IN-VISIBILITY:

THE SENTIMENTAL IN CHINESE CINEMA

SINCE THE 1990s

by

Hui Miao

Department of American and Canadian Studies
School of Historical Studies
The University of Birmingham
November 2010

UNIVERSITYOF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

Hui Miao

In-visibility:
The Sentimental in Chinese Cinema since the 1990s

November 2010

Abstract

The greater visibility of Chinese films brought by the wider global access and circulation has not satisfied the culturally specific understanding of Chinese cinema. The subject/object power relations stemming from the legacy of colonial and postcolonial discourse hinders the arrival of a better-balanced cross-cultural reading. The visibility of cinema provides a visual spectacle, it also challenges the audience with a communication of the epistemic side of visibility which feeds the images meaning and imagination and facilitates a more balanced culturally specific understanding. However, the epistemic side of visibility remains invisible under power-engaged cross-cultural reading. This study suggests that the sentimental provides a possibility for a better-balanced cross-cultural understanding through its provision of empathic connection with the culture, history and the psyche.

Home-longing/homecoming is claimed to the basis that the Chinese culture is built upon. Defined as the sentimental, this affective mode has been manifested across Chinese cinema abundantly through visual representation. The various articulations of the sentimental in face of the global and transnational homogeneous force further prove the deep-rootedness of the sentimental. The sentimental fashions as an affective link that establishes an empathic engagement in cross-cultural analysis. Through reading eight Chinese films made since the 1990, this study illustrates the relationship between the visual spectacle and the sentimental in Chinese cinema. Although the eight films are all from mainland Chinese directors, this study is carried out with the awareness of the sharing of Chinese culture within the Chinese language cinema where this study locates.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to give my primary intellectual and personal thanks to my PhD supervisor Michele Aaron. Michele has been a constant and valued source of intellectual guidance and stimulation over the course of this project and through the most difficult personal situations. While I am fully responsible for the contents, she has undoubtedly enhanced my work by tirelessly encouraging me to push boundaries further.

For encouragement and support I am grateful to my family and friends who remain anonymous behind my study over the years and always hold faith in me. My thanks are especially given to Mr. Hin Hiong Khoo for financially allowing me to pursue my project; to my loving parents for their unconditional support and love and for providing me with the emotional basis and inspiration for undertaking and completing this research. 爸爸，妈妈，谢谢你们多年来无条件的支持。爱，让我有勇气走完这段很长的路！

I dedicate this work to my loving husband Steve: for his numerous readings over this work that have challenged me with comments and questions; for his constant faith and love that have sustained me through this testing journey.

For Steve- my home in the world,
For all the years we have endured with love

CONTENTS

NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSCRIPTION

This work uses the *pinyin* system for transcriptions of Chinese-language characters and quotations. Where the names of the characters from Taiwan or Hong Kong are mentioned, their original spelling in Wade-Giles transliterations and Cantonese transliterations are also presented. The Chinese film titles are presented in English translation accompanied by the *pinyin* transcription.

I decided not to include the Chinese characters in this work for names, book/article titles unless it is in places where I think it would make a difference- in such instances Chinese characters are given in various parts of the work.

For the scholars' names that are in Chinese, I have quoted from the original form in the published resource. For example, Yingjin Zhang- if the resource I quoted is from the Chinese then it is presented as Zhang Yingjing; if it is in English then Yingjin Zhang is given as a result of the original quote.

INTRODUCTION

The power that makes the Chinese cohesive is not a religion or ideology, it is the power of the kinship group. Chinese civilisation is constructed upon the extreme deduction of kinship group experience. The homecoming of Chinese people has become a kind of religious ritual. Home is the holy land in people's hearts.

--- Shang Huipeng, "Collective homecoming and Chinese human relations"[1]

Trust me, for deep feeling and understanding require total commitment.

---Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*[2]

The present study invites the reader to explore articulations and adaptations of the sentimental in contemporary Chinese cinema. The greater visibility of Chinese cinema that has been brought by ever-expanding global circulation has not necessarily brought greater cross-cultural understanding. Chinese cinema often remains a target for realising anthropological ambition rather than being understood as an endeavour of conceptual value. The notion of 'in-visibility' in the title contains two levels of meanings: "invisibility" and "in visibility." This dual concept compliments my articulation of the presence of Chinese cinematic images and absence of a greater understanding of these films. Chinese cinema becomes more visible due to the ever-expanding global circulation. However, the epistemic aspect of visibility, which lends meaning to the visible cinematic images, remains invisible.

Based on the presumption that visibility itself is problematic, Rey Chow summarises the relation between the visible and the invisible:

> […] becoming visible is no longer simply a matter of becoming visible in the visual sense (as an image or object) but also a matter of participating in a discursive politics of (re)configuring the relation between center and margins, a politics in which what is visible may be a key but not the exclusive determinant. *There is, in other words, a visibility of visibility- a visibility that is the condition of possibility for what becomes visible, that may derive a certain intelligibility from the latter but cannot be simply reduced to it.*[3]

That is to say that when applied to the studies of Chinese cinema, the visibility of Chinese cinema includes what one can see visually, but also what one understands cross-culturally. *What one understands is the epistemic side of visibility which informs the visual side of visibility and makes the visual images so*. Therefore, visibility does not only depend on the visual input. It also depends on cultural politics that may affect the viewing positions/power positions. This therefore makes the approach towards a better-balanced understanding of the epistemic side of visibility problematic.

As the title of this thesis suggests, this study explores the absence (invisibility) of a greater understanding of Chinese culture and society. Such an understanding is valuable as it lends meaning to the visual spectacle of Chinese cinema (visibility). This study also examines Chinese cinema as a thought-provoking effort to engage with social and historical issues via visual signification (the epistemic side of visibility) unique to the cinema when the presence of images is provided for global consumption (the visual side of visibility). Also, it looks into the persistence and evolution of the sentimental in Chinese cinema and its key connection to the restoration of what has been missing.

The following pages therefore address themselves to several pertinent questions that flow from these issues. What has cinematic visibility told us about visibility itself? What does the sentimental mean exactly in the Chinese cultural context? What is the relationship between the sentimental and visibility in terms of understanding Chinese cinema? This study intends to analyse these questions in detail.

In the cross-cultural context, this study argues that the sentimental is a key element in an effective cross-cultural analysis. The films analysed within this study vary in themes, topics

and cinematic techniques, but they are bound together by being what is called "the sentimental" based on Rey Chow's recent study on the same topic.[4] In this study, the sentimental, *Qinqing zhuyi*, is defined as homecoming or home-longing. *Qinqing zhuyi* literally means kinship sentiments which are closely related to family and home. Confucianism is largely regarded as the foundation of Chinese moral standards and a system of ethics. The core of Confucianism is benevolence (*Ren*), which connotes 'the natural emotions that cannot be hidden or denied among kinship relations.'[5] In China, it has traditionally been recognised that kinship relations form the centre of all human relations. In his reading of *Book of Songs* (*Shijing*), Nie Yonghua comments that 'the kinship relations that place family as the centre forms the basic characteristics of Chinese culture, and all the other social relations are derived from this.'[6] Benevolence changes the outer restrictive principles into inner emotions and naturalises the rules into feelings. This is how family, as the core of moral standards, works as the core central unit in Chinese culture. That is why Qian Mu comments that '[f]amily is the supporting pillar of Chinese culture. We can almost say that the entire Chinese culture is built upon the concept of family to a certain degree. There is first the concept of family, then the concept of humanity, then everything else follows.'[7] Family not only organises the basic structure of traditional Chinese society but also becomes the referent for traditional Chinese cultural values and spirit. In Chinese culture, family and nation are structural isomorphs. The old emperors used to promote this term for the stability of the nation. It has become important and popular again in recent years because it has been increasingly acknowledged as the cultural spirit upon which people will regain security and a sense of belonging in an individualistic and material-driven society. Its transformed versions demonstrate the fundamental importance of the sentimental as the cultural frame that provides foundations to all other cultural relations and interpretations. It has been represented abundantly on the Chinese screen in its original forms and in its

transformed versions. However, considering it is such a pervasive issue, it is very under-researched. The sentimental persists across the Chinese screen and immerses itself into Chinese culture, so it deserves our renewed academic attention.

The sentimental is a culturally specific phenomenon in Chinese culture that can provide effective communication in the area of cross-cultural analysis. The reason for this is that the sentimental provides possibilities for empathy which combines affect and critical awareness and opens up 'a space for cross-cultural encounters in which differences are not eradicated but inhabited.'[8] Empathy has played a crucial role in the recent studies of trauma and witnessing. It brings trauma and history together in a way that is understandable, feel-able and accessible to different people with different cultures and histories. Dominick LaCapra's term 'empathic unsettlement' involves and emphasises an affective connection. Although 'empathic unsettlement' is raised in terms of trauma studies, it is equally useful in the area of cross-cultural reading, which would bring new feelings and new understanding into the field. Empathic unsettlement would accommodate the differences of cultures and involve the real feeling for others. It keeps critical distance to be able to see, but is also emotionally accommodating to be able to redeem respect towards other cultures. '[It] involves virtual not vicarious experience- that is to say, experience in which one puts oneself in the other's position without taking place of- or speaking for- the other or becoming a surrogate victim who appropriates the victim's voice or suffering.'[9] The sentimental would facilitate the affective link and establish an empathic understanding in the area of cross-cultural analysis in order to take us to the epistemic side of the visibility in the case of Chinese cinema.

LaCapra states that '[a]t the very least, empathic unsettlement poses a barrier to closure in discourse and places in jeopardy harmonizing or spiritually uplifting accounts of extreme

events from which we attempt to derive reassurance or a benefit (for example, unearned confidence about the ability of the human spirit to endure any adversity with dignity and nobility).'[10] Empathy can penetrate the inner being, it makes a real commitment towards understandings of pain, suffering and happiness. Empathy provides an understanding in general terms of human experience rather than being a racial or gendered criticism while reducing the self-recognition of being superior or authoritative, and enlarges the potential for a more balanced concern.

In the area of cross-cultural analysis and studies of Chinese cinema, empathy should be readily applied to arrive at a more balanced reading and understanding. The sentimental in the Chinese context provides the pivotal step for affective involvement in understanding cultural specificity in Chinese cinema. This type of empathy ultimately provides us with knowledge of what has fed the visuality of the images of Chinese cinema- the epistemic side of visibility. Through this empathic reading, Chinese cinema should be considered as an autonomous field with its own conceptual and aesthetic merits. I will discuss in the pages that follow how Chinese films come to terms with the enduring sentimental and how the sentimental is articulated and transformed in the visual and narrative mode specific to cinema. An understanding will be arrived at the epistemic side of visibility which might be materialised by visual objects such as filmic images, but that can also be perceived as the cultural framework that bestows all the images with weight and meaning in its very combination with the sentimental.

Through exploring the sentimental, I am suggesting that the sentimental provides a possibility for a better-balanced cross-cultural understanding through its provision of empathic connections with the culture, history and psyche. The sentimental facilitates a culturally

specific perspective into Chinese culture. Therefore, it provides a possibility for a better-balanced cross-cultural understanding of Chinese cinema. This study illustrates the relationship between the visual spectacle and the sentimental in Chinese cinema. Through an analysis of eight films, I explore how the sentimental engages with the visual spectacle and how it is gratified and perpetuated in Chinese cinema. In the face of ongoing economic development and self-centred individualism, recognition and understanding of the sentimental is not only crucial in the area of cross-cultural communication, but it is in fact also significant to the cultural participants. In contrast to the upheaval and competitive nature of social and cultural changes in China at large, Chinese cinema propounds the sentimental-this enduring and moderate affective concept- to preserve something valuable for the cultural vitality. Conforming to the Chinese tradition of being moderate in expressions of feeling, the sentimental challenges the viewers conceptually and aesthetically in its moderate manner rather than through a radical representation. (Moderation as a "Chinese" way of expression will be expanded on in a later section of the introduction). Even when radical figures are presented in these films the sentimental, which suggests a mild and tender affective mode, persists. It thus provides a culturally specific connection to the emotional traits that shore up the vitality of the films.

According to James Chandler, "the sentimental" means 'the languages of emotion.'[11] Sentiment is normally considered to be equivalent to emotions and feelings that make being sentimental. Therefore, "the sentimental" is 'an aesthetic mode,' a way to express emotions and feelings. In Western-American literature, the sentimental refers to the aesthetic attitude that takes its 'roots in the seventeenth century' and 'took shape in the second half of the eighteenth century when the neologism "sentimental" was first coined.'[12] The connotation of the sentimental has changed over the course of time in different continents, such as from

feelings of melancholy over the passing of time as described by Friedrich Schiller, to the means of empowerment in social struggle.[13] "The sentimental" is chosen rather than sentiment in this study because sentiment is a state and storage of emotions, while "the sentimental" encompasses the dynamics of change and transformation that goes with what I define as "the sentimental." I will provide analysis on how to understand the sentimental in a Chinese context, and how I define it according to the Chinese context. Through reading the eight Chinese films in question, the focus is on how we understand the sentimental with specific reference to the Chinese cultural context. This can be done by way of the visual and narrative modes of signification of cinema and through the forms of social interaction and collective imaging specific to the transitional Chinese culture where the most unstable and unpredictable foundations for human relations can be found in an era of globalisation and global transaction.

With its focus on the articulation and transformation of the Chinese sentimental, this thesis is indebted to and intellectually affirmed by Chow's 2007 work *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films*. This current study has formed a dialogue with Chow's work in many ways. Building on this dialogue, I will put forward my conceptions of Chinese family and the imagination of family in Chinese cinema. Chow's critical engagement with identity politics and the problematic of becoming visible, and in particular her introduction of Giles Deleuze's idea on visibility, provides a useful departure point for this work. For example, this study examines and expands on psychological aspects of the understanding of the visual spectacle (through readings of Freud, Lacan, etc.) which informs my search for the inner mechanism of the sentimental in Chinese culture.

Such a discursive topic as the sentimental can be hard to define. Although my research engages with issues relating to the sentimental and visibility that are discussed in Chow's work, there are major differences between the definition, the connotation and parameters of the terms that are employed. Chow defines the sentimental as '*Wenqing zhuyi*' which literally means 'warm sentiment-ism,' and she continues that '[*a*]*t the heart of Chinese sentimentalism lies the idealization of filiality*.'[14] Because filiality is regarded as an ideal in her work, considerable effort has to be made to sustain the ideal. That is why this ideal is defined as 'an indomitable collective will.'[15] Chow also comments that idealism should be considered in the sense 'as in idealist philosophy, which holds that the object of external perception consists of ideas,' and 'as the act of idealizing- of envisioning and asserting goodness and perfection in the thing or person perceived.'[16] From this, we can tell that the idealisation involves consistent efforts of achieving and sustaining it. Therefore, the sentimental in her work is largely based on '*an inclination or a disposition toward making compromises and toward making-do with even- and especially- that which is oppressive and unbearable*.'[17] This is also why the significant sense of 'moderation' is mentioned in her work which contributes to her illustration of the sentimental as 'being accommodating.'[18] Thus the sentimental here is understood as making compromises and accommodating unbearable human conditions. Therefore, a large part of her work is devoted to migrants and marginalised figures, stemming from her background as a Chinese immigrant growing up in America and her sense of longing for cultural belonging.

Chow acknowledges that '[i]n Chinese language, as can be expected, more than one term has been used for "sentimentalism."'[19] In this study I use the expression "*Qinqing zhuyi*" which is a family-bounded term in Chinese culture. *Qinqing zhuyi* literally means kinship relations. It is difficult to find an exact English translation for this phrase. "The sentimental" is the closest

meaning that suits the translation in terms of the affective and active sides of the connotation contained in the word. Therefore, the word sentimental is shared in this study with Chow's work even though the definition varies. This choice of term is significant not because it differentiates my research from Chow's, but because it illustrates my emphasis on cultural specificity and its importance in cross-cultural analysis. Chow's choice of word emphasises a greater connection with social struggle. Chow says that 'the sentimental is perhaps best described as a *mood of endurance*, a mode whose contours tend to remain fuzzy rather than sharply delineated and whose effects may more easily be apprehended as (a prevailing) *tone*.' Therefore, my choice of phrase places the emphasis on a positive social convention and cultural spirit, while the connotation of Chow's term implies a sense of social strictures that is imposed on individuals. Although I therefore place different emphasis on the sentimental, I also engage with the concept of the '*mood of endurance*' of the sentimental, allowing me to explore the cultural psyche in pursuit of the articulation of this endurance in Chinese cinema.[20]

Being moderate is also mentioned at various points in this study. Although my use of the term shares some of the connotations that Chow employs in terms of being 'mild' and 'tender', I emphasise being moderate as the convention of Chinese cultural expression.[21] Therefore, articulations of the sentimental in Chinese cinema pose an opposite counter-force to the material-driven domestic economy and the ever-expanding globalisation. However, being moderate, to Chow, means tolerance and endurance. The other reason that being moderate is mentioned is to differentiate the meaning of the sentimental in the Chinese context in contrast to its English definition. According to The New Oxford Dictionary of English, the word "sentimental" means 'of or prompted by feelings of tenderness, sadness, or nostalgia;' or '(of a work of literature, music, or art) dealing with feelings of tenderness,

sadness, or nostalgia in an *exaggerated* and *self-indulgent* way.'[22] However, there are slightly different connotations between the English and Chinese definitions. The term in English can imply an 'exaggerated' and 'self-indulgent' way, whereas the Chinese cultural convention of expression is rather mild and moderate. Chow also acknowledges that being moderate is 'not quite the affective outpour that is the typical definition of sentimentalism.'[23]

In the following pages, the sentimental is presented and tested in terms of homecoming and home-longing- this is the central theme that I argue is an enduring topic in Chinese culture- and how the sentimental is understood and articulated when combined with the film medium. This discussion leads towards the suggestion that the sentimental is one of the points of entry and access for a more balanced cross-cultural understanding. The sentimental in Chinese cinema should engender a more sophisticated and complex understanding not only as a theme but also as an embedded cultural framework upon which we can base our understanding of Chinese cinema. This persistent affective mode is a culturally specific Chinese phenomenon that is in tension with unbalanced cross-cultural readings and understandings.

Where Chow's work discusses the compromises and sacrifices towards filiality as a central theme of the sentimental, Chapter 2 of this study explores family sacrifice as part of the moral apparatus that enables the enduring articulation of the sentimental on the Chinese screen. The core of the sentimental in the current study is rooted in the kinship relationship. Therefore, this study focuses on the negotiation and renegotiation of the kinship relationship in Chinese culture in its original meaning and in its transformed styles. My analysis focuses on the core relation in Chinese culture- the kinship relations, which is not a disparate concept but a cultural entity that involves complex and empathic understanding cross-culturally. Although Chow does acknowledge the importance of Chinese filial piety (which is the

principle of the kinship relations) in her work, it is discussed as the stricture under which the compromises and sacrifices have to be made towards achieving the sentimental rather than as being part of the cultural framework. Therefore, the sentimental in this study is defined specifically as being Chinese and I analyse how it is rooted in Chinese culture in general and how it is represented as an aesthetic effort leading to the epistemic understanding of visibility of cinema.

Chow raises the question of what it means to be visible in the modern world for non-Western people based on her reading of Chinese and Japanese authors. Therefore, the film as a transnational cultural phenomenon always provokes the problematic between visual presentation and cultural identity.[24] As a consequence, Chow broadly engages with the 'fraught relationship between film and cultural identity' as part of the Western discipline of film studies.[25] Chow claims that Chinese cinema since the 1980s, that has been participating in a wider global circulation, is 'an inherent part of a contemporary global problematic of becoming visible.'[26] Therefore, Chinese cinema should also belong to the history of Western cinema studies as well as belonging to the history of Chinese culture.[27] While I appreciate this position- of not making Chinese cinema a paticularism that would deepen the cultural otherness- I approach Chinese cinema in my study as a unique cultural phenomenon with universal accessibility. Promoting cultural specificity in my research is not to essentialise Chinese culture. It is a way to get to the core of the cultural understanding. As I assert in the concluding chapter of this study, awareness of the power position is not sufficient for a better-balanced cross-cultural analysis. The focus of this thesis is on demonstrating the importance of cultural specificity in a cross-cultural analysis especially in a transnational and global era and given that Chinese cinema itself is heterogeneous. Therefore, the problematic of visibility that this study examines stems from the longstanding legacy of

colonial/postcolonial discourse. I do not elaborate the sentimental in my study in the hope of constructing it as 'cinema-defining events' as Chow hopes to do.[28] But I do want to make it a culturally specific case for understanding Chinese cinema and the emotional affective pond and storage for images.

Visibility in this work is defined in terms of the visuality of cinema and understanding of the visuality- the epistemic side of visibility that has fed the images of visuality in Chinese cinema. In this way, the current study emphasises that the sentimental is one way to achieve an epistemic understanding of visibility in a cross-cultural context. Visibility here contains the deep-rooted power relationship that problematises the object/subject looking relations. Chow's visibility is defined as the ongoing problematic in the field of film studies. From Walter Benjamin, Christian Metz, to Laura Mulvey, she locates her examination in the framework of post-structuralism and discusses identity politics as part of the history of cinema studies generally rather than belonging to Chinese cinema exclusively. Therefore, visibility as a term is shared in the definition that is summarised by Chow, but diversifies in terms of belonging to Chinese cinema specifically or to histories of cinema studies in general.

The current study contributes to the larger discipline of film studies that continuously tests and negotiates the unequal subject/object viewing relationship embedded in postcolonial studies that are essential to the study of the film medium. The sentimental is considered in this study as the affective mode that evokes the empathic understanding cross-culturally towards a more efficient cross-cultural communication. If Chow's work opens up a new area of studying the sentimental in Chinese cinema, then my work hopes to complement and further contribute to this through providing a specific cultural understanding of the endurance of the sentimental, its inner mechanism and its transformations in an era when materialism has often dominated affective appreciation. Although numerous Chinese language

publications acknowledge the importance and consistency of the Chinese sentimental, very few actually take on the sentimental as an aesthetic and speculative concept in the Chinese context.[29] I hope that this study can stimulate further research on the visibility of Chinese cinema when it is provided for global consumption.

In discussing "Chinese" cinema, I do not intend to imply its equivalent to the People's Republic of China although all the films in this study do happen to be works by directors from mainland China. It is evident that the recent economic development of mainland China has propelled its status as an economic superpower in the twenty-first century. China's imminent ascendance onto the world stage and subsequently into a world view has also fuelled its cumulative imagination of Chinese nationalism. Therefore, it is important not to equate the "Chinese" in this study automatically with mainland China. The use of "Chinese" in this study is based on the presumption that the populations in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other diasporic Chinese communities throughout the world all share a pan-Chinese culture that has been acknowledged by each individual group, although each group has its own unique relation to "Chinese" culture, linguistic practice, and world position. Although different groups have been keen on affirming their autonomies, their numerous historical and cultural connections need to be acknowledged. Rather than attempt to compete for or monopolise the term "Chinese," it would be better to recognise Chinese itself as problematic and acknowledge the coexistence of various groups with similar or shared cultural and historical heritages.[30] In fact, the practice of co-producing transnational films has already foreseen the porous definition of "Chinese" film. In recent years, "Chinese" has been used more in a linguistic sense (*Huayu*, Chinese language, usually includes Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese, and all the various different kinds of local dialects within mainland China) rather

than in a national sense, which recognises the issue that the term "Chinese" has raised in terms of the perpetuation of the essentialism that is incurred by nationalism.[31]

Visibility in Global Communication and the Subject/Object Relationship

Chinese cinema since the late 1980s has stormed onto the world stage with its stylistic distinctiveness and its star actors, actresses and directors. It has become a highly visible component in a changing world arena. Transactions across the terrain of a globalised world have made possible the wider circulation of film images within the global cultural marketplace. Reform of the economic system since the Cultural Revolution has brought tremendous change within China. The market economy that has emerged as a result of the economic reform brings to Chinese people not only business exchange on a globalised level, but also a cultural exchange on this wider level too. The rapid economic development of China in the last 30 years has facilitated its more prominent presence on the global stage and this has attracted far more critical attention of scholars from outside the borders of its cultural products.[32] For example, the early productions of the Fifth Generation directors such as Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* (*Hong Gaoliang*, 1987) won the Golden Bear Award for Best Feature Film at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1988; Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine* (*Ba wang bie ji*, 1993) won the 46th Palme d'Or award at the Festival de Cannes in 1993; Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Blue Kite* (*Lan feng zheng*, 1993) won the Best Feature Film Award at the 6th Tokyo International Film Festival.[33] The high visibility of Chinese cinema has been accompanied by a steady stream of scholars in recent years from various disciplines and many academically trained researchers who have joined in the English-speaking study of Chinese cinema. The fascination with a speedy and fascinating visual media and the abundant accessibility of the raw materials has made the visibility of Chinese movies an unprecedented phenomenon.

However, the greater visibility of Chinese cinema has not necessarily endowed it with conceptual value that can be provoking for a more insightful understanding of Chinese culture. For example, Yingjin Zhang has demonstrated this in his study of 'eurocentrism' and 'cultural imperialism' in cross-cultural analysis in the field of Chinese film studies.[34] Rey Chow also observes the compartmentalisation in the field of Chinese film studies and points out that 'the study of non-Western films, much like the study of non-Western cultures in general' are only considered to be 'phenomena of social or anthropological interest.'[35] Although different theoretical studies take on different agendas, they unwittingly partake in a larger ideological legacy, which is expressed in and reinforced by postcolonial discourse. This discourse has facilitated and fixated on a subject/object viewing position which makes cross-cultural analysis an area where progressive research and mutual understanding can be problematic.

Cross-cultural analysis is complex and problematic. It is located in the difficult terrain of the subject/object dynamic dominating the characteristic of the relationship between the colonial West and the colonised non-West spanning the past 500 years. To contextualise any discussion of cross-cultural analysis, it is first necessary to refer to the anthropological and postcolonial debates in connection with subject/object relations. This can illustrate how these discourses continue today to paralyse non-Western cultural identities as the object of the gaze of the West.

The subject/object relationship stems from the Western anthropological tradition of power-oriented relations already widely studied by scholars. Alan Barnard, for instance, observes that anthropology 'is taken to mean our way of making sense of other peoples' modes of thought, since anthropologists usually study cultures other than their own.'[36] Instead of

defining this act of understanding as an act of control, Western anthropologists often claimed that the controlling power centre 'has transformed for us the sensational, wild and unaccountable world of 'savages' into a number of well-ordered communities governed by law, behaving and thinking according to consistent principles.'[37] Others like Trinh T. Minh-ha have contested this by demonstrating that 'one of the conceits of anthropology lie in its positivist dream of a neutralized language that strips off all its singularity to become nature's exact, unmisted reflection.'[38] While acknowledging the desire to know the Other, the power-oriented application of 'consistent principles' saturates the entire field of anthropological activity. This colonial power relation determines that the dominant culture is the observer, and the Other can only be observed, which intrinsically determines that cross-cultural analysis does not operate within an equitable cultural exchange. The awareness of the hierarchies of Western knowledge becomes a means of reinforcing the observer's culture.

With the decline of physical colonisation in the second half of the twentieth century, postcolonialism has emerged in its place to define and explain modern power relationships. The West today claims primary responsibility for the inimical aspects of its colonial past through programmes such as 'Whiteness Studies,'[39] while downplaying attempts to understand and assimilate the role played by the colonised. Homi K. Bhabha, one of the most important thinkers in postcolonial criticism, has developed a series of challenging concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, and difference central to broadening postcolonial theory.[40] Bhabha emphasises the 'agency' of the colonised and their active participation in the formation of the colonial present, thereby asserting their subjectivity. For him the consequence of colonial control is not only simple political, economic, socio-cultural or military domination. There are more complex and varied cultural contacts and interactions at work involving the resistance and mimicry of the colonised as the object of colonial authority.

Through analysing Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, combining Jacques Lacan's

theory of the Imaginary, Bhabha observes that colonial identity is always 'anxious' because

of the 'counter-gaze' threatening the colonial sense of self. The anxiety is due to the

'impossibility of claiming an origin for the Self (or Other) within a tradition of representation

that conceives of identity as the satisfaction of a totalizing, plenitudinous object of vision.'[41]

For Bhabha as for Lacan, the identity is never 'a priori, nor a finished product; it is only ever

the problematic process of access to an image of totality.'[42]

Edward Said's *Orientalism,* written in 1978, is widely considered to be the milestone

postcolonial studies text. *Orientalism* provides an authoritative reading of Western attitudes

at large towards 'ethnic minorities.' Said illustrates how colonisers set up an allegedly

superior Western self in relation to the ostensibly inferior non-Western: 'Orientalism can be

discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it

by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it,

ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and

having authority over the Orient.'[43] His study provides an extremely valuable opening to the

critical academic study of contemporary non-Western societies. Connecting cultural criticism

to world power relations and politics, Said also demonstrates that imperialism is an ongoing

process that recurs under ever more subtle guises.[44]

For Bhabha and for Said, therefore, postcolonial criticism still fundamentally revolves around

the subject/object issue. The ambition to genuinely know the other and the colonial

subject/object tension create an epistemological impasse in postcolonial criticism. Although

postcolonial discourse acknowledges that colonialism has been a hidden presence shaping

Euro-American power in the world and the grand narratives of modern progress, the

subjectivity of the colonised is still in fact being repressed. The continuing placement of

emphasis on knowing the other as a means of realising and defining one's own cultural

values perpetuates the act of speaking for them. This therefore embodies the epistemological

impasse hindering our arrival at a culturally-specific core of approaching understanding.

Western subjectivity continues to objectify the Other and this fuels its cross-cultural

interpretive authority.

With the increasing forces of globalisation, the unresolved subject/object relation still

provides a position of authority for colonialism. Global changes present a more complex

scenario for the development of theoretical discourse, especially since in the globalised

environment theories travel in a relatively borderless world. [45] But this does not automatically

mean that previous power relationships have been transformed. Instead, as Masao Miyoshi

argues, 'colonialism is even more active now in the form of transnational corporatism.' [46]

Miyoshi provocatively stresses that '[t]he problem we face now is how to understand today's

global configuration of power and culture that is both similar and different vis-à-vis the

historical metropolitan-colonial paradigm.' [47] He asserts that the perpetration of colonialism

has occurred in his discussion of the development of transnational corporations (TNC). He

believes that the contemporary world 'is not an age of postcolonialism but of intensified

colonialism, even though it is under an unfamiliar guise.' [48] Miyoshi tries to convey the still

active dynamic of colonialism in shaping world power today. However, in a larger historical

temporality, postcolonialism provides an original understanding of colonialism.

Postcolonialism has not banished subject/object issues to the colonial past. Rather it reveals

that a more complex situation is at hand that continues to perpetuate the relationship.

This observation is not intended to diminish or dismiss the sincere intellectual desire of critics and scholars in the West for exploring other cultures. Such efforts can be mutually beneficial. E. Ann Kaplan, for instance, asserts that 'theorists outside the producing culture might uncover different strands of the multiple meanings than critics of the originating culture just because they bring different frameworks/theories/ideologies to the texts.'[49] To a certain degree the notion of a positive cross-cultural influence is justified. What is objectionable is not the desire to know, but the observer's epistemology reflected in the language while claiming to understand the others' bodily feeling, that allows the observer to speak on their behalf. The assertion of cultural authority illustrates the reproducibility and longevity of the issue of colonialism.

The much more recent history of the study of film has not exactly departed from this Western critical paradigm constructed through the unequal subject/object relationship. Through the assimilating effects of global influence, Chinese art and literature have often been criticised by Western scholars as departing from its ethnic origin.[50] By simply claiming Chinese culture as an organic whole, this ignores the personal and literary history and also underestimates the processes of survival, the struggle for dignity and faith and the constant negotiation of identity that is continuously occurring. The fluidity and mutation of identity are neglected as rare possibilities.

In the area of Chinese film studies, the conceptual and speculative merits of Chinese cinema as an intellectual endeavour remain objectified and invisible in the Western-dominated discipline. At the same time many scholars (especially native Chinese scholars) feel it is necessary to ground their work within cultural parameters as a way of avoiding Eurocentric trends of theory and interpretation. In such an effort, studies of Chinese cinema also produce

a cultural particularism which is ultimately a kind of cultural essentialism. The past victimisation under Western imperialism flips over to a self-essentialisation. The situation has updated itself, but the problem perpetuates. Chinese identity has been naturalised and fortified into a fixed origin as something that can be traced back. In a way, cultural essentialism popularises the same Otherness that orientalism has been criticising. Orientalism and particularism (such as nationalism) are reverse sides of the same coin. "Chinese" should not be a method of differentiation because this would inscribe a comparable sense of Otherness that tends to be applied by Orientalism. A scholarly essentialism thus functions squarely within the orientalist dynamic and continues to imprison "Other" cultures.

When taken in the context of the study of film, visibility is problematic because of the power-oriented viewing position intrinsic to a longstanding set of issues pertaining to the fraught relationship between the subject and the object. This is not a new observation. In fact, the visibility of cinema as a transnational phenomenon was already seen as problematic from the reflections of the non-Western cultural experience of film during the early years of the 20th century. Lumiere's film-showing reached China in 1896 following Edison's invention of the Kinetoscope parlour which first appeared in 1894.[51] Realisation of cinema's potential emergence as a transnational concept instead of simply a Western one occurred almost from its inception. According to Li Daoxing's description of early Chinese film culture, part of the forces that pushed the production of early Chinese films and the culture of film criticism was the vilification and humiliation felt by Chinese audiences and authors in relation to the images captured by foreign film companies. During the 1910s and 1920s, the foreign film companies who went to China to film natural scenery, current affairs and the Peking Opera were more interested in including degenerative images of Chinese culture with their lenses, such as the practice of foot-binding by Chinese women, the smoking of opium, gambling, and

the frequentation of brothels. At a time when travel and accessibility of images were extremely limited in comparison to today, the images that were captured by foreign film companies became authoritative depictions that possessed exaggerated credibility. These images shocked Chinese audiences within China and offended overseas Chinese communities by undermining their sense of national dignity. This encouraged professionals within the developing Chinese film industry towards cooperative efforts to produce their own films that would reveal the "real" China and Chinese culture.[52]

The self-conscious response from Chinese audiences and artists raised questions about what it meant to be visible and to be seen in the modern world. The images that were visible in the visual sense actually question visibility itself and generated a sense of being invisible which was felt by the Chinese audience. In this way the majority of the culture remained invisible. The visual immediacy conveyed by the images captured by foreign film companies in China were experienced by Chinese audiences not only as scientific advancement but also as a type of racially marked signification. Their own cultures were made to appear inferior through the gaze of this new medium of visibility.

Kelly Oliver points out that 'many contemporary theorists of society and culture talk about power in terms of visibility. To be empowered is to be visible; to be disempowered is to be rendered invisible. […] Dominance and marginality are discussed in terms of visibility and invisibility.'[53] However, the greater visibility does not necessarily equate to political empowerment. Visibility does not simply refer to the ocular dimension of vision. It is viewed under the condition that it is mediated through power relations. Therefore, the subject/object power relation has made the visibility of Chinese cinema itself problematic. Greater

understanding cross-culturally requires entry points for a better-balanced understanding of Chinese cinema as a conceptual and speculative endeavour.

The Sentimental in the Chinese Context

The sentimental can be one of the entry points to facilitate a better-balanced understanding of the visibility of Chinese cinema on both the visual and epistemic level. When regarded in close relationship to the fraught power relation of the viewing position, Chinese cinema as a collective conceptual endeavour is sometimes neglected. Chinese cinema has become globally visible with the celebrated production of innovative films directed by the mainland Fifth Generation directors such as Chen Kaige, Zhang Yimou, Tian Zhuangzhuang, as well as by their contemporaries in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Although the films I discuss in the following chapters are all works of mainland Chinese directors, the collective efforts made by all the "Chinese" film-makers towards the prosperity of Chinese cinema in general should not be neglected. The subject/object relationship is central to my readings in response to the visibility of Chinese cinema. The subject/object relationship embedded in the cross-cultural study perpetuates its ambition of seeking an authentic Other. The identity of Chinese cinema is still largely considered as fixed and authentic. The problematic of visibility has not brought to the fore attention to the problematic of the naturalness of the cinematic images. Therefore, Chinese cinema produces resistance cinematically towards an unbalanced understanding and challenges Western thinking aesthetically and theoretically. However, Chinese cinema suggests that resistance can be through the negotiation of an affective mode rather than through radical representations. The persistence of a predominant affective mode that I will define as the sentimental in Chinese films indicates that contemporary film engenders lasting resistance through a rather mild, persistent, and culturally deep-rooted mode. To engage productively with the global visibility of contemporary Chinese cinema, it is therefore

important to work conceptually and speculatively, at a level beyond the chronological documenting efforts that at times dominate developments in this field.[54]

According to The New Oxford Dictionary of English, the word "sentimental" is associated with the 'exaggerated' and 'self-indulgent' way of expression.[55] When studied in the context of Chinese culture, the radical expression of emotions is generally not seen as a typical character trait of the Chinese because "being moderate" has been acclaimed all throughout Chinese history. This can be seen during the Tang dynasty, which is generally agreed as the period in which China's greatest poetry was written. Chinese lyrics from this period were typically very short, un-emphatic and quiet in manner, and limited to suggesting a mood or a scene by a few touches rather than painting a detailed picture. The *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*) is one of the *Four Books* (*Sishu*). Together with the *Five Classics* (*Wujing*), they are expressions of basic methods of the central system of Confucianism which constitutes the essence of China's social ethics. Although it was criticised by Lu Xun during the New Literature Movement, it is the underlying principle that would nurture Chinese philosophy. According to James Legge's translation of the text, the goal of the Mean is to maintain balance and harmony through directing the mind to a state of constant equilibrium. The person who follows the Mean is on a path of duty and must never leave it. Therefore, the Mean pursues a state of being natural. No one should exceed their natural order according to their natural status in the world.[56] This illustrates one of many examples in Chinese thought of harmony being praised. Therefore, there are no considerable stirrings of excessive pleasure, anger, sorrow or joy. So the expression of the sentimental should always be in moderation. In *The Book of the Way* (*Dao de jing*), it is said that the 'greatest music has no sound, the greatest image has no shape (*Da yin xi sheng, da xiang wu xing*).'[57] There is a Chinese saying that follows this doctrine, that 'the greatest love has no word (*Da ai wu yan*).' Therefore,

conventionally, the expression of emotions and affects is accepted as being moderate rather than being overwhelming and radical.

As being mentioned above, it is difficult to find the exact equivalent translation in Chinese for the sentimental. However, the term *Qinqing zhuyi* coincides with what I want to discuss in this study. *Qinqing zhuyi* literally means kinship sentiments which are closely related to family and home. Family not only organises the basic structure of traditional Chinese society but also becomes the referent for traditional Chinese cultural values and spirit. Based on family ethics, filial piety is the spiritual support of the family. The culture of filial piety is an important element of Chinese culture. For instance Xie Youwei observes that '[i]n a sense, Chinese culture is a culture of filial piety.'[58] In the traditional culture filial piety is emphasised in terms of respecting, caring and looking after one's parents with dedication. This commitment and bond not only includes the physical act of looking after and satisfying basic necessities of one's parents, but also the comforting of their inner state and respecting their personalities. Chinese culture generally considers an individual to be the extension of their parents' lives. Therefore, one should love one's parents just the same as one loves oneself.

This kind of dedication towards parents also ripples out to siblings and other family members and beyond the "blood" family. In Chinese culture, family and nation are structural isomorphs. Family is the starting point for nation, and nation is the extension of family. The dedication towards parents and family, therefore, extends into loyalty towards the nation and other groups. All concepts of relations, clan, classmates, social groups, society, nation are derived around the spindle of the family. The word "*qin*" demonstrates this connection. It means blood relationship, but it also means being close and intimate. Therefore, loyalty and

filial piety (*Zhong he xiao*) are at the heart of the Chinese sentimental. This represents not only a matter of respecting family elders, but also an age-old moral apparatus for submitting to anything beyond the self in order to achieve closeness and intimacy. Gu Hongming once said, 'Thus this cult of ancestor-worship, together with the Divine duty of loyalty, in Confucianism gives to the Chinese people the same sense of permanence in their existence while they live and the same consolation when they die which the belief in a future life in religion gives to the mass of mankind in other countries.'[59] The main essence, whether in the absolute duty of loyalty to the Emperors, or in ancestor-worship, is filial piety.

However, this concept of family and filial piety has been transformed by conditions of the modern globalised, borderless and fast-paced world. In Yingjin Zhang's preface of the recent work by Jin Changqing, Zhang cited the theory of Roland Robertson and comments that the phenomenon of being homeless is a psychological result of modernity. This state of mind encompasses nostalgia towards the feeling of being at home.[60] Thus, as we face modern life, the concept of home-longing or homecoming has been extended or transformed into different ways of seeking intimacy and security, which is supposed to be provided from being at home.

The natural extensiveness of the sentimental is seen in new ways on the Chinese screen with even stronger cohesiveness. The sentimental seems to shed light on something unique to Chinese culture. Among the various films featured in this study, the situations in which the sentimental typically occurs include homecoming, such as in *Getting Home* (*Luo ye gui gen*, Zhang Yang, 2007); family sacrifice to keep the wholesomeness and integrity of the family, such as in *Springtime in a Small Town* (*Xiao cheng zhi chun*, Fei Mu, 1948; Tian Zhuangzhuang, 2002); nostalgia in tendency, such as in *In the Heat of the Sun* (*Yangguang canlan de rizi*, Jiang Wen, 1994); being a cultural insider, such as in *The Dream Factory* (*Jia*

fang yi fang, Feng Xiaogang, 1997); and intimate space, such as in *The Orphan of Anyang* (*Anyang ying'er*, Wang Chao, 2001) and *Still Life* (*Sanxia hao ren*, Jia Zhangke, 2006).[61] These are just a few of the situations that are persistently articulated in Chinese cinema from which I base my discussion of the sentimental. The sentimental is seen to reproduce and perpetuate itself in relation to the visibility of Chinese cinema no matter under what circumstances or in what era it is located. It grows and expands beyond individual consent and dissent. Therefore, simply to use the restricted definition of home to interpret the Chinese sentimental seems not to follow the shifts that have occurred under these different cultural circumstances. To summarise briefly here, homecoming and home-longing seem to suit the changing and lasting situation better in crystalising the essence of the sentimental in Chinese context. It includes all the fundamental and variant emotions of the sentimental that is being at home, being an insider, or simply being together. Questions might be raised regarding the issue that the sentimental is an affective mode. However, homecoming is an action mode. It should be emphasised that homecoming is considered as an affective mode combining the reservoir of emotional home-longing, filial piety and the various emotions with expressive intention of movements. Therefore, instead of simply being an affective expression, the Chinese sentimental becomes a cultural frame that preserves cultural harmony and maintains cultural communication. It changes and transforms under different cultural situations and conditions, but it remains the cohesive power that traverses time and space. Therefore, I would argue that the Chinese sentimental is this mode of human relationship that is encouraged and promoted as being in an imagined intimacy- an intimacy that provides security and strength in the face of the intensified and aggressive challenges posed by modernity.

Giles Deleuze talks about the close-up device not only as 'type of image' but also 'a component of all images,' because it freezes the moment and amplifies the emotional explosion of the moment.[62] We can say the same that the sentimental in Chinese cinema is a type of image and also a component of all Chinese images. It is the emotional core where all the other emotional derivatives come from. The imagination of the sentimental mode of homecoming has long been popular both on the Chinese screen and in literary history. The sentimental seems to engender a core value that many kinds of emotions return to in the Chinese cultural context. Yu Hua, whose novel *To Live* (1993) provides the story line for the same-titled award-winning film by Zhang Yimou who is one of the most acclaimed Chinese Fifth Generation directors, is regarded as an avant-garde novelist at the time. However, when it is scrutinised contextually, the sentimental is always at the heart of his work. According to Pan Huili, 'Yu Hua's novels face the suffering with the sentimental, experiences deeply the living situation of Chinese ordinary citizens, seeks the sentimental world …expresses the penetrating despair in a sentimental way and reflects an eternal humanitarian solicitude.'[63] In the book *To Live*, the character Fu Gui, who is facing the deaths of his son, daughter, wife, son-in-law and the grandchild, still has the capacity to live, to love and to forgive. The sentimental becomes the foundation of the basic living core. It goes beyond the family, extends into friends, the community, even to the opposing side. Yu Hua's novel *Xu Sanguan's Story of Selling Blood* (1998) tells a story of Xu Sanguan who displaces the devil with the sentimental. He sells nearly every drop of his blood and suffers constant excruciating pain to raise a child who does not have a blood bond with him. This seems to be the perfect example of the type of extended kinship that is central to Chinese cultural thinking.

In Chinese literature and film, a common theme related to the sentimental is continuously returned to. Some of literary examples of this are *Torrent Trilogy* by Ba Jin (1933, 1938, and

1941); the novels of Zhang Ailing such as *Love in a Fallen City* (*Qin cheng zhi lian*, 1943) and *Eighteen Springs* (*Shiba chun*, 1951); *Four Generations under One Roof* by Lao She (*Si shi tong tang*, 1949); *Thunderstorm* by Cao Yu (*Leiyu*, 1933). In the cinema there are *Raise the Red Lantern* by Zhang Yimou (*Da hong denglong gaogao gua*, 1991), *A Sigh* by Feng Xiaogang (*Yi sheng tanxi*, 2000), *In the Mood for Love* by Wong Kai-wai (*Hua yang nian hua*, 2001), and *Summer Snow* by Ann Hui (*Nvren sishi*, 1995) as just some examples. These works all focus on one or another aspect of family/home and discuss the ethical morality and the change and evolution of the traditional concept of family in a new and changing era. It should come as no surprise that although Ang Lee lived in America for 14 years his first film production touched on a migrant family. In an interview Ang Lee commented that 'Chinese culture is something that is deep-rooted in me. I am not only influenced by the early education in Taiwan, but also the influence from family and other sources of Chinese influence. Although I have been living in America for 14 years, my thought and impression are very Chinese.'[64] The image and concept of family that repeatedly appear in Ang Lee's films are very much a part of a Chinese phenomenon. To Ang Lee, it is also the vector of the cultural difference between the West and China and the place where the cultural dilemma and conflict happen. For him, family conflicts in his films are not restricted within the family. Ang Lee renews our understanding of family through unconventional representations that counter traditional conceptions. The attention that he pays towards family and family problems and the ending that he gives to his various films can be viewed as a conflict between traditional understandings of the family as a concrete and solid concept and the family when understood as being in transition. Although Ang Lee's films vary in styles and subject matter, as many of his films engage with the family and cultural issues and also considering his cross-cultural position, the concept of home has become a platform for cultural communication. It is through the concept of family/home that Ang lee shows the

collision and inhabitation of culture to different audiences with different cultural backgrounds, providing an entry point for the understanding of cultural difference.

The new city migrants have embodied the new perspective for the concept of home across the Chinese screen. Migrant workers and their children have settled in different corners of the cities, the educated population are lured to the metropolitan to seek for more opportunities. These are the new phenomena in a society that is under transformation. The meaning of family is changing from the traditional concept of being close by and a within family unit to a more scattered and diverse connotation. The concept is not just under reconstruction, but also deconstruction. However, the core of the concept as a mode of home-coming has not changed. The recent popularity of the sentimental TV series such as *The Sentimental Tree* (*Qinqing shu*), *Big Sister* (*Da jie*), *Not Blood Brothers* (*Fei qin xiongdi*) in China in recent years demonstrates the re-enactment of homecoming in Chinese popular culture. Due to the fast development of the market economy, traditional values have been challenged dramatically. In the process of adjusting to the new economy, social relations and family relations are driven more by materialism and have become more utilitarian. However, from the personal point of view, home is still where the sense of security is anchored. People crave security and interdependence: 'The surging popularity for the sentimental has provided shelter for the soul of lonely and depressed individuals. It acts as mother and lover, who care for the broken soul in every possible way. It properly restores and comforts traumatised hearts in reality.'[65] The statistical popularity of the theme of the sentimental provides evidence of a seeking of satisfaction and self-realisation in the sentimental that has been lost in busy lifestyles and intense social competition.[66] It illustrates that the sentimental still provides comfort and a sense of belonging in the material world.

Such situations of the sentimental are readily identifiable in Chinese cinema. The persistence of the sentimental in Chinese film reflects the crystallisation of a cultural essence that has been morphing in every fibre of the society. It persists across space and time and in different forms no matter how intangible it looks. This study does not assume that the sentimental is the only thematic access point through which to carry out cross-cultural analysis. However, the Chinese sentimental is one of the core elements that enable us to get to a better balanced cross-cultural reading in the context of Chinese cinema. For the sentimental persists across the Chinese screen and immerses itself into Chinese culture, so it deserves our renewed attention to undertake cross-cultural inquiry in an age of globalised visibility.

The Parameters of this Study

A couple of caveats regarding the parameters of this thesis need to be explained here before proceeding to the main body of the study. The films that are analysed here are taken from the period since the 1990s to the present. The films chosen are all set against the background of the city- they are not films reflecting country life. The reason that these post-1990 films relating to urban space are selected is because this study not only engages with how Chinese cinema comes to terms with the sentimental, but also how the sentimental transforms and mutates in a changing world. The urban space in China since the 1990s provides such a backdrop for a suitable examination.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, in the wake of Western cultural infiltration, the concept of the city has undergone a series of transfigurations in China. Increasingly, the city became aligned with Western imperialism and colonialism, and it gradually acquired a number of negative qualities and faced great criticism. Given its modern configuration, anti-urbanism became an issue in both political and cultural realms.[67] During the highest era of

political fever of 1960s to 1970s, urban culture was associated with capitalism and became a taboo topic for articulation of any sort. Although configurations of the city and the country have gone through many different versions, a fundamental suspicion of the moral implications of the modern city has become firmly rooted in cultural articulations of the city. Country life in the Chinese context commonly bears the sense of being rustic, pastoral, idyllic, and bucolic.[68] Meanwhile the city is the place where the transformation happens and the moral standard fails. It is the place that is depicted as being cold, cruel and lacking of human touch. Therefore, traditionally, the countryside takes on strong affective values and is more related to home-longing and homesickness, while the city is normally where this kind of nostalgia happens towards country life. Therefore, this research does not examine films with country life as the background that tend towards issues of home-coming, as it could lose the critical power that it might otherwise gain from insights into urban films. Locating the films in the city emphasises the deep-rootedness and persistence of the sentimental across the Chinese screen. It is a critical necessity to avoid the natural connection of the sentimental with country life.

The identity of the sentimental is under constant negotiation and mutation in the city. It is facing challenges all the time, but these challenges also stimulate persistent articulation of the sentimental in Chinese culture. The city is the place that witnesses all the transformations and challenges that are brought about by global transactions. The visual articulation of the sentimental, the power-relations embedded in visibility, the interpretation of the sentimental in a cross-cultural situation, all take place against the background of modernity and globalisation. In the 1990s Chinese cities both large and small saw tremendous changes in both infrastructural and social dimensions. Traditional housing compounds, neighbourhoods, and old communities of commerce and culture were torn down to give way to the

development of expressways, subway stations, corporate buildings, and shopping malls. The 1990s forever altered socialist China with relentless demolition and reconstruction in response to the demands from a market economy and intense material pursuit by a growing middle class population. The cities are the most visible and concentrated sites of this drastic and dramatic economic, social, and cultural transformation. In the face of an explosion of mass culture and with it the accompanying issues of social fragmentation and dislocation, the figures on the Chinese screen range from the laid-off workers, the prostitutes, the abandoned children, to the migrant workers and all who are on the margins of but also central to the city's modern transformation. Viewed as existing in challenging, if not shattering, living conditions and in constant search of a sense of belonging and security, their captivating stories give shape and meaning to the persistence and mutation of the sentimental.

Throughout this study I examine the affective mode that I define as the sentimental. If the affective mode I define can be demonstrated in the city- the space that combines the most expansive elements and the most extreme forms of social and cultural forces and changes- then this leads us to understand that it is anchored in Chinese cultural heritage that has endured through the passage of time. By underscoring this predominant epistemic as much as affective orientation of the sentimental, in the following chapters I will discuss how Chinese cinema comes to terms with the sentimental and how the sentimental has been manifested and transformed through the visual spectacle. This will facilitate a culturally specific understanding of Chinese cinema. The point here is not only to explore the sentimental as such but also to show how it continues to show its logics and effects through the cinematic medium, which reveals, gratifies, and powers the sentimental. If this enduring mode of holding things and people together and guiding film form and style has figured so

prominently in Chinese cinema, then it must be acknowledged as something significant to inform us in our pursuit of cross-cultural understanding.

Existing Scholarship in the Field

Besides Rey Chow's *Sentimental Fabulations*, there are other examples on similar thematic issues in Chinese language publications. Generally speaking, the study of the sentimental topics within China tends to be carried out in a more figurative and allegorical form. Recent works such as *On the Cultural Spirit of the Fifth Generation Directors* by Li Gang, and *Seeking Roots on Screen: A Study of Cultural Trends of Roots-Seeking in Chinese Cinema since 1980* by Jin Changqing share this trend. Li Gang's book focuses on the Fifth Generation directors and discusses their relationship with Chinese culture regarding historical consciousness and humanity consciousness in their films. The book is 'trying to reflect the significance of the times, historical value and cultural influence in their filmic texts through examining the formation of their cultural spirit and appearance, in order to find the cultural coordinates that truly belong to them in this ever-changing era.'[69] Jin Changqing's work articulates the popular topic of root-seeking as a Chinese critical trend. He demonstrates the circular process of abandoning the root, approaching the root, and returning to the root in Chinese cinema. The book tends to 'scrutinise the cultural analysis of the narrative of typical root-seeking filmic texts; discusses the narrative, the time and space, and the action executor and many other elements and narrative strategies, in order to draw conclusions on the mode of cultural expression in Chinese root-seeking films. Therefore, appropriate historical locations and value judgements will be given to the ideological trend of Chinese films since the 1980s.'[70] As Jin says, 'the root-seeking film is the most prominent creative trend in Chinese cinema since 1980s. It focuses on discovering the social life from the cultural perspective, and the structure of deep ethnic psychology in order to pursue analysis of the

cultural root and the life root to reflect the historical process of conflict and fusion of the traditional culture and the modern culture.'[71] Although these two books do not directly focus on the Chinese sentimental, when looking at the subject against the backdrop of the larger cultural context, both works can be regarded as defining identity of Chinese cinema in relation to Chinese heritage and culture in general. They discuss the ambivalent relationship between Chinese cinema and Chinese culture. Indeed the two books themselves actually share in this ambivalence and uncertainty towards the cultural position. What is this root of root-seeking exactly? What exactly is this cultural spirit upon which Chinese cinema is based? It seems that the authors position themselves on a more grand cultural level in order to negotiate and understand that culture. However, there is something more fundamental that should be acknowledged and discussed and laid out for more complicated cultural relations to be based upon. That is why the sentimental is located at the centre of this study to demonstrate the fundamental importance of the sentimental as the cultural frame that provides foundations to all other cultural relations and interpretations.

The current study tends to refract the major cultural issues from the basic and essential cultural foundation- the sentimental. This study carries out the task through examining the articulation and transformation of the sentimental in Chinese cinema in a contemporary sense while looking into the past to reflect on changes in the cultural connotation of the representation of the sentimental in film. The ultimate aim of this study is that inquiry of the sentimental can contribute to the promotion of and greater accessibility and cross-cultural understanding towards Chinese culture. I hope that my discussion of the sentimental in the visibility of Chinese cinema engages the 'total commitment' towards cross-cultural understanding that Trinh T. Minh-ha has called for.

