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IMAGES OF OLDER PERSONS IN HONG KONG POPULAR FILMS

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IMAGES OF OLDER PERSONS IN HONG KONG POPULAR FILMS

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ABSTRACT

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Film watching is a popular leisure activity in modern society. Films, as a medium, provide powerful tools to deliver social messages and to create images of particular social groups. The cinematic images portrayed by films toward a particular social group may consequently shape our social perceptions and expectations of that social group. The ways that cinematic images portray older persons are, therefore, a potentially major source for detecting social values and views about them.

As some cinematic images tend to reflect social attitudes and behaviours, the present research aimed at investigating how popular films portray the images of older persons. Focus was on the examination of: 1) the representation of older persons in Hong Kong movies, 2) whether older persons are positively or negatively portrayed in movies, and 3) any changes in the cinematic images of older persons over the last two decades.

The present research examined Hong Kong movies released between 1981 and 2001. The population of the present study is the most popular Hong Kong movies, based on the turnover of the Hong Kong ticket offices. The sampled films were derived from the three highest-turnover movies for each year from 1981 to 2001.

Content analysis was employed in this study to determine the representation and images of older persons in the 63 sampled movies. Generally speaking, older persons were found to be under-represented in the sampled movies relative to their presence in the population. Older persons were portrayed as having white hair, wrinkle skin, and walk independently in terms of physical appearance. Older persons were also portrayed as having generally good health status. However, older persons were portrayed to have a decline in both family status and socio-economic status in the 1990s as compared to that of the 1980s. In terms of occupation, most

older persons were portrayed as retired persons in the movies. Apart from these features, the present research also found that there was a gender differences in the portrayal of older persons.

Many older persons were depicted in the movies in the home setting, perhaps reinforcing traditional Asian family values and stereotypes. However, this perhaps underplays older persons' active roles and contributions in the light of such current concepts as productive and active aging. There is a temporal division in that older persons in many movies of the 1980s were portrayed as more home-based while, in the 1990s, they were becoming more actively involved in external activities.

I declare that this thesis 《Images of Older Persons in Hong Kong Popular Films》 is the product of my own research and has not been published in any other publications.

WONG Nga Man
October 2003

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Chapter One

Introduction

The study of social perceptions towards older persons has a long history in the field of social gerontology. Among the studies of social perceptions towards older persons, the field of the study on the social images of older persons is one newly emerging area of focus. The field has become popular not only because the elderly population is increasing globally, but also because old age is a significant and persuasive variable of individuals' successful ageing. Social perceptions and images of older persons may influence the attitudes, assessment and behaviours of younger age groups towards older persons. More importantly, social images of older persons may affect both public and academic reactions to institutional arrangements as well as social services provision for the elderly (Feder, 1999; Law, 1995; Aronson, 1992; Feinson, 1986; Walker, 1980).

The social perception of older persons is an important and influential factor that directs societal reactions and various institutional arrangements for older persons (Kolland, 1993). Negative perceptions towards older persons could affect the social policies assessment and service provision for older persons (Katz, 1990). Unfortunately, many professionals, especially medical practitioners, are likely to accept that physical deterioration and decrement of the older persons are inevitable in later life (Palmore, 1977).

Gerontologists and sociologists have sometimes found that the images and the life styles of older persons had been distorted (Bytheway, 1995; Bytheway, et. al.

1990). Mythically and stereotypically, older persons have often been portrayed in the mass media as physically incompetent, intellectually conservative, economically unproductive, mentally malfunctioning, emotionally disturbed, demented, disoriented, and so on (Katz and Green, 2002; La-Grange and Yung, 2001). However, findings of various research studies have demonstrated that the real world of the older persons is unlikely to be that miserable (Sidenvall, et. al., 2001; Estes, Linkins, and Binney, 1996; Law, 1995; Lee, 1989; Morris, 1989). These negative perceptions and stereotypes towards older persons are thought to have impacts on social policies and service provision, cause adverse medical and mental health treatment of older persons, and even diminish the self-esteem and feelings of adequacy, usefulness, and security of older persons (Kogan, 1961). One of the major goals of this thesis is to identify how the Hong Kong films have portrayed older persons and to contribute contemporary evidence to this academic and policy area in a dynamic Asian city.

Demographic Ageing: A Worldwide Phenomenon

The total number of the world's older persons (aged 65 or above) has already exceeded 430 million, or 7 % of its population. Recent statistic shows that more than 14% of the populations of Western countries, including countries like North America, Northern Europe, and Western Europe, are older persons (Population Reference Bureau, 2002; United Nations, 2002). In Asia, in countries such as Korea, China, Singapore, and Thailand, the number of older persons exceeds 7% of the total population. In Japan, the elderly population exceeded 18% of the total population (ESCAP, 2003).

Hong Kong shares many common features of the demographic transition with most Western aged societies. Hong Kong's population has grown older during the last 20 years. The total elderly population in Hong Kong has increased from 326,809 (6.6%) in 1981 to 482,040 (8.7%) in 1991 and 747,052 (11.1%) in 2001 (Census and Statistics Department, 1982, 2001). It is projected that the elderly population will be double by 2026, with 1,625,400 older persons sharing 15.7% of the total population (Table 1.1). The life expectancy at birth of Hong Kong people rose from 72.3 for men and 78.5 for women in 1981, to 75.2 for men and 79.4 for women in 1991, and to 76.7 for men and 82.2 for women in 2001. The median age has also increased from 26 in 1981, to 31 in 1991, and further to 36 in 2001. Crude birth rate has been decreasing from 35% in 1961 to 7.2% in 2001. At the same time, crude death rate has remained low in the last 40 years (Table 1.2). As a result, there is a continue increase in the numbers of older persons and in their share of the proportion of the total population (Table 1.3).

The combination of continued very low total fertility rates and longer life expectancy unavoidably lead to population ageing in Hong Kong. The Chief Executive in his 2002 Inauguration Speech announced that: "There is an urgent need for development of a comprehensive population policy. This population policy will be designed to fit Hong Kong's long-term social and economic development, will complement family requirements, and will address the interests of different sectors in our community"¹.

¹ An Inauguration Speech by the Chief Executive on 1 July 2002. The speech released by the Hong Kong Government through the government web site.

Table 1.1 Hong Kong's Older Population (aged 65 or above), 1961-2031

Year	Population size	% shared in total population
1961	87,918	2.8
1966	141,400	3.3
1971	177,572	4.5
1976	242,800	5.5
1981	326,809	6.6
1986	408,542	7.6
1991	482,040	8.7
1996	629,555	10.1
2001	747,052	11.1
2006*	839,000	11.5
2011*	897,900	11.8
2016*	1,076,700	13.4
2021*	1,322,500	15.7
2026*	1,625,400	18.5
2031*	2,120,000	24.4

Sources: **Hong Kong Population Projections, 2002-2031*
Census and By-census reports of various years

Table 1.2 Hong Kong: Selected Vital Statistic, 1961-2031

Year	Crude birth rate (%)	Crude death rate (%)	Annual growth rate (%)	Life expectancy	
				Male	Female
1961	35.0	6.1	3.9	--	--
1971	19.7	5.0	2.2	67.8	75.3
1976	17.4	5.0	2.2	69.6	76.2
1981	16.8	4.8	2.8	72.3	78.5
1986	13.0	4.7	1.3	74.1	79.4
1991	12.0	5.0	0.8	75.1	80.6
1996	9.9	5.0	1.9	76.7	82.7
2001	7.2	5.0	0.9	78.4	84.6
2006*	--	--	--	79.1	84.9
2011*	--	--	--	80.0	85.7
2016*	--	--	--	80.7	86.4
2021*	--	--	--	81.4	86.9
2026*	--	--	--	81.8	87.4
2031*	--	--	--	82.3	87.8

Sources: **Hong Kong Population Projections, 2002-2031*
Census and By-census reports of various years

Table 1.3 Hong Kong: Population by Age Groups (%), 1961-2031

Year	Under 15	15-64	65 or above
1961	40.8	56.4	2.8
1966	40.1	56.6	3.3
1971	35.8	59.7	4.5
1976	30.1	64.4	5.5
1981	24.8	68.6	6.6
1986	23.1	69.3	7.6
1991	20.9	70.4	8.7
1996	18.5	71.7	10.1
2001	16.5	72.3	11.1
2006*	14.7	73.8	11.5
2011*	13.4	74.8	11.8
2016*	14.0	72.6	13.4
2021*	15.3	69.0	15.7
2026*	16.1	65.4	18.5
2031*	11.7	3.9	24.4

Sources: **Hong Kong Population Projections, 2002-2031*
Census and By-census reports of various years

After the announcement, the Chief Secretary for Administration set up a Task Force on Population Policy which aimed at identifying major challenges arising from Hong Kong's demographic trends and characteristics (HKSAR, 2003). We can see that the ageing population has continued to arouse government's concerns. The

Task Force will address the concerns of a low fertility rate on ageing population, the growing demand on services for older persons, and the impact of such a large, dependent non-working population on Hong Kong society.

Research on Older Persons' Images in Western Societies

The marked increase in the number of older persons has made the study of images of older persons timely. A review of the literature on the study of older persons shows the existence of negative and stereotypic perceptions towards older persons (Pinquart and Sorensen, 2001). Studies on social images towards older persons reveal that there is an increased research interest in how media portray this age group. Media images are arguably a reflection of a society's attitudes and beliefs in the culture, as well as projections of 'desired' realities (Bazzini, et al., 1997). According to Touraine (1981), a society "reproduces its image and feeding back into the community through media". The media is, therefore, an important source of social views about older persons, although it is very difficult to find statistical evidence and gauge its actual impact.

Images of older persons have been examined across such media as television and television commercials (Roy and Harwood, 1997; Riggs, 1996; Robinson and Skill, 1995; Bell, 1992; Swayne and Greco, 1987; Elliott, 1984), newspapers (Gibb and Holroyd, 1996; Buchholz and Bynum, 1982), crime fiction (Hepworth, 1993; Woodward, 1991; Kehl, 1988), music (Aday and Austin, 2000; Leitner, 1983), cartoons (Polivka, 1988), magazines (Bramlett-Solomom and Subramanian, 1999; Roberts and Zhou, 1997; Featherstone and Hepworth, 1995), birthday cards (Demos and Jache, 1980), advertisements (Carrigan and Szmign, 1999; Peterson, 1995),

readers and text (Kington and Drotter, 1981; Robin, 1977), and films (Markson and Taylor, 2000; Bazzini, et. al., 1997; Stoddard, 1983; Haskeel, 1974). However, as noted by Markson and Taylor (2000), research on the images of older persons in films is still rather underdeveloped and the importance of films in shaping or constructing the social images, sometimes exaggerated or mystified, of older persons remain static. This is particularly true in the contemporary Asia-Pacific settings.

Research on Older Persons in Hong Kong

Hong Kong has become a progressively more aged society since the mid-1980s when her elderly population, aged 65 years old and above, reached 7.6% in 1986 (Census and Statistics Department, 1986). The continual increase of the elderly population in Hong Kong has attracted increased public and academic concerns about the elderly problems. There are increased research on the social service needs (Kwan, 1997; Cheung, 1990; Chow, 1979), health and caring (Boey and Ko, 1996; Chi and Boey, 1994; Chow, 1993; Chi and Leung, 1992; Chow, 1992; Chi and Lee, 1989), living arrangement (Lee, et al. 1997), life satisfaction (Boey, 1998; Chan, 1995; Lee and Chi, 1990), environmental planning (Phillips and Yeh, 1999) and issues surrounding long-term care of older persons (Phillips and Chan, 2002).

A review of studies on older persons in Hong Kong reveals that, to a certain extent, research on older persons in Hong Kong has generally focused on applied or action-oriented research, which has aimed at exploring the life conditions of older persons, identifying later life adaptation problems, and making policy recommendations to related government departments so as to improve the social welfare and services for older persons (Phillips and Chan, 2002; Law, 2001 and

1995). There are a few examples of research on the social perceptions of older persons such as general attitudes (Law, 1982), primary school students' perceptions (Law, Chan, and Ng, 1998), student and pupil nurse (Kwan and Law, 1994), and printed media (Gibb and Holroyd, 1996). One of the objectives of the present research is trying to fill in this research gap.

Compared with most Western societies, research on older persons in Hong Kong, and especially their places and views in society, is at a preliminary stage. In 1977, when the Services for the Elderly announced that the purpose of "Care in the Community" is the developmental core of old age services, the elderly studies began to flower (Hong Kong Government Secretariat, 1977). To justify the existing policies of older persons' services and urge for additional resources and funding from the government, researchers were always focused on the discussion and criticism of the insufficiency of older persons services in Hong Kong (Chi and Chui, 1999; Kwan, 1997).

Images of Older Persons in the Media

Gerontological study on the images of older persons portrayed in media, such as television, magazine, films, repeatedly demonstrated that there are various negative stereotypes towards older persons (Bramlett-Soloman and Subramanian, 1999; Bazzini, et al. 1997; Swayne and Greco, 1987). Older persons were portrayed as, for example, more conservative, stubborn, eccentric and even more foolish than younger characters in various types of media (Davis and Davis as cited in Bell, 1992; Palmore, 1971). In addition, older persons were always found to be under-represented in media such as primetime television programs, movies and

commercial advertising (Markson and Taylor, 2000; Bazzini, et al. 1997; Robinson and Skill, 1995; Swayne and Greco, 1986). It is believed that the representation of a group in the media could reflect the importance and social status of a certain class of people. Since older persons are always under-represented, it implies that they may have a relatively low social status.

However, there is also evidence showing that the images of older persons portrayed in various media sources have been improving in some aged Western societies. For example, Buchholz and Bynum (1982) found that elderly people in the United States were presented in a more positive manner in newspapers than in the past. Polivka (1988) also found that there was an expanded older persons' role as executives, civic leaders, and moving forces in political and consumer issues in the United States media cartoons.

In our daily life, we often indirectly take in images about older persons' from the different kinds of mass media. To a certain extent, people will believe, perhaps uncritically, the portrayal of individual characteristics in the mass media. Through the representations, roles, and personalities described in movies, we will gain a general idea of the importance of older persons in movies. Movies can reflect how people view older persons in all walks of life. If there is a positive portrayal of older persons, there is a higher possibility of having positive attitudes towards older persons. However, if movies depict older persons negatively, there is a higher possibility of the development of ageism. By receiving negative stereotypical messages of older persons, we are likely to have a negative attitude towards them, prejudice and bias may be resulted. Therefore, we cannot under-estimate the effect of movies that give to audience.

In the present study, it is assumed that there is a correlation between mass media, behaviour and perception. There is rich research on this area, for example, Lowery and DeFleur (1988) showed that 20th Century young persons regarded film as a source of education about fashion, social problems and family issues etc. Gerbner (1980) and his associates as well as Wober and Gunter (1982) found that the amount of viewing television is a crucial and causal variable in the relationship between television content and audience response. The main objective of this study is to study upon how the Hong Kong popular films portrayed images of older persons.

Film Watching

Film watching is a popular type of entertainment in modern societies. Filmmaking is also one of the largest and most enjoyable, often profitable, entertainment enterprises in modern societies. Given the increased accessibility of video recorders, VCDs and DVDs and the development of family cinema, this medium, film, has become a powerful tool to deliver social messages and to create social images of particular social groups. Images of a certain agent social group (for example, older persons or young persons) transmitted through films contain messages about socially expected behaviours and attitudes, through these messages may have discrepancies with the actual social situations of that particular social group. However, the cinematic images of a certain social group portrayed by films may consequently shape our social perceptions of and expectations towards that particular social group. It is, therefore, the cinematic images of older persons that may reflect the social perceptions and expectations of the older persons in general, particularly the social status and roles of older persons. The cinematic images of older persons are thus a major source for detecting social values and views about

older persons.

Film can potentially make a fourfold contribution to the understanding of human behaviour and perception (Hanna, 1989). First, film provides an invaluable record, a datum of behaviour. Secondly, film can provides images of selected and non-selected nonrecurring behaviour. When the camera picks up information not actively sought by a researcher, film may generate data. Thirdly, film permits analysis and reanalysis by primary and secondary investigations. Lastly, film permits units of behaviour not visible at normal speed to be seen and examined through arbitrarily slowing or stopping motion.

Unfortunately, there are some limitations on using films to analyze human behaviour. First, films (in the movies) are an artificial representation of the reality, which will affect the portrayal of older persons as well as other characters. Secondly, different genre of movies will have different ways of portrayal, sometimes maybe contradictory and confused. Lastly, retrospective interviews with audience members are generally impossible, as the sampled movies were shown a long time ago.

Films as a kind of mass media do undoubtedly have some kinds of influence on people, especially on the young (So and Chan, 1992). The influence of the media can be both desirable and undesirable. So and Chan's study demonstrated that an audience's knowledge about current affairs is positively related to the exposure of mass media and, at the same time, their attitudes to "nonsense cults", hedonism, triad societies, rejection of existing moral standards, and so on.

Mu and Huo (2002) stated that movies are always affecting our daily life. No matter what genre of movie it is, an audience can be influenced by some of the story line or use some dialogues in movies for daily life. For example in the movie *Prison on Fire*, when the prison warden Scarface asked Chow Yun-fat (the major male character) why he talked so loud, Chow replied “I talk loud doesn’t mean I am rude”. Since this movie novel was well known in Hong Kong society, the sentence is still widely used among the people of Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, watching movies has become a popular entertainment among all walks of life. As stated in various editions of the *Hong Kong Year Book* (Hong Kong Government, 1992-1996), cinema-going remained a popular leisure activity. On average, people go to the cinema once a month. That is an average of 60 million cinema attendances, second only to television watching. Moreover, the mini-cinemas in many cases replaced large cinemas and offering greater choice to cinema-goers (Hong Kong Government, 1992-1996). Overall ticket office takings in 1981 were \$241,911,547.00 increasing to \$1,038,493,508.00 in 1991. However, in 2001, the ticket office decreased to \$397,163,717.00 due to the illegal copying of Hong Kong’s movies in the last decade and the easy accessibility of video recorders, VCDs, DVDs and family cinema (Chan, 2000).

The government administration in Hong Kong is also committed to providing a favourable environment for the healthy and long-term development of the film industry in Hong Kong. In May 1998, the Film Services Advisory Committee was established to provide a conduit for dialogue between the film industry and the government, and to advise on the work of the Film Services Office which facilitates film production in Hong Kong as well as promotes Hong Kong films locally and

abroad (HKSAR, 2002:388).

All these demonstrate the popularity of film watching in Hong Kong and the importance of film on shaping images and behaviour.

Purpose of Study

As mentioned earlier, research on older persons in Hong Kong has tended to be predominantly by applied or action-oriented research. There are limited examples of research on images of older persons, therefore, the present research aimed at exploring the images of older persons in Hong Kong popular films. Popular films were chosen in the present study because popular films imply larger size of audiences and in turn, have potentially greater social influence or impact.

This study focuses on understanding the existing state of the phenomenon of older persons' images in Hong Kong movies. The study tries to find out the images of older persons generally, whereas film genre differences and time era differences in the portrayal of older persons are not the main focus of this research. The present study will not be in a position to suggest whether there is a problem or a misrepresentation of reality relating to older persons in Hong Kong movies. Instead, the study aimed at finding out the facts of how film producers portray older persons in general. This research would also like to be comparable with some Western research on the images of older persons which was also concern about how the media portray them.

Significance of the Present Research

It is believed that social perceptions towards older persons can direct societal reactions to older persons and various institutional arrangements for them. How people view older persons would affect the policy recommendations and/or services by the government departments. Since the medium of film is a powerful tool to deliver social messages and to create social images of particular social groups, it is, therefore, important to see how movies create the images of older persons. Furthermore, by knowing how movies portray older persons, we may know the importance of older persons in movies and society. The thesis will contribute to academic knowledge on this topic in a modern Asian-pacific city, Hong Kong. It will also give some influence to policy makers and the film industry. However, the impacts on the film industry may well be limited as most movies are commercial ventures, even the movies carry social messages, and censorship in Hong Kong is limited.

Research Questions

The present study examines the ways in which images of older persons in Hong Kong popular films in 1981-2001 were presented. Popular films refer to the top movies generating the highest turnover of the Hong Kong local ticket offices. Cinematic images are reflections of social attitudes and behaviours, although much depends on the genre and historical relevance of the films. This study aims to investigate how popular films have portrayed images of older persons. This research is an exploratory descriptive study of how older persons were portrayed in Hong Kong movies. Foci of study of the present research include the representation

of older persons in Hong Kong movies, whether older persons are positively or negatively portrayed in movies, and changes of cinematic images of older persons over the last two decades. It is an essentially exploratory and descriptive study, although pioneering. Some ways of extending related research are discussed in Chapter Eight.

How are older persons portrayed in Hong Kong movies? In the present study, attempts have been made to find out whether older persons are relatively underrepresented in Hong Kong popular films, in terms of proportion in major characters and supporting characters. For examples, do male older persons' characters outnumber female older persons' characters in Hong Kong movies as a combined consequence of ageism and sexism? Are older persons in Hong Kong more or less positively portrayed or negatively portrayed in the popular movies in Hong Kong? Are there any changes of the cinematic images of older persons in the period of early 1980s and late 1990s?

The present study therefore focuses on three exploratory research questions, which are:

1. Are older persons under-represented in Hong Kong movies?
2. How are older persons portrayed in Hong Kong movies and are there any gender differences in the portrayals?
3. Have there been any changes in the cinematic images of older persons during the period early 1980s to the later 1990s?

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in eight chapters. After the introductory chapter, the next chapter, the literature review, reviews studies of images of older persons in different types of mass media in Western societies. It is followed by an examination on a review of the development of research on older persons in Hong Kong. The next two chapters present the analytical framework and research design of the present study. A general profile of the 63 sampled movies and a brief description of the 88 identifiable older characters in them are presented in Chapter Five. Chapter Six summarizes the major findings on the portrayal of older persons in Hong Kong movies. Chapter Seven concerns the discussion of the research and the last chapter summarizes the major findings of the thesis and returns to the limitations of the present study, and points to a future research agenda.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter presents a review on studies on older persons in both Western and Eastern societies. It starts with the general perceptions towards older persons in Western societies, then follow by a theoretical review of negative stereotypes towards older persons include the possible lights shed by theories such as role theory, disengagement theory, subculture theory, modernization theory, and social exchange theory. After the theoretical review, changing perceptions towards older persons are examined, followed by the portrayal of older persons' images by various mass media. The chapter in conclusion reviews elderly studies in Hong Kong.

Stereotypes of Older Persons

The field of the study of older persons has undergone a tremendous development in the past two decades. Related researches and studies can be found in both major sociological journals and gerontological journals. Study on attitudes and perceptions towards older persons have been very popular, because attitudes and perceptions held by the society would affect the self-definition and behaviour of the older persons (Green, 1981).

The study of attitudes and perceptions towards older persons has long been a major component of the social psychological perspective in gerontology as it reflects the behavioural tendencies of people. Since the 1950s, researchers have studied various groups of persons' beliefs towards the older persons. Attitudes and

perceptions held by different social groups towards the older persons can influence the way people are treated. Stereotyping notions of the older persons not only change individuals' behaviour towards them but also influence the types of political and social institutions that are designed for the older persons (McTavish, 1971).

Stereotypes are defined by Ashmore and DelBoca (1981) as people's perception schemes towards a particular categorization principle. Applying Ashmore and DelBoca's definition of stereotype to the study of older persons, stereotypes of the older persons can either be inherently positive or inherently negative.

Studies on the stereotyping of older persons have a fairly long history. Stereotypes of older persons were seen to be dominated by such negative personal characteristic as conservatism, inflexibility, being withdrawn, passive, dependent, nurturant, religious, traditional, present-oriented, suffering from various forms of physical and mental deterioration (Hummert, et al 1994; Koyano, 1989; Levin, 1988; Miller and Acuff, 1982; Schonfield, 1982; Bassili and Reil, 1981; Brubaker and Powers, 1976; Tuckman and Lorge, 1953).

This large volume of stereotyping research could provide insights into a person's cognitive structures for having stereotypes towards older persons. When asking respondents to describe the traits of older persons, stereotyping researches spontaneously reported that there were resulted in conflicting traits (for example: miserable or happy, dependent or independent) (Hummert, et al 1994; Kite, Deaux, and Miele, 1991; Rothbaum, 1983). The coexistence of these conflicting traits suggested that there have multiple stereotypes towards older persons rather than pervasive, negative one. Besides, research on the attitudes towards older persons

sometimes found there was a negative attitudes towards older persons (Schwalb and Sedlacek, 1990; Braithwaite, 1986; Cameron and Cromer, 1974) and sometimes positive (Puckett, et al 1983; Crockett, et al 1977; Bell and Stanfield, 1973). Multiple stereotypes can provide a strong theoretical account for the coexistence of both positive and negative attitudes towards older persons (Hummert, et al 1995).

Social Perceptions towards Older Persons in Western Society

Recently, older persons have quite frequently been portrayed by the mass media, as well as by professional, social workers and politicians, as a problematic “group”. It is also not difficult to find that older persons are labeled by health and economic professionals and some of their literature as a burden to society, economy and family and as a group requiring various social services and welfare (Borgatta, 1991; Ahmed, Kraft, and Porter, 1987). As a result, many people may unintentionally negatively stereotype older persons and assume all are the same, often using group terminology such as “the elderly”, which implies a uniformity of characteristics of older persons that does not reflect reality (Phillips, 2000).

Previous research has documented the existence of negative and stereotypic perceptions of older persons. McTavish’s (1971) review suggested that negative beliefs about ageing and older persons were widespread. The widespread negative beliefs on older persons were one of the major reasons for using wide variations in the types of measurements in studying the elderly research (Green, 1981; McTavish, 1971). Using different measurements had caused different results in elderly studies. However, these are some common, but not necessary valid perceptions have emerged towards the elderly (Green, 1981). Togonu-Bickersteth and Akinnawo’s study

(1987-1989) found that 375 Nigerian university students on a semantic differential scales (21 bipolar adjectives) rated older persons as sincere, wiser, fairer, and predictable than the young persons. The study also did not find any pervasive negative stereotype of the older persons held by the young.

