ANDREW LAU AND ALAN MAK'S
Infernal Affairs
– The Trilogy

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"At first glance, Square Word Calligraphy appears to be nothing more unusual than Chinese characters, but in fact it is a new way of rendering English words in the format of a square so they resemble Chinese characters. Chinese viewers expect to be able to read Square Word Calligraphy but cannot. Western viewers, however are surprised to find they can read it. Delight erupts when meaning is unexpectedly revealed."

— Britta Erickson, *The Art of Xu Bing*

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Introduction:
The New Wave and the Generic Abyss

A classic story of cops, robbers, and the difficulty of telling them apart, *Infernal Affairs* deals with the tale of two moles — one a triad in the police force and the other an undercover officer in the gangs. As a figure of the imagination, the mole has taken hold on global screens. The character embodies the predicament of hidden and uncertain identities, concealed motives, moral ambiguity, conflicted loyalties, and the inability to take a stand or find roots in an increasingly complex world of new technologies and post-industrial, transnational economies. With the added factors of its change of sovereignty from British to Chinese rule, the Asian financial crisis, and SARS, Hong Kong's obsession with the hidden malevolence behind the quotidian exterior takes on a particular local significance as well, and, in a film industry plagued by triads and the infiltration of Hollywood product, the mole symbolizes the alien within the familiar — the competitor or the parasite within the ranks.

When *Infernal Affairs* appeared in Hong Kong cinemas in 2002, the film industry had been in decline for several years.

Competition from an increasingly aggressive Hollywood distribution system, the infiltration of the triads into the industry in the 1990s, the impact of satellite television, videos, and video piracy, the "brain drain" that had sucked talent from all sectors of the Hong Kong economy including the film industry since the signing of the Joint Declaration in 1984, and the continuing uncertainty of the consequences of the change in sovereignty in 1997 all fed the crisis at the box-office. Emerging at a time when Hong Kong was shaken by SARS, a depressed economy, and waves of political disaffection culminating in the July 1, 2003 demonstrations, the *Infernal Affairs* trilogy speaks to the times. The challenges facing the Hong Kong film industry during this period mirror not only Hong Kong's economic and political problems, but a more general global crisis of labor, national political authority, social structure, cultural authenticity, and personal identity at the turn of the century. In *City on Fire: Hong Kong Cinema*, Lisa Odham Stokes and Michael Hoover note:

> In various ways Hong Kong cinema is revealed to be "crisis cinema," one that finds itself in a historic conjuncture where new patterns of language, time and space, place and identity, and meaning itself, are emerging.[1]

As part of this crisis cinema culture, *Infernal Affairs* holds up a mirror to the industry that created it, the local society that spawned it, as well as the global market that embraced it.

The Internet, video piracy, corporate raiding, and the rise of the remake have been able to "white-wash" Asian popular cinema for a wider Euro-American audience. There is a need to appeal to a "young and dangerous" global youth audience by moving to a new generation of Hong Kong film stars while maintaining the established "brand" of recognizable faces. Not surprisingly, along with other Asian box-office hits like *The Ring* (1998), *My Sassy*

Girl (2001), and *The Eye* (2002), *Infernal Affairs* has been snatched up, not for distribution in the United States, but to be remade by Martin Scorsese into *The Departed* (2006, starring Jack Nicholson, Matt Damon and Leonardo DiCaprio). Fantasies, like capital, commodities, and labor, circulate globally, and *Infernal Affairs*, itself indebted to a slew of Hollywood creations, including *The Godfather Trilogy* (1972–90), *Heat* (1995), *Internal Affairs* (1990), *Miami Vice* (1984–89), *The Sopranos* (1999–2006), and, of course, John Woo's *Face/Off* (1997), provides a case study of how films travel as popular narratives and as commercial products.

Taken as a whole, the *Infernal Affairs* trilogy provides the illusion of an epic sweep (from 1991–2003) that covers the issues of government legitimacy, global capitalist expansion, individual alienation, and the implosion of a system that blurs "legitimate" political authority with an underground "illegitimate" economic reality. As part of the New Hong Kong Cinema Series, this short book attempts to highlight the significance of *Infernal Affairs* within the context of contemporary Hong Kong cinema as well as within global film culture by examining all three films in the trilogy. Exploring the way *Infernal Affairs* has crossed borders as a story, a commercial product, and as a work of art, this study demonstrates the ways in which Hong Kong cinema continues to be inextricably intertwined with global film culture and the transnational movie market.

Infernal Affairs touches on themes hotly debated within contemporary critical theory, including globalization, transnational migrations and diaspora, the politics of time and space, nostalgia, memory and the archive, consumerism and post-industrial capitalism, identity and subjectivity, new technologies of communication, and the defining qualities of postmodernity. The trilogy conjures up a narrative time and space intersected by rings, like the circles of hell, of aesthetic, cultural, historical, political, and economic associations. After peeling away these layers,

including the trilogy's relationship to popular genres, spatial/ temporal structure, its use of allegory, its reliance on performance, its association with the Hong Kong New Wave, and its commercial ties to Greater Chinese cinema, this analysis of *Infernal Affairs* concludes with a look at the trilogy's self-reflexive allusions to the mass media and the current state of Hong Kong film culture within a global context.

Infernal Affairs and the New Wave

Current Hong Kong cinema runs the gamut from commercial genre films through the Hong Kong New Wave and the "Second Wave" of newer directors to the work of independent filmmakers who often collaborate with or are influenced by the Sixth Generation from the People's Republic of China (PRC). *Infernal Affairs*, with its star-studded cast and high production values, adheres more to the commercial end of that spectrum. However, in Hong Kong film culture, the boundaries between the commercial, the art house, and the experimental blur, and filmmakers may move from film school experimentation to public-financed television to commercial features to art house productions or independent co-productions throughout the course of their careers. For example, John Woo went from making experimental shorts as part of Hong Kong's cine-club movement to working for Chang Cheh at Shaw Brothers, to being part of Hong Kong's New Wave through his association with Tsui Hark, to crossing the Pacific to make commercial Hollywood features.[2]

Although *Infernal Affairs'* "new cinema" credentials may be a bit shaky, they are worth examining to provide an entry into the way the film circulates globally as popular entertainment with art film overtones. As Charles Leary has noted:

> The hyperbolic tale of police corruption — i.e. corruption among those investigating corruption (the Internal Affairs office) — might also invite a constellation between this new image of Hong Kong "high concept" cinema in *Infernal Affairs* and a flashback to the Hong Kong new wave of the 1980s, some of whose noted auteurs honed their skills by making docudramas for a television series sponsored by Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption.[3]

In fact, several associations link the cast and crew of *Infernal Affairs* with the Hong Kong New Wave. Andrew Lau Wai-keung, *Infernal Affairs'* co-director and cinematographer, has moved between art films and commercial features throughout his career. Both his art house projects and his commercial forays, in fact, have dealt with criminals and police. He worked with Wong Kar-wai as his cinematographer on two stories of cops and crooks, *As Tears Go By* (1988) and *Chungking Express* (1994), as well as working behind the camera for Ringo Lam on a story of an undercover mole, *City on Fire* (1987).

Lau directed *To Live and Die in Tsimshatsui* (1994)[4] with the prolific and unabashedly commercial Wong Jing.[5] *To Live and Die in Tsimshatsui*, like *Infernal Affairs*, deals with an undercover cop with an identity crisis. Continuing to work within the triad genre, Lau moved on to youth gangs in the *Young and Dangerous* series (beginning in 1996). With this background, Lau has had plenty of experience blending triad pulp fiction with New Wave stylistic and thematic concerns around the mole — moving effortlessly between the influence of Wong Jing and Wong Kar-wai.

