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# Eliminating the Uncertainty of Hong Kong in 1990s: Tsui Hark's Once Upon a Time in China (1, 2, 3)

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Eliminating the Uncertainty of Hong Kong in 1990s:  
Tsui Hark's Once Upon a Time in China (1, 2, 3)

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

My argument is that the Wong Fei-hung film series, *Once Upon a Time in China* (Tsui Hark, Chapters 1, 2, 3), not only affirms the ideas of Confucianism, but also criticizes them. Tsui Hark's film series expresses Hong Kong's tension of selecting eastern tradition and western modernity before it returned to mainland China in 1997, which represents the selection of entirely different values between East and West. Though the film series was made from 1991 to 1993, Hark started considering how to eliminate the uncertainty in selecting ideology after Hong Kong's return. He provides his answer by combining eastern Confucianism and western modernity to lead Hong Kong to build a more inclusive nationalism. This new nationalism not only transforms tense uncertainty into positive potentiality, but also avoids the intense conflict between those who select eastern values and those who select western ones.

Tsui Hark's affirmation to Confucianism includes the traditional moral principles which are kindness, righteousness, wisdom, sincerity and "father guides son". Meanwhile, he affirms the individualism and anti-tradition of modernity. For Hong Kong, Hark's implication is to let them take the Chinese nation as the prerequisite for safeguarding the unification of China and abiding by the leadership of state sovereignty, as well as accepting the traditional Confucian morality. In addition, as a modern city, Hong Kong should continue to carry forward individualism and anti-tradition of modernity to satisfies the individual's reasonable desires and

challenge the traditional with creativity. In this thesis, I support this argument by analyzing two aspects of these films: character and genre.

## INTRODUCTION

The 1990s was a very special period for Hong Kong. After the negotiations between Deng Xiaoping and Margaret Thatcher in 1984, China and Britain signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which meant Hong Kong would return to China in 1997. Hong Kong city had been a colony of Britain for a long time. The colonial conflicts between capitalism and socialism, between western and Chinese ideology, would reemerge after 1997, and these problems would be very confusing for Hong Kong's citizens.

Confucianism is the main ideology in China by looking back to the Chinese history. It has experienced 2,000 years in China. From official affirmation to the condemnation of the Cultural Revolution, to its revival in the 1980s and 1990s, Confucianism not only regained the core of Chinese culture, but also became an important part of Chinese ideology.

On the one hand, Confucianism was constructed in 770 B.C. and enshrined as orthodox ideology by Emperor Wu in A.D. 155. Since then, Confucianism has been the mainstream ideology of the Chinese people. On the other hand, Confucianism can be seen as the main ideology, that is, the Imperial Examination System, which began in A.D. 587 and ended in 1905 in the Qing Dynasty. "The system continued with some modifications until its 1905 abolition under the Qing dynasty" (Patricia Buckley,145). The main content of the examination was Four Books and Five

Classics which are the Confucianism classics. “From a certain viewpoint, the examination system represented the Confucian system in its most rationalist aspect” (Yang. C. K, 255). These classics had been the textbooks that the students must learn in schools and all who want to be governors must have a good understanding of those classics. However, during the Cultural Revolution initiated by Chairman Mao in 1966, Confucianism was completely negated and regarded as a product of the feudal society.

After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping became the leader in China. He started to redress and correct many leftist mistakes. “Following Mao's death in 1976, Deng outmaneuvered his chosen successor Hua Guo-feng in December 1978. Inheriting a country beset with social conflict, disenchantment with the Communist Party and institutional disorder resulting from the leftist policies of the Mao era, Deng became the paramount figure of the "second generation" of party leadership” (*New York Times*, 20). Therefore, Confucianism was reassessed by the public. In the 1980s, Confucianism began to revive. Li Zehou, a Chinese philosopher, published *Re-evaluation of Confucius* (1980). He considered that Confucianism is still the representative of Chinese culture and paved the way for cultural conservatism. In 1990, Ji Xianlin, known as the first scholar of Chinese studies in modern times, said in his *Culture in the east and west*: “Western culture which is based on analysis will decline. Instead, eastern culture which is based on synthesis will rise” (28). In the wave of cultural conservatism, scholars not only criticized radicalism during the Cultural Revolution, but also ensure the status of Confucianism. “This cultural

nationalism which utilizes Confucianism as the core is the important component in the wave of cultural conservatism” (Fang Bo, 12).

Conversely, Hong Kong, as a colony dominated by the British, was influenced not only by British culture, but also by capitalist economics. This city has been a modern city for a long time. “Hong Kong entered its modern era when it became a British overseas territory in 1841” (Steve Tsang, 2). To continue explore why Hong Kong is modern, I borrow some key words of modernity from Dan Laughey. (See P1). So, Hong Kong’s modernity is embodied in several aspects, especially capitalism, markets, industrial and rule of law. For an example, Hong Kong’s free market is the one of the most freedom. “Hong Kong is one of the most significant global financial centers, holding the highest Financial Development Index score and consistently ranking as the most competitive and freest economic area in the world” (Long Finance,22). The question thus became: What should Hong Kong do after the return? Should it embrace or refuse one set of values or the other? Fully embracing Confucianism would mean that Hong Kong would have to drop all the features of modernity, providing motivation to radical nationalists who reject Hong Kong’s modern achievements like the high level of the economy.

Conversely, as a long-term colonial area, Hong Kong would lose Chinese tradition if it continued to entirely follow Western ideology. This would not only isolate Hong Kong's identity to mainland China but also make Hong Kong separate from the Chinese nation in the future. Hark’s answer was that the Chinese should break those traditions that are too conservative and treat modernity in an inclusive

way. This strategy not only figured out the danger of radical westernization and nationalism but also avoided the potential violence between those who select different values.

To explore how the film series maintains Confucianism and challenges it with western modernity via character and genre, I open a conversation to discuss the nature of Confucianism and modernity. As the main ideology in China in the 1990s, Confucianism can mostly represent Chinese values, judgments, and ethical standards. For those who want to be superior gentlemen (Junzi), Confucianism defines the Three cardinal guides and the Five constant virtues to requires them. “Dong Zhongshu is a representative of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty...He also proposed that load guides retainer, father guides son, husband guides wife and kindness, righteousness, etiquette, wisdom and sincerity as the moral standards in human life, so, people concludes these as Three Cardinal Guides and the Five constant virtues” (History 2, 9). These rules are what I am interested in and explore it in this thesis.

Benevolence means a Junzi should love other people; righteousness means a Junzi should know what is justice and evil; wisdom means a Junzi should gain knowledge to know what is right and wrong, true and false; sincerity means a Junzi should be honest and trustworthy; etiquette means Junzi should restrain one’s desire to obey ethics.

Conversely, modernity has an entirely different set of values, emphasizing especially the idea of challenging tradition, as well as stressing that, with more individualism, comes more freedom. In this thesis, I mainly explore individualism and

anti-tradition in modernity. According to Hahm Chaibong's definition, "Individualism is the quintessential product of modernity". In addition to the individualism, modernity also includes anti-tradition. "Modernity rejects anything "old" and makes novelty ... a criterion for truth" (Hall, 1990). The old thing is tradition, so anti-tradition is another feature of modernity.

Based on these definitions of Confucianism and modernity, my research starts with character. Hark maintains Confucianism in his film series. Kwan Tak-hing is the most famous actor to play Wong Fei-hung, having done so at least 60 times and he represents the ideal of Confucianism. Kwan Tak-hing not only uses Confucianism as his moral standard, but also his Kung Fu follows the rules strictly, because morality is most important thing in Kung Fu as it is in Confucianism.

Most clearly, Kung Fu originated in China. As a national genre, the function of the Kung Fu movie is to express national values. So, Confucianism cannot be separated from Kung Fu films. A proverb in martial arts says, "Learning the morality before learning the Kung Fu," which is to emphasize morality is more important than bodily fighting skills. Kung Fu is made of two parts, inside and outside. Inside means the morality, outside means the bodily Kung Fu skills. Through the different Kung Fu organizations, the requirements are similar. "Commandments in Shao Lin Temple say, be friendly and kind to fellows, do not cheat" (He Bing, 24). "Commandments in Emei says, we don't talk to those who have no wisdom, we don't teach who have no benevolence" (Huang Li, 24). These principles are exactly what Confucianism defines

in its Five Constant Virtues, which are benevolence, righteousness, etiquette, wisdom and sincerity.

Therefore, heroes in Kung Fu films must have a high morality, because it is the basic requirement to a Kung Fu man. Jet Li is a new actor to play Wong Fei-hung, and, again, I find that he follows of the four basic values of Confucianism, which like Kwan in the previous Wong Fei-hung films, points to Tsui Hark's affirmation of Confucianism values. For instance, the new Wong Fei-hung is not only a Kung Fu master, but also a doctor, and Hark draws more views to show his doctor life. Wong is willing to cure those sick people who have no money to pay for medicine, which is a way to illustrate his adhering to the value of kindness.

In addition to upholding Confucianism, Hark also criticizes it. Wong, as a hero, has more emotional performance in the story. According to the ethics of Confucianism, Wong Fei-hung and Aunt Thirteen belong to two different seniorities in the family, because Aunt Thirteen is a cousin of Wong's mother. That is the reason why Wong calls her aunt. Therefore, they should not love each other, though they have no genetic connection; they are still related within the strictures of Confucian society, which made such love taboo in Chinese society if breaks the principle of etiquette. As I mentioned above, modernity emphasizes individualism. In this context, Jet Li is no longer a hero who only serves the public and follows all the rules as in Kwan Tak-hing's image of the Confucianism patriarch. Instead, he is a challenger and a hero who has an individual life. Furthermore, the love between Wong and his aunt is a kind of combination of east and west. Aunt Thirteen as a westernized role is not

only a symbol of western values but also a teacher who can guide Wong on the path to becoming modern. Hark thus tries to send a message to the audience, combining eastern and western values as a way to solve uncertainty about Hong Kong's future.

