

Watchful Partners, Hidden Currents

Hong Kong Cinema Moving into the Mainland of China

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The naming of Hong Kong cinema became detached from the city of Hong Kong in the mid-2000s when its major local film companies, producers, and directors relocated their offices and personnel to the Chinese mainland to redirect their energies into co-producing films. The Cantonese film legacies and local Hong Kong stories that gave this cinema its reputation remained largely absent from the “co-production films” (*he pai pian*) made under partnership terms in the mainland of the People’s Republic of China (hereafter the PRC or China).¹ In growing quantity and budget, co-produced films capitalized on distribution privileges, massive numbers of moviegoers, and government endorsement to become the highest-grossing pictures in the annual output of the PRC.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s co-produced films were occasional, low-budget, “cross-border” ventures involving China’s state film studios. By the early 1990s there were award-winning features coming out of this practice to expand the screenscape of Hong Kong cinema. Redefined by partnership arrangements, co-production after the mid-2000s became the very medium that drove the unprecedented transregional move of the Hong Kong film industry. Relocating creative talents and genre filmmaking experience into China played a substantial part in China’s state-managed cultural globalization through a rapid expansion of China’s commercial cinema; a form of soft power for the early twenty-first century.

Moving Hong Kong’s film industry operations inevitably brought change to the ideoscapes and mediascapes of the mainland. From the perspective of film history, this is a key instance of the “return” of capitalist cinema to the Chinese mainland, since the culture industry of Shanghai was nationalized after the Communist takeover in 1950. This is also an instance of Chinese capitalism

playing a prominent role in the historical performance of Hong Kong's transregional accumulation and imagination.

The Close Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA, 2003) and its supplementary clauses provide strong economic incentives for many Hong Kong service sectors and producers to place themselves under a different business culture in the Chinese mainland market. Operating as one of the free trade agreements that China adopted as a World Trade Organization member, CEPA established an accessible means for Hong Kong-based companies to share expertise, investments, cultural resource, talents, facilities, and profit with mainland partners by setting up offices and operations in mainland cities. Under CEPA's terms of bilateral trade and industry partnerships, the Hong Kong–China co-production movies have the same status as PRC films; in particular, they retain a higher percentage of box-office receipts compared to imported films, which are additionally restricted by annual quota limits. To salvage what they could from a prolonged state of declining returns, all of Hong Kong's established film companies set up offices in Beijing or Shanghai to relearn the rules of the game in China. Their experiences echo those of many service sector companies that adapted themselves by building mainland business networks in advertising, banking, cultural entertainment, education services, finance, insurance, law, photographic and printing services, telecommunications, and the like.² CEPA and its supplements thus amount to providing the legal grounds for the integration or assimilation of every vital business sector of Hong Kong with the China market, bringing about significant reorientation and new hegemonies.

Obvious ideological differences between the place-based cinema of Hong Kong and the state-sponsored films of the PRC continue to exist, as they have since the early 1950s. Besides the more hardcore aspects regarding the government's image and the Party's authority, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Film, Radio and Television (SAPPRFT) runs a stringent censorship regime covering the treatment of politics, contemporary history, the image of China, crime, and sex among other areas. Reorientation means that co-investments will aim at apolitical entertainment to establish a commercial cinema for China. Not unexpectedly, the Hong Kong industry that over-produced genre films in the 1990s also recycled old formulas, neglecting local culture or politics, in its mainland operations. Self-domestication began to take place in shaping the scripts and final films when twenty-first century mainland investment took the place of pre-sales in Southeast Asia and Japan that characterized the 1960s and the 1970s (Law 2000; McDonogh and Wong 2005). Leaving local sensibility behind, according to Bono Lee, means that the time of a "post-Hong Kong cinema" has come, and all that is left is to seek out the "hidden currents" or traces of the preceding (read, more vibrant) Hong Kong cinema in the co-produced films (Lee 2012). The idea that there are resilient styles, sensibilities, and legacies in Hong Kong cinema that have persisted against all odds sounds comforting, even though this gives no small hint of nostalgia and assumes a prospect of success in the absence of any guarantee that one may find imaginative and impressive currents in a vast ocean of bland entertainment.

More than two decades of cross-border flow of Hong Kong movies and popular music to the mainland encouraged and supported a new and unexpected community of viewers and critics. When Hong Kong movies were still illegitimate goods prohibited from circulation by the Chinese government, many were able to access them through the technologies of videocassette disc (VCD) and digital videodisc (DVD). This exposure turned some viewers into cinephiles familiar with world cinema's classics and auteur films. Their favored choices of Hong Kong comedies, crime thrillers, and classic Shaw Brothers' movies of the past gives them cause to cast a critical eye on co-produced films (Shen 2012). As will be shown later, selective appropriations of Hong Kong film classics in China's independent films have come via this undocumented, illicit exposure. One outcome of this once-underground flow is that mainland critics and cinephiles are as capable as their Hong Kong counterparts in identifying any worthy "hidden currents" in films, and many have learned to become equally watchful over the comparative achievements of other cinemas.

Within reviews of co-produced films in journals, newspapers, and published monographs, there is often evidence of film studies education taking effect among educated viewers. An often used citation from the translated study of *Planet Hong Kong* (David Bordwell 2000) to describe the appeal of Hong Kong films as "all too extravagant, too gratuitously wild" (*jin shi guo huo, jin shi dian kuang*), for example, indicates that in China Hong Kong films continue to be subject to transnational appraisal via cyberspace in which Chinese critics participate. On the other hand, a Sinocentric disavowal of Hong Kong as a relevant cinematic entity in co-production films has emerged, to fuel a debate over vanished identity versus remnant but vital currents.

Just as transnational flows are a phenomenon of cultural globalization, concepts related to the latter can be adopted to examine co-produced films. That is, co-produced films are not just about China and Chineseness on the one side, and Hong Kong or Hongkongness on the other. One such concept is "managed globalization," a reference to China's state initiation of bilateral trade agreements to manage the process of cultural globalization following the country's membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The term "managed globalization" refers to the PRC government's top-down policy-making and intervention in managing growth of the country's economy within a world market economy. Various management strategies help to expand the circulation of Chinese cultural products by permitting increased private ownership to loosen the grip of state monopoly, allowing imported entertainment to indulge the audience's fantasies, and making reforms in management and business practices (Yan 2002). Thus, "managing" refers not only to the state's strategies to "maximize benefits and minimize vulnerabilities" (Saunders 2000); these strategies are aligned with Chinese capitalism flourishing without forgoing the engineering of Chinese nationalism and content control. The Chinese state recognizes and allows open criticism of capitalist globalization with US domination, but nationalism with internal hegemony and

colonization remains a blind spot to many. Instead, the dominant market occupation model becomes one that drives management reform and restructuring of many sectors, which in the film industry means a private sector of companies in film production, and a select few getting into the business of film distribution and exhibition. Managed globalization thus mirrors capitalist globalization in creating opportunities of immense profit for a small number of operations, and hence the development of sharp inequalities. From this top-down perspective, film co-production with Hong Kong and other places through bilateral trade agreements amounts to reorienting China's film sector to an industry mode with the commercial and export capacity as measure of its success.

Taking note of the ways managed globalization translates global forces into the state's legitimacy and authority through managing economic growth does not mean that state intervention and CEPA are the sole determining force in shaping the life of cultural productions. By taking note of the undocumented flows of movies and movie-exhibition technologies into the mainland, I raise the previously remarked tendency to seek out unofficial cultures and the uncommon illuminations of (popular) cultural productions on the part of viewers. In this discussion this may be taken as another substantial force in the long-term reception and recognition of a cinema's strengths and merits that outlasts the relatively fast cycles of economic boom and bust. Besides, just as audiences of the late 1990s voted against bland Hong Kong productions by closing their wallets, the same has happened to Hong Kong audiences' response to many bland co-produced films. Alertness to the quality issue revealing the downside of state-granted protection and privilege as twin problems of managed globalization is essential, especially if cultural productions in their local or co-produced forms are to affect impressionable, transnational imaginations through various auditory-visual "currents."

