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Shot in Shanghai: Sino-U.S. Media Co-Production in the Post-WTO Era

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Shot in Shanghai: Sino-U.S. Media Co-Production in the Post-WTO Era

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Aynne Elizabeth Kokas

2012

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Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

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"Shot in Shanghai" examines Sino-U.S. media co-production to reveal the complex negotiation between transnational commercial interests, state regulation of media, and the reform of the Chinese state-run film industry. By situating the study in the commercial center of Shanghai, the dissertation argues that the transformation of media industries exists as part of a delicate compromise between China's *hexie shehui* (harmonious society—a euphemistic explanation for government control of media content) and the forces of global capital. To form a foundation for future scholarship in the fields of media studies and Chinese studies, the dissertation articulates the complexity of film co-production in the ten years between China's accession to the WTO and the PRC's 2011 twelfth five year plan.

The dissertation introduces three central concepts that are crucial to understanding the growth of media collaboration between China and the U.S. These include the role of

the urban brand, the importance of latter day compradors (*maiban*), and the growth of global production ecosystems in the PRC. By discussing the international brand of Shanghai as a place for international business in China, the dissertation argues that co-production in Shanghai de-centralizes the system of state-run film and TV production based in Beijing. Rehabilitation of the term late Qing term "comprador" (*maiban)* for the media co-production process engages with debates about globalization in China by highlighting how industrial collaborations (and collaborators) act as a bridge, not just a wedge, between cultures. Finally, the dissertation's discussion of the production ecosystem reveals the studio co-production system as a site-based hierarchy of flexible cultural intermediaries who facilitate the production process. Together, these frameworks stimulate further critique of the notion of national cinemas by demonstrating the complex transcultural power dynamics imbedded within the Sino-U.S. co-production process.

Ultimately, the dissertation argues that the cultural phenomena that shape film co-production—city branding, the comprador class, and the production ecosystem are not only essential for understanding Sino-U.S. media co-production, but also for comprehending cultural relations between two of the world's largest economies.

The dissertation of Aynne Elizabeth Kokas is approved.

Seiji Lippit
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For my Yiayia

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Introduction

For nearly 20 years, China has been a major site of global production for the automotive, engineering, and consumer products industries. Yet international film production has only been a significant industry in China since the nation's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. Examining the rising phenomenon of Sino-U.S. film co-production cuts to the core of the increasing internationalization of media workers and production in China. Caldwell argues, "Film/TV production communities themselves are cultural expressions" (2007, p. 2). As such, *Shot in Shanghai: Sino-U.S. Film Co-Production in the Post-WTO Era* examines communities of film workers, from day laborers to directors, who inhabit the studio space in Shanghai and the nearby Hengdian World Studios. The spaces in and around Shanghai act as a canvas for Sino-U.S. co-productions in both Chinese and English, for both the Chinese and global film markets. Mainland-, Hong Kong-, and Taiwan-based companies create much of the media in the People's Republic of China (PRC) for Mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese consumers. But the reality of media production in China is changing. In this dissertation, I examine a major unexplored vista of the media production landscape in China: Sino-American film production and co-production communities in the cosmopolitan space of contemporary Shanghai.

Shot in Shanghai: Sino-U.S. Film Co-Production in the Post-WTO Era analyzes the role of commercial filmmaking in the creation of transnational culture in order to highlight the new cultural dynamics that have emerged as part of the collaboration between hegemonic Hollywood industrial entities and Chinese political entities. Examination of Sino-U.S. film co-production in the contemporary period is particularly compelling because of the increase in transnational media

production activity in China combined with growing Hollywood investment in Chinese media production. The two phenomena are closely linked. Mainland China's 20-film quota for imported films restricts foreign access to a market with a potential 1.3 billion consumers—a figure that grew at an average rate of 30% per year from 2004 to 2009 (Coonan, 2009). Co-productions, in contrast, can play on domestic screens without being hamstrung by import regulations. Perhaps even more importantly, co-productions can work with domestic distribution companies rather than the monopoly distributor for imported films. As a result, production companies can both build relationships with more efficient privatized Mainland distribution companies and take home a greater percentage of box office receipts. Thus, the practice of transnational film co-production in China is one of the major global trends in the rapidly growing Chinese media industry. Examining how film co-production works in China offers a remarkable view into the process of international collaboration for media projects in one of the largest markets in the world.

In this dissertation, I will focus on film co-production in China's post-WTO accession period, from 2001 to the present. Film co-production in China is not a new phenomenon—it originated in the 1920s.[1] However, China's accession to the WTO marked a major shift in how films could be financed in Mainland China by liberalizing the type of legal foreign direct investment into the market (Z. Zhang, 2007).

A brief historical overview of transnational Chinese media production further demonstrates why analysis of Sino-U.S. film co-production is an idea whose time has come.

[1] Chinese film scholar Poshek Fu is writing a manuscript on early Chinese film co-productions with Southeast Asia. My initial awareness of the co-production phenomenon was sparked by his insights during a conversation we had in Shanghai in the summer of 2009. His final research on the subject is forthcoming.

Although American producers have been shooting films in China since the 1910s,[2] shifts in China's political and economic landscape have affected the country's industrial output as well as its cultural output. Chinese cinema scholar Zhang Zhen (2007) argues that in the period following Deng Xiaoping's 1992 *zhuanxing* (transformation policy), which encouraged the opening of Chinese markets, film production in China has been shifting toward a model of increased co-production. By extension, the films shot as co-productions in China are expanding outward to international markets, not only in Asia—where filmmaking talent from Japan, Hong Kong, and later, Taiwan, has been moving with regularity since the 1920s—but also to the United States, one of the key co-production players in the Chinese film industry.

Other recent events have supported the increased global circulation of Sino-U.S. co-productions. The inauguration of the Shanghai International Film Festival in 1993, the liberalization of the Chinese Film Export and Import Corporation co-production laws in 1995 (Zhang, 2004; Berry, 2006), the formation of closer political and economic ties between Hong Kong's global film industry and the Mainland film industry beginning in 1997, and the influx of foreign capital investment following China's accession to the WTO in 2001 have revitalized Sino-US film co-production. It is crucial to investigate the cultural implications of the reemergence of co-productions. My dissertation will offer insight into how film co-production functions in China and will propose a theoretical framework for examining the important cultural practices imbedded in the industrial process.

Literature Review

The practice of studying commercial entertainment cinema in Mainland China is a relatively new phenomenon. Mainland critics have described four different film genres: the

[2] The first Chinese feature film, 1913's *The Difficult Couple* (*Nanfu, Nanqi*), was produced by an American studio in China called the Asian Film Studio, run by a producer named Benjamin Polaski. Li Minwei and Polaski also produced the first Chinese film in Hong Kong during the same year: *Zhuangzi Tests His Wife* (*Zhuangzi Shiqi*).

"propaganda or education" film (a Maoist holdover); the "entertainment film," denounced in 1989 and justified in the post-Mao era as a reward for the hard-working masses; the "art film," frequently antagonistic to the Party; and the "Xie Jin model," films focused on reconciling the traumatic past of China's modern history with the aims of the Party (Silbergeld, 1999, p. 189). When Silbergeld wrote *China into Film*—also the year that China joined the WTO—it was just 12 years after "entertainment" films had been denounced by the Chinese government. Twenty years later, the Shanghai Film Studio provided substantial investment to the third installment of Hollywood's *The Mummy* series. The dizzyingly rapid pace of change in Americans' access to filmmaking in China in the early 2000s must be attributed at least in part to increasing economic liberalization. Similarly, in Paul Pickowicz's search for filmmaking economies that offered the richest comparison with the industry in Mainland China, he argues for an alliance with the people of the "[former] Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and Hungary" (1994, p. 89). Prior to China's admission to the WTO, a study of this nature would seem absurd in Mainland China's inchoate private industrial economy. Yet the rapid pace of change is precisely what makes examining the international commercialization of Chinese cinema so important. A close examination of the films produced by the liberalization of industrial filmmaking spaces will provide a crucial window into the cultural impacts of China's rapid economic growth.

In the period of economic policy liberalization that followed China's accession to the WTO, the available options for filmmaking partners in China's Mainland expanded dramatically. American filmmakers received a new form of access to production companies and production spaces in China. Although scholars of film and media production have examined the phenomenon of runaway production and co-production, the subject has been largely ignored by scholars of Chinese cinema, despite the growing frequency of transnational co-production with

Western partners. Scott (2000), Baltruschat (2003), and Tinnic (2005) provide useful methodological insights into the study of transnational U.S. film co-productions but have focused their studies on Canada. Keane (2009) addresses the growth of media production capacity in all of East Asia in an article-length study. Curtin (2007) deals with the entire *huaren*[3] realm and different types of media. While both Keane and Curtin break important ground in the study of film co-production in China, the increasing scale of filmmaking, the complicated PRC regulatory environment, and significant Sino-U.S. economic relationship productions suggest that the time is right for a sustained study on film co-production. My dissertation will offer important insight into what constitutes a contemporary Sino-U.S. co-production while also exploring various manifestations of the end product.

Chinese cinema studies has intermittently focused on the transnational conditions of film production. For example, the work of Yingjin Zhang (2000) and Poshek Fu (2003) addresses transnational and transregional film production in semicolonial Shanghai, even acknowledging the presence of foreign producers and distributors. For periods such as the Cultural Revolution, scholarship has also focused on an earnest depiction of the conditions of domestic production (Clark, 1987). Clark analyzes the unique political conditions of the Chinese domestic film production context. Contemporary perspectives in the field of Chinese cinema studies acknowledge the cross-pollination of Chinese cinemas of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China (Lu, 2005). Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar (2006) have done key work on the construction of the relationship between transnational Chinese-language film production and the

[3] Dealing with the differing linguistic and political backgrounds of the disparate groups referred to as "Chinese" in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan remains a thorny issue. In Mandarin, the differing linguistic traditions can be captured by the use of different words. For example, *huayu dianying* refers to films shot in all of the languages of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, as well as films shot in other countries that wholly or partly use a Chinese dialect. *Huaren dianying* in Mandarin can refer to any film involving individuals from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, or Mainland China, as well as to Chinese-Americans.

nation. Sheldon Lu (1997) examines the relationship between Hollywood and Hong Kong filmmaker John Woo, one of the first commercially successful Chinese Hollywood transplants. However, only Curtin and Keane address the phenomenon of Western film production and co-production in Mainland China following China's accession to the WTO. My study will fortify the existing literature in Chinese cinema studies by focusing on the presence of Hollywood and other Western influences on filmmaking in Mainland China, rather than on the relationships within and between Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Rather than focus on defining "Chinese" or "Sinophone"[4] cinemas in terms of their relationship to a specific political body, my analysis will use a different starting point: the spaces and individuals of film co-production. The paradigm shift is subtle but important. As a methodological base, I will look more toward the field of media production studies. My study will focus not on the problematic field of the relationship between "Chinese" cinemas and the "nation," but instead on films shot in China—particularly in the cosmopolitan spaces in and around Shanghai. As Caldwell (2007), Curtin (2007), and Scott (2000) all argue, the industrial space of media production offers a rich locus for analyzing the media itself.

Curtin's analysis of media production examines Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, and Singapore from the standpoint of *media capital*, the notion of acknowledging "the *spatial* logistics of capital, creativity, culture, and polity without privileging one among the four" (2007, p. 23). Curtin's analysis is seminal in that it offers a first step toward synthesizing the reality of film production in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong with a historical emphasis on the regional cultural characteristics of individual films. Yet Curtin's research leaves ample space to take an in-depth look at the relationship between Western filmmakers and studio spaces in Shanghai. In

[4] See Shu-mei Shih's (2007) discussion of Chinese-language film decoupled from Mainland China as "Sinophone" in *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific.*

its attempt to be capacious, the text leaves room for additional scholarship about filmmaking conditions and relationships. My dissertation will take a more in-depth look at the Mainland filmmaking communities that Curtin addresses in his text.

My project speaks to three disparate yet converging fields of inquiry. As the title of my dissertation suggests, part of this project examines the unique cultural milieu of Shanghai. Looking at the cultural phenomenon of co-production allows us to delve deeply into the ways the city's past imbues its present with an unapologetic cosmopolitanism, whether real or imagined. Within the context of Chinese cinema studies, this project both contributes to and challenges a growing body of literature on global Chinese cinemas by delving into questions of film co-production as culturally contested territory. Within the context of media industry studies, my study on co-production in China builds on the growing body of interdisciplinary scholarship on the practice of film production, taking into account the unique challenges of trans-Pacific collaboration. From the standpoint of cultural history, I am deeply indebted to both the growing field of Chinese cinema studies and the well-established field of modern and contemporary Shanghai cultural history. Without a strong knowledge of the fundamentals of cultural life in Shanghai and film history in China, it would be impossible to create a contextually grounded analysis of Sino-U.S. film co-production.

At its foundation, I view my project as being in dialogue with works such as Chinese film scholar Zhang Zhen's *The Urban Generation* (2007), which uses film analysis in the contemporary Chinese urban context to comment on the rapid cultural change brought about by the marketization of the Chinese economy. At the same time, by building on the work of John Caldwell, Michael Curtin, Toby Miller, and others, I seek to contribute to the growing body of work on production cultures by examining in depth a highly dynamic space of transnational

media production. The two disciplinary vantage points are precisely what make this project uniquely valuable. The combined ethnographic and political-economic mode of analysis central to production studies dovetails with the historic focus on culture and the means of production in the study of greater China's cinema.

From a methodological standpoint, the thread of industrial analysis in film studies offers a valuable theoretical entrée into the complex filmmaking communities in China. *Shot in Shanghai* will use the tools of industry analysis within the context of production studies as a way to better understand the growth of Sino-U.S. collaborations in the Chinese film industry. At the same time, the complex cultural dynamics present in Sino-U.S. co-production relationships will complicate preexisting models of production analyses, many of which focus on North American or Euro-American contexts. Analyzing film-industry-produced paratexts[5] and epitexts,[6] critically mapping the spaces of film production, and closely examining the practices of production in addition to the films themselves offers a transnational industry-based approach to the frequently nation-based field of Chinese cinema studies. At the same time, my work will enrich production studies analysis with deeper insights into cultural production relationships between China and the United States.

Understanding the industrial relationships within the production process is critical to the study of contemporary Chinese filmmaking, particularly Chinese film co-productions. In his landmark text on the nature of contemporary media production, Mark Deuze argues, "Understanding media must include a critical awareness of the particular characteristics of

[5] Genette (1997) defines *paratext* as "those liminal devices and conventions within the book that mediate the book to the reader" (p. xviii). Within the context of cinema, I rely on the use of the term as adapted by Giuliana Bruno, John Caldwell, and other scholars: "everything outside the film proper, but still within the filmic text, that is, titles, credits, and certain intertitles" (Bruno, 2007, p. 364).

[6] According to Genette (1997), *epitext* refers to the "posters, advertisements, press releases, and other prospectuses" (p. 367) not directly linked to the film itself. Lisa Kernan and Giuliana Bruno attempt to further adapt the term for the context of films and their related materials.

making media" (2007, p. x). My study seeks to complement the existing literature on Chinese-language film production to include the growing phenomenon of Western film co-productions.

From a methodological standpoint, this dissertation will rely on scholarship in the field of production studies. Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson's text, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1985), offers an approach to systematically analyzing the practice of film production within the context of the Hollywood studio system of the 1910s to the 1960s. By drawing from a variety of case studies and offering a taxonomy of the differing historical modes of film co-production, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* provides a useful framework for developing new ways of thinking about production systems. Using producer, director, studio units, and production "packages" as discursive categories offers a way to think about how each step impacts the entire filmmaking process. I will build on Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson's analysis to develop a lineage of film production within the contemporary Sino-American context. Denise Mann (2008) further distinguishes between "Old Hollywood-style in-house productions and New Hollywood package-style productions" (p. 19) by suggesting a limited auteur-like effect emerging from commercial package production strategies. My work will take Mann's analysis a step further by highlighting the cultural communities created by the commercial production of "packages."

Asserting that media production creates its own cultures, Mayer, Banks, & Caldwell's anthology *Production Studies* (2009) and Caldwell's text *Production Culture* (2008) offer multiple routes to studying the life of production in concert with the procedures of production. Paired with the more systems-oriented analysis of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema,* the production cultures vein of production studies offers a particularly useful methodology for my own study. Sino-U.S. co-production, by its very name, is a process bringing together two major contemporary cultural forces. Popular media frequently paints China and the United States as

cultural monoliths.[7] However, by deploying what Caldwell (2008) terms *critical industrial practices* (p. 5), the examination of media-worker-developed interpretive schemata facilitates delving into the nuanced subcommunities. What emerges is the capacity to view a culture that is neither "Chinese" nor "American," yet draws on both cultures and speaks to both cultures. In its own small way, studying Sino-U.S. film co-production from a cultural vantage point reveals the foundations of cultural commonality in one of the most fraught and tentative contemporary global-cultural relationships.

In addition to drawing on the work of production studies scholars to explore Sino-U.S. cultural relationships, this dissertation also builds on contemporary scholars' discussions of media workflows. In *Media Work* (2007), Mark Deuze analyzes liquid media workflows between multiple transnational spaces. *Liquidity* refers to how the cutting edge of technology is rapidly fraying the boundaries between work and private time and between the local and the transnational. Deuze's work offers a useful baseline for understanding contemporary media workflows grounded in emerging technologies. However, his work stops short of delving deeply into the consequences of shifting international relationships that have resulted from new communications and media production technologies. I will build on Deuze's work by outlining the fluid media collaboration system of Sino-U.S. film co-productions, exploring the increasingly "liquid" relationship between media production in the two countries that has resulted from changes in media production and communication technology.

Why Shanghai?

At first glance, focusing on film co-production in Shanghai may seem to be a counterintuitive strategy. Beijing is the cultural capital of China and the site of its largest film

[7] This tendency is particularly apparent in contemporary American news media about China and contemporary Chinese news media about the United States and is deserving of its own broad analysis and close reading.

studios; it is also home to the Beijing Film Academy—China's foremost institution for training new domestic film workers—and other institutions that supply film workers, such as the Beijing Drama Academy and the Beijing Broadcasting Academy. In addition, Beijing has been the shooting location for many important film co-productions, both Sino-U.S. and otherwise, as well as films that were picked up and distributed to the international market. Examples of films shot in Beijing with foreign financing include director Zhang Yimou's *The House of Flying Daggers* (2004)*, The Curse of the Golden Flower* (2006)*,* and *Hero* (2002), and director Chen Kaige's *The Promise* (2005). Recent Beijing-based co-productions by foreign directors include Marc Forster's *The Kite Runner* (2007), Roger Spottiswoode's *The Children of Huang Shi* (2008), and Harald Zwart's *The Karate Kid* (2010). However, because of its close proximity to the China Film Co-Production Corporation (Zhongguo Hepai Dianying Gongsi) and the State Administration of Radio Film and Television (Guojia Guangbo Dianying Dianshi Zongju), Beijing is a much more rigid environment for both film production and investment.

From a historical standpoint, Shanghai is a particularly relevant site for analysis. As early as 1756, foreign merchants noted the city's hospitable conditions for foreign trade (Broeze, 1989). Shanghai functioned as a space of mediation between the Qing Empire and Euro-American imperialism (Meng, 2006). Not only was the highly internationalized semicolonial Shanghai cinema an important antecedent to today's co-productions (P. Fu, personal communication, May 31, 2009), but several contemporary co-productions feature the urban milieu of semicolonial Shanghai. The most notable of these films, which will also be included my analysis, include Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* (2007), James Ivory's *The White Countess* (2005), and John Curran's *The Painted Veil* (2006). Examining the phenomenon of re-creating Shanghai's semicolonial period through the mode of foreign film co-production bespeaks a rich

politico-historical dimension in the practice of contemporary Sino-U.S. co-production—one beyond the question of contemporary debates about the fraught economic relationship between China and the United States.

The reasons cited above—easy access to international trade routes and a local government amenable to foreign investment—exist to this day. Shanghai's place at the mouth of the Yangtze River made it a key site for trade; today, its status as a major hub for international air travel facilitates creative collaborations with other nations. The foreigner-friendly semicolonial concession spaces have given way to a city known throughout China for its highly pragmatic regulatory environment. Contemporary filmmaker Sun Xun (2009) characterized the Shanghai film regulatory environment as a space much more open to foreign influence than other cities in China. This suggests that Shanghai regulators are much more forward-looking in terms of how they deal with artists. In addition, the Shanghai Media Group was the first state-owned media company to split off and form its own independent for-profit division (T. Garcia, personal communication, November 2009). The more liberal economic practices in Shanghai help foster what Alexander Des Forges highlights as the way "Shanghai poses itself not only as a privileged intermediary between 'China' and 'the U.S.,' but also as the best place in which to integrate globalization past and future into a coherent narrative" (2007, p. 181). Thus, the uniquely international-business-forward environment in Shanghai makes it an ideal space to study the present and probable future of co-production practices in China (C. Fu, personal communication, February 8, 2009).

But why focus on film co-productions between China and the United States? The important relationships between the filmmaking communities of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China have eclipsed examinations of the Sino-U.S. film production relationship in

recent scholarship. However, the past 10 years have seen a dramatic increase in film production and distribution of films shot in China mediated through Euro-American film production financing, technological resources, and distribution methods. As Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar argue, "In this era of global capital flows . . . it is clear that the national cinemas approach with its premise of distinct and separate national cultures would be fraught anywhere" (2006, p. 3). Analysis of the various relationships between films shot in China and their Western financial backers and technical support systems challenges the notion that what we consider to be "Chinese" films and "Hollywood" films cannot, in fact, be parsed so discretely.

In this dissertation, I will focus on American involvement in two of the major co-production areas that require extensive Sino-U.S. collaboration: financing and film production. In so doing, I seek to expand our understanding of media created in China by deepening awareness of the particular cross-cultural dynamics of Sino-U.S. co-production. It should be noted that postproduction and distribution also have a significant role in the politics of collaboration, but I will not address them extensively in this project.

Because of China's role at the forefront of the global economy, the study of its creative industries is of far-reaching significance. Changes in Mainland China's media production environment accelerated following the country's admission to the WTO. The period of rapid change in the 2000s has set the tone for China's emergence as a player in global media production and consumption. This project offers an important foundation for further analyses of the convergence between Chinese and American creative industries following China's WTO accession.

Film Co-Production and Classical Film Theory

Even taking into account the rhetoric surrounding China's economic and cultural rise on the world stage, the reasons for examining film co-production in Shanghai date back to Dziga Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929). Like *Man With a Movie Camera*, the films shot in Shanghai following China's WTO accession beg the question: Is the city awakening to a newly vibrant economic landscape, an alienating industrial world, or something in between? What can the production processes of the films shot in the city and its surrounding studios reveal to us about industrial collaboration for media production between China and the United States? How does the film production process link the contemporary city with its complicated international past?

One of the first films about the filmmaking process, *Man With a Movie Camera* treats the cameraman as an industrial worker within the context of the film. The quotidian role of the cameraman in the film echoes Walter Benjamin's (1968) observation about the period of transition from literature to cinema in Russia during the 1920s: "Some of the players whom we meet in Russian films are not actors in our own sense but people who portray *themselves*—and primarily in their own work process" (p. 232). Benjamin's argument applies in intriguing ways to the rapid changes in filmmaking in Shanghai following China's accession to the WTO. The workers portrayed in films mirror the workers who build the new industrial spaces of Shanghai. In the nearby studio of Hengdian, everyday laborers were trained as film workers for both *The Mummy 3: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* (2008)[8] and *The Forbidden Kingdom* (2008), creating a direct link between the workers building real and fictional representations of the city and its environs. Xintiandi, an upscale international shopping, dining, and entertainment space in Shanghai proper, was partly built from Shanghai's old *shikumen*-style homes. The space, home

[8] Subsequently referred to in this dissertation as *The Mummy 3*, its informal title.

to the UME International Cineplex, a New Orleans-style jazz club, a French bakery, and an American steak house chain, was conceived of and executed by a Chinese-American film producer. From the most humble places in the economy to the most powerful, the people (although not necessarily characters) and activities populating the film are linked inextricably with the growth of Shanghai as an economic center.

Another example of the relationship between the rise of the industrial economy and cinema can be found in Luigi Pirandello's novel *Si Gira* (1916), which Walter Benjamin references in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1968). Pirandello notes that the Italian word *operatore* refers not only to the traditional term *camera operator*, but also to the term *worker*. The films in my case studies rely on Chinese labor in Shanghai's new industrial economy and in the process reveal important elements of the growing industrial city. Like *Man With a Movie Camera*, the films in my study also structure what Simmel calls "the technique of metropolitan life" (1950, p. 409), but not merely in terms of representations of industrial labor. Some of the films in my study explore labor practices in Shanghai, and all of the films reveal the connections between the practice of transnational industrial collaboration, contemporary Shanghai's relationship to its colonial past, Shanghai's cultural relationship with Hong Kong martial arts cinema, and the phenomenon of the international blockbuster.

Methodology

The core of my work will give life to the conceptual rubric of the *production ecosystem*, an interconnected web of relationships and power dynamics that run the world of individual film productions and influence the larger filmmaking environment. To that end, I will analyze the critical industrial practices operating within the world of film co-production in China. In addition to drawing on Caldwell's conceptual rubric, I will also incorporate two key elements

into the critical industrial discourse. First, my study will delve more deeply into the practice of cross-cultural coding, specifically the translation of Chinese-language industrial practices for American film crews. Second, I will analyze the active interplay between governmental and commercial policies as part of Shanghai's transition from a state-owned to a partially privatized film industry. The additional flexibility required to navigate between two radically different cultures combined with the tension between Chinese business and governmental interests makes analyzing critical industrial practices in Sino-U.S. film co-productions a particularly fascinating field of inquiry.

My approach to the questions in this dissertation will be in turn empirical, historical, and theoretical. In order to illuminate the state of contemporary Sino-U.S. co-production activity, I have collected interviews with film industry workers and leaders who have worked on eight case study films shot in Shanghai during the past 10 years. My individual interviews take advantage of what Deuze (2007) terms the "greater individualization of workers" (p. 4), a particularly noteworthy trend in an industry in which even 10 years ago, the majority of film workers were employed in state-owned, state-run, party controlled film studios organized into hierarchical work units. Although all of my interviewees were in some way involved with one of the case study films shot in Shanghai or Hengdian, they are based in locations as disparate as Sydney, London, Los Angeles, Beijing, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur, and Hong Kong. In keeping with the methodology of Chinese studies, I will ground each case study analysis in the historical context of production. Specifically, my analysis focuses on the historical production conditions for three film genres that derive the maximum competitive advantage from shooting in China: historical drama, martial arts/*wuxia*, and big-budget blockbuster action films. Finally, I seek to incorporate an empirical understanding of industry co-production practices and the historical influences on

the production of films in specific genres to argue for a more expansive theoretical rubric for analyzing media production in the Chinese context.

Although interviews offer a valuable way to gather information, they also create a significant interpretive challenge in my work. Sherry Ortner, an anthropologist at UCLA, is currently enmeshed in ethnographic fieldwork related to the study of cinema. The practice of ethnographic research and deep description within the field of film industry studies offers several intriguing challenges. Ortner notes that academics occupy a similar—if not the same—cultural position as many filmmakers and film industry professionals in China, albeit with several noteworthy differences (2009). Ortner's work is particularly useful for critiquing my own interview-based work on film co-productions. Unlike other power hierarchies of anthropological research, such as "studying down" (in which the anthropologist has a much higher status than the subject, usually because of a privileged access to resources from Western academia) or "studying up" (in which the scholar attempts to access high-level individuals with substantially greater financial or political clout), Ortner identifies the practice of academics studying the film industry as "studying sideways," in which people with a similar cultural background interact on a study (p. 175). What is particularly interesting about Ortner's work is the way in which she attenuates the different types of cultural backgrounds for people within the film industry. Some individuals, such as independent filmmakers, film festival directors, and so-called "creative" producers, view themselves as being at the vanguard of culture, affiliating with an academic in the humanities. In this sense, studying sideways offers the researcher both an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the topic, but can also be threatening to the research subject. As Ortner articulates in her interview with producer Christine Vachon, she is able to access a

unique perspective on the filmmaker's work because of her desire to be perceived as a cultural torchbearer.

From a methodological standpoint, I will examine the industry materials I have gathered, conduct a textual analysis of the films themselves, and consider both my role and the role of my interviewees in the process of transferring ideas about co-production. Through awareness of the biases inherent in my position—economic, gendered, racialized, and nationalized—I will provide an in-depth analysis of Sino-U.S. film co-productions that offers a valuable perspective to consumers, researchers, and filmmakers on both sides of the Pacific.

During the course of my research, I have had experiences that speak to Ortner's work about studying sideways. Because of academic interests held by high-level industry players, I was repeatedly granted frank, relatively lengthy interviews. In one particularly interesting incident, Paul Schwartzmann, Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wai's agent, spent 20 minutes describing research he had conducted for his yet-to-be-completed dissertation prior to moving on to the content-related details of our interview. Similar phenomena occurred in at least three additional interviews, in which part of the price of access for my interview was participating in and supporting the academic ambitions of the high-level industry player with whom I was speaking. Based on my own experiences, I would like to offer a corollary to Ortner's (2009) notion of studying sideways that takes into account my role as a graduate student (rather than a professor) and my gender. In my experience conducting industry interviews with players holding academic aspirations close to the vest, I would argue that my dual role as a student and a woman made me less intimidating, thus creating an interview situation that allowed for greater openness on the part of my interviewee.

In three instances when I was being introduced to interviewees, the introducer referred to me as some variant of "a nice girl." The inherently gender-inflected context of a young woman interviewing older, powerful men in some ways re-creates the gender dynamic seen elsewhere in Hollywood industry circles. Although I am grateful for the information and access I received, I propose that my access was at least partially based on my ability to fit into an established industry gender dynamic while studying the industry itself. It was an instance in which studying up and studying sideways became intertwined. In any case, as in any other ethnographic study, the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee had a significant impact on the overall outcome of my project.

Chapter Breakdown and Conclusions

My study can be viewed in two parts, each composed of two chapters. The first section of the dissertation pays particular attention to honing an understanding of Sino-U.S. film co-production and examines the role of Shanghai within this sphere. The second part of the dissertation examines the role of above-the-line and below-the-line workers in shaping the industrial processes of collaboration in the context of Sino-U.S. film co-production.

Chapter one provides an overview of the broad range of categories that have been misapprehended as Sino-U.S. film co-productions with a view toward understanding what actually constitutes a co-production and why it is essential to examine the cultural—not just economic—implications of Sino-U.S. film co-productions. From a methodological standpoint, this first chapter draws heavily on encoded industrial texts such as contracts, production policy, trade publications, and interviews with film workers. Comparisons with co-production policies from other international contexts and analyses of other types of Chinese film production agreements shape the discussion of how film co-production facilitates both an essential transfer

of cultural knowledge, yet also reifies existing power incongruities in the Sino-U.S. media production landscape.

Chapter two focuses on the role of Shanghai as an essential site for the mediation of the new international cultures of production brokered by increased co-production activity. From a methodological standpoint, I examine the contemporary and historical characteristics of the city that make it uniquely suited to its role as a site of international media collaboration. For example, examination of shooting on the Nanjing Road site at the Shanghai Film Studios opens up a world not limited to the shooting space itself, but to the people, personalities, and regulatory environment native to the space. I will also pay special attention to the manufactured messages about each production in supporting materials also known as paratexts. My paratextual analysis will include "making of" DVD features, books, and international DVD release paraphernalia as a way to further analyze how the production itself is discussed by filmmakers, the studio, and distributors. Dividing groups of case studies according to people and place is particularly useful because analysis then focuses on characteristics unique to the production conditions of the greater Shanghai region. Ultimately, this chapter pays particular attention to the importance of specific sites of production—both on location and in studio—that further enhance the city's profile as a site of international collaboration.

The second part of the dissertation focuses on the transnational communities of cultural translators who shape the film co-production process and ultimately contribute to the rapid internationalization of the Chinese media industries. By examining how above- and below-the-line workers contribute differently to the construction of transnational media co-production cultures, it becomes possible to understand both how narratives circulate transnationally and what types of communities emerge through transnational production activity.

Chapter three, which draws on an analysis of Ang Lee's 2007 film *Lust, Caution*, focuses on the role of above-the-line *compradors* in shaping the film co-production process. The chapter examines the cultural work required by writers, directors, producers, and regulators to form the foundation for collaborative production between China and the United States. Ultimately, this chapter situates the new class of above-the-line film workers as part of broader shift in class and transnational production practice in the contemporary PRC.

The fourth chapter uses case studies to look at the question of labor in Sino-U.S. film co-production. To that end, the chapter will incorporate case studies from Rob Cohen's *The Mummy 3* (2008) and Rob Minkoff's *The Forbidden Kingdom* (2008), two films shot in the Shanghai exurb of Hengdian. *The Mummy 3* and *The Forbidden Kingdom* both relied on large Chinese crews to produce martial-arts-inspired epics in the Hengdian World Studios. Specifically, the chapter argues that each film creates a production ecosystem complete with cultural hierarchies grounded in both transnational and local labor practices. Looking at *The Mummy 3* and *The Forbidden Kingdom* provides crucial insight into the uses of transnational film labor in China.

By building a landscape of production that synthesizes historical research in Chinese cinema with an in-depth examination of the changing relationship between Shanghai and Hollywood, I look forward to contributing an important bridge between studies of Chinese cinema located in the field of area studies and cinema studies disciplines. My study will contribute to a more detailed analysis of the actual processes behind the development, shooting, and distribution of Sino-U.S. studio feature co-productions. I intend to use the deep description of the film co-production process as a way to explore the ways in which the film co-production process creates a microcosm of Sino-U.S. industrial collaboration—one that foregrounds cultural

relationships because of the cultural character of the product.

Ultimately, *Shot in Shanghai* is less about revealing a new reality than about delving into a world that already exists. Bi- or trilingual and dual-country-code business cards flood film production events in China, with networking filmmakers sharing the caveat of "it is easiest to reach me on Skype,"[9] a multilingual, international, electronically based communication platform. As foretold by Hardt and Negri (2000) in their landmark work *Empire*, the human interactions undergirding industrial production are already essentially placeless, while the sites of production themselves are still place-based. What ultimately emerges from a detailed examination of postmillennial Shanghai film production is an exciting, if unsurprising, trans-Pacific map of relationships among financial, production, and marketing entities connecting Shanghai to Hollywood.

[9]A note on Skype: The Internet-based free calling service served as both an integral and befuddling tool for my project. In addition to providing ample opportunities to conduct face-to-face video interviews with busy film professionals at all hours of the day and night, the flexibility of the medium also created several types of productive confusion. In several instances, speaking on Skype encouraged interviewees to reflectively discuss their living/working relationship between Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Sydney, London, and other cities.

Chapter 1

Cultural Convergence: Film Co-Production in China

The Chinese State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT) recently distributed an image of a happy panda, bamboo, and several film reels (see Figure 1) to promote family film co-production between China and the United States. In contrast, in a poster sent to American magazine subscribers to promote *The Economist*, a gigantic panda wraps itself around the Empire State Building as helicopters swarm the city, evoking an uncontained, King Kong-like animal overtaking American soil (see Figure 2). The competing pandas highlight the growing gap in cultural and industrial assumptions in Sino-U.S. relations. The creative process of film co-production also offers important insight into the cultural relationship between the United States and China. As Lash and Urry (1994) have highlighted, the modern society exists at an intersection of economic order and differing systems of cultural expression. Examination of the film co-production process takes into account the fraught relationship between culture and industry, the tense relationship between the United States and China, and the intriguing cultural discourse emerging from the interactions between media cultures of production in Sino-U.S. film co-productions. In this chapter, I examine both the practices and representation of global film co-production with China in order to argue that analysis of co-production is essential to understanding how stakeholders broker the changing relationships between Chinese and U.S. media industries.

Figure 1. Image featured on the cover of a brochure for the Chinese Family Film Festival, March 10–14, 2010. Retrieved from http://www.iffilmfest.org/china/

Figure 2. Cover of *The Economist*, May 19, 2007. Retrieved from http://www.economist.com /node/21521033

The Significance and Complexity of Sino-U.S. Co-Productions

Although the official way to refer to co-productions between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States is "Sino-U.S.," the tense cultural-industrial dynamics could easily be discussed as "Sino versus U.S." Indeed, the balance between Chinese and U.S. partners in the co-production process can shift from active collaboration to suspicion to antagonism all in the course of one project. Yet because film co-production offers unprecedented access to the Chinese market for American investors and both foreign technological and financial investment for Chinese film groups, there is an incentive on both sides to learn how to navigate this contentious process. By following the process of film co-production, we can also better appreciate the fluid dynamics of the Sino-U.S. cultural relationship. Analysis of film co-productions helps us develop new insights into the antagonisms that continuously shift the process of collaboration on a continuum from Sino vs. U.S. to Sino-U.S.

The simplicity of the term "Sino-U.S. co-production" also obscures other national dynamics in the process of cultural collaboration. Though it is tempting to look only at the significance of hegemonic economies of scale in the process of popular cultural production, this approach is inaccurate. Co-productions are rarely solely Sino-U.S. in their constituent parts. Policy agreements, personnel demands, and financial resources often lead to the integration of important co-production components from Europe, Australia, Hong Kong, and other Asian countries. Therefore, analysis of film co-production not only allows us to develop a more nuanced understanding of the complex interrelationships between Chinese central government institutions and Hollywood film studios, but it also highlights the fact that bilateral collaboration facilitates the growth of international industrial cultures of film co-production.

Ultimately, understanding film co-production is crucial for understanding the cultural life of contemporary China for three key reasons. First, the practice of co-production imbeds within production relationships between China and multiple other spaces. Unlike examining domestic film production, studying film co-production reveals the multilayered complexity of the interactions among the government-run Chinese film industry, private companies operating in China, and privately held entertainment conglomerates in the United States. These connections are becoming an increasingly important aspect of film production practice in Mainland China with the rapid expansion of the media industries. Moreover, the private-public nature of these interactions between hegemonic Chinese state-owned enterprises and hegemonic Hollywood film studios presents a clash of titans that serves as a useful analogy for understanding a broad scope of the cultural interactions between China and the United States. Finally, the nature of the production of visual images is such that it also allows us to understand how we see others and how we see ourselves. Co-productions are powerful negotiations between behemoth Chinese film groups and powerful Hollywood studios over the ownership of representation. Thus, their importance is not only as industrial products, but also as a means for understanding how Chinese and U.S. cultural interests coalesce and contradict each other on a macro scale.

Anchored by an exploration of the different types of post-World Trade Organization Sino-U.S. film co-productions, this chapter examines what constitutes a co-production in general and what constitutes a co-production between the United States and China. What are the modes of visual and textual discourse that inform our understanding of how co-production operates as cultural crosspollination? Ultimately, I argue that the growth of film co-production is essential to understand as part of a larger cultural and technological convergence of American and Chinese media production, and by extension, a radical shift in global media industrial culture.

