Introduction
The New Hong Kong Cinema, Cinema of Transitions and East Asia

Made on a 'mid budget' of RMB30 million (£2.8 million or U.S.$4.8 million),[1] *A Simple Life* (Ann Hui, Hong Kong, 2012) does not belong to any Hong Kong mainstream genres (Bordwell 2000; FILMART 2007). It tells a very simple story between an elderly, loyal housemaid Tao Jie of a Hong Kong Chinese migrant family and her young master Roger. Their love and care for each other makes them no different from any blood-related family. The director Ann Hui acknowledges that one of the main themes of *A Simple Life* – the sociopolitical issues of ageing – was rarely explored in Hong Kong films.[2] She admits that making this film was a risky endeavour, for she employed stars to play major roles while shooting the film like a documentary.[3] After Hui and the film's writer/producer Roger Lee (whose real-life story was the blueprint of the film) showed the synopsis to Hong Kong superstar Andy Lau and Deanie Ip (playing Tao Jie), the two actors were not just interested in playing the key roles, but Lau was also willing to find finances for the film (H. 2012). *A Simple Life* turned out to be emotionally touching, garnering multiple important awards (such as the best actress and best director awards) when it travelled along the international film festival circuit in 2011 and 2012. The film's international glory meant it soon became the talk of the town. It was also one of the highest box-office grossing films (ranked number five) in Hong Kong in the first half of 2012 (Shackleton 2012b), becoming the most bankable film Hui had made in decades (Sek 2013: 124). Its mainland China box-office takings doubled the film's initial budget.[4]

Being *A Simple Life*'s lead actor and executive producer, Lau promotes the film in its 'Making of' programme.[5] Upon finishing it, he chants loudly in Cantonese,[6] 'Hurray, Hong Kong Cinema!' Lau is internationally famous for his role as the triad mole inside the Hong Kong Police Force in the *Infernal Affairs* trilogy (directed by Hong Kong filmmakers Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, and released in 2002 and 2003 respectively).[7] Much less known outside Hong Kong is Lau's active support (in terms of both finances and human resources) for independent Hong Kong films, especially those made on low budgets. The star

often assumes the role of producer of these films, such as for Fruit Chan's *Made in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1997). Lau's wholehearted support for Hong Kong Cinema is indisputable.

What these filmmakers show us is more than their success and perseverance in helping Hong Kong films survive. Reading between the lines of their comments on this non-genre Hong Kong film *A Simple Life* and Hong Kong Cinema more generally in different media interviews, we can detect a number of concerns that Hong Kong filmmakers are carrying with them. Most notable are the struggles of the once-prosperous mainstream film industry in Hong Kong. The filmmakers reveal the limitations of the filmmaking environment within Hong Kong in recent years and the uncertainty of the future of the Hong Kong film industry when East Asia moves towards a pan-Asian, China-led co-production era.[8] Lau, for example, could have chanted 'Hurray, Chinese Cinema!' instead of 'Hurray, Hong Kong Cinema!' in promoting *A Simple Life*, which is technically a China-Hong Kong co-production that has received serious investment from China. On top of concerns on the industry level, these filmmakers continue to place themselves at the forefront, fighting for a distinct identity of local Hong Kong films that help to define the identity of their fellow Hongkongers.[9]

This book is a treatise on the New Hong Kong Cinema (including the cinematic tradition, film industry and relevant institutional aspects, and individual films) that has developed over the past three and a half decades from the 1980s to the mid 2010s. Hong Kong films made during this era often directly or indirectly concern the 1997 sovereignty handover (or just 'Handover' in short) of the city, whether they belong to mainstream genre traditions or lean towards experimental and non-commercial practice. My main argument is that these films should be discussed, and can be understood more fully, from the angle of 'transitions' in the renewed and continuously changing East Asian regional context in the age of China's rise. Hence, I highlight three related areas of concern here: (1) the New Hong Kong Cinema, (2) its relationship to 'Transitions', and (3) its positioning vis-à-vis China and within East Asia. In turn, they will inform my critical analysis in this book. Situating my argument at the intersection of these three related angles, this book goes beyond the parameters of other theoretical paradigms such as transnational, national or local cinema, in which Hong Kong Cinema is often explored.

The New Hong Kong Cinema

I use the term 'New Hong Kong Cinema' by building on cultural theorist Ackbar Abbas' ideas. Abbas uses this expression to refer to Hong Kong films made since 1982, in order to highlight a special stage of development of Hong Kong Cinema as a response to a specific sociopolitical, historical situation and a cultural space of disappearance related to the 1997 political handover (Abbas 1997: 16–17). Abbas moves on to use this term as the umbrella title of a book series (published by the Hong Kong University Press) under the general editorship of himself and his colleague Wimal Dissanayake (they were joined by film scholars Mette Hjort, Gina Marchetti and Stephen Teo).[10] Each volume presents a close analysis by a scholar or critic of one Hong Kong film (an exception is Marchetti's (2007) study on all three films of the *Infernal Affairs* trilogy in a single book). In the preface of the books in this publication series, Abbas and Dissanayake (no original date; see for example Marchetti 2007, E. Cheung 2009 and Yue 2010) identify further the qualities of the New Hong Kong Cinema:

> In the New Hong Kong Cinema … it is neither the subject matter nor a particular set of generic conventions that is paramount. In fact, many Hong Kong films begin by following generic conventions but proceed to transform them. Such transformation of genre is also the transformation of a sense of place where all the rules have quietly and deceptively changed. It is this shifting sense of place, often expressed negatively and indirectly – but in the best work always rendered precisely in (necessarily) innovative images – that is decisive for the New Hong Kong Cinema.

While Abbas and Dissanayake focus their attention on the cultural and historical importance of these Hong Kong films (on a par with Italian neorealist films, French New Wave and New German Cinema) in a disappearing cultural space in Hong Kong, my usage of the term here in capitals is an extension slightly modified from their concept. Firstly, I stress the fact that new Hong Kong mainstream films offer cinematic representations of residents in Hong Kong (especially of the Hong Kong Chinese). These films are related primarily to a population called 'Hongkongers' on screen, off-screen and/or behind the screen. Given the volatility of different qualifiers that have been applied to the Hongkongers' sense of being, it is logical to think that the identities represented in many Hong Kong

films during the Handover transition, which is still ongoing as I will discuss below, should be better understood on multiple levels. Vantage points of reference may include the narrative structures, subject matter, visual and audio styles and so on of these films. Secondly, the commercialism in the Hong Kong mainstream film industry has pushed the boundaries of the New Hong Kong Cinema. Whereas new Hong Kong mainstream films cannot be too formulaic and convey their messages via certain genres only (as Abbas and Dissanayake point out), the filmmakers cannot be extremely auteurist or artistic, especially in Andrew Sarris' sense (1981), and ignore the commercial side of their film projects. Moreover, although most of the films under discussion in this book are considered components of the commercial Hong Kong mainstream film industry, many of them in fact are not indigenous Hong Kong films, because they have significant financial investments and human resources coming from outside Hong Kong. Depending on the contexts in which they are mentioned and explored, these films can be classified as 'Hong Kong films', 'China–Hong Kong co-productions', 'pan-East Asian films' or all of the above at the same time. Prime examples are John Woo's *Red Cliff* and *Red Cliff II* (China/Hong Kong/Japan/South Korea/Taiwan/United States), released in 2008 and 2009 respectively (they are in fact two instalments of a single film; I will thus refer them to as Part I and Part II of *Red Cliff* hereafter) (see my discussion in Chapter Four of this book). To avoid confusion over the origin of these co-produced Hong Kong films, in this text I call them Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films.

To maintain these two characteristics, the New Hong Kong Cinema must engage with (and in) the empirical environs and people of Hong Kong. My first experience of Hong Kong films, unlike that of many of their admirers, did not occur in a movie theatre but at home in Hong Kong when I watched television reruns of small-budget old Cantonese films made within relatively short production periods in the late 1950s and the 1960s.[11] These were a major source of enjoyment in my childhood, but I should admit that these Hong Kong films meant more than pure entertainment to me when I was growing up in my native Hong Kong. Through them, I acquired some snapshot knowledge of the city and people's lives in a recent past of Hong Kong. The more I understand this place and the more Hong Kong-made or Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films from different periods I see, the more I feel these films should be watched and understood not just for the sake of their aesthetic or industrial value, but as a combination of various factors intrinsic and extrinsic to them and to the place they are concerned with.

Therefore, besides being a critical study of recent Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films, this monograph is based on a particular take of how Hong Kong has developed as a city newly under Chinese rule amid new regionalization in East Asia. Those films belonging to the New Hong Kong Cinema I scrutinize here are not only treated as parts of the mass media, nor do they only serve as a sort of lens through which Hong Kong society can be explored. They are also viewed and critically examined as channels, facilitators, catalysts (in some cases), meaning producers and redevelopers influencing the social, cultural, economic, political and historical spheres of Hong Kong. Moreover, in exerting influences on these spheres of Hong Kong, the New Hong Kong Cinema (especially in the senses of film industry and cinematic tradition) has transcended, is transcending and will most likely continue to transcend the interfaces between Hong Kong, China, East Asia and the rest of the world. In particular, I would like to ask throughout this book: (1) Over the past three and a half decades, have Hong Kong films made use of any specific subject matter, plots, aesthetics, characterization, etc., to construct an on-screen world that would reflect the impact of the sovereignty change in real life? (2) How have the target audiences of these films (especially those in East and South East Asia) responded to changes – if such there are – to these filmic elements (in question 1) in Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films? (3) Has the Handover had any direct or indirect political-economic effects on the changes taking place in Hong Kong's mainstream film industry in the context of the rise of China and the rearrangement of East Asia's international relations after the Asian Financial Crisis (1997–98)? (4) How have these changes, as mentioned in the above questions, interplayed with one another, and what lessons might other parts of the globalized world learn from the developments in contemporary Hong Kong Cinema? In the following I will first discuss some special times, places and people, which I believe are so significant to the development of the New Hong Kong Cinema that my analysis of these films would be incomplete without them.

