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Nostalgic Futures: The Self-Fashioning of Victoria Harbor in Film Posters

The term colonial identity is more than a simple paradox; it is the seemingly illogical union between a system of subjugation and a mode of freedom. Identities are means of expression and empowerment, a way to situate oneself in reality, whilst colonization is the marginalization and hegemony of another group. Thus, the notion that there can be an identity forged within the erasure that is colonialism seems by nature a paradox. This unclear and constant conflict of identities is at the very heart of Hong Kong's struggle to craft its own separate image in the global-political and cultural landscape of the 20th century. Originally a quaint harbor town within imperial China, the rise of British colonial ventures made Hong Kong a destination for trade between the two countries. However, upon the British's introduction of opium to the lucrative (but unbalanced) tea trade, the Chinese government vehemently objected, destroying cargo loads of opium and banning all trade of the drug in Hong Kong. Disagreement with the British government ensued, leading to two humiliating defeats during the Opium Wars from 1839 to 1842, which resulted in the cessation of Hong Kong to the British Empire (Matthews 23 and Ng 2). What followed for this small port-town was 165 years of colonial rule by the British.

Enter 1997, the year Hong Kong was to be "reunited" with China after over a century of separation. One would imagine the prospect of being released from the status of a colony would be a moment of celebration for the culturally and politically isolated city. The reality could not

have been further from the truth. Since the 1984 Sino-British Agreement, which set into motion the process of returning Hong Kong to China, terms such as "the 1997 deadline," "the 1997 specter," and "post-97 consciousness," rose in popular discourse about the fate of the city (Ng 4). There was a growing fear amongst Hongkongers[1] that the return to Mainland China would spell the end of the city as they knew it. From a removed standpoint it seemed bizarre: why would a colony such as Hong Kong resist the idea of "de-colonization" when former colonies such as India and South Africa had fought ardently for independence? To better understand this change that had come upon Hong Kong we must venture back to the cinema of the 1960s.

Hong Kong's cultural identity has always been inevitably linked to its movies. To trace the history of Hong Kong film would be to trace the history and transformation of Hong Kong's self-identification. Film posters are equally important to this history, offering for many moviegoers their first and perhaps only introduction to the narratives and ideologies of a movie. In many ways film posters, like propaganda posters, help extend the reality of the film to "construct a political self in aesthetic form" (Donald and Teo 138). This conversational relationship movie posters have with the public is unique in its ability to capture and portray specific aspects of a movie, often telling its own message and story. In particular, there exists multiple examples that can be found signaling the transformation of Hong Kong's cinematic landscape. For this paper, my focus will be on four posters that highlight how the changing use of Victoria Harbor's skyline signaled the ideological shift that Hong Kong underwent from a globalized identity focused on invisibility to a nostalgic identity focused on self-orientalism. Through this transformation I hope to bring to light the complications of understanding Hong

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[1] "The established residents of Hong Kong came to be called Hongkongers …leaving their Chinese identity in shadow" (Matthew 63)

Kong in the old framework of a binary opposition between the East and West and instead offer

an alternate perception of a local identity created by achronological imagination.

[Figure 1] *The Young Dragons Movie Poster* (1974)

Our analysis begins near the tail end of Hong Kong's Kung Fu craze of the 1970s with

the poster of *Young Dragon*'s (1975) [see Figure 1]. Done in a similar style to the other famous

Hong Kong Kung Fu film posters like *One-Armed Swordsman* (1967) and *Fist of Fury* (1972),

this poster relies heavily on the hand-drawn aesthetics of the genre. The primary male

protagonist occupies the foreground giving an aggressive kick that intrudes into the space of the

title, whilst the dramatic portraits of the other characters are presented at the top of the poster

looking away from the viewer. Behind the main protagonist is the basic black silhouette of a

non-descript urban skyline outlined in white. The poster's central focus is on the humans, with

the bright and vivid color palette of these characters stealing attention away from the otherwise

simple background. Even the white that surrounds the skyline is not enough to draw attention

away from these characters, serving instead as a visual cue to the vertical lines that lead back to

the people within the poster. For the other films a simple striking color as a background would suffice, be it a dramatic white or a searing red, but the choice inclusion of a skyline, Hong Kong's skyline, is particularly telling. The visual role the skyline plays in this poster reveals the manner in which Hong Kong identity was constructed, not in the realm of the self, but in the realm of the other.

