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The Antecedents of Taiwan New Cinema: 
The State of Taiwan Film in the 1960s and 1970s

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the 
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

James Anthony Wicks

Committee in Charge

Professor Yingjin Zhang, Chair
Professor Alain Cohen
Professor Larissa Heinrich
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Professor Kuiyi Shen
Professor Winnie Woodhull

2010
The Dissertation of James Anthony Wicks is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2010
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Holly, River, Abbey, and Dylan Wicks.
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“Gender Negotiation in Song Cunshou’s Story of Mother and Taiwan Cinema of the early 1970s.” Forthcoming.


“Ruan Lingyu” (actress), Berkshire Encyclopedia of China, ed. Linsun Cheng (Berkshire Publishing Group LLC, 2008).

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Cultural Studies

Studies in Chinese Cinemas
Professor Yingjin Zhang
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Antecedents of Taiwan New Cinema:
The State of Taiwan Film in the 1960s and 1970s

by

James Anthony Wicks

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor Yingjin Zhang, Chair

In many ways there could not be a more fascinating method to investigate how Taiwan’s Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang, KMT) Government defined itself as the representative government of all of China in the 1960s and 1970s than to consider its state-sanctioned film industry. The films produced by the state represent ideas of national unity and a glorious “homeland” during decades that witnessed the most intense of transformations: in film with the rise and eventual decline of the popularity of Taiwan cinema in Southeast Asia, in literature with the xiangtu (nativist literature) debates, in the economy as factories and the emergence of small business replaced an agricultural infrastructure, and in politics with the end of the Nationalist’s international status after losing its seat in the United Nations in 1971. At each stage
the state propagated its ideal of “free China” for all to see on the silver screen -- an ideal made all the more complicated by competing regional and cultural influences: from the east by the People’s Republic of China, from the north by the heritage of Japanese colonialism, from the west’s concurrent military and economic aid, and from the south where a vast capitalist market was governed by lines drawn during the Cold War. Thus, situating these multiple discourses involves both a historical analysis, that is to bring the material and historical moment to light, and a cultural analysis, that is to consider how it is that the state believed images produced in a pop-medium might bolster a government’s political status as its films competed on the open market.

This dissertation both excavates the socio-historical context of Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s in part by way of onsite research in Taiwan thanks to the Ministry of Education (Taiwan, R.O.C.) “Talent Cultivation Project of Taiwanese Literature, History and Art in Globalization” Grant, and it pays close attention to the cinematic form using the lens of cultural studies. All the while it remains focused on the primary motivation for this project: a curiosity to explore a blank space on the map of English language scholarship concerning Mandarin language Taiwan cinema.
Introduction

There are fewer more fascinating methods for investigating the ways in which Taiwan’s Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang, KMT) Government defined itself as the representative government of all of China in the 1960s and 1970s than to consider its state-sanctioned film industry. The films produced by the state represent ideas of national unity and a glorious “homeland” during decades that witnessed the most intense of transformations in many areas: in film with the rise and eventual decline of the popularity of Taiwan cinema in Southeast Asia, in literature with the xiangtu (nativist) literature debates, in the economy with the emergence of factories and small business replacing an agricultural infrastructure, and in politics with the end of the Nationalist’s international status after losing its seat in the United Nations in 1971. At each stage the state propagated its ideal of “free China” for all to see on the silver screen -- an ideal made all the more complicated by competing regional and cultural influences: from the east by the People’s Republic of China, from the north by the heritage of Japanese colonialism, from the west’s concurrent military and economic aid, and from the south where a vast capitalist market was governed by lines drawn during the Cold War. Thus, situating these multiple discourses involves both a historical analysis, that is to bring the material and historical moment to light, and a cultural analysis, that is to consider how it is that the state believed images produced in a pop-medium might bolster a government’s political status as its films competed on the open market.

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In fact, apart from June Yip’s book *Envisioning Taiwan: Fiction, Cinema, and the Nation in the Cultural Imaginary* (2004) and Hector Rodríguez’s dissertation entitled *The Cinema of Taiwan: National Identity and Political Legitimacy* (1995), few monographs have considered in detail the history, aesthetic principles, and framework of pre-1980s film in Taiwan. In the process of elucidating these previously omitted details, this dissertation reveals the oversimplification of summarizing film from the 1960s and 1970s as easily dismissed “propaganda.” It also interweaves previous studies of Taiwan Cinema with the original research of local magazines, newspaper articles, film studio statistics, and the voices of popular contemporary actors such as Ke Junxiong and Li Xiang, film critics Huang Ren and Cai Guorong, and director Li Xing, obtained by onsite interviews in Taiwan. Thus, human voices are heard in this text of living history that argues that there is continuity between Taiwan’s film history and the emergence of Taiwan New Cinema’s notable directors such Hou Hsiao-hsien (Hou Xiaoxian), Edward Yang (Yang Dechang), Ang Lee (Li An), and Tsai Ming-liang (Cai Mingliang). Taiwan New Cinema was built on a state industry that was both vivacious and multifaceted -- and for good reason, was all too ready for the serious makeover that would follow.

“The Antecedents of Taiwan New Cinema” is an original contribution to the
history of Taiwan film, while at the same time it significantly contributes to inquiries in the broader fields of Film Studies, Chinese Studies, and studies of Transnationalism. Certainly, there is a void in the records of cinematic history if there is no consideration of the participant voices, dialogue with the critics and experts, and meticulous analyses of the extraordinary images from the unique -- indeed, singular -- state of Taiwan film in the 1960s and 1970s. In order to fulfill all that this text sets out to accomplish, this project integrates multiple perspectives and schools of thought. It challenges film history narratives that do not call into question the limitations of using the category of the “nation” as a dominant paradigm, critically engages with accounts within Chinese Studies that either oversimplify the influence of pre-1980s cinema in Taiwan or present Taiwan’s film history as parallel rather than intertwined with China, and highlights discourses that trace transnational flows of culture -- from both center to periphery and periphery to center -- as the filmic image crosses national boundaries. In the end, its importance is found in the way it reveals a rich and complex historical legacy via its archival research, and how it proposes critical analyses of the cinematic objects of inquiry by using current theories of cultural interpretation.

When the journal *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* released the first book-length work devoted to Taiwan cinema in the spring of 2003, the major commonality among the articles was the insistence that studies of Taiwan cinema must consider the local, singular, and unique characteristics of the island nation when evaluating its films. In general, by highlighting film as an institution in Taiwan, the directors films appear to be distinctly Taiwanese cultural products; and by centering
attention on Taiwan’s history, the argument is that films which depict Taiwan’s heritage as a site of occupying colonial forces and the home for a populace in a state of transplantation display a certain national cinematic tradition. However, this groundbreaking volume also left room for future scholars to comment on how Taiwan cinema at nearly every juncture was also a transnational cinema. For example, at the advent of cinema, Japan was occupying Taiwan and influenced the production and exhibition of cinema until 1945. Next, Taiwanese language films competed in the market with Nationalist films of the 1950s and 1960s that had inherited an anti-Communist and anti-Japanese tradition from the mainland. At the same time, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia’s commercial system, advance capital, and exhibition market was important. By the 1970s, adaptations of Qiong Yao novels, Japanese martial arts films, and Hollywood storylines had already made an indelible mark on the narratives of Taiwan’s films.

These aspects of Taiwan film history continue to be captured in texts that primarily focus on post-1980 Taiwan film, such as Chris Berry and Feii Lu’s (Lu Feiyi) text *Island on the Edge: Taiwan New Cinema and After* (2005), which lays claim to being “the first English-language anthology on the Taiwan New Cinema.” This edited volume introduces its audience to twelve key films released in Taiwan over the last 25 years. Similarly, Tonglin Lu’s *Confronting Modernity in the Cinemas of Taiwan and Mainland China* (2002), a monograph that traces the two different and unique historical trajectories of Taiwan and Mainland China, focuses on each society’s recent interaction and confrontation with Western notions of progress as they are reflected on the screen. Emilie Yueh-Yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis
tackle the history of Taiwan film in the topical first two chapters of *Taiwan Film Directors: A Treasure Island* (2005). The text also features four essays on Taiwan’s most famous and internationally acclaimed contemporary directors: Edward Yang, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Ang Lee, and Tsai Ming-liang. Most recently, Ru-Shou Robert Chen and Darrell William Davis edited *Cinema Taiwan: Politics, Popularity and State of Arts* (2007). While this text is exceptional, the brevity and diversity of the topics addressed allows leeway for scholarship to map out the myriad of discussions into a topography that can be grasped by the amateur and expert alike. Perhaps such a project must follow the lead of June Yip’s *Envisioning Taiwan*, which considers how Taiwan imagines itself as a nation after being subjected to a unique colonial experience, numerous transferences of power, and the present multinational corporations in the age of globalization.

The above are the primary English language texts that address Taiwan cinema, in addition to Yingjin Zhang’s historical framework and case studies presented in *Chinese National Cinema* (2004). Other key texts that feature chapters on Taiwan cinema include: Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh’s *Chinese-Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics* (2005) and Nick Brown, Paul G. Pickowicz, Vivian Sobshack, and Esther Yau’s *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics* (1996). Texts written in traditional Mandarin characters that are important to this study include numerous works by Huang Ren, including his text *Film and Government Propaganda* (1994), and perhaps most importantly, Lu Feiyi’s *Taiwan Film: Politics, Economics, and Aesthetics 1949-1994* (1998). These works are complemented by film biographies and histories written in Taiwan, such as: Cai Guorong’s edited
volume *National Film in the 1960s: Famous Directors and Notable Selections* (1982), Du Yunzhi’s *Film History in the Republic of China* (1988), Henry Gong’s autobiographical *Film Recollections* (2005), and histories of Central Motion Picture Company (CMPC, Zhongying) studio.

This dissertation relies on and is indebted to the scholarship and discussion outlined above, films released during the time period under scrutiny, and primary sources published during the 1960s and 1970s. My objective is to synthesize this information into an engaging, lively, persuasive text that tests theoretical boundaries, takes calculated risks, and most importantly, makes an argument based on substantiated evidence through the lens of theories of transnationalism. While the primary theoretical contribution to Chinese film studies may lie in the presentation of Taiwan film in a transnational context, this approach is included among the following four categories which are crucial to my interpretive framework: 1) historical contextualization, 2) transnationalism as paradigm, 3) the rubric of postcolonialism, and 4) cinematic image and narrative analysis.

1) **Historical Research**

In addition to the filmic image, this dissertation takes contemporary newspaper articles, studio publications, and popular magazines as important sites of examination. In my use of these primary source materials, I keep in mind Bruce Cumings’ notion that the language we use is a “culmination […] molded by a great many distinct regimes.”³ In order to identify how power shapes discursive practice, Cumings claims that in the process of excavating a historical moment one should archeologically
observe the “‘passing events’ in their proper dispersion -- that is, in a discernible genealogy.” Accordingly, this dissertation describes how the government in Taiwan intended to use its authority to shape the discourse of film in the 1960s and 1970s.

These concurrent sources in Taiwan are evaluated as culturally distinct texts that lose their investigative meaning if disconnected from local historical and geographical contexts. In using the term “culturally distinct,” I follow Arjun Appadurai’s definition of culture as less a substance than a “dimension of difference” that would distinguish Taiwan’s experience from, for example, temporally simultaneous works produced in Hong Kong and mainland China -- although the lines between dimensions of difference can be blurry.⁴ I also subscribe to Appadurai’s formulation of culture as a process, namely: “the process of naturalizing a subset of differences that have been mobilized to articulate group identity.”⁵ This characterization of culture is helpful because the works from Taiwan are in many ways particular, specific, and separate from its regional neighbors.

Historically, each film identified in this dissertation is situated within its specific moment in Taiwan’s history and in ways that demonstrate how the previous heritage influenced the work under discussion. For the purposes of this dissertation, the three historical phases in Taiwan’s history are as follows. First, the period of Japanese colonialism affected the island from 1895-1945. Cultural historian Ping-hui Liao has divided Japanese colonization in Taiwan into four stages: “Assimilation” 1895-1919, “Integration” 1919-1930, “Incorporation and Coercion” 1930-1937, and “Subjugation” 1937-45, during the Second Sino-Japanese War.⁶ The second phase, Nationalist rule in Taiwan, can be categorized from 1945-1987. This 42 year period
includes the retrocession of 1945, which occurred when Chiang Kai-shek's (Jiang Jieshi) KMT government was awarded Taiwan after the Second Sino-Japanese War, the violent February 28 Incident of 1947 in which 18,000 to 28,000 people were killed by KMT troops who were establishing their iron rule and “weeding out communists,” the KMT retreat to Taiwan in 1949, the reception of United States of America military and financial aid from 1951-1969, and the eventual decline of Taiwan’s international recognition after losing representation in the United Nations in 1971. The third historical phase, the democratic era of Taiwan, is delineated by 1987, the year the KMT abolished martial law, and continues to the present. The current time period is characterized in broad terms by the rise of social and political freedoms leading to today’s more pluralistic society in Taiwan.

These historical categories are significant because they allow one to understand the cultural and social contexts that influence Taiwanese film production. As Yingjin Zhang writes, in his project to determine what it is that is precisely “Chinese” in Chinese National Cinema, “we can strategically approach the ‘Chinese’ in ‘Chinese cinema’ in predominantly cultural and historical terms,” keeping in mind that the “enunciation of the national must be examined at multiple levels, historically, typologically and theoretically, all at once.” I would follow this model in terms of strategically approaching what is specific to “Taiwan” in Taiwan’s film culture and cultural context in general.

Geography is also essential to an understanding of cultural texts in Taiwan. The Taiwan Straits to the west and the Pacific Ocean to the east enclose multiple ethnic groups, languages, living conditions, and distinct regional flavors, all of which
are influenced by the natural features and layout of the landscape. Michelle Yeh begins her excellent essay on Taiwan poetry in *Frontier Taiwan: An Anthology of Modern Chinese Poetry* by stating that “an island is a paradox.”\textsuperscript{10} Surrounded by sea, this state -- approximately 250 miles long and 90 miles wide -- is divided into two distinct regions: a densely populated western plain on the west side and a rugged mountain range that constitutes two-thirds of the island on the east side. This particular topography contributes to a unique sense of *Taiwan-ness* that cannot be understood unless one recognizes the rhythms of landscape, the smells from street vendors, the intense humidity of summer, the typhoon winds and rains that lash rural rice fields and urban skyscrapers alike, and the common earthquake tremors. People in Taiwan, just like others who have become part and parcel with their own environments, understand that their specific social experiences are different from any other space on the planet. Today, the residents include the *waishengren* (mainlanders) who speak Mandarin, the *Minnanren* (Minnan) who speak Fujianese/Hokkien, the *Kejiaren* (Hakka) who speak Hakka, and the *Yuanzhumin* (Aboriginal indigenous people) who speak mutually unintelligible dialects. The latter are the oldest residents of the island; by estimates their heritage stretches back some 12,000-15,000 years. They are of Austronesian descent, and are comprised of the following major tribes: Atayal, Saisiyat, Bunum, Tsou, Paiwan, Rukai, Puyuma, Ami, and Yami.

Although these three categories are broad, an understanding of culture, history, and geography provides a framework for the discussion that follows. For example, in chapter two I discuss the film *Three Times* (*Zuihao de shiguang*, 2005) by Hou Hsiao-hsien, a film that is more meaningfully appreciated with a knowledge of Taiwan’s
history. In the third chapter I present connections between two directors from Taiwan and China, a topic that cannot be addressed without examining the profound cultural differences between the two states during the late 1950s and early 1960s. In chapter four a consideration of Taiwan’s history in the early 1970s is crucial, while in chapter five, in which I address the interconnection between Taiwan’s nativist literature debates and late 1970s film, the relationship between Taiwan’s citizens and the local geography is significant.

2) Theoretical foundation: The Aesthetics of Transnational Analysis

Raymond Williams: “The most interesting and difficult part of any cultural analysis, in complex societies, is that which seeks to grasp the hegemonic in its active and formative but also in transformational processes.”

In order to capture the transnational dimension of Taiwan film in the 1960s and 1970s I employ an original approach by combining Raymond Williams’s notion of epochal analysis in his text *Marxism and Literature* (that society contains its dominant, residual, and emergent modes of culture), in conjunction with Wimal Dissanayake’s discussion in *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema* that film travels (as image, as commodity, and as cultural product) at the local, national, regional, and global levels. The interstitial spaces between the local, national, regional, and global, which I label transnational, are also sites of cultural flow, which has been noted in Homi Bhabha’s *Nation and Narration*. The intent is to shed light on the way Taiwan’s films stage the ideological dominant at various levels of inquiry. This use of transnationalism theory recognizes that there are dominant and unequal power
relations, but at the same time, it takes into account that there is a multi-directional, which I like to think of as “fluid,” exchange of culture between the local, national, regional, and transnational.

I do not use the terms local, national, regional, and transnational merely as pretentious theoretical umbrella terms. As far as possible, I mean these terms quite literally, while recognizing that conceptions of the local, national, regional, and transnational change over time and depend on one’s vantage point. A practical way of thinking these terms through would be to consider a radio station broadcasting in Taidong, a small city in southeast Taiwan. This radio station would be considered “local” in the sense that its frequency and transmission might not reach Hualian, a city approximately two hours north by train on the east coast, or Gaoxiong, a industrial port metropolis over the mountain range two hours to the west, and certainly not the capital of Taipei in the north. This would be a local radio station. It addresses local concerns. Is that to say that such a radio station’s concerns would not overlap with the national concerns? Certainly not. When a typhoon approaches, the local station might broadcast information from the Central Weather Bureau. Similarly, political information and discussion would be a part of this “local” Taidong radio station.

Then when Japanese, Korean, or Hong Kong television shows, pop music, and culture are discussed or presented on the air, the regional is certainly part of this local station.

Finally, global news, events, and gossip become part of the local discussion. Thus, we find in one radio station the intersection of the local, national, regional, and transnational. Each category is inflected by, overlapping with, and shaped by the other, and yet remains distinct. Or, to use the analogy of ocean currents and water
temperature: the water within any location is a certain temperature, although it is in a continual process of blending, changing, and shifting. Similarly, the “local” is distinct -- it has its own temperature -- but it changes and shifts according to the rhythms of various movements.

Wimal Dissanayake writes in his article “Globalization and the Experience of Culture: The Resilience of Nationhood,” in Natascha Gentz and Stefan Kramer’s edited volume, Globalization, Cultural Identities, and Media Representations, that the result of exchange over many levels is not a smooth confluence of diverse forces into an elegant unity, but a “problematic coexistence of different influences with the evolving matrix of cultural modernity and the space of national imaginary” -- this is the nature of the local, national, regional, and transnational model. Thus, a transnational approach is broad in scope in that it keeps in mind multiple international connections, but at the same time it focuses on specific objects of inquiry in particular locations when initiating any analysis. In my examples outlined above, the object of inquiry would be a radio station or the temperature of the sea. In the following chapters, the objects of analysis are films made in Taiwan during the 1960s and 1970s that certainly acquire different meanings when observed from different locations and perspectives.

Why use such an approach? The value of the “transnational” model is not to add a new level of complexity to film studies, or to add yet another dominant paradigm that, once one reflects on it for while appears to be something that has existed all along. For example, “hybridity,” a term that seems to have gone out of fashion before the current text was written, at first seems original and helpful until one
recognizes its universalizing aspect -- isn’t everything hybrid to some extent? Similarly, isn’t everything transnational? Transnationalism might be used in this simplistic way; however, transnationalism can retain its critical edge when it is used to critique the dominant. In film studies, this often means a broad critique of the dominance of the United States in its many guises: imperialism, hegemony, commodification, racialization, and gender discrimination. Within film studies, a critique of the dominant is to trace the marketing and distribution of cinema with capital from Hollywood and its film distribution centers. In this way, a critical review of power relations is a social act, and following Judith Butler, not something deployed just to enjoy the questions and all of the complexities of analysis, but something to “extend the norms of ‘human’” so that all are recognized as participants in the public sphere.14

This model of the transnational has been used by film, literature, and cultural critics in studies of immigration, mobility, temporary and permanent forms of displacement, and cultural flow as a corrective to the national paradigm of literary studies and to call into question singular national allegiances (for example, the linguistic, common “blood,” geography, race, and ethnicity). This approach and these objects of analysis provide a way to dislodge the idea of the national as the exclusive privileged analytical category. Theories of transnationalism might show how the nation is socially constructed and how it oftentimes built unequal historical conditions and maintains an unequal state of affairs. Transnationalism, then, is not a transcendental term that supersedes national boundaries, praises the efficiency of travel in the age of global transportation, and stands in a dazed amazement at the
rapidity of information transmission. Instead, theories of transnationalism might traverse, question, and disrupt epistemological categories, ultimately serving the purposes of cross-boundary work to reveal the inequalities experienced by the disadvantaged. For example, transnational connections outlined in Saskia Sassen’s work show that global commerce conceals hegemonic western capitalism. Her explanations of how commodities are shipped around the work reveal that international financial exchanges produce real inequalities, especially for women and children.¹⁵

The transnational approach is most effective when it recognizes power structures and uneven power relations when tracing border crossings and cultural flow. When transnationalism is presented as the study of how lives and relationships have transcended the borders of nation states, there is a danger of universalizing and neglecting the fact that power does have its centers and that genuine force is being exerted from cultural centers in order to dominate the periphery. Along these lines, Stuart Hall asks in his discussion of globalization: “Is this just the old enemy in a new disguise? Is this the ever-rolling march of the old form of commodification, the old form of globalization, fully in keeping of capital, fully in keeping of the West, which is simply able to absorb everybody else within its drive?”¹⁶ Hall describes how capitalism is perceived as a force that will continue to spread without resistance across the globe, an idea furthered by extreme Marxist perspectives which tend to portray globalization and transnational theory based entirely on a center to periphery model of capitalist penetration.
Such notions reveal the dangerous pitfalls within theories of transnationalism. First, the idea that transnationalism analyzes cultural flow without taking into account actual borders (physical, judicial, and geographical) ignores the ways that the nation still exists as a dominant paradigm. Second, the Marxist perspective that the local has no way to resist the thrust of global capitalism is dangerous as well. Local resistance and the potential for change are central to the understanding of transnational theory that I outline below. The foundation for this theoretical lens which I offer as a contribution to transnational theory is based on a combination of Raymond Williams’ theories in *Marxism and Literature* and the categories Wimal Dissanayake presents in the introduction of his edited volume, *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*.

The theories I use from Williams center on his famous discussion of the dominant, residual, and the emergent. In summary, his notion of the dominant is that in ‘epochal’ analyses there is typically a dominant feature of culture, for example the feudal system of the European middle ages or the bourgeois class of the industrial era. Thus, the cultural theorist who studies the “cultural dominant” mode should trace the “internal dynamic relations,” or the interrelationship of multiple processes, of this dominant mode as it interacts with other features of culture. One of the features of culture that interacts within the dominant mode is called the residual, which Williams defines as a cultural idea or project that can trace its beginning to a historical moment in the past but remains active under a current dominant cultural system in the present. One of the examples that Williams uses to describe the residual is religion. Religions can trace their organization and diffusion to a particular historical moment. Religion can also work either in conjunction with the dominant mode (maintaining the judicial
structure in place) or it can work in disjunction with the dominant mode (by advocating such values as selflessness). According to Williams, another feature of culture that interacts with the dominant mode is termed the emergent, which is not necessarily a “new idea” that materializes in a culture so much as an alternative or oppositional force that challenges arenas that the dominant culture “neglects, excludes, represses, or simply fails to recognize.” What is particularly exciting about this dominant, residual, emergent approach is that, “no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order … includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention.” In other words, there remains hope for the residual or emergent features of culture to change the dominant mode.

Based on this theoretical foundation, the theory of transnationalism I propose should recognize the dominant and unequal power relations according to Williams’ terminology, but at the same time, it should take into account that there is a multi-directional exchange, appropriation, and indigenization of culture. This is where Wimal Dissanayake’s categories provide a helpful structure. Dissanayake analyzes film as it travels as image, commodity, and cultural product between the local, the national, the regional, and the transnational. At the level of the local, the transmissions, interactions, and appropriations and indigenization of culture are never static. This notion is reinforced by Appadurai’s idea that “locality itself is a historical product and that the histories through which localities emerge are eventually subject to the dynamics of the global.” In terms of films distribution and audience attendance, one finds various interpretations and meanings at the local level that at times the director or production companies do not intend. At the level of the national,
film is very much a part of this system in many ways: censorship, production, distribution, taxes, and the mode of address, which includes propaganda film.

National film productions might depict the reality of the local situation, or perpetuate national origin myths or, along the lines of propaganda, the “correct” way of seeing and interpreting the images on the screen. In this way, the mode of address, the “intention” of the national cinema, is important and worth studying. At the national level the dominant, using Williams’ term, might be addressed by analyzing what is rejected and accepted. Further examples of the national include governmental, administrative, and legal influences on cinema production. It is important to mention the levels of containment, in contrast to claims of uninhibited cultural flow in debates about globalization, which the nation still enforces on cinema production today. In the mid-1990s, Appadurai claimed that modernity at large means, perhaps, the end of the nation state. But this idea seems less likely today. Chris Berry writes in his article “From National Cinema to Cinema and the National,” in Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen’s edited volume Theorising National Cinema: “However, if the idea of the territorial nation-state as a transcendent and exclusive ideal form is no longer tenable, that does not mean either that the form of issues of the national disappear.” Indeed, a careful consideration of the role of global capitalism and its interrelationship with, rather than its subjugation of, the nation is essential for filmic analysis. In Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue that to “float ‘above’ petty nationalist concerns” is to ignore the real structure of power that the nation employs as it “facilitates the making and the
dissemination” of films. This observation is as persuasive for the filmmaker, as Shohat and Stam imply, as it is for the cultural theorist.

Overall, the observations on nationalism that Berry and Shohat and Stam address lead to specific questions about the role of the nation in each of the key periods in Taiwan’s history: Japanese Colonialism, Nationalist Rule, and the Democratic era. Within the context of this dissertation’s focus on the influence of the KMT on Taiwan politics during Nationalist Rule, I take the view that the films the state created and endorsed are presented as a staging, not a reflection, of national policies. The choice of wording between “staging” and “reflection” is taken from *Theorising National Cinema*. Vitali and Willemen state:

> films may and may not reflect the ideological trajectory dominant within the nation at any one time,” […] “films can be seen not to ‘reflect’, but to ‘stage’ the historical conditions that constitute ‘the national’ and, in the process, to ‘mediate’ the socio-economic dynamics that shape cinematic production, along with the other production sectors governed by national industrial regulation and legislation.”

This characterization of the nation’s involvement in cinema in general is important when considering how the cinematic image is presented in Taiwan’s films of the 1960s and 1970s. For example, taking the case study of Bai Jingrui’s 1970 film *Home Sweet Home*, one observes a national staging of the “ideal” Taiwan citizen on the big screen (see chapter three). My analysis demonstrates the ways in which the film is mediated by national and industrial regulations, following the lead of Vitali and Willemen’s theoretical foundation.

An excellent model of this type of approach, situated within Taiwan’s national fabric and socio-historical framework, is provided by Fran Martin in her introduction
to *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film, and Public Culture*. Martin writes that culture does not remain constant and unchanged; rather, cultures are transformed and modified as cultural products travel between and across cultural landscapes. Her text provides a case study that illustrates how, using Williams’ terminology, the cultural dominant might be changed and transformed in the contact zone when differing cultures from various localities intersect. In the contact zone, those locations where the emergent (whether engendered locally or produced dialectically due to transnational influences) intersects with the dominant, culture fragments, dislocates, and at times radically initiates new formations of identity. For example, Martin describes an archeology of terms that have been used to describe homosexuality in Taiwan such as *tongxinglian* and *tongzhi*, terms that lead one to recognize that in an analysis of cultural exchange, local ideas of gender and sexual *specificity* trump *generalizations* if the cultural theorist “attends to the historical specificities of local context and is sensitive to the ways in which locality today is always itself marked by translocal interaction.” Moreover, the generalizations one encounters when considering polarizing characterizations such as “Chinese vs. western” do not withstand careful examination when considering specific gender issues in Taiwan. Similarly, there is not a universal film language that transcends national borders; rather, the filmic “language” of Taiwan’s state film industry has distinct national characteristics.

At the level of the regional, one must factor in the notion that the very idea of a “region” is also a construction particular to time and place. As with the local and the national, regional affiliations such as the “Pacific Rim” are not just geographical,
but there is an agenda that works to the advantage of the dominant that uses the regional framework. Consider the ways Taiwan’s cinema history has been positioned: in the context of Japanese Colonialism, the regional includes the extent of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” in the Nationalist Era the regional includes Taiwan’s global position within Cold War boundary lines, and during the Democratic Era the regional includes the fraught issue of whether or not Taiwan’s political status is that of an independent Asian nation or a province of mainland China, the People’s Republic of China.

The above provides a schematic presentation of the local, national, and regional categories that Dissanayake describes in his work. His final categorization that I use is the transnational. It is important to note two qualifications of transnationalism at this juncture. First, the transnational should not be confused with the postnational. Doing so would be to conflate all nations without recognizing borders, an error I have intended to avoid by describing the importance of the nation in the construction of cinematic images. Second, the transnational is not to be confused with the transhistorical. Instead, my approach to the transnational category is that, due to the multiple confluences of culture and power, transnational influences on culture can and do change over time. With these qualifiers in places, there is still of course the international transference of voices over cell phones, images and text and films over the internet, not to mention the increasing interlinkages of transportation, technology, consumer culture, and commodification. A filmic example of this *par excellence* would be Ang Lee’s *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), which used transnational capital for funding and strategically employed a pan-
Asian cast. The result was the production of a global hit and, in the United States; it remains the second highest grossing foreign-language film after *The Passion of the Christ* (Gibson, 2004). It is no wonder that *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* continues to bring attention to the ways cinematic images have become de-territorialized and, within Chinese film studios, how film might convey a pan-Chinese identity.

In total, there is a continual flow between the local, national, regional, and transnational that effects the production of film. Also, I would argue that there is a difference between universalizing an object of study, which I intend to avoid at all costs, and identifying underlying structures and historical tendencies, which is the fundamental intention of this dissertation. Thus, I would like to propose that a transnational theory as an approach to film studies is one that, at each level -- the local, the national, the regional, and the transnational (Dissanayake) -- one might locate the dominant, residual, and emergent (Williams). In essence, this approach is not entirely original, but rather a combination of previously existing approaches. But its value is the way it might keep in mind global cultural flow without ignoring the local particular.

For instance, consider the following two perspectives. The first is from film director Pratibha Parmar, who states, from the perspective of an Asian lesbian living in England, “I do not speak from a position of marginalization but more crucially from the resistance to that marginalization.” Another instance might be the epigraph to the second chapter of Fran Martin’s *Situating Sexualities*: one Yuan Zenan writes that “New Park is Taiwan in miniature.” This is in reference to the way that
Taipei’s New Park, a place for gay males to cruise and make connections, is a physical microcosm of the culture of Taiwan. What is noticeable in these two examples is that the individual, located within a community and part of a socially constructed network of human relations, does not see him or herself as “marginal” -- but rather, as the center. Conceptually, the local spokesperson is a “local” center within a community that contains its own dominant, residual, and emergent in miniature. Seen in a wider perspective, it is possible for a local community to share the same dominant as the national and regional and transnational, but more often, there are competing dominants at every level offering resistance, appropriating what is valued and excluding, or attempting to exclude, that which does not seem appropriate.

**Table 1: Transnational Flow and Exchange**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>Transnational</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>Residual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Emergent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If transnational theory is used as I outline, I would argue that a Marxist perspective might retain its critical edge, for it might locate the shifting levels of exchange (instead of recognizing only a center to periphery penetration). At the same time, this theory of transnationalism might be able to conceptualize the *totality of*
transnational capitalism when globalization does, in fact, regard the valued dominants of the various regional, national, and local cultures solely as hindrances to discard, overrun, and devalue.\(^3\) Otherwise, simply stating that cultural exchange is a two way street offers too much of a disguise, I think, for the dominant of global capitalism to maintain unequal power relations. Lastly, it is important to consider that there are interstitial spaces between the local, national, regional, and transnational, and this in-between notion is credited to Homi Bhabha’s influential consideration of nation and narration.

In retrospect, it would seem that at the moment when post-structuralism was in favor within cultural studies and national paradigms were being challenged, somehow the “nation” was retained in film studies as a model to describe film traditions. But recently this course has been changed or is changing, and there is a trend of re-evaluation in Chinese film studies. Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar write in *China on Screen: Cinema and Nation* that at one point one could have written about an essential “Chinese culture” but (to put it loosely) those days are long gone, so now “… we argue for the abandonment of the national cinemas approach and its replacement with a larger analytic framework of cinema and the national.”\(^3\) Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh write in *Chinese-Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics*: “Ironically, just as film studies is defining its geographic borders and theoretical perimeters, the forces of globalization have forced film scholars to reexamine their assumptions and practices.”\(^3\)
3) The Rubric of Postcolonialism

While the theoretical framework for this dissertation is one that considers cultural flow between the local and the transnational, it also operates under the principle that Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s can be considered a colonial environment as described in current postcolonial theory. The relevance of this perspective is described more completely in chapter five, but it is worthwhile to present the theoretical framework that shapes this overall perspective at this juncture. The importance of postcolonial theory is that it allows one a lens through which to more accurately consider the history of literature and film in postwar Taiwan, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, within a framework in which resistance and struggle are essential factors of the discussion.

The idea that the KMT government functioned as a colonial power is supported by the following. First, in Darrell W. Davis’s article: “Borrowing Postcolonial: Wu Nianzhen’s Dou-san and the Memory Mine,” Davis writes: “Taiwan’s postwar phase was not postcolonial, nor even neocolonial, but rather a recolonization under the KMT.” Following this observation, which my research and filmic analysis also confirms, it was after the abandonment of martial law in Taiwan in 1987 that there was a chance for the local film industry in Taiwan to express the frustration of living under the colonial aspects of the KMT government. This argument is not stated to conflate a Chinese colonialism with, for example, an English or French colonialism by any means, but it provides a rubric to understand the outpouring of work in the 1980s without considering economic factors alone.
Second, Fangming Chen, in his article “Postmodern or Postcolonial? An Inquiry into Postwar Taiwanese Literary History,” argues that Taiwan society is postcolonial, not postmodern. If it is postcolonial, it is such because the KMT regime functioned in a colonial manner until 1987. For example, he writes that in Taiwan it was after martial law that the margins spoke, a time when feminist, queer, and aboriginal voices emerged in order to express recognition, identity, and subjectivity. Chen emphasizes: “These groups’ aspirations for liberation did not have to wait until the introduction of postmodern thought into Taiwan; rather, it was precisely the end of martial law that enabled previously suppressed desires to be unbound.” Geography is important to this articulation of the colonialist aspects of Taiwan’s postwar history as well. Again, Darrell William Davis writes in his essay in Chinese Language Cinema that geography (in addition to history, politics, and psychology) is the site where the government names and renames places -- so that the place changes its connotations and is reconstituted when successive regimes enter the place (concrete) and alter the space (conceptual framework to understand how to interpret the environment). This aspect of naming geographical and architectural features is evident in Taiwan when certain Japanese structures, such as the Taiwan Jinsha (Shinto Shrine), built in 1901, was destroyed in order to build the Grand Hotel in 1961 on the same site, while the Office of the Taiwan Government-General, built in 1919, was used by the incoming KMT government in 1945. Interestingly, the KMT government allowed Japanese film theaters to stand. The new government replaced the language, the film images, the flags and national symbols, but the buildings where films were shown remained intact.
Third, I follow Ania Loomba’s definition of colonialism as: “the forcible
takeover of land and economy.”39 This description of colonialism applies to the
Japanese Occupation of Taiwan from 1895 to 1945, but after the retrocession in many
ways the Nationalist regime functioned as a new colonial power. Next, I follow Ania
Loomba’s definition of postcolonialism as not only literally following colonialism,
but more flexibly as the “contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of
colonialism.”40 The struggle of postcolonialism is an issue that looms over and
interweaves throughout the discussion of Taiwan film from 1960s and 1970s, both
explicitly and implicitly.

Loomba’s working definitions of the terms “colonialism” and
“postcolonialism” are reinforced by additional influential writers in the field of
postcolonial studies. As Ackbar Abbas writes in Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics
of Disappearance, postcolonialism entails thinking and acting in a certain way: it is “a
tactic and a practice, not a legal-political contract,” a product of history that operates
under particular conditions.41 In this way, postcolonialism might be understood as a
verb, as an action, as a response. In Taiwan film of the 1960s and 1970s, this notion
is important because the films of the KMT that this dissertation focuses on were made
in a political environment, and issued by government directive, to contrast with the
previous Japanese political regime. Certainly, the KMT government, while enforcing
Mandarin language education in a militaristic manner and issuing decrees that any
condemnation of Generalissimo Chang Kai-shek would be punished as
insubordination, intended to distance itself from any association with the previous
colonial power. This is especially important when considering the historical trend of
films from the 1970s in which patriotic and nationalistic stories represent victory over the Japanese during the Second Sino-Japanese war (see chapters four and five). Yet the government acted in a colonial manner even as it critiqued the Japanese colonial regime that preceded it.

Decolonialization, “a dialogue with the colonial past, and not a simple dismantling of colonial habits and modes of life,” as Arjun Appadurai writes in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, is another way to consider Taiwan’s break with its colonial past. This dialogue, evident in films and in other primary textual materials from the time period in question, takes place at multiple levels of society, including the institutional as well as ideological and aesthetic. The idea that postcolonialism is “a dialogue with the colonial past” is relevant to the condition of Taiwan filmmaking from 1960s to the 1970s because the colonial heritage did not simply disappear. Indeed, with the support of U.S. military aid, including the stationing of troops, from 1951 to 1969, not to mention the arrival and establishment of Japanese factories, the legacies of colonialism were perpetuated in different ways. The dialogue between the local populace and the established KMT regime became more vociferous in a persistent struggle for political equality and representation. At times this was a violent dialogue, culminating with the Gaoxiong Incident of 1979.

Franz Fanon’s work in both *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* reinforces the notion that that colonialism does not disappear overnight, but rather there is a continual struggle involved. His psychoanalytical readings of fictional characters, especially in the initial chapters of *Black Skin, White Masks*,
provide a blueprint for the types of character studies this work attempts to follow. So, in terms of Taiwan film making, the KMT government functioned as a colonial regime that struggled to present its cause as the cause of the local people, appealing to them as members of the Chinese nation rather than that of the Japanese “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” while the struggle of the *benshengren* (local populace) was for representation on their own terms.

**4) Interpretation of the Cinematic Narrative and Image**

This project focuses on the aesthetic and structural analyses of style and content within narrative film representations in addition to the material processes by which cinema is constructed. As described in the chapter outline below, close readings of Taiwan’s representative films of the era are foremost, yet they are not presented in isolation of the historical moment. Similarly, in *Postsocialist Cinema in Post-Mao China: The Cultural Revolution after the Cultural Revolution*, Chris Berry clarifies that his work is concerned with examining the interrelationship of the history of the Chinese cinematic image and the history of the Chinese cinema institution as a site of social and cultural formation. He states that the two histories entail a process of renegotiation in which society influences the institution of cinema, and cinema influences society. Cinematic discourse, as it is formed in social and cultural processes, affects society — and this is most evident when the discourse of film “precedes or exceeds” political discourse. These “excesses” might be located by noting disjunctions or points of slippage between what is portrayed on the screen and social mandates propagated by the state film. In the same way, the intention of my
analysis of 1960s and 1970s Mandarin-language cinema in Taiwan will be to both situate film images historically and analyze film as a social institution.

In this way I hope to contribute to the conversation by conjoining close film analysis with historical contextualization, substantiating theory with textual evidence. The result of combining both approaches is presented in the following chapters in which I discuss: historical conjunctions and disjunctions between directors Xie Jin and Li Xing in China and Taiwan respectively (see chapter two), the construction of the national in relation to the local and the transnational (see chapter three), and the relationship between cinematic aesthetics and sociopolitical institutions (see chapters four and five).