Hong Kong: A Revisit to the 'Borrowed Time' and the 'Borrowed Place'

Firstly, the *time*. The period from the late 1960s to the late 1970s marked the penultimate stage of the 151-year-old British colonial governance of Hong Kong (excluding the three years and eight months of Japanese occupation of Hong Kong during the Second World War). As Richard Hughes opens his famous book *Hong Kong: Borrowed Place – Borrowed Time* (1968: 9) with a snapshot of

Hong Kong in the postwar period: 'A borrowed place living on borrowed time, Hong Kong is an impudent capitalist survival on China's communist *derriere*, an anachronistic mixture of British colonialism and the Chinese way of life, a jumble of millionaires' mansions and horrible slums, a teeming mass of hard-working humans, a well-ordered autocracy' (italics in original). The very same period also saw some of the major incidents elsewhere that are still having repercussions and lingering consequences today: the Cold War (1947–89), the Vietnam War (1956–75), China's Cultural Revolution (1966–76), the 1973 oil crisis … None of these *seemed* to have any lasting negative impacts on the island in the grand scheme of things. Contrary to the trend in the world's major events, the British Crown Colony as a whole enjoyed a prosperous period in the late 1970s and the 1980s, and would even become one of the Four Asian Tigers.[12] Stock exchanges repeatedly hit historic highs of transactions. The properties and real estate sectors of the city's economy soared to incredible levels. Banking, finances and other service industries also enjoyed their heydays. The whole society followed suit at a rapid pace. Wealth was being seriously accumulated, while the gap between the rich and the poor began to widen quickly. Starting from that period, the Hong Kong Chinese saw they might be quite different from other Chinese communities. They began to explore in other sectors as well, most notably in political and cultural areas, their identity as 'Hongkongers' – an identification that distinguished them from their British colonizers and definitely from their still backward and poor mainland Chinese neighbours.

The *place* itself indeed helps to create this kind of hope and mentality. Geographically Hong Kong is located at the south-eastern tip of China's territory. This location had been doing the place a huge injustice throughout the long history of development of the Chinese governance system, dating back to around 1700 BC. As journalist and historian Martin Jacques (2012) argues in his book *When China Rules the World*, China is in itself a civilization-state, whose central governance operates somewhere in the middle of its vast territory. Thus, Beijing, Nanjing, Louyang and Xian were chosen to be the country's capitals in different periods. The physical location of the governance centre suggests that the Chinese territories located along the country's geographical borders might not have enjoyed the same importance as regards the governance of the whole nation. Located on the country's geographical periphery, Hong Kong has never fallen under the strict and direct administration of the central authorities ever since China was officially united as one nation by Qin Shihuang (the First

Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, 221–206 BC).[13] Arguably, this was also one of the reasons why Qing China (under the Qing Dynasty, which ruled from 1644 to 1912, and was the last in the country's history) ceded Hong Kong, albeit reluctantly, to the British as part of the compensation after the country's defeat in the two Opium Wars (in 1842 and 1860 respectively). Towards the end of the British colonial empire in the late 1960s, Hong Kong as a British Crown Colony benefited from the non-interventionist policy of the Hong Kong British government, which enabled the city to utilize its natural strengths to develop as an entrepôt and a bridge between China and the outside world. It has gradually consolidated its indispensable position as a global city transcending the national and geopolitical confines of its hinterland (Sassen 2001).

Towards Identification with Hong Kong and the Hongkongers' Identity

Finally, the *people*. The specific history and geographical location of Hong Kong have strongly contributed to what makes up the community living there over the years. According to the 2011 Hong Kong government census (released on 4 May 2012), ethnic Chinese residents in Hong Kong stood at a total of 6.6 million, accounting for 93.6 per cent of the territory's entire population of 7.07 million.[14] The majority of the Hong Kong Chinese residents were immigrants or descendants of immigrants from mainland China. They had been regarded by their mainland counterparts and the People's Republic of China (PRC) authorities as members of the overseas Chinese communities (known as *hai wai qiao bao* in Mandarin) before Hong Kong reunited with China politically. In studying the sojourn patterns of overseas Chinese over the past 200 years, Chinese immigration scholar Wang Gungwu (1991a) classifies Chinese emigrants into several categories, including 'trader', 'coolie', 'sojourner' and 'descent or re-migrant'; these categories are based mainly on the various primary reasons for people leaving China. Although Wang arranges these migration patterns chronologically, in reality these kinds of migrations could also be found in periods other than the ones in which they were the predominant kinds.

Due to the convenient geographical proximity, many Chinese emigrants from the south of China might find themselves residing in Hong Kong at some point without the initial intention of staying there forever. During the post-Second World War period, these previous refugees or emigrants witnessed the negative changes in China after the establishment of the PRC. They also saw how the colonial government began a series of beneficial sociocultural policies that

turned out to be useful for the Hong Kong residents to build their local con-
sciousness after the 1967 pro-communist riots and anti-colonialism demon-
strations. With other locals, they have begun to enjoy the effects of economic
prosperity in Hong Kong since the 1970s. They realized their stay in Hong Kong
might be much longer than originally envisaged (Curtin 2003: 215–16; Y-W. Chu
2013: 125). Economically, if not necessarily culturally, they began to identify with
Hong Kong more than with their places of origin in mainland China.

Hence, although many Hongkongers are ethnic Chinese and culturally also
very Chinese,[15] their Chineseness – itself a problematic, controversial, cultural
essentialist and ethnic deterministic concept (Tu 1994; Chun 1996; Ang 1998,
2001; R. Chow 1998: 17) – is inevitably different from that of their co-nationals
in mainland China (see further discussion on 'Chineseness' in Chapter Two).
Cultural critics have found various stages of change taking place in the iden-
tification, mentality and worldview of the Hong Kong Chinese throughout the
years (Skeldon 1994c; Tu 1994; Wang G. and J. Wong 1999; Jacques 2012). Over
the colonial history and the post-reunification period, the sentiments and
ways of thinking of the Hong Kong Chinese have been closer to those of the
Chinese descendants settled far from Chinese soil. Theirs can be regarded as
the direct effect of exposure to colonial and postcolonial influences, although it
may depend on individuals how deep such influences can go. The postcolonial
effects they undergo, however, may not necessarily result in nationalist senti-
ments, as film scholar Laikwan Pang (2007) observes when writing about post-
colonial Hong Kong Cinema. The author argues that it is more and more difficult
for the recent Hong Kong Cinema to fit into the postcolonial model, in which
local films are supposed to be employed to assert the newly gained national
status (2007: 423–24). Such ethno-centric nationalist sentiments, nonetheless,
are lacking in many Hong Kong Chinese. Likewise, Hong Kong as a society does
not display such sentiments often.

One might even say that the Chineseness that the Hongkongers display often
changes depending on circumstances. Many Hong Kong Chinese may choose
to align with the mainland Chinese and the Chinese living in other territories (or
countries) when a suitable political, cultural or economic environment prevails.
Recent incidents, such as the fighting for territorial rights over Diaoyu Island,
show that the ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong do align themselves with China on
international relations issues. Yet, many of them also feel uneasy about their
own status as 'Chinese nationals' after the political handover. They fight hard for

their own local distinctiveness, something that might not be deemed appropriate elsewhere on the mainland under the PRC rule.

The identity complex of many Hong Kong Chinese comes to a certain extent from their self-awareness of being 'overseas Chinese' or themselves once being part of the Chinese diaspora (Safran 1991; R. Chow 1993; Ang 2001; W. Cheung 2007: 66–69). As diaspora scholar William Safran (1991: 87) regards, 'diasporic consciousness' is 'an intellectualization of an existential condition'. Seen in the above context, I argue that ideas related to the 'diaspora' paradigm can provide us with an informative starting point for understanding the complicated identification issues of the Hong Kong Chinese, and the pre- and post-reunification Hong Kong. It allows us to be better informed with regard to Hong Kong's relationship with a 'China' that tends to exert its deeply rooted civilization-state posture, to revive its position as a regional big brother in East Asia, and to behave as a country that will become a true world power in the foreseeable future (Katzenstein 2000; Jacques 2012).

Yet, I also believe there are limitations to deploying the strict ideas of this paradigm when analysing the Hongkongers' ever-changing identity negotiations. Media historian and social theorist John Durham Peters (1999: 39) defines diaspora as those people who have to be tolerant of the 'perpetual postponement of homecoming and the necessity … of living among strange lands and peoples'. In writing about exilic and diasporic filmmakers from Third World countries now residing in the West, diaspora and film scholar Hamid Naficy (2001: 14) defines 'diaspora' as follows:

> *People in diaspora have an identity in their homeland* before *their departure, and their diasporic identity is constructed in resonance with this prior identity. However … diaspora is necessarily collective, in both its origination and its destination. As a result, the nurturing of a collective memory, often of an idealized homeland, is constitutive of the diasporic identity … People in diaspora, moreover, maintain a long-term sense of ethnic consciousness and distinctiveness.* (emphasis in original)

If the original idea of homeland and home country is not very clear and has at times become a hegemonic 'other', as in the case of many Hong Kong Chinese with their love-hate relationship with 'China',[16] with the current Chinese authorities and with their mainland Chinese counterparts, then perhaps 'diaspora' as a

concept does not work perfectly. Still, there is no reason to believe the diasporic paradigm is completely inappropriate here. As cultural theorist Ien Ang (1998: 225) puts it concisely:

> *Central to the diasporic paradigm is the theoretical axiom that Chineseness is not a category with a fixed content – be it racial, cultural, or geographical – but operates as an open and indeterminate signifier whose meanings are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated in different sections of the Chinese diaspora ... There are, in this paradigm, many different Chinese identities, not one.*

Therefore, we must and should be prepared to use this concept open-mindedly in order to interrogate the very nature of the centre-prone, vertically integrated 'China' influences and 'China' factor when studying the identity issues of the Hong Kong Chinese. At the same time, we can appreciate and highlight the tendency towards a hybridity that diasporic dispersal might result in (Ang 1998: 236).

From People to Films: Local Chinese, Ex-British Subjects, or East Asians?

