K.A.L.F. 문학과 영상 2020 가을
https://doi.org/10.36114/JLF.2020.9.21.2.467

Hong Kong's Identity Crisis in Two Different Mourning: *The Secret* (1979) and "Losing the City" (1994)

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I mourn therefore I am.
— Jacques Derrida (*Points* 321)

I. Introduction

Since the end of the second world war, Hong Kong has gone through a tempestuous transformation, walking a fine line between

East and West; 'Asianness' and 'Westernness'; 'Chinese-ness' and 'HongKonger-ness.' Like an adolescent in one's puberty, it had suffered from growing pains in historical watersheds, such as the massive influx of Chinese exiles when the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976, which caused violent demonstrations by its extreme leftists (Leung 227), and finally, the Handover in 1997. These radical changes, along with the emergence of the post-war generation who had "a weak sense of nationhood and held neither long-term goals nor ambitions" (Cheuk 13), demanded Hong Kong redefine its cultural identity within perplexing international dynamics, as graven in its literature and cinematic discourse.

Two notable examples of such local allegory are Ann Hui's debut film, *The Secret* (1979), and Wong Bik Wan's short story, "Losing the City" (1994). As for Ann Hui, she is a representative director of Hong Kong New Wave Cinema, the movement led by young social-minded directors in the late 1970s. Like other New Wave colleagues, her works have been "steeped in the social problems of Hong Kong," displaying "the realistic representation of social problems and society" (Cheuk 54). Thus, many scholars examine her oeuvre as "national allegories and as political responses to the politics of the construction of Hong Kong's cultural identity" (Chang 725). Especially in *The Secret*, Ann Hui "explores, often tragically, domestic life and duties in Hong Kong" (Perks 49), manifesting her work as a faithful social representation in the late 1970s. On the other hand, Wong Bik Wan is a famous female writer in Hong Kong who published many renowned literary works, including *Thereafter* (1994), *Tenderness and Violence* (1994), and *Seven Kinds of Silence* (1997). Having won numerous literary awards (Hui 207), her works are assessed to be closely linked with Hong Kong identity, as her "complete and mass metaphor behind the fragmented short pieces"

echoes "her heavy sighing for Hong Kong" (Li 6-8). "Losing the City" is one of her works dedicated to Hong Kong, linking "pathology to [its] historical condition" just before the Handover (Yeh 694).

These works, each of which capture Hong Kong in its corresponding period, have two *points de capiton*: their ways of mourning premature deaths and a newborn baby at the end. As for mourning, *The Secret* starts and ends with mourning—memorial prayer of Buddhist monks and lighted incense for the deceased—not to mention there is always a portrait of a 'dead' female character in the house. On the contrary, in "Losing the City," there seems to be no mourning at all; as a male protagonist, Chan Lo Yuen, thinks his familial murder as inevitable and shows no tears or regret (Wong 208). However, from the perspective of Jacques Derrida—who defined the "successful" work of mourning as preserving the memory of the lost object as the Other with its alterity, and thereby entering into "melancholia" (*The Work* 144)—Chan's "symptoms of depression" (210) and detailed remembrance of his family, make this story a faithful embodiment of Derridean mourning.

Derrida's theory on mourning differs from that of Sigmund Freud in that it pursues not to withdraw one's libidinal cathexis from the deceased, which is the complete opposite of what Freud asserted in "Mourning and Melancholia"; Freud's mourning is to make ego "free and uninhibited again" by relocating libido from the lost object to a substitute (245). If this surrogate object cannot be found from the outside world, Freud argues, one should transform his or her ego by introjecting certain traits of the lost object, so that the libido can be retracted into one's ego. Derrida criticizes this theory because, in Freud's way, the lost object loses its *otherness* inside our ego, being absorbed into the subject.[1] Derrida says, "no one will ever have asked

the dead person how he would have preferred to be eaten" ("Fors" xxxviii), and even "not to mourn" is also another form of "fidelity" (*Points* 152), which is why he manifests "failing *well*" to mourn as a successful mourning (*The Work* 144).