Chapter Outline

Chapter One: A Historical Overview of Taiwan Cinema: Representations of Transition in *Three Times*

The first chapter contributes to the discussion of Taiwan cinema by synthesizing in one location the key moments in Taiwan’s film history. While the locus in this chapter is Taiwan’s Mandarin-language state film, the chapter describes the interaction of *Minnanyu* (Taiwanese-language) film, Japanese film, and film from Hollywood, and describes how Mandarin-language film gradually replaced Taiwanese film in the 1970s. In order to do so, it traces the era’s key figures, movements and dates. This includes an overview of the entertainment scene in Taiwan during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the influence of Hong Kong film especially in 1963 with
director Li Hanxiang’s *The Love Eterne (Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yingtai)* but also its antecedents, including martial arts films, the “golden age,” film in the early 1970s, the patriotic war films of the mid-1970s, and representations of indigenous Taiwan by the state in late 1970s Taiwan films. Overall, this chapter provides a structure for the four following chapters that provide close readings of key films from the 1960s and 1970s.

**Chapter Two: Two Stage Brothers: Xie Jin and Li Xing in the early 1960s.**

This chapter proposes that the most important link between mainland Chinese director Xie Jin and Taiwan director Li Xing’s films during the Cold War was the influence of Shanghai’s film tradition of realist aesthetics in the 1930s and 1940s, an aesthetic identifiable less by its accurate replication of reality on the screen, but by its fascinating representation of the dominant ideology and distinctive expression of the production values of the time. This Shanghai tradition was the root of a common cinematic language that flourished on both sides of the Strait after 1949, despite the unique parameters inherent to each film culture after the Communist victory in the civil war. Despite different political and historical situations, and despite the way these directors are usually framed in the polarizing terms of difference associated with the Cold War, the films of Xie Jin and Li Xing are remarkably similar. In order to make this case, three sets of films are analyzed so that one might recognize narrative similarities, consider the personal experiences which shaped Xie Jin’s and Li Xing’s craft, and observe the lineage of realist filmic techniques that link the two filmmakers in interesting ways. This seemingly counterintuitive observation, exemplified by additional surprising connections in the articulation of Shanghai’s filmic modes and
devices by Xie Jin and Li Xing in the 1960s, shows that conceptions of film as a universal language, or conversely as the expression of a specific national film tradition, do not entirely account for the similarities of these two Mandarin-language filmmakers.

Chapter Three: “My home is in _____”: the Politics of Migration in Bai Jingrui’s 1970 film Home Sweet Home.

This chapter argues that Home Sweet Home’s central concern is the politics, both aesthetically and ideologically, of depicting migration within a narrative film. More specifically, this film presents the official state position that the Chinese Nationalist Party held regarding students from Taiwan who studied abroad in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This claim might be made because the film was released by a state studio, CMPC, under state supervision and censorship, to further the state’s ideological project through visual media. In order to reveal the nuances and inflections of Home Sweet Home, and frame it within a wider context, this chapter also discusses two contemporary films that represent migration on the global stage: Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s 1974 film Ali: Fear Eats the Soul (Angst essen Seele auf) and Ousmane Sembène’s 1966 film Black Girl (La Noire de...). Common features in these films include exquisite cinematic imagery juxtaposed with complex, three-dimensional protagonists who create a space for individuality and expressions of subjectivity. At the same time, Ali and Black Girl are historical texts that demonstrate the discrepancies between the studio intentions for representing migration, and the actual formal choices that the directors chose to employ. Thus, close readings of all
three films help illuminate the ways that Bai Jingrui’s aesthetic choices work both in conjunction and disjunction with the intentions of the Taiwan state government in 1970.

Chapter Four: Gender Negotiation in Song Cunshou’s *Story of Mother* and Taiwan cinema of the early 1970s.

This segment examines the representation of gender identity and negotiation in Song Cunshou’s *Story of Mother* (1972) in order to make two primary observations. First, this early 1970s wenyi, or “literary art” film released with state approval in Taiwan represents passive males who attempt to earn their right to be worthy patriarchs; meanwhile, women are portrayed as active participants whose actions are acceptable so long as they follow the rule of their fathers. Second, I propose that this model of representing gender changes very little through the middle of the decade, despite numerous social transformations on Taiwan’s political stage. This case is clarified by comparisons with Bai Jingrui’s *Goodbye Darling* (1970) and Li Xing’s mid-1970s film *Land of the Undaunted* (1975). Sequence breakdowns of two of the films are presented in order to consider narrative, structural, and aesthetic qualities. Theoretically, the essay re-evaluates Shu-mei Shih’s recent *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*, which states that that all negotiations in highly volatile situations are always gender negotiations; thus, patriarchal national systems might be undermined by disjunctions and contestations in the cultural and political arenas. Taken as a whole, the work of an important and engaging director,
Song Cunshou, emerges as a primary reference point for a study of cinema in a
complex, intriguing, transitional period in Taiwan’s history of the silver screen.

Chapter Five: Portraying the Local: Taiwan Cinema in the Late 1970s

The story of Taiwan cinema in the early 1960s begins in many ways with Li Xing, and the 1970s also concludes with Li Xing and his dominant films. This chapter analyzes late 1970s filmmaking and includes three preliminary observations on the state of Taiwan cinema at the end of the decade, thus commenting on the origins of Taiwan New Cinema by outlining: 1) perhaps surprisingly, the strengths and limitations of Frederic Jameson’s essay “Remapping Taipei,” 2) observations on the state apparatus’s attempts to depict the local situation in late 1970s cinema, and 3) a brief comparison of the historical situation that saw the birth of the Taiwan New Cinema with that of New American Cinema. At this stage of the text the antecedents of Taiwan New Cinema have been presented, a continuity argument with Taiwan’s filmic heritage explicated, and the need for innovation in terms of Taiwan cinema marketing and aesthetics established.

Conclusion: Transnationalism and the Structure of Feeling of 1960s and 1970s Taiwan Cinema: A Brief Reflection

The conclusion amalgamates the layers of meaning in the dissertation at this juncture: from the historical context in chapter one, to class and socio-economic factors in chapter two, to issues of race and ethnicity in chapter three, to issues of gender in chapter four, and to issues at the intersection of the local and the national in
chapter five. By summarizing each chapter’s most important observations into a continuous thread, it becomes apparent that state ideology comprised the backbone of the industry’s direction, and that its once popular policies were no longer suitable for a new historical moment. These trends and factors contributed to perhaps some of the world’s best and brightest films of the 1980s during rise of Taiwan New Cinema. The conclusion also argues that the recent popularity of Cape No. 7 (Wei Te-sheng, 2008) demonstrates that Taiwan cinema during the current “post-new” era just might be re-employing the old 1960s and 1970s models of catering to the masses to bring audiences back to the theatre. Thus, a brief commentary on the heritage of Taiwan cinema of the 1960s and 1970s is in order at the end of the dissertation.
Chapter One

A Historical Overview of Taiwan Cinema: Representations of Transition in Three Times

It is fitting that a schematic description of Taiwan’s cinematic history revolve around the work of Hou Hsiao-hsien. While this stunning director is perhaps not the central figure in the narrative of Taiwan cinema in totality or even in this dissertation specifically, he is certainly a product of the 1960s and 1970s, which is the focal point of this discussion. Consider the image below. This picture, taken at a retrospective exhibition of Director Li Xing’s work at the Golden Horse Film Awards in 2008, reveals the notes that Hou Hsiao-hsien took while serving as script-supervisor under director Li Xing’s production of Heart with a Million Knots (Xin you qianqian jie) in 1973.

Figure 1: Li Xing’s Script for Heart with a Million Knots.

This document demonstrates that Hou Hsiao-hsien learned the ropes of filmmaking by
his predecessors as he mastered, step by step, the elements of film form and film sense *en route* to becoming one of the finest film directors in the world.

Recognized internationally for landmark films in the 1980s and 1990s, including *A Time To Live, A Time to Die* (Tongnian wangshi,1985), *City of Sadness* (Bei qing chengshi,1989), *The Puppetmaster* (Xi meng rensheng, 1993), and *Good Men, Good Women* (Haonan, hao nü,1995), Hou Hsiao-hsien’s theatre “The Spot” in Taipei was and remains a location for an exchange of films and new ideas. In addition, Hou’s importance and influence as a figurehead of Taiwan’s New Cinema movement of the 1980s is recognized in the work of up and coming directors such as Tom Shu-yu Lin, who directed the recent success *Winds of September* (Jiu jiang feng, 2008). Hou Hsiao-hsien’s work links the past, present, and future, so it is with Hou Hsiao-hsien that this story begins.

While his Taiwan trilogy is oft discussed and serves as a focal point for Taiwan film studies, I would argue that Hou Hsiao-hsien’s 2005 film *Three Times* is the pivotal film that must be understood thoroughly if one is to engage in a conversation about Taiwan film. This overview of Taiwan’s film history is framed, not by discussing Hou Hsiao-hsien’s autobiographical experience, but through his film’s form and structure in order to consider how the images, dialogue, sound, writing, and noise are employed to represent Taiwan’s major historical moments and trends. *Three Times* also fulfills the necessary function of any text that describes Taiwan history, that is, to provide key dates and historical contextualization. In doing so, I follow Hou Hsiao-hsien’s depictions of 1911, 1966, and 2005, while describing each year represented in *Three Times* alongside a particular sociological issue, namely
colonialism, ethnicity, and gender respectively.

The connection between filmic image and socio-historical condition, and descriptions of transition between the eras *Three Times* depicts, are more fully explored in subsequent chapters on films made in Taiwan during the 1960s and 1970s. For example, in chapter two I present a comparison between Taiwan films in the 1960s with concurrent films in China in the 1960s, yet the reasons for the similarities between the two filmmaking traditions might not be fully realized without the foundational overview provided in this chapter. So, each historical detail in this chapter, and each image outlined in Hou’s film, is presented as a nexus that links to a series of additional reference points, allowing one to recognize that each apparently unique moment or isolated artistic incident is an important aspect of larger and more complex framework.44

Aesthetically, *Three Times* can be discussed as a response to the film production values that were employed in the heritage of Taiwan filmmaking. Historically, the film represents particular moments that were pivotal to and formative of Taiwan’s current condition. Considering both the film aesthetics and the historical periods represented, I have selected particular images and anecdotes in order to illustrate the multiple intersections between the local, national, regional, and transnational in Taiwan’s film history.45 The metaphor of the intersection is valuable because an overview of Taiwan film history is similar to the project of describing the roads, avenues, and boulevards of a city populated by millions of people. Just as a city guide might not describe in detail every single intersection of a city but only the
well traveled and representative, similarly in this chapter I point out only the major sites of exchange.

As the English title suggests (the Chinese title reads: “The Best of Times”), *Three Times* represents three separate epochs in Taiwan’s history. Each time period represented on the screen depicts a moment that occurs approximately 17-18 years after a pivotal historical moment in Taiwan’s history: the April 17, 1895 signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which ceded Taiwan to Japan; the arrival of the KMT Nationalists to Taiwan in 1949, and the KMT’s abolishment of martial law in 1987. While the significance of 17-18 years is not explicitly spelled out in the film, it is reasonable to conclude that an understanding of Taiwan socio-political history is essential to an understanding of Taiwan’s filmic modes, whether they are aspects of the film apparatus, spectatorship, or the actual fictitious worlds represented. Indeed, without a historical contextualization, it would be difficult to approach the stories portrayed without attributing to the film universal aspects such as loneliness, friendship, and love (which tends to be the typical analysis among United States newspaper film critics).

**Three Times**

Taken as a whole, this chapter contributes to the discussion of Taiwan cinema by using *Three Times* to synthesize the major events of Taiwan’s film history. Each segment in Hou’s film is a stand-alone story, a vignette that captures a certain mood and atmosphere of the time period represented. The first section takes place in 1966 and is entitled “A Time for Love,” the second section begins in 1911 and is entitled
“A Time for Freedom,” and the third section occurs in 2005 and is entitled “A Time for Youth.” While the film *Three Times* is intentionally non-linear, I will consider the film in linear fashion, before considering the significance of Hou Hsiao-hsien’s organization of the film. By outlining the film in chronological order here, rather than presenting the actual sequence of the film, one might observe Taiwan’s history linearly, and at the same time one might consider the fictional film as a concrete reference point from which to outline Taiwan’s actual cinematic history.

One aspect of the fictional representation, and one of the incredible features of *Three Times*, is that each section stars the same leading characters, Zhang Zhen as the male lead, and Shu Qi as the female lead. In each segment they portray star-crossed lovers dealing with their time and place in very different universes, those being (in order of depiction in the film): Gaoxiong in 1966 during the US military colonialism, Taipei in 1911 under the governance of Japanese colonization, and Taipei in 2005 under the strictures of globalization and the spectacle of media. In all instances, Taiwan is the setting on the global stage, a contact zone where transnational endeavors intersect, a place where the slippage between fictional and factual occurrences is the backdrop for politicians and film directors alike.

**A Time for Freedom**

The irony of each translation of the intertitles selected for *Three Times* is that they could hardly be more inaccurate. So, part of the interpretive mission of an audience in general, or this reading specifically, is to place the intertitle in a dialectical relationship with the time period depicted. For example, the segment that
portrays life in 1911 Taipei is entitled: “A Time for Freedom” (the original text reads literally: “freedom dream,” or “dream of freedom”). However, this section of the film takes place when Taiwan was under Japanese occupation. The Japanese occupation from 1895-1945 marks just one period in Taiwan’s many periods of colonization on the island, and so it is essential to consider the significance of the year 1911 within the overall colonial legacy of Taiwan.

The segment begins with an eye-level shot in taken in middle of a hallway, inside a brothel, facing an open door at dusk. Shoji screens on both sides of the hallway reveal a distinctly Japanese influence. In the center, upper half of the frame hangs a lantern. A servant steps on a stool to light it. As the lantern begins to emit its yellow glow, on the right side of the screen, reading right to left as in traditional Chinese script: “1911, Dadaocheng” The servant steps to the left side of the frame, the camera remaining stationary; this allows for the remaining brightness of daylight in the doorway to shine through the passageway. The natural lighting is a light-grey, excepting the light that pours through a rattan curtain shade altering the light to a brownish hue. The servant steps down, takes the lantern cover, and as he places it on the lantern, traditional Taiwanese music begins to play while the scene fades out to black.

Next a panning shot, right to left, captures a courtesan, Shu Qi, within her room. Zhang Zhen enters at the right side of the screen. The two lovers are subdued externally, but internally seem elated to see one another: smiles change their stature from reserved statues to animated human beings that genuinely enjoy each other’s company. Together they comprise the locus of the scene. They speak together on a
topic central to Zhang Zhen’s character: the politics of the colonized. Shu Qi asks: “When did you arrive?” The only sound is the non-diegetic track of classical music, and the words are presented as intertitles just as they would be during a silent film made at the actual historical moment the film depicts. Their lips move but they have no voice. Zhang Zhen describes how he met one Mr. Liang in Keelung. Shu Qi asks, by way of intertitle: “Do you mean Mr. Liang who fled to Japan after the Reform Movement failed?” Chang says that Mr. Liang spoke for an hour and wrote four poems and that he “found them deeply moving.” One of the poems reads: “Our homeland is torn asunder. Our brotherly bond is ever tighter.”

This conversation reveals the role of literature on the island in its efforts for self-representation within the Japanese colonial system. It also refers to the use of literature at the time to voice concern among the first generation writers in Taiwan who longed for a return to their homeland to mainland China. These writers perceived a connection with the mainland in contrast to the colonizing Japanese rulers. In 1921, the Taiwan Cultural Association was formed, an organization that intended to become the representative body for the island and to eventually achieve autonomy in governance, because the local Taiwanese could only be second class citizens under such a governing framework.

During the exchange between Shu Qi and Zhang Zhen the music remains constant, but after the next cut, the camera reveals that Shu Qi is singing the track as entertainment within the hostel -- it has been her voice all along -- and the audience observes Zhang Zhen listening in the background. Then this third scene fades to black and the text in white letters reads: “A Time for Freedom.” Is this really a “time
for freedom,” when clearly the characters are enclosed within pre-determined cultural roles (courtesan/patron), sequestered within the lifestyle of a brothel, under the rule of Japanese colonialism?

Taiwan’s records in the history books are marked by many such eras of colonial history, eras when “A Time for Freedom” would seem equally out of place as an accurate description of the time. During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), when the island of Taiwan was the home of primarily Aboriginals of Austronesian descent, there was an influx of immigrants from the mainland into the island that was beyond the periphery of the dynasty’s rule. In terms of foreign interactions with the island, the next key date occurs in 1540 when Portuguese explorers gave the name “Isla Formosa” to the island, meaning “Beautiful Island.” It was an appellation that would remain in foreign conceptions of the island up to the 20th century. European occupation of the island began in 1622 with the arrival of the Dutch, who established Fort Zeelandia in 1624, while the Spanish colonized northern Taiwan in the mid 1600s.

In 1662 the Dutch were defeated by Zheng Chenggong, also known as Koxinga, who fled to the island in an effort to regroup and return to the mainland to restore the Ming Dynasty after the Manchus (Qing Dynasty, 1644-1912) overthrew the Ming in 1644. What is remarkable is that history would repeat itself in 1949 when Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek would attempt the same endeavor -- to use Taiwan as a base before reclaiming the mainland -- with the same end result. Zheng Chenggong’s son Zheng Jing, and Zheng Chenggong’s grandson, Zheng Keshuang, were eventually defeated by the Qing admiral Shi Lang in 1683, ending any hope of
restoring the Ming Dynasty. After Qing victory, Taiwan was, for the first time, a part of Fujian Province. Thus, Taiwan entered world history as a domain ruled by China. As Emma Teng persuasively outlines in *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895*, the Qing government on the mainland also functioned as a colonizer and colonizing presence over the island. Teng asserts: “With annexation, Taiwan ‘entered the map and records’ not only in symbolic sense but also in a literal sense. Before the Qing conquest of the island, Taiwan was essentially terra incognita to Chinese cartographers.” Over the next 200 years Taiwan was but a peripheral hinterland to the governors of Beijing. Then, after defeat to Japan in the first Sino-Japanese War, Taiwan became a colony of Japan after the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed.

1895 is thus a significant year in terms of Taiwan’s political history, yet the date is also significant in terms of film history. Interestingly, 1895 is the year cinema was invented, and it is by coincidence the year Sigmund Freud began writing about the unconscious, a discourse that has been inextricably linked to cinematic interpretation as representation of the unconscious mind. In addition, between the years 1895 and 1911, the year in which Hou Hsiao-hsien sets his representation of Taiwanese people living under Japanese occupation, Taiwan film history began. Although the first screening of a film in Taiwan is subject to debate, Taiwan cinema emerged within the Japanese colonial system, which imported films from Japan, China, and Hollywood. In addition to the filmic image, film exhibition in Taiwan included a *benshi* who stood in front of the audience next to the screen and both narrated the film and provided a live commentary.
Hou’s periodization of 1911 takes place in Dadaocheng, a district of Taipei that was once a wharf, located just east of the current Taipei Main Station. The film shots in this segment are exclusively interior shots within a brothel, and just as in Hou’s film *Flowers of Shanghai* (Haishang hua, 1998), there is a material factor involved: it would be impossible to film on location considering the current state of hyper-urbanization. But at the same time, the interior shots heighten the stark contrast with the present-day perpetual motion and rumble of scooters, cars and trucks rushing throughout downtown Taipei. Furthermore, the replication of silent film techniques is in keeping with the early 20th century Taiwan cinema history which began within the Japanese colonial system. In these ways, the film takes the audience out of the present-day moment and deep into the unfamiliar pace of life and territory of Taiwan in the nineteen tens.

Yet there is also continuity between the world of the early 20th century and Taiwan of today; what remains constant is the desire for self representation and agency. Hou’s dialogue during this segment demonstrates the complex interrelationship between Taiwan and the mainland. This is because 1911 marks the precise moment when the Qing Dynasty -- the first dynasty in the history of China with political rights over Taiwan -- was coming to an end. By 1912, the Republic of China, the governing body of the mainland, and the future government of Taiwan, was in power. The characters portrayed by Shu Qi and Zhang Zhen in *Three Times* are deeply concerned with the transition that occurred on the mainland. Zhang Zhen states, “Mr. Liang says China will not be ready to help us free ourselves from Japan for another three decades.” The process of “becoming Japanese” was far from a
welcome, smooth transition. During the first seven years of occupation alone, over 20,000 “bandits” were killed by the Japanese in their efforts to wrest control over the island inhabitants. Hou notes this turmoil of the time with a strategic intertitle that refers to the beginning of revolt on the mainland: “Three Months Later: The Wuchang Uprising.” The off-screen political events that are referred to in the intertitles are complimented in the brothel narrative by conflicts of ownership over courtesans and the arrival of a new courtesan, only ten years old, whom Shu Qi begins to train.

Certainly, no document can capture the totality of a historical moment, yet without the fragments of history we would not have access to history. We receive history in dispatches, in fragments, and in this case through a recent film that brings us into dialogue with the past by way of what Christian Metz has described as the five tracks: image, noise, writing, music, and dialogue. The beauty of using Hou’s representations of Taiwan history as a framework for this chapter is that we encounter representations of Taiwan’s complexity without tying up all of the loose ends. This is what Hou’s film, as with all great film, accomplishes: by giving us brief, careful, and rich imagery with deep focus, both in terms of camera technique and ideological complexity, the tension of all that the period contains but cannot be presented is brought to the surface of our conscious experience, and it is so full of life and meaning that it is difficult to classify or categorize. The representation of life under Japanese colonialism, accessed only by way of the intimate interior spaces of a brothel, presents us today with important issues without resolving all of them in the classical Hollywood mode.
In the conclusion of this segment, Zhang Zhen must resign himself to the fact that, as he states in a conversation with Shu Qi, the mainland would not be able to control Taiwan “for another three decades.” Historically, the final stage of Japanese rule occurred during the Second Sino-Japanese war during the years 1937 and 1945. When the Nationalists arrived in 1945 to take over the island, they quickly recognized that the local Taiwanese culture had been become in many ways distinctly Japanese. Financially Taiwan was far more successful due to Japanese economic policies (by 1939 the per capita trade value in Taiwan was 39 times that of China), and in terms of education, 71% of the elementary-aged students had attended Japanese schools. Taiwan studies scholar Yvonne Sung-sheng Chang describes the importance of language and literary culture on the island: all Chinese language sections were banned in newspapers and magazines during the Second Sino-Japanese War. All of these factors divided artists and writers, as with the populace in general, into pro- and anti-colonial camps. While not all residents loathed the governance of the Japanese, the general atmosphere was one of elation once the Japanese departed. This experience is not depicted in *Three Times*, but it is the concluding representation in Hou Hsiao-hsien’s 1993 film *Puppetmaster*. In an iconic image of the Japanese withdrawal, local residents thrash Japanese planes with sledgehammers in order to claim scrap metal as the scene slowly fades to black.

**A Time for Love**

In *Three Times*, the 1960s are portrayed in a segment entitled “A Time for Love.” In between the two film segments represented in the film, 1911 and 1966, a
seismic power shift occurred on the island. After the Japanese lost the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1945, the period known as Retrocession began. Retrocession day, October 25, 1945, followed the terms of the Cairo Declaration, which stated that territories the Japanese had previously claimed from China would be returned to the Republic of China upon surrender. After the regimented and well organized rulers of Taiwan returned to Japan, there could hardly be a more startling contrast than the disorganized arrival of governors from the mainland, accompanied with their bedraggled troops. What followed was almost immediate unemployment and inflation. The KMT politicos took over the local bureaucracy, and KMT carpetbaggers confiscated railway equipment and factory infrastructures and machinery.\(^{53}\) Meanwhile, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had his mind elsewhere, as the Nationalist Government waged war with Mao Zedong and the Communists. The “228 Incident” of 1947, which took place before Chiang’s presidency on the island, was hardly the precedent to set before the KMT governors left the mainland in 1949 following their sound defeat to the Communists in the “War of Liberation.”

The Japanese film centers in Taipei and around the island, including production and distribution networks, were taken over by the KMT in 1945 when Taiwan was returned to China. The KMT first set up a Taiwan Studio in Taipei, and then the government apparatus brought with it Zhongdian (Central) Film Studio, Zhongzhi (China) Motion Pictures, and Nongjiao (Agricultural Education) Film Company when it fled to Taiwan in 1949. Film was not a number one priority for the ousted regime. After all, the pre-production phase of film production alone requires screenwriters, producers, financiers and careful organization and planning.\(^{54}\) Next, at
production stage, a cast, photography unit, sound unit, not to mention make-up, is all required: a coordinated effort of hundreds of workers that create thousands of feet of film. Then comes post-production, involving the editor, dialogue dubbing, and non-synchronized dialogue. And the final stage is exhibition, when the audience purchases tickets to see the film. In Taiwan, the exhibition network was appropriated from the Japanese, as part of the KMT’s efforts to maintain economic power once they took over the infrastructure that the Japanese put in place. But due to high inflation and the difficulties of distribution, the film industry initially stalled.

Considering the cost and complexity of producing film, it is no wonder that the KMT government was focused on what they considered more pressing concerns: returning to the mainland while convincing the local populace to “become Chinese.”

After the Nationalists’ arrival in 1949 until martial law was abolished in 1987, the ethnicity of the island was generally divided into two groups. The first was the benshengren, those from Taiwan who remained in Taiwan throughout Japanese Colonialism. This included the Minnan, Hakka, and Aboriginal groups that comprised a majority of the population. Second was the waishengren, those who came over to Taiwan from the mainland after the KMT was defeated in the civil war from 1945-1949. Nowadays, sociologists generally classify Taiwan’s residents into four distinct groups. The first group is comprised of the mainlanders, who speak Mandarin, the national language imposed by the KMT. They comprise approximately 12% of the total population. Second, the Minnan comprise roughly 72% of the population; third is the Hakka, 14% of the population; and the fourth group, the Aboriginals, comprised of 9 tribes, account for the remaining percentage of the
Taiwan, this isolated island off of the coast of China, containing its own distinct ethnic delineations and character, has been linked by way of political organization and imagination throughout its history to larger regional concerns. It is a place that has been pulled by the tides of history, and thus is considered to be a part of the region by political ties not always accepted or identified by the local populace as their own. This was a concern of the incoming KMT regime in the late 1940s. One way to envision their predicament is to consider the imaginary boundary lines that the KMT perceived, and indeed contributed to themselves, when Taiwan was aligned into oftentimes unwelcome geopolitical arrangements.

First, consider Taiwan’s connection to the mainland. If a map is drawn in which an imaginary line links the island to the landmass to the east, one could envisage that it is a part of mainland China. To the north, Taiwan was considered a part of Japan. Maps of Taiwan that were composed during Japanese Colonization link Taiwan to its northern neighbor.
To the east, Taiwan is a part of the Pacific Rim, a term that includes the United States as a critical participant in the affairs of Asia. During the 1960s and 1970s, the lines drawn across the globe during the Cold War linked Taiwan to the United States. Director Wu Nianzhen once stated that the psychological colonialism of the United States was more influential to the citizens of Taiwan than the physical colonialism of Japan. The fourth imaginary line connects the island of Taiwan to the southern region, linking the Aboriginal peoples to their ancestral homelands in the south.

While there are additional ways that Taiwan has been united with its neighbors, the result of considering this model, in which Taiwan is “roped” into regional and transnational allegiances to the north, south, east, and west, is that when
one perceives all of the layers in total, Taiwan remains encircled in the center of all of these concerns. This is an effective way to think of the island’s people. So many lines have been drawn around the island for so long: as province, as colony, and as ally in the Cold War, that in the end the social formation is that of an island with very much its own identity, parts of other wholes, and yet definitively a whole unto itself.

Hou focuses on the unique experience of the *benshengren* during the 1960s, a time when political freedoms and expressions were silenced due to the absence of basic civil and free rights enforced by the *waishengren*, and yet this section is entitled “A Time for Love.” The scene fades from black opening credits to the opening scene, light in the doorway of a simple wooden pool hall in a quiet southern Taiwan town in 1966. The balance is perfect, just as it is in the Dadaocheng opening sequence that follows in the second segment of the film.

Then, in one of the most beautiful, well thought out, ingenious forty minutes in cinema of all time, the pleasant melody of The Platters’ version of “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” begins. It is a soundtrack from the west during an era in Taiwan’s history heavily influenced by United States neo-colonialism. There are only two takes in the first 4 minutes and 23 seconds of the segment. The leggy Shu Qi stands in her aqua-green tight pants, and the statuesque Zhang Zhen moves in a plain button-down shirt revealing a white undershirt, in keeping with mid-1960s fashion. As they play billiards, red pool balls move across a green pool table. The camera pans gently back and forth between the characters and their billiard sticks, following the rhythm of the music and the game. A jump cut follows, yet still, the rhythm and movement remains. The lush green tones, the lighting, the wooden walls: everything is simple and yet
refined. There is a certain richness to the texture, and the song plays. After “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” has played through in entirety, the scene fades again to black.

Next, Zhang Zhen is riding a bike in his classic black Converse All-Stars. There is no explanation in the transition, but it is apparent that Zhang Zhen’s spirit is light as he glides towards the camera, which depicts him with a tracking shot. He is smiling. He is clearly not wealthy, but he seems to be in the mood to fall head-over-heels into a new relationship. This happy-go-lucky image of riding a bike through rural Taiwan is taken directly from the heritage of Taiwan films in the 1960s and 1970s that captured a similar sentiment by way of a cliché bike-ride-through-the-countryside scene.

Then the film returns to the pool room: an eye-level shot -- the exact same angle as in the Dadaocheng scenes -- capture Zhang Zhen entering the shot after getting off of his bike. He leaves a letter for the pool hall girl he is in love with. The camera remains stationary as the characters move in and out of the frame. Overall, the 1960s seem to be a simpler time, when couples would write letters indirectly to one another to profess their love, rather than being open with their sexuality. In a later scene, the letter’s contents are revealed: Zhang Zhen reads through voiceover: “I am off to the army. [...] I just wanted to thank you. The days I have spent around here have been the happiest of all.” The militaristic setting of the 1960s Cold War era is alluded to, but it does not dampen or hamper life in general. Life goes on. Nothing seems to happen too fast. Hou’s use of the long take contributes to this sentiment.

Nostalgia pervades the segment representing 1966, right in the middle of the period known today in Taiwan film history as the “golden age,” from 1964-1969. It
took the film industry 17 long years to get to arrive at that juncture. The first film made by the new regime was in production as the Chinese Civil War concluded on the mainland, stranding famous film personalities Zhang Ying and Zhang Che on the island as the doors to the mainland were closed. In 1950 their film was finally released: *Wind and Cloud on Ali Mountain* (Alishan fengyun, Zhang Ying), the first film that was “made in Taiwan.” The narrative structure of Hollywood films, such as *Man On a Tightrope* (Kazan, 1953) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (Ray, 1955), was replicated in the local KMT films that would follow, as described in Huang Ren’s work.56 The early films made by the KMT regime on the island were anti-Communist in nature, but as Huang Ren has written, anti-Communist films comprise only 30% of the total output of films made in *Guoyu* (Mandarin Chinese) and produced in Taiwan between 1950 and 1970.57

While the early *Guoyu* films propagated specific political messages, the *Taiyu* (Taiwanese-language) film industry of the late 1950s and early 1960s was diverse. Note that 1052 Taiwanese-dialect films were made from 1955-1969, while only 373 were made in Mandarin.58 *Taiyu* films contained multidimensional crossbreeds of numerous varieties: opera adaptations, action films, martial arts films, musicals, comedies, and romance films. Even so, both the *Taiyu* and *Guoyu* industries had to avoid Japanese style and dress in their films, as mandated by the sensitive KMT government. By 1966 *Taiyu* film was on the decline, and its representatives had to request the government to provide preferential treatment so that the failing production houses could import color film stock in order to compete with what was by then an established *Guoyu* industry. By 1967, the *Taiyu* film industry was bankrupt, and by
the 1970s, Taiyu film companies made the full transition to producing Guoyu films. A number of directors in the Taiyu industry had successful careers in Guoyu film production and television, and a number of actors and actresses started their careers in the Taiyu film tradition but crossed over. So while this dissertation does not go into great detail here, the influence of Taiyu film during the late 1950s and early 1960s cannot be underestimated in the history of Taiwan’s film making.

However, things started to change in 1963, a significant year for Taiwan’s state film-making apparatus. To take a look at that year’s film production and importation for a moment: 70 Mandarin films were made (including films from Hong Kong) and an impressive 96 Taiwanese films were made on the island; imported films include 9 Japanese films, 63 from Europe, while 169 were from the United States. The three facets that began the paradigm shift of 1963 include Li Hanxiang’s successful film The Love Eterne, the emergence of Gong Hong’s managerial prowess at CMPC studios, and Li Xing’s film Our Neighbor. These three interlocking factors altered Taiwan’s film landscape and provided the foundation for the Taiwan New Cinema movement that would follow 20 years later.

Li Hanxiang’s film The Love Eterne found a popular reception in Taiwan which has reached mythological proportions that need not be repeated here. Eventually, the director relocated to Taiwan and directed his films in the burgeoning Taiwanese market. His 1965 film Hsih-Shih: Beauty of Beauties (Xi Shi), including massive sets, large scale scenes, and a cast with a thousand extras out-grossed all Taiwan and Hong Kong film studio productions that year. And his artistic film The Winter (Dong nuan, 1968) is arguably the finest film of the twenty-year period
spanning the early 1960s until the Taiwan New Wave of the 1980s. In an interview with Director Li Xing, in Taipei in 2008, I asked, “What type of transition did you notice between the 1960s and 1970s?” Li Xing responded, “In the 1960s the influence of Guolian (Grand Motion Pictures/ Li Hanxiang’s) film studio cannot be underestimated. In 1963 Li Hanxiang’s film The Love Eterne caused a sensation -- reporters from Hong Kong stated that Taipei had gone crazy over the actress Lingbo. Then, when director Li Hanxiang came to Taiwan, he started competition with the Taiwan state films studios, and that competition is what propelled the market. This carried Taiwan film through the 1960s and into the 1970s.”

Indeed, with Li Hanxiang came Hong Kong technicians and personnel. In addition, the major state studios inaugurated their own professional training programs and a star system was set firmly in place. Furthermore, 164 new theatres were built from 1961 to 1965 to satisfy the increasing number of film viewers. King Hu (another transplanted “defector” from Hong Kong), renowned for his influential martial arts film Come Drink With Me (Dazui xia, 1966) which he made in Hong Kong, produced landmark Asian films after his arrival in Taiwan, including Dragon Inn (Longmen kezhan, 1967) and Touch of Zen (Xianü, 1970). Due in part to the impressive increases in popularity, production standards, and influence of Li Hanxiang and King Hu, Taiwan’s films were screened in over 50 countries.

Gong Hong’s influence in 1963 also cannot be underestimated. The creation of Taiwan’s onscreen fictionalized universe and the formation of Taiwan’s golden age began in many ways when Gong Hong assumed leadership of CMPC film production in 1963. Gong Hong, a prolific and resourceful manager, produced films for the open
domestic market alongside popular films from Hollywood and Hong Kong, while also extending the international market of Taiwan films to Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. The films he produced were part of CMPC’s national and transnational film enterprise. Thanks to the growing influence of five key directors, including friend and colleague Li Xing (see chapters two and five), Bai Jingrui (see chapter three), Song Cunshou (see chapter four) as well as Hong Kong transplants Li Hanxiang and King Hu, the rise of cinema in Taiwan emerged and became dominant in the region.

After Li Xing’s film *Our Neighbor* garnered local acclaim, Gong Hong, the newly appointed manager of the state-owned CMPC, asked Li Xing to make narrative state policy films (see chapter two). Gong Hong’s plan was to make government films in Mandarin that used Italian neorealist techniques. For example, he intended to film on location and depict the economic conditions of the laboring class. But rather than representing the quotidian aspects of their lives, as the Italian neorealists and the Shanghai critical realists ideally intended (thus “exposing the darkness” of society), Gong Hong modified the style so that the characters on the big screen find contentment under the auspices of Chiang Kai-shek and his government. He identified ways in which Li Xing’s techniques could be used for these purposes and was optimistic that Li Xing would be a suitable candidate for his project. As with any film project, audience response was considered in advance. Surely Gong Hong recognized that Taiwan audiences would be willing to part with their money to see a “new” variety of an old national film tradition.
Certainly, there are many differences between the Italian neorealism of *The Bicycle Thief* (De Sica, 1948) and Gong Hong’s “healthy realist” (*jiankang xieshizhuyi*) film *Beautiful Duckling* (Yangya ren jia, Li Xing, 1965). For instance, healthy realism films were not as critical of society as Italian neorealism films were, and healthy realism privileged the values of the government over artistic expression. Still, the two film styles share an intriguing similarity. Gilles Deleuze, in his discussion of Italian neorealism, asserts that even though Italy had been defeated in World War II, it still “had at its disposal a cinematographic institution which had escaped fascism relatively successfully.” Communist China and the Nationalist Taiwan had fought in a civil war, but had kept their cinema institutions relatively intact as well. When it came time to modify existing cinematic techniques, these Chinese-language directors, perhaps like the Italian directors before them, had similar ideas about ways to represent their societies aesthetically, while keeping in mind the limited material resources available to them. Artistic choices such as filming on location and using unknown actors were a result of artistic as much as practical considerations.

What follows the year 1963 has become lore in Taiwan film history. Li Xing co-directed the healthy realism film *Oyster Girl* (*Ke nü*) with Li Jia in 1964. It was the first color widescreen film made in Taiwan, and it depicted the lives of oyster farmers in a coastal village in Taiwan. And in 1965 Li Xing directed a second healthy realism film on his own for Zhongying studio, a work entitled *Beautiful Duckling*. It portrays duck farmers in Taiwan who benefit from state subsidies and agricultural policies. Together, the films ushered in a new era of popularity.
The importance of Hollywood film during the “golden age” was also critical. After all, the majority of films shown on the island were from the United States, which was competing with Taiwan’s films on the open market. The influence of the Hollywood tradition on films of Taiwan in the mid-1960s can be traced back to the 1950s when Taiwan films were modeled on Hollywood’s classical narratives with their recognizable conflict, climax, and resolution. The “realistic” continuity editing in the style of the classical Hollywood and melodramatic approach is also evident. But the influence from the United States was not only evident in Taiwan film aesthetics. As evidenced from researching Taiwan newspapers published in the 1960s, in which film advertisements might be found adjacent to articles describing the global Cold War landscape, Taiwan was a state aligned with the “free world.” Taiwan was entrenched in a mode to follow the United States into the 21st century, both in filmic discourse and in the language of international politics. It is to the 21st century that we follow Hou Hsiao-hsien by considering the final segment of his film, *Three Times*.

**A Time for Youth**

The bittersweet longings of nostalgia that Hou Hsiao-hsien represents in depictions of the 1960s, when love was possible in the midst of the Cold War, political repression, and conflict between the mainlanders in power and the locals who were again underrepresented by a new state, disappears in the section of the film depicted in 2005. After the abolishment of martial law in 1987, the local situation of Taiwan is depicted one that is a part of a global situation: it is “a time for youth,” a
time of being trapped within a new stage of neoliberalism and global capitalism, represented by a postmodern mode of ennui.

Hou marks the transformation by foregrounding the economic changes on the island. Taiwanese society began its impressive financial growth in the 1960s. Taiwan’s population endured poverty in the 1950s, due in large part to the way the Nationalists had stifled economic growth and removed the infrastructure the Japanese had put in place from 1895 to 1945. But after land reforms and the receipt of millions of dollars in aid from the United States from 1951 to 1964, a sense of economic hopefulness permeated society. The agricultural growth of Taiwan in the 1960s was followed by the industrial growth of the 1970s and beyond. The effects of the subsequent changes architecturally, technologically, and emotionally are signaled by the loud motorcycle that carries Zhang Zhen and Shu Qi and comprises the entire soundtrack when the segment begins.

