

The background of the cover is composed of large, expressive brushstrokes in various shades of teal and dark blue. These strokes are layered and curved, creating a sense of movement and depth. In the center-right area, there is a square patch with a distinct, rough, and textured appearance, resembling a piece of fabric or a different material, which stands out from the smooth brushstrokes.

COMUNICAR LA ARQUITECTURA

DEL ORIGEN DE LA MODERNIDAD A LA ERA DIGITAL

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The background is an abstract composition of swirling, layered brushstrokes in various shades of teal and dark blue. A prominent, dark, textured square is positioned in the center-right area, appearing to be a physical object or a different material layered over the paint.

COMUNICAR LA ARQUITECTURA

DEL ORIGEN DE LA MODERNIDAD A LA ERA DIGITAL

TOMO I

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COMUNICAR LA ARQUITECTURA

del origen de la modernidad
a la era digital

TOMO I

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(EDS.)

COMUNICAR LA ARQUITECTURA

del origen de la modernidad a la era digital

Granada, 2024

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ISBN(e) 978-84-338-7371-2

Edita:

Editorial Universidad de Granada

Campus Universitario de Cartuja

Colegio Máximo, s. n., 18071, Granada

Telf.: 958 243930-246220

Web: editorial.ugr.es

Maquetación: Noelia Iglesias Morales

Diseño de cubierta: Francisco Antonio García Pérez (imagen de fondo: detalle de *Blue on almost white*, Nikodem Szpunar, 2022)

Imprime: Printhauss

Printed in Spain

Impreso en España

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IV Congreso Internacional Cultura y Ciudad

Comunicar la arquitectura: del origen de la modernidad a la era digital

Granada 24-26 enero 2024

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The Imagined and the Lived: A Comparative Study of Kowloon Walled City in Cyberpunk Science Fictions and Hong Kong Urban Cinema

Lo imaginado y lo vivido: un análisis comparativo de la ciudad amurallada de Kowloon en la ciencia ficción ciberpunk y el cine urbano de Hong Kong

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Abstract

Inspiración constante de películas de ciencia ficción como *Blade Runner* (1982) y *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), la ciudad amurallada de Kowloon ha sido comúnmente vista como “un lugar de oscuridad”, “un símbolo de la estética ciberpunk”, “una ciudad sin reglas ni leyes” o incluso “una encarnación de la distopía”. Esta generalización ignora su papel como ciudad autónoma con una compleja estructura social interna que, sin embargo, ha sido capturada con acierto por el cine New Wave de Hong Kong. Este artículo examina el modo en que las películas de ciencia ficción ciberpunk y el cine urbano de Hong Kong representan el entorno espacial y social de la Ciudad Amurallada, qué diferencias muestran las representaciones cinematográficas de estos dos géneros, y cómo la Ciudad de Kowloon, temática subyacente en estas películas, nos ayuda a reflexionar sobre la relación entre las visiones tecnocráticas de la ciudad y las experiencias vividas por sus habitantes.

Being a constant inspiration of sci-fi films such as *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), Kowloon Walled City has been commonly seen “a place of darkness,” “a symbol of cyberpunk aesthetic,” “a city with no rules and laws,” and “an embodiment of dystopia.” such generalization of the area neglects its role as an autonomous city and the complex social structure within, which have been nevertheless captured in the neorealism-influenced Hong Kong New Wave cinema. This paper examines how cyberpunk sci-fi films and Hong Kong urban cinema address and represent the spatial environment and social milieu of the Walled City, what differences are demonstrated between the cinematic representations in these two genres, and how Kowloon Walled City as the subject itself in these films helps us reflect on the relationship between the technocratic projections of the city and the lived experiences of its inhabitants.

Keywords

Ciudad amurallada de Kowloon, ciencia ficción, ciberpunk, cine urbano de Hong Kong
Kowloon Walled City, science fiction, cyberpunk, Hong Kong urban cinema