Understanding how the Hong Kong Chinese perceive themselves and are perceived by others (other Chinese communities and the non-Chinese) is important for us to construct a comprehensive picture of the roles Hong Kong as a society plays in a complex system of international relations, in which China is emerging as a world power. This background also helps me examine the functions and dimensions of Hong Kong films made recently, especially in an era in which the Hong Kong film industry has been declining continuously. For most of its history, the local film industry has operated without assistance from the Hong Kong government (see Chapter Five for an analysis of Hong Kong's film policy). The demise of the studio system that supported most of the film outputs in Hong Kong from the 1960s to the mid 1980s further aggravated the difficulties in filmmaking there. After the last Hong Kong-based production studio Shaw Brothers stopped financing and producing film projects in 1986 and concentrated its investments on its television station, Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB), film productions in Hong Kong have been typically run by small companies with limited investment capital in a form not much different from a cottage industry (except for a few larger independent companies including Cinema City

(1980–91), D&B Films (1984–92) and Golden Harvest (since 1970)[17]) (Bordwell 2000: 1, 70; Chan C. 2000: 9–10, 599–606; S. Chung 2003: 13–14). Hong Kong Cinema enjoyed its heyday in the 1980s and the early 1990s. Domestic box-office earnings and overseas revenue from Hong Kong-made films reached the highest record of HK$3.1 billion in 1992 (£246 million or U.S.$400 million) (J. Chan, Fung and C. Ng 2010: 13). The film industry turned out 239 films in 1993 at its apex (Chan C. 2000: 457), selling films to the domestic as well as overseas markets in East/South East Asia and North America. Hong Kong films had a close to 80 per cent gross local market share in the early 1990s. There were about 15,000 people working in film production in Hong Kong during that period (Szeto and Y. Chen 2013).

Small companies were able to enjoy the film industry pinnacle throughout the late 1980s and in the early 1990s when the economy of Hong Kong was booming. However, in 1994 a recession of the whole film industry began. Critics blame the recession of Hong Kong's film sector on a combination of causes, which occurred at around the same time, such as piracy, overproduction of low quality films, threatening rivalry of Hollywood blockbusters, brain drain of creative labour from the local film industry to the West (mainly Hollywood), changing consumption habit of film audiences and shrinking of both local and traditional overseas markets, e.g., Taiwan (Chung H. 1999: 21–23). It was noted that between 1992 and 1998 overseas revenue of Hong Kong film production dropped 85 per cent. Many small, local film companies in Hong Kong suffered as a result of this recession that turned out to be long term (G. Leung and J. Chan 1997: 147–48). After the local film industry representatives had lobbied for governmental help, it was only in the post-Handover period that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government set up two funds (the Film Development Fund and the Film Guarantee Fund in 1999 and 2003 respectively) to help the ailing film industry (see discussion on these funding schemes in Chapter Five).[18] And it was as late as 2007 that the local government officially established the Hong Kong Film Development Council (HKFDC) to administer these two film funds, which are notoriously difficult to apply for due to the specific requirements of the funding schemes. On the other hand, the 'return' to Chinese rule, and the signing of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) in 2003 between Hong Kong and the mainland authorities gave the Hong Kong film industry in the new millennium a hope of penetrating the vast mainland Chinese audience market, which

was not available to Hong Kong in the colonial period. The CEPA, in particular, allows Hong Kong film projects to bypass China's strict quota on foreign film import and enter China by way of co-producing films with China-based companies and/or film talent. Working in the discipline of comparative literature, Yiu-Wai Chu (2013: 100–1) notes the difference between contemporary China-Hong Kong co-productions that started to appear in the 1990s, and the 'Mainland-Hong Kong cooperative films' made before the Cultural Revolution and after the open-door policy in communist China. The latter often involved left-wing, pro-communist film companies in Hong Kong and their special relationship with mainland Chinese organizations. These 'cooperative films' are mostly period dramas and were produced outside Hong Kong's mainstream film industry. The more recent China-Hong Kong film co-productions came into being when the mainland Chinese filmmakers began to work with the commercial Hong Kong film industry to produce such critical successes as Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine* (China/Hong Kong, 1993). Their birth coincided with the start of the decline of the Hong Kong film industry.

Lamenting the difficult situation of Hong Kong film professionals, Hong Kong actor Chapman To comments that previously Hong Kong filmmakers might only have cared about how to make good Hong Kong films; now, since 1997, because of the co-productions with the mainland Chinese filmmakers and the gradual integration of Hong Kong cinematic practice into the mainland Chinese one, Hong Kong filmmakers have to care about whether a film can pass China's censorship mechanism.[19] His comments echo Pang's remarks (2007: 424): 'If we consider 1997 the moment when Hong Kong merged back into China to become a city of a nation, the nation is welcomed most wholeheartedly by Hong Kong people on economic grounds, but, culturally, Hong Kong filmmakers continue to see the mainland market as a foreign one'. Like many other film scholars who focus on Hong Kong Cinema and how its functions are going to play out when China's influences are indeed becoming stronger and stronger, Pang's observation has a certain truth (and also hidden worries) in it. Pang is confident enough to say that Hong Kong Cinema will continue to retain its certain place-based local characteristics, as she sees that 'the local is at the core of the transnational' (L. Pang 2007: 427). Yet, like many other film scholars, Pang mobilizes the binary enquiries of local/transnational to study the situation of Hong Kong Cinema.

We can find other similar binaries such as local/national, national/transnational, local/global, colonial/postcolonial presented in scholarly literature

on Hong Kong films by other film scholars. For example, Stephen Teo's *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* (1997) gives a thorough record of how Hong Kong Cinema has developed in both historical and local/national filmmaking respects. Similarly, Yingchi Chu's *Hong Kong Cinema* (2003) uses the national cinema paradigm (see Higson 1989, 1997) to discuss locally made Hong Kong films in relation to China and the United Kingdom. Vivian P.Y. Lee's *Hong Kong Cinema since 1997* (2009) gives an update on Hong Kong films from a cultural studies perspective. Her analysis also emphasizes heavily the 'local' and 'global' (see also Fu and Desser 2000). In light of the ever-changing filmmaking and film consumption contexts of Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films, employing only binary sets of concepts for enquiry will not be sufficient for us to fill in the blanks that might be left as we try to understand Hong Kong's cinematic practice and what it might mean to those who regularly produce and consume the relevant films.

Moreover, being a global city that has been regarded by some as more successful economically than its former colonizer, Hong Kong and its film industry do enjoy a status that cannot fit comfortably within the 'local' category. Grouping Hong Kong Cinema under the category of postcolonial or even global does not work perfectly either. I should also note that for most of these Hong Kong-related films made recently, the national cinema paradigm is not appropriate. As Pang (2010: 140) points out rightly, Hong Kong Cinema has never been 'national' in any direct sense, although other media or film scholars argue otherwise that Hong Kong Cinema 'practically' functions 'as a national cinema in quantity, quality, and stylistic distinctiveness' (Shih 2007: 14). The variety of views among different researchers of Hong Kong Cinema stems partially from the personal theoretical underpinnings of the scholars and partially from the versatile yet ambiguous nature of the distinct Hong Kong cinematic tradition. Hong Kong Cinema never really contributed to the British national cinema when Hong Kong was a British Crown Colony. It had a more intriguing relationship with the cinematic practice in mainland China before the establishment of the PRC in 1949, and later with Taiwan Cinema during the 1960s to the early 1980s.[20] The recent contributions of Hong Kong Cinema to the Mandarin-speaking national cinema of the PRC can best be regarded as a form of commercial partnership and by no means a hard-core 'nationalist' move.

Other existing studies on Hong Kong Cinema, individual Hong Kong filmmakers or films tend to focus on a single area of concern to explore critically,

such as the formalistic appreciation, the search for identity, philosophical and literary interpretation, or industrial aspects. Film scholar David Bordwell's *Planet Hong Kong* (2000), for instance, emphasizes the formal techniques used in mainstream Hong Kong films, making a hidden comparison of these films with Hollywood products. For those scholars who deal with the identity and cultural issues in film, they characterize contemporary Hong Kong Cinema as a 'crisis cinema' or as a major part of a 'disappearing culture' right before and/or imme-diately after the 1997 Handover (Abbas 1997; E. Cheung and Chu Y-w. 2004). When the use of these terms is confined to a specific time frame, they seem to be correct. There is, however, doubt as to using these terms to acknowledge Hong Kong Cinema appropriately when the latter continues to evolve beyond that specific time frame.

While these perspectives may be useful in initiating analysis of Hong Kong Cinema as part of world cinemas,[21] we should be alert to the subtleties of Hong Kong Cinema and the ways different Hong Kong films are produced, distributed, exhibited and received in different highly politicized, spatial-temporal environ-ments. Analysing contemporary Hong Kong films, especially those made after the 1990s, in terms of the above-mentioned paradigms is thus too easy a way of shying away from more in-depth interrogation of the complexity of transnational, (trans-)cultural, political and economic relationships that are still emerging within the geopolitical boundary of East Asia. The latter is a geopolitical context that is still under-studied in existing research of Hong Kong films. Hong Kong Cinema has been playing a paramount role in the region's mediascapes, a role far better recognized in East Asia than in other parts of the world (Appadurai 1990, 1996). This is the reason why this book aims to fill in this gap to understand the New Hong Kong Cinema from the East Asian regional perspective.

The Model of 'Cinema of Transitions'

With the benefit of hindsight, and after years of observing the dramatic evolu-tion of the New Hong Kong Cinema since 1997, I argue for and choose to use the model of 'Cinema *of* Transitions' instead in this book. I seek to obtain better understanding of the most recent developments in Hong Kong Cinema and film culture in multiple areas of concern, and in relation to Hong Kong's transitions over the past few decades in an East Asian setting (Abbas 1997; Y. Chu 2003; L.

Pang 2007: 424, 2009: 84). The term 'Cinema of Transitions' is defined here as any cinema practice, tradition or film industry that demonstrates the ability to *reflexively* adjust and continuously readjust itself in *proactive* response to multiple types of transitions taking place in the surrounding world, whether they be cultural, social, political, economic, historical or religious. The cinematic adjustment could result in a change in the messages films convey, in the quest for human identity the films present, or even just in the transitional restructuring of the film industry of concern.

The manner in which I use the concept thus allows our discussion to embrace more aspects and kinds of transitions than how 'transition' in singular (or as a mass noun) is often used, for example, in denoting newly emerged national cinemas of the post-socialist nations in Europe. Eastern European cinemas, such as the Polish and Slovenian ones, are considered to be 'cinemas *in* transition' (my emphasis) predominantly within the national cinema paradigm or its variants (Sosnowski 1996; Mazaj 2011). Naficy (2008) uses the term 'cinema of transition' (i.e., transition without plural form) to depict those Iranians in film who are in transit in third spaces or third countries. On the other hand, cultural historian Jessica Stites Mor (2012: 9) uses 'transition cinema' to identify those Argentine political films that reflect the transition (to democracy) culture in Argentina. 'Transition' in their cases is mainly related to the change of the political-economic system in the countries concerned and how such change is imprinted on the cultural imagination in films.

