1999 was because the *New York Times* was on the story and said that the Chinese espionage did very severe damage to the American interest. See “Wen Ho Lee: A Discussion with *Time* Correspondent Elaine Shannon Hosted by Court TV (Transcript from September 13, 2000),” <<http://www.time.com/time/community/transcripts/2000/091400wenho.html>>, accessed February 4, 2003.

27. Christopher Cox, a six-term Republican congressman from California, headed the committee to investigate allegations that China stole U.S. nuclear secrets. He released his report, which was full of factual errors, in 1999. See James Oberg, “Errors Mar Cox Report,” *ABC News*, <<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/science/DailyNews/oberg990602.html>>, accessed February 4, 2003.

Chapter 7: Tigers Crouch and Dragons Hide in the New Trans-Chinese Cinema

1. It is difficult to categorize Lee’s *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* as Chinese or Hollywood, since the financing scheme that funded the movie was based on the advance sale of the international distribution rights to a horde of American, Japanese, and European companies. The major money came from different divisions of Tokyo-based Sony. Sony Pictures Classics in New York bought the U.S. distribution rights. Columbia Pictures in Hollywood owned the rights for Latin America and several Asian markets. Columbia Pictures Asia, a Hong Kong-based production company, also contributed funds, and Sony Classical Music financed the soundtrack. The actual cash for the film was provided by a bank in Paris, while a bond company in Los Angeles insured the production. For more details, see Klein (2002). However, I won’t celebrate the film as a typical representative of global cinema. Rather, I would use it to rethink the function of national-cultural terms in the global world.

2. In the past, Hong Kong films have been divided into Cantonese and Mandarin ones. It was the Mandarin-language films of Hong Kong that first succeeded in creating a global audience. But beginning in the 1980s, the reemergence of Cantonese language and culture dominated the screen of Hong Kong cinema. Cantonese is spoken by all the characters, including the Westerners, in Hong Kong films, much the same way that Hollywood cinema has every screen character speak English. But when Hong Kong Cantonese cinema began losing its market in the 1990s, many compa-

nies started producing Hollywood-styled movies with a lot of characters speaking English. For instance, Stanley Tong believes that the mastery of the English language in future Hong Kong productions has become the requisite initial step toward globalization (S. Cheung 2000, 125). See chapter 4.

3. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* barely made US\$2 million in Hong Kong and US\$1.3 million in mainland China in 2001, though it performed strongly in Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, and other Asian countries. For Hong Kong audiences, there is not enough action in the film—audiences complain that fighting doesn't begin until after the first fifteen or so minutes—and many scenes are too familiar.

4. Its global box-office revenue was US\$208 million in 2001, while the film was made for only about US\$15 million.

5. The list of the awards won by the film is long. To name a few: Best Foreign Language Film, Best Cinematography, Best Score, and Best Art Direction, 73rd Annual Academy Awards; Best Feature, Best Director, and Best Supporting Actress (Zhang), 2001 Independent Spirit Awards; Best Director, 2001 Directors Guild Awards; Best Cinematography, Best Foreign Film, Best Original Score, and Most Promising Actress (Zhang), 2001 Chicago Film Critics Awards; Best Director, Best Foreign Language Film, Best Music, and Best Costume, 2001 British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA); Best Director and Best Foreign Language Film, 2001 Golden Globes; People's Choice Award, 25th Annual Toronto International Film Festival; Best Foreign Film, 2000 National Board of Review; Best Cinematography, 2000 New York Film Critics Circle; Best Picture, Best Cinematography, Best Production Design, and Best Music, 2000 Los Angeles Film Critics Association; Best Cinematography and Best Foreign Film, 2000 Boston Society of Film Critics; Best Foreign Film, 2000 Broadcast Film Critics Association; Best Foreign Film and Best Cinematography, 2000 Online Film Critics Society. In Taiwan and Hong Kong the film's awards include: Best Picture, Best Sound Effects, Best Action Choreography, Best Original Film Score, Best Film Editing, and Best Visual Effects, 2000 Golden Horse Awards (Taiwan's version of the Oscars); Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress in a Supporting Role, Best Cinematography, Best Action Director, Best Original Film Score, Best Sound Effects, and Best Original Song, 20th Annual Hong Kong Film Awards.

