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Philipps Universität Marburg

Remastering Hong Kong Cinema

Charles Leary

In descriptions of Hong Kong cinema, and Hong Kong itself, one invariably encounters two keywords: "globalization" and "speed," with speed being a factor of globalization, in the rapid production, circulation, and consumption of cultural commodities. The conspicuousness of these terms in studies of the region is partly due of course to the shifting dominion over Hong Kong during its modern history – once a British colony, once Japanese-occupied territory, and now a "Special Administrative Region" for China's "one country, two systems" project – as well as its status as one of the most active financial centers in the world. As a site of a number of distinct streams of immigration (and emigration) throughout the 20th century, the city has long been described as a place of transit, from the West to the East and vice-versa, and its cosmopolitan sensibility has been compared by one critic, for example, with an airport.[1] Hong Kong has even registered itself as a brand name welcoming globalization, with its slogan "Asia's World City."[2] Aside from the transfer of its capital – that is, the move of well-known film personnel to Hollywood – the globalization of Hong Kong cinema is a tale told in its circulation via film festivals, but more emphatically so in video outlets, cable television, and internet sales and discussion – moving, it appears, at a speed for the most efficient circulation.

Speed: Political Economy and Film Form

Consider, for an example of the deployment of "speed" as a keyword in Hong Kong film and cultural criticism, this passage from Esther Yau's introduction to her anthology *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*:

> Speed is of prime importance for global access. Cultural productions coming from the major metropolitan centers display an explicit self-consciousness of competitive time, as if they embody the notion that conquest of the vast marketplace can only be possible through fast production and instantaneous dispatches.[3]

Yau is alluding here to the quick production and distribution pace of Hong Kong studio films, that once put out an enormous amount of material, but have now declined in annual output (although mainstream feature films are still made relatively quickly compared to Hollywood productions). Various factors – such as fluctuations in the real estate market, video piracy, and the 1997 Asia

financial crisis – led to a decline in production and an increase in Hollywood dominance at the Hong Kong box office beginning in the 1990s.[4] Speed does indeed distinguish Hong Kong cinema's rapid dispersal throughout mainstream and non-mainstream markets. Overseas Chinese communities quickly gain access to and consume Hong Kong films (and television) via video clubs and stores, and the international cult-fan has long relied on video, including poor-quality bootleg copies, to see these films.[5] And in Hong Kong, the Video Compact Disc (VCD), a cheaper digital format with a picture quality inferior to DVD (and more frequently pirated), is a primary means of spectatorship.

Various critical accounts emphasize the phenomenon of quick global access to Hong Kong cinema, but this access must be qualified as indicative of the particular dimension of Hong Kong cinephilia. The reception of Hong Kong cinema is really its reception on video, particularly (but far from exclusively) overseas. New York, for example, recently lost its last remaining Chinatown movie theater, the Music Palace, which was a first-run house for films from Hong Kong. Although the festival circuit has recently enjoyed the popular genre films of Johnnie To, generally speaking, Hong Kong films on the festival circuit are art-auteur productions. In addition, the American distribution of Hong Kong's popular cinema has become a target of frustration and consternation among cinephiles. Miramax, the subject of numerous fan websites – including (with a name presumably inspired by the animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) the *Web Alliance for the Respectful Treatment of Asian Cinema* – has developed a notorious reputation for purchasing the rights to many Hong Kong films and delaying their release for what to some seems an indefinite period of time.[6] For example, after years of anticipation among American fans, the blockbuster Shaolin Soccer (Hong Kong: Stephen Chow, 2001) was finally released in the United States and other Western regions only after being re-edited with added special effects. Miramax also delayed the release of another major box-office success in Asia, Infernal Affairs (Hong Kong: Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, 2002), now being remade by Martin Scorsese for Brad Pitt's production company.[7] In fact, the new trend of simply buying remake rights to Hong Kong films seems the most immediate form of circulation. The Hollywood adaptations of the Japanese film Ringu (Japan: Hideo Nakata, 1998) and Ju-on: The Grudge (Japan: Takashi Shimizu, 2000-2003) have thus far proved to be the most successful examples, with a number of what once were Hong Kong horror films now coming to a theater near you soon via Hollywood.[8]

