UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Shanghai in Contemporary Chinese Film

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in

Comparative Literature

by

Xiangyang Liu

Committee in charge:

Professor Yingjin Zhang, Chair
Professor Larissa Heinrich
Professor Wai-lim Yip

2010

The Thesis of Xiangyang Liu is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

_____

_____

_____
Chair

University of California, San Diego

2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page…… iii

Table of Contents…….……...… iv

Abstract……..…..... v

Introduction…… …….. 1

Chapter One

A Modern City in the Perspective of Two Generations……... 3

Chapter Two

Urban Culture: Transmission and circling…….. 27

Chapter Three

Negotiation with Shanghai's Present and Past……..... 51

Conclusion……...…… 86

Bibliography..……..…… …….. 90

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Shanghai in Contemporary Chinese Film

by

Xiangyang Liu

Master of Arts in Comparative Literature

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor Yingjin Zhang, Chair

This thesis is intended to investigate a series of films produced since the 1990s. All of these films deal with the theme of Shanghai, old or new, yet, under different circumstances, they are of disparate styles and perspectives and represent various ideological and cultural characteristics of each period. In Chapter One, I will discuss Zhang Yimou's *Shanghai Triad*, Chen Kaige's *Temptress Moon* and two films by Lou Ye,

Suzhou River and *Purple Butterfly*, from which we can see the differences between two generations of Chinese filmmakers. While the Fifth Generation tend to imagine and investigate in the framework of Chinese history, the younger generation avoids the grand narrative and chooses to focus more on the life of individuals and their inner world. Chapter Two will take three Hong Kong films as examples, one by Ann Hui and the other two by Stanley Kwan. From these three films, we can see a special relationship between Shanghai and Hong Kong and the circulation of urban culture in modern Chinese history. Chapter Three will examine some newer films, respectively by younger directors Zhang Yibai and Lee Xin and by three world-renowned directors Ang Lee, Ann Hui, and Stanley Kwan. Some of these films pay attention to contemporary urban life, but some still dwell on the past to make further explorations. The diversity of these films apparently reflects the chaotic and noisy era we are living in, and through them we can hear the different voices of anxiety, bewilderment, optimism, sentimentalism or nostalgia.

Introduction

It is self-evident that the birth and evolution of film are closely integrated with the development of modern cities. Film is made for city dwellers: it is their new favorite; it entertains them, nourishes them, and consoles them. From its very beginning, film, with the character of photography, has taken the responsibility of recording human history, not only those major events, but also details of everyday life, including the ambiguities of human emotion and thinking. Gradually, film has infiltrated every corner of our life; it is already an indispensable part of contemporary culture, so that it is no longer a neutral observer but another ego of us. Therefore, if we can retrieve all those old movies, what we can see is not only the materials of a past time, more importantly, we can also find out that invisible existence behind the lens, that is, people's perception and cognition of the time.

This thesis is not intended to cover films related to all cities; such a project would be too large and probably need one to probe the whole history of world film. In this limited space, I would like to concentrate my studies on films related to the city of Shanghai. First of all, Shanghai is the origin and the symbol of the modern Chinese city. This young city was born in the final stage of the old era. It witnessed the advent of the modern time, and it accumulated within it the initial and the gradual deepening of Chinese people's experience of modernity. Secondly, film has always played an important role in the history of Shanghai. It is not an accident that it is the birth place of Chinese film, which was only a couple of years later than the Lumiere brothers' great invention in France. From the very beginning, film had already begun to record

new detailed event happened in this city. In the development of the city culture, film is both a narrator and a participatant. Furthermore, as a metropolis, Shanghai has always been exceptional than all other cities in China. It is always some steps ahead, and people are prone to see it as the future for the others. Therefore, when the cinematic lens extends to the depth of the city, what it stirs is not only the memory of the past but also the mentality of today's people.

Shanghai witnessed the earliest flourishing of Chinese film in the 1930s and the 1940s, which paralleled a peak of urban culture in China. During the 1930s and the 1940s, Shanghai established its unique position in Chinese culture. Unfortunately, the once flourishing urban culture rapidly declined after 1949. As a big city, its giant body still physically existed, but all the energy seemed extinguished. Shanghai was still a film production base during the time, but most movies released were seldom related to the city and the people living in it. The once dynamic urban life entered a long period of hibernation, and its revival did not come until the 1980s, when China re-opened its door to the world, and the Shanghai theme will regain its popularity. At this time, Chinese film also returned to its home, reliving old memories and unfolding new dreams.

Chapter One:

A Modern City in the Perspective of Two Generations

Retrieving the Origin of the Modern City

The 1980s was a pivotal period of modern Chinese history. With the reopening of its long time closed door, China began to recover normal contact and communication with the world. Although the ruling Communist Party has always been reluctant to carry out political reforms, the rapid development in the economic sphere of the country indeed shocked the world. The 80s was also a period of full recovery of Chinese culture, and if we look back from the vantage point of more than twenty years later, the degree of activity and freedom of that time even exceed those of today's. It is no doubt that the 1980s has made a lot of major contributions in the field of culture and thought, and one of them was from Chinese film. Perhaps, with the unique advantage of image that can easily spread beyond language and culture, in a short time Chinese film had become a focus of world attention, and Fifth Generation film directors, including Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige and Tian Zhuangzhuang, are considered leaders of this trend. Although filmmakers usually are not initiators and pioneers of controversial topics and cultural movements, still, because of its importance and influence, Chinese film has played a role as an exponent and witness of the time.

From *Yellow Earth* (Chen Kaige), *Horse Thief* (Tian Zhuangzhuang*), One and Eight* (Zhang Junzhao) and *Red Sorghum* (Zhang Yimou) to *To Live* (Zhang Yimou), *Farewell to My Concubine* (Chen Kaige), a series of works of the Fifth generation directors provided us characters of Chinese culture, from which we also can see the progress and transition of common topics. At the beginning, they tried to use bold experimental style to rewrite revolutionary myth, which can be seen as inheritance and development of the revolutionary history. Then the concentration moved on to Chinese culture. Similar to the root-searching movement in literature, Chinese films explored the national character, cultural essence, in other words, the identity of the nation. When entering the 1990s, topics became complicated and diverse, but one constant concern was still focusing on the profound changes brought by modernization and globalization, in other words, about Chinese modernity, and this also came with the rising of the urban culture of the time. As a group always with a historical consciousness, the 5th Generation directors also move their cameras to urban cities. Shanghai, unsurprisingly, became their target.

In *Shanghai Triad* (Yao a yao, yao dao wai po qiao, 1995), Zhang Yimou, who had been appreciated by western audiences and international film festivals, moved his eyes to old Shanghai of the 1930s. This is a stylized movie, which has a strong imprint of Hollywood gangster movies. After a series of successful ethnographic films, Zhang Yimou decided to try a new way, particularly on a new object.

Most parts of *Shanghai Triad* are full of violence and blood, especially in its first half. The leading male character of the story is Mr. Tang, the godfather-like chief of the Tang family-run underground world, who controls the city's lucrative opium and prostitution trade. As the most powerful person in Shanghai, Mr. Tang owns everything: money and women, but he still faces threats and conspiracy that is why in the second part of the movie he has to leave Shanghai, hiding in an isolated island to get around the impasse. Like what he did before, Zhang Yimou still gives female characters a big role in this story. In *Shanghai Triad*, Gong Li plays Xiao Jinbao, the most beautiful prostitute-singer in Shanghai, who witnesses everything and gradually understands the hypocrisy and ruthlessness of all these men around her, but in this sinister world, she has no chance of escaping her fate.

Compared with *Shanghai Triad*, Chen Kaige's *Temptress Moon* (Fengyue, 1996) is more complicated and convoluted. Following the story line, which constantly switches between a provincial town and urban Shanghai, we see the pain and anxiety people endured when an old time was being replaced by a new one.

Temptress Moon is a story about Zhongliang (Leslie Cheung), a Shanghai gangster raised on the sumptuous rural estate of the powerful, opium-addled Pang family. A permanent outsider, Zhongliang escapes the painful decadence of the Pang household and becomes a smooth-talking mobster, seducing women in the night clubs of the 1920s Shanghai, but he is forced to face his past when hired to seduce and abduct Ruyi (who was his childhood playmate) in a criminal attempt to gain control

over the now vulnerable Pang estate. What begins as a routine seduction becomes more complicated when Zhongliang finds himself unable to escape his true feelings for Ruyi and the crippling memories of his painful childhood.

Today, we may doubt if these two movies are exactly exploring Shanghai, particularly if we had looked forward to seeing an original old Shanghai to be depicted on the screen. However, both movies were intended for the "Shanghai Theme", which was rising and becoming popular at the time. In order to be close to the real feelings of their subject, both Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige chose writers from the south (Bi Feiyu from Nanjing, Wang Anyi from Shanghai) to finish the scripts. Both movies were shot in Shanghai. Today, the Shi Ku Men building built for the shooting of *Temptress Moon* is still standing in a suburban town, not only for tourism but also for shooting other movies and TV dramas of the Shanghai theme. Perhaps what makes us unsatisfied is there are still not enough physical Shanghai scenes in the two movies, but we cannot deny in the cinematic texts, Shanghai is always an important factor. The characters are always pondering going to or leaving Shanghai; they try to conquer this city, which let them feel intoxicated and bewildered; they search for an appropriate definition of the city, to love it or hate it. Anyway, in these two different films, Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige had rendered their thoughts and feelings upon old Shanghai.

As for representing urban cities in movies, Chen and Zhang are not forerunners of their generation. In the early and then late 1980s, other directors like Sun Zhou, Huang Jianxin and Teng Wenji had begun to produce movies about city life. Yet,

while these directors were fascinated with the dynamic lives in contemporary metropolis, Chen and Zhang were more concerned about its origin and early development. One reason of Chen and Zhang's predilections is, although they decided to tap a new subject-matter, with their past achievements, they must keep the continuity of their creations, that is, keep exploring the depth of Chinese history and culture. But why do they choose Shanghai? Here, the realistic reason is the rise of the "Shanghai theme" in the 1990s, and one remarkable characteristic of this phenomenon is: though the "Shanghai theme" was boosted by the soaring of Shanghai's economy of the time, its cultural symptoms are full of nostalgia and more related with the past.

If we say the whole 1980s in China was full of passionate expectations of the new century, when entering the 1990s, the hectic pace began to slow down and added to this was a desire of looking back, which is the nostalgia of the Fin de siècle. Apparently, this abrupt change was an expected result of the political crisis of 1989, which ended up with the government's flagrant military crackdown of the protests, creating the Tiananmen Massacre that shocked the world. No one had imagined the last ten years of the 20th century would begin with such frustration and depressing. The vibrant atmosphere had disappeared, and intellectuals, including artists, were perplexed. Although political control was tightened, the economical reform was not stopped, and with the process of marketization and the introduction of foreign capital, the face of China has been undergoing enormous changes. Such a contradictory reality was the very background of the ambience of nostalgia germinating in the 1990s, and behind it was the complex mentality of the time. Analyzing the nostalgia, culture and

film critic Dai Jinhua believes that this phenomenon originated from a two-fold need. On the one hand, it is an emotional need, about which Dai says: “the giddy and aggressively rapid urbanization of the 1990s embodies the most contradictory sentiment of contemporary Chinese people, especially contemporary Chinese intellectual elite” (Dirlik and Zhang, 208). On the other hand, Dai believes that “the emergence of nostalgia answers a cultural need”, which was a reaction to a time of “expressive materiality”, and she terms it as “a positive construction” that works as “the best substitute for historical consciousness” (Dirlik and Zhang, 210). Indeed, such a trend had already begun in some directors’ works. Taking another 5th generation director Sun Zhou and his movie *Xin Xiang* (The fragrant heart) as an example, Dai Jinhua reveals a profound transition happening in Chinese culture, which is “for the first time, the history-forsaking forward gaze and posture of Fifth Generation into a posture of regarding history and embracing historical culture” (Dirlik and Zhang, 210,211). It was this change that promoted the prevalence of nostalgia and made the south and Shanghai to be the focus of Chinese culture.

Ironically, Zhang Yimou ambitiously came to Shanghai with the intent of shooting this urban city but in the midway he turned around and walked away. In *Shanghai Triad*, we can feel that the attitude of its creator was ambiguous. On the one hand, Zhang Yimou took a great effort and used plenty of resources, and this was the most expensive movie among his works until then, in which he tried to represent the styles and features of Shanghai. On the other hand, he also doubted the meaning of this bustling and flourishing city. The movie uses a boy named Shui Shen, who just

comes from the countryside, as the narrator, so that the old Shanghai we see is from Shui Shen's perspective and involves his feelings. Yet, Shui Shen's feelings are inevitably twisted, not only because he is a country man (the way Xiao Jinbao calls him), but also because where he is steeped in is Shanghai's underworld. The first day of Shui Shen in Shanghai begins with a bloody killing scene; later when he becomes the servant of Xiao Jinbao, the rude and unreasonable hostess makes Shui Shen lose all his initial curiosity and anticipation. To Shui Shen, Shanghai is strange and dangerous, without any merit, so that the most direct reaction of him is to flee there. The opposition between the city and the countryside is clearly reflected on Shui Shen's feeling; maybe this also implies the conflict in the filmmaker's heart.

At the height of the film's crisis, Mr. Tang chooses to leave Shanghai. Before that, he is nearly killed by conspirators if Shui Shen's uncle, another country man, has not sacrificed his own life to save him. There is no safe place for Mr. Tang anymore in Shanghai. He has to escape and hide in the countryside, like a loser. To these who tire of all the hating, cheating and infighting in cities, the countryside is always an asylum to return to. In contrast to the city, here reigns eternal serenity and simplicity. Therefore, when the narration of the movie moves to the second part, we all feel some sort of release because of the fadeaway of the former circumstances of darkness and depression, then appreciate the ambience of pastoralism. However, such naivety could only belong to Shui Shen and Jinbao, who are not totally corrupted. To those urbanized men, wherever they are, they have to continue their business, to fight and kill, otherwise they will get killed. At the end, the small island becomes a guise, and

the beautiful scenery is like a transient illusion. Mr. Tang and his followers merely use this small piece of countryside as an alternative battleground. What they need is to keep control of Shanghai. The small island has lost the essence of countryside and become an epitome of corrupt urban city.