Organisation of the Chapters

The films that are considered in the various chapters of this study are grouped into two parts that highlight distinctive articulations of the sentimental in Chinese cinema. The first three chapters are organised into Part 1 which looks at how Chinese films come to terms with the sentimental and how the sentimental, an affective mode but also a culturally specific concept, perpetuates itself in the cinematic spectacle. In the form of an inner mechanism, the sentimental is consciously invoked and monumentalised. In this process of monumentalisation, we can observe how the sentimental connects with and persists through visual expression. Part 2, comprising chapters 4 to 6, deals with how the sentimental is outwardly represented vis-à-vis present issues posed by globalisation, the rapid development of China and the vulnerability of community and solidarity when the sentimental is not necessarily seen as a persisting force. By facilitating unconventional affective connections, the sentimental provides possibilities for understanding the epistemic aspects of the cinematic visibility. The overarching structure of the thesis is therefore organised as the articulation of the sentimental from inner mechanism to outer manifestations. By insisting on the sentimental as a culturally specific phenomenon, the contribution that the sentimental provides to the understanding of the visibility of Chinese cinema is implicitly demonstrated through the various chapters. The concluding chapter returns to the issues of cross-cultural analysis that have been discussed previously in this introduction. It concludes the thesis by summarising the importance of the sentimental in Chinese cinema in terms of arriving at a better-balanced understanding in cross-cultural analysis.

Chapter 1 illustrates how the articulation of the sentimental combines with the cinema as visual medium, and what link has been made between the sentimental and the visibility of Chinese cinema in this combination. The sentimental is witnessed in the almost uncanny

experience of the birth of cinema in China, especially the birth of the first Chinese film in the late 19th and early 20th century. The sentimental is materialised in the process of becoming visible with Chinese cultural images and the visibility gives rise to the profound sentimental. Sigmund Freud's argument about the uncanny provides imaginative conceptions about home. The feeling of uncanniness as described by Freud is not necessarily the result of something strange and frightening but rather the result of some emotionally charged home-coming longing that one has repressed yet keeps running into. By analysing the uncanny, the development of the story in *Shadow Magic* (*Xiyang jing*, Ann Hu, 1999) is led by a constant wish to return to "home" where 'each one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning,'[72] although the "home" is substituted by the image of "local people, local scenes" (the dialogue from Xiao Liu) that indicates the homecoming in a broader cultural sense.

The film *Shadow Magic* was made in 1999 by Ann Hu. In the film, being and becoming visible is something that no one can afford not to desire (from the still new technique of photography to the iconoclastic experimentation with the film technique). Yet this work also shows that the ever-expanding capacities for seeing make it possible for the observation of the sentimental. In the first part of the film Xiao Liu and Raymond form a friendship and Xiao Liu helps Raymond to make the film clips of the moving shadow play popular with Chinese audiences that Raymond has brought with him from Paris. Xiao Liu is intrigued by the technique. However, this new possibility of being visible is not the main reason to explain Xiao Liu's desire to learn to shoot films for himself. During this process, Xiao Liu keeps running into (and up against) traditional Chinese culture such as the Peking Opera, the most popular visual entertainment at the time in China. The new innovation of film shows poses as potential competition, but eventually it is the opera master who saves Xiao Liu's life from being sentenced to death following a technical failing during a film showing at the imperial

palace. From Xiao Liu's pure curiosity and interest towards the new technology and its possibilities until the moment that he is able to put Chinese images on the screen, Xiao Liu is pulled uncannily by the wish to go back to the 'local people, local scenes,' although he is seen as an iconoclastic figure at the time. From the foreign images that interested the audience in a visual sense to the assimilation of this new medium into the culture, it was the Chinese images, the images that connect the visibility to the Chinese audience sentimentally, that make the film part of the cultural experience. The sentimental accompanies the visibility of the new medium, and most importantly, it grants visibility an extra sense that connects the visual to the epistemic. Without the sentimental, the visibility of the foreign images remains a curious spectacle but lacks in profound know-ability that could be interpreted as the ability to preserve. Considered in the context of the film set against an immense foreign invasion of China, the introduction of the sentimental takes on even more weight in terms of the visibility brought about by the foreign technology.

Where Chapter 1 explores the fundamental connection of the sentimental to visibility in Chinese cinema and has embedded the ingrained possibilities of opening up the epistemic side of the visibility, **Chapter 2** defines what this sentimental involves in the Chinese context and how it becomes an enduring theme across the Chinese screen. *Springtime in a Small Town* (*Xiao zheng zhi chun*, 2002) directed by Tian Zhuangzhuang is a remake of Chinese pioneer director Fei Mu's same name production in 1948. The reason why this film was chosen to be remade helps with understanding the consistency of the two films and how the sentimental is defined and popularised. Tian Zhuangzhuang said the new version of the old film pays tribute to his admired director and said 'it is the extension of humanity's spirit.'[73] When the film was initially made in 1948 during the Chinese civil war, it was attacked by many critics as being out of touch with the current affairs of a country that was experiencing

severe social struggles. 50 years later, Tian Zhuangzhuang rediscovers the value of the original film in the face of the rapid social change and danger of the collapse of moral standards and cultural values that would provide a sense of belonging to those who are lost in the material and commodity culture. Although I have introduced the meaning of the sentimental as a sense of home-longing and homecoming, Chapter 2 goes on to further illustrate how Chinese cinema has made this theme an enduring one through embedding family sacrifice and compromise within this moral apparatus, just like the conscious agendas that directors follow. In the film, the forbidden love between long-lost lovers, the sad departure of the long-lost lover, and the compromise/sacrifice made towards keeping a broken family together because of a willingness to uphold the social stricture seem to take on the weight of the imprisonment of home. But it is exactly this psychological submission and organic connectedness that gives weight to the necessity to extend this 'spirit of humanity,' which is seen as the "springtime" of a small town that brings the warmth and hope. The pejorative side of the connotation incurred by the notion of compromise is behind the idea of the remaking of *Springtime in a Small Town*, which is to emphasise compromise as an important enduring element of the Chinese sentimental. Throughout both films, there is little dialogue. By focusing on the internal state of mind of the characters through different film devices such as the setting and use of certain shot techniques, the film makes possible the articulation of the connection of the affective mode to the visual spectacle. By comparing and contrasting the differences and similarities of the two different productions made 50 years apart, the remake of the original film, in the new visibility, demonstrates cinematically how it popularises and perpetuates the sentimental.

Chinese cinema not only perpetuates the theme of the sentimental, it also reflects how the sentimental persists and transcends itself. Through a reading of *Getting Home* (*Luo ye gui*

gen, Zhang Yang, 2007), **Chapter 3** explores how the sentimental functions as a transcendental longing that persists in the culture context. The film develops the film narrative through the theme of "the road home." Through analysing the cultural significance of death and home, and Jacques Lacan's concept of death, this chapter makes connections between the homecoming and the filmic language, and how the connection articulates the perpetuation of the sentimental. *Getting Home* is a road movie as the film title implies. Lao Zhao is a migrant worker in Shenzhen in the south of China. His friend Lao Liu dies of an excessive drinking addiction. Lao Zhao then starts his journey to return Lao Liu's body to his hometown in order to keep his promise made to Lao Liu before he died. Lao Zhao disguises Lao Liu as a drunk companion so as not to frighten people that he encounters on his travels. They meet various people on the way and come across all different kinds of difficulties. Finally, Lao Zhao has to cremate Lao Liu's body with the help of the police. Eventually when they get to Lao Liu's home, the house has been demolished. Lao Liu's son has left a note on the broken front door providing his family's new address. The ending implies that a new journey home begins again. As the end of one's biological life also heralds the beginning of emancipation according to Chinese culture, death persistently idealises a connection with origin. The sense of transcending the present emphasises what remains inaccessible, the unreachable places (as vividly implied by the ending of the film *Getting Home*), just like "the road home" actually goes in circles and leads to nowhere. Homecoming, then, is a return to the utopian possibilities of determination, meaningful action, and happiness that constitute a society that has been lost. The death suggests a type of perseverance and endurance that far transcends the bounds of the human world. In this chapter the sentimental becomes a transcendental longing but goes nowhere through visual display. However, it is exactly because of this nowhere state that the sentimental perpetuates its continuous journey home.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 discuss how the sentimental becomes ingrained in the visual spectacle as a cultural convention and works as an inner mechanism at the cultural core. The chapters that follow in Part 2 focus on the mutation and transformation of the sentimental in the imagined city space in the films, and how the sentimental is expressed through unconventional methods of articulation. Part 1 reflects on how the sentimental works as an ingrained theme across the Chinese screen, and how it is perpetuated and perpetuates itself in the cultural context which reveals the Chinese cultural legacy of longing of the sentimental. The sentimental in Chinese cinema can be reflected in entirely perceptible aspects of daily life, and it also takes on a kind of intangible transcendental longing. In the following section, the emphasis is on tracing how the sentimental transposes, transforms, and negotiates with the "original" meanings from Part 1 in an era when the sentimental of homecoming might be regarded as a nostalgic relic, and how the sentimental makes the understanding of the "original" meaning applicable, relevant and possible through the visual medium of the film.

Chapter 4 explores how the sentimental becomes the intimacy-seeking tendency in nostalgia in the film *In the Heat of the Sun* (*Yangguang canlan de rizi*, Jiang Wen, 1994). During the 1990s China saw unprecedented changes in all areas of social life. The transformation of the economic system from a planned economy to market economy resulted in many state-owned enterprises being reorganised into incorporated companies, and also encouraged many people to pursue material wealth. One result of this has been a diminished sense of belonging. Home and family, the solid nuclear unit in Chinese society for thousands of years has been increasingly imagined as a lost treasure in a materially-driven society. The concept of family and homecoming are threatened with becoming increasingly obsolete and rarely possible in a material world that focuses on fast gains. At the same time, films representing the past that invoke a strong nostalgic tone have become extremely popular since the late 1980s.

Such nostalgic images respond to the epidemic mood of home-longing. The sense of belonging that is supposed to be provided by home shatter with the collapse of human relations. It seems that the sense of belonging can only be fulfilled through re-experiencing the past. Svetlana Boym describes nostalgia as 'the incurable modern condition,' and as 'an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world.'[74] The loss of this 'continuity' is exactly what has caused the burst of nostalgia in China in the 1990s. I argue in this chapter that the sentimental of home-longing is manifested through a form of nostalgia. The sentimental becomes a tendency of constant and active searching for intimacy as an alternative to the one that used to be provided by the sense of home-belonging, whether with another person, a group, or even with temporality, in Chinese cinema. This intimacy-searching tendency can be seen as the projection of reconnections with a lost self in the hope of reconnecting to a lost sense of belonging.

The film shows three ways in which the protagonist Ma Xiaojun searches out an alternative intimacy during his adolescence. He tries to assert his power by longing for relationships through an intrusive gaze, identifying himself as an inside member of a gang, and gaining control over his personal history as a first person narrator. These approaches can be summarised as forming different kinds of intimacy. By breaking into other people's space, he forms a type of intimacy with strangers. He also tries to gain intimacy by identifying himself as part of a gang. Moreover, by getting control over his own past, he tries to form an intimacy with his past self to provide consistent evidence of who he is in the present tense. However, the film reveals that he never had the intimacy that he is trying to form. My hypothesis is that it is not the real home that Chinese films since the 1990s have been looking for. Rather it is the tendency of active searching for an alternative intimacy to replace and compensate for the

shattered concept of home that the films try to illuminate, as well as to try to sustain the longing itself.

While Chapter 4 looks at how the sentimental is identified as an intimacy seeking tendency in nostalgia, **Chapter 5** goes on to discuss how the sentimental is witnessed in the construction of an intimate space through the films *Still Life* (*Sanxia haoren*, Jai Zhangke, 2006) and *The Orphan of Anyang* (*Anyang ying'er*, Wang Chao, 2001). If nostalgia is about temporality and escaping from the present, then the intimate spaces in this chapter emphasise a spatial awareness and the connection with the present. Under the modernist perspective that witnesses dramatic social change and transformation of personal life, the skyscrapers and busy lifestyles have significantly eliminated the traditional communal spaces. The sense of space becomes mutable and international. The films *Still Life* and *The Orphan of Anyang* recognise images such as the transient space, laid-off worker, the prostitute, the unwanted child, as indicative of something other than loneliness, insecurity and instability. The film actually indicates a new kind of space for new intimacies. The intimate spaces in these films are recognised as being transient and full of chance encounters. If globalisation generates plentiful possibilities for new visibility, then it also offers the potential for renewed experiences of intimacy. Set against the background of the Three Gorges Dam project, *Still Life* elaborates on the story of Han Sanming and Shen Hong who look for their respective spouses in the place that is soon going to be submerged under the water. In *The Orphan of Anyang*, Yu Dagang forms an unconventional family with prostitute Feng Yanli and her baby. Analysis of the films reveals that the characters should not be seen as lonely individuals and victims of the social transformation because the construction of these intimate spaces marks out the affirmation of their inner-selves.

The alienating force brought on by the global economy and the infrastructural changes within China are depicted as destructive for individual life. However, this is also depicted as a coercive power in terms of re-establishing interpersonal relations. The construction of intimate spaces is a form of cultural resistance in terms of using the persistence of the family longing to resist the destructive force of globalisation. The Chinese sentimental is depicted as being more powerful than ever in terms of gluing the broken pieces back together as the moral support of a continuous life. The reflection on the firmness of the interiority faced with the harsh reality symbolises the strength of the sentimental of family/home longing and belonging in terms of an effective resistance with emphasis on the intimate spaces.

The medium of film provides the opportunity for the audience to participate, negotiate and understand the production of intimate spaces in Chinese cinema in the 1990s. Although the spaces of intimacy are supposed to be private and hidden, they are constructed differently in many of the films of this period. They are constructed instead as more public and with more variable expressions of being at home. This challenges the traditional conception of home and intimacy. It also provides a greater opportunity for understanding the Chinese sentimental and its variations.

After exploring the transformation of the sentimental through alternative intimacy seeking and the construction and imagination of intimate spaces in Chinese cinema, **Chapter 6** explores how the sentimental is manifested through a community construction through the 'carnivalization' of language in the film *The Dream Factory* (*Jia fang yi fang*, Feng Xiaogang, 1997).[75] This term is borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin's 'carnivalization of literature' which refers to transposing the free, united, equal and profane nature of the carnival into the language of literature. The film is a Chinese New Year production (*He sui*

pian) by the hugely successful director Feng Xiaogang.[76] The film deliberately uses parody language that marks out cultural outsiders from insiders. The film selects and forms a culturally epistemic community through the deliberate carnivalisation of language that is a feature of his films. Feng recycles and reuses quotations from locally well-known and historical characters and from classic films, as well as referencing fragments from notable historical periods, and then codes them into local contexts and contemporary settings displayed by seemingly random choices of location. The reference to jokes, puns, allusions, anecdotes, and idioms deliberately addresses Feng's filmic language to an exclusive community that must have a shared experience and understanding of the changes and rite of passage to the present to be able to participate in it. The language becomes the facilitator of an internal exclusive form of communication- comprehension of it can only be achieved by members within the community.

Facing the intrusive material-driven global homogeneous force, his films thus imaginatively form a local community embracing the sentimental that provides the sense of belonging to the local community. The sentimental local emerges in between the disintegrating cultural discourse and global structuralisation and remains fluctuating and unsettled rather than being fully articulated and self-present. Feng Xiaogang's films appear to be an attempt to reassert the integrity of the local as it encounters a threatening globalisation. His films are by no means hostile or antagonistic towards globalism, especially considering that many of them include foreign investment in their production. But they surely present a conscious formation of a sentimental local that holds the local viewing community together and provides a sense of belonging to the local identity that can be negotiated in a continuous sense.

The study concludes in the final chapter with a discussion of the film *Farewell My Concubine* (*Ba wang bie ji*, Chen Kaige, 1993). **Chapter 7** emphasises that the sentimental is culturally specific to Chinese cinema and is a key element to facilitate cross-cultural understanding. The film plot of *Farewell My Concubine* spans over half a century as we follow the lives of the two opera stars, Cheng Dieyi and Duan Xiaolou, from their entry as young boys into the Peking Opera school in 1924, with Cheng having been left by his prostitute mother, to their reunion in 1977, with Dieyi committing suicide at the site of their reunion just as in the story of the opera that has gained them their fame. This opera depicts a historical story of the defeated King of Chu as he was left trapped in battle by the Han River. His favourite concubine Yu danced for him one last time before cutting her throat in a show of 'loyalty to the end.'

This chapter provides a response to E. Ann Kaplan's reading of *Farewell My Concubine* and raises the problematic in the cross-cultural analysis. Kaplan is fully aware of her cultural position as a white and Western educated feminist. The absence of cultural specificity in her reading makes her analysis of the film problematic- her subjective awareness actually undermines the subjectivity of the characters and also the subjective position of the Chinese audience (I do not mean that the film is made specifically for a Chinese audience- this is just a response towards what Kaplan has claimed in her essay). I then apply trauma theory and provide a culturally specific reading of the film that has firm connections to the sentimental in contrast to Kaplan's reading.

The importance of the sentimental in the making and interpreting of the film is to reveal the sustaining force of the working through trauma against a background that is culturally specific. The sentimental is the way that provides the characters in the film with the

possibility to work through the traumatic memory. Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine* endeavors to forge an effort to search figuratively for contexts and templates through which traumatic experiences can be given an expressive voice. The connection of the sentimental also enables the film to provide a rich perception for the spectator to produce deep and complex responses to the post-traumatic recall- it cues the spectator to perform an active recognition and identification. Therefore, a real witness might be formed and the lost identity and truth might be restored as a result, in response to the culturally specific necessity of the period.

The final section of Chapter 7 brings the whole thesis to a conclusion. In understanding this predominant epistemic, as much as affective, orientation of the sentimental as it has endured across the Chinese screen, the objective of this study is to explore and identify the artistic and aesthetic value of the sentimental, and its capacity as a privileged entry point for an empathic understanding cross-culturally. It is like the fibre of society and culture that holds people together and generates meaningful interpretations. In the age of globalised visibility of cultural representations, it continues to provide extremely significant insights into cross-cultural understanding and diversified human existence. The sentimental facilitates a better-balanced understanding of the visibility of Chinese cinema in terms of expressing the epistemic side of visibility. The visibility of Chinese cinema also proves the persistence of the sentimental. The sentimental is seen to reproduce and perpetuate itself in relation to the visibility of Chinese cinema no matter under what circumstances or in what era it is located.

While I am stressing the importance of the sentimental as cultural specificity within cross-cultural analysis, I frequently use Western theories that are culturally specific to Western culture and civilisation throughout this study, whether it is psychoanalysis, cultural theories,

film theories etc. However, as I am participating through this study in a mainly English-speaking field of Chinese film studies, the application of Western theories can make the problematic of cross-cultural analysis more prominent as it builds upon the same understanding. Also I face an added dilemma in that I have received most of my academic training for this relatively new area of film studies in Great Britain. Therefore, these are the analytical tools that are readily available to me. A subject like film studies is very much a Western established discipline that has hardly been institutionalised in terms of Chinese language film studies. In Chinese language film studies, most of the theoretical references are mainly based on Western streams of thought in any case. Also the years that I have spent in the UK have exposed me to a range of critical thinking whilst my experience living and researching in a foreign country have also enabled me to think upon issues relating to identity. The immediate connection or application of theory behind the cultural phenomenon that I experience therefore establishes a natural connection for me personally. Therefore, as cited by Rey Chow, some critics put it that '[e]very time we speak or write in English, French, German, or one of the marginalized European languages we pay homage to Western intellectual and political hegemony.'[77] Yet, 'if "the West" as such has become an ineradicable environment, it is not whether we "pay homage" to it but how we do it that matters.'[78] Therefore, by writing and showing the cultural dilemma at the same time, I hope that my analysis throughout this study will not only do justice to and provide a culturally specific understanding of Chinese films by using Western theories, but that it will also prove that it is possible to arrive at a better-balanced cross-cultural analysis through the lens of cultural specificity.

I would like to raise one final caveat in terms of the focus of this work. I am aware of the moral and ethical connection of the sentimental especially in terms of cross-cultural analysis.

However, when I use terms such as moral community in chapter 6, I do not intend to engage

in and diverge into the larger theoretical debates on ethics and morality. This could

undoubtedly be a potentially valuable future research area but it lies beyond the parameters of

this study.

[1] Shang Huipeng, "Jiti huijia yu zhongguoren de 'lun ren zhuyi'" (Collective Homecoming and Chinese "Human Relations", in *Sixiang zhe* 2 (2009). http://www.mylin.com/thinker/publication_old/sixiangzhe2/our_country/1057.aspx.

[2] Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, 52.

[3] Rey Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, 11. Emphasis in original.

[4] Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations,* 2007.

[5] Xu Jiapeng, "Kongzi renxue rendao zhuyi de xianshi xing pinge guanjian: du *Lunyu* qi ze" (Cast of the Realistic Characteristic of Confucian Humanitarianism- After Reading Seven Chapters of *Analects of Confucius*), in *Zhaotong shifan gaodeng zhuanke xuexiao xuebao* 1Vol. 25 (2003), 16.

[6] Nie Yonghua, "*Shijing* qinqing shi de wenhua yunhan yu wenxue muti" (The Cultural Connotation and Literature Theme in the Kinship Poems in *Book of Songs*), in *Zhengzhou daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 6 vol. 38 (2005), 33.

[7] Qian Mu, *Zhongguo wenhuashi daolun (The Introduction to History of Chinese Culture)*. Beijing: Commercial Publishing House, 1994, 51.

[8] Stef Craps, "Linking Legacies of Loss: Traumatic Histories and Cross-cultural Empathy in Caryl Phillips's Higher Ground and The Nature of Blood," in *Studies in the Novel*, 1/2 vol. 40 (2008), 200.

[9] *Ibid*., 192.

[10] *Ibid*., 191.

[11] James Chandler, "The Languages of Sentiment," in *Textual Practice* 22:1 (2008), 21.

[12] *Ibid*., 21.

[13] Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations,* 15-19; Mary Chapman and Glenn Hendler, eds., *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture*. Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999.

[14] Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations*, 17, 22. Emphasis in original.

[15] *Ibid*., 21-22.

[16] *Ibid*., 41.

[17] *Ibid*., 18.

[18] *Ibid*., 18-19.

[19] *Ibid*., 17.

[20] *Ibid*., 18. Chow's brief mention of Fei Mu's film encourages my choice of the film for chapter 2 as it is widely accepted as a master piece in the history of Chinese cinema.

[21] *Ibid*., 18.

[22] Judy Pearsall, ed., *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. My emphasis added.

[23] Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations,*18.

[24] *Ibid.,* 2.

[25] *Ibid*., 2.

[26] *Ibid*., 13.

[27] *Ibid*., 13.

[28] *Ibid*., 24.

[29] For example, in Chinese literary history, *The Book of Songs* and *The Analects of Confucius* are the main early works that established the concept of the sentimental. They became the essence of and the foundation for the development of Chinese culture. In the modern literary field, the works of Bing Xin consistently praise the love of mother and family. Her works encourage the integrity of many Chinese in the early 20th century when China was experiencing a period of disintegration caused by war. Bin Xin's works focuses on the value of humanity and the human being itself, and have far-reaching influence on the shattered culture and disoriented spirit. Other writers, such as Zhang Ailing, Liang Xiaosheng and even the avant-garde Yu Hua, all articulate searching for the sentimental as the base line for the development of their stories.

[30] A similar view is shared in Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations*, 24-25.

[31] Regarding discussions on "Chineseness," see Yingjin Zhang, *Screening China: Critical Interventions, Cinematic Reconfigurations, and Transnational Imaginary in Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. Michigan: The University of Michigan, 2003, 3-6, 22, 112-113.

[32] Zhang Yingjin has discussed in detail the scholarship and methodology of Chinese film studies in the Western academic field. See "Xifang xuejie de zhongguo dianying yanjiu fangfa xuanping" (The Selected Discussion on the Methodology of Chinese Film Studies in Western Academia). *Beijing dianying xueyuan xuebao*, 5, 2004, 1-9.

[33] www.hi.baidu.com/hqlk/blog/item/8e6997ca67bf644df31fe77e.html.

[34] Yingjin Zhang, *Screening China*, 115-147.

[35] Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations*, ix-x.

[36] Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 4.

[37] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonaut of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. London: George Routledge, 1922, 22.

[38] Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other,* 53.

[39] Whiteness Studies is a controversial area of academic inquiry focused on the cultural, historical and sociological aspects of people identified as white, and the social construction of whiteness as social status. It emerged as a field of study within academia, primarily in the United State and the UK, as early as 1983. See Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Trumansburg; New York: Crossing Press, 1983.

[40] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994.

[41] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 46-7; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto Press, 1991. For an account of Jacques Lacan's concept of the Imaginary, see J. Rose, "The Imaginary," in Colin MacCabe, ed., *The Talking Cure: Essays in Psychoanalysis and Language*. London: Macmillan, 1981. On Bhabha's academic influence see David Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, London: Routledge, 2006.

[42] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 51.

[43] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979, 3.

[44] For the discussion of Said's *Orientalism* see Henry Schwarz, "Mission Impossible: Introducing Postcolonial Studies in the US Academy," in Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray, ed., *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. UK; USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, 10-12.

[45] See Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983, 226.

[46] Masao Miyashi, "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State," in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, eds., *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996, 96.

[47] *Ibid*., 96.

[48] *Ibid*., 97.

[49] E. Ann Kaplan, ed., *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. New York; London: Routledge, 1990, 142.

[50] See Rey Chow's criticism on Stephen Owen's review of the Chinese poet Bei Dao's poem "The August Sleepwalker," *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993, 1-10.

[51] John Belton, *American Cinema/American Culture*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 7.

[52] Li Daoxin, *Zhongguo dianying wenhua shi (1905-2004) (History of Chinese Film Culture)*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004, 26-32.

[53] Chris Prentice, "From Visibility to Visuality: Patricia Grace's *Baby No-Eyes* and the Cultural Politics of Decolonization," in *Modern Fiction Studies* 2 Vol. 55 (2009), 325. See also Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 11.

[54] Rey Chow discusses this in the introduction to her *Sentimental Fabulations*.

[55] Judy Pearsall, ed., *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2001.

[56] James Legge, "The Doctrine of the Mean/Zhong Yong," in *The Chinese Classics*, vol.1. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960.

[57] The English translation of the book normally retains the original name in order to keep the Dao/Tao which is an established and acknowledged principle of knowledge. I take the English title from Moss Roberts' translation. Moss Roberts, trans., *Dao De Jing: The Book of the Way*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001. I use the Chinese version, see Dong Lizi, *Daode jing quanjian (The Full Version of Dao De Jing)*. Beijing: China Textile Press, 2010.

[58] Li Rusheng, "Lun xiao wenhua yu hexie shehui de goujian" (On Filial Piety Culture and the Construction of a Harmonious Society), in *Hubei shehui kexue* 6 (2006), 42.

[59] Gu Hongming, *The Spirit of the Chinese*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1998, 41.

[60] Jin Cangqing, *Yingxiang de Xungen: 1980 Nian Yilai Zhongguo Dianying Xungen Sichao Yanjiu (Seeking Roots on Screen: A Study of Cultural Trends of Roots-Seeking in Chinese Cinema Since 1980)*. Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 2008, 6.

[61] www.mtime.com/

[62] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: the Movement-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London: The Athlone Press, 1997, 87.

[63] Pan Huili, "Wenqing zai kunan zhong shique yu huigui: Yu Hua xiaoshuo muti jiedu" (The Loss and Return of the Sentimental in Suffering: Interpretations of the Motifs of Yu Hua's Novels)," in *Lishui shifan zhuanke xuexiao xuebao* 4 Vol. 24 (2002), 59.

[64] Cui Xinguang, "Li An dianying zhong jiating de wenhua yiyi" (The Cultural Significance of Family in Ang Lee's Films), in *Dianying wenxue* 23 (2007), 31.

[65] Huang Huilin, *Dangdai Wenhua Yanjiu* (*Contemporary Cultural Studies*). Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1998, 52.

[66] Zhang Weijia, "Qinqing jv rebo de wenhua jiedu (The Cultural Reading of the Popularity of TV Series on the sentimental)," in *Zhongguo dianshi* 3 (2008), 40-43.

[67] For China's urban and anti-urban past, see Rhoads Murphy, *The Fading of the Maoist Vision: City and Country in China's Development*. New York: Methuen, 1980, 18-33.

[68] Yingjin Zhang, *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film: Configurations of Space, Time, and Gender*. Stanford: Standford University Press, 1996, 7.

[69] Li Gang, *Lun Zhongguo Diwudai Daoyan de Wenhua Jingshen (On the Cultural Spirit of the Fifth Generation Directors)*. Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2008, 1-2.

[70] Jin Cangqing, *Seeking Roots on Screen*, 19.

[71] *Ibid*., 2.

[72] Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XVII (1917-1919)*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955, 245.

[73] http://tieba.baidu.com/f?kz=370593131

[74] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001, XIV.

[75] I borrow this phrase from Mikhail Bakhtin. See his definition of 'the carnivalization of literature' in Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson and introduced by Wayne C.Booth. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, 122.

[76] The genre of *He sui pian* and its development are explained in Chapter 6.

[77] Rey Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity: the Politics of Reading Between West and East*. Minnesota and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, XI.

[78] *Ibid*., XV.

CHAPTER 1

The Power of Home: *Shadow Magic* and the Visibility of the Sentimental

Sigmund Freud's *The 'Uncanny'* gives an illuminating illustration of the connection between the 'subdued emotional impulses' and the question of "home."[1] Initially a piece of work to explore the intersection between narrative and psychoanalysis, *The 'Uncanny'* provides an insight into what I will explore throughout my analysis of the film *Shadow Magic* (*Xi yang jing*). An important aspect of the film is the power of "home" and how the "home" exercises its power, which creates a feeling of the uncanny that is fatefully inescapable. Freud terms the uncanny as the emotional excess, which is related to 'what is frightening' and 'what arouses dread and horror.'[2] Freud analyses E. A. T. Hoffmann's story 'The Sand-Man' about the repeated appearance in the protagonist Nathaniel's life of the figure of the Sand-Man until Nathaniel throws himself off the tower because of the sight of the Sand-Man.[3] He also recites his experience in a provincial town in Italy when he kept coming back to the same quarter no matter which turning he took.[4] Here the uncanny fear is created through the repeated occurrence of the same situation. It seems that no matter how much you try, you are always seduced by a strong power that is inescapable. Therefore, Freud says that 'it is only this factor of *involuntary repetition* which surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere, and forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable when otherwise we should have spoken only of 'chance'.'[5]

This repeated and unintended occurrence of the same thing does generate the feeling of fearfulness and the uncanny. However, after a linguistic examination, Freud reveals that the

German word for uncanny, 'unheimlich,' which literally means the opposite of 'heimlich' [homely] actually shares the same meaning of the opposite.[6] Thus the uncanny 'unheimlich' can take on the meaning of 'heimlich,' which is 'belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly, etc.'[7] He therefore defines the uncanny as the 'class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar,'[8] and 'this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression.' Therefore, 'the prefix 'un' ['un-'] is the token of repression.'[9] The uncanny is fearful at sight, however it is something that is 'long familiar' but that has been repressed in the mind due to the nature of the issue. It could be something that is raw and tender in memory and that has never been processed properly. Therefore, the conscious mind is trying to hide the painful memory for protection. Freud observes that the unpleasure 'does not contradict the dominance of the pleasure principle [and] does not seem to necessitate any far-reaching limitation of the pleasure principle.'[10] This makes the uncanny 'something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light.'[11] We can see now that the process of the repeated happening is the path that leads back to the 'long familiar' without the subject actively seeking. The seemingly uncontrollable, unavoidable, and somehow fateful experience generates the uncanny feeling.

However, this feeling of the uncanny is not experienced at any time when the same thing happens in front of us repeatedly. It has to be 'subject to certain conditions and combined with certain circumstances, [to] arouse an uncanny feeling.'[12] In other words, '[s]omething has to be added to what is novel and unfamiliar in order to make it uncanny.'[13] When Freud uses psychoanalytic method to trace this uncanny feeling to infantile sources, it goes back to the

'intra-uterine existence.'[14] So now '[t]he unheimlich place… is the entrance to the former Heim [home] of all human beings, to the place where each one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning.'[15] The separation of the mother and infant at birth symbolises a familiar place that the infant cannot go back to physically, therefore it becomes a transcendental longing. It is the longing to go back "home" and the degree of unfulfillment that define the uncanny feeling.

The other course that would show emotion in the form of uncanny feeling is through the confirmation of surmounted thoughts:

> We- or our primitive forefathers- once believed that these possibilities were realities, and were convinced that they actually happened. Nowadays we no longer believe in them, we have *surmounted* these modes of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our new beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation. As soon as something *actually happens* in our lives which seems to confirm the old, discarded beliefs we get a feeling of the uncanny.[16]

The difference between the two courses is that the second one depends on the person himself/herself- whether he/she is alert to these kinds of spiritual and supernatural beliefs. The infantile home-longing could happen to anyone as it is the physical reality for all human beings, if it is triggered by the "right" situation, people, senses, emotions, or things. Freud summarises that 'an uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed.'[17]

Shadow Magic testifies to both courses in Freud's conclusion of the uncanny of the infantile complex being repressed or primitive beliefs being surmounted. The film's protagonist Xiao Liu is curious about modern technological inventions and is thus considered by his own culture, Chinese culture, as disloyal. Although he insists on exploring the new brought-in medium of

cinema despite the reservations and hostility of his social peers and extended family, he seems to never leave the home of Chinese culture. His eventual success occurs when he takes foreign techniques back to the Chinese culture- by making a film about his home and his people. The seemingly unwilling path of returning "home" of the protagonist seems to coincide with Freud's illustration of the wish to return to 'intra-uterine existence'. This is explained by the cultural forces that confront Xiao Liu in the film. Freud's engagement with the uncanny imaginatively proposes the connection between the uncanny and the home-coming. Although the uncanny feeling initially creates the feeling of fearfulness due to the reoccurrence of the same situation, it leads you back to something actually familiar but which is not familiar anymore because it is either repressed or surmounted. The return to the 'intra-uterine existence' should not be taken as what it literally means. Rather, it should be seen as the initial and inseparable bond between child and mother. Once this intense closeness is forced to break, the child seems to be on a road of seeking alternative closeness constantly throughout life. And here in *Shadow Magic* the bond is the cultural bond that is projected on to Xiao Liu. The uncanny feelings do not happen when all the reoccurrences occur, but require a certain condition. The film is about the birth of Chinese cinema and the new visibility that was brought by cinematic functions as 'translating' people 'into that state of feeling' and 'awakening' their 'possibility of experiencing it.'[18] As the sentimental in this thesis is termed mainly as home-longing and home-coming, the juxtaposition of Freud's uncanny and the film *Shadow Magic* will help to explain the uncanniness of home-coming and how the uncanny takes on the effect through cinematic signification.

The Cultural Conflict as the Conflict with Home and the Departure from Home

Shadow Magic is Ann Hu's first 35mm feature film. Born and raised in Beijing, Hu went to the

United States to study in 1979. Graduating from the business school at New York University in

1985 with a major in International Marketing, she became the top profit generator within two

years working in the U.S. conglomerate Elders. After unusual success on Wall Street, Hu took

courses at New York University School of Film, Video & Broadcasting, and completed her first

narrative film *Dream and Memory* (*Shan he jiu hua*) in 1994. The film *Shadow Magic* was

released in 2000 and has won many awards internationally at various film festivals such as the

Academy Award as the Best Film in China, and the Audience Award in Taiwan's Golden Horse

Film Festival. Ann Hu's cross-cultural background between the U.S. and China has given her a

unique standpoint for producing film. But this has also made her a target for criticism, as will be

expanded on later in this chapter.[19]

In order to discuss the uncanny feeling of home-coming with emphasis on the inescapable

alluring power of the home and how this is achieved cinematically, it is necessary to identify the

tension between the subject and home. In this case it is Xiao Liu and his family. There is an

immediate tension between Xiao Liu and the "home" in the film. The major conflict related to

"home" is between Chinese culture and the new medium of cinema which is seen as an invading

force. Therefore, the tension between Xiao Liu and his family becomes the underlying part of

this dominant conflict in the film and contributes to the development of the characters. Therefore,

in the film, the homecoming journey operates on two levels: the cultural return on a symbolic

level and the physical reuniting of Xiao Liu with his father and his old employer.

Xiao Liu is first and foremost depicted as an iconoclastic figure in the film. He is considered as someone who 'signs on with the cultural interloper and messes up with his own future and arranged marriage with an older widow.'[20] At the beginning of the film, the reputed Peking Opera singer Lord Tan comes to the Feng Tai photo shop where Xiao Liu is in charge of photo shooting to have his picture taken. He does not take the task for Lord Tan to heart as everyone else does. While everyone is busy perfecting the decorations and arranging the photography facilities in preparation for the arrival of the celebrated figure Lord Tan (Li Yusheng), Xiao Liu is trying out a discarded victrola in a storage room and is thus late for the welcoming of Lord Tan. To make matters worse Xiao Liu shows Lord Tan some music from the discarded victrola. Xiao Liu is so intrigued by his discovery that he does not have any sense that his actions might appear confrontational towards Lord Tan's music performance in other people's eyes. Lord Tan finds the Western music 'ostentatious and lacking in refinement.' Just as well, he has to be loyal to his own performance and his loyal fans.

Xiao Liu is in charge of the picture shooting in the photo shop. Comments about the photograph among people who have come to see Lord Tan outside the photo shop, such as 'who does not know what oneself looks like? Why bother taking pictures? I heard there is a guy whose soul was taken when he was taking a picture, he is still in bed,' illustrate that photo-shooting is still a fairly new phenomenon in China when the film is set in 1902. While photo shooting is still a novel technique, Xiao Liu is already in charge of the photography facilities at probably the only photo shop in Beijing- he is quite ahead of the time compared to most of his Chinese peers. Xiao Liu's behaviour at the beginning of the film sets up the tenets of his character as someone who is curious about new technological innovations and cultural novelty, not a conventional person who

holds on to traditions such as the Peking Opera. The novelty of new technology provides great

seductive appeal to him. Although we might today call him an innovator or adventurer and

admire his courage, he was considered disloyal towards the old culture at that time in China.

Therefore if Chinese culture is regarded as "home" in this chapter, then the new imported culture

constantly pulls Xiao Liu away from his home in the film.

The first time Xiao Liu's family is introduced is when his father Lao Liu (Wang Jingming) asks

Uncle Lou to arrange a marriage for Xiao Liu to marry the rich widow Jiang. There are no

further details about Xiao Liu's family: there is no information about his mother, his other

siblings if he has any, and what they do. We can conclude therefore that the role of Xiao Liu's

family in the film is to introduce the sense of conflict between him and his family and the

construction of Xiao Liu's character, rather than putting weight on introducing the whole family

to the audience. In a patriarchal society the father is sufficient to engender traditional values and

to symbolise the power of home. Later on, we overhear a conversation between Xiao Liu and

Master Ren regarding Xiao Liu's arranged marriage to Widow Jiang. Master Ren tells Xiao Liu

that his marriage was arranged by his father as well. His wife is from a wealthy family from

which he receives the funding to open the photo shop. Then he comments while looking at his

son Fu Guan that everything he has now is Fu Guan's in the future. This infers that Master Ren

swallowed the bitterness derived from his inability to fight against the power of the home in

order to provide something better for his child. A better life here might mean a life with choices.

This is the first time in the film so far that the concept of family is so clearly articulated. The

power of home is part of the inescapable fate of individual lives. The life-long commitment is

proved by Master Ren's putting hope into the next life- the life of his son is symbolically an

extension of his own. Here, Xiao Liu's resistance to agree to the arranged marriage reflects his character and augers his determination to embrace the new film culture. Also the film uses his conflict with his family to mature and nourish the main conflict between Chinese culture (Peking Opera) and foreign imports (film).

This "home" conflict becomes clearer and more intensified when the foreign character Raymond Wallace (Jared Harris) is introduced. Raymond is an English opportunist who wants to earn enough money to win his wife and children back from a broken marriage. He brings new Western film technology with him to Beijing, such as hand-cranked, black and white, soundless cameras and projectors. This new medium and the images it produces are harbingers of profound change for the residents of Beijing. Before long, Xiao Liu remarks that "men will cut their pigtails and women will unbind their feet." These comments echo the epigraph at the beginning of the film that "at the end of the 19th century, the upcoming of Western culture is becoming a threat to the traditional culture of the Qing Dynasty." For most Chinese at the time who have gone through decades of foreign invasions, 'the first movies brought not only a new form of entertainment but also a threat to Chinese tradition.'[21] With great ambition to earn his fortune showing films, Raymond soon realises that he must overcome his own and his audience's xenophobia before he can start to attract a following. Xiao Liu is infectiously fascinated with the new medium. Although the Chinese audience are depicted as initially suspicious, they soon transform into a roomful of rapt, slack-jawed viewers watching the footage of speeding trains, white dancers, etc.

All these changes are considered as disloyal towards the traditional Peking Opera, the highly praised performing art in China at the time, especially in the capital Beijing. So the tension is now magnified from the tension between a father and son to the tension between Chinese culture and foreign influence. The dramatic build-up of tension between the characters eventually defines the cultural conflict that Xiao Liu stands in with his patriarchal family. He is only interested in the novel film technique without judgmentally identifying that it belongs to Chinese culture or foreign culture. However, the traditional cultural view leaves him with no choice if he wants to pursue his interest.

This cultural conflict suffocates Xiao Liu and eventually forces him to depart from home. He has no intention to choose between his beloved Chinese inheritance and the desired foreign technology which is initially so despised by the Chinese culture. He attempts to stay true to his loyalty by continuing to work at the Feng Tai photo shop, yet at the same time he is eager to learn the new foreign magic. Therefore, he talks Raymond into offering him a job to attract audiences to his shows while learning the film techniques on the job. This cooperation sees a flux of interest and financial success from the Chinese audiences. But when Raymond asks him to "leave home, leave Feng Tai, and come with me," Xiao Liu replies that "only the worst and lowest man shows no loyalty." For Xiao Liu, the film technology is not in opposition to the traditional Chinese arts. His loyalty towards the Feng Tai photo shop, which is symbolically home to him, shows his core connection to home. Later, however, he is forced to leave with Raymond despite his underlying loyalty to the tradition of family when his father refuses to acknowledge him as his son.

Although he consciously chooses to follow this despised technique, he never regards it in opposition to Chinese culture. However, the Western moving picture is seen as another foreign invasion and Xiao Liu's behaviour is seen as rebellious and disloyal towards his Chinese ancestors. His love for Lord Tan's daughter Xiao Ling is threatened by his fascination with Western film as he is considered as having no respect for Xiao Ling's father. Loyalty and respect equate to loving the Chinese opera only. Xiao Liu is seemingly put into a position where he has to stand in opposition to Chinese culture. This conflict reaches its climax when Raymond receives a letter inviting him and Xiao Liu to project their film for Empress Dowager Cixi at her birthday celebration. Xiao Liu later finds out that he is also invited as part of the Feng Tai photo shop team to take a picture for Empress Dowager. Xiao Liu wants to manage two jobs on the same day without confronting his respected owner Master Ren and losing the opportunity to prove his new interest to his fellow Chinese. Although it is a matter of completing the job for him, his actions are regarded as disloyal by the Feng Tai group and Xiao Liu is sacked by his respectful Master Ren.

When Xiao Liu wanders back to Raymond's place, his father finds him there and forces him to marry Widow Jiang. Accepting his father's plan and returning home will be regarded by Lao Liu as abandoning his obsession with film. Xiao Liu refuses. His father leaves cutting the kinship bond with him by not recognising him as his son any more. Xiao Liu nearly collapses when his father leaves due to the shock and sense of loss. Raymond then reassures Xiao Liu that, "You can stay with me Liu. I've got plenty clothes. Hey, you will be the first moving picture man in all of China…." For Raymond the most important concern about leaving home is having a roof over your head and clothes to wear. But what he does not understand is that life is connected by the

sentimental- the home is not only a physical linking. It holds all sorts of connections from inside to outside the body. It is where everything is rooted. Xiao Liu has lost his roots. He is forced to separate from home. From the Chinese perspective it is Xiao Liu who abandons his home by his choice because he knows the consequences of insisting upon learning the foreign moving picture technique. Leaving home does not mean that Xiao Liu has no connection with home anymore. Home means a lot more than its organic meaning. It is like the intra-uterine life. Everyone is forced to leave that original place. But the uncanny keeps returning to the longing of that original place. Xiao Liu's life after his fatherly kinship is cut is actually the start of his journey of coming back home. In other words, although he is forced to leave home, "home" never leaves him.

Coming Home

If there is no departure, there is no coming back. But this coming home does not necessarily mean coming back home physically. It means here in the film coming to an emotional agreement with the sentimental which is always presented cinematically as homecoming or home-longing. The power of home seems to relate to the female according to Freud's theory of intra-uterine living. In the film, although the characters who run the photo shop, who operate the film projecting and filming, and the person who wins the heart of the opera fans are all male, the people behind them who actually direct and control them are all female. Empress Dowager Cixi controls the power behind the curtain. Raymond seeks success with his film-showing as a way of winning his wife back. The photo shop owner starts his business with money from his wife's family making his wife the "man" of the family. Xiao Liu wants to win Xiao Ling's heart by being an outstanding achiever. These female figures symbolically relate the audience to the intra-uterine living. They therefore constantly, although in a hidden way, remind the audience of the

inescapable power of home. The power of home has made Xiao Liu's life like a kite- no matter how far the kite travels it is always connected to the other end by a thread. Xiao Liu is dragged by this line, a line that becomes almost invisible at a far distance. He is constantly dragged home (home-longing) although he is simultaneously forced to leave home.

The relationships between Xiao Liu and his father and between Xiao Liu and Xiao Ling are tangible connections. But the power of home is intangible and almost fateful. The following part examines how the sentimental- the power of home- is articulated and presented cinematically in the film. Furthermore we will explore how the new visibility brought by film initiates the journey of returning home. During this process, Xiao Liu becomes more and more self-conscious of his actions and the reasons behind them. This is achieved by his progressive knowledge of the new visibility. Amy Taubin comments that Xiao Liu's 'initial fascination with the mechanics of moving pictures quickly develops into a visionary understanding of cinema's metaphysical and political potential- not only as a means for gathering images from afar but also a tool for self-reflection.'[22] Xiao Liu discovers the sentimental through the new visibility, and the sentimental is what keeps Xiao Liu in the exploration of the visibility.

However, the marriage between visibility and the sentimental takes steps of progression in the film. When Xiao Liu first introduces shadow magic to Lord Tan's daughter Xiao Ling, he opens the window and there appears the view of a busy street in Beijing. Xiao Liu points out the figures in their sight which include Uncle Zhang and his grandson, Xiao Xing and his lover. Xiao Liu tells Xiao Ling that the shadow magic will record all these moments of life. At this stage, Xiao Liu has realised the preservation function of film after watching the foreign film clips brought by

Raymond. His idea of this recording function has not expanded beyond image preservation due to the awe he feels towards the technical wonder. Xiao Liu is excited enough to come to realise that the film clips are not just entertainment, they are records of life as well.

When Xiao Liu watches the film clips with Raymond, he sees Raymond's family and Raymond kissing his ex-wife. This is the first time that Xiao Liu realises that film not only records images, it also preserves affective emotions, such as love. From these affectively inspiring film clips, Xiao Liu learns from Raymond that he could say "you are the most beautiful girl in the world" to Xiao Ling. Without the inspiration of the clips, or without the visibility of the sentimental, Xiao Liu would not have the confidence to do so. When Raymond and Xiao Liu exhaust the film clips through repeated showings, Xiao Liu suggests that Raymond films "local people, local scenes, new film, Chinese films!" Raymond responds, "You are crazy! Who wants to see that? They can walk out of their doors and see it any time they want!" From this short dialogue we can actually tell that although Raymond takes the film clips to China, film remains a mere technical excitement to him as well. While Raymond and Xiao Liu film the 'local scenes,' Raymond is amazed by the Chinese scenery. He is also captured by the camera while eating sunflower seeds with Er Ye on the street with a Chinese winter coat on. He expresses that "I'm so overwhelmed. I love China!" after he films the Great Wall. This new visibility brings the new connection- the connection between seeing and the affective expressions. Although he is a pioneer in the film in terms of making film a transnational phenomenon, and he has been projecting film for a while in China, this is the first time that he actually connects his feelings with the 'local people, local scenes' through the camera lens. Visibility provides a world that still has a capacity for the affective explorations. And yet, the new visibility, the 'local people, local scenes' are Xiao Liu's

paths leading him back home. The film plot is layering the different scenes to propel and emphasise the topic of returning home.

Firstly, the Chinese film clips find their way home. Xiao Liu and Raymond are invited to project the film clips for the Empress Dowager's birthday. However, the excitement of their pending professional success is overshadowed by a technical fault which causes a fire to break out inside the palace in which Xiao Liu is accidentally injured. In her anger Empress Dowager orders that Raymond and Xiao Liu should be sentenced to death for conspiracy to harm the Empress Dowager's life. It is Lord Tan, who earlier performed at the palace, who kneels down and begs for their lives. Raymond is expelled from the country, and Xiao Liu goes back to Master Ren's photo shop. Also gone with Raymond are the film clips that they filmed together in China. Six months later, Xiao Liu receives a box from Great Britain- Raymond sends all the Chinese film clips back to him. These film clips inspire Xiao Liu to take up his interest again. They are also symbols of the preservation of the friendship between Xiao Liu and Raymond as stated in Raymond's letter to Xiao Liu, which echo with the affective connection through the new visibility of film earlier in the film.

Secondly, Xiao Liu's father's act of trading his glasses for a camera lens functions as the symbolic acceptance of home. The clips sent by Raymond encourage Xiao Liu to start showing film again. He collects and makes all the projecting equipment except a projecting lens which is too expensive for him to afford. Xiao Liu's father Lao Liu overhears this and goes to a glasses shop and manages to get the lens that Xiao Liu needs by trading in his own glasses on which he relies to see. This loss of glasses symbolically means a loss of one's sight, which by extension

can be taken as losing one's eyes in an extreme form. From a psychoanalytic interpretation, 'the fear of damaging or losing one's eyes is a terrible one in children. Many adults retain their apprehensiveness in this respect, and no physical injury is so much dreaded by them as an injury to the eye.'[23] Therefore, the 'anxiety about one's eyes, the fear of going blind, is often enough a substitute for the dread of being castrated.'[24] Xiao Liu's father's symbolically self-blinding act is a mitigated form of being castrated. He therefore loses his controlling power as a patriarchal figure. There is no opposite force between Xiao Liu and his father now- he is accepted by home. Indeed, in an earlier scene, Lord Tan kneels down to beg for Xiao Liu's life before Empress Dowager. This can be taken as taking Xiao Liu back home as well. Lord Tan, a father figure, submits his dignity and fame to beg for the life of Xiao Liu despite the film showing being considered to be disrespectful towards Lord Tan's traditional Peking Opera. His act of begging wipes away these conflicts and facilitates Xiao Liu's acceptance within the community again.

Thirdly, the harmonious juxtaposition of Chinese performing arts and Western film medium symbolises the thaw of the cultural conflict. The diminishing conflict of the home is demonstrated by the acts of Lord Tan and Xiao Liu's father. The cultural conflict is reconciled at the end of the film with the simultaneous playing of a silent film clip along with the live performance of the piece. This occurs at Xiao Liu's opening show of the Chinese film clips. The clip shows a traditional comedian art form *Xiangsheng*, in which two comedians stand on stage while conversing a funny story. When Xiao Liu shows this film clip, the two comedians, who are actually in the film, are doing the simultaneous dubbing for the audience. Now, the traditional art form and the new foreign art form are exhibited together at the same time. Who would say that they are in conflict? It is only on a time line that they have sequence. They can exist

harmoniously together without being in conflict with each other. It is no coincidence that the first Chinese film is about the Chinese Opera *Dingjun Mountain (Dingjun shan)* by Lord Tan (Tan Xinpei). This is a perfect example of a Western medium combining with Chinese art.

As an iconoclastic figure who controversially presents the much-maligned foreign film shows to Chinese audiences, Xiao Liu experiences separation from home before his return. During this period, he is continuously called and seduced by "home." Without knowing or planning, he combines the new foreign art form with Chinese traditional art form (the dubbing and the production subject matter of the first film). Although the production of the first Chinese film is not introduced in detail at the end of the film, the result itself celebrates Xiao Liu's return to home. Home, as an old and discarded belief, is proved to be vindicated.

As for the director, Ann Hu's cross-cultural background neatly intersects with this important theme of the film. Ann Hu was born in mainland China but was one of the first students permitted to leave the country after the Cultural Revolution; she then became a highly successful commodities trader based in New York before she began a filmmaking career. Her first 35mm feature film is about the birth of the first Chinese film and its relation to Peking Opera.[25] The film *Shadow Magic* shows strongly coloured Peking Opera costumes and iconic Chinese scenery. The storyline depicts conventional Chinese kinship relations and conveys the principle of family sacrifice. Also, the soundtrack throughout the film is traditional Chinese music played by string instruments. All these elements convey traditional Chinese characteristics and invoke a nostalgic longing. The film itself is therefore a journey back home symbolically and physically for the director herself. It might be argued that her cross-cultural background simply provides a

perspective for the better blending and accommodating of different cultural elements within the film. I would also suggest that the visibility of the film in a visual sense, at least, is Ann Hu's arrival at home.

Shadow Magic is recognised as being in tune with the 'cloying nostalgia of *Cinema Paradiso*'[26] *Cinema Paradiso* (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988) is an Italian classic that tells a story about a filmmaker recalling his childhood relationship with Alfredo, a projectionist at the village theatre, who inspires a love of movies in him. The two films do share some similarities. The music of *Shadow Magic* sees the marks of the classic film *Cinema Paradiso*. *Cinema Paradiso* is about how film as an art form intrigues, influences and changes the little boy Toto's life; *Shadow Magic* is also a film about how film opens up Xiao Liu's artistic vision and eventually inspires him to produce the first Chinese film. There is a special relationship portrayed in each individual film: in *Cinema Paradiso* it is the friendship between Toto and Alfredo who also provides a sense of fatherhood; in *Shadow Magic* the friendship is between Raymond and Xiao Liu. The two films also accommodate a love story respectively as sub-plots. Moreover, it has been recognised that by playing the old film clips in *Shadow Magic,* 'the scene plays upon the same nostalgia for the innocent days of cinema's infancy and wonder that powered "Cinema Paradiso".'[27] These similarities create a nostalgic link between the two films. Rey Chow states that filmmaking itself can be taken as homecoming.[28] *Shadow Magic* thus not only shares nostalgic sentiments with *Cinema Paradiso*. *Shadow Magic* also symbolically goes back "home" to this successful and classic film that holds the hearts of many audiences.

The Original Home?

The home that Xiao Liu returns to is forever changed: Lao Liu accepts the shadow magic and is very proud of his son at the film show; the Chinese audience are so fascinated by the new medium, they crowd inside and outside the film showing venue; even Master Ren and Lord Tan join in the production of the Chinese first film- a film that is based on Chinese Peking Opera and therefore importantly combines traditional and foreign culture. Xiao Liu is changed as well. From a film experimentalist to a film professional, Xiao Liu matures not only his technique, but also his vision of a different world. In the film, after Lao Liu cuts the kinship bond with his son, Xiao Liu goes to see a Peking Opera performance with Raymond in the hope of meeting his lover Xiao Ling. He wears a Western suit. Whether being dressed up like this is due to his lack of personal clothing or for other reasons is not divulged. But visually this is the first direct confrontation that Xiao Liu experiences with tradition due to his appearance. Raymond notices the hostile looks he receives from other members of the audience and realises that they are not really welcome there. Without listening to Xiao Liu, he wants to leave the opera house halfway through the performance, not understanding that leaving in the middle of the performance is considered extremely disrespectful in Chinese culture. They are subsequently both forced out of the performing house by other audience members.

Xiao Liu, "Because of you, I lose everything- my job, my family, my honour, the woman I love. Meeting you is my downfall!"

…

Raymond, "You've changed. You're not like other people anymore. You've got nowhere to go back to."

And indeed, Xiao Liu cannot return to the same home that he left. This reminds us of the intra-uterine living that Freud examines in his theory of the uncanny. It is a place that no one can go back to physically. Therefore, it remains a transcendental longing that persists. Xiao Liu keeps on being dragged by the longing for home. However, when all the conflicts thaw, he arrives back at a home which is not the one that he left.