Yau continues, "Riding on the winds of change, the mutations of commercial Hong Kong cinema since 1980 have foretold a new globalization narrative: that of speed, or the emergence of a 'permanent present' that paradoxically erases earlier notions of space and time and invites nostalgia."[9] It is true that films

produced as recently as 1980 or later may often be forgotten with the newest release of something comparable, and, with the lack of a legal mandate that many other countries have requiring producers to register a print of the film, many do not make it to the Hong Kong Film Archive. This narrative of globalization predicated on the concept of speed, familiar to the academic work regarding the cultural space of Hong Kong and its cinema, could allow the Hong Kong film past, that is, the perceived "primitive" past of chop-socky kung fu exploitation film of the 1960s and 1970s, to disappear – this past at once stands in for the present and provides the very formal antecedent for the "speed" metaphor with the fast-pace of action cinema. "Speed" often collapses two approaches to Hong Kong film – the political economic reading and film form – into one concurrent sweep, a juxtaposition I return to below in the discussion of the temporal inscription of deteriorated classics in conjunction with their historical context of film industry practice and contemporary re-release. As for Yau's examination of a "permanent present," commensurate with the tenets of postmodernist theory as well as, more specifically, in Yau's persuasive argument, the contemporary Hong Kong genre film's eclipse of parochial "Chineseness" in earlier Hong Kong cinema, it is worth noting that with the emergence of an immediate reference point – that is, the 1997 handover, inviting a before-and-after approach – a frenetic history writing project characterizes much recent activity among government institutions, artists, policymakers, journalists, and academics in Hong Kong.[10]

This search for public memory extends to the realm of film culture, most notably with the establishment of a physical space for the Hong Kong Film Archive in 2001. A visit on any day to the Hong Kong Film Archive quickly dispels the notion that Hong Kong is a postmodern space without a past while also revealing the regrettable gaps in the historical record of Hong Kong film. The irrecoverable loss of a majority of the world's film heritage is a well-known fact, while Hong Kong's film legacy has been hit especially hard, with only a handful of films made prior to World War II surviving. One especially unfortunate example is the possibility that the Japanese army may have melted down many films to extract the silver base during the occupation of Hong Kong from 1941 to 1945.[11] Because of the particularly poor climate conditions for film storage in humid Hong Kong, many artifacts in the Archive have come from closing movie theaters in overseas Chinatowns.

The development of the Hong Kong Film Archive has been peppered with astonishing stories of rescues from the dustbins of history. For example, almost 100 films from the 1950s and 1960s were discovered in a dumpster in an alley in Oakland's Chinatown, previously held in a storage room in the basement of a nearby Chinese restaurant.[12] Many artifacts have also been donated by the family members of filmmakers or collectors, and the Archive has celebrated its

relationship with local cinephilia in staging an exhibition of fan magazines and other ephemera accompanied by the stories of the collectors who donated them.[13] Other special exhibits focus not only on film history but the popular culture and everyday life throughout Hong Kong's history, such as projects on fashion and popular literature. The Archive has also functioned as a center of film scholarship in Hong Kong, regularly conducting oral histories, collaborating with local universities on academic conferences and other projects, and releasing a number of richly detailed books on Hong Kong film history. And there seems to be a certain political dimension to the Archive's attention to underappreciated or rare works, providing the unique space to revisit local Cantonese independent productions (prior to the Hong Kong "new wave" of the 1980s) that competed (without much financial success) with major studios, like Shaw Brothers and the Motion Picture and General Investment Company (MP&GI), which produced Mandarin dialect films.

The Hong Kong Film (and Video) Catalogue

The Hong Kong Film Archive is primarily a film-based institution, but in returning to earlier remarks that Hong Kong cinema is often experienced on video, one should also note a few "conservation on video" projects currently underway in Hong Kong. One is led by film producer and critic Roger Garcia, who is duplicating the catalogue of Modern Films onto video, which is comprised of little-known yet significant experimental films from the 1980s.[14] One of the filmmakers represented by Modern Films, Comyn Mo, later became one of the founding directors of the video-art collective videotage, now housed at the Cattle Depot Artists Village.[15] Working with both videotage and the Hong Kong Film Archive, the video artist May Fung began the "iGenerations" project to collect various experimental films from the 1960s to 1980s that had fallen out of circulation. Many of these films were also made by those now considered some of Hong Kong cinema's best-known critics, including Law Kar, Sek Kei and former student filmmaker/critic John Woo.[16]

