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**Sheldon H. Lu and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh, eds./Chinese-Language Film**

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**SHELDON H. LU AND  
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## **Introduction**

### **Mapping the Field of Chinese-Language Cinema**

#### **Language and Film**

This collection of essays covers the cinematic traditions of mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Chinese diaspora from the beginning of Chinese film history to the present moment. In compiling a highly selective “film historiography,” as it were, we editors face once again the dilemma of choice and inclusion—namely, what constitutes “Chinese cinema” or “Chinese-language cinema.” As we attempt to come to terms with an ever-evolving phenomenon and a developing subject of investigation, we provisionally define Chinese-language films as films that use predominantly Chinese dialects and are made in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Chinese diaspora, as well as those produced through transnational collaborations with other film industries.

Sometimes Chinese-language cinema is synonymous with Chinese cinema if national boundary and language coincide, for instance, in the case of a Mandarin-language film made and released in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Yet, at other times, Chinese-language cinema is not equivalent to Chinese cinema if the Chinese-language film is made outside the sovereign Chinese nation-state—for example, in Hollywood, Singapore, or elsewhere. Here language spills over the territorial fixity of the nation-state, and such a situation casts doubt on neat and easy assumptions about the isomorphism of geography, culture, nation,

identity, and citizenship. There are also transnational Chinese-language films that are not made in and by the Chinese state. Rather, they are funded by a variety of external sources and mainly circulate in international film markets. Thus, Chinese-language cinema is a more comprehensive term that covers all the local, national, regional, transnational, diasporic, and global cinemas relating to the Chinese language. The nonequivalence and asymmetry between language and nation bespeaks continuity and unity as well as rupture and fragmentation in the body politic and cultural affiliations among ethnic Chinese in the modern world.

At this juncture, it is helpful to revisit Benedict Anderson's seminal formulation of the idea of nationhood as an "imagined community." Anderson emphasizes the importance of language in the origin and spread of nationalism. For him, "print-languages laid the bases for national consciousness."<sup>1</sup> If print-languages played a crucial role in the formative period of nationalism historically, the importance of the cinema in the maintenance and reinvention of nationhood cannot be underestimated since the beginning of the twentieth century. Nationhood/nationalism must be perpetually reinvented as time goes by long after its original historical formation. Although the modern nation-state is territorially fixed, the "element of artifact, invention and social engineering" is of paramount importance in nation-building.<sup>2</sup> Cinema has increasingly participated in the "birth of a nation."

The historical formation of nation-states in Western Europe predates the appearance of the cinema at the turn of the twentieth century. Hence the importance of print-languages (novels, newspapers) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In many other parts of the world, however, the establishment of the modern nation-state is roughly concurrent with the development of cinema—for example, in the case of the founding of the Republic of China, in 1912. And numerous nations in Africa and Asia gained independence many decades after the appearance of the cinema. For Ousmane Sembene, his film is a "night school" (*école du soir*) to educate the illiterate masses in Africa. In the socialist Mao era, the Chinese state regularly dispatches projectionists to screen films in remote villages where movie theaters do not exist. In such a fashion, film culture is spread far beyond the boundaries of metropolises such as Shanghai, and is effectively used to both entertain and educate the masses in the socialist nation-building project. In the present age of global media, people watch films and television as much as, if not more than, they read novels and newspapers.

The questions of both film as language and language(s) in film must be reviewed more carefully. First, film itself is a special symbolic language, a semiotic system, a vehicle of representation, and an audiovisual technology.<sup>3</sup> As such, film preserves, renews, and creates a sense of nationhood as an imaginary unity through

an artful combination of images, symbols, sound, and performance. The nation-state is thus performed, staged, represented, and narrated afresh in a film each time.

Second, the issue of language or languages in film is particularly significant. Chinese-language users, along with Chinese-language films, cover vast networks, stretching from mainland China to Taiwan, which wavers between a nation-state and a “renegade province,” to the special administrative regions (SARs) of postcolonial Hong Kong and Macau, the independent city-state Singapore, large Chinese populations in Southeast Asia (Malaysia and so forth), Asian-American communities in the United States, and Chinese immigrants throughout the entire world.

If language is in part what lends unity to the Chinese nation-state and more broadly to a sense of Chineseness among the diasporic populations, it is also a force fraught with tension and contention. As we know, Mandarin, the Beijing dialect (*guoyu*, or *putonghua*), has been designated as the official language and dialect by the state (both the Republic of China and the People’s Republic of China), but numerous Chinese dialects are spoken by Chinese nationals inside China as well as by immigrants outside China. The different dialects constitute distinct speech genres, as it were, and exist in a state of polyglossia. Sometimes they engage in Bakhtinian dialogic exchanges in a lively, noisy, and yet peaceful atmosphere;<sup>4</sup> but oftentimes they fail to achieve the desired effect of rational, intersubjective, communicative speech acts in a Habermasian fashion.<sup>5</sup> Both past history and contemporary cultural production have continuously testified to the linguistic hierarchy and social discrimination embedded in Chinese cinema and society. Remember the banning of Cantonese-language films under the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) in the Republican era for the sake of national and linguistic unity. Or recall the depiction of reverse discrimination in recent Hong Kong films, for instance, *Comrades, Almost a Love Story* (*Tian mimi*, 1997) by Peter Chan, where Mandarin speakers are stigmatized in Hong Kong society. Or in Wong Kar-wai’s *In the Mood for Love* (*Huayang nianhua*, 2000), the Shanghaiese dialect evokes a warm nostalgia for a close-knit linguistic community consisting of émigrés living in Hong Kong in a bygone era. The use of local dialects (Sichuanese, northern Shaanxi dialect, and so forth) in numerous mainland films, especially the country films, aims at achieving multiple ends: comedic effects of defamiliarization and refamiliarization, regional flavor, and, no less important, the ever-expanding and changing definition of China and the Chinese people. Dialects and accents create both intimacy and distance on-screen for the characters in the film as well as offscreen among the audience. In such a manner, filmic discourse attempts to articulate again and again a national self-definition in relation to the linguistic, dialectal, ethnic, and religious others. The adoption of particular languages, dialects, and idiolects in film belongs to



Lizhen (Maggie Cheung) and Mr. Zhou (Tony Leung Chiu-wai), both modern yet old-fashioned, communicate in *In the Mood for Love* (Wong Kar-wai, Hong Kong, 2000).

the procedures of inclusion and exclusion in the imagining of a national community. Hence, Chinese language is at once a centrifugal and centripetal force in the nation-building process. In the least, language helps forge a fluid, deterritorialized, pan-Chinese identity among Chinese speakers across national boundaries.