To understand how the portrayal of Hong Kong's skyline is revealing of the city's early identity, we must understand the film industry of the 1970s. Recovering from the near demise of Hong Kong's Cantonese Film industry, actors like Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee became "catalyst[s] in Hong Kong cinema's entry into the international market" (Teo 100, 137, 145). Suddenly the focus of Hong Kong's film industry became centered not on the local appeal but on the global appeal. This sudden boom led to the cultivation of a "translocal flexibility," the idea of identifying and portraying the local as a consequence of and reaction to the trends of the global (Yip 152). This resulted, as Man-Fung Yip explains, in the reliance of Hong Kong cinema "on overseas markets … making transnationalism an essential feature of Hong Kong Cinema" (152). The result of this is seen in posters like *The Young Dragons*, where the Chinese title is paired with an English title in its advertisement. Furthermore, the recognizable features of a Kung Fu film poster with their dramatized style of hand-drawn aesthetics are tailored to be consumed for their exotic and fantastic appeal. It is of no surprise the dominating aspect of the *The Young Dragons* poster is not the contrasting yellow of the title, but the actors themselves. These early Kung Fu posters existed as if they were prepackaged for easy export into the transnational marketplace.

Thus, in examining these early martial arts films, one would quickly come to the conclusion that Hong Kong's cinema is really the dependent reaction to the global and colonial

economic entertainment market. This is already problematic as the idea infers to some extent what psychologist Sigmund Freud refers to as "reverse hallucination," a concept that revolves around not seeing what is there (Abbas 6). As innocent as this idea seems, these traits are really the symptoms of a colonial erasure. Hong Kong views itself during this era not as a city with a real identity but as a gateway and a port between the East and the West. The unremarkable and unidentifiable skyline in these posters seems to say as much. Hong Kong, though it exists for the viewers to see and to enjoy, in reality is rendered invisible, a mere mirror to the narrative of colonial encounters. Existing in the realm not simply of colonialism but of global economics renders Hong Kong's identity, as seen through the lens of globally exported Hong Kong films, as ultimately invisible unto itself.

[Figure 2] *Murderer Pursues* (1981)

Upon reflection, some may come to the conclusion that these differentiations are only the byproduct of the Kung Fu film boom and the need to market martial art films in an appealing manner. While to some extent true, this assumption does not explain the complexity of other film posters such as *Murderer Pursues* [see Figure 2], which complicates the notion of a poster as a byproduct of simple consumption. Foremost in the poster is the sun-burnt orange of the title along with a pair of mysterious eyes colored in a sickly lime as an ominous silver gun juts out below. Already, the contrasting color of these elements create a dramatic appeal for the viewers' attention, as bullet lines lead viewers to the white silhouette of people in the line of fire. As the viewers finish their visual journey with the headshots of the actors, the disjointed imagery implies a sense of mystery and intrigue to the violent and dramatic imagery above. However, what is not a part of this visual drama is the skyline. Even as the more detailed depiction and the slight accents of yellow of the buildings try to capture viewers' attention the focus is inevitably displaced from the elaborate skyline to the eyes below; the viewers' gaze is instinctively drawn downward by the contrasting coloring where the gaze of the eyes subliminally direct viewers away from the skyline to the action below. Consequently, through the visual composition of the posters, Hong Kong's skyline is made present yet invisible. Once again the city of modern Hong Kong is reduced to simply that, a symbol of modernity that plays the role of a background to the drama that the film industry tries to export for audiences. As a consequence, this movie poster utilizes the skyline of Hong Kong not as a focal point but as a framing device for the films narrative and thematic references; an active displacement of the focus from the city of Hong Kong, to the movie and story instead.