When it comes to genre, I explore how Hark's films continue traditions from classical Kung Fu films through their emphasis on patriarchy and ceremony and how he breaks the tradition by new Kung Fu style in mise-en-scene, editing and action design. Also, I argue that he imitates *Once Upon a Time in the West* in narrative and theme. The patriarchy in Confucianism can be found in the relationship between student and master, which obeys the idea of "Father guides son" in Confucianism. In China, the word master combines teacher and father. The master in the Kung Fu organization is like a father in the family, his authority cannot be challenged. The ceremony is a very important part to find how Kung Fu maintains the hierarchy of Confucianism. The student has to kneel and kowtow to the master; he also needs to hold a cup of tea to serve the master during the ceremony. With master's permission, the student becomes one part of the Kung Fu organization. The ceremony is a statement to clarify the master's absolute power and control. On the one hand, kneeling and kowtowing tells all the students that they are on a lower level than the master; they are serving. On the other hand, only the master can decide if the student can be a member of Kung Fu organization. Usually, the Kung Fu organization only has one master, which means the master is a King, a father in this group, and the student has to obey the master.

Rong was punished by Wong Fei-hung because he was reckless; Liang Kwan was punished because he is too close to Aunt Thirteen. The students were guided by the master and never made any refutation to the master. The ceremony also appears in the movie. Although Wong Fei-hung begins to accept Western ideas, there is no lack of conservative ceremonies in Hark's films. He uses the contrast between suits and ceremonies to express that accepting Western modernity is not to abandon the tradition. He affirms hierarchy by maintaining the ceremony.

In addition, Wong Fei-hung's authority is challenged by his father. Wong Fei-hung loses his dominance and is afraid when trying to tell his father about his love with Aunt Thirteen. This is an expression of "father guides son" because the final marriage would be decided by Wong's father. Therefore, father is the absolute authority. Although Hark challenged the etiquette with individualism, Wong Fei-hung still needs his father's approval of his marriage. Hark actually affirms "father guides son" in Confucianism through ceremony and the relationship between Wong Fei-hung and his father.

Beyond the similarities, I also find some difference between Hark's film series and classic Kung Fu films especially in the *mies-en-scene*, editing and action design. These new styles not only challenge the tradition, but also prove that Hark mingles the anti-tradition of modernity in his movies. Comparing to classics, firstly, Hark's *mies-en-scenes* are more complex, so characters do not just fight on the wide space, but rather on ladders or tables. Secondly, the editing in Hark's films is more than

classics especially the shifts between close-ups and close shot. Thirdly, the hero can finish the actions which can not be completed in real life.

Meanwhile, Hark also expresses the anti-tradition in his films by learning from Sergio Leone. Leone's Spaghetti Western challenges the traditional Western by two ways, narrative and theme. In classic Westerns, the story always happened in binary sides, which are justice and evil. But in Leone's narrative, several stories intersect together and there is no obvious fixed identity of characters. Hark utilizes Leone's narrative in his film series, too. Unlike the binary relationship in classic Kung Fu films, Wong Fei-hung is involved in conflicts between feudalistic Qing government and capitalistic revolution and radical nationalism.

In addition, the theme in Leone's film is not about personal revenge or conflicts, but rather about the consideration of history. The capitalist era will replace the barbarism era and cowboy era will disappear, too, due to the modernity that emerges. Hark imitates this, too. What he focuses on is not Wong Fei-hung's revenge or conflict between others, but rather, between the east conservative culture and west modern culture. In this way, Hark combines the anti-tradition in his films.

The dominant discussions about *Once Upon a Time in China* typically focus on the colonial struggle and the exploration of new nationalism in Hong Kong. While there is much to agree with in these discussions, my argument complicates the idea of a new nationalism by linking it to the identity of Hong Kong. Because Hark produced his film series from 1991 to 1993, we can read this as his desire to utilize his films to convey a message to Hong Kong before 1997. This message is about combining the

eastern Confucianism and western modernity to construct a more inclusive nationalism, rather than continue to follow western values or choosing to entirely embrace eastern ones.

In 1991, when Tsui Hark made *Once Upon a Time in China*, Hong Kong faced an unavoidable problem of uncertainty. This uncertainty was about the identity of Hong Kong between the West and the East, between capitalism and socialism, Western values and Eastern values. Kwai-Cheung Lo argues: “The British colonial regime historically alienated the colonized Hong Kong Chinese from their national identification with China by promoting a separate Hong Kong identity and instituting a colonial education that effaced Hong Kong history” (43). Lo recognizes that Hong Kong's identity had become increasingly westernized and separated from the East's traditions. I extend his argument, discussing how, as Hong Kong's national identification became more and more westernized, it led to a situation wherein Hong Kong had to select to either maintain its western values or shift to the eastern ones after returning to mainland China.

To solve the above uncertainty problem, Hark, as a new wave director gives his strategy via his film series. Lo's theory proposes that there is not only an important link between this film series and Hong Kong's identity, but also the filmmaker's real concentration. He analyzes a plot that involves the burning of the British flag and many other western things by xenophobic fundamentalists: “The sequence obviously is more about Hong Kong as 1997 approaches than it is about China in the late nineteenth century. The filmmaker seems concerned that the end of

British colonialism may lead to a violent outburst of nationalist passion” (45). I embrace his examination that Hark realized the danger of nationalist passion after Hong Kong’s return, but lack of demerits of western values. So, I fill out his theory by the consideration of a question, should Hong Kong maintain the existing western values or embrace Chinese tradition after its return? Hark's film series utilizes actors and genre to express his attitude, by dealing with uncertainty of the traditional Chinese Confucianism and Western modernity to establish a new value which is a combination of Chinese and Western value, so as to construct a more inclusive nationalism.

I begin with a comparison of the two main actors portraying this character: Kwan Tak-hing and Jet Li. Kwan had been a symbol of Confucianism, and his function is to establish a perfect moral model for the public. Siu Leung Li argues that “While Kwan’s interpretation of the character of Wong as an embodiment of traditional Chinese values and Confucian morality has been firmly inscribed in the local imagination, and he himself being so patriotic and nationalistic a person” (531). While Siu’s account of Kwan is thoughtful, his discussion lacks any comparison of Kwan to Jet Li. While Jet Li still retains many features of traditional Confucianism, he also breaks some of its rules. Particularly, he challenges the idea that he should not love Aunt Thirteen, something absolutely prohibited in the Confucian norms. In Tsui’s film series, Wong Fei-hung is no longer a public symbol who needs to serve the community. Instead, he has become an individual hero. This can be read as an abandonment of traditional Confucian collectivism, and an embrace of western

individualism. In addition, notice that Aunt Thirteen is a modern woman who studies abroad, and that her appearance and ideas are westernized. Here, too, we can read their love as a symbol for combining West and East. Siu Leung Li notes, "Aunt Thirteen is a 'westernized' yet 'Chinese' woman who returns home from England. Switching between Victorian dresses and Chinese costumes, Aunt Thirteen, the feminine, embodying uncertainties and represented as an agent of Europeanized modernization, enchants Wong and drives him to rethink China's situation and its future" (535). I agree with Li, he illustrates the identity of Aunt Thirteen, but I think she missed the meaning of their love.

Confucianism cannot be separated from Kung Fu films. Any hero in a Kung Fu film must have a reason for their violence, and this reason must make the audience give moral recognition and support. Hark's film series is no exception. Connecting Confucianism and Kung Fu genre, Jie Hao writes, "Violence is originally a factor that is harmful to society or minors, but it is inseparable from showing the violence in the Kung Fu film. The reason why the audiences accept this violence is that Confucian ethics provide a solution to this contradiction, which is to legitimize violence" (5). So while violence is necessary for the Kung Fu genre, the hero needs a Confucian moral theory to support this use of violence in order to gain the audience's approval. However, Hark complicates this justification by cross-fertilizing Kung Fu and the spaghetti western, where moral codes are ambiguous. In *Once Upon a Time in the West*, as mentioned above, there is no absolute justice or evil, and everyone has moral imperfections. Leone uses these films to challenge the binary opposition in the

traditional western genre. The same situation unfolds in Hark's film series. Na lanyuan is killed in the final fight by Wong Fei-hung, but he is not evil because he maintains his loyalty to Qing government. Also, Leone emphasizes historical interchange rather than the revenge. All the stories/killings/violence start from the train station, which is a very precious resource for the capitalist. The expansion of capitalism has replaced the simple revenge story. Hark learns it, Wong Fei -hung, the foreign invaders, White Lotus religion, Qing government and revolutionary leaders respect the conflicts between the different values. Hark utilizes the historical intersection to replace the simple revenge story in the traditional Kung Fu genre to show his thoughts of uncertainty between different values.

As I mention above, I utilize *Once Upon a Time in China* as my primary source to concentrate on how Tsui Hark figures the uncertainty of Hong Kong when it returns to mainland China. To help understand this relationship, I borrow a theory from 20th-century Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin. In his *Discourse In The Novel* (1935), he argues, "Any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the coexistence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between different epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form.... Therefore, languages do not exclude each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways" (291). Bakhtin argues that language is a form that combines different voices throughout human history. All languages went through the past; they represent different social

formations and ideologies. However, they do not exclude each other, but rather, communicate with each other.