Similarly, the confrontation between the rural and urban also exists in *Temptress Moon*. The difference is: Chen Kaige's rural China is more detailed and full of darkness and dooms that is close to usual imagination of the South, but the Shanghai his the movie appears to be flimsy and empty. Yet, Shanghai still represents an important factor in the whole storyline, because from the beginning to the end, the narration jumps between the rural town and the urban Shanghai. Going back and forth between the two places, the main characters, including Ru Yi, Zhong Liang and Duan Wu are trying to find a way out of the impasse of their lives and feelings. To them, Shanghai is a new world; it is the future and hope. However, this hope is doomed to be a moon in the water because of the real identity of Zhong Liang. The director apparently deals with Shanghai as a symbol representing a westernized direction: initially, when Zhong Liang hastily leaves home, actually his direction is Beijing, which is the power centre of the empire, but at the railway station he is abducted to Shanghai. Later, Zhong Liang goes back home and tries to bring Ru Yi to Shanghai, but the destination he tells her is still Beijing. Here Shanghai is supposed to be hided, and Zhong Liang knows there will be a catastrophe if Ru Yi goes to Shanghai. Another character Duan Wu also finishes his changeover in Shanghai. When he realizes this city is a "battleground of men and women," his effeminate and

subservient feature suddenly disappears. Sitting on Ru Yi's body, he finally experiences being a real man. Generally speaking, Chen Kaige's attitude is negative; both sides he sees are hopeless and meaningless. The rural old China is in decline, morbid, a-moral and fatuous, but the new westernized China is more sinister, ruthless and hypocritical. At the end, Zhong Liang is killed, Ru Yi has dementia, and then Duan Wu is selected head of Pang family. The two worlds are so incompatible and can only keep going on in their own directions.

Parallel with the rise of the nostalgic trend, in the 1990s, there was also a series of passionate discussions and debates on the topic of Chinese modernity. When trying to revisit the origin of Chinese modernity, people necessarily trace it back to Shanghai, the biggest and earliest Chinese metropolis. Now it is without question that we are all surrounded by modernity which, in Baudelaire's words, means "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent." Modern city is supposed to be a place to show us what modernity brings to people, a kind of totally new feeling and experiences. Correspondingly, we will have strong expectations of Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou's movies on the "Shanghai Theme." However, both *Shanghai Triad* and *Temptress Moon* are not good as expected. As indicated before, in both movies the urban city has not become the main object of the concern but a time background. In one interview about *Shanghai Triad*, Zhang Yimou claimed that his goal in this movie was not to represent old Shanghai. What concerned him most are still his characters and their fates (Li Erwei, 129). In the same interview, Zhang also admitted that Shanghai for him is just a scene, and the story could have happened in any other place. Yet, Zhang

Yimou's explanations could also be considered as a sort of sidestepping, because after the movie did not get the expected success both domestically and internationally, he himself seemed to accept that he had not succeeded with the Shanghai theme. Therefore, he simply denied he had had that purpose.

Nevertheless, since Zhang Yimou had already brought his story to Shanghai, he indeed provided his version of this theme. In contrast to those one-sided criticisms, Chinese literary critic Chen Xiaoming proposes his interpretation on this movie; he thinks "In fact, the film aims at one of the blind spots in the study of modern Chinese history" (Dirlik and Zhang, 234). As Chen Xiaoming argues, Zhang Yimou's gangster movie precisely reflects the peculiarity of the Chinese modernity, which is "interwoven with the patriarchal clan system." Besides, "[a]lthough they are engaged in modern forms of trade and commerce such as banking and saving and loans, the ways in which their businesses operate are entirely determined by the traditional clan system." Chen Xiaoming thinks *Shanghai Triad* has been greatly misunderstood. From its English title (the Chinese title is borrowed from an old folk song) to the style of Hollywood musical and its status as a B-rate gangster movie, Zhang Yimou seemed to have abandoned the genuine China familiar to his audiences. However, as Chen Xiaoming points out, actually in this movie "Zhang intended to reveal a tragic paradox: Modernization in China had to be accomplished in traditional ways" (Dirlik and Zhang, 235). Chen Xiaoming's argument is creative and illuminating, giving the movie a deeper meaning that perhaps hides in the filmmakers' unconscious, and such a method might also apply to analyzing Chen Kaige's movie. In *Temptress Moon* the

urban Shanghai is an accidental arrival of a trip. Compared with the new and vibrant city, the countryside exposes its decadence and impotence, and the rickety Pang family has no choice but to put the burden on a young woman. At the same time, the ubiquitous femininity tenderness of the south declares that traditional China has lost its masculinity and creativity. In the modern city, the law of the jungle is being executed; everybody is in the combat of existence. In other words, the arrival of modernity only pushes mankind to a more dangerous situation. On the other hand, verging on the collapse, the rural town continues to maintain its stale patriarchal system to contend the threats from the outside, but this is just a temporary struggle which has no hope of victory at all. The new system has been built in the urban city which is powerful and organized, and it quickly transformed Zhong Liang as an effective implement that can be sent back and turn the old system breakdown.

Although it is too arbitrary to deem both *Shanghai Triad* and *Temptress Moon* are cinematic discourses about modernity, it has been widely recognized that the Fifth Generation directors share a common character that is seen in their reflections on and rewriting of Chinese history on the screen as their obligation, whether their attitude is "forsaking" or "embracing" (Dai Jinhua's words). The reason *Shanghai Triad* did not get approval from the west is that the west thought Zhang Yimou abandoned his style and came to imitate Hollywood, where the gangster movie has been a primary genre. Likewise, *Temptress Moon* also got little applause from abroad because of its interest in the underground society. All these critiques from the outside consider both movies as not representing real China. However, some critics do not accept this opinion and

point out it is “superficial” (Chen Mo, 140). On *Temptress Moon*, Chen Mo argues: “He (Chen Kaige) gives account of a story of the past, actually what he wants to focus on is contemporary thought under the authoritarian ruling in today’s China” (Chen Mo, 141). Chen Mo’s argument apparently is very close to Chen Xiaoming’s interpretation of *Shanghai Triad*. To conclude, all works of Fifth Generation could be seen as a retrospection and reflection upon Chinese history, both of the past and present. In other words, we cannot simply read these movies as an interesting story but must penetrate the surface to find the connotations under it. This reminds me of the theory of “National Allegory” which Fredric Jameson postulates in one of his essays, “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism.” The common character of the Third-world cultural production is "Those texts, even those narratives which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic, necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public Third World culture and society” (Jameson 187, 142). Although Jameson’s theory is controversial in the critical circle, we still find it is a useful method to analyze many works from the Third-World, particularly the films of Fifth Generation directors. On the one hand, what Fifth Generation were facing is the attention from the west, imagination of the Orient and the desire to prove this imagination; therefore, these movies from China will never be read isolatedly but will be seen as a text of a country. On the other hand, as a group grown under the traditional education, with the obligation to write history in mind, Fifth Generation consequently has a strong desire of rewriting the past and

expressing their own thought through their works. Nevertheless, whether or not works represented by Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige have precisely probed the Chinese modernity need further research, to discuss the thoughts of the time and compare these works with these works of the next generation.

Growing with the City

Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige have been criticized for not being good at representing contemporary China and urban life. Though they frequently won international awards and have a large number of fans domestically, opinions from scholars and intellectuals gradually turn to be reserved, and some sharply condemn them as experts of ethnography shooting movie for the west; even when they move their attention to urban Shanghai, their preference is to show the old and dark side of the country. However, it is unfair to condemn all Fifth Generation directors for the lack of concern and practices of contemporary urban life. Earlier in the mid-1980s, Huang Jianxin had already begun to make a series of movies focusing on the city. His works had a considerable impact on the time and were highly acclaimed even overseas. Paul G. Pickowicz points out that, among the elite group of the 5th generation, Huang "was really the only important director—dealt exclusively and explicitly with the profound problems of the contemporary socialist city" (Browne, et al, 57). Pickowicz also believes that from Huang's movies we can find the origin of the massive protests in the spring and summer of 1989, and he also argues that "Huang Jianxin's

anticipated that extraordinary turmoil" (Browne, et al, 57). Given his notion of "Postsocialism" to interpret Huang's works, Pickowicz apparently is still reading these movies as allegories, which I think is a useful method and is close to Huang's intention. Nevertheless, we have to admit that, although Fifth Generation directors have the ambition and the grand view to rewrite national history and national fate, their relationship with the urban has always some distant or septum, which might have been caused by their personal experiences and the education they got. Perhaps we should shift our anticipation to the younger generation who is more closely connected with the modern cities.

Then, where is the next generation when Fifth Generation filmmakers were enjoying the spotlights and freely choosing what kind of movie they liked to shoot? The younger generation, who were considered to lack the experience of suffering, is actually not as lucky as their predecessors. What the development of market-oriented economy brings to young artists is a helpless situation, short of survival space, without minimum financial support, being neglected and marginalized. In the introduction of the book, *The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of Twenty-first Century* that she edited, Zhang Zhen uses the term "minor cinema" to depict the situation of this generation of the time, and she points out "The 'minor' status of this new urban cinema is marked on one hand by its youth, by virtue of its overlap with "coming of age" of the so-called Sixth Generation and the appearance of other newcomers in the 1990s. On the other hand, the term signals its position as a 'minority' in relation to but also in dialogue with the officially sanctioned mainstream

cinema"(Zhang Zhen, 2). Overall, exposed to the complicated and entangled reality of the 1990s, the sixth generations, as sons of cities, are more directly experiencing every change that happens in the Chinese society, so there is no reason for them not to represent the environment that has nourished them.

This is not to say that city is the only topic of the sixth generation directors; their works are so various that they even cannot be adequately called a group, from an aesthetic or theoretical angle. However, all their works are bounded with the city they live or grow up in, like Beijing for Zhang Yuan and Wang Xiaoshuai, Wushan for Zhang Ming, Datong for Jia Zhangke and Shanghai for Lou Ye, Li Jun and Li Xin. Different from Fifth Generation, all the cities that appear in the sixth generation's movies keep their real names, including their streets and landmarks, and the documentary style they adopted is a new departure from the refinement of their predecessors. Also, as outsiders of the mainstream, they give up the grand narrative and choose to pay more attention to everyday life and individuals.

I will take Lou Ye as an example to do further study on this young group, and the two movies of Lou Ye to be explored are *Suzhou River* and *Purple Butterfly*.

Suzhou River is not Lou Ye's earliest movie. Before this, he had already finished two works: *Weekend Love* (Zhou Mo Qing Ren) and *Don't Be Young* (Wei Qing Shao Nu) respectively released in 1993 and 1995. In fact, *Weekend Love* is also about Shanghai. In this movie, which Lou Ye was later dissatisfied with and admitted that there were "some technical problems had not been resolved" (Chen Qingsong,

253); he tells a story of several young people during the 1980s. In the meantime, through the movie, the director also tried to express his feeling toward his native town. However, *Weekend Love* certainly is not a mature work. It is Lou's third feature film *Suzhou River*'s (1997), after a commercial production *Don't be Young*, that will let us see a more completed movie by the new generation.

Like *Weekend Love*, *Suzhou River* is also a story about the emotional entanglements between young people; but they are different than before; they belong to different parts of the city. Although they love each other, the communication between them is always difficult. The distinctive character of *Suzhou River* is the parallel structure of its narrative. The movie begins with two seemingly unrelated points: the story of the photographer and the story of Mada. Nevertheless, in both stories there is a girl, one named Mudan (with Mada), the other is Meimei (with the photographer), both of whom are performed by one actress Zhou Xun: Mada loses Mudan in the first part of the story, and some years later he comes back trying to retrieve her. Then he meets Meimei who has the same face as Mudan, though the two girls' temperaments are different. The two stories finally are mingled, but we find that the two girls are not the same one, although they have even appeared in the same scene.

Suzhou River has the characteristic of an Auteur movie. From the beginning to the end, there is always a voice narrating or discussing everything going on, although it is spoken out through the photographer who has been behind the camera. We can

also see his asides as coming from the director himself. Because the aside is always thinking and sometime choosing the direction of the story, the movie appears uncertain, like a work which is still being made. The initial story of Mada and Mudan is like a fairy tale in the modern city, but when this too pure story is put into a wider circumstance, everything is changed, even Mada. Making his living by riding his motorcycle to deliver goods in the city, Mada enters on the giant social net connecting different people. This is a mediocre life but also has all kinds of possibilities: firstly, a girl (Mudan) appears as an object needed to be shuttled, which causes the encounter of two lonely hearts; It then comes the intervention of the criminal gang. However, the love story of Mada and Mudan has to face the complexity of the modern life, and this is why when Mudan is enjoying unprecedented happiness with Mada, as audiences we begin to worry where the story will go, having a presentiment that this is not going to be a typical story in today's reality. Here, the director chooses an ambiguous and hypothetical way to accomplish the transition of narration, by which a simple love story is put in a world full of chicanery. By exploring the complexity and randomness, Lou Ye profoundly expresses his view of the modern city.