Chinese-language film, or “Sinophone film,” is yet to be distinguished from varieties of postcolonial cinemas—for instance, Francophone cinema, or Anglophone cinema. The scattering of Chinese-language speakers around the globe is by and large not the result of the historical colonization of indigenous peoples of the Southern hemisphere and the consequent imposition of colonizers’ languages on them, as in the case of the former colonies of France.<sup>6</sup> Nor is the Chinese language in the position of a hegemonic language, the lingua franca of international business, world politics, tourism, as in the case of English in contemporary time. To a great extent, Chinese-language cinema is the result of the migration of Chinese-dialect speakers around the world. This is not to say that China was historically exempt from imperialism and colonialism and is currently free from their aftereffects. Part of China proper, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau were indeed embroiled in those merciless processes. English, Portuguese, and Japanese were instituted as official languages at the geographic peripheries of China—in the islands of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, respectively, in various historical periods. The point to be made here is that speakers of Chinese di-

lects around the world have been mostly ethnic Chinese rather than indigenous peoples who were forced or inculcated to speak the language of external colonizers. Fissures and dissent often stem from situations related to inter-Chinese linguistic and dialectal priority and hierarchy. Communication frequently breaks down and speech acts turn quarrelsome between different dialectal regions from within mainland China, and, despite a common “mother tongue,” one often hears a profusion of sound and fury from the noisy isles of Taiwan and Hong Kong as their citizens strive to maintain a distinct sense of community vis à vis the traditional political hegemony of the mainland.

It appears that the function of language in relation to the nation-state and identity-formation in Sinophone cinema has been manifested in several important ways. In the first type, language, dialects, and accents are coterminous with the realm of the nation-state. They may serve the interests of the nation or be used as critiques of the nation. In either case, the national is the ultimate referent and horizon of meaning. An obvious example would be any Mandarin-language film made in China. Even when Mandarin is not spoken, local dialects are subordinated to an overarching discourse of the nation-state. Dialects and accents serve as a backdrop to show a lively diversity within a grand national unity. For instance, *Rounding up Draftees* (*Zhua zhuangding*, 1963) is an entirely Sichuanese-dialect film made in the People’s Republic of China. Set in the period of the War of Resistance against Japan (1937–1945), the film is a satire of the corruption and cruelty of the Guomindang (the ruling Nationalist Party). The film depicts how local Guomindang officers economically exploited poor peasants and coerced them to join the army. The local dialect is meant to expose the provincialism of the Guomindang and ultimately points to the necessity of rebellion and revolution against the existing order. Here the Sichuanese dialect is utilized to support a specific political vision of China.

We may take a recent film in western Hunan (*Xiangxi*) dialect as another example. Dai Sijie’s film *The Little Chinese Seamstress* (*Xiao caifeng*, 2003) is an international coproduction and “transnational film” and seems to be at the opposite end of the ideology of a Mao-era film such as *Rounding up Draftees*. This Franco-Chinese coproduction, however, also narrowly refers to the nation-state of China as a political object. Except for the ending, which takes place in present-day Shanghai, the setting of the film is a mountainous region in western Hunan province, near the hometown of the great writer Shen Congwen, reminiscent of his masterpiece *Border Town* (*Bian cheng*). Although beautiful and idyllic, the locale is scarred by poverty and political turmoil. The film covers the Cultural Revolution period, and remains another work of the “Cultural Revolution genre” denouncing the political oppression and cultural deprivation that the Chinese people suffered in those years. A transnational, diasporic film ends up being a

specifically politicized, humanist film. At the same time, the local dialect augments the regional flavor of the setting, serves as a stylistic ornamentation, and builds a sense of rural innocence in a Chinese province.

The second type of films refers to those films in which the use of dialects reaches below and beneath the level of the national, fortifies a strong feeling of regionalism, and articulates an ambivalent relationship with the discourse of the nation-state. Fukienese and Cantonese films and television dramas in Taiwan and Hong Kong often assert a distinct regional identity versus the historical and present domination of Mandarin and the mainland. In the case of Taiwanese-language films, there has been a historical resentment against the past oppression of the Mandarin-speaking Guomintang, and currently there is the fear of a mainland Chinese takeover. In the case of Hong Kong, the century-long British colonial rule coupled with the Cantonese dialect has created a culture that is distinct from the motherland.

*City of Sadness* is a supreme example of regionalism and multiple languages in Sinophone cinema. There is a plethora of dialects in the film—Mandarin, Fukienese, Hakka, Shanghainese, and Japanese—each coming out the life-world of specific communities and expressing different cultural identities and political convictions. Most extraordinary of all is Lin Wen-ch'ing (Tony Leung Chiu-wai), the deaf-mute photographer. His inability to speak means his refusal to accept any definitive word and official verdict on a series of events in Taiwanese history—Japanese occupation, the Guomintang takeover, the February 28 Incident, and the White Terror that persisted in the following decades. As a photographer, he documents history in his own quietly perceptive manner with the camera's eye.

A third function of language and dialects in cinema is that filmic discourse expands above and beyond the level of the national to create a fluid, deterritorialized, global, pan-Chinese identity. Although the setting may be somewhere in China, the film itself does not engage specifically geopolitical considerations. This is especially true of certain film genres, such as martial arts and action. These films tend to project a generalized abstract sense of Chineseness and make China into a cultural marker that manifests itself in martial arts, swordplay, kung-fu, cuisine, oriental philosophy, and so on. The political allegory of the nation largely disappears, and the values of foreign culture, entertainment, exoticism, and world tourism are high on the silver screen, all heartened to secure a greater share of the regional, as well as global, film market.

Such examples include Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (*Wohu canglong*, 2000) and recent films of Jackie Chan. In *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the lead actors Chow Yun-fat and Michelle Yeoh speak Mandarin with heavy Cantonese accents. Their accented speech violates the rule of verisimilitude, be-

cause they are supposed to portray characters from a particular region of China. Although this appears laughable and improbable for audiences in mainland China and Taiwan, it does not matter for international audiences who watch the film through subtitles. The non-Chinese viewers could enjoy the spectacular scenery, incredible action choreography, and marvelous legends as they spend time learning about a depoliticized “cultural China” set in the past.

The three functions of languages and dialects as outlined above are heuristic guides rather than absolute categories. Sometimes the dominant dialectal function in a given Chinese-language film may change from viewer to viewer, or more than one function may coexist in a viewing experience. For instance, a film such as Wong Kar-wai’s *In the Mood for Love* could mean different things for different viewers in a rather personal way. Hong Kong residents, Shanghainese immigrants, Chinese citizens, and international audiences could relate to the themes and experiences of immigration, love, memory, nostalgia, and cultural identity in their own meaningful manners.

