The Representation of Masculinities in Edward Yang's Films During Taiwan's Rapid Transition into Modernity.

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Abstract

This study explores the representation of masculinity through the lens of Edward Yang's work. While the thematic and stylistic characteristics of Yang's city films with Taipei as the main protagonist have been widely documented, the representation of masculinity has remained an under-researched area in Yang's films. This thesis fills a gap in the study of Yang's distinctive film language by articulating how his representation of Taiwanese masculinities reflects on and critiques the negative social-cultural impact experienced by Taiwanese society partly as a result of its complex colonial history and its rapid transition into modernity. This research also examines the representation of masculinities in pre-TNC Taiwanese cinema, and briefly discusses male identities shown in Hong Kong and mainland China Cinema, to situate Yang's different perception and filmic representation of masculinity in the wider context of Chinese language cinema.

Informed by a tripartite epistemological framework which consists of postcolonial, Chinese/Western masculinity and modernity theories, this thesis uses close textual analysis to explore the conundrum of Taiwanese masculinity formation through the lens of Yang's film language. The close textual analysis to investigate Yang's representation is based on his whole oeuvre of seven and a quarter feature films, with a special focus on his use of space, frames-within-frames, and glass/ mirror/figurative reflections. Yang highlights the challenges of masculinity construction in a society with ever-shifting norms. The weakening colonial, patriarchal and Confucian influences in Taiwanese society, in combination with the consequences of different stages of modernity, contribute to a problematized, frustrated and entrapped Taiwanese masculinity. These findings add new insights to the study of Taiwanese masculinity and Taiwan's vernacular modernity as represented in Taiwan cinema, in Taiwan's

own terms, instead of being subsumed within the larger sphere of cinematic representation of Chinese masculinity.

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List of Abbreviations

ABSD   *A Brighter Summer Day*

ACC   *A Confucian Confusion*

CCRM   Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement

CCP   Chinese Communist Party

CMPC   Central Motion Picture Corporation

KMT   Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)

LLB   Little League Baseball

MJ   *Mahjong*

PRC   People's Republic of China

ROC   Republic of China

SMS   Synchronous Monadic Simultaneity

TDOTB   *That Day on the Beach*

TNC   Taiwan New Cinema

TS   *Taipei Story*

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Glossaries of Chinese Terms:

benshengren 本省人 islanders, or native Taiwanese

bentu 本土 native

churen toudi' 出人頭地 being outstanding

dandang 擔當 being responsible for the family

Fajia 法家 Legalist

fang 房 the genealogical status of a son in a family

xiao 孝 filial piety

fuerdai 富二代 children of the nouveau riche

fukan 副刊 literary supplements to the newspaper

Guan Zi; Mu Min 管子 牧民 *Shepherding the People* by *Guan Zi*

guohua 國畫 national paintings

guoju 國劇 national theatre

guopian 國片 national cinema

guoyue 國樂 national music

guoyu 國語 national language

he hua-jiu 喝花酒 flower drinking

du 獨 *independent*

jiaji suiji, jiagou suigou 嫁鷄隨鷄，嫁狗隨狗 Literally 'marry a cock, follows a cock; marry a dog, follows a dog'

jiankang zongyi 健康综藝 healthy variety of arts

jiankang xieshi 健康寫實 Healthy Realism

jiazu 家族 household

jie 節 moral integrity

juancun 眷村 military dependents' village

junzi 君子 exemplary man

kangri pian 抗日片 Anti-Japanese war films

kominka 皇民化運動 Japanisation movement

Kuomintang 國民黨 Nationalist Party

li 利 profitability

Meilidao shijian 美麗島事件 *Meilidao* Incident

qing 情 sentiment

qingmei zhuma 青梅竹馬 Childhood Sweetheart

renai 仁愛 benevolence

Riben Jingshen 日本精神 Japanese spirit

Ruzhe de kunhuo 儒者的困惑 *A Confucian Confusion*

San Gang 三綱 Three Fundamental Bonds

Shijie Datong 世界大同 Great Unity

Siwei Bade 四維八德 Four Cardinal Principles and Eight Virtues

Taiyu 台語 Taiwanese language

Taiyupian 台語片

tangtang zhengzheng, zhuangjing ziqiang 堂堂正正 莊敬自强 dignified, self-possessed and self-reliant

waishengren 外省人 mainlanders

wei junzi 偽君子 fake exemplary man

wu lun 五倫 five cardinal relationships

wunu 舞女 dancing hostess

wuxia pian 武俠片 martial art films

xia 俠 chivary

xiangtu 鄉土 native soil

xianu 俠女 female knight-errant

xiaoren 小人 inferior man

xin dianying 新電影 The New Cinema

Xungen 尋根 root-searching

yang 陽 masculine

yang gang 陽剛 masculinity

yikou qi 一口氣 a kind of spirit, a sense of righteousness

yin 陰 feminine

yi 義 righteousness

zhong 忠 loyalty

Chapter 1: Introduction.

1.1/ My Journey into Edward Yang (楊德昌 *Yang Dechang*).

My interest in Edward Yang's films stems from his complexity and contradictions. He was a self-declared 'Taipei guy', yet he had very Westernised worldviews and his films are generally considered to be influenced by European film styles. His youthful singers in *A Brighter Summer Day* (1991) have perfectly-tuned angelic voices, yet they are also violent gangsters involved in bloody gang fights. He sceptically critiqued social issues, yet he seemed to never judge his characters. His most philosophical work *A Confucian Confusion* (1994) is, ironically, also the most satirical. One of the most contradictory elements in his films is his depiction of father figures, the symbolic figure of power at the apex of a patriarchal gender power relationship. Their presence is marked by their absence; they are authoritative but at once submissive to political and economic forces; they benefit from the patriarchal society, and yet they are also the victims of their own desperate attempt to keep their status quo; they are empowered by a traditional human relationship hierarchy grounded in Confucian ideology, yet they are living in a rapidly transitioning modern cosmopolitan society where traditional values are diminishing.

Yang's films emerged at a time when Taiwan was undergoing rapid social, economic and political changes, and was transitioning from an agrarian to a globalised cosmopolitan society, with the shackles of its complex colonial history and the Confucian cultural values increasingly challenged by the new order. The enigmatic portrayals of men not only provide a particular perspective to read Yang's films, but also constitute a new lens through which the different stages and consequences of transition to modernity in postcolonial Taiwan society can be

observed. Indeed, the constant shaping and reshaping of men's identity refracts the long-lasting political effects of imperialism, colonialism and global capitalism in Taiwan, while the ambivalent portrayal of Yang's men provides a novel articulation of masculinities and allows space for their renegotiations against the backdrop of rapid changes. However, this interesting and important aspect of Yang's films seems not to have been systematically studied in previous literature.

The aim of the study is therefore to explore Yang's films through the lens of masculinities both on the analytical level (how Yang's use of cinematic city space, frames-within-frames technique, and literal and figurative reflections illuminates his representation of Taiwanese masculinities) and the conceptual level (how modernity, postcolonial and hegemonic masculinities theories inform Yang's representation of masculinities in his films). In addition, Yang's films were made during a period when Taiwan was wavering between traditional Confucian cultural values and the invasion of Western neoliberal ideologies, and was beginning to be let loose from the iron grip of the rigid patriarchal power of the authoritative one-party state to an unknown and risk-ridden future. These city films, which are all set in Taipei, seem to be influenced by a sense of the postmodern in their distinctive sense of contingency which resonates with the ephemerality and volatility of the rapidly changing society. If, in Miriam Hansen's words, cinema as vernacular modernism articulates and mediates the experience of modernity and modernisation (1999: 60), then how does Yang's cinema function as a discursive site for negotiating and reproducing men's subjectivity during Taiwan's rapid modernisation process? How does his continuous representation of the challenges facing masculinities construction across his oeuvre stand as a symbol of the social, political and cultural dilemmas facing Taiwan during these pivotal times? More specifically, as one of the first cultural products during the process of democratisation leading to the lifting of martial

law, how are Yang's films informed by postcolonial, modernity and masculinity theories to shed new light on the painstaking process of identity construction/ reconstruction during those most turbulent years of transition? In short, the core research question of the thesis is:

How does Yang's continuous representation of masculinities across his oeuvre contribute to the understanding of the social, political and cultural changes during the different stages of modernity in Taiwan?

In the following sections of this chapter, I will first discuss the historical and social background which helped to shape the construction of Taiwanese masculinity. I will then offer a brief discussion on the research context of this study by first engaging with previous literature about Taiwanese masculinity, hence locating this under-researched topic within the broad corpus of Chinese masculinity study. Filmic representation of masculinities in different Chinese language cinemas, namely, Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan cinemas, during their respective period of rapid changes and uncertainties will also be briefly discussed. This is to accentuate Yang's different take on the representation of masculinities in the wider context of Chinese language cinemas. Then I will introduce Edward Yang and his role in the most important cinematic movement in Taiwan, the Taiwan New Cinema (TNC) movement, situating his importance in the paradigmatic change in cinematic representation of Taiwanese society, and by extension, the issues of identity crises during his period. Finally, after introducing both the social-historical and research background, I will explain the rationale for the methodology and the scholarly contributions of this study, before concluding the chapter with a brief structure of the main body of the thesis.

1.2/ Historical and Social Contexts of Taiwan (from the Japanese colonial era to the lifting of martial law 1895-1987).

It is often difficult to avoid discussing social context when studying most forms of popular cultural media, and this is especially true when studying art forms with elements of social critique. While films are not transparent representations of reality, cinematic images are shaped by social structures, and they in turn affect society. Consequently, there can be a very blurred line between filmic and sociological studies in the analysis of films. With that said, I want to state clearly that my thesis is first and foremost a study of Edward Yang's films, demonstrating his filmic texts' capacity to explore and reflect the consequences of modernity through the constructions of Taiwanese masculinity during a pivotal period of Taiwan's history. As Aasita Bali states, there is behaviour expected of individuals based on gender roles in every society, and the stability of the existing social order depends on these roles being followed (Bali 2014: 93-94). This seems to echo Mary Douglas's assertion that the human body is treated as an image of society, so it is not possible to consider the body without also considering its social dimensions (Douglas 1996), thereby implying that defined gender roles are fundamental features of society. Given that gender roles are dependent on social values and norms, and can therefore be confused when the structures of society are going through rapid changes, it will be helpful to discuss the nature of Taiwanese society from historical, political and social contexts in its shaping of masculine norms. This helps ground my interpretation of Yang's films on Taiwan's lived experiences. While it is difficult to draw a clear time frame in the discussion of the historical and social contexts for the production of Yang's films, I would start with the Japanese colonial regime and the recolonisation of the Nationalist Government, also known as Kuomintang (國民黨) or KMT, to the period around which the martial law was lifted in 1987 when Yang started his film career. This will not only provide a context for the construction of masculine identity in Taiwanese society, but also for the construction of

Taiwanese masculinity in Taiwanese cinema before Yang's time (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

1.2.1/ Japanese Colonisation and the Recolonisation by the Nationalist Government.

Taiwan is an ex-colony of Japan (1895-1945) and the five decades of Japanese colonisation brought to the colonial subjects fractured and ambiguous identities. The mimicry of the *Riben Jingshen* (日本精神 Japanese spirit) problematised the formation of national identity and personal identities among the elite Taiwanese colonial subjects (Liu 2009: 265-267), whereas the marginalisation of the underclass created an 'inferiority' complex which ripped the colonised subjects of a sense of self-possession (Fanon 1952: 85). This, together with the feminisation of the colonised by the Japanese colonisers (Shie 2009: 45), had a direct influence on the formation of Taiwanese colonial masculinity. After losing the civil war to the Communist Party in 1949, which founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the same year, the KMT retreated to Taiwan with around one million civil war exiles and military personnel (Yang 2021: 59-63). In many ways, the rule of the Republic of China (ROC) was a settler-colonial regime. The new wave of settlers quickly asserted their political dominance over the descendants of previous settlers and indigenous people alike (Hirano et al. 2018: 212). In response to the February 28 anti-government uprising in 1947 (known as '228' in Chinese language use) in which thousands of civilians were killed[1], the KMT imposed the second longest martial law in the world (38 years, 1949-1987) (Haddon 2005: 58). Claiming to be the sole legitimate ruler of all China, the KMT also imposed a variety of measures to 're-Sinicise'

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[1] On the 27th of February 1947, an old woman was caught selling illegal cigarettes and when the Monopoly Bureau tried to arrest her, the officers shot one of the people and widespread riots and violence against mainlanders were triggered on the next day. Although the worst of the violence lasted for a few months only (from the 12th of March to the 15th of May), tens of thousands of people were killed and in response to these anti-government uprisings the KMT imposed the 38-year-long martial law (1949-1987) during which the whole of Taiwan was living under the White Terror (Smith 2008: 147-148).

local residents and to foster a 'greater China identity' (Wang & Liu 2004: 572). These discriminatory measures put the local Taiwanese in a subordinate position; hence they further problematised the already ambiguous and destabilised postcolonial national identity, and in turn contributed to the shaping of a kind of ambiguous Taiwanese masculinity.

The ambiguity in Taiwanese masculinity is further exacerbated by the conflicting politico-economic structure of the island state. Taiwan has always been on the edge of larger geopolitical entities and subjected to invasions, migrations, incursions and pressures historically. The PRC has never abandoned the idea of reunifying Taiwan with the mainland. The ROC lost its recognition as the representative of all China in 1971, with its place taken over by the PRC. This setback, combined with the shock of the United States' recognition of the PRC as the legitimate government of all China, caused Taiwan to become even more marginalised on the international political scene. Yet despite international political setbacks, Taiwan enjoyed the fastest economic growth in the world in the 1980s. The GDP growth averaged more than 9 percent annually between the 1960s and the 1980s (Chan & Clark 1994: 130); per capita income had climbed twenty-fivefold since 1950 to reach US$ 5,000 in 1987 (Omestad 1988: 179). While Taiwan's political ambiguity had substantially and metaphorically affected the development of male gender identity, the economic miracle had also brought about radical changes in social relations, value systems and demands for political liberalisation which contested men's status quo. These changes were not only at odds with the traditional Confucian familial values upheld (at least superficially) by the government, but they also triggered all the undesirable consequences of modernity (for example, weakening of family ties, uncertainties and risk culture, which will be discussed in detail in the analysis Chapters 3, 4, and 5).

1.2.2/ A Society Undergoing Rapid Cultural, Social and Political Transformation.

Modernisation in Taiwan came along with extremely rapid economic growth which contributed to socioeconomic transformation. Such transformation, as noted before, meant not only a transition from agricultural to consumer society but also a radical transformation or re-formation of traditional culture, namely, the family-oriented Confucian value system (Lu 2002:118). Though challenges to traditional patriarchal masculinity brought about by modernity are not unique to Taiwan in the 1980s, it must be noted that compared to Western societies, Taiwan's transition to modernity from a traditional society was far more rapid. Without the longer evolution as had happened in the West, Taiwan went from an agrarian economy straight into an industrialised society bearing all the consequences engendered by such rapid transitions. Furthermore, the death of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) in 1975 and his son Chiang Ching-guo (蔣經國) in 1988 signalled the end of one of the longest political dynasties in the century and saw the disappearance of authoritative political father figures. This, combined with the KMT's waning will to rule by coercion after the series of setbacks experienced by Taiwan on the international political stage, contributed to the greater political and social freedoms Taiwanese people gradually started to enjoy. For the first time they were able to challenge social and political norms free from the control of their colonial and authoritarian rulers, especially after the lifting of martial law in 1987.

As the demand for greater freedoms began to accelerate around the time of the end of martial law, many cultural, social and political transformations also started to gain their impetus (Rawnsley 2016: 375). One of the major social transformations was the increasing challenge to the Confucian ideology, human ethics and gender stratification which Chiang Kai-shek employed to assume tighter control over Taiwan (Wong & Yau 2016: 223). In addition, the

burgeoning women's movements in the global North started to influence Taiwanese society in the 1980s with the repeal of martial law (Bih 2017: 237). A number of groups dedicated to serving women's unique needs were founded during this time, while the number of courses, speeches and demonstrations promoting gender equality was on the rise (Ibid). These social changes resulted in the inevitable disruption of the established Confucian-based patriarchal gender roles. As Connell (2002: 44) argues, masculinity is linked to the social practices that men demonstrate in their position within the gender order. Accepting Connell's argument, it then seems unavoidable that there was confusion in male identity given the rapid social changes in Taiwanese society during these rapidly transitioning years, which will be further discussed in the next section.

1.3/ Research Context.

1.3.1/ Existing Literature on Taiwanese Masculinity.

Taiwan is not generally recognised internationally (e.g., the United Nations) as an independent country. Taiwan studies are often viewed as an appendix to China studies, and Taiwan is often absent from the discussions of East Asian masculinities (Yueh 2019: 114 Kao 2015: 200).[2] A single essentialised Chinese masculinity, however, would seem to be inappropriate for the construction of a Taiwan gender identity, as different masculinities would result from complex articulations between different factors and in different contexts (Wong & Yau 2016: 240). Therefore, it is important to study the underrepresented Taiwanese masculinity as a separate economic and political entity. In the first place, it seems that in the limited literature discussing

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[2] See for example, in Lin, Haywood and Mac an Ghaill's (2017) edited volume *East Asian Men: Masculinity, Sexuality and Desire*: only 3 out of 14 chapters are about Taiwanese masculinity. Also, Louie's monographs *Chinese Masculinities in a Globalising World* (2015) and *Theorising Chinese Masculinity* (2002) basically focus the discussion on masculinity formation in Mainland China and other East Asian countries like Japan, and diasporic masculinities in Western countries

Taiwanese masculinity, it has been presented in a traditional and hegemonic way. For example, Wang argues in his monograph, *Taiwanese Men* (1998, cited in Bih 2017: 245), that men in contemporary Taiwanese society still conform to hegemonic masculinity norms such as physical strength, enthusiasm for sport, being resolute, suppressing vulnerable emotions, aspiring to be rich, being exclusively heterosexual, having a son to carry on the family name, and having authority over women and other men. In addition, Bedford & Huang (2011) explore how Taiwanese men negotiate and manufacture their masculinities through the sexual objectification of women. They note that men would participate in *he hua-jiu* (喝花酒), literally translated as 'flower drinking', a highly ritualised group drinking activity in paid-hostess bars. According to the participants, 'flower drinking' is important to career development and success, which is a definitive quality of manhood. It also helps Taiwanese men to enact and construct their own masculinities by dominance over women and to demonstrate this power to other men through 'flower drinking' (2011: 87).

On a different note, Kao & Bih look into the effect of the ambiguous political status of Taiwan on the construction of Taiwanese masculinities, developed in the context of a series of diplomatic setbacks on the international political stage in the 1970s. It has been claimed that Taiwanese men during this time were 'doubly castrated' racially and nationally, due to racial desexualisation by Western stereotyping of Asian men on the one hand, and a lack of national recognition caused by the continuous suppression of Taiwan's international status by the PRC (2014:178) on the other. As a result, this put them in a doubly submissive position in international hierarchies of masculinity when competing with other masculinities (e.g. Caucasian or Black). It has also become the core source of ambiguous masculinity of Taiwanese men as both their gender and nationality (the two fundamental categories to develop individual and collective identities) were constantly questioned (Ibid).

It seems, then, that one aspect of Taiwanese masculinity depicted in the literature is based on the actions of 'doubly castrated' males trying to negate their helplessness and victim status by asserting their dominance over women. In other words, Taiwanese men's ambiguous self-identity is shaped by their contradictory position: oppressed by previous colonisers and racism and also by oppressing women (Pon 2000: 144). The ambiguous masculinity derived from international politics and manifested in the institutional and interpersonal levels of Taiwanese masculine selves, is, however, under-researched and under-represented. Taiwanese cinema, being one of the first cultural products to benefit from Taiwan's widening discursive space due to the political reforms, explored the subject of changing gender roles in the brave new world of a more modern and democratic Taiwan. The study of cinematic depictions of such vulnerable and fragile masculinities in the face of the challenges of fast-approaching modernity, then, can contribute to a better understanding of how cinema may act as social commentaries to help shape and change social norms. In this study, therefore, not only will I chronologically study Yang's whole oeuvre to investigate how his cinema serves the above functions, but I will also look into how masculinity has been represented in Taiwan cinema since its inception in Taiwan until the TNC movement to add new knowledge to the under-researched area of the representation of masculinity in Taiwanese cinema.

1.3.2/ Filmic Representation of Masculinities in Chinese Language Cinemas: Hong Kong and Mainland China

Mass media, especially cinema and television, are important devices that shape, build and strengthen male and female roles in societies. The representation of gender in media is crucial because individuals get to know gender roles in the process of socialisation (Gurkan & Serttas 2017: 402). Cinematic discourse and images, as Kaplan posits, are by no means gender neutral (Kaplan 2000: 1-2), but are products of social and cultural processes, and they in turn affect

society. Mass media reflect social values, while narration in films provides opportunities for identification. Hence it is important to study how these media depict masculinity. For example, Kord and Krimmer (2011) conducted an in-depth analysis of sixty blockbusters which shows that masculinities represented in films respond to changes in society. Examples of this include the increasingly prevalent white victimisation after the Vietnam War and the feminisation of America following 11/9 (2011: 1-2). They also argue and illustrate that 'destabilised masculinity' in late-twentieth and early-twenty-first-century films differs significantly from the hard-body action films of the Reagan period during the 1980s (Ibid: 3).

In media studies, the potential of films and television to both reflect and influence cultural understandings of gender roles has long been the subject of social scientific inquiry (Scharrer and Blackburn 2018: 149). Cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross 1976) posits that media blur the boundary between real life and the version of reality portrayed in media. People's views shape the representations of social norms or identities in popular media, and their views are in turn shaped by them. Gender, as Butler suggests in her essay 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution', is constructed by a system of rewards and punishments. The various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all (1988: 522). Men, indeed, are seen to be rewarded, both in movies and also in life, for keeping an invincible exterior. Through 'performing' their masculinities in a way which is upheld by socially constructed standards, they, in turn, strengthen those views.

What exactly are the general patterns of masculinities represented in and shaped by the media then? Modern conceptions of masculinity recognise it as socially constructed, multidimensional, and variable (Levant and Richmond 2007: 131); it reshapes when

intersecting with race, class, sexuality, and other components of identity (Kimmel 1987: 21). Although cultural ideals of masculinity shift to suit a given historical moment (Connell 2005: 12), there remain several core beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours associated with traditional masculine roles. Common features of traditional masculinity (a concept similar to hegemonic masculinity) include avoidance of femininity, dominance, importance of sex, restrictive emotionality (suppressing the expression of emotions), negativity towards sexual minorities and self-reliance (Levant and Richmond 2007: 131).

Such common features are frequently represented in classical Hollywood genre movies. Men in genre films are constantly struggling to keep the status quo. Individualistic male characters dominate film genres such as Westerns, gangster and detective films. 'Traditional' men objectify women, are driven by sex, and avoid all facets pertaining to femininity (Lotterhos 1999: 1). Michael Corleone in *The Godfather* (Coppola 1972) and Han Solo in *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977) are prime examples of men who are calm and calculated instead of being emotional. Examples of this can be seen throughout American film history in classic roles played by Clint Eastwood, John Wayne, Humphrey Bogart, and Sylvester Stallone. As Butler argues, identification as a man is to assert a particular gender identity typically marked by a masculine gender expression (1988: 522). Thus, gendered bodies and identities are heavily policed by systems of power and by individuals participating in society to reinforce and reward gendered actions (Lotterhos 1999: 2), which are in turn represented and consolidated in mass media like films.

Indeed, films are important in negotiating the terrain of masculinity. From the social construction of gender roles to the changing perception of masculinity and the destabilised

masculinity experienced by men starting from the 1990s, Hollywood cinema reflects the construction of masculinity and the historical and societal changes which affect it. In this light, films are themselves primary documents of history which can reveal things about their time that other historical records might not (Davis 1996: 8), and the destabilised and angst-ridden masculinity represented in films seems to be a response to a whole range of social and political reasons (e.g. the Vietnam War, the change in American foreign policies). If, as Chris Berry asserts, cinema is a renegotiation in which society influences the institution of cinema and cinema influences society (Berry 2004: 21), then how does the representation of gender roles reflect the social, historical and political changes in the cinema of a country on the periphery of the world stage with a complicated colonial history like Taiwan? And how does Taiwan cinema in turn act as a site of socio-cultural negotiation which consolidates socially constructed gender roles? I will discuss these points later in this chapter.

In the wider context of Chinese language cinema, films produced in Hong Kong and mainland China around Yang's time seem to resort to a masculinised male identity in response to the uncertainties and anxieties incurred by the rapid changes taking place at the time (Lu 2011). For example, through male violence which draws on a code of honour of male heroes to construct a new order, *The Big Heat* 城市特警 (Johnny To 杜琪峯 & Andrew Kam 金揚樺 1988), *A Better Tomorrow* 英雄本色 (John Woo 1988) and *Hard Boiled* 辣手神探 (John Woo 1992) represent existential threats felt by Hong Kong people. In 1984, the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed between the Chinese and the British governments to hand over the rule and sovereignty of the crown colony to China in 1997. This agreement was reached without consulting the wishes of the Hong Kong people. The impending handover had left Hong Kong in a state of uncertainty, faced with an existential threat to its ways of life by a totalitarian one-party Communist state at the time (Fenwick 2018: 436). The above-mentioned contemporary

action movies produced at a time of great anxiety and uncertainty employ modern male heroes to manifest a kind of 'mythical and aestheticised violence'. Such kind of violence posited by Stephen Teo refers to the wish fulfilment of ordinary people who are powerless to do anything to change their situations (Teo 2010: 161), and so it is a kind of 'constructive violence' which brings new stability and norm to men's identity (Ibid: 159).

Indeed, there has long been a Hong Kong cinematic tradition pervasively occupied by macho masculinity, from Zhang Che's (張澈) *yang gang* (陽剛) masculinity genre in the 1960s to Bruce Lee's muscle-bodied kung fu films of the early 1970s, and Jacky Chan's acrobatic stunts in his action movies in the 1980s and 1990s (Lei 2019: 409). As Zhang Che explained, one of the rationales behind producing the *yang gang* action films stemmed from their resonance with the rebellious mood against the colonial administration during the turbulent times of social riots in the 1960s (White 2015: 86). While Bruce Lee's hard-bodied kung fu films relate his tough masculinity to the myth of a masculine national identity (Tasker 2005: 400), Jacky Chan's action films released immediately after the 1997 handover featured a 'manly man' image, though one not without flaws and struggles. According to Jacky Chan, he did not mind being a manly man but unlike Bruce Lee's film persona as a superhero, he wanted to be a normal person who has a lot of flaws and struggles, and who is neither invincible nor heroic (Chan 2018: 172). While Chan prefers an onscreen ambivalent male hero image which shows both a masculine and a vulnerable side, it is also one that utilises mythical violence in order to define what it means to be a man.   It seems, then, that Hong Kong commercial cinema's reaction to the contemporary socio-political changes was the retrenchment to a stereotypical masculinisation of male bodies, which could offer certainties to people fearful of the future due to political factors beyond their control.   This cinematic portrayal of masculinity reinforced the deeply embedded traditional Confucian gender norms, and in this way consolidated the patriarchal

order in the society. By accentuating the strong bond between men that tends to exclude women, these films seem to show that frustration and anxieties can only be remedied through the patriarchal network. In the later analysis chapters on Yang's oeuvre, however, I hope to show that his cinematic representation of masculinity deals with risks and trauma brought about by rapid socio-political changes, thus critiquing rather than consolidating the patriarchal order.

If the masculinisation of male bodies and the consolidation of a patriarchal hierarchy seem to be one way in which Hong Kong cinema responded to rapid changes and uncertainties in society during the era around Yang's time, then in the context of mainland Chinese cinema the situation seems to be a bit more complicated. During the years immediately following the death of Mao Zedong (毛澤東) in 1976, concerns over Chinese masculinity first appeared in literary works as responses to the political and mental castration of Chinese men (particularly on male intellectuals) imposed by the regime (Song 2010: 407). The *xungen* (尋根 root-searching) literature emerged during the confusing cultural atmosphere of Deng Xiaoping's (鄧小平) economic reform, which saw the de-deification of *Mao* and also the embracing of Western individualism at the expense of the socialist collective (Williams 2004: ii). It inspired many of the first films of the Fifth-Generation directors,[3] among them Chen Kaige (陳凱歌, the director of *Yellow Earth* 黃土地 1984) and Zhang Yimou (張藝謀 director of *Red Sorghum* 紅高粱 1988 and *Raise the Red Lantern* 大紅燈籠高高掛 1991).

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[3] The so called 'Fifth Generation' is an imposed rather than consensual term designating a group of young Chinese directors who started their careers in the early 1980s. These new directors, including Chen Kaige, Zhang Yimou, Tian Zhuang Zhuang and Wu Ziniu, were the first class to graduate from the Beijing Film Academy since the Cultural Revolution began. Each of them has their own film style but shares the same aesthetic direction and sense of history (Ni 2002: 4). For further explanations of the theory and definitions of 'generations', see Ibid; 188-190).

Similar to the root-searching writers who sought the idealised masculine image in the harsh landscape of northwest China, the Fifth-Generation directors also tried to respond to the feminine and weak manhood shaped under long-term oppression by the authoritarian party state (Lu 1995: 49-50; Zhong, 2000: 5) through the apparent reassertion of individuality-cum-masculinity in their films (Lu 2000: 30). For example, Chinese masculinity is reconstructed through the depiction of the physical and libidinal liberation of Chinese men in the legendary past in Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum,* a film adapted from Mo Yan's (莫言) 1986 novel, *Red Sorghum Clan*. As Jie Lu argues, the portrayal of tough masculinity through the use of the male body and macho attitudes was influenced by the Western conception and a global culture of body aesthetics (Lu 2011: 103), and it is 'a hybridised version that incorporates both Chinese and Western masculine constituents' (Berry 2006: 226). Yuejin Wang analyses *Red Sorghum* in terms of its representation of a `Chinese version of masculinity'. He contends that by adopting the perspective of the hero 'My Grandpa' who fights against a Japanese occupier, Zhang's film reverses a previous emphasis upon femininity and passivity in Chinese literature (Wang 1991: 85) and is a primitive celebration of macho masculinity that replaces a masculine cultural psyche that was both suffering and diseased (Ibid: 90).

This representation of men is marked by ambivalence, suggesting how these figures embody wider political, historical and cultural dilemmas. On the surface, this reaffirmation of manly masculinity seems to be one of the Fifth-Generation directors' ways to renegotiate their traumatic history. The masculinity represented in their films no longer entails the effeminate scholar-intellectual type prevalent in Chinese culture. Rather, it is but a projection of primitive vitality (Lu 2000: 30). Nevertheless, the northwest idealised masculine image still succumbs to drought and famine (the peasants in *Huang Tudi*); the real anti-Japanese hero in the film *Red Sorghum* is actually the grandmother who is killed by the Japanese, not the male character

(Zhong 2000: 143). In Jiang Wen's[4] (姜文) *Devils on the Doorsteps* 鬼子來了 (2000), Ma Dasan's (馬大三) manliness is apparently defined by his physical masculinity (which corresponds to My Grandpa in *Red Sorghum 1987*) and his strong potency (he is seen naked with his girlfriend at the beginning of the film). Ma's characterisation, however, can also be seen as Jiang's satirical challenge on resorting to manly masculinity as an effective way to negotiate Chinese masculinity amid the confusing post-Mao/ post-Cultural Revolution era when the people were confronted with a different reality and different new problems. Irrespective of Ma's strong potency, his enactment of masculinity is ironically punished by death: he is executed by the KMT government for killing prisoners of war in order to take revenge for the villagers.

In Chen Kaige's *The Big Parade* 大閱兵 (1986), he uses remasculinised roles (e.g. soldiers) to symbolise masculine toughness on the one hand, and employs these characters to challenge whether such toughness is just a propaganda portrait of modern masculinities and the official version of martial masculinity (Williams 2004: 124) on the other. Similarly, in his internationally acclaimed debut film *Yellow Earth*, the character of the Eighth Route Army soldier *Gu Qing* (顧青) symbolises how the Communist Party reconstructed the idealised masculine image through the construction of socialist manhood. Nonetheless, the idealised revolutionary masculinity seems powerless and ignorant in the face of the practical hardship facing the tough but silent peasants, not to say the suffering of the female protagonist under the

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[4] While Jiang is usually categorised as one of the Sixth-Generation directors, *Devils on the Doorsteps* is a film which seems to be a further investigation to the question posed by the fifth-generation director Zhang Yimou in *Red Sorghum* which was produced 12 years before, with both films challenging the use of physical masculinity and male potency as an effective and legitimate way to renegotiate male identity in times of national confusion. It is under this rationale that this film is cited among other Fifth-Generation directors' works in the discussion of masculinity representation.

oppression of the hegemonic feudal patriarchy. In this light, if the *xungen* (root-searching) literature tends to idealise the northwest masculine power (e.g. the peasants) as a mythical root (*gen*) of Chineseness, and associate the search for such potent male characters with the search for a potent China (Zhong 2000: 169), the films of the Fifth-Generation directors seem to take a more ambiguous stand. On the one hand, they aestheticise and even exoticise these masculine bodies through their visual celebrations of potency, while on the other hand, they question whether these strong and potent masculine figures are merely reflections of a self-referential indulgence by returning to the mythical roots of Chineseness in the search for the renewed Chinese masculine self (Ibid: 167), and by extension, a renewed Chinese identity.

It is worth noting that no matter which way the representation of masculinity goes in Hong Kong and mainland Chinese cinemas, it seems that patriarchal power still plays a very important role in the definition of masculinity identity. In Hong Kong cinema during the time of uncertainties as the 1997 handover to China loomed ever closer, remasculinised bodies who observe hegemonic patriarchal order seem to be offering the sense of stability and security that Hong Kong people craved at the time. In mainland Chinese cinema, although the Fifth-Generation directors in the post-Mao era held an ambivalent attitude towards the effectiveness of finding a new masculine self by going back to the old cultural roots in a repressive political environment, the masculinised male body and male potency are still the imagined signifier for a strong national- and self-identity.

1.3.3/ Representation of Masculinity in Early Taiwan Cinema

The interesting question is, then: how does the representation of masculinity in Taiwanese cinema differ from the way masculinity was represented in Hong Kong and mainland Chinese

cinemas during times of uncertainties and great transitions? As previously discussed, Taiwan's colonial history is highly complicated. The lingering influences of Japanese occupation, the second longest martial law imposed by the KMT, the international political setbacks, the rapid transition into modernity, and KMT's waning authoritative political grip all contributed to an ambiguous Taiwanese identity, and by extension, an ambiguous Taiwanese masculinity. How masculinity is represented in Taiwan cinema is, however, still an under-researched area. I aim to remedy this omission by discussing in this section the representation of masculinity in films produced during the Japanese occupation, the KMT era of recolonisation, and early post-martial law Taiwan cinema. This will also help to locate both Taiwan New Cinema and Yang's work about the representation of masculinity in Taiwan cinema.

Gender representation in cultural productions during the Japanese colonial period shows how imperial colonialism worked, and it is not confined to cinematic images. For example, the ethnographical and cultural essays written by Nishikawa Mitsuru, one of the most prominent members of the cultural elite in Taiwan during the 1930s, show that the erasure of the colonial male presence or the feminisation of the colonised subjects inevitably transforms those subjects into the ultimate object of desire and pleasure (Kleeman 2006: 306). Such gendered representation of masculinity resonates in films produced in that period in Taiwan by the Japanese. Owing to the assorted restrictions and limitations in the exhibitions and production of Taiwanese films, Taiwan could not set up an independent film industry, rendering it difficult to explore how Taiwanese masculinity was represented in films produced at the time. The two domestically made propagandistic films, *The Eyes of the Buddha* 大佛的瞳孔 (Tanaka King 1922) and *Sayon's Bell* 莎韻之鐘 (Hiroshi Shimizu 1943), however, manifest the Japanese colonisers' justification of their colonial domination through the gendered representation of the

colonised (Shie 2009: 38). By erasing the colonial male presence (no young Taiwanese men can save the Taiwanese girl) and through the imagining of Taiwan as a young virgin who needs the protection of the heroic Japanese colonisers in *The Eyes of the Buddha,* the film highlights the representation of the impotent masculinity of the colonised.

Similarly, the symbolic emasculation of the colonised subjects' masculinity is a theme highlighted in *Sayon's Bell*. Throughout the whole film, the Japanese occupying forces are portrayed as a genial and modernising presence (the Japanese men are either doctors, teachers or well-disciplined soldiers), while the indigenous men are kept silent in two different ways. On the one hand, the local educated elites speak in Japanese (actually, all the main characters are played by Japanese), study in Japan, talk about basic infrastructure such as irrigation systems and are worried about the development of the Pacific War. By portraying these educated and modernised local men as the ideal subjects in the '*kominka* movement', the film successfully 'silences' them by assigning them a 'Japanese' voice, hence symbolically emasculating the colonised male subjects and denying them a national identity. On the other hand, the presence of uneducated indigenous men is reduced to the background of the film settings. These silent, emotionless men with heavily tattooed faces are presented as the complete opposite of the pretty, lively, caring, kind and innocent female protagonist Sayon. If the colonised land is commonly imagined as being gendered feminine and sexed as a virgin female body (Montrose 1991: 12), Sayon is its perfect symbol. By deliberately silencing the indigenous males, the Japanese colonial hegemony is further justified through the representation of the voiceless masculinity in colonial cinema.

After Japan's fifty-year colonial regime was ended, Taiwan's post-colonial film history can be paradoxically conditioned as 'film history without films, and national cinema without a nation' (Hong 2011: 15). In 1945, film imports from the former coloniser stopped, and a vacuum developed on Taiwan's cinema screens (Ye 1995). It was under this vacuum before the KMT started to tighten its grip on Taiwan's film industry that *Taiyupian* (台語片), or Taiwanese-language cinema, started to become prolific. *Taiyupian* were recorded in Hoklo (Hokkienese, also known as Minnanhua), the Fujian-derived dialect spoken by most of Taiwan's long-established islanders (Berry 2017). Despite KMT's de/recolonisation policy and strict censorship measures, *Taiyupian* continued to thrive between 1955 and 1970. Among the diversified genres present in dialect cinema, three of them stand out: films in the travelogue format, comedies, and melodrama. One of the most popular plots among the well-received melodramatic films is the story between an ill-fated woman and an 'impotent' man, where the latter is always represented as effeminate, loving and caring and yet who is too weak and helpless to turn around the tragic fate of the woman he loves. This idea of an 'impotent masculinity' is further explored in Shen's article, 'False Love/Taipei/Youth: The Impotent Men in Three Taiyupian in the 1960s'. She posits that the representation of Taiwan's masculinity in that era can be concluded in one term: 'the impotent men' (Shen 2017: 57). In the three films she discusses, namely *False Love* aka *Husband's Secret* 丈夫的秘密 (Lin Tuan-Chiu 林摶秋 1960), *Early Train from Taipei*, and *Dangerous Youth* 危險青春 (Xin Qi 辛奇1969), there seems to be a lack of strong, moralistic patriarchal figures in all the films. All the male protagonists are represented as impotent males who are passive, weak, lacking authority and unwilling (or unable) to take action to change the reality in the face of the rapid changes leading to modernity. It is worth noting that these films present a compelling portrayal of male melancholy and anxiety, which can only be resolved through the preservation of traditional patriarchal virtues and the affirmation of Confucian family values.

With the adoption of the Film Investigation Law in 1955, the KMT government further tightened its film censorship, and it was particularly sensitive to the communist theme. In the 1960s, the government initiated the Healthy Realist Film Movement which, according to Gong Hong (the new manager of the state-owned Central Motion Picture Corporation who coined the term), to educate and influence the people, hence promoting moral, political and social well-being through mass media (Chiang 2013: 26). Healthy Realist films, as stated by (Ibid: 26). It can therefore be seen from the first that Healthy Realist films are a propaganda tool of the state. These films promote tropes about prosperity, ethics and harmony in social relationships (Chiang 2015: 3), and they are in line with the government's nation-building project through the elimination of sick bodies (usually associated with females), non-conforming and unmanageable hyper-masculinity which is not in line with the state-endorsed Confucian values that can help consolidate KMT's legitimate rule of the society. For example, the protagonists in *Story of Mother* 母親三十歲 (Song Cunshou 宋存壽 1972) and *Goodbye Darling* 再見阿郎 (Bai Jingrui 白景瑞 1970) are both eliminated at the end of the films. While the mother in the former film is eliminated for her transgressive female sexuality (she commits adultery in a loveless marriage), the male protagonist who represents a type of hyper-masculinity which is unacceptable for the KMT regime (Wicks 2010: 170) meets his demise in a car accident in the latter film.

The government's ideal representation of gender relationships was also evident in the romantic melodramas adapted from Qiong Yao's novels, which became a major success within the realm of Healthy Realism films. As Lin Wenchi posits, Qiong Yao's films resolve social differences as the society of Taiwan underwent rapid modernisation and urbanisation, by idealising the

working class (especially females) and romanticising individualism (Lin 2010: 45). In these apparently women-centred stories, the idealised working-class heroines do, in fact, work their way out of poverty and move up the social ladder by marrying into affluent families. In this way, Qiong Yao's romances 'eased social anxieties, nurtured the alienated female souls, intensified nostalgic sentiments and identification with the Chinese nation, and thereby strengthened the patriarchal system and the traditional moral order' (Lu 1998: 135). Furthermore, men in Qiong Yao's novels are the ultimate symbol of a male-dominated status quo. They are almost without exception good at heart and capable of love, even though on the surface they appear to be rude, impulsive and distant. Though these male protagonists seem to be rebellious, they will usually end up fulfilling various responsibilities and resolving all family conflicts by becoming a successful businessman or professional, a filial son who finally lives up to the expectations of the father, and of course a loving husband to the female protagonist. Once again, the transgressive masculinity which does not help the advance of a rapidly modernising society is tamed, and the patriarchal order favoured by the Confucius values and the KMT is upheld. Hence, Qiong Yao's romantic films enjoyed a long period of popularity among male and female audiences alike and were allowed to exist under the tight censorship system.

Taiwanese cinema from the colonial era to the mid-1970s represents a type of masculinity which is unique in the postcolonial, post-civil war and pre-rapid modernisation society. This is demonstrated through the Japanese propagandist films (though very few and far between), the commercialised *Taiyupian*, Healthy Realism productions which bear heavy propagandistic connotations of the KMT government, and the romance films adapted from Qiong Yao's novels which embrace a kind of hegemonic masculinity under the wings of a stable patriarchal social structure. This hegemonic patriarchal masculinity upheld by the KMT government uses

Confucianism to reinforce hard work, self-sacrifice to the family and the country, women's absolute submission to husbands, and filiality. However, as the nation was on the path to recovery and sought global acknowledgement after a series of diplomatic setbacks, movies showcased a tougher, more uncompromising version of masculinity that was believed to be crucial in establishing the KMT government's lawful rule and the advance of the society Such kind of masculinity is represented and reinforced in two other film genres: the *kangri pian* (anti-Japanese war films), and the *wuxia pian* (martial art films).

Taiwan only committed to making anti-Japanese war films after Japan signed the Joint Communique with the PRC on September 29, 1972, marking Japan's recognition of the PRC as the sole legal government of China, and the KMT-ruled Taiwan as an inalienable part of the PRC's territory (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2014). This came as a huge setback to the Taiwanese, as they felt that they were seriously betrayed by their ex-colonisers and one-time ally. As a result, anti-Japanese war films were commissioned by the KMT government to unite the country by boosting their national morale against the Japanese. In addition, these films act as a counterforce to the perceived emasculation of Taiwanese masculinity due to colonisation, and the double castration effect on Taiwanese men induced by the stereotyped image of effeminate Asian men and the lack of a clear national identity. Not surprisingly, in these combat films which are mostly melodrama in disguise, the patriotic masculinity modelled on Chiang Kai-shek (*tangtang zhengzheng, zhuangjing ziqiang* 堂堂正正 莊敬自强 *Dignified, Self-possessed and Self-reliant)* is predominately celebrated. It is interesting to note, however, that some historical facts in the anti-war films are deliberately misrepresented, highlighting the KMT government's intention of de-Japanisation and re-sinicisation in order to consolidate the rule of the government (Zhou 2016: 236). For example, the narrative about the KMT army from the mainland helping the anti-Japanese revolts in Taiwan does not have any historical

basis (Yeh 2000: 74). By representing the native Taiwanese men as imagined war heroes, these anti-Japanese war films intend to consolidate a kind of re-sinicised masculinity through mimicry which could further unite the whole country in times of hardship.

Although it is too simplistic to claim that Taiwanese cinema between the 1960s and 1970s and before the TNC was characterised by propagandistic productions, the KMT did continue to ensure that its idealised narrative formula, Healthy Realism, never touched upon the real social and political issues at the time. In fact, the definition of 'healthy variety of arts' (健康综藝 *jiankang zongyi*) kept expanding, and one of the most popular categories was martial arts films which were approved for release by the government or produced by CMPC (Wicks 2014: 115). This genre provided a kind of escape route from the oppressive political climate in real life for the audience. Many of these films figured among the top ten box-office hits between 1966 and 1969, including Zhang Che's[5] invariably male-dominated *wuxia* films. Zhang's films have always been cited as *yang gang* (staunching masculinity), emphasising the robust qualities of manhood (Ibid), where the male protagonists are always fighting to their last breath. Some of Zhang's heroes even die standing upright following a prolonged battle. These male warriors are the embodiment of *wen-wu* (civil-military) masculinity though most of the time the *wu* overrides the *wen* aspects of their masculinity, and subvert the long-established orientalist stereotypes of the feminised Chinese masculinities. The representation of masculinity in

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[5] Taiwan and Hong Kong Mandarin film industries were closely related through the financial and distribution arrangements put in place by business and political interests, and so Taiwan considered Hong Kong's Mandarin pictures as part of the 'national cinema' (國片 *guopian*) (Teo 2000: 93). Hence, although Zhang was considered as the key pioneer of the Hong Kong martial arts cinema (White 2015: 80), and he mainly made films in Hong Kong, it is very difficult to draw a line between whether he was a Hong Kong or Taiwan director. Yet, given the high popularity and the huge influence on the 'New *Wuxia* 武俠' genre of Zhang Che, it would be helpful to study how his representations of masculinity resonate with the issues about the construction of Taiwanese male identity.

Zhang's films also resonates with the state of Taiwanese masculinity in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With Taiwan's increasing economic power and yet marginalised international status following the loss of its United Nations seat in 1971, Taiwanese men were burdened with oppression from the authoritative KMT government domestically, and a shrinking diplomatic space internationally. The hypermasculine and yet imperfect male specimens (for example the male protagonist in *The One-armed Swordsman*) in Zhang's films are more plausible representations of subaltern male identity and masculinity in crisis (Teo 2009: 102). This may explain why Taiwanese men identify with these characters, viewing these films as a venting outlet for their double castration anxiety.

It is important to note that under the strict KMT censorship system, not all kinds of martial arts films would make it to the silver screen. The reason why Zhang Che's poetic violence and his martial arts films were allowed to be shown in Taiwan was because of the way he refashioned his masculine subjects. Zhang indeed saw his heroes as the epitome of *xia* 俠(chivalry) virtues: rebellious, non-conformist in nature and their behaviour challenge traditional Confucian precepts (Teo 2009: 99), yet *xia* is also obsessed with a set of Confucian moral standards such as loyalty (忠 *zhong*), filial piety (孝 *xiao*), moral integrity (節 *jie*), righteousness (義 *yi*). By defending these moral values at the expense of their lives, these heroes fit into the imagined hypermasculinity that the KMT would like to build up during the years of diplomatic setbacks. The reimagined masculine identity constructed in Zhang's films is formidable and invincible on the one hand, and loyal and submissive to the superior on the other. Zhang's representation of masculinity as such is still in line with the KMT government's policy to use Taiwan cinema as a way of mediating their idealised narrative.

In this section, I have explored the representation of masculinity in Taiwanese cinema since its introduction under Japanese colonial rule as a form of colonial modernity. The discussion seems to show that the films produced from the Japanese colonial era to the recolonisation of the KMT government have been strongly affiliated with the ideology upheld by the ruling power to consolidate and justify their legitimate ruling status. The kind of impotent and frustrated masculinity identity represented in early Taiwan cinema resonates with the impasse of Taiwan's political situation and the painstaking search for a clear national and personal identity during the unsettled period of rapid modernisation. Taiwanese cinema, until the end of the 1970s, was still controlled by the tight censorship of the KMT regime. As a result, films produced in this period were still dominated by productions which are in line with the government's narratives of building a strong and healthy nation to reclaim the mainland, and uphold a harmonised and hierarchical human relationship structure based on a Confucian patriarchal dominance to protect the patriarchal status quo. Any cinematic expression that deviates from this narrative was forbidden. It was not until the beginning of the 1980s when the film industry was badly hit by international competition that reforms were finally introduced. The more relaxed political constraint imposed by the government after the death of Chiang Kai-Shek and the gradual introduction of a more democratic political system also encouraged the emergence of new directors, among them the flag-bearers of the Taiwan New Cinema, Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang.

1.3.4/ Existing literature on TNC, Edward Yang and the Main Concerns of His Films

The rapid transition of Taiwan from a mainly agrarian society in the 1960s to a market-oriented consumer society in the 1990s caused vast social and cultural shifts, with people struggling to make sense of the new norms and values that started to replace old certainties (Chang 2019: 1).

Within a relatively short period of thirty years, Taiwanese society underwent a major social transition process as the rapid formation of consumer society was accompanied by equally speedy political democratisation. Cinema as a social commentary and as a reflection of these seismic waves of changes was especially evident in the TNC movement. Though initially a strategy advocated by the then president of the Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMPC) Ming Chi to re-energize the stagnated Taiwan film industry that was badly hit by international competition (Shih 2011: 67), it ultimately led to the emergence of the most important cinema movement in Taiwan. The new films that emerged during this movement showed Taiwan's development and explored changes in thinking with regard to modernity and Taiwan's cultural identity. Before TNC, the ideology of 'Taiwaneseness' was absent from the island's cinema (Li 2014: 97). The height of this turbulent transitional period during the 1980s saw the birth of the TNC which, as a product of its historical, political, economic and social context, served as a mirror of this regionalised transition.