However, film festival retrospective programs, museums, and repertory theaters across the world, and particularly video stores in Asia and the global Chinatowns, are a testament to a major remastering project of what could be called the Golden Age of Hong Kong Cinema – that of the Mandarin cinema of the two major studios in the 1950s and 1960s, MP&GI and the Shaw Brothers.[17] Hong Kong recovered relatively quickly from the decimation of World War II and the Japanese Occupation, transforming itself from a trade entrepôt to a major industrial center in the 1950s. Part of the impetus in this economic shift was

an influx of Shanghai industrialists to Hong Kong, who escaped the ravages of war on the mainland and the political turmoil following the Communist Party's assumption of power in 1949.[18] It was during the late 1940s and 1950s when Hong Kong, flush with the migration of many filmmakers and studios from Shanghai, overtook Shanghai as the capital of Chinese-language filmmaking.[19] In concert with a changing public culture in Hong Kong, two studios based in Singapore would cement this shift. MP&GI – later changed to its better-known name, Cathay – was established by the Cambridge-educated Loke Wan Tho, who inherited a family business of mining and hotel industries and proposed to "modernize the everyday culture of Asia" with state-of-the-art theaters across Southeast Asia.[20] Acquiring the financially-troubled Yung-hwa studio in Hong Kong, he moved from distribution and exhibition to a fully vertically integrated enterprise, producing films in the 1950s and 1960s that focused on contemporary melodrama, comedies, and musicals portraying a middle-class Hong Kong (despite rampant poverty) that had yet to emerge, but soon would.[21] The success of Cathay's Mandarin-language films spurred Run Run Shaw, of the Shaw and Sons distribution and theater enterprise also based in Singapore, to move to Hong Kong and personally oversee the establishment of a huge motion picture production studio. Fierce competition among the two studios yielded a variety of lavish, big-budget films not yet seen in the region, and out of the reach for independent Cantonese-dialect low-budget films. Eventually, Shaw Brothers rose to dominate the market, particularly after the untimely death of Loke Wan Tho in 1964 and the popularity of Shaw's new school "wuxia" (martial arts) film genre introduced in the late 1960s.[22]

In 2000, Cathay began digitally remastering over 200 of their films into a "classic library" for television broadcast, albeit advertised as "digitally restored."[23] Gradually over the past few years, a handful of these "classic" films have been released on VCD and DVD by Panorama Entertainment, a video distributor that recently purchased the rights to the library of the Golden Harvest studio (Shaw Brother's rival in the 1970s and the producer of Bruce Lee's Hong Kong films) and which is now also embarking on film production. A number of Cathay films, as well as related objects and ephemera from the studio library, were also recently transferred to the Hong Kong Film Archive with the eclipse of Cathay's lease on their warehouse.[24] However, these Cathay video releases come on the heels of the more heavily marketed release of classics from what was its major competitor, and surely many have seen the quite explicit homage to Hong Kong cinema's past in Quentin Tarantino's recent film Kill Bill: Vol. 1 (USA: 2003), the credit sequence of which opens with the title card that opened every Shaw Brothers production filmed in "Shawscope," Shaws' version of Cinemascope. Juxtaposed with a welcome message trailer from what perhaps was a grindhouse or B-movie theater, the film squarely situates Taran-

tino's Hong Kong cinephilia in the realm of cult spectatorship – but, as a nostalgia that specifies watching the films in a movie theater and not on video.[25]

Though not, in fact, a Shaw Brothers production, parts of Kill Bill were filmed at Shaw's Movietown, the studio that once provided the location for the sets of many classic martial arts films but is now the site of the biggest commercial film restoration project ever undertaken. For years, the reigning patriarch of the studio, Run Run Shaw, refused to lend out titles for re-release from the vast film library – not even to educational institutions – after ceasing film production in the 1980s to concentrate on film exhibition and distribution and television production with Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB), the station which provided the training ground for many filmmakers associated with the Hong Kong new wave as well as many of today's stars. In 2002, the Shaw Brothers catalogue, totaling over 760 films, was finally sold to a Malaysian media conglomerate, which established Celestial Pictures to restore and distribute the films on video and on cable television. Celestial embarked on a 24-hour-a-day work schedule to digitally remaster and release an incredible quota of ten to twenty titles per month. In addition to releasing the titles on DVD and VCD, Celestial established a Shaw Brothers cable network that currently airs in various Asian countries. They also own distribution rights to a number of current films and also finance new productions. Thus, we are in Hong Kong perhaps witnessing something similar to Lew Wasserman's purchase of the Paramount library, which allowed him to capitalize on redistributing old product while engaging in television and film production. However, Shaw does maintain an interest in Celestial Pictures, and the two companies are cooperating together with another major studio, China Star Entertainment, to build a new multi-billion-dollar studio complex.