Therefore, although Chan's mourning would be a failure from Freud's point of view since he does not try to retract his libido from the dead, continually reminiscing the memory, and even seems to have no will to "mourn" at all, as he is successfully adopting another way to commemorate his loss. Besides, both film and novel feature babies at the end, one as an orphan (*The Secret*) and the other as "mentally retarded" ("Losing the City" 232), like a symbolic diptych of Hong Kong's identity formation. Focusing on these links between the two works, this paper will delve into Hong Kong's identity crisis in the late 1970s and pre-1997 as an ambivalent process of remembering the former self and begetting a new self-hood, based on Freud and Derrida's mourning theory. Ultimately, it will suggest Derridean mourning as an ideal identity formation for Hong Kong regarding how to relate with its past for the future.

II. Freudian Mourning of the late 1970s: *The Secret* (1979)

As one of Hong Kong's new wave cinema that emerged in the late

1) Freud himself was also uncertain about his mourning theory. In his "Mourning and Melancholia," he poses "a warning against any over-estimation of the value of our conclusions" (243). He wonders why, after the work of mourning is finished, there is "no hint in its case of the economic condition for a phase of triumph," and admits that it is "impossible" for him to answer this objection (255).

1970s, Ann Hui's *The Secret* (1979) dramatizes a mysterious murder that happened at Long Fu Shan woods in Hong Kong Island. Before investigating the essence of the death and the subsequent mourning in this film, its opening sequence is worthy of analysis since it presents the contextual outline of the incident: the erosion of Chinese heritage. The movie starts with a montage of 'falling' as a metaphor that represents the old values. First, as part of a traditional memorial service, the two paper dolls fall in flames (Figure 1). Then the scene changes into the fallen leaves in the Western District (Figure 2), which "includes all the traditional customs and superstitions, old values, and morals upheld in the neighborhood by the older generation without much doubt" (Leung 241). This shot is followed by a traditional Chinese rite in Li Yuen's home to serve tea to her grandmother on her birthday, where Li breaks an antique teacup that emblemizes the old value (Figure 3). Then her mother says to her, "You will never get to be a good housewife," showing the oppression put to the younger generation. This scene overlaps with a shot of the falling boy and helping nurse, Lin Ching-ming (Figure 4), which can be an allegorical scene where the modernity—a nurse schooled in the ways of Western civilization—takes care of Hong Kong with ailing tradition—the boy in a cast. Such an image of 'disabled tradition' more clearly appears when

Figure 1. Traditional paper dolls

Figure 2. Fallen leaves

Figure 3. Fallen gaiwan

Figure 4. Fallen and dependent boy

the grandmother of Li, who is visually impaired, leans on Ah Ming after Li's death. Thus, all these four images at the introduction indicate the collapsing Chinese tradition in 1970s Hong Kong, as a premise of the whole story.

This weakening of Chinese heritage became conspicuous from the 1960s and 1970s, when the post-war generation, who "received a western education in the colony," reached adulthood, and pre-existing Chinese culture was being mingled with and challenged by the Western way of life (Cheuk 13). Also, the Cold War period made contemporary Hong Kongers have a sense of "remote" China and develop "cultural identities resembling the culture of their local communities rather than that of China" (Chu 40). Due to such a trend, the traditional Western District, the backdrop of *The Secret*, was becoming a mixed urban space. Thus, most younger generation characters in this film show certain modern traits; Ah Cho and Ah Ming studied Western medicine, Mei Siujei works at a Western casino, and Li is also a modern woman. Besides the occupation and educational level, Ah Cho and Mei's dating style is quite liberal, as they openly have an affair in front of Ah Cho's pregnant girlfriend, Li. Ah Cho does not seem to have the intention of marrying anyone since he never introduces or talks about Li to his family and also denies

promising to marry Mei as well.

However, since Li belongs to a traditional family and is trapped between the old and modern values, the tragedy occurs. As Leung argues, Li's body, "like the Western District where old and new coexist, is the battlefield where various forces of the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, the violent and the rational, struggle for power" (241). That is, unlike other characters in the same generation who precisely indicate Western identity, Li falls into the grey zone between tradition and modernity, as her fetus, who is the creature of such an in-betweenness, has no choice but to exist as *the secret*. Also, another younger generation character whose individuality is interesting to notice is the madman in the woods. As his mother conducts a superstitious occult ceremony and is his sole companion, he seems to inherit the pristine traditional identity from her. However, as a mad man, he fails to keep social norms, just like Li fails to observe old customs in her family. As Li gets mad in the end, like him, their failure to adjust to the Hong Kong society—represented by 'madness'—is emphasized as a mutually common trait. Thus, the madman is another extreme metaphor of the shaking identity of Hong Kongers at that time, which was oscillating among 'Chinese-ness,' 'Westernness,' and still uncertain 'Hong Konger-ness,' not being able to position himself in the society properly.

