

General Introduction

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At the time when the world had just entered the new millennium, I ventured to track the exciting development of Chinese cinema through its “box-office boom and academic investment” (Y. Zhang 2002: 16–18). Ten years down the road, Chinese cinema has continued its extraordinary expansion in all aspects, very much like the red-hot Chinese economy, which became the world’s second largest when China’s GDP (US\$1.33 trillion) surpassed Japan’s (US\$1.28 trillion) in the second quarter of 2010 (*Time* 2010). Yet, even before the awe-inspiring ceremonies at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, masterminded by the world-renowned Chinese film director Zhang Yimou (b. 1950), were televised live to captivated audiences globally (Curtin 2010: 118), a series of impressive achievements in Chinese cinema had already occurred. In terms of box office in the United States, two successful Chinese art films from the early 1990s could barely compare to two Chinese blockbusters a decade later: on the one hand, *The Wedding Banquet* (Ang Lee, 1993) was screened in 113 US theaters and grossed US\$6.9 million, while *Farewell My Concubine* (Chen Kaige, 1993) opened in three theaters only but grossed \$5.2 million; on the other hand, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Ang Lee, 2000) was screened in 2,027 theaters and grossed \$128.1 million, while *Hero* (Zhang Yimou, 2002) was screened in 2,175 theaters and grossed \$53.7 million (Rosen 2010: 47). In terms of box office in China, the 2009 top-grossing domestic film, *The Founding of a Republic* (Han Sanping, Huang Jianxin, 2009), reached RMB 415 million (or approximately US\$6.1 million) (Yin 2010: 6), representing an increase of 9.9 times over that of the record RMB 42 million set by *Big Shot’s Funeral* (Feng Xiaogang, 2001) (Y. Zhang 2010c: 135).¹ Indeed, compared with 88 domestic films and RMB 840 million total box office in 2001 (Y. Zhang 2010a: 172), the 2009 statistics – 456 domestic feature productions and RMB 6,206 million total box office (Yin 2010: 5) – indicate a growth of 5.2 times and 7.4 times, respectively,

thereby consolidating a decade-long unprecedented boom (for the latest statistics, see Rosen's tables in Chapter 11). Equally impressive is the academic investment in Chinese film studies, as colleges in Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America have quickly expanded course offerings in China-related disciplinary and area studies. The *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, a refereed periodical devoted exclusively to this growing field, was inaugurated in the United Kingdom in 2007, academic publishers have increased the number of new books in Chinese film studies, and innumerable panels, workshops, symposia, and conferences on Chinese cinema are held around the world every year.²

Launched at an appropriate time, therefore, *A Companion to Chinese Cinema* seeks to map the expanding field of Chinese cinema in a bold and definitive way. Given its generous length of thirty chapters, the volume offers sufficient depth and breadth to engage a variety of theories, methods, debates, and issues in a fast-developing academic field and to shape the intellectual conversation around key subjects in Chinese cinema and Chinese film studies. To maximize its mapping potential, the volume is designed to be as much prospective in nature (i.e., to start a discussion moving forward) as it is retrospective and reflective (i.e., to trace the history and state of the field). This introduction, as a starter, sets the stage for interactive conversations among chapters included here and publications elsewhere by briefly identifying a few highlights in Chinese film studies in English, delineating the structure of the present volume's coverage, summarizing major contributions from our individual chapters, relating divergent and convergent points among different contributors, and briefly mentioning several areas and topics worthy of additional research.³

A quick glance over select English publications from the past three decades helps us outline the contours of the developing field of Chinese film studies, although readers should pursue Chapter 26 for Chris Berry's mapping of the field in terms of language, readership, and discipline. First, at a time when Chinese cinema had just started to attract increasing attention abroad, in the first edition of *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema* Chris Berry (1985: i) rightly emphasized the urgent need for "a multidisciplinary approach" and anticipated that "Chinese cinema can be productively studied from a number of angles."⁴ Second, while keeping a similar multidisciplinary emphasis, in *New Chinese Cinemas* (1994) Nick Browne, Paul G. Pickowicz, Vivian Sobchak, and Esther Yau extended the parameters of Chinese cinema to include Hong Kong and Taiwan and justified this extension by pluralizing Chinese cinemas. Third, retaining the plural form of designation, Sheldon Lu in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas* (1997) foregrounded transnationalism as a new framework that goes beyond national cinemas, and the impact of transnationalism is visible in the subsequent scholarship (e.g., Berry and Farquhar 2006). Fourth, in *Chinese-Language Film* (2005) Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yeh have chosen "Chinese-language film" as a more inclusive term that can accommodate films from Chinese territories other than mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; its equivalent in Chinese, *huayu dianying*, has likewise gained more traction in Chinese scholarship,

as Chen Xihe observes in Chapter 25. Finally, with *Chinese Ecocinema* (2009), Sheldon Lu and Jiayan Mi demonstrate that Chinese cinema has a larger role to play in China studies and film studies because cinema is a vital force in renegotiating fractured relationships among nature, history, technology, and culture.

The slight variation in the titles of the above-mentioned anthologies reveals that naming the object of our study has been contentious. In the current English discourse, “Chinese cinema(s),” “Chinese-language cinema,” and “Sinophone cinema” are three principal contenders, each carrying its own ideological baggage and each working toward an explicit aim of deterritorialization or reterritorialization. First, the reconceptualization of the national in Chinese cinema as various geographically grounded and “socially, politically, and historically specific projects” (Berry 1998: 132) has undermined the foundational myth of consensus and homogeneity in the national cinema paradigm, and many scholars have accepted that “Chinese cinema” covers Chinese-language films – as well as films with mixed Chinese and other languages – from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other places overseas (Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America). The heterogeneity recognized by this wide coverage has sometimes resulted in a plural designation of “Chinese cinemas,” as captured in the two titles mentioned above (Browne et al. 1994; S. Lu 1997) and more recently in the title of the *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*.⁵ What is important here is that in reconceptualizing Chinese cinema, the Chineseness is seen as dispersed “historically, politically, territorially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically” (Y. Zhang 2004a: 3), thus keeping all kinds of Chineseness open to contention and reconfiguration. Precious due to its open horizons, “Chinese cinema” is preferred in this volume to the other two terms, which seem to be restricted either linguistically or territorially.

Second, in an effort to loosen its grounding in the territorial nation-state, “Chinese-language cinema” highlights the diversity of languages and dialects in Chinese cinema, as already evident in such terms as “Cantonese cinema” (*yueyu pian*), “Mandarin cinema” (*guoyu pian*), and “Taiwanese-dialect cinema” (*taiyu pian*).⁶ Perhaps functioning better in Chinese, where *Zhongguo dianying* (Chinese cinema) carries a residual emphasis on the nation-state (*guo*), *huayu dianying* (Chinese-language cinema) extends to include films produced by Chinese diasporas “outside the sovereign Chinese nation-state – for example, Hollywood, Singapore, or elsewhere” (Lu and Yeh 2005: 1). Moreover, “Chinese-language cinema” also foregrounds the heterogeneity internal to a territory by tracking dialects and other accented practices (S. Lu 2007: 150–63). Yet, the fact that Sheldon Lu has switched from “Chinese cinemas” (1997) to “Chinese-language film” (2005) and back to “Chinese ecocinema” (2009) proves that the difference between “Chinese cinema(s)” and “Chinese-language film” is not substantial after all.