The question of origin opens up an important issue concerning authenticity that has formed many debates in the area of post-colonial studies. The discussions on *Shadow Magic* provide us with an insight into these debates from the cultural standpoint and the perpetuation of colonialism.

Zhong Dafeng comments on the adaptation from the screenplay *Ding Jun Mountain* to the film *Shadow Magic* that there were 'major changes' from the original screenplay. In his article "From *Dingjun Mountain* to *Shadow Magic*" Zhong points out the alterations and the shift of the cultural standpoint that were caused once overseas funding was introduced (mainly from Taiwan) to the film's production process. The screenplay *Dingjun Mountain* was published in 1995 and was awarded Best Screenplay in Taiwan. It was originally produced in commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Chinese cinema for Youth Film Studio. However, it was aborted due to a lack of funding. After several twists and turns, American funding was secured.[29] However, Zhong argues that, without undermining the uniqueness of either products, the success of *Shadow Magic* is based on 'the sacrifice of the historical truthfulness in the original screenplay.'[30] He states that the film claims truthfulness as one of its key selling points.

Therefore, the audience takes the story portrayed in the film as a kind of authentic reference to history.

One of the changes that most concerns Zhong is the introduction of Raymond. Zhong says in his article that both the screenplay and the film are based on the birth of the Chinese first film *Dingjun Mountain*. Records of how the film was made are scarce. Zhong believes that 'Xiao Liu in the screenplay is the key character to propel the development of the film.'[31] Zhong comments that the original screenplay tells a story of how 'the ordinary people in old Beijing were curious about the new entity and sought interest and happiness in their quiet and ordinary lives. Because of their sensitivity and love for novelty, the birth of the first film was a natural result when the time was ready.'[32] The film as a new medium in the screenplay is not emphasised as a 'foreign entity' that would bring ground-breaking changes to people's lives. However, Zhong demonstrates that the film version, in contrast, emphasises how 'the foreign entity that comes from the Western civilisation' overcomes all the difficulties it faces and enters into Chinese culture.[33] Thus, according to Zhong, Raymond replaces Xiao Liu as 'the leading force' to propel the development of the film.[34]

Moreover, Zhong explains that 'the screenplay *Dingjun Mountain* is produced for the local film and stands within the local culture. It concerns how a new medium is born in China and becomes a new medium that is rooted within the national soil.'[35] The director of the film Ann Hu is criticised for creating 'an Orientalist view' within which *Shadow Magic* and the protagonist Raymond become 'the carrier of modern Western civilisation' and construct a superior Western ideology over the "Orient" without being challenged. Overall the film is criticised as an

Orientalist imagining that defers to Western culture. A. O. Scott also observed this in his *New York Times* review of *Shadow Magic*, commenting that '[t]he film's slightly overcomplicated plot is built around the tension between old and new, Western and Chinese.' Scott concludes that the film is clearly 'biased in favor of the modernity and egalitarianism that Raymond represents.'[36]

The introduction of Raymond is necessary in the plot development to enhance the difference between home and the foreign. Although it is not the director's intention to cast opposites, Raymond's character facilitates a clear materialisation of the abstract concept of home and the foreign. Actually it is through Raymond's eyes (the equivalent to the camera lens/the unique experience of the new visibility of the medium of film) that the audience finds the new sentimental that is attached and tunnelled by these new "eyes." Therefore the new visibility provides a new position- a vision that not only finds new foreign technology, but also the old Chinese kinship sentimental. To say that this is still an Orientalist exotic scene is to fix the imagination of origin in an unnecessarily defensive frame, and actually contributes to the same Orientalist line of thought- fixing the image of Other culture at a distance without acknowledging its mutation and liquidity.

Coincidentally, Pan Ruojian is critical of *Shadow Magic* as an international production when analysing the narrative of the film. The article mentions that the original screenplay realises the point of view that captures the complicated emotions, curiosity, hesitation, excitement, refusal, acceptance and control during the period when the first film was made in China. In the film the best way of expressing the story seems to be by prioritising the narrative concerning how the foreign medium of film conflicts with and conquers Chinese culture. The article summarises that

the 'internationalised production strategy' has to have an 'other' viewpoint. Because the film

adapts this kind of 'other' viewpoint, therefore, the film becomes someone else's film rather than

'ours.'[37] The article criticises this 'other' kind of viewpoint as Raymond's point of view. Pan

says that Raymond is depicted as a 'cultural enlightenmentalist' in the film.[38] To his mind, only

Xiao Liu is trying to converse and communicate with the world, and the rest of the Chinese are

seen as 'a cultural group that is rigid, conservative and backward.'[39] Raymond is thrown out of

the photo shop by the workers, and pushed onto the street from the Opera House by Lord Tan's

loyal fans, and eventually expelled from China by Empress Dowager Cixi. Therefore, Pan

Ruojian considers that *Shadow Magic* 'polarises the [Western] film medium as progressive and

Peking Opera as restrictive.'[40] The film's ending when the Chinese first film records Lord Tan's

opera piece is a sign of 'confrontation and success over one culture [Chinese] by another culture

[Western].'[41] Although Raymond's presence in China is prohibited at the time when the first

Chinese film is made and he is not able to witness this, the camera is considered to be the 'absent

presenter.'[42]

The comments from both scholars above raise concerns that the input of foreign funding or a

foreign production team negatively influence its final form, making *Shadow Magic* unfaithful to

the historical situation of how the first Chinese film was actually made, therefore resulting in a

film that is rather "unoriginal." This links into debates over "authenticity." To some degree it is

justified to make the case that 'the internationalised production strategy' could influence the

mobility and mentality of the film production. However, this 'internationalised production

strategy' seems to mean more in terms of the conflicts between the East and West that appear

unresolvable in the face of the transnational flow of funds and labour. The foreign influence is

considered to be invasive and destructive rather than part of the process of constant change of the

home culture due to the breach between the East and the West. This 'other' viewpoint that Pan

describes perpetuates the "Self" and "Other" division in post-colonial theory. China is

perpetually put into an "Other" position. Chinese scholars have claimed that the Chinese version

is the "authentic" story of how the film was initiated in China. Instead, Hu's version of the film

is criticised as being Orientalist due to her cross-cultural background and the involvement of a

multi-national production team. As Homi K. Bhabha explains, '[c]ultures are never unitary in

themselves, nor simply dualistic in relation of Self and Other.'[43] The concept that 'the historical

identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept

alive in the national tradition of the People' is 'hierarchical' and 'untenable.'[44] Culture is in no

way original and pure because 'the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or

fixity.'[45] In the film this concept is raised by Xiao Liu's inability to return to the home he leaves

due to the changes that are continuously happening to both himself and his home, and also to his

understanding of home. As Mudrooroo says, '[a]ll societies and cultures change and adapt, and

this is fact not theory.'[46] Therefore, all cultures are under constant change and are intrinsically

unstable. Criticism of the film from Chinese scholars therefore falls within with Bhabha's idea of

'conceptualizing an *international* culture' based on 'the exoticism or multi-culturalism of the

diversity of cultures,' but not on 'the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*.'[47] By

doing so, the concept still falls into the 'political trope of essentialism' that is set up by imperial

discourse 'which proves difficult to displace.' The "marginal" stays in the periphery, and the

binarism of centre/margin has not changed or progressed, but has been reinscribed. 'As post-

colonial discourse demonstrates, the appeal of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' is not merely an

ontological contradiction, but a political trap.'[48] Ultimately it emphasises some of the same distinctions that colonial narratives always had.

When trying to analyse the occurrence of the strong feeling of something uncanny, Freud mentioned the 'double' which he claimed had been 'thoroughly treated by Otto Rank.' Rank's treatment of the 'double' concerns 'the connections which the 'double' has with reflections in mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and with fear of death.' Freud then suggests that 'probably the 'immortal' soul was the first 'double' of the body.' I would put forward here that the film adopts the story of projecting and filming as the double of life. Although Freud does say afterwards that after this initial period is 'surmounted', the 'double' could well reverse from being 'an assurance of immortality' to 'the uncanny harbinger of death,' it should not affect my analysis of the connection between cinema and the sentimental.[49] Xiao Liu's wish to record 'local people, local scenes' can be well regarded as doubling the real life. In putting on the 'shadow magic', the aim is to preserve and immortalise the local scene. When the audience screams for the first time when they "see" themselves in the film clips that have been filmed by Xiao Liu and Raymond, it seems that it is this machine, this visibility that finds themselves for them. For the first time, they have a strong feeling of being connected affectively to their existence beyond their physical being. Therefore, we can say that the visibility of cinema provides the possibility for not only preserving local scenes, but also for witnessing the sentimental of homecoming and home-longing, which is doubled again by the film *Shadow Magic* itself. The film immortalises not only the view but also the sentimental of homecoming, which further demonstrates the argument about the elusiveness of going back home- the home and the sentimental remain an immortalised transcendental longing.

[1] Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XVII (1917-1919)*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955, 217-256.

[2] *Ibid*., 219.

[3] *Ibid*., 226-232.

[4] *Ibid*., 237.

[5] *Ibid*., 237. My emphasis.

[6] *Ibid*., 224.

[7] *Ibid*., 222.

[8] *Ibid*., 220.

[9] *Ibid*., 245.

[10] Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XVIII (1920-1922)*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955, 11.

[11] Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", 241.

[12] *Ibid*., 237.

[13] *Ibid*., 221.

[14] *Ibid*., 244.

[15] *Ibid*., 245.

[16] *Ibid*., 247-248.

[17] *Ibid*., 249.

[18] *Ibid*., 220.

[19] http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0398866/bio

[20] Mike Clark, *Movies in USA Today*. June 4, 2001.

[21] Edward Guthmann, *Movies in San Francisco Gate*. Friday, April 13, 2001.

[22] Amy Taubin, *Movies in The Village Voice*. Tuesday, April 3, 2001.

[23] Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", 231.

[24] *Ibid*., 231

[25] www.hudong.com/wiki/%E8%83%A1%E5%AE%89

[26] Taubin, *Movies in The Village Voice*.

[27] Michael O'Sullivan, *Entertainment Guide in Washington Post*. Friday, April 20, 2001.

[28] Rey Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, 40-43.

[29] Zhong Dafeng, "Cong *Dingjun shan* dao *Xi yang jing*: gaibian beihou de wenhua lichang zhuanyi (From *Dingjun Mountain* to *Shadow Magic*: the Shift of Cultural Standpoint behind the Adaptation) ," in *Dianying yishu*, 4 (2001), 40.

[30] *Ibid.,* 40.

[31] *Ibid*., 41.

[32] *Ibid*., 41.

[33] *Ibid*., 41.

[34] *Ibid*., 41.

[35] *Ibid*., 43.

[36] A. O. Scott, "'Shadow Magic': When Movies Fomented a Cultural Revolution." In *Arts: The New York Times*, April 6, 2001.

[37] Pan Ruojian, "*Xi yang jing* zhong de zhongguo tingyuan: wenhua chongtu yu guojihua xushi celue (The Chinese Courtyard in the Western View: Cultural Conflict and Internationalised Narrative Strategy)," in *Dianying yishu* 2 (2001), 46, 44. 44-47 & 102.

[38] *Ibid*., 45.

[39] *Ibid.,* 45.

[40] *Ibid.,* 45.

[41] *Ibid.,* 45.

[42] *Ibid.,* 45.

[43] Homi K. Bhabha, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences," in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, 207.

[44] *Ibid*., 208.

[45] *Ibid*., 208.

[46] Mudrooroo, "White Forms, Aboriginal Content," in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, 228.

[47] Bhabha, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences," 209.

[48] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-colonial Studies*, 214.

[49] Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", 235.

CHAPTER 2

Two Cities and the Same Sentimental Affection

The themes of imaginations and articulations of the sentimental have long been represented and discussed on the Chinese cinematic screen. These interrelated themes are rich in Chinese tradition and reflect a unique Chinese human spirit. It could be suggested that all Chinese social relations, in the end, come to be decided by the sentimental. The popularity with this theme on the Chinese screen has renewed and rejuvenated its conceptual importance. In this chapter, I will discuss how the theme of the sentimental has become an eternal topic within Chinese cinema through a reading of Fei Mu's *Springtime in a Small Town* (*Xiao cheng zhi chun*1948) and the same title remake by Tian Zhuangzhuang (2002).

The artistic value of *Springtime in a Small Town* (1948) by Fei Mu was discovered in early 1980s during a series of coordinated film exhibitions held internationally and nationally (mainly in Hong Kong), thirty years after the film was first made.[1] The film was claimed as expressing a very Chinese way of culture. The film was subsequently shown at many overseas film exhibitions as if it was a spokesperson for Chinese culture that could provide insight into the "Chinese way." It is now considered to present the height and achievements of Chinese film-making during the 1940s.

However, when *Springtime in a Small Town* was first made, it was criticised as 'confining the springtime in a decadent corner. The story of the film is narrow, conservative, obsolete and hermetical.'[2] The film was produced during the second civil war (1945-1949), a tough and embattled period in Chinese modern history. Responding to the times, Chinese cinema tended to focus more on narratives themselves for didactical purposes rather than on the descriptions

of individuals and emotions. *Springtime in a Small Town* is a rare example of an exploration of human emotions, moral ethics, and cultural language. The director Fei Mu was criticised as being too bourgeois due to the central love emotions expressed in the film. Fei Mu was criticised as abandoning the political spirit and the contemporaneity, and the film was considered as 'having no contemporary spirit, no national character and it is the result of the imagination of the neurotics.'[3] The value of *Springtime in a Small Town* was not appreciated and the film was quickly forgotten after Fei Mu passed away in Hong Kong two years after its release in 1948. In 2005, the Association of Hong Kong Golden Statue Awards held a special selection award based on "The Best Chinese Films in One-hundred Years of Chinese Cinema." *Springtime in a Small Town* topped the list.[4] It was acclaimed as 'the best Chinese film in history' by Hong Kong critics.[5]

Springtime in a Small Town was produced in 1948 by Shanghai Wenhua Film Company. There are only five characters in the film, an old and ruined courtyard house, and a ruined city wall. The story spans over 9 days. The whole film took three months to complete. No one could imagine when the film was made that the artistic charm of this small production near the end of Fei Mu's film career could be recovered more than thirty years after its initial release.[6] Fifty years later in 2002, one of the acclaimed Chinese Fifth Generation directors Tian Zhuangzhuang remade the film following a 10 year hiatus since producing his award-winning film *The Blue Kite* (*Lan feng zheng*, 1993). Tian's film invited many big names in the field of Chinese cinema. The playwright is written by A Cheng whose father Zhong Dianfei was the famous Chinese film critic; the costume and image designer is Ye Jintian (Tim Yip) who is the Oscar winner for best artistic director; the director of photography is Li Pingbin (Mark Lee Pingbin) who is also the director of photography of the award-winning film *In the Mood of Love* (*Hua yang nian hua*, 2000) by Wong Kar-wai.

The 2002 version does not attempt to make dramatic changes to the original version of *Springtime in a Small Town*. Tian Zhuangzhuang explained that 'this is intended to be the same story told by two different people. For me, the best part [of making this film] is to be able to express the story in my own ways.'[7] Tian also compared the remake of *Springtime in a Small Town* to copying a master painting in a TV interview- even though you might do a great job, it is still a copy.[8] This demonstrates a great respect to a pioneer film-maker. However, such a successful director as Tian would not devote his efforts and risk his professional reputation to make a film that he considered to be worthless. Something about *Springtime in a Small Town* struck him deeply to make him decide to express it in his favourite language- film language. This is supposed to be the acclaimed production that would surpass *The Blue Kite* after 10 years of pondering and preparation. The common concern is where the value lies in remaking Fei Mu's film when the original is already recognised as a perfect classic.[9] Therefore, we would ask what message has been delivered from Fei Mu's film that not only takes it to the top of Chinese film history, but also articulates something time-enduring that is able to convey something to a contemporary audience? What has inspired Tian Zhuangzhuang to remake the film from 50 years ago? How do the two films converse with their respective film language? These are the questions that I will discuss in the following pages. As a topic that is enduring in Chinese cinema, the sentimental varies, transforms and even disguises itself within the visibility of the cinematic experience. It also contributes to the speculative and aesthetic quality of Chinese cinema. Therefore, it is important to discover what kind of deliberate and conscious efforts have been made towards the sentimental that have facilitated its persistence in Chinese film.

Springtime in a Small Town is set after the second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) in an old mansion house that has been damaged during the Japanese bombing campaign. Dai Liyan, who is the eldest son of the family, is convinced that he has bad lung problems. He has lost his vitality because of his inability to maintain his inherited property well. His vitality is sapped with the burning of the house. He and his wife have been living in separate rooms for a few years, and he always takes his anger out on his wife and his younger sister. His wife Zhou Yuwen is loyal to her husband in terms of looking after him and fulfilling her domestic duty. However, she holds no romantic feeling towards him. The only comfort that she has is in thinking of her first love Zhang Zhichen. One spring time, Zhichen comes to the small city to see them. Yuwen is not aware that Zhichen is an old school friend of Liyan, while Liyan does not know that Zhichen and Yuwen were in love but separated by the war. Faced with the sick husband and the healthy first love, Yuwen would choose to leave with Zhichen if she allows herself. When Liyan finds out about his wife's former relationship with Zhichen, he wants to take his life to complete Yuwen's happiness. He is saved by Zhichen. Yuwen is guilty of her thoughts. Zhichen leaves the city after this incident. The film ends with both Yuwen and Liyan standing on the city wall looking into the distance.

The screenplay was completed by Li Tianji who studied drama and was only 26 years old at the time when he wrote the play. It is said that there are various reflections of Li's own life in the screenplay.[10] The title was changed many times, from *Unrequited Love* (*Ku lian*), to *The Lost Love* (*Mishi de aiqing*), and eventually Li settled on *Springtime in a Small Town*. Just from the changes to the title, we can tell that a progression of effort took place to position the major theme of the film.[11]

A film with such a simple storyline actually contains many layers of meaning in its simplicity. The soul of the film is indicated by what the title suggests- spring. Spring as the season that follows winter does not have the maturity of autumn and the splendour of summer. It can still be a bit cold and grey. The colour is sporadic and the impression of life is fragile. However, springtime can also evoke the appearance of new shoots overnight and the expectation of new blossom in a few days. Therefore, it renders feelings of impulse and expectation. Overall, it contains the meaning of hope and vitality. Therefore, the season of spring has two different and dual meanings in the film. One is the concrete meaning of the season spring, which introduces the time when the story of the film takes place. The second symbolic meaning is of the hope and vitality that grows out of the ruined house and the city.

What is this hope and vitality then? The story is about social stricture, the self sacrifice made to keep the wholeness of the family. It is this sacrifice, this stricture of duty and loyalty that is evoked by the season of spring that brings hope and vitality to life in the film. Made during the severe civil war in China, *Springtime in a Small Town* seems to have more to say about the essence that holds the Chinese people together among the ruins of war. Expressing retention of the integrity of home, of being protected, being accommodated, being accepted, being revitalised is the essence that the film tries to engage.

It might be interpreted that *Springtime in a Small Town* is actually a social criticism of the decadent tradition of family loyalty. The ruined house can be seen as a perfect example of the entrapment of the social stricture. The director is fully aware of this. That is why he uses another ruined site- the city wall- to balance and contrast the ambivalence of his imagination of home in the film. Throughout the film, the ruined house is the place for desperation. Even the spirit of the youthful and lively younger sister Dai Xiu is suppressed inside the house. Yet

we still see the complex structure of the inside of the mansion retained, the delicate window sill, the sculptured pillars, and many other beautiful features that symbolise the splendour of Chinese culture. However, the scene is set after the Japanese bombing and the house is half burned. Therefore, it does symbolise the decline of Chinese tradition. However, there is room for hope in the symbolism. The surviving fragments also imply that these can be the base upon which Chinese culture can be restored in the future.

Meanwhile the city wall is a place for passion and vitality. It is Yuwen's favourite place to unwind and recharge. She comes here every day on her way to go shopping and on her return. The few times that Yuwen and Zhichen meet privately they also meet here at the city wall. Therefore, it is a place that stands in contrast with the ruined house. The film does not make sharp divisions between the private and public space. However, the divide itself symbolically infers tension between Yuwen, Zhichen and Liyan. The final scene of the film is meaningfully set at the city wall. Zhichen leaves the city wall and Liyan joins Yuwen there, entering into the space that he had previously been excluded from. They both look into the distance, symbolising the re-merging and fusion of their relationship and the inception of hope and a possible future together. The sentimental endures and gives weight to the foundation of their future. The director uses this setting to convey that hope and vitality can endure. It indicates that familial loyalty, the Chinese sentimental, is where hope and vitality grow from. A simple story places the importance of family before personal desire.

This chapter will examine how the original film by Fei Mu establishes the articulation of the sentimental, this eternal topic in Chinese culture. It is widely acknowledged that the remake version by Tian Zhuangzhuang did not make many changes to the original. My comments will therefore address whether interpretations of Fei Mu's film can equally be applied to the

two different versions. I will examine Tian's film to find out what *has* been changed and why the changes were made. I will explore Tian's inspiration for a challenge that would engage his artistic creativity and his desire to pay homage to a pioneering director who delivered a message of a deeply rooted tradition of Chinese family imagination. Tian popularises and universalises this theme by bringing the film to a contemporary audience and retelling the story with his artistic appreciation of the theme.

Fei Mu: Family as a Restricted Ideal

Fei Mu apparently provided his actors and actresses with one simple instruction, that *Springtime in a Small Town* 'starts with passion, but ends with propriety.'[12] This quality of restraint resonates in both versions of the film. Although everyday China is not a country noted for its restraint and simplicity, especially during times of war and upheaval, the serenity that is brought about by restraint is an unimaginable luxury and these qualities remain ideals. Fei Mu insists upon them and uses his film to make these ideals more than empty hypotheses. Both versions of the film are also restrained- limited, controlled and restricted- in a technical sense: first and foremost there are only five characters in the whole film (although Tian's film inserts the transitional scene where Zhichen teaches dancing at Daixiu's school, discussed later in the chapter). Moreover, there are not many cinematographic variations of camera angles and camera movements. It is a very simple story of a transient moment of life. This might sound like too little upon which to base a film running at an hour and a half in length. But it is not the story that Fei Mu wants to show so much as the way his characters react to what happens in the story. What sacrifice each character has to make to keep the ideals, and what beauty these relations create.

This sense of restraint is also reinforced by the choice of settings in the film. There are only two locations: inside the house and on top of the city wall. Few activities take place outside the domestic setting. The house represents a small private world that is closed, governed by apparently inflexible rules, controlled by laws that are only to be deduced. The ruined mansion adds symbolic poignancy to the events that occur inside the house: the ruin symbolises the delicacy of the characters' feelings. It brings a sense of sadness and awareness of fragility. The old house restricts the field of vision of the audience as well. This view (visual) is the view (opinion) in repose. It seems to be a better way to listen and to watch. The house arranges everything under its roof, which is a traditional signifier for family. This is the best place to view what is going on in a family. Inside the house, we see the stillness of lives and also the hidden burst of vitality within them. The quietness of the house seems to always anticipate an impending momentous event. The film creates tension by playing upon the sense of the calm before a storm, that when little is happening anything can possibly happen. It is this contrast between the immeasurable and the static, the expected and the surprising that makes Fei Mu's film an exceptional and memorable emotional experience. Fei Mu uses the simple setting, dialogue and filming and editing techniques to present the complex activities of emotional conflicts and to convey a powerful message about family and the imagination of family that is deeply embedded in Chinese culture.

This message is complemented by the rhythm of *Springtime in a Small Town* as well. The slow tempo seems to be the manifestation of the film's inner life. It animates each individual scene, making meaningful the flow of the scenes in terms of building up the tension and exploring the layers of implication of the sentimental in the film. Normally we would expect the tempo to be decided by the camera movements. However, there are not many variations of camera positions and movements in Fei Mu's film, the lack of camera movements itself

slows the tempo down at certain degree. The tempo of *Springtime in a Small Town* is decided

by the film tone- the speed of characters' movements and conversation, the focus on the inner

mind of the characters, and the long duration of each scene. Fei Mu calls it the 'air' of the

film. He had previously experimented with this style of 'from the beginning to the end, a

slow rhythm throughout' in his early film *The Life* (*Ren sheng*, 1934).[13] The slow tempo

makes the film less compact, but its power is hidden in the tension engendered by its slow

rhythm, as well as in the ripples of the sequence and the circuitous flow of the story. This

kind of slow tone is designed to demonstrate the movement of a state of mind. It materialises

the inner life of the film. Therefore, the slowness can literally and figuratively complement

and convey the sentimental.

In terms of the sentimental, the slow tempo of the film also goes well with the rhythm and

balance of the sentimental that refers to Chinese culture specifically. The slow tempo is

created to fit alongside traditional Chinese aesthetics. China is a traditionally agricultural

country. Therefore, what is hidden behind the time and space is the traditional concept of an

association with time that is divided by seasonal breaks. Also since the Han Dynasty, the

Confucian idea of being moderate (*Zhong yong*) was taught to create stability for the country.

Therefore, traditionally Chinese aesthetics are based on stasis and tranquillity. It seems

natural to grasp this sense of a slow tempo for Fei Mu, who is famous for being deeply

influenced by Chinese culture. For expressing the affective mode, the slow tempo then

creates the tunnel for the smooth flow of the sentimental. Although there are few passionate

expressions in the film, the slow tempo makes the flicker of an eyelid and quiver of the lip as

strong as the tides in terms of emotional delivery.

Although the camera movements seem to shy away from recording emotional peaks and troughs, the slow rhythmic motion of the film enables emotion to be eventually apprehended. Even without dialogue, the meaning of a scene ripples out by the succession of the scene. In Fei Mu's film, when Zhichen and Yuwen leave the city wall where they have met for a chat, they walk along the lane lined up by trees on each side. There is no conversation in this scene, but the inner statement of the mind is clearly articulated. When the scene starts, Zhichen and Yuwen walk into the frame with their backs to the camera. They walk slowly side by side, but with an obvious distance between them. They walk slowly towards each other, then separate, and then walk together again. This time Yuwen holds Zhichen's arm and they both walk faster. They separate once more after a few steps. Yuwen starts to run, and Zhichen is chasing after her. They then both run out of the frame. There is no camera movement in the whole scene. The two characters walk further and further away from the camera. This scene could have been constructed with several shots before rapidly moving into the next scene. However, Fei Mu makes this scene unforgettable without, or indeed *by*, placing any (no) conversation and camera movement in it. The tension is created by the quietness and the slow tempo, and the consistent use of the same camera angle. The shots or scenes containing similar emotional tensions work in the same way as when a painter applies brush strokes, each one contributing to the final impression. Each shot sustains the others. The audience can then dwell on the shots and the sequence and be able to comprehend the emotional weight contained within them. It works like the ripples of a wave, and the conjuncture contains the power. Therefore, the more ordinary, the more contained, the stronger the effect, the more profound the meaning and impact. This is the spirit of Chinese aesthetics.

Here, I have to make another comparison of Fei Mu's traditional technique of picture composition. It can be best understood when compared to traditional Chinese painting, in

which the meaning is not solid, it is only expressed through impression and creation of atmosphere. In his letter To Yang Ji, Fei Mu wrote that 'I use long shots and slow action to compose my film and made a presumptuous and adventurous attempt to deliver the grey sentiment of the old China.'[14] This delivers the ambiguous understanding of the sentimental- the emotions towards the family ideal: it can be an entrapment but it is also where hope and dignity grows.

However, the intense humanity of the characters could not be so completely revealed simply by the setting and the tempo. It can only be fully appreciated when the framing and the shots are in combination. Both films apply mainly long and medium shots, while close-ups are rare. The director Jia Zhangke once commented on the use of the long-shot by Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu. Jia Zhangke stated that Ozu's films were a kind of 'observation in stasis, listening quietly,' which presented 'the beauty of oriental films and the life attitudes of the oriental people.'[15] The use of long shots is an attitude of silence and observation. It separates the audience and the world in which the story is happening, and leaves the audience physically uninvolved.

As well as the long shots, the slow tempo means that the scenes are also longer than is conventionally typical. That means that there is less narrative during the same amount of running time when compared with other films in general. The story is presented over a long period of time, and there is little overt action to sustain the values of the period. Consequently, critics were unsympathetic when the film was released and complained about its slow bourgeois feeling. The slowness was considered to give emphasis to the enjoyment or appreciation of lifestyle. Although the tempo of Fei Mu's film is slow, it has its own pace- a psychological time. For the audience that is drawn into his film, there is a realm of purely

psychological time that is created by the long shots. Beneath the seemingly still life, the potential for bursts of emotion are exposed. Although these outbursts are suppressed, it is exactly this suppression and vigour beneath the surface that give Fei Mu's film its enduring charm, while also making the use of time more meaningful. Just as Fei Mu restricts vision to enable us to see more, he slows down the tempo to let us feel more. If the film is slow compared to real time, then it is created for appreciation, for generating empathic feelings that connect the audience to the characters. There is little dialogue, and many conversations are not even completed. Yet the film creates a feeling that you see the goodness and beauty of everyday things and everyday people, the things that only film images, not words, can describe. The film's slow tempo represents something that only exists in transience. It serves to generate mixed feelings of sadness and comfort in the viewer who experiences the beauty of life and of a culture. It is here that we taste the undiluted flavour of the Chinese sentimental.

It has been observed that the long shot is used for 'representing the natural flow of characters' emotions and the development of the story.'[16] The panned long shots add variety to the composition of the shots and artistically represent the inner states of and delicate relationships among the characters. One example of this is when Zhichen first arrives, Dai Xiu is singing to welcome him in Liyan's room in the evening. The scene starts with a long shot containing three characters: in the foreground of the scene is Yuwen who is preparing the medicine for Liyan. Zhichen and Dai Xiu are behind her with Zhichen slightly in front of Dai Xiu. Zhichen is sitting on a chair, Dai Xiu is standing. Dai Xiu is singing, but Zhichen is not concentrating on her singing, his eyes are on Yuwen whose back is to him. Then the shot follows Yuwen who takes the medicine to Liyan, changing to a medium shot of Liyan's bed. Yuwen comes back to the table with Liyan looking at her from behind. Yuwen sits down still

in the foreground with her back to the camera. The shot goes back to the first composition

that includes Yuwen, Zhichen and Dai Xiu. Zhichen is looking at her. We can tell Yuwen is

aware of his attention from the way in which she awkwardly wipes her face with her

handkerchief. At the same time, Dai Xiu notices what is going on between the two of them so

she leans forward and sings a few words quite loudly to get Zhichen's attention back.

Zhichen's thoughts are disturbed as well. The shot moves to a medium shot that only includes

Zhichen and Dai Xiu. The shot moves back to Liyan. He stands up and moves into the shot

with Zhichen and Dai Xiu and taps on Zhichen's shoulder with a gentle smile on his face.

Then Yuwen stands up to prepare the bed for Liyan. The scene ends with another long shot

with Liyan, Zhichen and Dai Xiu. Dai Xiu finishes singing and asks Zhichen to tell her a

story. Zhichen makes an excuse of having eaten too much to avoid this.

There is no conversation during this scene. However, the relationships and inner thinking are expressed exquisitely through the combination of the long and medium shots. Zhichen and Yuwen have not seen each other for ten years. They are trying their best to contain their emotional reactions towards each other. The feelings are only delivered through the looks, but we can feel the tension in the silence. Yuwen is still a loyal wife to Liyan and is committed to looking after his life. Liyan holds very fond feelings towards his wife when he is relaxed in a situation like this. Dai Xiu is fond of Zhichen and wants his attention. Liyan is pleased to see his old friend Zhichen and shares the same excitement as Dai Xiu who considers Zhichen's arrival as bringing life and happiness to the house. Four people with four very different mental and emotional perspectives are presented here. At the end of the scene, Yuwen starts to prepare the bed. Implicitly she is secretly starting to prepare and sort out her own heart and emotions with her back turned towards the camera.

This is one of the many examples of the use of long/medium shots in the film. The use of long/medium shots creates a picture that is not emotionally involved. But the use of the long shot also engages the audience more because it does not provide any indication or direction. It establishes an experience of passive observation that requires a lot more involvement from the audience to engage with the film.

The use of close-up shots in *Springtime in a Small Town* is very rare. Close-up shots are used to emphasise the intensity of emotions being felt by the characters on screen. This change in the balance of the picture could imply the intrusion of something- the uncertainty of life. One example is the use of close-up shots when Yuwen goes to see Zhichen during the first night after he arrives. The shot is framed from behind a bush, reinforcing a sense of secrecy surrounding the meeting. We see a close-up of Yuwen's feet which move slowly and with hesitation. This reflects Yuwen's inner struggle over whether her actions are justifiable. Her feet stop and start moving forward again. A crane shot shows the full back view of Yuwen. A second close-up shot is used at the same night-time scene, Yuwen insists on getting a blanket and a bed sheet for Zhichen while she is in his room. When Yuwen comes back to his room, we see through the bush again a close-up shot of Yuwen's feet. This time they move very fast and it feels like Yuwen wants to put two steps into one. It is followed by a crane shot and shows the happy face of Yuwen when she closes Zhichen's door from inside.

There is a third close-up shot during the scene of the night of Dai Xiu's birthday. Yuwen is a little drunk. She dresses up and goes to see Zhichen. This time we again see her feet through the same frame set behind the bush. The feet move slowly but firmly. A crane shot again after this shot shows her turning around to see whether anyone is about. The look on her face matches the inner state of her mind transmitted through the movement of her feet. The minimal use of close-up shots among the consistent use of long/medium shots is selectively deployed by the director. The close-ups imply the burst of emotions. In these three successive scenes, the close-ups centralise Yuwen's shifting inner thoughts. This is in contrast with later when she lets go of her relationship with Zhichen due to her commitment to her family, emphasising the sacrifice that she has to make towards the sentimental. The use of the crane shot emphasises a sense of overarching power as if someone is watching everything that

occurs in the scene without missing a single flick of movement or expression. Set among the static and non-moving shots, a revealing shot like this creates more tension along with the close-ups. This draws attention to Yuwen's dilemma about the relationship, with the close-ups emphasising her close emotional attachment to Zhichen. These shots engage the audience, allowing them to become more emotionally involved in terms of empathetically appreciating the relationships among the characters.

These selective variations of cinematic technique create more impact on the scene because of the rareness of their use. They also create surprise. In a world of slowness and quietness, any movement calls attention and unexpected effect. Fei Mu does not use the effects that are so customarily used in films to express the emotional shifts and turns and are widely accepted and anticipated by the audience. In a film that is thematised as sentimental and affects delivery, there might be a lot of emotional conflicts and clashes of characters to convey and emphasise the sustaining quality of the theme. Fei Mu does not go down this path. Although *Springtime in a Small Town* touches on a traditional topic of the Chinese sentimental and family sacrifice, it is not a direct and straightforward topic to discuss. Fei Mu wants to create a world of smoothness to express that the sentimental, the ideal of family, is fully endorsed by the story in a conventional way. However, he also wants to create tension and awkwardness along with the smoothness to emphasise the sacrifice or hidden desire under the conventional ideal, in order to make the ideal even more powerful and more realistic.

Besides the setting, the tempo, and the shot, the props of the film, although not many, are well chosen and designed to contribute to the meaning of the film. Zhichen is given two presents respectively after he arrives at Dai's family. The first one is an orchid given by Yuwen which is delivered by Lao Huang. The second gift is a Bonsai made by Dai Xiu. The

presents symbolise the only two female characters in the film. The orchid symbolises beautiful loneliness. Confucius comments that 'the orchid is born in a quiet glen, and always shows her beauty even when no one is watching. Therefore, a real gentleman who practices his morals and conducts should not change his proprieties because of poverty.'[17] Therefore, it becomes the symbol of Yuwen and fits well with traditional Chinese aesthetics of the ideal image of woman as refined, determined and elegant. Meanwhile the Bonsai presents a life force that is young and full of vitality. However, it only grows in a small pot so it cannot grow into a large tree symbolising that their relationship does not have the potential to develop. It implies that Dai Xiu has no place in Zhichen's heart as a lover no matter how fond she is of him.

Doors and windows have meanings in the film as well, especially the opening and closing of them. At the beginning of the film, Dai Xiu appears for the first time after she opens her door. Then follows a series of actions of opening doors and windows. This is a metaphor that Dai Xiu is a symbol of youth and life and full of hope. She is open to life and accepts the outside world. After she comes back home from the city wall with Zhichen, she closes her curtain implying that she has started acknowledging her feelings for Zhichen and she wants to hide her secret by creating a private space from the outside world.

Liyan and Yuwen have been sleeping in their own bedrooms for three years. The fronts of the rooms are facing each other and there are only two doors in between. However, the doors create an unreachable gap between the two of them. The doors seem to become symbols of doors to hearts as well. Before Liyan decides to take his own life at the end of the film, he enters Yuwen's room for the first time in three years, which symbolises his desire to gain access to Yuwen's heart and get closer to her. However, a cough disrupts his effort by

reminding him of his illness. He returns to his room. Early on in the film, when he sits in his deckchair, he faces Yuwen's room. When Lao Huang asks him whether he wants the door to be closed or not, he hesitates between answering yes or no. He is uncertain whether he wants to open his heart to Yuwen. Eventually he asks Lao Huang to close the door to her room. This infers that he is losing his confidence and that without his initiative the gap between them shall forever exist.

Zhichen's door is a door of desire and restriction. He opens the door to Yuwen and sometimes keeps her in for a while. On the night of Dai Xiu's birthday Yuwen squeezes into his room through his door and Zhichen rushes out and locks her in. Yuwen breaks the window on the door to open it. She breaks not only the window, but also symbolically breaks with her desire for Zhichen. In the final scene of the film Yuwen and Liyan appear together on the city wall. This mirrors the opening scene of the film except that this time they are both present looking forward into the distance with their backs to us. At the beginning of the film Yuwen appears there alone. A circular form in film almost invariably results in a full, final, and completed feeling, a sense of closure. Life has revolved, and we are back where we started but with a difference. We are witness to changing relationships over time and in particular the relationship between Yuwen and Liyan after the impact of an intruder Zhichen, This is the purpose of the film which defines the audience's experience- the power of the sentimental has sustained the family relations and borne with it a sense of hope and future.

All these symbolisations go hand in hand with the slow tempo, restricted setting, and minimal use of variable shot movement. Sometimes they function to introduce the personalities of the characters. Most of time, they add richness in the expression of the main theme of the film- an ideal that requires sacrifice and restraint.

Fei Mu's film has received praise years after its production in part because of the theme that is articulated in *Springtime in a Small Town* during the severe civil war era. It is a film that transcends the devastation of its time to comment on the wholeness, belief, and protection in general. The film explores issues of devotion and fidelity, often as an assumed if unnamed ideal; these values express reverence, love, gratitude, the will to obey or to serve; they imply a ritual. It is nothing lofty, more an insight into a perpetual and daily element of human life. Fei Mu's directing achieves this transcendence from acts based in the mundane- for instance buying vegetables in the morning, stewing Chinese medicine for the sick husband, walking along the ruined city wall- undisturbed by social upheavals, undismayed by financial misfortunes- where a sense of the daily-ness of life is perhaps most readily to be discovered. It is precisely this day-to-day existence that Fei Mu so realistically and hence so movingly captures as the restrained ideal of the kinship as the sentimental.

Tian Zhuangzhuang: the Sentimental as an Eternal Topic in Chinese Cinema

The three main characters in both films have very symbolically meaningful names. Li within Liyan means propriety; yan means speaking. Therefore the name can be understood in Chinese as 'speaking for propriety,' which underscores that his figure represents Chinese tradition. In the film, he wears an old long suit and reads old books that are still thread-bounded. He has been sick for the last six years and feels pessimistic about the future (at the beginning of Fei Mu's film, he tells Lao Huang that his health is too poor to be cured just like his ruined house which is too worn-out to be rebuilt). All these elements reflect the declination of the vitality of Chinese culture and tradition in China. Meanwhile he is very understanding about the relationship between Zhichen and his wife Yuwen and willing to sacrifice his life to complete Yuwen's happiness.

On the contrary, Zhichen literally stands for ambition and passion. He wears a modern suit and waistcoat. He travels a lot. His experience, his spirit and his career in the last ten years, all match the meaning of his name. He brings vitality into the house which affects everyone within it. However, his passion is not uncontrolled. It is regulated by Zhi which also means ideal. His name therefore mixes passion with self-restraint and reservation. Therefore the two male characters embody different personalities, but both carry representations of director Fei Mu's understanding of Chinese tradition and culture.

Yuwen literally means the texture of jade. Jade in Chinese culture always personifies something beautiful, wise, sublime, clean and brave. 'The texture of jade is considered to be the standard for the value of jade. There is a saying that "no texture makes no jade".'[18] The texture of jade is formed through years of pressing and moving by external forces. Therefore, the name given to Yuwen marks her out as a figure of vitality and passion, but also as representing beauty and the sublime. Her character is destined to perform the interpretation of the Chinese sentimental struggle- just as jade stands out after years of development underneath the earth, the value of the sentimental shines after numerous tests. The end of Fei Mu's film can be seen as an invitation to a new film. At the end of the film, Liyan (propriety) is still alive after being saved by Zhichen, and Yuwen (beauty) stays, while Zhichen (passion) leaves. What is going to happen when passion (Zhichen) returns as indicated by the conversation between Dai Xiu and Zhichen on their way to the station? Tian Zhuangzhuang seems to receive the question and find the answer in his own version of the film which responds to Fei Mu's film cinematically.

Tian's remake of *Springtime in a Small Town* retains the major elements of Fei Mu's original film- the five main characters; the same story line; even the dialogue is hardly changed. The

film changes from black and white to colour, and some minor changes occur in Tian's version to match contemporary understanding of the era. For example, in Tian's version a new scene is added in which Zhichen teaches Dai Xiu's classmates to dance at her school. Therefore, more people appear in the remake along with the five main characters, in contrast to the old version in which only these five people occupy the s5creen. However, the inserted scene does not change the meaning of the film except to tighten up the plot. In Fei Mu's version, the dance-teaching scene takes place on the city wall and only involves Zhichen and Dai Xiu. In Tian's version, it changes to Zhichen teaching at Dai Xiu's school with her friends in scene. The change takes the focus off the relationship between Zhichen and Dai Xiu from the old version. This therefore acts to focus attention and tension concretely on the relationship between Zhichen and Yuwen.

For Tian, directing the remake is a form of affirmation of the message delivered in the old version of the film. It is an announcement of an agreed-upon standard for traditional values of the family ideal. In the following part, I will discuss the major changes introduced in the remake of *Springtime in a Small Town* in order to discuss how the new version takes the sentimental further and makes it an eternal topic cinematically.

One of the major changes in Tian's remake of *Springtime in a Small Town* is the deletion of Yuwen's voice-over, which is one of the major features in Fei Mu's version. The voice-over punctuates the slowness of the long shots and slow tempo of the original version. It also provides a feeling of omniscient knowledge to Yuwen and a sense of introspection. For example, before Zhichen arrives, Yuwen's voice explains that "I didn't know he would come. He came by train. He enters into the city." The voice-over also provides insight into Yuwen's inner state. It is a dreamlike conversation with herself, a private monologue borne out of the

suppression and anxiety in her external life. Significantly, there is no voice-over during the period after Zhichen arrives, from the first night that Yuwen goes to see him until the night of Dai Xiu's birthday when she visits him for the last time, but is refused entry by Zhichen. After that, the voice-over resumes- Yuwen starts talking to herself again. The voice-over thus emphasises the subjective view of the film from Yuwen's point of view. The voice-over draws a distinction between Yuwen's inner-state of loneliness before Zhichen's appearance and her feeling of liberation following his arrival. This also therefore emphasises the sacrifice Yuwen makes later on in the film and in turn lays focus on the element of self-sacrifice of the Chinese sentimental.

In Tian's 2002 film there is no voice-over for Yuwen. We therefore experience the feelings of all the characters as events unfold. The use of voice-over normally creates a sense of retrospection, of retelling events from memory. Through the absence of the voice-over, the remake of *Springtime in a Small Town* emphasises the present tense. Although it is still set in the past it emphasises a present historic tense- an eternal lasting of a historical moment. It is in that present moment that what we might have forgotten or neglected, such as the importance of the sentimental and the value of self-sacrifice, is preserved. This present moment is immortalised. It is like in *Shadow Magic*, the affective feelings are preserved in the present visibility. Without the voice-over, the film is able to present an objective view rather than giving preference to Yuwen's subjective perspective. Tian deliberately perpetuates the theme by removing the voice-over. In so doing this indicates an ongoing topic and he uses the objective view to objectivise the message that was delivered in the original film about the sentimental and the sacrifice made towards the social stricture.

Another difference is the use of straight-cuts rather than fade-ins and fade-outs. In Fei Mu's film, he uses mainly fade-ins and fade-outs for cinematic punctuation. The fades seem to give emphasis to a scene and allow the scenes to run for longer. Therefore, the scene must express something important for the theme of the film. This technique also gives more of a sense of involvement of the director, so the scene becomes more subjective in terms of gathering and attracting the audience's attention to certain scenes and certain messages through the use of cinematic devices. Yasujiro Ozu comments on the use of fade-ins and fade-outs to emphasise that 'that was an important scene, that is something to remember.'[19] However, later on Ozu gives up the fade-ins and fade-outs as he comments that the fades are 'not part of cinematic grammar' and 'only attributes of the camera.'[20]

In Tian's version the cinematic punctuation is delivered through straight cuts. This helps Tian to create a distinctive look. It shows an attitude towards what is happening on the screen. It shows no hesitation for making a direct comment, rather than avoiding it. When Donald Richie comments on Ozu's use of straight cuts, he says:

> As scene follows scene we are given no hint of how we are to react. When the simple cut is the only punctuation, it becomes no punctuation at all in the usual sense of signaling how we are to read, how we are to react. Consequently our ideas and emotions are free, and we have little sensation of a directing intelligence. It is almost as if the camera had made the film and not the director. In the circumstances we must supply the emotional direction ourselves, and doing so, I believe, heightens our emotional involvement, brings us closer than we can be (this applies in real life, too) when our reactions have been foreseen and foreordained. One result is that we find similarities between ourselves and the people we are watching. We think more, but it does not follow that we feel less.[21]

In comparison to Fei Mu, Tian probably avoids the implication of comment and judgement, and so the 2002 version of the film feels a bit more distant. But because of this Tian's film also requires greater involvement and engagement of the audience in comparison with the original film- the audience has to devote so much more to be able to be part of the film and to

understand it. We have to get more affectively involved during the film, and hence enhancing our personal cinematic experience of the film.

Although the camera position is still immobile and mainly utilises the long/medium shots in similar fashion with the old version, there are also more tracking shots. The tracking shot is supposed to create smoothness of movements and progression, to display the occurrences in a more compact rhythm and to hide what is happening outside the frame. However, when Tian uses this technique it has unconventional implications. The tracking shots in the film do not simply track the character. The camera might follow a character a little bit and stop at a long/medium shot, and the character then either goes out of the frame or comes closer to the camera. Therefore, the tracking shots in Tian's film do not track. This tracking shot becomes meaningful as a means of pulling away or approaching the subject, and creates a feeling of simultaneity- the scene occurs at the time of viewing. While the tracking shot stops where it should not stop conventionally, it emphasises the distance between the audience and the characters. This is not a distance that prevents the audience from being able to reach an understanding of the film- because the tracking shot does mean an increase of emotional involvement conventionally. Rather, it is the distance that Tian wants to create to deliver his message. The director has something to comment in the scene, but he leaves it to the audience to ponder that message. Therefore, it produces a feeling of objectivity.

When Tian Zhuangzhuang remade *Springtime in a Small Town* he had the temporal distance from the era of the film's setting that Fei Mu of course did not have. This is perhaps one of the reasons that allows Tian to approach the film from an objective perspective.[22] It is exactly this sense of objectivity that Tian's version achieves. The original film establishes the topic of the Chinese sentimental. Tian's film affirms this message and popularises and

universalises it through the techniques he incorporates in remaking the film. The switch from a subjective to an objective interpretation of the story makes it feel more directly a part of our life rather than being someone else's story. Compared to Fei Mu's film, Tian's camera reaches out a little further. There is no other space in Fei's film except a ruined city wall, several old rooms in a ruined courtyard, and the ruined walls around the house. Tian's version gives broader glimpses of the railway, the shops, and the young students who like Dai Xiu are full of energy. If we look further over the city wall, we can even see green fields in the distance. These little touches in Tian's version give the feeling of being more objective and open to the outside rather than being restricted inside the house and on the city wall where only the subjective eyes can reach.

In the final scene in Tian's film, the shot stops with the old city wall in the frame. The shot is still, no movement. We are left dangling. There seems no formal and clear conclusion. It is very different from Fei Mu's conclusion which is obvious and directional. The wall gives us a feeling of infinity. We feel that the film, like life, is like a wall- you do not know from the angle whether the shot is taken from outside the city or inside the city. We feel the pain of separating but also a sense of fullness- life on either side of the wall goes on without the other person. The scene is organised for us to see the present and the length of the scene also makes us think about the future without dwelling on the past. This old city wall provides a feeling that something ineffable, something unspoken, is being suggested- something to do with loss, with the transience of life, with our place here inside or outside the city wall.

This scene leaves the meaning of the film open for interpretation. We do not have a clear and direct intimation of what the director wants to say and we cannot unequivocally say what it means. This wall is static in the scene. So it becomes a form that can accept the deep and

contradictory emotions and transform them into a feeling of something unified, solid, permanent and transcendent. The concentration on the city wall also creates a feeling of balance. The composition of the picture is still and balanced, although hardly beautiful. But it presents a sense of order that becomes the metaphor for the remaining world, for the characters within the film, and the audience as well.

The sentimental itself cannot constitute a force. It always has a decadent tendency when seen and felt. It could be interpreted as holding onto the obsolete and not being progressive in terms of following the steps and tides of the revolutionary era in which Fei Mu's original film is set. That is why some articles have argued that Fei Mu's film can be interpreted as drawing contrasts between the East and the West and that it praises the positivity of Western influence. In Fei Mu's film, Zhichen can be regarded as symbolising Western influence due to his worldly experience. '[…] the old Chinese cultural radiance does not exist any longer. The inner rigidity and closedness of the old system resulted in the severe exhaustion of vitality. The film reveals the degeneration and decay of the culture. This is no doubt the direct result of destructive attacks on traditional Chinese culture from Western culture.'[23] Comments like this first of all do injustice to the beauty and balance of the film by Fei Mu. It also puts two different cultures in direct opposition. Yet there is no implication of this within the film itself which instead talks to the struggle between the flesh and soul, between passion and morality, and between indulgence and restraint. The victor is the soul, morality and restraint.

Tian Zhuangzhuang remakes the film, not as a critical cultural commentary, but out of a sense of admiration of and reflection on Chinese culture and civilisation. Tian's film directs it into creative channels that allows a fresh energy to be created within the sentimental. The film makes the sentimental anew and perpetuates it. The film opens with the sound of a train

which brings Zhichen to the family, and it ends with Zhichen leaving and again, the sound of a train. The train was still a vehicle of potential and change at the time when the film is set. The sound of a train in the distance, the idea of all those people being carried away to begin life anew elsewhere, the sense of longing and nostalgia all imply the perpetuation of something emotionally potent for the Chinese who accept it as an integral part of life and of vitality and readily make sacrifices to sustain the ideal of the sentimental.

[1] Luo Ka, who is a senior researcher in film culture in Hong Kong, once recalled the discovery process of film *Springtime in a Small Town* in an interview. The film was shown publicly in Hong Kong in 1949. Due to a lack of response and box office return, the film received little attention from the 1950s to the 1970s. In 1978 the Hong Kong Film Culture Centre organised the first "Retrospective Exhibition of Chinese Film." More than 20 films were exhibited, including *A Spring River Flows East* (1947), *Angels on the Road* (1937), and *The Cloud and Moon* (1947). Although *Springtime in a Small Town* was not shown at the time, the exhibition provided possibilities for the up-coming activities. In 1981, the Hong Kong Film Culture Centre was organising the second "Retrospective Exhibition of Chinese Film," while at the same time, the British Film Institute and British National Cinema were organising a cultural exchange activity with the Chinese Film Archive. There were more than 30 Chinese films with English subtitles shown in London. In 1983, China took more than 100 films to Torino, Italy for a bigger scale Chinese film exhibition. It was at that exhibition that many foreign participants discovered *Springtime in a Small Town*, and were amazed by its artistic achievement in the 1940s. According to Luo Ka, a special theme dedicated to Fei Mu was arranged at the Hong Kong International Film Festival in 1985. From the 1980s to the 1990s, more and more Hong Kong researchers paid greater attention to Fei Mu. At the same time, more mainland scholars started to discover this neglected and forgotten director. An enthusiast of the film *Springtime in a Small Town* collects all the comments that have been released and publishes them in a public forum online. http://www.tianya.cn/publicforum/Content/books/1/74427.shtml.

[2] Yan Caidie, "Shuying hengxie, anxiang fudong: jiedu Fei Mu *Xiao cheng zhi chun* de wenhua yiyi" (Sparse Shadows Cross and Hidden Fragrance Drifts- Interpreting the Cultural Significance in *Springtime in a Small Town* by Fei Mu), in *Shijie huawen wenxue luntan* 3 (2005), 61.

[3] *Ibid*., 61.

[4] *Ibid*., 60.

[5] Feng Yiping and Feng Hao, "Yizhong shouwang, liangzhong yixiang: xin jiu *Xiao cheng zhi chun* bijiao yanjiu" (A Contrast of Two Editions of *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Baoshan shizhuan xuebao* 4 Vol.26 (2007), 82.

[6] Chen Shan, "Yongyuan de *Xiao cheng zhi chun*" (Forever *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Beijing dianying xueyuan xuebao* 1 (2002), 50.

[7] Feng Yiping and Feng Hao, "Yizhong shouwang, liangzhong yixiang: xin jiu *Xiaocheng zhi chun* bijiao yanjiu," 83.

[8] This is from the CCTV programme *Renwu (People)*. http://www.cctv.com/lm/284/55/46873.html

[9] Bao Yan, "Jianshou yu misan: dazhong wenhua shiyu zhong *Xiao cheng zhi chun* de shenfen shuxie yu rentong weiji" (Persistence and Dispersion: Identity Definition and Crisis of *Springtime in a Small Town* in the Mass Culture Context), in *Xinan jiaotong daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 6 (2005), 2.

[10] Chen Shan, "Yongyuan de *Xiaocheng zhi chun*," 51.

[11] *Ibid*., 51.

[12] Feng Yiping and Feng Hao, "Yizhong shouwang, liangzhong yixiang: xin jiu *Xiaocheng zhi chun* bijiao yanjiu," 82.

[13] Ling He, "Ping *Ren sheng*" (Comment on *The Life*), in *Shen bao (dianying zhuanlan)*, 4th February, 1934.

[14] Chen Shan, "Yongyuan de *Xiaocheng zhi chun*," 51.

[15] Jia Zhangke, *Jia xiang:Jia Zhangke dianying biji (1996-2008)* (*Jia Xiang: the Film Notes of Jia Zhangke (1996-2008)*). Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2009, 137-138.

[16] Li Yang and Liu Lishi, "Cong *Xiao cheng zhi chun* kan Fei Mu de daoyan fengge" (The Directing Style of Fei Mu from *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Dongfang yishu* 6 (2005), 20.

[17] Zeng Qi, "Jiedu *Xiao cheng zhi chun* de xiangzheng he yinyu (Interpretations of the Symbols and Metaphors in *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Dianying pingjie* 7 (2007), 38. The original message from Confucius is 'Zhilan sheng yu you gu, bu yi wu ren er bu fang; junzi xiu dao li de, bu wei qiongkun er gai jie.'

[18] *Ibid*., 38.

[19] Donald Richie, *Ozu*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1977, 107.

[20] *Ibid*., 105.

[21] *Ibid*., 108-109.

[22] Zhang Lina, "Zhongshi de beipan: xinban *Xiao cheng zhi chun* de wenhua chuancheng yu shanbian" (A Faithful Rebellion: the Cultural Inheritance and Evolution of the New Version of *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Dangdai dianying* 1 (2006), 89.