The Suzhou River and the Huangpu River are commonly deemed as two mother rivers, though the former is more related with the origin and development of the city, the latter one apparently not only played and is playing a more important role in modern times but also became the main landmark of Shanghai. Contrasting the dynamically changing Huangpu River, the Suzhou River is old and dirty; with the slow flowing, the river seems totally behind the time. Through the Suzhou River, Lou

Ye shows another side of the city, which is more real without decoration and where more ordinary people are living in. Those scenes on the river are raw and shaking, and with the obsolescence, it spontaneously stirs the memory of the past, or a kind of sense of nostalgia. However, Lou Ye's old river is not simply representing an innocent past but the dangerous and cruel present. It's well-known that besides serving as the water transport link, the Suzhou River for a long time was also the biggest sewer of the city, contains all kinds of garbage and dirty; therefore, it is not strange that and what happening on the river or by its banks are more of cheating, betrayal and crime. With his back to the fashionable Huangpu River, Lou Ye chose the Suzhou River to represent his Shanghai, which is inevitably full of darkness, and depression. Along with the disappearance of the heroine and the quest of the hero in the film, these factors naturally let us feel the director's predilection on the style of Film Noir. In a book on Chinese film, Jerome Silbergeld makes meticulous comparison between Lou Ye's *Suzhou River* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo,* and his analysis not only lets us believe that the young director obviously had been influenced by the Hitchcock's masterpiece, but also reveals the depth of Lou Ye's work. Silbergeld uses Film Noir and Anti-Noir (Silbergeld, 30, 34.) one after another to discuss *Suzhou River*, which means Lou Ye has continuation and development beyond learning and imitation. What concerns Silbergeld more is the second part of the film, when the romantic love story is destroyed but a more terrible reality is exposed, and he sees that the depiction of Mada's betrayal in the film symbolizes the "corruption" of the city, which is "in an age where unfettered materialism and perversion of official ideology run as the way

from the back ground of Suzhou Creek to the government offices in Beijing. Corruption, the perception of which now helps to define daily life in the New China, has left no one behind in the wake of ideological decline." (Silbergeld, 33.). Though I think Silbergeld's argument exaggerates Lou Ye's intention to criticize the reality of today's China, I agree that Lou Ye has expressed caution and concern about the present society. Film Noir emerged during the era of the Great Depression in the America, which is totally different from today's China, that's why Lou Ye's anxiety appears untimely to this carefree era, but we can see Lou Ye's film as a prediction: it is possible that the corruption of the whole era will bring people to that cold, alienate world of Film Noir.

Purple Butterfly (2002), the next film of Lou Ye finished three years later, is again of the Shanghai theme. Actually, during the interim, Lou Ye did not make any movie because he had been prohibited to do so by the government for *Suzhou River*, which he entered some overseas film festivals without the approval of official censorship. Though this was caused by the violation of the procedure, whether the movie could get the green light is very questionable. Indeed, Lou Ye was not the only one who lost the right to work, and in the black list of the government, there were dozens from Sixth Generation. In contrast with the marginalized situation of this group, at the same time, most of the 5th generation directors were gradually joining the mainstream and making big budget commercial movies. This difference had determined that their films will go on distinct paths, even for a similar theme.

Starring the famous Chinese movie star Zhang Ziyi, *Purple Butterfly* starts in Manchuria. Itami (Toru Nakamura), who is Japanese, meets a beautiful Chinese girl Cynthia (Ziyi Zhang), and despite the complicated political situation, the two fall in love, but their happiness soon ends when Itami returns home for military service. However, three years later, in Japanese occupied Shanghai, the two meet again, but now Itami is a professional agent; and Cynthia joins a covert group with plans to kill Yamamoto, who is the boss of Itami.

Purple Butterfly has the frame of a commercial film, containing characters of action movies or thriller movies. Besides the emotional entanglement of Itami and Cynthia, another couple who is accidentally dragged into the story is developed into another thread of the movie. The interweavement of the two story lines makes the movie more intriguing and blurred than *Suzhou River*. Yet, all these complicated plots are just appearance; they are the creator's materials. What Lou Ye wants to represent are still human emotions, which he believes are invariable. In an interview, Lou Ye said:" Nothing has changed." As I understand, this is not meant that though the environment is always changing, people are the same. Actually, the outside world can push and distort individuals, their lives and their souls, but something in their mind is the remaining essence. What Lou Ye is interested in is the fate of individuals, their wandering, pursing and struggling, but all these are deeply imprinted by the mark of the time. This is a story talking about individual lives under a grand background: the war, the crisis of the nation and the direction of history. However, all these people participate in history with an ambiguous intention or personal purpose: love, hatred,

jealousy and misunderstanding. It is difficult to put the characters into different political camps. Some of them even do not belong to any side. They fumble in the maze of the tumultuous world, fail or succeed, always by accident, but all their efforts paid with the price of blood and the ultimate price of life has no significant influence on history. Therefore, the grand narrative is deconstructed, and history, though dark and depressing, has no meaning at all to these ever existed lives.

While Zhang Yimou declares that his movie could happen in other cities and that Shanghai has no specific meaning to him, and Chen Kaige pays more attention to his imagined exotic south, Lou Ye believes his *Purple Butterfly* must happen in Shanghai. The reason is, as I see it, not only it is the birthplace of the director, and he also spent his childhood and early youth here. More importantly, Lou Ye has a profound perception of this city. I agree with the director that this story should happen at Shanghai; otherwise the movie will surely become unconvincing and totally fictional. It is always said that "Shanghai is adventurers' paradise," where swarms every kind of people coming from every direction, far and near; they have different backgrounds but the metropolis gives them chances to conceal their personal history, sometimes they have multiple identities of which they can choose in accordance with the needs. In the both wide and compressed space of the modern city, they encounter or separate, love or kill each other. Possibility is endless here, anything can happen, which both excite and perplex people. The so called "paradise" is actually a test ground of Chinese modernity, and what we are experiencing in today's modern city all

can find their origins there. In short, *Purple Butterfly* provides us an allegory of modern city, an allegory of Shanghai.

Between the Two Generations

Using only one director to represent Sixth Generation will not seem to be comprehensive, but we still can see some obvious differences between them and Fifth Generation. They also different in terms of their attitudes toward Chinese history, and their way of treating them into the objects, and their aesthetic styles.

First, different world views and personal experiences of the two generations determine the difference of two Shanghai discourses. Fifth Generation sees urban Shanghai as a heterogeneous entity which brings not only novelty and excitement but also threatens chaos. Both Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige express suspicion and wariness toward city in their movies. It seems they are reluctant to recognize that this new culture can bring progress and benefit. From *Shanghai Triad* and *Temptress Moon*, the old China still exists in the countryside, though it has adjusted its form. Yet, Sixth Generation filmmakers started more from their personal position; they and the cities have an inborn relationship. For them, the cities have never been new things. In other words, this younger generation see themselves as a part of the urban culture; therefore, they seldom query and doubt what surrounds them. All they like to do is to merge them in this environment to gain sensational stimuli; this is a sensational generation.

Second, the two generations' movies exhibit different visions of Shanghai. The reason is their different creative styles. Fifth Generation filmmakers prefer realism and always try to reproduce the real life, yet their story and narration are always fictional and full of personal imagination. Most Sixth Generation directors like to use a documentary style combined with MTV and commercial advertisement style, but they are often inclined to choose untraditional narration to construct their story. In general, Fifth Generation filmmakers want their audiences to enter in the story and understand the thoughts of the creators. On the contrary, the younger generation seems to like demonstrating their subjectivity by choosing to break free from convention. However, this also shows that they hope their audience can have a chance to re-experience and have their own feeling when they are watching.

Finally, I find that both Fifth Generation and Sixth Generation had a subtle relationship with the trend of the time: they were inevitably driven by it, they tried to catch it and negotiate with it; sometimes they got surprising success, but sometimes their movies sank for no reason. All four movies discussed in this chapter are not considered as successful. Though Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige's movies still could retain marketing might, most comments were negative; and Lou Ye only gained some acclaim in the circle of the so-called art-movies. Specifically, upon the "Shanghai Theme," all these movies fail. None of them has become a symbol of Shanghai Fever, and they are like digressional works, so that most people even ignore their existence related to the "Shanghai Theme." From the positive side, we can conclude that all these artists are so independent that they keep their own quality, style and character

when they are creating. However, this also means they are limited in the subjective imagination, and toward this complex object, they lack the enough understanding and necessary experience. So that, it is inevitable most of these works are premature reaction to the trend thought. To represent the quintessence of this urban culture, we must explore more into the depth of its history.

Chapter Two:

Urban Culture: Transmission and Circling

One of the most significant phenomena in modern Chinese history and culture is the relationship between the two major metropolises: Hong Kong and Shanghai, people's migration between the two cities, and the circulation between the two cultures. People prefer to call this "A Tale of Two Cities," which seems an exceptional chapter in modern Chinese history. Hence, it's not a surprise that film, as a symbol of modern city, plays an important role in this tale. In this chapter, I will discuss the existence and influence of the so called "Shanghai Factor" in Hong Kong film: its origin and evolution, what role it has played to connect the two cities and cultures under the impact of fashion and marketization, the possibility and crisis of the dialogue that once mutually reinforced the two cultures.

Shanghai and Hong Kong: memory lost and retrieved

When we often talk about the rise of Shanghai, it subsumes a two-fold meaning: a splendid peak of past and a period of decline and silence. As early as 1930s, Shanghai had already been called "The Biggest City of Far East." The historical opportunity enabled the city to take the lead to become a metropolis, compared to Tokyo, Hong Kong and any other Asian big cities. One more detail that needs to be mentioned is that, like a miracle, modern Shanghai was established in a debilitated

empire. However, the former prosperity completely vanished after 1949. For a long time, though still keeping its giant body, the city's importance was greatly diluted, though people of other provinces would be pleased if they got some specific candy and traveler bag (namely, Big Rabbits Candy and Shanghai Traveler Bag) which ironically became symbols of new Shanghai under the leadership of the Communist Party. All those achievements before the founding of New China was intentionally skirted and neglected, because they belong to the humiliation of being occupied by imperialists and the corruption of the bourgeois way of life. As a proof, during that time, Shanghai was no longer an explicit object in Chinese movies, although people were watching movies produced in this city. If we browse through the movies of that time, we can find they either narrate the revolutionary history or depict some apparently fictional space related to socialist construction. Gradually, Shanghai was totally forgotten by Chinese film, which amounts to the elimination of the memory of old Shanghai.

However, this precious memory has not been completely extinguished, and it is Hong Kong that is taking such a role of retrospection. It seems that old Shanghai was initially revived in Hong Kong, a lost-sibling of decades ago. Indeed, at the very beginning of Chinese reform and opening-up, when Hong Kong came back into the horizon, Shanghai had to look up and adore this far more developed modern city. Therefore, at this time the inflowing of Hong Kong culture and its products is definitely one-way; Shanghai had reduced to pure audience and had nothing to show. Yet, one impressive and remarkable event is the broadcasting of the TV series

Shanghai Bund (*Shanghai Tan*) in 1985(it was produced in 1980). The melodramatic story about old Shanghai of the 1930s quickly got popular in the same city a half century later, and the main actors and actresses also became well-known to every Shanghainese. From today's view, the production quality of *Shanghai Bund* was rather rough, and the performance of the actors were also mannered and exaggerated, but this totally different version of the past indeed ignited the long time oppressed memory. At this moment, the once vigorous interaction between the two cities seems to be suddenly recuperating.

If we look back on Chinese film history, we can clearly see that from the very beginning the intimate relationship between the two cities had already existed, considering that the birth of Hong Kong film was directly influenced by Shanghai, and the latter also became the human resource center of the former. A great number of Hong Kong filmmakers were from Shanghai, and in decades, many of them frequently traveled between the two places. Thus, the Shanghai contribution to the Hong Kong film industry cannot be underestimated. Also, it seems natural that Shanghai as a factor will remain in Hong Kong film and will reappear over and over again.

It cannot be denied that, for Hong Kong people, the old Shanghai factor in *Shanghai Bund* is more as an imagination than as a retrospection of the real old Shanghai. But, this is not to say that the popularity of this TV drama in both cities is a total misunderstanding. If delving into the issue further, we can find that behind this resonance is similar feelings and experiences of people in Hong Kong and Shanghai

that are distinguished from other Chinese cities, which is the very basis of this tale of two cities. With the passage of time, we can see more films will focus on this complicated and enchanting relationship between them.

I think maybe there is no other movie more suitable than *Love in a Fallen City* to start this discussion. Some critics think the movie *Love in a Fallen City* (1984) by female director Ann Hui is the starting point of a nostalgic trend in Hong Kong film production, because Hong Kong and Shanghai of the 1940s are contrasted in it (Chiao, 1987, 193). Of course, this contrasting of the two cities is not Ann Hui's creation. The movie is an adaptation of Eileen Chang's famous story written in 1942. In the movie, the heroine Bai Liusu, who is a divorcee, cannot suffer the control and discrimination of her parents' family in Shanghai, and then she comes to Hong Kong to date with a business man named Fan Liuyuan. Bai Liusu falls in love with this charming and fair-spoken person, but she cannot see any promising future. Fortunately, the war breaks out, Hong Kong falls into Japanese hands. Fan has no other choice but to stay in Hong Kong, and they get married. At the end of the movie, Eileen Chang's words appear on the screen: "Hong Kong's defeat had given her victory. However, in this unreasonable world, who can say, which was the cause, and which the result? Who knows? Maybe it was in order to vindicate her that an entire city fell….Liusu did not feel that her place in history was anything remarkable" (E. Chang 1996, 92).