Perceptions that older persons are conservative and set in their ways seem to have been found most often in youth-oriented, modernized, and industrialized societies. It seems that the younger generation usually perceive older persons in a negative terms in many modernized societies (Hummert, 1993; Kogan, 1961). Passivity and loss of energy are often perceived as two of the major characteristics of older persons (Mueller, et. al., 2002). Apart from these characteristics, previous research findings also demonstrated that older persons are always seen as weak and depending on others (Eisdorfer, Altrocchi, 1961). McTavish (1971) and Lutsky (1980) reviewed that stereotyped views of older persons found in various studies. Older persons were seen as generally ill, tired, not sexually interested, forgetful, less able to learn new things, less likely to participate in activities, and isolated.

A Theoretical Review of Negative Stereotype towards Older Persons

A number of theories have been developed which lead some support to the suggestion that industrialization and urban development, characterized by high degree of social mobility and social change, have “devalued” and “deskilled” older persons. Such theories include role theory, disengagement theory, subculture theory, modernization theory and social exchange theory.

Role Theory

Role theory has generally been recognized as one of the earliest social theories in gerontology, which explains how individuals adjust to ageing and associated role changes in later life (Hooyman and Kiyak, 2002). The theory states that people play a variety of social roles throughout the life course and those roles change. Older persons become socialized to new roles as they get old and they must learn how to deal with role losses (Hooyman and Kiyak, 2002). Older persons have during their life-course will have gained and lost life roles and adjustment to role loss becomes a determinant of to successful ageing.

People may for example lose their role as husbands or wives when growing old after death of their spouses. Older persons may also suffer from loneliness when they lose their close friends. Another key feature of role change in later life is retirement. Retirement (loss of working role) can force older persons to leave work which in turn may also cause them to lose income and probably loss of the breadwinner's role in the family. Men are more likely to lose their economic or work role in old age and loss of an economic role may make older persons depend more on their adult children. As a society becomes modernized, it will be basically a youth-oriented society and the norms or values of the older persons may replaced by the young. Bias in age norms may reinforce the negative stereotypes towards older persons who, as a result, may have a lower self-perception and may suffer from depression and unhappiness in later life.

As Law (1995:37) concluded, the contribution of role theory can thus explain why some older persons have difficulties in adjusting in later life. However, the

theory does not specify the ways on how individual older person can adjust in later life when they face role loss. To due with this limitation, the activity theory and disengagement theory were developed to counter such weakness.

Disengagement Theory

Another major theory in social gerontology stems from Cumming and Henry (1961) who suggested that there is a linear relationship between age and disengagement. When an individual (older person) become aged, their disengagement becomes greater. That is older persons should decrease their activities in later life, interact less with others, and keep a passive role.

Social disengagement for many older persons may be seen as socially and psychologically functional and as a natural part of the ageing process. Also, social disengage is inevitable and culturally universal. The process of disengagement is a method that a society prepares for the structure of its members, when the inevitable arrives, it does not disrupt the orderly functioning of a society (Bond, et. al., 1996). As people become aged, their social and psychological needs change from active involvement to inactive contemplation. Older persons can have an opportunity to retreat from the demands of society and quietly contemplate the meaning of life.

Johnson (1994) explored the relevance of disengagement theory to the lives of very old persons, aged 85 or above. Johnson's findings indicated that common physical and social losses make older persons difficult to stay socially involved. However, if older persons redefine their optimal level of social integration, loosen normative constraints, redefine their time orientation from the future to present, and

detach themselves from social activities, these older persons could continue to maintain contentment with their lives.

Subculture Theory

Subculture theory applies to many social groups and was developed by Rose and others in the early 1960s (Rose, 1965). With respect to older groups, Rose believed that older persons will contact with each other frequently and less with the young people as they grow old, thus a subculture of older persons will be formed with distinctive ideas, values, and behaviours. This subculture approach of course has been applied to many other groups – usually minorities, immigrants, or others.

Rose also identified some features that may contribute to the development of the subculture of older persons. Such features included the rapid growth of older population, compulsory retirement which encourage group affinity, decline in family contacts, and development of retire communities. Apart from that, the negative stereotype towards older persons and the decline of economic opportunities for them also excluded older persons to participate in other social activities.

The theory has gained support from studies of older persons segregated settings, such as in retirement communities (Sherman, 1975; Rosow, 1967). However, such studies had been challenged by selective and relatively homogeneous to represent the general residential pattern and activities of older persons.

Modernization Theory

Modernization theory is basically a theory of social change. It has been widely applied to various aspects of social life in the sociological literature. The major argument of modernization theory, as stated by Cowgill and Holmes (1972), is a systematic relationship between the extent of modernization of a society and the social status of older persons. The urbanization hypothesis of ageing states that levels of industrialization and social mobility are negatively correlated with attitudes towards the older persons (Chang, Chang, and Shen, 1984). This hypothesis was supported by the findings of a number of cross-cultural studies (Walker 1980; McTavish 1971). It is evident that negative attitudes towards older persons are more likely to be found in societies in which individualism and liberalism, and in society in which their people have higher educational achievement.

As noted by Dowd (1981), economic development involves changes in both social structure and social interaction. Such changes are always disruptive to long-standing social organization patterns. The prestige and relative status of older persons are always declined and even lost during the process of industrialization and modernization. The social structure in modern world also devalued older persons. The social stratification produced distinct styles of the older persons in the work world and middle classes. Emergence of class hierarchies, structural position is determined by the relationship to the means of production.

The modernization thesis, to a great extent, is portrayed as an evil to older persons. As a society becomes modernized, the social status of the older persons had been devalued (Cowgill, 1986). Health technology, economic technology,

urbanization, and education are the four major aspects of modernization which consequently lead to the decline of the social status of the older persons.

Social Exchange Theory

Dowd (1981) drew upon economic cost-benefit models of social participation which attempt to answer why social interaction and activity decrease with age. He believed that there was unequal exchange process between older persons and other society members in investments and returns. As there was a shift in opportunity structures, roles, and skills that older persons have fewer resources with which to exert power in their social relationships, and their status declines. With little to exchange, older persons are forced to accept the retirement role.

Human beings are viewed as persons seeking maximizing their benefits and minimizing the costs paid in the process of social exchange. Social exchange theory on ageing, therefore, focuses on intergenerational relationships and social support for the elderly (Kart and Kinney, 2001). Dowd (1975) stated that the decreased social interaction in older age could be explained in terms of an intricate process of exchange between society and its older population resulting from the older persons' power-dependent relationship. The particular skill or expertise of older workers became out modeled or its value reduced, older workers have little to exchange that is of critical value. To conclude, older persons are being devalued because they had little or even nothing to exchange in industrial world.

Changing Perceptions towards Older Persons

Many research findings repeatedly demonstrate that older persons have been quite negatively perceived, and/or stereotyped by other people, as a review by McTavish as early as 1971 indicates. However, more recent research findings have found that perceptions towards older persons have become somewhat more positive (Midlarsky, et. al., 1999). The changing perceptions towards older persons are partly due to education programmes but some of the theories, such as exchange theory, can also explain strengthen intergenerational relations. Different social groups also express differently their perceptions towards the aged.

Participation in education programmes can lead to positive attitudinal change towards ageing. Dooley and Frankel (1990) found that adolescents would hold a more positive attitude towards the older persons after participating in a programme of regular contact with older persons. Sahud, Bruvold, and Merino (1990) also called for instruments capable of measuring attitudes about the older persons across cultural contexts. They developed an attitude scale by using Likert scaling techniques for measuring the structure of attitudes about the older persons in order to develop some theoretical understanding of attitude structure. They found that both English and Spanish had a positive attitude towards the older persons. Other attitude research by Katz (1990) reported that an introductory interdisciplinary gerontology course led to the subjects experienced significant positive change in attitudes towards older persons in general, and familiar older persons in particular.

As stated earlier, modernization might devalue and deskill the older persons. However, modernization may also have a positive impact on them. With

industrialization and modernization, various social security systems have been developed. These social security systems may better ensure the older persons to have a more meaningful later life. Besides, the improvement on the social welfare and services for the older persons can make the later life become more meaningful. Increased varieties in public entertainment give more choice of leisure activities in later life and increase the chance that later life becomes more enjoyable (Law, 1995).

Images of Older Persons in Various Mass Media Sources

Given that the mass media has become a powerful source of socialization and may even shape the attitudes towards older persons, studies of images of older persons in mass media has become more and more popular. Since late 1970s, there was a considerable amount of research investigated the images of older persons in mass media. These studies included the analyses of television programmes, commercial advertisements, newspapers, magazine, books and readers, movies, music, and greeting cards as well. Almost all types of these studies reported that there was a continuous under-representation of older persons in mass media. These studies also found that older women were consistently misrepresented in proportion to the true population. Stereotype, negative portrayals, and negative manner were prevalent in the studies of older persons in media. However, since 1990s, more and more studies showed that there were improved overall images of older persons became positive. For examples, Bell (1992) found that older characters were in a leading role and also they were portrayed as powerful, healthy, affluent, and admired.

The following section focuses on more recent findings on the images of older persons in a variety of mass media.

Portrayal of older persons on television

Most studies in television portrayal of older persons, there were almost all research found that there was an under-representation of older persons as compared to the actual population (Signorielli, 2001; Greenberg and Collette, 1997; Robinson and Skill, 1995; Vernon, et. al. 1991; Swayne and Greco, 1987; Elliott, 1984; Hiemstra, et. al. 1983; Signorielli, 1983; Gerbner, et. al. 1980; Northcott, 1975; Aronoff, 1974). Besides, older men were outnumbered older women in television programmes (Signorielli, 2001; Vernon, et. al. 1991; Elliott, 1984; Signorielli, 1983; Aronoff, 1974; Peterson, 1973). Apart from these, older characters were almost absent from the major role of the casting (Signorielli, 2001; Robinson and Skill, 1995; Swayne and Greco, 1987). A number of studies also found that negative image is manifested. The negative images of older persons included failure, unhappiness, helpless, and fools (Waters and Huck, 1985; Bishop and Krause, 1981; Northcott, 1975; Aronoff, 1974).

Peterson (1973) examined the portrayals of older persons in prime time programmes concluded that the representation of older persons was proportionate to the population, but still reported an under-representation of older women. The images of older men were considered as “generally favourable” (p. 573) whereas no specific images of older women were reported.

Wober and Gunter (1982) intended to see how the public in London regards the image of older persons on television programmes. Results indicated that the viewers did not see any misrepresentation or negative image of the older persons in television programmes. However, they found that the image of older persons in

comedies and action shows was less respected than that in documentaries and game shows.

Moving on to the 1980s, the portrayal of older persons' images had perhaps become more positive. Dail (1988) examined 193 older characters in twelve family-oriented television programmes and found that an overall positive portrayal towards older persons was emerging. Such findings suggested that it might be due to the marking acknowledge most of the economic strength among older Americans.

Portrayal of older persons in readers and textbooks

Of all the reviewed research on children readers and adolescent literature, nearly all their findings indicated an under-representation of older persons especially older female characters. Besides, older characters were relegated in minor role cast in an unfavourable light (Ansello, 1977; Barnum, 1977; Robin, 1977; Petersons and Karnes, 1976). Even high school and undergraduate textbooks also found that there was under-represented and negative portrayal towards older persons (Markson and Pratt, 1996; Stolley and Hill, 1996). However, Robin in 1977 analyzed four series of children's readers and found that older characters were in major roles. Also, older characters were engaged in a wide variety of activities and they were portrayed in unmistakably 'supportive' type behaviour: helper or host.

Kingston and Drotter (1981) examined a series of six basal readers and found that a total of 188 older characters were shown as active, kind, wise, and hardworking. Illustrations tended to be stereotyped with older women portrayed as bespectacled, wearing aprons and their hair in bows, and sitting in rocking chairs.

Older men tended to smoke pipes, be bald, and wear suspenders.

Portrayal of older persons in newspaper and magazines

It appears that some newspapers and magazine are all somehow against or present negative images. However, Broussard, et. al. (1980) drive away the myth that newspapers create negative images of the older persons. Most of the stories were neutral in nature, as expect from a source of journalism rather than entertainment. Broussard, et. al. found positive images of older persons in stories and shown in true proportion of the U.S. older population at that time.

A survey of total 120 issues from two newspapers by Buchholz and Bynum in 1982 showed that only 3 percent of the stories regarding the older persons covered topics of significance such as health, retirement, housing, employment, income, public transportation and demographic changes. However, the overall image of older persons remained neutral.

Another analysis covered eleven different Sunday newspapers by Wass, et. al. (1985) found that the images of older persons in journalism had changed little in the passed twenty years. Older women were still under-represented and less than 1 percent of the total space was devoted to any coverage of the older persons at all.

Almerico and Fillmer (1988) examined how children's magazines portray older persons. The results indicated that older persons were not represented proportionally to the actual population. No discrimination was discovered in the portrayal and the impression of older persons was shown as being active rather than

passive. Active older persons were shown as working, gardening, cooling, and walking. The overall impression of older characters was positive one.

Portrayal of older persons in advertisements

As expected, older characters in advertisements (both magazine and journals) were under-represented and in unfavourable light (Carrigan and Szmigin, 1999; Peterson, 1995) except those advertisements appealing especially to older persons (Kvasnicka, Beymer, and Perloff, 1982). Smith (1976) examined two medical journals and analyses older characters in drug advertisements. All the characters were in negative light as the main point of the advertisements is preventing or curing the negative situation.

Ursic, Ursic and Ursic (1986) examined magazine advertisements for the previous 30 years and found that older characters appeared in an overall neutral portrayal. Although the older persons appeared proportionately to the real population, older women were still under-represented. Bramlett-Solomon and Wilson (1989) as well as Bramlett-Solomon and Subramanian (1999) examined images of older persons in *Life* and *Ebony* magazine advertisements. It was found that fewer older persons appeared in the magazine in both 1980s and 1990s. Older persons did appear more often associated with ageing products and services.

Harwood and Roy (1999) studied popular magazines in India and U.S. and found that older persons were presented in a relatively positive light in both cultures. Such positive light included well groomed, active, healthy, and happy. However, older women were still under-represented in both cultures as compared to older men.

Portrayal of older persons in music

Leitner (1983), Cohen and Kruschnitz (1990) and Aday and Austin (2000) studied the presentation of older persons in music. Both studies indicated that negative rather than positive view of ageing was predominated. The negative portrayals in lyrics were mostly focused on physical attributes, health, and loneliness. The portrayals have been expressed variously:

When I get older, losing my hair

*Darling, I am growing older Silver threads away the gold Shine upon
my brow today Life is fading fast away*

Old bones don't move so fast lie they did in the past

*You know that old trees just grow stronger Old rivers grow wider
everyday Old people just grow lonesome*

Portrayal of older persons in poetry

Studies of older persons in poetry have indicated strong negative attitudes about physical, emotional, and social losses toward them. Also, there was a striving for continued struggle, change, growth and self-realization in old age (Clark, 1980; Sohngen and Smith, 1978). Dawson (2000) investigated negative images of older women in artwork and poetry in North East England. He found that common themes included women as powerless, dangerous, and in need of control.

Portrayal of older persons in humour and birthday cards

Davies (1977) studied the attitudes towards old age in humour and indicated that there were negative attitudes in jokes. In particular, very negative attitudes to ageing of older women were found. As a continuation of research on attitudes towards old age, birthday cards as a source of age related humor were used by Demos and Jache (1980) to examine the representation of old age in cards. Most of the cards portrayed ageing negatively than positively and focused upon themes having to do with physical and mental characteristics.

Portrayal of older persons in movies

Although there was an ever growing of research on movie, however, images of older persons in movie have, with a few examples (Markson and Taylor, 2000; Fisher, 1992), been limited. Bazzini, et. al. (1997) and Walsh (1989) both found that older women were rare in the starring role. Once older persons were appeared, they always portrayed more negatively than their male contemporaries.

Markson and Taylor studied over 3,000 movies in which actors and actresses had been nominated at least once during their lifetimes for an Oscar award. Research findings indicated that older men were depicted as vigorous, employed, and involved in same-gender friendships and adventure. Older women were in peripheral to the action or portrayed as rich dowagers, lonely spinsters. However, older persons' roles in movie remained remarkably static in age and gender stereotyping.

Beliefs of Older Persons in Modern Asian Culture

The common understanding and beliefs about older persons in a society construct how older persons are understood and responded to by its members. Many classic Chinese writings had mentioned about ageing. Some classical writings also gave both chronological and biological discourse on the aged. Besides, there was also some writings mentioned about social discourse, especially respect the older persons. Cultural traditions of extended family systems, filial piety towards older persons play an integral part in the formation of beliefs and attitudes of the majority of Hong Kong Chinese people today (Ho, 1996; Kosberg, 1994). Traditionally, older persons carry high status in family. They contributed their wisdom and experience and played an important role in making family decision.

Yau (2002) in 2000 interviewed 498 Taiwanese about the contemporary older Taiwanese's images. In his research he found that the most common portrayal of older persons were decline in physical health, experienced, unwanted by others, and everything in the last stage in life. Yau concluded that it is a "youth colonial world", older persons' construction was characterized by postcolonial discourse. Under this youth oriented world, older persons became less important, being disengaged and isolated.

However, Leung (1989) contended that few older persons are now consulted on important family matters and filial piety is only a minor consideration of the care of older persons. Tao (1982) found evidence supporting this view and concluded that older persons are finding themselves unwanted by the family.

Phillips (1992) argues that it is difficult to determine by demographic means that Hong Kong families are becoming less caring for their older persons. It may be that the increasing number of older persons throws concerns about them in a new perspective. With the recent developments in Hong Kong society which may overshadow tradition values towards older persons. Phillips (1988) suggested that cultural practices and religious beliefs still an important considerations. However, there were tensions with the demands of a modern society.

Research on Older Persons in Hong Kong

As noted, Hong Kong has become an “aged” society since the mid-1980s, (in 1986, her elderly population, aged 65 years old and above, reached 7.6%) (Census and Statistics Department, 1986). With an increasing number of older persons in Hong Kong, large number of older persons will have a great impact on society. How people perceived towards older persons will affect the policy implementation on the services. Researches on older persons become more popular since Hong Kong has become an ageing society in mid-1980s. However, elderly research in Hong Kong is predominated by identifying the social service needs (Kwan, 1997; Cheung, 1990; Chow, 1979), health and caring (Boey and Ko, 1996; Chi and Boey, 1994; Chow, 1993; Chi and Leung, 1992; Chow, 1992; Chi and Lee, 1989), living arrangement (Lee, et al. 1997), and life satisfaction of the older persons (Boey, 1998; Chan, 1995; Lee and Chi, 1990).

In other words, research on older persons in Hong Kong has generally been dominated by applied or action-oriented research which aimed at exploring the life conditions of older persons, identifying later life adaptation problems, and making

policy recommendations to related governmental departments so as to improve the social welfare and services for older persons (Law, 1995). Research on the social perceptions of older persons have only a few examples, such as general attitudes (Law, 1982), primary school students' perceptions (Law, Chan, and Ng, 1998), student/pupil nurse (Kwan and Law, 1994), and print media (Gibb and Holroyd, 1996). One of the objectives of the present research is try to fill up this research gap.

Law's (1982) research on attitudes towards older persons found that the attitudes of Hong Kong people towards the older persons appeared to be inconsistent due to the multiplicity of the attitude constructed. In the report, a profile of negative stereotypes towards older persons is being listed. The negative stereotypes included conservative, slow, stubborn, and weak. However, on the other hand, the report also found some positive images of the older persons. The older persons were considered by the respondents as warm, tidy, and pleasant persons. The report further stated that young adults tend to view the older persons more positively. The more educated, the less they would consider the older persons as out of place in society and more likely to accept the older persons.

Research on primary school students' perceptions towards older persons by Law, Chan and Ng (1998) indicated that students generally tended to have a negative perception on the physical aspect of later life. However, the students perceived the quality of social life in old age were quite positive.

Research on the changing roles and status of older persons in Hong Kong conducted by Chow (1997) stated that since early 1970s, the role and status of older

persons have undergone dramatic changes. The tradition values of older persons as a source of honour and power, also their valuable experiences had been obsolete as a result of modernization and urbanization. With the introduction of compulsory education in 1970s, older persons found that their experiences became less valuable as their skills no longer suit to the modern society. As a result, the status of older persons diminished quickly.

Chow also found that both the older respondents and younger respondents exhibited negative perceptions towards older persons on physical, psychological, economic well-being. The older respondents viewed themselves more negatively than the younger respondents. Even worse, older respondents found that they were difficult to adjust in later life and being socially isolated and lonely. When asking them about the 'ideal' older persons, the older respondents concerned about good health, ability to take care of oneself, alert and energetic, and going out independently. However, the younger respondents have no idea what "ideal" older persons are. On the descriptions of the images of older persons, Chow found that there were both positive and negative descriptions. For the positive perceptions, older persons were leading in leisurely life and experienced. For the negative perceptions, older persons were portrayed by ageing fast, slow motion, frail, and declining in health.

A more recent research finding on the practice of filial piety by Chow (2001) found that the majority of the respondents agreed that "to satisfy material needs to their parents" is their responsibilities to their parents. This implied that filial piety is not easy to be discarded and the upholding the spirit of respecting parents is necessary.

A review of studies in the *Hong Kong Journal of Gerontology*

Studies involving older persons in Hong Kong have been developed for over 40 years. Hong Kong has an active gerontological association and the *Hong Kong Journal of Gerontology* is a major, explicitly interdisciplinary academic journal, over 10 years old, which focuses on topics about older persons. The current editors are a doctor, a social work academic and a social policy professor. By reviewing the articles published in this journal, we can understand different perspectives towards later life. Also, by knowing the popular research topics in studies on older persons, we can understand the strengths and weaknesses of such research and the ways it analyzes the old age and its problems. Therefore, it may be helpful to improve research on older persons in Hong Kong in the coming future. A review of the *Hong Kong Journal of Gerontology* was conducted to examine the research topics and compares them with that of Western research.

A review of the journal from 1987 to 2000, a total of 14 volumes², shows that the main areas of study were focused on identifying health problems in later life and promoting health programmes and services for older persons (24.9%). Apart from these, 23.2% of the reviewed articles focused on exploring the social services need as well as introducing some social services programmes for older persons. Other topics like studies on the general life style (9.4%), social services or policy evaluation (9.4%), housing problems and living arrangement (7.2%) and caregiver's stress and qualifications (5.5%) were found in the reviewed articles. However, topics on social image and self image of older persons (3.9%), retirement preparation and adjustment (2.8%), life satisfaction (2.8%), and productive ageing and successful

² For the reviewed list of *Hong Kong Journal of Gerontology* papers, please refer to Appendix I.

ageing (0.6%) were rarely to be seen.

With respect to the scope of study, the most popular area of interest in older persons research in Hong Kong have tended to focus on: 1) use or demand for social services (53.0%); 2) health status and problems and medical advice (51.4%); 3) living arrangements and conditions (28.7%); 4) social support (26.0%); 5) social relationship (21%) and family life and relationship (21%). However, most studies were aimed at examining the negative association between old age and the intensity of social networks and social relationships. Ageing was very often negatively depicted as the main reason for health deterioration, loss of the capability for self-care, being isolated and dependent on the social services.

This brief categorisation of the articles published in the *Hong Kong Journal of Gerontology* has also demonstrated that the predominating discipline in the study of older persons in Hong Kong is the social work professionals (43.6%), followed by medical professional (26.0%). Only 8.9% of research studies on older persons published in this interdisciplinary journal were conducted by sociologists and gerontologists although this proportion may be increasing in recent issues.

More recent studies in Western societies were likely to explore the positive aspects of later life. The positive perceptions of older persons between ageing and social relationship, ageing and family relationship, ageing and modernized society were all popular topics of elderly studies. In order to find out the whole face of later life, different aspects life patterns of older persons, like financial status, job opportunity, general life style also need to be studied. Besides, researchers are showing more interests in studying the elements which can contribute the successful

ageing, for instance the analysis of life satisfaction index, discussion of productive ageing and retirement planning, etc. All of these focuses are needed to promote the idea that a well-prepared later life can be cheerful and enjoyable.

In comparison to Western studies, research on older persons in Hong Kong can be assessed as lacking diversification in its foci. It has tended to place emphasis on the social services needs and deterioration of health status among older persons. Moreover, some aspects of older persons are apparently overlooked, such as housing problems, retirement planning, social images and self images, life satisfaction, productive ageing and successful ageing.

Chapter Three

A Framework for Analysis

In the previous chapter, it was noted that older persons were generally portrayed negatively by, and under-represented in most of the media. The present study applied modernization theory to explain the possible reasons for such an under-representation and negative image of older persons in Hong Kong movies.

A Brief Description of Modernization Theory

Modernization theory is basically a theory of social change. It is a process by which agrarian societies are transformed into industrial societies. Cowgill and Holmes were the first one to apply modernization theory in an ageing study. They found that there were systematic relationships between the extent of modernization in a society and the status of older persons. Based on the findings from fifteen societies, ranging from mostly preliterate countries to highly modernized countries, Cowgill and Holmes (1972:322-323) summarized the relationship between modernization and the status of older persons into 22 points. They are:

1. The concept of old age is relative to the degree of modernization; a person is classified as old at an earlier chronological age in a primitive society than in a modern society.
2. Old age is identified in terms of chronological age chiefly in modern societies; in other societies onset of old age is more commonly linked with events such as succession to eldership or becoming a grandparent.

3. Longevity is directly and significantly related to the degree of modernization.
4. Modernized societies have older populations, that is, higher proportions of old people.
5. Modern societies have higher proportions of women and especially of widows.
6. Modern societies have higher proportions of people who live to be grandparents and even great-grandparents.
7. The status of the aged is high in primitive societies and is lower and more ambiguous in modern societies.
8. In primitive societies, older people tend to hold positions of political and economic power, but in modern societies such power is possessed by only a few.
9. The status of the aged is high in societies in which there is a high reverence for or worship of ancestors.
10. The status of the aged is higher when they constitute a low proportion of the population and tends to decline as their numbers and proportions increase.
11. The status of the aged is inversely proportional to the rate of social change.
12. Stability of residence favours high status of the aged; mobility tends to undermine it.
13. The status of the aged tends to be high in agricultural societies and lower in urbanized societies.
14. The status of the aged tends to be high in preliterate societies and to decline with increasing literacy of the populations.
15. The status of the aged is high in those societies in which they are able to continue to perform useful and valued functions; however, this is contingent upon the values of the society as well as upon the specific activities of the aged.
16. Retirement is a modern invention; it is found chiefly in modern high-productivity societies.