In the business culture of Hong Kong filmmaking, survival is both a strength and a problem. Since the 1950s, commercial filmmaking in Hong Kong has been financed by transregional capital, with Asian investors, relocated entrepreneurs and artists (writers, directors, photographers and so on), and regional and overseas audiences. Transregional resources and cross-border ventures were key to accumulation (Fu 2007). They reflect cultural globalization through flexible accumulation of capital and resources (Ong 1997), not to mention assimilation and synthesis of various regional cultures and global genre idioms (Yau 2001). Flexibility as a *modus operandi* implies being open to co-investment, co-production, dialogue dubbing, outsourcing, and modifying of content and scenes in order to enhance mobility of production as well as access to different regional and overseas markets (Chan 2011). Strategies to seek multiple sources of funding including pre-sales and a regular export trade of low- to medium-budget martial arts, crime thriller, and romantic comedy movies have sustained a small industry's intermittent growth (Stokes and Hoover 1999). The successes have put this cinema on the map of cross-cultural consumption, along with popular reception of Hong Kong movie stars overseas (Farquhar and Zhang 2010). Working through

the postwar years of industry building and Mandarin / Cantonese filmmaking separate from its Shanghai antecedents, the experiences of export-oriented production and genre filmmaking have built legacies that make Hong Kong film culture a vital part of postwar popular culture in East Asia (Fu 2003). Adoption of a modern identity and translation of idioms from capitalist cinemas, including those of noir, musical, and urban romance have also taken place since the 1960s. The stories of absent fathers, police / gangster entanglements, returning ghosts, romanticized criminals, and lonely rebels share an anti-authority outlook, including disrespect towards official history. These films of the 1980s and the 1990s incorporated and reinvented idioms of Hollywood, European, Japanese, and early Cantonese cinema to make icons that circulated to global screens and were transnational. Despite their popularity, these films are regarded as carrying the stigma of “spiritual pollution” in the eyes of PRC film officials. This is a clear indication that the anti-authority outlook of Hong Kong films of the 1980s and 1990s does not fit with China’s political idioms and monitored sensibility, meaning that attempting to adopt idioms and sensibilities from either side would lead to contradictory ideologies and inconsistent outlooks. Following official permission, the problem of ready compliance as the downside of adaptability shows up in early co-produced films made with a “mercenary approach,” a ready “(self-) mainlandization” and a “utilitarian nationalism” (Szeto and Chen 2012; Chu 2013). These prominent characteristics of compliance, though obvious since the mid-2000s, have their local precedents in the guise of cheap imitations of successful genre films and mercenary filmmaking. Among other reasons, one must acknowledge the lack of government and social resources applied to the cultivation of literary talents and creative filmmaking practices during most of the colonial era during which time commercial culture was always given heavy emphasis in the city. The outcome of the neglect, and transregional survival tactics, has been the evolution of a general mediocrity in industry practice as well as in the Hong Kong movies. Hence, a time of ample funding of mainland operations with new restrictions immediately prompts manifestation of a utilitarian ethos that reveals a lack of the resources of imagination needed to fuel and sustain reflections and alternative possibilities.

The co-produced films of Hong Kong and China destabilize the singular identity of Hong Kong cinema of the 1990s along with the bounded notion of a PRC cinema of the mainland. In most studies completed during that era, despite mentions of a “China–Hong Kong” identity question, and analysis of representations illustrating a “China syndrome” in the local Hong Kong features, there has been little discussion of co-production, including cross-border productions on the mainland. One obvious reason has been an intense interest on local culture before the 1997 takeover. A good example is in a seminal discussion of Hong Kong films of the 1990s as the products of a cultural space of disappearance in which the films *Once Upon a Time in China* (Tsui Hark, 1991–93), *Center Stage* (Stanley Kwan, 1992), and *Ashes of Time* (Wong Kar-wai, 1994) are taken to illuminate their directors’

response to this space (Abbas 1997: 24). The fact that all three films have undertaken a cross-border mode of co-production in the mainland is rarely, or never, mentioned; the films' material and symbolic relations to these conditions as well as their transregional imagination are left out of the discussion, thus turning the cross-border phenomenon into one of disappearance. To insist on appearance and visibility can be a problem itself. The naming of co-produced films as "China-Hong Kong co-production films" (*zhong gang he pai pian*) for certain critics already carries with it a hierarchical order, with the dominance of the nation-state, or just the state, taken for granted by many. Critics who are convinced of the disappearance of Hong Kong into China have used such words as "melt" (*rong*, taken to mean total assimilation), "encompass" (or "include") (*rong*), and "getting grounded" (*jie di qi*) to name China's encompassing of Hong Kong cinema on the basis of production site, finance, and market, so that it is an abstract "China," rather than the PRC film industry (which is another subject beyond the scope of this discussion), that acts as the grand center of assimilation. This simplified notion has excluded the actual film business operations that are always network-based, lack transparency, are prone to reversals – boom and bust – and characterized by splitting as much as by temporary partnerships (Zhang 2008; Zhan 2013).³ When a nationalist perspective of co-production has already gone so far as to disavow the role of Hong Kong in the process, Hong Kong cinema is taken as no more, and the relocated directors are no longer Hong Kong directors, even if mainland critics may bemoan the existence in recent co-production films of recycled generic formulas and hackneyed plot twists from earlier Hong Kong films.⁴ The fact that those formulas are so well known to the mainland audiences, while the reverse has not been the case with the Hong Kong audience, can serve as an argument that a cinema and its transnational reach do not vanish altogether but remain a debated issue. To many Hong Kong-based critics, mainland relocation means a kind of sell-out, abandonment, and explicit subjection to the powerful tactics of control (Choy 2010), thus a disappointment when it comes to any self-expression of Hong Kong in the co-produced films. Hope is also invested in the young and recent entrants to local independent filmmaking (Shum 2014), along with awareness of the incorporation of explicit Hong Kong-style narrative strategies in co-production films so they can better compete with "indigenous" commercial films directed by young mainland directors.

The debates on the identity and future of Hong Kong cinema manifest existing divergences anticipated in the "One Country, Two Systems" setup adopted by the PRC ruling regime under its leader Deng Xiaoping. Since China's takeover of Hong Kong in 1997, "one country, two cinemas" has become more than a mere fact. So far, putting Hong Kong filmmakers in co-produced films has been a part of managed globalization (as a gainful outcome of bilateral trade agreement) and an instrument of state assimilation (through cultural renationalization of film content). In what respect should co-production be taken as a distinct yet continuous entity from the cinemas of the PRC and Hong Kong? Clearly, the practice

operates under a separate set of regulations. There are procedural, technical, and stylistic relations of continuity and discontinuity between these two cinemas, such that as an entity it includes the limitations and dreams of more than one cinema. It is certainly possible for a Sinocentric view to encompass the cinematic entities with terms like a “Greater Chinese cinema” and a “Greater China filmmaker.” For this discussion, I retain the connecting dash in “Hong Kong-in-mainland operations” and “China–Hong Kong co-production film” to take note of the spatial dynamics, cultural politics, and reinventions that put certain putative characteristics of Hong Kong films and Hong Kong culture in suspense. The dash acknowledges the flows of images, ideas, narratives, and styles across various terrains, provoking localization tendencies along with competitive forms of mimicry and cinema-building. There are other possible descriptions of the relocations and dislocations in “China–Hong Kong co-production films” in general, and the phenomenon of “mainland-in-Hong Kong” suggests discussions that will not be pursued here. Taking insight from Arjun Appadurai, connectivity through translocal and transregional flows is also understood as incapable of stopping disjunctures, resistances, and differentiations from occurring (Appadurai 1996). Hence, instead of adopting the “death of Hong Kong cinema” as a notion to characterize co-production as discussed above, the emphasis is on the performances and mutations of Hong Kong cinema in the making of China’s commercial cinema that continue to generate responses to cultural globalization, mainland resources, and mainland audiences. For the same reason, China’s cinema does not remain the same when the mediascapes, ideoscapes, and business practices of filmmaking in China have incorporated mixed legacies and ideas from elsewhere. Thus, the “China–Hong Kong” co-production cannot be considered under the national paradigm alone.

The context and related issues of Hong Kong-in-mainland operations and the co-production films of Hong Kong and China discussed above are further elaborated in the following related aspects: 1) the salient business moves of Hong Kong industry, involving producing, filmmaking, and multiplex business as a transregional force of global culture; 2) an alternative potentiality of Hong Kong films, with examples of critical appropriations that identify alienation as a shared condition of modernity; and 3) an example of partnership and a discussion of a partnership imaginary of two co-produced films.⁵

Hong Kong Films and Business in the Chinese Mainland

The movement of Hong Kong film industry to the Chinese mainland has well-known causes linked to economic decline since the mid-1990s (Teo 2008: 342). Many directors sought opportunities but found reduced transregional funds, and experienced technicians moved to work in mainland television stations. In China, many state film studios also struggled financially with insufficient box-office

receipts to cover production costs, low productivity, and low morale (Zhu 2003). Membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was seen as an inevitable step, and with bilateral trade agreements increasing the number of imported films from ten titles per year at the outset to 34 titles in 2012, there was a rise in film distribution and exhibition.⁶ Hollywood and Hong Kong imports accounted for more than two-thirds of the market share. This meant “fierce debate[s] and sharp division” regarding cultural imperialism and how China’s filmmaking might survive its encounter with an aggressive and experienced Hollywood (Su 2011).⁷ Hong Kong movies quickly reaped rewards from being counted among China’s annual film imports, with quite a few run-of-the-mill features taking in ten to 40 times more than could have been earned from the Hong Kong box-office alone. China Film Corporation, the state film distributor, also gained from the import-distribution boom, while China’s state film studios got the least direct benefit. The state’s liberal economic policy created other new inequalities with the granting of a film distribution permit to one private company and allowing certain private investors to get into movie multiplex building in metropolitan Beijing and Shanghai, followed by the well-populated second- and third-tier cities. Imported films appealed massively to young viewers seeking weekend and holiday entertainment, and an expanding market sped up the cycles of production, distribution and exhibition.