Third, albeit equally predicated on the politics of language, Shu-mei Shih (2007: 4) refutes what she perceives as the centripetal force in “Chinese-language cinema” and defines “the Sinophone” as one that refers to “a network of places of cultural production outside China and on the margins of China and Chineseness,” the former

exemplified by Taiwan and the latter by Hong Kong. While Shih's reterritorialized method of positioning the Sinophone against China in a counter-hegemonic fashion has left many questions unresolved (Y. Zhang 2010a: 20–1), her attempt to map out a vast – albeit scattered and fragmented – space of cultural productions in the Chinese language or by the ethnic Chinese around the world bespeaks the complicated geopolitics of Chinese cinema from its early years to the present day. Indeed, Yiman Wang shows in Chapter 29 precisely such a geographic dispersal in certain phases of Chinese film history, from early cinema to globalization.

My brief discussion above illustrates that critical anthologies have played a crucial role in moving the field of Chinese film studies forward thanks to their productive format of expanded coverage and multi-author collaboration. This volume aims to continue that fine tradition. Apart from this general introduction, 29 originally written chapters collected here are divided into five parts: (1) history and geography, (2) industry and institution, (3) genre and representation, (4) arts and media, and (5) issues and debates. As representative of the interdisciplinary nature of the field, our thirty contributors come from film and media studies, literary and cultural studies, history, political science, and art history, and they have adopted a variety of theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches to given subjects. However, it is crucial to remember from the outset that the volume does not claim to have exhausted every aspect of Chinese cinema, nor does it cover all relevant subjects in its five parts. Each chapter represents its author's take on a particular topic, but taken as a whole the volume promises to provide an inspirational introduction to the rich materials Chinese cinema has offered to the world.

Part I: History and Geography

"Part I: History and Geography" contains seven chapters, three of them focused on the mainland and two others each on Hong Kong and Taiwan. This division of labor highlights the centrality of political geography in Chinese cinema, which is as much a transnational, transregional, and translocal cinema as it is a national cinema (Y. Zhang 2011). Indeed, the cross-border flows of ideas and images were already underway in early Chinese cinema, as Zhang Zhen documents in Chapter 2, "Transplanting Melodrama: Observations on the Emergence of Early Chinese Narrative Film." Using the newly discovered extant fragments of *Poet from the Sea* (Hou Yao, 1927) as a springboard, Zhang acknowledges the multiplicity and mutual imbrication of centers and peripheries as well as modernities and subjectivities in the founding phase of Chinese film history. She deliberately re-anchors the recent scholarly debate on melodrama's global appeal *vis-à-vis* cultural identity in the context of the melodrama film's emergence in China during the 1920s–1930s. Following Cai Guorong's twofold differentiation of the *wenyi* genre, which overlaps in thematic and stylistic parameters with the conventional Western melodrama

film, into those concerned with family ethics and those with romances, Zhang argues that Hou Yao (1903–42) best represents the “artistic” wenyi film centered on romantic love, in distinction with early “family ethics” melodrama films geared ostensibly toward kinship, communal sentiments, plebian tastes, and market demands, best exemplified by the works of Zheng Zhengqiu (1889–1935). Furthermore, by situating the wenyi film in the changing Chinese political environment of the 1910s–1920s, Zhang demonstrates that Hou’s *Poet from the Sea* stands as a testimony to the cultural and ideological transition that affected both the literary and film scenes, and thus represents a lament for the incomplete project of the May Fourth enlightenment. With references to the D. W. Griffith (1875–1948) fever in 1920s Shanghai as part of the broad transnational “melodramatic imagination,” Zhang concludes that Chinese filmmakers succeeded in translating and adapting Euro-American sources, along with Chinese literary and theatrical traditions, in the contradiction-ridden context of China’s new culture movement and Shanghai’s semicolonial modernity.

Zhang Zhen’s deliberation on early Chinese cinema favors a cultural history approach she first adopted in her book on pre-1937 Chinese cinema (Z. Zhang 2005), which is distinguished, among others, by a focused historical perspective (the 1920s in this case), attention to the materiality of cultural production (the archive, print culture), sensitivity to intertextuality and cross-mediality (e.g., film, literature, theater) in a transnational context, and eagerness for theoretical intervention (e.g., melodrama and modernity). Her concentration on melodrama through the case study of Hou Yao’s 1920s oeuvres prepares us for Stephen Teo’s study of genre and nation in Chapter 15. Regrettably, space limitations have prevented us from including another chapter to deal with the 1930s–1940s, although the interested reader is advised to pursue existing scholarship on these vibrant periods (J. Hu 2000; Pang 2002; Fu 2003; Y. Zhang 2008), from which a large number of films have become available for viewing in video format. In terms of film historiography, however, the postwar period (i.e., 1945–49) still awaits book-length treatment in English.

Instead of concentrating on a particular decade and a key genre as Zhang Zhen does, Paul Clark leads us through important events and representative works during three tremulous decades in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in Chapter 3, “Artists, Cadres and Audiences: Chinese Socialist Cinema, 1949–1978.” He starts with the transition years when most filmmakers’ careers crossed the 1949 divide. It is through issuing new rules and staging nationwide mass campaigns that the Communist regime experimented, modified, abandoned, or even reversed the new directions it set (e.g., the Hundred Flowers). Nonetheless, the socialist period gradually brought up a new corps of studios and filmmakers, as well as new cadres and audiences, especially those in the vast countryside serviced by mobile projection teams. Mao Zedong’s new aesthetic standard of combining revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism saw fruition in the revolutionary “model play” (*yangbanxi*) films during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), and the ensuing

period of aftermath and recovery prepared for the emergence of an entirely new generation in the 1980s. Coming from an expert on socialist China, Clark's historical narrative offers a concise overview, but its limited references to English scholarship other than his own (Clark 1987, 2005) points to the paucity of critical attention to socialist cinema, although the situation has changed with a special issue on the 1950s of the *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, which includes the author's new work on film audiences (Clark 2011).

Compared with the socialist period, the past three decades of Chinese cinema have received much more scholarly attention (X. Zhang 1997; S. Lu 2002; Y. Zhang 2002, 2010a; Y. Zhu 2003; Berry 2004a; Pickowicz and Zhang 2006; Z. Zhang 2007b; McGrath 2008b). In Chapter 4, "Directors, Aesthetics, Genres: Chinese Postsocialist Cinema, 1979–2010," I first delineate the parameters of postsocialism and highlight the concept of simultaneous continuities and discontinuities that mark this period of seismic changes. I can then take time to review three interrelated areas – directors, aesthetics, and genres – and tackle problems engendered by a generational lineup, the significance of avant-garde experiment and international reception, the complication of genre repackaging, and the changing functions of cinema in the age of globalization. I argue that, convenient as it is, dividing directors into generations does little justice to the complexity and heterogeneity of Chinese film history, that several generations share their moments of experimental filmmaking at different historical junctures, and that the principal function of cinema in postsocialist China has switched from aesthetics and education in the late 1970s through 1980s to entertainment in the 2000s. A revisit to two critical debates on Xie Jin's film model and entertainment cinema, respectively, in the second half of the 1980s, together with a comparison of selective market statistics, foregrounds how much Chinese cinema and film criticism have changed in the past three decades.

