Deconstructing Binary Concepts of Good/Evil, Male/Female, Love/Hatred: A Comparative Cultural Study of *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle*

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Abstract

Neil Jordan depicts a story in *The Crying Game* which is permeated with binary oppositions in multiple scenes at a dizzying speed. The plot is featured by unconventionality which secures the film a position in the international screenplay industry. *Kung Fu Hustle*, a Hong Kong film directed by Stephen Chow, embraces Hollywood-level box-office. It is an exemplary work of unconventionality as well. Multiple themes of human nature, gender, and love remain to be further discovered and investigated in both films. The disintegration of similar themes is presented through different approaches. The mystery behind the "abnormality" of the two films is of significance in cultural studies. The present study decodes the secrets of *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle* through deconstructing binary concepts of Good/Evil, Male/Female, and Love/Hatred shown in the films, which provides a comprehensive and analytical perspective to interpret Jordan's and Chow's masterpieces through a comparative analysis.

Keywords: *The Crying Game, Kung Fu Hustle,* deconstructionism, binary oppositions, comparative cultural study

1. Introduction

In 1992, Neil Jordan's film *The Crying Game* received great applause from the movie industry as well as academic communities. As a romantic thriller, it starts with a carnival scene where Jody (a British soldier) falls into the trap of Jude's (an IRA member) sexual seduction. Jody is a hostage controlled by another IRA man, Fergus. A friendship between the two opposite parties generates and promotes the development of the film plot. When Fergus is assigned to terminate Jody, he finds himself unable to accomplish the task and finally lets Jody leave. Ironically, Jody dies during the British army's ambush of the hostage site. To look after Jody's girlfriend, Dil, Fergus moves to London, disguising himself as a construction worker. Fergus feels an irresistible urge to love Dil but finds out that "she" is a man. The IRA tracks Fergus down, holding him guilty of betraying the IRA and using Dil to demand his involvement in an assassination of a judge. When Fergus does not show up in time, Jude seeks him out but only gets killed by Dil. Fergus takes the blame and goes to prison for Dil, atoning for the death of Jude. The film ends with a scene where Dil dresses up as a woman visiting Fergus in the prison.

Differing from *The Crying Game*, *Kung Fu Hustle* is a comedy beneath the surface of great martial arts films. Overcoming the law of gravity and physics, the main characters in this film can leap into the air and spin in circles and even land on the ground gracefully. Protagonists in *Kung Fu Hustle* do not have formal names, only being referred to as nicknames such as Xing, the Landlord, and Fang. Small potatoes cultivate strong power, which is one of the unique features of Chow's filming style. *Kung Fu Hustle* describes a story with the backdrop of a chaotic social setting where the Axe Gang manipulates and dominates society. A Shanghai slum named Pig Sty Alley stays free from the harassment of gangsters. The couple of the Landlord and many other community members have been living in the slum in a harmonious atmosphere. Xing, who used to be bullied, wants to become a part of the Axe Gang. Therefore, he attempts to commit evil crimes to demonstrate his potential evilness. In the end, however, he realizes that he does not belong to the group of evil gangsters. Rather, he is one of the heroes who should protect kindness and peace, just like many characters from Pig Sty Alley.

The Crying Game is intertwined with multiple themes ranging from race, gender, and identity to love. Similarly, *Kung Fu Hustle* embraces various topics including humanity, love, and culture as well. It is through dismantling conventional ideas on these topics that the films can present reasonable and interesting plots. With traditional thoughts overthrown and a series of binary oppositions deconstructed, typical characteristics of deconstructionism make their presence to the audience, and more specifically, to scholars. Academically speaking, exploring multiple themes of the two films requires a well-

established theory and a comprehensive research method. Through reviewing previous studies on *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle*, the present study notices that a study on decoding the two films applying deconstruction theory has not yet been investigated enough. Some film commentators fail to consciously explain the theory and its application in analyzing films, only simply mentioning the idea of binary oppositions without synthesizing the deconstruction features in the films. The present research, therefore, targets unveiling the mystery of *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle* by explaining the deconstruction of binary oppositions in them, which provides a novel and systematic way of interpreting and comparing films, inspiring people to rethink the credibility of conventional doctrines.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies on The Crying Game and Kung Fu Hustle