The New Cinema (新電影 *xin dianying*) in Taiwan was a distinct step away from the pedagogical orientation of healthy realism, the commercialism of studio genres, and the eclectic provincialism of *Taiyupian* (Taiwanese-language films) (Yeh & Davis 2005: 56). It carried over themes from the Taiwanese *xiangtu* (鄉土 native soil) literature of the 1960s and 1970s. *Xiangtu* literature attempts to create a distinctive form of Taiwanese identity different from the mainstream Chinese national identity promoted by the KMT (Makeham & Hsiau 2005: 133). For example, Hou Hsiao-hsien (侯孝賢), one of the main founders of TNC, reflects on his search for post-colonial personal and national identities through his coming-of-age stories. Wu Nien-jen (吳念真), another major figure in TNC and scriptwriter of *A City of Sadness* 悲情城市 (Hou Hsiao-Hsien 1989), reflects on the 'Japan-complex' of the *benshengren* (本省人

the people who settled in Taiwan before World War II and their offspring) resulting from Taiwan's colonial past through the story of his father (Davis 2003: 724). Cinematically, the TNC directors' aesthetic was, in line with that of the Italian neorealists (Wilson 2014b: 21), to portray acutely important contemporary issues rooted in everyday life. Their collaboration with the renowned photographer and documentary filmmaker Chang Chao-Tang (張照堂) in *Woman of Wrath* 殺夫 (Tseng Chuang-hsiang 曾壯祥 1984） and *Last Train to Tanshui* 我們 的天空 (Ko I-cheng 柯一正 1986) realistically shows the lives of ordinary civilians, juxtaposing fiction and stark realism within the cinematic world (Sun 2015: 291). Although women directors did not play an important role in the TNC movement, women writers' contributions could not be underestimated. As Lingzhen Wang explains, several of the TNC movies are based on books written by female authors. While Wan Jen's *Ah-Fei* (1983) is based on Liao Hui-ying's novel, Hou Hsiao-hsien's *The Boys from Fengkuei* (1983) is derived from Chu Tien-wen's fiction, and Tseng Chunag-siang's *The Woman of Wrath* (1985) is an adaptation of Li Ang's novel (2012: 339). French cinema also permeates TNC films as varied as Cheng Yu-chieh's *Yang-Yang* (2009), Hou's *Le Voyage du Ballon Rouge* (*Flight of the Red Balloon*, 2007) and Tsai Ming Liang's (蔡明亮) *What Time is it There*? (2001). As Michelle Bloom contends, the French auteurs (e.g. Francois Truffaut) who serve as the 'cinematic fathers' of the contemporary Taiwanese directors are especially but not exclusively New Wave directors (2014: 37). A prominent feature in contemporary 'Sino-French' films helmed by Taiwanese directors is the absence of father figures, a recurring motif seen in Edward Yang's oeuvre as well.

It is also important to note that TNC's 'newness' was more in terms of its content and style, and it did not involve any major infrastructural changes in the film industry. In producer Jen Hong-zhi's words, TNC was 'not so much pertaining to the industrial infrastructure as to the

dramaturgy and critic system' (cited in Hong 2011: 114). At the time the TNC directors started to produce films, the government-run CMPC was still the most powerful studio in Taiwan and the censorship system was still strict. A whole segment in Wan Ren's *His Son's Big Doll* (1983), *A Taste of Apples*, was ordered to be re-edited by the state censor in fear of embarrassing the American Government (Yeh & Davis 2005: 62). Thanks to the effort of other new cinema directors and Yang Zhiqi (a *United Daily News* entertainment journalist who championed the TNC), the whole segment film was finally shown uncut. This controversy, dubbed the 'apple-peeling incident', showed that there was a public stand against the idea of censorship altogether, and the TNC movement was rooted in a heightened focus on this much larger insistence on cultural democratisation (Ibid).

In a nutshell, TNC is an important development in Taiwan film history in view of its thematic, stylistic cutting-edge perspectives, as well as its social and political critiques. Not surprisingly, there has been a large corpus of literature focusing on this cinematic movement, which some consider to be the most important in Taiwan's film history (Shih 2011, Hong 2011, Lim 2022, Yip 2004, Lu 2002, Chang 2019, Wilson 2014a, Berry & Lu 2005). Thematically, TNC incorporated elements of indigenous Taiwanese life, especially visible in language, literary adaptations, and rural subjects (Yeh & Davis 2005: 56). It is the embodiment of resistance: resistance to the authoritative rule, resistance to the conservative and propagandist-oriented film industry, and resistance to social injustice (Chen 2015: 277). Stylistically it is on the cutting edge in its pursuit of observational realism (associated with Hou Hsiao-hsien) and modernist expressionism (associated with Edward Yang) (Berry & Lu 2005: 6). As one of the flagbearers and one of the most anti-establishment directors of the TNC, Edward Yang is mentioned or explored in nearly all literature about this cinematic movement.

Edward Yang was born on November 6, 1947, in Shanghai, China. He and his family moved to Taiwan in 1949 after the Communist Party defeated the Nationalists and took over the mainland. Throughout his film career Yang made one short and seven feature films. Yang's directing debut *Expectations* (指望) is the second episode in the portmanteau film *In Our Time* 光陰的故事 (1982), which is generally acknowledged as the first film of the TNC movement (Yip 2004: 54 Chang 2019: 2 Wilson 2014b: 49). *Expectations* prefigures many of the concerns in Yang's works. From the first feature film *That Day on the Beach* 海灘的一天 (1983), to *Taipei Story* 青梅竹馬 (1985), *Terrorizers* 恐怖分子 (1986), *A Brighter Summer Day* 牯嶺街少年殺人事件 (1991), *A Confucian Confusion* 獨立时代 (1994), *Mahjong* (1996) and *Yi Yi* 一 一(2000), Yang's films serve as his continuous creative response to and commentary on a Taiwanese society which was faced with the accelerated globalisation of capitalism and political democratisation.

With political and cultural democratisation on the way in the early 1980s, TNC expanded opportunities to produce and promote diverse cultural ideas previously not permitted (Rawnsley 2016: 374). Many TNC directors' autobiographical films, for example, Hou Hsiao-hsien's *The Boys from Fenggui* 風柜來的少年 (1983) and *The Time to Live and the Time to Die* 童年往事 (1985); and *A Borrowed Life* 多桑 (1994) directed by Wu Nian-jen, do not only provide an opportunity to contemplate personal and national history, but also constitute an important medium to establish Taiwanese historiography as a unique genre in Taiwan cinema (Ibid: 380). While the coming-of-age stories of these TNC directors are reflections of the anxieties and socioeconomic challenges from a retrospective male perspective, Yang's focus is

fixated on the urban population, their negotiations of self-identities within a rapidly changing city space and the diminishing importance of traditional signposting. If cinema is a form of vernacular modernism which articulates and mediates the experience of modernity and modernisation (Hansen 1999: 60), then the films of Yang can be understood as vernacular modernism which engage in Taiwan's vernacular modernity distinctively experienced by the Taiwanese people. In addition, in Ivy Chang's monograph on Taiwan contemporary cinema, she discusses how Yang's oeuvre represents the 'pre-modern, modern and postmodern conditions as often seen in the non-Western global city' (Chang 2019: 20). Using Antony Giddens's and David Harvey's modernity theories, she further argues that the 'social disorder, cultural disjuncture, volatility, and ephemerality' represented in Yang's films are caused by the aggravated invasion of global capitalism (Ibid). Her examination of the relationship between the consequences of modernity and Yang's city films highlights his obsessive concerns about the transitional Taiwanese society at the turn of the twenty-first century. While Chang is aware of the problematised individual identity construction in the postmodern condition of Taipei City, she, however, stops short of looking into the challenges facing men whose status quo was being shaken in the face of rapid societal transitions.

An important element in Yang's films is his distrust of metanarratives and the institutions which promote them (e.g. education system and public media) (Kraicer & Roosen 1988, Anderson 2005, Huang 2017). Yang's critical attitude towards Taiwan's heading into the 21st century with a 4th century BCE ideology, Confucianism, is aptly encapsulated by the title of one of his films, '*A Confucian Confusion*'. His films constantly reflect present-day Taipei's complex collision and blending of Chinese tradition and global modernity. Further, he shows his defiance against authoritative patriarchal family and workplace structures which promote a conformist culture. He also shows the incompatibility of the traditional Confucian human relations hierarchy *wu*

lun (五倫) with the ephemeral conditions of late modernity where doubt has become a pervasive feature and traditional signposts are constantly challenged (Giddens 1991:3). This will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

Yang's distinctive aesthetics and stylistic markers are well-researched. Yeh & Davis (2005) devote a whole book chapter to discussing narratives and distinctive film forms in Yang's whole oeuvre. In Fredric Jameson's seminal paper 'Remapping Taipei' (1992), he coins an acronym, SMS, or 'Synchronous Monadic Simultaneity' to describe Yang's complex storytelling technique and hails Yang's *Terrorizers* as a postmodernist film, though his erasure of Yang's particularity of Taipei has been contested by Catherine Liu's book chapter 'Taiwan's Cold War Geopolitics in Edward Yang's *The Terrorizers'* (2017). James Tweedie studies Yang's cinema from the perspective of the city film genre (2014), while Emilie Yeh takes a novel look at Yang's 4-hour epic *A Brighter Summer Day* through his use of music. Yang's films, similar to those of other TNC directors, are seen to be in line with the Italian realism tradition because of their emphasis on the realistic depiction of people's everyday life, which is a contrast to the melodramas and kung fu action films in the decades before. Although Yang's films portray spiritual poverty within a highly urbanised and capitalised Taipei City rather than the struggles among the poverty-stricken Italians after the Second World War, both Yang's and the Italian neorealist films manifest 'realism as a mode of production', a term used by Lucia Nagib to precisely summarise Bazin's explanation of realist cinema:

> Bazin was the first to locate realism at the point of production, by extolling, in neorealism (Rossellini, Visconti, De Sica), the regular use of real locations, non-professional actors (as well as actors stripped of their acting personas) and the combination of long takes and long shots that preserve the space-time integrity of the profilmic event.

According to Yang Shunqing, who participated in the script writing, set designing, and acting in the film *A Brighter Summer Day*, Edward Yang had an obsessive meticulousness in the reconstruction of the sombre age of the 1960s; he would not start shooting unless everything was in place while preparing for the filming location and set design (Liu 2005: 69). Further, his extensive use of long shots and long takes, a kind of realist cinematographic art which is hailed by Bazin as 'cinéma par excellence' (Bazin 2005: 27-28), also helps preserving cinematic realism by staying faithful to the spatio-temporal continuity. It is this realist mode of production, as located by Bazin and further discussed in detail by Nagib, which serves as a common denominator of the neorealist and Yang's films.

What makes Yang's films stand out from other early TNC productions is the presence of French New Wave elements such as silences and omissions, striking tableaux set amidst the easy-going flow of narrative, and the lack of potential sentimentalism of the nativist films (Lin 2008). For example, although Yang maintained that his works were not impacted by Antonioni's, many sources have highlighted the intertextual allusions between the two filmmakers' movies. I-Fen Wu argues that *The Terrorizers* is an intertext of Antonioni's *L'eclisse* (1962) in terms of their narratives and style (2006: 388). Primarily both films focus on alienated human relationships in an urban setting, and both directors frequently employ '*temps mort*' (dead time) to represent the existential angst of the protagonists. Despite the name, the term dead time describes 'the moments that occur when the image continues after the narrative usefulness has ended, or when people have left the frame, leaving us with a non-anthropocentric image of the world' (Ford 2003). As Jimmy Weaver also notes, Yang's camera often occupies a space long before the character enters the frame for that scene's action, and he contends that 'this "temps

mort," or dead time, is another trace of Antonioni's influence (Weaver 2012). On the other hand, Nagib suggests the term 'non-cinema' to describe the uncinematic stasis (2016: 132) in Antonioni's films. As Adorno notes about Antonioni's *La Notte* (1961): Whatever is 'uncinematic' in this film gives it the power to express, as if with hollow eyes, the emptiness of time (1991: 180). Indeed, this 'emptiness' of time is a recurring motif in Yang's oeuvre where his protagonists seem to be stuck in stasis in his camera frame, to such an extent that one might argue that the allusions are easily discernible.

The visual elegance of Yang's cinema is frequently characterised as cold, as one would a glassy surface that repels identification (Jameson 1992: 120). Yang's way of storytelling is unconventional. His narratives usually develop slowly and turn on small incidents or chance meetings, eruptions of desire and deliberate testing of social codes (Sklar 2000: 6). Yang's preference for long and medium shots over close up encourages analytical distance rather than direct sensory stimulation which prevails in a lot of Hollywood blockbusters (Rosenbaum 1997). That said, Yang's plots are complex and typically incorporate several crisscrossing narrative strands fully engaged with the problems of contemporary urban life, hence resisting simplistic interpretation or explication.

Yang's visual motifs are also well-known. His use of mirror and glass reflections, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, aptly resonates with his themes of urban alienation and the impossibility of communication among urban dwellers in the rapidly changing city. While big glass panes constitute invisible and confusing barriers between people, the cold and glassy surface of Taipei's skyscrapers denote the age of transnational capitalism and the homogeneity in the postmodern cosmopolitan which blurs all kinds of identity. Yang's sophisticated use of

glass reflections also integrates the exterior cityscape with the interior psyche of the urbanites, highlighting their anguish and frustration which are closely related to the city environment. In this sense, the similarity between Yang's and Antonioni's artistic vision and creative choices in their visual style is noticeable. Antonioni uses glass and steel in his films to 'create elegant monuments of nothingness which had the dry style of machine forms without the contents' (Mumford 1964: 156), mirroring the alienated human relationships of urban dwellers. For example, in *La Notte*, the glossy glass and chrome exteriors of Giovanni and Lidia's home aptly serve as a visual representation of their stagnant marriage (Tomasulo 1993: 8). Further, Yang frequently uses the frames-within-frames visual technique to represent the everyday life of city dwellers. He uses window frames, door frames, pillars, closets, blinds, mirrors, etc to enable spectators to peep into people's everyday banality, showcasing a sense of entrapment, alienation, tension and pressure experienced by modern-day people in their search for a stable identity in the fast-changing world where the signposting of traditional values is lost.

Among all other important elements in Yang's films, there is one recurring motif which is present in his whole oeuvre, namely, absent, incompetent or even deceased father figures. While the absent father figure motif keeps recurring in *Terrorizers* (Xiao-qiang 小强 and the White Chic's fathers), *A Brighter Summer Day* (Xiao-ma's 小馬 father), *A Confucian Confusion* (Xiao-ming's 小明 father who leaves them for another woman), *Mahjong* (Hongyu's 鴻宇 father who is in hiding in most of the film), and *Yi Yi* (Lily's father), deceased father figures can be found in *Expectations* (Xiao-fen's 小芬 father), *That Day on the Beach* (Jia-li 佳莉 and Jia-sen's 佳森 father), *A Brighter Summer Day* (Xiao-ming's 小明 father) and *Mahjong* (Hongyu's father who commits suicide later in the film). These father figures embody different representations of masculinities which reflect the contradicting ideologies and the

changing norms and behaviours which affect the construction of self-identity in society. However, such representation of masculine figures has only been touched on by Sun's (2013) and Rosenbaum's (1997) articles. It is also briefly mentioned in several other books (e.g. Anderson 2005, Yeh & Davis 2005), with Yeh & Davis precisely summing up the perpetual problem in Edward Yang's oeuvre being 'the monstrous insidiousness of authority (either political or economic) which dwarfs the diegetic father figures in his films' (2005: 251). To date, most studies on Yang's films tend to focus on his unique film language (Flannery 2014, Liu, 2015, Chiang 2011), and his representation of Taipei City as the apex of changes under modernisation and globalisation (Jameson 1995, Sklar 2000, Wu 2020). The study of the representation of masculinities in his films, however, seems to be patchy. For example, Tonglin Lu discusses Ah-liong's 阿隆 (*Taipei Story* 1985) struggle to keep up with the fast-changing world while clinging onto his traditional code of honour from a bygone patriarchal era (2002: 128), and men's confusion in late modernity as they tend to share a nostalgia for a safer past where they do not need to fulfil a new standard of masculinity (Ibid: 151). Liu talks about the restrictions set up by the patriarchal culture on women in *A Brighter Summer Day* (1991) and how the dichotomous pair of chaste women (basis of stability) and femme fatale (source of chaos and misfortune) are stereotyped in a patriarchal ideology (Liu 2004: 292). Similarly, in another book chapter about *A Brighter Summer Day*, Liu takes a feminist stance to assert that the conspicuous central theme of the femme fatale phenomenon in Yang's films (*That Day On the Beach* 1983, *Taipei Story* 1985 and *Terrorizers* 1986) is actually a lament on the failure of power transference from father to son (Liu 2005: 76). So far, then, the relationship between masculinity construction and one of the main concerns of Yang, namely, the consequences brought about by rapid modernisation, has never been studied systematically across his whole oeuvre.

This omission seems puzzling. Yang does deal with the topic in all his films through the representation of younger male protagonists who are more inclined to be disillusioned, alienated, rebellious or even violent directly or indirectly related to a weak or even invisible father figure in their lives. Yang's men are shown to struggle to accommodate Taiwan's rapidly changing social and personal relations, and they often find themselves at odds with individualism and other values that define the new world. His films also manifest the incompatibility of the hierarchical Confucian ideology in the rapidly transforming Taiwanese society and depict how such incongruity has brought challenges to man's status quo. As Yang has always been hailed as one of the most modern directors of his time with great acknowledgement of his critical social awareness, it is questionable that his films do not explore one of the most important aspects of identity construction, namely, masculinities construction, in Taiwan amid its rapid modernisation process. The limited corpus of literature concerning Yang's cinematic representation of Taiwanese masculinities seems to have exposed two important gaps. These are Yang's filmic representation of Taiwanese masculinities and how they evolve with the advent of modernisation, and how his cinematic representation of Taiwanese masculinities reflects and refracts the tortuous socio-political and historical background of Taiwan.

1.4/ Methodology.

This study will use close textual analysis to fill the gaps in previous literature about Yang's films. Textual analysis is usually used to investigate the structures of texts in order to explore a text's foundational elements and the functions they serve in the construction of meaning in the real world (Silverman 2001: 195). It helps us to understand the meanings and representations within a specific text in relation to society and culture (Click & Kramer 2007:

246). My examination of Yang's films, like any other analysis, does not aim to establish that this is the sole understanding of Taiwanese masculinities within specific social and cultural settings. My use of textual analysis is based on the post-structuralist approach. Such an approach does not seek to claim any one form of representation of masculinity as being the only 'accurate' or 'truthful' interpretation (McKee 2003: 13), but rather, seeks to understand the ways in which these forms of representation of masculinities take place, the assumptions behind them and the kinds of sense-making about the world which they reveal (Ibid: 20).

My decision to study Yang's complete set of works is based on the rationale that this enables a comprehensive look at Yang's representation of masculinity across different stages of modernity. As Yang's films are known for their complex cinematic language and their obsessive return to the new urban generation's daily life in Taipei City, I will closely analyse his use of cinematic space, frames-within-frames, and literal and figurative reflections to explicate the social and cultural issues triggered by rapid modernisation reflected through the lens of masculinity construction. First of all, Yang's focus on the urban space of Taipei stems from his urban rather than national or transnational affections and affiliations (Tweedy 2014: 7). The spatial changes in Yang's First Taipei trilogy (*That Day on the Beach* 1983, *Taipei Story* 1985 and *Terrorizers* 1986) which was produced towards the end of martial law, and Second Taipei trilogy (*A Confucian Confusion* 1994, *Mahjong* 1996 and *Yi Yi* 2000) which was produced during the post-martial law period foreground the spatial changes in urban Taipei City before and after the lifting of martial law, hence reflecting the different challenges facing the male protagonists in Yang's films. Second, frames-within-frames is one of the most important filmic techniques used by Yang in his films. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, Yang steadily increases his use of frames in his films so that 47% of shots in his last film *Yi Yi* (2000) have a frame in them. Building on Chang's observation of Yang's use of frames-within-frames to

represent the everyday life of urban dwellers (Chang 2004: 19), my study looks further into how Yang's abundant use of frames-within-frames depicts the sense of entrapment, alienation, frustration and tension experienced by Taiwanese men amid their search for a stable sense of self in the increasingly ephemeral and volatile conditions of Taiwanese society. Finally, I explore literal and figurative reflections in Yang's films with regard to their different capacities in the representation of the struggles of men within and across generations. These reflections do not only accentuate the profound influences of the hegemonic masculinities enabled by different forms of colonialism which have continued to shape Taiwanese masculinities, but they also highlight men's struggles during the shift from a more single-minded heavy modernity where the rules of behaviour were clear and it was difficult to break out of pre-determined patterns and boundaries (Bauman 2000: 9-11), to the risk-conscious late modernity characterised by reflexivity.

The conceptual aspect of the study is grounded on the tripartite epistemological framework consisting of postcolonial, Chinese/ Western masculinity and modernity theories. Given Taiwan's complex colonial history, it would be crucial to employ the broadest notion of postcolonial theory to understand its masculinity formation. Therefore, postcolonial theories posited and discussed by Frantz Fanon and the 'holy trinity', Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak (Young 1995: 165), are used to explain how the construction of male identities are influenced by othering and stereotyping (Said 1978). The elements of hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence (Bhabha 1994), the continuous oppression and misrepresentation of the 'subaltern' (Spivak 1994) in the Taiwan context, and how such influences evolved in the rapidly modernising and globalising Taiwanese society will also be analysed. In addition, as Taiwan shares the Han culture with their mainland Chinese counterparts, the construction of gender roles and identities is heavily influenced by the Confucian human relationship hierarchy such

as the *wu lun* model, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.2). This, together with Kam Louie's *wen-wu* (文武) dyad (also discussed in section 2.3.2 in the next chapter) which is devised to theorise Chinese masculinity, will be employed in the discussion of the construction of masculinity in the Taiwan context. Further, building on Raewyn Connell's theory of 'hegemonic masculinities' (Connell 1995: xviii), my study looks at how Taiwanese masculinities construction was influenced by the imbalance of power within the Confucian human relationship hierarchy, between the colonisers and the colonised, and under the hegemonic structure of globalising masculinity (Connell 2005: 74). Finally, I will draw on Giddens's concept on the consequences of modernity (Giddens 1992), Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity and its constant mobility and uncertainty in late modernity (2012), and Ulrich Beck's extension of Giddens's concept of reflexive modernity (Beck et al., 1994). I will employ them to illustrate how the complicated influences of Taiwan's colonial background and its Confucian culture on the construction of masculinity have been further problematised by the rapid transition into modernity which undercut traditional habits and customs in day-to-day social life.

It is worth noting that although Yang's films are known for their major concern about middle-class Taiwanese life in Taipei City, this does not, however, render the study of Yang's films a less comprehensive way of understanding Taiwanese society. In fact, Taiwan gradually turned into a middle-class society, like its counterparts among the other Asian newly industrialising economies (Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea) in the 1980s (Koo and Hsiao 1995, in Marsh 2003:39). In Taiwan, after thirty years of fast economic growth, an increase in division of labour and the expansion of Taiwan's manufacturing and service sectors has brought about a growing middle stratum of people between the large conglomerates and the working people. In a survey implemented by the Taiwan government's research body under the Executive Yuan

in 1985, more than 50% of the people in Taiwan answered that they belong to the 'middle stratum,' other choices being 'upper' and 'lower.' According to the survey, the figure increased from 51.7% in 1978 to 56.9% in 1983 (Nakajima 1997: 142). In this sense, the middle class can be conceived of as a very important sector in "modern" society. Therefore, studying middle-class male identity can significantly contribute to my research on how Taiwanese masculinity is impacted by different stages of modernity in Taiwanese society as depicted in Yang's films.

1.5/ Scholarly Contribution.

Edward Yang's films have previously been studied in association with the ephemeral, volatile and risk-ridden consequences of modernity resulting from the unprecedented mass-scaled urbanisation and globalisation (Chang 2019: 20). His city films have also been studied as a particular genre which manifests the transformation in both urban space and its representation in cinema under the pressures of globalisation (Tweedy 2014: 179). Yang's films have, however, never been perceived as a masculine project, and his depiction of male identity is neglected in most analyses of his films, or at least has not received the same amount of attention as the study of their female counterparts in his works[6]. My study of Yang's use of cinematic space, frames-within-frames and literal and figurative reflections to represent the ambiguous, frustrated and entrapped facets of masculine identity, hence manifesting the vulnerability and insecurity among Taiwanese men contributes to a better understanding to this neglected area of scholarship.

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[6] For scholarly studies on femme fatale characters in Yang's films please see Liu (2005). A Myth(ology) Mythologizing Its Own Closure: Edward Yang's A Brighter Summer Day. In C. Berry & F. Lu ed., *Island on the Edge : Taiwan New Cinema and After*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005. For Yang's criticism of Taiwan's education system and neoliberal capitalism from a female's perspective, please see Kai-man, Chang (2017). Filming Critical Female Perspectives: Edward Yang's *The Terrorizers*. *ASIANetwork Exchange* 24, no. 1 (2017): 112–31. For the discussion on Yang's representation of modern individualised women in *Taipei Story* (1985), see Tony Ryan's article 'The Position of Women in New Chinese Cinema' (1987), *East West Film Journal*, 1 (2). Pp. 32-44.

I will also devise a novel theoretical framework for the analysis of Yang's representation of masculinity under different stages of modernity. The use of this tripartite epistemological framework (Confucian ideologies, Connell's masculinity theories, and *wen-wu* dyad), combined with close textual analysis, to explore the changing representation of the construction of masculinity in Yang's whole oeuvre constitutes a novel way to examine his works. The different modernity theories inform my study of Yang's representation of masculinity from heavy to liquid and reflexive modernity. Furthermore, my use of Chinese and Western masculinity theories contributes to the theorising of hegemonic patriarchal *wu lun* human relationships, and in the transnational business masculinity represented in Yang's films. My research will further show that these identity issues faced by Taiwanese men are present within and across generations. The framework can also be used to study the cinematic representation of gender roles within a Chinese cultural setting.

Hence, through the lens of Yang's representation of masculinity, my provides greater insight into Taiwan's vernacular modernity. As different places experience their modernising process differently, the study of Yang's men manifests how Taiwan experienced and negotiated the contradictory experience of modernity in its specific way. Yang's films as a kind of vernacular modernism provide an alternative paradigm in representing Taiwanese masculinities which stand as a symbol of resistance to the politically imposed and state-endorsed masculine identity as represented in films produced under tight censorship before political and cultural democratisation. Taiwan has, as previously mentioned, always been on the road to identity building and searching. The study of Yang's films and their representation of a continual search for male identity can contribute to the understanding of the construction of both personal and

national identity of the Taiwanese people, which had long been suppressed by the authoritative KMT government, and which is still a profound challenge to the island state to this date.

Finally, my project intends to contribute to the academic debate on the under-researched cinematic representation of Taiwanese masculinity under the Japanese colonial regime, the tight censorship of the KMT government, the beginning of the democratisation process in Taiwan during the 1980s, and the invasion of accelerated globalisation of capitalism. By investigating the complicated dynamics of postcolonialism, Confucian and transnational business masculinities, and the aggravated invasion of global capitalism in the construction of Taiwanese masculinity in films produced before and during Yang's era, my project provides a comprehensive overview of the understudied Taiwanese masculinity represented in contemporary Taiwanese cinema, not just subsumed within Chinese cinema or Chinese masculinity studies, but rightly on Taiwan's own terms.

1.6/ Structure of Thesis

The introduction chapter sets the scene for the research and briefly introduces the scholarly contributions and structure of my thesis.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed explanation of the theoretical frameworks used to examine the factors contributing to masculinity formation in Taiwan. Firstly, Fanon, Said, Bhabha and Spivak's postcolonial theories which illustrate the postcolonial influence (e.g. the reconstruction of subjectivity, the stereotyped masculinities, and the role of mimicry) on Taiwanese masculinity formation as represented in Yang's films. Then the traditional Confucian hierarchical framework *wu lun*, Kam Louie's *wen-wu* paradigm, and Connell's

concept of hegemonic transnational business masculinity will be explained in order to show how they help theorise masculinity in a patriarchal Taiwanese society under the influence of global capitalism in the patriarchal Taiwanese society. Finally, different modernity theories by Giddens, Bauman and Beck which contextualise the changes in Taiwanese society in different stages of modernity. The theories are important in defining the masculinities represented in Yang's films, how they are formulated and how the loss of all signposting in liquid modernity challenges men's patriarchal status.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are interlocking chapters on the close textual analysis of Yang's whole oeuvre. Chapter 3 examines Yang's construction of space to represent masculinities. It begins with a brief literature review on the definition and function of space in the context of cinema. It then draws on Lefebvre's theory on the production of space to understand Yang's construction of the colonial, the urban and the porous, ambiguous and homogenous globalised and commercialised space in his works. The chapter focuses on Yang's use of the obsolete and repressive colonial space, the porous and homogenous space which lacks a clear demarcation between public and private realms, and the claustrophobic urban space constructed through a 'tunnel vision' to manifest the constant anxiety and frustration experienced by men in the fast-changing society.

Chapter 4 explores Yang's use of frames-within-frames to represent masculinity across his works. It starts with a brief review of the functions of the frames-within-frames technique in cinema. This is succeeded by an in-depth textual analysis of Yang's entire filmography, with a specific focus on his use of the frames-within-frames device. The issues of a lack of father figure due to the waning postcolonial influences (both from the Japanese and the de facto

recolonisers: the KMT government), the disappearing of traditional signposting, the disintegration of family ties, the changing gender roles due to the rapid changes in society, and the volatile and ephemeral liquid modernity all cast incredible pressure on the patriarchal status quo of Taiwanese men. This chapter shows how Yang uses his frames-within-frames device to represent these challenges facing men in different stages of modernity, which will be further developed in the final analysis chapter.

Chapter 5 analyses Yang's use of mirror, glass and figurative reflections in his cinematic representation of Taiwanese masculinity. Following a brief review of how specular reflections are used in films, the rest of the chapter is divided into three sections. Each section focuses on a particular type of reflection, namely, mirror, glass and figurative reflections. This chapter argues that the problems facing men evolve across different stages of modernity, within the same and across different generations. Although Yang seems to represent a lost and frustrated masculine image throughout his works, this chapter ends with a discussion on Yang's focus on reflexive modernity which causes greater confusion and yet at the same time provides a way out for men's struggle in the risk society in his last film *Yi Yi*.

Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter which draws together all the implications of the textual analysis of Yang's films in his representation of masculinity. It will also recapitulate the original contributions of the study. Finally, the chapter discusses the possible implications for the current study and points to a future direction of the study of Yang's films.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the central concepts of postcolonial, masculinities and modernity theories which are used throughout the study, and explain the complexities and

contestations involved in employing such terms. The implications of these terms in the analysis of Yang's works will also be explained.

Chapter 2: Foundational Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter will discuss the tripartite epistemological framework I have devised, drawing on postcolonial, Chinese/ Western masculinity and modernity theories. These theories are not discussed as isolated themes but will be drawn together to inform the textual analysis of Yang's representation of masculinity. I will first discuss the relevant theoretical background of postcolonial theories and their interaction with the construction of masculinities, both in the Western and Taiwanese contexts. Though the colonial history of Taiwan has been briefly touched on in the introduction, it is necessary to discuss it in further detail in this chapter to show a clearer link between how postcolonial theories which emerged in the Western context can be applied to postcolonial Taiwan. I will then explain the different modernity frameworks which help theorise Yang's representation of masculinity. Finally, Yang's career spans several decades, and his films show a trajectory of the decline in the influence of the patriarchal hierarchy in traditional Confucian human relationships and the increasing influence of the globalised hegemonic business masculinity. Hence, I will also discuss the theories employed to define Chinese concepts of masculinity and transnational business masculinities.

2.1/ Masculinities and Postcolonialism

It is important to define postcolonialism in clearer terms before embarking on the effects of postcolonialism on the construction of masculinity. Leela Gandhi (1998: 3) asserts that while some critics invoke the hyphenated form of 'post-colonialism' as a decisive temporal marker of the decolonising process, others fiercely query the implied chronological distinction between colonialism and its aftermath on the grounds that the postcolonial condition is 'inaugurated with the onset rather than the end of colonial occupation.' Postcolonialism, according to this definition, is a historically determined power relationship generated by the legacies of conquest

and colonialism, and has decisively shaped the economic, political, social, and cultural conditions of the modern world. It then slowly evolves towards a critique of Western hegemony in the global context, exposing the twin nature of the modernist project of colonisation: freedom, self-determination, reason, and yet also submission, marginalisation, and inadequacy of the 'other' (Morrell & Swart 2004: 94). In short, postcolonialism provides a voice for people who are dominated, marginalised, and othered by Western imperial expansion. It is important to note that these people are not confined only to the ex-colonised. In fact, under the influence of globalisation, which is described as a new form of colonialism or imperialism (Ibid: 92), postcolonialism is widely employed and interpreted as a means to critique any sort of marginalisation and othering in the rapidly modernising and globalising world.

Modern colonialism is now widely recognised to have institutionalised enduring hierarchies of individuals and knowledge (Said 1978, Spivak 1994, Bhabha 1983), resulting in the oversimplification of intricate nuances and exchanges into a binary (self/other) logic of colonial power (Prakash 1995: 3). Indeed, the world still bears the mark of colonialism, for example, the dichotomy between the high income, developed, Global North (which covers the First and much of the Second World, and is normally termed as the 'West'); and the low income, least or underdeveloped Global South (which largely corresponds to the Third World, or the 'rest'). Long after the zenith of colonialism, the former colonies which have gained political independence do not have the same kind of liberty in their economies and are still heavily influenced by their previous colonisers or other developed ex-colonisers through globalisation, capitalism and cultural imperialism.

In the Taiwan context, for example, the heavy reliance on American commercial and military aid between the 1950s and the 1970s means that Taiwan's complicated postcolonial history and its destabilised national identity were further exacerbated by the 'neocolonial' influence of the Americans. Sartre coined the term 'neocolonialism' in a speech delivered on 27 January 1956 at the Salle Wagram in Paris to describe the indirect colonisation of 'capitalism' in Algeria by the French Government at the time (Majumdar 2007: 84). Kwame Nkrumah (1966: ix) also discusses neocolonialism's characteristic of the perceived illusion of independence in the context of African countries undergoing decolonisation in the 1960s. In fact, political independence made little difference when the true levers of power were economic, and they remained firmly in the hands of international capitalists and the Western states that served them. The imbalance of economic power has exacerbated the asymmetry in power relations between the well and the un/underdeveloped. Therefore, when talking about postcolonial Taiwan, it is necessary to bear in mind the political influences imposed by the Japanese colonisers and the KMT recolonisers on the one hand, and the social, economic and cultural influences incurred by the neocolonialism on the other, topics which will be discussed in detail in section 2.2.

As this study intends to show, Yang's films bear the traits of a postcolonial critique of Taiwanese society. Though they do not explicitly criticise the Japanese colonial history and the brutal recolonisation process such as the White Terror at the beginning of the KMT's rule, they show the struggle of the Taiwanese people, especially through the male protagonists, in their search for a clear identity after the Japanese colonisation, during the recolonisation process of the KMT where a Confucian masculine identity was reimposed on the ex-colonised Taiwanese men, and challenges brought on by the collapse of old social norms due to neocolonialism.

Given that colonisation is such a highly gendered process (it was, for instance, driven by gendered metropolitan forces and reflected the gender order of the metropole (Morrell & Stewart 2004: 91), its rise and decline is therefore inherently connected to the shaping and formation of masculinity for both the colonisers and the colonised, during the zenith of Western colonisation and till today. The process of colonisation affects not only the mind but also the physical body. It generalises the concept of the West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category (Kabesh 2013: 25) while its decline marks the concomitant historical crisis of the values it represented, chiefly masculine authority founded and embodied in the patriarchal family. Hence postcolonial theories have come to play an increasingly important role in the understanding and theorising of masculinities.

2.1.1/ Fanon and the Production of Inferior Colonial Masculinity

Some of the earliest and most influential writings of Fanon, which would later transform into postcolonial theory, provide keen insights into the production of gender. They also explore the distortions of masculinities produced under the oppression of colonisation, as well as the masculinities experienced by the colonisers themselves (Fanon 1952, 1961). Though written more than half a century ago, his works still resonate with the present situation of black masculinities. As repeatedly pointed out by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), nobody can escape the psychic and social structures of a Western world which privileges whiteness, demarcates human beings into those who are superior or inferior, and functions with a hierarchy of dominance and subordination.

Following Fanon, Kabesh posits that the main issue of colonialism is the continual matter of subjection that affects all men (and indeed women as well). Subjectivity, according to Kabesh,

indicates that men are subject to the social order with all the associated meanings, injunctions, beliefs and values that are imbibed, inhabited and lived out. Hence, masculinity is an identity which is gained not just from family or individual predispositions but, much more critically, from wider social structures, including language and social, economic, and cultural institutions (Kabesh 2013: 8). Just as Fanon asserts: the inferiority complex of black people does not antedate colonisation (Fanon 1952: 85). That is, it is not something naturally felt among black people but is imposed through racism in white societies. The racist is responsible for the creation of an inferior race (Ibid: 93) that is degraded and viewed solely as black bodies instead of individuals with thoughts and emotions (Ibid: 85). The masculinity formation of black people is distorted in a way that in their subconscious, the black men are confronted with the dilemma of 'turn white or disappear' (Ibid: 100). Fanon's writings inspire my study of the representation of postcolonial masculinity in Yang's films in two ways. Firstly, if the formation of male subjectivity is heavily influenced by colonisation, how is it reflected across Yang's whole oeuvre? Secondly, Fang Ming Chen asserts (1999: 165; 2002: 16) that postcolonialism allows the subaltern, whom Spivak defines as people 'who can never speak in the context of colonial production' (Spivak 1994: 93), to 'interrogate the damage inflicted by the colonisers on the existing society and enables the reconstruction of subjectivity' and 'pursuit of subjectivity' for the colonised. Considering this, how does the formation of masculinity change in the films produced by Yang around the time when the martial law was lifted, and which are often seen as the first cultural products marking the decolonisation of Taiwan?

2.1.2/ Said: Self-/ Orientalism, Self/ Other Binary Representation and Stereotyping

One major concern of postcolonialism is how Western discursive practices, in their representation of the world and of themselves, legitimise the contemporary global power

structures (Condit & Kavoori 1998: 197). As Said posits in his concept of Orientalism (1978), the representation of the Middle Eastern and Asian societies (i.e. the Orient) is still very much constituted from a Eurocentric point of view. Originally applied to the Arab world, Said's concept of Orientalism describes how the Middle East was positioned by the West as the primitive and backwards 'Other' which required the 'rhetoric of high cultural humanism' (Said 1978: 227). The constant feminising of the Oriental other as opposed to the male European power fantasy is one prime example of 'the self and other' dichotomy posited by Said in *Orientalism* (Ibid: 206). 'The other', the alien and alter ego to and of the self, is in fact the inferior reflection of Europe. In the context of postcolonial critique, othering codifies and fixes the 'self' as the true human and the 'other' as other than human. Such binary self/ other representation between the colonisers and the colonised risks simplifying the latent characteristics of the colonised's identities, positioning the colonisers in a dominating privileged hegemonic ideal while subjecting the colonised under constant stereotyping and demonising. Orientalism, in Said's words, denotes a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony (Said 1978: 3). It helps produce and sustain imperialism and colonialism, and it contributes to the reiteration and recirculation of these representations in the East itself. As briefly touched on before, the films produced by the Japanese colonial regime in Taiwan highlighted the type of self/ other representation between the colonisers and the colonised. The representation of the silent, emotionless aborigines with heavily tattooed faces is the total opposite of the portrayal of the Japanese males who are modernised, genial and well-educated. By deliberately upholding this type of self/ other binary between the colonisers and the colonised subjects, the Japanese colonial hegemony is further justified through the representation of the voiceless masculinity in colonial cinema.

Though the body of knowledge that Said defines as 'orientalist' mostly refers to Western texts produced in the nineteenth century (Kim 2016: 154), the concept of 'persistent otherness', the representation of the exotic East as the subject of the modernised Western gaze is also applicable to the study of Chinese cinema. For example, it is argued that Oriental-exoticism has been adapted in Zhang Yimou's films (Teo 2021). By willingly subjecting his film to the Western gaze, Zhang has been accused by critics such as Yaowei Zhu and Yiu-Wai Chu of 'self-Orientalism' (2013: 28), or what Rey Chow terms 'cultural exhibitionism' and the 'Oriental's Orientalism' (as cited in Lu 1997: 126). Ang Lee's films, Eleanor Ty argues, create pleasures but also problems in the representation of the exotic East amidst their desire to locate national or ethnic identity (1996: 60). Some critics are more positive in their reading of Zhang and Lee's films, citing Zhang's works as a cultural hybrid incorporating Western moral and political philosophy as a way to destabilise the West's image of China in an age of globalisation (Kim 2016: 153), while Lee's films provide an indigenous representation of the Orient, China in particular, challenging Western hegemonic consumerism (Dariotis & Fung 1997: 189).

The Third World, encompassing the regions formerly dominated by colonial capitalism, marks a distinctive type of cultural experience as they are all in various distinct ways locked in a life-and-death struggle with first-world cultural imperialism, as it is euphemistically termed 'modernisation', which is part and parcel of colonialism (Jameson 1986: 68). Jameson further argues that all third-world texts are necessarily allegorical, and they are to be read as what he calls 'national allegories', where the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society (Jameson 1986: 69). Jameson (1992: 118) describes Yang as a Third World filmmaker, who produces films with the characteristics of what he considers to be Third World literature. While the definition of

the Third World is contested[7], Jameson's national allegories which highlight Yang's use of the individual experiences of the characters in his films to represent the larger social and political issues of Taiwan help me to locate my main concern in my argument. Hence, this thesis will look at Yang's oeuvre from the perspective of a national allegory, arguing that their representation of masculinity allegorises the challenge between the colonisers/ recolonisers and the colonised, and between the Western and the Oriental point of view.

2.1.3/ Bhabha: Hybridity, Mimicry and Ambivalence

Taking up from Said's concepts of binary representation, Bhabha is the first scholar to talk about the elements of hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence in postcolonial literature, illustrating the complex interdependent relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. He posits that 'colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 1994: 122). The effects of this mimicry have, however, a direct impact on a colonised subject's sense of identity and psyche. Similar to the construction of gender identity which is grounded on the stylised repetition of acts through time (Butler 1988: 520), the colonial project is an ongoing process of production and reproduction. It is, however, always marked by anxiety, something that enables the dominated to fight back (Huddart 2006: 1). Such anxiety marks moments in which the coloniser is less powerful than may be apparent, and moments when the colonised were able to resist the dominance exercised over them. Bhabha's work emphasises the active agency of the colonised, showing different ways in which the colonised can resist their colonisers' power. He argues

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[7] Aijaz Ahmad faults Jameson's assertion by pointing out that 'there is no such thing as a third-world literature which can be constructed as an internally coherent object of theoretical knowledge (Ahmad 1987: 4). Yet Auritro Majumder argues that Jameson's 'Third World' is indeed an internally coherent concept, but one which is only in relation to capital (Majumder 2017: 786). When Jameson speaks of third-world cultures he is referring to 'a cultural struggle that is itself a reflection of the economic situation in such areas of their penetration by various stages of capital' (1986: 68).

that while the colonisers want to produce compliant subjects who mimic the colonisers, more often than not they produce ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery (1994: 122). In fact, the mimicry, that is, the copying of the colonisers' language, behaviour and cultural values by the colonised, is at once resemblance and menace (Ibid). It is this 'grotesque mimicry' which constantly recalls the irreducible difference between the copy and the original, the colonised and the colonisers (Bhabha 1983: 27), that plays an important role in Yang's representation of masculinity in his earlier films. As will be discussed in further detail in the three analysis chapters, mimicry empowers Yang's men to challenge the different colonising powers, and provides them with a means for asserting a distinct identity, even if it is a problematic one.

Relying on the frameworks of postcolonial studies, Kabesh tries to make sense of the complex social–cultural–emotional webs upon which postcolonial masculinities are built. She explains that colonised subjects are, precisely subjects who are at the sharp end of profoundly ambivalent, if not maddening statements such as 'you are not like us, you are to become like us' (Kabesh 2013: 38). Humiliation is felt when the self is eroded or, more problematically, not allowed to exist to begin with. While the white person is normally the subject and dominates all the political, social and cultural power, the colonised person of colour is neither subject nor object. They seem only to exist in the gaps in the white world (Kureishi 2004: 107). The greatest humiliation of the colonised is, therefore, the denial of their illusion of self-possession. This emotion of humiliation, together with the shame felt by black men knowing that the desire to become their white counterparts is not reciprocal, have undesirable effects on the construction of colonial and postcolonial masculinities (Kabesh 2013: 93).

On the men from the Middle East and men who have a history of colonisation in general, Kabesh argues that the continuous assertion of masculinity and patriarchy (the Middle East is replete with patriarchal power relations) is a response to the shame experienced in relation to the colonised past and imperialist present (Ibid: 96). On the other hand, although the colonisers are constantly positioned at the centre of power, the strong desire for the colonised to become white still causes insecurity and anxiety among the colonisers. As stated by Bhabha, 'They want to take our place. It is true for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place' (1986: xv). This statement points to the anxiety of the colonisers concerning what in their fears will get stolen. Masculinity fears for itself, and consequently, robust efforts are made to fend off possible humiliation and shame (of the possible loss of power and privileges to the colonised). By discriminating against the othered, the minority, the inferior and the weak, masculinity succeeds in bolstering the diminishing self, which kickstarts a vicious cycle of continuous colonisation and exploitation. Given the complicated colonial history of Taiwan, the effects of European colonialism may vary greatly in its specific context. The dominant postcolonial theory therefore will only partially describe what constitutes the postcolonial condition in Taiwan. That said, Bhabha's concept of ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity can in a sense explain the ambivalent masculinity formed by the colonial subjects under the Japanese colonisers and the KMT re-colonisers. In addition, it exemplifies the use of mimicry as a tool for survival and resistance by Yang's men, rather than simply reflecting the consequences of political and cultural colonisation. This will be further illustrated in the section on postcolonial masculinity formation in the Taiwan context.

2.2/ The Consequences of Modernities on the Construction of Masculinity

The debates on postcolonialism and the spread of global capitalism seem to be distinct from each other, even though the two are linked. Stuart Hall states that 'two halves of the current

debate about 'late modernity' – the postcolonial and the analysis of the new developments in global capitalism – have indeed largely proceeded in relative isolation from one another' (Hall 1996 quoted in Bartolovich 2002: 3). Globalisation has been described as another form of colonialism or imperialism, and has not corrected the legacies of the uneven march of capitalism or the differential impacts of imperialism (Morrell and Swart 2004: 92). Most modernisation theories rest on a crude dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern" societies and are designed to elucidate the means whereby "traditional" societies can acquire the attributes of "modernity" (Cleary 2002: 103). Yang's films have a nuanced interpretation of the consequences of colonialism and the different stages of modernity in Taiwan. While his earlier films bear traits of postcolonial critique on masculinity formation, his later films seem to focus on the influence of global capitalism on his male protagonists' subjectivity formation. As discussed in the previous section, neocolonialism is also a form of colonialism. The consequences of modernity exacerbated by globalised capitalism have become the major concerns in Yang's later films. In this section, I will outline the different modernity theories employed in the study to illustrate the influences of transitions brought about by modernity, and how they undercut traditional habits and customs and confront the traditional role of masculinity as represented in Yang's films. It is important to keep in mind that although there are contested areas within these modernity theories [8] and they offer insight into modern societies, they have their own pros and cons and not all are suitable for the constantly shifting modern landscape. The following summary of their theories as such will focus on how they explain the different stages of modernity as manifested in Yang's films and how they fit into

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[8] For critiques about Giddens, Beck and Bauman's theories of individualisation as a result of detraditionalization, see Dawson (2012) *Reviewing the Critique of individualization: The Disembedded and Embedded Theses*; for a critique of Bauman's inconsistency and complexity in his arguments, see Smith (2017) *Exploring Bauman's Liquid Modernity*

Yang's perception of the rapidly changing Taiwanese society which is in turn expressed through his unique film language.

2.2.1/ Giddens's Concepts on the Consequences of Modernity (Giddens 1992)

Giddens's theory of modernity stresses that modernity radically alters the nature of day-to-day social life and affects the most personal aspects of our experience. Though modernity must be understood on an institutional level, it affects the individual in a direct way and therefore the construction of self-identity. The latter, Giddens stresses, also helps to shape the institutions of modernity in return (Giddens 1991:1). Giddens terms the present-day world 'high or late-modernity', in which doubt is a pervasive feature of modern critical reason (Giddens 1991:3), and all the signposts offered by tradition have become blank. All metanarratives should therefore be regarded as questionable and invalid until further notice (Giddens 1990: 49). Modernity is permeated by abstract systems like money and time (Giddens 1990:112). In fact, modern social life is characterised by the following two traits: the reorganisation of time and space, and the expansion of disembedding mechanisms (a process in which social relations have become increasingly spread across time and space and which is associated with a decline in traditional social ties). Globalisation, as Giddens contends, should be understood as a mechanism of 'disembedding' which puts strains on previously isolated local activities and relations by making them interact over wide distances in time and space (Giddens 1990:21; 2000:85-7). However, Giddens also writes that despite these processes of disembedding, synchronous interactions between people remain an important foundation of our working lives as humans are social beings and they enjoy the pleasure of social interactions. In other words, he claims that disembedded relations can be 'reembedded', that is, reappropriated so that fragmented social connections can be retrieved and sustained (1990: 79, 88). Yet in view of the

late modernity conditions which are saturated with uncertainty, this process of reembedding can be a precarious one and the individuals are required to constantly review their own choices.

This leads to another important advocation by Giddens is his notion of the reflexive project of the self. According to Giddens, stepping into modernity implies that individuals are constantly shaping, monitoring and reflecting on how to live their lives instead of just accepting a handed-down identity (1991: 5). As tradition has been continually dissolved by the intensifying forces of modernisation, it culminates at a point of detraditionalisation and marks the beginning of what Beck calls the risk society (1992: 14-5). Giddens hence concludes that we are the first generation to live in a post-traditional society (1994: 83), where globalisation and reflexivity are the central forces of detraditionalisation. In agreement with Giddens, Beck further argues that we no longer live our lives in traditional certainties, but rather in reflexive modernity where one needs to find their certainties (1994: 13-14).

2.2.2/ Beck's Extension of Giddens's Concept of Reflexive Modernity

Reflexive modernity means first the disembedding of industrial social forms and second the re-embedding of another modernity (Beck 1994: 2); as the industrial society becomes obsolete, the risk society which is characterised by the 'return of uncertainty to society' emerges. While Giddens (2003: 2) speaks about a 'runaway world' which appears increasingly open and changeable, Beck (cited in Yates, 2003) characterises risk society as a 'world out of control…where there is nothing certain but uncertainty'. The word 'reflexive' refers to a boomerang effect where people have to face the consequences of the unwanted risks they manufacture. According to Beck, the 'Return of uncertainty to society' means:

…first of all that more and more social conflicts are no longer treated as problems of order but as problems of risk. Such risk problems are characterised by having no unambiguous solutions; rather, they are distinguished by a fundamental ambivalence, which can usually be grasped by calculations of probability, but not removed that way.

(Beck 1994: 8)

As developed by Giddens, Beck and Lash, reflexive modernity recognises that the organised capitalism of earlier industrialisation is over, and it seizes the moment as one for reflection and reorganisation. For Giddens, reflexivity is not distinctive to a post-traditional society. However, he argues that only in the era of modernity is the revision of convention radicalised to apply to all aspects of human life in principle (Giddens 1990: 38-39). Since individuals have been set free from the rigid shackles of traditions, culture and the agents of class structures, they are invited to reflect on the rules and resources of the dysfunctional social structure (Lash 1994: 115-116). Similar to Giddens, Beck places high emphasis on an individual's responsibility to refuse a given identity. He suggests that people in late modernity would and should transform their 'given' identity in a more solid stage of modernity (e.g. traditional class stratification and gender roles) to one which is individually generated, after day-to-day decisions on how to live. For example, in Taiwan's case, the arrival of the reflexivity age requests more responsibility on individuals to build up their own sense of identity and sort out their existential crisis; the moment of reflecting and reorganisation has arrived in the backdrop of the tumultuous global transition to disorganised capitalism (Li 2003:198). Beck et al (1994: 174) write that an elementary thesis of reflexive modernisation is: 'the more societies are modernised, the more agents (subjects) acquire the ability to reflect on the social conditions of their existence and to change them in that way.' The consistent introspection demanded of individuals, as discussed earlier and often depicted in Yang's urban films, presents both advantages and disadvantages

in today's society. Reflexive modernity may indeed bring emancipation to some people as they acquire the ability to reflect on the social conditions of their existence; it can, however, also bring an intensifying sense of rootlessness because of the loss of certainty to others. Urban dwellers are, as asserted by Beck, faced with constant risks when people are expected to live in the turbulence of the global risk society as individuals, or as Beck asserts, only as individuals (Ibid: 7-8). That said, reflexive modernity brings in reconstruction instead of deconstruction, emphasising the role of reflexivity as a way of dealing with Western disaffection with modernity (Lee 2006: 359). Though new boundaries are re-defined and identities are pluralised in the era of reflexive modernity, not all sureties of tradition have been driven out by modern knowledge and practices (Ibid: 359).