Many contemporary Hong Kong mainstream films do depict in their diegetic scenarios the multitude of sociocultural and political transitions in the wider context. First and foremost, part of the society's transition is related to Hong Kong's status change from being a British Crown Colony to a Chinese special administrative region. There are numerous scholarly volumes and monographs devoted to Hong Kong's political transition from British to Chinese rule. Many of them are aligned closely with the perspectives of law and sociology. Not surprisingly, most of these publications came out right before or in the year 1997, during which the actual political handover took place.[22] A few of them were published after 1997.[23] What is particularly interesting is not the fact that these publications were written by scholars studying politics and have a strong focus on the political effects of the city's sovereignty shift, but how these authors regard the 1997-related transition of Hong Kong as something that stopped right at the point when Hong Kong became a Chinese special administrative region.

Transitions

I prefer to adopt a broader and pluralistic understanding of transitions. Hong Kong society had undergone a prolonged process of transitions before and after 1997 that have had multilayered, lingering effects. We have to understand what these 'transitions' actually mean to Hong Kong economically, politically and soci-oculturally. From an *economic* perspective, Wang Gungwu and John Wong (1999: 8) point out that, due to China's open-door policy, Hong Kong in its last stage as a British Crown Colony had already started to build a closely knit economic relationship with China. Hence, even though there was no formal economic integration arrangement in place before the political handover, the economic transition from the colonial into the postcolonial period has, on the whole, been a smooth one. With China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and its skyrocketing gross domestic product (GDP) in the first ten years after the accession,[24] Hong Kong is one of those China-administrated cities that have harvested economic benefits. For example, it has weathered the effects of the Asian Financial Crisis much better than other South East Asian territories, and is enjoying stronger protection against the Global Financial Crisis that began in 2007. Yiu-Wai Chu (2013), however, expresses his worries for Hong Kong in transition in the age of China's rise as one of the superpowers in a globalized world. The author builds his opinion on Abbas' idea about the 'disappearance' of Hong Kong culture and explores it from a different perspective, highlighting the negative aspects of the changes Hong Kong has been experiencing since the Handover. There was, for example, an overemphasis on the top-down 'Central District Values' (Y-W. Chu 2013: 43–68) caring for 'profitability', 'efficiency', rather than other human aspects of the population during Donald Tsang's administration (the successor of Tung Chee-hwa as the head of the Hong Kong SAR government). In 2001, the local government launched the 'Brand Hong Kong' marketing programme to promote Hong Kong as 'Asia's World City' on a par with London and New York. The programme was updated in 2010. This move, however, ended up marginalizing other core values that truly define the Hongkongers, especially those struggling in the grass-roots social stratum (Y-W. Chu 2013: 70, 74). To Chu, Hong Kong has been 'lost in transition'– the title of his book, in part due to the incompetence of the newly established SAR government (Y-W. Chu 2013: 12–14). In Chu's opinion, Hong Kong can no longer maintain its uniqueness as a capitalist city on Chinese soil after the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003. Many mainland Chinese cities have since

been striving to become as 'capitalist' as Hong Kong (or 'Hong Kong-ized' in Chu's words), while Hong Kong has been relying more and more on mainland Chinese capital to sustain its economic well-being (Y-W. Chu 2013: 9–12). Hong Kong's economic transition from being the only capitalist city under Chinese rule to becoming heavily reliant on the huge capital support from the supposedly socialist China has in turn tremendously influenced Hong Kong's political and sociocultural spaces.

Politically, Hong Kong's transitions are manifest in at least two different ways. On the one hand, both the British and Chinese authorities see the Handover as the point when the British transferred Hong Kong's sovereignty to the Chinese at midnight on 30 June 1997. Hence, the official transition was the period that started when both countries signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, thereby nailing the destiny of Hong Kong up to the point when the Handover would be completed, that is, 1 July 1997. Yet, on the other hand, we also need to bear in mind that Deng Xiaoping, who was the chief engineer on the Chinese side behind the sovereignty change, advocated an as yet unheard of 'one country, two systems' principle for Hong Kong's supposedly smooth political reunification with China.[25] Under this principle, Hong Kong would be allowed to enjoy a high degree of autonomy to continue having the capitalist system in place, and to have its own political framework and institutional structure for fifty years after 1997, without the interference by the socialist system of the PRC. Operating institutions from colonial years, such as the legal and educational systems, have continued to function in Hong Kong after the Handover. Wang Gungwu and John Wong (1999: 8) emphasize that 'there is neither a clear-cut institutional mechanism nor a firm timetable' for how the 'two systems' will eventually become one. There is also no institutional arrangement for any conflicts that might arise between the two systems (Kuan 1999: 24).[26] Giving the impression of playing it by ear, the political transition (and uncertainty) of Hong Kong is de facto still going on; Wang and Wong (1999: 10) call it 'limbo'.

Socioculturally, as noted by well-known government officials and scholars as well as by ordinary citizens of Hong Kong, the 'real transition' is not about sovereignty but about the identity of the people involved (Wong S. 1999: 182). And to this note I would add that many Hong Kong Chinese have some sort of diasporic experience (first-hand experience or learned knowledge from their parents and grandparents), which further complicates the Hongkongers' identity negotiations at any given time.[27] The Hongkongers' identity transitions thus have

countless dimensions and directions. Sociologist Wong Siu-lun (1999: 186–88) in a longitudinal survey (1991–97) identifies four identity transitions: Loyalists (to China), Locals (focusing on Hong Kong), Waverers (wanting to emigrate but being rejected by the countries they are aiming at), and Cosmopolitans (planning and having the resources to emigrate). Irrespective of how much money they earn, how much education they have had and what social class they are in, those who undergo identity transitions from British subjects or stateless Chinese to (involuntary) Chinese nationals[28] are often inarticulate when it comes to expressing the intense emotional complexities that they have to deal with. Not to mention that such emotional conditions often range from cultural embracing or resistance, to psychological readjustment. Constantly changing with situations and circumstances, this identity complex is also interrelated with how a unit of individuals (family or community) feel about themselves and how others perceive who and what they are (Wong S. 1999: 186).

As an example of Cinema of Transitions, the New Hong Kong Cinema entails another level of transition in the society, especially in the commercial film industrial practice that is concerned with film finance, production, distribution, exhibition and reception. There have been several stages of *structural adjustment in the mainstream Hong Kong film industry* since the late 1970s when a clearer direction of genuine local productions addressing concerns of local Hongkongers (and not the 'Chinese nationals' living in Hong Kong) was introduced into the field. In brief, we can characterize contemporary Hong Kong film industry as having started as a local and global-oriented one in the late 1970s and the 1980s. This was the time when the first Hong Kong New Wave directors began their filmmaking career, often using international film festivals as their première platforms. Cultural studies scholars Mirana M. Szeto and Yun-chung Chen (2013) observe that there was a 'mixed system' going on in the film sector of Hong Kong during that period. The system was characterized by 'satellite systems, director subcontracting, and major-minor relations that reflect different power relations between the studios and the independents' (Szeto and Y. Chen 2013). The local film industry then went through shrinkage in the input (finances and human resources in particular), and the amount and quality of output in the 1990s. The 'mixed system' of film production was giving way to a flexible 'independent system', characterized by highly networked, non-contracted film labourers and small companies of less than ten staff members. It then passed to a stage of polarization in terms of types of films (blockbusters versus small-budget indies)

in the 2000s and the 2010s. Since the late 2000s, the industry has landed on another mode, where East Asia is both the input source and the output channel. Not only have the types of film output changed rapidly over the last few decades, but likewise the ways of production, distribution, exhibition and reception of Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films. It is expected that Hong Kong Cinema (if this term is to be in use continuously to describe the cinematic practice of films made in Hong Kong) will undergo further transformation again in the near future in order to find a niche of its own in the larger screen industry environments, whether those of China, East Asia or the world. Through stages of structural adjustment of the Hong Kong film industry, we can see that external transitions have not bogged down or worsened the cinematic practice. At times they even become a driving force that impels the constant reinventions, growth and prospering of the cinema of concern. External transitions and the Cinema of Transitions, as in the case of the New Hong Kong Cinema, are therefore working partners (metaphorically speaking) that mutually sustain each other. As long as there are external transitions, the Cinema of Transitions will reflect and respond to these changes internally.

In addition, within the model of Cinema of Transitions, the cinema of concern may itself become a factor intervening in the external transitions. There are numbers of instances of recently made Hong Kong films attempting to intervene in the changes of the city's sociopolitical arena. For example, Herman Yau's *From the Queen to the Chief Executive* (Hong Kong, 2001) questions the hypocrisy of the local law system in handling the cases of twenty-three juvenile delinquents who committed serious crimes (e.g., murder) before 1997 (B. Lee 2002: 26). In real life, these delinquents were supposed to be 'detained at Her Majesty's pleasure' during the colonial era due to their young age, and to wait for the British monarch's final decision on their sentences. However, these young criminals were completely forgotten by the British colonizers when the latter left after Hong Kong's sovereignty change. The new chief executive of the Hong Kong SAR government did not show much concern for these juvenile delinquents either. Ultimately, these young criminals might have to spend an even longer, indeterminate period in prison as opposed to what adult criminals committing similar crimes would have to undergo.

The Cinema of Transitions may even proactively extend its influences to other cultural forms, such as television, animation, video games and comics. Tsui Hark's *A Chinese Ghost Story* (Hong Kong, 1987) is a typical example of film

contents 'flowing' across different screen-based media during the time when the Hong Kong film industry was going through structural adjustment in response to the changes in wider sociocultural and political contexts. Tsui's film was loosely based on a short story within the Chinese classic collection of supernatural stories *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (written by Pu Songling approximately in the late 1600s and the early 1700s), and was inspired by Li Han-hsiang's film adaption *The Enchanting Shadow* (Hong Kong, 1960) of the same story. Both 1960 and 1987 films share the same Chinese title *Qian Nu You Hun* (倩女幽魂 in both traditional and simplified Chinese scripts). They tell the fight between a good Taoist and an evil spirit amid the love story between a young man and a beautiful female ghost. Tsui's 1987 film is believed to have spawned three other films under the same family title: *A Chinese Ghost Story II* (Ching Siu-tung, Hong Kong, 1990), *A Chinese Ghost Story III* (Ching Siu-tung, Hong Kong, 1991) and *A Chinese Fairy Tale* (aka *A Chinese Ghost Story*) (Wilson Yip, China/Hong Kong, 2011). Tsui was the producer of the 1990 and 1991 films but was not involved in the 2011 version. In 1997, Tsui directed an animated film based on the same series and entitled it *A Chinese Ghost Story: The Tsui Hark Animation* (Tsui Hark, Hong Kong, 1997). This film series also inspired a 2003 television series of forty episodes under the same title. It was produced and broadcast in Taiwan (then broadcast in Hong Kong in 2006). The television series features Hong Kong, mainland Chinese and Taiwanese actors, who were not involved in any of Tsui's *A Chinese Ghost Story* films.

