

REPRESENTATION OF FEMALES AS VICTIMS IN HONG KONG CRIME FILMS (2003-2015)

Perspectives from *One Nite in Mongkok*, *Protégé*
and *The Stool Pigeon*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of females as victims in award-winning Hong Kong crime films, *One Nite in Mongkok* (2004), *Protégé* (2007), and *The Stool Pigeon* (2010), which were recognised in the *Hong Kong Film Awards* in the period following the 2003 signing of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) with the Mainland government. Using a textual and critical multimodal discourse analysis approach, it analyses the narrative, visual and audio elements to uncover representations of female protagonists' victimhood. This study sets the first benchmark for understanding filmic representations of gender in the post-CEPA era, which can then be compared with earlier Hong Kong films.

This study argues that female victims in the selected case studies are represented as being from the underclass and who suffer from physical and mental violence exerted by male perpetrators. The films metaphorically reflect a broader context of female submission and male dominance in a patriarchal society and an anxiety over the growing power of women in a capitalist society in which underclass women are reduced to commodities that are exchanged among aggressive male gangsters. Significantly, however, this unjust victimization of female protagonists also operates as a catalyst to motivate sympathetic male protagonists who have romantic involvement with them to make better moral decisions.

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student



Tingting HU

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

A beautiful girl, from a small village in Mainland China, works as a prostitute in Hong Kong and suffers from violence and rape at the hands of a local gangster.

A young mother, who is forced to use drugs by her husband and becomes addicted, falls in love with an undercover detective.

A pretty girl, the girlfriend of a criminal gang leader, starts a fight and is brutally injured by a group of gangsters.

Each of these three characters is the leading female role in one of three popular Hong Kong crime films produced after 2003, namely *One Nite in Mongkok/Wangjiao Heiye* (Derek Tung-Sing Yee, 2004), *Protégé/Mentu* (Derek Tung-Sing Yee, 2007) and *The Stool Pigeon/Xianren* (Dante Lam, 2010). These films were highly appraised with awards in the *Hong Kong Film Awards* (hereafter HKFA). This study selects the three films as case studies that have women as central characters and portrays them as victims, which has been the most common framing of women in award-winning Hong Kong crime films.

Hong Kong cinema has long had a reputation for its violent genres. Audiences have been captivated by swordsmen and kung fu masters in the world of martial arts, as well as by the extravagant spectacles of gangsters, hit men, drug dealers and detectives engaging in melees in contemporary, cosmopolitan settings. While men are predominantly shown in action roles, the female protagonists tend to be constructed as weak and insecure.

However, few academic studies have explored such representations of female victims in depth.

In this study, the genre of crime films is chosen as the lens through which to explore the representation of females as victims in Hong Kong society. Crime film is seldom analysed as a genre in the field of film studies because it is often considered too broad to be investigated as a distinct genre with typical narrative formats, themes, characters or filming styles (Kristof, 2010). This is in contrast with the specific genres of kung fu or martial arts. However, crime films, which I define as dramas without acrobatic fighting or kung fu that portray 'realistic' representations of criminals, the law and contemporary society (drawing on Clarens, 1967), are an important genre in their own right. These films portray criminal activities and their consequences as the principle line of the narratives (Rafter, 2006), and focus on three main kinds of characters, namely criminals, victims and avengers, though boundaries between these characterizations are often blurred (Leitch, 2002).

As discussed in this study, crime films play an important artistic role in presenting issues of social concern. The representation of crime, including violence against women, reflects a relationship between filmmakers, audiences and society as well as changing political and cultural values (Miller & McMullan, 2011). Hence, an analysis of filmic representations of women in crime films will contribute to an understanding of attitudes towards crime, women and their place in society.

This study is situated in the field of feminist media studies. This field has been extensive in Western academia with rapid development occurring in the 1970s (Slocum, 2001).

Particular focus has included the link between psychoanalytic theories and the male gaze on women in classical Hollywood films (Mulvey, 1975). The research has also covered the characterization of female victims (Clover, 1992; Eschholz & Bufkin, 2001), female violence (Creed, 1993; O'Day, 2004), and gender stereotypes (Campbell, 1993; Gilpatric, 2010; Madriz, 1997; Messner, 2002; Williams, 1991). In the Western context, horror, action and gangster genres, which are closely related to crime films and are often classified as sub-genres of crime films, have been the subjects of analysis. However, an in-depth analysis of female representation in the crime 'drama' genre remains limited.

In contrast to Western-oriented women's studies, which have a particular concern with viewing experiences, women's studies in the domain of Chinese film studies, including Hong Kong films, have been more textually oriented, focusing on the construction of female characters. Scholars have paid attention to the representation of females in martial arts films (Cai, 2005; Edwards, 2011), the construction of women warriors (Edwards, 2011; Funnell, 2014; Schubart, 2007) and female characters' internal self-examination in melodramas (Chow, 2007). While there is relatively extensive research on martial arts films in Hong Kong cinema, the scholarship of female representations in other film genres is scarce. This study begins to fill these gaps by offering an in-depth analysis of women in Hong Kong crime dramas, with a focus on the representation of women who are constructed as victims, pointing to two key research questions that will be explored in this study:

- How are female victims represented in post-CEPA (2003) award-winning Hong Kong crime films?

- How do the representations of female victims in contemporary Hong Kong crime films relate to the social and political discourses on women and violence in Hong Kong more broadly?

This study focuses on films produced since 2003 as this is the year when the governments of Hong Kong and the Mainland signed the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA). This year is regarded as an important turning point in the history of the Hong Kong film industry and marks a new trajectory in its interactions with the Mainland. Hong Kong films have obtained great benefits from the massive film market and investment from the Mainland, especially following the Asian financial crisis in 1997–98 and the spread of the SARS disease in 2003, which had a particularly devastating impact on the Hong Kong economy. Filmmakers and film companies in the Mainland have also improved their filming and production techniques through collaboration with their peers from Hong Kong. After 2003, Hong Kong filmmakers have reframed content to appeal to the Mainland censors and have integrated more Mainland elements to cater to the tastes of Mainland audiences, with 80% of Hong Kong films being made with the Mainland market in mind (Zhu & Rosen, 2010). This study is the first to specifically focus on the representation of female victims in post-CEPA crime films, and aims to provide a benchmark for future studies that examine the shift in specific representations as the Mainland and Hong Kong relations have intensified.

This study adopts textual and critical multimodal discourse analyses as its central methodology. It analyses how diverse forms of expressive elements in films interact to create stories and characters, and how they connect with broader social and political discourses. The selected film texts are analysed from three perspectives of narratives

(stories and plots), visuals (mise-en-scène and camera work) and audio (dialogue and sound) elements, and issues raised in the films are linked to social and political discourses on gender and violence in Hong Kong.

The next chapter, Chapter 2, reviews the key theories of feminist film studies in Western and Chinese contexts. It then explains the choice of focus on women in Hong Kong crime dramas. Finally, it introduces the Hong Kong film industry from a historical perspective, focusing on the crime genre, the impact of the CEPA, as well as women's movements and feminist consciousness in films.

Chapter 3 details the theoretical and methodological approach used in this study, including the criteria for selecting the three case studies. It explains how the films are analysed from the three aspects of narratives (stories and plots), visuals (mise-en-scène and camera work) and audio (dialogue and sound) elements, which are underpinned by a critical and multimodal discourse analysis approach.

Chapter 4 engages in a detailed analysis of the film texts of the three case studies, focusing on the representation of violence against women and the impact of their victimization on men. Linking the findings to broader social and political discourses, it discusses how the films reinforce a sense of female submission and male dominance, arguing that this relates to a broader anxiety among men in a traditionally patriarchal society as women's social status in society rises. It also discusses a number of broader social issues that arise in the films, including the strong social power of male gangsters and the inequality between Mainland immigrants and native Hong Kongers. It argues that these films reflect an economic-oriented Hong Kong capitalist society, where women from the underclass are reduced to commodities that are exchanged among aggressive male gangsters.

Finally, Chapter 5, the conclusion, reviews the significance of this study from feminist, cinematic and critical perspectives by emphasising links between cinematic representations of violence against women and broader social concerns over the role of women in social and political discourse in Chinese society and women's (and men's) mental health. It then indicates some potential directions for future research in Chinese/Hong Kong context.

Overall, through analysing the representation of females as victims in Hong Kong crime films, this study provides insights into perceptions of the role of women and violence in contemporary Hong Kong society. It aims to provoke further discussion on the impact of growing relations among Chinese filmmakers from Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland, Taiwan and further afield on representations violence and of the place of women in Chinese society.

CHAPTER 2 FEMINISM AND HONG KONG CRIME FILMS

This chapter canvasses feminist theories as well as theories of crime and violence in the media, with a focus on the discussion of these issues in Hong Kong film studies. It identifies gaps in the studies of women, crime and violence in Hong Kong crime films. It then introduces the background of the Hong Kong film industry and its interaction with the Mainland film market, with particular emphasis on the period since the 2003 signing of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA). It also discusses the impact of women's social movements on feminist consciousness in Hong Kong films.

Feminism and Film Studies

The Western Context

This study is situated in the field of feminist media studies, which developed rapidly in the 1970s in Western academia. One of the classic theories was proposed by a British scholar, Laura Mulvey in her well-known paper, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" published in 1975 in *Screen*. Mulvey's work was one of the first major essays that shifted the orientation of film theory on classical Hollywood films from the relationship between art and reality towards psychoanalytic theories and developed a framework to examine the intersection between film theory, psychoanalysis and feminism. Exploring the link between social practices and filmic representations, Mulvey (1975) argued that the female body on the screen in classical Hollywood cinema was constructed as an object of gaze for heterosexual male spectators. She proposed two distinct modes of the male gaze, namely 'voyeuristic', referring to women as images 'to be looked at', and 'fetishistic', referring to women as being a substitute or a stimulus for sexual gratification, and whose bodies are transformed into imaginary objects of physical beauty in such a way that makes male viewers feel satisfied. Based on psychoanalysis, she argued that to build up an illusion of

viewing pleasure, cinematic codes shaped the gaze on women as an object in imaginary worlds through the filmic creation of the dimension of time (editing, narrative) and space (distance, editing). She argued that women are constructed in a particular way to be looked at as the spectacle itself. This theory set out to uncover social interpretations of sexual differences in viewing habits and the unconsciousness underpinning of patriarchal ideals in film.

However, Mulvey was criticized for assuming the impossibility of the enjoyment of classical Hollywood cinema by women and later addressed these issues in “Afterthoughts on ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946)” (1981) in which she argued that female audiences might waver between a male-coded and a female-coded analytic viewing position. Her thoughts motivated the development of theories on the spectatorship of gay, lesbian and bisexual viewers. For instance, the British scholar of queer studies, Richard Dyer (1986), grounded his work on Mulvey's theory to explore the imitation of female stars by homosexual men and women. Feminist critic, Gaylyn Studlar (1985), also draws on Mulvey's theory that male viewers obtain visual pleasure from the viewpoint of being dominant, but extensively problematized it. She agreed with Mulvey on the importance of viewing pleasure obtained from watching films, but believed that both male and female viewers are able to obtain pleasure from viewing a film, and that the act of looking is not purely a male domain. Though these theories explore the spectatorship of female images in cinema, which is not the focus of this study, they offer insightful perspectives from which to interrogate filmic representations of women.

Studying female victims is one angle through which to analyse the representation of

female characters in films. US-based scholars, Eschholz and Bufkin (2001), who have investigated the gendered nature of violent crime with a focus on the representations of criminals and victims in films, have argued that the media is effective in influencing people in society to believe that violence is a way to achieve masculinity. Drawing on Hirsch (1994) and Meyers (1997), the authors examined female archetypes in films. They argued that women in these crime films are mainly categorized into stereotypically dichotomous groups of virgins and vamps and that women are either traditional good girls who need to be protected by men, or anti-traditional bad girls who are punished by violence and crime. However, neither good nor bad girls are immune from being brutalized by criminals. While Eschholz and Bufkin's research focused on Hollywood films, Hong Kong films are similarly male-dominated, and some of this theory may be applicable. However, in many Hong Kong films, the distinction between good and bad women is often blurred. For instance, it is often hard to define a female criminal as good or bad because she may have a good nature and be forced to commit a crime, which actually arouses the audience's sympathy.

Nevertheless, women are not always victims, but are also constructed as perpetrators in many films. For instance, the representation of women as monsters in horror films has been studied by Barbara Creed, a scholar based in Australia (1993). Creed argued that female bodies are created as whole or mutilated, as somewhere on the borderline between human and inhuman, good and evil, and/or as having normal or abnormal sexual desire. Creed's concept of borderlines can be usefully applied to the present study of Hong Kong crime films to examine how female victims influence male characters to be moral or immoral, or lawful or unlawful, in the context of their romantic and violent interactions with the male protagonists.