For *Infernal Affairs*, for example, Lau drew on Wong Kar-wai regular, Christopher Doyle, to provide some assistance with the color timing in the processing lab, so that the film exhibits a Hong Kong New Wave texture. The look of the film, in fact, resonates with a visual style that has helped to define the Hong Kong New Wave for a global audience. Combining the grittiness of location

shooting with the élan of contrasting colors and textures, the cinematography ranges from electronically manipulated video images to soft black and white as well as drained and saturated colors. Cool exterior blues and neon toned greens, cold metallic shades for institutional interiors, and warm browns and earth tones for intimate interiors round out the palette.

As in other Hong Kong New Wave films, *Infernal Affairs* does not shy away from placing cinematographic virtuosity in the foreground — including dramatic contrasts of field size (moving between extreme close-ups of facial details to extreme long shots of the Hong Kong cityscape), height (going from the tops of skyscrapers to cluttered depths of the city's markets), and movement (from dynamic pans to nearly imperceptible re-framings of virtually static tableaux). Camera movement and editing work together to establish a rhythm that fluctuates violently throughout the film — from periods of quiet contemplation to moments of frenetic violence. This visual pace follows the twists and turns of the narrative that moves without a fixed spatial or temporal anchor. In fact, *Infernal Affairs'* co-director/co-writer Alan Mak Siu-fai experimented with elliptical narratives reminiscent of many Hong Kong New Wave films in *Rave Fever* (1999), and the same vertiginous disregard for classical continuity characterizes the trilogy.

In front of the camera, the acting talents also have strong New Wave credentials. Andy Lau worked with Wong Kar-wai as a young thug in *As Tears Go By* and as a cop in *Days of Being Wild* (1991), and Tony Leung has been a staple in Wong Kar-wai's films from *Ashes of Time* and *Chungking Express* (both 1994) through *2046* (2004). Leung and Lau have worked with Hong Kong New Wave, Taiwan New Cinema, and Fifth Generation Chinese directors such as Ann Hui, Stanley Kwan, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, and Zhang Yimou. Andy Lau produced independent director Fruit Chan's *Made in Hong Kong* (1997) and *The Longest Summer* (1998) and co-

produced *Infernal Affairs*. Supporting actors Eric Tsang and Anthony Wong have credits working with edgy directors including Wayne Wang, Allen Fong, Peter Chan, and Sylvia Chang. In 2003, both Tsang and Wong were featured in the independent *Fu Bo*. Other supporting actors have also worked for independent filmmakers — e.g., Hu Jun starred in Zhang Yuan's *East Palace, West Palace* (1996).[6]

Survival in transnational Chinese cinema has depended on cultivating and maintaining "flexible"[7] identities (like the moles in *Infernal Affairs'* fiction). Chinese filmmakers (from the PRC, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere) move between art and commerce, between European film festivals and American art houses, with dreams of Hollywood remakes or multiplex breakthroughs. For example, Taiwan director Ang Lee, via his proxy Jen (Zhang Ziyi), takes a leap of faith into an abyss that may bring the rewards of enlightenment or the obscurity of oblivion in *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* (2000). In *Hero* (2002), mainland Chinese director Zhang Yimou also takes a chance through his proxy Nameless (Jet Li) that the world is ready for the return of the wandering hero — Nameless/Jet Li who travels from the PRC to Hong Kong to Hollywood and back again to China. *Hero* also imaginatively repatriates Hong Kong's Tony Leung (as Broken Sword) and Maggie Cheung (as Flying Snow) as well as Chinese-American Donnie Yen (as Sky) who sacrifice themselves to maintain the Chinese nation-state. The diasporic Chinese from the far edges of the world symbolically capitulate to the central authority of the Emperor Qin (Chen Daoming)/Beijing/the PRC/Chinese cinema.[8]

While Lee and Zhang put their resources into the re-imagined "community" of dynastic China, Lau and Mak rework the contemporary crime genre by mingling the gangster/triad film with the police story. However, just as Lee draws on Hong Kong, PRC and American talent to make his Taiwanese version of a Hong Kong action film set in mainland China, and Zhang pulls in actors from

the far reaches of Greater China for his version of the Hong Kong martial arts film made in the PRC, Lau and Mak create a Hong Kong film in tune with transnational flows. For *Infernal Affairs III*, for example, the directors snatched up Chen Daoming, who plays the Qin Emperor in Zhang's *Hero*, to embody Mainland authority as the police mole Shen (a.k.a. "Shadow" — a reference to the Chinese word for "cinema" — *dian ying*/"electric shadows"), while Zhang Yimou cast Andy Lau as a duplicitous mole in his period martial arts film *House of Flying Daggers* (2004). Directors from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the PRC, working on the edges of the international art film/commercial film marketplace, draw on the same pool of Greater Chinese onscreen talent, generic conventions, and thematic concerns.

If both *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* and *Hero* play with the idea of the abyss (oblivion of the void/destructive force of empire) and the loss of self (sacrifice of the body for spiritual enlightenment or of individual independence for national unity), *Infernal Affairs* makes those themes explicit from the outset. The film is the "dao" (way) of "wu jian" (no place/nowhere) — the impossible path of Buddhist "continuous hell." Just as Lee and Zhang take a leap of faith by bringing their martial arts characters to the abyss, Lau and Mak follow suit by bringing their characters into the inferno, hoping for a commercial rebirth from the generic ashes.

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Thieves and Pirates:
Beyond "Auteur" Cinema

As a commodity, *Infernal Affairs* floats within a global market. Gilles Deleuze notes that this floating culture has been colonized by clichés:

> They are these floating images, these anonymous clichés, which circulate in the external world, but which also penetrate each one of us and constitute his internal world, so that everyone possesses only psychic clichés by which he thinks and feels, is thought and is felt, being himself a cliché among the others in the world which surround him.[1]

Infernal Affairs self-consciously reflects on its use of clichés. At the climactic moment that Lau finds himself under Chan's gun in *Infernal Affairs I*, he remarks on the clichéd nature of their encounter by asking, "Do all undercover cops like rooftops?" Even phrases like "Sorry, I'm a cop" are repeated *ad nauseum*. From the repetition of clichés like "what goes around comes around" and "tomorrow is another day" to clichéd references to a popular

cultural imagination of the world of cops and crooks, *Infernal Affairs* keeps its characters within this world of clichés.

As a form of mimicry, the cliché calls up a history of colonialism as it bridges the gap between Hollywood and Hong Kong films. "What goes around" in Hollywood, in fact, "comes around" in Hong Kong, and *Infernal Affairs* situates the clichés of the gangster genre within the specific circumstances of Hong Kong and its film culture. Stephen Teo notes the gangster genre has pushed Hong Kong cinema culture to the edge:

> … in terms of their description of human behaviour in extremis, the thin line dividing enforcers of the law and criminals, together with the unwritten code that binds them together, gangster movies have constantly pushed Hong Kong cinema over the edge. They are rough, raw and jagged — often frighteningly so. A Hong Kong gangster movie can make viewers feel that civilization is indeed at risk and that Hong Kong is the last place on earth they would want to be.[2]

Although speaking of Wong Kar-wai's forays into the gangster genre, Ackbar Abbas's remarks also echo *Infernal Affairs'* slippage between the clichés of the genre and the self-conscious contemplation of the cinematic image:

> If the formulaic demands of the genre of the gangster film imply colonization and self-colonization by clichés, and if subverting the formulaic is not viable for a number of reasons (such as the need to get financial support to make films), there is still a third possibility: that of doing something else within the genre, of nudging it a little from its stable position and so provoking thought. This is postcoloniality not in the form of an argument; it takes the form of a new practice of the image.[3]