Cinema of Transitions and Interstitiality

An essence of the Cinema of Transitions is its quality of being interstitial. The New Hong Kong Cinema and the transitions it has been reflecting in the past thirty-plus years since the Handover news was announced come closest to an interstitial style of cinema in Naficy's accented cinema theory (proposed in 2001), despite the obvious place-specific differences between Hong Kong and the accented filmmakers' places of origin. In Naficy's proposition (2001: 10), the accented films are made by filmmakers predominantly from 'Third World and postcolonial countries (or from the global South)' who have gone into exile or diaspora because of decolonization and other political changes taking place in their home countries since the 1960s. They have managed to find their ways to make films again within the mainstream filmmaking systems of the West after migrating to the United States and various European countries. Owing to the

specific political-cultural transitions of their identities, their filmmaking style and filmmaking process have also undergone drastic changes. As Naficy argues:

> *If the dominant cinema is considered universal and without accent, the films that diasporic and exilic subjects make are accented … the accent emanates not so much from the accented speech of the diegetic characters as from the displacement of the filmmakers and their artisanal production modes. (Naficy 2001: 4)*

> *To be interstitial, therefore, is to operate both within and astride the cracks of the system, benefiting from its contradictions, anomalies, and heterogeneity. It also means being located at the intersection of the local and the global, mediating between the two contrary categories, which in syllogism are called 'subalternity' and 'superalternity'. As a result, accented filmmakers are not so much marginal or subaltern as they are interstitial, partial, and multiple. (Naficy 2001: 46–47; my emphasis)*

According to Naficy, diasporic and exilic filmmakers making films in the West often refer to their places of origin and displacement experience. These films are therefore 'accented' (Naficy 2001: 4). Here, Naficy uses the linguistic term 'accent' in order to suggest a distinctive particularity of certain cinemas: if the classical and the new Hollywood cinemas are free from any overt ideology and accent (i.e., the neutral one), then by extension all alternative cinemas are accented (Naficy 2001: 23). We may adapt Naficy's idea of accented cinema to the case of the New Hong Kong Cinema where we can find cinematic expressions of the Hongkongers' diasporic experience and interstitiality: *if the dominant film industry is becoming a China market-oriented film industry that is based in mainland China and is heavily charged with the Sinocentric ideology, then the New Hong Kong Cinema is accented in the sense that it is transitional and interstitial.*

The sense of interstitiality in the case of the New Hong Kong Cinema has been a troubled one, precisely because it is hidden under a thick veneer of commercialism (Abbas 1997: 17–18; M. Berry 2005). Yet, the more this cinematic practice's interstitiality lies hidden below the surface, the more it is betrayed by all sorts of clues contained in the films and picked up effortlessly by target audiences who have similar concerns. Far from leading to ghettoization or marginalization, the interstitiality of the New Hong Kong Cinema tends to work for

proactive transcendence, enabling the cinematic practice, and what it depicts, to circumvent the orthodox geopolitical constraints of particular locales, cities or nations. Ultimately the New Hong Kong Cinema firmly maintains an advantageous position, as it reaps rich harvests in good times and weathers adversities in bad times.

Hence, Abbas' (1994: 65) mention that Hong Kong Cinema 'is both a popular cinema and a cinema of auteurs' is not entirely correct. Many Hong Kong mainstream filmmakers, including those whom critics praise as being auteurs, would always have, first and foremost, the goal of surviving in the film business by securing financial resources and maintaining sufficient box-office income (Ngai and Wong K. 1997: 97; M. Berry 2005: 422–542). It follows that even when these mainstream filmmakers have wished to address some sociopolitical issues of Hong Kong, instead of the constraint of political censorship, their concern has mostly been the financial conditions of their film projects and their livelihood (Sek 1988: 15; Teo 1988; Lo Y. 1997; K. Ng 2009). These two seemingly contrasting concerns have been haunting Hong Kong filmmakers for a long time. Striking a balance between caring for ideological, society-related topics in films and playing by the rules of the game in the commercial filmmaking industry has become one of the most imperative tasks of many Hong Kong mainstream filmmakers. At the same time, their success stories in filmmaking offer us abundant material for exploring and appreciating film practices in different places.

Naficy's theory covers a wide range of areas that are the components of the 'accented style' (in the author's words) the accented filmmakers employ to reflect their diasporic and exilic identity after re-establishing their filmmaking careers in the West (Naficy 2001: 289–92). These areas of concern include accented films' visual style, narrative structure, characters and characterization, subject matter, structures of feeling, accented filmmakers' own location and authorship, as well as their specific mode of film production, distribution, exhibition and reception activities. This theory and its areas of discussion thus serve as a highly adaptable theoretical framework that we can utilize to examine the New Hong Kong Cinema as an example of the Cinema of Transitions. It also informs the structure of this book and the realignment of several seemingly separate issues regarding Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films. I will return to this point in the last section 'About the Research and the Book' of this 'Introduction'. For now, we will discuss how the New Hong Kong Cinema has remained firmly an identifiable unit against the backdrop of recent developments in China and East Asia.

East Asia in the Twenty-first Century: Concepts and Perspectives

While Hong Kong film culture has come to reflect the economic, political, social and cultural concerns of the Hong Kong Chinese, we can no longer confine Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films to 'local', 'global' or a portmanteau 'glocal' that consists of the two. Instead, we should turn to an already emerging new direction that makes more visible the understated component within the global-local paradigm, i.e., the redefined regional film cultures in an 'East Asia' that is undergoing the latest round of regionalism. This reconsideration is especially necessary in view of the dramatic international relations triggered by the rise of China, U.S. preoccupation with Middle Eastern issues and its interests in the Asia-Pacific region in the twenty-first century (Campbell 2011), and the Global (mainly Western) Financial Crisis.

The New East Asian Regionalism

The regionalism and regionalization characteristics of East Asia should not be confused with that of the European Union or the two Americas. International relations expert Peter J. Katzenstein distinguishes between 'regionalism' and 'regionalization'. According to Katzenstein (2000: 354), 'Regionalisation describes the geographic manifestation of international or global economic processes. Regionalism refers to the political structures that both reflect and shape the strategies of governments, business corporations and a variety of non-governmental organisations and social movement'. When Katzenstein wrote about East Asia's 'new regionalism' in 2000, in East Asia there were two political-economic centres, China and Japan. In little more than ten years, however, the situation in East Asia changed drastically. Jacques (2012) stays away from a Euro-American perspective and looks at East Asia's (in particular China's) progress from the historical perspective of Chinese civilization. He notes that China will soon become the single most important power in East Asia, first, through its economic prowess in the post-WTO accession years and, second, through revitalized cultural influences. Jacques' assumption represents a still somewhat homogenous approach to treating and understanding Chinese people, especially as he does not delve deep into the cultural and racial conflicts between different Chinese communities or into the Hong Kong Chinese community's uneasiness about returning to the rule of PRC. However, his emphasis on China's being a civilization-state (and not a nation-state in the modern sense) offers

strong support to his arguments that China's approach to the entire world is going to be very different from what the West (of which Europe and the United States are the two cornerstones) is familiar with. Jacques reminds his readers that China is not just the nation-state it has 'recently' become (in the last one hundred years approximately). It is, in the author's words, 'the oldest continuously existing polity in the world' (Jacques 2012: 244). He also notes that:

> *When the Chinese use the term 'China' they are not usually referring to the country or nation so much as Chinese civilization – its history, the dynasties, Confucius, the ways of thinking, the role of government, the relationships and customs, the* guanxi *(the network of personal connections), the family, filial piety, ancestral worship, the values, and distinctive philosophy, all of which long predate China's history as a nation-state ... Chinese identity is overwhelmingly a product of its civilizational history. The Chinese think of themselves not as a nation-state but as a civilization-state ... its multitudinous layers comprising the civilization-state, with the nation-state merely the top soil. (Jacques 2012: 244)*

Understanding how China works and thinks as a civilization-state, rather than just a nation-state, is important, as it will help us understand how the Chinese (particularly those of the mainland) behave towards one another and towards the non-Chinese. Jacques detects the often overlooked racial discriminatory attitudes the ethnic Chinese generally have towards peoples of darker complexion,[29] combined with ignorance of racial difference within China. He also discusses the possibility that China's rise might lead to a renewed expression of the age-old China-centred tributary system (encompassing some of the past East Asian tributary states, such as Japan and Korea), the modern East Asia (ASEAN+3) summit in the late 1990s and the 2000s being an important hint of such a tendency (Jacques 2012: 347, 374–405).

Rey Chow (1993: 9), herself a Hong Kong-raised cultural theorist now living in the United States, also protests against the Chinese 'hegemony' in her book *Writing Diaspora*. Chow disapproves of the cultural essentialism that results from Chinese 'hegemony', and of the Chinese identity being imposed upon those people of Chinese descent who hold a culturally pluralistic view. The author argues that such moves demonstrate a focus on consanguinity that violently demands total submission of the ethnic Chinese to a hollow Sinocentrism

(Chow 1993: 24–25). Chow advocates that people should 'unlearn' their submission to their ethnicity and acknowledge the more realistic cultural identity negotiations often demonstrated by her fellow Hong Kong Chinese.