Introduction

In 1993, when the science fiction writer William Gibson was transiting through the Hong Kong Kai Tak Airport, he was immediately drawn to the remaining ruins of the Kowloon Walled City at the horizon of the runway. As a huge contrast to the “Disneyland with death penalty,”¹ Gibson found himself at ease with the uncalculated, chaotic energy of the Walled City, an energy that he was “ready for.” In the preface of his novel *Idoru*, published three years after his glimpse of the Walled City, Gibson wrote that “the Walled City continued to haunt me.”² But what was haunting Gibson after his brief encounter? What made it a constant inspiration for his works (as well as others)? The Walled City he gazed from afar in 1993 was already a ruin that soon be completely demolished one year after, and his knowledge of the City was solely based on the Japanese photographer Ryuji Miyamoto’s photobook *Kowloon Walled City* (1987).³ Hence, we might question that whether the image of the Walled City for Gibson is actually an equivalent of the real Walled City, or the latter has been replaced by an imagery created by Gibson and a considerable body of literature, art and film works. Looking at both transnational cyber-punk science fictions and local neorealism-inspired films in Hong Kong, this paper aims to revisit the cinematic representations of the Kowloon Walled City in these two different genres and examine the built environment and the spatial practices of its inhabitants underneath the chaotic surface of the Walled City.

The story of the Kowloon Walled City can be traced back to its role as a Chinese outpost for official salt pond in the 12th Century and a fortified *Yamen* (government office) of the Qing Dynasty built in 1847.⁴ After an attack from the British Force in 1899, the Qing officials abandoned the fort, which was gradually inhabited by Chinese residents. In 1947, British colony government attempted to drive away the inhabitants in the area but caused a riot, leading the district to an enclave under a “hands-off policy.”⁵ However, it is in the 1950s after the Chinese Civil War that the site started its massive transformation into a “walled city” by accommodating a large number of refugees fleeing from the Mainland.

One building was built upon another, at different times and with different materials. Narrow alley soon became dark inner corridors (fig. 1). In Gibson’s text, it was built higher and higher by the people, with “no rules [...] no police [...] just building, just people living.”⁶ Other authors also claimed that the City was constructed through a bottom-up approach with “no masterplan to follow —or regulations to adhere to—.”⁷ However, with the disclosure of

¹ See William Gibson, “Disneyland with the Death Penalty”, *Wired* (September/October 1993).

² See William Gibson, *Idoru* (New York: Penguin, 1996).

³ In *Idoru*, Gibson admitted at the beginning of the book that “I know no more about it [the Walled City] than I could gather from Miyamoto’s stunning images”. See Gibson, *Idoru*.

⁴ See Elizabeth Sinn, “Kowloon Walled City: Its Origin and Early History”, *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, n.º 27 (1987): 30–45.

⁵ See Julia Wilkinson, “A Chinese Magistrate’s Fort”, in *City of Darkness: Life in Kowloon Walled City*, ed. by Greg Girard and Ian Lambot (Pewsey: Watermark, 1993), 60–71.

⁶ See Gibson, *Idoru*...

⁷ See Girard and Lambot, *City of Darkness...*; also see Steffen Lehmann, “Sustainable urbanism: towards a framework for quality and optimal density?”, *Future Cities and Environment* 2, n.º 8 (2016): 1-29.

colonial reports archives in recent years, Hong Kong urban scholars pointed out that this perception of as a city of anarchy itself is de facto a distorted view of the city, where top-down planning was actually involved during its development.⁸ This type of ambiguity of the real history, then, makes the “legacy of the Kowloon Walled City” seemly only half the story.



Figure 1. Kowloon Walled City in 1966. Source: Hong Kong Government Records Service, HKRS163-1- 2537.

None of this is to deny the impact of works by Gibson, Girard and Lambot, as well as other filmmakers’ walled-city-inspired projects discussed later in this paper; or what they perceived and recognized during their direct or indirect visits with the Walled City. What I want to discuss here is the ambiguity and ambivalence of their narratives (which can be found throughout the book of Girard and Lambot itself), in order to reveal a deeper understanding of the city that may go beyond its walls, spatial conditions and beyond the imagery of a post-apocalyptic city.

The presence of Kowloon Walled City in cyberpunk science fiction

In an article by film critic Kenneth Turan, he mentioned that Ridley Scott, drawing upon “his experience with urban excess in New York and the Orient,” wanted to make the *Blade Runner* (1982) film to be “Hong Kong on a bad day.”⁹ In Wong Kin Yuen’s influential article *On the Edge of Spaces: Blade Runner, Ghost in the Shell, and Hong Kong’s Cityscape*, the writer superimposes the Ridleyville on the Times Square in Hong Kong, pointing out the similar traits between the two as both reflects a high-tech city with “a bewildering collage of signs and patterns with enough anarchic elements remaining (a small part of the

⁸ See Lawrence W. C. Lai and Mark Hansley Chua, “The history of planning for Kowloon City”, *Planning Perspectives* 33, n.º1 (2018): 97-112.