Permission for private enterprises in an emerging commercial cinema in China changed the outlook of many cultural brokers. To them, the China that had been a place of forbidding politics, material scarcity, and state propaganda for decades turned into a vast marketplace of young consumers with spending power that meant an industry boom in the early twenty-first century. Four Hong Kong companies (Edko Films, Media Asia, Emperor, and Mandarin) were among the ones that immediately took advantage of opportunities for expansion under CEPA. Edko Films, a longstanding Hong Kong distribution company specializing in art-house films since 1950, set up a Beijing office and invested in blockbusters as well as medium-budget co-produced films including *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Ang Lee, 2000), *House of Flying Daggers* (Zhang Yimou, 2004), *American Dreams in China* (Peter Chan, 2013), and *Finding Mr. Right* (Xue Xiaolu, 2013). By investing in the features directed by Ang Lee and Zhang Yimou, Edko (Beijing) Films gained blockbuster producing experience and global reach. Media Asia Entertainment Group, a Hong Kong-based production / distribution company since 1994, signed regional and China-based contracts for telecasted movies, and established Shanghai Media Asia Limited to consolidate regular business with the Shanghai Film Group to produce and distribute co-produced films. Media Asia also invested in China’s Huayi Brothers’ productions that banked on the reputation and popularity of director Feng Xiaogang that includes *A World without Thieves* (2004), *The Banquet* (2006), and *If You are the One* (2008), and also in the Poly-Bona financed and distributed features that were shot in mainland (such as *The Warlords*, directed by Peter Chan, 2007 and *A Beautiful Life*, directed by Andrew Lau, 2011) and in Hong Kong (*Triangle*, co-directed by Tsui Hark, Ringo Lam, and Johnnie To, 2007).

The boom times that have seen Media Asia grow into an entertainment conglomerate is an example of the tendency to integrate movie-making with television drama production and the music business.⁸ Emperor Entertainment Group is a subsidiary film company of Hong Kong's Emperor Group, with business in financial services, real estate, film production, star management, concerts, television, publication, jewelry, and restaurants.⁹ Emperor CEO Albert Yeung has invested in co-production films such as *CZ12* (2012) and in Hong Kong-made features (such as *Blind Detective*, Johnnie To, 2013) targeted towards the China market.¹⁰ Mandarin Film Distribution (1991) has produced films and run multiplexes in Hong Kong and it owns subsidiary companies Mandarin Film Production (Singapore), the Mandarin Laboratory International (in Hong Kong), and a sound recording studio. Besides investing in profitable co-production films including *Ip Man I* and *II* (Wilson Yip, 2008 and 2010), it runs a profitable Mandarin (post-production) Laboratory (in Hedian in Zhejiang Province), and a Mandarin publicity company (in Beijing).¹¹

Hong Kong investments also moved into the multiplex chains in the mainland. Ng See-yuen, a local director turned film exhibition entrepreneur, founded the UME (Ultimate Movie Experience) Cineplex with ownership of new movie multiplexes in the cities of Guangzhou, Shanghai, Chongqing, and Hangzhou.¹² Action star Jackie Chan acquired co-ownership of thirteen "Jackie Chan-Yaolai International cinema" multiplexes in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xian, Tianjin, Zhengzhou, Chengdu, Kunming, and four other cities.¹³ In the US, going to movie multiplexes has diminished significance as the result of choices afforded by DVD rentals, personal collections, cable selections, and internet sites (Acland 2003; Klinger 2006), whereas in China in 2014 about 1,609 screens were added in the first three months, making a total of 20,007 screens. Film entertainment in shopping mall multiplexes provides a stable locus of visual consumption especially during the holidays and the New Year (Coonan 2014).

In the years 2012 and 2013, reported annual box-office returns in the PRC went up to RMB 17 billion (approximately US\$2.8 billion) and RMB 21.8 billion (US\$3.6 billion) respectively, from RMB 810 million (US\$97.8 million) in 2000.¹⁴ The new commercial Chinese films (of which co-produced features have the most prominent box-office presence) took nearly 58 percent of the annual market share in these years alongside the imported "mega features" (*da pian*) from Hollywood (Qing 2007; Frater 2013). The China market now accounts for about 40 percent of the annual growth in Hollywood movies' box-office returns from the Asia-Pacific region. This is prompting studio executives and independent producers to line up features targeted to this market and to initiate co-production deals (Frater 2013).¹⁵

The better-known co-produced films depend on the recycling, reuse, and reinvention of various established Hong Kong genre idioms to a mainland-based story. Collaboration in producing, a Hong Kong director at the helm, and employment of proportionate numbers of creative artists (according to the quota set by CEPA)

constitute the norm. Genre variations include crime thrillers (*Drug War*, Johnnie To, 2012), comedies (*CJ7*, Stephen Chow, 2008), martial arts dramas (*Ip Man I and II*, Wilson Yip, 2008 and 2010; *The Grandmaster*, Wong Kar-wai, 2013), martial arts action in 3-D technology (*Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*, Tsui Hark, 2011), rags-to-riches fantasy (*American Dreams in China*, Peter Chan, 2013), romance (*Love in the Buff*, Edmond Pang, 2012), and remakes of Mao era classics (*The Silent War*, Alan Mak and Felix Chong, 2012). The mainland-based locations, acting talents, cultural sensibilities, history, and nationalist sentiments infuse what one may call the films' cultural renationalization, while there remains a range of styles, narrative strategies, and craftsmanship that make the obvious legacies and currents of Hong Kong cinema and popular culture.

Stringent censorship tampers with certain content but cannot homogenize the selective adoption of global and local idioms. The auteur director Wong Kar-wai, for example, undertook a thorough study of the existing traditional schools of martial arts in the mainland in preparation for his reflective, melancholic, and diaspora-infused martial arts drama *The Grandmaster* (2013). Its story of affective disappointment is what has characterized the films *Chungking Express* (1994) and *In the Mood for Love* (2000), now translated into the missed appointment of two martial arts masters, Ip Man (Tony Leung) and Gong Er (Zhang Ziyi), whose affection for each other begins with their spectacular match / fight in a gilded pleasure house in Foshan where Northern and Southern masters meet in southern China, then ends years later in the diaspora setting of Hong Kong. The cosmopolitan outlook and restraint that Ip Man displays as the Wing Chun master is put to the test not merely by the challenging of other masters, but by grandness itself being put to test through temptations to arrogance, compliance for survival, a vengeful guarding of family honor, and lowly living with painful memories of loss. The film draws from the fame of Bruce Lee as the best-known disciple of Ip Man, without investing in a ready-made nationalism that the film *Ip Man I* has.

In a first full-scale co-production film, Johnnie To relocates the genre convention of police procedural to an old city section of Tianjin, and the film adopts the well-honed narrative strategies of doubling and mirroring, entangled destinies, and suspense based on mistrust that have characterized Milkyway productions. The usual cast that appears in many Johnnie To films becomes an ensemble that is pursued by relentless mainland cops.¹⁶ Alan Mak and Felix Chong co-directed a feature that has precedents in China's "anti-espionage films" by having Tony Leung playing a mute piano-tuning worker with superior auditory capacities and who is taken captive by the Communist to detect hard-to-catch enemy Morse codes, thus adapting what they did with code-sending in *Infernal Affairs* to a civil war setting. Even though film crafting continues, the popularity of the transferring and adapting process has put many film directors into a low-creativity mode of repackaging.

It is no surprise that genre filmmaking expertise was a welcomed presence in the commercial turn of China's cinema. From *Crazy Stone* (Ning Hao, 2006) to

Table 1.1 Hong Kong Directors' Co-production Films in China (2003–2013)

Director	Films shown in China	Box Office in Yuan
Johnnie To	<i>Don't Go Breaking My Heart</i> (單身男女, 2011)	95.5 million
	<i>Life without Principle</i> (奪命金, 2011)	24.8 million
	<i>Drug War</i> (毒戰, 2012)	147.54 million
	<i>Blind Detective</i> (盲探, 2013)	209.13 million
Wong Kar-wai	<i>2046</i> (2004)	30 million
	<i>The Grandmaster</i> (一代宗師, 2013)	288.28 million
Tsui Hark	<i>Seven Swords</i> (七劍, 2005)	83.45 million
	<i>All About Women</i> (女人不壞, 2008)	22.8 million
	<i>Detective Dee and the Mystery of the Phantom Flame</i> (通天神探狄仁傑, 2010)	295.5 million
	<i>The Flying Swords of Dragon Gate</i> (龍門飛甲, 2011)	540.55 million
Ann Hui	<i>Detective Dee: Rise of the Sea Dragon</i> (狄仁傑之神都龍王, 2013)	601.72 million
	<i>Jade Goddess of Mercy</i> (玉觀音, 2003)	5 million
	<i>The Postmodern Life of My Aunt</i> (姨媽的後現代生活, 2006)	6.64 million
	<i>A Simple Life</i> (桃姐, 2012)	68.19 million
Peter Chan	<i>Perhaps Love</i> (如果愛, 2005)	29.8 million
	<i>The Warlords</i> (投名狀, 2007)	201.1 million
	<i>Wu Xia</i> (武俠, 2011)	173.3 million
	<i>American Dreams in China</i> (中國合夥人, 2013)	539.28 million
Benny Chan Muk-sing	<i>Rob-B-Hood</i> (寶貝計劃, 2006)	92 million
	<i>Connected</i> (保持通話, 2008)	44 million
	<i>City Under Siege</i> (全城戒備, 2010)	88 million
	<i>Shaolin</i> (新少林寺, 2011)	210.3 million
Jacob	<i>The White Storm</i> (掃毒, 2013)	236.59 million
	<i>A Battle of Wits</i> (墨攻, 2006)	61.5 million
	<i>Rest on Your Shoulder</i> (肩上蝶, 2011)	6.8 million
	<i>The Storm Warriors</i> (風雲II, 2009)	59.53 million
The Pang Brothers (Danny Pang Phat & Oxide Pang Chun)	<i>Out of Inferno</i> (逃出生天, 2013)	132.71 million
Wong Ching-po	<i>Mob Sister</i> (阿嫂, 2005) (not shown nationwide)	5 million

Sources: CEPA 港片導演這10年: 別再叫我們港片導演, 我們已經找到大陸的感覺 <http://news.mtime.com/2013/12/02/1521253.html>; 太平洋電影網 <http://www.cinema.com.cn>; 藝恩娛樂諮詢 <http://www.entgroup.cn>; 中國電影報 <http://weibo.com/u/2304129841>. All accessed May 22, 2014. The ordering of the directors follows that of the sources.

