Made in Hong Kong

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Supplementary text to the documentary film
MADE IN HONG KONG (75 mins.)

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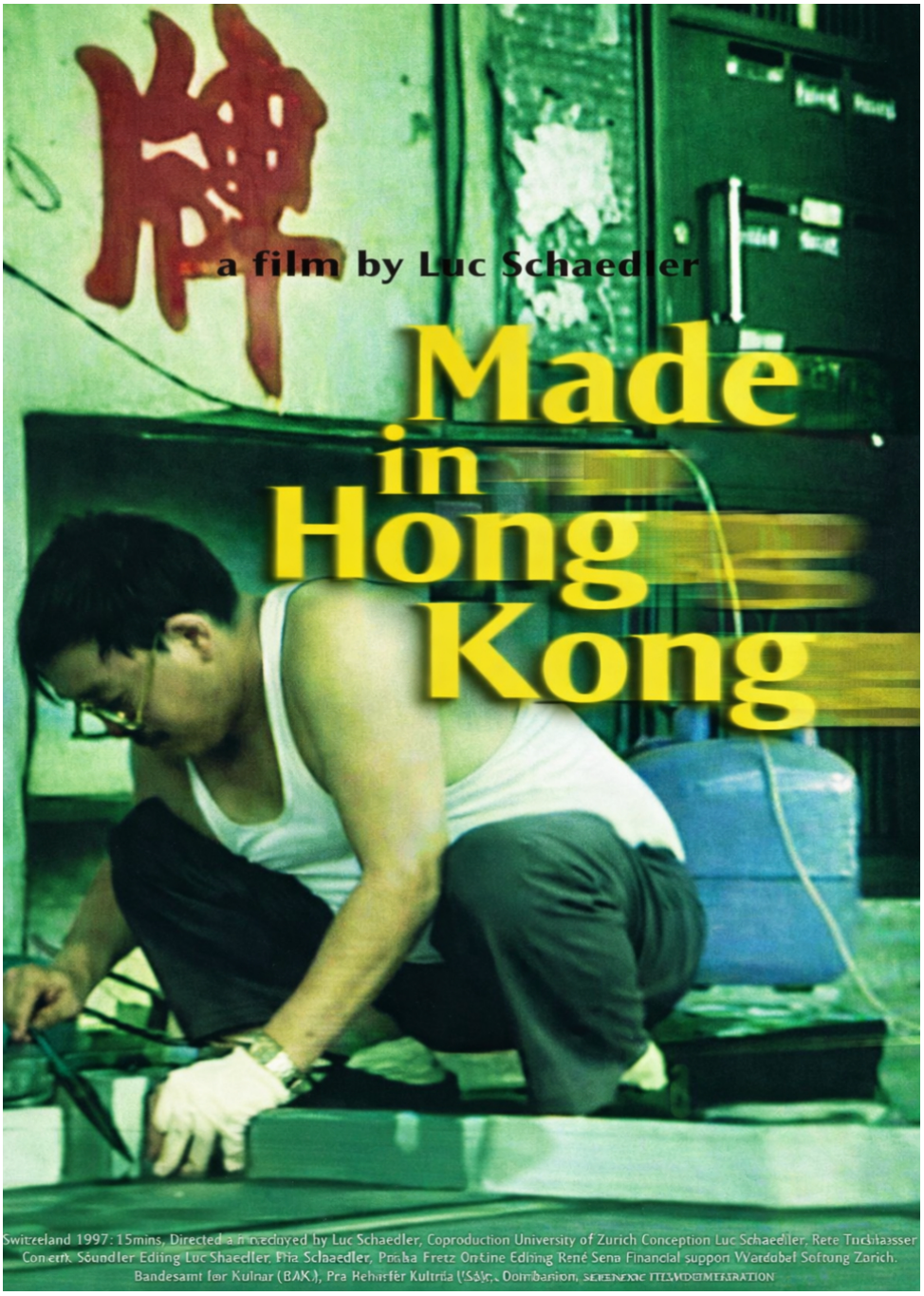

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Part 1: Introduction

On the Making of the Film

When I landed in Hong Kong in the winter of 1989 after a several-hour flight from Sydney, I was thrilled. The final approach brought the plane so close to the high-rise buildings that you could literally watch people eating inside their apartments. The airport was right in the middle of the city. Due to a lack of space – as I correctly guessed – the runway had been built out into the sea. It was then, for the first time, that the thought flashed through my mind: someone should make a film about Hong Kong. The same thought came to me again later, when I first encountered Chungking Mansions – a slum-like block of buildings in the heart of Hong Kong, inhabited mainly by migrants from the Indian subcontinent. The bazaar-like chaos, the noise, the exotic smells, and the fascinating blend of Third World and high-tech reminded me of one of my favourite films: the science-fiction classic Blade Runner by Ridley Scott (1982). That I myself – not just "someone" – would six years later make a documentary film about Hong Kong was something I would never have dared imagine back then. But things turned out differently: in autumn 1995, I began work on the film, which was planned as the central component of my licentiate with Prof. Michael Oppitz. On 30 June 1997, just in time for the day of Hong Kong's handover to China, the premiere took place at the Kino Xenix in Zurich. Against all expectations, and surpassing my wildest hopes, the film was met with a tremendous response. Made in Hong Kong – the title of the film – was screened in various cinemas across Switzerland and was invited to four international film festivals in Canada (Vancouver), South Korea (Pusan), and Germany (Leipzig, Duisburg). In this respect, the film far exceeded the university context in which it was made. With the written component of my licentiate, I am attempting, in a sense, to bring it back to the university. The following production report is intended as a tool for students who wish to work with the film and/or who are engaged in their own film project in Visual Anthropology. The text is structured so that it can be read either before or after watching the film, though I personally would recommend watching Made in Hong Kong first, so as to approach it as openly and without preconceptions as possible.

In the first part, I will present my motivations for making the film. These introductory reflections will lead me, in the second part, to the chapter structure of my film, which in various ways reflects my own experience with Hong Kong. Here, alongside the biographical connection to the themes addressed in the individual chapters, I will also provide historical and bibliographical material. This material is intended, on the one hand, to supply helpful background information and, on the other, to enable a deeper, more extended engagement with individual topics that I was unable to do justice to within the film itself. This is followed by a presentation of the people who appear in the film as my conversation partners. In the third part, I will describe how I proceeded methodologically:

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during the preparation and research phase and during filming. The fourth part deals with the post-production phase (editing and montage). I make no claim that my methods – some of which only emerged in the course of the work, and partly by chance – are universally valid or applicable. But gaining insight into a fellow student's way of working can help reflect on one's own approach, and perhaps spark new ideas along the way. The fifth and final part is the appendix, which will contain a thematically organised bibliography, various graphs on economics, and a selection of my worksheets (interview guidance, transcription, structuring the field of work, etc.). I will of course include a VHS viewing copy of my film Made in Hong Kong with the written work. This is the 80-minute English original version with German subtitles.

Thoughts on My Motivations

In his book Directing the Documentary (1992), documentary filmmaker Michael Rabiger notes that one must engage with a chosen topic over a longer period of time – sometimes several years. It is therefore important to be clear about whether you actually have something to say about the subject, whether you genuinely want to spend that much time with it, and whether there is some form of personal connection (pp. 35ff). There must be an inner necessity to do the work. Although I worked on my project for only just under two years – short for a feature-length documentary – the question of why I had ever thought of making a film about Hong Kong became acute during times of crisis. What helped me through those difficult periods was less the subject itself (or its topicality) than my personal connection to it, which operated on two distinct levels.

Through my in-depth engagement with Hong Kong, I was able to touch on a question more central to me: the confrontation with the foreign (an unfamiliar culture) and the experience of being foreign myself. A question that has never left me since my extended travels through Asia (1988–90). Through getting to know cultures that were alien to me, I became partly estranged from my own culture and turned into someone without a home – while feeling at home in two worlds, even though the deeper access to the Asian one will ultimately remain closed to me. This mixture of getting to know a culture, feeling at home within it, and yet remaining a stranger, showed itself most clearly to me in Hong Kong and intensified during my work there. While the curiosity and hospitality I encountered in India, Thailand, or even in China left me with the illusion of belonging, at least a little, I repeatedly came up against indifference, disinterest, and even open rejection in Hong Kong. An experience shared by my interview partners as well as by all my acquaintances who had lived in Hong Kong for extended periods. In the case of Hong Kong, this led to an extremely ambivalent relationship on my part, best expressed in the words of Nicole Turner, one of my interview partners: "(...) I really hated it, but I have grown to like it... (Pause) ... I love it and I hate it... (she laughs)." The film conveys that she is not alone in her ambivalent feelings about Hong Kong.

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This ambivalence finds a correspondence in my childhood, in a formative memory of my late father. He was the only child in his family, in the 1940s, who was able to receive a proper education. This took him from a small, manageable village in the canton of Graubünden to Paris and Zurich. For as long as I can remember, my father reflected on having left his homeland (Untervaz) and moved to foreign places (Paris, Zurich), and in the years before his death he increasingly described it as a problematic and ultimately burdensome experience that he had never truly come to terms with. My intense engagement with Hong Kong and my ambivalent feelings about it offered me, over the past two years, an opportunity to better understand the sense of rootlessness in my father's life and to grapple with the tragedy contained within it. Even if this experience is not directly recognisable in the film – perhaps only to people who know me well – it resonates as a hidden statement (Oppitz 1989) in individual images and sequences.

Working visually raises a problem that Oppitz addresses in his book Die Kunst der Genauigkeit (1989). After making a case for treating the image on equal terms with the word (p. 24), he explains how two distinct semiological layers can be identified in an image (pp. 24ff). Oppitz calls these layers the "surplus value" of the image; they consist of the intended and the hidden image content. The intended content aims to depict the subject as faithfully as possible, as it actually is. Once the subject has been depicted, the hidden content slips in, as it were, through the back door. The faithful depiction of a subject carries information not only about the subject itself, but also about the creator of the image: "his individual or collective ideas and fantasies, his skills and the style of the era in which he expresses himself visually" (p. 24). The image – or, in the case of a film, the sequence of images – thus carries information not only about the depicted subject (in my case, the city of Hong Kong) but also about my conception and interpretation of Hong Kong (e.g. the experience of being a stranger in this city).

In the choice of persons – which often came about "by chance" – my attitude towards Hong Kong is reflected. In the end, I only had genuinely productive conversations with people who, like me, had developed an ambivalent relationship (a love-hate relationship) with the city. Even if they had perhaps established themselves in Hong Kong more successfully, they had remained outsiders. With the other interview candidates, the conversation quickly dried up and lacked the depth necessary for an interesting exchange. Out of twelve people in total, I therefore chose only six for the film. With one exception, the selected individuals did not grow up in Hong Kong; rather, for various reasons, they had each decided at a certain point in their lives to leave their home country and move to Hong Kong to build a new existence. Leaving their familiar place of security was tied to particular ideas about the new place. In the conversations, I tried to find out where they came from, why they had decided to leave their homeland, what ideas they had had about Hong Kong, what their first impression was, and what they were doing today – years later. But not only in the

choice of persons, but also in the structure and chapter layout of the film, does my conception and interpretation of Hong Kong come through. Following my own personal story, the film is conceived as a journey to Hong Kong: after an introductory, panoramic title sequence set to the song "Hong Kong" by Screamin' Jay Hawkins, the viewer arrives in the city in the first chapter – Arrival. In the following six chapters – Stories, Space Management & Le Corbusier, Chinatown, Chungking Mansions, Nothing to Celebrate, and 1997 – the city gradually reveals itself: one hears different impressions and assessments of Hong Kong from various people, and eventually leaves the city to melancholic Cantonese music, departing the same way one arrived.

Part 2: The Film

Chapter Structure

As mentioned above, the film consists of seven chapters that, in their sequence, simulate a journey to Hong Kong in which the viewer gradually gets to know the city. In what follows, I would like to discuss each chapter (theme) in terms of four aspects: 1. The idea behind each chapter, extending Oppitz's distinction between intended and hidden image content to the content of an entire chapter. Here I will try to present the intended content. 2. The biographical connection to the chapter, where the hidden content – which has slipped in through my own person – will be hinted at. 3. Historical and economic references, where I will mention the most important historical and economic events underlying the chapter's theme. 4. Materials, where I will refer primarily to the relevant literature (and graphics), to enable a deeper engagement with the topics addressed. In these four points, I aim neither to give an exhaustive account of Hong Kong's history or economic development – for that, I refer in point 4 (Materials) to the relevant literature, which can and should be consulted – nor to inflate my own biography unnecessarily. Rather, I want to point to what seem to me the most important aspects of Hong Kong's history and to identify the city's distinctive features that strike me as important and necessary for a better understanding of the city (and, of course, of my film).

Title Sequence and End Credits

These two sequences, which are not independent chapters in their own right, form the brackets of the film and determine its narrative structure, framing it as a travel report: one arrives in Hong Kong, stays for a while, and leaves again. In these sequences, the choice of music seems to me particularly significant. In the title sequence, the song "Hong Kong" by Screamin' Jay Hawkins links the images to the title cards. In it, Hawkins sings about his girlfriend, who lives "standing in a corner, down in Hong Kong," and in the refrain he imitates the distinctive South Chinese dialect,

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ironically exaggerating the tonal characteristics of the Chinese language. The piece is less about Hong Kong itself than about his idea of Hong Kong. In the title sequence, I deliberately chose images that visually summarise Hong Kong: high-rises, signs, people, faces, TV sequences, rejection, kung-fu, and also 1997. My intention was to provide, as if in a table of contents, a brief preview of what was to come. One of the last and, for me, most important images in this sequence shows a Chinese man who notices my camera, stands up, and waves me away emphatically with his newspaper. This form of rejection was a frequently recurring experience during my stays in Hong Kong and during filming. Placed at the beginning of the film, the shot was intended to carry the feeling of rejection atmospherically through the entire film.

In the end credits, one leaves Hong Kong the same way one arrived – by ship. In the meantime, however, the viewer has gotten to know the city better through seven chapters, and has hopefully developed some kind of relationship with it. The music is now no longer from a Westerner singing "about" Hong Kong, but from a Chinese person singing "from" Hong Kong. Sam Hui is one of the most important figures in Canto-Pop, which developed in the 1970s as a response to the Mandarin-language pop songs of the time. The trailblazer for this development towards a more distinctly Hong Kong identity was the film industry, which stopped producing films in classical Chinese (Mandarin) and switched to the local South Chinese dialect, Cantonese. This reflects, on a cultural level, the waning influence of the nostalgic Chinese immigrants of the 1940s and '50s, who were increasingly integrating into Hong Kong and beginning to regard it as their home. The transition from Western music (title sequence) to Chinese music (end credits) allows us to follow this development atmospherically, to a certain extent, without explicitly pointing to it. Hong Kong has, at least for me, briefly become a home. The melancholic mood of Sam Hui's piece at the end of the film is intended to convey a sense of sadness and wistfulness at the departure. The overcast sky and the dim light of the final shots reflect the uncertain future surrounding 1997.

Arrival

The Idea

Unlike other cities, where you simply go, Hong Kong is – in my view – a city where you arrive. I therefore wanted the viewer of my film to arrive in Hong Kong. In this context, I wanted the statements (cf. Appendix: English Dialogue List) to point to the different ideas and expectations that can be bound up with such an arrival. At the visual level, I wanted the viewer to approach the city slowly from the outside, catching only a glimpse of its fascinating façade. The arrival takes place by ship for two reasons: on the one hand, I was not allowed to film the approach from the plane, and on the other, arriving by ship carries the symbolic weight of arrival more powerfully. At the same time, it allows for a reference to British colonialism and to Hong Kong's history as a harbour city.

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Biographical Connection

Through childhood and adolescent memories, Hong Kong had imprinted itself on me as a city of plastic toys (Made in Hong Kong) and kung-fu (Bruce Lee). Later impressions of Hong Kong remained as outside views – I described my first flight in the introduction. On the subsequent bus ride to Tsim Sha Tsui, countless Chinese signs flew past me – I was captivated by their strong visual presence. Today I wonder whether the fascination that radiated from the Chinese characters stemmed from the fact that I could only guess at what they meant. They offered themselves as a projection screen. Once I learned, after some time, to recognise the characters (without understanding their meaning!), I already felt almost at home. A feeling of belonging crept in – but real understanding remained an illusion, existing only in one's own imagination. Ultimately the signs remained visual stimuli. And so I could not make a film about Hong Kong, but only "about" my ideas, my conception of this city.

Historical and Economic References

The history of Hong Kong as a colonial city is approximately 150 years old. Throughout the entire history of Hong Kong, arrival remained a central experience for its people, since Hong Kong was a classic city of immigration: initially for English opium traders as well as for the Indian soldiers and merchants who came with them (around 1843–1898), and later for South Chinese immigrants before, during and after the Chinese Revolution (around 1911, 1945–60), as well as for masses of refugees from Vietnam (from 1976) and waves of migrant workers from across the Pacific region (from 1980). Thanks to Hong Kong's political stability and remarkable economic development since the Second World War – from an insignificant harbour town to the most important financial centre in the Pacific region – the arrival of many people was associated with the idea of Hong Kong as an Eldorado. Hong Kong was (and is) a safe harbour and a political and economic refuge.

Materials

The moment of arrival appears in both novels by James Clavell: Tai-Pan (1966) and Noble House (1981). In Tai-Pan, the historical arrival and the rivalry between two competing opium-trading families is rendered in literary form, while Noble House continues this conflict into the 1960s. When Mr. Bartlett, one of the main characters, steps off the plane on his arrival in Hong Kong, he asks: "What's this smell?" And receives the answer: "That's Hong Kong's very own – it's money!" (p. 43). As with the statements of my interview partners (cf. Appendix: Dialogue List), a sense of expectation is created here that seems typical of people going to Hong Kong. In the famous novel The World of Suzie Wong (1957) by Richard Mason, the author has the hero arrive by Star Ferry and meet Suzie Wong there. In the second part of my arrival sequence, I visually reference the novel and deliberately chose images of the Star Ferry that also appear in the later Hollywood film of the same name (1961). Excerpts from the film are incorporated in the second chapter, Stories.

Historical accounts can be found in Welsh (1993) and Cameron (1991), who primarily present the English version; White (1994), which addresses the Indian perspective; and Yee (1992), which offers the Chinese viewpoint.

Stories

The Idea

In this chapter, I wanted to give an overview of Hong Kong's history in an atmospheric rather than a historically detailed way. Eric Lye summarises the historical origins of Hong Kong in his statement and addresses the Chinese trauma of British superiority in the previous century. Guo Danian (Chinese) and Peter Mann (English) were meant to act as representatives of their respective groups, making their history tangible through anecdote. Whereas the aspect of Chinese immigration is central to Guo Danian, colonial history and a sense of adventure play the key role for Peter Mann. Since the three individuals differ in the topics (and time periods) they address, I consistently assigned different images to each of them. The TV spot of the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, placed between Eric Lye and Guo Danian, was intended to make clear that the immigration story of Guo Danian's parents' generation has already become myth and been integrated into Hong Kong's sense of self-identity: from nothing to great wealth within a single generation – or in Guo Danian's words: "...from a nothing much city to become the financial centre of the world!" A circumstance that, paradoxically, even the anarchist Guo Danian takes pride in. The film excerpts from The World of Suzie Wong (1961), used alongside Peter Mann, were intended to show "historical" images of Hong Kong from the 1960s, to allow a comparison with today, while simultaneously illustrating the colonial tone of Peter Mann's statements with a touch of irony. It is also a homage to the most famous novel about Hong Kong, which has shaped many people's image of the city – Hollywood's conception of Hong Kong.

Biographical Connection

It is a commonplace that Hong Kong is defined by the collision of two distinct cultures – the Chinese and the British. My biographical contribution is that this coexistence always fascinated me in Hong Kong – and is also why I engaged so deeply with Hong Kong's history. In this coexistence, which for an outsider can also become a sense of opposition, I saw a reflection of my own "rootlessness," which I already discussed above in "Thoughts on My Motivations." As a "Gwailo" (Cantonese: foreign devil) and a non-Englishman, I could not truly identify with either of the two cultures. In addition, a long friendship (since 1984) connects me to Guo Danian, and I found his "political" perspective on the city extremely refreshing, not least because it often coincided with my own. As for Peter Mann, I only got to know him during the filming. Over those three months, Peter Mann became, beyond his significance as an interview partner, an important sounding board and

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friend for me. We were in constant dialogue about our relationship to Hong Kong and my difficult day-to-day film work. In this sense, the chapter "Stories" is also a homage to two friends.