[23] Yan Caidie, "Shuying hengxie, anxiang fudong: jiedu Fei Mu *Xiao cheng zhi chun* de wenhua yiyi," 62.

CHAPTER 3

The Road Home: Perpetuation of the Sentimental

Given that the sentimental is frequently articulated in Chinese cinema, it is often expressed through the representation of ordinary characters and day-to-day situations. It is universal. There is no class difference, no materialistic showing off, no better or worse people in relation to the sentimental. In other words, the sentimental is at the core of all relationships in Chinese culture. We have examined some of the efforts that have been made in Chinese cinema to perpetuate the topic. This chapter will turn inwards and examine how the sentimental is capable of perpetuating itself in a Chinese context, by which I mean that the sentimental as a deep-rooted affective mode is itself enduring (and not just that the films make it so). I will explore how the sentimental shows this nature through the film spectacle with a reading of Zhang Yang's film *Getting Home* (*Luo ye gui gen*, 2007).

Zhang Yang's film *Getting Home* is based on a real story which was originally published in the newspaper *Southern Weekend*.[1] In the original story, a migrant worker carries the dead body of his friend who dies of an undisclosed illness at work back to their hometown for burial due to local tradition and his promise to take him home before his death. In the original report, the carrying of a dead body over a thousand miles was just a prelude or background. The focus of the article was on the living condition of two ordinary migrant workers. By publishing this extraordinary and incredible story it was hoped that *Southern Weekend's* readership would be encouraged to think upon the social background and human reality against which the story occurs. Migrant workers have been the mainstay of the construction workforce and have provided an almost limitless supply of the cheap labour that has so contributed to the rapid development of China and its infrastructure in recent years. This

report was extremely important in raising awareness levels about their living conditions and the need to protect their basic needs. The social controversy after its publication made it an even more shocking story in the face of the social reality.[2] It disclosed a shocking reality highlighting the contrast between the invisible existence endured by the migrant workers in contrast to the visible work that they perform in developing the city.

However, director Zhang Yang transforms the story in his film. The original storyline is kept, but the film changes the tone- moving away from condemnations of the alienating human relationships within an increasingly materialistic society, and frames all the bitter and sad events in the original story with a positive-looking perspective. Zhang thereby transforms the story into a modern urban comedy. However, it is exactly because of this change of tone in the film from the original story that our attention is also shifted from a social criticism to a bigger picture, a bigger picture that allows us to see the mechanism of the sentimental in Chinese culture. The film explores what fuels the behaviour of the migrant worker who is motivated to carry his friend's dead body back to his hometown, and it is also able to show what the critical newspaper article failed to reveal that the sentimental itself sustains the tough journey but also sustains itself in the cultural articulation. Furthermore, the film *Getting Home*, which has transformed these messages into visual manifestations, provides the possibility to examine the theme of the sentimental and how the sentimental perpetuates itself in the Chinese cultural context.

The Chinese title of the film is *Luo ye gui gen*, which literally means "fallen leaves go back to the roots." This idiom is often used in the Chinese context when describing people who live away from their birthplace but who will eventually return to their hometown. Traditionally, there is a ritual in China to take the dead back to their hometown for burial. In

so doing they will not become lonely and homeless ghosts in the next life from losing the roots to come back to life in the following life.

In the film *Getting Home*, the film plot takes on this traditional ritual which is still a popular convention in some parts of rural China. In the film, Lao Zhao and Lao Liu are both migrant workers from rural areas and both work at the same construction site in Shenzhen in southern China. Lao Liu dies of alcohol abuse. Lao Zhao decides to take his body back to where he is from so that Lao Liu will be able to eventually settle down and gain peace after death. Lao Zhao disguises Lao Liu as a drunk companion and takes him on the coach. He comes across all different kinds of people coming from different walks of life: thieves, drivers, a lonely old man, a hair salon girl, etc. However, when he gets to Lao Liu's home, he finds that the house is submerged under water due to the flooding for the Three Gorges project. In all his disappointment Lao Zhao restarts his journey searching for Lao Liu's home.

Lao Zhao undergoes all sorts of ups and downs during his journey to transfer the dead body back home. However, the film does not depict the story as a tragedy as it was in reality and as recounted by the newspaper article. Rather, the film creates a comedy projecting humorous dialogues and acts that attempts to make you cry at the same time as you want to laugh. The choice of the most famous stage comedian in China Zhao Benshan as the main protagonist Lao Zhao underscores the fundamental tone of the film. The film was produced and released for the season of celebration of the Chinese New Year (this genre of film is called *He sui pian*) in January 2007. It contributed to the atmosphere of celebration as all films typically do that are released in that period.

The change of tone for the film is made possible because the focus of the story shifts to the journey back home rather than taking the story as an entry point for criticism of troubling and indifferent social realities as the original reports did. It is the home that this journey leads to and it is home that the film looks for and celebrates. What exactly does the film look for and celebrate in a journey leading home? Chapter 2 has explored how Chinese cinema universalises and popularises the sentimental which is centred around the home, therefore, making it an enduring topic on Chinese screen. This chapter will look at the inner mechanism and discuss how the sentimental perpetuates itself in Chinese culture in relation to death and the road home through a reading of the film *Getting Home*.

Death and Homecoming

In the film the story starts with the death of Lao Liu. It thus entails a journey back home as according to Chinese tradition the dead can only settle once transferred back to their home place. This indicates an intimate link between death and home-coming in Chinese culture beyond the superficially conventional ritual. As a country that has been traditionally influenced by Buddhism, people in China generally share a common and firm belief in transmigration (*Lunhui*). Although in contemporary China it is less common to see people actually practicing Buddhism, the basic ideas have become part of the tradition and the cultural inheritance that has embedded in daily life.

Transmigration refers to the continual, endless cycle of death and rebirth which governs the existence of all human beings. Transmigration is believed to be the waiting circle for the eternal nirvana. Nirvana is a fundamental concept in Buddhism. '[I]t is widely understood to refer to the ideal calmness of mind attained by Gautama Buddha, a state that the Buddha perfected in death, and that all human beings have the potential to attain even during life.'[3]

Another concept that should be introduced here is emancipation. Emancipation from transmigration is commonly accepted as the accomplishment of complete death. Thus 'nirvana is the state of emancipation from transmigration towards which we should strive, pursuing enlightenment.'[4] Transmigration seems to represent a system of life and death as an agonising pattern of alternation. The pain of transmigration is that of being incapable of dying completely in an endless circle. Therefore, it can be understood that during the endless circle of death and rebirth, one of the deaths would lead to emancipation which is the ultimate joy of nirvana- a state of being eternal and joy in the final death. Death is the only way to reach the state of emancipation. Chapter 1 has explored an understanding of homecoming as the desire for intra-uterine living where the eternal longing leads to. So emancipation can be equated to intra-uterine living in terms of desiring a state of joy. *Death thus can be understood as the extreme form of homecoming*, returning to the pure state of being without constraints or interference from outside, a state of total freedom. That is why in the film *Getting Home*, the dead body has to be transferred back home. As well as ascribing to Chinese tradition, this also symbolically implies that homecoming can achieve the final death and attainment of the state of emancipation in terms of Chinese tradition and Buddhist belief- to die completely.

However, Lao Liu is already dead. What then does it mean exactly to die completely? How does it relate to the sentimental and imaginations of home? Regardless of whether or not one accepts the concept of transmigration literally as endless death and rebirth, transmigration can be understood to include the idea that 'one's life cannot be reduced to one's somatic life, and specifically, that by dying somatically, one does not necessarily accomplish one's complete extinction.'[5] In other words, transmigration entails the notion that there is another death in addition to somatic death. One cannot fully die or settle in this context until one accomplishes

this other death. Death (the extreme form of homecoming) is the way to achieve this other death. In the film, the homecoming happens between the two deaths- Lao Liu first dies at the construction site. Lao Zhao takes him back home to complete his eventual death. In Jaques Lacan's terms, 'between two deaths,' as Slavoj Žižek explains, is a realm of 'erasure of the symbolic network that defines the subject's identity,' a collapse of 'all the links that anchor the subject in its symbolic substance.'[6] In Lacan's seminal text "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious (1960)," Lacan provides his theory of how the subject is constituted. The part that illustrates death and its complete inaccessibility is useful for the purposes of this chapter.[7] I will explore what the Lacanian concept of death means and how it will help us to understand how death relates to the perpetuation of homecoming.

The Lacanian subject is the subject of the unconscious. It is different from the subject of the conscious, which is the ego, and speaks as a subject to bar the desire of the unconscious. Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy summarise that according to Lacan '[t]he subject cannot be conceived as a 'signified', an objectively knowable thing […] for the subject arises in relation to desire which is unknown to him.'[8] This desire is the desire of the unconscious. Lacan characterises desire as 'paradoxical, deviant, erratic, eccentric, even scandalous,'[9] as 'desire of the Other,' necessarily unconscious.[10] Therefore, the subject cannot know his destiny because his existence is denied as the subject presents as a threat to the ego. According to Lacan, the issue of the unconscious is always raised around the question of lack. The lack of being results in the subject having to question an Other, which could be the psychoanalyst, the mother, the society, the country, the friend, etc. to find out the truth of the subject. Lacan famously puts the subject as a barred subject between the conscious and the unconscious. The conscious speaks in a form of knowledge which is accessible. Although the unconscious falls

out of the symbolic order where language belongs, it has its own language. Lacan recognises the language of the unconscious as 'an interrogative voice.'[11] This is the logic of the subject which tries to get through as 'interrupted messages.'[12] However, this is the moment that we might recognise 'the presence of desire, and the subject's truth.'[13] 'Truth is nothing other than that which knowledge can apprehend as knowledge only by setting its ignorance to work.'[14] As Benvenuto and Kennedy have observed, this is 'when all the subject's 'sensible' discourse is suddenly interrupted, and signifier and signified are revealed in their separateness. The subject comes into being at this point, when he experiences a lack of cohesion, a moment of discord (cf. the 'mirror stage'), where his own words and knowledge of himself fade away.'[15] To get this complicated message in short, for Lacan the ego can only exist if it does not know the truth. That is to say that the ego does not exist- it is only an imaginary representation of the subject; the subject is barred to its own existence because it cannot get to the surface as it is forbidden by the conscious. The subject, which is the subject of the unconscious, lacks of being. So it can only obtain truth through asking the Other who is supposed to be absolute but actually has its own lack. So the subject can only speak through desire in its own language where you can observe the presence of the desire. It is like a coin- if you look at one side, the other side is always hidden.[16]

Lacan describes the moment when the subject comes into being as 'there where it was just now, there where is was for a while, between an extinction that is still glowing and a birth that is retarded, 'I' can come into being and disappear from what I say.'[17] Lacan further explains, '[b]eing or non-being, that is how *I* as subject comes on the scene, conjugated with the double aporia of a true survival that is abolished by knowledge of itself, and by a discourse in which it is death that sustains existence.'[18] The being, according to Lacan, is in the unconscious, while the non-being is in the conscious. However, according to Lacan, the

conscious being is a false being (that is why it is *none* being). It is constituted through the mirror stage- the Imaginery Order, and represented through the Symbolic Order- where language, cultural and social symbolism belong. 'In Lacan's view,' Benvenuto and Kennedy summarise, 'language represents that 'margin beyond life' where the being of the individual is only represented. He considered that the subject is always caught up in language's function of representing something inaccessible, the margin beyond life, and the ultimate, inaccessible experience of death.'[19] That is why Lacan states that the death of the non-being actually pushes the being to the front- that is how the subject *I* comes into being.

As Benvenuto and Kennedy interpret, 'Death becomes the origin of the subject's life- not of the imaginary life of the ego for which death merely represents a danger, but of what desire strives after. Death is the 'beyond' of desire, the forbidden, i.e., death is equivalent to enjoyment, jouissance.'[20] 'For Lacan absolute jouissance is impossible or is possible only in death.'[21]Death, for Lacan, belongs to the domain of the Real Order where the truth resides and knowledge fails, cannot be signified and remains inaccessible. The fleshly body is no longer the image of death or representative of death, it is representative of the organic body only. The desire towards death and even final completion of death, however, remain completely unknown to the conscious. However, this drive from the desire towards death that never achieves understanding in the conscious thus assures its continuance. Lacan's death, as for the psychoanalytic death, deals with the invisible part of the death- the desire for death. However, because it is absolutely unknowable, therefore, we can never talk about the real feeling about death. The subject has to ask the Other about death. Because of the split in the subject, and also because of the imperfection of the Other, the death of the subject remains unknown and inaccessible.

If death (the death that leads to emancipation) can be recognised as the extreme form of homecoming in the Chinese cultural context, and if the emancipation (the complete death in Chinese culture) shares a structural homology with Lacanian death, we therefore can use the inner mechanism of Lacanian death to explain Chinese homecoming. Both emancipation and Lacanian death admit an eternalised representational dimension as well as a complete death beyond it- that is where the subject comes into being and where the emancipation is completed. However endless the representational dimension may seem, the subject longs for another dimension of complete death. Because the endless rebirth is itself painful, we long for nirvana. This conception of eternal pain is encountered in Lacan's understanding of life which forbids joy. For Lacan, the pain of existence is that the being is struggling to subjectivity which is unknown to the conscious. In Lacan's point of view death is the only potential to strive for enjoyment, for life (what Lacan calls the jouissance). Because death is led by desire and falls out of the signification chain, so it remains completely unavailable as knowledge. Thus it perpetuates exactly because of its absolute unreacheability. Following this line of thought then, the homecoming event like Lacanian death is a never-ending process that thus perpetuates itself. The following part of this chapter focuses on how *Getting Home* articulates this complex and abstract concept about homecoming and how it perpetuates it in a cinematic setting.

On The Road

As the sentimental implies the theme of homecoming and home-longing, most of the films on the sentimental are set within or around the place of home. *Getting Home* is different from many other Chinese homecoming films as its story is set on the road. Normally films relating to the theme of the sentimental in China have detailed descriptions of inside the house or symbolic descriptions of something that implies being inside. In *Getting Home* the road

functions as the structural framework of the film. The road serves as the metronome of the film and structurally supports the development of the story and gives impetus to plot development. The changing space brings out new stories and new encounters. Being set outside the house also means moving out of confinement, although it also implies rootlessness as well. Leaving the confinement of the house provides all kinds of possibilities because nothing is fixed and no one knows who one will come across next.

It is the road through which Lao Zhao carries Lao Liu's body back to his hometown. The road is where the story happens and that encompasses the background of the film. However, the meaning of the road goes beyond its physical meaning as a passage that connects places and functions as the facilitator for journey. If the film was only based on a limited reading of the road, then it would only be necessary to record the various sceneries along the road as mere background. However, if the road is utilised for its metaphorical capacity, then the connection between time and space, the spatial proceeding and displacement, the accidental meeting and separating all become significant expressions for the characters in the film. The road itself means a journey, a departure, an accidental meeting, freedom, adventure, going home, etc. The road becomes the best place for human encounters symbolically. Once embarked on the road, you enter into a state of forward motion, giving a sense of dynamic devotion on a journey of searching.

The film is set on the road and can be regarded as a typical example of the road movie genre. As many scholars have recognised the inspiration for the road movie genre dates back to as early as the adventure story of Homer's Odyssey. Wendy Everett observes that, '[i]n America, road movies tapped into a potent cultural myth in which notions of the open road and travel reflect a fundamental belief in "the freedom to move upward and outward".'[22] Therefore, 'the

implications of escape through journey that the films articulate is essentially positive.'[23]

Under these terms, the experience on the road is normally depicted as a realisation of utopian dreams. However, in *Getting Home*, although the final target (of getting home) of the journey is positive, the implication from the journey on the road itself is somehow negative because it implies a sense of being homeless which seems to refer to 'the transcendental homelessness of modern life.'[24] The road could lead to anywhere. However, without clear instruction, signposting and appropriate transportation, going anywhere also means going nowhere. The homeless state that the road implies becomes even clearer through the experiences of the protagonists. Lao Zhao and Lao Liu are both migrant workers who have left their homelands and been working in the big cities where they have no home and no sense of belonging. The beginning of the film is also the beginning of their journey. Lao Zhao does not have a clear idea of how he can get Lao Liu back home due to a lack of support and available transport to enable him to carry his friend's dead body. Although they do get help occasionally, they come across many difficulties that interrupt their journey and sometimes almost prevent him from going any further.

In this sense, being on the road itself implies the state of being homeless although the road functions as the possible connection between the departure and the destination. It is ironic when you imagine that the two protagonists are representatives of many other migrant workers who have built the different roads they have been on. These roads take many people home, while leaving them homeless. Lao Zhao faces the possibility that he might not be able to complete his task of taking Lao Liu back to his hometown. Therefore, compared with typical road films, *Getting Home* does not feature a journey of escape from the contemporary environment. The road in the film functions to entrap the characters. This also implies problems of social disaffection and exclusion caused by industrialisation, urbanisation and

unequal distribution of economic wealth. This state of being homeless sets up the tone of the film as what Lacan calls the non-being state of the conscious. It prepares for the debut of the unconscious.

This state of being homeless enables a journey of quest. Everett reminds us that the 'road movie is, of course, a genre which itself is characterized by fluidity and open-endedness, in which the narrative trajectory of the road serves as an extended metaphor of quest and discovery and affords the protagonist various transformative experiences.'[25] Being homeless gives more emphasis on the necessity of this journey of quest and discovery. In the film, the journey is of a quest after death. This motif of the quest becomes more pervasive and clear in the film as the road enables various trajectories of desire, leading the characters into imaginary geographies of the inner and the outer world. The quest and discovery are never external. It is always the projection of an inner quest. Therefore, the road externalises the inner quest. This becomes more engaging with the encounter of different travellers as they are more projective in terms of external implications. What one comes across on the road might be random. However, once the encounters are put into a film narrative, they are designed to carry specific implications contributing to the expression of the film's themes. In *Getting Home*, many of Lao Zhao's encounters on the road serve as the externalisation of his unconscious desires. The road thus becomes a necessary process of dislocation that allows the projection and evaluation of inner quest and discovery, which also means the projection of inner desire.

Perhaps in contrast to many American road movies, *Getting Home* tends to be set on smaller and indirect roads where cars can stop easily and the roads are not very crowded. There are motorways in the film as well, but the story mainly takes place on minor roads. Structurally,

the motorways seem to only function as the in-between connections of different stories. We do not see the typical image in an American road movie of giant panoramic views opening up of the straight and endless road with the horizon in sight with the implications this invokes of optimism and boundless potential. In contrast, in *Getting Home* the roads are normally winding and located within mountain districts. This of course tends to restrict the view ahead.

There are no clear signs on the road in *Getting Home* either. We can only occasionally recognise the rough direction of the road from identifying signs on passing vehicles. A setting like this implies that the film is more concerned with the practicalities of negotiating difference and changes of location and the encounters that ensue. This negotiation raises the question of communication- how communication occurs between the differences and how it should be done in the face of changes. There are sharp bends, landslides, and many crossroads in the film implying the difficulties of communication, some of which even imply the failure of communication. Therefore, these roads imply the possibilities and also impossibilities of outward and inward communication.

At the film's outset, Lao Zhao and Lao Liu are on the coach at the beginning of their journey. Lao Zhao has disguised Lao Liu as a drunk friend. The coach is soon stopped by the roadside by robbers. When Lao Zhao insists on keeping Lao Liu's compensation money from the robber, money that is received from the company boss after his death, the fact that Lao Liu is actually dead is exposed to the other passengers. The ringleader of the gang respects Lao Zhao's loyalty and decides to give the money he steals from that coach to him and let the coach pass. Once the passengers get their own belongings back from Lao Zhao, they abandon the two of them on the roadside. In the following shot, Lao Zhao carries Lao Liu at the bottom of a road with the coach leaving them behind. The road bends around and disappears

behind the mountain. They look small and hopeless in comparison to the huge mountain and the endless road. The communication fails here because no understanding comes to pass- Lao Zhao does not get the empathy from the passengers even though he manages to keep their belongings safe from the robbers.

The conscious (the homeless state on the road), unconscious (the subjective quest after death) and the communication of desire (of the unconscious) all become symbolic in the setting of the road in the film, which establishes the tone of the film as a journey- a quest after death and about homecoming. If we extrapolate this with Lacanian thinking, it is the desire for complete death (jouissance) that initiates the journey. At the same time, being inside the conscious world (a state of being homeless), the desire tries to come to expression (the projection of inner quest). However, the communication cannot be fulfilled as desire will never be obtained as knowledge. This is not about putting different symbols into rigid definition. The grasping of the principal setting of *Getting Home* can help us to understand the further development of the film.

Lao Zhao and Lao Liu are abandoned by the coach at the bottom of the bending road.

The Encounters on the Way

If being homeless can be interpreted as the non-being state of the conscious, then the different encounters on the way imply the way through which the desire works. As previously mentioned, the choice of smaller roads enables the protagonists to maintain close contact with other travellers. Therefore, the road in *Getting Home* also provides a way to ensure proximity with the Other. The roads that are chosen connect major towns but they are always set in mountainous areas. This is for practical reasons- it is unsafe to walk along the motorway and it would be too confusing to traverse the village roads. Therefore, the choice of road enhances the possibility of encounter, but it also determines that the characteristic of the encounters is random.

The road itself indicates the breaking up of the socio-symbolic space- the road implies the lack of appropriate Symbolic inscription. The Other is necessary for the definition of the self and a necessity for the expression of the desire. The contacts with different individuals on the road trigger the inward journey's outward projection. The different individuals expose their respective difficult pasts through contact with Lao Zhao. The road is where the stories happen, and it also externalises the internal state of the characters. The road seems to become the link between the internal and the external. The different encounters on the way symbolise the opportunity to unleash desires. Through contacting different characters, the purpose and meaning of the journey is clarified and reaffirmed. Furthermore, the different encounters, when recognised as how the desire works to form communication and seek ultimate joy, project what Lao Zhao is looking for/having. His inner desires, unspoken throughout the film, are instead projected and externalised in the encounters he experiences on the road. This keeps the concept of desire flowing through the film, sustaining the narrative of continuous search.

One example is when Lao Zhao meets a lorry driver who initially refuses to give them a lift. Lao Zhao's money has been stolen at night and he is concerned that he will be discovered by the police for not reporting that he is carrying a dead body. The lorry driver picks them up and decides to give them a lift out of sympathy. On the way, Lao Zhao's singing provokes a painful memory for the driver who has lost his lover with whom he had been planning to form a family. The driver promises the girl that once he finishes driving for 30,000 kilometres in the lorry to save up money for their future he will return and marry her. The mileage has been completed, but the girl has disappeared for an unknown reason. Lao Zhao encourages the lorry driver to complete another 30,000 kilometres to get her back. They separate as the lorry driver sets off on his own journey of search.

Another example is when Lao Zhao meets a young man who is on his way to Tibet by bicycle. From the altitude between where they meet and Tibet we can tell that the young man still has a long way to go. Lao Zhao pays him a lot of respect for his courage and bravery, to which the young man explains that he just wants to show himself that he can complete something before his 28th birthday because he has always been seen as someone who never has the patience and determination to succeed in anything. These encounters all reveal connections with searching- for true love and inner determination. Although the stories are told by the characters Lao Zhao and Lao Liu meet, they are nonetheless the projection of Lao Zhao's searching desire. We do not find out whether they eventually reach their destinations or not. However, they help to define Lao Zhao's journey at various interfacing points. All these encounters remain nameless which further indicates that they are just projections of desire.

Lao Zhao separates from the lorry driver.

Lao Zhao runs forward as the young man continues on his journey to Tibet.

Although this is a road movie, it does not contain characters who demonstrate the typical characteristics of loss, confusion, dissociation and rebellion that are often associated with middle class protagonists forced onto the road in other road movies. The film starts with Lao Zhao's voluntary self-exile due to his verbal promise to his friend. The film is peopled with characters who consciously or unconsciously try to identify with a state of transition. The film *All the Way* (*Zou dao di*, Shi Yunjiu, 2001) is recognised as the first road movie in China.

In that film the subjects become victims of geographical and cultural displacement. However, *Getting Home* is driven by subjects who actually desire displacement, striving to erase traditional boundaries and borders. This can be understood symbolically as the way that desire works to strive for expression.

These Others at certain degrees articulate Lao Zhao's desire although he does not talk about it when he comes across different individuals. For example, Lao Zhao is starving after his money is stolen and he separates from the lorry driver. He disguises Lao Liu as a scarecrow in a field and joins a funeral team to try to get a meal after the funeral service has finished. Because of his sincere emotional reaction at the funeral, the old man who is supposed to be the one that the funeral is organised for meets Lao Zhao at the meal. We then find out that the old man is not dead. He has no wife and no children, therefore his life is unfulfilled and lonely. He thus decides to organise a funeral before he dies to experience the busy and lively moment. All the people at the funeral are hired by him. Although Lao Zhao's true emotional reaction at the funeral is for Lao Liu and himself rather than for the old man, the old man is touched by a shared loneliness transferred through Lao Zhao's genuine emotional response to the funeral. The old man then becomes the Other that explains the inner state of Lao Zhao. He wants to experience his own funeral because he desires the happiness after death that is symbolically celebrated at the colourful funeral. This sheds light on the purpose of Lao Zhao's journey which is to take Lao Liu's body back home to emancipate him in death according to Chinese culture.

Another example is when Lao Zhao finds out that the money given to Lao Liu from the company boss who they work for in the big city is forged. The desperate Lao Zhao wants to bury Lao Liu because he has no means to take him any further on this tough journey. He digs

a hole and then lies in it to try out the size. Suddenly he experiences the unexpected tranquillity which is supposed to be given only by death. He decides to die there with Lao Liu. He changes his mind not to die at the last minute but falls unconscious as he pulls out of his attempt to commit suicide. He is saved by a beekeeping family. The reason the family raise bees in such an isolated place is that the wife's face is badly burned from an accident at work. The disfigurement frightened the town-folk, which pushed the wife to the edge of suicide. The husband then decided to move to an isolated place to make a living from beekeeping. In this way, the family distance themselves from other people's comments and are able to enjoy a happy life. They are in exile from their own initiative. However, this exile does not mean a homeless state. Rather, the exile provides a true home. This seems to connect with the way that desire works and provides an answer to what desire strives for as true happiness. Lao Zhao and Lao Liu's journey, and all the exile journeys of the people they encounter, rely on dreams of imaginary territories. They become the necessary Other intrinsic to the self-definition. Kerstin Pilz comments that '[t]he journey collapses the binaries of fear and desire, self and other, as fear of the unknown turns into desire and estrangement of the self leads to understanding, meaning and self-fulfilment.'[26] The encounters become the visual manifestation of the desire. They are the preoccupations and also interruptions on the journey.

Lao Zhao (on the right) measures the size of the hole he digs for Lao Liu (on the left).

Lao Zhao and Lao Liu do come across some bad people such as the thief who steals Lao Zhao's money at night at the hotel; the unscrupulous restaurant boss who blackmails a fortune from Lao Zhao's meal and beats him up once he discovers that the money Lao Zhao gives is fake without listening to his explanation or empathising with his situation; the van driver who promises to give them a lift if Lao Zhao helps him to start the van but then leaves them after getting his help. These negative influences emphasise the difficulties in the communication. They are necessary as defining how the desire is communicated. In short, the encounters on the road serve as the Other who is the only way to get to know the desire. They are like the 'interrupted messages' where 'the presence of desire' can be seen.

The Home We Want to Get to

Throughout the film the concept of home is negotiated intentionally either by images or by language. This constant reminder serves to imply the clear objective of the journey, and also to imply that home is an inevitable part of the journey although it is only mentioned at the end. The home serves to assume an experienced and agreed concept where the encounters

and the situations on the journey can be measured. Therefore, home is an important part of the journey. The constant reminder keeps the film structurally tight and also helps to reveal the theme of the film at the end. When Lao Zhao leaves the beekeeping family, the son of the family reads aloud from his text book about the 'motherland.'

"If my motherland was a sea,

I am a little fish, happily swimming inside.

If my motherland was a road,

I am a car, happily driving on it.

If my motherland was a tree,

I am a piece of leaf, happily twirling down to the root!"

Here, the country- the motherland is a symbol for the bigger family. This concept of family becomes clearer when later on in the film Lao Zhao sits on top of a lorry on his way forward on his journey. He changes 'motherland' from the textbook to 'hometown.' It goes as follows:

"If my hometown was a road,

I am a car, happily driving on it.

If my hometown was a tree,

I am a piece of leaf, happily twirling down to the root!"

This change of words is Lao Zhao's spontaneous response to an inner state of happiness. He is on the smooth part of his journey where he gets lifted easily. He is pleased that they are getting closer to Lao Liu's home, which reaffirms the importance of the realisation of the homecoming.

Lao Zhao recites the poem on top of the lorry.

The concept of homecoming is defined and confirmed along the way, especially towards the

end of the journey through seemingly random occasions. Lao Zhao wants to donate his blood

in exchange for a meal. The nurse discovers that he has had hepatitis B in the past and

therefore his blood is infectious and he is not allowed to donate. He is then taken by a

stranger who tells Lao Zhao that he will pay for his blood even though he knows Lao Zhao's

blood is infected. We later on discover that he is an illegal blood collector. Lao Zhao meets a

scavenging lady who sells blood regularly to earn money to pay for her son's education. They

are arrested by the authorities during a police raid at the illegal blood trader's place of

operation. In the shelter house, Lao Zhao and the scavenging lady perform double reed

(*Shuanghuang*), and Lao Zhao sings the pop song *I want to have a home*, which is an

emotional preparation for what is about to happen.[27] After the party, Lao Zhao finds out that

the lady wanders the city to earn money for her son who is studying at university. But her son

is ashamed to acknowledge his scavenging mother in front of his classmates, and they have

therefore not seen each other for two years. She has no home and no sense of belonging in

this strange city. Lao Zhao promises the lady that he will return to her to establish a family with her after taking Lao Liu's body back home. The random encounter and the convenient partnering seem to be the outcome of a modern lifestyle. However, it implies that the forming of the concept of homecoming has become clearer along the journey. We do not know whether Lao Zhao does return to the lady although it implies a new mission and another journey for him. The journey which decides the destination of home has involved a remapping of the spaces and a new understanding of home. In this process, the home becomes a more and more ambiguous concept that is mobile and transient as a result of the economic boom and city migration. However, no matter what happens, the purpose of homecoming as the desire striving for death is firm and clear. Every time the concept is articulated, the homecoming is tested and reaffirmed.

Lao Zhao with the scavenging lady.

Poet Huang Lihai writes in his poem *The Birth Place* that 'If one cannot live anymore/Then go back to the birth place to get life organised.'[28] This poetic and abstract sentence connects the beginning of life to the end of life. The birth place provides the foundation and identity,

and decides the individual's sense of belonging, texture of life and the destination. That is why Huang says 'the birth place contains the memory for all one's life!' It is a site that provides fresh energy to start again and the implication here is that the birth place is where the subject belongs. Home has succeeded the physical meaning and implies respect and awe to unconscious desiring.[29]

The end of the film *Getting Home* implies endless possibilities and journeys yet to come. At the end, Lao Zhao faints on the road and is saved by a policeman. According to the law, Lao Zhao has to agree to cremate Lao Liu's body. Lao Zhao returns to Lao Liu's home with the policeman's help where they find that the Three Gorge project has been proceeding and Lao Liu's home is close to being submerged under the water. Meanwhile all his family has moved to some other place. A note left on the broken front door to the family home written by Lao Liu's son Xiao Jun indicates a family misunderstanding between father and son. However, the message indicates that the misunderstanding has since been reconciled because Xiao Jun apologises to his father and expresses his hope for Lao Liu's return soon. Xiao Jun also informs his father of the house-move. Therefore, we can conclude that the misunderstanding has been reconciled during the process of searching.

The film ends with the policeman saying that "it will take 7 hours to get to Yichang (the place the son says the family has moved to)." This indicates that Lao Zhao will start his journey in search of Lao Liu's home once again. What kind of people they will come across and what kind of events will happen remain unknown. Therefore, the arrival at Lao Liu's home remains a possible imagination. The film keeps the corollary of a sense of homelessness as a consideration of the modern condition. The home is the inspiration. However, the non-location of home at the end implies that home is just a utopian concept. As Pamela Robertson

has commented on road movies, no matter how focused they are on the journey, as a genre it remains nonetheless 'obsessed with home.'[30] At the end of the film Lao Liu's former hometown has become a desolated wasteland, a strange site of debris indicating that his home belongs to the old, the marginalised and the unknown. The unconscious search for home-coming can only be inscribed on another new journey. Homecoming thus becomes an endless journey that never ceases.

Lao Liu's former home is close to being submerged.

To conclude, *Getting Home* begins with and then focuses on the issue of death of Lao Liu throughout the film. The theme of death persistently idealises the notion of origin. The sense of the beyond here and now emphasises what remains inaccessible, certain unreachable places. The road home that is initiated by death thus becomes a journey that goes in circles and goes nowhere. The sentimental shares a similar mechanism with death. This reveals why Chinese cinema has a tendency to perpetuate the topic of homecoming: it is because it never gets to its destination- that is why it immortalises. The road home, symbolically, is to return to utopian possibilities of being united, to be determined to keep together, to share communal

purpose and happiness that far transcends the human bonds. The homecoming thus becomes a transcendental longing that goes beyond human knowledge. It is exactly because of this unreachableness that the sentimental as homecoming perpetuates itself, which also makes it possible for the topic to endure in a visual sense.

This film can be a playful subversion of its American counterpart where the genre is established and defined. The road and the encounters that take place on it and the search for home give us a valuable insight into understanding the Chinese sentimental in a cultural context. Homecoming, the sentimental, actually functions as desire. The road home is the way of exploring this desire. The nowhere state at the end of *Getting Home* implies that desire cannot lead to knowledge. It is exactly because of this nowhere state that the road home never ends. Accordingly, at the end of the film Lao Zhao starts a new journey home again. Therefore, through the film medium this new visibility becomes a way of exploring the perpetuating force of homecoming. On the Chinese screen homecoming is constantly transformed into different forms: from being inside a family, to being inside a country, a group, even the togetherness between two people, they are all divergent forms of the same homecoming desire. The sentimental thus becomes a never-ending process that explores for itself the never-ending transformations. The second part of this study will examine examples of the different forms of homecoming in Chinese cinema.

[1] http://www.sina.com.cn 13/01/2005, *Southern Weekend*.

[2] Xie Jun, "Nongmin gong: xianshen de jingxiang- dianying *Luo ye gui gen* de san zhong jiangshu" (Migrant Worker: the Screen Image of Their Appearance- the Three Narratives in the Film *Getting Home*), in *Yishu pinglun* 3 (2008), 57-61.

[3] Kazushige Shingu and Tetsuo Funaki, "'Between Two Deaths': The intersection of Psychoanalysis and Japanese Buddhism," in *Theory and Psychology*, SAGE Publication 2 vol. 18 (2008), 254.

[4] *Ibid*., 255.

[5] *Ibid*., 256.

[6] Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute*. New York: Verso, 2000, 30.

[7] I owe much gratitude towards Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy's book, *The Works of Jaques Lacan: An Introduction*. Their straightforward and revealing introduction makes the study of Lacan a joy.

[8] Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jaques Lacan: An Introduction*. London: Free Association Books, 1986, 165.

[9] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Slection*. Bristol: Routledge, 1997, 286.

[10] *Ibid*., 312.

[11] *Ibid*., 295.

[12] *Ibid*., 186.

[13] Benvenuto and Kennedy, *The Works of Jaques Lacan*, 169.

[14] Lacan, *Écrits*, 296.

[15] Benvenuto and Kennedy, *The Works of Jaques Lacan*, 169-170.

[16] For Lacan's three orders: the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real Order, see Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jaques Lacan: An Introduction*. London: Free Association Books, 1986, pp. 77-90.

[17] Lacan, *Écrits*, 300.

[18] *Ibid*., 300. Emphasis in original.

[19] Benvenuto and Kennedy, *The Works of Jaques Lacan*, 171.

[20] *Ibid*., 180.

[21] Elisabeth Weber, "Special Topic: Ethics and Literary Study," in *PMLA* 1 vol. 114, Jan. (1999), 102-105.

[22] Wendy Everett, "Lost in Transition? The European Road Movie, or A Genre 'adrifting in the cosmos'," in *Literature/Film Quarterly* 37, 3 (2009), 166.

[23] *Ibid*., 166.

[24] *Ibid*., 166.

[25] *Ibid*., 167.

[26] Kerstin Pilz, "Dreams of Escape: Variations of the Italian Road Movie," in *Romance Studies* 2 Vol. 21, July (2003), 150.

[27] Double reed is a type of comic stage performance normally conducted by two actors. Only one performer is visible and they mime to the audience and their arms are hidden from view. The other performer hides behind the actor in front but their hands and arms are visible to the audience. This actor gestures with his arms, apparently belonging to the front actor, and speaks the words that are mimed by the front performer.

[28] Cao Xia, "*Chushengdi* yu *Yi xiang ren* de jiaocha yuedu zhaji"(Cross Reading Notes on The Birth Place and The Stranger), in *Xingxing* 7, 2008.

[29] *Ibid*.

[30] Wendy Everett, "Lost in Transition?," 170. Pamela Robertson, "Home and Away: Friends of Dorothy on the Road in Oz," in Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, eds., *The Road Movie Book*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997, 271.

CHAPTER 4

Searching for an Alternative Intimacy in Nostalgia: The Sentimental in *In the Heat of the Sun*

During the 1990s China saw unprecedented changes in all areas of social life. The transformation of the economic system from a planned economy to market economy has resulted in many state-owned enterprises being reorganised into incorporated companies, and also encouraged many people to pursue material wealth. This, of course, starkly contrasts with the principles that were evoked especially during the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976). The fast development of the urban space in China has also followed the geographical flow of residents into the bigger cities who hope for more economic opportunities and a better material life. However, new social problems also appear as realities accompanying the economic development, such as a high unemployment rate, social inequality, an increasing divorce rate, etc. The ascetic life style promoted in the "old" days especially during the Cultural Revolution has been replaced by the new cultural value- materialism. This seems to be where people anchor their security and identity. The rapid pace of social change is overwhelming for a country that has long been deprived of the idea of material necessity. It is therefore easy to fall into the tide without anchoring and apprehending their needs beyond the pursuit of materialistic satisfaction.

What has changed with this fast social shift is not just the purpose of life and the shift of social relations, but also a great loss of sense of belonging. Home and family, the solid nuclear unit in Chinese society for thousands of years starts being imagined as a lost treasure in a materially-driven society. The concept of family and homecoming seem to be becoming increasingly obsolete and of rare possibility in a material world that focuses on fast gains. At

the same time, films representing the past that invoke a strong nostalgic tone have become

extremely popular since the late 1980s. The film images appear in rich colours and epic story

lines (for example the Fifth Generation directors); or the films generally depict a great sense

of loss and displacement (for example the Sixth Generation directors).[1] Svetlana Boym

comments that '[l]onging must be what we share as human beings, but that doesn't prevent us

from telling very different stories of belonging and nonbelonging.'[2] The stories vary and

cinematic techniques differ, but the sentimental permeates across the Chinese screen.

Such nostalgic images respond to the epidemic mood of home-longing. The sense of

belonging that is supposed to be provided by home shatters with the collapse of human

relations. It seems that the sense of belonging can only be fulfilled through re-experiencing

the past. Svetlana Boym describes nostalgia as 'the incurable modern condition,' and as 'an

affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a

fragmented world.'[3] The loss of this 'continuity' is exactly what has caused the burst of

nostalgia in China in the 1990s. I will argue in this chapter that the sentimental of home-

longing is manifested through a form of nostalgia. The sentimental becomes a tendency of

constant and active searching for intimacy as an alternative to the one that used to be

provided by the sense of home-belonging, whether with another person, a group, or even with

temporality, in Chinese cinema. And this intimacy-searching tendency can be seen as the

projection of reconnections with a lost self in the hope of reconnecting to a lost sense of

belonging. In order to explore how the sentimental is articulated in the nostalgic films, I will

discuss Jiang Wen's *In the Heat of the Sun* (*Yangguang canlan de rizi*, 1994). My hypothesis

is that it is not the real home that Chinese films in the 1990s have been looking for. Rather it

is the tendency of active searching for an alternative intimacy to replace and compensate for

the shattered concept of home (with both the Cultural Revolution and fast-changing economic reforms) that the films try to illuminate, as well as to try to sustain the longing itself.

Nostalgia as Cultural Resistance and Nostalgic in Tendency

Many scholars, whether within China or overseas, have acknowledged the nostalgic trend of Chinese artistic expression in the 1990s. The trend emerged against the rise of former *Zhiqing* returning to the memory of the Cultural Revolution. *Zhiqing* is a time-specific phrase most commonly applied to the Cultural Revolution period. It literally means "Educated Youth." It refers to the young people who were sent to the countryside to work on the land willingly or by force from the 1950s to the 1970s. Although when the programme commenced it was undertaken for the purpose of resolving unemployment issues in the urban centres, it was expanded onto a national scale during the period of the Cultural Revolution. In the early years of the Cultural Revolution, many young people found themselves rootless due to the termination of the education system for ideological revolutionary reasons. Sending the young people to the countryside was a way to occupy China's urban youth. After the University Entrance Examination (*Gaokao*) was resumed in 1977, many of these young exiles tried to return to their original hometowns. It is estimated that altogether between 120 and 180 million young people were sent to the countryside from the 1950s to the 1970s.[4]

A museum exhibition was opened in Beijing on 25 November 1990. It was titled *Our Spiritual Attachment to the Black Soil- A Retrospective Exhibit about the Educated Youth of Beidahuang*. It featured the life and work of the youths sent away to the far northern part of China. Many exhibitions by former *Zhiqing* responded to this one in various regions of China. At the same time, publications of *Zhiqing* photographs and albums of the old songs that resonate so specifically with the Cultural Revolution period (although they might not

necessarily have been produced for the Cultural Revolution) quickly spread all over China.[5] Some restaurants have even been decorated with a Cultural Revolution theme, such as with reprinted old newspaper articles adorning the walls, a khaki and green colour theme etc.. The waiters and waitresses are dressed as Red Guards taking orders from the guests, although the food content would stand in ironic contrast to what they wear in the attempt to imitate the past period. The Cultural Revolution, a topic that was so painful to discuss for years in China, has returned with different affective attachments. It has even become commodified and fashionable for commercial purposes.

Stripping off the commercial application, this nostalgic trend towards the memory of the Cultural Revolution first of all is what the *Zhiqing* generation initiates to look for a social agency against the official accounts of the Cultural Revolution (although the Cultural Revolution is also critiqued in the *Zhiqing*'s writing). The official Chinese account of the Cultural Revolution ascribes it to being 'a manifestation of the people's struggle against the *Gang of Four* under the leadership of the authentic core of the Communist Party.' The people who went through the Cultural Revolution are defined as being the victims of 'a few villains.'[6] This over-simplification of the period denies agency to those people who endured that chaotic period and it also generalises and politicises the suffering of individual victims. A complex political movement has now been reduced to become a binary division between good and evil. As Tonglin Lu observes, the '[r]ecords of the Cultural Revolution…. tend to elude the crucial aspect of individual participants' agency.'[7] The official accounts of the Cultural Revolution are typically a victimisation narrative. In this way, individual agency is muted in the generalisation and lost in the collective political history. All emotional and physical hardships that were gone through become simplified into a victimisation narrative.

The nostalgic mode has therefore come to embody the efforts of the *Zhiqing* generation to gain continuity with the past by asserting a retrieval of their own agency. The official account of the Cultural Revolution has reduced and to some degree denied the complex and extremely testing nature of the era. This has resulted in the creation of a vacuum in the experience of a whole generation of Chinese who lived through the period of the Cultural Revolution. The nostalgic mode is not to romanticise the past, but to gain vitality through social agency. To some degree, the victimisation narrative of the Cultural Revolution shares similar psychological influences with the many victimising narratives of the Holocaust. Interestingly, the nostalgic trend towards the memory of the Cultural Revolution has coincided with some counter-narrative publications towards mainstream accounts of the Holocaust. Imre Kertész's 1975 novel *Fatelessness* was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 2002.[8] The story is based on the author's semi-autobiographical experience in Nazi concentration camps during the Holocaust period. In 2004, the novel was adapted into film by Lajos Koltai under the title *Fateless*. After surviving the concentration camps, the boy protagonist in the novel Gyuri has a moment of emotional crux towards the camp experience on his way home. 'It was that peculiar hour, I recognized even now, even here- my favourite hour in the camp, and I was seized by a sharp, painful, futile longing for it: nostalgia, homesickness.'[9] The home is not as Gyuri imagines at the camp. His father dies in a Nazi labour camp in Austria; his stepmother is remarried; even his old home has been occupied by another family. At this moment he remembers the 'happiness' of the concentration camp. The novel concludes, 'For even there, next to the chimneys, in the intervals between the torments, there was something that resembled happiness. Everyone asks only about the hardships and the "atrocities," whereas for me perhaps it is that experience which will remain the most memorable. Yes, the next time I am asked, I ought to speak about that, the happiness of the concentration camps. If indeed I am asked. And provided I myself don't forget.'[10]

Countering the Holocaust atrocity account, Kertész's story uses personal fragile experiences to claim an agency for life that is not defined by fate. Kertész described the film *Fateless* as 'beautiful' in an interview at his Berlin home. In his newspaper article *New York Times* journalist Alan Riding commented that '[t]he notion of a "beautiful" Holocaust movie may seem as strange as the homesickness that Mr. Kertész recalled feeling for camp life when he returned to Budapest in July 1945.'[11] Kertész says, 'I took the word [happiness] out of its everyday context and made it seem scandalous…. It was an act of rebellion against the role of victim which society had assigned me. It was a way of assuming responsibility, of defining my own fate.'[12]

The nostalgia towards the Cultural Revolution memory demonstrates this sense of responsibility for assuming social agency, especially in response to the muting of the official historical account. As David J. Davies recognises, '[t]he zhiqing commemorations, however, presented images and narratives and expresses sentiments that were often an uneasy fit with both the physical environment of late twentieth century urban China and mainstream assumptions of the meaning of the Cultural Revolution.'[13] The narratives and depictions are very different from the common vision of the Cultural Revolution which emphasises the national and cultural calamity and widespread suffering. Instead, the new commemorations emphasise 'a historical role of hard work, shared sacrifice and dedication.'[14] Davies discusses in his article the various responses towards the nostalgia for the Cultural Revolution memory at the turn of the new century. According to Davies some comment that nostalgia is used to 'taste again the elegance, peace and tranquility of the past,' and that this shows that 'the Chinese nation is presently moving in a down-to-earth manner from reflecting on the past toward maturity.' Others are uneasy with the suffering that occurred during the Cultural Revolution, and criticise nostalgia 'as the result of a corruption or dilution of a natural

healing process by the market economy.'[15] For example, Feng Jicai criticises the nostalgia of former *Zhiqing* by arguing that '[n]ostalgia is able to take these bad terrible things and see them as beautiful…. If, as in the case of the *Zhiqing*, one does not go through a period of very deep assessment, we arrive at nostalgia.'[16] The criticism that responded to the nostalgic trend tended to place emphasis on the victimisation of the individual experience rather than rising above or transcending emphasis on condemnation of the era. Many were in fact trapped in their condemnation in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution because they were unable to move on and reconcile with the past.

Yet, one thing is shared from both sides of this response to the Cultural Revolution- the nostalgic trend has to be positioned in the corresponding social and cultural background to reveal the motivation of this new fashion. The nostalgia is forging a form of resistance on a personal level against the official collective articulation. However, this resistance cannot be taken as an isolated resistance towards the Communist party. It is a response towards the general social reality. For instance, Guobin Yang emphasises the impact of social changes on the *Zhiqing* generation as these social issues might be more prominently experienced by them because they have experienced more societal and political ups and downs as a generation compared to earlier and later generations of the population in China. However, that being said, the social problems apply to all Chinese as a social reality.[17] Therefore, the nostalgic mode occurs as an epidemic phenomenon across Chinese society rather than being specific to the *Zhiqing* generation. Yang has observed that the nostalgia mode indicates a shift from 'the macropolitics of mass political campaigns' to 'a micropolitics with a social and cultural orientation.'[18] Therefore, when considered against the backdrop of the 1990s and the new social and economic reality, nostalgia towards the Cultural Revolution memory can be seen as just a vehicle to reveal and construct a form of cultural resistance towards these new social

issues. Lei Ouyang Bryant points out that '[n]ostalgia as a site of memory is therefore fuelled by the changes in contemporary society.'[19] The social reality that people faced at this time was the struggle to find their identities and position themselves in a new era characterised by the economic boom and socio-political changes. It became necessary to seek continuity with the sense of belonging from the past in order to sustain the sense of belonging for the present. As Yang observes, '[i]n these struggles, the past becomes a vital source for coping with the present. The nostalgic experience emotionally connects the generation to its past and compels them to articulate their generational experience in narrative form. At the same time, nostalgia also contrasts a past to which positive emotions are ascribed with a present lacking in humane warmth, thus serving as a critique of that present. In this way, nostalgia becomes a cultural movement, under no central control, to validate identities and challenge the values of commercialism in contemporary Chinese society.'[20]

This cultural resistance functions on a more personal level. Although the trend is collective, it is formed by individual statements. Nostalgia can be defined as 'one's relationship to the past, to the imagined community, to home, to one's own self-perception.'[21] Therefore the nostalgia itself is a personal concept that stands in contrast to the official collective account. Personal interviews and memoirs that partly comprise the nostalgic trend further demonstrate the personalised character of the nostalgia. At this personal level 'the nostalgia emerged as a form of cultural resistance. At its center was a concern for meaning and identity newly problematized by changing conditions of Chinese life.'[22] Therefore, it is not the past where the nostalgia is anchored that is reconciled here. It is the struggle with the present that highlights the importance of the nostalgic trend. As Davies observes, nostalgia for the Cultural Revolution actually provides 'an advantageous form to negotiate the many conflicting memories of the Cultural Revolution as well as critique economic inequity, social

class distinctions, and differential opportunity for "success" in contemporary China.'[23] As Davies argues, 'to the extent that nostalgia is socially shared and commemorative, it is not a kind of "false history" which misrepresents the truth of the past, but it is a contemporary social practice that engages with present struggles *through recourse* to the past.'[24] Faced with the global circulation of transnationalism and the post-socialist struggle, the nostalgia of the 1990s can be seen as an expression of cultural resistance towards the modernisation of China and modernity at large. Svetlana Boym observes that '[n]ostalgia is not merely an expression of local longing, but a result of a new understanding of time and space that made the division into "local" and "universal" possible.'[25] Therefore, the nostalgic longing itself forms a sense of resistance towards the assimilation of modernity itself. In the mode of this nostalgic longing, the sentimental of homecoming becomes the ineffable homesickness that is a response to the changing environment.

Boym has provided a conception of two kinds of nostalgia that illuminates the mechanism and perspectives of nostalgia, which also provides the framework to explain what this epidemic nostalgia in China really indicates. Through a comparison of Boym's two views of nostalgia, I would argue that the 'reflective nostalgia' is more suited to the critical tone of the nostalgia in China in the 1990s. According to Boym, 'Nostalgia (from *notos-* return home, and *algia-* longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy.'[26] There are two types of nostalgia- restorative and reflective. '*Restoration* (from *re-staure-* re-establishment) signifies a return to the original stasis, to the prelapsarian moment. The past for the restorative nostalgic is a value for the present; the past is not a duration but a perfect snapshot. Moreover, the past is not supposed to reveal any signs of decay; it has to be freshly painted in its "original image" and remain eternally young.' On the other hand,

'Reflective nostalgia is more concerned with historical and individual time, with the irrevocability of the past and human finitude. *Re-flection* suggests new flexibility, not the reestablishment of stasis. The focus here is not on recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth but on the meditation on history and passage of time.'[27] The restorative nostalgia focuses on the restoration of the valuable past that is longed for in the present tense as well. The restorative nostalgia does not acknowledge the mutation of the past and the change of temporality. This might pose the danger of raising nationalist fervency to build up a clear demarcation of us and others based on an exclusively shared past. The reflective nostalgia tries to rescue not the absolute past but rather the continuity of a fragmented time line and the nostalgia itself that bestows the past with a personal interpretation. Therefore Boyms comments that '[r]estorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance.'[28] She continues, 'If restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space.'[29]

The nostalgic representation in Chinese cinema since the 1990s has actually been popular since the 1980s. Besides the critique of the Cultural Revolution, the Fifth Generation directors utilised the epic story line, extreme and rich colours, and the specific and intentionally selected cultural forms to construct a past. Through this, the past is remembered in a beautiful and glorified time line. The shared memories, the lost youth, the continuity of life that was interrupted by the extremes of the era, and the past itself as a nostalgia-invoking temporality can be reconciled through nostalgia. But films in the 1990s tended to use a different form of nostalgia to concentrate on the longing itself rather than the conception of a

specific "home" to go back to. As I have discussed in chapter 1 in the first part of this thesis the home is in constant change and there is no original "home" that stays the same. It is also exactly because of this mutating state that the longing itself is sustained because the home-longing/home-coming always represent a renewed form in response to the different interpretation of home.

Films such as *Farewell My Concubine* (*Ba wang bi ji*, Chen Kaige, 1993) and *The Road Home* (*Wode fuqin muqin*, Zhang Yimou, 1999) fall into the category of restorative nostalgia as illustrated by Boym's models of the nostalgic. On the other hand films such as *Platform* (*Zhantai*, Jia Zhangke, 2000) and the film I will discuss in the following part of this chapter *In the Heat of the Sun* (*Yangguang canlan de rizi*, Jiang Wen, 1994) show the characteristics of reflective nostalgia that focuses on the articulation of longing itself. As Boym explains, '[r]eflective nostalgia does not pretend to rebuild the mythical place called home; it is "enamored of distance, not of the referent itself." This type of nostalgic narrative is ironic, inconclusive and fragmentary.' Furthermore, Boym illustrates that the 'past is not made in the image of the present or seen as foreboding of some present disaster; rather, the past opens up a multitude of potentialities, nonteleological possibilities of historic development.'[30] For the reflective nostalgia films, the negotiation of the narrative encompasses the relations between past, present and future. In other words there is no real "home" to return to. Therefore, the nostalgia is manifested as a form of tendency rather than a clear route of going towards certain places. In a sense, reflective nostalgia provides a kind of stability to which the identity can anchor itself and also a justification for the intangible home-longing itself.

Rey Chow's comments are also illuminating here, that '[t]he alluring object of nostalgia is notoriously elusive.'[31] Chow defines nostalgia as being 'commonly understood to be a

longing for the past or, etymologically, a homesickness.'[32] For Chow, the past is always remembered as being better and more beautiful. Similarly, Lei Ouyang Bryant cites Geremie Barmé who defines nostalgia as 'a longing for or painful yearning to return home' and 'a condition of being lost to a familiar abode, an exile from home and, as such, [it] is said to be closely related to the homing instinct.'[33] Although the nostalgia presents the sentimental of home-longing, for Chow, the main problem with nostalgia is 'the constant disruption of [the] physical and architectural environment and thus [the] sense of the stability of place.'[34] Therefore, the stability of the longing for home is challenged in spatial and temporal movement. Chow comments that many films made in Hong Kong during the 1980s and 1990s 'are not *nostalgic for the past* as it was; rather, they are, simply by their sensitivity to the movements of temporality, nostalgic *in tendency*.' The tendency is initiated because of the constant change of the object of nostalgia. The only thing that is for sure is the longing itself. The affective longing shows that 'the sense of loss it projects is definite.'[35] As Chow observes,

> Nostalgia is not simply a reaching toward the definite past from a definite present, but a subjective state that seeks to express itself in pictures imbued with particular memories of a certain pastness. *In film*, these subjectively pictorialized memories are there for everyone to see: nostalgia thus has a public life as much as a purely private one. The cinematic image, because of its visible nature, becomes a wonderfully appropriate embodiment of nostalgia's ambivalence between dream and reality, of nostalgia's insistence on seeing "concrete" thing in fantasy and memory.[36]

Therefore, the nostalgia in Chinese cinema since the 1990s can be summarised as the game with temporality. Rather than projecting a simple loss and a wish to restore the loss on the screen, nostalgia manipulates temporality and forms consistency in the changing temporality. A form of vitality and identity is resumed through this consistency.