Studies on critiquing *The Crying Game* share themes ranging from race, gender, film-shooting techniques, cross-dressing, love, etc. Most of them are journals of film reviews. Researchers embarked on unraveling the fascinating details of *The Crying Game* with an overwhelming interest, shedding light on topics of race and ethnicity. Nicola Evans argues that contemporary films have become the medium of rejuvenating race and stereotypes through subverting conventional opinions (Evans, 1998). He explains how ideology works to form the public's attitudes towards race and ethnicity. David Lugowski makes comments on *The Crying Game* by analyzing and elucidating the plot. He proposes that the film's emphasis on race expands beyond interracial relations and lies in the construction of manhood (Lugowski, 1993).

Topics concerning gender and homosexuality have been investigated by scholars as well. James Joy studies the way black and white female film figures are represented in *The Crying Game*. He thinks that audiences who are fascinated by Jordan's interracial film might also have been trapped by the stereotypical idea of black femme fatales are described and sold as the objects of white/male fantasy (Joy, 1995). Echoing Joy's research, Sarah Edge explores the way Jude, the IRA woman is represented in the film. She concludes that the character of Jude represents both national and international anxieties concerning contemporary masculine and feminine subject positions (Edge, 1995). Lori Gilbert regards *The Crying Game* as a crossing game in the sense that a protagonist named Dil crosses the river of males and females through cross-dressing. Her (His) presence is a blender of genders and an element of homosexuality. Jude crosses the water from girlhood to womanhood (Gilbert, 1994), which is an element of gender.

Attempts have been made to weave multifaceted themes in *The Crying Game* together. Luo Feiyan discusses the film from the perspective of nationality, gender identity, and the transcendence of human nature (Luo, 2020). Among a handful of research on *The Crying Game*, the most prominent one is conducted by Hu Jiaqiang and Lv Linqiong. In their research, the film is divided into three parts and each part shows a deconstruction of a triangle of relationships. Using the theory of deconstruction, this study manages to present readers with a well-structured explanation of how deconstructionism works in breaking conventional views. It does not, however, mention the concept of deconstructing the binary oppositions in the film.

Previous studies concerning *Kung Fu Hustle* are related to the sophisticated Chinese culture. Scholars attempt to discover the essence of Chinese Kung Fu and grass-roots culture. Lu Xi analyzes the Kung Fu culture in the film by unraveling the veil of the humorous scenes and uses *Kung Fu Hustle* as an example to investigate the grass-roots culture in Chow's films (Lu, 2014). Similarly, Che et al. propose that Stephen chow's comedy style conforms to the social context and reveals the commercial culture in the post-modern climax (Che, 2005). To enrich the research on *Kung Fu Hustle*, Du Houping incorporates more elements for analysis. He analyzes the construction of film figures and the culture it presents to the audience, concluding that the way Chow portrays characters and presents heroes shows features of post-modernity, which deserves appreciation (Du, 2020). Previous studies emphasize the importance of the culture conveyed by *Kung Fu Hustle* and present a well-structured analysis for reference.

Scholars notice the deconstruction of conventional interpretations of the role of heroes, aesthetics, and human nature as well. For instance, Tang Xiaoting argues that Stephen Chow uses humor, parody, and martial arts to deconstruct the public's understanding of heroes and provides explanations for a novel interpretation of heroic values (Tang, 2005). To further the research, Li Tong analyzes Stephen Chow's films from the perspective of deconstructionism, with *Kung Fu Hustle* as one of the examples. Li proposes that Chow deconstructs the role of heroes by pointing out that heroes could be ordinary people and the binary opposition of Good/Evil is deconstructed in the film as well (Li, 2019). What should be noted is that previous studies lack a systematic analysis of *Kung Fu Hustle*, only emphasizing the deconstruction of one of the binary oppositions in the film.

2.2 Research Gap

From the analysis of *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle*, we can sense that there exist research gaps in uncovering the

details of the films. Considering the film plot, there is no denying that both films are by nature masterpieces permeated with deconstruction. Previous studies, nonetheless, do lack enough emphasis on this theory. On one side, there is a lack of a systematic theory that has been applied as the theoretical foundation of any research. Most of the studies are film reviews with the main plot being explained and analyzed and several topics being discussed. In the case that there does exist a statement regarding binary oppositions, the deconstruction of those hierarchical pairs is not demonstrated.