Historical and Economic References

In this chapter, the three individuals address different aspects and periods of Hong Kong's history, which I will briefly sketch here (cf. Appendix: Timeline and Aspects of Hong Kong History). Eric Lye refers in essence to the conquest phase of Hong Kong, from its beginnings (1823) to its consolidation (1898). Since their first contact with China, the English opium traders exploited the technological superiority of their ships and weapons. Their clippers were far more manoeuvrable and had a shallower draught than the unwieldy Chinese junks. This allowed them to advance by sea all the way to Canton, the most important city in South China, in record time, and to bombard and besiege it from their ships. In both the First Opium War (1843) and the Second (1861), this advantage was ultimately decisive in China's capitulation. Another circumstance worked in the English's favour: until that point, it was inconceivable for the Chinese that any other nation could even come close to being as powerful as the Middle Kingdom. The English were underestimated more than once. The two defeats (1843 and 1861) were a bitter experience for China – a national trauma, even – "...but they had to accept that," as Eric Lye drily comments (more on this trauma in the chapter 1997).

Guo Danian speaks about two periods of enormous significance in Hong Kong: on the one hand, the great wave of immigration during and after the Revolution (1937–49), and on the other, the turbulent 1970s, which led to a political opening of Hong Kong. The post-war period and the associated wave of immigration from China ushered in a new era for Hong Kong: although the city remained a British Crown Colony, the continuous influx of Chinese people increased their political weight. Through selected representatives (in business and education), they became increasingly integrated into decision-making processes. Probably triggered by the Cultural Revolution spilling over into Hong Kong (1967), the British colonial rulers began to loosen their grip. The police state and the arrogant behaviour of the colonial rulers came under pressure and ultimately also hindered the economic upswing. Important social problems such as poverty, housing shortage, inadequate public transport, and corruption were finally addressed in the 1970s (cf. also: Space Management & Le Corbusier).

Peter Mann's anecdotes from his daily police work fall precisely within this era. In the 1970s, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was founded, and its thorough work provoked a genuine storm of indignation (cf. film: Stories), but nonetheless led to a disentangling of colonial privileges and associated economic advantages. In his final statement, Peter Mann reflects self-ironically on these privileges ("we have probably been a little bit arrogant back then") and

concludes by mentioning that they, as British colonial officers, had been required to learn the language of the Chinese majority. Previously, it had been the Chinese who were forced to learn English. A small but not insignificant indicator of the political opening towards the Chinese majority in Hong Kong. All of that should not, however, obscure the fact that Hong Kong ultimately remained, right up to the end (1997), a remnant of authoritarian colonialism with its roots in the previous century.

Regarding Hong Kong's economic development, three notable phases stand out, all closely tied to the political situation in China:

- 1843–1949: In the middle of the previous century, under the influence of the Opium Wars, Hong Kong transformed from a small, insignificant fishing village (1843: 6,000 inhabitants) into an important trading port on the South Chinese coast. By 1937, Hong Kong had already become a city of one million. Economic dependence on trade – mainly with China – was almost total.

1949–1972: China's involvement in the Korean War (1950–53) and the resulting entanglement in the Cold War led to a Western trade boycott against China. Hong Kong was hit so hard that trade with China came almost to a standstill. In order to survive, Hong Kong had to diversify economically, shifting towards industrial production – with the masses of Chinese refugees providing the necessary cheap labour.

- 1973–1995: Only after Nixon's visit to China (1972) did the trade boycott begin to ease. Hong Kong's trading port became one of the largest in the world (cf. Graph 4). After China's economic opening under Deng Xiao Ping (1978), industrial production was increasingly outsourced to the cheaper mainland, and Hong Kong's position as a services and financial centre in the Pacific region was built up. In the 1980s, Hong Kong's most important exports were no longer just cheap products – "Made in Hong Kong" – but above all services. This flexibility was strongly facilitated by an authoritarian colonial regime wholly committed to the ideology of "laissez-faire" capitalism.

Materials

My accounts draw on the history books of Cameron (1991), who devotes a chapter each to the fight against corruption (1991: 305–319) and the social problems of the 1970s (1991: 280–292); Welsh (1993); Yee (1992); and White (1994). It is striking that, with the exception of White (1994: 1–58), the Indian contribution to the founding and development of Hong Kong is neglected (cf. below: Chungking Mansions). While Cameron (1991) and Welsh (1993) present history from a British, colonial perspective, Yee (1992: 1–67) emphasises the Chinese viewpoint – an important and necessary counterbalance. His accounts of the devastating consequences of the imposed opium trade on China, and of the decline of the Qing Dynasty (1911), are both illuminating and disturbing. Fok (1993) offers a deeper engagement with the historical literature, analysing differences between Western and Chinese historiography regarding the origins of Hong Kong (cf. Appendix: Aspects of Hong Kong History). For critical engagement with colonialism, my information

comes primarily from Said's classic Orientalism (1978). Economic data on Hong Kong can be found in Cameron (1991: 292–305), Welsh (1993), and White (1994). Further accounts appear in Chan (1982), who critiques the ideology of "laissez-faire capitalism"; Cooper (1982), who attempts a Marxist analysis; and Drakakis-Smith (1992), who situates Hong Kong's economic significance within the Pacific region. Two graphs (4 & 5) from the Hong Kong Statistics Department illustrate the ratio of import and export trade (1992) and the mutual economic dependence of Hong Kong and China (1994).

Space Management & Le Corbusier

The Idea

Hong Kong is relatively small in terms of surface area. Since the hills rise steeply from the coast and cannot be built on, the city clusters along the buildable shoreline, which is further extended through large-scale land reclamation projects (cf. Graph 1). The available space is exploited to the very last, and gigantic residential developments dominate the cityscape. Over six million people live today in the most confined of spaces, resulting in a density and compactness of settlement unique in the world. In this chapter, I tried, on the one hand, to make visible the sheer scale of this settlement – the madness of it – and on the other, to raise the question of how the people who live here cope with it. Nicole Turner's introductory remarks (cf. Appendix: Dialogue List) and Eric Lye's first statement were intended to draw attention to the madness – but also, despite the horror, to the fascinating aspects of it. Their statements I tried to render visually on a one-to-one basis. It then falls to the architect Eric Lye to explain the reasons for how things came to be this way and how people deal with it. What was important to me was showing that, compared to earlier conditions (illegal immigrant settlements), the housing estate concept represented a clear improvement which people valued – but that over the years people's needs have changed, which is now causing major problems.

Personal Connection

My connection to this topic was a mixture of fascination (cf. Introduction) and dismay at the scale of these gigantic, monotonous housing estates. I simply could not imagine how people could live in them, or why they accepted it. I asked all of my Chinese friends this question and never received a satisfying answer – except from Eric Lye. While preparing for the film in early 1996, I came across an illustration in Harvey's book on postmodernity (Harvey 1991) that showed how Le Corbusier in 1920 had imagined residential developments in Paris and New York (cf. Appendix: copy "Le Corbusier"). The resemblance to actually existing housing estates in Hong Kong was striking and disturbing in equal measure. From this emerged the question I put to Eric Lye as an architect: how does he feel about this unintended similarity? "I mean Corbusier did some calculation and found

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that this form is the most efficient, so the people here don't need to read Corbusier, they too can calculate and think this is the most efficient form and it is! This is the form that gives you the most light, it's the form that you can pack the most people in – except Corbusier thought of it as Utopia, but it is really hell…!"

Historical and Economic References

Unlike Zurich, which grew slowly and continuously adapted to changing economic and political conditions, Hong Kong came into being in just 150 years – with the major urban development spurts taking place mainly after the Second World War. The mass immigrations and waves of refugees during and especially after the Revolution (1949) caused the mostly illegal immigrant settlements to grow beyond measure. In Eric Lye's words: "They were either living up the hills and every time when it rains, things came down or they were living in very dirty places!" When a fire broke out in 1952 in Shek Kip Mei, one of these settlements, more than 50,000 people were made homeless overnight. The colonial government fundamentally changed its settlement policy as a result, and what has since grown into the world's largest public housing programme began (cf. Graphs 2 & 3). Of the oldest six-storey estates, very few still stand today. Most have been replaced by the next generation of 17-storey buildings, and then by 24- and 34-storey ones. Today, 45 years after the fire in Shek Kip Mei, half of Hong Kong's population (approx. 3 million people) live in public housing estates. The limited space was not only maximised through increasingly tall buildings, but also through gigantic land reclamation projects (cf. Graph 1), unprecedented anywhere else in the world.

Materials

My information on the urban development of Hong Kong comes mainly from Lampugnani (1993: 98–112), who divides the development into five phases, of which I have summarised the last two (since 1952) above. Leeming (1977) conducted research over several years in the Kowloon district, which includes Shek Kip Mei. Further information comes from Kehl (1983), who carried out detailed studies in slums, and Drakakis-Smith (1992: 159–182), who compares Hong Kong's urban development with other cities in the Pacific region.

As further reading on the city – not directly related to Hong Kong – I would recommend: Zukin (1991: 5–53), on the manifestation of economic power relations in space; Harvey (1991: 40–98), on postmodern economy and the city; King (1983), on the connections between the city, colonialism, and the world economy; and Sassen (1991), on the significance of the major cities of New York, London, and Tokyo for the world economy.

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The appendix contains three graphs from the Hong Kong Statistics Department illustrating the extent of land reclamation (up to 1994), the development of population in the new towns (1991), and construction plans for the future (from 1994).

«Chinatown»

The Idea

The chapter "Chinatown" was intended to be a direct continuation of the preceding chapter, Space Management & Le Corbusier. The transition is made by Eric Lye's final statement: "Why do Hong Kong people survive – because they use the city as a living room." It is precisely this aspect of intense street life, which stands in contrast to the anonymous housing estates, that was to be shown in this chapter. Both the chapter title and the opening shot – looking through an aquarium onto the street – are programmatic. The term "Chinatown" is a Western designation for the way Chinese culture manifests itself spatially abroad. Our ideas and images of Chinese culture are strongly shaped by the various Chinatowns we know (San Francisco, New York, Paris). The real experience of China (or Hong Kong) is therefore measured against these images and preconceptions. China seems so Chinese because it reminds us of "our own" Chinatowns – through the similarity we receive confirmation (which, in its historical dimension, has distinctly colonial overtones). Applied to Hong Kong, the term is a paradox, since Hong Kong is a Chinese city and can therefore never be a Chinatown – except from the perspective of an outsider. And that was precisely my point: not to claim that this is the "real" Hong Kong or the "Chinese" Hong Kong, but rather a projection, a construct – a Chinatown. The view through an aquarium (a filter) onto the busy street was intended as a symbol for this gaze onto something, rather than from within it. Of course, in this chapter I also wanted to give expression to my fascination with these more traditional Chinese neighbourhoods, which struck me as picturesque and which offer a necessary contrast to the modern business district (cf. film: Arrival) of Hong Kong. The Urban Council TV spot about the danger of illegal structures – notorious in the more traditional and poorer neighbourhoods due to lack of space – was not intended to suggest an analysis of this problem, but merely to point out that this social issue is being acknowledged and taken seriously, even to the point of being featured in a television spot. Analogous to the first TV spot for the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank (cf. film: Stories), I use this and the subsequent TV spots partly as additional information about Hong Kong, and partly to show how Hong Kong presents itself in the visual media – a kind of self-image.

In his final statement, Eric Lye wonders what it even means to be Chinese, and answers: "(...) me, for one, I no longer know what it means being Chinese…" While my images present Chinese neighbourhoods – developing something like a "Chinatown" (or rather my idea of one) – Eric Lye, speaking personally, calls into question this kind of external attribution.

Personal Connection

I have already referred above to the problem of being a stranger and being excluded (cf. above: Thoughts on My Motivations). In the districts commonly referred to as Chinatown – Mong Kok, Yau Ma Tei, and Sham Shui Po – this conflict sharpened most intensely for me. I wandered through the streets for hours, even weeks, at all times of day and night, allowing myself to be captivated by the dense atmosphere and the life on the street – or, as Eric Lye put it: "They use the city as a living room." Without being able to explain exactly why, I felt extraordinarily at ease here. In contrast to Zurich, where everything is ordered and life takes place behind façades (except perhaps in summer), the multi-layeredness here struck me as almost utopian. I would gladly have transplanted some elements to Switzerland: the card games on the street, the loud restaurants, the craftsman reading his newspaper on the pavement, the old man in the herbal shop, the children, the winding façades overgrown with illegal structures (mostly balconies), the ambient noise. But precisely because I felt so comfortable here, it hurt all the more that I could barely make contact with the people. On the one hand, I lacked knowledge of Cantonese, and on the other, I met with great indifference and remained an excluded foreign body.

I had had similar experiences in other countries (China, India, Tibet, Thailand), but people's curiosity about my foreignness (exoticism) and their friendliness softened the feeling of exclusion – I felt more or less welcome (even if only because of the money I was spending). In Hong Kong, I came up against a wall. I gave a great deal of thought to possible reasons for this, and could only explain it through the colonial history of Hong Kong. As a "Gwailo" (big-eyed devil), as Whites are called in Hong Kong, I was, whether I liked it or not, a "representative" of the British colonial regime that had humiliated the Chinese in the previous century and kept them out of political life until only a few years prior. Whether I wanted to or not, I was one of those over-privileged Whites – or just a bothersome tourist. Without the language, I could never clear up this misunderstanding, which pained me. But even for Peter Mann (the colonial officer), who has lived in Hong Kong for 25 years and speaks both Chinese dialects (Mandarin and Cantonese) fluently, the problems are not fundamentally different – he too, as he told me, runs into this wall – just a little later than I do. In this sense, this chapter is not a depiction of what the neighbourhoods of Mong Kok, Yau Ma Tei, and Sham Shui Po are really like, but rather a homage to my idea, my image of this "Chinatown."

Historical and Economic References

Hong Kong as a city consists of two parts: Hong Kong Island, where the modern business district (Central) is located today, and Kowloon, the peninsula on the Chinese mainland, where the aforementioned neighbourhoods (Chinatown) are found. Kowloon was only annexed after the Second Opium War (1861) and subsequently became the main settlement area for the newly arrived Chinese immigrants. Aside from the military barracks of the occupying power – inhabited

mainly by Nepalese and Indians – this area was taken over by the Chinese. Only in Sheung Wan and Wan Chai, two central districts on the island, were Chinese merchants able to hold their ground. Their significance as intermediaries and facilitators for British traders was indispensable. Even today, one can find remnants from earlier times in Sheung Wan: warehouses, winding colonial-style apartment buildings, narrow staircases, and above all shops specialising in the export trade of exotic goods (to our eyes): ground shells, dried bats, shark fins, aged ginseng, and so on. The World of Suzie Wong was filmed in Sheung Wan, not in Wan Chai where it is actually set. The old Wan Chai largely no longer exists. It has been absorbed into the ever-expanding business district, and only a handful of buildings still bear witness to its past as a disreputable harbour quarter and fish market.

For two reasons, the Chinese structures in Kowloon are laid out on a larger scale and have been preserved for longer than those on the island. Kowloon was regarded by the British as the Chinese part of Hong Kong, while they claimed the more remote island for themselves – initially for military reasons, since the island is approximately four kilometres from the mainland (China) and accessible only by ferry. The relative protection this offered was felt to be pleasant, though ultimately it was an illusion. Not least out of this sense of insecurity, the British forced the Chinese in 1898, through a military operation, to lease further territories (The New Territories) to the north of Kowloon – for 99 years. Here lies the foundation of the handover of Hong Kong to China, since the lease was to expire in 1997. The New Territories and Kowloon were a buffer zone for the British, who had retreated to the island they believed was protected.

After the war, during the reconstruction of Hong Kong, the airport was built at Kai Tak, in the eastern southern tip of Kowloon. The runway was extended out into the reclaimed sea due to lack of space. As Hong Kong grew rapidly, the airport came to sit right in the middle of the city. For this reason, no high-rises were permitted in Kowloon, which lies almost entirely in the flight path. The use of space thus expanded less vertically, and more horizontally and at the periphery, developing far more slowly than on the island. Today, with the new airport at Chek Lap Kok on the remote island of Lantau, the formerly "protected" areas of Kowloon are already incorporated into large urban planning projects that will fundamentally transform the old structure that has survived (cf. Appendix: "Urban Planning" and Graphs 1–3). Sooner or later, the neighbourhoods I filmed and the street life as it exists today will disappear.

Economically, Kowloon was of immense significance particularly in the years after the Second World War. The manufacturing facilities required for industrial production (cf. above: Stories) were built mainly in Kowloon – in the very neighbourhoods I filmed, from the small workshops that still exist today (cf. film: Chinatown, cardboard workshop) to the larger production halls in Tai Kok Tsui.

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The material foundation for Hong Kong's economic transformation (from 1955) was laid here. In the 1960s, the Vietnam War brought a new economic component: tourism. Hong Kong was (and remains) a popular port of call for the US Navy. At the southern tip of Kowloon, in Tsim Sha Tsui, the necessary infrastructure was put in place: hotels, shopping centres, restaurants, and also prostitution. Today, the southern tip of the Kowloon peninsula is known as the Golden Mile, and the Holiday Inn located there has accordingly named itself thus. Tourism remains a significant source of income for Hong Kong, and the sharp drop in visitor numbers since the handover in June 1997 is being watched with concern.

While the expansion of the container port in the northwest of Kowloon was halted by the trade boycott (1950–1973) (cf. above: Stories), it exploded spatially after China's opening in the early 1980s. Today it is once again among the largest in the world (cf. film: Nothing to Celebrate) and consolidates Hong Kong's economic position as a goods trans-shipment hub in the Pacific region.

Materials

Information and research on street life in Chinatown comes exclusively from Leeming (1977), Kehl (1983), and Drakakis-Smith (1992), which also address economic growth and social problems such as inadequate sanitation, lack of space, and crime. The discussion of Chinese identity in general, and Hong Kong identity in particular, has been informed primarily by Yee (1992). Further important aspects of Hong Kong society are addressed by Lau (1994), who examines class structure and economic inequalities in Hong Kong. Information on the urban planning of Kowloon was taken from Lampugnani (1993) and Leeming (1997). More general historical information on Kowloon can be found in Welsh (1993), Cameron (1991), and White (1994). The copy "Urban Planning" and Graphs 1–3 (all in the appendix) are intended to illustrate the scale of the development – including what has already been planned.

Chungking Mansions

The Idea

Originally, I had no intention of expanding the scope of my film to all of Hong Kong – I wanted to portray only the Chungking Mansions: a portrait of this block of buildings (cf. Appendix: Structure of Chungking Mansions, including floor plans) or a social study through which I primarily wanted to show the problem of migration in its various dimensions. Already during the research phase (1995), it became apparent that it would be difficult to get close to the illegal migrant workers. During filming, that suspicion became a certainty. After about three weeks, I had to accept that three months – as long as my money would last – would not be enough to build the trust needed with the various groups of migrant workers. Their mistrust of the camera was too great, and they also did not expect much to come of my work. Since most of them were in Hong Kong illegally, with expired

visas, the risk was too high – you would be able to see them in my film – and my reassurances (that it was just a university project, the distance between Zurich and Hong Kong, that it was not a TV production, etc.) were of no use. The constant police raids gave them reason to be wary (cf. film: Chungking Mansions, Police Raid). Moreover, most of the legal businesspeople in Chungking Mansions are also involved in semi-legal or even illegal activities: they do not pay taxes, bribe customs officers at the port, and employ illegal migrant workers (cf. film: Chungking Mansions, Illegal Workers). It was therefore difficult to film at all, since nobody wanted to appear on camera and I had almost no access to the businesses. I decided to drop the "Chungking Mansions" project and pivot to Hong Kong as a whole. The Chungking Mansions were nonetheless to remain a part of Hong Kong in the film. The chapter was intended at least to allude to the problem of migration and give the Indians an important place in my film (cf. below: 1.7.3.). The title makes this intention clear: Chungking Mansions – Little India: migrant workers, businessmen, prostitution. These three aspects were what I wanted to address. The Pakistani Afzal Mohammad was to address the issue of illegal migrant workers through his theatre piece (1); the Indian Mohan was to serve as an example of immigrants who have "made it" (2); and the concluding night shots from Chungking Mansions were, among other things, to show prostitutes at work (3).

