



UNIVERSITY DE MACAU

UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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**Stephen Chow — the King of Comedy in Hong Kong
“Laughter in Disguise” and “Seeing beyond Believing”**

By

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degree of Master of Arts at the University of Macau**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, including where due acknowledgments are made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or monograph submitted to this university or to any other institutions for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signature _____



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Abstract

This thesis is an interpretative attempt to explore the form and content of Stephen Chow's Hong Kong movies, which are famous for his non-sensical levity. Known in Cantonese as *mou-lei-tou* and *wu-li-tou* in Mandarin, this levity expands the realms of comedy genre. Stephen Chow's comedies dissect the fraught relations between Hong Kong and Mainland China, showing how Hong Kong struggles and negotiates with Mainland China in the matter of national affiliation, political allegiance and cultural citizenship. The handover of Hong Kong in 1997 from Great Britain to the People's Republic of China will be viewed as a watershed, according to which, a wide spectrum of Stephen Chow's movies are covered and analyzed in this thesis. This thesis engages with semiotics to decipher the stills extracted from Stephen Chow's movies within the frame of postmodernism. It argues that the attitudes and perceptions of Hong Kong toward Mainland China, as seen in and through Stephen Chow's movie corpus, have been transformed from being negative and pessimistic to something comparatively more positive and optimistic, transfigured from the deep-seated concepts or stereotypes to being more open and liberal, and transmuted from the horror for and macabreness toward Mainland China to gradual mergence and assimilation with and into each other. In terms of Stephen Chow's movies, the correspondence between Hong Kong and Mainland China has come a long way and has been making their way toward peace, harmony and inclusion.

Key words: Movie/film/cinema, Hong Kong movies, Comedy, Postmodernism, Semiotics

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