Infernal Affairs presents two types of film in one package. Director Andrew Lau, with his background as a cinematographer,

contributes primarily to the visual design of the trilogy — its dramatic use of Hong Kong rooftops, its contrasting cool and warm colors, its organization of space on the streets and in office interiors. Co-director Alan Mak, as the co-screenwriter, takes on the task of storytelling and working with the ensemble cast on performance. *Infernal Affairs'* classic morality tale vies with its flamboyant visual style; however, both work together within a piece that is about both performance and image — looking the part as well as playing a role. The trilogy exists between cinema and television (coupled with other new technologies like computers and cell phones). The glamour, substance, depth, and complexity of cinema (from *The Godfather* to the Hong Kong New Wave) compete with the surface panache, spontaneity, and energy of television (from TVB to MTV).[4] Its fragmented style creates a balancing act between its art film roots and its express purpose to make money against the odds within an industry in crisis.[5]

Another layer of postmodern allegory clings to *Infernal Affairs*, and the trilogy not only alludes to other films and other media products, but it also tells the story of its own production within the context of Hong Kong and world cinema. Hong Kong cinema has always been positioned within a complex network of transnational relations, and *Infernal Affairs* displays the traces of this history. In fact, the underworld economy within the trilogy's narrative mirrors the political economy underpinning the Hong Kong cinema industry. Hong Kong productions have always been created by and catered to a transnational population from mainland China, Southeast Asia and other parts of the Chinese diaspora, and, after 1949, Taiwan.[6] Capital and talent flowed into and through Hong Kong, because of its colonial connections and borders, and ties to Shanghai, Bangkok, Saigon, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Honolulu, San Francisco, London, New York, and elsewhere run deep. Particularly during the Cold War, "left-wing" studios, with ties to production facilities and markets in the PRC, and "right-wing"

studios, catering to markets in the ROC, competed for the Hong Kong and the overseas Chinese market. During the Cultural Revolution, the "left wing" studios were cut off from the Mainland, but Taiwan continued to ban films and filmmakers perceived to be sympathetic to Communism.

The end of martial law in Taiwan and the easing of cross-straits relations with the opening of the Mainland to Taiwan's business community have not eliminated the cinematic tug of war between the PRC and the ROC within the Hong Kong film industry. Although competition from Hollywood has intensified, Taiwan continues to be an important market, and the prestige of the Golden Horse Awards as well as box office receipts mean something to Hong Kong filmmakers like Lau and Mak.[7] The voice of Tsai Chin and the presence of Elva Hsiao nod to the continuing importance of Taiwan for Hong Kong filmmakers, and talent that frequently moves back and forth between Taiwan and Hong Kong, like Anthony Wong and Tony Leung, can only be a plus for a production like *Infernal Affairs*.

However, just as Yeung gets points with his PRC cohorts when he repatriates the Taiwanese gun runners, *Infernal Affairs* cannot turn its back on its relationship to the PRC as a source of talent, financing, and potential market. Since the opening of China to foreign investment and trade in the late 1970s, the Hong Kong film industry quickly revitalized its old ties across the border through traditionally "left-wing" studios as well as other players in joint-venture co-production initiatives. However, the relationship between the film industries in Hong Kong and the PRC has been rocky. With tight restrictions on the import of films into the PRC, even co-productions had difficulty finding an audience across the border. While Hong Kong films are considered "Chinese" in Taiwan and can compete on an equal footing with films made locally, Hong Kong films are imports in the PRC and, thus, subject to quotas and other restrictions. Under "one country, two systems," this has continued to be true after 1997. However, with the gradual

implementation of CEPA (Closer Economic Partnership Agreement), this will eventually change. Even before its complete implementation, it made sense for Lau and Mak to work with the Tianjin Film Studios as a co-producer in *Infernal Affairs III*. They also draw in Mainland talent for *Infernal Affairs II* and *III*, so that Hu Jun and Chen Daoming become major players in the drama — and, perhaps, box-office draws across the border. Shen/Shadow/ Chen Daoming survives the trilogy as a symbol of Hong Kong cinema's closer links to the Mainland in the future.

Even though Thailand, as part of the Golden Triangle, is known for opium production and heroin trafficking, it still forms a major link in the narrative's imagination of Hong Kong's illegal cocaine trade. Although it may not make much sense in terms of drugs, it makes enormous sense in terms of the film industry.[8] With a history of overseas Chinese involvement in all aspects of society that spans centuries, Thailand has more recently emerged as an increasingly important site for film production and marketing. The government has seeded Bangkok's international film festival, and conditions for film production have improved exponentially as well. Filming in Bangkok not only nods to a traditionally important market for Hong Kong films within and beyond Thailand's substantial Chinese community, but also points to increased opportunities for cost-effective co-productions between Bangkok and Hong Kong. Sam, as well as Hong Kong filmmakers, take Bangkok as a second home, and filmmakers like Danny Pang, who edited all the *Infernal Affairs* films, have been very successful working between Thailand and Hong Kong. Drawing on Thai and Hong Kong talent, *The Eye* (2002), which Danny Pang made with his twin brother Oxide, with funds from Singapore's Raintree Productions, turned out to be a global success. In fact, *Infernal Affairs II* also drew on Raintree Productions for resources.

Although Hawaii proves to be a dead-end for *Infernal Affairs'* principals and only minor characters drift in from the United States

as hired hands at the service of the triads, Hollywood — and America as a source of inspiration and potential market — insistently clings to the trilogy. Martin Scorsese's remake of *Infernal Affairs* as *The Departed* distributed by Warner Brothers[9] brings the ring of influence full circle. Although set within the world of the Irish mob in Boston, *The Departed* stars Italian (German) American Leonardo DiCaprio playing the Tony Leung role. Since his breakthrough feature *Mean Streets* (1973), Scorsese — along with directors such as Francis Ford Coppola, Michael Cimino, Abel Ferrara, Brian De Palma, and Quentin Tarantino — has been an Italian American filmmaker associated with the crime genre. More recently, another Italian American, David Chase (*né* De Cesare), has added a new dimension to screen portrayals of gangsters with his cable television series *The Sopranos* — drawing on directing talent like Mike Figgis who established himself on the big screen with films about corruption like *Internal Affairs* (1990). Many Italian American stars have been associated with these films and others featuring gangsters, including Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, John Travolta, and Nicolas Cage (*né* Nicholas Kim Coppola, Francis Ford Coppola's nephew). Moreover, several Italian American crime stories deal with undercover police in the Mafia and/or corruption within the police force; e.g., *Serpico* (1973), *Prince of the City* (1981), *Donnie Brasco* (1997).

The Godfather (1972), made during a time of national crisis at the height of American discontent with the war in Vietnam, merges a sense of ethnic alienation from the promise of the American dream with a more general malaise surrounding the excesses of the military-industrial establishment.[10] Although the cinematic gangster of Prohibition and the Depression had his undeniable appeal, the gangster of the New American Cinema, beginning in the 1970s, embodied a moral ambiguity compounded by ethnic otherness, a crisis in patriarchal authority, and the rapidly changing mores of a nation under siege from within. Through the millennium,

the new American gangster continues to represent a society in conflict embroiled in the excesses of capitalism and searching for spiritual relief everywhere from established religion to psychiatry.

In fact, the Hong Kong and American screen gangster share a similar social milieu marked by rapid change, mercurial identities, and economic panic. Several Hong Kong filmmakers have borrowed liberally from Hollywood Italian characterizations of the gangster (e.g., Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables*, 1987, on Al Capone, becomes the basis for Kirk Wong's *Gunmen* — 1988, with cinematography by Andrew Lau — on Shanghai triads).[11] Italian American filmmakers have been attracted to Hong Kong triads as a parallel to their own interest in the Italian mafia. As occult criminal organizations, the mafia and the triads have certain historical characteristics in common. Within Italy and China, they have their roots in discontent with what was perceived to be illegitimate government authority, and they offered protection against other even more violent forces in the society at the time by claiming patriotic motives. The mafia and triads often crossed the thin line between protection in a lawless society and extortion adding to social chaos.