In both posters the aforementioned paradox of being simultaneously the subject, yet invisible, is key to understanding this "global" phase of Hong Kong's identity. Just as in the

poster of *The Young Dragons,* the "erasure" of Hong Kong's skyline in the poster for *Murderer Pursues* reveals the practice of simply utilizing Hong Kong as a setting, indistinguishable from any other. As Ackbar Abbas writes in *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, "stories about Hong Kong always turned into stories about somewhere else, as if Hong Kong culture were somehow not a subject," a practice used heavily in these early posters (25). For Western audiences Hong Kong becomes not a city unto itself, but a metaphor for a containable and consumable "Chinese-ness" (Abbas 276). The removal of a distinct Hong Kong symbol creates a faceless identity that leaves viewers not with the impression that there exists a distinct local Hong Kong identity but, rather, that Hong Kong is merely a vague notion of modernity fused with the notion of Said's Other[2]. Yet Hong Kong cannot be viewed as being trapped in the hegemonic discourse of appealing and depending on the transnational economy. Although Hong Kong was caught between two political empires, the true struggle is not between the identities of the "Chinese State" and the "British Colony" but a fight to define itself within the context of the "global market" (Matthews 66). This desire to create a fluid transnational identity for Hong Kong, largely disconnected from the notion of reality and the past, creates what Abbas describes as the "politics of disappearance" (7).

This concept of the politics of dis-appearance[3] is central to understanding Hong Kong cinema prior to the transition of 1984. Abbas' politics of "dis-appearance" is based on the mass acceptance of the aforementioned concept of "reverse hallucination" that posited an inability to

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[2] "Other", as outlined by scholar Edward Said in his book *Orientalism,* refers to the idea of the Orient as a "surrogate and even underground self" that is defined against a Western identity and mode of thinking in order to dominate the Orient (Said 4). In this situation it refers to the exoticization of the Orient to appeal to Western discourse, expectations and stereotypes. Refer to Said for a more in-depth discussion of Orientalism.

[3] The hyphenation as used by Abbas is a stylistic choice to emphasize the specific nature of his definition of disappearance; to be present yet unseen or invisible.

see what is there. Thus, the notion of Hong Kong appearing as a "cultural desert," a city without distinct artistic or cultural signifiers, is the byproduct of the acceptance of this ideology. Reflected through the "dis-appearance" of Hong Kong's cityscape in early portrayals of its movie posters, these concepts created a colonial "hyper-dependency"—not on the British colony but on the colonial market as a whole. As a result, this mindset crafted an image of Hong Kong through its films and its posters as a byproduct or an extension of Western discourse. Still, through all this, it would be misguided to assume that Hong Kong had blindly fallen into a hegemonic relationship for identity creation by the British; rather, it was this unique and dynamic image as a transnational city that sustained Hong Kong's early venture into self-formation.

Thus, the 1984 Sino-British agreement, which essentially promised the handover of Hong Kong back to China in 1997, brought with it an overwhelming fear of the end of this newly crafted identity. For a city that had enjoyed the unique ability to exist at the borderlands of two empires, the thought of having to abandon its state of liminality and transnational identity seemed dangerous. The early posters had depicted Hong Kong as apart from the direct influence of the British colonial powers, expressing and creating its identity as a fluid and non-binary global cosmopolitanism. The 1984 agreement and the later 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre left a harsh impression upon the Hong Kong public of the ability to continue cultivating this identity. Although it had created a fluid and "floating" identity in the past, Hong Kong had the herculean task of creating a character that could withstand the hegemonic force of reintegration into a new empire.