Anxieties

Significant anxieties about the co-production process exist among Chinese studios, American filmmakers, international policymakers, and film workers. At events such as the 2009 Shanghai International Film Festival co-production forum, the state of co-production in the Chinese film industry provoked heated debate among old cadre guards from the China Film Group, pragmatic film producers from the Shanghai Film Group, and global Chinese directors such as John Woo.[10] The issues discussed focused on the questions, "Does co-production offer a lifeline—an opportunity for growth, for profitability, for modernization—or will there be no more 'Chinese' films left? And what does the term 'Chinese film' mean?" In the face of foreign competition for Chinese spaces of film production, the practice of Sino-U.S. film co-production is a highly contested area in terms of the "preservation" of the Chinese film industry in the face of foreign box office competition ("Made in China," 2009). Indeed, the liberalization of film production in China is by no means a wholly welcome phenomenon.

The questions brought forth about co-production underscore an important tension in the Chinese domestic film industry. On one hand, there are the national-film-group-sponsored, domestic-market-focused films. It is through the development of these types of films that most of the current leaders of major Chinese film institutions, such as the China Film Group, the Shanghai Film Group, and SARFT, earned their stripes in the mid-1980s. On the other hand, there are more recent directors from the Chinese fifth and sixth generations who are known internationally and have developed their contemporary oeuvre with significant assistance from

[10] One of the keynote seminars at the Shanghai International Film Festival was "Chinese-Foreign Film Co-Production Forum—Chinese Value: Opportunity and Strategy Over the Financial Recession," held on June 16, 2009. The featured speakers included Han Sanping, chairman of the China Film Group Corporation and director of the China Film Producer Association; Ren Zhonglun, chairman of the Shanghai Film Group Corporation; and Zhang Xun, president of the China Film Co-Production Corporation.

abroad. Jia Zhangke's and Zhang Yuan's works first became known on the international stage because the SARFT banned the films from public distribution in China. Canonical fifth-generation filmmakers like Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou work with American financing and distribution companies. The rapid internationalization of the Chinese film industry over the past 20 years has created a significant cultural divide between filmmakers accustomed to using the resources of the international market and institutional bureaucrats still operating with the intention to develop the domestic market with government assistance. Both impulses reflect the reality of filmmaking in China. The existence of film co-production activity underlines the tension between the PRC filmmaking establishment who came to power as a result of national film groups and later groups of filmmakers who have risen to prominence as a result of their appeal to an international market.

Indeed, there are examples of the types of filmmaking that might become extinct through excessive Hollywood involvement in the Chinese film industry. Filmmakers like Feng Xiaogang, trained in the Chinese market and popular almost exclusively in China for comedies like *Cell Phone* (*Shouji*) and the 2009 Chinese New Year blockbuster *If You Are the One* (*Fei Cheng Wu Rao*), provide counterexamples of the type of locally specific films that emerge organically from the domestic market. Both of Feng's films relied entirely on domestic talent, funding, and audiences. Though the films were profitable, funding issues influenced the outcome of both films. Rather than rely on Hollywood money to finance his films, Feng is notorious for using copious amounts of product placement. Screenwriter Liu Zhenyun noted that Nokia heavily funded *Cell Phone* (personal communication, July 2004), and some reviewers likened the excessive product placement in *If You Are the One* to a separate character in the narrative ("2009 New Year," 2009). The product placement model of production funding has the

potential to mimic the influence of foreign investment of film co-productions in China through the investment of advertising dollars from major multinationals in local productions. Thus, even though Chinese government regulation figures prominently in the regulation of foreign investment, there nevertheless exists the possibility of substantial flexibility for opportunistic filmmakers.

While Chinese filmmakers have reason to be concerned about foreign interlopers in a heavily protected domestic industry, concerns about the preservation of existing power and revenue structures are equally apparent for Hollywood studios investing in China. The impact of Hollywood financing and technology on local film industries in countries such as Brazil, Canada, France, India, and Korea is a fraught issue touching on questions of cultural imperialism, technology transfer, and the relationship among art, industry, and the worker.[11] However, for U.S. distributors in the Chinese market, concerns about the protection of intellectual property in the largest growing film-theatrical market in the world create a substantial amount of tension that both drives collaboration with PRC filmmakers and also creates tension surrounding illegal filming and DVD and digital distribution of protected entertainment properties.

American anxiety about failure in the Chinese market is grounded in reality. Financial failure characterized Hollywood investment in China in the first decade of the 21st century. Warner Bros. entered the DVD market in 2004 and distributed DVDs at prices that were competitive with legal local sellers, but they were forced to leave the market in 2008 due to unsuccessful market growth (M. Gareton, personal communication, 2012). At the time of their departure, Warner was also distributing films in the Chinese market for other Hollywood studios,

[11] The practice of independent film co-production between China and the U.S. is a fascinating topic outside of the scope of this study. Independent films shot between the U.S. and China exist in a radically different regulatory environment than studio-films. I anticipate writing a follow-up project that uses the rich material I have gained in interviews that delve into the independent film co-production world.

including Universal (Gareton). In production, powerful Hollywood players the Weinstein Company received and then lost co-production approval to shoot in Shanghai for the film *Shanghai*. Instead, the shoot was forced to relocate to Thailand (S. Salzman, personal communication, 2010). Approval for the film was only reinstated immediately prior to Weinstein's appearance at the 2011 Shanghai International Film Festival SIFF FORUM, but distribution was then stalled again by SARFT (Salzman). When major players like Warner Bros. and the Weinstein Company face major blockages to production and distribution in the world's fastest growing theatrical market, the broader anxiety about the market becomes infectious.

Ultimately, the domestic Chinese film market's regulatory and financial development will determine how important the phenomenon of film co-production is from a long-term vantage point. However, the exploration of the use of space and labor in production collaborations during the first major period of film internationalization in Mainland China since the mid-1940s provides a valuable foundation for future studies of global Chinese media.

What Is Film Co-Production?

An oft-written-about field, film co-production is the subject of numerous policy handbooks[12] and how-to guides[13] for the industry professional. However, critical analysis of film co-production as a cultural-industrial phenomenon within global screen culture is limited.[14] Analysis of the cultural significance of film co-production between China and the United States—two of the world's largest economies, both immense media markets, in terms of dollars (the United

[12] See *Contracts for the Film & Television Industry* (Litwak, 1998), *Film Policy* (Moran, 1996), *Media Law* (Baker, 1998), and *The European Film Production Guide* (Andersen, 1996).

[13] See *43 Ways to Finance Your Feature Film* (Cones, 1998), *Independent Feature Film Production* (Goodell, 1998), *The Film Finance Handbook* (Davies & Wistreich, 2007), *The Guerilla Film Makers Handbook* (Jones & Jolliffe, 2004), and *The Insider's Guide to Film Finance* (Alberstat, 2004).

[14] Notable exceptions are the chapter "Co-Producing Hollywood" in *Global Hollywood 2* (Miller, Maxwell, Govil, McMurria, & Wang, 2005) and the excellent work done by geographer Allen Scott about production relations between the United States and Canada.

States) and market size (China)—is even more rare. This chapter identifies the key issues, history, influences, and terms in the field of Sino-U.S. film co-production, paying special attention to areas of productive misunderstanding between U.S. and Chinese spheres of influence on film production culture.

Finally, what constitutes the term "co-production"? Does it include distribution or pre-production? How often does this process occur—sometimes, never? Is there a budgetary limit—lower bound or upper bound? Is there a type of filmmaker—one more focused on the auteur tradition or one grounded in the economics of an international-industrial-media-production conglomerate—that should receive the bulk of our attention? As scholars of screen studies, media studies, film studies, communications, or Chinese studies, what do we need to know about the production process in order to be able to comment on the phenomenon of film co-production? The fundamentally commercial structure of most co-productions combined with the profit-driven focus of filmmaking makes it incumbent upon scholars to understand the structure of film production relationships in order to understand the medium in which we work. This is no more important than in the field of Sino-U.S. co-production, where the impulse of American filmmakers to leave their home filmmaking culture, fly 13 hours, experience jetlag, suffer stomach flu, and be set out to sea, floating in a world of Chinese characters, is often due more to profit motive than cultural interest (G. Wigan and J. Schmaus, personal communication, December 2009). In the case of Chinese filmmakers returning to the Mainland, the increased financial feasibility of huge period sets and large numbers of extras follows a similar logic of capital.

Recent History of Film Co-Production in China

Film co-production is a relatively recent phenomenon in the history of the People's Republic of China, despite playing an important early role in the cinematic history of Shanghai (Y. Zhang, 1999).[15] Before 1984, the Chinese film industry operated as part of a state-controlled monopoly (Donald & Gammack, 2007). By the early 1990s, co-productions constituted one third of the films produced in China (Donald & Gammack). However, due to the screening of the Japanese-Chinese co-production *The Blue Kite* in 1994 without the permission of the Chinese government, SARFT introduced more stringent co-production regulations and instituted a 20-film import quota for the Mainland. The competitive import quota encourages producers who want to distribute their films on the Mainland to consider applying for co-production permissions. Although film co-production has officially existed in Mainland China since 1994, I focus on the period following China's accession to the World Trade Organization because of the increased feasibility of co-production due to more transparent, internationally recognized regulations.

Another important way co-productions impact global screen culture is through distribution practices. Theatrical distribution infrastructure in China is growing rapidly. Within the context of co-production, the balance of power for theatrical distribution shifts slightly in favor of the co-production company, though ultimate authority remains with SARFT. For example, James Cameron's *Avatar* (2010) was removed from 2D screens in order to make way for the domestic Chinese New Year *hesuipian* (blockbuster) *Confucius* (LeFraniere, 2010); in contrast, official co-productions have the same distribution rights and privileges as domestic films, although domestic companies pay a slightly lower percentage of their revenues for

[15] I will explore the connection between Shanghai's early film culture and the practice of international co-production in greater depth during my discussion of Shanghai's filmmaking culture in chapter 2.

distribution fees. Film co-production practice, then, has the potential to transform what can be conceived of as a "national" film on Chinese screens through the treatment of co-produced films as "local" films for the purposes of distribution.

Gaining an in-depth background on film co-production also requires a detailed understanding of capital for the development of media, particularly during the past two years. Following the global financial crisis, Chinese television stations and film studios have offered a unique source of funding for enterprising Hollywood producers. State-supported studios, private Chinese investment funds, and cash-rich state television stations have liquid funds to support midsize projects. Moreover, for socio-politically safe projects—particularly family films—there exists the possibility of access to the domestic market. Recent examples of this include Disney's decision to produce a new version of *High School Musical* in Shanghai (J. Yang, personal communication, October 2011) and SARFT's sponsoring of the Hollywood-based International Family Film Festival.

With box office revenues increasing by at least 30% in each of the past six years—including a 44% increase in 2009—the question of how to distribute movies in China is an inquiry of consequence for American filmmakers (Coonan, 2010). In addition to a film import quota of 20 films per year, any films allowed in under the quota have an additional 30% distribution fee (C. Fu, personal communication, February 2009). The China Film Co-Production Corporation offers import quota waivers and distribution fee reductions for films officially classified as co-productions. Understanding film co-production is thus central to understanding the internationalization of the Chinese film industry in the 21st century. Film co-production is an important phenomenon both culturally and economically. Encouraging co-production is a key strategy employed by the Chinese Film Co-Production Corporation to

provide the Chinese film industry with the opportunity to internationalize (Zhang Xun, personal communication, June 4, 2009). At the same time, participating in co-productions offers American filmmakers demographically broader, more profitable access to the Chinese market for their films.

Following the 2012 PRC decision to allow 3D films access to the Chinese market outside of established film co-production requirements and film import quotas (Waxman, 2012), the imperative to engage in film co-productions has been lessened. However, we can learn a tremendous amount from the seismic shifts in collaboration that have occurred between China's accession to the WTO in 2000 and the shift to a new 3D import standard in 2012. Indeed, in many ways, the expansion of films at only the highest budgetary and technical levels reflects both the anxieties of Chinese and American filmmakers. On the Chinese side, the expansion of 3D distribution of American films is one strategy to increase offerings in growing digital theatrical spaces while still protecting the growth of Chinese domestic filmmakers. On the Hollywood side, increasing exports of 3D films offers a safe haven from rampant piracy and distribution concerns. Piracy of 3D films is a less appealing option because the film experience relies heavily on theater-based technologies that cannot be replicated at home. At the same time, 3D theatrical capacity does not pose the same competition with Chinese domestic films and therefore is less likely to incur the ire of regulators. Therefore, while the shift in policy to allow for 3D imports to the Chinese market changes the importance of co-production, it also reifies many of the existing tensions behind the co-production process.

Comparative Regional Models

Now that we have a sense of the context and rationale behind contemporary co-production, it is worth taking time to further analyze the term "Sino-U.S." To gain perspective on

the implications of the process, we must consider what the term actually means for the purposes of film co-production. Does the term occlude other important production cultures involved in the world of film co-production? What about Hong Kong and Taiwan? One can correctly refer to a co-production as being a Sino-U.S. product yet be insufficiently descriptive. This chapter will identify some of the important ways in which the Sino-U.S. co-production relationship also integrates other important cultures of production while simultaneously operating as part of the rich, challenging trade and cultural relationship between the two spheres of influence.

My intent in this study is to create a more nuanced understanding of the plurality of international industrial cultures of film co-production by examining the institutions and workers in those filmmaking cultures using film-co-production as a lens. My central area of inquiry in this chapter is what constitutes film co-production between China and the United States, but this goal breaks down into multiple parts. First, it is useful to understand the importance of the Sino-U.S. label. Does the specificity of the Chinese market or the U.S. market matter? In short, yes; the particularities of the Sino-U.S. economic and cultural relationship make studying film co-productions between the two countries particularly informative not only on a cultural level, but also on a political and economic level. Film co-productions between China and the United States offer a window into not only the challenge of creating cultural products between the two countries, but also the political and economic relationships that help to shape cultural production for cultural products that require substantial capital investment.

The specific relationships, money, and people that constitute individual co-production processes may be murky, but the guiding principles remain constant. The following section is designed to draw out some of the major discursive gaps and identify major component parts in the Sino-U.S. co-production process. I will articulate a series of generalized definitions of co-

production mechanisms from different economies involved in the co-production process alongside key co-production agreements. Because this is meant to be a state-of-the-field discussion, the actual policy issues change. However, the guiding principles motivating co-productions remain consistent even with changes in policy. For example, the domestic Chinese tension between encouraging technology transfer through co-production as balanced by the fear of foreign domination of domestic production facilities remains an issue in the field of co-production even when the specific policy mechanisms for entering the market change. In this study, I attempt to offer insight into the industrial cultures both within and surrounding the co-production process.

Co-Production, Chinese Style

In terms of the letter of the law, film co-production in China appears to be a transparent, almost linear process. The China Film Co-Production Corporation, a quasi-government agency founded in 1979 and authorized by SARFT to oversee the administration and coordination of film co-productions, mediates all Mainland film co-productions (China Film Co-Production Corporation Corporate Brochure, 2009). According to the China Film Co-Production Corporation and all production entities under its auspices (which includes all entities seeking to legally make films in China), co-productions are contractual arrangements between a foreign party and a Chinese party agreed upon through consent of the China Film Co-Production Corporation. The process has clear official policies in place, but this appearance of transparency obscures the challenges of the process.

The approval process is relatively straightforward—that is, if one reads Chinese co-production policy without any background about Chinese film production culture or about the cultural and economic challenges of establishing a healthy working relationship between U.S.

and Chinese corporate partners. Complicating factors hide within the square boxes delineating the steps for making a movie in China. Yet there is an important simplicity in the process of making films in China: All roads lead through SARFT. Without a SARFT-sanctioned partnership, film co-production cannot legally commence in China. The order of operations of censoring the film for distribution also shifts for co-productions. When a film is initially approved by SARFT, there is a greater likelihood that the film will be distributed with changes rather than banned by SARFT once it is finished. In contrast, imported films are more likely to be completely rejected due to unsanctioned content (C. Fu, personal communication, February 2009). Thus, the practice of co-production takes on an important role in terms of managing censorship risk. Films with greater local political buy-in during the production stages are more likely to reach theatrical audiences because they are more likely to meet censorship requirements (C. Fu). This makes the co-production practice a process of cultural hybridization in which Chinese film bureaucrats and American film producers negotiate how to represent Euro-American film culture to Chinese viewers.

From a financial standpoint, the practice of co-production offers a distinct distribution incentive. Rather than be restricted to the designated film distribution company, which charges a fee of 40% of revenues and has no competitors, co-produced films have a broader array of potential distribution revenues and must pay a fee of only 30% of revenues (C. Fu). What this means from a cultural standpoint is that films that might otherwise be made within one culture of production become the product of two or more cultures of production due to financial incentives. The impulse to make the film for a specific budget and have greater access to the Chinese domestic market also leads to important cultural shifts within the cultures of production of

Chinese filmmaking communities. Thus, film co-production, while primarily a policy-based or finance-based choice, ultimately informs a new cultural world of filmmaking.

Co-Production, Hollywood Style

In this section I will first provide an overview of regionally based approaches to co-production with China in order to outline the shape of co-productions. By definition, all co-productions involve a minimum of two parties. American companies bring a unique set of dynamics to Chinese co-productions. Therefore, in order to understand Sino-U.S. co-production, it is integral to understand the "Hollywood" approach to co-productions.

Though the process of making each film differs slightly, certain practices characterize co-production filmmaking in each region. For example, the process of making a co-production in Hollywood can take multiple paths. Using European film funds as well as multiple producers and executive producers makes identifying the film's official producers a challenging task, even if the film is conceived of, financed, shot, edited, and distributed entirely within the confines of Southern California. Moreover, U.S. government oversight of motion picture production and co-production is limited to the tax and financial laws applied to all corporations and the Motion Picture Association of America's ratings system. As a result, understanding the "simplicity" of the Chinese model is often difficult for Hollywood producers. If in China, all (legal) avenues to film co-production lead through SARFT, in Hollywood, everyone uses the surface streets to avoid unnecessary traffic; that is, the routes to financing a film and gaining approval within the U.S. film industry are substantially more flexible than they are within the Chinese context. Thus, there exists a fundamental cultural disconnect about the best way to manage the co-production process. Experienced film co-production professionals in the United States who work extensively with European partners are quintessential Hollywood masters of finding new,

different, and semi-legal ways to approach getting a film made. Although in both China and Hollywood, film producers are masters of working around obstacles in the financing and shooting process, in China, incorrectly dealing with the central government film authorities can mean anything from a failed initial deal, to prohibitive censorship, to not-so-subtle government regulations that ultimately sabotage a film's run on Mainland screens.

Although the focus of this study is Sino-U.S. film co-production, I argue in the previous section that the term encompasses much more than one sees at first blush. Film co-productions between Chinese and U.S. companies rely, on a macro level, on film co-production cultural practices established in China's relationships with other foreign co-production partners. Thus, Sino-U.S. film co-productions, although Chinese and American in focus, draw heavily from other traditions of co-production filmmaking in their very foundations. At the same time, the fluid movement of film workers trained to be successful on big-budget films in China draws on individuals from multiple global labor pools, particularly workers from other global co-productions within China. What we can learn from the highly commercial and fluidly international approaches imbedded within the Sino-U.S. co-production process is the value of setting those productions in a space with extensive financial infrastructure and a culture of international corporate enterprises—a place like Shanghai.

European Multilaterals

Understanding the European model of film co-production is useful in order to discern how the cultural dynamics between European and Chinese co-productions inform Sino-U.S. relationships. By providing an example of an alternative approach, the European model also acts as a useful foil for understanding the nuances of the film co-production policies, practices, and cultures existing in the United States and China. Co-productions with European countries shape

film co-production culture in China in two key ways. First, European filmmakers pioneered film co-production practice earlier than other international filmmakers due to the more permeable economic boundaries between European countries. Their approaches therefore serve as a theoretical model for many other countries engaging in co-productions. Second, European producers were some of the first producers to participate in the inchoate world of contemporary Chinese film co-production. Therefore, on a pragmatic level, they brought with them their approaches to film co-production that in turn shaped Mainland co-production practices.

The Council of Europe's European Cinema Support Fund began funding European film co-production prior to the establishment of the European Union ("Co-Production Support," n.d.). As an organization devoted in part to the promotion of European cultural identity, the Council of Europe had much to gain in developing a clearer process for implementing co-productions between European signatories. The preamble of the European Convention states that the convention was designed with the consideration that "cinematographic co-production, an instrument of creation and expression of cultural diversity on a European scale, should be reinforced" ("European Convention," 1992). Film co-production, at least from the perspective of the European Council, is a matter of crucial importance for building and disseminating constructions of cultural identity and the multilateral cultural identity implicit in a "European" production. The charter of the European Convention establishes one of the foundational documents on the practice of multilateral co-production. Unlike the Hollywood model, European co-productions also must pass through the Council of Europe approval process. However, the European model offers substantially greater transparency for multilateral co-production collaboration than the Chinese model. The European model offers important insights

to better understand how it is possible for governments to assess and guide the co-production process.

In Chinese co-productions, 30% of main talent must be Chinese for a film to be considered an official film co-production, a policy that helps to ensure that the film co-production process facilitates the growth of local industry. Yet the official stance on the number of Chinese above- and below-the-line workers[16] who need to be part of the shoot is at the discretion of SARFT. In contrast, the European model offers a more discrete way to determine cultural ownership of a film. While both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses, the European model is instructive in that it reveals how one multinational body of government conceived of the question of cultural ownership of a given media work. In order to be considered a European co-production, a given film must have at least 15 of 19 possible points or receive special dispensation (see Table 1).

Table 1

European Convention on Cinematic Co-Production

European elements	Weighting Points
Creative group	
Director	3
Scriptwriter	3
Composer	1
	7
Performing group	

[16] Both "above-the-line" and "below-the-line" are accounting terms used to account for film budgetary expenditures. "Above-the-line" refers to expenses negotiated before shooting, including costs for high-level creative personnel. "Below-the-line" labor refers to technical and nonstarring members of a film cast and crew.

First role	3
Second role	2
Third role	1
	6
Technical craft group	
Cameraman	1
Sound recordist	1
Editor	1
Art director	1
Studio or shooting location	1
Post-production location	1
	6

N.B.

a First, second, and third roles are determined by number of days worked.

b So far as Article 8 is concerned, "artistic" refers to the creative and performing groups; "technical" refers to the technical and craft group.

Note: Reprinted from "European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production," by the Council of Europe, 1992, Appendix II.

The privileging of above-the-line labor in determining a film's viability for preferential treatment is immediately evident in the European co-production chart. We see a similar practice within the context of film co-production in China. In order to retain appropriate "cultural content," films are required to maintain a certain percentage of Chinese starring roles. However, the intriguing difference between the Chinese and European models exists in the greater emphasis on blue-collar labor in the Chinese context.

The privileging of above-the-line roles in European co-production agreements provides useful insight into the reasons behind film co-production regulation. The emphasis on above-

the-line players reveals the policy's focus on building and disseminating the accomplishments of high-level domestic creative workers, rather than creating the largest number of jobs or training the greatest number of below-the-line workers. Yet it is precisely the monetary and above-the-line factors that are measured by co-production policy rather than the domestic labor considerations of below-the-line work. The transnational production of films cannot reasonably be considered the project of discrete nations. The above-the-line workers, particularly those who work on co-productions, circulate almost entirely on a transnational circuit of international film festival premieres and have blended national and linguistic identities, to say nothing of the convoluted international path of funding sources.

Scholarly research in film studies tends to focus on above-the-line players, from the auteur to the producer, but the impact on cultures of film production is equal, if not greater, for below-the-line film workers. Studies of film co-production offer a fascinating window into the contradictions between the cultural policy and the lived experience of cultural workers. In terms of the measurable impact on local industry, the work of below-the-line cast and crew is ultimately what trains new talent for the local industry, and in fact, has a substantial impact on the development of the national film industry. It also highlights a blind spot in our understanding of transnational film production, which I seek to remedy in this study. Examining the significance of co-production for below-the-line workers enhances our understanding of the impacts of co-production. In the context of film co-production between China and the United States, in which the question of labor costs in production plays such a significant role in production decisions, examining the role of below-the-line workers becomes an area of particularly overarching significance.

Hong Kong, the (Burning) Bridge

The overdetermined cultural relationship between Hong Kong and the Mainland can prove to be as much of an impediment to market entry as an opportunity. When Ringo Lam decided on the English names for the series of Hong Kong films through which his work came to international prominence—*City on Fire* (1987), *Prison on Fire 1* and *2* (1987 and 1991), and *School on Fire* (1988)—he ostensibly chose the suffix "on fire" to provide a sense of "urgency and action" in his films (Stokes & Hoover, 1999**)**. While Lam's pre-handover terminology referred to the cultural dynamism of his city, "on fire" can also apply to the current film production relationship between the Mainland and Hong Kong, both in terms of its dynamism and its precariousness. Due to the uncertainty of cultural relations between the two areas, the production relationship between Hong Kong and China can be seen as a bridge—a bridge on fire.

Hong Kong presents an interesting case within the context of Sino-U.S. film co-production. As the lion's share of co-production activity, PRC-Hong Kong film co-productions played a formative role in the development of film co-production culture. Moreover, Hong Kong also acts as an important facilitator for co-productions from other countries, for both regulatory and cultural reasons.

While the specifics of the regulations are bound to change due to the fluid Hong Kong-PRC political relationship, the major issues described are deeply imbedded into the relationship between the two places. Through CEPA, Hong Kong has a preferential production relationship with Mainland China. The city markets itself as a key site for facilitating international film production with China, though Hong Kong itself is also the largest source of co-productions with the Mainland. Thus, the case of Hong Kong is intriguing to examine both because of its PRC-Hong Kong co-productions, but also because of the important cultural, political, and economic

role the Special Administrative Region (SAR) plays in facilitating co-productions between non-Hong Kong countries and companies with the Mainland. The notion of what constitutes a co-production between Hong Kong and PRC is important to understand, both because of the growth of Hong Kong-China co-productions and because of Hong Kong's role as a co-production intermediary between the Mainland and other international co-production entities.

It is important to note that although the specifics of film co-production policies are a moving target, the larger issues underlying the production relationship between Shanghai and Hong Kong have been in place, to varying degrees, since nearly the inception of filmmaking in China and to a much larger extent following the 1934 establishment of Tianyi Studios in Kowloon, Hong Kong (Fu, 2003). The historical significance of the film production relationship between Hong Kong and China plays an important role in the context of current regulations. However, while the specificities of the regulations are bound to change due to the fluid Hong Kong-PRC political relationship, the major issues of production relations are deeply imbedded into the relationship between the two places.

Hong Kong's role as a co-production intermediary is threefold. On a policy level, Hong Kong offers a more liberal financial environment for the incorporation of co-production entities, film distribution, and the international transfer of funds. For example, following the implementation of a modification of CEPA, Hong Kong—as well as Macao—has been able to distribute films directly to the Mainland as a solely owned venture ("Supplementary Stipulations," n.d.). What this means in practice is that film productions made by a venture that includes parties from Hong Kong and another place can create a co-production for distribution to the Mainland. Including Hong Kong (and to a far lesser degree, Macao) in a co-production offers an alternate bridge to accessing Mainland screens, though it should be noted that

distribution rights must still pass through SARFT approval. Hong Kong's British colonial legacy, complete with favorable tax structures for international investment, offers a space for more transparent film production practices than on the Mainland. This feature makes Sino-Hong Kong co-productions appealing for both Hong Kongers and other groups seeking to benefit from the special relationship between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Hong Kong offers a space of comparatively lax content regulations for shooting for tripartite co-productions with the Mainland and another country, but the boundaries regarding the decency of content are both fluid and opaque.

A second reason for Mainland co-production with Hong Kong is that the region offers a space of comparatively lax content regulations for shooting. As a result, films with content that may be objectionable to Mainland censors can still be shot within the greater China region. An excellent example of this is the role of Hong Kong as a shooting space for Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution.* The majority of the film's shooting in Hong Kong's Shaw Studios focused on sexual content otherwise prohibited by Mainland filming requirements. Ultimately, the choice had some negative repercussions. The censored version of the film initially achieved widespread financial success in Mainland China (H. Chang, 2009; Hamer, 2011). However, in a backlash that followed the film's wide success, Mainland actress Tang Wei was blacklisted from Mainland screens for her part in the sex scenes that had been cut from the Mainland version of the film. (Tang has subsequently been allowed to appear on Hong Kong screens.) As the case of *Lust, Caution* demonstrates, the bridge between the filmmaking spaces of Hong Kong and Shanghai could burn at a moment's notice. The legacy of Hong Kong as a space of comparatively lax shooting controls still must be approached with caution. However, the SAR

still offers an important complement to shooting in Mainland China as part of the process of co-production.

Finally, through its multilingual, multicultural workforce, Hong Kong offers an important human bridge for co-productions. Most Hong Kong film workers in Hong Kong speak at least some English, Mandarin, and Cantonese, making them valuable team members for Sino-U.S. co-productions. Due to the multilingual cultural context of Hong Kong life, film workers are skilled at navigating among multiple linguistic and cultural contexts during a film shoot. Thus, in addition to its regulatory liberalism, the city's film workers have the skills of cultural intermediaries incorporated into their film training.

However, as with the looser standards for content production in Hong Kong, the role of the intermediary also brings with it important challenges. Between Mainland and Hong Kong film workers, there exist cultural tensions between colonizer and colonized, the developing and the developed, and Mandarin language culture and Cantonese language culture. As Hong Kong filmmaker Peter Chao pointed out during a June 2009 site visit to the set of the Mainland-Hong Kong co-production *Bodyguards and Assassins*, Hong Kongers in positions of leadership must be extremely careful about how they treat Mainland employees in order to dispel any accusations of favoritism toward fellow SAR residents. The cultural advantages of employing large number of Hong Kongers in a Mainland-based production must be balanced with the nuanced understanding required due to the fraught relationship between Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese populations. Factors include Hong Kong's history as a British colony, the Mainland's perceived role as a colonizer and/or the "motherland." This is to say nothing of the individual histories and politics of film workers and the continuum of each worker's personal affinities with Mainland or Hong Kong cultural identities.

Australian Interlopers

Like Hong Kong, Australia has a special co-production relationship with the Mainland. Liberal Australian film co-production policy privileges the Sino-Australian co-production relationship. Australia is one of a small but growing number of countries that have legislated an official co-production treaty with China. Australian film workers have also taken a role at the forefront of non-Asian cultural intermediaries in the film co-production process as English-speaking film workers from outside the hegemonic culture of North American film production. The combination of streamlined co-production regulations and a population of comparatively flexible film workers makes Chinese co-production with Australian companies a useful foil for understanding Sino-U.S. film co-production practice.

Australia's co-production model parallels that of Mainland China. The Australian model has an "Australian content" co-production requirement. The governmental parties of the co-production treaty determine what constitutes Significant Australian Content (SAC). In both the Mainland and Australia, the practice of film co-production involves public diplomacy at the highest levels.

Also significant within the Australian model is the calculation of the financial impact of co-production. Unlike the European model, which requires a certain number of European filmmakers to guide the creative direction of the co-produced film, the Australian model instead focuses the bulk of its attention on the financial benefit to be derived from the co-production project. Whereas in some cases, co-production is seen primarily as a way to cultivate the global cultural impact of a country's film industry, in the Australian model, the impetus to facilitate co-productions for financial benefit is clear. The other main requirement of the film co-production is that it has a specific amount of Qualified Australian Production Expenditures (QAPE). Thus,

on the Australian side, the calculus of film co-production factors in both cultural and financial investment in the transnational cultural product.

The work of Australians as cultural translators in Greater China filmmaking is still a highly understudied phenomenon, largely because most Australians hold below-the-line positions. A notable exception is filmmaker Christopher Doyle, an Australian cinematographer best known for his role as the main cinematographer for Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai. Doyle, also known by his Chinese name Du Kefeng (杜可风), has argued that his Chinese "rechristening" allowed him to enter a new world but left him feeling personally divided (Doyle, 2004). While Doyle is a boundary breaker in terms of the roles of Australians in films from the Greater China region, the growth of co-production activity has created an intriguing group of new intermediaries working on the Chinese Mainland. Holding difficult jobs such as stunt performers and logistics managers on Sino-U.S. co-productions, these workers—who are neither American nor Chinese—provide an important link between the highly codified filmmaking practices of American big-budget productions and the more "rough-and-tumble" approach popular in Mainland filmmaking circles.

Scale-Based Models

Ultimately, understanding the different modes of film production that can operate like film co-productions helps illuminate the types of international influence that shape the world of Chinese domestic filmmaking. It also underscores the importance of understanding film co-production and its cousins—including independent film co-productions and categories of collaborative film productions that are not explicitly co-productions—as an integral part of the field of Chinese cinema studies.

Although this study focuses on big-budget Sino-U.S. narrative feature film co-productions, because of the global distribution scope of the films and the substantial demand for domestic Chinese filmmaking resources, it is important to understand the role of categories of filmmaking adjacent to blockbuster film co-production. Sino-U.S. film co-production takes place at all budgetary levels of the filmmaking process. Specifically, the Sino-U.S. film co-production process opens up a space for independent filmmakers to make small "transnational" films. (For a table of examples, see this paper's Filmography.) This group of films is unique in that the cost savings and production incentives derived from shooting in Mainland China allow for the production of films that would have been otherwise difficult to make. The Shanghai-based films in this category include films that act as love letters to the city, even invoking their shooting location in their titles. Examples of Sino-U.S. independent film co-productions in this category include Oscar L. Costo's *Shanghai Red* (2007) and David Ren's *Shanghai Kiss* (2007). The phenomenon of independent titles invoking the site of transnational film co-production extends beyond American filmmakers. *Shanghai Baby* (2007) and *Shanghai Trance* (2008), directed by Europeans Berengar Pfahl and David Verbeek, respectively, also pay homage to the city.

Because these films lack the sweeping distribution scope of the big-budget studio films in the study, I will briefly outline the shape of the independent film co-production scene to provide contrast with the larger studio films highlighted later in the study. In its two-week theatrical run from February 12–21, 2010, *Shanghai Red* took in a total of $8,659 ("Shanghai Red," n.d.). The film's only theatrical release in China, at the Shanghai Film Festival in 2007, was sparsely attended. It also had limited Mainland DVD distribution. The theatrical distribution rights for *Shanghai Kiss* were only purchased for Australia, Brazil, Brunei, Greece, Ireland, Korea, Malta,

Singapore, Turkey, and the United Kingdom—not the United States or China. Though films like *The Mummy, The Forbidden Kingdom*, and even *Lust, Caution* have substantially greater influence on global screen culture, independent films also play a part in constructing Sino-U.S. film co-production discourse.

Because film co-production in Shanghai remains a relatively new phenomenon in its post-WTO form, the makers of these films, however small, have a unique platform to express their perspectives on the process of transnational cultural production. In part because of her producing turn for *Shanghai Red*, Vivian Wu is a VIP in Chinese governmental co-production circles, as evidenced by her presence at the "head table" at the 2009 Shanghai International Film Festival co-production forum luncheon, where she sat alongside with such key co-production players as Tong Gang, the head of SARFT; Ren Zhonglun, the head of the Shanghai Film Studio; and Zhang Xun, the head of the China Film Co-Production Corporation (CFCC). *Shanghai Kiss* director David Ren wrote a testimonial entitled "A Love Letter to Shanghai" that was published on the CFCC's Web site; in it, he details both the benefits and drawbacks of shooting a film in the city as well as his plans to shoot a follow-up film there (Ren, 2008). Wu also describes her experience shooting in Shanghai on the CFCC's site. "Independent" filmmakers wrote two of the three testimonials on the CFCC Web site, both discussing their "love affair with Shanghai." (The third testimonial is by Matt Birch, production supervisor of *Mission: Impossible III,* which was also a Shanghai-based production.) The prominence of testimonials from "small" filmmakers highlights that co-production promotion discourse pervades the co-production process at all levels.

Misapprehended Categories

In understanding Sino-U.S. film co-production as an industrial cultural process, it is also important to understand the misapprehended categories that can stand in for co-productions. These "red herring" productions have many similar cultural characteristics to official film co-productions and may even be labeled co-productions by some producers. However, according to the narrowest definition of Sino-U.S. film co-production, the films do not officially pass muster. The films in the course of this study use different production structures to refer to the film co-production. Defining the terms will help explain their cultural industrial significance.

Assisted Productions

Assisted productions, known as *xiepai dianying* (邪派电影) in Mandarin, refer to films that are shot in China with the assistance of film studio facilities but without official government approval for distribution and often without Chinese financial support. The world of assisted productions is essentially one of mercenary film production. Chinese film workers and spaces are part of the film but lack official collaboration. Examples of assisted productions include J.J. Abrams' *Mission: Impossible III*, Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46*, and Kurt Wimmer's *Ultraviolet.* With a far more precarious status on the Chinese Mainland than official co-productions, assisted productions have no guarantee of being distributed to Mainland screens (C. Fu, personal communication, February 2009). In certain cases, they are pre-denied distribution permissions as part of their shooting approval (Fu). Assisted productions can look much like official co-productions in terms of the final product. However, the shape of collaboration between Chinese and American film workers differs. The American side has more financial control and the Chinese side more regulatory control than in official co-productions, in which both sides make certain concessions in order to facilitate distribution of the co-produced film.

Chinese Productions With Foreign Talent

The presence of a famous non-Chinese actor in a film can suggest that the work is a co-production, when in fact, it is merely a high-budget, outward-looking Chinese film. For example, Beijing-based Chinese-American director Dayyan Eng's Kevin Spacey vehicle, *Inseparable* (2010), is a Chinese-financed local production with U.S. talent. In the case of *Big Shot's Funeral* (2001), the film was released theatrically only in China. Chinese productions with foreign talent create cultures of collaboration similar to those of official film co-productions but with substantially smaller groups of foreign talent and few, if any, foreign below-the-line workers on the production.

Productions by Localized "Foreign" Studios

Over the past five years, Disney has established a local production arm for its China team. The Chinese-language films it produces are designed for the Chinese local market with local talent and domestic financing. However, the films remain Disney productions green-lit and supported by the Los Angeles-based studio. It is tempting to label the Disney productions as co-productions. However, by official Chinese government standards, the films are local productions because of the official status of Disney (China), Ltd. This distinction is important. By making local films for the local market, Disney is pioneering a new form of hybrid "local" film.

Key Issues in Co-Production Discourse

Sino-U.S. film co-production is as much a discursive framework as an industrial process. The following section will create a framework for understanding the key themes, modes, and terms of film co-production discourse. It is important to understand not only what co-production is but also how key parties discuss co-production. The mode through which different types of film co-production information circulate reveals the different levels of influence and channels of

communication within the context of film co-production. Specifically, it is important to examine key terms that guide the film co-production process. There exist a series of culturally loaded terms that both guide and confuse the film co-production process. The terms that I will refer to include *contract* (*hetong*), *relationships* (*guanxi*), and *intellectual property* (*zhishi chanquan).* Taken together, the thematic issues, terms, and ways in which co-production discourse circulates throughout film production communities and to the public create an overarching discourse of film co-production that shapes cultural relations between the United States and China through the film production process.