I think Bakhtin's theory can be extended to an understanding of values or ideologies. Importantly, Bakhtin's idea of the "heteroglot" refers to non-exclusion, which in essence, suggests the relationship between western and eastern values are not binary oppositions but interactions. Confucianism and modernity, collectivism and individualism, socialism and capitalism, are interrelated. Hark's strategy also emphasizes the intersection of East and West. To fully embrace Confucianism or modernity would have meant abandoning their intersection, and Hark rejects this way of thinking and instead seeks to intervene in the problem of East and West.

Hark's strategy is a good way to figure out the uncertainty; I then examine the meaning of Aunt Thirteen. As a westernized figure, she guides Wong Fei-hung to be modern: how to eat western foods like steak, how to use a steam machine or a camera, and so on. However, Wong sometimes feels annoyed at this, because he thinks he needs to learn too many things. Aunt Thirteen represents western modernity seems like a more superior value than eastern values. Edward Said notes in *Orientalism* (1978) that "a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed, it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (15). Said argues that the West thinks itself as the "I" who is superior, and the East as "other" and backward. This is hegemony in a colonial context.

In aforementioned part, I argued that Hark learns from Leone's west spaghetti, especially he borrows the idea of anti-tradition. In Bakhtin's *Dialogism*, he mentions, "The utterance is filled with dialogic overtones, and they must be taken into account in order to fully understand the style of the utterance. After all, our thought itself, philosophical, scientific, artistic is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought, and this cannot but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well" (92). Obviously, Bakhtin thinks the intersection is very important to construct thoughts and culture. Hark, as a pathfinder of new Kung Fu cinema, constructs his own style by communicating with Leone. This is also a communication between Kung Fu genre and the spaghetti western. Hark uses his interaction with the spaghetti western to shape his own style. He provides a way that Hong Kong as a westernized colonial why not combine Confucianism and modernity to construct a new conclusive nationalism.

In Chapter 1, I mainly discuss how the films combine Confucianism with modernity in terms of characters. There are three sections in this chapter. In first section I compare the previous and current actors of Wong Fei-hung, they are Kwan Tak-hing and Jet Li. I explore how Jet Li maintains the elements of conservative Confucianism. In the second section, I discuss the development of Wong and Aunt Thirteen's love, mainly focusing on that how Wong shifts and breaks etiquette with individualism. In the third section I mainly explore how Aunt Thirteen converts herself and accept Chinese tradition by abandoning her Orientalism.

There are two sections in Chapter 2 and their goals are to explore how Hark's film series combines "Father guides son" principle and anti-tradition in terms of genre. In first section, I focus on how Hark affirms the father's authority and power by comparing the classic Kung Fu films. Also, Hark's breakthrough of Kung Fu action expresses his anti-tradition. In the second section, I explore how Hark affirms the anti-tradition by imitating Leone's new narrative and theme of Western.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Romance as Allegory: Wong Fei-hung's Individualism and Aunt Thirteen's Traditional Kung Fu**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As I mentioned in my introduction, Tsui Hark tries to utilize his work to offer a solution to Hong Kong by combining Chinese and Western values to construct a more inclusive nationalism. He either embrace the West or the East. In this chapter, I start with a character analysis of the film to demonstrate that Hark utilizes romance as an allegory to reveal the combination of western modernity and eastern Confucianism.

Wong Fei-hung is a hero who represents the conservative tradition and restrains individual desire according to Confucianism, but Aunt Thirteen is a westernized woman who represents more freedom, individualism, and modern technics in the western modernity. They are very similar to the relationship between traditional China and Hong Kong. Wong Fei-hung maintains the Confucian character yet finally accepts individualism. The westernized Aunt Thirteen embraces western modernity and accepts traditional Kung Fu. They transform themselves because of romance, and Hark embraces Confucianism, such as righteousness and wisdom in terms of character, and criticizes the restraining desire of etiquette. He also embraces

the freedom of individualism but criticizes Orientalism and the loss of identity in colonialism.

The development of romance starts from the first chapter to the third chapter of the film series. Hark utilizes individualism to challenge Confucianism's etiquette because only etiquette in Confucianism's basic rules is completely contradictory to individualism. In traditional Confucianism, there are "Five Constant Virtues", which are benevolence, righteousness, wisdom, sincerity and etiquette. A man should follow these moral rules to be a gentleman (Junzi). In *Analects of Confucius*, Confucius tells his student, "Restrain one's desire and return to etiquette" (475–221 BC). According to Confucius's point in Confucianism, if an individual wants to have etiquette, he has to restrain his desire.

However, modern western individualism emphasizes that human as an individual should be respected: "Individualism thus involves the right of the individual to freedom and self-realization," writes Ellen Meiksins Wood (6). I borrow this idea from Wood, the individual has the freedom to fulfill his/her own desire, and the desire should be respected sufficiently, rather than restraining. Due to that Wong and Aunt thirteen are relatives, the love between them challenges the morality. Etiquette emphasizes that following all the ethical rules by repressing individual desire as I mentioned. But Wong and Aunt thirteen obviously breach the ethical rules and etiquette, so the love is a taboo which would be forbidden in Confucianism, but is encouraged in individualism. This is the contradiction between etiquette and individualism. Hark chooses romance as a breakthrough of Confucianism etiquette,

which means Jet Li breaks etiquette and affairs the romance of individualism. In this way, Jet Li's new Wong Fei-hung is a combination of benevolence, righteousness, wisdom, sincerity and individualism; thus, he is an image of eastern Confucianism and western modernity.

Not only does Wong change, but also Aunt Thirteen converts herself due to the romance. As I mentioned in my Introduction, she represents modern technology. She rejects traditional Kung Fu and embraces the gun, because she thinks western guns are better for keeping her safe due to an appearance of easy control and using it at longer distance. But in Aunt Thirteen's mind, Kung Fu is complex and weak. As a modern technology, guns are tools for the capitalist countries to colonize other countries, because guns not only can kill those who use melee weapons at a long distance, but also makes killing easily. As a technology for violence and killing, it makes Hong Kong separate from China and became the British colony after First Opium War.

At the beginning, Aunt Thirteen chooses a gun and refuses to learn Kung Fu; she not only embraces the western modern technology, but also gives up traditional Kung Fu and Chinese culture. Based on these things, she treats eastern traditions from an Orientalist perspective. And most importantly, the identity of Aunt Thirteen is still the East. Hark's allegory links Aunt Thirteen to Hong Kong and Hong Kong should do the changes like Aunt Thirteen who gives up the her ideas in orientalism and accept the Chinese national tradition.

The development of romance in the film series is a process in communication of western and eastern values. Both Wong and Aunt Thirteen convert themselves by the romance. Conservative Wong accepts the individualism to release his wants in love to break taboo in etiquette, and modern Aunt Thirteen gives up her Orientalist perspective and accepts, learns and uses traditional Kung Fu. The romance as allegory to telling Hong Kong, communicating to tradition and combining the eastern and western values is a way to solve Hong Kong's uncertainty and construct a new nationalism which is based on the identity of the Chinese nation, with benevolence, righteousness, wisdom and sincerity of Confucianism, also respect the reasonable realization of personal desires.

### **I. From Kwan Tak-hing to Jet Li, Inheritance of Confucianism**

In the first chapter of film series, Tsui Hark indeed affirms traditional Confucianism. Though Aunt Thirteen implies that she loves him, Wong rejects this romance and complies with Confucianism's rules.

By comparing the classic actor of Wong Fei-hung whose name is Kwan Tak-hing and the new actor Jet Li, I find that they are similar in their films and personal lives. Kwan Tak-hing was the actor who played Wong Fei-hung 77 times in films. What he represents is deeply ingrained Confucianism characterization. As I mentioned in the Introduction, a man has to follow "Five Constant Virtues" in Confucianism if he wants to be a superior gentleman (Junzi). Kwan Tak-hing not only matches these rules in the film, but also in his life.

The main scholars of *Once Upon a Time in China* have recognized that Kwan Tak-hing represents a perfect Confucian image in his films. As Tony Williams's thoughts to Jet Li and Kwan Tak-hing, "Li was the ideal actor to embody a fictional character coping with serious historical challenges to his screen character than Kwan Tak-hing, who always remained rooted in the traditional values of Confucius" (7). I agree his point, but I am trying to explore a connection between his real life and folk hero Wong Fei-hung's life to express Kwan's perfect Confucianism image. Therefore, I no longer analyze his Confucianism image in films, but focus on their similar lives.

Wong Fei-hung and Kwan Tak-hing are both regarded heroes and they save people. Wong Fei-hung is a real folk hero who was born in Guangdong province in 1856. He started his Kung Fu career when he was three years old, and his father is a famous master, too. He learned Kung Fu from his father, and another master named Kun Liang. Both Wong Qiyong and Kun Liang are one of the Guangdong Ten Tigers. The Ten Tigers are very famous Kung Fu masters in Guangdong province. But Wong Fei-hung is more influential than other masters, because he learned from two masters, and develop them to a high level. Another fact that makes him a hero is that he beat dozens of bandits in 1875. After that, he became a Kung Fu master. He then created the Pochilam pharmacy after his father died in 1886. Wong is both a hero, Kung Fu master, and a doctor.

What about Kwan Tak-hing? He was a dramatic actor at the beginning of his career, then he starred in *Sentimental Song of Companions' Tide* (Shu-sun Chiu,

1934), which was the first sound film made in China. When he knew Japan invaded China, he organized a charity performance in the U.S, and he collected 5000 dollars. He also communicated with the National Rescue Organization in San Francisco, finally collecting about 12,000 dollars. In this way, he is a national hero. In 1952, he created Tak-hing pharmacy, then changed its name to Pochilam in the 1970s.