The incredible feature of Hou Hsiao-hsien’s *Three Times* is that he juxtaposes the utterly silent section of 1911 with the revving of engines in Taiwan in 2005. In fact, the entire third segment in 2005 contains a dull roar, like in a David Lynch film. No silence, only the dull whir of mechanical noise. In the final sequence of the 1911 section, Shu Qi reads a message from Zhang Zhen, that he has reached Tokyo with Mr. Liang, and will soon be leaving for Shanghai. Zhang Zhen writes, in a letter Shu Qi reads: “I saw the hall where they signed the treaty handing Taiwan over to Japan. Thinking of Mr. Liang’s poem, I couldn’t help shedding a tear.” The oppression of the past was physical, a visual, perceivable domination enacted by the Japanese. Yet in the present there is a new kind of invisible oppression that permeates society in a
The introductory sequence of the third segment begins with a camera tracking a loud motorcycle. Zhang Zhen drives, intent, looking ahead, focusing on nothing. Shu Qi’s hands clutch his waist as she rides behind him, lost in tears, lost in a deathlike sadness. The motorcycle heads towards the city, in autumn or winter at dawn, when the Taipei skies are grey, becoming laden with rain. Under an overpass Zhang Zhen stops the motorcycle and asks if Shu Qi is all right. She appears to calm down momentarily. The title reads: “A Time for Youth.” They continue on.

Next, again in a hallway shot, always a hallway shot in this film -- corridors reminiscent of Ozu in terms of the framing -- the two lovers enter a modern day Taipei apartment. Photographs line the narrow passage way they traverse, while Shu Qi checks her text messages on her cell phone, the new mode of written communication. Here is the urban space, the silence of returning home. No longer is there a political issue to discuss: not speaking of Japan as in 1911, no mention of mandatory military service as in 1966; here the sole concern is raw nerves. Caught in the midst of a love triangle between Zhang Zhen, Shu Qi, and another woman Shu Qi loves, Zhang Zhen and Shu Qi escape from the world by making love in the cold apartment. Their expression of physical love, not represented in the previous sections of the film, and not represented in previous eras in Taiwan’s history, offers a particular type of commentary: not because such raw emotion or love triangles such as
theirs did not exist before, but due to political censorship such expressions in the past would not have been possible to express on film. Shu Qi and Zhang Zhen return home, they make love, they reflect, and they think, they ponder, they create art, they wonder, in silence.

So much happened between 1966 and 2005 that the 1960s almost seem to be another universe. Culturally, Taiwan had experienced another momentous change. The healthy realist ideas of a “homeland” of the 1960s underwent the most intense of transformations through the 1970s: in film with the eventual decline of the popularity of Taiwan cinema overseas, in literature with the nativist literature debates, in industry with more factories and the emergence of small business and the subsequent deterioration of the environment, and in politics with the end of the Nationalist’s international status. Taipei, Taiwan was no longer the seat of all of China. Then, as martial law was abolished in 1987, there was a significant rise in political and freedom of expression not capable in the previous era.

In film circles the golden age of the mid to late 1960s passed into a mode of Taiwan’s *wenyi,* or “literary art,” film tradition of the 1970s. The films of the early 1970s demonstrate that a focus on domestic affairs, on melodramatic relationships between men and women in contemporary society, were an important part of Taiwan’s film industry. Then, alongside the decrease in Taiwan’s prestige in international diplomacy as the decade wore on, the *wenyi* film tradition transitioned to a new era of *kangri* (resist-Japanese) films that represented regional and global conflicts. Films of this nature, films that show the defeat of foreign threats whenever and however they arose, include: *The Everlasting Glory* (Yinglie Qianqiu, Ding
Shanxi, 1974) and *Eight Hundred Heroes* (Babai Zhuangshi, Ding Shanxi, 1976), among others.67 However, while the *wényì* films of the decade shifted from representations of the local to representations of the regional and global, depictions of gender remain in many ways constant (see chapter four).

Lu Feiyi’s text *Taiwan Film: Politics, Economics, and Aesthetics 1949-1994* invaluably situates the way the 1970s films transformed alongside the changing times, and thus helps clarify the types of films available to audiences during the early to mid-1970s.68 By 1975 the number of films submitted for censorship approval was far lower than the highest year of film production in Taiwan, 1968’s figure of 189. This is due to a number of factors, including that in 1970 Mandarin cinema had effectively pushed Taiwanese cinema totally out of the picture, in addition, Taiwan’s so-called “golden age” of cinema, when its films received advance capital from overseas investors in Southeast Asia, was in an irrecoverable down turn. However, these details do not explain the decline of the overall industry as a whole, for it was to recover from this decrease in production, and was not to bottom out until the late 1980s and early 1990s. Indeed, by the late 1970s Taiwan was to see the production of some of the greatest hits in Taiwan film history, right before the industry hit the standstill of the 1980s (see chapter five).

The famous Taiwan New Cinema movement from approximately 1982 to 1988 was an aesthetic response to the filmmaking tradition that preceded it, but also a political response to decades of governmental repression. While the Taiwan New Cinema movement comprised only 14 percent of the total cinema production from 1982-1988, it left an indelible impact on the film industry in Taiwan that in some
ways remains to this day. Indeed, Taiwan New Cinema is blamed for the decline of commercial cinema in Taiwan. Taiwan New Cinema might be characterized as: “a step away from pedagogical orientation of healthy realism, the commercialism of studio genres, and the eclectic provincialism of taiyu pian (Taiwanese-language films).”69 Key figures in this movement include Hou Hsiao-hsien, Wu Nianzhen, and Edward Yang, Wang Tong, and Wan Ren. The establishment, CMPC, instituted a “low capital, high production” model in the late 1970s and early 1980s as part of an attempt to rejuvenate the Taiwan film industry. Wu Nianzhen and others were thus able to get the nativist voice into cinema, for there to be something refreshing and new.

The second wave of directors in the 1990s, that also provide a link between the past and the present, allowing one to better understand the imagery Hou Hsiao-hsien presents in the final section of his film *Three Times*, includes directors in the 1990s such as Ang Lee, who made *Wedding Banquet* in 1993, and Tsai Ming-liang, who directed such films as *Rebels of a Neon God* (*Qingxiaonian Nezha*, 1992) and *Vive l’Amour* (*Aiqing wansui*, 1994). But this categorization of a “second wave,” just as citing “generations” when considering film on the mainland, is not absolute. For example, Hou Hsiao-hsien made famous films in the 1990s as well, as did the maestro Edward Yang, who directed *The Terrorizers* (*Kongbu fenzi*) in 1986 and *Yi Yi* in 2000. While films from the Taiwan New Cinema and the Second Wave won film awards abroad, domestic feature production declined and audience interest in domestic productions decreased. In addition, local factors including the rise in cable television and unregulated video rental practices lead to the general demise of film production
on the island. In general, the trend is marked by a decrease in domestic film production, yet the films that were produced demonstrate high production values. By the year 2000, Hollywood controlled 93 percent of the market, but this development may be finally changing, if the recent success of local film on the island is any indication (see conclusion).

Ultimately, the future of Taiwan’s film industry is uncertain. The freedom of expression that Taiwan’s directors of the 1980s strove for has been achieved in Taiwan’s culture in general, and yet the current pluralistic society still contains its own pitfalls and challenges. “A Time of Youth,” in Hou’s fictional landscape, represents this moment as another phase in which residents of Taiwan try to determine who they are and where they belong. Yet their attempts are limited by the experience of modern day employment that leads them to alienation, an indelible part of their psychological landscape. Robert W. Witkin, in his work titled Adorno on Popular Culture, writes that when:

> The process of production comes to be initiated, ordered and controlled not by the direct producers but by the production system that keeps them employed. Workers become ‘appendages’ to this system, estranged from the product of their labor. They do not choose it, nor does it express their social being. Work is progressively de-skilled and each individual performs routinized, atomized, and meaningless tasks at a pace and under conditions he does not control.70

This summary is an appropriate description of Shu Qi and Zhang Zhen’s condition as they struggle to express themselves in the current landscape of modern Taipei.

So perhaps “A Time of Youth” is the least ironic intertitle of Three Times, considering that Hou depicts young adults on the current landscape, rather than the era of parents, grand-parents, and great-grandparents. And yet, the irony remains. How
can 2005 be a time of youth? After all that has transpired, is Taiwan still at an introductory phase of development, still determining its position in global politics? The representation of three separate important time periods seems to imply that, once seventeen years or so have passed, it is possible to gauge the sentiment of an era. Moreover, *Three Times* accomplishes what the best films often accomplish by providing a mediated version of reality in a sophisticated and entertaining way that leads to questions -- resolved and unresolved -- that remain with us today.

Overall, each historical moment in *Three Times*, although portrayed by the same two actors, Shu Qi and Zhang Zhen, offers different perspectives on the multiple languages that have been used on the island, societal restrictions, and social formations. The film shows concrete differences in pop culture and material items as the times change: hairstyles, writing, music, occupations, lighting, transportation, and modes of expressing affection all come and go. And these objects and changes are presented in an aesthetically pleasing way. For example, the camera angles in hallways lead us to see similar filmic vantage points, providing a sense of comfort and consistency, while the scenery in the foreground of the camera is transformed.

This description of the imagery in *Three Times* is a microcosm of what has occurred throughout Taiwan cinema history; metaphorically speaking: directors stand in hallways filming their scenes, while -- like in a fast-motion film -- history makes its changes on the island around them. What stays the same and what changes is what the following chapters of this dissertation comments on. Just as with Hou’s film, the significant moments are those when emergent, residual, and dominant traditions solidify just enough to capture momentarily before they transform again. And such
moments never emerge out of nowhere. The following chapters more closely
examine the foundational moments spanning the years 1960-1980, from which *Three
Times* emerged.
Chapter Two

Two Stage Brothers: Xie Jin and Li Xing in the Early 1960s

What could be more different than the films from mainland China and Taiwan during the Cold War? In 1956 China was observing the behavior of the Soviet Union closely, measuring its response to the Hungarian crisis. Would Moscow legitimate rebel demands or crush the uprising in order to maintain international communist unity? Mainland China’s decision to support the Soviet position was subverted by the local industry in “Free China,” Taiwan, which publicly screened films in order to raise funds for the Hungarian rebels. Perhaps it was this, as well as other unwelcome gestures by Taiwan’s state-controlled media, that led the People’s Daily (Renmin ribao) in 1957 to report that the film industry in Taiwan was “terrible” since it was organized by bureaucratic officials and “gangsters.” This denunciation followed a pattern in the People’s Daily to highlight both the real and imagined plight of Taiwan’s peasants, educators, and locals under the rule of the Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek. Not to be outdone, the 1957-8 edition of the China Yearbook published in Taiwan referred to Mao Zedong and his communist administrators as the “sons of Satan.” Ideological jibes such as these were reinforced by visual media on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. In 1958, when the mainland shelled Taiwan-administered Jinmen (Quemoy) islands, to demonstrate among other reasons that it was not going to be bullied by United States foreign policy, the event was immediately recorded in the form of a documentary film and distributed in Taiwan.
Later, in 1963, a joint Taiwan-Japan feature length narrative film was released on the event: *Storm over Jinmen Bay* (*Jinmendao fengyun*).

And yet the real and deep fissures that separated the two nations in the 1960s provide little explanation for the amicable relationship today between two grandmaster film directors of the 1960s: Xie Jin in mainland China, and his counterpart in Taiwan, Li Xing. How are we to understand an event in colonial Hong Kong in November 1991, when Li Xing first met one of the most famous Shanghai filmmakers and playwrights of the 1930s, Xia Yan? Although Li Xing and Xia Yan were separated for a majority of their lives by hostile historical environments, political affiliations, state film systems, and two generations, it seemed that there was no distance between them when they spoke together in Shanghainese. Li Xing told Xia Yan that the old man’s work was quite important to him.75 The familiarity Li Xing shared with Xia Yan was also extended to Xie Jin when the two men first met in Hong Kong in 1992. Later in the same year when Xie Jin traveled to Taiwan as the leader of the Chinese delegation attending the Golden Horse Awards, he stayed with Li Xing and his wife. How is it that these two directors, the most popular directors of their respective nations during the mid-1960s, filmmakers who made the most significant state films for regimes that were sworn enemies, find so much in common today?

It would seem that the link between the directors was their common objective and desire to make propaganda films. This interpretation follows the sources as they are presently understood, namely that Xie Jin and Li Xing lived in different environments and supported opposite causes. Certainly, this proposal has its merits. Audiences of Xie Jin’s or Li Xing’s films of the 1960s could have understood the
other’s film by identifying the antithesis of its political intention. In other words, they
could recognize simple binary opposites: one side communist, one side fascist-capitalist, one side following the Soviet Union’s lead into the twenty-first century, the
other following the United States. But as a conclusion, something is missing, only
half of the story is told. After all, can one argue that Xie Jin and Li Xing are
comrades today because they propagated antithetical ideologies?

This chapter proposes that films made in China and Taiwan during the Cold
War were presented in a mutually intelligible filmic language, just as Li Xing and Xia
Yan spoke together in Shanghainese after the cultural thaw of the early 1990s. Taking
this speculation to its furthest logical conclusion, a movie from Taiwan in the 1960s
could have screened in China and the filmic construction of the grammar, syntax, and
symbolism of each image would have been entirely understood, each picture a
recognizable type, the dialogue and setting conforming to certain established
conventions. In order to make this case, three sets of films will be compared so that
one might distinguish filmic similarities despite different political situations, consider
the personal experiences which shaped Xie Jin’s and Li Xing’s craft, and observe the
lineage of realist filmic techniques that link the two filmmakers in interesting ways.

Chinese film history is reasonably well known, but only part of the story is
understood if the film scene in Taiwan is presented as separate instead of inextricably
linked. At the same time, studies that present Taiwan’s post-1949 state film industry
as parallel rather than intertwined with China’s film industry also do not entirely
appreciate the full picture. Thus, it is essential to focus on the means that each
director used to produce his films, as well as the ends -- state policy films. Overall, if
the language in the films is the same, what language is it? And where did it come from?

Act 1: Setting the Stage

The 1965 film *Stage Sisters* (Wu tai jiemei, Xie Jin) was made in China when the nation was in a tailspin that particularly affected urban intellectuals such as Xie Jin in Shanghai. Ideological discussions were primary at the time because the political apparatus was replacing experts with politicians. Overall, it was a time of turbulence. Following the Anti-rightist campaign of 1957, in which some 300,000 people were denounced or imprisoned, the disastrous Great Leap Forward of 1958-61 led to the deaths of some 20-30 million people, border clashes with India splashed across headlines, and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union were ruptured. In the early 1960s people in China were struggling economically to return to the levels of the financial, agricultural, and industrial levels achieved before 1958. From 1961 to 1963 the government initiated plans to reinstate the intellectuals in a united front, but from 1964 to 1965 this window of opportunity was closed. The end of the “cultural thaw” was signaled by many state efforts, including the socialist education movement intended to install class consciousness in the masses.

It against this backdrop that *Stage Sisters* script was published, when a new wind of change was in the air. The storm that followed was the Cultural Revolution, which began a year after the film was completed. The climate was already so inhospitable in 1965 that the film was never formally released. Instead, it was screened to select audiences before being relegated to the shelves during the
subsequent chaotic years, and Xie Jin was denounced in front of thousands of people.\textsuperscript{79}

The film \textit{Stage Sisters} is remarkable because it encapsulates a compelling effort to satisfy the contradictory requirements of state propaganda, classical Hollywood narrative continuity, and Soviet realism. Consequently, it contains so many narrative and poetic inconsistencies that it nearly bursts at the seams. The film depicts the lives of two women who become convinced that the Communist revolution is a just cause. First, during the Nanjing Decade, the protagonist, Chunhua, escapes certain oppression as a child bride in the rural regions of Shaoxing by joining a traveling opera troupe. There she meets an actress named Yuehong, and together they form an inseparable bond as they perform together on the stage. After Yuehong’s father dies, the dishonest manager of the group binds both Chunhua and Yuehong to a three year contract and takes them to Shanghai where they work to become two of the biggest opera stars in Shanghai. By the time the sisters pay off their debt to their manager and earn their independence, Yuehong is seduced by what the film presents as materialism and petty bourgeois romance, while Chunhua holds to her traditional standards and thus recognizes the moral bankruptcy of Republican-era capitalist society. Eventually, she accepts the value-system of her new-found underground Communist comrades. The climax of the film occurs when, despite their differences, Chunhua defends a falsely-accused Yuehong in a corrupt Shanghai court. Later, after “liberation” in 1949, Chunhua and Yuehong together join a state drama troupe that tours China to spread the message of communism.
The setting of the film is similar to pre-1949 Shanghai films in the way that geography is portrayed as a powerful force that constructs class identity. Just as the spatial division between the rural and the urban is prefigured in previous Chinese films, one might say that in *Stage Sisters* the place makes the people, rather than the people making the place. The countryside scenes that introduce the film -- vast landscapes and mountaintop vistas -- are important because they establish a pure and rustic location that was corrupted by Nationalist scoundrels. For example, in one early scene Chunhua is unjustly accused and then punished by Nationalist policemen by being lashed to a pole in a rural village square. While the primary purpose of Chunhua’s painful experience is arguably to highlight Xie Jin’s skillful presentation of suffering in an aesthetically pleasing way, in political terms it is clear that the Nationalists will go to any length to torment the pure-hearted people of the countryside. In the end of the film, the same town is revisited after liberation by the state drama troupe, and since the Nationalists are no longer present, their corrupting spell over this pastoral site has disappeared. Notably, Chunhua revisits the pole in the center of the village square, and it is no longer occupied.

Meanwhile, Shanghai is a site of modernity in the film, but also of decadence. It is inherently depraved, a scene of moral darkness and decay. Its only redeeming quality is the responsible underground Communist workers who bring light to the urban citizens. As in the rural-urban border-crossing films of the 1930s *The Fishermen’s Song* (Yuguang qu, Cai Chusheng, 1934) and *Daybreak* (Tianming, Sun Yu, 1933), Shanghai functions as a character who challenges the protagonist to take political action. In *Daybreak*, two lovers move from the country to the city in order to
find work, but instead find destitution. They learn that the city is a place where seemingly innocuous language and behavior are charged with imperialist and capitalist meanings. Once they recognize the significance of linguistic coding, they must choose between supporting the collective voice and joining the masses, or conforming to the dehumanizing objectivity inherent in a position at the bottom of the food chain. Thus, Shanghai is the site where the characters experience some sort of realization or epiphany. In *Stage Sisters* too, it is in Shanghai that Chunhua realizes there is another way, that one does not have to be “used by the enemy,” to put it in Xie Jin’s phrasing at the time. Ultimately, the setting is as critical to the narrative as the character’s responses to the choices available to them.

Observing character response in these terms, one recalls that directors of the 1930s so-called leftwing film tradition in Shanghai intended to craft film narratives that “exposed the darkness” of society, including the evils of feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism. These three negative aspects of Nationalist rule are evident in *Stage Sisters*. Chunhua and Yuehong resist the sexual advances of a landlord and his cronies after they perform in a rural town. They encounter the luxurious consumer products and lifestyle of the city, which temporarily blinds Yuehong to class-consciousness. And, the malevolent manager of the theater in Shanghai is linked to an international imperialist trade system that sucks dry the life of the city, in both financial and moral terms. In fact, he flees to Taiwan once Shanghai is liberated by the Communists. Since he is a character who responds to his environment with an incorrect worldview, he is doomed to fail. In contrast, the heroine Chunhua is a victim of adverse circumstances at the beginning of the narrative, but due to her
honesty and resilience she succeeds against the odds by the conclusion. More interesting however, is the temporal space of the pre-1949 era that is the location where she enters into her critical moments of moral ambiguity. Within this uncertain time and space Chunhua has a genuine opportunity to choose between capitalism and communism. But the state rejected Xie Jin’s portrayal of the full array of options available in pre-liberation Shanghai.

**Act 2: Different Backdrop, Same Story**

While China in the early to mid-1960s was striving towards economic recovery, Taiwan was building on the foundation of its robust agricultural sector and entering a new phase of industry. In fact, due to successful land reforms that ended “feudal” landownership practices, Taiwan’s caloric consumption was second in Asia only to Japan by the 1960s. Taiwan had been a poor nation in the 1950s, because the Nationalists had stifled economic growth and removed the infrastructure the Japanese had put in place from 1895 to 1945. But after land reforms and the receipt of over 100 million dollars in aid from the United States from 1951 to 1964, a sense of economic hopefulness permeated society.81 This confidence was expressed in state newspapers which published grand financial forecasts and advertisements for locally produced consumer electronics that were unavailable in mainland China.82

While Taiwan’s populace was optimistic about economic developments -- more foreign capital was pouring in than ever before, and the export market was expanding -- it was pessimistic about the state of political rights and free speech. The ideological straightjacket imposed on artistic and political expression stemmed from
the loss of the mainland when the Nationalists retreated to Taiwan in 1949. National Assembly members in Taiwan, including all of the Legislative and Control Yuan, were originally from China. This created friction with the local Taiwanese, who were managed yet again by another foreign colonizing government. Most of the population had never been to China, and while politically many of them were neither communist nor anti-communist, they resented the Nationalists. In order to maintain control, the central government massacred dissidents after a riot in 1947, initiated martial law in 1949 (which remained in effect until 1987), and instituted a reign of “white terror.” Meanwhile, the Nationalist’s plan to return to the mainland was becoming improbable. Even Chiang Kai-shek admitted in 1959 that returning to the mainland was “70 percent” a political goal. This reality had a severe impact at both the macro- and micro-levels of society, because the significance of what it meant to be a citizen of China was confused in this environment. In such a milieu, artists could not express anything that directly criticized a sensitive government.

It is within these circumstances that Li Xing directed the 1965 film *Four Loves* (Wanjun biaomei), a romance film made to be screened on the open market in competition with Hollywood imports. *Four Loves* is notable because it was the first adaptation of a novel by Qiong Yao, a popular novelist known for her sentimental stories. Although the film was escapist, it conformed to the political situation by supporting Nationalist authority in surprisingly overt ways.

*Four Loves*, like *Stage Sisters*, features a female protagonist who searches to find her place within a larger group identity. In this case, the variables include a story set in the early Republican era on the mainland, and a young female protagonist, an
orphan, who moves in with the family of a wealthy landowner. The nine year-old Wanjun quickly becomes part of her adopted family in which she refers to the three sons as cousins. The family patriarch intends for Wanjun to marry the oldest son when she turns eighteen, but that does not stop the younger brothers from vying for Wanjun’s attention. The oldest is a thin intellectual who likes poetry and is prone to illness, the second is an athletic and ambitious man with a passionate political adherence to the political thought of Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan), and the third brother is rambunctious and naïve.

Since Wanjun claims to love each brother equally, she can not commit to any of them. Thus the prolonged sadomasochistic segment of the film begins. Wanjun sets the masochistic program by not entrusting herself to any suitor. The brothers then, each in turn, sadistically berate Wanjun for not choosing a life-long partner from among them. They plead with her, shout at her, and even steal gifts that they had given to her as children. Wanjun mourns, sleeps restlessly, and nearly commits suicide in response. The viewer’s interest derives from watching each character give and take abuse. Furthering the misery of Wanjun, one by one the brothers leave for Shanghai, the site of their father’s business, a nationalist military academy, and a modern university. The film closes with the arrival of a letter from the brothers. Wanjun discovers that the brothers are thriving in Shanghai. The oldest brother is enrolled at a university, and the two younger brothers are cadets in the nationalist military academy. As the curtains close, the audience discovers that it is the middle brother who has won Wanjun’s heart.
*Four Loves* is comprised of interior and exterior shots of an affluent residence: a living room decorated with teakwood patterns, bedrooms with ornamental bed frames, and a courtyard with a landscaped goldfish pond and a white bridge with red handrails. Each of these shots portrays a glorious excess of consumer goods, such as traditional Chinese wear made with fine silk and a handheld camera that the brothers use to photograph Wanjun. It evokes the kind of idyllic materialism that was being promoted in Taiwan at the time, perhaps sowing the seeds of the hyper-consumerism of Taiwan today. While exterior shots are not the norm, the characters within interior spaces often discuss the world around them. For example, the aunt mentions that it is dangerous to be a traveling businessperson in a time of social instability, and the uncle struggles to accept Sun Zhongshan’s revolutionary thought. The most memorable shots away from the house show the middle brother attending after-school meetings with Instructor Huang who preaches Sun’s ideology. Set on a mountainside that overlooks a river delta and the sea, Huang tells his students that they should be concerned about the future of the nation. Here the stage is Taiwan, because Taiwan is where the filming took place, but in reality Taiwan’s landscape stands in for the mainland. Taiwan becomes China within, or perhaps only through, this fiction.

As for the world of Shanghai, while it is never directly shown in the film, it is by no means described as a terrible place, but rather as the natural site of a bustling commerce, and a place where true revolutionaries might taste and touch China’s future. The film thus looks back and envisions an ideal Shanghai, one that the Nationalists imagined that they had fostered and ruled over. Accordingly, each setting (the traditional house, the mountain vista, and the world of Shanghai) is
imbued with a positive view of what China once was under the old patriarchal
Confucian system and the need to move in the future to a prosperous international
market system managed by the Nationalist government.

The characters, political agenda, and affect of *Four Loves* flows seamlessly
out of the Shanghai tradition of films before 1949. It is easy to imagine the
disapproval this film would have garnered from leftist critics in Shanghai in the 1930s
owing to the absence of a “correct” portrayal of feudalism, but one can also imagine
its popularity had it been released at that time. Each character conforms to a standard
melodramatic type. The characters within *Four Loves*, as in *Stage Sisters*, resemble
the familiar models that had been popular in the films of the 1930s and 1940s. For
example: a female protagonist who is a victim of society, a family that struggles to
adapt to the changes of modernity, an instructor who teaches the correct ideology, and
a villain who causes the masses to suffer. With these stock characters, combined with
the standard juxtaposition of revolution and “realistic” continuity editing in the style
of the classical Hollywood tradition that maintains the illusion of chronometric time,
*Four Loves* would certainly have been intelligible to those on both sides of the strait
familiar with the dominant literary and visual art traditions. Even the conclusion is
conventional. The protagonist in *Four Loves* learns that the Nationalists possess the
correct ideology. Those who fail to accept this ideal, like the prison warden who jails
Instructor Huang for spreading revolutionary ideas, are doomed to fail, just as such
characters would have in the films of the past. It is the same old setting and character
types, positioned in a new Cold War landscape.
A key similarity between Xie Jin’s *Stage Sisters* and Li Xing’s *Four Loves* is that the narrative thrust of each story is connected by conflicts involving family membership which could function just as effectively with alternative political backdrops or agendas. For example, if Chunhua in *Stage Sisters* had joined a Nationalist drama troupe in Shanghai, the plot would still function in terms of Chunhua’s desire to be on good terms with her sister. And had Wanjun’s lovers in *Four Loves* gone to Shanghai to join the Communist underground, Wanjun would still have reveled in her emotional torment. The representation of a pre-1949 setting in both films is central to this assessment because both directors realized that it was a time when the correct political choice was not pre-established. It held the promise of story, of unpredictability.

This historical connection to pre-1949 Shanghai in post-1949 Chinese language films does not need to be imposed retrospectively upon these rich filmic objects in order to prove a point. Rather, it emerges from the constituent parts of the films themselves. The role of the pre-1949 environment in general and the Shanghai setting in particular was essential. Neither film would hold together without this setting for character dilemma, ambiguity, and conversion. Thus, the single most important link between both directors is the influence of Shanghai and its film tradition of the 1930s and 1940s, creating the roots of a common cinematic language that flourished in both places after 1949 despite the unique parameters inherent to the film worlds in each nation after the Communist victory in the civil war. This seemingly counterintuitive observation, exemplified by additional surprising connections in the distinctive articulation of realist modes by Xie Jin and Li Xing in
the 1960s, shows that conceptions of film as a universal language, or conversely as
the expression of a specific national film tradition, do not entirely account for the
similarities of these two Mandarin-language filmmakers. In order to trace these
connections further, a discussion of two more films will take into account the
biographies of Li Xing and Xie Jin and their film creations as they intersect with
Shanghai.

Act 3: Separated Neighbors

In the 1930s and 1940s, Shanghai was a hub of international business divided
into three zones: the Chinese Municipality, International Settlement, and French
Concession. Film in Shanghai was a significant social institution, a key location of
culture and sophisticated entertainment, for Shanghai and its nearly three million
people. Each studio had its own magazine or film yearbook, and most newspapers
contained movie columns. Large crowds went to art deco theatres where heroes
survived natural and national calamities, and where long-suffering heroines overcame
impossible odds.

It was in this city that Li Xing was born in 1930. A year after his birth the
Japanese bombed the city, and before the infrastructure was able to reach full
recovery the city was again the site of war when it was occupied by the Japanese from
1937 to 1945. After the Second Sino-Japanese War, China was involved in a civil
war that affected politics at the local level. In this period, from approximately 1946 to
1949, many film personalities who had been displaced around China and in Hong
Kong returned to Shanghai in order to create a new post-war era of Shanghai film.
Notable films included *Spring River Flows East* (*Yijiang chun shui xiang dong liu*, Cai Chusheng and Zheng Junli, 1947), Fei Mu’s *Spring in a Small Town* (*Xiaocheng zhi chun*, 1948), and *Crows and Sparrows* (*Wuya yu maque*, Zheng Junli, 1949). It was during this time that Li was indelibly influenced by the Shanghai film tradition. Li Xing specifically recalls the influence of Fei Mu later in his career.\(^8\) Li Xing entered university in order to study drama, but he did not complete this pursuit because of his move to Taiwan in 1949.

Li Xing fled to Taiwan with his mother and father, two older brothers, and one younger brother. In Taiwan, drama was not offered as a program at any of the universities, so after transferring to Normal University, Li Xing decided to study in the Education Department. Even during this time, he remained passionate about drama, participating in extracurricular drama groups and performances, and he often discussed drama and the arts with his friends. After graduating, Li Xing taught at a school attached to Normal University. Later he fulfilled his obligation to serve in the military, and then wrote a column on culture and the arts as a journalist. In 1956 he entered the film world as an actor, assistant director, and director. He was involved in thirteen Taiwanese-language films before his first production in Mandarin.

The Nationalist government’s cultural production in Taiwan during the 1950s was predominately of the so-called *fangong wenxue* (anti-communist literature) variety. According to Wai-lim Yip, a prominent poet in Taiwan whose path from China to Taiwan took an detour through Hong Kong, this type of cultural product did not meet the emotional needs of the *waishengren*, because they were dealing psychologically with both a physical and emotional separation from their homeland.\(^8\)
It appeared that fate was out of their hands, to be determined by forces from abroad. Indeed, the U.S. Seventh fleet arrived in the Taiwan Strait to provide security for Taiwan at the outbreak of the Korean War. This heightened the metaphysical feeling of entrapment and amplified anxiety about the future. Poets such as Yip, many of them in the military, brought the aesthetic language of the 1930s and 1940s with them to Taiwan and used this language to describe their milieu in a meaningful way.90 They also relied on their recollections of the art world in China, as none of the local libraries in Taiwan contained books from 1940s Shanghai due to the government’s fear that the texts might include subversive content.

While the *waisheng* poets were introspectively reflecting on the scattering of families across China during the 1940s and the related sentiments of isolation and frustration, the film industry was sculpting a different sort of reality. Taiwan film historian Lu Feiyi asserts that, unlike the work of poets and dramatists, narrative movies of the time were romantic and non-confrontational, and worked in accordance with the government’s policy of *wenhuafuxing yundong* (cultural restoration).91 Specifically, state films released in Taiwan were promulgating state policy through didactic films in Mandarin, while private studios were producing escapist operas or comedies in Taiwanese.92 At first the government did not produce films for mass consumption on a regular basis. After all, it was difficult to get the production system moving, because many artists and technicians remained on the mainland. This stalled the Mandarin-language film industry on many levels, from screenwriting and acting in the studios to fundraising and investment.
Since the Nationalist government intended to return to China soon, it initially dealt with more pressing matters than developing new artistic perspectives. Thus, both state and private films in Taiwan resonated with the old Shanghai realist tradition. On screen this generally meant the presentation of authentic location and costume details, the replication of reality as it is commonly perceived by placing the camera at eye-level, and the spare use of editing tricks or special effects. The local industry did not possess the financial resources, technology, or personnel to make anything else. Color films were too expensive and difficult to produce. Avant-garde techniques, such as surrealistic or unconscious elements, spontaneity, and unconventional narrative structures were absent. And as in China, there was limited use of filters, double-exposure, fish-eye lens, or any radical collision of images.

Li Xing is an intriguing figure because he was aware of both “progressive” theatre circles and the film industry. In order to merge the two perspectives in the conservative medium of film, his conclusion was that he should find a way to ease the separation anxiety that many shared after moving from the mainland. In this way he could wrap a relevant social issue in the trappings of a popular consumer product. His most famous film of the 1950s fits this criterion. It was a Taiwanese language comedy entitled *Brothers Wang and Liu Tour Taiwan* (Wangge liuge you Taiwan, 1958), a kind of Laurel and Hardy caricature preceded in Shanghai films of the 1930s. *Brothers Wang* was produced by Tailian, a local Taiwanese studio that Li Xing made successful almost single handedly. The film portrays the brothers as they discover the scenic sites of Taiwan in a time when travel was difficult and expensive. Building on
the success of the initial installment, Li Xing went on to make five sequels. Then, in 1962, Li Xing established his own film studio with financial support from his parents.

The first film Li Xing both directed and produced in his studio was *Our Neighbors*, released in 1963. This black and white melodrama, set in an inner city slum, is divided into three acts. Act one introduces characters who live in make-shift housing units in the back alleys of the city: a drunkard, a shopkeeper, an intellectual, two working men who live together, a mother and her elementary-school daughter Pearl, a grandmother who moved from China with her teenage grandson, and a prostitute and her drug-dealing pimp. They dwell in crowded urban quarters, just like the graduates in *Crossroads* (Shizi jietou, Shen Xiling, 1937) who live in alley houses in Shanghai in which simple wood partitions covered in newspaper, serving as both wallpaper and insulation, divided multiple families in close vicinity. Each individual in *Our Neighbors* is charming, and possesses his or her own redeeming qualities, with the exception of the drug dealer. While each character is embroiled in some sort of minor conflict that is adequately resolved by the end of the narrative, the basic story traces the life of young Pearl after the death of her mother. Act two depicts a series of dilemmas that one of the workers in the community, Fat Uncle Shi, encounters as he raises young Pearl. He struggles to earn enough money for both himself and his new daughter. Then he finds himself tempted to earn money illegally by making a delivery for the drug dealer in his neighborhood. Uncle Shi initially resists the efforts of the attractive teacher who tries to persuade him to let Pearl go to school instead of working on the street. But by the end of the third and final act, Fat Uncle Shi learns
how to balance his many responsibilities, and young Pearl finds contentment both as an adopted daughter and as a student at the state school.

In many ways, the sugar-coated film does a fine job at maximizing the impact of visual images rather than relying on conversations to convey character emotion. For example, in one scene the drug dealer visits the grandmother’s flat in order to trick her out of the money she has saved for her funeral. When he enters the grandmother’s room, she is saying her prayers with her Buddhist prayer beads. While the contrast between the dishonest intentions of the drug dealer and religious virtue is a bit heavy-handed, the potential for the filmic medium in terms of space, time, image, and dialogue is maximized here. Yet, when the film attempts to express political dogma, it reverts from its overall program of showing instead of telling, and resorts to addressing the audience directly, essentially commanding it to accept the intended message of the film.

For instance, act one in Our Neighbors begins with the following textual preface while establishing shots depict urban slums in Taiwan:

This story takes place in a corner of the city. The people who live here are without hatred. There is only love. The love between mother and daughter, between compatriots, and of a small orphaned girl, and the moving fraternal love of the poor masses. Only a society infused with the spirit of love can move forward in the right direction and can hope for a beautiful future.

These words, printed on the screen, are interjected from an omniscient, third-person perspective. In general, the text reveals the influence of traditional Confucian values that imbue Li Xing’s work, ideas that were permissible in Taiwan cinema but banned in China after 1949. It is clear that the narrator is suggesting that if the characters in
the film are obedient, forthright, and virtuous, then all of their problems will be resolved satisfactorily.

After the first act, the audience learns about the types of problems that the characters face and what they want for their “beautiful future.” At this juncture, the omniscient, third-person narrator perspective is articulated through the grandmother. One evening when the characters sit together in a circle in the alley to discuss life and family matters, the grandmother’s son says: “Grandma, the paper says that tomorrow the first batch of refugees will be coming from Hong Kong to Taiwan.” The grandmother says that they will go and greet the refugees. The camera then pans right to left in order to settle on a close-up of the grandmother’s face. “I hope your father will be there,” she continues: “If he’s not maybe we’ll run into some others who escaped from the home town. We can ask them about the situation there.” Then she starts crying: “Ah, the poor people of mainland China are oppressed unbearably these days.” Then the grandson interrupts, “Grandma, they will surely rebel,” and then another neighbor chimes in, “And when that happens, we can all return home.” The grandmother concludes: “Yes, when that happens we can all return home.”

The third key moment during which the film addresses the audience directly occurs during another communal gathering in the ghetto. Fat Uncle Shi asks his neighbors whether or not he should perform a one-time drug delivery so that he can earn extra money to help raise young Pearl. A skeptical viewer might think that the grandmother is actually a government spy sent to the inner city slum to bolster state policy. She says to Fat Uncle Shi:
There is nothing wrong with poverty. Be careful. Petty greed brings lots of trouble on your shoulders. If you’re going to be poor, be poor with integrity. Remember what I said. In Taiwan these days, everyone should be lawful and know their place, only then will we ever be able to return home. If we all engage in slimy activities like [drug dealing], we’re all finished!

The logic is that if one is virtuous, then one will be able to return to China. However, the film does not explain how Confucian tradition will enable a return to China. But what is more pertinent, in terms of the argument in this chapter, is that the grandmother’s staging and technique of addressing the audience directly has clear antecedents in the film tradition of Shanghai before 1949. The following section analyzes this method, and observes how Xie Jin employed it as well.

**Act 4: Audience Address**

Xie Jin was born in 1923 in Zhejiang and was in elementary school when the Japanese invaded Shanghai in 1931. As a child he attended the cinema regularly with his mother, watching films like *Fishermen’s Song*, *Crossroads*, and *Street Angel* (Malu tianshi, Yuan Muzhi, 1937). In an interview in 1989, Xie Jin stated: “Cai Chusheng, Sun Yu, and Shen Xiling all became my favorite directors.” He also watched a lot of Hollywood films. Between 1931 and the time he entered college, China was at war with Japan. This is important to keep in mind because the fact that Li Xing and Xie Jin shared the Shanghai tradition before 1949 is not to say that the past was an idyllic setting or that they nostalgically longed for a return. It was a time of turmoil and change.
Xie Jin moved with his family between Hong Kong and Shanghai during those turbulent years before he attended college. He received his education in drama at the Sichuan Jiang’an National Theater Academy and the Nanjing National Drama Institute, with famous instructors including Hong Shen and Cao Yu. It is interesting to compare the work of Xie Jin with Li Xing in light of this because both directors used dramatic staging techniques, as if their actors and actresses worked under a proscenium arch rather than within the frame of film. In 1948 Xie Jin was invited by Wu Renzhi, one of Xie Jin’s previous instructors, to make the transition from stage drama to film at the Datong Film Studio in Shanghai. As an assistant director, he learned how to make films in a studio that released an original motion picture every two to three months. After liberation, Xie Jin stayed in Shanghai. He recollects today: “My teachers all stayed behind to build New China, and I decided not to go abroad” even though many people had encouraged him to live in Hong Kong. In 1950, he attended a university in Huabei for eight months to study Marxist philosophy and communist art techniques, although he did not join the communist party.

Thematically, post-1949 socialist films in China differ from those in Taiwan in that they depicted the proletariat and the transformation of citizens into revolutionaries. Typically, these films represented the lives of archetypal peasants, workers, and soldiers. An exception to this trend is evident in Xie Jin’s film *Woman Basketball Player Number Five* (Nülan wuhao). It is useful to compare this work with Li Xing’s *Our Neighbors* because Xie Jin made his film in a moment when intellectuals in China were permitted free expression. It was during the Hundred Flowers movement of early 1957, when Mao Zedong seemed to be asking
intellectuals to voice criticism of the present state of affairs in order to shake up the bureaucracy, that Xie Jin took the opportunity to write this film about athletes. By this point, Xie Jin already had three years of directing experience under his belt. And he had good reason to believe that his film would be widely successful. The future looked bright, and the anxiety inherent in the Taiwan experience was not an issue. Xie Jin has stated in a recent interview: “During the 1950s, we were actually better off than the Nationalist-ruled Taiwan -- it was only later that things took a turn for the worse.”