While the thematic content of co-production discourse is significant in understanding what constitutes a film co-production, equally important is the way in which industry and government players communicate their perception of the central issues surrounding film co-production. As Marshall McLuhan argues, "The medium is the message" (1967). There are four main channels through which co-production discourse grows, including (a) co-production contracts, (b) formal industry panels, (c) industry Web sites, and (d) informal industry chatter. These different discursive modes regulate the ways in which the nebulous process of co-production appears to above-the-line workers, below-the-line workers, policy makers, distributors, financiers, and other parties. The four modes of co-production discourse combine to create a more complete picture of the co-production process. All four different modes of discourse operate according to internal rules within the film production industry that are in turn modified by interactions between American and Chinese filmmakers, negotiated by intermediaries with experience and background in both worlds. What is most important to take away is that the multiple discursive levels of co-production practice ultimately inflect the perspectives of key actors in the process with incomplete information. Thus, looking at modes

of communication about film co-production becomes a way to explode the cultural assumptions imbedded within the practice of transnational filmmaking.

To further elaborate on the distinctions between these different modes of discourse, I will use the example of director John Woo and the discourse surrounding the co-production of *Red Cliff* (2008). *Red Cliff* began as a Sino-U.S. film co-production, but due to financing issues, it eventually became the first major blockbuster produced between major Asian countries. Woo has been a major figure in facilitating the transfer of film production culture between China and the United States for more than 20 years. As part of the publicity process for the release of *Red Cliff*, Woo conducted a global tour describing his perspective on the film co-production process. Woo's world tour for *Red Cliff* traversed all four modes of film co-production discourse. As producer of the film, Woo was involved in the development of co-production contracts (Kokas, 2009). He also acted as a panelist on the co-production industry forum at the Shanghai International Film Festival's Jin Jue International Forum on co-productions. Woo followed up by conducting interviews with the American press for the Web, while information about the shoot also leaked to informal Web-based sources. Film workers from Woo's shoot now circulate throughout the film industry in China, sharing chatter and perspectives on the film co-production process.

Now that I have provided an overview of how the modes of discourse operate together, yet separately, it is useful to look at the significance of each discursive register. Co-production contracts, for example, deploy specific legal language grounded in the policy imperatives of the Chinese government as well as the legal and financial requirements of American film producers. Adding another layer of complexity to the significance of the contract is a different understanding of the word in Chinese and English. In an English-language context, particularly

an American business context, *contract* is a term firmly grounded in a tradition of inviolability without penalty of extreme financial consequences. The laws supporting American businesses in the United States are robust. Moreover, from a conceptual standpoint, the term contract has strong foundations in the tradition of Anglo-American political thought. The notion of the "contract between governing party and the governed" in English law dates back to the reign of Charles I (Reid, Hartog, Nelson, & Kern, 2000). While scholars have argued that contractual relationships played an important role in the domestic economy of early modern China (Zelin, Ocko, & Gardella, 2004; Lo & Tian, 2005), the legal protections against breach of contract in China are much less robust than in the United States. As a result, this major form of co-production discourse is substantially different on opposite sides of the Pacific.

The unequal significance of the term in Chinese and American contexts of cultural production ultimately makes direct translation from contract to *hetong* a misleading cultural operation that can undermine a common understanding of the term. Broadly speaking, in an American context, contracts for film production services set terms for industrial services that will be completed upon penalty of enforceable legal action through a transparent court system. In the Chinese system, contracts set terms for the completion of an industrial process. However, the main means of contract enforcement is through personal influence rather than a reliance on a still-developing legal framework.

For an example of the legal discourse surrounding co-production, see Exhibit X. A film producer who wished to remain anonymous provided the co-production agreement below. The names of the parties involved have been redacted. In the context of the contract, we can see how definition of terms becomes a nearly obsessive process:

Exhibit X

WHEREAS XXX Media LLC, a California Limited Liability Company, XXX Media Ltd, a Hong Kong company wholly owned by XXX Media LLC (individually and collectively hereinafter referred to as "XY") and the China Film Group ("CFG") sometimes referred to herein individually as "Co-Producer" and collectively as the "Co-Producers" intend to produce a feature-length theatrical motion picture presently entitled [----------], (the "Film");

WHEREAS XY and CFG intend to produce the Film in accordance with the Co-Production laws and requirements governing cinematographic co-production in the People's Republic of China and/or as a multilateral co-production involving the Peoples Republic of China and any other country (the "co-production treaty partner") that has a bi-lateral co-production agreement with China, and a contracted North American distributor.

The highly codified, formalized language attempts to clearly define the cultural relationship between Chinese and American parties in the film co-production process. The film being produced had not been named at this point in the contract development, but the individual co-producers are already "clearly defined" by the contractual discourse. Yet the shape of the film co-production discourse expands exponentially when incorporated with other modes of less formal discourse about the film co-production process.

Another significant space for transmitting discourse about the film co-production process is the film industry forum. In order to explore the role of international film industry forums in the field of Sino-U.S. film co-production, I will focus on the role of international film market

forums that deal with Sino-U.S. film co-production, such as the Jin Jue International Forum at the Shanghai International Film Festival. "Pitch" forums like the Jin Jue International Forum shape discourse about international film co-production in China by creating dialogue between industry "contact men," both brokers of production deals as well as cultural intermediaries (Hirsch, 1991). The PRC is a filmmaking environment that lacks regulatory and cultural transparency for both foreign and local players. Within film co-production forums, the opaque discourse about film co-production both reveals and comments on the intricacies of the public-private creative partnerships involved in shooting a film between the United States and China.

Within the context of industry forums, two formal types of gatekeepers mediate an audience's understanding of a given text: the contact men, who provide messages about the text for media practitioners to co-opt, and media practitioners, who then frame messages for the public. At the Jin Jue International forum, media practitioners also act as contact men, speaking both to their peers and to the public. Panel members act as brokers of public notions of what constitutes an international film co-production.

The industrial self-talk present at the Shanghai International Film Festival forums breaks down into five categories of speakers. First, there are the heads of major state-owned film groups, with special priority given to the Beijing-based China Film Group and the Shanghai Film Group. Some of the "usual suspects" in these forums include Ren Zhonglun, head of the Shanghai Film Group, and Han Sanping, head of the China Directors Association. Second, there are representatives from domestic and foreign film production companies that engage in co-production activity. Also populating the forums are the few major international creative/economic forces behind Sino-U.S. film co-production, such as filmmaker John Woo. Finally, there are audience members who respond to the panels and transmit industry discourse

beyond the badged confines of the film market forum space, including journalists, some academics, and lower-level industry operatives. Beyond acting as a means to market individual production companies, the production forums shape both the co-production practices of the industry and the discourse surrounding co-production. Companies and individuals who introduce the practice of Chinese-International co-production have the unique opportunity to publicly define the steps that go into what is often a nebulous, evolving filmmaking practice. The few key individuals from the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, Europe, and the United States who have experience on major Chinese productions—often as few as one major production—serve as co-production panel "experts" at festival market forums on Chinese co-production from Europe to the United States to Greater China.

Chinese film co-production forums have emerged in the past five years at film festivals around the world. In addition to the Jin Jue International Forum, recent examples include the Co-Producing with China forum at the 2009 Berlinale and the Los Angeles-based International Family Film Festival's co-production forum, sponsored in part by SARFT. The increase in film co-production forums signals a move toward greater industry interest in the practice of co-production in general and co-production with Euro-American companies in particular.

Web-based discourse also contributes to the discourse about film co-production and takes on different registers of formality. On one end of the spectrum are testimonials on the CFCC Web site about what constitutes Sino-U.S. film co-production. This mode of Web discourse closely follows the highly formalized language of film co-production contracts. In contrast, there are also highly informal third-party sites about film co-production, such as the English-language site monkeypeaches.com. The site details co-production information primarily for film fans but also for industry workers who lack access to inner circles and can instead use the Web

site to "spy" on co-productions. The Chinese-language social media site Douban acts as a clearinghouse for cultural workers who set up groups to exchange information about cultural activities. Despite presenting the practice of co-production differently, both formal and informal sites are accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. The expansive scope of Web discourse on film co-production makes these Web-based meeting places important for developing the conceptual frameworks of what constitutes the world of co-production. While informing ongoing discourse about what constitutes a co-production, the sites also expand participation in the film co-production discourse.

In sum, film co-production contracts are highly specific in whom they consider to be parties relevant to co-productions. They only consider the specific organizations involved in a specific film co-production to be relevant to their definition of what constitutes a co-production. Industry forums, in contrast, reach out to a cabal of individuals already involved in co-productions, planning to become involved in co-productions, or charged with the task of mediating co-production discourse for the public (such as journalists). Web sites attempt to offer co-production information directly to the public. However, what is particularly interesting is that the different levels of granularity in the representation of co-production are not directly linked with the presentation of more or less information about the process but rather with different information about the process. For example, fan or below-the-line worker Web sites offer information about the reception of particular notions of co-production that are difficult to access even for the filmmakers directly involved in drafting the co-production contract.

Informal industry chatter acts as the glue for the entire range of film co-production discourse, moving like a virus from the formalized halls of co-production contract writing to industrial forums and ending up on Web sites. Often, the least complete yet most accurate

characterizations of film co-production discourse occur through informal discussions between industry players. Parties at film festival opening events and discussions in coffee shops in between screenings provide spaces for film workers from different spaces to come together. Within specific communities, certain bars and coffee shops provide places to see, be seen, and interact. For example, adjacent to both the old Beijing Film Studio and the Beijing Film Academy was a small, extremely unassuming café, the only place within a 20-minute walk where patrons could purchase a cup of brewed coffee. That space became a crucial nexus for industry chatter between student and professional communities. The structure of the Beijing Film Studio and Beijing Film Academy has since changed, but the gathering principle remains equally salient. At the Shanghai International Film Festival, prior to major renovations of the Shanghai Film Art Center in 2008, only one coffee shop was located on the premises, and thus it served as a meeting point for discussions between filmmakers, film workers, and film fans about co-productions.

Examples within the Hollywood context are less extreme in their convergence, because, unlike in China, coffee shop infrastructure in Los Angeles is already highly developed, and thus a variety of options exist. However, in the highly developed urban infrastructure of Los Angeles, the spaces of industry chatter migrate according to the power dynamics in individual relationships. If two film workers from different parts of Los Angeles meet, the proximity of each worker's home base to the meeting space is a useful barometer for measuring the power dynamic in the relationship. Although it is the least formalized of all of the modes of discourse, industry chatter follows some consistent patterns of behavior according to the movement of major film festival circuits, the location of studio infrastructure, and the convergence of film workers around awards shows. What all of this ultimately means for film co-production is that

an entire layer of discourse exists within and around the world of more formalized spaces of discourse, acting as an exegetical tradition for more traditional industry texts such as contracts and forums.

Earlier in my discussion, I highlighted three key terms that through productive misunderstandings between Chinese and U.S. production contexts highlight the main cultural gaps in co-production discourse. I will discuss the remaining terms—*relationships* (*guanxi)* and *intellectual property* (*zhishi chanquan)*—highlighting their significance in translation and how they shape the co-production process through their discursive frameworks.

The issue of personal influence and the influence of relationships brings us to a key misapprehended term that shapes the co-production conflict. Guanxi, a Mandarin Chinese term used to refer to personal relationships and their influence, has been the subject of major consideration in academic business and political science literature regarding professional relationships in China. The term has a much more storied usage within the Chinese production context, referring to the scope of a person's ability to deliver a particular task to successful completion. Just as there is a lack of understanding about the strength of contract law in the Chinese context, there is a lack of understanding of the pervasive significance of guanxi.

Another term with a systemic cultural difference that confuses the notion of what constitutes a co-production is intellectual property, or zhishi chanquan. The notion of intellectual property is a comparatively new concept in a Chinese context. To quote an adage from the Chinese Cultural Revolution (as cited in Alford, 1995, p. 56):

> Is it necessary for a steel worker to put his name on a steel ingot he produces in the course of his duty? If not, why should a member of the intelligentsia enjoy the privilege of putting his name on what he produces?

Legal scholar William Alford argues that from a historical conceptual standpoint, cultural production in a Chinese context has operated according to the notion that works emerge as part of a society rather than as the efforts of one individual. The practice of academic production, even in contemporary Chinese universities and artists' studios, speaks to this perspective; older scholars often incorporate the work of young artists and scholars into larger compendiums without attribution. Even following China's accession to the World Trade Organization, rampant co-opting and distribution of what in the United States is considered proprietary intellectual material remains a major concern for American media corporations operating in China (V. Yip, personal communication, April 21, 2009). The difference in the significance of the term intellectual property creates a major hurdle for film co-production practice between China and the United States.

Impact of co-production on DVD distribution

An excellent example of how the co-production process functions in relation to paratextual materials is the home entertainment release of James Ivory's Shanghai-based co-production, *The White Countess*. The packaging of *The White Countess* for its home theatrical distribution illustrates a misleading relationship between production and distribution practices. In addition to its U.S. release, *The White Countess* was released for the home entertainment market twice in the Greater China region. DVD versions of the film were released in Hong Kong, and VCD versions of the film were released on Mainland China, where the film was also shot. VCD, an earlier type of digital video format common in China in the 1990s and the early 21st century, is no longer the favored viewing medium in most mid- to large-size Chinese cities.

The difference between the film's American and Mainland releases is startling.

The main credits and introductory material are different both in content and form. Sony Pictures Classics and the Shanghai Film Group jointly produced the film. However, in both versions of the film, the local producers are listed first, foregrounding their relative influence on the final products. Producer James Ivory's name is replaced with Chinese producer Ren Zhonglun's name in the beginning of the Chinese version. The opening credits assert the true cultural origin of the film over the narrative's claims of ambiguity. Surprisingly, even the cast list differs from version to version, despite the film itself being nearly identical. The Chinese version bills the local voice actors dubbing the sound concurrently with the film's international stars, Ralph Fiennes and Natasha Richardson. The slight changes in the film's opening credits almost compose two distinct films with different actors and producers, despite employing the same visual structure during the narrative.

Deepening the difference between the two versions, the films both contain a variety of imposing national markers. In the fore of the American version are several intimidating FBI antipiracy warnings and disclaimers. The Chinese version, on the other hand, is inaugurated with the official stamp of the China Film Bureau, the Chinese film governance and film censorship body. In both cases, each version of the film foregrounds the political (government regulatory bodies) and economic (distribution companies) context of the film before the narrative even begins.

Equally revealing are the exterior covers of the releases. The film's Chinese release makes no mention at all of the film's Western production company. However, in an almost astonishingly literal example of the Orientalist overtones of the American release, the DVD container of *The White Countess* features a description of the film by critic Richard Roeper: "Echoes of *Casablanca.*" In what way does a film about 1930s Shanghai echo a film about

World War II-era Morocco? The U.S. home theatrical distribution of the film exotifies the story, while the Chinese release attempts to localize it. The issue of the different messages sent by the packaging of co-productions for distribution underscores the importance of film co-production as a multilayered process of cultural negotiation. While the production process forces film workers to collaborate, the distribution process divides the audience according to media delivery technologies and region codes.

Watching the two releases side by side creates a startling shift in perspective for the viewer. For example, the film's female protagonist, Natasha Richardson's Countess Sofia Belinskaya, is a Czarist Russian émigré. The film's first shot is of the Countess at a ball in Czarist Russia. Entering the world of Czarist Russia from the paratext of the two releases radically shifts one's immediate vantage point on the film. From the American perspective, far greater sympathy lies with Czarist Russia's plight due to historical American animosity toward Communism and Marxism. However, entering the film from a Chinese vantage point offers a radically different historical perspective because of China's tradition of sympathy for Marxist revolution and view of Communist Russia as an intermittent historical ally.

The distribution company's introduction of the first images of the film shapes the viewer's perspective. When the film begins with the Sony Pictures Classics logo, the viewer is immediately conditioned by Sony's marketing practices to prepare for an "art" or "foreign" film. Due to Sony Pictures Classics' film distribution practices of collecting foreign films for distribution in the American market, the viewer is, at best, a traveler through cinema. At worst, the distribution company forces the viewer into the role of cultural imperialist.

In contrast, films introduced as a product of the Shanghai Film Group condition the viewer to see the story as a local story of Shanghai history within the Chinese context.

Consequently, before the film even begins and the first representation of the city emerges on screen, the release prepares the viewer to read *The White Countess* as a Chinese story. Though the film is the same, the paratextual shifts in distribution practice shift the entire context of the story. Thus, the story of co-production and the distribution of co-produced films ultimately reflect the shifting cultural context in which each distribution company chooses to situate the film. The industrial processes become cultural practices.

Linguistically, the Chinese distribution company also completely transforms the film. Novelist Kazuo Ishiguro, who wrote the literary text on which *The White Countess* was based, was also the film's screenwriter. However, in the film's Mainland Chinese release, the film is only available in Mandarin with Chinese subtitles. The linguistic structure of the film's Mainland Chinese release is unique in its monolingualism. Films—particularly those by international directors—are rarely legally or illegally released in China without some form of their original language intact. Thus, the Chinese release literally overwrites the English-language discourse of the film. In this way, the practice of distributing co-produced films localizes the film while sharing an international story. Co-production operates like an unending soccer match in which the question of cultural origin moves back and forth rapidly between sides. But the ball is not the cultural identity of the film—it is the field and the players.

It is significant that Mainland Chinese version of *The White Countess* was released in the VCD format. To some extent, the Chinese nationalist overtones in the film's Mainland VCD release suggest an attempt to influence the domestic opinion of those individuals with less global exposure, the type who would seek to purchase a copy of a film. The question of technology in terms of the cultural framing of co-productions extends beyond this one production. As distribution channels diverge across countries, the cultural impact of film co-productions

changes. Is the work distributed via cell phone? Streaming video? Gray-market torrent download? Netflix? Legally purchased DVD? Does a film take on certain cultural dimensions by virtue of the way in which it is viewed? I would argue yes. The paratextual messages surrounding the co-production extend beyond the content surrounding the work to the mode of delivery.

Conclusion

Film co-production, from pre-production through distribution, is both a clearly defined and wholly changeable phenomenon. Indeed, it is the paradoxical coexistence of clearly defined rules and malleable practices that makes the study of this particular mode of cultural production particularly relevant. Indeed, analysis of co-production reveals the complexity not only of the changing cultural relationship between China and the United States, but also by extension, the dynamic mediascape of a globalizing China. By examining the cultural implications of the industrial processes behind Sino-U.S. co-production, it is evident that the nuanced negotiation of what constitutes a Chinese film is in flux. At the same time, that uncertainty related to issues of "Chinese-ness" brings into question our understanding of what Hollywood films are.

It is my hope that highlighting this cultural-industrial process reveals the complex provenance of filmmaking that SARFT deems "Chinese" and that audiences deem to be from "Hollywood." In fact, the anxieties on both sides of the Pacific about the purity of cultural production are well-founded. The growth of Hollywood co-productions has changed the types of capacity for filmmaking in the PRC. Distribution of films in Chinese cinema is creating an assault on the intellectual property of film studios in a dramatic and unstoppable way. Yet what we can see by analyzing film co-production is that although Hollywood studio films challenge the party-based structure of Chinese state-owned film groups, and less transparent filmmaking and distribution

regulations are threatening to American investors, the industries have already begun to overlap. Considerations of the Chinese film industry versus the Hollywood film industry are outmoded when faced with the fact that these separate global players have, in fact, been part of intimately overlapping systems of financing, production, and distribution for years and are poised to become only more intertwined.

Chapter 2

Film Co-Production in Shanghai: Understanding Local and Global Media Capitals

Why Shanghai?

In the world of Chinese film production, pundits, critics, producers, and historians regularly weigh in on the rise and fall of individual Chinese cities as sites of film production. Questions such as, "What will happen to the local film industry after Hong Kong returns to China?"; "What will happen to filmmaking in Beijing after Zhang Yimou defects to Hollywood?"; and "Is the Taiwan film industry still relevant?" circulate at conference panels, at film festivals, in the trade press, and in academic research.[17] With a few notable exceptions, most scholarship focuses on the ascendance or decline of individual centers of media production—particularly Hong Kong and Taiwan—rather than on the networks between cities (Fu, 2003; Yeh & Davis, 2005; Yeh & Davis, 2008). With Beijing as the "cultural capital" of Mainland China, Taipei as the center of filmmaking in Taiwan, and Hong Kong's robust tradition of both Cantonese and Mandarin language cinema, the Shanghai film industry has largely been excluded from extensive consideration about the globalization of Chinese film production. In this chapter, I argue that film production under globalization should be viewed as a network in China rather than a competition between centers. Moreover, within a networked system of production, Shanghai is an essential site that brokers production between Beijing and Hong Kong as well as between Mainland China and the West. In particular, urban branding of

[17] Examples of publications that discuss these questions include *Variety International*, the Shanghai International Film Festival guidebook, and Web sites such as Film Business Asia.

Shanghai, both intentional and unintentional, is essential to its role in the growth of China's co-production culture.

As scholars of media and culture, it is tempting to examine the circulation of film production practice in the context of the fields in which we feel most comfortable—by looking at the roles of artists and other culture workers in the creation of films. This chapter reinscribes the importance of Shanghai in the network of film production in contemporary China by addressing the essential intermediary role the city plays in the globalization of Chinese film production culture. My work is grounded in Sassen's (1991) examination of the role of the global city in the "work of producing and reproducing the organization and management of a global production system and a global marketplace for finance" (p. 1). At the same time, I look at how these characteristics of the global city connect inextricably to larger practices of urban branding. My reconsideration of the structure of the film industry in China places equal weight on the industrial concerns of film production in the contemporary period, acknowledging that as filmmaking is a cultural process, commercial film production is also beholden to a broad range of influences in the context of global investment that ultimately affect the shape of individual film industries.

The shift of looking at Shanghai and Beijing as inextricable partners in the growth of China's media industry allows Shanghai function as a node of production without diminishing Beijing's crown as the PRC "cultural capital." Both Mainland and Greater Chinese centers of film production have historically been closely interlinked. However, acknowledging the importance of a networked structure of cities in the Chinese film production context, rather than viewing urban film co-production promotion as a competitive endeavor, ultimately means making a radical shift in the structure of our historical understanding of Mainland Chinese

cultural production. A movement away from viewing infrastructure growth as a zero-sum game and instead viewing it as a complementary process requires a reframing of Mainland Chinese production relationships.

China's accession to the World Trade Organization has led to a restructuring of the Mainland film industry as well as a substantial influx of financial assets. Cultural geographer Allen Scott (2005) argued that cities that are the "foci of national culture and innovation" (p. 169) and the sites of "burgeoning cultural economy, particularly in the audio-visual industry" (p. 169) are positioned to play a continued role the development of cultural production. Thus, the notion of a narrowly defined cultural center, especially in the case of the rapidly developing media sector of Mainland China, can be expanded outward into the development of multiple production centers with different overall strengths.

The growth of production relationships between Shanghai and Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, and Shanghai and the United States underscores an important spatial economic shift that Scott alluded to in his discussion of foci of innovation. As Castells (2000; 2011) rightly argued, the space of places has been replaced by the space of flows, in which individual places remain significant, but the shift in agglomerations between these places ultimately is more significant than the spaces themselves. It may seem counterintuitive to write about a city (in this case, Shanghai) to underscore the shifting spatial flows of Chinese production culture. Yet to insert an additional node into the flow of production activity is to draw awareness to the importance of the cycle.

Shanghai's International Filmmaking History

Essential to this exploration of the importance of contemporary Shanghai's role as a global city in the internationalization of contemporary Chinese film production culture is the role

of Shanghai's historical infrastructure in its growth as an urban brand, and by extension, as a site for international film co-production. In order to reinscribe the role of Shanghai film co-production activity in the network of global cities later in this chapter, I will first look at Shanghai's historical place in the generation of global culture and how this bleeds into the contemporary role of the city.

Poshek Fu (2003) further highlights the importance of the city's extraterritoriality during the semicolonial period in its development of a more internationally-oriented Shanghai cinema. Similarly, Shanghai scholar Alexander Des Forges and others have located the city as a privileged space of "in-betweenness" between China and the West, a place where the China's modern global past and international present can converge (Des Forges, 2007). The city's continuous position as an international trading port as well as its role as a Chinese financial hub makes Shanghai a space unique among Mainland Chinese cities in terms of access to international capital and the historical flow of international influence. Shanghai's role as the home of the Mainland Chinese stock exchange, as well as much of the country's privatized financial infrastructure, puts the city at the hub of Chinese industrial development, even for industries that may not otherwise be based in the city. The dynamic between Beijing as the "cultural capital" of China and Shanghai as the city with the bulk of the country's private financial infrastructure creates a need for collaboration between the two cities in the film production process, particularly in productions that involve international financial transactions. Ultimately, the city's "in-betweenness" in the context of international financial transactions has also contributed to its role in contemporary film co-production that is heavily finance-based.

Shanghai's lineage as a site of international film production influences its contemporary production environment. Shanghai's major contemporary film studios were established in

parallel with the Beijing-based studios, but the preexisting film industry in Shanghai created a different type of studio from the beginning. In Beijing, the major film studios were established from virtually nothing following the creation of the PRC in 1949 (Y. Zhang & Xiao, 1998). These cultural institutions in Beijing came about due to a conscious choice by PRC central planners to relocate major cultural institutions to Beijing following the founding of the new republic. The work of the studios has historically focused on PRC nation-building projects. The existence of a history of commercial film co-production in Shanghai prior to 1949 facilitates a production environment that encourages private investment in the media industries.

The current incarnation of China's film studios outside of Shanghai emerged as part of a propaganda effort on the part of the PRC. Regional film studios, as well as the Beijing Film Studio (now the China National Film Studio) were part of the nation-building imperative following China's 1949 revolution (Y. Zhang & Xiao, 1998). The *gong, nong, bing* (worker, farmer, soldier) statue situated above the main gate of the original Beijing Film Studio underscored the political significance of media production infrastructure in the PRC. In contrast, the Shanghai Film Group is located in a building from the semicolonial period in the French concession. While both studios were initially funded by the central government, the infrastructure, particularly in Huairou, mirrors the structure of the revolutionary work unit.

Prior to 1949, Shanghai also played a role at the forefront of international collaboration in the Chinese film industry. Shanghai began as the home of international cinema in China. International film exhibition in China first occurred at Xu Garden (Xuyuan) in 1896, with the first exhibition of Lumiere films (Z. Zhang, 2005). As early as 1898, the Thomas Edison Company sent a cameraperson to Shanghai to shoot international documentaries entitled *Shanghai Jingcha* (上海警察) and *Shanghai Jieying* (上海街景) (Wu, 1999). In 1908, an Italian

director with the Chinese name of Qiaomin Laolo went to Shanghai to shoot a series of documentary films (Wu, 1999). In the October 13, 1909, edition of Shanghai's *Xinwen Bao*, a Euro-American businessman placed an ad for a "specialized seller of exhibition equipment, as well as advertising services" (Wu, 1999). Film production collaboration with foreign filmmakers existed as early as 1909. The relationship between media production and industry in Shanghai predates the Republican era.

Shanghai's role as a site of international media collaboration also parallels a history of successful international technology transfer, essential for the growth of technology-based industries such as media. Foreign corporations mediated the transfer of industrial technology from the United States to China as early as the 1910s (Bramsen, 2001). In 1914, the first Edison synchronized-sound film made its way to be exhibited in Shanghai (Bramsen). What we see from the earliest stages of film production and exhibition in Shanghai is the presence of a Euro-American industrial culture that both shaped and was shaped by the urban culture of Shanghai.

Specific periods of international influence had a long-term impact on the media production landscape of the city. Shanghai's role as a site of international film production activity, particularly during the Republican era, is a well-documented phenomenon (Fu, 2003; Z. Zhang, 2005). During the Republican era, in which large semicolonial presences in American, French, British, and Japanese settlements created a space where international cultures were forced into close proximity with one another, Shanghai experienced a cinematic golden age (Fu; Z. Zhang). American film producers have been involved in filmmaking in Shanghai since the 1910s (Lu, 1997). During the Sino-Japanese war, the city also hosted extensive international co-production activity on behalf of Japanese colonizers. The specific semicolonial condition of international financial growth in the concessions and the rise of forced film co-production

activity with the Japanese during the period leading up to and during the Sino-Japanese War created an interesting set of historical circumstances for examining film co-production in Shanghai. The global economic influence of the semicolonial period created a precedent for international collaboration within the Shanghai film industry.

Though Shanghai's Republican-era cinema reached its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s, the narratives of contemporary film co-productions in Shanghai suggest that the past remains significant to the practice of international film co-production. Half of film co-productions are set in present-day or near-future Shanghai; the other half explicitly reference the cultural conditions of Republican Shanghai in general and the foreign presence in Shanghai in particular. On one hand, this can be viewed as part of a pragmatic strategy to incorporate Euro-American stars into a China-based production; on the other hand, the choice of time period reveals the interplay between contemporary and historical cultures of production.

With approximately half of Shanghai co-productions depicting the period from the rise of the Nationalist movement in China to the period of Japanese occupation in Shanghai, Shanghai's history is being reinscribed onto the industrial process. Table 2 highlights the diegetic year of four recent film co-productions in order to highlight the recent interest in Republican-era narratives for film co-productions. Shanghai's historical international media industries created a vast selection of images of the city, which in turn facilitate contemporary co-production by providing objects for commercial reproduction.

Table 2

Film	*The Painted Veil*	*The White Countess*	*The Mummy 3*	*Lust, Caution*
Diegetic Year	Shanghai 1925	Shanghai 1937	Shanghai 1946	Shanghai 1942

In addition to returning to Chinese Republican-era production spaces, several of the film co-productions shot in Shanghai also look back on the Republican period in their narratives, a time when Shanghai held a similar position in the context of international banking in China. In 1937—in the midst of the period examined by *The Painted Veil, The White Countess*, and *Lust, Caution*—Shanghai accounted for 79.2% of all foreign banking capital, 81.2% of all foreign investment in commerce and import-export trade, 67.1% of foreign industrial investment, and 76.8% of foreign real estate investment (Broeze, 1989). What we can see from the foreign investment data of the Republican era is a correlation between historical foreign direct investment and investment in international film co-productions about that period. Co-production, in addition to being a mode of creative production, is also a form of foreign direct investment. Thus, an important link emerges between foreign economic investment prior to the establishment of the PRC and latter-day direct investment. The connection between Republican-era foreign direct investment and contemporary foreign investment is established thematically through the content of several major co-productions. The relationship between Republican-era and contemporary foreign investment further highlights the characteristics of Shanghai as a filmmaking environment, giving it a unique place in a network of film production in Mainland China.

The contemporary city of Shanghai offers resources that meet the needs of both Chinese and international production companies. *The White Countess*, *The Mummy 3,* and *Lust, Caution* all use the space of Shanghai's late Republican period as the foundation of their narratives. The transnational presence within the historical moment of Shanghai's late Republican period, from the presence of foreign concessions in the city to the Sino-Japanese War, and the city's historical and architectural context offer a far broader range of filmmaking possibilities than any other city

on the Chinese Mainland. W. Somerset Maugham's novel *The Painted Veil* is set in Hong Kong, while the 2006 film adaptation is set in Shanghai. Using 1925 was a choice on the part of the filmmakers to create a "Chinese" environment that, according to their assessment, "no longer existed in Hong Kong [in 2006]" (Levy, n.d.). Yet, at the same time, the space of Shanghai also acted as a stand-in for the depiction of London within the film (Levy). Thus, the shooting space of Shanghai functioned as both a national and international space for the purposes of *The Painted Veil*. This underscores the main argument for Shanghai's rise as a space of international co-production.

In the contemporary period, echoing the historical structures in place, Shanghai led the privatization of state-owned film groups. The Shanghai Media Group partially privatized during the second part of 2009 (Juan, 2010). By taking a role on the forefront of privatization, the Shanghai Media Group also made the choice to facilitate partnerships with private Euro-American film studios. Thus, Shanghai's unique position in the sphere of Chinese film co-production is facilitated by both the city's historical role as a filmmaking space and its colonial historical significance. The ways in which the filmmaking histories of Beijing and Shanghai differ make each city an important part of the contemporary filmmaking landscape.

The contemporary co-production environment in Shanghai provides an optimal laboratory for exploring the cultural-industrial dynamics of film co-production because the city has historically held a more prominent role in the industrial rise of China than in post-1949 media production.[18] Despite being a historical force in international media production in China, the city has been less prominent than Beijing in the post-1949 growth of the Chinese film

[18] Shanghai was, however, the undisputed center of Mainland Chinese media production prior to 1949. For excellent discussions of this topic, see Poshek Fu's *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong: The Politics of Chinese Cinemas*, John Lent's *Animation in Asia and the Pacific*, Vivian Shen's *The Origins of Left-Wing Cinema in China: 1932-1937*, Yingjin Zhang's *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai: 1922-1943*, and Zhang Zhen's *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema 1896-1937*.

industry. However, following China's accession to the WTO, Shanghai became a more appealing destination for Euro-American film co-production because of its comparatively liberal, more pro-business environment. The blend of cultural and industrial production incentives in the Shanghai film industry underscores the different media production resources offered by different Mainland Chinese cities, as well as the importance of growing production networks between cities.

Networks and Boundaries

The case of Shanghai reveals that domestic and international media production in Mainland China need to be considered in conjunction with one another as part of a multi-city network—as part of a space of flows, rather than as one competing monolithic urban entity under the rubric of "Chinese cinema." Shanghai's role in the world of film co-production creates an important antipode to the highly centralized state-sponsored film production activities found in Beijing. Both the perception of international film production in Shanghai and the actual conditions differ from the conditions of film production (largely domestic) in Beijing. The comparison between the rise of film co-production in Shanghai and the growth of domestic film production in Beijing informs the shifting tides of the media industries of different cities in the Greater China region. Examining the rise of Shanghai as a space of film co-production in China in relation to the growth of Beijing as a site for domestic film production complicates the idea that film production in China moves between Beijing, Hong Kong, and Taipei. Instead, the notion of filmmaking "centers" must be tempered by an appreciation for flows between different urban film industries. While film studios in Beijing and Shanghai continue to make domestic and international films, the cities offer different types of resources for international film co-

production. Shanghai's more liberal, Westernized business and policy environment supports international production, particularly for Euro-American film producers.

The two cities bring different types of advantages to the Chinese media industries. Whereas Beijing has the bulk of China's centers for film training as well as several of its largest studios, the level of political control over film production due to proximity to Chinese central government agencies like the State Administration of Film and Television (SARFT) makes filming of slightly controversial content more difficult in Beijing. In contrast, the development of urban capital and media networks in Shanghai has supported the parallel rise of contemporary film co-production in Shanghai. In addition to market growth, the places and organizations that make up the world of Shanghai filmmaking also play an important role in the development of production relationships between the cities, with particular value to the development of film co-production.

Examining international film production in Mainland China as a space of flows rather than as a Beijing-dominated phenomenon also forces us to resituate our understanding of the relationship between Chinese film centers and other urban media production centers such as Hollywood. Rather than existing as merely the connection between monolithic constructs like "Hollywood" and "Beijing," the structure of film production networks between China and the United States is substantially more fluid than a multipolar system. An exploration of Mainland Chinese film co- production practice as a web expands our perspective on film production to consider a world in which the film studios of individual cities collaborate according to the strengths of each site of production, rather than limiting Mainland China's production to the supposed cultural center of Beijing.

Examining the space of film co-production connects to an interesting trend in the world of film co-production globally: the division of labor between cities focusing on domestic versus international film production. Within the context of Canadian film production, the distinction already exists. Canadian domestic film production is primarily based in Toronto, whereas Canadian-U.S. film co-productions are much more prevalent in Vancouver (Scott & Pope, 2007). I argue that a similar dynamic is emerging within the Chinese context in that Chinese media production is developing two different centers of production: one in Beijing that focuses on domestic and Asian production and one in Shanghai that focuses on Euro-American co-productions.

Shanghai: Production Networks, Media Networks

The rise of film co-production in Shanghai following China's accession to the WTO is the story of a re-emerging global city as much as the story of a growing film co-production enterprise. It is the story of Shanghai's changing cultural landscape as shaped by the economic forces of trade liberalization and networks of industrial production. Shin, Timberlake (2000), and others have highlighted the movement of auto products from production to distribution through consumption as part of a network of regional urban hubs during the 1990s. The networks put in place between Asia and the United States to take advantage of economies of scale for the production of engineered products facilitated a network of businesspeople and trade officials versed in the practice of trans-Pacific production and distribution. Following China's accession to the WTO, the media industries opened to foreign joint-venture activity. WTO liberalization in China created a unique set of circumstances in which the cities with the most developed trans-Pacific business networks were more poised to take advantage of shifts in the media industries than cities with the most developed domestic capacity. Shanghai's historical role as a center for

Chinese-international film production in conjunction with the city's place on the forefront of economic liberalization in China created a unique opportunity for the city to develop as a site for film co-production.

While the actual degree to which Shanghai is currently a "global city" is up for debate, the city has leverage over a substantially larger population than regional hubs in Europe or Latin America due to the sheer scope of the Chinese population. With its combination of regional power, domestic importance, and global brand, the city has strategic value for Euro-American co-productions seeking to enter the Chinese market on their own, as well as in relation to the world of film production in Beijing. The increasingly liberal and geographically fluid production context of Mainland China demands that scholars cultivate a more nuanced understanding of the building blocks of the production network beyond centralized studio activity in Beijing. This exploration of film co-production in Shanghai is one step toward building our understanding of the complex contemporary Mainland Chinese network of industrial production.

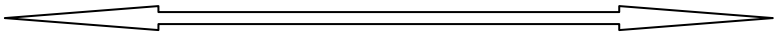
Production Versus Co-Production

I locate Chinese film production and film co-production as two separate yet overlapping phenomena as part of my project to more accurately deconstruct the spaces of flows in the contemporary Chinese film industry. To make the distinction clearer, it will first be helpful to review some definitions. Domestic Chinese film production refers to films that use entirely Mainland Chinese talent and resources, or talent based in Mainland China. Film co-production in the Sino-U.S. context refers to projects that employ industrial collaboration formally approved by the China Film Co-production Corporation. In the middle of the continuum are foreign-directed local productions[19]; films made almost entirely with Chinese talent and infrastructure,

[19] An example of this type of film is Robert Vicencio's *Distance Runners* (2009).

but funded by an outside entity, like Disney[20]; and Chinese funded-films with prominent American talent[21]. Also located in the space between domestic film production and official co-production is the more informal practice of filmmaking collaboration, in which transnational film workers take part in the filmmaking process. Filmmaking collaborations can take almost as many forms as can be conceived. Combinations include unofficially co-produced and co-funded projects and projects with talent from multiple countries. Table 3 highlights the relationship between different modes of production within the domestic Chinese context.

Table 3

Domestic					International
Domestic Production	Local Production	Film Collaboration	Film Co-Production	Assisted Production	Foreign Production

By distinguishing between domestic film production and film co-production in China when analyzing filmmaking in Mainland China, it is possible to understand the importance of the production network existing within Mainland China. Analysis of film co-production and domestic production as separate entities under the rubric of "film production in Mainland China" shifts the importance of Shanghai in the Chinese film industry from being an under-considered space to a global gateway operating in conjunction with domestic film producers in Beijing. However, the importance of Shanghai as a filmmaking space is not limited solely to the reality of the city's conditions for film production. Perception of the city as an international filmmaking space, particularly in contrast to Beijing, is equally important.