With the above allegorical relationship between characters and competing values, the trigger of mourning in *The Secret*—the murder—needs to be elucidated. There are two mirroring murder scenes, one of which is encompassed within the other as a cinematic dramaturgy: the former one is the initial incident where Ah Cho and Mei are killed, and the latter one is the aftermath of the first death, where Li dies (Figure 5). Characters take roles of the dead and survivor in each of

these two scenes. In the prior shot, while Ah Cho and Mei die, Li and her baby escape as survivors. In the second scene, Li becomes the victim by the madman, and the madman's mother appears as a troubleshooter by saving Li's baby. This baby, the madman's mother, and Ah Ming together survive this 'mad disaster.'[2] In the meantime, although Ah Cho dies at Mei's hands, the decisive murder is committed by the madman in both scenes. This sketch of being killed and surviving, as summarized in Table 1, is significant because one's "identity is not a fixed point" but an ambivalent process (Hall 9) or ongoing struggle between colliding self-images. That is, these 'mad' murder scenes are consonant with the turbulent Hong Kong identity in the 1970s as they show the clash between values each character represents, contributing to forming a new cultural ego of Hong Kong.

Figure 5. Twin murder scenes

	The 1st murder	**The 2nd Murder**
The dead	Ah Cho and Mei	Li
Survivor	Li and her baby	The madman's mother Ah Ming Li's baby
Killer	The madman	

Table 1. Characters' roles in two murder scenes

2) The original title of the film, *Fung Gip* (脚劫), means 'mad disaster' in Cantonese.

As discussed above, the deceased—Ah Cho, Mei, and Li—symbolize the Western influence on the Hong Kong culture. While this can be an extension from the Confucian atmosphere of Hong Kong cinema in the 1960s which emphasized "dependence on family and tradition" and condemnation for those who are "unfilial" (Teo 18), it is meaningful to note that the murderer is the madman, who represents the Hong Kongers in the 1970s who were confused about their identity. As a young Hong Konger, he kills the modernized characters, indicating that the new generation of Hong Kong denies the Western colonial identity as well; both traditional and colonized self-hoods were not for them.

Instead, the traits of survivors comprehensively imply the new Hong Kong identity: a traditional woman, a modern woman, and an orphan baby. By the cooperation of tradition and modernity, a newly born identity of Hong Kong goes out into the world, but with no parents alive. This combination of three characters is an allegory of young Hong Kongers in the 1970s, who had an infirm sense of 'motherland' towards China, as orphans. Like New Wave directors such as Ann Hui, who were "post-war born, local-raised, foreign-trained" (Leung 236), their culture was "a hybrid one amalgamated with traditional, indigenous and imported elements" (Lo 141). Besides, the baby is handed from the midwife (the madman's mother) who symbolizes tradition to modernity (Ah Ming), manifesting the changing social values of Hong Kong which was breaking away from the past (Figure 6). One may raise a doubt about this interpretation based on the fact that the baby emerges at the end of the film; this newborn has little to do with the main story and thus cannot take such a huge role as an emblem of new Hong Kong identity. However, the infant has existed since the beginning, as the pivot of the

Figure 6. Handover of the orphan baby

film's secret, suffering the identity confusion of Hong Kong in the late 1970s with the mother. Besides, the baby acts as a chief cause of why Li becomes the marginal character who belongs to neither tradition nor modernity and grows as a symbolic output of identity crisis in this film. Therefore, the birth of an orphan interlinking with the murder signifies such a rootless and crossbred nature of Hong Kong; it has suffered the loss or fading of its values, and then reborn as an *orphan*. However, since the madman, who corresponds to the chaotic young generation of Hong Kong, still does not participate in the childbirth, its identity crisis seems to be continued as an unfinished process.