In the film *In the Heat of the Sun*, this nostalgia in tendency- the sentimental itself- is manifested through an active and constant search for intimacy. Through the search for

intimacy, the nostalgic home-longing is embodied with meaning and power. The vitality lies not in the past or present, but in this tendency for longing. The search for alternative intimacy indicates a search for imagined community. The failure to form intimacy in the film also indicates the mythic nature of the community which also perpetuates the longing itself. It is because of this mythic nature and the impossibility of the task that the searching journey is perpetuated. Through the nostalgic filmic images, the sense of longing for belonging is repaired and sustained. On a superficial level, nostalgia itself is a reckoning of being united together, longing towards the same thing that would group everyone together. According to Rey Chow, nostalgia is a longing for something that has been lost. Therefore, the nostalgia provides the alternative space and time for retrieving a past that has been shared and can be perceived as togetherness in a changing temporality. The nostalgic longing for the longing itself shows the enduring character of longing for a togetherness and effectiveness of the longing. There is a kind of spirit manifested through the nostalgia mode which is able to sustain people into the future, or at least in the present. In the following part, I will discuss how this search for intimacy is articulated cinematically in the film *In the Heat of the Sun*.

Nostalgic Film Images and Alternative Intimacy

In the heat of the Sun literally translates as "Days of the Resplendent Sunshine." It was released in 1994 and was directed by Jiang Wen. This was Jiang Wen's debut into directing after years as a leading actor on the Chinese screen. The film is based on Wang Shuo's novel *Ferocious Animals* (*Dongwu xiongmeng*, 1991). The protagonist of *In the Heat of the Sun,* Ma Xiaojun, grows up in Beijing during the mid-1970s. The film explores Ma Xiaojun's construction of a personal history. The film is set in the middle of China's Cultural Revolution, and records the memories of "that summer" when he meets Mi Lan, whose reputation is that of a dangerous heartbreaker. Since his father is constantly sent to the other

parts of the country as an army officer, Ma Xiaojun spends most of his time in the company of his gang of friends, which is made up of his old school friends Da Mayi, Liu Sitian, Liu Yiku and Yang Gao. Liu Yiku, Liu Sitian's older half brother, brings in a girlfriend Yu Beipei, who later also joins the gang. Ma Xiaojun and his friends are all children of Communist Party cadres. They are too young to be sent to the countryside, but they are old enough to form gangs, fight viciously, smoke cigarettes, chase girls, etc. The film follows Ma Xiaojun as he grows up during the period of the Cultural Revolution.

In the Heat of the Sun uses the cinematic combination of images, sound and colours to construct nostalgia towards the past. Posing resistance to the grand narrative of history, Wang Shuo is a representative and leading figure of the so-called Pizi Wenxue ("riffraff" literature), a literary trend that challenges and confronts elite literature and the didactic function endowed to literature. Yomi Braester calls Jiang Wen's film a depiction through 'street-smart history' which opposes the official grand narrative. The film does not treat the Cultural Revolution 'through the single prism of political oppression.'[37] However, does the film just want to make a contrast with the so-called 'Maoist rhetoric,' and establish a 'literary resistance' to the 'earlier depictions of the Cultural Revolution which have emphasized reliance on memory and especially on remembrance of its atrocities?'[38]

As we have discussed earlier, this kind of personal history does indeed pose a form of cultural resistance towards the official account of the era. However, considered against the social background and the nostalgic mode, *In the Heat of the Sun* exerts more layered meanings than solely as a resistance towards the grand narrative. The film jumps out of the usual framework of interior definitions and the type of denunciations that are typical during the Cultural Revolution. The camera reaches out to the bikes on the streets and the roof tops

of houses that deliberately create an atmosphere of idle feeling in stark contrast to the intense politicised atmosphere generally associated with the Cultural Revolution. It steps out of the confined area and announces a change or difference of perspective. But this kind of resistance exerts deeper responses towards transnationalism, modernity, globalisation and materialism experienced in China when the film was made. Furthermore, once the nostalgia is identified as being reflective rather than restorative, the sense of loss of general belonging becomes even clearer. Braester comments that '*In the Heat of the Sun* resonates with Zhang [Yimou]'s film [Red Sorghum] not only in reinventing cinematic language but also in retelling a key moment in China's history,' and 'revisits the Cultural Revolution through the nostalgic eyes….'[39] Although Braester recognises the nostalgia mode, *Red Sorghum* and *In the Heat of the Sun* fall into the different categories of restorative and reflective nostalgia respectively in terms of the longing and memory construction. Therefore, in *In the Heat of the Sun*, it is the longing for belonging itself, either to a family, or a group, a community, a couple, or even a true inner self deriving from the family belonging, that the film tries to convey through nostalgia.

In the heat of the Sun first of all presents a strong sense of nostalgia. The music, the depiction of the past through misty and powerful colour shots in contrast to the black-and-white present, the parallel narratives of the present and the past, the protagonist's voice-over, etc. all contribute to this sense of nostalgia. The celestial and dreamy light of the sun gives a brilliant aura to the film in order to invoke nostalgia in the memory of the Cultural Revolution. This can then provide 'the possibility that the past might be intentionally evoked through nostalgic references to communicate something of value beyond the details of "what happened".'[40] At the beginning of the film, the adult Xiaojun comments on the fast development of Beijing. The city has transformed into something that is no longer recognisable for him. Beijing, as a

space, is losing the memory of itself. It is emblematic of Xiaojun's difficulty in recalling a truthful memory. Therefore, the nostalgia itself provides an alternative space and time for the construction of a searching journey that projects and coincides with the uncertainty of Xiaojun's memory. The film focuses on the projection of this searching.

The protagonists of *In the Heat of the Sun* are not heroes although they want to be. At the beginning of the film, young Xiaojun expresses his wish to join the army to fight should World War Three break out. They are not everyday people from the era either because typical characters from the period are normally depicted as existing in a great struggle of political revolution. The protagonists are in fact a group of young boys who are on the margins, close to being forgotten by the era. However, it is exactly because of this- the historical nature of the era itself that allows them to have more freedom and therefore allows a different personal engagement with the history. Representing the exploration of this personal relationship with history is a symbol of the self-discovery searching journey. Although the theme of home is represented in a more shattered way, the tone of nostalgia transforms the home theme into a more diversified process of seeking an alternative intimacy, as the nostalgia itself means homesickness.

So how does the film project this sense of the tendency of longing cinematically? First of all I will discuss the music that stands out from all the other cinematic components in this film. Then I will explore how the film's narrative centres around the protagonist Ma Xiaojun's attempts to search for intimacy. Xiaojun attempts to do this largely through his invasion of other people's space, his relationship with gangs, and through the relationship between him as a first person narrator and his personal history. By breaking into other people's space, he forms a type of intimacy with strangers. By identifying himself as part of a gang, he tries to

use group power to form his sense of belonging. By getting control over his own past, he tries to form an intimacy with his past self to provide consistent evidence of who he is in the present tense. However, the end of the film reveals that he never had the intimacy he is trying to form. This further demonstrates that it is the abstract tendency that the film tries to convey rather than any concrete destination.

From the research Lei Ouyang Bryant has conducted in China, she notices that the Cultural Revolution songs frequently 'serve as a powerful trigger for an individual's emotions and memories.' She continues that '[m]usic, more often than not, serves as a reliable means to evoke the memories and emotions of the Cultural Revolution period which might otherwise have been forgotten.'[41] The music has the power to take you straight back to the era from which it originated. Based on the research of Thomas Turino and Anthony Storr, Bryant summarises that 'music is recognized as an indicator that has the potential to manifest powerful emotions and music is also an effective means of enhancing memory.'[42] Therefore, the music has a strong relationship with memory and the songs from the Cultural Revolution period 'often inspire nostalgic and encouraging reflections among the individuals.'[43]

No original music is used in *In the Heat of the Sun*. The theme song is the music from Pietro Mascagni's opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The rest of the music is Russian, North Korean and music taken from the Cultural Revolution period. These pieces of music first of all transpose the audience directly back to the period without the use of any plot or narrative. In fact, using music from the past is an indicator of nostalgia. The music in the film includes *Ah Chairman Mao* (*A maozhuxi*)*, the Revolutionary Soldiers Pray for Your Long Life* (*Geming zhanshi zhufu maozhuxi wan shou wu jiang*), *Tibetan Liberated Serfs Are Longing for Chairman Mao* (*Fanshen nongnu xiangnian maozhuxi*), *The Ode Dedicated to Chairman Mao* (*Songge*

xiangei maozhuxi); the interlude in the North Korean film *Flower Girl*; and the songs

Katyusha and *Evening in the Suburbs of Moscow* originating from the former Soviet Union.[44]

Just from their distinctive titles, these songs can be recognised as belonging to a specific era. When explaining why the theme song chosen was Italian rather than Chinese, Jiang Wen says, 'It is very strange that it is this Italian music that takes me instantly back to the world that is almost forgotten. It reminds me of many things. I go back to the period again. I can almost smell the flavour of the time. […] This music expresses people's yearning towards the 20th century in the 19th century, which coincides with the yearning that China has towards the communism of the 1960s and 1970s.'[45] Choosing a piece of music that is not intimately connected to the period depicted in the film, director Jiang Wen follows his instinct of creating the right aura rather than being constrained by specific links with the period itself. This again indicates that it is the affective tendency that the director is looking for in the film rather something that must always fit perfectly with the era.

The use of music and characteristic political and propaganda banners from the era has reduced the spans of entire historical decades to single dramatic, spectacular moments. However, this representation does not function as what Svetlana Boym calls restorative nostalgia because it is not the era that the film tries to restore but the sentimental longing itself. The Fifth Generation directors use the mode of nostalgia in many of their works and they construct a more timeless China that can be restored. For example in Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine*, the constant appearance of the Peking Opera and the stage mark an eternal focalisation of time- no matter what happens, the King Chu and his concubine still continue to perform the same opera in the midst of different eras. The history is restored as a

series of dramatic moments and glossy snapshots. However, in *In the Heat of the Sun*, the music is used more for creating an aura, rather than for the moment itself.

In Jie Li's analysis of *In the Heat of the Sun*, she quotes Frederic Jameson's description of 'the high elegance of nostalgia film' and 'the grade-B simulations of iconoclastic punk film' as two 'filmic modes' in portraying the American 1950s. Jie Li claims that in *In the Heat of the Sun*, 'every icon, artefact and style of the Cultural Revolution reappear in irreverent contexts or parodied forms.'[46] This parody style is part of the manifestation of the reflective nostalgia which focuses on the longing itself rather than restoring the exact moment. In the scene when Ma Xiaojun and the rest of the gang take revenge on another group because their own member Yang Gao is beaten by them, they are all on bikes in order to get to the other group. In the background, the radio presenter says that '[t]he networking programmes of the people's broadcasting radio stations are over.' Then the song of *The Internationale* starts. As the music plays, Xiaojun and his gang fight with the other group with bricks and sharp objects. Xiaojun hits an opponent from the opposite group on the head and blood instantly runs down his face. The majestic and righteous music is juxtaposed with a badly natured group fight among the so-called descendents of the proletariat.

Jiang Wen describes how, 'At that time, every evening at 8:30 the networking programmes of the people's broadcasting radio stations was over, *The Internationale* burst into everyone's ears. There was no TV at the time. The whole of China listened to the same programme every evening. And it was summer, all the windows were open. Therefore, it felt that the whole world was in the music of *The Internationale* at 8:30. This reminds me of the atmosphere when I look back. Very hot and very dry…'[47] The music contrasts with the fight, yet it makes the fight appear as if it was justified in Xiaojun's eyes as it is his memory. The images and

sound are not realistically recorded, but they are close enough to recollect the details although not the sequence. The film is full of gaps, loose ends and free associations. It goes with Boym's definition of the reflective nostalgic mode, 'enamored of distance, not of the referent itself.' The music of The Internationale functions therefore to remind the audience of the era as a collage picture of visual and audio combination, rather than as what Braester suggests, that the director 'associates the song with heroism.'[48] Thus the music generally in the film creates an atmosphere of nostalgia. It does not go hand in hand with the specific moment. Rather, it is the longing for a connection with the period, the sense of belonging to the time and the group that the music in the film tries to evoke.

There are three significant ways in which the film narrative articulates the tendency of sentimental longing. Firstly, Xiaojun tries to form an intimacy with strangers in his exploration of space. Xiaojun is an expert at breaking into other people's houses with the all-purpose key he makes for himself. This intrusion represents far more than burglary. The physical mastery of space involves a breaking down of physical barriers, therefore forging an intimacy with the unknown people whose space he transgresses- through eating their food, sleeping on their beds and "sharing" the privacy that he has no right to violate. Xiaojun's behaviour of physical intrusion gains him the power of a gaze. This is not a mere ocular look, but a more transcendental 'mode of desire.'[49] In looking, Xiaojun becomes powerful in the space where his definition of intimacy resides. He also transmits his desire for belonging through his attempts to control the space. This space gives Xiaojun power over the object of his gaze. In this way he is able to gain the intimacy that he desires.

Secondly, the adult Xiaojun also has a strong nostalgia for gang life. The young Xiaojun tries to form intimacy through his self-identification as part of the gang. He always seeks approval

from his gang. Xiaojun violently beats up a rival group member because one of the friends from his own gang is injured by another group. Taking revenge on an enemy is the most effective way that he knows to prove his heroic status within his group. However, it is not the singular hero that appeals to Xiaojun. In the following scene the gang are having a shower together after the violent fight. Washing off the blood together is another expression of the tight bond that is integral with the collective gang identity, as much as the actual act of the battle itself. Desire is articulated as male heterosexual desire with homoerotic overtones. Having a shower together visually reveals the bond and echoes some kind of ancient tribal ritual of male bonding. The personal identity emerges as an agent in and through relationships with others. The object of Xiaojun's searching thus turns out to have been the rediscovery of the value of group commitment. The end of the film when the gang group reunite and ride in a limousine on the streets of Beijing also celebrates self-discovery and male-bonding. The confined space inside the car that the adult Xiaojun and his friends occupy is intentionally depicted by the director Jiang Wen to indicate Xiaojun's continuous effort to locate himself within a group. This contrasts with the open space outside the car that symbolises Xiaojun's constant and continuous search for intimacy.

Thirdly, as an adult narrator, Xiaojun attempts to form an intimacy with his own personal history. He recollects the memory of "that summer" in detail and shows the processes through which various versions of memories are tried on and rejected or accepted. Even during the blips in the film where he cannot distinguish real history from his imagination, the narrative still goes on smoothly as normal. This can be taken as a confident assurance of his searching process. Therefore, the adult Xiaojun as a narrator distances himself at a vantage point from the days of his adolescence which may be a visualised form of the nostalgic tendency. The adult Xiaojun's voice-over constantly rejects the memory inside the frame

which indicates Xiaojun's being in the middle of the searching journey. In the negotiation of the relationship between the past self and present self, a kind of intimacy is articulated through the consistency of the temporality.

However, the intimacy Xiaojun tries to form proves to be futile, which tests even further the nostalgic tendency as something concrete and attainable to go back to. The nostalgia in the film, as Braester notes, is 'tainted by one's inability to remember things as they were.'[50] *In the Heat of the Sun* is full of lenses and mirrors that fool Xiaojun into thinking he has mastery over himself. This also functions as an indicator of a prevailing sense of illusion. Xiaojun lives a fantasy life in front of the mirror. He constantly performs out his alternative identities. The film is full of flashes of self-awareness, as though he suddenly comes to a point of realisation and is aware of the impossibility of the characters that he is acting out. Whatever identities he forms in front of the mirror collapse as soon as he finishes his monologue. Mi Lan is a stranger with whom Xiajun tries to imagine intimacy, although later on in the young Xiaojun's life they become friends. Mi Lan's initial colour photograph is followed by a close-up of Yu Beipei's face in a similar expression. Later on, when Xiaojun asks Mi Lan about that picture, it turns out to be an illusion. Subsequently the adult narrator even suggests uncertainty over whether Mi Lan exists or not. Xiaojun's hobby of making keys allows him agency for both power and violation over this nostalgic tendency. Other signs in the film constantly remind us of the theme as well. For example, Mi Lan wears a small key around her ankle (too small to be a door key), which has its significance inscribed by repeated close-ups. This key symbolises a searching tendency- what is the key used for? Where/What does it lead to? In a sense, this key represents what Xiaojun can never know. Although Xiaojun is such an expert in negotiating doors and using the right keys, this key presents a mystery because this is a key that belongs to no doors. Towards the end of the film, Xiaojun tries to rape Mi Lan.

The first thing he does is to rip the key off Mi Lan's ankle, which is emphasised by a close-up. This in turn illustrates a futile search that is terminated by himself.

Xiaojun's intimacy towards his gang also turns out to be a hallucination in his head. Towards the end of the film, Mi Lan and Xiaojun's gang meet at the Moscow Restaurant to celebrate the birthdays of Liu Yiku and Xiaojun. A fight begins between Yiku and Xiaojun after Xiaojun insults Mi Lan. Xiaojun stabs Yiku in the chest repeatedly with a broken bottle. The film-speed slows down as Xiaojun looks down to see that Yiku is without a scratch. At this point, the narrator intervenes and the film stops and rewinds. This event never actually happened. Xiaojun is just editing his own scene. Attempts to mediate vision are all proven to be illusory, just as Xiaojun as a narrator cannot present a comfortable recollection of his own past to the audience. The voice-over claims to be the adult version of the protagonist Ma Xiaojun. At the end of the film after his attempt to rape Mi Lan, Xiaojun jumps off the high elevated diving board at a swimming pool. He is trying to get the attention of his gang friends by undertaking this dangerous act but no one pays him any attention.

Throughout *In the Heat of the Sun*, Xiaojun's voice repeatedly complains about lapses in his memory, which often plays tricks on him and his narrative. The voice over at the beginning sets up the tone of the film. "Beijing has changed so fast. In twenty years it has changed into a modern city, and I can find almost nothing the way I remember it. Actually the change has already wrecked my memories so that I cannot tell the imagined from the real." Braester comments that '[m]emory finds itself at a standstill. The impossibility to capture the past- the impossibility of ever reconstructing the past as a reality- causes the narrative to grind to a halt. The narrator's goal is to tell things as they were, convey history as it actually was. He must,

however, beat a hasty retreat when his vision of the past crystallizes into a still image, not a vision of reality but a resplendent cinematic mirage.'[51]

The active searching for intimacy and the failure of forming it in actuality are what the sentimental of home-longing tries to articulate in the film. *In the Heat of the Sun* is a story without firm outcomes. Therefore, it is never a film about the actual object of longing but about the rite of passage. For Braester, the confused memory and the coming back-and-forth of the storytelling 'presents an image emblematic of the film's resistance to the Maoist vision of history.' These accounts, commonly regarded as the official history, place everyone within a narrative of victimisation and social disaster. However, it is important to view this film as an integral part of the cultural movement that started in the 1980s. This film exhibits a nostalgic tendency in terms of its exploration of a sense of belonging through attempts to form alternative intimacies. The film indicates that Ma Xiaojun can never recall a sincere recollection of his own adolescence, and that he never finishes the process of forming an intimacy. It is always a process of searching and of longing for belonging. Director Jiang Wen creates this symbolic cinematic nostalgia and releases a form of cultural resistance towards the collective definition of history that has eliminated the individual agency in a time when the country was obsessed with recollections of the past. Not only does this suggest a contrasting representation to conventional accounts of the Cultural Revolution, but it also deals with the difficult territory of how to construct the sense of belonging through cinematically depicting the nostalgic tendency, whether that involves acknowledging it, fabricating it, or coming to terms with the possibility of longing. Therefore, during this process, the protagonist's formation of intimacy never provides a definitive answer. The searching process itself justifies the enduring longing.

In conclusion, this chapter has critiqued interpretations of nostalgia as an affect of home-longing. Cinema as a medium privileges an immediate visual perception of the affect. *In the Heat of the Sun* focuses upon turning the grievances of the period of the Cultural Revolution into a representation of growing up and days of youth as a way of making an affect of belonging to the past a basis for collective togetherness. The film *In the Heat of the Sun* ends in the black and white present. All the boys are now in a limousine driving in Beijing. They are still on the road, which can be taken to symbolise their endless searching journey. They are just passing by a part of the journey. They meet an old friend with mental disabilities who appears repeatedly in the film and always answers "Ou-ba!" to their teasing cipher "Gooloomoo!" But this time the boy looks at them and says 'You idiot!' Even the simplest memory is cheating on them. When even the memory is not reliable it at least proves the affective attachment of the sentimental. Nostalgia as a form of homecoming materialised in the tendency of longing. The search for intimacy is the search for the lost sense of belonging as well. 'Cultural identity is based on a certain social poetics or "cultural intimacy" that provides a glue in everyday life.' Boym continues to warn us that '[i]t is very important to distinguish between political nationalism and cultural intimacy, which, after all, is based on common social context, not on national or ethnic homogeneity.'[52] Recognising the instabilities within a historically specific conception of home-longing, the film offers recognition of the habitual dependence upon some form of intimacy and social contact among the characters. So what is so "resplendent" in the film as suggested by the title? Disturbing the class order, making fun of the teacher, peeping at adults' secrets, sneaking into other people's houses, smoking, courting girls, fighting without mercy, sexual rites of passage? The film accentuates immersing oneself in the longing for belonging. The sense of the sentimental homecoming is manifested, projected, sustained and endured in the search for intimacy and belonging. This searching journey also provides the possibility of understanding the

sentimental in Chinese cinema in a more contextual manner. In an era driven by materialism, the sense of the sentimental of home-longing becomes part of the general culture of longing for belonging. Even when the home itself is not imagined as the locus of the sentimental, the intimacy that is provided by home and family is still an inspiration that provides a foundation for longing. By understanding this better connections might be provided to the articulation of the affects in the film *In the Heat of the Sun*. More broadly this can reveal the adaptation and transformation of the sentimental in Chinese culture.

[1] Dai Jinhua discusses the background and some of the works by selected Chinese Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Generation directors. See *Wu zhong fengjing: zhongguo dianying wenhua 1978-1998 (The Scenery in the Mist: Chinese Film Culture 1978-1998).* Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2006.

[2] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001, 41.

[3] *Ibid*., XIV.

[4] http://baike.baidu.com/view/9610.htm

[5] Guobin Yang, "China's Zhiqing Generation: Nostalgia, Identity, and Cultural Resistance in the 1990s," in *Modern China* 3 Vol. 29, July (2003), 267-268.

[6] Tonglin Lu, "Fantasy and Ideology in a Chinese Film: A Žižekian Reading of the Cultural Revolution," in *East Asia Cultural Critique* 2 Vol. 12, Fall (2004), 539.

[7] *Ibid*., 540.

[8] *Fatelessness* was previously published in an English translation by Christopher and Katharina Wilson as *Fateless* in 1992. It was published in English again in 2004 as *Fatelessness* translated by Tim Wilkinson.

[9] Imre Kertész, *Fateless*. Translated from the Hungarian by Tim Wilkinson. London: Vintage Books, 2006, 261.

[10] Ibid., 262.

[11] Alan Riding, "The Holocaust, from a Teenage View," in *The New York Times*. January 3, 2006.

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] David J. Davies, "Old Zhiqing Photos: Nostalgia and the "Spirit" of the Cultural Revolution," in *The China Review* 2 Vol. 5, Fall (2005), 98.

[14] *Ibid*., 99.

[15] *Ibid*., 100.

[16] *Ibid*., 101.

[17] Guobin Yang, "China's Zhiqing Generation," 267-296.

[18] *Ibid*., 289.

[19] Lei Ouyang Bryant, "Music, Memory, and Nostalgia: Collective Memories of Cultural Revolution Songs in Contemporary China," in *The China Review* 2 Vol. 5, Fall (2005), 163.

[20] Guobin Yang, "China's Zhiqing Generation," 276.

[21] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 41.

[22] Guobin Yang, "China's Zhiqing Generation," 269.

[23] Davies, "Old Zhiqing Photos," 98.

[24] *Ibid*., 102. Emphasis in original.

[25] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, XVI.

[26] *Ibid*., XIII.

[27] *Ibid*., 49. Emphasis in original.

[28] *Ibid*., 41.

[29] *Ibid*., 49.

[30] *Bid.,* 50.

[31] *Ibid*., XIV.

[32] Rey Chow, "A Souvenir of Love," in Esther C. M. Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 210.

[33] Lei Ouyang Bryant, "Music, Memory, and Nostalgia," 162.

[34] Chow, "A Souvenir of Love," 210-211.

[35] *Ibid*., 224-225. Emphasis in original.

[36] *Ibid*., 215.

[37] Yomi Braester, "Memory at a Standstill: 'Street-smart History' in Jiang Wen's *In the heat of the Sun*," in *Screen* 42:4 Winter (2001), 356. 350-362.

[38] *Ibid*., 351.

[39] *Ibid*., 350.

[40] Davies, "Old Zhiqing Photos,"101.

[41] Lei Ouyang Bryant, "Music, Memory, and Nostalgia," 160.

[42] *Ibid*., 161.

[43] *Ibid*., 152.

[44] These are all well-known songs of the revolutionary era in China.

[45] Jiang Wen, *Dansheng (Birth)*. Beijing: Huayi chubanshe, 1997, 51.

[46] Jie Li, "From Auto-ethnography to Autobiography: Representations of the Past in Contemporary Chinese Cinema," in *Senses of Cinema* 45, 2007; Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London and New York: Verso, 1991, 287-288.

[47] Jiang Wen, *Dansheng*, 33.

[48] Braester, "Memory at a Standstill," 358.

[49] E. Crosz, "Voyeurism/Exhibitionism/the Gaze," in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, Elizabeth Wright, ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, 449.

[50] Braester, "Memory at a Standstill," 357.

[51] *Ibid*., 353.

[52] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 42-43.

CHAPTER 5

Intimate Spaces in a Transforming World: The Intimate Spaces in *Still Life* and *The Orphan of Anyang*

The notion of space is important for many films in Chinese cinema since the 1990s, especially in the 2000s. Many films from this period convey cinematically that spaces are the medium through which narrative is transmitted or communicated. Spaces often appear across the screen that symbolise instability, transience, and fleetingness in film such as the platform at a train station (*Platform*, *Zhantai,* Jia Zhangke, 2000); the hotel where the prostitution service is provided (*Durian Durian*, *Liulian liulian*, Fruit Chan, 2000); the rundown rented flat complex from the socialist period (*The Orphan of Anyang*, *Anyang yinger*, Wang Chao, 2001); and the boat house and the half-demolished residential buildings against the Three Gorges Dam Project where most of the physical space will soon be submerged under water (*Still Life*, *Sanxia haoren*, Jia Zhangke, 2006). These spaces are also characterised by the fleeting figures who come and go without leaving any lasting trace of their existence. These are quite different from traditional images of the home where it is conventionally accepted that intimate relationships are formed and reconciled. These are, in contrast, the spaces more for unstable and changeable relations. Cinematically, these spaces are accentuated by long shots and long takes. There are normally no dramatic stories or narratives encumbering these spaces while the shots linger across the scene. The conversation is often elliptical in the films. Therefore, the importance of these spaces is emphasised cinematically. They in a sense facilitate the articulation of the symbolisation and importance of spaces in these films when considered as an integral part of the narrative strategy. The narrative constructions and re-constructions cannot sprout up if they are not rooted or buried in situational spaces.

Why are these spaces important? In this chapter, I argue that these spaces are intimate spaces within which the changing concept of the Chinese sentimental can be understood and re-articulated. In the previous chapter I explored how the home-longing sentimental in Chinese cinema, faced with transnational materialism and the new market economy, is represented as a tendency of longing for belonging in nostalgia. This has largely contributed to the definition of the sentimental in Chinese cinema in a transitional era not only as being rooted in the family/home imagination, but also as a sense of longing for intimate attachment and belonging- being part of a clan, a group, even the intimacy between two people. This intimacy becomes the alternative of home-longing in terms of recognising the Chinese sentimental. The sentimental, as a searching process for alternative intimacy, is more elusively presented in Chinese cinema as reflective nostalgia.[1] If nostalgia is a concept of temporality, the construction of intimate spaces is an explicit statement of spatial awareness. As the reflective nostalgia is implicit in terms of the object of longing, the intimate spaces are materialised and solidified. The films cinematically construct intimate spaces that accommodate the changing understanding of sentimental home-longing. These spaces become the vehicle for production, reproduction and understanding of the changing concept of intimacy.

Transient and Intimate Space

The notion of intimate space normally (or traditionally) refers to the house or home. For Gaston Bachelard, '[o]n whatever theoretical horizon we examine it, the house image would appear to have become the topography of our intimate being.'[2] In conventional understanding, the space of the house or home is private and where intimacy is established and (re)stored, where the individual connects with the intimate core of being away from the public sphere. This public space is often contrasted to the private by being identified as cruel and

competitive. However, with the development of the post-socialist Chinese market economy and the sudden accumulation of wealth, affective relations/connections inside the everlasting home space change in the world of spatial and temporal disjuncture. The concept of home becomes unstable with the economic ups and downs, personal situations, and frequent migration responding to the fast pace of the economic development and cultural change. Even within the space of home, the emotions of homelessness are pervasive due to the disconnection with the inner self and intimate connection with the space. As Svetlana Boym states, '"transcendental homelessness" and permanent exile have come to be regarded as an ailment of modern times.'[3] In such a way, it is increasingly identified that the restorative intimate private space of the home is being more and more invaded and transgressed by the uncertain and often pernicious influences and tendencies of the public sphere.

However, during the period that I am examining, spaces appear in the films where different intimacies are formed but are visually indifferent and deserted. These spaces are full of fleeting figures. Even the spaces themselves are at risk of vanishing due to the demands of economic development. They are very different from our conventional understanding of intimate spaces. When Bachelard investigates the generation and storing of memories and the house as 'the spaces of our intimacy,' he elaborates that a space of intimacy is a space that is 'confined, simple, shut-in.' It might be small and hidden away like an attic, but it provides a space to be away from the world. It does not 'seek to becomes extended, but would like above all still to be possessed.'[4] The spaces I will discuss in this chapter probably do not fit in comfortably with any of the characteristics mentioned above. However, intimacies are established within them- the reunited spouses, the grouping with strangers, the forming of family relations, the reconnection with inner-selves, etc. These intimate spaces might not be physically or visually evident, but they generate the possibilities for new kinds of relating and

connecting. When Boym introduces the concept of 'diasporic intimacy,' she says that it 'does not promise an unmediated emotional fusion, but only a precarious affection- no less deep, yet aware of its transience.'[5] These intimate spaces exactly embrace similar kinds of displaced and relocated intimacies in a space that is characterised by its transience. The material and capital driven development has changed the traditional concept of home and stable intimate spaces. However, it is because of the harsh development that has compelled the forging and rebirth of this new intimate space that the displaced intimacy can be relocated. It is because of this that Boym states that '[t]he experience of life in the modern metropolis, at once alienation and exhilarating, contributed a lot to the genesis of the diasporic intimacy.'[6]

Through constructing these intimate spaces, the new intimacy can be embraced and the dialogue with the lost intimacy is re-constructed. These spaces become the sanctuary for the lost intimacies and reconcile with the strangeness of the conflicts caused by the onset of a competitive and materialistic global economy. However, '[t]o feel at home … is a state of mind that doesn't depend on an actual location. The object of longing, then, is not really a place called home but this sense of intimacy with the world.'[7] Therefore, these intimate spaces in the film are not necessarily images of home or homelike spaces. Rather, they are spaces that provide the possibility of connecting to a lost sense of intimacy. These intimate spaces are places that accommodate renewed understandings of intimacy. They are also spaces that produce and reproduce intimate subjects, contexts and new definitions of intimacy. They provide specific contexts within which relationships take place but on the other hand where they can also break down. Instead of depicting a space in the world where the possibility of intimacy is scarce, these films create an intimate space where lost souls meet, family relations are established, sentimental home-longing is reconciled, and the individuals

find affirmative ways to cope with the instability of the outside world in these spaces of transience.

In the following part, I will discuss how the intimate spaces are constructed through readings of the films *Still Life* and *The Orphan of Anyang*. These films are useful examples to analyse because *Still Life* places emphasis on the depiction of intimate spaces in relation to vanishing spaces, while *The Orphan of Anyang* depicts intimate spaces through chance encounters. Both the two films depict spaces of transience with emphasis on different attributes of the space- the space itself and the characters within the space. The intimate spaces in *Still Life* are not stable, while the characters that we encounter within the intimate spaces in *The Orphan of Anyang* are seemingly random.

The Intimate Space in Transience

Jia Zhangke's *Still Life* won the Golden Lion award in 2006 at the Venice Film Festival. The film is about two people, Han Sanming and Shen Hong, who travel to Fengjie to search for their respective spouses in Sichuan Province against the backdrop of the Three Gorges Dam project. Han Sanming, a coal miner from Fenyang, comes to Fengjie to look for his ex-wife from whom he has been separated for sixteen years. The ex-wife Yaomei was originally bought from Sichuan Province, although whether this was through a willing exchange of money with her family or through human trafficking is not divulged in the film.[8] They then formed their family and had their own daughter. However, we discover through Sanming's later conversations that Yaomei was taken by the police (because she had been purchased for money by Sanming) and repatriated back home. She also took their daughter, leaving an address on the back of a cigarette package for Sanming when she left on his demand for a point of contact. Sanming eventually finds his ex-wife who now works on a transportation

boat and decides to resume the marriage upon Yaomei's agreement. However, he has to go back home on his own first and continue working in the mine for a year to save enough money to pay off the debt that Yaomei's brother owes to the boat owner. The parallel story in the film follows the nurse Shen Hong from Taiyuan who comes to Fengjie to look for her husband who first came to Fengjie on business but has now been out of touch for two years. Shen Hong also finds her husband. However, she finds out that he has not been loyal during the two years of their separation. They meet by the Three Gorges Dam and Shen Hong proposes that they divorce after their last dance.

The two parallel stories take place against the backdrop of the Three Gorges Dam project. Many locations in the film have already been submerged under the water by the time that this chapter is being written. Therefore, the film is produced in a place of disappearance. The film is full of scenes of demolition. While Sanming is waiting for his ex-wife's boat to come back to Feng Jie from a business trip, he joins the demolition group to earn some pocket money. By following him as the main protagonist of the film, the camera is able to show the large scale of demolition taking place within the area. There frequently appear removal trucks that are full of furniture and collections of household items. The consequent groups of homeless people are left to either live on boats or in temporary sheds. Within this kind of background, most of the spaces are presented as ephemeral. These images of vanishing spaces are extremely potent and become etched on the mind of the viewer once they appear on the screen.

A labourer working on the demolition site.

When Sanming first arrives in Feng Jie he discovers that the address left by his ex-wife has already been submerged by water. He passes a street on a motorcycle taxi to go to his hostel. The shot follows the motorcycle taxi but stops at a street corner as the motorcycle is driven out of the frame. In the middle of the shot, two people on the ladder above the roof are painting big red letters and numbers on the side wall of a tall apartment building that states that "the water line for the third phase [of the Three Gorges Dam project] is 156.5 metres." Underneath, the local residents are still running the shop and chatting to each other leisurely, although the lorries full of household furniture that indicate the mass residential exodus from the area pass frequently in the foreground of the shot. Everything under that big red metre line is going to be submerged under water in the near future. There are no close-ups, no dramatic cinematic indications to show the sentimental lingering or nostalgia for this disappearing space. The camera tells us in a matter of fact way- this is the reality they/we are living in.

Everything below the red line is to be submerged under water in the third phase of the Three Gorges Dam project.

Another example of the transient nature of space in this film is when Sanming eventually finds his ex-wife. They meet up in a derelict building before Sanming returns home to earn the redemption money that will allow him to take his ex-wife back from the boat owner because of Yaomei's brother's debts of 30,000 Yuan. The building has a big hole through which many other tall buildings in the distance that are in the similar state of dereliction can be seen. Sanming squats down and smokes. Yaomei stands in front of him. Yaomei gives Sanming a toffee sweet. Sanming bites half and gives the other half to Yaomei. Yaomei squats as well after accepting the other half of the toffee. Sixteen years of separation now brings the two of them into a disappearing space to share one piece of toffee. From a traded bride sixteen years ago to feeling reluctance at letting Sanming go, Yaomei has established a sense of sentimental attachment to Sanming that is transmitted through the sharing of the toffee. The sweetness of the toffee that they share also indicates the sweet intimacy that they share at that moment. Suddenly a shockingly loud sound comes from distance and one of the buildings in the background is blown up for demolition. They both stand up and look in the direction from where the huge sound comes from. Sanming moves forward and holds

Yaomei's arms from her back. There is no dialogue or emotional accumulation to dramatise the scene. However, the sense of the sentimental and the will to protect the intimacy is felt even stronger inside this ruined and soon to be demolished building. The sharing of a little sweet and the sudden demolition of the building illustrate the humble situation they find themselves in and just how small and insignificant they are against the backdrop of these major demolition works. It can be argued that the nature of the demolition scene highlights the vulnerability and fragility of their relationship. However, the small movement towards his ex-wife by Sanming when the demolition occurs around them shows his intention to protect his wife. The recognition that they are sharing a moment of intimacy can only be acquired in this sharp contrast with the shattered building. If it took place in a secure setting such as a house-like space then the intimacy they form might be taken for granted. The urgency of the feeling of transience of the space and the assumption of the unstable relationship that should be acquired in this kind of space challenges the audience's empathy towards their silent but firm intimacy.

Yaomei and Sanming sharing a piece of toffee.

The tall building in the background of the last picture has just been demolished. Yaomei and Sanming stand up and look out in response to the huge sound caused by the demolition.

These two scenes are indicative of intimate spaces in transience. It is a spatial disjuncture-because intimate relations are not supposed to be established in an unstable space of disappearance. The redefining of intimate space is even more powerful when it is actually recognised as providing a rooted sense of belonging. For instance Sanming is away from his hometown from where his ex-wife Yaomei was determined to leave 16 years ago. But in this ruined building, the intimacy that they never had originally in their relationship is established. Compared to the home that has been left behind, the intimacy takes root here upon the ruins of a city marked for demolition through the offering of trueness and sincerity. So what counts as intimate in a globalised context that is full of disappearance and new appearance? This requires a space of exploration. These intimate spaces respond to the spatial transformation effected by capital development, globalism and internationalism, and challenge the realistic strategies for depicting spaces. These examples also illustrate that the only way to have a relation with these spaces now is through film representation- they are captured by the camera in the process of their disappearance. The representation of these spaces is not the representation of presence because they are lost already by the time that we as the audience

watch them. Thus, it is a representation of the space as absence. This sense of absence makes the presence of intimacy more eminent when juxtaposed with the spatial loss of the site of that intimacy.

These intimate spaces are also represented as a contrast to Sanming's own home environment. Sanming's home is hardly mentioned in the film. The only time he mentions his hometown is when he joins the demolition group to earn some pocket money. The local people he meets mention that their hometown Kuimen is depicted on the back of the Chinese 10 Yuan note. Sanming responds that his hometown Hukou is on the back of the Chinese 50 Yuan note. Sanming takes a 50 Yuan note out of his pocket to show the other workers. Everyone comments that Sanming's hometown is more grand and magnificent with an obvious nostalgic tone towards the changes and losses that have already happened or are going to befall their own hometown. Their hometown Kuimen will probably only be remembered as a souvenir image on the back of the 10 Yuan note.

However, Sanming does not relate his hometown to the magnificence that the others comment on. The only thing he relates home to is his job. He is a coal miner back home. The image of a mine is dark and isolated, which symbolises that the home he has in his mind is quite distant compared to the place he now finds himself in and the people he is with. He does not show any sentimental attachment towards home when he mentions it. It seems to be a place that is just for work. However, in this place that is miles away from his hometown, he actually develops a friendship with others such as the driver of the motorbike taxi and the workers from the demolition site. The night that he tells the others that he is going to return to his home the following day, the clinking of beer glasses and the sharing of cigarettes displays a sense of belonging to this group through the shared experience of this ephemeral space.

Because this site will soon disappear people appear to place heightened value and urgency on the transience of the chance encounters around them. People will soon scatter and disperse to different places as soon as the space that they now occupy disappears.

Boym has observed that the development of the consciousness towards home 'does not begin at home, but at the moment of leaving home.'[9] The same tendency would also apply to the awareness of home-longing. The sense of home-longing seems to start and develop once one is away from home and embarking on a journey elsewhere. The depiction of intimate spaces in the film *Still Life* further illustrates the transposition of home-longing and the attachment of the Chinese sentimental. The characters Sanming and Shen Hong are both on a searching journey. The affects of being secure by the intimacy of home (in their hometown) are deliberately cast in doubt by the director Jia Zhangke - Sanming is isolated in a coal mine where his traded wife has left him 16 years previously; Shen Hong has been out of contact with her husband for 2 years. However, Sanming not only finds his wife, but also forms a relationship with her in this space of disappearance. They construct intimate spaces where their desires for belonging are fulfilled. Although Shen Hong decides to divorce her husband when she finds him, it is due to the fact that she finds out about the ambiguous relationship between her husband and another woman during their two years of separation. She tells her husband that she has fallen in love with another man and that she is on her way to meet him in Yicang, another city along the Yangtze River. The film does not indicate whether this is a true story or just her excuse and means of saving face in light of her husband's disloyalty. In either case, the vanishing space provides a location for her to find closure on her failed marriage. Moreover, at the end of the scene, Shen Hong catches a ship that is going to Yicang. We can thus conclude that she places hope in gaining/regaining intimacy by travelling away from home rather than going back to it. The film indicates the forming and understanding of

the concept of home-longing in intimate spaces in transience by deliberately placing the characters on emotional as well as physical journeys away from their home environments.

Family Bonding among Chance Encounters

If *Still Life* emphasises the spatial side of intimate spaces, *The Orphan of Anyang* places our focus on the chance encounters that take place within these intimate spaces. The film tells a story in the old city of Anyang located in Henan province. The newly laid-off worker Yu Dagang finds an abandoned baby at a noodle bar at the night market. The little note pinned to the baby promises 200 Chinese Yuan each month to whoever looks after the baby. In return for this money that could support him, Dagang takes the baby home and also meets the baby's mother Feng Yanli later on in order to receive the payment. With the first payment, Dagang opens a bicycle repair stall outside his apartment building. The baby's mother Yanli is a prostitute who works at an entertainment complex that has a KTV bar, massage room, dancing studio, etc. The baby's father is Sidan, the gang boss who runs the complex. Dagang asks Yanli to work from his flat when they meet up for the second time. From then on, Yanli attracts customers on the street and takes them back to Dagang's flat, while Dagang looks after the baby at the bicycle stall watching different men walking in and out of his flat building. However, when the gang boss learns that he has terminal cancer he locates Yanli to ask for the baby back. Dagang kills him by accident when he tries to protest against this request. Dagang is sentenced to death for manslaughter. Yanli is taken to the train station following a police raid to crack down on prostitution. When Yanli tries to run away, she passes the baby to a stranger who has appeared as Dagang in her flashback.

The Orphan of Anyang won the Fipresci Award at the 37th Chicago International Film Festival in 2001. The film develops the story line in a very slow mode- the use of long takes

suggests a focus on the space that the camera observes (which I will discuss later in this chapter). The conversation is elliptical, which calls attention to the characters and their background. Transient cultural spaces appear in the film as well- the desolate factory, the empty yard, the rented flat, the unemployed worker, etc. Everything seems to be so unstable and is depicted in a pervasive grey tone of colour that highlights the winter of the city.

The prominence of space in this film has been recognised. For example, Xiaoping Lin discusses the variety of walls in *The Orphan of Anyang* as 'a central motif.'[10] Lin observes that '[a]gainst this bleak post-Socialist urban landscape the walls serve as a cinematic metaphor for a troubled break-up of the Socialist state and traditional family….' because symbolically the walls lose their function of protecting those within them.[11] However, I would like to take the example of the space of Dagang's flat as the site for the construction of intimate spaces. At the beginning of the film, the concept of chance encounters is deliberately articulated through the baby. After reading the note pinned onto the wrap of the baby offering 200 Yuan every month to whoever looks after the baby, Dagang asks the owner of the noodle bar whether he can take the baby. The owner just gives the baby to him without any doubts of Dagang's ability to look after a young baby. When Dagang starts his bicycle repair stall, a local policeman passes by and chats to him. We understand that he is local because he knows certain details of Dagang such as that he is not married and that he has recently been laid off. However, when he notices the baby in the basket and learns that Dagang has picked the baby up from the street, he does not even raise any question concerning the status of the baby. This is obviously surprising considering the nature of his job. Instead he continues to talk about introducing a girlfriend to Dagang. These two scenes explicitly reveal to us the indifference of the human relationship and the accustomedness to the chance encounters in life. These scenes also show the reluctance of the director to participate in the mass contemplation of

homelessness. In many ways, this is more realistic than the dramatic brilliance that might be achieved by a direct portrayal of the great fuss taking place over a deserted baby. Human beings randomly meet and randomly depart from each other. People seem to be so used to the idea, especially in a time when frequent migration is widely understood as being part of the necessity for economic development. A deserted baby probably would cause some kind of discussion in real life. However, when considered against the background and general tone of the film, the two scenes together are inserted with deliberation to establish the fundamental message of chance encounters.

Dangang's flat is situated within a typical flat complex that is allocated to employees by their factory during the socialist period. This procedure has been changed in the reform era. The little square room contains everything- a small cooking area, dining table, bed, and a television set which is arranged on the bed due to shortage of space. The room looks old and the wallpaper is peeling from the walls. Strictly speaking, Dagang does not own the flat. But it is his home. Before Dagang meets the baby and Yanli, the flat is a place of loneliness. At the beginning of the film, the room appears with the whole focus on the light with a man's heavy breathing and masturbating in the background. The feeling of frustration and isolation of life is transmitted cinematically. The sense of loneliness is emphasised by the scene immediate following this in which Dagang appears in front of the city wall. His figure is small and insignificant compared with the suffocating size of the wall. The sense of loneliness does not really alter after Dagang takes the baby home. It appears in the shot in which Dagang and the baby lie side by side on his bed. The baby is happily asleep. The shot moves to the light of the room again and the heavy sound of breathing comes again from the background.

However, the atmosphere changes completely after Yanli joins them. Although she works as a prostitute in Dagang's flat, while the three of them are together the flat appears as a family home. One short scene illustrates this. Yanli wakes up her customer after being woken up by the alarm herself. After the customer leaves, she quickly changes into a white jumper and white hair band which contrasts strikingly with the bright dazzling colours of the clothes she normally wears for business. She delicately puts on a little lipstick. This changing of her clothes after her appointment suggests that Yanli wishes to act as a virtuous wife and mother. They eat dinner together, and she shows a rare and gentle smile and gesture that can be noticed from a mother and wife. This sense of family bonding is emphasised in the following shots of the three characters in the market choosing a winter hat for the baby and a scarf for Yanli. They even take a family portrait at a photo booth at the end of their day out. Everyone in Dagang's flat fits in with ease. The relations can be summarised by the meaning of a family portrait. To fit with ease connotes a sense of belonging or fitting as well as a sense of comfort. The shots of different numbers of figures lying in bed are neatly placed in the film. The shots in between them function as the expounding connection to highlight the escalation of the intimacy among the characters. Dagang's flat of loneliness becomes a space for comfort and ease. Part of the comfort and ease that the space affords is its expansiveness in meaning and limits. Rather than making the intimate space vulnerable, the random people actually give more meaning and substance to it.

Dagang, Yanli and the baby having dinner.

The family portrait.

Dagang's flat becomes meaningful in that it is creative of potential new intimacies. This is Dagang's private space, but it is also the place where Yanli works as a prostitute. Many anonymous men have stayed here in exchange for money. Yanli's customers thus imply that the seemingly private details of one's life are not necessarily free from unsolicited inspection by others. Therefore, it is a public space in terms of the trespass of Dagang's privacy.

Therefore, Dagang's flat is not a place of residence, but of transience in the conventional sense. However, this space suggests different intimate connections- Dagang with the baby, Dagang with Yanli, and even Yanli with her baby. The film challenges the idea that intimacy can only be confined within the form of the couple and within the realm of the private. Dagang's flat depicts a new intimate space out of the impossibility of intimacy in a context characterised by societal dispersion. The space of Dagang's flat creates a public world of belonging. Because it is loose and creative in definition, this suggests and requires a depth of feelings and an imaginative array of affective relations from the audience. Therefore, this space accommodates the rich possibilities for imaging and imagining intimacy in a global context.

The potential for public intimate connections is understood by the lack of the possibility of restricting intimacy to privatised spaces. The formation of intimate spaces also reflects the affirmation and connection with inner selves. The conventionally unusual relationship between Dagang and Yanli, and the intimacy formed between them are not an emergency solution for gaining warmth. They are tested and depicted cinematically as an affirmation towards inner selves and resistance towards the outside world. Thus, Dagang's flat can be interpreted as a space for the confrontation with inner realities (feelings) besides creative intimacies and possible connections. In this way the intimate spaces symbolise the spaces of interiority. The spatial transformation from a private space to a public one where the intimacy is established indicates a tendency moving away from the instability of the outside world to the asylum of the interiority, which challenges traditional understandings of private and public space. In the intimate spaces, the protagonists actually reach an understanding towards resistance to the strangeness of the outside world with self-assured intimacies. This is achieved through the starting and evolving of intimate relations. These intimate spaces thus

become the spaces of affirmation and reconciliation. There is no great dramatic struggle over this in the film, and no fleeing away. There is only adaptation. However, this quiet and active adaptation indicates the depth and strength of the Chinese sentimental in terms of mental and cultural rootedness. Therefore, the spaces of intimacy are not only the spaces for physical intimacy but also spaces for connecting to oneself. It is intimate in terms of finding an intimate affirmation.

The film thus reveals the dimension of interiority. It is a sense of assurance and confidence rather than a feeling of intimidation of the instability of the outside world. The connection with interiority ensures that the protagonists ultimately feel at home with themselves. The intimate spaces thus can be anywhere and without rootedness as the intimacy grows from within. The outside material world and external disorder actually drive the protagonists into the dimension of interiority- the connection with themselves. That is why they rejoice in spontaneity, variety, and disorder and abnormality. Far from renouncing the possibility of intimacy out of the fleeting spaces, they confront the external in subjective reality/interiority instead of negating the felt reality. To feel at home with oneself actually is an affirmation of the self in the face of a fast-changing world. As the intimacy refers to various interpersonal attachments between family, lovers, friends, groups, an attachment to oneself may also be viewed as an expression of intimacy. The outside world is transformed and accepted through the creation of an intimate connection with the interiority inside the subjects. The outside world thus can be rendered as something intimate. The depiction of the publicness of the private space in *The Orphan of Anyang* indicates the openness of the interiority. The house is not the containment of the bodies, which indicate that the interiority is not contained inside the bodies. The intimate spaces are symbolic spaces, which reflect the inward connections of

the subjects and the initiative to reconnect with the world with an affirmative sense of intimacy.

There are many moments in the film that express this sense of intimate connection and affirmation with the interiority in terms of articulating the intimate feelings. Dagang is not an eloquent man. He says very few sentences throughout the entire film. Therefore the moments when he does say something calls for the attention of the audience, giving more weight to what he utters. When he is taken into custody at the local police station, Yanli takes the baby along to visit him. There is no drama over the possibility of parting forever when they see each other on two sides of the parting net. Dagang only instructs Yanli to "treat the baby well if I die. He is my offspring." After leaving the police station, Yanli takes the baby to the noodle house where Dagang and she first met. She orders the same food for her and for Dagang as at their first meeting although Dagang is not, of course, sitting opposite her this time. She cries while she eats her noodles. This little corner of a public space is an intimate space for her. When the general atmosphere in the film is built upon a background of hopelessness, disappointment and negligence, the assumed tendency is to give up what should persist such as love, gratitude, loyalty, concern, intimacy, support, etc. However, the film uses the space of intimacy to articulate a sense of persistence from inside of the characters and the power of the Chinese sentimental in terms of restoring vitality and normality of daily life. At the end of the film, Yanli tries to run away from the police during the anti-prostitution raid. The camera has been still and distant (in other words, very little use of close-ups) for the entire film until this scene but now for the first time it starts to move and follow the characters. Among the panic, Yanli gives the baby to a person passing by. She does not escape and is eventually caught by the police. While she sits in the back of the minivan which takes all the captured prostitutes to the train station to be repatriated to their

hometowns, she looks through the tiny window on the side of the van. Suddenly the man who she has given her baby to appears in her flash back as Dagang, who is supposed to be sentenced to death for his manslaughter of the gang boss Sidan. In an interview with the Chinese film critic Cheng Qingsong at Sina.com, Wang Chao described how the audience at the Cannes Film Festival called the hands that Yanli puts the baby in at the end of the film 'the hands of God.'[12] If the end of the film indicates the beginning of another suffering because the baby loses his biological father Sidan, Dagang, and his mother successively within a short period of time, and he then falls into the hands of some unknown person, then "the hands of God" symbolise the redemption. By paralleling the sign of never-ending suffering and "the hands of God" together, the director wants to deliver the message that it is the suffering that redeems them because the belief in family, human warmth, intimacy that have been rare luxuries in the age of materialism is hardened and tested through suffering. Therefore, these intimate spaces are not only spaces for intimate interpersonal connections, but also a reflection of the determination, resistance and persistence towards the outside world in way of resuming the lost intimacies.

Long shot and long take

Both films are filmed mainly with long to medium shots. In *Still Life* extra long shots are used plentifully as well. Regarding the scale of the removal and demolition, the long to extra long shots are appropriate to reflect a documentary-like reality, and the emotional involvement. Normally the distance and lack of close detail of long shots creates a feeling of distance and removal. However, considered against the background of the Three Gorges Dam project, the long shots actually invoke more personal feelings. The camera is filming a space of disappearance. The desperation to see more and include more before everything is lost forever evokes the feeling of reluctance to let it go and nostalgia for the present. The long

shot has the similar function of emotional involvement in *The Orphan of Anyang* as well. The long shot at the beginning of the film when Dagang stops in front of a few birdcages along the city wall and stares at them indicates that he sympathises with the life of the birds. He is like them now as well- trapped in the city, the life, the situation. There is no dialogue in the entire scene. There are no close-ups or reaction shots. This requires greater engagement of the audience. The lack of dialogue means that the viewer's response is based more on assumption than on the direct speech of the characters. The combination of silence with the small figure of Dagang compared to the wall image that fills the screen conveys the director's sympathetic tone towards him.

Dagang staring at the bird cages.

The long shots in both films often serve to reduce the potential drama of a scene, compelling the audience to pay closer attention to what is happening in the scene. The long shots draw the attention of the audience to the construction of space. Together with a slow, lingering rhythm of the movement in silence, it seems as if the camera has taken the perspective of someone waiting in silence and waiting for something to happen. Of course, nothing happens and the anticipation stagnates and turns into a vague disappointment. Therefore, the attention

is drawn towards the space in the frame around the characters and any possibility of connections instead of any drama within the film. With the filmic language, the films seem to confirm Boym's conjecture that 'Perhaps what is most missed during historical cataclysms and exile is not the past and the homeland exactly, but rather this potential space of cultural experience that one has shared with one's friends and compatriots that is based neither on nation nor religion but on elective affinities.'[13]

In addition to the usage of the long shot, another prominent camera technique is use of the long take. Compared with the long shot, the long take places even more emphasis on the awareness of space, especially when the dialogue is elliptical. As Brian Henderson comments, 'it is the long take alone that permits the director to vary and develop the image without switching to another image.' Thus, he continues 'the long take makes mise-en-scène possible,' and also provides the 'time necessary for mise-en-scène space.'[14] The long take, although completed with a focus on time, actually forms a great sense of space. In the long takes, when time becomes irrelevant to what is happening, the space becomes prominent. Therefore, the long take allows the audience to be able to see the environment more closely and ponder on the choice of the background. Henderson says that 'the long take rarely appears in its pure state (as a sequence filmed in one shot), but almost always in combination with some form of editing [....] Thus long-take style necessarily involves long takes and cutting in some combination.'[15] However, when it does appear as uninterrupted and without any editing, the long take gives emphasis to the space rather than the dramatic developments within the scene. A good example of this can be given of the inside of the noodle house in *The Orphan of Anayng* which appears in long take twice in the film. Altogether almost ten minutes are allocated to the two scenes in order to captivate the audience's attention and accumulate their thoughts upon the space in terms of the cinematic construction of the spaces and the

endowment of meaning. The seemingly random space within the noodle house becomes the intimate space for the memories of the protagonists. This further illustrates the creativity of the production of the intimate spaces in the film.