Although *Woman Basketball Player* was altered and Xie Jin’s original intentions were revised, the film still bore the director’s distinctive stamp when it was released after the Anti-Rightist Campaign.

The opening image of *Woman Basketball Player* is a silhouette of Shanghai’s skyline. The contour of the buildings constitutes the foreground, while an orange and red sunset blazes along the horizon. This image remains freeze-framed while the title and credits roll in a white font. The next shot, the first image of the narrative, is an establishing shot of the Bund, brightly lit on a summer morning. It is a new day. The atmosphere of the shot, however brief, reminds the audience that the sun has set on the dark days before liberation. Indeed, the environment could not be any more optimistic. The beautiful and happy members of the women’s basketball team laugh and sing together when they are not playing on the court in their impressive athletic complex, coaches who have not seen each other in a long time remark that the other has put on weight since they were last together, and families living in Shanghai’s urban center appear affluent and successful.
Woman Basketball Player contains political messages as explicit as Li Xing’s Our Neighbors, and Xie Jin uses a similar method to convey the state’s ideas. Namely, the main character learns to welcome the intervention of state policy in private affairs, while a secondary character explains the state policy directly to the audience. For example, the main character in Li Xing’s Our Neighbors is young Pearl who loses her mother, but the perspective of the state is voiced by the grandmother. In the same way, the main character in Woman Basketball Player is Xiaolin, a basketball player on the Shanghai women’s city team. And like the main character in Our Neighbors, she learns the value of state guidelines for society, but she is not the voice of state policy. In Woman Basketball Player, the voice of the state is presented by Coach Tiao, played by Liu Qiong, a famous actor during the Japanese occupation.

Throughout the simplistic “athlete drama” narrative, Xiaolin learns that she needs to realize her full potential so that she can bring honor to China in international basketball competitions. In contrast, Coach Tiao’s story is more compelling and dynamic. Visually presented in a series of flashbacks, Coach Tiao recalls the time when he played as a member of a Chinese team against a United States Navy team in Shanghai before 1949. He recollects that at halftime his manager demanded that the Chinese team fix the game so that the manager could make some money. But instead of losing, Tiao disregarded his manager’s request and won the game with a last second shot. Afterwards, a band of street thugs sent by the mob beat him severely for not losing the game.

Taken allegorically, the film suggests that the Chinese nation as a whole was capable of standing on its own before liberation, but was sold to foreigners and thus
forced to be weak by its own Chinese leadership who sought financial rewards. The function of the flashbacks within the narrative structure is to represent an old, yet familiar, Shanghai setting in which Xie Jin can explore human nature at its worst. Thus, cinematically attention-grabbing moments of extreme corruption and depravity are depicted at a time (1957) when such conditions had been allegedly eradicated by the state. So, just as the wealth of Shanghai is presented as an enchanting temptation to Yuehong in *Stage Sisters*, or as the most interesting moments in 1930s “leftist” films such as *New Women* (*Xin Nüxing*, Cai Chusheng, 1934) are those that portray the dance-hall culture that the film purports to denounce, the most intriguing segments in Xie Jin’s films occur before the protagonist realizes that Communism solves all problems.

Since Coach Tiao experienced life in Shanghai both before and after 1949, he possesses a certain authority which he uses at key junctures to persuade other characters. When Coach Tiao is introduced to the women’s team early in the film, he is wearing an army shirt from the Southwest Military Region (*Xinan junqu*). This provides him with additional integrity. The coach makes his first significant speech in the film after the team loses a game against their local rivals. Xiaolin is singled out in the coach’s diatribe because she was late to the game. Coach Tiao says that athletes must always be prepared to strengthen their team, just as all soldiers were ready to support the Communist cause during the civil war. Then he adds: “Your generation is different because happiness is around you every minute. But some of you do not realize how precious this moment is, and sometimes you do not value what the nation
gives to athletes today." His intention is to startle his young basketball players into action so that they will strive harder in the next game.

Coach Tiao’s next monologue is directed toward Xiaolin’s boyfriend, Taokai. Taokai, the film’s representative intellectual, implores Xiaolin to take the university entrance exams instead of playing basketball so that she can serve socialism as an engineer. He says that Xiaolin is wasting her time playing sports. This sends Coach Tiao into a rage. He tells the intellectual that if foreigners sneered at the quality of China’s engineers, then Taokai would be just as humiliated as Coach Tiao is when China’s flag is not raised above the podium at a sports competitions. Coach Tiao says:

If we had our flag raised and our anthem played, all of the people from other countries would have to stand up and take their hats off under our flag even if they opposed us. They would have to consider that what is before them is a strong country with a population of 600 million people. Yet some people think that this is meaningless work and has nothing to do with socialism.

The content of the speeches of Coach Tiao in Woman Basketball Player and the grandmother in Our Neighbors are no doubt different. One encourages his team to seize the day, while the other hopes her neighbors will live righteously until they return home. But the method of delivery is the same. The narrative flow of the stories of the basketball player number five and young Pearl is entirely interrupted when the grandmother or Coach Tiao speaks. This is clearly evident for two reasons. First, the speeches are incongruent on rhetorical terms with the topics that the speeches are intended to address. When Fat Uncle Shi asks his neighbors for advice about making money on the side, he gets an earful about returning to the mainland. And when Xiaolin is late to a basketball game, she hears about civil war, honor, and
political values. Second, both Coach Tiao and the grandmother look directly at the
camera, and thus address the audience rather than the characters in the film, when
they give their speeches. This brings to mind discussions of “suture” in film studies.
The idea is that audiences of film enjoy the experience of believing that the fantasy on
screen is actually occurring in reality. People take pleasure in misrecognition when
they watch a movie. But when a character addresses the camera directly, as Coach
Tiao and the grandmother do, it breaks the illusion. Reality appears on the screen
instead of diversion. Certainly, the suture is broken when the coach and the
grandmother speak. This functions within the structure of the films as an overt
propaganda technique.

What is more, while this technique did not originate in Shanghai, it has a
particular lineage in the films of Shanghai in the 1930s and 1940s. Perhaps most
pertinent is the last image of the film Small Toys (Xiao Wanyi, Sun Yu, 1933). In this
scene, a long-suffering and partially-insane village woman named Ye hears fireworks
in downtown Shanghai, but she mistakes the sound for the bombs of attacking
Japanese forces. At first she screams. Nearby crowds hear her cry and run for shelter.
But, after realizing that Ye is wild with passion, the crowds re-emerge from under
tables and stairwells to listen to Ye, moved by her ardent shouts that China must resist
imperialism. Ye inspires those who agree with her to join her in clapping their hands,
and one by one, each class represented -- from the poor street hawker to the middle
class couple to the wealthy party-going elites -- all join her in clapping their hands. In
the film’s final image, Ye addresses the camera directly and challenges the audience
to act: “Resist!” Small Toys is one of many films of the era to replicate this strategy in order to express extra-narrative political ideology.

The content and delivery of Coach Tiao’s and the grandmother’s messages becomes even more interesting when one considers that both Xie Jin and Li Xing lived in Shanghai before 1949 and that they were intimately familiar with the local film tradition. This being the case, the voice of the characters in their films is linked to the director’s voices and experiences. The result is that both directors convey their notions of pre-1949 life on the screen, bringing their memories and old film presentations of the past, whether through flashbacks or stories, into the present moment of their films. Since these cinematic strategies and choices carried political connotations, the next two films by Xie Jin and Li Xing that will be compared demonstrate the implications of articulating Shanghai’s critical realist (pipan xianshizhuyì) tradition in service of different national projects in the mid-1960s.

**Act 5: Seeing Red**

The connection between the state and the Shanghai film industry began well before the civil war. As early as 1930, the Nationalist government sought to control cinema in Shanghai, much as it tried to manage many aspects of popular culture, from fortune tellers on the street to neighborhood gossip in the home. One of its steps was to ban wuxia shenguai pian (martial arts-magic spirit pictures) which had been popular in the 1920s. Government policy held that these types of films, in both form and content, did not serve the interests of citizens in a modernizing state. By contrast, the Nationalists approved of films in the realist tradition, especially when
they presented patriotic, anti-imperialist depictions that served the state’s interests. The state believed that objective depictions of people employed in typical occupations and functioning in everyday social environments had greater cultural value than fantasy or Hollywood genre films.\textsuperscript{104} The endorsement of realist techniques was consistent with the nationalist government’s stance in the world of visual arts, in which realist paintings were advocated for the modern project, while unconventional modernist techniques were discouraged.\textsuperscript{105}

However, the realist mode as an “objective” depiction of reality was of course a construct that could be used to either support or criticize the government.\textsuperscript{106} By using scissors in the editing room, film censors attempted to curtail the impact of the critical realist films when they “exposed the darkness” of society in projections of class struggle or critiques of culture under the Nationalists. When the Nationalists moved to Taiwan, they brought with them their censorship policies and the recollection of their experiences. Du Yunzhi’s history of Taiwan cinema contains an interesting story about a man named Wan Dechuan, a carpenter who worked as a spy for the government in Shanghai’s film industry in the 1930s and 1940s. Wan was hired by the Lianhua film studio in Shanghai to build film sets, but he simultaneously provided the government with an insider’s perspective of the industry. After the civil war, he migrated to Taiwan where he worked for Taiwan Film Studios.\textsuperscript{107} While efforts such as those by Wan Dechuan were only marginally successful in blocking leftist cultural production, his story demonstrates another link between the Nationalist film industry in Taiwan and its origins in Shanghai.

The extent to which the Nationalists managed cinema in the 1930s and 1940s
and the degree to which leftist intellectuals influenced the film industry have been
debated for some time. In a recent book, historian Li Daoxin in many ways removes
the state initiative from the equation when he argues that it was the leftist intellectuals
and directors who recognized that the surfeit of wuxia shenguai pian was
inappropriate for the political climate of China in the 1930s. Li includes an
extraordinary quotation by Zheng Zhengqiu, “the most prestigious Chinese filmmaker
in the early 1930s.” In Zheng’s 1933 article, “How I Came to a New Path,” he
declared that: “one could look at the problems of the nation as a collapsing wall, or
one could make a stand and resist.” Zheng then employed the binary image of two
roads: one leading to enlightenment, the other to death. To Zheng, the way to resist
was to make political films containing anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-feudal
themes, instead of escapist films.

Regardless, the bottom line is that it was a similar style, realism, that the
Nationalists advocated and the “progressive” film directors used. Many famous
directors familiar with the realist mode before 1949 stayed in China to help build the
new society, and they were rewarded for their loyalty to the Communist party with
public and state positions of power. Xia Yan, for example, was appointed Vice
Minister of Culture (which was in charge of film) from 1954 to 1965, while directors
such as Cai Chusheng continued to contribute to the art scene by writing consistently
for Film Art (Dianying yishu) magazine. Other veterans active in the 1950s film
industry included Zhu Shilin, Sun Yu, Lai Chensheng, Situ Huimin, Shen Fu, and
Zheng Junli.

But in China’s highly politicized culture, the Communist state soon became
wary of the pre-1949 critical realist tendency to depict the socially disenfranchised in melodramatic storylines. So it is no wonder that Soviet realism was imposed in narrative films after 1949, because this film method teleologically anticipates the triumph of communism. The government was not necessarily concerned about realistic representations “characterized by internal coherence, plausible causality, and psychological plausibility.” After all, in the “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art,” Mao stated: “Marxism-Leninism can include but not replace realism in literary and artistic creation.” But the government was concerned about the inclination of Shanghai’s critical realist film tradition when it critiqued culture. Since Xie Jin was familiar with the pre- and post-1949 use of the realist tradition in China, it is fitting to turn to his 1961 film *Red Detachment of Women* (Hongse niangzijun) because it reveals how the critical realist tradition was interpreted under the auspices of the communist government.

The story of *Red Detachment* takes place in Hainan during the 1930s. The protagonist, Qionghua, is a servant in the household of a ruthless landowner named Nan Batian. Like the flashback sequences in *Woman Basketball Player*, the depictions of life before liberation in *Red Detachment* are hellish. Qionghua suffers brutal beatings and is caged in a cell waist-deep in water in the basement of Nan Batian’s ornate estate. Fortunately Changqing, the leader of a woman’s detachment of revolutionary soldiers, rescues Qionghua. In the end, Qionghua joins the soldiers and overthrows Nan Batian and his cronies.

The script for *Red Detachment* was written by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) branch of the film industry in 1959. But the script was deemed too violent by
the PLA, so it was sent to other studios for production, whereupon it fell into Xie Jin’s
hands. Artists and politicos at the time claimed that brutal, violent depictions of
revolution on the big screen might dissuade viewers from becoming revolutionaries.
The problem was that oversimplified representations of revolution were unrealistic
and therefore unconvincing. Xie Jin addressed this issue in a People’s Daily article he
 penned in 1961. His article dealt with how real his realist depictions of revolution
could be. He was concerned that audience response is ultimately uncontrollable,
regardless of how one chooses to portray violence on screen. In addition, he claimed
that the audience did not want to see a protagonist who shoulders the burden of
Communism, but rather preferred a provocative struggle that takes into account all
that revolution encompasses in terms of responsibility and flat-out messiness.

In his newspaper article, Xie Jin specifically addressed the scene in which
Qionghua attempts to join the military. At this moment in the story, Qionghua
unbuttons her collar to reveal scars inflicted by Nan Batian in order to persuade the
senior officers that she is worthy of joining their struggle. The scars speak louder
than words, for a victim of feudalism would probably be devoted to destroying the old
society. Xie Jin intended the visual image of the wound to speak for itself. But in
order to avoid any ambiguity, the state required Xie Jin to include Qionghua’s
redundant oral explanation of how she received the scars, and why it was important
for her to exact righteous revenge. From the state’s perspective, the scars could not be
open to interpretation, so the visual image had to be accompanied by a verbal
explanation so that the audience would know what it was supposed to think. It is no
wonder that the state wanted to intervene in this way, considering that the catastrophic
Great Leap was coming to a close in 1961. In short, there were plenty of contemporary scars to represent. It had to be absolutely certain that this was a blemish of the past, not one that the current regime could have inflicted.

In 1962, *Popular Cinema* magazine initiated the reader-voted “Hundred Flowers Film Awards.” *Red Detachment* and its depiction of the pre-1949 era won the awards for best picture, best director, best actress, and best supporting actor. In the following year the China Film Archive organized a retrospective of Chinese films of the 1930s. Yet the moment when films from or about the past could be shown passed quickly. In fact, during the festival of Beijing Opera in the summer of 1964, two films were denounced because they did not sufficiently present revolutionary examples, the same fate that awaited *Stage Sisters*. During this festival, one speaker stated: “Ours is a socialist society and each element of the superstructure must serve the socialist economic base.” One way of advancing this project, advocated by “Shanghai propagandists” Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan, was to write only about the years after liberation. This shift from debates about replicating reality in an authentic way to an advocacy of politics is apparent in *Film Art* magazine. In 1963, nearly half of the articles were political in nature, and the other half aesthetic, dealing with film structure, form, and content. But by early 1966, before the Cultural Revolution began, all of the articles on film were related to politics.

Thus, attempts at realistic depictions, such as those in *Red Detachment of Women*, became unacceptable by the time *Stage Sisters* was released. *Stage Sisters* failed the political expectations of its era on all counts. In 1964 Xie Jin wrote an article to defend the ways in which *Stage Sisters* treated the pre-1949 era. He stated:
“The film denounces the old society so that audiences can treasure the present moment even more.”

Still, the film was not released to the public at large for another fifteen years. Cultural Revolution criticism of *Stage Sisters* burst on the scene in May 1966. Many articles in the *People’s Daily* condemned the film because of its sympathetic portrayals of the bourgeois and its incongruence with Mao’s expectations for art. Specifically, Xie Jin was accused of employing the critical realism tradition of the 1930s rather than using the state-approved idealistic methods of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism.

An illustration of Xie Jin’s outlook toward the state’s involvement in the film industry can be found in *Stage Sisters*. During the portrayal of life under Nationalist rule, Chunhua is a progressive activist when she performs in underground drama performances, but after liberation she is co-opted into a state drama troupe. In this depiction, after 1949 the advocates of a “leftist” perspective transferred from intellectuals and artists to the communist state. The film presents this transference as a positive, but the reality was otherwise. Xie Jin notes how leftist politicians muddled his mid-1960s work in an interview in 2005: “Seen today, the first half of the *Red Detachment* is still very good, but the second half is not as strong because of the leftist criticisms that led to a lot of cuts and altered the story line.”

This statement is consistent with his critique of *Stage Sisters* in 1989: “The second part seems weak to me. I couldn't finish it the way I would have liked. If I could redo the second part now, it would improve the entire film.”

Tellingly, the second half of both films occurs after Xie Jin’s protagonists encounter Communist ideals. By the mid-1960s, it had become impossible to depict society with outdated techniques.
Act 6: Beautiful Domestication

Xie Jin’s stage brother in Taiwan had a different fate. Li Xing’s film *Our Neighbors*, made in the tradition of *Crossroads* and other Shanghai films, was extremely successful at the box office. Aesthetically, the style of the film was appealing to both *benshengren*, the local people of Taiwan, and *waishengren* audiences who recognized that the film looked like other realist melodramas from Shanghai. Local urban audiences were just as familiar with this type of film as the migrants from the mainland because the Japanese government allowed the screening of movies from China until 1937. And the old film reels were re-introduced to Taiwan’s theaters after the Nationalists took over the island in 1945.

Politically, *Our Neighbors* was an ideal state film for many reasons. Even though it had been produced by a private film studio, it depicted reality in a way that was in line with the state’s policy. The mainland Chinese characters in *Our Neighbors* believe that if they live a moral, honest life in Taiwan they will have an opportunity to return to the mainland. It must have been touching for government officials in Taiwan to see a film that suggested a return to the mainland was still a possibility, even though this goal was becoming increasingly unrealistic.

After the film garnered local acclaim, Gong Hong, the newly appointed manager of the state-owned Zhongying Studio, asked Li Xing to make narrative propaganda films. Gong Hong’s film style was named “healthy realism,” and it could not have emerged at a more fortunate time for Mandarin-language film in Taiwan. While Taiwanese-language films comprised 98 of the 120 films produced in 1964 and
114 of 138 films produced in 1965, they were slowly losing ground to the emergent Mandarin films.\textsuperscript{120}

Li Xing codirected the healthy realism film \textit{Oyster Girl} with Li Jia in 1964. It was the first color widescreen film made in Taiwan, and it depicted the lives of oyster farmers in a coastal village in Taiwan. Interestingly, it too, like every Xie Jin and Li Xing film discussed in this chapter, deals with the adoption of an orphaned female protagonist in ways that affirm patriarchal state authority. Moreover, \textit{Oyster Girl}, like the Xie Jin and Li Xing films discussed here, tends to cash in on the titillating appeal of female actresses. The poster and film stills for \textit{Oyster Girl} demonstrate the male gaze in their depictions of the heroine and other oyster girls smiling and lounging together in short skirts and shorts. Even more telling, there is a scene over three minutes long of a female mud-wrestling bout at the beginning of the film. At first two women fight, but the brawl soon turns into a swirling mass of over twenty women biting, tearing shirts, and soaking each other. Male voyeurism is also prevalent in \textit{Women Basketball Player}. Xie Jin takes the camera into the restroom to show the women washing their arms and faces or into the locker room before they change into their uniforms. While there is no nudity, the women are objectified as sexual objects. These representations of gender also have a deep-seated connection to Shanghai film conventions. Films like \textit{Small Toys} contain tangential narrative scenes that display the female form, such as when Li Lili exercises in front of the camera, in accord with a masculine perspective.

In 1965 Li Xing directed a second healthy realism film on his own for Zhongying studio, a work entitled \textit{Beautiful Duckling}. It portrays duck farmers in
Taiwan who benefit from state subsidies and agricultural policies. The story of *Beautiful Duckling* revolves around Xiaoyue, a teenage girl in rural Taiwan, who lives with a man, Laolin, who she believes is her father. She loves him dearly and deferentially obeys his every command. Together they live in a traditional peasant home in an idyllic rural setting and raise ducks provided to them through a government program. But their happiness is ruined by Chaofu, portrayed as a crass, beetle nut-chewing Taiwanese opera-troupe actor who occasionally stops by Laolin’s house in order to blackmail him. In one scene, Xiaoyue and Laolin participate in an agricultural fair held by the state Farmer’s Association, and there they watch a performance by the mysterious Chaofu and his traveling drama troupe. Later, the viewer learns that Chaofu is blackmailing Laolin because Chaofu is Xiaoyue’s real brother, and he will tell Xiaoyue that she is adopted unless Laolin pays up. Eventually, Xiaoyue understands that she was adopted by Laolin after her father died in Hainan while in service to the Japanese military. Xiaoyue’s mother died before Xiaoyue was old enough to remember her. The neighbor, Laolin, took her in and raised her as his own. Initially Xiaoyue is upset, but by the film’s resolution she resolves to stay with her “father.”

If the film is read as national allegory, Xiaoyue would stand for the people of Taiwan, and Laolin would stand for the Nationalist mainlanders who took over Taiwan. This being the case, the conclusion of the film represents the willing and official acceptance of Nationalist rulers by the local Taiwanese. This reading of the film was in accordance with state film policy in Taiwan in the mid-1960s in many ways. First, Laolin loves Xiaoyue as if she were his own, a representation of the state
as selfless instead of self-serving. Also, just as the ducks are provided by the state in
der for Laolin to live a productive and happy life, so too does Laolin provide social
and psychological stability for Xiaoyue so that she can live in peace. After Xiaoyue
learns the truth, Laolin admits that there is nothing he can do to make Xiaoyue believe
that he is her real father. But it is in this instant, the moment he lets her go, that
Xiaoyue recognizes Laolin’s genuine concern for her. Thus, she willingly chooses to
stay with him. Clearly, if the local Taiwanese were to accept the Nationalists as
Xiaoyue accepts Laolin, nothing could be more satisfying for those in authority.

*Beautiful Duckling* and *Oyster Girl* were the two most successful state films of
their time. *Oyster Girl* won best picture at the Asian Film Festival in 1964, and
*Beautiful Duckling* won a number of awards in 1965. In the early 1960s, it was
typical for government propaganda films to be screened in Taiwan for one week, but
*Oyster Girl* was released twice and screened for seventy-two days. Financially, the
movies challenged the martial arts films from Hong Kong at the box office, and they
also served to extend the international market of Taiwan films throughout Southeast
Asia where they became popular in such places as Hong Kong, Singapore, and
Malaysia. In return, this marketing strategy brought investment to Taiwan’s film
industry from abroad, marking the beginning of Taiwan’s golden age of cinema in the
region.

Li Xing’s tendency to look back at China before the Nationalists lost the civil
war was most clearly articulated in *Our Neighbors*. He was able to craft his film by
using the old style, and this led the state to recognize him as a capable director who
could advocate the state’s policies. In Xie Jin’s case, returning to moments before
1949 in his film narratives and employing realist techniques were dangerous political acts that almost cost him his career and his life. Since Xie Jin was a political survivor, he found a way to carry on and flourish even in the latter half of the Cultural Revolution during which he made three films. But as the 1960s came to a close, Taiwan’s film industry was emergent, one of the most popular and vibrant cinemas in Asia, while film in mainland China was in decline.

**Epilogue**

One of the most interesting similarities between Li Xing’s and Xie Jin’s films can be seen in their presentation of dramatic, patriotic songs in *Beautiful Duckling* and *Stage Sisters*. In Li Xing’s *Beautiful Duckling*, Laolin takes Xiaoyue to visit relatives who are rice farmers. During their visit, it is time for the harvest. All of a sudden, the entire narrative grinds to a halt, and the non-diegetic roar of a hundred-member chorus bursts onto the soundscape. A panning long shot captures rice farms and farmers in the fields. Then close-ups of cheerful laborers gathering rice fill the screen while a hyperbolic, pastoral-themed song reverberates:

> Serene is the sky, endless is the field
> The earth teems with golden harvest
> Fragrant smells arise, agile are the reapers
> Grain glistens in the sun … it is paradise on earth!

Evidently, the landscape of Taiwan is no longer purgatory for *waisheng ren*, but heaven. If Li Xing had articulated through his characters in *Our Neighbors* his determination to return to the mainland in 1963, by 1965 he was happy to support the state’s desire to remain in Taiwan. Here is home, and home is paradise. Xie Jin
adopts the same technique of including a non-diegetic chorus throughout *Stage Sisters*. After Chunhua wins her court case at the film’s dénouement, the camera begins to roll (spinning around the subject as axis) and pan (spinning around a vertical axis), while an enthusiastic chorus fills the airwaves:

The people are stirred up… the people are in uproar
The real villain will not escape
Living in the bitter water, in wind and rain
I bathe my eyes in the clear water of the spring…

[Then the background image fades into a long shot of Shanghai]
And the future is as bright as flowered brocade!

This distinctive method of employing patriotic songs is another technique that has its roots in Shanghai in the 1930s. Most poignantly, “The March of the Volunteers,” the theme song that became the national anthem of the People’s Republic, was written by Nie’er for the film *Children of Troubled Times* (Fengyun ernü, Xu Xingzhi, 1935). And Ying Yunwei’s 1934 film *Plunder of Peach and Plum* (Taoli jie), is bookended by a college student graduation song that features language devoted to the homeland:

Listen! The groaning of the masses is everywhere.
Behold! Year after year, we witness our land transgressed. [. . .]
Today we transmit the fragrance of peach and plum,
Tomorrow we will be the foundation of society!^{123}

The passionate songs that Li Xing and Xie Jin provocatively introduced into their narrative films constitute one of many key connections they shared with Shanghai film before 1949. They used the setting and memory of old Shanghai for their narratives, they edited and presented character dialogue in the same way, and they dealt with the political implications of using such techniques.^{124} When they used realist methods, and when they abandoned them in favor of propaganda techniques or the inclusion of patriotic songs, they consistently referred to the pre-1949 film
tradition. These similarities reveal both the national and transnational antecedents of Chinese-Shanghai realist cinema in the 1960s.

On the national level, it was no historical accident that the Shanghai critical realist tradition was employed in the 1960s in both Taiwan and the People’s Republic. Instead of developing new film techniques to deliver state propaganda, the state relied on modifications of old artistic expressions because these modes were already established and seemed successful to the authorities. These two directors experienced the environment they depicted in their later works, and this familiarity left an indelible impression on their filmmaking. Also, the delivery of Xie Jin’s and Li Xing’s films is similar because both directors were employed in specialized political departments that were in many ways more concerned with state policy than with economic success at the box office. Gary Rawnsley argues that propaganda functions to “win the hearts and minds” of the populace by targeting a sympathetic audience, generating public interest, and strategically employing the most effective techniques in terms of time and context. In this endeavor, the stakes are high, a matter of survival for those in authority.125 It is remarkable how the films of both Xie Jin and Li Xing meet these criteria. Their films were accessible because they presented familiar settings in recognizable ways.

On the transnational level, one notices that the technique articulated by Xie Jin and Li Xing was actually a hybrid form comprised of expressions associated with multiple film traditions. Before 1949, Shanghai was influenced by cinematic models from the Soviet Union including the work of such writers as V. I. Pudovkin who were important in terms of aesthetics and narrative structure. At the same time, these styles
were combined with the melodramatic approach of Hollywood film. Movies from the United States caused Chinese-language film directors to structure their films in ways that highlight a well-defined conflict, climax, and resolution. The classical Hollywood film style is also echoed in the prevalence of medium shots, revealing the body from the waist up, and in the tendency to allot plenty of time to each scene so that it might be thoroughly understood before a new image is introduced. Both Xie Jin and Li Xing use these methods to their full potential. In addition, the actors in Xie Jin’s and Li Xing’s films tend to mirror the Chinese operatic posing methods and facial expressions prevalent in the 1930s and 1940s.

Japanese occupation also influenced the local film industry, as did cultural exchange when directors migrated between Shanghai and other places such as Hong Kong during the war years. From 1945-1949, artistic films such as the acclaimed *Spring in a Small Town* show that the methods used in the 1930s achieved a heightened level of sophistication. After 1949, both nations were influenced by styles that complemented the Shanghai realist mode. In 1954, a film exchange in China included neorealist films from Italy.\(^\text{126}\) In this and other ways neorealism was introduced to China. Xie Jin stated in an interview: “the strongest influence on the generation of directors that came upon the scene after Liberation was no doubt Soviet cinema… But let’s not forget Italian cinema.”\(^\text{127}\) This style traveled through various channels to affect the film scene in Taiwan as well. Italian film techniques influenced Gong Hong and directors in the 1960s, including Bai Jingrui, who studied film in Italy.\(^\text{128}\)
At the same time, and perhaps most importantly, this national and transnational analysis of Xie Jin’s and Li Xing’s films reveals how knowledge is produced within the confines of accepted discourse. Since Xie Jin and Li Xing are often framed in the polarizing terms of difference stereotypically associated with the Cold War, it is difficult to articulate similarities. Talk of continuities seems counterintuitive. However, tracing the continuous use of realist techniques after 1949 demonstrates that the works of Xie Jin and Li Xing are related in interesting ways. As a result, hopefully the parameters of the accepted discourse will expand.

This project also fits into other discussions with larger implications. First, additional connections are concurrently being traced between China and Taiwan by focusing on the institution of film. Certainly, there are multiple ways to link the two national traditions after 1949 without tracing the influence of Shanghai realism. For example, it would be fascinating to see a comparative analysis of the language in film policy documents on both sides of the strait or to observe the methods and intentions of both governments when they screened propaganda films in rural areas in the 1950s. Were Xie Jin and Li Xing communicating by way of a liaison in Hong Kong all along? We do not know for sure. And should China and Taiwan be presented as separate nations? Taiwan held the seat of all of “Free China” in the United Nations during the time discussed in this paper. Furthermore, the Communists in China and the Nationalists in Taiwan were both struggling for international legitimacy, so it is startling to consider that they were both employing the same artistic tradition in service of their endeavors. If Taiwan and China were a unified nation in the mid-1960s, the fact that Xie Jin and Li Xing use the same modes of
representation, as this paper argues, would be implicit and unnecessary to point out. As is, this argument may possibly provide new insights into the Taiwan independence movement today. On the one hand, if the Communists and Nationalists were employing the same artistic techniques during the Cold War, then surely they share additional important similarities. These links might comprise the common grounds on which the Chinese Nationalist Party in Taiwan and the Communist government base their increasingly amicable relationship. This could also explain Xie Jin’s and Li Xing’s friendship today. On the other hand, these connections leave room for Taiwan’s ruling Democratic Progressive Party (Minjindang, DPP) to persist in its claim that the local Taiwanese have always been left out of the picture.

While the resolution to all of these questions is still up in the air, some of the answers are available to us in the cinematic records we find on the big screen. Xie Jin noted in 2005, “For me, the films I directed before the Cultural Revolution are mostly about the contrast between the old society and the new society. What was the past like?” Li Xing’s films in the mid-1960s ask the same question. Xie Jin’s and Li Xing’s fictional representations of history provide us with valuable artifacts to consider as the cross-strait drama continues to unfold.

Chapter 2, in part, is a reprint of the material as it appears in *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, Spring 2009. Wicks, James, 2009. The dissertation author was the primary investigator and author of this paper.
Chapter Three

“My Home is in _______”:
The Politics of Migration In Bai Jingrui’s 1970 film *Home Sweet Home*

I am a little bird fond of play/ who has wandered about in all directions/
Now I am very tired/ And a tired bird must hurry back to its nest…/
Taipei! Taipei! -- *Home Sweet Home*’s theme song.

The introduction of director Bai Jingrui’s 1970 film *Home Sweet Home* is in many ways a microcosm of the entire film. As the film begins, the title stretches across the screen in white font against a black background: “家在台北” (literally: home is in Taipei). Next, the cast is introduced with the accompaniment of the film’s theme song, a mixture of late 1960s pop rock and traditional folk song vocals accented by an unmistakable chorus: “Taipei!” Then the first image of the diegesis is presented: a full screen image of a China Airlines passenger plane in mid-flight. Bai carefully initiates the plot by taking the camera within the interior space of the fuselage in order to present the film’s four primary characters. His strategy is to employ a multi-frame matting technique so that the audience at once sees both the main characters traveling on the plane towards Taiwan and images of their parties waiting for them in the airport in Taipei (see figure 3). The introductory scenes, such as this one, are visually exciting while at the same time they propel the narrative forward.
At approximately the two minute mark, the theme song fades into the dull whir of air-conditioning and the muffled engine noise inside the plane. Conversations among the main characters begin. One learns that all of those on board are college graduates who previously studied abroad but are now returning to Taiwan to visit their homeland on a chartered flight. Among them is Dr. Wu (Ke Junxiong), an expert in water conservation. He informs a young woman who studied literature in the United States that he has not been back to Taiwan for ten years. Next, a married couple discusses how it might be awkward for the husband, Mr. Zhiyun (Wu Jiaqi), to introduce his American but ethnically Chinese wife, Ms. Ruyin (Chen Huimei), to his parents who live in the rural outskirts of Taipei. Then, a playboy named Hefan (Jiangming) asks Lengyu (Lixiang), a wealthy woman who lived with a businessman for three years in the United States, if she plans to return. Lengyu shakes her head, no: “After all,” she says, “The United States is not our home.” The last image depicted within the plane is a close-up of Dr. Wu’s immigration form: he scribbles out his name written in Chinese characters and replaces it with his English name to match
This summary of *Home Sweet Home*’s introduction highlights the film’s central concern: the politics, both aesthetically and ideologically, of depicting migration within a narrative film. More specifically, as the following analysis intends to demonstrate, this film presents the official state position that the Chinese Nationalist Party held regarding students from Taiwan who studied abroad in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This claim might be made because the film was released by a state studio, Central Motion Picture Company, under state supervision and censorship to further the state’s ideological project through visual media. In order to reveal the nuances and inflections of *Home Sweet Home*, and frame it within a wider context, this paper will also discuss two contemporary films that represent migration on the global stage: Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s 1974 film *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (*Angst essen Seele auf*) and Ousmane Sembène’s 1966 film *Black Girl* (*La Noire de...*). Common features in these films include exquisite cinematic imagery juxtaposed with complex, three-dimensional protagonists who create a space for individuality and expressions of subjectivity. At the same time, *Ali* and *Black Girl* are historical texts that demonstrate the discrepancies between the studio intentions for representing migration, and the actual formal choices that the directors chose to employ. Thus, close readings of all three films help illuminate the ways that Bai Jingrui’s aesthetic choices work both in conjunction and disjunction with the intentions of the Taiwan state government in 1970.

A model for the type of inquiry can be found in a recent article by Emily Davis entitled “The Intimacies of Globalization: Bodies and Borders On-Screen.” In
this essay, Davis analyzes a diverse set of visual filmic narratives in order to explain the relationship between representations of migration, sexual identity, and commodification in narrative film. For example, she asserts that Dirty Pretty Things (Frears, 2002), Maria Full of Grace (Marston, 2004), and the “Badlaa” episode from the X-Files TV show depict how globalization has commodified the body. Davis proves her point when she examines the inhumanity of the organ trade in Dirty Pretty Things and the power of xenophobia to propel a narrative of alien infiltration in “Badlaa.” In this study I would like to pick up where Davis’s article ends. Namely, I would like to pinpoint additional scenes in world cinema -- in this case, those screened during the late 1960s and early 1970s -- in which issues of migration intersect with those unstable moments between “exploitation and agency,” exposing the ways people are oftentimes depicted as objects instead of subjects during the migration process.¹³²

Constructing Taiwan as “Home Sweet Home”

Home Sweet Home concentrates on a particular social dynamic of migration, namely the phenomenon of “brain drain” in Taiwan during the late 1960s and 1970s. “In the case of Taiwan,” Viem Kwok and Hayne Leland write in their article published in The American Economic Review, “more than 50,000 college graduates left the country for advanced studies overseas during the period from 1960 to 1979. During this period, only 6,000 of them returned.”¹³³ These writers cite the following reasons why overseas students oftentimes do not return to their homelands: “lack of employment opportunities for returning graduates, lower salary levels in the
indigenous country, and preference of graduates to live abroad.” However, both writers also agree that these reasons do not apply to the case of college students from Taiwan, because Taiwan’s economic prospects at the time were among the best in Asia. Taiwan boasted an impressive agricultural sector, it was entering a new phase of industry, and its caloric consumption was second only to Japan. Still, students were leaving and not coming back.

The Nationalist state decided to address this significant social issue on the big screen. While narrative film has been used throughout Chinese film history for didactic purposes, its specific articulation in the 1970s was part of the state’s “Cultural Renaissance” project initiated as a counterbalance to the concurrent “Cultural Revolution” occurring in mainland China. The intention was to glorify traditional Chinese cultural arts so that the island’s populace would not forget their heritage while completing westernized modernization projects. The Cultural Renaissance was initiated by Chiang Kai-shek in November of 1966, and the main body running the renaissance was the Ministry of Education, which created the Cultural Bureau with powers over radio, television, and cinema.

In Home Sweet Home one encounters a film that intersects a social concern affecting Taiwan, namely migration, and the arts, namely a didactic state film project. As a case in point, within the narrative of the film nearly all of the characters returning to Taiwan conform to national policy by deciding to stay because they prefer the lifestyle, tradition, and values of Chinese culture over the culture in the United States which they left behind. In his article, “Taiwan’s ‘Cultural Renaissance’: A Preliminary View’ in a 1970 issue of the China Quarterly, Warren
Tozer concludes that the Cultural Renaissance was “primarily a political rather than an intellectual movement,” and thus the arts in Taiwan “suffer from governmental repression.”\textsuperscript{137} This conclusion is consistent with many writers in Taiwan today who recognize the restrictive authoritarian and patriarchal values that permeated the presentations of traditional Chinese culture during the Cultural Renaissance.

While propagandistic in nature, Taiwan’s state films of the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s such as \textit{Home Sweet Home} were extremely popular both in Taiwan and Southeast Asia. This is not surprising because the films were very entertaining. After Gong Hong became manager of CMPC in 1963, he produced a series of films that competed financially in the open market with popular films from Hollywood and Hong Kong (see chapters one and two). \textit{Home Sweet Home} was part of CMPC’s national and transnational film tradition. It was released in the year that is still the greatest in Taiwan film history in terms of number of film theaters (826), seats (441,000), and number of time films were viewed.\textsuperscript{138} At home, it won many awards, including the 1970 Golden Horse (Taiwan’s Academy Awards) Best Film, Best Actress, and Best Editing awards. Overseas, it garnered acclaim at the 16th Asia Pacific Film Awards when it won awards for Best Actress and Best Screenplay.

Bai Jingrui’s input for this film, and overall during the rise of cinema during Taiwan’s so-called “Golden Age” was essential. Bai moved to Taiwan in 1949 after the Nationalists lost the civil war, and studied art in the university now known as National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei. In the late 1950s, while he wrote film and art criticism columns in newspapers, he was greatly influenced by Italian neorealist cinema and determined that he should go to Italy to study film. From 1961-64
Bai studied painting, cinema, and set design as the first exchange student from Taiwan to Italy. Interestingly, Bai had a personal insight into the characters he portrays in *Home Sweet Home*, as he was a study abroad student who returned to Taiwan as well. When he returned, among other responsibilities, he was a committee member and screen editor for CMPC. There he helped introduce “healthy realism” alongside Gong Hong. In 1967 Bai directed his first film on his own, *Lonely Seventeen* (Jimo de shiqisui). Bai intended *Lonely Seventeen* to critique society in pointed, direct ways, but his script was massively overhauled by state censors before release. After this experience, he turned to safer themes and comedy in his next four films, including *Home Sweet Home*.