Furthermore, analyzing the way of mourning in *The Secret* takes on a considerable ponderance because it discloses how Hong Kongers in the late 1970s coped with collapsing traditional values, discontent with the Western lifestyle, and following subjective destitution in their identity crisis. As Freud claims in "Mourning and Melancholia," mourning is the reaction to the loss of not only a loved person, but also "some abstraction . . . such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on" (243). Thus, objects of mourning include one's former self in the process of identity formation. Besides, the painful process of mourning brings about an unavoidable change in one's ego, either as Freudian introjection or Derridean incorporation. The former indicates the

replacement of the libido from the lost object to one's ego, which establishes "an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object (Freud 249)." As Freud puts it, "the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, and the [ego] could henceforth be judged by a special agency, as though it were an object, the forsaken object" (ibid.). In such an introjection of Freud's mourning, the dead are *killed* once again in the subject's psyche, losing its *alterity*. On the other hand, incorporation in Derrida's mourning means cherishing the lost object without absorbing it as a part of one's ego, so that it can maintain its otherness. This indeed is not an easy task because one always perceives and is affected by the Other in his or her subjective way; introjection always cuts in. Thus, Derrida argues, "the interminable mourning between introjection and incorporation . . . is the proper work of mourning" (Woods 3). In this way, the ego goes through more distressing sadness since its libido remains with the lost object, but it can develop itself embracing the past, not burying it into oblivion. Therefore, either way, the process of *Bildung* can be rephrased as the work of mourning, the constant repetition of ego's death and rebirth: "I mourn therefore I am" (Derrida, *Points* 321).

The Secret coherently opens and ends with mourning; at the beginning, the statue of Buddha, monks, and burning paper figures appear with the praying voices which comfort the victimized souls of premature death (Figure 7), while at the ending shot, incense sticks for the dead are burning and a brazen image of Buddha shows up again (Figure 8). With the portrait of 'dead' Li constantly hanged in her house (Figure 11), the act of mourning fills the whole narrative of the film. After Li and Ah Cho's death is announced, their surrounding people show various symptoms of mourning from the typical ones—

Figure 7. Mourning at the opening of *The Secret*

Figure 8. Mourning at the ending

Figure 9. Absentminded grandmother

Figure 10. Hallucination of Ah Cho's colleagues

Figure 11. Portrait of the 'dead' Li

Figure 12. Crying and Reminiscing

such as crying, reminiscing (Figure 12), and "loss of interest in the external world" (Figure 9)—to the "pathological" ones as "hallucination of [the deceased one's] presence" (Valls 188; Figure 10). One may argue

that all this evidence of lamentation signifies Derrida's mourning since the dead haunts the living just as in Derridean incorporation—keeping the dead alive inside one's self—and there seems to be no apparent termination of sorrow which is the purpose of Freud's mourning. However, in this film, the haunting dead is depicted as *a thing that should not exist*, creating suspense and tremble of fear. People are shocked when they witness Li, who is considered as dead. They do not want the coexistence with the ghost; they want exorcism, which is connected to why Ah Ming investigates the mystery of the death. Eventually, 'dead' Li dies once more at the end, as an analogy of Freudian mourning. In Freud's theory, mourning can be successful only when the dead misses their alterity inside the living—thus being killed again. Moreover, along with the twin homicide scenes, there is another repeating image: Li's grandmother releasing a butterfly (Figure 13). At the time of death, this shot emerges as if she wants to expel the ghost or the past. Such an act symbolizes retracting libido from the lost object and the film's will to forget the bygone identity of Hong Kong. Furthermore, the baby, thrown upon the world with no parents, also relates to the severance from the past. In this way, although *The Secret* does not show the self-evident completion of the Freudian mourning, the oblivion of the previous ego is what it pursues and to which it proceeds.

Figure 13. Releasing butterflies

III. Derridean Mourning of the Handover period: "Losing the City" (1994)

While Ann Hui's *The Secret* (1979) shows Freudian mourning of the late 1970s Hong Kong, Wong Bik Wan's "Losing the City" (1994), another Gothic allegory of Hong Kong set in near 1997 when "the colony was going to vanish forever" (Wong 209), portrays another landscape of identity formation: Derridean mourning. Before investigating how the novel manifests mourning, its historical context and the essence of its death needs to be clarified. The Handover of Hong Kong, already anticipated from the early 1980s, basically meant the liberation from British colonialism, but Hong Kong was not enthusiastic about its return. As Yingchi Chu argues, "To Hong Kong, China was not just the 'motherland,' but a country with a Communist government and third-world economy" (42). That is, for Hong Kongers who had enjoyed "autonomy and a geopolitically defined community" (ibid., 43), the colony's return to China was not considered as a reunion with the homeland, but as falling under another colonial regime since Hong Kong was already a quasi-nation with own distinct cultural and political identity. Thus, the imminent future beyond 1997, which was entirely unknown, triggered high anxiety and fear among Hong Kongers.[3] Amid all uncertain and foreboding conjectures about time to come, only one thing was sure: their identity was about to undergo a significant change, or better to say, was already experiencing a loss of its pre-established self. This fatalistic identity crisis, which had been irrevocably declared, was being executed in full swing, like the