On the other side, previous studies fail to provide a large number of journals for the investigation. Topics from the film are not explored to a large extent. Though there are scholars applying deconstructionism in analyzing the film, they do not start from the angle of overthrowing the binary oppositions that appear in the film. What should be addressed is that scant attention has been paid to conducting a comparative cultural study of *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle*, ignoring the different manifestations of deconstructing the same binary oppositions in two different films that both enjoy applause in the film industry.

The present paper, therefore, bears significance in the sense that it decodes the mystery of *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle* from deconstructionism, with the starting point of analyzing the binary oppositions in this film. Using Derrida's deconstructionism to disintegrate the hierarchical pairs in the film, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and systematic view of interpreting *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle*, with elements regarding human nature, gender, and love being considered and elucidated.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Derrida's Philosophy of Deconstruction

Emerging in the 1960s, deconstruction is a form of philosophical and critical analysis originating principally from Jacques Derrida's masterpiece name*d Of Grammatology.* As a renowned philosopher in the 20th century, Derrida challenges the "center" of meaning that is presupposed by Saussure, even in structuralist theory (Derrida, 1988). In Derrida'*s Of Grammatology, the* reasonable existence of a "center" is doubted and negated. The desire for a "center" is defined as "logocentrism" that carries the greatest possible concentration of presence (Derrida, 1997). Derrida puts in question the fundamental metaphysical assumptions of Western philosophy that everything has a "center".

To justify and express his deconstructive thoughts, Derrida coins the term "différance" to define a combination of spatial and temporal concepts, retaining its meanings of differing and deferring. "Différance" is the systematic play of differences, traces of differences, and the spacing by which elements relate to one another (Cuddon, 2004). It emphasizes the temporal and spatial differences among things and is a tool for analyzing literary works.

The thought of deconstruction put forward by Derrida does not have an explicit definition according to Derrida himself. Deconstruction demonstrates the difficulty of any theory that would define meaning in a uni-vocal way: as what an author intends, what conventions determine, what readers experience (Culler, 1982). Some people misinterpret deconstruction as the mere destruction of a "center" or authority. Deconstruction functions in more than just dismantling a "center"; it targets using neutral and equivocal deconstructive terms to subvert metaphysical thinking. Derrida attacks the assumption that a text has a single, stable meaning (Klages, 2006).

3.2 Deconstruction of Binary Oppositions

The origin of binary oppositions can be traced back to the ancient Greek arena when Aristotle Western metaphysics developed an "either-or" logic that inevitably generated dualistic thinking (Bressler, 2004). The dualistic thinking of binary oppositions can be detected in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* in which he proposed a series of concepts of binary oppositions such as the signified and the signifier, diachronic and synchronic, langue, and parole (Saussure, 1960). Binary oppositions are developed to work as the theoretical foundation of modern structuralism in Saussure's compositions. The concept of binary oppositions prescribes hierarchical pairs such as presence/absence, good/evil, male/female, central/marginal, speech/writing, etc. In Western metaphysics, the former element of the pairs is superior and fundamental to the latter one. As Derrida states that the former dominates the latter in value and logos (Derrida, 1997).

To deconstruct binary oppositions, Derrida uses the term "différance" to argue that hierarchical oppositions can be removed and dismantled. Selden supports Derrida, saying that "Binary opposition" can always be deconstructed, "The hierarchy can be easily undone and reversed." (Selden et al., 2004). In literary theoretical discourse, neither term in a binary opposition or pair is considered absolute. It is therefore reasonable for the audience to understand why in literary works and movies some twists and turns subvert conventional thinking. In defining a term of binary oppositions, it is never possible to give either one a permanent definition. If so, the plots would be fixed and lack innovation. In Western thoughts, one term defines and

is, in turn, defined by what appears to be its opposite, and in all binary oppositions, one term, usually the former of the two, is privileged hierarchically over the other (Wolfreys et al., 2006). It is exactly this kind of thinking pattern that has been greatly sniped at by Derrida. In interpreting any binary opposition, Derrida argues the structure within any hierarchical pair is shaky and could be reasonably reversed. For example, Meng argued that in the right/wrong binary hierarchy, Western thought would claim the supremacy of right over wrong, attributing to wrong a derivative and supplementary role. However, the purity of "right" does not exist. There is at least some "right" in the wrong (Meng, 2015). Therefore, applying Derrida's deconstruction of binary oppositions in understanding *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle*, explanations of how each of the hierarchical pairs gets dissolved are justifiable.