Stylistically, the predominant use of local dialects in contemporary Chinese art cinema has helped create an immediacy and a raw quality in the texture of the films. Here are some examples that have gained visibility and critical acclaim in international arthouse film circuits in recent years: a Shaanxi dialect is used in *The Story of Qiu Ju* (*Qiu Ju da guansi*, Zhang Yimou, 1993); a Hebei dialect is used in *Ermo* (*Ermo*, Zhou Xiaowen, 1994); Henan dialects are used in *Orphan of Anyang* (*Angyang ying'er*, Wang Chao, 2001) and *Blind Shaft* (*Mang jing*, Li Yang, 2003); and Jia Zhangke uses the Shanxi dialects of Fenyang and Datong in his films *Xiao Wu* (*Xiao Wu*, 1997), *Platform* (*Zhantai*, 2000), and *Unknown Pleasures* (*Ren xiaoyao*, 2002). The consistent and pervasive employment of these various northern Chinese dialects effectively builds the realism of characters, ambiance, locale, and atmosphere. Here we may speak of “Chinese-dialect film” as a subgenre of Chinese-language film.

In contemporary Chinese mainstream popular cinema, however, local dialects are deployed to elicit the appropriate effects of comedy, humor, and satire. For instance, if particular characters speak dialects rather than Mandarin, it shows the lovely, down-to-earth, provincial quality of the individuals, who may have difficulty adjusting to the fast-paced life in a big city like Beijing. The quaint, unfamiliar accents are intended to be funny and entertaining for the urban audience. This is precisely the dialectal strategy adopted in yet another highly successful commercial film by Feng Xiaogang, *Cell Phone* (*Shouji*, 2003). Here we have the old material and spiritual divide between the rural and the urban, the primitive and the modern. The earthbound and homely represented by the dialect users are pitted against the forces of globalization and telecommunication that gather momentum in China’s metropolises. In general, the use of dialects



in Chinese-language films could alternatively or simultaneously create Brechtian distancing, defamiliarizing effects as well as conveying feelings of directness and closeness.

At an even more profound level, linguistic and dialectal differences within Greater China point to the enormous uneven economic formations and the schizophrenic mentality of the nation-state at large. Fruit Chan's *Durian Durian* (*Liulian piaopiao*, 2001) is an interesting case in point. The film consists of two parts, the first set in Cantonese-speaking capitalist Hong Kong and the second in the Northeast (Dongbei) in postsocialist China, where the northeast dialect is spoken. The northeast, seen through the city of Mudanjiang, and signified by the northeast accent, is a typical postindustrial, postsocialist city in decay and ruins. The heroine, Xiao Yan, a young woman from Dongbei, leaves her native city behind and comes to Hong Kong to make money by becoming a prostitute. The film opens with Xiao Yan's voice-over narration in a distinctive and seductive northeast dialect, and the frame is filled with a shot of the scenic Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong superimposed with and turning into muddy Mudan River in the Northeast. While serving her various male customers in Hong Kong, she speaks different dialects, sometimes Cantonese and sometimes Mandarin, and lies to them about what part of China she comes from. Indeed, mainland prostitutes in Hong Kong arrive from all over China—Shanghai, Hunan, Sichuan, and so on. The first half of the film set in warm, glitzy, fast-paced, capitalist Hong Kong forms a strong contrast to the second part, set in drab, cold, dusty postsocialist Dongbei. Northeast China was one of most industrialized regions in the Mao era, but it has suffered decay and high rates of unemployment since the economic reforms. Numerous state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have gone bankrupt one after one, and millions of Dongbei residents have been laid off. As a result, Dongbei prostitutes are present everywhere in China. Thus, the Cantonese dialect in capitalist Hong Kong and the northeast dialect in the hinterland of postsocialist China, spoken by the same woman, indicate the two halves of the Chinese national psyche and dramatize the social and economic disparity within China through the mouth and body of the same prostitute. What the film reveals is the historic transition from old-style industrial production to affective labor and service industry, to the ascendancy of biopower or the biopolitical regime, in the words of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.<sup>7</sup> As a matter of fact, Xiao Yan's ex-husband and former male friends also turn to the service industry for survival in Mudanjiang. They become dancers in a local nightclub. This aspect of the film is very much like what happened in the film *The Full Monty* (1997), where former factory workers in a rundown postindustrial city choose to become male strippers in a transitional period of British history. What occurred in the West decades ago is happening in China today.

This shift from modernity to postmodernity, a process that is at times painful and other time exhilarating, is vividly described in many Chinese-dialect films. Human tragedies in dangerous coalmines, abandoned factories, and ghost towns result from antiquarian industrial modes of production in such Henan-dialect films as *Blind Shaft* and *Orphan of Anyang*. Viewers can also glimpse at ultra-modern cities like Beijing and get a laugh out of the silliness of Chinese citizens equipped with new communication conveniences. In *Cell Phone*, adventurous married men cannot escape from the omnipresence of a modern telecommunication technology as they attempt to hide extramarital affairs from their spouses. The cell phone beeps, and if you do not answer, where are you? The Sichuanese-speaking character, Lao Mo (Zhang Guoli), head of a television station, clumsily makes a fool of himself as he tries unsuccessfully to have an illicit love affair. His conclusion is that a primitive agrarian society is superior to a postmodern society of instant communication. There is no place to hide these days. The magic object “cell phone” performs the function of surveillance in a postmodern disciplinary society. The classic Marxian model of successive modes of production is inadequate for an analysis of these kinds of films and must be supplemented by an examination of modes of communication, spectatorship, and consumption.

Each and every attempt to revisit film history is inevitably a matter of “reinventing film studies” from a different critical angle.<sup>8</sup> Anthologies on Chinese films reinterpret the objects of investigation, give them new life, and, as a result, the objects themselves change and grow. Earlier volumes in English are cognizant of the multiple formations in Chinese film history. For instance, *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema* (1991), edited by Chris Berry, includes chapters on films from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, although “Chinese cinema” is in the singular in the book’s title.<sup>9</sup> In *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, and Politics* (1994), Chinese cinemas ostensibly become a plural entity, containing PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The editors of this book are acutely aware of the differences between the three cinematic practices, but still retain the umbrella term “Chinese.”<sup>10</sup> *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender* (1997) adds the qualifier “transnational” to account for certain problematic areas often overlooked by national cinema studies.<sup>11</sup> *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies* (1998) has separate entries for Chinese cinema, Taiwanese cinema, and Hong Kong cinema under the general rubric of “world cinema.”<sup>12</sup>

These adjustments indicate the difficulties of using a single term to contain a body of work known generally in the West as “Chinese film.” They also signify efforts to gain a greater understanding and knowledge about films made from the three major film production centers in the region. Therefore, just when geopolitical developments have called for adjustments to the term “China,” film studies itself has also gone through a major change in the studies of “national cinema.”

A similar situation occurred in the academic studies of Chinese films among scholars in the Chinese-speaking world. In the Chinese language, the term for “Chinese cinema” has been customarily “*Zhongguo dianying*.” Recent historical developments in the “Greater China” area, however, have changed academic conceptions of what “China” is and even more so the potential meanings of “Chinese cinema.” Film artists, critics, and scholars in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong have begun to visit and establish contact with each other across geographic regions and political allegiances. As a result, a new phrase, “Chinese-language film” (*huayu dianying*), has come into currency.