[20] For examples of this type of filmmaking, see Disney's *The Magic Gourd* and *High School Musical: China.*

[21] See Dayyan Eng's *Inseparable* (2001).

Yet, even Beijing- and Shanghai-based co-productions differ. An excellent example of this is the most recent iteration of *The Karate Kid* (2010)—titled *The Kung Fu Kid* internationally—a $40 million co-production between the China Film Group and Sony (Horn, 2010). Despite an international cast, the film is ultimately about an American trying to adapt to life in a very Chinese space, rather than a highly international space. All of the Shanghai films listed above, including the Chinese-language film *Lust, Caution*, deal explicitly with a foreign colonial presence on Chinese soil rather than foreigners attempting to become part of Chinese society writ large. Moreover, the contemporary films shot in China also largely deal with the contemporary foreign expatriate presence in China. What we can see in film co-productions based in Shanghai from a thematic perspective is a complicated symbiosis. The city of Shanghai offers spaces for narratives that focus on a Euro-American presence. The city's former colonial presence, however historically problematic, has left a legacy of both internationally influenced spaces and narrative material unlike that available in other major Chinese cities.

While it is possible to categorize all Chinese-language films shot in the Mainland from the same point of origin, the different industrial cultures that produce Mainland Chinese domestic productions and film co-productions makes it incumbent upon us to distinguish the different types of international influence when discussing individual films. Whereas scholars like Chris Berry and others have sought to parse the transnational identity of films such as the Miramax-produced-*Hero* (2002) by examining the film's narrative content, I would instead like to propose using a film's industrial pedigree as a way in which to understand it as a cultural product (Berry & Farquhar, 2006). Though SARFT distribution guidelines treat film co-productions and domestic productions the same way, by highlighting their distinctness, it is possible to more fully appreciate the nuances of contemporary Chinese industrial film co-

production. In addition to structuring our understanding of filmmaking in China according to linguistic or cultural arguments, it is crucial to examine the industrial logic of film production practice within the rigorous political context of film co-production in China. The subtle bifurcation of the Chinese film production industry into spaces that emphasize domestic film production or international film co-production has important implications for the role of Chinese spaces of film production within the global context. Following the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Expo Shanghai, the internationalization of media production in China has become inextricably tied to large-scale government policy initiatives. These massive projects demanded the development of high-level international production infrastructure in conjunction with broad-based collaboration between vertically integrated international media outlets and laterally integrated privatizing state-owned enterprises. Internationalization of media production became national policy. The "media capitals" model is a valuable way to understand the relationship between multiple cultural capitals of media production. However, within the huge scope of the world of Chinese media production, I would argue that there is room for a network of media production capitals within the same country. In Mainland China, both Beijing and Shanghai have an important role to play in the execution of international media projects.

Chinese film production is subtly dividing into an industry that provides more support for domestic film production (Beijing) and a city that provides more support for international film co-production (Shanghai). In discussions with many Chinese filmmakers, many of whom are based in Beijing, the notion that Shanghai should be a more important space for film co-production than Beijing is met with disdain and disbelief. Because Beijing has held the role of the country's "cultural center," to argue the importance of the dispersal of media production activity borders on heretical. For others filmmakers, shooting a co-production (though not a

necessarily a domestic production) in Shanghai offered the most direct route toward making a film with minimal restrictions and maximum financial support (personal communication with X. Zheng, June 2010; Xun, 2009). Yet when examining the Euro-American films produced in China over the past 10 years, more have been shot in Shanghai than in Beijing. Chinese film co-production relies on characteristics that are particularly prevalent in Shanghai: a more liberal financial environment, more transparent business processes, and more distance from central government demands. This is obviously a relative comparison within the Chinese Mainland context. However, in the case of film co-productions, Shanghai's comparatively liberal business environment is a significant advantage.

Shanghai, the Co-Production Media Capital

While the impulse in studies of Mainland Chinese cinema is to focus on Beijing as the country's "cultural capital," the role played by film co-production in Shanghai following China's WTO accession is necessary to have a complete picture of the landscape of post-WTO-accession Chinese cinema. Media scholar Michael Curtin (2007) has argued that Shanghai, along with Beijing, is a "fourth-tier" media capital. Rather than attempt to reclassify the "tier" of Shanghai within the world of media capitals, I argue that the role of Chinese cities in the tier system is in a state of flux due to the large-scale internationalization of the Chinese media industry. Specifically, the structure of media capitals in China is shifting into spaces of domestic-focused film production in Beijing and international-focused film production in Shanghai, relying on the flow between cities rather than on one particular space. In the contemporary period, regional distinctions are emerging that tie Beijing more closely to government-sponsored film production and allow Shanghai to have a more private sector-oriented film production sector. With increased access to the Mainland Chinese market by international investors and media

production companies, the Beijing-centered world of Chinese film production has undergone a shift. While the center of domestic film production remains in Beijing, Euro-American film co-production has taken root in Shanghai.

The financial considerations involved in the development of media capitals are an important part of understanding the shifting roles of Beijing and Shanghai within the global order of urban production spaces. Part of Curtin's (2007) argument about media capitals also focuses on the agglomeration of financial capital at the site of production. Shanghai's unique position as the center of financial markets in China allows for a different form of international capital agglomeration than in Beijing. Shanghai offers a more effective space for incubating co-productions by also offering a more liberal financial services environment. In contrast, the bulk of domestic production in Beijing relies heavily on financing from state-owned film groups. Understanding the production relationship between Beijing and Shanghai with regard to domestic and international productions is crucial for understanding the larger network of international media capitals.

Shanghai performs as a media capital by the ways in which international cultures of media production interact with government entities and domestic film workers during the film co-production process. Shanghai's role as the "international" face of Chinese film production continues to emerge through the types of films that are shot in Shanghai. A recent example includes *Shanghai, I Love You*, an international omnibus collaboration. The film was shot in Shanghai and is part of a "cities of love" series. The series is shot across several international media capitals. The first in the series is *Paris, J'taime,* followed by *New York, I Love You*, as well as an additional film that will be shot in Tel Aviv. The presence of Shanghai in an

international omnibus urban film series is a telling reflection of both the filmmaking environment in the city and the international perception of the city.

The role of individual cities within the context of international media production networks is the subject of constant debate due to the increasing flow between sites of production. While much of the language used to discuss networks of regional media production sites refers to regional media capitals such as Cairo, Paris, and Seoul, I argue that Shanghai simultaneously acts as a domestic, regional, and international center of production because of the size and scope of the Mainland Chinese market. In other words, although Shanghai's regional influence as a media production center is less substantial than other cities in Asia, its role as an international gateway to film co-production in one of the largest media markets in the world makes it uniquely important both in the present and in consideration of the rapid development of infrastructure for film production and distribution in Mainland China.

Indeed, the relationship between different urban film co-production sites shifts continuously according to the financial, political, and creative situations of each city, as well as the pathways between them. To engage in analysis of film production in Shanghai expands our perspective on the nature of the Chinese film industry. Instead of focusing solely on the activities of the center, it is possible to look at how important sites outside of Beijing feed into the development of the Mainland film industry.

Two types of industrial infrastructure development in Shanghai facilitate the growth of film co-production activity in the city: the development of financial networks and the privatization of film studio space. Increases in international capital for not only the media industry but also other industries in Shanghai creates a situation in which the most obvious place to shoot large international productions from the perspective of a domestic producer (Beijing)

differs from the most obvious place to shoot a film production for a Euro-American producer (Shanghai). The combined growth of sophisticated financial services practices along with the development of new spaces for film production make Shanghai an important part of the urban network of film co-production, thus debunking the notion that film production in China must be centered in the capital.

One of the main reasons for the disregard of Shanghai as an important space for film co-production boils down to the question of whether co-production with European and American companies helps or damages the domestic film production. Discussion surrounding the rise of film co-production in Shanghai runs in opposition to the training and disposition of many filmmakers in Beijing—namely, that film production in China is a commercial transaction and will grow according to the demands and incentives of private industry. With full respect given to the filmmaking community in Beijing, it is important to also look at filmmaking in China as a privatizing industrial process. Film studios and regulators offer greater flexibility for international filmmakers in Shanghai than in Beijing, a fact that is currently shifting the structure of film production practice in China.

Shanghai, the Filmmaking Brand

In a publicly released memo from August 3, 2009, the Shanghai city government made a well-publicized move to articulate the city's "brand"[22] (Shanghai Zhiliang Jishu Jiandu Ju, 2009) as a way to encourage investment in the city. Specifically, the memo referred to "Shanghai brand management methods"[23] (Shanghai Zhiliang Jishu Jiandu Ju), highlighting an awareness of the importance of the city's global positioning at the highest levels of city government. The government's awareness of Shanghai's *mingpai*—its nameplate or brand—underscores the close

[22] 名牌

[23] 上海名牌管理办法

relationship between the city government, the city's economic growth, and the rise of international investment by image-producing industries in the city. While the development of the city's brand is important within the context of investment promotion, it is particularly significant for the international development of the media industries within the city for two key reasons. First, global awareness of the city makes it a more appealing locale for global stories. Second, familiarity with the brand of the city on the part of Euro-American producers has the potential to act as a surrogate for knowledge of actual local market conditions.

Scholars have discussed the importance of branding cities for encouraging global investment, tourism, and media development, demonstrating that media production has an impact on the global profile of a city beyond direct investment and capacity building. Stephanie Donald's work on Shanghai as a "branded city" argues that the cultural perception and re-creation of a given urban space, particularly through tourism pamphlets, is significant in terms of how industries deploy those spaces and how consumers consume those spaces (Donald & Gammack, 2007). Donald's argument about the use of Shanghai films to brand the city as a destination for tourism is significant both in terms of how the circulation of images encourages foreign travelers to come to the city and how it encourages the replication of images of the city through media production. The same image-based practice used to encourage tourism in the city also supports the growth of international industrial investment in general and film co-production in particular.

Marketing images of the city as an international space encourages both tourism and international investment for a broad range of industries. Circulating specific images of the city through general trade-promotion activities like the World Expo or specific international-film-production-promotion activities such as the Shanghai International Film Festival promote the

city on multiple levels: as a tourist destination, a space for economic production, and a site for motion picture production. By "selling" the space of the city, the Shanghai city government and the Shanghai Film Group help to create an alternative destination for film co-production for those unfamiliar with the preexisting trends for production within the Chinese film industry.

While Donald and Gammack's (2007) discussion of the Shanghai city brand focuses more on tourism, the implications of her ideas also apply to the field of film co-production. The question of the city as brand cuts to the quick of the shifting production relationship between Beijing and Shanghai. Shanghai has come much more quickly and effortlessly to the admittedly market-driven practice of actively marketing the city globally as a place for investment. This move has important implications beyond the financial industry. Through the shifting dynamics in the Chinese film production process, it becomes easier to understand how the economic growth tactics of individual cities—in particular, how the cities market their economic growth—has a strong impact on the growth of film co-production as well as on film production relationships within the region.

Donald's tourism pamphlets and the Shanghai city government brand communiqué are important forms of city branding that are referred to by scholars (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010). But direct government communication is only part of the portfolio of factors that, due to economic and historical considerations, elevate Shanghai's role in Chinese media industries beyond the city's role as a shooting site. Kavaratzis (2004) highlights the combination of functional and symbolic roles in the practice of urban branding. Specifically, he highlights four different unintentional (yet essential) forms of city brand communication (Kavaratzis). These include Landscape Strategies (in particular, architecture and heritage management), Infrastructure Projects, Organizational Structure (including public-private partnerships), and City

Behavior (including strategy, financial incentives, quality of services, and types of events organized). Examining communications such as city-sponsored tourism pamphlets is a key part of the story in terms of the reinscription of Shanghai as an important site for international Chinese media production. My work extends Donald's analysis by focusing also on other branding practices that support the circulation of images of the city to investors and ultimately, to consumers.

City branding contributes to the development of international industry in general, but it is particularly significant in image-producing industries. Efforts to brand the city of Shanghai, as exemplified by the Expo 2010 Shanghai, highlight the global role played by the city in the network of media production about China.[24] Although international literature (for example) produced for and about the Expo differs dramatically in form from actual film co-productions, the calculated dissemination of the city's international brand circulates a new series of images about the city—images that have the potential to influence future international media production.

Although the political and economic will to develop an urban brand are the most significant factors in the international cultivation of the city's mingpai, the city also has substantial resources available to promote. At the crux of encouraging international film co-production in Shanghai is the city's international image. "Shanghai" evokes dramatic associations, both historically and in the contemporary period (Wasserstrom, 2009; Yatsko, 2001; Gamble, 2003; See, 2010; C. V. Yeh, 2006); L. O. Lee, 1999; Gandelsonas, Abbas, & Boyer, 2002). The unique character of Shanghai life attracted the attention of writers and filmmakers during Shanghai's semicolonial period and the city's Republican era due to the city's international character and modernity. Shanghai's historical heritage as a center of cultural

[24] While not examining the issue of the city "brand" directly, Greg Elmer (2008) identifies the relationship between film location scouting and world's fairs in an examination of the annual Santa Monica AFCI *Locations* trade show.

production left behind important infrastructure for the development of contemporary film co-production. At the same time, the city's contemporary global image also plays a role in the post-WTO co-production scene, which is split almost evenly between two kinds of images: those of the Republican and semicolonial period, which represented the height of early Shanghai filmmaking, and those of the city's overwhelmingly contemporary urban spaces.[25]

Because Shanghai has been more successful than Beijing in cultivating an international brand, it has also attracted a greater plurality of Chinese film co-productions with Euro-American companies. The growth of Shanghai's international mingpai is particularly important for understanding the co-production process due to its uniqueness within the context of Mainland Chinese media industries. Domestic Chinese film policy makers heavily underestimate the importance of a city's brand (La, 2007). Whereas Chinese filmmakers have a concrete understanding of how individual film studios function in domestic film production, in the context of film co-production, foreign filmmakers often have less access to concrete information because of a lack of industry transparency, a lack of research, or both. I argue that international film co-production choices rely on factors such as a city's international brand, and access to different types of information results in a different decision-making process for domestic and international filmmakers.

Urban Branding and the Spaces of the City

The re-creation of Shanghai's Republican era on screen has been occurring in a city whose development is being guided by a 21-year "Master Plan of Shanghai," incorporating the city's economy, finances, and trade (Burtynsky, Steven L. Newman Real Estate Institute, & Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2006). Clearly communicated city priorities for financial and

[25] Example of Republican-era-set Shanghai production: *The Mummy 3*; example of semicolonial-period-set Shanghai production: *The White Countess;* examples of contemporary- or near-future-set Shanghai productions: *Ultraviolet*, *Code 46*, *Shanghai Kiss, Shanghai Red, Mission: Impossible III.*

economic growth form an important baseline for co-production investors as a mode of transmitting information about the city's organizational structure. In this manner, city government branding is closely and consciously linked to industrial growth across all sectors, including media.

Other particularly significant phenomena are the landscape strategies for urban brand growth. Several Shanghai urban architectural features figure prominently in many of the contemporary Chinese film co-productions. The intriguing blend of real, re-created, and imagined space evokes the city's contemporary architectural context as well as the well-documented fascination with the historical spaces of the Shanghai built environment. I will highlight the role of several key filmmaking spaces emerging from the intersection of the city's built environment and the constructed world of the film set. The key spaces of contemporary Sino-U.S. film co-production are both radically disparate in terms of both the time period the site evokes and the place each site occupies on the continuum between reality and imagination. Yet the films also exhibit an intriguing consistency in their use of these seemingly disparate sites.

Oriental Pearl Tower

One of the most iconic images of the contemporary city of Shanghai is featured prominently in several of the major co-productions and assisted productions shot in the city in the post-WTO period: the city's Oriental Pearl Tower. Completed in 1995, six years prior to China's accession to the WTO, amid the commercial building frenzy in Shanghai's Pudong district, the Oriental Pearl Tower has been a mainstay of the city's skyline. Moreover, the tower was the first major structure in Pudong district, underscoring its role as an anchor for the district's development. In addition to appearing prominently in both domestic and co-produced films, the Oriental Pearl Tower is also a space for transmitting media discourse on its own; the

tower was originally built to transmit television signals, and the interior space of the tower converges into an arts and entertainment complex. Thus, the tower occupies a prominent space in the creation of media, transmits communication signals, and serves as a space for the circulation of media among consumers. As one of the major images of Shanghai, the Oriental Pearl Tower evokes a contemporary Chinese life that is unique to the city. Images of the tower serve as a brand image that connects other image-producing sites in a network of contemporary media production.

Within the co-production context, the Oriental Pearl Tower has taken on multiple roles, most of which focus on the representation of an evil, hypercorporate near future. A sweeping panorama of the Oriental Pearl Tower serves as an establishing shot for the lair of corporate villain Owen Davian (Philip Seymour Hoffman) in the assisted production of J.J. Abrams's *Mission: Impossible III* (2006). The tower also plays a prominent role in establishing the Shanghai of Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003), a dystopic near-future narrative about a world of genetically based precognition. *Code 46* uses Shanghai in general and the Oriental Pearl Tower in particular as a stand-in for a near-future world where corporations and technology join together to undermine human autonomy. A third example is the Oriental Pearl Tower of Kurt Wimmer's *Ultraviolet* (2006), in which the tower is woven with CGI into another near-future world—this time, one populated by proto-vampires called hemophages. In all three contexts, the cinematic landscape transforms the architecture of the Oriental Pearl Tower in Shanghai into one possible near-future reality. One can even view the redeployment of one of Shanghai's most iconic buildings as an attempt by Euro-American filmmakers to postulate their own version of Shanghai's emergent "alternative modernity." Through the process of Shanghai co-production,

the built spaces of the city's architecture become part of a larger cultural consciousness about the city's present and future.

Concession Spaces

Historical spaces from the French Concession, sites of former foreign investment, take the stage again as part of the promotion of Shanghai's brand. However, in the post-WTO accession iteration of concession image production, filmmakers must shoot around contemporary foreign direct investment in order to create "authentic" images of the prior era. Examples of this phenomenon include Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* and Stephen Chow's *Kung Fu Hustle*, both co-productions that deployed French concession streets to represent Republican-era Shanghai. The films were shot in Huashan Lu, Fuxing Lu, and Shinan Lu, all sites of substantial contemporary foreign direct investment that capitalize on a neo-concession chic through restored lane houses, old Shanghai-themed lounges, and spaces for purchasing reproduced artifacts of Republican-era Shanghai life. Ultimately, the deployment of urban heritage programs is part of a positive feedback loop for developing the city's brand through the circulation of images.

Nanjing Xi Lu Set

A less common landscape strategy for branding is the re-creation of an imagined cityscape. Beyond the deployment of spaces in the city's daily built environment, the branding process also incorporates the use of a rebuilt set of Shanghai located at the Shanghai Film Studios. Ultimately, we can see that these branded urban spaces take on a central role in later co-productions. The use of concession streets on screen creates a context in which actual contemporary commercial reinterpretations of the period of foreign control in Shanghai are shot in spaces with extensive foreign capital interests. By contrast, Nanjing Xi Lu is a construct of historical images and the imagined space of the concession area. The Shanghai Film Studios has

a mock-up of Republican era-Shanghai, specifically the iconic road Nanjing Xi Lu, a main thoroughfare that exists to this day as a space for commercial exchange. What is particularly intriguing about the Nanjing Xi Lu space is the fact that, unlike American set spaces, the space itself grows and changes along with different co-productions. Thus, the iconic historical space within the studio-built environment shifts with the influence of international co-production activity, which intertwines urban development, urban branding, and film co-production in Shanghai.

By deploying built studio space, the film co-production process also builds the urban brand. The most notable examples include Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* (2007) and Rob Cohen's *The Mummy 3* (2008). Both used the Shanghai Film Studios' Nanjing Xi Lu space, modifying the iconic historical space of Shanghai to be circulated as a Western co-production-mediated version of a Chinese historical space. Thus, the co-production process has important implications not only economically, but also culturally. By creating film co-productions that deal with both Republican-era history and the space of contemporary Shanghai, American media companies are able to generate and distribute images of both iconic historical periods and the contemporary moment. However, unlike the images generated by contemporary Chinese film directors who have eschewed working within the American studio system, the co-produced images circulate extensively to huge numbers of viewers around the world. Even the lone film co-production in this study directed by Ang Lee, who was born and raised in Taiwan, was adapted for the screen by James Schamus, an American writer and producer. Thus, while the incentive to produce a co-production is largely economic, the outcome has important cultural implications.

Lounge spaces

Though Kavaratzis (2004) focuses on existing physical landscapes in his discussion of the communication of an urban brand, I argue that in the case of Shanghai, there is at least one imagined space that is equally important to co-production branding. Film scholar Vivian Sobchack (1998) has written about the chronotope of the "lounge" on screen within the context of American post-World War II film noir. While distinct from the American film noir tradition, the role of lounge space in Shanghai films of the Republican era evokes many anxieties similar to those highlighted by Sobchack in her work on film noir. Films such as Yuan Muzhi's *Dushi Fengguang* (1935) and Wu Yonggang's *Xin Nvxing* (1934) evoke anxiety surrounding shifting social structures, the changing place of the woman in the home, and the perceived rise of an unwholesome urban environment (Browne). We see the imagined place of the lounge space on screen as a consistent chronotope within Republican-era Shanghai film. Yet within the context of film co-productions set in the diegetic world of both the Republican era and a dystopian near-future space, the films evoke the lounge spaces of Republican-era Shanghai cinema. The imagined space of the Republican-era lounge acts as a brand image that moves from its place of origin within the context of Shanghai Republican-era film production to the space of contemporary film co-production.

What is particularly significant about the revisiting of the lounge space within post-WTO era Shanghai film co-productions is that the space acts out the deterioration of the city's social fabric. Indeed, from Han Banqing's *Haishanghua Liezhuan*[26] to contemporary literature by writers such as Wei Hui and Mian Mian, the lounge space functions as a space of contending social values. Along these same lines, it is also a space of contention between people of different nationalities. The lounge space is open to all, accessible regardless of language or national

[26] *海上海上花列傳*

origin, grounded in the transnational values of alcohol and sex. For example, in James Ivory's *The White Countess*, Matsuda, one of the major architects of the Japanese invasion of Shanghai, frequents The White Countess, the name of the lounge from which the film derives its name. Both Todd Jackson (Ralph Fiennes), the bar's proprietor, and Matsuda (Hiroyuki Sanada) refer to the lounge as a sacred space outside of the realm of international politics. As in the case of Sobchack's film noir examples, the lounge is a space separate from regular time and space. In the context of *The White Countess,* the lounge is a separate international world within the narrative. However, the borderlessness of lounge space is not limited to the world within the film. Lounges also operate as meeting spaces for international cultural labor, such as film crews on co-productions. Thus, the film re-creates a space on screen much like the spaces connected to the film's own creation.

The replication of the borderless lounge space is not limited to the spaces of Republican-era Shanghai. Co-productions located in the contemporary period also deploy the lounge space as a site of international collaboration. In *Code 46*, for example, the space of the lounge exists as a point of transfer for extralegal documents called *papeles* that allow people to travel outside of their government-restricted personal radii in order to follow their dreams. In both cases, the lounge is both an international and a supra-national space.

The use of lounge space comments on the cross-cultural dynamic between different industrial practices. The imagined space of the lounge on screen is significant to the film co-production process. In addition to a space of international interaction on screen in the films themselves, the lounge space also serves as a point of supra-national community building between members of the film crew.

From the everyday fixtures of the city, to built environments for film production, to the imagined spaces of urban life, the spaces of Shanghai all work as an active part of the film co-production process. Thus, three different iconic spaces of Shanghai filmmaking—the urban branding of the Oriental Pearl Tower, the filmmaking infrastructure development of the Shanghai Film Studios' Nanjing Xi Lu space, and the reconstruction of imagined spaces of film co-production on screen—link the various urban imaginations of Shanghai.

The branding of the Shanghai region as a global city through its infrastructure and landscape strategies draws largely upon existing urban planning and government infrastructure from the public sector. However, in conjunction with public sector branding, important public-private brand infrastructure is growing in parallel. The following sections will examine the intersection between urban and corporate branding practices that ultimately contribute to the importance of Shanghai as a place to mediate between domestic and international production in the network of Greater Chinese media capitals.

Shanghai Film Co-Production Infrastructure, Part 1: Branding Spaces

Co-production in Shanghai relies not only on the branding of the city, but also media infrastructure. Shanghai is home to three different major types of infrastructure related to filmmaking—studios, film post-production facilities, and theme parks. While each type of infrastructure takes a distinct role in building the city's role as major site in China's media "space of flows," the different types work together to highlight the city's profile in film co-production. Studios offer a space for filmmaking with comparatively liberal financial regulations. Post-production facilities support more advanced technical development of the filmmaking practice. Finally, theme parks actively brand the practice of filmmaking in China for both film workers and consumers.

To understand the practice of co-production in Shanghai and why it reveals inner dynamics of Chinese film production, it becomes crucial to understand the function and relationship between work units (and their private counterparts), state-owned media companies, and state-owned film studios. My discussions of the work unit will include both the Beijing Film Studio and the Shanghai Film Studios. Ultimately, an in-depth understanding of the spaces of film production and co-production in Shanghai will form the foundation for my exploration into the implications of the city's film co-production environment.

First in importance for film co-production infrastructure are the Shanghai Film Studios. The city's immediate region is home to one of China's largest film studios, the Shanghai Film Studios in Songjiang. The Shanghai Film Studios is roughly a one-hour drive outside of the city center. Songjiang is part of Shanghai's sphere of influence, but is not considered to be part of the city's urban core. What emerges in terms of the spatial relationship between Shanghai and Songjiang is slightly more than the distance between downtown Los Angeles and Burbank. In both cases, the studio space in the "suburbs" was rapidly filled in by development. The Shanghai Film Studios offers studio space, sound stages, the aforementioned Nanjing Xi Lu set, and a restaurant, and it also houses studio administration buildings. The proximity of the studio in relation to the city makes it a crucial aspect of the film co-production infrastructure of Shanghai. However, it is not merely the existence of the studio space that makes film co-production in Shanghai a uniquely viable option.

The studio space is an important piece of infrastructure for the development of film co-productions, but even more important is the redeployment of the state-owned film studio as a space for international media production. The Shanghai Film Studios has hosted not only international film co-productions but also extensive commercial media production. The same

crew who built the set for *The Mummy 3* also worked on a Coca-Cola commercial co-production in which the Shanghai of the Shanghai Film Studios stood in for New York (L. Jiansheng, personal communication, 2009).

The combination of film production spaces in the region immediately surrounding Shanghai makes the city a viable destination for multiple registers of film production. The new China Film Studios in Huairou also has similar a capacity to facilitate co-productions in addition to a large studio lot. However, what makes the Jiangnan[27] unique in the world of Chinese film co-production is the presence of not only the Shanghai Film Studios, but also the proximity of the Hengdian World Studios, the largest film studio in Asia. It is also within driving distance of Shanghai. The combination of the urban Shanghai Film Studios and the Jiangnan Hengdian World Studios creates a uniquely diverse platform for film co-production opportunities. Thus, while Beijing offers one main film studio for film co-productions, the Jiangnan region offers two different types of filmmaking spaces. The Shanghai Film Studios offers the expertise of city-trained film workers. The Hengdian World Studios, in contrast, offers many of the competitive advantages associated with shooting in China, including abundant, inexpensive labor. Beyond using the built spaces of the city as a backdrop for co-production activity, the substantial permanent studio sets in both studios create a unique resource for encouraging film co-production in the Jiangnan region.

The Shanghai region has tremendous expertise in marketing the spaces of production that are absent from other Chinese domestic spaces of film production. In addition to annual events such as the Shanghai Film Festival and spectacles like the 2010 Expo Shanghai, the city government has both allowed and approved a series of "film parks." There are two types of

[27] *Jiangnan* refers to the region south of the Yangtze River and usually includes the provinces of Zhejiang and Anhui, as well as the region surrounding Shanghai. The area of Jiangsu surrounding Nanjing is also sometimes included.

parks: state-run domestic Chinese film parks and international film theme parks. On the Chinese domestic side exist "spectacles" located on working Chinese domestic film studios. These spaces emerged from public institutions, but their existence reflects the outward-looking perspective of film bureaucrats in Shanghai. The studio is open to public tours from the Shanghai main bus station. Tourists can visit the Nanjing Xi Lu mock-up, have coffee in a café with headshots signed by a myriad of Chinese demicelebrities, and see stunt men "rehearse" martial arts for an imaginary upcoming film. The overall effect is much more automotive factory tour than Universal Studios. However, the existence of the "Shanghai Film Park" differs in stark contrast to the opportunities for visitors to explore filmmaking facilities in Beijing.

The new China National Film Studios are located in Huairou, outside of Beijing. In contrast to the Shanghai Film Studios location in Songjiang, which has extensive rail and bus connections to central Shanghai, the China National Film Studios are accessible only via car or shuttle bus. Entry for nonemployees to the China film studios is only available with high-level permission. The site is completely invisible from the exterior, with the exception of an imposing guard tower manned by guards in military fatigues. Unlike the Shanghai Film Studios, the China Film Studio is clearly focused inward on groups that are already connected to the inner circle of the Chinese domestic film industry. The infrastructure at the China Film Studio is newer and more expansive than at the Shanghai Film Studios in Songjiang. However, there is a clear distinction between the two places in terms of focus. This distinction applies to all of the major film studios in Beijing, of which there are many, including the Chinese People's Liberation Army 8-1 Film Studio and the China Youth Film Studio, based out of the Beijing Film Academy. Whereas the Shanghai Film Studios offers a limited view into the filmmaking process for outsiders, the China Film Studios bases its access on internal connections within the domestic

industry. The mode of access to the different film studios can be considered a metaphor for the two cities' differences in the process of film co-production. In Shanghai, money is the price of admission to the film studio; in Beijing, one must have government connections or risk being left outside the gate with an emotionless army guard.

Even further increasing the notion of access is the Hengdian World Studios. Whereas the Shanghai Film Studios offer a day trip from the city, visiting the Hengdian World Studios is a full extravaganza. The studio's web site offers information for tourists, including information on four different vacation packages. Although there may not be a direct causal link between access to film studio sites and co-production activity, it stands to reason that filmmaking spaces that make themselves publicly accessible are more appealing destinations for domestic industry outsiders trying to make films. Moreover, for filmmakers outside of China who do not have the same degree of awareness of Beijing's role as the country's cultural center, the spaces that actively market themselves would appear to have a distinct advantage in attracting investments for film co-productions. This allows us to return to the earlier distinction made between the spaces of film production and co-production in China. Whereas Beijing will for the foreseeable future remain the center of Chinese film production, the different structure of filmmaking infrastructure in Shanghai means that the Jiangnan region plays a disproportionately important role in foreign film production in China.

Chinese domestic film parks exist in the Jiangnan region in a way that is completely distinct from major film production spaces in Beijing. They offer non-insiders a window into the filmmaking process and through their external relations practices make clear that financial means are the main mode of accessing film production facilities. However, they have a limited capacity to brand the region surrounding Shanghai as a space for image production. The tours are

primarily geared toward tourists rather than filmmakers. Moreover, they lack the same kind of sustained spectacle present in comparable branded studio spaces in Los Angeles, such as Universal Studios. The state-run film parks differ from international parks in that they are designed less for entertainment and more for exposure to the industrial culture of filmmaking in China. Though most of the visitors to filmmaking spaces during the course of the regular year are domestic tourists, the openness of the studios to visitors facilitates access in a way that is unthinkable at the major Beijing film studios. Moreover, though Chinese tourists occupy the parks during much of the year, during major branding events such as the Shanghai International Film Festival, the relative openness of these spaces becomes important for the facilitation of tours for international visitors. In many ways, studio branding infrastructure is the creation of a "field of dreams." Build it, and they will come.

A second significant feature of the film co-production environment in Shanghai and its surrounding region is the presence and growth of foreign film studio experience parks. In addition to spaces like the Hengdian World Studios and the Shanghai Film Experience parks, foreign studios are setting up film theme parks on the Mainland in Shanghai. By bringing the "studio experience" to consumers, the studios are branding not only their movies and related merchandise but also the studio as a film production entity. In Shanghai, the Disney studios are part of a larger-scale Disney market-entry strategy for China, one that began with "Disney English" schools[28], followed by gaming co-productions, and later, local film productions. What is particularly interesting about the antecedents of the Shanghai studio theme park is that the main features that the different ventures had in common were the potential for broadening Disney's cultural influence in China and for generating corporate profit.

[28] Disney English was one of the company's first forays into China. The venture received government support due to its alignment with government priorities of increasing overall English-language education (V. Yip, personal communication, April 21, 2009).

The Disney Shanghai Studios is the first major long-term Disney infrastructure investment in China. The capital investment associated with the Shanghai Disney theme park marks a major shift in the relationship between foreign film producers and the city government of Shanghai, as well as a shift in the position of foreign film producers in China in general. Specifically, the development of the Shanghai Film Studios theme park offers Disney the opportunity to build its own soft infrastructure for dealing with the major cultural differences in the film co-production process discussed in chapter one: contracts, *guanxi*, and intellectual property protection. Developing a theme park with the city government is a cultural process as well as an economic one in which Disney's team develops an understanding of the tools necessary for other forms of collaboration beyond theme park development (B. Schwegler, personal communication, 2010 April 14).

Historically, capital investment by American film studios on Mainland China has been limited. However, the theme park model is interesting in that it emphasizes one of the underlying characteristics of Hollywood theme parks, the marketing of film production. Within the Chinese context, the theme park offers a first public look at each company's film production practice within a new market rather than a developed market. In this sense, the film production theme parks in China are highly reminiscent of the early years of studio branding in the United States—the development of Disneyland in California, for example.

What is particularly intriguing about the rise of the film studio theme park in Shanghai from the perspective of the media capitals argument is relationship between the rise of studio theme parks in regional media capitals and the rise of international media production capacity. Disney's earlier theme parks in Paris, Japan, and Hong Kong existed in international media capitals that served as the center of major national and regional film production hubs. With the

rise of the Shanghai Disney theme park, Shanghai has taken its place alongside those other spaces as a place of strategic priority for infrastructure development by Disney.

Disney is not the only major studio with an active interest in developing theme park space. NBC Universal has also placed a priority on developing a theme park in Shanghai. NBC Universal has a different form of investment in the development of the Chinese production and distribution market. Unlike Disney's emphasis on English, local film production, and gaming, NBC Universal has a vested interest in the home entertainment distribution market in China. NBC Universal has a high degree of television market penetration in China, but very little profit. The studio theme park concept offers an opportunity to build on the development of the brand that occurs through illegal distribution practices. The theme park experience leverages the presence of the studio in the market to create future production opportunities. We can see the rise of theme park activity as a proxy for an increased priority in developing production capacity in a given market. The practice of branding production works in two directions in the context of Shanghai; the city tries to brand itself through trade events, and large production companies like Disney attempt to brand themselves through the development of corporate infrastructure. The media industry theme park works in symbiosis with the development of film co-production by creating a presence for the film studio on the Chinese Mainland. In turn, the film theme park space helps to "brand" the studio within the space of the city.

A particularly fascinating recent phenomenon is the convergence of foreign film experience parks with local studio theme parks. In the February 2011, the Huayi Brothers, China's most prominent private film production and co-production facilitation company, announced its plans to open a combination studio and theme park in the Shanghai Jiading Industrial Zone (Landreth, 2011). The site, $152 million (1 billion yuan) investment, is slated to

occupy 7.1 million square feet (667,000 square meters), making it East Asia's largest film studio (Landreth). Though film production capacity will be the first component of the studio complex development, Huayi has also planned a "culture city" theme park (Landreth). Huayi's substantial investment in the studio space, which is less than a three-hour trip away from Hengdian World Studios, Shanghai, and the new Disney Shanghai theme park, highlights the explosion of international filmmaking infrastructure in the Shanghai region.

Huayi Brothers' investment in Shanghai is significant to the filmmaking culture of the region for more than the vast expansion of Jiangnan filmmaking capacity. The company is best known for its substantial role in the growth of privately financed and internationally co-produced films in Beijing. As both the production company of Feng Xiaogang, Beijing film director par excellence, as well as the production company behind Disney's *High School Musical: China*, the company's investment in the Jiangnan region suggests enhanced opportunities for co-production available in Shanghai.

Shanghai Film Co-Production Infrastructure, Part 2: Branding Events

Kavaratzis (2004) also highlights the role of city behavior in the creation of an urban brand. I argue that several series of events—specifically focused on the subject of co-production—sponsored by Shanghai city government entities contribute to the process of reinscribing the city into an essential role in the internationalization of Greater Chinese media production network. Founded in 1997, the Shanghai International Film Festival is the city's foremost international film production brand-building event. In addition to its international competition portion, the Shanghai International Film Festival also holds a related Jin Jue International Forum, which hosts forums on film co-production and an international film "Pitch and Catch" forum. That Shanghai, rather than Beijing, has served as the site of China's major

international film festival is another indication that Shanghai has a more liberal filmmaking environment and plays an important role as part of the network of media capitals in the Greater China region.

The international film market industry forums at the Shanghai International Film Festival—particularly the Jin Jue International Forum film co-production events—act as a site for the development of transnational film co-production practice. As a case study, it is important to explore the genesis of the Jin Jue International Forum at the Shanghai International Film Festival and consider its larger impact on the growth of co-production deal making in China. Cindy Lin, film producer and CEO of Beijing-based film co-production company Infotainment China, proposed the forum as a way to attract international talent to the festival, and, more importantly, to establish an international Pitch and Catch forum in which new domestic projects— including her own—could be set up with foreign investors.

The Pitch and Catch Forum—the first of its kind in China—introduced Chinese filmmakers to the practice of Western pitch sessions in a formalized film industry environment. Lin, a graduate of the Beijing Film Academy Cinematography undergraduate program and of Melbourne Business School, drew on the experience she acquired at film festivals around the world in order to establish the Jin Jue International Forum. In addition to increasing the international profile of the Shanghai International Film Festival, the forum also yielded a concrete result: Two of Lin's films were picked up at the following year's forum. Ultimately, the internationalization of the film festival co-production discourse was closely tied to the emergence of a film-marketing culture.

The forum produced enough funded projects for Lin that she eventually had to hand over the reins to the head of the Shanghai International Film Festival, who will be running the forum

in its third year. The language and practice of the Pitch and Catch forum—previously absent from even Chinese film co-production development—has made its way into the bureaucracy of a state-owned enterprise such as the Shanghai International Film Festival, a subsidiary of the Shanghai Media and Entertainment Group. The importance of the development of the Pitch and Catch forum is in its ordinariness. One individual's marketing plan subtly shifted the process of moving from concept to film, both in concept and in reality. Moreover, it shows the small steps that lead to major shifts in the branding of one city as a site of production.