⁹ See Kenneth Turan, “Blade Runner 2”, *Los Angeles Times Magazine* (September 13, 1992). <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-09-13-tm-1537-story.html>.

market and old style shops) to create a sense of pastiche."¹⁰ For Wong, it is the postmodern architectural atmosphere and the post-information society with spectacle and consumerism of Hong Kong that becomes the "source of their fascination for cyberpunk film designers."¹¹ However, if we look closer, the characteristic and the atmosphere of the "clandestine or underground side of social life" in Ridleyville, using Wong's quote from Soja,¹² certainly resonates more with the peripheral areas, or "the edge", rather than the center land of the former colony.

In street scenes such as Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) ordering food at a market, or him chasing a replicant, Zhora (Joanna Cassidy), we can glimpse this imagined spatiality and its visual aesthetics from a street and everyday level while the high-rise structures and the mega city become absent.

Apart from the most obvious visual references of neon-signs, Chinese characters and dragon icons, the "Hong Kong-esque" motif is also manifested through the crowdedness of the street, the visual chaos of piping, the scattered objects, and the rain-soaked alleyways. By showing Deckard ploughing into the drunkard and the garbage, the film creates a spatial embodiment of marginality against the hegemonic discourse,¹³ a central theme that runs through the cyberpunk genre. This bottom layer of the Ridleyville, as argued by urban historian Norman Klein,¹⁴ re-echoes the old neighborhoods of immigrants and marginalized groups ("the old China Town," "the old burlesque district," etc.) that have been torn down and swept away.

Hong Kong, then, becomes a perfect reference (visually and culturally) to this imagery of marginality and exotism. From the late 1950s, the colonial government started a series of strategies to promote the city as "the Pearl of the Orient" to attract western tourists through posters and advertisements featuring lanterns, wooden boats and other traditional Chinese objects.¹⁵ Naturally, the visual chaos presented in the bottom layer of the Ridleyville, being previously marginalized in the western mainstream,¹⁶ is used in the creation of a zone "in which the 'tourist' can be freed from western rationalism and taste the 'mystical essence' of the east."¹⁷

Another example is *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) by Mamoru Oshii, based on the manga by artist Masamune Shirow. Compared to the ambiguous reference of Hong Kong in Ridleyville,

¹⁰ See Kin Yuen Wong, "On the Edge of Spaces: Blade Runner, Ghost in the Shell, and Hong Kong's Cityscape", *Science Fiction Studies* 27, n.º 1 (March, 2000): 6.

¹¹ See Wong, "On the Edge of Spaces...", 9.

¹² See Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996).

¹³ See Soja, *Thirdspace...*, 111.

¹⁴ See Norman Klein, "Building Blade Runner," *Social Text*, 28 (1991): 147–152.

¹⁵ See P. Y Chung, *The Story of Department Store: Transformations of Causeway Bay* (Chung Hwa Book Company, 2009).

¹⁶ See Elana Gomel, "Recycled Dystopias: Cyberpunk and the End of History", *Arts* 7, n.º 3 (2018): 31.

¹⁷ See Leonard Patrick Sanders, "Postmodern Orientalism. William Gibson, Cyberpunk and Japan" (PhD Thesis, Massey University, Albany N.Z., 2008), 42.

the New Port City in *Ghost in the Shell* is a direct homage to the chaotic streetscape of Hong Kong. In an early site study published as *The Analysis of the Ghost in the Shell*, the art designer Takeuchi Atsushi mentioned that the story can only happen in Hong Kong.¹⁸ The set illustrations produced by a group of artists from the studio such as Hiromasa Ogura and Shuichi Kusamori capture the signboards “protruding like tentacles from a deformed buildings” and the dark narrow alley with hanging piping, all serving a direct visual connection to the bewildering image of the Walled City as a city of darkness and chaos, a place that fascinates Gibson, Girard and Lambot.¹⁹ This focus on architectural presence and “visual noise”²⁰ was demonstrated explicitly in *The Analysis of the Ghost in the Shell*. The Hong Kong-esque street landscape and the claustrophobic built environment suggest an emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of the city.

These efforts and studies of the city (both the Walled City and the city of Hong Kong) highlight how they (the Ridleyville and the New Port City) look, rather than who the people are and what the urban milieu is. By looking at the city as a character, these films develop a dialogue with the city through the depiction of its characteristics (spatial and psychological) but neglects its inhabitants²¹. Through the eyes of the protagonists in *Blade Runner* and *Ghost in the Shell*, those inhabitants became nameless figures and extras whose identity and agency disappeared in the external gaze. With 33,000 inhabitants at its peak, such generalization erases the multiplicity of the Walled City and generates a unilateral discourse that aligns with its chaotic appearance and external prejudice.