17. The status of the aged is high in societies in which the extended form of the family is prevalent and tends to be lower in societies which favour the nuclear form of the family and neolocal marriage.
18. With modernization the responsibility for the provision of economic security for dependent aged tends to be shifted from the family to the state.
19. The proportion of the aged who are able to maintain leadership roles declines with modernization.
20. In primitive societies the roles of widows tend to be clearly ascribed, but such role ascription declines with modernization; the widow's role in modern societies tends to be flexible and ambiguous.
21. The individualistic value system of Western society tends to reduce the security and status of older people.
22. Disengagement is not characteristic of the aged in primitive or agrarian societies, but an increasing tendency toward disengagement appears to accompany modernization.

According to Cowgill and Holmes, there are some universal features in all societies when population ageing takes place. First, aged people always form a minority of the total population (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972:3). However, this does not mean that older persons have no power. Merely when they do, power is exercised by a minority of the population. Within the minority, older women almost always outnumber older men and widows usually make up a high proportion among the aged population, especially older females.

Secondly, there is often an age-grading system appears in which some people are classified as 'old' (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972:4). At the same time, the role

expectations for the older persons are different from other age groups. There is a tendency for older persons to shift from roles which require physical exertion to sedentary, more advisory or supervisor positions.

Thirdly, some older persons continue to act as political, judicial, and civic leaders in both primitive and modern societies (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972:4). The term “elder” was commonly implied leader, headman, or councilman which suggests an important role of older persons in societies.

Fourthly, there are mutual responsibilities between older persons and their adult children in family (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972:5). It was found that young people feel a serious obligation to visit their parents. The tradition value that family has been the safest haven for older persons seems no longer be the truth as a society became modernized. Instead of family support, insurance and assistance programmes have been instituted as a kind of substitutes for the filial piety.

Fifthly, saving appears to be a desire for older persons (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972:5). It seems that individual older person to save is impossible; the development of insurance, pension schemes, and social security is unavoidable.

Last, there is a prolongation of people’s life, even in old age (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972:6). With the development of health technologies and increased living standards, many people survive longer.

Causal Linkages of Modernization-Related Factors to Ageing Problem

In Cowgill and Holmes's (1972) study, they identified four major aspects of modernization which could lead to a decline of older persons' status in society. The four aspects include advances in health technologies, the development of economic technologies, the expansion of mass education, and urbanization.

Health Technology

The development of health technologies are characterized by many things, including sanitary engineering, purification of water, improved knowledge of diet and better food, personal hygiene, and the discoveries in medical and surgery. All these contribute to the improvement of health, decrease in mortality rate, and prolongation of life expectancy. As a result, ageing population emerges and increases competitions between generations. Consequently, the status of older persons tends to decline as their numbers and proportions increase.

Economic Technology

People also enjoy the benefits from the development of economic technologies, such as new occupations from industrialization, the multitude of new products and services, increased diversity of occupations, greater specialization and increasingly complex job skills. However, this may also increase the degree of intergenerational competition for job between older persons and the young. Given that the older persons are often less equipped with knowledge and training for new occupations, their skills are always regarded as obsolete. They are also more expensive in a

security wage system.

The development of economic technology, in turn, may leave some older persons not only without a work role but also without the traditional role of providing vocational guidance to the young. Losing the work role, older persons would be suffering from a reduction in income and may be forced to retire. Eventually, older persons will become economically dependent.

Mass Education

It is argued by Cowgill and Holmes that the promotion of mass education would make younger people more literate and better equipped with technical training which favour the younger generation engaged in new occupations. As young people are more educated than their parents, older persons may be regarded as less knowledgeable and unskillful. Value differences between generations in modernized society may further lead to inversion of status. Consequently, there may be an intellectual and moral segregation between generations, lowering older persons' social status may result.

Urbanization

Urbanization will lead to both geographic and social mobility. Both kinds of mobility tend to widen the distance between older persons and their offspring, weaken the bonds of extended family and undermine the authority of older persons. Neolocal marriages emerge as a result of geographical mobility and may lead to residential segregation of older persons. Together with the social mobility, there

would be increased social distance between older persons and their adult children. Social segregation would be resulted and lower the status of older persons.

Research Supporting Modernization Theory

Modernization, according to Cowgill and Holmes, is a bad dream for older persons. Modernization deskills older persons, devalues their experiences, takes away their authority, separates them from their adult children, and leaves them in poverty and makes them suffer from role loss.

After the introduction of Cowgill and Holmes of the possible causal link between modernization and population ageing, the theory has received increased academic attention. Large amounts of research have been conducted to test the theory. For example, Palmore and Whittington (1971), Palmore and Manton (1974) found that there were a significant decline in status of the older persons observed in the United States during its modernization process.

Yang (1999) studied the living arrangements of older persons in Taiwan and found that the proportion of older persons living with their adult children has declined during the last two decades. Such a decline was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of older persons living with their spouse only. It also related to the decreased propensity to live with adult children due to the socioeconomic changes generalized as a result of modernization. Houben (2001) also found that modernization threatens older persons' housing in Europe. Consequently, there is a change of housing for older persons in European states.

Clark (1993) and Shankardass (1995) found that modernization has made some older persons lose their status in economical terms. Clark obtained data from fifty-one nations and found that economic development is associated with losses in older persons' occupations, especially in professional and technical occupations. Shankardass found that older persons in India, a non-western country, were also suffering from the effect of modernization. Some argue that older persons' needs have been neglected making them economically dependent, although in many countries over the past few decades there have been great advances in provisions for older persons in terms of social facilities and pensions.

The Modernization Process in Hong Kong

The following paragraphs present an overview of the modernization process in Hong Kong and examine the effects of modernization on the life pattern of her older citizens. Given that Hong Kong had been a British colony for over 150 years and her modernization process, to a certain extent, followed that of Western societies. It should be said however that many other Asia-Pacific societies have followed similar paths.

Health Technology

With the development of health technologies, such as sanitary engineering, purification of water, improved knowledge of diet and personal hygiene, as well as the discoveries in medical and surgery, there is a continuous decrease in mortality and increase in prolongation of life expectancy. In Table 1.2 (page 5), we can see that both the crude birth rates and natural increase rates have decreased significantly

since 1960s. Crude death rates also decreased due to the improvement in health care technology. In addition, with better nutrition and knowledge during pregnancy have lead to a steady increase in the life expectancy at birth.

As noted earlier, Hong Kong has been an ageing society since the mid-1980s. Table 1.1 (page 4) summarizes the elderly population from various Census and Statistic reports. From the table it was noted that there was a marked increase of older persons since 1960s. In 1961, there had 87,918 older persons which shared 2.8% of the total population. Within ten years, the number of older persons doubled, to 177,572 persons, sharing 4.5% of the total population. Another ten years after, the elderly population reached 326,809 older persons, almost double again (Census and Statistics Department, 1982). From 1981 onwards, the growth of older persons seemed to cool down. The elderly population reached 8.7% in 1991 and further to 11.1% in 2001 (Census and Statistics Department, 2002a). It is projected that the elderly population will reach 15.7% in 2021 (Census and Statistics Department, 2002b).

The Department of Health is the official health advisory body which is responsible to safeguarding health of the community through promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services to the individual. Every year, the department spends one-third of its budget on preventing communicable and non-communicable diseases, and on promotion of health through publicity and public education (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2000). The Department of Health as a primary health care provider seeks to provide curative care, disease prevention and health promotion to the community so as improve the health of our population (Gauld and Gould, 2002).

Apart from that, there are an increasing number of beds in public hospitals in the past two decades. The number of beds has been increased from 10,281 in 1981 to 21,684 in 1991, and further to 49,596³ in 2002. There is also an increase in the number of public hospitals. There were 36 public hospitals in 1991. In 2001, the number increased to 43 public hospitals over the territories (Hospital Authority, 1991-1992 and 2001-2002). All these can enhance both primary and secondary health to the community.

The development of health technologies in Hong Kong has contributed to the improvement of the population's health status, decrease in mortality and prolongation of life expectancy. The ageing population has emerged as a result of the dual process of very low fertility and longer life expectancy. The increase of the aged population will however, perhaps increase competition between generations. It may be that the status of older persons may decline as their number and proportion increased.

Economic Technology

The last sixty years of economic development in Hong Kong, as stated by Lo and Lo (2002), has undergone at least five identifiable periods: entrepot trade, industrialization, diversification, services orientation, and value-added orientation. After the World War I, Hong Kong became an entrepot between China and other countries. After the World War II, Hong Kong underwent a rapid industrialization from the 1950s (Lo and Lo, 2002; Welsh, 1997). From 1971 to 1980, Hong Kong went through a period of considerable diversification. Hong Kong's economy has

³ data as at 31 March 2002

diversified from plastic products, clothing, toys and electronic goods, to the banking industry. From the early 1980's to 1997, Hong Kong emerged as a mainly service sector economy, with rapid development of an international financial and trade center (Ho, 1996). From 1997 onward, Hong Kong has become a value-added oriented economy. To maintain its competitive power with other three dragons in Asia and also the Pearl River Delta and some special economic zones in China, both the Hong Kong government and business promote advanced technology such as e-business, logistic, and cyber-ports (Jao, 1996). The economy has been in a state of fairly constant reorientation, most recently in line with the great changes in China itself.

After the rapid economic restructuring over the last half century, Hong Kong is now the world's eighth largest banking center in terms of external assets of banks and, of the world's top 100 banks, 77 of them have operations in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is the third largest stock market in Asia, the world's seventh largest forex and derivative market and the world's number four gold market. At the end of 2000, there were 1,860 authorized unit trusts and mutual funds in Hong Kong. Their net assets valued around HK\$2,410 billion at the end of 2000. At the end of 2001, there were 206 authorized insurers, 100 of which were incorporated in Hong Kong, the rest incorporated in 25 countries. The gross premium in 2000 was about 5.1% of Hong Kong's GDP (Asian Development Bank, web data).

Economic development, especially industrialization and the diversification process, has created new occupations in different sectors. Table 3.1 shows the labour force in different industries of Hong Kong over the last two decades. From the table it may be seen that there is a decreasing number of working population is employed in manufacturing. However, there is an increasing working population in

financing and business service, and also in personal services. This is a part of the evidence that Hong Kong is moving towards a service and value-added oriented economy. Some may feel that older persons are unavoidably obsolete in services oriented economy as they do not have acquired knowledge and skill related to the new economy. The labour force participation rate of older persons had been decreasing from 3.0% in 1981 to 2.4% in 1991 and further to 1.6% in 2001 (Table 3.2); this could however be in line with international trends towards formal retirement (Phillips, 2000).

Table 3.1 Working Population by Industry, 1981-2001 (%)

Industry	Year		
	1981	1991	2001
Manufacturing	41.3	28.2	12.3
Construction	7.7	6.9	7.6
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	19.2	22.5	26.2
Transport, storage and communication	7.5	9.8	11.3
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	4.8	10.6	16.1
Community, social and personal services	15.6	19.9	25.5
Others	3.9	2.1	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(n)	(2,404,067)	(2,715,103)	(3,252,706)

Sources: *Hong Kong 1991 Population Census: Main Report*
2001 Population Census: Main Report – Volume I

Table 3.2 Labour Force Participation of Older Persons, 1981-2001 (%)

Year	Gender		
	Male	Female	Both sexes
1981	2.9	3.3	3.0
1986	3.0	2.8	2.9
1991	2.8	1.9	2.4
1996	2.5	1.1	1.9
2001	2.2	0.7	1.6

Sources: *Hong Kong 1991 Population Census: Main Report*
2001 Population Census: Main Report – Volume I

The rapid economic development in Hong Kong, especially industrialization and diversification, has created new occupations in many different sectors. New occupations imply new knowledge and skills. Older persons are sometimes, perhaps erroneously, labeled as unavoidably obsolete in the new economy as they may not be equipped with appropriate new knowledge and skills. As a result, older persons may be forced to retire, becoming economically dependent and losing their work role.

Mass Education

After World War II, not only was the economy and whole infrastructure of Hong Kong under reconstruction, but social services and education were also under reconstruction. The Fisher Report in 1951 and the Seven-year plan in 1954 paved the way for rapid and dramatic expansion of school places in Hong Kong, especially for primary education. The 1963's Marsh and Simpson Report and the 1965's

White Paper finally established the policy base for the provision of free primary school education for all children (The HKIEd, 1998). Six-year free education was introduced in all government and government aided schools in 1971. The 1974's White Paper on secondary education recommended that by 1979 every child could enjoy nine-year education (The HKIEd, 1998). This target was reached in 1978, by which all children aged between 6-15 or up to Secondary 3 level could enjoy the nine-year free education. In other word, that meant that the younger generation would be more educated given the free education extended to not only the government schools but also subsidized schools.

By the early 1970s, expansion for the secondary education and for the tertiary education was envisaged. In 1982, with the Llewellyn Report laid down the future direction of the education system, in particular the tertiary sector, Hong Kong has began to feel for a way to meet the twin goals of school places and educational quality⁴.

The provision in 1978 of nine-year free and compulsory education to the school children has improved the literacy rate. By the early 1980s, 90% of 16 year-old children were in Secondary 5 classes. In 1989, the original target was to provide higher education places for 14% of the relevant age group. The rapid expansion of tertiary education from 1991 brought about 20% of the relevant age group receiving higher education, although still behind Western standards. From Table 3.3, it can seen that there were steady increase in number of the young people attending tertiary education over the past ten years. With children becoming considerably more

⁴ For a summary of the major issues and recommendations of educational matters, see Hong Kong Government 1981 and the concise description for the later period in Hong Kong Government 1994.

educated than their parents (Table 3.3), perhaps older persons' knowledge could be regarded as obsolete and value difference result. So there could be segregations between the generations, with older persons, less educated being alienated.

The provision and expansion of education in Hong Kong has raised the general education level and younger persons are equipped with better skill than their parents. As a consequence, there may emerge differences in values between generations and also possibly obsolescence of older persons' knowledge. Segregation between generations may result and, in turn, there may be a social and psychological alienation among the older persons. This may also influence unfavourable image formation of older persons.

Table 3.3 Educational Attainment by Age Group, 1981-2001 (%)

	Education Attainment				Total (n)
	No Schooling / Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary / Matriculation	Tertiary	
1981					
15-24	1.5	21.7	71.2	5.5	100.0 (1,147,757)
25-34	4.1	36.9	49.6	9.4	100.0 (882,195)
35-44	11.9	41.4	36.0	10.6	99.9 (483,387)
45-54	29.4	46.8	18.5	5.3	100.0 (516,666)
55-64	39.0	42.6	14.5	3.8	99.9 (392,239)
65+	57.5	30.5	9.2	2.8	100.0 (326,809)
1991					
15-24	0.5	3.5	82.3	13.7	100.0 (839,841)
25-34	1.9	18.2	64.4	15.5	100.0 (1,178,288)
35-44	4.5	34.1	50.8	10.6	100.0 (891,032)
45-54	14.0	38.8	35.5	11.7	100.0 (487,658)
55-64	34.6	42.1	18.2	5.1	100.0 (491,506)
65+	52.4	32.6	12.0	3.0	100.0 (482,040)
2001					
15-24	0.2	1.7	78.8	19.3	100.0 (920,445)
25-34	0.7	4.9	64.9	29.5	100.0 (1,108,529)
35-44	1.9	17.8	62.9	17.4	100.0 (1,360,487)
45-54	4.7	35.6	49.7	10.0	100.0 (960,417)
55-64	14.5	40.0	35.0	10.5	100.0 (502,042)
65+	42.4	39.2	14.6	2.2	100.0 (747,052)

Sources: *Hong Kong 1981 Census Basic Tables**Hong Kong 1991 Population Census: Main Tables**2001 Population Census: Main Tables*

Urbanization

Urbanization, a process of urban development and changes of lifestyles, generally leads to social mobility. It also enables younger generations to migrate and leave the older parents in their original places. With industrialization and urbanization, many families in Hong Kong have experienced a rapid and drastic change since 1970s which have possible weakened the bonds of extended family (Ng, Phillips and Lee, 2002). In traditional China, the family and kinship system conferred upon its members distinct rights and responsibilities but these entitlements and obligations have been weakened nowadays. The 1981 census for the first time found that ‘unextended nuclear families’ accounted for over half of the total number of households. Data in Table 3.4 show that there is an increasing proportion of unextended nuclear families since 1981. At the same time, there has been a decrease in the number of extended nuclear families in Hong Kong since 1981.

Table 3.4 Household Composition by Broad Area, 1981-2001 (%)

Household Composition	1981	1991	2001
Unextended nuclear family	54.4 (677,109)	61.6 (975,498)	66.2 (1,360,181)
Extended nuclear family	16.0 (199,008)	12.5 (198,356)	9.4 (193,001)

Sources: *Hong Kong 1991 Population Census: Main Report*
2001 Population Census: Main Report – Volume I

Urbanization is usually felt to enable or encourage people, especially the younger generations, to be able to migrate both inter-nationally and intra-nationally. Although Hong Kong is often said to be a small place, there is still considerable internal migration. In 2001, among 1,183,874 internal migrants, just 8.7% were older persons (Census and Statistics Department, 2002). 78.6% of the internal migrants were those aged 15-64. The figures suggested that young people left their older parents in their original districts. The continuing movement of younger generations could perhaps lead to social distance between generations, especially the older generations who are not part of the relocation process. Table 3.5 show the population in new town. From the table we can see that, in 2001 only 8.6% of the new town population was comprised older persons as compared to 51.2% are younger people (aged 25 and 54). This may imply that older persons are less likely to move to new towns with their younger family members. With an increase in social distance, social and psychological alienation might result, as migration will affect intergeneration and mutual supports among family members. Besides, the traditional functions of Chinese family system, such as the education of the children, the care of the young and the old, the cultivation of proper relationships could weaken.

Nuclearization of the family and changes in lifestyles as a result of urbanization may lead to social distance between generations. Increases in the number of nuclear families may weaken the traditional functions of family system. Social and psychological alienation might result, as older persons might lose their status in the family.

Table 3.5 New Town Population, 1991 and 2001 (%)

	Areas		
	New Towns*	Other Areas in the New Territories	Hong Kong Island and Kowloon
1991			
<15	25.6	21.8	17.8
15-24	13.5	16.6	15.0
25-34	21.7	21.4	21.1
35-44	16.7	13.1	16.0
45-54	7.9	7.5	9.5
55-64	6.6	8.9	10.4
65+	6.2	10.7	10.2
total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(n)	(2,052,511)	(280,252)	(3,189,518)
2001			
<15	18.2	16.9	15.0
15-24	15.3	13.6	12.3
25-34	16.3	19.1	16.4
35-44	20.8	21.2	19.7
45-54	14.1	12.4	14.7
55-64	6.7	6.2	8.4
65+	8.6	10.7	13.5
total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(n)	(2,991,831)	(357,110)	(3,359,448)

*New Towns include Tuen Mun, Sha Tin, Kwai Chung, Tai Po, Tsuen Wan, Tsing Yi, Fanling/Sheung Shui, Tseung Kwan O, Ma On Shan, Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai, North Lantau.

Sources: *Hong Kong 1991 Population Census: Main Report*

2001 Population Census: Main Report – Volume I

To sum up, illustrations have been made in this chapter to highlight the effects of each aspect of modernization (health technology, economic technology, mass education and urbanization), as suggested by Cowgill and Holmes, on the decline of the social status of older persons. Given Hong Kong is a modern society, it is reasonable to predict that the social status of her older citizens will also decline as a result of modernization.

Chapter Four

Research Design and Methodology

Population and the Sample of Films

The present research aims at exploring how movies portray older persons. Among all the different kinds of mass media, this research focuses only on the analysis of movies because watching movies has been a popular entertainment in Hong Kong over the years and movies' potential impact. Cinema-going is ranked second only to television watching among all popular entertainment in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Government, 1992-1996). Movies also provide a powerful medium to deliver social messages and to create social images of particular social groups.

The population used for the present study was the most popular Hong Kong movies in each year from 1981 to 2001. The most popular movies were defined on the basis of turnover of the Hong Kong local ticket offices. The samples of the present study were drawn from the best three turnover movies during the period 1981 to 2001. Movies with the highest turnover ticket office imply larger size of audiences and, in turn, potentially greater social influence. Three movies were drawn from each year between 1981 to 2001. The selected three movies in each year were the movies with the best, second best and the third best turnover ticket office in that particular year. A total of 63 movies were, then, examined. The sampled movie list was obtained from *The Structure and Marketing Analysis of Hong Kong Film Industry*⁵ and the magazine *City Entertainment*⁶.

⁵ This was written by Chan C. W. in 2000 which stated the development of Hong Kong Film Industry,

The sampled movies were:

Year	Name of movies	Box office (HKD)
1981		\$
1	Security Unlimited 《摩登保鏢》	17,769,048
2	Chasing Girls 《追女仔》	9,464,742
3	All the Wrong Clues for the Right Solution 《鬼馬智多星》	7,479,946
1982		
1	Aces Go Places 《最佳拍檔》	26,043,773
2	It Takes Two 《難兄難弟》	16,724,578
3	The Shaolin Temple 《少林寺》	16,157,801
1983		
1	Aces Go Places II 《最佳拍檔大顯神通》	23,273,140
2	Winners and Sinners 《奇謀妙計五福星》	21,972,419
3	Zu the Warriors from the Magic Mountain 《新蜀山劍俠》	15,872,222
1984		
1	Aces Go Places - Our Men From Bond Street 《最佳拍檔女皇密令》	29,286,077
2	Kids from Shaolin 《少林小子》	22,287,595
3	A Family Affair 《全家福》	22,129,187
1985		
1	My Lucky Stars 《福星高照》	30,748,643
2	Twinkle, Twinkle Lucky Stars 《夏日福星》	28,911,851
3	Police Story 《警察故事》	26,626,760
1986		
1	A Better Tomorrow 《英雄本色》	34,651,324
2	Millionaires' Express 《富貴列車》	28,122,275
3	Aces Go Places IV 《最佳拍檔之千里救差婆》	27,012,748
1987		
1	Armour of God 《龍兄虎弟》	35,469,408
2	Project A II 《A 計劃續集》	31,459,916
3	Prison on Fire 《監獄風雲》	31,153,645

number of audiences, and local ticket offices.

⁶ It is a biweekly movie magazine published since 1979 which mention mainly the news about Hong Kong films.

1988		
1	The Eighth Happiness 《八星報喜》	37,090,776
2	Police Story, Part II 《警察故事續集》	34,151,609
3	Dragon Forever 《飛龍猛將》	33,578,920
1989		
1	God of Gamblers 《賭神》	36,294,029
2	Mr. Canton and Lady Rose 《奇蹟》	34,036,029
3	Mr. Coconut 《合家歡》	31,246,447
1990		
1	All for Winner 《賭聖》	41,326,156
2	God of Gamblers II 《賭俠》	40,342,759
3	Front Page 《新半斤八兩》	26,348,460
1991		
1	Fight Back to School 《逃學威龍》	43,829,449
2	Armour of God II-Operation Condor 《飛鷹計劃》	39,048,711
3	To Be Number One 《跛豪》	38,703,363
1992		
1	Justice, My Foot! 《審死官》	49,884,734
2	All's Well End's Well 《家有囍事》	48,992,188
3	Royal Tramp 《鹿鼎記》	40,862,831
1993		
1	Flirting Scholar 《唐伯虎點秋香》	40,171,033
2	All's Well End's Well, Too 《花田囍事》	35,481,480
3	Cestla Vie, Moncheri 《新不了情》	31,149,673
1994		
1	God of Gambler's Return 《賭神 2》	52,541,028
2	Drunken Master II 《醉拳 II》	40,971,484
3	From Beijing with Love 《國產凌凌漆》	37,523,850
1995		
1	Rumble in the Bronx 《紅番區》	56,912,536
2	Thunderbolt 《霹靂火》	45,647,210
3	Sixty Million Dollar Man 《百變星君》	35,236,551

1996		
1	First Strike 《警察故事 4 之簡單任務》	57,518,795
2	The God of Cookery 《食神》	40,861,655
3	Forbidden City Cop 《大內密探零零發》	36,051,899
1997		
1	Mr. Nice Guy 《一個好人》	45,420,457
2	All's Well End's Well' 97 《9 7 家有囍事》	40,435,675
3	Once upon a Time in China and America 《黃飛鴻之西域雄師》	30,268,415
1998		
1	The Storm Riders 《風雲雄霸天下》	41,532,235
2	Who Am I? 《我是誰》	38,852,845
3	The Lucky Guy 《行運一條龍》	27,730,525
1999		
1	King of Comedy 《喜劇之王》	29,848,860
2	Gorgeous 《玻璃樽》	27,545,889
3	A Man Called Hero 《中華英雄》	23,368,902
2000		
1	Needing You 《孤男寡女》	35,214,661
2	Tokyo Raiders 《東京攻略》	28,187,905
3	Summer Holiday 《夏日的麼麼茶》	21,336,647
2001		
1	Shaolin Soccer 《少林足球》	60,739,847
2	Love On A Diet 《瘦身男女》	40,435,886
3	The Accidental Spy 《特務迷城》	40,347,895

Research Method

Content Analysis

Content analysis was employed to study the representation and images of older persons in the sampled movies. Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from the content of text (Krippendorff, 1980:21). The content refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated. Content analysis can be applied to anything written, visual or spoken which serve as a medium for communication. It includes books, newspaper or magazine articles, advertisements, speeches, official documents, films or videotapes, musical lyrics, photographs, article of clothing, or works of art (Lawrence, 1997).