3) Wong Bik Wan states in "Losing the City" that "the Hong Kong dollar was suffering a sharp decline, and people were rushing to supermarkets to stock up on food" (218).

fact that everyone dies someday, or, as the last movement of Beethoven's swansong over which he famously wrote: "*Muss es sein? Es muss sein! Es muss sein!*" ("Must it be? It must be! It must be!")[4]

This sense of inevitable fate is paved from the early part of the novel, with the resonating sound of Bach's "Suite of Unaccompanied Cello, No.1 in G" (208). Chan Lo Yuen listens attentively to this religious music, saying that it is "unbearably painful [;] but it had to be" (ibid.). Similar remarks of obligatory destiny—"things had to be so" (205), "It's not a matter of liking or not liking" (217), "What will be, will be!" (225), "I had no choice" (226)—are being repeated throughout the story, like Bach reiterates specific themes of melody (228) in his counterpoint method.[5] Moreover, such a deterministic

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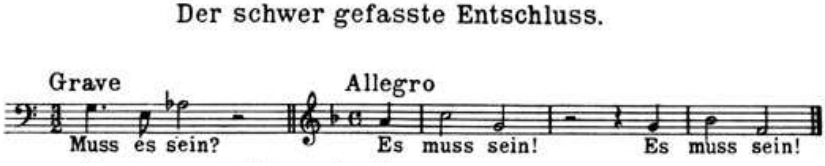
4) The last movement of Beethoven's string quartet No.16 in F Major Op.135, "Der schwer gefasste Entschluss" ("The resolution reached with difficulty"), is as follows:



Although Wong Bik Wan did not particularly mention this Beethoven's posthumous work in the text, Evans happens to understand "Beethoven in his deafness" at the latter part (229), and, more importantly, the titles of themes tie in jointly with the conversation between Chan and Mei: "Must we have the baby?"—"Yes, we must, we must have this baby" (219). Thus, the speculation can be made about the hidden connection between this quartet and "Losing the City"; the latter is virtually the former's spitting image.

5) Counterpoint is Bach's representative composing technique in which several themes of melody take turns, juxtaposed and contrasted. Like repeating themes in Bach's counterpoint, there are many paralleled concepts and images that are being repeated in the novel, other than discussed sentences of determinism, such as number "five" (206; 209; 214; 215; 225) and color

narrative accompanies death and loss. Jim Hak Ming and Oi Yuk's occupations, carrier of the casualties and "agent for a funeral parlour" (207), are both related to death, and two main losses in the story—the death of Chan's family and Valerie's leaving from Evans—are considered as destined events (208-209). Besides, along with these *real* losses, a theme of predetermined, irreparable, and abstract loss—*symbolic* death of self-identity—repetitively echoes: "I keep feeling as if I've lost something" (218), "Something had been lost, there was no turning back, ever" (219), "[In] some corner of our hearts, memory and passion had been lost" (220).

Chan and Mei markedly experience this death of individual identity, which eventually gives rise to Chan's familial murder. Since Hong Kong's chaotic situation scares Mei and makes her unable to feel at-homeness (218), they leave Hong Kong and continually move abroad to Calgary, Toronto, and San Francisco; but they eventually return to Hong Kong, only to find they are jumping "out [of] the frying pan into the fire, and out of the fire back into the frying pan" (223). The trigger of such serial emigration—their failure to find the real home—may well be the result of the human's "inherent lack" (Lacan 639). However, more precisely, it is due to the anticipation of Hong Kong's apocalyptic doom, as Chan is "terrified by the unknown future awaiting a new life" (219). Up against the fading of the former self, Chan and Mei taste panic, fear, and despair, regardless of where they are, as the representatives of contemporary Hong Kongers. Sometimes Chan and Mei feel Canadian neighbors are "more like the people of

"purple" (213; 214; 216; 217) associated with Chan Lo Yuen and his family. Also, the author uses a multi-perspective method, using diverse points of view like musical melody, which starts with Jim Hak Ming's voice and returns to it at the end. That is, the narrative structure of the novel follows that of Bach's music.