The first time Dagang and Yanli meet is at a noodle house. The shot is filmed from a distance. The shot is still and without any movement for the entire scene which lasts almost 5 minutes. After the initial few sentences of conversation as Yanli finds out who Dagang is and about his situation, Yanli orders two bowls of noodles- a bigger one for Dagang and a small one for herself. The rest of the scene captures the two of them as they eat the noodles. Yanli appears in this scene in her dark mini skirt and bright orange jacket, a lot of make-up and pinned up hair style. The second time when the noodle house appears in the film again is after Dagang is arrested by the police on the manslaughter charge for the murder of gang boss Sidan. Yanli takes the baby to visit him. After leaving the police station, Yanli goes to the noodle house and again orders a bigger portion that is supposed to be for Dagang and a smaller portion for herself. The shot is positioned the same as in the first noodle house scene. Yanli stares at Dangang's noodle bowl across the table for a little while then starts eating her own. The whole scene is almost 5 minutes long again. Yanli starts to cry quietly while she eats and occasionally looks across the table at Dagang's bowl. This time, she appears in a pair of black trousers, a dark grey winter coat, no make-up, and wearing a ponytail with a light pink hair band. She looks more like a caring mother and a virtuous wife in the traditional image.

The first time that Dagang and Yanli meet at the noodle house.

The second time at the noodle house when Yanli goes alone as Dagang is in custody.

The contrast of the two scenes provides meaning beyond the language. The change in appearance of Yanli indicates her conscious return to the family. Dagang does not have money or any material possessions to attract her other than the ability to give her the sense of family belonging. Her crying across the table at Dagang's noodle bowl shows her emotional attachment to Dagang, or more precisely to a sense of family belonging. Life was just starting

to improve for both of them- Yanli was suggesting to Dagang that she would give up her line of work next spring just before he is arrested. Instead a new perspective of life is now in store for both of them. However, the noodle house is still the same, but the people at the table are different. This further emphasises the instability of the chance encounters. It also creates an aura to fill in this ordinary space with intimate feelings, memories, perspectives and reverie. This seemingly public space becomes personal and intimate in terms of the personal investment made within the space. This corner of the noodle house will always be remembered by Yanli and the audience as the intimate space that initiates and provides the hope and possibility of belonging.

The long take serves to preserve the potential space. It might be argued that the long take 'serves to preserve and contemplate on the passage of time.'[16] However, it is exactly because of the emphasis on the passage of time and the awareness derived from the agitation of waiting that calls the attention of the audience to the space of the frame and what has constituted the space rather than focusing on the foreground of what is happening in terms of action. In the long and tedious waiting, nothing significant happens plot wise. It is through time and the deadlock that is sensed between human and time that the camera catches the space of intimacy. When there is no dialogue, the observance of space becomes even more obvious.

It might be argued that these spaces of intimacy indicate the instability and fleetingness of the intimacy. However, each story from the two films does have continuous unfinished relationships lingering into the future which provides lasting and potential intimacies. Sanming will come back to Fengjie in a year to pay off the debt and get his ex-wife and daughter back; Shen Hong is meeting her lover in Yicang as she agrees with her husband that

they must start a new life; Yanli has given the baby to a man absentmindedly when she is running away from the police, however, the man appears in her flashback as Dagang, therefore, the films leaves hope of the possibility that they might meet again in the future. No stories actually have a certain ending. However, they all indicate a continuation of the intimacy. The intimacy will be formed again wherever the intimate spaces are provided. Therefore, the intimate spaces emphasise even more of the connection with the interiority- not just one's own, but also with others' interiorities. It is up to the individuals to construct a space of intimacy, rather than to take the intimacy to where the house is. With discontent to the outside world, the new space of intimacy is centred around the people. The intimate spaces gain substance through personal investment rather than through the physical settings and material possessions inside the space.

Even though the intimate spaces are depicted as transient, they are constructed through conscious efforts. The contrast between the transience of the spaces and the intimacies is to give emphasis to the endurance of the Chinese sentimental and its adaptability. For example, Dagang forms an unconventional form of family with a prostitute and her baby. The prostitute even works from his flat. However, this is not forced upon him. After Dagang gets the first payment from Yanli, he opens a bicycle repair stall outside his flat building. A local police man comes to chat to him and volunteers to introduce a girlfriend to him. In the following scene, Dagang and Yanli meet up for the second time. Dagang asks Yanli whether he can give the baby back. Although he does not explain why he wants to do this, from the logical order of the scenes it could be guessed that his tendency is towards accepting the girlfriend that is going to be introduced to him and somehow starting a family of his own. However, in the next scene, Dagang and Yanli are lying together on Dagang's bed. The following is the conversation that takes place between them:

"What is your name?"

"Feng Yanli."

"Don't be a Xiaojie anymore."[17]

"What else can I do if I am not a Xiaojie?"

"Then come and work here. I will take care of the baby."

In the next scene, Dagang repairs a bicycle at his stall with the baby sitting in a basket beside him. Yanli wanders in front of the shops along the street trying to capture her potential customers. Therefore, the decision to be together is one of Dagang's own choice. He gives up the possibility of starting his own family and takes in the prostitute and her baby. This conscious decision is prominent set against the background of the spaces of transience and the chance encounters inside the spaces. However, it emphasises in part the persistence of the Chinese sentimental and the multi-faceted representation it takes in the form of cultural resistance and cultural insistence.

I began this chapter by describing the importance of space in many films in Chinese cinema since the 1990s. The significance of these spaces is that they are fleeting, unstable and full of chance encounters. However, these spaces are depicted as intimate spaces as they contain the feelings of intimacy and produce/reproduce understandings of intimacy. These spaces provide the possibility and creativity towards traditional conceptions of being at home and being intimate, which is often related to the house/home image and confined within a family space. These spaces might not be (or are far from being) conventionally understood as intimate spaces. However, they facilitate an intellectual understanding of the change and

formation of new interpersonal relations in the space of modernity that is hugely impacted by a material-driven economy.

If nostalgia means a temporal disjuncture that goes back to the imaginative home, even just the tendency of looking for/forming an alternative intimacy to fulfil the longing for belonging to compensate for the displaced home, then the construction of intimate spaces symbolically confronts the strangeness and alienation of the world without escaping from the present. This honest way of facing oneself is a manifestation of interiority that is a form of survival and resistance to the exterior world.

The alienating force brought on by the global economy and the infrastructural changes within China are depicted as destructive for individual life. However, this is also depicted as a coercive power in terms of re-establishing interpersonal relations. The construction of intimate spaces is a form of cultural resistance in terms of using the persistence of the home-longing to resist the destructive force of globalisation. The Chinese sentimental is depicted as being more powerful than ever in terms of gluing the broken pieces back together as the moral support of a continuous life when the surface of that life seems to be halted. The reflection on the firmness of the interiority facing the harsh reality symbolises the strength of the home-longing and longing for belonging in terms of an affective resistance with emphasis on the intimate spaces.

Film as a visual medium creates the spaces of intimacy and then presents them as 'transferential' spaces where the public can see and form feelings towards it. Stephen Luis Vilaseca cites Peter Brooks who observes that 'The transferential space is…the place of fictions, of reproductions, of reprints, of repetitions - in which change is effected, through

interpretation and construction.'[18] Therefore, the medium of film provides the opportunity for the audience to participate, negotiate and understand the production of intimate spaces in Chinese cinema in the 1990s. Although the spaces of intimacy are supposed to be private and hidden, they are constructed differently in many of the films in Chinese cinema of this period. They are constructed instead as more public and with more variable expressions of being at home. This challenges the traditional conception of home and intimacy. It also provides a greater opportunity for understanding the Chinese sentimental and its variations.

[1] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001, 256.

[2] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space: the Classical Look at How We Experience Intimate Places*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994, xxxvi.

[3] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 256.

[4] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 9-10.

[5] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 252.

[6] *Ibid*., 254.

[7] *Ibid*., 251.

[8] The buying and selling of women still occurs in some parts of China, most commonly due to the isolation of the places or due to the isolating nature of male occupations that makes meeting female partners more difficult. Although it is not clearly established in this film, Sanming might have bought Yaomei because his job as a coal miner makes his opportunity to meet women extremely limited.

[9] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 255.

[10] Xiaoping Lin, "Behind Chinese Walls: the Uncanny Power of Matriarchy in Wang Chao's *The Orphan of Anyang*," in *Third Text* 2 Vol. 23 March (2009), 195.

[11] *Ibid*., 195.

[12] Cheng Qingsong, "Duihua: Wang Chao- zhenzheng de miandui zhenzheng" (Dialogue: Wang Chao- Facing the Truth)," June 17, 2002 at http://ent.sina.com.cn/r/2002-06-17/87705.html.

[13] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 53.

[14] Brian Henderson, *A Critique of Film Theory*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1980, 49.

[15] *Ibid*., 50.

[16] Jie Li, "From Auto-ethnography to Autobiography: Representations of the Past in Contemporary Chinese Cinema," in *Senses of Cinema* 45, 2007.

[17] "Xiaojie" literally means "miss." This term was given to refer to prostitutes at the beginning of the reform and opening up period when businessmen from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau came to places of sexual entertainment in mainland China. The expression soon spread all over China because of the fast development of the prostitution industry and also the superficial decency of the word.

[18] I borrow the term 'transferential space' from Stephen Luis Vilaseca in his study of El cuarto de atrás. Although it is employed in a totally different context, 'transferential space' can also be used in the Chinese context. In the article, the relation between the 'transferential space' and Freud's concept of transference is articulated. Just as the patients transfer their emotions to the analyst during conversation which means that secretive emotions go outwards and public, the 'transferential space' is a place that is open and public. The intimate spaces in the films I discuss in this chapter are combinations of intimate spaces and 'transferential spaces.' See Stephen Luis Vilaseca, "From Spaces of Intimacy to Transferential Space: The Structure of Memory and the Reconciliation with Strangeness in El cuarto de atrás," in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 3 Vol. 83 (2006), 187.

CHAPTER 6

A Sentimental Local through the Carnivalisation of Language: The Rhetorical Strategy of *The Dream Factory*[1]

In the previous chapters of this study I have discussed the ingrained tendency within Chinese cinema for being concerned with the sentimental- whether this is represented through home-longing, homecoming, and the sacrifices that sometimes must be made towards preserving or protecting the integrity of the home. Even when the image of home and the family relationship is under deconstruction structurally, various manifestations are still deliberately imagined and articulated through filmic images, such as nostalgia in longing for home belonging and the construction of intimate spaces where the home/family relations are reconciled. All of these examples demonstrate a quality of cultural rootedness of the Chinese sentimental. This is also manifested through the adaptation and transformation of the sentimental as a local response to global engagement. Taking this idea further, this local response can also be regarded as a type of cultural resistance with very Chinese characteristics. Having said that, even the notion of Chineseness of typical Chinese characteristics being identifiably uniform and national is clearly problematic because of the heterogeneity of China.

Therefore, Chinese cinema has been regarded as Chinese language cinema rather than as a Chinese national cinema as was mentioned in the introduction to this study. But this raises a further problem. What therefore also happens when Chinese as language itself becomes problematic, for instance when it implies exclusivity rather than inclusivity? What kind of sentimental does it form locally? This chapter will explore this question in terms of the articulation of the sentimental through the use of language, especially the 'carnivalization' of

the language.[2] This term is borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin's 'carnivalization of literature' which refers to transposing the free, united, equal and profane nature of the carnival into the language of literature. I will discuss the characteristics of the language in Feng Xiaogang's *He sui pain* (New Year films), with a focus on *The Dream Factory* (*Jia fang yi fang*, 1997)- the first *He sui pian* in China that brought director Feng Xiaogang the success that laid the foundations for his career in the film industry. I will argue that his films select and form a culturally epistemic community through the deliberate carnivalisation of language that is a feature of his films. Feng recycles and reuses quotations from locally well-known and historical characters and from classical films, as well as referencing fragments from notable historical periods, and then codes them into local contexts and contemporary settings displayed by seemingly random choices of location. The reference to jokes, puns, allusions, anecdotes, and idioms deliberately addresses Feng's filmic language to an exclusive community that must have a shared experience and understanding of the changes and rite of passage to the present to be able to participate in it. The language becomes the facilitator of an internal exclusive form of communication- comprehension of it can only be achieved by the members inside the community.

The exclusivity of the language does not stem from the employment of the Beijing accent of Mandarin or from the use of any particular local dialect. It is shown to all audiences as a result of global circulation. However, it is exactly because of the global openness of the films that it is possible for the films to distinguish between a culturally epistemic community and the cultural outsiders. This community facilitates the circulation of the home-longing sentimental because everyone located inside that community can establish a great sense of belonging and consistency of togetherness. The success of Feng Xiaogang's films demonstrates the populist demand and celebration of the sentimental. The language can only

be fully appreciated by the people who have the potential of connecting to the resource both historically and culturally. In the pages that follow I will identify this as a cohesive force which has exclusively bonded the community members. In the final part of the chapter I will use Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of 'the carnivalization of literature' to discuss the carnivalisation of the language in Feng Xiaogang's films in order to reflect on how the epistemic community is established through the carnivalisation of the language.

Feng Xiaogang and *He Sui Pian*

He sui pian is a type of films that are released for the New Year celebration period. It initially came to mainland China from Hong Kong. This is the name given to films that are produced and released for the New Year and Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) period. The emergence of *He sui pian* is part of the commercial advertising strategy to raise publicity for the films in order to be able to distinguish the uniqueness of the production for its celebrity cast, prominent investment, or other special qualities that enhance the appeal, thereby attracting the attention of the audience. During the Spring Festival in 1995, mainland China imported and showed the film *Rumble in the Bronx* (*Hong fan qu*, Stanley Tong, 1995) starring Jackie Chan. The film was a huge commercial sensation in the mainland, bringing a box-office return of 80 million Chinese Yuan. The scale of this commercial success was unprecedented at this time in the Chinese calendar and was something of a shock for the film market in mainland China. Prior to 1995 cinemas in China had traditionally closed for at least 3 days during the Spring Festival. This was the first time that a film had deliberately been exhibited for the allocated festive showing slot.[3]

Initially most of the *He sui pian* that were released were comedies. The genre has diversified as it has developed. Therefore, they are also called *He sui Comedy* (*He sui xijv*). That genre is

well suited to the Spring Festival atmosphere that pervades China during its annual festive period. Normally during the Spring Festival, Chinese audiences tend to prefer watching a "feel good" or "bringing good luck" type of film, rather than horror, disaster, or crime/gangster genres although in recent years all kinds of film genres have been enlisted among the *He sui pian* showing slot (mainly for commercial reasons). However, feel-good plots can sometimes cause aesthetic apathy due to the formulaic, simplistic or dull story lines without catching complications. Therefore, it is also important to create interesting conflicts, either by the addition of unexpected intrigues within the story lines, the introduction of famous film stars, or the creation of more dramatic language within the film, as well as concluding with a happy ending. The Spring Festival is the time of the year that is dedicated towards the reunion of the family in Chinese culture. An entertaining and memorable comedy is therefore an attractive and pleasant form of entertainment that is conducive to mobilising the family atmosphere.

The name and reputation of Feng Xiagang is closely tied with *He sui pian* in China. The director is called by the media "the father of Chinese *He sui pian*." At the end of 1997, *The Dream Factory* was shown in Beijing and shocked the film community by its success in box office returns. *The Dream Factory* was the first Chinese film that was produced within mainland China in order to be released for the Chinese New Year time slot. The total cost of the production amounted to 4 million Chinese Yuan, but the film took 30 million Chinese Yuan in box-office returns, a success that topped the chart of box-office returns for that year.[4] In the following years, Feng Xiaogang directed *Be There or Be Square* (*Bu jian bu san*, 1998) and *Sorry Baby* (*Mei wan mei liao*, 1999). These films established Feng's individual and distinctive style and brand of film. They also consolidated his position as the most celebrated film director at the box-office in China. Since 2000, he has directed other *He sui pian* such as

Big Shot's Funeral (*Da wan*, 2001), *Cell Phone* (*Shou ji*, 2003), *A World Without Thieves* (*Tian xia wu zei*, 2004), *If You Are the One* (*Fei cheng wu rao*, 2008), and *If You Are the One 2* (*Fei cheng wu rao* 2, 2010). Feng has also directed other genres that are not comedies fitting into the *He sui pian* category. Examples of other Feng's productions would be *A Sigh* (*Yi sheng tanxi*, 2000), *The Banquet* (*Ye yan*, 2006), *The Assembly* (*Ji jie hao*, 2007), and *Aftershock* (*Tangshan da dizhen*, 2010). This chapter will focus mainly on a discussion of the language of Feng Xiaogang's *He sui Comedy* in general with emphasis given in particular to his first production entitled *The Dream Factory*. The artistic creativity and style of his many other films lie outside the parameter of this particular discussion.

The shared characteristic of all his productions, no matter what genre each film belongs to, is that they all gain high, if not the best, box-office return for the year of the film's release. Dai Jinhua comments that the success of Feng Xiaogang's films is due to three reasons. The first factor is the emergence of a mass culture in China, which has responded generally to the cultural freedom enjoyed in the post-Mao era and that has also provided an environment for the appreciation of non-elite cultural phenomenon such as Feng Xiagang's films.

The second reason is the emergence of the "Wang Shuo phenomenon" in the late 1980s. Wang Shuo is a writer whose works and language style established the so-called "riffraff literature" in China which posed a considerable challenge to the conventional elite literary culture. Wang Shuo's language is demonic and full of energy. He mainly ridicules the authoritative narrative and elite position of the intellectuals through parody and irony. The experience of working together with Wang Shuo in his early career demonstrably had a significant influence on the language style that would be employed in Feng Xiaogang's films. I will discuss in more detail the influence of Wang Shuo's language and the importance of the

Wang Shuo phenomenon in Chinese culture in the following part of this chapter. Dai Jinhua asserts that although Feng Xiaogang has inherited the language style of Wang Shuo, he inserts his own form of the sentimental into his films. In other words it is the sentimental that becomes the distinguishing characteristic of Feng Xiaogang's films.

The third feature of Feng's cinematic success cited by Dai Jinhua relates to the changes that have taken place in the Chinese film market. At the end of 1994, after half a century of isolation from Hollywood film, China imported 10 Hollywood films which encouraged many Chinese film-lovers to go to the cinema to view them. Before this time, China had a film culture largely without the visual cinematic experience- films were produced and discussed by journalists and critics in newspapers and magazines, yet not many people actually went to the cinema to view the films in person. Those initial few imported Hollywood films quickly took over the Chinese film market, which resulted in the dislocation of the Chinese film market for Chinese-produced films. Feng Xiaogang's films have emerged amongst this context. The success of his films has changed the allocation of profit within the Chinese film market- his films have been among the few Chinese productions that have managed to take a meaningful percentage of commercial takings within the Chinese film market in the face of the stiff competition posed by Hollywood films.[5] In 2003, *Cell Phone* grossed 56 million Chinese Yuan in box-office returns beating *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* which in turn took 52 million Chinese Yuan. In 2004 *A World without Thieves* amassed 120 million Chinese Yuan in box-office returns, outdoing *The Lord of Rings: The Return of the King* which grossed 87 million Chinese Yuan.[6]

This has been a remarkable professional achievement for director Feng Xiaogang within the Chinese film market and perhaps an unlikely commercial success in terms of being able to

compete with the domination and allure of Hollywood's films. His films have also attained for him the brand of Chinese *He sui pian*. The inheritance of Wang Shuo's language style facilitates an inheritance of resistance and challenge towards the hierarchy in Feng Xiaogang's films although this is undertaken with his unique touch of the sentimental. This element has contributed tremendously to the success of his films. The popularity of Feng's films also embodies a kind of resistance towards the transnational cultural expansion (or invasion) that can be revealed through statistical trends of the film market. To a certain degree, Feng Xiaogang has made *He sui pian* a unique type of film in China that suits the Chinese tradition and the Chinese audience. The popularity amongst audiences means that his films normally guarantee box-office sales. It has been a successful story since the early 1990s when the Chinese film industry entered into the practice of market competition. *He sui pian*, especially Feng Xiaogang's *He sui pian*, has managed to chart a surviving path for the local film industry while it has faced stiff competition in the film market from Hollywood, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other regions as well. The allocated showing slot for *He sui pian* during the Spring Festival has become a prominent phenomenon in the Chinese film history and industry in the past 15 years.

Feng Xiaogang has not only established his own brand of *He sui pian*, he has also himself become a brand. This means that audiences have a set of expectations for his films. There has also developed a dependence on the entertaining effect of his cinematic releases to produce a complete festival atmosphere. Therefore, his films have created a cultural community that is centred on either watching and talking about his films and the characters within them, or on applying the language within Feng's films as catch-phrases in daily life. These trends have gradually established a relationship between his films and the audience of continuous

consumption. Watching one of Feng's films during the Spring Festival celebration has become a defining habit of cultural consumption for Chinese audiences.

The success of Feng Xiaogang's films does not mean that his films are intrinsically the best or most artistically significant, or that he is the greatest contemporary Chinese film director. A further reason for the success of his films, besides the three reasons identified by Dai Jinhua, lies behind Feng's ability to identify with ordinary people's lives. This identification contributes to the decision of the style of the language and the response towards the rise of the mass culture. Feng Xiaogang's *He sui comedy* predominantly features "*Xiao ren wu*" (ordinary people) and their daily lives, whether it is the laid-off worker Yao Yuan in *The Dream Factory*, or the hard-working streetwise immigrant Liu Yuan in *Be There or Be Square*, or the van driver Han Dong who looks after his comatose sister and takes revenge on his boss who refuses to pay him by tricking him into paying an extremely extravagant and expensive meal in *Sorry Baby*. They are all figures that can be found in ordinary life. Jia Leilei points out that Feng Xiaogang entered the film industry from a background in television production, which played a large part in informing and strengthening his consciousness and awareness of public/mass perspective in his film productions. 'Television is a type of art that is more concerned with the public, more entertaining and more commercialised compared to film, no matter in terms of the difference of the management system or the circumstances of the film market in reality.'[7] The focus on "*Xiao ren wu*" facilitates an environment for the articulation and popularity of the language of Feng Xiaogang's films. Feng Xiaogang's *He sui pian* functions to create a sense of community by drawing everyone in front of the screen to identify with the characters from the films, and to laugh together with the people at least in the same room. The holiday itself of course also provides a sense of belonging through a sharing of the true festive atmosphere and

appreciation of the importance of the festive spirit. The various celebratory programmes and activities also cluster the Chinese population as a community at this time in the Chinese calendar. Therefore, the holiday atmosphere also contributes to the community creating function of Feng Xiaogang's films. The language in his films is full of parodies and allusions that are specific to the culture. This inextricably distinguishes the insiders of a culture from the outsiders. What the language achieves is the sentimental from the local - the community who partakes in the history and the present of the culture. Viewing Feng's films becomes a very act of remembering the history of the culture, and this invokes the sentimental in the sense of belonging. The local here refers to more than simply a spatial concept. It is also a 'quality' that is permissive and abstract which holds the community together through the sharing and remembering of the past and the present.[8]

Feng Xiaogang's films create a totally Chinese cultural context in which traditional values are appreciated and shared, and the sentimental of home-belonging is achieved. For example, in *The Dream Factory*, the film criticises the falseness and vanity of the nouveau riche and celebrities within the commodity economy, and praises the stubborn persistence of traditional love. The film is light-hearted and the stories are random. However, it provides something for the audience to reflect upon after the viewing. The traditional moral principles and cultural values are disseminated through the viewing itself. The festive and communal spirit of the Spring Festival for which the *He sui pian* is produced also provides adequate opportunity for uncovering the audience's aesthetic and empathic potential, which guarantees the wide articulation of Feng Xiaogang's films. The language of his films, under these circumstances, becomes a site of forming a communal rite of solidarity by pulling audiences into the intentional domain of shared memories, histories, pains, and laughter. Before we move onto a discussion of the rhetorical strategy of Feng Xiaogang's films, I will spare a few pages to

discuss Wang Shuo in terms of the artistic influence that he has had on Feng Xiaogang's language style.

Wang Shuo's Influence and the Language in Feng Xiaogang's Films

Wang Shuo is a well-known writer in China. He is celebrated for his language style replete with irony and ridicule and for his contribution to the construction of a new Chinese popular culture. His works are generally considered to be bold and creative because they oppose the authoritative narrative and the elite position of Chinese intellectuals. His domineering style has gained him a name for his type of writing- *Pizi wenxue* which translates as "riffraff literature."[9] He and his followers criticise the so-called sublime and majestic nature of elitist writers, undermining their superior status and the enlightening feature that they assume for their works. His domineering language and the challenge he poses towards authority and hierarchy in general have caused considerable stirrings and vigorous debates over certain social and cultural phenomena. Especially since the late 1980s, many of his works have been adapted into television or film screenplays. He has become even more well-known in the public sphere. The year 1988 is even called 'Wang Shuo film year' because four of his novels were adapted into films: *Half Flame, Half Water* (*Yiban shi huoyan, yiban shi haishui*, Xia Gang) was adapted from the novella of the same name (1986); *Transmigration* (*Lunhui*, Huang jianxin) was adapted from *Surfacing* (*Fuchu haimian*, 1985); *Deep Breath* (*Da chuanqi*, Ye Daying) was adapted from *The Rubber Man* (*Xiangpi ren*, 1986)); and *The Troubleshooters* (*Wan zhu*, Mi Jiashan) was adapted from the novella of the same name (1987).[10] This is an unprecedented phenomenon in Chinese film production history in that the works from one single writer have been so intensely adapted into film screenplays. The film *In the Heat of the Sun* that I have discussed in chapter 4 was also adapted from one of Wang Shuo's novella entitled *Ferocious Animals* (*Dongwu xiongmeng*, 1991).

Regarding Wang Shuo's novels, Wang Meng, an established Chinese writer, comments that:

> [Wang Shuo's works] do not raise any questions and do not intend to answer any questions either; they do not focus on workers, peasants and soldiers, or on official elites and intellectuals; his works do not describe revolutionaries or anti-revolutionaries, or any characters who have historical significance- his works do not consider characters as being historical or social; his works do not praise truthfulness, kindness and glory, or castigate fallacy, ugliness and maliciousness, or even distinguish the difference between them; his works do not intend to give or promise anything to the readers; his works are not progressive, or reactionary; his works are not noble and they do not avoid dirty thoughts; you cannot put his works in any category, they are not too grey either; they do not bear much weight (I used to call this 'weightlessness')[….][11]

From Wang Meng's assessment, it is obvious that Wang Shuo's works do not have any didactic function that is conventionally assumed of the writers and their works in China. In fact, the lack of a didactic agenda is a way of forming a different language that opposes elitist intellectual positions. His novels satirise the function of cultural enlightenment that the elite culture assumes.

Chinese writers are generally patronised by the government and the public as elevated professionals who are supposed to provide the spiritual food for the nation. They should be the leaders of moral trends and their works should fulfil an educational function. They appear to be above the masses and have the power to teach and inform. However, when Wang Shuo came onto the scene he claimed that 'I am a commodity fetishist. I can hardly reject money.'[12] His market consciousness and the explicit statements expressing his love for the commodification of literature opposed both official ideology and elitist intellectual discourse. Wang Shuo therefore does not fit neatly into the conventional system and it was only possible for him to attain a position from which to be able to speak because of the new space that opened up with the development of cultural marketisation. For example, when Wang Shuo discusses his initial inspiration for writing his first novel *The Air Stewardess* (*Kongzhong*

xiaojie, 1984), he explicitly states that he realised that the story of an air stewardess would be appealing and would be easy to sell because travelling by plane was still a luxury that was rarely experienced by the majority of the population at the time.[13] Although Wang Shuo always explicitly expresses his sense of a keen commercial awareness, when one reads the novel *The Air Stewardess*, it is not difficult to accept that his concern for marketability does not suppress his pursuit of sophisticated literary creativity. His sense of market awareness actually helps Wang to air his voice and his radical thoughts. His works question the lofty and privileged status of Chinese intellectuals in general and their roles of enlightening the general public. For example, his novella *Nothing Serious At All* (*Yidian zhengjing meiyou*, 1989) subverts the enlightening roles of the writers. Wang decodes this to assert that the relationship between the national culture and the state ideology attempts to subject the people to the unquestionable state authority. His works, representative of a new Chinese popular culture, threatens and even destroys the distinction between serious culture and popular culture and claims a resistance to discursive power and a stance of contesting official control and elitist suppression.

Wang Shuo's language style has had a big influence on Feng Xiaogang in terms of the language style that he deploys in his films. In fact, only one of the *He sui pian* produced by Feng Xiaogang is a direct adaptation of one of Wang Shuo's novella. *The Dream Factory* is adapted from *You Are not a Commoner* (*Ni bushi yige suren*, 1992). Feng Xiaogang once said that '[t]hese ordinary lives and the language used in ordinary life become vivid and fascinating after Wang Shuo's seemingly casual description. This timely perspective and the angle to observe life has exerted great influence on my later career as a director. His language becomes a programmatic literature that guides my production of *He sui pian*.'[14] The recognition and application of Wang Shuo's linguistic style was partially a result of their long

term working relationship. In early 1989, Wang Shuo started the *Sea Horse Film Creation Group* with himself as the head of the group. Feng Xiaogang was also a member of the group. They later started the *Good Dream Company* with Wang Shuo as chairman and Feng Xiaogang as general manager. Their longstanding working relationship has meant that Feng Xiaogang acknowledges and identifies with the style of Wang Shuo's language. Feng Xiaogang has admitted many times to the media that Wang Shuo's creativity has had a big impact on him. Before Feng Xiaogang began his production career in film, he was the playwright together with Wang Shuo of a successful and well-received television series called *Stories from the Editorial Board* (*Bianjibu de gushi*, 1991). His first film production *Farewell My Love* (*Yong shi wo Ai*, 1994) was then based on Wang Shuo's novella *Farewell My Love* (1989) and *The Air Stewardess*.[15]

Wang Shuo's language gives Feng Xiaogang's films an inspiringly entertaining element. The political and cultural sarcasm embodied by the riffraff flavoured Beijing dialect features Wang Shuo's language. His language is loquacious (*pin*) - it gives the audience the feeling that characters talk excessively without any clear meaning or purpose to their speech. His language is also characterised by talking freely (*kan*) which refers to various kinds of talking, from casual chatting to big-talk boasting. His language reflects the cultural phenomenon of openness in the post-Mao era because it exposes one of the means of social involvement of common people. Wang Shuo's language makes his work a unique type of literature that represents the political strength of the new public space. This indeed gives more space and liberty to the revitalisation of Chinese language and culture.

In the 1990s as the market economy evolved and developed, the film industry faced confusion and uncertainty within the process of economic restructuring. China was

transforming into a society that was characterised by rapid industrialisation from what had been a traditionally agricultural society. The film industry seemed unable to locate a matching language to cope with the new social and cultural changes and challenges. Faced with the new urban life and swift urbanisation, the arts field in general was in a state of speechlessness- lacking an appropriate language to echo the culture, the social psychology and the modern life style.[16] Influenced by Wang Shuo, the language in Feng Xiaogang's films has facilitated the communication with the audience in the context of this language vacuum. Similarly to Wang Shuo who does not pursue formal recognition in the field of literature, Feng Xiaogang also does not deliberately seek artistic recognition at international film festivals in contrast to the success that is enjoyed by many of his peer directors such as Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige. Instead he creates films for the mass lives, and he caters for the aesthetic psyche of the ordinary audience. Feng Xiaogang's films focus on the lives of ordinary people (*Xiao ren wu*) and their happiness, sorrow, struggles and persistence in life. His films thus resonate with the living situation encountered by ordinary people. What therefore catches the attention of audiences and touches them is the sincere connection and comfort reflected through the description of trouble, desire and disappointment of the characters in these films. Therefore, there is no preaching or educating in the films. There is only understanding and aesthetic harmony. The characters can often be greedy and vulgar, but they are real and they reflect the real struggles in life.

The television series and film adaptations make Wang Shuo's language an urban fad. By aiming to provide entertainment rather than to educate or to instil social messages, these screen productions provide memorable conversational material for the ordinary Chinese cinema goer.[17] As we have seen, Feng Xiaogang adopts the language style of Wang Shuo. However, he also gets rid of the revolt, the intensity and the insensitivity of Wang's language,

which means that his films are more widely accepted by audiences without provoking conflict and opposition. Therefore, Feng Xiaogang's films provide a great deal of response od the sentimental in view of the fast pace of the materially-driven urban life.

However, the profound message that I will now explore stems not just from the films themselves, but from the effect that the language of Feng Xiaogang's films has created. The following part discusses how the creation of a local community through the sentimental is produced through the utilisation of Feng Xiaogang's language.

Carnivalisation of Language and the Construction of the Sentimental Local

In Mikhail Bakhtin's discussion of 'the carnivalization of literature,' he mentions what the carnival meant to people in the Middle Ages:

> It could be said (with certain reservations, of course) that a person of the Middle Ages lived, as it were, *two lives*: one was the *official* life, monolithically serious and gloomy, subjugated to a strict hierarchical order, full of terror, dogmatism, reverence, and piety; the other was the *life of the carnival square*, free and unrestricted, full of ambivalent laughter, blasphemy, the profanation of everything sacred, full of debasing and obscenities, familiar contact with everyone and everything. Both these lives were legitimate, but separated by strict temporal boundaries.[18]

According to Bakhtin, the carnival provides the opportunity for the participants to present a different life free from official orders and social strictures. Everyone is an equal participant and shares in the world of 'the carnival square.' There is no difference between performers and spectators because everyone lives in 'a *carnivalistic life*.' Bakhtin explains that 'carnivalistic life is life drawn out of its *usual* rut, it is to some extent "life turned inside out," "the reverse side of the world."'[19]

When locating the carnival spirit in the language of literature, Bakhtin argues that the

> Carnival has worked out an entire language of symbolic concretely sensuous forms- from large and complex mass actions to individual carnivalistic gestures. This language, in a differentiated and even (as in any language) articulate way, gave expression to a unified (but complex) carnival sense of the world, permeating all its forms. This language cannot be translated in any full or adequate way into a verbal language, and much less into a language of abstract concepts, but it is amenable to a certain transposition into a language of artistic images that has something in common with its concretely sensuous nature; that is, it can be transposed into the language of literature. We are calling this transposition of carnival into the language of literature the carnivalization of literature.[20]

Therefore, being equal and united, being free, and celebrating the profanation of the language are the characteristics that embody 'the carnivalization of literature.' The spirit of the carnival itself poses challenges to authority and to social oppression. A united community is thus formed under the same spirit. This applies to the language in Feng Xiaogang's films. The linguistic application within his films that resembles the language style of Wang Shuo is akin to 'the carnivalization of literature' as described by Bakhtin. Through the carnivalisation of the language, everyone becomes equal and without classification. 'People who in life are separated by impenetrable hierarchical barriers enter into free familiar contact on the carnival square.'[21] Therefore, the carnival community is established in spite of the intrusion of a global, unequal and material-driven economy. According to Bakhtin, there are no 'laws, prohibitions, and restrictions that determine the structure and order of ordinary.'[22] There is no 'hierarchical structure and all the forms of terror, reverence, piety, and etiquette connected with it.'[23] Feng Xiaogang's language creates this '*free and familiar contact among people.*'[24] And this 'familiar contact' determines 'the outspoken carnivalistic word.'[25] Therefore, in the carnival world, the 'new mode of interrelationship between individuals' introduces new ways to counteract the inequalities that are caused by social hierarchy. The community that the language creates is in tune with this sense of the carnivalistic sense of the world. Thus Feng Xiaogang's films, because of the language that they utilise, create a community where

everyone is equal within and where everyone shares the same ideals of opposing the oppressive outside world.

Parody is the main application of Feng Xiaogang's language that enables his productions to achieve the carnival spirit in the films. Classical phrases from novels or revolutionary films are used in his films in totally different or even opposite settings and contexts. This can be explained through what Bakhtin calls the 'carnivalistic parodies on sacred texts and sayings, etc' in order to gain equality and freedom.[26] When Bakhtin describes the 'carnivalistic acts,' he explains that 'the primary carnivalistic act is the *mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king.*'[27] The clowns are crowned as a king at the carnival. This act itself is a statement of decrowning the real king in terms of taking the high down to earth. This spirit of crowning and decrowning is also applicable to the language of Feng Xiaogang's films, which demonstrates the 'violation of the usual and the generally accepted, life drawn out of its usual rut.'[28] According to Bakhtin, parody itself is of a 'carnivalistic nature.' Parody is 'organically inherent' in terms of the carnival character. As he says, 'Parodying is the creation of a *decrowning double.*'[29] What he means here is that parody means to crown the ordinary people who are involved in the parody; while at the same time decrowning the high officials who are the objects of the parody. 'Carnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid.'[30] In Feng Xiaogang's films, the characters' use of classical phrases is one way that the ordinary characters are thus crowned, while also decrowning the authoritative position of the classical narrative, which manifests the carnivalisation of the language. The distance between the elite and the ordinary is in this way reduced through the carnivalisation of the language. Therefore, the films are more accepted by audiences that are

able to identify with the atmosphere and feel that they are being a part of it, and therefore also have a real empathic connection towards the lives of the characters in the films.

The carnival character of the language employed in Feng Xiaogang's films has been widely recognised. For instance Dang Jun writes that the 'characters' language that accompanies the story plot greatly enriches and complements the simple story line through merging with the story line as a whole.'[31] Many critics have noticed that '[t]he main attracting aspect [of Feng Xiaogang's films] is not the plot, but the parody and humorous language.'[32] It has been said that '[t]he density of language is immense in Feng Xiaogang's films. More than 70% of the shots are sustained by language. It is also the language that attracts the audience the most.'[33] Although cinematically the individual shots in Feng Xiaogang's films are beautifully crafted and structured, these critical observations on the language nevertheless rightly illuminate the importance and function of language in Feng Xiaogang's films. In the following section I will now move onto the analysis of the film *The Dream Factory*.

The Dream Factory (*Jia fang yi fang*, 1997)

The Dream Factory is Feng Xiaogang's first *He sui pian* production. In the film, four young characters start a new project named "Realising Your Dream in One Day." Yao Yuan (Ge You) is an unemployed actor, together with the unemployed deputy director Zhou Beiyan (Liu Bei), props staff Liangzi (Zhou Bing), and playwright Qian Kang (Feng Xiaogang). The project promises to give whoever comes for the service a day that experiences the realisation of whatever dream they have. All kinds of bizarre dreams ensue. Everyone wants to have a 180 degree change in their lives. The bookkeeper wants to be General George S. Patton; the rich businessman wants to try living a materially deprived life; the celebrity singer and actress wants to be ordinary again; the chef who cannot keep any secrets wants to be a tight-

lipped rough guy, etc. The film is full of parody and ridicule. At the end of the film Yao Yuan and Beiyan get married. However, they loan their new flat to a strange couple that they meet at the hospital. The couple have been living in two different cities separately for 20 years because the husband works in Beijing and they have not been able to afford to buy a property in Beijing. The wife has recently learned that she is dying of cancer. The film ends with the realisation of the couple's dream of living in Beijing together before the wife dies.

In the following space, I will provide some examples of the language used in the conversations in the film. For example we will look at the bookkeeper who wants to have a day being the famous U.S. army officer during World War Two General Patton. A lot of temporary extras are hired by the company to act as soldiers. The uniform and the artillery props take us to the battlefield. The bookkeeper, by design, has the opportunity to give orders to the soldiers, to visit injured soldiers in hospital, and to have a strategy deployment meeting. When the day finishes, three of them, Yao Yuan, Liangzi and Qian Kang, undress the bookkeeper.

Bookkeeper: "Then where am I going next?"

Qian Kang: "I am really sorry, your dream has to stop now. We only realise your dream in one day."

Bookkeeper: "Why can't you make realising one's dream in 10 days? You must state a price, please state a price!"

Qian Kang: "No way!"

Yao Yuan: "It is nice just to have a taste. We are in a peaceful era, even the real General Patton has to stay at home conscientiously. If he acts wildly, the police will still arrest him.

Sell your books earnestly and be a good citizen. Our country is protected by our powerful People's Liberation Army. Even if a war does break out, it will not come to your turn."

The bookkeeper's dream deconstructs the mystique of the real-life General Patton while crowning him as a real general through the use of the costumes and props.

Yao Yuan (middle), Qian Kang (right), and the "General Patton."

Here is another example in the film of the quoting and parodying of political terminology that will be familiar to Chinese cinema-goers in the audience. This conversation takes place at an ordinary daily summary meeting before everyone leaves the office at the end of the day.

Qian Kang: "From the trial operation of the previous period, the achievements should be acknowledged, the selfless enthusiasm for work from everyone is up-surging, especially Yao Yuan."

Yao Yuan: "Go straight to the part after "but" Lao Qian."

Qian Kang: "But, we have also exposed a serious problem in our work, which is the problem of what kind of people we should serve. Comrades (*Tongzhimen*), don't underestimate this problem. It might cause trouble if we don't take it seriously."

Liang Zi: "Teacher Qian, in my opinion, our work belongs to the service industry, so the customer is our God."

Qian Kang: "Although the problem is about our customers, we are actually responsible for who our customers should be. Put simply, [we should decide] whose taste we want to cater for, and who we will serve."

Zhou Beiyan: "You always say that we don't differentiate people according to their position and rank. We should be willing to provide whatever the mass requires."

Yao Yuan: "Let our leader finish his speech first."

Qian Kang: "Therefore, we need to correct (*Jiupian*) and rectify (*Zhengfeng*). Our "Realising Your Dream in One Day" should say no to some people. If we don't do this, we will not be able to progress in our career; if we don't do this, we will suffer a big setback (*Zai dagentou*). I hope everyone has a clear understanding of this in your work in the future."

Although it is a simple daily meeting, the language used here makes it sound like the characters are commenting on a major political issue. The use of words such as *Tongzhimen*, *Jiupian*, and *Zhengfeng* are expressions that are appropriate at high-level Communist Party meetings to rectify governmental procedures and discipline. When borrowed here to discuss and analyse the gains and losses of the company operation, they mimic an atmosphere that is serious and weighty. The juxtaposition of the language and the situation thereby creates the comedic effect due to the decrowning of the political sacredness that those official phrases have represented.

Here is another example of the quoting of revolutionary phrases. In *The Dream Factory*, Yao Yuan is hit by a flower pot thrown by the overweight chef whose dream it is to keep a sentence secret no matter what torture he receives. Before Yao Yuan falls into a coma, he opens his eyes and says, "Go to Lenin quickly and tell him Bukharin is a traitor."[34] This line is taken from a former Soviet film *Lenin in October* (Mikhail Romm, 1937). The film was widely viewed across China in the 1960s and 1970s due to the close political ties with the former Soviet Union and also because of the scarcity of film resources in that period. The few films that were available were shown repeatedly to the degree that many people could repeat the lines of the characters as the film was being screened. Therefore, even when it is quoted years later and out of context, the era is still remembered as glorious, but the crown has been removed. This line also appears in *In the Heat of the Sun* as well, which is a manifestation of nostalgia. *The Dream Factory* has the nostalgic attachment, but it also functions to contribute to the carnivalisation of the language and the decrowning of cultural heroes by quoting the lines in a totally inappropriate and out-of-context situation.

The use of parody creates a suitable atmosphere for comedy effects. In *The Dream Factory*, a man who is so spoiled by his wife who submits herself to daily humiliation by him believes that being bullied must be pleasurable. Otherwise his wife would not accept it without complaint. His dream is to be treated as badly as possible. Beiyan and Yao Yuan are dressed up as landlord and landlady in the story set for him. The landlady immediately reminds the Chinese audience of the landlady in the opera *The White-haired Girl* (*Bai mao nv*, opera, 1945). The landlady's image is exaggerated and vilified. Therefore, all the related lines from the original opera, which is supposed to be a tragic story, lose the political and condemnatory power once they are applied in this dramatic setting.

The exaggerated image of the landlady from *The White-haired Girl*.

In another of Feng Xiaogang's films titled *Be There or Be Square* (*Bu jian bu san*, 1998) there is a similar example of quoting historical and revolutionary phrases, demonstrating his usage of this form of language in his work. Liu Yuan is a Chinese immigrant in America. He teaches policemen in the United States how to speak Chinese. When the class is over, Liu Yuan says, "Comrades, thank you for your dedication!" The American policemen stand up and say, "It is our honour to serve our people!" This is taken from the four lines that are spoken by a high-ranking military officer during the national parade in China. Originally it was first used on 1 October, 1949 when Zhu De, the Chief General of the People's Liberation Army of China, paraded the military forces at the national founding ceremony. The full lines are, "Salute to everyone! Hail to the Chief! Comrades, thank you for your dedication! It is our honour to serve our people!" It was an honour bestowed to the army in gratitude for their 28 years of service fighting since 1921 when the Chinese Communist Party was first established. These are widely familiar lines that have special political meaning and connotation. However, when they are said by the American policemen as trivial greeting words, the halo of the sentences is removed. There is a sense of comedy in this scene that flows out of the

incompatible and unlikely combination of the people and the words they speak. Liu Yuan teaches slang and common daily idioms in the classroom, and the contrast between the formal and serious classroom in the view of the Chinese audience and the riff-raff style and marketplace feel of the language creates the pleasure of subversion, destruction, and deconstruction. It is this pleasure of subversion that creates the humour. As Wang Haili comments, 'the deconstructive comedy style fulfils the audience's relaxation of being able to release [stress] and excitement of destruction and subversion in order to relieve the pressure from the real life.'[35]

The parodying of the classical revolutionary and political language is one of the main characteristics of the film *The Dream Factory*. Through burlesquing the classical excerpts from revolutionary films and putting the extracts in an environment that is mismatched with or even opposite to the discursive origin of the language employed, a new interpretation is extended out of the surprising context that creates the humour. The narrative of the film juxtaposes the past and present by associations with different historical figures and memories. Language here functions as a cultural domain where local expressions, memories and heritage are preserved and (re)articulated. The film adopts the names and mannerisms of well-known cultural figures and local interpretations and recollections of well-known stories and often-viewed classic films. Anachronistic treatment of the stories allows the historical figures and moments to be relived in the film. *The Dream Factory* thus evokes an association and understanding that only cultural participants can be privy to decode. Some scenes are structured to encourage the viewers to receive the comedic effect by recycling the native history and activating the humour through a rooted awareness of the production of the humour.

Therefore, Feng Xiaogang's films differentiate the audience on the basis of their local knowledge. These films create an ideal viewer community who share in the familiarity of the local culture. Feng Xiaogang's films also create a sense of belonging by putting this shared knowledge as the basis to establish this sense of belonging to the exclusive community. Through drawing the audience in front of the screen to watch and laugh over the superficial carnivalised language, the viewing experience actually recalls shared memory and joined cultural interpretation. The story in *The Dream Factory* relates to the social changes in the nation and combines the historical figures and events with totally new settings. The story is full of references to current social phenomenon and recycles and transforms well-known images and phrases from the past. Therefore, these films cannot be fully appreciated if you do not share in or experience the culturally intimate connections. Moreover, communicating the rich comedic effect of the films through English (or any foreign)-language subtitles is extremely problematic without the assistance of appropriate explanation and referencing. Therefore, cultural exclusivity is reinforced at the moment when well-known phrases are articulated and culturally-recognisable historical figures are recycled.

Feng Xiaogang's films always interweave some warm-hearted story lines to reflect the lives of ordinary people and their joys and sorrows. In *The Dream Factory* the technician loses his wife who dies of cancer after they enjoy a happy period of married life in Beijing together once Liu Yuan and Beiyan loan their new flat to them to unite them before the wife dies; in *Be There or Be Square*, Liu Yuan's mother has a terminal disease; In *Sorry Baby*, Han Dong takes a lot of trouble wanting to get his money back because he supports his sister who is comatose in the hospital. Therefore, although they are comedies, they air and share in an understanding of the traditional family commitment among cultural insiders. The exclusive local is also reinforced by the articulation of togetherness at the end of the films- *The Dream*

Factory ends with Yao Yuan and Beiyan's wedding, *Be There or Be Square* finishes with Liu Yuan and Li Qing being together, etc. This togetherness is part of the necessity of a happy ending, but it also functions as closure and a finishing touch to the sentimental affects. The cultural community created through language, and the finishing touch of the sentimental completes an enactment of a local identity. This parody is the deconstruction of the texts themselves, and also the deconstruction of the material-driven, alienating and unequal life style. The film *The Dream Factory* thus functions as a cultural counterforce to the full-blown trend of consumer individualism. Through the language, the audience is taken to the source texts through a recreational and ridiculing parody where a renewed cultural bonding and connecting is established within the community. The exclusivity of the community is like the carnival square where the community challenges authority and also the transnational and global permeations. At least the act of viewing the film itself provides a moment of satisfaction, of feeling free from the fragile and lost communal solidarity and support, and of being encouraged by the sense of the sentimental of belonging.

The technician and his dying wife sitting in Yao Yuan and Beiyan's new flat.

Yao Yuan and Beiyan have a traditional wedding.

In his discussion of the production of locality in the delocalised world, Arjun Appadurai says that 'I view locality as primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial. I see it as a *complex phenomenological quality*, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts.'[36] For Appadurai locality does not necessarily refer to a local space. Instead he uses 'neighborhood' to refer to 'the actually existing social forms in which locality, as a dimension or value, is variably realized.'[37] Therefore, we could conclude that the 'locality' is what can be constructed through all different kinds of historical consciousness, inheritance, or mediated self-conception. The 'neighborhood' is the actual and material space that guarantees the reproduction of the locality. Appadurai says that 'locality is always emergent from the practices of local subjects in specific neighbourhoods.'[38] Especially in the world of film, locality is created and constructed as a virtual world. The locality is like a value system that is negotiated among the neighbourhood. After all, the locality is a 'phenomenological quality.' Therefore, the sentimental local referred to in this chapter is realised not as spatial locality, but as 'a structure of feeling.'[39] The local here is not a narrow homogeneous social space.

Instead the local is constructed through discursive and distinctive cultural references. This sentimental local is not like the intimate spaces discussed in the last chapter. They are discursive. They only become meaningful when considered in terms of the global and transnational. This sentimental local itself represents a confrontation and challenge to the global through the production of locality and local subjects.

To conclude, the severe social and cultural challenges faced by China since the 1990s that were caused by the fast economic, social and cultural shifts and developments brought about an era in which a sense of communal solidarity seemed to be gradually eroded by a new focus on material-driven individualism. From this a conscious effort to establish a moral community and a search for a sense of group moral support are powerfully reflected through the language of Feng Xiaogang's films. This search for moral community underpins the ingrained sense of the sentimental in a style of conscious construction, but that simultaneously has an awareness of the fragility of local identity with the permeation of transnational and globalised influences. This creation of a local community is a way of adapting and adjusting to a culture that is becoming heterogeneous in character. Discussion of how the identity of Hong Kong has been changed and challenged before and after the handover period in 1997 is extremely familiar. It can equally be argued that mainland China, although it has long been influenced by Hong Kong culture, is anxious over the disintegration of an assimilated culture. *The Dream Factory* was released in late 1997. Although there are a lot of cultural, historical and commercial elements that can be ascribed to its making, the wider cultural disintegration brought about by global influences such as is indicated by Hong Kong's "return" is one of the main factors. The film itself functioned as an act of coping but also as a means of remembering.

It has been widely accepted and also criticised that the success of Feng Xiaogang's films is a 'miracle.' Some scholars suggest that this is due to his 'extraordinary wisdom, intelligence, and judgement.'[40] However, the success in forming a moral community and unity among the viewers who have participated in the cultural transformation and inherited the cultural associations cannot be ignored. Parody, banter, ridicule, cynicism, and the Beijing accent- the language connects different temporalities and echoes to the intimacy that is deeply rooted in the culture. The viewing experience itself, the process of association and recollection of the historical images and well-known lines of characters and the creation of colloquial catchphrases after the viewing have supplied the possibility for local solidarity. This cultural community excludes cultural outsiders from the intimate renewed connections and attachments that insiders would intrinsically form through the film viewing experience.

Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi once noted that globalisation needs to be understood as marking a space of tension rather than a stablised field.[41] With the decline of the nation-state, the boundary becomes more and more blurred. The statist knowledge is challenged by the 'poststatist condition.' What is new is what has been revealed when we look back through the older intellectual formations approaching newer forms under changed and changing conditions. Paul A. Bové's essay '"Global/Local" Memory and thought' recognises the outstanding intellectual efforts to advance thought into the sphere of global/local construction. He points out that our 'in-between-ness' is not in the sense meant by Rushdie or Said when, with others, they speak of hybrid subjectivities resulting from diasporic shifts within and after colonialism. His 'in-between-ness' suggests the gap 'prior to the existence of fully poststatist intellectual formations of critique,' of reorganisation and reconstruction of all the given relationships. The gap demands an epistemological shift from the intellectual formation constructed around statist forms. It is precisely because of this 'in-between-ness' or Bové's

'conundrum' that the complex dialogue in the current cultural scene is prompted.[42] Meanwhile, the global/local emerges as a complex and embracing arena for melting and forging a new horizon.

Therefore, in this in-between period faced with the tensions created by globalisation, the local becomes the space for negotiation. Locality here does not relate to a spatial sense of space, it is a cultural and structural space that provides the cohesive power for a renewed moral unity and community where the sentimental can be (re)articulated. Chinese locality is constantly under construction in order to delineate a well-established local identity that lends meaning to the individual beings. The sentimental local emerges in between the disintegrating cultural discourse and global structuralisation and remains fluctuating and unsettled rather than being fully articulated and self-present. Feng Xiaogang's films appear to be an attempt to reassert the integrity of the local as it encounters a threatening globalisation. These films are by no means hostile or antagonistic towards globalism, especially considering that many of them include foreign investment in their production. But they surely present a conscious formation of the sentimental local that holds the local viewing community together and provides a sense of belonging to the local identity that can be negotiated in a continuous sense.

[1] This chapter has been inspired by Linda Chiu-han Lai's "Film and Enigmatization: Nostalgia, Nonsense, and Remembering," in Esther C. M. Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, 231-250.

[2] I borrow this phrase from Mikhail Bakhtin. See his definition of 'the carnivalization of literature' in Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson and introduced by Wayne C.Booth. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, 122.

[3] Yang Xiaoyun and Zhou Xia, "*He sui pian* xueshu taolunhui zongshu" (Summary of a Seminar on New Year's Film)," in *Dangdai dianying* 4 (2009), 32.

[4] Dang Jun, "Feng Xiaogang *He sui xijv* dianying zhuti bianhua fenxi" (The Analysis of Theme Change in Feng Xiaogang's New Year Comedies), in *Dongnan chuanbo* 4 (2010), 96.

[5] Dai Jinhua, *Baijia jiangtan (Lectureroom)* on CCTV on February 2, 2005. The programme is part of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Chinese cinema (1905-2005). The name of Dai's speech on the day was "Feng Xiaogang zouhong zhi mi" (The Mystery of the Popularity of Feng Xiaogang).

[6] Jia Leilei, "Feng Xiaogang dianying yu zhongguo dazhong wenhua pinpai" (Feng Xiagang's Films as the Chinese Brand of Mass Culture), in *Dangdai dianying* 6 (2006), 47.

[7] *Ibid*., 45.

[8] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Public Worlds, Volume 1. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 178.

[9] Chen Shangrong, "Xin shimin wenhua de daiyanren: jiushi niandai Wang Shuo, Chi Li, Feng Xiaogang chuangzuo guan bijiao lun" (The Representatives of the New Public Culture: A Comparative Study on the Creative Attitude of Wang Shuo, Chi Li, and Feng Xiaogang in the 1990s), in *Piping shijie* 3 (2005), 48.