Finding Mr. Right, the former a comedy with investment from megastar Andy Lau and the latter a romantic comedy with investment from Edko Films (Hong Kong and Beijing), China's young directors have been making their first commercial features. The change in their box-office records within six years is telling: the former made around RMB 23 million and the later RMB 85 million in the China market. Commercial ventures with low investment came into the scene quickly as well: *Lost in Thailand* (Xu Zheng, 2012), a low-budget slapstick comedy with a traveling story (thus a road movie setup) features a country bumpkin with good moral values. It cost RMB 30 million and it made RMB 1 billion in box-office returns.¹⁷ A cycle of medium- and low-budget features, mostly romances and comedies, reliably draw teenage audiences into the multiplexes (Zhang 2010). Not unexpectedly, urban dramas, comedies, and teen pics with vernacular expressions offer strong competition to China–Hong Kong co-production films and Hollywood imports. Their intimate stories, indigenous sensibility, evocations of collective memory, and local expressions, including hard-to-translate jokes, place emphasis on place-based specificities and have many cinema precedents that compete well against Hollywood imports. Seen this way, young Chinese directors finding ways to compete with high-budget imports and co-production films are not unlike the young Hong Kong directors responding to Cantonese films in the early 1980s. What they make for China's commercial cinema tends to promote global escapist entertainment.

The Hong Kong-in-mainland operations and the Hong Kong co-production films in China (or China–Hong Kong co-production films) have features that are similar to co-productions in international film history; they are distinct from China's occasional co-productions with Europe and Hollywood.¹⁸ From the perspective of past and existing articulations, the features can be summarized in seven points:

- 1 Hong Kong action cinema has moved on from its historical connection with Shanghai to running its own course, with well-crafted, emotion-loaded films of the martial arts and crime thriller variety; flexible accumulation through overseas markets and co-production help in handling a declining audience and in seeking out new markets.
- 2 The issues of preserving national film production, protective regulations, state intervention (including sponsorship), profit share, proportionate numbers of cast and crew from the co-producing sides, the approval process, mobility of labor, reservations and complaints are simultaneously common to co-production settings and specific to the changing mainland and Hong Kong contexts.
- 3 Reinventions of global genre idioms in Hong Kong's cosmopolitan urban setting have shaped the incorporation of selective Chinese cultural resources for several decades, whereas co-produced films in China require new de-selection and re-selection of idioms.

- 4 A rapid expansion in movie screens and distribution business has given a boost to production, with relatively short cycles of return and re-production as an indication of China's existing market potential.
- 5 Disparities in film production culture and business culture between the mainland and Hong Kong have set the relocated producers and directors on the watch for financial risks and partnership with China's state film corporations and successful (semi-)private entities.
- 6 A lack of transparency in China's network- and relation-based film industry is compounded by increasing vertical integration of production and distribution.
- 7 Competition from young Chinese directors and from China's co-production projects with other countries can mean short-term stability for the relocated Hong Kong directors. Should more co-productions with Hollywood materialize, the competition could put the relocated Hong Kong directors in the same insecure position as the state film studio directors have experienced (Yu 2009).

Appropriation and Reinvention in China

In 1986, John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* featured a professional gunman who took down a horde of rival gangsters in smooth, near-dancing, movements but was wounded and became a crippled guard of a parking lot. The film was released when local protests against the building of a nuclear power plant in southern China (Guangdong Province) got no response from the PRC authorities. The besieged hero, played by Chow Yun-fat, is an underdog with the capacity to take control of things in the right direction but suffers betrayal and the kind of slight that resonates with a collective sense of helplessness at the time. Li Cheuk-to, commenting on the coincidence of the film's pessimistic melancholy and the social activism's failed result, noted that the film (along with *City Kids* [Poon Man-kit, 1989]) exemplifies a paradigm shift from that of waning of tradition and family ethics to the idea of fraternal honor in an uncertain future, which the present generation must confront without assurance (Li 1994). What later became known as classic "heroic bloodshed" movies, featuring men with aspirations, skills, and a sense of honor who try but fail to overcome powerful forces of evil, have cross-border resonance with certain experiences, including those during the Cultural Revolution and other hard times. Their social imaginary of alienation, distrust, injustice, and inadequacy, in which the individual is forced to pay a high cost to survive, bespeaks of a different perspective on the promised progress of Chinese modernity. With an anti-authority outlook and devoid of didacticism, the films also provided escapist entertainment for the young. Evidence of their popularity can be seen in the large numbers of itinerant peddlers and tiny neighborhood stores selling pirated Hong Kong movies on VCD in the mainland rather than any public sales records (Wang 2003). These were also early encounters with capitalism

and many young viewers only belatedly intimated their familiarity with this cinema by way of cyberspace and written comments on their stars and other memorable sights and sounds.¹⁹

A belated, open homage to John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* appeared two decades later in the movie *Still Life* (Jia Zhangke, 2006). Known to critics as an auteur of China's cinema for his innovations in holding together both fiction and documentary modes in the narrative space, Jia Zhangke is acquainted with Hong Kong movies of the 1980s. *Still Life* is an intricate sonic and visual articulation of cinema that takes a view of modernization from the ground up. A migrant worker looking for his departed wife and daughter meets a young man in a small town that is about to be submerged under massive flooding as the result of the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. The man, who tells others to call him "little Ma," performs like Chow Yun-fat: he lights a cigarette with a money bill, mimics a show of brotherhood, but admits his helplessness by taking a line from the John Woo classic: "We are no longer suitable for the times, because we are too nostalgic." His dead body is later covered by a heap of debris, then given a river burial that mirrors the submerging of living habitations under a monumental project of state modernization in the Upper Yangtze River.

A critical view from the grassroots also features in a portmanteau feature, *A Touch of Sin* (Jia Zhangke, 2013). The film's name is a homage to King Hu's Taiwan *wuxia* classic *A Touch of Zen* (1971), and two of the four episodes depict a humiliated man and a humiliated woman turning to violence to enact their own justice where no other persons or means exist between each alienated individual and the evils of rampant corruption, underclass oppression, and misogynist attitudes towards a female as sex service provider. He puts a gun to use and she does the same with a blade. There is no hint of redemptive honor or Brother Fat-type friendship; instead, there are violent, lonesome assertions battling the high and low forces of abjection.

In view of the provocative use of genre idioms, it is not an exaggeration to note that Sinophone martial arts and crime films orient their viewers to the alienating forces of capital. Alienation was not an unfamiliar experience with nation-building years under the Mao regime, and, as shown in a Fifth Generation film *Peacock* (Gu Changwei, 2005), the state workers are cogs in the industrialization machine who monitor each other under strict prohibitions against self-expressions and individualism. Even as a source of "spiritual pollution" in the mainland, Hong Kong movies went into city neighborhoods and towns through the unplanned economy of smuggling. Not only action cinema but also comedies and Shaw Brothers productions drew attention to the material cultures of fashion, interior design, and privately owned automobiles along with various styles of individualist behaviors, bold language, and sentimentality to impart the lures and warnings of colonial capitalism. They contain paradoxical rewards and warnings of being urban, modern, individual, and cosmopolitan in the midst of ample instances of disappointment, betrayals, pathologies, and perversions. Put



Figure 1.1 Citation of Hong Kong film in *Still Life* (Jia Zhangke, 2006), an independent production.

differently, the alienating material, psychological, and symbolic dimensions of capitalist modernity address themselves through entertainment across social separation and ideological difference to appeal to an already alienated population under a different system that is drawn to that of another.²⁰

One subject of alienation is the border-crossing migrant who withstands setbacks and takes hold of new opportunities in big cities. Aside from the said appropriations of *Still Life* and *A Touch of Sin*, there are films before and after co-production that speak to the attractions of Hong Kong culture and their incorporation in Chinese capitalism. *Comrades*, *Almost a Love Story* (Peter Chan, 1996) and *Lost in Beijing* (Li Yu, 2007) completed before and after CEPA and on different sides of the Hong Kong–mainland border are illustrative instances. *Comrades* exemplifies migrant sensibilities through the popular songs of Deng Lijun (Teresa Tang), location scenes in Hong Kong and the US, and references to transnational imagination through stars and consumption. Its story of a young man and a young woman climbing the social ladder after they arrive at Hong Kong separately though on the same train from the northern and the southern mainland provinces illustrates the self-conscious adoption of migrant narratives. The female protagonist Li Qiao (played by Maggie Cheung) turns to working as a masseuse and cohabits with a gangster (played by Eric Tsang) before following him in his transPacific escape that land the undocumented couple in New York City. *Lost in Beijing* depicts sexual relations embroiled in monetary exchange and emotional revenge. Its story of a rural migrant couple working in lowly jobs in

Beijing has an oppressive setting. The married woman Pingguo (played by Fan Bingbing) was raped by a client (played by Leung Kar-fai) from southern Guangdong Province while serving him as a masseuse, and her husband Ah Kun (played by Tong Dawei), a window cleaning worker, arranges to sell her anticipated baby to the boss for a compensatory sum of money.²¹ Commenting on *Comrades*, Rey Chow notes that the character Li Qiao does not seek to return to old Communist values when interruptions to her pursuits appear; instead, she forges a substitute path that is enforced by the film's reified commodities including sweet music, thus making possible a "perverse process of subjectivization" (Chow 2007: 119). Similar perversions can be said of the decision made by Pingguo in *Lost* as well: she neither gives up wealth for the sake of her baby nor hangs onto her rich boss, but exits quietly with her baby and her boss's money without letting the men know of her whereabouts. This "perverse subjectivization" is reinforced by the films' attentiveness to material possessions and desire for youthful bodies. Not coincidentally, two migrant females in *Comrades* and *Lost* take on the part of female masseuse, withstand economic and sexual exploitation, and refuse to return to utopian collectivity. A departure from *Comrades'* nostalgic inflections, *Lost* goes for a dehumanizing setting of rape, womb appropriation, and wife-for-sale. Without enjoying the same reputation, the mainland production has made a bleak reinvention of the romantic migrant narrative.