What is common to Jacques' and Chow's writing is their acknowledgement of Sinocentrism (or 'the Middle Kingdom mentality') (Jacques 2012: 294–341), an ideology rarely discussed and taken for granted in scholarly works. It focuses on 'China' as a modern nation-state, a civilization, a race and even a cultural concept. The concept of 'cultural China' put forward by neo-Confucian Tu Wei-ming in *The Living Tree* (1994: 1–34) provoked much controversy. He argues the need for those who live and work on the 'periphery' of China (i.e., those Chinese descendants who do not live on the mainland) to replace the traditional 'centre' (mainland Chinese) in cultural and intellectual discussions. This should lead to a rethinking of the concept of 'China'. On the surface, Tu's argument looks like a kind of nonconformist disapproval of the absolute cultural elitism in which the mainland Chinese intellectuals are dominant. Ien Ang, however, points out that Tu's definition of three symbolic universes comprising 'cultural China' represents yet another Sinocentric ideology. It highlights the 'periphery' (where Chinese intellectuals in diaspora dominate) instead of the 'centre', and precludes the possibilities of cultural pluralism and diversity among these overseas Chinese (Ang 1998: 228–33). Why, after all, do the overseas Chinese have to think and act only like 'Chinese', and why does the thinking of 'cultural China' have to be initiated by intellectual communities? A strong marginalization of non-intellectual ethnic Chinese communities who think and act otherwise but most likely form the great majority of the Chinese diaspora is easily detected here. As we shall see in my discussion in Chapter Four, the cultural Sinocentrism and feeling of superiority could be as dangerous as any other essentialist ideology, such as German Nazism or Italian Fascism, that glorifies one's own culture and history while potentially marginalizing, ignoring and, in the extreme case, killing off other cultures and peoples.

The awareness of the possible effects of cultural Sinocentrism is very important if we are to understand how modern China, attempting to be a continuity of its civilizational past, is proactively influencing its own nationals and the overseas and returned Chinese communities to perceive themselves and others. This in turn influences the ways these different ethnic Chinese communities construct *a* Chinese identity more on the basis of Chinese culture and history than on the modern notions of nationality and citizenship (Wu 1994: 148–49).

The cultural-political effects also extend to the interactions of these communities and individuals within and beyond cultural-industrial sectors like the film industry, practitioners of which are often involved in working with colleagues from various countries. As Jacques (2012: 343) notes, 'The way in which China handles its rise and exercises its growing power in the East Asian region will be a very important indicator of how it is likely to behave as a global power'.

The New Hong Kong Cinema as One of the Most Prominent Components of the East Asian Film Industries

To reiterate, this book has chosen to focus on Hong Kong Cinema of the last thirty-plus years. Special attention is paid to this cinematic tradition's relation to China on the rise in an East Asian setting. It explores the manner in which the New Hong Kong Cinema has been influenced by a love-hate relationship with the cultural Sinocentrism at home (in Hong Kong and elsewhere in mainland China) and, more significantly, in other parts of East Asia.

Why do we shift Hong Kong Cinema from the usual transnational or national cinema paradigms and reposition it instead in the (new) East Asia paradigm – a regional and cultural concept that was perhaps less important for Hong Kong Cinema in the Cold War period than after the Asian Financial Crisis? In other words, why is it essential for us to understand how contemporary Hong Kong Cinema has been moulded to become a part of China-led, East Asia-oriented film business?

With more and more archival materials being explored and published in different scholarly studies in recent years, we can now understand that the film industries in East Asia have been prone to working and doing business interdependently in different historical periods, including the most recent one (see, for example, Yau S. 2010; Sugawara 2011; DeBoer 2014). The phenomenon in today's East Asian collaborative film business world finds a surprising parallel in the 1950s and the 1960s as well as in much earlier periods. Initiated by key players in the film scene in the East Asian region, this kind of interrelationship among different East Asian film industries has gone beyond individual East Asian film industries' aim of fighting against the invasion of Hollywood products. It has also accomplished more than just the promotion of national film products of each country in East Asia. The Shaw family, for example, has been one of the dominant players in the region (see, for example, Wong A. 2003; Fu 2008). Throughout the years, the Shaws have changed from their earliest form,

Tianyi (aka Unique) Film Productions in Shanghai (established in 1925), through to a reincarnation in Hong Kong as Nanyang (established in 1937; renamed as Shaw and Sons Limited in 1950), and the establishment of Shaw Brothers (HK) Limited (1958–2011), to its present mode of producing films under various companies of the Shaw conglomerate. By the 1950s and the 1960s, Shaw Brothers had firmly established branches of production, distribution and exhibition across East/South East Asia, becoming the biggest film studio in the region. Besides building a film kingdom with branches operational in various places, the Shaws also worked with some of the biggest players (film studios) in East Asia (most notably Japan's Shochiku, Toho, Daiei (acquired by Kadokawa in 2002), Toei and Nikkatsu) to weave a tight regional film business network. Together they launched in 1954 the first film festival in East/South East Asia chiefly for film marketing purposes (see K. Yau 2003; R. Cheung 2011c: 203–4; Iordanova 2011: 11).[30] Initially known as the Southeast Asian Film Festival, the event was renamed in 1957 as the Asian Film Festival; then in 1982 it was further renamed as the Asia-Pacific Film Festival, the title that is still in use today (S. Lee 2011: 242–46).

Therefore, from a historical point of view, the late 1990s to 2010s actually witnesses a revitalized, rather than a completely new, phenomenon of collaboration (in the areas of film financing, production and marketing) and resources sharing within East Asia. We see it happening in some of the most successful mainstream East Asian films of the new millennium, the latest being Wong Kar-wai's *The Grandmaster* (China/Hong Kong, 2013) on the biographic story of martial arts master Ip Man. Successful projects do not involve key film companies only. There are also profitable co-produced films that are made on smaller budgets. They find their niches and enjoy positive box-office/critical reception. We can easily find some examples among those made and distributed by Peter Chan's Applause Pictures (established in 2000) (Davis and Yeh 2008: 93–99).[31]

Several East Asian and Chinese-language cinema experts have considered using East Asia as the main vantage point of their studies. From an industrial-cultural point of view, Darrell William Davis and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh (2008: 1) argue that a discussion of East Asian screen industries as a whole will better reflect the significant restructuring and transformation of all film industries in specific East Asian localities involved. The authors consider aspects of film industries in the region, ranging from film policies and funding opportunities to trans-border production and talent sharing. What they have found to be the latest trend in the 2000s is 'increasing decentralisation, deregulation, and regional cooperation'

(Davis and Yeh 2008: 3). In writing about the political economy of the first genuine co-produced China-Hong Kong blockbuster, Zhang Yimou's *Hero* (2002), Anthony Fung and Joseph M. Chan (2010: 203) discover a rational economic calculation in the production of the film. The authors believe *Hero* follows an international market structure: the Asian, including the Chinese, audience market serves as a barometer for the American market, which in turn influences either positively or negatively the film buyers in Europe (see also Curtin 2007: 25). From a cultural studies point of view, as suggested by Jonathan D. Mackintosh, Chris Berry and Nicola Liscutin (2009: 8–9), a regional perspective underscores the ongoing cultural negotiations between the dichotomy of 'global' and 'local'. It also intervenes in postcolonial approaches to globalization, which has been seen as a Western-led ideology to be followed by the rest of the world. Similar to its ever-changing geopolitical parameters, 'East Asia' as a cultural entity and ideological concept is bound to undergo continuous constructions and deconstructions (Mackintosh, C. Berry and Liscutin 2009: 21–22; see also R. Cheung 2011a: 42–43).

The regional interdependence in film and other screen industries is not without problems. It raises the question of industrial biases and the consolidation of the more powerful film business players in the region. As media and cultural studies scholar Kōichi Iwabuchi (2009: 26–27) observes, instead of de-Westernizing the media cultural flows, what has been happening in East Asia in the past fifteen years or so places the United States again in the dominant position. This is made possible by the growing dominance of multinational media conglomerates that have connections with the country. However, with the rise of China, the government of which is keen on developing the nation's cultural and creative industries, there is increasing evidence that the key players of East Asian film industries are of Chinese origin and are mostly based in Beijing. Cases such as China Film Group Corporation (CFGC), Bona Film Group, Huayi Brothers and Wanda Group have enviable financial power of influence, and are usually permitted and backed in various ways by the Chinese central government in operating their film business.[32] As a sanctioned gateway of China's domestic film industry, at least one of these key players, the state-run CFGC, also holds almost absolute control of foreign imported film distribution within China.[33] Moreover, these key industry players do not just aim at selling Chinese film products to domestic and neighbouring markets in East Asia. They are also using East Asia as their hinterland to engage in collaboration with Hollywood to produce English-speaking films, thereby skimming off the most profitable markets, which

Hollywood products used to dominate for decades. As Bruno Wu, the founder of ChinaWood Film and Media Hub in China, says: 'We want to participate in English-language global content, but with Chinese elements and talent that Chinese audiences relates [*sic*] to' (China's New Global Strategy 2012).

This situation of asymmetrical interdependence (and power relations), with Chinese film companies that are operating at certain economic and political advantages, seems to echo the China-centred tributary system in the realm of international relations I discussed above. Some might argue that this bears a similarity to the marginalization and oppression already prevailing in the bipolar world (Mackintosh, C. Berry and Liscutin 2009: 15–16). However, we should also have in mind that such an asymmetrical relationship among film industry players in East Asia is not imposed single-handedly by China. Neither does it imply that there are no big film business players in other parts of East Asia: we can see that South Korea and Japan have their own 'big shots', like CJ E&M Film Division (formerly CJ Entertainment) in South Korea and Toho in Japan. The way that other East Asian film business players have chosen to benefit from the success of their Chinese counterparts may suggest that: (1) these other East Asian players are content to work under the leadership of those leading players from China at the dawn of the twenty-first century, (2) they are accumulating and saving up their own resources before coming to the fore again, (3) they are looking at other markets besides those in their own countries and East Asia, (4) they do not mind imitating China's ways of operating its film business for specific reasons, even to the extreme extent of being Sinicized in various ways. Whichever is the case, the picture is bound to be very complicated and intriguing.

In these seemingly Chinese-dominated situations, as far as film industries in East Asia are concerned, Hong Kong Cinema's role in the industrial, cultural, geopolitical and economic arenas of China and East Asia has not only been well maintained, it has also been highlighted in official records. For example, in 2003, the Centre for Cultural Policy Research of the University of Hong Kong published a 'Baseline Study on Hong Kong's Creative Industries' for the Hong Kong SAR government. Hong Kong's film and video industry was highlighted among the eleven creative industries under study (The Centre for Cultural Policy Research of the University of Hong Kong 2003: 104–11). Moreover, there have been more and more signs of the reinvention of Hong Kong's cinematic practice in the twenty-first century amid China's rise, and the latest development of East Asian and global film business (see, for example, A Description of China's Film

Industry 2007; Coonan 2009; Shackleton 2012c). Some recent phenomena with regard to Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films since the turn of this millennium include:

1. Appealing to a pan-Chinese film market is apparently the most popular way for the China-Hong Kong as well as pan-East Asian co-production projects to maintain a strong regional and international presence. The subject matter and talent employed also show a deliberate consideration of the Chinese audience market.[34]

2. Hong Kong local films test the regional water with their local relevance in the use of visual elements and their audio distinctiveness before going beyond East Asia (for example, insistence on the use of Cantonese language to maintain Hong Kong's local identities, despite full awareness that Cantonese-speaking films may have linguistic and cultural limitations in reaching Mandarin-speaking film audience communities in China).