Considering as well the aforementioned Fortune Star's purchase of the Golden Harvest library, these few major remastering projects can be described in terms similar to those which Thomas Elsaesser has used to discuss digitization: as "the totem-notion around which a notoriously conservative industry is in the process of reorganizing – and this usually means reinvesting – itself, in order to do much the same as it has always done."[26] In many ways, the "remastering" project of Hong Kong's golden era of Mandarin cinema is providing the capital to allow Hong Kong cinema and television to restructure itself, including, perhaps, a shift away from local dialect cinema (Cantonese) to a rebirth of Mandarin cinema. Indeed, the satellite station TVB, which includes the Shaws as a major stockholder, has purchased the exclusive rights to show Celestial films on its channel, buying its own product back to re-sell.

The Pathology of Re-Presenting the Past

Celestial's project should be met with some skepticism, not least of all because they are not, in fact, restoring these films into archival quality resolutions, but rather "remastering" them onto DVD for standard broadcast resolution. However, some titles were released for a limited commercial run in theaters across Asia (Miramax holds the North American rights) on digital projection, considered by some experts an inevitable replacement for film projection commensurate with the rise of digital technology for production, post-production, and conservation.[27] Both the New York Film Festivals and Cannes showed a print of Celestial's showcase project, the "restored" Come Drink with Me (Hong Kong: King Hu, 1966), starring Cheng Pei-pei, who has done much promotion for Celestial while her career has enjoyed something of a resurgence after playing the villain in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (Taiwan/Hong Kong/USA/China: Ang Lee, 2001). Though the lab has a mandate to remaster three to four films per week, Come Drink with Me received two weeks of attention, digitally remastered in high definition format and then transferred back to film.[28]

With such a large-scale commercial project, automatic restoration software is typically employed, and Celestial enlisted the American firm DaVinci to use its "Revival" system. As is the case with many such projects, professionals are not conducting the actual pass of the film through the digital output. Operators of the equipment are trained on the job, and a worker interviewed for a fan magazine reported, "when I joined, many of the people there had almost no experience in film and video and the manager who was hired later didn't even know what a Digital Beta tape was!"[29] The film is processed through various modules, such as those termed de-Flicker, de-Shake, de-Scratch, de-Blotch and de-Noise. A hidden module, working constantly in the background, is referred to as "motion estimation." This module addresses the occasional fast motion that will be interpreted as dirt and interpolated with new pixels, the residual trace of the moving object deleted, with the missing object then referred to as an "artifact."[30] The Shaw Brothers' martial arts films presented a particular problem in this regard, requiring the composition of a new algorithm to approximate kung fu action. Thoma Thurau of SGI, which provided the hardware for the project, reported: "An actor would be throwing a punch, and the system would think that the unusually fast motion was dirt."[31]

In the discourse of restoration techniques, this kind of motion – that is, motion that the software cannot track and thus reads as damage – has been termed "pathological motion."[32] Types of motion that are recognized as typically causing problems for the "motion estimation" process are movement of cloth, water,

and smoke. Besides the fast movement of bodies in kung fu, these are all typical features of the martial arts film's *mise en scène*. Come Drink with Me also includes all of these elements, highlighting the martial arts film's exploration of the various planes within the phenomenal world. Come Drink with Me is something of a transitional work in the genre's history, still using on occasion typical Shanghai martial arts special effects from the 1930s, as with the Drunken Knight character who has the power to push water and the air. To move through air, or to move air itself, leaves a visible trace, like ripples in water.