The screen performances of well-established actors in co-production films serve as a measure of the mainstreaming of reinvention, counter to the instances discussed above. Changes in the screen roles of the native-turned-transnational actor Chow Yun-fat are telling: his performances in John Woo's "heroic bloodshed" films have inspired a critical appropriation noted above, but his roles have become more respectable: from playing a professional killer, wounded gunman, police mole, and prisoner in the 1980s, Chow becomes a screen emperor (*Curse of the Golden Flower*, Zhang Yimou, 2006), a scholar-philosopher (*Confucius*, Hu Mei, 2010), and General Yuan Shikai (*The Founding of a Party*, 2011). There have been occasional roles when Chow plays a business tycoon and veteran gambler when director Wong Jing got into co-produced features for release during the Chinese New Year. In less conventional narratives, Chow plays a warlord and his impersonator (*Let the Bullets Fly*, Jiang Wen, 2010) and a cheat (*The Postmodern Life of My Aunt*, Ann Hui, 2006). The latter is a feature set in contemporary, metropolitan Shanghai with a scene re-enacting an iconic image of Chow in raincoat walking away from the camera, but the tall man is no swinging gunman – he is a mere small-time operator who scams on a lonesome, middle-aged language teacher. The film's intersecting stories of abandonment and deception refuse to corroborate any prosperity narrative and instead, point to a broken state of familial and social bonds that have young and middle-aged females and males resorting to scant resources and perverse survival schemes.

Appropriation and reinvention involve the work of artists and cultural brokers that crosses the boundaries of national and local cinemas. In lieu of a comprehensive

study, it is important to note this form of “horizontal” connectivity that shapes the looks, styles, genre idioms, and sensibility of the films. There are several implications to consider: the space for evocative appropriations remains possible with narratives and genre idioms convening alienation, though there are only a few precedents of such while critical perspectives are largely missing in the co-produced films; the reinventions and references complicate the symbolic aspects of films such that the cross-border work that shape them is not reducible to economics alone, nor is state censorship the only reason to blame for films’ reticent cultural politics; the assimilation of Hong Kong cinema into that of the mainland is a complicated matter when set within a frame of cultural globalization that considers “horizontal” cross-cinema work with appropriation and reinvention open to various possibilities; and big business by way of partnership-based co-production and blockbuster filmmaking has the tendency to merge escapist entertainment with the acceptance of the subjectivization of capitalism.

Borrowing, mimicry, citation, and reinvention that are said to have marked Hong Kong cinema and its relationship to American, European, and Japanese films in the context of cultural globalization are relevant in examining co-productions. This is not to overstate replications of mimicry as a continuation of derivative filmmaking extending from commercial filmmaking in Hong Kong to China. To note a certain leveling capacity of genre conventions does not amount to saying that the films undergo an auto-Westernization, or that the differences in the two cinemas would be erased as the result of homogenization. Rather, the appropriation and reinvention complicates the territorial bounded concept of national cinema. With the film market in China open to Hollywood’s global reach, and China’s directors working in parallel with Hong Kong commercial genre filmmaking, the cultural renationalization of Hong Kong cinema entails intersections with global culture that cannot be reduced to economic or business assimilation. Scholars have noted that CEPA as a free-trade agreement is not a mere economic instrument; rather, its impact on Hong Kong film industry’s major economic restructuring has ramifications for film content, labor, and identity (Chu 2013; Szeto and Chen 2013). Whereas the notion of “renationalization” usually refers to the process by which private ownership is converted to state or public ownership, CEPA has included clauses stating the profit percentage that Hong Kong businesses in mainland can keep in private hands, thus only performing partial “nationalization” of profit while allowing the means of production to remain privately owned. Renationalization occurred with Shanghai cinema after the Communist takeover of private resources and merged all private companies into the state-run Shanghai Film Studio. The film directors, actors, writers, and artists became state employees and were subjected to campaigns of political criticism and ideological re-education that forbade them to connect with Western ideas and bourgeois cultures. By comparison, the takeover of Hong Kong in the year 1997 operated by way of the official “One Country, Two Systems” arrangement, with the mainland system remaining separate from that of HKSAR until the year 2046, at least theoretically so.

Rather than nationalization, there is cultural renationalization through the making of co-produced films whereby the mainland's setting, cultural sensibilities, historical events, spoken language, literary resources, and talents have prominent presence. Cultural engineering within the national territory is not the same as nationalization of private resources, as it does not rely on any prohibition against Hong Kong companies producing films to show outside China. Circulation of cultural renationalized films can easily make business a witting or unwitting partner of transnational projections of soft power.

Partnership

From the very start, distribution and release dates remain most important for co-produced films to do well. China Film Corporation has decision-making power over these aspects. In 2001, SAPPRT granted a film distribution license (*dian ying fa xing xu ke zheng*) to Bona Film Group, making it the first private company to get into the film distribution business. Yu Dong, founder and owner of Bona Film Group, is a 1994 Beijing Film Academy Management Department graduate. He gained domestic distribution experience with Beijing Film Studio and China Film Group from 1994 to 2000. Leaving state employment to start a small Beijing Bona Culture Communication Company that year, he first represented film studios and then started distributing China–Hong Kong co-production films by using a prepay method. With initial success, he first merged with a state-owned company to form PolyBona Film Distribution, and in 2006 bought back the shares then obtained private equity from Sequoia Capital to found Bona Film Group (Chu 2010). Within these six years, PolyBona and Bona distributed several co-production films with profitable returns: *The Touch* (Peter Pau, 2002), *Cat and Mouse* (Gordon Chan Ka-sheung, 2003), *Dragon Tiger Date* (Wilson Yip Wai-shun, 2006), *After This Our Exile* (Patrick Tam, 2006), and *Confession of Pain* (Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, 2006). It went on to distribute *The Postmodern Life of My Aunt* (Ann Hui, 2006), *Connected* (Benny Chan Muk-sing, 2008), and *Overheard* (Alan Mak and Felix Chong, 2009). Bona also joined with multiple investors in several co-produced films, including *Protégé* (Derek Yee Tung-sing, 2007), *Flash Point* (Wilson Yip Wai-shun, 2007), *The Warlords* (Peter Chan, 2007), *An Empress and the Warriors* (Ching Siu-tung, 2008), *Three Kingdoms: The Resurrection of the Dragon* (Daniel Lee Yan-gong, 2008), *Red Cliff* (John Woo, 2008), *CJ7* (Stephen Chow, 2008). With *Overheard* (2009), Bona Film Group began distributing co-production films back to the Hong Kong market. In December of 2010, Bona Film Group went public on NASDAQ by obtaining an Initial Public Offering (IPO). Bona achieved full vertical integration in the same year by acquiring multiplexes through Bona International Cineplex Investment & Management Company Limited. No antitrust lawsuits or decrees yet exist to prohibit vertical integration from happening quickly. Producing and

distributing 14 additional co-produced films took place in the following four years. The focused strategy has also ended in artistic recognition, with six of the Bona-invested features winning Best Film award at the annual Hong Kong Film Awards: *After This Our Exile*, *The Warlords*, *Bodyguards and Assassins* (2009), *Gallants* (2010), *A Simple Life* (2011), and *The Grandmaster* (2013).