The depiction of Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong urban cinema

The generalization of the area in cyberpunk films neglects its role as an autonomous city and the complex social structure within, which has been nevertheless captured in the neo-realism influenced Hong Kong New Wave cinema by local filmmakers.²² In these city films, their “hunger for reality” becomes “an act of concrete homage towards other people.”²³ The city is depicted as a place for communities and a shelter for marginalized groups, thus forming an archive of descriptions of how the space is being lived and practiced.²⁴

¹⁸ See Morita Nozaki and Seki Kubo, *The Analysis of Ghost in the Shell* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1995); also see Wong, “On the Edge of Spaces...”, 13.

¹⁹ See Stefan Rieckes, *Anime Architecture: Imagined Worlds and Endless Megacities* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2020), 98-124.

²⁰ See Nozaki, Kubo, *The Analysis of Ghost in the Shell...*

²¹ See *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, directed by Thom Andersen (2003).

²² For the term “Hong Kong urban cinema”, see Ping-kwan Leung, “Urban Cinema and the Cultural Identity of Hong Kong”, in *The Cinema of Hong Kong*, ed. by Poshek Fu and David Desser (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 227–251; also see Zhuzhang Li, “Made in Hong Kong: The (re)production of publicness in the cinematic urban topography of contemporary Hong Kong”, in *The Everyday in Visual Culture: Slices of Lives*, ed. by Francois Penz and Janina Schupp (London: Routledge, 2022), 158-171.

²³ See Cesare Zavattini, “Some Ideas on the Cinema,” in *Vittorio De Sica*, ed. by Howard Curle and Stephen Snyder (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 50–61.

²⁴ See Francois Penz, *Cinematic Aided Design: An Everyday Life Approach to Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2018), 3-4.

In the film *Brothers from the Walled City* (1982), the first part of the film shows the childhood of two brothers Jiakang (*Fei Gao*) and Jiajun (*Xiaohao Qian*) inside the Walled City. In the scene where the policeman tries to catch the boys, they quickly escape from the street through stairs and disappear into the disorienting alleys of the Walled City. Through the eyes of two brothers, the film then becomes a “modern cartography” of the Walled City,²⁵ showing its spatial conditions, urban milieu and psychogeographical terrain as well as its relationship with the exterior cityscape. In the Walled City, the sides of the alley were commonly occupied by tables, baskets, plants and other domestic objects, demonstrating an externalization of daily-life activities and an interpenetration of urbanity and domesticity, echoing the fluidity of the exterior and interior through other spaces in Hong Kong such as corridors in public housing and rooftops²⁶. These alleys may appear to be a maze as the policeman in *Brothers from the Walled City* soon stops trying to track the boys down; however, for local residents there was certainly a hidden order and local knowledge underneath the disordered surface. The domestic extension, the stalls, the handwritten signposts and the informal playgrounds all become physical and visual references for two brothers to navigate in the Walled City, rather than the background of overloaded information and “visual noise” featured in cyberpunk science fiction.

Such local knowledge and understandings of the Walled City could only be fully considered when the external gaze weakened.²⁷ Shot on location, *Brothers from the Walled City* and other films such as *Long Arm of the Law* (Johnny Mak, 1984) do not judge the Walled City with generalization and prejudice, neither do they romanticize it as a city of liberty. Their cameras captured the Walled City in its fullness: gangs, robbers, opium dealers, brothels, and gambling dens, but also strolling inhabitants, vendors, dentists, restaurants, shops, and running kids. It is a city of darkness and, simultaneously, a city of kinship, brotherhood, and social bonds. As Leung Ping-kwan, one of the key figures in the field of Hong Kong cultural studies, wrote: “... the divergent perspectives and fragmented narratives refuse to be easily unified, but it is exactly through their conflicts that the complex hybrid nature of the urban space and the cultural identity of Hong Kong are revealed.”²⁸

In *Brothers from the Walled City*, for example, the father and uncle of the two brothers operate illegitimate businesses such as gambling dens and erotic venues. At the same time, they are the ones who organize activities for residents and maintain social order in certain areas while punishing activities such as drug trafficking and tricksters. The owner of the local restaurant would be as close as a family member to the father and the boys. As shown in the films and in an interview with local inhabitants, the Walled City was, in fact, safer than many other places in Hong Kong to some extent. There, “young children were often

²⁵ See Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion* (New York: Verso, 2002), 9.