Yet why does this movement qualify as "pathological," if we consider the word's connotations? With all the emphasis on other-worldly (or, "unusual") movement in the martial arts film, is there something especially pathological about the genre? Charges of pathology in fact do resonate with the history of the martial arts film. Not only has it occupied a marginal existence in the West as a low-culture, trashy, or cult object, but also in Hong Kong (and its origins and circulations in Mainland China and Taiwan), it has at various periods of "nation building" propaganda in the history of modern China been a target – that is, considered as something to get rid of, to be inoculated from. For example, in the censorship of martial arts films (and, particularly, Cantonese dialect films) in the 1930s in advance of the New Life movement in Republican China, or in the "healthy realism" campaign of Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s, in which the "health" of the nation was endangered by the "feudal superstitions" and perceived immoral sensationalism of the martial arts film, the genre has come under attack for supposedly immanent moral or political failings.[33]

Come Drink with Me, as the inaugural showcase for Shaw's remastering project, presents an interesting case study. I've already alluded to its transitional stylistic elements, and the film did indeed usher in what was promoted as "Shaw's Color *Wuxia* Century."[34] However, Hu, under contract to the Shaws as an assistant director and actor, directed only this one film for the studio before going independent and moving his operations to Taiwan (and later to Korea and unsuccessfully to America). In considering how the attempts to "remaster" the martial arts action film– that is, to try to catch the action that we always miss – Come Drink with Me presents a particular challenge, following David Bordwell's analysis of Hu's aesthetic as one of "the glimpse." He writes:

> How, we might ask, can cinema express the other-worldly grace and strength of these supremely disciplined but still mortal fighters? The solution he found was to stress certain qualities of these feats – their abruptness, their speed, their mystery. And he chose to do so by treating these feats as only partly visible… Hu makes his action faster than the eyes – and even, it seems, the camera – can follow. Often we are allowed only a trace of the warriors' amazing feats. We do not see the action so much as glimpse it.[35]

Hu pioneered some of the quickest editing in Hong Kong cinema at the time, and had a practice of deleting frames between the beginning and end of even the most mundane movements, creating at times a jumpy or blurry effect.[36] Readers familiar with Bordwell's work may recall that in prefacing his texts, he often makes a point of insisting on reproducing frame enlargements to illustrate his arguments, as opposed to production stills, and thus many of Bordwell's books are gloriously illustrated with color plates. Interestingly, in his essay on Hu, the images he uses reveal the difficulty of attempting to capture the image of motion in the static form of the photograph. All of the photos of the action scenes are blurry and largely illegible. This image is, in a sense, the trace he talks about, and this is the image read as pathological, or "dirty," by automatic restoration processes.

The other unique feature of Come Drink with Me (consistent with some of Hu's other works) is its revitalization of the female heroine tradition that can be traced back to the earliest martial arts films made in Shanghai. The martial arts moves performed by the heroine take on a more radical meaning, as has been argued on occasion, as the woman surpasses the patriarchal order, flying through the air across borders and traveling (often by passing for a man) through the male-dominated spaces of the *jiang hu* and roadside inn (a central setting for many of Hu's films).[37] Keeping in mind the rubric of pathological motion (or movement), we can consider its other appearance in the medical films discussed by Lisa Cartwright in her book, *Screening the Body*. She explains that pathological movement was often interpreted as a sign of perversion, like interpretations of sexual perversion, "putting the body to uses that have nothing to do with immanent purpose."[38] The martial arts movement is often theatrical and not realistic, yet as Zhang Zhen finds in the early Shanghai films – and as Bruce Lee (though the most utilitarian martial arts hero) makes clear in a vengeful attack on a Japanese *dojo* in Fist of Fury (Hong Kong: Wei Lo, 1972), AKA The Chinese Connection – the martial arts' transformative power over the body was in part a relief from, and social uplifting response to, China's denigration as the "sick man of Asia" after it lost, among other things, control of Hong Kong after the Opium Wars. As Zhang describes:

> Unfailingly, the heroine is endowed with extraordinary body techniques that mark her as a cyborg-like creature. One such technique is the ability to effortlessly move the body either horizontally or vertically, such as flying in the sky or leaping over a tall wall. In other words, what makes possible the instant bodily transportation from one location to another hinges upon the capability of losing one's gravity in space and overcoming the restraint of time.[39]