Leaving mainland China, Robert Chi takes us back in history by resituating Hong Kong cinema in a framework larger than that of mainland-centered Chinese national cinema. In Chapter 5, "Hong Kong Cinema before 1980," Chi pursues a theoretical approach by which one may focus on geography instead of history, on places, regions, and orientations instead of periods. From the geographic perspective, the size and location of Hong Kong are revealed to have exerted a deep impact on its film industry from the very beginning, cultivating a constitutive role of extraterritoriality and a fundamental orientation toward regional networking. History and geography cannot exist without each other, Chi argues; hence particular orientations privilege particular historical narratives for Hong Kong, with nationalism to the north, (de)colonization to the south, modernization to the east, and empire to the west. Seen in this context, Chi suggests, Hong Kong cinema was more a part of Southeast Asia than of China in its early decades. Moreover, just as we may reconceptualize a center as a point through which things pass rather than as a point of origin or arrival, so we can appreciate a place where things like tropes, genres, talent, technology, and capital pass through, recombining and

metamorphosing in the process. The outcome of such conceptualization is a decisive shift from the nation to the region, and the meditation on space and cinema enables Chi to map out a whole region with Hong Kong as a new kind of center. To be sure, national factors are still part of the picture, but they manifest themselves differently in various “geo-corporate” models, as those represented by Lai Man-wai (Li Minwei, 1892–1953) and the Shaw Brothers, all locked in the dynamics of border-crossing activities.

In Chapter 6, “The Hong Kong New Wave,” Gina Marchetti offers a fresh look at a much-discussed film movement in Hong Kong (E. Yau 2001; Cheuk 2008) by differentiating connotations between “new wave” and “new cinema” in world cinema and connecting the “new” to a new generation who uses new technologies to achieve new effects in largely nontraditional ways. The emphasis on the new leads Marchetti to rediscover King Hu (Hu Jinquan, 1931–97, active in the 1960s) and Tang Shu-shuen (Tang Shuxuan, b. 1941, active in the 1970s) as two notable predecessors to the Hong Kong New Wave, and her profiles of representative directors (e.g., Allen Fong [Fang Yuping, b. 1947], Ann Hui [Xu Anhua, b. 1947]) and their “performing women” on and off screen (e.g., Maggie Cheung [Zhang Manyu, b. 1964], Anita Mui [Mei Yanfang, 1963–2003]) add nuances to shared concerns from two waves of an evolving movement. For Marchetti, the martial arts genre gives the new wave an opportunity to explore complex issues such as androgyny (via Brigitte Lin [Lin Qingxia, b. 1954]) and queer sensibility (via Leslie Cheung [Zhang Guorong, 1956–2003]), and the current return of the real in confronting Hong Kong local conditions has revived a distinguished tradition in Cantonese cinema. Overall, Marchetti demonstrates that Hong Kong cinema is at once local, translocal, and global, as best exemplified by Wong Kar-wai (Wang Jiawei, b. 1958), and her analysis dovetails with some observations from our other contributors on star performance (Sabrina Yu in Chapter 12), women’s cinema (Lingzhen Wang in Chapter 17), and queer sexuality (Helen Leung in Chapter 28).

Heading out to Taiwan, James Wicks adopts a different approach than Marchetti’s differentiation by categories and, instead, zooms in on a critical text in Taiwan cinema in order to contextualize an often-neglected period – what Guo-Juin Hong (2010) describes as “Taiwan cinema’s missing years” – prior to the emergence of Taiwan New Cinema in 1982. In Chapter 7, “Gender Negotiation in Song Cunshou’s *Story of Mother* and Taiwan Cinema of the Early 1970s,” Wicks analyzes an unusual 1972 film by Song Cunshou (b. 1930), which uses transgressive female sexuality as an entry point to measure the wider political significance of gender identity as represented through passive males yet to earn their authority and active females coming into conformity with patriarchal nationalism, both part of the narrative typical of state-sponsored productions in 1970s Taiwan. Semiotic sequence breakdowns of Song’s film reveal its narrative, structural, and aesthetic qualities, while comparisons with other contemporary films demonstrate that gender negotiations were allegorically meaningful in a volatile decade in Taiwan’s cold-war history. After all, Wicks argues, the Kuomintang (Nationalist) state in

Taiwan propounded a version of gender inequality in early 1970s cinema that perhaps unintentionally encapsulated its geopolitical quandary, and the fact that subversive work was allowed in official productions indicates that radically challenging films would appear once the political situation changed.

What followed from the 1970s is the by-now familiar story of Taiwan New Cinema (Berry and Lu 2005; Yeh and Davis 2005; Davis and Chen 2007). In Chapter 8, “Second Coming: The Legacy of Taiwan New Cinema,” Darrell Davis revisits New Cinema’s outstanding auteurist ambitions, its rich formal innovations (e.g., realist, observational styles), and its unique sensitivity to Taiwan history and Taiwanese material that may have made it a “recovery cinema,” an act of salvaging repressed unofficial memory. His discussion moves from *xiangtu* (nativism, a counter-hegemonic ideology from the 1980s) to *bentu* (localism, a widespread sentiment from the 1990s onward) and considers controversies surrounding the impact of government subsidies through annual film funds (*fudaojin*). For Davis, New Cinema is Taiwan cinema: a state-supported movement under intense public scrutiny, criticized for its high standards, elitism, and commercial shortcomings. By highlighting *Cape No. 7* (Wei Te-sheng, 2008) as a work of reconciliation and an unusual box-office hit, Davis evaluates Taiwan filmmakers’ ability to counter the modernist gloom of post-New Cinema leftovers and the potential of a new *bentu* style to build a hodge-podge of diversity and to bring in rural peripheries, ethnic minorities, and different linguistic and demographic outsiders. True to Davis’s evaluation, more recent works from the post-New Cinema have continued to prove that the new *bentu* is indeed translocal and multilingual in nature, bringing Tagalog and Filipino guest workers into Taipei’s cityscape in *Pinoy Sunday* (Wi Ding Ho, 2009) and featuring Hakka dialect prominently alongside Mandarin and Taiwanese in *Cannot Live Without You* (Leon Dai, 2009).

Part II: Industry and Institution

“Part II: Industry and Institution” comprises five chapters on the industrial and institutional aspects of Chinese film. One preoccupation in film scholarship has been with a long tradition of propaganda and censorship in China, but the context of globalization has given rise to new problems (Hollywood dominance, transnational capital flows), new strategies (Chinese blockbusters), new concepts (e.g., media capital, soft power), and new or renewed institutions (the star system, international film festivals). Industrial and institutional concerns provide different lenses through which we can obtain a better understanding of why Chinese cinema has developed in ways specific to its variant contexts of cultural and political economy.

Obviously related to historical and geopolitical developments surveyed in Part I, Chapter 9, “Propaganda and Censorship in Chinese Cinema,” places the

government control of cinema in a historical and international context and rethinks the intricate relationship between film and politics. For Matthew Johnson, the use of cinema for propaganda purposes is widespread among political and intellectual elites around the globe, and censorship has long been a vital tool of statecraft because political and economic competition always spills over into the realms of mass culture and entertainment. As a powerful medium of new mass media technologies, cinema exerts a tremendous impact on two crucial aspects of state formation – international image and popular mentalities. From war documentaries of the Republican revolution of the 1920s to the educational cinematography movement of the 1930s, Johnson studies cinema's role in times of wars and between the wars, and from there he moves to survey the cold-war era, where two different models of state cinema developed in the PRC and Taiwan. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of "soft power" (a topic also taken up by Ying Zhu and Bruce Robinson in Chapter 23), which the PRC government uses now to justify its new mission to shape global influence, determine patterns of investment, and measure limits of acceptable representation in domestic and foreign productions.