It is very clear that in her story, Eileen Chang integrated a lot of her experiences and feelings. During the war, she also escaped to Hong Kong to continue her

education, but later the fall of Hong Kong forced her to go back to Shanghai. Like Liusu, Eileen Chang also reaped some advantages from the war: her sudden fame in Shanghai during Japanese occupation, and her marriage with Hu Lancheng, a high ranked official and her appreciator. Through Liusu or Eileen Chang's life, it seems as if Shanghai and Hong Kong formed the whole world for some people of that time, outside which their life would not continue. Therefore, after a half century, when the story was adapted into a movie, the old relationship of interdependence between the two cities resurfaced. Yet, this time the perspective of the narration is changed on screen. Although most parts of the plot are set in Hong Kong, the original story shows the personal feeling of a Shanghainese woman. To Liusu, leaving Shanghai is a reluctant decision, and Hong Kong is an alternative choice. Even if she tries to stay in Hong Kong, she and Liuyuan still prefer to eat at a Shanghai restaurant. Yet, the situation changes when these details from the story go onto the screen. Apparently, the angle of view changes to be external perspective: not only Liusu does become an object being watched, but also the viewer now is in Hong Kong. The gap of nearly half a century brings to the narration of Ann Hui's adaption a nostalgic sentiment, which is two-fold: nostalgia of old Hong Kong and its relationship to old Shanghai. All components of the movie are also of Hong Kong. The Shanghai part is all shot indoors, while various scenes of Hong Kong are perfectly represented. The male and female protagonists are performed by two famous stars of Hong Kong, Chow Yun-fat and Cora Miao, and Chow is the same leading actor in *Shanghai Bund*. The strong

Hong Kong proportion of the movie is exactly what makes some critics feel unsatisfied.

In his book *Shanghai Modern*, Leo Lee clearly points out this is a "failed characterization" (Lee, 337), and the choice of both actor and actress are wrong. As Leo Lee sees it, Chow Yun-fat "has too many easygoing manners of a young man from present-day Hong Kong or Taiwan" (Lee, 337). But to me, Leo Lee might be too indulged in Shanghai and expects to see a representation of a typical old Shanghai, although he believes that "(Shanghai) is lost forever and cannot be reproduced by whatever means." (Lee, 337) Indeed, what needs to be reproduced in the movie in the first place is not Shanghai but Hong Kong of the past. It does not matter whether Chow Yun-fat is more like today's people. Actually he makes us feel more intimate and can lead us to the past. The importance of movie version is the reflection of Hong Kong culture upon its own history, yet when it reaches the origin of the city, the inevitable outcome is the encounter with the old Shanghai, and what represented in the movie version is a good proof that mutual communication between the two cities had existed very early. We can see this form of dialogue will be directly used as a narrative method in Stanley Kwan's film *Center Stage* (1992). This time, old Shanghai and new Hong Kong will talk face to face.

Center Stage: A Dialogue between the Past and the Present

From its Chinese title *Ruan Lingyu*, *Center Stage* suggests that it is a biographical film of the early Chinese film star. Indeed, Kwan's film covers the most important periods of Ruan Lingyu's life. It starts in 1929, the year in which she began her career in Lianhua Studio in Shanghai, and concludes with her surprising suicide in 1935. However, the director did not shoot it as a typical biographical movie, which means delicately retelling Ruan's life and replicating the ambience of her time. Instead, the finished film shows a complicated style, which mixes the biopic of Ruan performed by Maggie Cheung, movie clips of Ruan herself and the documentary parts of the shooting of Kwan's film. The most significant factor is the dialogue between Maggie Cheung and the character she performs. Throughout the film, the past and the present are juxtaposed; all the old details gradually emerge and piece up to construct an integrated vision, but the process progresses under the questioning and reflecting of all participants of the film, and the result is that the film concerns not only the past but more about the responding and reflecting of today's people on an old era of half a century ago. The intervention of Hong Kong factor changes this movie, which now is not only about Shanghai but also about Hong Kong. In short, the Hong Kong perspective in fact is at the front of the stage.

Similarity or dissimilarity to the prototype is an issue that all biographic movies must face when selecting the actor or actress. Letting Maggie Cheung play Ruan Lingyu, who replaced the original selection of Anita Mui (Mei Yanfang), at first widened the distance between the performed and the performing. Not only is the dissimilarity between Ruan and Cheung, but also between their backgrounds and their

attitudes to life. For a long time, the director was not eager to let the actress enter the role, so that Maggie Cheung is still alive on the screen, who keeps responding, asking and answering, blended with wonderment, and sometimes even self-mockery. For instance, at the beginning of the film, some stills of Ruan's early career are shown on the screen, when the director's voice over explains that before joining Lianhua Studio, most roles Ruan played were eye candies, then, Maggie Cheung appears on the screen and says: "Isn't that like me?" And then, when these stills continue, the director says that although Ruan committed suicide half a century ago, today's people still remember her, and then he asks Maggie Cheung if she likes to be remembered by people half a century later. Maggie appears on the screen again and answers: "Even if someone remembers me; that will be different, because today Ruan Lingyu has already become a legend". Here, both Maggie Cheung's casual attitude toward that similarity and her shunning or understating of "legend" indicates not only the difference between the actresses of two generations but also the great transformations of two eras.

Between the similarity and the dissimilarity, what most concerns Stanley Kwan is the latter. It is dissimilarity of the two departed eras and two generations that engenders the necessity of dialogue. Actually, during the process of the production, a big change of the emphasis, particularly about the similarity or dissimilarity, had happened. In the original script, the narrative structure the playwright used is the paralleling advancing of two eras, and what he wanted to stress is the similarity of them, by means of which to express a sort of nostalgic feeling toward the past. Like

one Hong Kong scholar has pointed out that this kind of parallel is “too intentional and ostensible” and “this conduct is a result of a static concept of history, which ignores the complexity and relatedness of history” (Cheung, E. 2007, 11).

Relocating in History

From *Center Stage*, we can see a dialogue across time and space which connects the two eras and the two city cultures. Dialogue always needs a collaborator; otherwise there will be no communication but only a monologue. However, in the dialogue between Hong Kong and Shanghai, it is not necessary that both sides should be presented at the same time. One of the two can be an envisaged interlocutor, so that the dialogue is similar to the two-for-one image of Ruan Lingyu and Maggie Cheung. However, the existence of an “Other” is indispensable. Hong Kong needs someone to talk to. Likewise, old Shanghai which is buried under these lackluster films is also hankering for its confidante. This is exactly as Leo Lee points out: “I see a more intricate culture significance behind this obvious self-absorption-an inscription of Hong Kong’s own anxieties onto a Shanghai of the past. As Hong Kong did for Eileen Chang’s Shanghai of the 1940s, it takes an ‘other’ to define the self” (Lee, 333).

Yet, why Shanghai and Hong Kong can act as the “other” of the “other”? Furthermore, why has such a unique relationship been formed between Shanghai and Hong Kong? One obvious reason could be their similar historical situations: both cities had or have their colonial periods, which ironically had not left a lot of memory

of humiliation but brought a deep-seated superiority feeling because the invasion of colonists indeed let them experience modernization earlier than their compatriots. This privilege made many people lacking the national consciousness but usually care more about their own cities. This does not mean the fate of the whole nation has no big influence on the two cities, both Hong Kong and Shanghai are forever under the magnetic field of history, but they have their own destinies or fortunes. In *Love in a Fallen City*, Eileen Chang's heroine is wandering between Shanghai and Hong Kong. What Bai Liusu eagerly looks for is the possibility of living in a city which is very similar to Shanghai; therefore, she can rebuild her personal life. Finally, the fall of the city helps her fulfill the once hopeless dream of marriage. The notion "City" is especially highlighted by Eileen Chang through Bai Liusu's inner monologue. This is not only Bai Liusu, maybe this also includes Eileen Chang herself. She is so selfish that she puts herself higher than the city. To the contrary, this actually proves that their life are so dependent upon the city in which they reside.

When it comes to Ann Hui's version, when the fall of Hong Kong half a century ago appears on screen, what the catastrophic scene brings out is not the memory of the past but the anxiety and worry of the falling once again of the city. Ann Hui's *Love in a Fallen City* was produced in 1984, two years after the leaders of Great Britain and Mainland China had agreed upon the handover of the sovereignty over Hong Kong to China. The film changes an allegory of the Shanghainese to a new allegory of today's Hong Kong people, giving voice to their anxiety toward the future. Stanley Kwan's *Center Stage* was shot after June, 1989, when on TV all Hong Kong people had

watched the crackdown in Beijing, which brought big shock and dismay that pushed the anxiety to a peak. Kwan's film obviously is a circuitous expression of the haunting anxiety, so that his question of "fifty years later" cannot be understood as concerning only a comparison between Ruan Lingyu and Maggie Cheung, but as concerning history, the past and the future. As shown by another director Wang Kar-wai ,who chose the number 2046, fifty years after 1997, as one of his movies' title, anxiety toward the future in Hong Kong culture ran through the whole 1980s and 1990s, even into the 2000s.

Yet, here I will not comprehensively discuss this phenomenon, because there have been a lot of research focusing on the topic of "anxiety of Hong Kong's returning." I will concentrate on the effect of these mental factors and the way Hong Kong people deal with it. The "Shanghai factor" in Hong Kong film is obviously an important representation of this sort of reaction or tactic. Upon the negotiation of the sovereignty of Hone Kong, people in this city had never had any chance to speak. What they got is a result and one unchangeable future. Suddenly, a huge and ominous shadow loomed before them. For them, mainland China was strange and fearful, but they had to face it. From Ann Hui's *Love in a Fallen City* to Stanley Kwan's *Center Stage*, one significant change is that, after the initial anxiety and self-pity, they gradually began to find some real relationship with the mainland. Within the vast and complicated mainland, they found a concrete and not so strange object: old Shanghai. We can say that, the eagerly explored Shanghai Factor from the 1980s in Hong Kong film production is a conscious searching of cultural identity, and its significance is

also profound. As I have indicated, both convergence and divergence coexist in the dialogue between the two cities. While approaching old Shanghai culture is a strategy of finding a way out under the pressure of anxiety, the emphasis of divergence from those scholars exhibits another aspect of this mental crisis. That is to say, the subjectivity of Hong Kong is always the core of the exploration. Therefore, it seems like a pilgrimage when Maggie Cheung began to perform Ruan Lingyu, but in the process, what is really going on is the negotiation between the past and the present, and the latter is more important. The pending 1997 makes a dangling subjectivity to face the necessity of locating its position in history. As the object of the dialogue, Shanghai is like a mirror of Hong Kong when the latter tried to define and identify itself. However, the situation at the beginning cannot determine the future. Fairly speaking, at the very beginning, old Shanghai was exactly like ruined remains, silent and still. Yet, when the communication started, the dormant city and its culture were awakened and begin to revive.

An Old Soul Awakened

The late 1980s was the darkness before dawn when Old Shanghai was waiting to be awakened, and Hong Kong no doubt played an indispensable role here. An obvious reason is that Hong Kong accidentally replaced Shanghai when Old Shanghai went into decline after its peak of prosperity. Just like the time division provided by Leo Lee: "…Shanghai reached the pinnacle of its urban glory in the early 1930s. It

continued during the ‘insolated island’ period of 1937-1941, when Shanghai was only partially occupied by Japan while the concessions still maintained legal autonomy and even after the Japanese occupied the entire city in 1942’”. (Lee, 323) As Leo Lee sees it, after the Sino-Japanese War ended in 1945, the glory had already come to an end. He sentimentally concludes: “[T]he city lost all its glitz and glamour, its dynamism and decadence. And Mao Dun’s ‘midnight’ world of ‘light, heat, and power’ seems also to have vanished. Taking its place is the rapidly developing former colonial city of Hong Kong.” (Lee, 323) However, because of this specific relationship of replacement, it might be most appropriate to have Hong Kong to rouse the dust-laden dream.

In *Center Stage*, through a series of juxtaposing and contrasting, the ghost of Old Shanghai seems gradually to find a body it can attach itself to, although when the two integrate with each other, it is difficult to judge whether it is the present returns to the past or the past comes to the present. In the film, Maggie Cheung continuously tries to figure out those roles performed by Ruan Lingyu, with the old and new clips of the same contents alternating on the screen. For instance, the scene from *Spring Dream of an Old Capital* (故都春梦) in which Ruan holds flowers with exaggerated emotion, in *Goddess* (神女) when the heroine uses the gestures of walking and smoking to express resistance, in *New Women* (新女性) when the protagonist shouts on the hospital bed, and in *Wild Flowers* (野花闲草) when the woman crawls in snow ground. Most of these scenes seem dramatic and excessive seen from today’s tastes,

which causes the difficulty of imitation and reproduction, and brings the question towards a legendary past.

Nevertheless, Stanley Kwan's film is not a simple biopic, but a comprehensive examination of the era of the 1930s and the film of the time. As Cheung points out, Kwan's attitude "exhibits a Hong Kong film artist's respect towards films of the 1930s, but at the same time keeps a distance." (Cheung, E. 2007, 011) Maggie Cheung's attitude at the beginning is also lukewarm. To an active Hong Kong actress, a role is a role, and Ruan Lingyu maybe important but still is one of them. However, the bygone soul quietly comes back. When representing the shooting of *New Women*, Stanley Kwan tries to tell Liang Jiahui, who playing the director Cai Chushen in the film, how to understand the feelings of that time, and under the quilt, tears stream from Ruan Lingyu's eyes. Of course, the tears first of all belong to Maggie Cheung, but they also represent the revival of Ruan Lingyu's emotion when she was in the shooting. Furthermore, this emotional scenario is less Maggie Cheung's understanding of that role in *New Women* than her empathy with Ruan herself. All these old movie clips are very precious and deserve our admiration and cherishment. After all, they have their historical limits and are inevitably old-fashioned to today's people. Actually, what can be recovered is not these films Ruan Lingyu participated or Cai Chushen directed. It is fruitless to make a color film replacing a black-white one. What is truly meaningful is what Stanley Kwan has tried: approaching the past by conducting a dialogue with it, and let all these facts that are sheltered by history speak for themselves. Therefore, not only is Ruan Lingyu revived, but also Cai Chushen, Li Lili, Li Minwei, Sun Yu, Bu

Wancang, Wu Yonggang…a generation of Chinese filmmakers appeared on the screen, which make us no longer constrained within the simplified and sometimes ideologized film works but experience people's real feelings behind the authorized history book. Although nearly all films Ruan played in have a leftist tendency, in real life, she was entangled in complicate relationships with people around her. To her, all these things were more difficult to deal with than those in movies. In short, the film *Center Stage* reproduces a vivid old Shanghai to us, which is more complicated than we have imagined, although we always believe we are living in a more complicated world than ever.

