

gie Cheung, Anita Mui, and Michelle Yeoh—it was a box-office failure in Hong Kong and had limited social/cultural impact. Yet *The Heroic Trio* has been championed by Western film critics interested in exploring the underlying political context of the film, as it is set in a postapocalyptic city that is considered a metaphor for post-1997 Hong Kong. The film presents women, rather than men, as the heroes of the film who safeguard the city from attack. In reality, however, Hong Kong filmmakers have relied on the popular appeal of action men, rather than women, to ensure the survival of the post-1997 film industry.¹⁰

The overwhelming impression provided by film scholars is that Hong Kong identity is inextricably bound up in discourses of Chinese masculinity, male performance, and physical achievement. The male body in action has long been considered a locus of national and ethnic identity for local, regional, and international audiences. While this may be the case, the history of Hong Kong action remains incomplete and can only be expanded through an in-depth examination of Chinese warrior women. While men have set the heroic precedent in Hong Kong action, warrior women have subsequently matched (and in some cases surpassed) this standard by demonstrating their martial arts skills in the space of physical action. In the chapters that follow, I explore how the female body can also be considered a locus of transnational Chinese identity and examine how elements such as gender performance, iconography, generic verisimilitude, corporeal authenticity, language/accent, and family ties/trees connote powerful messages about ethnic authenticity and local identity in Hong Kong as the city moves toward and past its 1997 amalgamation with mainland China.