Indeed, reflexivity is not a mere instrument of doubt that jeopardises foundations. On the one hand, it continuously revises to differentiate the modern from the traditional, while on the other it tries to react to the evaporation of traditional morality by re-anchoring the self in a rapidly changing world through the perceived necessity of tradition. In other words, reflexive modernity cannot fully differentiate itself from tradition because of its ambivalent attitude toward the latter (Ibid: 361). As Akram and Hogan contend, the de-traditionalisation thesis advocated by Giddens (1991) and Beck (1992) does not correctly describe processes of reflexivity in society today. Though these seminal theorists of modernity argue that individuals in modern society are constantly reflecting on their own social behaviour and absorbing new knowledge in the construction of their lives without being controlled by traditions, in reality, however, everyday life behaviour and identity are constrained for a variety of reasons (Akram & Hogan 2015: 622). In fact, it can be argued that individualization encompasses both an individual's mindset and the way society is structured. Changes in idealised gender relationships and masculinity formations are re-embedded, re-negotiated and re-organised

under increasing individualisation among individuals. Yet at the same time, gender roles, gender hierarchies, and gender dynamics are all shaped by the traditional construction of masculinity on the one hand, and the continuous transformation of modern society on the other. This study intends to argue, therefore, that as modernity progresses from heavy/solid to light/ liquid modernity, Yang's use of space, frames and reflections provide a nuanced reading of how constant reflexivity will generate more questions that once appeared to be answered, and renegotiate the fluid, fragmented masculine identity in late modernity characterised by globalisation, risk, detraditionalisation, individualisation and reflexivity.

2.2.3/ Bauman

While Beck regards a period of constant mobility as reflexive modernity, Bauman uses the term liquid modernity to describe the situation. In addition to Giddens's concept of 'high/ late modernity', Bauman's theory of 'liquid or light modernity is also drawn on to analyse Yang's films. To Bauman, 'liquid' is a better term to describe the condition of constant mobility and the changes he observed in relationships, identities, and global economics within contemporary society. He asserts that such a society is characterised by the growing conviction that change is the only permanence, and uncertainty the only certainty (2000: viii). His analogy between people living in light modernity and passengers on board a plane without a pilot or a known destination echoes the radical changes and challenges faced by Taiwan during its rapid transition from a traditional agrarian society into an industrial, modernised and globalised cosmopolitan one. The new level of uncertainty brings about a higher level of anxiety and more risks, and it is now up to individuals to decide what their destinations are (Bauman 2000: 59).

Postmodernity, then, is not seen as a radical break with modern society. Instead, it has always been characterised by an ambivalent dual nature. This is because although people have been granted an unprecedented amount of freedom to achieve their goals, they are also burdened with the need to assume the risks and the responsibilities that this freedom brings (Bauman 2000: 19). Hence, individuals need social norms and some sense of routine to ground themselves in modernity. As stated by Sennet and quoted by Bauman, 'Routine can demean, but it can also protect' (*Ibid*: 21). This, however, points to one of the central problems faced by people who live in postmodernity: norms and routines are much less stable that they once were, since there is no longer a social definition for the self, and individuals are expected to define themselves by their own psychological specificity and not social or universal principles (Ibid: 20-21). Despite the contested debates and criticisms briefly mentioned before, they do help illustrate the fragmented and formless human relationships that Yang depicts in his films (especially the later works of Yang like *A Confucian Confusion* and *Mahjong*) where the world of the protagonists seems to disintegrate within a matter of days. Hence in my study of Yang's films, the modernity theories of Giddens, Beck and Bauman discussed above will be used to illustrate the representation of masculinity, showing how male identities, which seem to be the vested interest of the patriarchal Taiwanese society, are constantly challenged and reflected upon under the risk-ridden culture of modernity.

2.3/ Concepts of Masculinity: Local and Global

As my project focuses on the influences of postcolonial history and different stages of modernity on the construction of masculinity, it is essential to define masculinity in the Taiwan context. In addition, as Connell (2005) argues, the construction and enactment of masculinity should be considered not only on a local but also on a global scale. In other words, in the era

of globalisation, the communication of different masculinities should be an active interaction between local and global forces. Concepts of masculinity in the Western context and their influences on Taiwanese masculinity formation should therefore also be considered. This section will first look at the influences of Japanese colonisation on the construction of Taiwanese masculinity. It will then discuss what defines a man in the Taiwan context based on the Confucian ideology that has long been adopted by the local Taiwanese who shared Han cultural traditions, and also one which was idealised by the KMT government as a means to strengthen their recolonisation of the island state. It will also delineate how the status of men in a Confucian-based patriarchal structure can be explained by Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity. These different frameworks will help explain how Yang's films represent masculinity and how such representation reflects the social, political and cultural changes at the time.

2.3.1/ Japanese Colonial Influences on the Formation of Masculinities in Taiwan

In section 2.1 I have argued how postcolonialism critiques the colonial influence on the construction of masculinity. Yet applying Western concepts of postcolonial theories to the construction of masculinity in post-war Taiwan, as mentioned briefly at the beginning of the chapter, can be problematic. It could, however, be argued that the Japanese, being one of the major colonial powers in Taiwan's complex history, were at least honorary Westerners having succeeded in their mimicry of the West. In fact, at the height of the Japanese colonial power when Imperial Japan's influence spread across the Western Pacific and East Asia, there were persistent attempts to differentiate the Japanese people both racially and culturally from their colonial subjects. Furthermore, what we need to be mindful of is the structural sameness of Japanese imperialist/colonialist practice compared with Western imperialism and colonisation

(Ching 2001:27). The military and political advantages of the modern Japanese state had been translated into the self-perceived cultural and racial superiority of the Japanese nation and its people (Ibid: 25), accentuating their domination over, and discrimination against, the colonised subjects. Given this, the concepts of Western postcolonial theories of 'othering', 'ambivalence', 'mimicry' and 'representation' seem to be applicable in the Taiwan context.

Despite the strong sense of Chinese (Han) cultural tradition shared by the KMT and the *benshengren*, it is not clear whether the latter willingly identify with the Chinese identity re-imposed by the incoming regime. Cultural assimilation, or the re-sinicising project pushed by the KMT to strengthen their rule is in many ways no different from recolonisation. Given that colonialism is a system of power, the power relations at play are indeed relevant in both Western and Asian contexts. This power relationship is also visible in the construction of masculinities. Before further discussion on how these postcolonial theories can be applied to the Taiwan context and affect the construction of masculinity, it is necessary to first understand the complex colonial history of Taiwan.

Contemporary research in the past two decades on Taiwanese national identity (Harrison 2006, Lupke 2009), gender (Chen & Mac an Ghaill 2017, Bih, H. 2017), colonial and postcolonial history (especially in film and literary studies, see Barclay 2015, Scruggs 2006) have all contributed to the increase of Taiwan studies in the academic discourse. That said, Taiwanese identity is still a relatively marginal subject in mainstream Western academic discourse. Firstly, Taiwan has a very complex history of being colonised. It was colonised in contemporary history by Japan, and later recolonised by an ethnic Chinese regime, but it seems by then, the culture of Taiwan and mainland China had diverged due to the half a century of Japanese

colonisation. Hence, the use of postcolonial theory for the analysis of Taiwanese society should take into account the complex history of colonisation of Taiwan, and not be submerged within the wide umbrella of Sinology or Chinese studies (Shih 2003: 144). On a similar note, though the interest in East Asian men's studies has grown in recent years, studies on Taiwanese masculinity are peripheral, nearly always appearing as one or two chapters in monographs on Chinese masculinities studies (Chen and Mac an Ghaill 2017 Wong & Yau 2016). While Louie's ground-breaking *wen-wu* model about Chinese masculinities formation has provided a helpful framework for theorising Chinese masculinity (Louie 2002), it is mainly focused on the formation of Chinese masculinity in mainland China, with the focus on Taiwanese and Hong Kong masculinities studies remaining on the periphery. Similar to personal identity such as masculinity, national identity is constructed in a socialisation process. If men are products of history and ideology, and if masculinity is a product of social construction like nationality, it then follows that the understanding of the formation of the Taiwanese national identity may lead to a more thorough understanding of the formation of Taiwanese masculinity.

Taiwan did not become a full province of China until 1887. Before the arrival of the Han settlers from Mainland China, the island's non-Han indigenous inhabitants had been colonised by the Spanish in northern Taiwan between the 1620s and 1640s, and the Dutch between the 1620s and 1660s. The Ming loyalist Zheng Cheng-gong (Koxinga) then displaced the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century until the authority of the Qing imperial government was established on the island. During the two centuries of Qing's rule, a Taiwanese identity would probably have been largely understood separately and individually as Indigenous Taiwanese, Hakka, Southern Min, and European. Under Japanese colonial rule, the sense of distinctive Taiwaneseness was also relatively weak. According to Liu, Hung & Vickers (2005: 102), it was the experience of political and cultural repression under the KMT regime that prompted

many *benshengren* to reject the Great Han chauvinist, homogenising vision of Chinese identity. In other words, Taiwanese identity or consciousness and its community have been urgent issues in Taiwan only since the end of the Japanese colonisation in 1945, and Japanese colonial modernity had probably catalysed a Taiwanese identity or consciousness (Scruggs 2015: 32).

That said, during Japanese colonial rule, the colonialised subjects' identity and the effects of colonisation are still worthy of examination. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon famously observes, 'Colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: In reality, who am I?' (Fanon 1961: 250). Unlike the French in Indochina, the Dutch in the East Indies, or the British in South Asia, who discriminated against the natives because of race, colour or cultural background; Japanese colonisers in Taiwan often invoked their common cultural roots, highlighting the fact that the Japanese and the Taiwanese shared the same language and ethnicity. As a result, Taiwanese identities waver between Chinese and Japanese. Nevertheless, such colonial discourse of cultural affinity encouraged under the Japanese assimilation and imperialisation policy only served to conceal the inherent inequalities between the 'natural' Japanese, and the 'naturalised' Japanese imperial subjects, and the hypocrisy that allowed the colonised not to live as Japanese, but only to die as Japanese (Ching 2001: 5-6).

This resonates with Kabesh's observation that while colonised subjects must conform to the norms of their colonisers, they will never become one of them (Kabesh 2013: 38). As masculinity is an identity which is gained from social structures, and men are subjects to the social order in which they inhabit and live out, such an ambivalent relationship between the colonisers and the colonised constituted the formation of the ambiguous and frustrated masculinity among Taiwanese men. Furthermore, the complex interdependent relationship

between the coloniser and the colonised concerning elements of hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence as posited by Bhabha seems to be applicable in the context of Japanese colonial rule. His assertion that 'colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (1994: 122) aptly describes the Taiwanese colonised subjects' mentality at the time. This is manifested through the 'intentional assimilation' policy adopted by the ethnic Han Taiwanese elites under Japanese rule (Shozo 2006: 63), as a way to be assimilated into the Japanese civilisation on the one hand, and as an 'acceptance as resistance' strategy on the other (Chen 2001: 236).

The Japanese colonial rule came in the form of a 'colonial modernity'. It also, however, brought to the colonial subjects fractured and destabilised identities. To the Japanese, the Taiwanese colonial project was largely informed by European colonial management theories. They flaunted their nation as the bearer of 'the mission of civilisation' to those both within the boundaries and beyond (Takeshi 2006: 143). Hence, the Japanese laid down progressive educational guidelines, which were designed to produce a colonial subject who complemented infrastructural and economic projects (Scruggs 2006: 427-428). Under such a policy of gradual assimilation throughout the 1920s, however, ambiguous national identities among the intellectuals started to emerge, which later developed into a polarised identity among these Taiwanese.

When the Japanese first adopted the assimilation policy, the aggressive colonial government policies of universal education contributed to an expanded reading population. Such an increase in literacy was, however, targeted mainly at Japanese literacy (Ibid: 429). This means those Taiwanese who wanted upward social mobility in society needed to excel in Japanese in the

first place, showing the early signs of hegemonic control in the colonised elites. Such hegemony was successful to a certain extent. Higher education as a tool for buying off the Taiwanese elite families created a generation of Taiwanese intellectuals who were born during the Japanese colonial rule, adopted Japanese as their official language and received modern education either in Japan or taught in Japanese in Taiwan. The 'psyche politics' (Liu 2009: 261), the discursive operations employed in the shaping of the identity and subjectivity of the Taiwanese during the Japanese colonial period, had a long-term effect on their identity formation. Until quite recently, to some Taiwanese people, the colonial era's self-image, the *Riben jingshen* (Japanese spirit) refers not only to nostalgia for the Japanese era but also to a more general suggestion of the qualities of 'cleanliness, justice, honesty, diligence, trustworthiness responsibility, lawfulness, service to the state and effacing of the self – everything associated with modernity '(Ibid: 269).

Not all Taiwanese have ambivalent feelings towards this Japanese spirit. During colonial rule, it worked to assimilate the educated elites, and affected the formation of self-identity, especially in the construction of upwardly mobile, modernised and yet loyal (to the Japanese state and the Emperor) masculine colonised subjects. In this aspect, once again the postcolonial theory on masculinity formation seems to be applicable in the Japanese colonial situation. While in the hierarchical Western world whiteness is privileged, demarcating human beings into those who are superior or inferior, and functions with a hierarchy of dominance and subordination (Kabesh 2013: 8); in the Japanese colonial context whiteness is simply substituted into the Japaneseness, with the assimilated elites striving themselves to possess the *Riben jingshen*, yet always feeling the sense of inferiority imposed by their modernised colonisers.

This assimilation project, however, failed to engage the marginalised people in Taiwan, such as the underclass and women. This kind of 'polarised identity' (Fong 2006: 173) between the assimilated elites and the marginalised was revealed in contemporary short stories and novels during the *kominka* movement 皇民化運動, the comprehensive cultural policy movement between 1931-1945, shortly before the end of the Japanese colonial rule. Taiwanese literature during that period, which was classified into the mass and the intellectual genres, played a significant role in shaping the identity of Taiwanese individuals. First, the intellectual genre showed the determination of the elites to be loyal to the emperor and patriotic to the state. Yet it also carried the connotation of a sub-Japanese complex, showing the Taiwanese intellectuals' understanding that, at best, they could only strive to be second-class Japanese even if they were convinced to believe that they possessed the Japanese spirit. Secondly, the mass genre consistently recalled the exploitation and humiliation of the insignificant and marginal underclass, and that their collective identity was rooted in the precolonial Han culture that remained. (Fong 2006: 179). It is this constant reminding of the exploitation and humiliation that the marginalised people had to endure which kept them out of Japanisation indoctrination, thus revealing the polarised identities of Taiwanese colonised subjects. Indeed, Japanese colonisation had created an ambiguous national identity among the elites and a split national identity between the assimilated class and the marginalised people. These problematic perceptions of national identity, which in turn problematised the construction of other aspects of identity and subjectivity of the Taiwanese, were further complicated upon the retrocession of Taiwan by the KMT after the Second World War.

Unlike other former colonies like Algeria and India, Taiwan did not gain independence after colonisation. Instead, Taiwan, Peng Hu and other nearby islands were retroceded to the Republic of China at the conclusion of WWII in 1945. Commenting on the retrocession, Fangming Chen suggests that the process of re-educating former subjects of the Japanese Empire to become citizens of the Chinese Republic was in fact a recolonisation project (cited in Scruggs 2015: 32). In the first place, the postcolonial subjects, the native Taiwanese appeared to be marginalised by their unfamiliarity with the Republic of China and its national language (國語 *Guoyu*). Also, the (re)colonisers from the mainland who are of the same ethnic origin humiliated the native ex-colonised subjects by denying the modernised Japanese culture and self-identity among the elites, and the residual pre-colonial collective Han identity shared among the underclasses, through suppressing the public use of their perceived 'native' languages, namely Japanese among the elites and Taiwanese Hokkien among the underclasses. The identity conundrum was further exacerbated in 1949 when the KMT government lost the civil war to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and was forced into exile. Although the KMT claimed that they were the only legitimate political and cultural representative of the whole of China (Cook 2005: 85), they were viewed by the native Taiwanese as outsiders (外省人 *waishengren,* literally meaning 'people from outside the province') who were dislocated from the homeland with which they were ideologically affiliated (Lupke 2009: 247). As to the postcolonial native Taiwanese, they were not only denied nationhood as subjects of a Japanese colony, but also the right to be recognised as 'Chinese' citizens since their once legitimate government had now become an exiled regime. Such problematised national identity for both the mainlanders and the native Taiwanese, as Kao & Bih (2014) argue, constitutes a double castration effect on Taiwanese masculinity construction.

According to Kao & Bih (2014), Taiwanese men are placed in a doubly submissive position in international hierarchies of masculinity. They argue that Taiwanese men are racially castrated as they are forced to share the burden of stereotypes which Western society imposes upon Asian men; and nationally castrated as they are forced to continuously defend and fight for their masculinity based on their questioned, unstable and ambiguous national identity (Ibid: 177-178). The authors first look into the three examples in which Taiwanese men practice and construct masculinities: *aluba* (a type of campus activity popular among adolescent males in Taiwan which promotes closeness as well as competition), *doing soldier* (a process in which Taiwanese men are theoretically transformed from boys into men and construct their masculinities through compulsory military service) and *flower drinking* (a set of social practices in which a group of men visit commercial sex clubs that offer a variety of erotic entertainment services). These three examples represent three life stages in which men develop their masculine selves (respectively, adolescence, early adulthood, and middle adulthood) and three social fields where masculinities are constructed (school, the military, and work). They then draw a connection between the ambiguous sovereignty of Taiwan on the international diplomatic stage and the ambiguity of Taiwanese masculinities; arguing that the masculinities created through the social dynamics created in these sites are characterised by ambiguity at the international, institutional, interpersonal, and developmental levels (Ibid: 188-189). Indeed, it seems likely that the ambivalences in Taiwan's national identity affected and impeded the construction of other forms of identity. To this date, the question of a Taiwanese national identity has still not been settled, and Taiwan is politically split between the two major political parties (pro-status quo and pro-independence). Taiwan's national identity is intractably caught up in a vexing stalemate of neither/ nor: it is neither part of a generally recognised Chinese state, nor is it an independent country despite its de facto independent status; it is neither essentially Chinese nor is it essentially Taiwanese (Lupke 2009: 243). It is not surprising that

such a fractious and ambiguous nature of Taiwan's national identity is manifested in the formation process of Taiwanese masculinities.

The above discussion of postcolonial critiques of the construction of Taiwanese national and personal identities, in particular, masculinity, provides a basic understanding of how the two interact with each other. Taiwan's identity has always been intertwined with its complex colonial history. The ambiguous and fractured national identity produced as a result of the split between the assimilated class and the marginalised people under Japanese colonial rule, and the painful division of Taiwan politics between the *benshengren* and *waishengren* both influenced the construction of Taiwanese masculinity.

2.3.2/ Defining Chinese Masculinity in the Taiwan Context after Japanese Colonisation

As noted before, studies of Taiwanese masculinity have always been on the periphery of the study of Chinese masculinity. In fact, the latter has not gained enough currency until the last two decades. As Connell has rightly asserted, most of the research and debate on the relation of hegemonic masculinity to identity, power and violence has occurred within the global North (Connell 2016: 304). While there were some interesting studies on Asian masculinities at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the majority of the writings focus on their ex-colonial status and there seems to be no particular framework to theorise Chinese masculinity until Kam Louie's groundbreaking *wen-wu* theory (Louie 2002, 2015). Through the ancient *wen-wu* dichotomy, Louie proposes that traditional Chinese masculinity comprises *wen-* the mental or civil – and *wu* – the physical or martial. This masculinity dyad emphasises the *wen* aspect since Confucius is viewed as the embodiment of *wen,* with cultural attainment always taking priority

over physical prowess (Louie2014: 22). *Wen* traditionally refers to 'those genteel, refined qualities that *wen* associated with literary and artistic pursuits of the classical scholars' (Louie 2002: 14) and the Confucian ideal is a *junzi* (君子 exemplary man). Confucius compares a *junzi* with a *xiaoren* (小人 inferior man) in order to explain the *junzi* ideal: a *junzi* understands the importance of morality (義 *yi*) and a *xiaoren* focuses mainly on the importance of profitability (利 *li*) (Yang 1958: 42). Louie is, however, well aware of the breakneck speed of modernisation and Westernisation experienced globally. Westernisation, among other things, promotes a concept of gender equality and the virtue of capital accumulation. Hence, Louie states that the *wen-wu* dyad also evolves by seeing the inclusion of women into the dichotomy, and the different interpretations of the attainment of *wen* as the perception of wealth and education has changed dramatically during the rapid globalisation process. This changed interpretation of *wen* by Louie is likely to be based on the fact that profit is no longer a derogatory term in a modernised, capitalist society. In this thesis, I will argue that Yang's representation of masculinity reflects his perception of the incompatibility between traditional Chinese moral values once strongly promoted by the KMT to encourage conformist attitudes on the one hand, and the rapid transition into modernity in Taiwanese society on the other. I will also show that it is this incompatibility which destabilises the patriarchal order in Yang's films, constituting his portrayal of an ambiguous and frustrated Taiwanese masculine identity.

While Louie's *wen-wu* dyad is useful in examining Chinese masculinity, the masculinity formation process in postcolonial Taiwan was, and still is, a distinctive trajectory which is very different from that of mainland China. After the KMT's retrocession of Taiwan, Chiang Kai-shek was determined to strengthen the legitimacy of his government as the representative of all of China in two stages. The first stage was the heavy-handed de-Japanisation which saw the

banning of the Japanese language, media imports and publications (Luo 1996: 23). As the hope for the KMT government to retake mainland China gradually faded, it moved on to the second stage and promoted stronger Sinicisation policies to justify their position as the sole government of the whole of China. It is under this context that the KMT instigated the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement (CCRM) (1966-early 2000) to promote an idealised manhood based on Confucian ethics.

This kind of idealised manhood stresses the importance of man's responsibilities to uphold the conditions of a well-ordered society: 'Let the lord be lordly, the retainer loyal; the father fatherly, and the son sonly' (*Analects* 論語 12:11). Mencius (孟子 372–289 BCE) expands his assumption of these two fundamental bonds into five principal human relationships, the concept of *wun lun,* as the basis of a stable society. This states that father and son have love (for each other); lord and retainer have obligations (to each other); husband and wife have distinct (spheres); senior and junior have precedence; and friends have faith (in each other) (Mencius: *Teng Wen Gong* 1 孟子, 滕文公上).   Although Confucius himself never spoke specifically about *wu lun*, the stress on social order and self-cultivation in his philosophy is undeniable. Most importantly, both Confucius and Mencius underscore that everyone, whether a superior or an inferior has obligations to properly fulfil their role, and that virtuous human relationships are premised on mutuality (Hwang & Meyer 2018: 3-4).

Borrowing from the *Fajia* (法家 Legalist) writings of *Han Fei* (韓非 280–233 BC), the great Han dynasty Confucian philosopher and statesman *Dong Zhongshu* (董仲舒 197-104 BCE), however, reinterpreted the *wu lun* human relationships as an entirely vertical and one-sided *San*

Gang (三綱 Three Fundamental Bonds) structure. It maintains social order through explicit power structures in which a retainer serves the lord, the son serves the father and the wife serves the husband. The superior (the lord, the father and the husband) is *yang* (陽) and the subordinate (the retainer, the son and the wife) is *yin* (陰); *yang* is always superior to *yin* and strikingly there is no mention of the importance of mutual obligations (Dong Zhongshu: *Chun Qiu Fan Lu* 53 春秋繁露). It is this interpretation of the Confucius and Mencius' principal human relationships based on a patriarchal system, and subservience to the ruling order that the Nationalist government adopted to strengthen their rule. It is also through this web of interpersonal relationships and virtues prescribed by this form of Confucianism that the ideal masculinity is defined.

Although the KMT had been defeated by the Community Party in mainland China, they hoped to triumph over the latter by claiming to be the legitimate heir and guardian of traditional Chinese culture. Hence, ethics courses revolving around ancient teachings such as *Siwei Bade* (四維八德 Four Cardinal Principles and Eight Virtues) were taught in primary and junior high schools from the early 1970s (Yang 1992: 45). The Four Cardinal Principles derived from the Legalist text *Guan Zi* (管子) refers to etiquette, righteousness, self-integrity and dignity (*Guan Zi Mu Min* 管子. 牧民), while Neo-Confucian scholar *Zhu Xi* (朱熹) combined these virtues with other four cultural ideals asserted by Confucius, namely, filiality, respect for senior relatives and siblings, loyalty and trustworthiness, to become the Eight Virtues (*Zhu Xi*: *Lu Yu Zhu Shu. Xue Er – Xue Er* 論語注疏. 學而).

These traditional principles and virtues were later reiterated by Chiang Kai-shek during the CCRM, emphasising the achievement of social harmony through self-cultivation on patriotism and filiality that subordinate sons to the father, and citizens to the head of state. Most importantly, the virtues were treated as the exemplary and definitive behaviours of a gentleman. In other words, they were promoted by the KMT government as the main criteria of an idealised masculinity. As will be discussed in further detail in the analysis chapters, Yang's cinematic representation of men shows how this idealised masculine identity imposed on Taiwanese men triggers a huge sense of confusion in their identity construction during the tumultuous process of rapid transition into late modernity.

2.3.3/ Defining Taiwanese Masculinity in The Global Context

As briefly discussed previously, Connell's concept of globalising masculinity has 'connected the gender regimes of institutions, and the gender orders of local societies, on a world scale' (Connell 2005: 71). Building on her own definition that gender is a structure of social practice (Connell 2001: 34), Connell asserts that there is more than one kind of masculinity, and that these not only defined through their relationships with femininities, but also their interaction with other male identities, sexualities and histories (Ibid: 37-38). In order to theorise gendered power relations among men and understand the effectiveness of masculinities in the legitimation of the gender order, Connell coins the term 'hegemonic masculinities' (Connell 1995: xviii) to refer to various versions of being a man that embody `the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy'. Hegemony, therefore, is a mobile relation which is constantly in flux. When conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded (Ibid: 77).

As dominant forms of masculinity are associated with major forms of social power, transnational corporations operating in global markets might be a good setting to understand the emergence of 'transnational business masculinities' as the latest manifestation of a mode of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 1998: 16, Connell & Wood 2005: 347). The globalised concept of transnational business masculinities goes beyond the local to the global, and is useful in explaining the relationship between men and how they form their identity in Yang's films. Hegemonic forms of masculinity in modernity share a few key common features, for instance, related to authority, heterosexuality, social conservatism, integration with a family division of labour, symbolic gender differences and emotional distance between men and women (Ibid: 348). In addition to these common traits, the transnational paradigm of business masculinity is characterised by constant long-distance travel, global networking, more frequent company-hopping and fewer loyalties to organisations and family; provisionality and insecurity; association with power and preoccupation with profit-making (Ibid: 355-361). While Kimmel asserts that the meanings of masculinity vary across cultures, through history, among men within any one culture, and over the course of a man's life (1997:189), the toll taken on masculinity construction by the breakneck speed of modernisation compounded with global capitalism seems, in Yang's films, to be ubiquitous. This will be analysed in the coming chapters.

2.4/ Brief Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has discussed the complicated colonial history of Taiwan, and its rapid transition to modernity which challenged long-held truths and social norms of a previously mainly agrarian society with a Confucian-based patriarchal hierarchy. Given this, identity construction, already a complex issue, is even more so in Taiwan. Hence, it is unlikely that the analysis of

gender construction, which in the context of this thesis focuses on masculinity, can be adequately conducted based on only either Western or Chinese-based theories. Building on the discussion in this chapter, I synthesise the concepts of postcolonial, Chinese/ Western masculinity and modernity theories into a single tripartite epistemological framework for the analysis of gender construction in a Taiwan context. This tripartite epistemological framework will be used to inform the textual analysis of cinematic representation of masculinity, and by extension, of Yang's representation of masculinity.

Chapter 3: Edward Yang's Construction of Space to Represent Masculinities During Taiwan's Rapid Transition into Late Modernity

In the last chapter, I have discussed the foundational theoretical frameworks employed in my project, and how they inform my study of Yang's representation of masculinity. It was argued that Taiwanese masculinity has been affected by different stages of modernity, namely, Japanese colonial modernity, heavy, liquid and reflexive modernity. It was also suggested that Taiwanese masculinity can be defined by both Chinese and Western concepts. While the Confucian masculinity *wen-wu* dyad and the patriarchal hierarchy in human relationships (*wu lun*) help define Taiwanese masculinity and support men's status quo, Connell's concepts of hegemonic and transnational masculinity help explain how Taiwanese masculinity has been shaped in contemporary society and show different challenges facing men and how they affect the construction of masculinity. With the arrival of the TNC movement which started around the same time as the gradual democratisation process in Taiwan, Yang used his distinctive ways of constructing cinematic space to accentuate the influence of the ephemerality and volatility in the different stages of modernity on Taiwanese men's identity formation. In the following chapters, I am going to analyse how Yang's films depict Taiwanese masculinity and the changes it faces using cinematic space, frames-within-frames, and literal and figurative reflections. First of all, in this chapter, I will discuss Yang's construction of cinematic space and its function in representing masculinity and reflecting historical, and socio-political changes in Taiwanese society.

3.1/ Why study Yang's Cinematic Space?

Edward Yang's oeuvre has been characterised by its sheer presentness in the 20th-century history of Taiwan (Rosenbaum 1997). Apart from *In Our Time* (1982) and *A Brighter Summer Day* (1991), all of his films are set in contemporary Taiwan. As a director who is renowned for using space as not just the landscape of his city stories, Yang's use of city space as a major character in his films is a thematic signature which has been well studied (Hao 2016, Yeh & Davis 2005, Jacobson 2005, Yang 2007). For example, Jameson states in his seminal article 'Remapping Taipei' (1992) that Yang uses Taipei City as a major character in his film *Terrorizers* (1986) to denote the postmodern condition of alienation and Taiwanese identity crisis as a result of rapid urbanisation**.** If Hou's representation of empty space in his films accentuates his focus on the history of Taiwan, and Tsai Ming-liang's use of space denotes a heavy sense of spatial disorientation, Yang's cinematic space is important in his depiction of what he cares about most: the presentness of the spatial practices that propound and presuppose the real space of the city, and the society that produced these practices.

In this chapter, I will examine three different features of Edward Yang's space construction in his films, namely, the use of urban spaces characterised by colonial and modern architecture; the porous and ambiguous space which blurs boundaries between the public and the private; and the cinematic space constructed through Yang's tunnel vision to reflect the social, political and cultural forces which are at play in the rapidly changing society. Drawing on Lefebvre's tripartite scheme of space production (Lefebvre 1991), I will also discuss how Taiwanese masculinity interacts with Yang's spatial construction and how it is shaped by the embedded social practices within such construction. Before engaging in the close textual analysis of Yang's films, however, I will clarify the concept of space put forward by Lefebvre and define what I mean by space in the context of cinema.

3.1.1/ What is Lefebvre's concept of the Production of Space?

In the opening chapter of Lefebvre's magnum opus, *The Production of Space*, for instance, a compressed account of the concept of space is presented. To Lefebvre, social space is a social and historical product (1991: 26-27) which is regarded as an ever-changing and incomplete process subjected to the social and political action of humans. Defining spaces as social practices (Ibid: 8), Lefebvre further asserts that they should be studied not just as an empty entity but as one which shapes and is shaped by human response to the underlying conditions of the capitalist society. He argues that such a heterogeneous socially and historically produced space can be represented by a 'spatial triad' which comprises three different modes of spatial production, namely, spatial practice, representations of space and representational space; terms which correspond to the perceived space, the conceived space and the lived space respectively (Ibid*:* 40). While ideally the conceived space should not be planned and built to mainly facilitate economic growth and profit, in reality, however, he suggests that spatial practices are designed to serve power in a particular mode of production and they are a means of control and domination, of power (Ibid: 31). His theory is therefore borrowed here not only for understanding space, but also as a tool to understand how Yang's construction of his sophisticated cinematic space articulates the lived space of Taipei City, manifesting the inherent social struggles which emerge during the production of space.

3.1.2/ The Study of Cinematic Space

If the production of space in a society is defined as social practice, the construction and production of space in cinema is more problematic to define. Space, in the first place, is

everywhere but nowhere in a film. The audience will notice the presence of a screen space, but what they pay attention to is the action space in which all the actions and narratives occur and take agency. The pace of classical cinema has, however, been pushed faster and faster to the point that space has become less important than actions in the development of the narratives, and it seems that popular cinema has forgotten to take the time to just stop and look at a landscape. As stated by Cutting *et al.*, the *King Kong* (2005) remake had a whopping 3,099 shots packed into 187 minutes (Cutting *et al.*, 2010: 3). Compared to its 1935 original version, the average shot length has decreased from 4.8 sec to 2.5 sec. The decreasing shot length has undoubtedly served the 'kinetic' demand, for example, the demand for pace, acceleration, movement and thrills, of the audience. Yet shorter shot length means more action, which in turn encourages the viewers to pay less attention to the space on screen.

Nevertheless, such over-emphasis on actions and the detention of audiences' attention is less of a major concern in other cinemas which are running parallel or resisting the mainstream film industry. For example, Deleuze's theory of time-image aptly explains how the film industry changed from an era of movement/ action-image to time-image which cut in after the Second World War, arguably beginning with the Italian neorealist films (Bell 1997: 1). After the war, according to Deleuze, the movement-image, the indirect representation of time gave way to the formation of the direct time-image which has found its way from Renoir to Italian neorealism through Welles, and is being described as duration-image, change-image, relation-image, volume-image which is beyond movement itself (Deleuze 1992: 11). As the time-image does not rely on the reference to action, it presents time through a depersonalised individual identity, and a homogenous and desingularising space, an 'any space whatsoever', a concept Deleuze

loosely borrows from Marc Augé's notion of 'non-place' [9]: places for transit, places where people do not feel a sense of belonging, like metro stations, fast food restaurants or airport transit terminals. These locations disrupt the sense of self for individuals by raising doubts about their identity through the ambiguous nature of the space and the disorienting nature of the time-image. In this sense, space is once again placed in the centre of the frame and becomes an important element in the story to push the narrative and present time directly.

Indeed, the 'spatial turn' has gained currency increasingly in critical thinking and cultural theory. For Foucault (1979), spatial practice is disciplinary, while Henri Lefebvre contends that social space is hegemonic, reproducing dominant cultural values in *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre 1991). There has been an increasing interest in the study of location and space, and also in the contrast between landscape and cityscape, the country and the city, psychological mapping and mythology (Konstantarakos 2000: 1, Torre 2008, Blank & Rosen-Zvi 2010:3). This perspective has exerted its influence on literary and cinematic studies (Pallasmaa 2012: 157, Hallam 2010: 277). Konstantarakos (2000), for example, draws attention to the fact that European cinema is articulated around spatial opposition. The recurrent theme is the contrast between centrality and marginality, and more precisely, exclusion and inclusion (2000: 4). Space is not merely the setting of stories but generates the narrative both in prose and films (Ibid: 1). For example, in Woody Allen's *Manhattan* (1979), spatial configurations are described with remarkable precision so that the inhabitants and the urban space of Manhattan are greatly simplified, turning them into prettified and gentrified works of art in the process.

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[9] Stivale (2005) notes that whilst Deleuze does attribute the any-space-whatever to an Augé, it is to a 'Pascal' Augé, rather than to Marc Augé. As *Cinema 1* came out around the same time as Augé's publications on nonplaces, including *Un ethnologue dans le métro* (1986), perhaps Deleuze might have mixed up the attribution.

Landscape also plays an important role in Antonioni's films. The process of incorporation of the characters in the landscape becomes a primary element in Antonioni's visual language, serving narrative, dramatic, and thematic functions (Jazairy 2009: 349). For example, the desolate urban space in *Red Desert* (1964) turns inward emotions of the protagonists outward and represents the root cause of the female protagonist Giuliana's extreme neurosis. In *La Notte* (1961), the huge golf course makes Giovanni Pontano and his wife Lidia so small, symbolising the powerlessness the couple feel in the midst of their painfully dwindling marriage. Through Antonioni's construction of cinematic space, themes of existential quandaries, communication breakdowns and alienation (similar to those in Yang's films) are accentuated and spilt beyond the space in his films into the real world.

Outside Europe and North America, Wong Kar-wai's use of shared urban spaces in avant-garde cinema as a means to challenge traditional notions of physical closeness and emotional detachment has been extensively explored (Gan 2003, Rayns 1995, Abbas 1997). In the Taiwan context, Edward Yang and other Taiwan New Cinema directors such as Tsai Ming-liang also show great sensibility in the use of space in their films (Levy 2013: 694). Although both Yang's and Tsai's films challenge the deep-rooted patriarchal norms of identity and highlight the negative consequences brought by modernisation and globalised capitalism, the former focuses on the reflexivity of the individuals in their pursuit and construction of a clear meaningful self-identity, whereas the latter focuses more on the marginalisation of sexual identities and hence resort to a queer strategy to challenge any fixed identities in connection with the collapsing traditional family structure in late modernity. While it is not one of the main concerns of this chapter to compare and contrast Tsai Ming-liang's films with Yang's, the discussion of Tsai's cinematic spatial construction will help constitute a more complete picture of the cinematic representations of masculinities (or in Tsai's case, sexual identities) in relation to the

consequences of modernities in a rapidly changing society during such a pivotal transitioning period in Taiwanese cinema and by extension, Taiwan society.

Born in 1957 in Kuching, Malaysia, Tsai Ming-liang is among the third-generation Chinese immigrants in Malaysia who went to Taiwan to pursue a college education. Although he made his debut feature film in 1992, nearly ten years after Yang made his first segment film, his most prolific years overlapped with those of Yang. As he has admitted and as it might be expected, he has strong connections with, and was influenced by, his predecessors like Hou Hsiao-hsien and Yang. For example, the emphasis on absent father figures in their oeuvres and the concerns about Taiwan's modernisation and the advance of capitalism. Similar to Yang and Hou, Tsai inherits the spirit of European New Wave Cinema, and adopts modernist/ postmodernist aesthetics, minimalist style, and diasporic sentiment to explore various facets of contemporary Taiwanese society (Chang 2008: 25). For example, Fassbinder's gender and sexual preoccupations; Bresson's meticulous focus on the bodies of his non-professional actors; and Antonioni's alienating urban landscapes are all evident in his films. What sets him apart from other TNC directors is his utilisation of extreme slowness, sometimes to the extent of austerity, to resist the accelerated temporality in mainstream cinema whose aesthetics is premised upon intensified continuity (Lim 2014: 40), and also his spatial configuration through a queer lens to challenge the fixity of sexual orientation and identity.

To Tsai, queer means obliqueness of gender and sex and it deconstructs any fixed sexual identity, treating sexuality and desire as performed without cohering in it (De Villers 2013: 67). It also represents a yearning for reconnection within the collapsing traditional social structure due to rapid transitions brought by globalisation, showcasing the fleeting conditions in late

modernity, namely the spatial, temporal and identity (mainly sexual) disorientation driven by globalisation (Ibid: 74), which are elements linked to the hallmarks of Yang's films as well. Indeed, one constantly recurring thematic element in Tsai's films is the fleeting and uncertain everydayness in late modernity. If Yang's films are about presentness and how to deal with the invasion of the present by the risks from the future, Tsai's films are actually about the 'impossibility of the Now' (Hong 2011: 159). They capture new urban spaces at moments of transition, where the urbanisation process is an endless construction that is always incomplete and the coexisting old is always in disrepair (Ibid: 160). Most importantly, as mentioned before, Tsai uses a queer lens to see problems relating to globalisation through his representation of gender identities and sexuality. He encourages a queer reading of these problems in order not to conform to or hide behind the monolithically assigned social and gender roles in a patriarchal society like Taiwan.

In *Rebels of the Neon God* 青少年哪吒 (1992), the first of Tsai's Taipei Trilogy, for example, Tsai pushes the sense of homelessness and dislocation due to the breakdown of the traditional core family structure to the full by showing a Taipei full of leaks and holes, an urban space which resembles a maze wherein the youngsters roam with no direction and no destination (Hong 2011: 166). In the film the fluidity in the movement of the young protagonists within the disenchanting urban space is not enabled by freedom but by homelessness; the connection among the lonely individuals is not sustained by affection but by their common state of separation. In the second film of Tsai's Taipei Trilogy, *Vive L'Amour* 愛情萬歳 (1994), the unfinished Da-an (大安) Forest Park's ephemerality is captured between an old location for the *juancun* (眷村 military dependents' village) and other squatter areas in ruins (disappearance), and a new location for a gentrifying city park that is being built (appearance). Tsai uses the

space of the Forest Park which is under construction to seize the fleeting and disorienting moment of Taipei city in rapid transition, where the residents in the space found themselves suddenly became occupants of a borrowed place and from residents to illegal squatters (Ibid 169).

The above brief discussion on Tsai Ming-liang's films provides a context of how one of the most prominent TNC directors represents masculinity and how Tsai's works relate to Taiwan's historical, cultural and political changes. If Tsai's space invokes a great sense of disorientation which subverts any fixity in identity, then Yang's sheer presentness and his distinctive construction of cinematic space within the contemporary Taipei city document the influences of the different stages of modernity on the construction of masculinity which in turn reflects the identity searching and rebuilding among men within the rapidly changing society during Yang's time. This will be analysed in detail in this chapter.

3.2/ Edward Yang's Cinematic Representation of Urban Space

While Antonioni's influence can be seen in Edward Yang's use of cinematic space, it is also evident that he draws from the tradition of Italian neorealist cinema (Berry & Lu 2005, Kellner 1998, Shih 2011). Neorealism is seen as a cinematic practice which echoes Lefebvre's ideas in *The Production of Space* (1991). To Lefebvre, space is not abstract, individuals are seen not to exist in a vacuum, but in relation to the urban reality surrounding them (1991: 10). Crucially, Lefebvre asserts that there is a human potential to subvert and overcome the imposing restrictions and formulations of capitalism and its particular spatial forms (Brancaleone 2014: 4), and he argues that neorealist films help to embrace this subversion in the real world. While

neorealist films' influence peaked in the 1940s and early 1950s, Lefebvre's critique of the underlying forces of capitalism in modernist cities and the social issues raised by these films continue to be relevant to Yang's works.

Being part of the first generation of directors who benefited from the loosening of control over freedom of speech near the end of martial law in Taiwan, and influenced by Italian neorealism, Yang took the chance to critique the social, cultural and humanistic issues (alienation and disintegration of families etc) facing the speedily modernising Taiwanese society within the urban space. His films, like many other TNC directors' works, are a kind of resistance to the KMT's tight control of media which had long been used as their propagandist tool. In line with Lefebvre's understanding of neorealist films, Yang's construction of cinematic space is rooted in everyday life. His urban space is not only used as a backdrop but also as a character. Many times space is given attention and respect so that its presence in the film cannot be ignored, and in this way, Yang gives the audience ample time to develop a conversation between themselves, the characters and the narrative. Also, in the course of constructing such a kind of filmic space, Yang manifests Lefebvre's theory of space as a product of social practice. To Yang, the production of colonial and urban space in Taipei is heavily related to the consequences of modernity. Hence, by interacting with the spatial relationships, the men in Yang's films are also interacting with the consequences of different stages of modernity. In the following sections of this chapter, I will analyse the different aspects of Yang's cinematic space production, namely, colonial space and urban space, porous and ambiguous space with blurred boundaries, space constructed with a tunnel vision, and the different kinds of social practices embedded in them.

3.2.1/ First Taipei Trilogy: Colonial and Modernising Urban Space in Rapid Transition

Yang's oeuvre can be divided into two different periods with two different emphases in the construction of cinematic urban space. I would separate these two main stages as the First Taipei Trilogy (*That Day on the Beach* 1983, *Taipei Story* 1985 and *Terrorizers* 1986) which were produced towards the end of martial law and lay a greater emphasis on the transition from colonial to urban space; and the Second Taipei Trilogy (*A Confucian Confusion* 1994, *Mahjong* 1996 and *Yi Yi* 2000), which were produced during the period immediately following the lifting of martial law, and which emphasise the porous and ambiguous urban space with a lack of clear boundary between public and private space. Although *Expectations* (1982) is one of the four segments in the first TNC portmanteau film *In Our Time*, it is not included in the two trilogies as it is not a full-length feature film. This does not reduce the importance of the segment film, however, and it will be discussed in detail in other parts of this thesis. The only period feature film in Yang's career, *A Brighter Summer Day* (1991), will be analysed as a transition film between the two trilogies by using Yang's aesthetic 'tunnel vision' technique to elaborate how Yang linked the two eras together and used this film as a cinematic time tunnel. This will be illustrated in detail in the last section of this chapter.

In the following sections, I will focus on the discussion of Yang's use of spatiality in his oeuvre to illustrate how social relations are affected by spatial relations, and vice versa. In particular, Yang's films witness how the space of not things (ideology, cultural and historical legacies) is subordinate to the space of things (commodities, economic development) (Lefebvre 1991: 402). As Kellner contends, Yang's works are the culmination of a national allegory about modernisation which is one of the common traits of the TNC films (1998: 112). Through the use of different visual, narrative, and atmospheric stylistic markers, Yang created a kind of

cinematic stylistic discourse as a critical analysis of the postmodern and transnational character of contemporary Taiwan. Although the focus of narratives and the styles of the cinematic spaces he constructed in his first and second Taipei Trilogies are different, Yang's representation of masculinity during Taiwan's rapid transition into modernity seems to follow the same trait.

Yang's First Taipei Trilogy was produced at a time when Taipei's cityscape was undergoing drastic changes. Beginning in the 1970s, accelerated globalisation changed Taipei's landscape and skyline. In 1974, the government widened Zhongxiao East and West Roads; in 1975, it lifted the restrictions on high-rise buildings, opening Dunhua 敦化, Renai 仁愛 and Jianguo 建國 Roads to be the commercial zone of high-rise buildings (Chang 2019: 19). Such space production, as Lefebvre contends, is utilised and dominated by the capitalist system of production (Smith 2014: 319). Up to 1997, there were a total of 1214 units of 16-story or higher buildings in Taipei (Hung 2002: 129). The colonial era buildings were, then, being replaced by a brave new world of shiny, modernised skyscrapers, an apt reflection of disappearing colonial influences being replaced by modernity in Taiwanese society.

Yang uses colonial space, and the disappearance of it, to mark the declining influence of Japanese colonisation on the construction of Taiwanese masculinity, and the increasing frustration felt by men due to the growing prominence of the homogeneous urban space and the loss of traditional signposting brought by liquid modernity. Yang uses Japanese colonial-style buildings in *That Day on the Beach* (Fig 1) to show the culmination and weakening of patriarchal power. Ever the nonconformist, Yang hired an inexperienced cameraman called Christopher Doyle (杜可風) to shoot his first full-length feature. Doyle would subsequently go on to become the long-term cinematographer of Wong Kar-wai (王家衛), photographing such

internationally acclaimed films as *Days of Being Wild* (1990) and *In the Mood for Love* (2000). According to Yang, some production crews assigned by CMPC would often refuse to take directions from him while he was making *Expectations*. He was therefore determined to use Doyle, and this supports film producer Jen Hong-zhi's claim that the TNC movement did not involve any major infrastructural changes.

Figure 1 Japanese-style housing TDOTB (1983)

That Day on the Beach (TDOTB) focuses on the reunion of two women, Qing-qing, a much-celebrated pianist, and the younger sister of her ex-boyfriend, Jia-li, an independent businesswoman. During their luncheon in Vienna, Yang employs a series of flashbacks to unearth secrets from their pasts, and uses their different life experiences to explore changing societal and familial values as rapid modernization sets in. Gliding from one flashback to another and featuring interwoven timelines, Yang delineates the complicated and painful struggles of the two female protagonists. Qing-qing and Jia-sen's (Jia-li's brother) relationship breaks down because of his father's disapproval. Although Jia-li marries her boyfriend De-wei (德偉) against her parents' wishes, their marriage finally collapses after De-wei has become a successful businessman. Near the end of the film, Jia-li discloses the fact that De-wai goes missing after committing adultery and stealing money from the company owned by his best friend Ah-cai (阿財). The film highlights a sense of entrapment as the characters struggle to

escape different hegemonic forces (Japanese colonialism, the spread of Western values and global materialism, the nationalist government's policies) and enter into an uncertain future.

Figure 2   Culmination of patriarchal power (TDOTB 1983)

Jia-sen is a young medical doctor who is brought up under the absolute control of his father and is set to follow in the latter's footsteps to become a family doctor in a small village clinic which is situated in a distinctive Japanese colonial-style building. Even as a fully grown adult, his status as a son means that he has no say in deciding who he can marry. The authoritative patriarchal power is well illustrated in Fig 2, with Jia-sen kneeling on the floor awaiting his father's forgiveness for attempting to object to an arranged marriage. The father's hegemonic masculinity does not only dominate other men (his son), but also women (his wife and his daughter). As seen in the same screenshot, Jia-sen's mother plays no role in settling the huge disagreement between her husband and her son; all she can do is pick up the shattered pieces of a broken cup on the floor, also kneeling. In this shot, the culmination of patriarchal power is represented through the social space exemplified in the Japanese colonial setting. The unquestioned patriarchal power and the dutiful submission of the son resonate with that portrayed in Ozu's 1942 film *There Was a Father*. Filial piety is equated with absolute acceptance of patriarchal authority, which symbolises the autocratic structure of power in keeping with the ideologies of the ruling family state, in the case of Taiwan, the KMT regime (Standish 2000: 40). It is, however, also in the same social space where the disintegration of the traditional patriarchal authority occurs later in the film. Defying the marriage arranged by

her father, Jia-li escapes from the authoritative patriarchal power epitomised by the Japanese colonial living space and elopes with De-wei. Once it was the symbol of order and power, now the small family clinic which has become obsolete captures Jia-sen's sense of entrapment and powerlessness, which is one of the common traits in the masculinity represented in Yang's films throughout his oeuvre. It is also important to note that while the element of Japanese nostalgia is first seen in Yang's *That Day on the Beach*, it is not an isolated thematic device and keeps recurring in his later works. However, different from the mythic narratives in films like *Sayon's Bells* which represent the voiceless masculinity of the colonised, Yang's use of Japanese nostalgia manifests the declining Japanese colonial influence on Taiwanese masculinity formation in Taiwanese society en route to its rapid modernisation.