Hong Kong, and more reassuring" (214), but, at other times, they are afraid "disaster is bound to hit" them in alien lands (219); they indeed "had run away from one prison, only to find [themselves] in another" (214). Chan also says they had created "the Tower of Babel, believing it would lead [them] straight to heaven" (221), but in the end, it turns out to be "a false hope" (223). Chan and Mei continue to be alienated in the sequence of cities, like Lacanian subjects who lose their real existence in the metonymic chain of signifiers; no city (the signifier) can perfectly express themselves (the signified), so their identity (the meaning) keeps slipping through the fissure between the Real and the Symbolic in their diasporic emigration. In the process, Chan develops his murderous intent since he loves his family (223) and the real death is the only way to terminate their consecutive symbolic death. In this way, there emerge two kinds of death in this work—the physical extinction of loved ones and the psychical death of individual identity —both of which are the object of mourning.

The painful process of mourning in "Losing the City" appears as silent remembrance, following Derrida's argument: "one *must* always begin [mourning] by remembering" (*Memoires* 35). Melancholic Chan and Evans both "grow very quiet" after losing their loved ones, stuck in "so heavy and so intricate" memory of the past (212), and thus *fail* to perform Freudian mourning since they do not attempt to retract their libido from the lost object. The only discrepancy between the two is that while Chan reminisces in complete muteness, Evans confesses his loss. These similar yet different mourners synthetically personify the concept of Derrida's aporia, *the impossible mourning*: one should not betray the lost object by interiorizing it within us, but nevertheless he or she must try to talk, write, and remember to respect the dead's "infinite remove," so that the dead stay *alive* with their intact alterity

inside one's heart (*Memoires* 6). In other words, Derrida demands us to live with the ghosts or to be their "cemetery guide" ("Fors" xxxv), not "ideally *and* quasi-literally devouring them" (*Memoires* 34). An allegorical counterexample is Mei, who makes her children eat the animals' entrails for exorcism; she attempts to purge herself and her children of "the curse of [symbolic] death" by eating "the evil" away (221). This scene is a metaphorical epitome of Freudian mourning—the unfaithful act of eating the dead without valid "love, care, and concern" (ibid.). *En revanche*, Derridean mourning is to live with "a wasteland of ugly scars" of immortal "phoenix" like Evans' ex-wife, Valerie (212), not erasing them. Derrida sublated to pursue the cannibalistic oblivion—the ultimate goal of Freudian mourning—yet aimed to retain the Other inside and beyond himself. This arduous "*unreadability* of mourning" is why, in Derridean theory, "the possible remains impossible," and "the *failure succeeds*" (ibid., 34-35). Derrida focuses on the point where the possibility and impossibility meet, the success and failure coincide, and the mourning and melancholia overlap; the point where Chan and Evans remember the absence of loved ones between silence and articulation.

At that Derridean point, the "mentally retarded baby" is born (232). Like the orphan in *The Secret*, this baby is present from the beginning (206); it grows in the narrative's womb and gets out into the world in the conclusion, as a symbolic fruit of the whole story. Since his parents, Jim and Oi, both work for death-related business and undergo their neighbors' death in pregnancy, the baby happens to inherently connote *the death*, the object of mourning. Besides, when this baby is *in utero*, his parents play "the game of blood pool" (230) in which the death scene of Chan's family, "a large pool of blood" (210), is reproduced. This Gothic prenatal education is portrayed as a "fun" and romantic

activity despite its connection with death and leads directly to the following scene where Oi goes into labour, and Jim asks the Chief Inspector, "Remember me?" (230).[6] This sequence is another illustration of Derridean mourning in "Losing the City" because the game is precisely the act of remembering the death and letting the dead haunts the living, like Catholic priests who reenact the last supper of the dead Jesus in Eucharist, repeating '*Do this in memory of me*.' In this way, Jim and Oi choose to coexist with the traumatic experience of death, keep working for the dead in their work, not forgetting the past. Moreover, that act of remembrance causes Oi's infection and subsequent "premature labour" and mental retardation of the baby (230), which nevertheless brings happiness and "hope" (232). While the premature birth represents Hong Kong in the Handover period when it was forced to reborn as a new self despite the ongoing inner confusion,[7] the mentally challenged baby allegorically symbolizes Hong Kong's outcome of Derridean mourning. That is, by remembering and incorporating the past, Hong Kongers may be slow to adapt to the new environment as a retarded baby, but, in this way, they can make it into the future with continuity and hope. With both parents alive, who gives real "love, care, and concern" (ibid.), the baby will grow with its historical root, unlike the orphan in *The Secret*. "For hope is never something just out there, or not there" (ibid.), "Losing the City" requests Hong Kongers in the post-handover period to commemorate the loss of their former self in a Derridean way, and thereby create a hopeful new identity in continuity with the past.