Although safe in content, the narrative structure of *Home Sweet Home* in contrast hardly conforms to the continuity editing style typical to Taiwan film. Rather, in terms of its narrative, *Home Sweet Home* is the *Pulp Fiction* (Tarantino, 1994) of Taiwan cinema at the time -- its narrative style equally unique and original. The story of *Home Sweet Home* is divided into three key sections. After arriving at the airport, there is an approximately 30 minute long story depicting the two-month stay of Mr. Zhiyun and Ms. Ruyin, the couple that return to so that Mr. Zhiyun can introduce his Chinese-American wife to his family. But, once their conflict in the first narrative is resolved, the film re-beings at the airport, whereupon the audience sees the two-month stay of the wealthy mistress Lengyu, presented in screen-time in around twenty minutes. Then the film re-starts at the airport again, in order to trace the stay of Dr. Wu in Taiwan after he had been overseas for ten consecutive years. These three separate narratives, which will be discussed in further detail below, are
bookended by the setting of the airport: in the beginning of the film, the characters arrive there, and in the end, all of the characters congregate there again in order to either depart or remain in Taiwan as the case may be.

Table 2: The Three Narratives of *Home Sweet Home*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narrative 1</th>
<th>Narrative 2</th>
<th>Narrative 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Screen time</strong></td>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character(s)</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Zhiyun, Ms. Ruyin</td>
<td>Lengyu</td>
<td>Dr. Wu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interior and exterior locations</strong></td>
<td>Rural outskirts of Taipei/ Sun Moon Lake</td>
<td>Hip Downtown Taipei/ Chung Shan Hall</td>
<td>Poor slums of Taipei/ State water conservation project in Southern Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td>Chixia’s marriage</td>
<td>Argument with Wangpu</td>
<td>Confrontation with Dr. Wu’s father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision</strong></td>
<td>Stay in Taiwan</td>
<td>Stay in Taiwan</td>
<td>Stay in Taiwan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of the story’s mini-narratives, the characters struggle to define their own identity after living overseas. They wonder, oftentimes aloud, what constitutes their individuality and where they belong, and they voice their opinions about how others have changed. In order to trace the identity formation and cinematic representation of each character, I will focus on two pivotal moments in each mini-narrative in the film. The first is the moment when the characters contemplate, even meditate, on their present condition in terms of migration. The second pivotal
moment is when they reach a decision, in the midst of extreme psychological tension, about who they are and where they belong.

**Narrative 1: You Can Always Go Home**

In the first narrative, Mr. Zhiyun successfully and indeed effortlessly introduces Ms. Ruyin to her in-laws, who wholeheartedly welcome her into their family after their first dinner together. (Significantly, the mother notes that while Ms. Ruyin grew up overseas, fortunately she did not acquire any strange habits.) Afterwards, the loving couple takes a walk on a hillside to watch a sublime sunset. While the yellow and pink clouds comprise the background, and with the landscape in silhouette, Mr. Zhiyun says: “Before I left here [Taiwan] I didn’t think that Taiwan was special. Now that I’ve returned, I see that we have the same sun here that we had in the United States.” In other words, he realizes that there is no advantage to living overseas, because life is the same no matter where one lives, here or there. Then the couple, still walking together in the midst of nature, discuss how hectic it was working for IBM in New York City, and how they would rarely have free time to share together. Mr. Zhiyun says: “In New York I always felt like I was a machine, but coming back from the U.S., I now feel like a genuine person” -- which is translated in the English subtitles as: “Now I feel like a real man.” During this conversation, it becomes apparent that the couple made their decision to stay in Taiwan almost as soon as their chartered flight touched the ground.

The conflict in their story involves Mr. Zhiyun’s younger sister, the vivacious and strong-willed Chixia, who becomes engaged to the playboy Hefan. Indeed, the
first narrative of the film would contain little conflict without the appearance of this little hellion. Since Hefan is both planning to return to the United States and attracted to spirited women, and since Chixia wants nothing more than to emigrate and seek out trouble, they are a perfect match. But Chixia’s family overwhelmingly disapproves. Her mother, father, Mr. Zhiyun, and Ms. Ruyin all confront her in her bedroom in order to talk her out of marrying Hefan. Chixia quickly grows tired of their ranting and raving, so while they are talking she puts on a record of western pop music, mostly drums and surfing guitar, and turns the volume up. Way up. Soon, the audience is only presented with the faces of each family member shouting as they yell at Chixia, but their words are drowned out by the sound of the music. Then, the camera focuses on each person’s yelling mouth and eyes alone, and this imagery is then spliced and replicated in multiple frames across the screen, so that the full screen is a mixture of endless angry eyes and screaming mouths. The imagery is disorienting to say the least. But nothing the family can say or do breaks through to Chixia’s consciousness, not that fact that Hefan is a good for nothing, that she is too young, or that she should stay in Taiwan to care for her family. In the end, Chixia decides to leave and the family struggles to accept the reality of this decision and its consequences.

But this is not the fate of Mr. Zhiyun and Ms. Ruyin. In the last scene of their story, Ms. Ruyin approaches Mr. Zhiyun in the middle of a field on the farm, while he is holding a lamb. She says that since his sister Chixia is going to leave, her in-laws will be lonely, so she determines not to leave Taiwan. Mr. Zhiyun says, “I have no right to ask you to stay here.” Ms. Ruyin then says, “But I have the right to stay with
my husband, together. And the farm here needs you very much. Come, let’s go tell
your father that we are staying.” An entire paper could be written on the “staged
femininity” in the film in terms of Laura Mulvey’s work, and this aspect of the film
rivals, if not overshadows at key moments, the theme of migration in the film as it
does here. In any case, immediately following Ms. Ruyin’s speech, the theme song
chorus chimes in: “Taipei! Taipei!”

**Narrative 2: Who do you love?**

Then the film cuts to the second narrative. This story begins once again at the
airport so that the life of Lengyu, and Wangpu (Wangrong) her lover, might take
center stage. It becomes apparent in this section of the film that Bai is not simply
telling the story of four different characters, but that he is crafting a film that
accumulates multiple layers of meaning as the story progresses. While the first
narrative relies on rural scenes and shots from Sun Moon Lake, a famous tourist site
in Taiwan, the second narrative takes the camera into a modern high-rise apartment
painted and decorated with the swinging, ornate style and bright, gaudy colors of the
late 1960s. One of the rooms in the apartment is Wangpu’s art studio, where his work
appears to be influenced by western realistic figure drawings and Andy Warhol-style
pop art. The variation in settings and characters reminds one that ethnicity is a fluid
construct that varies according to location, and that issues of migration in one setting
might not necessarily apply to another. Jan Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur’s work
demonstrates that national identities are shaped in many different environments:
judicial, political, civic, economic, and literary. In addition, the motives for
departure from one environment to another are many: ideological, financial, political, and national.140

Bai’s film seems to take similar ideas into account as he presents multiple environments and as he reveals the differences among the character’s motives and agendas. For example, the first narrative depicts a couple that returns to Taiwan to re-acquaint a family dispersed across the globe, and the second narrative depicts the re-engagement of two estranged lovers. The personal motivations that each character embodies are framed within the overall construction of national identity. To which nation does one belong? Where is home? Ultimately, in this film the concerns of Taiwan as a nation become more important to these characters than their individual needs and desires, just as the state intended for nationalist art. In the first narrative, the traditional model of the family, care for the elderly, and love of Taiwan’s natural beauty -- the very ideas the state endorses -- are more important than migration to the United States. The second narrative presents a different set of state-endorsed reasons to remain in Taiwan.

After their arrival, Lengyu and Wangpu attend a dinner party at a downtown Taipei restaurant. During a conversation over mixed drinks, old friends and former classmates discuss Lengyu’s involvement with a business man named Mr. Chao back in the United States who convinced Lengyu to move in with him for three years. Lengyu admits that she had a wonderful time with the wealthy Mr. Chao, but that she returned for the slower pace of life in Taiwan, and to salvage her relationship with the artist and teacher Wangpu, whom she supported financially while abroad. All seems to be going according to Lengyu’s plan of regaining Wangpu’s affection until she
becomes jealous of Wangpu after he paints a portrait of another woman on the steps of the National Palace Museum. The National Palace Museum, built in 1965, is an important site of nationalism in the film, as it houses the most extensive collection of Chinese artwork in the world. As a result of seeing Wangpu’s portrait drawings, Lengyu argues with Wangpu, who in turn packs his belongings and leaves their apartment. In the end, Lengyu is all alone. Lengyu is forced to admit to her friends that she was wrong for leaving Wangpu in the first place -- that he is justified in rejecting her -- and she decides to return to the United States. It is at the point of making this decision that the second narrative ends; however, Lengyu has a surprising change of heart in the film’s final scene in the airport, where she decides to stay in Taiwan.

**Narrative 3: Opposites Attract**

Representations of subjectivity despite social, cultural, and national pressures and concerns are made visible throughout the film, but perhaps notions of agency are most poignantly presented in the third and final narrative of the film. The focus on the individual search for identity is emphasized in the third narrative without any stylistic devices such as those in the first two narratives, which include simultaneous multi-framed shots and split screen modes of presentation. In contrast, the third narrative plays out continuously, creating a melodramatic “tear-jerker” film within the overall film. In many ways it is the most important narrative of the three Bai presents; it certainly is the longest, clocking in at almost an hour long.

The basic story in the third segment involves Dr. Wu, a successful water
conservationist, who returns to Taiwan to both attend a conference and divorce his wife in Taiwan who he has not seen for ten years. But he simply cannot do it. Dr. Wu’s close friend and colleague tries to talk him out of divorcing his wife, his brother disapproves, his father wants to disown him for being so heartless, and his ten year old son becomes endeared to him. Most importantly, the audience learns that his wife Suyuan (played by Gui Yalei, winner of the best actress award) took care of his disadvantaged family by selling vegetables in an open air market and sewing the family’s clothes in Dr. Wu’s absence. When Dr. Wu returns, she never requires a thing of him, but only desires his happiness regardless of circumstance. Under the emotional pressure that Dr. Wu faces as he negotiates the response of his family and friends in Taiwan, he “doesn’t have a chance” as Emilie Yeh and Darrell Davis write. Indeed, Dr. Wu stays in Taiwan.

Dr. Wu’s moment of contemplation and meditation occurs when he visits his colleague’s water dam project in the southern part of the island. Dr. Wu recognizes how much his friend wants him to stay, how loyal his wife has been to him despite his infidelity, and how much his nation needs his skill as a water conservationist. In light of all of these things, he decides to stay in Taiwan. Just as he is about to inform his family, Dr. Wu’s father beats him with a cane because he thinks that Dr. Wu is about to make a decision that will only prolong his family’s suffering. But all is patched up at the end of the story, when Dr. Wu purchases a new apartment in downtown Taipei and moves in with his family and father instead of returning to the United States. As Dr. Wu and his family drive to their new apartment home, the catchy theme song from the introduction concludes the film: “A tired bird must hurry back to its nest…/
Taipei! Taipei!”

**KMT Directives/ Bai’s Choices**

Dr. Wu’s journey could be characterized as a search for personal identity under the pressure of conforming to national identity stereotypes. In the end, Dr. Wu’s unique, individual subjectivity merges into the subjectivity of all of those around him, as he becomes likeminded with those surrounding him: his wife, his father, and his colleague who makes sure that his company will hire Dr. Wu so that they can be co-workers. The issues Bai Jingrui depicts, including migration, identity, and nationalist sentiment, were also addressed in Ann Hui’s Hong Kong films a decade later. But while Ann Hui’s films present a distrust of national sentiment, Bai’s film seemingly embraces the dominant perspective held by the Taiwan government, for the return to family and social order was part of the national project to maintain the traditional Chinese patriarchal value system. This is the nationalism presented by the state in Taiwan’s arts: not so much a love for the flag and the militaristic defense of borders, but the idea that it is great to be part of the collective project of Chinese culture in “free China” as opposed to the other China on the mainland. This brings to mind Rey Chow’s argument in her introduction to *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility*, that being visible on the big screen does not necessarily translate into empowerment. In the case of Bai’s film, visibility (assigned with an inherent value in being visible alone) does not equal empowerment, because the characters from all types of settings and class backgrounds are visible on Taiwan’s screen, but
the individuals are organized and presented on the state’s terms, not their own. In the end, the film presents a kind of false realism -- the characters and settings look real, but their presentation is caged within a certain ideology.

If one were to try to crack the ideological construct of this state film by looking for ambiguous moments within the representation of character development alone in order to argue that Bai is trying to undermine the state’s project, one would have to argue from a limited pool of evidence. In many ways, it is difficult to find a discrepancy between what the characters believe, and what the film intends for the audience to believe. *Home Sweet Home*’s mediation of its characters is a particular construction of reality that is presented with a consistent logic -- so if the audience buys the premises that the characters in the film share, then the conclusion follows. But since Bai Jingrui understood foreign film styles outside of Taiwan state policy, and since he was all too familiar with state censorship, and since he was one of the first members of the film circles who changed the evaluation criteria for the Golden Horse Awards when martial law was abolished in 1987, is it possible that Bai found alternative ways to inject his own perspective into *Home Sweet Home*? With this question in mind, it is the form of the film itself that deserves a second look, a form that becomes increasingly less stylistically self-referential during the final hour of the film.

The innovative aesthetic moves Bai makes, especially early in the film, bring attention to the film’s construction. Like postmodern artwork, Bai’s work reminds the audience that art is not a transparent depiction of the world, or a mirror held up to the world for its unmediated reflection, but rather a human construct made with certain
intentions in mind. Stylistically, the craft of the film is apparent in the introduction sequence, the “split-screen montage masking” technique employed in subsequent segments of the film, and the way the narrative persistently re-starts throughout the diegesis.144 It is in this way that the façade of the film, and the intentions of the state during the Cultural Renaissance, become most clear. These stylistic modes “break up” the film, demonstrating that the film has been crafted instead of maintaining the illusion of temporal and spatial reality.145 Bai’s film could thus be seen as undermining the state because at the least he makes the gesture to the audience that his film is not only promoting state policy, but also informing the audience that the film is a construct subject to evaluation. Certainly, tension between the state’s purpose and Bai’s authorial intention invites the criticism that postmodernism artwork, in the process of self-referential representation, maintains complicity with that it critiques because it does not offer an alternative, but just “plays” with the form.146 In this way, Bai’s film might be interpreted as complicit with the state. Still, Home Sweet Home does create this space of stylistic and aesthetic tension, one that the film’s moments of narrative continuity and the happy resolution for each character does not entirely resolve.

The art of governing this film both ideologically from the state perspective, and aesthetically in terms of the choices that Bai employs, does not always work in harmony, but produces ambiguity. The methods and tactics involved in managing the film create a dissimilarity between intention and product, and ultimately a disconnect between character’s lives in the film and the lived experience of those who actually
preferred staying abroad. After all, the perspective of those students who genuinely do not want to live under Taiwan’s then-dictatorial regime is never portrayed. With these issues in mind, Fassbinder’s *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* and Sembène’s *Black Girl* broaden the horizons of this conversation. For example, *Ali* depicts a migrant worker living in his host country, and *Black Girl* represents the entire transitional, transnational, migratory process from home country to host country. Thus, one can compare and contrast additional depictions of characters who determine who they are and where they belong after moving overseas, and at the same time, in keeping with a central theme of this paper, one might also locate ways that the cinematic form works in conjunction and disjunction with each project’s intentions.

*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*

*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* is a story about a young Moroccan migrant guest worker (*Gastarbeiter*) named Ali (El Hedi ben Salem) who works as a mechanic in Munich, Germany. As the film begins, Ali meets Emmi (Brigitta Mira), a sixty-something German cleaning lady and widow of two decades, at a bar where Ali hangs out after work with his buddies from Morocco and their German girlfriends. Ali is dared to dance with Emmi by his friends, and after one thing leads to another, Ali and Emmi fall in love. The love between Ali and Emmi is depicted as nothing but genuine and sincere, although far from ideal: the two are intensely ostracized by Emmi’s children and co-workers for their relationship. However, after an extended off-screen vacation to rural Germany, Ali and Emmi return to Munich to find that Emmi’s friends and wider social network have accepted their decision. It is after this
juncture in the picture that Emmi begins to treat Ali with racist gestures formally directed to both of them, and as a result, Ali becomes frustrated and briefly turns to his former girlfriend, the German bartender Barbara. But in the end, Ali returns to Emmi, realizing her authentic love; she in turn apologizes for her actions, and accepts him. The film ends tragically with Ali in the hospital because he suffers from an ulcer that the doctors say he will never recover from. A doctor states that the stress of living overseas will hospitalize Ali every six months. Emmi sits next to Ali on a hospital bed as the film comes to a close.

Arguably Fassbinder made this film in order to prod his audience into considering a positive view of the guest workers who were “‘encouraged’ to come to West Germany during the Wirtschaftswunder-years (the years of the "economic miracle" in the 1950s and 1960s).”147 Fassbinder had a specific intention: to depict Ali in a sympathetic way in one of the first of just a few films that depicted guest workers in Germany. This specific objective was consistent with the general purpose of New German Cinema directors. Shailja Sharma, in her article “Fassbinder's Ali and the Politics of Subject-Formation,” writes: “The new German directors went out of their way to subvert the xenophobic and patriarchal traditions of pre-war [German Heimatfilm] cinema.”148 The formal choices that directors such as Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Alexander Kluge and others made in Germany during the 1970s undermine both the historic German cinematic form and Hollywood stereotypes so that their audiences might critically assess the content of their films.

Similar to Taiwan’s state cinema studio, capital was invested into this cinema movement in order to change society. But while the CMPC employed a top-down
approach, the New German Cinema hoped to transform culture from the bottom-up. Alexander Kluge’s brief but entirely fascinating and meditative piece “On Film and the Public Sphere” provides an insight into the intentions of this group of directors. He argues that the possibility for social change is expanded when filmgoers and society in general communicate both their fantasies and intellectual desires within the structure of public dialogue and communal exchange. Kluge’s ideas arrive via Habermas’s text The Public Transformation of the Public Sphere; Habermas believed that a rational, intelligent, public sphere was created during the 18th century at the beginning of liberal democratism, but since then the horizons of perception have been marginalized and appropriated by mass media and governmental propaganda.

This chapter notes a connection between Habermas’s work and (its potential to comment on) modern Chinese culture. Richard Madsen, in his essay “The Public Sphere, Civil Society and Moral Community: A Research Agenda for Contemporary China Studies,” traces Habermas’s ideas in order to locate a sound research strategy for studying society in “post-socialist” China on the mainland. Madson claims that Habermas’s conception of the public sphere is helpful in structuring a study of Chinese social history, because it allows one to center on “the moral and cultural dimensions” of modernity, while also recognizing, as Habermas observed, the extent to which these “lifeworlds” are “increasingly colonized by ‘systems’ of wealth and power.” Madsen finds Habermas’s model helpful for a study of China because it allows one to avoid ethnocentric biases when identifying the ways rational public discussion is taking place within historically specific conditions.
Thus, considering both thematic and theoretical connections, Fassbinder’s *Ali* is linked with Bai’s *Home Sweet Home* in interesting ways. Both films address migration as a central theme, both were motivated by political agendas beyond entertainment alone, and incidentally both were quite popular when released, consequently possessing the potential to produce dialogue in the public sphere.

In addition, just as Bai’s formal choices undermine the purpose of his film as state propaganda, it is important to recognize that Fassbinder’s depiction of Ali is not entirely consistent with the intentions of the new German cinema movement. In fact, key moments in the narrative perhaps unintentionally undermine Ali’s depiction as “noble immigrant.” Fassbinder is praised for bringing an unvoiced issue to the screen in Sharma’s article, mentioned above, and in Susan Patterson’s article, “Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* and the Expropriation of a National *Heim*.” But Patterson concludes in her article that Ali is subjugated at the film’s conclusion because he remains within Emmi’s space rather than his own, he is never known by his real name (El Hedi ben Salem M’Barek Mohammed Mustafa), and he is not allowed to speak in his own language.\(^{152}\) Barbara Mennel writes, in “Masochistic Fantasy and Racialized Fetish in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul,*” that the film is about Ali’s victimization because he is fetishized as a sex object by Emmi’s friends and he is orientalized as the film’s only nude (which is not the case, in fact, Barbara is presented in the nude as well) as well as by his music, language, and habits.\(^{153}\) All of these examples might be summarized as follows: Ali becomes stereotype. So while Fassbinder intended Ali to be an appealing figure, critical analysis tends to commend Fassbinder’s gesture but admit that Fassbinder’s effort falls short of the mark.
While multiple elements of the plot and story depict Ali in demeaning ways at key intervals, one aspect of Fassbinder’s formal choices seems to redeem Ali’s representation. Namely, the framing of the film, which is astounding and at moments world class, succeeds in producing a progressive figure who in many ways is undermined, reified, and co-opted by the forces the film apparently intends to resist. Mennel writes: “The social entrapment of Emmi and Ali is mirrored in the film’s structural emphasis on the couple’s persistently stark framing,”¹⁵⁴ and Patterson also notes: “fragmenting effects of shots through doors, windows, and banisters; they are isolated in doorways through long shots; they are pinned by static camera positioning.”¹⁵⁵ Rather than commenting on the almost painfully precise use of geometric shapes to position characters within the frame of the screen, I would rather highlight two long-take, “still life” shots in the film. In these two breathless moments the camera does not pan or roll, but simply remains on the characters persistently, indefatigably. These still shots possess the effect of grinding the narrative continuity to an absolute halt. The result is that the moving figures are captured like photographs -- without freezing the frame altogether -- in precisely the terms Deleuze uses to describe the “time-image.”

The first occurrence is absolutely incredible because the narrative at that junction is so lively and multifaceted that it is almost difficult to describe, but the image, in contrast, is as motionless as can possibly be, a complete standstill. The static image is this: Ali and Emmi sit properly, backs straight, alone in a restaurant, staring directly at the camera through a doorway. At this stage in the narrative, Ali and Emmi have been instructed by their landlord that they must marry in order to
cohabitate, then they proceed to get married at a municipal court, and then by themselves -- no one is with them to celebrate -- Emmi suggests that they go out to eat at an expensive restaurant that, as Emmi points out, Hitler used to frequent. Within the restaurant, as the only customers, sitting in front of a massive painting, Emmi does not know how to order the unfamiliar and expensive food except with the utmost awkwardness, and Ali is at a loss as well. After the waiter exits the room, after they have finally ordered, the film stops. After all that has transpired: ostracization, marriage, an awkward social setting, the camera stands still as if abandoned. The image almost becomes a still life, metaphysically fracturing the film’s space-time continuum.

The film, while held motionless for only twelve seconds, feels like a staged drama in which one imagines that the scene has ended and the curtain will close at any moment. Or it is like the last note in a symphony before the conductor requests silence. After a while the eye is drawn to peripheral details like the gigantic yellow painting behind them, a deep yellow unlike the predominantly stark red paintings in the bar where Ali and Emmi met. It is details like these and more that one considers when everything is still, and as Emmi and Ali look at… us, the audience. Maybe we are the audience participating in their marriage that no one else will attend, so in fact Emmi and Ali are not alone; or maybe we are complicit in their ostracism. Or maybe it is, as in Bai’s film, that the fictional construction of the entire piece is revealed, as if the audience is allowed to observe the interior machinery of the production instead of the slick external surface. It is such musings, detached from the film narrative itself and even wandering, that are validated by the film because it is a part of its structure.
Ali, as a recurrent pattern, builds a complex narrative into a crescendo that is at once undermined by static shots such as these. This leads to contemplation about the function of this formal move within the fabric of the entire piece.

The next time the image is stationary occurs when the relationship between Ali and Emmi is on the rocks. At this time Ali turns to the bartender Barbara for sex, comfort, and even food -- Emmi won’t make couscous for him. In Barbara’s apartment one evening, Ali gets undressed there, his second nude scene in the film, waiting for his lover. He stares at the camera, standing in front of a green bedspread in a bedroom down a hallway, in an image framed much like the room within the room in the restaurant scene. Ali’s depiction here reverses the male gaze according to Mulvey’s terms -- or in another perspective it simultaneously affirms it, considering Fassbinder’s off-screen relationship with Salem. Barbara walks out of a bathroom at stage left, turns off the overhead lights, and proceeds, nude as well, until the two connect, hold each other, and lie on the bed, Ali on top of the supine Barbara. It is at this exact moment that the actors stop their movement, effectively ending the extension of their actions into lovemaking. Sharma writes: “when Ali is taken to bed by Barbara, the pleasure of the spectator in this voyeuristic moment is undercut by the obvious framing of the scene by the camera, as well as by the limp, unexcited posture of Ali himself.” Then the film stops, a staged moment that stands alone for 22 seconds. In one instance, Barbara’s hand moves, a momentary break within the caesura.

How do these formal concerns, these significant and recurrent static images, contribute to a depiction of migration, in terms of authorial intention and the subject
formation of Ali? Just like the characters in *Home Sweet Home*, Ali too arrives at a moment in which he must decide where he belongs after his transnational journey. For him, this moment occurs when he chooses to stay with Emmi despite all of the trials of their relationship. He determines, after all, that he is going to stay in Germany with her. But this choice is not without its ambiguity, for as other scholars have argued, it is a choice that places him firmly within a culture that orientalizes (permanently ostracizing) and fetishizes (permanently objectifying) him.

So perhaps the least ambiguous quality of the film occurs in those moments when the film image stops its movement, and the audience’s mind might wander, left to its own imagination -- an indirect result of the image’s complete discontinuation. At these moments Ali’s situation itself becomes the object of reflection. The question is: what is going on? Ali’s existence, his predicament, brings to mind the historical situation, a real dilemma: the issue of migration that Germany as a nation was dealing with at the time. This historical problem is solidified, made concrete by the static camera within the fictional narrative, and thus becomes a reference point for conversation on racism and the actual economic situation.

Considering Fassbinder’s film alongside Bai’s is a complex enterprise, and by no means an “apples to apples” comparison. The dissimilarities are as great or greater than the similarities. Still, these key ideas emerge as points of quantifiable comparison: *Ali* was made within the body of New German Cinema with a certain intention in mind, the formal devices of static framing tend to affirm Ali’s humanity and subjectivity, Ali reaches a moment of extreme psychological tension as a result of his choice to migrate, and in the end he decides his place in life: he will indeed stay
overseas, away from his homeland and family. These four points of reference are also revealed in distinct ways in *Black Girl*, which will be considered next.

*Black Girl*

*Home Sweet Home* opens with the image of a passenger plane traveling towards screen left, while the black and white film *Black Girl* begins with a huge, white passenger ship moving left to right as it enters a French harbor. In the background, a military ship moors. The first words the protagonist Diouana (Mbissine Thérèse Diop) says is “Will someone be waiting for me?” It is not a rhetorical question, for there is someone waiting for her, Monsieur (Robert Fontaine). But the question, in keeping with the use of voice over in the film in general, leads the audience to consider the internal experience of Diouana. Monsieur drives Diouana beside and then beyond the beautiful countryside, to an apartment in Antibes that overlooks the French Riviera. There, people stroll in leisure, unlike the people depicted in Africa, who mill around in search of work. Diouana, who migrates to France in order to work as a nanny for Monsieur and Madame (Anne-Marie Jelinek) just as she had done for them in Senegal, soon learns that she has been brought to work as a common maid instead. Upon entering the apartment, her first assignment is to clean the bathroom, and specifically the bathtub, at her master’s command. It is this walled prison, and specifically in this bathtub, where she takes her life at the film’s denouement.

Of all of the films discussed in this chapter, Diouana’s subjectivity is most clearly evident to the audience due to the access to her thoughts via the voice-over
technique. At one point in the film, in voice over, Diouana states: “Back in Dakar they must be saying: ‘Diouana is happy in France... She has a good life.’ For me, France is the kitchen, the living room, the bathroom and my bedroom.” Her words make clear the reality of the situation: she is not by any means content. It is a contrast between what is perceived visually (or in this case, imagined by her family and friends at home) and what is actually going on in the inner-workings of her mind. Early in the film, when Diouana still has hope for her situation in France, when she still wears fancy clothes and looks forward to experiencing life as a full citizen in the new country she has chosen, she is required by Madame to make “authentic African cuisine” for a dinner party. Part cook, which she is not, and part waitress, she is treated like an object. During the meal an elderly male guest at the dinner party states: “I’ve never kissed a negress,” before placing a kiss on the cheek of the unwilling and bemused Diouana.

When Diouana returns to her solitary seat in the kitchen, it is by means of a voice-over, in a moment of transparent introspection, that the visual image focuses on a handcrafted mask from Africa, leading to a fade-out and fade-in transition to a depiction of Diouana’s previous experiences in Senegal. The mask is an essential visual image in the story: it is the mask that Diouana originally gave to Monsieur and Madame when she was first employed by them in Africa. Moreover, as Rachael Langford convincingly writes in: “Black and White in Black and White: Identity and Cinematography in Ousmane Sembène’s La Noire de .../ Black Girl, ” the mask functions as an object of gift exchange in which both parties should be treated as members of equal social status. But perhaps even more essential than the mask is
the voice-over, for it is Diouana’s voice that carries the story as she describes where she sought work, how she found employment as a nanny, and when she told her friends and family: “I’ve got a job with the white folks.” Her recollections are always recounted in the slow, lackadaisical drawl of a listless recollection or reflection. When time returns in the film to the present, it is still her voice that compares and contrasts the current moment with the past. When the façade of her exterior is reduced to silence as she performs the housework, it is her interior voice that the audience maintains a privileged access to.

It is in this way that Sembène depicts the entire migratory process, from the job search in Africa to the arrival overseas, to the end, the ultimate conclusion. Just as Fassbinder’s film overlaps thread over thread of narrative until it becomes so complicated that it nearly bursts at the seams before he freezes the film in space and time by way of long static takes, Sembène similarly introduces and builds a complex web of story lines, geographical locations, and points in time that would be difficult to interpret without the formal device of Diouana’s voice-over. It is Diouana’s voice that is consistent, and more importantly permanent, a fact about the film that is in many ways its central theme. It is apparent in the film that what is permanent is the legacy of colonialism, the fact that neo-colonialist life of the 1960s maintained the idea that Africans possessed a “non-subjectivity or lesser subjectivity” than their former European colonizers.158 What is permanent also is the potential for change, which works in contradiction to the permanence of repression. In her article on the film, Langford argues: “La Noire de... can be seen to confront these issues of identity
and subjectivity and to suggest tactics for contesting the reduction of the African to mere identicalness.”

Due to foreign control over the African film production and distribution, the ability to challenge the legacy of colonialism in the filmic medium was a long time coming in Africa. While the first film in sub-Saharan Africa was made in 1953, a 23 minute short by Mamadou Touré, remarkably, *Black Girl* was the first feature-length film made by an African director in Africa. Sembène, author of six novels and director of two previous shorts at this stage in his career, took the very first opportunity to challenge visual depictions of Africans over which he previously had no control. Sheila Petty describes how after Sembène’s film there was optimism that the impact of film in Africa would not just be for amusement alone, and this legacy can be identified further in the 1975 Fédération Panafricaine des Cinéastes (FEPACI) meeting in Algiers. In this meeting the “Algiers Charter of African Film” was written. It “stipulates that African film should be a vehicle for education, information and consciousness-raising, and not strictly a vehicle for entertainment.”

These historical details resonate with a central tenet of this paper; namely, to consider in detail those films depicting migration that were made with a certain intention in mind: in Bai’s situation, to make a film that conformed to the state’s idea of migration, and in the cases of Fassbinder and Sembène, to make films that were in allegiance with grassroots political movements. In these three films, and especially in *Black Girl*, the intention is not “strictly entertainment,” but to educate or persuade the audience (Table 3). For example, *Black Girl* was made in order to educate its audience about the effects of migration and neocolonialism, an intention that is
achieved to a great extent by the use of the voice-over technique. In addition, the protagonist Diouana is represented in a moment when she chooses who she is and where she belongs. Diouana’s decision to take her life, unlike any of the other characters in the films discussed here, is one that allows her to escape the equation altogether: she becomes subject to no one. This moment is one that has been misinterpreted by many viewers who might consider Diouana’s suicide to be the ultimate act of subjugation by the forces of neocolonialism.

Table 3. Outline of Major Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Home, Sweet Home</th>
<th>Ali: Fear Eats the Soul</th>
<th>Black Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intention for depicting migration</td>
<td>Conform to State Policy</td>
<td>Provide positive image of a migrant guest worker</td>
<td>Challenge neo-colonial stereotypes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subversion of intention</td>
<td>Bai’s postmodern techniques that affirm the film’s construction is manipulated</td>
<td>Fetishization and orientalization of Ali, conforming to stereotype</td>
<td>(Potential) Misinterpretation of suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal device</td>
<td>Non-linear narrative</td>
<td>Framing, static shots</td>
<td>Voice-over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>See Table 2</td>
<td>Ali and German life/triangular love relationship</td>
<td>Oppression by employers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possibly the most significant precursor to Diouana’s suicide is a conversation she has with Monsieur and Madame regarding a letter they receive from Diouana’s mother. Monsieur reads the letter to Diouana at the dining room table in their
apartment, and Madame listens in. The two masters are noticeably excited by this event, as they hope a letter from home will enliven the depressed Diouana. Monsieur and Madame’s expectations would seem valid, if not for the voice-over. Access to Diouana’s thoughts reveal that Diouana’s mother is illiterate so she could not have written the letter herself. More than likely the words were recorded by a public writer in her community. So there is a significant mediation from Diouana’s mother’s spoken words in Africa to the enunciation of the words by her employer reading the letter in France. Next, when Monsieur finishes the letter and suggests that the illiterate Diouana respond, he actually starts writing the letter -- putting words into Diouana’s mouth -- without her consent. This inscription of Diouana by her employers can be characterized as anything but trustworthy. The disjunction between what is happening and the reality of Diouana’s psyche is so complex that clearly it would take intense effort to elucidate, an endeavor Diouana refuses when she excuses herself from the table.

The film goes to great lengths to demonstrate that Diouana exercises control over her situation when provided an opportunity: she walks the streets on her own in her homeland to find employment, she decides to work in France on her own accord, and she is in control of her body sexually when she is with her boyfriend before leaving Senegal -- frustrated with him when he acts out of line, and conforming to her own desires at her own discretion. This is important because if otherwise, her suicide might be interpreted as an act of resignation instead of an act of agency and control. At the time of Diouana’s suicide she states: “Never again will the mistress scold me...” and “she will never lie to me again.” These statements are precisely and profoundly
the case. Her voice-over and her actions merge into one. Langford claims: “the suicide does not reduce [Diouana] to objecthood, thus constituting a victory for colonial discourse; rather it demonstrates her ultimate agency. [...] In death she becomes fully the unadministrable, uncircumscribable body which has already so aggravated her employees, but at the same time she indelibly embodies her subjectivity.”

And yet, of course, she has departed. Diouana cannot overthrow her masters from the grave. This aspect of the film troubles viewers, and perhaps it cannot be resolved except by considering that the fictional film, if it is intent on instilling hope at all, is motivated by a very real, non-fictional desire to educate its audience.

Although from a different time and place, a famous suicide in the history of Chinese cinema sheds light on this issue because it provides a way to understand how Sembène might have intended his audience to interpret the film’s climax with a sentiment other than despair. On the 8th of March, 1935, Shanghai’s famous actress of the silent screen Ruan Lingyu (Lily Yuan) committed suicide. The 24 year-old actress took her life two days before a contentious court case, and years after being under the gaze and scrutiny of a tabloid press that praised the “virtue, innocence, and sincerity of movie actresses in the 1930s” while it demonized other women considered the “femme fatales of the city.” Ruan fell into the latter category as she was labeled an “immoral” woman, and by all appearances she simply could not go on living under such pressure. Thus, her suicide has yielded theories of causation that have yet to be entirely resolved. Was it because the press would never allow her to construct her own subject position? Or was her death in some way due to the fact
that she portrayed intense and tragic on-screen characters who committed suicide?
Regardless, all speculation seems to take into account that it was Ruan’s choice to
commit suicide. Michael Chang writes: “The fact that Ruan became more human in
the eyes of some, but only after taking her own life, was merely another twist of irony.
A columnist in Qingqing dianying asked: “If Ruan Lingyu hadn’t committed suicide,
would you still express sympathy with her?”166 Her last decision demonstrated that
society could not control every aspect of her being, and metaphorically Ruan Lingyu
held up a mirror to those who were profiting by her victimization.

It is in this context of actual, historical agency and permanence that Diouana’s
action within the fictional narrative might be considered. Similar to Ruan Lingyu, the
act Diouana performs in Black Girl is effective in critiquing social reality because her
choice was performed of her own volition. Her action affects the social relations of
all of the participants, and thus it is by far her most significant act. It is like a
rhetorical gesture at once embodying appeals to logos (rationale), pathos (emotion),
and ethos (ethics). But in total contrast to Ruan Lingyu, the affect of Diouana’s
gesture is important to the film not because suicide should be the choice of migrant
workers in reality, but because after all it is an imaginary action that is totally,
unconditionally, absolute. What remains in the film is not the idea that suicide is the
ideal choice of agency, but that at the core of Diouana’s choice is the essence of a
permanent action that repositions all existing coordinates. If correct, this reading of
the film might be consistent with Sembène’s political activism, since it was lasting
change that Sembène strove for.
All in all, Diouana’s death is indeed the most dramatic of conclusions. And it is one in which the intention and content of the film do not work in an oppositional relationship, but in harmony. In this film, in this depiction of migration, the narrative is represented in concert with the formal device of the voice-over in a unified effort to confront racism and the colonial value system. In many ways, then, Black Girl avoids the ambiguity of intention in Fassbinder’s film, and the inherent contradictions between state purpose and formal devices employed in Bai’s film.

A Sort of Homecoming: Home Sweet Home

The French title of Black Girl (La Noire de…), is literally The Black Girl of… And this is the question this chapter has considered as well in terms of the politics of migration on the big screen during the late 1960s and early 1970s in world cinema. Where is home? Returning to Home Sweet Home after an examination of Ali and Black Girl provides a new perspective on the “particular and limited local contexts” of depicting migration in Taiwan during the 1970s. The following is a series of categorizations and their possible implications.

Table 4. Three Cinematic Depictions of Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Nation depicted</th>
<th>Interior/Exterior</th>
<th>Title descriptions</th>
<th>Character decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Sweet Home</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Both Interior/Exterior</td>
<td>Location: Home</td>
<td>Return to the homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali: Fear Eats the Soul</td>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>Primarily interior</td>
<td>Protagonist: Ali</td>
<td>Remain overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Girl</td>
<td>Home/transi</td>
<td>Primarily interior</td>
<td>Protagonist: (Diouana)</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Sweet Home is exclusively set in Taiwan. Due to financial concerns, and the difficulty of on-site (overseas) location filming, there is a material reason for this. Still, the film fails to fully demonstrate to the experience of living abroad, while repeatedly referring to overseas incidents in its dialogue. Considering Fassbinder and Sembène’s films, life outside of one’s homeland includes its low points, and at its worst, entirely dehumanizing situations. Both Ali and Diouana are depicted as frustrated and even disillusioned when they consider the disparity between what they thought life overseas might be and their actual experience. While working in Germany, Ali loses his right to be called by his birth name, he is orientalized, and treated as an object instead of a subject by the other characters in the film. But in the end, he decides to stay in Germany. Sembène’s Diouana is also fetishized, and still she chooses not to go home. The hope she has for a better life in France, once effectively negated by the reality of her life in France, does not lead her to conclude that she should make every effort to return to Senegal. In contrast to both Ali and Diouana’s experiences, Bai’s film essentially demonstrates that returning home after being overseas is an ideal choice.

This point might be emphasized by considering the spaces that the directors chose to represent. In Bai’s case, the spaces could quantitatively be characterized as both interior (a variety of Taipei homes) and exterior (Sun Moon Lake, National Palace Museum, construction site of a dam) locations, while Fassbinder and Sembène chose to focus primarily on interior spaces. This reveals one aspect of Bai’s project: to make known the natural beauty of Taiwan and the accomplishments of the
Nationalist state. In contrast, the characters in Fassbinder and Sembène’s’ films in their respective countries abroad are employed within interior spaces and less than ideal living conditions. Bai’s choice to show exterior locations is consistent with the intention to appeal to transnational migratory workers who, like Ali and Diouana, might work indoors while abroad and thus would not have an opportunity to explore nature or spend leisurely hours at public places. Bai’s film shows how students who returned to Taiwan might appreciate the great outdoors. Yet in reality students were unconvinced by the appeal of their homeland’s cultural monuments and geography to remain in Taiwan.