In the "new world" of the United States, colonial Hong Kong, or elsewhere, Italian and Chinese émigrés needed protection from exploitation based on racism and prejudice, and the mafia and triads filled a void for those excluded from the mainstream culture and its criminal justice system. As newcomers became more acclimated to their adopted countries, triads and the mafia needed other sources of income. Occult and outside the law, they gravitated to vice — liquor, gambling, prostitution, narcotics — while maintaining a foothold in the related areas of loan sharking and extortion while moving into non-criminal activities; e.g., entertainment, real estate, etc. Throughout their histories, the mafia and triads have had an ambivalent relationship to their host societies. There has been open celebration of triad support for the

KMT and its activities; the Mafia fought fascism in Sicily, pushed an election in favor of an underdog candidate for president in the United States, etc. However, police and other branches of the government in Hong Kong, Europe, and the United States have also openly gone to war against secret societies.

Because of this historical ambivalence, the Italian and Chinese underworlds provide a meeting ground for filmmakers interested in the drama of economic inequality, the dark side of capitalism, the addictions of consumerism, alienation from the "nation," the crisis in government authority, and identity crises resulting from an increasingly complex technological society to changing notions of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Hong Kong on the cusp of influences from the PRC, Taiwan, Britain, and the US, but separate from them all, and Italian America with just enough ethnic, cultural, historical, and religious difference to be separate from the Anglo-American mainstream find themselves positioned similarly to use the gangster as an emblem of a more general social discontent.

Therefore, Hong Kong and Italian American filmmakers working in the gangster genre have quite a bit in common and a mutual interest in each other's output should be expected. Michael Cimino (*Year of the Dragon*, 1985) and Abel Ferrara (*China Girl*, 1987) have taken up the subject of the relationship between the Italian mafia and the Chinese triads in New York City. As well as making *The Departed* based on *Infernal Affairs*, Scorsese also found inspiration in Chinese history for his film on the Dalai Lama *Kundun* (1997). When Quentin Tarantino made *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), he turned to Hong Kong for inspiration and remade Ringo Lam's *City on Fire* (1987). Both films are about an undercover cop who infiltrates a gang. The thin line between cop and crook as well as the conflicted morality of betraying trust within a group of thieves feed into a slew of other films including *Infernal Affairs*. John Woo has turned this theme into a key element of much of his oeuvre, including *A Better Tomorrow* (1986), *The Killer* (1989), *Hard Boiled* (1992),

and *Face/Off* (1997). Coming full circle, Woo cast John Travolta (from Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*) and Nicolas Cage (a member of the Coppola clan) in *Face/Off* as cop and crook who switch identities — the main inspiration for the script of *Infernal Affairs*.[12]

Earlier, this profound ambivalence surrounding the depiction of the triads came to the surface in Andrew Lau's successful series *Young and Dangerous* (1996–2000), based on a popular comic book and scripted by Manfred Wong.[13] Controversial for supposedly glamorizing the triads by giving them a youthful, "hip" new image,[14] the series appeared simultaneously with a spike in triad activity within the film industry as well as a triad push to recruit new members from the public schools because of the manpower shortage occasioned by Hong Kong's vibrant economy in the late 1980s and 1990s that made triad involvement less attractive.

Several films made in the 1990s paid tribute to triad kingpins. Publicity surrounding triad infiltration into the film industry peaked during 1992 when Anita Mui became embroiled in two gangland assassinations (of Wong Long-wai and Andely "Tiger" Chan) and film producer/former drug smuggler Jim Choi was gunned down the same year.[15] Fredric Dannen even quotes Wong Kar-wai as saying, "It's better to deal with a godfather than an accountant."[16]

In many ways, *Infernal Affairs* plays as a continuation of Andrew Lau's popular *Young and Dangerous*. When Sam talks about moving out from Tuen Mun as he rallies his young recruits to join the ranks of the police, he seems to address the young hoods from the earlier series with the promise of fresh faces, trendy styles, and hip characterization to reinvigorate Hong Kong popular notions of the triad genre.[17] Running parallel to the year leading up to the handover and concluding at the millennium, the series covered many of the themes taken up by the *Infernal Affairs* trilogy, including the impact of the handover on the triad economy, the increasing importance of the PRC as a factor, global ties with Taiwan, Japan, and Thailand as hedges against the local Hong Kong

situation, gang warfare linked to capitalist expansion, and the crisis in traditional notions of Chinese patriarchy and masculinity as the young triads come of age in a different world from their predecessors. Just as Ringo Lam's *School on Fire* (1988), Wilson Yip's *Mongkok Story* (1996), and Fruit Chan's independently produced *Made in Hong Kong* (1997) present a bleak picture of young hoods, *Infernal Affairs* takes *Young and Dangerous* to its logical conclusion by showing the downfall of the triads.

The Author as Brand Name

One of the primary ways *Infernal Affairs* rests on the repression of Hong Kong New Wave cinema as a basis for its own re-imagination of the Hong Kong film as a transnational product involves its references to and denial of the New Wave auteur. The "auteur" functions less as an "author" and more as a "brand" with a "name" as the guarantee of a specific market niche. Part of the rise of the co-directed, international blockbuster (e.g., films by the Cohen Brothers, the Wachowski Brothers, Johnnie To/Wai Ka-fai), *Infernal Affairs* moves beyond the personal film and the obsessions of a single auteur into a creative environment, which revolves around anti-individualism and eclecticism.[18]

However, the trilogy is also in constant conversation with its New Wave antecedents — particularly the oeuvre of Wong Kar-wai (Andrew Lau's former collaborator) and his stylistic flourishes, interest in time, obsession with popular culture, allegorical references, etc. Like other postmodern films, *Infernal Affairs* dissolves the borders between popular and high culture, and it turns its allusive nature from a reliance on esoteric references to a common vocabulary based on comic books, Hollywood film, and pulp fiction. To this, it adds a high degree of self-consciousness regarding its own creation.[19]

In this regard, it joins a long tradition of gangster films with self-reflexive stylistics; e.g., Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1959) and other gangster meditations from the French New Wave (e.g., Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samourai*, 1967), Oshima Nagisa's *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (1968), etc. Other films feature the Japanese New Wave's obsession with yakuza gangs, the PRC's Sixth Generation's preoccupation with petty hoods, Taiwan's New Cinema's interest in the triads, and, of course, Hong Kong New Wave's forays into the gangster genre in Wong Kar-wai's films.

Filmmakers have a profound connection to the world of the gangster in which image is everything, competition rife, and survival means scoring the next deal to continue operating. Godard made that perfectly clear in his oeuvre, and it sticks to *Infernal Affairs*. The filmmakers must go through the same elaborate negotiations as the gangster to put their package together, produce it, distribute it, and make a profit. Chan on the cell phone or Keung boasting of the market in European or American stolen cars "re-exported" in Hong Kong for the Mainland market parallels the "re-export" of pirated DVDs of Hollywood films (or Hong Kong versions of Hollywood commercial fare) that flow through Hong Kong as a transshipment point on their way to the PRC.[20] Given the PRC's limited legal distribution of foreign films, the demand for pirated DVDs and VCDs runs high,[21] and Hong Kong triads happily take a cut of the action. However, in an industry plagued by the infiltration of actual gangsters and illegal competition from video pirates, the filmmakers also have a profound identification with the forces of law and order to protect their business interests. Like Chan and Lau, filmmakers fall between the cracks that divide cops and crooks. Drawing directly on the work of other filmmakers to compete with an aggressive Hollywood product, they are, in turn, harassed by the illegal trade in their creative property.