Any anxiety concerning this female embodiment of technological and spiritual strength was quickly displaced by Hu's competitor and the most prolific direc-

tor under contract to Shaws, Zhang Che. Zhang's martial arts films ushered in what he called a cinema of "staunch masculinity," and promoted the rise of male stars in a popular cinema at the time dominated by female stars (in all genres), a practice that extended far past his retirement, particularly with the films of one of his protégés, John Woo.[40] The shift is most clear in Zhang's Golden Swallow (Hong Kong: 1968) something of a sequel to Come Drink with Me that marginalizes Cheng Peipei's heroine character and makes her the damsel in distress, despite her character's name giving the film its title. While Celestial entered Cannes with Come Drink with Me, it returned in 2004 to distribute a new independent Chinese film and, recreate the earlier order of gender representation, with a newly "restored" version of one of the titles of Zhang's classic castration-revenge trilogy, The New One-Armed Swordsman (Hong Kong: 1971).[41]

The rubric of pathology has, finally, also been engaged in the discourse of the relationship of speed with Hong Kong's cinema and cultural space. In *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, Ackbar Abbas describes how with the looming deadline of the 1997 handover, Hong Kong began a reappraisal of the significance of its popular culture, one that takes the explosive form of "disappearance." With the anxiety among Hong Kong citizens over the handover exacerbated by the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, what was once taken for granted threatened to disappear, revealing a "pathology of presence" where the city space is one of misrecognition, not unlike, perhaps the "pathological movement" that restoration software misrecognizes as something else – a misrecognition that is no longer the sense of coincidence and déjà vu experienced on the city street, but that can only happen with the speed of the immediate electronic transmission.[42]

In the various remastering projects discussed above, the films are indeed moving at full speed, now available in, more often than not, quality formats superior to the state in which they were found; yet, numerous Hong Kong cinephiles will note that there is something missing, particularly among the pixels when these video images are blown up for projection in the repertory theater. The balance of the restrictions of preservation versus public access is a fundamental debate for any archiving project, but with Celestial's corporate mandate, here the "healthy" re-packaging and remembering of this seminal period in Hong Kong's film history has opted for mass consumption. Such accessibility of course runs counter to one of the key symptoms of a cinephile's pathology of desire, that is, assuming exclusive ownership, even authorship, over a coveted film. And the cinephile will also remain fixated on a particular moment in a film as the source of meaning; in the martial arts film, we should suspect such a moment would include this pathological movement that give the films their "other-worldly" quality (or, as Paul Willemen describes the process of cinephi-

lia, "a sense of its own 'beyond'") in excess of a classical narrative's representational limits of realist temporality and visual perspective – the very moments that frustrate the remastering machine's attempts at standardization.[43] Run Run Shaw reportedly screened films for himself and his staff on a regular basis (often going to great lengths to find prints of European films). Now with the keys to Shaw's library, the CEO of Celestial Pictures, William Pfeiffer, claims to screen a few films from the shelves every night, surveying their remastering potential.[44] The remastering project has in part been guided by the spectatorship of both DVD enthusiasts and corporate executives, engaging in that perversion one can diagnose as "cinephilia," while at the same time cleaning things up for the video store.

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Notes

1. Abbas, Ackbar. *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 4.
2. The strategy for Hong Kong's publicity campaign, and registration of "Hong Kong" as a brand name, is explained online in "Brand Hong Kong" at Hong Kong SAR Government Information Centre. <http://www.brandhk.com.hk>.
3. Yau, Esther. "Introduction. Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World." Yau, Esther (ed.) *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, p. 3.
4. Teo, Stephen. *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions*, London: BFI, 1997, p. vii.
5. An interesting sketch of video shops in overseas Chinese communities can be found in Wong Hing-yuk, Cindy. "Cities, Cultures and Cassettes. Hong Kong Cinema and Transnational Audiences." *Post Script* 19.1, 1999.
6. Miramax chairman Harvey Weinstein addressed these critics in a guest column for *Daily Variety*, citing scheduling and marketing logistical difficulties. Weinstein, Harvey. "Climbing the Chinese wall." *Daily Variety*, September 1, 2004: p.15.
7. The Scorsese version is tentatively titled The Departed, and lists as executive producers Roy Lee and Doug Davison, who produced the Hollywood remake of Ringu. Brodesser, Claude and Cathy Dunkley. "Damon Goes Undercover for WB." *Daily Variety*, July 23, 2004: p. 1.
8. For example, Tom Cruise's production company is producing a remake of the Pang Brothers, The Eye (Hong Kong/UK/Thailand/Singapore: Oxide Pang Chun and Danny Pang, 2002.) An interesting analysis of the recent phenomenon of Hollywood remakes of Asian films can be found in Xu, Gary Gang. "Remaking East Asia, Outsourcing Hollywood." *Senses of Cinema* 34, 2005.

