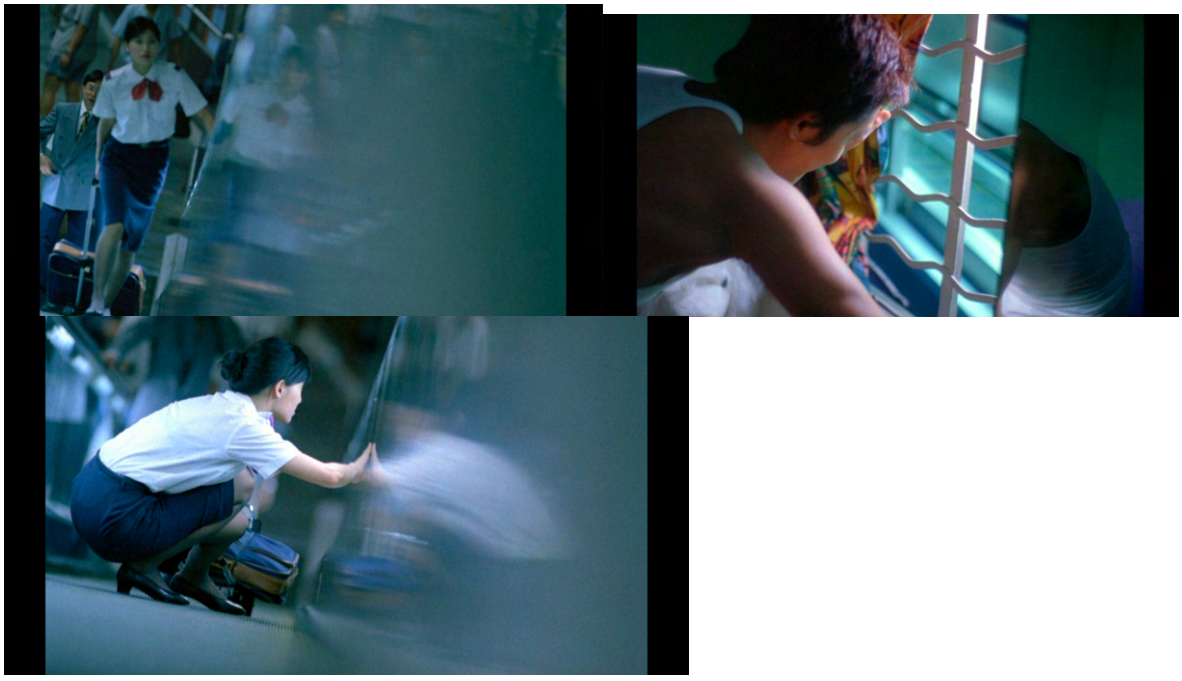


Escapism

This scene (1:35:00) where Tony Leung's Cop 663 reads a handwritten boarding pass from Hong Kong to an unknown destination cuts to Faye Wong's character sitting in a bar named California, now an Air Stewardess. This represented to me the escapist desires of many people, including many from Hong Kong, to emigrate and pursue a life abroad. Though ultimately, just as the lyrics of California Dreaming suggest, in the end Faye Wong expresses disappointment at her life abroad in California, returning home with a twinge of homesickness. It isn't easy for people to give up their previous lives.



Vertical Motion

The Central-Mid-Levels escalator features prominently through Chungking Express with Cop 663's apartment located next to it. As such all the scenes in his flat have the motion of people passing through in the background. It reminded me of the Paternoster in the University of Sheffield's Art's Tower with its continuous vertical movement, transporting people through the building, perhaps the closest thing Sheffield has to the skyscrapers of Hong Kong.









Late night takeaways

The Midnight Express serves as a focal point for characters through Chungking Express. It brings to mind the scenes post night-out on West Street as people congregate around the late-night Kebab shops. Though they are more social scenes than the isolation of Midnight Express, both scenes involve trading of gossip and the opportunity for drunken emotional unloading.





Cultural diversity

With the first half of the film set in and around the alleyways of Chunking Mansion, Chungking Express shows the ethnic diversity of parts of Hong Kong in some very claustrophobic and anxiety-inducing scenes. Though the depiction of the South Asian immigrants in Chungking Express is a generally negative one with its association with

crime and poverty, these are also perceptions held by people in Britain about immigrants. It also reflects the ways in which immigrants are exploited with their precarious socioeconomic position.



Expiration Dates

Throughout the first half of the film there is the recurring motif of expiration dates and ticking clocks. Though it has multiple potential meanings in the film, one that is hard to ignore is the impending handover to China that was due to take place in 1997, 3 years after the film's release.