Personal Connection

Since my first stay in Hong Kong nine years ago (1988), I have always stayed in guest houses in Chungking Mansions during my many visits (approximately 10 months in total), which had become a kind of home to me in Hong Kong. I knew every corner, visited the Indian restaurants regularly, and made friends with whom I am still in contact today when I am in Hong Kong. All the more disappointing, then, to realise that these connections were of little help to me in my film work.

History

Chungking Mansions is located in Tsim Sha Tsui, the southernmost district of Kowloon, which belongs to the Chinese mainland. Initially a showcase development (1960s), Chungking Mansions evolved, through the influx of foreign nationals (mainly from India, Nepal, and Pakistan), the Vietnam War (1960s/70s), and the associated tourism, into a kind of slum. The Indian influence, the demand for cheap guest houses (tourists) and brothels (for US soldiers) quickly changed the social structure. Many Chinese families subsequently moved out and the residential component shrank. The vacated space was filled mainly by Indian, Nepalese, and Pakistani immigrants. During the transitional period (1970s), this led to repeated gang wars between Chinese and Indian gangs. The stigmatisation as a run-down, Indian subculture – Little India – dates primarily from this era, a reputation that Chungking Mansions has never been able to shed. Yet it has remained an attraction in Hong Kong, and a few years ago the Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Kar Wai immortalised the building complex in his outstanding feature film Chungking Express (1994). The

music at the beginning of the Chungking Mansions chapter in my film is taken as a leitmotif from Wong Kar Wai's film.

Regarding the significance of the Indian community in Hong Kong, I should note that they have been involved in building this city since its very beginnings (1843): initially mainly as police officers and soldiers, and later (from 1861) increasingly as businesspeople. Both English and Chinese historiography neglect their influence. It took Barbara Sue White's book Turbans and Traders (1994) to give them their rightful place in Hong Kong's historical record. Three important institutions in Hong Kong were founded by Indian businesspeople: the first hospital, the first university, and the Star Ferry (which operates between the island and the mainland), which has become something of a symbol of Hong Kong itself. The Indians together make up less than 1% of Hong Kong's total population, yet they control more than 10% of its import/export trade (from: White).

Materials

My background information on the Indian community in Hong Kong and their significance comes exclusively from White (1994) and a small number of articles about Chungking Mansions (cf. Appendix: Article "The Twilight Zone"). The details concerning the spatial structure and history of Chungking Mansions are from Leeming (1997) and have been updated by me during the research and filming periods (cf. Appendix: Structure of Chungking Mansions, including floor plan).

I also gathered information from two conversations with former residents of Chungking Mansions who unfortunately found no place in this film: Mr. Fat, a guest house owner from Shanghai, and Eric Perreira, a Portuguese-Chinese man who had witnessed the gang wars of the 1970s. His family had moved to the New Territories in 1980 as a result of the slummification of Chungking Mansions.

«Nothing to Celebrate»

The Idea

In this chapter, I wanted to address aspects that had not yet been discussed in the film, but which were close to my heart: the sense of fascination upon arrival that fades over time (Afzal Mohammad), the architecture of Hong Kong (Eric Lye), the ideology of the free market (Nicole Turner, Mohan), the rapid and permanent change of the city (Peter Mann), and the ambivalence of the relationship to Hong Kong that all my interview partners share. Nicole Turner put this ambivalence most vividly for me: "I hated it (Hong Kong)...(Pause)...no, I loved it...(Pause)...I love it and I hate it!" In a certain sense, the statements can be understood as a commentary from me – not any single statement as such, but all of them taken together (cf. Appendix: Dialogue List). I deliberately and with a specific thought in mind placed this chapter within my film. In the preceding

chapters, the viewer gradually gets to know the city better. The chapters deal, more or less, with self-contained thematic areas (Arrival, History, Space Management, etc.). It now seemed to me time to revisit what had been seen and heard so far in a reflective way – as if people were sitting back and asking themselves: so, what is it, this Hong Kong? What makes this city (for me)? The attempt to approach Hong Kong again from a different angle through reflection seemed to me, before the concluding chapter 1997, not only necessary but also meaningful. Ultimately, 1997 will be the point for these people where it is decided which direction their life plans will take. They had, for various reasons, decided to travel to this city and live there. The handover of Hong Kong to China in June 1997, and the uncertainty that came with it, would cast their decision in a different light – or even call it into question.

Personal Connection

I mentioned above that this chapter is a kind of commentary from me about Hong Kong. It contains statements about Hong Kong that correspond to my own experience and assessment, and which I also wanted to have said. My personal connection to it is that their statements could have been my own. I would not want to place the emphasis on any single statement, but on all of them together. I also hoped that their statements would, on the one hand, refer back to what had previously been seen and heard, and on the other, prepare the ground for the following chapter (1997).

Historical and Economic References

In the first part, which revolves around architecture, my concern was less with architecture as such, but rather with the fact that it is not any single element that makes the city, but all elements combined that radiate an incredible energy. Eric Lye continues: "Hong Kong as a city has no place and no space, but it has a lot of activities – and that takes the mind of the people!" He develops his argument further and concludes that Hong Kong is a "transient city" – a grand marketplace. What ultimately connects Hong Kong is precisely this marketplace: the economy is the only common denominator that, to a certain extent, links the various ethnic groups – Indians, Westerners, and Chinese – and ultimately holds the city together. In Nicole Turner's memorable words: "It's a phenomenal place to make money (...) it's a wet dream for capitalists!" Yet this market is not nearly as free as is always claimed, but rather supported and steered by an authoritarian, ultimately undemocratic regime. Nicole Turner again: "(...) it's a perfect combination of authoritarianism and capitalism, the colonialists call it laissez-faire, but it is authoritarianism, which doesn't interfere in the economy at all." Against the over-valuation of the economic and outward appearance, Nicole Turner places (somewhat pointedly) the price that must be paid for it: "(Hong Kong) is a city without a soul!"

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Materials

On the last-mentioned problem, I recommend the article by Chan (1982), which settles accounts with the ideology of "laissez-faire capitalism" in Hong Kong. Further critical literature on the ideology of the free market and the political price to be paid for it can be found in Cooper (1982), Kehl (1983), Lau (1994), and Yee (1992). As further reading on architecture – which I have not addressed above – I refer to Lampugnani (1993), specifically on Hong Kong; Harvey (1991: 64–98), on postmodern architecture and the city; and Zukin (1991: 4–54).

«1997» – The Handover of Hong Kong to China

The Idea

The premiere of my film was on 30 June 1997, one day before the handover of Hong Kong to China. Nevertheless, Made in Hong Kong was not intended to be a film about this event. For me – and this was something I discussed with my interview partners – the 1997 event was merely the backdrop against which our conversations about their lives and their relationship to Hong Kong were to take place. During the preparation for my film, I hoped and expected that the uncertainty surrounding 1997 would lead to an intensified reflection among people about their own lives, and this proved to be the case. In their very personal statements about 1997, my aim was less to provide historical material or data (which could be found in the press) than to show how they, as individuals, deal with it and how it affects their lives. I shared Nicole Turner's assessment (cf. Appendix: Dialogue List) that the handover itself would become a spectacle, but that one could only really judge what had changed (and how) after five or ten years. Central to me in relation to 1997 were the statements by Guo Danian, in which he pointed out that Hong Kong should have been returned a long time ago, and that the problem for the Chinese population of Hong Kong was not belonging to China, but coming under the wing of a dogmatic regime. Throughout the various conversations, I had hoped for these statements – Guo Danian was the only one who brought them up!

Personal Connection

Alongside the methodological aspect – how I could make use of 1997 as a backdrop for intensified reflection on people's lives – I had concrete experiences during my visits to Hong Kong with this very issue, experiences that left a deep impression on me and even allowed me to draw connections to Europe. In 1989, I was working in a bar in Hong Kong, shortly before the student movement in China began. I was in contact mainly with the newly rich English clientele, whose only concern was making money and staying put for a while (business as usual). At a small demonstration in support of the victims of the bloody crackdown on the uprising in Lhasa in March 1989 by the Chinese army, we were heckled by passers-by. One placard in particular seemed to displease them: "Tibet 1989 equals Hong Kong 1997." Just one month later, as the student

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movement on Tiananmen Square in Beijing began to take shape and grow, a wave of euphoria broke out in Hong Kong. People hoped for a profound change in China that would ultimately also change their situation with regard to 1997. The year 1997 was suddenly back on the agenda and was being actively discussed. I travelled to Japan at that time and witnessed from there the bloody suppression of what had grown into a mass movement of students in Beijing. I was shaken. When I returned to work in Hong Kong shortly afterwards, I found a changed city. There were demonstrations, political discussions were taking place, but one could also sense the deep-seated shock. The first people began speaking openly about leaving for the safety of abroad. I myself decided to get to know China and undertook a journey from Pakistan, through western China into Tibetan nomadic regions (Amdo), and then on to Chengdu (Sichuan) and back to Hong Kong. Conversations with Chinese people about what had happened in Beijing accompanied me throughout the journey – above all in the city of millions, Chengdu, which had itself experienced the suppression of a smaller movement.

After six months in China, I returned to Hong Kong in December 1989. Once again, the mood had completely changed. The radical politicisation had given way to paralysing resignation. The largest wave of emigration from Hong Kong since 1945 was beginning at that time. In the media, people were already discussing the looming "brain drain," as mainly educated members of the middle and upper classes were beginning to leave – at least those who could afford to "buy their way" into other countries. At the same time, I watched on television in Hong Kong the fall of the Wall in Berlin. The tropical heat and humidity in my tiny room stood in stark contrast to the snowstorm in Germany and to the historical significance of the Wall falling. While those freezing in Germany were rejoicing, Hong Kong was gripped by a great disillusionment – what irony! Since then, I have regularly returned to Hong Kong at intervals (five times since 1992) and have been able to observe the shifts in mood. Two striking elements stand out:

1. It seemed to me that the discussion around Hong Kong identity – particularly in terms of distinction from China – was being taken up with renewed intensity. Cultural work played an important role in this. Shortly after the Tiananmen debacle, a new section was added to the Hong Kong Film Festival (1992) with the self-evident title: Beyond Censorship. And a retrospective was dedicated to the political Japanese documentary filmmaker Ogawa, who had been active in various radical civil rights movements (e.g. against the Narita Airport in Tokyo) – as if preparing for something.

2. In parallel, there was the "democratisation process" initiated by Chris Patten, the new Governor of Hong Kong (1992). The Chinese government understood this "political tactic" – as they called it – not as a genuine democratisation, but rather as an attempt to embarrass China before the

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international community. In this assessment they were not entirely wrong, and they responded with confrontation. The associated short-term dip in economic growth (1992–1994) drove most Chinese Hong Kong businesspeople into the open arms of the hated regime. The businesspeople quickly realised that deals could be made under a communist government too. The current Governor Tung Chee-Hwa, installed by the Chinese government in 1997, was one of the most prominent representatives of this school of thought!

Historical and Economic References

In summary, I would like to point to the following key moments in Hong Kong's history, all of which are directly (or indirectly) connected to the 1997 handover:

1. 1898: Through a military action (the siege of Beijing), the British forced the Chinese to cede further territories – this time not as annexed territory (as in 1843 with the island, and in 1861 with Kowloon), but through a 99-year lease. With the New Territories, Hong Kong grew dramatically in size.

2. 1946: The then Governor Young attempted, through political reforms, to involve the Hong Kong population (including the Chinese!) more in decision-making processes. The "Young Plan," considered utopian, was stopped by London, and with it the idea of leading Hong Kong towards a kind of quasi-independence at an early stage. Young was removed from office.

3. 1972: Richard Nixon visited China. What became known as the "thaw" between China and the West began. After the death of Mao (1976), Deng Xiao Ping prevailed in internal power struggles and initiated the economic opening of China (1978).

4. 1984: As an indirect consequence of improving relations between England and China, the question of 1997 came onto the agenda for the first time. In difficult negotiations (Peter Mann described Thatcher's conduct towards the Chinese as scandalous!), the two parties arrived at the "ingenious solution": One Country – Two Systems. What would go down in history as the Joint Declaration stipulated no less than that the British were prepared not only to return the leased New Territories to China, but also the island of Hong Kong and Kowloon, annexed in the Opium Wars (1843/61). In return, the Chinese government guaranteed that it would not change Hong Kong's political and economic system for 50 years. All subsequent negotiations revolved precisely around this point. The attempted "democratisation" by Chris Patten (from 1992) was therefore seen by the Chinese as an affront. As far as Hong Kong's political and economic system was concerned, they always referred to the situation as it had been before 1984.

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5. 1989: The population of Hong Kong (and the global public) lost confidence in the assurances made by China. The waves of emigration since then are to be read as a response to this loss of trust.

6. 1992: Chris Patten in turn attempted to respond to this massive loss of confidence. His efforts to accelerate the "democratisation" of Hong Kong are better understood as a reaction to the massacre in Beijing in 1989. But ultimately, on both sides, it amounted to power games between two nations that, as Nicole Turner and Peter Mann put it in their interview, were "...proud and egocentric nations, that both have this strange obsession with keeping face!"

Materials

General accounts of the issue can be found in Welsh (1993), Cameron (1991), and Yee (1992), while the specific 1997 situation for immigrants from the Indian subcontinent is addressed by White (1994). Detailed studies on the handover and the problem of the loss of confidence are: Cheng (1994; 1987), who carried out two large-scale surveys in Hong Kong; Lau (1995), with his widely discussed study on the loss of trust; and last but not least, the book by Wang (1995), in which various representatives of the political, economic, and educated establishment take positions on the Joint Declaration (1984) and the imminent transition.

The Interview Subjects – Six Conversations

Although the individuals in the film introduce themselves (some more, some less) and provide information about their background, I would like to supply the most important details about their lives here:

Guo Danian

Guo Danian was born in the 1950s, the son of poor South Chinese immigrants who had fled during the Revolution (1947). He received a colonial education in Hong Kong at a Catholic mission school, where he was required to learn English. Unlike his brother, who went to university and studied law, Guo Danian – influenced by the 1968 movement – refused this path and became a freelance journalist. He became involved in various left-wing radical political groups and dedicated himself increasingly to cultural work (film, theatre, music). In the early 1980s, he founded the rock band "Blackbird" with his wife Cassie, which has since released several CDs. In 1984 they attended an anarchist congress in Venice, where I also got to know them. Guo Danian subsequently devoted himself mainly to the band and its political work. To make ends live – as he puts it – he writes freelance articles on cultural topics. In 1989, he was among those Chinese from Hong Kong who actively tried to support the students in Beijing. In Hong Kong, he is a well-known figure among his generation and for young people outside the mainstream.

Peter Mann

Peter Mann, like Guo Danian in his mid-forties, comes from the educated English middle class of southern England. At Oxford he studied alongside Tony Blair (!), whom he did not particularly like, since Blair neither smoked (hash) nor drank to excess. His studies in Sociology, Theology, and English were more of an obligation, and after graduating he sought adventure. On the advice of friends, he travelled to India and Hong Kong (1976). There he enrolled in the police school and worked as a police officer in Hong Kong. As an Englishman, he was immediately made the superior of a small unit in the streets of "Chinatown." Again on the advice of friends, he applied for a position in the colonial administration. He was snapped up and went through the classic administrative career path (from 1978), gaining an insight into all departments (economy, transportation, housing, environment, etc.). Today he works at the third level of the hierarchy as coordinator of the various departments (central policy unit). His annual summary report on the individual departments is submitted to the ministerial council, which revises it and passes it on to Governor Chris Patten. From this, in conversation with the ministers, Patten derives his policy for the coming year. Peter Mann will remain in Hong Kong, but is looking for a position in the private sector.

Nicole Turner

Nicole Turner is in her mid-twenties and grew up in South Africa as the daughter of an English landowning family near Cape Town. At secondary school she became active in a radical women's group that supported the ANC. Shortly before the political transition in South Africa she was living underground. Disillusioned by the corruption of ANC politicians, she left South Africa – she'd had enough, wanted to get away, and Asia was the cheapest option. After travelling in India and Thailand, she ended up staying in Hong Kong (1994) and began working by chance as a freelancer for the Hong Kong Standard. Her reports on Hong Kong nightlife and neighbouring Guangdong (China) were so in demand that she was able to live from them. Although she hated Hong Kong (but also loved it) and always wanted to leave again, she hasn't done so yet. Today she works as a journalist at Channel IV in Hong Kong.

Eric Lye

Eric Lye was born in the 1930s in Malaysia, the son of Chinese immigrants. His father worked as an army officer, while his mother lived with the children on the rubber plantation they owned. He received his education in the army, where he was able to study architecture. Through many stops – England, Canada, and the USA – he eventually made his way to Hong Kong with his family as a professor of architecture. According to him, he – as a Chinese person – had never received in the West the recognition that now comes to him in Hong Kong. His move to Hong Kong was also made for the sake of his two sons, whom he wanted to see grow up in a Chinese environment. For

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several years he has been the head of the architecture department at the University of Hong Kong. Today Eric Lye is approaching retirement. He holds both a Canadian and a British passport, but has no plans for the time being to leave Hong Kong – why would he, he asks himself.

Afzal Mohammad

Afzal Mohammad grew up an orphan in Pakistan. His parents were killed during the war between Pakistan and the breakaway state of Bangladesh. He received a good education in the orphanage, and as a talented pupil was given the opportunity to continue his studies. He studied art and graphic design. For years he had also worked as an actor (parallel theatre) and was discovered and invited to Hong Kong (1990) while on tour by Mok Choyu, the director of the people's theatre in Hong Kong. He subsequently toured Asia with various productions dedicated to the social problems of the respective countries (poverty, education, etc.), as well as the issue of migration across the Asian region. But he could not live from theatre alone, and began working for an American insurance company (1994) that sells life insurance to Indians and Pakistanis. Ironically, he now works in the very place where he previously gathered vivid material about the problems of migrant workers – in Chungking Mansions. In the meantime, he has married a Taiwanese woman and plans to leave Hong Kong soon.

Mohan

As Mohan tells it, he grew up in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state – in Lucknow, a large city with a long colonial history. His parents owned a small textile business, where he began to work after his military training. Seeing no opportunity for professional advancement in India, he decided, on the advice of friends, to travel to Hong Kong (1968). He started out as a textile specialist and tailor, which took him to the USA as well, where he took measurements in luxury hotels for suits made in Hong Kong and sent back to the USA. Loneliness got to him and he returned to Hong Kong, where he opened his own shop in Chungking Mansions (from the mid-1970s). Typical of many businesspeople in Chungking Mansions, his business has had its ups and downs, and has today settled at the level of a reasonably sized textile shop – though currently doing poorly. He owns a flat in Chungking Mansions where he lives with his family and his son's family. For several years he has been regularly visiting the Hindu temple of his guru in Kowloon and is active in the cultural life of the Indian community in Hong Kong.

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Part 3: From Research (December 1995) to Filming (April – June 1996)

Preliminary Remarks

As already mentioned in the introduction, I began preparations for my film project in 1995. Fortunately, I did not know at the time exactly what lay ahead – in terms of work and problems – otherwise I might have thrown in the towel. It was not courage that led me to take on such a project alone, but rather naivety (and, as a psychological strategy, also a degree of wilful ignorance). Three factors helped me, again and again, to find my footing in the chaos and somehow manage my difficulties ("somehow," because looking back, I sometimes cannot recall exactly how things played out). Before discussing my working methods, I would like to briefly address these three factors. I will not present them chronologically – in the order in which they arose during my work – but will instead organise them thematically: 1. Films, 2. Books, 3. People.

Films

The Made in Hong Kong project was my first film project. I had never before conceived, planned, operated a camera, edited a film, or marketed one. Everything was new. I should preface this, however, by saying that I had been working with film for several years, and film is my passion. Since 1986 I have been involved with the Kino Xenix in Zurich and have worked in all areas there, most of all in programming. During that time I saw countless feature films and documentaries, which helped me develop my eye (in an abstract sense) with regard to camera work and editing. At the University of Zurich, I began studying Film Studies and Visual Anthropology in 1993. This naturally included analysing what I had seen and articulating it in abstract terms. This ongoing engagement with film further sharpened my eye. Since many of my friends work professionally in film (directing, camera, production), I had the privilege of being invited to many rough cut screenings. There the task was usually to determine whether the rough structure of a film was working, whether its story was coming through, and how it could be further tightened. This was the only practical experience with film I had – though, as it turned out, it was invaluable. Before plunging into my own project, I deliberately watched a number of documentaries that attempted to approach the phenomenon of the city, including: Kaupunkisinfonia (Finland, 1995), Sans Soleil (France, 1982), Fragments of Lower Eastside (CH/USA, 1994), Le Joli Mai (France, 1962), as well as the feature films Blade Runner (USA, 1982) and Chungking Express (HK, 1994). I wanted to see how differently one might visually capture a city. During the filming and post-production, fragments of these films would repeatedly come to mind and encourage me to keep going.