Obviously, both Wong Fei-hung and Kwan Tak-hing are regarded heroes, and they own pharmacies to save people. Kwan Tak-hing started playing Wong Fei-hung in the film in 1949 and his quality has been bundled with Wong Fei-hung; even outside of the film, people are willing to call him Master Wong. His similar experiences to Wong Fei-hung and his multiple times playing Wong Fei-hung have made him an ingrained symbol of Confucianism. Thus, audiences are used to seeing this old man of Confucianism caring for others, following the rules, and protecting justice.

When it comes to Jet Li, he has a similar experience with Wong Fei-hung and Kwan Tak-hing. He is a very successful Kung Fu performer in his career. He gained first place at the China Wushu Competition (Teenager group) in 1974, then achieved a gold medal in 1975 and five gold medals in 1979 in the National Games of the People's Republic of China. Furthermore, Li played Jue Yuan in his first movie *The Shaolin Temple*, and he came well-known by his character. The price of the ticket of this film is only 0.3 Chinese Yuan at that period, but the box-office is 0.16 billion Chinese Yuan. Li not only has talent in Kung Fu, but also a positive characterization of hero. Comparing Jet Li to Wong Fei-hung, they have similar features in that they both have great Kung Fu. Also, Li has a hero-image like Jue Yuan in *The Shaolin*

*Temple*, which is similar with Kwan's characterization of Wong Fei-hung. Thus, Hark not only utilizes Li to make an affirmation to traditional Confucianism, but also inherits from Kwan Tak-hing.

In addition, he indeed affirms all the Confucianism rules in Chapter 1 as what Kwan Tak-hing did before. The new Wong Fei-hung has a clinic; he is a Kung Fu master and a doctor. He even helps those who have no money to pay for medicine. This indicates he has mercy. In the first chapter of the series, Liang Kuan (who becomes Wong Fei-hung's student later) is chased by a lot of villains, but he is saved by Wong Fei-hung. To Wong, this is a stranger, but he still saves Liang Kuan because he has righteousness. When facing the other powers, White Lotus religion, Qing dynasty (government), invaders, he is a nationalist, but not unquestioning reject invaders like White Lotus religion, but learn from the invaders, so he has wisdom; Wong Fei-hung made a deal with villain, they will have a lunch together, he knows the villain wants to kill him with the poisonous, but he still come to the lunch, because he has credit; He rejects the Aunt Thirteen's romance of taboo, which means he follows the etiquette. Until now, Li plays a perfect Confucianism character in film and finishes the inheritance from realistic Wong Fei-hung to Kwan Tak-hing to him, Tsui Hark affirms the Five Constant Virtues in Confucianism, but he also challenges etiquette.

## **II. Kung Fu Hero, No longer a perfect Confucian characterization**

Wong changes himself from repressing to releasing desire, from fully embracing Confucianism to accepting individualism by romance. In his change, I argue that there are three phases: enlightenment, awakening and permission. These phases happened in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of *Once Upon a Time in China*, respectively. Enlightenment means Aunt Thirteen's individualism tries to teach Wong what is love. Awakening means Wong finally realizes that Aunt Thirteen is his love and admits it. Permission means Confucianism society permits taboo love between Wong and Aunt Thirteen.

When I said the taboo between Wong and his Aunt above, it is necessary to figure out what is the relationship between Wong and Aunt Thirteen. In Wong's first appearance in Chapter 1 of the film series, he goes into a tea house to meet his Jiu Gong. Jiu Gong in China means mother's uncle, so Wong's mother and Jiu Gong's daughter are the same generation. Therefore, Wong is the junior in his family, that is why he calls Jiu Gong's daughter Aunt Thirteen.

The romance is started by Aunt Thirteen; she tries to express her love to Wong, but Wong rejects her because he still maintains etiquette. She shows her love for Wong the first time they are alone. Aunt Thirteen goes to Wong's bedroom at night. When Wong asks why she has come, she answers, "I am here to make a suit for you." So, Wong talks to Aunt Thirteen about foreign countries and Wong is thinking about other things. At the moment, Wong's back is to Aunt Thirteen, and his shadow is reflected on the wall. The camera is shifting between their faces and the shadow. Aunt Thirteen finds they are standing apart, but the shadows are on the wall put them

together, so she utilizes the light projection to touch Wong's face very carefully (see P2 and P3).

This is not a real touch, but her shadow is touching Wong's shadow. Aunt Thirteen feels satisfied by her imagination in this way; it looks like she touches Wong for real. "A bit disappointed by Wong's failure to declare his affection for her, Aunt Thirteen immediately sees the wall on which their profiles have been projected as a fantasy screen on which to realize their romantic union" (Kwan-Cheung Lo, 47). Lo is right, Aunt Thirteen imagines that she and Wong can be in a romantic union, but she has to be so careful because she knows this is a taboo in Confucianism and she immediately stops touching the shadow when Wong turns back to her. This is the first dialogue between Aunt Thirteen and Wong, it is also a communication between etiquette and individualism. Though Aunt Thirteen wants Wong to enlighten Wong to abandon the restraint from individual desire, Wong rejects her love and thinks they should keep a distance.

In the second phase of their romance, Wong starts awakening and converts his ideas by the romance. He does not fully follow the Five Constant Virtues, but rather, begins to adopt individualism in place of etiquette to start releasing his desire. He finally expresses his love before dangers come. Aunt Thirteen and Liang Kwan (Wong's student) are hiding in the embassy with Wong. Aunt Thirteen sees Liang Kwan who is teaching the kids Kung Fu, so she asks that if he can teach her "Grabbing Hand", which Wong had already taught. But Aunt Thirteen makes a mistake which results in a hug. At the same time, Wong just emerges and feels very

angry. Even though Liang Kwan explains to Wong that he was teaching Kung Fu, he yells to Liang Kwan, “Does she needs you to teach Kung Fu? If she needs, I can teach her”! Then he punishes Liang Kwan by mincing him practice Kung Fu in downstairs. Wong, the great Kung Fu master, is jealous, impulsive and childish when his woman is touched by another man. It is the real emotion he expresses to the audience; it indicates that everyone has his/her individual emotion, even a hero.

When Aunt Thirteen is leaving, she holds Wong ’s hand and says, “I know you treat me as your eldership, but I treat you as my man”. The camera stops moving, and shows a close-up to Wong ’s face. He opens his eyes and stares at Aunt Thirteen without a blink. Shocking, surprising and speechless emotions take up Wong ’s expression; he cannot imagine that Aunt Thirteen can present her love to him directly. I think Wong is struggling with etiquette and individual emotion, and he does not know how to figure it out. He just knows he is willing to pay everything to protect Aunt Thirteen, even his life. As a hero, he has the great Kung Fu, and he can beat dozens of villains, but he cannot express his feeling as an individual. The change happens at the moment that Aunt Thirteen is leaving, Wong says, “Shao Jun.” He doesn’t call her aunt, or honorific “you” anymore, but her given name. This indicates Wong admits his love to Aunt Thirteen and has given up etiquette to embrace individualism.

Though Wong has converted in Chapter 2, he has not yet received approval from Confucian authorities. So, this is not an end to Wong ’s conversion. Hark utilizes Chapter 3 to reveal that Confucianism compromises individualism. In Chapter

3, there is a very special character who is Wong 's father. In previous chapters, Wong is the authority of his Kung Fu institution, all his students respect him and listen to his order. When it comes to chapter 3, Wong loses his voice, because as one principle requires in Confucianism, "Father guides son." When Wong goes to Beijing, he meets his father Wong Qiying. What's the position of Wong 's father in the family? Hark utilizes a series of shots to illustrate that Wong Qiying is a venerable master.

First, Hark uses the camera close-up to the plaque, Guang dong native organization to emphasize the place, it is a place which Guang dong people assemble in Beijing. Then, the camera moves from right to left in a low angle and shows the Lion heads that are full of the ceiling. Besides these heads, there are a lot of silk banners (as awards or a gifts). Then the camera moves forward quickly to the lion head which hangs in the middle of the wooden beam, and there is a plaque at left side, which reads, "Grand and Powerful Guang dong Lion." Also, the background music (the same music as the opening song) emerges. The music is very powerful by playing drums. The huge impact on the audience, the serious lion and the plaque offers a strong comparison to the noise of people talking, which implies the super boss is going out. Next plot, Wong Qiying comes out, he across an alley, everyone shows respect to him, "Master Wong, how are you"? Obviously, he is a very venerable master in this organization.

In other words, if Wong wants to marry with Aunt Thirteen, he has to tell his father that he has broken with etiquette. Wong tries to talk to his father many times, but all fail, because he is afraid of his father. At last, he tells the truth to his father

because he thought Aunt Thirteen has told this to his father before. Wong Qiying was excited that his son was going to marry, but his expression shifts to frozen at once when he hears his son is going to marry with Aunt Thirteen. It is shocking news to Wong Qiying, and he thinks it is a real chaos relationship in this family. Aunt Thirteen is Wong Qiying's sister-in-law, but his son is going to be his brother-in-law if Wong Fei-hung marries with Aunt Thirteen, so all the identities in this family will be chaos.

When Wong comes back later, he thinks Aunt Thirteen feel so disappointed to him and left, so he can't help running to Aunt Thirteen and hug her closely when he finds Aunt Thirteen is standing front of him. Obviously, he does not notice that all his students, elders, relatives and friends are staring at them. Therefore, this is the challenge to the Confucianism, and everyone has a frozen expression of a wood without any movements and voice. Wong and Aunt Thirteen hug together under those silk banners, Wong's students standing under the plaque. Wong as an individual, expresses his emotion directly in such a serious place. Lion dance, represents the Chinese tradition, and Wong's father as the leader of this organization is the representative of absolute authority. One of the elders says to Wong Qiying, "You have to say something now." "Let's drop those old lion heads, something outdated should not be kept." In this way, the individualism not only challenges the etiquette, but also achieves the approval of Confucianism.