²⁶ See Zhuozhang Li, “The Fluid City: A Cinematic Urban Tectonic Study of (Re)Production of Publicness in Contemporary Hong Kong” (PhD Thesis, University of Liverpool, 2021).

²⁷ See Brodwyn Fischer, “A Century in the Present Tense: Crisis, Politics, and the Intellectual History of Brazil’s Informal Cities”, in *Cities from Scratch*, ed. by Brodwyn Fischer, Bryan McCann and Javier Auyero (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 9–67.

²⁸ See Leung, “Urban Cinema and the Cultural Identity of Hong Kong”..., 241.

allowed to wander freely within its confines.”²⁹ Life within the Walled City may not involve authoritative rules and operations, but there is no doubt that a public order, based on moral principles, social relationships and cultural values, has existed internally since its early days.³⁰ In Leung’s writing on the Walled City, sexual workers and drug addicts could be found on one side at the same time as priests or social workers on the other:

What were children’s games centers by day became strip show venues by night. It is a very complex place [...] a place that seemed frightening but where most people continued to lead normal lives. A place just like the rest of Hong Kong.³¹

On the one hand, beyond orientalist imagination³² and external bias, the Walled City inhabitants portrayed in these local films show no dissimilar traits to the outsiders as they have the “same worries” about living and similar ways of appropriating the urban space.³³ On the other hand, inside the Walled City, among the street hubbub and all kinds of groups mixed together, there were hidden threads of social structure that accommodated various sets of activities and forms. For Sennett, this sort of social connection amid different groups —“the multiplicity of human contact”³⁴— converts the everyday life within the Walled City into “a journey between various kinds of group life”. It is, therefore, a city that remains open for everyone. This may answer our question at the beginning: comparing with the purified Disneyland with death penalty, it is this sense of plurality and the tolerance of “otherness” in the Walled City —hidden under its dark and chaotic appearance— that has drawn Gibson’s attention and, apart from *Idoru*, inspired him to transform the San Francisco Bay Bridge into an autonomous community of subculture groups in *Virtual Light* (1993).

Hive of dream

For Wong, this quality of plurality and openness is linked to “Hong Kong’s urbanity in embracing racial and cultural differences” as a colonial city “on the edge of the empire.”³⁵ However, the informality and the tolerance of otherness is neither a modern urban experience nor a sole outcome of coloniality. As a city predominantly inhabited by ethnic Chinese, Hong Kong’s urbanity is inevitably influenced by Chinese culture and philosophy. In the prominent Chinese painting *Qingming Shanghe Tu* (fig. 2),³⁶ the scroll depicts different ac-

²⁹ See Girard and Lambot, *City of Darkness...*, 87.

³⁰ Based on Chan Hip Ping, a resident of the Walled City and vice-president of the Kowloon Walled City Kai Fong Association, most of the criminal activities were actually initiated by outsiders as the City was not controlled by the authorities, see Girard, Lambot, *City of Darkness...*, 175.

³¹ Ping-Kwan Leung, “The Walled City: Our Place”, in Girard and Lambot, *City of Darkness...*, 120.

³² See Sanders, “Postmodern Orientalism...”, 8-24.

³³ See Girard and Lambot, *City of Darkness...*, 90.

³⁴ See Sennett’s analysis of Halstead Street as “the centre of Chicago’s great immigrant ghetto”. Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 53-57.

³⁵ See Wong, “On the Edge of Spaces...”, 1-18.

³⁶ Also named as *Along the River during Qingming Festival*, the scroll portrays the everyday life of Bianjing around 1145.

tivities, temporary extensions, informal structures, and the built environment in an ancient city—all together forming an ever-changing urban space and a complex hybrid nature of urban culture—. For Lewis Mumford, this urban culture suggests a possible answer to the choice between purified functionalist technocracy and livable cities:

If life prevail, the city of the future will have, as but few contemporary cities have, the qualities shown in this Chinese painting [...] with the endless permutations and combinations that varied landscapes, varied occupations, varied cultural activities, and the varied personal attributes of men [and women] make possible. Not the perfect hive, but the living city.³⁷



Figure 2. Street scene in *Qingming Shanghe Tu*, Section of the handscroll. Attributed to Zeduan Zhang, ink and color on silk, 11th–12th century, Northern Song dynasty. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