[10] Liu Fan, "Gaibian yihuo gaizhi: Feng Xiaogang dianying zhong de *Wang Shuo zhuyi* wenti (Adaptation or Changing the Set: On the Problematics of Wangshuoism in Feng Xiaogang's Films), in *Dianying yishu* 3 (2004), 99.

[11] *Ibid*., 99.

[12] Wang Shuo, et al., *Wo Shi Wang Shuo (I Am Wang Shuo)*. Beijing: Guoji wenhua chuban gongsi, 1992, 17.

[13] *Ibid*., 20-21.

[14] Feng Xiagang, *Wo Ba Qingchun Xian Gei Ni (I Dedicate My Youth to You)*. Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 2003, 44.

[15] Liu Zhendong and Yang Xiaohui, "Lun Feng Xiaogang xijv dianying chuangzuo de wenhua Qqdongli (On the Cultural Driving Force of the Production of Feng Xiaogang's Comedy Films), in *Hebei daxue chengren jiaoyu xueyuan* 4 Vol. 11 (2009), 97.

[16] Gong Xiaopeng, "Qian lun Feng Xiaogang *Hesui pian* dui chuantong xijv de chuangxin yiyi (On the Innovative Significance of Feng Xiaogang's *Hesui pian* to the Traditional Comedy)," in *Shidai wenxue* 6 (2007), 99-100.

[17] Chen Shangrong, "Xin shimin wenhua de daiyanren: jiushi niandai Wang Shuo, Chi Li, Feng Xiaogang chuangzuo guan bijiao lun," 48.

[18] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 129-130. Emphasis in original.

[19] *Ibid*., 122. Emphasis in original.

[20] *Ibid*., 122.

[21] *Ibid*., 123.

[22] *Ibid*., 122.

[23] *Ibid*., 123.

[24] *Ibid*., 123. Emphasis in original.

[25] *Ibid*., 123.

[26] *Ibid*., 123.

[27] *Ibid*., 124. Emphasis in original.

[28] *Ibid*., 126.

[29] *Ibid*., 127. Emphasis in original.

[30] *Ibid*., 123.

[31] Dang Jun, "Feng Xiaogang *Hesui xijv* dianying zhuti bianhua fenxi," 95.

[32] *Ibid*., 96.

[33] Yan Fang, "Feng Xiagang dianying renwu taici de yuyan fenxi" (The Linguistic Analysis of the Characters' Lines in Feng Xiagang's Films), in *Ke jiao wenhui* 12 (2008), 170.

[34] The line is translated from Chinese.

[35] Wang Haili, "Heise youmo yu wulitou gaoxiao- Feng Xiaogang he Zhou Xingchi xijv dianying bijiao" (Black Humour and Nonsense (Wulitou) Comedy- the Comparison of the Comedy Films of Feng Xiaogang and Stephen Chiau (Zhou Xingchi)), in *Jiannan wenxue* 3 (2010), 114.

[36] Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 178. My emphasis.

[37] *Ibid*., 179.

[38] *Ibid*., 198.

[39] *Ibid*., 199.

[40] Yin Hong and Tang Jianying, "Feng Xiaogang dianying yu dianying shangye meixue" (Commercial Aesthetics in Feng Xiaogang's Films), in *Danddai dianying* 6 (2006), 50.

[41] Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyashi, eds., *The Cultures of Globalization*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998, xvi.

[42] Paul A. Bové, " 'Global/Local' Memory and thought," in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, eds., *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996, 372-385.

CHAPTER 7

The Sentimental and Cross-Cultural Analysis

In the introduction to this study, I mapped out some of the problematic viewing relations in cinema and proposed that the subject/object relation in the area of cross-cultural analysis has hindered the arrival at an epistemic understanding of visibility. I also suggested that the sentimental fashions as an affective mode provides for empathic readings between different cultures, given that many such films are produced for global consumption. I have discussed so far in this study how Chinese films come to terms with the enduring sentimental and how the sentimental is articulated and transformed in the visual and narrative mode specific to cinema. The visibility of the cinema provides a visual spectacle, and it also challenges the audience with a communication of the epistemic side of the visibility. It therefore follows that the sentimental acts as a point of entry to access the epistemic side of the visibility and to arrive at a more balanced cross-cultural understanding. Therefore, this study would not be complete without a return to the terrain of the sentimental and cross-cultural analysis in terms of what position the sentimental holds and how it contributes to (epistemic) understanding beyond the visuality.

The terrain of cross-cultural analysis is rather sensitive, complex and problematic. As I have discussed in the introduction it is located in the subject/object dynamic dominating the characteristic of the relation between a general West and non-West division. This division originates from a larger ideological legacy, which is articulated and reinforced by anthropological and postcolonial discourse. At the same time, the subject/object relation is also potentially perpetuated by the non-West by essentialising an *authentic* national culture. If one of the strategies of colonialism and Orientalism is to nativise the local culture, history,

and tradition compared to the universal and cosmopolitan look and globalised culture in the West, then the nationalism, essentialism, or nativism of a particular culture deserves the same attention as the criticism of colonialism and Orientalism themselves.[1] Therefore, by claiming the sentimental as the point of entry for a balanced cross-cultural analysis, it has to be proved that it is not to be trapped in a discourse that is 'geographically deterministic and hence culturally essentialist.'[2] As Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden argue, 'The most critically significant attempt in recent years to recuperate the national as a site for positive self-fashioning has been the concept of the "postcolonial".' With the rise of the phenomenon of the transnational mediascape, 'the concept of the transnational also problematizes "postcolonialism" as an attempt to maintain and legitimize conventional notions of cultural authenticity.'[3]

Therefore, in this chapter, which in many ways works as a concluding chapter of the whole thesis, I will iterate the importance of the sentimental in terms of cross-cultural analysis in light of a national and transnational interface. The reason that the national/transnational interface is utilised here stems from the problematic issue of what "Chinese" means in "Chinese cinema" in terms of whether it participates in the articulation of colonialism and Orientalism by otherising/essentialising a national culture; and what position the sentimental holds in terms of the impetus it provides among cross-cultural readings. I will then use a reading from E. Ann Kaplan on *Farewell My Concubine* (*Bawang bie ji*, Chen Kaige, 1993) to illustrate how the sentimental leads to an empathic understanding within the cross-cultural analysis beyond the visual presentation.

The Position of the Sentimental in the Interface of National and Transnational

The study of Chinese cinema inevitably leads to a discussion of the problematic question of defining Chineseness itself.[4] The term "China" does not necessarily refer to the commonly accepted People's Republic of China with the Communist Party as the central government. China actually consists of the People's Republic of China; Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region that became part of the People's Republic of China in 1997 from its former status as a British colonial possession; the Republic of China (*Taiwan*) with the Nationalist Party as the central government; and Macau, also a Special Administrative Region that became part of the People's Republic of China in 1999 from its former status as a Portuguese colonial possession. Although the Republic of China's status has long been a sensitive issue on a political level, the issue is over whether the Communist Party should hold power rather than over being a part of greater China on a cultural level. As I have mentioned briefly in the introduction, the different parts of greater China do acknowledge the inheritance of a pan-Chinese culture, although different regions have their unique ways of connecting to and developing within the larger culture.

Many critics have recognised that the sense of Chinese in Chinese cinema is 'utterly inadequate' if it is considered as the nation-state because of the problematic of defining Chineseness itself.[5] In film studies or cultural studies, the particularising of a national culture risks becoming the perpetuating force of colonial discourse. For Rey Chow, the question of the image projected to Western audiences implies the fetishisation and commodification of China in a post-colonial circulation of filmic signifiers.[6] Chow compares this presentation of China to the West, that she argues has been accomplished by the renowned Fifth Generation filmmakers such as Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou, to the state of mind of colonised subjects trying to 'engage with the colonizer's own terms.'[7] Yet Chow also finds them guilty of a

'form of primitive passion that is sinocentrism'[8] and that this leads to 'generating the nativist belief that foreign audiences 'cannot understand "*China*"…the ultimate essence beyond representation.'[9] Therefore, the self-exoticism of essentialising or mythifying a culture, especially a national culture that assumes a fixed and authentic set of customs and traditions residing within national borders, functions in the same way as do colonialism and postcolonialism in terms of constructing a cultural otherness.

However, with the intervention of the transnational scenario in an environment of borderless circulation, many scholars suggest that the national should not be taken as a conventional image of nation that comprises 'the mapping of an imagined community with a secure and shared identity and sense of belonging, on to a carefully demarcated geo-political space.'[10] Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar argue that we should not take the national for granted as something 'known' and 'unproblematic.' Instead the national should be considered as 'constructed, maintained, and challenged.'[11] Cited by Yingjin Zhang, Berry proposes that 'the nation is not merely an imagined textual object but a historically and socially contingent construction of a form of *collective agency*.'[12] Berry also suggests the 'recasting national cinema as a multiplicity of projects, authored by different individuals, groups, and institutions with various purposes, but bound together by the politics of national agency and collective subjectivity as constructed entities.'[13] Therefore, the national actually facilitates a scenario in Chinese cinema allowing the equally valid *cinemas* to compete, communicate, mutually influence, and permeate changes with each other and to enable the construction of a national cinema that is under constant negotiation and mutation.

In my opinion serious reservation should be held towards the concept of a national cinema, especially in the case of Chinese cinema, as the border does have prominent power and it is

controversial to measure the national cinema whether on a national level or on a transnational level.[14] For example, the Republic of China has long claimed its national political independence in terms of participating in international affairs while recognising the inheritance of a shared Chinese culture. However, this renewed concept of the national is useful to recognise the heterogeneity of Chinese cinema, and allows the possibility for a synergetic identification of cinema that reflects the collectivity it embodies. In this respect, this echoes Yingjin Zhang's observation that '[t]he problematic nature of "Chinese" as a signifier should suffice to demythify "Chineseness" as a pre-given, monolithic and immutable essence.'[15] Similarly to the national, the cultural and the ethnic are not unified concepts either. They have to be understood as socially and historically constructed concepts. They are not themselves unified, fixed, and coherent. However, they do provide the measurements for recognition in terms of coherence and consistency on a personal level to seek a sense of identity. Therefore, the usage of Chinese in this study is in no way an attempt to essentialise a particular culture by way of enlarging the gap of cultural otherness. The Chinese in this study is not a narrow nation-state and geopolitical concept. In this study, although the films that I chose to discuss are all directed by mainland Chinese directors, the productions of the films are the result of international co-operation. Therefore, the Chinese in this study refers to the vast territory of films that are produced in the Chinese language and that associate with and recognise the vast span of Chinese history and culture. This is just a way to locate the parameter rather than to define it within certain restrictions.

Therefore, the national understood in this way should not fall into any traps as a critical force of postcolonial discourse. Although the transnational provides the possibility for recognising the ambiguity of postcolonial discourse, it is not understood as the opposite side of the national, as the transnational has to acknowledge the national first in order to be able to stand

in opposition. It is argued that 'the transnational is understood not as a higher order, but as a larger arena connecting differences, so that a variety of regional, national, and local specificities impact upon each other in various types of relationships ranging from synergy to contest.'[16] This transnational perspective would also contribute to 'understanding Chinese culture as an open, multiple, contested, and dynamic formation that the cinema participates in.'[17] According to Higson 'the concept of the "transnational" may be a subtler means of describing cultural and economic formations that are rarely contained by national boundaries.'[18] Therefore, on the one hand, the transnational helps to recognise the co-existence of different forces within the cultural realm. On the other hand, however, 'the *national* in the transnational is still vital to any account of its specificity.'[19] As Berry and Farquhar argue, 'the national informs almost every aspect of the Chinese cinematic image and narrative repertoire.'[20] This is where the Chinese sentimental should be given its due credit. The sentimental in this study endures, manifests, adapts and transforms under different circumstances through different eras. Therefore, the internal differences within the culture are retained as the sentimental allows for different articulations. At the same time, the sentimental also provides the possibility for connecting to a culturally specific perspective. This is considered to be vital in the cross-cultural analysis in this study.

The reason that the complex relations between the national and the transnational need to be mentioned here is that the sentimental in this study foregrounds a conceptual space for the study of Chinese cinema as it recognises the transnational environment and the controversy of Chineseness itself as a territorial nation-state. However, at the same time there is a recognised cultural identity and association that allows the sentimental to persist and transform. The films that are discussed in this study so far have been characterised by the

persistence, endurance and adaptation of the sentimental as the sentimental itself subverts the myth of being unified and unchangeable.

The sentimental as a concept forms the tendency of a home-longing and homecoming in Chinese cinema, while at the same time it recognises the complex connections and influences of the transnational and the global in its very way of adaptation, persistence and transformation. The sentimental recognises the border issue and all the other blurring issues that make problematic the question of authenticity for culture. It connects the diasporic communities exactly because of their transnational dispersive characteristics. The sentimental mobilises between the home and homelessness, between unity and disjunction, and reflects the contingency and instability of time and space. The sentimental thus acknowledges the integrity and inheritance of the culture without imprisoning the differences. That is why in the films that I have discussed in this study the sentimental is often cinematically imagined or depicted as a searching journey in order to show the constant mutation and negotiation within the culture. The sentimental opens a space of examination of Chinese cinema as it is recognised as being at the core of the cultural value. Its (re)configurations in and through different circumstances and periods reveal the consistency and diversity of its representations in Chinese cinema. The sentimental has surfaced in some Chinese films in an abundant way. It challenges us both visually and on an epistemic level. As mentioned in the introduction, Chow summarises that:

> […] becoming visible is no longer simply a matter of becoming visible in the visual sense (as an image or object) but also a matter of participating in a discursive politics of (re)configuring the relation between center and margins, a politics in which what is visible may be a key but not the exclusive determinant. *There is, in other words, a visibility of visibility- a visibility that is the condition of possibility for what becomes visible, that may derive a certain intelligibility from the latter but cannot be simply reduced to it.*[21]

Therefore, the visibility cannot only be understood on a visual level. What Chow calls the 'visibility of visibility' is the epistemic side of visibility that actually makes the visibility meaningful. The reason that I have not mentioned the relationship between visibility and visuality throughout the chapters is that it has been implicit rather than explicitly underpinning the engagement between the visual spectacle and the sentimental in Chinese cinema. The sentimental is an affective mode that is beyond the language that enables an empathic connection towards the visuality, which might enable the audience to get through the visual layer of the visibility to reach the epistemic side of the visibility.

In this study I have been using the term Chinese cinema rather than the appellation Chinese *cinemas* that is preferred by some scholars.[22] This is to emphasise the mutual inheritance, reference and influence among the different cinemas. The sentimental functions as agency that connects differences and facilitates an individual vitalisation. Therefore, my choice of using the singular form is to acknowledge the amalgamation of different entities and dialects of different cinemas with the awareness of consistency of the cultural inheritance and the cultural rootedness of the sentimental.

The sentimental in Chinese cinema is understood as allowing space for the juxtaposition and negotiation of cultural adaptation and development. It is therefore also the space in which cultural specificity can grasp vitality as the sentimental itself requires culturally specific understanding as I have discussed throughout this study. By cultural specificity, I mean the culturally specific contextual concern rather than mere textual appreciation. This cultural specificity furthers fortifies the identities of individual cinemas, but also the wider identity of Chinese cinema as a whole. Cultural specificity is not a way to promote isolation imposed by difference. Rather, it works as a balance and an aggregation of the understandings of

ontological diversity. The sentimental provides a way to give subjectivity to the subject as it allows the possibility of an empathic connection which facilitates the dissemination of individuals' feelings. Cinema can then be considered 'an enabling agent' that is 'capable of bringing about societal changes' if looking beyond the national parameter and in a transnational paradigm.[23] The sentimental in Chinese cinema opens up a space for negotiation and co-existence of difference and appreciation of different cinemas, while at the same time stressing the cultural specificity that maintains the characteristics of Chinese cinema as a whole within the mobility of the cross-cultural communications.

Cross-cultural analysis is a mutually beneficial area. For instance, E. Ann Kaplan observes that 'theorists outside the producing culture might uncover different strands of the multiple meanings than critics of the originating culture just because they bring different frameworks/theories/ideologies to the texts.'[24] To a certain degree the notion of a positive cross-cultural influence is justified. However, when it comes to a study of non-Western texts, what is objectionable is not the desire to know, but the observer's epistemology reflected in the language while claiming to understand the others' intimate and intrinsic feelings, that allows the observer to speak on their behalf. The assertion of cultural authority illustrates the reproducibility and longevity of the issue of colonialism. If it is accepted that changes in power relations have occurred in the postcolonial era, then recognising the differences between cultures is still not enough in itself to provide a better-balanced cross-cultural analysis. Culturally-specific scrutiny is more effective in allowing autonomy to the subject rather than merely 'a gesture of pedagogic expediency.'[25] Postcolonialism has not banished the subject/object issue to the colonial past. Rather it reveals that a more complex situation is at hand that continues to perpetuate this relationship. The sentimental in Chinese cinema provides the possibility of facilitating a better-balanced cross-cultural analysis. By

responding to the Western critical paradigm constructed through the unequal subject/object relationship, the failure to recognise cultural specificity at the core of cross-cultural readings can be uncovered. In what follows, I will discuss Kaplan's reading of *Farewell My Concubine* as an example of a possible Western cross-cultural reading.

A Western reading of *Farewell My Concubine*

Farwell My Concubine was directed by the internationally acclaimed director Chen Kaige, one of the leading figures among the so-called Chinese Fifth Generation film directors. The film saw the co-production of Tomson (Hong Kong) Film Ltd and Beijing Film Studio with a novel reliance on foreign investment. It was adapted from a popular novel written by Hong Kong author Lillian Lee (Li Bihua). Side by side with Gong Li and Leslie Cheung (Zhang Guorong), who were most likely chosen for their international fame and the appeal this held to the Hong Kong investors, the cast also includes some of China's better-known actors, such as Zhang Fengyi, Ge You and Ying Da.

Farewell My Concubine won the 46th Palme d'Or award at the Festival de Cannes in 1993. The film takes its name from a traditional Peking Opera and follows the lives of two famous operatic actors Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) and Duan Xiaolou (Zhang Fengyi). The film follows their relationship from their training as young boys at the itinerant opera school in the 1920s. Their lives are set against the background of political and social turbulence spanning the warlord era of the 1920s, the Japanese invasion and occupation of the 1930s, the civil war of the 1940s, the communist accession in 1949 and the Cultural Revolution, until they meet again in 1977 after fifty turbulent years of Chinese history.

E. Ann Kaplan's "Reading Formations and Chen Kaige's Farewell My Concubine" is a feminist study of this, one of the hallmark productions of the Chinese Fifth Generation directors.[26] Kaplan explores the treatment of mother-child and male-female relations in the film which she suggests may illuminate 'larger issues to do with the family and with constructions of male and female sexualities as they are impacted by the public sphere.'[27] Kaplan's self-acknowledged reading of the film through feminist and psychoanalytic frameworks provides a valuable and perceptive analysis of the film. Nonetheless, it simultaneously raises issues over the reading of film from a non-culturally-specific position. While I concur with Kaplan's elaboration of the emotional tones at the beginning of the film, this interpretation becomes problematic when she attempts to illustrate how the protagonists are linked together through an effort to prove 'a political dimension in the form of national allegory.'[28] Although it can be read in this way, I would argue that this assumption makes Kaplan's reading of many later scenes of the film problematic.

In the opening scene the mother of Douzi (Cheng Dieyi's nickname that is used when he is at the opera school) takes him to the itinerant opera company and asks the opera master to take him in as she cannot bring him up in the brothel where she works any more. Douzi's mother violently cuts off her son's extra finger when the master declares that it contravenes the opera traditions. When Douzi's mother leaves he calls out for her. Instead of showing an emotionally responsive mother the next shot is of an empty doorway set against a bleak snow-covered backdrop.

According to her 'subjective responses' to the film, Kaplan reads this scene as a 'metaphor for abandonment' that establishes 'one of the main emotional strands' of the film.[29] From this point Douzi's identity is defined as an 'abandonment neurotic.'[30] Kaplan suggests that Douzi

is 'ever seeking to refind or replace the mother' and it is this that leads him to literalise offstage his onstage Concubine-King relationship with Shitou (Duan Xiaolou's nickname when he is at the opera school).[31]

The relationship between Douzi and Shitou is also framed by Kaplan as a homosexual one according to a 'stereotypical representation of homosexuals.'[32] Kaplan considers (homo)sexuality to be a fundamental thematic element of the film. Kaplan reads Shitou as acting as Douzi's 'mother-substitute,' and Shitou's marriage is therefore read as an attempt 'to free himself' from his 'mother-substitute' role.[33] According to Kaplan 'Douzi undergoes a traumatic crisis in which his moral structures are eroded: 'In revenge, he takes up with the 'decadent' opera patron, Master Yuan, and he sings for the Japanese to bring about Shitou's release [….]'[34] Kaplan does not connect sexuality to the subjective relations of the characters and other thematic elements of the film. For instance Douzi's homosexual identity is intimately interwoven with his infatuation for the opera which results from his seeking of a sentimental bond and togetherness that has been lost in real life. The film *Farewell My Concubine* is about the sentimental togetherness. The male bonding is an alternative of family longing. As will be argued later in this chapter, although Douzi is a homosexual figure, in this film the sentimental togetherness rather than sexuality should be considered the central theme.

One might ask why Cheng Dieyi's characterisation as a homosexual is so decisive to Kaplan's interpretation of *Farewell My Concubine*. According to Kaplan, his double 'abandonment' from both his mother and from Duan Xiaolou produces the tragic tone of the film. Whether consciously or unconsciously constructed by the director, this tragedy implies an 'underlying political passion' that is buried, according to Kaplan, within the film's subtext.[35] Borrowing Fredric Jameson's national allegory theory, Kaplan concludes that

Cheng Dieyi's image actually carries 'double meanings'- 'the specific narrative about a family or individual was often intended to be read as an allegory for the Chinese political scene.'[36] Therefore, the film becomes a political condemnation and 'grief' narrative spanning fifty years of political upheavals.[37]

Individual emotional experiences register the personal psychic formation, and the national allegory theory provides another possible way to connect the Western audience to a Chinese film.[38] However, a subjective reading of the scenes without linking the film and individuals to a more complex social and political context still risks objectifying and impersonalising the Other with unique cultural context left unconnected. The characters stay imprisoned by the images rather than becoming challenges to the social, historical and cultural construction. The individuals are grouped together under the so-called 'political dimension.' Kaplan acknowledges the potential inadequacies of her position as a Western trained feminist in her essay. But despite her emphasis on the transference of *subjectivity* across cultures, she appears to underplay the importance of the protagonists' *subjectivity* in *Farewell My Concubine*. For instance Cheng Dieyi's lifelong yearning for the togetherness that is reflected by his infatuation towards the opera that is such a central theme in the film.

To her credit, in her essay Kaplan states that 'what is interesting to me in undertaking cross-cultural analysis is precisely finding out what others will make of my responses.'[39] However, the methodology of 'Reading Formations' tends towards a unilateral rather than a cross-cultural imposition of a Western discourse upon a Chinese text. I am not questioning whether Western discourse is applicable as the academic referencing and locating throughout this study has made the answer to this obvious. The point for discussion is whether Kaplan's analysis, in this instance, is based on 'a rigorous scrutiny of textual evidence and a sufficient

consideration of the sociocultural specificity of the Other.'[40] In the following part, I will discuss how a more balanced reading could be borne out of a culturally specific context that places the sentimental as the central theme.

A Contextual Understanding of the Historical/Social Background of the Fifth Generation

The Fifth Generation directors were the first graduates to come through the Beijing Film Institute in 1982, after the higher education institutions had reopened in 1978 following the Cultural Revolution. Having lived through the Cultural Revolution and witnessed the climax of a turbulent historical period, the Fifth Generation boldly represented the suffering experienced by a generation in modern Chinese history. When Western cultural theoretical discourses have been applied to their films, the interpretation has tended to focus on what Esther Yau calls the 'dehumanising political discourse' in China.[41] This refers to these films' function as condemnations of the widespread infliction of pain and destruction on ordinary Chinese citizens by political regimes in the modern era. There is undoubtedly an element of political discourse in these films collectively, but giving this a predominant position distorts a balanced reading of them and mutes the individual voice under the collectiveness. When placed in a synchronic historical context they can be read as performing a more realistic function. As I will discuss later, emphasis needs to be placed on the rehabilitative rather than merely the condemnatory function of the Fifth Generation.

In order to consider the culturally-specific context it is important to recognise specific literary influences on these directors as this has been recognised as a prominent dynamic in Chinese cinema especially for the Fifth Generation. Many of the Fifth Generation directors have referred to the key influence of literature on their work and most films from this period are in

fact adapted from Chinese novels. As Chen Mo comments, 'When we talk about the material and trend of the Fifth Generation's films, actually it is the Chinese literature that gave us the first step.'[42] The literary heritage profoundly influences and gives meaning to their productions.

The first literary wave that emerged after the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s is referred to as the "literature of the wounded (*Shanghen wenxue*)."[43] Deeply critical of the previous ten years that had been extremely traumatic, this wave marked the first time that writers felt able to expose the human suffering of the Cultural Revolution which they had previously been afraid of alluding to. "Literature of the wounded" was followed by "reflection literature (*Fansi wenxue*)." Authors began not only to address the suffering of the period itself, but also to condemn and question the cultural values that had unconsciously played a role in the suffering. This position resulted in a negative attack more broadly on China's cultural heritage. Where "wound" and "reflection" literature focused on trauma without really providing cultural rehabilitation, by the mid-1980s "search for roots literature (*Xungen wenxue*)" emerged. At a time when China was opening up to the rest of the world, this movement began to address the task left by the previous literary movements, looking for a sense of hope and meaning in order to maintain a sense of unity and revitalise the populace. The Fifth Generation directors have been most influenced by "search for roots literature," which they echoed in their attempts to reflect on China's difficult recent past and to awaken a sense of cultural vitality.

Western critics have acknowledged the relationship between Chinese literature and Chinese cinema. For example Sheila Cornelius comments that the Fifth Generation's practice of adapting novels as film scripts 'places the films firmly within this context.' Cornelius

believes that 'this is an attempt to discover how the inhumanities of the persecution […] could have occurred.'[44] Yet Cornelius risks over-emphasising the function of political condemnation in her connection of literature and cinema. This can be illustrated by what Yu Hua, the author of *To Live* (*Huozhe*, a novel later adapted to film by Zhang Yimou) wrote in its foreword: 'With time going on, the hatred in my heart is calming down. I have started to realise that what a true writer pursues is truth, a truth that rejects moral judgement. The task of the writer is not to air one's grievances, not to denounce or expose, it should rise above this […].'[45] It is very significant that the movement away from denunciation embodied by both the "search for roots literature" movement and the Fifth Generation of film directors has generally not been acknowledged by Western critics such as Kaplan despite their acknowledgment of a literary-cinematic link.

Farewell My Concubine provides textual evidence of the Fifth Generation's move away from mere political condemnation to a more progressive and rehabilitative position. The story primarily depicts the theme of searching for and maintaining an intimate togetherness in the hope of regaining the family belonging. This sense of belonging echoes the literary trend of "search for roots literature" and also facilitates a rehabilitative function. The film realises its aim through its artistic engagement on a number of levels. The first level is acknowledgement- by presenting traumatic events the film acknowledges that human agency determines social environments. In one of the final scenes in which Xiaolou betrays his close friend Dieyi and his wife Juxian, the worst socio-political excesses of the period are depicted, acknowledging how individuals were compelled by intimidation and mob persecution to betray friends and family. But this scene cannot be taken in isolation and must be placed in context with the rest of the film. Dieyi's comments reflect this necessity to understand the origins and causes of the situation: "You think disaster just falls from the sky? No! We have

come step by step towards this fate. It is retribution [….] Now even the King of Chu is on his knees begging for mercy! Can the Peking Opera survive this indignity?" Indicative of the rest of the film, this climactic scene reflects that ultimately it is human initiative that determines the demise of culture and personal relationships. Instead of framing the characters under the political turmoil, Chen Kaige refrains from political polemic. This scene claims the individuals' responsibility which in fact infers subjectivity to the individual. This is a distinctive aspect of the Fifth Generation more generally that distinguishes them from periods of denial and later condemnation of the Cultural Revolution. By the 1990s it was more widely accepted to move beyond criticism of the past and instead to try to reconcile with the events of the Cultural Revolution in order to draw a line under the period.

Earlier in the film Dieyi burns his operatic costumes, significantly marking Dieyi's only betrayal of the opera, the art that has shaped his life and his entire identity. The operatic costumes are also symbolic of his sustained search for the togetherness with the King/Xiaolou. Without his costumes and the passion for the opera that they symbolise, he loses his sense of belonging which in turns undermines his very sense of identity. Chen Kaige's message is that acknowledging human weaknesses is not enough. Rehabilitation requires a sense of belonging. The burning of the operatic costumes is intended to provoke in the audiences a sharp response of desperation towards the sense of loss by implicitly indicating the fragility and importance of the sense of belonging. On a broader level, with the Peking Opera widely recognised as one of four "Cultural Essences" in China, this scene intends to provoke a sense of cultural belonging. *Farewell My Concubine* works on this second rehabilitative level by utilising the Peking Opera as the filmic artefact to restore the sense of cultural belonging through recognising and acknowledging the value of Chinese culture and re-establishing connections with the cultural heritage.

Cheng Dieyi burning his operatic costumes.

On a third level *Farewell My Concubine* awakens an awareness of the human capacity for forgiveness, brought out in the final scenes of the film in particular. This sense of forgiveness in a Chinese context is also facilitated by the sentimental. As we have discussed in the introduction, the sentimental is connected to homecoming and home-longing and is normally expressed in a moderate way. Therefore, the sentimental symbolises being mild and being harmonious in the Chinese cultural context. The key to rehabilitation is to restore the capacity to forgive and to love, in order to overcome suffering without hatred no matter how traumatic the experience that has been endured. The peaceful setting of the aftermath of Xialou and Dieyi's betrayals reflect the calmness of Juxian's state of mind. Set in front of a temple, with large trees framing the scene, the environment in a Chinese religious and cultural sense manifests an impression of peace. As Juxian turns to leave Dieyi she silently offers him her forgiveness, despite his betrayal, silently through her look. In the closing scene of the film set eleven years later, Dieyi echoes this silent act of forgiveness, this time for Xialou, manifested by his final serene smile before his death. He parallels the opera story in which the

Concubine takes her life at the end to show her faithfulness to the King. Dieyi's final act of suicide in a sense fulfils his life-long longing for the intimate togetherness with the King/Xiaolou, and also proves the persistence of his enduring searching. Dieyi's death is intimately connected with his infatuation rather than his sexuality, in contrast to what might be assumed from a conventional Western critical perspective.

Cheng Dieyi's serene smile before his death.

Farewell My Concubine does not cast the protagonists specifically as victims of China's turbulent modern history as Western interpretations might suggest. Interpreting the film as a political critique underestimates and reduces the wider artistic and social context from which it emerged and misreads director Chen Kaige's more nuanced approach. He places events like the Cultural Revolution within the wider context of existential suffering and emphasises human agency in determining social environments. *Farewell My Concubine* is more a story about the persistence of the longing for unity and togetherness, and the capacity to forgive and to love in the most traumatic circumstances because of the very connection in the sense of belonging, represented through its non-politicised protagonists.

Kaplan's article "Reading Formations" therefore undervalues a culturally specific analysis, while her reading carries an implicit interpretive authority. This is indicated in the issue of subjectivity. Kaplan claims that she is 'in full awareness of the Eurocentric bias' of her reading of *Farewell My Concubine*.[46] However, she also claims that 'Eurocentrism includes ways Western critics are trained to be selfconscious about the emotional impact of a film on the individual spectator and to focus on subjectivity.' [47] This subjectivity is restricted in Kaplan's case to the perspective of a Western-trained feminist. Her 'subjectivity' effectively speaks in the name of the silent characters in the film and also the wider Chinese audience who have gone through an extremely traumatic era. This creates a serious gap in the theoretical discussion that underestimates the importance of cultural specificity, showing that the Western quest for knowledge is introverted into finding out what matters to the observer rather than what matters to the observed. If we presume that Kaplan keeps a Chinese subjectivity in mind, then her reading creates an ahistorical intervention between a Chinese audience and the subjective desire of rehabilitation within the social and historical context.

Moreover, if Cheng Dieyi's subjectivity is acknowledged, then his infatuation with the opera should not be neglected. If his traumatic experience with his mother determines his homosexual identity, then his early traumatic experience with the Eunuch Zhang should also logically provoke repulsion towards male-male relationships, which would seemingly contradict Kaplan's reading. Chen Kaige himself explains that 'Cheng Dieyi expresses the theme of infatuation. His love towards Duan Xiaolou is indeed his perfectionist pursuit of opera and the self.'[48] The most crucial factor in his sexuality is the fact that a faithful relationship on-stage and off-stage enables this sense of togetherness with Xiaolou. His singing for the Japanese is read by Kaplan as an act of 'revenge' by Dieyi because of Xiaolou's betrayal through marriage to Juxian. Yet when he is accused of treachery by the

Nationalist regime Dieyi's response is not defensive. He is not stimulated by self-interest but rather his obsession with the opera, declaring that 'if Aoki [the appreciative Japanese officer he sang for] was alive, then the Peking Opera would have already spread to Japan.' His response emphasises his infatuation for the opera over and above all consideration for his personal life and safety. Dieyi's infatuation with the opera is also exposed as apathetic to and exclusive of the shifting political climate that takes place around him, as demonstrated, for instance, by his siding with a Japanese officer after the Japanese occupation of China has ended.

This infatuation with the opera is actually his infatuation towards the faithful relationship between the Concubine and the King, which is indicative of his powerful longing for a faithful togetherness off the stage. His infatuation also helps to explain his taking up with Master Yuan, the opera patron who holds an exhaustive knowledge of the opera "Farewell My Concubine." Yuan acts as a substitute King for Dieyi when Xiaolou fails to fulfil his lifelong role for him. In the scenes that show the development of an intimate relationship between Dieyi and Master Yuan, the latter becomes the King either by applying the make-up of the King, or by wearing the operatic costume. This further illustrates Dieyi's emotional attachment to the role of the King who symbolises a stable sense of belonging for him. Kaplan's emphasis on Dieyi's (homo)sexuality, therefore, disconnects his image and his symbolic identity from the textual and contextual connections with the rest of the film and the wider social and historical specificity.

A Reading of the Sentimental in *Farewell My Concubine*

In the previous part, I have for the most part responded to Kaplan's reading of the film *Farewell My Concubine* in order to shed some light on what might be missing from her

reading under a culturally specific context. In this part, I will focus on an analysis of the film from the perspective of the endurance of the sentimental that is manifested by working through personal trauma. As Kaplan herself acknowledges in her reading this trauma is initiated by the separation between Douzi and his mother at the beginning of the film. This traumatic experience sets up the theme of the sentimental of the film. The working through a trauma as such is a personal journey that entails the persistence of looking for a lost family belonging and an alternative togetherness. The working through a personal trauma also reflects the trauma that is experienced historically and culturally on a broader level during the political upheavals of, for instance, the Japanese occupation and the Cultural Revolution. The sentimental should therefore be understood as the enabling force and propulsive power that sustains the working-through of trauma manifested throughout the film. Accordingly, the sentimental plays an important part in terms of connecting the plots, characters, music, sequences and all other elements cinematically to convey the articulation of the working-through of the trauma. *Farewell My Concubine* depicts the force and struggle of working through trauma and cinematically brings the viewers to an intimate engagement with personal memory and past trauma. The film endeavors as an effort in creating a real witness through personalised memory of historical trauma. I argue that the working-through of trauma might free the survivors from dominant collective memory that is articulated under a sweeping political condemnation that does not set them free from traumatic memory. Realising the sustaining power of the sentimental behind the working-through, and relating this to the specific historical and cultural context of the 1990s when the film was made, an interpretation of the film as such provides an empathic understanding through a culturally specific approach.

Personal Memories and Traumatic Memories

From the very beginning, *Farewell My Concubine* connects the audience with tensions of personal memory. In the prologue, two opera performers (the audience only recognises their identities as Cheng Dieyi and Duan Xiaolou later in the film) who are dressed in Peking Opera costumes walk into an empty stadium hall. The hall attendant recognises them, and declares, "It's you two… I am a great fan of your opera." One actor answers, "It has been twenty years since we performed together." The other actor rebukes, "Twenty-one." Here we are introduced to some of the main themes of the film- the dislocation of memory and staging issues in theatrical spectacles. In response to the attendant's statement that their troubles are all due to the Gang of Four (the political leaders of the Cultural Revolution) the actors concede this point in a hollow and hesitant voice that lacks conviction. Here, the memory is implicitly set against the political turmoil.

At the end of the prologue, the blue stage light forms a cone shape set against a black background, enclosing the two blurry figures who each cast a long shadow in the centre. It seems that the camera is moving away from the present scene. The opera music Farewell My Concubine starts in a crescendo as if in preparation for the performance. However, as the title dissolves against the background of a painting of the story Farewell My Concubine, the music continues to play without the start of the performance. The music stops after the credits have finished, and the inter-title on the screen changes from 1977 in the prologue to 1924 in the first scene after the credits. A woman who carries a young child (later on in the film, we recognise the young boy as Douzi and the woman is his mother Yanhong; Douzi is Cheng Dieyi's nickname when he is trained at the opera school; as I have already mentioned Duan Xiaolou's nickname is Shitou; Cheng Dieyi and Duan Xiaolou are their stage names that are given to them after they become famous) as she makes her way through a busy market district.

This scene is set in a sepia colour (the colour does not change again back to normal until Douzi is taken to the opera school by his mother). The transition to sepia photography indicates to the audience that the scene takes place in the more distant past. The termination of the music without the start of the performance gives us a feeling of frustration or incompleteness, and also forms a tension between two kinds of memories - one is set against the backdrop of political turbulence and the other is set in a nostalgic tone.

Although there is no clear ownership of this memory, one should be able to recognise the director's choice of framing the film as personal memories. In an interview with Michael Berry in 1995, Chen Kaige identifies himself with the character Cheng Dieyi on the level of their artistic pursuit.[49] He also expresses his extensive love for the city of Beijing and for the Peking Opera. '[…] I realized that Beijing opera is truly a critical part of the city's history and culture. One of the reasons I feel that Beijing of today is no longer Beijing is due to the absence of its opera. When I was a child, no matter what lane or alley you walked down, you could always hear the sound of someone singing. Beijing opera is the life of the city [….]'[50] Chen Kaige's fond memory of growing up in Beijing sets up a nostalgic tone for the film, and this also places emphasis on the choice of Beijing as the place of the memory. In the film *Farewell My Concubine*, while the woman walks through the busy market district, there are detailed descriptions of vendors and performers which are intimate vignettes of Chen Kaige's native city. The stage, the opera and the striking colour and style of the operatic make-up and costumes, the peddler's shouting, and the pigeon's whistle are all typical Beijing images and sounds and are all the intimate objects to which the director has a strong emotional attachment. It reveals the director's unabashed nostalgia to the city's layout and traditions. Indeed Chen Kaige recalls that, 'When shooting *Farewell My Concubine* I felt an unknown force taking hold of me. I believe that I put into the film all my understanding of Beijing and

all that old Beijing left in me. After shooting, I dreamed that Leslie Cheung as Cheng Dieyi was bidding me farewell; I wept in my dream.'[51] Therefore, the film is an effort by which the director tries to come to terms with the past. It is a past that has been lost in China's recent transformation with its rapid modernisation and urbanisation.

However, interpreting the film simply as nostalgic memory does not take into account the nature of traumatic memory that the director tries to imbue throughout. Therefore, the force of traumatic memory and the suffering of an enduring struggle with traumatic memory can be neglected. A freshly opened scar is repeatedly visualised throughout *Farewell My Concubine*. Douzi's extra finger is mutilated by his mother. We are reminded of the mutilation of Douzi's sixth finger later in the film through several shots of the fabric hand cover that he used to use as a child to cover the finger before his mother had it amputated- for instance when it appears in the frame on a dressing table in the opera house. Shitou is left with a cut on his forehead after being hit by the opera teacher Master Guan. After their first performance, Douzi licks Shitou's forehead to soothe the pain caused by the sweat. Every time when Cheng Dieyi carefully puts paint on Duan Xiaolou's face, the audience is reminded of the scar. During the final scene in the film, Cheng Dieyi cuts his throat with the sword and opens another scar.

These physical scars constantly remind the audience of the existence of the enduring trauma. In Chen Kaige's autobigraphy Young Kaige (*Shaonian Kaige*) he describes his relationship with his own father.[52] As a boy aged fourteen years old, Chen Kaige betrayed his father during the Cultural Revolution. The director's guilt-ridden past can be inferred from the different figures in the film, such as Duan Xiaolou, and Xiaosi'er. Xiaosi'er is the abandoned baby that Cheng Dieyi picks up outside Eunuch Zhang's mansion. Dieyi brings him up and nurtures him into a successful opera actor. However, he then betrays Dieyi during the

Cultural Revolution. Therefore, the film portrays a personal memory of Beijing that not only embraces the director's nostalgic growing-up sentiments, but also hides his unresolved memories from the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, the choice of Beijing as the place of memory does not form another mainstream voice as Beijing being the capital and centre of all the political upheavals. Rather, the repetitive appearance of the rectangular courtyard of old Beijing- *Siheyuan*, the opera house, together with all the other audio-visual objects forge an intimate space that facilitates the post-traumatic recollection and reclamation of memories that might otherwise be lost in the collective narrative. Throughout the film, a tension pervades between film narrative and traumatic memory.

This constant tension is actually the 'urge' to express that emanates from traumatic memory, also providing the possibility for the film to reconcile the traumatic past. In Sigmund Freud's writings on hysteria, he spells out clearly the effects of psychological trauma on memory and narrative. In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" he draws links between hysterical symptoms and the effects of 'traumatic neurosis.'[53] He suggests that hysterics have experienced a traumatic event, an event that acts like a 'gap in the psyche' in that it is not registered fully in consciousness as it occurs and thus cannot be remembered.[54] Instead, the traumatic memory is replayed belatedly through somatic (hysterical) symptoms. Freud defines hysteria- like traumatic neuroses- as a disorder of memory, stating, in his collaborative work with Josef Breuer in the *Studies on Hysteria* that 'hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences.'[55] This formulation has double significance. On the one hand, hysterics' memories of the past are incomplete, riddled with gaps and inconsistencies as a result of the traumatic experience they have been unable to assimilate into their minds. As a result, hysterics are characteristically unable to tell their life stories; the stories they attempt to tell, Freud points out, are incoherent and frequently dry out, 'leaving gaps unfulfilled and riddles unanswered.'[56] For Freud

traumatic experience cannot be fitted easily into a life story, not because it is 'unspeakable' but because it remains unknown, a 'gap' within consciousness and memory that defies narrativisation. This 'gap' in the memory is actually a reality that most of the survivors have not begun to face. The traumatic memory has not been integrated into the existing meaning scheme, therefore, forming a void out of the life story.

Freud explains that traumatic memory is a disrupted memory, and he also suggests that the traumatic memory experiences an 'urge' to express itself. When the ego eventually projects this 'urge' outwards, it seems 'foreign' even to the ego.[57] According to Freud, the 'daemonic' character of the instinctual 'compulsion' of a traumatic memory is powerful enough to find its entry. Therefore, it becomes possible for the viewer of the film to recognise the dominance in the 'unconscious repressed' of a 'compulsion to repeat.'[58] In his early research, Freud used cathartic methods to set his patients in hypnosis. However, when they awoke, they might not remember what they had told the physicians. In such a way, the traumatic memory could be regarded as a memory without ownership before its entering into consciousness.

Therefore, the repetitive presence of personal trauma for the character Cheng Dieyi in the film *Farewell My Concubine* may be recognised as an attempt to engage the viewer in a dialogue with trauma through identifying with the 'repressed' 'compulsion' of the traumatic memory. This might open the viewer up to the possibility of beginning to recognise its hitherto repressed acknowledgement of traumatic memory. The film thus may help the viewer to bracket formative identifications, and generate a willingness to reflect on past experience and fill in the 'gap' in the traumatic memory. This also echoes with the rehabilitative theme that the director tries to convey through the film, which I have already touched on in the previous section.

The more we look at cause-effect chains and motifs, we can actually recognise traces of Cheng Dieyi's inner 'compulsion to repeat' from his early age. After watching a performance by the opera school at a market, Yanhong, Douzi's prostitute mother, follows the troupe back to the opera school. While Yanhong and Douzi stand in the courtyard of the school, the camera crosscuts to the street outside the school. A man appears who is shouting as he sharpens knives, "Bring your scissors for sharpening! Sharpen your knives!" The camera moves back to a room inside the school where Yanhong asks Master Guan, the opera teacher, to take Douzi in as he is now too old to be brought up in the brothel. Master Guan discovers that Douzi has an extra finger on one hand and refuses his entry- the sixth finger would rule the boy out of an acting career according to old operatic traditions. Yanhong quickly takes Douzi out. The low drum starts together with a very eerie sound. The scene is crosscut to outside on the street, where the sound of knives clattering is again heard. Yanhong pulls Douzi down, kneeling opposite the knife sharpener's working stool. Douzi says, "Mum, my hand is freezing. It feels like ice." Yanhong then violently cuts off his extra finger. Douzi looks at his bleeding hands without screaming. This scene depicts the first traumatic memory in Douzi's life. Being mutilated and abandoned by his mother, the scene symbolises an emasculation or castration threat. The mutilation throws him into a symbolic world now that his real world dominated by his biological link to his mother is transplanted and substituted by his infatuation with the opera, and accordingly to the King/Xiaolou. This scene echoes a later scene where the 'compulsion to repeat' can be recognised.

Yanhong violently cuts off Douzi's extra finger.

At the opera school Douzi is trained for a female role because of his physical figure. He refuses to sing the correct lyrics. "At sixteen I am a nun. My hair is shorn at youth's prime. I am by nature a boy…" (The correct lyrics should be "By nature I am a girl.") Douzi runs away from the opera school one day with another opera student Laizi having been severely punished by the opera teacher for repeatedly singing the wrong lyrics. By chance they come upon a performance of Farewell My Concubine in a theatre. While Laizi is overwhelmed by the adulation that the performers receive from the audience in the theatre, in contrast Douzi cries as the camera moves back and forth many times focusing on his face and the face of the King of Chu on stage. He then pulls Laizi with him running back to the opera school where he accepts his punishment without asking for any mercy.

Douzi's willingness to go back to the opera school is based on his recognition of the King. This is the start of his lifelong infatuation towards opera where he can form an alternative affect of the sentimental and therefore a sense of belonging through a pairing with the King. If the King and Queen can be interpreted as male and female genitals according to Freud's

dream-work symbols, then what he recognises on the stage is the phallic power that he symbolically lacks resulting from the first castration threat from his mother.[59] He chooses to go back to the opera school because he realises that his pairing with Shitou, who performs the role of the King, would provide an enduring relationship with this phallic power, although the immediate reality is different. This emphasises that this is a symbolic world of infatuation that Douzi tries to inhabit, and not a world based on any external reality outside the opera. Once again he sings the wrong lyrics. Shitou puts Master Guan's pipe into his mouth and moves it violently. When the blood comes out of Douzi's mouth, he stands up and sings the right lyrics for the first time with a satisfied expression on his face. This scene can be interpreted as his second castration as implied by the change of lyrics. The expression of satisfaction on his face does not imply his contentment with being symbolically castrated, it implies and enhances his desire for the phallic power- now he becomes the real partner of the King.

Douzi sings the correct lyrics after Shitou puts the pipe in his mouth.

Therefore, the 'compulsion to repeat,' as one of the central themes of the film, becomes a principle of the film that relates all the elements together to create a coherent whole. Cheng

Dieyi's traumatic memory also appears in another scene. After Douzi and Shitou perform Farewell My Concubine for Eunuch Zhang's birthday celebration, Douzi is taken to Eunuch Zhang's mansion. He becomes trapped in the room with Zhang. What actually happens in the room remains unknown to and unseen by the viewer. When he comes out of the mansion, Douzi comes across a deserted baby. Master Guan tells him to leave the baby as "everyone has their own fate." Douzi insists on taking the baby with him. According to Freud's dream-work symbols, the baby can be interpreted as the symbols of the genitals.[60] Therefore, the scene implicitly delivers what he has lost in the mansion to the audience. This seemingly involuntary repetition is actually another proof of the 'compulsion to repeat' which forces upon us the idea of something fateful as implied by Master Guan.

Combined with the repetitive appearance of the sword, the phallic symbols become more obvious as sites for the recognition of the 'compulsion' of the traumatic memory that compels to 'repeat.' The sword first appears in the sitting room in Eunuch Zhang's mansion after Douzi and Shitou perform Farewell My Concubine for Eunuch Zhang's birthday celebration. Shitou finds the real sword and wishes to have it. Douzi promises to acquire it for him one day. Throughout the rest of the film, Cheng Dieyi always "by chance" comes by the sword. This enhances the 'compulsion' in the unconscious which has no conscious direction. However, it makes its entry repeatedly as symptoms open for interpretation.

It is worth pausing here to mention Cheng Dieyi's homosexual relationship with Master Yuan. Cheng Dieyi's homosexuality often becomes the prominent forging aspect of his identity. As I have already mentioned, Kaplan extends this to consider that homosexuality is a fundamental thematic element of the film itself.[61] Although Cheng Dieyi is evidently a homosexual character, considering this as a salient thematic element might risk reducing the

'coincidence' of the 'compulsion to repeat' to certain laws, therefore depriving the power of the traumatic memory. Master Guan is the one who forges an explicitly homosexual relationship with Cheng Dieyi. However, Cheng Dieyi does not express any affectionate feelings towards him in real life. It is only when they put on the opera paint and Master Yuan appears dressed as the King of Chu that Cheng Dieyi forms an affectionate relationship with him. Therefore, Master Yuan only functions as a reassertion of Cheng Dieyi's identification with the King and his persistent searching for the togetherness with the King, reinforcing the traumatic 'compulsion.'

A Meaning To Be Found

These compulsions can be recognised as the nature of traumatic memory and call for recognition of the survivors' constant struggle with traumatic memory. Besides, the film also uses Cheng Dieyi and his infatuation with opera and the stage to form a sense of insistence, which makes all the traumatic compulsions meaningful in terms of the protagonist's consistent and continuous search for what has been lost in the trauma event- the sentimental of family belonging, and a relocation of lost identity- a constant search for an alternative togetherness. The setting of the Peking Opera stage throughout the film represents a space disconnected from our perception of time. The repetitive showing of the opera Farewell My Concubine on the stage reinforces this timeless space. Cheng Dieyi lives within the opera, outside the boundaries of the politicised present of the narrative. His stage brother, Duan Xiaolou, comments on various occasions "That is just opera!" "How are we going to get through the days, and make it in the real world among ordinary people?"

Cheng Dieyi only tends to make contact with the "real world" through the opera. For instance during the Japanese occupation he sings for the Japanese officials in exchange for Duan

Xiaolou's release from prison. He informs Duan Xiaolou in great excitement after his release that General Aoki knows how to appreciate the Peking Opera. His immediate excitement when he first sees Duan Xiaolou freed from captivity is contrasted with the following scene when Japanese soldiers shoot a group of anti-Japanese students. His positive perception of the Japanese, shaped by his operatic prism is set against the "reality" of brutal Japanese occupation practises.

In a later scene Cheng Dieyi is accused of being a national traitor and faces the death sentence by the Nationalist court. In response he says, "If Aoki had lived, he'd have taken the Peking Opera to Japan." He disregards his personal safety in defiance of any insult to his beloved opera. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, he criticises the new opera in contrast to the Peking Opera. In so doing, he ignores the political agenda of the time, thereby planting the seeds for his later condemnation by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. Chen Kaige comments that Cheng Dieyi is 'someone who never changes even as the world surrounding him is in constant fluctuation.'[62] The reason he does not change is because he lives in the fantasy on stage where he could form the intimate togetherness with the King. This reinforces his persistent search and maintenance of a sense of belonging that he has lost in his "real" life. The changing of the reality around him does not affect his personal state of existence. His persistent pursuit of opera seems to be driven by an insistent unknown force. In order to make sense of this unknown force, I will now refer to Jacques Lacan's 'insistence of the signifying chain.'[63]

Lacan's 1956 essay on Edgar Allan Poe's short story *Purloined Letter* is 'a reworking of material from Lacan's 1955 seminar *The Ego in Freudian Theory and Psychoanalytic Technique*.'[64] The 1955 seminar was particularly concerned with Freud's notion of the

repetition compulsion, which Lacan linked with the 'instance of the signifying chain.' The subject of the story is a letter, and Lacan traced the effect on the characters as it changes hands and follows a complicated path, its route and displacements determining the action and destiny of the characters. Lacan used the story to illustrate his theory that 'it is the Symbolic Order which is constitutive for the subject- by demonstrating in the story the decisive orientation which the subject receives from the itinerary of a signifier.'[65] Like a signifier as a linguistic term, the letter travels in a definite path, forming a symbolic circuit which cuts across the subjects of the story. The subjects are changed at each turning-point and displacement of the chain, as they lose, receive or search for the letter. According to Lacan's 'signifying chain,' he emphasises the importance for the subject of the repetition of a chain of meaning in a symbolic circuit. The subjective truth can only be realised by following the path of the signifiers on the signifying chain. Meaning does not arise in the individual signifier, it is produced through the insistence of the signifier on the chain and in the very connections between the signifiers.

It seems that director Chen Kaige emphasises a sense of insistence on searching for meaning of trauma by contrasting the timeless space and Cheng Dieyi's enduring love for opera against the ever-changing circumstances. He raises questions exactly about this insistence that is sustained by the longing of the sentimental. If traumatic memory has a meaning to be discovered, then the stage and Cheng Dieyi together form a tension of insistence for searching. Cheng Dieyi's character cannot alone represent the meaning of trauma. It is through his very connections with others or other objects that the meaning of trauma might surface. Therefore, although the traumatic memory seems to be in the 'repressed unconscious' from the outset, there is an active inner part played by the survivor by the very repetition and

insistence. This character Cheng Dieyi excites the audience because of a seemingly inescapable fate that repeatedly pursues him during the film.

Producing a Real Witness

The analysis of the film so far provides proofs of the presence of traumatic memory and its 'compulsion to repeat.' However, the film does not stop at this level, it also attempts to demonstrate some ways of 'working through' the traumatic memory. By this it might be possible to produce a real witness to the traumatic event.

Cheng Dieyi always treats Juxian as an antagonist who takes Duan Xiaolou away from him. They force each other to leave Duan Xiaolou on numerous occasions throughout the film. It is not a coincidence that both Juxian and Cheng Dieyi's mother are prostitutes. In the scene when he is in the process of giving up opium, Juxian comes in when Cheng Dieyi is in a comatose state.

Cheng Dieyi: "Mum, my hand is freezing! It feels like ice. My hand is freezing!"
Juxian holds him to her chest and cries and taps him like a baby.
Juxian: "It's ok. Everything is all right."

The words Cheng Dieyi says are exactly the same as those he says to his mother when she cuts off his extra finger outside the opera school. This is the first time in the film that Cheng Dieyi reflects on his early memory albeit in an unconscious state. Meanwhile, Juxian's role is transformed into that of a mother's role preparing for the later narrative.

At the condemnation meeting set at the height of the Cultural Revolution, Duan Xiaolou is forced to denounce Cheng Dieyi for his past. In an effort to protect him Juxian shouts to stop Duan Xiaolou when he wants to tell the public mob about Cheng Dieyi's homosexual relationship with Master Yuan. Cheng Dieyi is also compelled by the situation and loses his self-control, condemning Juxian as a prostitute. Most of Freud's discourses on psychoanalysis and psychotherapy recognise the necessity that it is only when the seemingly unspeakable traumatic experience can be transformed into a narrative that the traumatic event can be put in the past and the survivor can begin to recreate an identity shattered by trauma. Therefore, the condemnation meeting can be taken as an extreme form of retelling the traumatic memory. The unspeakable and unacceptable are symbolically transformed into a narrative form. In the immediate scene after this, Juxian returns the sword to Dieyi in front of a temple while Dieyi kneels down alone after the condemnation meeting. Therefore, Juxian who now functions figuratively as a substitute for Dieyi's mother, returns the sword symbolising the return of phallic power to him. As I have mentioned above, this scene is set against the background of a temple with big pine trees on the sides, which is interpreted in Chinese culture as a sign of tranquillity, and it is also another choice of the director to represent an intimate space. Here the film completes its attempt to prove the reconciliation of trauma achieved by integrating the traumatic memory into a narrative memory, although in an extreme form.