Yang's production of cinematic space which highlights the postcolonial influences and the rapid modernisation progress continues in *Taipei Story*. The colonial architecture which was built during the Japanese colonial era had a Western renaissance-themed baroque style. It not only symbolised modernisation but also represented the way the Japanese wanted to be perceived. As mentioned before, Japanese colonisation was largely informed by European colonial management theories, and its mission was to bring civilisation to the colonised. The Japanese colonial modernity was marked by a better healthcare system, infrastructure and impressive Western-themed architecture. The baroque-style colonial buildings had, however, lost their appeal (Fig 3) and were facing imminent regeneration and gentrification when *Taipei Story* was filmed. The obsolete and crumbling state of colonial architecture represents the diminishing patriarchal power in the face of rapid modernisation where traditional signposts were disappearing.

Yang uses the replacement of the run-down colonial buildings with modernised architecture to exemplify the waning Japanese colonial and KMT recolonial political power during the transitioning years around the lifting of martial law. For example, the male protagonist Ah-liong's living space in *Taipei Story* reflects the bygone era of colonial modernity in Taiwan. It also strongly signifies the declining patriarchal power in the face of rapid modernisation. *Taipei Story* is Yang's second full-length feature. He uses the interlocking categories of gender, class, generation, and culture to map out contemporary Taiwanese society. The film follows the estranged relationship between a couple, Ah-liong (played by Hou Hsiao-hsien) and Ah-Tsing (played by Tsai Chin). Ah-liong, a former Little League baseball star, works in a family textile business. He is stuck in a past structured by traditional masculine codes of honour (virility, filial piety) that occasionally manifest in physical violence. Ah-tsing is an executive assistant in an architecture company. Being forced to resign after the company she works for has been taken over, she dreams of a new start in the United States with Ah-liong. Even as a successful and independent woman, Ah-tsing still has to cope with Ah-liong's immaturity, her abusive father, and her huge sense of insecurity induced by her unhappy childhood and her demanding career. The movie ends with Lon being stabbed by a biker Ah-tsing had an affair with, and a scene of Ah-tsing, unaware of the death of her lover, contemplating whether to join a new company formed by her former boss, Ms. Mei. The breakdown of the couple's relationship reflects a rupture with the past and failure on the part of young urbanites to construct a stable identity in a rapidly modernizing world.

Ah-liong's run-down fabric shop is located on Dihua Street (迪化街), one of the oldest streets in Taipei filled with historical buildings dating back over 150 years, and which was facing imminent demolition at the time when the film was shot. Ah-liong is the personification of Confucian patriarchal values who tries to fulfil the traditional expectations of a man. He is loyal

and filial and helps the father of his fiancée, Ah-tsing (阿貞), to repay his debts; he helps his childhood friend sort out his family and financial problems, and he tries to protect Ah-tsing from her young stalker. Yet, in the obsolete living space which is bracing for its looming demolition and regeneration, Ah-liong seems powerless or heavily burdened. Sitting idle in the rundown fabric shop, he gives out blank promises of taking his staff to Disneyland as he is going to expand his business in America (Fig 4).

Figure 3 The baroque-style colonial buildings TS (1985)   Figure 4 Ah-liong's rundown fabric shop TS (1985)

In the equally depressing home of Ah-qin (阿欽), his Little League Baseball (LLB) ex-teammate whose wife is a gambling addict, both men are seen sitting in a bare room which explains the dire financial situation of Ah-qin (Fig 5). Ironically, a shiny trophy sits awkwardly next to the two ex-LLB teammates, reminding them of their glorious days in the past, and contrasting the frustrating situation they are currently in. LLB, like many other tools used by the KMT, was a form of cultural symbolism to build a national identity for the Taiwanese in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Taiwan was marginalised in the international community (Yu & Bairner 2008: 215). Introduced by the Japanese to the native Taiwanese, baseball was a kind of colonial mimicry imposed on the colonised subjects to 'achieve a reformed and recognisable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 1994: 122). It was not until the success of Taiwan in the LLB world championship in 1969 that

the KMT started to hijack the sports game for their nation-building project (Yu & Bairner 2008: 221). The screenshot captures the two winners of the 1969 LLB World Series who try to navigate the rapidly modernising world equipped with their traditional values and the spectre of the golden memories which help define their once 'elite' national and masculine identity. Yang's message here is clear: the waning influence of the KMT government which represents an authoritative patriarchal status, and the loss of traditional signposts in late modern life have left the originally fragmented and frustrated masculinity in an even further dire situation. The apparent nostalgia for Japanese colonisation present in the cinematic urban space and in the private space of the two LLB prodigies is not Yang's nostalgic nod to Taiwan's seeming pro-colonial nostalgia which is distinct from neighbouring East Asian societies like South Korea and China (Lin 2022: 1). Quite on the contrary, he is using the disappearing colonial urban space and the diminishing bygone glory of a sport introduced by Taiwan's ex-colonisers and hijacked by its recolonisers as a nation-building tool to signify the increasingly frustrated masculinity experienced by Taiwanese man. Different from the tragic hero structure dominant in Japanese films (Standish 2000: 2), Ah-liong's ending is tragic enough but far from being heroic. At the end of the film Ah-liong is left bleeding to death resulting from a pointless rage against Ah-tsing's young stalker, while he is reminiscing about his good old days as a promising baseball young talent (Fig 6). Although Yang's spatial construction does not seem to assert definitively that the patriarchal power had completely collapsed in Taiwanese society since the beginning of the rapid transition into modernity, it does critique and challenge the relevant societal structure as it 'progresses'.

If the increasing disappearance of Japanese or Western-style colonial buildings symbolises the challenged and declining patriarchal power in the mid-1980s, modern architecture in developed urban space is used in Yang's First Taipei Trilogy to further demonstrate the transition of colonial influence to the influences under the consequences of modernity on the construction of masculinity. Within his urbanised cinematic social space, problems which accompanied the so-called 'Taiwan Miracle'- the strong economy boosted by stock and real estate speculation - are manifested. During this period when Taiwan enjoyed unprecedented economic growth, insufficient laws and regulations on economy and property rights contributed to counterfeiting, and piracy was rampant in Taiwan (Chang 2019: 20). Globalisation comes as the consequence of Western-centric modernity. It leads to the abrupt disjuncture from the pre-modern society, and the abstraction and homogenisation of time and space (Giddens 1990: 6). In *Taipei Story*, Yang constructs a Taipei which shows the transition from a society which was still influenced by the patriarchal values manifested in the obsolete and colonial style buildings, to a rapidly urbanising lived space which sweeps away any historical memories and replaces them with a homogeneous cityscape.

As Taiwan's modernisation process gained full speed, the existential crisis experienced by Ah-tsing's male colleague Xiao-Ke (小柯) is manifested in their loss of identity in the volatile and ephemeral conditions of a more advanced stage of modernity. As Xiao-ke remarks:

'Look at these buildings- it's getting harder and harder for me to distinguish which ones I designed and which I didn't…it is unimportant whether I exist or not.' (Fig 7)

-Taipei Story 1985

When all the signposts of tradition are blank, people can become directionless and lose a sense of meaning in their lives. David Harvey asserts that fluidity is the underlining feature of postmodern conditions in global cities. That is, volatility and ephemerality are the determinants of fashion, products, techniques, labour, ideas, ideologies and values, while instantaneity and disposability are the rules of the capitalist game (Harvey 1990: 285-286). Compared to the lack of resources and hardship experienced and exposed in Italian neorealist films made after the Second World War, the social problems revealed by Yang's realist films seem to be concerned with disposability and ephemerality which all resulted from rapid transition into modernity. Uncertainty and risks have started to become the norm (Giddens 1991: 12), a more or less continuous state of affairs rather than a mere interruption.

As discussed previously, during the period around the lifting of martial law in Taiwan (the early to late 1980s in the last century), the Taiwanese had just come out from the tight control of a dictatorship (Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975), and they were enjoying unprecedented freedom and economic growth. Yet the main protagonists in Yang's films seem uncomfortable in the face of such great freedom and prosperity. Giddens suggests that modernity confronts individuals with a complex diversity of choice (Giddens 1991: 80), and he argues that in an external environment full of changes, the person is obsessively preoccupied with the apprehension of possible risks to his or her existence and paralysed in terms of practical action, inner deadness, and incapable of sustaining the protective cocoon of basic trust (Ibid: 53-54).

This is the basic problem confronting Taiwanese people during that era when they began to enjoy greater freedom. It coincided with the fact that Taiwan was moving from heavy to liquid modernity, from a kind of modernity rooted in place, mass and size to one which is tied to lightness, rapid changes and ephemerality (Bauman 2000: 58). Once again Yang uses his urban cinematic space as a critique of prevailing social issues prevailing in the rapidly modernising Taiwan.

For example, in *That Day on the Beach*, the male protagonist De-wei is a stereotype of people who are lost when being confronted with a complex diversity of choices. As he explains to his childhood friend and business partner, he and his wife, Jia-li, have gradually grown apart because of the hectic life he is living and the endless risks he has to take in his work. De-wei seems to be imprisoned constantly in an enclosed area, be it in his home, workplace or car. Even when he is in an open space he seems to be ambushed and entrapped by the busy traffic (Fig 8), looking frustrated, nervous and exhausted. Apparently, the rapidly changing society has exhausted his means to keep up with that pace, while at the same time he is struggling to live up to the expectations of Jia-li to fulfil the role of a caring and understanding husband. Despite De-wei's efforts to fulfil the traditional role of the primary breadwinner and head of the household, his masculinity is in turmoil as he navigates this pressure.

Figure 7 Which buildings are designed by Xiao-ke? TS (1985)   *Figure 8 De-wei entrapped in urban space TDOTB (1983)*

In *Terrorizers*, Yang constructs a living space for urbanites which is affiliated with alienation and confinement. Jameson describes the space constructed in *Terrorizers* as 'interlocking apartments, juxtaposed, superimposed in rectangular or in deep focus boxes…' (Jameson 1992: 154). If *Taipei Story* highlights the transformation of Taipei into an increasingly modernized city, *The Terrorizers* (*Kongbu Fenzi* 恐怖份子, 1986) represents a reflexive postmodern view of Taipei that blurs the line between reality and fiction, dramatizes the vagaries of fate, and lays bare the violence and alienation of urban life.

Produced and screened in the year before the lifting of martial law in Taiwan, *Terrorizers* depicts the pathologies of late modernity through Yang's network narratives, which is a common narrative device found in nearly all Yang's films. According to David Bordwell, network narratives revolve around enduring and personal connections between friends, partners, and family members. These relationships often incorporate elements of fate and are formed through subtle connections. (2006: 130-131). They offer a rich tapestry of interconnected stories, emphasizing the relationships between characters and revealing hidden connections across diverse cross-sections of entire communities. The network narratives in *Terrorizers* are structured around six characters whose fragmented lives are gradually revealed to be interconnected: a rich young photographer awaiting military conscription and his keen novel reader girlfriend; a female criminal known as the White Chick (as she is ethically Eurasian); a middle-class couple slowly drifting apart (Zhou Yu-fen, a novelist suffering from a writer's block and trapped in the unhappy marriage, and Li Li-zhong, a laboratory technician who slanders his friend to advance his own career and who appears to be unsympathetic to his wife's problems); and Chou's lover, a successful electronics entrepreneur. The film opens with a high-angle wide shot of the streets of Taipei in the early morning hours. A police car with a loud siren speeds by, en route to a drug den to arrest White Chick and her boyfriend. While the

latter is caught by the police, White Chick manages to escape after jumping from the balcony, as the young photographer happens to capture the image of her fleeing. On his way to work, Li drives past White Chick who collapses on the side of the street, without knowing that his marriage will be ruined, and his world turned upside down just because of a prank call made by White Chick later in the film. During the ten-minute opening sequence, Yang meticulously reveals to the audience the film's web-of-life narrative, and how the characters are connected through chance encounters within an urban space which is characterized by alienation, a sense of confinement, and inescapable risk.

For example, the hospital where the main protagonist, hospital technician Li Li-zhong (李立中), works is also constructed as a space filled with rooms, stairs and corridors. The empty space and the large meeting rooms (Fig 9), however, suggest alienation and the huge social distance between Li and his colleagues. Although Li lives in a spacious apartment with his estranged wife Zhou Yu-fen (周郁芬), the 'home' they share is no more than a set of boxes put together with clear boundaries in the same house. Li is confined to the dimly lit tiny toilet washing his hands every time he comes home from work; his wife, similarly, seems to be stuck in her small study room trying to write a novel. In this way, Yang's construction of their living space shows that the couple are essentially prisoners in their own private space. While the couple are living in the same house, they do not share any communal space. Even when Zhou breaks the news of her intention to end her marriage to Li, she is sitting on the opposite side of the dining table from him and staring into the camera instead of at her husband, as if she is not talking to him (Fig 10). As further pointed out by Jameson, Li Li-zhong in *Terrorizers* not only represents the rigid yet obsolete patriarchal system of Taiwanese society which is increasingly under the threat of the new-found independence obtained by Taiwanese women during the

rapid modernisation process, but Li also signalises Taiwan's situation in the international system (Jameson 1992: 145). Being economically successful and politically isolated and marginalised, Taiwan's frustrated and embarrassing position on the international stage is represented through the suffocating and frustrating life led by Li in *Terrorizers*.

Figure 9 Li's alienating work space Terrorizers (1986)

Figure 10 Zhou staring into the camera Terrorizers (1986)

Figure 11 The big gas tank and the risk-ridden urban space Terrorizers (1986)

In a nutshell, Yang's construction of colonial and rapidly modernising urban space, be it private or public, highlights the social relations embodied and shaped in it. Through the construction of the obsolete, disappearing colonial space and the rapidly changing urban space which erases historical and personal identities, Yang represents the frustrated and entrapped facets of masculine identity which shape and are shaped by such cinematic space. The First Taipei Trilogy is thus a prime illustration of Lefebvre's assertion that space is a historical and social product. It also responds to Lefebvre's claim that abstract conceived space in modern society is prioritised over the perceived and lived space, as the former is constructed to serve

capitalistic gains. This may explain why Yang's male protagonists feel the pressure and loss of signposts at a time when Taiwan is moving from heavy modernity to liquid modernity and ends up feeling threatened and engulfed in an existential crisis. The everyday life characterised by alienation, confinement and the loss of a clear identity is not only manifested in social relationships in public spaces but also can be seen in private living spaces. The increasing frustration is encapsulated in the big gas tank sitting right next to residential buildings (Fig11) in Taipei City, which accentuates its risk-ridden nature whilst marching into advanced stages of modernity, translated into the recurring motif of violence in Yang's films starting from *Taipei Story.*

3.2.2/ Porous and Ambiguous Space in the Second Taipei Trilogy

I have so far argued that Yang's spatial construction in the First Taipei Trilogy juxtaposes colonial, postcolonial and modernising urban space to represent the frustration and threat experienced by Taiwanese men in different ways. In his Second Taipei Trilogy, Yang's use of porous and ambiguous space without clear boundaries between the public and the private domains shows the co-existence of the traditional, modern and postmodern features of the modernisation process, and their impacts on Taiwanese masculinity. While Lefebvre suggests that problems arising in everyday life such as alienation, ennui and existential crises, stem from a spatial organisation dominated by the capitalist system of production, Giddens and Bauman use their contemporary theories of modernity to explain the emergence of these issues and their impact on the construction of masculinity.

As modernity sweeps away all traditional types of social order (Giddens 1990: 4), the unprecedented mass-scale urbanisation of the pre-modern cities and their peripheries can catch people by surprise (Ibid: 6). In addition, the accelerated expansion of global capitalism abstracts time and space, resulting in the disembedding of social systems (Ibid: 17) which turns the city into a compressed global space that Harvey refers to as being volatile and ephemeral (1990:285-286). During a time of disorganised capitalism and manufactured uncertainty, Yang's cinematic space generates conversations with Giddens's and Bauman's modernity theories, illustrating how Taiwan had experienced radical condensation of different stages of modernity through the representation of masculinity. In light of the increasingly uncertain and volatile conditions of liquid modernity, I will use indoor space with its porous boundaries, and non-places which are homogeneous and where people lack a sense of belonging to illustrate the theatricality and artificiality of human relationships.

For Bauman, liquid modernity has been characterised by an ambivalent dual nature which takes radical change as the norm on the one hand, while seeing the need for order on the other. This is because, though people have been granted an unprecedented amount of freedom to achieve their goals, they are also burdened with the need to assume the risks and the responsibilities that come with such freedom (Bauman 2000: 19). In light of this individuals need social norms and some sense of routine to ground themselves in modernity. As stated by Sennet and quoted by Bauman, 'Routine can demean, but it can also protect' (Ibid: 21). This, however, points to one of the central problems faced by people who live in postmodernity: such norms and routines are much less stable since a social definition for the self no longer exists, and 'individuals are expected to define themselves in terms of their psychological specificity and not social or universal principles' (Ibid: 20-21). Bauman later changed the term postmodernity to liquid modernity to better describe the condition of constant mobility and change he sees in

relationships, identities and global economics within contemporary society. As he asserts, people living in liquid (or light, as explained below) modernity are like passengers on an aircraft who discover:

> …to their horror that the pilot's cabin is empty and that there is no way to extract from the mysterious black box labelled 'automatic pilot', any information about where the plane is flying, where it is going to land, who is to choose the airport, and whether there are any rules which would allow the passengers to contribute to the safety of the arrival.
>
> -Bauman 2000: 59

In other words, while in (heavy) modernity, people know where they stand and what rules to follow, in light modernity, the level of uncertainty introduced is so high that we no longer know what the ends are. The absence of a supreme office means that it is now up to the individual to decide what these ends should be. With Taipei's elevation from a modern city to a global metropolis in the 1990s, Yang's city films delineate the increasing loss of subjectivity caused by global capitalism while his cinematic narratives were characterised by 'post-modern pastiche, hybridisation and crisscrossing' (Lin 1995: 78). While Yang uses post-colonial and modernised city space in his First Taipei Trilogy to get this message across, in his Second Taipei Trilogy, he constructs an urban space which is ambiguous and porous to indicate a lack of signposting among modern city dwellers. In these films, the task of searching for personal and national identities under rapidly accelerated Westernisation has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible.

In *A Confucian Confusion* (1994), the problems faced by the Taiwanese during liquid modernity are spelt out clearly in the difference between the English and Chinese titles of the film. The Chinese translation of the film's title is '*The Age of Independence*', which as Yang explains in an interview, indicates that the film is primarily about one taking responsibility for one's action in an era when apparently everybody is free and independent in making their own choices in life (cited in Chang & Li 2008: 51). The official English title of the film, however, refers to a philosophical confusion in Confucianism, and the relevance of Confucian traditions in a modern society. Yang uses the ancient Chinese sage, Confucius, as a metaphor for the confused Chinese men in the modern era: even if the revived sage had preached in person in the context of liquid modernity, he would not have been able to restore the glory of his renowned ideology. All he could do was to be puzzled, as lost as the self-proclaimed spiritual descendant of Confucius in the film, the character of the 'Author' who is struggling in the rapidly modernised Taipei City. The dilemma faced by modern-day men is signified by the discrepancy in the meanings of the film titles: while the Chinese title hints at the freedom enjoyed by people in liquid modernity, the English title of the film hints at the problem of applying Confucian ethics to the modern way of living. As Yang explained in another interview:

A Confucian Confusion is the first and so far only attempt at self-reflection: at examining what is wrong with trying to head into the 21st century with a 4th century BCE ideology. Getting too bloody rich is the best way to make us all forget to face reality. I hope the current economic crisis will change that.

-Kraicer & Roosen-Runge 1998: 53

Yang raised the above concern retrospectively after the Taiwan economic bubble burst in 1997, revisiting the prophetic quality of the film's (which was released in 1994) major themes: the increasing difficulty in defining one's self-identity in an era where social norms and routines were fleeting and unstable. In the first place, it was a time when traditional patriarchal values instigated by the Chiang Kai Shek Nationalist Government started to fall apart. Chiang relied on Confucian human ethics and gender stratification to seek tighter control over Taiwan, teaching ancient virtues with an emphasis on filiality and patriotism in junior high school from the 1970s. Not only did he bring order to Taiwan by subsuming individuals under family heads, but he also claimed people's allegiance as the father of the country (Wong & Yau 2016: 222-223). Decades of rapid modernisation and economic success meant, however, that Taiwan was experiencing many different rapid changes characterised by liquid modernity in the 1990s. Huge economic success brought along social practices which were not in line with the traditional Confucian teachings appropriated by government propaganda. While in the past the metanarratives of an oppressive patriarchal family structure had provided a rigid hierarchy to help men define themselves, liquid modernity brought about complicated interpersonal relationships which challenged the privileged status of men, as manifested in Yang's cinematic space.

A Confucian Confusion is a satirical comedy built on network narratives (Bordwell 2006: 130-131) which revolves around Molly, a well-born young woman who runs a culture company which is backed by Ah-khim (阿欽), her rich boyfriend, and financially advised by Ah-khim's personal consultant, Larry. Larry has an affair with Xiao-feng while at the same time trying to seduce Molly. Molly's friend Birdy is a self-described avant-garde playwright who directs films and produces theatrical plays for her company. His fame stems from copying the works of the Author, who happens to be the ex-husband of Molly's sister, a renowned TV talk show

host. Molly's best friend and personal assistant is Qiqi (琪琪), a former schoolmate who is to marry Xiao-ming, a low-level government employee who is a militant conformist, always proud to be loyal and subservient to his supervisor but unfortunately set up by the latter and costing his best friend his job. While Xiao-ming works hard and plans to form a family with Qiqi, he cheats on her and later develops an affair with Molly. If the inescapable risks and chance meetings which are depicted in the First Taipei Trilogy cause a series of undesirable consequences brought by modernity, these problems certainly become worse in Yang's Second Taipei Trilogy. Crime, corruption, family disintegration, and demoralization occurring in Taiwanese society during the 1980s and the 1990s under rapid economic growth and democratization all happen in *ACC* within a couple of days, through Yang's use of porous and ambiguous space with blurs public and private boundaries.

At the beginning of the film, Yang employs a wide angle shot to introduce the huge, flamboyant and pretentious studio of the male protagonist Birdy, which is decorated with big red banners, bizarre charms and costumes and props for Chinese opera (Fig 12). Birdy labels himself as a 'postmodernist' theatre director, playwright and 'artist', producing works mixing traditional and modern interior settings and performing styles (opera, modern dance and martial art performance by a man dressed in a bridal dress Fig 13). Yang's long shot projects a Brechtian-style alienation effect (Chang 2019: 24), inviting the audience to examine carefully from a distance Birdy's survival philosophy, which he apparently derives from Confucius' teachings. When a journalist confronts him that some critics think he is switching from making postmodern art to comedies to please the audience, Birdy defends himself by saying that the world will be at peace if everybody lives in Great Unity, a kind of society advocated by Confucius teachings (*Liji*, *Liyun* 禮記·禮運 verse 1). Only that, to him, 'Great Unity' *(*世界大

同 *Shijie Datong*) does not mean a utopian world in which everybody lives in peace and mutual respect, instead it means one in which 'everybody thinks the same'. Drawing an analogy between democracy and his art, he claims that if democracy is about voting, box office performance is the most democratic voting system: box office success means great art. Here, as Yang emphasises in another interview (Chang & Li 2008: 51) and throughout the whole film, Confucian ethics which are likely to create confusion in times of great change are still being exploited as a kind of signposting to help. Though it is debatable whether Birdy truly believes in Confucian teachings, they are appropriated to justify his façade as a postmodernist avant-garde artist for financial gains. In this way, Yang exposes the danger of using an outdated ideology to deal with problems facing modern-day people in a quickly changing society.

Figure 12 Brechtian style alienation effect ACC (1994)

Figure 13 Birdy's pretentious postmodernist art ACC (1994)

By constructing Birdy's living space as a 'postmodernist' studio, Yang intends to use it as a microcosm of Taipei's postmodern space, manifesting all the cultural, economic and political problems faced by Taiwanese people at the time. In the early 1990s in the last century, Taiwan had become a highly urbanised country and most people lived in the city. Economically Taiwan heavily relied on international trade and militarily Taiwan mainly relied on the U.S. for arms purchases and hopefully some form of protection from China's aggression (Tung 2008: 246). As the world became more international, Westernisation seemed to be inevitable. The speed of the modernisation process, however, brought about a radical break from the past of local people

and left an empty space in their lives, one that could not be refilled by material wealth (Lu 2002: 210). Although traditional Confucian teachings had been highly praised by the Nationalist government for their emphasis on social harmony sustained by a strictly observed social hierarchy, they would only encourage hypocrisy in a vastly individualised and commercialised society where its inhabitants were submerged in an ocean of impersonal high-rises and indistinguishable streets, and where traditional family ties were subverted by the worship of money (Ibid: 18-19).

In *A Confucian Confusion*, the visual presentation of Birdy's pretentious production discussed in the previous paragraph highlights such hypocrisy. Similarly, the long take of Birdy skating around his puzzled interviewers (he is rollerblading in his studio staged with primary colours when being interviewed) displays Birdy's artificiality, and the wide angle manifests the theatricality of the declaration of his pseudo-Confucian views (Fig 14). This disillusionment triggered by a radical break from tradition, however, has a debilitating impact on Taiwanese masculinity, as the Confucian tradition has been one of the most important ideological bases upheld by the Nationalist government for decades. It has enforced the central authority's legitimacy with firm social structures coated with moral justifications to stress conformism, discipline and personal sacrifices for social stability and economic growth. More importantly, it has shaped the formation of Taiwanese masculinities through rigid gender and family hierarchy, putting men in a privileged position, with women making huge sacrifices providing unpaid productivity in the labour market and at the same time taking care of their families (Hsiung 1996: Preface 1). When men are situated on a stage where traditional signposts to define their gender roles and identity are challenged and rendered outdated because of the rapid changes in light modernity, it is not surprising that they have also become the first to suffer in their endeavour to uphold the idealised image of Chinese masculinity.

Figure 14 Birdy declaring his pseudo-Confucian views ACC (1994)

Birdy's studio is not only used as a stage to display the basic problems confronting city dwellers in late modernity and their debilitating influence on masculinity construction, but also to foreground the breakdown of interpersonal relations triggered by spatial ambiguity. Yang critiques how a blurred and even collapsed boundary between public and private realms contributes to the vulnerability, and the accompanying feelings of anxiety and ambiguity among city dwellers, which in turn creates identity issues. Public and private are contested realms, open to debate and intervention (Gieseking et al 2014:183). One way to define them is through individual rights and activities. In this case, the public realm is often used to characterise the spaces of approved social interaction, while the private one refers to personal space and intimate encounters (Ibid). Public-private distinction has been a key organising principle, shaping the physical space of the cities and the social life of their citizens, the distinction defines the normative and legal use of space, delimits the self, and regulates the public sphere (Madanipour 2003: 1). As Mandanipour asserts, the boundary between the public and the private faces two directions: on the one hand it keeps the disruptive material out of the public arena and, on the other, protects private life from the public gaze (Ibid: 52). If any sort of territory provides feelings of distinctiveness, privacy and a sense of personal identity (Bell et al., 1996:306), the ambiguity of such a territory might indicate a loss of control and the lack of protection, hence creating feelings of anxiety and frustration. If Tsai Ming-liang represents the blurring of public and private realms by filming ambiguous spaces that proliferated in the

aftermath of economic growth, Yang's cinematic space disrupts the binary opposition of public and private spaces, revealing their blurred boundaries and illustrating how they are bleeding into each other (Braester 2005: 158-159).

Take the studio-living space of Birdy, again, for example; the blurring of public and private boundaries is illustrated by the fact that this is a place where Birdy makes films and lives. His socks and underwear are hung near a bed in the studio (Fig 15, 16), where he tries to woo Larry's lover into sex. His telephone is hidden in a food steamer (Fig 17), making it difficult to distinguish whether the steamer is really a kitchen utensil for Birdy or a prop. The lack of clear boundaries between Birdy's public (the film set) and private (his bedroom) realms shows the vulnerability of city dwellers living with a porous public/ private boundary in urban city settings. These ambiguous urban spaces, as depicted in Tsai Ming-liang's *Vive l'amour* (1994), fail to provide city dwellers with any sense of identity and stability, and the reappropriation of public spaces for intimate behaviour only debases emotion in urban settings (Braester 2005:165). Thus Tsai's construction of cinematic space shows a disorientation highly associated with the collapsing societal structures in late modernity.

Figure 15 Birdy's studio-living space ACC (1994)   *Figure 16 Blurred public/ private boundary: a bed in the studio*

Figure 17 Blurred public/ private boundary: a telephone in a stage prop ACC (1994)

Similarly in *A Confucian Confusion*, the spatial ambiguity in Birdy's working and living spaces also manifests a loss of control of his privacy and the lack of protection of his true (yet also fake) identity. Comparable to Deleuze's concept of 'any space whatsoever' as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Birdy's studio/ living space does not give him any sense of belonging. It does not feel like his home as his personal space is constantly intruded upon and his furniture and household utensils are props. Yang's construction of such a space with an undetermined nature exposes Birdy's identity crisis: his messy and fake living space is a manifestation of his hypocritical character and his fake identity as a master of postmodern art and as a spiritual guru of the modern-day people.

The porous space where Birdy's public and private realms bleed into each other has also another important layer of meaning to the frustration and anxiety felt by Taiwanese men in liquid modernity. According to Chi-nan Chen's seminal research on the Chinese family system in Taiwan (1986), *fang* (房 literally means a bedroom) and *jiazu* (家族 literally means a household*)* are two native concepts of the basic characteristics of the Chinese family. *Fang* refers to the bedroom of a married son and his wife, and it places a central emphasis on the son's conjugal status (Ibid: 55-56). Metaphorically, *fang* takes on the meaning of the genealogical status of a son as a conjugal unit with his father, while *Jiazu* refers to the

genealogical status of father in relation to son (Ibid: 64). Together these two concepts constitute the core of the Chinese family in Taiwan, and the continuity of the *fang/jiazu* line, as Chen (Ibid: 80) notes, is the single most important imperative of the Chinese family in Taiwan.

Birdy's 'bedroom', then, is just a porous zone between his private living space and the public space of his production studio, and certainly has no such connotation of a son's conjugal status, nor has it any metaphorical meaning of the genealogical status of a son with his father. The bedroom of Birdy has deviated from its original purpose of upholding the fang/jiazu lineage, suggesting a challenge to the traditional role of a man as the family's leader, and also the only rightful successor of the family legacy (as daughters cannot create a *fang* in her father's *jiazu)* (Ibid*:* 68). Hence the spatial ambiguity and porous public/private realms in urban space not only highlight the complicated web of interpersonal relationships and the disintegration of traditional ties in times of rapid modernisation, but also suggest how these changes challenge the traditional privileged masculinity norms and expose the vulnerability faced by Taiwanese men in liquid modernity. In his next film, *Mahjong,* Yang continues to focus on spatial ambiguity and its symbolic influence on masculinity, demonstrating how private and clearly demarcated spaces which are constantly transgressed and intruded into fail to provide people with feelings of security, triggering the feelings of anxiety, frustration and ambiguity over destruction of personal identities.

Despite showcasing fraudulence, prostitution and a brutal murder, *Mahjong* is regarded as one of the two satirical comedies produced by Yang a couple of years before Taiwan's economic bubble burst in 1997. The core of the story centres on a petty criminal quartet made up of the gang leader Hongyu, Hong Kong, Little Buddha and Lun-lun, exploring the connectedness of

the apparently random relationships among them which epitomises the characteristics of a network plot (Bordwell 2006: 132). Hongyu's father, Mr Chen, is in the hide from his debt collectors, while Hongyu tries to copy Mr Chen's survival tactic to become the biggest and most shameless fraudster in Taipei. The gang befriend a girl from France because of the possibility of prostituting her, but Lun-lun refuses to get involved in the plan and falls in love with her. The story takes a darker turn when Hongyu's father commits suicide after realising the meaninglessness of his life chasing after wealth and neglecting other precious things such as his love for his son. On being pleaded to commit more fraud by the presumptive sugar daddy of the woman who ripped off his father and left their family in financial turmoil, Hongyu starts his final meltdown and brutally kills the man. The domino effect of masculinity failing among the male protagonists unfolds against a backdrop of social disorder and cultural disjuncture caused by the aggravated invasion of global capitalism in Taiwan, expressed within Yang's cinematic portrayal of the porous and ambiguous urban space, where the line between public and private becomes indistinguishable.

In a telling sequence in *Mahjong*, Hong Kong (a young male hairdresser) and other members of a gang of small-time crooks team up against Alison, his insecure girlfriend whom he just met the previous night. Hong Kong attempts to convince Alison that the members' friendship depends on sharing, even of girlfriends as sexual partners. The whole sequence (see illustrations below) happens in an enclosed space, with the camera panning with minute movements following the hoax, the threats and the delusions among these young people through different doorways. At one point, the ringleader of the gang, Hongyu, appears to be consulting Alison in another room in private, carefully closing the door behind him. However, the gesture is a sham, and the members of the gang are aware of this. The camera keeps panning across the supposedly private bedrooms through the half-open doors, hence suggesting a spatial

continuity over the partition walls. In this way, Hongyu's living space functions as a microcosm of Taipei, showcasing the penetrability of its spaces. Despite the presence of the walls, the apartment acts as a fluid space where no clear boundary is in place. Such a collapse of the boundary between the public (the space in the apartment which is supposed to be shared by everyone in it) and the private (the bedroom where Alison and Hong Kong's intimate relation is intruded into) signalises the dysfunctional interpersonal relations in the dysfunctional society in late modernity.
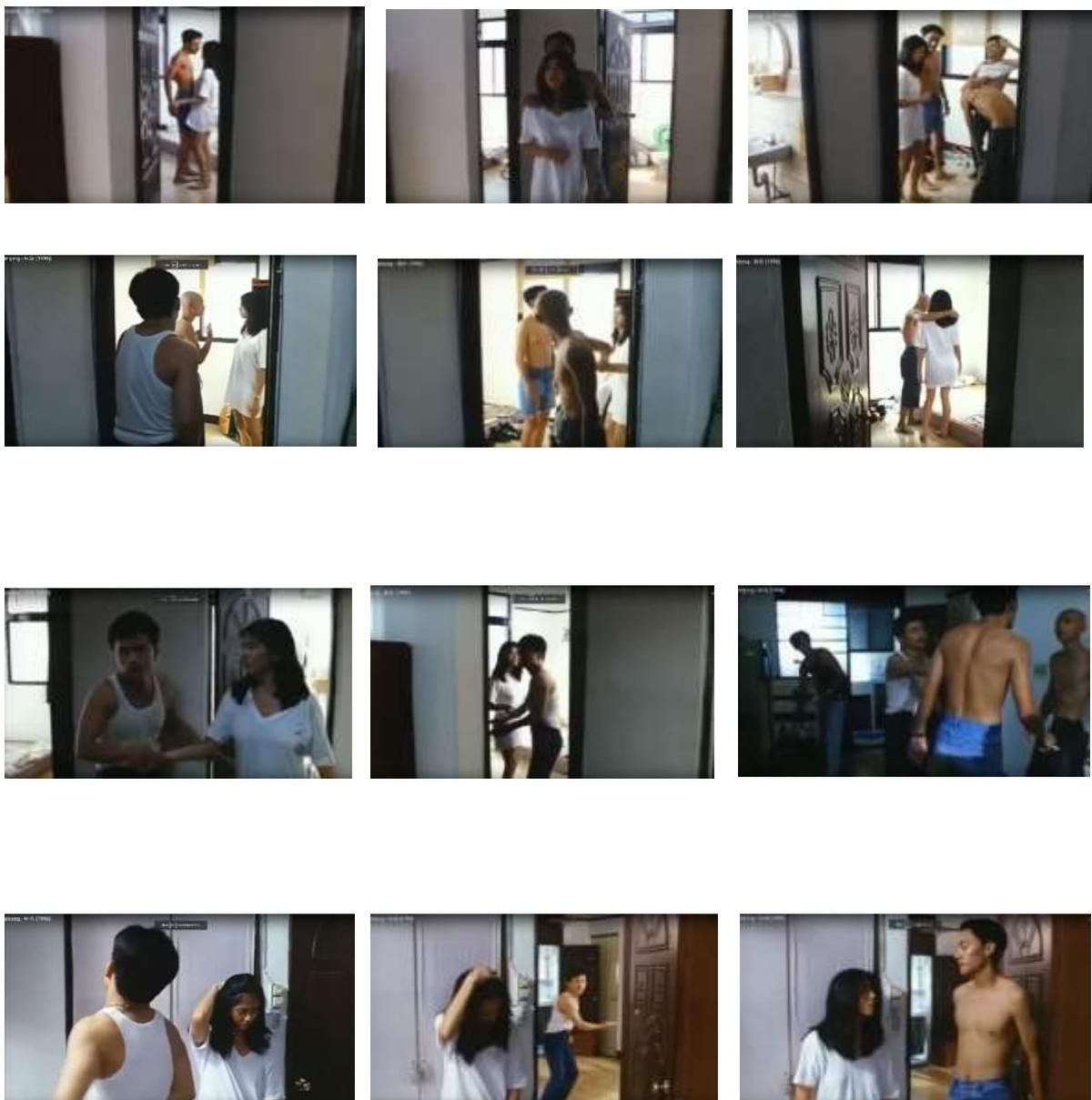
Mahjong Sequence (highlights the collapsed boundary between the public and the private)

With the collapsed boundary between the public and the private, the interior and private realm of modern dwellers is penetrated by the outside world imbued by the insecure and ephemeral late modernity conditions, where all traditional signposting is lost. As a petty gangster, Hongyu defines his masculinity through his role as the head of his gang, emulating his father who is renowned as the most 'successful' and the most shameless fraudster in Taiwan. The code of business inherited from his father aptly encapsulates the confusing situation in contemporary Taiwan under rapid modernisation: nobody knows what they want; people want to be told what to do so they will have somebody to blame when something goes wrong. Interestingly, Hongyu's lecture seems to be a blank self-reassuring slogan. Unfortunately, such a system of thought passed down from an elusive and frustrated patriarchal figure who has been hiding from debt collectors in most of the film only exacerbates Hongyu's masculinity crisis, ending up in the implosion of his ideological world on discovering his father's suicide.

On top of using the porous and permeable walls in Hongyu's apartment to signify the lack of a clear demarcation between the private and the public realm in society, Yang uses glass walls in the construction of his cinematic space to exemplify the same issue in his films. Since the use of mirror and glass reflections in Yang's films will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, here I will only focus on how Yang uses glass walls and windows to divide urban spaces in order to provide different layers of critique on modern social relationships here. Yang's penchant for shooting his characters from the opposite side of the ever-present glass - these include the numerous café scenes (Fig 18, 19) and bedroom windows (Fig 20) - draws attention to two problems in late modernity.

Figure 18 & Fig 19 Characters shot from the opposite side of the glass panes in cafes Yi Yi (2000)

Figure 20 Characters shot from the opposite side of a window Yi Yi (2000)

First, as Tweedie argues, the constant invasion of the public into the private urban space is a way the TNC challenged the notion of ownership and control of housing during the 1980s and 1990s in Taiwan (2013: 189). In Lefebvre's terms, the conceived space of privatised housing was prioritised over the preservation of the monumental construction and collective history of Taiwan. In addition, the omnipresent glass walls and windows which function as a permeable demarcation between the public space and the private space have another layer of meaning in Yang's representation of masculinity in Taiwan during its process of modernisation. While women are certainly not completely excluded from the public world, they are more associated with the private space whereas men are seen to have more legitimate positions in both the public and private realms. Some feminist theorists have argued that the concept of the individual in the public domain is imbued with characteristics that, as part of binary formulations, are deemed inherently masculine, such as rationality, while the individual of the

private domain is imbued with characteristics deemed feminine, such as gentleness and humility (Pateman, 1988; Fraser, 1989; Butler and Scott, 1992; Phillips, 1993). The blurring of boundaries between private and public spaces in Taipei during late modernity implies a shift in power dynamics, with women gaining agency in the urban sphere and men potentially losing their traditional domain. However, as Bondi points out, it might also have a strong tendency to pressurise them to behave more like men (Bondi 1998: 163), hence further challenging the patriarchal status of Taiwanese men.

It is also worth noting that while Yang uses glass structures to show the lack of clear demarcations in the urban space of Taipei, a lot of these glass walls can be found in homogeneous spaces such as the international restaurant chains TGI Fridays and NY Bagels (Fig 21, 22). These liminal urban spaces where intimate encounters can happen not only highlight the insecurity induced by their porous and permeable nature, but also characterise the homogeneity in the city brought on by globalisation and the accelerated internationalisation in the 1980s. These popular spaces deconstruct and reshape Taipei inhabitants' memories of the city, leading to a loss of memory and identity for these urban dwellers (Chang 2019: 22). This ultimately demonstrates the challenge of establishing a unique identity in the midst of the overwhelming influence of Western culture.

Figure 21 ACC (1994) & Figure 22 Yi Yi (2000) Homogeneous spaces such as international restaurant chains

In addition, the neocolonial influence of global capitalism has a major impact on the subjectivity formation of Taiwanese men. The invasion of Western culture, which in the case of Taiwan is mainly American, has cast a cultural castration effect on Taiwanese masculinity. For example, in *A Confucian Confusion*, the image of the male protagonist Xiao-ming and his colleague 'relaxing' in a sports bar aptly explains the challenges faced by Taiwanese men. The huge projected image of NBA players (Fig 23), a representation of American masculinity, dwarfs the two men, thereby suggesting that they need to keep up with the rapid pace of modernisation and intense global competition to protect their vested interests. Similarly, in *Mahjong*, the American restaurant chain Hard Rock Café is a place where men go to flaunt their trendiness or their transnationality, and trendiness is perceived as being a Westerner or speaking with an impeccable American accent. Without a foreign racial status or an ability to cash in on Western cultural capital, the local gang led by Hongyu appears to be small-time crooks who are out of place in the rapidly globalised and internationalised Taiwan.

Figure 23 NBA players: American masculinity ACC (1994)

In this section, I have tried to show how Yang uses his construction of cinematic space in his Second Taipei Trilogy to represent the frustration and threat experienced by Taiwanese men in late modernity. The lack of clear demarcation of the public and the private realms fails to protect city dwellers, inducing vulnerability and insecurity. While these feelings are not confined to men, the section has shown that men's hegemonic status in society was being increasingly

challenged due to the increasing irrelevance of the Confucian patriarchal system as women began to be more financially independent in the headlong rush towards modernity. The shift in the gender power relationship can cause men to become more confused about their role in society. It is important to note that while the entrapped and frustrated type of masculinity is accentuated by Yang's portrayal of the disappearance of colonial space in the First Trilogy, the increasingly homogeneous, porous and ambiguous urban space in the Second Taipei Trilogy manifests the same vulnerable and insecure facets of men. Although similar traits of masculine identity are found in both Taipei Trilogies, the evolution of Yang's movies depicts a gradual shift from a relatively straightforward modernity with established guidelines, to a fluid modernity defined by ambiguity and major shifts in individual roles. These important societal changes, however, did not happen overnight. Before Taiwan marched into the increasingly volatile and risk-ridden liquid modernity represented in the Second Taipei Trilogy, Yang released the film *A Brighter Summer Day* in 1991 to review the hidden part of Taiwan's history on the one hand, and to delineate how the past of Taiwan contributes to the masculine identity issues in a rapidly changing late modernity on the other.

3.2.3/ Tunnel Vision in Cinematic Space and Film as a Time Tunnel

As discussed in the previous section, the cinematic space in Yang's First and Second Taipei Trilogy reflects different issues brought about by different stages of modernity and how masculinity is shaped under these circumstances. While it seems that the spatial construction of the First Taipei Trilogy reflects the conditions of heavy modernity which Bauman compares to the Fordist model whereby everything is still supposed to be under the control of a manager and people have more rules to follow (2000: 57), the spatial construction of the Second Taipei Trilogy seems to be more related to conditions found in liquid modernity where confusion,

uncertainty and risk-ridden living conditions take hold to further undermine a stable and secure male identity. In between the two Taipei Trilogies, Yang used the film *A Brighter Summer Day* as a time tunnel to link up the 1960s and the 1990s.

In the book *Edward Yang: Ten-Year Commemoration* (HKIFF 2017: 20), Yang discussed the rationale behind the production of his only period epic, *A Brighter Summer Day/ ABSD* (1991). He explained how the younger generation in the 1960s had to live in a highly repressed society with a lack of personal, social and cultural identity, and how the painful history of Taiwan affected and suffocated the generation growing up in that era. So, the film is like a time tunnel showcasing the trajectory of masculinity construction during the few decades between the 1960s and early 1990s. It not only touches upon the taboo subject of the White Terror, which lasted for nearly four decades until the lifting of martial law in 1987, but is also Yang's critique on how this important part of the island's history has been deleted deliberately by the KMT regime. In fact, this historic epic is also about contemporary (1990s) Taiwan, representing how Taiwan's colonial history and the political repression of the KMT regime influenced masculine identity formation. In order to construct a cinematic space which links Taiwan's past and future together, Yang employs a technique of 'tunnel vision' to depict the social and political struggles embedded within the living space of the protagonists. This technique accentuates how the factors affecting the construction of masculinity during the White Terror relate to the anxiety and insecurity felt by men in the Taiwanese society depicted in the Second Taipei Trilogy. Before embarking on the analysis of Yang's use of *ABSD* as a cinematic time tunnel, I will first explain what tunnel vision is in Yang's cinematic space and how he uses it in his films to represent masculinity.

In Yeh and Davis's words, Yang can be seen as a kind of 'modernist realist', connected to a tradition of ascetic realism (Yeh & Davis 2005:101). While Yang's films focus on social problems and utilise the common neorealist filmic techniques such as long takes, long shots, location shooting and the use of non-professional actors (Kinder 2008), his kind of realism is considered to be distinct and special. As Yeh and Davis observe, Yang often constructs his cinematic space by using cylindrical long shots to exaggerate depth with obstructing details and pools of darkness. His long shots, termed 'tunnel vision' by Yeh and Davis, are marked by concave angles that give way to a claustrophobic, repressive, and suffocating cinematic space (2005:104). They act as a perceptual vortex pulling attention inward; they obscure by separating figures from the background, and such obscurities suggest deliberate concealment, and potential unmasking (Ibid: 117). Yang's tunnel vision foregrounds the social practices in the urban space which engender repressive and suffocating feelings, and these feelings in turn affect the construction of masculinity in his films.

In *Expectations* (1982), the first theatrical production by Yang with the story background referring back to the sixties, Yang uses this signature style of his to indicate an existential dilemma among masculine subjects at the time the film was made. It is a coming-of-age story of two young adolescents, Xiao-fen and Xiao-hua (小華). Xiao-fen's widowed mother is the sole breadwinner of the family and earnestly wishes her elder daughter, Xiao-fen's rebellious teenage sister to get into university or else to get a job to support the family. This twenty-minute short film contains two plot lines: one involving Xiao-fen's rivalry with her older sister to get the young lodger's attention, the other following her friendship with a short, skinny, bespectacled boy with whom she learns how to ride a bike and shares a similar desire of growing up fast. Not only is the film told from a young girl's perspective, but it also demonstrates Yang's inclination to create multiple plot lines to expose the conflicts, multiplicity,

and interconnectedness of human desires, emotions, and fantasy, especially those of women and children whose voices are often marginalized in Taiwanese society.

As mentioned in the introduction, while Taiwanese men were allowed to develop economic strength, they were unable to fully defend their diplomatic interests with other full-fledged nations (Kao & Bih 2014: 176). This led to their existential dilemma of switching between defending their dominant, powerful status and submissive, more feminised status in order to survive. In line with TNC films' major concern regarding life as actually lived by everyday people in Taiwan (Anderson 2005: 21 Chang 2017:113), Yang addresses the social and economic issues in the film in the context of the politically repressive and yet economically thriving Taiwan in the 1960s. *Expectations* manifests the trouble of being a man in post-colonial Taiwanese society in a wider context: how to define self, cultural and national identity in the face of challenges brought about by the conflicting political-economic status and the rapid arrival of late modernity. From the beginning of the story, Xiao-hua, the young boy in *Expectations*, has expressed his earnest wish to learn how to ride a bike. The cycling skill that he insists on mastering has an important implication: it signifies the freedom he, or the society at the time so longed for. In a society long repressed by the authoritarian rule of KMT, the yearning for freedom is represented by Xiao-hua's humble wish to be able 'to go anywhere he wants to go' (Fig 24). The shot which frames him talking directly to the camera denotes Yang's declaration of the yearning for freedom to the audience, while ironically the tunnel vision showing the lived space of the alleyway behind him signifies a less optimistic outcome of his wish. As discussed in the introduction chapter, the complex colonial and postcolonial history of the island state has contributed to a crisis of identity among the Taiwanese, which in turn become the core sources of ambiguous masculinity. Yang's depiction of Xiao-hua's desperate yearning for freedom, manifested in his determination to master the cycling skill, can therefore

be associated with the same yearning for freedom among Taiwanese men to construct and assert their own identities. In the end, Xiao-hua learns how to ride the bike, successfully taking the first step towards liberty and establishing his masculine identity. The same alleyway portrayed as a dark, confined and insecure space in Fig 25, however, reflects the real challenges facing the protagonist. In contrast to the bright and hopeful atmosphere depicted in Fig 24, Xiao-hua in Fig 25 shares with his friend his biggest disillusionment about growing up and becoming a man:

> 'You know, I've so eagerly wanted to learn to ride a bicycle, I thought then, after I have learnt it I could go where I wanted. But now (that I have mastered the skill), I don't know where I really want to ride to.'

> ---*Expectations* 1982

Figure 24 Xiao-hua yearning for freedom   *Figure 25 Tunnel vision showing disillusionment Expectations (1982)*

This is Yang's view about masculinity in a time when everything seemed hopeful and bright, a time when Taiwan was on the brink of seeing the lifting of martial law. Freedom, however, comes at a price. Without the certainty of an authoritative figure laying down the rules, while at the same time facing the unprecedented challenges brought about by the rapid transition into modernity, the individual must take responsibility for all actions and choices. Although *Expectations* is not part of the First Taipei Trilogy as it is not a full-length feature film, it is important in Yang's oeuvre as it marks the beginning of Yang's examination of men's

painstaking journey of identity searching and building after a long and complicated colonial history, and in the face of the intensifying and perplexing transition into late modernity.

Long shots bearing the signature style of tunnel vision are commonly used in Yang's construction of urban cinematic spaces across his oeuvre, more often than not foregrounding frustration, alienation, or even the looming threat of death. Fig 26 is a screenshot taken from *Taipei Story* (1985). The long and meandering road ending at a barely palpable focal point in the shot signifies the death of the male protagonist Ah-liong. He is one of the out-of-their-depth male characters depicted in Yang's films, whose frustrated masculinity is often manifested in his living and workplaces characterised by obsolete colonial-style buildings and business ventures, for example, his fabric shop. While Ah-liong meets his violent end on this seemingly never-ending road in the urban setting, it can be seen as Yang's use of his cinematic urban space to denote the displacement of masculine agency which cannot adapt to the rapid urbanisation of Taiwanese society.

Similarly, Yang uses a seemingly never-ending road in the urban space of Taipei City to open the film *Terrorizers* (1986) (Fig 27). The construction of the cinematic space of Taipei in this shot with the buildings on the left-hand side of the road extending to a vanishing point communicates a sense of neverendingness; the way the buildings and road stretch on "eternally" into the distance expresses the sense that the troubles brought on by an urban setting are never-ending and inescapable. Likewise, the sporadic streetlights have a connotation of a disjointed and fragmented existence of life in the city. Jameson argues that *Terrorizers'* intersecting narrative constructs a peculiarly urban context epitomising postmodern space, as a series of boxlike packages that contain, separate, and isolate inhabitants (Jameson 1992: 154). Indeed,

discontinuity is a large part of this film. The narrative of the film and the human relationships in it are pushed by chance meetings and disconnecting incidences. If the production of space is a social process, the cinematic space of Taipei City through the use of tunnel vision signifies alienation, fragmentation and uncertainties aptly depicted by Giddens as the consequences of modernity.