Through formation of film festival co-production forums, the inchoate processes of film co-production become documented, documentable practices of branding the co-production process. In the case of the Jin Jue International Forum, the Pitch and Catch "green light" process encourages filmmakers to think about creating filmmaking opportunities in Shanghai. The Pitch and Catch forum initially emerged as a forum for domestic projects (Lin, 2009). However, in the past two years, the program has shifted its attention to international co-productions. Thus, through the international exhibition space of the Shanghai International Film Festival, a culture of "co-production branding" emerges from marketing specific films or projects. General Shanghai trade events and specific film production promotion-related events brand co-productions in the city. The international branding of film co-production in Shanghai—a city that, following the establishment of the PRC, had not been the center of film production in China—shifts the domestic film production culture in China. Moreover, disproportionate film co-production in Shanghai skews the images circulated of China to international audiences.

Beijing, typically viewed as the center of filmmaking in China, offers fewer opportunities to brand the city as a site for international co-production activity. Whereas Shanghai has the Shanghai International Film Festival, Beijing has the "Beijing Screenings," a series of the

"bests" of the Shanghai International Film Festival that lacks a Pitch and Catch forum. Beijing and the China Film Group have a uniquely comfortable position within the context of film production in China. As the state-owned film group with the closest ties with both SARFT and the Chinese central government, the group has to do little to establish its position in the ranks of Chinese film production. The Shanghai Film Group and Shanghai Film Studios, in contrast, lack those connections. Therefore, there is substantially less incentive in Beijing to hold international film production branding events when the city is the go-to site for all domestic film production.

Beyond the regular infrastructure of international branding events for Shanghai film productions, the Shanghai Film Group has instituted a series of Shanghai film-branding activities that circulate an image of Shanghai as a film co-production destination. In addition to the Shanghai International Film Festival forums, the Shanghai Film Group has staged a variety of Chinese film co-production forums in the past five years at film festivals around the world, signaling a move toward greater industry interest in the practice of Chinese co-production in general, and co-production with Western companies in particular. A recent example, beyond the Jin Jue Forum at the Shanghai Film Festival, is the recent Co-Producing with China forum at the 2009 Berlinale, co-hosted by Infotainment and the Shanghai International Film Festival.

In keeping with the connection between the rise of film co-production in Shanghai and the city's growing emphasis on facilitating international business collaborations, the Shanghai Film Group's international production brand-building practice extends beyond the film festival world to economic infrastructure-building projects. For example, during the World Expo in Shanghai, the Shanghai Film Group created a series of film theaters within the China pavilion, spatially and conceptually linking the Shanghai Film Group with the international economic brand-building endeavor of the Expo. Not only did the Expo offer important exhibition space, but it also

featured for international visitors a Sino-U.S. co-produced IMAX film, *Shanghai Holiday*, simultaneously highlighting the city's role as a tourist destination and site of film co-production. However, the circulation of images of film co-production as part of film Expo coverage extended into television coverage of the Expo as well. International Channel Shanghai ran a five-minute teleology of China's filmmaking history starting in the late Qing period and culminating with the *Shanghai Holiday* Shanghai Expo co-production. Though the narrative leaves ample space for critique by film historians, its mere existence suggests the incredible importance placed by state media-planning officials on the circulation of images of the city as an international investment destination.

By presenting the practice of co-production within the framework of planned industry dialogue between private production companies and state-owned film production groups, the forums simultaneously created and institutionalized the language and practice of film co-production in China. Temporary brand-building events have an important long-term effect on the growth of Shanghai as a filmmaking brand, but they also frame the city as an alternative site to Beijing for international film production.

Conclusion

Shanghai's role as a rising space of film co-production in China divides into two parts: the perception and the reality of film production in the city. Brand-building activities accentuate the international perception of Shanghai as a filmmaking space. However, the Shanghai case is particularly interesting in that co-production promotion activities overlap with general trade-promotion activities. As a result, events such as the Shanghai World Expo and other trade-related events increase the international profile of the city as a place to conduct business—and by extension, to produce international media content. Shanghai city government initiatives and

foreign film studio parks both help brand the city. The branding process is crucial in the selection of international film production destinations. Thus, Shanghai is a more obvious choice than other destinations for film co-productions for individuals not immediately involved in film production on the Chinese Mainland and an essential link between domestic and international industrial cultures of film production.

However, it is not only the carefully managed perception of business and film production in the city that make Shanghai an important space for film co-production in China. As in the case of the perception of the city as a filmmaking destination, the reality of Shanghai's more liberal financial and business environment makes the city more attractive for the co-production process. Shanghai offers an important combination of financial and business resources that make the economic aspects of film production more viable than in other parts of China. To some degree, the ease of working in a Shanghai business environment compared to other spaces in China also emerges from the unique outward-looking cultural and historical factors in the city's history.

Finally, the landscape strategies of the city offer iconic spaces that lend themselves more to international productions than to domestic Chinese productions. The prevalence of colonial facades and the rise of spaces such as Shanghai's Pudong district offer more generally "international" spaces for filming than other cities in China. Indeed, spaces—both real and imagined—ultimately shift the brand of the city to build its profile as a site for international exchange.

This exploration of Shanghai's place in the "space of flows" for the Chinese film industry is significant to the media landscape of China and in the United States because of the increasing economic and cultural interconnectedness of the two countries. The factors that impact a city's

role as a space for film co-production differ from the factors that make the city a center for domestic film production. Specifically, it is important to look at the place of the city within international networks of industrial production, both in recent history and in the contemporary period, as well as to view it as a multifaceted and broadly circulated urban brand.

Ultimately, by examining the specific structures supporting the practice of film co-production (studio spaces, urban landscapes, and branding activities), it becomes possible to better understand the production of international works within the Chinese film co-production context. In order to more fully appreciate the role of the specific aspects of the city discussed within this chapter, the following chapter will take an in-depth look at the co-production of a specific film, Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* (2007).

Chapter 3

Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* and the New Shanghai Film *Compradors*

Film co-production in Shanghai reveals shifts in the structure of the Chinese film industry not only through changing relationships between Chinese media capitals, but also through new relationships among the above-the-line industry players who build connections between the American and Chinese film industries. In addition to widening understanding of filmmaking in China through activities such as brand building, co-productions deepen interpersonal understanding of the creative process through the required interactions between producers, directors, and film financiers at the highest levels of the production process. Increases in film co-production activity must rely on groups of individuals who shape the connections underlying international media production through collaborative filmmaking practice and cultivate new modes of viewership.

As such, Sino-U.S. film co-production relies heavily on the figure of the *cultural intermediary.* Bourdieu (1984) initiated the use of this term in his influential work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste,* suggesting that occupations involving "presentation and representation," particularly those involving high cultural capital, constitute the work of the cultural intermediary. Featherstone (1990), Nixon (2003), Entwhistle (2009), and others have extended the use of this idea to a broad range of culture industries. Cultural intermediaries in the film co-production process act in a way that is both distinct from and connected to their role as creators of media. During the co-production process, filmmakers must present and represent

their work as they develop production relationships[29] and develop an audience for the final production through marketing activities. In China, the role of individual cultural intermediaries is particularly significant because of the heavily relationship-dependent nature of industrial production in China and film production in general. The role of cultural intermediaries in Sino-U.S. film co-production is thus one of the key factors that make film co-production an important process, even beyond the works produced as part of the process.

Acknowledging the important role of cultural intermediaries in the film co-production process, I argue in this chapter that scholars need a new mode of examining and classifying film co-productions. Rather than rely on auteur- or industry-based studies alone, it is possible to group and classify films according to their use of cultural intermediaries in the production process. Hesmondhalgh (2002) suggests that the term *cultural intermediary*, although useful, can be excessively general, overwriting the nuances of different types of cultural production activity. To that end, I argue that there is a need for a specific set of terms addressing the cultural relationship of filmmakers in the media production process between the United States and Asia through which to highlight the specific role of the worker who navigates between Chinese and American cultural industries. This approach can incorporate other forms of film analysis and categorization while also highlighting the significant transcultural work of the film co-production process.

In order to examine challenges of overlapping presentation and representation of visual and economic culture in China and the United States, I propose a reinscription of the late Qing

[29] As Caldwell and others have argued, the process of "pitching" is an important category of generating narratives and intra-industry messages.

term *comprador* (*maiban*)[30] as a way to deepen our discussion of the cultural intermediary in Sino-U.S. film co-production. During the late Qing period, economic intermediaries were referred to as compradors[31], a term derived from Portuguese who settled in Macau. The term's origins within the Sino-international trade arena make it uniquely suited to discussions of film co-production between China and the United States. I would like to resurrect this term for contemporary use, highlighting the cultural awareness required to play the comprador role and the value of forced cultural sensitivity driven by the cultural-economic process.

Compradors in the context of this chapter are cultural intermediaries who are involved in presentation and representation between China and the United States through the culture industry. Although the use of compradors in the filmmaking process may not have been designed to facilitate greater understanding between media production communities and audiences in the United States and Asia, the development of language, narratives, and institutions that support collaboration as part of the film co-production process helps form a foundation for collaboration between media industries in particular and between the United States and China in general.

The Comprador: "Never Underestimate the Importance of Local Knowledge"

The advertisements depicted in Figure 3 underscore the demands of cultural intermediaries in the media co-production process. Part of a campaign by the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) launched in 2001—the same year as China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO)—the ads highlight different cultural understandings of

[30] The term was the subject of a chapter-length introduction titled "The Position and Function of the Chinese Comprador" written by U.S. Commercial Attaché Julean Arnold in the 1920 edition of the U.S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce's *Commercial Handbook of China*.

[31] For an in-depth exploration of Sino-U.S. cultural relations in the late Qing period, including the role of the comprador, see Theodore Huters's comprehensive exploration of the subject in *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican Era China* (2005). Further explorations of the usage of the term comprador can be found in John King Fairbank's *Trade and Diplomacy on the Chinese Coast* (1969), Yen-p'ing Hao's *The Comprador in Nineteenth Century China* (1970), and David Meyer's *Hong Kong as a Global Metropolis* (2000).

similar visual symbols. The ads underscore the challenges of creating meaningful visual media for multiple contexts. Moreover, the ads highlight the level of cultural awareness required at the highest levels in order to generate media that can be read productively in different markets.

Figure 3. Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation advertisements, 2001. Retrieved from www.adsofthworld.com

Similarly, the process of navigating the cultural expectations required by different filmmaking communities demands a high level of awareness of cultural norms as well as a tremendous degree of adaptability. Parsing the nuances of meaning across different production contexts—to say nothing of distinct policy or economic environments—requires a distinct skill set independent of the technical abilities involved in making a film. In essence, film co-productions require a multilevel team of cultural diplomats to bring the film to life.

The early role of financial firms such as HSBC becomes equally important in spaces such as the film industry, where film workers must negotiate culture to engage in transnational

enterprise and vice versa. The role of film co-production in international collaborations is the sort of research topic that can be undertaken by economic historians and organizational studies researchers. However, by not weighing in on the importance of these phenomena in a cultural context, we lose out on valuable insight needed to understand contemporary cultural dynamics. Indeed, contemporary film industry compradors negotiate cultural differences on behalf of a business that creates culture while at the same time creating cultural bridges through their work. Thus, the importance of the role of film industry compradors extends beyond the work of cultural translators in the financial world. Compradors create the building blocks for awareness between China and the United States while working with those cultures themselves.

Indeed, the term has already developed traction as a way to discuss economic activity in contemporary China by the thinkers of the New Left. Dai Jinhua (2007) highlights the way in which new compradors enhance class divisions in China. After all, the influence of the term on contemporary Chinese commercial life has been central to debates of capitalism and economic growth. Deng Xiaoping's (1976) landmark essay in *Red Flag* discussed the importance of enhancing access to capitalism through the work of capitalist compradors. In essence, the term is closely associated with the rise of both capitalism and class difference in contemporary China, for better or worse.

Combining the late Qing and contemporary usages of the term yields a meaning that encompasses economically driven class distinction and cross-cultural collaboration. Contemporary film compradors are perpetually suspended between capitalist motivations and the creation of new channels for cultural dialogue; the two contexts exist concurrently. It is the tension between economic gain and cultural cooperation that ultimately makes this category so essential to understand.

By brokering the film co-production process, compradors in the Sino-U.S. film co-production process forge important new connections between disparate cultural groups—in this case, between industrial cultures of production in the United States and China. This chapter will focus on three types of cultural compradors who have visible roles in the film co-production process—the film's producers, director, and press liaisons—in order to highlight the more visible ways in which above-the-line workers in the film co-production process act as brokers and translators of culture.

Above-the-line film workers build cultural relationships between the United States and China as participants involved in individual productions, thus forging ties to continue generating transnational cultural products. The meaning generated by above-the-line compradors in the film co-production process creates links between Chinese and American industrial cultures of filmmaking. At the same time, the generation and regeneration of ties between industrial cultures of production in the United States and China also creates a distinct blend of filmmaking cultures (both on screen and in public discourse) for international film spectators. High-level cultural relationships in filmmaking have an impact on multiple layers of the process of generating meaning in film production. Not only do compradors facilitate the transnational development of cultures of visual media production, but the process also cultivates audiences who have a broader understanding of transnational media production practice.

To more clearly illustrate the role of above-the-line compradors in the cultural exchange process, I will first provide a brief introduction to the different types of comprador activity that take place throughout the entire Sino-U.S. co-production process. Compradors in contemporary Sino-U.S. film co-production exist on multiple levels of the film production process. Individuals who take on this role include screenwriters, producers, and directors, as well as stand-ins,

translators, production coordinators, line producers, and first assistant directors (Feithshans, personal communication, June 2008; Lionetti, personal communication, June 2009; Fang, personal communication, April 2009; Lo, personal communication, June 2009). In large productions, departments such as transportation and stunts also have individuals on the team tasked with helping the group navigate cultural relations (D. Barrett, personal communication, November 2008; N. Critser, personal communication, July 2007). The role of comprador can either be a main focus of the film worker's skill set, as in the case of the Michelle Yen-San Lo, the Malaysian Chinese production coordinator on *The Mummy 3* (M. Lo, personal communication, June 2009), or a secondary attribute that helps an individual do his or her other job, as in the case of James Schamus, executive producer and screenwriter of *Lust, Caution* (W. Fang, personal communication, July 2009). Co-produced films need a combination of both types of film workers in order to create a blend of cultural savvy and filmmaking savvy.

The role of compradors in the above- and below-the-line stages of filmmaking differs in important ways. This chapter focuses on individuals whose task is to sell the message of the film either as part of their direct involvement at strategic levels of the production process, or as part of being involved in the system of public relations discourse surrounding film distribution. The individual archetypes addressed in this study include the producers, directors, and media entities responsible for disbursing public information about the co-production. Chapter 4 will focus on the culture of labor groups of below-the-line cultural intermediaries who move from studio to studio for individual productions.

Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* (2007) offers an excellent case for demonstrating the role of compradors in creating internationally circulated visual culture while simultaneously generating transnational-industrial connections. *Lust, Caution* is particularly interesting for examining the

work of above-the line compradors in the Sino-U.S. film co-production process. First, the film is one of few Sino-U.S. film co-productions created by a team that has worked consistently and successfully both in the Greater China region and in the United States. Thus, the team had a more nuanced perspective on the differences between Sino-U.S. industrial cultures of production from the beginning of the process. Moreover, the preexisting relationships in place for the team likely supported greater responsiveness by potential studio collaborators in both the United States and China. Second, Ang Lee is a director whose work is well known by the film's target audience in both the United States and the Greater China region. As a result, his team had less to do in terms of building awareness of the director and instead focused more attention on bridging cross-cultural gaps created by filmmaking. Finally, Eileen Chang, the author of the film's narrative source material, had extensive background navigating the complex cultural territory between the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, and the United States.[32] Thus, on the levels of producing, directing, and screenwriting, the team behind *Lust, Caution* had a deep sensitivity to the cross-cultural issues involved in the creation and distribution of a Sino-U.S. co-production.

In addition to *Lust, Caution*'s development and shooting process being a co-produced affair, the script's development was a practice of transnational cultural negotiation. Chang, the quintessential Sino-U.S. cultural intermediary, created the foundation of the story. James Schamus produced and adapted the film for the screen from Chang's novella. Schamus's longtime collaborator Wang Hui-ling translated the screenplay into Mandarin. The process of developing the film's script was one of the foundational activities engaged in by cultural intermediaries to create a new narrative that attended to both U.S. and Chinese cultural sensibilities. Above-the-line cultural intermediaries Schamus and Wang (and to a lesser degree,

[32] Eileen Chang, also known as Zhang Ailing, was an iconic 20th-century Chinese writer born in Shanghai who divided her later years between Hong Kong and the United States Zhang came to prominence during Shanghai's highly international semicolonial period (Chen & Dilley, 2002).

Chang) used the tools of language and the circulation of media to construct a narrative designed to appeal to multiple audiences. The significance of the cultural intermediary's agency in developing the multinational cultural products emerges strongly throughout the script development process of *Lust, Caution.*

The narrative pedigree of the original text highlights the notion that media production by Sino-U.S. cultural intermediaries is a part of a historically continuous process that has come to the fore following China's accession to the WTO but is very much connected to earlier traditions of Sino-U.S. cultural collaboration. *Lust, Caution* is particularly interesting because the cultural intermediaries involved in making the film also had to negotiate a long, challenging history of the narrative's earlier transnational movement in order to create a contemporary cultural product. The complexity of adapting earlier Chinese print culture—in particular, the work of a canonized author—made negotiating the production of *Lust, Caution* a uniquely rich opportunity to observe the process of cultural translation in action.

Before examining the compradors involved in the production of *Lust, Caution*, it is useful to look at the literature surrounding theories of cultural intermediaries in order to understand how we can further situate the term in a Sino-U.S. film production context. Historically, scholars have characterized cultural intermediaries as individuals who, beyond producing goods and services, purvey values ascribed to particular products through process of distribution (Smith Maguire, 2008; du Gay, 2002; Miller & Rose, 1997). The notion of the cultural intermediary frequently refers to brokers of taste or an aesthetic, usually within a specific national context (Entwhistle, 2009). I assert that the role of the cultural intermediary in Sino-U.S. film co-productions extends beyond the practice of selling values to consumers in a domestic context. Cultural intermediaries, particularly in the case of above-the-line workers, exchange values

within the film co-production process as well as with other filmmakers. Moreover, the aesthetic choices made by cultural intermediaries in the film co-production process depend on the ability to understand, translate, and often shape cultural norms for consumption by international members of the filmmaking team. Film co-production demands an additional level of adaptability for an individual cultural intermediary: the ability to simultaneously negotiate between different industrial cultures of production while also navigating the expectations of audiences from different cultures of origin.

As a point of contrast, compradors working with the United States and Canada must navigate the differences between communities of film workers in Vancouver and Los Angeles as well as geographic differences, creating additional barriers to film production (Scott & Pope, 2007). Although they are on the same continent and the same coast, film workers on co-productions between Los Angeles and Vancouver move between countries (Scott & Pope). Cultural intermediaries in the film co-production process between the United States and Canada must also work with the former's highly privatized media industry and the latter's partially public media industry (Scott & Pope). Even within productions joined by a free-trade agreement, a shared language, and a long history of joint filmmaking, compradors are necessary to navigate national and cultural boundaries.

However, within the Sino-U.S. production context, compradors must navigate the same types of challenges writ large, in addition to substantially greater differences between language, culture, and economics. Different structures of language play a major role in the work required of cultural intermediaries to manage the film co-production process. An examination of *Lust, Caution*, in particular, offers extensive examples of the multiple layers of linguistic complexity

addressed by cultural intermediaries. In the Sino-U.S. context, more is at stake in the practice of co-creating culture because of the large cultural divide between China and the United States.

The Comprador: Overarching Challenges

In addition to their traditional economic role, compradors in the Sino-U.S. context must be able to manage public policy interests as well as cultural workers and economic factors. A significant example of the role of cultural intermediaries is navigating the public-private divide between film production in China and film production in the United States. Though the Shanghai Film Group became partially privatized in 2010, the group retains most of its earlier infrastructure from the period of state-controlled Chinese studios. Moreover, even if the Shanghai Film Studio collaboratively produces a film, the existence of filmmaking networks within the contemporary Chinese film production context means that collaboration with the privatized Shanghai Film Group will likely involve collaboration with the still-public China Film Group as well. Beyond the corporate profiles of major Chinese studios, there also exists the far-reaching control of the public State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT) and the China Film Co-Production Corporation (CFCPC), both of which must approve film co-productions prior to and after shooting (Z. Xun, personal communication, July 2009). Consequently, cultural intermediaries working in China develop a substantial body of knowledge surrounding the politico-economic culture as well as the creative culture of producing a film in China.

In contrast, collaboration with for-profit U.S. production companies creates a cultural challenge for Chinese film producers, many of whom were trained in the state-run system. Chinese cultural intermediaries working with American firms must become familiar with the

critical financial practices of film co-production in the American context, an equally daunting cultural task. Just as political limitations drive content production in Mainland film production, commercial expectations guide the production of films within the American industrial context. Each system has its distinct limitations and advantages. Cultural intermediaries in the film co-production process must understand both types of industrial cultures in order to generate a cultural product that fits the demands of both systems. Thus, the role of the cultural intermediary within the Sino-U.S. film co-production first requires navigating the distinct organizational cultures of film production in China and the United States, grounded in their distinct economic systems.

Beyond navigating between public and private film production cultures, there also is the challenge of translating the cultural-linguistic differences between Chinese and American production contexts. Language is the obvious difference between Chinese and American production contexts. There are noticeable differences between Hong Kong's British linguistic influence, American English, and the linguistic tendencies of film workers brought in from Australia and New Zealand. Moving between multiple Chinese and English-language dialects while simultaneously managing the differences in culture related to those linguistic contexts makes the film co-production process a sophisticated challenge of cultural negotiation embedded in a politico-economic process. At the same time, the process can also be viewed as a cultural process guided by political and economic considerations. Yet what is most important in the case of the comprador is how the Sino-U.S. film co-production process demands the ability to negotiate between these two highly complex cultural contexts in terms of cultural, linguistic, economic, and political considerations.

However, in the context of Sino-U.S. co-productions, compradors—unlike workers—must be able to operate in multiple Chinese-language contexts, rather than just the two hegemonic languages of English and Mandarin. Cantonese is the de facto working language for Hong Kong-based compradors, while Shanghai-bred film workers prefer Shanghainese. Although they are less involved with daily interactions among crew members, above-the-line workers must be aware of and sensitive to multiple cultural and linguistic distinctions in order to cultivate a cohesive culture of production on set. These same considerations plague analysis of the filmmaking process.

In addition to meeting the translation challenges posed by multilingual crews, the comprador must also be able to navigate the different cultural expectations for the film co-production process—expectations grounded in the unique filmmaking cultures of the United States and China. For example, Chinese film crew members report that American film crew members expect much more time between takes and more lavish craft services (J. Siu, personal communication, July 2009). American film crew members report that Chinese crew members are comfortable taking on greater physical risks during the filmmaking process (M. Feitshans, personal communication, July 2008). These perceptions highlight differing expectations that may only become apparent in the midst of the filmmaking process. Such cultural differences have the potential to impact the economic calculus of film co-production. The different industrial cultures of filmmaking in China and the United States require the comprador to broker relationships between two distinct industrial cultures inflected by substantial differences in language, local cultural norms, and economic systems.

In addition to navigating the expectations that film workers have based on their own experiences, compradors in Sino-U.S. film co-productions must also navigate workers'

expectations of what the *other* group of workers will demand. One example of a cultural conflict that can arise from divergent expectations is grounded in the economics of film co-production. The expectations of "deal making" in the Sino-U.S. production context force two different industrial cultures to negotiate in order to produce a film. One of the major factors that drives American production companies to seek film co-production opportunities in China is the cost advantage of shooting in China—an advantage that exists in part due to lower (but rising) labor costs, and in part due to preferential access to Mainland theatrical distribution (M. Feitshans, personal communication, July 2008). For their part, deal makers at the major Chinese film groups are highly aware of the cost advantage of film co-productions (L. Jiansheng, personal communication, February 2009). As a result, American and Chinese film workers have the expectation that the other side is either a) undervaluing/overvaluing their work (Chinese side, of American labor demands) or b) overselling their product (Americans, of Chinese labor production). Although this process directly affects the bottom line for a film's budget, it requires a careful reliance on linguistic and cultural knowledge.

The Sino-U.S. film co-production context poses unique challenges to compradors. Yet the complex demands placed on above-the-line workers who navigate between Chinese and American cultures of industrial production help us to better appreciate why we must take into account the work of cultural intermediaries in scholarship about the Chinese film industry. Not only must compradors bridge the enormous gaps between these two differing worlds of film production, but in the process, they must come to an understanding of the already overwhelmingly large and fragmented industrial cultures on either side of the Pacific. To develop a better understanding of the role of the comprador in the Sino-U.S. film co-production

process, the following sections will analyze key above-the-line players in *Lust, Caution* as modern-day cultural intermediaries.

Ang Lee: The Director as Comprador

As discussed in the previous chapter, professional interactions emerging from Shanghai "branding" events lead to important film co-production activities. Specifically, film director Ang Lee's activity as a comprador in these branding events in the beginning stages of the film's production is worth analyzing as part of the exploration of compradors in film co-production. Lee's *Lust, Caution* emerged as a result of negotiations between Ren Zhonglun, the head of the Shanghai Film Group, and Lee's production company (Chang, Wang, Schamus, & Lee, 2007). The closeness between the director and Ren, a high-level player not only in the Chinese film industry but also in the Chinese government, reveals the types of stakeholders in the film co-production process.

The importance of compradors extends beyond how they interact with major figures in the film co-production process to how news of those interactions circulates. In addition to Lee's Shanghai Film Festival presence—a publicity event par excellence for the Chinese film industry— news of the collaboration between Ren and Lee also emerged as part of the "making of" text series about the production (Chang, Wang, Schamus, & Lee, 2007). Not only did the filmmaker have to negotiate with the political/industrial head of the Shanghai Film Group as part of a public event (though not in public), but the story also was transmitted to American audiences as part of the marketing of the film co-production process. Thus, the mediation between cultures took place on three levels: between Lee and the Chinese public, between Lee and Ren, and finally, in the portrayal of the relationship between Lee and Ren to the American public in the "making of" text.

Compradors also frame their own legacies as part of the process of building cultural relationships between the United States and China. This commentary on the film co-production process thus not only facilitates collaboration but also structures the discourse about collaboration and the compradors' place within it. Co-producer David Lee's essay in *Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film* (2007) discusses the process through which Ang Lee, when invited to the Shanghai International Film Festival by the festival director (who is also the head of the corporation that owns the Shanghai Film Studio), was offered the full support of the Shanghai Film Studios, including doubling and tripling the studio's official work force after Lee agreed to attend the Shanghai International Film Festival. Ultimately, co-producer David Lee's documentation of Ang Lee's particular relationship with the Shanghai Film Festival led to a new documented understanding of the co-production practice. Like the co-production forums, David Lee's essay on co-production in China was a marketing practice, part of Focus Features's deal to cross-promote texts with Pantheon. However, it also helped to shape discourse about co-production. Ang Lee's role as a facilitator of co-production deals positioned him as both a storyteller within the filmmaking process and a storyteller about the filmmaking process.

James Schamus: The Screenwriter as Comprador

James Schamus, executive producer and screenwriter of *Lust, Caution*, acted as a cultural intermediary in the co-production process, both in terms of the translation of language and the translation of culture related to creative and industrial production. Though Schamus was also the executive producer of the film, in this chapter's discussion of the screenwriter as comprador, it is helpful to focus on his role in writing and translating the script. Screenwriters of co-produced films are in the unique position to broker the cultural demands of two markets through the

writing process. An examination of Schamus's work on *Lust, Caution* offers particularly helpful insight into the role of the comprador in the Sino-U.S. film co-production process.

To provide background about Schamus's role as a cultural intermediary between Asia and the United States through his screenwriting work, it is useful to look at an earlier example of his work as a cultural intermediary in disseminating Ang Lee's narratives. To begin, this section will focus on earlier Lee/Schamus screenwriting collaborations: Lee's *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman* (1994) and director Maria Ripoll's *Tortilla Soup* (2001). Although Ripoll set *Tortilla Soup* in the context of Mexican-American culture, she took *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman*'s narrative and premise wholesale; she even maintained numerous syntactic elements of the first film and enlisted James Schamus—*Eat, Drink, Man, Woman*'s producer and a longtime Lee collaborator—as a screenwriter. *Lust, Caution*, unlike *Tortilla Soup*, required adaptation from a foreign literary context, thus requiring both an adaptation for the screen and a cultural adaptation. By adapting Eileen Chang's already highly international narrative, Schamus both translated and reclassified the narrative structure in such a way that the process of working as a comprador became a process of creation, rather than one of re-creation.

By approaching the text of *Lust, Caution* from a different cultural viewpoint, Schamus was able to infuse a fresh international perspective into the work of a highly canonized Chinese-language author, ultimately shaping a new generation's perspective on the novella. Indeed, one of the challenges of the transnational adaptation process faced by the co-production team was what Schamus termed "excess reverence" (J. Schamus, personal communication, December 2009). Schamus began his work as a screenwriter on *Lust, Caution* after Ang Lee and Wang Hui-ling had reached an impasse on the development of their *Lust, Caution* screenplay, which had been in the works for several years (Schamus). When Schamus came on board, the two were

struggling with the adaptation process. Schamus agreed to sign on as screenwriter with the caveat that he must be allowed to freely make adjustments to the text (Schamus). Whereas Ang Lee and Wang Hui-ling had been brought up in Chinese-language contexts, in which the work of Eileen Chang is viewed with a cult-like affinity, Schamus lacked the same cultural connection to the text. Schamus emphasized the development of the internal psychology of Wang Jiazhi (played by Tang Wei) beyond what was present in Chang's novella and adjusted the structure of the script to provide more of a three-act structure (Schamus). Ultimately, these changes to the narrative highlighted elements significant to Euro-American storytelling traditions while also making the film a more saleable cultural product for global markets.

Schamus's role in managing the combined economic and cultural aspects of the film also extended to the translation of language. In addition to his work in the adaptation process, Schamus also took an active role as a translator, drilling down the subtitles for the film's English-language release (J. Schamus, personal communication, December 2009). Schamus also wrote the French subtitles for the film (Schamus). While Schamus's ability to prepare the film's subtitles was due to his aptitude as a writer, his rationale for spending time on the subtitles reflected the perspective of a producer: By providing highly edited subtitles in two Western languages, he maximized access to the film for other markets. With both English and French subtitles available from the production team, groups distributing the film into markets for other languages had the resources to triangulate their subtitle translations, thus making them more accurate for audiences. However, the fact that the film's executive producer wrote multiple sets of subtitles highlights the additional cultural activity involved in the filmmaking process.

Schamus's contributions in the realm of linguistic translation also underscore the financial imperative connected to the practice of cultural exchange in the film co-production

process. In his discussion of his linguistic contributions to the production of *Lust, Caution*, Schamus highlighted the fact that additional attention to cultural details, such as the adaptation of narrative and the translation of subtitles, has the potential to expand the reach of film co-productions. Though Schamus can be seen as being at the forefront of the practice of film co-production in terms of his sensitivity to the cultural implications of the film co-production process, his work also represents the shape of things to come as film co-production in China becomes more widespread.

Bill Kong: "Deal Guru" as Comprador

While Lee, and to a degree, Schamus, operated in large part as cultural translators of the narrative of *Lust, Caution* in the creative process, much of the work of compradors—and the origin of the term—stems from the significant role they play in bridging the cultural gaps between economic cultures. The practice of negotiating film deals is widely regarded as requiring finesse and social savvy, and the ability to navigate across multiple cultural contexts to get a film green-lighted is a key part of the film co-production process. An excellent example of the cultural understanding transmitted through the deal-making process can be seen through the role played by film producer Bill Kong in the production of *Lust, Caution*. A key player in the film co-production process for the Ang Lee blockbuster *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Kong was also instrumental in securing shooting privileges for *Lust, Caution* on the ground in Shanghai (J. Schamus, personal communication, December 2009).

Kong's role as a comprador in the Sino-U.S. co-production process relied on his ability to navigate cultural, financial, and policy challenges in order to facilitate the production of the film. Shooting permission for *Lust, Caution* in Shanghai was by no means guaranteed (J. Schamus, personal communication, December 2009). In fact, due to tensions between China and Japan in

2006 and 2007, the material about Sino-Japanese relations in the film's narrative was particularly sensitive. However, Kong was able to combine his understanding of the filmmaking process with his awareness of the multiple culturo-linguistic contexts—American, Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong—that played an active role in the production of the film in order to facilitate the film's production in Mainland China and its distribution on Mainland Chinese screens. In addition to being involved with the financial aspects of the production, Kong also helped open up important new cultural frontiers within the larger context of filmmaking in China. For example, the introduction of co-produced content tested the boundaries of the representation of 20th-century Chinese history on Mainland screens in a way that probably would not have otherwise occurred in the setting of a domestic film production. Moreover, the new "Nanjing Road" outdoor landscape created specifically for the film was also a product of the Shanghai Film Studio attempting to court international investment in the Chinese filmmaking process (Chang, Wang, Schamus, & Lee, 2007). Ultimately, even an art house film such as *Lust, Caution* required intervention from a comprador figure to facilitate the film's production in Mainland China. Kong's role as a producer is part and parcel with his importance as a comprador in the Sino-U.S. co-production context.

Zhang Xun: The Regulator as *Comprador*

Although the notions of Chinese government regulators and capitalist compradors may seem irreconcilable, I argue that in the case of Sino-U.S. film co-production, it is essential to also take into account the role of state-owned corporations charged with both regulation and investment promotion. Zhang Xun, the general manager of the CFCC, is one of the figures who fits this role. The CFCC is a state-owned enterprise charged with the facilitation of film co-productions in China. Zhang directs Chinese government funds into specific projects and is

involved in the content regulation of film co-productions. Thus, her role is a peculiar combination of the work of international investment promotion and international content regulation, emphasizing an important role played by each of the compradors described earlier.

Zhang's work as a regulator essentially positions her as an arbiter of collaborative creative production between China and the United States. Her regulatory duties encompass three major functions. First, she identifies potential projects for co-production based on requests from foreign producers. As part of this process, she must assess whether a film would be potentially viable as a co-production based on the broad strokes of genre. Family films offer promising possibilities because of their inherently wholesome content. The popular horror genre, in contrast, contains a broad range of content that has the potential to be objectionable to SARFT regulators, from violence to supernatural themes. The next stage of regulation requires assessment of the particulars of a given film. The CFCC requires film producers to submit everything from script drafts to story synopses prior to receiving co-production approval. At any point during this content assessment, the CFCC can ask filmmakers to make changes to the film to meet shifting content requirements. Finally, filmmakers in co-productions must be willing to update the CFCC throughout the filmmaking process about any changes in content. This continuous dialogue gives Zhang significant power in regulating the type of cross-cultural products that can be produced between the United States and China.

The CFCC regulates the content of films it co-produces, but it is also a corporation, and Zhang manages its economic output. Zhang's twin duties of enhancing co-production activity in China and serving as a cultural gatekeeper mirror the roles of the above-the-line compradors working on the investment side. Just as a film's viability in the commercial market is a consideration for compradors working in the private sector, Zhang must balance a series of

constraints in her advocacy of different projects. Zhang's role underscores that navigating the co-production process requires multiple types of leaders who are sensitive to the cultural demands of producing a collaborative cultural product.

Notably, Zhang's role as gatekeeper has the potential for a broad-reaching global impact as it relates to content restrictions placed on global blockbusters. Filmmakers who would like to access the Chinese market as a co-production must make content adjustments to meet the requirements of the CFCC. Rob Cohen's *The Mummy 3* (2008) had to make adjustments to some of its representations of Republican-era China (Yu, 2008). Co-production approval for Mikael Håfström's *Shanghai* (2010) was rescinded (before being granted again) after the bulk of the film was shot in Bangkok, rather than in the film's eponymous city (S. Salzman, personal communication, March 10, 2010). The power of Zhang and the other public-private compradors at the CFCC suggests that it is not only the power of Hollywood money that has the potential to shape the landscape of contemporary Chinese cinema, but also the regulatory power of Chinese compradors, who have the power to shape the global cinescape.

Compradors as "Contact Men": Selling Cultural Exchange via Co-Production

The previous sections highlight the role of above-the-line workers as compradors who manage the cultural demands of the film co-production process while the film is being made. But in many ways, the most visible work accomplished by compradors occurs in the public sphere through the selling of the idea of the production to the public.[33] The term comprador is useful when referring to the broader practice of managing collaboration in Sino-U.S. media co-production. However, in the case of *Lust, Caution,* as well as many other Sino-U.S. film co-productions, compradors also served as "contact men," a term originated by Paul Hirsch (1991)

[33] For a different approach to examining the relationship between publics in the U.S. and Asia and *Lust, Caution*, see Leo Ou-fan Lee's article *Ang Lee's Lust Caution and Its Reception*.

to describe individuals whose primary profession was to market a product across multiple industries. As with many other parts of the film co-production process, the contact man task originally began as the domain of marketers and journalists but shifted to individuals in other roles—specifically, producers and directors. In the context of film co-production, contact men[34] provide messages about the text for media practitioners to co-opt, who then frame the messages for the public (Hirsch). Mediating discourse deployed by a text's compradors as contact men creates the lens through which spectators can understand the film. The incorporation of Hirsch's original description of the term into the idea of the comprador in Sino-U.S. film co-production highlights the role of film producers and directors in generating messages about their work for the public. Of recent Chinese-language Sino-U.S. co-productions, the Venice Film Festival winner *Lust, Caution* is a particularly telling case through which to examine the role of comprador as contact man because of the substantial media attention paid to the film. The grand publicity blitz generated as part of its American release and its broad distribution in both Chinese and American markets makes *Lust, Caution* a rich case study for examining the role of contact men in Sino-U.S. film co-production. The film received a significant amount of media attention because it was Ang Lee's first effort following his Oscar-winning film *Brokeback Mountain*. *Lust, Caution* was also Lee's first Chinese-language film following his landmark martial arts blockbuster *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,* which grossed more than $61 million in its two-month domestic American theatrical run at a peak of 868 screens ("Crouching Tiger," 2008).[35]

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[34] Paul Hirsch (1991) describes several functions of contact men in his article "Processing Fads and Fashions," which analyzes the layers of production in cultural organizations. In this chapter, I employ his last definition: the "cooptation of mass-media gatekeepers." Building on Hirsch, I argue that filmmakers, and to a certain degree, high-level crew members, act in concert with the film's public relations team to enlist the support of the mass media as part of a larger cultural project of training media spectatorship in popular Chinese dramas.

[35] *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* differed dramatically from *Lust, Caution* in the types of cultural boundaries it needed to overcome. Chinese martial arts cinema has a history of playing relatively successfully to commercial

Despite the film's NC-17 rating in the United States, *Lust, Caution* received broader distribution than comparable Chinese-language dramas by Chinese directors whose work was distributed in the United States.[36] Ultimately, using the case of *Lust, Caution*, this section will reveal the ways in which multinational media mirror the work of compradors in the co-production process.