As with soft power, "media capital" is another new critical concept that examines matters beyond nation-state borders. Moving away from the prism of nationalism that used to inform international media studies of how particular states developed their screen industries, Chapter 10, "Chinese Media Capital in Global Context," begins with an explanation of the concept of media capital, which Michael Curtin has developed to assess spatial dynamics of the transnational Chinese cultural economy. For Curtin, the concept of media capital invokes both connotations of the term: capital as a geographic center within a field of interconnected locales and capital as a concentration of resources, reputation, and talent. As such, media capitals are sites of mediation, locations where complex forces and flows interact. Curtin expounds three key principles critical to the structuring role in screen industries around the world: (1) the logic of accumulation, (2) trajectories of creative migration, and (3) contours of sociocultural variation. Media capital, he argues, is a concept that at once acknowledges the spatial logics of capital, creativity, culture, and polity without privileging one among the four. In a succinct account of key industrial and sociocultural trends in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taipei, Singapore, and Beijing over a century, which he elaborated elsewhere (Curtin 2007), Curtin traces the geographical deployment of resources, talent, and products, and examines recent shifts in activity as media enterprises adapt to the pressures and opportunities posed by the latest wave of globalization.

Similarly focusing on political economy as do Johnson and Curtin, Stanley Rosen examines the role film plays in the evolving relationship between state and society in Chapter 11, "Film and Society in China: The Logic of the Market." As market performance becomes a key factor in political legitimization, governmental strategy has become dependent on making China rich and powerful. This strategy has led to the continuing expansion of a confident and demanding middle class and the coming of age of a new generation of youth who have extensive

knowledge of international cultural trends, an individualism that poses a challenge to official voices, and a strong sense of nationalism. Given new changes in Chinese society, Rosen argues, the state now must negotiate with social and cultural forces in trying to balance contradictory values, which are manifested in the tension between producing propaganda films that promote mainstream values and the production of more popular super-commercial blockbusters. Using survey research and public opinion data, box-office statistics, documentary sources, interviews, and case studies, Rosen investigates contradictions and negotiations through government policies toward film, audience exposure and receptivity to films, the influence of film on values, and likely future prospects for film as a factor in the Chinese state's relationship with society.

Rosen's overview of film audience brings us to the appeal of another significant development in the globalizing China, namely celebrity culture, which covers not just screen stars but other performing artists as well as commercial and even political figures (Edwards and Jeffreys 2010). In Chapter 12, "Vulnerable Chinese Stars: From Xizi to Film Worker," Sabrina Yu regards screen stardom as part of celebrity culture and proposes her model of star vulnerability in counterposition to the Euro-American model of star power dominant in film studies. With her convictions that stars are culturally made and that a careful examination of national stardom deepens our understanding of national cinema and identity, Yu enumerates examples of cultural specificities in Chinese stardom, such as stars as *xizi* (a derogatory term for actors) or "film workers" (a socialist designation), stars as moral victims (e.g., Ruan Lingyu, 1910–35), and stars as political subordinates (e.g., Jackie Chan [Cheng Long, b. 1954]). As humiliation and tragedy always linger behind glamour, Yu contends that vulnerability defines all aspects of Chinese stars – commercial, political, moral, and cultural. Even the all-star film format and the expectation of all-rounded talent (film, television, music) typical of Hong Kong stars reveals the mechanism of restriction (by way of dispersion) rather than concentration of a star's power. Building on current research on individual Chinese stars (Farquhar and Zhang 2010), Yu's chapter represents a new direction in tackling the phenomenon of Chinese stardom as a whole and in negotiating Hollywood star theories.

In Chapter 13, "Ports of Entry: Mapping Chinese Cinema's Multiple Trajectories at International Film Festivals," Nikki Lee and Julian Stringer conduct a temporal and a spatial analysis of Chinese cinema's representation at leading international film festivals, which has been truly spectacular compared with other national cinemas. They suggest that timing is perfect as globalization initiatives and China's rise as a world economic power since the 1980s have paved the way for the ascendancy of Chinese cinema on the world stage. Extending Michael Curtin's concept of media capital (see Chapter 10), which explores the geographic concentration of media industries in large cities, Lee and Stringer investigate what they call "the port city film festival" as another site of media concentration and trace a pattern of such port city festival operations as both repeatable and significant. Their analysis of

such A-list film festivals as Cannes, Tokyo, and Venice reveals similar receptiveness to Chinese cinema, but by comparing the selections of and awards to Chinese films over time in different festivals, including the B-list venues such as Rotterdam and Pusan, they also notice different emphases and preferences among these festivals. Some festivals remain loyal to established directors, while others prefer emergent talents; some showcase popular artistic movies, while others support politically provocative and aesthetically experimental films. Berlin is an exception to the port city film festival model, but it has played an important role in promoting Chinese cinema nonetheless. Supported by seven tables of individual festivals' entries and awards, this chapter not only illustrates the crucial importance of international film festivals to the growth of Chinese cinema in the last three decades but also points to a new area of film studies that examines the circulation and reception of films through cultural industries and institutions on the global stage.

Part III: Genre and Representation

"Part III: Genre and Representation" contains five chapters that deal with a select number of key styles, genres, and modes in Chinese cinema, including martial arts film, documentary film, women's film, and urban film. In Chapter 14, "In Search of Chinese Film Style(s) and Technique(s)," James Udden mounts a compelling critique of an essentialist brand of "Eastern" aesthetics, which for him is largely based on unsubstantiated and at times contradictory claims of long takes, still camera, flat lighting, empty shots, and the like. Citing concrete examples from a wide array of films, including the classic *Spring in a Small Town* (Fei Mu, 1948), Udden demonstrates that Chinese cinema has produced no monolithic, quintessential Chinese film style, but instead an impressive diversity of cinematic styles and techniques, which displays inventiveness and experimentation due to greatly varying historical contexts. Hong Kong cinema, for instance, translated indigenous acrobatic and generic traditions into distinctively cinematic terms, resulting in the most physical cinema to ever grace this planet. By contrast, Taiwan created a new Asian brand of art cinema that is not simply derivative of either its Japanese or European predecessors. Instead of blindly accepting a distinctive Chinese style, Udden recommends that we come to terms with multifaceted cinematic testaments to an ongoing cultural dynamic. In sum, Udden's recommendation here dovetails with Jerome Silbergeld's (in Chapters 21 and 22), namely that we would do better examining individual works and appreciating their unique contributions to world cinema than searching for some innate, preconceived national characteristics.