This term was originally introduced by scholars based in Taiwan and Hong Kong in the early 1990s.<sup>13</sup> As a result of a thaw in relations between Taiwan and the mainland at that time, mainland film scholars were invited to Taiwan for the first time. Consequently, *huayu dianying* was used in Taiwanese scholarship to indicate any film produced in a Chinese-speaking society, to clarify the categories formerly used to distinguish mainland films (*dalu pian*), Hong Kong films (*gangpian*), and Taiwanese films (*guopian*). In other words, a linguistic description was used to unify and supersede older geographical divisions and political discriminations. Similarly, musical terms such as *huayu gequ* (Chinese-language songs) and *huayu yinyue* (Chinese-language music) are used to designate pan-Chinese popular music across the Taiwan Straits. Likewise, terms such as *huawen wenxue*, *huayu wenxue*, and *Zhongwen wenxue* signify Chinese-language literature written by authors globally, not just Chinese literature produced in mainland China. It is not without irony that the first “Chinese” Nobel Prize winner in literature, Gao Xingjian, lives in France but writes in Chinese. This “cultural turn” in the game of naming, the actual practices of film coproduction, and the increasing regional integration within the “Greater China economic zone” are all gestures to establish connections and linkages in the Chinese-speaking world beyond the political borderlines of the modern nation-state.

Having said this, it should also be noted that these developments in Chinese-language film scholarship are not a simple reflection of the political changes that have happened between socialist PRC, democratic Taiwan, and postcolonial Hong Kong. Certainly, these changes have made Chinese film scholarship across old national and regional borders an engaging, diverse, and unpredictable field; more important, the excitement in doing Chinese film studies is born not only of politics but also of Chinese-language film itself: its energy, resilience, and remarkable innovation in storytelling, sound, image, and design. As a result, Chinese-language cinemas, however they are defined, belong to the most dynamic contemporary cinemas in the world.

Cinema studies is a relatively young discipline in comparison to other fields such as literary studies. The study of “national cinema” has recently developed

into an important branch of cinema studies. Ironically, just as film studies is defining its geographic borders and theoretical perimeters, the forces of globalization have forced film scholars to reexamine their assumptions and practices. Border crossing and transnationalism have been part of the film medium from the beginning, because film itself is a truly international technology. Nevertheless, these tendencies have intensified in the post-cold war era. The kinds of phenomena that critics of Asian film witness and describe are also evident in other cinematic traditions. Thus, a critic writes about the difficulty of establishing the national origin of a film in the context of European cinema:

What determines the national identity of a film when funding, language, setting, topic, cast, and director are increasingly mixed? How can we classify films such as Louis Malle's 1992 film *Damage* (French director, Franco-British cast, English settings), Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Three Colours* trilogy (*Blue*, 1993; *White*, 1993; *Red*, 1994; made by a Polish director with French funds and a Franco-Polish cast), and Lars von Trier's 1996 film *Breaking the Waves* (Danish director, Norwegian-European funds, British cast, Scottish setting)?<sup>14</sup>

Here Ginette Vincendeau enumerates instances of pan-European production and inter-European collaborations. Examples of pan-Chinese production and inter-Chinese and inter-Asian co-collaborations are no less abundant. Whether in Europe or Asia, cross-regional and transnational filmmaking has become a trend trespassing narrow national boundaries.

The essays collected in this volume explore the manifold dimensions of Chinese-language films and highlight areas that previous studies overlooked. The contributors take up issues and topics ranging from the beginnings of Chinese cinema in the early twentieth century, through various historical periods, to the turn of the twenty-first century. Their cross-cultural engagements with individual films are accomplished with an acute sense of chronology and history. Because of the broad areas covered, there is a risk of oversimplification in dividing them according to some a priori principles. For the sake of clarity and convenience, we divide the chapters into three parts. Part I deals with the diachronic issues of film history, periodization, and trends. The scholars in part I revise old models of film history as well as write new chapters on the evolving Chinese cinemas. Part II focuses on synchronic questions of poetics, aesthetics, form, and directorial style. Part III tackles the politics of filmmaking and film reception, the prominent themes of contemporary cultural studies, and issues of identity, gender, the national, the transnational, the postcolonial, and globalization. It would be wrong to assume that questions concerning film style or film history have no bearing on such themes as national and cultural identity or that abstract cultural studies can be somehow detached from the concrete analysis of

film genres, forms, and directors. More often than not, these various lines of thought are intricately interlocked with each other, as many of the chapters contained here convincingly demonstrate. Although we have divided the chapters according to the three major categories represented by the parts of the volume, in fact, the individual chapters grouped in one part frequently address issues in the other part of the volume.

### **Part I: Historiography, Periodization, Trends**

The writing of Chinese film history—namely, the project of “historiography”—is a major task in our collective enterprise. Historiography is necessarily always already revisionist as historians endeavor to look at the past with a fresh eye. “Periodization” focuses on moments in time: the “pre-” and the “post-,” “early” and “late,” “beginning” and “end,” “contemporary” and “past,” as some of the chapter titles indicate. Such temporal differentiations are intended to describe the movements and trends in China’s long film history with more coherence and clarity.

The chapter jointly written by Mary Farquhar and Chris Berry proposes a new way of looking at the historical evolution of Chinese film art. Taking a cue from Tom Gunning’s idea of “cinema of attractions,” they look at the history and aesthetics of Chinese opera film. From “shadow play” in early twentieth century to the heyday of “revolutionary model opera” in the 1960s and 1970s, Chinese film artists are bound to a vital indigenous tradition rooted in past centuries.<sup>15</sup> This chapter points to the importance of a nonmimetic, expressionist tradition in Chinese film as opposed to the realist tendency based on imitation or mimesis.

Zhang Zhen’s chapter guides us to an intriguing episode in early Chinese film history. Martial arts film flourished in Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s. The Republican government, however, soon took action to ban such films in the name of modernization, nation-building, and science. Film censors saw ghosts and improbable supernatural feats as vestiges of feudalism and superstition from old China. Likewise, intellectuals regarded martial arts heroes and heroines as anachronistic and reactionary. Afterward, the martial arts genre, apparently incompatible with the ethos of modernity, flourished only at the margins of Chinese civilization beyond the reach of the Chinese nation-state—the tiny island of Hong Kong under the benign neglect of British colonial rule.<sup>16</sup> It is important to see that, at the same moment, for reasons of national unity the film censors of the Republican government banned the use of the Cantonese dialect in films. Only Mandarin, the official Chinese dialect, can be used. Cantonese-language

films survived and flourished in the remote island of Hong Kong in the years that followed.