Ruan Lingyu's suicide was once a sensational event of the time and this is also necessarily the climax of the film. What the director Stanley Kwan shows us is a compound part that mixes the past and the present, the performer and the performed; in other word, both sides are on the scene. What are left of the real funeral are only some old photos, which are stationary images without voices. In accordance with details of these photos, Kwan made a great effort to rebuild the vanished moments, letting his actors and actresses return to the ambience of the time when the photos were being shot. Wu Yonggang comes, then Fei Mu. From the point of view of the audience, these actors are already incarnations of those famous men in Chinese cinema history. But, it is not so simple to let these people and the era they representing revived, if they cannot think and speak as if they were alive. Here, using the Brechtian "alienation effect," Stanley Kwan himself directly steps into the shooting scene. Just as when Wu Yonggang and Fei Mu directed Ruan Lingyu's performance, Kwan talked

with and inspired actors to figure out the feeling and thinking of their roles. Finally, to us, Wu Yonggang and Fei Mu begin to speak. Admittedly, the real words of Wu Yonggang and Fei Mu will never be retrieved. When we revisit the past, what we can hear perhaps is the echo of our calling. No matter what we do, we are always incarnating the bygone others; but when we try hard to mimic them, those once existent feelings will be brought out. From today's point of view, Ruan Lingyu's suicide is not so astonishing and a bit absurd, but by narrating this melodramatic event, Stanley Kwan's film gives us details and quintessence of an era.

Dwelling on Details

The film *Center Stage* won extensive acclaim because of its successful establishment of the interconnection between the two urban cultures and two eras. On the one hand, the director stresses the subjective perspective of Hong Kong, representing the mental state of a specific historic period; on the other hand, through the deepening of the dialogue, a remote history and details beneath its surface show their forgotten features. When the Old Shanghai revived in the vision of contemporary culture, its complexity and richness are impressive and attractive and need further examination. Therefore, two years after *Center Stage*, Stanley Kwan produced another Shanghai film *Red Rose and White Rose* (1994).

Red Rose and White Rose is an adaption of Eileen Chang's story which narrates a young man's two emotional experiences with two different kinds of women: one is

Red Rose, another is White Rose. The story by Eileen Chang has the character of bildungsroman novel, although it only covers the protagonist Zhenbao's life before his marriage and after, his change and maturation brought by the entanglement with a married woman and the puzzlement with his own marriage are obvious. Yet, re-narrating Chang's story is not the only purpose of Kwan, who actually wanted to rebuild a physical old Shanghai in his mind through this movie. To represent the details of old Shanghai, the director devoted a lot of attention to the everyday life of the time. Interior scenes are the main space of the story, and the close shot is the major method of framing. The consequence is that the parts are highlighted, and details are strengthened. This obvious change makes *Red Rose White Rose* totally different from *Center Stage*. It seems Kwan concealed or even forewent Hong Kong subjectivity and devoted himself to his objects, totally indulging in building a nostalgic ambience.

The details that Kwan tried to depict are those normal people of a past time and their daily life, as well as obscure trivial in everyday life. What the film *Red Rose and White Rose* represents is the texture and fabric of life, from which we can find some unremarkable and unconventional aesthetic feelings. This time, the director was not intended to create an epic of an old era, but this narrative strategy of walking away from the center efficiently compensates for the imperfectness and deficiency of the grand narratives.

Firstly, all people in *Red Rose and White Rose* are average persons, and none of them is a celebrity. They live in a normal state, with hopes and desires but never lofty

ambitions. They have not experienced hardships, even if sometimes they feel stressed, but it is never too strong and usually will not lead to drastic change. In general, all things in their life are not so serious and important but petty, light and trivial, and what they suffer a lot are ennui and mediocrity. The personal relationships around these people are normal and simple, like the protagonist Zhenbao, who is always dealing with his relatives, old classmates and old colleagues. Indeed, focusing on normal people is exactly the change toward Old Shanghai of Kwan, although their similarity and the mediocrity make them appear to be of little importance. Secondly, all things happen in the film are bland and lack dramatic conflicts. What structures *Red Rose and White Rose* are those "big events" of every person of all times: falling in love, getting married, and dealing with relatives. There are no adventures; even if the emotional entanglement between Zhenbao and Jiaolei seems to lead to an unmanageable mess, suddenly an unexpected accident resolves everything. In contrast, the background of the time (when the nation faced many crises) is lightly touched on, which is ambiguously referred to by newspapers of different dates in Zhenbao's hands, or the didactic radio broadcasting in a corner of the room. However, these references of the characters of the time also become trivial and appear un-important. Thirdly, the movie is full of representations of material stuff of everyday life. From the old tram, elevator to copper faucet, vintage telephone set; from spreading butter on bread to putting handkerchiefs on the tiles of toilet; also, the blood of mosquitoes left on the wall. All these material details or small acts of people constitute a vivid and charming genre painting. In routine daily life which flows like water, the power of materials

became significant; they are surrounding every person, occupying every corner of their life. In this modern urban space, materials are also a kind of being, coexisting with humans.

Apparently, the story or the plot must be the most unsubstantial part of *Red Rose White Rose*. From the beginning to the end, the narration seems to have turned a full circle: Zhenbao wakes up becoming a good man, for a second time, but not necessarily the last time. There is no clear action line, and what runs through the movie are fluctuations of the characters' emotions, which are not enough to reach any kind of tension. Yet, without the distraction of deliberate plots, the very nature of everydayness easily emerges and catches our attention, and we can finally feel the beauty of these details that are always forgotten or ignored. This unique beauty is usually trivial, ambiguous and fleeting, but its very value is exactly its reticence and transiency. Furthermore, if we can extend this kind of appreciation to watch those ordinary people who are insignificant elements of the city, we can also find impressive details about them. For instance, even when the lady in the movie only sits on the toilet bowl because of constipation, her melancholy and boredom still touches us. Stanley Kwan's *Red Rose White Rose* is meant to bring us to the everyday life itself, in which we can feel the original flavors of old Shanghai, or the Shanghaineseness.

Judging Shanghaineseness

As discussed earlier, Kwan's *Center Stage* was widely recognized and considered a milestone in film history. Yet, what *Red Rose White Rose* encountered after its release was more subtle and complex. Despite some awards from several film festivals, including Taiwan's Golden Horse Award, most critics hold reservations and even express unsatisfaction, and the objections are either focusing on whether this is a successful or faithful adaptation of Eileen Chang's story, or on how to judge the representation of Old Shanghai in the movie. Indeed, these two aspects are bound because in most people's mind Eileen Chang and Old Shanghai are closely connected, and the writer seemed like a master and a symbol of a culture. However, problem appears when people idolize Eileen Chang and use her to replace Old Shanghai and the urban culture it represents.

In an essay concentrating on *Red Rose White Rose*, Taiwan scholar Lin Wenqi(林文淇) summarizes those critiques that the film is "subordinated to Eileen Chang too much" and "couldn't surpass the structure of the original story": "to conclude, most film critics deem the movie as only a pale reproduction of the original story because it has totally lost the literary charm of Eileen Chang's fiction, and there is no need to mention if there is a constructive dialogue between the movie and the literary work upon cross-cultural perspective" (Cheung, M. 20). Of course, these opinions do not represent Lin himself, who argues that there is a "Hong Kong consciousness hidden" in Kwan's movie. Another scholar Leo Lee expresses more disappointment than he did on Ann Hui's *Love in a Fallen City*. Lee writes: "as a film *Red Rose White Rose* is not entirely successful. It may be that Kwan remained too

faithful to Chang's story, which concerns the love affairs of a rather selfish man with two women. Chang's narration is filled with her sardonic commentary, and Kwan reproduces some of the lines in a silent film. Obviously, the film's narrative mimics the short story-an attempt that fails because the story relies so heavily on the character's psychological interaction, which the film cannot replicate."(Lee, 337)

To me, the critique of Kwan's *Red Rose and White Rose* being "subordinated to Eileen Chang too much" is unfair and untenable. All movies adapted from novels, especially by acclaimed authors, have to suffer being compared to the original works. The negative criticisms usually are focused on distortions or alterations in the adaptations, but it seems it is not the case that Stanley Kwan encountered, because his problem is the opposite. As Leo Lee puts it, "Kwan's failure reveals the earnestness of his effort to reconnect with Shanghai." Leo Lee's judgment is based on reasoning in this vein: because reconstructing old Shanghai is impossible, such efforts are doomed to be failures. Apparently, Leo Lee's opinion is similar to those summarized by Lin Wenqi. However, judging his film by emphasizing adaptations is not an appropriate method. Though an adaptation of Eileen Chang's story cannot totally break away from the original work, it is not necessarily a pure reproduction. There is no need to say the core of both the story and the film is representing Shanghai of the 1930-1940s, but it is not granted that the perspectives of the author and the director are all the same. Leo Lee's criticism upon Kwan's film is problematic because in his mind he had already replaced Old Shanghai with Eileen Chang's Shanghai, so that, to him, reproducing Old Shanghai equals reproducing Chang's perspective. Leo Lee's problem is that he sees

Eileen Chang as an absolute symbol of the old culture, and he himself is a legitimate spokesman for Eileen Chang. Under his preconceived criteria, it is impossible that Kwan's effort could get comprehensively recognized.

For those criticisms of Kwan's "subordination," the deeper disaffection indeed is about his loss of own position. Upon this viewpoint, Lin Wenqi's evaluation is exactly the opposite. Lin Wenqi summarized those criticism as "misreading," and he thinks that Kwan's film is not a simple reproduction of the original story, but "reserves Kwan's Hong Kong consciousness" (21), although the film does not has an explicit factor of Hong Kong consciousness as in *Ruan Lingyu*. Lin argues that the Japanese occupied situation of Shanghai in *Red Rose White Rose* is comparable to the colonial status of Hong Kong, and the predicament in Zhenbao's life is the irresoluble conflict between the subjectivity of personal desire and society or state. Furthermore, Lin also points out that the film, "by depicting females and the details of their sensual desires, profoundly challenges the vacuous grand narrative of history and state" (23). This opinion is similar with Rey Chow's arguments on Eileen Chang: "Chang's modes of narration sabotage the identity that Chinese modernism seeks between 'inner subjectivity' and 'new nation' incomplete because ideological, her women characters mock the narrative machine does not yet, they seem to say, for the fetters of feudal China are still there, in the very way we feel" (Chow, 120).

Both Lin Wenqi's and Rey Chow's opinions on Eileen Chang can be applied to Kwan, and it is not because that his film was adapted from Chang's story, but because

he and she have similar urban cultural sensibilities. As Leo Lee points out, "In my view, the old Shanghai craze in Hong Kong's mass culture scene is not merely a reflection of Hong Kong's narcissism, and its obsession with its own identity. Rather, Shanghai's past glory represents a genuine mystery which cannot be explained by the official master narratives of history and revolution. It is a mystery the people of Hong Kong wish to unravel, and in so doing forge a symbolic link between the two cities that transcends history." (Lee, 333) To me, Leo Lee's analysis is cogent and actually can be applied to Eileen Chang's thinking. Now, if we look back on Kwan's *Center Stage*, we can understand that though the film has a framing narrative, what it really is concerned about actually are those trivial, fragments of the quotidian life, though they seemed had no significance on the fate of characters and the progress of the story. We see in real life the ordinary side of Ruan Lingyu contrasted with those roles she played on screen, and more importantly, the everyday life of the 1930s in Shanghai. Therefore, I think it is inappropriate for us to use *Center Stage* to belittle *Red Rose White Rose*, because the essences of both films are similar and the two should be read connectedly. The former is going from big toward small; the latter is from small toward big. A film about film, *Center Stage* lets us see a generation of film makers behind the camera, whom are another branch of The May Fourth movement but are chronically neglected by official history. *Red Rose White Rose* represents ordinary city dwellers who are usually omitted in grand narrations.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I would like to cite a statement by Leo Lee: "Tsui Hark and Stanley Kwan's obsession with Shanghai must be accounted for in a large perspective. What Hong Kong and Shanghai have shared in common is not only the historical background of colonialism or semi-colonialism but also an urban cultural sensibility rooted in cosmopolitanism. History has dealt its most ironic coup de grâce by making the cities important once again as cultural and commercial centers after half a century of rural revolution promoting the triumph over the cities. As a century of China's search for modernity comes to an end, the specters that hang over the not so distant horizon are cities such as Shanghai and Hong Kong." (Lee, 339) Indeed, Leo Lee's words apply to more directors, including Ann Hui. From the late 1980s to the turn of the 20th and 21th century, a lot of Hong Kong films are concerned with the Shanghai Factor, and the phenomenon involves both the consciousness of Hong Kong identity and the revival of urban cultural sensibility. As I have discussed, among these directors and their works, Stanley Kwan is no doubt the most salient figure. In Kwan's films, we can see clear and intimate relationships between the two cultures of Shanghai and Hong Kong, an ongoing dialogue between the two cities, a strong influence of Shanghai literature upon Hong Kong film, and also, a shared attitude or spirit which appreciates day-to-day life more than grand narratives of state and history.

Chapter Three:

Negotiation with Shanghai's Present and Past

In this chapter I will investigate the changes and developments of the "Shanghai Theme" in some new films produced after the new millennium. In this new era, with the rapid growth of the economy and the expansion of connections with the world, social life, particularly in cities, is drastically changed, and all these need to be expressed and have already been demonstrated by the artists through different forms, including film. The young generation born and growing up in cities obviously has more advantage to speak in this respect. However, what the modern city offers are the unprecedented complexity and equivocality, which inevitably results in different perspectives and judgments of people. Some people are eager to find spiritual sustenance, when the reality of the chaotic time lets them feel perplexed; some adopt a way of dancing with fashion, easily hiding in the colorful image-woven dream; some express suspicion to the urban life and offer their bitter irony. All these proved that we are living in an era of diversity, where various viewpoints coexist. After a long time of repression and withering, Shanghai and the urban culture it represents are revived and again become the symbol of Chinese modernity. Considering its past and present is obvious an attractive issue.