The relationship between the titles of each of the films and the spaces represented is significant as well. In Bai’s film, the title is a place: “home.” But for both Fassbinder and Sembène the title stands for the main character represented. Ali is specifically mentioned in Fassbinder’s title, and Diouana is indirectly referred to in Sembène’s. Moreover, the representations of Ali and Diouana reveal that the migratory process is one that impacts identity formation in powerful ways. For them, the overseas is a postmodern experience in which the psyche might be fractured. They each feel dislocated, an absence of stability, and the persistence of incoherence. In Diouana’s representation specifically, there is no sense of a unified identity. This is consistent with the fact that their physical and social reality changed radically, and thus they struggle intellectually and psychologically to adapt to new cultural environments.

These observations have two key implications when considering Bai’s film. First, Bai depicts his characters, in contrast to Fassbinder and Sembène, with a kind of
unified identity incongruent with Fassbinder and Sembène’s depictions of migration at the time. Bai’s characters Mr. Zhiyun and Ms. Ruyin, Lengyu, and Dr. Wu are almost entirely centered, autonomous entities that consider their border crossings and psychological transformations with a kind of modernist identity intact. Second, since the characters tend to be presented as one-dimensional cardboard copies of the KMT state’s model, the film is in many ways actually about the place: “Taiwan,” and not the characters at all. The historical reality of Taiwan in 1970 was that the KMT was very concerned about its situation on multiple levels. For example, the government had based its identity as “free China” on the fact that it was recognized as such by the international community -- something that was going to change drastically in 1971 with the UN recognition of China, and in 1972 with U.S. President Nixon’s historic visit to China. Thus, the tension surrounding the film from the perspective of an audience considering both the fictional narrative and the historical context of the film, is the disconnect between the nationalist film project of offering goodwill and a populace that was all too aware of its unpredictable political situation. The government attempted to assuage public instability by foregrounding the landscape of the nation in its effort to depict migration. The film’s characters, essentially complicit objects, might even be said to comprise the background.

Thomas Elsaesser, an eminent scholar on Fassbinder’s films, once said that New German Cinema only existed after it was validated overseas, something that never happened to Taiwan film of the 1970s in the west. And, if considering the stereotypes expected of the art house circuit -- subterranean characters, exotic settings, transfixed narratives -- one might infer that *Home, Sweet Home*, since it represents
characters who possess their modernist identities intact, was not, and likely will never be, famous in the western art house scene as Fassbinder and Sembène remain today. Bai’s characters, out of historical time and place, in a country soon without its international identity, are anachronistically centered subjects instead of contingent, volatile, and unstable. In these and other ways, Bai’s film helps reveal that nationalist rhetoric about what is natural and innate is in fact paradoxical and arbitrary. 171 This is what comprises a key site of slippage in the politics of migration in Bai’s film, Home Sweet Home: the character’s home might be in Taipei, but their choices there under a dictatorial government are pre-arranged, formatted, framed, and stereotyped, not necessarily free and natural. Bai provides a key insight to this through the use of transparent postmodern devices and narrative techniques. His moves undermine the film’s intent, unlike the formal choices Fassbinder and Sembène make.

Certainly, the richness and complexity of Home Sweet Home emerges when considering its fascinating context, the way it represents the role of migration in the unique -- indeed, singular -- state of Taiwan by the global medium of film. It is a movie every bit about an authoritarian regime competing with the desires of a creative auteur director. The film also introduces notions of “homeland” at the beginning of a decade which was to witness the most intense of transformations. Since everything that the characters embrace in the film, when they decide to remain in Taiwan, would not exist in the same ways in the following years, perhaps Bai’s film marks one of the last times this homeland could be referred to by the KMT government as “home, sweet home.”
Chapter 3, in part, is a reprint of the material as it appears in *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, Spring 2010, Wicks, James, 2010. The dissertation author was the primary investigator and author of this paper.
Chapter Four

Gender Negotiation in Song Cunshou’s *Story of Mother* and
Taiwan Cinema of the early 1970s

In 1975 the Taiwan government’s most prestigious film prize, the Golden Horse for best film, was awarded to Director Li Xing for his film *Land of the Undaunted* (Wu tu wu min), a period piece produced in the *zhanzheng wenyi jupian* (literary art war film) tradition. The film, set in China during the Japanese Occupation period, traces both the life and times of an inspirational Headmaster Du (Wang Yin) who will not give in to his Japanese oppressors, and his students and teachers, who must make their own difficult choices between preserving the dignity of China or giving in to the aggression of those who would tear it down. When imprisoned for his acts of resistance, Headmaster Du informs his Japanese oppressor:

“You read our Chinese texts because it is the basis of your culture, your culture is inherited from China. […] The Chinese are a strong and resilient people who will never surrender!” Certainly, there would be many profitable ways to analyze *Land of the Undaunted*; however, as the film still below makes clear, a focus on the film’s gender dynamics is particularly rewarding.
In the film’s final sequence, the teachers and students struggle to understand the death of their headmaster, an inspirational figurehead who died while in captivity. With the headmaster’s passing might have left all hope for the students and instructors he left behind. Yet, in a symbolic act of defiance, an instructor named Mr. Li (Qin Han) reads the headmaster’s final letter to an enthusiastic and stirred assembly of students. Since the Japanese military police cannot stand for such behavior, Mr. Li is carted off to prison for his political insubordination. But then, in a final act of civil disobedience, the headmaster’s daughter Ms. Du (Lin Fengjiao) picks up the letter and continues reading where Mr. Li had left off.

The symbolism is profound on multiple levels. Certainly, the notion that the people of China will never give up despite regional conflict is conveyed clearly. Yet, in terms of gender representation, one observes that the authority of the woman is
figuratively granted by the father. Indeed, as the daughter reads her father’s words, the scene captures the presence of the daughter in the foreground reading the letter, while the image of the deceased father looms large behind her. His eyes peer over her shoulders as if approving the reading of his words by her tongue. In fairness, when asked about this final image, Director Li Xing has stated that this image does not contain any inherent meaning or symbolism. But as far as I may find it possible, I would beg to differ. Because, seen in the framework of Taiwan’s film history in the early 1970s, this imagery conforms to a consistent pattern in which films represent women as adopted into society by way of the approval of strong fathers. These films suggest that to belong to the nation is to have the approval of the patriarchs.

My thesis in this chapter is that the finest film of early 1970s Taiwan cinema, Song Cunshou’s Story of Mother (Muqin sanshi sui), seen in comparison and contrast with Bai Jingrui’s interesting Goodbye Darling (Zaijian Alang) from 1970, not only demonstrates the ways in which patriarchal figures confer their approval and authority, but also that the representation of gender in the film sheds light on the larger geopolitical predicament of Taiwan’s concurrent situation. In order to do so, my analysis of Story of Mother follows the constructive theoretical framework presented in Shu-mei Shih’s Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific. My discussion of Story of Mother’s representations of women and female sexuality underscores Shih’s bold claim: “there is no identity negotiation that is not at the same time a gendered negotiation. In highly volatile situations, the greatest fears and desires as well as the most fantastic projections of confidence are always articulated in gendered terms.”
This assertion is taken from Shih’s chapter entitled “The Geopolitics of Desire,” which describes how gender and nationalism are oftentimes presented in a binary structure that places the local women in a position verses the patriarchal state system. In this way, women are the “third term” in a binary struggle between a “geopolitical nation-state” and “unwelcome invaders.” But Shih notes a distinct contrast between this binary system and the phenomenon of gender articulations in Hong Kong and Taiwan at the end of the 1990s, when there was an effort in Taiwan and Hong Kong to “nationalize or territorialize politics and culture” under the threat of transnational migration; namely the influx of incoming dalumei (“mainland sister”) in Taiwan and the biutse (Cantonese) or biaojie (Mandarin) in Hong Kong. This entailed an effort of women disembedding patriarchy from the nation, so that the nation could be appealed to as an organ unaffiliated with masculinity. Shih writes: “these women deploy their national and transnational allegiances pragmatically and locally to define the meaning of their own politics.” In this way, the nation is not an oppressor, but strategically appealed to in order to challenge the idea of “transnational Chinese culture” (alternatively, “pan-Chinese culture” or “global Chinese culture”) represented in the mid-1990s media.

What I would like to focus on here is how Shih’s gender theorization might also inform our understanding of Taiwan’s film representations of the early 1970s. To begin, in terms of “identity negotiation,” it is reasonable to conclude that the Chinese Nationalist Party’s censorship apparatus approved of films that presented its distinctive characteristics in an ideal manner. Next, an examination of state-approved filmic narratives, themselves structured representations of state-endorsed
ideology, reveals that the resolution of conflict entails a “gendered negotiation.” In *Story of Mother* specifically, the resolution of the film has everything to do with how men and women were expected to behave in Taiwan society. Additionally, Shih’s discussion of “volatile situations” might be evaluated in two ways. First, one could consider that the conflicts within film narratives are presented as “volatile” situations. For example, *Story of Mother* focuses on an estranged relationship that threatens to divide a family in two. Second, the term “volatile” could apply to Taiwan’s regional and global identity during what could not be a more turbulent decade for a state that based its legitimacy on international recognition. The KMT government had based its identity as “free China” on the fact that it was recognized as such by the international community -- itself a fictional representation that was altered drastically in 1971 with the United Nations recognition of China.

Moreover, Shih describes how a “coherent pan-Chinese” cultural identity might be undermined by “disjunctions and contestations in the cultural and political arenas.” While Shih’s statement applies to the historical moment of 1990s Taiwan and Hong Kong, the notion that gender negotiation might destabilize a “coherent pan-Chinese” identity is also relevant to the film *Story of Mother*, which similarly “thwarts an easy assertion of the emergence of a pan-Chinese culture.” The cultural identity that Taiwan propounded in the early 1970s might be termed “pan-Chinese,” to use Shih’s appellation, because the characters on Taiwan’s silver screen, such as those in *Land of the Undaunted*, were expected to be models of a pan-Chinese identity propagated by the “Cultural Renaissance,” in contrast to the ideas of the “Cultural Revolution” which was concurrently propagated on the mainland. Thus, this chapter
describes how the depiction of gender in a captivating filmic text, *Story of Mother*,
interconnects with its historical-material context during a time when a series of
political setbacks plagued the government (see chapters one and five).

Cinematic discourse and images are the product of social and cultural
processes, which as Ann Kaplan writes, is a production that is by no means gender
neutral. In turn, the cinematic image affects society -- a phenomenon most evident
when the discourse of film “precedes or exceeds” political discourse. These
“excesses” might be located by noting disjunctions or points of slippage between what
is portrayed on the screen and social mandates propagated by state film. This idea of
excess is elucidated by Darrell William Davis:

Film history is usually practiced using a kind of parallelism, establishing
connections between fictional worlds onscreen (texts) and the actual world
contained in primary documents from the same period (context). It is deeply
satisfying when we “discover” correspondences between film imagery and
documented historical fact – when it looks as if film indeed reflects film
history. However, this sells film short. Films are themselves primary
documents of history, and can reveal things about their time that other
historical records might not.

It is in this way that films might accurately depict what is occurring in the social
context. Accordingly, the depictions of gender and female sexuality in the following
analysis might accurately portray gender roles and the social context of Taiwan in the
early 1970s. This is to be expected, and it is a fascinating process in and of itself to
observe these connections. But what is at times more captivating, as is the case in this
chapter, is the way that *Story of Mother* exposes facets of society that perhaps the
KMT government did not intend at the time.

*Story of Mother* is a rich film that demonstrates, as a kind of social gauge, the
possibilities available to directors when they took on projects that explore gender relations. In fact, film critic Cai Guorong recommended this film, along with Bai Jingrui’s *Goodbye Darling* (1970), when I discussed this chapter’s topic with him.\(^{184}\) Both films deal with depictions of gender negotiation and have stood out to scholars of Taiwan cinema and culture. Emilie Yeh and Darrell Davis offer a comprehensive analysis of the film, stimulating further discussion of the film with insights such as “Bai’s *Goodbye Darling* has a number of moments that would have given Taiwan’s censors plenty of worry.”\(^{185}\) Similarly, Yingjin Zhang states that *Story of Mother* is “a rare study of female sexuality” in Taiwan.\(^{186}\) At the same time, in many ways these are extremely safe films, films that disclose what the KMT government deemed as acceptable, authorized, and valid representations; certainly, these are images that the state would not release otherwise. *Story of Mother* demonstrates the types of gender identity that are acceptable, and which types of gender characteristics cause trouble in Taiwan’s *wenyi* or “literary art” film tradition.\(^{187}\)

Lu Feiyyi situates *Story of Mother* in the broader scope of Taiwan’s film industry, and thus helps clarify the types of films available to audiences during the early to mid-1970s. The number of films submitted for censorship approval from 1970 to 1975 is as follows: 117 (1970), 114 (1971), 81 (1972), 45 (1973), 66 (1974), 49 (1975).\(^{188}\) By 1975 the number of films submitted for censorship approval was far lower than the highest year of film production in Taiwan, 189 in 1968. This is due to a number of factors (see chapter one). In 1972 when Song released *Story of Mother*, 275 films were screened in Taiwan from abroad, while 135 were from Hong Kong. In 1972 more films were made in the *wenyi* tradition than any other film category (27),
while comedies came in second that year (20), and then martial arts films third (7).
During the time in which *Story of Mother* was released, the government enforced a quota on the number of films that could be imported so that the local industry could flourish, which reminds one of the way that national finances were managed in general in Taiwan, film being one aspect of an overall prosperous era of administered economic growth.

Song Cunshou made over 25 films in his career, and certainly a standout film from his oeuvre is *Story of Mother* due to its gender depictions. As a recent Taipei film retrospective attests, Song is one of the major figures of Taiwan cinema in the 1960s and 1970s. He is in the top five directors of this era, along with Li Xing, Bai Jingrui, and Li Hanxiang, and Hu Jinquan (King Hu) who “defected” from Hong Kong and made films in Taiwan. Song originally worked in a printing shop and loved to watch films, then, after meeting directors Li Hanxiang and King Hu, he started working as a scriptwriter and log keeper for the Shaw Brothers. Eventually, he worked his way up the production chain until he was an assistant director, and then with Li Hanxiang’s assistance at *Guolian* Studios, Song became a director. In his own words, Song went through stages of being “an audience member, a researcher, and then a creator” of films over a ten year period, and through this process he had the opportunity to perfect his craft.

Song’s first film was a *Minnanyu huangmeidiao* (popular folk melody) film entitled *A Perturbed Girl* (*Tian zhi jiao nü*, 1966), which was at the height of the subgenre’s popularity at the time. He would follow this film with pictures ranging from martial arts epics such as *Iron Petticoat* (*Tieniangzi*, 1969) to contemporary
dramatic family pieces based on Qiong Yao’s novels such as *Outside the Window* (Chuangwai, 1973). Song’s films are distinguished by his careful use of editing, willingness to work cross genre, and his placement of characters into situations where a series of allegiances and binary choices test their psychological limits. His work displays a keen knack for employing understatement wisely and an ability to depict subtle character emotion studies. In addition, Song is the type of consummate director who trusts his audience throughout the film. He withholds key names, dates and other relevant details until necessary, keeping the audience guessing and entertained, while maintaining that precious balance between revealing too much information like a TV soap opera and not revealing enough information like an intellectualized art house picture.

These generalizations apply to *Story of Mother*, a film that was critically received but did poorly at the box office. Song stated that film critics might have found the protagonist in *Story of Mother* to be too young to experience the events that transpire in the narrative, and it was hard to score a good result at the box office with a film that centers on the life of a middle-aged woman. Instead, Song argues, audiences preferred romances featuring beautiful clothes and luxurious settings. Regardless, *Story of Mother* includes such aesthetic virtues as well-paced editing, exquisite use of photographed images -- such as those otherwise superficial framed family photographs on a domestic wall that in fact provide visual clues foreshadowing future scenes -- and a colorful use of thematic images such as oranges prominent in both present-tense and flashback sequences.

Released by privately-run Dazhong Studio, *Story of Mother* is a melodrama
that centers on the psyche of a young college student named Qingmao (Qin Han), who must struggle to accept that his mother (Li Xiang) cheated on his father when Qingmao was a young boy. As such, it is the first film to depict a mother’s affair in the history of Taiwan cinema. By the end of the film, Qingmao learns -- by way of the advice of the strong female models in his life, namely his girlfriend and his Aunt -- that he should take a more tolerant view of his mother’s former infidelity, and forgive her. Then, in an outrageous final scene, the unfortunate Qingmao is disallowed from reconciling with his mother because she is randomly struck by a taxi at a railroad crossing and dies while Qingmao looks on.

Song benefited from the full backing of the Dazhong studio owners, including both Li Xing and Bai Jingrui, when he directed the film. Since Li and Bai were film directors themselves, they understood that Song needed to retain full freedom to manage everything from actors to financial concerns, and that is what they allowed. The film did not pose any problems for Dazhong in terms of censorship, even though it might be considered the Lust, Caution (Lee, 2007) of its time due to its representation of sexuality: in the first sequence, and repeated via flashback in sequence 26, the mother expresses deep pleasure while in the arms of her lover. On the one hand, the shot entails the briefest of glances, but on the other hand, it does push the envelope at a time when filming pornography would result in the death penalty. In any case, the film was made from the start to pass the approval of the censors without causing any problems, and that is indeed what occurred. Li Xing, the producer of the film, stated that he did not want to make films that would be altered later by others. In other words, one might say that Dazhong’s films were made to
be complicit with state policy. In this way, in terms of what Taiwan and Southeast Asia’s audiences saw, there was not to be a major difference between the films released by the state and those that would be released by local and transnational private studios for the open market.  

In terms of filmic structure, one notes that in comparison with other Taiwan films of the early decade -- for example Li Hanxiang’s period film *The Story of Tin-ying* (Tiying, 1970), Li Jia’s comedy *The Fake Tycoon* (Miao jile, 1971), Li Xing’s *The Autumn Execution* (Qiujue, 1972), and Bai Jingrui’s romantic film *Love in a Cabin* (Bai wu zhi lian, 1972) -- *Story of Mother* displays a complex narrative strategy. One could even argue that its narrative level of sophistication matches the films of the Taiwan New Cinema a decade later. Sequences 7-17 of *Story of Mother* are comprised of an extended flashback, and moreover, an embedded flashback within the flashback. These flashbacks portray events that occur to Qingmao as a young boy (portrayed by a young Tuo Zonghua, who as an adult starred in Ang Lee’s *Lust, Caution*). A sequence breakdown of the film in table 5, below, enables a more complex understanding of the film’s structure and patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 5</strong>: <em>Story of Mother</em> Sequence Breakdown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story of Mother</strong> (Song Cunshou, 1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System 1: Filmic Apparatus and Enunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System 2: Principle of Spectatorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System 3: <strong>Interactants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>QM= Qingmao (Qin Han); M= his mother (Li Xiang); ML= his mother’s lover; MZ= his girlfriend, Meizhong; BM= his aunt, Bomu; QB= BM’s son, F= his father; BF= BM’s husband, or Bofu; QMB= his younger brother; MH= Mother’s second husband</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Primary</em>: Alley (A), University (U), Coffee Shop(s) (CS), Bomu’s home in Taipei (BMH), Mother and Father’s home in Jiayi (MFH), Mother’s House after the Father*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table continued

dies (MH); Qingmao’s dorm room (QMD), Train (T)
Secondary: Mother’s lover’s house (LH), Bus Stop (BST), City Walk (CW), Hospital (H), Funeral site (FS), BM’s backyard (BMBY), Meizhong’s dorm room: MZD, Nature Walk (NW), Hotel (H2)

* Note: shading indicates flashback sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seq.*</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Interactants</th>
<th>Sequence Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A, LH</td>
<td>QM, M, ML</td>
<td>Opening credits, spying sequence: QMB sees M making love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>U, QMD, BST</td>
<td>BM, QM, MZ</td>
<td>Day 1: BM visits QM at the U in order to ask him to reconcile with M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>QM, MZ, QB</td>
<td>QM is emotionally incapable of hanging out with his friends when thinking about his mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>QM</td>
<td>QM goes for a walk through the city to clear his mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>QM, M, ML</td>
<td>M meets ML on a train, ML offers M and QM oranges, M accepts, QM does not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>QMD</td>
<td>QM</td>
<td>QM returns to QMD after his walk, he looks at a photograph of his father… fade out to another flashback…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>MFH, A, LH</td>
<td>QM, M, F, ML</td>
<td>Sequence 1 is fleshed out with scenes that occur before and immediately following sequence 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>MFH</td>
<td>QM, M</td>
<td>M tries to reconnect with the now distant QM; QM writes a letter to BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>T, A</td>
<td>BM, QM</td>
<td>BM takes a train to Jiayi, QM meets her at the station and they go home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>MFH</td>
<td>QM, F, BM, M</td>
<td>BM encourages F to go to Taipei to seek help for his illness, talks to M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>QM, F, BM, BF</td>
<td>F has his illness diagnosed, then returns home with QM on the train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>MFH</td>
<td>QM, F, M, ML</td>
<td>ML is at home when F returns, F argues with M and then literally falls deathily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F dies in the hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>FS</td>
<td>QM, M, BM, BF</td>
<td>BM takes QM, QM’s two younger siblings stay with M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>BMH</td>
<td>QM, BM, QB</td>
<td>QM becomes friends with QB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>BMBY</td>
<td>QM, QM</td>
<td>QM’s younger brother comes to BM for help – his M is not taking good care of him, and in fact, their younger sister dies from neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>MH</td>
<td>QMB</td>
<td>The story of QM’s younger siblings is depicted, an embedded flashback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>BMH</td>
<td>QM, BM, BF</td>
<td>The story of QM’s younger brother comes to an end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>QMD</td>
<td>QM</td>
<td>QM is reflecting (on sequences 7a-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>M, MZ</td>
<td>Day 2 of the narrative: M goes to the U to talk to MZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>BMH</td>
<td>BM, M</td>
<td>BM and M discuss QM and MZ’s relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>MH</td>
<td>QMB, MH, M</td>
<td>M returns home from visiting BM, she is loyal to MH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>MH</td>
<td>M, QMB</td>
<td>M goes back to Taipei to get in touch with QM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>QMD, CS</td>
<td>MZ, M</td>
<td>M and MZ discuss how to get QM back into contact with M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>U, NW</td>
<td>QM, MZ</td>
<td>QM and MZ have a wonderful time together until MZ mentions M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As an analysis of the sequence breakdown indicates, this is an intricately constructed film. One of the first important themes that emerges is scopophilia. The idea of looking, seeing, and observing both sexuality and tragedy is projected in the first sequence: the boy follows his mother to her lover’s tryst and sees his mother in ecstasy while in bed with her lover (sequence 1), and later in the film Qingmao stays to watch his father confront his mother’s infidelity, after which his father dies of health complications, even though his father explicitly tells him to leave the room (sequence 11). Furthermore, the mother is seen from subjective point of view shots as she sleuths around Qingmao’s university campus to see what he looks like after all of the years she was away from him (sequence 19). Even the final sequence of the film involves Qingmao witnessing the death of his mother when she is struck by a vehicle at a railroad crossing. Thus, the motif of spying is introduced from the very

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>BMH</td>
<td>MZ, BM, QM, MZ, BF</td>
<td>Day 3: BM and MZ plan to reunite QM with M; over dinner, QM learns that he has been accepted to study in the U.S., BF encourages him to make peace with his M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>QM, MZ, M</td>
<td>QM and MZ visit M, it appears as if M is sleeping around in the hotel, so QM leaves the hotel in anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>QM, MZ</td>
<td>MZ tells QM to get over himself, especially when he says that he thinks all women are like M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>MZD</td>
<td>MZ, BM</td>
<td>BM visits MZ in her dorm room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>BMBY, BMH</td>
<td>QM, MZ, BM, BF, QB</td>
<td>BM tells QM that the apparent “lover” in M’s hotel was just the owner delivering tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>QM, MZ</td>
<td>QM and MZ go to visit M in Jiayi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>MH</td>
<td>QM, MZ, QB</td>
<td>QM and MZ discover their mother is at the hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M, MH</td>
<td>M takes good care of MH (unlike how she treated F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>MH, A</td>
<td>M, MH, QB</td>
<td>M returns home to learn that she missed seeing QM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>BMH</td>
<td>BF, M</td>
<td>M visits BM, but BF says that QM, MZ, and BM are at the train station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>TX/ T</td>
<td>QM, M</td>
<td>M takes a taxi to see QM, meanwhile QM is leaving on a train, M sees QM on the train and runs towards his train, then she is struck by a taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>QM, M</td>
<td>QM sees his mother lying on the road as his train takes him further away from her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
first sequence of a film that represents multiple sites of tension and dichotomies ranging from distinctions between pre-adolescence naiveté and middle-aged sexuality, public life and the private life, inner circles of friends and outside influences, and the divide between ecstasy and retribution.

A second significant element of this representation of Taiwan culture in the early 1970s is the way the camera tracks and traces the film’s dominant female characters as they glide effortlessly through and between the settings represented in the film. This notion is beautifully revealed in the second sequence of the film, in which Aunt Bomu sets the precedent for how female characters traverse the physical spaces of the film. The second sequence is divided into three scenes: first Aunt Bomu enters the university campus and speaks to Qingmao’s girlfriend Meizhong, then she proceeds to visit Qingmao in his dorm room, then she exits the scene by taking a city bus to head back home. The three scenes in this sequence are linked by tracing her movement and presence, which also foreshadows the way Aunt Bomu will weave in and out of Qingmao’s life later in the film in the flashback sequences; for example, when the young Qingmao writes Aunt Bomu a letter regarding his father’s health and his mother’s infidelity (sequence 7b), Aunt Bomu in turn travels by train in order to help Qingmao’s situation. And in the final third of the film, she is a key negotiator between Qingmao and his mother. Certainly, Aunt Bomu and Qingmao’s girlfriend Meizhong, who separately and independently make peace with the mother before Qingmao attempts such a gesture, move back and forth freely between the spaces the mother occupies and those Qingmao inhabit. In this way, the film is a progressive film at its time; it appears to demonstrate that women’s secondary status was slowly
However, two key quotations that at first glance might appear to complement the stature of women in Taiwan society actually function as counterweights to the potential emergence of gender equality. The first quotation comes from the mouth of Aunt Bomu. In sequence 9 she tells the mother, as they fix dinner together in the kitchen: “As women we marry and have children, and as such we accept our fate.” Qingmao is seen in this scene spying on his aunt. He overhears the conversation, and recollects it within a flashback sequence. It is as if he longs for his mother to have taken the advice of his aunt, as if he wishes that his mother would have accepted his aunt’s advice and “accept her fate” as a woman who must not commit adultery and thus detour from the path designated by the men in her life.

The second quotation occurs in sequence 11, when Qingmao’s father confronts the mother about her secret trysts; she passionately explains: “Although I am a mother, I am a woman too!” This would seem to challenge the father, and introduce to the discussion that women should be treated as equal subjects rather than objects; however, it is important to note that this scene as well is presented in the film as a flashback, and as such it is part of the memory that troubles Qingmao. This is the advantage of considering the structure in conjunction with the film’s major themes: the mother's statement is framed by her son’s psyche and recollection, she is part of his imagination, part of his worldview. Thus, her assertion “Although I am a mother, I am a woman too!” on the one hand privileges the mother’s subjectivity. But, on the other hand, its function in the film is to cause anxiety to the protagonist who, in the present-tense of the film, reacts with apprehension because such a statement entails
equality with his father. These are statements that weigh on Qingmao’s psyche as he negotiates his transition to adulthood. Taken together, these statements suggest that the film does not present a free, uncontrolled, and unmonitored female sexuality as socially acceptable. While the film does push the envelope, and should be applauded for raising uncomfortable societal questions such as how one might accept extramarital affairs, at its most mundane the film maintains the status quo.

Intriguingly, Qingmao does not reconcile with his mother for a majority of the film. Early in the narrative, Qingmao safeguards his father’s power by pushing his mother completely out of his life; in this way he blindly holds onto a memory of a perfect father who suffered the ignominy of an unfaithful wife. Throughout this section of the narrative Qingmao’s character is depicted as unbearably ignorant and stubborn (see sequence 27). Again, it would seem that this blind acceptance of the father allows a space for the expression of female subjectivity, since clearly Qingmao holds on to notions of patriarchal authority without logic or reason. But it might also be argued that Qingmao’s father is cuckolded because his father is too pathetic to prevent it. Indeed, the father is so frail he suffers a fatal heart attack the moment he attempts to confront his wife about her infidelity. After the father passes away, the father’s authority is maintained by a son who understands neither his mother nor how to safeguard what is left of his own authority as patriarch. The conflict of the film is that Qingmao is immobilized by his immaturity, and his father was an invalid, terminally ill, and weak patriarch.

So, while women like Aunt Bomu freely maneuver the physical spaces of the film, it is Qingmao’s psychological transformation that enables the narrative to
progress through its various stages of conflict, climax, and resolution. The world of
the film swings according to his whims whether advertently, when Qingmao
intentionally rejects his mother’s affection (sequence 7b), or inadvertently, when
Qingmao determines to resolve his conflict with his mother (sequence 35). Aunt
Bomu and Qingmao’s intelligent girlfriend, Meizhong, try to influence Qingmao to
change his mind; significantly, it is only after learning that his uncle supports the
advice provided to him by Meizhong and Aunt Bomu that Qingmao chooses to
reestablish a relationship with his mother (sequence 25).

So, if the central question of the film, a question introduced in the film’s
second sequence, is: should a mother’s infidelity and neglect of her children (sequence
15) be held against her indefinitely? Then the answer is no, for if one understands the
mother’s point of view, she deserves compassion. Even her death is cast in a
sympathetic light (sequence 36). However, an even more pertinent question remains:
who confers this compassion and sympathy? Considering the way gender is presented
in the film, it is up to the up and coming member of the patriarchal system, Qingmao,
to earn his rightful role as masculine authority by conferring his approval. Due to the
fact that the film never actually presents Qingmao when he reestablished a
relationship with his mother, but rather the film represents Qingmao’s change of
heart, the film could be said to portray a man in the process of attaining his mantle of
patriarchal authority, but one who has not entirely achieved it.

Qingmao preserves his authority by recognizing that his father was weak and
that he himself holds the power of integrating his mother back into his life and
society. As for the leading women, they are active in so far as they desire to be with
men for their sexual pleasure, such as the mother, and in the way they make decisions for themselves, such as Aunt Bomu and Meizhong. The women are considerate, compassionate, and sensitive. Yet one could say that theirs is a subjectivity that poses no threat as long as there are powerful men in charge. And men in the film must be on their guard: at any moment the mother -- who is never named, and thus functions as archetype -- might have an affair if their husband is a pushover, weak, and ignorant. Such men as Qingmao’s father will meet the fate they deserve if they are not cautious. In the end, these archetypes: the pathetic father and impetuous mother, pass away. What remains is the enlightened son.

Bai Jingrui’s film *Goodbye Darling* offers a different critique of Taiwan’s male youth. Released by Wansheng Studios two years previous to *Story of Mother* in 1970, the same year that Bai also directed *Home, Sweet Home* (see chapter three), *Goodbye Darling* could be deemed a safe film in a number of ways. Unlike the unique editing styles inherent to *Home Sweet Home*, *Goodbye Darling* conforms to the continuity editing style typical to Taiwan film which stemmed from the classical Hollywood mode. While it is a film that does not take extreme risks in terms of film style or political statements, it certainly bears the distinctive stamp of Bai who was willing to experiment, unlike many of his peers. For example, when the main character of the film, Guizhi (performed by Zhang Meiyao, a former Taiwanese-language film star) puts on her new sunglasses in sequence 4, the subjective point of view shot is tinted red, as if the audience is seeing through her eyes. And, in a brilliant conclusion to the thirteenth sequence, Alang angrily throws his t-shirt at the camera (after pulling the cranes off of a light cord, and then turning the light on,
which is amazing considering sequence 8), effectively fading the image to black, creating a natural segue. And its use of parallel editing, as mentioned earlier, is surprising and innovative taking into account that other directors in Taiwan were not attempting such strategies.

A sequence breakdown reveals the nuances of the narrative:

Table 6: Goodbye Darling Sequence Breakdown

**Goodbye Alang** (Bai Jingrui, 1970)

System 1: Filmic Apparatus and Enunciation
System 2: Principle of Spectatorship
System 3: Interactants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seq.</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Interactants</th>
<th>Sequence Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>GZ, band members</td>
<td>Title, and opening voice-over while a band marches in a small southern Taiwan city; one of the girls is frustrated with GZ’s poor performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>OM, band members</td>
<td>Two scuffles: the band members storm the office for their pay, then two female characters (Au Tao and Fang Mei) tussle over who is Alang’s girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>OM, GZ</td>
<td>OM trains GZ to be the band leader, OM gives her new shoes and sunglasses, making one of the girls jealous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>GZR</td>
<td>GZ, AL</td>
<td>GZ and AL meet, he tries to force himself on her, but GZ bites him, the close-up POV shots during this struggle contrast with sequence 13, at the end of the scene Auntie and OM arrive to kick AL out of GZR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>band members</td>
<td>The band performs along a waterfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>OM, GZ, AL</td>
<td>OM takes GZ out to eat in the night market, there AL causes a public scene that amuses GZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>AL, AU</td>
<td>Alang goes to the BD in order to ask AU if he can rejoin the band, she consents, then some thugs come to the BD and beat AL up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ALR</td>
<td>AL, GZ</td>
<td>GZ goes to ALs’ flat while he is recovering from his beating and they make love, signified by a close-up of a light bulb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seq.</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Interactants</th>
<th>Sequence Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>GZ, OM</td>
<td>GZ sneaks back to the BD, but is noticed by OM who inquires after her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>AL, GZ, OM</td>
<td>AL, out with GZ, causes a scene during a day market where an opera performance is in the background, OM spies on the couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ALR</td>
<td>AL, GZ, OM</td>
<td>After returning to ALR, GZ is frustrated with AL’s behavior and leaves, OM tells AL to stay away from GZ, then AL throws OM down the stairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>AUR</td>
<td>OM, AU</td>
<td>OM asks AU to forbid AL from coming around the BD and to serve as the matchmaker between OM and GZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>ALR</td>
<td>AL, GZ, AU, OM</td>
<td>AL and GZ make love, AU and OM arrive to take GZ back to the BD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>band members</td>
<td>GZ faints while performing with the band on a blistering hot afternoon in the countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>GZR</td>
<td>GZ, OM</td>
<td>GZ recovers from heatstroke with OM’s assistance, they agree to marry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>AUR</td>
<td>OM, AU, GZ</td>
<td>OM pays AU the money that binds GZ to the band, during the ensuing celebration with the other band members, GZ sneaks off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>ALR</td>
<td>GZ, AL</td>
<td>GZ goes to AL’s messy apartment and tells him she is marrying OM, which infuriates him, and that she is pregnant with this child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>OM</td>
<td>OM plays a somber tune on his flute – GZ has left him for a month now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>OM</td>
<td>OM goes to the night market for dinner, and learns AL has moved to Gaoxiong with a woman (GZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>PH</td>
<td>AL, GZ</td>
<td>GZ goes to a PH to see AL, he refuses to see her there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>OM</td>
<td>OM leaves to find GZ and AL, he falls down the stairs as he leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>AL is told not to hawk watermelon along a waterfront in Gaoxiong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>AL/GZH</td>
<td>AL, GZ</td>
<td>AL demeans GZ in a heated argument by throwing water and insults on her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>AL/GZH</td>
<td>OM, GZ, AL</td>
<td>OM comes to get his money from GZ, but upon learning of her pregnancy and poor condition, decides not to request it, just then AL walks in the door excited about his new job as a truck driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>OTR</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>AL drives a truck full of pigs to Taipei, and crashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>AL/GZH</td>
<td>AL, GZ</td>
<td>GZ tells AL he will surely crash again if he keeps up this dangerous occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>TG</td>
<td>GZ, AL</td>
<td>GZ tells AL not to drive or GZ will move to Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>AL, GZ</td>
<td>AL asks GZ to stay, but as AL is determined to drive trucks, GZ leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>OTR</td>
<td>GZ, AL</td>
<td>GZ (on a train) witness AL (driving his truck) come to his fiery death in a dramatic train/truck collision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>GZ, OM</td>
<td>The band plays on the modern streets of Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>band members</td>
<td>The cautionary voice-over states: “Goodbye, Alang!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The film is a study in contrasts. On the one hand, there is the weak male
character exemplified in Old Monkey, a 51 year old band manager who is continually haggled by the women in the band as they find him easy to manipulate and laughable when he is at his weakest. Meanwhile, the strong female characters are typified by the band owner named Auntie. Auntie is the boss. Her authority carries weight when it comes to any issue within the band dormitory. Emotionally, the band goes as Auntie goes: if she is happy, they follow suit, if she says stop, they stop on a dime, if she is upset, everyone listens. Old Monkey seeks her when he needs advice, and even pleads to Auntie in order to persuade her to serve as his matchmaker. The main female character, Guizhi, is also a stalwart figure. She maintains her optimism when she is a new member of the band, keeps her composure under pressure, and is willing to give a series of second chances to the ill-mannered Alang. She also manipulates Old Monkey into paying her bond to the band, demonstrating clever survival skills and a keen wit.

The most important strong-willed character in the film is Alang, but his strength connotes things negative: he is uncontrollable, violent, and dangerous. His method of employing a Taiwan southern-style uncouth, hyper-masculine strategy to negotiate gender boundaries is, on the terms provided by the film, unacceptable. Similar to the narrative strategies of *Story of Mother*, the film presents many scenes that justify Alang’s elimination. In sequence four of the film Alang sadistically forces himself on top of Guizhi in order to rape her, but she effectively bites his mouth to get him off of her. Alang repeatedly knocks down anything in his way, both physical objects like a table in a night market and a gambling booth in a day market, and he even throws Old Monkey down a set of stairs. He messes around with prostitutes, and
gets beat up by the *liumang* (local thugs) from his neighborhood. He smashes Guizhi square in the face in sequence 17, and in sequence 23 three he screams at Guizhi, “If you weren’t pregnant, I would kick you to death!” In these ways he is vile through and through. Still, his rough charm wears off on Guizhi. In fact, after he strikes her, she claims that he is not so despicable as to kill her. The happiness he displays when finding work as a truck driver in the final half of the film makes him appear content with himself and the world around him.

What is notable too is that, like *Story of Mother*, the film might be said to leave a space for the expression of female sexuality. And while it is only just as daring as Song’s film, and certainly is in accordance with state censorship, it manages to represent with equal emphasis the pleasure of sexuality to both women and men. Consider the sex scene in sequence 13, which is described by Yeh and Davis elegantly as “simple and exemplary.” There scene is silent, without a diegetic or non-diegetic track: first a prone and enraptured Guizhi faces up, eyes closed in medium shot, to Alang above her; cut to two paper cranes hanging and swinging from a light cord, an orange one on top of a pink one; cut to Alang’s face covered with sweat, eyes closed and then he opens them to look down upon Guizhi; cut again to the cranes, the close-up zoomed in closer than previously; cut to Guizhi from the point of view of Alang as she reaches a climax; then a point of view shot from Guizhi looking up at Alang, his eyes open and beaming; cut to another shot of Guizhi in bliss; another shot of Alang beaming; back to Guizhi; cut to the cranes; then a lightly played solo piano soundtrack begins as Alang lays down slowly next to Guizhi from her point of view, he is hot and sweaty in the brightly lit room. As the images move
back and forth between the two in this scene, both are seen to be enjoying other. They are pleased both together and individually. Moreover, as in *Story of Mother*, it is Guizhi who initiates their association, as she comes alone to his room, in control of her own sexuality and desire. Neither this film nor *Story of Mother* presents any character who frowns on such behavior.