With the demise of martial arts film and the death of the symbolic old China, film culture was dictated by the tastes and viewing habits of the modernizing urbanites in metropolises such as Shanghai in the republican era (1911–1949). Film gave rise to a new urban culture, an alternative public sphere based on the sensory-reflexive experiences of modernity, and became a Chinese/Shanghai-ese version of “vernacular modernism.” In the words of Miriam Hansen, “Shanghai cinema of the 1920s and 30s represents a distinct brand of vernacular modernism, one that evolved in a complex relation to American—and other foreign—models while drawing on and transforming Chinese traditions in theater, literature, graphic, and print culture, both modernist and popular. I think this case can be made at several levels: the thematic concerns of the films; their mise-en-scène and visual style; their formal strategies of narration, including modes of performance, character construction, and spectatorial identification; and the films’ address to and function within a specific horizon of reception.”<sup>17</sup>

In the face of the brutal realities of wars and revolutions, vernacular modernism, or modernism as such in literature and arts across the board, disappeared all too quickly from China’s cultural landscape. Modernism was seen as decadent and individualistic, and hence incompatible with the ethos of the suffering Chinese masses and the nation at war. Realism, be it “socialist realism” on the mainland throughout the Mao era, or Hong Kong’s left-wing cinema of the 1950s, or “healthy realism” in Taiwan, took hold in Chinese film culture. It was not until the emergence of “new waves” in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China in the 1980s that the tyranny of various instrumental realisms began to recede. The “new waves,” also in the name of reclaiming the real, attempted to capture the scenes, sight, and sound of reality with a renewed cinematic language. The stylistic characteristics and critical orientations of the new wavers first caught the attention of world audiences and served as a catalyst in promoting Chinese cinema studies in the West into a legitimate and growing academic field.

Meiling Wu writes a new chapter in Taiwan New Cinema—that of “post-sadness.” Hou Hsiao-hsien’s work, especially *City of Sadness*, remains the defining ethos of the classic Taiwan New Cinema in many ways; however, Taiwanese films have entered a new phase of development. If the affectations of previous genres and styles of Taiwanese cinema such as the nationalist government’s propaganda films, sappy melodramas adapted from Qiong Yao’s romances, “healthy realism” of the 1960s, and “social realism” of the late 1970s, all appear hopelessly hackneyed and out of touch with reality, the New Cinema movement led by Hou Hsiao-hsien and his like aims to restore realism and authenticity to Taiwanese

film and give true expression to Taiwanese history and reality. Yet, in the eyes of a younger generation of Taiwanese directors, it is time to go beyond Hou's idiosyncrasies and mannerisms. Gone are the personal quest for and collective reconstruction of the local/national history of Taiwan, the nostalgia for the idyllic past, and anguished reflection on the fate of an entire people. Wu tackles the film art of Tsai Ming-liang and Lin Cheng-sheng as representative of a new spirit in Taiwanese cinema. Now the camera focuses on the existential absurdities of private individuals and the malaise of urban daily life in contemporary, postmodern cities of Taiwan. The rituals and routines of everyman and everywoman are depicted in painful minute details without being assimilated to some higher national pathos.

The transition between generations of filmmakers in the mainland is not so different from the situation in Taiwan. The mythic grand tales of China as spun by the giants of previous generations have given way to the emergence of new "post-fifth generation directors" (*hou diwudai daoyan*). Likewise, the disorienting feelings and fragmentary experiences of ordinary folks in the contemporary Chinese city find expression in numerous films. Shuqin Cui tackles the politics of naming and labeling in a controversial area, that of Chinese independent directors in the 1990s. Terms such as "independent," "underground," "experimental," and "nonofficial/nonmainstream" reveal ideological perspectives from which one approaches a corpus of films and a group of directors. Urban space and city life, the personal and subjective, the artist-self, and descriptions of youthful, emerging sexuality all find their way into the work of a new generation of directors.<sup>18</sup> They are distinguished from the so-called fifth generation that emerged in the 1980s.

Sheldon H. Lu dissects a slice of Chinese film culture at the end of the twentieth century by examining the film *Not One Less* by Zhang Yimou, the most active and visible figure from the fifth generation. This chapter studies the sociology of the Chinese film industry—audiences, box-sales figures, and popular attitudes, as well as the international politics of film festivals. Furthermore, it points to the ways in which the old rural themes in Zhang's previous work stubbornly persist in his new films while numerous Chinese citizens are already enmeshed in the midst of messy, dizzying urban lives and are caught in the throes and exhilarations of global postmodernization.<sup>19</sup>

## **Part II: Poetics, Directors, Styles**

Film is an international technology, yet each national cinematic tradition draws on its own artistic legacies for inspiration and innovation. The fruitful tension be-

tween the national and the international, between indigenous forces and Euro-American conventions, animates the growth and development of Chinese cinemas. In this section, some chapters provide lucid, synchronic, structural(ist), transhistorical accounts of the poetics and aesthetics of Chinese film as an integral part of world cinema. Still other chapters explore directorial styles in social and historical specificity.

As David Bordwell's illuminating chapter shows, the cinemas of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong can be understood in the context of international film style. And this style, as Bordwell suggests, is rooted in three cinematic patterns—continuity editing, planimetric composition, and the long take. In this regard, Chinese filmmaking is perhaps not so different from its Western counterparts, as many Chinese scholars have claimed. Classic Hollywood continuity, as the most economical and effective way of storytelling, was adopted and refined by generations of Chinese filmmakers. This cinematic pattern is further intensified in the hands of Hong Kong filmmakers with their own kinetic variations. In appropriating Hollywood continuity, the planimetric composition of European art cinema, and the device of the long take, Chinese film artists have participated in and contributed to a transcultural poetics of cinema.

Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh's article takes us to the "treasure island" off the mainland shore to explore issues surrounding Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien. Recently called "the best narrative filmmaker alive today," Hou is a controversial director at home. In Taiwan, Hou is seen as a master without an audience. Yeh's article discusses the nagging problem of the reception gap of Chinese films in the world and at home. She argues that assessing Hou's films from a poetic standpoint releases a barrage of critical, political pronouncements that form a clashing, discordant context.

Xiaoping Lin analyzes a cycle of three films by Jia Zhangke, one of the most gifted independent directors from the so-called sixth generation in mainland China. Jia usually stages a nonprofessional cast who perform the roles of ordinary people and "antiheroes," a sharp contrast to the mythic larger-than-life figures of the fifth-generation films, which cash in on the status of bankable stars such as Gong Li. The gritty, documentary, realistic style of Jia's films closely observes and chronicles the impact of social change and globalization on small-town characters in post-Mao China, a country caught in a transition from socialism to a capitalist market economy.

Thomas Luk's article examines the aesthetics, style, and mood of *In the Mood for Love* (*Huayang nianhua*, 2000) by Wong Kai-wai, the internationally celebrated art-house director from Hong Kong. Wong sumptuously evokes nostalgia for a bygone era through the atmospherics of music, image, clothing, mise-



en-scène, and milieu. Luk traces the literary inspirations for the film, a 1972 nostalgic novella *Tête-Bêche* (*Intersection*), a tale by celebrated Hong Kong writer Liu Yichang and *Shinju*, a double-suicide love story by Japanese writer Komatsu Sakyo. Luk argues that the film's sharp departure from the novels indicates Wong's reinvention of memory through anxiety about the future of Hong Kong. The realm of fantasy, desire, love, and psychic repression is ultimately linked to the larger arena of geopolitics in world history as indicated in the ending of the film.