Another series of shots can provide the difference before permission of Wong's father. When Wong hugs Aunt Thirteen, the position of them are always

under those silk banners (see P4). The boundary is very clear to see, silk banners occupy half and Wong occupy another half with Aunt Thirteen, but they are under the silk banners all the time in the panorama or close shot. These silk banners are symbols of family, eldership and authority. After the speech of Wong's father, the camera changes its angle and shot from low to high. Wong and Aunt Thirteen's position is becoming higher with camera zoom in and dissolve into the mise-en-scene. Their individual love, the taboo officially be permitted in Confucianism family.

### **III. Victorian Dress and Victoria Harbor**

When it comes to Aunt Thirteen's conversion from westernized to accepting Chinese tradition, I would like to explain why Aunt Thirteen is westernized firstly. It divides in three parts, outside dress, western habits and entirely Orientalism. The dress. when she first comes out, the camera zooms in and focuses on her body. She wears a Victorian-style dress, it's very clear to find the shape of cute bust and butt due to the tight belt, also the white glove and lace edge on collar. The dresses are to focus and exaggerate the women's sexy feature. However, the traditional Chinese dresses for women are very loose, so that the dresses can hide women's feature and restrain the attraction in conservative Chinese tradition. The difference of eastern and western dresses indicates their different attitude to desire. For east, the active desire should be hidden, but individualism focus on expression. Hong Kong as a modern city was called one of Asian Four Tigers, the Victoria Harbor represents not only the most beautiful views but the highest economic achievements in Hong Kong. So, Victoria

Harbor is also the nick name of Hong Kong. This Victoria Harbor, like the Victorian dress on Aunt Thirteen, it is modern and it expresses the reasonable desire.

Secondly, Aunt Thirteen's western habits. The first time that Wong meets her and tries to use Chinese traditional way to greet. Wong bows her hands together, but Aunt Thirteen stops him and pulls his hand to make a handshake. In addition, she says, "The rule of meeting for western people is a handshake." On the one hand, she maintains western habits she learned abroad and brought to China, then forces others to change for her. On the other hand, "western people" is her definition of her identity. In her subconscious, she is a western person, not an indigenous citizen. The identity of Hong Kong has undergone the education of Western history and the ideological colonization has gradually been alienated from China. Therefore, Aunt Thirteen's alienation of her identity is the same as Hong Kong. What's more, her westernized identity is shaped by indigenous children. When she arrives in Guangzhou, the children on the street throw the red liquid which looks like blood on her and the children curse her as a "Fake foreign devil." Devil is an insulting name for foreign people, because they are invaders for those natives. Therefore, for children, Aunt Thirteen imitates the western people, so they call her fake foreign devil. The red liquid as blood not only illustrates that native's hate to foreigners but also reveals that Aunt Thirteen has a westernized identity.

The westernized identity and ideology makes her to reject tradition, so she thinks she can use a gun to protect herself and rejects learning Kung Fu. In the romance of Wong and Aunt Thirteen, Wong tries to teach her "Grabbing Hand"

which can protect her when the enemy is very close to her. However, Aunt Thirteen She does not want to do Kung Fu practice. As I mentioned above, Aunt Thirteen's westernized feature indicates from outside dress, western habits and entirely Orientalism. She doesn't change the outside dress, because that is reasonable desire in individualism and Tsui Hark embrace it. To western habits, Hark criticizes it which can't be accepted to all Chinese. To Orientalism, she changes her mind and accepts the traditional Kung Fu.

In Chapter 2, Wong and his student Liang Kuan take a lunch with Aunt Thirteen on the train. Aunt thirteen teaches them how to use the knife and fork, but Liang Kuan makes the steak in the air, Wong holds it and blame Liang Kuan. However, Wong does the same thing to Liang Kuan, and he puts the steak on Aunt thirteen's face. I think it is not only a humorous plot, but also indicates western food does not match Wong and Liang Kuan very well. Finally, they don't finish all meat, and vomit the food to the outside. The train makes them dizzy, the knife and folk limit their ability to take good, the steak and mash potato suffer their stomach, so they vomit. Western modern technic, facilities, and food are combined together, they represent the fully western values and culture, and it can't be digested.

Next, Tsui Hark utilizes the Chinese traditional food to make a comparison. A long take follows a waiter to the market, interestingly, the focus is not on the waiter's body, but the Chinese traditional food on his hand, the Steamed stuffed bun. Then the waiter turn left, but the camera continues moving forward, all the plaques are about Chinese traditional food, Chinese pho, Fish noodle, Longing, Ju Yuchun (a name of

the restaurant). One citizen talks to another, “No matter what happens, taking food is the most important.” The food as the paramount necessity of people, cannot be changed or westernized. Tsui Hark emphasizes the importance of traditional food, which is to express some traditions like food cannot be replaced or westernized, fully westernized will result the un-digestion.

Aunt Thirteen’s selection between gun and Kung Fu is same as modernity and tradition. As Hardy Hanappi defines modernity, “Faith in inevitable social, scientific and technological progress and human perfectibility” (82). The gun is a production of modernity, also a start of colonialism. Wong has realized how powerful the gun is when he saw the innocent people were killed by guns, and he says “The fist cannot beat the guns.” Even so, he still maintains Kung Fu to protect people. But Aunt Thirteen refuses and she says, “It’s too complex, carrying a gun would be much easier and safer.” However, Wong is very angry and says “Shut up”! Since Wong has realized the fist cannot beat the guns, why he is so angry? I think this is Tsui Hark’s affirmation to traditional Chinese Kung Fu, and critics to those fully embrace western modernity like Aunt Thirteen.

Aunt Thirteen’s ideology makes her has the ideas of Orientalism. As Edward Said argues, “European identity as a superior one,” Aunt Thirteen thinks modernity is “I” which is superior, and traditional Kung Fu is “other,” and “I” is more superior than “other,” which means the gun is more superior than Kung Fu. She relies on the gun because she believes that the gun is easy to use and can solve all the dangers, but Kung Fu is so hard to learn and weaker than guns. However, the gun is not always

efficient to all dangers. In chapter 1, Aunt thirteen expresses that how she relies on the gun. While Wong is fighting with Yan Zhendong who is a Kung Fu master, too, Aunt thirteen takes a gun and tries to kill Yan to protect Wong. Aunt thirteen only knows how to use a gun for defense when danger comes, and she refuses to learn Kung Fu because she thinks the gun is the most powerful and she can rely on it. But the truth is that every time Wong saves her by Kung Fu when she is in danger.

When White Lotus religion (a radical nationalism organization) invades the embassy to kill people, the western soldiers are weak even though they have guns. Due to the very close space between radical natives and western soldiers, the soldiers can't aim at enemies and shoot them quickly which results in them being killed by radical natives. But Wong defeats them with Kung Fu to save the soldiers and Aunt Thirteen. Wong proves that Kung Fu is more powerful and efficient in close combat.

Aunt finally accepts Kung Fu and uses Kung Fu to beat a gun. At the end of Chapter 2, Aunt Thirteen is pointed by a gun, a Chinese soldier wants to kill the leader of the revolutionary Party. But Aunt Thirteen uses the "Grabbing Hand" to stop this, she says the pithy formula and does the action step by step. "Pressing the head, locking the hands and turning the body," she says to the soldier and pushes him into the sea. Aunt Thirteen not only accepts traditional Kung Fu, but also uses Kung Fu in combat. Furthermore, this time her Kung Fu defeats the gun. On the one hand, she recognizes that she does not need to rely on the gun anymore, on the other hand, she proves that the gun is not unbeatable or better than Kung Fu in her real experience.

Tsui Hark utilizes Aunt Thirteen's conversion to make an allegory, Hong Kong as

westernized Aunt Thirteen, should recognize its Chinese national identity firstly, because the not all modernity fits Chinese nation, also, Hong Kong should abandon the Orientalism since they are not west, also, modern doesn't mean abandon all the traditions.

In conclusion, I mainly explained how Hark utilizes romance as an allegory which combines individualism and benevolence, righteousness, wisdom, sincerity in character. In the romance of Wong Fei-hung and Aunt Thirteen, Wong as a representative of Confucianism converts to adopt the individualism, and Aunt Thirteen as a representative of modernity starts embracing the traditional Kung Fu. Hark's allegory is to offer a strategy to solve Hong Kong's uncertainty as Aunt Thirteen's conversion which adopts the traditional China and keeps individualism when facing to tradition as Wong Fei-hung accepts individualism of modernity.

The following chapter focuses on the examination of how Tsui Hark combines the eastern and western values in genre. There are two sections, and I draw Hark's affirmation of Confucianism by examining the Confucianism as a core theory to support Kung Fu and his film series as a Kung Fu genre inherits principle of "Father guides son" in Confucianism in first section. In section two, I describe how Hark learns from Leone's spaghetti western to construct a new narrative and theme in his anti-traditional Kung Fu films.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Under “Father Guides Son, Hark’s Anti-tradition

#### INTRODUCTION

In the second chapter, I further explore how Tsui Hark’s film series combines Confucianism and modernity through genre. On the one hand, after I compare *Once Upon a Time in China* series and classic Kung Fu films and find that Hark affirms Confucianism “father guides son” principle from classics. On the other, the series combines anti-tradition by the differences between classic Kung Fu movies and comparing Hark’s work to Leone’s *Once Upon a Time in the West*.