Besides female victims, Western scholars have also explored representations of women as warriors in films. UK-based scholar, Marc O' Day (2004), has suggested three interrelated propositions relating to action heroines in contemporary adventure-action films. The first proposition is that action-adventure cinema often calls into question the so-called common sense depiction of women in a patriarchal culture where men are stereotypically recognized as powerful, strong, rational, and active, while women are believed to be soft, weak, insecure, passive, and dependent. In action-adventure cinema male and female representations do not follow this stereotype. The second proposition is that women warriors in action-adventure cinema are not only erotic objects incorporated to satisfy an audience's viewing pleasure, but are also key action figures in the narrative structure. The third related proposition is about spectatorship, suggesting that viewers are attracted to watch action movies because of various motivations associated with gender, ethnicity, age, social class, or personality. It does not completely follow Mulvey's codes of 'voyeuristic' and 'fetishistic', because 'action babes' satisfy the viewing pleasure of both male and female audiences. O' Day's (2004) theory indicates that action heroines do not only present their feminine beauty and sexual attraction, which is patriarchally defined, but also show them as having a masculine strength similar to male heroes. Although O' Day's (2004) theory is built around women warriors from the spectator perspective, it provides useful prompts for exploring the interactions between female and male characters, which can be applied to the analysis of female victims in Hong Kong crime films.

Overall, in the Western context, feminist studies of female representations in films cover both portrayals of females as victims and as warriors, and have a strong focus on spectatorship. However, while female victims, monsters and warriors have been analysed

specifically in horror and action films, there remains a dearth of research on the representation of women in crime dramas.

The Chinese Context

The representation of women in the context of Chinese films, including Hong Kong films, has heavily focused on the genre of martial arts (*wuxia*) and women warriors. The imaginary martial arts world has a radically different social system from reality in law, ideology and regulations. Yet, as US-based scholar, Rong Cai's (2005) analysis of the gender imagination in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Ang Lee, 2000) showed, the martial arts world does not exist in a social or ideological vacuum. While the female protagonists are key figures in martial arts storylines and not simply erotic objects for the male (or female) gaze, the characters still have to comply with gender norms. When female warriors exert violence against males, they cross the gender line and this creates a dilemma or danger for them. Cai (2005) argued that the Chinese women warrior is "a spectacle of misplaced ambitions and problematic desires" (p.444). To maintain male dominance, female warriors' desires are rendered problematic and have to be controlled. The scripted social order in the space of martial arts films both regulates gender roles and discloses anxieties about problematic transgressions. Although Cai's (2005) argument is based on an analysis of a martial art film, analysing female desires and the consequences of their challenges to male authority can be extended to crime dramas as well.

The scholarship of women warriors in Chinese martial arts cinema also includes Louise Edwards' (2011) analysis of the global Chinese blockbuster, *Hero* (2002), directed by well-known Mainland director, Zhang Yimou. In exploring continuity and change, her work provides insights into the manner in which gender ideologies contribute to *Hero's*

success. She argued that *Hero* successfully presents its women warriors as combining both traditional and hyper-modern perspectives. Their representations also relate to altering gender roles and hierarchies, with female warriors humanized and presented with feminine beauty and as having natural sexual desires, which was rare in previous decades. This shift was triggered by a dramatic social transformation prompted by feminist politics in China over the last century (Edwards, 2008), as well as changes in attitudes towards acceptable sexuality (Jeffreys, 2004). Edwards (2011) argued that women amazons in Chinese martial arts films were depicted as vulnerable victims of sexuality in the 21st century. It also became common in a range of other media, including plays, movies, novels and short stories to construct women-as-victim narratives with suicide, murder or other degradation of the female lead. She argued that the focus on the tragedy and humiliation of female victims metaphorically reflects the humiliation that China faced as a result of Western imperialist interference. Edwards (2011) also argued that the increasing strength of women's social power in the real world has led to a sense of anxiety regarding patriarchal social norms, with men afraid of being challenged by women's power. This anxiety is expressed through narratives focused on the sexual weakness and vulnerability of women in relation to their male attackers, and is a suggestion that can be readily applied to the study of Hong Kong crime dramas.

In the Hong Kong context, scholars have also studied female characters' internal self-reflection. Of particular note is Rey Chow (2007) who suggested a set of codes of 'psychic interiority' that concern female characters' internal mental states, drawing on an analysis of Hong Kong female director, Ann Hui's *Song of the Exile* (1990) (a biographical film about the director). Chow (2007:88) classified the codes into five categories: 1) the psychic mobility of modern women (e.g. going to another city for education or career); 2)

self-examination and introspection in the context of a strange social background where the women are new insiders; 3) the inward turn to women themselves, which unconsciously leads to a decline in self-esteem; 4) insights from introspection, which tend to be realized too late when things are beyond their control; and 5) a predominant feeling of melancholy, which is semiotically linked to metaphoric natural phenomenon like cold wind and heavy rain. This set of codes was created to investigate the internal mentality of female characters and highlights how the relationships between feminine psychic interiority and social practices are configured. It is a useful framework that can be applied to the analysis of the representation of female victims in Hong Kong crime films.

More recent scholarship focusing on the representation of female characters in Hong Kong films has included Jason Siu's (2013) analysis of female police officers in Hong Kong crime films. As Siu (2013) contended, there has been a tendency for Hong Kong modern crime films to depict female officers as weak and insecure, as dependent on their male partners or supervisors for salvation, and as women who struggle to keep a balance between their career and family life. He argued that this trend reflects a social mindset that panders to audiences' preferences. He applied Jan Assmann's (1992) psychological theory of 'cultural memory' to explain this phenomenon in Hong Kong, which indicates that people inherit a cultural memory and sense of tradition from the older generations. Filmmakers in Hong Kong have inherited a classical Confucian Chinese philosophy and consciously or unconsciously construct women with traditional characteristics, which tends to create a stereotype of weak and insecure professionals. Since some audiences have grown up watching films with weak female professionals, they may unconsciously accept this perspective as a social norm.

From another perspective, the representation of female victims cannot be separated from their interactions with men. Generally, the space of Hong Kong crime films is a male dominant world with male actors playing the leading roles to complete missions or maintain the social order imposed by the authorities such as the police. The representation of masculinity in Hong Kong crime films has possessed both Western and Chinese characteristics, drawing on its history of 150 years as a British colony before being 'returned' to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1997. Masculinities in Chinese societies may be decoded in light of the historical background of Confucian discourses (Song and Hird, 2013). Kam Louie (2002) theorized that Chinese masculinity is comprised of 'wen' and 'wu'. 'Wen' generally refers to genteel people with good qualities who are knowledgeable about literature and the arts. In the ancient world, this type of masculinity was well recognized among male poets or scholars. 'Wu' refers to physical strength and military power, as well as the wisdom to know how to use it appropriately and at the right time (Louie, 2002). Western men in Chinese films are generally constructed as tough, courageous and decisive, with an adventurous spirit, violent tendencies and remorseless attitudes towards sexual relations (Dubbert, 1979; Herek, 1987; Kaufman, 1987). However, from a Chinese traditional perspective, unlike the Western style, Chinese men in Chinese contexts are more likely to be balanced with a softer and wiser personality. Meanwhile, throughout Chinese history, 'wen' has been valued more highly than 'wu' and has been associated more with the elite classes (Louie, 2002). After the establishment of the PRC, which enhanced the representation of 'wu' masculinity, 'wu' qualities gained increased prominence in representations of Chinese men in movies, plays and fiction narratives (Brownell, 1995). In the present study, the concept of masculinity is useful for exploring how female victims are represented in relation to a range of men, including men with positive, 'wen' qualities who show affection for the female protagonists, as well as

those with excessive ‘wu’ qualities who use their strength to victimize female characters. Understanding masculinity is necessary for highlighting the interpersonal influences of men on women and vice versa.

To summarize, studies of female characters in Chinese films, including Hong Kong films, mainly concern women warriors and the genre of martial arts. Limited attention has been paid to the study of the representation of women in other genres including crime dramas. Drawing on the theories of previous studies, this study explores the representation of female victims through the lens of crime dramas, by focusing on the violence against women, women’s interactions with men and their interpersonal influences, as well as the relationship between these representations and broader social and political discourses.

Crime Films and Violence Against Women

Crime Films

Crime films play an important role in presenting the actions and attitudes of people from different social backgrounds. Like other genres, crime films construct popular perceptions of reality, including the social status of males and females (Ezzedeen, 2013) and offer commentary on “the politics of everyday life” (Cavender & Jurik, 2012). Hence, the study of the representation of women in crime films can contribute to our understanding of media attitudes towards women and their circumstances in contemporary society.

In the Western film context, it is generally recognised that the first crime film is an American short film, *The Great Train Robbery* (dir. Edwin S.Porter, 1903) (Leitch, 2002), which tells a story of bandits who stage a brazen train hold-up and have a conflict with a posse of police. The first recognised sub-category of crime films in the US were gangster

films, such as *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (dir. D.W. Griffith, 1912), a silent film that portrays evil gangsters in New York (Todd, 2006). In the 1920s and 1930s, mediated crimes focused on themes of war in the wake of World War I (Surette, 2011). The 1930s was a prosperous period for crime films, especially gangster and prison films, such as *Public Enemy* (dir. William A. Wellman, 1931) and *Scarface* (dir. Howard Hawks & Richard Rosson, 1932). From the 1940s to 1955, film noir became a new style that featured a low-key, black-and-white visual style. Meanwhile, women in film noir were represented as strong and powerful (e.g. the femme fatale). Although crime films became popular for a decade after World War II, they began declining in quantity and quality from the mid-1950s. However, the emergence of Alfred Hitchcock, a British cutting-edge director, brought crime films to a new peak. Then, *Bonnie and Clyde* (dir. Arthur Penn, 1967) marked a revival of Hollywood crime film. From the 1980s, crime films diversified and focused on prison stories, such as *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (dir. Hector Babenco, 1985) and *Cry Freedom* (dir. Richard Attenborough, 1987), and serial killers, such as *Silence of the Lambs* (dir. Jonathan Demme, 1991) and *Seven* (dir. David Fincher, 1995). In the 1990s, absurdist films that depicted comedic, brash and slick violence attracted more audiences, for instance, *Natural Born Killer* (dir. Stone, 1994) and *Pulp Fiction* (dir. Tarantino, 1994). Since 2000, crime films have continued to remain popular worldwide.

Violence Against Women in Hong Kong and Mainland China

There are a range of definitions of violence against women from feminist and crime perspectives, which have different emphases. According to Tang et al. (2000), feminists argue that violence covers all types of aggressive behaviours towards and adverse treatment of women, while from a crime perspective, it refers to the intentionality of the action and the physical harm inflicted. The crime approach aims to prevent violence

against women; however, feminists do not feel that the law effectively protects women, claiming that there are a broader range of violent behaviours that are not included in pre-existing legal categories. Certain aggressiveness may not directly cause long-term physical harm to women, but may have a detrimental effect on their emotional and mental health. Tang et al. (2000) contended that the feminist approach is aimed at helping to develop more measures to protect women from various types of violence, including cases where women may not perceive the aggressiveness by male intimates as violent behaviour. A feminist approach allows us to tackle the genre of crime films by focusing on films that depict violence against women in a range of ways, including physical abuse and emotional torment that may be beyond the scope of the law. Although Hong Kong's law indicates that consistent mental torment against women is illegal and victims can apply for an injunction to secure their protection, the definition of mental torment is not clear and it is difficult to convict perpetrators.

Political changes in China have generally increased protections for women. After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, women gained the right to work outside the family and take on political responsibilities (Tang & Lai, 2008). The slogan, 'Women can uphold half of the sky' during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s further promoted the social status of women. However, the facts of their liberation may not have correlated entirely with the official propaganda slogans during this period. A real improvement for women could be seen between 1970 and 2000, when rights for all PRC citizens were enhanced (Edwards, 2000). Implemented in 1950, the Marriage Law codified gender equality in a family context. It was then revised in 1980 and modified again in 2001 to enhance the protection of women within their families. The enactment of the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women in 1992 further prohibited discrimination and the maltreatment of

women. The recent legal reforms affirm that acts of bigamy, abuse, neglect and criminal offence are illegal, and refers to the punishment of perpetrators. For instance, an ordinance on domestic violence came under legislation in the Mainland in 2015. In Hong Kong, the legal system has set up various local institutional mechanisms to improve women's rights, including the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Women's Commission (Tang & Lai, 2008).