Wong Kar-wai has occupied a special place in the international arthouse film circuits. Indeed, his perpetual fascination with temporality has become his artistic trademark. If Hong Kong action and martial arts films exemplify the "movement-image" and "action-image," it may be said that Wong's film art is the quintessence of Deleuzian "time-image."<sup>20</sup> *Ashes of Time* (*Dongxie xidu*, 1994), *Chungking Express* (*Chongqing senlin*, 1994), *Happy Together* (*Chunguang zhaxie*, 1997), and *In the Mood for Love* are musings on the structure of time itself. Thematically, Wong's films explore the existential human states of waiting, anticipation, departure, journey, memory, loss, and nostalgia. There are projections of the future (*Chungking Express*) as well as remembrances of things past (*In the Mood for Love*). Cinematically, he distills the very images of time and allows the viewer to watch the physical passage of time—slow motion, fast forward, smudge, freeze, overlapping temporal orders, temporal fragmentation, temporal continuity and discontinuity. Transience and timelessness, motion and stillness, fullness and emptiness (both spatially and psychologically in an Ozuesque style) are the central modalities of "being and time" that his film art attempts to capture.

Sheldon Lu's chapter discusses the cultural politics of Ang Lee's commercial blockbuster *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (*Wohu canglong*, 2000), by far the most successful Chinese-language film in terms of box office sales worldwide. A "Hollywood-made" (Columbia Pictures) "Chinese-language film" is far from being an oxymoron, a categorical confusion, but is cheered by mass audiences from around the globe in the postnational, borderless world. The film is an example of transnational and global cinema par excellence. Although set in ancient China, the film has little to do with actual history. As Lee says, this film is his invention of ancient China, a world that does not exist anymore but remains an imagination in his mind. Culture, tradition, ethnicity, and "Chineseness" for that matter, are dehistoricized, decontextualized, and disembedded from deep national roots. Chinese culture, in the form of martial arts or ethnic cuisine, becomes a portable package that travels, is carried over, and is ultimately consumed effortlessly from region to region across the globe—such is the state of cultural consumption and entertainment in the age of globalization.

### Part III: Politics, Nationhood, Globalization

In the development and fine-tuning of distinct film styles and poetics, imaginary representations of identity, nationality, and citizenship loom large in cinematic discourses. The interpellation, or “hailing,” of individuals as subjects for the goal of nation-building and modernization is a constant endeavor among China’s policy makers, the intellectual elite, and public opinion throughout the twentieth century (through censorship, state ownership of film studios, and so on). The boundaries of nationhood and citizenship can be more effectively maintained and policed within the Chinese nation-state, be it Republican China or the PRC.

But the problem of identity formation has been complicated by the historical conditions of Taiwan and Hong Kong as ex-Japanese and ex-British colonies, as outlying islands far from the geopolitical center of China, and as places inhabited by people who speak Hokkien (also known as Fukienese), Hakka, and Cantonese, dialects incomprehensible to the ears of Mandarin speakers. As a result, Taiwan’s and Hong Kong’s relations with China are ambivalent, involving both identification with and resistance to “Chinese” culture and the hegemony of the nation-state.

Darrell W. Davis introduces the Taiwanese film *Dou-san: A Borrowed Life* (Wu Nianzhen, 1994) as a strong case of psychological postcolonialism. He places the film in the context of the Japanese occupation, Taiwan New Cinema, Wu’s other works, and the conceptual frameworks of postcolonial studies. In light of Taiwan’s occupation by various outsiders, Davis offers conclusions about the role of contemporary media in the formation and political uses of modern Taiwanese identity.

The interrogation of identity and subjectivity in Chinese cinematic discourse is not a vague, abstract process, but is embodied in specific film genres in different historical periods and in response to unique social circumstances. Shiao-ying Shen’s chapter asks whether a feminine inscription exists in Taiwanese cinema. She looks at two cases—a controversial Taiwanese actress Yang Hwei-shan in the 1980s and the Taiwanese/Hong Kong director Sylvia Chang. Her discussions demonstrate that body, performance, and direction are ways of facilitating feminine writing.

David Desser considers the corporeality of Chinese identity, visible in male megastars such as Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, and Jet Li. He unpacks various aspects of nationalist embodiment, from epistemology (body of knowledge) to diaspora (bodies in exile) to artistic corpus (body of work) by reviewing several decades of Hong Kong martial arts films. Whereas Shiao-ying Shen analyzes the problem and representation of female authorship and performance in Taiwanese

cinema, Desser confronts issues of nationalism and masculine cultural pride in Hong Kong cinema head-on. Ultimately, the global reception of Chinese cinema cannot be understood without accounting for its emergence from under the tutelage, and condescension, of Western eyes.

The cultural politics of mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong is intensified by global developments after the end of the cold war as well as the return of Hong Kong to mainland China. Large numbers of Hong Kong residents (many of whom are Chinese nationals) find themselves in the traffic of cross-national travel. Sheldon Lu examines Hong Kong diaspora film from the mid-1980s to the handover. He pinpoints a paradigm change in the representation of place, self, and nationality in this film genre. It is a shift from the pathos of the nation-state (the “China syndrome,” “exile complex,” “persecution complex”) to a discourse of flexible citizenship and transnationality. Moreover, he analyzes the emergence of a new type of “transnational TV drama,” a joint CBS–Hong Kong coproduction, *Martial Law*. Diaspora as typified by Hong Kong residents and portrayed in Hong Kong films, as well as international collaborations involving Hong Kong film artists, indicates a decentered, deterritorialized, and fluid mechanism of identity formation, a sense of being-in-mobility.

Chu Yiu Wai begins where Sheldon Lu stops, by focusing on Hong Kong films from the posthandover, postcolonial period. He explores the formation of local identity in cinematic representation. Even in those films that purport to reenact Hong Kong’s local history, Chu argues that the reconstructed Hong Kong identity remains impure, “inauthentic,” unstable, plural, and mixed. The local, the national, and global all meet in the dialogic space of the filmic text.

As an independent, autonomous city-state since 1965, Singapore lies outside the territorial boundary of the Chinese nation, yet the island country’s population is predominantly ethnic Chinese. Although English, Mandarin, Malay/Bahasa, and Tamil are the designated official languages, Singlish (Singaporean English) and a variety of Chinese dialects are spoken by the people on a daily basis: Hokkien, Cantonese, and Shanghainese. Gina Marchetti’s chapter examines the Chinese-language and hybrid-language films of the Singaporean director Eric Khoo. While Khoo’s films usher in an emergent Singaporean national cinema, at the same time they partake of a nexus of transnational Chinese-language film culture. Marchetti points out a central tension in the political and cultural imaginary of Singapore. On the one hand, Singapore is a postcolonial hybrid culture, a thriving port city that functions as one of the busiest transit points in the transnational flows of ships, capital, commodity, and labor. On the other hand, it is engaged in the earnest business of nation-building and the formation of a Confucian, orderly, clean model state. Such a basic contradiction in Singapore’s politics is manifested in filmic discourse.