The Master is the authority in the Kung Fu school or organization in the classic Kung Fu films, just like a father in the family. These films contain the patriarchy of Confucianism. Hark’s works also maintain the patriarchy by giving master’s power and ceremony. Although there are similarities, Hark’s films series have some noticeable differences from classic Kung Fu films. Firstly, Hark’s new stylistic take on Kung Fu is embodied in mise-en-scene, editing, and action design. To maintain Hong Kong’s creativity, Hark embraces anti-traditional elements of the genre. Hark utilizes new cinematic technics in *Once Upon a Time in China* that against the traditions of the Kung Fu genre, and further provides his ideas that guide Hong Kong to maintain its innovative spirit. As I previously mentioned, Hark tries to

send a message through combining East and West, and thereby constructing a new form of nationalism. Through comparing classic Kung Fu films with Hark's films series, I conclude that Hark maintains similar notions of patriarchy as those identified in classic Kung Fu films.

Additionally, I argue that Hark has learned from Leone. Hark embraces Leone's revisionist Western techniques, using this creative turn of anti-tradition in modernity. Leone's turns against tradition in Western are his new narrative and theme. His film does not focus on binary concepts of revenge as seen in most classic Westerns, but rather emphasizes that all stories, killings, and people intersect with together. Hark was evidently influenced by this narrative - the *Once Upon a Time in China* series describe how Wong Fei-hung faces this idea of historical replacement. At a point of historical intersection, different forces come from the feudal Qing destiny, superstitious White Lotus religion, foreigner invaders, and so on. In addition, Hark also utilizes the theme which Leone used in *Once Upon a Time in the West*. Leone does not focus on the justice and evil between revenges, but rather emphasizes the conflict between different eras. This touches on the idea that modernity has replaced traditional barbarism in the West. Everybody in this film is pushed to walk the lines of historical replacement. Looking back to Hark, there is no revenge about Wong, but all the conflicts are between feudalism and capitalism, conservatism and modernity. Thereby, Hark challenges the narratives and themes of classic Kung Fu films.

Connecting to my overarching argument, Hark's affirmation of patriarchal forces is an implication that serves to guide Hong Kong. He implies that Hong Kong is like a son to China, and under Confucian norms, it should obey and respect China, its metaphorical father. Hong Kong's identity has been one of a district rather than Chinese since its political separation from the mainland. Its return in 1997 was under the guise that Hong Kong would not be an individual area, but part of China. Hark emphasizes that Hong Kong is part of China, and that it has a right to obey and unify with the mainland in order to make China a complete country. This concept is politically defined in the first principle of the Basic Law of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region - "the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is part of the People's Republic of China" (11). However, I think that the Chinese version is better because it emphasizes that Hong Kong is a part which can not be isolated in China.

However, Hark also embraces anti-traditional elements to try and encourage Hong Kong's creativity. By comparing Hark's new cinematic techniques in *Once Upon a Time in China* to those of classic Kung Fu films, he clearly is challenging the traditions of the classic Kung Fu genre, and further providing an implication that guides Hong Kong to maintain an innovative spirit. Furthermore, Leone's influence on Hark is an example of how he combined his genre with Western tectonics. His new take on the Kung Fu genre combines Leone's narrative style with historical themes. This challenges the genre's traditions, adding creativity. Hark's message is clear: Hong Kong, needs to be more creative and embrace anti-tradition of modernity.

## **I. Classic Kung Fu Genre and Hark's New Style**

I think *Once Upon a Time in China* as a Kung Fu genre, maintains the traditional principle, "Father guides son", by exploring the similarities with the classic Kung Fu films. Hark embraces "Father guides son" by his affirmation of the master, because the master in the Kung Fu organization is like a father in the family and he has the dominant power. Also, the word master is combined with teacher and father in China. For those classic Kung Fu films, all three types of Kung Fu films showed master's absolute authority, and Wong Fei-hung inherits this feature.

In his book *Genre Film*, Hao Jian defines that there are three sub-genres under the umbrella of Kung Fu films: "Realistic Kung Fu films which focus on the fighting; Fantasy Kung Fu films which mainly express special effort; Humorous Kung Fu emphasizes the combination of Kung Fu and humorous performance". In realistic Kung Fu films, the scenes are usually real and the characters are like in the real life, they can't fly or special magic, which means most actions can happen in the real life. In Fantasy Kung Fu films, a lot of scenes are artificial and the characters have special magic. Someone can flies or use magic Kung Fu with CGI tectonics. Also, the monsters, witches or ghosts usually emerge in the films. In Humorous Kung Fu films, the character usually combines the acrobatics and comedies with Kung Fu in the performance. It is therefore important to consider these sub-genres when discussing Kung Fu films, so I have selected three classic films from each type to indicate how they express master's authority.

First I will discuss the realistic style of Kung Fu. As mentioned in my first chapter, *The Shaolin Temple* (Chang Hsin Yen, 1982) was a very successful Kung Fu movie that utilizes realistic fighting styles. The camera focuses on these realistic fighting styles, and the film star actors like Jet Li, who earned five champions in competition. These professional Kung Fu actors performed a realistic Kung Fu fight sequence without needing special effects. In this film, Jet Li played a monk in *The Shaolin Temple*. He wanted to learn Kung Fu to take revenge on those who had wronged him, which made him a dangerous fighter in training. When the master saw this, Li's character was punished and he had to stop practicing Kung Fu for three days.

Next is the humorous style of Kung Fu. Hong Kong's top-grossing movie of 1980 was *The Young Master* (Jackie Chan, 1980), which starred Jackie Chan. In this film, Chan's master used a fan to beat his older brother as punishment for helping others to make lion dance. However, the older brother did not revolt against the master. The master also beat Chan because of his plea, but he also did not revolt against the master. In addition, the master's costume was black, while his students wore white t-shirts with black belts. The difference in their clothing served to illustrate the master's authority. Additionally, when the students were going to fight, the master stopped them and stood in front of the camera. The lens only focused on his expression, which was angry and serious, but the students' faces were unclear. This further represents that the master's decision is the most important than the students'. Even when everyone went back to the Kung Fu school and master took off the jacket, revealing a white shirt the same as students, his position remained at the

center screen. Two students stood on left side and another two on his right while he sat in the center. These placements visually demonstrated his position of central control within the organization.

Lastly is the fantastic style of Kung Fu. In *The Miracle Fighters* (Yuen Woo-ping, 1982), the student has a very difficult journey learning Kung Fu, and sometimes the master will beat his head as punishment. The student also has to cater to the master's personal life, washing his clothes and cleaning his house. In these three films, which represent different sub-genres of Kung Fu, all describe the authority of the master and subservience of students. The students must obey the masters orders in a servant-like manner. Hark uses this idea of the master's power in his own film series by three ways, maintaining Wong's power in Pochilam, no lack of ceremony, and expressing sovereign power of Wong's father.

Firstly, Wong expresses his power during a dinner with students who challenge his authority. Tsui Hark utilizes a series of symmetrical cameras to express Wong's central position. At dinner time, Wong's students want to fight with gangsters, but he forbids it. Thus, the students go on a hunger strike in protest. In the first scene, Wong has his back to the camera, but his position is still central and his body occupies a huge part of the screen. There is a line of students on either side of him, and even the gates are symmetrically located around him. There are three gates in the house, and Wong's head is located at the center gate (See P5). The camera then cuts to a shot of only Wong's face, showing two lights on the top of each corner, two plants at the bottoms corners, and our screens (Chinese traditional furniture) behind

Wong. Wong remains at the center of the screen, and everything around him is symmetrical (See P6). The students then start challenging Wong one by one, standing up from the table and trying to persuade him to change his mind. In this picture, Wong is not only the farthest away from the camera, but also the smallest and shortest.

Once everyone stands up, Wong is surrounded and all the lines of symmetry broken. However, he regains his power back using only two words, "Sit down." He follows this with "everyone follow my orders, get vegetables, get rice, eat them". Every student obeys this, and Wong goes back to the central position again. In the last frame, the camera pans up from Wong's head to title of Pochilam as he gives his orders. Tsui Hark's symmetrical design demonstrates Wong's unquestioned centrality to the order of Pochilam. Even though he was challenged by his students and briefly appeared to lose this position, he easily regains it with just a few words. Nobody can truly challenge or undermine Wong's position and authority in the organization.

In addition, the film draws on Wong's power through the compliance of his chief student Rong who is very strong and impulsive. He was about to get into a fight, when another student advised him to calm down. His response was to angrily shout at this student - "you know nothing and you have no respect for me, call my big brother!" However, Wong Fei-hung was able to calm him down. Rong immediately spoke to his master in a very gentle tone. The student and Wong spoke to Rong in the same way but elicited different responses, demonstrating that Rong only obeys the master. Additionally, when Rong knelt at the door of Pochilam in the rain asking for

Wong's forgiveness, he rejected Aunt Thirteen's offer to let him inside. He said "master is not calling me and I can not go in." Once Wong came out and asked him to get up, he did. Here we can see that for Rong's, only Wong holds absolute power that commands obedience. Looking at the relationships of Rong and the students with Wong, it is evident that Wong has absolute power in Pochilam and the students only follow him, following the traditional Kung Fu concepts of an absolute master.