Content analysis is a well-known qualitative research methods among scholars dealing with media and communication (Berger, 2000:173) as it can measure “human” behaviour, assuming that verbal behaviour is a form of human behaviour. In Charles R. Wright’s (1986) *Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective*, he stated:

Content analysis is a research technique for the systematic classification and description of communication content according to certain usually predetermined categories. It may involve quantitative or qualitative analysis, or both. Technical objectivity requires that the categories of classification and analysis be clearly and operationally defined so that other researchers can follow them reliable... It is important to remember, however, that content analysis itself provides no direct data about the nature of the communicator, audience, or effects. Therefore, great caution must be exercised whenever this technique is used for any purpose other than the classification, description and analysis of the manifest content of the communication. (Wright 1986, pp. 125-126)

Content analysis can convey a message in qualitative terms to quantitative data such as graphs, charts and tables that can yield meaningful interpretation (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1986, pp.169). Content analysis is always regarded as an unobtrusive research design and accepts unstructured material with its strength in handling large volumes of data.

Therefore, content analysis was chosen because it provides a “systematic and quantitative description” of media content. “Systematic description” refers to all samples examined under the same regulated coding system (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1986, pp.169). In addition, it is systematic because samples are obtained by scientific sampling procedure rather than chosen in an accidental way.

During the coding procedure, coders are required to use their personal judgement to code message into the predetermined categories which can produce bias. However, if the coding technique and regulation are clearly defined, content analysis still can provide a high degree of reliability (Peterson, 1998).

For this study, a coding scheme was developed to answer the three research questions of the present study. The coding scheme was pre-tested for 10% of the sampled movies. Some modification of the scheme was done after pre-tested, then all movies were coded by the researcher based on the coding scheme. To better ensure the reliability of the coding, the inter-coder reliability test was applied. A second coder was employed to code 10% of the sampled movies after all the coding was finished.

Inter-coder reliability test is a measure of agreement between coders on the categorization of items being analyzed. The following formula was used to compute the inter-coder reliability (North, et. al., 1963):

$$R = 2 \frac{(C_{1,2})}{C_1 + C_2}$$

where $C_{1,2}$, the number of category assignments on which coders agree, was divided by $C_1 + C_2$, the total of category assignments made by the coders. The alpha value of inter-coder reliability for the representation of older persons was 0.92, and 0.86 for the portrayal of older persons.

Measurement

The unit of analysis of the present study was the individual character who appeared in the sampled movies. In each movie, 1) all speaking characters, 2) characters with an action or, 3) those characters who had close-up shots of their faces, were regarded as valid characters and were identified and coded. However, characters with only body parts and bodies without faces were not be counted. To be enumerated, all characters must appear in the movies for at least 3 seconds, because if a character appeared for less than 3 seconds, it may be difficult to identify his/her gender, age, and appearance. All the identified characters were coded in respect to their role prominence, gender and age. For the characters defined as older characters, i.e. those apparently aged 65 or above, would be coded in greater detail for physical appearance, health condition, family status, socio-economic status, personality and setting.

Representation of Older Persons in Movies

Research question one, “Are older persons under-represented in Hong Kong movies?” would be addressed by enumerating the number of older persons who appeared in movies. By comparing the number of older persons who acted as major or supporting characters in movies, the research could also identify whether they were underrepresented or not.

A character’s age was coded into three broad categories: children, adults, and older persons. Children were those characters described, identified, or perceived as being under 18 years old. Adults were those characters described, identified, or perceived as being between 20 and 64 years old. Older persons in this research were defined as those described, identified, or perceived as being 65 year-old or above. Apart from chronological age, the clues for classification of older persons was based upon the following objective criteria.

A person with any two of the following criteria was coded as an older person, although the researcher acknowledges that these criteria in themselves are rather stereotypical. They were:

- 1) appearance of retirement;
- 2) extensive grey/white hair;
- 3) extensive wrinkling of face and hands;
- 4) use of an ambulatory aids such as wheelchairs;
- 5) acting as grandparent; or
- 6) parent of son or daughter who was in middle-aged or above (Swayne and Greco, 1987; Elliot, 1984; Sohngen and Smith, 1978).

The role prominence of characters was classified and coded into three categories: major, supporting, or minor role. Usually, each movie advertised the major starring roles, however in this research, the starring role was not always taken to be that advertised. Sometimes the major star advertised was due to the popularity of that particular actor or actress and aimed at attracting a larger audience. In this research, “major” role character was defined as one who was central to the story and appeared most, in terms of time, in the movie. Also, much of the focus was on the character’s actions or behaviours. A “supporting” character was defined as a regular character who had primary influence on the story but who was not a central focus. A “minor” character was one who was not essential to the story. Major or supporting characters might have interaction with minor characters through out the story. The function of minor characters was to move the story forward by giving or receiving information for the drama involving the other characters (Bazzini, et al, 1997; Robinson and Skill, 1995). The gender of the character was coded as either male or female.

To see whether there was any under-representation of older persons in Hong Kong movies, the research compared the number of older persons who appeared in movies with the actual proportion/percentage of older persons in Hong Kong’s population. By comparison with the actual figures, it can be see if there is any under-representation or over-representation of any group of people in the selected movies.

Portrayal of Older Persons in Movies

The analysis for research question two, “How are older persons portrayed in Hong Kong movies and are there any gender differences in the portrayals?”, would be based upon an examination of the following domains: 1) physical appearance, 2) health status, 3) family status, 4) socio-economic status, 5) personality, 6) occupation, 7) setting.

1) Physical appearance

Analysis of physical appearance focused on three characteristics: hair colour, smoothness of skin, and mobility. Colour of hair was coded as grey, white, or black. Skin was coded as smooth or wrinkled. Mobility was coded as walking independently, with wheelchairs, or with walking stick or canes.

2) Health status

Health status refers to the apparent physical condition of a person. Coding for health status was in three categories: good, fair, and poor. An older person who had any two of the following criteria in either category was coded as in good, fair, or poor health.

The indicators for an older person with a good health included:

- 1) able to resist disease;
- 2) no serious sickness symptoms;
- 3) normal functionality of all five senses, i.e. good hearing, sight, smell, taste, and sensation;

- 4) able to carry out activities of daily living (ADLs) individually, such as bathing, cooking, walking;
- 5) able to undertake some exercise, such as tai chi.

The indicators for an older person with a fair health condition are:

- 1) less able to resist disease;
- 2) some sickness symptoms, such as coughing, dizzying;
- 3) some of the five senses appearing not to function normally, i.e. hearing, sight, smell, taste, and sensation;
- 4) the need for another's assistance when carrying out ADLs, such as bathing, cooking, walking;
- 5) able to do some exercise with assistance, such as tai chi.

The indicators for an older person with a poor health condition are:

- 1) not able to resist disease and weak appearance;
- 2) with a chronic illness;
- 3) all five senses appearing not to function normally, i.e. cannot hear clearly, cannot see clearly, loss of smell, taste, and sensation;
- 4) cannot carry out ADLs, i.e. totally depend on others;
- 5) unable to do exercise.

3) *Family status*

Family status refers to one's position in a family in relation to other family members. This was coded as a higher family status or a lower family status. An older person with any two of the following criteria in either category was coded as

having a higher or a lower family status.

The indicators for an older person with a higher status in family are:

- 1) being one of the major breadwinners of the family;
- 2) having a significant influence in the decision making process in various family issues or affairs;
- 3) giving instructions to other family members which then followed;
- 4) respect shown by other family members during conversation, i.e. members will participate in the conversation.

The indicators for an older person with a lower status in family are:

- 1) not one of the breadwinners in the family;
- 2) having little or even no influence in the decision making process in various family issues or affairs;
- 3) when giving instructions, other family members do not listen and follow;
- 4) few responses during conversation.

4) *Socio-economic status*

This would be coded based upon an older persons' status in society. In Hong Kong, socio-economic status is generally measured in terms of economic status. People holding such posts as managers or doctors would be regarded as having a higher socio-economic status and the kinds of occupation can reflect a person's education level and manner (politeness). Older persons' socio-economic status was indicated by being employed or not and by life style and leisure activities. An older person who has any two of the following criteria in either category was coded as

having a higher or a lower socio-economic status.

The indicators for an older person with a higher status in society are:

- 1) being employed⁷;
- 2) living in an apparently luxurious lifestyle, for example, going to expensive restaurants for meals;
- 3) living in a large apartment;
- 4) going out by private car, perhaps he/she has a driver;
- 5) well dressed or tidily dressed;
- 6) having relative expensive leisure activities, such as playing golf, playing tennis, etc.

The indicators for an older person with a lower status in society are:

- 1) being unemployed;
- 2) living in a casual ways, for example meals at home or at relatively cheap restaurants;
- 3) living in a small apartment, and/or in a public housing estate;
- 4) going out by public transport;
- 5) poor or untidy dressed;
- 6) having relative inexpensive leisure activities, such as playing football or basketball in a public sports ground.

⁷ The Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong usually ranks occupations into 9 strata: managerial and administrators; professionals; associate professionals; clerks; service workers and shop sales workers; craft and related workers; plant and machine operators and assemblers; elementary occupations; skilled agricultural and fishery workers. Older persons' socio-economic status would be coded accordingly to these strata.

5) *Personality*

Personality was coded as being positively portrayed or negatively portrayed.

Indications of a positive portrayal of personality are:

- 1) experience;
- 2) wisdom;
- 3) kindness;
- 4) being an adviser;
- 5) making the family harmonious;
- 6) sociable.

The negative portrayal of personality are:

- 1) stubbornness;
- 2) conservative;
- 3) eccentricity;
- 4) foolishness;
- 5) weakness;
- 6) dependence;
- 7) forgetfulness;
- 8) unable or less able to learn new things;
- 9) being isolated.

6) *Occupation*

Occupation was coded by using the Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong, which ranks occupation into 9 strata. Apart from that, the present research assumes that many older persons were retired. A category of retired person will also be considered. The categories of occupations are:

- 1) managerial and administrators;
- 2) professionals;
- 3) associate professionals;
- 4) clerks;
- 5) service workers and shop sales workers;
- 6) craft and related workers;
- 7) plant and machine operators and assemblers;
- 8) elementary occupations;
- 9) skilled agricultural and fishery workers;
- 10) others;
- 11) retired persons.

7) *Setting*

The coding for setting in the movies was mainly for answering the research question number three, to see whether there were any changes of older person in certain settings. This was coded as in the home setting, outside the home setting, and in both settings.

Changes of Cinematic Images of Older Persons

Research question three, “Have there been any changes in the cinematic images of older persons during the period early 1980s and to the later 1990s?” was addressed by counting if there were any apparent changes of the cinematic images of older persons in the past two decades by comparing the images of older persons in the Hong Kong's movies in the periods 1981 to 2001. According to the review of modernization theory, it may be suggested that, as there was an improvement in health technology, there will be a prolongation of life expectancy, demographic aging of the population would be possible. It was believed that older characters casting in the 1980s movies would be likely to be fewer than those in 1990s.

Apart from this, with developments in economic technology and mass education, older persons' skill and knowledge would perhaps be portrayed as obsolete compared with those of younger persons. As a result, older persons might be forced to retire and they would lose socio-economic status. It was suggested that older characters portrayed in 1980s movies would have a higher socio-economic status than those in the 1990s.

As Hong Kong society has become more urbanized, there will probably also be an increase in social mobility. As a society becomes more mobile, social distances will probably be greater than before. As a consequence, there could be social alienation and segregation between the older generation and the younger generations. It was believed that older characters would be likely to be portrayed more actively or positively in social activities in the 1980s than in the 1990s.

Chapter Five

A General Profile of the Sampled Movies and a Brief Description of the Older Characters Portrayed

In the present research, a total of 63 top three movies in the period 1981-2001 were examined and coded. As noted in Chapter Four, the findings were used to answer the three research questions. They are specifically:

- 1) Are older persons under-represented in Hong Kong movies?
- 2) How are older persons portrayed in Hong Kong movies and are there any gender differences in the portrayals?
- 3) Have there been any changes in the cinematic images of older persons during the period early 1980s to the later 1990s?

Before attempting to answer the three research questions, the thesis outlines a general profile of the sampled movies with a brief description of the identified older characters⁸. This forms an essential descriptive background to the findings which are analyzed in more detail in Chapter Six, and help to indicate the type or genre of popular movies which, of course, might greatly influence the nature of roles available and portrayal.

⁸ For the synopses of the 63 sampled movies, please refer to Appendix II.

General Profile of the Sampled Movies

Among the sampled 63 movies, the majority (26 or 41.27%), in terms of genre, were what may be called comedy movies. 23 (36.51%) could be classified as action movies, 7 (11.11%) as romance movies and 4 (6.35%) as gambling movies. The rest were triad, crime and gangster movies, comprising 4.76% of the sampled movies.

Comedy movies refer to those movies aimed at “making them laugh” and to “elicit laughter” from the audiences. Most comedies are light-hearted dramas, which are designed to amuse and provoke laughter. They usually have a happy ending. Examples are those movies portrayed by Sam Hui, Stephen Chow and Leslie Cheung. Action movies, including kung-fu films, refer to movies that have tremendous impact, non-stop motion, continuous high energy and fights. The design of action movies is for pure audience escapism with the action sequences at the core of the movies. This genre of movies centers mainly around an action hero – portrayed by these most prominent examples: Jet Li, Sammo Hung and Jackie Chan. All kung-fu films and Wong Fei-hung serials are classified as action movies. Romance movies refer to love stories or affairs of the heart centered on passion. A love story is the main plot focus of romance movies. Major characters in this genre generally face obstacles and hazards of hardship, social class status, occupation, or family that threaten to break their union. However, the characters can overcome all the difficulties eventually and experience life “happily ever after”. Love story usually serves as a shield against the harshness of the real world. Gamble movies refer to those stories with main focus on gambling and the struggle in the casino legacy. A typical example of this kind of movie is *God of Gamblers*, in which the

main male actor, Chow Yun-fat, was portrayed as the God of Gambler. Other gamblers tried to seize his title by rival in casino.

In terms of period, 53 (84.13%) out of the total of 63 sampled movies were contemporary dramas and 10 (15.87%) were costume dramas. Contemporary dramas refer to those stories have modern style and dress. Costume dramas refer to those actors and actresses wear in historical clothing and have a historical story background.

Among the sampled movies, 47 (74.6%) cases have older characters in their stories; 20 (42.55%) were in comedy movies, 17 (36.17%) in action movies, 4 (8.51%) in romance movies, another 4 (8.51%) in gamble movies, and 2 (4.26%) in triad, crime and gangster movies. In terms of period, 38 (80.85%) were in contemporary dramas and 9 (19.15%) were in costume dramas.

A total of 3,242 characters can be identified in the 63 sampled movies. Among these identifiable characters, most of them (3,080 or 95.01%) were adult characters with 74 (2.28%) children characters and 88 (2.71%) older characters. Among all these 3,242 identifiable characters, 2,478 (76.43%) were male characters and 764 (23.57%) were female characters. Among the 88 older characters, 61 (69.32%) were older males and 27 (30.68%) were older females.

The length of movies of these 63 sampled movies ranged from 85 minutes to 130 minutes. Comedy movies and romance movies are generally less than 100 minutes, whereas action movies were always over 100 minutes. However, older characters usually appeared ranged from a few seconds to 22 minutes in most movies,

subjected to the role prominence of older characters. The length of time of an older character with a supporting role in a movie usually ranged from 8 minutes to 22 minutes. If he or she were in a minor role, his or her length of time in the movie would be reduced from around 3 seconds to a few minutes.

In terms of characters and role prominence, all sampled movies had more male characters than female characters. Usually each movie has 2 to 5 major characters, 3 to 8 supporting characters, and 20 to 60 minor characters. Majority of older characters were in minor role.

The directors of all the sampled movies were Chinese. Most movies, except two Jackie Chan's movies, *Who Am I?* (1998) and *The Accidental Spy* (2001), used Cantonese rather than English as the media of communication.

A Brief Description of the 88 Identified Older Characters

(Indicating Character number, movie title and date, genre of movie)

Character 1 (*Security Unlimited*, 1981; comedy movie)

A male dead body was found. Before his death, he had undertaken a kidney transplant operation, which two diamond kidneys were planted inside his body. In his funeral, his family members were afraid that someone would take away the two diamond kidneys. So his body was looked after by a security guard agency. This part is certainly not the main story line of the movie, and the body appeared for only 1 minute in the movie. The older character, a dead body, was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 2 and 3 (*Chasing Girls*, 1981; romance movie)

Character 2 is an old widow. She lived in the United States with her son after she retired. However, she found that her son spent too much time chasing foreign girls. Then she decided to send him back to Hong Kong and asked him to marry a Chinese girl. Months later, she came to Hong Kong to see her son's girl friend and have a meal with them. Although she was the one order her son back to Hong Kong, the story was about how her son and the cousin chase girls. She appeared in the movie for 3 minutes and was not the focus of the story. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 3 is another old woman who was walking along the stairs in the airport. She acted as a passenger just pass around the airport, with no assigned dialogue. She appeared for only 6 seconds in the movie, therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 4 (*All the Wrong Clues for the Right Solution*, 1981; comedy movie)

Character 4 is an old man, with a name called Old Woo, was a crook from Shanghai. He, Old Woo, pretended to be a rich man and has lots of stock shares. Actually Old Woo wanted to cheat money from a Godfather, Capone (a male supporting character), because he was very rich. He asked his daughter pretended to fall in love with Capone so as to know him more and let him trust her. Then Old Woo can plan how to get Capone's money. The story was about Capone who was released from jail and was determined to take vengeance on the Champ. Old Woo appeared for 7 minutes in the movie and had a primary influence on the story about

Capone's vengeance. Therefore, he was counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Characters 5 and 6 (*Aces Go Places*, 1982; comedy movie)

Character 5 is an old man who is a member of triad society. He buys and sells diamonds to other people. He appeared for only 10 seconds in the movie and had no direct influence to the story line. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 6 is a godfather. When he knew that his diamonds was stolen by King Kong (a male major character), he ordered his followers to go to Hong Kong and get back the diamonds. Again, he appeared only for 50 seconds in the movie and had no direct influence to the story line. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 7 and 8 (*It Takes Two*, 1982; comedy movie)

Character 7 is an old woman who with a wrinkled face. She was having *xian mian*. She had no assigned dialogue in the movie and had no influence on the development of the story. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 8 is another old woman who cooperated with her friends to take revenge on a gangster. She was asked to pretend to be a rich woman. She appeared around 40 seconds in the movie and had no direct influence in the story. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role.

Character 9 (*The Shaolin Temple*, 1982; action movie)

Character 9 is a Shaolin monk, he took custody of patients in the Shaolin Temple and let a young boy be a monk and taught him martial arts. Later, the young boy was attacked by others, the Shaolin monk said he would take the full responsibility for the boy. Then he was bind and stood in the middle of bonfire. He appeared for 2 minutes in the movie but had no influence in the development of the story. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 10 and 11 (*Aces Go Places II*, 1983; comedy movie)

Characters 10 and 11 are an old couple. When they are having dinner at home, the detective, Baldy (a male major character), went into their home and asked whether they were grand thieves or not? They told him 60 years before they were in grand thieves but not now. They appeared for 1 minute in the movie and had no influence on the story line. So they were counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 12 (*Winners and Sinners*, 1983; comedy movie)

Character 12 is an old male housekeeper. He ordered the cleaners to clean up the house and told them the rules in that house. He appeared for only 10 seconds in the movie and had no influence on the story line. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 13 and 14 (*Zu the Warriors from the Magic Mountain*, 1983; action movie)

Character 13 is named Mojiao, a well-known martial arts master; he contains the evil spirit, Siemo, within his own body and asked the young men to bring back the swords of Zihcing Shuanjian from the cliff of Tiandao within 49 days so as to treat Siemo. He appeared for 5 minutes in the movie and had an influence on the story line. He was, therefore, counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Character 14 is named Long Eyebrow Master, who was an excellent martial arts master. He was also the one to fight against the evil spirit and stop the evil to damage the world. He appeared for 4 minutes and had an influence on the story line. He was, therefore, counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Character 15 (*Kids from Shaolin*, 1984; action movie)

Character 15 is a monk, who was murdered by a young man. The young man killed the monk and pretended to be a monk in that temple because he wanted to take advantage from the Wu Tang family. The monk appeared for only 10 seconds in the movie and had no influence on the story line. He was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 16 (*A Family Affair*, 1984; comedy movie)

Character 16 is a grandfather, Mr. Yeung, whose daughter and son-in-law separated about one year. Together with his granddaughter and grandson, they tried every means to interfere and jeopardize the romance so as to make his daughter and son-in-law together. Apart from that, Mr. Yeung always looks after his grandchildren and brought them everywhere. He appeared over 20 minutes in the

movie and had primary influence on the story but he was not the center focus. He was, therefore, counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Characters 17 to 20 (*A Better Tomorrow*, 1986; action movie)

Character 17 is Mr. Yiu, a manager, but he copied US paper notes. At last, he was killed by “Ah Shing” (a male supporting character) because Ah Shing finds that he was useless. Mr. Yiu appeared for about 2 minutes in the movie. As he had no direct influence on the story line, Mr. Yiu was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 18, Mr. Sung, is a father. When he was in hospital, he asked his son to stop the illegal business, because Sung’s younger son is a police, he don’t want the brothers fight each other. After he discharge at home, he was killed by the triad. This part is not the main story line of the movie, and Mr. Sung appeared for only 1 minutes and 30 seconds. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 19 is a godfather who bought the copied US paper notes from Mr. Yiu (character 17). He was having a pipe during business. This part, again, is not the main story line of the movie and he appeared for only 20 seconds. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 20 is Mr. Chan, a watchman in Ah Shing’s (a male supporting character) office. He helps Mark (a male major character) to stolen Ah Shing’s corpus delicti. Again, this part is certainly not the main story line of the movie and he appeared for only 30 seconds in the movie. Mr. Chan was, therefore, counted as

a minor role in the movie.

Characters 21 and 22 (*Aces Go Places IV*, 1986; comedy movie)

Characters 21 and 22 are an old couple walking along a street. They appeared for only 3 seconds in the movie and certainly not an essential part to the story. Therefore, this couple was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 23 to 25 (*Armour of God*, 1987; action movie)

Character 23 is a housekeeper who is in charge all the affairs in a Count's (nobleman) home. He appeared for only 30 seconds in the movie, and this part is certainly not the main story line of the movie. The housekeeper was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 24 is the Count, a rich man who likes to collect curios. He was the one who lend three weapons of "Armour of Gods" to the male major characters to rescue their friend. He appeared for 5 minutes in the minutes and had influence on the story line. He was, therefore, counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Character 25 is a godfather of an evil cult. He ordered his followers to find all the "Armour of Gods", so as to kidnap people. He appeared for only 40 seconds in the movies. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 26 (*Project A II*, 1987; action movie)

Character 26 is a moneyer who was murdered by villains. He appeared for

only 4 seconds in the movie and certainly not the main story line of the movie. He was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 27 and 28 (*Prison on Fire*, 1987; crime movie)

Character 27 is Ching's (a male major character) mother, who brought her grandson (that is Ching's son) to visit him in the prison. She just sat in aside when Ching was talking with his son. She appeared for only 18 seconds and this part is certainly not the main story line of the movie. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 28 is an old woman who was looking at prisoners cutting grass through her home's window. The shot was last for 5 seconds and this part is not the main story line of the movie. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 29 to 31 (*The Eighth Happiness*, 1988; comedy movie)

Character 29 is a male drama teacher. He showed his ability in drama during the class. He appeared for only 25 seconds in the movie and this part was not the main focus of the movie. He was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 30 and 31 are a couple. The wife was driving a car, however she had not put on her glasses. At the end, they had an accident. A policeman came and asked them questions, but they could not hear and answer clearly. They appeared for only 1 minute in the movie and this part was not the main focus of the

story. Therefore, there were counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 32 and 33 (*God of Gamblers*, 1989; gamble movie)

Character 32 is Knife's (a male major character) grandmother, who looked after Ko Chun ("God of Gambler", another male major character) after he hit his head in a fall and stayed in Knife's home to take rest. She appeared for 1 minute and 10 seconds in the movie, but this part is not the main focus of the story. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 33 with a name called Chan Kam Shing, who is a gambler. He watched all the videos about Ko Chun's pokerino. And what he wanted is try to seize Ko Chun's title. This part of story was not directly related to the main story line, and he appeared 6 minutes in the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 34 (*Mr. Coconut*, 1989; comedy movie)

Character 34 is a village leader, who is responsible to looks after the village affairs. Apart from that, he was always invited to be a judge in all competition. Other villagers would like to bring something to him for each visit. However, this part was not the main story line, and he appeared for only 30 seconds in the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 35 (*All for Winner*, 1990; gamble movie)

Character 35 is an old woman who went home after exercise. In the lift, she

met Chow (a male major character) and found that he was an erratic. She hit him with her wood sword. The part is certainly not the main story line of the movie, and she appeared for only 40 seconds in the movie. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 36 (*God of Gamblers II*, 1990; gamble movie)

Character 36 is Chan Kam Shing, a gambler, who acted as a prison. When a friend visited him in the prison, he still wanted to gang up on the “God of Gambler”. Chan appeared for only 39 seconds in the movie. As this part was not directly related to the main story line, therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 37 (*Fight Back to School*, 1991; comedy movie)

Character 37 is a grandmother. She was being “bawled out” by her grandson, who asked her to do this and do that. Afterwards, her grandson told her to stay in her bedroom and not to show up in the dining room. This part was not the main story line of the movie, and she appeared for only 52 seconds. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 38 (*Armour of God II – Operation Condor*, 1991; action movie)

Character 38 is an old man. He wanted to find Nazi’s gold hidden in a secret fortress in the Sahara Desert. He ordered other people to find the road to the base. When they arrived the base, all people left him alone and found gold by themselves. Afterwards, the base blow, and he used the big fan to save other’s life. And he was die in that base. This part is not the main focus of the story line, and he appeared

for 3 minutes in the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 39 to 41 (*To Be Number One*, 1991; gangster movie)