There is a race for companies to get a substantial share in a booming yet unpredictable China film industry. As mentioned earlier, diversifying services and forming a small conglomerate make an obvious business strategy in the China operations of Media Asia, Emperor Entertainment, Edko Films, and Mandarin Films. Producing films has become the best way to guarantee a hand in their distribution. Bona Film Group, after building a record of success in distributing China-Hong Kong co-production films, went into producing. Yu Dong, its CEO, has extensive knowledge of domestic distribution; he also adopted star-studded celebration events common in the mega-festival of Cannes to attract media attention. With Polybona and Bona, Yu Dong has invested in several key Hong Kong directors. Ann Hui as one of the latter makes just such a reference in *A Simple Life*, in which Yu Dong makes a cameo appearance as a mainland producer to whom Hong Kong directors Tsui Hark and Sammo Hung pitch their film ideas as gainful ventures. Though brief, and set within a story of a mutually caring relationship between a Hong Kong film producer and his aging domestic helper, the scene contains a vignette of the budget-and-profit centered conversations and a mercenary approach as the centerpiece of mainland-centered partnerships after CEPA came into effect.²²

A well-publicized yet short-lived partnership involving Yu Dong, Peter Chan, and Huang Jianxin is a case of de-/selection in the process of vertical integration and flexible accumulation. Peter Chan has been a member of four film companies either as partner or founder / owner, a path closely linked to his own trans-regional trajectory. Having grown up in Thailand and studied for some years in the United States before landing in his film career in Hong Kong, Peter Chan is best known for his directorial success with *Comrades*, *Almost a Love Story* (1996). In 1991, he formed a partnership with Eric Tsang, Claudia Chung, and Lee Chi-ngai. Their company, UFO (United Filmmakers Organization Limited), made a few popular urban dramas with investment through presales with regional distributors. The best-known UFO films are: *Tom, Dick & Harry* (Peter Chan & Lee Chi-ngai, 1993), *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Father* (Peter Chan and Lee Chi-ngai, 1993), and *He's a Woman, She's a Man* (Peter Chan, 1994), and there were also a few flops (Chung 2011). UFO remained while Peter Chan went to Hollywood and directed *The Love Letter* (1999) for DreamWorks but did not find the corporate culture suitable for his career. As Hong Kong movies lost appeal for overseas investors and regional audiences in the late 1990s, Chan founded his company Applause Pictures to produce movies for the young in Asia's regional market, with some success in Thailand and Korea. Following the enactment of CEPA, Chan moved his office to Beijing, formed We Pictures with mainland director Huang Jianxin and focused

on making co-produced films. The co-produced genre films under his direction include a musical (*Perhaps Love*, 2005), an imperial intrigue (*The Warlords*, 2007), a mixed detective–martial arts film (*Wu Xia*, 2011), *Bodyguards and Assassins* (as producer), and a fantasy success story (*American Dreams in China*, 2013).

A member of China's Fifth Generation directors, best known for his cinema of the absurd, Huang Jianxin became a partner of Cinema Popular with Yu Dong and Peter Chan. Huang's early films won critical acclaim and were well recognized by scholars of post-socialist films (Pickowicz 1994). Counter to the Fifth Generation's festival films set in exotic and vague historical settings, Huang Jianxin took a challenging path, with social satirical films to illuminate life in contemporary urban China. His "post-socialist" films exhibit a range of salient absurdities in urban China of the post-Mao era linked to political paranoia, alienation, surveillance, and pathologies in everyday interactions. These include: *Black Cannon Incident* (1986), *Dislocation* (a.k.a. *The Stand-in*, 1987), *Samsara* (a.k.a. *Transmigration*, 1988), *Stand Up, Don't Bend Over* (1992), *Wooden Men's Bride* (1993), *Back to Back, Face to Face* (1994), *Signal Left, Turn Right* (co-directed with Yang Yazhou, 1996) *Surveillance* (co-directed with Yang Yazhou, 1997), and *Gimme Kudos* (2004) among others. Besides being invited to overseas film festivals, Huang Jianxin has lived in Australia and Hong Kong. Along with partnering with Peter Chan in We Pictures, Huang Jianxin became co-producer and co-director of China's government-sponsored major motif films *The Founding of a Republic* (2009) and *The Founding of a Party* (2011) with celebrity actors and directors from the mainland and Hong Kong. This change of direction is in keeping with China's Fifth Generation directors aligning their career with Chinese state capitalism, about two decades after most of the Hong Kong New Wave directors turned towards commercial genre films.

Cinema Popular announced its film production plans of 15 co-produced features within three years in February of 2009. *Bodyguards and Assassins* is the first feature of the group. Produced by Peter Chan and directed by Teddy Chan with help from Andrew Lau, *Bodyguards* brought profit to the company. Before the second production began, however, Yu Dong terminated the business relationship. The first production had a large daily cash outlay to pay for the completion of a nineteenth-century Hong Kong street movie set, and schedule delays due to the stars' over-scheduling with other productions. According to Peter Chan, the duration of a one-year production is the main concern for Yu Dong. Possibly, the usual problems that many directors have tolerated in Hong Kong-style productions became too risky for a cautious investor who has many options. Taking note of personality difference as an explanation for the end of the partnership, Peter Chan mentioned boundaries and his dominating work style (Sun 2013). Since Bona has already achieved vertical integration of distribution and exhibition, it simply deselects a partnership to reduce potential loss. Such is not the case for individual directors whose prospects are subject to existing and future systems of distribution and exhibition, be they in physical locales or digital platforms.²³

Partnership Imaginary and Cultural Memory

Deliberate and unexpected alliances have a longstanding presence in Hong Kong cinema, with the latter receiving elaboration through unlikely friendships between figures of the law and the outlaw, starting with the films of John Woo and Ringo Lam. Allies and companions have vernacular Cantonese expression “*say dong*” (buddy) invoking trouble-sharing. Written vernacular terms for “partner” include “*he zuo zhe*” (the people in cooperation with each other) and “*he huo ren*” or “*huo ban*” (the ones who cook together). Their written Chinese characters point to primitive aspects of the relation: “*he*” (unite) is made up of the “human” and “mouth”; “*huo*” (cooking, making meals) made up of “human” and “fire,” and “*ban*” (companionship) of “human” and “half.” They embed the reference to primary survival, companionship, and (co)existence. One may take liberties to extend the idea of “fire” to the “aspirations” or “passion” in partner relations. In a different context, a companion, partner, or a joint-owner appears in the classical Greek word *Koinonos*. The notion of *koinonia* has a rich first-century New Testament reference to the fellowship of a persecuted minority with a shared conviction. Partnership involves subjects sharing passion, conviction, and suffering aside from mere companionship or co-existence. By comparison, modern capitalist partnerships of the twentieth century, including state–corporate alliances, rely rather heavily on legal instruments, management technologies, and business options. Finessing of apparatuses and instruments for border-crossing capital and ventures clearly apply to CEPA and its supplementary clauses that brought about partnership and the completion of co-production films.

The co-produced film *Bodyguards and Assassins* carries an implicit partnership imaginary that puts a local tycoon and a teacher in the center of action. The fantasy action movie is set in the Victoria City of Hong Kong at the turn of the nineteenth century, when a few courageous workers defend their benefactor and master and end up fighting against the Qing imperial soldiers coming to the city to assassinate Dr. Sun Yat-sen and curb the sparks of the 1911 Revolution. This re-nationalizing packaging does not obscure the central maneuvers in the first half of the film whereby the tycoon’s established benevolence and influence are what brings together a team of bodyguards, thus making an uninspiring borrowing of the recruitment of bandit-fighting samurais *Seven Samurai* (Akira Kurosawa, 1954). Tycoon Li Yutang is played by China’s veteran actor Wang Xueqi (who has appeared in the Fifth Generation films as well as major motif films), a choice that echoes the rising prominence of mainland entrepreneurs as well as mainland corporations in Hong Kong, with possible allusion to the colonial legacies of integrating local tycoons and elites into its economic governance that supports neo-liberalism in HKSAR in the post-1997 years.²⁴ Li’s investment in his son’s education in the film finds ample reference in the Chinese parents who, though wary of Western ways of life, have put their children in famous overseas universities overseas to enhance the family’s

symbolic capital. The casting of roles and character details thus enact transregional imagination, with a story of ordinary workers and a theater troupe in Hong Kong who have birthplaces in China being an obvious reference to a long history of the city as a Chinese diaspora. A period drama set in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and a modern Revolution that generates no significant opposition among Chinese communities provide the grounds for the cooperation that is necessary for the co-production process.

There is a narrative of expected alliance between Li Yutang who supports the teacher Chen Xiaobai (Tony Leung Ka-fai) and his protection operation. Tycoon Li's reasons to risk his personal networks are not fully evident, though the businessmen intend to keep the status quo of a relatively open environment for business under colonial rule. His friendship with a Chinese superintendent in the colonial police force is an indication that there is common interest between them. Unexpected alliance has a role in the characterization of the operation's fighters or the bodyguards: one resistance member is an ex-general of Qing regime living in exile in Hong Kong who fights for survival; the other is a gambling-debt burdened policeman Shen Chongyang (Donnie Yen) who first sells his skills to the imperial force for money, then turns against its henchmen on the day of the operation. Shen fights valiantly to his death after deterring the advancement of the fierce assassins. His mind change is nonetheless embedded in a cliché of family melodrama rather than reveal any traces of popular crime thrillers: the gambling addict Shen abandoned his wife (Fan Bingbing) in a downward spiral, but determines to redeem his manhood and sense of honor by joining the bodyguard operation on his own after his ex-wife tells him that the lovely young girl living with her in Li Yutang's house is their daughter.

Not unlike Shen, the bodyguards partaking in the protection operation have little awareness of the political meaning of their action. Many do so to repay the tycoon Li's kindness. Alliance based on well-informed conviction is restricted to the young man Li Chongguang (Wang Po-chieh). As tycoon Li's teenage son, Chongguang embraces his teacher's ideals and chooses to forsake his privileged status by happily performing as stand-in for Dr. Sun in a decoy sedan procession to draw the assassin's attention away from the true Dr. Sun. This youthful passion contrasts with his father's cautious involvement, and has a direct opposite in the assassin team leader Yan Xiao-guo (Hu Jun) who pledges allegiance to Empress Dowager and the Qing regime. Yan's men catch and imprison teacher Chen Xiaobai. Coincidentally, Yan has received a Western education with teacher Chen Xiaobai, and he shows respect by delivering a plate of food to his teacher who refuses to eat anything. A brief conversation between him and teacher Chen reveals Yan's views: a modern education has given him reasons to mistrust the Western ways. The opposition between embracing and opposing ideals of liberal democracy refers to an off-screen debate regarding a Western road and a Chinese road that is century-long and ongoing. The opposing views receive no new insight in the film, which uses them as the basis for conflict when two sides engage in

life-and-death fights. Chongguang's inescapable death can be taken to carry a recognition of the imperial force's relentlessness, and also the film's lack of hope towards substantial change carried by the next generation.