In this chapter, I examine how compradors frame *Lust, Caution* within media discourse to bridge the gap between the United States and China, and what that framing tells us about the role of cultural intermediaries in the Sino-U.S. co-production process. Based on data that I have gathered from semi-imbedded and publicly disclosed deep texts, I argue that the strategic placement of the film's cultural role at the crossroads between China and the United States occupies a central role in its public relations discourse, which includes consideration of the film's "Chinese-ness" (as related to its historical and narrative accessibility), of China as a shooting and co-production location, and of its Asian stars. Ultimately, this approach yields greater understanding of the process of marketing "Chinese-ness" and will also provide a clearer understanding of the role of cultural intermediaries in the American market.

As compradors market the film, making it accessible to global audiences, they also create a cultural bridge between American and Chinese film culture. In terms of the forms of text, this chapter will examine public relations outputs discussing the production, including both publicly disclosed deep texts and semi-imbedded texts. The publicly disclosed texts include public interviews, reviews with quotes, and public relations documents, including the film's semi-

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American audiences, both in narrative form (for example, Bruce Lee's successful films of the 1970s) and, more recently, as an important hybrid element in Hollywood action choreography in films such as *The Matrix* and *Charlie's Angels*.

[36] Anecdotally, in Los Angeles, Hong Kong auteur Wong Kar-Wai's 2005 film *2046* played at the NuArt Theater, a small art cinema. In contrast, NC-17 rated *Lust, Caution* played throughout art theaters in Los Angeles as well as in commercial theaters throughout Los Angeles's heavily Chinese San Gabriel Valley. By the numbers, *Lust, Caution*'s widest release was at 143 theaters, despite the limiting factor of an NC-17 rating, as compared with 61 theaters for *2046* ("*Lust, Caution* Box Office," 2008)..

imbedded U.S. press kit. Additional interviews with production staff and production data yield the opportunity to examine the correspondence and dissonance between strategy and the actual practice of public discourse in the film. By examining a broad selection of publicly disclosed materials designed to market the film, it becomes possible to see how compradors in the Sino-U.S. film co-production process build understanding between different filmmaking cultures.

As part of the process of marketing the film, *Lust, Caution*'s compradors examined the issue of the film's accessibility to American audiences. U.S. marketing material about the film focused on Chinese history and culture, film production in China, and Asian stars as a way to bridge the gap between the film and the perceived knowledge of viewers in the United States. To that end, the bulk of material analyzed in this chapter will focus on discourse designed to translate the film out of its Chinese linguistic and cultural context. For films that are not co-productions, contact men are responsible for generating material that bridges any lack of perceived audience awareness of the film's content that may prevent access to certain sectors of the market. However, in the context of film co-productions, compradors must not only supplement awareness of a film's narrative content but also traverse different cultural boundaries for each individual market, explaining the portion of the film that is inaccessible to the "other."

Issues of the accessibility of spectatorship arise in many of the publicly disclosed deep texts surrounding the film. These questions consist of two main types: language and content. On a linguistic level, the discourse of compradors operates as multiple acts of translation in order to make the cultural background of the work more accessible to Western spectatorship. As part of a collaboration with Focus Features, *Lust, Caution*'s production company, Random House produced two volumes of translation through its Pantheon and Anchor Books divisions coinciding with the film's release. One volume, Julia Lovell's 2007 translation of Chang's

novella, makes the "original" Chinese-language story available for a Western audience. By translating the story into English in time for the film's U.S. release, the film's marketing effort attempts to teach Western audiences about one of the major writers of 20th-century China. On one level, the translated novella is an obvious choice of product for Random House. The success of Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* dramatically increased sales of the Annie Proulx short story on which the film was based. Yet at the same time, the publisher's choice to translate the text assumes no market for the novella in Chinese. (The second Random House volume also did not include the Chinese-language text of Chang's story.) While the choice of English over Chinese may seem to be intended to increase market share, the film's distribution strategy actively took into account the location of Chinese-speaking communities, choosing to distribute the film to commercial cinemas in Los Angeles's heavily Chinese San Gabriel Valley. In other words, the role of the English-language text was at least in part to educate the film's non-Chinese-speaking spectators, rather than appealing to the film's Chinese spectators.

In a similar act of translation, Random House released an omnibus text entitled *Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film* (see Appendix). The text provides not only the translated short story but also an extended "subtitle" in the form of the film's script, as well as essays by cast and crew members detailing the cultural processes of film co-production. Non-Chinese-speaker James Schamus's credit on the script suggests that a large portion— if not all—of the script was initially written in English, so the publication of the script is not an act of translation from Chinese into English like the novella's release. And indeed, the presence of these subtitles echoes Schamus's own involvement in the project as a comprador. Instead, the early English-language script of a Chinese-language film distributed in the U.S. market operates as a form of mobile subtitle, offering an additional layer of explanation for

spectators uncomfortable with the Chinese dialogue track. Cues throughout the script presented in the book suggest its dual function as a handbook of linguistic accessibility. The extended script offers a linguistic translation, expands the market for the film, and is also a commercial product in its own right. What we can see from work of contact men in the case of *Lust, Caution* is that it is impossible to separate the cultural and economic functions of the work of contact men in the co-production process.

Indeed, the annotations of the script mark this cultural function even more explicitly. Footnotes define key Romanized terms throughout the text. For example, the Chinese word for "wife," *tai-tai*, is footnoted as "a married woman with a certain social status—'Ma Tai-tai' means something like "Madame Ma" (Chang, Wang, Schamus, & Lee, 2007, p. 51). The explanation offers not only a linguistic translation but also insight into the class and cultural context presented by both the film and the novella. The ancillary product thus also provides a cultural context for the reader through which to better understand the film's content. The production of explanatory paratexts is an important way in which cultural intermediaries facilitate the commercial success of the Sino-U.S. film co-production process. Ultimately, the creation of ancillary texts that promote cultural understanding is a strategy through which the film co-production process sustains itself economically while generating new cultural bridges between China and the United States.

In essence, the work of contact men in the process of marketing *Lust, Caution* repositions the narrative by situating the work in a new cultural context. In the case of *Lust, Caution,* the editors at Random House took a more erudite strategy for branding the film than would be appropriate for most co-productions. The repetition of images of the film is immediately evident upon viewing the two Random House ancillary texts side by side (see Figure 4).

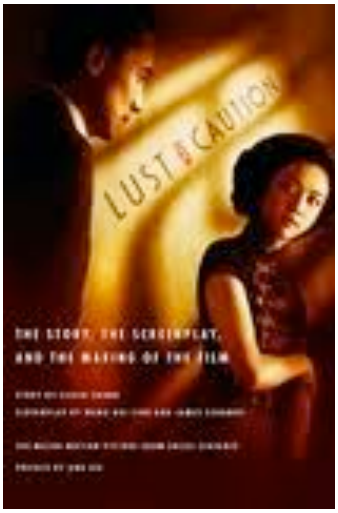

Figure 4: Note the parallelism of imagery on the covers of *Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film* (Chang, Wang, Schamus, & Lee, 2007) and the rereleased novella (Chang, 2007).

The images on the covers are identical, and the information is nearly identical, despite the fact that one volume is a 311-page hardcover book and the other is a 68-page paperback book. The text's structure expands the cultural circulation of the film beyond the realm of media spectatorship into a field of a direct appeal to the audience through literary discourse[37]. Moreover, the work of Random House as a comprador on the level of a corporation generated a new type of material surrounding the film with the capacity to bring the narrative to a broader audience. In conclusion, employing commercial literary texts as additional contact points to feed the audience both inside and outside of the media industry allowed the film greater cultural reach than financial reach.

[37] This paper will not go into depth about questions of institutional authorship beyond acknowledging the important interplay between public relations teams and filmmakers in the modes of representation of the film in publicly disclosed deep texts. However, it is worth noting the multiple layers of authorship identified on the cover of *Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film*. The cover credits Eileen Chang as the author of the novella, Wang Hui Ling and James Schamus as the film's screenwriters, Focus Features as the film's producer, and Ang Lee as the author of the book's preface. The practice of creating an omnibus mode of authorship for the text speaks to a desire to diversify authorship across a span of authors from a broad range of cultural contexts and time periods in order to maximize the appeal of film spectatorship.

Cultural and economic promotion of a film may not succeed simultaneously. Although the film's box office numbers in the U.S. market failed to reach even the $5 million mark in a release of 143 screens over 119 days, the cultural impact of the film on the media industry has taken root ("*Lust, Caution* Box Office," 2008). Images from the film have already begun to enter the art cinema cultural lexicon. The film's cultural circulation suggests *Lust, Caution*'s public relations discourse may have been far more successful as a means to build cultural awareness of Chinese cinema than as an income-generating strategy. A publicity image from *Lust, Caution*—one almost identical to the first color image in *Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film*—graces the cover of a recent catalog for the U.K. publisher Wallflower Books, distributed through Columbia University Press in the United States. Indeed, the image from the Wallflower publicity handbook cover actually comes from the *TCM International Film Guide 2008*, which bills itself as "the definitive annual review of world cinema." *Lust, Caution* was never a critical favorite.[38] However, as the source of the cover image for the *TCM International Film Guide 2008*, the film takes on an important cultural role. Reviews juxtaposed with the film still list the film guide as "indispensable" by such film industry heavyweights as Francis Ford Coppola and Roger Ebert, as well as a broad cross-section of the cinematically minded, including a scholar, a trade journal, and a newspaper journalist. While the film's market penetration outside of China may not have soared, on a cultural level, the tactics of translation made headway in Western film markets.

Yet despite extensive commercial distribution of explanatory texts, the accessibility of content in three different forms was central to the discourse used by compradors surrounding the film. This suggests some of the key barriers to entry for Chinese-themed Sino-foreign co-

[38] As of March 17, 2008, the film had received a score of 69% on the Web site Rotten Tomatoes, notably receiving negative reviews from Anthony Lane in *The New Yorker* and Manohla Dargis in *The New York Times*.

productions. The following discussion will highlight the ideas posed by contact men within the Sino-U.S. film co-production context of *Lust, Caution.* In an interview, Schamus identified the key differences in the film's cultural status as it travels:

> "It's pretty much the biggest cultural moment in Chinese culture in maybe years, or a long, long time," Schamus says, though his expectations for American audiences are comparatively modest. "The film opens here to a number of obstacles: a foreign language, the NC-17 rating and an altogether slower pace to which Americans aren't accustomed" (Rice, 2008).

Schamus's statement articulates three central obstacles to the film's release in the United States. The forms of discourse of contact men, both on the side of the filmmakers marketing the film and critics reviewing the film, included the understanding of both political and cinematic Chinese history, the viability of China as a production location for a major film, and the identification of Asian stars. The various points of access addressed in the public discourse surrounding the film's release touch on a tremendous range of topics. The loci of accessibility (or inaccessibility) as repeatedly articulated by both interviewer and interviewees structure some of the major barriers to entry in the American market for Chinese-language Sino-U.S. co-productions, both as perceived by filmmakers and marketers and as articulated by critics.

Dealing with the relative "inaccessibility" for American viewers of the film's historical romance narrative was central to the cultural bridge building required of contact men working on *Lust, Caution* ("*Lust, Caution* Reviews," n.d.). Particularly interesting is the emergence of a discourse of inaccessibility relating to recent Chinese historical themes. However, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a film grounded in the Chinese literary trope of the *wuxia*, or knight-errant narrative, was the highest grossing foreign-language film of all time at the U.S. box office

(Chang, Wang, Schamus, & Lee, 2007). Some audiences perceived *Lust, Caution* as comparatively difficult to access despite being grounded in a historical moment much more relevant to American viewers than classical Chinese tales—namely, the Japanese occupation of China during World War II.

The filmmakers' responses to media critiques outline important perceived biases of American audiences while at the same time highlighting their role as interpreters of the film for viewers of different cultural backgrounds. In an interview with British press at the time of the film's U.K. release, Schamus outlined the cultural issues involved in the film's American release in contrast to the film's release in China:

> But in the context of the States we've had to treat it as an art film for the elite, and that's okay . . . But we do have these cultural headways—the kind of hypocrisy, the rating—that kind of crap. We know there's a kind of head-wind that's pushing against us and all we can do is fight it. (Parfitt, 2008, para. 3).

More tellingly, a statement made by Schamus at the film's Los Angeles premiere, which was picked up by the Asian and Asian-American culture magazine *Asia-Pacific Arts*, highlights filmmakers' strong perceptions that media cultural biases shaped the film's treatment in the American media:

> If you don't like our movie, that's perfectly fine, that's your job. Sometimes, however, I have to object against a certain amount of ignorance, that, when accompanied by smugness and an unwillingness to see what you're trying to do, I have to object to. . . . When somebody is too lazy to even go back and see who Eileen Chang was and what was really going on in Shanghai and how the politics

> and sexuality of it figure into Chinese culture, then I feel like, "Well, maybe you should get another job" (Hu, 2008, para. 6).

Schamus's critique of Western media identifies a significant perceived gap in American media awareness of Chinese literary and political history. The film's compradors then attempt, with various levels of transparency, to contend with the cultural barriers to strong media coverage. Thus, Schamus's critique of Western critical discourse about the film can be seen as both an expression of his frustration and a part of his role as an intermediary in the co-production process.

Taking Schamus's criticism of American media into consideration brings up the question of what role the filmmaker in a historical genre co-production has in providing a historical context to media spectators. In the Chinese context, *Lust, Caution* was hailed as providing a superb window into 20th-century Chinese history, but a review by *Screen* writer Dan Fainaru in Venice, where the film took home the Venice Film Festival's major prize, argues,

> Had Lee accepted that his film is about the conflict between duty and desire, and worked smoothly on this premise, this could have been a far more focused and precise film. . . . But by wishing to expand the story into a vast period portrait, first of Hong Kong, and then of Shanghai, Lee opens up avenues that he never has time to follow up (Fainaru, 2007, para. 7).

Fainaru's critique of the film speaks directly to Schamus's dismissal of the film's critics. Ultimately, viewing Schamus's responses to the reviews of *Lust, Caution* in concert with the reviews themselves suggests a tension in the perceived role of the American media, raising the issue of whether critics should be cultural arbiters or passive recipients—particularly in the context of film co-productions, where they often do more work to fully assess the cultural

implications of the film. Amid the dialogue between Schamus and critics of *Lust, Caution* is a debate about the relevance of contemporary Chinese history to the American media, a rather shocking revelation given America's tremendous financial dependence on China.

Ultimately, the interaction of compradors in the role of film marketers or filmmakers suggests that not only are the cultural context and economics of a film tied up together, but that American critics and audiences expect that filmmakers will cater to their cultural tastes in order to gain their economic support. This complicated calculus underscores the need to incorporate analysis of industrial practices into the study of filmmaking—and into the study of co-production, in particular. Creating films across boundaries, a practice which is becoming increasingly common and increasingly essential in the Asia-Pacific region, requires a sophisticated interplay of awareness of market conditions, audience desires, and the nuances of both national and international storytelling practices.

Indeed, in the case of *Lust, Caution*, compradors even mediate the place of contemporary Chinese history in the American media while also situating the place of film production in China as part of American cultural production. Examining public relations materials produced to support the film's release reveals a distinct move by contact men to sell to the American market the idea of a co-produced film shot in China. Descriptions of the process of shooting in China speak directly to questions about terms commonly identified in other discussions of industrial production in China, such as *guanxi* ("connections") and ideas of "quality," "efficiency," and "openness." Interviews with filmmakers and other paratextual materials speak about film production in China on varying levels that depend on the intended audience (industrial, spectatorial, or a combination thereof). Whereas industry materials speak about the practice of filmmaking in terms of its practicality, commentary for spectators describes the practice of

shooting in China as a way to bring the film's "foreign-ness" home. The publicly disclosed deep texts of the film engage in dialogue about the value of shooting a co-production in China. Moreover, the types of materials discussing the practice of film co-production range from laudatory discussions of shooting in China to more general description of the benefits of transnational co-productions between the United States and Asia.

Lust, Caution's Hollywood publicity kit, an industrial text designed to explain the film to journalists, further reveals the role of compradors in the film co-production process. Specifically, it suggests that explaining the process of film production in China is a key part of making the film accessible to the press. The kit devotes approximately one third of its quotes by members of the filmmaking team to the experience of shooting in China. Despite a month in Hong Kong and several days in Malaysia, discussions of the shoot focus on Shanghai. The emphasis on Shanghai is noteworthy both because of the complexity of shooting in Mainland China and because of the city's position as a site of contemporary international industrial collaboration between the United States and China. Key quotes include producer Bill Kong's lavish praise of the Chinese government's "openness" and "dedication" to the project: "Over the past several years, China has become more friendly to filmmakers and more open to the world than it once was" (Focus Features, 2008, p. 7**)**. James Schamus complimented the "extraordinary craftsmanship" of the Chinese set builders (Focus Features, p. 7). In a similar vein, the cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto stated, "I've worked well with foreign crews before, but ours on *Lust, Caution* was really top-notch. We tend to think, 'Well, if it's not Hollywood crews . . . ,' but there is a big industry in China and there are many quality workers" (Focus Features, p. 7). Taken with other similarly laudatory platitudes from the rest of the film production team, Kong and Prieto's statements suggest that the practice of marketing the transnational co-production is

also, in part, a practice of overcoming popular reluctance about cultural production in China. Through their repeated statements, the filmmakers conjure up a world-class Chinese film industry, suggesting that the practice of marketing the film becomes entwined with the practice of identifying cultural production in China as a desirable object of spectatorship.

As with co-production contracts and policy discourse, the texts created by contact men acting as compradors to market the film also shape discourse about Sino-U.S. collaborations. In *Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film*, one of the more detailed descriptions of the process of shooting in China seems to speak directly to questions about terms commonly identified in other discussions of industrial production in China, including the term *guanxi* and ideas of "quality" and "efficiency." A glance through any American newspaper article about industrial production in China will inevitably strike at least one, if not all, of these chords. The crossover use of these terms suggests that discussions of co-production filmmaking in China also play into larger contemporary discussions about industrial production in China. *Lust, Caution: The Story, the Screenplay, and the Making of the Film*, a text designed for film spectators, incorporates the writing of another comprador. Co-producer David Lee's essay discusses the process through which Ang Lee, when invited to the Shanghai International Film Festival by the festival director (also the head of the corporation that owns the Shanghai Film Studio), was offered the full support of the Shanghai Film Studios, including doubling and tripling the work force after Lee agreed to attend the Shanghai International Film Festival (Chang, Wang, Schamus, & Lee, 2007).. Lee's choice of topic essay plays into popular industrial mythologies about the practice of industrial production in China, namely the importance of high-level contacts. On this level, his writing both not only explicates but also publicizes the practice of film production in China for viewers of the film. Paratextual discourse

markets the film by promoting the co-production location both as a worthwhile site of spectatorship and as an object in dialogue with other contemporary practices of industrial production. This behind-the scenes look also functions as a travelogue, guiding viewers through the experience of film production in China. Similarly, contact men act in the capacity of both public relations masters and tour guides.

Public interviews with film compradors also take on the role of shaping the discourse of collaboration. In other popular publicly disclosed interviews, the filmmakers discuss co-production between the United States and Asia to increase the accessibility of the practice not just for industrial partners, but also for fans eager to understand more about the production process. In one popular review, Ang Lee argues,

> These days you go big, like me, John Woo, Zhang Yimou, going more unique. It's the same with Hollywood. Hollywood is not just made for America. It's foreign. Like the whole Hong Kong film industry is meant to be seen by Taiwan and Southeast Asia, not just locally by Hong Kong. . . . I'm trying to pull the audience Eastbound. . . . But only the big directors can do that. Some are more successful, some are not. I cannot say this is an entirely good model, but it's a move forward because the film industry needs to be big and China has the potential of a big market (Roberts, 2012).

As a means to market his own film, Lee ultimately acts as a publicity agent for the practice of co-production between the United States and Asia. Thus, the work of contact men in film co-production—particularly for films such as *Lust, Caution* that are obviously in part the products of another country—extends beyond marketing the film to spectators to marketing the *process* of making the film to spectators. In many ways, the automotive comparison applies here as well.

Cars in the United States are marketed not only as Ford pickup trucks, but as American-made Ford pick-up trucks. Similarly, Toyota actively markets its production facilities in the United States to emphasize that its cars are, in part, made in America. Thus, the ways in which contact men "sell" the film co-production process echoes the marketing of more traditional modes of industrial production, such as automobile manufacturing. Intriguingly, the marketing of international collaborations by film compradors mirrors similar practices by other transnational industries. The role of compradors in selling the practice of film co-production on a macro scale also shares other similarities with the marketing of automotive production, such as emphasizing the origin of the "component parts" of each film.

Ang Lee's aforementioned invocation of the "big" Chinese directors who head co-productions touches on one of the central barriers to access to the American market. Transnational stars, like a particularly fast engine, offer a way for compradors to sell their products. However, unlike the near-universal appeal of a faster engine, selling stardom requires translating an entire cultural system. The barrier—cross-cultural recognition of stardom— is a prominent feature of the publicly disclosed deep texts about *Lust, Caution* and semi-imbedded deep texts such as the film's press kit. For example, the film's press kit re-creates an Asian "star system"—what Paul McDonald terms "the mechanism for the production of popular identities" (2005, p. 1). Three actors stand out in their treatment in the press kit: female protagonist and newcomer Tang Wei, Asian movie star Tony Leung, and crossover music industry star Wang Leehom. In each case, the press kit identifies the actor's pedigree within the star system of contemporary Chinese culture and also translates the pedigree into a corresponding archetype of Hollywood stardom. Tang is a "rising star," Leung is an "icon," and Wang is a "pop music idol" (Focus Features, 2007, p. 17). The interview with Tang included in the press kit is titled simply

"Who Is Tang Wei," underscoring her ingénue status. The interview further highlights Tang's "rise to stardom," emphasizing the fact that she was chosen out of 10,000 Chinese actresses because Lee felt she had a special "old-fashioned Chinese look" (Focus Features, p. 17). In contrast, the biography of actress Joan Chen—already known in the United States for her roles on the American television series *Twin Peaks* and in Oliver Stone's film *Heaven and Earth*—merely lists her filmography, rather than articulating a Hollywood archetype for her to play as part of the production's publicity efforts. Translating the star status of Asian actors then becomes part of the filmmakers' English-language marketing discourse in anticipation of ignorant or indifferent press reception of these stars. By translating Asian star hierarchies, the film's publicity materials also function as a practice of re-creating transnational systems of stardom as a means of exploiting the market for the film.

Publicly disclosed interviews further highlight the role of compradors in re-creating the star system as a transnational cultural practice—a way of building bridges between Chinese and American production communities as well as between Chinese and American audiences. In interviews, the filmmakers have reconstructed the mechanisms of stardom surrounding newcomer Tang and longstanding icon Leung. Lee has repeatedly informed interviewers that he looked through 10,000 candidates to find Tang Wei, a woman who wasn't even allowed to study acting in drama school; she studied directing instead (Abeel, 2007). Of Leung, Lee said that he had "never seen anyone play a traitor so well in Chinese film history" (Balfour, 2008, para. 9). In later interviews for the British market, Lee further structured the mechanism of stardom surrounding Tang and Leung. Of ingénue Tang, he stated, "It feels like fate brought us together," but said that he "went after [Leung] because he's [Chinese cinema's] best actor" (Carnevale, 2008, para. 6 & 7). Rather than introducing the actors on their own terms as part of

the film, the marketing discourse surrounding the production focused on the transference of preexisting models of Asian stardom into the American context in order to counteract perceived ignorance about Chinese "stars" in American media discourse. The practice of marketing film co-production thus requires compradors to share the existing standards of stardom in a different cultural context. More importantly, disseminating an understanding of the star system in the Greater China region also requires contact men to shape ideas of stardom. Thus, the process not only encourages the dissemination of Chinese expectations of stardom but often reifies previously nonexistent expectations (as in the case of Tang Wei) in the service of foreign spectators.

Public discourse by compradors offers essential insight for understanding Sino-U.S. cultural relations. As the discourse of contact men translates Asian stars into Hollywood archetypes and Chinese crews and production conditions into Hollywood equivalents, the public discourse surrounding *Lust, Caution* also emerges as a bellwether for Sino-U.S. cultural misapprehension. As tempting as it may be to judge the cultural narrowness of the United States, observing the tensions that emerge through the introduction of a challenging cultural work such as *Lust, Caution* offers far more productive conclusions. Public discourse about the film reveals a highly diversified group of compradors—screenwriters, executive producers, co-producers, and directors. The rise of a variety of compradors appears to emerge from a larger trend that occurs as part of the marketing of the film—namely, the practice of educating the Western media about the viability of popular Chinese dramas in an American context (Hirsch, 1991). Beyond translations and "making of" texts, the production of *Lust, Caution* also led to events such as Asia Society conferences based on the film (see Appendix). Although on one level, the cultural turn in marketing the film can be seen as an attempt to co-opt media practices, new co-

production publicity efforts in the American market offer the opportunity to highlight gaps in American media coverage of other cultures—and, more importantly, to begin building understanding.

Conclusion

Rather than rely on auteur- or industry-based studies alone, it essential to group and classify films according to their use of cultural intermediaries in the production process. The process of shaping and brokering a film across distinct cultures of production is a creative activity that needs to be acknowledged in its own right, rather than as merely an ancillary activity. As cultures of production become increasingly intertwined, the ability to understand the cultural demands of different groups becomes ever more fundamental to the process of making media.

Ultimately, the example of *Lust, Caution* illuminates the role of compradors in the filmmaking process and also highlights how the film co-production process generates new understanding—not only between communities of viewers, but also between communities of filmmakers. Above-the-line cultural intermediaries operate on several important levels in the process of building greater cultural understanding. On the level of language, screenwriters play an important role in communicating not only language, but also -cultural psychology and the narrative arcs of distinct literary traditions. On the level of film direction, stories drawn from a co-production context, by virtue of their perceived financial contributions to the market, often receive greater latitude in terms of content restrictions. Though financially driven, this process of opening expands the acceptable range of filmmaking content in Mainland China. In contrast, films that are shot in Mainland China but distributed globally must shape the content of the work to satisfy the censors in order to receive shooting permissions. Finally, in terms of the role of

above-the-line cultural intermediaries in the financial context, producers who deal directly with the challenges of funding a Sino-U.S. co-production take an active role in constructing cultural bridges between different funding organizations.

Moreover, the cultural work of film co-production forms the very foundation of transnational filmmaking. Without the cross-cultural intelligence of Schamus, Lee, Kong, and others, *Lust, Caution* could not have come together in the industrial context of contemporary Shanghai. The cultural work of selling the film to the public was crucial for the creation of an audience for the film, both in China and in the United States. As audiences for films become increasingly global and box office revenues increasingly require the deployment of cross-cultural work—both in the inception of films and in their marketing and distribution—it is incumbent upon us as scholars of film and scholars of transcultural East Asia to give the cultural work of film production and film compradors full credit in our analysis.

But what of the rise of international blockbusters that are not co-productions? Recent changes in Chinese law allow the import of 3D films to the country's screens outside of the Chinese government's 20-film import quota (Hennock, 2012). Even though this change does not explicitly generate stronger relationships between Chinese and American cultures of production, it makes essential shifts in the type of labor required to enhance Sino-U.S. collaboration writ large—specifically, in the growth of transnational cultures of distribution and marketing.

Whereas this chapter focused on the role of individual above-the-line players and their contributions to long-term cultural collaboration through the film co-production process, the next chapter will focus on the role of institutions and below-the-line workers as cultural intermediaries in the film co-production process in order to explore how film co-production

plays an important role in fostering cultural collaboration for workers and throughout domestic institutions in China.

Chapter 4

The Forbidden Kingdom, *The Mummy 3: The Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*, and the International Production Ecosystem

Adorno and Horkheimer were among the first to call into question commercial media's control and exploitation of the public, but other approaches have followed and are instructive to examine as part of an exploration of the production ecosystem. The cultural industries model, in contrast with the culture industry model, suggests that the intersection of culture and the market economy creates the possibility for training and innovation (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). Hesmondhalgh's argument underscores the financial pressures to participate in the exchange of innovation across borders and highlights the importance of this impulse when examining the economic pressure on Chinese filmmakers and film workers to participate in a system of global cultural production. However, it fails to articulate the complex layers of compromise between industrial and political players that are necessary to produce new forms of culture. Hartley's (2005) analysis of what he terms the "creative industries" focuses on issues of class, but by using as his foundation the different types of creative labor highlighted in Florida's (2002) conception of the creative class, he excludes the examination of issues of language and citizenship in the production of cultures. Ultimately, this chapter seeks to highlight an underexamined, but essential site of contention in the cultural implications of creative production: the role of language and citizenship in transnational commercial film production.

New modes of understanding the labor and flows of Sino-U.S. film co-production is an area of concern for scholars of both Chinese studies and media industries. An examination of the culture of Sino-U.S. film co-production cuts to the quick of a major consideration in both fields:

the incongruous labor networks that structure collaboration in the culture industries. In the context of Chinese studies, scholars in fields from art history (Wu & Wang, 2010)[39] to film studies (Zhao, 2008)[40] to literature[41] (Button, 2009) have examined the structural power differentials in the international markets for creative production between China and the United States. However, in almost all cases, the discussion of cultural incongruities by these scholars addresses issues of distribution or production outside of China. This chapter, in contrast, examines the cultural implications of international production in China[42] with special emphasis on the culture workers of the global film industry. Ultimately, analysis of the conditions of Sino-U.S. film co-production in China offers a route toward understanding both the larger cultural significance of international media production as well as a site-specific appreciation of the issues involved in film co-production in China. In examining a topic of concern for Chinese cultural studies and media industry analysis, it is possible to develop a conceptual rubric that enriches both.

The first part of this chapter will provide an outline of different approaches to the analysis of networks of workers in transnational media production while also introducing a new term—the *production ecosystem*—as a way to incorporate important new power incongruities into my analysis. In order to flesh out how a production ecosystem might work, the second part of the chapter highlights case studies of two recent Sino-U.S. co-productions and the way in which those productions manifested cultural power dynamics on a given studio site. The third

[39] The book examines discourse about the international art market from China to the United States.

[40] For further discussion of this topic, see Berry & Farquhar's *China on Screen* (2006).

[41] This is also a major theme of Ha Jin's 2009 novel, *A Free Life*.

[42] It should be noted that there is substantive literature examining Sino-U.S. industrial production. Australian scholar Michael Keane has written several excellent studies examining the "creative industries" more broadly. There is also a substantial body of literature examining the pragmatic considerations of Sino-U.S. industrial collaboration.

part of the chapter further develops the idea of the production ecosystem by providing a taxonomy of cultural workers, who, like the above-the-line compradors of chapter two, engage in the labor of cultural translation to an even greater extent than their more traditional work as film laborers. Finally, this chapter situates the idea of the production ecosystem as a unit of analysis within the debate about international labor in the culture industries.

Media studies scholars have paid substantial attention to the role of groups of national and international labor in relationship to media production.[43] Doris Baltruschat poses the notion of global media ecologies as the "networks of media and cultural agents" (2010, p. 3), particularly in the context of co-productions between Canada, Britain, Europe, and Australia. Similarly, O'Regan and Goldsmith's (2005) analysis of production ecology examines the important role film studios play in creating local, regional, national, and international production communities. Both the spatial focus of O'Regan and Goldsmith's work and the human network focus of Baltruschat's work are extremely valuable for developing a way to examine the communities of production that form within the context of Chinese studios in the contemporary period of film co-production. Together, the notions of production and media ecologies are invaluable for revealing the deeply interconnected nature of international film co-productions, both in terms of people and spaces.

Although these frameworks are useful, within the context of Chinese film co-production, there must also be a conceptual rubric in place to address the potent implications of power involved in the use of local labor in international networks of production. Models such as Baltruschat's media ecologies and O'Regan and Goldsmith's production ecology focus almost exclusively on production relationships between developed countries. The development of

[43] For an explanation of the industrial labor fragmentation that led to the need for ever more sophisticated informal networks of media labor, see Susan Christopherson's (1996) essay, "Flexibility and Adaptation in Industrial Relations: The Exceptional Case of U.S. Media Entertainment Industries."

networked production spaces in Canada with American labor or European co-productions with Canadian or Australian labor present models that are useful for understanding co-production between both developed and developing[44] countries. However, these models need to go further to incorporate the important power and infrastructure differentials that can exist in this type of collaboration. Moreover, the media and production ecology models do not deal directly with issues of Orientalism or with the neocolonialist investment practices that can influence production cultures that emerge in a relationship between countries such as China and the United States. While it cannot be overstated that the precise dynamic of Sino-U.S. production relationships is in flux, the need for a more capacious model that takes into account the challenging racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economic considerations of collaborations between the two countries will remain. As such, I would like to propose that the idea of a production ecosystem, with its attendant implications of hierarchy, offers a more accurate theoretical context for the examination of film co-production in China.

The idea of the production ecosystem emerges from the combination of network- and studio-based ecologies as proposed by O'Regan and Goldsmith (2005) and Baltruschat (2010) with the idea of the "business ecosystem" proposed by James Moore (1993). Moore explains that a business ecosystem is:

> . . . an economic community supported by a foundation of interacting organizations and individuals. . . . The member organizations also include suppliers, lead producers, competitors, and other stakeholders. Over time, they co-

[44] In this case, I use the term "developing country" to refer to China because of its massive infrastructure growth in terms of film production infrastructure, cultural institutions, private media enterprise, and media production technology. I also use the term to highlight labor cost incongruities within the country due to uneven development across regions. However, I use the idea of a "developing" nation with some skepticism due to the sheer size and scale of China's economy, as well as its rapid growth. Moreover, the sheer number and variety of countries that can be referred to as "developing" can render the term overly broad.

> evolve their capabilities and roles, and tend to align themselves with the directions set by one or more central companies. Those companies holding leadership roles may change over time, but the function of ecosystem leader is valued by the community because it enables members to move toward shared visions to align their investments and to find mutually supportive roles (1993, p. 76).

Moore's ecosystem model, which has become a standard for analysis of the high-tech industry, acknowledges the importance of hierarchy in the development of systems of production. Notably, Moore eschews the location-based analysis offered by O'Regan and Goldsmith. I argue that place-based analysis is also crucial to understanding a production-specific ecosystem because of the prestructured industrial culture of production on set. The notion of place can refer to the space of the city, the space of the studio, or any other locus of production activity that forms a unifying presence for a given production hierarchy[45]. I define the production ecosystem as a place-based network of media labor and capital structured by hierarchies of industrial power that are often influenced by ethnicity, language, culture, and citizenship.

However, the conceptual framework of the production ecosystem is not and should not be associated solely with the spaces of film production during and after the shoot. The fluidity of the term ecosystem takes into account the possible movement of crew members and techniques away from the original site of production, as well as the role of film workers who work on international projects but are grounded in specific sites of production by their *hukou*, or residence permit. Specifically, we can discuss the production ecosystem of a given film as extending

[45] I maintain that at present, place-based production ecosystems are a valuable foundational model. However, with the rapid growth of virtual production and online communities, I believe that the notion of place-based production ecosystems could be expanded so that the "site" is virtual, such as a data cloud or a joint social media site for a given production or series of productions.

internationally through the film editing process. The notion of the production ecosystem accommodates multiple layers of the filmmaking process, from the experience of crew members on set to the changing nature of the local community as a result of co-production activity. As with ecosystems in the natural world, film co-production is both a highly localized system and a process with tremendous potential for fluidity.

Examination of spatially situated networks of power and labor according to production can also work in collaboration with larger models of examining networks of pre- and post-production. Geographer Allen Scott (2004; 2005) presents the corresponding notion that industries such as film production agglomerate in given spaces. Scott's analysis focuses on the organic grouping of companies in film-support industries such as special effects (2005). By cross-examining media and labor networks as part of individual production spaces in tandem with related industry agglomerations, it becomes possible to understand power and ethnicity in the broader cultural geography of media production.

Ultimately, the production ecosystem is an important conceptual rubric for developing a clearer understanding of the convergence of multilocal film co-production workers and co-production practices. It also offers a robust structure for revealing the importance of race, language, and citizenship (both local and international) through the film co-production process. Just as ecosystems in the natural world transfer important information to key players in the system, so does the production ecosystem transmit important information about changing norms in film co-production. Indeed, the examination of international networks of production labor and spaces lends itself to an exploration of these relationships based on power, due to both the hierarchical nature of film production and the incommensurable power dynamic between domestic Chinese film laborers and cosmopolitan above-the-line workers.

Power, often grounded in the relationship between citizenship, mobility, and language, plays an important role in the development of networks in the Sino-U.S. production ecosystem. While these hierarchies also exist in U.S.-Canadian, Canadian-European, and Canadian-Australian productions, the culturally and often nationally inflected power dynamic in the production process needs to be examined as part of the development of an industrial culture of film in Sino-U.S. co-productions. As with issues of power and labor in other contexts of international manufacturing in China, the role of domestic Chinese labor in international film co-productions is often both misunderstood and underappreciated. By examining media production as both a power- and network-based ecosystem, it becomes more feasible to appreciate the complexities of industrial cultures of film co-production.

While chapter three discussed the importance of above-the-line film workers as compradors, this chapter highlights the practice of cultural exchange in labor communities operating within major co-production shoots in China. Rather than examining the work of individual actors, this chapter highlights the development of communities of shared industrial media production culture that co-evolve with their environment—communities that develop their own practices of relating and surviving. How do people evolve with and interact within production ecosystems as a way to shape them? Scholars have examined how increasingly flexible work processes have led to the development of communities in the film production process (Christopherson, 1996; Scott, 2004), but little work has been done to examine the development of those communities in Sino-U.S. co-productions and how hierarchies manifest themselves during the process. Growing relationships and shifting power differentials in the media production sector make it important to study production relationships between the United States and China.

Production ecosystems, in which networks of labor and spaces in Sino-U.S. film co-production converge, offer a valuable site for examining cultural production. In their analysis of semipermanent work groups (SPWG), Helen Blair and Maria Daskalaki argue that film crews act as spaces where "social and technical knowledge is negotiated, shaped, and re-shaped" (Blair & Daskalaki, 2004, p. 183). If we look at production ecosystems as spaces where semipermanent work groups form and develop, the significant cross-cultural work of negotiating social knowledge through the film co-production process becomes clear. The notion of the production ecosystem also highlights the systems and relationships still in place that continue to exist after the disassembly of the first work group. Given that within a single country, film crews reformulate social knowledge, the cultural negotiation work of film crews is doubly significant within the context of Sino-U.S. film co-productions.