The copy, in fact, troubles the waters of an industry in crisis while also fueling its creative energy. In *One-Way Street*, Walter

Benjamin puts his finger on the power of the copy by referring to the traditional Chinese practice of copying books:

> The power of the country road is different when one is walking along it from when one is flying over it by airplane. In the same way, the power of a text is different when it is read from when it is copied out. The airplane passenger sees only how the road pushes through the landscape, how it unfolds according to the same laws as the terrain surrounding it. Only he who walks the road on foot learns of the power it commands, and of how, from the very scenery that for the flier is only the unfurled plain, it calls forth distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects at each of its turns like a commander deploying soldiers at a front. Only the copied text commands the soul of him who is occupied with it, whereas the mere reader never discovers the new aspects of his inner self that are opened by the text, that road cut through the interior jungle forever closing behind it: because the reader follows the movement of this mind in the free flight of daydreaming, whereas the copier submits it to command. The Chinese practice of copying books was thus an incomparable guarantee of literary culture, and the transcript a key to China's enigmas.[22]

As Benjamin notes, the issue may rest with the perspective taken toward art — from the point of view of a leisurely stroll or the flight of a speeding airplane. Whether this provides a key to either "China's enigmas" or *Infernal Affairs* remains moot. However, the copy may offer a "guarantee" of Hong Kong's cinematic culture.

It seems appropriate, ultimately, that the filmmakers allegorize their role as creative observers in the figure of Lau's wife Mary (Sammi Cheng, who has made a career as a film comedienne and pop singer). In *Infernal Affairs I*, Mary scrutinizes the enigmatic Lau, imagines him with multiple hidden personalities, and fails to determine whether he's a "good guy" or a "bad guy." Drunk in *Infernal Affairs II* (played by Chiu Chung-yue), Mary seems

confused about her own identity and has trouble even spelling her name. In *Infernal Affairs III*, Mary finally walks away from Lau. However, Lau continues to fascinate as an image — the "face" of Hong Kong for the world — and Andrew Lau and Alan Mak do not walk away from his star presence but allow him to fill the screen in close-up as the final image of the film — a gesture of faith in Hong Kong, its film industry, and the glamour of its constructed identity as "Asia's world city."

As the trilogy ends, coincidence draws a fine line between chance and fate. The directors' fortuitous use of "Forgotten Times" provides a key to understanding the workings of karma in the film. Chan and Lau share a common destiny — each trapped in a hell, at least partially of his own making, and fated to lose everything — including his identity. Although Chan has his upright police persona restored on his tombstone at the end of the first *Infernal Affairs*, it comes too late for the character to realize his dream of coming out from undercover. Lau ends up taking on Chan's identity as he sinks into madness, tapping out his own Morse code message to himself near the end of *Infernal Affairs III*. Both are lost to themselves.

However, a contradiction exists between *Infernal Affairs'* vision of the crisis of masculinity, global capitalism, and government legitimacy and its success as a transnational commercial product. The Hong Kong genre film has been "reincarnated" in the context of the global film market. Like *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* and *Hero*, *Infernal Affairs* provides a fantasy that can cross borders and find new life for producers in search of reliable profits. Andrew Lau, for example, has been snatched up by Hollywood to direct *The Flock*, starring Richard Gere as a federal officer.[23] Again, coming full circle, the villain of *Internal Affairs* (1990) works with the director of *Infernal Affairs*.

Situated somewhere between pessimism and consumer exuberance, *Infernal Affairs* fits within the global postmodern

crystallized in postcolonial Hong Kong described by Evans Chan as:

> ... moving from the old century into the new one, postmodernism seems still fairly young and post-colonial Hong Kong is a mere infant. But this age does induce profound pessimism. Thoughts, politics, and history are all being commodified and processed by the all-embracing media in the periodic artificial excitement of fashion and consumerism.[24]

Within postmodernity, the question of identity — national, ethnic, class, and sexual — speaks to a global crisis, and the fate of two moles in Hong Kong captivates viewers whose "forgotten times" may have nothing to do with Greater China but everything to do with the decay of the patriarchy, transnational capitalism, and the crisis of the nation-state. As generic cycles echo the karmic cycles of Buddhism, "continuous hell" metamorphoses into the continuous dramatic, visual, and thematic revival of Hong Kong commercial cinema through the turn of the New Wave art house wheel of cinematic fate.

Notes

Chapter 1   Introduction: The New Wave and the Generic Abyss

1. Lisa Odham Stokes and Michael Hoover, *City on Fire: Hong Kong Cinema*, (London: Verso, 1999), p. 36. For more on Hong Kong "crisis cinema," see Tony Williams, "Space, Place, and Spectacle: The Crisis Cinema of John Woo," *Cinema Journal* 36:2 (Winter 1997), pp. 67–84. Information on film credits cited throughout this book has been taken from the Internet Movie Database, http://www.imdb.com/.

2. For more on John Woo's transnational productions, see Anne Ciecko, "Transnational Action: John Woo, Hong Kong, Hollywood," in Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 221–238. Also, see Lisa Odham Stokes and Michael Hoover, *City on Fire: Hong Kong Cinema*, (London: Verso, 1999).

3. Charles Leary, "What Goes Around, Comes Around: *Infernal Affairs II* and *III* and *Running on Karma*," *Senses of Cinema* (January 2004), http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/04/30/infernal_affairs_ ii.html/. See also his review of the first film in the trilogy: Charles Leary, "*Infernal Affairs:* High Concept in Hong Kong," *Senses of*

Cinema (April 2003), http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/03/ 26/infernal_affairs.html. In addition to Ann Hui, Joyce Chan (who later collaborated with Ann Hui) wrote *Family: A Metamorphosis*, a popular television series against corruption produced in the 1970s. For more on this series, see Evans Chan, "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema" *Postmodern Culture* 10: 3 (May, 2000), http:// www3.iath.virginia.edu /pmc/text-only/issue.500/10.3chan.txt/.

4.   In fact, Andrew Lau, Manfred Wong, and Wong Jing were partners in the Best of the Best production company.

5.   For an appraisal of Wong Jing, see Yingjin Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema* (NY: Routledge, 2004), p. 265.

6.   For more on the background of cast and crew, see Tony Rayns, "Deep Cover," *Sight and Sound* (January 2004), http://www.bfi.org.uk/ sightandsound/2004_01/infernalaffairs.php/.

7.   Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

8.   For more on *Hero*, see Evans Chan, "Zhang Yimou's *Hero* — The Temptations of Fascism," *Film International* no. 8 (March 2004), http://www.filmint.nu/netonly/eng/heroevanschan.htm/. Chen Kaige also made a very different film about the Emperor Qin, *The Emperor and the Assassin* (1998). For an insightful reading of this film, see Yingjin Zhang, *Screening China: Critical Interventions, Cinematic Reconfigurations, and the Transnational Imaginary in Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), pp. 320–322.

Chapter 2   Forgotten Times: Music, Memory, Time, and Space

1.   For more on the depiction of economic relations within Hong Kong cinema, see Gina Marchetti, "Buying American, Consuming Hong Kong: Cultural Commerce, Fantasies of Identity, and the Cinema," in Poshek Fu and David Desser, eds., *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 289–313.

2.   Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

3. For clarity, throughout the book, the first film in the trilogy is referred to as *Infernal Affairs I.*

4. David Chase quoted in Ellen Wulfhorst, "'Sopranos' final season focus: Money — Creator Chase leaves door open for more," *CNN,* May 24, 2005, http://www.cnn.com/2005/SHOWBIZ/TV/05/24/leisure. sopranos.reut/index.html/.

5. Stokes and Hoover, p. 302.

6. The title of the song is sometimes translated as "Those Were the Days."

7. See Appendix 2.

8. The use of the flashback technique references an entire sub-history of the cinema's relationship to memory and the human psyche, see Maureen Turim, *Flashbacks in Film: Memory and History* (NY: Routledge, 1989).

9. Iain Chambers, "Maps, Movies, Musics, and Memory," in David B. Clarke, ed., *The Cinematic City* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 232–233 (230–40).

10. Edward Yang is also known for his keen interest in music. See Emilie Yueh-Yu Yeh, "Elvis, Allow Me to Introduce Myself: American Music and Neocolonialism in Taiwan Cinema," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 15:1 (Spring 2003), pp. 1–28.

11. Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

12. For more on the centrality of Teresa Teng to *Comrades'* narrative, see Linda Chiu-han Lai, "Film and Enigmatization: Nostalgia, Nonsense, and Remembering," in Esther C. M. Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 231–250; Sheldon H. Lu, "Filming Diaspora and Identity: Hong Kong and 1997," in Poshek Fu and David Desser, eds., *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 273–288.

13. Leung also worked with Hou on *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998).

14. Shen Shiao-Ying, "Obtuse Music and Nebulous Males: The Haunting Presence of Taiwan in Hong Kong Films of the 1990s," in Laikwan Pang and Day Wong, eds., *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p. 135 (118–135). For a specific discussion of the "Taiwan Factor" in the Hong Kong

gangster genre, see Karen Fang, *John Woo's A Better Tomorrow* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004).

15. For more on Chinese masculinity, see Kam Louie, *Theorizing Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

16. For more on the uncanny in Hong Kong film, see Esther M. K. Cheung, "The City that Haunts: The Uncanny in Fruit Chan's *Made in Hong Kong*," in Esther M. K. Cheung and Chu Yiu-wai, eds., *Between Home and World: A Reader in Hong Kong Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 352–368. For more on the uncanny in relation to allegory in Hong Kong film, see Bliss Cua Lim, "Spectral Times: The Ghost Film as Historical Allegory," *positions: east asian cultures critique* 9:2 (Fall 2001), pp. 287–329.

17. With respect to this crisis in masculinity, *Infernal Affairs* seems to reference John Woo's oeuvre and then move off in a different direction. For more on men/masculinity in the films of John Woo, see Julian Stringer, "'Your Tender Smiles Give Me Strength': Paradigms of Masculinity in John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* and *The Killer*," *Screen* 38:1 (Spring 1997), pp. 25–41.

18. The disabled hero has been an important trope in John Woo's cinema as well, see Anthony Enns, "The Spectacle of Disabled Masculinity in John Woo's 'Heroic Bloodshed' Films," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 17:2 (June 2000), pp. 137–145.

19. Ackbar Abbas has remarked on nostalgia in Hong Kong film in *Hong Kong: Culture and Politics of Disappearance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). For more on Hong Kong's "nostalgia" cinema, see Rey Chow, "A Souvenir of Love," *Modern Chinese Literature* 7:2 (Fall 1993), pp. 59–78; Natalia Chan Sui Hung, "Rewriting History: Hong Kong Nostalgia Cinema and Its Social Practice," in Poshek Fu and David Desser, eds., *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 253–272; Linda Chiu-han Lai, "Film and Enigmatization: Nostalgia, Nonsense, and Remembering," in Esther C. M. Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 231–250. Although the "nostalgia films" discussed by these authors generally refer to films

set in the 1930s to 1960s, a case can be made for a new turn in nostalgia for the 1980s in Hong Kong film culture with films like *Infernal Affairs*.

20. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Culture," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture.* (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983), p. 116 (111–125). For more on the nostalgia film, see Vera Dika, *The Uses of Nostalgia: Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art and Film* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

21. They even call each other pet names — "Dumbo" and "Mickey Mouse" in one subtitled version of the film.

22. For a reading of *Face/Off* in relation to Hong Kong cinema and Chinese culture, see Kwai-Cheung Lo, *Chinese Face/Off: The Transnational Popular Culture of Hong Kong* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005). For a reading in relation to transnational cinema, see Chuck Kleinhans, "Terms of Transition: The Action Film, Postmodernism, and Issues of an East-West Perspective," in Jenny Kwok Wah Lau, ed., *Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), pp. 167–178.

23. See Appendix 2.

24. See Karen Fang, *John Woo's A Better Tomorrow* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004).

25. Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Culture," pp. 115–116.

26. See Jillian Sandell, "Reinventing Masculinity: The Spectacle of Male Intimacy in the Films of John Woo," *Film Quarterly* 49:4 (Summer 1996), pp. 23–34.

27. For an eloquent discussion of the relationship between cinematic time, alienated labor, and modernity, see Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

28. Although translated this way in the subtitles, the phrase may be better represented by something more like: "He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword."

29. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 250.

30. Ibid, p. 85.

31. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962). Many scholars have investigated the relationship between Heidegger's philosophy and Nazi political convictions. For a discussion of how his thoughts on time relate specifically to his fascism, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

32. For more on the usefulness of the chronotope to film analysis, see Michael V. Montgomery, *Carnivals and Commonplaces: Bakhtin's Chronotope, Cultural Studies, and Film* (NY: Peter Lang, 1994) and Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, Film* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

33. Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 3.

34. The chronotope associated with *Infernal Affairs III* bears a striking resemblance to the chronotope of life in exile explored in Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 191.

35. Robert Warshow, *The Immediate Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

36. For information on cross-border criminal law, see H. L. Fu, "The Impact of the Chinese Criminal Law in Hong Kong," in Robert Ash, Peter Ferdinand, Brian Hook, and Robin Porter, eds., *Hong Kong in Transition: One Country, Two Systems* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), pp. 149–160.

37. In other postmodern films, time and memory complicate the action (e.g., *Blade Runner*, 1982, *Total Recall*, 1990).

38. Robert Warshow, *The Immediate Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 101.

39. Yingchi Chu, *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland, and Self* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 130.

40. For a definition, see Saskia Sassen, *The Global City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

41. Marc Auge, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 79.

42. Building on Rem Koolhaas's notion of the Generic City, Ackbar Abbas sees Hong Kong in much the same way in Ackbar Abbas, "Cinema, the City, and the Cinematic," in Linda Krause and Patrice Petro, eds., *Global Cities: Cinema, Architecture, and Urbanism in the Digital Age* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), pp. 142–156.

43. Yingjin Zhang, *Screening China: Critical Interventions, Cinematic Reconfigurations, and the Transnational Imaginary in Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), p. 308. Zhang draws here on the work of Lin Wenchi, "The Representation of Taipei in Taiwanese Films," in Ru-Shou Robert Chen and Gene-Fon Liao, eds., *Focus on Taipei through Cinema* (Taipei: Wanxiang, 1995), in Chinese, and Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

44. For a discussion of gender, the cinema, and the postmodern city, see Elisabeth Mahoney, "'The People in Parentheses': Space under Pressure in the Post-Modern City," in David B. Clarke, ed., *The Cinematic City* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 168–185.

45. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (NY: Vintage, 1992, originally published in 1961).

46. Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, p. 67.

47. Ibid, pp. 75–76.

48. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, p. 5.

49. Mark Shiel, "Cinema and the City in History and Theory," in Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice, eds., *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 12 (1–18).

Chapter 3   Allegories of Hell: Moral Tales and National Shadows

1. "Dharma Movie Review: *Infernal Affairs I* & *II:* The Path to Continuous Hell," http://www.moonpointer.com/movies/infernalaffairs.htm/.

2. See Martin Booth, *The Dragon Syndicates: The Global Phenomenon of the Triads* (NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, Inc., 1999). See also Sterling Seagrave, *Lords of the Rim* (London: Corgi, Bantam, 1995).

3. For a discussion of Confucius and Guan Gong as models of Chinese masculinity, see Kam Louie, *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

4. A very different reading of this conflict between the rule of law and the rule of blood will be discussed below.

5. Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (1986), pp. 65–88; Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'," *Social Text* 17 (1987), pp. 3–25; Ian Buchanan, "National Allegory Today: A Return to Jameson," *New Formations* 51:1 (December 2003), pp. 66–79. For an example of the use of Jameson on national allegory to analyze Chinese film, see Yingjin Zhang, *Screening China*, op. cit.

6. Sheldon H. Lu, "Filming Diaspora and Identity: Hong Kong and 1997," Poshek Fu and David Desser, eds., *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 273–288.