Books

Five books accompanied me throughout the entire project (1995–97), though unfortunately not all of them from the beginning. I would warmly recommend consulting all of them beforehand. I have already referred to the book by Rabiger (1992), Directing the Documentary, in the chapter "Thoughts on My Motivations." Many of his extremely practical tips helped me time and again (e.g. the choice of shot size for interviews conducted alone).

On a methodological level (e.g. formulating research interests and hypotheses), I was able to return repeatedly to the article Film und Feldforschung by Ballhaus (1995). He specifically describes the filming situation of the ethnologist working alone and the difficulties that can arise from it (overwhelm, anxiety).

I have already discussed the book Die Kunst der Genauigkeit by Oppitz (1989) above. His exploration of how "the visual anthropologist can mediate between surface and hidden meaning" (p. 29) occupied and inspired me throughout the entire project.

In this context, the article Dichte Beschreibung (Thick Description) by Geertz (1993) should also be mentioned, which coined the term "thick description" for the kind of mediation Oppitz refers to. Geertz's influence was felt primarily at the level of the demands I placed on myself. Ultimately, both in camera work and in editing, the task is to bring what has been seen and experienced – one's own experience – into a concentrated form that can move beyond the surface and make the hidden meaning accessible. In my film, perhaps: the search for identity, rootlessness, the experience of being a stranger.

Most central to me, however, was the book Angst und Methoden in den Verhaltenswissenschaften by Devereux (1988). Regrettably, I only began consulting it during the long editing process (11 months). Through countless examples from psychoanalysis and ethnology, Devereux demonstrates how important it is not only to examine the research subject's reaction to the researcher (transference), but above all the researcher's reaction to the transference directed at them (counter-transference). The researcher's counter-reaction (e.g. anxiety, aggression, admiration) is crucial, because in relation to the research it sets a course that can lead to serious distortions in the interpretation of the material. Ultimately, these distortions prevent one from being able to "freely" mediate between surface and hidden meaning. The repeated reading of and engagement with Devereux during the editing period helped me develop this mediation: rather than reacting again with anxiety and repression (counter-transference) to the anxiety-inducing rejection (transference) I had experienced during filming and which I recognised in the raw footage, I learned to deal with it creatively and to "use" it for my film: the search for identity, rootlessness, the experience of being a stranger.

People

During the development (planning) and execution (filming, editing) of my project, three people accompanied me, with whom I was in constant and intense dialogue. This circle could well have been wider, as it is important to receive different external responses to one's own work – very much in the spirit of Devereux: so that the material can detach itself from one's own person, a distance can emerge, and from that distance a freer perspective can develop.

Reto Tischhauser was the first to watch the raw footage (46 hours) after filming (1996), sitting beside me as he did so. For me, this was an incredibly important experience, because for the first time I was confronted with how someone else perceived the material and how it affected them. Through our different perceptions – his and mine – a fascinating discussion emerged.

Priska Fretz helped me, after the screening with Reto Tischhauser (3 weeks), to structure the material we had assessed and selected (4 months). Her experience as an established editing assistant was of immeasurable value. For the first time, stories began to take shape and the material gradually started to speak to me. Through the ongoing dialogue with her, I reached the point where I wanted (had to?) carry on alone: she had taught me how to walk.

Antonia Maino (my girlfriend) was the first to see the edited passages each time. Her reactions and suggestions were so valuable because she neither knew Hong Kong (unlike Reto Tischhauser) nor the material (unlike Reto Tischhauser and Priska Fretz). With her, I sensed for the first time whether something worked fundamentally or not.

Preparation and Research (Oct. – Dec. 1995)

Preparations for the film began in October 1995. I was about to start my licentiate in Ethnology. I had nearly had the opportunity to be part of a film project in India, which then fell through. From this, however, came the idea to do my licentiate visually rather than in writing. I presented my new idea for Made in Hong Kong to my professor Michael Oppitz, who immediately agreed to accept a visual work as well (provided it was good). Since I did not feel confident taking on this project (research and film) alone, I asked my friend Reto Tischhauser – with whom I had spent countless hours in the cinema – if he wanted to get involved. For years we have shared a common passion for Hong Kong cinema. The place fascinated him, of course, as did my vague idea of making the Chungking Mansions the focus of the film. The only problem was that he knew neither Hong Kong nor Chungking Mansions. It was therefore obvious that, before he could make a definitive decision, we should travel to Hong Kong together to do a preliminary research trip. As an advance investment, I could bring the digital camera (Sony DVC 1000E), and he was prepared to cover the cost of his flight and accommodation. At that point we still expected to find a production company after the research trip that would co-finance the project. Fortunately, Cathay Pacific – to whom I had sent a brief summary of the idea – agreed to heavily discount our flights. The financial outlay was still within manageable bounds. I had bought the digital Sony camera on the advice of a

cameraman who assured me that the investment would pay off. Since this generation of camera was brand new, I would surely be able to rent it out after filming to recoup the cost – and he was right. Even today, two years later, the camera has more than paid for itself. Moreover, the quality of digital footage is just as good as the far more expensive professional Beta-SP, which I could never have afforded.

In December, we set off to Hong Kong for three weeks. In that time we primarily wanted to clarify three things: 1. How does Reto Tischhauser react to Hong Kong (and to Chungking Mansions)? 2. Is it feasible to work with the camera, and how do people respond to it? 3. What might a joint project look like?

1. It became apparent fairly quickly that my image of Hong Kong (and Chungking Mansions) had been distorted and romanticised by memory. My earlier, condensed accounts of Hong Kong apparently stood in stark contrast to the experience Reto Tischhauser was now having. He also realised that he lacked my biographical connection to the city, and that for him there was therefore no compelling reason to make a film specifically here. I myself, however, hoped for precisely this contrast to generate a productive dynamic for the film.

2. Although the camera is very small and unobtrusive, people reacted to it very strongly – especially in Chungking Mansions (cf. above). We naturally wondered whether it was the camera or our joint presence causing this. We noticed that it was apparently easier to film alone. Already at this point it was becoming clear that the rejection by people – especially in Chungking Mansions, where we were primarily filming – would be a major problem. We gradually began, perhaps unconsciously, to expand our interest to Hong Kong as a whole, wandering through the city and collecting impressions. But as soon as we tried to film people, the same problems arose as in Chungking Mansions – we were told where to go.

3. Faced with this daily experience of rejection, we discussed the problem extensively and looked for solutions – none of which we could come up with yet. The idea of filming covertly was not appealing to us; we would rather abandon the project. The only possibility we could see was gaining the trust of people, which we managed to some extent – but only punctually, and only in Chungking Mansions. In any case, we realised that three weeks could never be enough for this. We could not formulate a concrete joint project in such a short time. We therefore returned to Zurich with more questions than answers.

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After the Research (January – April 1996)

Evaluating the Material

Back in Zurich, we began evaluating the four hours of material we had recorded. The quality of the footage, quite apart from its content and artistic value, was remarkable. Even on a large screen (at Kino Xenix) the quality held up and matched that of a professional camera. Regarding the content evaluation, we immediately noticed two things:

1. The problem of rejection was clearly visible – people turning away everywhere, or in some cases even moving aggressively towards the camera.
2. Already during the research trip, we had begun to orient ourselves outside Chungking Mansions and to look at the whole city.

I should note, however, that Reto Tischhauser saw the problems much more clearly than I did. A process of repression had apparently set in for me, since I knew I would carry out the project one way or another, regardless of possible difficulties. But this repression meant that when the difficulties arose during filming – difficulties one could have prepared for, perhaps – they hit me with full force (cf. below).

The Video Course

Alongside this evaluation, we attended two courses at the adult education school: an Introduction to the Video Camera (1) and to the Editing Suite (2). Although the courses presented little challenge for us, they gave us the opportunity over several months – three hours per week – to work concretely with video. We could experiment as we liked and shed some beginner's habits: wild zooming, aimless panning, and so on. At the editing table we were also confronted with the fact that not all filmed material is actually editable. We therefore had to learn, while filming, to already consider how individual shots might fit together. During the actual shoot four months later, I was glad to have already thought through these considerations in concrete terms and to have seen the results: Cantone Louis (a five-minute short film about a former steelworker at Georg+Fischer in Schaffhausen).

Reto Tischhauser Drops Out

During this period, a process took place within Reto Tischhauser that ultimately led him to step away from the joint project. I have already discussed his difficulties in becoming comfortable with the subject and location and developing his own relationship to it. On top of this, he realised – unlike me – what an enormous investment of time a project like this would require, and that he simply could not make that commitment. For me, this was my licentiate and I had already set a generous timeframe (until the end of 1996). But the most important reason – and for this I am grateful to him – was that he sensed I should be doing this project alone. Although I did not see it

that way at all at the time, in retrospect I have to agree with him. I would not want to be without this experience, as demanding as it was.

Carrying On Alone

My main task now was: 1. to reframe the project, 2. possibly find a producer, and 3. draw up a budget.

1. I had come across an architecture professor in Hong Kong via the internet whom I could well imagine as an interview partner. From the letter I wrote to him, the following summary of the new project emerges: "The overall focus of my work will be to find out what people makes to go to Hong Kong, what kind of phantasies they connect with Hong Kong and whether their wishes eventually come true. I have chosen the Chungking Mansions as main location for my studies for several reasons: through my own biography I'm 'connected' with the Chungking Mansions since more than seven years (I travelled in Asia from 1988 to 1991 and kept coming back). The ethnic and social mixture in these blocks seems extraordinary for Hong Kong as well as the complexity of social and functional interactions in such a small place. And last but not least the Chungking Mansions are visually very interesting. Since the Chungking Mansions are but a small part of a larger landscape – the city of Hong Kong – I imagined to include impressions from 'outside'. The people I will directly work together with may have started their stay in the big city in the Chungking Mansions, but their actual reasons to come to this place were the phantasies (and projections) they hold (and cherish) of Hong Kong (...) There will be two levels: one is 'inside' the Chungking Mansions, portraying people in their daily life, combined with conversations about their expectations of Hong Kong. The other is 'outside' the Chungking Mansions, combining my personal impressions of Hong Kong with interviews of people who have a more 'reflective' approach towards Hong Kong."

2. As far as finding a producer was concerned, things fell through fairly quickly. On the one hand, it was not possible in such a short time (3 months) to submit an application to the various institutions (federal and cantonal funding bodies, foundations) that would have had any real chance of success. On the other, my own vision and that of my prospective producer diverged so widely that a collaboration (fortunately) became redundant. I felt much freer now, which certainly benefited the work!

3. The third question now was whether I could finance the project on my own. Since the project emerged from within the university, I as a student had access to their editing suites free of charge. One major budget item thus fell away immediately. The only remaining question was how much money I could invest in the filming in Hong Kong. This would ultimately determine how long I could stay there. After the camera purchase, I had a net sum of roughly CHF 12,000 remaining (including grants paid out monthly). From this I would have to cover living expenses in Hong Kong and

improve the technical equipment (directional microphone, tripod, additional batteries, LCD monitor, etc.). I set aside three months (possibly four) for filming, which I wanted to begin in April 1996. Cathay Pacific had again agreed to heavily discount the flight to Hong Kong (CHF 1,000 instead of 1,600).

From Working Hypothesis to Research Structure

The new project, with Hong Kong at the centre of the investigation, emerged from a working hypothesis that had stood at the beginning of my idea, but which I only fully formulated after the research trip: Hong Kong is not a place you simply go to, but a place where you arrive – and this arrival is bound up with particular ideas (fantasies) (cf. film: Arrival). With 1997 as the backdrop, I hoped that the anticipated ideas of the people I wanted to interview would, in retrospect, crystallise and become sharper (cf. film: 1997). From this assessment, I formulated the structure of questioning that I wanted to maintain in all interviews (which I did, right to the end!). It essentially consisted of four clusters of questions:

1. Where do you come from? 2. Why Hong Kong? 3. What were your ideas (fantasies) about Hong Kong? 4. What are you doing now in Hong Kong?

So I now had a working hypothesis, a possible structure for the questioning, a camera, and I knew I would be working alone. What I lacked was the chance to test all four elements against reality – and I had barely two weeks left before departure...

The Trial Run – A First Conversation

Mätti and Nathalie, two friends of mine, had lived in Hong Kong for three years and had tried to build a life there with some degree of success – he as a graphic designer, she as a seamstress. They had returned only a few months earlier, because they had had enough. They agreed to be my test subjects. I wanted to find out whether the questioning structure described above was workable, and whether I could manage the interview situation (conversation and camera) on my own. Drawing on my prior knowledge, I wrote a brief summary of their time in Hong Kong and a sequence of possible questions (keeping to the structure mentioned above). I handed them this A4 sheet a few days before the conversation. On a Sunday morning we met in the empty Xenix bar for the trial run. We briefly went over the sheet and I again drew their attention to the points that interested me most. And then we were off!

During the conversation I focused entirely on them and paid very little attention to the camera. To make this possible, I had chosen a shot size (wide-angle full shot) in which they would barely fall out of frame even if they moved significantly. The trial run was a success in every respect and gave me confidence. The conversation felt vivid and engaging. The questioning structure allowed me at any point to let them digress (when I wanted to) and to bring them back on track (when I felt they

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had strayed). On the technical side, too, I gathered important insights: regarding sound quality (good) and the camera direction I had chosen (poor).

Filming (April – June 1996)

Introduction

I had firmly decided not to film during the first three to four weeks, but to slowly readjust to Hong Kong. During this time I wanted to attend the Hong Kong International Film Festival and re-establish the contacts I had made during the research trip. I also needed to upgrade my film equipment: buy a tripod, additional batteries for the camera, a small LCD monitor for the interviews, a wide-angle attachment and a lens hood. I also bought a cheap Polaroid camera, which I planned to use during the first "idle" weeks for scouting purposes. It was well suited to recording possible filming locations that I would later want to revisit with the camera. Even with the Polaroid camera I had to confront how difficult it was to photograph people. Since the stakes were now real, this concerned me far more than it had during the research trip with Reto Tischhauser. In Chungking Mansions, I discovered that some of the people who might have appeared in the film were no longer there. Two had returned to their home countries, the others had apparently been picked up by the police. And the one person still there – Raju, an Indian shopkeeper – no longer wanted to be filmed, despite having promised to do so during the research trip. Towards the end of my shoot, he confided that a rumour had been circulating among business owners in Chungking Mansions that I was an undercover immigration or drug enforcement officer. He did not want to take any risks – sharing a cup of tea was about as far as he was willing to go with me. I knew nothing of this, but I could sense an impenetrable wall and had to admit to myself that three months would not be enough to win people's trust and truly look behind the scenes. Whether by coincidence or not, it was precisely at the moment of this realisation that I fell seriously ill and was confined to bed for over two weeks, which I used to read both of James Clavell's classic Hong Kong novels: Tai-Pan (1966) and Noble House (1981). After that, it was clear to me: I would incorporate Chungking Mansions into the film only marginally and "pivot" to Hong Kong as a whole. The work from then on took shape on two levels – inevitably intertwined, though I will treat them separately here: 1. the conversations, and 2. collecting images.

Finding Interview Subjects

I have already addressed the structure of questioning above. It contained an important restriction on the range of possible interview subjects. Since I was interested in where people originally came from and what ideas (fantasies) they had had about Hong Kong, I only wanted to speak with people who had not been born in Hong Kong, but who had at some point in their lives decided to move there and live there (Guo Danian and Kin were the only exceptions). A further restriction arose from my decision to work without a translator (also for budgetary reasons). I therefore had to

find people whose English was good enough to express themselves in an extended conversation. And then there was the question of representativeness: which ethnic groups, age ranges, and class segments should be represented? On this question, I was really only interested in ethnic group membership. I have already indicated above that Hong Kong became what it is today through the Chinese, the English, and the Indians. It was therefore important to me to have at least one representative of each of these groups as an interview partner. Since Filipinas – mainly women working as domestic helpers – now make up the largest non-Chinese group, I wanted to include at least one representative. In total, I conducted twelve one-hour conversations with: Westerners (3), Indians (2), Filipinas (1), and Chinese (5). How I came to find each of the individuals is best described using the term "guided chance." Shortly after my arrival for the shoot (and also during the research trip), I had told everyone I met about my film project and asked whether they knew anyone who might be suitable or interested. I had cast the net; now I was curious to see who I would reel in. Below I will briefly describe how I came across each of the individuals.

The Selected Individuals

As a preliminary remark, let me note that finding the people was not easy – but was ultimately the smaller problem. The main challenge was convincing them that they, as individuals, were interesting enough for my film:

Guo Danian (Chinese): I have known him for years. He had already agreed during the research trip. Although he was born in Hong Kong, he seemed suitable to me because his parents are the archetypal immigrants who came to Hong Kong with nothing and built a life for themselves there in a short time.

Eric Lye (Chinese): I came across him in the magazine Merian. Two of his quotes about Hong Kong were so compelling that I emailed him immediately. To my great surprise, he replied promptly and agreed to take part on one condition: that I give a talk about my project at his university (which I did).

Nicole Turner (Westerner): I met her during the research trip (1995) with Reto Tischhauser. She had written an interesting article about Chungking Mansions (cf. Appendix: Article "The Twilight Zone"). We contacted her through the editorial office of the Hong Kong Standard and met for a Thai dinner. After some persuasion she agreed to possibly take part. She only gave me a definitive yes shortly before the interview.

Peter Mann (Westerner): I got to know him through a friend of a friend of my brother's. She had been working for years as a manager at the Japanese Nomura Bank in Hong Kong. At a dinner, she promised to introduce me to Peter Mann, assuring me he would definitely take part. A few days later I met Peter Mann at the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Central. He invited me to a French dinner with red wine – and we became friends. We met every week to talk about everything (and Hong Kong) – even after the interview.

Afzal Mohammad (Pakistani): he was indirectly introduced to me by Guo Danian, who during the research trip had introduced me to Mok Choyu. The latter had at the time (1992) invited Afzal Mohammad to perform his theatre piece in Hong Kong. Guo Danian and Mok Choyu had known each other since the 1970s, when they had both been active in political groups. All I knew about Afzal Mohammad was that his piece "Achas in Chungking Mansions" (which appears in the film) had apparently been quite successful in Hong Kong. We got on well, laughed a lot, and he eventually agreed over a shared Pakistani meal.

Mohan (Indian): before I had given up the Chungking Mansions as the main subject of my film, I had visited every shop to introduce the owners to my project (over 100 in total). I received refusal after refusal. In one of the last shops I entered, a young Indian man agreed to speak to his uncle. A day later, I was able to talk to Mohan in his shop. He listened patiently, said nothing, and when I had finished he simply said: "If you're happy, I'm happy, too – we have to help each other, that's what we are here for."

The following five individuals I would also like to mention, even though they unfortunately did not find a place in the film. Their exclusion had less to do with the quality of the conversation than with the dynamics of the editing process.

Connie (Filipina): over a cup of tea with Raju in Chungking Mansions, he introduced me to her. She turned out to have an interesting life story and her English was excellent. The question of my relationship to the interview subjects came most clearly into focus with her. In the course of our acquaintance I realised that she was using me just as much as I was using her, and I was better able to deal with my feelings of guilt towards her. For her, it was clearly important to be able to tell her sad life story to a neutral person – me – who was willing to listen patiently. I barely needed to ask questions or guide the conversation – her life flowed like a river, with all its highs and lows. I later had the fortunate opportunity to show the conversation to students in a proseminar on migration run by Johanna Pfaff (Ethnoseminar, Zurich). They were deeply moved by Connie and the openness with which she spoke about her life.

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Mr. Fat (Chinese): I have known him since my first visit to Hong Kong (1989). His guest house in Chungking Mansions became a kind of home to me. Over the years I was able to piece together his interesting life story from fragments he shared with me. Although he agreed to take part, he "withdrew" during the conversation and retreated into monosyllabic answers.

Kin (Chinese): a taxi driver from Hong Kong. Our open conversation on the way to a filming location near the airport surprised me so much that I asked whether he would be willing to continue it on camera. My project interested him and he spontaneously agreed: I should start right now, here in the taxi, as he had time. Unfortunately, I was so caught off guard by his unexpected agreement and the unfamiliar filming situation (in a small, moving taxi) that the audio and visual quality was unfortunately unusable. I did not take him up on his offer to resume the conversation at his home – for reasons I cannot explain today. Did I not believe him? At the very least I should have tried!