Figure 26 Tunnel vision foregrounding death TS (1985)   *Figure 27 Neverending troubles in urban settings Terrorizers (1986)*

Yang's use of the tunnel vision technique to construct cinematic space culminates in *ABSD*, highlighting the film's status as a cinematic time tunnel linking the two Taipei Trilogies. *ABSD*, Yang's first post-martial law film, is set in the backdrop of the White Terror and examines how the politically repressive period shapes the frustrated masculinity of the gangster characters and manifests their constant struggle for secure personal, cultural and national identities. The film tells how the first and second generations of the so-called mainlanders — those who came from mainland China with the Kuomintang in 1949 — engage in power and sexual games, and how they try to adapt to the new social environment in Taiwan. The protagonist, Si'r, is a senior high school student. He participates in gang activities because his parents are burdened by responsibilities, inconsiderate, and often unjust, and because his girl betrays him. Ming, Si'r's girlfriend, lost her father in the civil war in mainland China. She and her mother, who suffers badly from asthma, depend on unwilling relatives, who are themselves destitute exiles from mainland China. Ming's mother is hired as a housemaid for the parents of Si'r's best friend, Ma. Lured financially and sexually, Ming falls for Ma and thus upsets the boys' friendship.

Ming was originally the girlfriend of Honey, the noble leader of the Park Gang who entrusted her to Si'r before his murder by the treacherous leader of the Soldiers' Village Gang. Si'r takes a samurai sword left behind by the Japanese colonists and sets out to avenge himself on Ma. But instead, he runs into Ming, falls out with her, and kills her by stabbing her repeatedly.

ABSD is widely seen to be inspired by and an answer to Hou Hsiao-hsien's *A City of Sadness* (1989) (Yeh & Davis 2005, Wen 2008, Chen 2013). Hou's film addresses the problem of contested personal and national identities through the reconstruction of the 228 massacre (Haddon 2005: 61), and indeed, there are a number of shared themes in both films. In the first place, the repeated theme of an absent father figure can be seen in *A City of Sadness* and many other films of Hou, highlighting the anxiety of the native Taiwanese men in their constant search for a stable national and personal identity. Voiceless, weak, or even deceased patriarchal figures are also found in nearly all of Yang's films. Secondly, the recurring theme of violence is present in both *A City of Sadness* and *ABSD*. Hou's story about the sons of the Lin family shows that they are no different from small-time crooks and are a far cry from the image of the well-connected 'Shanghai' gang in the film. Hou's representation of post-colonial native Taiwanese masculinity through the violent fights and brutal murders is clear: it is inferior to the Shanghainese (mainlanders, the new colonisers) masculinity. Whereas in *ABSD*, the recurring theme of violence is manifested in the turf wars between the triad gangs formed by *waishengren* teenagers living in military dependents' villages, which is the direct reflection of the insecurity of the second generations of the mainlanders. Further, the Japanese presence in both films is prominent and yet the messages it conveys are different. In *A City of Sadness*, the ambiguous colonial complex of the Taiwanese towards their ex-colonisers is shown in the parting scene where the female protagonist Hiromi is gifted a kimono by her Japanese friend, Shizuka. Shizuka also gives a sword and a poem to Hiromi's brother, who was present when

Shizuka's brother wrote the poem. Hou portrays the Japanese in a dignified and civilised manner (Shizuka practices the art of flower arrangement and the piano, and her brother writes poems), yet it also hints at the abandonment of Taiwan by the ex-colonisers after the Japanese were defeated in WWII. The hopelessness and helplessness of the Taiwanese is manifested through Wen-hsiung's (the eldest son of the Lin family in the film) moaning about being exploited and deserted by both the Japanese and the KMT, like a deserted child without the protection of a parental figure. On the contrary, the Japanese presence in *ABSD* is not Yang's way of mourning for the loss of a stable personal and national identity in relation to the subtext of the developmental history of Taiwan. Instead, Yang uses his tunnel vision cinematic space in *ABSD* to resonate with Hou's portrait of Taiwan's struggle with its identity issues on the one hand, and foreground the grim future of a postmodern Taiwanese society which sees a total collapse of moral values and a lack of a sense of security on the other.

ABSD is loosely based on the true story of a young man who studied in the same secondary school as Yang in the early sixties. It takes place against the backdrop of a violent and turbulent period of war (the 1958 Second Taiwan Strait Crisis) and the White Terror (1949-1987), during which tens of thousands of alleged dissidents were interrogated, imprisoned or killed (Hsiao Yeh 2017: 68-69). Under this context, Yang's only period feature film is produced to criticise how Taiwanese people have forgotten the history of the White Terror, and how such a highly politically oppressive society contributed to a lack of a sense of security and a fractured personal and cultural identity. Thematically, tunnel vision has strong institutional links with the orderly corridors, intersections or other designs of officialdom (school, military, hospital, prison) (Fig 28, 29), and suggests framing as a rigid imposition of control such as imprisonment, inspection or at least surveillance (Yeh & Davis 2005: 117). Take for example the arched passageway shown in Fig 30. It is a vestibule linking the street and the schoolyard of Si'er (四

兒), the young protagonist. The colonial pillars and arches suggest the neoclassical pretension of empire found all over Asia, in this case, connoting imperial Japan through the architecture of Victorian England. The darkness at the other end of the vestibule signals danger and fear. Although the fear in this shot is incurred by the imminent danger of a gangster fight facing Si'er and his friends, it is also a reflection of the prevailing sentiment experienced by the Taiwanese society under the White Terror (1947-87).

Figure 28 & Figure 29 Tunnel vision has strong institutional links with orderly corridors found in official settings. ABSD (1991)

Figure 30 The colonial pillars and arches ABSD (1991)   Figure 31 Offscreen laughter hinting fear ABSD (1991)

Yang does not stage the actual fight, nor does he show the actual gangsters on the other side of the darkness. Instead, he uses the darkness out of which a basketball suddenly appears (Fig 31), and the offscreen laughter coming from the dark to taunt the audience. In this way, Yang constructs a cinematic space produced under the violent power struggle between two different gangs, and at once hinting at the fearful sentiments incited by the White Terror felt across the society. Furthermore, by manifesting such fear he is criticising the contemporary Taiwanese who give up their identity and integrity not just because of political reasons, but also because

of the greed and alienation brought about by rapid modernisation and materialism (Kang 2017: 71). Though Yang made the film in the late 1980s, it is obvious that he saw the contemporary Taiwanese society of the 1990s as an extension of the same lost generation of the 1960s, which was suffocated not just by the institutions, but also by the lack of courage to speak out for oneself and seek the truth.

Another prime example of Yang's production of cinematic space which accentuates the suffocating political atmosphere is found in the interrogation sequence of *ABSD*. When Si'er's father, Mr Zhang, is being interrogated and forced to sign a confession, Yang sets the scene in an abandoned boarding school, institutionally linking Zhang with his son. From Fig 32 & 33, it is clearly shown that Zhang has been subjected to lengthy interrogation, lasting through the night until the next day. In the long veranda running along the room where he is held, large blocks of ice are seen being left on the ground. It turns out that this is one of the tools used to torture the detainees as they are made to sit on the blocks of ice if they refuse to write a detailed confession. Once again, the tunnel vision provides a cinematic space in *ABSD* signifying the repressed and frustrated masculinity of Zhang.

Figure 32 & Figure 33 Tunnel vision signifying the repressed and frustrated masculinity of Mr Zhang ABSD (1991)

In fact, this is an important turning point in the plot. Si'er is extremely disappointed in his father's change from a man of strict principle (he has a heart-to-heart conversation with Si'er

at the beginning of the film stressing that one should not be afraid to defend one's honour if one believes one is in the right) to a cowardly father figure after the interrogation. This disappointment in the crumbling of the role model of his masculine identity turns into anger which culminates at the end of the film when he murders his love interest, Xiao-ming. The repressed and suffocated masculinity that resulted from the fear of living in the White Terror finally finds a venting outlet. The fact that people are too scared to speak up for themselves and unwilling to stand up to injustice contributes to the huge disappointment and anger felt by Si'er. As Yang comments, while it is Si'er who commits the crime, the whole of society, even the victim, are the accomplices to the murder (cited in HKIFF 2017: 22). It is this repressive and suffocating social space, manifested in Edward Yang's unique construction of cinematic space through the tunnel vision, which aptly describes the repressed and frustrated masculinity that he represented in the time tunnel film *ABSD* and also throughout his oeuvre. It is also worth noting that *ABSD* echoes with and is different from Hou Hsiao-hsien's *A City of Sadness* in some ways.

In this chapter, I have argued that Yang's construction of cinematic space accentuates the consequences of different stages of modernity which are reflected in the construction of masculinity in the postcolonial and rapidly modernising society. Using Lefebvre's theory of production of space, this chapter first delineated the interaction of spatial relationships and human relationships, and how masculinity is challenged under the rapid changes in both spheres. Through the depiction of men's challenges within the context of his cinematic space, Yang shows that while late modernity brings about more freedom and choices, it also leads to greater levels of anxiety and insecurity. It is important to note that while the entrapped and frustrated type of masculinity is accentuated in Yang's construction of colonial and rapidly re/developing urban space, this frustration and sense of entrapment is caused by a lack of choice,

and being forced to conform to an idealised masculinity imposed by authoritarian regimes under the Japanese colonisation and the KMT recolonisation. The porous and ambiguous urban space in the Second Taipei Trilogy also manifests the similar vulnerable and insecure facets of men which is exacerbated by the manufactured uncertainty in high or late modernity (Giddens 1990: 190). However, this is caused by too many choices while having fewer rules to follow, contributing to a loss of direction and a lack of role models in the self-assertion of personal identities. Hence, it would be fair to say that although the result of frustration is the same, the underlying causes of this frustration are distinct.

Between the two Taipei trilogies which foreground a Taiwanese society transitioning from simpler modernity where people still have some rules to follow, to liquid modernity where volatility and ephemerality have become the societal norms, *ABSD* is a film used by Yang to reflect on how the forbidden history of Taiwan represented in it constitutes the repressed and frustrated masculinity throughout Yang's oeuvre. Having established this common trait in Yang's representation of masculinity in his films through the cinematic spatial configuration of Taipei City, I will discuss how Yang uses his representation of masculinity from another perspective. By moving from the broad overview of spatial construction in the films to the specific use of the frames-within-frames technique, the next chapter will continue to look deeper into challenges faced by the Taiwanese men and by extension the whole society within a rapidly modernising and globalising context.

Chapter 4: Representation of Masculinities in Yang's Frames-Within-Frames

In the last chapter, I analysed how Edward Yang uses cinematic space to represent his perception of Taiwanese masculinities. I demonstrated that Yang uses colonial, urban, ambiguous public/ private, and cold and homogeneous glass architecture in city space to represent Taiwanese masculinities undergoing the challenges brought by post-colonial conditions and the rapid transition into liquid modernity. The previous chapter has shown how Yang's construction of cinematic space is used as the 'establishing shot' to illustrate the different settings of the rapidly changing social practices that triggered the identity crises men endured during Yang's time. This chapter will analyse how Yang uses frames-within-frames extensively in his films to provide a 'close-up shot' of the frustrating and entrapping conditions of Taiwanese masculinities, which in turn refract Taiwan's rapid societal transformation. I will, then, be looking at how he explores the same problems of frustrated and entrapped masculinity using a different filmic technique, frames-within-frames.

4.1/ The Technique of Frames-within-frames in Films

Before looking into Yang's use of frames-within-frames as his main visual trope, it is worth discussing what such a technique does in cinema and how it is used in other films. For a start, there is no standardised meaning for a frame within a frame. It all depends on the content and the purpose and intention of the creator. A cinematic frame within a frame is not limited to a rectangular shape. Many of the frames-within-frames elements include anything that breaks a frame into smaller sections: mirrors, windows, doors, trees, and power lines, and even the use of semi-silhouetted foreground objects. What is included within a frame, however, will be viewed as an intentional stylistic choice; and well-composed frames-within-frames can fracture

screen space, add depth, and create visual interest in cinematic compositions (Goodman 2016). Meaning will always arise from composition choices and using frames-within-frames is no different. For example, if the frame within a frame is tight and restrictive, this may indicate claustrophobia. Similarly, vertical lines of any kind can be read as imprisonment, conflict and separation for the characters, which is actually a stylistic choice characteristic of film noir. While the closed frame technique is structured to keep the attention only on the information that is contained in the shot, the open frame convention allows an action to move in and out of the frame and does not disguise the fact that the shot is only a partial viewpoint of a much larger environment (Ward 2013: 89). In Alfred Hitchcock's films, his mastery of cinematic framing draws attention to nearly every shot of his films. Beyond regulating the components of his visual style, the 'frame' also plays an important thematic role in his films especially when he uses an interior compositional frame such as a window of a doorway within the larger film frame (Gunning 2007: 14). Certain patterns of meaning, such as the entrapment of characters are recurrent, derived often from his use of frames in his thrillers.

One prime example of using frames-within-frames shots (about a hundred) to enhance the paranoia of a classic spy thriller is *The Ipcress File* (1965) by Sidney J. Furie. As McNaughton (2019) rightly asserts, the motif of the grid or box is commonly used in espionage thrillers to express their claustrophobic and unsettling tone, which McNaughton claims can be linked to Max Weber's conception of modern, capitalist society as an iron cage. Weber, however, did not actually use the term cage and this translation is attributed to Talcott Parsons (cited in Tiryakian 1981: 28). That said, the cage is nevertheless a useful metaphor for the disciplinary nature of modern life, and the entrapping, bureaucratic nature of modern capitalism, including the unending cycle of production and consumption (McNaughton 2019). Toby Miller argues that spy stories on screen function hegemonically as part of a process of mirroring 'repressive

state apparatuses' via 'ideological state apparatuses' (Miller 2003: 93). He connects Weber with grid imagery in his account of class in a capitalist society, specifically using the cage metaphor to describe how the production and ideology of such fictions are imbricated in hegemonic assumptions about capitalism: 'both the processes and the contents of espionage cinema and TV appear intensely problematic, caught in a cage of capitalist normalcy' (Ibid). As Furie has shown in *The Ipcress File*'s framing design, boxes and grids (both material and symbolic) are used as recurrent visual symbols to convey the alienating, entrapping conditions of such 'iron cage' modernity. In essence, the frames-within-frames composition technique thematically and stylistically turns the cinematic space into prison-like sites, constraining and trapping characters within and behind different frames-within-frames devices such as door frames, window frames, mesh, and car windscreens. In this way, the protagonists' constant threat of being under imprisonment, danger, pressure and frustration is exerted through these omnipresent frames.

4.2/ Yang's Use of Frames-within-frames to Represent Masculinities

Masculinities have no physical referent and are in constant fluctuation since individuals are constituted out of overlapping and often conflicting relational contexts. As Xueping Zhong (2000: 7) points out, the search for masculinities is actually a multifaceted process across several paradigms such as questions of male desire, anxiety, and male relationships with women; sexual politics played by the power structure (the Party-state and its ideology) etc. In addition, in Taiwan's case, layered political deadlocks and complicated, multifaceted cultural identities have contributed to the fractured national identity and ambivalent Taiwanese masculinities. Christopher Lupke (2009: 245) suggests a kind of 'aesthetic of division' in contemporary Taiwanese art and literature. Tension, conflicts and misunderstandings lie just

below the surface of Taiwan's unhealable political wound between *benshengren* (nativists) and *waishengren* (mainlanders), which is manifested in the modernist and nativist literature debate (Ibid: 248). He also links the contested identity issues to an exhibition of avant-garde art from Taiwan curated by An-yi Pan at the Cornell Art Museum in 2004, stressing the extent to which various artists in this exhibit seemed obsessed with images of splitting, cutting, dissection, and the dissolution of the human body.

This seems to suggest that the traumatic experience of the painful division in Taiwanese politics and national identity is manifested in art productions of a body being severed or torn apart, hence showcasing a dissected collective consciousness that could not be healed (Ibid: 246). This resonates with Kaja Silverman's claim in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (1992: 52), which states that men and masculinities, including narratives and representations of masculinities, are affected profoundly by historical trauma. I strongly contend that Yang's use of frames is his representation of the impact of such traumatic historical experiences on the construction of Taiwanese masculinities. In addition, given Yang's profound 'presentness' and his focus on the impact of modernity on Taiwanese contemporary society, his frames-within-frames will also be shown as an effective way to foreground the challenges facing Taiwanese society in the different stages of its rapid transition into modernity.

Across Yang's oeuvre, frames-within-frames are a common visual motif used to tell his stories. From the segment *Expectations* in the portmanteau film *In Our Time* (1982) to his last most internationally acclaimed film, *Yi Yi* (2000), he has steadily increased his use of framing devices in his films (See Appendix One). In *Expectations*, there are only 11.7 % of shots in which some sort of frames are found, whereas starting from his first feature film *That Day on the Beach* (1983), the use of framing devices to convey his narratives has drastically increased.

In |*A Confucian Confusion* (1994), 52.6% of the shots in the film contain some form of frames, and in *Yi Yi* (2000), 47% of shots contain a frame. Chang writes about Yang's frames-within-frames perception and sums it up as follows:

> Edward Yang is interested in representing the everyday life of urban dwellers: sometimes they seem living in a disconnected space and de-chronologised moments; the spectators see them from the window frames, door frames, pillars, closets, blinds, mirrors, elevators…peeping [at] them repeating everyday banality.

Chang 2004: 19

Indeed, Yang uses frames to express different aspects of masculinity, including frustration, alienation, a sense of entrapment, tensions, conflicts and pressure. These challenges are experienced by Taiwanese men while protecting or restoring their privileged masculinity and finding a stable sense of self, in the face of historic trauma and a rapidly changing society. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Yang's portrayal of masculinity closely reflects the different changes taking place in different stages of modernity. While I used spatial configuration as an establishing shot to give an overview of how Yang's perception of masculinity is represented in his First and Second Taipei Trilogies, this chapter will take a close-up examination of his films in order to manifest these changes reflected through his representation of masculinity using frames-within-frames technique. By studying Yang's films in chronological order, this chapter intends to show a simultaneous evolution of their representation of masculinity and the Taiwanese society which facilitated their production. Interestingly, EY's portrayal of men shows some similarities to that which is portrayed in early Taiwan cinema, while at the same time stands alone as a refraction of the changing historical and social landscapes during

Taiwan's pivotal times of rapid transition from a postcolonial island state to one which is ruled by globalised capitalism.

4.2.1/ *Expectations, That Day on the Beach* and *Taipei Story: Weakening Patriarchal Role Models Signifying Diminishing Colonial Influence in Taiwanese Society*

In the first three films of Yang, he uses the absence of father figures and the weak patriarchal role models to show various challenges facing men which reflect nuanced and rapid societal changes. *Expectations* is one of the two films in Yang's oeuvre where female characters appear in a framing device more than their male counterparts. While there are 14 scenes in which a female character appears in a frame within a frame, male characters only appear in the framing device 3 times (see Appendix One). The fact that the male characters are deliberately under-represented in the frames-within-frames may be an acknowledgement of the total absence of a father figure in the film. With the absence of such a figure, the gender role of a man is mainly defined through the female characters: Xiao-fen's widowed mother and her elder sister. Yang introduces this matriarchal figure of the family through a kitchen door frame (Fig 34 & 35), showing the dual responsibilities (both as a breadwinner and a housewife) of the mother and her confinement at once. As the main breadwinner of the family, Xiao-fen's mother takes on two jobs to keep the family running, and yet at the same time has to prepare dinner before finishing it in a rush and hurrying out for her second job. It is interesting to note that the usual way of asserting masculinity through group struggles and the use of violence (Connell 1995: 83) is limited only to a TV newsreel about the Vietnam War, with which none of the female family members are concerned (Fig 36).

Figure 34 & Figure 35 Door frame showing the sense of confinement of the family's matriarch Expectations (1982)

真是對不起我，也對不起妳爸爸
Or you can't face me and your father

Figure 36 Usual way of asserting masculinity: war

With the absence of a male figure, the actual power asserter is the one who holds economic power – the widowed mother. Over dinner, she sends out an ultimatum to her elder daughter: if she cannot secure an offer of a university place this time, she must find a job and support the family. Here we see the traditional idea of masculinity, no matter whether it is manifested in a male or female character, embodied in the virtues of '*churen toudi*' (出人頭地 being outstanding) and '*Dandang*' (擔當 being responsible for the family) (Wong & Yau 2016: 223).

The economic power held by the mother and the expectation placed on the elder daughter to achieve academic (and future economic) success is not represented by Yang as a symbol of feminist progress though. Rather, as stated by Yang in an interview, it is a more nuanced perspective to describe the changing social conditions and the pressure imposed on both males and females (cited in Berry 2005: 288).

While the main theme of *Expectations* is Xiao-fen's coming-of-age experience, an equally important theme of the film is Yang's perception and representation of Taiwanese masculinity in the early 1980s. In the absence of a dominant political patriarchal figure and considering Taiwan's isolated position in global politics, the only solid identity Taiwanese men successfully constructed was their internationally recognised 'economic miracle' identity. As discussed in the previous chapter, the gap between Taiwan's economic strength and its political influence has led to the development of ambiguous masculinity in Taiwanese men. While Yang uses tunnel vision to construct a cinematic space in *Expectations* to highlight men's disillusionment in their painstaking journey of identity building, he uses frames-within-frames to achieve a similar aim here. The only adult male protagonist in this story, the student tenant living in Xiao-fen's house is a voiceless figure. Although he is the love interest of Xiao-fen and he has a relationship with her sister, he is barely heard talking throughout the whole film. Through a slightly blurred image of the student tenant behind a door frame (Fig 37) and the silhouette of the student behind a window frame (Fig 38), Yang depicts a kind of voiceless and ambiguous masculinity. The frames-within-frames images highlight the absence of a strong patriarchal figure, resulting from the fading of China's aura among the post-war generation in the 1960s (Zheng 2014: 459) when the film was set, and the gradual loosening of the KMT government control in the early 1980s when the film was made. More importantly, Yang's frames foreshadow the disillusionment felt by Taiwanese men under rapid transitions in modern society.

Figures 37 & 38 Blurred image and silhouette of a male figure depicting voiceless masculinity Expectations (1982)

In the next two films directed by Yang, *That Day on the Beach* and *Taipei Story*, the diminishing postcolonial patriarchal influence on masculinity formation in Taiwan still lingers, though the patriarchal figure either exerts a debilitating influence on masculinity formation or is obsolete and fails to catch up with the fast-changing pace of liquid modernity. Three decades of rapid economic growth from the 1960s to the 1980s transformed Taiwan from an agricultural to an industrial society, and then from a manufacturing-based to a high-tech economy. Economic development contributed to the political democratisation of the island state, leading to the lifting of the four-decade-long curfew in 1987 (Lu 2011: 766). Irrespective of the different ways Taiwanese men benefited from the political and economic progress, Yang's frames accentuate the frustration and pressures imposed on men due to the loss of signposting (e.g. the breakdown in traditional values) and the failure to catch up with the ever-changing parameters and demands brought in by globalisation and the transition into liquid modernity. It is also interesting to note that the weakening patriarchal influence represented in these films in some ways resonates with the representation of impotent masculinity in early Taiwanese cinema, and the narrative of tragic hero masculine image in pre-war Japanese cinema.

In *That Day on the Beach*, the father of the main protagonists Jia-li and Jia-sen is a typical authoritative patriarchal figure who is the product of the late colonial *kominka* programme

instigated by the Japanese to solicit loyalty from colonial subjects. He runs his family clinic in a Japanese-style house (Fig 39) and wears Japanese pyjamas (*nemaki*) (Fig 40). He has total authority over his children so that both Jia-sen and Jia-li's marriages are arranged by him. However, like the Taiwanese's Japanese colonisers who endorsed patriarchal ideologies, the father has never been a good parental figure. He has an affair with his nurse; seldom talks to his children and does not care about their emotional needs. Different from the types of frames-within-frames Yang uses in *Expectations* to highlight the ambivalent presence of a father figure both in the film and Taiwanese society, the frames-within-frames he uses in the mise-en-scene of the Lin household symbolically turns the family home into a cage and a prison (Fig 41). Indeed, both the authoritative father figure and his submissive family are consistently situated in some kind of a frame (e.g. the grids on the latticed Japanese-style sliding doors, window and door frames). Yang's recurrent frames-within-frames visual motifs thus represent the claustrophobic and oppressive nature of hegemonic masculine dominance. The mimicry of Jia-sen on his father's masculine image, which in turn is built on the idealised Japanese colonial masculinity has, unfortunately, become a mockery of it.

Fig 39 & 40 The Japanese house and the Japanese way of dressing symbolise authoritative patriarchal power TDOTB (1983)

Figure 41 Frames-within-frames showing home as a prison TDOTB (1983)

The death of the father marks the end of an era. To Jia-sen, however, this is not the solution to his problems. As he stated to Jia-li in the film,

> 'Once I believed too much in Papa. Look at me now. Following him, following all that time has left behind…'

<div align="right">

Jia-sen *That Day on the Beach* (1982)

</div>

The blind loyalty of Jia-sen leads to his loss of the love of his life and the marriage with a woman whom he hardly knows. The demise of the strong patriarchal father figure does not in any sense make his life any better. In fact, the death of the father signals the foreseeable death of the obsolete clinic, which in time will be forgotten by the world, along with Jia-sen. His weak and subservient character resonates with the representation of the impotent male characters in early Taiwanese cinema, for example, in *Taiyupian*. While the masculinity portrayed in the latter represents a suppressed society controlled by the KMT government, the masculinity represented in the former struggles to adapt to the rapid changes of modernization. It cannot be denied that men do enjoy the dividends of patriarchy and they appear to be socioeconomic achievers. They are, however, also the ones to bear the costs of competitive pressure (Yeh & Davis 2005: 123). Although Yang's representation of masculinity is a critical one that does not imply nostalgia for strong patriarchal authority, his use of frames-within-frames does highlight the challenges facing modern-day men.

As to Jia-sen's sister Jia-li, on defying her father's decision to marry her off in order to secure more economic and social capital, she decides to elope and find refuge in her marriage with De-wei. The beginning of De-wei's successful career means that Jia-li can have the luxury of staying at home and doing the things she enjoys. Whereas in De-wei's case, the more he has got involved in the swift currents of high-stakes capital games, the more frustrated he becomes and the more he seems to be lost in the ever-changing parameters and demands of the fast-changing world. For example, in De-wei's working environment, large transparent partitions such as large windows and glass doors are commonly seen (Fig 42 & 43), creating 'divisions, grids and compartmentalisation of space and character' (Barnwell 2017). Such transparent partitions also convey that 'privacy is an illusion' (D'Arcy 2014: 282), and De-wei is working in a transparent cage (Fig 44). In addition, he is repeatedly shown to be framed by windows when he is at the office (Fig 45), which again gives the impression that he is a boxed-in character ambushed by the glassy and cold high-rise buildings outside the window (Fig 46). The sense of his imprisonment can be seen in the interesting contrast between the flashback of his carefree days as a young student playing basketball (Fig 47), and his now routinised life. The improvised basketball hoop, made up of a cardboard and bin, appears to be a nostalgic reminder of happier days gone by, compared to his now entrapped and boring existence (Fig 48).

Figure 42 & Figure 43 Large windows and glass doors compartmentalising people in De-wei's working space TDOTB (1983)

Figure 44 De-wei working in a transparent cage TDOTB (1983)   *Figure 45 Repeatedly framed by windows TDOTB (1983)*

Figure 46 Ambushed by glassy high-rises TDOTB (1983)   *Figure 47 De-wei's younger carefree days TDOTB (1983)*

Figure 48 Improvised basketball hoop at the office TDOTB (1983)   *Figure 49 Wooden cage motif TDOTB (1983)*

Figure 50 & Figure 51 Home as a prison: De-wei framed by wooden bars and iron gate at home TDOTB (1983)

Likewise, his affluent and well-appointed apartment does not give him any sense of a home. Instead, the 'wooden cage' motif, similar to Weber's 'iron cage' metaphor, is prominent in the interior design, hence dividing the space into grids and confining characters behind bars (Fig 49). For example, in a shot where Jia-li is shown to be trapped in the kitchen, De-wei is shown to be trapped behind the wooden bars like a prisoner out in the lounge (Fig 50). Furthermore, the tight frame of the iron gate of his apartment encases his head within the decorative grid, symbolizing his departure from the house as a release from prison. (Fig 51). Globalisation unites as much as divides; it signals new freedom for some; upon many others, it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate. Such are the paradoxes continually evolving in what Bauman has described as 'liquid modernity'. In *That Day on the Beach*, Yang shows that while the diminishing importance of traditional signposting has enabled more freedom and space for reflexivity in identity searching, enacting and becoming, it has also brought more frustration to

men as the traditional social norms have been challenged. While Taiwan was marching into the brave new world of more political freedom and economic advances brought by globalised capitalism, Yang shows that men were seemingly moving from the confinement of one cage to another, through his frequent use of the stylistic tool frames-within-frames.

If the patriarchal figure represented in *That Day on the Beach* is a culmination of the hegemonic masculinity reinforced by the Japanese colonial influences, the patriarchal figure represented by the run-down fabric shop owner, Ah-liong, in *Taipei Story* is much more related to a Chinese traditional patriarch. That said, he is not the absolute power symbol of the family, but rather, one who has lost his grip amid a post-traditional order where family ties are disintegrating and gender roles are changing. While his childhood sweetheart Ah-tsing hopes that he will be the key to her future by starting a new life in America, Ah-liong is stuck in a past that combines baseball and traditional loyalty, and that indirectly causes the breakdown of their relationship. Not all men are beneficiaries of globalisation and liquid modernity indeed, as modernity produces difference, exclusion and marginalisation (Giddens 1991: 6). As shown in Chapter 4, Ah-liong, who insists on maintaining the traditional code of patriarchy in a passive and tragic way, loses his own life at the end of the film. On the surface, Ah-liong is killed in a petty street fight; but in the larger scheme, he dies because he fails to cope with new orders of social and sexual relations (Yeh & Davis 2005: 124). Yang's frames-within-frames technique evocatively portrays the breaking down of the traditional code of honour from a bygone patriarchal era which was deeply rooted in Chinese tradition and further reinforced by the half-century of Japanese colonial influences. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Edward Yang's construction of disappearing colonial space signifies the waning of Japanese colonial influence. In *Taipei Story*, the demise of Ah-liong's tragic hero masculinity also indicates how the changing socio-political environment casts incredible pressure on men. Originally, the

idealised tragic hero masculine image which is prominently present in Japanese films in the 1930s and 1940s intends to accentuate the filial, loyal and non-verbal tragic hero to uphold patriarchal authority to reinforce the interests of masculinity at a time when the on-rush of modernism challenged the traditional foundations of the family (Sandish 2000: 52). However, in *Taipei Story*, Ah-liong's tragic hero image manifests the disillusionment, isolation and frustration experienced by men when they try so hard to restore patriarchy but in vain.

Edward Yang uses nine different frames-within-frames shots to portend such disintegration in the first three minutes of the film. The first shot features a huge French window in the empty apartment of Ah-tsing. Though both Ah-liong and Ah-tsing are framed by the French window, they are separated by a rail in the middle. In the following six frames-within-frames shots (including a door opening through which the emotionally distant Ah-liong is seen mimicking a baseball batter with his swinging arms; mirror frames in which Ah-tsing with a pair of oversized shades appears, and door frames), the two protagonists never appear together in the same frame. In the penultimate frame in the sequence, both of them appear in the same doorframe but yet again there is a wall situated between the two. The opening sequence then ends with an empty shot of the French window, on which the Chinese and the English title of the film are projected.

Taipei Story Opening Sequence

(indicating the unbridgeable gap between Ah-liong and Ah-tsing)

By constantly placing the two main protagonists in different frames or putting a barrier between them when they appear in the same frame, Yang precisely describes the alienated relationship between Ah-liong and Ah-tsing, foreshadowing an unbridgeable gap between the two as the modernisation process of Taipei City threatens to pull them apart. The incompatibility between the casually dressed Ah-liong and the yuppie-attired Ah-tsing in a shoulder-padded business suit is highlighted by the completely different meanings in the Chinese (青梅竹馬 *Childhood Sweetheart*) and English (*Taipei Story*) titles of the film, which is projected on the two different panels of the French window in the opening credits. In a way, the two main characters represent two different eras: the past and the future. The eventual collapse of their relationship hinted at

through Yang's framing devices not only accentuates the frustration, confinement and helplessness experienced by Ah-liong, who fails to reclaim his masculinity by preserving traditional family ties, but also shows the unavoidable breakdown of ties between the past and the future of the rapidly changing Taipei City.

Ah-liong's masculine image is built on his traditional code of honour, which has been mentioned in the last chapter. As his ex-girlfriend perceptively points out, however, his superfluous code of honour is only a cover for his inadequacy and impotence (Lu 2002: 127-128). Indeed, while everything in the rapidly changing world is steadily and irreversibly on the move, this is not the case for Ah-liong. His obsolete and run-down fabric shop is so badly managed that even his staff is worried about its imminent closure. His relationship with Ah-tsing barely merits the name and it beggars belief that they have been together since their childhood. His trip to America brings back only the false hope of fulfilling Ah-tsing's American and wedding dreams. Most of all, the traditional patriarchal values which he upholds and which Ah-tsing interprets as a sign of safety and reliability have unavoidably weakened him, rendering it hard for him to cope with the fast-changing world and a new environment. The frustration and sense of entrapment resulting from his failure to deal with all these changes is shown in the way he is depicted in the narrative and Yang's framing device.

Figure 52 & Figure 53 Frames-within-frames accentuating Ah-lion's sense of entrapment in urban space TS (1985)

Figure 54 Ah-liong's frustration in urban space TS (1985)   Figure 55 International currencies symbolising globalisation

For example, when Ah-liong is in open spaces, he is framed through a mesh of wire (Fig 52) or the car windscreen (Fig 53). Using an ocean of automobiles and people, Yang frames Ah-liong in the busy urban space (Fig 54), accentuating his sense of entrapment within the hustle and bustle of Taipei City. The tight and restrictive framing devices indicate the claustrophobic psyche of Ah-liong even when he is shown in open spaces. The way he is out of sync with this modern society is shown in the scene where he meets Ah-tsing's city yuppie friends. In the first place, the bar where Ah-tsing's friends socialise is a symbol of Westernisation and globalisation. Bank notes from different countries are pinned up to emphasise this fact (Fig 55). Disco music plays loudly in the background and the darts games emphasise the heavy presence of Western culture, which is a sharp contrast to the old-fashioned karaoke bar where Ah-liong normally goes, where its regular customers still sing Japanese oldies.

When Ah-liong introduces himself as working with 'fabric', none of Ah-tsing's yuppie friends can work out the exact nature of his job, apart from categorising him as working in the 'textile industry'. In fact, Ah-liong's old fabric shop is a far cry from any modernised industry. The incompatibility in lifestyles and values between him and Ah-tsing's friends ends up in a meaningless fight when he is teased about his long-gone baseball glories. As he explains to Ah-tsing later, he believes that fighting is for a kind of 'spirit' (一口氣 *yikou qi*) (Lu 2002: 131) or a 'sense of righteousness'. In this code of honour passed down from a bygone patriarchal era, 'saving face' was a key value among Confucian gentlemen in the past (Ibid: 128). In contemporary Taipei, however, such old-fashioned masculinity has become an object of mockery. This may explain why Ah-liong fits in well and looks comfortable when dining with Ah-tsing's father in the latter's spooky, shadow-drenched home which is filled with old-fashioned furniture. While the two men are bonding over a few bottles of beer during the meal, Ah-tsing and her mother busy themselves with chores (her mother cooking in the kitchen and she fetching and opening the cold beers). At one point, Ah-tsing tells her mum she finds 'Ah-liong is getting more and more like dad', poignantly grouping the men of the two generations in the same category of dominant patriarchal power, but joins her mother and herself in a different category of victims of traditional patriarchy. Although at work Ah-tsing is an irreplaceable executive assistant to her boss Ms Mei, at home she quietly assumes the role of a servant.

Ironically, the traditional code of honour and traditional family ties which Ah-liong is so eager to preserve have gradually lost their meaning to Ah-tsing and the modern society she represents. Her ability to break free from the patriarchal force puts Ah-liong's code of honour in jeopardy.

America may have always been a power symbol in Yang's films, but it does not solve the existential crisis facing Ah-liong. As Ah-liong asserts, America is not the penicillin to the irreparable differences between him (and the past by-gone patriarchal values he represents) and Ah-tsing (the modern Taipei story she signifies), nor is marriage. His death does not seem to deprive the city of anything. On the contrary, it liberates Ah-tsing further from the burden of traditional family-oriented ethics. At the end of the film, Yang inserts the scene of Ah-liong's body being taken from the roadside where he was stabbed into Ah-tsing's conversation with her ex-boss, Miss Mei. While Ah-liong loses his life in a meaningless way, Ah-tsing gets a new job opportunity in the information technology company started up by Miss Mei. Ah-liong's death therefore signals the death of the Confucius traditional code of honour and the dated Japanese tragic hero masculine ideal image. The traditional masculine identity in the rapidly modernising Taiwan is in a way similar to the hallucinated image of his victorious return from the teenage world championship framed by the empty screen of the abandoned TV (Fig 56), which is dumped among a heap of scrap.

Figure 56 Hallucinated image of Ah-liong's past glory TS (1985)

Similar to the male protagonist De-wei in *That Day on the Beach*, there is another male character in *Taipei Story* who manifests challenges faced by men in a society marching into liquid modernity. Though men enjoy the dividends of patriarchy at the systemic level, in the risk-ridden culture of modernity they also suffer one way or another. Xiao-ke, Ah-tsing's male colleague, is a successful architect with a dutiful wife and a young son. At the beginning of the

film, however, he suffers serious existential crises. A minor miscalculation in his survey has resulted in a lawsuit which would cost him his job. Then the company both he and Ah-tsing are working for is acquired by another big enterprise, which could threaten his job security. In addition, his marriage is on the verge of breaking down due to a lack of communication between him and his wife. Taipei City's extreme speed of modernisation and the suffocating pace of modern life not only erase the collective memories of its citizens, but also trigger Xiao-ke's identity crisis within the jungle of skyscrapers: what defines his self-identity if he is replaceable any time? What is the difference between his existence or absence, if not even he can remember which buildings are designed by him? Though Giddens argues that feelings of personal powerlessness were more intense in pre-modern contexts because of the more or less unchallengeable hold of tradition (Giddens 1991: 192), individuals still experience feelings of powerlessness profoundly in relation to a diverse and alienating modern social universe. In *Taipei Story*, Yang manifests Xiao-ke's existential crises which contributes to a sense of besiegedness on his masculinity, through the recurring use of frames-within-frames devices such as the cage and grid motifs.

Resembling the interior design of De-wei's office, Xiao-ke's office is like a cage fitted with blinds. When the team of personnel who are going to take over the company first arrive, Xiao-ke peeps through the blinds to catch a glimpse as if he is a caged prisoner (Fig 57). Interestingly, when Ah-tsing asks which one is the new manager Xiao-ke's answer is 'the one with glasses', though all five men standing outside are all wearing glasses (Fig 58). The similar appearances of the new management team highlight their lack of distinctive identity, suggesting that the more extensive modern social systems become, the more each particular individual is like an atom in a vast agglomeration of other individuals (Ibid). The vertical blinds behind them resemble prison bars, hinting at the fact that these powerful-looking men who acquire the assets

of other smaller companies are also in a way boxed in by the entrapping, bureaucratic nature of modern capitalism. Also, the empty corridors and big glass panels of the building feature the grid motif (Fig 59), while Yang's extreme long shots manifest alienation and the diminished sense of self against a cityscape filled with glassy and homogenous blocks of offices.

Figure 57 Xiao-ke's office as the prison motif TS (1985)

Figure 58 Men in suits and glasses lack distinctive identity TS (1985)

Figure 59 Office building featuring the grid motif TS (1985)

If masculinity refers to the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine (Stets & Burke 2000: 997), and the sense of self is constantly shifting in response to ever-changing parameters and demands (Gelfer: 2014: 2), how Xiao-ke sees himself as a man and as an individual is affected by the crises he experiences in the face of rapidly changing demand of liquid modernity. During the process of modernisation and redevelopment, not only is Ah-liong's old-fashioned fabric shop and the traditional era it represents doomed to disappear, but it seems that the trace of Xiao-ke's existence is also disappearing with the number of rapidly increasing

new buildings. When he is confiding to Ah-tsing about his existential crisis, he is framed by the black window frame; the matchbox-like buildings in the background evoke the cage motif (Fig 60), highlighting the sense of entrapment. These frames-within-frames devices resonate with Weber's iron cage concept as briefly mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, symbolising the disciplinary, entrapping, and bureaucratic nature of life under capitalism which includes the endless cycle of consumption and production (Weber 2003: 179-181). Under the rapid pace of capitalist mass production, Xiao-ke feels the alienation of the workers from the products of their labour (Flew 1984: 10), hence triggering his sense of powerlessness and meaninglessness. He is also caught in the rapid transition from heavy to liquid modernity, increasingly causing him to lose a sense of certainty, predictability and rootedness, some common features which used to exist in heavy capitalism (Bauman 2000: 57). His constant questioning of his own existence's meaning shapes his construction of masculinity, rendering it frustrated, entrapped and voiceless. His failure to establish a clear self-identity through his career is echoed in his failure to exert his patriarchal presence at home. His dutiful wife seems to be able to run and take care of the family on her own. His long working hours mean that when he arrives home it is well past his son's bedtime. In one scene he is perfectly framed within the doorway of his son's bedroom, as he is stopped by his wife from waking up his son up when he wants to talk to him (Fig 61). Here Yang's door frame is used as a symbol of struggles and limitations experienced in society; the fact that he is stuck in the doorway aptly explains his current ambiguous position in his life: he is neither in nor out, present nor absent, important nor unimportant.

Figure 60 Matchbox-like buildings evoking the cage motif TS (1985) Figure 61 Xiao-k's trapped masculinity TS (1985)

As stated in the above analysis, not all men benefit from modernity and globalisation. Men may enjoy systemic patriarchal dividends but on a personal level, some men do suffer, and their sufferings do have undesirable impacts on their masculinity formation. Though Jia-sen and Ah-liong both inherit patriarchal dividends from their fathers which has a strong connotation of the colonial bygone glory, they suffer because they are imprisoned by the residual glories of a bygone era and fail to meet up with the changing masculine expectations in modern society. While De-wei and Xiao-ke seem to be privileged young professional urbanites, their masculinities also suffer as they find it difficult to adjust to the rapidly changing social, economic and cultural transformations. In any case, through the use of frames-within-frames, Yang's initial works delve into the themes of absent father figures and weakening patriarchal role models, serving as a powerful depiction of Taiwanese masculinity and its evolution in tandem with the progressive shifts of Taiwanese society. In the next film Yang produced shortly after *Taipei Story*, it seems that the breakneck speed of economic development and the corresponding consequences of modernity have in many ways exacerbated the identity crises facing Taiwanese men, which Yang continuously manifests in his use of frames-within-frames devices.

4.2.2/ Terrorizers: Ambiguous Masculinity – Victim or/ and Perpetrator of Violence and Men Stepping into Liquid Modernity

The construction of Taiwanese masculinities is hugely influenced by the island's unique political and historical background. The neither/nor positionality of Taiwan, the insoluble ambivalences, the layered political deadlocks and cultural identities have caused painful divisions in Taiwanese politics and national identity (Lupke 2009: 243).   The indeterminate, undecidable and open-ended status of Taiwan has contributed to the development of masculinity in ambiguity in Taiwanese men (Kao & Bih 2014: 175). In fact, Kao & Bih's observation of Taiwanese masculinity resonates with Yang's representation of masculinity in his films. As shown and discussed previously in Yang's films, not all men can adapt to the economic, political and cultural changes on the island. The double bill of the breaking down of the traditional family structures and the rapid transition into a risk-ridden late modernity culture render the Taiwanese masculinities represented in Yang's frames-within-frames looking frustrated, entrapped and powerless. His male characters (especially the middle-class white-collar men) surging forward as entrepreneurs or clinging to obsolete forms of Confucianism are usually disappointing, passive, and out of step with their worlds. Through them, Yang explores and reflects on the psychological toll that modernisation takes on a class of relatively privileged men (Liu 2017: 116) in late modernity.

The depressing husband Li Li-zhong in *Terrorizers* (1986), for example, is an extreme example of a weak male who is unable to keep up with the times. The sense of powerlessness in men, however, does not always mean passively succumbing to the pressures and challenges thrown at them. As pressure builds up, violence may occur. In *Terrorizers*, it seems that the frustration and loss represented in Yang's earlier films have built up to a point that they are going to

explode, where everybody becomes at once the victim and the perpetrator of some kind of everyday terrorism. The recurring theme of violence prevalent in *Taipei Story* is further showcased in Yang's frames-within-frames devices in this film. Rather than being triggered by the historical burden incurred by Taiwan's colonial history and the White Terror, the violence portrayed in *Terrorizers* is more associated with the evolving societal changes from heavy to liquid modernity.

Produced and screened in the year before the lifting of martial law in Taiwan, *Terrorizers* foregrounds the pathologies of late modernity which intersect with each other. The intertwining fates of the protagonists develop into never-ending urban nightmares, which are signified by the ubiquitous gas tank situated in the city. Yang uses three entwining stories to show how the protagonists cross their paths by chance meeting: the hospital technician Li Li-zhong and his novelist wife Zhou Yu-fen; the rich young photographer Xiao-qiang who is awaiting his military conscription notice and his keen novel reader girlfriend; and a Eurasian girl called White Chick and her gangster boyfriend who is also her pimp. These city dwellers from diverse backgrounds seem to share one thing in common, as discussed in Chapter 4, that is they are always confined in an enclosed space affiliated with a sense of alienation and confinement.

The subject of Yang's theme of women's confinement in *Terrorizers* has been discussed extensively (for example, Yeh & Davis 2005, Hong 2011, Liu 2017), and while it is true that both men and women are confined in enclosed spaces in Yang's films, women seem to have chosen this, using such confining spaces as temporary shelters. For instance, Zhou's shelter is her cramped little study which, as she states in the film, helps her to run away from the meaningless repetitive routine day after day. The photographer Xiao-qiang's girlfriend is

hardly seen outdoors on her own, except for being captured in photographs taken by her boyfriend with an outdoor background, and going out to make a phone call to Li Li-zhong with him. Otherwise, she is either reading novels in bed or staying in her tiny flat. In the case of White Chick, she allows herself to be locked at home by her mother after breaking her ankle, using this confinement as a temporary shelter at her convenience. Once she is out of the plaster leg-cast, she breaks out of her 'prison' – her mother's home -- without any difficulties. In a way, all these women's confining spaces seem to be fitted with an emergency exit. In addition, these women are seldom placed in a frame-within-frame device inside their confined spaces. Even in one scene where Zhou Yu-fen's face is framed by rows of television screens, these frames do not emphasise a sense of confinement. Instead, on the television screens we see Zhou's interview after winning the *fukan* 副刊 (literary supplements to a newspaper) fiction contest, signifying her release from a stifling marriage.

Indeed, in Yang's films, women seem to be able to weather crises better than men. Though the unavoidable and irreversible changing gender roles which are a part of Westernisation and modernisation do not necessarily bring happiness to women, they do bring emotional and financial independence. Contrary to the depiction of women as possible beneficiaries of modernity, men in Yang's films are often depicted as its victims (Lu 2002: 151). To Li Li-zhong, for instance, both his private and public spaces are suffocating and entrapping. His workplace is represented as a building made up of piles of boxes (Fig 62), where the windows in each box offer a glance at the people being imprisoned inside. The railings of the stairs feature the cage motif, suggesting Li's entrapment, and even the flood of sunlight pouring on him makes him look besieged (Fig 63 & Fig 64). When Li is outdoors, once again Yang shows him being framed by the car windscreen (Fig 65). In one particular shot, when he finds out that his supervisor is hiding from him in the office, Li is shot from a high angle, framed by the

marking of a parking bay (Fig 66). It seems that although the female protagonists are always confined indoors, the comparatively speaking more mobile Li is no freer in public spaces.

Figure 62 Office building like a pile of boxes Terrorizers (1986)   *Figure 63 Stair railings suggest entrapment Terrorizers(1986)*

Figure 64 Li besieged by floods of light Terrorizers (1986)   *Figure 65 Li looks entrapped in the car Terrorizers (1986)*

Figure 66 Parking Bay as a frame-within-frame device Terrorizers (1986)

To exacerbate the situation, Li's home does not act as a relaxing shelter for him either. In two different shots near the beginning and the middle of the film, Li appears almost exactly in the

same position within the toilet door frame and in dim light (Fig 67 & Fig 68). The recurring cage motif and the sense of imprisonment which Yang highlights using frames-within-frames both in public and private spaces reflect Li's frustrating and depressing state. Lu suggests a possible reason for men's stress and frustration during rapid transitions in society, explaining that men, in general, prefer to remain in the status quo. Hence the changing gender relations which redefine the image of masculinity based on gender division in traditional China generate a deeply rooted uneasiness in men (Ibid). To men, such uneasiness engulfs them and leaves them no choice and nowhere to hide. Such an explanation, however, does not aptly explain Li's situation. To him, Zhou's success as a novelist and starting her career does not constitute the biggest challenge to his masculinity image and a deeply rooted sense of frustration. To understand the root cause of Li's frustration, one must account for Taiwan's political situation and modernisation process.

Figure 67 & 68 Alienated and confined world: Li enclosed in the toilet door frame and dim light Terrorizers (1986)

After the U.S. cut off diplomatic ties and politically marginalised Taiwan, the KMT government put forward initiatives to assist its elites in connecting to the rest of the world through education and trade. Among the young elites, those who specialized in computer science and engineering were the ones who reaped the greatest benefits from the transformation process. (Liu 2017: 117-118). Unfortunately, Li embodies the tragedy of a white-collar professional who is left behind by the success of entrepreneurial and creative class elites like

Zhou Yu-fen and her lover, Xiao-shen (小沈), who appears to be a successful electronics entrepreneur. The ease with which Zhou ends her marriage with Li and moves to a new life and a new trendy apartment represents the breakneck speed of change in Taipei of the era. Li's displacement in the new order of late modernity robs him of a place among the prospering class. The way he attempts to reclaim his masculinity ends up in extreme violence and his own demise.

Whereas Li's masculinity suffers under the new order of late modernity, Xiao-qiang's masculinity construction is influenced by the transitory status of Taiwan and the risk-ridden nature of late modernity. Though some of Jameson's (1992) assertions[10] have been challenged in different places (Hong 2011: 129, Chang 2005, Liu 2017: 116), he is in some sense correct in identifying Taiwan as a transitional space. To the KMT, Taiwan has always been a non-place, a tropical way station, a temporary garrison where the Nationalist Army would re-gather its strength to return to and reconquer the mainland (Liu 2017: 119). After the recognition of the People's Republic of China as the sole representation of China, this dream of using Taiwan as a base for reconquest faded, and Taiwan's future was cast into limbo. Despite economic stability, the heightened temporality of transience and the marginality of Taiwan itself in the world system evokes a sense of cautious provisionality among Taiwanese people, which becomes the norm and the only condition people can count on (Yeh & Davis 2005: 101). Such a situation has an important impact on the masculinity formation of Taiwanese men represented in *Terrorizers*.