In response, the Hong Kong New Wave of the 1980s was a cinematic movement in which a generation of young local Hong Kong filmmakers and artists began to actively shape the

perception of Hong Kong film. Unlike earlier generations of the "market mentality,"[4] these

artists who were born and raised in colonial Hong Kong were keenly aware of their "own

identity as Hong Kong film makers", making them the film generation that would give "birth to a

separate Hong Kong identity" (Teo 108). Although Hong Kong films in previous years had to

some degree an awareness of a local Hong Kong community, it was during the 1970s and this era

that a finite "concept of a geopolitical and legal-political Hong Kong community" was truly

created (Chu 97). Most importantly, these filmmakers were able to fuse their deep awareness of

the social and cultural concerns of local Hong Kong with their film. This emergence of Hong

Kong New Wave films not only revolutionized the way film and mass media related to the

people of Hong Kong, but the way the Hong Kong people related to their city and the world as

well.

1997 brought with it not only a sense of urgency but a finality in Hong Kong's depiction

of itself as well. As Daisy Ng writes, Hong Kong during the decade preceding 1997 "was

imagined as already lost"; hence, the nostalgic urge to "reconstruct the collective memory of"

Hong Kong "as it was, even before it disappeared" (Chang 56 and Ng 159). As a consequence,

Hong Kong utilized nostalgia[5] from the bygone days of "Shanghaization"[6] in allegorical film like

Stanley Kwan's *Rouge* and *Centre Stage* to negotiate Hong Kong's identity, both in its present

and its past, interlacing the two to form a metaphorical fabric which would exist independently in

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[4] "Market mentality" is an ideology that focuses on trading political concerns and involvement in order to participate in lucrative commercial and economic boom of 1970-1980's Hong Kong (Matthew 25)

[5] Although nostalgia is normally associated with the longing of the past, here it extends the idea of nostalgia to a pursuit or recreation of a romanticized past as an ideal.

[6] "Shanghaization" was a movement in Hong Kong where Shanghai's cultural influence brought over by immigrants and refugees shaped the artistic and cultural perception of Hong Kong, to the world and itself. (Lee 328,330)

its new status as a SAR (Ng 127). At the center of this new discourse on the identity of Hong

Kong was the refashioning of the cityscape itself. What had once been a faceless non-entity in

posters, the skyline of Hong Kong, in the city of fast "demolition and rebuilding" where flux was

the only consistency, soon became an icon for this newly rising entity that attempted to be

independently separate from the empires of the East and the West (Graf 64 and Yiu-Wai 41). As

the lens through which Hong Kong viewed itself through movies changed, the film posters

underwent their own transformation as well.

[Figure 3] *Plain Jane to the Rescue* (1982)

In this "Hong Kong New Wave" era, filmmakers turned to the epicenter of Hong Kong's

reestablished history: Victoria Harbor. Unlike the early 1970s movie posters of *Murderer*

Pursues and *The Young Dragons*, the composition as well as the depiction of the actors in

relation to the cityscape arguably changes in posters like *A Better Tomorrow* and *Plain Jane*