Dazzling: Hope of Merging Fragments

In 2001 Lee Xin, who is Shanghai-born and a member of the Sixth Generation directors, made his third feature film *Dazzling* 花眼. Until then, all of his three films were about Shanghai. His debut *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* 谈情说爱(1995) focuses on contemporary life, and his second film *Gun with Love* 我血我情(1997) is a gangster movie set in old Shanghai. In *Dazzling*, Lee Xin chooses to return to the themes and methods he explored in his first film, and uses multiple narratives to represent the rich and colorful urban life and people's different emotional experiences. With its special vision, postmodern narrative method and sophisticated expressive power, *Dazzling* draws wide attention and critics believe that "it has the distinctive and characteristic quality of postmodernism cinema" (Gui, 41). However, to me, beneath the images of *Dazzling* and its fashionable style, urban life represented in the film is mostly of the normal condition and not so unusual or complicated than expected. This obvious contrast between the form and content of the film conveys or reveals inner contradictions and anxieties of the director, concerning the crisis that daily life and traditional values find themselves in the circumstances of modernization, and his intention is apparently to find a way out of this quandary and provides some possible belief and hope.

With five episodes, Lee Xin's *Dazzling* goes further than his first film, which has three stories and is narrated chronologically. However, this time the director mixes all episodes, making them crisscrossed, although each story keeps on its own course

and has no direct effect on others. The first story takes place between a pair of lovers. The girl decides to leave the young man because she thinks there are always some things that will never happen in the world, such as to have rain in a clear night or to have the young man propose to her. However, at the end, the young man realizes that and brings an unexpected rain to the front of the girl's window. The second is a campus love story, in which the young man tries to express feelings to a girl through the campus broadcasting, but the anticipated emotional moment turns out to be a joke caused by an accidental glitch. Seeing that the girl is so embarrassed, the boy finally braces up and walks forward to the girl. The third story is again related to the expression of love: a physical education teacher repeats the same greeting word to a young woman whom he escorts everyday but never has the courage to express his feeling, until the very last moment, knowing that he will lose her forever, the young teacher begins to run trying to catch up with the vanishing bus. The fourth is like a fable in which a girl is looking for "a road to love". Arriving at the edge of a forest, she meets a lonely ranger. Without any hesitation, the ranger blazes out a trail in the forest, giving a simple and clear answer to the girl's inquiry. In narrative, Lee Xin integrates in the film the fifth story which belongs to the narrator of the whole film, a movie theater usher who suffers from an eye disease, yet this story is still connected in spirit to all the other four stories. At the end of the film, the usher is sitting in a public park in the warm sunshine of the morning, waiting for a girl who will never show up because an accident has already killed her during the night.

The director's narrative preference apparently comes from the influence of some American directors: Jim Jarmusch and Quentin Tarantino, who both like to break the conventional cinematic narrative and use composite structure to cover different parts and facets of modern life. The method of the two American directors, normally categorized as non-mainstream but still given worldwide acclaim, is not only to make the narration more interesting and complicated but to give the film more cognitive power. For Lee Xin, *Dazzling* is meant to build a comprehensive and multi-dimensional perception upon the contemporary life, a panoramic view of the city. Such a narrative method pays more attention to the relations between parts than the development of the story and the arrangement of plots. In other words, the director expects the audience to think of the meaning of the film more than its story. Usually, it is common that in a film with multiple story lines, the initially unrelated parts gradually meet one another, producing surprising effects and pushing the story to a new direction. Yet, all stories in *Dazzling* are only juxtaposed; though there are many spatial crisscrosses in the film, none of the characters is aware of these coincidences, except for the audience. This is not to say that *Dazzling* is just a combination of several separate stories. Actually what the director wants to emphasize is the theme they all shared. In the film, every character encounters an emotional crisis, feeling confused about the meaning of love, and all these crises are related to the dynamically changing modern city.

Sharing the common topic of searching for the true meaning of love, all of Lee Xin's five stories also happen on the similar level, which makes it very clear that the

urban life represented in the film are running on normal track, without big events and dramas. There are only small crises, which exist in daily life of normal people and seem of no importance to others. Because there are no big conflicts, strong turning points and accidents. The film inevitably appears moderate and somewhat mediocre. Although the director deliberately creates some dramatic scenes, trying to elevate the intensity of the film, for instance, the fake rain made by the young man and the trail cut by the two hands of the ranger in a few moments, the effects tend to be poetic but do not meet the anticipation of the audience to see the modern city life, which is supposed to be more novel and abnormal. Such disappointments are caused not only by the imagination of the modern city, but also by the fashionable image style of the film. In other words, the content and the style of the film are incompatible, and there is clearly a gap between them. If the chic outer packing is stripped, what we find in *Dazzling* is actually a plain old heart.

Maybe it is too early to condemn the director who compromises our anticipation, because it might be unfair to impose our presupposed understanding of urban city upon him, especially when the object here is a particular city, the contemporary Shanghai, a distinctive existence in Chinese culture and society. As a young city, with its significant status in the modern history of China, Shanghai is always deemed as a symbol of modernity, representing all things new and the direction of future. However, we should not ignore the other side of Shanghai culture, which is the emphasis upon the individual and the daily life. Here, *Dazzling* with its stories and all roles in it apparently concerns more the quotidian life of urban city, the ordinary people, the

normal scenes of daily life and those peculiar details. What the director decided to work on is not the outer appearance of urban Shanghai but its inner space and the roots of this particular culture. The way *Dazzling* views urban Shanghai is not from the outside and with a distance but from the inside, and this change of angle brings observation to the base of the city life.

Compared to the dynamic and colorful modern society, daily life represents an opposite quality, which seems normal, simple and somewhat obsolete. The changing is slow and sometimes it is even motionless. Lee Xin's choice apparently contradicts popular narrative trends, although it is premature to conclude that he wants his film to be full of postures of challenge. To me, what determines the way the director made his choice is his real feelings and direct experiences of the city where he was born and grew up. When he began to envision his film, these details no doubt appeared before his eyes. To Lee Xin and his generation, the memory and experiences of the city are all of their memory and experiences. There are a lot of vivid details hidden in the film. Sometime these fragments are floating, even a bit dissociated with the narration. For instance, the young teacher stands in a line outside the US Consulate at night for a visa interview. This was a famous scene during the 1980s and 1990s in Shanghai. Actually, the person who pays the teacher for surrogating is the history teacher who appears in the episode of campus love, and the class he gives is also part of a common memory of the people of that time. As for the singer who strangely appears in the public garden before the ending, one reasonable interpretation is that the director wants to represent the contingency of daily life.

As its title implies, *Dazzling* is a film made up of fragments that mostly are randomly juxtaposed. All characters are fragments of which we only see some sections. The Shanghai details are fragments, which are scattered in dim corners of the story and are easy to be neglected because they usually have no strong relation to the story line or the characters. This disorder apparently exhibits a deep mental disorientation and crisis. When new challenges and the more complicated era come, the instinctive reactions of people are to immediately turn back to look for some support. Finding value and meaning in normal life -- such a belief is unquestionable. However, in the film, this turning back appears to lack the necessary pressure and urgency. The young woman seems to expect the physical education teacher to articulate his feelings, so there is no need for her to see another unknown man next day. Though love is always a difficult conundrum to everybody, the college student's problem is just that he has no confidence and courage to express. To the young man in the cinema, his fear of marriage is only a temporary syndrome. In general, all these problems are simplified, and the solutions are also simple, and at the end nearly all characters in the film have resolved their crisis and can go back to the happy orbits of normal life. In order to elevate his thinking, Lee Xin attaches a pair of angels to the narration, and at the end, two of them find that there is an invisible heart of love on a lot of people's body on the streets. To conclude, the director intends to find hope and belief through the disrupted daily life of today, but his method and progress are hasty and shallow. Modern life is complicated and sometimes dangerous, but at the same time full of excitement and temptations. Human nature determines that most people will like to face more

possibilities and try more chances, though it can bring them pain and injury. When the director pulls back his characters and lets them find meanings of life, he inadvertently exposes the inherent weakness of Shanghai culture, which emphasizes the daily life and which at the same time causes conservatism and satisfaction with the status quo.

Lee Xin's avant-garde gesture is apparently more on the surface of the film, but in content he is concerned more about the traditional daily life. It seems he is worried that if such a tranquil world is once broken, future life will never have a direction and no longer can hold a stable value. However, Lee Xin's anxiety seems too subjective, and he has not sufficiently represented such a sense of urgency through his characters, who are encountering personal crisis that mostly are too simple and trivial. Given the initial "Dazzling", Lee Xin's film has not gone further into the depth of modern life, and that is why the film makes people feel its disconnection of the form and content. In short, Lee Xin's characters are not enough to support his thought, and that is why the word "love" that appears on people's body seems so abrupt and incredible.

A Dreamed Communication

The Longest Night in Shanghai 夜。上海 (2007) is a work of another young director Zhang Yibai, who began his career shooting MTV and later turned to TV drama that made him famous. After his first film *Spring Subway* (2002) set in Beijing, Zhang Yibai turns to Shanghai. With the consistent style, *The Longest Night in Shanghai* is an airy, romantic comedy that represents a dreamful, poetic and

sentimental modern city. In the film, a successful Japanese make-up artist Mizushima (Masahiro Motoki) loses his way the first night he arrives in Shanghai. This leads to his encounter with a Shanghai taxi driver Lin Xin (Zhao Wei), a girl who is also bewildered with her own emotional problem. In misted shades of the night, they strive to find their direction, decide on the future of emotions and retrieve their egos. Staying together, they begin to understand each other, and while they try to help each other, their souls break the barriers of language and get communicated. This film, in general, conveys a lot of hope and optimism. The modern city is such an endless maze that all people in it, whether residents or passers-by, will always face various personal quagmires, but the possibility of dialogue and communication is still hopeful, and a reasonable solution for people is to adjust themselves to the new era and environment, including redefining the value of love.

Through its two protagonists, the film reveals the mental situations of urbanites. On the one side, the city has deeply changed people's life; they are more and more dependent on one another in a gigantic net of relationships, as the professions of Mizushima and Lin Xin constantly bring them to meet different people, and there are always unpredictable possibilities. Yet, on the other hand, the encounters between strangers are always accidental and short and have very little effect on them. That is why we can see in the film that neither Mizushima nor Lin Xin pays much attention to their customers: models or passengers, because such a professional or business relationship is just meaningless repetitions without continuing significance.

The first impression Mizushima gives us is his restrained manner and coolness; he seems not to care about anything, and just does anything according to the schedule or procedure, written out by his female assistant who has an intimate relation with him, and even when his colleagues are always quarreling around him, he still remains indifferent. Always wearing a microphone on the head, Mizushima seems to prefer having a place to escape or hide in. Yet, as a typical figure from Japan, a post-industrial country, Mizushima does not know that he has lost his self long ago, until he meets Lin Xin. Contrasted with Mizushima, Lin Xin is an exception who seems to have not been converted by the modern city. She is simple, straightforward, careless and naïve. Although she can handle her job with skills and ease, and even in a hurry still remembers sending Mizushima to a hotel to get some kickback, but when facing personal emotional problems, Lin Xin suddenly becomes bewildered and has no idea. Hence, Lin Xin is also a drifter in this big city. Her character determines her as an outsider who can never find access to the life she wants.

After all, Mizushima and Lin Xin will not recognize their personal crisis until they meet each other. From Lin Xin, Mizushima finds an energetic and vivid personality that he lacks and needs, so that when he knows Lin Xin's dream is almost dashed, he immediately wants to salvage this little hope. To Lin Xin, the tongue-tired man sitting in her car gradually becomes a confidante, because only he can read her heart and appreciate the exceptional beauty behind her unkemptness. With the help from each other, Lin Xin and Mizushima finally find their lost ego and confidence, with which they can free themselves from perplexing situations and move forward to

the future. Mizushima can make an end to the lifeless relation with his assistant that gives both of them a big release and freedom, and Lin Xin can end her hopeless anticipation of the young mechanic who will soon marry another woman. However, the ending of the film still leaves many things open. When the morning comes, Mizushima decides to go back to see Lin Xin, because he wants to "make one person more beautiful." If his job is always to make-up these professional models walking on stage, this time Mizushima's target is a real girl in real life. Finally, with Mizushima's virtuoso skill, Lin Xin turns out to have an entirely new look. In the last shot of the film, Lin Xin, facing in the mirror, suddenly uses Japanese to ask Mizushima: "Do you love me?" It seems the director does not want the dream to finish before the dawn, and he insists this fantasy could last in the day. Nevertheless, from the film we do not hear Mizushima's answer, which is outside the film's story. Yet, I believe that what Lin Xin really wants here is not a result but some proof of what happened in the long night. At the other side of the mirror, it is unrealistic that Lin Xin and Mizushima can continue their relationship. But they certainly have shared a feeling. Though this sort of feeling must be transient and has no realistic possibility to survive, the communication between the two strangers gives warmth and promising, which are often covered by the complex surface of the modern city.