Eric (Eurasian): half Portuguese, half Chinese. He grew up as a child in Chungking Mansions, before his parents moved to the New Territories as the building deteriorated into a slum (cf. above: Chungking Mansions). His parents sent him to an English school where he could not learn Chinese. He speaks it fluently, but cannot write it – which constantly causes confusion among Chinese people (e.g. in restaurants and at work). As a Eurasian constantly moving between two cultures, he was intended to serve as a bridge between the two worlds. Furthermore, his anecdotes from his youth in Chungking Mansions were highly entertaining. Nevertheless, his presence did not fit the film, because others (Nicole Turner, Peter Mann, Guo Danian) expressed similar ideas more concisely, and Chungking Mansions had become only a small part of the whole film.

Kin (Westerner): a "mad" English vagrant. One constantly encounters him when spending extended time in Chungking Mansions. His rasping voice and the out-of-tune strumming of his guitar echo through the corridors and stairwells. I was aware of the difficulty of having a "normal" conversation with him, but wanted to try nonetheless. It was not usable. For him, the time with me was a welcome opportunity to get a good meal and a little money. I tried to include him briefly in the Chungking Mansions chapter, but didn't manage it. He can be seen very briefly in the Indian restaurant where they feed him for free (one of the Indians refers to this in that passage).
Of course I also tried to talk to other people (e.g. wealthy immigrants from Shanghai), but received refusals because people either had no time, could not relate to my project, or did not want to expose themselves publicly.

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On Conducting Conversations: Notes on Method

Of the eleven people I spoke with in Hong Kong, none wanted to be filmed in their everyday life, with two exceptions: Guo Danian and Mohan. This meant I only had to prepare people for this one situation – the conversation itself. With small, insignificant variations, I proceeded in the same way with everyone:

The Pre-Interview

After getting to know them, I would hold a preliminary conversation. I usually met for this at a neutral location (e.g. a restaurant). On the one hand, I wanted to tell them about my project, explain roughly what it was about, and on the other, I wanted to get a sense of their life, so I could figure out how to shape the conversation and in which direction to steer it. I found different things interesting about each person (e.g. Eric Lye: his thoughts on architecture; Afzal Mohammad: information on the problem of migration; Nicole Turner: her witty one-liners about Hong Kong; Mohan: his philosophy of life, etc.).

Summary and Possible Questions

In a second step, I tried to summarise their life for myself and formulate possible questions I could ask them. I kept to the structure of the questioning described above wherever possible. The result of this working process was an A4 sheet which I handed to them, containing my thoughts and a possible structure for the upcoming one-hour conversation (cf. Appendix: Interviews – Possible Questions). I tried to point out that the individual questions were not to be taken literally, and that I would ask them differently in the conversation and in a different order. It was simply intended to give them an idea of what might come up. Most were grateful for this support (Peter Mann, Eric Lye, Nicole Turner), while others barely took any notice of it (Guo Danian, Afzal Mohammad, Mohan).

The Conversation

Although the conversation itself would last only an hour (the length of a tape), I asked people to allow two to three hours, so that we could prepare everything together calmly (with the exception of Eric Lye, everyone was willing to do this). I left the choice of location to the people themselves, because it was important to me that they felt comfortable. At the location – usually in their home – I likewise let them sit wherever they wished, for the same reason. Only when I could slightly improve the lighting by a small adjustment would I ask if they were comfortable with that. While they were getting settled (or making tea), I prepared for the upcoming filming situation: set up the tripod, mounted the camera, and placed the monitor in front of me on the table or on my lap.
The tripod stood close beside me, the camera roughly at head height. The monitor in front of me allowed me to keep an eye on the shot I had chosen without having to look through the viewfinder

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constantly. If they moved slightly out of frame during the conversation, I could correct this at any time. My primary focus remained on the conversation rather than the camera. Since I was using a lightweight directional microphone mounted on the camera, the camera had to be as close as possible to the people and the microphone aimed at their mouths. To make this work, we had to shoot at a wide angle (short focal length) and sit very close together. Before we started, I let them look through the camera to give them an idea of how much space they had to move without falling out of frame. This contact with my tool apparently also helped to ease their anxiety about the camera.

I usually began the conversation by pointing out that we could stop the recording at any point if they wished. Then I thanked them for their willingness to take part and moved directly to the first question: "Could you please tell me where you come from?" And from there, everything took its course, which I could only partially (consciously) control. I tried to engage with my counterpart and with the conversation so fully that a natural momentum could develop. I have often asked myself since how it was possible to achieve such intimacy and depth in such brief, one-off conversations, and have arrived at the following explanations. I had prepared carefully for the conversations and let people sense how much the film and the subject (Hong Kong) mattered to me. I made no attempt to conceal my insecurity and nervousness. This made me vulnerable too, and we were both exposing ourselves to a shared risk during the conversation, which seemed to bond us: I through my uncertainty, and they by sharing personal things about themselves. And of course luck also played a role.

The Keyword Transcription of the Conversation

After the conversations, I watched the recordings on the monitor alone and took notes. On my Macintosh PowerBook, I had created a template (in FileMakerPro) for the transcription, into which I could enter the following details (cf. Appendix: Interview Transcription):

1. Tape number
2. Name of the person interviewed
3. Time code
4. Transcription of the interview (keyword notes)

For each question and its answer I created a new data record. This work proved invaluable during the rough cut in Zurich, because I could search the computer for individual keywords from memory, which always told me where (time code) to find them on the tape and who (name) had said something relevant. For my work in Hong Kong, the ongoing transcription meant that I could deepen what I had just discussed with people. Their statements inspired me and opened up new perspectives on Hong Kong, which in turn gave me ideas for new questions and images I still wanted to collect. I was thus in constant dialogue with my own material. I should perhaps mention

here that the interviews genuinely inspired me and gave me courage, while looking at the collected images often depressed me, since I constantly doubted their quality.

Collecting Images

My Working Method

I came to this collecting-based working method mainly for two reasons. I have already mentioned that my interview partners did not want to be filmed in their everyday lives. I therefore had to find images of Hong Kong and juxtapose them with their statements about the city. Moreover, at that point I still had no clear idea of what the film might look like, and I deferred these decisions to later, to the editing room. So that I could work freely there, I needed as many and as varied images as possible – of people, of places, and of everyday life. I filmed everything I thought I might possibly need for the film at some point (amounting to over 35 hours). This collecting was not, however, random, as it might appear. Through my long acquaintance with and relationship to Hong Kong, I had developed a particular sense of what made this city for me. I had specific locations in mind (e.g. the harbour, the business district, Chinatown) as well as abstract concepts (e.g. East/West, density, economy) and everyday scenes (e.g. people working, eating). In my daily collecting work I tried, wherever possible, to keep all three levels in mind – that is, to be clear about why I was filming what. For this purpose, I sometimes made lists in preparation for the coming filming days: lists of locations (cf. Appendix: Places) and/or everyday scenes, noting what these might represent in a more abstract sense (cf. Appendix: Places and Abstracts). To give just one example: to the street markets I assigned the following terms: exotism, chinatown, visuality of HK, cultural pattern, life on streets. I thus developed a working method in which "random" collecting and "deliberate" searching stood in a reciprocal relationship. The ongoing transcription of already-recorded material was also necessary for this. Analogous to the interviews (cf. above), I created a template on the computer into which I could enter the following details:

1. Tape number
2. Time code
3. Image content (comments)
4. Notes on the shots

For each scene – not individual shots – I created a new data record (cf. Appendix: Image Material Transcription, Tape 45). I tried to transcribe each tape immediately after finishing it. In doing so, I could review my own material, get a sense of its quality, and at the same time have some control over what was still missing. For the work on the following days, this was very helpful, because each time I made a fresh list of locations/everyday scenes I still wanted to film, or abstract concepts for which I still needed to find suitable images. Since I deeply doubted the quality of my material, however, reviewing it was sometimes a very painful process that constantly confronted me with

what felt like failure. Towards the end of the shoot, I abandoned the ongoing transcription for this reason – it was starting to hinder more than help.

The Visual Material

The visual material I collected can be roughly divided into three areas: 1. shots (scenes, images) without people, 2. everyday scenes with people, and 3. the TV spots.

Shots Without People

These were relatively straightforward to capture, since nobody disturbed me and I could take my time finding my angle and shot. These shots were usually exterior views: of buildings (architecture, urban canyons), of the harbour (boats, skyline), of the city (from the hill), etc. Only in very few cases was I not allowed to film or needed a permit – namely whenever I wanted an interior view (shopping centre, restaurant). In certain cases I ignored the explicit prohibition, took my shots as quickly as I could, and left (e.g. the first shot of the film: the pan across the skyline from inside a high-rise window). Reviewing my material on an ongoing basis (cf. above), I naturally noticed that I had primarily exterior shots. But I could not see how, given the production circumstances, I could have changed this. The frustration alternated with the realisation that I had to make a virtue of necessity: if I was already an outsider, then I would also make that a theme through the images – though the line between that and an excuse was razor thin.

Everyday Scenes With People

These presented me with major problems. As soon as people felt they were being filmed, they walked out of frame or made it unmistakably clear that I should leave – sometimes quite aggressively. Even though I never walked directly up to people and started filming, but rather observed a scene I wanted to film for a few minutes and then slowly approached with the camera, it made no difference. Once "caught" filming, the scene would usually fall apart entirely. I deliberately use the word "caught," because that is how I felt. The constant rejection and waving-away generated feelings of guilt in me, because I felt I was disturbing people. An example: on the edge of "Chinatown" (Tai Kok Tsui), one of Hong Kong's largest land reclamation projects was taking place at the time – a gigantic, noisy construction site with countless cranes and excavators. Against this spectacular backdrop, I observed for a while a group of elderly Chinese people in a grimy backyard, rehearsing a Peking opera. Their instruments could barely be heard above the din, but their concentration was written on their faces. The contrast in this scene (old vs. new, tradition vs. modernity, noise vs. music) fascinated me so much that I decided to film them and moved close with my camera. When they shortly afterwards stopped playing and began to discuss, I did not connect this to my presence, but to their rehearsal. Only after about ten minutes, when an old man came up to me and asked me in broken English to leave, because otherwise the others would not

play again, did I realise I was the disruptive element. And I had not even recorded a single frame! Crestfallen and disappointed – with a flash of anger – I walked away.

But over time, it was no longer any individual rejection that was the problem – those I had to deal with in the moment – but the anticipation of being rejected. I began to dream about it. The fear of possible rejection escalated into a trauma. I started hiding in my room and could barely bring myself to go out – I had to force myself to film. Of course I noticed while reviewing the footage that people were waving me off, walking out of frame, or chasing me away. But it was only three months later, during the screening with Reto Tischhauser in Zurich, that I realised how I had reacted to this rejection while filming: a) I had voluntarily cut off many scenes as soon as people began to look in the direction of the camera, even when stopping may not have been necessary at all. b) People's heads were frequently cut off at the top of the frame, as if I were trying to protect their violated privacy. c) Many shots were filmed from a low angle, from a corner, as if I had been trying to hide while filming.

A few times, however, I did manage to break through the rejection, and when I did, at least one of the following factors was always at play: 1. The further I was from the centre – i.e. the more purely Chinese the surroundings – the greater my chance of also being allowed to film people. It seemed I could benefit from a kind of "exoticism bonus": I was at least as "exotic" to the people as they were to me. 2. With children and elderly people it was more often possible to break the ice – perhaps because they had less to lose in terms of face. 3. Whenever something went wrong for me (a loss of face?) and I was observed in that moment, the filming afterwards was much easier. When, for instance, I was trying to film in a vegetable market (Chinatown: the scene of Chinese men playing Mahjong was shot there), I was repeatedly sent away at first. Then I suddenly slipped on a mango peel, almost fell, caught myself acrobatically, and instead of cursing had to laugh at myself – whereupon the Chinese onlookers joined in the laughter. From that moment on, I was passed from shop to shop. Since gambling is illegal in Hong Kong, it was truly remarkable that I was able to film so close to the table – even as they paid each other the money (and it was no small amount)!
The question remains, however, why it was so difficult to film people at all. One important factor is certainly that I did not speak the language and so could not explain to people what I wanted. But I noticed while watching television in Hong Kong that Chinese people often hold an object (a newspaper, etc.) in front of their face, even when filmed by other Chinese people. The language barrier alone could not, therefore, explain the problem. Peter Mann, with whom I frequently discussed this, offered another explanation: in Chinese culture, the public sphere is coded differently than it is for us. Due to lack of space, many things take place in public spaces (e.g. the street) that would otherwise belong to the private sphere (e.g. eating, sleeping). And exposing oneself in public – making oneself visible – means also drawing the attention of the authorities, and

Translated from the original by Claude (Anthropic)

with that (historically speaking) always trouble (forced labour, taxes, etc.). This protective behaviour of the Chinese towards any form of public exposure goes back to the Qing Dynasty – but also to colonialism, he added hesitantly.

The TV Spots

Already during the research trip (1995), Reto Tischhauser and I noticed that advertising in Hong Kong is characterised by a high degree of self-representation. Its own history is mythologised and in turn used as advertising material – from nothing to financial centre (cf. film: Stories, Shanghai Bank spot). A particular feeling about life is cultivated, saturated with the ideology of the free market. "Business is everything!", as Guo Danian puts it in his final statement about Hong Kong. A funny example is the slogan in a Bally advertisement shown only in Asia (!): "Finding someone you love – is wonderful. Finding something you love to wear is even better!" (cf. film: Nothing to Celebrate). But not only the business world, but also the Hong Kong government makes use of TV spots for "self-representation." Social problems are exposed and the government shown to be addressing them: corruption, dangerous illegal structures (cf. film: Chinatown), the problem of migration (cf. film: Chungking Mansions), inadequate hygiene, violated human rights, and the financial centre threatened by the 1997 handover (cf. film: 1997). To the statements of my interview partners about Hong Kong, which I wanted to contrast with my images of Hong Kong, the self-representation of Hong Kong in the TV spots was intended to serve as an important counterpoint. Since the spots represented a third level alongside the conversations and the images of Hong Kong, I also wanted to distinguish them formally. It was important to me to show that they had been filmed off a television screen. To do this, I placed the camera on a tripod in front of the TV, with the microphone aimed at its speaker. Since through my excessive TV watching I could recognise individual spots immediately – by their sequence or theme music – it was enough to keep the camera on "standby" and to immediately press the record button on the remote control when they were broadcast. In terms of material consumption, an extremely economical solution. I returned to Zurich with just 45 minutes of TV spots – and each of them had been recorded two or three times.

Return to Zurich

After three months in Hong Kong I had recorded twelve hours of conversations, one tape full of TV spots, and over 35 hours of visual material. The money was slowly running out and I realised I was not going to be able to capture anything fundamentally new. So after three months of filming I decided to go home – that was in June 1996. On the one hand, I was looking back on three months of intensive work, the strain of which I was already beginning to repress, and on the other, there was this nagging feeling of having failed completely. In the final two weeks I had for this reason stopped transcribing my visual material (cf. above), because reviewing it was increasingly depressing me. The images did not appeal to me and, despite having very varied material, I felt I

had not captured the essential. It really was time to go. I said goodbye to my interview partners (except Afzal Mohammad, whom I did not manage to see again) and flew home.
On the very day I arrived in Zurich, the cameraman who had advised me to buy the digital Sony camera nearly a year earlier came to visit. He randomly took a tape from my suitcase and watched sections of it on the small LCD handheld monitor I had used in Hong Kong to check the interviews. After a while he turned around and said: "Even if the rest of the material is only half as good, you will still be able to make a film – don't worry!" Of course his words pleased me, but I could not really take them in. The depressing feeling of having failed was stronger.

Part 4: Post-Production (July 1996 – June 1997)

Transcription (July 1997)

The transcription of the material was not yet quite complete. The recordings from the last two weeks before departure still needed to be done. I also wanted to revise the other transcriptions (conversations and visual material). For me, this work was a welcome opportunity to revisit the difficult shoot one more time. And although I was confronted day after day with my own material, I was able to gain a certain – albeit small – but necessary distance from it. The transcription phase was short for me only because I had already done most of it during the shoot. Normally, however, it takes much more time, or is done in parallel with the first screening together with the editor. Transcription is an important, indispensable part of post-production, and it is worth doing carefully. There was not a single day in the editing room where I did not have to refer back to it!
Completing the transcription was urgent, as the technicians at the TV-Uni, where I would be working on a Super-VHS editing system, wanted to transfer my digital material to S-VHS as soon as possible. Rene Senn, one of the technicians, was so impressed by the quality of my material that he offered me the chance to do the fine cut on their professional equipment.
In the meantime, Reto Tischhauser had agreed to screen all the material with me and share his feedback. I subsequently printed out the revised transcriptions of the conversations and the visual material in two copies.

Screening the Material (with Reto Tischhauser)

The aim of this working process was to gain a better grip on the enormous amount of material. My primary hope was to sort and structure the visual material. Through the mere presence of Reto Tischhauser during the screening, I learned to see in the images not only what I had wanted to show with them, but how they affected a viewer. We did not even have to speak for this shift in my perception to take place. Sometimes a brief remark or question from him was enough to trigger a

longer discussion about what I had intended with particular scenes or images. Through seeing the images differently in two senses – "Reto Tischhauser vs. me" and "me (before the screening with Reto Tischhauser) vs. me (afterwards)" – I learned to assess the quality of the images, and their shortcomings, more freely. Looking back, this work was one of the most important stages in the making of the film, because it prepared the ground on which I could work at all creatively – it reminds me today of a Zen saying: "If you meet the Buddha – kill him!"

Notes on the Difficulties of the Screening

I want to point out in advance that the work I am about to describe (and summarise) was associated with great difficulties. On the one hand, it was very time-consuming and hard to maintain an overview or see an end in sight. On the other hand, it also took a personal toll. There was not a day on which I did not fall asleep at night, and wake up the next morning, without thinking about the film taking shape. I described above how even during filming in Hong Kong I sometimes felt I had failed. The same feeling accompanied me throughout the entire post-production phase. I think it is important and necessary to mention this now, because these difficulties will not always be apparent in the text that follows. And in retrospect (after finishing the work), one is always inclined to forget or even repress the difficulties one encountered. During the screening of the material with Reto Tischhauser, I made the following entry in my diary (it was to be one of the last):

> *"Depressed back in Hong Kong:*
> *– felt like I had failed, that I had the wrong material, fear, back to working alone*
> *– confronted for the first time with my own material (in the presence of a viewer: Reto Tischhauser)*
> *– had to realise that Reto Tischhauser did not always see what I had tried to film*
> *– what I tried to show (capture) did not always match what was actually on screen*
> *– imagined content in the image often did not match the image's actual statement (e.g. capitalism in Mei Foo)*
> *– for the first time my material is being judged by others (fear and aggression)*
> *– shocked by the variety of material*
> *– lose the overview, can no longer see stories; only the mass of material*
> *– realise for the first time the scale of the work ahead; just sorting the material alone!*
> *– afraid of not finishing*
> *– see, alongside the qualities, also the limitations in the material*
> *– material important and dear to me is not noticed by Reto Tischhauser (disappointment)*
> *– realise that many of these beloved shots and people will not appear in the film (disappointment, but also guilt!!)*
> *– doubt my ability to handle the material*

– afraid of being confronted again with the difficulties I had in Hong Kong: rejection, being a stranger...

– up until now everything was imaginary; the film could still 'be anything' – from now on it gets concrete! Decisions have to be made... (fear, uncertainty, doubt)"

I would not like to comment further on this passage, but it should be kept in mind when reading the chapters that follow. Beneath the surface, the doubts, uncertainties, and fears described here were always present. In dealing with these difficulties, the repeated reading of Devereux's Angst und Methode in den Verhaltenswissenschaften (1988) played a significant role (cf. above). And without the regular conversations with Reto Tischhauser, Antonia (my girlfriend), and Priska Fretz, I would barely have made it through this period (twelve months)...