4. Deconstruction of Binary Oppositions

The Crying Game and *Kung Fu Hustle* in the public's interpretation are simply deemed as "being full of twists and turns" and the mechanism of how each protagonist transforms throughout the films remains ambiguous. Derrida's deconstruction serves as an instrument that bridges the vacuum between the film plots and the revelation of several themes in the films. He thinks that any binary opposition is subject to deconstruction (Derrida, 1981). This study will analyze the deconstruction of binary oppositions in the films, including Good/Evil, Male/Female, Love/Hatred, with each of them representing the subversion of human nature, gender, and love. As the plot fares ahead, conventional doctrines concerning the three binary oppositions are deconstructed and, to some degree, reconstructed.

4.1 Deconstruction of Binary Opposition between Good and Evil

In *The Crying Game*, the IRA members are depicted as terrorists. The IRA operative leader Peter and member Jude breed typical characteristics of a killer: cruel, violent, indifferent, cranky, merciless, etc. The way they treat Jody is undoubtedly inhumane. Jody is clouted, handcuffed, blindfolded, beaten, and tortured for days. With a backdrop of dark and dim scenery, the film cultivates a dismal atmosphere. As a member of the IRA, Fergus is expected to embody the evilness that is inherited from his political background. Fergus does not break the audience's expectations of him at the beginning of the film. He is obedient, following what is demanded to do. Before he has interactions with Jody, it is fair to say that Fergus symbolizes evilness which is the same as his IRA boss and "colleagues".

Fergus experiences a radical change when compared with how he acts like an IRA member. If he disguises himself as a merciless killer from the onset, it is a person with kindness and good human nature that he turns out to be in the end. Reviewing the film, we can sense that there is a binary opposition between Good/Evil. According to Midgley, in western metaphysics, the former is superior to the latter (Midgley, 2002). What is assessed as superior and better is placed on the left side of the hierarchical pair, and what is deemed as inferior, worse, or less welcomed is put on the right side of the slash. There is a consensus among not only in Western ideology but also within Chinese communities that performing good deeds and becoming good people are valued with care more than being evil or bad. The binary opposition of Good/Evil is demonstrated by Fergus with good nature versus Fergus and the IRA as killers.

Judged from the plot, the hierarchical opposition of Good/Evil is unstable. Neil Jordan manages to demonstrate how a binary opposition is possibly shattered and dismantled into pieces. This pair of binary opposition belongs to the category of human nature. When defining the essence of human nature, Plato defines "Good" as justice, support, help, harmoniousness, truth, and virtue; "Evil" as injustice, destroy, destruction, and chaos (Jia & Zhang, 2019). He also argues that the binary of Good/Evil cannot be subverted or reversed. While in Jordan's film, the binary opposition is explicitly overthrown. The process, according to Derrida, is precisely the process of deconstruction. For the audience, conventional ideas on the human nature of a killer are subverted. Fergus is an unconventional killer.

Deconstructing the role of a killer involves two stimuli. The first one is the interaction between Fergus and Jody. Though trapped in a perilous situation, Jody attempts to develop a friendship with Fergus both consciously and unconsciously. In his eyes, Fergus enjoys utterly discrepant features compared with other IRA members. He senses Fergus's kindness, patience, and sympathy towards him and takes advantage of it to secure himself a possible opportunity for escape. Fergus as a killer is unbelievably friendly to Jody, feeding and communicating with him every day. A weird yet harmonious friendship gradually makes its presence to the audience. After the interaction, Fergus acts in a way that bears no resemblance to a killer: he talks, laughs, and even helps his hostage to escape, tilting to his true nature.