In regard to Khoo's films, as well as Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the existence of Chinese-language cinema outside the boundaries of the Chinese nation-state demarcates new categories of films that cannot be adequately accounted for by the old paradigm of national cinema. Therefore, it seems that transnational Chinese cinema and Chinese-language cinema are more comprehensive, productive, and useful concepts in dealing with the multifarious strands of film culture that exist in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Chinese diaspora.

In tracking the historical trajectory of Chinese-language cinemas as a whole, these chapters nevertheless focus on specific areas of investigation. Beneath and beyond the general tripartite division of the book, there exist further multiple threads linking the concerns of the various authors:

- The formulation of a Chinese film *poetics*, be it universal, indigenous, or auteuristic (Bordwell, Farquhar/Berry, Yeh).
- *Directorial style* in the cases of Hou Hsiao-hsien, Zhang Yimou, Wong Kai-wai, Ang Lee, Wu Nianzhen, Tsai Ming-liang, Lin Cheng-sheng, Eric Khoo, and Jia Zhangke (Yeh, Wu, Lu, Lin, Luk, Marchetti, Davis).
- The history, evolution, and fate of individual *genres*, whether the extinction of the early martial arts film (Zhang), or the later international expansion of Hong Kong martial arts and *wuxia* (swordplay) film (Desser, Lu).
- The construction and deconstruction of *subjectivity, identity, nationality, and citizenship* in contemporary films from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (Davis, Chu, Lu, Marchetti).
- Attempts at coming to terms with both *history* and *contemporaneity* among post-fifth generation mainland Chinese filmmakers (Cui) as well as postsadness Taiwanese directors (Wu, Davis).
- *Gender* formations, sexual performance, and sexual politics, whether female authorship or femininity in Taiwanese melodramas (Shen) or masculinity in Hong Kong martial arts films (Desser).

These are only a few of the main strands in the long history of Chinese-language films, a history that waits for further explorations.

### **Intimations at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century**

In the last years of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, films from the mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Chinese diaspora continue to capture worldwide attention. In 2000, Taiwanese director Edward Yang's film *Yi Yi* (*A One and a Two*) was voted the best film by the National Society of Film Critics in the United States and received the best director award at

Cannes. Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai's film *In the Mood for Love* was voted the number one film in the *Village Voice* poll, and Tony Leung Chiu-wai, the lead actor in the film, received the best actor award at the Cannes Film Festival. As a classic example of transnational as well as global cinema, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, by the Taiwanese/Chinese/American director Ang Lee, was a Chinese-language film jointly produced and distributed by Sony Classics/Columbia Pictures and studios in Taiwan and China. This film was released in its original Chinese language and proved a big hit in the global film markets. It received the best director award at the Golden Globe awards in January 2001. It was also nominated for ten Oscars, and eventually won four, including the best foreign language picture, in March 2001.

Ang Lee's example prompted his friend and competitor Zhang Yimou to create his own martial arts film with hopes of similar global success. China's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO) also caused the government and the domestic industry to seek new modes of film production to compete with the influx of foreign film exports, particularly Hollywood blockbusters. Zhang's *Yingxiong* (Hero), loosely based on the story of the attempted assassination of the First Emperor of China, employed a cast of megastars from Greater China (Jet Li, Zhang Ziyi, Maggie Cheung, Tony Leung Chiu-wai, Chen Daoming) and debuted in early 2003. Its sumptuous cinematography and spectacular choreography rivaled Lee's film; however, it did not finally capture the Oscar Zhang sought and could not compare with the success of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* in the international market. Nevertheless, it overwhelmingly broke box-office records in mainland China, thanks to the Chinese government's preemptive strike against piracy and the introduction of computerized counting of ticket sales. As a product of transnational, trans-Chinese collaboration and as China's initial response to her entry to the WTO, *Hero* revived China's national cinema vis-à-vis the ascending hegemony of Hollywood films in China's domestic film market.

Transnational cooperation between the U.S. film industry and Asian directors and companies accelerated at the turn of the twenty-first century. Sony's Columbia Pictures formed an Asian wing—Columbia Pictures Film Production Asia—to coproduce local language films for the Asian and overseas markets. Led by Barbara Robinson, Columbia Asia produced the Taiwanese hit *Shuangtong* (Double Vision) and the mainland Chinese film *Dawan* (Big Shot's Funeral), which was directed by Feng Xiaogang. It is also remaking Hollywood films for the Asian market. (David Mamet's 1998 film *Things Change* is the first effort for the Korean market.) Another media giant, Miramax, purchased the right to distribute Zhang Yimou's *Hero* in North America for US\$15 million. It also acquired Stephen Chow's *Shaolin Soccer* (2001) and released a dubbed, recut version in summer

2004. Its increasingly monopolistic worldwide control of some of Hong Kong's best-known films is changing the rules of the game in transnational cinema production, marketing, and distribution. Miramax spends large sums of money to buy remake rights to various Asian films (for example, the Korean film *Jail Breakers*). With the involvement of major U.S. film producers and distributors in the financing and marketing of Asian films, perhaps a new model of the relationship between art and commerce on a global scale is being created.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, film festivals at various places outside the PRC such as Hong Kong, Los Angeles, New York City, and Rotterdam were busy launching and promoting a new breed of mainland Chinese film artists to international audiences. This young, urban, post-fifth generation of directors forges a new kind of film aesthetic in the representation of China, a film aesthetic that captures the angst and experiences of contemporary city life and as such remains distinct from the manners of previous generations. The cooptation and promotion of these young directors in such "art film" festivals offers an alternative venue to the Hollywood commercial route of distribution as exemplified by figures such as Ang Lee and Zhang Yimou.

In the United States, Asian film conventions and genres—especially the martial arts, action, and gangsters—have been appropriated by Hollywood filmmakers and in some way have changed the face of the American cinema. Popular films such as *Charlie's Angels* (2000), *Charlie's Angels 2: Full Throttle* (2003), the *Matrix* trilogy (1999, 2003), and *Kill Bill* (volume 1, 2003; volume 2, 2004) lavishly absorb and borrow the styles, motifs, storylines, personnel, props, settings, and just about everything else, from the classic Hong Kong action films of the Shaw Brothers to Bruce Lee to Japanese *yakuza* films. As a result, the internationalization of Chinese-language cinema from within Hollywood has contributed to the transformation of mainstream American film culture. In these examples, film has become a global melting pot where the styles of Chinese and American cinema are hybridized and become indistinguishable.