Saves the Day. The design practice most common to this new movement can already be seen in posters such as *Plain Jane to the Rescue* (1982) [see Figure 3]. Here the poster has moved beyond the classical use of drawings that were synonymous with the profitable Kung Fu films, and instead implemented photographic images placed upon each other. In the foreground are the two main characters awkwardly looking at each other as they share food, whilst in the background are British colonial officers dressed in white set against a section of Victoria Harbor at night. The warm color of the couple at the front of the poster contrasts heavily with the cold whites and blues of the background, yet the stark contrast in this poster is not meant to steal attention away from the skyline but to emphasize it. Rather than have a vertical or linear visual narrative, this poster relies on a much looser perspective that invites readers to shift their focus upwards from the two couples. The focus of the posters is thus not the two actors at the foreground of the poster but is instead the area shared between the police officers and the skyline above them. This less dramatic form of poster making focused not only upon the characters but also their interaction with the city. Thus, this gradual visual shift in posters signified the ever-growing shift in Hong Kong's identity.
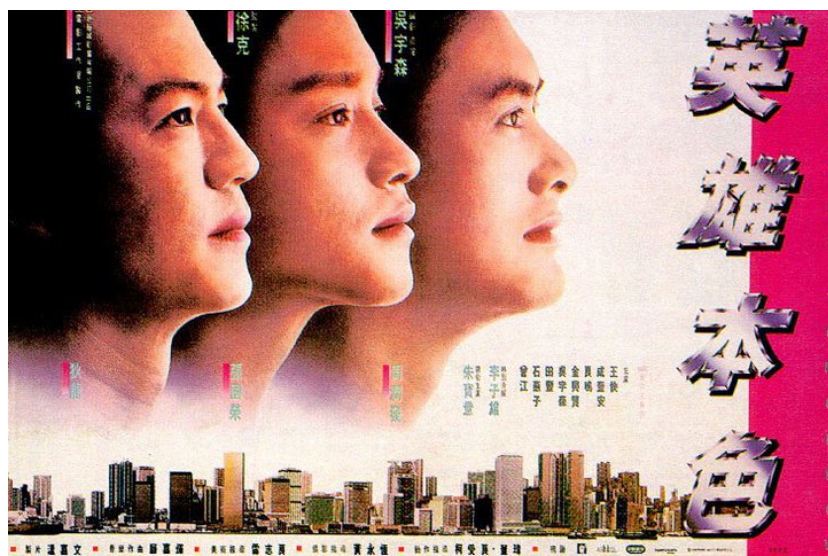
[Figure 4] *A Better Tomorrow* (1986)

[Figure 5] *Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin* (1953)

If *Plain Jane to the Rescue* hints at a larger focus on the city of Hong Kong, *A Better Tomorrow* serves as an encapsulation of the "Hong Kong New Wave" film that worked to actively define this era of Hong Kong cinematographic history. The simple yet famous design of the poster for *A Better Tomorrow* [See Figure 4.] by John Woo released in 1986 highlights a shift in poster design and motifs of the "Hong Kong New Wave." Here, the poster does not waste any time in relaying to viewers what the two central focuses of poster and the movie will be about. The three movie stars, including the famous Canto-pop singer Leslie Cheung,[7] are framed at the top, while below is an impressive panoramic picture of Victoria Harbor running from edge to edge towards the bottom of the poster. The choice decision to only have the characters and the harbor in the poster shows the dramatic shift from the use of the skyline as a mere set piece for

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[7] "The rise of Canto-pop in the 70's coincided with the…first generation of locally born Hon Kong people. Nostalgic interest in the Canto-Pop of the 70s and 80s there is inseparable from a collective memory of …local identity" (Ng 115). Leslie Cheung was one of the most famous Canto-pop starts of the era who helped define and popularize the genre for a generation of Hong Kongers.

the story of the characters. The panoramic depiction of the harbor reveals immediately that the iconography of the harbor is a central part of the narrative that is being provided. Furthermore, the specific choice to present to viewers a detailed daytime picture of Victoria Harbor shows the importance of creating a skyline the is distinctly and unmistakably Victoria Harbor. In addition to choosing to cast the harbor in day, it's placement as the only other focus of attention aside from the characters above make it unmistakable that Victoria Harbor and Hong Kong plays an integral role within the movie. The choice placement of the three actors' faces in an almost stoic fashion is also reminiscent of the political posters, namely communist propaganda posters centering on *Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin* [see Figure 5]. However, for the movie poster, the large profiles that loom over the poster are not political leaders but movie stars, seeming to subtly counter the notion that political powers dominate and will dominate Hong Kong and instead offer an alternative narrative where Hong Kong's local culture and imagined narrative takes prevalence. Through creating this parallel with a propaganda poster it creates a unique dynamic which suggest that for Hongkongers, pop-culture icons and commercial movie stars bear more collective power and weight than the political icons it displaces. In some ways through this poster Hong Kong is creating for itself a memorial, one that attempts to capture Hong Kong through its actors and its harbor in the way it desires to be remembered for the present and the future. In combination, it as if this poster and other posters of the Hong Kong New Wave such as *Home in Hong Kong* [see Figure 6] through monumentalizing the notion of modernity, commercialism, and cultural export stand as a tribute or even counter discourse to the possibility of erasure of a definitive and recognizable Hong Kong by empire.