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6) In this part, the word "remember" appears as much as three times (230).
7) In the same vein, the orphan in *The Secret* is also born prematurely.

IV. Conclusion: Continuing *Bildung*, The Future Past of Hong Kong

Beyond every challenge and opportunity before Hong Kong, the lesson from its two allegorical works—Ann Hui's *The Secret* and Wong Bik Wan's "Losing the City"—is evident: Hong Kong's identity formation has been a continuous process of death and rebirth. Whether it is a nation, local community, or individual, the subject is fated to repeatedly bid farewell to the former self and welcome the new identity, conflicting among diverse sets of values. Meanwhile, it is also apparent that one must decide the way of mourning to deal with the past. Freud and Derrida suggest the two competing concepts of 'proper mourning': one has a finality of forgetting the lost object, while the other is an interminable odyssey of remembrance. The purpose of the former, Freudian mourning, is to become the orphan in *The Secret*, making a clean break from the past. It is completed by finding a substitute for the lost object or introjecting it inside one's ego. However, Derrida rejects this theory for its lack of ethics for the lost object; Freud eliminates the dead's alterity inside oneself and thereby beheads the corpse. Instead, he demands us to live together with the ghost, or scars, of the past, as a mentally retarded baby in "Losing the City." By adopting this attitude, the subject may fail to keep pace with fast-changing surroundings since it is an endless task with its innate sense of melancholia. Still, since every existence is based on the memory of the Other and dead self, one can better locate themselves on the endless straight line of time by preserving the continuity with the past. Contrary to the Freudian theory, commemorating the old days' loss as unvarnished is necessary to rebound from it and develop an intact and authentic self.

Lately, Hong Kong is undergoing another painful identity crisis as an extension of that in the Handover period. Although the Sino-British Joint Declaration (1984) pledged Hong Kong's autonomy till 2047, China has been attempting to intervene and control Hong Kong's internal circumstances, as if it is another colonizer since the British Empire. This tension between Hong Kong and China has been gradually reaching the tipping point, eventually exploding as Umbrella Revolution (2014) and ongoing protests against the Extradition Act since 2019. Although Hong Kongers are actively fighting against the peril of losing the city, it is obvious that their recent self will die for the better or worse; they will have to rise with a new identity from the ashes. In that historical rebirth, their past should be treated as a precious foundation to celebrate, not as a problem to be repressed or forgotten. That is, in this continuing *Bildung*, Hong Kongers should keep conducting the Derridean mourning instead of Freudian mourning, to respect the trajectory of its local history. From the point where the past is cherished, not being wiped out, they will finally move on to the future with genuine hope.

Keywords: Hong Kong's Identity, Mourning Theory, Jacques Derrida, Sigmund Freud, Identity Formation

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Hong Kong's Identity Crisis in Two Different Mourning: *The Secret* (1979) and "Losing the City" (1994)

This paper delves into a contrasting diptych of two allegorical works—Ann Hui's film, *The Secret* (1979), and Wong Bik Wan's short story, "Losing the City" (1994)—in terms of Hong Kong's identity in the late 1970s and Handover period. It takes a new departure to shed light on how the two works show the different ways of mourning based on Sigmund Freud and Jacques Derrida's theories, asserting that identity formation is *the work of mourning*: the constant repetition of ego's death and rebirth. Freud and Derrida suggested the two competing concepts of proper mourning; one has an ultimate purpose of forgetting the lost object as depicted in *The Secret*, while the other is an interminable odyssey of remembrance as in "Losing the City." As metaphorical results of these two ways of mourning, the paper further analyzes the newly born babies at the end of each work: a Freudian orphan and a Derridean mentally disabled baby. Although Derrida's mourning makes the ego more painful than Freudian mourning does, the subject only then can genuinely grow, embracing the past, not burying it into oblivion. Therefore, the paper concludes Derridean mourning as an ideal way to deal with the identity crisis for the future of Hong Kong.

Keywords: Hong Kong's Identity, Mourning Theory, Jacques Derrida, Sigmund Freud, Identity Formation

논문투고일: 2020년 8월 15일 심사의뢰일: 8월 18일 심사완료일: 8월 31일 게재확정일: 9월 5일

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