The second stimulus comes in the story of the scorpion and the frog. Jordan tactically borrows the parable from Orson Welles' *Mr. Arkadin*. In Jody's narrative, he implies that there are two types of people in this world: one being evil in nature; the other, being innately good. Evil people do everything for their own sake; while good ones know what the right thing is. Jody wants Fergus to understand that they are in a similar position: they are both controlled by the IRA. Jody

implies that Fergus does not belong to the IRA in nature. He also overtly expresses his concern over the nature of the IRA, suggesting that the IRA is evil in nature and will kill him as a hostage. Fergus, however, does not believe that the organization will kill innocent people. This further demonstrates that Fergus is the frog who should chase his true self bravely. Reflecting on the story and what Jody says, Fergus starts to doubt the behavior of the IRA and rethink the predicament he is in. He realizes that there is some commonness between him and Jody. Their friendship has been built on an increasingly solid foundation. So, we will not be surprised to see that when Fergus is required to kill Jody, he seems so hesitant and finally let him leave.

Derrida thinks employing the strategies of deconstruction, the hierarchical opposition of Good/Evil could be transformed into Evil/Good, namely, "Good" can dominate "Evil" and it is the same the other way round. In terms of the parable's ambiguous meaning, Fergus becomes amphibious of a mixed or two-fold nature. Using deconstruction to analyze the dissolution of the hierarchical binary of Good/Evil, we can understand how Fergus manages to transform from "evil political identify" to "good inborn nature", which deconstructs people's conventional understanding of the nature of a killer.

In *Kung Fu Hustle*, the dualistic pair of Good/Evil has been made explicit at the beginning of the film. In a time of social unrest and disorder, the Axe Gang blatantly kills the leader of another gang and his mistress, threatening policemen to clean up the "battlefield". The Axe Gang is deemed as the most feared group of gangs with scary physical and mental power. It can be inferred from the film that if you are a member of the Axe Gang, you are entitled to high social status and the right of going shopping free of charge. People fear being wreaked vengeance upon by those gangsters if they cannot satisfy their requirements. Pig Sty Alley, however, presents itself as an utterly different community where peace and kindness exist. Though conflicts happen occasionally, people living in Pig Sty Alley are representatives of friendliness, virtue, and humanity. Some seemingly philistines are proficient in martial arts. It is their efforts to fight against the Axe Gang that demonstrates the pursuit of good virtue. The relationship between the two sides can be described as the binary opposition of Good/Evil. In the context of the film, they are by no means living in harmony.

To combat evilness, Xing presents the audience in an exemplary way by emphasizing and exploring the essence of humanity. Xing as one of the protagonists used to be bullied by a group of naughty and evil teenagers amid his endeavor to protect a disadvantaged girl. This results in his inclination to be a gangster. He believes it is the basis of being respected and cherished. Xing's behaviors, including robbery, murder, and deceit, are not successful and all end in failure. The more eager he is to demonstrate his evil human nature, the more attacks he gets from other people. He then starts to doubt himself and finally cannot avoid approaching his true nature, which can be sensed when Xing tries to kill the gangster instead of the Landlord. After Xing suffers from the pain of being beaten up by Mr. Beast, the world's top killer, he reoccurs in the film as a brand-new person who supports righteousness and good virtue. He transforms from an evil human being into a person in the pursuit of kindness and peace.

The role of the world's top killer Mr. Beast, whose Chinese name is Huo Yun Xie Shen, has been deconstructed in *Kung Fu Hustle* as well. As a representation of evilness and insanity, Mr. Beast pursues violence throughout his lifetime, which implies that he is as evil as the Axe Gang members. His human nature, at the same time, is evidenced by his merciless and cruel acts of killing. Mr. Beast claims that in the world of Kung Fu, speed defines the winner. His Kung Fu can be said to be second to none and in the battle against Xing, Mr. Beast wreaks havoc on all Xing's bones and tendons. When he fails to kill Xing, he thinks he is destined to doom. What elevates the main theme of the film to a higher level is that Xing does not kill Mr. Beast. On the contrary, Xing shows his willingness to teach Mr. Beast which makes the defeated man so touched and then resort to peace. Mr. Beast transforms from a "beast" into a person who understands the importance of kindness. Chow deconstructs the role of Mr. Beast at the end of the film, showing his purpose of revealing a profound and perpetual topic of all mankind, namely, the pursuit of peace and good human nature.

4.2 Deconstruction of Binary Opposition between Male and Female

The second binary opposition is concerned with Male/Female. In this hierarchical pair, gender is deconstructed through the disruption of the conventional dichotomy of man and woman.