3. In the Hong Kong film industry, between the level of co-produced blockbusters and that of low-budget local film productions there is one other filmmaking stratum, albeit a much less visible one. In it we find some Hong Kong directors occasionally making films that are not characteristics of their typical oeuvres (for example, big-budget filmmakers making low-budget films, or inexperienced filmmakers participating in expensive co-productions).

4. Hong Kong has made itself an excellent candidate for illustrating communications scholar Michael Curtin's argument (2003, 2007: 14–19) about 'media capital', which attracts immigration of creative labour. It has a well-established community of filmmakers, actors and other kinds of talent. Moreover, Hong Kong film viewers are one of the major sounding boards of Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films.

5. Hong Kong film financiers and film executives have a forward-looking attitude and flexible operational modes. They are the chief cultural-industrial representatives of Chinese-language films. They are also the first collaborators of foreign film executives who might want to take advantage of Hong Kong's signing of the CEPA with China, so as to enter the huge mainland Chinese audience market (Petkovic 2009; Fung and J. Chan 2010: 205–6).

6. The Hong Kong SAR government has made the decision to promote the film industry as one of the core cultural industries. This in turn inspires the mainland Chinese film industry's changing mode of doing business.

7. The Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and its related events (e.g., Hong Kong International Film & TV Market (FILMART), the Hong Kong-Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) and the Hong Kong Film Awards) together form one of the main regional film hubs with regard to film trade, marketing and distribution.

Hence, while Hollywood remains the biggest film industry player in a more and more globalized world, the once homogenized East Asia deserves a closer study as the Chinese film industry now becomes the powerhouse of the region while Hong Kong Cinema is one of the most distinct frontiers of East Asia's film sector.

About the Research and the Book

In discussing the transitions that are closely related to Hong Kong as a society and how the Hong Kong film industry operates under such circumstances, I strongly believe that an analysis pertaining not just to one or two facets but various different ones of the New Hong Kong Cinema can anatomize the issues more thoroughly than otherwise. Here we do not only deal with the human identity quest often revealed in film, but we also explore how underlying ideologies of individual films and filmmakers have influenced the actual operation of film as a cultural and creative industry. My purpose is to display the interlocking manner of these facets of the New Hong Kong Cinema. In doing so, I do not intend to highlight or downplay any particular area of this cinematic practice. To achieve this purpose, my multidimensional methodology has helped me carry out the research tasks. Over more than eleven years of investigations of the New Hong Kong Cinema, I have conducted numerous rounds of textual analysis of films. I have also conducted online and offline study of old newspapers and film trade press, archival research, field surveys at film festivals, personal interviews with film industry insiders, and online surveys of written chat room conversations. These research activities have been helpful for me to understand the contexts of the making, distribution, exhibition and reception of Hong Kong related Chinese-language films. They also allow me to examine critically how the New Hong Kong Cinema has accumulated its cultural and economic values via these various functions along its 'value chain', to borrow the concept from business management. Although my research approach to the New Hong Kong Cinema

is mainly qualitative, I have also employed quantitative data in certain parts of my analysis.

As I mentioned earlier, Naficy's accented cinema theory and the areas it regards as components of the accented style (Naficy 2001: 289–92) inform the way I see apparently separate issues of Hong Kong films as parts of a closely integrated entity within the model of Cinema of Transitions. For the purpose of easily presenting these issues that intertwine with each other in reality, I will deal with them as a structure. The first three chapters in this book can be viewed as the book's pivot. They cover interrogations pertinent to the matters of the films themselves and the film production, as a consequence of the diasporic and interstitial experience of the Hongkongers (Hong Kong Chinese being the majority of this population) over the course of colonial and postcolonial history. In order to show the extent of the issues of concern found across a wide range of films, I select an array of film examples to illustrate and illuminate my points within the confines of each chapter.

Chapter One critically examines the use of 'journeys' and 'journeying' in Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films. As Naficy observes (2001: 4–6), the accented filmmakers are often preoccupied with place and displacement. Various kinds of journeys become cinematic tools with which filmmakers express struggles over identities. Naficy chooses specific places, spaces and vehicles as his 'privileged' sites to investigate journeys and related subject matter in accented and exilic films. Similar to these accented films, the New Hong Kong Cinema often features journeys and journeying. Extending from Naficy's ideas, I focus my discussion not only on the journeys per se, but on three stylistic areas – subject matter, way of developing characters and narrative structure, where journeys and journeying are typically employed in new Hong Kong films to unveil the Hongkongers' identity negotiations.

According to Naficy (2001: 275, 290), accented films tend to feature foreigner or outsider characters to show the films' and the filmmakers' interstitiality. The typical characteristics of these characters include speaking the dominant language in film with an accent. They carry with them an air of alienation and loneliness. Many of these roles are played by non-actors or amateur actors. Bearing in mind the interstitial quality of accented films, in Chapter Two I look at several types of outsider characters that are often featured in new Hong Kong films. These characters are from Vietnam, mainland China and other parts of South East Asia; some of them are hand-drawn, non-human animated figures. Not

only are they fluent in the Cantonese Chinese language, which is the mother tongue of most of the Hong Kong Chinese residents, these outsider characters are able to speak the language without any accent. Their presence in film raises questions, such as: why are they the lead characters in the first place, if the New Hong Kong Cinema is supposed to be about the city and people of Hong Kong? What roles do they play in helping the Hong Kong Chinese to look inwardly to their own qualities being 'Chinese'? I explore in this chapter how these supposedly non-Chinese characters provide an indirect route for the Hong Kong Chinese (filmmakers and audience alike) to perceive themselves from a different angle during periods of transitions.

Chapter Three draws on the idea of accented filmmakers' authorship to discuss the vision of four different types of Hong Kong filmmakers and their self-inscription in film in the context of Hong Kong's transitions. Naficy's original idea on the accented filmmakers' authorship (2001: 34) is to 'put the locatedness and the historicity of the authors back into authorship', as 'authors' are free from a definite expression in pre-structuralism and post-structuralism. Filmmakers of accented films assume multiple roles, mostly as a way to perform their selves. They can be the author, narrator or simply a subject in film (Naficy 2001: 291). Borrowing Naficy's concept, the 'locatedness' and the 'historicity' of filmmakers in the New Hong Kong Cinema refer to the place Hong Kong and the Handover respectively. Yet, unlike the archetypal accented filmmakers identified by Naficy, many Hong Kong filmmakers cannot show their existence directly on screen, due to the commercial nature of their films. The demand of senior film executives, film distributors and viewers may be more influential than the filmmakers themselves in determining how filmmakers inscribe or do not inscribe themselves in film, and the image filmmakers create for themselves inside and beyond their films. Ann Hui represents those who work between commercial and art-house productions. Johnnie To is a firm believer of film commercialization. Fruit Chan presents himself as a grass-roots independent filmmaker with a highly skilled marketing mind. The 'New Generation Directors' are still struggling with their filmmaking endeavours. For this reason, it is interesting to study the authorial concerns and vision of these different Hong Kong filmmakers when they feature the life of the underprivileged or social underdogs – a common theme that shows their love of the city and people of Hong Kong, and their worries amid the place's historical transitions.

In the field of film studies, the film audience is often under-explored or is not usually deemed a core research area. In Chapter Four I bring the film audience

into my consideration by interrogating the New Hong Kong Cinema's state of transitions and interstitiality from the perspective of film audiences. I believe it is important to unearth audience reception information of Hong Kong-related Chinese-language films that the box-office data or professional film critics would not be able to provide. To accomplish my task, I trace the reception of the Chinese-language mega blockbuster *Red Cliff* (Part I in 2008 and Part II in 2009), as a representative of the New Hong Kong Cinema, among its various ethnic Chinese film viewing communities in East and South East Asia. These audiences in the region are traditionally Hong Kong Cinema's major target markets (Hau 2012). I give details of a series of original online surveys and a follow-up survey of their viewing experience. In this research, I found that the command of spoken and written Chinese languages, and the knowledge of Chinese history, did help many of these film viewers articulate their diverse opinions on the film, which are quite different from the director John Woo's initial directorial vision. These audiences' existential conditions and their spectatorial responses thus add one more dimension to our discussion of the state of diasporic mentalities and transitions found in the New Hong Kong Cinema.

In Chapter Five I explore the newest East Asian film business network that has evolved since the Asian Financial Crisis attacked the region. There, we can see the combined influences of the political-economic frameworks of different East Asian territories on shaping the region's film industries and business. My purpose is to find out how the New Hong Kong Cinema operates astride and within the interstices found in this regional context, in which several cinematic hubs interact, collaborate and compete with each other in conducting film-related activities. These cinematic hubs, which I call nodes, include Beijing, Shanghai, Tokyo, Busan, Taipei and Hong Kong. My discussion focuses on the respective national/sub-regional film policies affecting these East Asian film business nodes, and these nodes' complicated relationships in maintaining their network of activities. In this regional film landscape, the New Hong Kong Cinema's role during transitions is again highlighted when China is increasing its influence in East Asia and throughout the rest of the world.

This book concludes with a summary of my arguments for looking at the New Hong Kong Cinema as a Cinema of Transitions. Hong Kong Cinema's ever-increasing importance as one of the sharpest frontiers of the East Asian film arena makes it a natural engine, and a prime example, for the regional and international development of other cinematic practices.