In the realm of academic studies, Chinese cinemas stand as both an alternative paradigm and a testimony to the development of film as an international art. It has become increasingly important for general historians and theorists to take into account the Chinese case as they attempt to formulate film theories with global pretensions. Chinese examples are often cited as a significant non-Hollywood tradition in support of specific brands of film theory. As a result, Chinese film studies has not only enlarged the scope of China studies as an "area studies," but also played a crucial part in the ongoing debates about international film history and theory. Along with various other local, regional, and national cinematic traditions, Chinese-language films provide prime materials and provocative cases for scholars of world cinema to rethink the crucial yet perplexed

relationship between cinema and nation, to observe the imaging and imaginary formation of the nation-state, nationality, and nationalism on screen, and to re-examine the construction as well as deconstruction of national identity in filmic discourse.<sup>22</sup> The existence of Chinese-language cinema outside the boundaries of the Chinese nation-state once more calls into question the old paradigm of “national cinema.” On a lighter note, after a full century of evolution and innovation, Chinese-language films have given more than enough guilty and legitimate pleasures to a variety of film fans from around the world. Furthermore, they have presented and will continue to present plenty of opportunities for film scholars to challenge their critical assumptions and expand their intellectual horizons.

### Notes

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 44.
2. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10. For relevant discussion, see also Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983).
3. For structuralist, semiological studies of the question of film language, see Christian Metz, *Language and Cinema*, trans. Donna Jean (The Hague: Mouton, 1974); Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, trans. Michael Taylor (New York: Oxford, 1974); and Yuri Lotman, *Semiotics of Cinema*, trans. Mark E. Suino (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Contributions, 1976). Gilles Deleuze offers a critique of this approach and proposes a Peircean semiotic account of film language in his provocative study *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).
4. See M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), and *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
5. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).
6. For sample studies of postcolonial Francophone cinema, see Dina Sherzer, ed., *Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); Lieve Spaas, *The Francophone Film: A Struggle for Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
7. See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).
8. For such a recent attempt, see Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, eds, *Reinventing Film Studies* (London: Arnold/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). An account of the relatively short history of film studies in the West is given by Dudley Andrew, “The

‘Three Ages’ of Cinema Studies and the Age to Come” *PMLA* 115.3 (May 2000): 341–351. Yingjin Zhang offers a critical overview of contemporary Chinese film studies in the United States in *Screening China: Critical Interventions, Cinematic Reconfigurations, and the Transnational Imaginary in Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 2002).

9. Chris Berry, ed., *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1991).

10. Nick Browne, Paul G. Pickowicz, Vivian Sobchack, Esther Yau, eds, *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a review and critique of this book, see Yeh Yueh-yu, “Defining ‘Chinese,’” *Jump Cut* 42 (1998): 73–76.

11. Sheldon H. Lu, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1997). Gina Marchetti speaks of Chinese cinemas as “plural and transnational” in her introduction to a special section on “Chinese and Chinese Diaspora Cinema” in *Jump Cut* 42 (1998): 68–72. Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar further elaborate on the interrelations between the national and the transnational in cinema studies in their joint essay “From National Cinemas to Cinema and the National: Rethinking the National in Transnational Chinese Cinemas,” *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese* 4.2 (January 2001): 109–122. In April 2000, Hong Kong Baptist University held an international film conference called “Year 2000 and Beyond: History, Technology, and the Future of Transnational Chinese Film and Television,” highlighting the significance of the transnational in cinema studies.

12. See John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, eds., *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). The section on world cinema is later reprinted as a separate volume, also edited by Hill and Gibson, titled *World Cinema: Critical Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

13. For instance, Lee Tain-Dow organized a conference on Chinese-language films in Taipei in 1992. A similar conference on Chinese-language films was also held at Hong Kong Baptist University in fall 1996. For book-length critical studies centered on the idea of “*huayu dianying*,” see Zheng Shusen (William Tay), ed., *Wenhua piping yu huayu dianying* (Cultural criticism and Chinese-language cinemas) (Taipei: Maitian, 1995); Lee Tain-Dow, ed., *Dangdai huayu dianying lunshu* (Studies in contemporary Chinese-language film) (Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 1996); Yeh Yueh-yu, Cheuk Pak-tong, Ng Ho, eds., *Sandi chuanqi: huayu dianying ershi nian* (Romance of three places: twenty years of Chinese-language cinemas) (Taipei: Caituan faren guojia dianying ziliaoguan, 1999); Pu Feng and Li Zhaoxing, eds., *Jingdian liangbai: zuijia huayu dianying liangbaibu* (Two hundred classics: two hundred best Chinese-language films) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Critics Society, 2002).

14. Ginette Vincendeau, “Issues in European Cinema,” in John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, eds., *World Cinema: Critical Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 58–59.

15. For previous studies of indigenous Chinese traditions in English, see Wai-fong Loh, “From Romantic Love to Class Struggle: Reflections on the Film *Liu Sanjie*,” in Bonnie McDougall, ed., *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in People’s Republic of*



*China, 1949–1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 165–176; Gina Marchetti, “Two Stage Sisters: The Blossoming of a Revolutionary Aesthetic,” in Lu, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinemas*, 59–80.

16. For further studies of film censorship in the name of nation-building in the Republican period, see Zhiwei Xiao, “Anti-Imperialism and Film Censorship during the Nanjing Decade, 1927–1937,” in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas*, 35–57; Xiao, “Constructing a New National Culture: Film Censorship and Issues of Cantonese Dialect, Superstition, and Sex in the Nanjing Decade,” in Yingjin Zhang, ed., *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai: 1922–1943* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999).

17. Miriam Bratu Hansen, “Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons: Shanghai Silent Film as Vernacular Modernism,” *Film Quarterly* 54.1 (2000): 13.

18. Zhang Yuan has been regarded as one of the most prominent directors from the post-fifth generation. For critical studies of his work, see Chris Berry, “Staging Gay Life in China: *East Palace, West Palace*,” *Jump Cut* 42 (1998): 84–89; Zhang Zhen, “Zhang Yuan,” in Yvonne Tasker, ed., *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 418–429. Jenny Kwok Wah Lau offers a useful broad discussion of this new generation of filmmakers in “Globalization and Youthful Subculture: The Chinese Sixth-Generation Films at the Dawn of the New Century,” in Jenny Kwok Wah Lau, ed., *Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 13–27.

19. For a comprehensive mapping of the cultural landscape of China in the late-twentieth century, as well as discussions of the interrelations of postmodernism and visual culture, see Sheldon H. Lu, *China, Transnational Visuality, Global Postmodernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

20. See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone Press, 1986); Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*.

21. We owe Stanley Rosen at the University of Southern California for the information and insight expressed in this paragraph. See his unpublished essay “Hollywood, Globalization and Film Markets in Asia: Lessons for China?”

22. Some informative studies of the interrelations of film and nation from global perspectives have been published recently. See, for example, Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie, eds., *Cinema and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2000); Alan Williams, ed., *Film and Nationalism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002).