Character 39 is a female cleaner in a restaurant. She was collecting all dishes and cleaning them. This part is certainly not the main story line of the movie, and she appeared for only 7 seconds. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 40 is Hou's (a male major character) mother, who came to Hong Kong illegally. After she settle down in Hong Kong, she was happy with his son because he was rich. What she did most are play with grandchildren, went to restaurants. She appeared for 1 minute and 30 seconds, and she had some influence on the story line. Therefore, she was counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Character 41 is an old man who serves people opium. He had no dialogue in the movie and appeared for only 15 seconds. This part was not the main focus of the movie, therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 42 to 44 (*Justice, My Foot!*, 1992; comedy movie)

Character 42 is an officer called Wu, who has power but he was a figurehead. He followed other's comments and made decisions. Although he had power, he never knew how to make judgements. He appeared for 1 minute and 40 seconds in he movie, and this part was not the main focus of the movie. Therefore, Wu was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 43 is an officer's mother. When she knew that her daughter and son-in-law had killed someone, she forced her son to overcome this incident. This part was not the main focus of this movie, and she appeared for 1 minute and 50 seconds only. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 44 is a village woman who asked Mrs. Sung (a female major character) to find a nurser/wet nurse for her grandchildren. Again, this part was not the main focus of this movie, and she appeared for only 15 seconds. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 45 and 46 (*All's Well End's Well*, 1992; comedy movie)

Characters 45 and 46 are an old couple. They were retired, always stay at home and watch television programmes. However, they were concerned their three sons' affairs. When they knew that their elder son and daughter-in-law separate, they tried to find their daughter-in-law, ask her to go back home with them. They appeared for 10 minutes in the movie and had influence on the story line of the movie but not the central focus. Therefore, they were counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Characters 47 to 49 (*Royal Tramp*, 1992; comedy movie)

Character 47 is a Prince, named Aobai, who led Manchu's government. He has a great power and is good at martial art. Because of his ambitious, the emperor wanted to kill him. He appeared over 10 minutes in the movie and he was a regular character who had primary influence on the story. However, he was not the central

focus of the story. He was, therefore, counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Character 48 is a minor officer who is in charge of castration. He had no dialogue in the movie and appeared for only 35 seconds. This part was not the main story of the movie, therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 49 is Aobai's mother. She appeared when Showboy (a male major character) was checking Aobai's family members. She appeared for only 22 seconds in the movie, and this part was not the main story line of the movie. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 50 (*All's Well End's Well, Too*, 1993; comedy movie)

Character 50 is an old widow, named Tai Chun, was found. Her son and daughter always create troubles in the village. Tai Chun decided that her daughter should get marry with her fiancé. The story started with her daughter's marriage, and followed by her son's love affairs. Tai Chun was worry about their marriage, so she tried to do something on these affairs. Tai Chun appeared for 7 minutes in the movie and she had an influence on the development of story, but not a central focus. Therefore, she was counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Characters 51 to 53 (*C'est la Vie, Mon Cheri*, 1993; romance movie)

Character 51 is a female domestic helper. She was not only doing work at home but also helping the family in a small Cantonese opera in Temple Street. Later, when Min (a female major character) got sick, she brought her to a temple and

prays for the god to look after her. She appeared for only 30 seconds in the movie, and she had no direct influence on the story line. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 52 and 53 are two old men who were listening to the Cantonese opera in the Temple Street. They had no dialogue in the movie and appeared for only 4 seconds. Therefore, they were counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 54 (*God of Gambler's Return*, 1994; gamble movie)

Character 54 is a gambler who took two sides advantages. After he told everything to Ko Chun (a male major character), he was murdered by other. He appeared for only 1 minute in the movie, and he had no influence on the story line. He was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 55 to 57 (*Drunken Master II*, 1994; action movie)

Character 55 is a rich man who donates money for the poor. He went to a famine district with his friends and visited the poor. He appeared for only 7 seconds in the movie, and this part was not the main focus of the story. He was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 56 is a male domestic helper who looks after the house in Po Chi Lam, a Chinese clinic. He appeared for only 6 seconds in the movie, and again, this part was not the main focus of the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 57 is an old man who owns a noodles store located in an open market. He was talking with a male major character and tried to pursue him to understand his father's point of view. He appeared for only 18 seconds in the movie, and this part was not the main story line. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 58 and 59 (*Rumble in the Bronx*, 1995; action movie)

Character 58 is Keung's (a male major character) uncle, who owns a supermarket in the United States. After he sold his supermarket, he married a western lady. He appeared for 4 minutes and 15 seconds, but he had no direct influence on the story line. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 59 is the head of a triad society. He was playing golf when talking with his triad members. He appeared for only 2 minutes, and this part was not the main story line of the movie. He was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 60 (*Thunderbolt*, 1995; action movie)

Character 60 acted as "The King of Car" in the Hong Kong police force. He is an expert in all kind of cars and engines. When his son, Jackie (a male major character), was found by the triad society and broke his house, he protected his two daughters and was hurt from that incident. He appeared for 6 minutes in the movie, however, the main story was about his son take place in a high-speed, high-risk world of auto racing. This part was not the main focus, therefore, he was counted

as a minor role in the movie.

Character 61 (*First Strike*, 1996; action movie)

Character 61 is an old man. He got sick and stayed in a hospital. He appeared for only 30 seconds in the movie, and this part was not the main story line of the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 62 and 63 (*The God of Cookery*, 1996; comedy movie)

Character 62 is a Shaolin monk, but he is also a big eater. During a cooking competition, he appeared periodically to explain the kung-fu used in cooking. He appeared for only 2 minutes and this part was not the main story line of the movie. Therefore, the monk was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 63 is a domestic helper in a Shaolin Temple. He was mainly cleaning up the Shaolin temple. He appeared for only 4 seconds in the movie. This part was also not the main story line, therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie too.

Characters 64 and 65 (*Forbidden City Cop*, 1996; comedy movie)

Character 64 is a wife of a triad society member. She knew kung fu and had a fight with others for a while. She appeared for only 4 minutes, and had no direct influence to the story line. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 65 is a male woodman who is passing along the road that an emperor

planned to go. This part, again, was not the main story line, and he appeared for only 5 seconds in the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 66 (*Mr. Nice Guy*, 1997; action movie)

Character 66 is a grandfather. He was playing with his granddaughter in his big house. He had no dialogue in the movie and appeared for only 10 seconds. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 67 (*All's Well End's Well' 97*, 1997; comedy movie)

Character 67 is Mr. Lo, a well off, retired man who always stays at home, flowering and cooking, sometimes playing TV games and billiard ball with his youngest son. He also tried to learn new things such as diving which made all his sons surprised. He cares about his sons very much, talking with his older son about his divorce; to know his second son's girlfriend; plan to establish a fund when his youngest son got hurt. He was a regular character who had primary influence on the story but not a central focus, and he appeared for 15 minutes in the movie. Mr. Lo was, therefore, counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Characters 68 and 69 (*Once Upon a Time in China and America*, 1997; action movie)

Character 68 is a cacique. He appeared for only 5 seconds and had not dialogue in the movie. He was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 69 is a Chinese who “chase” a lady in America. He appeared for only 8 seconds in the movie, and this part was not the main story line. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 70 to 72 (*The Storm Riders*, 1998; action movie)

Character 70 is a prophet Mud Buddha. Everyone wants to find him for a foretold. Mud Buddha had made a foretold to the first half of the Lord Conqueror’s (a male supporting character) life which would be invincible with two boys named Wind and Cloud. However, he had not told the Conqueror about the second half of his life. Ten years later, Conqueror wants to find Mud Buddha so as to know his second half of life. After he found Mud Buddha, the Conqueror confined him in an underground room, at last, Mud Buddha died. He had a primary influence in the story line, and appeared for 5 minutes in the movie. Therefore, Mud Buddha was counted as a supporting role in the movie.

Character 71 is a leader of a village who asked for tax deduction from Conqueror. This part was not the main story line of the movie, and he appeared for only 20 seconds. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 72 is a “Sword Saint” who has a challenge with Conqueror in order to claim who was the undisputed leader in martial art master. Although Conqueror always mentioned that he have a fight with “Sword Saint”, “Sword Saint” appeared for only 1 minute and 10 seconds. This part was not the main story line of the movie, therefore, Sword Saint was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 73 and 74 (*Who Am I?*, 1998; action movie)

Character 73 is a government officer holding a post related to military services. However, he co-operate with other villains in buying and selling of nuclear weapons. He appeared for only 30 seconds in the movie, and this part was not the main story line of the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 74 is a doctor specialized in memory. He tried to cure Jackie (a male major character) after he lost his memory in an accident. However, this part was also not the main story line of the movie, and he appeared for only 17 seconds. Therefore, the doctor was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 75 (*The Lucky Guy*, 1998; comedy movie)

Character 75 is a grandfather. He did not trust his granddaughter who said that the “Lucky” coffee shop (a local style restaurant) closed, then he brought his granddaughter downstairs to see what happen. This part was not the main story line of the movie, and he appeared for 2 minutes only. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 76 to 79 (*King of Comedy*, 1999; comedy movie)

Character 76 is an older female who left Kai Fong Welfare Association. She had no dialogue in the movie and appeared for only 3 seconds. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 77 is an old woman who forced to give money to the triad society.

When Wan (a male major character) saw this, he pretended that the old woman dropped a hundred dollar note on the ground and gave it back to her. She felt happy after she “gets back” her money. This part was not the main story line of the movie, and she appeared for only 45 seconds. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 78 is a grandmother who recovered from tuberculosis. When she knew that her grandson would fight with other, she was worry about him. Again, this part was not the main story line, and she appeared for only 1 minute in the movie. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 79 is an old man, who kept on singing in the Kai Fong Welfare Association and ignore Wan. This part was also not the main story line of the movie, and he appeared for only 35 seconds in the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 80 (*A Man Called Hero*, 1999; action movie)

Character 80 is a martial arts master. After he fought with his *shi di*, he taught Hero (a male major character) all the martial arts and gave the *jiang men* to him. This part was not the main story line of the movie, and he appeared for only 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 81 (*Needing You*, 2000; romance movie)

Character 81 is Wah siu’s (a male major character) mother, a hotel cleaner. A

hotel room was reserved for her son, and she looked after him showing what a mother will do in a home. She appeared for only 13 seconds in the movie, and this part was not the main story line. Therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 82 to 84 (*Love On A Diet*, 2001; romance movie)

Character 82 is a Japanese old man who dated Mini (a female major character) and was sacred that she was a trencher woman. Later he ran away when Mini went to the wash room. He appeared for only 2 minutes in the movie, and this part was not the main story line of the movie. He was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 83 is a Japanese old woman who owns a small hotel in Japan. She introduces Mini to Character 82. This part was, again, not the main story line of the movie. She appeared for only 3 minutes in the movie, therefore, she was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 84 is a Chinese man who taught Mini to swallow a tapeworm to lose weight. He was not the focus of this movie, and he appeared for only 4 minutes in the movie. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Characters 85 to 88 (*The Accidental Spy*, 2001; action movie)

Character 85 is a male passenger who listened to Bei's (a male major character) suggestion when some people robber a bank, he was the only one said that he would

help Bei. He appeared for only 4 seconds in the movie and was not the main focus to the story line. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 86 is an older female senceman. When she put the properties into a lift, the robber and Bei (a male major character) were also in the same lift. She tried to avoid being attacked by them. She appeared for only 44 seconds in the movie, and was not the main focus to the story. She was, therefore, counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 87 is a previous undercover agent of North Korea. He was in a hospital and connected to a breathing machine. This part was not the main story line of the movie and he appeared for only 30 seconds. Therefore, he was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Character 88 is a Catholic priest, who was waiting for Bei to get back the things that the undercover agent had left in the church. Again, this part was not in the main story line of the movie and he appeared for only 1 minute and 30 seconds in the movie. Therefore, the father was counted as a minor role in the movie.

Chapter Six

Findings: the Representation and Portrayal of Older Persons in Hong Kong Movies

Chapter Five summarized the general profile of the 63 sampled movies and gave a brief description of the 88 identifiable older characters. This chapter attempts to answer the three research questions (see page 15).

Research Question 1: Are Older Persons Under-represented in Hong Kong Movies?

To answer this question, the following aspects were examined:

- 1) the representation of older characters in terms of number and proportion as compared to the actual elderly population of Hong Kong;
- 2) the representation of older characters in terms of role prominence and gender as compared to the actual sex ratio of Hong Kong;
- 3) the representation of older characters in terms of genre of movies; and
- 4) the representation of older characters in terms of length of their appeared in the movies.

The representation of older characters in terms of number and proportion

In Hong Kong, the aged population in year 1981 was 6.6% rising to 8.7% in 1991 and to 11.1% in 2001. To measure the representation of older persons in Hong Kong movies throughout 20 years, the average proportion of older persons in these

20 years seems a reasonable figure although arbitrary. In short, the average elderly proportion over the period is about 8.8%. Therefore, if the number and proportion of older persons in the sampled movies is less than 8.8%, it may indicate that there is an under-representation of older persons. If the number and proportion of older persons in the sampled movies is greater than 8.8%, it may indicate that there is an over-representation of older persons.

As noted in Chapter One, Hong Kong's population has aged demographically during the last 20 years (Phillips, 2000). Life expectancy at birth has risen from 72.3 for men and 78.5 for women in 1981 to 75.2 and 79.4 respectively in 1991, and further to 76.7 and 82.2 by 2001. The elderly population has increased from 326,809 (6.6%) in 1981 to 482,040 (8.7%) in 1991 and 747,052 (11.1%) in 2001 respectively (Census and Statistics Department, 1997, 2001). Among the 747,052 older persons in 2001, 345,184 are older males which shared 10.5% of the total male population in Hong Kong. 401,868 are older females which shared 11.7% of the total older females in Hong Kong. The sex ratio of older persons was 683, 784, and 859 in 1981, 1991, and 2001 respectively (Census and Statistics Department, 2002a). Demographically speaking, the percentage of older persons, especially the very old persons (aged 75 or above), has increased dramatically during the last 2 decades. The very old population has risen from 2% to 3%, and further to 4.3% in 1981, 1991, and 2001 respectively (Census and Statistics Department, 2002a). In 2001 census, the population of children is 23.3% and adult is 65.6%. The male and female population comprising 49% and 51% of the total population respectively. Were these demographic number reflected in the sampled movies?

Table 5.1 shows the number of characters by age and by gender. Children were those characters described, identified, or perceived as being under 18 years old. Adults were those characters described, identified, or perceived as being between 20 and 64 years old. Older persons were those described, identified, or perceived as being 65 years old or above. Data in Table 5.1 indicated that there were total of 3,242 characters identified among the 63 movies. It was recorded that 2,478 (76.43%) were male and 764 (23.57%) were female. Among all identifiable characters, 3,080 (95.01%) were adults, 2,369 (76.72%) of them were male and 711 (23.08%) were female. 74 (2.28%) were children under 18 years old. 48 (64.86%) of them were male and 26 (35.14%) of them were female. Among all the identifiable characters, 88 (2.71%) of them were older characters. These 88 older characters, 61 (69.32%) were male and 27 (30.68%) were female. Apart from that, there were four adult characters in the films pretended to be an older persons⁹.

In Hong Kong, the population of older persons was 747,052 (11.1%) in 2001. Older males and older females comprised 10.5% and 11.7% of the total male and female population in Hong Kong respectively. The sex ratio of older persons was 859 M:F in 2001. In the sampled movies, older characters only shared 2.71% out of the total identified characters. Older male characters shared 2.46% out of the total male characters in the sampled movies, and older female characters shared 3.53% out of the total female characters. The sex ratio in the sampled movies was 2259. Given these data, I would like to conclude that older persons were considerably under-represented in the sampled movies when compared to the actual population in

⁹ The four adult characters were cast as adult in the sampled movies; however, due to the story development, they pretended to be an older persons. The pretended characters were from “Security Unlimited” (1981), “Kids from Shaolin” (1984), “Front Page” (1990), and “Sixty Million Dollar Man” (1995).

Hong Kong. Older females were even more under-represented than older males.

Table 5.1 Characters by Age and by Gender

Characters	Number of characters	%
By Age		
Children	74	2.28
Adult	3,080	95.01
Older Persons	88	2.71
Total	3,242	100.00
By Gender		
Children Male	48	64.86
Children Female	26	35.14
Total	74	100.00
Adult Male	2,369	76.72
Adult Female	711	23.08
Total	3,080	100.00
Older Male	61	69.32
Older Female	27	30.68
Total	88	100.00

The representation of older characters in terms of role prominence and sex

If the portrayal of older persons in role prominence is less than the total number, it may indicate that there is an under-representation of older persons in role prominence. If the portrayal of older persons in role prominence is more than the total number, it may indicate that there is an over-representation of older persons in role prominence.

In terms of role prominence, data in Table 5.2 indicated that the majority of older characters (76 or 86.36%) were in minor role. Only 12 (13.64%) of the older characters were in supporting role. In addition, there was no older character in major role in the sampled movies. When compare with all characters, it was found that older characters were under-represented in major and supporting role but over-represented in minor role. If we consider gender, data in Table 5.3 indicated that older female characters were slightly more under-represented, as compared to males, in supporting role but over-represented in minor role.

Table 5.2 Role Prominence by Character Age (%)

Role Prominence	Character Age			Total
	Children	Adults	Older Characters	
Major	2.70	6.01	0.00	5.77
Supporting	6.76	15.52	13.64	15.27
Minor	90.54	78.47	86.36	78.96
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(74)	(3,080)	(88)	(3,242)

*p<0.05

Table 5.3 Role Prominence by Character Age and by Gender (%)

Role prominence	Children		Adult		Older Persons		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Major	2.08	3.85	4.69	10.41	0	0	4.52	9.82
Supporting	3.25	7.69	14.98	17.30	14.75	11.11	14.81	16.75
Minor	91.67	88.46	80.33	72.29	85.25	88.89	80.67	73.43
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(48)	(26)	(2,369)	(711)	(61)	(27)	(2,478)	(764)

*p<0.05

Generally speaking, the number of older characters in each movie ranged from 1 to 4. Some movies had no older characters, often because of the genre of movie. Movies that have four older characters included *A Better Tomorrow* (1986), *King of Comedy* (1999), and *The Accidental Spy* (2001). Among these three movies, two were action movies and one is a comedy movie. Movies that have only one older character were usually found to be comedy movies, such as: *Winners and Sinners* (1983), *Fight Back to School* (1991), and *All's Well End's Well 97* (1997). Movies that have no older characters are almost always found in romance movie, and sometimes action movies.

When older characters appear in movies, they were mostly portrayed as minor roles like *Aces Go Places II* (1983). The story was about how King Kong and detective Baldy (male major characters) capture the Black Gloves in an underwater base. Although there was an old couple who appeared in the movie, they were having dinner at home and the shot lasted for only 2 minutes as the detective Baldy wanted to ask them a question. Another example is a moneyer in *Project A II*

(1987), who was murdered by villains and the shot lasted for only few seconds.

The representation of older characters in terms of genre

If the number and proportion of older persons in different genre is fewer than that of the actual elderly population in Hong Kong, it may indicate that there is an under-representation of older persons in different genre. If the number and proportion of older persons in different genre is greater than that of the actual elderly population in Hong Kong, it may indicate that there is an over-representation of older persons in different genre.

Concerning the different genre, among the 47 movies with older characters, 20 (42.55%) were in comedy movies, 17 (36.17%) were in action movies. 4 (8.51%) romance movies, and 4 (8.51%) in gamble movies. The rest (3 or 6.38%) were in crime, and gangster movie. Among all movies, there were 1,314 characters, 1,178 characters, 337 characters, 210 characters, and 141 characters found in comedy movies, action movies, romance movies, gamble movies, and crime and gangster movies respectively. For the movies with older characters, it was found that 36 (2.74%), 33 (2.8%), 9 (2.67%), 5 (2.38%), 5 (3.55%) were found in comedy movies, action movies, romance movies, gamble movies, and crime and gangster movies respectively.

In terms of time phase, there were 2,981 characters identified in contemporary movies of whom 70 (2.35%) were older persons. For costume movies, 261 characters were identified and 18 (6.90%) were older characters.

The actual elderly population in Hong Kong has reached over 11.1%, in the sampled movies older persons shared less than 4% (except costume movies which have 6.9% of older characters) in all genre of movies. This figure is far less than that of the actual elderly population. Given that fewer than 4% of older characters appeared in different genre of movies, the above findings indicated that older persons were considerably under-represented in all genre of movies. In romantic movies and gambling movies in particular, older persons were less likely to appear in these genres of movies.

The representation of older characters in terms of length of time they appeared in movies

If the length of time older persons appeared in the sampled movies is less than 8.8% of the total length of time, it may indicate that there is an under-representation of older persons in length of time. If the length of time older persons appeared in the sampled movies is more than 8.8% of the total length of time, it may indicate that there is an over-representation of older persons in length of time.

In terms of length of time, it was recorded that the total length for all the sampled movies was 6,470 minutes. However, older persons were appeared for only 173 minutes (2.67%) only out of the total length of time. Given that older persons appeared for only 2.67% of the total length of time, the above finding indicated that older persons were very under-represented in the sampled movies.

Comparing this admittedly rather crude demographic analysis in the sampled movies with the actual proportion of older persons in Hong Kong's population, it can

be seen that there was an under-representation of older persons in the above four items, that is: number and proportion, role prominence and sex, genre, and length of time appeared in movies. As the actual proportion of older persons in Hong Kong has 11.1%, it might be expected that there would be a comparable proportion of older persons in the sampled movies. However, the present research findings showed that older persons shared only 2.71% out of the total identified characters in the sampled movies. In terms of role prominence and sex, older persons were missing in the portrayal of major role. However, older persons were under-represented in supporting role and over-represented in minor role. Older females were found even under-represented in supporting role and over-represented in minor role. Older persons were also found to be under-represented in all genre of movies and in length of time. So it was concluded that older persons were under-represented in movies.

It should be noted that romantic movies have fewer older characters than other genre of movies. It was because in romantic movies the storyline is about love affairs between youngsters, like the movies *Flirting Scholar* (1993) and *Summer Holiday* (2000). Older persons may be mismatched for such stories, in turn no representation of older persons in movies.

Research Question 2: “How are Older Persons Portrayed in Hong Kong Movies and are there Any Gender Differences in the Portrayals?”

To answer this question, attempts were made to examine how older persons were portrayed in the sampled movies in the following domains: physical appearance, health status, family status, socio-economic status, personality, occupation, and setting. Physical appearance refers to one’s hair colour, smoothness of skin, and

mobility. Health status refers to the condition of a person's body. Family status and socio-economic status refer to a person's position in a family and in society respectively. Personality refers to characteristics and qualities of a person seen as a whole. Occupation refers to a person's job, and setting refers to place and time at which older persons occur in the story.

Physical appearance of older characters

The physical appearance of older persons was coded in terms of colour of hair, smoothness of skin and mobility. For the colour of hair, generally speaking, a person with a white hair implies that he/she is an older person. The more white hair one has, the older he or she is. It was found that 34 (38.64%) out of 88 identified older characters had black hair. 32 (36.36%) of them had a mixture of black and white hair, and 22 (25%) of the older characters with attentively white hair respectively.

For the portrayal of older characters in terms of smoothness of skin, it was found that 66 (75%) out of the identified older characters had a wrinkled skin, whereas only 22 (25%) of them had a smooth skin.

With respect to mobility, 75 (92.60%) of the older characters could walk independently (N=81). 5 (6.17%) of them need a stick to assist, and 1 (1.23%) even need a wheelchair.

Among all different genre, some older characters were portrayed to have a good physical appearance. For example, Mr. Lo (Character 67, page 96) in the movie

All's Well End's Well' 97 who was energetic, can carry out his daily activities by himself independently. Apart from that, he was also willing to learn new things, such as diving. An example of older character with a poor physical appearance was found in the movie *All's Well End's Well, Too*. The old widow, Tai Chung (Character 50, page 92), who has extensive white hair, wrinkle skin, need a stick to assist walking. In the movie, she was portrayed to walk slowly and bend her back.

Health status

The health status of the older characters was coded into three different categories, namely good, fair, and poor. The health status of 82 out of 88 identified older characters could be identified. It was found that 58 (70.73%) out of the 82 identifiable older characters have a good health status. 20 (24.4%) and 4 (4.87%) of them were found to have a fair and poor health status respectively.

Examples of older persons with a good health status can be found in the movies *Thunderbolt* and *All's Well End's Well 97*. The old man (Character 60, page 94) in *Thunderbolt* was found to have a good health condition because he can still work independently and effectively. Mr. Lo (Character 67, page 96) in *All's Well End's Well 97* was portrayed as a healthy person. He was able to carry out his daily activities independently, and willing to learn new things such as diving and climbing. Even his three sons thought that he was quite old to learn such things, he exhibited a high degree of adaptability in handling new tasks.

There were two examples where we could see older characters with a fair health status. In the movie *A Family Affair*, the grandfather, Mr. Yeung (Character 16,

page 84), has to look after his grandchildren for his daughter. Mr. Yeung, although he could only walk slowly and needed to take breaks when having outdoor activities, he was still capable to bring his grandchildren to restaurant, to play with them at home, and to bring them for picnic during weekends or holidays. He was energetic enough to bring them everywhere and run with them. The grandmother (Character 78, page 99) in the movie *King of Comedy* who was recovered from tuberculosis was also coded as having a fair health status. In the movies, when she knew that her grandson would go to fight with others, she wanted to scold to him. However, she was too weak to scold to her grandson.

An example of an older character with poor health status could be found in the movie *A Better Tomorrow*. The older character, Mr. Sung (Character 18, page 85), was suffering from chronic illness and had to stay in hospital for treatment. After he was discharged from hospital to home, he still needed to have medication. When a member from the triad society went to his home and want to kill him, he was too weak to protect himself and was killed eventually.

Family status

The family status of 21 out of 88 identified older characters could be identified. There was only 21 older characters could be identified with family status because older characters were portrayed individually in the story line. There were no interaction or communication for older persons with other people, therefore, it was difficult to identify older persons' family status. Among the 21 older characters, 18 (85.71%) of them were found to have a high family status, and 3 (14.29%) of them were found to have a low family status.