Notes

1. According to the Hong Kong International Film & TV Market (FILMART) (2007), films made with a budget between U.S.$1 million and U.S.$5 million (i.e., between £615,000 and £3 million) are considered 'mid-budget films' in Asia.
2. Source: interview with Ann Hui in 'No Regrets', *A Simple Life* (DVD) (Hong Kong version, bonus track).
3. Source: interview with Ann Hui in the 'Making of', *A Simple Life* (DVD) (Hong Kong version, bonus track).
4. The mainland China box-office figures for *A Simple Life* were reported in *China Film News* (in pinyin, *Zhongguo Dianyin Bao*), and quoted in another entertainment-related website ent.163.com (How Bad n.d.). *China Film News* is under the governance of the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT; formerly the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT)) of the People's Republic of China (PRC).
5. Source: interview with Andy Lau in the 'Making of', *A Simple Life* (DVD) (Hong Kong version, bonus track).
6. The specific Chinese language a person uses discloses his/her geopolitical origin. The Cantonese language is the mother tongue of most Hong Kong Chinese. It is spoken as the everyday language there. Unlike the mainland Chinese, the Hong Kong Chinese are still taught to write traditional Chinese written characters in school, although more and more Chinese residents in Hong Kong can also read texts in simplified Chinese characters (which were introduced by the government of the PRC in mainland China in the 1950s). Today, traditional written Chinese is used by the Hong Kong Chinese, the Taiwan Chinese, the Macau Chinese and earlier generations of overseas Chinese living in Europe and the United States. Simplified written Chinese, on the other hand, is used by the mainland Chinese and Chinese communities living in South East Asia, such as those in Singapore and Malaysia.
7. Film information: *Infernal Affairs* (Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, Hong Kong, 2002); *Infernal Affairs II* (Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, Hong Kong, 2003); *Infernal Affairs III* (Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, Hong Kong, 2003).
8. To conform with the general recognition of the status of the nation of China, by the name 'China' here I refer to the PRC, set up by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949 in mainland China. Regarding the Republic of China that was established in 1912 in mainland China and that later resettled in Taiwan by the Kuomintang (i.e., the Chinese Nationalist Party) in 1949, I will refer to it in this text as 'Taiwan'. It also claims to be the true China.
9. The words 'Hongkonger' and 'Hong Kongese' were officially included in the Oxford English Dictionary in March 2014 to refer to a 'native or inhabitant of Hong Kong', although the use of the word 'Hongkonger' dates back to 1870 (Lam 2014). 'Hong Kongese' can also be used as an adjective, 'Of or relating to Hong Kong or its inhabitants'.

10. For a complete list of this series of books, see Hong Kong University Press' official website, www.hkupress.org (accessed 5 May 2015).
11. The local mass media in Hong Kong nicknamed some of these postwar Cantonese films as *tsat yat sin* in Cantonese (or *qi ri xian* in Mandarin; literally, seven-day works) because they were completed over production periods that were in some cases as short as a single week. Not surprisingly, many of them are not of high quality.
12. Hong Kong together with Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea are referred to as Asia's Four Little Dragons (aka Asian Tigers) due to their intense economic growth between the 1960s and the 1990s.
13. There is archaeological evidence of human presence in Hong Kong dating as far back as 39,000 years ago.
14. See 'Nationality and Ethnicity' (released on 4 May 2012) under 'Interactive Visualisations', results of the 2011 Population Census, conducted by the Census and Statistics Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government, www.census2011.gov.hk (accessed 5 May 2015).
15. Jacques (2012: 535, 567–68) highlights the influence of Confucian tradition as one of the persistent and long-lasting cultural influences on ethnic Chinese, as well as on former tributary states to China, such as Japan and Korea (see also Straubhaar quoted in Curtin 2003: 221).
16. 'China' is used here to denote both the country and a cultural-political concept.
17. Golden Harvest was renamed as 'Orange Sky Golden Harvest' in August 2009 after the single largest shareholder Wu Kebo joined the group through Orange Sky Entertainment Group (International) Holding Company Limited. Source: 'About Us', Orange Sky Golden Harvest Entertainment's official website (English), www.osgh. com.hk (accessed 5 May 2015).
18. For details of the two film funds, see 'Film Development Fund' and 'Film Guarantee Fund', the Hong Kong Film Development Council (HKFDC)'s official website (English), www.fdc.gov.hk (accessed 5 May 2015).
19. Interview footage in *News Magazine*, Jade Channel, Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB), Hong Kong. Broadcast on Saturday, 1 December 2012, from 7 PM to 7.30 PM Hong Kong time.
20. For a detailed account of that part of the history of Hong Kong Cinema, see the studies by Stephen Teo (1997), David Bordwell (2000) and Yingchi Chu (2003). Mainland China and Taiwan both claim that their respective cinemas are the real Chinese national cinema. While mainland China still treated locally made, non-co-produced, Hong Kong films as foreign films after the Handover, Taiwan had accepted Hong Kong films as part of its national cinema long before Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule.
21. I refer to 'world cinemas' in the plural in this book, instead of 'world cinema', in order to acknowledge the emergence of different cinematic practices within the once homogeneous 'world cinema' in the discipline of film studies.

22. See the works by, for example, Peter Wesley-Smith (1993) (subject: law), Michael Sida (1994) (subject: history, politics and government), David Newman (1995) (subject: politics and government), Enbao Wang (1995) (subject: politics and government), and Wang Gungwu and Wong Siu-lun (1995) (subject: politics and government).

23. See the works by, for example, Wang Gungwu and John Wong (1999) (subject: interdiscipline), Robert Ash et al. (2000) (subject: economics, politics and government), Robert Ash et al. (2003) (subject: politics and government) and Ralf Horlemann (2003) (subject: history).

24. In 2012, China's GDP stood at U.S.$8,226,885 million (£5,060,000 million). Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 22 February 2013.

25. The 'one country, two systems' principle was also planned to apply to Macau (whose sovereignty change from Portuguese to Chinese rule happened in 1999) and Taiwan as well (see Y-W. Chu 2013: 4–6).

26. In practice, however, Hong Kong is not entirely free from China's political interference. Occasional incidents (e.g., the Hong Kong SAR sought interpretation of the Basic Law by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the PRC after the judiciary passed a judgement in 1999 regarding right of abode issues) have led observers to suspect the judiciary independence of Hong Kong in the 'one country, two systems' framework. On 10 June 2014 the Chinese State Council issued a white paper on the practice of the 'one country, two systems' policy in Hong Kong, alerting the pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong of China's intention to further narrow Hong Kong's political freedom (China Media 2014; Hume 2014). The white paper stresses that 'the central government exercises overall jurisdiction over the HKSAR [Hong Kong SAR]' and 'the powers delegated to the HKSAR by the central government ... enable it to exercise a high degree of autonomy in accordance with the law' in the section on 'Establishment of the Special Administrative Region System in Hong Kong' (Full Text 2014).

27. Even after more than seventeen years (at the time of writing) since the official Handover, sociocultural alienation between the mainland Chinese and the Hong Kong Chinese, and between their respective identifications, has not subsided and has influenced a wide array of aspects of people's everyday lives.

28. According to the official information of the Hong Kong SAR government, notwithstanding that a Hong Kong resident had obtained the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) passport before the 1997 Handover, he/she is a Chinese national in the Hong Kong SAR after the Handover if he/she is of Chinese descent and was born in Chinese territories (including Hong Kong). He/she is, however, not required to give up his/her BN(O) passport, which was the result of a special political arrangement put in place by the British government for Hong Kong citizens before the British gave up sovereignty of Hong Kong. The choice of not having the Chinese nationality status is out of the question, unless one officially applies for renouncement of one's Chinese nationality. See 'Frequently Asked Questions about Chinese Nationality',

the Hong Kong Immigration Department of the Hong Kong SAR government's offi-
cial website (English), www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/chinese/faqnationality.
htm (accessed 5 May 2015).

29. Jacques refers to several such examples in his book. In particular, the author men-
tions the tragic death of his wife Harinder Veriah, a young Malaysian lawyer of Indian
descent, in Hong Kong in 2000, as being a direct result of serious racial discrimina-
tion at a local hospital. In 2008, this case led the Hong Kong SAR government to
introduce anti-racist legislation for the first time (Jacques 2012: 325). Racial issues
have not gone completely unnoticed by the Hong Kong Chinese population. The
Chinese-language mass media occasionally mention such issues, but usually in con-
nection with other pressing sociopolitical matters. For example, one of the in-depth
news programmes of TVB Jade channel (a Cantonese-language channel), *Sunday
Report,* presented a half-hour broadcast on 25 November 2012 on the topic of for-
eign children's schooling in Hong Kong. The programme showed that the Hong Kong
mainstream education system had not made any provisions or special arrangements
for the children of expatriates (who lack Chinese language skills) to take lessons in
Chinese if they wished. This indirectly touched upon the problem of the local gov-
ernment's insufficient awareness of the needs of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

30. Personal interview with Li Cheuk-to, Artistic Director of the Hong Kong International
Film Festival (HKIFF), conducted by the author in Hong Kong on 7 July 2010 (within
the context of the 'Dynamics of World Cinema' project at the University of St
Andrews).

31. While expensively made East Asian films are usually staples of the mainstream movie
theatres throughout East Asia, they are marketed and exhibited as art-house films
in Europe and the United States. The reverse happens when European mainstream
films and American indies are screened in East Asia's art houses.

32. China Film Group Corporation (CFGC) is the largest and most influential state-run
film enterprise in China. Bona Film Group is the largest privately owned film distribu-
tor in China. It develops an integrated business model that encompasses film dis-
tribution, film production, film exhibition and talent representation. Huayi Brothers
is China's leading independent television and film production company, which also
diversifies into producing music labels and building movie theatres. The Dalian
Wanda Group operates in the cultural industry as well as in commercial properties,
luxury hotels, tourism investment and department store chains (See China's Wanda
Group Buys AMC Entertainment 2012; Davis and Yeh 2008: 27–28; see also Fung and
J. Chan 2010: 204 (on *Hero*, a film that enjoyed exceptionally privileged promotion
and marketing due to its close connection with the Chinese government)).

33. At the time of writing, CFGC and a smaller film distributor, Huaxia Film Distribution
(CFGC owns 20 per cent of Huaxia's shares), are the only two officially approved film
distributors in China allowed by the Chinese authorities to distribute foreign films
in China on a revenue-sharing basis. According to film trade magazine *Variety*, there

will soon be one more Chinese film distributor allowed to achieve their calibre and release foreign films (China Opens up 2012).

34. There have been worries that Hong Kong filmmaking might soon lose its distinctiveness once it is thoroughly blended with other cinematic practices in the East Asian region, most notably mainland Chinese filmmaking. Counter-comments from both Hong Kong and mainland China uphold that, instead of being 'mainlandized', Hong Kong filmmaking is influencing mainland Chinese commercial films with its specific style of shooting (Sek 2013: 123–24; it is also noted in renowned mainland Chinese actor-director Zhang Guoli's thank-you speech when he received the Best Film from Mainland and Taiwan Award for the film *Back to 1942* (Feng Xiaogang, China, 2012) in the thirty-second edition of the Hong Kong Film Awards in 2013).