The co-produced film makes cross-cultural references while performing cultural renationalization. Working as a star vehicle, it has young mainland singer Li Yuchun playing the daughter of the exiled general, and transnational martial arts star Donnie Yen engaging in a spectacular fight with Vietnamese-American kick-boxer and fighter champion Cung Le. A full-hour action sequence is set to match the film time as a device with precedents in *24* (2001–2010), an American television drama series, and *High Noon* (1952), a classic Western. Overstatement and mimicry carry over from previous action movies: two instances are ceaseless martial arts fights for an hour, and hyperdense business signs filling up the frames to make a fictive Central District of nineteenth century Hong Kong out of a movie set built in the mainland. A rickshaw rolling haplessly down a stone-paved street gives homage to the Odessa Steps sequence in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and makes allusion to the killing of those holding hopes for change. Commemoration of the 1911 Chinese Revolution is gestured by individual captions in the film frame placed next to each dying bodyguard making a virtual connection to actual historical figures. Each caption contains the person's name, years of birth and death, and native place that match not the actor's biography, but those of the actual heroes and martyrs of the 1911 Revolution event. More names at the end are identified with the uprisings that ended the Qing regime's rule in 1911.

A mixed-genre film, *American Dreams in China* (hereafter *Dreams*) is a coming-of-age story, a friendship melodrama, and a rags-to-riches fantasy tale. The aforementioned termination of production plans in Cinema Popular has not stopped Peter Chan from seeking mainland screenwriters and mainland actors to take up key positions working for him in making the film. The story also has resonance in the partnership imaginary in *American Dreams in China* that is overlooked in the many e-reviews of the film's messages.²⁵ Organized around the story of three ordinary students of a university in Beijing whose different paths in life come to converge in the cooperation of a highly profitable English language school that eventually acquired an IPO on NASDAQ, the film strikes a strong note to the emphasis put on enterprise success during three decades of China's overall economic boom. Critics identify the film's use of lawsuit to frame the story as a borrowed one from *Social Network* (David Fincher, 2010) and describe it as an "enterprise creation" history (*chuang ye shi*). Peter Chan appeared in an enterprise-based 2013 conference of the Boao Forum for Asia and won Best Director in the government's 2013 Golden Rooster awards. Its story of entrepreneurial success through the ups and downs of three decades of incessant development has an actual counterpart in a well-known "Xin Dongfang" (New East) English-language school with national branches providing preparation classes for tens of thousands of Chinese students to get good scores in Education Testing Services run examinations (TOEFL, GRE, and ACT are mentioned). Scenes in the film incorporate motivation speeches and attach a

can-do entrepreneurial spirit to ethnic pride. Its rags-to-riches story is accepted as a reflection of China's rise in the world economy and a new horizon of success that everyone can take as their dreams. This projected horizon nevertheless received a clear-eyed reception from the critics who read the dialogue that admits its lie: it is a business in mass deception with "chicken soup" sold to young students anxious about failure.

The partnership imaginary in this film has several social references that sustain public interest in the story. First, the country versus city backgrounds of business partners Cheng Dongqing (Wang Xiaoming) and Meng Xiaojin (Deng Chao) acknowledges a wide rift between the resources that each young man has which accounts for their difference in confidence and sense of entitlement in life. A bowing Cheng Dongqing in front of villagers who lend him money to attend university marks a lowly beginning that continues to characterize the experiences of exploitation and humiliation as a teacher. Meng Xiaojin's bold rebuttal of a teacher for imparting second-hand knowledge, adding to him being the first of the friends to enjoy a smooth exit to study and work in the US makes a clear contrast. His return to China after facing the dimmed prospects of upward social mobility not only has a tint of melancholy, the humbling reversal of fortune reflects a commonly held view towards the "overseas returnees" (*hai gui*, with the same sound as "sea turtle"). Initially shown with proportionate comic exaggerations and pity, Cheng Dongqing's inferior feelings, secret romantic longings, exploitation by senior members in the university, and expulsion from the state employment system make the very stuff of rejection that appeals to a massive audience stuck with scanty resources and limited opportunities. A man who has never left China (nicknamed *tu bie*, or "earthly turtle") but who finally achieves immense wealth, status, and an uncommon popular recognition out of persistence, hard work, and conservative management delivers a promise that supports the belief in a Chinese road to prosperity. The contrast between the overseas returnee and the indigenous businessman imply the strength of the partnership and a collusion with the official "Chinese Dream" of success rather than the tensions that have continued in the relationship.

Second, partners sharing experiences of failure due to personal, cultural, and systemic restrictions make as good a start as any. The intersecting stories are connected through the use of voice-off to add an interior dimension to what amounts to three personal testimonies on overcoming anxiety, gaining confidence, and living with limited prospects. A montage series of lectures and individual classes maintain the external aspect of work taken up by the young entrepreneurs. Cheng Dongqing develops a pedagogical style that integrates his inferior feelings to motivate a growing audience of young men and women from similarly humble backgrounds seeking assurance. Getting over shame as an inhibiting emotion takes the Freudian route of talking cure that incorporates every personal experience of limitations and failure into English words and phrases that make effective English-language acquisition. Meng Xiaojin, who has stage fright, chooses to give

personal coaching sessions to timid students so they can face up to the officials in visa application interviews. He also prompts Wang Yang (Tong Dawei) to incorporate his experience of dating an American girlfriend into conversation lessons. An unlicensed school operating in an empty state factory that cobbles the skills and experiences of its teachers together appeals to the viewer as one familiar scenario of the Chinese road to globalization. In the process, an indigenous venture is seen to grow out of a peasant boy's unmovable resilience as much as from an overseas returnee's American experience. A performance-based validation of Cheng and Meng is complemented by an adaptive attitude as an option speaking to the less competitive as well: apparently the most carefree among the three friends – having worn long hair, dated an American girlfriend, and written poetry in the 1980s, Wang Yang has been going with the flow. He not truly counter-cultural, however, for when circumstance changes, he cuts his long hair, burns his poems, and settles down with an easy-going woman.

Third, popular songs evoke nostalgia for the 1980s as an immensely creative time for music, movies, and politics. Among the nine songs, two of them allude to the idealism of an era. The music of “L’Internationale” evokes the memory of Tian’anmen student movement and solidarity across the student–worker divide in the face of forbidden powers for those who have gone through the event. Suppression of any image or mentioning of the event is a sign of enforced amnesia and its voluntary self-perpetuation. This tendency continues with the scene of Wang Dawei singing “The Boundless Sea and Sky” at a karaoke right after he and



Figure 1.2 *American Dreams in China* (Peter Chan, 2013): A returnee (Peter Chan and Hong Kong?) getting trimmed in a partnership ritual.



Figure 1.3 *Drug War* (Johnnie To, 2012) has an allegorical image of an involuntary partnership of death.

Cheng count their first stack of student fees and are feeling affluent. The song's lyrics refer to giving up one's ideals and going with the flow, which coincides with the young men's move to running language education classes for profit. Written by the late band singer and composer Wong Ka-kui, who insisted on keeping artistic integrity in the midst of a money-crazed entertainment scene, the song also calls to mind the tragedy when Ka-kui died an untimely death in Japan shortly after he gave in to making regular industry performances.²⁶ For an audience that knows the references, the songs do more than provide a negligible music background to a fantasy narrative. The cultural memory that the songs evoke inadvertently serve as a measure against the film's amnesia and its many compromises.

Watchful Partners, Hidden Currents

Peter Chan set the partners within performance-based goals so his film's imaginary is aligned with the official horizon in China's managed cultural globalization, with success measured by an IPO in NASDAQ. Johnnie To's *Drug War* has a different scenario on partnership by putting Milkyway crime thrillers to a co-production setting. It tells a story of a Hong Kong capitalist (drug) dealer Timmy Choi (Louis Koo) in the mainland turning into a police informant to escape the death penalty. Choi delivers his Hong Kong and mainland partners in crime to a police operation that is efficient, unmovable, and covers all locations with surveillance cameras and support. He survives the gun battles that kill his partners but fails to walk away for,

unbeknownst to him, the police captain Zhang (Sun Honglei) handcuffed himself to Choi's leg before he dies. A dead body of a state policeman chained tightly to one leg of a wounded Hong Kong informant who has gotten all of his allies killed makes a horrific, haunting kind of involuntary partnership. More grim and trenchant compared to the instance of a symbolic haircut in *American Dreams*, this allegorical image negotiates one cinema's narrative strategies in a different, restrictive co-production setting without mirroring compliance as the way to success. Still bound by repetitions of previous generic approaches and narrative strategies, the scene holds together an abiding cynicism with distance from unconscious self-alienation to make room for alertness to insidious tendencies.

The alliances, allegiances, betrayals, and deadly connections enacted in the above features have a corollary in the main issues and concerns of co-production. The partnership imaginary in these middlebrow co-production films is enacted through genre idioms as well as reinventions of previous Hong Kong films, including those produced by the same companies or directed by the same director who has relocated to the mainland. Taken as an extension of a small industry's historical cross-border performances and flexible accumulation practices, this imaginary cannot be reduced to co-production relations alone. A cultural memory of narrative strategies, creative film crafting, and transregional negotiation of the Hong Kong's colonial era restrictions and industry limitations does not vanish. Instead, this cultural memory is entangled with a retroactive identity of this cinema which infuses the co-produced films of Hong Kong and China in a particular manifestation of cultural globalization that is not entirely that of Hong Kong or of China. Partnership imaginary that engages different spatial dynamics and cultural memory can reinforce the chances of breaking out from previous successes and present misses, and that is yet to be realized.