In *The Crying Game*, although Fergus is ordered to kill Jody, he cannot do this. However, Jody is run over by a van of a British army. This film now shifts its location to London, where Fergus (who has changed his name to Jimmy) finds Jody's girlfriend, Dil, and gradually develops a romantic relationship with her. When Fergus meets Dil at the first sight, he is attracted by this tender and beautiful girl with long curly hair and fashionable clothes as a hairdresser. More importantly, she is full of female charm. She flirts with Fergus and tries to establish a relationship with him in a reserved way. She sings a song in the pub where her lithe body and graceful dancing greatly impress Fergus. As a lady, she is certainly delicate and

vulnerable, so she needs masculine protection. Fergus and Dil soon fall in love with each other like all other love stories with dates, flowers, and romantic restaurants. It seems that the audience can imagine their subsequent happy life. However, the film dismantles all expectations: when Fergus takes off Dil's clothes, he is shocked to find out that Dil is a man. Suddenly, he pushes Dil away and rushes to the toilet. He cannot accept loving a man because he thinks he is not gay.

It is not only a subversion of the film plot but also a subversion of traditional stereotypes and a deconstruction of male and female, homosexuality and heterosexuality. With the reference to Derrida's Philosophy of Deconstruction, the dichotomy of male and female should be destroyed. Sex is a mistaken concept to distinguish a person because a man or a woman is not defined by his or her biological traits. Gender, a cultural version of sex, is also unreasonable because it is just a kind of performance of masculinity or femininity (Li, 2003). In this film, Dil is a man from the point of biological traits; but "she" is a woman from her social practices. Once the conventional gender stereotype is deconstructed, we don't call Dil a homosexual or a transvestite and we don't say Dil is abnormal or weird. Dil is Dil, who can be a true self, wear the clothes he/she likes, and love a person he/she loves. When the differences between male and female, homosexuality and heterosexuality are erased, two persons fall in love for the only one purpose: love.

In this film, Dil is a good example. She is never confused or shameful about her "abnormality". She wears the clothes she likes and behaves following her own heart. She bravely admits and demonstrates her love even when she is refused by Fergus. On the contrary, Fergus is puzzled about his gender identity. At first, he expresses his disgust at homosexuality and rejects Dil's love. But gradually, he finds he still has some feelings for Dil even though he knows Dil is a man. To some extent, his gender identity is not deconstructed thoroughly, but it is exactly his nature. He is indecisive and afraid to transcend the conventional rules while his all actions indicate that he is beyond the normality. Finally, he will figure out whether the relationship between him and Dil is friendship or, love.

Although there is no homosexual element in the film *Kung Fu Hustle*, the male and female characters can still represent the deconstruction of traditional sexual stereotypes, especially through the relationship between the Landlord and Landlady. It is generally acknowledged that in a patriarchal society, the husband is superior to the wife because the husband is the pillar of the family. However, in this film, the Landlady is the leader of her family and even the head of the community. She is depicted as a shrewish and tough woman at the beginning of the film, but as the plot progresses, a sense of justice in her inner heart is re-evoked. Finally, she realizes her responsibility and tries her best to protect other people with her husband. On the contrary, the Landlord is less remarkable as he is a little roguish and always follows the Landlady. When the lipstick marks on his face are seen by her wife, he is beaten fiercely. It is safe to say that Landlord and Landlady represent the subversive version of conventional images of husband and wife.

Although the behaviors of Landlord and Landlady are constructed for comic effect, the characters' design in which the wife is stronger than the husband contributes to the concept that the traditional stereotypes can be broken, and a new and opposite mode is possible and even successful. Women, particularly, the Landlady in *Kung Fu Hustle* are never the appendage of the men. The Landlady is competent with superb martial art skills and bears the responsibility of pursuing justice. Also, the Landlord is a skilled fighter with a sense of justice. Therefore, they are a couple having the same ability and ambitions. All in all, the dichotomy of male and female can be erased, and we should not bind some certain qualities to a certain sex. It is the feature of an individual that is valuable, no matter what his or her sex is.

4.3 Deconstruction of Binary Opposition between Love and Hatred

The third binary opposition is about Love/Hatred which reconstructs the new relationship between Fergus and Dil in the film *The Crying Game* and drives the transformation of Xing in *Kung Fu Hustle*.