The national, nonetheless, remains a fundamental concern in Chinese film history, as evident in Chapter 15, "Film Genre and Chinese Cinema: A Discourse of Film and Nation," where Stephen Teo discusses the symbiotic and at times contradictory relationship between the concept of genre and the rise of the

Chinese cinema as an expression of national cinema. He argues that Chinese filmmakers look upon genre as an indispensable avenue of nationalistic expression in cinema while at the same time seeking to expand this expression as a transnational conceit. In this process, specific Chinese genres are created as amalgamations of indigenous and foreign genres that have nevertheless endured as Chinese cinematic genres, such as martial arts film (*wuxia pian*) and opera film (*xiqu pian*). In particular, Teo explores the somewhat misplaced idealization of *wenyi pian* (literary film) as a “high” genre (see also Zhang Zhen in Chapter 2) and the customary dismissal of *wuxia pian* as a “low” genre. A discussion of Derrida’s comment on the genre’s law of impurity helps highlight the ambivalence of genre, but Teo believes that this ambivalence can encompass a sense of identity and provide a certain satisfaction in the audience who seeks identification through the indigenous characteristics of given genres. He concludes that genre gives the impression of a national cinema identity but its true purpose may be to mutate that identity as time and circumstance change and as the world draws closer and nations become even more interconnected.

Qi Wang brings us from genre and nation to performance and individuality in Chapter 16, “Performing Documentation: Wu Wenguang and the Performative Turn of New Chinese Documentary.” She questions the assumed dominance of an observational aesthetic – construed in opposition to official media practices – in Chinese independent documentary since the late 1980s. With her detailed analysis of the performative motifs in Wu Wenguang (b. 1956), Wang traces a neglected performative turn in the new documentary that proves to have provided a sustaining force for the development and understanding of newer documentaries and mixed-genre experimental videos in China. The performativity in question foregrounds the dynamic between the filmmaker, the camera, and the filmed subjects, as well as the authenticity of documentary information, and our attention to the performative mode, Wang suggests, would help readjust the previous oppositional framework and conceptualize the new documentary as negotiation not only between the official and independent forces but also between the socialist past and the postsocialist present, forgetting and memory, self and other, documentary and other contemporaneous forms of documenting Chinese reality in film and video, as well as in avant-garde art and performance. With her emphasis on performance, Wang adds a fresh insight to a growing body of scholarship in Chinese documentary film studies (Pickowicz and Zhang 2006: 47–122; Berry, Lu, and Rofel 2010; Y. Zhang 2010b).

Rather than focusing on one particular director as Qi Wang does with Wu Wenguang, Lingzhen Wang provides a panoramic view in Chapter 17, “Chinese Women’s Cinema.” With bold strokes, she outlines a critical genealogy of Chinese women’s cinema, redefined as cinematic practice by female directors in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and explores three major topics that are critical to feminist film studies – politics of gender and cinema in history, female cinematic subjectivity and spectatorship, and visual pleasures and consumerism. Starting from the early 1920s and going all the way to the 2000s, Wang guides us through

the formation and disintegration of commercial, institutional, and personal channels that enable women to enter the filmmaking industry, and she demonstrates that women's participation in filmmaking is geopolitically and historically contingent, and the meaning and significance of their films are diverse and resistant to any uniform interpretations. It is in and through this diverse engagement with historical forces, whether of the market, politics, or patriarchal traditions, as Wang argues, that Chinese women have exhibited their agency, not only in reorienting gender configurations in history, but also in articulating different meanings and aesthetics in their cinematic practices. In current scholarship, rarely has one been provided with a more comprehensive account of Chinese women's cinema in such a concise format, and Lingzhen Wang is commended particularly for bringing to our attention active filmmakers in Hong Kong and Taiwan, a tradition long overlooked in film studies.

In Chapter 18, "From Urban Films to Urban Cinema: The Emergence of a Critical Concept," Yomi Braester undertakes a different genealogical work and poses this question: Why should the term "Urban Cinema" be considered a useful category for understanding films focused on the city? Following Rick Altman's argument that generic definitions do not rely on intrinsic categories but rather are invented for the convenience of distributors and critics, Braester launches an inquiry into the motivation for promoting Urban Cinema as a genre in mainland China. Starting with urban films of the late 1980s when the term "urban cinema" (*chengshi dianying*) first appeared, Braester outlines a thematic typology for what appeared then as an emerging genre (e.g., alienated youths, unstable identities) and its distinct visual idiom (e.g., roaming point-of-view shots, widespread urban ruins). Since these films range from official productions (e.g., the Fourth Generation) to independent films (e.g., the Sixth Generation) and new commercial films from the late 1990s onward, Braester reveals overlaps and contradictions between Urban Cinema and New Urban Cinema in creative and critical discourses. A scholar whose recent work has increasingly engaged cinema and the city (Braester 2010; Braester and Tweedie 2010), Braester concludes that filmmakers and critics have deployed Urban Cinema and New Urban Cinema to further their stakes in a charged debate on the meeting point between post-Maoist aesthetics and ideology. This conclusion reminds us of Stephen Teo's meditation on genre in Chapter 15, which likewise argues that genres are vehicles for articulating Chinese filmmakers' visions of nation and identity.

Part IV: Arts and Media

"Part IV: Arts and Media" comprises six chapters and represents the renewed efforts to intervene in continuing deliberations on inter-art and intermedial issues that involve film and literature, film and theater, film and visual arts, and film and

television, as well as film and technology. Chapter 19, “The Intertwinement of Chinese Film and Literature: Choices and Strategies in Adaptations,” investigates a century of Chinese filmic adaptations of literature. After briefing on scholarship in this area, Liyan Qin locates herself as part of the “sociological turn” in adaptation studies, although her chapter is concerned more with history, politics, and culture than about sociology. A survey of what Chinese filmmakers chose to adapt during different periods prepares for a discussion of different strategies of adaptations, which range from faithful adherence to the original in all possible ways, to subjective attempts to capture the so-called “spirit” of the original as interpreted by the filmmakers, to radical appropriation of the original only as raw material on which to build one’s own film. Given this wide spectrum of “fidelity” in adaptations, Qin observes a remarkable reversal of the status of film *vis-à-vis* literature: films once presented themselves as by-products of literature, but starting with Zhang Yimou in the late 1980s (L. Qin 2010), visibility has become foregrounded and the free adaptation style widely adopted, to the extent that nowadays a novel is often released as an add-on to capitalize on the recent success of a film. The respective artistic qualities of film and literature aside, Qin believes that the change in the filmmakers’ strategies about what and how to adapt over time sheds light on the dynamic of Chinese history as well as on the mutual influence between culture and history.

Like literature, theater is another art form that was used to elevate the status of film in its formative years, but by the late 1970s Chinese critics began to call for abandoning the “clutch of drama” in filmmaking. Comparing this radical call for abandonment with a subsequent construction of “shadowplay” (*yingxi*) as an indigenous concept of film theory, Weihong Bao revisits the much-debated relationship between film and theater in Chapter 20, “Diary of a Homecoming: (Dis-)Inhabiting the Theatrical in Postwar Shanghai Cinema.” She adopts a triple frame – conceptual, historical, and textual – to study the irreducible presence of the theatrical in film from a figural, stylistic, and spectatorial perspective. Conceptually, she traces the distinction between cinema and theater in early Western film theory and draws on recent scholarship on intermediality. Historically, she reviews the symbiosis, cross-fertilization, and mutual distancing between Chinese cinema and theater in the first half of the twentieth century. Textually, she analyzes a cluster of “homecoming” films that feature the postwar theater workers who returned from the hinterland only to find themselves denied dwelling in Shanghai. For Bao, the displacement of the cinematic and the theatrical effectively evoked asymmetrical binaries of country–city, exteriority–domesticity, and utopic past–dystopic present, and the two media’s mutual framing, contiguous aesthetics, and shared exhibition space in the 1940s propelled a transformation in both media on aesthetic as well as political levels. By examining cinematic and dramatic articulations of social space, political message, affective horizon, and modes of spectatorship, Bao ultimately seeks to reconsider cinema and theater as technologies of perception that engage and mediate experiences of social changes in modern China.