Social science research has found that intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of violence against women by male perpetrators. According to Tang and Lai's (2008) study in China, the average lifetime and yearly prevalence of intimate partner violence was 19.7% and 16.8% of the population in 1987 and 2006 respectively, including 42.6% and 37.3% for psychological, 14.2% and 6.7% for physical, and 9.8% and 5.4% for sexual violence. Women were at increased risk of intimate partner violence if they and/or their partner had a low educational level, belonged to the underclass, grew up in a rural setting, and suffered problems related to smoking, alcoholism and drug abuse. In the International Violence Against Women Survey in 2006 in Hong Kong (Bouhours & Broadhurst, 2015), sexual violence (13.4%) was more frequent than other kinds of physical violence (11.7%). The overall percentage of any violence against women over a lifetime in Hong Kong was 19.9%, which, though significant, was comparatively lower than in other countries (the top three were Costa Rica 60%, the Czech Republic 58% and Australia 57%). Apart from domestic violence, female prostitutes are the most likely group to be victimized in Hong Kong. According to the Action for Reach Out survey (2007), 25.7% of female prostitutes had experienced non-negotiated sexual activities. 18.6% had been confronted after a refusal of payment from customers. Robbery and verbal threats or blackmail had happened to 14.2% and 13.3% of them. As Li's (2012) research explains,

prostitutes have experienced economic, physical, verbal and sexual violence.

These facts on the law, women and violence set an important backdrop to the study of filmic representations of these issues in society. The present study identifies violence against women from a feminist perspective and includes physical violence, sexual assault and emotional torment to women from the underclass, including women who work as prostitutes, and examines how these filmic representations reflect social issues, phenomena and social values in Chinese contemporary society.

The Hong Kong Film Industry and Society

A Brief History of Hong Kong Crime Films

The roots of contemporary Hong Kong crime films emerged at the end of the 1960s (Kristof, 2010), with examples including *The Story of a Discharged Prisoner* (dir. Kong Lung, 1967) that tells the story of a recidivist who is released from prison and resists the temptation of committing another crime. From the early days, females acted in the roles of detectives, chivalrous thieves, heroines, and spies, in films such as *The Black Rose* (dir. Chor Yuen, 1965), which was inspired by the James Bond series.

The 1970s is recognized as the period when Hong Kong crime films blossomed, with the emergence of gangster and police films. Both of these genres were strongly influenced by kung fu movies and integrated crime elements into the influential swordplay genre (Kristof, 2010). Women played lead roles in a number of films in the 1970s, for instance, in *A Cause to Kill*, directed by Mitsuo Murayama (1970), a Japanese contract director at the Shaw Brothers (the leading film studio in Hong Kong from 1958 until its dissolution in 2011). In this film, the lead female role plans to murder her husband and is finally brought

to justice.

The 1980s marked an increasing dominance of crime films in Hong Kong (Kristof, 2010), becoming one of the favourite genres of the New Wave directors. A popular example includes Ann Hui's *The Secret*, telling the story of a wife's plan to murder her husband who had cheated on her. The film won Best Feature Film at the Taipei-based *Golden Horse Award* in 1980. The 1980s Hong Kong crime films absorbed elements from kung fu and martial arts and adapted them to suit a modern urban environment (Kristof, 2010). With the Mainland-Hong Kong borders loosening in the 1980s, an increasing number of Mainlanders fled or moved to Hong Kong and Mainland immigrant gangsters or criminals frequently featured in Hong Kong crime films during this period. They were often framed as "the laughable country-bumpkin fool, the tragic and vulnerable prostitute, and the shrewd and violent criminal/dirty cop" (Lo, 2007).

Since the 1990s, the crime genre has continued to play a dominant role in Hong Kong cinema. However, the Hong Kong film industry as a whole declined in the early 1990s, in particular, following the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98. While the 1980s saw around 200 films being released in Hong Kong each year, 1997 saw fewer than 100 new films released and audience admissions to cinemas dropped by 8%. In 1997, for the first time in decades the total box-office earnings from foreign imports (53%) surpassed those of local products (47%) (Bordwell, 2011:50). Besides extra investment from the Hong Kong government, Hong Kong filmmakers also took measures to save themselves. BOB (Best of Best), a Hong Kong film studio targeting a young audience and made up of influential directors and filmmakers in Hong Kong, including Jing Wong, Manfred Wong and Andrew Lau, which operated from 1996 to 2000, experimented with cross-media

creations. They gained success in adapting serial films from popular comic books, such as *Young and Dangerous*, which concerns a group of youngsters who join a mafia organization, and follows their adventures of love, revenge, friendship and betrayal. Some Hong Kong filmmakers also drew ideas from Hollywood blockbusters. For example, Teddy Chan's *Downtown Torpedoes* (1997) depicts a group of professional agents who work on a transnational mission with high-tech equipment, such as micro-cameras, miniature bombs and a three-dimensional sonic scan to bring the criminals to justice. These gangster and detective stories led to an increasingly diverse depiction of women, who act in roles as gangsters and skilled professionals, like police officers, lawyers and agents.

With an extended downturn in 2002 and SARS in 2003, the box office of the Hong Kong film market suffered. However, even during these times crime films remained popular in Hong Kong, with Andrew Lau's *Infernal Affairs* (2002), a story of a battle between an undercover detective and a mole in a police team, being the most popular film in 2002-2003 (Zhan, 2013). The box office earning (HK\$55 million) was more than twice the income of the second highest earning film in Hong Kong that year, Zhang Yimou's *Hero*, that achieved around HK\$27 million¹. *Infernal Affairs III* (2003) was also the highest earning film at the Hong Kong box office in 2003, generating HK\$30 million².

The prevalence of Hong Kong crime films is related to the social context. The recognition of gangsters has gradually surfaced in Hong Kong culture, with Hong Kong cinema frequently casting gangsters' stories as a theme in the films (Martin, 2012). As Ong (1999:

¹ Refer to <http://www.boxofficecn.com/hkboxoffice2002>

² Refer to <http://www.boxofficecn.com/hkboxoffice2003>

161-165) illustrated, gangsters have fascinated Hong Kong filmmakers, who have been intrigued by their strong brotherhood connections, their heroic spirit, and their ability to resist corruption and unreasonable control. However, the power of gangsters has not only impacted on the film stories. As Martin (2012) argued, local Hong Kong mafia organizations have been influential in both film representation and production, with gangsters themselves participating in the financing, creation, resourcing and decision-making underpinning major films. Their interference has both helped and hindered film production, with the Hong Kong film industry having to seek protection and compensation from these organizations.

The 2003 Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA)

The year, 2003, is regarded as a significant turning point for the Hong Kong film industry, as it is the year when the governments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the PRC (the official name of Hong Kong after 1997) and the Beijing-based PRC signed the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA). The agreement aimed to promote business interactions between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Before the CEPA, Hong Kong films were included in the quota of imported films that included 10 per year before 2001 and then 20 per year after China joined the World Trade Organisation in 2001. Hollywood films were the most popular among audiences and occupied the bulk of the imported quota. Hong Kong films were considered inferior in comparison to Hollywood blockbusters. Since January 1, 2004, when the CEPA was implemented, as long as there are no fewer than one third of leading actors/actresses from the Mainland, regardless of the proportion of Mainlanders in the whole cast, Hong Kong films have been allowed to be screened in the Mainland film market after passing the censors, like any other Mainland-made movie.

The cancellation of the quota releases Hong Kong films from earlier restrictions in entering the Mainland film market. Under the CEPA, co-produced movies screened in the Mainland increased from 26 in 2003 to 35 in 2004. From 2005 to 2009, there were around 28 co-produced films. For the next three years, the numbers increased to around 40 films a year. Action and detective films that related to crime stories were the most popular genres to be co-produced (41.3% of all co-produced films between 2002 and 2012), considerably surpassing comedy (20%) and romantic stories (17.7%) (Zhan, 2013). This suggests that Hong Kong films involving crime stories were also well received by the Mainland film market.

With the sharp increase in co-production, Hong Kong films have achieved considerable box office success in the Mainland film market. In 2003, 26 Hong Kong films screened in the Mainland, generating 200 million RMB, and it doubled to more than 500 million RMB, with 32 films in 2004, occupying 70% of the total income of Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan films put together. In 2005, seven Hong Kong films alone generated more than 30 million RMB, while, in total, they generated 600 million RMB, reaching 30% of the annual box office of the Mainland Chinese film market. In 2006, Hong Kong films earned 815 million RMB, with the top seven Hong Kong films each generating 50 million RMB and possessing 31% of the share of the Mainland film market (Ding, 2007).

Undoubtedly, the CEPA has allowed the Hong Kong film industry to generate considerable profits, and has motivated Hong Kong filmmakers' 'move northward', establishing a new cooperative mode of operation for Hong Kong cinema. Following the establishment of Hong Kong director, Peter Chan's Beijing office in 2009, many

influential Hong Kong filmmakers, including Jackie Chan, Jing Wong, John Woo, have opened new offices in the Mainland. Mainland filmmakers also benefit from interaction with Hong Kong filmmakers, including acting, directing, cinematography and marketing (Ding, 2012). Moreover, a new communications platform for the Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan filmmakers has been formally established. In this context, the Mainland and Hong Kong-centred Chinese cinema has remained dominant in the Asian film market and the collaborative approach has also allowed Chinese films to become more successful in the international film market (Yin, 2004). Although some Hong Kong filmmakers continue to focus on local film styles and markets, the collaborative tendency is a major trend in the profit-oriented Hong Kong film industry.

Accompanied by criticism and controversy about the decline of the typical Hong Kong film style, post-2003 Hong Kong films have presented an obvious transformation in terms of their themes, content and production to meet the requirements of the Mainland censors. As He (2008) indicated, the officers of the State Administration of Radio Film and Television (SARFT) in the Mainland examine films according to scripts. However, many Hong Kong directors had been accustomed to being flexible with scripts in the production stages. The initial scripts were often brief so that directors could change ideas in the filming process. To pass the Mainland censors, however, Hong Kong production teams have had to write a complete, detailed script to submit for approval prior to filming and have been required to minimize any changes to approved scripts. If they do not stick to this process they risk making a film that will not be able to enter or access the massive Mainland market, which can be financially risky. Two versions of some Hong Kong films have sometimes been made to meet the different needs of the Mainland and Hong Kong markets. For instance, two versions of Johnnie To's *Election* (2005) and Ang Lee's *Lust*,

Caution (2007) were produced for distribution to the Mainland and Hong Kong markets with a reduction in violent and sexual scenes in the Mainland-oriented versions.

In order to pass Mainland censorship, Hong Kong crime films have been transformed. Firstly, as Xu (2012) has illustrated, the central value of detective-crime films in the 1980s was to promote humanity and explore mortality, and it was not necessary to completely follow the social order imposed by the authorities such as the police. For instance, John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* (1986) canvasses the brotherhood between a hit man who breaks the law and a detective who does not arrest him. However, since Andrew Lau's *Infernal Affairs* Trilogy (2002-2003), key figures in Hong Kong detective-crime narratives have tended to surrender to authorities and meet their fate according to the law. Under the Mainland censorship rules, regardless of humanity and morality, characters who break the law are unable to escape legitimate punishment (Xu, 2012). A transformation has also been reflected in action films with acrobatic fighting and kung fu. In particular, the integration of ethnic and patriotic values in these films has shifted since joining the Mainland market. For example, stories of Jackie Chan's *Project A* (1983) and Teddy Chan's *Bodyguards and Assassins* (2009) are both set in the early 20th century. *Project A* tells a story of a captain who is set up by corrupt governors and fights against local pirates to maintain the security. It promotes the bravery and wisdom of Hong Kongers, as well as their courage to fight against social inequality. However, in *Bodyguards and Assassins*, the filmmakers tend to show the spirit of self-sacrifice, patriotism and Chinese nationality, which is more likely to be in line with Mainland propaganda.

The CEPA has not only led to economic integration and cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong film industries, but has motivated a new transformation of

cultural values in Hong Kong films. Considering the sensitivity of film content regarding politics, ethnicity, pornography and superstition for the Mainland authorities, Hong Kong filmmakers have gradually abandoned some of these features, including entire genres such as ghost movies. Hong Kong films are also dropping local folk customs and subversive filmic content in favour of cultural content that is familiar to Mainland audiences (Liu, 2012). With an increase in the depiction of favourite themes of the Mainland, such as nationality, patriotism, self-sacrifice and compliance with the law and mainstream norms, Hong Kong films have begun to develop a grand ‘main melody/*zhuxuanlv*’ orientation that is in line with the cultural and political values and consciousness of the Mainland.

At the same time, although Mainland censorship continues to block some Hong Kong movies, the trend is towards a more open acceptance of topics that were previously considered taboo. For example, *The Death Curse* (dir. Pou-Soi Cheang, 2003), a story of ghosts and a haunted house, *2 Young* (dir. Derek Tung-Sing Yee, 2005) about premarital pregnancy, and *Protégé* (dir. Derek Tung-Sing Yee, 2007) (discussed in this project), which shows details of the production and trafficking of drugs, sexual scenes and physical violence, all successfully passed the censors and were screened in the Mainland.