As a consequence, this begs the question of the meaning of the rising importance of Victoria Harbor in relation to the identity of Hong Kong within Hong Kong New Wave film. If

there is such graphical attention given to clearly depicting and defining Victoria Harbor, what stake does Hong Kong's identity have in creating the visual space to represent this renowned architectural skyline? For many Hong Kong New Wave artists, there was not only a conscious movement to define Hong Kong as a theoretical and cultural concept but, in addition, there was the awareness that the "development of Hong Kong cannot be seen in isolation from its harbor" (Graf 64). Even famous writer Ye-Si (Leung Ping-Kwan) notes that the creation of "urban culture" and subsequent "images of their city" was an attempt to distinguish "Hong Kong from mainland China." I argue that the incorporation of the harbor is in this line of creation—a creation of separation and autonomy from images given by empire—is not simply an act of including the harbor in the larger discourse of film, or even an appeal to the global audience garnered from the Kung Fu movie boom, but is instead an active tool meant to redefine and re-characterize Victoria Harbor as both its present and its past, apart from the global marketplace (Ping-Kwan 227).

[Figure 6] *The Home at Hong Kong* (1983)

The integration with China in 1997 was not simply the threat of the end of a way of life but the threat of an alteration of Hong Kong's history. Thus, the task for movie posters and movies was not to redefine Hong Kong's future apart from British coloniality but to define Hong Kong's distinct past. For example, *Plain Jane Saves the Day* did this by neutralizing the threat of the British Colonial Police by placing them as miniscule to both the protagonist and city or character of Hong Kong itself. Nostalgia is used here to create a vision for the future, based on a reimagined conception of the past. *The Home at Hong Kong (1983)* [see figure 6] does something similar by portraying Victoria Harbor in a panoramic black and white photo as if it were a relic of the past, when in the context of the movie the Victoria Harbor presented is in the present. Nostalgia is used in *The Home at Hong Kong* is used in the same manner but in the opposite direction; the idealistic "retelling" of Hong Kong's past take place within the present yet if frames the present as if it were part of an ideal past it has already established. Through this form of nostalgia cinema, these films created an identity that rewrote Hong Kong's past as autonomously their own to coincide with the then thriving present and created a present that integrated elements of the past into the present apart from the histories of empire. Abbas Ackbar argues that this nostalgia is simply the appropriation of seeing Hong Kong in the lens of a "post-colonial opposition" that merely viewing Hong Kong through the lens of nostalgia invites the simplification of the diverse categories and distinction of Hong Kong, opening it up to revisits of a state of "hyperdependcy" and "self-orientalization."[8] And though I would agree that such a danger exists in the realm and discourse of nostalgia, I would argue that it does more. The nostalgia that Abbas defines as viewing things through the lens of "better days" or "simpler time" does in fact open up the danger of self-Orientalizing: presenting one's identity through an

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[8] Discussed in Professor Rahmieh Lecture at University of Irvine, California. It entails the self-exoticization and fetishization for Eurocentric Discourse.

external Eurocentric lens that focuses on the exoticism and consumption of one's own culture. However, as seen in the posters, the new nostalgia is not simply an attempt to redefine Hong Kong as an antithesis nor a glorification of its colonial past but rather as a rewriting and reclaiming of one's local identity and history. In this new nostalgia, there exists an independence from the "historical" past, and an awareness of the "storied" past that excludes both the British and China from Hong Kong's rise in entertainment and globalism.