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[10] For example, Zhou's character represents the impasse or entrapment of a Third-World anachronistic artist in the global symbolic order, and Li's character is the embodiment of the sadness and melancholy of Taiwan's aspirational developmental post-Third Worldness.

The rich young photographer Xiao-qiang is the embodiment of such kind of masculinity. He comes from a wealthy family, but is alienated from his father, and only goes back to his luxurious but empty home when he has spent all his money. Behind the purported sense of freedom inherent in reckless youthful irresponsibility and promised by economic security, Xiao-qiang is suffering from a sense of helplessness. His life is put on hold because of the imminent reality of military conscription. Similar to Li, his nihilistic indifference to others is the classic symptom of urban alienation. While Li is detached from the reality of his wife's estrangement and her affair with her ex-boyfriend, Xiao-qiang is totally disconnected from the environment as his photo-shooting is plainly random. None of his targets, including his love interest White Chick, are aware of his presence. This ambiguous identity and his sense of helplessness are shown in a frame-within-frame shot, where the silhouette of Xiao-qiang is framed by the French window in his girlfriend's flat. The blurred image symbolises his uncertain future (Fig 69). In addition, damp alleyways are used by Yang as a space of narrative convergence, where the fates of different members of Taiwanese society become fatally intertwined, and in this way, foregrounding the risk-ridden nature of liquid modernity and unpredictability of liquid modern conditions (Bauman 2000: xiv). The tight spaces of the cramped and narrow alleys (Fig 70) also indicate Xiao-qiang's trapped status in the entangling web of human alienation and his inability to break away from his fate of being drafted into the army. Poignantly, his transitory, alienated and confined world shapes his masculinity, which reverberates with the national identity of the Taiwanese in the face of global indifference, derision and outright hostility.

Figure 69 Silhouette suggesting uncertainty Terrorizers (1986)   Fig 70 Tight alleys indicating trapped status Terrorizers (1986)

4.2.3/ A Brighter Summer Day: Men's Time Tunnel between the 1960s and the 1990s

At a similar juncture to the release of Yang's first three feature films, Taiwan seemed to have reached a turning point. In 1986, the one-party authoritarian rule by the Nationalist party was over; dissidents founded the Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan and open political discussion was allowed (Shih 2011: 68). On 14 July 1987, the Nationalist Government lifted the 38-year-long martial law. With the lifting of martial law, there seems to be a change in the topics of films made by Taiwanese directors. Compared to films produced by TNC directors before the lifting of martial law which focus on alienating human relationships and existential crisis caused by the unprecedented speed of the transition into modernity, the post-martial law gangster films depict frustrated masculinities which is the epitome and embodiment of an ambiguous and internationally marginalised national identity, and touched on politically sensitive subjects which were previously tabooed (Liao 2015: 76). As discussed in the previous chapter, Yang uses *ABSD* as a time tunnel film to link Taiwan's past and future together, using the tunnel vision technique to accentuate how the factors affecting the construction of masculinity during the White Terror relate to the anxiety and insecurity felt by men in Taiwanese society depicted in the Second Taipei Trilogy. In this section, I am going to explore how Yang's use of frames-within-frames in *ABSD* to provide a close-up representation of the kind of masculinity which is similar and yet different from that represented in early Taiwanese

cinema, reflecting the socio-historical context of Taiwan in the 1960s and foretelling his representation of masculinity in the 1990s under the rapid modernisation in Taiwanese society.

The way that masculinity presents itself in films often symptomises particular cultural-political issues. For example, in Wong Kar Wai's *Chungking Express* (1994), police officer 663 is infantilised by the way he talks to different household objects and stuffed toys when lamenting his failed relationship. Such infantilisation of men, especially those usually seen as macho figures, implies the loss of masculine power in Hong Kong on the verge of being handed over to Communist China by its British capitalist colonisers. As Chin-pang Lei asserts, both China and the British government are paternalistic fathers to Hong Kong people and there is not much option left for them but to passively play the role of a child or adolescent (2019: 414). If gender representation, specifically the construction of masculinity, is often related to politics and cultural norms (Ibid: 407), the repressed and disintegrating patriarchal figures in Edward Yang's 4-hour epic film, *A Brighter Summer Day* (*ABSD*), aptly reflect the changing political climate and the culture of ambivalent postcolonial identities in the 1960s. In the film, the crisis facing the first and the second generation of *waishengren* (mainlanders) is summed up in the first intertitle:

'When China's Communists won the civil war in 1949, millions of mainlanders fled to Taiwan with the Nationalist Government. Their children grew up in the uneasy atmosphere created by their parents' uncertainties. Many joined street gangs to give themselves an identity. They hoped to strengthen their sense of security.'

'A Brighter Summer Day' (1991).

According to Yang, his parents were among those mainlanders who came to settle in Taiwan. They knew there was no hope for the KMT to reclaim the mainland despite the official promises made, so Yang's generation (which is the same as Si'er's) was taught not to trust the government (Kraicer & & Roosen-Runge 1998: 51). The Nationalist government, however, named the streets in Taipei using the names of different cities and provinces in China in order to build up a strong sense of Chinese identity and maintain the façade that it was the legitimate government of China (e.g. Chongqing S. Rd. 重慶南路, Beiping E Rd. 北平東路, Changchun Rd 長春路, Liaoning St. 遼寧街). They also named the streets after the old teachings of *Siwei bade* 四維八德 (four anchors and eight virtues, e.g. Zhungxiao Rd. 忠孝路, Renai Rd. 仁愛路, Xinyi Rd. 信義路, Heping Rd. 和平路) in attempts to consolidate social harmony by upholding filiality and patriotism that subordinate citizens to the ruling elites. Si'er and other young gangsters in the film, however, infatuate themselves with Western culture such as American music and films as acts of self-assertion and resistance. This kind of discrepancy between the ideology and political identity propagandised by the government and the distrust and injustice experienced by people caused uncertainties and insecurities among the baby boomer generation.

Yang uses the frames-within-frames technique at the beginning of the film to delineate the crisis facing Si'er and his father, Mr Zhang. In Fig 71 and Fig 72, both Mr Zhang and his son are confined in frames. Mr Zhang's figure is framed by the window, the pillars in the room and the door; Si'er is imprisoned by the huge pillars surrounding him while he sits outside of the room waiting alone. The use of huge pillars in these scenes foretells the different existential crises facing the father and the son: while the father is fighting for justice (and his son's future) by appealing his son's examination outcome, Si'er is sitting outside among the tall and cold

pillars which symbolise his imprisonment in a highly repressive bureaucratic institutional state apparatus: the school. At this stage, Mr Zhang is still a strong patriarchal figure to Si'er. He is brave enough to stand up against injustice and challenge the decision of the Examination Board. His image as a man of principle culminates in a later scene where he explains to Si'er that a man should not apologise for anything which he thinks he has not done wrong, no matter under what kind of circumstances.

Figure71 & Figure 72 Frames-within-frames shots foretelling the existential crisis of Mr Zhang and Si'er ABSD (1991)

This strong patriarchal figure, however, begins to crumble after he has been arrested by the Garrison Command and endured a lengthy interrogation. During the whole detention process, Mr. Zhang is confined in different types of frames (Fig 73), or shown against big, framed windows (Fig 74 & 75). These windows are signifiers of the prison motif, highlighting the imminent threat of imprisonment under the iron-fist rule of the Nationalist government. The disintegration of a strong patriarchal figure is further represented in a later scene (Fig 76). Through the big wooden door frame in the Zhang family's Japanese-style house, Mr Zhang is shown beating up his second son and wrongly accusing him of stealing. This 50-second-long scene is by no means an exertion of his patriarchal power, however. In fact, this is his only means to vent his extreme frustration with the bureaucracy; a gesture showing his weakness (Liu 2005: 71). Both the large window frames in the empty interrogation room and the latticed

Japanese-style sliding door function as a cage motif, boxing in Mr Zhang and manifesting the suffocating grip of the White Terror which inflicts an overwhelming feeling of helplessness and vulnerability. Similar to the weak, passive and impotent male protagonists in *Taiyupian*, Mr Zhang is unable to change reality in the face of huge political pressure. However, different from the narratives in early Taiwanese cinema which suggest that male melancholy and anxiety can be resolved through the affirmation of Confucian family, Yang's representation of masculinity does not show that the apparent assertion of patriarchal power seems to be the simple answer to men's struggles. Instead, it discloses the wounds of Taiwanese men and reveals the scars and weaknesses of the country (Lei 2019: 410-411).

Figure 73 Mr Zhang in detention ABSD (1991)

Figure 74 Zhang framed by windows ABSD (1991)

Figure 75 Zhang looks helpless by the framed windows Figure 76 The caged-in father venting his frustration ABSD (1991)

In Susan Jeffords' study of muscular heroes with 'hard bodies' in 1980s Hollywood cinema, she associates cinematic images with political crisis and national identity. According to Jeffords,

'masculine bodies as the embodiment of the nation call on people's identification and the male images are propagandist and compensatory, responding to the political need of the Republican government to strengthen its power and the emotional need of a people with a shaken national identity.'

(Jeffords 1994; 86)

Contrary to the 1980s' hard bodies genre in Hollywood cinema which offered masculine images in compensation for the political trauma suffered by American men in the 1970s, the frustrated and powerless masculinity displayed in the post-martial law gangster films in the Taiwan context accentuates the identity quandary in Taiwan through the struggles of gangsterdom (Liao 2015:54). In Hou Hsiao-hsien's *A City of Sadness*, such kind of frustration and disillusionment is represented through the small-time crooks in the Lin family. In *ABSD*, the anxiety issues and identity crises experienced by men are represented through the second-generation mainlander gangster character, Honey. Unlike the superheroes with hard bodies who emerge in Hollywood films such as Bruce Willis in the *Die Hard* series (1988, 1990, 1995 and 2007), or the tragic and romantic gangsters who are tough and heroic in the face of adversity in John Woo's films (for example Chow Yun-fat in the *A Better Tomorrow* series in 1985, 1988 and 1992), the young gangsters in Yang's *ABSD* seem to be weak and insecure. Honey, the alter-ego of Si'er, is seen in other gangsters' eyes as the fearsome leader of the Little Park gang (mainly composed of both mainlanders and islanders) who kills the ex-leader of the 217 gang (mainly composed of mainlanders) over their common love interest, Ming. Honey is also another patriarchal figure for Si'er to look up to because the former is determined to fight against injustice and protect the woman he loves.

In reality, however, Honey is one of the repressed second-generation mainlanders who turns to gangsterdom for security and identity recognition. As a struggling lower-class refugee who finds it difficult to assimilate into mainstream Taiwanese society, Honey murders to define his masculinity through patriarchal power and heterosexual relationships. The fact that he is betrayed by some mainlander gangsters but finds real friendship and protection in the islanders' triad gangs (eventually leading to the islanders' bloody revenge for his death) further accentuates the disillusionment in Taiwanese identity formation. As mentioned before, gender representation is often related to social, cultural and political norms of a society. In *ABSD* Honey's defeated and ambiguous masculinity is represented through Yang's frames-within-frames devices in order to manifest Taiwan's ongoing identity crisis and related political dilemmas.

When Honey first appears in the film, he learns that his leadership in the Little Park gang has been compromised. His realisation of this change is represented by his lonely figure framed by the door of the ice cream parlour (Fig 77) after a confrontation with the new leader, Sly. In a different scene, he reflects on the similarities between the lives of gangsters and the characters in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, a book he picked up during his time as a fugitive after committing the murder. He specifically identifies with the character of Pierre, a social outcast who insists on assassinating Napoleon in order to change the world. The failure of this fictional hero resonates with the failure of Honey to change the world from a marginalised position, both as a fugitive on the run and an exiled lower-class refugee. His sense of failure and entrapment is symbolised by the wooden bars behind him which signify the cage motif (Fig 78). In the scene before he is murdered, he is also framed by the trees on a long dark road (Fig 79), ominously foreclosing any chance for his escape from his tragic ending. In a way, Yang's representation of Honey's entrapped and defeated masculinity reflects the identity predicament experienced

by Taiwanese men in the 1960s. It also, in Yang's own words, foretells the political, cultural and social dilemma facing contemporary Taiwanese society in the 1990s (Yang 2017: 20).

Figure 77 Honey's lonely figure framed by door ABSD (1991)   Figure 78 Honey caged-in by wooden bars ABSD (1991)

Figure 79 Honey framed by trees on a dark road before his death ABSD (1991)

The desperate need for the youths to build up a sense of security and a satisfying individual and collective identity through violence and bullying in the 1960s to a certain extent resonates with the wave of identity recognition debates among Taiwanese after martial law was lifted in the late 1980s (Qi 2017: 26). Many of the second-generation mainlanders who are seen as outsiders by the native Taiwanese, actually believe that they are just as Taiwanese as the native islanders. As the liberalisation that followed martial law has strengthened the cultural and political power of the native Taiwanese, and the trend towards indigenisation has gained momentum, many second-generation mainlanders worry that they will be increasingly marginalised by and even excluded from Taiwanese society (Yip 2004: 75). Through the interactions between rival gangs of disaffected youths in the film, the tense relationships

between mainlanders and local Taiwanese are played out. The geographical conflicts among the youngsters in the military villages reflect the political conflicts among different political parties in the wider contemporary Taiwan context three decades later (Jiao 2018: 155). Furthermore, the death of Honey signals the collapse of the second patriarchal figure to Si'er. Interestingly, both of these figures are at once the victims of systemic violence inflicted by society, and the perpetuator of violence which they inflict on the others. Following his father and his hero's footsteps, Si'er unfortunately cannot break this vicious cycle. The dignified, self-possessed and self-reliant masculinity modelled on Chiang Kai-shek and reinforced by the KMT government does not seem to help Si'er to build his masculine identity. Contrary to the hardboiled masculine image which emerges in HK gangster films that highlights 'Hong Kong manhood' as a means to defeat the sense of powerlessness triggered by the 1997 handover (Liao 2015: 57), Si'er's young gangster image is frustrated, ambiguous and crumbles in the face of the violence inflicted on him from different sources.

The connection between masculinity and violence has been well documented. Aggression and violence is seen to be a way of asserting or emphasising masculinity through interactions with the peer group particularly during adolescence (Connell 1995, Kimmel & Mahler 2003, Hall 2002, Edwards 2006). Indeed, during the turbulent White Terror era, the second generation of mainlanders resorted to gangsterdom to build up their identity through violence and bullying to prove their masculinity (He & He 2010: 42). The heavy presence of tanks and troops in Si'er's neighbourhood highlights the militarised and highly oppressive social milieu in which he grows up (Fig 80). The imminent threat of military violence is paralleled by violence and bloody revenge between gangs at school and on the street. Similar to the way Hou Hsiao-hsien portrays violence in *A City of Sadness*, Yang uses long shots to highlight it in a detached way, calmly depicting its omnipresence and the sense of helplessness among these teenagers

surviving in that environment. Together with the use of frames-within-frames in these long

shots, the recurring theme of violence in *ABSD* is effectively conveyed. For example, the

bloody fights between the two gangs are framed from a long distance at school (Fig 81) and on

the street. The confrontation among the gang members is shot from afar and framed by the trees

(Fig 82); the entrance of the long and dark pool hall frames the brutal killings triggered by

Honey's death (Fig 83). Finally, at the ice cream parlour where the gangs hang out, Yang uses

the service area as a frame-within-frame device to showcase the frantic flight of the gang

members for their lives (Fig 84). In all the above scenes, Yang's camera sits calmly at a distance

from the combustion, and his frames-within-frames highlight one of the most prominent factors

defining these young gangsters' masculinity: violence.

Figure 80 Militarised and oppressive social milieu ABSD (1991)   *Figure 81 Long shots to frame violence ABSD (1991)*

Figure 82 Gang violence framed by trees ABSD (1991)   *Figure 83 Murder framed in the dark ABSD (1991)*

Figure 84 Violence in ice-cream parlour ABSD (1991)

Unlike other gang members in the film, however, Si'er does not possess a clear identity as a

gangster. Honey and the local Wanhua (萬華) gang do not know his name; the head officer of

the Juvenile Division has not seen him before, mistaking his signature as a 'funny face' (Fig

85) after he is arrested. Indeed, he is a marginalised character with only an ambiguous identity

even within the gangster world that he joined to assert his identity. This sense of

disillusionment and ambiguity is also illustrated in his living environment, with a strong sense

of entrapment and frustration highlighted by Yang's frames-within-frames devices. The

Japanese-style housing in which his family live is in the first place a symbol of these

mainlanders' displaced and confused identity. As Si'er's mother notes with a hint of sarcasm,

having fought the Japanese for eight years, they now live in Japanese houses and listen to

Japanese songs.
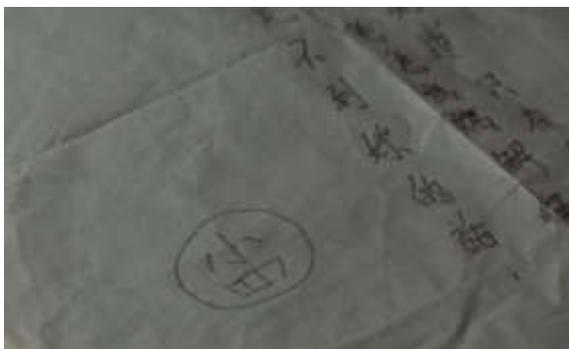
Figure 85 Si'er's signature ABSD (1991)

Figure 86 Japanese wardrobe: another cage motif ABSD (1991)

The cramped living space filled with frames and divisions renders Si'er a withdrawn and isolated member of the household. Si'er sleeps in a Japanese-style wardrobe which is literally a small box (Fig 86). It is only within the confines of this small and contained area that he can vent his frustration and anger towards the injustice and violence he faces throughout the day through his diary. He and the rest of the family seldom appear in the house without being separated by wooden pillars (Fig 87) or caged in by some sort of frame (Fig 88). The mise-en-scene meticulously arranged by Yang shows the sense of confinement and once again stresses the cage motif. It is in this living space filled with rigid lines and divisions where Si'er's hysterical father passes the violence inflicted on him by the government onto the next generation. To Si'er, the only patriarchal figures who help him to define a clear and stable self-identity and his masculinity are his father before the interrogation and Honey. Only after the downfall of these two figures does Si'er use violence as a means of battling against injustice and shaping his own identity and masculinity.

Figure 87 & Figure 88 Si'er's home is filled with rigid frames and divisions, highlighting a sense of alienation ABSD (1991)

Whether it is a means to assert masculinity or to fight against social injustice during the repressive dark era, Yang's reconstruction of the root cause of the teenage homicide incident recreates a cross-section of the history of that period. Released at an important turning point in Taiwan's history, *ABSD* looks backwards and also responds to sociopolitical needs in

contemporary Taiwan in the post-martial law era, raising broader questions of identity and identification during a period in which the island's past, present, and future relationships with China became openly debatable (Yip 2004: 75). It also indicates the direction the postmodern culture of Taiwan is heading: the disintegration of traditional virtues and the invasion of an alien culture offering escape into an endless bliss of high economic growth and rampant consumption in the several decades following the White Terror period. These progressive changes in Taiwanese society will be discussed in the next section on Yang's two urban social satires, *A Confucian Confusion* (1994) *and Mahjong* (1996).

4.2.4/ A Confucian Confusion & Mahjong: Confused Men in the Confusing Liquid Modernity and the Domino Effect of Masculinities Failing

If the political, social and cultural factors in *ABSD* contribute to the formation of a repressed, insecure and ambiguous masculine identity in the 1960s, the knock-on effect of such factors and the breakneck speed of globalisation are the leading factors contributing to the twisted human nature and obscured masculinity in Yang's films of the 1990s. During the period as encapsulated in Yang's films before *A Brighter Summer Day* (films produced in the 1980s), masculinity formation is mainly shaped by existential crises facing men during heavy modernity, where people still have some sense of rules to follow. In the films made after *ABSD*, however, the problems confronting men have moved from struggling to find a firm footing in a fast-changing society, to exercising reflexivity in all aspects of life in the post-traditional liquid modernity, where the debates and uncertainties about personal, national and cultural identities know no end. Hence *ABSD* serves as a tunnel linking up the representation of masculinities in the 1960s and the 1990s, from a more substantial modernist existential struggle to a fleeting postmodernist one. In this section, I will concentrate on analysing Yang's use of

frames-within-frames to represent the quandary of masculine identity in the 1990s in Taiwan in *A Confucian Confusion* and *Mahjong*.

The 1990s was a turbulent period of ever-increasingly rapid changes in Taiwan, even compared to the previous decades. Politically, Chiang Ching-kuo was succeeded by Li Deng-hui, who was a native Taiwanese. In 1993, the objective of recovering the mainland was formally abandoned. Culturally, the literary movement known as *xiangtu*, regionalist or nativist literature that first emerged in the 1960s and flourished in the 1970s, inspired the Taiwan New Cinema which developed in the 1980s. The thriving economy of Taiwan and the accelerated internationalisation of Taipei were exemplified by the widespread availability of trendy bars and global restaurant chains, signifying Taiwan's undeniable existence and central importance in the new global community (Yip 2004: 7). All the above factors contributed to the increasingly strong demands for a reassessment of the island's national identity on the one hand, and the urge to construct a viable civil society which is the foundation of consolidated democracy on the other.

Furthermore, the rapid economic growth and democratisation process in Taiwan brought about problems experienced by other modernising societies, namely, crime, corruption, alienation, disintegration and demoralisation. In 1985, before political liberalisation, there were 60,707 known criminal cases reported to the police. In 1993, this more than doubled to 140,648. The crime rate per 10,000 people jumped from 31.73 in 1985 to 67.46 in 1993 (Directorate-General of Budget Accounting & Statistics 1994). The democratisation which came after the lifting of martial law and the end of one-party authoritarian rule in Taiwan did not initially eliminate corruption (Fell 2020; Yu et al. 2008). Instead, the power of corrupted local factions and

conglomerates moved up to the national level, leading to increased vote buying, links between organised crime and political parties, and also big business and the leading politicians (Göbel 2004: 4). Family disintegration was another social issue as Taiwan had the highest divorce rate in Asia. In 1991 some 6.3 of every 1,000 couples divorced and the trend was on the rise (Free China Review 1993).

According to Yang in his interview with Kraicer & Roosen-Runge, Taiwan's society had changed for the worse between the 1980s and the 1990s. While 'on the outside it is all money, all wealth; everyone is putting on new costumes, new clothes, new fashion…..but on the inside we are going the other way' (1998: 52). The ubiquitous malaises in Taiwanese society mentioned which endlessly undermined and challenged the traditional Confucian influenced social norms and structures, which includes a stifling patriarchal system, begs an obvious question. Was Confucianism, which embodies the harmonised and hierarchical human relationships, still the anchor of the society and the effective blueprint for the Taiwanese in solving their political, social and cultural problems?

As discussed before, Yang sees Confucianism as an ancient set of values appropriated by the KMT government to assert the central authority's control, through rigid social structures coated with moral justifications to stress conformism, and personal sacrifices for the greater good of social harmony and group security (Anderson 2005: 76-77). Regardless, Yang does not completely reject Confucianism. In fact, he sees it as a supplement to modernity which establishes a relationally ordered, modern society in which people can still find some of their own footing (Law & Lo 2016). Qiqi in *A Confucian Confusion* is portrayed as a sincere character who tries to uphold harmonious human relationships, as suggested by Confucian

teachings. She is always the one who helps Molly, her boss and her best friend, resolve conflicts with her employees. She is the olive branch between her fiancée Xiao-ming and his stepmother, and she maintains a respectful relationship with her future in-laws. Her sincere character is portrayed in the film as faithfully conforming to the Confucian ideal. This, however, is perceived by others as vicious and hypocritical. Through the characterisation of Qiqi, and also in an interview, Yang critiques the absurd notion of totally relying on a 4th century BCE ideology to head into the stage of modernity characterised by reflexivity in the 21st century (cited in Kraicer & Roosen-Runge 1998: 53).

At the beginning of the film *A Confucian Confusion*, Yang inserts a title card quoting from *Analects of Confucius* as an introduction:

> Confucius: How populous it is here!
>
> Ran You (冉有, Confucius' disciple): Once there are so many people, what should be done?
>
> Confucius: Make the people rich.
>
> Ran You: Once they are rich, what next?
>
> -*Analects of Confucius* 13: 9

While Confucius's reply to his disciple was to 'educate the people once they were rich', Yang deliberately omits the answer in order to show the disillusionment of the affluent Taiwanese in the 1990s, and draws attention to his endeavour in the film to examine the possibility to apply the ancient ideology of Confucianism in reflexive modernity. In the first place, the '4th century BCE ideology' that Yang mentioned in the above interview had been, in his view, appropriated by the Nationalist government for political control on the one hand, and distorted by modern-

day people as an instrument for monetary and commercial gain on the other. In addition, the rigid, conformist and hierarchical interpretation of Confucian teachings appropriated by the KMT to facilitate its nation-building narratives is hardly compatible with the complicated and rapidly changing human relationships and the reflexive nature of modernity. In *A Confucian Confusion*, Yang uses the fake Confucian master Birdy, the hypocrite Larry, and a Confucian ideal man wannabe Xiao-ming to illustrate the impossibility of using such an ancient ideology as a set of guidelines to define ideal masculinity in late modernity.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, a Confucian harmonised and orderly society is grounded on the five cardinal relations *wu lun*: Father and son have love (for each other); lord and retainer have obligations (to each other); husband and wife have distinct (spheres); senior and junior have precedence; and friends have faith (in each other) (Mencius: *Teng Wen Gong* 1). While one of the main aims of such a rigid hierarchy of human relationships is to maintain social order, it is also based on Confucius and Mencius's claim that virtuous human relationships are premised on mutuality. However, the Nationalist government adopted the entirely vertical and one-sided *San Gang* (Three Fundamental Bonds) (Dong Zhongshu: *Chun Qiu Fan Lu* 53) structure in which there is no mention of the importance of mutual obligations in order to strengthen their rule and the patriarchal system. That may explain why although Yang does not endorse a patriarchal society, neither does he entirely disregard the *wu lun* human relationships hierarchy; it is only the instrumental use of Confucianism to gain political and financial benefits that Yang sees as problematic.

Many sources have mentioned the frequent use of long shots and long takes in Yang's films (Yeh & Davies 2005: 100 Jacobson 2005: 48 Bordwell 2016 Zhu 2008: 57). It is, however, in

A *Confucian Confusion* that the use of such techniques is extremely prominent, partly down to the fact that Yang had been participating in theatre production before making the film. Among the 152 shots in *A Confucian Confusion,* Yang uses only 5 close-ups but 45 long shots, and the average shot length is 50.1 sec. In a way, these fixed long shots (there are thirty fixed camera long shots, over two-thirds of which are also long takes over 1 min 30 seconds) and extreme long takes (there are 11 shots which are over 1 min, 9 over 2 mins and 9 over 3 mins) serve as a frame-within-frame through which Yang highlights the different types of post-Confucian masculinities which delineate the major challenges facing Taiwanese men in liquid modernity as if their daily lives are framed by a proscenium stage.

Using Birdy's studio as an example again (see Fig 12 & 14 in Chapter 4), Yang's fixed long shots frame the spacious studio into a theatrical stage on which his life is performed, and a transparent cage created by his lies. Birdy, posing as a postmodernist spiritual guru who appropriates Confucian thoughts, is actually a fake master who is extremely insecure about himself. He takes advantage of Confucian teachings to sell his postmodernist play but his great master image exists only in a 'frame' (Fig 89). According to Yang, Birdy's gesture of pointing his index finger upwards signalises independence and non-conformism (1905 Cinema Web 2014). Ironically, it is in direct contrast to Birdy's reality (see also in Fig 89), as a plagiarist worrying about copyright issues, and a fake Confucian using his identity to coax women into his bed.

While Giddens suggests that in a reflexive society, traditional guidance is replaced by expert systems (1990:27-8; 1994:84-5), this kind of so-called lifestyle gurus and cultural masters take advantage of the burden (though at the same time the liberation) of the modern subjects to

construct their own identities and distort the interpretation of Confucius's teachings for monetary gains, and sexual predation. Indeed, what Birdy does seems no different from the appropriation of the Confucian ideology by the Nationalist government for economic and political gains. In both cases, the instrumental and distorted use of the already rigid and hierarchical Confucian ideology further spoils genuine interpersonal relationships, generating the ubiquitous acceptance of hypocrisy (Law & Lo 2016). It can also contribute to the deteriorating authority of the patriarchal political and domestic power of men, as the powerful and righteous patriarchal image promoted by Chiang Kai-shek and used as the pillar supporting a patriarchal family, and by extension, a political regime, is being reduced to an empty signifier.

Figure 89 *The great master image in a frame* ACC (1994)   Figure 90 Molly and Larry in separate window frames *ACC* (1994)

The challenge faced by men's status is also induced by the intensifying force of reflexivity in modernity. Reflexivity, which Giddens (1990: 38-9, 53) explains as the expanding general attitude of continuously questioning and reshaping the world while considering an endless stream of new information, liberates life from the constraints of tradition. Individuals in modern society are forced to create their unique biographical narratives through constant revision in a context of many possibilities, instead of just accepting a fixed and assigned identity (Giddens 1991: 5). This reflexivity is shown in the conversation between Larry and Molly (Fig 90). Similar to the character of Birdy, Larry is another fake Confucian who is actually a cunning, insincere and hypocritical sexual predator. As a personal consultant to Ah-khim, the second generation of the *nouveau riche* who is being manipulated by him, Larry distorts the meaning

of traditional harmonious human relationships and uses them as investments in a commercialised, market-oriented society. In a 3-minute-26-second fixed medium long shot against a backdrop of a modernised city landscape (Fig 90), he gives the performance of a lifetime to his boss's fiancée, Molly:

> 'Just like money, sentiment (情 *qing*) is also an investment. Take friendship for instance. It's a long-term investment, like stocks or savings. Family is another kind of investment, like you and Ah-khim. Do you know what this culture business is like? it is a high-risk, high-return investment, just like love/ sentiment.'

> *A Confucian Confusion* (1994)

Like Birdy, Larry poses as a great mentor and counsellor, advocating the use of fundamental human bonding as investment capital, trying to convince Molly that the doctrines of Confucianism are solely for instrumental use for great financial return. Here Yang frames Larry and Molly in two different big window panels, with Molly taking the centre stage facing the audience, with Larry's shady silhouette overshadowed by the skyscrapers in the background. Living under the intensifying forces of reflexive modernity, Molly has to ask herself how to live her life. As a reflexive individual, Molly is not convinced by Larry's distorted Confucian ideology of using *qing* as an investment, and eventually takes the lead to end her loveless engagement with Ah-khim, giving the company back to him. Contrary to Larry's claim that 'a person cannot be greatly different from others, it is simply not practical…', Molly refuses conformity and chooses independence, showing that she is not the simple-minded recipient of Larry's vitiated form of Confucianism, nor is she the subordinate beneficiary of her fiancée's financial support. In fact, *A Confucian Confusion* is the only film in which men and women appear in more or less the same number of frames-within-frames devices (see Appendix One). It shows that the constant reflexivity characteristic of modernity encourages the growing

independence of women, which further challenges the status quo of patriarchal gender roles in a post-traditional order (Giddens 1991: 215).

The important theme of independence is also illustrated in the design of the Chinese title of the film (Fig 91). Yang uses four Chinese words in different colours and shapes to represent different political views of Taiwanese people at the time (with the colour green standing for Democratic Progressive Party, and the Chinese word '獨' meaning independent). The special design of the film title also shows that social relationships are to be reassessed in an era where people have started to respond reflexively to their social circumstances in the light of changing information. As discussed before, though both men and women face unprecedented pressure as reflexive beings, men seem to be hit harder due to their vested interest in a patriarchal structure, now being challenged by the onset of modernity. The Confucian tradition which stresses conformism, discipline and personal sacrifice (especially from women) has been one of the fundamental values promoted by the Nationalist government to maintain social harmony and optimise productivity for decades. During the era of modernity, the revision of convention is radicalised in all aspects of human life (Giddens1990: 19), and men must fight hard in order to defend their status if they cannot adapt to greater gender equality in this brave new world.

Figure 91 Chinese film title of ACC (1994)   *Figure 92 Chinese 'wen' masculinity vs American masculinity (1994)*

If fake masters of Confucianism render it problematic for the ideology to be relevant in liquid modernity, the same problem may also be faced by those who genuinely try to uphold the thousand-year-old *wu lun* human relationships, defending a dated patriarchal system. Xiao-ming is a man who acts, in his best friend Liren's (立人) words, like a Qing dynasty scholar-official. The masculinity he represents seems to be in direct contrast to the image of Westernised ideal masculinity as represented by the NBA basketball athlete on the large screen framing him and Liren in the sports bar (Fig 92). In his theorisation of Chinese masculinity, Louie (2002, 2015) proposes that Chinese masculinity comprises *wen*- the mental or civil – and *wu* – the physical or martial. As explained in Chapter 2, Confucian masculinity emphasises the *wen* aspect of the dyad. *Wen* traditionally refers to 'those genteel, refined qualities [...] associated with literary and artistic pursuits of the classical scholars' (Louie 2002: 14), and the Confucian ideal is a *junzi* who understands the importance of morality (*yi*), as opposed to a *xiaoren*, who focuses on the importance of profitability (*li*) (Yang 1958: 42).

Contrary to *wei junzi* (偽君子 fake exemplary man) like Birdy and *xiaoren* like Larry, Xiao-ming genuinely defends and is happy to conform to the patriarchal culture in his office, where he is respectful and obedient to his supervisor and other superiors. As he confides to Liren 'I want to be like everyone else, what's wrong with that?' In an argument with Qiqi in a taxi, he attributes his being highly appreciated in the workplace to his militant conformist attitude: he knows where he stands and he never complains. He cares deeply about his father (which can be seen in the hospital scene where he desperately tries to visit his critically ill father). He sees the importance of morality so he urges Liren to bend the rules in order to help a desperate contractor so that he does not go bankrupt. He is loyal to his friend and stands by him at important moments, and he is a symbol of a 'sense of security' because he has a stable source

of income, and he plans well for the future family of himself and Qiqi. In this way, he is trying to adhere to *wu lun*'s principles by being a filial son, a loyal and respectful subordinate to his supervisor, a trusting and faithful friend to Liren, and a reliable and responsible (future) husband to Qiqi. By upholding this ideal Confucian masculinity, which is a form of hegemonic masculinity that ideologically legitimates the global subordination of women to men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832), Xiao-ming is reinforcing the patriarchal ideology and perpetuating patriarchal power.

Under Yang's frames-within-frames devices, however, it is clearly shown that the complicated human relationships and the rapidly changing environments in liquid modernity constantly induce anxiety in self-identity and undermine Xiao-ming's ideal masculine image. Despite his care for his father and his wish to be a filial son, Xiao-ming maintains an estranged relationship with his father because of the disintegration of his family (his father has left his mother for another woman). In his office, frames are used to highlight his humility (Fig 93) performed in front of his superiors. In addition, when he is placed in the same frame as his supervisor, the two are always separated by a bar or a glass wall (Fig 94 & 95), indicating the barrier between them, and signifying the differences in their worldviews and moral standpoints.

Figure 93 Xiao-ming's humility shown in frame ACC (1994)   *Figure 94 Xiao-ming and supervisor in different frames*

Figure 95 The glass barrier between Xiao-ming and supervisor   *Figure 96 Corridor as grid motif ACC (1994)*

Figure 97 Xiao-ming caged in by his confusion, manifested by the prominent grid of the windows ACC (1994)

While he takes pride in being a conformist and does not complain in front of his superiors, his loyalty to his supervisor is not reciprocated. He is set up by the latter, which costs Liren his job. Though he tries to stay faithful to Liren and resigns after finding out that his supervisor has used him to get rid of the non-conformist Liren in the office, he eventually loses Liren's trust and friendship. The strain in the relationship between Xiao-ming and Liren is shown in the scene where he is framed by the grid motif in the corridor of his office, where the low ceiling and the claustrophobic space (Fig 96) foreground the pressure imposed on him as he tries to live up to his Confucian gentleman ideal masculinity. Though deeply committed to his relationship with Qiqi, he succumbs to the temptation of having an affair with another woman, Qiqi's best friend Molly. In the face of all these changes which happen within two to three days, he is completely caged in by his total confusion about the fast-changing world, under Yang's frames-within-frames device of the prominent grid of the windows (Fig 97) that encloses him.

As acknowledged by Louie, the *wen-wu* dyad encompasses different representations and meanings over space and time, constantly evolving due to influences from the West and the East (Louie 2014: 18). The emergence of the wealthy as role models and the importance placed on 'business management' being 'ethical and Confucian' have changed the nature of *wen* itself (Louie 2015: 11). The reconstitution of *wen* as monetary power rather than only scholastic learning has intensified so much so that the business consultant has become the new sage (see how Larry poses as a mentor to Molly as he is the financial consultant sent by Ah-khim). Molly's brother-in-law, the alter ego of Confucius in modern times, best illustrates the sufferings brought by this kind of new masculinity reconfiguration. As a reclusive author who tries to follow Confucian teachings to the word, it seems that he has been forgotten by the world. The sense of entrapment which engulfs the author is repeatedly shown in his living environment. His world is cut off from the outside by the eight-panelled opaque glass partition (Fig 98), featuring the grid motif and transforming his flat into a cage, with his books building a short wall surrounding him (Fig 99). When Molly's sister, a successful talk show host and a romance and marriage advisor, arrives at his flat, the way they are framed shows the confused situation the author is in. While Molly's sister is situated on the bright side in front of the panels (Fig 100), the author is engulfed by darkness (Fig 101). While self-described cultural workers or artists like her, Molly and Birdy control wealth and fame, the author is trapped in the prison-like house looking and feeling confused. In his latest (rejected) eponymous novel *A Confucian Confusion*, the ancient Chinese sage becomes a metaphor for the confused Chinese men in the modern era: even the revived sage in person will not be able to restore the glory of his ideology.

Figure 98 Glass panels as grid motif ACC (1994)

Figure 99 The author enclosed in his world of books ACC (1994)

Figure 100 Molly's sister and the bright outside world ACC (1994) Figure 101 The author engulfed by darkness ACC (1994)

Note that Yang does not wholly disregard Confucianism, nor is he hinting that Western ideologies are the only way out of the crisis facing Taiwanese men in their construction of masculinity at the time. What Yang suggests is during the rapid transition into modernity, modern society is characterised by its ephemerality and reflexiveness. The prevailing hierarchical and patriarchal human relationships are therefore persistently being challenged and questioned, including the one-sided top-down bonds that uphold patriarchal power. The traditional principles and virtues appropriated by Chiang Kai-shek during the CCRM to emphasise self-cultivation on patriotism and filiality are observed only superficially, and even this superficiality is being challenged by the new social structures enacted due to modernisation. The demise of traditional Confucian norms and values will inevitably disrupt the firm ground upon which traditional patriarchal power takes root. Such irretrievable loss of a past renders modern-day men losing their sense of self. (Louie 2015: 11). Instead of relying on superficially

observed ancient ideologies and hegemonic masculine hierarchy, *A Confucian Confusion* suggests that modern-day men's confusion can only be dealt with by a higher degree of independent and reflexive thinking. Once again, Yang's changing representation of masculinity reflects the transformation of Taiwanese society as the different stages of modernity progress. The political and national identity conundrum in the 1960s among the disillusioned teenagers seems to have been transplanted to the 1990s' young generation in Taiwanese society, only that the sense of insecurity and uncertainty has been exacerbated even more severely with the aggressive progression into liquid modernity. Yang continues to foreground men's struggle in the next film *Mahjong*, where the rapidly changing society sets off a domino effect of collapsing masculinity in the late 1990s.

Produced in the year before the bursting of Taiwan's economic bubble in 1997, *Mahjong* is a film which encapsulates the volatile and ephemeral lives of urban dwellers in Taipei, emphasising the social disorder and cultural disjuncture caused by the aggravated invasion of global capitalism (Chang 2019: 8). With the global flows of capital, commodities, cultures and technologies, the formation of the identity of individuals or cities heavily relies on 'image'. All signs and advertisements, despite their gorgeous and splendid appearance, cannot be disentangled from money, sex, and violence (Harvey 1990: 287). This kind of image is far from the Confucian masculinity image idealised by the KMT government. At the height of Taiwan's economic miracle, Yang sees and represents a domino effect of masculinities failing through Hongyu's gang of small-time crooks in the film. Following the footsteps of their counterparts in *ABSD*, who gamble on snooker games in a shabby pool hall, and make profits from holding music concerts, Hongyu's gang of petty gangsters make a living through low-level crimes, and fit the bill of Liao's description of the 'obsolete business models' of the post-martial law gangster films (Liao 2015: 63). In *Mahjong*, Yang uses the network plot about four male

protagonists of the gang to manifest the continuously frustrated masculinity under the post-martial law and post-Confucian conditions in Taiwan during liquid modernity, through his use of the frames-within-frames technique.

In the first place, *Mahjong* draws attention to the constant crisis men endure in post-traditional Taipei through Yang's representation of a weak and absent father figure, and the detrimental effect such a figure has on the future generation. As Yang asserts, the film is about a post-Confucian era in Taiwan when people were in a most confused state:

> 'Law and order used to be maintained by the mobs, but now because of democracy, you want the police to fill this role. So the mobs are in the process of trying to be legitimate business people, but they still run a lot of things…'

> (cited in Kraicer & Roosen-Runge 1998: 53)

The democratisation of Taiwan's political system, as mentioned earlier, did not bring an immediate stop to corruption. The problems of an underground economy and political corruption such as the increasing importance of 'black gold' were still rampant (Gobel 2004: 4). On the surface, Hongyu's father, Mr Chen, is a successful businessman. In reality, he is actually (according to Hongyu) a most shameless and 'successful' swindler, who goes into hiding amidst rumours of his bankruptcy and is missing from the start of the film. The weak and absent father figure of Mr Chen seems to signify the disappearance of authoritarianism and also the fading importance of Confucian teachings as social norms and signposting. His dysfunctional family exemplifies the challenges facing the traditional family system, which in turn challenges men's status. While Mr Chen's hysterical and estranged wife lives alone in their luxurious family home, he and his lover stay in a small flat together hiding from debt

collectors. In a 5 minute 28 second scene where Hongyu lectures his father to make a comeback and continue his heroic business as a successful swindler in Taipei, his aggressive gestures and postures dwarf the father figure of Mr Chen, putting him in a subordinate position (Fig 102). Mr Chen is also constantly shown against the frames of locked windows (Fig 103), highlighting the motif of imprisonment. Indeed, this weak and mostly absent father figure is never seen outside of the house and he seldom even moves around in it. He is literally his own prisoner.

Figure 102 Weak and elusive father figure MJ (1996)   *Figure 103 Window frame highlights prison motif MJ (1996)*

This representation of his sense of entrapment resonates with the interrogation scenes in *ABSD*. The frames-within-frames devices in both scenes consist of windows and highlighting a prison motif. Further, both fathers in the films are played by Chang Kuo-chu (張國柱). In fact, Mr Chen would have grown up in the same period as Si'er in *ABSD*. The actors playing Cat (Wong Chi-zan 王啓赞) and Airplane (Lawrance Ko 柯宇綸) in *ABSD* appear in *Mahjong* again, playing two of the members in Hongyu's criminal quartet, Little Buddha and Lun-lun (綸綸) respectively. Hong Kong, the other member of Hongyu's group is played by Chang Chen (張震), who plays Si'er in *ABSD*. Yang's intention seems clear: the seeds of uncertainty and insecurity sowed during the sixties in Taiwanese society have reaped their harvest in the 1990s. The young people who grew up under a repressive and suffocating militant atmosphere have failed to provide much sense of security for the next generation. Though Taiwan has become

one of the world centres in the peak of global capitalism in the twenty-first century, it has become a 'runaway world' that is increasingly open and changeable (Giddens 1995: 1) and a risk society as a world out of control (Beck cited in Yates 2003: 96). When the organised capitalism of earlier industrialisation is over, and the signposting from tradition, family and culture is in tatters, the problematic nature of frustrated and ambiguous masculinity is inherited and passed on from one generation to the next.

As stated by Bauman, one of the central problems of living in a postmodern society is that social norms and routines are much less stable than they once were (Bauman 2000: 21). While the individuals have already been granted most of the freedoms they could have ever dreamed of, it is extremely hard to find any universal guide for our lives. In *A Confucian Confusion*, Xiao-ming at least has his set of traditional values to refer to in the building of an ideal masculinity. In *Mahjong*, it is no longer easy to have a social definition of the self in the assertion of masculinity. In the case of Hong Kong and Little Buddha, their self-identity and masculinity have never been clear. Hong Kong defines his masculine identity by his being a gigolo and his seduction skills. His asserted masculinity suffers a huge blow after he is set up by Angela, a worldly businesswoman whom Hongyu mistakenly thinks has swindled his father, who humiliates him by sharing him with her friends. After being humiliated by this gang of women, Hong Kong is reduced to hysterical tears, filmed by Yang through a door frame (Fig 104).

Figure 104 Crumbling masculinity framed by door MJ (1996)   Figure 105 Frustrated man in two sets of frames MJ (1996)

In the case of Little Buddha, his masculinity is hinged on his gangster identity. Hence, after the disintegration of the criminal quartet, his sense of self which has always been defined by other gang members breaks down completely, and Yang shows his confusion and frustration by putting him within two sets of frames (Fig105). Lastly, Hongyu acts as the gang leader and the most streetwise one among his peers; his self-identity is wholly modelled on Mr Chen. Hongyu is determined to surpass his father and become the most unscrupulous swindler in Taiwan. His unwavering dedication to his surviving principles of 'nobody knows what they really want' and 'use his brain instead of his emotion' is driven entirely by his elusive father. When this whole sense of self and his ideal masculine image is denied by the suicide of Mr Chen, Hongyu suffers his final meltdown and his whole world crumbles. In the scene where he kills Qiu Dong (邱董 Director Chow) when the latter begs him to commit another fraud, Hongyu's frustration bursts into violence (Fig 106 &107), foregrounding the collapse of his defeated and deflated masculinity. Different from other frames used in the film which mainly showcase the prison motif and frustration, Yang uses the walls and the raised platform to frame the recurring theme of brutal violence as if it is happening on a stage, using static long shots (1 min 58 sec long with only one tiny movement of the camera) and flickering red and green light to highlight Hongyu's sense of disillusionment and hopelessness in the risk-ridden liquid modernity.

Figure 106 & Figure 107 Hongyu's frustration bursts into violence, framed by the walls and the raised platform MJ (1996)

4.2.5/ Yi Yi: A Reflexive Project of the Self

In the two satirical comedies *A Confucian Confusion* and *Mahjong*, Yang shows how the abrupt cultural disjuncture caused by the breakneck speed of modernisation and the invasion of global capitalism induces identity issues such as the lack of a clear and stable sense of self, and the feelings of insecurity and anxiety which have resulted in a series of masculinity failings. The cynical and angry tone in the two films, however, takes an apparently harmonious and tranquil turn in Yang's next and last film *Yi Yi* (2000). Using the city as the background and also one of the main protagonists in the film, *Yi Yi* shows a gentrified dimension of postmodernity with a flip side of business masculinity under globalisation which is highly preoccupied with money and profit making. At first glance, it is a film which is a far cry from Yang's angry accusations of the assorted confusions of late capitalist Taiwanese life. On closer scrutiny, *Yi Yi* encapsulates the problems of urban existence using the quotidian space of the quickly urbanising modern Taipei as his canvas. The cyclical repetition of a search for identity amidst the constantly shifting sense of self in liquid modernity does not stop at his previous films. The fight of men to (re)construct their masculinity continues in the context of neoliberal capitalism, only this time it is less bound by cultural context, more emerging from a discourse on the market and preoccupation with money.

Yi Yi is a three-hour-long family epic which describes how different generations negotiate social transformation and new values in this highly commercialised and materialistic culture through the problems faced by different members of NJ's family. Financed using Japanese funds, the film was not released in Taiwan until 2017, partly because Yang did not own the distribution rights and partly in protest against Taiwan's distribution system, which Yang believed had done extensive damage to the Taiwan film industry. Using the city as the background and also one of the main protagonists in the film, *Yi Yi* shows a gentrified dimension of postmodernity with a flip side of business masculinity under globalisation which is highly preoccupied with money and profit making. The network narratives shift among different family members of different generations, depicting the existential crises of the Jian family in Taipei. Each member of the family stands at the centre of a cluster of friends and relationships. NJ, the film's middle-aged protagonist, finds himself reflecting on whether or not the various paths he might have taken in his life would ultimately have made any difference to its outcome. His wife, Min-min, is suffering from a spiritual crisis precipitated by her mother's stroke-induced coma. Their teenage daughter, Ting-Ting, has fallen in love for the first time, and their eight-year-old son, Yang-Yang, has begun to grow increasingly curious about the world around him. The ubiquitous presence of screens in the film (an ultrasound scan, surveillance cameras in buildings and schools, projection screens in classrooms and offices, cameras, camcorders, and video games) manifests the extent to which Yang saw technology to have penetrated everyday life. Yang's film demonstrates extraordinary farsightedness in its depiction of the ways that media technology can shape people's perspectives on the world.

The film opens with a wedding ceremony: NJ's brother-in-law Ah-di (阿弟) marries his heavily pregnant fiancée, Xiao-yan (小燕). His ex-girlfriend Yun-yun (雲雲) makes a scene at the restaurant by breaking down in front of Po Po (婆婆 grandma), apologising for 'not being good enough to be your daughter-in-law', and howling 'Where's that pregnant bitch?' as NJ's wife Min-min tries to calm her down. This unconventional wedding foregrounds the subversion of traditional moral values and social norms, which is framed precisely by Yang in their enlarged upside-down wedding picture (Fig 108), foretelling the failure of Ah-di as the patriarch of his new family. Ah-di is, essentially, a flashback to Yang's Taipei-as-capital-of global-avarice films, particularly *Mahjong* (1996) (Anderson 2005: 92). He is extremely money-minded, to the extent that his whole personal identity is built on money. This is in the context of Taiwan being at the peak of global capitalism, where accelerated global flows of capital have been brought in, and people tend to look forward to instant profits, fame, and power rather than looking inward for introspection (Chang 2019: 23). Every time Ah-di has a conversation with NJ, it is about money. When his mother Po Po is sent to the hospital after the stroke, he reassures NJ that he is going to repay his debts soon instead of worrying about his mother's health. In Yang's careful framing of the hospital scene (Fig 109), NJ and Ah-di are separated by the frames of the glass wall. When NJ is seen deep in thought worrying about his mother-in-law, the latter talks non-stop about money, showing that human relationships are at stake when people are preoccupied with money.