In summary, the CEPA is significant for both the Hong Kong and Mainland film industries. As May and Ma (2014) suggested, the future of the Hong Kong and Mainland film industries is increasingly interconnected, with the two forming a supra-Chinese media centre and Hong Kong as the media capital. Significantly, there is still scarce scholarship on film analysis that locates the commencement of the CEPA as a key date in the production of films, which means more academic research on post-2003 Hong Kong films is urgently needed. These films can then be compared with pre-CEPA representations to

identify shifts in representations, as the Mainland-Hong Kong relationship has intensified. The post-2003 Hong Kong films to be discussed in this study include *Protégé* and *The Stool Pigeon*, which are co-productions with Mainland filmmakers, actors and actresses. However, the narratives are located in Hong Kong and reflect the specific conditions of Hong Kong society. This study takes into account the background of the actors and actresses, as well as the representation of Mainlanders in Hong Kong, with a focus on the link between their place of origin, the nature of the violence, suffering or moral justice being carried out, and the construction of their gendered identities in this shifting society.

Mainland Immigrants in Hong Kong

Filmic representations of Mainland immigrants in Hong Kong crime films are pervasive and include characters in the films examined in this study. It is therefore necessary to review the social status of immigrants living in Hong Kong. According to Law and Lee's (2006) investigation, the social status of people from the Mainland who have resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years is low, and is reflected in their income, education, occupations and housing. First, the median monthly family income for new arrivals was between HK\$6,100 and HK\$7,500 between 1998 and 2003, which was lower than the average for Hong Kong families (between HK\$15,500 and 18,000)³. Second, the educational level of Mainlanders is still lower than the population as a whole. In 2001, only 5.7% of new migrants had tertiary education, while 16.4% of the local counterparts were educated to this level.⁴ Third, Mainland immigrants are also disadvantaged in the labour market, as shown by their occupation and skill levels. Siu's (1999) research showed that from 1991 to 2001, the most frequent occupations for Mainlanders were unskilled,

³ Home Affairs Department, *Survey on New Arrivals from the Mainland*, Quarterly Reports, various issues and *Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics*, 2004.

⁴ Census and Statistics Department (2002, p. 26)

such as elementary or service workers and sales assistants, whereas there was less than a quarter of the whole Hong Kong population doing these jobs. Furthermore, around 30% of the overall Hong Kong population worked as professionals, managers, and administrators; however, only 15% of new arrivals did these jobs. Fourth, more than 70% of Mainlanders lived in public rental housing, including sublet rooms, bed spaces, or cocklofts in 1998⁵. From 1998 to 2003, around 70% of them reported having difficulties in adapting to the way of life in Hong Kong, in terms of their living environment (38.4% to 53.1%), work (32% to 53.2%) and family finance (27% to 34.9%)⁵.

From a legal perspective, reasons for social exclusion of Mainlanders include the failure of the legal system to promote civic integration, failure of the labour market to promote economic integration, failure of the welfare state system to support social integration, and failure of the community system to encourage interpersonal integration (Berghman, 1995). In particular, in Hong Kong society, the main orientation of its policies have been economic rather than humanitarian. As a result, the entry of Mainland immigrants, who are seen as potential threats to Hong Kong's economic prosperity, may be resented by those with local status.

The social integration of Mainlanders depends not only on economic circumstances, but also on public perception (Law & Lee, 2006). The media, including film representations, play an important role in forming the public perceptions of Mainlanders. Among social groups in Hong Kong society, Mainlanders are categorized by the regions from which they originated, such as from Guangdong, Shanghai, or Beijing, each of which is accompanied by different characteristics or traits. As Wong and Wan (2001) argued, Mainlanders are

⁵ Home Affairs Department, Survey on New Arrivals from the Mainland Quarterly Reports, various issues.

viewed as the weakest ethnic group in the political and economic environment in Hong Kong. The media tends to exaggerate the negative aspects of Mainlanders, labelling them as ignorant, rude, dirty and greedy, as well as being competitors with Hong Kongers for employment, housing and welfare benefits. These representations encourage Hong Kong locals to regard Mainlanders as selfish, greedy, cowardly, annoying, arrogant and uncivilized (Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2003). The film analysis of this study will investigate the representation of Mainlander women and their social status in Hong Kong.

Feminist Movements and Films

Feminist social movements have impacted on filmmaking in both the Mainland and Hong Kong. The New Enlightenment Movement (also called the New May Fourth Movement, in the 1980s) in which Chinese intellectuals criticized the Cultural Revolution, established the modes of a market-orientated economy and advocated individualism, and feminism was popularised in this context (Han, 2009). Following this trend of ideological emancipation, many Mainland female directors began to construct females with an independent personality, who engaged in the pursuit of self-achievement. Examples of Mainland films include *Woman-Demon-Human* (Shuqin Huang, 1987) *Golden Fingernails* (Zhifang Bao, 1989), *Women's World* (Kena Dong, 1991), *Woman-TAXI-Woman* (Junzheng Wang, 1991), and *Lone Woman* (Zhiyu Qin, 1991). However, these films highlight obedience to patriarchy rather than resistance.

Apart from female directors, Mainland male directors have also constructed anti-traditional female images, but they tend to be obedient in the end. For instance, in *Yellow Earth* (Kaige Chen, 1984), the female character has the courage to break the rules by

escaping from the established marriage by her father. But she finally disappears after crossing a river, which implies her destiny is still associated with the gender norms that women do not have a happy ending if they violate males' expectations. More recently, some films directed by younger male directors with awards in international film festivals also construct obedient women. For example, in *Shanghai Dreams* (Xiaoshuai Wang, 2005), although the female character has the courage to seek romance and resist pressure based on the social rules of patriarchy, she is still forced to be obedient to her father by leaving the man she loves. Since the aggressive father reports to police that her boyfriend rapes her, the man is executed, which causes the female character to become crazy in the end. Hence, from the vision of male directors, females are still under male control.

Hong Kong feminist films emerged as early as 1939 and included such films as *It's A Woman's World* (1939) by Esther Eng (1914-1970). She was a Chinese-American director in the 1930s and the 1940s who developed her career in Hong Kong. This film includes 36 female characters with various identities, such as an old-fashioned teacher, a gorgeous clerk, a professional lawyer and a dissolute courtesan. It reflects the diverse traits and conditions of women from a variety of social classes in Hong Kong. In the 1980s, influenced by the New Wave Movement in Hong Kong and the New Enlightenment movement in the Mainland, Hong Kong female directors were aroused by a strong sense of self-consciousness and creativity. They began using the medium of film and a range of less conventional film styles and narrative structures to reflect social problems, lifestyles and values from female perspectives. The most outstanding representative is Hong Kong female director Ann Hui, who focused on filming figures among common people to reflect their social life and evoke the introspection of audiences about social reality. For instance, *Summer Snow* (1995) depicts a woman's hard life with the triple identities of being a wife,

mother and an office lady that reflects the pressure and hardship of women in daily life. It won Best Film and Best Director at the HKFA in 1996. There is no lack of films concerning women's lives in Hong Kong, but the filming viewpoints are more likely to be geared towards generating compassion or sympathy for women, rather than asserting women's power to control their own destiny (Gu, 2013).

With the development of feminist consciousness, more events have been held in China to promote feminist cinema and this has had a positive impact on feminist filmmaking in the Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The first China Women's Film Festival (CWFF) was held in Beijing in November 2013. The festival aimed to encourage female filmmakers to embark on a journey of self-reflection and discover the 'grey zone' between real existence and virtual imagination (Wu, 2014). Twenty-three films made by female filmmakers from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, Japan, France, the US and Vietnam were shown during the event. The agenda of the CWFF was to promote females in filmmaking and raise the awareness of women's rights in China, such as reproductive and sexual rights, and suffrage through the exchange of ideas. These thoughts were represented and interpreted through vivid cinematic story-telling to give the audience a better understanding of what women are going through and the kind of rights for which women are fighting (Wu, 2014). Though the films included in this analysis are not among those from the festival, nor do they provide feminist perspectives per se (in fact all the selected films are directed by men), this new feminist film festival shows the feminist consciousness is of considerable interest in greater China and may impact on the filmmaking landscape more broadly. It also highlights how networking and idea-sharing between filmmakers in the Mainland, Hong Kong and other regions with an interest in women's rights and representations has become much more frequent.

Summary

While scholarship on female characters in horror and action film genres in the Western context has been focused more on psychoanalysis and spectatorship, the Chinese film analysis of women concentrates on female warriors and the genre of martial arts. Thus far there has been a lack of analysis on female characters in the context of Chinese/Hong Kong crime dramas. Crime films have been dominant in the Hong Kong film industry since the early 1970s and have continued to play a significant role since the signing of the CEPA in 2003, after which Hong Kong films have catered intensively for the Mainland market. Since the CEPA, professionals in Hong Kong and the Mainland have increasingly engaged with one another in a range of fields, including the production of films and the discussion of the rights and roles of women in Chinese society. This study aims to bridge the gap in the study of the representation of females as victims in Hong Kong crime films and link it to ongoing social and political change that is impacting on both Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese society. The next chapter explains the theoretical and methodological approach, including the criteria for selecting the three case studies and details of the film text analysis.

CHAPTER 3 ANALYSING FILM TEXTS – TEXTUALITY, MULTIMODALITY AND CRITICALITY

This chapter explains the selection criteria for the three case studies, followed by a discussion of the methods of textual and critical multimodal discourse and how they are applied in this study. It establishes links between narrative, visual and audio elements in film texts and social and political discourses. It lays the groundwork for an in-depth analysis in Chapter 4 of the representation of female victims in three selected films.

Three Case Studies

To select the case studies, this study firstly focused only on award-winning crime films from the *Hong Kong Film Awards* (HKFA), which began in Hong Kong in 1982. As Hong Kong's most important film festival, and indeed the most influential and prestigious festival in the broader Chinese film domain, the selected films are thought to be of particular interest and relevance to Hong Kong society. The films selected for these awards must have been directed by Hong Kong directors and with production teams with Hong Kongers in charge, which means they were produced from a Hong Kong perspective. The qualified films satisfied three selection criteria, namely 1) the director was a Hong Kong resident; 2) at least one production company was registered in Hong Kong if the film is coproduction with the Mainland or other country; and 3) at least six of the production crew were Hong Kong residents. Juries of filmmakers, film experts, and film historians work to select outstanding films and recognize achievement in various aspects of filmmaking, including directing, screenwriting, acting and cinematography. There are two rounds of voting each year. The first round is open to all registered voters who engage in occupations related to film industry and a selected group of 100 professional adjudicators determine

five nominees for each award category. Voting in the second round is open to a group of 50 professional adjudicators, executive committee members of the HKFA, and members of the 13 professional film bodies. The award-winning films are widely acclaimed and popular among audiences. They also become paradigms for filmmakers and academics to study. All these factors suggest that the award-winning films at the HKFA have a particularly important role and influence within the Hong Kong film industry and beyond.

The initial selection stage for the present study involved a review of all 257 films that had received awards in the HKFA from its inception in 1982 until 2015 to identify those that were crime drama according to the definitions of crime films discussed in Chapter 1. The selected films have narratives that revolve around criminals, the law and society, adopt crime and the consequences of crime as central stories, and have key figures who are criminals, victims and avengers. As Table 3.1 details, 31 crime films were identified comprising about 12% of all award-winning films.

Table 3.1 *HKFA Award-Winning Crime Films and Number of Films Awarded Per Year From 1982-2015*

Year	HKFA Films	
	Award-winning Crime Films	Number Awarded
1982	---	5
1983	He lives by night 夜惊魂	7
1984	Long Arm of the Law 省港旗兵	6
1985	---	8
1986	Police Story 警察故事	11
1987	A Better Tomorrow 英雄本色	8
1988	City on Fire 龙虎风云	8
1989	---	7
1990	Butterfly Dream Killer 杀手蝴蝶梦	9
1991	---	7
1992	To Be Number One 跛豪	9

1993	---	7
1994	Crime Story 重案组	7
1995	---	7
1996	---	7
1997	Downtown Torpedoes 神偷谍影	6
1998	---	8
1999	Beast Cops 野兽刑警	7
	Portland Street Blues 古惑仔之洪兴十三妹	
	Young and Dangerous: The Prequel 新古惑仔之少年激斗篇	
2000	The Mission 枪火	8
2001	---	4
2002	---	8
2003	Infernal Affairs 无间道	6
2004	PTU	9
	Infernal Affairs II 无间道	
2005	One Nite in Mongkok 旺角黑夜	7
2006	Election 龙城岁月/黑社会	7
	Kill Zone 杀破狼	
2007	Confession of Pain 伤城	10
2008	Mad Detective 神探	8
	Protégé 门徒	
	Eye in the Sky 跟踪	
	Flash Point 导火线	
2009	The Beast Stalker 证人	8
2010	Overheard 窃听风云	8
2011	The Stool Pigeon 线人	9
2012	Life Without Principle 夺命金	8
2013	Cold War 寒战	8
	Night Fall 大追捕	
2014	---	4
2015	Overheard 3 窃听风云	11

Most of these Hong Kong crime films feature male characters in leading roles, while females play secondary roles as men's romantic partners. Most women play as obstacles to men in their attempts to commit or solve crimes, while they themselves are rarely involved in the actual crime. For this project, however, I chose to concentrate on crime films in which the female characters are important in the process of committing or solving crimes.