And yet, while Alang and Guizhi might share gender equality in their moment of passion, this is not consistently the case throughout the film. Again, the structure that frames the film undermines such a reading. The film is initiated with a voice over, with the moving-image of a marching band parade performance in the background: “Countries are developed rapidly/ Above all, Taiwan is outstanding/ Many years ago/ Three-wheeled carriages were very popular/ You could see many low-leveled building too/ [During that time] There was a girl band at the southern part…” The setting, as the introduction attests, is that of a bygone era, before modernization transformed the island. Thus begins the story about Guizhi, a band member in a southern Taiwan town who falls in love with a James Dean-type, *Rebel Without a Cause* (Ray, 1955) character performed convincingly by Ke Junxiong. After Guizhi becomes pregnant, she rejects an opportunity to marry an aged and responsible, albeit weak-willed man, named Old Monkey, and instead moves with Alang to Gaoxiong, where the reckless Alan takes a job as a truck driver. Guizhi eventually leaves him, and en route to Taipei she sees Alang crash his truck and meet his unlucky end. At the conclusion of the film, as Guizhi performs with a band in Taipei, the same “voice of god” voiceover concludes the film: “Now, three-wheeled carriages exist no longer/ And no more low-leveled buildings/ Instead there are pitch
roads and high sky-scrappers/ What about people like Ah-Lang?/ His is of imprudent
and rough character/ That won’t suit the present industrial society/ So his final
conclusion is natural/ Pity can we just say: ‘Goodbye, Darling’!”

Perhaps the warning in *Goodbye Darling*, those unhappy disclaimers that
bookend the film, is a continuation in the tradition of films like *Blackboard Jungle*,
(Brooks, 1955) one of the first youth films in the United States, which included a
similar qualification for the viewers: the film the audience is about to see displays
despicable characters so that each person might avoid immoral behavior in their own
lives. And certainly, voiceovers and introductory text in film was not unique to the
history of Taiwan cinema as well. In fact, the first healthy realist film by Li Xing,
*Our Neighbors* (1963) carries a similar voice-over style introduction. But, as Davis
and Yeh write, “The feeble attachment of a moral to this story of rich human
fallibility is an example of the evolution of healthy realism into something
ideologically unruly.”  

So, ultimately there is a lesson to be learned. What lesson is it, exactly?

*Goodbye Darling* like *Story of Mother*, was released during the state’s
“Cultural Renaissance” (see chapter three). This project, as Jason Kuo persuasively
writes in *Art and Cultural Politics in Postwar Taiwan*, included the glorification of
the nation on all fronts: *guoyu* (national language), *guoyue* (national music), *guoju*
(national theatre, Peking Opera), and *guohua* (national painting). This chapter
might offer an intervention in the discussion of Taiwan cinema by considering the
relationship between gender and this nationalistic state project. *Goodbye Darling* was
a signal that Alang’s expression of identity will not enable society to advance
according to KMT policy. Even though he speaks guoyu, he is not one who would enjoy guoyue, guофu, or guohua. However, while the film cautions men from acting in anti-social ways like Alang, the behavior of the women is not condemned. 

*Goodbye Darling* portrays Auntie as a more than capable authority on the local level. The film does not portray any negative occurrences for any of the women of the band who flock after Alang (sequence 7), or fight for his attention (sequence 2). Guizhi is consistently her portrayed sympathetically throughout the film. Still, it is the male figure that remains the central figure of the film. Yet he is too assertive, irresponsible, and unmanageable. So it is in alignment with state policy that his death, like Mother’s death, minimizes any threat that his on-screen non-conformist behavior might have on society in general.

If Shuqin Cui is correct, then ideally gender discussions should arrive via a “self-motivated” movement -- rather one than appropriated by a patriarchal nationalism -- which would eventually lead to freedom. Yet, I would argue that such perspectives propounded by Cui are not to be found in the film discussed here. So, rather than a movement from the grassroots, one might conclude that the structure of *Story of Mother* and the character portrayal of Alang in *Goodbye Darling* reveals that this presentation of gender behavior was endorsed by the KMT state. And this was a state in a “volatile” situation, to return to Shih’s terminology.

The correlation between the political situation in early 1970s Taiwan film industry and its representation of gender is surprising. While Taiwan’s prestige in international diplomacy decreased as the decade wore on, the state endorsed wenyi film style transitioned to a new era of *kangri* films that represented the KMT regime
as successful in regional and global conflicts. A key moment in this transition occurred in October of 1972, when CMPC’s manager Gong Hong, the father of healthy realism, left his post and Mei Changling took the helm at the studio. Under Mei’s watch, a kangri film hit the screens entitled Storm Over the Yang-zi River (1972). The film was met with popular acclaim alongside the concurrent sever in Japanese-Taiwan relations. This film was soon followed by other films from the early to mid-1970s in the propaganda-dominated, patriotic, nationalist film style. Films of this nature, films that show the defeat of foreign threats whenever and however they arose, include: The Everlasting Glory (Ding Shanxi, 1974) and Eight Hundred Heroes (Ding Shanxi, 1976). Films were produced in this genre throughout the decade, including A Teacher of Great Soldiers (Liu Jiachang, 1978).

Despite these changes, depictions of gender remained in many ways unchanged. In 1972 Story of Mother features a future patriarch who must forgive the sins of the mother, and learn to emulate his uncle who is a model of strength in contrast to his own sickly, cuckolded father. And in the 1975 film Land of the Undaunted, gender equality is not fully achieved when speaking is allowed only under the auspices of the father, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. While the style of films changed dramatically, representations of women’s role in society remained quite similar. So, if one is to look to Story of Mother to locate female characters exceeding their cultural norms one might find it to a certain extent, but not to the degree that women earn rights equal to their male counterparts. But not only this, the organization of the film, as the semiotic sequence breakdowns attests, shows that when female subjectivity is expressed, it is encapsulated or carefully framed
within the memory of a future patriarch who might approve or disapprove of female expressions of identity.

So, to return to Davis’s point established early in the chapter: “films are themselves primary documents of history, and can reveal things about their time that other historical records might not,” what does a film that represents gender negotiation in the early 1970s reveal about Taiwan’s precarious political situation? In the ever-transforming political climate, in the ever-transitioning film market, and in the ever-changing styles of the films, why is it that the portrayal of gender remains constant? Why is it that women require the guidance of a firm father in order to function in society?

One interpretation might be that the fathers, by extension, stand in for the patriarchal KMT authority concurrently in power in Taiwan. If so, a potential reading might be that the consistent representation of the patriarchs throughout the early 1970s correlates with the KMT state’s consistent international policy -- despite all challenges to their governance and political standing. Politically, the Nationalist’s constantly propagated their position as the seat of all of China in the early 1970s as both theirs already (since the government was recognized as the Republic of China) and something that must be earned and maintained (after they had lost legal representation in the United Nations). The depiction of Qingmao’s emotional struggles in Story of Mother demonstrates the psychological impasse inherent to this double bind. Qingmao provides a fictional representation of this phenomenon since he is one who is always already the centerpiece of the film since he is the primary male, and yet at the same time he must both earn and maintain this position by
forgiving his mother and recognizing the weakness of his father before him. In contrast, Alang fails to earn proper respect as patriarchal figurehead. Shih’s statement that “the greatest fears and desires as well as the most fantastic projections of confidence are always articulated in gendered terms” certainly requires qualification. Still, the essence of Shih’s sentiment resonates with *Story of Mother* when considering the representation of Qingmao as patriarchal authority. After all, so much is at stake in this national allegory: will Qingmao maintain his privileged status, or will he, like his father, be cuckolded as well?

*Story of Mother* could not be produced at any other time or place in history. It is a film specific to the ever transitional local and contingent context of Taiwan in the early 1970s. And still the influence of the global was always part of the equation, as the local and global interwove in a web of power and history. Ella Shohat writes that in the evaluation of transitional situations, the cultural critic should show the “different levels and valences embedded in it.” In this discussion, the valences include the cinematic image and a national film institution set within a volatile social context. Despite all of the variables, one might still locate with a degree of clarity a handful of insights embedded in the gender representations in *Story of Mother*. Naturally, many stones remain unturned, but this case-study has attempted to demonstrate that the KMT state propounded a version of gender inequality in early 1970s cinema that perhaps unintentionally encapsulated its geopolitical quandary. As the turbulent 1970s concluded and the transitional 1980s began, new political issues would in turn be captured on celluloid to represent the historical permutations and social instabilities that would follow.
Chapter 4, in part, has been submitted for publication in a forthcoming volume on Chinese cinemas. The dissertation author was the primary investigator and author of this material.
Chapter Five

Portraying the Local: Taiwan Cinema in the late 1970s

The story of Taiwan cinema in the early 1960s begins in many ways with Li Xing, and the 1970s also concludes with Li Xing and his dominant films. This chapter analyzes late 1970s filmmaking and includes three preliminary observations on the state of Taiwan cinema at the end of the decade, thus commenting on the origins of Taiwan New Cinema by outlining: 1) perhaps surprisingly, the strengths and limitations of Frederic Jameson’s essay “Remapping Taipei,” 2) observations on the state apparatus’s attempts to depict the local situation in late 1970s cinema, and 3) a brief comparison of the historical situation that saw the birth of the Taiwan New Cinema with that of New American Cinema.210

First, how is it that a reassessment of “Remapping Taipei” might be essential to an understanding of Taiwan film in the 1970s? I argue that Jameson’s article reveals why it is necessary to consider both the “positioning of the national entity within the new world system of late capitalism” and the local interrelationship of literature and film cultures in Taiwan in order to understand the film Jameson critiques, namely The Terrorizers (Yang, 1986). Accordingly, a discussion of the interconnection of literature and film cultures follows below. Moreover, I will describe how the critical perspectives of Yvonne Chang and Emilie Yeh and Darrell Davis directly -- and June Yip indirectly -- respond to Jameson’s essay.

To begin, definitions and examples of nativism and modernist literature in Taiwan in the 1970s. Taiwan nativist literature initially advocated for the protection
of local traditional and agrarian culture in Taiwan as a form of resistance against the assimilation and modernization movements imposed during Japanese occupation.  

The “revival” of the nativist literature movement reflects the transitional period of the 1970s in Taiwan culturally, geographically, and historically. Nativist literature was cultural in that it conveyed the experience of local Taiwanese whose perception of history and society differed from the mainlanders who arrived in 1949. The nativist writers expressed feelings from the perspective of the rural and mountainous regions, representing those who had lived on the periphery of urban centers. And they decried the excesses inherent to rapid industrialization and urbanization in the 1970s.

Historically, the nativist position was characterized by its opposition to foreign governance, be it Japanese Occupation or KMT forces. Angelina Yee, in her article “Constructing a Native Consciousness: Taiwan Literature in the 20th Century,” summarizes the nativist point of view as: a) against western values such as capitalism, materialism, imperialism, b) against the minority KMT Nationalist government that perpetuated the myth of returning to the mainland, and repressed the local populace with violence, imprisonment, and by disallowing the formation of new political parties, and c) against the mainland Chinese government which the nativists characterized as regressive, oppressive, and economically backward.

Authors of the nativist movement include Wang Tuo, Yang Qingchu, Chen Yingzhen and Wang Zhenhe. Huang Chun-ming, while taken as an advocate for the nativist position by nativist supporters, might fit less precisely in this company of nativist authors since he is quite unconcerned with how he is classified. Still, he has written stories that serve as a wonderful example of literature that originated in the
countryside from a local Taiwan perspective. His short story, “The Drowning of an Old Cat,” was published in 1974 by Dalin Publishing Company. The story takes place in a town named Clear Spring Village of around 50,000 people, which had been perennially remote but renowned for its natural spring that provides fresh water to its community. However, due to modernization projects (sponsored by the KMT, see chapter three) and the expansion of the urban into rural spaces, Clear Spring Village comes under threat of development by the town leaders of Jiezai, a nearby city. When the townspeople of Jiezai arrive in Clear Spring Village in order to build a swimming pool, an entertaining yet dignified group of four old men try to stop the building project because they want to keep the village rustic and pristine as it has always been. This group of elderly patriarchs is led by Ah-sheng who protects the land because, as he states, “I love this piece of land and everything on it.”215 Ah-sheng fails to stop the building of the pool, however, and in a both humorous and tragic event, Ah-sheng drowns in the swimming pool in the story’s final scene. In a critique of “Drowning of an Old Cat,” Howard Goldblatt writes: “the land itself stands in the way of progress and must be sacrificed to the god of modernization.”216 The dualism represented in this Hwang’s story, between modernity and tradition, and the rural and the urban, is a common theme in nativist literature.

This contrasts with modernist writing in Taiwan. Modernist literature in Taiwan continued to thrive directly after the postwar years, unlike on the mainland. The modern poetry of Taiwan can be distinguished by its language and form. It was written in the vernacular and focused on language exploration and evocative word combinations which distinguished it from classical poetry with its conventional meter.
and rhythm, and a tradition of 3000 years as a sister art to calligraphy and painting. Modern poetry during the 1920s and 1930s was inspired by the sentiment expressed during the May Fourth Movement on the mainland -- which had also inspired Taiwan’s nativist writers of the 1920s -- although direct connections to the May Fourth movement were thwarted after 1945 by the Nationalist’s censorship of texts by leftist writers such as Lu Xun and Lao She.

After the KMT government established its leadership in Taipei in 1945, poetry in Taiwan was often characterized by its anti-communist, pro-nationalist themes; however, a collection of poets who employed modernist writing techniques, including obscure language and reflections on metaphysical dilemmas, discovered that abstract verse not only allowed them to express their anxiety and frustration, but also these sentiments could be published without detection by KMT government censors. The group of writers that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s included notable writers such as Wang Wenxing and Bai Xianyong. These writers displayed a “double alienation” from the writing tradition on the mainland, and from the physical place of the mainland which was their home.

An example of modern poetry includes Shang Qin’s surrealist poem entitled, “Giraffe.” Written in two stanzas, the first of four lines and the second of three lines:

After the young prison guard noticed that at the monthly physical check-up all the height increases of the prisoners took place in the neck, he reported to the warden: “Sir, the windows are too high!” But the reply he received was: "No, they look up at Time."

The kindhearted young guard didn't know what Time looks like, nor its origin and whereabouts, so night after night he patrolled the zoo hesitantly and waited outside the giraffe pen.
This poem does not follow Hwang Chun-ming’s realistic and humanistic portrayal of the city of Clear Spring Village with its endearing populace that lives with a close relationship to the land. In contrast, Shang Qin’s poem focuses on existential problems and separation anxiety, evoked in such terms as “prisoner” and “freedom,” and the feelings of exile of modernist poets and writers. The year after this poem was written, the journal Xiandai Wenxue (Modern Literature, 1960-1973) was founded by Taiwan University students. The publication was an important part of the movement of modernist writing in Taiwan, and it contained published translations of Western authors such as Franz Kafka, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf.

The public clash of modernist and nativist literature, which focused on the extent to which the perspectives held by the respective writers were valid expressions and justified points of view to represent the experience of living in Taiwan under the KMT, came to the fore in the 1970s, a decade of intense political instability in Taiwan once the government lost international support. The Nativist Literature Debates consisted of a public clash between nativist writers who claimed that the modernists were not adequately speaking on behalf of the political and social experience of the local benshengren of Taiwan, and the modernists, who argued that the nativist writers were separatists. The debates between the two camps pitted a local Taiwanese humanist realist tradition against the mainlanders who displayed aesthetic formalism.²²⁰

In 1972, these differences were at the heart of the “New Poetry” debates, when nativist criticism was directed towards the modernists for not using traditional Chinese techniques or Taiwan’s local dialects in their writings. The debates
culminated in 1977-1978, following a government organized conference in 1977 entitled the “Symposium of Literary Workers,” during which attacks on nativist literature took center stage.\textsuperscript{221} The nativist writers were accused of being communists due to their anti-KMT stance, an emotionally-charged attack bolstered by concurrent reports of atrocities committed by the communists on the mainland during the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, the use of the Taiwanese-dialect in nativist literature, which was banned in public schools, appeared to be a break with a Chinese nationalism. This accusation was denied by nativist writers such as Chen Yingzhen who defended both his use of language and his allegiance to a Chinese consciousness.\textsuperscript{222}

The \textit{xiangtu} literary debates, concerned as they were with the relationship between literary expression and politics, became inextricably linked to film production in the 1970s. This is not to say that prior to the 1970s, film and literary worlds remained apart. Indeed, the fiction of novelist Qiong Yao left an indelible mark on Taiwan filmmaking. Between 1965 and 1970, 22 of her films were adapted to the screen, including by the Shao Brothers in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{223} Li Xing was the first director to adapt her work when he made \textit{Four Loves} (see chapter two), and Song Cunshou’s film \textit{Story of Mother} was also a Qiong Yao adaptation (see chapter four). Yao’s escapist narratives, including stories set in the early Republican eras that regale love gained and love lost, was a standard genre in its own right in the sentimental and romantic films of the 1960s and 1970s. The film adaptations of Qiong Yao’s work were easily appropriated as part of the “healthy realist” tradition and its subsequent modifications.
Although they were not to have the same staying power as Qiong Yao’s adaptations, by the late 1970s Taiwan's film industry embraced a new trend: adapting nativist stories to Taiwan’s screens. Li Xing was at the forefront of this movement. Not surprisingly, his films presented nativist stories with a distinctly state-endorsed point of view. This point of view can be observed in four of Li Xing’s late 1970s and early 1980s films: *He Never Gives up* (Wangyang zhong de yi tiao chuan, 1978), *Good Morning, Taipei* (Zao’an Taibei, 1979), *The Story of a Small Town* (Xiaocheng gushi, 1980), and *My Native Land* (Yuan xiangren, 1980). Li Xing won the Golden Horse Award for best picture in 1978 with *He Never Gives Up*, in 1979 with *Story of a Small Town*, and in 1980 with *Good Morning, Taipei*.

*The Story of a Small Town*, classified as a *xiangtu pian* (nativist film), was selected as one of the top three films of the year in 1979 by the Chinese Film Critics Association (*Zhongguo yingpinren xiehui*) of Taiwan. The film begins in a woodshop within a prison, in which a wizened patriarchal figure named Lailao, portrayed by the father in both *Beautiful Duckling* and in the first narrative of *Home Sweet Home*, invites a younger fellow convict, Chen Wenxiong (Kenny Bee), to work with him once they have served their sentences. Wenxiong agrees, and after sometime they both work together in Lailao’s woodworking shop in Sanyi, a small town north of Taizhong known throughout the island for its famous woodcarvings. There Wenxiong falls in love with Lailao’s daughter, the deaf ’Axiu, portrayed by Lin Fengjiao, who won the Golden Horse award for her performance.²²⁴ Lailao, Wenxiong, and ’Axiu’s lives are occasionally disrupted by local ruffians and superficial urbanites who seemingly arrive only to disturb the local family’s values of
discipline, hard work, and unity. The film concludes with a song that, like the theme song in *Home Sweet Home*, conveys the message of the film: “Generation after generation/ Features of the small town remain the same.” All the while, panning shots depict a pastoral Sanyi, nestled next to lush mountains and verdant rice fields, and interior shots represent a humble dwelling inhabited by kind and trustworthy residents.

Li Xing’s film is a far cry from the controversial nativist stories that did not shy away from the grotesque, yet at the same time this type of film was successful at the box office for a final moment of triumph before the film production slump of the mid-1980s. Once the downward spiral of film production was accurately forecasted, the KMT government opened up to new film strategies and was willing to provide a greater opportunity to its film personnel including Chen Kunhou, Wang Tong, and Hou Hsiao-hsien, and to newcomers such as Edward Yang and Wan Ren. Taiwan New Cinema is what emerged during this moment of transition. In the new climate, screenwriters such as Wu Nianzhen and Zhu Tianwen advocated for “a return (or “regression”) to daily practices of Taiwanese languages and behaviors, things that audiences for *Taiyu pian* had lost, and that had never been seen onscreen by younger people.” The example *par excellence* of this desire is represented in *The Sandwich Man* (‘Erzi de da wan’ou, 1983), a tri-part film written about extensively and adapted from three stories by Hwang Chun-ming, and directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien, Zeng Zhuangxiang, and Wan Ren.

Enter Frederick Jameson. His famous essay “Remapping Taipei” focuses on Edward Yang’s Taiwan New Cinema film *The Terrorizers*. The film is a multi-narrative work that includes the interaction of three storylines: a photographer who
captures Taipei life, a Eurasian woman known as “White Chick” who attempts to swindle money and is involved in multiple relationships (captured by the photographer), and a professional couple including a doctor and his wife, a novelist who feels entrapped within the closed space of her residence. The cityscape of Taipei with its geometric buildings and skyline and disco lights in urban clubs provides the setting. The Terrorizers is unlike the nativist-style film in the tradition of the stories that comprise The Sandwich Man, or depictions of rural life and growing up in Taiwan in Hou Hsiao-hsien’s A Time to Live, A Time to Die (1985). However, The Terrorizers is classified within the body of Taiwan New Cinema films because it marks an aesthetic break with the previous era’s films and it addresses the negative aspects of living in contemporary urban Taiwan society. In general, the extreme characterizations of nativist literature (as traditional and local) and modernist (as obscure and concerned with aesthetics alone) are blurred and conflated in Yang’s film.

However, Jameson’s article reveals that he does not intend to investigate the complexity of the nativist and modernist discussion as part of his sophisticated analysis of the film. Thus, he does not fully take into account the cultural, historical, and geographical background of the Taiwan situation. However, Jameson is an expert on the relationship between capital and cultural production, and this is what he focuses on in his essay. Jameson writes, regarding the depiction of Taipei in the 1980s:

Indeed, it does seem to be the case that The Terrorizers (a peculiar and pointed translation of Kongbu Fenzi, 1986) assimilates modernization, and the toll it takes on psychic subjects, more generally to urbanization than to Westernization as such. This lends its “diagnosis” a kind of
globality, if not a universality, which is evidently what has made Yang’s critics uncomfortable.

According to Jameson, *The Terrorizers* depicts the extent to which the global reach of modernization, urbanization, and Westernization has affected Taiwan. Therefore, *The Terrorizers* fittingly shares many of its characteristics with other “third world films” that similarly use multiple perspectives inherent to a distinctively postmodern in its depictions of urban settings and the meaningless routines of its citizens. The characters appear to express feelings of alienation which is related to participating in the modes of production in the age of late capitalism. Jameson asserts:

[...] [Taipei] is an example of some generally late capitalist urbanization (which one hesitates, except to make the point, to call postmodern) of a now-classic proliferation of the urban fabric that one finds in the First and Third Worlds everywhere alike.”

**Conclusion 1: The Jameson Debate**

So, how is one to acknowledge the effects of late capitalism in the depiction of life in Taipei, and yet not lose focus on the cultural specificities of the modernist and nativist debates that must be considered in order to analyze the films of Taiwan New Cinema? Yvonne Chang’s essay “*The Terrorizer* and the Great Divide in Contemporary Taiwan’s Cultural Development,” provides an excellent reference point in this discussion. She addresses the specific ways that *The Terrorizers* is a “Great Dividing” moment in Taiwan history, an instance when the professional cultural order inherent to commercial capitalism superseded the age of the literary culture that existed during the martial-law era in Taiwan. In the mid 1980s, marked by the abolition of martial law, there was an opportunity to transition to explore new voices
and ideas and experiences -- and Yvonne Chang characterizes this in general as a transition from martial law to market law. 231

Chang argues that, in contrast to David Harvey’s conditions of postmodernity that have been used in Western discourse in analyses of East Asia, “it is more justifiable to locate the Great Divide within the historical context of contemporary Taiwan at a point when verifiable cultural reorientations can be discerned.” 232 Economically speaking, the great divide was preceded by the increased commercialization of the media and publishing industries. 233 In this way, Chang’s article maintains both a focus on economic issues and cultural issues in Taiwan. The strength of her argument is her focus on evidence from Taiwan’s literature and publishing agencies to observe how Taiwan has emerged as an economically developed country. Within the context of this discussion, Chang depicts The Terrorizers as the film that marks a significant divide between two eras, the previous being when serious modernist and nativist art was created, and the following being a new popular art regulated by market (low-brow, according to Chang) forces. Thus, The Terrorizers, with its inherent self-reflexivity and reflection of commercial culture in Taiwan, also represents the end of Taiwan’s brief arthouse filmmaking mode when contemplative nativist works were adapted into film in the early 1980s. According to Chang, films following The Terrorizers became increasingly governed by the global forces Jameson observes in his article, thus “herald[ing] the arrival of a more specialized, differentiated, and professional cultural order typical of advanced capitalism, and the close of the unique literary culture that formed in martial-law Taiwan.” 234
I agree with Chang’s argument because, as with Jameson, an economic perspective is essential to understanding the condition of Taiwan filmmaking. Yet Chang provides additional details that are essential components to the analysis of the film by considering, not only the intersection of late capitalism with Taiwan’s filmmaking industry, but also Taiwan’s local and political influences on the creation of fictional narratives in Taiwan's postwar history. With this in mind, when one considers *The Terrorizers*, with all of its angst and presentation of multiple interlocking narratives, it's emergence in Taiwan film history sociologically has as much if not more to do with the emergence of a post-colonialist mentality -- seizing the opportunity represent issues outside of the objectives of the state apparatus -- as it does with the economic system of globalization and associated market forces.

Fangming Chen writes that (what Yvonne Change terms) the “Great Divide” in Taiwan was distinctly postcolonial, not postmodern: “aspirations for liberation did not have to wait until the introduction of postmodern thought into Taiwan; rather, it was precisely the end of martial law that enabled previously suppressed desires to be unbound.” So the emergence of Taiwan New Cinema, which I argue is a combination of both nativism (local stories) and modernism (appeal to existential dilemmas) -- was a result of the new political environment after martial law, not due to financial concerns alone, as artists seized the opportunity to explore new experiences that could not be represented before.

This discussion highlights the importance of considering a rubric of postcolonialism to understand the nativist and modernist debates, as well as Taiwan film production in the late 1970s and early 1980s, for the strict binary between
nativism and modernism in the 1970s at its worst polarizes the conversation in a way that ignores the many factors that nativism and modernism actually share. In terms of literature, what is evident is that on the one hand the modernist and nativists were competing in the 1970s with each other for the right to “own” the ideal mode to express the distinct experience of living in Taiwan. However, when viewed as responses to the regimentation of the KMT regime it is evident that the opposing factions share the same dilemma: how should one respond to the monolithic colonial regimentation propounded by the KMT? How can one represent the reality of Taiwan’s social condition through fictional narratives in an age when the dominant restricts free speech and oppositional political views? This was a real and pressing issue during the white terror: director Bai Ke was accused of being a spy in 1962 and sentenced to death in 1964, and author Chen Yingzhen was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment as late as 1968 for “subversive” activities.236 These are just two instances of widespread political subjugation on the island between the KMT occupation in 1949 and the end of martial law on July 15, 1987. Overall, the entire picture must be kept in mind, for the influence of the colonial system is difficult to observe within the narrow study of a particular literary camp, the study of a particular film movement, or the study of the relationship between artistic movements and international capital.

Although the categories I have introduced here are admittedly broad: nativism, modernism, and postcolonialism, the intention of describing these movements alongside specific examples is to directly provide both a theoretical and historical background to Jameson’s discussion of Taiwan New Cinema. Nativism and
modernism are essential facets of Taiwan’s particular cultural, historical, and geographical experience that deserve close inspection when considering Taiwan’s film scene. For example, Hwang Chun-ming’s work reveals an attachment to Taiwan’s northeastern rural locations, while Shang Qins’ poetry offers a different geographical connection -- the mainland, or maybe two geographies at the same time, both Taiwan and China. In contrast, Jameson’s reference points are global.

So, when Yeh and Davis write: “Maybe there are simpler ways to understand and enjoy Yang’s film than the Jamesonian system,” the answer is really, yes and no. Partly Yeh and Davis are having some fun at Jameson’s expense because Jameson’s essay is nearly impenetrable at multiple junctures. Yet, when Yeh and Davis argue that Jameson should understand the local situation more carefully, which Yvonne Chang’s article more clearly conveys, they make a valid point. Jameson’s article nicely outlines the way Yang’s film uses postmodern film techniques, such as depicting a photographer as in Blowup (Antonioni, 1966) who takes pictures that in turn question the ontological relationship between image and “reality,” so overall, he captures the aesthetics of the film, but he misses the local context. More specifically, when Jameson entered the scene in Taiwan, what he initially thought to be the result of globalization was actually the cultural moment in the mid to late 1980s when the people of Taiwan were experiencing a particular phase of decolonialism. The era in which a decolonialist dialogue with a colonial past was not possible was precisely during the late 1970s, when films like those directed by Li Xing initiated a depiction of the local experience, whetting the audience’s appetite for the “authentic” Taiwan New Cinema films of the 1980s.
Conclusion 2: Reflections on the Legacy of the “Healthy Realist” Model

The 1970s were famously transitional on Taiwan’s political stage: in 1970 the Diaoyu Tai islands were returned to Japan, in October of 1971 Taiwan withdrew from the United Nations, in February of 1972 the Shanghai Communiqué was signed which paved the way for diplomatic relations between the United States and China, in 1975 Chiang Kai-shek passed away, in 1976 Taiwan boycotted the Olympic Games, and in 1979 the Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States was terminated. The decade culminated with the Meilidao Incident, a political protest on December 10, 1979, Human Rights day, which led to the arrest of the “Gaoxiong Eight” and others for their appeal to return more rights to the people of Taiwan. But the government film industry, by not depicting such events or addressing these concerns, could not have been more escapist, despite their attempts to portray the island “realistically.”

The representations that the state endorsed throughout the time period discussed in this dissertation could be characterized in three ways. The first is nostalgia for the mainland. This is evident in the 1950s films such as Opium Poppy (Yingsuhua, 1955) and in the early 1960s with Li Xing’s Our Neighbor, and carries the lineage of the Shanghai realist mode (see chapter three). This filmmaking mode has its literary analogs as well. June Yip writes: “the vast majority of literary works produced in Taiwan during the 1950s avoided confronting contemporary sociopolitical realities” and “relied on personal memories to tell only stories of life on the mainland.” Hwang Chun-ming recalls the texts available to him as a student in Taiwan: “either anti-Communist tracts or nostalgic writing by mainlanders,
sentimental yearning for the good old days back in their hometowns.\textsuperscript{241}

While this nostalgia was expressed in different ways throughout the following decade, whether in films set in the Republican era on the mainland or in films that appealed to universal notions of belonging by representing the unification of families despite adversity, the next category includes representations of KMT military supremacy in Taiwan: patriotic war films. Consider that during the mid-1970s, patriotic war films persistently won the Golden Horse film awards: \textit{Land of the Undaunted} (see chapter five) in 1975, \textit{The Victory} (Meihua, Liu Jiachang) in 1976, and \textit{Heroes of the Eastern Skies} (Jianqiao Yinglie chuan, Zhang Cengze) in 1977. The third category is the escapism of romance films and martial arts films.\textsuperscript{242} This mode is accomplished to near perfection in Li Hanxiang’s \textit{Hsih-Shih: Beauty of Beauties} (1965) and King Hu’s \textit{Dragon Inn} (1967) and to great failure by such CMPC’s imitations such as \textit{The Ammunition Hunter} (Luo ying xia, Ding Shanxi, 1971), with its poor production values and its insipid representation of something the KMT would never do: liberate China. The film ends with a cliché: the hero rides off into the sunset.

These are the characteristics of the film industry throughout the 1960s and 1970s, before, during, and after the ‘golden age’ of Taiwan’s film making. Perhaps the film that most fully realizes the three trends outlined above is Bai Jingrui’s film \textit{The Coldest Winter in Peking} (Huangtianhoutu, 1981). Based on a true story, \textit{The Coldest Winter in Peking} depicts the story of Shen Yifu, a man who was sent to a concentration camp in mainland China during the Cultural Revolution. During the course of the film, the cataclysmic events of the Cultural Revolution lead to the death
of Shen’s father and his wife goes insane. In Bai’s depiction, previous bans by the KMT on images of Mao Zedong, Red Guards, and life on the mainland were relaxed - no doubt because Taiwan’s modernization and lifestyle was hoped, by contrast, to be considered by domestic audiences as far superior to life on the mainland. What is striking is that horrific topics in Taiwan remained hidden from view. There was no chance in 1981 that the February 28 Incident or White Terror would be depicted on the silver screen. Such depictions would have to wait until after martial law, when in 1989 Hou Hsiao-hsien released *City of Sadness*.

While CMPC films were at times spectacular, even a scene in *The Coldest Winter in Peking* of the sent down youth dispersing to the countryside is impressive in both scale and scope, the fact remained that CMPC was not consistently as mesmerizing as the Hollywood or Hong Kong films that would capture Taiwan’s audiences during the 1980s. In sum, the common feature of these three categorizations: nostalgia, patriotism, and escapism, is that the silver screen presented the reality of life as the KMT saw it. Taboo topics of Taiwan were not addressed the tension in these films is not the tension of the common experience. Off-limits topics would have to wait another decade.

But there is a fourth category: the depiction of the local endorsed by the government apparatus. These films, including *He Never Gives up* (1978), *Good Morning, Taipei* (1979) and *The Story of a Small Town* (1980), and *My Native Land* (1980), contained all of the elements of the state films that preceded them: the escapism of the romance or swordplay films, yet without the patriotism of the KMT military or the nostalgia for the homeland on the mainland. In short, the fiction in
film that Taiwan stands in for China (see chapter three) was abolished. Taiwan is Taiwan in the films.

Yet, this fourth category can be seen in retrospect as less a depiction of the local condition than a set of films endorsed by the state that appeal to universal ideals. Regarding modernist writers, June Yip writes: “Since the focus of the modernist writers was on the private interior world of individual psyches rather than the public external world of social interaction, their works have more frequently been valued for their timeless or universal attributes than for any historically or culturally specific understanding of Taiwan.”244 This description could be applied to depictions of local Taiwan experiences once adapted by the state. Characters, such as Zheng Fengzi (Chin Han) in He Never Gives Up, might be interpreted as those who persist despite hardship, rather than specific representations of a distinctly Taiwanese experience. Moreover, language is a key facet of this equation. Unlike the native experience, including many residents who, like the old-timers in “The Drowning of an Old Cat,” “didn’t understand a word of Mandarin,” the films endorsed by the state in the late 1970s were presented in Guoyu.

Remarkably, two similarities in production strategies link these four film categories in addition to their use of Guoyu. The first is that the films of the 1960s and 1970s, with rare exceptions such as in The Winter by Li Hanxiang, do not have pauses, those moments of interruption that allow for audience reflection. Walter Benjamin writes, in his essay “The Author as Producer”:

Epic theater, therefore, does not reproduce situations, rather it discovers them. This discovery is accomplished by means of the interruption of sequences. Only interruption does not have here the character of stimulant but of an
organizing function. It arrests the action in its course, and thereby compels the
listener to adopt an attitude vis-à-vis the process, the actor vis-à-vis his role.
[...] What emerges is this: events are alterable not at their climaxes, not by
virtue and resolution, but only in their strictly habitual course, by reason and
practice.\textsuperscript{245}

Benjamin’s article, which describes how writers might guide their audiences
towards a “functional transformation” of society, locates the ways pauses, the
“interruption of sequences” in stage drama allows for audience participation and
reflection. The criteria Benjamin presents as essential for the possibility of “reason
and practice” in the habitual course of daily life are moments of pause and
reconsideration that might be presented in artistic, narrative works. Consider Hou
Hsiao-hsien’s film pacing: he makes his films almost entirely staged interruptions of
daily life. This style contrasts with the film sequences of the 1960s and 1970s (see
sequence breakdowns of \textit{Story of Mother} and \textit{Goodbye Darling} and in chapter 5) that
sequentially and methodically reveal their story lines from introduction to climax to
conclusion. Another, a prominent production strategy of films of the 1960s and 1970s
in Taiwan was to generally tell the story of one protagonist from a certain, dependable
point of view. Even when parallel narratives are essential to plot, as they are in \textit{Land
of the Undaunted}, they are linked in time and space as part of the same chronology.
This structure is also challenged in \textit{The Terrorizers}, with its multiple stories and
intersecting plotlines, which is also part of its postmodern aesthetic.\textsuperscript{246}

With this framework in mind, namely the absence of both caesuras and
multiple narratives in Taiwan films of the 1960s and 1970s, one can appreciate that
the Taiwan New Cinema was indeed a reexamination of the filmmaking tradition that
preceded it, as Zhang Yingjin states.\textsuperscript{247} And this reexamination was emphasized
further with the second wave films, following the Taiwan New Cinema, that use film
techniques that challenge the norms of Taiwan’s particular mode of conventional
filmmaking. Perhaps, as Yvonne Chang writes: “… the high-culture rhetoric
concealed the real objective of New Cinema promoters, which was simply to
overcome all obstacles standing in the way of the filmmakers producing films,
political and commercial alike.”248 But the two really go hand in hand: the new form,
including moments of pause and multiple storylines, combined with the opportunity to
express new points of view in an age of postcolonialism, reveals that it was time for
the filmmaking strategies of the 1960s and 1970s to be subverted. The 1980s,
cinematographically, would be a time for reflection. And without colonial circumvention,
the outpouring of multiple points of view began to emerge.

Conclusion 3: Initiating a Comparative Framework: Why Hollywood Loved and
Loves Auteur Films, and Taiwan Doesn’t

Like the directors of the American New Cinema, the auteurs of Taiwan cinema
in the 1980s impressed their distinctive stamps on their film art, most famously being
Hou Hsiao-hsien’s long take that has influenced an aesthetic throughout Asia, as
described in James Udden’s: “This time he moves!”: The Deeper Significance of Hou
Hsiao-hsien’s radical break in Good Men, Good Women.”249 Today, Hou’s films
receive foreign investment from France and Japan, and garner acclaim from audiences
globally at film festivals.

Similarly, auteur films of Hollywood today, such as those by Quentin
Tarantino, Oliver Stone, and maybe even James Cameron, are oftentimes successful
because the audience understands that a film possessing a certain director’s name will be a film presented in a predictable, identifiable style. In the 1970s, auteur directors such as Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, and Robert Altman were initially permitted to make auteur films with their own signature auteur style because Hollywood was desperate for an alternative to a production system that no longer appealed to its intended audience. Between the Paramount Decision of 1948 and the MPAA Voluntary Film Rating System in 1968, Hollywood’s profit margins steadily decreased. A number of factors lead to Hollywood’s apparent demise, including, among others: the rise in the popularity of television, a population shift away from the city (with theatres) to suburbs (without theatres), and the restrictions of a production code that prevented competition with X-rated material. When auteur films were successful and audiences returned to theatres in droves, Hollywood executives were delighted. And this is primary the legacy of the auteur film that is highlighted in this brief conclusion -- set up as a foil to film at the transition of the 1970s and 1980s in Taiwan a decade later -- in order to be certain of profit, Hollywood executives understood that a guaranteed audience is essential. Even today, after the emergence of the blockbuster, auteur films are essential for the Hollywood industry because auteur films guarantee an audience.

When Coppola was given the opportunity to direct the landmark film *The Godfather* (1972), he gained a free reign over his material that was previously unheard of. Hollywood executives were willing to experiment, so if Coppola preferred to shoot a film that was 1/3 in Italian, 1/2 in the dark, and all Coppola, that was acceptable to studio executives. As for Coppola, artistic freedom was precisely
what he and a new generation of film makers desired -- university educated as they were in auteur theory as described in *Cahiers du cinéma*, presented on the screen in films by François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard and the French New Wave, and circulated in the United States by Andrew Sarris in the 1960s. Auteur theory rose as an academic discipline in the United States and entailed that directors could be evaluated as the authors of films, just as writers are as the creators of their literary works. This idea, which might be taken for granted today, was a shift away from considering film as the product of a studio system as films were in Hollywood during the classical Hollywood studio era. According to auteur theory, directors embodied the status of a creative artist, and it was understood that the director’s style was a demonstration of the director’s personality. For example Coppola, inspired by the auteur theory, included in his art certain autobiographical details -- which is what Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang would do as well in Taiwan a decade later -- within the films he crafted. The result was a technically brilliant, original, and contemplative movie with sympathetic characters.