The Chinese title (夜。上海) of the film is directly borrowed from an old song, which in English is "Night; Shanghai," is more abridged and not so emotional. The first part refers the time when the romantic adventure of the two happens, and the second part emphasizes the particular location: Shanghai. To show Shanghai is

apparently a more important motivation for the film, and even the plot serves the purpose. Lin Xin*'s* job from the very beginning has provided the convenience in that it lets the landscape of the metropolis quickly revealed, and the hidden details and mesmeric charm of the city naturally rise. The plot and the environment where it happens present a combination of truth and fiction that complement and are propelled by each other, by which the interaction makes the fanciful story seem possible, and the real city turns dreamful. Following Lin Xin's cab, those landmarks of today's Shanghai gradually appear: Oriental Pearl Tower, The Bund, Jin Mao Building and the Greatest Turn of the East beside Huangpu River. However, this wandering actually is a deliberated representation of Shanghai by the filmmakers. Most parts of the film are in the night, so that all these daily routines are laid aside. Though Mizushima's colleagues keep quarreling, what only functions as a backdrop, an unpleasant shadow of the day, perhaps that gives Mizushima more desire and makes him subconsciously gets lost and wants to escape. Furthermore, this dreamful night is not only devoid of daily life but also full of decorations. During the initial stage, the film seems like a tourism exploitation trailer, and when the lights are turned on, all positive aspects are highlighted and glamorized, and the opposite side concealed. The city shows the appearance it wants others to see. Yet, this general description is far from sufficient. What is obvious is that to Mizushima, who is from another metropolis, a highly developed modern city cannot generate any interest and surprise, because usually these cities are similar. In order to distinguish Shanghai from other cities, the film tries to explore the details of the city and its charisma. When lost in the maze of the streets,

Mizushima encounters some daily scenarios, which are usually considered characteristics of Shanghai. For example: those seniors dancing in the square, and people chatting or playing chess in the public garden. It is possible that because of these sentimental moments, Mizushima forgets the urgency of going back and cannot help going further into the depth, and then he could meet the girl who represents the uniqueness of the city. If in this Japan-sponsored film, Mizushima represents an intruding observer, Shanghai in this film, as the object, is represented by those sentimental factors, especially the female characters. In Mizushima's eyes, Lin Xin is an accidental discovery; she is of course a daughter of the big city, but she still keeps her purity and fresh self. From Lin Xin, we can feel that Shanghai is not as sophisticated as it is supposed to be. It is young and vigorous, with the hidden beauty waiting to be appreciated by those who possess feelings. In addition, in the film, the bald-headed colleague of Mizushima meets a young female police officer, and after brief fighting hand to hand, the two surprisingly sit by the street and begin to talk. Although they don't understand each other at all, martial arts and the name of Bruce Lee quickly connect them. Another episode happens in a Jazz club where the man with glasses meets a sexy female singer; amid the ambiguous ambience, the two begin to talk in English; with those people of different skin colors moving around, the club becomes a land with no national identity. While the singer understatedly mentions several names of faraway cities, the man also appears to feel satisfied with this fruitless flirting.

To conclude, the image of Shanghai this film gives is tender, soft and feminized, and besides its modern surface, the inner soul of the city is more fascinating. However, with the rapid changing of modern social life, this unique beauty is facing ignorance. In the film, the role of the female officer appears to be a replica of Lin Xin, with the same naivety, innocence and accessibility. Nevertheless, the singer in the club gives a good compensation to Lin Xin. Her laxity, coolness, and mystique are at the same time pretentious and attractive. While in the labyrinth of streets Lin Xin and Mizushima are treating each other candidly, in this space with a different mood, another kind of communication also gives mutual consolation to their lonely hearts. In other words, what happens in the Jazz Club probably can happen every night in Shanghai. However, what happens on the streets is more like a dream which contains more of the artist's imagination and wishes.

Escaping the Postmodern City

In those films focused on contemporary Shanghai, *The Postmodern Life of My Aunt* 姨妈的后现代生活 (2006) is an unexpected success. The film is a cooperation between screenwriter Li Qiang, from Beijing, and director Ann Hui, from Hong Kong. In Hong Kong Film Awards of 2008, the film received eight nominations and won two of them: the best actress and the best music awards, showing that the performance of leading actress Siqin Gaowa and the character she plays was highly appreciated. The story of this film revolves around the role Aunt: through a series of her experiences in

the city, with laughters and frustration, the film represents an alternate appearance of Shanghai. No more exciting, flashy and vigorous, Aunt's city seems noisy, chaotic and a bit depressing. Though the screenwriter and director have more sympathy for the character Aunt, their attitude toward the modern city and the era it represents is complicated, sometimes critical and sometimes full of ridicules and satires.

Like the people in this city who have long enjoyed a kind of self-satisfied mundane life, the aunt played by Siqin Gaowa is a typical Shanghainese, basically kind-hearted but shrewd and good at managing daily life. Yet, the shifts of time break up the peace and order, and a lot of unexpected things are approaching. In the film, Aunt walks into traps of life again and again and always becomes a sad victim. She is so frustrated and finally realizes that she is no longer able to control her life, because the world has totally changed and there is no place for her in this beloved city.

In her nephew Kuankuan's eyes when they meet on the railway platform, Aunt's dressing and manner appear brusque like a cartoon character, which makes Kuankuan even wants to evade her. After settling down, more details of Aunt are revealed, which is like an illustration of the prototypical Shanghainese, such as the unplugged refrigerator, fees charged for local calls at home and fans used instead of air conditioners in the sweltering summer. Yet, it seems these details are not sufficient, so that the film puts Aunt together with Mrs. Shui, who is more wordy, inquisitive and posturing. The inner world of Shanghai exposes its real face to the little boy from the outside, and belonging to the new generation, he must immediately feel these old

ladies are so behind time, and the stale odor rising from the depth of the old house is so incongruous with the outside world. Through the life of these typical Shanghainese, we can find that behind the florid surface, the soul of this urban city appears so aged and hollow. Many Shanghainese always feel that they are exceptional and naturally related to the western world, although this relationship can never be verified. This self-perception lets Aunt always feel unsatisfied with her life and wants to change it. Yet her desire and self-judgments make her a prey in others' eyes, and that is why she appears as a comic character in the beginning but turns into a tragic role at the end.

The first blow comes from Kuankuan. In order to help a girl to have a cosmetic surgery, Kuankuan and the girl plot a kidnapping and extortion, and Aunt is sadly chosen as the target. Although at first Aunt treats Kuankuan not so kindly and too stingily, the retaliation is so quick and goes so far that Aunt is deeply hurt. To her, her calculating is just a lifestyle, which does not mean she is a person without emotional warmth. After Kuankuan's departure, Aunt's kindness quickly gets proved when she meets a young provincial lady Jin Yonghua, who is worrying about how to save her sick daughter. Aunt invites Jin home and employs her as housekeeper, but unfortunately, Jin's miserable story is a fabrication, and she actually is a cheat, so that the poor aunt gets fooled again. What follows is an even bigger trap. When Aunt meets Pan Zhichang in the public garden, this fair-spoken man makes Aunt lose all caution and finally not only her feeling is cheated but she also loses all her savings. Facing these series of defeats, Aunt cannot but say good-bye to Shanghai and go back to the northern city where she has a family from which she escaped some years ago.

Aunt is no longer capable to catch up with the fast changing Shanghai, although she is a long time indigenous inhabitant of the city. The outside world has changed, and it is more suitable to the newcomers who are smarter and stronger than Aunt. Through Aunt's experience, we can see the real situation of all those old Shanghainese people. They are the grass-roots of this culture, but the rapidly changing modern city is leaving them further and further behind; usually they can only stay in the old houses, watching the outside world through their windows, and if they want to participate in this new life, they will sink into the postmodern life that Aunt has experienced, with similar results.

What is at the same time familiar and strange to us is that the world in which Aunt and her folks are living is so conflicted and divided. On the one hand, sixty or seventy years ago those petty urban bourgeois characters, who are both lovely and pathetic, were already the subjects of Chinese films. While time has changed, these folks are nearly in the same situation. On the other hand, into the new century, what has been deeply rooted in most people's impression is Shanghai's another face, which is supposed to be modern, fashionable and colorful, but in this story of Aunt's postmodern life, we do not even see those skyscrapers as the symbols of new Shanghai until Aunt left the city. In other words, the new Shanghai could be Aunt's memory but is not part of her life. It is obvious that the filmmakers have no intention to dance with the chorus of Shanghai myth, and what they do is to circumvent the glamour and splendor of the surface and reveal the emptiness under it. Though Aunt is always busy, her life indeed is vacuous. Watching over her old apartment, lonely Aunt has nothing

to anticipate. If these cheating did not happen, no one would know her past and that she actually had a family. The people around Aunt are also in a similar situation. Mrs. Shui's only hope is her cat. When the cat is lost, she no longer wants to live. Pan Zhichang is good at talking with no lack of charm, but his inside shabbiness is also clear. The disfigured girl is pitiful and appears horrible, but with revelations of details, what her story highlights is helplessness. Through these characters, what we see is a group portrait of the middle-class stratum of Shanghai, and there is no reason to neglect this stratum when investigating Shanghai culture. All these people's life, though seemingly complicated, if observed closely, the inherent substance shows the mediocrity and emptiness. In other words, the base of the unique culture is not as fresh and pretty as its colorful surface. It is obsolete, and the superiority it painfully maintains actually has no basis. However, contrasted with the flagging Old Shanghai, what the new one presents us are chaotic, barbarous and preposterous scenes. If the old has at least sensibility, the new one appears totally a hotchpotch and has no appreciable traits. Here, Aunt's postmodern life the filmmakers recounted is the portraiture of the postmodern city, and while they scornfully satirize the Old Shanghai, they also deliver a negative pessimism. However, to me, the meaning of this film is precisely the uncomfortable feeling it provides.

The Body and the Past

Discussing films related to Shanghai theme, *Lust, Caution* 色戒 (2007) is apparently a topic that cannot be avoided. From its casting, shooting to its releasing, this high budget film adapted from Eileen Chang's story and directed by ethnic Chinese director Ang Lee in fact became a boisterous event in the whole Mandarin circle. The heated controversy stirred up by the film is complicated and involves multiple levels, not only from the angle of art and aesthetics, but also from cultural and ideological perspectives. Here, what I would like is to focus my discussions on the representation of the Shanghai theme in the film, to see how the film portrays a specific historical period and yet how the spiritual status of the time we are living is reflected in this film.

Most controversy about the film is centered on its new perception of a specific historical period. To the Chinese people, the Japanese occupied period in modern history is no doubt a scar and a shame. About this, the orthodox history books already had an explicit narration and clear-cut conclusion, which has also been widely accepted by most people. Even the original author Eileen Chang herself was not so confident when she finished this work in 1950, and her hesitation lasted thirty years until its publication in Taiwan. The reaction to Chang's new work was lukewarm in the 1980s; there were few who considered it a successful work compared with her early writings. In short, people of that time were still not prepared to accept the main character of a traitor. The traitor-character is twofold, not only including that character Mr. Yi in the story, but also another real person in Chang's personal life. Though Eileen Chang had already been considered a master of Chinese literature, her

notorious marriage with Hu Lanchen, who was a traitor serving in the puppet government during Japanese occupation, was often understated or deliberately evaded. Yet, when it comes to this century, the chance of recording this piece of old history appears. The great sensation of Ang Lee's film proves that the right time for Chang's story has come.

Both Chang's story and Ang Lee's film are re-writings of the existing history book. Chang's work contains more of her entangled inner world. Actually, her story is based on a true event in which a female secret agent (Zhen Pingru) infiltrated into opponent intelligence, seduced the spy chief and tried to assassinate him. The failure of Zhen Pingru's action is the same as Wang Jiazhi's in Chang's story and Lee's film, but Zhen Pingru's story is relatively simple. As a professional, she lost her life because of the failure of the plan, and her character is very clear: devoted, patriotic and courageous. Yet, in the story, Eileen Chang boldly re-wrote Zhen Pingru into her own Wang Jiazhi, who at the final moment suddenly finds herself already the captive of emotion to her prey. It is obvious that in order to create Wang Jiazhi, Eileen Chang purposely hollows out Zhen Pingru and fills in her own feeling and experiences. Although such a method of re-writing is criticized by some people who believe that Chang purposely defamed a heroine with the intention to wash up the disgrace of her past, my opinion is that Chang's inner world was not so vicious and what she considered was to write a piece of history of her own version, in which all these big words has vanished. Even though the war is ongoing, people still exist in their daily life, and they need to eat, play, buy jewelry and make love. In fact, before the Japanese

invasion, when all Chinese were suffering the misery of the war, people in Shanghai were luckily enjoying their happy but short period of the "isolated island". The daily life in the occupied period seems not so exaggerated. However, Eileen Chang was not aware of the inwardness of her work. Although she had put her feelings in it, she did not anticipate that this story could be successful, and the darkest period of time in Shanghai history would shine up and gain wide resonance.

On the basis of Chang's story, Ang Lee's film goes further. Although the adaption was considered precise and faithful, we still see a lot of elaboration and creativity. Ang Lee and his screenwriter used Eileen Chang's life to complement the character of Wang Jiazhi, and added Hu Lanchen to the role of Mr. Yi, so that the "small, a bit bald, mice like" Mr. Yi in the story turns out in the film as a handsome and suave man played by Tony Leung, and the sad light in Wan Jiazhi's eyes seemed like a refraction of Eileen Chang's feeling of that time. This is not to say that the film is about Eileen Chang's biography, and in fact it is difficult to simply equate the author with the character she created. My point here is, Ang Lee's adaption is an externalization of Eileen Chang's inner descriptions, through which an era ambiguously implied in the story is now adequately represented on the screen and get normalized, which could be seen by some people as deliberate beautification. Actually, this externalization is an effort to recover the real look of that era. Maybe Ang Lee's old Shanghai does not match everybody's imagination, but it is very possible that he has already closely approached Eileen Chang's old Shanghai. In fact, in this film with the Japanese occupation as the background, the invaders indeed become the

background, and they even totally receded, and the only remaining hint is an army dog whose coat is easily associated with the color of Japanese military uniform. Although occupiers are erased from what they occupied, the atmosphere of repression and terror is pervasive in the movie. It translates into the invisible mental situations of the characters, especially the two main characters who are struggling in the dilemma of reality. Because the invaders are absent, the fear everywhere turns nameless and abstract, heavily oppressing the subjects and giving them nowhere to escape. The adaption seems successfully rebuilt the atmosphere of the time, with the meticulous imitation of all physical details of Old Shanghai, but the environment and ambience in the film indeed are a reproduction of subjective perspective. This is not only a film originated from a story involving a lot of Eileen Chang's personal emotions, but also today's perceptions by Ang Lee and his contemporaries. The Old Shanghai represented in the film is both concrete and abstract and this cinematic city can be used to link two distant eras and provoke strong echoes.