6. The victory of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* in the Oscars and in the U.S. box-office race led Zhang Yimou to try to duplicate Ang Lee's magic formula in making his first martial arts epic, *Hero* (2002), with similar multinational funding (from mainland China, the United States, and Hong Kong) and a transnational (Chinese) cast and crew (four Hong Kong stars—Jet Li, Tony Leung, Maggie Cheung, and Donnie Yen; the Hong Kong choreographer Ching Siu-tung; the Chinese-speaking Australian cinematographer Christopher Doyle, who has shot many of Wong Kar-wai's films; the Japanese designer Emi Wada; and the composer Tan Dun and the "princess" Zhang Ziyi from *Crouching Tiger*). It was the most expensive film ever made in mainland China and did well in China's box office. But it didn't win any Oscar and was not released in the United States until August 2004. Miramax sat on

the film for almost two years. Another Zhang Yimou crowd-pleasing martial arts movie, *House of Flying Daggers* (2004), starring Takeshi Kaneshiro, Andy Lau, and Zhang Ziyi, was also made with international funding. Its release to the Western market is very likely, due to the box-office success of *Hero* in the United States.

7. The production companies involved in the film include Columbia Pictures Film Production Asia, Sony Pictures Classics, Good Machine International, Edko Films, Zoom Hunt International, China Film Co-production Corporation, and Asian Union Audio Visual and Cultural Company.

8. Probably only the name “Hong Kong” could accommodate the complicated background of the film. David Bordwell even confines all of the film’s references to the traditions of Hong Kong martial arts cinema: “From a historical perspective, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* becomes a millennial synthesis of the great wuxia tradition. . . . The serene self-possession of Li Mu Bai is reminiscent of King Hu’s fighters. . . . Yu Shu Lien’s rooftop pursuit of the mysterious thief echoes 1960s adventures, and her unfussy prowess puts her in the line of women warriors played by Wu Lizhen, Josephine Siao Fong-fong, and Cheng Pei Pei. . . . The young couple, Jen and Lo, recall the combative couples of *Shaolin vs. Ninja*; by the end, however, their love affair, told through sumptuous desert flashbacks, acquires a sweeping poetic anguish akin to that of *Ashes of Time*. . . . Blending everything is Ang Lee, fully aware of the landmarks of the genre he’s working in, and like his predecessors he at once pays homage to them and reworks them to new effect” (Bordwell 2000a, 20–21).

9. For American audiences, it is a subtitled Chinese-language film. But for Chinese audiences, especially the Mandarin-speaking ones, the film is not “really” Chinese enough because Chow is a Cantonese who fails to deliver proper Mandarin and Yeoh can’t even read Chinese and had to learn her part line by line in pinyin.

10. The acquisition of Columbia Pictures by Sony a few years ago does not necessarily represent the penetration of Japanese culture or otherness in Hollywood, which would designate a clear line between the foreign outsider and the internal American self. On the contrary, it only shows that Hollywood has been incorporated into the transnational media conglomerate and has become the major producer of global images, gradually losing the sense of an outside.

11. Joseph S. M. Lau argues that the wuxia novels of Jin Yong/Louis Cha could become a means of Chinese education for the overseas Chinese. See J. Lau (1998).

12. The difference is that in Hu’s film, the fight takes place on the ground under bamboo trees, while in Lee’s work the characters float high and dance on the tops of the trees, with cranes and wires digitally removed from the frames. The spatial opposition may allegorize the rather different receptions of the two Chinese filmmakers in the United States. In the last few years of his life, Hu tried hard to find investors for his film on Chinese American railway workers to no avail.

13. The so-called “fame in the West” is of course only relative. King Hu’s *Touch of Zen* was presented at the 1975 Cannes Film Festival and won the Technical Award.

His *Touch of Zen* and *The Fate of Lee Khan* (1973) have been released in France. Hu's films received considerable attention in France and other parts of Europe.

14. See C. Wong (2000, 35). In an interview given to the Taiwan media in 1993, Lee had already made similar statements about the westernization of Chineseness and went so far as to say that, "in the process of Westernization, Taiwanese people have already done many of the kinds of work that [Chinese immigrants in the United States] do. Although their bodies are not in the United States, they are immigrants psychologically. . . . What is the difference between living in Flushing, New York and Taipei? Except that one knows America better and sees more Americans, there is not much difference." See *China Times Weekly* 65, March–April 1993, 75; qtd. from Shih (2000).

15. Lee has acknowledged that his films are more popular among female audiences. He chose to adapt Wang Dulu's martial arts novel precisely because it focuses on the role of female warriors. Furthermore, he cast Chow Yun Fat instead of Jet Li as the male lead because Chow looks more feminine.

16. Hollywood recognizes its female market because the top-grossing record of *Titanic* (1997) was largely made by young girls seeing the film over and over again. According to the Motion Picture Association of America, half of teenage movie-going audiences are girls. Hollywood pictures aimed at girls and younger women have produced good box-office successes since the late 1990s. The track record led some in Hollywood to speculate that young females are on their way to becoming one of the film industry's most reliable audience blocs. See Cieply and Eller (2003) and Elias (2003).