Example of older character with a relatively high family status could be found in the movie *All's Well End's Well Too*. The mother, Tai Chun (Character 50, page 92), who was portrayed to have a high family status received respects from her son and daughter in all means. Even her daughter was not happy with the marriage arranged by Tai Chun, the daughter agreed that what her mother planned for her is good to her and eventually still married the man of her mother's choice. However, the grandmother (Character 37, page 89) in the movie *Fight Back to School* has a low family status in the sense that once his grandson brought his friend back home, his grandson ordered her to give a cup of tea to his friend, and then snacks, and many other services as well.

Socio-economic status

The socio-economic status of 72 out of 88 identified older characters could be identified. 45 (62.5%) out of 72 older characters were found to have a high socio-economic status and 27 (37.5%) of them were found to have a low socio-economic status.

Examples of older persons with a high socio-economic status could be found in the movies *Mr. Coconut* and *The Storm Riders*. A village leader (Character 34, page 88) was found to have a high socio-economic status in *Mr. Coconut* because he was responsible for looking after all matters in the village. Apart from that, he was always invited to be a judge for all the competitions in the village. Other villagers would visit him frequently and would like to share with him. The Mud Buddha (Character 70, page 97) in *The Storm Riders* also has a high socio-economic. Since Mud Buddha was a famous prophet, everyone wants to find him to have anticipated.

He also made foretold to one's life accurately, especially the Lord Conqueror who always wanted to find Mud Buddha to tell him his second half of his life.

Examples of older persons with a low socio-economic status could be found in the movies *Aces Go Places* and *To Be Number One*. An old man (Character 5, page 82) in *Aces Go Places* was coded with a low socio-economic status because he was a member of the triad society. He was having a selling diamond illegally. Although he was rich, he has an illegal business. So, he was considered as having a low socio-economic status. A dish-cleaner (Character 39, page 90) in *To Be Number One* was found and identified with a low socio-economic status. She was responsible for washing dishes and her job was classified as elementary occupation which is unskilled work.

Personality

The personality of 63 out of 88 identified older characters could be identified. 48 (76.19%) out of the 63 older characters were found to have a positive personality, whereas 15 (23.81%) of them were found to have a negative personality.

In the portrayal of personality, the monk (Character 9, page 83) in the movie *The Shaolin Temple* was portrayed with a positive personality. He was the person in charge of the Shaolin. Once a young boy was escaped from a slave camp, the monk showed pity on him and asked the boy to stay with him, disregard to others' objections. Even the monk know that the young boy would have a vengeance towards the one who killed his father, the monk think maybe kept the boy in Shaolin can change his mind of vengeance, and one day he can be a good monk.

An example of older character with a negative personality could be seen in the movie *Love On A Diet*. The older character is a fat man (Character 84, page 100). He was also an old-fashioned and foolish man. He taught Mini (a female major character) to swallow a tapeworm so as to loss weight, because the tapeworm will absorb whatever she has eaten. Later, when Mini was placed in a hospital, a doctor scold on the fat old man and said “where’s your common sense?”

Occupation

The occupation of 72 out of 88 identified older characters could be identified. Table 5.4 summarizes the distribution of occupation of these 72 older characters. Among them, 29 were portrayed as retired persons. 11 of the older characters were portrayed as professionals or associate professionals, 8 of them were in managerial and administrators, 8 in service workers and shop sales workers. 5 of the older characters were portrayed as working in elementary occupations and 1 in craft and related worker, the other in skilled agricultural and fishery worker. 9 of them were unclassified, these 9 older characters were put under the category ‘others’.

Table 5.4 Occupation of Older Persons

Occupation	Number of participant
Managerial and administrators ¹⁰	8 (11.11%)
Professionals ¹¹	1 (1.39%)
Associate professional ¹²	10 (13.89%)
Service workers and shop sales workers ¹³	8 (11.11%)
Craft and related workers ¹⁴	1 (1.39%)
Elementary occupations ¹⁵	5 (6.94%)
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers ¹⁶	1 (1.39%)
Others ¹⁷	9 (12.50%)
Retired persons	29 (40.28%)
Total	72 (100.00%)

Taking gender into account, it could be seen that there was a difference between male and female in the portrayal of physical appearance (Table 5.5), health status, family status, socio-economic status, personality, and setting (Table 5.6). Data in Table 5.6 showed that older male characters have a higher status in both family and socio-economic than that of older female characters. There was 100% and 71.43% of older male character with a high family status and socio-economic status respectively as compared to 70% and 31.3% of them amongst older female characters.

¹⁰ Managerial and administrators included manager, government officer, and boss.

¹¹ Professionals included doctor.

¹² Associate professionals included monk, marital art master, father, and drama teacher.

¹³ Service workers and shop sales workers included house keeper, food store holder, police and domestic helper.

¹⁴ Craft and related workers included sceneman.

¹⁵ Elementary occupations included manual labour, watch man, and cleaner.

¹⁶ Skilled agricultural and fishery workers included woodman.

¹⁷ Others included cheater, godfather, and gambler.

Table 5.5 Physical Appearance by Gender (%)

Physical Appearance	Gender	
	Male	Female
Hair colour		
black	34.43	48.15
white and black	37.70	33.33
white	27.87	18.52
total	100.00	100.00
(n)	(61)	(27)
Skin		
smooth	27.87	18.52
wrinkle	72.13	81.48
total	100.00	100.00
(n)	(61)	(27)
Mobility		
independent	92.98	91.67
with stick	5.26	8.33
with wheelchair	1.75	0.00
total	99.99	100.00
(n)	(57)	(24)

p>0.05

Table 5.6 Images of Older Characters by Gender (%)

Images	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Health status			
good	74.14	62.50	70.73
fair	18.96	37.50	24.39
poor	6.90	0.00	4.88
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(58)	(24)	(82)
Family status*			
high	100.00	70.00	85.70
low	0.00	30.00	14.30
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(11)	(10)	(21)
Socio-economic status**			
high	71.43	31.25	62.50
low	28.57	68.75	37.50
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(56)	(16)	(72)
Personality			
positive	80.00	66.67	76.19
negative	20.00	33.33	23.81
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(45)	(18)	(63)
Setting			
home	8.20	22.22	12.50
outside	80.33	62.96	75.00
both	11.47	14.81	12.50
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(61)	(27)	(88)

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Data in Table 5.7 shown the gender differences in occupations. There were more female characters (75.00%) portrayed as retired persons than that of male

characters (22.92%). Apart from that, male characters were dominated in all kinds of occupation except craft and related workers.

Table 5.7 Occupation by Gender (%)

Occupation***	Gender	
	Male	Female
Managerial and administrators	16.67	0.00
Professionals	2.08	0.00
Associate professionals	20.83	0.00
Service workers and shop sales workers	12.50	8.33
Craft and related workers	0.00	4.17
Elementary occupations	4.17	12.50
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	2.08	0.00
Others	18.75	0.00
Retired persons	22.92	75.00
Total	100.00	100.00
(n)	(48)	(24)

***p<0.001

The result might be a reflection of the traditional Chinese society characteristics in which males are generally regarded as major breadwinners and have major decision power in the family. It is a traditional culture that men go outside to work, whilst women stay at home to do housework. All these lead to males having a higher status in both family and society.

For the portrayal of personality, there were more older male characters with a positive personality (80%) than older female characters (66.67%). For the setting, it was found that more older female characters (22.22%) were portrayed in home setting than older male characters (8.2%). On the other hand, older female characters were less likely to be portrayed in outside setting (62.96%) when compared with older male characters (80.33%). The above result may imply that female characters are always looking after their family matters so they were portrayed in home setting more than male characters.

Research Question 3: “Have there been Any Changes in the Cinematic Images of Older Persons During the Period Early 1980s to the Later 1990s?”

To answer this question, a comparison of older persons’ portrayal by the sampled movies between two different decades were made so as to see whether there were any changes of cinematic images of older persons. The 63 sampled movies were divided into two groups, namely 1980s movies (1981 to 1990) and 1990s movies (1991 to 2001). It is admittedly fairly crude to divide the movies into two sub-eras according to the two decades, but it was hoped that this might indicate if any temporal changes had taken place.

Data in Table 5.8 shows the changes in older characters’ health status, family status, socio-economic status, and setting in the past two decades. From the table we can observe that the health status of older characters is improving in the last two decades. The proportion of older characters with good health status rose from 65.6% in 1980s to 74% in 1990s.

Table 5.8 Status of Older Characters by Year (%)

Status	Year		Total
	1980s	1990s	
Health status			
good	65.62	74.00	70.73
fair	28.12	22.00	24.39
poor	6.26	4.00	4.88
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(32)	(50)	(82)
Family status			
high	100.00	78.57	85.71
low	0.00	21.43	14.29
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(7)	(14)	(21)
Socio-economic status			
high	70.37	57.78	62.50
low	29.63	42.22	37.50
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(27)	(45)	(72)
Setting			
home	22.22	5.77	12.50
outside	66.67	80.77	75.00
both	11.11	13.46	12.50
total	100.00	100.00	100.00
(n)	(36)	(52)	(88)

$p > 0.05$

Older characters' status in family and society both declined from the 1980s to 1990s. From the table we can see that in the 1980s, 100% of the older characters had a high family status. However the proportion of older characters had high family status was decreased to 78.6% in the 1990s. Apart from that, the socio-economic status of older characters also decline in the sampled movies from 71.4% in 1980s to 57.8% in the 1990s.

From Table 5.8, we can see that there was a decline in the numbers of older characters appearing in the home setting, from 22.2% in 1980s to 5.8% in 1990s. Furthermore, portrayal of older characters in “outside home” settings increased from 66.7% in the 1980s to 80.8% in the 1990s. This may imply the modern concepts that older persons become more active in outside home activities and having successful ageing.

Table 5.9 Occupation by Year of Film (%)

Occupation	Year	
	1980s	1990s
Managerial and administrators	9.68	12.20
Professionals	0.00	2.44
Associate professionals	16.13	12.20
Service workers and shop sales workers	6.45	14.63
Craft and related workers	0.00	2.44
Elementary occupations	6.45	7.32
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	0.00	2.44
Others	22.58	4.88
Retired people	38.71	41.46
Total	100.00	100.00
(n)	(31)	(41)

$p > 0.05$

If we compare the distribution of occupation among older characters between the two decades (Table 5.9), it is apparent that there were more older characters who were portrayed as retired persons in 1990s than in the 1980s. At the same time,

there was an increase in the variety of occupational rank in the 1990s than 1980s. Older characters were most likely to be portrayed as managerial and administrators, service workers and shop sales workers in the 1990s.

In the 1990s, older characters were portrayed in a wider range of occupations like managerial and administrators, professionals and associate professionals, service workers and shop sales workers. This perhaps underplays older persons' active roles and contributions in the light of current concepts, such as productive and active ageing. However, it may reflect role loss, as discussed in Role Theory earlier in Chapter Two. There is also a temporal division, in that older persons in many movies of the 1980s were more often portrayed in a home setting while, in the 1990s, they were becoming more actively involved in external activities.

Summary Remarks

From the above findings, it may be concluded that older characters were found to be under-represented in the Hong Kong movies. Older characters were portrayed as having white hair, wrinkled skin, but walking independently in terms of physical appearance. They were portrayed as having a generally good health status. Older persons were portrayed with relatively high family and socio-economic statuses. They were usually portrayed with a positive personality and most were portrayed as retired persons in the sampled movies. In terms of gender, it was found that there was a gender difference in the portrayal of physical appearance, health status, family status, socio-economic status, personality, and occupation in which men were generally more positively portrayed. The present research also found that there was an improvement in health status shown in the 1990s over the 1980s. Older

characters' family status and socio-economic status were found to be in some decline in the 1990s. However, there were more older characters portrayed outside the home setting in the 1990s than in the 1980s. Also, there was a wider range of occupations for older characters in the 1990s than the 1980s.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

In this chapter, the main focus will be on the interpretations the theoretical and practical implications of the research findings outlined in Chapter Six.

Under-representation of Older Persons

The present research found that there has been an under-representation of older persons in Hong Kong movies in terms of numbers and proportions, role prominence, genre of film, and length of time they appeared in movies. Currently, over 11.1% of Hong Kong's population is over 65 years of age. However, only 2.71% of the identifiable characters were older characters on average. Compared with Western research on under-representation of older persons in media, Harris and Feinberg (1977), Gerbner, et. al. (1980) and Vernon, et. al. (1991) both found that the representation of older persons in television was at about only a quarter of the actual elderly proportion in the United States. Older persons in Hong Kong's media were even more under-represented than in Western society, implying a greater relative neglect or overlooking of this age group. The research also found that older men outnumbered older women considerably. The results were in line with the Western findings that: older men outnumbered older women in mass media portrayal (Signorielli, 2001; Walsh, 1989).

In terms of role prominence, the majority of older persons were portrayed in minor roles. There were only 13.64% of older persons were in supporting roles,

and none in major roles in the sampled movies. Apart from that, older persons were under-represented in all genre of movies and the length of time they appeared in the sampled movies. Robinson and Skill (1995) also found that there was an under-representation of older persons in major and supporting roles in prime-time television. These findings lend support to the suggestion that older persons are perceived as less prominent or important in movies.

Why were older persons under-represented in Hong Kong movies? Many of the suggestions below are speculative as the research did not focus on attitudes, but these suggestions point to the need for more study. There are many possible reasons accounting for the under-representation of older persons in Hong Kong movies. First of all, older persons have long been negatively portrayed by young persons as a dependent social group with a relative low social status in the society (Gething, et. al., 2002; Combe and Schmader, 1999). For example, Law (1982) found that older persons were perceived as conservative, stubborn, and weak. Chow and Kwan (1986) also warned that the negative attitudes towards older persons have already lead to an inferior self-image among them. Young persons also have a negative perception of economic well-being among older persons. Older persons were perceived to be poor and have a low income (Chow, 1997). On top of that, majority of the popular movies were comedies and action movies. These kinds of movies are either “make people laugh” films or have non-stop action, which aimed at audience escapism. Older persons are always portrayed in supporting or minor roles in these kinds of movies as they are generally perceived as less able to “make people laugh” and physically less fit for the continuous high energy and fights action. That is probably why older persons were found to be under-represented in most popular Hong Kong movies, that is, related to the genre of the most popular films.

Secondly, Hong Kong society has changed rapidly in the last two decades. There are certain factors that have contributed to the modernization in Hong Kong. These changes include the new affluence and the emergence of a new middle class (Wilding, 1996). A new affluence has increased the people's ability to meet their own basic needs and to cement social stability. New affluence gives rise to aspiration for better housing, more education, and for more and better social services. Young people in the main can enjoy the benefits of this new affluence. They have increased their chances for receiving more education and becoming more knowledgeable than their parents. As a consequence, value differences may emerge between generations. For example, young persons may prefer individualistic life styles and form small nuclear family after marriage (Sung, 2000). However, older parents may prefer to have large families and live with their family members as long as they can (Kwok, 2001). Furthermore, as young people become more educated, they will know how to ask for better services from the government through various means including supporting particular political parties. Older persons generally, being less educated (Table 3.3, page 55) and being perhaps less socialized with political awareness, may not be able to know how to ask for better services. In turn, they tend to rely on the younger people or social workers to ask for social and other services. Eventually, older persons can become a group dependent on the young people.

In the sampled movies, younger characters in the 1990s movies are mostly portrayed as being more educated than their parents and in high-tech occupations like such as Information Technology. In addition, younger persons prefer living alone or having casual sex in the 1990s movies, such as in the movies *Gorgeous* and *Needing You*. This might result in value differences between generations. Furthermore,

older persons were very much shown in home settings in the 1980s which implies that there were few elderly service centres or activities for them or that this was their more stereotypical role.

Thirdly, the rapid economic development has contributed to the development and expansion of higher education in and since the 1980s. With the rapid development in industrial and the service sectors, Hong Kong needs skilled labour to fill up new posts in the new economy. The link between industrial and economic development and technical education was a factor that led to the expansion in technical education and also contributed to the new economic environment. Older persons being perceived as less well-equipped with new knowledge to deal with high-tech industry, they may also be perceived as “deskilled” in this modern industry. Older persons, in turn, may have been forced to retire. The proportion of retired persons among the elderly population increased from 325,893 (78.7%) in 1991 to 573,145 (82.7%) in 2001 (Census and Statistics Department, 2002c). Furthermore, with the changes in the general economic conditions, more and more older persons have retired at an early age. Older persons will become economically dependent as there are few pension schemes for them, and many have no formal income after retirement.

It can be argued that the younger generation, being more educated, is more sensitive to social changes and certainly, it might be felt that the younger generation can more easily adapt to the rapid changes in Hong Kong society. Older persons are sometimes perceived as being less able to adapt to the rapid changes easily and they might lose competitive advantage in the job market. Therefore, it may be relatively difficult for older persons to be employed in this highly specialized

economy. Unfortunately, they can become jobless or stuck in lower paying jobs, which can generate pressures for the expansion of provision for services, especially in terms of economic protection.

Fourthly, Hong Kong is principally a capitalist society. The labour market tends to create a “dependent image” of older persons as the free competitive environment of Hong Kong puts much emphasis on productivity and efficiency. Since older persons’ working ability in this capitalized society is arguably devalued, they were perceived as less productive than younger people. Thus, the youth-oriented labour market in Hong Kong is forcing older persons to retire from the job market. As a result, older persons were viewed as having a lower status in the modernized society. Of course, similar comments have been made with respect to the skills levels of some younger school-leavers.

For the above reasons, film producers may have over the years may have considered older persons as less important. As films are a commercial activity, profit making will generally be the foremost important consideration for most film making companies. Older persons are not perceived by film producers as a main focus in most stories. The under-representation of older persons may be a circular result of film producers who have over the years portrayed older persons as less important or prominent in society. Perhaps this reinforces the belief that Hong Kong is a youth oriented society. As Hong Kong is to an extent a youth oriented society, commercial films will consider the preference and need of the younger persons even of the population is demographically ageing. So, it may be unavoidable that commercial films usually target the young. Producers often use famous movie stars to cast movies so as to attract audiences. Older stars seems to

be at a mismatch with the commercial taste of the major audiences. Perhaps as a consequence, we may speculate that older persons were under-represented in movies.

Gender Differences in the Portrayal of Older Persons' Images

Apart from the above findings, the research also found that older women are less well represented in the movies than older men. Older men were found to have a relative higher status in both family and socio-economic than that of older women. Furthermore, more older men were portrayed as having a positive personality than older women. Older men were also more likely to be portrayed in the outside home setting than older women. More older women were portrayed as retired persons than older men, however, more older men were found to be employed than older women.

In traditional Chinese society, there are inequalities among men and women. In the pecking order, men are always treated with more respect than women. As Hong Kong has become more westernized and be an international city, it has promoted equal opportunities for all people but with varying degrees of success. In 1996, the Equal Opportunities Commission was established which aimed at promoting equality of opportunities between men and women, between persons with and without a disability and irrespective of family status. In 2001, the Women's Commission was established which aimed at promoting the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Government has tried to promote the equal opportunities for men and women. However, the traditional perception of gender inequality is deep rooted in most Hong Kong people (Pong, 1992). For example, women are always employed in a gender stereotyped occupations. Men

tend to occupy better jobs and with higher pay than women in the same occupation (Ching and Kwan, 2002; Chan and Ng, 1994; Ng, 1986). Apart from these, given that both men and women are having full-time job, women still continue to contribute the majority of housework (Lee, 2002). Older women are still treated unequally even though the government has to an extent tried to promote equality for all people.

The relative low status of older women may be a reflection of the traditional Chinese society characteristics: men are generally perceived as major breadwinners and have major decision power in the family. Also it is a traditional culture that men go outside to work and women stay at home to be a homemaker. The 2001 Population Census showed that the median monthly income of women is less than that of men. The overall median monthly income is \$12,000 and \$8,900 for men and women respectively (Census and Statistics Department, 2002a). All these lead to a picture that women are economically dependent and have little decision power.

Changing Status among Older Persons

The present research suggests that there is an apparent improvement in older persons' health status but decline of older persons' family and socio-economic status. Improve in health status may be a result of older persons are becoming more care about their physical health. They were having exercise in the morning so as to keep their physical health. Besides, some older persons kept working in the 1990s movies which suggested that they were healthy enough to carry out their activities. The suggested decline of family status may be a result of the weakening of family system in Hong Kong that a number of researchers have mentioned. As stated

before, younger persons in the 1990s movies prefer to live along or have cohabitation rather than marry, like the movies *Needing You* and *Summer Holidays*. As a result, the traditional family system breaks down. Chow (2000) also noted that the modern family system in Hong Kong may no longer be able to perform its full traditional care roles for older persons. Traditionally, the family functions as a self-sufficient unit which includes education, counseling, child caring, economic production unit, and family planning. With the rapid modernization process, the family system in Hong Kong has also changed dramatically. There is an increasing number of unextended nuclear family in Hong Kong (Table 3.4, page 56). Young people often no longer prefer to live with their parents, especially after marriage. Given more and more nuclear families in Hong Kong, the traditional extended family functioning as a self-supporting unit can perhaps no longer be maintained.

Apart from the growing number of nuclear families, the formal education system, establishment of day care centers for children, and job opportunities also can lead to a decline of older persons' status in family. Traditionally, older persons have been perceived as the major decision-makers in the family as they have knowledge and life experience. However, with formal education and compulsory nine-years free education, older persons can no longer "monopolize" knowledge. Formal education spreads knowledge to all school-year children who have more chances to receive updated knowledge than older persons. The development of internet in modern society facilitates people to get up-to-date information easier than before. Therefore, older persons are not the only people who monopolize knowledge although many are actually willing to learn IT technology (Chan, et. al. 2003). Younger persons can also access knowledge through many different sources. Older persons are no longer the only sources of wisdom in the family.

The apparent decline of socio-economic status among the older persons may be the result of both economic development and promotion of mass education. Economic development created new occupations which encourages a greater specialization and increasingly complex job skills. This needs new technique and knowledge to fill the new occupations. Mass education may have made young people more educated and better equipped with technical training favouring them to engage in new occupations. All these may have resulted in the obsolescence of older persons' knowledge and skills and value differences emerging between generations.

From this research, we can note that there is a relative high proportion of older characters portrayed as retired persons, which is in line with the census findings. The 2001 population census recorded that 82.7% of the economically inactive older persons are retired persons. The rest of them are either home-makers or have other activities (Census and Statistics, 2002c). More older persons portrayed as retired persons may be a result of economic development which have a diversity of occupations that encourages greater specialization and increasingly complex job skills. This, in turn, increased the intergenerational competition of job between older persons and the young. Given that the older persons were portrayed as less equipped with new knowledge and training for new occupations, they were obsolete and forced to retire. These retired persons will act as a role of grandparents looking after their grandchildren. The older persons would play with their grandchildren, enjoy family life, watch television programmes at home or simply be a home-maker. To this extent, the movies do appear somewhat to reflect statistical reality.

Practical Implications

The mass media can act as a reflector indicating a social group's status. Movies may have a considerable impact upon the public's images, knowledge, and behaviours (Signorielli, 1983). Therefore, it is much better for us to find out those images of older persons in movies so as to see how popular culture portrays them.

The mass media itself can be an agent to reflect the images of older persons. However, education is also an important aspect to improve the positive portrayal of older persons. For instance, having a positive portrayal of older persons images, the general perceptions among the public towards older persons will perhaps become more positive. With positive images of older persons in public, older persons will obtain higher self-esteem and confidence. Older persons will no longer think that they are lonely and isolated. This is a way stereotype and images might be recreated and adapted over time.

As the number of older persons is increasing, the HKSAR government has become ever more aware of the importance of the provision of services for this group. The Chief Executive, Mr. C. H. Tung, in his first policy address in 1997 pointed out the importance of care for older persons. In the policy address, Mr. Tung highlighted the need to provide a sense of security, a sense of belonging and a feeling of health and worthiness for older persons. He also addressed the need for retirement protection and other financial assistance for the older persons. Besides, provision of certain basic needs of older persons is important, such as increase supply of housing, to enable older persons to continue to live at home, or if appropriate to live in residential care places in both public and private sectors, so as

to lead a better quality of life for older persons.

To improve the image of old age, the Elderly Commission in its report on health ageing (2001) also pointed out the need to improve images of older persons. The Ad Hoc Committee has proposed to increase the awareness of the concept of society, especially the mass media, so that they could recognize older persons as an asset and a pool of resources rather than a burden to the society. The Elderly Commission believe that media has been a most effective means to reach out to the general public and to spread messages of public interest.

Hong Kong is not a welfare society like the United Kingdom or Australia, where better social welfare schemes have been developed. People in Hong Kong currently have to count mainly on their own or family savings for supporting their livelihood after retirement. However, most older persons nowadays have low formal education and most are doing low-wage jobs with no pension schemes. Therefore, a significant proportion of older persons in Hong Kong have little in the way of savings and insufficient for supporting their livelihood and the Mandatory Provident Fund scheme established in 2000 will do nothing to help the current elderly cohorts. Moreover, the high costs of living in Hong Kong can make adult children unable to support their older parents. As a result, the Hong Kong Government has eventually shouldered some of the responsibility of provide care services for older persons. Thus, the social conditions in Hong Kong make the study of social service needs and medical programmes become the predominant topics in elderly studies in Hong Kong as noted in Chapter Two. Research has found that older persons need to depend on social services provided by the government, and their life is difficult in the later life. However, many research

studies point out that older persons are not that miserable (Sidenall, et. al. 2001; Taylor, 2001; Morris, 1989). As noted in Chapter Two, in order to find out the whole face of later life, different aspects of life patterns among older persons need to be studied. More up-to-date research interest on successful ageing, analysis on life satisfaction, discussion of productive ageing and retirement planning can help to promote the idea that a well-prepared later life can be cheerful and enjoyable. However, the sampled movies did not mention or fully reflect such concepts as successful ageing or healthy ageing.