The scroll demonstrates an alternative urban structure and social entity that coexists with the sovereign power and order. It is an urban culture that belongs to the grassroots who make a living on the street and have to “fight for their needs with whatever weapons were at hand.”³⁸ It is not surprising, then, to see the protestors during the 2014 Occupy Central Movement draw up a guidance map of their encampment, a near-utopian village as a bottom-up site of resistance to the hegemony of political and capital power, and name it *Admiralty Shanghe Tu*, echoing the original title of the 12th century painting. In *Disneyland with Death Penalty*, Gibson describes the Walled City as “hive of dream” with “mismatched, uncalculated windows.”³⁹ For Gibson and Mumford, the hive might be imperfect and mismatched, but it provides a material environment that allows the existence of an alternative social order and the possibility of other ways of living in the city.

³⁷ Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, 1989), plates 64.

³⁸ See Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder...*, 56.

³⁹ See Gibson, “Disneyland with Death Penalty...”

Conclusions

From cyberpunk science fictions to Hong Kong urban cinema, this paper registers the real and the lived Walled City as a space for the multiplicity of human contacts and reveals an urban discourse concealed by its dehumanized dystopian appearance. Through the camera of Hong Kong urban cinema, the Kowloon Walled City escapes from the imagery and the external gaze, while its inhabitants, once being nameless extras, take agency and tell their own stories as the protagonist.⁴⁰ The vision of the Ridleyville as “Hong Kong on a bad day,” or the Newport City with visual signposts as “in the flood of information,”⁴¹ rises naturally out of the Walled City and Hong Kong’s architectural presence and built environment. Their imagined spatiality might resonate with the Walled City as a site of marginality against the hegemonic power. However, “these disjointed signs, these scattered artefacts, can never equal the solid place from which they came.”⁴² Paraphrasing architect Yung Ho Chang who cited the dialogue of Hiroshima Mon Amour (1959) in the discussion of everyday lives: We saw everything in the City. No, we saw nothing because we have neither walked in the City, lived there, “bought groceries or did the laundry.”⁴³ The local discourse of the Walled City, being ambiguous and ambivalent per se, can only be fully revealed when our interpretation is not driven by a prejudice, a romanticisation or a projection; rather, it is through the process of looking directly at its quotidian lives as well as the socio-spatial structures underneath its chaotic surface that the hidden narrative of the everyday. As Lefebvre puts it: “the extraordinary within the ordinary”⁴⁴ has come to be grasped in a more solid way.

This hidden discourse of the Walled City indicates a more human-centered understanding of the process of city-making rather than seeing the place as a set of objects that can be discussed without considering the suppressed subjectivity of groups. By foregrounding the everyday experiences and socio-spatial practices, the filmic depictions of the district in Hong Kong urban cinema demonstrate a collective response from the local inhabitants at the margin. The Walled City became a result of varied practices and, simultaneously, a fertile ground for further actions that all aim at claiming and asserting their right to not only accessing the resources and services in the city but also the citizenship of creating alternative possibilities and common spaces. Meanwhile, as rebel and insurgent as the Walled City may appear, one cannot overlook and discard the impact of the *laissez-faire*, or tolerant, attitude from the authorities in the process of making the “hive of dream”. It is this ambiguous relationship between the centrality and marginality that forms an open field, a safe space, and a freezone where the inhabitants are enabled to create and spatialise their own orders,

⁴⁰ Similar changes can also be found in the depiction of Chungking Mansion, another citadel of darkness in Hong Kong. In *Hand Rolled Cigarette* (2020), for example, a marginalised South Asian youth Manny (Binpin Karma) becomes one of the main characters in the story, in contrast to the group of nameless migrant workers cast in Wong Kar-wai’s classic *Chungking Express* (1994).

⁴¹ See Nozaki, Kubo, *The Analysis of Ghost in the Shell...*

⁴² See Leung, “The Walled City: Our Place...”, 120-123.

⁴³ See Yung Ho Chang, “A Loop”, in *The Everyday in Visual Culture: Slices of Lives*, ed. by Francois Penz and Janina Schupp (London: Routledge, 2022), xix.

⁴⁴ See Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (New York: Verso, 2014), 298.

which are often considered “contradiction and disorder” from the view of technicist rationalism.⁴⁵ Such multiplicity and the chaos and conflicts that follow, as has been highlighted by Sennett, are not “an immoral threat” but “expressions of human need”,⁴⁶ embodied within the alive and active street as a silver lining in the grim world of *Blade Runner* and other cyberpunk science fictions.

⁴⁵ See Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 81-85.

⁴⁶ See Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder...*, 198.



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