The Production Ecosystem and the Culture Industry

To illustrate the larger issue of the importance of a conceptual rubric such as the production ecosystem, I would like to use the case of the Shanghai Film Studio's set-building team leader, Lu Jiansheng.[46] I was first put in touch with Lu through Catherine Fu, the head of co-production for the Shanghai Film Group. Lu acted as the head set builder for the production of *The Mummy 3: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*. He was responsible for procuring all of the necessary wood, metal, glass, and synthetics to create, among other things, the 1930s Shanghai lounge space that served as a major site for the production. *The Mummy 3* was one of the first major international film productions Lu had been part of, although he also worked to transform the lot of the Shanghai Film Studio into New York City for a Coca-Cola commercial. Lu is in his 50s and at the top of his craft. Although he currently works as a set-building team leader for

[46] All of the information I provide about Lu Jiansheng's life comes from an interview I conducted with him at the Shanghai Film Studios in February 2009.

international film and commercial productions, he received his initial training in set-building during the Chinese Cultural Revolution at a small institute in Shanghai, which remained open to train people to make revolutionary-model operas. Lu's career took him through multiple political contexts of media production *while* he grew and changed within the same production ecosystem.

Lu's case demonstrates the intensely political implications of even the most seemingly pragmatic production activities. Because Lu is from a connected family in Shanghai, he was able to stay in the city to learn the craft of set building when many other youth were being sent down to the countryside for service learning. He has been working there since the 1960s. When I interviewed him in February 2009, he expressed a great deal of excitement about the resources available to him to create a vision for the set. The emergence of market-based film production has offered him greater creative flexibility, and additional access to resources means a more appealing production. The funding for the film production, while creating optimal creative conditions for one of its workers, also deployed Lu's original training as a filmmaking revolutionary into the production of a Hollywood export product. Lu embodies the "apolitical" potential of film co-production. His transition to working on big-budget Hollywood films such as *The Mummy 3* is indeed both a fascinating and problematic illustration of the major ideological shifts in the practice of film production in China. In order to get *The Mummy 3* approved by the state censors, the film had to portray anti-Communist forces as in line with a host of demons, ghouls, and mummies. While ostensibly reifying the Chinese revolutionary politico-historical narrative, the film production leveraged those "revolutionary" resources for the creation of big-budget industrial entertainment.

The story offers multiple complications to the culture industry model. On one hand, a film such as *The Mummy 3* is exactly what Adorno and Horkheimer warned of. The narrative relies on limited American understanding of China and incorporates hegemonic Chinese political narratives in order to secure financial gain. Yet at the same time, the film created a new mode of production for a Communist-trained film worker and his colleagues. The story of Lu Jiansheng teaches us that there are unexpected outcomes of the economic liberalization of cultural production. At first glance, a Communist-trained film worker working on a sequel to a Hollywood action blockbuster seems like a Marxist apocalypse, but from Lu's perspective, working on *The Mummy 3* allowed him to further develop his craft as a builder. Ultimately, the case of Lu Jiansheng can illustrate the importance of careful, site-specific examination of the networks of power relationships and the lives of workers involved in the process of cultural production.

The story of Lu Jiansheng is instructive for understanding the overarching significance of the politics of culture and citizenship. At the same time, his story reveals the inextricable role of individuals in these systems. To that end, this chapter will develop a foundational understanding of the production ecosystem by highlighting the people and spaces endemic to the creation of the Hengdian production ecosystem.

Hengdian World Studios,[47] just outside of Shanghai, is an archetypal example of the hierarchical networked structure of contemporary Sino-U.S. film co-production. Hengdian was a production ecosystem without international film co-productions, but the integration of international co-productions expanded the scope of the ecosystem. The hierarchical order of film

[47] The focus of this dissertation is on film co-production in Shanghai and the region immediately surrounding the city. However, our discussion of the production ecosystem is best served by an analysis of film co-production in Hengdian World Studios, a four-hour drive outside of Shanghai. In the United States, a space four hours outside of the city center would hardly be considered a suburb, but in China's densely populated eastern seaboard, cities blend into one another, and Hengdian is widely considered to be under the purview of Shanghai.

studio production combined with the movement of film, television, and commercial production at the studio allowed for the development of a networked power structure of site-specific labor. However, the idea of the production ecosystem is particularly useful as a way to make sense of the industrial culture of film co-production because of the way in which power structures shift with the introduction of international labor and capital. This chapter develops the idea that the production ecosystem must be examined in the context of power structures by creating a taxonomy of below-the-line film workers who, through their cultural position, both implemented and challenged production hierarchies.

To form the foundation for analysis, it is helpful to first outline the production ecosystem operating at Hengdian during a recent growth spurt in the studio's international production capacity. Hengdian offers an example of a stable domestic production ecosystem that incorporated international production labor and capital. The creation of the Hengdian World Studios was a Chinese government effort, and Hengdian has been home to crews for a broad variety of domestic Chinese media productions. At the same time, some of the most significant uses of the space have created a strongly transnational character. Zhang Yimou's first major costume spectacle, *Hero* (2002), was shot at Hengdian and later distributed globally. Hengdian has continued to develop as a significant space for international co-production. It offers a combination of local labor and expansive shooting spaces for back-to-back film co-productions, which means that it is an ideal location for the development of a site-specific production ecosystem. By looking at the international production ecosystem that developed out of back-to-back Sino-U.S. film co-productions at Hengdian, it is possible to understand how space, networks, and power interact in the Sino-U.S. film co-production process.

While Hengdian has been home to many large-scale film productions and co-productions, two productions in particular offer valuable insight into what I conceive of as Hengdian's production ecosystem. Hengdian's preexisting production ecosystem comprised the studio space, the studio's preexisting labor pool, and the production, effects, and financing companies that had supported productions at the studio prior to 2006. Rob Minkoff's *The Forbidden Kingdom* (2008) and Rob Cohen's *The Mummy 3* (2008) were both shot in Hengdian World Studios during the same six-month period in 2006. The Jet Li-Jackie Chan vehicle *The Forbidden Kingdom*, which was the first film to be number one at the box office in both the United States and China on the same weekend, offers a model of collaborative Sino-U.S. filmmaking that I will examine in greater depth later in this chapter. In contrast, *The Mummy 3* provides an example of Sino-U.S. film co-production as foreign industrial takeover, another model of labor usage that I will examine in this chapter. By building a common pool of labor in the space of the studio and a series of interconnected production relationships, the films fostered an international production ecosystem at Hengdian that built on the studio's preexisting domestic production ecosystem. The films used very different models of co-production, but examining the nuanced interactions between people and place in both productions provides important insight into the idea of the production ecosystem's effect on the community. The presence of the productions transformed local filmmaking practices, internationalized the town, and influenced the shape of work groups in the film production process.

In order to understand the cultural implications of the production ecosystem in Sino-U.S. film co-productions, it is important to look at the structure of co-productions on two levels: the macro structure of the group and the roles of individual actors. In Sino-U.S. joint film projects, the culture of the group on the set location is particularly important. The structure of film crew

life impacts the practice of cultural exchange between Chinese and foreign film workers. For example, in *The Forbidden Kingdom*, Chinese and foreign crew members ate together. In contrast, during *The Mummy 3* shoot, the foreign crew had access to a substantially more sophisticated dining room and meal options. Although this change was fairly minor, it ultimately had a substantial impact on the perceived cultural relationships within the crew, as articulated in follow-up interviews (J. Siu, personal communication, August 7, 2009). From photographic evidence of *The Forbidden Kingdom* shoot, it is also possible to see the casual ways in which film workers were able to relate to each other. Small shifts in interaction, such as the way in which individuals eat, shift both the structure of the production and its ecosystem.

The production ecosystem in Hengdian emerged in part from the mixing of industrial microcultures of individual productions. The structure of cast and crew life on *The Forbidden Kingdom* and *The Mummy 3* differed dramatically, as did the power relationships on set, particularly in terms of the treatment of Chinese and non-Chinese crew members. However, because the film crews overlapped in terms of time and space, the differing hierarchies of film production coalesced into one production ecosystem. Thus, the story of the labor communities in *The Forbidden Kingdom* and *The Mummy 3* is also a classic yarn of globalization, reflecting the changing roles of workers in urban fringes following the introduction of a new global industry. Because of their intensive action-oriented focus, the shoots required large crews to collaborate on complex tasks, creating large transnational webs of production activity. Examining extensive on-the-ground interviews, cast photography, and artifacts from the shoots illuminates how film co-production is an important cultural process because of the cultural ecosystems that it creates and leaves behind.

To understand the development of the international production ecosystem, it is helpful to understand the spaces of the production ecosystem and how they have changed as part of the internationalization of film production in Hengdian. The spaces of Hengdian shifted as part of the film co-production process. Parts of the town of Hengdian became bases for the development of international cultural dialogue as a result of the combination of the place of production and international labor. Local spaces became international spaces. For example, a local town restaurant became the site of international crew dinners for *The Forbidden Kingdom*, and a local karaoke parlor became a gathering place for an international group of singers. Although the presence of international crew in local establishments is only a small shift on its own, the repeated movement of international crews into and out of the space of the city has the potential to fundamentally change the city. In other words, the repeated formation of production ecosystems in Hengdian has the potential to create long-term changes in the city, grounded in the way in which crew members use the space in and around the site of production.

The ways in which film crews transmit cultural information and share important affinities underscore significant power hierarchies in the process of cultural translation work. Broadly stated, below-the-line workers develop the industrial culture of crew interactions within the studio space, whereas above-the-line workers structure the macro-culture of the shoot as well as transnational characteristics of the narrative. As discussed in chapter three, in *Lust, Caution*, director Ang Lee brought Eileen Chang's world to life, screenwriter James Schamus helped shape the psychology and narrative arc of the story in order to address the needs of Western audiences, and executive producer Bill Kong worked with Chinese authorities to ensure the overall viability of the film's content to obtain shooting privileges in Mainland China. Creating a narrative and marketing a film is outside the cultural knowledge of film crews. However,

below-the-line workers play an equally important role in shaping a different part of the production ecosystem: the ways in which people from different cultures interact on a daily basis.

Group Work

Film crews on Sino-U.S. film co-productions must navigate issues of cultural bias attached to language usage as part of the process of building the production ecosystem. Just as above-the-line workers in Sino-U.S. film co-productions engage in translation work related to script development and production negotiations, below-the-line workers must navigate multiple dialects of Chinese and English on a daily basis.[48] However, unlike the more permanent linguistic labor of adapting scripts and writing subtitles, the translation work of film crews focuses on using language as a tool for encouraging collaboration between different cultural groups on a particular film shoot.

How and when crew members speak a particular dialect or language depends on both the power dynamic of the production ecosystem and the cultural norms of each co-production. Film crew members from Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and the United States may all speak some Mandarin, but the politics of using Mandarin on set are tied to the structure of the production ecosystem. For example, if crew members from Shanghai choose to use Shanghainese, a dialect that limits access to production discourse to other Shanghainese because of its limited range, it reinforces stereotypes about the insularity of Shanghainese culture.[49] The hierarchy of language usage in the film co-production process is one reason that a power-based model such as the production ecosystem is a valuable way to consider transnational production cultures.

[48] For example, on the production of *Lust Caution,* film workers regularly spoke Cantonese, Shanghainese, and Mandarin, in addition to American English, British English, Malaysian English, and Australian English.

[49] For an in-depth examination of the closed structure of Shanghainese social life, see Jos Gamble's (2003) *Shanghai in Transition: Changing Perspectives and Social Contours of a Chinese Metropolis.*

Use of Cantonese can also mark hierarchies in the production ecosystem. An excellent example of the linguistic dynamic in the co-production context can be seen in the production world of Teddy Chan's *Bodyguards and Assassins*. Although it is a Mainland-Hong Kong co-production rather than a Sino-U.S. co-production, the film co-production process dealt with a blend of linguistic challenges with Beijing-, Shanghai-, and Hong Kong-based crews. Producer Peter Chan, one of the main figures of cinematic collaboration between Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland, highlighted the importance of understanding crew members' cultural and linguistic backgrounds prior to disciplining them in order to prevent cultural disruptions on set (P. Chan, personal communication, June 14, 2009). Chan pointed out that when reprimanding crew members on Mainland shoots, he had to make sure that the crew used Mandarin rather than Cantonese. The Hong Kong crew members also had to be careful in exercising authority over Mainland workers, lest they create ill will on set (Chan). Understanding linguistic nuance is just as important—if not more important—in below-the-line work, such as executing stunts, as in high-level production negotiations. As such, below-the-line works form the foundational power relationships that structure the production ecosystem.

Below-the-line workers also must also navigate the cultural dialogue required by financial transactions within the production ecosystem, working with individual laborers to set prices for goods and services delivered. As in the case of factory production in China, infrastructure-intensive film and media productions include cultural interactions that shape financial relationships. While establishing prices for services may seem like a largely financial consideration, the mode of interaction between foreign and Chinese below-the-line workers ultimately impacts the development of the production ecosystem as workers deploy different types of negotiation practices across cultures.

Financial transactions have the potential to shape the power relationships of the production ecosystem. For example, the notion of a fixed price for services in an American context conflicts with the notion of prices based on relationships in a Chinese context. At times, American workers fail to understand the multiple layers of the Chinese pricing system. A lack of understanding of cultural norms is a significant obstacle in collaboration. In interviews, many Chinese workers expressed disdain over the fact that American above-the-line workers accused them of gauging prices or demanded "guanxi" prices, despite the fact that it was the first major financial interaction between the parties. This lack of understanding caused Chinese purveyors of services to reflect on their own system, but also to critique the "other" for misunderstanding how their system of pricing worked (L. Jiansheng & R. Vicenio, personal communication, March, 2009). In cases where American above-the-line workers paid full price, the financial costs may have been slightly higher, but the long-term social costs were decidedly lower than if they had demanded a discount. Ultimately, considerations of status in the production ecosystem as related to culturally inflected "deal making" are an important way to understand the cultural structures of the production ecosystem.

Cultural Workers in the Group

Intriguing processes of cultural cross-pollination emerge when examining the stories of individual film workers operating as part of the production ecosystem. I argue that the smooth genesis and completion of co-productions requires the cultural intelligence of a new class of latter-day media production ambassadors in the production team. Chapter three examined the role of compradors in above-the-line film production roles—the individuals involved in setting the conditions that can bring a production ecosystem into existence. However, compradors also play a key role in the development of the production ecosystem. Specifically, certain individuals

act as different types of production coordinators, directly facilitating cross-cultural production activities on set. There is a class of bicultural workers with limited training who create connections between different members of the film crew. Examining the role of these workers as "cultural glue" can reveal what type of cultural work is required to facilitate collaboration as well as the ways in which hierarchies of culture, nationality, and gender operate.

The glue of the production ecosystem in a cross-cultural context consists of four types of workers. The fundamental categories of the taxonomy include translators, "assistants," location specialists, and assistant directors or "coordinators." These individuals form the core group who facilitate cultural relations within the semipermanent work group on each individual set. By exploring each of these roles within the semipermanent work group, it is possible to analyze how the film co-production process builds cultural linkages within and between crews over time. Understanding the cultural practice of industrial workers provides us with important insight into the ways in which film co-production operates not only as a way to produce visual culture, but also to produce more fluid relationships between media communities.

Translation

It is useful to begin with the figure of the translator when examining the workers who operate within the production ecosystem. Theoretical explorations of the role of the translator in literature highlight the Italian concept of the translator as traitor or *traductor*, suggesting that even translators who seek to be faithful to the text are, by definition, still disloyal in their representation of it. In the case of translators in the production ecosystem, film workers can be placed in ambivalently traitorous positions by virtue of their role. They may have the privilege and status of a foreign worker but the identity of a local worker.

Wang Fang, a master's student at the Shanghai University School of Film and Television, took a part-time job on the set of *The Mummy 3* as a way to earn money, but she ultimately became a comprador in the process (F. Wang, personal communication, July 2009). As a graduate student in film studies, she had a more advanced knowledge of English than most low-paid workers as well as some knowledge of the filmmaking process, though largely on a theoretical level. During *The Mummy 3* shoot in Shanghai, Wang worked as a translator for Western background actors. As a translator, Wang bridged two different worlds. In *The Mummy 3*, there were multiple craft services tents for different members of the production team. Local Chinese team members had to eat in one tent, whereas foreign team members had a separate, more elaborate dining tent. As a translator for foreign background actors, Wang moved back and forth between the tent for local Chinese workers and the tent for foreign workers, creating linkages within the production ecosystem (F. Wang; J. Siu, personal communication, July 2009). Wang's status as a culture worker in training within the local Shanghai context made her uniquely capable as a translator between the different parts of the semipermanent work group.

Wang Fang's role in the production process also demonstrates the fluidity of cultural relations within the crew of an individual film. Although Wang started working on *The Mummy 3* as a translator, she eventually shifted roles and became a stand-in for actress Liang Luo Shi because of her "look" and her English-language abilities (F. Wang, personal communication, July 2009). Wang moved from working with foreign background actors to working with Chinese "stars," but throughout the entire process, she acted as a glue that provided cultural linkages among the people on set (Wang). Wang is just one of many workers who acted as translators for above-the-line workers in the film co-production process. By creating a space in which non-Chinese above-the-line workers could participate in the film co-production process,

these compradors were both essential and invisible in the filmmaking process, which is precisely why discussions of power in the production ecosystem—particularly in transnational co-productions—are essential.

Individual roles in a given space are less significant than relationships that underscore the entire system. Mark Deuze (2007) suggests that a shift toward mobile employment practices, such as those in the international film co-production context, leads to semipermanent work groups, breaking down the boundaries between work and private life. Building on his argument, it is possible to examine how mobile employment practices in industrial contexts such as film co-production ultimately break down geographic and cultural boundaries. Specifically, film co-production creates multiple alternative ecosystems composed of cultural and geographic parts that ultimately synthesize into a new temporary but highly interdependent world.

In addition to translators, there is also a core group of Chinese workers who manage the physical environment on production sets. These workers do everything from taking care of accommodations and logistics for large numbers of crew members to managing the physical spaces of production. I will profile three workers who fit this category: Yvonne Chang, the production logistics facilitator for *The Mummy 3*; Chen Fenglei, the location manager for *The Mummy 3*, among other films; and Lu Jiansheng, the director of set building at the Shanghai Film Studio.

Location

One of the major modes of cultural translation during a co-production shoot is the translation of places—the conversion of sites in Mainland China for Euro-American production crews. Whereas film workers such as Wang Fang translated language between foreign and Chinese crews, the next group of individuals I will discuss translate spaces across cultures. At

first blush, the idea that Chinese film workers in China would have to translate Chinese spaces for a shoot designed to be shot in China is counterintuitive. However, the work of site managers in film co-productions reveals that the translation of physical spaces is a key aspect of co-productions' cultural impact. Namely, site managers in the film co-production process facilitate a world in which both the image and use of spaces in China follow the expectations of American filmmakers. The practice of translating space requires a deep intuitive knowledge of the expectations of both foreign and Chinese film workers in terms of how they view and use space. This notion of the translation of space expands on O'Regan and Goldsmith's (2005) concept of production ecology by examining the ways in which spaces can be reformulated according to cultural expectations.

External location management and scouting provides an excellent example of the type of cultural work conducted by film workers in the Sino-U.S. film co-production process. Location managers, who are responsible for finding and securing sites for production, have an important role in shaping the "look" of the film. When a film's director is unfamiliar with local spaces, as is usually the case in U.S. co-productions shot in China, the location manager plays an integral role in facilitating the representation of the space of China. As location manager Chen Fenglei said in an interview, "The foreigners I have worked with view China as a new *ticai*—material—so the people interested in looking for locations are quite numerous" (personal communication, November 2008). Chen exhibited a deep awareness of the role he plays in the cultural context of the filmmaking process. As a location manager, his work puts him in the position of providing cultural "material" for the co-production. The use of the word *ticai* evokes an object—a commodity designed to materially augment the preexisting narrative without fundamentally changing it. His characterization of the process speaks to the assumptions made about film co-

production in China—assumptions based on the notion that China is a place where Western filmmaking can be "applied," rather than operate in dialogue within local media production communities.

Location management is as much a part of the cultural dialogue as is it a pragmatic demand of the filmmaking process. Location managers, who typically divide their time between domestic and co-produced films, are almost always local Chinese film workers in the production ecosystem that supports Sino-U.S. film co-productions (F. Chen, personal communication, November 2008). Thus, their role within the co-production process is to introduce production teams to suitable local architecture for shooting. Managing these iconic images of the Shanghai "brand" for foreign film teams is a key part of the location manager's role. The location manager helps deploy these images on screen, translating foreign ideas of what Shanghai looks like into actual Chinese spaces for circulation. In fact, the same location manager planned the shooting locations of several major film co-productions shot in Shanghai in the early 21st century: Stephen Chow's *Kungfu Hustle* (2004), Peter Chan's *Perhaps Love* (2005), Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution,* and Rob Cohen's *The Mummy 3*. The production ecosystem structures the repetition of local images that a foreign crew then circulates to Chinese film workers. The exchange of assumptions about location selection between local location managers and foreign film workers creates a hierarchy of who is ultimately allowed to "see" what a city looks like. Even though location managers are local, they must curate images of their own cities to meet foreign tastes.

Whereas location managers curate the type of domestic Chinese spaces that will be represented on film, set builders also have an integral role in facilitating cultural exchange through film co-production practice. Rather than selecting spaces, set builders create "Chinese"

sets on behalf of foreign co-productions, playing an important part in physically building the production ecosystem. The practice of building Chinese set spaces in China, created by Chinese film workers, at the behest of a foreign production company, is an act of cultural co-creation, and one in which film workers can be charged with re-creating a version of their own culture for consumption by the other. Chinese set builders must collaborate with foreign filmmakers in the process of creating spaces representative of China while at the same time deploying the aesthetic perspective of foreign filmmakers for an international market.

The political and cultural implications of the re-creation of Chinese spaces by Chinese film workers for American productions highlight the significance of understanding production as a hierarchy grounded in economic and cultural issues. One particularly fascinating example of the act of cultural co-creation in the set-building process is the career of Lu Jiansheng, Shanghai Film Studio's head set builder. As the head set builder for *The Mummy 3*, Lu was responsible for procuring all of the necessary wood, metal, glass, and synthetic materials needed to create sets such as the 1930s Shanghai lounge space that served as a major site for the production. *The Mummy 3* was one of Lu's first major international film productions, although he had also worked to transform the lot of the Shanghai Film Studio into New York City for a Coca-Cola commercial. Lu is in his 50s and is at the top of his craft. Although he currently works as a set-building team leader for international film and commercial productions, he received his initial training during the Chinese Cultural Revolution at a small institute in Shanghai, which remained open to train people to make revolutionary-model operas. Thus, Lu, who trained as a filmmaker under Mao's propaganda regime, now engages in the process of synthesizing international filmmaking culture with Chinese filmmaking culture. As a result of the rapid economic liberalization of film production in China, many workers who began their careers as part of the

state-controlled filmmaking system now work on foreign, privately funded projects. The work of Lu Jiansheng underscores the way in which overlapping traditions of filmmaking in China and the United States can function together in the same industrial system of production.

Production logistics management, a practice related to location management, shares an important role in the transfer of cultural knowledge about space through the co-production process and within the production ecosystem. Whereas location managers help filmmakers select places to shoot, production logistics managers manage the spaces required for accommodating cast and crew. Although the work of production logistics managers has fewer implications for the final internationally circulated images of the film, they must develop an intimate understanding of the expected living conditions of people in the semipermanent work group.

Individuals who populate the production ecosystem not only compose the cross-cultural community of the individual production, but they also construct the community. Production logistics managers facilitate the creation of a new community of transnational production workers, forming the infrastructure in which the semipermanent work group operates. For example, Yvonne Chang, the production logistics coordinator for *The Mummy 3* in Shanghai, was responsible for finding living space for the film's workers. Chang was, in essence, responsible for facilitating the growth of a transnational community of more than 1,000 media workers. Where, how, and under what circumstances these people lived and worked was determined not only by the requests of her employers, but also by her own cultural knowledge of the needs of foreign production crews. One of Chang's roles in the production process was to work with the proprietors of the newly established Motel 168 outside of Chedun (the site of the Shanghai Film Studios), in order to create a living space that would meet the needs of Chinese

and international film crews (Y. Chang, personal communication, June 2009). Chang's role in the film co-production process highlights the way in which the creation of media through the international film co-production process develops new living communities of film workers who co-create culture. Part of her role as a transnational culture worker was to create a living space that met the needs of both American and Chinese film crews. At the same time, this role fostered the development of a liminal transnational living space that supported the creative process.

The individuals populating production ecosystems play an important role in building the space of collaboration. From the deployment of urban space for a shoot, to the repurposing of parts of a city as a miniature community of filmmakers, to the physical co-creation of Chinese set pieces, workers within the semipermanent co-production group influence how film workers interact within the co-production host country and within the semipermanent work group. Moreover, these acts build the space of the production ecosystem, from the living quarters for the crew to the sets of production where filming takes place. Bicultural workers create the spaces of production that ultimately form the foundation of the production ecosystem. The cross-cultural work of this class of production coordinators leads to the development of a transnational media culture not only on screen, but also in the context of the production community.

Facilitation

Managing the spaces of co-production is one important way in which members of each co-production team shape the production ecosystem. Spaces create the canvases through which both viewers and crew members experience the production ecosystem. An important corollary to the process of structuring transnational spaces in film co-productions is the rise of a subculture of transnational "assistants," who act as a bridge between spaces, languages, and filmmaking cultures. Similar to Wang Fang, who acted as a translator, this group of people (called *zhuli* in

Mandarin) act in supporting roles to fill gaps in the linguistic and cultural knowledge of foreign film workers who come to China to work on film co-productions. The subculture of assistants in the film co-production process is often composed of bilingual Chinese workers who reside in China. The workers primarily act as assistants to producers and directors, but can also take on coordination roles between multiple groups on the film crew.

Bicultural competence is one of the major requirements for and assets possessed by assistants in film co-productions. Indeed, cross-cultural knowledge can take precedence over filmmaking background, affirming the significance of cultural work in the Sino-U.S. production ecosystem and the value of examining the type of cultural collaboration that is necessary to produce a film. Briefly moving away from Hengdian, it is instructive to look to productions in Beijing for additional examples of the role of the cultural assistant. University of California–Berkeley graduate Nick Critser, who had traveled to China to study Chinese at Peking University, was hired to work as a translator for the stunt department on the set of Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill: Volume 1* (2003), shot at the Beijing Film Studios (N. Critser, personal communication, July 2007). Critser had no filmmaking experience, but by entering the production ecosystem in the role of a cultural laborer, he was eventually promoted from language assistant to stunt grip because of his ability to work with both the Chinese and American crews.

To provide more in-depth understanding of the assistant role in film co-productions, I will also examine the case of Jason Siu, an assistant to Matthew Feitshans, producer of Rob Minkoff's *The Forbidden Kingdom.* Siu began his work on *The Forbidden Kingdom* as a production assistant. A Chinese Australian who studied film in Australia before relocating to Beijing, Siu was introduced to the *Forbidden Kingdom* by his father, who knew Minkoff. Siu

described his initial role in the filmmaking process as a "glorified translator" (J. Siu, personal communication, August 7, 2009). However, "because [he] knew Excel and could make call sheets," he rapidly moved up the chain of command, ending up as the film's second assistant director (Siu). Like many others in the film co-production semipermanent work group, Siu ascended rapidly in the crew hierarchy due to the combination of his language skills and his very basic technical abilities. Translator Wang Fang experienced a similar rise for similar reasons. Merely being able to do the work required on a production is not sufficient; film workers must have the capacity to address the needs of a dynamic and culturally complex work force.

This also highlights the transferability of cross-cultural filmmaking skills across different productions and the recomposition of similar production ecosystems at different filmmaking sites. After being trained by Feitshans during the shoot for *The Forbidden Kingdom*, Siu was hired as a translating assistant and assistant director for two independent American features shot in the Shanghai region. Siu moved from one production ecosystem to the next by staying on site at Hengdian and in Shanghai to support *The Mummy 3*, the next film co-production that was shot there. While the practice of film workers staying on site to work for a new production with similar technical requirements is hardly an atypical phenomenon, Siu's specific cultural role on the shoot makes his movement from *The Forbidden Kingdom* to *The Mummy 3* significant in that it highlights the movement of assistants with both cultural and filmmaking background across crews and throughout the film co-production ecosystem. Indeed, the value of the ecosystem as a theoretical construct is that it emphasizes the already-existing interconnectedness of people, place, and culture that characterizes the film co-production process.

Even unexpected areas of the film production process require dedicated cultural translation. Australian Henry Dray, head of the transportation department for *The Kite Runner*

(2007), shot in Xinjiang, recruited musician David Harris, a New Zealander living in Beijing, to work on the production (D. Harris, personal communication, November 2008). Harris had no prior experience in film production, but Dray, who had played the same role on three prior international collaborations,[50] said he chose Dray to be his assistant because of shared cultural expectations and language (Harris; Dray, personal communication, December 2008). Dray also promoted Harris during his tenure on set. Although Siu, Critser, and Dray did not subsequently work on many other film productions, they all were hired because of their cultural proficiency, and all three made significant shifts into production roles with a scope beyond their language and cultural expertise. The experience of these assistants suggests the primacy of cross-cultural ability in the Sino-U.S. production ecosystem, even beyond prior filmmaking skills. It also highlights potential favoritism of English speakers, as well as and non-Chinese citizens in productions where non-Chinese film workers hold leadership roles.

Siu's Australian nationality highlights an important phenomenon in the context of production coordination: third-party nationals working as facilitators for Sino-U.S. co-productions. Another example of this is Michelle Yen-San Lo, whose work on *Lust, Caution* led to a role as a production coordinator on *The Mummy 3*. Lo is a multilingual, culturally adaptable production coordinator. She speaks English, Mandarin, and Cantonese and also worked on Chinese-Malaysian director Tsai Ming-liang's *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (2006). On *The Mummy 3*, Lo coordinated between American and Chinese crew and across multiple languages and dialects. Like Harris and Siu, Lo developed the cross-cultural skills to navigate across production contexts, but her citizenship is neither Chinese nor American. Unlike the compradors described in chapter three, below-the-line workers who meet the cultural demands of these productions lack the social position and financial power to structure co-productions from their

[50] *The Great Raid* (2005), *Ultraviolet* (2006), and *Mission: Impossible III* (2006)

inception, but their work actively shapes the way these systems look and work on a daily basis. Similarly, although these third-country production coordinators are not "native" to the co-production site, they are essential to the functioning of large-scale co-production activity.

The comparative mobility of Harris, Siu, and Critser highlights an incongruity of power in the production ecosystem. Because of restrictions to their hukou (residence permits), local workers Wang and Chang were only legally allowed to work in their place of residence. Although working in a city without hukou is a common practice, it increases the likelihood that an individual can be exploited by the labor market, and unlike Harris, Siu, and Critser, Wang and Chang could not return to their home country to work legally. Thus, the structure of the production ecosystem in China relies on an already precarious system of contract-based employment layered on top of either an illegal labor market practice or the creation of a captive labor market.

The production ecosystem model also highlights the inherent power inequities imbedded in a system with fixed populations of workers in a newly transient industry. An example of this phenomenon is the workers in the Hengdian labor system. While visiting the studio in the summer of 2012, I had the opportunity to speak with a local tour guide who worked at the studio. His name was Hei Hei, and he came from a family of farmers in Hengdian. Despite having grown up in a farming community, Hei Hei and most of his family worked either part or full time in the film industry at Hengdian. The new economy of the city is now dependent on tourist traffic and production activity. Should Hei Hei ever decide that he wanted to find steadier work, the farming communities of Hengdian would no longer be intact. Yet because of China's hukou system, Hei Hei would not be able to legally leave the city to find work. When faced with the conundrum of an unstable local industry and a geographically restricted hukou, many workers do

indeed leave for the cities to work (Zhang, Wu, & Sanders, 2007). Although the economic growth and cultural collaboration stemming from the co-production process offer exciting new opportunities for Chinese workers, it is also essential to develop analytical tools to look at the full implications of this shift in cultural and industrial practice.

The combination of both flexible and temporary work forces changes the types of cultural interactions between workers and media production projects. The economic imperative driving the need for a functional semipermanent work group places value on individuals in the roles of cultural intermediary. Developing a taxonomy of the roles that integrate international film production personnel within the larger Chinese film production environment creates a rubric through which to better understand the cultural logic of semipermanent work groups moving in and out of fixed spaces. It also ultimately helps to reveal how the power structures of film production play out in hierarchies of language, education, citizenship, and residence.

Flexible Cultural Labor and the Production Ecosystem

In addition to a more culturally aware work force, international production ecosystems maintain an alternative cultural geography. Bilton defines an alternative geography as "a range of informal networks of collaboration, expertise, and influence" (2007, p. 46). Bilton's alternative cultural geography cuts to the core of one of the main principles of the production ecosystem: namely, that like film co-production itself, it is both hyperlocal and hyperglobal, but created by the overlapping relationships of people and space—or Castells's space of flows (2011). Ultimately, the growth of increasingly fluid modes of both work and employment make this conceptual structure a useful tool for understanding contemporary production dynamics, particularly in productions that move between multiple localities. While the notion of the

ecosystem is grounded in a specific place and specific relationships, there is substantial movement and play within the system.

The Production Ecosystem and the New International Division of Cultural Labor

Understanding film co-production as a series of production ecosystems is useful for more than just parsing the complexities of international film production in the contemporary period. The production ecosystem rubric combined with the competing notions of the culture industry/cultural industries models inform the larger question of what Miller and others have termed the "new international division of cultural labor" (2003, p. 22). Miller identifies the new international division of cultural labor (NICL), highlighting the notion of how to theorize citizenship as well as the "cultural impact of the foreign multinational on daily life" (2003, p. 22). Whereas Miller highlights the impact that changing structures of cultural labor have had on broader questions of the daily life of an individual worker, I would like to highlight the significance of these questions for the related worlds of film labor and the spaces of film production. The production ecosystem rubric fills out the industrial structures underlying the new international division of cultural labor by pointing to the mobile, international work conditions of cultural labor. The question of possible structures of the NICL can be answered by the idea of the production ecosystem. Ultimately, the fluid labor structure imbedded within the production ecosystem increases our overall understanding of the NICL structure.

The Role of the Production Ecosystem in the Co-Production Process

To summarize, the schema of analysis of the cultural relationships present within the film co-production process has four levels, marking different registers of Sino-U.S. cultural interaction. On the first, most grassroots level are the workers charged with creating connections between diverse production populations. Translators, assistants, and production logistics

managers take on the important role of ensuring that groups from different backgrounds cohere together. On the next level is the scope of the media ecology: the group of international media laborers who come together in the service of media production. The third level can be viewed as the production ecosystem level: the level of analysis at which we examine the power dynamics among members of the semipermanent work group in the production environment—particularly the examination of culture- or gender-based hierarchies within the system. On the highest register is Miller and other scholars' new international division of cultural labor, the aggregate considerations of multiple global production ecosystems. Thus, we can view the production ecosystem as the major unit of analysis for the examination of cultural dynamics in localized film production communities, such as the crews that worked on *The Mummy 3* and *The Forbidden Kingdom.*

Conclusion: Why Is the Production Ecosystem Important?

Looking at the context of Sino-U.S. co-production is particularly instructive for understanding the implications of the production ecosystem as a theoretical construct. Within this rarified production system, we can see the types of cultural activities required to facilitate the production of culture. By trading on linguistic and cultural knowledge, individual members of the ecosystem play essential roles in assuring connectivity. At the same time, these workers are at the mercy of project-based work to cobble together their existence, functioning as a group that Standing (2011) refers to as "the precariat."

Siu, Harris, Critser, and Wang ultimately left the world of filmmaking, finding it too unstable of a profession. Chang and Lo only work part time. Of the below-the-line workers discussed in this chapter, only Lu Jiansheng is a fixture in the industry, as a lifetime employee of the Shanghai Film Studio. The convergence of Chinese state-owned media production with

Hollywood blockbuster films has exported a new mode type of precariousness into the Chinese film production market. Paradoxically, the partial demand for these culturally adaptable workers both creates a demand for skills of cross-cultural translation and leaves these workers ill-prepared to actually enter the industry on a permanent basis. Although this is a common critique among other types of culture workers (Deuze, 2007), the broader implications highlight the insecurity of this type of cultural mobility for below-the line-workers.

The trend becomes even more problematic when applied to workers who lack the geographic mobility of foreigners such as Siu, Harris, or Critser, or lack Wang's academic credentials. Film workers such as the Hengdian tour guide and background actor Hei Hei lack the geographic mobility to adjust their work patterns when their cross-cultural knowledge is no longer directly useful. The farm workers who act in the Hengdian production ecosystem benefit from the economic development that the industry has supported in the town, but also must suffer through a new form of transnational labor instability. While the cultural demands of film production may differ from the types of labor required by factory work, the same global economic trends shape the lives of the workers in the ecosystem.

Ultimately, the term *production ecosystem* is also used with an element of irony. In Hengdian, in particular, the development of an international film co-production ecosystem is directly linked to the disruption of the town's preexisting agro-ecosystem. The film studio directly displaced green space outside the city. Thus, not only does the notion of the production ecosystem suggest the way that individual film workers interact within their film co-production environment, it also suggests the creation of a new manufactured ecosystem grounded in the production process, rather than in the agro-ecosystem previously present in the space. Not only has there been a shift in the cultural interactions within the city and in the relationship between

the inhabitants and the space of the city, but the environment with which these individuals interact is also undergoing major shifts. Therefore, our understanding of the industrial culture of production within the context of film co-production in Mainland China varies not only according to the internationalization of semipermanent work groups, but also due to radical environmental shifts.

With lush, long shots of Chinese landscapes combined with visibly multinational casts, both Minkoff's *Forbidden Kingdom* and Cohen's *The Mummy 3* allude to the complex structure of the production ecosystem through the very texture of each film. Yet although the space of production is deeply meaningful to this new form of Chinese filmmaking activity, it is ultimately the people involved in the process who give the production ecosystem its shape and diversity. By moving into new spaces in the service of film co-production, new industrial cultures of co-production shape not only the physical structure of the production space but also the power relationships between individuals from different countries, regions, and language groups.

Next Steps

As part of their book-length examination of contemporary Chinese cinema, scholars Ying Zhu and Stanley Rosen highlight "the importance of the commerce-art-politics nexus and its changing context" (2010, p. 6) as a way to better understand the landscape of contemporary Chinese cinemas. Focusing this nexus on an examination of the spaces of the production and their attendant cultural dynamics facilitates an understanding of how the infrastructure demands of Chinese film productions interact with the cultural requirements for compradors and the cultural implications of Sino-U.S. film co-production.

Although this chapter exclusively addresses the idea of the production ecosystem in the context of filmmaking between China and the United States, the fundamental conceptual

landscape has potential applications beyond the Sino-U.S. relationship. Film co-production and collaboration between the United States and the developing world is largely underexamined. Growing scholarship on filmmaking collaborations between Hollywood and Mumbai, Lagos, Seoul, and other media capitals can make use of the production ecosystem framework to allow for a more capacious understanding of international media production in developing countries. At the same time, the model creates a space to understand the importance of "otherness" in the development of industrial cultures of film production.