Furthermore, the development of district administration and the representative government in Hong Kong has give a chance to her citizens to elect some of their chosen representatives in the government. Older persons share a significant amount of voting power in the elections, but their electoral participation is subject to influence of power (Cheung, et. al., 2001). Candidates are eager to offer them cheap medical services and other social services in order to obtain their support. Therefore, the election culture in Hong Kong may accounts for sources of the advocates of increasing social services expenditure for older persons.

Older persons have long been portrayal as a homogeneous group and their images are relative low as viewed by younger persons (Al-Badayneh, 2001; Combe and Schmader, 1999). However, some recent research has found that older persons have a favourable self-image than negative (Taylor, 2001; Oswald, 1994). As mentioned in Chapter Two, Chow (1997) found that the “ideal” perception of older persons is as being healthy and having good relationships with family members. The impression of older persons in the real world as viewed by older persons themselves was of leading a leisurely life, caring, and being courteous. However,

older persons also perceive themselves with some negative descriptions, such as ageing fast, slow in motion, and declining in health. Besides, the portrayal of older persons as welfare dependent and existing on handout can lead to negative self-images. Older persons can nevertheless have a positive self-concept if they participate in volunteer work and keep active in the later life (Kwan and Chan, 1997).

Theoretical Implications of the Study

The present research in part uses modernization theory as a vehicle to explain the relationship between various kinds of social changes to the status of older persons in the Hong Kong popular movies. The present research found that social status of older persons is declining when Hong Kong become more modernized in the 1990s than the 1980s. In Hong Kong, there is no doubt that the status of older persons has declined since the 1970s (Chow, 1997). Traditionally, older persons are often perceived as having valuable experiences and holding high social positions. However, older persons' experiences may have become less valuable in this more specialized society. Given that younger persons are being better educated than their parents and with skill to suit the demand of modern society in Hong Kong, young persons join in the labour force and replace older persons' position in labour market. As a result, the status of older persons declines as they are no longer holding power and resources. For example, in the movie *A Better Tomorrow*, Ah Shing (a male supporting character) told Mr. Yiu (character 17) that he is quite old, and its time for him to retire and let him replace Mr. Yiu. Sung (2000) pointed out that the form of respects for older persons may be changing, however, as respect remains a value and obligation to bind generations together in Chinese societies. Although respect for

older persons is still a common practice for young persons, older persons have found themselves “playing a less significant role in making important decisions, both within the family and in society” (Chow, 1997:3). It can be concluded that some aspects of modernization theory may be applicable in Hong Kong to explain the relationship between modernization and the social status of older persons.

Whilst various interpretations of the theory exist, modernization theory can apply in explaining the decline of family and socio-economic status of older persons in Hong Kong. However, modernization in Hong Kong may have some positive aspect for older persons. In this study, it noted that there was an improvement in the health status of older persons. The purification of water, better diet, advancement of medical care, as well as the promotion of health care, may all have contributed to the prolongation of life expectancy and better health in later life. Modernization theory can perhaps, therefore, be applied to explain the lower status of older persons in family and society. However, a modern society can also have a positive effect to older persons. As Hong Kong was a British colony over 150 years, the modernization process, to a certain extent, followed that of Western societies. However, can this finding be generalized to other Chinese societies?

In China, the elderly population reached 7% of the total population (ESCAP, 2003), so the country is moving to being an aged society. China has started her modernization more recently, mainly in the 1980s, the social status of urban older persons are generally high (Tsui, et. al. 1995). In the traditional age related hierarchy within the family, their control over economic and social resources is significant in determining the status of older persons. Sun (2002) found that older persons in urban China, although often living away from their adult children, this

does not affect support from family. However, there is still no extensive empirical research on the relationship between modernization and the social status of older persons in China. Research on the social status of older persons and modernization in China can help us to testing the applicability and validity of the theory in a non-Western society.

The thesis provides one prospective on images and social change. There are, of course, many other ways of researching social change. Films and especially top-grossing films may, after all, not reflect social reality. How people perceive older persons will potentially affect both public and academic reactions to institutional arrangements as well as social service provision for them. The general under-representation and decline in social status of older persons may create a negative impression for the public. The Hong Kong Elderly Commission has pointed out the importance of improving images of older persons. Film can be a medium to reflect social perceptions as any propagandist knows, so it is time for film producers to portray positive aspect of later life so as to improve the images of older persons.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

The present research aimed to examine the images of older persons as portrayed in Hong Kong popular films shown in the period 1981 to 2001. Implicit is the suggestion that images of certain social groups transmitted through films contain imputed message about socially expected behaviours and attitudes. The cinematic images of a social group portrayed by films may shape our social perceptions of and expectations towards that particular group. Therefore, the foci of the present study include the representation of older persons in Hong Kong movies, the portrayal of older persons, and the changes of cinematic images of older persons over the last two decades.

The present study used as an explanatory framework modernization theory to look at the under-representation and the potential lowering status of older persons in Hong Kong movies. As noted in Chapter Three, modernization theory is a broad theory of social change, by which agrarian societies are transformed into industrial societies. Cowgill and Holmes (1972) found that there were systematic relationships between the extent of modernization in a society and the status of older persons. They also identified four major aspects, namely health technology, economic technology, mass education, and urbanization, that could lead to a decline of the status of older persons.

In this research, the survey population was the most popular Hong Kong movies in each year from 1981 to 2001. The samples were drawn from the best three

turnover ticket office during that period. A total of 63 movies in 21 years were sampled and examined. Content analysis was employed to examine the representation and images of older persons in the sampled movies. To ensure the reliability of the coding, an inter-coder reliability test was applied.

It was found that there is an under-representation of older persons in Hong Kong movies in terms of both number and proportion, as compared to the actual proportion of Hong Kong elderly population. Older persons are also apparently under-represented in proportion in both major and supporting roles in movies. Older persons are also under-represented in the different genres and length of time they appeared in the movies.

Physically, older persons were generally portrayed as having white hair and with wrinkled skin. Positively, most older persons were found to walk without any walking aids and have a relatively good health status. They were portrayed to have a relatively high family and socio-economic status and with a positive personality as well. In terms of occupation, most older persons were portrayed as retired persons in the movies. When older persons were shown as employed, they were mostly portrayed as professionals or associated professionals. However, there are gender differences in the portrayal of physical appearance, health status, family status, socio-economic status, personality, and occupation. Apart from these, there is an improvement of older persons' health status in the 1990s than that in the 1980s. However, their family status and socio-economic status are apparently declining in the 1990s.

As mentioned in Chapter One, social perceptions are an important and influential factor that direct societal reactions and various institutional arrangements for older persons. Negative perceptions towards older persons may affect service provisions for them. Unfortunately, physical deterioration and decrease in activity for older persons may affect their in later lives. However, in this research, the health status of older persons was depicted as relative high, which implied that older persons may pay more attention to their physical health. The decline of older persons in social status may imply that there are being less respect by other age groups. It is therefore time for us to think of how to improve the arrangements for older persons.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Study

Although the present research is valuable to fill a gap in research on older persons in Hong Kong and, indeed, within the Asia-Pacific as a whole, it still has limitations. First of all, the present research focuses on the analysis of the three top turnover Hong Kong popular films from 1981 to 2001, that is a total of 63 movies were examined. Among the 63 sampled movies, over 3,000 characters were identified but only 88 of them were older characters. Given that only a relatively small number of older characters could be identified, it is very difficult to apply sophisticated statistical tests and analysis among the proposed variables. If the sample included a longer time period, it may be that more older characters could have been identified. However, due to the unavailability of systematic information on old movies before the 1980s and the difficulty of obtaining the movies for the research to review, the present research only cover movies after 1980.

Recently, some filmmaking companies, like Shaw's studio, have republished some movies produced before the 1980s. The Hong Kong Film Archive has also been re-arranging information for the movies produced before the 1980s. Given more and more information and a higher availability of movies which produced long time ago, for further study, it is suggested that further examination of changes of cinematic images of older persons over several decades can be conducted shortly. With a longer time period, we can achieve a more sophisticated analysis on the older persons' social status portrayal of different stages of modernization in Hong Kong.

Second, the present research aims at exploring how Hong Kong popular films portrayed the images of older persons. Older persons are not a homogeneous group. They can be divided at least into a young old group (age 65 to 74), middle old group (age 75 to 84), and old old group (age 85 or above). It would be interesting to make a comparison of the portrayal between different groups among the older persons can make the research more interesting. However, since there were only 88 older characters among the 63 sampled movies, the sample size was too small to allow such a comparison. As mentioned before, with a larger sample size, more older characters can be identified. With more characters, a comparison between different groups of older persons becomes feasible.

Third, the study of cinematic images of older persons has at least two aspects, one is by studying how movies portrayed images of any group, the other is by asking how audiences themselves perceived cinematic images of older persons after they watched the movie. The present study adopted the first approach, focusing on how movies portray older persons. As some movies were shown a long time ago, it is not feasible to interview audiences as to how they perceived older persons after

watching the movies. Also, it is not feasible to have an experimental research approach for 63 movies in a short period of time. It is suggested that interview with audiences could perhaps be a topic for further study, but in a larger scale experimental design project.

Last but not the least, Hong Kong is an international city, and every year there are many foreign movies released. Usually, foreign movies have a higher turnover in the ticket office. Further research might include both Hong Kong movies and foreign movies. People watching Hong Kong movies perhaps may be those with relatively lower level of education, less sophistication and of lower social class. Those watching foreign movies may have a relatively higher education level and be of the middle class, and more able to speak or comprehend movies in English or other languages. A comparison on cinematic images between Hong Kong and foreign movies could perhaps help to let us know how different cultures portray older persons.

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Security Unlimited 《摩登保鑣》 1981

This is a story about a security guard agency and its three agents – Michael, Sam and Ricky. Sam and Ricky are delivering a large sum of money to a bank when a robbery takes place under their nose. After a series of hair-raising about hilarious chases, the agents get their men. With Michael and Sam giving their reward money to Ricky. They live haphazardly ever after.

Chasing Girls 《追女仔》 1981

Robert being spend too much time on chasing after foreign girls (Negro-girls only) in New York, was sent back to Hong Kong by his mother and asked to marry a Chinese girl. He stayed at his auntie's house on Kowloon, and started to chase around girls everywhere. His cousin fell in love with a TV actress but she loved Robert instead. At one dancing party, Robert was attracted by a beautiful waitress Ah Far and tried of making acquaintance with her.

All the Wrong Clues for the Right Solution 《鬼馬智多星》 1981

Some time in the thirties in Hong Kong, the Godfather Capone, upon release from jail, was determined to take vengeance on the Champ, a small time private eye who double-crossed him. The conspiracy was somehow exposed to detective Robin, an old friend of the Champ. Under the pretext of a licence expiry, Robin custodised the Champ in order to protect him. At the same time, Old Woo, a big crook from Shanghai bailed out the Champ so as to use him as a bait for Capone's money. However, with the realization of the trap, Robin and the Champ called upon Capone, Old Woo, as well as the heads of the Four Families of the underworld.

Aces Go Places 《最佳拍檔》 1982

The Mafia is concluding a secret deal in Hong Kong when the loot to be handed over, a consignment of valuable diamonds, is stolen by someone who left a white glove. Based on this clue, the police thinks that it is the work of the infamous international thief “White Glove”. Interpol is contacted and an ace detective, Baldy, is sent from New York to investigate. He is assisted by a local woman inspector known for her toughness. They start on a wrong footing initially but grow to be very fond of one another. At the end, detective Baldy found out where the diamonds are.

It Takes Two 《難兄難弟》 1982

A comedy set in the sixties where two nightclub cabaret entertainers who are the best of friends run into trouble by having angered an underworld gangster. The gangster sentences them to a fate worst than death – that one of the two should cause the other to go mad. This he succeeds in doing. The one who remains sane tries all he can to find a cure for his friend. Finally in a desperate attempt, he visits an animal trainer who once cured a monkey. Then he decided to try the medication on his friend. After treatment, two of them go back to Hong Kong and plan to have revenge on the gangster.

The Shaolin Temple 《少林寺》 1982

A young boy (Jet Li) escaping from a slave camp is taken in by the monks of the Shaolin Temple. There, he learns martial arts in order to take revenge on the traitorous general who killed his father. His quest for vengeance implicates the monks, who come to his defense. In the process of fighting the general's troops, they save the true emperor, who rewards them greatly

Aces Go Places II 《最佳拍檔大顯神通》 1983

King Kong (Sam Hui) was attacked by the robot – Black Knight I which was sent by the Italian Mafia to avenge the capture of the White Gloves. He also hired an internationally notorious killer Black Gloves to kill King Kong as well and diamond transfer deal with the underworld. King Kong joins forces with the police to capture Black Gloves who sends Black Knight II to attack King Kong and detective Baldy. Finally, they have a battle in an underwater base.

Winners and Sinners 《奇謀妙計五福星》 1983

The five met in prison, and they – Teapot (Sammo Hung), Exhaust Pipe (Richard Ng), Vaseline (Ching Shung Lin), Curly Jerk (John Sham) and Ranks (Fung Shiu Fam) – became friends and swore they would stay clean from now on. In fact they formed a cleaning company and worked hard at it after their release. Little did they realize they were released together with Boss Chau of the feared underworld who immediately reactivated his money counterfeit operations. Crack CID detective Jackie Chan after the counterfeit ring. He was on the point of busting it when the printing plate got robbed and lost, only to end by accident in the five's van. There was a pursue between the five and Boss Chau.

Zu the Warriors from the Magic Mountain 《新蜀山劍俠》 1983

This story set in the Wuhu Luanhua (AD 304-439) Period when the five northern tribes cut up half of China, and the country is in chaos. A run away soldier Di Mingci (played by Yuan Biao) from the Sishu, western Sichuan falls off a cliff and, instead of death, he finds himself in a mysterious land, a zone belonging to the Mojiao. There are some unknown vessels flying across the sky, and coincidentally he is trapped in a cluster of threads in a huge cave. A martial arts master called Ding Yin (played by Adam Cheng, Cheng Shaociu) rescues him. Ding Yin impresses Di by his unbelievable wugong, such as he can fly, so Di kneels down asking Ding to leave this strange land to save the chaotic country, and he also begs Ding to accept him as a disciple. However Ding refuses, because he wants to keep himself away from the disordered world. Before long Ding's junior fellow disciple Siao Yu (played by Damian Lao, Liu Songren) and Siao's disciple, Yi Jhen, also

come on the scene. Together they fight the flying vessels, the martial arts masters of Mojiao. Unfortunately Siao Yu is wounded and even worse is that the evil spirit of Siemo possesses him. So Ding Yin decides to take Siao to the castle called Yaochih Sianbao to be cured.

The martial arts masters of the Mojiao kept attacking them, until the Master Long Eyebrow appears. He contains the evil spirit, Siemo, with his own body and asked the young men to bring back the swords of Zihcing Shuanjian from the cliff of Tiandao within 49 days, before the Siemo regain power from the moon. So the young men, Ding Yin, Yi Jhen, Siao Yu, and Di Mingci (he sticks onto Ding Yin), have two places to go and two missions to complete. The first is to go to the castle to cure Siao Yu, and the second is to go to the cliff to bring back the swords. The first comes first; they take the mission of rescuing Siao Yu as the primary mission. However, when they arrive at the castle, they are informed that the Mistress of the castle (played by Brigitte Lin, Lin Chingsia) is in the middle of her retreating period, and she cannot be disturbed. However Ding Yin happens to be the one who can help the castle to keep the ice fire burning, so the Mistress comes on the scene to cure Siao Yu.

However when the young men leave for the next destination, Ding is accidentally injured, and the evil spirit possesses him at once. Before Ding is fully occupied, he orders Mingci to send him back to the Mistress's place to get cured within three days. When Mingci takes him to the castle, they realize that the Mistress has run out energy after rescuing Siao Yu. So the Mistress decides to freeze Ding in the castle so the Siemo cannot come out by using Di's body. So she breaks the ice mirror and the castle is frozen at once, only Mingci, Yi Jhen and one maid of the castle are able to leave the castle in time.

They then went to the Tiandao Cliff, where the Mistress Li Yichih teaches them how to use the two swords by uniting their spirits and minds. The 49-day period is up soon, and the Long Eyebrow Master can no longer contain the demon. Siemo, which incarnates by using Ding Yin's body. The Mistress from the castle flies out to stop him from damaging the world, and holding the swords Mingci and Yijhen also become very powerful. Together they defeat the demon.

Aces Go Places – Our Men from Bond Street 《最佳拍檔女皇密令》1984

King Kong (Sam Hui) is commissioned by a man who claims to be Mr. Bond, special agent from the British Secret Service to recover for the Queen precious stones stolen from her crown which are now in Hong Kong. Back in Hong Kong, a Secret Service man from the Bond Street Headquarters, Mr. Tom Collins, has just arrived to find out a gang of notorious international crooks led by Mr. Bond. After King Kong has carried out his mission successfully for Mr. Bond, he is summoned by the Governor to assist Collins in retrieving the stolen goods and catch Mr. Bond's gang.

Kids from Shaolin 《少林小子》1984

Two families living on opposite sides of a river maintain a friendly rivalry based on their different styles of martial arts. One is a family of daughters who practice Wu Tang Sword; the other clan consists of boy orphans (Jet Li plays the eldest) from a brigand-ravaged village who were rescued and raised by a Shaolin disciple. When the father of the Wu Tang family is attacked by evil men, the Shaolin family helps out.

A Family Affair 《全家福》1984

The Ten-year marriage of Chan Wing Cheong (Sam Hui) and Nancy Yeung (Olivia Cheng) ended up in separation about a year ago. Consequently, their cheerful and intelligent children, Maisy (Helen Chan) and Tommy (Ben Ben) are also living apart. By mutual agreement, Tommy is in the custody of the father while Maisy is staying with her mother and grandfather (Dean Shek). It doesn't take long for steady companionship to blossom between Wing Cheong and Linda (Jenny Yan) and Nancy and George (Melvin Wong). Both children and their grandfather are upset about the two couples new affair. The trios try every means to interfere and jeopardize the romance. Unfortunately all efforts and tricks fail to cool down the courtship. One night, Maisy went to find Tommy and said that she ran away from home. Tommy decided to go with his sister, went to a temple to pray for bodhisattva that make their parents together instead of having new affair.

My Lucky Stars 《福星高照》 1985

Jackie Chan swarms the streets of Japan with stray bullets and flying fists in this action packed thriller of cops and robbers. In order to understand the mind of the deviant, Jackie musters up a group of Hong Kong felons to help him capture a criminal mastermind.

Twinkle, Twinkle Lucky Stars 《夏日福星》 1985

The Lucky Stars return and quite frankly. Sammo Hung and pals Stanley Fung, Eric Tsang, and Richard Ng return for more puerile comedy. They're assigned to protect Rosamund Kwan because some bad guys are out to get her. Naturally, they spend time trying to grope her and sneak peeks at her in wet lingerie. Meanwhile, Jackie Chan, Yuen Biao, and Andy Lau fight people. Somehow the two gangs of stars intersect to take on Richard Norton and Yasuki Kurata. But first there's some time out for Richard Ng to harass Michelle Yeoh. Also, there's an aborted romantic subplot involving Sammo Hung and Sibelle Hu, who's returning from the first film as Miss Woo.

Police Story 《警察故事》 1985

Jackie Chan is Hong Kong's toughest supercop. After his unit is assigned the task of arresting a major drug dealer, Jackie finds himself engaged in a dangerous high-speed pursuit, though he succeeds in putting the cuffs on the chief villain, Chee, Jackie is forced to watch as the man's wily lawyer sets him free, thanks to a legal technicality. The vengeful Chee then set out to frame Jackie with the murder of a fellow police officer. Our hero is forced to go outside the law to prove his innocence, and finally bring the criminal mastermind to justice.

A Better Tomorrow 《英雄本色》 1986

The passage of a heroic character in the under world seeking vengeance against conspirator and the love of his younger brother. The brothers are in conflicting roles, the outlaw and cop. Sung Tse-kit (Leslie Cheung), a dedicated policeman blamed Tse-ho (Ti Lung) for father's death as much as obstructing his career in the police force. Flamboyant Tse-ho and Mark (Chow Yuen Fat) are betrayed by their jealousy subordinate Tam Shing (Le Tse Hung) into the counterfeit syndicate. Gun wounded Tse-ho gives himself up in order to let Tam Shing escape. After serving his jail term, repentant Tse-ho returns to Hong Kong to lead a new life and finds out Mark was crippled in the massacre for his vengeance. But crooked Tam Shing as a rising lieutenant in the syndicate would not take chances. He wastes no time to plot against Tse-ho and Mark. However, Tse-ho and Mark fight against Tam Shing in a shipyard, Tam Shing was shoot by Tse-ho which end the battle between the two sides.

Millionaires' Express 《富貴列車》 1986

In the 1930, the steam is China's only means of mass transport and a new rail line has been built connecting Shanghai with Chengtu. The first run of its much-publicized "Millionaires' Express" is scheduled. The train passes the Hanshui town non-stop. Hanshui, though backward, has a bank of its own. But the security officer and his men, using arson, rob the bank and hide away. They plan to board the express for a wonderful life elsewhere. The town's fireman Yuen Biao finds himself suddenly the security chief in charge of a massive manhunt. Scarcely has he realized the seriousness of the job than he finds a happy-go-lucky adventurer Samo who invests in everything connected with pleasure.

Aces Go Places IV 《最佳拍檔之千里救差婆》 1986

The invention of a prism – a special brain stimulant, gets King Kong (Sam Hui) and Inspector (Karl Maka) into a series of dangerous adventures. The lives of Inspector Ho (Sylvia Chang) and her son, Baldy Junior are also threatened by the villains.

Armour of God 《龍兄虎弟》 1987

A fortune hunter's ex-girlfriend is kidnapped by an evil cult. Her fiancée enlists his help in finding and delivering the ransom – the priceless and powerful Armour of Gods. With the help of a sexy woman and a wacky sidekick, the mission begins.

Project A II 《A 計劃續集》 1987

Jackie Chan stars as Dragon Ma, a police officer attempting to keep the peace at the start of the twentieth century. A revolution has begun between the Dowager Empress and a group that eventually leads to communist rule in China. Project A II begins with Mr. Chun as the chief of police. He is the only person who is allowed to carry a gun, but he abuses his privilege by staging his cases. He positions himself close to the scene of the staged crime, then takes credit for stopping it.

Mr. Chun's plans go awry, however, when his superiors discover his actions, in addition to the public learning of his deeds. Dragon Ma takes over for Mr. Chun and learns that criminal groups have been bribing the police force to stay out of their affairs. In addition to a corrupt police force, Dragon Ma also has to deal with an inept and cowardly group of individuals who refuse to uphold law and order because it might be dangerous. Dragon Ma eventually disciplines the disorderly group and several interesting plot twists keep the movie moving at a somewhat swift pace.

Prison on Fire 《監獄風雲》 1987

PRISON ON FIRE follows the fairly standard formula of the new prisoner being thrown into the violent world of prison life. Tony Leung, plays Lo Ka Yiu, a typical middle class Hong Kong shop owner who accidentally kills a street punk during an attempted robbery. He is sentenced to three years for manslaughter. The prison is run by corrupt, sadistic warden Scarface (Roy Cheung), who pits the Hong Kong prisoners against the prisoners from the mainland. Although their accent differences are somewhat lost on American ears, they are as different to the

Chinese as Italian and Irish gangsters' accents would be in an American crime film. Yiu is befriended by Ching (Chow Yun-Fat), a wisecracking inmate who knows just how much to taunt the guards. But he becomes the enemy of Mick (Nam Yin), and the two of them have a wild, bloody, and soapy fight in the laundry room.

The Eighth Happiness 《八星報喜》 1988

Owing to breakdown of the telephone system, three brothers respectively find their new loves on the wrong telephone lines. Fai, the eldest, a TV program host, falls in love with a charming divorced woman. Long, the younger, is a good-looking playboy, though he has a steady lover, another gorgeous creature attracts him. Sung, the youngest, is a timid youngster, he knows nothing about romance until a pretty girl comes into his life.

Police Story, Part II 《警察故事續集》 1988

Even the superstar Jackie Chan does not always have things all his way. As a staff detective of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, he does not get a medal in his busting of a drug ring. Instead, he is reprimanded by his superiors for his rash, unorthodox, although heroic methods in the capture of the drug lord, Chu Tao. This generates revenge face-off which causes Jackie to be scolded by his boss again.

Dragon Forever 《飛龍猛將》 1988

The three kung-fu-teers are back in their last and finest collaboration ever. Jackie Chan is a lawyer fighting a case for a shady businessman. When he realizes his client actually running a cocaine factory, Jackie teams up with his bumbling buddy (Sammo Hung) and his mentally deranged friend (Yune Baio) to take on the villains.

God of Gamblers 《賭神》 1989

Chow Yun Fat plays Ko Chun, a super-suave gambler gifted with almost supernatural skill at all games of chance. In a now classic scene, Ko faces off against Michiko Nishikawa in a game of dice. After this victory, Ko is recruited by his opponent, a man named Wong, to help him depose his rival Chan in a high stakes game. However, before the game can occur Ko hits his head in a fall and loses his memory. He is taken in by a small time hood named Knife (Andy Lau) and his girlfriend Jane (Joey Wong), neither of whom know who he really is. They soon discover that although Ko has been reduced to the mentality of a child, he still retains his phenomenal gambling abilities. However, he won't gamble unless he's fed his favorite brand of chocolate. Word eventually leaks out about Ko's condition, and the pressure builds as his enemies move to have him eliminated.

Mr. Canton and Lady Rose 《奇蹟》 1989

Directed by and starring Jackie Chan, and set in 1930s Hong Kong, Miracles is a gangster film that is equal parts comedy and action film, with a touch of melodrama thrown in for good measure. Chan stars as a young man who rescues a dying crime boss in 1930s Hong Kong. When the boss passed away, he is tapped to become the new leader. He attributes his good luck to an old rose seller and the roses he buys off of her. To pay her back for all of his good fortune, he helps her pretend to be a wealthy socialite, just as she had described herself in letters to her daughter in order to help impress her daughter's wealthy fiancé and not queer their upcoming marriage.