Figure 108 Upside-down photo, subversion of traditions Yi Yi (2000)   Figure 109 NJ & Ah-di in separated frames Yi Yi (2000)

Figure 110 All Ah-di talks about is money   Yi Yi (2000)   Figure 111 Failed sense of manhood framed by the door Yi Yi (2000)

In addition, when Ah-di talks to the comatose Po Po by her bedside, he spends most of the time boasting about how rich he has become (Fig 110), and that many people have to come to him for loans. Note that Ah-di is put in the centre of Yang's camera frame for the whole time when he is talking to his mother. Smartly dressed and looking relaxed and confident, he shows a relatively strong sense of masculine self which is constructed on his economic potency. Since his whole identity is built on nothing more than his financial status, it is no wonder that his sense of masculinity fails whenever he is in a financial crisis. Being thrown out by Xiao-yan after a row, he goes to his ex-girlfriend to stay the night because he still owes NJ money. After the birth of his son, he breaks down and cries as he thinks it is cruel to bring the baby into this world when he has lost all his money. The pressure to be the main source of income for the family has long been ingrained in men's concept of masculinity (Elmhirst 2006, Jackson 2001, George 2006), making Ah-di's failure to do so after his financial crisis a blow to his sense of

manhood. This is manifested in his attempted suicide after the big fight between Xiao-yan and his ex-girlfriend during a family gathering, captured by Yang's frames-within-frames device showing his collapsed body and his weeping wife (Fig 111).

While Ah-di's masculinity is defined by his economic potency, NJ's masculinity construction is highly connected with a Taiwanese society which is vastly modernised and running full speed into globalisation. Globalisation involves sweeping changes on the social, cultural and political terrains and it has both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, it opens cultures to a whole arena as the development in technology dissolves international boundaries (Smith, Burke & Ward 2000:1). On the other, it brings about a monoculture of ideas, politics and economic models which renders it a hegemonic process where people all over the world may eventually fall prey to the accelerating encroachment of homogenised, Westernised, consumer culture (Wani 2011: 38). No matter whether one takes an optimistic or pessimistic view, the world is faced with an inevitably high degree of globalisation. Due to the seemingly unstoppable march of globalisation, Connell suggests that it is necessary to understand masculinities on a world scale in the context of neoliberal globalisation (Connell 1995: xx-xxi).

According to Connell, dominant forms of masculinity are associated with major forms of social power, hence transnational corporations operating in global markets are a good setting to understand the emergence of 'transnational business masculinities' as the latest manifestation of a mode of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 1998: 16, Connell & Wood 2005: 347). As aptly summarised by Kwon's (2019: 318) article on globalisation and business masculinities in South Korea, Connell's transnational business masculinity can be characterised by 'frequent global mobility, transnational social networks; job-and-company-hopping; increasing

detachment from older loyalties to organisation, nation and family; provisionality and insecurity; and the maximisation of profits and returns.' Connell's assertion about this form of business masculine identity as having 'the' hegemonic status in a globalising world is insightful but not without challenges (Elias & Beasley 2009). While I agree that Connell's assertion of transnational business masculine identity being the only, or the most important form of, hegemonic status can be problematic, I nevertheless find her description of transnational business masculinity aptly describes the dilemma of the main protagonist NJ, who is the beneficiary as well as the victim of transnational business masculinity.

'Hegemonic masculinity' refers to the understanding that not 'all masculinities are not created equal' (Kimmel 1997: 189), and that it is not solely a monolithic form of patriarchal power over women, but rather a continuously constituted and contested set of interlocking hierarchical social relations (Elias & Beasley 2009: 285). Undoubtedly NJ's boardroom has no place for females. The only female staff member among the top management team is responsible for office chores like serving tea, taking phone calls and passing on messages. Yet the harshest and most hierarchical relationship exists among the management class, that is, among men. As NJ's company is struggling in the transition of a changing media landscape and is on the verge of bankruptcy, his business partner Da-da (大大) desperately tries to keep the financial consultant of their investor happy by prematurely announcing their cooperation with Ota, an established Japanese computer games creator. Caged in by the big frames of the panelled window in the conference room (Fig 112), Da-da's frustration is highlighted by the big door frame and low ceiling lights which entrap him (Fig 113). NJ and his partners are blamed by their investor for their recent loss due to rapid over-expansion, despite their previous big earnings. As the consultant points out, 'What's the point of investing in new ideas when others can produce cheap copycats? Who doesn't know how to make computers these days?' These professional

entrepreneurs are in a way experiencing the same existential crisis as Xiao-ke, the architect in *Taipei Story* (1985), who increasingly loses a sense of certainty and predictability amidst the rapid changes in late modernity. This kind of uncertainty and anxiety accentuated by Yang's recurring grid and cage motifs in NJ's workplace unfortunately is also part and parcel of hegemonic transnational business masculinity.

Figure 112 The panelled window: another cage motif Yi Yi (2000) Figure 113 The gridded door entrapping Da-da Yi Yi (2000)

In order to make the most profit in the short run, NJ's partners pretend that they are interested in Ota's risky new design and at the same time try to make a deal with Ato Company, a notorious copycat business which produces counterfeit products at much lower cost. While NJ's partners are displaying the defining quality of transnational business masculinity of making a profit without moral constraints (Connell & Wood 2005: 361), and showing a declining sense of responsibility for others (Connell 2000: 52), NJ is in defiance of this aspect of globalised masculinity. Here, Yang uses his frames to foreground the disagreement and alienation between NJ and his partners (Fig 114). As his partners are blurred and situated in the background, NJ is clearly shown in the front looking towards Ota, amazed by Ota's genuineness and calm aura. Contrary to Yang's use of weakening patriarchal role models to signify the bygone Japanese colonial and the waning KMT authoritarian rule, the positive depiction of the Japanese character Mr Ota reflects the contemporary perception of Japan and the Japanese among the Taiwanese. As a new, distinctly 'Taiwanese' identity was formed in

the broader democratised, post-martial law Taiwanese localization context, 'expressing regard for Japan was a common, indirect way of criticizing the Nationalist regime" (Brown 2010: 470). In addition, the experience of Japanese colonialism helped distinguish 'Taiwanese' from 'Chinese' or 'Mainlander' (Sun 2007: 797). While Yang does not intend to use *Yi Yi* as a political allegory to hint at a nostalgic feeling about Japan, the portrayal of Mr Ota as an honest, forward-looking and self-reflexive potential business partner who might save NJ's business aptly reflects the psyche of Taiwanese people at a time when Japan was seen as their good friend and honest broker (Lam 2004: 257). As Ota tells NJ later during a business dinner, 'You are like me, we can't tell a lie'. Despite knowing his business partners for most of his life and running the high-tech computer business together, NJ looks lonely and tired in their company all the time. Separated from his colleagues and framed by the glass wall frame in his office, NJ seeks comfort in his teenage hobby, music, when he is at odds with his partners' disregard for business ethics (Fig 115). Twice when he discovers that he is betrayed by his partners (first on learning that they are starting to negotiate with the copycat company behind his back, and second when Da-da tells him that their investor has changed his mind and signed a contract with Ato despite their original promise to close a deal with Ota), NJ's powerless and lonely figure is shown in a frame (Fig 116 & Fig 117). When NJ angrily confronts Da-da 'Where's our dignity? Ota is a good man!', Da-da's reply, quite in a matter-of-fact way summarises the rationale of business masculinities under globalisation: 'A good man? What has that to do with business?' Unlike Yang's previous films, this strong undercurrent in the apparently harmonious and affluent urban city environment does not turn into any ugly scenes or a farce. Instead, NJ chooses to defend his manhood by leaving the company in a dignified way.

Figure 114 Yang's frames separate NJ from his colleagues Yi Yi (2000)   *Figure 115 Nj in his own world Yi Yi (2000)*

Figure 116 & Figure 117 NJ's lonely figure in different frames-within-frames devices Yi Yi (2000)

Though the meanings of masculinity vary across cultures, through history, among men within any one culture, and over the course of a man's life (Kimmel 1997:189), the toll taken on masculinity construction under the breakneck speed of modernisation compounded with global capitalism is, in Yang's films, universal. After NJ has left the company, Da-da confesses to NJ about his masculinity crisis: 'I've worked my butt off all these years, and I didn't do it for fun. You know, NJ, I'm never happy.' The experience of pressure, long working hours, high pay but low security induces mental and physical crises in transnational business masculinity, which in turn is shaped by the social, cultural and economic changes shifts that have been labelled globalisation. As globalisation seems to be an irresistible natural phenomenon in late modernity, there is simply nowhere for men to hide from these ordeals.

Transnational business masculinity has also taken a toll on men's family lives. Da-da's family is in San Francisco while he is based in Taiwan, and NJ is expected to make business trips at short notice. Increasing global mobility is one of the features of transnational business masculinity, contributing to fatherless households which are embedded with nation-state-based cultural and institutional norms (Taga 2005: 132-133), and where most household duties are expected to fall on women's shoulders. As NJ confesses to Po Po in her coma, he used to rely on his wife Min-min (who also works full time in an office) to solve all the household problems so that he could focus on his business. This induces Min-min's breakdown as she reflects on her daily life during her conversation with her unconscious mother: her life is so hectic and yet she feels that it is so meaningless. To NJ, although he wants to be a friend to his son and adores his daughter, his long working hours and his business trips have apparently alienated him from his family. Similar to the way Yang represents Xiao-ke's neither-nor status in his family *Taipei Story* (Fig 61), Yang repeatedly puts NJ in door frames in his house (Fig 118 to Fig 121), highlighting his identity as a half outsider in his household, thus manifesting the flip side of a transnational business masculinity. In the face of all the challenges in life, work and family in the post-traditional globalised capitalist Taiwan, Yang's last film seems to provide a different way out for his men.

Figure 118 NJ framed by the doorway Yi Yi (2000)

Figure 119 NJ as half outsider in his family Yi Yi (2000)

Figure 120 NJ: neither in nor out Yi Yi (2000)   *Figure 121 NJ always enclosed by some sort of frames Yi Yi (2000)*

As Yang highlights through the characterisation of NJ, while the hegemonic facet of transnational business masculinity strengthens the gender division of labour within households in a global arena, it is not necessarily the only path of masculinity building in the rapidly modernising Taipei. As briefly discussed in Chapter 2, despite Giddens's suggestion that modernised societies see an increasing self-monitoring capacity among the agents in their identity construction (Giddens 1991: 75), this greater reflexiveness does not inevitably lead to detraditionalisation. In fact, as much as tradition is something gradually dis-embedding and being un-done in late modernity, gendered reflexivity can also contribute to the continuation of certain traditional values (Chen & Mac an Ghaill 2017: 52). Yang's representation of NJ's masculinity seems to resonate with this argument, echoing the meaning of the film's Chinese title, '— —', which bears the meaning of going back to the beginning for a new start.

While Min-min's breakdown leads to her taking refuge in a spiritual retreat in search of religious comfort, NJ cooks for the family, talks to Po Po in place of Min-min, and spends more time understanding his eight-year-old son Yang Yang. After his long reflection during the Tokyo business trip, in which he has the chance to rekindle his teenage romance with his first love, Sherry, he finds it 'unnecessary' to relive his teenage years at the expense of breaking up his family. As stated by Lin et al., rather than globalising forces displacing the need for

traditional familial ideologies, processes of late modernity may operate to ensure the cultural continuity of the traditional family (Lin et al. 2017: 6). In fact, modernisation cannot totally vanquish tradition; rather, it just charts new social order drawing on different aspects of tradition in different cultures (Lee 1997: 271). In NJ's case, the traditional family structure, which is in line with the harmonious *wu lun* (as advocated by Confucius and Mencius) human relationships, has become an important signpost in the construction of his masculine identity.

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed description of how Yang uses his frames-within-frames devices to manifest men's frustration and struggles, thus reflecting societal changes and different kinds of existential crises. From the first segment film *Expectations*, Yang raises the questions of how to be, how to act and where to go through the character of Xiao-hua, setting the scene for these pressing issues facing modern subjects. Through his representation of masculinity, Yang reflects the rapid political, social, cultural and economic transformation during the turbulent years around the end of martial law and the increasing influence of global capitalism. Using frames-within-frames as medium and close-up shots in cinematic terms to examine these swift changes, I have tried to show that Yang's representation of masculinity synchronises with the progress of different stages of modernity (from heavy to light/ late modernity) and documents crucial historical and political changes (the KMT White Terror and the re-sinicisation project in consolidating their rule). Such representation of masculinity, especially through Yang's use of different framing devices, also highlights a sense of entrapment, alienation, ambiguity and disillusionment. However, as briefly touched on previously, Yang's continuous representation of men's struggle suggests that their confusion can only be dwelt with by a higher degree of independent and reflexive thinking. In the next chapter, I will closely examine how Yang uses another motif in his films, reflections, to represent a way out of the identity and existential conundrum of men.

Chapter 5: Edward Yang's Reflections: Mirrors, Glasses and Figurative Reflections of Masculinities.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I have discussed how Yang represents the identity struggles of men in a Taiwanese society undergoing turbulent transformations through a wider perspective (from spatial configuration) and then narrowed it down to a closer and more detailed look (using frames-within-frames devices). However, Yang looks not only at men's identity construction from the outside; he is also constantly showing their introspection (or the lack of it), reflecting on the self from within. Yang achieves this through his use of different kinds of reflections: mirror, glass, and figurative. Increasingly shady and opaque specular reflections in his films, as I will show in this chapter, are one of the stylistic characteristics he uses to respond to the progressively uncertain and risky society under reflexive modernity. Yet this time Yang focuses on how the reflexive facet of modernity not only confuses but also helps in the reconstruction of self-identity. In addition, I will discuss the frequent use of figurative reflections, that is, using two characters to mirror the construction and deconstruction of each other's masculinities. This is also a major stylistic marker of Yang's films to show the ongoing struggles in masculinities formation within the same and across different generations. Before we look into Yang's various types of reflections of masculinities, however, it will be necessary to first look at the use of mirror reflections in films.

5.1/ Mirror Reflections in Films

To better understand the functions of mirror reflections in films, it will be helpful to start with Christian Metz's study of film as a medium with a structuralist approach. Metz was the pioneer of film semiotics, treating film as a language with a language system (Metz 1974). His later

work about film then focuses on the psychoanalytical study of the spectators' role in the cinematographic institution (Trohler 2018: 28). The shift of focus sees Metz employing the key Lacanian concepts of the 'imaginary' and the 'symbolic' to explain the logic of the spectator's fascination with the image (Metz 1982: 48-49). Through an evocation of Jacques Lacan's 'Mirror Stage', Metz sees the spectator's captivation by the image as being equivalent to the child's identification of the internal self with its external image in the mirror (Mambrol 2018). This identification is pleasurable, a factor reinforced by the cinema institution's encouragement of the spectator. When the spectator has assimilated the pleasure of going to the cinema, films become an integral part of their desire and the screen has become equivalent to a mirror which offers an image to satisfy such desire. In this sense, Metz (1982: 45) likens films to a kind of new mirror. However, there is no simplistic conflation of the screen and the mirror. As Metz further elaborates, the screen is also a non-mirror, since it may project our desire, but it never projects the spectator's actual body (Metz 2015: 63).

Apart from drawing (not so straightforward) analogy between the screen and mirrors, Metz also talks about mirrors in films, which he terms 'a privileged filmic object' (2015: 60). They can distract but they can also focus our attention. As explained by Metz, the second frame (the mirror) has the effect of drawing attention to the main frame (the camera frame) (Metz 2015: 53). Mirror reflections imply different meanings, and they constitute an important tool for film analysis. Unlike doors and blinds which let the gaze of the audience pass through, mirrors return the gaze to the sender and recast it (Metz 2015: 60). The actual presence of a mirror in a film complicates the act of viewing (Wagner 2020: 48), and it often evokes a response from the viewer. By pointing the camera at the mirror reflection of a character, a director denaturalises their identity by denying direct access to the object of the camera's scrutiny (Silverman 1989: 62). Psychoanalytic theory suggests that identity formation requires the

internalisation of a series of things that are external in the first instance. Therefore, it is not from the consciousness that we have to learn, but from the 'Other' (in this context, the mirror reflection captured by the camera in films) whom each of us might finally be said to be (Silverman 2000: 13). A mirror in film can indeed be regarded as a variant of the secondary screen. It carves out a frame-within-a-frame device through which the character is watching something other than themselves that is simultaneously close yet separate. Mirror reflections as such act as vehicles of self-awareness, though sometimes painful ones. They may reflect aspects of the self that one wishes to ignore, and they force the characters (and also the audience) to inspect these hidden aspects from within.

In addition, mirrors in films may also distort reality, confuse distinctions between public and private spaces and blur the boundaries between interior and exterior spaces (Carlson 2011: 20). As stated by Michel Foucault, mirror reflections destabilise vision and knowledge, producing an ephemeral and indefinable 'placeless place' (Foucault 1986: 23). Whereas the mirror is a real object, the image produced by the mirror is not real; while the subject standing in front of a mirror is absolutely real, the reflection of such a subject and the environment that surrounds it is unreal because 'in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there' (Ibid). In this way, Foucault argues that the mirror creates an environment that is neither inside nor out, neither real nor false, hence the term 'a placeless place'. Foucault asserts that such mirrored space trains viewers for the heterotopic space of cinema, allowing them to be in two places at once and reflecting both presence and absence (Carlson 2011: 27).

Resonating with Foucault's assertion that mirror reflections destabilise vision and knowledge, Gilles Deleuze's theory of the crystal-image highlights the indiscernibility between the actual

and virtual when they collide with each other, rendering them impossible to be distinguished from each other. Deleuze discusses mirror images as subtypes of the crystal image in his book *Cinema 2: The Time-image* (1989). According to Deleuze, the cornerstone of time-image, the crystal-image, is formed by the collision of the actual (the presentness of viewing), and the virtual (the pastness of the event) image. The crystal-image splits time into two heterogeneous directions, 'one of which is launched towards the future while the other falls into the past. Time consists of this split, and it is … time, that we see in the crystal' (Ibid: 81). Deleuze cites mirror scenes in cinema as the most familiar case, where the actual collides with the virtual; the pastness of the recorded event fuses with the presentness of its viewing. For instance, a perfect crystal-image is formed in the famous mirror maze sequence in *The Lady from Shanghai* (Orson Welles 1947), where Elsa (played by Rita Hayworth) tries to kill her husband Bannister, the virtual images proliferate to such an extent that the entire actuality is absorbed by the virtual images (Ibid: 70). When the virtual and actual image becomes indivisible in the crystal-image, the image of time which embodies the past and the present can be seen. In Edward Yang's films, many mirror and glass reflection shots serve the functions discussed above. In the rest of the chapter, I will discuss Yang's reflections from three different perspectives: mirror reflections, glass reflections, and figurative reflections.

5.2/ Yang's Mirror Reflections in Reflexive Modernity

The use of mirror and glass reflections in Yang's films has been well documented. Brian Jacobson (2005: 7) sees Yang's use of glass reflections as a visual reminder of the ever-present sense of alienation among the main characters in his films. Chang holds a similar view and contends that Yang uses glass reflections to visualise the mutual permeability between interior and exterior, private and public, visible and invisible, hence manifesting increasing

psychological and social bewilderment and confusion (Chang 2019: 23). Whereas Larry Tung argues that Yang frames these reflective shots to highlight the fact that lives do not go on in a vacuum but in a community (Tung 2008: 249), Yeh & Davis contend that although Yang's films are marked with cold and glassy surfaces of the modern city, they also allow chance encounters, forging unexpected connections (2005: 94). While most of these authors focus on the reflections of the cityscape which overlap the inner mindset of the protagonists, my focus will be on Yang's use of mirror and glass reflections in the introspection of masculinities, which at the same time reflects the corresponding societal transformation in Taiwan.

As discussed in the last section, mirror reflections in films can serve many roles. One of the most prominent functions of using mirrors in films concerns the introspection and reflection of identity. Mirrors are a powerful tool for introspection. Sabine Melchior-Bonnet describes mirrors as providing an enigmatic and transfigured knowledge of oneself (2001: 105) that allows the individual to understand themselves through the mastering of their consciousness (Ibid: 156). If the big screen in a cinema acts as a mirror to enable the spectators to identify with the act of perceiving the image of the characters in films, then actual mirrors in films provide an opportunity for characters in films to reflect, build and show different or hidden identities. Chang argues that Yang's films are vivid portraits of women's experiences against the backdrop of Taiwan's ever-shifting political and economic landscapes, especially the rise of neoliberal capitalism (Chang 2017: 120). It is true that in Yang's first two films, only female characters are seen to use mirrors to reflect on their own identities. In *Expectations* (1982), for example, the fully made-up face of Xiao-fen's elder sister reflected in the mirror shows her hidden rebellious identity which is different from the one she performs in front of her mother (Fig 122). By studying her own body in front of the mirror (Fig 123), Xiao-fen is consciously reflecting on her growing process from girlhood and womanhood. Here the mirror becomes a

great tool to capture her anxiety when advancing into the adult world. In one brilliant shot in *That Day on the Beach* (1983), the actual image of Jia-li's lost and bewildered face is placed side by side with the virtual image of the materialistic world filled with shelves of new clothes (Fig 124). The deliberate confusion between the virtual and the actual image highlights the ephemeral and uncertain identity of Jia-li in the face of her crumbling marriage. These are both prime examples of Yang's use of mirrors to reflect female identities. Yet in the later films of Yang, mirrors are used as the privileged object for men to study, show and reflect on their fractured and repressed masculinity.

Figure 122 Mirror reflects true identity Expectations (1982) Figure 123 Mirror reflects changing identity Expectations (1982)

Figure 124 Jia-li's uncertain identity manifested in the confusing virtual and actual images TDOTB (1983)

Yang does not employ many specular shots to help reflect masculinities. In *Taipei Story* (1984), there is only one mirror shot which tells of Ah -liong's bruised masculinity. In an attempt to preserve his masculine image, Ah-liong has exhausted his means. He tries to uphold traditional

family ties; he tries to keep up with the modernisation and globalisation process by agreeing to move to the United States with Ah-tsing to start everything anew; he also tries to maintain his masculine pride by asserting his masculine prowess. As discussed in the previous chapters, however, these endeavours have all failed. Apparently, Ah-liong's masculinity leans towards the '*wu*' attribute which Louie uses to conceptualise Chinese masculinity (Louie 2002). Louie explains that *wu* is a concept which embodies attributes of physical strength and military prowess, and men are only considered to have achieved this ideal when they have the 'wisdom to know when and when not to deploy it' (Ibid: 14). In this sense, Ah-liong has, however, failed to achieve an idealised masculine image.

His defeated masculinity is represented in the mirror shot in the film (Fig 125), where he is shown checking on his bruises after a meaningless fight triggered when one of Ah-tsing's yuppy friends teased him about his lost glorious past as a baseball prodigy. The bruised image in the mirror is also a reflection of Ah-liong's loss of grip in a world inhabited by Westernised young professionals, while he is still living on the past glories associated with the colonial influence. Baseball can be seen as a colonial legacy that was planted and sunk deep roots during the fifty-year Japanese occupation of the island from 1895 to 1945 (Morris 2004: 176-177). Introduced by the Japanese colonial regime, and maintained as a cultural symbol for building a national identity for the Taiwanese by the KMT in the late 1960s and early 1970s, baseball has never thoroughly shed its Japanese heritage. Ah-liong's past baseball glory serves as a reminder of the broken relationship between Taiwan and its colonizers, who were once a strong political father figure in the Taiwanese mind. Similar to Jia-sen's (in *That Day on the Beach*) mimicking his father's Japanese elite masculine identity, Ah-liong's mimicry of the Japanese colonial identity is doomed to fail. Though Ah-liong has never shown his sense of entrapment in front of others, his defeat is aptly manifested in this battered mirror image in front of the

audience. By pointing the camera to the mirror reflection of Ah-liong, Yang complicates the act of viewing and draws the attention of the audience to this image which Ah-liong is internalising, inevitably inspecting his own anxieties and vulnerabilities. In this way Yang represents the sense of entrapment of a man, and by extension, the Taiwanese society, at the crossroads of running full speed towards an uncertain future with the baggage of historical trauma.

Figure 125 The mirror reflection of Ah-liong's defeated masculinity TS (1985)

If Ah-liong's masculinity image manifests those men who struggle to keep pace with modernisation and the changing gender roles in the urban landscape, the mirror images in *Terrorizers* (1986) reflect the challenges faced by men in Taiwanese society shortly before the lifting of martial law in 1987 whilst running full speed into liquid modernity. During a period when momentous changes occurred in the sociopolitical and economic realms, the mirrors in the film offer a useful window to look back on this moment in Taiwanese masculinity, a decisive one because of its historical timing and pronounced reflexivity. While Bauman regards such a period as liquid modernity, Beck uses the term reflexive modernity to explain the situation. In Chapter 2, I have explained that reflexive modernity means the disembedding of industrial social forms and the re-embedding of another modernity (Beck 1994: 2); as the industrial society becomes obsolete, the risk society which is characterised by the 'return of uncertainty to society' emerges. Since the only certainty in reflexive modernity is uncertainty, it may bring emancipation to some people but also imbues an intensifying sense of rootlessness

due to the loss of certainty in others. In Yang's cinematic space configuration in *Terrorizers*, the constant risks facing urban dwellers are signified by the ubiquitous large gas tank in Taipei City, while the constant self-confrontation (or the lack of it) is reflected through the increased use of mirror images.

First of all, the mirror reflection of the rich amateur photographer Xiao-qiang appears near the opening of the film (Fig 126). Later on, Li Li-zhong, the hospital technician is seen washing his hands in front of his bathroom mirror three times (Fig 127). It is, however, interesting to note that while Xiao-qiang's reflection is seen in the mirror, he is not interested in looking at it at all. In Li's case, his mirror reflection is deliberately not shown in the screenshot. If, as discussed earlier in this chapter, psychoanalysis asserts that identity requires the internalisation of a series of things that are external, Xiao-qiang and Li's masculine identity is nowhere to be seen and internalised in these few mirror shots. Indeed, near the beginning of the film, neither Xiao-qiang nor Li is certain about their self-identity. While the former is in limbo awaiting his conscription notice, Li is struggling to climb up his career ladder to prove his masculinity as a man who has a 'career' (as he boasts to his friend, the police officer, near the end of the film). Further, at this point Taiwan was on the verge of stepping into the post-traditional society where people were being expected to live in the turbulence of the global risk society as an individual, or as Beck asserts, only as an individual (1994: 7-8). Neither man has family support to overcome the problems they are facing, as people could have done previously. Xiao-qiang has a live-in girlfriend, and yet their transitional living space where their respective belongings are scattered in two different corners shows that it is nowhere near a 'home'. Similarly, Li and his wife Zhou Yu-fen seem to have separate living spaces in their home although they live under the same roof. Whereas Zhou struggles to write in her cramped study room, Li tries to

wash off his sin and guilt for framing his colleague by repeatedly washing his hands in the toilet.

Figure 126 Xiao-qiang not interested in his reflection   *Figure 127 Li's reflection deliberately not shown Terrorizers (1986)*

The two male protagonists start to seriously reflect on their own identity when they start to confront themselves through their mirror (figurative or literal) reflections. After moving into his rented flat and turning it into a darkroom, Xiao-qiang sets up a collage of White Chick on one of the walls (Fig 128). In a way, this wall acts as a cinema screen, which is likened by Metz to a mirror, with Xiao-qiang's desire projected on it in ways that are accessible to his male gaze. While he does not directly identify with the image of White Chick, he identifies with the perception that he is the creator and sole bearer of this image, which gives him a sense of empowerment about his masculine identity. Contrary to Laura Mulvey's (1986: 203) claim about the active/male and passive/female split in the pleasure of looking from the male's perspective, however, the White Chick constantly resists and evades any form of containment.

After White Chick has stolen Xiao-qiang's cameras and returns to her pimp, Xiao-qiang tears down the black paper blocking the sunlight, letting breezes in to blow the collage apart. This disrupts any forms of traditional male voyeurism and denies Xiao-qiang's identity as the bearer of the look. The image of the smaller photos of the collage fluttering in the breeze (Fig 129) also highlights the transitory, powerless and fragmented identity of Xiao-qiang, resonating with

the transitory status of Taiwan facing the imminent lift of martial law and the unknowable future as an emerging bona fide democracy. Interestingly, if the mirror image is a subtype of crystal-image, the broken mirror image of White Chick crystalises Xiao-qiang's past (the object of his voyeuristic gaze) and his present (the daylight reminding him of the real world), which embodies the limbo in which Xiao-qiang, and by extension Taiwanese society, is held.
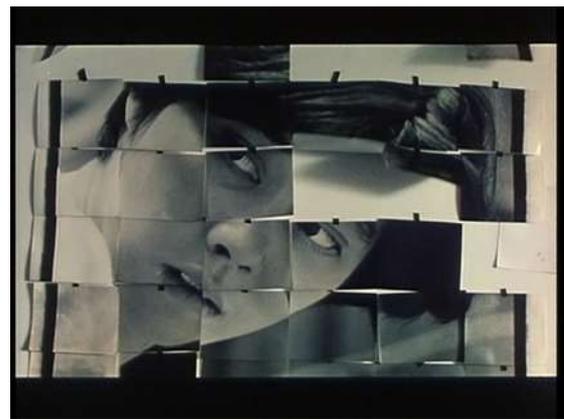
Figure 128 & Figure 129 Projection of Xiao-qiang's male gaze, and his fragmented and transitory identity Terrorizers (1986)

In Li Li-zhong's case, his self is never reflected in the mirror before realising that his wife is not coming back and that he has lost the promotion opportunity. This symbolises the fact that he is reluctant to confront his true self, taking for granted everything that has defined his masculinity effectively so far. He is the provider of the family, he has a stable and secure career with a good prospect for promotion, and he is an understanding husband who allows his wife to stay at home if she prefers not to work. It is not until the collapse of his marriage and the rejection of his promotion that he starts to seriously introspect about his true identity as a displaced white-collar professional who has been ripped from a place in the prospering computer science and engineering industry (Fig 130 & 131). His wife's victory in the *fukan* fiction contest signals her successful assimilation to the rapid movement of the cultural field toward market-driven standards (Chang 2005: 25). Most importantly, her new lover's status as

a successful electronics entrepreneur is a mirror of his failed attempt to define his masculinity through a successful career. As John Anderson argues (2005: 38), the primary dichotomy at work in Yang's urban film within the jungle of the city is between those who can keep up, such as Zhou and her lover Xiao-shen, and those who can't, such as Ah-liong and Li.

It is interesting to note that time seems to split in two different directions after Li inspects his true self for the first time in the cop's bathroom, illustrating the different facets of the crystal-image of time. This is captured in the film's two possible endings. The first is that Li commits suicide, while the second sees him stealing his friend's gun to kill his supervisor and his wife's lover. The two endings endow the film with an unfolded and unpredictable future of multiplicity, in line with the new fluid and hybrid forms, pluralisations and ambiguities that exist in reflexive modernity (Lee 2008: 57). Unable to cope with this transitional period replete with rapid changes, Li becomes the victim and perpetrator of everyday terrorism.

Figure 130 & Figure 131 Li introspecting about his displaced male identity Terrorizers (1986)

In the films made after *Terrorizers*, Yang once again minimises the use of specular reflections to inform male identities. In *A Brighter Summer Day* and *A Confucian Confusion*, there is only one mirror shot in each film that shows the male protagonist from the front. As previously shown in *ABSD*, the patriarchal institution of the Nationalist government incited brutal violence on Taiwanese people during the reign of the White Terror. In addition, the omnipresence of

army trucks in the film is a constant reminder of imminent war threats from mainland China. The teenagers who grew up in such an oppressive and violent environment in the early 1960s lacked a sense of security. Many of the objects which keep recurring in the film, for example the torch, the Elvis songs, the samurai sword, the old radio and cassette player, all come from elsewhere and are central to the existential crisis undergone by the characters in the film who have to grab a sense of self whenever they can find it (Rosenbaum1997: 6). Yang uses one mirror shot to epitomise the model of masculine identity which is grabbed by the protagonist Si'er (Fig 132).

Figure 132 Si'er's misidentification with the empowering cowboy masculinity ABSD (1991)

Borrowing the hat of the young doctor, Si'er poses as a cowboy in his only frontal mirror shot in the film. This is also the only scene in the film where he is seen relaxed and being captivated by the image in the mirror that he can identify with as if a child sees his specular image in the mirror stage. Just as a young child who happily assumes the 'ideal-I' reflection in the mirror as the maturation of his power (Lacan 2002: 94-96), the usually quiet and serious Si'er performs his empowered masculine identity in front of a mirror through his mimicry of the idealised masculine image of an American cowboy. Similar to the performing of Elvis Presley's songs by other gangsters, the allegiance to Western culture is not simply a 'grotesque mimicry' as stated by Bhabha (1983: 27), but rather part of the international, intracultural youth rebellion (Yeh 2003: 22). It empowers the gang members and provides them a means for asserting a distinct identity, albeit a problematic one. In Si'er's case, such idolisation of Western culture

can only betray Si'er's expectations and turn into an empty image. He inevitably fails to find an outlet for his repressed and frustrated masculinities in Western culture, or more precisely, in the imported mass media culture through neocolonialism. Instead, he turns to violence in order to fight against the injustice of the whole world and re-entrench his masculinity by killing Xiao-ming. In a manner of speaking, this is similar to the betrayal of the Taiwanese by the US switching diplomatic recognition from the ROC in Taiwan to the PRC in January 1979.

A Confucian Confusion (1994) is a film which in itself is a mirror construction. In the first place, the Chinese title of the eponymous novel by the author (Molly's brother-in-law), 儒者的困惑 (*Ruzhe de kunhuo*), reflects the English title of the film; the play within the film is a pastiche of performing arts, and the character of the author as a stand-in for the director Edward Yang. According to Yang, he identified partly with the character of the author. He reckoned that the author stands for some kind of conscience in society who is left behind by mainstream values and he tries to stay optimistic (cited in Kraicer & Roosen-Runge 1998: 52). The character of the author is actually a reflexive allegory of Confucian living in the modern world, and the film is a reflexive allegory of how the ultra-capitalisation of Taiwan has turned itself into a profit-oriented society, rendering the teachings of Confucius obsolete and hypocritical. As discussed before, these rapid socio-economic changes combined with the unique political situation contributed to the frustration of the Taiwanese building up their identities. Men, who have a vested interest in the traditional hierarchy supported by Confucianism, always seem to come out worse than women in Yang's films as they must fight harder to cling on to their privileged status amidst rapid social changes, such as the changing of gender roles. The beneficiaries of the economic miracle are not necessarily men.

The repression of masculinity brought about by the rapid changes in liquid modernity is aptly manifested in Ah-khim's only mirror shot in *A Confucian Confusion*. Modern Taiwanese men are burdened (though also benefit) from the consequences of modernity, as modernity is a double-edged phenomenon (Giddens 1990: 7). While human beings can enjoy a relatively more secure and rewarding existence than in pre-modern systems, time-space distanciation that comes with modernisation disembeds social institutions such as family, kin, and education from the local society or community, causing a decline of traditional social ties (Ibid: 21). Though the reflexivity of modern society helps us to continuously collect and new information to organise and change society, the constant reflexivity needed seems to leave us with more questions where once there appeared to be answers, rendering life in the modern world like being aboard a careering juggernaut (Ibid: 53). To the successful entrepreneurs and yuppies in *A Confucian Confusion*, the well-established traditional virtues and patriarchal system have failed to effectively serve as a blueprint to construct their identities. Instead, nearly everyone in the film seems to be using *qing* (sentiment) as an investment for money, as the latter is the prime value of a consumer society. The lip service paid to Confucius's teachings challenges the patriarchal order that builds upon the harmonious five cardinal relations *wu lun*, hence weakening family ties and commodifying human relationships. The traditional hierarchical gender relationships are disrupted as human relationships are based on monetary gains rather than *qing*.

As seen from the mirror image (Fig 133), *fuerdai* (富二代 children of the nouveau riche) Ah-khim is frustrated over his loveless relationship with his fiancé Molly. In this complex mirror image, Ah-khim's mirror reflection and Chaplin's poster on the wall mutually reflect one another. While Chaplin's cinematic persona is defined as a tramp, a loveable outcast victimised by industrial bureaucracies, his own flaws and plain dumb luck (Howe 2013: 45), the off-screen

Chaplin was one of the wealthiest celebrities at the time and had total control of the production of his films. Some radical film critics even attacked him as 'an accomplice to capitalism in his pre-*Modern Times* films' (Marland 1989: 138-139). The mirror image of Ah-khim's appears to mimic Chaplin's, highlighting the ambiguous situations they are in. Despite Chaplin's critical view of the rapid pace of technological change, his own success was built on film, an art form defined by technology. In Ah-khim's case, despite benefiting from his inherited monetary power which reconstitutes the *wen* aspect of masculine identity in a modernised and capitalistic Taiwan society, he is also the victim of this wealth. People surrounding him are performing '*qing*' only for financial gain. While the 'tramp' persona in Chaplin's films reflects the frustration men faced during the Great Depression and the challenges to masculine identity from the dehumanising Fordist industrialism (Howe 2013: 45), the dim-witted Ah-khim exemplifies the frustration among men whose masculine identity is entrenched in materialistic and pragmatic values, disregarding the traditional Confucian ideals upon which a firm patriarchal hierarchy is built.

Figure 133 Ah-khim mimicking Chaplin in his mirror image ACC (1994)

It is interesting to note that mirror reflections are rarely seen in films after *A Confucian Confusion*. They are used only a few times in *Mahjong* and *Yi Yi* (2000) on men. Unlike the specular reflections used in the previous films to show the male protagonists' introspection of their identity, the partial, shady and fragmented mirror reflections in the last two films of Yang

are all related to deceitful acts. For example, in *Mahjong*, Hongyu's reflection is partially shown in the scene when he is plotting how to take revenge on the woman (Angela) whom he thinks has cheated his father and led to his bankruptcy (Fig 134). As to Hongkong, in both mirror shots he is either going to lie to a woman or is lying to one (Fig 135 & Fig 136). Whereas for NJ in *Yi Yi*, the reflection of his back in the mirror is captured when he learns of the betrayal of his long-term friends and business partners on Ota (Fig 137). As Yang states, the Taiwanese society he was trying to show in his later films had gone from bad to worse (cited Kraicer & Roosen-Runge 1998: 52), where traditional signposting was disappearing, and people did not know what they really wanted. Young people like Hongyu and Hongkong think they can manipulate others like Alison, the young woman who does not know whether she wants to be shared by the friends of the man she thinks she is in love with. Similar to the teenage gangsters in *A Brighter Summer Day*, Hongyu and Hongkong are actually resorting to gangster masculinity in order to secure their own sense of identity. However, the petty criminal quartet headed by Hongyu crumbles like a row of falling dominoes when the leader is confronted with his father's suicide. Using his father as a social mirror, Hongyu misidentifies his father's 'shameless and successful swindler' identity as his own. As a team of small-time criminals, Hongkong misidentifies Hongyu's hegemonic masculinity as his own ideal, using sexual prowess as a manipulative tool to take advantage of women like Alison. Yet the fragmented and shady reflections of Hongyu and Hongkong foretell the breakdown of their own masculinities.

Figure 134 Hongyu's fragmented mirror reflection MJ (1996)   *Figure 135 Hongkong's shady mirror reflection MJ (1996)*

Figure 136 Hongkong lying to Alison MJ (1996)   *Figure 137 NJ learns about his colleagues' betrayal Yi Yi (2000)*

5.3/ Yang's Glass Reflections

In the last section, I have looked into Yang's use of mirror images to show how his characters inspect their identity through their mirror reflections, and how the latter shows more than one wants to face and see. I have argued that his mirror reflections exemplify how the increasingly ephemeral and volatile risk society in liquid modernity affects the construction of masculinity in Taipei City. The loss of traditional signposts and the existential crisis culminate in the shady mirror reflections *Mahjong* (1996) of the male protagonists. As modernity progresses from heavy to light/ liquid modernity, Yang's specular reflections have become more and more opaque, demonstrating a corresponding shift from the representation of a presumably more single-minded orthodox and simple first modernity (Hansen 1999: 69-70) to the progressively

more risk-conscious phase of the post- or second modernity. Similar to Yang's use of more porous and ambiguous space in the Second Taipei Trilogy, he uses more ambiguous and blurry glass reflections to suggest the fact that it has become less and less possible for people to gain a stable identity. As David Li asserts, 'individuals are no longer significantly or singularly interpellated into the biological family, or for that matter, into the biological destiny' (Li 2003: 199). Equally, Yang also unfolds a facet of modernity in which human beings are pushed to be more reflexive about how they are and how they should act. In this section, I will continue to discuss how Yang's glass reflections show the inevitable dissolution of the once meaningful boundary between public and private in late modernity, and how such changing conditions of modernity affect the construction of masculinity accordingly. Further, I will also argue that while late modernity is characterised by its uncertain and risk-ridden nature, it is also characterised by reflexivity. This reflexivity, however, is not a complete overhaul of traditional values but, rather, draws from such values in the construction of new identities.

In Xiaodong Lin's study on masculinities within Chinese rural-urban migration, he argues that his subjects' masculinity is shaped by the new urban experience of rural-urban migration on the one hand, and informed by the traditional male roles in families on the other (Lin 2010: 9). Traditional Chinese masculinity was established based on the family unit of a collective interest with a functional division and attendant gendered meanings (Ibid: 13). Men in traditional Chinese families are seen as authority father figures, as Lin cites, 'marry a cockerel and follow a cockerel, marry a dog and follow a dog' (嫁鶏隨鶏，嫁狗隨狗 *jiaji suiji, jiagou suigou,*) (Ibid: 14). This Chinese saying describes the traditional hegemonic gender roles and relationships, placing women as the followers and dependents of men. The process of China's modernisation has enabled women to enter the labour market and has enhanced their economic status and hence, independence. This changes the power balances between the genders, thereby

disrupting the traditional gender division of labour which was structured through the binary between 'inside and outside' (Jacka 1997: 25). However, the male subjects in Lin's study managed to re-negotiate their masculinities in the industrialised and urbanised setting in contemporary China. As Lin contends, while modern society may have challenged an individual's conceptualisation of tradition, there is still continuity within male peasant workers' perceptions of traditional men's roles. In other words, the improved financial status of women and the changing perception of gender norms in the modernising urban context have challenged traditional Chinese masculinity but not undermined it totally. Instead, it 'recreates' a tradition that is different from a conventional understanding (Lin 2010: 15). In the face of the tumultuous societal transformation brought by industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation, men seem to be able to negotiate their identity by reflexively deploying the traditional patriarchal ideology into their modern experience. Although it is not possible to fully translate the effects of modernisation on Chinese male rural-urban migration to the Taiwan context of the 1980s and 1990s, it seems like this kind of reinvention and recreation of self-identity also applies in Yang's reflection on masculinity during reflexive modernity in his last film *Yi Yi*.

In all of Yang's films before *Yi Yi*, the absence of strong patriarchs or powerful masculine images is common. The patriarchal heads in Yang's previous works are either absent (*Terrorizers* 1986, *Mahjong* 1996), over authoritative (*That Day on the Beach* 1983), incompetent (*Taipei Story* 1985, *A Brighter Summer Day* 1991) or even dead (*Expectations* 1983, *Mahjong* 1996). While violence and murders among gangsters are not uncommon (*ABSD, Terrorizers, Mahjong*), they do not celebrate spectacular or hyper-masculinity as in conventional gangster or martial arts films (for example, those films discussed in the Hong Kong and Taiwan context). Instead, they reflect the continuous challenges and setbacks faced by modern Taiwanese men in different stages of modernity, highlighting frustrated

masculinities amidst the rapid transition to risk-ridden modernity. Such is the global risk society whose predicament is defined by Beck as 'unintentional self-dissolution or self-endangerment' (Beck 1994: 176). It seems that as modernity progresses, the declining importance of patriarchal power becomes inevitable in Yang's films. However, this does not seem to be the case in *Yi Yi*. Despite the connotations of multi-layered and at times ambiguous self-identity which is plagued by the kinds of anxiety and uncertainty reflected and refracted through Yang's glass reflections, his male subjects – the father and son NJ and Yang Yang – seem to have found a solution to this problem to renegotiate their fluid, fragmented masculine identity in the wider context of late modernity characterised by globalisation, risk, detraditionalisation, individualisation and reflexivity (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Giddens 1992, Smart and Neale 1999).

Yang uses glass reflections to connect and divide the urbanites, hence revealing the indistinguishability of the public and private spaces. In *Yi Yi*, there are around eighteen sets of shots where the camera and the city dwellers are separated by an invisible partition: glass panes (Chang 2019: 23). The ever-present divider also creates a sense of distance for the spectators, showing Yang's respect of the private life of the protagonists on the one hand, and encouraging the viewers' more objective understanding of these urbanists' struggles in reflexive modernity on the other. The loss of social fibre and the teleological understanding of individual destiny contributes to the constant questioning of the concept of being good, and the disintegration of the basic moral framework that forms the local community. Yang's use of glass panes not only shows reflections and refractions of the multi-layered complexities in the modern world, but also marks space without absolute delimitation, manifesting the indistinguishability between inside and outside, and in this way suggesting a permeability, liquidity and flexibility of transnational capitalism which is typical of reflexive modernity (Li 2003: 200). In this way,

glass panes act as an interface for the intrusion of the public into the private space of city dwellers, causing them feelings of loss of control and lack of protection and engulfing them with the pressure of modernity.

Such pressure is, like Yang's glass reflections, omnipresent in NJ's living and working space, the two major environments where he defines his familial and transnational business masculinity. In both milieus, NJ's masculinity faces unprecedented challenges brought by late modernity. As shown in Min-min's breakdown scene in her bedroom, the exterior city-night traffic is shot through the bedroom window (Fig 138). Here the reflexivity and transparency of Yang's glass amply convinces the spectators that the inhabitants of the Taipei City in late modernity are actually living in the same 'condominium of the lonely crowd without optimal escape routes' (Ibid: 201). The miniature window-framed scenes simultaneously display different family problems (the argument in the bedroom of Lily's mother, the sobbing in Min-min's bedroom) with the backdrop of the dissolving city lights which intrude into the city dwellers' private lives through the interface of the glass window. In this way, Yang shows the interconnectivity between the dynamism and mobility of the city and the detached human relationships in fragmented families.

Figure 138 Glass reflection superimposing public and private life Yi Yi (2000)

Until recently, the traditional patriarchal family has functioned as the central social agency for the making of young femininities and masculinities (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood 2007: 68). As modernity progresses, family structures change. Whereas the authority of the father over his family has traditionally been a validating symbol of all larger social forms of authority, of law, society and religion (French 1995: 1-2), familial relations are no longer shaped by traditional certainties in reflexive modernisation. The patriarchal head of the family is not necessarily the sole breadwinner and the authoritative leader of the family. Instead, the surge of individuation (Beck 1992: 87) experienced in reflexive modernisation changes the pre-modern family from a bounded community of economic need, underpinned by solidarity, obligation and permanence, to that of an open community constituted by an elective relationship in late modernity (Beck and Beck-Genrsheim 1995**:** 79-81). As a result, couples are increasingly impelled into decision-making, negotiation and individual strategies about every detail of how they should live and run the family together (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood 2007: 51-52). In NJ's case, in the face Min-min's breakdown, he has to negotiate new ways of running the family by stepping up to take care of the family while his wife is away for her spiritual retreat. At the same time, he has to face the endless uncertainties which are brought about by late modernity, to the extent that he is reduced to asking the symbol of the gradually collapsing filial authority, the comatose Po Po, whether she would want to wake up if she had to face all the uncertainties that he is confronted with. Given that Po Po is unconscious, the question seems rhetorical, and an outlet for his frustrations.

It is worth noting that the decline of the authority of men as the patriarchal heads of families does not, however, lead to the simple assumption that women are the beneficiaries of a new social order in late modernity. Though women's social status has improved, and gender order and relations changed in late modern times, the problems they face have become

correspondingly more complex. While Lily's mother appears to be a successful entrepreneur, she is also a single mother trying to improve her alienated relationship with her daughter on the one hand, and dealing with problematic relationships with different men on the other. By the same token, while Min-min is a career woman and has a complete family, but her hectic but monotonous life makes her feel like she is living in a 'blank'. Moreover, she is finding it difficult to grasp hold of a stable sense of identity amidst the loss of support and security in traditional family ties, signified by the physical collapse of Po Po after a stroke.

NJ's identity crisis and Min-min's existential frustration are highlighted in Yang's glass reflections. At one point, the bodies of NJ and Min-min seem to be joined together (Fig 139), while the city lights dissolve in the bedroom signify the existential angst and identity crisis engulfing both of them. It is interesting, however, to note that while Min-min's reflection on the window is blurred and overpowered by the intruding city lights, NJ walks over to the window to close the blind in order to keep out the invasion of the outside. Though he is no longer the authoritative patriarchal head, he is nevertheless still the one trying his best to keep the family intact. After all, family is the dominant structure of patriarchal masculinity. By protecting such a structure, NJ is actually preserving his traditional masculinity. Indeed, reflexive modernity is about reconstruction and as Giddens suggests, it is a post-traditional order but not one in which the sureties of tradition and habit have been totally replaced (1991: 2), and not every aspect of a traditional system can be thoroughly exorcised by modern knowledge and practices. Thus, reflexivity is not just an instrument of doubt that jeopardises the foundation of traditions, it is also one which agitates modern individuals to seek pre-modern sources of moral understanding (Lee 2006: 360).

Figure 139 NJ and Min-min engulfed by existential angst in the city Yi Yi (2000)

Another function of Yang's glass reflections is to highlight his concerns with subjectivity, alienation and fragmentation in a transnational cinematic space situated in the wider context of the highly globalised reflexive modernity. As Chang observes, permeable and liquid omnipresent glass panes in Yang's films act as an interface for the projection of fragmented and ambiguous personal identities, which are blurred and darkened by the complex webbed relationships as well as a series of fakeries, frauds, betrayals, violence and exploitation in disguise (2019: 21). As Jacobson contends, Yang's glass reflections suggest human alienation and objectification in an urban environment (2005: 52). While the angst of different city dwellers is projected on the glass interface simultaneously, this invisible divider reminds the spectators that these people are separated and cornered in their own world. The invisible but ubiquitous suppression and repression of anxiety and uncertainty imposed on the urbanites is reified as the reflections of the skyscrapers rolling over and engulfing NJ and his business partners (Fig 140 & 141).

Figure 140 & Fig 141 Reflections of skyscrapers signifying ubiquitous anxiety and uncertainty Yi Yi (2000)

Figure 142 Glass reflection highlighting NJ's fragmented and complex self Yi Yi (2000)

Struggling to position their company in the changing media landscape, NJ and his business partners fall into deep disagreement. While his short-sighted business partners try to assign NJ the role of wooing Ota and keeping him interested in the business deal, NJ is resentful of their dishonest tactics that put profit before ethics, a defining quality of transnational business masculinity (Connell & Wood 2005: 361). As NJ tries to define his own masculinity in the post-traditional settings which emerge from modernity's dynamism, his fragmented subjectivity is highlighted in Yang's glass reflection. In the scene when NJ learns that his business partners are going to strike a deal with the copycat company Ato, there is a static image projected on the huge glass pane showing the overlapping bodies of his secretary, another office worker and himself, highlighting the fragmentation of his complex self (Fig 142).

His occupation of different roles - the head of a company, the patriarch of a disintegrating traditional family who tries to pull it back together, and yet at the same time a man contemplating an uncertain extra-marital affair – shows the layered and complex ever-expanding social horizons (Li 2003: 200) in reflexive modernity. The situation is exacerbated by the detraditionalisation which unsettles inherited patterns of relationships, thus calling into question the notions of the self and identity (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood 2007: 53). On facing the crisis of pluralisation of identities involving processes of fragmentation and dislocation in the reflexive modernity setting, Yang and his characters are always asking the same question: How shall I live in modernity? This echoes the existential questions posed by people living in circumstances of late modernity as observed by Giddens: 'What to do? How to act? Who to be?' (Giddens 1991: 70).