Similarly, in addition to having space to develop in geographic scope, the idea of the production ecosystem can also apply to other site-specific media production practices such as the development of gaming, animation, and advertising. Similar cultural and relational dynamics in these industries would allow for a more in-depth exploration of the potential for understanding the idea of "production" in a broader sense. The next chapter will take an in-depth look at the potential ways of analyzing the cultural significance of Sino-U.S. film co-production in the convergence of industrial cultures of media production. By offering a rubric for examining the power dynamics of space-based networks of relationships, the concept of the production ecosystem not only offers a way to reconcile industrial cultures of film production, but also forms a foundation for examining the cultural implications of growing practices of media convergence.

Conclusions and New Directions

Ultimately, the story of contemporary Sino-U.S. film co-production in China's cosmopolitan center has far-reaching implications for the creation of culture in Mainland China. The Sino-U.S. cultural relationship, one of the most significant of the 21st century, will be shaped through media. Nowhere are these negotiations more prominent than in the context of co-productions, not only in terms of the dissemination of joint content, but also through the creation of joint cultures of production.

Not only do co-productions create co-imagined worlds, but they offer the opportunity for people from different backgrounds to collaborate in the manifestation of these ideas. The creation of joint communities of media producers creates pockets of dialogue among people from both cultures. Joint industrial cultures of production offer an important space for high-level interaction between artists and media workers, whereas previous Sino-U.S. dialogue focused on the voices of politicians and manufacturers. In complicated politico-economic relationships between states where propaganda abounds as much as misinformation, it becomes important to find a proxy for understanding the human connections between different cultures. Thus, examining media co-production not only teaches us about the field of media production in China, but it also has the larger impact of teaching us how to better understand our world on a very fundamental level.

Whereas navigating the political and economic dynamics between China and the United States is fraught with overdetermined wrangling and protectionist policies, media production is one space where it is possible for the ideas of both cultures to converge and cross-pollinate—a place to push the boundaries of cultural expectations and censorship. Within the Chinese film

co-production context, the co-production approval process is an area that restricts the type of content that can be jointly produced and distributed on the Mainland. Yet co-productions are also a space in which producers from outside the traditional sphere of influence of the Chinese Film Co-Production Corporation can test the boundaries of what content is acceptable in the constantly changing political landscape of Chinese media production. For the Sino-U.S. cultural relationship, film co-production offers an important window into the ways that collaboration can grow and offers insight into the complexities of industrial collaborations between China and the United States.

Film co-production, as an archive of the state film studio system in China, is an important media form to understand as a foundation for building the picture of what media collaboration looks like in terms of a cultural and industrial collaboration. The deployment of revolutionary film studios in the service of Hollywood big-budget films helps observers of China better understand the significant transitions taking place in the field of cultural production. Because of its close connection to historical visual media production, exploration of film co-production is crucial to developing a baseline understanding of how collaboration works in media production between China and the United States. To understand film co-production is to understand the origins of media co-production in China.

As one of the most time-, capital- and labor-intensive media production practices, film co-production offers a unique perspective on the other cultures of production that can emerge through the co-creation of culture. The vast variety of cultural translators required and the substantial spatial requirements of the process dictate the need for extensive, continuous collaboration throughout the filmmaking process. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, both above-the-line and below-the-line workers take an active role in facilitating the cultural

dialogue within the film co-production process. However, film co-production is only one, extremely formative, way in which companies in China and the United States co-create a cultural imaginary. Other types of media industrial cultures have overlapping modes of the co-creation of culture, emerging from some of the same infrastructures as film co-production practices. Thus, understanding film co-production builds a foundation for understanding other modes of creating international cultures of industrial production through media.

There is precedent for cross-platform analysis of the mode of production in the culture industry. The examination of film co-production as part of a larger set of cultural industries has its foundations in the work of theorists ranging from Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) to Hartley (2005), however, like the concept of co-productions—which have varying definitions in a Western theoretical context and very strictly defined legal constructs in a contemporary Chinese context—the concept of what constitutes a "culture industry" is contentious across cultures. The Chinese government's 12th five-year plan for 2011-2015 cites the "culture industry" as a "main pillar" of development. Thus, both Western theory and Mainland Chinese cultural production regulations highlight the lessons these industries can teach each other.

This chapter highlights some potential new directions for the study of co-produced culture between China and the United States, grounded in the types of dialogue that have emerged from discussions of film co-production with media workers in the two countries. The industrial cultures of film co-production share important issues with other types of media that are less highly regulated and less capital intensive. Because of the rigorous regulatory challenges, the substantial demand for international labor, and major spatial considerations, film co-production offers the most demanding scenario for Sino-U.S. industrial cultures of production. Comparing other types of media co-productions has the potential to share important insights

about the challenging cultural relationships involved in the co-creation of Sino-U.S. media, in addition to production relationships that can ultimately influence the content of co-created media.

Using film co-production as a baseline, I would like to offer a preliminary exploration of the co-creation of Sino-U.S. culture in other media that have a growing Sino-U.S. collaborative component. While earlier parts of this project have focused explicitly on the practice of Sino-U.S. film co-production, this chapter will open up analysis to look at different modes of collaborative media production. To further understand the nature of Sino-U.S. collaborative media production, I examine television, the usual suspect for looking at networks of media production (Baltruschat, 2010; Moran, 2009; Wasko & Erickson, 2008), as well as other forms of media whose contributions to cultural collaboration offer additional perspectives.

In particular, I am interested in analysis of Sino-U.S. collaborative production of three additional types of media: animation, advertisements, and social media. Like live-action television production, the first two forms deploy the resources of China's state-owned film studios, thus offering a perspective on different scales and types of collaboration with state-owned film studios. Social media, in contrast, is frequently the product of collaborations between private entities and offers a more in-depth understanding of the potential for cultural collaboration in private entities. By using Sino-U.S. film co-production as a baseline to begin comparing Sino-U.S. collaborative media production in the post-WTO era, the continuities of cultural relations across different modes of media production make themselves visible.

To start our journey exploring the creation of Sino-U.S. industrial cultures of production outside of the film world, it is necessary to first look at television co-production in the Sino-U.S. context—the industry that overlaps the most with film co-production. Using many of the same

production resources as film co-productions but with radically different standards for distribution, Sino-U.S. television production in China offers an intriguing counterpoint to the development of joint cultures of film production. The differences in both production and distribution of foreign and co-produced television content suggest an important alternative model to the active joint cultures of film co-production produced as a result of China's film co-production policies.

Television

The broader range of distribution channels for televised content in Mainland China creates a model of joint cultural collaboration that demands less explicit collaboration between Chinese and American partners. More specifically, it is possible to put foreign content on Chinese television stations that is not co-produced and does not have to pass through central government approval. Moreover, provincial television stations in China are wealthy and have massive distribution networks and a constant need for new content. Thus, there is a large, growing demand for foreign content on Chinese television stations. In addition to an overall greater demand for content, provincial and city stations exercise a greater deal of authority over the content of their stations than studios do over co-produced media content, providing content producers with a broader marketplace in which to sell their goods. Within the realm of Sino-U.S. media collaboration in the field of television, rather than forming a collaborative semipermanent work group as is encouraged by film co-production policies, there instead exists greater incentive for a broker/seller relationship for either production services or content. While Sino-U.S. media collaborations all exist as a practice of cultural co-creation, the policy demands of certain media co-production activities—particularly Mainland film co-productions—create

conditions that encourage more collaboration than production services activities or the sale of content.

In contrast to film co-production practice, Sino-U.S. television production frequently takes the form of more limited modes of cultural exchange for media content generation. Examples of the phenomenon include the use of locations for footage to be included in content distributed outside of China, such as the Discovery Channel documentary *The Science of Star Wars* (2005), which used locations and images from monks at the Shaolin Temple to partly facilitate the creation of work for international television distribution. We can look at a production like *The Science of Star Wars* as being analogous to a production services arrangement in the field of film co-production in terms of the cultural relations of the media producers. *The Science of Star Wars* quite literally imposed a Western narrative onto Chinese content, even to the degree of co-opting pre-modern Chinese martial arts practices into the larger narrative of George Lucas's ascent to Hollywood fame. The relationship between content and form in the context of the production is one of less direct collaboration and more deployment of Western narratives to subsume Chinese spaces.

Later incarnations of the production services model of collaboration within the Chinese television production context include *Survivor: China* (2007-2008), which focused on deploying China as a backdrop for a popular American television show. *Survivor: China* is a particularly interesting example of the co-creation of industrial culture because the premise of the show mirrors the production challenges faced by the show's crew. On a plane back from Shanghai in 2007, I encountered the crew members of *Survivor: China* returning, wearily, from their sojourn abroad. Whereas the visual culture produced by the TV show focused on the cultural adjustment challenges faced by reality TV cast members, the real reality of *Survivor: China* also included

crew members who participated in a culturally dynamic workplace, albeit without the same level of celebrity attached. In this sense, *Survivor: China* not only used an American television format to discuss Chinese content to shape an understanding of a Mainland Chinese landscape, but the production process also created a meta-industrial structure in which foreign below-the-line film crew workers were participating in the format narrative. What the case of *Survivor: China* demonstrates, but is pervasive throughout the production services model of collaboration in both film and television, is the overlap between diegetic narrative discourses and industrial discourses of production. Particularly in the case of an industrial-cultural dialogue as complex as Sino-U.S. media production, it is crucial to examine the industrial context of production in conjunction with our critical analysis of individual works.

Sino-U.S. cultural-industrial dialogue in collaborative television production is visible in the context of U.S. companies imposing American formats onto Chinese spaces, but the reverse also occurs in the Chinese domestic television market. Chinese television shows have also adapted American platforms to the domestic market, but then used either entirely or a vast majority of China-based film workers. Examples of this type of production behavior include the *American Idol*-inspired *Super Girl*[51] and *The Amazing Race: China Rush*, a reality show on the International Channel Shanghai based on *The Amazing Race*. Doris Baltruschat (2003) highlights the importance of television platforms as a way to transfer narratives across cultures. Yet in the context of *Super Girl* and *The Amazing Race: China Rush*, the new platforms also transformed the cultures of media production in China by creating new types of interaction between audiences and the TV platform. The close production relationship between the spaces,

[51] 超□女声. An excellent example of the comparatively liberal environment of provincial television production, *Super Girl*, produced by Hunan Satellite Television, was not only hugely popular, but also became controversial because it allowed for direct participation of audiences in a "vote." For more on the *Super Girl* phenomenon, see Bingchun Meng's *Who Needs Democracy If We Can Pick Our Favorite Girl?: Super Girl as Media Spectacle* (2009).

people, and even content of media production in Shanghai suggests that the cultural relations that emerge through media production exist on a continuum shaped by spaces of production and industrial cultures, even more than by the medium itself.

Film and television production are arguably the most prominent modes of live-action media collaboration between Chinese and U.S. partners. Yet advertising, a system of media production that employs many overlapping state-owned and private media production resources, offers additional lessons for the development of a more nuanced understanding of Sino-U.S. media collaboration. While most large-scale critical studies of global media production focus on film and television, I would argue that examining the production of advertisements is an important part of developing a full understanding of networks of Sino-U.S. production landscapes.

Advertising

In many ways, the role of collaborative Sino-U.S. advertising production maintains important linkages that facilitate the growth of individual production ecosystems in Chinese studio spaces. Yet while major landmark film co-productions radically transform the production ecosystem of a studio space, the ecosystem continues to adapt in smaller ways in intermittent periods through events such as the production of advertising. An excellent example of the important transitional role of advertising in the development of the Sino-U.S. media production ecosystem is the use of the Nanjing Xi Lu space in between major Sino-U.S. film co-productions. The space, which was remodeled for Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* and then redeployed for *The Mummy 3*, also served as the site for a Coca-Cola commercial in which set builders modified the Shanghai Film Studio's Nanjing Xi Lu cityscape to appear as New York City. The transitional use of the studio's urban landscape reveals multiple fascinating messages about the

significance of international ad production as a gateway between film productions. To begin, the use of the Nanjing Xi Lu site by Coca-Cola suggests the important finding that film co-production is an anchor of Sino-U.S. media dialogue. However, Shanghai's co-production ecosystem also supports life beyond film and television production. Requiring shorter shoot times, advertisers such as Coca-Cola can take advantage of the fallow periods of Sino-U.S. film co-production in order to deploy preexisting semipermanent work groups and their compradors to produce smaller, highly commercial projects. Ultimately, the space acts as a hybrid production ecosystem serving both Sino-U.S. film and advertising communities concurrently.

The implications of the growth of international advertisement production during hiatuses in Sino-U.S. film co-production are also tied to the idea of branding a city through visual media. By deploying the Nanjing Xi Lu space as part of a city ad, but with Shanghai standing in for New York City, the ad turns the idea of production and urban branding on its head. Indeed, we can view location-based advertising as an extension of the Sino-U.S. production ecosystem in that it requires similar principles of cultural negotiation within the context of space, environment, and production practice.

Social Media

In many ways, the principles driving social media regulation can be seen as cousins of the principles behind the regulation of film co-production activity. Sino-U.S. film co-production is a major source of potential economic and technical support for the growth of the Chinese film production market. While local directors have complained about the limitations to capacity caused by film co-production practice, the growth in technical expertise for below-the-line workers as a result of film co-production practice is also equally apparent to filmmakers at many different levels. Similarly, the production of social media has the potential to offer technical

support for the development of social network systems in the Mainland. However, the capacity for social mobilization within the context of the Chinese social network framework creates a uniquely challenging context for the development of social media sites that are not explicitly commercial.

Social media collaborations and film co-productions share a similar set of aesthetic concerns related to the translatability of media products between China and the United States. In the context of film co-production, above-the-line workers must cultivate a style that can appeal to both Chinese and American audiences. A major consideration as it relates to stylistic differences is the pace of editing to create the overall effect of the film. Even co-productions that are shot in China are edited outside of China.[52] As a result, the Western partner substantially influences the final aesthetic overtones of the film co-production. In the context of Sino-U.S. social media collaborations, there are similar aesthetic considerations. In the production of Sino-U.S. social media, Chinese consumers are willing to work with Western Web sites, but the reverse is rarely true. We can theorize that in the transfer of media products between China and the United States, regardless of the locus of production, companies rely on Western platforms and design to move effectively between both markets.

However, movement between the countries in the context of social media, while retaining some of the challenges faced by the movement of content in co-produced films, also has some unique characteristics due to the specific nature of individual forms of social media. Whereas sites like Facebook that offer the opportunity for mass mobilization through social networks have historically been blocked in China, group-buying sites can move more easily between the two countries. The distinction is analogous to the more rigorous control of narrative content in films

[52] Examples include *The Painted Veil*, *The Forbidden Kingdom*, *Code 46*, *The Mummy 3*, and *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*.

than in advertisements; direct commercial activities such as advertising or social media that is transactional in nature are not vetted through the more rigorous part of SARFT that co-produced films are. Thus, by examining co-produced film production in relation to other forms of co-produced media, it is possible to discern privileging of more substantially commercial media.

With increasing information technology infrastructure as well as an exponentially growing population of netizens, China offers a potentially lucrative market for social network activity. However, the banning of Facebook and other transactional sites on the Mainland suggests only a limited central government tolerance for internationally co-created social network activity. Heavily monitored domestic social media sites such as Kaixin Wang and Douban do exist. Similarly, the Chinese media market is dominated by instant messaging sites like QQ that maintain a strong social media component and search engines such as Sina that offer e-mail service, chatting, and a social network space. However, these sites lack the same international fluidity of social media spaces like Facebook.

Intriguingly, group-buying social network sites such as Groupon have been able to establish themselves on the Mainland, suggesting that the co-creation of networks grounded in consuming as a social activity may be a feasible form of international social network practice. The explicitly commercial, social nature of group-buying sites harkens back to the earlier critiques of the Frankfurt School—that the rise of commercial media has the potential to subsume more socially conscious modes of interaction. The existence of sites like Groupon and the restriction of sites like Facebook suggests that while the co-production of social media in China is feasible, modes of international media co-creation that offer clear economic benefits have a far greater likelihood of retaining the ability to operate, and thus to serve as a forum for international interactions. What makes the shared principles of economic growth for China in

the production of international media in China so interesting is the ways in which it inherently biases large-scale media-based cultural interactions between the United States and China to occur within a commercial space.

Animation

Also at the forefront of the development of Sino-U.S. media collaboration is the growth of animation collaborations. Animation co-production practice is similar to film co-production and social media collaborations in that it offers an opportunity for the development of additional technical expertise within the Chinese market through collaboration. As with other modes of manufacturing, it is not known whether these technology transfers will ultimately yield continuous collaboration or will instead create a competitive and non-collaborative Chinese market. However, regardless of what the future holds, animation collaborations in the Chinese market offer an intriguing counterpoint to the case of film co-productions.

There are two major distinctions between film co-production and animated co-production. The first major difference is the key demographic of animated entertainment. The bulk of animated entertainment, particularly in China, focuses on children. As is indicated by the restriction of co-produced theatrical entertainment in Chinese cinemas during the summer holidays, the exposure of children to co-produced media is an area of particular political sensitivity. Because co-produced animation is directed at a sensitive demographic, censors have a clear incentive to limit the co-production of culture in this medium.

By a different logic, co-produced animated entertainment can be viewed as a leading indicator for film co-production activity because of its unique infrastructure demands. Major national film studios still largely control film production activity. Although private production companies such as the Huayi Brothers play important roles within the domestic film production

market, major productions still require collaboration with national film studios. The origins of the national film studios are with the founding of the People's Republic of China, with major studios such as the Beijing Film Studios (now Chinese National Film Studios) founded in the same year as the republic itself. On the other hand, animation companies can exist privately and produce projects without collaboration from the major film studios. Indeed, studios that have been unwilling to set down brick-and-mortar sites for content production for filmed entertainment have entered into agreements to establish animation studios in the Jiangnan region surrounding Shanghai (Lang, 2012; DreamWorks, 2012). Notably, one of Dreamworks's Chinese partners is the recently privatized Shanghai Media Group (DreamWorks). What this ultimately means is that it is possible to create a co-produced animated work without the same level of government buy-in as is required for a co-produced film. The increased liberalization in the co-production of animated works means that the co-production of animation offers important insights into how it may be possible for film co-production to become a more liberalized practice in the future.

Because of the more liberal production environment for animation in China, there is also a different type of personal investment by cultural compradors in the field of media production. Film co-production activity focuses on specific project-based collaborations that yield cultural knowledge that can widely circulate through semipermanent work groups. In contrast, investment in animated co-productions focuses on longer-term potential investments in studios. The overlap and reorganization of film co-production activity potentially leads to faster changes in collaborative approaches between Chinese and American labor groups. However, the development of foreign-invested animation studios suggests the possibility of a longer-term culture of collaboration and the co-creation of narratives. Appropriately, the space of animated

media is also one that allows for the possibility of eliding challenging questions of race and ethnicity in the co-production process, due to the medium's unique ability to reconstitute the human body on screen.

Media co-production in the animated sphere is already showing the greater feasibility of liberalization. Whereas media events like the Shanghai International Film Festival's "Pitch and Catch" forum appeal to mid-level players in contemporary film co-production, similar events in the field of animation attract much higher-profile interest. X Media Lab, an animation-focused event held in Shanghai and Hangzhou in the spring of 2008, attracted players such as the president of Marvel Entertainment and the director of the animated feature *Kung Fu Panda*, both of whom were in China exploring the possibility of establishing a private studio collaboration (E. Rollman & J. Stevenson, personal communication, April 16, 2009). The feasibility of private collaborations within the realm of animated entertainment makes it an interesting counterpoint to co-produced films, particularly when examining the co-production of culture. The more liberal landscape for animated entertainment investment has the potential to yield increasingly open collaborations in terms of the co-development of narratives between Chinese and American companies.

Ultimately, the structural differences between animated projects and film co-productions result in different types of cultural creation. In both cases, the collaborative production of media between China and the United States must incorporate both perspectives for financial reasons, but the specific mode of collaboration differs in important ways. Because the production of animated entertainment relies more heavily on joint-venture studio activity than the more project-based film production, it ultimately has the potential to yield more long-term cultural impact on the mode of production for animated entertainment. Rather than a semipermanent

work group, animation studios create longer-term collaborations. While it is outside of the scope of this chapter to examine the phenomenon of long-term animation collaborations in depth, it is important to note the distinction in the industrial collaboration for the co-creation of culture.

However, animated entertainment differs from live-action filmmaking not only in terms of how organizational differences influence the creative process, but also in terms of the way in which the medium supports cross-cultural narrative production. Animation offers a unique opportunity for Sino-U.S. collaborative projects in that the mode of representation allows for racial ambiguity and fluidity, both challenging and avoiding one of the considerations of transnational spectatorship. In an animated world, all characters are the "other" merely through their fluid representation of reality. In contrast, filmed entertainment contends with the question of how audiences will encounter the "other" represented on screen. In this sense, taking the opportunity to examine film co-production in the context of other modes of collaborative visual media production offers important insight into the challenges of industrial media production between China and the United States.

Running in parallel with the massive infrastructure growth in the film studio capacity in the area immediately surrounding Shanghai is an important parallel growth phenomenon in the Jiangnan city of Suzhou. This suggests that the economic liberalization of the region, combined with its distance from the regulatory arm of Beijing, has had an impact on not only the growth of film production infrastructure, but also on the growth of parallel media industries that engage with foreign production talent. In many ways, the space of international animation production in the Jiangnan region follows the growth of creative industries infrastructure in the region. Like industrial cultures of film co-production, the animation industry followed not the center of culture in China, but instead took its lead from other contexts of industrial production. Suzhou's

role as a major site for animation production began in 2005, four years after China's accession to the WTO, and four years before the agreement to form Shanghai Disney, suggesting an international teleology for the relationship between domestic infrastructure and international production activity. Moreover, the growth of animation infrastructure in Suzhou links back to foreign direct investment in technology in the region. In 2005, the Singaporean government made a major investment into the economic development of Suzhou through the creation of the Suzhou Industrial Park as part of a bilateral agreement with the Chinese government (Ganesan, 2005). Subsequently, the Chinese government invested in the creation of a second industrial zone, SISPARK—the Suzhou International Science Park—in direct competition with the Singaporean-Chinese venture (Ganesan). Notably, whereas the initial investment of infrastructure development broadly focused on the development of international technical production and management infrastructure, the second park, created by the Chinese government, redeploys the space as a focus for the creative industries—particularly animation.

But it is not only in Suzhou, a key city of the Jiangnan region, that we can see extensive growth in the spaces set aside for the creation of international animation projects. Shanghai also has its own Animation and Comic Zone. The site is described by promotional literature as "the first of its kind in China" ("Animation and Comic Zone," n.d., para. 1), highlighting Shanghai's role in the forefront of the development of the animation industry. At the same time, the branding materials also explicitly highlight the importance of the park as a way to "build an industry clustering of animation and comic products in China" ("Animation and Comic Zone," n.d., para. 1). Finally, the branding material situates the site in relation to other key Shanghai cultural resources, including creative labor from Shanghai University and People's Square, the de facto city center ("Animation and Comic Zone," n.d.). The branding literature situates the

new animation industrial park in terms of its role in cultivating a robust animation industry in Shanghai, but the publication of the park on Shanghai's "International Creative City" Web site (http://www.creativecity.sh.cn/en/index.aspx) underscores the importance of overlap between the cultures of transnational cultural production within the city.

Industrial Parks and Branding

As with film co-production, the growth of industrial infrastructure for animation facilitated the growth of self-conscious branding events to define the practice of international creative collaboration between China and the West. For example, SISPARK is now home to X Media Lab, a yearly summit between high-level culture workers from both China and the West to facilitate industrial growth. Like the China Film Pitch and Catch, the events focus on brokering cultural knowledge about the cultural industries in order to create new ventures. Notably, the events offer "Western"-style receptions. In 2009, the China Film Pitch and Catch reception was at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel in Shanghai. The X: Media Lab reception took place at the Glamour Bar in the M on the Bund complex, a concession-era building renovated the year before China's accession to WTO and designed to "reference Shanghai's glamorous past," but to provide an experience "grounded in classical European techniques." ("Thirteen Years," n.d.) The deployment of spaces with a self-consciously "foreign" influence reveals an inflection of accommodation to Western modes of social interaction as a way to facilitate growth. Rather than banquets or formal receptions with elaborate toasts, events like the Pitch and Catch Forum and the X Media Lab also rely on the more progressive business culture of the city as a way to accommodate a less familiar mode of social interaction in business settings.

In addition to the cultural knowledge transmitted by the reception, the X Media Lab animation market, like the China Film Pitch and Catch, also incorporated an industry "matching" event, placing Chinese animation studios with producers from the United States and vice versa. In both contexts, the industry socialization within the "pitch" forum encouraged Chinese film workers to adapt to "norms" of pitching within an American filmmaking context. However, at the same time, these "norms"—which actually represent a broad range of business activities in the world of entertainment in Los Angeles—became distilled "industry knowledge" for Chinese film and animation studio members to learn in an encounter with the "other."

Indeed, this is part of a larger international branding effort for Shanghai. The entire system operates as part of Shanghai's role as a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities network. Branding events such as the Shanghai International Creative Industry Activity Week highlight the interconnectedness of the cultures of co-production across a broad range of industries.

Final Words

Ultimately, important next steps beyond the analysis of Sino-U.S. film co-production would include a more detailed examination of how the key issues of collaboration highlighted in this dissertation transfer to realms of other Sino-U.S. co-production activities. How does the work of compradors in the media industries operate in advertising, animation, television, and social media? How do production ecosystems overlap and cross-pollinate within the same region? How does urban branding impact the entire swath of media industries? In turn, how do the media industries fortify urban and regional brands in post-WTO China? Understanding Sino-U.S. film co-production is an essential foundation to exploring these questions, but also creates exciting spaces for further exploration.

At its core, this dissertation schematizes the collaboration process on four different levels: the individual, the production space, the city, and the transnational network. However, this work differs from previous scholarship by highlighting the ways in which these levels jointly contribute to the process of global media production, albeit on significantly different registers. Indeed, it is this often-multilayered collaboration between cultures that has confounded scholars in the development of terminology to describe interactions across cultures of production. "Transnational" can be inaccurate because frequently, these activities occur within one country but are composed of people with a broad range of backgrounds. "International" suggests collaboration between entities on the level of the nation state, which often inaccurately describes the size and level of collaboration. Similarly, a term like "global" fails to capture the specificity of interactions between individual members of individual cultures. By highlighting the work of individuals (compradors) and communities (production ecosystems/urban branding), this dissertation addresses, in part, the conundrum of classifying the process of Sino-U.S. collaboration in the media industries and beyond.

Appendix

Sample Industrial Discourse About Film Co-Production

Kokas, A. (2009). APA interview with John Woo. *Asia Pacific Arts*. Retrieved from http://asiapacificarts.usc.edu/article@apa?apa_interview_with_john_woo_1899.aspx

Asia Pacific Arts: 赤壁'是一个香港台湾日本韩国大陆和美国合拍电影.

这对电影有什么影响? 你是'赤壁'的一个制片人.

对你来说这部电影算是一个中美 / 日中 / 韩中合拍电影?

[*Red Cliff* is a co-production between Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, the U.S., Japan, and Korea. As a producer of the film, how would you characterize its origins? Sino-U.S.? Sino-Japanese? Sino-Korean?]

John Woo: 都有的.

我們有美國的一個公司要投資這個電影讓我覺得要拍一個'三國'的故事是一個那麼吸引國際觀眾的題材, 他是很有這個吸引力. 那麼, 後來就加入了日本, 韓國, 台灣有其他的投資.

那麼,我們都知道日本也很迷這個'三國'的故事,

韓國的中學也有'三國'的課程所以讓我在設計這個電影的時候讓我更加興奮.

這樣的電影真的可以口稱是一個國際性的電影. 是很有支前.

但是一定要作一個調整因為你說這個西方國家他們不懂的我們的歷史.

他們不曉得裡邊的因素人物所以要考慮要用什麼樣的方式讓亞洲人看起來還是一個'三國'的故事, 但是讓西方人來看的時候, 他們也會覺得是一個非常有趣的一個電影,

他們能夠明白的一個電影所以有我們考慮到兩個版本.

一個是給亞洲觀眾看的因為他們對這個歷史, 這個人物很有興趣，很認識. 那麼, 美國觀眾, 西方觀眾的故事可能比較簡單一些其中是在場面和人性的表現.

這樣可以作成一個國際市場的美麗. 在中國拍的話就更有理想.

我們是有政府個方面的支持. 故事也發生在中國.

[It is all of those. There was a U.S. company that offered to invest when we decided to film *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. I thought that the story offered material that appealed to an international audience. It is tremendously attractive. So, we later added Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese investment. We all know that in Japan there is much enthusiasm for the story of the *Three Kingdoms*. In Korea, there are middle school classes on *Three Kingdoms*. Therefore, when I was conceptualizing this film, I became more and more excited. This type of film can genuinely be greeted as an international film. It had much support from the beginning. But we definitely had to make adjustments [for the U.S. version] because, as you know, people from Western countries don't understand our history. They do not know the original characters in the story. So, we needed to consider what Asian audiences would want to see in a "Three Kingdoms" film, yet allow Westerners to see a very interesting movie as well -- one that they could understand. So, we considered two releases. One is for Asian audiences, who are very interested in the history and who know the characters. The U.S. version is simpler in terms of the scenes and characters. This way the film works beautifully for the entire international market. Filming in Mainland China was really ideal. We had support from the government at every level, and of course, the story occurred in China. One other thing is that I have wanted to make this film for a very long time -- for twenty years.]

APA: 你什么时候开始想拍这部电影?

[When did you first want to shoot this film?]

JW: 我想拍這個電影很舊, 有二十年, 拍 A Better Tomorrow 以後就開始想拍,

但是那個時候沒有錢也沒有這個technology. 那,

我覺得西方人對我們中國人電影的了解只有武俠片, 一些動作片.

他們很少有機會認識到我們文化的另外一方面, 知道我們中國人做人的原則是什麼,

知道我們的理想是什麼. 很難在一個武俠片表現出來.

但是'三國'特別是這個赤壁之戰是很能表現我們中國人的機會和當年戰陣的聰明還有一種

做人做事態度 -- 種風度像梁朝偉這樣可以表現出來.

我在外國怎麼多年他們對我非常禮儀非常好我也有很多實習的機會, 很多交朋友的機會,

但是我覺得他們對我們文化的了解還是不夠 -- 只有了解西方.

我希望他們可以更了解我們所以我就選定認為這個Red Cliff .

這個故事是可以讓很多人對我們多了解. 這個是一個交朋友最好的方式.

[I have wanted to shoot this film for a long time -- for twenty years, starting after *A Better Tomorrow* -- but at that time we didn't have any money. We also didn't have the technology. I think that Westerners' understanding of Chinese people's filmmaking is limited to martial arts and action movies. Westerners rarely have the opportunity to experience another part of Chinese culture -- to know the principles behind why Chinese people behave the way they do, and to know what our ideals are. It is very difficult to show those things in a martial arts film. However, the *Three Kingdoms*, and especially the story of *Red Cliff*, is a good opportunity to reveal the military cunning of that period of battle, as well as their approach to work and their overall bearing, as is so well revealed by Tony Leung Chiu-Wai's acting. I was abroad for so many years, and they were so polite to me, so good, and I had many chances to learns, many

opportunities to make friends. But I think Westerners do not understand Chinese culture well enough. They only understand the West. I want them to better understand us, so I chose to make *Red Cliff*. This story can help many people better understand us. This is the best way to build relationships.]

APA: 对对对.

[Yes, yes, definitely.]

JW:

我作一个filmmaker很感激可以在不同的国家交朋友。我在美国学了很多，我在香港也作了很多电影。有一分感激就能交很多的朋友。那么在加上中国最近

有很多文化的变化，也有一批非常可爱喜欢拍电影的年轻人。年轻人都喜爱电影，喜欢学，希望能够参与一个象好莱坞这么大的剧作当作一个学习的机会，想让他们

学一些好莱坞的经验，让他们有机会用一些新的器材. 他们都工作的很好。

[Being a filmmaker, I have been very fortunate to make friends from many countries. I have learned so much in the U.S., and I have also made many films in Hong Kong. I have an appreciation for building these relationships. To add to that, recently in China there have been many cultural changes, as well as a group of charming young people who like to make movies. Young people all like watching moves. They like learning. I hoped for them to participate in a big Hollywood production as a learning experience to help them pick up some Hollywood-style experience -- to give them an opportunity to use some new equipment. They all worked extremely well.]

APA: 所以拍这部片子的过程还是一个很重要交流的机会?

[So the process of filming this movie was an important cultural exchange opportunity?]

JW: 因為我們也帶了美國的工作人員還有韓國的, 香港, 台灣,

大陸大家一起合作還有大家一起學習一個不同的經驗.

因為我知道現在有很多美國投資在大陸, 如果他們

（年輕人）學在這裡以後他們可以去任何別的劇組。

[Because we brought Americans, Koreans, Hong Kong people, Taiwanese, and Mainland Chinese together, everyone went through a new experience. Because I know that now there is much American investment in Mainland China, if they [young Chinese filmmakers] study here [on the set of *Red Cliff*], they will be able to work on any other crew.]

APA:

我和一些合拍电影剧组人员谈过还有他们都说在合拍电影一定要有三到四个人了解美国拍电影的文化也了解中国拍 电影的文化还是韩国的. 这些人是来当作一个glue.

我想问一下在你的片子里边你有没有需要这样的人在你的剧组里边所以拍出来就可以成功了.

[I've spoken with people from a variety of co-productions, and everyone has said that it is necessary to have three or four people who understand American filmmaking culture and also understand Chinese filmmaking culture, or Korean filmmaking culture. These people act as a sort of glue. I would like to ask: on your film did you need this type of person in the crew to ensure the success of filming?]

JW: 要看是那一種題材的電影. 香港的本身題材的電影我們用香港人就可以了.

但是像拍一個Red Cliff這樣的電影因為是要involve一些new

technology大特技技術，那需要很多國家的工作人員.

在大陸也有這樣的人才但是他們剛開始所以還是需要一些外國的技術來讓他們學.

我比較喜歡用不同的人才從不同的國家, 這樣大家可以一起合作.

甚至是我們的音樂也是日本人作的. 在這個戲裡邊可以有一個不同的感覺.

我也希望用這個機會讓中國人了解美國人的方式,

也讓美國人了解中國人做事的態度還有他們的創意. 這樣是一個很好的事情.

[It is important to look at what type of material you are filming. With material from Hong Kong, working with a Hong Kong crew is fine. But films like *Red Cliff* involve some new technology -- special effects technology. That requires crew from many countries. In the Mainland, they also have this type of personnel but they are just starting, so they still need some foreign technology to learn from. I prefer to use different people from different countries -- this way we can collaborate together. The music was even created by a Japanese composer. This way the project can have a different feel. I hope to use this as an opportunity to help Chinese people understand American styles and also to let Americans understand the Chinese work ethic and their creativity. This is a very good thing.]

APA: 是的. 那我还是想问一下,

在大陆有一些人说多有合拍电影会让中国当地拍电影的市场更弱,

就是有很多外国人来当地的人没有机会.

还有另外一个想法像你一样的说多有交流就能够让当地的电影市场更强. 你是怎么认为的?

[Definitely. So, I would like to ask, in the Mainland there are people who say that the more foreign co-productions there are, the weaker the [Chinese domestic] market will become. Because there are many foreigners coming, locals lack opportunities. There is another perspective, similar to yours, suggesting that having more exchange creates a stronger market. What do you think?]

JW: 我覺得合拍電影多了也不會減弱本土電影創作, 反而給觀眾多了很多了選擇.

可以看一些結合不同的東西的電影同時也很享受本土的電影.

有很多本土的電影拍的非常的好. 我們Red Cliff賣了三錢萬人民幣.'非誠勿擾'

馮小剛的電影賣了四千一百萬人民幣. 他拍的很好.

因為大陸觀眾喜歡看從'赤壁'和'非誠勿擾'之後是吸引很多觀眾從新找到電影院去.

那麼他們也喜歡看外國電影也喜歡看本土的電影所以不會受影響.

我們帶一些新的工作方式, 新的經驗帶到大陸的話會有影響.

比如說他們本來一個星期要工作七天. 我改到工作六天.

一定要每天讓工作人員有十二個小時休息, 讓他們吃的飽, 加他們薪水.

所以有很多人說我破壞了這個行業. 可是我覺得用一些好萊塢的方式好. 你不能每天工作.

他們不會很累. 那麼這樣好. 以後他們拍的比我們更好.

我覺得有很多事情雙方都要一個諧調, 大家要多交流. 怎麼樣作也好, 合拍電影好,

本土電影也好, 都希望把中國電影拍好.

[I think film co-production will not weaken local film. Rather, it gives audiences more choices. They can view different things mixed in, and at the same time appreciate a local film. Many local films are shot extremely well. *Red Cliff* sold 300 million RMB at the box office. *If You Are the One*, a film by Feng Xiaogang, sold 410 million RMB at the box office. They shot the film very well. Because Mainland audiences liked watching *Red Cliff* and *If You Are the One*, and they were attracted back to the theaters to go watch other new films. Audiences like watching foreign movies and also local movies, so there won't be a significant influence. We have brought over a new style of working -- new experiences on the Mainland that will have an impact. For example,

in one week they worked seven days. I changed it to a six-day week. I definitely wanted to give workers twelve hours of rest time per day, have them eat enough to be full, improve their salaries. There are people who said I was destroying this industry, but I think adopting a few Hollywood ways is good. You cannot work every day. They would be very tired. This way is good. Ultimately, they will shoot better than us. I think there are many ways that both sides can harmonize, where everyone can have an exchange. However that happens is good -- as a co-production, as a local film, the hope is that Chinese films will be shot well.]

APA: 对你来说合拍电影在中国会越来越多吗?

[From your perspective, will film co-productions become more frequent?]

JW: 和香港拍越來越多. 外國投資也越來越多.

[Mainland-Hong Kong co-productions will become more frequent. Foreign film investment will also become more frequent.]

APA: 在这个150 分钟的西方release我有看到过不在亚洲版的character introductions 和 voiceover. 我和一些西方朋友看过西方版本还有他们觉得很有用的.

[In the 150 minute Western release, we get character introductions and voiceover not seen in the Asian version. I watched this Western edit with some Western friends and they found it useful.]

Were there any other methods that you used to cue the audience about the story -- like using more of a Shakespearean five-act structure in the Western version? What was your thought process when you were doing the edit?

JW: Well, besides using the titles, I didn't know what else to do. There was a suggestion by the distributor. We also used them in the Japanese version. They started using it that way for the introduction first. Many Japanese are familiar with this part of history, but less so for the young

audience. The young audience 只有從 [only rely on] comic books 和 [and] games 來學到這個 '三國'的故事 [to learn the story of the *Three Kingdoms*]. They don't know much about the history, so [the distributors] suggested using some voiceover and subtitles to explain how the story starts and all the characters' background, so this would really help the young Japanese audience to catch the story right away. So we are using that method for the American version as well. The other way was trying to simplify the story and focus the main story line and the key characters. Suppose for the Asian version there were ten stories. I think it could be too much for the American audience, so we had to focus on one story. That would make it easier for them to relate to all of the characters.

APA: Do you have any plans to do any additional video games, for this or any other movies?

JW: Nah, no, no.

Filmography

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