Secondly, Hark's films are the inclusion of ceremonies. Hark deliberately used a unique ceremony of Kung Fu to illustrate the students are in domination. As I mentioned in the introduction, the ceremony crucial to maintain the ideas of the "father guiding the son". Liang Kuan's kowtow to Wong demonstrates that student follows master. He brings a cup of tea to Wong, expressing that he will serve his master. Wong accepts the tea, meaning he accepts Liang Kuan as his student. The ceremony is a necessary qualification step for any potential student of Kung Fu. It is an overt affirmation of Liang Kuan's identity as a trainee and subordinate of Wong. The master has the power to decide any student's fate from their first day of training. If he takes the tea, he accepts them, but if not, he rejects them. Furthermore, the master has the right to expel students at any time. Importantly, Wong holds the ceremony even though he is wearing a Western suit. In the first chapter, Wong started straying from absolute traditionalism, taking on more elements of individualism. He holds the traditional tea ceremony, but while wearing a non-traditional Western suit. Undeniably, Wong is becoming more individualistic, demonstrated by his choice of

attire, but he has not completely abandoned traditional or the principles of the “father guiding the son”.

Thirdly, the relationship between master and father is important. Even though Wong is the master and has absolute authority over Pochilam, he takes on a subordinate role when with his father. Therefore, Hark expresses that individualism should take a back seat to ideas of patriarchy. This is an affirmation of Hark's belief in the "father guides son", his implication for how Hong Kong should act towards China. As previously mentioned, Wong is the most powerful man in Pochilam, but even he loses his voice when his father appears in the third chapter of the film series. This means that his father guides him. Firstly, Wong would not dare to admit his love for Aunt Thirteen. Aunt Thirteen asks Wong to confess his true feelings to Wong's father, but when Wong goes into his father's room he loses his seriousness and calmness, acting like a shy boy. His father asks to him, "you have something important to tell me?" but Wong freezes and says “nothing," excusing himself right afterwards. Wong shows his afraid by sharply blinking his eyes more times, and even drinking the medicine which he supposed to give his father. When facing his father, Wong's characterization is completely different than when facing his students or enemies. He is afraid, tense, and often looks for an escape. Only with his father's permission can decide if he can marriages with Aunt Thirteen. He cannot make decisions as he once did in Pochilam since his father compromises his once-absolute authority.

Another point expresses father's power which Wong lost his center position. I previously discussed how Hark utilizes camera angles and frames to express Wong's absolute authority and centrality, but this disappears in the third chapter. When the villain arrives, Wong talks with him while standing on the left. Wong's student, Liang Kuan, stands on the right. Meanwhile, no one stands in the central section of the frame. Though Aunt Thirteen is technically located in the center, she stands back in the second line. However, when Wong's father walks onscreen, he takes the central position besides Wong. Hark is trying to demonstrate to the audience that Wong is no longer the central force of authority now that his father has arrived.

Beyond the similarities, Hark makes new mise-en-scene, editing and action design in his films to express his anti-tradition. As I mentioned before, there are three different types of Kung Fu sub-genres: humorous, fantastic, and realistic Kung Fu. *Once Upon a Time in China* is part of the realistic sub-genre. In order to identify obvious features in the film and explore how Tsui Hark challenges the traditional Kung Fu action genre, I chose to compare *The Shaolin Temple* with *Once Upon a Time in China* since both belong to this sub-genre. I have thus divided Hark's challenges into three parts which specifically are more complex fighting environments, faster fighting, and more exaggerated movements.

In *The Shaolin Temple*, the final battle scene between Jue Yuan and Ren is located at the riverside. They fight on the ground, which is wide enough for them to use Kung Fu with ease. However, the battle scenes in *Once Upon a Time in China* with similar gravitas takes place in a more challenging location. In the first

installment, Wong fights on a ladder. In the second installment, he fights on tables. Finally, in the third, he fights on an altar. These scenes are undoubtedly more complex than those in *The Shaolin Temple*, and Hark changes the location of the fights in every installment. This is particularly evident in the second installment - the villain's servants build a stage using four tables (See P7), and the villain sits atop the highest one. Wong not only needs to fight the villain, but consistently keep his balance. It is obviously much harder for a hero win in this scenario because the tables limit his action, forcing him to maintain balance and fight at the same time. During the fight scene in *The Shaolin Temple*, the audience never needs to pay attention to the challenges of the scenery, focusing on the fight alone. Hark's fighting arrangements, on one hand, places higher requirements on the hero, because he has to simultaneously defeat the villain and ensure his own safety. On the other hand, it allows for more variances of fighting action, because the hero needs combine balancing on tables with traditional Kung Fu techniques.

Secondly, Hark uses more editing techniques and abundant shots. In *The Shaolin Temple*, Jue Yuan and Ren's final battle at the riverside was almost entirely filmed with medium shots and panoramic views to show their Kung Fu skills in their entirety. Kung Fu was performed by the actors, but the actor was limited within these camera shots, thus limiting what the audience can see. However, Hark's films brought something new. For example, Wong completed a series of action shots, starting from getting onto the tables with 18 edits, and 8 close-up shots of his feet. This helped to better show the complexity of action needed to maintain his balance. Furthermore,

close-ups of his feet highlighted the tremendous power and visual impact of hitting. In this way, Hark not only made a more effective way of expressing Kung Fu on film, but deconstructed Kung Fu itself. He divided Kung Fu into many parts, and emphasized the special skills used at certain points in the fight.

Thirdly, Hark's Kung Fu is more exaggerated. In *The Shaolin Temple*, Jue Yuan's Kung Fu was similar to real-life action sequences, meaning he could perform the fights in reality as well as on screen. However, Wong's best Kung Fu skill is the shadowless-kick - it is too fast to even see the move's shadow. Wong can kick up to seven times in the air, beyond any possible human limits, even Bruce Lee can only kick up to three times in the air. As I said, *The Shaolin Temple* and *Once Upon a Time in China* both belong to the realistic Kung Fu sub-genre, but Hark writes heroes that can perform actions that are not possible in reality. Hark not only exaggerates the power of Kung Fu, but redefines Kung Fu by creating more creative sequences only possible through the power of editing.

## **II. From Leone To Hark, New Narrative and Theme**

After comparing *Once Upon a Time in China* to *Once Upon a Time in The West*, it becomes evident that Hark learned from Sergio Leone's adoption of anti-tradition in modernity, particularly in the narratives and themes. Hark's imitations are based around the similar historical contexts of these two films. Both Kung Fu films and Western films are considered to be traditional genres. The first similarity between

the two is that they all have a long historical background, and are still currently developing.

The first film defined within the 'Western' genre was *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903). Porter's film is widely considered to have "set the pattern—of crime, pursuit, and retribution—for the Western film genre" (Fenin, George N,47). The first Kung Fu films premiered in 1920. "In fact, another film was produced in the same year, *Pick up Gold in Barren Hills*, is one of the earliest martial arts films in China." (History of Wuxia film in China, 6). Thus, Western films and Kung Fu films are both traditional genres in their respective culture's filmmaking histories.

Furthermore, both Western and Kung Fu genres were not popular when Leone and Hark made their films. After the disastrous Vietnam war and economic depression of the 1960s, public morale was low, and many people started to feel animosity towards their government. This led to the formation of protesting movements, and countercultures were formed in direct opposition to the government and mainstream culture. "As the 1960s progressed, widespread social tensions also developed concerning other issues, and tended to flow along generational lines regarding human sexuality, women's rights, traditional modes of authority" (Saylor). No doubt that the tradition of Western film genres belongs to "traditional modes of authority". Leone challenged this tradition. "By then, though, the historical romance that had provided the Western with its basic narrative and thematic materials was in crisis, and the genre had entered a terminal phase of decadence, self-critique and

obsolescence” (A. O. Scott,4). Therefore, Western films in the 1960s fell into a regressive stage, and Leone began to make his anti-traditional Western films.

What about the situation of Kung Fu films in Hong Kong in the 1980s? After going through a flourishing era, including the global influence of Bruce Lee in the 1970s, the Kung Fu genre started to experience a decline. Traditional Kung Fu movies were not attracting audiences in the same way as before. “Some directors, such as Shaw’s Lau Kar-Leung, sustained the martial-arts genre in *Spiritual Boxer* (1975) and *The Eight-Diagram Pole Fighter* (1984), but on the whole swordplay and Kung Fu films declined. Police thrillers, contemporary comedies, and underworld action films became the major genres of the 1980s”. (David Bordwell, 648) It is no doubt that Bruce Lee’s death was a huge loss felt across the entire Kung Fu film industry, but it also offered an opportunity for Jackie Chan to become a star. “The success of Hui’s comedies boosted another performer, Jackie Chan. Chan began his career as a Bruce Lee imitator...Chan soon became the biggest star in Asian”. However, even Chan, widely considered as Lee's replacement, started blending action with humor in crime films like *Project A* (1983), *Police Story* (1985), and adventure films like *Armor of God* (1986). Thus, we can conclude that traditional Kung Fu films were not popular in Hong Kong during the 1980s.

Based on my research, the reason that Hark was inspired by Leone’s *Once Upon a Time in the West* was because he saw an opportunity to blend two types of culturally traditional film styles, and also because these two traditional genres were experiencing the decline at that period of time. I will next explore how Hark's works

were inspired by Leone's, arguing that the anti-traditional elements in Hark's films were greatly influenced by Leone.

There are distinct differences noticeable between Leone's Italian Western films and classic Western films, specifically regarding narrative and theme. "As Leon Hunt (2011: 108) has suggested, maybe the Italian Western subverted its US reference most of all when it paved the way for other cinemas appropriating the Western in different cultural and ideological contexts" (Austin Fisher,4). What I can interpret from this is that Western films provided a point of reference in the USA. To further understand particular differences between the two, I have selected rules from the book *Genre Film* (Hao Jian, 2011) to compare these films with *Once Upon a Time in The West*.