While individuation experienced in reflexive modernisation means that biographies become self-reflexive and socially prescribed biography is transformed into biography that is self-produced (Beck 1992: 135), culture and tradition still play an important role in shaping self-identity (Adams 2003: 225). In order to redefine his masculinity identity in the era of reflexive modernity, NJ once again values the necessity of tradition to re-anchor the self in a rapidly changing world. In the transnational business world where profitability is of the utmost concern, NJ opts for the upholding of the traditional Confucian ideal *junzi* who understands the importance of morality (*yi*). He refuses to compromise his integrity and leaves the company. As the patriarchal head of the family, NJ limits his personal gratification and refrains from reigniting his once passionate relationship with his first love, Sherry.

It is worth noting that by recognising his obligations and embracing a generational cycle of perpetuity, NJ, or more to the point Yang, does not fully endorse the centuries-old Confucian teachings, nor does he embrace the interpretation of a *wu lun* human relationship system by Han Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒 197-104 BCE), which is entirely a vertical and one-sided patriarchal structure. On hearing Da-da's confession about making the wrong decision of co-producing cheap imitations that nobody buys, NJ's response is not a good lesson of Confucius teachings of how to be a *junzi*. Instead, his remark 'If you don't love what you do, how can you be happy?' reflects that his *wen* attributes of acting like a *junzi* is a personal conscious choice after reconsidering the meaningfulness of tradition in modernity's own unfolding. By the same token, after Min-min returns from her spiritual retreat, the couple's reconciliation is marked by NJ's heartfelt reflection:

> '…I suddenly realised that, even if I was given a second chance (to relive my youth), I wouldn't need it, I really wouldn't… '

Yi Yi (2000)

The fact that he declines the opportunity to relive his youth but goes back to his family has, as mentioned before, helped NJ to restore his patriarchal masculinity. Yet it is established through negotiation and reflection instead of pure hegemony. What Yang represents through NJ's character is, in other words, a kind of recreated identity negotiated in the reflexive process of connecting personal and social change (Giddens 1991: 32-33). As Li contends, this perpetuation of traditional familial masculinity is not necessarily an endorsement of the model of traditional patrilineal governance (Li 2003: 203). In the wider context of late modernity, Yang posits a way out for men to renegotiate their fragmented and ambiguous masculine identity through the philosophy of the character NJ's son Yang Yang:

'…Daddy, I can't see what you see, and you can't see what I see, how can I know what you see?'

Yi Yi (2000)

According to Yang Yang, people can only see half of the truth, so he takes pictures of people's backs in order to help them see better. In the conditions of high modernity where no determining authorities can remove uncertainties; the individual is confronted with a complex diversity of choices while all signposts established by tradition are blank; and the risks in urban life are as ubiquitous as the big gas tank in *Terrorizers*; Yang Yang's pictures which show the other half of the truth are a direct contrast to the anxiety and uncertainty reflected and refracted through Yang's glass reflections. While the misrecognition of Si'er (*ABSD*) and Hongyu's (*A Confucian Confusion*) masculine identities resulted in the violent and tragic realisation that they have been living an illusion, Yang Yang's unwavering quest for truth enables him to attain a deeper understanding of himself, ultimately shaping his own sense of identity.

5.4/ Figurative Reflections: Character Reflections and Reflections in Characters Within and across Generations

If the representation of masculinity through mirror and glass reflections is Yang's response to the progressively uncertain and risky society under reflexive modernity, then figurative reflections are Yang's recurring motif to reflect men's ongoing struggles in masculinities formation within the same and across different generations. Figurative reflections, that is, the use of reflection characters as mirrors, function not only as a mirror of masculine identity but also as a projection of the generational problem of masculinity construction in Taiwan. Of

course, the so-called identity crisis of men is not uniquely experienced by Taiwanese male subjects. In fact, in environments that are changing at breakneck speed, identity issues in relation to gender are an important part of existential angst (Louie 2014: 26). Yet Yang's diagnosis of Taiwanese men's pathos takes into consideration the complicated political, historical and economic factors such as KMT's de facto colonial rule after its retreat to the island until the lifting of martial law, Taiwan's rapid transition to high modernity in the backdrop of a quandary of identity issues, and the incompatibility of the apparently anachronistic Confucian ideology in the post-traditional order of liquid modernity. By studying the figurative reflections between Yang's male characters, this thesis aims not only to constitute a better understanding of how masculinity construction evolved and reshaped over the few decades (from the 1960s to the millennium) through the perspective of Yang's distinctive film language, but also to add another layer of nuanced understanding to the vernacular modernity experienced in Taiwan which embodies a constant struggle to identity building even to this date.

Yang's male characters bear no resemblance to state-endorsed masculinity images. In fact, Yang and other TNC directors' works foreground a paradigm shift in the representation of masculinity; the patriarchal hierarchy advocated in Healthy Realism, anti-war and escapist film genres is repeatedly scrutinised in the films of the new Taiwanese directors. From the outset of their exodus from mainland China, the KMT seemed to observe an idealised version of Chinese tradition which they proudly used as an imagined legitimating image for their minority government. Yet as Taiwan enjoyed one of the fastest economic growths in the world in the 1970s and 1980s, which brought about radical changes in lifestyles, social relations and value systems, these changes became at odds with the government's own traditional ideological stances (Lu 2002: 11). In addition, as discussed before, Taiwan's undefined and ambivalent

national identity had contributed to the construction of the ambivalent Taiwanese masculinity, which had been a taboo subject not to be touched on in films before the TNC (Sun 2013: 150). Nevertheless, the gradual political and cultural democratisation that emerged around the lifting of martial law engendered greater freedom within Taiwanese society. Yang, as one of the first wave of directors who benefited from such freedoms, uses figurative reflections between father and son in different films to reflect and project the conundrums of masculine identities, and by extension, the tumultuous societal transformation in Taiwanese society.

5.4.1/ Men Stuck in Bygone Era: Jia-sen Vs his father in That Day on the Beach & Ah-liong Vs Ah-tsing's father in Taipei Story

In Yang's earlier films, as stated in previous analysis chapters, there is a more prominent presence of Japanese colonial influences. The Japanese-style house that Jia-sen and Jia-li's family live in and the elite father image signify a sense of superiority in this middle-class family. It is a reminder of the *Riben jingshen* (Japanese spirit) upheld by and imposed onto the elite native Taiwanese during the last few years of their colonial rule. To the Japanese, it was a part of their comprehensive cultural policy to encourage their colonised subjects to identify themselves as Japanese and stay loyal to the *tenno* (heavenly sovereign). To the Taiwanese elite class, however, it symbolised an elite status which was associated with modernity (Liu 2009: 269). The patriarchal figure in Jia-sen's family, his father who is a respected doctor running a village clinic, is the embodiment of such eliteness. Jia-sen sees his father as a role model in the film, and he is represented as a split image of the latter (Fig 143). Such figurative reflection of the father and son characters exemplifies the strong colonial influence in the formation of Taiwanese masculinity on the one hand, and forecloses its importance in the future construction of Taiwanese identity on the other. The figurative reflection foretells the

incompatibility of the grotesque mimicry of an obsolete (colonial) patriarchal figure within a modernising society. The fact that Jia-sen models himself on his father and blindly follows his footsteps highlights one of Yang's running themes in his oeuvre: authoritative patriarchy does not only dominate women, but it is also a form of hegemonic masculinity which dominates men. The institutional power embodied by Jia-sen's father suffocates individuality, leading to the ongoing problem of outward conformity and inner rage, which is another theme running in Yang's future films.

Figure 143 Figurative reflection of Jia-sen and his father TDOTB (1983)

Japanese postcolonial influence was diminishing, especially after the ex-colonisers signed the Joint Communique with the PRC in 1972 which marked their recognition of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, and the rapid industrial growth and modernisation of Taiwan during the 1960s and 1970s. Yang's films reflect this change and increasingly focus on the gradual and profound changes brought about by the socio-economic changes of a previously agrarian society (Lu 2002: 125). While Japanese postcolonial influences on Taiwanese identity formation had become a minor factor, men's struggle to preserve their status amidst the gradual disintegration of traditional family ties and ideologies in the alienating and risk-ridden late modernity became a progressive focal point in Yang's films. As discussed before, Ah-liong and Ah-tsing's father are the two prime examples of men

who live in the rapidly modernising city in search of their past glory and idiosyncratic codes of honour. According to Ah-tsing's observation, Ah-liong and her father are complete mirror images of each other (Fig 144). Ah-liong values traditional family ties. He uses the money to move to America to help repay the debt of Ah-tsing's father. He drags the wife of his childhood friend from the gambling table back home to take care of her children, showing his friend that a man should be able to control his wife in order to maintain the patriarchal order. He is nostalgic about his past and seems unable to cope with the new norms in a changed, and changing, world. As his ex-girlfriend remarks, 'The whole world has changed, only you remain the same'. He fights to retain the status of provider, protector, and saviour of family values. He is the product of a bygone traditional culture and patriarchal hierarchy, struggling to relive, or cling to, his past glories.

Figure 144 Ah-liong and Ah-tsing's father are mirror images of each other TS (1985)

In this sense, Ah-tsing 's father is a mirror image of Ah-liong. He is the patriarchal head of the family in which women are assumed to be submissive. Like Ah-liong, he is nostalgic about his past, though arguably less glorious, conquests, when he reminisces about the reckless youthful days of borrowing money from Ah-liong's father to take a woman to a hotel. As Lu rightly points out, Yang uses both characters to show how the patriarchal order of the 1980s in Taiwan was shaken and shrunken (Ibid: 127). Both men act in a way they think how a man should act,

failing to recognise that the patriarchal order which used to protect their vested interest is starting to be reshaped. Through the figurative reflections of these two characters, Yang shows their frustrations triggered by accelerated urbanisation, modernisation and globalisation resulting in the breakdown of previously accepted norms and values. The disappearing living space of Ah-liong and Ah-tsing's father in the area of Dihua Street, plus the changing gender power relationships, and the invasion of Western social and economic culture, all cast doubts and pressure on their masculine identity under the neo-colonisation of global capitalism. In addition, the character reflection of Ah-liong and Ah-tsing's father shows that the problems faced by men in their struggle to preserve their ideal masculine image can be passed from one generation to the next. Violence, one way to define masculinity in the film, is a clear trait passed down from Ah-tsing's father (domestic violence), Ah-liong (violent behaviour in the name of saving other people to consolidate his masculine image) and Ah-tsing's young admirer (the violent killing of Ah-liong). While Yang uses his two earlier works to reflect the struggles facing men to uphold their status quo in a fast-changing world, it is not his intention to defend their right to do so. As a painter of the Taiwanese landscape, Yang merely uses his works to serve as a canvas on which the Taiwanese society under his impression is realistically represented.

5.4.2/ Ongoing Search for a Father Figure: Si'er Vs Si'er's father &/ Si'er Vs Honey in A Brighter Summer Day

Lost in nostalgia and without a clear roadmap for the future, Yang's male protagonists continue to seek a paternal figure in Taiwan's ever-evolving society. *ABSD* is a film about transition, regarding both the production and the filmic contexts. This first epic film of Yang's was produced shortly after the lifting of martial law when Taiwanese society gradually started to

progress into democracy. This greater freedom triggered a wave of identity recognition among the Taiwanese. Yang, as one of the second generation of the *waishengren*, made the film as an interim account of the identity crisis experienced by teenagers in the 1960s, highlighting the problems and urgency of the contemporary Taiwanese people in defining their own identity (Qi 2017: 26). The film depicts a Taiwan which was stuck between tradition and modernity, America and Japan, and in an era characterised by chaos, injustice and instability (Jiao 2018: 157). The omnipresent neoclassical buildings and Japanese-style housing connote the colonial influence of their Japanese ex-colonisers on the one hand, and signify the repressiveness of the KMT military rule on the other. As a minority 're-coloniser' institution, the KMT exerted violence on the people to assert its self-proclaimed legitimacy as the sole government of China after losing the civil war to the Communist Party in the Mainland (Wong & Yau 2016: 221). Indeed, there is a layer of brutality lurking beneath the surface of suburban conformity, and Yang uses the figurative reflections of Mr Zhang and Si'er to accentuate their struggles across and within generations.

Near the beginning of the film, Yang uses a 1 min 28 sec long take to feature the father and son's figurative reflection (Fig 145 & Fig 146). As the two small figures on their bikes slowly emerge from the perceptual vortex of the 'tunnel vision', the audience's attention is drawn towards the father and son's figurative reflection, surprised at how their figures resemble each other. From the start of the film, Yang lays down the similarities between Si'er and his father, foretelling their similar resistance against the fault-filled patriarchal world. Bureaucratic agencies, such as the government and the schools in *ABSD,* are represented as a type of patriarchal figure which is coarse, profoundly unjust and lacks any sense of feeling (Liu 2004: 279). This not only affects the *benshengren* (the native islanders), but also the mainlanders who retreated to Taiwan with the KMT. While the *benshengren* saw the *waishengren* as outsiders

and the authoritative re-colonisers, the powerless lower-class *waishengren* like Si'er and his father Mr Zhang were marginalised by their own government-in-exile and frequently led isolated, impoverished lives (Yip 2004: 74). It is these ambivalent identities that drive men into insecurity.

Figure 145 & Figure 146   Father and son figurative reflection through tunnel vision ABSD (1991)

In Mr Zhang's case, he tries to define his own masculine identity by standing up for his beliefs. In a scene featuring the figurative reflection of him and Si'er (Fig 147), he explains to the latter that, 'a man who lacks faith in his own beliefs is like a man without his scrotum', drawing an analogy between his masculine ideal and the male reproductive organ. This scene is yet again another reflection of a later scene after Mr Zhang's gruesome interrogation at the Garrison Command, only that it shows a voiceless and defeated father figure of Mr Zhang (Fig 148). As a kind of figurative reflection, this time it is Si'er who repeats Mr Zhang's proud motto, reassuring his father that he still believes their future can be changed with hard work and principles. The disillusioned and frustrated image of Mr Zhang denotes a psychological castration after he fails to uphold his own principles during the interrogation, owing up to

whatever names the interrogator wants. It also forecloses Si'er's possibility of living in a brighter summer day at the end of the story.

Figure 147 & Figure 148   Figurative reflection of father and son before and after Zhang's interrogation ABSD (1991)

Si'er, as a figurative reflection of his father, experiences ambivalent identity issues stemming from the repressive and chaotic social environment. Although both he and his friend Xiao-ma are marginalised by the bureaucratic and patriarchal school authority, Xiao-ma uses his father's power to challenge institutional oppression while the powerless Si'er submits to the injustice and is silenced by the institution. This silence, however, is just a reflection of the outward conformity and inner rage of Jia-sen in *That Day on the Beach,* and the brutal violence hidden behind the voiceless younger generation epitomised by Ah-liong's murderer in *Taipei Story.* The inner rage turns into violence after Si'er's failed pursuit of Xiao-ming, the object of desire in a macho game of power. Xiao-ming, in a way, is a female figurative mirror of Si'er, as they are both searching for security. If Si'er builds his masculinity upon gangster identity, Xiao-ming builds her femininity upon men's jealousy and protection. Her fragility becomes the exact opposite of the masculinity evidenced in men, and in this way, she becomes a mystery in the eyes of men. (Liu 2004: 286). She is the symbol of patriarchal power and territory. The fruitless fight for the same woman among these young gangsters is not an act of love. Rather, it reveals the desperate need of these confused young men to define their own masculinity.

Another prominent reflection character employed by Yang is Honey, who is a figurative reflection of Si'er (Fig 149). In the first place, both characters represent the marginalised second-generation mainlanders. As explained in the film's first and only title card, these young people are living in the uneasy atmosphere created by their parents' own uncertainties. While a lot of them use American rock culture as a venting outlet for their disappointment and anguish, both Honey and Si'er resort to gangster masculinity in order to establish a stable identity and consolidate their sense of security, and both hold on to the same woman to define their hegemonic power as the possessor of the object of desire. Further, they are the only gangsters who contain both *wen* (cultural attainment) and *wu* (physical prowess) attributes of the ideal Chinese masculine identity proposed by Kam Louie (2014: 18). While Si'er strives hard for better academic results in order to go back to day school before his violent act, Honey is a gangster who reads *War and Peace*. Most importantly, Honey is also a patriarchal figure to Si'er, and in many ways he sees the latter as his successor. Unfortunately, this figurative patriarchal lineage foretells the succession of violence within and across different generations.

Figure 149 Figurative reflection of Si'er and Honey foregrounds their struggle for a clear identity ABSD (1991)

Their violent struggle to rebel against the authoritative and suffocating social atmosphere results in a violent failure. The ambivalent ethnic identity of Honey (he is a mainlander gangster but is sheltered and supported by native gangsters) and the ambivalent gangster identity of Si'er (he mingles with the gangsters but is never recognised as one of them and is

never involved in their turf wars) reflect the ambivalent masculine identity of Taiwanese men under the authoritarian rule of the KMT government. While the native Taiwanese were treated by the ruling government as enslaved ex-colonised subjects who needed to be re-sinicised, the mainlanders suffered from the loss of a clear national identity after their defeat in the civil war and their exile to Taiwan. Once again, Yang's use of figurative reflections highlights how these social and political factors affect the construction of different kinds of identities which inevitably shape Taiwanese masculinity. In the films that follow *ABSD*, the lack of a potent father figure, the gang culture, and the allegiance to Western culture which happened in the early 1960s are transplanted to the globalised, modernised, commercialised Taiwan in the 1990s, where Yang's figurative reflections continue to foreground how these factors shaping masculinities make a clear shift from the past to the present.

5.4.3/ From Absolute Confusion to Self-reflexivity: Fathers Vs Sons in A Confucian Confusion, Mahjong and Yi Yi

Four decades after KMT's retreat to Taiwan, the main factors influencing the shaping of Taiwanese masculinities have evolved. While the traits of colonial influence are still present, they function more in the background as the Taiwanese finally entered the process of decolonisation in which the recuperation of their native history enabled a strong quest for identity. This urge for identity searching coincided with the rapid modernisation in Taiwan, where the sense of self is constantly shifting in response to the ever-changing liquid modernity. During this period, as Anderson suggests, Taiwan was a society gone mad, one whose members were incapable of discerning the real from the fake, and eventually making figurative and literal sacrifices of innocent victims (Anderson 2005: 66). Such confusion stemmed from a number of rapid social, economic and cultural transformations which contributed to the destabilisation

of traditional identities, and is revealed in the figurative reflections of two father and son relationships in *A Confucian Confusion* and *Mahjong*.

In the first place, the father-son relationships in both films are characterised by the lack of a father figure. The trope of absent father figures is a common theme in other TNC directors' movies. For example, in Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Daughter of the Nile* (1987) and Tsai Ming-liang's *Rebels of the Neon God* (1992), the absent and troubling father figures destabilise the family members left behind (Bloom 2014: 37). In fact, these absent father figures denote the colonial complex of the native Taiwanese people towards their Japanese ex-colonisers, and the whole nation's contradictory feelings towards the Americans who exerted colonial power in Taiwan without colonial institutions through heavy military and economic support (Lu 2002: 128). Although these 'colonisers' symbolised modernity in Taiwan, they both deserted Taiwan on the international diplomatic stage (Kao and Bih 2014: 175).

Furthermore, the absent or weak patriarchal figures reflect the disillusioned and confused psyche of the Taiwanese people after the lifting of martial law that marked the waning dominance of the political patriarchal figures of both Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo (Sun 2013: 151). While this sense of disillusionment and confusion might well have been present before the lifting of martial law, the TNC directors could discuss and reflect on it in a more in-depth and critical way due to relaxed censorship during the post-martial law era. In the two satirical comedies, *A Confucian Confusion* and *Mahjong*, for example, Yang uses figurative reflections within the two father-son relationships to depict a detraditionalising and increasingly amoral Taiwanese society, where its political transition coincides with the rapid invasion of global capitalism (Chang 2019: 21). The political (the disappearance of powerful

political figures), the ideological (the incompatible Confucian teachings within the ephemeral and volatile late modernity) and physical (Xiao-ming and Hongyu's fathers) absent-fathers in a way represent and manifest the challenges to the long-held patriarchal certainties, which in turn, threaten men's position in the hierarchy. It is important, however, to note that while Yang stresses the progressively ephemeral late modernity conditions in his films after *ABSD*, he also shows the growing importance of self-reflexivity amidst the increasingly risk-ridden society.

In *A Confucian Confusion*, Xiao-ming's father divorced his mother some twenty years previous and had been imprisoned for accepting bribes. Hence, he is mostly absent in Xiao-ming's life and when Xiao-ming needs advice and support, his father can never be reached (Fig 150 & Fig 151). In the absence of a physical father figure, Xiao-ming's idea of being a man is established on the traditional Confucian values reinforced by the KMT during the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement (CCRM) in the 1970s, which were taught in school during his formative years. These values that emphasise self-cultivation and patrilineal values such as filiality and conformity provide a clear signposting for Xiao-ming in defining his manhood. Such value system, however, collapses as he experiences frauds, betrayals and exploitation in disguise in a matter of days in the film, amidst the volatile and ephemeral late modernity conditions. The commodification and monetisation of human relationships destabilise the Confucian tradition which places sentiment as its central value (Lu 2002: 142), turning the idealised and harmonic *wu lun* social structure into hypocritical and commercial investments.

Fig 150 & Fig 151 Figurative reflection of Xiao-ming and father highlights the absence of patriarchal figures ACC (1994)

The rapidly detraditionalising society causes confusion not only in Xiao-ming's perception of human relationships, but also in his deep-rooted reference to the Confucian teachings as the foundation of his masculine identity formation. In fact, the Confucian ideology which stresses rigid vertical and one-sided human relationships, where individuals are subsumed under patriarchal heads and women are submissive to their husbands, is hardly compatible with the ephemeral late modernity. While in the 1960s and early 1970s, Taiwanese women lacked wealth, power, and status in the labour market and the political sphere, women in the 1990s were more independent. Women like Molly and Qiqi are 'reflexive beings' whose constant reflexivity prevents them from simply submitting to the supposed head of the family, hence challenging the status of the patriarchal system. No matter whether it is the collapsing ideological patriarchal figure or the weakened patriarchal figure in disintegrating social ties, Yang's diegetic absent father figures highlight new Taiwanese men's struggles across generations under an authoritarian political system or an overpowering economic totality compounded with global capitalism (Yeh & Davis 2005: 251). This kind of struggle is reflected in the figurative reflection of the father-son relationship between Hongyu and Mr Chen as well.

Figure 152 Figurative reflection of Hongyu &Mr Chen also reflects the father-son relationship in ACC   MJ (1996)

In *Mahjong*, Hongyu's father Mr Chen goes into hiding after running into serious debt and only contacts his son before he commits suicide (Fig 152). As a figurative reflection of the father-son relationship in *A Confucian Confusion*, both Xiao-ming and Hongyu seek out an imaginary father figure to help define their own masculine identity. While Xiao-ming relies on a 4th century BCE ideology to build his masculine self in the late 20th century, Hongyu's benchmark for manhood is Mr Chen's fraudster identity. His ideal masculine image is, in his own words, 'the most shameless and successful swindler Mr Chen ten years ago', who manipulated and exploited people who did not really know what they wanted. In this light, the representation of the father-son masculinity also depicts the trajectory of Taiwan's modernisation process in late modernity. At the peak of global capitalism, the post-traditional and post-martial law Taiwan is filled with Western capitalists (epitomised by the French company Matra which built the Muzha MRT in Taipei at a ridiculously high price) and local money grabbers (exemplified by fraudsters like Mr Chen and his son Hongyu and his gang) who cannot wait to make instant profits. The blind pursuit of capital gains ends in serious disillusionment in Yang's postmodern men. As Mr Chen reflects when he last talks to his son,

> 'When you are as rich as me, you will find out what you want is the thing that money can't buy. When I die, I have nothing left but money. I am the poorest in the world.'

> *Mahjong* (1996)

Such kind of spiritual neo-poverty contributes to Mr Chen's own disillusionment and culminates in his suicide. It also triggers the implosion of Hongyu's ideological world and the collapse of his ideal masculine image. If Confucianism is the ideological framework that fails to help Xiao-ming define his own identity, then money as the new religion and ultimate signposting in the ephemeral late modernity conditions also fails to help Hongyu pin down his own identity. Indeed, money as the god of consumer society detaches people from traditional communities, disrupts family ties and traditional family structure and deepens one's sense of insecurity (Lu 2002: 118-119). The demise of Mr Chen's elusive father figure is Yang's critique on how men's masculinity is shaped and challenged in late modernity under a long-running influence of ambivalent political, ideological and physical patriarchal figures who are either monstrously authoritative or completely absent. It once again displays Yang's awareness of the changing nature of men's struggle with their own identities during the rapid transition of Taiwan from the overpowering authoritarian political system and organised capitalism of earlier industrialisation to a lack of all signposting in the disorganised late or liquid modernity.

Nonetheless, the absent father figures in *A Confucian Confusion* and *Mahjong* also foretells the increasing importance of reflexive processes at the heart of social transformation. Xiao-ming, in the first place, reflects on the cause of his disillusionment after his Confucian masculinity which stresses conformism to the patriarchal culture in both his workplace and family has been challenged and shaken. Instead of being proud of behaving like everyone else, he resigns from his company in order to stand by his belief in the importance of morality (*yi* 義) and reunites with his fiancé Qiqi at the end of the film. Mr Chen's reflection, on the other hand, though only articulated before his demise, is a sign of Yang's emphasis on the importance of self-reflexivity

in liquid modernity. His suicide contributes to the disbandment of the criminal quartet led by Hongyu, and it also indirectly leads to one of the members, Lun Lun's departure from the gang and his self-reflection on his own future.

In Yang's last film *Yi Yi* (2000), his father-son figurative reflection seems to show that men have found a way out of their masculine identity conundrum by exercising their reflexivity. Indeed, one of the approaches which insists on the role of rational agency in a world characterised by the runaway effects of modernity is reflexive modernity (Lee 2006: 356). As illustrated by the works of Beck, Giddens and Lash (1994: 115-116), reflexivity is at once structural and subjective, in which agents are called upon to reflect on the 'rules' and 'resources' of dysfunctional structures and to institute self-regulation against the 'heteronomous monitoring' or externally imposed governance of the previous era. In other words, it means reflection and reorganisation rather than post-modern dystopic resignation to the impossibility of truth claims (Li 2003: 198). Such reflexivity culminates in *Yi Yi*, where Yang's use of figurative reflection in the characters of NJ and Yang Yang highlights how reflexive modern subjects return to the beginning for a new start. To Yang, reflexive modernity brings repetition with difference (Chang 2019: 33). As Ota remarks, though we wake up every morning in the same way, we do not live the same day twice. The positive portrayal of Ota as a symbol of rejuvenation and reflexive being is, as discussed before, not Yang's yearning for a role model (manifested in a Japanese male character) in the disconcerting liquid modernity. In Ota's own words, he does not have the magic to solve all the problems facing NJ and his own company; he is just willing to 'return to the beginning for a new start'. This seems to resonate with the portrayal of NJ and Yang Yang. They are figurative reflections of each other's repetitive and yet different paths to explore their own sense of true self, and in doing so, break the destructive cycle of Yang's previous portrait of masculinity.

As NJ claims when he talks to Po Po in her coma, Yang Yang takes after him in many ways. In the first place, both NJ and Yang Yang value the importance of being true to oneself. When NJ is asked to lie to Ota by his business partners because he looks genuine and sincere, he detests his partners' short-sightedness and hypocrisy and questions them: 'So honesty is an act? What about friendship? Business? Is there anything real left?' As a man who tries to define his own masculinity in a post-traditional setting where inherited patterns of relationships are called into question and self-identity is constantly challenged, NJ is at once facing the burden and the liberty of constructing his own identity. He has no choice but to choose how to be and how to act (Giddens 1994: 75). If Bauman's liquid modernity outlook on the world is inexorably transient, producing a sense of impermanence that he describes as the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive and fugitive power (Bauman 2000: 14), then the choice of NJ shows how he anchors his identity with the help of re-embedding into Chinese traditions while at the same time showing great reflexivity on how he should see the world.

In the transnational business world, he chooses to speak only what he believes is 'true', though he is not confident this is possible. This resembles the Confucian ideal masculine image of *junzi*. In his family, NJ renegotiates his identity after going back to his origin: he refrains from making a new start with his childhood sweetheart. In a way, he gives up individualism for his role as the patriarchal head of the family, apparently re-embedding into the *wu lun* human relationships advocated by the great Confucian scholar, Mencius. Modernisation cannot totally vanquish tradition. Instead, it draws on many different aspects of tradition to chart new social orders (Lee 1997:271). NJ's reflexivity is informed by Confucian tradition on the one hand and

deep personal reflection on the other (as he tells Sherry, we all need time to think). This assists him in navigating the unstable terrain of liquid modernity characterized by the incessant growth of capitalism, rapid advancements in technology, and excessive consumerism (Lee 2006: 362), ultimately safeguarding his sense of self, unlike the male protagonists in Yang's previous films.

The father-son figurative reflection of NJ and Yang Yang shows how this reflexivity is passed on between generations, which manifests Edward Yang's answer to his men's masculinity crises. To NJ and Yang Yang, being true to themselves is the only way to sail through late modernity uncertainties and assert their self-identities. In response to his business partners' suggestion of using a copycat company in order to cut costs and prevent their company from going broke, NJ maintains his silence in order to show disapproval. As remarked by his long-term business partner, Da-da, NJ is behaving like a 'scholar', an exemplary embodiment of the *wen* masculinity, a *junzi* who values morality more than profitability. To NJ, it is his personal choice to maintain his integrity, even if it means that his business will suffer. His reflective process can be seen during his conversation with Po Po, when he confesses that he finds it difficult to talk to her because he is not confident whether he is sincere in his monologue, even if Po Po is in a coma. As his figurative reflection, Yang Yang does not want to talk to Po Po as he thinks 'hearing' is not 'seeing'; if Po Po can only hear but not see what happens then she cannot grasp the whole truth and it is meaningless to talk to her. In addition, in his final farewell speech to Po Po, he admits that he only knows 'half of the truth' of everything and since he cannot tell the whole truth he would rather keep silent. Fortunately, differs from other protagonists in Yang's previous films, Yang Yang reaches out to his father NJ for help:

Yang Yang: Daddy, I can't see what you see and you can't see what I see. How can I know what you see?..... (Does it mean that) Can we only know half of the truth?

Yi Yi (2000)

In contrast to Jia-li and Jia-sen's authoritative father in *That Day on the Beach* (1983), the frustrated father figure of Ah-zhen in *Taipei Story* (1985) who fails to recognise his shaken and shrunken status, the voiceless and defeated father figure of Si'er whose collapsed masculinity leads to the implosion of his son's ideological world, the state appropriated Confucius ideological father figure of Xiao-ming who fails to provide clear signposting in defining his manhood, or the elusive father figure of Hongyu who leaves his son totally disillusioned, NJ encourages Yang Yang to utilise the power of doubt and explore the other half of truth in his own way. As Lee contends, the power of doubt in reflexivity frees internal criticism from its own dogmatic tendencies; it critiques modernity's foundation by not unilaterally returning to tradition. Despite Yang's portrayal of Japan as a reminder of Taiwan's idyllic past, it does not imply any simple answers to the problems in contemporary Taiwanese society. Instead, *Yi Yi* reconsiders the meaningfulness of tradition in modernity's own unfolding (2006: 361). While NJ achieves this by contemplating the present (Fig 153), Yang Yang achieves this by constantly exploring the future, using his camera as a tool to establish his holistic vision of truth and to help other people see what they cannot see (Fig 154). On his way to constructing his own masculine identity, though being teased, misunderstood and misrepresented (as an avant-garde artist by his authoritative teacher), he ultimately becomes confident of his direction and place in the world at the end of the film.

Figure 153 & Figure 154 NJ reflecting on the present while Yang Yang exploring the future   Yi Yi (2000)

In a way, Yang Yang constitutes a figurative reflection of the little boy Xiao-hua in *Expectations*, the second short in the seminal TNC film *In Our Time* (1982). Xiao-hua's confusion about where he can go after grasping the skills of riding a bike in a way symbolises Taiwanese men's struggles in defining a clear masculine identity in the context of conflicting political-economic status and the rapidly modernising society. In this regard, the last character in Yang's film seems to be answering the first young male protagonist's questions about what to do, where to go and how to act. It is important to note that Yang is by no means trying to engender the possibility of providing an overarching truth that will resolve the various levels of angst experienced by men in their identity construction, nor is he resigned to the impossibility of functioning within the repressive logic of those conditions of alienation, fragmentation or angst (Jacobson 2002: 64). Instead, Edward Yang and his junior alter ego Yang Yang show that although they may not have any grand narratives of truth in defining their own identities, they do have a clear direction to go against the tide of liquid modernity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study has explored the representation of masculinity through the lens of Edward Yang's work. While the thematic and stylistic characteristics of Yang's city films with Taipei as the main protagonist have been widely documented, the representation of masculinity has remained an under-researched area in Yang's films. I highlighted his use of the absent, incompetent or even deceased father figures to signify the loss of authoritative patriarchal figures and traditional signposts in the rapidly changing society which affected the construction of masculinity. This is one extremely prominent motif in Yang's films, and yet it is also an understudied area in the literature on his works. This is a glaring omission. As I have attempted to find in this research, Yang's representation of masculine identities stands out from his contemporaries. His take on masculinity does not involve the flaunting of muscles in times of crisis, nor does he fall back on the traditional Confucian teachings as a clear signpost of identity construction. Moving away from the colonial past and the increasingly irrelevant Confucian teachings and heading towards an uncertain future, Yang's men look frustrated, entrapped, confused and lost in a rapidly transitioning society. It is this ambiguous and impotent masculinity which ironically dismantles the ideal Confucian model of masculinity and the mimicry of a Westernised male image formerly used to define Taiwanese masculinity. Instead, Yang's persistent emphasis on the importance of self-reflexivity not only seems to suggest a way out of men's constant struggle to construct a masculine identity in his films, but also by extension sheds light on the conundrum of the long and winding road of the search of Taiwanese identity, distinct from its traditional Han Chinese roots.

I used three cinematic techniques to analyse Yang's representation of Taiwanese masculinity. His work shows a continuous trait of repressed, frustrated and ambiguous masculinity,

manifested by a continuous representation of masculinity in his whole oeuvre lasting for over two decades (from the 1980s to 2000). However, different from the passive indictment against the Japanese colonial rule and the suffocating martial law imposed by the KMT government, Yang's representation of masculinity critiques, and also stands as a symbol of, the social, political and cultural dilemmas facing Taiwan during the turbulent period of rapid changes from the 1950s to the 1990s. The political democratisation of the island state, a rapid transition into modernities, and the lingering, neocolonial influence of the US are all evident in his films. Furthermore, his earlier films depict the consequences of US military and economic aid between the 1950s and the 1970s, and his later films critique the aggravated globalist capitalism.

Informed by postcolonial, modernity and masculinity theories, my textual analysis of Yang's city films suggested that his portrayal of ambiguous masculine identity resonates with ambiguous postcolonial Taiwanese identity. In other words, the long-term political marginalisation of Taiwan, combined with its rapid transition into the ephemeral and volatile liquid modernity destabilised the status quo of a traditional patriarchal Taiwanese society, contributing to an identity crisis. In this way, I argued that not only have I contributed to the study of Yang's films, but I have also added new insights to the study of Taiwanese masculinity and Taiwan's vernacular modernity as represented in Taiwan cinema, in Taiwan's terms instead of being subsumed within the larger sphere of cinematic representation of Chinese masculinity.

In this chapter I will first reiterate the findings of the textual analysis of the study, which constitute an important piece of the jigsaw puzzle missing in the study of Yang's films. Then I

will recapitulate how the analysis of the representations of masculinity is informed by the tripartite foundational theories. Finally, I will summarise how my project contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the cinematic representation of masculinity in Taiwanese cinema, and discuss further implications for the future study of Yang's films and Taiwan cinema.

6.1/ Edward Yang's Representation of Masculinity Using Space, Frames-within-frames and Reflections.

This thesis casts a new light to the study of Yang's films by plugging the hole of the under-researched area of his representation of masculinity in his whole oeuvre. I have tried to achieve this aim by demonstrating that Yang uses cinematic space, frames-within-frames and literal and figurative reflections to represent the ambiguous, frustrated and entrapped facets of masculine identity, hence manifesting the vulnerability and insecurity among Taiwanese men. Firstly, I used cinematic space as an establishing shot to illustrate the rapidly changing social practices that trigger the identity crises men endured in Yang's works. My space analysis chapter divided Yang's films into the First and the Second Taipei Trilogies, with *A Brighter Summer Day* acting as a time tunnel film linking the representation of masculinity in them. While the First Taipei Trilogy focuses on obsolete colonial space and rapidly modernising urban space, the Second depicts porous and ambiguous space with blurred boundaries.

In his First Taipei Trilogy, Yang's spatial construction depicts a disappearing colonial space. In addition, he portrays a rapidly modernizing urban space that erases both historical and personal identities, leaving the male protagonists feeling trapped and discontent with their masculine identity. I used Yeh and Davis's cinematic term 'Tunnel Vision' (2005: 104) to demonstrate that

Yang uses this technique to construct a cinematic space that suggests the rigid imposition of control such as imprisonment, inspection or at least surveillance (Ibid: 117), which in turn produces a repressed and frustrated masculinity throughout his oeuvre. Furthermore, Yang used *A Brighter Summer Day* as a time tunnel film to link the two Taipei Trilogies, transplanting the masculinity constructed under the influence of the oppressive White Terror in the 1960s to the 1990s when the island state was rushing full speed into liquid modernity.

For the Second Taipei Trilogy, I highlighted a porous and ambiguous cinematic space in my textual analysis to emphasise the increasingly uncertain and volatile conditions of liquid modernity. Yang's representation of masculinity reflects the risk-ridden Taiwanese society in liquid modernity where the disillusionment triggered by a radical break from tradition has a crippling impact on Taiwanese masculinity. The blurred and even collapsed boundaries between public and private realms in these porous and ambiguous spaces contribute to the vulnerability and the accompanying feelings of anxiety among city dwellers. This can be seen in Yang's use of glass structures, for example, big glass walls found in homogeneous spaces such as international restaurant chains TGI Fridays and NY Bagels, to highlight the insecurity induced by globalisation and the accelerated internationalisation during the 1980s.

In essence, my analysis of Yang's cinematic space seems to have shown that although a similar trait of frustrated and ambiguous masculine identity is represented in both Taipei Trilogies, the progressive changes in his use of cinematic space are in step with the corresponding historical, cultural and political changes in Taiwanese society. These changes include the lifting of martial law, the beginning of political and cultural democratisation, and the cultural challenges brought about by US economic and cultural hegemony. The traditional Confucian ideologies which

had underpinned much of the patriarchal system were increasingly being challenged by US cultural values imported through military and monetary aids in the 1950s and 1960s, and by global capitalism accompanied by a homogenised, Westernised consumer culture during the 1980s and 1990s.

Moving from spatial construction in Yang's films to his use of frames-within-frames technique, I examined in detail the challenges faced by Taiwanese men, and by extension, the whole society within a rapidly modernising and globalising context. Yang uses frames-within-frames technique as close-up shots extensively in his films to accentuate the frustrating and entrapping nature of Taiwanese masculinity, which in turn refracts Taiwan's rapid societal transformation during different stages of modernity. The analysis of the technique used in each of Yang's films demonstrated his continuous and evolving cinematic representation of masculinity. By analysing Yang's body of work chronologically, the study has attempted to show a synchronized progression that reflects the societal transitions occurring in Taiwan during the same timeframe. I also provided relative social contexts to help illustrate that Yang's perception of the different factors affecting the construction of Taiwanese masculinity in his films evolves with the changing society.

My analysis has further suggested that while the impact of historical factors (e.g., Japanese colonisation, the re-colonisation by the KMT and the long period of martial law) on the construction of Taiwanese masculinities is more prominent in his earlier films, the increasingly ephemeral, volatile and risk-ridden conditions of liquid modernity have become the major factors shaping the construction of masculinity in Yang's later films. Once again, I have tried to show that Yang's representation of men's identity conundrum evolves with the rapidly

changing Taiwanese society. While Yang's films by no means indicate a nostalgia for a firm hand of patriarchy, the sense of male insecurity depicted in them is influenced by the disappearing traditional signposts such as the diminishing importance of strong patriarchal figures (e.g., Japanese colonisers and authoritarian political figures) and Confucian patriarchy in a postcolonial and rapidly modernising society. Furthermore, the commodification of human relationships, and the exacerbated sense of insecurity and uncertainty triggered by the aggressive progression of globalised capitalism, contributed to the emergence of 'transnational business masculinities' as the latest manifestation of a mode of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 1998: 16, Connell & Wood 2005: 347). The above factors all seem to contribute to the increasingly confused, entrapped and frustrated masculinities which Yang manifests in his increasing use of frames-within-frames across his oeuvre.

As Yang's representation of men's identity issues resonates and evolves with the consequences brought by liquid modernity, my textual analysis foregrounded how Yang's perception of men's existential issues can be at once debilitating and emancipating through his use of reflections in his oeuvre. I used clear mirror reflections in Yang's earlier films (mainly in his First Taipei Trilogy) and more and more opaque glass reflections in his later films (mainly in the Second Taipei Trilogy and culminating in his last film, *Yi Yi*) to accentuate Yang's reflection on the changing nature of men's struggles.   His films resonate with the changing nature of a presumably more single-minded orthodox and simple heavy modernity (Hansen 1999: 69-70), where people still have some rules to follow, to the progressively more uncertain and risk-conscious late/ liquid modernity, where the ephemeral living conditions are like taking a flight journey without a pilot, and the only certainty is uncertainty. While I argued that Yang's ambiguous and blurry glass reflections suggest the increasing difficulty to construct stable identities in liquid modernity, I also used figurative reflections (using reflection

characters as mirrors) to delineate men's ongoing struggles in masculinities formation within the same and also across different generations.

To conclude, the use of the three cinematic techniques discussed above accentuates the sense of identity confusion experienced by his male protagonists in a society undergoing massive social, political and cultural changes. I suggest that the representation of masculinity in Yang's films, therefore, can help to enable a better understanding of the traumas experienced by Taiwanese society during this period of social, political and cultural upheaval, which answers the research question set out in the introductory chapter. My study, in this way, not only contributes to the study of Yang's distinctive film language but also adds another layer of nuanced understanding to the vernacular modernity experienced in Taiwan which embodies a constant struggle to identity building using the lens of masculinity.

6.2/ Tripartite Epistemological Framework in Theorising Yang's Representation of Masculinity under Stages of Modernity

In this thesis, I employed postcolonial theories, Confucian ideologies, Western (mainly drawing on Connell's masculinity theories 1995, 2005) and Chinese (the *wen-wu* dyad advocated by Louie 2002) ways of theorising masculinity to analyse how Yang's films depict the construction of Taiwanese masculinity.   The use of a tripartite epistemological framework with the support of close textual analysis to explore the changing representation of the construction of masculinity in Yang's whole oeuvre constitutes a novel look at his works.   The complex colonial history of Taiwan and the rapid transformation of society during the two decades from the 1960s to the 1980s contributed to the confused, ambivalent and frustrated masculine

identity as men's patriarchal dominance was challenged and destabilised by the rapidly changing economic and gender power structures in Taiwan society.

The different modernity theories inform my study of Yang's representation of masculinity from heavy to liquid and reflexive modernity. Furthermore, my use of Chinese and Western masculinity theories contributes to theorising the hegemonic patriarchal *wu lun* human relationship and the transnational business masculinity represented in Yang's films. My research further indicates that these identity issues faced by men are present within and across generations. Yang's representation of men evolves from being influenced by the colonial and re-colonial regimes, from heavy to liquid modernity. The modernity theories help to explain Yang's take on his perception of masculinity: while he accentuates the progressively ephemeral late modernity conditions in his films after *ABSD*, he also shows the increasing importance of self-reflexivity amidst the increasingly risk-ridden society. Yang's figurative reflection between the teenage male character in his first segment film *Expectations* and the young boy Yang Yang in his last film *Yi Yi* projects his optimistic outlook amidst the turbulent changes brought about by the breakneck speed of modernity. Although Yang depicts the loss of traditional signposts in his films and the resulting frustration and disillusionment experienced by men, Yang firmly believes in the power of doubt in reflexivity. As asserted by Lee, the power of doubt in reflexivity frees internal criticism from its own dogmatic tendencies. It critiques modernity's foundation by avoiding a one-sided embrace of tradition and rejecting reliance on patriarchal authority or Japanese sentimentality. Instead, it reconsiders the meaningfulness of tradition in modernity's own unfolding (2006: 361).

An interesting finding during the analysis is that there are hints Yang may be critiquing Chinese colonisation in the form of the KMT recolonisation of Taiwan. The common perception of modern colonialism, and by extension, postcolonialism and neo-colonialism, is that it is a mainly Western legacy, and there is little literature on the topic of Chinese colonialism or its effect on the colonised people. The topic is beyond the scope of this thesis, but decolonisation from Taiwanese and Chinese perspectives can benefit from further research.

6.3/ Taiwanese Masculinity as Represented in Contemporary Taiwan Cinema

This thesis also contributes to the knowledge of the representation of masculinity in contemporary Taiwan cinema. I hope I have achieved this through the investigation into the cinematic representation of masculinity in the films produced during the Japanese colonial era (though rare in numbers), and also in the KMT-endorsed pre-TNC cinema (*Taiyupian*, Health Realism, Qiong Yao's romance cinema, *kangri pian* and *wuxia pian*). My study of the representation of masculinity in Taiwanese cinema implied that a kind of voiceless masculinity is found in Japanese colonial cinema. In Taiwan's dialect cinema, *Taiyupian*, a similar type of silenced, ill-fated and impotent masculinity is also represented in this type of commercial films produced between the mid-1950s and early 1970s before the KMT started to tighten up its control on the film industry. This form of voiceless masculinity might represent the reluctant compliance of a people that has been terrorised into silence after 50 years of Japanese colonial rule and during the White Terror. The KMT regime, in its pursuit of nation-building and legitimacy, resorted to suppressing even the mildest forms of indictment. The representation of a voiceless, weak and impotent form of masculinity depicted in *Taiyupian*, was no longer an option as such. Instead, films must portray the messages endorsed by the state. Healthy Realist films produced by state-owned film companies and the romance films adapted from Qiong

Yao's novels in the mid-1960s and 1970s discourage transgressive femininity and reward self-sacrifice for the 'greater good'. These are usually sacrifices for the family (mostly by women) and the country (mostly by men). Both types of films embrace a kind of hegemonic masculinity which in turn consolidates the patriarchal social structure.

My exploration of how masculinity is represented in the pre-TNC films might also suggest that these films produced under strict state censorship by and large upheld re-sinicised masculinity which was loyal and submissive to the KMT government, and also reinforced the patriarchal family and social hierarchy which were the main pillars of the legitimation efforts of the KMT government. For example, the idealised masculinity constructed through mimicking the 'dignified, self-possessed and self-reliant' masculinity modelled on Chiang Kai-shek is promoted in anti-Japanese war films produced by state-owned film companies in an attempt to unite and motivate the whole country in times of hardship. Similarly, in box office hits like *wuxia* and kung fu films which feature rebellious heroes and heroines, there is a kind of controlled hypermasculinity which is formidable and invincible on the one hand but loyal, filial and submissive to their superiors on the other. In this way, my study adds new knowledge to the debate on the representation of masculinity in Taiwanese cinema. The only kind of cinematic representations of masculinity which could pass the strict state censorship and make it to the screen was the one that did not challenge the idealised masculine image endorsed by the KMT; one that seemed to be tamed and repressed by the government.

My research indicated that the similar yet different trait of voiceless and repressed masculine identity represented in pre-TNC films is still prominent in films produced during and after the TNC movement. Hou Hsiao-hsien, for example, reconstructed Taiwanese history and identity

through the lens of masculinity in the films he made during and after the short-lived TNC, and Tsai Ming Liang employed a queer reading of gender and sexual identities to deconstruct and challenge the knowingness of any sort of fixed identity. Regardless of their different ways of representing gender identities, however, the voiceless, ill-fated, and repressed masculinity represented in *Taiyupian* is also found in both Hou's and Tsai's films, which is usually manifested in the loss or the absence of powerful father figures. Most importantly, the absent father figures and frustrated masculinity are also common traits present in the whole oeuvre of Yang. This kind of masculinity aptly resonates with the impasse of Taiwan's political situation and the painstaking search for a clear national and personal identity due to its complicated colonial history, the 38-year-long martial law, the suffocating White Terror era, and the unsettled period of its rapid modernisation.

6.4/ Implications for Further Research

TNC is generally believed to be a short-lived movement that took off between 1982/ 83 and started to wane shortly after 1987. Despite this, the works of the first generation TNC directors such as Edward Yang still have a great impact on ensuing generations of Taiwanese directors as they are often hailed as the first batch of cultural products that appeared after the relaxation of strict political censorship. While Yang's films do not directly touch on the theme of decolonisation, the themes of independent thinking and reflexiveness in identity searching have enlightened a younger generation of directors to reflect on the distinctive form of Taiwanese identity. For example, Wei Te-sheng, who admitted that Yang was his mentor and the most influential senior on his career path, directed *Cape No 7* (2008), *Warriors Of The Rainbow* (2011) and *Kano* (2014) which depict a still coalescing multi-ethnic and multicultural Taiwanese identity, and feature a non-dichotomising attitude that does not portray the Japanese colonisation in black-or-white terms. Different from the studies of Hou Hsiao-hsien's films which explore the complicated Taiwanese identity by reconceptualising the historiography of Taiwan, my study of Yang's films may point to a new direction for future research. For example, further studies could be conducted on the films of Edward Yang, or other Taiwanese directors focusing on their roles in decolonising Taiwan through cinema. This may generate different debates on the different filmic techniques or film languages which contribute to the understanding of Taiwan's painstaking search for identity, and help to draw a bigger picture of cinematic representations of Taiwanese identity, a topic that has been neglected in the field of film studies.

The search for a unique Taiwan identity, however, is complicated by Taiwan's shared Han cultural heritage with China. Hence, the construction of a Taiwan identity can be made easier

if it can be distinct from a greater Chinese cultural and national identity. In this context, research into decolonisation from a Taiwan perspective from the influences of Chinese colonialism may be useful for the construction of a distinct Taiwan identity. The topic is still relevant given the present geopolitical tensions across the Taiwan Strait. As shown in my previous analysis, there are hints of critique of Chinese colonialism in the form of KMT recolonisation within Yang's work, and this may prove fertile ground, or at least serve as a starting point, for a decolonisation process through films.

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Appendix One

Number of Frames-within-frames in Yang's Screenshots

	Female	Male	Female +male	Empty frames	Other	Film length	No of Shots	Total frames/ No. of shots
Expectations	14	3	2	4	2	28 min 21 sec	216	25 (11.6%)
That Day on the Beach	74	44	25	6	9	167 min 45sec	649	158 (24.3%)
Taipei Story	34	51	11	8	4	119 min 34 sec	481	108 (22.5%)
Terrorizers	23	43	8	8	12	107 min	447	94 (21%)
A Brighter Summer Day	45	67	25	6	3	233 min 47 sec	510	156 (30.6%)
A Confucian Confusion	31	32	12	1	4	126 min 49 sec	152	80 (52.6%)
Mahjong	8	36	19	3	4	118 min 16 sec	167	70 (43.2%)
Yi Yi	43	63	34	6	14	170 min 33 sec	343	160 (46.6%)