Van der Kolk and van der Hart distinguish traumatic memory and narrative memory. 'Narrative memory consists of mental constructs, which people use to make sense out of experience.' They continue, '[u]nder extreme conditions, existing meaning schemes may be entirely unable to accommodate frightening experiences, which causes the memory of these experiences to be stored differently and not be available for retrieval under ordinary

conditions: it becomes dissociated from conscious awareness and voluntary control.'[66] For therapeutic reasons, only when the traumatic memory is recognised and adapted into narrative memory can the trauma be integrated as part of the existing identity. 'Traumatic memories are the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language. It appears that, in order for this to occur successfully, the traumatised person has to return to the memory often in order to complete it.'[67] However, placing a traumatic memory into a narrative memory does not mean simply retelling the event, especially when it comes to historical trauma. It might risk merging with the collective memory to become a different way of telling the same story. It might also risk diluting the force and generalising a specific traumatic event, which has the effect of 'obscuring crucial historical distinctions' and 'block[s] processes that counteract trauma and its symptomatic after effects.'[68] More likely, the process might become a condemnation, which is part of the enduring force of traumatic memory that will push the survivors away from the truth.

In the case of this film, the Cultural Revolution is set at its climax. It is also the event that leaves the director enduring his own guilt for betraying his father. The memory of the Cultural Revolution is mainly constructed by the state narrative. Most of the survivors from that period claim themselves or are claimed as the victims. It seems that the "Gang of Four and its followers" is the pervasive explanation given for that period in Chinese modern history. But in reality the majority of people played their parts at different levels within the mass movement. '[T]he period's most devastating effect was the betrayal of memory itself, by remoulding recall of the past into a tool of torture.'[69] The collective memory might add on the weight of torture without releasing the real pain buried underneath. 'The traumatic experience has normally long been submerged and has become distorted in its submersion.

The horror of the historical experience is maintained in the testimony only as an elusive memory that feels as if it no longer resembles any reality. The horror is, indeed, compelling not only in its reality but even more so, in its flagrant distortion and subversion of reality. Realising its dimensions becomes a process that demands retreat.'[70] Therefore, the collective memory at the core is pushing the memory away, the memory that might contain the real truth for working through the trauma.

The irreducible specificity of traumatic stories is the truth that should surface. With one's 'buried truth,' one still lives as a slave to one's memory.[71] The traumatic memory still perpetuates its tyranny. When one's memory is so obedient to the collective memory, one's identity as an individual ceases to exist. One fails to be an authentic witness of trauma and oneself. As Cathy Caruth puts it, '[t]o be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. And thus the traumatic symptom cannot be interpreted, simply, as a distortion of reality, nor as the lending of unconscious meaning to a reality it wished to ignore, nor as the repression of what once was wished.'[72] It might be painful to face what actually occurs in the traumatic event, especially when it relates to the loss of personal ethical values. However, it is the essential part of working through trauma that one needs to cohere and absorb the real truth in the traumatic experience. The film *Farewell My Concubine* does not criticise the political situation as its ultimate target. Rather, it focuses on infatuation and betrayal as its two core themes as stated by the director.[73] Therefore, the film takes some responsibilities for the traumatic event. '[C]arrying through the witness is a way of transmuting pain and guilt into responsibility, and carrying through that responsibility has enormous therapeutic value.'[74] This responsibility is not just the responsibility to the dead, but also to oneself- a reintegration of the self. Part of the human value system relies on one's ability to take responsibility. Through carrying the responsibility via one's witnessing, one can recognise

267

oneself and one's values. Therefore, one can also be reconstructed and reintegrated. The film attempts to provoke the viewer to rethink the notions of experience and traumatic impact and examine the responsibility that one should bear to the historical witness.

Double Witness

The film not only attempts to lay out the different levels of recognising, adapting and working through traumatic experience, it also raises questions implicitly to the viewer. Therefore, the visibility of the visual images implicitly raises the question regarding visibility itself. The image of a mirror repeatedly appears throughout the film. The first time is when Cheng Dieyi and Duan Xiaolou have just become adults. After a performance of the opera Farewell My Concubine they are both in the dressing room, still with the opera paint on their faces.

Duan: "At key moments, I squeezed my waist with my hands, so I wouldn't run out of breath." The camera moves from his whole figure to his waist. Cheng Dieyi's hands appear around his waist from the back.

Cheng: "Here?"

Duan: "No."

Cheng: "Here?"

Duan: "Yes."

Cheng Dieyi squeezes his waist and tickles him.

Duan: "Stop it!" The sound of a train approaching then intercedes.

We now see them both in the mirror in which they are both laughing. Suddenly the laughter stops, they look at each other and turn around at the same time looking at the mirror

accompanied by the sound of a train passing in the background. This is interrupted by the sound of the door opening. They step apart from each other. Their patron Master Yuan enters the room. Yuan is knowledgeable of the Peking Opera and later on in the film forms a homosexual relationship with Cheng Dieyi. He sits in front of the mirror, then turns and looks at Cheng Dieyi through the mirror although Cheng Dieyi stands right in front of him.

The mirror reappears in a backstage dressing room. Cheng Dieyi and Duan Xiaolou are sitting back to back while they apply the opera paint to their faces. The camera looks into Cheng Dieyi's mirror in which we can see Duan Xiaolou's back, face and an infinite space caused by the reflection. Cheng Dieyi asks Duan Xiaolou about an incident in the brothel named the "House of Blossoms." In this brothel Duan Xiaolou had accidentally become engaged to the prostitute Juxian as a result of saving her from a group of people forcing her to feed them wine mouth to mouth. After an argument, Cheng Dieyi refuses to help Duan Xiaolou with his make-up. He walks in front of the mirror. The camera shot is still directed into the mirror from behind his back. Then in the frame Duan Xiaolou walks into the mirror image behind him.

The third use of the mirror is also set in the backstage dressing room. Shortly beforehand, Juxian quits the brothel and comes to the theatre to request a proper wedding with Duan Xiaolou after their accidental engagement at the House of Blossoms. Duan Xiaolou leaves with Juxian, ignoring Cheng Dieyi's appeals for him to stay. Cheng Dieyi sits in front of a mirror. The camera is shot from behind his back. In the mirror, there appears the image of Master Yuan with a pair of peacock feather headpieces brought as a gift to Cheng Dieyi.

Throughout the film, a mirror appears a total of nine times with different individuals. The scenes already mentioned, involving the chief protagonist Cheng Dieyi, can help to explain the function of the mirror in the film. In these scenes, images are always seen from the mirror. In contrast with shots of the front of the characters, this angle enables us to see not only the images of the characters (normally the back or side), but also their double images from the mirror. Freud's work on the theme of 'double' might provide us some paths to further thinking. When he analyses author E. T. A. Hoffmann who is claimed as 'the unrivalled master of the uncanny in literature' in "The 'Uncanny'," he observes the connection between Hoffmann's themes and the phenomenon of the 'double.' It suggests that either two characters possess common 'knowledge, feelings and experience,' or that one character identifies someone else as himself/herself, and lastly, the 'constant recurrence of the same thing.' The theme of the 'double' is a mental process, in which the character either leaps from one character to another, or there is a 'doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self,' or the same character-traits or vicissitudes constantly repeat.[75] These provide Freud with traces for the exploration of infantile sources. It should be observed that the doubling involves an active identification through which a certain relationship is formed. The character in the film now has a relationship that might be absent in real life with another person, or even with oneself.

As Freud focuses more on the lasting effect of the dominance in the unconscious mind of a 'compulsion to repeat,' Robert Jay Lifton suggests trauma in a new way, that 'extreme trauma creates a second self.' Lifton explains that:

> What I mean by this is, as I came to think about role, and self and identity: strictly speaking, in theory, there's no such thing as role. There's a lot of talk about role, but it can be misleading. Because to the extent that one is *in* anything there's a self-involvement. But in extreme involvements, as in extreme trauma, one's sense of self is radically altered. And there is a traumatized self that is created. Of course, it's not a totally new self, it's what one brought into trauma as affected

significantly and painfully, confusedly, but in a very primal way, by that trauma. And recovery from post-traumatic effects, or from survivor conflicts, cannot really occur until that traumatized self is reintegrated. It's a form of doubling in the traumatized person. And in doubling, as I came to identify it, there have to be elements that are at odds in the two selves, including ethical contradictions.[76]

Therefore the film uses the mirror image to represent a doubling identity- the traumatised and the self- the traumatic memory and the ego. The repetitive appearance of the mirror image reinforces the tension between the power of the traumatic memory and the constant struggle of the survivors. It therefore also reinforces the insistent search for the togetherness as the way to work through the trauma and the sustaining force of the sentimental.

However, for the purpose of this film more broadly, it also can be inferred that the mirror image also calls for an active viewing and witnessing from the spectators. The recurrence of the mirror provides an address for Cheng Dieyi to identify with different individuals or his extraneous self and to form a relationship that is otherwise unavailable. The mirror functions as the very points of his connection to the others and himself in his symbolic circuit. It also needs to be acknowledged that traumatic representations might not appear in easily recognisable forms. As a result, creating new ways of recognising the truth of traumatic memories that would, under traditional criteria, be considered to be false urgently need to be established through different ways of witnessing. Thus, the viewing process forms a relationship between the audience and the images of the film, a relationship that challenges the audience's ways of witnessing historical trauma.

Conclusion

Therefore we can arrive at an understanding that the film *Farewell My Concubine* is not simply a film about memory, but is also about searching for possible ways of working through trauma for the traumatised. As trauma implies a shattering of a culture's meaning-

making processes and representational modes, it is always claimed as being beyond the reach of representation. Therefore, as I have repeatedly articulated throughout my analysis, the importance of the sentimental in the making and interpreting of the film is to reveal the sustaining force of the working through trauma against a background that is culturally specific. The sentimental is the very way that provides the characters in the film with the possibility to work through the traumatic memory. Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine* endeavors to forge an effort to search figuratively for contexts and templates through which traumatic experiences can be given an expressive voice. The sentimental connection also enables the film to provide a rich perception for the spectator to produce deep and complex responses to the post-traumatic recall- it cues the spectator to perform an active recognition and identification. Therefore, a real witness might be formed and the lost identity and truth might be restored as a result, in response to the culturally specific necessity of the period. And this culturally specific analysis across cultures is what I try to engage with, in order to obtain or enhance the epistemic understanding of the visibility in the field of film studies. For this reason I suggest that the sentimental, as it has been abundantly represented in so many Chinese films, provides a possibility for a better-balanced cross-cultural reading/viewing through its provision of the affective connection with the culture, history, the psyche, and their various transformations through empathic engagement.

Kaplan raises the significant concern that cross-cultural reading can generate cultural imperialism: 'Cross-cultural analysis, we know, is difficult- fraught with danger. We are forced to read works produced by the Other through the constraints of our own frameworks/theories/ideologies.'[77] Kaplan's awareness of the power imbalance in cross-cultural analysis is not being disputed here. This concluding chapter intends to explore a

tendency symptomatic in the pursuit of cross-cultural analysis that continues to place the Other in an objective position and presumes possession of an interpretive authority.

By insisting on the requirement of a culturally specific approach, I am not asserting that a 'correct' reading of Chinese film is only possible in a native Chinese study. Such an approach would appear to risk reaffirming a seemingly unbridgeable divide between East and West, while also adding to the circulation of colonial stereotypes. James Clifford shows that Said's *Orientalism* frequently relapses into the same 'essentializing' modes that it attacks, and then warns that an exclusive dependence on dichotomising concepts would not save an oppositional critique of *Orientalism* from falling into 'Occidentalism.'[78] It seems sensible therefore, to keep in mind that the problem remains the same if one shifts from the pole of Western-centred analyses to an 'other'-centred pole. Lacanian psychoanalysis suggests that all identities are incomplete, whether they are individual or collective identities.[79]

This sense of the incompleteness of one's identity provides an original understanding of colonial power, and also lays out a basis to make a better-balanced cross-cultural analysis approachable. The endorsement of pure stable cultural identities would always position the other culture as different or threatening, rather than diverse. By insisting on the importance of cultural specificity when confronting the Western theoretical paradigm, this recognition of identity endorses drawing from the different parts of varied cultures in an effort to develop a better awareness of mutually incomplete identities and cultural diversities in order to reject a polarised stand.

With this in mind Yingjin Zhang claims that cross-cultural analysis would be more fruitful if it was based on a 'dialogic mode.'[80] A dialogue needs to be built upon an equal subjectivity,

in other words by acknowledging the Other's subjectivity and taking it truly into practice. Zhang agrees with Clifford that 'dialogue' and 'negotiation' are the essential concepts in an off-centred world, and argues that the 'dialogic mode' of cross-cultural analysis is a process that better balances the issue of a fixed identity and the fear of 'eradicating one's subjectivity by encounters with an alien culture.'[81] Therefore, the different parts could approach each other through a negotiation of how to communicate with each other, rather than as a form of speaking for the other. Cultural specificity can be understood in these terms as a strategic approach towards a politics of how to advance the dialogue.

In an on-going postcolonial framework, what cross-cultural analysis should question is the accompanying power relationship. It can also advance genuine insight when different cultures interact for the practical purpose of acquiring a more informed mutual understanding. In view of this Henry Schwarz observes that 'postcolonial studies works to make this relation of unequal power more visible, with the goal of ending it.'[82] Putting the world into binary oppositions does not produce a better-balanced understanding. The division itself can only be productive when the complex dynamics of cultural diversity are considered. What is increasingly needed is to adopt a progression that systematically proceeds from generalities to specificities, or vice versa.

Although cross-cultural analysis still encounters the dangers of continuing neo-colonialist fetishisation of otherness, there is no reason not to be optimistic regarding the potential for the emergence of a better-balanced practice of cultural specificity. Despite the dilemmas of cross-cultural reading, it is certainly possible to draw the interested parties into dialogue. The proliferation of theories will definitely contribute to the proliferation of the practice.

Nonetheless, Bérénice Reynaud is not particularly upbeat in her assessment of the tribulations facing Chinese film studies. She stipulates that 'the question Chinese film studies will have to face […] is how to contain Western theoretical imperialism while simultaneously avoiding the fetishization of the specificity of Chinese culture- the turning of it into an exotic Other knowable only through the critical analyses of native insiders.'[83] Reynaud's concern for the transformation into the 'exotic' underlies a power relation- to whom is the image exotic? But her acknowledgement of the foundation for cross-cultural reading based on 'an ever-increasing knowledge of Chinese culture, film, and political history' can hopefully coincide with and support an expanding awareness and recognition of cultural specificity from and across all groups and cultures.[84]

When the filmic images are shown on the screen, they are visible to a transnational circulation and interpretation. We can almost say that there are no restrictions anywhere today for the publication of images if they are desired. However, as the title of this thesis suggests, the visibility of the images might at the same time imply a sense of invisibility- the images are only known as visual shadows without a great understanding specific to the conditions underlying how and why the images are presented. This can be put down to a lack of connection with the cultural conditions in which the images are born. Rey Chow emphasises that there is '*a visibility of visibility- a visibility that is the condition of possibility for what becomes visible, that may derive a certain intelligibility from the latter but cannot be simply reduced to it*.'[85] Therefore, both the visual and the epistemic sides together complete the understanding of visibility. Without this acknowledgement, the images of these films are without cultural grounding. This study highlights the need for a culturally specific understanding of the sentimental. The sentimental facilitates an emotional link towards a greater understanding of Chinese cinema. Therefore, I have compared two different ways of

interpreting the same film to illustrate how the consideration of the sentimental in Chinese cinema as a culturally specific phenomenon would make a key difference in understanding Chinese films in general.

Through a consideration of the sentimental, the characters from *Farewell My Concubine* become figures within a contextual history, culture and environment. The unresolved emotional complex between the director and his father, the childhood memories of the actors, and other interwoven connections rely on an empathic connection which opens up the emotional diversity and the subtle relationship among the characters. Rather than being unilaterally seen, the sentimental provides the opportunity of a cross-culturally specific understanding. This film is cohesive of the collective efforts of the whole generation that is embedded in the director's work. A film as such has to take the historical, cultural and generational response into consideration. Otherwise, it would lead to an interpretation such as Kaplan's that risks leaving the visibility of the images simply on a visual level. Not only do the images in the film become silent, the voice of the connected audience is silenced as well. Therefore, it proves that visibility does imply a sense of invisibility. However, an empathic link initiated by the sentimental connects the audience emotionally to the culture and history that the film relates to. The sentimental is an affective mode that is invisible. However, it facilitates the possibility of an empathic understanding of the visibility of the visual images.

By claiming that the sentimental is a culturally specific phenomenon, there is a risk of essentialising a particularism. However, this cultural specificity is essential in cross-cultural understanding. It promotes a culturally-specific contextual concern rather than mere textual appreciation. Cultural specificity is not a way to promote isolation imposed by difference. Rather, it works as a balanced aggregation of the understandings of ontological diversity. The

sentimental in Chinese cinema provides a better-balanced approach among cross-cultural analysis. Some conceptual and artistic endeavours or merits of Chinese cinema can be overlooked under certain generalising Western discourses. In terms of Chinese cinema, the hidden subject/object viewing position can undermine cross-cultural analysis in terms of undertaking progressive research and arriving at a mutual understanding. The sentimental enables the audience to connect to the significant emotional flow of the films. This links the audience to a visibility beyond the visual spectacle.

As this is the concluding chapter of this study, I would like to conclude the whole thesis here as well. The sentimental as a cultural specificity, as I have explained above, can enhance a more nuanced understanding of the Chinese films that I have examined in this study and of course Chinese cinema more generally. In this study, I have discussed the sentimental as the cultural essence in China that is reflected in numerous forms including Chinese literature, politics, culture and history. Therefore, an engagement with the sentimental would provide a culturally specific approach to better recognise the intended function of some films and the artistic vision of their directors. Western cross-cultural approaches at times risk lacking, misreading, or undervaluing this essence of cultural specificity that can blur the complexities of cultural dynamics. The specific role of cross-cultural studies should be to construct a framework that directs us to appropriate ways to access the culturally specific contexts required of a 'total commitment' to the understanding of external cultures that Trinh Minh-ha and others have advocated.[86] Responding to an era that is pregnant with transnational force, cross-cultural analysis, especially in the area of the reading of films, requires more diligent engagement. The sentimental can certainly help to facilitate this through an empathic approach that holds much promise in raising awareness of persisting flaws in cross-cultural

analysis. Then our arrival at a culturally specific understanding that takes us to the epistemic side of the visibility beyond visuality should be possible.

[1] For a more detailed discussion, see Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993, 1-26.

[2] *Ibid*., 7.

[3] Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden, eds., *Transnational Cinema: the Film Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006, 5.

[4] For the problematic of China as nation or the study of the national cinema of China, see especially Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar, *China on Screen: Cinema and Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006; and Yingjin Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*. New York and London: Routledge.

[5] Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*, 1.

[6] Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, 37-38.

[7] *Ibid*., 38.

[8] *Ibid*., 51.

[9] *Ibid*., 49-50. My emphasis.

[10] Andrew Higson, "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema," in Ezra and Rowden, *Transnational Cinema*, 16.

[11] Berry and Farquhar, *China on Screen*, 3.

[12] Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*, 6. See also Chris Berry, "If China Can Say No, Can China Make Movies? Or, Do Movies Make China? Rethinking National Cinema and National Agency," in Boundary 2, 25, 3, pp. 129-150. My emphasis.

[13] Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*, 6. See also Berry, "If China Can Say No," 132.

[14] This has been recognised by Yingjin Zhang as well. See Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*, 6-7.

[15] *Ibid*., 4.

[16] Berry and Farquhar, *China on Screen*, 5.

[17] *Ibid*., 5.

[18] Higson, "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema," in Ezra and Rowden , *Transnational Cinema*, 15-16.

[19] Berry and Farquhar, *China on Screen*, 1.

[20] *Ibid*., 2.

[21] Rey Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, 11, original emphasis.

[22] Song Hwee Lim explains his use of the plural form of Chinese cinemas. See footnote 1 in Song Hwee Lim, "Celluloid Comrades: Male Homosexuality in Chinese Cinemas of the 1990s," in *China Information* 1 Vol. XVI, (2002), 68.

[23] Lim, "Celluloid Comrades," 68.

[24] E. Ann Kaplan, ed., *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. New York; London: Routledge, 1990, 142.

[25] *Ibid*., 98. For more on the continuity of colonialism see Noam Chomsky, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues*. London: Verso, 1993, especially Chapters 3 and 4.

[26] E. Ann Kaplan, "Reading Formations and Chen Kaige's Farewell My Concubine," In Sheldon H. Lu, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinema: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*. Honolulu, HI, USA: University of Hawaii Press, 1997, 265-275.

[27] *Ibid*., 268.

[28] This is cited by Kaplan , "Reading Formations," 265. The original is from Fredric Jameson.

[29] *Ibid*., 267-268.

[30] *Ibid*., 270.

[31] *Ibid.*, 270.

[32] *Ibid.*, 270.

[33] *Ibid*., 270.

[34] *Ibid*., 270.

[35] *Ibid.,* 273.

[36] *Ibid*., 273. For Jameson's national allegory and Three Worlds theory see Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," in *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65-68.

[37] *Ibid.*, 273.

[38] Regarding the theory of "national allegory," see Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text* 15 (Fall), 65-68; and Yingjin Zhang, *Screening China: Critical Interventions, Cinematic Reconfigurations, and the Transnational Imaginary in Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002, 208-209.

[39] *Ibid*., 267.

[40] Yingjin Zhang, *Screening China*, 121.

[41] Esther C. M. Yau, "Yellow Earth: Western Analysis and a Non-Western Text," In Chris Berry, ed., *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*. London: BFI Publishing, 1991, 70.

[42] Chen Mo, "Dangdai zhongguo dianying he wenxue" (Contemporary Chinese Films and Literature), in *Dangdai dianying* 2 (1995), 45.

[43] For Chinese literary movements see Chen Sihe, *Zhongguo Dangdai Wenxue Jiaocheng (A Course on Chinese Contemporary Literature)*. Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2001. I have translated from the Mandarin Chinese.

[44] Sheila Cornelius with Ian Haydn Smith, *New Chinese Cinema: Challenging Representations*. London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2002, 36-37.

[45] Yu Hua, *Huo Zhe (To Live)*. Haikou: Nanhai chubanshe, 2003. The quote is taken from the foreword in *Huo Zhe* (Chinese Version), 1993. Translated from Mandarin Chinese. See Yu Hua's personal blog, http://blog.sina.com.cn/yuhua.

[46] Kaplan, "Reading Formations," 266.

[47] *Ibid*., 266.

[48] Yang Yuanying, Pan Hua, and Zhang Zhuan, eds., *Jiushi niandai de diwu dai (The Fifth Generation of Chinese Filmmakers in the 1990s)*. Beijing: Beijing guangbo xueyuan chubanshe, 2000, 264-5.

[49] Michael Berry, *Speaking in Images: Interviews with Contemporary Chinese Filmmakers*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, 95-7.

[50] Michael Berry, *Speaking in Images,* 96.

[51] Chen Kaige, "Zhangda youshi zhishi yishunjian de shi" (Sometimes Growing Up Takes Only a Moment), in Yang Yuanying, Pan Hua, and Zhang Zhuan, *Jiushi niandai de diwu dai,* 151-160.

[52] Chen Kaige, *Shaonian Kaige* (*Young Kaige*). Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe (People's Literature Publishing), 2001.

[53] Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the pleasure principle," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. XVIII (1920-1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955, 7-64.

[54] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. II : Studies on Hysteria*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955, 228.

[55] *Ibid*., 7.

[56] *Ibid*., 45.

[57] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955, 236.

[58] Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the pleasure principle," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. XVIII (1920-1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works*, 7-64; for "compulsion to repeat", see18-23.

[59] According to Freud, 'the very great majority of symbols in dreams are sexual symbols.' He lists numerous symbols which can be used to represent sexual processes and the genital organs of both sexes. This is summarised by Freud Museum London, see http://www.freud.org.uk/education/topic/10576/subtopic/40029/. See also Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Translated by James Strachey, edited by James Strachey and Angela Richards. London: Penguin, 1991.

[60] *Ibid*.

[61] Kaplan, "Reading Formations," Lu, *Transnational Chinese Cinema*, 270.

[62] Michael Berry, 95.

[63] Cited by Bice Benvenuo and Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jacques Lacan: An Introduction*. London: Free Association Books, 1986, 91-102.

[64] *Ibid*., 91. The title od Lacan's essay is "The Seminar on Poe's "Purloined Letter"."

[65] *Ibid*.

[66] Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, "The Intrusisve Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma," in Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, 160.

[67] *Ibid*., 176.

[68] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, xi.

[69] Yomi Braester, "Farewell My Concubine: National Myth and City Memories," in Chris Berry, ed., *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*. London: British Film Institute, 2003, 93.

[70] Dori Laub, "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle," in Caruth, *Trauma*, 62.

[71] *Ibid*., 63.

[72] Caruth, *Trauma*, 5.

[73] Chen Kaige discusses these themes in an interview with Luo Xueying: "the film does not present the historical process of China's 50 years history, rather the film takes this history as a backdrop to express two human themes- infatuation and betrayal." See Yang Yuanying, Pan Hua, and Zhang Zhuan, *Jiushi niandai de diwu dai*, 264.

[74] Robert Jay Lifton, "An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton," in Caruth, *Trauma*, 138.

[75] Freud, XVII *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, 233-238.

[76] Lifton, 137.

[77] E. Ann Kaplan, "Problematising Cross-cultural Analysis: The Case of Women in the Recent Chinese Cinema," in Berry, *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema,* 142.

[78] James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 255-276.

[79] See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994, especially "Interrogating identity: Frantz Fanon and the postcolonial prerogative," 40-65; and "The other question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism," 66-84.

[80] Zhang, *Screening China*, 140.

[81] Zhang, *Screening China*, 140-141. Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, 46, 273.

[82] Henry Schwarz, "Mission Impossible," in Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray, eds., *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, 4.

[83] Bérénice Reynaud, "Chinese Cinema," In John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, eds., *World Cinema: Critical Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 164.

[84] *Ibid*.

[85] Chow, *Sentimental Fabulations*, 11. Emphasis in original.

[86] Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, 52.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Articles

Antze, Paul and Michael Lambek, eds. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York; London: Routledge, 1996.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Public Worlds, Volume 1. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*. London: Routledge, 1989.

—————, eds. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London; New York: Routledge, 1995.

Ahmad, Aijaz. "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the National Allegory." *Social Text* 17 (1987): 3-25.

Antze, Paul and Michael Lambek, eds. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space: the Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Spaces.* Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson and introduced by Wayne C.Booth. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

Bao, Yan. "Jianshou yu misan: dazhong wenhua shiyu zhong *Xiao cheng zhi chun* de shenfen shuxie yu rentong weiji" (Persistence and Dispersion: Identity Definition and Crisis of *Springtime in a Small Town* in the Mass Culture Context), in *Xinan jiaotong daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 6 (2005), 1-7.

Barker, Francis, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, eds. 1994. *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.

Barnard, Alan. *History and Theory in Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Belton, John. *American Cinema/American Culture*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994.

Benjamin, Andrew, ed. *Judging Lyotard*. Lndon: Routledge, 1992.

Benvenuto, Bice and Roger Kennedy. *The Works of Jaques Lacan: An Introduction*. London: Free Association Books, 1988.

Berger, John. *About Looking*. London: Writers and Readers, 1980.

Berry, Chris, ed. *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*. London: BFI Publishing, 1991.

———, "If China Can Say No, Can China Make Movies? Or, Do Movies Make China? Rethinking National Cinema and National Agency," in *Boundary* 2, 25, 3 (1998), 129-150.

———, ed. *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*. London: British Film Institute, 2003.

Berry, Chris and Mary Farquhar. *China on Screen: Cinema and Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Berry, Michael. *Speaking in Images: Interviews with Contemporary Chinese Filmmakers*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994.

———. "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences," in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, 206-214. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction (7th Edition)*. New York; London: McGraw Hill, 2004.

Bové, Paul A. "'Global/Local' Memory and thought," in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, eds. *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginery*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996, 372-385.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

Brecher, Jeremy and Tim Costello. *Global Village or Global Pillage: Economic Reconstruction from the Bottom Up*. Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1994.

Braester, Yomi. "Memory at a Standstill: 'Street-smart History' in Jiang Wen's *In the Heat of the Sun*," in *Screen* 42:4 Winter (2001), 350-362.

———. "Farewell My Concubine: National Myth and City Memories," in Chris Berry, ed., *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*. London: British Film Institute, 2003, 93.

Browne, Nick, Paul G. Pickowicz, Vivian Sobchack, and Esther Yau, eds. *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Bryant, Lei Ouyang. "Music, Memory, and Nostalgia: Collective Memories of Cultural Revolution Songs in Contemporary China," in *The China Review* 2 Vol. 5, Fall (2005), 151-175.

Cao, Xia. "*Chushengdi* yu *Yi xiang ren* de jiaocha yuedu zhaji"(Cross Reading Notes on The Birth Place and The Stranger), in *Xingxing* 7, 2008.

Caruth, Cathy. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

Chandler, James. "The Languages of Sentiment," in *Textual Practice* 22:1 (2008), 21-39.

Chapman, Mary and Glenn Hendler, eds. *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture*. Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999.

Chen, Kaige. "Zhangda youshi zhishi yishunjian de shi" (Sometimes Growing Up Takes Only a Moment), in Yang Yuanying, Pan Hua, and Zhang Zhuan, *Jiushi niandai de diwu dai,* 151-160.

Chen, Mo. "Dangdai zhongguo dianying he wenxue" (Contemporary Chinese Films and Literature), in *Dangdai dianying* 2 (1995).

Chen, Shan. "Yongyuan de *Xiaocheng zhi chun*" (Forever *Springtime in a Small Tow*), in *Beijing dianying xueyuan xuebao* 1 (2002), 50-58.

Chen, Shangrong. "Xin shimin wenhua de daiyanren: jiushi niandai Wang Shuo, Chi Li, Feng Xiaogang chuangzuo guan bijiao lun (The Representatives of the New Public Culture: A Comparative Study on the Creative Attitude of Wang Shuo, Chi Li, and Feng Xiaogang in the 1990s), in *Piping shijie* 3 (2005), 48-52.

Chen, Sihe. *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue jiaocheng (A Course on Chinese Contemporary Literature.)* Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2001.

Chen, Xiaoyun. *Dianying chengshi: zhongguo dianying yu chengshi wenhua 1990-2007 (Cinematic City: Chinese Cinema and the Urban Culture 1990-2007)*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2008.

Chen, Xuguang. *Dangdai zhongguo yingshi wenhua yanjiu (Contemporary Chinese Film Culture Studies)*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004.

Cheng, Qingsong. "Duihua: Wang Chao- zhenzheng de miandui zhenzheng" (Dialogue: Wang Chao- Facing the Truth)," June 17, 2002 at http://ent.sina.com.cn/r/2002-06-17/87705.html.

Chomsky, Noam. *Year 501: The Conquest Continues*. London: Verso, 1993.

Chow, Rey. *Woman and Chinese Modernity: the Politics of Reading Between West and East*. Minnesota and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

———. *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993.

———. *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

———. "A Souvenir of Love," in Esther C. M. Yau, ed., *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 209-229.

———. *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Clarke, David B, ed. *The Cinematic City*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Clark, Mike. *Movies in USA Today*. June 4, 2001.

Cleminson, Richard and Maggie Allison, eds. *In/visibility: Gender and Representation in a European Context*. Bradford: University of Bradford, 1998.

Clifford, James and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1988.

Cohen, Paul A. *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

Copjec, Joan. *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: the MIT Press, 1995.

Cornelius, Sheila with Ian Haydn Smith. *New Chinese Cinema: Challenging Representations*. London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2002.

Craps, Stef. "Linking Legacies of Loss: Traumatic Histories and Cross-cultural Empathy in Caryle Phillips's Higher Cround and The Nature of Blood," in *Studies in the Novel*, 1/2 vol. 40 (2008), 191-202 & 235.

Crosz, E. "Voyeurism/Exhibitionism/the Gaze," in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, Elizabeth Wright, ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

Cui, Xinguang. "Li An dianying zhong jiating de wenhua yiyi" (The Cultural Significance of Family in Ang Lee's Films), in *Dianying wenxue* 23 (2007), 30-31.

Dai, Jinhua. *Jing yu shisu shenhua: yingpianjJingdu shiba li (The Mirror and Secular Myth: Close Readings of 18 Films)*. Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 1995.

———. *Dianying piping (Film Criticism)*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004.

———. *Baijia jiangtan (Lectureroom)* on CCTV on February 2, 2005. The programme is part of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Chinese cinema (1905-2005). The name of Dai's speech on the day was "Feng Xiaogang zouhong zhi mi" (The Mystery of the Popularity of Feng Xiaogang).

———. *Wu zhong fengjing: zhongguo dianying wenhua 1978-1998 (The Scenery in the Mist: Chinese Film Culture 1978-1998)*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2006.

Dang, Jun. "Feng Xiaogang *Hesui xijv* dianying zhuti bianhua fenxi" (The Analysis of Theme Change in Feng Xiaogang's New Year Comedies), in *Dongnan chuanbo* 4 (2010), 94-97.

Davies, David J. "Old Zhiqing Photos: Nostalgia and the "Spirit" of the Cultural Revolution," in *The China Review* 2 Vol. 5, Fall (2005), 97-123.

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 1: the Movement-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London: The Athlone Press, 1997.

———. *Cinema II: the Time-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London: The Athlone Press, 1994.

Ding, Yaping (et al.), eds. *Bainian zhongguo dianyinglLilun wenxuan 1897- 2001(An Anthology of A Hundred Years of Chinese Film Theories 1897-2001)*. Beijing: Beijing wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2002.

Dissanayake, Wimal. *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Dixon, Wheeler W. *Disaster and Memory: Celebrity and the Crisis of Hollywood Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Dong, Lizi. *Dao de jing quanjian (The Full Version of Dao De Jing)*. Beijing: Zhongguo fangzhi chubanshe, 2010.

Ehlers, Hella and Joyce Crick, eds. *The Trauma of the Past: Remembering and Working Through*. London: Geothe-Institute, 1993.

Everett, Wendy. "Lost in Transition? The European Road Movie, or A Genre 'adrifting in the cosmos'," in *Literature/Film Quarterly* 37, 3 (2009), 165-175.

Ezra, Elizabeth and Terry Rowden, eds. *Transnational Cinema: the Film Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press, 1986.

Feng, Xiaogang. *Wo Ba Qingchun Xian Gei Ni (I Dedicate My Youth to You)*. Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 2003.

Feng, Yiping and Feng Hao. "Yizhong shouwang, liangzhong yixiang: xin jiu *Xiaocheng zhi chun* bijiao yanjiu" (A Contrast of Two Editions of *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Baoshan shizhuan xuebao* 4 Vol.26 (2007), 82-84.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. V (1900-1901): Interpretation of Dreams (Second Part) and, On*

Dreams. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953.

———. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. II : Studies on Hysteria*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955.

———. "The 'Uncanny'", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XVII (1917-1919)*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955.

———. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XVIII (1920-1922)*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955.

———. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. VI : Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1960.

———. *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*. Trans. W.J.H.Sprott. London: the Hogarth Press Ltd, 1967.

Frye, Marilyn. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Trumansburg; New York: Crossing Press, 1983.

Goldberg, David Theo and Ato Quayson, eds. *Relocating Postcolonialism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Gong, Xiaopeng. "Qian lun Feng Xiaogang *He sui pian* dui chuantong xijv de chuangxin yiyi (On the Innovative Significance of Feng Xiaogang's *He sui pian* to the Traditional Comedy)," *in Shidai wenxue* 6 (2007), 99-101.

Grainage, Paul. ed. *Memory and Popular Film*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.

Grossberg, Lawrence, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler, eds. *Cultural Studies*. New York; London: Routledge, 1992.

Gu, Hongming. *The Spirit of the Chinese*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1998.

Guthmann, Edward. *Movies in San Francisco Gate*. Friday, April 13, 2001.

Hartman, Geoffrey H., ed. *Holocaust Rememberance: the Shapes of Memory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Haviland, William A. *Cultural Anthropology* 8th ed. Fort Worth, TX; London: Harcourt Brace, 1996.

Hayward, Susan. *Cinema Studies: the Key Concepts (3rd Edition)*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Heald, Suzette and Ariane Deluz, eds. *Anthropology and Psychoanalysis: An Encounter through Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Henderson, Brian. *A Critique of Film Theory*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1980.

Higson, Andrew. "The Concept of National Cinema," in *Screen* 4 Vol. 30 (1989), 37-46.

———. *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

———. "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema," in Ezra and Rowden, *Transnational Cinema*, 15-25.

Hill, John and Pamela Church Gibson, eds. *World Cinema: Critical Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Hirsch, Joshua. *Afterimage: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004.

Hornstein, Shelley and Florence Jacobowitz, eds. *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003.

Huang, Huilin. *Dangdai Wenhua Yanjiu* (*Contemporary Cultural Studies*). Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1998.

Huddart, David. *Homi K. Bhabha*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Humphrey, Michael. *The Politics of Atrocity and Reconciliation: From Terror to Trauma*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Jameson, Fredric. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65-68.

———. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London and New York: Verso, 1991, 287-288.

Jameson, Fredric and Masao Miyoshi, eds. *The Cultures of Globalization*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998.

Jia, Leilei. "Feng Xiaogang dianying yu zhongguo dazhong wenhua pinpai" (Feng Xiagang's Films as the Chinese Brand of Mass Culture), in *Dangdai dianying* 6 (2006), 44-50.

Jia, Zhangke. *Jia xiang:Jia Zhangke dianying biji (1996-2008) (Jia Xiang: the Film Notes of Jia Zhangke (1996-2008))*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2009.

Jiang, Wen. *Dansheng (Birth)*. Beijing: Huayi chubanshe, 1997.

Jiang, Yunlun and Shi Jian, eds. *Xianfeng, duihua: women yijing xuanze (Avart-Garde: We Have Chosen)*. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004.

Jin, Cangqing. *Yingxiang de Xungen: 1980 Nian Yilai Zhongguo Dianying Xungen Sichao Yanjiu (Seeking Roots on Screen: A Study of Cultural Trends of Roots-Seeking in Chinese Cinema Since 1980)*. Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 2008.

Kaplan, E. Ann. *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. New York; London: Routledge, 1990.

———. "Problematising Cross-cultural Analysis: The Case of Women in the Recent Chinese Cinema." in Chris Berry, ed. *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*, 141-165. London: BFI Publishing, 1991.

———. "Reading Formations and Chen Kaige's Farewell My Concubine," in Sheldon H. Lu, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinema: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, 265-275. Honolulu, HI, USA: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

———. *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze*. New York; London: Routledge, 1997.

Kennedy, Liam. *Race and Urban Spaces in Contemporary American Culture*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Kertész, Imre. *Fateless*. Translated from the Hungarian by Tim Wilkinson. London: Vintage Books, 2006.

Kohon, Gregorio, ed. *The British School of Psychoanalysis: the Independent Tradition*. London: Free Association, 1986.

Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Slection*. Bristol: Routledge, 1997.

LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Lai, Linda Chiu-han. "Film and Enigmatization: Nostalgia, Nonsense, and Remembering," in Esther C. M. Yau, ed. *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Lan, Aiguo. *Hou haolaiwu shidai de zhongguo dianying (Chinese Cinema in the Post-Hollywood Era)*. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004.

Laub, Dori. "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle," in Caruth, *Trauma*.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Legge, James. "The Doctrine of the Mean/Zhong Yong," in *The Chinese Classics*, vol.1. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960.

Li, Daoxin. *Zhongguo dianying piping shi 1897- 2000 (History of Chinese Film Criticism 1897-2000)*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2002.

———. *Zhongguo dianying wenhua shi (1905-2004) (History of Chinese Film Culture)*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004.

———. *Zhongguo dianyingshi yanjiu zhuanti (Monographic Study of the History of Chinese Film)*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2006.

Li, Duoyu (et al.), eds. *Zhongguo dianying bainian 1905- 2005 (100 Years of the Chinese Movie 1905-2005)*. Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 2005.

Li, Gang. *Lun Zhongguo Diwudai Daoyan de Wenhua Jingshen (On the Cultural Spirit of the Fifth Generation Directors)*. Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2008.

Li, Jie. "From Auto-ethnography to Autobiography: Representations of the Past in Contemporary Chinese Cinema," in *Senses of Cinema* 45, 2007.

Lifton, Robert Jay. *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of "Brainwashing" in China*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1962.

———. "An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton," in Caruth, *Trauma*.

Ling, He. "Ping *Ren Sheng*" (Comment on *The Life*), in *Film Column of Shen Newspaper*, 4th February, 1934.

Li, Rusheng. "Lun xiao wenhua yu hexie shehui de goujian" (On Filial Piety Culture and the Construction of a Harmonious Society), in *Hubei shehui kexue* 6 (2006), 42-43.

Li, Yang and Liu Lishi. "Cong *Xiaocheng zhi chun* kan Fei Mu de daoyan fengge" (The Directing Style of Fei Mu from *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Dongfang yishu* 6 (2005), 20-22.

Lim, Song Hwee. "Celluloid Comrades: Male Homosexuality in Chinese Cinemas of the 1990s," in *China Information*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, (2002), 68-88.

Lin, Xiaoping. "Behind Chinese Walls: the Uncanny Power of Matriarchy in Wang Chao's *The Orphan of Anyang*," in *Third Text* 2 Vol. 23 March (2009), 195-208.

Liu, Fan, "Gaibian yihuo gaizhi: Feng Xiaogang dianying zhong de *Wang Shuo zhuyi* wenti (Adaptation or Changing the Set: On the Problematics of Wangshuoism in Feng Xiaogang's Films), in *Dianying yishu* 3 (2004), 99-101.

Liu, Zhendong and Yang Xiaohui, "Lun Feng Xiaogang xijv dianying chuangzuo de wenhua Qqdongli (On the Cultural Driving Force of the Production of Feng Xiaogang's Comedy Films), in *Hebei daxue chengren jiaoyu xueyuan* 4 Vol. 11 (2009), 96-97.

Loshitzky, Yosefa, ed. *Spielberg's Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler's List*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Lowenstein, Adam. *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Lu, Shaoyang. *Zhongguo dangdai dianyingshi: 1977 nian yilai (Chinese Contemporary Film History since 1977)*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004.

Lu, Sheldon H., ed. *Transnational Chinese Cinema: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*. HI, USA: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

Lu, Tonglin. "Fantasy and Ideology in a Chinese Film: A Žižekian Reading of the Cultural Revolution," in *East Asia Cultural Critique* 2 Vol. 12, Fall (2004), 539-564.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *Political Writings*. Trans. Bill Readings with Kevin Paul Geiman. London: U.C.L. Press, 1993.

Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Routledge, 1997.

MacCabe, Colin. *The Talking Cure: Essays in Psychoanalysis and Language*. London: Macmillan, 1981.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Argonault of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. London: George Routledge, 1922.

Marchetti, Gina. *From Tian'anmen to Times Square: Transnational China and the Chinese Diaspora on Global Screen, 1989-1997*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.

Marcus, George E. and Michael M. J. Fischer. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Meyer, William H. *Transnational Media and Third World Development: the Structure and Impact of Imperialism*. New York and London: Greenwood Press, 1988.

Miyashi, Masao. "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State." in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, eds.

Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginery. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996.

Mudrooroo, "White Forms, Aboriginal Content," in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, 228-231.

Murphey, Rhoads. *The Fading of the Maoist Vision: City and Country in China's Development*. New York: Methuen, 1980.

Nichols, Bill, ed. *Movies and Methods: An Anthology, Vol. II*. Berkeley, Los Angles, London: University of California Press, 1985.

Nie, Yonghua. "*Shijing* qinqing shi de wenhua yunhan yu wenxue muti" (The Cultural Connotation and Literature Theme in the Kinship Poems in *Book of Songs*), in *Zhengzhou daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 6 vol. 38 (2005), 33-36.

Nkrumah, Kwame. *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. London: Nelson, 1965.

Nugent, Stephen and Cris Shore, eds. 1997. *Anthropology and Cultural Studies*. London: Pluto, 1997.

Okely, Judith. *Own and Other Culture*. London; New York: Routledge, 1996.

Oliver, Kelly. *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

O'Sullivan, Michael. *Entertainment Guide in Washington Post*. Friday, April 20, 2001.

Pan, Huili. "Wenqing zai kunan zhong shique yu huigui: Yu Hua xiaoshuo muti jiedu" (The Loss and Return of the Sentimental in Suffering: Interpretations of the Motifs of Yu Hua's Novels)," in *Lishui shifan zhuanke xuexiao xuebao* 4 Vol. 24 (2002), 59-62.

Pan, Ruojian. "*Xi yang jing* zhong de zhongguo tingyuan: wenhua chongtu yu guojihua xushi celue (The Chinese Courtyard in the Western View: Cultural Conflict and Internationalised Narrative Strategy)," in *Dianying yishu* 2 (2001), 46, 44. 44-47 & 102.

Park, Robert E., Ernest W. Burgess and Roderick D. McKenzie. *The City*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Pearsall, Judy, ed. *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Philips, Adam. *Sigmund Freud (1856-1939): The Penguin Freud Reader*. London: Penguin, 2006.

Pilz, Kerstin. "Dreams of Escape: Variations of the Italian Road Movie," in *Romance Studies* 2 Vol. 21, July (2003), 139-152.

Pines, Jim and Paul Willemen, eds. *Questions of Third Cinema*. London: BFI Publishing, 1989.

Prentice, Chris. "From Visibility to Visuality: Patricia Grace's *Baby No-Eyes* and the Cultural Politics of Docolonization," in *Modern Fiction Studies* 2 Vol. 55 (2009), 321-348.

Qian, Mu. *Zhongguo wenhuashi daolun* (*The Introduction to History of Chinese Culture*). Beijing: Commercial Publishing House, 1994.

Rao, Shuguang (et al.), eds. *Zhongguo dianying fenxi (Chinese Film Analysis)*. Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 2007.

Readings, Bill. *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Reynaud, Bérénice. "Chinese Cinema." in John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, eds. *World Cinema: Critical Approach*, 159-165. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Richie, Donald. *Ozu*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1977.

Richon, Oliver. "Representation, the Despot and the Harem: Some Questions Around Academic Orientalist Painting by Lecomte-Du-Nouy." in Francis Barker, (et al.), eds. *Europe and Its Others: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature*, Vol. 1, 1-13. Colchester: University of Essex, 1985.

Riding, Alan. "The Holocaust, from a Teenage View," in *The New York Times*. January 3, 2006.

Robertson, Pamela. "Home and Away: Friends of Dorothy on the Road in Oz," in Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, eds., *The Road Movie Book*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997, 271-286.

Robson, Kathryn. *Writing Wounds: the Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women's Life-writing*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

———. *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983.

———. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994.

Schwarz, Henry and Sangeeta Ray, eds. *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Scott, A. O. "'Shadow Magic': When Movies Fomented a Cultural Revolution." In *Arts: The New York Times*, April 6, 2001.

Shang, Huipeng. "Jiti huijia yu zhongguoren de "lun ren zhuyi"" (Collective Homecoming and Chinese "Human Relations"," in *Sixiang zhe* 2 (2009). http://www.mylin.com/thinker/publication_old/sixiangzhe2/our_country/1057.aspx.

Shiel, Mark and Tony Fitzmaurice, eds. *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

———, eds. *Screening the City*. London and New York: Verso, 2003.

Shingu, Kazushige and Tetsuo Funaki. "'Between Two Deaths': The intersection of Psychoanalysis and Japanese Buddhism," in *Theory and Psychology*, SAGE Publication 2 vol. 18 (2008), 253-267.

Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and Media*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

———, eds. *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*. New Brunswick, New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2003.

Simon, Roger I., Sharon Rosenberg, and Claudia Eppert, eds. *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2000.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "How to Read a 'Culturally Different' Book," in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen. *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*, 127-149. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994.

———. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MS; London: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Stam, Robert, Robert Burgoyne and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis. *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-structuralism and Beyond*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

Tal, Kalí. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Taubin, Amy. *Movies in The Village Voice*. Tuesday, April 3, 2001.

Trinh, T. Minh-ha. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

———. *Framer Framed*. New York; London: Routledge, 1992.

Turim, Maureen Cheryn. *Flashbacks in Film: Memory and History*. New York; London: Routledge, 1989.

Turner, Terence. "Anthropology and Multiculturalism: What is Anthropology that Multiculturalism Should be Mindful of It?" in *Cultural anthropology* 4 Vol. 8 (1993), 411-429.

van der Kolk, Bessel A. and Onno van der Hart, "The Intrusisve Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma," in Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

Vilaseca, Stephen Luis. "From Spaces of Intimacy to Transferential Space: The Structure of Memory and the Reconciliation with Strangeness in El cuarto de atrás," in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 3 Vol. 83 (2006), 181-192.

Wang, Chengbing. *Dangdai Rentong Weiji de Renxue Jiedu (Anthropological Reading on Contemporary Identity Crisis)*. Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2004.

Wang, Haili. "Heise youmo yu wulitou gaoxiao- Feng Xiaogang he Zhou Xingchi xijv dianying bijiao" (Black Humour and Nonsense (Wulitou) Comedy- the Comparison of the Comedy Films of Feng Xiaogang and Stephen Chiau (Zhou Xingchi)), in *Jiannan wenxue* 3 (2010), 114-115.

Wang, Zhimin. *Dianying Xue: Jiben Lilun yu Hongguan Xushu (Film Studies: Basic Theory and Macroscopic Narrative)*. Beijing: China Film Press, 2002.

Wang, Shuo, et al. *Wo Shi Wang Shuo (I Am Wang Shuo)*. Beijing: Guoji wenhua chuban gongsi, 1992.

Weber, Elisabeth. "Special Topic: Ethics and Literary Study," in *PMLA* 1 vol. 114, Jan. (1999), 102-105.

Wilson, Rob and Wimal Dissanayake, eds. *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginery*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996.

Xie, Jun. "Nongmin gong: xianshen de jingxiang- dianying *Luo ye gui gen* de san zhong jiangshu" (Migrant Worker: the Screen Image of Their Appearance- the Three Narratives in the Film *Getting Home*), in *Yishu pinglun* 3 (2008), 57-61.

Xu, Jiapeng. "Kongzi renxue rendao zhuyi de xianshi xing pinge guanjian: du *Lunyu* qi ze" (Cast of the Realistic Characteristic of Confucian Humanitarianism- After Reading Seven Chapters of *Analects of Confucius*), in *Zhaotong shifan gaodeng zhuanke xuexiao xuebao* 1Vol. 25 (2003), 15-18.

Yan, Caidie. "Shuying hengxie, anxiang fudong: jiedu Fei Mu *Xiao cheng zhi chun* de wenhua yiyi (Sparse Shadows Cross and Hidden Fragrance Drifts- Interpreting the Cultural Significance in *Springtime in a Small Town* by Fei Mu), in *Shijie huawen wenxue luntan* 3 (2005), 60-63.

Yan, Chunjun (et al.), eds. *Cultural Symphony: Comparative Studies of Chinese Cinema (Wenhua de Jiaoxiang: Zhongguo Dianying Bijiao Yanjiu)*. Beijing: China Film Press, 2000.

Yan, Fang. "Feng Xiagang dianying renwu taici de yuyan fenxi" (The Linguistic Analysis of the Characters' Lines in Feng Xiagang's Films), in *Ke jiao wenhui* 12 (2008), 170.

Yang, Guobin. "China's Zhiqing Generation: Nostalgia, Identity, and Cultural Resistance in the 1990s," in *Modern China* 3 Vol. 29, July (2003), 267-296.

Yang, Xiaoyun and Zhou Xia. "*Hesui pian* xueshu taolunhui zongshu" (Summary of a Seminar on New Year's Film)," in *Dangdai dianying* 4 (2009), 32-36.

Yang, Yuanying, Pan Hua, and Zhang Zhuan, eds. *Jiushi niandai de diwu dai (The Fifth Generation of Chinese Filmmakers in the 1990s)*. Beijing: Beijing guangbo xueyuan chubanshe, 2000.

Yau, Esther C. M. "Yellow Earth: Western Analysis and a Non-Western Text." in Chris Berry, ed. *Perspectives On Chinese Cinema*, 62-79. London: BFI Publishing, 1991.

———. ed. *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Yin, Hong (et al.), eds. *Kuayue bainian: quanqiuhua beijing xia de zhongguo dianying (Across One Hundred Years: Chinese Cinema under Globalisation)*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007.

Yin, Hong and Tang Jianying, "Feng Xiaogang dianying yu dianying shangye meixue" (Commercial Aesthetics in Feng Xiaogang's Films), in *Danddai dianying* 6 (2006), 50-55.

Yu, Hua. *Huo Zhe (To Live)*. Haikou: Nanhai chubanshe, 2003.

Zeng, Qi. "Jiedu *Xiaocheng zhi chun* de xiangzheng he yinyu (Interpretations of the Symbols and Metaphors in *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Dianying pingjie* 7 (2007), 37-38

Zhang Huijun, Xie Xiaojing and Chen Yi (et al.), eds. *Yinmu zhuiqiu: yu zhongguo dangdai dianying daoyan duihua (Screen Pursuit: Dialogues with Contemporary Chinese Film Directors)*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2002.

Zhang, Lina. "Zhongshi de beipan: xinban *Xiaocheng zhi chun* de wenhua chuancheng yu shanbian" (A Faithful Rebellion: the Cultural Inheritance and Evolution of the New Version of *Springtime in a Small Town*), in *Dangdai dianying* 1 (2006), 88-90.

Zhang, Weijia. "Qinqing jv rebo de wenhua jiedu (The Cultural Reading of the Popularity of TV Series on the sentimental)," in *Zhongguo dianshi* 3 (2008), 40-43.

Zhang, Xudong. *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reforms: Cultural Fever, Avant-garde Fiction, and the New Chinese Cinema*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997.

Zhang, Yingjin. *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film: Configurations of Space, Time, and Gender*. Stanford: Standford University Press, 1996.

———. *Screening China: Critical Interventions, Cinematic Reconfigurations, and the Transnational Imaginery in Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002.

———. *Chinese National Cinema*. New York; UK: Routledge, 2004.

Zhang, Zhen, ed. *The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007.

Zhong, Dafeng. "Cong *Dingjun shan* dao *Xiyang jing*: gaibian beihou de wenhua lichang zhuanyi (From *Dingjun Mountain* to *Shadow Magic*: the Shift of Cultural Standpoint behind the Adaptation)," in *Dianying yishu*, 4 (2001), 40-43.

———, Pan Ruojian and Zhuang Yuxin (et al.), eds. *Film Theory: New Interpretations and Dialogue (Dianying Lilun: Xin de Quanshi yu Huayu)*. Beijing: China Film Press, 2003.

Žižek, Slovaj. *Enjoy Your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out*. New York; London: Routledge, 1992.

———. *The Fragile Absolute*. New York: Verso, 2000.

Websites

http://www.mylin.com/thinker/publication_old/sixiangzhe2/our_country/1057.aspx

www.hi.baidu.com/hqlk/blog/item/8e6997ca67bf644df31fe77e.html.

www.mtime.com/

http://tieba.baidu.com/f?kz=370593131

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0398866/bio

www.hudong.com/wiki/%E8%83%A1%E5%AE%89

http://www.tianya.cn/publicforum/Content/books/1/74427.shtml.

CCTV programme *People (Ren Wu)*. http://www.cctv.com/lm/284/55/46873.html

http://www.sina.com.cn 13/01/2005, *Southern Weekend*.

http://baike.baidu.com/view/9610.htm

http://ent.sina.com.cn/r/2002-06-17/87705.html