As well as being a theatrical, literary, and musical form, film is an intensely visual art – this observation leads Jerome Silbergeld to wonder why art historians have been so slow to take up the subject as part of their studies of Chinese visual history and visual culture. In Chapter 21, “Cinema and the Visual Arts of China,” Silbergeld poses challenging questions: What unique insights are offered by film critiques that focus intensely on film’s visibility – on body language, the natural setting, visual references to other films and to other visual traditions, literature, and history – especially in a cinematic tradition that has been heavily regulated by script-reading but visually illiterate or irresponsive censors? Starting with previous scattered remarks on the similarity between cinema and Chinese handscroll painting, Silbergeld proceeds to explore whether there is a “Chinese way” of seeing or visual narration, to what degree Chinese film lends itself to Western forms of art analysis, and whether or not Chinese film conforms to Western theories of film and photography. Like James Udden in Chapter 14, Silbergeld is reluctant to attach “national” attributes to cinema or theory without concrete textual evidence. Instead, he proposes that we consider cinema in relation to the visual arts (e.g., shared styles, shared culture), examine the function of the visual arts as they appear in cinema, and treat cinema as a visual art. The result is a fascinating meditation on visual aspects of a composite art that is cinema, including its rendition of temporality, spatiality, symbolism, and imagery, as well as its intricate relationship with painting, photography, and multimedia arts.

A similar interdisciplinary interest informs Jerome Silbergeld’s venture into another intermedial area – film and music in Chinese cinema – that has yet to receive a book-length treatment in English. In Chapter 22, “From Mountain Songs to Silvery Moonlight: Some Notes on Music in Chinese Cinema,” Silbergeld does not take a conventional approach like that of appreciation of an individual film auteur, as others have done with Wong Kar-wai’s globally circulated works (E. Yeh 1999; de Carvalho 2008); instead, he makes a bold statement that the use of lyrics – more than melody – is most distinctive about Chinese cinema and in that sense most serious Chinese films could be loosely considered to be “musicals.” This specific type of “musical” quality in Chinese cinema is illustrated through his analysis of various uses of lyrics in such works as *Street Angel* (Yuan Muzhi, 1937), *Third Sister Liu* (Su Li, 1961), and *Yellow Earth* (Chen Kaige, 1984). However, Silbergeld also finds time to reveal the complexity of music and sound – both diegetic and extra-diegetic – in Chinese cinema, which tends to draw on a variety of sources, from Chinese folk songs to classical Western music. For Silbergeld, what is important now is not a rush to construct a theory of Chinese film music but a better understanding of the mutual interaction of Chinese and Western film and music across genres and periods.

Turning attention to a different media platform rather than artistic medium, Ying Zhu and Bruce Robinson evaluate an ongoing effort at integrating film and television in China through the case of CCTV-6 (China Central Television’s Movie Channel) in Chapter 23, “Cross-Fertilization in Chinese Cinema and

Television: A Strategic Turn in Cultural Policy.” China’s film and television industries developed semi-independently up to the mid-1990s (Zhu and Nakajima 2010), and each was unwilling to enter into a serious partnership with the other until the state issued new policies to restructure the entire media sector and to transform it into a commercially competitive, globally influential engine of China’s “soft power” (a concept Matthew Johnson also discusses in Chapter 9). Founded in 1996, the Movie Channel soon became CCTV’s second most popular channel by promoting cinematic arts and exposing smaller films to a much wider audience, and as such it serves as an example of mutually beneficial collaboration between the two industries. Meanwhile, the China Film Group was formed in 1999 as a film-based multimedia conglomerate (including the Movie Channel), which has been given structural and regulatory advantages and charged with the mission of developing itself into a globally competitive media titan (likewise observed by Michael Curtin in Chapter 10). By tracking developments of the Movie Channel and the China Film Group, Zhu and Robinson highlight a set of issues concerning cross-fertilization between China’s film and television industries and its impact on the future direction of Chinese cinema in particular and the Chinese media industry in general. Not surprisingly, institutional analysis such as this chapter presents has raised new questions regarding artistic and ideological qualities in television productions, which are explored in an emergent body of scholarship on China’s television (Zhu and Berry 2009) and television drama series (Zhu, Keane, and Bai 2008; X. Zhong 2010).

From the national scale of media restructuring in the current era of globalization, Gary Xu redirects our gaze back to the historical contexts in which Chinese cinema tackles problems of technology. Rather than the institutional analysis offered by Zhu and Robinson (as well as Matthew Johnson and Michael Curtin, respectively in Chapters 9 and 10), Xu experiments with a unique approach in Chapter 24, “Chinese Cinema and Technology.” He selects three films from the first half of the twentieth century – *Laborer’s Love* (Zhang Shichuan, 1922), *Street Angel* (1937), and *Spring in a Small Town* (1948) – and enumerates key advances in film technology and techniques (e.g., projection, camerawork, editing, lighting, sound) around these representative works. From the period of early cinema, Xu argues, the Chinese fascination with film technology has never abated; better yet, the fascination has been fully embedded in Chinese cinema as an inherent and constant reflection on the effectiveness as well as the limits of imported technologies. Through detailed observations, Xu explores the historical roots of the Chinese fascination with film technology, its relationship with Chinese modernity, and its role in shaping Chinese cinema’s unique aesthetics. After a brief overview of the development in the second half of the twentieth century, the chapter ends with a critique of recent Chinese blockbusters as slavish imitations of Hollywood, marked by their shallow plot, porous details, poor performance, and tendency toward cultural homogenization. None of these flaws can be disguised by these films’ lavish scenery, glossy picture, rich colors, realistic sounds, rapid editing, and

smooth and multi-perspective camerawork. As Xu contends, this is not technological sophistication; rather, Chinese directors, pushed by the demand of global commercial cinema, are getting away from their strength: the keen awareness of and fascination with what film technology really means.

Part V: Issues and Debates

“Part V: Issues and Debates” comprises six chapters. Two of them offer overviews of the evolving scholarship on Chinese film, respectively in Chinese and in English, and the remaining chapters take up a select number of recurring issues in Chinese film studies, such as masculinity and sexuality, homosexuality and queer aesthetics, transnationalism and globalization. In particular, two chapters address two sides of the same transnational practices often neglected by current scholarship: the diasporic formation of Chinese filmmaking (by Yiman Wang) and the trope of the absent American in the transitional period of the Reform-era Chinese cinema (by Michael Berry). Together, the chapters in Part V demonstrate that, just as Chinese cinema has been deeply involved in transnational, translocal practices for over a century, so Chinese film studies must pay attention to fissures and ruptures in filmmaking and film scholarship.