*The Godfather Part II* (1974) is a perfect example of the Hollywood auteur film because it bears the mark of Coppola’s signature stylistic moves. For example, a common element in Coppola’s films is the set piece within the mise-en-scène. Set pieces in Coppola’s films transform a film set into a theater stage. Every object is positioned with an intricate consideration of lighting, balance, and negative space. Rather than using multiple camera angles or quick-paced editing, Coppola moves the camera through these set pieces. The effect is both theatrical and dramatic, even when shooting on location. This is evident in *The Godfather Part II* when Tom
Hagen (Robert Duvall) talks to Frankie Pentangeli (Michael V. Gazzo) in the prison courtyard in the latter half of the film. One notes the way in which the fence positioning divides the frame in such a way that it separates first Duvall’s head from his body, and then after they reposition themselves, Pentangeli’s head from his body -- foreshadowing Pentangeli’s eventual death. The scale and scope of the artistry is evident in this and other seemingly spontaneous ways characters and the camera moves through the film space, rather than the ways someone, or anyone, in the post-production phase, could edit and rearrange the various parts to create a coherent film. The idea, of course, is that the set piece style is particular to Coppola, and one that clearly identifies him as the “author” of the film. Therefore, his films exhibit a meticulous nature that is particular to his own vision, and in contrast to the mass-marketed “whammy” movies of the 1980s, display a care and attention to mise-en-scène details.

The effect on Coppola’s audiences was not left unfelt. Audiences went in droves to see the enduring images. But success for the auteur meant that eventually studio executives were unhappy because they were losing control. Enter the blockbuster of the 1980s which film executives did have control over, and a group of films so well known to film audiences that this body of films can almost go undefined. So while the cultural landscape has changed, and the appellation “Hollywood Renaissance” has been replaced with “New American Cinema,” Hollywood’s profit motive has not. Still, within New American Cinema’s blockbusters, there remains a niche market for directors who want to leave their signature mark on movies. And they are allowed to do so because their films are profitable. This point is evident in
the work of Quentin Tarantino. For example, fans who went to see *Inglorious Basterds* (Tarantino, 2009) perhaps craved the “‘Tarantino-esque,’” a film “from a Tarantino script and very much in keeping with the style and mood of the cult status Tarantino-written and directed hits.”

While Coppola’s style could be termed academic, Tarantino’s is self-expressive, often alluding to images from the 1970s. And while Coppola’s films are presented in long interludes, Tarantino’s films can race through scenes with multiple angles and incongruous time sequences which heighten a sense of urgency. The strength of Tarantino’s films is often his scripts that are witty, cool, intricately tied to the narrative, and explicit. In the opening sequence of *Reservoir Dogs* (Tarantino, 1992), as the camera spins in circles around the table and the hyper-dialogue reads like the smooth and edgy sounds of the 1970s soundtrack, the audience is brought into a different world. Tarantino’s lines, where he elucidates the subtleties of Madonna’s “Like a Virgin,” offer allusions and interpretations of popular culture singular to the mind of Tarantino. Not to mention the scene of torture which exhibits in-your-face affect found at least in one juncture in most of his films. By doing so, Tarantino creates a cinematic experience that is not conventional, one audience’s identify with in a type of cult atmosphere where you are either in or you’re out. Tarantino’s ability to express the violence of the police man torture scene with such nonchalance blurs of the lines between illusion and reality and draws us into a vision that is clearly Tarantino’s own.

The similarity between the new wave of films in the United States and Taiwan is that, especially initially, college students and audiences were excited about the new
phenomenon of Taiwan new wave “auteur” films. They were films that struck a chord with audiences who had never seen films like the ones they were watching. In conjunction with journalists who praised the new movement such as Peggy Chiao, there was a buzz about the emerging scene. Another similarity is without a doubt the profit motive. The Taiwan New Cinema movement in and of itself was not to endure because it was not profitable in the long run, nor was the Taiwan New Cinema movement to morph into an age of the blockbuster, as it did in the United States. Hollywood blockbusters, starting in 1975 with Jaws (Spielberg, 1975), ended up being popular in Taiwan as well and there was not to be an equivalent movement of “whammy” films in Taiwan. Taiwan was left with auteur directors who made arthouse films, and the audience in Taiwan in general preferred seeing blockbuster films made in Hong Kong and Hollywood.

In the Hollywood filmmaking tradition, auteurs made and make films in such a way that audiences wants to see them again, because they can expect a signature product before they walk in the theatre or movie rental store. After all, the pleasure of an audience is achieved when an expectation is satisfied with the purchased product.253 While these films present both masterful and subtle piece of art, their value to Hollywood can be reduced, on one hand, to the fact that they pay the bills. In retrospect, auteur theory did satisfy two important needs in the west: to directors, it validated film as the “seventh art,” and second, it satisfied Hollywood executives: they could sell films to a niche market that learned to get exactly what it expected from a particular auteur director. By analyzing both The Godfather Part II and films such as Tarantino’s Reservoir Dogs, this industrial element cannot be ignored --
auteur film enabled Hollywood to become a yet more established and financially successful institution over the last 35 years. In the present landscape of contemporary New American Cinema, an auteur’s signature on a movie is not reduced to, but has become, a set of expected qualities that an audience is willing to stand in line and pay for time and again. Fortunately, in the case of auteur films, the audience experiences an accomplished work of art.

Unfortunately, in Taiwan the move away from the escapism of KMT filmmaking led to auteur directors depicting the reality of Taiwan in ways that left audiences looking for alternatives. The answer for Taiwan cinema today might be to return to the escapism espoused by the KMT, but presented from a local perspective. Such an approach would capture the popularity of local cinema that the KMT once held during the “golden age,” but with a focus on the local experience that leaves audiences entertained rather than educated. The answer might be found in the recently released Cape No. 7, which might be adequately, although unintentionally, termed a “blockbuster” in Taiwan, and it will be briefly considered in the concluding chapter which follows.
Conclusion

Transnationalism and the Structure of Feeling of 1960s and 1970s Taiwan Cinema: A Brief Reflection

At the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference recently held in Los Angeles (17-21 March 2010) the theoretical framework represented by the term “transnationalism” was included in over ten panel titles and in over 20 presentation titles. The idea of “transnationalism” seemed ubiquitous. The term is part of a movement, a paradigm shift that effectively challenges the model of the nation-state as the dominant criterion to characterize a particular film tradition or set of traditions. At the same time, no other term seems to garner such loathing, evidenced by eye-rolling -- at least according to my own observation -- so perhaps the use of the term will be short-lived. It seems self-evident that the use of the term for its own sake, and as short hand for global interconnectivity is eye catching jargon. Yet the emergence of this term, just as with Homi Bhabha’s work on hybridity in the mid-1990s, is important at this juncture even though it may be an academic fad.

While the use of transnationalism may pass quickly because of the propensity to use the term to airbrush over complex transferences of capital and only vaguely refer to the extended reaches of global corporations, my intention has been to use the term in historical material ways. By combining Wimal Dissanayake’s definitions of the local, national, regional, and global with Raymond Williams’ well-known descriptions of the emergent, dominant, and residual, I try to avoid describing “the spirit of the age” in favor of following Williams’ notion of “structure of feeling.” Moreover, combining postcolonial theory with close textual analysis reveals that an
unequal exchange results when cultures overlap, interrelate, and clash along borders that are both physical and psychological.

As noted in chapter one, “A Historical Overview of Taiwan Cinema: Representations of Transition in *Three Times*,” it is evident that at each stage of the film’s representations that dominant political power in Taiwan restricts certain aspects of both residual and emergent culture, although total constraint is impossible. The film is initiated by a segment depicting Taiwan life in the 1960s, entitled “A Time for Love.” Yet the title seems ironic since the Nationalists had overtaken the island with legal and military force, and the United States had infiltrated the landscape with its economic policies during the Cold War. Even after Japanese occupation, and after the civil war on the mainland depleted the island’s agricultural and industrial infrastructure, Hou Hsiao-hsien’s nostalgic representation shows that Taiwan’s youth culture maintained a psychological resistance that could not be entirely subjugated.

Interestingly, it is the intersection of United States pop culture and Taiwan rural life that is represented in the opening track, “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes.” The song sets the mood and emotional platform for the segment, and indeed the entire film. This song captures the ways in which sentiment emerges from specific Taiwan localities -- consider the shots of old highway signs taken throughout the island as Zhang Zhen’s character searches for Shu Qi -- yet is conveyed in the music of the colonizing, foreign influence. But not only do Hou’s fictional film representations allow viewers the possibility to comment on the historical moment, but also on the heritage of filmmaking itself. This idea is most evident in *Three Times* in the most trying of segments for first-time viewers, due to the intensity of its slow pace, namely
the scenes depicting Japanese Occupation. This segment of the film demonstrates the authoritative reach of the Japanese government into the affairs of even the most private of spaces in local Taiwanese life; namely, that of the brothel house. But more importantly, the film presents the caesura. It is as if Hou slows down time itself. The pause, the moments between action, allowing the opportunity to reflect on the purpose, rationale, and influence of major events (historical and fictional), is inherent to the structure of *Three Times*.

In contrast, the use of the caesura is a technique largely absent from all of the representative 1960s and 1970s films described in this dissertation: Li Xing’s *Oyster Girl, Beautiful Duckling*, and *Four Loves* in chapter two, (Xie Jin’s films on the mainland could be included too, for that matter), *Home Sweet Home* in chapter three, *Story of Mother* and *Goodbye Darling* in chapter four, and *Story of a Small Town* in chapter five. Hou Hsiao-hsien heighten one’s awareness of the lack of the caesura in Taiwan’s films of the 1960s and 1970s by shooting films almost entirely in the long-take, slow-paced mode once he came to prominence as a director in the 1980s. Like the still-life shots in Fassbinder’s *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* described in chapter three, the segment depicting Japanese occupation in Hou’s film allows for viewer contemplation, as inevitably the suture is broken, and the mind considers the image without being fastened to the narrative.

The use of contemplative long-takes in *Three Times* emerges from a filmmaking tradition that followed the dominant Hollywood editing mode in the 1960s and 1970s. *Three Times* also challenges the norms of what might be represented on the Taiwan screen post-martial law in the “A Time for Youth” segment
of his film by depicting queer identity, which was unacceptable according to the status quo of the dominant film apparatus before 1987 in Taiwan. Just as he represents sexuality in a straightforward way, which would have been censured in the 1960s and 1970, Hou offers a political point of view that would have previously been unsanctioned: all three segments of *Three Times* are linked by the idea that the local residents of Taiwan have rarely been able to define their own identity in global politics. Instead, they are spoken for, whether by the Japanese colonial government in 1911, the KMT Nationalists in 1966, or by world trade organizations in the age of the “global village” in 2005.

Chapter two, “Two Stage Brothers: Tracing a Common Heritage in Xie Jin and Li Xing’s Early 1960s Films” presents the transnational theoretical model in a comparative mode. Upon examining filmmaking strategies on both sides of the Taiwan Strait during the Cold War, it is apparent that film aesthetics were used in surprisingly similar ways due to a shared residual heritage. In both locations, described as the “nations” of Taiwan -- in this dissertation this term is used until the Nationalists lose their seat in the United Nations in 1971-- and China, the reach of global film traditions is evident in the discussion of: Shanghai realism (which remained a residual tradition), Italian neo-realism (an emergent tradition), Hollywood filmmaking (dominant in Taiwan) and socialist realism (dominant on the mainland). Yet regional geo-political differences during the Cold War did not, and at times due to the apparent solidity of language and historical record, do not allow us to clearly see similarities.

The third chapter, “‘My Home is in _______’: The Politics of Migration in
Bai Jingrui’s 1970 Film *Home Sweet Home,*” compares films from across the globe. While the dominant, emergent, and residual trends in Taiwan in 1970 (Bai Jingrui, *Home Sweet Home*), in Africa in 1966 (Sembene, *Black Girl*), and in Germany in 1974 (Fassbinder, *Ali*) are most definitely singular and particular, the three films are linked by their depictions of migration, a primary concern of transnationalist criticism. While the possibility of tracing all of the cultural variables in each of the three nations is beyond the scope of the chapter, the conclusion clarifies the authorial intentions and brings into sharper focus the emergent trends in each location.  

There is hopefulness in each of these films for a new future, for the idea that a new dominant, a new definition of “normal” might emerge. Sembene’s film questions the extent to which racism limits the rights of African workers in Europe, and Fassbinder challenges German anti-miscegenation. In the case of Taiwan in 1970, Bai Jingrui’s authorized depiction of migration reveals that Taiwan’s citizens were expected to function as pawns of the state, precisely the identity that the nativist writers would confront in the ensuing decade.

Zhang Yingjin’s recent book, *Cinema, Space, and Polylocality in a Globalizing China,* endorses a comparative film studies model over a transnational mode of inquiry. This is an approach that I am currently contemplating further based on my experience of using the comparative model in chapters two, three, and five. What I am certain about at this stage is that the result of a comparative inquiry helps one more carefully identify the contours of Taiwan’s emergent traditions. For example, in terms of Taiwan cinema in Bai Jingrui’s 1970, the dominant culture at the national level is represented, but the local emergent traditions of nativism remain off
camera (see chapter three). At the same time, emergent nativism in the 1970s was actually a resuscitation of residual nativism, for Taiwan’s local writers reinvented a tradition of that stemmed from roots in the 1920s and 1930 during the Japanese colonial era (see chapter five). Meanwhile, the Nationalists projected their residual culture from mainland China onto the silver screen, revealing a past from which they were physically, psychologically, and for many, permanently separated.

In the mid-1970s, the raw feelings of separation anxiety on the part of the waishengren, and intimate connections to the Taiwan as permanent homeland for the benshengren, were not directly addressed on the big screen, but the fissures resulting from these tensions began to show. I was inspired to write chapter four, “Gender Negotiation in Song Cunshou’s Story of Mother and Taiwan Cinema of the early 1970s,” as I reflected on Edward Yang’s famous statement that Taiwan New Cinema movement could have started ten years earlier if not for government restrictions. A review of early to mid-1970s films demonstrates that the aesthetic, structural, and narrative complexity was ready to be exploited at this early stage in Taiwan’s filmmaking tradition. A poetic filmmaker such as Song Cunshou would have been quite capable of depicting subjects far more taboo than adultery, yet he made films when political concerns were not allowed to be represented from the perspective of the local. However, as the decade persisted, as the government could no longer shore up its image on all fronts (local, national, regional, global), it was through the cracks in the façade (revealed in Story of Mother) that the local filmmakers began to portray their experiences in the 1980s.

Depictions of a shared cultural heritage and a reversal of expected models of
dominant/KMT behavior are traits that might characterize the Taiwan New Cinema movement. Yet an observation of gender in films released during the decade provides clues about what was to come. Admittedly, while representations of gender in the mid-1970s reveal that patriarchal society in Taiwan was a social construction that would eventually come under great scrutiny, it was not until the second wave of Taiwan filmmakers, specifically Tsai Ming-liang and the transnational/Taiwan director Ang Lee, that issues of gender would be openly addressed.

In chapter five, “Portraying the Local: Taiwan Cinema in the late 1970s,” the dominant trends in Taiwan film making: 1) Nostalgic, 2) Patriotic, 3) Escapist (Romance, Costume Dramas, and Martial Arts Films), and 4) “Depictions of the Local” during the 1960s and 1970s reveal the importance of maintaining a keen awareness of colonial concerns -- both the residual aspect of Japanese colonialism, and the dominant characteristics of “Nationalist colonialism” -- as a primary lens through which to understand the state film apparatus. Realistic portrayals of the colonial era reach their apotheosis, perhaps, in Wu Nianzhen’s *Buddha Bless America* in 1996. Wu’s film presents the richness and diversity of nativism twenty years after the nativist debates, and the previously and tightly held opposition between modernist and nativist aesthetics breaks down in his work. In *Buddha Bless America*, set during U.S. military occupation in Taiwan, the main character Lin-wen encourages his local rural townspeople to allow a U.S. base to perform military exercises near their village in the hopes that the American doctors might be able to surgically re-attach his brother’s fingers that were cut off while working in a transnational Japanese factory. Wu Nianzhen stated in an online interview: “Even though America has never
occupied Taiwan, its influence over the Taiwanese people is far greater [than Japan's] … Its influence extends beyond the cultural and economic to the most important domain of all, politics.”

In the end of his film, Lin-wen must admit that his strategy to help his family failed, while his fellow local Taiwanese residents attempt to resume their lives after the American forces, which upend nearly every aspect of their daily routines, depart.

When I consider how much Taiwan cinema changes between Bai Jingrui’s film *The Coldest Winter in Peking* (1981), perhaps the final embodiment of healthy realism, and *City of Sadness* (1989) by the end of the decade -- and even *Buddha Bless America* in the 1990s -- the changes are phenomenal, mind boggling. Two key trends characterize the film making institution in Taiwan after the 1970s: in terms of the industry, the Taiwan distribution and exhibition channels for films like *The Coldest Winter in Peking* famously collapsed, and in terms of the film depictions, nearly all of the previous taboo subjects (see chapter five) became viable topics for film adaptations. Today, three current trends seem to dominate the film scene in Taiwan: the (continuation of) the residual international arthouse scene from the Taiwan New Cinema tradition (for example: *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* [Tsai Ming-liang, 2003]) the dominance of multinational co-productions (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* [Ang Lee, 2000]), and the emergent local-revitalization in the film industry (example: *Formula 17* [Chen Yingrong, 2005]).

It is the third category that the recent *Cape No. 7* (2008), the most successful film at the box office in the history of Taiwan film, might be classified. If popularity in cinema is a direct result of mirroring the imagination and experience of society
effectively, this would explain the success of *Cape No. 7*, a film that generated print, web, and televised excitement which was furthered by word of mouth.\textsuperscript{258}

Interestingly, the film harkens back to the glory days of 1960s Taiwan cinema by presenting its narrative in a fast-paced plot. Even the old concerns of the 1970s make their way into the storyline. Central to the film’s plot is nostalgia for Japanese occupation, since the main characters, a Taiwanese rock musician falls and his love interest, a Japanese model, is interwoven with a plot set in the colonial era in which a woman falls in love with a Japanese colonialist who was forced to return to Japan despite his desire to stay on the island in 1945.

Ping-hui Liao has written that films such as *The Puppetmaster* and *Dou-San: A Borrowed Life* portray “the ambivalent nature of Taiwanese postcoloniality,” and certainly this statement might be applied to *Cape No. 7* as well.\textsuperscript{259} The similarity that links *Cape No. 7* with the films Liao describes is the representation of local Taiwanese experience, but the difference is that *Cape No. 7* does so in a way that is entertaining, fast-paced, endearing, and popular. The caesura of the Taiwan New Cinema is jettisoned in favor of techniques directors of the 1960s and 1970s would have considered normative. *Cape No. 7*, despite its weaknesses -- after all, it is a well-received good film, not a great film -- offers the best of both worlds in the history of Taiwan filmmaking; that is, it represents the lived experience of a local populace which has persistently struggled to have their voice heard globally, and like the golden age of the 1960s, the film was -- in Taiwan, at least -- widely well-received.

According to the participants of the golden age, however, *Cape No. 7* primarily shares one similarity with the past: its ability to sell tickets. Moreover, to
the previous era’s representative voices, the golden age is likely to never return. Film critic Huang Ren, when asked about his thoughts on *Cape No. 7*, responded: “No Taiwan cinema has surpassed the cinema of the 1960s and 1970s. *Cape No. 7* is an entertaining film, but its artistic quality is not equal to Taiwan’s old films.” And Director Li Xing reminisced: “*Cape No. 7* reminds me of the popularity of Li Hanxiang’s *The Love Eterne* in 1963 because scholars as well as the general populace were interested in the popularity of the film […] However, Li Hanxiang’s film in 1963 started the rise of Taiwan cinema, but *Cape No. 7* is really a question mark. It contains good music, and a popular lead actor, but is it the new beginning of Taiwan cinema? I am not so sure -- people are attending this film because it is popular, but a true establishment of Taiwan cinema will be seen when people go to see all kinds of Taiwan films, not only the popular ones.”

On the one hand, the history of state film in Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s is relatively unexplored by current scholarship, perhaps because the dominant modes of filmmaking at the time seem so straightforward that they do not deserve a close inquiry. But this dismissal neglects the popularity of the old films, the complex interactions between the local emergent, residual, and dominant trends of the time, and the fluctuations and transferences of international cultural exchange. On the other hand, members of the “old guard” still believe -- oftentimes, for good reason -- that the “golden” cinema production network pre-1980 trumps international arthouse awards or representations of stories from the margins in the post-1980 era. To these participants of yesteryear, it is the post-1980 era that is easy to overlook because it has been unpopular in Taiwan.
When I had a chance to ask actress Li Xiang of *Story of Mother*: “What do you think about Taiwan New Cinema? Many scholars abroad believe that it produced Taiwan’s best cinema.” She responded: “No, that is not the case. When Li Xing was making his films -- when I was acting in films -- that was when films were on the rise. The films of Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang in the early 1980s were produced when Taiwan’s films were in decline.” And finally, Li Xing, when asked to respond to his influence on Taiwan New Cinema and beyond in Taiwan, responded: “In my film *Our Neighbors*, which started the healthy realist tradition, you find the foundations of Taiwan cinema.”

When it comes to the notion that Taiwan cinema of the 1960s and 1970s produced a “foundation,” a structure of feeling that filmmakers respond to even today, I could not agree more. The era may currently be known as a “missing period” in western scholarship, but surely it will not remain so, for the antecedents of Taiwan New Cinema are as nuanced as those of any film tradition from any point in time. This dissertation is an entrance point into the stories, both fictional and non-fictional, that together comprise the framework for the narrative which would follow. It traces a storyline that, like a movie-script, is complete with humble beginnings in the early 1960s, an incredible rise to the top of Southeast Asian cinema by the end of the decade, a period of decline, and then a brief moment of local popularity in the late 1970s before the final credits.
Statements such as the following are representative of this point of view: “Taiwanese New Cinema catapulted cinema in the Republic of China on Taiwan to the status of national art cinema after decades of propaganda and simplistic commercial cinema.” Stephen Kramer, “Transcultural Narrations of the Local: Taiwanese Cinema between Utopia and Heterotopia,” in *Globalization, Cultural identities, and Media Representations*, eds. Natascha Gentz and Stefan Kramer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 53.

I use the international standard romanization system Hanyu pinyin, with an exception of well-known political figures such as Chiang Kai-shek, film directors such as Hou Hsiao-hsien and locations such as Taipei, Romanized in the manner which they most frequently occur in the Wade-Giles system.


Ibid.


Estimates vary.


Ibid., 6.


Wimal Dissanayake describes how India’s cinema is a site of transformation as the global intersects with the local in terms of thematics, narrativity, ideology, and communication in “Globalization and the Experience of Culture: The Resilience of Nationhood,” in *Globalization* (see note 1), 30.
13 Ibid., 34.


17 Williams, Marxism and Literature, 125.

18 Ibid.

19 Appadurai, Modernity at Large, 18.

20 Ibid., 23.


25 Fran Martin, Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film and Public Culture (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), 37.

26 Martin, Situating Sexualities, 42.


28 According to Dissanayake’s terms, the exchange between cultures includes: convolution, transformation, localization, rejection, polysemous and asymmetrical changes, confrontation, commodification, reinvention, and resistance. See


30 Martin, *Situating Sexualities*, 47.


34 Darrell W. Davis, “Borrowing Postcolonial: Wu Nianzhen’s Dou-san and the Memory Mine,” in *Chinese-Language Film* (see note 33), 240.


36 Ibid., 45.


40 Ibid., 16.


Also, considering that Taiwan Film Studies is many ways in its infancy, I opt for an overview perspective in this chapter.

See Introduction.


Morris, “Taiwan’s History,” The Minor Arts of Daily Life (see note 46), 14.


Morris, “Taiwan’s History: An Introduction,” The Minor Arts of Daily Life (see note 46), 20.


57 Ibid.


59 The influence of the popular folk melody films such as *The Love Eterne* might be clearly seen in Taiwan throughout the 1960s in the Hong Kongesque interior set designs.

60 Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*, 120.


64 Ibid., 247.


72 “Shanghai xiju jie pipan fanmai ‘Sanshi Niandai’ heihu de huai yingpian *Wutai Jiemei*” [Shanghai’s theatre circles criticize the peddling of the “1930s” contraband film *Stage Sisters*], *Renmin ribao* (May 22, 1966).


75 See Huang Ren, *Xingzhe yingji: Li Xing, dianying, wushi nian* [The Passerby’s Trace: Li Xing, Cinema, Fifty Years] (Taipei: Shibao wenhua chuban qiye gufenyouxiangongsi, 1999), 386.


78 Xie Jin, Lingu, and Xujin, “*Wu tai jiemei*” [Stage Sisters], *Dianying Juzuo* 1 (January 1964): 44-73.

79 Xie Jin, quoted in Michael Berry, *Speaking in Images: Interviews with Contemporary Chinese Filmmakers* (NY: Columbia UP, 2005), 34.

80 See Xie Jin, *Wo dui daoyan yishu de zhuqiu* [My Pursuit in Film Directing] (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1998), 56.

81 For the information in this paragraph, see Rawnsley, *Taiwan's Informal Diplomacy and Propaganda*, and John Franklin Copper, *Taiwan: Nation-State or Province?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).
82 See Taiwan state newspapers, such as Lianhe bao [United Daily News], circa 1963.

83 Copper, *Taiwan: Nation-State or Province?*, 117.

84 Copper, *Taiwan: Nation-State or Province?*, 159.

85 Conversation with Professor Wai-lim Yip at the University of California, San Diego on February 8, 2007.

86 Hollywood films were concurrently banned in China.

87 Historian Frederick Wakeman, Jr. has written: “It is difficult to exaggerate the centrality of cinema to Shanghai’s mass culture. Movie actors and actresses were national celebrities and popular idols.” See Frederick Wakeman Jr., *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 11.


89 Conversation with Professor Wai-lim Yip.


92 This project focuses on Mandarin films, but to put things in perspective, 1052 Taiwanese-dialect films were made from 1955-1969, while only 373 were made in Mandarin. See Zhang Yingjin, *Chinese National Cinema*, 125.

93 Zhang Yingjin asserts: “similar to the humanist tradition of the pre-1950 mainland cinema, Li’s films concentrate on family values, dramatize separation and suffering, and represent women as the embodiment of both traditional virtues and a modern outlook.” See Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema*, 135.


95 Yun Meng, ed., *Zhongguo dianying jia liezhuan* [Biographies of Chinese Film Personalities], vol. 6 (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1986), 484.

97 Yun Meng, ed., *Biographies of Chinese Film Personalities*, 484.

98 Tracing the film industry in China through the 1950s is to observe the machinations of a state in an effort to control a private industry. State ownership of all cinema in China differed from Taiwan where private Taiwanese studios released opera and comedy films that competed on the open market with state films and movies from the United States and other countries.

99 Li Xing’s *Our Neighbors* was made when he owned his own studio, and yet it remained complicit with the state. Similarly, *Women Basketball Player* was written and directed at a time when Xie Jin had freedom to express his own ideas, yet it too is in accordance with state policy.

100 Xie Jin, quoted in Berry *Speaking in Images*, 35.

101 According to the Nationalists, the motivation to control popular culture was based in-part on a desire to fulfill Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s “Three People’s Principles” in the process of modernizing China. See Wakeman, Jr., 92.

102 This translation of *wuxia shenguai pian* is from Emilie Yueh-Yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors: A Treasure Island*.

103 Film historian Xiao Zhiwei’s dissertation on film censorship during the Nanjing Decade, which figures centrally in this part of the discussion, describes the Nanjing government’s process as it began to exercise more control of film during the late 1920s. In brief, cinema was self-censored or locally censored until 1927, at which point the Nationalists established the “Film Censorship Regulations.” These regulations were enforced by the National Film Censorship Committee (NFCC), under the Departments of the Interior and Education, until 1934 when the Nationalists reorganized the film censorship body under the Central Film Censorship Committee (CFCC), an arm of the Department of Propaganda. The CFCC, which was dissolved in 1938 during the war with Japan, was centralized by the Nationalists party in order to more effectively enforce a ban on anti-Japanese representations as well as ban foreign films that portrayed China or the Chinese people in demeaning or offensive ways. Studies of censorship demonstrate that during the prewar period from 1927-1937, while film was squarely within with the realm of business and capitalist ventures, it was also expected to oblige the government by projecting and representing the most moral and uplifting aspects of Chinese culture. See Xiao Zhiwei, *Film Censorship in China, 1927-1937*, Ph. D. diss. (San Diego: University of California, San Diego, 1994).
The term “realism” also evokes the debates about ‘classical cinema’ and the ‘classic realist text.’ These terms denote a set of formal parameters involving practices of editing, camerawork, and sound which promote the appearance of spatial and temporal continuity.” See Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000), 143.


Robert Stam writes, quoting Comolli and Narboni: “what the camera registers in fact is the vague, unformulated, untheorized, unthought-out world of the dominant ideology … reproducing things not as they really are but as they appear when refracted through the ideology.” Stam also asserts: “The most conventional definitions of realism make claims about verisimilitude, the putative adequation of a fiction to the facticity of the world. These definitions assume that realism is not only possible (and empirically verifiable) but also desirable.” See Stam, 140, 142.


Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction*, 141.

McDougal, *Mao Zedong’s “Talks at the Yan’an conference on literature and art”: A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, 82-83.

This statement was made by Peng Zhen. The two denounced films include: *Zaochun eryue* (Early Spring in February) and *Beiguo jiangnan* (North and South of the Country). See MacFarquhar, 388, 396-397.

“This meant the negation not merely of classical literature, but also of the works of communist and leftist intellectuals written from the 1920s through the 1940s, many of whom were grandees of the current cultural establishment.” See MacFarquhar, 382.

The publication was halted altogether during the Cultural Revolution.
225

Xie Jin, *Wo dui daoyan yishu de zhuiqiu* [My Pursuit in Film Directing], 56.

The film was “screened to select audiences in order to generate criticism” and not released to the public until 1979. See Zhang, 216.


Xie Jin, quoted in Berry *Speaking in Images*, 31.

Xie Jin, quoted in Da Huo’er, 107-109.


Li Xing’s portrayal of a drama troupe is similar to *Stage Sisters* in extraordinary ways. One observes in both films the stage set-up during a popular festival, behind the scenes shots of actresses putting on their make-up, and the squabbles between established and up-and-coming performers -- details both Xie Jin and Li Xing would have been personally familiar with.


Specifically, Xie Jin was denounced for his use of Shanghai’s realist tradition, while Li Xing was praised.

Rawnsley, *Taiwan's Informal Diplomacy and Propaganda*, 35-36.


Xie Jin, quoted in Da Huo’er, 107-109.

See comparison with Italian neorealism in Chapter 1.

See note 3.

A recent article by Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh traces the recuperation and reactivation of the old *wenyi* film tradition as it re-emerges in hybrid forms on the
contemporary screen. Also, Robert Chi has written an essay that considers how a mainland Chinese film, *Spirit of the Sea* (Hai hun, 1957, dir. Xu Tao), depicts a *Battleship Potemkin*-type rebellion occurring on a Nationalist-controlled warship. Both articles can be found in Darrell William Davis and Ru-Shou Robert Chen, *Cinema Taiwan* (see note 66).

131 Xie Jin, quoted in Berry *Speaking in Images*, 31.


134 Ibid.

135 See Tun-Jen Cheng and Yun-Han Chu: “the role of state owned enterprises (SOE) shrank relative to the private sector in the 1960s after export-led industrialization (ELI) became the principle development strategy; but SOE’s in the 1960s and 1970s upgraded the industrial base and served as a parking space for the economic bureaucracy and received investment especially during the 1970s for the task of ‘industrial deepening,’” in “State-Business Relationship in Taiwan: A Political Economy Perspective.” In *Taiwan's Modernization in Global Perspective*, ed. Peter C.Y. Chow (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), 199.


137 Ibid, 97.


140 Ibid.


142 Yeh and Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors*, 41.

Yeh and Davis, Taiwan Film Directors, 41.


Jameson, Postmodernism, 30.


Shailja Sharma, “Fassbinder's Ali and the Politics of Subject-Formation,” 107.


Ibid., 187.


Ibid., 193.


Sharma, “Fassbinder's Ali and the Politics of Subject-Formation,” 109.


Ibid.


Ibid., 19.


Ibid., 156.

Ibid., 157.

Martin, Situating Sexualities, 30.

Jameson, Postmodernism, 15.

Sharma, “Fassbinder's Ali and the Politics of Subject-Formation,” 113.

Jameson, Postmodernism, 77.


Author interview, Taipei, October 2008.


Ibid., 88.
175 Ibid., 96.

176 Ibid., 116.

177 See Yeh and Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors*, and Huang Ren, *Film and Government Propaganda*, 1994.

178 Taiwan’s perennial challenges were three: poverty, authoritarian rule, and the perpetual threat of military action from China; see Liao Kuang-sheng, “Experiences and Major Policies in Taiwan’s Development.” In Chow, *Taiwan’s Modernization* (see note 137), 285.

179 Shih, *Visuality and Identity*, 88.

180 Ibid.


185 Yeh and Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors*, 37.


Ibid.

Ibid., 8.


Viewers have found the abundance of coincidences in the film difficult to accept, especially the conclusion. See Jin Shihui and Di Zhonghai, “Yunmenwu Jitan Chuangwai yu Muqin Sanshisui” [The Cloudgate Dance Troupe discuss Outside the Window and Story of Mother], Yingxiang Zazhi 24 (1979): 20-23.

Song Cunshou, “Wo de Wushi Huigu” [My Retrospective at Fifty Years of Age], 8.


Author interview, Taipei, October 2008.


Depictions of spying might be found in sequences 1,11,19, and 23; other important motifs include: flashbacks, representations of death: 12,16,30,35/6; trains: 4,5,7b, 8,10,15,26,35/6; letter writing: 7b, 10, 23; and the soundtrack, which varies between somber and intense, warranting an inquiry in and of itself.

Linda Williams considers how women speak to each other within film narratives that privilege patriarchy, and she particularly discusses the way women take up their identities within such systems, be it by resistance or struggling within contradictions. See Linda Williams, “‘Something Else Besides a Mother’: Stella Dallas and the Maternal Melodrama,” in Feminism (see note 29), 413.

Yeh and Davis, Taiwan Film Directors, 38.

This film was mentioned by Ke Junxiong as influential to his acting style in an author interview, Taipei, Sept 2008.

Yeh and Davis, Taiwan Film Directors, 39. Also: Scholars have noticed throughout film history that the pleasure of watching such films often stems from observing behavior that is not condoned, and thus unique, even attractive in an aesthetics-of-the-grotesque type of way. Such would be the case in Goodbye Darling.


Note that after 1977, when Ming Ji took over CMPC, the patriotic film tradition was maintained, even as the New Taiwan Cinema movement began.

When I had an opportunity to ask the actress who plays the role of mother in the film, Li Xiang, if she believed that *Story of Mother* helped advance women’s rights in Taiwan, keeping in mind that she voices the line: “I am a wife, but I am a woman too!” Li Xiang responded: “No, I do not think that the film had any influence on society. Besides, that was just one line in the film.” Author Interview, November 2008.


Jameson, “Remapping Taipei,” 142.

See Yip, *Envisioning Taiwan*.


Yeh, *Frontier Taiwan*, 2-3.

Wai-lim Yip Lecture, University of California, San Diego, April, 2009.
219 Yeh, *Frontier Taiwan*, 176. Thanks to Professor Wai-lim Yip for introducing this poem to me and for providing his analysis which influences my interpretation of the poem here.


221 See Yip, *Envisioning Taiwan*.

222 In retrospect, the 1970s nativist writers were in some ways the inheritors of the sentiments of the 1930s leftwing filmmakers in Shanghai: influenced by the May Fourth era and the New Culture Movement, and denouncing both anti-imperialist (vis-à-vis both Japan and the West) and anti-capitalist infiltration.


224 Thus, the film continues the tradition of depicting a handicapped woman who requires the guidance of a strong, yet loving, father.

225 In 1979, the low-budget *Good Morning, Taipei* was the 8th highest grossing Taiwan film screened in Taipei of the year. See Zhongguo DianyingTushi Bianji Weiyuanhui, *Zhongguo Dianying Tushi 1905-2005* [Chinese Film: An Illustrated History 1905-2005], 543. Notably, a patriotic war film (*Huang Jun Yun Gui*) was the second highest grossing film that year. Lu Feiyi’s consolidation of film data shows that in 1980 more films were sent to the government for censorship approval (133 films) than in 1970 (117 films), an impressive rebound from the low in 1973 (45 films). Filmproduction numbers would increase until 1982 (144 films). See Lu Feiyi, *Taiwan Film: Politics, Economics, and Aesthetics 1949-1994*, 433.

Yet at the same time cultural trends were set in motion that would undermine state-approved film production. Attending the theater to see Taiwan’s films became increasingly less popular due to the rise of TV and the VCR, not to mention Hollywood dominance, which local exhibitors preferred because they earned a percentage of the profits from imported films. In addition, new forms of leisure entertainment emerged alongside continued economic growth.

Interestingly, the rise and fall of Taiwan cinema is in direct inversion to the rise in popularity and number of films produced in Hong Kong and screened in Taiwan. In general, when film production decreased in Hong Kong, film production in Taiwan increased, and when films in Taiwan increased, the films from Hong Kong decreased. See Lu Feiyi, *Taiwan Film: Politics, Economics, and Aesthetics 1949-1994*, 1998.

226 The famous films of the Taiwan New Cinema, distributed in the west and the international arthouse circuit to great acclaim alongside films of mainland China’s
“fifth generation” and following on the heels of the Hong Kong New Wave, comprised only 59 of the 762 films made between 1982 and 1989 and did not revive the Taiwan film market as hoped for by the government.

227 Yeh and Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors*, 63.

228 *In Our Time* (Guangyin de gushi, 1982), is another early landmark Taiwan New Cinema film, with its second episode, “Zhiwang,” directed by Edward Yang.

229 Jameson, “Remapping Taipei,” 120.


231 Chang’s representation of literary history in Taiwan demonstrates that modernist literature in Taiwan of the late 1950s and 1960s was not as a-political as it was characterized during the 1970s debates. In the historical moment when political topics were taboo, it was actually a type of intervention that modernist poetry and fiction in Taiwan tried to address the social situation in the only method they had available to them — namely, through indirect, difficult, experimental language that in the end pointed to the frustration of living under the KMT regime.


233 Ibid.

234 Ibid., 14.

235 Chen Fangming, “Postmodern or Postcolonial? An Inquiry into Postwar Taiwanese Literary History,” 45.


237 Yet narrowing one’s focus to a specific geographical location in order to analyze a particular Taiwan sentiment in no way simplifies the discussion; rather, the complexity of the conversation is only initiated. Because additionally, historical and cultural factors must be taken into account when considering the way geography shapes artistic production.
238 Yeh and Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors*, 129.

239 In a description of the relationship between literature and film culture, June Yip writes: “What unites the literature of Hwang Chun-ming and the films of Hou Hsiao-hsien and makes their works central to any investigation of Taiwanese nationhood is their common fascination with the sociohistorical specificities of the modern Taiwanese experience and their attempts to formulate a sense of Taiwanese cultural identity.” See Yip, *Envisioning Taiwan*, 9.


242 In the 1950s and 1960s in Taiwan it was impossible to access the sentiment of the May Fourth era, “Hence, the literature taught in Taiwan’s schools was limited primarily to the Confucian classics and traditional Chinese poetry from the dynastic era. Popular literature consisted largely of escapist entertainment -- historical romances and swordsman epics -- far removed from the quotidian realities of Taiwan.” See Yip, *Envisioning Taiwan*, 23.

243 Note that poor production values persist: in a dramatic scene, a clumsy second is comically knocked off balance by a swinging door as he storms a private residence.


246 Granted, *Home Sweet Home* contains multiple narrative programs, but arguably it has only one point of view -- namely, that of the state.


248 Chang, “*The Terrorizer* and the Great Divide in Contemporary Taiwan’s Cultural Development,” 21.

249 James Udden, “This Time he Moves!”: The Deeper Significance of Hou Hsiao-hsien’s Radical Break in *Good Men, Good Women*,” in *Cinema Taiwan* (see note 66).


252 Ibid., 38.


254 The discussion surrounding authorial intent is fraught with ambiguity and complexity. See Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen, eds. *Theorising National Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2006).


257 See Darrell William Davis and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh, *East Asian Screen Industries* (London: British Film Institute, 2008).


259 Ping-hui Liao, “Preface: Screening Contemporary Taiwan Cinema,” in *Cinema Taiwan* (see note 66), xv.

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