Screening the Conversations

As preparation, we had drawn up a four-part grid for screening the conversations, to be applied uniformly to all of them: 1. general assessment of the conversation (primary or secondary interview?), 2. topics addressed, 3. assessment of image quality/shot (including sound), and 4. selection of outstanding individual passages. After each screened tape, we compared our notes. I tried to put the key points of our discussion down on paper the same day while they were still fresh. To give a sense of what this looked like, I would like to offer one of the twelve examples here. I have chosen Peter Mann:

Peter Mann (colonial officer in HK since 1976, speaks Cantonese)

1. General assessment: certainly a main character, because he is compelling, both in terms of content and personality. Many references, anecdotes, and bon mots. What is interesting about him is that he represents the colonial English type, but with a very strong affinity for China, the Chinese, and especially HK. He has lived there for 20 years and speaks the language. He can certainly be set in relation to the other people. He could probably be used like Eric Lye, as a kind of specialist. He is also almost the only figure who loves HK almost without reservation and almost defends it in contrast to the others.
2. Topics addressed: History (colonial legacy, ICAC (corruption), Wan Chai, 1984 handover negotiations), 1997, language, East/West (the best!), loss of face (double standards, hypocrisy).
3. Image quality: acceptable, slight yellow cast, but he comes across well (likeable, funny, charming), sound is good!

For point 4, the selection of outstanding individual passages, we had marked them directly on the transcription sheets (highlighted in red).

Based on the initial assessment of the individuals (and how they might be used), we made a first selection, from which Kin (inadequate sound quality, answers lacking sharpness), Kiki (content unusable), Mr. Fat (poor English, refusal to engage), Connie (interview too dense and self-

contained – a film in its own right), and Mätti & Nathalie (the only conversation not in English) were dropped. For the remaining individuals, we compiled the selected interview passages one after another in a second step and screened them – approximately 120 minutes of tape in total. We wanted to find out whether the statements, now taken out of context (one person after another), would still work. For Peter Mann, our combined notes looked like this after the screening:

After Screening the Interview Passages

– what he says about Suzie Wong combined with original footage from the film (for the opening?)

– statements on MacLehose, Deng Xiao Ping, and the 1984 negotiations as an introduction to 1997? (Guo Danian's statement about the unjust Treaty of Nanjing would also fit)

– "gambling/hypocrisy" with footage of the horse races from TV

– Tango passage as a summary for 1997

– "HK has changed, when you come back and it hasn't changed," as a possible ending

– "HK is 21st century on the China coast" with rollercoaster footage from Dragon Centre?

– "dinosaurs" with rush hour footage, MTR, Gwailos in front of Exchange Square or Rolls-Royce with Bank of China in background?

– "survival of the fittest" with statements by Nicole Turner on "rudeness" or Guo Danian's account of "culture of survival" (positive aspect)?

– paranoia towards the public sphere combined with images of rejection (people running away etc.)

– "HK people are survivors par excellence" as an introduction to Chinatown (?)

Following the compilation of the tape, I incorporated the selected passages in full in the transcription. For the subsequent work (structuring, rough/fine cut), the tape described above, the notes on selected passages for each individual, and the full-text transcription formed the working basis.

Screening the Visual Material

Analogous to the screening of the conversations, we had agreed on a grid for assessing the material. Independently of each other, we would assign a rating to the individual screened passages and shots – based on the existing transcription, which I had printed out for Reto Tischhauser and myself:

–3– meant: very good (must be in the film)

–2– meant: okay (can be in the film, might be needed)

–1– meant: poor (cut, forget it)

Since in my rough transcription I had not opened a data record for each individual shot, but had often grouped them into (partial) sequences, we wanted to note the time code of shots that we

particularly liked, so that we would end up with a collection of the best shots and, above all, know where to find them. After each tape we compared our notes and agreed on the following evaluation system:
Two –3–s (one each from Reto Tischhauser and me) stayed –3–
One –3– and one –2– became either –3– or –2– depending on the discussion
One –3– and one –1– became a –2–
etc.

Our rough evaluation system already led to a drastic reduction in the visual material we wanted to work with. The scenes or shots rated –1– made up over half of the total visual material (approx. 20 hours). The scenes rated –3– and –2– were roughly equal (approx. 7 hours each). Looking back, I can say that the film consists predominantly – over 90% – of material rated –3–.
In a subsequent step, I expanded the existing transcription – which had served as our working basis – to include the rating scale discussed by Reto Tischhauser and me, as well as notes on individual scenes (time code). For all entries rated –3– or –2–, I added two new fields to the data record: Location (e.g. Chungking, harbour, etc.) and Theme (e.g. night, economy, streetlife, etc.). Since the programme I was using (FileMakerPro) allows searching by any defined field (existing: tape number, time code, image content (comment), shots; new: rating, location, theme) – individually or in combination – I had computer access to my material at any time. Instead of having to fast-forward through S-VHS tapes for a long time during the rough cut, searching for a street scene in Chinatown, I could simply type the following into the programme's search mask: in the Location field: "Chinatown," and in the Theme field: "street scene." The programme would then list all entries for which this categorisation applied, where I could see on which tape (tape number), at what point on the tape (time code), and what scene (image content) relating to "Chinatown" and "street scene" could be found (cf. Appendix: Extended Transcription 2; note also the difference/expansion compared to Transcription 1).

Excursus on Two Video Editing Systems (Avid and Fast-Machine)
I describe the above process in such detail because I initially had no access to a computer-controlled (digital) video editing system that manages the data. With modern video editing systems (e.g. Avid, Fast-Machine), it is possible to import the selected material into the computer – either as a representative still image with a reference to the original scene on tape (Fast-Machine), or as a complete scene that can be played back at any time (Avid). The management and organisation of one's visual material then no longer has to take place through a separate programme (e.g. FileMakerPro), but is handled by the editing computer itself (Avid, Fast-Machine). Individual scenes, shots, or themes can be sorted into folders (reel or rack groups) – not unlike the desktop of a Macintosh. If you then search for a "street scene in Chinatown," you can click on the relevant

folder labelled "Chinatown" and find the selected (street) scenes or shots within it. With the Avid, however, the material is immediately accessible because it is stored on the hard drive (in real time) and can be called up instantly, whereas with the Fast-Machine there is only a reference in the form of a still image (cf. above). The computer then prompts you to insert the relevant tape into the playback device, and the computer fast-forwards automatically to the position of the defined reference (image). At the University of Zurich, I had the opportunity after the screening with Reto Tischhauser to work with such an editing system (Fast-Machine), since the TV-Uni had in the meantime upgraded its equipment. I still had to refer to my notes (transcription), but the computer took over an important part of the material management.

Structuring the Screened Material (with Priska Fretz)

After finishing the work with Reto Tischhauser (end of August 1997), I took ten days off. During this time (five working days), Priska Fretz intended to screen the visual material and the conversations. To summarise what she had at her disposal:

1. A 120-minute tape with the selected interview passages (in place of the twelve hours in total)
2. Approx. 36 hours of visual material
3. A printout of the revised transcription: with the rating scale (1–3), the extended index (location, theme), and notes on individual scenes/shots (with TC) that were particularly valuable.

The rating scale helped her to fast-forward past sections rated –1–. The material to be screened was thereby considerably reduced, giving her more time to concentrate on the essential passages. This is the only reason the screening was manageable in such a short time at all. The collaboration with Priska Fretz can be divided into three phases, which I will discuss individually:

1. Notes on the Wall
2. The First Rough Cut
3. Development of the Chapter Structure

Notes on the Wall: In Search of a Common Thread (September 1996)

Working from our notes and from memory, we began writing individual themes (e.g. arrival, economy, architecture, the future, etc.) and individual stories (e.g. children playing, fish market, cardboard workshop, etc.) on pieces of paper. This work alone took several days. Using these written notes (index cards) pasted onto the editing room wall, we tried to piece together a coherent story or rearrange them. This experimentation with themes and stories went on for several days; we constantly rearranged things, or discovered new themes/stories we had forgotten to write down. The number of notes grew, and with it the possibilities of developing different stories. We were, however, able to agree fairly quickly on a rough framework: one should arrive in the city, and with 1997 or an outlook on Hong Kong's future the film should end. In between, there were many themes I wanted to address: the housing estates, Chungking Mansions, the problem of migration,

the booming economy, Chinatown, the contrast between East and West, etc. The task was now, starting from the established framework (Arrival, 1997), to bring order to the space between them. At that point we still assumed, in the abstract, that one theme would arise naturally from another – appropriate statements from the individuals were intended to ensure these seamless transitions and act as a common thread through the film: images and statements about arrival would create a first impression of Hong Kong. This general impression – composed primarily of fascination and amazement – we then wanted to disrupt with the problem of migration in Chungking Mansions, etc.

The First Attempt: A Rough Rough Cut (Oct. – Nov. 1996)

From the considerations described above emerged the first rough cut. Unlike the experimentation with notes on the wall, during actual editing the chosen material and statements had to withstand a concrete test: which were the images through which one could most effectively show the arrival or the problem of migration? And which were the most suitable statements? All these questions occupied us over the two months in which the first rough cut came together. Our discussions, which at times became heated arguments, took up a great deal of time. Priska Fretz had to absorb much of my anxiety and self-doubt (cf. above) that surfaced, beneath the surface, through our conflicts in the editing room. I was, for example, disappointed and discouraged that after almost three months of work we had nothing tangible to show. The rough cut was by then 45 minutes long, but we were stuck. During this phase came the decision to show the unfinished rough cut to Barnie Lehner, a professional editor with whom Priska Fretz had worked as an assistant on several occasions.

He mostly watched calmly, made the occasional comment, and when the film was over he described his impressions: my visual material had impressed him greatly, and the quality and depth of the interviews had also struck him (a compliment that pleased me enormously and gave me courage). He did, however, see a major difficulty in our attempt to find a common thread to carry through the film. Without having seen all the material, he sensed correctly from the 45-minute rough cut that the coherent story that might serve as a common thread simply did not exist in my material. He pointed out that for the existing fragments (a large number of individual stories without direct connection, as Barnie described them), we would need to find a different structure that did justice to this fragmentation. As an example, he told us about his difficult work on the Swiss film Reise ins Landesinnere, during whose editing phase he had apparently struggled with similar problems.

Development of the Chapter Structure (December 1996)

Barnie's impressions of the first rough cut, his assessment of my visual material, and his tips marked a turning point in the work. I had to admit to myself that the coherent story simply did not

exist. This also had to do with the fact that the common thread (or, in other words, a clear filmic concept) had already been missing during filming in Hong Kong. For the conversations and the structure of the questioning I had a clear idea, but not for the images to accompany them. That is why I had opted for the working method of random and deliberate collecting (cf. above), deferring important decisions to the editing room. And now they were upon us! Both Priska Fretz and Reto Tischhauser had independently formulated the idea (or the beginnings of one) that my own approach to Hong Kong could serve as the structure of the film, since it also takes up the structure of the questioning in the conversations: I had arrived in the city with certain ideas, lived in Chungking Mansions, gradually got to know Hong Kong better, developed an (ambivalent) relationship with it, and eventually left. And 1997 was for me (and for the making of my film), just as it was for my interview partners, the backdrop against which I once again and with renewed intensity reflected on this city and my own story. From these considerations, the chapter structure emerged. We now pinned large sheets of paper to the wall with the individual chapters written on them, and began placing appropriate statements and possible stories/images beneath them. After about a month we had a structure and sequence that we liked and believed would work. The chapter structure – in which we assigned specific themes to individual chapters (e.g. the problem of migration to Chungking Mansions) – led to decisions such as preferring Afzal Mohammad over Eric in certain passages. Likewise, certain previously selected (good) statements from individuals were dropped because they no longer fit this concept. Remarkably, very little changed between this point and the final version (fine cut, 1997) – only details that gave the film its final polish.
We had, however, built in a small safety check. To verify whether the individual chapters were internally coherent, we had cut together the assigned statements one after another. This produced a tape of just under 60 minutes, which we watched several times on a large screen. It worked!

From Rough Cut to Fine Cut (January – June 1997)

Priska Fretz Steps Back (January 1997)

We therefore tackled the first chapter – the title sequence. Fortunately, we could draw on the first rough cut, since the opening had worked well there. We already knew we wanted to use "Hong Kong," a song by Screamin' Jay Hawkins, and we had already selected the images for it. But with the next chapter, problems began to emerge – between Priska Fretz and me. The film had begun to slowly take concrete shape, and within me grew a still unconscious desire to carry on alone from this point. Only through many conversations with my girlfriend (Antonia) did it crystallise into something I could name. I had feelings of guilt about "letting go" of Priska Fretz, because on the one hand she had been working for a very low wage well below the standard, and on the other, the interesting work was only just beginning. Because up until now we had mainly been working with notes on the wall and wrestling with the structure of the film, rather than actually editing images into stories. One morning I had finally resolved to speak to her about it – but she got there first. She told

me she would step back, because she sensed that I wanted (and had to) carry on alone from here. Just like Reto Tischhauser after the research trip, Priska Fretz also sensed (at the right moment) how important it apparently was for me to be able to continue the project on my own. I am grateful to both of them.

Carrying On Alone (from January 1997)

Day after day I went into the editing room alone and tried to realise the ideas I had sketched out with Priska Fretz (on the wall). I worked my way through the chapters one by one and produced two or even three rough cut versions of each, which I showed first to Antonia. Her spontaneous remarks, suggestions, and questions were enormously helpful and very encouraging. I cannot stress enough how important it is to consult third parties who regularly watch the attempts. Antonia frequently noticed things on the very first viewing that I had missed even after watching it multiple times: e.g. passages where the story dragged; images that confused more than they clarified; statements that were repetitive, etc. Antonia gave me the confirmation that spurred me on to keep going, even though it was sometimes hell. Not a day went by on which I fell asleep or woke up without thinking about the film – I even dreamed about it. While editing the chapter "Chinatown," for example, I sat at the editing suite for three full weeks without making a single cut. When I finally pushed through it, I felt I had made a complete mess. But when I showed the attempt to Reto Tischhauser, he was enthusiastic. "Finally a film!" was his first comment. With this example I want to show how my perception (and judgement) had shifted. I could barely trust my own assessments anymore. And yet in the editing room I had to trust myself. A paradox that is almost impossible to resolve when working alone.

The End Comes Into Sight

Nevertheless, by mid-May, after over four months, an end began to come into view. The pressure to move quickly increased, because it suddenly seemed possible to be finished in time for the handover of Hong Kong to China – on 30 June 1997. I informed the technician at the TV-Uni (Rene Senn) that I would soon be done. He accordingly reserved the last three weeks of June for the fine cut on the professional equipment. I now had barely three weeks to finish and revise the rough cut and prepare the German subtitles. I already had a translation of the statements, but what I had completely underestimated was the amount of work required to revise the subtitles. In order for them to be readable, they can only be a certain length – specifically, no more than 35 characters per line and a maximum of two lines per subtitle. This in turn meant I had to drastically shorten the translation, by more than a third! While doing this, I was still working in the editing room during the day to finish the rough cut. Despite the double workload and overload, I suddenly found the work enormously enjoyable again, now that an end was in sight – only about five more weeks until the planned premiere! One week before the appointment with Rene Senn, I had finished the revised

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rough cut, which I then showed to various people (Antonia, Reto Tischhauser, Priska Fretz, Barnie, and others). Fortunately, the rough version of the film seemed to work fundamentally, as I would not have been able to make any major changes at that point. With their criticism and inspired suggestions in mind (and on paper), I then began the fine cut with Rene Senn.

The Fine Cut (June 1997)

The editing system at the TV-Uni (Fast-Machine) on which I worked allowed me to print an edit list on which every individual cut in the rough version was documented. Starting from this list, Rene and I had to transfer every individual shot, in the order in which it had been cut, from my original material (Sony DVC) onto his system (Panasonic D3). This work alone took several days, since there were over seven hundred different shots. For the actual fine cut, we had about two weeks. Without going into detail, I would like to outline the main points that distinguish a rough version from a fine cut:

1. Titles: In the rough version, I had no titles yet. They had appeared there merely as black, silent gaps. This applied both to the title sequence, the chapter headings, and the end credits. With titles, a production immediately looks more professional.
2. Picture editing: In the fine cut, we began connecting certain (few) images not with a hard cut (as in the rough version) but through a dissolve (e.g. the arrival sequence with the ship). We also carefully matched the start and end points of each shot to the next, which was sometimes fiddly work (e.g. the cardboard sequence).
3. Compression: Through ongoing dialogue with Rene, it proved possible in the fine cut, through omissions and rearrangements that we discussed intensively, not only to shorten the film (by approx. 10 minutes) but also to deepen its content.
4. Sound editing: In the rough version, I had not yet edited the sound separately. Every sound had therefore been cut hard, and the quality and intensity of the sound changed from cut to cut. By overlapping individual sounds (and adjusting the volume) where necessary, we were now able to connect the images better. This work took the most time where we had to create and suggest the unity of time and space primarily through sound, since the images came from entirely different locations (e.g. Chinatown).
5. Music: In some places (e.g. the title sequence and end credits), we used music from CDs I had brought. This also increased the overall coherence of the film.

When the fine cut (including the sound mix) was finished, we had just two days left for the spotting of the subtitles – work that normally takes much longer. Today I understand why. Since subtitles briefly divert the eye from the image, they must adapt precisely to the editing in order not to disrupt the rhythm of the film. Only in this way can they, as it were, disappear into the background. For this important work, we unfortunately did not have enough time – we had a deadline to meet. But we were finished by Saturday evening, exactly one day before the premiere on 30 June 1997.

Epilogue: Thoughts on the Release of the Film

On the day of the handover of Hong Kong to China – Sunday, 30 June 1997, at 1:00 p.m. – the pre-premiere of Made in Hong Kong took place at the Kino Xenix in Zurich. The film was subsequently screened four more times at the Xenix, and also once each in Aarau, Basel, and St. Gallen. To the premiere, I had invited my friends and family. I was correspondingly anxious about their reactions. Since I was not satisfied with the subtitles at all (cf. above), I was extremely worried. Even Antonia, who had previewed (and praised) the film on Saturday evening, could not dispel my anxiety. When the screening began, I was on pins and needles. To my great surprise – and this is no understatement – the film seemed to go down well with the audience. They laughed a great deal and often, including at moments where this was not self-evident, because you had to know me personally to understand the subtle allusion. I was relieved and happy. A weight fell from my shoulders – apparently the laborious work had been worth it after all. The applause was my reward for a long and painful process that I had already begun to repress and forget. I apparently needed the positive verdict of my friends and family to be able to perceive the quality of the film at all.

The same evening, the public premiere also took place at the Xenix, followed by a discussion. The audience's response to Made in Hong Kong was just as warm as in the morning. The discussion was long and interesting. A second time I was relieved – and it would not be the last. Across the five screenings at the Xenix (including the pre-premiere), over 500 people attended in total; factoring in the screenings in Basel, Aarau, and St. Gallen, it was over 600. I would never have reckoned with such a success. On various recommendations, I began submitting the film to international film festivals – with little hope. The first attempt in Montreal failed, as expected, and I braced myself for more rejections. A few days later, however, I received confirmations from Vancouver (Canada) and Pusan (South Korea) that I could screen the film at both festivals in October. Vancouver pleased me particularly, since the person responsible at the selection committee – PoChu AuYeung – was herself a Hong Kong Chinese who had emigrated. A few weeks later, Leipzig (in competition) and Duisburg were added. For this reason, I postponed my licentiate examinations to 1998, as I wanted to dedicate myself entirely to the film (and its success). Pro Helvetia made the trip to Vancouver and Pusan possible through a financial contribution towards the flight costs. The festival visits were an unexpected but welcome opportunity, which allowed me to come into contact with various people who were interested in Hong Kong and in my film (cf. Appendix: Press Reactions).

In Vancouver, I was able to screen the film for the first time to a group of Chinese people from Hong Kong who had chosen Vancouver as their place of exile. Their reactions were critical but on the whole positive. They were pleased that someone was taking an interest in Hong Kong and

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found it courageous that I had taken on the project alone. They did feel, however, that the engagement with Hong Kong identity had been too brief, and that I should have interviewed more Chinese people.

In Pusan, the discussions focused less on the film itself than on the production conditions and the story of how it came to be made. The predominantly young audience was primarily interested in independent filmmaking (in Korea), and my film became an example of how it is possible, with little money and alone, to nonetheless make a film. The Sony camera and the quality of its images attracted particular interest. In the Pusan catalogue, my film – which was programmed in the Hong Kong retrospective – happened to appear next to one of my favourite films from Hong Kong: Touch of Zen by King Hu (1968).

Through the competition entry in Leipzig, I even had the opportunity to access promotion funds from the Federal Office of Culture (BAK). With their financial support I was now able to have posters and trilingual flyers produced (cf. Appendix: Flyers), and I will be able to cover some of the costs of the planned French subtitling with this support as well. In the meantime, I had also received a generous contribution towards the French subtitling from the Vontobel Foundation (Zurich), to which I had written, and which I will be producing in the coming weeks.
Duisburg was, however, the most interesting festival, because it left plenty of room for discussion and enabled fascinating conversations (cf. Discussion Paper). The animated atmosphere in Duisburg gave me the courage to continue making films – and the double-page spread in the festival catalogue for Made in Hong Kong is wonderful.