In Chapter 25, “Chinese Film Scholarship in Chinese,” Chen Xihe offers a comprehensive survey of film studies in the Chinese language from its early years to the new century. As he explains, Chinese film scholarship in Chinese mostly appears in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Scholarly publications were scattered and fragmentary before the 1980s, but they have entered a booming stage since then, especially in mainland China, where many professional journals are dedicated to publishing articles on Chinese film. For political, historical, and industrial reasons, Chinese film scholarship in the three areas took their corresponding local developments as their main concerns. Given such geocultural grounding, each of them only addressed selective topics of the other areas. The topics that attract common interest in the three areas are groups of directors and films that emerged in the 1980s, such as the mainland’s Fifth and Sixth Generations, Taiwan New Cinema, and Hong Kong New Wave. In terms of academic approaches, Chinese film scholarship in mainland China used to take a political and ideological perspective before the 1980s but has turned to an artistic and aesthetic exploration after the 1980s, whereas the scholarship in Hong Kong and Taiwan pays more attention to genre and industry issues. In the 1990s, cultural and industrial approaches became stronger in all three areas. Meanwhile, the development and transformation of Chinese cinema under the impact of globalization also command a strong interest. As a recent trend, Chinese film scholarship in Chinese tends to place Chinese film in all three areas in a dynamic relationship with one another, as well as in relation to Hollywood and world cinema.

Like Chen Xihe, Chris Berry is attentive to academic history, but he restructures his narrative in line with Pierre Bourdieu's institutional perspective on "the field" and offers a compelling account of four stages of the development in Chapter 26, "Chinese Film Scholarship in English." First, Berry traces the field's prehistory in the 1970s to scholars whose primary interests resided in other disciplines (e.g., folklore, sociology) and who did not even command a working knowledge of the Chinese language. Second, as the monolingualism of the 1970s yielded to the prevalent bilingualism of the 1980s as far as scholars are concerned, Berry notices the persistence of monolingual English readership in much of the new scholarship of the 1980s, which was shaped by the politics of international film festivals (the topic Lee and Stringer cover in Chapter 13) and the growth of film studies in Euro-American universities. The availability of English subtitles at the time thus explains the geopolitical imbalance in film scholarship on the PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Third, as film studies became a new nexus of cutting-edge interdisciplinary research in the 1990s, Berry argues that Chinese film studies in English followed the dominant trends of text-based analysis and pursued issues of identity, gender, sexuality, aesthetics, and modernity. Fourth, entering the new century, the field is increasingly caught in what Berry calls "the transnational turn" and expends its attention on hitherto neglected areas (e.g., industry, stardom) while continuing to problematize the national cinema paradigm. Berry concludes his account by pointing to areas in need of further research, such as reception studies, experimental cinema, questions of temporality and ethnicity, and the impact of new media technology.

Chris Berry's mapping of the field in terms of issue-oriented methodology is substantiated by chapters that follow. In Chapter 27, "The Return of the Repressed: Masculinity and Sexuality Reconsidered," Shuqin Cui contends that Chinese films after the mid-1980s have consistently staged the return of the repressed, which is masculinity lost or restored, in crisis or in redemption. She selects representative works from three phases to support her argument. The first is the late 1980s to the early 1990s when the Fifth Generation (especially Zhang Yimou's first trilogy) articulated the anxiety of masculinity by projecting ethnographic images of China in an allegorical form, whereby its female spectacle would generate a transnational encounter with Western fantasy and coproduce a cooperative Orientalism. The second is the mid-1990s when the Fifth Generation's collective return to history served the purpose not so much of correcting the historical record as of restoring personal memories of past violence and traumatized youth. Interestingly, Cui contends that Ang Lee (Li An, b. 1954) achieves a similar goal with his controversial return to wartime history in *Lust, Caution* (2007). The third is the late 1990s onward, when a new generation of young directors resorted to family melodrama to emphasize masculinity in retreat and foreground female agency in times of moral crisis. However, Cui notes, as these new films endow their female images with strength and determination, they actually send a (mis)perception of man as victim and woman as aggressor. All in all, Cui's selective reading demonstrates that

contemporary Chinese film has exhibited a consistent search for repressed masculinities to withstand hegemonic manipulation, whether it is political, historical, or commercial. In this search the female body always remains gendered – a rhetorical figure for projecting male fears and desires. In the cinematic renditions of masculinity and sexuality, Cui concludes, the majority of Chinese film directors have yet to grant the female image full subjectivity.

In Chapter 28, “Homosexuality and Queer Aesthetics,” Helen Leung traces the emergence of “New Queer Chinese Cinema,” maps its distinctive articulations across mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and locates its significance within Queer Cinema globally. In mainland China, the coexistence of strict censorship measures against homosexual representations on the one hand, and a lively underground film movement on the other, means that queer themes are exclusively found in the works of independent and often underground productions from directors such as Zhang Yuan (b. 1963) and Cui Zi’en (b. 1958). By contrast, queer themes appear mostly in genre films and dramatic vehicles with major stars in Hong Kong, where a handful of queer-identified filmmakers have produced sporadic works and gay directors like Stanley Kwan (Guan Jinpeng, b. 1957) and Yon Fan (Yang Fan, b. 1947) frequently flirt with queer issues. In Taiwan, various factors including a more socially visible *tongzhi* movement, a less intolerant political climate, and a niche market of queer-friendly viewers, result in a more diverse range of queer films, which include big commercial pleasers, smaller festival films, and the works of queer-identified auteurs such as Tsai Ming-liang (Cai Mingliang, b. 1958) and Zero Chou (Zhou Meiling, b. 1969) who have consciously developed complex queer themes and a distinctive queer aesthetic. Through extensive examples, Leung reveals New Queer Chinese Cinema to be vibrant, but she contends that the representation of homosexuality is, ironically, its least interesting aspect. Instead, films that expose the limits of the heterosexual kinship structure, play with the fluidity between gender identity, gender expression, and the sexed body, and chart the unpredictable paths of sexual and emotional bonds are, for Leung, truly worthy of our critical attention.

Moving away from issues of sexuality treated in Cui and Leung, Yiman Wang tackles issues of geocultural production in Chapter 29, “Alter-centering Chinese Cinema: The Diasporic Formation.” She examines the diasporic formation of Chinese cinema by tracing its evolving strategies of affectively articulating “home” or “imagined togetherness” (Naficy 2001) at different historical conjunctures. For Wang, Chinese diaspora refers not only to people who migrate out of mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, but also to internal diaspora between Sinophone regions that have markedly different dialects/languages and cultures. Given this enlarged map, Wang delineates key figures, groups, and practices in four facets of Chinese diaspora filmmaking: (1) pre-World War II diasporic filmmakers inside and outside the Sinophone area, especially those operating in the United States; (2) World War II and civil war migrations, Shanghai to Hong Kong (1937–49) and Hong Kong to California (1941–45); (3) flexible filmmaking: Hong Kong, China,

and the global turn; (4) shuttling in-between, going nonmainstream, and creolizing the Sinophone. The diasporic perspective enables Wang to address little-known works from early pioneers (e.g., Marion Wong, Joseph Sunn [a.k.a. Shu-sun Chiu, Zhao Shusen, 1904–90], and Lady Tsen Mei [1888–1985]) as well as contemporary figures (e.g., Shi-zheng Chen [b. 1963], Guo Xiaolu [b. 1973], and Zhang Liling). As the “other” site that traverses the “Chinese” center, Wang argues, diasporic filmmaking constitutes the alter-center where “Chinese” issues are staged and contested in interaction with non-Sinic contexts. Because what diasporic filmmakers have in common is their entangled negotiation with the Sinic languages and affective investment in a sense of “home” or “imagined togetherness,” Wang concludes that diasporic Chinese cinema must leave “home” in order to regain it; it must deconstruct the “home” to rebuild it anew in variant images; and it ultimately embodies the accented alter-center of the Sinophone “home.”