In *The Crying Game*, Fergus has known Dil is a man, and he says he cannot love Dil because he is not gay. Although Fergus says he only likes Dil as a girl previously, he still kisses her and looks after her. It seems everything has become better after the shock. However, Jude and Maguire turn up again and they order Fergus to carry out a dangerous assassination mission otherwise they would hurt Dil. The hatred for endless fight closely intertwines with the love for Dil and Fergus finally accepts this mission to protect Dil. However, Fergus doesn't show up in time for the assassination, causing the death of Maguire. Jude gets infuriated and seeks Fergus out with a gun but then she is killed by Dil. Fergus takes the rap for Dil and is sent to jail.

Ultimately, Dil visits Fergus in the prison and calculates when Fergus could be freed from prison. The atmosphere between them is relaxing and their lines also show a sense of humor (Dil mistakenly counts the days as she forgets the leap year and Fergus corrects her). When Dil asks Fergus why he does all these for her, he says it is because of his nature and tells the story of "scorpion and frog" with funny tones and gestures. The image of Fergus, in the end, demonstrates the

reconstruction of Fergus who gives up his previous hatred and accepts the love from Dil. As a killer, he once holds a gun to catch a hostage out of hatred, but later to protect his lover for love; he is supposed to be merciless and violent, but now he smiles at his lover.

Besides, the relationship between Fergus and Dil is reconstructed. The new reconstruction signals the disappearance of hatred and the pursuit of love. For Fergus, he sets aside the national hatred and begins to face up to Dil's love; for Dil, she puts aside the hatred for Fergus for the death of Jody but bravely loves Fergus again. And one thing that can be ensured is that their relationship is heading in a better direction. Their communication in the end at the prison is more relaxing than before and Fergus's attitude to Dil is more inclusive. He does not treat Dil seriously and carefully but regards her as a listener to whom he can talk casually and trustfully. It may be the best state of their relationship in which they understand each other although their attitudes to this relationship have never been identical. After all, a good ending for them does not have to be love, but beyond love.

For Xing, a hero in the film *Kung Fu Hustle*, love and hatred are no longer the opposites but a continuum in which his perfection is gradually established. In the beginning, Xing is described as a horrible man with profound hatred due to his failure and despair in his childhood. So, he wants to be an evildoer, attempting to kill someone and rob an ice cream trunk. The twist in the story is that Xing finds out that the vendor of the ice cream trunk is the girl whom he tried to help when he was a little boy. The girl Fang shows Xing the lollipop, but he throws it on the floor. At that moment, the love and kindness in Xing's inner heart are awakened and, in the meanwhile, a different hatred is also aroused. This kind of hatred is not Xing's disappointment in the dark society but in himself. He is angry at himself that he bullies the weak to hide his inability and hurts the girl who is expressing her gratitude. This hatred also evokes the love at the bottom of his heart. Xing reflects on himself and begins to believe there is still something good in the world, which foreshadows the transformation of Xing in the following plot.

The Landlord and Landlady also set the example of deconstructing the binary opposition of love and hatred. They live in a small town, escaping from conflicts in the world because of the death of their son. There must be some hatred in their heart, so they don't want to take any responsibility at the beginning. But later, as the film progresses, they realize that great power comes with great responsibility. The hatred for the outside disputes changes into the love, justice, and protection for innocent people and peace. To summarize, hatred and love in *Kung Fu Hustle* are no longer incompatible like water and fire as they can be found in one person at the same time. The hatred for the vicious force drives the love for peace and niceness, in turn, the love in the inner heart provides the power to fight against hatred and evilness.

5. Conclusion

The present research, from the perspective of Derrida's deconstruction, makes a comparative cultural study of *The Crying Game* and *Kung Fu Hustle* through deconstructing binary concepts. The conflicts between binary oppositions of Good/Evil, Male/Female, and Love/Hatred are intense, each of them presenting the subversion of the dominant terms within the structure. Interpreting films from the angle of dismantling hierarchical pairs, we further resonate with Neil Jordan and Stephen Chow in reconstructing the public's understanding of settled doctrines, invoking thoughts on human nature, gender, and love.

The Crying Game and *Kung Fu Hustle* nurture multiple binary oppositions and evoke their deconstruction. The deconstruction of these dichotomous pairs provides an explicit explanation for the audience to probe the mystery behind the plots. This study offers a well-structured way to analyze films applying deconstruction, assisted by the notion of breaking binary oppositions.

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