9. Yau, Esther. "Introduction. Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World." p. 7.
10. The films of the Shaw Brothers are particularly emblematic of popular Hong Kong filmmaking evoking an ahistorical Chinese past, and Sek Kei provides an effective summary of this approach in "Shaw Movie Town's 'China Dream' and 'Hong Kong Sentiments.'" Wong Ain-ling (ed.). *The Shaw Screen: A Preliminary Study*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2003.
11. Fonoroff, Paul. *Silver Light: A Pictorial History of Hong Kong Cinema, 1920-1970*, Hong Kong: Joint Publishing HK, 1997, p. xi.
12. Lee, Henry K. "Film Experts Find Treasure in Trash Bin: Vintage Martial-Arts Movies Bound for Hong Kong Archive." *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 28, 1999.
13. For example, see Hong Kong Film Archive, *Archive Treasures*.
14. For further information on Modern Films see Möller, Olaf. "A Lost Era of the Avant-Garde Was Forever in Search of the Elusive Nature of Home." *Film Comment* 40.5, 2004: pp. 20, 22.
15. After 1997, a number of artists' collectives sprung up, squatting in unused former factory spaces. Some of these have come and gone, but a few remain devoted to Hong Kong experimental art, such as Para/Site and the Cattle Depot Artists Village.
16. Fung, May (ed.). *i-GENERATIONs: Independent, Experimental and Alternative Creations from the 60s to Now*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2001.
17. One recent touring exhibition that screened in various American cities was sponsored by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, consequently including promotional material for the aforementioned Brand Hong Kong, advertising "Asia's World City."
18. For a history of modern Hong Kong, see Tsang, Steve. *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2004.
19. Law Kar (ed.). *The China Factor in Hong Kong Cinema*, Hong Kong: The Urban Council, 1990; Fu, Poshek. *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong: The Politics of Chinese Cinemas*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003; Zhen, Zhang. "The 'Shanghai Factor' in Hong Kong Cinema. A Tale of Two Cities in Historical Perspectives." *Asian Cinema* 10.1, 1998: pp. 146-159.
20. Fu, Poshek. "Hong Kong and Singapore. A History of the Cathay Cinema." p. 66.
21. Hong Kong Film Archive programmer Law Kar discussed this notion of the Cathay cinema depicting a future of increased living standards at the MP&GI Symposium presented by the Center for Humanities Research at Lingnan University and the Hong Kong Film Archive. An abbreviated account of the conference proceedings can be found in Liu Suet-wan, collated. "Summaries of HKFA Seminars, MP&GI Symposium. Session 5: 'Studio Style.'" Agnes Lam (trans.). *Hong Kong Film Archive Newsletter* 20, 2002.
22. This is an all too brief rudimentary history of the two studios, condensed for space limitations, leaving out the particularly interesting political implications of the importance of the Taiwan market once the Mandarin-language audience of mainland China closed its borders in 1950. For a more complete history of Cathay/MP&GI, see Lim, Kay Tong. *Cathay: 55 Years of Cinema*. Singapore: Landmark Books, 1991; Yu Mo-wan. "The Cathay Organisation and Hong Kong Cinema." Wong Ain-ling (ed.). *The Cathay Story*, Hong Kong Film Archive, 2002; and Cheung, Stephanie Po-yin. "A Southeast Asian Tycoon and His Movie Dream. Loke Wan Tho and MP&GI." Wong Ain-ling (ed.) *The Cathay Story*; on Shaws see Cheung, Stephanie

Po-yin. "The Industrial Evolution of a Fraternal Enterprise. The Shaw Brothers and the Shaw Organisation." Wong Ain-ling (ed.) *The Shaw Screen: A Preliminary Study,* Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2003.