Ten of the 31 awarded crime films fulfil this criteria, including two in the 1980s, three in the 1990s, three between 2000 and 2010 and two after 2011 (see Table 3. 2). Among these films, the majority of the female characters have a key identity as a victim, although they may be constructed as having different occupations such as prostitute, prosecutor and secretary. Only three construct women who are not the victims of violence. Given the significance of the portrayal of victims, I have chosen to focus on award-winning crime films that depict women as victims. To further narrow the scope, films from 2003 onwards were chosen as this was the year when the governments of Hong Kong and the Mainland signed the CEPA. As discussed in Chapter 2, this study focuses on the representation of female victims in post-CEPA crime films, and aims to provide a benchmark for future studies that examine the shift in specific representations as the Mainland and Hong Kong relations intensify.

Table 3.2 *Award-Winning Crime Films with Women as Central Characters and Their Portrayals, 1983 - 2012*

Year	Award-winning Crime Films with Women as Central Characters	Portrayals of Leading Female Characters
1983	He lives by night 夜惊魂	Victims/Host
1986	Police Story 警察故事	Victims/Secretary
1990	My Heart Is That Eternal Rose 杀手蝴蝶梦	Victims/Waitress
1997	Downtown Torpedoes 神偷谍影	Special Agent
1999	Portland Street Blues 古惑仔之洪兴十三妹	Gangster Leader
2005	One Nite in Mongkok 旺角黑夜	Victims/Prostitute
2008	Protégé 门徒	Victims/Drug user
2009	The Beast Stalker 证人	Victims/prosecutor
2011	The Stool Pigeon 线人	Victims/Gangsters
2012	Life Without Principle 夺命金	Financial Consultant

Based on the selection criteria above, this study chose *One Nite in Mongkok*, *Protégé* and *The Stool Pigeon* as the case studies. *The Beast Stalker* was excluded because the leading female character is constructed as a victimized prosecutor who is in a different social class from the leading female characters in the three selected case studies. The three selected films construct the leading female protagonists as victims from an underprivileged class, making them more readily comparable.

Theoretical Framework

Discourse and Representation

The notion of discourse is fundamental for examining issues of representation. Stuart Hall (1997), one of the founding figures in cultural and media studies, argued that representation in the media derives from gender norms and social values that are profoundly embedded in culture. In other words, the media creates meanings, represents social reality to audiences, and reflects underlying ideologies. He categorizes media representations into three levels – reflective, intentional and constructionist. At the reflective level, the representation mirrors reality by depicting actual objects, people, ideas or events. At the intentional level, media creators impose meanings on their subjects and express meanings through the media messages. At the constructionist level, cultural and linguistic knowledge is required to make subjects and objects meaningful, and for audiences to recognize them in their social and public practices (Hall, 1997). In this study, based on Hall's (1997) theory, the links between representations of female victims, violence against women, and social and political discourse are discussed by closely analysing the film texts.

Media discourses have connections with particular social conditions. Norman Fairclough (1995), one of the founders of discourse analysis, argued that discourses could be decoded according to the social practices in which they are situated. Discourse analysis is more than a perspective on texts; it is an examination of a kind of communication that texts reveal of broader social and cultural practices. The backgrounds to the narratives of the major films in this study are set in contemporary Hong Kong society – a region that has had an intensified relationship with Mainland China and Taiwan in recent years. Hong Kong has strong links to other major centres around the world through its unique position between ‘the East’ and ‘the West’ as a former British colony. The filmmakers who are embedded in this society necessarily draw on local and global elements that circulate within it and integrate their thoughts into the film texts and artistic approaches. From the perspective of spectatorship, audiences bring their own viewpoints to the film text so the meanings of particular film text vary according to the audience. Thus, through adopting the genre of crime drama as a lens, an analysis of the representation of female victims in these films can help us to understand filmmakers’ views about women’s position in Hong Kong society.

Textual Analysis and Critical and Multimodal Discourse Analyses

This study uses qualitative methodologies of textual analysis, and critical and multimodal discourse analyses. As Mulvey (2005) indicated, textual analysis has made a significant contribution to our understanding of how films construct meanings through the use of cinematic discourses that integrate particular filmic objects or characters into the mise-en-scène. A detailed review of filmic images and moments can reveal underlying meanings, which may not be directly delivered or perceived (Mulvey, 2005). Textual analysis has been used effectively to analyse the representation of women in films. For example, Siu’s

(2013) study of female police officers in Hong Kong crime films, as discussed in Chapter 2, employed a qualitative textual analysis approach.

Both multimodal and critical discourse analysis can help to reveal insights into communication through films, but have different emphases. Multimodal discourse analysis examines how meanings are created out of the interaction of various modes (eg. written text, sound, gesture, visual message) in different forms of media (eg. face-to-face, print, film) in particular sociocultural contexts (Djonov & Zhao, 2014). A multimodal analysis of films would, for instance, consider how visual, audio and narrative elements, including monologues, dialogue and polylogues, work together to create meanings (Richardson, 2010). It assumes that it is impossible to entirely isolate the characters' lines from their actions and the context in which the story happens. While many film theorists consider the various elements of filmic meaning, scholars such as Piazza (2010) have specifically articulated the usefulness of a multimodal approach to examine how dialogue artfully interacts with elements of the *mise-en-scène* to create meaning.

This study uses a 'critical' approach of multimodality to analyse how these interactions between different filmic elements link to broader social and political discourses. Critical discourse analysis helps us to analyse the relationship between language (and other modes, such as visuals, music and sound effects) and power by investigating the political or commercial implications of the mediated messages (Djonov & Zhao, 2004) or political agendas (Chouliaraki, 2006) that underpin the choices in the representation of events, people and ideas. Films are an example of narrative resources that engage with realities in the broader social and political environment. They represent stories that happen at a particular time and place, and reflect filmmakers' sensibilities and concerns. In other

words, examining links to the broader context is crucial for understanding the significance of filmic representations of society, including that of women and violence.

While a critical multimodal discourse analysis cannot account for the filmmakers' intentions or the audiences' responses, an in-depth textual analysis can help us to explore how protagonists are represented in media products that are widely consumed in Hong Kong and Mainland society. By choosing highly acclaimed, award-winning films, it can be reasonably assumed that the ideas and representations embedded in the films resonate with large numbers of audiences as well as the filmmakers at some level and play an important role in reflecting back contemporary society to its people.

Film Text Analysis: Narrative, Visual and Audio Elements

Based on the theories of textual and critical multimodal discourse analysis, this study examines the representation of female victims in the three selected Hong Kong crime films from three aspects: narratives (stories and plots); visuals (mise-en-scène and camera work); and audio (dialogue and sound) elements.

Narrative, or the chain of events that the characters' experience, is a critical element in films (Lewis, 2013). While viewers cannot watch all the events in a character's life, filmmakers use techniques to cover important parts of the narrative by emphasising certain scenes and neglecting others. The analysis of film narratives as applied in this study examines the stories of the leading female characters and explores representations of their personal characteristics, behaviours and mental conditions over time. It also considers the interconnections between the characters' representations and broader social and political circumstances.

For visual elements, *mise-en-scène* (literally, 'putting into the scene') is an important part of filmic representation. It refers to such elements as the setting, lighting, costumes, makeup and characters' behaviours (Sikov, 2010). The setting, which can be indoors or outdoors, light or dark, expansive or claustrophobic, provides important information, such as time, place, location, and the environment, which in turn links to the characters' feelings and actions (Lewis, 2013). The characters' costumes, makeup and hair help to identify and signify their social class, identity and even mental activities. The choreographed positioning of actors and actresses also helps to communicate filmic meanings (Lewis 2013). For instance, the leading characters are more likely to be positioned in the foreground, while the supporting characters may be in the background. The foregrounding of a male or female in a particular setting may encode particular meanings about the power relationship between them.

Camera work, as an aspect of visual elements, is another accessible way of examining filmic representations. Filmmakers use their lenses to give the impression of distance and closeness. In general, close ups of characters' faces deliver key information about their internal emotions. The characters filmed by medium-shot (taken from the waist upwards), three-quarter shot (taken from the knees upwards), full-shot (full body), long-shot (long distance) and extreme long-shot show their behaviours in relation to their surrounding environment. Apart from the camera distance, filmmakers also employ various camera angles to deliver expressive meanings to audiences. For instance, filming from a low angle, looking up to an object may imply admiration, whereas from a high angle looking down may suggest belittling. Eye-level shots may indicate equality. A bird's-eye view (extreme overhead shot from the sky or ceiling), three-shot (three people in a distinct

group) and master shot (long distance with the whole scene) are also employed to highlight aspects of context and feelings, including feelings of isolation, distance, and closeness (Sikov, 2010). In this study, a detailed analysis of camera positioning focused on leading characters is undertaken to explore the representations of females as victims.

Sound is also used to establish filmic meanings and represent characters. As Sikov (2010) explained, sound in films can be categorized into three groups: voice (comprising narration and dialogue), music, and sound effects. Characters use spoken lines to convey their moods and to narrate events, and the tone of their voice emphasizes key aspects of emotion. Musical accompaniment also helps to develop the narrative events and plays an important role in creating the atmosphere that underpins the characters' actions (Sikov, 2010). Sound effects help to stimulate audiences' emotional interaction with films (Sikov, 2010). Silence, which can portray a sense of emptiness or repression, is also a key element in relation to sound. All these three elements of sound work together to contribute to the overall meanings constructed within films and will be analysed in this study.

Summary

In summary, through the in-depth examination of filmic narrative (stories and plots), visuals (mise-en-scène and camera work) and audio (dialogue and sound) elements, this study explores the representation of females as victims in Hong Kong crime films. From a critical perspective, this study attempts to relate filmic representations to broader social and political discourses on women and violence in Hong Kong society. The next chapter proceeds with an in-depth analysis of the representation of women in the film texts of three case studies.

CHAPTER 4 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN A MALE DOMINATED SOCIETY

Overview of Selected Films

The first case study, *One Nite in Mongkok*, was directed by Hong Kong director, Derek Tung-Sing Yee/Er Dongsheng, in 2004. As one of the most popular and highly reputable directors, Yee's works are famous for their unique perspective in portraying people from the underclasses and reflecting on the specificities of their life in Hong Kong. With an emphasis of violence and prostitution, this film did not pass the censors and screen officially in the Mainland, but was it popular with mainland audiences in pirated forms. It gained HK\$7.63 million income in Hong Kong local market⁶. This film was awarded Best Director and Best Screenplay at the HKFA in 2005. It tells a story that takes place in the district of Mongkok in Hong Kong over a period of 24 hours. Lai Fu (acted by Daniel Wu/Wu Yanzu, an American-born Hong Kong actor), a tough and youthful village man, is a hit man imported to Hong Kong from the Mainland. Lai Fu rescues a hooker, Dandan, from a sadist. The character, Dandan, comes from the Mainland but is acted by a Hong Kong actress, Cecilia Cheung/Zhang Bozhi. Getting involved in a conflict between gangsters, Laifu is finally shot dead by police and Dandan returns to her hometown in the Mainland. In this film, Dandan does not engage in crime personally. But she has an influence on Laifu in terms of his intent towards criminal actions. The main theme of this film centres on the victimization of the female character and mirrors the living conditions of underclass women in Hong Kong.

⁶ Refer to <http://www.cbooo.cn/m/7059>

The second case study is another famous work directed by Derek Tung-Sing Yee – *Protégé*, produced in 2007 and nominated for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Screenplay at the 2008 HKFAs. Andy Lau/Liu Dehua, from Hong Kong, who acts as the drug boss, Quin, won the award for Best Supporting Actor in the film. It successfully passed the censors in the Mainland and gain RMB62.6 million in box office revenue.⁷ The story tells of a special agent, Nick, a Hong Kong resident (acted by Daniel Wu/Wu Yanzu), who has been an undercover detective in Asia's lucrative, organized drug trade for eight years, and becomes the protégé of the drug boss Quin. Nick has started to feel loyal to his new environment, and struggles over whether to continue to traffic drugs for wealth or bring the drug dealers to justice. Meanwhile, he has developed affection for a drug user, Jane (a Hong Kong character, acted by a Mainland actress, Jingchu Zhang), who is forced to use drugs by her Hong Kong husband (acted by Louis Koo/Gu Tianle, a Hong Kong actor). Jane's ultimate death from a drug overdose makes Nick realize the danger of drugs, so he eventually brings the drug dealers to justice. Jane does not engage in crime, but pity over her drug abuse and victimization encourage Nick to bring the drug dealers to justice. This film vividly portrays the physical and emotional effects of drug abuse on the female victim.