5. Part: Annex (materials)

List of dialogues

ARRIVAL

Peter Mann:
I always liked travelling, and so some friends of mine said, well...you know, why don't you go out and work in HK? and ... so I went along for an interview, back in 1976 and to my great surprise they accepted me, so I arrived in HK in October 1976, which was just a couple of months after the death of Mao Tse Tung ..... good time to come!

Mohan:
that was, 19th february, 1968, flight landed at four, p.m. I think, 4 p.m., a quarter past four, I was very anxious, that I am in HK, I am in HK, but now I don't feel that way, you know...

Nicole Turner:
I knew nothing about Asia, I knew nothing about China or HK...I don't think I even knew about the 1997 handover before I came here. I came here and I loved it, I just, I was overwhelmed by the energy, because it's completely the opposite of where I come from...

Afzal Mohammad:
I think whole world is my home and I have a chance, I have, I have a freedom to go anywhere and HK is some kind of that place, you know.

SOME STORIES

Eric Lye:
HK can never produce a man riding on a horse, put as statue, and say, this is our ... it's just not in line, you know, never had a revolutionary... because it was a trading port and as a trading port under the British and at the turn of the century the Chinese could

not compete with the british, with their canons and guns and warships and all that... I mean the west was powerful in this respect, is that they had all the military armament and in the end the chinese had to respect that and therefore felt inferior, they were using kung-fu and all that, but in the end those things don't work...

TV-Spot Subtitles:

After Typhoon Wanda, I was left with nothing.
It was no big deal. I started with nothing.
Then came the waater shortage.
I delivered water and made enough to buy a new boat.
Eventually it did rain and it never stopped.
Today I live in a flat. My son doesn't want to catch fish.
I say it's really no big deal.
I also say if you want the sun to shine...
...don't depend on the sky. depend on yourself.
HongKong Bank: Your future is our future.

Guo Danian:

I think I have a very typical HK background, what you call HK background, that is during the civil war in China, in the early 40ies, many people escaped to HK, because they don't want to be confronted with the War, my parents are the same, they were quite young when they got married, the war broke out and they wished to go to a save place to raise their children, so they came to HK and I was born here...my parents came to HK without nothing, just really little money almost nothing and they had to start their life from scratch...so I was born and my brothers were born and then we were educated in HK under colonial education ... and so I was brought up with the Western ideologies and all these values, and it is typical colonial but in a sense it seems to be quite liberal in a sense...so we were able to receive all these different ideas, world views and values and this is what made and what makes HK, because we were from the very poor class, we were given the really the opportunity to get an education, which would empower us to challenge what we came from.
I mean, HK is really built by a generation of refugees, of course there are some wealthy people who came here with money, so they tried to capitalize on this really human power, cheap human power and they developed industry in HK, so I can say HK is a mixture which is, its uniqueness is the mixture of chinese people from the north who are maybe more richer and those people from the south who would sacrifice all their life just for single purpose, like raising a family and to have a place

with a roof over their heads and meals on the table, things like that just really simple ideals of life...for the children to have an education and that is what made HK for the past 50 years, I mean from really nothing much city to become a financial centre in HK.

In the 70's, the colonial governement is still very rigid in the control of peoples thought and everything, it is still very much like a police state so the young people were not able to develop themselves socially, like the group that we used to have , we did have raids from the police detectives, so the political situation, the social control is much more harsh at that time and so we missed a chance to develop,

and so Cassie and me thought, yes, we have always liked rock'n roll, rock is a good medium to use, to talk to the people, also to express ourselves, so we started the band - blackbird...

Peter Mann:
it was a kind of option as to whether I join the foreign legion or something else, it was a bit like joining the foreign legion and I came out with a comission, as an inspector of the Royal HK Police Force...and my friends said, you are going to be a policeman, you must be joking, this was the last thing, they could think of me doing...but my line was for something completely different, I had a sort of priveleged middle class upbringing and I, what I wanted was a bit of adventure in fact we were taken back to the police training school and we were given an initiation ceremony, nobody really knew what was happening, cause we were so jet-lagged, we'd just been on the plain for thity hours and we didn't know what to expect, so the sargent major came out to us and said ah, you know, you guys, you look over there, what do you see, and we looked over and we saw all these towerblocks he said over there are fifty thousand chinese, and they all hate your guts and we were all very impressed by all this.

when I graduated I went out to be a police inspector, in charge of maybe 40 or 50 people for an 8 hour shift out in the streets of Kowloon, in Yau Ma Tei...ah, this was very interesting because it was at the time of the Independent Comission against Corruption (ICAC) , when it was first started and I remember I have only been there for about three weeks and I came in about 7 o'clock in the morning to find out that half of my squad had been arrested by the corruption people ...one station sargent, two sargents and 16 constables had all been arrested that morning ...so we all went up to the mess to have a beer and that day you probably heard about this, the ah ...there

was great unrest in HK, the police went down and they had a fight with all the anti-corruption guys...actually this would have been a field day for criminals, if they had known, because there was no policing going on that day.

I always fantasized, that one day I'd walk along and there would be a bank robbery, and I'd become a hero, but ... the nearest I came to it was actually, having a gambling raid, where there were about three of us, we got some tip-off, there was a big gambling casino and as you know, in HK gambling is the monopoly of the Jockey Club and that money goes back into the public purce, they build hospitals and schools, this sort of thing, all the other gambling is illegal. We knocked down this door, and there were about hundred people in there and a lot of money, so a few guys came running towards us, now at that time I had to draw my revolver and pointed at them and shouted in Chinese: Mui Woo, don't move! ... That was the nearest I got to it.

I never really thought that I would spend my whole career as a police inspector, this was sreally a bit of adventure for a young man...and a friend of mine told me, saying I had a degree anyway, that i should take the exams and try to enter the administration, which is like the colonial Civil Service, so I did and I was offered a job, that was in about 1978 and then ah I was district officer of Wan Chai for 6 years, which was a wonderful job, Wan Chai was the area that was made famous for Suzie Wong, where the sailors used to go where they had, where they came for R and R, during the Vietnam war.
Suzie Wong movie:

Policeman:
Wan Chai is that way

Suzie Wong:
you looking for girlfriend?

Lomax:
all right she is a Wan Chai girl, but at least you people must have some records.
(End of Movie-Sequence)

Peter Mann:
when I first came out here it was still very colonial, you were a gwailo, a foreign devil

and you were somewhat set appart from the rest of the population, actually you could get away with blue murder, most of the time you got stopped in your car driving to fast and they saw it was a European and they would be too much trouble to cause a fuss and so I think we did have an advantage and we probably were a littlebit arrogant in some ways, but for me it was a bit different, because we had to learn chinese...an cantonese is a very difficult language to learn, bevcause it's very tonal...but once you can speak a bit of cantones ...you find that it makes avery big difference to your enjoyment of the place and the way you are accepted by local people

SPACE MANAGEMENT & LE CORBUSIER:

Nicole Turner:
I go to the archives in Hong Kong and I'm shocked of how little is preserved. Old buildings get knocked down every day. There is very little sense of an old history.

When the british arrived here 150 years ago, there were 7000 people living on HK island... and... you know those people all live in highrise flats now, their descendants...It has sort of wiped away...I mean, Hk was nothing when the British arrived here, there weren't...they planted the trees, you know Hk looks quite green and tropical, well there werem't even any trees growing on the island, not like now, they've all been planted, they ve made it from nothing...

HK is special because it's a very small place to start with it is 390sqm, of which 8% are used, people live on 8% of the land, so it's very compact...people who study space management, that is the scientific name of it, they come to HK, to see how people deal with living in such close environments.

Eric Lye:
Yeah, I mean Corbusier did some calculation and found that that form is the most efficient, so the people here don't have to read Corbusier, they too can calculate and think that this is the most efficient form and it is!!! ...this is the form that give you most light, it's the form you can pack the most people in, except Corbusier thought of that as Utopia, but it is really hell ... Yeah, I mean, Corbusier was a bit of a Marxist, in his youth, with his socialist believe and thought that the land should not be wasted with one family one house concept.

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the population is still very homogeneous, they are manly chinese, they used to live in far worser conditions, they were either living up the hills, where everytime it rains, things come down or they had fires or they were living in very dirty places, so the housing estate was a great change, improvement, it provided schools for the children and so on and so on, they accepted that...in that respect HK has done well.

I can also understand in the West the concept of Housing Estate is not individualistic enough, you know, whereas this part of the world individualism was on the family table, not the social aspect of it, that's why it works, it is ... getting not to work anymore, not to work anymore, they have a lot of problems now in the Estates...because it's a different generation, their generation of 1949 you know, 1960, came from China with nothing and this was wonderful provision, now they are HK people,they are more educated, they demand more...they are having trouble, the concept of housing estate is in trouble, i think it has lost its usefulness

Why does HK survive? to the HK people it's not hell, not hell, because the city is so fibrant, they don't do their socializing at home, it is on the streets...so the city is...the flat is only a place to sleep take a bath and maybe have a meal, but generally they are outside, you know on the streets, and that's why the city is so dynamic, because the city is used as a living room.

CHINATOWN

Nicole Turner:
in some ways HK is much more chinese than China, because China is so run down and poor and HK has this Chinatown feel about it, one big Chinatown...

TV-Spot:
HK has thousands of dangerous illegal structures, that threaten public safety, there are also countless buildings in a neglected state, due to lack of maintenance owners must maintain their buildings and keep them free of illegal structures

Eric Lye:
my magic spot is MongKok, ShamShuiPo and YauMa Tei...that is my Magic spot in HK....not not....this is where people live their real lives, I mean this is underlying realy HK, the kind of activities are multilayered intensive and everybody participate you

Translated from the original by Claude (Anthropic)

know...ah...ah I mean the activities are layered so havy, you can be selling a CD here, upstairs is prostitution, next door is a restaurant ah ... for example the underground economy in HK, from Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok and all these places, well they don't pay taxes they live...a lot of millions of dollars go there, nobody knows, ah, to me that's real HK you know, the people get rich a lot people do a lot of illegal things...ah a lot of unhappiness also occcur

it's a paradox you know, HK people if you ask them gently, they will tell you western education western values are really important to our lives, if you push them very hard, they will tell you they are chinese and this ah is a contradiction, you know...I would say, ah..., that in a global sense, HK people are very Western, in a global sense, but they eat rice they...but those are just minor comforts to me of ones heritage not major...you know, I for one no longer know what it is being Chinese

CHUNGKING MANSIONS - LITTLE INDIA

Afzal Mohammad:
Chungking Mansions is a place where you can see mostly foreigners doing business from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, this kind...

1. Indian:
because much we needed money, because India is a very poor country, that's why I'm coming over here, because India's budget is very cheap, that's why .... I'm coming to make the money in HK.

2. Indian:
I'm businessman, ready made garment....businessman!

Nepalese:
According to we, whatever we know about Chungking Mansions and Chungking Mansions is a very rubbish place, something with that film, because all the illegal peoples are over here...

Chinese woman:
so if you let me know it's no problem, because you know, maybe something happens, if you show on the news...

Translated from the original by Claude (Anthropic)

TV-Spot:

some employers are taking a big risk, hiring illegal workers, this is a serious criminal offence, punishable by heavy fines and imprisonment. Convicted offenders will have a criminal record. Penalties for hiring illegal workers have been increased to a fine of 350'000 HK$ and three years in jail. Don't hire illegal workers.
Subtitle: Penalty: 3 years in prison plus $350'000 fine

Afzal Mohammad:

when I come to HK, I saw everything here and once Mok Choyu, who was the organizer of people's theater, he bring me to Chungking Mansion and I saw there people from Pakistan and India from other countries and I realize, that even they have worse situation than in their own country, in HK, so jokingly Mok Choyu told me why don't you write a play for this people? and I said yeah, why not, why not write a play?.

Migrant worker in the play:

it's hard to go to Dubai now, it's very expensive...but I can go to HK, no need a visa, only plane ticket, so I went to my mother...she knew that master will be very harsh to her, she gave me her ornaments, my sister gave her ornaments...I sold them, bought a ticket and flew to HK...

Afzal Mohammad:

...and we write a play that is called big wind and we tour with that play, Nepal, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh Thailand Taiwan HK, we go everywhere with that play, that was also mainly about migrant workers, why migrant workers comes abroad, and ah what they get from other countries and what they think they can get, something like that and how the economy is shifting from one country to another country and how migrant workers are also shifting from one country to another country, another country to another country...so that was the main thing for that play

Migrant worker in the play:

normally, Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshi, Nepali, we work together and we get 200$ per day, that is the big money for us...of course we know that our chinese boss get 3600$ for each container, to load or unload and they give us 200$...I never complain, what for?

Afzal Mohammad:

I tried to involve some of those people, they give me a lot of stories to write, so a lot of material I got from those people, They think it is great, but what will happen, I mean, who will care, what you are doing, what you are talking? But, I tried to tell them that it doesn't happen at once, I mean maybe it will take time, I mean we struggle and struggle and struggle. One day the people maybe understand their situation.

Migrant worker in the play:

...but don't treat us as animals!

Afzal Mohammad:

so this is the reason why, and I think everybody have a right to go anywhere in the world, the earth does not belong to one person or one country, I mean everybody have a right to go anywhere in the world.

but after they come in...they can not do anything, very few people are lucky that they get nice job, I mean permanent job, not nice as a loader and who is not lucky, they always ... like ah...the coolies in CM, maybe you saw, they are always scared of police, so anytime police they can come and arrest them, actually I saw, they always play a game, like mouse and a cat...you know, mouse just look in its, what is it called...the hole, just look around, nobody is there, no police is there, jump to another side, and do some work and there is another cart, so they run back to the hole, i mean all the time they are doing this, I mean the mouse and cat play....

Indian:

how are you?, I told you. I told you before Gujarati Mess, yesterday night, I told him to come here

Restaurant-owner:

This restaurant for who? who have no money, and for who, who have, who is hungry, I can give you food for free...

Mohan:

...I came from India, the city name is Lucknow, the beautiful city, historical place, it's the heart of Uttar Pradesh, in short form we say U.P., Lucknow is the best place compared to other cities, because I live, this is my hometown, you know.

Translated from the original by Claude (Anthropic)

I finish my education in the year of 1964 in India, then I joined Army, few years, then after I resign the Army, my father said, I need your help. so I join my fathers business, somehow, job was ok, I was enjoying, but there was not much scope, fortunately one day we were sitting in friend's circle, one of my friends say, that, would you like to go to HK? I say for what? he say for working, I say, no problem! Then I ask them what is HK, how people they live, what business they do, I heard many things about Hk, how people they live, it was a curiosity, new place, british colony, so I said ok, then I left India in 1968.

you see the god is great, I had nothing in my hands, I had only 5000HK$ in my pocket, so one day I was talking with my friend. I said, I don't want to work in this company. He said, you want to start your own business? I say, but I dont have money. He say: how about we start together. I say goddamn, we work together before, previously in Glad's custom Tailor, where did you get that money to start? he said, forget about that, how about we start our own business? What business do you want to do? He said, textile business, there is a shop in Chungking Mansion!

you see when a person is young, he wants to make money, he wants to see his bright future, everybody does it and I felt that way, that I will make money, but money does not grow on the tree, you see you have to work hard, you have to put efforts to make money and I did and I still do, now I'm 55 years old, I still want to work, I want to make money, but not like other people, all the time, 24 hours they think about money, think about the money...

now is important for me, Chungking, I may die in Chungking, you never know, time comes, you know....I may not....
TV-Spot:

In an early morning raid, more than 200 officers took part in the joint operation with the immigration department. They raided hostels in Tsim Sha Tsui, before dawn and detained 52 men and 7 women, of various nationalities, mainly for overstaying. Among them were 12 people from the mainland, suspected to be illegal immigrants. Three local man were also arrested for damaging a police vehicle.

Translated from the original by Claude (Anthropic)

NOTHING TO CELEBRATE:

Afzal Mohammad:

.in the beginning I come here, I sat near the harbour for hours, to see those buildings at night, the light, the high buildings, whoe this is great, even at night two o'clock I'm watching there, oh, it's great, how they made it on sand, how they did this architectural structure, those kind of things I was thinking, wow, so tall buildings, but now, I don't have that interest, I mean even if I go to the harbour, I see and I come back

Eric Lye:

Hk is a lost, is a lost cause, the best you can describe HK, is that HK as a place with its hills and waters and buildings, form a spectacle where you do not put your finger to identify a single building...all the buildings are just like rooms to accomodate things, right? here I would consider the architecture you see generally, are rooms of the city, the city is the architecture, not individual buildings... so if you point to a single building, it's very dull, but when you put in to attend all the buildings together, it can become a very dynamic place, ah...and HK unlike in the West, I mean it really has no space and no place, but it has a lot of activities and that takes the mind of people, I mean the reason it has probably done that, is because HK, as a city, has nothing to celebrate, there are no heros, they've never lost a war, they haven't changed Governments, you know right, nothing to celebrate, so a place that has no celebration, well, you don't have beautiful things.

Hk is one economic marketplace, like a marketplace, you go there, but you don't live there, you know you buy your things, you look around, make friendes and you go away, it's a very transient city in that respect...

Nicole Turner:

any HK person will tell you what makes HK special is money...it's just a phenomenal place to make money, it's ...Milton Freedman, he is the freemarket Guru said: if you want to see how the free market really works, go to HK! and that's what it is, it is a wet dream for capitalists, it's a perfect combination of authoritarianism, the colonialist call it laissez-faire and capitalism, which doesn't interfere in the economy at all...

Mohan:

you see in HK, big big tycoons, with a sip of a small drink, like this, you know....they do business of billions....just with a sip of....softdrink, you know....if I compare with them,

why not me...then i can not live, I go mad, what you call?, I go mad, why not me? everybody can not be rich, if everybody will be rich, then who will be poor?

Peter Mann:

for people who enjoy life, for people who are in the prime of their life, there can be few better places in the world, providing of course it doesn't make you completely crazy.

you know everyone says... Hk is forever changing...you go away for a few months holiday and you come back and you can't recoginize it, because there is so many new buildings and new roads and bridges...one of the most perceptive things that anyone has ever said about Hk, was...you will know it has changed, when you come back to HK and find that it hasn't changed, then you'll know it has changed...HK changes all the time it has incredible capacity for change..

Nicole Turner:

someone once desribed, I forgot who it was, but I like this description, he said HK is like a beautiful woman in a bad mood...and it is like that. There are moments when the city is unbearingly beautiful and when you're driving along the highways and you just see the skyline and the lights and you can feel that energy and yeah...it's beautiful. but it's...it has no soul,

Bally-Spot:

Finding someone you love is wonderful
Finding something you love to wear is even better

Nicole Turner:

I hated it! Because I realized that there was nothing underneath that energy, I'd been expecting, also with 1997 I thought there would be hysteria, not histeria, but a certain edge to life here. but it wasn't, people hurry, there is energy, but there is no edge to it, there is no depth...there is no culture, Hk has lost its culture and ah, I really hated it but I have grown to like it it...I love it and I hate it...

1997

Afzal Mohammad:

my biggest wish is, I want to see 1997, I want to see what kind of changes will come, here in HK, when chinese Governement will come here, because now I can see what these chinese are, and when other chinese will come, what will happen here

Nicole Turner:

In the Southafrican elections when they did happen, when the change did happen, there were 6000 journalists there and they were all waiting for the bloodbath, you know, they were waiting for the violence, they were waiting for the shit to hit the fan and it didn't happen, and its gonna happen in HK, the handover is gonna happen, there is gonna be big fireworks, the gonna shake hands, ah, you know, lot's of music and funfare, but nothing is gonna happen, so I'm not interested in that story, it's like five years later, it's gonna be interesting here, because that's when the changes will be apparent, but the handover itself will be an anticlimax!