23. Groves, Don. "Cathay Enters Digital Arena." *Variety* 15-21 May 2000: p. 70.
24. So, Karen. "Bringing Starlight Back to Hong Kong – The Return of the Cathay Films." *HKFA Newsletter*, nr. 29. 2004: n.p.
25. In a script provided to overseas distributors of the film for subtitling, an explanatory parenthetical for this title card reads, "Note that this message harks back to the '70s-era Chinese martial arts/revenge movie genre best exemplified by directors Cheh Chang and the Shaw Brothers, to which the director is paying homage."
26. Elsaesser, Thomas, "Digital Cinema: Delivery, Event, Time." Elsaesser, Thomas, Kay Hoffmann (eds.). *Cinema Futures, Cain, Abel or Cable*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 1998, p. 203.
27. "D-cinema and e-cinema, once well established, will remove colour print film stocks from the market, and with them may go almost all other motion picture photochemical supplies and services. It is not clear how long this will take but it seems inevitable. Estimates of 5-15 years have been put forward" from: "FIRST PROJECT WORKPACKAGE 3. Motion Picture Film Digitization for Preservation and Restoration." *State of the Art Reports,* Project First: Film Restoration and Conservation Strategies, 2003.
28. High definition format being 1080/24p. See "SGI® Technology Powers World's First Large-Scale Digital Film Remastering Center." Mountain View, CA: Silicon Graphics, Inc., 2003.
29. "Cleaning Up the Classics." *Hong Kong Digital* 4.200, n.d. <http://www.dighkmovies.com/v4/200/200.html>.
30. A demonstration can be found on a featurette included as an extra feature on the DVD of the latest *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) restoration.
31. "SGI® Technology Powers World's First Large-Scale Digital Film Remastering Center." Mountain View, CA: Silicon Graphics, Inc., 2003, p. 3.
32. Kokaram, Anil, et al. "Robust and Automatic Digital Restoration Systems. Coping with Reality." Amsterdam: International Broadcasting Convention, 2002, p. 405. For further studies of "pathological motion," also see Biemond, J., R.L. Lagendijk, and P.M.B. van Roosmalen. "Restoration and Storage of Film and Video Archive Material." Byrnes, J.S. (ed.). *Signal Processing for Multimedia*, IOS Press, 1999; and Biemond, J., A. Rares, and M.J.T. Reinders. "Statistical Analysis of Pathological Motion Areas." *IEEE Seminar on Digital Restoration of Film and Video Archives*, 2001.
33. On the banning of early martial arts films in China, see Zhen, Zhang, "Bodies in the Air. The Magic of Science and the Fate of the Early "'Martial Arts' Film in China." *Postscript* 20.2 & 3, 2001, p. 55-57.
34. Law, Kar. "The Origin and Development of Shaws' Colour *Wuxia* Century." Wong Ain-ling (ed.). *The Shaw Screen: A Preliminary Study.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2003.
35. Bordwell, David. "Richness Through Imperfection. King Hu and the Glimpse." Poshek Fu, David Desser (eds.). *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 200.
36. Rayns, Tony. "Director: King Hu." *Sight and Sound* 45.1, 1975/1976.

37. For discussion of the gender politics of the martial arts film see Zhang Zhen, "Bodies in the Air."; and Reynaud, Berenice. "The Book, the Goddess and the Hero. Sexual Politics in the Chinese Martial Arts Film." *Senses of Cinema*, no. 26, May-June 2003. <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/03/26/sexual_politics_chinese_martial_arts.html>.
38. Cartwright, Lisa. *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, p. 53
39. Zhang Zhen. "Bodies in the Air." p. 54.
40. Chang Cheh. *Chang Cheh: A Memoir*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2004, p. 79-103.
41. The castration-fear motif of Zhang's *The One-Armed Swordsman* films is addressed most directly in Stanley Kwan's documentary, Yang Yin: Gender in Chinese Cinema (Hong Kong/UK: 1996), in addition to a more general discussion of his representation of masculinity. Also see Teo, Stephen. *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions*. London: BFI, 1997; and Lam, Michael. "The Mysterious Gayness in Chang Cheh's Unhappy World." Wong Ain-ling (ed.) *The Shaw Screen: A Preliminary Study.*
42. Abbas, Ackbar. *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, p. 8.
43. Willemen, Paul. "Through the Glass Darkly: Cinephilia Reconsidered." *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory.* London: British Film Institute, 1994, p. 230.
44. Hansen, Jeremy. "Reach for the Sky." *Variety*, 20-26 August 2001: p. 22.