This new nostalgia in some ways offers the completion of the concept of the "double-edged sword of progress/nostalgia" put forth by Daisy Ng who rejects the nostalgic lens of viewing Hong Kong based on the ground that this paradox falls apart without recognition of how these forces create the "future" (Ng 174) Yet her rejection fails to consider that the future of Hong Kong is not linear or cyclical but fluid; the rise of Victoria Harbor is not a sudden reclamation of identity but the shift and adjustment to a new reality that places history within the realm of Hong Kong's old economic identity. Victoria Harbor is both the symbol of origin and the symbol of growth and evolution. Victoria Harbor is both the sight of devastation following the Second World War, but it also is the site where Hong Kong's new identity, Hong Kong's current identity was reborn into the entity that it is today. Nostalgia through film posters alters the reality of the past before Victoria Harbor's revitalization while keeping its historical weight in order to re-present the collective memory and story of the people. The story of Victoria Harbor as the start of an independent and globally present culture of Hong Kong. Within a single symbol of Victoria Harbor, Hong Kong New Wave artists managed to anchor Hong Kong's identity in an anachronistic object that defines its new, nostalgic origins, but also encapsulates its ever-evolving future.

[Figure 7] *Arrival*: Hong Kong (2016)   [Figure 8] *Arrival*: Shanghai (2016)

Movie posters for Hong Kong are as relevant today as they were over half a century ago.

The 2016 film *Arrival* brought with it a series of movie posters, one of which featured the

eponymous Victoria Harbor. However, in its international set of posters Arrival had the

disorienting inclusion of the "Oriental Pearl Tower" (actually located in Shanghai) presented

within Victoria harbor's skyline [see Figure 7]. For a generation of Hongkongers who had grown

up with the image of Victoria Harbor as representative of Hong Kong's identity in local film and

posters, the skyline was an emblem of a separate and unique identity within the world. Thus, the

notion that an international media company would conflate the skyline of Shanghai and Hong

Kong for many was not simply an error but the actualization of Hong Kong's dreaded 1997

reality: the erasure of a Hong Kong's distinct identity and culture. Though this minor detail

seems to be an overreaction on the part of Hongkongers it is undoubtedly tied to the fact that

Hongkongers felt as if their distinct local identity was being reduced into simply another facet

within a larger "Chinese" identity it had ever decreasing ties to. Thus, the correction offered by

the film company as reported in BBC's "Hong Kong outrage at 'Arrival' poster skyline blunder"

only furthered the indignation as the new poster "corrected" the "Oriental Pearl Tower" by

replacing Victoria Harbor with Shanghai's skyline [see Figure 8]. The citizens of Hong Kong

were outraged, contesting the fact that the correction to a misrepresented skyline was the

removal of Hong Kong; one citizen, shocked, wrote "So HK's the "WRONG" part here?"

("Hong Kong Outrage at 'Arrival' Poster Skyline Blunder"). Perhaps above all else this backlash

is a reaction to the seeming undoing of the cultural creation that Hong Kong has striven for in the

past decades.

Victoria Harbor had during the "Hong Kong New Wave" and the "New Nostalgia"

movements come to become a recognizable icon that represented Hong Kong's distinct identity,

yet the flippant replacement for Shanghai's skyline was a seeming reversal of the progress these

artists had made. In some ways it brought back the self-orientalizing "reverse hallucination"

status of earlier Kung Fu films. Hong Kong's skyline and thus Hong Kong was once again no

longer the center of focus but simply the "invisible" and now evidently replaceable background

to the stories of others. In the wake of 1997 and in the shadow of 2047[9] this once seemingly

harmless "politics of dis-appearance" now proved to be a threat in erasing the very identity of

Hong Kong as a state autonomous culturally and historically from empire. Whereas nostalgia

found its power in cross-integrating Hong Kong's past with its present through collective

memory, this slowly increasing blurring and erasure for some seem to only add to the fear that

Hong Kong as a distinct identity will be lost to the glacial movements of empire. Victoria Harbor

and portrayal in movie posters is as pertinent now as it was in *The Young Dragons*, the notion

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[9] The expiration of the "one country, two system" agreement set forth in the 1984 Sino-British Agreement.

has never been about simply capturing an isolated past or nostalgic present but integrating the two in order to achieve the ultimate purpose of both eras of posters, to create an identity that is apart from empires for Hong Kong.