"1. Fixed narrative patterns. One is the story of pioneering and law-building, and the other is the relationship between pioneers and Indians.

2. The characters have a fixed symbolic significance. Good cowboy and the police represent justice and law, the gunman represents evil." (Hao Jian, 68)

Firstly, Leone utilizes the new narrative. The story has not happened between binary sides, but rather the intersection of several stories. In Leone's film, there are no obvious forces of justice or evil, unlike traditional Western films that have binary notions of good and bad. Rather, the film has at least four sides - Frank helps Morton kill people and earn money, Harmonica wants to kill Frank for revenge, Morton is a capitalist who wants to control the Sweetwater and earn more money, and Cheyenne is a criminal who was caught by the police. Firstly, the police in this film are not the

main characters, the film is not about pacifism or protection of law. When Frank is first introduced, the audience learns that he killed Brett McBain's family to help Morton's achieve Sweetwater. He finally shoots a bullet into the train, but not at the boy. Everyone in the film is involved in the Sweetwater issue: Morton tries to control the place to build a station, Frank works for Morton, Harmonica helps Frank kill people who betrayed him, and Cheyenne kills Morton and all his accomplices. Their fates intersect like the knots in a net, with the net being Sweetwater, the station, and the train.

Hark embodies Leone's narrative way into his Kung Fu films, not just expressing the dualistic confrontation between Wong Fei-hung and the bullies, but juxtaposing various stories. Throughout the film series, what Wong's story intersects with gangsters, martial-art masters, foreign invaders, the Qing government, the revolutionary party, cults, and bullies, which is no longer a dualistic confrontation between heroes and villains as the classics. There is no absolute hero or villain in the movies. The aim of the cult was to kill all foreigners since their country had been invaded and forced by foreigners, thus the patriotism is their original aim in the film. Qing official fights with Wong because Wong helped the Revolutionary Party that overthrowing the Qing government, to this point, this is no obvious boundary between justice and evil. Because the chaotic situation forced the revolutionaries to against the feudalistic Qing government and build a capitalist system for the country, but Qing officials must be bound to maintain their own feudalistic government. Therefore, what

original aim of evil cults and official was to be patriotic, but there are differences in the way of patriotism rather than fixed sense of justice and evil.

Secondly, Leone's theme in film is no longer about revenge, but about conflicts between different historical periods, modernity and barbarity. Leone wants to tell us that the whole story is not about cowboy or violence, woman or revenge. Rather, everyone was pushed to look forward for new era. Characters in movie lose their fixed identities in classic Westerns, they become meaningless symbols, embodying their powerlessness in the changing epoch. With the exception of Harmonica, all the characters died in the fighting, while the alive Harmonica has to ride his horse to far distance alone. He accomplishes revenge as he lost his own meaning, because cowboy has withdrawn from the stage of history.

At the end of the film, Harmonica takes a look to the left at the dead Frank, while the train's whistle rings, the camera passes over Harmonica's head, and the distant train slowly comes out of the desert. A visioning scene shows many workers working on the rail. Followed by a subjective shot, driving into the Sweet Water town from a train perspective. From the moment the camera crossed Harmonica, he was no longer the subject of the lens, but with violins and singing of women, the spectacularly epic deserts and mountains became the stage and the train is surrounded by the people, which like a new star on the stage. The camera moves at the end slowly from the left to the right, showing the track being built, and at the end of the track Harmonica and the train walked in the opposite direction. In a wide-angle lens, Harmonica rides a horse through workers' tents, wood, and carriages, which are used

to build tracks. He becomes smaller and smaller in the picture until he disappears into the desert and mountains. As a symbol of modernity, the train has become a new theme in the western world, and the fate of the cowboy is death or disappearance. The substitution between trains and cowboys is a metaphor to modernity and barbarism, which is the theme of Leone. The duel, life, death, and revenge between the characters were tended to weak and fragile in the coming modernity.

Looking back to Hark's film series, his film theme is not surrounding the conflicts between people, but the traditional Kung Fu and modern technics like guns, trains, steam machines, or the traditional moral rules and individualism, or the conflicts between feudalism and capitalism. The roles are all in the historical intersection, Hark shows the intersection between traditional Confucianism and modernity.

Based on this, Leone used the traditional genre film to challenges those rules of the Western. So how about *Once upon a time in China*? The Kung Fu film is a traditional genre in China. Also, Tsui Hark challenged the rules of Confucianism in Kung Fu genre as my previous analysis. In addition, Leone's film and Hark's films are two different kinds of genre and different languages inside, but Hark moves the style of Spaghetti Western into Chinese traditional Kung Fu genre. As Bakhtin's dialogism mentioned that the intersection between different languages, not exclude. Hark's traditional Kung Fu genre did not exclude the Spaghetti Western, but intersects with it, so he made a lot of creations to Kung Fu style.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EPILOGUE

In this thesis, I explored how Tsui Hark 's film series *Once Upon a Time in China 1, 2 and 3* solves the uncertainty among different ideologies of the west and east after return of Hong Kong in 1997 as an allegory. As a westernized colony, the identity of Hong Kong was separated from China in the 18th century and evolved into the modern city under the ruling of the British. However, Hong Kong has to be faced up with the contradiction in selecting Chinese traditional Confucianism or western modernity, namely continuing keep modernity or returning thoroughly? Tsui Hark gives his answer to the question, namely combining the west Confucianism and east modernity to build a more inclusive nationalism.

Through my analysis, I found that Hark combines Confucian moral standards of characterization including kindness, righteousness, wisdom and sincerity, with individualism in modernity. Through comparison of the new and classical figures of Wong Fei-hung, I argue that the former Confucian moral standards of Kwan Tak-hing in the movie are retained for the role of Jet Li in the movie. However, in romance, Hark manifests his tolerance for the individualism through transformation of Wong Fei-hung's thought. The individual rational desire released rather than inhibited the etiquette of Confucianism. In the meantime, Aunt Thirteen also changes her thought in romance. As a westernized woman, she no longer admits the comprehensive

superiority of the west but realizes her Chinese identity and begins accepting the traditional culture. Hark uses these examples to manifest that Hong Kong should firstly realize its Chinese identity and recognizes and accept traditional Confucian morals. Meanwhile, Hong Kong shall retain its original individualism to satisfy rational individual desire.

Besides, Hark also continues expressing how to combine the Chinese Confucianism and western modernity in the film genre. Through the comparison of *Once Upon a Time in China* and classic Kung Fu films, I found that Hark inherits the Confucianism principle that “father guides son” from the classics. He embraces the patriarchy of the Confucianism by manifesting the authority of the master and father. In addition, he also assures the anti-tradition in modernity. He breaks through some visual elements in classic Kung Fu films, like more complicated mise-en-scene, faster and more editing and more exaggerated action design.

He also manifests anti-tradition by imitating Leone, who challenges the traditional model of classic Westerns through new narrative method and by using the new theme in *Once Upon a Time in the West*. Hark indeed refers to these contents and also utilizes them into his Kung Fu movies. In my exploration of revisionist Western of Leone, it indicates that on the one hand, his new narrative utilizes several stories which intersects each other to replace the classic binary relationship between justice and evil. On the other hand, his theme is no longer associated with revenge or conflicts among individuals but conflicts between modernity and barbarism which implies that the shift of historic periods. Hark refers to these contents, on the one

hand, the stories are evolved among different powers and there is no binary conflict between two sides. On the other hand, the theme of movie is no longer about how justice defeats evil but lays emphasis on the contradictions between capitalism and feudalism arising from the chaos as well as among modernity and conservative Confucianism. The intention of Hark is to compare the relationship between the father and son to that between China and Hong Kong. By affirming Confucianism patriarchy, the emphasis is made that Hong Kong should observe the leadership of China after its return. It is no longer an independent region but a part of China also has the responsibility of keeping the reunification and completeness of the country. Meanwhile, Hong Kong also should possess modern anti-tradition and be brave in making innovations and challenge traditional obsolete model.

When it comes to further studies, I think it is necessary to extend my exploration of Kung-Fu movies from the 1990's to the current era. The main purpose of further study is to explore the changes of Kung Fu films after Hong Kong return. In particular, the Kung Fu films which produced by the cooperation between the mainland and Hong Kong, can reflect the impacts to Hong Kong and mainland China through Hong Kong's return. Taking *Hero* (Zhang Yimou, 2002) as an example. The film was co-invested by EDKO Film in Hong Kong and Beijing New Picture Film in China and earned 177.4 million dollars at the box office with only a 31 millions dollar budgets. This is the first Kung Fu film of the fifth-generation director Zhang Yimou and the film starred China's Jet Li and Hong Kong's Tony Leung and Maggie Cheung. I think this cooperation is a kind of combination, which blends traditional

Confucian ideas from the mainland and modernity from Hong Kong. Based on this point, Hark's allegory has come true. However, my research is lack of how the cooperative Kung Fu movies were influenced by the mainland and Hong Kong Kung Fu films, when it comes to particularly ideology, narrative, theme and new visual presentation. Solving these problems is the key to further research.

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## APPENDIX

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<b>Modernity (modern societies)</b>	<b>Pre-modernity (traditional societies)</b>
Capitalism/Markets	Subsistence
Industrial	Agricultural
Urban	Rural
Bureaucracy	Aristocracy
Science	Religion/Superstition
Rational	Emotional
Rule of Law	Barbarism (lawlessness)
Culture	Nature
Literacy	Oral Society
Individualistic	Communal/Tribal

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**P 1.**



**P 2.**



**P 3.**



P 4.



P 5.



**P 6.**



**P 7.**