The third case study, *The Stool Pigeon*, is directed by a Hong Kong director, Dante Lam in 2010, and was nominated for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Screenplay at the HKFA in 2011. The first leading actor, Nicholas Tse/Xie Tingfeng (a Canadian born, Hong Kong actor) who acts as Ghost Jr. (a Hong Kong character) won the Best Actor award in the film. Though it involved violent scenes, it passed the censorship of the Mainland and

⁷ Refer to <http://www.cbooo.cn/m/5266>

achieved high box office revenue of RMB52,76 million⁸. The story is about a Hong Kong police officer, Don Lee (acted by Nick Cheung/Zhang Jiahui, a Hong Kong actor) and an informant, Ghost Jr., who cooperate to investigate a robbery led by the criminal, Barbarian (a Hong Kong character acted by a Mainland actor, Yi Lu,). The unexpected rebellion by Barbarian's girlfriend, Dee, who is from Taiwan (acted by a Taiwanese actress, Lunmei Gwei/Gui Lunmei) and who is cheated on by Barbarian, interrupts the police's plan and puts Ghost Jr. in danger. Ghost Jr. has affection for Dee and eventually dies in a gangster melee to save Dee's life. The leading female role, Dee, is a gangster and criminal, as well as a victim who suffers from physical and emotional violence at the hands of the male gangsters.

The Representation of Violence Against Women

This section provides a description of key scenes in which women experienced violence to be followed by an analytical discussion of the key findings in the next section. Textual analysis of the three case studies showed that the female victims are represented as belonging to an underprivileged class, as disempowered and as suffering from physical and emotional violence exerted by male perpetrators. In *One Nite in Mongkok*, the female victim Dandan, a prostitute from the Mainland, suffers from direct physical violence at the hands of a male Hong Kong gangster. Two scenes represent the male attacker's sexual aggressiveness towards the weak female victim through narrative, visual and audio elements. While the first involves the vivid depiction of violent behaviours, such as beating and punching, the violence in the second scene is eliminated and mainly focuses on the man's sexual intention, although no sexual activity is vividly portrayed. In the first scene, physical violence against Dandan is carried out by the drunken whoremaster, Wah

⁸ Refer to <http://www.cbooo.cn/m/573935>

who attempts to force Dandan to have sexual intercourse with him, but she begs him to let her go, repeatedly emphasizing that she has quit. Wah grabs Dandan's top and pushes her against the wall. The camera here employs eye level shots of a medium close-up of Dandan and Wah accompanying the sound effect of Dandan's back hitting the wall, which highlights the power imbalance.

The second violent scene against Dandan is a sexual assault that is filmed in an indirect way without a vivid depiction of the sexual violence. The camera films Wah shoving Dandan into a small hotel room, with a three-quarter shot of a weak and passive Dandan sitting on the bed and removing her red trench coat. The foregrounding of the male perpetrator with the victim in the background highlights his aggressiveness. The next medium-shot is of Dandan lying sadly on the bed after Wah's atrocity. The slightly canted high angle shot reveals a loss of self-esteem by the victim. In a related scene, we also see male-to-male aggression with Wah's intense violence against Laifu. In this scene, Dandan is merely a witness, who screams, cries and begs to stop. She is fearful, passive and unable to fight back. Before raping Dandan, Wah exerts intense and repeated violence against Laifu, including punching, beating, and pushing his head against a doorknob. Unlike the sexual assault of Dandan, the violence against Laifu is depicted in detail, with close-ups of the weapon (the doorknob), accompanied by a strong sound effect which shocks Dandan, and vivid pictures of blood flowing down Laifu's head. As a witness, a teary Dandan is seen in a medium close-up as a passive witness living in fear of masculine aggressiveness. In this context, the rape of Dandan also appears as a prize for winner in the man-to-man battle.

Unlike the depiction of direct physical violence in *One Nite in Mongkok*, *Protégé* presents a vivid depiction of a female victim's horrible drug addiction. Drugs in this film are used by the male perpetrator to control his wife, the female victim. Film noir elements (a filmic genre characterized by cynicism, fatalism, and moral ambiguity) present the severe consequences of drug use on the female victim. The use of the chiaroscuro effect (contrast of light and dark) akin to film noir helps to enhance the film's tragic sensibility (Chan, 2007: 33). It is employed in three scenes that portray the female victim using drugs, with low-key lighting effects contributing to the visual impression of darkness, sadness and breathlessness, and offering insights into the female victim's inner turmoil.

In the opening scene, we see Jane, the leading female character, giving herself an injection in the arm and lying slowly onto a couch in an old, shabby room. This scene sets the dark and sad atmosphere for the whole film. In the second scene, we see Jane diluting and heating the drugs and pumping the liquid into the tube of a needle, as well as her sweaty body, spasming toes and trembling hands. This scene also shows her having a hallucination as she engages in sexual activity with Nick, the undercover detective. Whilst engaging in sex, she imagines this moment is before her marriage and mistakenly regards Nick as her husband by saying "Promise me, be good to me after we get married. Don't hit me anymore", which implies that she had been a victim of domestic violence before she got married. At the end of the scene, the camera films her full body through a slightly canted shot from a high angle with strong sound effect of background music, presenting her pitiful, horribly twitched condition. Since the drug is an enticement that her husband uses to control her, the vivid portrayal of her suffering presents her victimization as being caused by a male perpetrator.

The third scene of Jane's drug abuse is the only scene that directly shows Jane's husband enticing her to take the drug, which results in her ultimate death. He tempts her to use a strong drug and gives her an injection into the neck with Jane's acquiescence. Jane's passive attitude shows that she is used to taking drugs with the help of her husband and has lost the desire to either resist or survive. Similar to the second scene, the camera films her through a slightly canted shot from a high angle, with a full-shot showing the effects of the drug on her, including choking, cramping, twitching and eye rolling. Her death scene cruelly depicts her limp body lying on the couch with her eyes and mouth wide open and a close-up of many mice gnawing her body, with a strong and provoking sound effect accompanying the visual representation of Jane's miserable death. Jane's death metaphorically expresses a sense of insecurity and tragedy closely linked to the social conditions of underclass women, who are more likely to be victims of domestic violence (Tang & Lai, 2008). As Pang (2001) argued, the deaths of the characters are employed to make certain social commentary on society and signify pessimistic attitudes about the future. This film uses the female victim's horrible death as a metaphor to represent the future of such underclass women who fall under the control of uncaring men and drugs.

Jane's victimization is also symbolically presented through the filmic use of nature. As discussed in Chapter 2, one of Chow's (2007, p. 88) codes of 'psychic interiority' that are used to analyse female characters' self-reflection relates to a predominant feeling of melancholy that is semiotically linked to metaphoric natural phenomenon, like cold wind and heavy rain. In this case, scenes of flowing clouds in the sky represent Jane's deteriorating life path and victimization. There are three scenes that depict the cloudy sky above typical old Hong Kong tenement buildings from a low angle. The sky and clouds are edited with an eerie pink-purple hue instead of the natural blue and white, suggesting

something unnerving is about to happen. The filmmakers then employ fast motion to make the clouds move excessively fast in the sky and shield the sunlight to express the visual impression of strangeness, darkness and repression. All of the scenes of the clouds and sky are arranged close to the scenes of Jane's victimization, which forebodes a negative ending for the female victim throughout the film. The representation of the strange natural phenomenon can be seen as a filmic expression of Jane's mental state highlighting her struggles with her dependency on drugs and the man who administers drugs to her.

Unlike the previous two films, *The Stool Pigeon* directly delineates violence against the woman by male attackers with a detailed depiction of violent scenes in which the female victim attempts to resist. The main scene of violence against the female victim occurs at the climax of the narrative, which is a melee that happens in an obsolete school building. Dee, the leading gangster girl, and Ghost Jr., the informant whose role is to get information about the criminal gang, work together to seize the gold that the criminal gang has robbed. In reaction, the savage criminals hunt them down. Dee's victimization is presented through a series of intense violent acts by the male perpetrators, including hacking and beating. For instance, when she drops the bag full of gold outside the door and stretches her hand to reach it, she suffers a chop to her arm by a machete. The camera films her anxious facial expression as seen through the door crack and her stretched-out hand through a close-up, followed by the male attacker's monstrous face and his raising of the machete. The next scene cuts to Dee's painful facial expression and her loud scream and hysterical cry, followed by a close-up of her bloody arm. The female victim is shown fighting back when the attacker, a member of the criminal gang, takes the machete and propels her against the broken window, and Dee picks up a piece of glass, hits him on the head and stabs him in his torso several times. However, she is ultimately repressed by the

masculine violence. The male attacker then pushes her to the ground, kicks her intensely and throws her onto a pile of desks and chairs. This intimate depiction of cold-blooded violence against the female victim is vividly presented, indicating the ferocious aggression of the male perpetrators.

Dee's victimization is not only presented through brutal violence but also through the emotional betrayal of her boyfriend, which is presented through the female's desperate actions and scripted lines. Hints of the deteriorating relationship between Dee and Barbarian, the leader of the criminal gang, appear in Dee's debut scene in which Barbarian introduces Dee to the criminal team and Dee informs him of her pregnancy unexpectedly. Their relationship crisis intensifies as Barbarian persuades Dee to have an abortion. After Dee's abortion and before the robbery, the complete rupture of their relationship is established by a confrontation during which Barbarian declares that he has another lover and will break up with Dee. Dee is seen smoking on the roof, enduring the pain after the abortion and expressing sadness at being abandoned. This relationship crisis and betrayal pushes Dee to betray Barbarian in return by planning a rebellious action and taking his loot from the robbery. Dee's victimization includes both physical violence and intense emotional harm.

The analysis of the representation of leading female characters in the three case studies found that they are all constructed as disempowered and among the underclass.

Mainlander Dandan in *One Nite in Mongkok* comes to Hong Kong to make money, works as a prostitute in a small, dirty hotel and suffers from violence by a local gangster. Jane in *Protégé* lives in an old, shabby room and sells pirated disks to pay the rent. Sometimes she goes without food to ensure she has enough money to buy drugs. Dee in *The Stool Pigeon*

does not have a normal job but follows her criminal boyfriend, Barbarian, to commit crimes to make a living. She explains that she was born into a poor family and gambled to support her sisters and brothers. The victimization of these women is represented through vivid displays of physical and emotional violence employed by male gangsters. Suffering from masculine violence, Dandan and Jane have no ability or desire to defend themselves. While Dee has the courage to resist, she is repressed by the male gangsters in the end.

The Impact of Females' Victimization on Males

While the women in the three films are victimized and presented as insecure, their unjust victimization has a powerful impact on the men who have affection for them, by encouraging them to abandon their original criminal or immoral plans and adopting a moral path. Creed (1993) argued that the characters in horror films can be classified as being between human or inhuman, good or evil, and/or as having normal or abnormal sexual desire. They may face a dilemma as whether to kill others or get killed, which forces them to choose to be good or evil. Although the specific nature of the borderline differs from one film to another, its function is similar: borderlines create encounters between the symbolic order or norm and a contrasting side that threatens its stability. In Hong Kong crime films, the borderline between good and evil and obeying social and moral norms are often blurred. Significantly, the females' victimization is likely to be the key catalyst for the male protagonists who care about the victims to shift from learning on the side of being morally corrupt towards making positive moral decisions.

In *One Nite in Mongkok*, Dandan, who is represented as a beautiful and kind-hearted prostitute, has a romantic involvement with Laifu. Their relationship leads Laifu to choose not to break social and legal regulations. Firstly, Laifu attempts to strangle to death the

employer who betrays him, but after Dandan shows up and persuades him not to kill, he lets the employer go, throws the gun away and decides to be a good man. However, after taking a beating from Wah and witnessing Dandan being raped by him, Laifu runs outside to the rubbish bin to collect the gun he has dropped. Although Laifu is going to break the law if he uses the gun, he has a positive and moral purpose, which is to defend Dandan. When he tries to find the gun, he unexpectedly meets a group of police officers who are looking for him. Eventually, the policemen shoot him dead before he commits any crime. So, while Dandan guides him to take a positive course of action, Laifu's wavering between abandoning or regaining the gun and breaking the law or maintaining it are driven by his love for Dandan and wish to protect her from further victimization.

In *Protégé*, Jane is romantically connected to Nick. Her tragic death is a significant motivation for him to make a moral choice and maintain the social order by deciding to bring the drug lord, Quin, who controls a large proportion of the drug market in Hong Kong, to justice. In this case, Nick has built up a strong bond with Quin as his protégé during his years of infiltrating the gang as an undercover investigator. Quin has severe health problems and would like to retire soon, and he promises Nick the entire drug production and trafficking business. Facing the temptation of a huge profit, Nick hesitates to decide whether to betray the police system by becoming a wealthy drug dealer or making the morally righteous choice by being an upright policeman and arresting the drug dealers. When he witnesses the miserable situation of Jane's death, Nick is shocked. He is visually seen to be screaming from the bottom of his heart, the intensity of his feelings highlighted through the accompanying silence. Jane's miserable death breaks Nick's hesitation and reminds him of the danger of drugs. After this, Nick arrests Quin unhesitatingly, which enhances Nick's social standing.