17. As Ni Kuang, who has written the scripts of some three hundred martial arts films, says, "There have been two periods when wu xia novels reached new peaks. The first was during the 20s and 30s with the sudden appearance of such excellent writers as Huanzhu Louzhu, Chu Zhenmu, Wang Dulu, Zheng Zhengyin and Pai Yu. The second wave began simultaneously in Hong Kong and Taiwan around 1955 when the works of Jin Yung launched the so-called 'new style' martial arts novels." Qtd. from Koo Siu-fung (1981, 25).

18. For an elaborate comparison between *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Sense and Sensibility*, see W. Leung (2001). Leung sees *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* as a continuity of *Sense and Sensibility* and calls the martial arts film "a Jane Austen plot with a Taoist twist" (49).

19. Žižek has argued that there are four senses of appearance: (1) illusion; (2) symbolic order; (3) a sign indicating that there is something beyond; and (4) something that fills the void in the midst of reality (Žižek 1999, 197–98).

20. John Woo's *The Killer* has been widely considered by Western critics as "noir-based libretto." See Naremore (1998, 228–29) and Hirsch (1999, 104–6).

21. Of course, there is another way to understand Li's persistence with Jen. Jen could serve as the object of exchange between Li and his enemy Jade Fox. To a certain extent, they fight their battle through her. The cruelest way for Li to take out his re-

venge on Jade Fox is not simply to kill her but to take away her disciple, to whom she is emotionally attached. Taking this interpretation further, we could say that the fact that Li goes so far as to break the rule of the Wudan school by recruiting a female disciple is a symbolic gesture of fulfilling what his late master, Southern Crane, failed to do. Southern Crane has been murdered by Jade Fox because he only sleeps with her but rejects her as his disciple. It also connotes Li's sexual desire for Jen. Such a reading takes into account the male bonding and the patriarchal conspiracy against the weaker and wicked women.

Chapter 8: Giant Panda, Mickey Mouse, and Other Transnational Objects of Fantasy in Theme Park Hong Kong

1. The unprofitable amusement park is running an accumulative deficit of HK\$142 million following the effects of the Asian economic turmoil in 1997. It extended its hours to 11 P.M. on Saturdays in July and August starting in the summer of 2001. Between July 1999 and June 2000, about three million people visited the venue, and Ocean Park is the city's third-most popular spot for tourists. But the continuing deficit has urged the park's board to seek government permission to rejuvenate the park by allowing it to form a partnership with an internationally known theme park. Choices for partners include Sea World on the Gold Coast, Queensland, or in Florida, or Universal Studios in Los Angeles.

2. Surveys indicate that millions of tourists are expected to come to Hong Kong in 2005 purely for the opening of Disneyland. About 75 percent of these are expected to be mainlanders. The expected figures of mainland visitors to Hong Kong would skyrocket to 10 million annually. Beginning in 2004, mainland residents could come to Hong Kong on an individual basis. Previously they were allowed to visit only as part of tour groups. In light of Hong Kong's round-the-clock opening of the border and further relaxation of mainland tourism policies, the Walt Disney group raised its projection for visitors to the \$22 billion Hong Kong Disneyland to 5.6 million, up from the initial forecast of 5.4 million per year, starting in 2005–6.

3. The statues at Bauhinia Plaza, where mainland tourists mostly visit, also serve the function of marking the reconquered space with the hegemonic meaning of Chineseness.

4. Another popular humanized animal figure, Hello Kitty, which Hong Kong people have loved for almost two decades, comes from Japan. The most popular locally made cartoon figures are two piglets named McMug and McDull, which were incorporated by the transnational fast food chain McDonald's to be toys for sale in their restaurants. Some union activists accused McDonald's of exploiting the Hong Kong cartoon pigs, since McMug and McDull were created in the late 1980s to symbolize the spirit of a simple life, friendship, and environmental protection, which runs counter to the transnational corporation's tradition of exploiting cheap labor and

causing environmental damage. Indeed, the popularity of the two piglets has already spawned a tie-in industry that includes the production of toys, educational material, and accessories. The two little pigs even have their own credit cards for a local bank. The comics of McDull has been developed into an animated feature film, *My Life as McDull* (2001), which immediately became a hit film in Hong Kong and won many awards in Asia and the Grand Prix Annecy Award in Cannes. A French-dubbed version was released in France during the summer of 2003.