The future of Hong Kong as represented through the ever-changing film industry can be consolidated into a harbor that in the midst of uncertainty and change built itself into an icon that defined a city for well over a century. It is, as Law describes, a cinema and culture "of various topics and genres, never in a fixed pattern, never stopping," with the ability to utilize the mediums to craft and recraft an identity as circumstances have changed, change, and will change in the future (Law 69). And perhaps as media and the perception of Hong Kong evolves so will Victoria Harbor, as it defines what it essentially means to be Hong Kong and to be nostalgic of a future that simultaneously has and perhaps will never come to pass.

Appendix

1.   [Figure 1] *The Young Dragons Movie Poster* (1974)
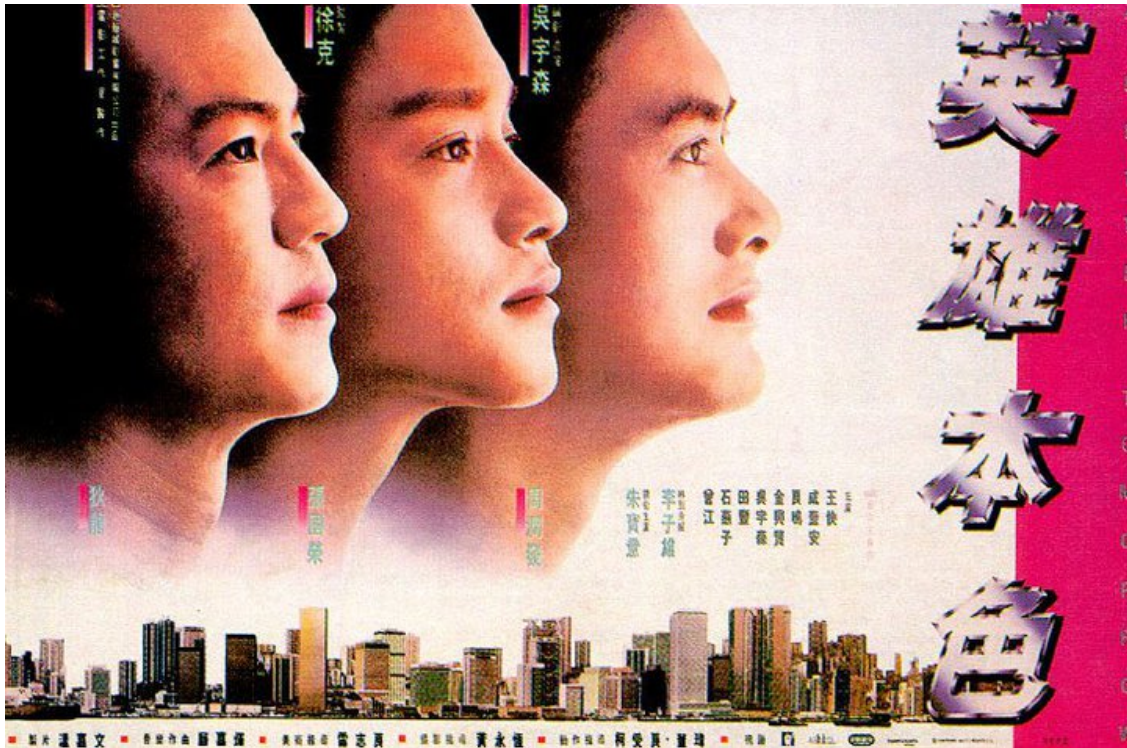

2.   [Figure 2] *Murderer Pursues* (1981)

3. [Figure 3] *Plain Jane to the Rescue* (1982)

4.   [Figure 4] *A Better Tomorrow* (1986)

5. [Figure 5] *Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin* (1953)

6. [Figure 6] *The Home at Hong Kong* (1983)

7. [Figure 7] *Arrival*: Hong Kong (2016)

8. [Figure 8] *Arrival*: Shanghai (2016)

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