In *The Stool Pigeon*, Ghost Jr. demonstrates affection for Dee. His empathy is aroused as a result of Dee's suffering from her boyfriend, Barbarian. For instance, Ghost Jr. covers her with a suit when she falls on the table after drinking a whole bottle of beer in one gulp. She has a sad expression on her face and her eyes are closed. A close-up of her face reveals a visual message of her disappointment. The foregrounding of Dee with Ghost Jr. in the background shows the compassionate male character who is standing behind her and who is drawn to her as a result of her emotional victimization and desire to help. Ghost Jr.'s desire to save the female victim from suffering may also be seen as an expression of his masculinity.

In another scene, Dee unpredictably rebels against Barbarian and disrupts the criminals' escape plan and the police's capture plan. Her actions force Ghost Jr. to choose between Barbarian and her, which puts their life in danger. He risks his life by taking a bullet meant for Dee in the melee. Although Barbarian is arrested, two other criminals escape and chase after Dee and Ghost Jr. who have taken the gold. During the run, Ghost Jr. blocks the way of the villains who are hunting Dee as a human shield, and finally gets hacked to death. Ghost Jr. is shown to make a choice of defending Dee, which is not consistent with his identity as an informant. His abnormal action can be attributed to his affection for her, which highlights her influence on him. That Dee loses the man who truly loves her suggests the doom of underclass women who are bound to suffer without happiness in love.

The scenes expressing the romantic relationship between Dee and Ghost Jr. have a strange mixture of excitement and bleakness. We first see the relationship blossom when they are

driving a car containing heavy weapons that have been prepared to block a planned robbery to be carried out by Dee's gangster boyfriend. In an intense scene Ghost Jr. tries to dodge a police car check and as they try to escape we hear the ironic use of a happy Christmas song as accompanying music. The facial expressions of both Dee and Ghost Jr. seem joyful in this unusual situation, highlighting the growing romance between them. After a car crash, they abandon the car and run into a market to escape from the police. They hide in a cabinet under a storage rack where Dee unexpectedly kisses Ghost Jr. However, the concealed space and repressed atmosphere suggest that their affection cannot be open. In another scene as Ghost Jr. he takes a bullet meant for Dee and is badly injured, he takes out a diamond ring Dee has her eyes on in a gold store they planned to rob, and gives it to Dee with his shivering hand, again suggesting she is doomed to suffer.

In the three case studies, men are invested with a decision-making power focused around completing a social mission such as defending others and maintaining social justice. Although women do not engage in these roles directly, as victims they generate sympathy from the men. The men who see women's charms in the moments of extreme distress are affected and motivated by them to take a morally correct path, through which the men can make a contribution to maintaining the social justice. Moreover, while men can change their decisions with the influence of women for whom they have affection, women have to conceal their true love and are unable to be open about their romantic interests, which suggests that women's emotional freedoms are restricted.

Female Submission and Male Dominance

The disempowered female victims' suffering from male perpetrators' violence and their lack of ability or desire to resist reveals an underlying sense of repression of women in a

male-dominated patriarchy that is influenced by traditional stereotypes of women as weak and dependent on men. As noted in Chapter 2, gender images in patriarchal culture have stereotypically featured men as powerful, strong, rational and active, and women as soft, weak, insecure, passive and dependent (O' Day, 2004). The basic problem of this formulation derives from the dichotomous conceptualization of gender that depicts masculinity as active and femininity as passive (Wong, 2005). The female victims in the three case studies are constructed as brutalized at the hands of men, which accords with Bouhours and Broadhurst's (2015) study of violence against women in Hong Kong pointing out that women in Hong Kong are more likely to be abused by men in a context where traditional Chinese values are revered.

The representations of women in these case studies do not challenge traditional Chinese gender norms and patriarchal beliefs and values that have been heavily influenced by Confucian philosophy (Gallin, 1992). The inferior role of women in traditional Chinese societies, as in these case studies, reflects the rigid gender norms as prescribed by Confucius decorum. As in traditional Chinese families, women in these films undertake reproductive roles, while men take the productive role and have authority over major decisions (Tang & Lai, 2008), including decisions over whether the women should have an abortion and cease their reproductive role as seen in the case of Dee and Barbarian in *The Stool Pigeon*. Meanwhile, women's reproductive roles can be extended to the behaviours that passively follow men, even if they are aware that men are wrong as seen in the case of Jane following her husband using drugs in *Protégé*, and Dee following her boyfriend in the committing of a crime in *The Stool Pigeon*. Despite women's positive influence on social change, they rarely engage in the action that affects the social change directly, which means that these rigid social norms ensure ongoing male dominance.

The filmic representation of women's weakness and vulnerability to being attacked by men also suggests a resistance of the patriarchy, in a context where violence (whether towards men or women) can be regarded as a valued attribute of men (Bandura, 1978), a way to define boys and men, and a way of articulating one's right to be a man (Bryan, 2008). Such highly acclaimed films as the three case studies examined here, are part of a society in which masculinity can be achieved through violence. At the very least, violence can be seen, as a proposition that attracts popular attention, if not immediate influence over the actions of men towards women (Eschholz & Bufkin's, 2001).

Although female characters are sometimes shown to possess the courage to defy male dominance, they still have to rely on male assistance or salvation and are unable to escape from men's repression in the end. For instance, Dee in *The Stool Pigeon* shows masculine strength and fights back against the male attackers, but is finally repressed by masculine violence. Dee displays courage in planning a rebellious action to get hold of her boyfriend Barbarian's loot to take revenge after he cheats on her. She adopts criminal strategies of bribery to encourage a member of the criminal gang to be her ally and uses Ghost Jr.'s affection for her to push him to join the rebellion too. However, her bravery is met with defeat and great physical injury in the end at the hands of male attackers just as she reaches for the gold. Her rebellion is a challenge to the authority of Barbarian, the leader of the criminal gang. The brutality against Dee is not only the male gangsters' way of recapturing their loot, but also represents the repression of female rebellion and the enhancement of male dominance. Dee's case verifies Cai's (2015) argument that under patriarchal social norms, if females are bold, they are seen to be transgressive and have problematic desires that go beyond the social boundaries of mainstream culture, so men

will suppress them to maintain male authority. Drawing on Edwards (2011), the fact that these films with familiar representations of women in subordinate positions won major awards and achieved box-office success in Hong Kong (and two receiving box office success in the Mainland) suggests they are tapping into a deep vein of misogyny among Chinese audiences and the film industry. It also reflects men's anxiety about women the increasing strength of women's social power.

Women's impact on social change has not been completely denied in the films. However, men are shown to act in the leading roles aimed at affecting social change, while women indirectly engage in social change by affecting men who waver between morally good and bad directions, and motivating them to achieve social righteousness and maintain the social order in the end. Such constructions can be seen as a way for the patriarchy to enhance its own self-esteem.

The Power of Gangsters in Hong Kong Society

In the three case studies, the narratives are associated with the underworld and women from the underprivileged class are brutalized by male gangsters, using both physical and emotional violence. As noted in Chapter 2, the Hong Kong film industry has a long-term connection with gangsters, making gangster stories common. The filmic representation of gangsters shows their strong social power and aggression towards both other male and female characters from the social underclasses. In *One Nite in Mongkok*, the violence against Dandan by a gangster includes a physical beating and a sexual assault. We see Dandan being raped and her prized possessions (gold necklace) confiscated by the male gangster. As a prostitute who engages in unskilled work, Dandan does not have the ability or desire to defend herself. In *Protégé*, we see Jane being forced by her gangster husband

to consistently use drugs. Jane has lost not only the capacity to work but also the will to survive, and eventually acquiesces to her husband's suggestion to insert the injection in her neck that causes her final death. In *The Stool Pigeon*, the nefarious criminals crazily chase Dee and attack, beat and hack her intensively with cold-blooded force. These scenes demonstrate male fearlessness and aggression, on the one hand, and the vulnerability and passivity of women, on the other, in a gangster world.

The representation of tough gangsters in Hong Kong crime films embodies their strong social power and the mercilessness of the economic-oriented Hong Kong capitalist society, in which women in the underclass are reduced to commodities who are exchanged by aggressive gangsters. As Liu and Di (2011) illustrated, people in capitalist societies have an awareness of a crisis and a fear of being eliminated, which is made exceedingly clear in these crime dramas. Taking *One Nite In Mongkok* as an example, prostitutes' sexual services are a kind of commodity exchange. However, under the pressure of gangsters, their services develop into sexual enforcement. A woman's body or sexual service (or rape) may be similar to a commodity like a gold necklace that can be bought (or stolen) at any moment. In *Protégé*, when Jane's husband sees that someone would like to pay her for sex, he unhesitatingly persuades her to accept this offer because he needs the money to buy more drugs. From his view, women can be exchanged with drugs. In *The Stool Pigeon*, Dee is bought by a leader of a Hong Kong mafia organization from her mother against her will. While female victims are subordinated in a capitalist society of unequal exchange, men assume a dominant role. Louie (2002) argued that two core themes of a capitalist society are production and profits. The purchasing power (or acquiring power in the case of taking goods and services which they do not pay for) is infused with male ideals that are merciless and profit-oriented, and which aim to satisfy men's needs. The representation of

masculinity in these films does not conform to the traditional concepts of literary cultivation and martial arts skills in a traditional ‘wen’/’wu’ sense. The portrayal of male gangsters metaphorically reflects the cruelty of capitalist societies in which profit is supreme and where male gangsters pursue profit through criminal and violent means, which has a particularly devastating effect on women.

Mainland Immigrants in Hong Kong

In this study, the filmic representation also reveals an inequality between Mainland immigrants and Hong Kong dwellers through the depiction of the female victims who are originally from the Mainland and have become part of the underclass of Hong Kong society. *One Nite in Mongkok* presents both male and female Mainland immigrants who suffer from intense violence and humiliation by Hong Kong locals. The female victim, Dandan, is from a small village in Hunan Province on the Mainland. She lives in a small and dirty hostel in Hong Kong and works as a prostitute, enduring her whoremasters’ bullying. The violence against her includes punching and sexual assault. This representation relates to social science research that indicates that prostitutes are at a particularly high risk of being exposed to various forms of violence in Hong Kong, including economic, physical, verbal, and sexual violence (Li, 2013). Laifu, who is from another small village in Hunan Province in the Mainland, is imported to Hong Kong to be a hit man. However, his main purpose in Hong Kong is to search for his missing fiancé. Without professional skills or education, being hired as a hit man is his only chance to enter Hong Kong. He also encounters intense physical violence exerted by the local gangsters. This narrative and filmic representation reflects Mainlanders’ inferior status in Hong Kong, especially those who are uneducated and unskilled (Law & Lee, 2006), see Chapter 2).

Although previous Hong Kong filmic representation of Mainlanders in Hong Kong have often been negative, it has recently improved. For instance, while films may often depict Mainlander females in roles like prostitutes experiencing lives of hardship and a loss of their self-esteem as they try to make money, an essential goodness underlying their existence is also presented, such as seen in films like *Love Will Tear Us Apart* (dir. Nelson Yu Lik-wai, 1999) and *Durian Durian* (dir. Fruit Chan, 2000). In *One Nite in Mongkok*, the female immigrant, Dandan, is constructed as a beautiful and kind-hearted prostitute. Although she desires money, she does not take any from Laifu, even though it may be tempting when she holds Laifu's bag full of cash. She also provides positive moral guidance, persuading Laifu to abandon the gun and not break the law. The male Mainlander, Laifu, is constructed as an intelligent village man who has the ability to realize that his employer has betrayed him. He has the courage to save Dandan from evil forces, with gangster Wah's pending sexual assault. Seeing Dandan suffering from physical pain, he shows compassion and leaves Dandan some cash in her bag without telling her. These details indicate that the filmic image of Mainlanders, even in a crime film that is full of negative events, is not completely negative. This tendency of showing the kind-hearted nature of people from the Mainland may also be influenced by the CEPA and the need to cater to Mainland audiences' preferences.

Although multicultural immigration in Hong Kong has prevailed for decades and the media representation of Mainlanders has changed, Mainlanders' life and social conditions, especially for underclass females, in Hong Kong still remains an obstacle. Applying two of the 'psychic interiority' codes that Chow (2007) proposes, *One Nite in Mongkok* shows modern women reviewing their life conditions during the process of 'psychic mobility' –

in this case going to another city for a career. It also shows Mainland women reviewing themselves in the context of a strange society where they are new insiders. In the last scene of *One Nite in Mongkok*, Dandan gets ready to return to her hometown in the Mainland. The officer of the border administration questions her overdue permit. Dandan said, “I won’t come here again.” Then she finds some cash that Laifu has left in her bag before his death. She cries and says, “Why is Hong Kong called Hong Kong?” This is not the question for the officer but for herself. While Hong Kong as a capitalist centre appears attractive at the outset and a way for women to improve their lives, their ability to do so remains in question, with their lives pervaded by a sense of social exclusion from both the world of male action and Hong Kong society at large.