5. At that time, top Chinese leaders from Prime Minister Zhu Rongji down had been pushing Disney to cut a deal with the local government to build a theme park on Chinese soil, and the Chinese government did endorse the building of Disneyland in Hong Kong. Early in 1996, the Chinese government held a number of discussions about a possible Disneyland, but the two sides could not get as far as choosing an appropriate Chinese city for the site. Since then, discussions have reached a stalemate. As China's thriving metropolis and one of the most densely populated cities, Shanghai was first considered a good choice for a Disney amusement park. But a project like this has to convince international investors, who have lost money before in similar operations in China. There are already more than thirty theme parks operating in Shanghai, and most of them are in a deficit. Finally, Disneyland chose Hong Kong instead of Shanghai, and the mayor of Shanghai congratulated Hong Kong for winning the bid. However, mainland China wants a Disneyland so much that mainland media report that a Beijing Disneyland will be opened in time for the 2008 Olympic Games. The Disney company's chief, Michael Eisner, has denied the report but admitted that the company is engaged in ongoing talks with authorities in Beijing and Shanghai, and he has said that a mainland Disney theme park is feasible because of the size of the Chinese market.

6. After the Hong Kong government showed a strong commitment to combating piracy, the center of counterfeited goods moved to Shenzhen, the show place of China's economic reform. To put it differently, the usual copying trick of Hong Kong has now been appropriated by its motherland, and China is becoming more and more Hongkongized.

7. The Tiger Balm Garden was sold in 1998 to the Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing's Cheung Kong Property Limited and will be demolished for an upscale housing development. Only the mansion inside the garden will be preserved and is designated as a historical monument. But there is another Tiger Balm Garden that was built by Aw Boon Haw in Singapore. It has been renovated by the Singapore government as the "Dragon World" theme park to "support the state's claims to an alternative modernity . . . trumpeting the triumphant Asian appropriation of Western modernity" (Oakes 1998, 43–44). On the other hand, there is another Chinese ancient-culture theme park named Tang Dynasty Village, which recreates the seventh-century Chinese village of Xian in Singapore.

8. The commercialization of traditional Chinese culture in Hong Kong theme

parks is not unusual. For example, the Sung Dynasty Village, a recreation of an old Chinese community in Sung Dynasty (960–1279) with costumed reenactors portraying courtesans, soldiers, and workers, was a popular tourist spot before it was closed in March 1997. The Middle Kingdom, right next to Hong Kong Ocean Park, is another recreation site that sells to visitors the ancient Chinese cultural heritage of thirteen dynasties with full-size replicas of temples, shrines, street scenes, pavilions, pagodas, and palaces.

9. Another way to understand the thesis of the theme park Hong Kong is to associate it with the new type of amusement park, such as Virtual World in San Diego, California, Acuarinto of Nagasaki, or the Circus Theater of Zandvoort in Holland (Cerver 1997), where adventures do not take place in real space but only behind the screen. The virtuality of Hong Kong lies precisely in its function of serving as a displayed image of Chineseness.

10. Shenzhen, the special economic zone, has been China's undisputed theme park capital since it built the first theme park, owns over twenty large-scale attractions and its tourist industry is worth several billion yuans. But it can hardly compete with Hong Kong in terms of international status.

11. U.S.-China relations became tense over incidents such as those mentioned in chapter 6, including the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 and the collision of a U.S. spy plane with a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea in 2001. China is now considered as the strategic military competitor of the United States in Asia Pacific under the presidency of George W. Bush, even though the United States needs China's cooperation occasionally in its war on terrorism.

12. China experienced "theme park fever" in the 1990s. Within three years after the opening of Splendid China, there were about sixteen large-scale theme parks and hundreds of small-scale parks in mainland China (Oakes 1998). By 1998, there were an estimated two thousand amusement or theme park attractions in China. But many of them have not been successful from a financial and operational perspective (Ap 2003).

13. A Western anthropologist has described the reactions to these Shenzhen theme parks: "For most of the people in Hong Kong with whom I discussed the parks, they were an expression of economic achievement and cooperation in the period leading up to the handover, although one cynical Danish journalist noted that Window of the World might protect the 'real world' from an invasion of Chinese tourism" (Hendry 2000, 110).

14. In a speech commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party on July 1, 2001, President Jiang Zemin announced that Beijing now wants to draw private entrepreneurs into the Party, probably as his strategy of jointly promoting economic reform and the Communists' political monopoly. But private business people have traditionally been seen by the Chinese Communists as "exploiters." For many die-hard and veteran Communists, such a move is simply a betrayal of the workers and farmers whom the Party was supposed to represent. At the Six-

teenth Congress, in 2002, the Chinese Communist Party officially reshaped its ideology in its constitution and embraced as members the capitalists that it once loathed.

15. However, other critics also point out that the big heads of Mickey and his crew have the power of the grotesque that can scare young children. Many kids run away from the cartoon characters in Disneyland theme parks, tearful and screaming (Project on Disney 1995).

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