Notes

- 1 On 1 July 1997, Hong Kong received the official name "Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" (HKSAR) after the People's Republic of China (PRC) assumed political sovereignty over the territory. It is territorially correct to speak of a "HKSAR" cinema. In this essay, I use "Hong Kong" as shorthand to refer to its cinema in pre- and post-1997 times. I adopt the use of "Chinese mainland" and "China" to refer to the PRC mainland (*zhongguo dalu*) that excludes the territory of Hong Kong. With co-produced films constituting the largest number of annual productions engaging most of the Hong Kong directors, one takes note of the changing referents of China–Hong Kong co-production and Hong Kong cinema. The "co-production of films" is now a historical practice and it may become outdated as a result of the rise of China's commercial cinema.
- 2 By 2014, up to 45 service sectors in the Chinese mainland had been placed under CEPA's liberalization clauses. The Hong Kong Trade Development Council's report on

- the sectors, and the inclusion of the financial sector, can be viewed in Ho, Dickson (2013): <http://economists-pick-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Research-Articles/CEPA-Supplement-X-and-Hong-Kong-s-financial-and-distribution-services-sectors/rp/en/1/1X000000/1X09VOV5.htm>. Accessed January 1, 2015.
- 3 See Zhang (2008); also Zhan (2013). The former includes such terms as “China consciousness” (*zhongguo yishi*), “same root same origin” (*tong geng tong yuan*), “cooperation and mutual assimilation” (*he zuo gong rong*). The latter takes the co-production films of 2009 to 2012 as showing “deep integration and assimilation” (*shen du rong he*) with films that show the directors and films have moved closer to the mainland culture (*neidi wen hua*) and values (*jia zhi guan*). (Except for the essay titles, the individual English terms are my translation.)
 - 4 The mainland internet film site “Mtimes” published a special section entitled “Do Not Call us Hong Kong Directors anymore” with a list of relocated Hong Kong directors and their co-production films. The account is mainland-based regarding the composite process of filmmaking in various locales. A table of names of the notable directors and their films are given in Table 1.1. See Nai Hui and An Di Yao Rao (2013).
 - 5 By “imaginary” I refer to the ways imagination, not just monetary gains or economic reason, figures in both the practice and the representation of co-production practice. Taking from Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities,” Charles Taylor wrote: “The social imaginary is not a set of ‘ideas’; rather, it is what enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society” (Taylor 2002, p. 91).
 - 6 Through the World Trade Organization, China agreed to raise the annual quota of imported Hollywood films from 20 to 34 (<http://www.filmbiz.asia/news/china-to-expand-film-import-quotas>. Accessed January 1, 2015). The actual number of imported films into the PRC each year is above this number if one counts the television sales of older feature movies, legal DVD and pirated DVD distribution, and pirate web-casts. When all legal and illegal venues are included, according to a Chinese internet source, the total can be over a thousand per year. See <http://news.mtime.com/2012/10/11/1499044-3.html>. Accessed February 19, 2014.
 - 7 As Wendy Su has pointed out, Chinese critics and writers use “Hollywood movies” as a generic term referring to a unified “Other” when talking about the latter’s threat on the PRC film industry. See Su (2011).
 - 8 For the business profile of Media Asia Group, see <http://www.mediaasia.com/en/about/group-structure>. Accessed January 20, 2015.
 - 9 For the business profile of Emperor Group, see <http://www.emperorgroup.com/en/Index.php>. Accessed January 20, 2015.
 - 10 The forming of conglomerates with subsidiary companies has altered the ecology of film production in Hong Kong and such is the tendency in the mainland. Profiles of Emperor’s CEO Albert Yeung are available at <http://www.hkcinemagic.com/en/people.asp?id=5300> and <http://www.emperorgroup.com/en/ourbusinesses.php?id=4>. Accessed January 1, 2015.
 - 11 Raymond Wong, the founder and executive director of the Mandarin group and the mastermind behind Mandarin Films’ family comedies and the *Ip Man* series (I, II), left his position to start a family-based Pegasus Entertainment Holdings company to replicate the success of production and distribution. Pegasus announced the production of *Ip Man* (III) in the spring of 2014.

- 12 For an overview of the growth of movie theaters and multiplexes in the PRC mainland, see Liu and Han (2012).
- 13 Jackie Chan's other co-owner is Sparkle Roll Group. Accordingly, the Beijing Jackie Chan-Yaolai International Cinema multiplex brought in RMB 80 million (US\$13 million) in 2010. <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20130501000113&cid=1102>. Accessed January 1, 2015.
- 14 Wang (2007).
- 15 See also Coonan and Roxborough (2013).
- 16 David Bordwell elucidates the narrative strategies of *Drug War* and includes an interpretation by Grady Hendrix in his blog: <http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2013/07/08/mixing-business-with-pleasure-johnnie-tos-drug-war/>. Accessed January 1, 2015.
- 17 In an interview, the film's producer Chen Zhixi acknowledges the challenge of finance, culture, and restrictions coming from the government for the PRC productions. Accordingly, the quality of talents, successful marketing through social media, and direct involvement of stakeholder in the project are some of what made the film successful. <http://knowledge.ckgsb.edu.cn/2013/03/29/china/lost-in-thailands-unique-business-model>. Accessed January 1, 2015.
- 18 Studies of European co-productions can offer historical references. Throughout the 1960s, for example, studios in Italy and Spain rented out facilities and crew for Hollywood's production of epics such *The King of Kings* (1961), *El Cid* (1961), and *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1963). Anglo-Italian co-productions with American investment brought about Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1966). Several director *auteurs* of New German cinema have made co-production films: *Despair* (1977) and *Querelle* (1982) both directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder; *Hammert* (1982) and *Paris, Texas* (1984), both by Wim Wenders, and *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) and *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) both by Werner Herzog. See Bergfelder, *International Adventures: German Popular Cinema and European Co-productions in the 1960s*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005 (53–4, 58, 240). The best-known China–US and China–Europe co-production features of the 1980s were *Empire of the Sun* and *The Last Emperor*. Bergfelder identifies key features in the co-production agreements in the German-European-American co-productions that are common in international film history. By 2011, China had signed co-production agreements with Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand, and Singapore and the numbers continue to expand. Some of the issues are discussed in Shackleton (2010).
- 19 At a panel that this writer attended during an official conference held in Beijing in 2004, several young critics working in official film institutions professed a familiarity with and love for the Hong Kong movies of the 1980s. The cyberspace is filled with personal comments on Hong Kong movies in personal blogs and reader's comments on movie pages.
- 20 A 1987 issue of Beijing-based film journal, *Contemporary Cinema* has “entertainment film” (*yu le pian*) in the feature section with extensive discussion of the characteristics of this different cinema, and the films of Hollywood and Hong Kong loom large behind the discussion. Essays on Hong Kong cinema and on co-production films make a regular presence in the journal since the 1990s. Film Festivals also played a significant role in encouraging, even enticing, the making of films that address the new subjectivities.

- 21 The stars are mixed in both films: Fan Bingbing and Tong Dawei are PRC film actors, and Maggie Cheung and Leung Ka-fai are long-time Hong Kong film actors. Eric Tsang is a native Hong Kong actor while Leon Lai is a Beijing-born Hong Kong actor.
- 22 The depiction of Hong Kong directors pitching film ideas to find investors has also appeared in *Vulgaria* (Pang Ho-cheung, 2012). The film raised controversy for its demeaning stereotype of the rich and ignorant first-time mainland investor.
- 23 According to one resource, China's internet companies Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent engaged in e-commerce and web research provision are getting into the entertainment industry by producing digital drama series and movies for the internet users. Yu Dong is quoted as saying that Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent will be the future employers who have famous film directors working on their movies. See Liu and Qu (2014). Also Wang, Wu and Huang (2014).
- 24 I have used the pinyin spelling for the names of protagonists. It is just as correct to use Cantonese or Hong Kong-style spelling for the names.
- 25 The Chinese internet movie site M-Time boasts of 900+ e-reviews of *American Dreams in China*. See: <http://movie.mtime.com/174760/comment.html>. Accessed January 1, 2015.
- 26 The film's nine songs are: 1. "The Boundless Sky and Sea" (海闊天空), Beyond, Hong Kong, 1993; 2. "The Girl in the Greenhouse" (花房姑娘), Cui Jian, Beijing, 1989; 3. "Rock 'N' Roll on the New Long March Road" (新長征路的上的搖滾), Cui Jian, Beijing, 1989; 4. "L'Internationale" (國際歌), Tang Dynasty, Beijing, 1991; 5. "Leaving on Jet Plane, John Denver" (cover: Yoyo Sham in the film), US, 1966; 6. "Live a Dashing Life" (瀟灑走一回), Sally Yeh, Hong Kong, 1991; 7. "The Outside World" (外面的世界), Chyi Chin, Taiwan, 1994; 8. "The Same Moonlight" (一樣的月光), Julie Sue, Taiwan, 1993; 9. "The Story of Time" (光陰的故事), Lo Dayu, Taiwan, 1981.

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