Guo Danian:

i think is fair that the british are going to give back HK to China, because it is land...it's not their land , well they got it through a very injustic treaty, I mean this should have been returned to China, I agree, but the thing is becoming chinese is nothing to be afraid for us, it's only becoming under the control of a dogmatic and ah, self centered communist party and a fake communist party, this is really what we are worried about, I mean if the political...the political environment in Chima is similar to Taiwan now I think allthe people in HK would celebrate, because most of them have a certain kind of connection to China relatives in side there, they are quite close...they are all chinese people , everybody would be joyous in celebration, but the things, the only doomed thing, that they saw this people in China are being manipulated, all this hard livings in china under this communist rule, all this massacre all this killings, the unfairness, corruption, it's only all this phanomenons that they watch from over the border that they are afraid of...

my parents generation on the avarage, even much more pessimistic than us, because they have experienced the hardships in their real life, before, but us now, we just grew up in HK and never faced really the hardship from the communists, except maybe in 400 days my vision is really quite impossible to realize now, except for unpredictable struggles within the central communist party after Deng Siao Pings death and then if

we can have the chance to coordinate with the struggle inside China, maybe there is a possibility, but this is really quite pessimistic, because people would say, the really deviance force in china now, has been really pacified, by the significant economic development, it's developping like crazy in China, all these new buildings all these new resources of money, coming from all over the world, opening up the market, I mean all these things would have killed the will to resist the communist control, I mean like something what we did, ah what happened in 1989, that there is really a possibility of forcing them to give up the control, so that may be the only chance left for me, the vision, is that they finally realize, the communist party finally realize, that it is inhuman to run the country like this....

TV-Spot:

Speaker: *The Tiananmen anniversary passes quietly in Beijing under police scrutiny. In HK thousands attend the rally in Victoria park to honour those killed.*
Police estimated the number if more than ten thousand, but organizers claimed there were some 45'000 present
Thousands filled Victoria Park this evening, to honour those killed in the Tiananmen Square Massacre 7 years ago. A huge videoscreen displayed images of that bloody day and organizers say, with just over a year to go, before the handover, this years events has added significance.
Activist: *I think it's very important for the people in HK, to come out in one voice and say to the Chinese Governement, that we have not forgotten what happened in June fourth and we hope that into the future of China there will be democracy and freedom*

Eric Lye:

I think it's about freedom I don't want to use the word democracy, because you can not define, except one man one vote, but freedom is very vital, you know, freedom of speech, freedom to travel, ... freedom of trade I think we will have, freedom of speech is a question mark, freedom to travel we might still have, these are to me three major, well freedom of the press is going to be a big problem ... because the Chinese say, oh yes you have press freedom, so long as you operate according to the law, but you know what that means...

TV-Spot:

Politician: *I'm not going to express any opinion about that, I think you are trying to trap me with that question, well it depends on the law of HK, if the law in HK allows people to demonstrate, people should be allowed to demonstrate.*

Mohan:

many time people they come, they say....what you think about 1997, I say, nothing!!!!, they say the chinese will take over this, I say, let them take over....nothing will be happen in HK, only Government will be the change, law will be the change, nothing will be happen, business will run same because, you see, this is the place, where everybody makes money, not only we, Governement also makes money, if china take over, China will also make money, if they say, that ok, everybody go, then who will live here, only chinese?

Peter Mann:

I mean everybody will tell you, they don't want to get married, they don't want to have a baby, they don't wanna start a new business, they don't wanna make a decision, until after this big upheaval is over, now to look on it, to look on the bright side, there is no reason why HK should not continue to be phenomenously successful, it has all the basics, we have, I mean we are the most advanced city in China, we have the best infrastructure, the best technology and I'd like to see the future very much as a sort of tango, between our technology and know-how and China's incredible space and human resources.

TV-Spot:

Years ago, I never would have imagined that HK would look like this one day
It's remarkable how HK has changed, today we are a major regional and global service centre, earning our living by selling our skills ... our professionalism ... our enterprise ... our creativity and our reputation for integrity, the services we provide have become our gbiggest money earner. Service is what keeps us strong. HK at your service.

Peter Mann:

and so, let's hope that tango is a smooth one. you have to understand this huge psychological problem about 1997, it never happened, I mean...the British empire which faded away over the last 20 or 30 years...ah there was never a precedent for...a county you know...countries always went independent, they were never given back to another sovereign power, so this has never actually happened before in world history, that you give a prosperous first world country of 6 million people , back to a slightly alien regime, this has never happened before, so whilst HK people chinese are very proud to be chinese, and quite rightly so they are also slightly nervous about these two very different cultures may collide

Guo Danian:

to have a significant influence in China is impossible, except those tycoons, who have all the money, of course they can influence China in the way of, oh you do that you better do that, so that's why it is quite horrible to read in the news or to see that the people who have the money, the businessman is now getting more and more control of the political! situation in a place like HK and even in such a large country in China. Business is everything...it's like when these Li Peng, Yang Zemin, when the go to meet Governemnts of the other countries, what they talk about, what they did...just signing treaties of business transactions and doing business and doing business, this is really ridicilous, I mean ....the head of State is primarily a businessman, I mean for me, this idea of a society is really crazy.

END

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Appendix (Materials)

Timeline Hong Kong (1821–1997)

1821 British opium traders use "Hong Kong" for the first time as a base for their drug smuggling to China (Opium Wars).

1843 The First Opium War leads to the Treaty of Nanjing; Hong Kong Island (6,000 inhabitants) becomes a British Crown Colony. The English call it Victoria.

1860 After the Second Opium War, Great Britain receives the Kowloon Peninsula, situated on the mainland opposite Victoria Island. The new Hong Kong thereby becomes one of the major cities on the Chinese coast.

1898 Through a further treaty with China, the New Territories and 240 islands – comprising over 90% of present-day Hong Kong in area – are leased to England for 99 years.

1937 Hong Kong becomes a city of one million. The outbreak of the Second World War in Asia, following the Japanese invasion of China, triggers a wave of refugees to Hong Kong.

1949 The Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War triggers a new wave of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

1960 As a consequence of the Cold War, the United States, following the Korean War (1952), imposes a (trade) boycott against China and forces Hong Kong to shift from trade – which had run mainly through China – to independent industrial production. It is from this period that cheap products bearing the label "Made in Hong Kong" originate.

1967 The Cultural Revolution temporarily spills over into Hong Kong.

1976 After the death of Mao, Deng Xiao Ping prevails in internal power struggles as sole ruler of China (1978). His liberal economic policy leads to the opening of China. Cheap industrial production is gradually outsourced from Hong Kong to China. This opening triggers a new mass exodus from China (particularly from Shanghai).

1980 The shift away from industrial production (outsourcing of production to low-wage countries) towards the service sector (real estate, stock exchange, pegging of the HK$ to the US$) makes Hong Kong, by the mid-1980s, the most important financial centre in the Pacific region.

1984 London and Beijing sign the agreement on the return of Hong Kong to China by 1 July 1997 (Joint Declaration). China promises not to fundamentally alter anything in Hong Kong for 50 years after 1997: Deng Xiao Ping's concept of "one country, two systems" prevails.

1989 The shock following the massacre in Tiananmen Square in Beijing paralyses Hong Kong for several days. Mass demonstrations follow. The beginning of various attempts over the remaining eight years to develop a distinct Hong Kong identity.

1997 Handover of Hong Kong to China. One of the largest media events of the century passes peacefully. CNN broadcasts live from Hong Kong for 24 hours.

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Aspects of Hong Kong History

Working Notes on the History of Hong Kong (keyword format)

1. Chinese Settlement

There was a Chinese settlement in the area before the English arrived – the Hakka culture. Fishing villages on the Kowloon Peninsula and Lantau.

2. The Influence of Immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent

The influence of immigrants (Sikhs, Gurkhas, Parsis) from the Indian subcontinent is neglected. Many significant public institutions in Hong Kong were founded by Indians: the Star Ferry, the first hospital, and the first university. Indians make up less than half a percent of the population, yet control more than 10% of Hong Kong's foreign trade.

3. Historiography

a) The English view predominates: the books neglect Chinese and Indian contributions, mostly chronologies rather than analyses.
b) The (Chinese) Communist view: interprets history exclusively through an imperialist lens, does not accept British sovereignty over Hong Kong. Since the Second World War, American influence in Hong Kong is overstated. Very few translations of these books into English!
c) The mixed view: mostly by Hong Kong historians. Acknowledges the Chinese contribution to Hong Kong (labour power, immigration) and connects it with the colonial (infrastructure, political system). Even in these books, the influence of Indian immigrants is missing.
d) The Indian view: the most important work is Turbans and Traders (White); information comes mainly from family chronicles and the yearbooks of Indian-founded institutions.

4. Key Development Phases (not a strict chronology)

a) Imposed trade (the Opium Wars): (military) British superiority vs. corruption of the Qing Dynasty. The (opium) trade served not only economic but also psychological (humiliation, weakening of morale) and political (undermining the will to resist) ends.
b) State of the Qing Dynasty: the foreign rule of the Manchus in China crumbling. Corruption, decadence, internal resistance against the (foreign) regime. This leads in 1911 to the first revolution; China becomes a republic. First major wave of refugees.
c) Japanese occupation of China: mass flight to Hong Kong. Second major wave of refugees. Resistance to Japanese rule grows within the country. Birth of the Communist resistance due to: 1. national threat (Japanese foreign rule) and 2. internal repression/corruption (Chiang Kai-Shek regime). Occupation of Hong Kong by Japanese troops leads to the temporary depopulation of Hong Kong (until 1945).

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d) After the war, hundreds of thousands flee to Hong Kong. Third major wave of refugees: fleeing the civil war and Mao. Dual economic significance: people as workforce, and the emigration of many Shanghai industrialists (export of know-how and capital).
e) From trade to industrial production: after the Western embargo on China, trade with China is forbidden under US pressure. Hong Kong shifts its emphasis to industrial production: the Chinese immigrants (cf. d) provide the necessary workforce!
f) From industrial production to service centre: Nixon's 1972 visit to China, normalisation of US-China relations. After China's opening (early 1980s under Deng Xiao Ping), trade is again possible. Again thousands emigrate (semi-legally) to Hong Kong. Hong Kong gradually outsources production to the cheaper mainland (low value added) and specialises in expensive, highly specialised (industrial) production (high value added). Development into a financial and distribution centre in Asia.

Summary
It is easy to see that China's history has always had a decisive influence on Hong Kong, and the importance of (Chinese) immigrants (as workforce) also becomes clear – without whom Hong Kong's much-praised flexibility would quite literally have come to nothing.

Structural Layout of Chungking Mansions

Chungking Mansions (CM) consists of three freestanding 17-storey blocks, of which the two larger ones are each divided into two parts. Narrow gaps and light shafts supply the winding apartments with sparse daylight (cf. floor plan 1). The ground floor and second floor are combined into a bazaar-like shopping arcade with a total of over 150 different shops (cf. floor plans 2 & 3). Just over half of the shops are involved in retail and wholesale trade (import/export), selling watches, clothing, fabrics, plastic goods, toys, consumer electronics, etc. The remainder consists of fast food restaurants (20), Indian supermarkets (5), money changers (10), tailor workshops, laundries, electronics shops, etc.

The individual blocks (A–E) are accessible via undersized lifts and narrow fire escapes. The ratio of residential to commercial space is 1:2. The 900 units (flats) are divided as follows: guest houses (approx. 120 legal / 100 illegal), private apartments (300), restaurants (25), canteens/clubs – mostly tied to specific regions (Gujarat, Kerala, Sindh, etc.) (50), tailors (10). The rest consists of offices (import/export), travel agencies, storage space, brothels, and a Christian church.
The management estimates the number of residents at over 6,000; just under half are Chinese (mainly from Shanghai), the remainder consisting of Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalese, and more recently Africans (mainly from Nigeria).

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The CM is managed by a management body (24 people), responsible mainly for organising security and waste disposal. The management represents the interests of the "Incorporated Owners of Chungking Mansions," which is organised as a cooperative.

Interview Preparations (2 Examples)

1. Preparation sheet given in advance of the interview with «Peter Mann».

His Story:
Middle class background, went to Oxford (sociology and theology; English), travelled in Asia (India), left UK in 1976 for Hong Kong. Policeman for two years, made exams for civil service. 1979 administrative officer in the Civil Service. Civil Servants can be transferred anytime anywhere. Normally stay on for two years to get experience in every field (through frequent transfers no corruption possible). Worked in security, district, housing, transport, environment etc. Now he's an editor of the last speech of the Governor, organizing the inputs from the different departments and putting them together.
Possible Questions:

personal history (where from, why HK, fantasies)
where/how did you grow up
why did you go to HK
did you have imaginations of HK (how your life would change etc.)
you arrived in HK, what was your first impression?
what did he actually do in HK
which was the most challenging

history of HK, especially since 1976
what were the most salient changes/developments in HK since 1976
what do you think were (are) HK's biggest problems

what is HK for you, what do you think makes it special (for you/in general)?
why did you learn Chinese? (did this change your perception of HK?)
some people say in HK the worst of both, East and West meet: Western individualism and the Chinese tradition of not interfering in other people's business?
the colonial past: is there a colonial present (privileges for gwailos)?
HK changed from a manufacturing to a servicing industry (how do you look at the ability of change in HK and its future)?

2. Preparation sheet given in advance of the interview with «Mohan».

The focus of my research (what I'm interested in most):
Why do people leave their country to go to Hong Kong? What makes them take this decision? Do people expect something of Hong Kong (money, a better life, more freedom, less social control)? What are the imaginations (hopes, fantasies, pictures) these people had/have of Hong Kong? Why did these people go to Chungking Mansion? What do they think about Chungking Mansion? How do they feel in Hong Kong (love/hate)? How did Hong Kong change in the last 10/15 years?

The most important thing in the interview is that you don't just answer my questions with yes and no, BUT that you tell me stories and anecdotes of what happened to you, how you made decisions etc. Even the most ordinary things (which seem unimportant to you) might be very interesting for me (and other people) to hear and watch!

Possible questions:
where do you come from
what is your social background (family, education, job)
can you tell me how and why you decided to leave India to go to Hong Kong
what did you think of Hong Kong when you arrived the first time
what did you do in Hong Kong at the beginning
how did you start the business you have in Chungking Mansions
how did your business and Chungking Mansions change in these years
is Chungking a good place to make business
why are there so many Indians/Pakistanis in Chungking Mansions
what do you think about Hong Kong
what do you think makes Hong Kong special (the fast rhythm/buildings/economy/mixture of different cultures/1997)
do you like/hate to live/be in Hong Kong and why
how did Hong Kong change since you came here first time (buildings/economy)
how is the relation among the different nationalities (Chinese/Indians/Africans/Westerners) in Chungking Mansions

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Places in Hong Kong

Notes on specific locations and related themes for the film:

Which shots of Hong Kong do I still want (need) to get?

a) Housing Estates (in Shek Kip Mei, Mei Foo, Kwun Tong, etc.)

b) Yau Ma Tei (market, illegal structures, hawkers, signs on Canton Rd., Shanghai Rd., etc.)

c) Tai Kok Tsui (reclamation, factories, sports grounds, hawkers, etc.)

d) Airport (approach from Sham Shui Po, hills, Kowloon City, Hung Hom?)

e) The International Global City (Central, Wan Chai, etc.: architecture, facades, mixed culture)

f) Sheung Wan (as one of these mixed places: East/West)

a) Housing Estates:

The scale of urban development, how much is being built, what is being built, and how monotonously it is built. The aim is to highlight the density of construction and how little space is available to people. Staged living space with residential blocks and accompanying entertainment and shopping complexes: cf. e.g. Whampoa Gardens. Differences between middle-class and working-class housing estates. But also the (exotic) fascination and aesthetic of these vast complexes. Goal: density, growth, scale of urban development and where are the people.

b) Yau Ma Tei:

Here I would like to focus essentially on visual aspects: the exoticism of the foreign perhaps; the forests of signs; the "traditionally" Chinese; the buildings, i.e. the mixture of different eras; illegal structures. The markets: Nelson Fish Market and Canton Market – what is sold, and above all how? People sleeping in their shops; a Mahjong game in the background; the kids at the Kowloon Food Market. Hawkers in the evening, prostitution (ask Afzal where the centre is). Goal: essentially my (visual) fascination with HK, the appeal of the exotic, and the "Chinese" (e.g. how chickens are kept; anecdote about the kitten).

c) Tai Kok Tsui:

cf. also b). But also the factories, the reclamation at Jordan Ferry, and the sports grounds in the evening with the high-rises in the background. Goal: the "old" HK of the 1970s with all its workshops, which have mainly been relocated to China.

d) Airport:

Approach. Perhaps possible to get an indirect overview of the city. Density of the space where people live and work. Airport in the middle of HK (what are the reasons? Immigration, rapid growth, land policy by government. Ask Eric Lye). Goal: illuminate questions of space and density at where are the people in there.

e) The International Global City:

Advertising about HK as a financial centre. Showcase of postmodernity in architecture AND business; the competitive dynamic; what logic lies behind it (ask Eric Lye). The aesthetic and pace, rhythm, noise, etc. Goal: illuminate questions about HK and postmodernity. Show ruptures. Noodle shop next to the most modern high-rise. The colonial legacy.

f) Sheung Wan:

Bring out the "Blade Runner" aspects. Queens Road. The old Taiping Shan. As in e), the coexistence of the global and the village-like; two different eras, epochs?

Streets/Buildings in Yau Ma Tei: (Chinatown aspect!)

– narrow triangular building: Kwong Wa St./Waterloo
– old buildings: Nathan Rd. at the level of the English Club
– illegal structures: Hamilton/Reclamation/Dundas/Canton Road
– chicken and kids: MongKok Market
– fish market: Nelson Rd.
– cool workshop: Kam Fong St. (people friendly!!!)

Places and Abstracts

Notes on central aspects assigned to certain locations in Hong Kong:

– street shops (density, scarcity of space, cultural pattern, streetlife)
– neon signs (exotism, chinatown, visuality)
– street markets: fish, vegetables (exotism, chinatown, visuality, cultural pattern), streetlife
– hawkers (cultural pattern, density, congestion, 3rd World aspects, contrast)
– workshops spilling onto pavements (density, scarcity of space, cultural pattern)
– the cramped nature of workshops (density, cultural pattern, scarcity of space)
– tiny shops (density, scarcity of space)
– illegal structures (density, scarcity of space, visuality)
– laundry hung outside (density, exotism, visuality)
– construction sites (economy, change, noise, hope, future)
– land reclamation zones (density, economy, hope, noise)
– different building styles and eras side by side (colonial past, postmodernity, visuality)
– contrast between West: Central, Mid-Levels etc. and East: Yau Ma Tei etc. (east and west meet, chinatown, existing differences, colonial past)
– elderly people at work: cardboard collectors (economy, free market, capitalism, 3rd World aspect)
– noise in Hong Kong: traffic, construction sites, industry (city, density, free market)
– traffic overflowing (density)

– signs of colonialism: colonial buildings, street signs (colonial past, east-west problems)

– airport in the middle of the city (density, visuality, scarcity of space)

– the harbour: calm, boats, water (space, recreation, tourism)

– harbour: busy container port, Star Ferry (economy, free port, capitalism)

– crowded streets: rush hour in Central (density, business, speed, rhythm, capitalism)

– underground/MTR (density, organisation, speed)

– architecture (postmodernity, belief in the future, hope, lost cause)

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Curriculum Vitae of Luc Schaedler

24.4.1963	Born in Zurich
1969–1975	Primary school in Feldmeilen
1976–1983	Cantonal school (Kantonsschule) in Zurich (Hohe Promenade)
1983–1985	Work as journalist at the Alternative Local Radio in Zurich
1985–1997	Collaboration at Kino Xenix as programme coordinator
1988–1990	Asian travels (India, China, Tibet, Japan) with working stays in Hong Kong (4 months) and Tokyo (7 months)
1990–1997	Repeated travels in the Asian region (China, Tibet, India)
1990–1995	Organisation of various film series focused on the Asian region: Zurich (1991/92 Tibet I & II, 1993 New Japanese Documentary Films, 1994 Buddhism), Dharamsala (1992 Tibet), and Delhi/Calcutta (1994: Buddhism)
1993–1997	University of Zurich: studies in Ethnology (Visual Anthropology), Film Studies, and Economic and Social History
1995–1997	Beginning of the licentiate in Visual Anthropology. Subject: A survey of Hong Kong before the handover to China in 1997.
1995/96	Field stay and four months of filming in Hong Kong.
1996/97	Editing and completion of the documentary film Made in Hong Kong

Filmography of Luc Schaedler

1995	Research in Zurich for Robert Kramer's film «Walk the Walk»
1996	Camera for «Official Street Parade Video» (Zurich 1996)
1996	«Cantone Louis» (5 min.) Short film with Reto Tischhauser
1997	«Made in Hong Kong» (75 min.)