Continuing with the geopolitics of cultural imagination, Michael Berry directs our attention to a different kind of alterity in Chapter 30, “The Absent American: Figuring the United States in Chinese Cinema of the Reform Era,” which explores a recurring trope by which the United States is framed primarily through a strategy of absence in contemporary Chinese cinema. In a section titled “The [Chinese-] American Cometh,” Berry sorts through a number of films produced between 1979 and 1982 in order to demonstrate how a new format was developed for imagining America within the parameters of a strict political formula. He then illustrates how a similar theme of absence would also dominate early portrayals of the Chinese immigrant experience almost a decade later under a section titled “Left for Coming to America.” Finally, Berry examines how America has been revisited as Chinese cinema shifts away from a politics of absence to a more complex framing. Overall, the series of films examined there helps elucidate larger questions of propaganda, nationalism, and globalism in Reform-Era China. While acknowledging the problematic of “Chinese” and “American” as legitimated national categories, Berry insists that at the core of all of these films – perhaps contrary to the filmmakers’ intent – are the celluloid footprints of travelers who freely move from China to America and back again. It is precisely these tales of mobility, border-crossing, and immigration that tell a greater story of identities in flux that challenges the very notion – or myth – of national identity.

Looking Forward: Chinese Cinema in Comparative Film Studies

As explained earlier in this introduction, *A Companion to Chinese Cinema* does not pretend to cover all subjects, and several worthy topics are regrettably not treated at length in this volume. To provide a framework for discussing such missing topics and looking forward to future research, I refer the reader to comparative film

studies that goes beyond national cinema and transnationalism and encourages interdisciplinary and cross-media research (Y. Zhang 2010a: 29–41). From that perspective, film music and song certainly call for dialogue between musicologists and film scholars, as in the case of scholarship on leftist cinema (Tuohy 1999; E. Yeh 2002). Often relegated to the margins of film and media studies, animation would benefit from research in interdisciplinarity and cross-mediality. Animation films have a long history in Chinese cinema (Quiquemelle 1991; Yan and Suo 2005), and China's recent investment in this sector – especially in digitization and in higher education – by the government and the industry alike is part of a new synergetic venture in building a regionally or even globally competitive creative industry in China (Lent and Xu 2010: 121–5).

Understandably, there are many other areas of Chinese cinema that are not treated in the current project but deserve further attention. Fortunately, the field is growing fast, and work has been underway to address scholarly lacunae. Under the editorship of Song Hwee Lim and Julian Ward, the *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* has taken an active role in charting new directions through its guest-edited special issues, which include topics like film stars (Farquhar and Zhang 2008), film exhibition (Pickowicz and Johnson 2009), and new media (Yue and Leung 2009). Indeed, compared with television, new media are marked by even smaller screens through wired and wireless communication (e.g., computers, cell phones). New media technologies have revolutionized the production, transmission, reception, and preservation of screen products – fictional, documentary, avant-garde – in contemporary China, and nowadays “smaller screens” regularly intervene in everyday life with its pronounced “lightness of realities” (Voci 2010).

Returning to the framework of comparative film studies, I believe that Chinese cinema would benefit a great deal from a reconsideration of its relationship with Hollywood, not just in the current era of globalization but also in earlier historical periods (Xiao 2010), as well as its relationship with East Asian cinema or Asian cinema in general. Hong Kong cinema has been placed in such a comparative perspective (Marchetti and See-Kam 2007; Tan, Feng, and Marchetti 2009), and similar comparative work has been done on horror films (Choi and Wada-Marciano 2008) and screen industries (Yeh and Davis 2008). Obviously, what we need most at this juncture is not just a mapping of individual national cinemas across Asia (Ciecko 2006; Eleftheriotis and Needham 2006; Vick 2007) – although that kind of project constitutes a necessary first step – but a sustained critical engagement with issues of cross-fertilization, mutual dialogue, and transnational or transregional cooperation among different Asian cinemas (Hunt and Leung 2008).

Finally, the significance of Chinese cinema must be measured by its enduring contribution to world cinema. Merely having its film stills grace the covers of world cinema books in English is by no means sufficient, even though it is apparently a current fashion in academic publication indicative of the increasing visibility of China and Chinese cinema (Nochimson 2010; Ďurovičová and Newman 2010). Likewise, the importance of Chinese film studies must be assessed

by its rigorous contribution to international film studies. *A Companion to Chinese Cinema* represents one such effort in critical assessment, as the following 29 chapters promise to open the reader's eyes to a variety of crucial aspects of Chinese cinema informed by the contributors' historical knowledge, theoretical expertise, and analytic rigor.

Notes

- 1 The currency exchange rate has been limited to a small margin of fluctuations around US\$1 to RBM 6.3–6.8 after being pegged at US\$1 to RMB 8.1–8.3 for years up to 2005. *The Founding of a Republic* still trailed behind two Hollywood blockbusters in China's 2009 exhibition market: *2012* (Roland Emmerich, 2009), with RBM 460.6 million, and *Transformers II: Revenge of the Fallen* (Michael Bay, 2009), with RBM 455 million (Yin 2010: 11).
- 2 For instance, Hong Kong University Press has launched two English book series related to Chinese film studies: "The New Hong Kong Cinema" (with fifteen titles by August 2010) and "TransAsia: Screen Cultures" (with six titles).
- 3 Given its targeted English readership, this introduction will mainly refer to scholarship in English, especially books and anthologies, and the reader is advised to consult Chapter 25 for Chinese-language publications.
- 4 The multiple roles Chris Berry has played in relation to Chinese cinema are noteworthy. Growing up in the UK, he received his PhD in cinema studies from the University of California, Los Angeles and taught at several universities in Australia, the US, and the UK. He had a stint as a government-appointed foreign film expert in Beijing during the 1980s and has promoted Chinese cinema internationally by helping with English subtitles and writing for film festivals and news media. His interdisciplinary academic work has covered cinema, television, media, queer studies, and psychoanalysis, among others.
- 5 However, one year after its inception, the editors of a special issue of *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* (Berry and Pang 2008) would question precisely the wisdom of keeping the plural form in an era when mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are increasingly involved in the transborder coproduction of Chinese blockbuster films.
- 6 Most notable among other regional dialect films are Amoy (*xiayu*) and Chaozhou: both were produced in Hong Kong mostly for Southeast Asian markets in the 1950s–1960s, and the former's popularity (seventy titles in 1958 and 89 in 1959, compared with nine Chaozhou titles in 1959) actually inspired the production of Taiwanese-dialect film in Taiwan, for *xiayu* (Xiamen dialect) or *minnanyu* (Southern Fujian dialect) are basically the same as Taiwanese dialect (*taiyu*). Other languages, dialects, and accents (e.g., Hakka, Shanghaiese, Sichuanese, and ethnic minorities' languages) also appear in Chinese films, but films featuring them in any significant way have never reached a critical mass (Y. Zhang 2004a: 155).