7. Stephen Teo, *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* (London: BFI, 1997), p. 207. Esther Yau, "Border Crossing: Mainland China's Presence in Hong Kong Cinema," in Nick Browne, Paul G. Pickowicz, Vivian Sobchack, and Esther Yau, eds., *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 181 (pp. 180–201).

8. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

9. The much ballyhooed truism that Hong Kong is the "freest" economy on earth hides a history of complex relations between colonial government, global capitalism, and Hong Kong's place within the world economy. For a case study on government intervention in the wake of the 1997 financial crisis, see Charles Goodhart and Lu Dai, *Intervention to Save Hong Kong: The Authorities' Counter-Speculation in Financial Markets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For further analysis of the economic crisis, see Y. C. Jao, *The Asian Financial Crisis and the Ordeal of Hong Kong* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2001).

10. For more on this point, see Yingchi Chu, *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland, and Self* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003). In this book, Chu examines the Jackie Chan vehicles *Project A* and *Project A (Part II)* as fantasies involving Hong Kong as a mediator between British and Chinese interests through the operation of the colonial police/coast guard. The book also explores the complex relationship between Hong Kong triads, Mainland gangs, and the Hong Kong police in *The Long Arm of the Law*.

11. For a definition of Greater China, see William A. Callahan, *Contingent States: Greater China and Transnational Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004). Chapter 5 deals specifically with Hong Kong.

12. For more on Hong Kong's political economy, see William Overholt, "Hong Kong at the Crossroads," Testimony Presented to the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, June 23, 2004, Rand Corporation, http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2005/RAND_CT228.pdf/.

13. Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (NY: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 116 (109–159).

14. Kabir Chhibber, "Timeline: Hong Kong," *Guardian*, July 1, 2002, http://www.guardian.co.uk/china/story/0,7369,747459,00.html; See also, Hong Kong Timeline, http://timelines.ws/countries/HONG_KONG.HTML/.

15. For a collection of perspectives on the political and economic consequences of the handover, see James C. Hsiung, ed., *Hong Kong and the Super Paradox: Life after Return to China* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

16. Jerome Silbergeld, *China into Film: Frames of Reference in Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999).

17. For a definition of the "post-national," see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

18. Entry in *Nationmaster*, http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Chris-Patten/. Attributed to Lu Ping (1995) and quoted in *HK Magazine*, June 16, 2006, p. 54.

19. Hawaii, long before US statehood, had a history of Chinese triad

activity, including Sun Yat-sen's contact with the Hawaiian triads during his time as an insurgent against the Qing Dynasty. See Martin Booth, *The Dragon Syndicates: The Global Phenomenon of the Triads* (NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, Inc., 1999). For more on the triads in North America, see Peter Huston, *Tongs, Gangs, and Triads: Chinese Crime Groups in North America* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 2001).

20. See Benjamin T. M. Liu, *The Hong Kong Triad Societies: Before and After the 1997 Change-over* (Hong Kong: Net e-Publishing, Ltd., 2001), p. 215.

21. See Mayfair Yang, *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Gina Marchetti, "Taiwanese Triads in the Transnational Imagination: *Mahjong* and *Goodbye South, Goodbye*," *Film International*, No. 9 (2004), pp. 28–41.

22. See Peter Wesley-Smith, "Judicial Autonomy under Hong Kong's Basic Law," in Robert Ash, Peter Ferdinand, Brian Hook, and Robin Porter, eds., *Hong Kong in Transition: One Country, Two Systems* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), pp. 161–174.

23. Quoted anonymously in Bob Beatty, *Democracy, Asian Values, and Hong Kong: Evaluating Political Elite Beliefs* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), p. 97.

24. Kevin Sinclair and Nelson Ng Kwok-cheung, *Asia's Finest Marches On: Policing Hong Kong from 1841 into the 21st Century* (Hong Kong: Kevin Sinclair Associates Limited, 1997). See also H. J. Lethbridge, *Hard Graft in Hong Kong: Scandal, Corruption, and the ICAC* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1985).

25. William H. Overholt, p. 16, http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/ 2005/RAND_CT228.pdf/. For more information on economic changes in the HKSAR, e.g., CEPA (Closer Economic Partnership Agreement), see http://cepa.tdctrade.com/.

26. For an analysis of the actual economy of triad businesses, see Yiu Kong Chu, *The Triads as Business* (London: Routledge, 2000).

27. For more on 14K, see Benjamin T. M. Liu, *The Hong Kong Triad Societies: Before and After the 1997 Change-over* (Hong Kong: Net e-Publishing, Ltd., 2001).

28. Kevin Sinclair and Nelson Ng Kwok-cheung, op. cit.

29. Fenton Bresler, *The Chinese Mafia* (Middlesex: Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1981).

30. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

Chapter 4   Postmodern Allegory: The Global Economy and New Technologies

1.   Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 168. For a perceptive reading of Hong Kong *wu xia pian* as postmodern allegories, see Bhaskar Sarkar, "Hong Kong Hysteria: Martial Arts Tales from a Mutating World," in Esther C. M. Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 159–176.

2.   See Esther M. K. Cheung and Chu Yiu-wai, eds., "Introduction: Between Home and World," in *Between Home and World: A Reader in Hong Kong Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. xi–xxxv.

3.   Esther C. M. Yau, "Introduction: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World," in Esther C. M. Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 4 (1–28).

4.   James A. Steintrager, "An Unworthy Subject: Slaughter, Cannibalism and Postcoloniality," in Laikwan Pang and Day Wong, eds., *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p. 155 (155–174).

5.   Jameson, *Geopolitical Aesthetic*, p. 5.

6.   Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. I: The Process of Capitalist Production*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, ed. Frederick Engels (NY: International, 1967), p. 72. For more on the commodity in recent Hong Kong cinema, see Gina Marchetti, "Buying American, Consuming Hong Kong: Cultural Commerce, Fantasies of Identity, and the Cinema," in Poshek Fu and David Desser,

eds., *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 289–313.

7. George Myserson, *Heidegger, Habermas, and the Mobile Phone* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2001).

8. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 19–20. With the turn of the century, there has been a resurgence of interest in memory, amnesia, and technology; for more on these themes, see Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

9. Derrida, p. 90.

Chapter 5   Identity as Static: Surveillance, Psychoanalysis, and Performance

1. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 210.

2. Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstasy of Communication," translated by John Johnston, in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Post Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), p. 127 (126–134). David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983) comes to mind as well.

3. Teo, *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimension*, p. 250.

4. "Encyclopedia: Hong Kong Police Force," Nationmaster.com, http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Hong-Kong-Police/.

5. Baudrillard, "Ecstasy of Communication", p. 133.

6. Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Culture," p. 120. Jameson also points out that it really does not matter if the Enlightenment subject ever actually existed or was always a fiction. It only matters that it only operates as a fiction within postmodern culture.

7. Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Culture," p. 125.

8. Yingchi Chu, *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland, and Self* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 129.

9. Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*, p. 269.

10. Laikwan Pang, "Post-1997 Hong Kong Masculinity," in Laikwan Pang and Day Wong, eds., *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), p. 36 (35–55).

11. In many ways, Chan resembles the troubled, Romantic hero described in Chuck Kleinhans, "Terms of Transition: The Action Film, Postmodernism, and Issues of an East-West Perspective," op. cit.

12. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (NY: Verso, 1991), p. 156, p. 364.

13. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 2. There is considerable scholarly discussion on various uses of "schizophrenia" to describe the postmodern condition, including Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. For a comparison of Deleuze and Guattari and Jameson on the topic, see Jonah Peretti, "Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Visual Culture and the Acceleration of Identity Formation/Dissolution," *Negations* (Winter 1996), http://www.datawranglers.com/negations/issues/96w/96w_peretti.html/.

14. Baudrillard, p. 127.

15. See Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (NY: Routledge, 1996), pp. 441–449.

16. See Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as Masquerade," in Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan, eds., *Formations of Fantasy* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986, originally published in 1929), pp. 35–44; Mary Ann Doane. "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator," *Screen*, 23: 3–4 (September/October 1982), pp. 74–87.

17. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Terri Hume Oliver (NY: Norton, 1999); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (NY: Grove Press, 1967).

18. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (NY: Routledge, 1990).

19. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

20. For a discussion of identity in post-1997 Hong Kong cinema, see Chu Yiu Wai, "Hybridity and (G)local Identity in Postcolonial Hong Kong Cinema," in Sheldon H. Lu and Emilie Yueh-Yu Yeh, eds., *Chinese-Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), pp. 312–328.

21. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC and Penguin, 1972). Also note Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* (1987) and the occupation of a "feminized space" by the Chinese male in Rey Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity: The Politics of Reading Between West and East* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

22. Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Indiana University Press, 1986).

23. Bryan Chang, "Never Running Out of Choices (in A World Without Method)," trans. Sam Ho, *Andy Lau: Actor in Focus* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong International Film Festival Society, 2005), p. 67 (62–67).

24. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, 1977).

25. Mark Poster, *The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 93. The same point is made in Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, *Times of Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life* (London: Routledge, 1999).

26. For a discussion of consumerism and television as part of the postmodern condition, see Margaret Morse, "An Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television," in Patricia Mellencamp, ed., *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 193–221.

27. Slavoj Zizek, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (NY: Routledge, 1992), p. 34 and p. 53.

28. Dorinne Kondo, *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater* (NY: Routledge, 1997), p. 7.

29. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 19–20.

30. Lee Cheuk-To, "Introduction," *Andy Lau: Actor in Focus* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong International Film Festival Society, 2005), p. 3.

31. Thomas Shin, Athena Sui, Bryan Chang, "Interviewing Andy Lau," *Andy Lau: Actor in Focus* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong International Film Festival Society, 2005), p. 44 (40–55).

32. For more on Leung's character, see Wimal Dissanayake, *Wong Kar-wai's Ashes of Time* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003).

33. For more on the Leung character, see Jeremy Tambling, *Wong Kar-wai's Happy Together* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003).

34. Ryan Gilbey, "The Leung View," *The Sunday Times* (UK), 29 February 2004, http://www.tonyleung.org/news/interview2004_1.shtml/.

35. Fredric Dannen and Barry Long, *Hong Kong Babylon: An Insider's Guide to the Hollywood of the East* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pp. 138–141.

36. For a detailed reading of *The Untold Story*, see James A. Steintrager, "An Unworthy Subject: Slaughter, Cannibalism and Postcoloniality," in Laikwan Pang and Day Wong, eds., *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), pp. 155–174.

Chapter 6   Thieves and Pirates: Beyond "Auteur" Cinema

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 208–209.

2. Stephen Teo, *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* (London: BFI, 1997), p. 233.

3. Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, p. 36.

4. For a definition of the "televisual" ("videographic" as opposed to the "cinematic"), see John Thornton Caldwell, *Televisuality: Style, Crisis, and Authority in American Television* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

5. It plays with the shift from Debord's "society of the spectacle" or Foucault's "panoptican" to Baudrillard's "hyperreal" realm of "simulation." See Jean Baudrillard, "The Procession of Simulacra," in *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994, 1981), pp. 1–42.

6. For a history of Hong Kong's transnational film connections, see Law Kar and Frank Bren (with Sam Ho), *Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross-Cultural View* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004).

7. See Liang Hai-Chiang, "Hong Kong Cinema's 'Taiwan Factor'," Law Kar, ed., *Fifty Years of Electric Shadows*, *21st Hong Kong International Film Festival*, trans. Yatsen Chan (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1997), pp. 158–163. See also, Kwai-cheung Lo, *Chinese Face/ Off: The Transnational Popular Culture of Hong Kong* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), pp. 106–107.

8. For a discussion of this aspect of film history, see Adam Knee, "Thailand in the Hong Kong Cinematic Imagination," *Hong Kong/ Hollywood at the Borders: Alternative Perspectives, Alternative Cinemas*, University of Hong Kong, April 2004, unpublished paper.

9. Warner Brothers, of course, has a long history of involvement with Hong Kong including co-productions beginning in the 1970s with Golden Harvest.

10. That Coppola should explore similar themes in *The Godfather* and *The Conversation* regarding a crisis in American society comes as no surprise, and neither does the fact that *Infernal Affairs* seems to reference both films for a similar reason.

11. Alison Veneto, "The Modern Hong Kong Triad Film: Part II," *Movie Poop Shoot*, May 26, 2006, http://www.moviepoopshoot.com/ intrigue/26.html/.

12. See Appendix 2.

13. For more on the series, see David Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

14. Although not mentioned by name, it is clearly the series lawmaker Benjamin T. M. Liu refers to when he complains about films that fueled the triad push to recruit members from Hong Kong public schools. See Benjamin T. M. Liu, *The Hong Kong Triad Societies: Before and After the 1997 Change-over* (Hong Kong: Net e-Publishing, Ltd., 2001).

15. For a chronology of these events, see Benjamin T. M. Liu, op. cit.

16. Fredric Dannen and Barry Long, *Hong Kong Babylon: An Insider's Guide to the Hollywood of the East* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), p. 44. See also Lisa Odham Stokes and Michael Hoover, *City on Fire: Hong Kong Cinema*, (London: Verso, 1999). Of course, gangsters have long been a part of other lucrative film industries, including

Hollywood, see Peter Bondanella, *Hollywood Italians: Dagos, Palookas, Romeos, Wise Guys, and Sopranos* (NY: Continuum, 2004). Hong Kong filmmakers have also dealt directly on screen with the impact of triads in the film industry (e.g., *Stuntwoman/Ah Kam*, 1996; *Viva Erotica*, 1996).

17. *Young and Dangerous IV* (1997) specifically locates part of its action in Tuen Mun and includes a detailed history of Tuen Mun by one of the film's protagonists. Quoted in Stokes and Hoover, pp. 83–84.

18. This anti-individualism may, indeed, put *Infernal Affairs'* creators in a better position to market themselves globally as "design professionals." See Steve Fore, "Home, Migration, Identity: Hong Kong Filmmakers Join the Chinese Diaspora," in Law Kar, ed., *Fifty Years of Electric Shadows: Report of Conference on Hong Kong Cinema*. (Hong Kong: The 21st Hong Kong International Film Festival, Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1997), pp. 130–135.

19. For discussions of the salient characteristics of Wong Kar-wai's oeuvre, see Ackbar Abbas, "The Erotics of Disappointment," in Jean-Marc Lalanne, David Martinez, Ackbar Abbas, and Jimmy Ngai, *Wong Kar-wai* (Paris: Dis Voir, 1997), pp. 39–81; Robert M. Payne, "Ways of Seeing Wild: The Cinema of Wong Kar-wai," *Jump Cut* No. 44 (Fall 2001), http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc44.2001/payne%20for%20site/wongkarwai1.html/; Curtis K. Tsui, "Subjective Culture and History: The Ethnographic Cinema of Wong Kar-wai," *Asian Cinema* 7:2 (Winter 1995), pp. 93–124; Stephen Teo, *Wong Kar-wai* (London: BFI, 2005); Peter Brunette, *Wong Kar-wai* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

20. For more on video piracy in Hong Kong, see Shujen Wang, *Framing Piracy: Globalization and Film Distribution in Greater China* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003).

21. See Laikwan Pang, "Piracy/Privacy: The Despair of Cinema and Collectivity in China," *boundary 2* 31:3 (Fall 2004), pp. 101–124.

22. Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: Verso, 1979, 1997), p. 50.

23. Borys Kit, "Gere Tends 'Flock' for Hong Kong Helmer," *Reuters/Hollywood Reporter*, August 3, 2005, http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050803/film_nm/gere_dc/.

24. Evans Chan, "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema," *Postmodern Culture* 10: 3 (May, 2000), http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/text-only/issue.500/10.3chan.txt/.