Summary

To summarize, in the case studies analysed, female victims, who are from the underprivileged class, including Mainlanders, are shown to be physically and emotionally brutalized by beatings, sexual assault and abandonment from male perpetrators. However, even though men are in charge of making decisions and affecting social change, women still have some influence. Females are more likely to be involved in affecting change in an indirect way by using their affection to influence men and motivate them to maintain the social and moral order. The construction of masculine violence against female victims in these films may suggest a level of reflexivity relating to patriarchal fears surrounding women’s increasing power. This chapter has also shown how cinematic representations of aggressive gangsters may be linked to the strong social power and cruelty in capitalist societies (of which Hong Kong is a prime example), in which people from the underprivileged classes are repressed. Moreover, it reflects that underclass female Mainlanders, who take unskilful occupations or find it hard to engage in work at all in

Hong Kong, tend to be socially excluded, though Mainlanders are likely to have morally upright characteristics.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

It has been the aim of this study to make sense of the social and political implications of representations of women and violence in award-winning Hong Kong crime films produced since 2003. Focusing on how crime films represent violence against women and the interpersonal impact between the leading female and male protagonists, the findings suggest that underclass female victims tend to be brutalized by male perpetrators through physical beatings, sexual assault and emotional torment.

Through analysing the three case studies, the consistent construction of female characters as weak and insecure who depend on male protection or salvation, reinforces a sense of female submission and male dominance in a patriarchal society. Male repression of women with transgressive desires and rebellious actions may be seen as a reflection of the growing anxiety of men that appears to be challenged by women's rise in the real world. Unlike the men, the women in the selected films are seldom presented with the power to directly affect social changes. Instead, women are portrayed as having a secondary influence through using their romantic attraction or through sympathy generated from their unjust victimhood, both of which motivate men to make moral decisions by upholding the law or a sense of social justice.

In the three case studies, the social problem of an unequal society in terms of gender relations and relations between Hong Kong locals and Mainland immigrants within the underclass is made apparent. The depiction of male perpetrators as aggressive gangsters exerting violence against female victims embodies the aggression of the capitalist Hong Kong society in which underclass women can be treated as commodities to be exchanged.

The stereotypical portrayal of females as weak and passive, in need of protection by men and as males as active and protective or aggressive towards females is common in both Chinese and Hollywood films, as discussed in Chapter 2 and 4. In the Chinese context, women who have transgressive desires, including women warriors and women who dare to fight back and defy male dominance (in the case of Dee) are shown to violate mainstream social norms and suffer in the end. This observation accords with traditional Chinese gender norms and patriarchal beliefs that have been heavily influenced by Confucian philosophy. The three major crime films of the present study perpetuate patriarchal assumptions under this tradition. The fact that they were accredited with major awards and achieved box office success in both Hong Kong and the Mainland, suggests that they are tapping into a deep vein of misogyny present in Chinese society. With the women in these films are denied any sense of agency, the Hong Kong film industry is shown to be participating in a patriarchal culture that puts women in their place and that fantasizes about their victimhood.

This study bridges the gap in the study of female victims' representations in Hong Kong crime films, a genre that is seldom studied in the Chinese context. Drawing on feminist theories, this study has focused on representations of violence against women in films and their emotional conditions. On the basis of cinema studies, a detailed film text analysis has decoded the representation of women as constructed through audio-visual artistic approaches, which derives from but is not entirely similar to reality. It contributed to an understanding of media attitudes towards women that may potentially influence the public's perception. By adopting a critical approach, this study related the film analysis to social and political discourse and examined filmic reflections on Hong Kong society.

Affected by CEPA, this study has suggested a few ways in which Hong Kong cinema may be undergoing a cultural transformation to adapt to the Mainland market. For instance, while violence against the female victims is presented indirectly in *One Nite in Mongkok* and *Protégé*, in *The Stool Pigeon*, a more recent film, the depiction of brutalization against the female character is represented in detail. Further research may clarify whether this reflects a general growing acceptability of the viewing of violence, including violence against women, by Chinese audiences on screen, and/or whether it relates to changing censorship regulations or changing Mainland sensibilities. The study also showed how the Mainland characters in Hong Kong crime films, both men and women, while in underclass roles, were constructed with positive redeeming features. For instance, the women were beautiful, innocent and kind-hearted. Although some women commit a crime, they either do this trying to defend themselves or are forced to under the influence of bad men. This study thus establishes a benchmark for further analyses of the representation of women as victims in pre- and post-CEPA crime films, as well as comparisons with representations of women in Mainland-and Taiwan-centred crime films.

Utilizing a textual approach, this study has been limited to particular findings resulting from a close examination of the representation of women as victims in three popular and influential film texts through detailed analysis of narrative, visual and audio elements. Future studies can be extended to include portrayals of women in other roles, such as police officers, agents and gangsters who are not victims. Since these portrayals are common in both Hong Kong and Mainland films, exploring how they are represented through their different social positions contributes to a broader understanding of how the media views different kinds of women. The analyses of women in other genres of Chinese films, which have not received significant scholarly attention, such as horror, war and

romantic films, can also be conducted. Comparisons within these genres can be made between Hong Kong films and those from other Chinese filmmaking hubs, including Beijing, Shanghai and Taipei across a larger timeframe. Furthermore, it is also worth examining issues of gender, violence and spectatorship in the context of Chinese crime films and other genres, an area that remains critically understudied. Unlike studies of representation, which provide insights into the encoding of messages by filmmakers who are embedded in society, spectatorship analysis helps to investigate how films generate discussions and impact on people's views about society. Further studies may thus combine analysis of films with interviews with filmmakers, performers and audiences and may offer different perspectives on how the film texts are interpreted.

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FILMOGRAPHY

One Nite in Mongkok

- Release date: 20 May 2004 (Hong Kong)
- Director: Derek Tung-Shing Yee
- Writer: Derek Tung-Shing Yee
- Stars: Cecilia Cheung (Hong Kong), Daniel Wu (Hong Kong) etc.
- Production Companies
 - Film Unlimited
 - Sil-Metropole Organisation
 - Universe Films Distribution Company
- Plot Summary:
 - It tells a story that takes place in the district of Mongkok in Hong Kong over a period of 24 hours. Lai Fu, a tough and youthful village man, is a hit man imported to Hong Kong from the Mainland. Lai Fu rescues a hooker, Dandan, from a sadist. Getting involved into gangster revenge, Laifu is finally shot to death by the police and Dandan returns to her hometown in the Mainland.

Protégé

- Release date: 13 February 2007 (Hong Kong/Mainland); 16 March 2007 (Taiwan)
- Director: Derek Tung-Shing Yee
- Writer: Derek Tung-Shing Yee
- Stars: Daniel Wu (Hong Kong), Jingchu Zhang (Mainland), Louis Koo (Hong Kong), Andy Lau (Hong Kong) etc.

- Production Companies
 - Artforce International (present) (as Artforce International Ltd)
 - Mediacorp Raintree Pictures
 - Global Entertainment Group Co. (present) (as Global Entertainment Group [Asia] Ltd)
 - China Film Group (present) (as China Film Group Corporation)
 - Beijing Poly-bona Film Publishing Company (present) (as Beijing Polybona Film Publishing Co. Ltd.)
 - Beijing Jinyinma Movie & TV Culture Co. (co-present) (as Beijing Jinyinma Movie & TV Culture Co., Ltd)
 - Film Unlimited
- Plot Summary:
 - A special agent, Nick has been deep undercover in Asia's lucrative, organized drug trade for eight years, and becomes the protégé of a crime boss. Nick has started to feel loyal to his new environment, and struggles over whether to continue to traffic drugs for wealth or to bring the drug dealers to justice. Meanwhile, he has developed affection for a drug user, Jane, who is forced to use drugs by her husband, who is also a drug user. Jane's ultimate death due to an overdose of drugs makes Nick realize the danger of drugs to people, so he eventually brings the drug dealers to justice.

The Stool Pigeon

- Release date: 26 August 2010 (Hong Kong/Mainland); 10 September 2010 (Taiwan)
- Director: Dante Lam
- Writer: Dante Lam (story), Wai Lun Ng (screenplay)
- Stars: Nicholas Tse (Hong Kong), Lunmei Gwei (Taiwan), Nick Cheung (Hong Kong), Yi Lu (Mainland) etc.
- Production Companies
 - Emperor Motion Pictures
 - Huayi Brothers Media
 - Sil-Metropole Organization
 - Visual Capture
- Plot Summary:
 - The story is about a Hong Kong police officer, Don Lee and an informant, Ghost Jr., who cooperate to investigate a robbery conducted by the criminal, Barbarian. The unexpected rebellion by Barbarian's girlfriend, Dee, who is cheated by Barbarian, interrupts the police's plan and puts Ghost Jr. in danger. Ghost Jr. has affection for Dee and eventually dies in a fight with gangsters to save Dee's life.⁹

⁹ Filmography information is from the international movie database (imdb.com). The plot summary is by the author.

GLOSSARY

FILMS

2 Young (2005)	早熟 (2005)
A Better Tomorrow (1986)	英雄本色 (1986)
A Cause to Kill (1970)	杀机 (1970)
Bodyguards and Assassins (2009)	十月围城 (2009)
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)	卧虎藏龙 (2000)
Downtown Torpedoes (1997)	神偷谍影 (1997)
Durian Durian (2000)	榴莲飘飘 (2000)
Election (2005)	黑社会 (2005)
Golden Fingernails (1989)	金色的指甲 (1989)
Hero (2002)	英雄 (2002)
Infernal Affairs (2002)	无间道 (2002)
It's A Women's World (1939)	女人世界 (1939)
Lone Woman (1991)	独身女人 (1991)
Love Will Tear Us Apart (1999)	天上人间 (1999)
Lust, Caution (2007)	色戒 (2007)
One Night in Mongkok (2004)	旺角黑夜 (2004)
Project A (1983)	A 计划 (1983)
Protégé (2007)	门徒 (2007)
Shanghai Dreams (2005)	青红 (2005)

Song of the Exile (1990)	客途秋恨 (1990)
Summer Snow (1995)	女人四十 (1995)
The Black Rose (1965)	黑玫瑰 (1965)
The Death Curse (2003)	古宅心慌慌 (2003)
The Secret (1979)	疯劫 (1979)
The Stool Pigeon (2010)	线人(2010)
The Story of a Discharged Prisoner (1967)	英雄本色 (1967)
To Be Number One (1991)	跛豪 (1991)
Woman-Demon-Human (1987)	人·鬼·情 (1987)
Woman-TAXI-Woman (1991)	女人·TAXI·女人 (1991)
Women's World (1991)	女性的世界 (1991)
Yellow Earth (1984)	黄土地 (1984)
Young and Dangerous (1996-1998)	古惑仔系列 (1996—1998)

ACTORS/ACTRESSES

Alexander Chan	陈望华
Andy Lau	刘德华
Ann Hui	许鞍华
Cecilia Cheung	张柏芝
Daniel Wu	吴彦祖
Ivy Ling	凌波
Jingchu Zhang	张静初

Louis Koo	古天乐
Lunmei Gwei	桂纶镁
Nicholas Tse	谢霆锋
Nick Cheung	张家辉
Yi Lu	陆毅

DIRECTORS/FRIMMAKERS

Andrew Lau	刘伟强
Ang Lee	李安
Ann Hui	许鞍华
Chor Yuen	楚原
Dante Lam	林超贤
Derek Tung-Sing Yee	尔冬升
Esther Eng	伍锦霞
Fruit Chan	陈果
Jackie Chan	成龙
Jing Wong	王晶
John Woo	吴宇森
Johnnie To	杜琪峰
Junzheng Wang	王君正
Kaige Chen	陈凯歌
Kena Dong	董克娜

Kong Lung	龙刚
Man Kit Poon	潘文杰
Manfred Wong	文隽
Mitsuo Murayama	穆时杰
Nelson Yu Lik-wai	余力为
Peter Chan	陈可辛
Pou-Soi Cheang	郑保瑞
Shuqin Huang	黄蜀芹
Teddy Chan	陈德森
Tsui Hark	徐克
Xiaoshuai Wang	王小帅
Yimou Zhang	张艺谋
Zhifang Bao	鲍芝芳
Zhiyu Qin	秦志钰

ACRONYMS

Hong Kong Film Awards (HKFA)	香港电影金像奖
Best of Best (BOB)	最佳拍档电影公司
China Women's Film Festival (CWFF)	中国民间女性影展
Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA)	关于建立更紧密经贸关系的安排