Mr. Coconut 《合家歡》 1989

Mr. Coconut is a happy-go-lucky, fun-loving fellow from a fishing village in Hainan Island in Southern China and spends most of his life picking coconuts. He is much slated as his application of reuniting with his long-separated sister and her family in affluent Hong Kong is finally granted. Little does he know that the family is far less than enthusiastic to receive this country bumpkin at home. The misadventure of Mr. Coconut thus begins and the family is being turned upside down

All for Winner 《賭聖》 1990

A dead-on parody of the Hong Kong "gambler" genre, with Chow in comic mode as a paranormally gifted, feckless rural rube whose X-ray vision attracts the attention of rival casino families who want to exploit his skills.

God of Gamblers II 《賭俠》 1990

The first of two continuations of the original "God Of Gamblers". The torch is passed to the psychically-gifted "Saint of Gamblers" (Lau), who teams up with two comic partners to continue the casino legacy.

Front Page 《新半斤八兩》 1990

Hui is the boss of an entertainment magazine, who want to keep his magazine publish, try to find some "news". An actress who accidentally meet Mad Bill Lee, they become friend in a short time. When Hui knows that Mad Bill Lee have a date with the actress, together with him and Fly, they try to "make" first hand news for Hui's magazine.

Fight Back to School 《逃學威龍》 1991

Stephen Chow stars as Chow Sing-Sing, a veteran SDU cop who gets stuck with the unenviable task of going undercover in high school. His mission: to find the missing gun that belongs to his captain (Barry Wong). His help: fellow undercover cop Tat (Ng Man-Tat) who's doubling as the school's janitor. His obstacles: bratty kids, annoying teachers (including Yuen King-Tan and Paul Chun Pui), evil triads (led by official triad actor Roy Cheung) and bastard fellow cops. His reward: possibly his comely teacher, who's played by the typically gorgeous Cheung Man.

To discuss the subtle merits of this film are near impossible. This is basically a ninety minute opportunity to check out the burgeoning comic charisma of Stephen Chow as he kicks ass, humbles lesser individuals, and generally makes a mockery of the system. Eventually plot does kick in and Sing is called upon to rescue the

students and the school, but that's just filler material for the wall-to-wall jokes.

Armour of God II – Operation Condor 《飛鷹計劃》 1991

Jackie the Condor is having more than his share of adventures, including a shotgun marriage, when Baron Scappis calls on him for help. The Baron tells Jackie this story: Near the end of the World War II, Nazi Germany was on the brink of defeat. The Nazi decided to hide the gold they had robbed of Europe in a secret fortress in the Sahara Desert. General Count von Katterling assigned the mission to his trusted aide and 18 guards. Nothing has ever been heard from the men since. The United Nations wants to have the gold recovered and used on humanitarian projects. So the Baron tells the Condor: you go there, locate the gold and take it back. And the Baron gives Jackie as assistant, Ada, a Chinese scholar, very pretty, very proud. Ada is a no-nonsense assistant of Condor's dispatchers and Eva (deGarcia) the innocent young granddaughter of one of the original Nazis who buried the gold. The three embark on a journey for lost gold and (obviously) meet danger at every turn with bumbling Muslim terrorists, hired guns, natives, and Adolf (Sanchez): the crippled and only living member of the original team of Nazis who buried the gold. His own internationally trained soldiers to protect him.

To Be Number One 《跛豪》 1991

Hou escaped from the despotic terrors on the mainland to Hong Kong and went to Boss Kun promising that he would take Shum Shui Po for Kun provided he would be appointed as a captain. Hou succeeded after few bloody fights. As Hou's getting strong, Kun became jealous. He set trap to Hou to hijack Boss Gung's narcotics shipments and tipped Gung at the same time. Fortunately Hou survived. Hou set trap back to Kun and made him imprison. Although he wiped out all other bosses later, the ICAC caught him finally.

Justice, My Foot! 《審死官》 1992

This period comedy stars Stephen Chow as the ingenious Counselor Sung

Shih-Chieh and Anita Mui, as his pregnant kung fu wife. The two of them are looking to reveal the political conspiracy behind a death by poisoning. In the process, he is set up, placed in jail, and becomes a target for murder. He has had a very high success rate with his clients, and now must prove his own innocence.

All's Well End's Well 《家有囍事》 1992

Stephen Chow is a womanizing deejay, one of whose attempted conquests is a Hollywood movie-mad Miss Hollyok (played by Maggie Cheung, whose first appearance is in a pointy metal bra Madonna get-up!); Raymond Wong takes on the role of a man who treats his wife (regardless of what form she comes in -- that of Sandra Ng or another actress whose name I do not know) like a servant, preferring to have fun with his mistress (ditto); while Leslie Cheung is the nice girlish boy-man who dotes on his ugly duckling sister-in-law (Ng) and chastises his brothers (Chow and Wong) for their general ill-treatment of women but very much dislikes a (distant?) female relative of his played by the usually perky Teresa Mo. Since all three brothers continue to live in the same house with their parents (a not unusual situation among East Asians), characters meet and stories do intermingle somewhat

The romantic misadventures of three zany brothers--a self-centered philanderer, a radio personality who lapses into infantilism after a conk on the head, and a flamboyantly fabulous little brother with a crush on his biker cousin. Notable for two reasons: the film contains spoofy allusions to a plethora of Hollywood hallmarks, and two reels were stolen by Triad gunmen prior to its theatrical release.

Royal Tramp 《鹿鼎記》 1992

Wei Shew Bao is the cowardly teller of tall tales who wows and annoys local visitors in equal measure. Although he speaks of grandiose deeds and colourful characters, the simple fact is that his own life is devoid of adventure. All of this changes when Wei saves the leader of the anti-Ching movement during a furious battle. Rewarding this strangely heroic act, the chief adopts Wei as his pupil and immediately assigns him the task of infiltrating the palace to find the '42 Chapter

Classic'. Once in the palace, the fearful and reluctant hero is forced to become the underling of powerful eunuch Lord Hai. Now with a second master, Wei is given a second mission - to break into the Queen Mother's palace and get the same book, but give it to Hai. While carrying out his double assignment he befriends a brother and sister team who are within the palace grounds; what Wei doesn't know is that this pair are in fact the young Emperor and his sister. As with so many others, the Emperor and especially his sister take a shine to this hapless thief and help him out of a few scrapes. When Wei does discover who his new friends really are, he finds that he now has a third master who also gives him a fearsome task to complete. Into this intrigue comes the mutual enemy, Aobai, the all-powerful general who seeks to rule the kingdom for himself. Therefore Wei must play all sides off against each other to ensure his own survival and the eventual completion of his missions.

Flirting Scholar 《唐伯虎點秋香》 1993

Tong Pak Foo is the top-grade scholar in Suzhou, whose fame as a poet and painter is unparalleled. Unfortunately, he's also saddled with an abundance of shrill wives who care only for gambling. On a feast day, Tong and his friend go to visit the temple and there, Tong meets Chau Heung for the first time. Tong is shaken at Chau's beauty. He decides to go after her, but Chau's master Wah is very angry with Tong's family, how can Tong make Chau Heung be his bride?

All's Well End's Well, Too 《花田囍事》 1993

In a reign of North Sung, there was a rich man called Tung together with his sister, Kit, creates trouble in the village all the time. Their mother, Tai Chun, decided Kit should get married with her fiancé, Sing. On wedding day, Sing was unable to bear the insult by the bride and left in anger. Begging in the street, Sing met a perfect fright, Mu, who is an outstanding martial artist. Hearing his story, she offered to teach Tung and Kit a lesson. To soothe their ailing mother, Tung and Kit host for her a birthday party highlighted by a famous magician Ko Pak Fai for performance.

On Lantern Festival night, Fai performed along the street. Suet and her servant Fung were out for the festival and were attracted by him. Suet's father thought Fai and Suet already had an affair and hastens to prepare a marriage for her to Fai. Suet's father mistaken Tung as Fai and prepared Tung to marry his daughter. Tung felt strange but when he saw Suet, he was delighted to marry her.

Tung came early for the wedding and mistakenly kidnapped Fai. But Kit was attracted by Fai and let him escaped. Mu realized Fai and Suet's story, she agreed to pretend as Suet and marry Tung. On the wedding night, Tung was shocked to find out the truth, but he was defeated by Mu and lost his virginity to Mu.

At the mean time, Kit reunited with Sing and happy to be with he again but Sing refused and wanted a divorce. Tung then has to think of a way to recover a basin of dirty water in order to save his sister's marriage.

C'est la Vie, Mon Cheri 《新不了情》 1993

Kit, a young jazz composer, fails to co-operate in the commercially oriented music industry in Hong Kong. In his period of depression, he meets Min, a girl who sings pop songs in a small Cantonese opera. Min's childlike innocence, and the passion towards music of the troupe members greatly encourage kit. Eventually, Kit and Min fall in love but Min suddenly collapses in pain and has to be rushed to hospital.

God of Gambler's Return 《賭神 2》 1994

An evil gambler tries to seize Chow Yun Fat's God of Gamblers title by assassinating the retired legend in France, but ends up brutally murdering his pregnant wife. Before she dies, she makes Chow promise he will not gamble or use his GOG title for one year. Months later, Chow comes to the aid of young boy orphaned by the same evil gambler and with the help of two mainlander gambling wannabes and a Chinese cop embarks on a plan to exact his revenge in Taiwan.

Drunken Master II 《醉拳 II》 1994

Wong Fei-hung knows the rule: no drunken boxing without his father permission. Rules, however, are sometimes made to be broken. So is anything else that crosses Fei-Hung's path.

Jackie Chan plays Fei-Hung in the wildly inventive and hilarious comedy/adventure hailed as one of his all-time best. Determined to stop the smugglers of priceless national artifacts, Fei-Hung confronts his foes with drunken boxing, a loose-limbed fighting style which he staggers, leans, weaves and clowns like a sailor on shore leave.

From Beijing with Love 《國產凌凌漆》 1994

China's grade A treasure, the skull of an ancient dinosaur, has been ruthlessly plundered. Unfortunately, it's not just a matter of getting it back, because first you have to pry it from the hands of "the man with the golden gun". So who else to turn to but the Chinese superspy, Ling Ling Chai? He's got the moves, the looks, and a magic box. With a sexy double agent pretending to be on his side, he will have to use his supreme butcher knife skills to save the day

Rumble in the Bronx 《紅番區》 1995

At various times in Rumble in the Bronx, Jackie Chan is set upon by a sneering biker wolf pack, has an entire grocery mart smashed down around his ears, is dragged through a river like a wounded duck and is flattened like road kill by an enormous, rampaging amphibious vehicle. Which means that our mirthful hero has everyone and everything right where he wants them.

Chan plays Keung, a Hong Kong cop visiting New York City; in this impish comedy/adventure that plunges the lawman into a high-testosterone feud over \$7 million in diamonds. "Something's always happening here," Keung's uncle says while showing him the neighborhood. He's got that right.

Thunderbolt 《霹靂火》 1995

The simple things matter to Alfred Tung. He wants little more than to work in the Tung family auto business and spend his after-hours relaxing with the family. But wait a minute: the actor playing Alfred happens to be Jackie Chan. There'll be no time for relaxing.

The whirlwind action star moves like a Thunderbolt in this pedal-to-the-metal movie that places Chan in the high-speed, high-risk world of auto racing and in the middle of astonishingly choreographed fight scenes that include a thorough, forceful, smash-up remodeling of a Pachinko parlor. Fasten your seat belts, action fans. With Chan at the wheel, the action isn't just hard driving. It's hard-hitting too!

Sixty Million Dollar Man 《百變星君》 1995

A young man has his body rearranged by angry gangsters after putting the moves on the don's daughter. But a refurbishing of his remnants by a mad doctor transforms him into a shape-changing superhero out for hilarious revenge.

First Strike 《警察故事 4 之簡單任務》 1996

A hard-hitting gang has the numbers and weapons on its side. Jackie Chan has what's within his reach: a ladder. It will do.

Chan's amazingly inventive and widely famed deployment of a ladder as a weapon (he also uses a broom, stilts, a chair, a shark and anything else that's handy during the film) is a highlight among highlights in this rollicking action/comedy in which he's called upon to recover a stolen warhead component. The adventure whisks our hero from high-rise Hong Kong to the snowy Ukraine to sunny Brisbane – and he plunges into it all with wall-to-walk kick butt joy. Settle in and watch as Chan and a ladder lift the martial arts to new heights of fun.

The God of Cookery 《食神》 1996

Stephen Chow directs and stars in this hilariously funny story about a cocky, power driven “cooking king” who loses everything to his evil, ambitious understudy. His only hope is an unsightly street vender (Karen Mok) who is secretly in love with him.

An arrogant, shallow chef hits the skids when his cooking empire is usurped by a mean-spirited rival. He is saved by the true love and good cooking of Sister Turkey, a plain but pure hearted street vendor whose wares heal the sick. Together, the two conspire to regain power by besting their foes in a winner-take-all cook-off.

Forbidden City Cop 《大內密探零零發》 1996

In the ancient times, for the protection of the safety of the emperors, a group of “Forbidden City Cops ” were trained and 008 (played by Stephen Chow) was the most prominent one. However, the emperor did not attach importance to him for his not knowing martial arts. He had to disguise himself as a civilian, waiting for the call from the emperor. Once the invaders from the State of Jin in the north would invade the Central, 008 discovered the enemy’s attempt and saved the emperor out of danger. He was promoted to high positions in the court. But the story of 008 did not end there.

Mr. Nice Guy 《一個好人》 1997

Baggio and Jackie are the stars of a TV cooking show “What’s Cooking Tonight?” The show has a very loyal and enthusiastic following. Investigative reporter Diana catches a shootout on the tape that Giancarlo murders a local gang leader. So, Giancarlo orders to kill her for the tape. Fortunately, she gets the help from Jackie, but she leaves the tape under the seat of Jackie’s car. Therefore, Jackie is falling in danger.

All's Well End's Well'97 《97 家有囍事》 1997

This story is about the house of Mr. Lo who has three sons, Lo Leung, Lo Fay and Lo Kung and a virtuous daughter-in-law, Eliza. They seem like a typical family in Hong Kong, but don't underestimate the things happened in this house, it could be humorist and touching.

Mr. Lo came from Northern China and married a local woman who died early. He worked very hard for his business and on the other hand, he was a good father in raising his kids. Amongst his three sons, Lo Kung is his most favored. Mr. Lo is about to retire, particularly his sons are all grown up and he would like to take it easy after so many years of hard work. But he really worried about Lo Kung especially with his unrestrained behavior. He was a young man with a rebellious temper, didn't like to work and loved to go party. Every time when Mr. Lo tried to talk to him, most of the time they will ended up having a quarrel and Lo Kung will ran away. With both of them having such a refractory temper, their relationship was getting worse.

On Lo Kung birthday, Lo Leung and Lo Fay played a joke with him. They persuaded him to buy a Mark Six lottery ticket with a preset numbers. That night, they showed him a recorded video tape with a old Mark Six Lottery result which exactly have the same number as the one Lo Kung bought. Everybody thought winning the lottery will craze him, but surprisingly he was just acting angry and told his brothers that he didn't buy the ticket. Obviously, Lo Kung just didn't want to share the prize with them. Later, he went to the bar to celebrate with his girlfriend and afterward he gambled with few guys there. He was set up by those con man and lost quite amount of money. He wrote a debt note to them and promised to repay on the next day. As always-bad luck come in double, he had a car accident with a head injury and was submitted to the hospital. He ran away from the hospital and went to claim his lottery prize, but he was shock when he found out the truth. As the debtors chasing him for money, he pretend his head injury caused him to act like a child so that his brother Lo Leung would repaid the debt for him.

Everybody were really concerned his injury and treated him very nice. His family planned to set up a fund for him so that his life will be taken care of, for that

reason, he just kept on with the lie. Nobody has suspected on him and wanted to talk to him when they have things in their mind as they thought he is really a child only. Like Lo Leung and his wife, they felt that their relationship seem in a bid trouble after married for so many years. On the sides, Lo Fay told him about his love life and all those trouble as couple face. But the most touching him was his father expressed his feeling of how much he loved him. Even though he acted like a kid, but his mind was clear and helping the family to solve their problems. Finally, he committed to his family that he lied about his head injury but everybody didn't mad at him. After all, Lo Kung has really grown up and this incident has taught him a good lesson especially his relationship with his father that it was deeper and they became good friend. The change of new Lo Kung was quite phenomenal, just like day and night.

Once upon a Time in China and America 《黃飛鴻之西域雄師》 1997

Wong Fei-Hung (Jet Li) travels to America with Aunt Yee to help a former student open his medical practice. When their stagecoach is attacked, Wong is thrown into a river, develops amnesia and is taken in by a local Native American tribe. Eventually he regains his memory and finds his friends in time to help his student, who is being threatened by a mob of angry white townsfolk.

The Storm Riders 《風雲雄霸天下》 1998

Based on best selling comic book. The storm riders are probably 'the special effects event of the year. Ekin Cheng and Aaron Kwok star as wind and cloud. 'Wind and Cloud will make you and break you'. The Conquer adapted the two boys Wind and Cloud and taught them skill. They helped the conquer dominating the world. However, wind and cloud soon unite and defeat Conquer.

Lord Conqueror wants to rule the Martial Arts world. It is foretold by the prophet Mud Buddha that two boys will be the key to his success and with them; he will be invincible for the first half of his life. Lord Conqueror sets out to find the boys based on the birth charts Mud Buddha had given him and raises them as his

disciples. Their names are Wind and Cloud.

Wind grows up to be gentle and naïve (translated: wuss) while Cloud is silent and mysterious (translated: friggin' cool). With them by his side, Lord Conqueror presides over the Martial Arts world with an iron fist, waiting for the day to challenge the Sword Saint in order to claim himself the undisputed leader. However, being a tyrant is not without its cost as Wind and Cloud play an important role in deciding Lord Conqueror's fate in the second half of his life.

Who Am I? 《我是誰》 1998

International action superstar Jackie Chan once again shows his thrilling stunts. He slides on the steep slope of a building from over tenth floor. Recruited by CIA to join an international team of super-commandos, Jackie (Jackie Chan) is left in a village in South Africa and loses his memories after his team was set up. One day, he saves two participants of a road rally, which is reported by newspaper. Having seen Jackie's picture, the villains track him down to kill him. Put together the pieces of the puzzle, Jackie flies to Rotterdam to meet the villains, aims at finding his true identity.

The Lucky Guy 《行運一條龍》 1998

"Lucky" Coffee Shop is well known for its egg tarts and tea. Waiter Sui, named as Prince Egg Tart, attracts lots of girls but only loves Candy. He and his friends, Nam and Fok, all have love problems. At the same time, the coffee shop may collapse since the landlord is increasing the rent tremendously. Let's see how the lucky guys of the shop can revert this situation. It is movie of joy, warmth and laughter.

King of Comedy 《喜劇之王》 1999

Chow is Wan Tin-Sau, a professional extra whose attention to his craft make him unbearable to work with. Twice he gets banned from the set of the latest action picture from action star Sister Cuckoo (Karen Mok). Enter Lau Piu-Piu (Cecilia Cheung Pak-Chi), a coarse club girl who approaches Sau for acting lessons to better her “professional” career. He helps her, but not without some difficulty, and they begin a small romance. However certain truths conspire to keep them apart and Sau finds himself alone - until he gets a call from Sister Cuckoo, who wants him for her next movie.

He accepts, but explaining the plot in such a straightforward manner can only make the film sound boring and aimless. In fact, it’s anything but - if you can deal with what it’s trying to do. Aside from being surprisingly benign, it’s also remarkably sentimental. At first glance, it’s just a disjointed parody of various films, but beneath that lies a strangely moving character drama. More to the point, it’s all about one character: Wan Tin-Sau. His incredible love of acting make him a laughingstock, but it’s that dedication that ultimately changes his life, bringing him both love and respect in unexpected ways.

The same can be said for Piu-Piu, who chooses love over money, and is quite compelling despite her stock character. Credit should be given to newcomer Cecilia Cheung Pak-Chi, who had the unenviable task of replacing Shu Qi, and still manages to bring a remarkable emotional depth to her character.

Gorgeous 《玻璃樽》 1999

In a small town in Taiwan, Goldie finds a bottle with a note inside. She is so exciting and flies to Hong Kong for her romantic dream. However the man she finds is gay. Later, Goldie meets a known adventurer Nick and they accidentally stay overnight on a deserted island. They fall for each other. Unfortunately, Nick is a playboy in nature. Goldie returns to Taiwan with a broken heart and later, Nick decided to find her in Taiwan.

A Man Called Hero 《中華英雄》 1999

After a simple initiation ceremony, Hero goes home with excited but he finds his parent was killed. What had happened was, Gian took a group of foreigners to Hero's parents and forced them to hand over the Red Sword, their family treasure. In order to take revenge, Hero kills the foreigners. Thereafter, he wants by the police and signs up to be a coal miner in America. Sixteen years later Hero's son Sword comes searching for him and becomes caught up in a gang war as Caucasians marshal the KKK to raze Chinatown. Sword learns that after working a cruel existence on a labor gang, his father became a vigilante and wanted murderer and of the story of his own birth.

Needing You 《孤男寡女》 2000

Wah-Siu, womanizing top sales manager of an HK electronics firm. Kinki, transferred to Wah-siu's division due to "office politics", who finds her boyfriend Dan cheating on her. Kinki is an emotionally unusual girl, and dutiful yet moody executive assistant in the company. Given to fits of pathological cleaning, Kinki is a perpetual doormat but a pure-hearted girl. The new comer cannot cope with the new environment: Rumours have it that her new boss Wah-siu is a womanizer and Kinki is unwilling to work with the womanizer! However, life is mysterious. Though Wah-Siu initially finds Kinki an awful employee, he eventually recognizes her kindness and work ethic, and proceeds to befriend and mentor her in resolving her situation with Dan. Gradually, Wah-siu's dedication to work, his constant care and concern over her move Kinki's heart, but her seed of love dares not grow because of a seemingly reviving relationship between Wah-siu and his old flame Ah Ying. Meanwhile, Ah Ying arranges to have internet mogul Roger Young squire Kinki, which drives Wah-Siu into his own romantically-depressed spiral.

Tokyo Raiders 《東京攻略》 2000

On the marriage day of Macy, her bridegroom Takahashi does not show up. Macy comes to Tokyo to look for him. She meets Tommy, an interior designer who wants to collect debt from Takahashi, and Lenny, a private eye who is hired by a gangster boss to spy on Takahashi. During the investigation, these three persons soon find that they are in conflict with the Japanese underworld gang.

Summer Holiday 《夏日的麼麼茶》 2000

Summer, an ambitious woman who's dumped by her boyfriend and fired from her job. With little left, she discovers that the Malaysian beach she co-owns with her cousin is desired by a developer for upwards of 4 million US dollars. She travels to Malaysia to sell, but discovers that the new co-owner is a beach bum named Momocha. Momocha, an indigenous inhabitant, who claims to be the authentic owner of the hotel. Two entirely different people begin a paradoxical battle of love in this quiet and relaxing island.

Shaolin Soccer 《少林足球》 2001

Chow stars as Sing, a Shaolin disciple famed for his "Mighty Steel Leg". He's inspired to start a soccer team composed of Shaolin martial artists after he meets Fung (Ng Man-Tat). Fung was once a brilliant soccer player called "Golden Leg Fung", but he became crippled after throwing a match some twenty years ago. His rival Hung (Patrick Tse) was the cause of Fung's injury, and now leads an intimidating soccer team with the unsubtle moniker "Evil Team". Fung's goal is to meet his old rival on the playing field, but first they have to get a team together.

(Shaolin was an art practiced through the ages; a skill mastered in the heart. In SHAOLIN SOCCER, it is so much more than a philosophy for six young believers. It is a complete way of life. But as the world changed around them, and Honor and Discipline become forgotten virtues, they lose their way --except for one loyal follower, Sing (Chow). With the help of a former soccer star, he reunites his old, out of shape, misfit friends, and recruits a young woman with extraordinary Kung Fu

skills. Together, they're out to combine the ancient power of Shaolin with the modern game of soccer and in the process, just might take the world's most popular sport to its most extreme.)

Love on A Diet 《瘦身男女》 2001

Mini Mo, a Chinese ex-pat residing in Japan, becomes an over weight fatty when her boyfriend Kurokawa, a budding pianist went abroad ten years ago. Ten years later, she's ballooned to over three hundred pounds. Kurokawa has become a national treasure, and tours the country with Mini showing up at every concert. Too bad he can't recognize her, which drives Mini into depression. Fatty, an equally overweight knife salesman who accidentally becomes Mini's friend and confidant. She hangs on to him because she feels she has nothing left, and Fatty takes to her only after he discovers that she's really a sweet girl beneath all those pounds.

Unfortunately, Kurokawa reveals his still-strong feelings for Mini on a national radio program. A long time ago, they made a mutual promise that if the two ever lost track of one another, they would meet ten years in the future at a particular place. Mini wants to meet him, but she's afraid he'll reject her current form.

Seeing Mini sink further into despair bothers Fatty, so he makes a deal with her. In the six months until she is to meet Kurokawa, he'll help her lose all that weight so she can appear before Kurokawa as the girl he once knew. It's tough going at first, but their mutual friendship brings them closer to their goal, and closer to each other.

The Accidental Spy 《特務迷城》 2001

The latest installment of the Jackie Chan Series of Action-adventure thrillers; this time he teams up with award-winning director Teddy Chan. This actioner unfolds with the story of Buck, a salesman at a workout equipment store who harbors dreams of adventures.

It all starts when on one normal dull day, Buck follows his instincts to trail two suspicious looking men into an alley. When he realizes that these men are robbing a jewelry store, he jumps into action to foil their plans. Soon after Buck meets Liu, a private investigator who convince Buck that he may be the long-lost son of a rich Korean businessman. In no time, Buck is on his way to fulfill his dream of adventure and fortune traveling to Korea, and even exotic Turkey. As Buck is drawn deeper into the game of cat and mouse, he realizes he has become the key to locating a lung cancer virus. With an assortment of characters fighting him along the way, will Buck succeed in finding the virus himself?

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