It is obvious that a large proportion of the sensational effects stirred up by Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* are those sex scenes in it, which is the most distinct part of the original story. Fiction writing depends on verbal description, while cinematic language relies more on picture. However, Ang Lee's shooting is not a simple process of interpreting Eileen Chang's words, and these stunning erotic scenes were born out of the lines of the story, but if we discard the stimulus from the surface, we can see more profound symbolic meanings beneath it.

The film contains three sex scenes which are nude, intense, sadomasochistic as well as lengthy, depressing and morbid. Of these parts, one plausible interpretation is that what they portray is the conflict between body and soul. Yet, where can we find the souls of the two main characters? Actually, Wang Jiazhi as an innocent girl is passively involved in the political assignation, and there is no clue that Mr. Yi has any belief or ideal with his job, so that neither of them has a soul. Consequently, inside the two bodies struggling and twisting on bed are emptiness. Ang Lee lets the body come on the scene to confront the conventional ideological thinking, though Wang Jiazhi's momentary decision finally costs her life, the director's endorsement of this moment of finding subjectivity is very clear. Some critic argues that Ang Lee's body narrative illustrates the separation between body and soul, which could be explained by the theory of Michel Foucault, and then these sex scenes suddenly find the profound interpretation, because here the body "is the direct display of the body, it directly confront the desire compressed by the rational. It no longer needs the support of the emotion within the social forms, but challenges these forms by displaying itself" (Feng, 35). It is this focusing on body that makes the film not only a narrative of a specific historical period, but with more abstract and universal meanings. In other words, the film also reflects a similar state of mind of two eras. Though people today seemed happier and there is no need for them to face severe life and death tests, and the modern society provides people nearly everything, but the endless chase of materials is also vacating their soul and spirit.

Furthermore, through the two hopeless bodies, today's audience's imagination of Eileen Chang's Old Shanghai is enriched with decadence and desperation (Cangliang, which Chang preferred to describe her style). Yet, like the director, we start our travel to the past from the present. With the result known, all the negative aspects turn out appreciable. Furthermore, the Old Shanghai in the film is also like a body. Although streets are filled with bustling crowds, the soul of the city is lost. Before the Japanese occupation of Shanghai, the concession period lasted more than half a century, including the brief isolated-island period. However, no one can deny that, imperialism indeed pushed the ancient empire to open its door to the world. For Shanghai, the direct advantage was to become an international metropolis. Therefore, the superiority complex of the city or its residents is actually based on its distance from all other places of China. Then, it is not strange that the consciousness of the nation is relatively diluted. Yet, the invasion of the Japanese abruptly broke the barrier between the city and its compatriots. The privilege of the past suddenly disappeared; a paradise was destroyed, and the city was reduced to an empty shell, or a pile of ruins. The original fiction is the unsuccessful swan song of Eileen Chang, and after the director chose it, he picked these missing fragments of Old Shanghai and put them back. That is why Long Yingtai thinks that Ang Lee has "saved a chapter of history" (Long, Sep.26, 2007). However, there is not such an inherent history to be saved. Ang Lee just uses his film to question the extant history. When naked bodies fill the screen, what we feel is the lightness of history.

Return to the Old Shanghai, But Where?

The Everlasting Regret 长恨歌(2005) is a film concentrating various kinds of Shanghai elements: a novel about a Shanghai woman's whole life in the city, the writer Wang Anyi who has already been regarded as the symbol of Shanghai culture, the director Stanley Kwan who is regarded as a good interpreter of Old Shanghai, and a cast including some famous actors and actresses from Hong Kong and Beijing. Needless to say the shooting of the film was in Shanghai and attracted intensive attention. However, the outcome is disappointing; the film did not obtain the desired effects, and even the director admitted his failure on different occasions.

Although the film is based on a novel, it is impossible to circumvent discussions on film adaptations, scrutinizing the technical procedure of the film adaptation is not my focus here, and what I would like to do is keep the focus on the Shanghai factor in the film and in the novel. Generally speaking, the success of the novel firstly lies in the fact that through the lifetime story of the heroine Wang Qiyao, the author Wang Anyi represents an unusual era for the city and its history. According to Zhang Xudong, this novel is "one of the most important literary works since the 1990s" (Zhang Xudong, 316) and "through Wang Anyi's writing, Shanghai the city with complacency but without time gains the historic concreteness and vitality" (Zhang Xudong, 317).

Secondly, through the depiction of daily life, the novel rebuilds memory of the past, which can be seen as a challenge to the long dominant grand native. Thirdly,

from the perspective of literary history, this work has the function of linking what goes before and what goes after. In other words, the tradition of "another direction of the May Fourth Movement" is here taken up. Wang Anyi has already been considered a heir of Eileen Chang, whether Wang herself likes it or not, but the novel *The Everlasting Regret* apparently has a lot of factors similar to Chang's writing. The book timely corresponds with people's anticipation of "Novels of Shanghai School," so that David Wang says the book finally "filled up the vacancy of decades after Chuan Qi and Ban Shen Yuan"（Wang Dewei. 28）, Yet, Wang Anyi's writing is not simply "filling up." Between her and Eileen Chang is a big difference.

Looking down from the highest point in the city, Shanghai's longtang-her vast neighborhoods inside enclosed alleys-are magnificent sight. The longtangs are the backdrops to this city. Streets and buildings emerge around them in a series of dots and lines… (Wang Anyi, 1)

This is the first paragraph of the novel. Wang Anyi begins with a panoramic view from "the highest point" of Shanghai, and then descends to the ground and enters its details. However, these details are still non-narrative. Wang Anyi nearly uses the whole first chapter to depict longtang, gossip in longtang, pigeons on roofs, and Shanghai's unique bedchamber before the heroine Wang Qiyao appears at the end. Yet, Stanley Kwan's film directly jumps to the second chapter of the origin novel, which describes Wang Qiyao visiting a film studio with her playmate. The major change is that when Wang Qiyao stands in the scenery watching out of the prop window, the

Shanghai that appears in front of her is only painted on flat boards. It is apparent that the director prefers focusing more on the character by which the history can be displayed through the ups and downs of people's fate. In the film, Wang Qiyao's story starts from a shooting scene of film studio, a fabricated place full of modernity where Wang Qiyao knows photographer Mr. Cheng, whose photo leads Wang Qiyao to participate in the Miss Shanghai beauty pageant and have the chance to encounter a high-ranking KMT officer Director Li and become his mistress.

Though the novel relates the tangled relationship between these characters, Stanley Kwan enhances the effects and influences of them, and we can see that even the man Lao Kele (a combination of Lao Kele and Chang Jiao in the novel) who kills Wang Qiyao in the end, is also introduced by Mr. Cheng. Stanley Kwan tried to make all characters in the novel appear in the film, which makes the less than two hours of the film seem quite crowded. All people in the film revolve around the heroine, and they come and leave, often without sufficient reason. Kwan's film tells a story of a woman's lifetime. She meets these men, falls in love with them and loses them. Though it is unfair to say that the cinematic version blurs the historical background, actually in the movie, Wang Qiyao's three love affairs exactly correspond with three historical periods: before 1949, after 1949 and during the era of reform and opening up after Mao's death. However, historical periods in Kwan's hands appear just sceneries, and what drive the narration are those people and their relationships. We often say different characters determine different fates. Wang Qiyao, played by Hong Kong actress Chen Sau Man (郑秀文), is innocent, sensitive, dedicated and amorous like her

counterpart in the novel. Yet, the director seems to characterize this figure in such a way that we cannot find any necessary relationship with the specific city. Unlike Wang Anyi's Wang Qiyao, who "is a typical daughter of the Shanghai longtang" (Wang Anyi. 22), and "behind every doorway in Shanghai longtangs a Wang Qiyang is studying, embroidering , whispering secrets to her sisters, or throwing a teary-eyed tantrum at her parents"(Wang Anyi. 25). Yet Stanley Kwan's Wang Qiyao is not necessary a daughter of Shanghai. She could be born anywhere, and her innate character has no relation to her surroundings. Of course, in order to enrich Wang Qiyao's life, the director adjusts all other characters around her. Many figures are combined from two characters, which are acceptable because of the time limit of a film, but the changes of two male characters make the film gush with feelings. In the film, Director Li turns more charming and is no longer an intelligence officer but like an unlucky hero that often appears in Hong Kong gangster movies. Different from the novel, Li did not die before 1949, and he left Shanghai and then lived in Brasilia until his death of 1981, but the film explicitly tells the audience that Wang Qiyao and Li love each other, and if it were not for the reason of the specific time, this connection of feeling could last longer. Another man who devotes his whole life to love Wang Qiyao is Mr. Cheng, who occasionally speaks in the voice over and plays the role of narrator in the film. In the novel, Mr. Cheng is a typical Shanghai man, who silently takes care of Wang Qiyao, but when Wang no longer needs him, Cheng quietly leaves. Yet in the film, Cheng exists until the end when he witnesses the death of his beloved woman. In short, both Wang Qiyao and Mr. Cheng could not get what they love. In Kwan's

perspective, love is such an everlasting regrettable thing that you either will never reach it or you are destined to lose it even if you could experience it once. So far it is clear that Stanley Kwan has changed the novel into a sentimental story, which may have more universal meaning, but has no significant relation to Shanghai history and culture. To those who loves Wang Anyi's novel, feeling difficult to accept Kwan's adaptation is a spontaneous reaction, because what the director did is actually quite opposite to the writer's intention. In a conversation with a scholar, Wang Anyi points out her intention of a "metaphysical" quest in her writing, but what made her disappointed was in many people's eyes, the novel "changes to a romantic story" (Wang& Zhang, 294). The metaphysical thinking in the novel elevates the level of perspective that not only displays the time of the past but also reexamines it. The novel could be accepted as a story of Shanghai culture, which is impossible to be realized through only dramatization, as Stanley Kwan did in his film.

Nevertheless, though the film is focused more on characters, the way it deals with the details is rough. In the novel, through the exquisite text, the writer conveys the ethos of an era and the vivid quotidian life. The story and all characters in it indeed are immersed in this unique ambience. Yet, in the film, such an ambience seems so weak and we cannot even feel it. A simple excuse is that these details are so trivial and lack attraction. For instance, when Wang Qiyao moves to Pin An Li, she begins to work at home as a nurse giving injections to patients. Gradually, she gets acquainted with more and more people, and a new page of her life begins with chatting with those frequent guests. However, in the film, this period of her nurse career happens in a

hospital, where the man (Kang Mingshun) first appears before the nurse Wang Qiyao. Hence, the detail of injection is totally a functional connection bringing the story to the next part. Another abandoned chapter of the novel is the impressive "evening chats around the stove" (Wang Anyi, 192), in which all these people try to evade the depression of the outside world and secretly taste a little pleasure. It is during this process of giving warmth to each other that Wang Qiyao and Kang Mingxun's covert feeling get ignited. Dashing out these valuable details, the film actually adds some new ones. For example, when working in the countryside, Mr. Cheng and Lao Kele find a phonograph. They excitedly gather together and try to listen to a record. It is no doubt this detail discloses the ridiculousness of the Cultural Revolution and the destruction it had brought, but it is too common and superficial like a patch to the film.

Actually, the two details in the novel I just talked about are all from the second part of Wang Anyi's novel, which is considered the more important part of the book. The first part Stanley Kwan painstakingly enhanced, is considered by Wang Anyi herself as the worst part of her work, and what she regards as more important are the other two parts (Wang & Zhang, 295). The critic David Wang shares a similar judgment, in which he says that "the part two of *The Everlasting Regret* must be the quintessence of the whole book" (Wang Dewei, 28). This is the part in which Wang Qiyao is entangled with three men: Kang Mingxun causes her pregnancy, Sa Sha confesses to be the father of the child, but Mr. Cheng assumes the responsibility of taking care of her. Concerning Wang Anyi's writing on Wang Qiyao's emotion, David Wang considers it "very skillful" (Wang, Dewei, 29), and in addition, comparing

Wang Anyi to Eileen Chang, he further points out that "Wang Anyi goes further than Eileen. It seems she wants to use the slow collapse of Shanghai to contrast a clandestine love affair" (Wang Dewei, 29). To me, the contrast here is two-directional. The city is collapsing or has collapsed, and the quality of a love could only reach the level it is supposed to be. Such scenario is no doubt full of sadness, but the writer's attitude is to keep some distance, because Wang Anyi wants her work to be not only a book of "realism" but also of "critical realism" (Wang & Zhang, 294). Yet in the book's cinematic version, too much are the sorrow and sentimentality. While the first part is enhanced, the director is even reluctant to give up Director Li and let him survive until the end, so that Wang Qiyao's whole life is shrouded by this lost love she once seized. Under the shadow of this past love, Wang Qiyao's life after 1949 is only going with the flow. As I see it, it is not strange that as a good interpreter of Eileen Chang and old Shanghai, Stanley Kwan prefers Wang Anyi's first part, and maybe he didn't realize that even this part is also unlike Eileen Chang's. Wang Qiyao's early life actually happened in the late 1940s, when the peak of old Shanghai already neared its end. To any director, if he only hopes to recapture Eileen Chang, the novel will be a wrong choice, since though it is still Shanghai, its essence is greatly changed.

Shanghai: Living in its Present or its Past

In this chapter, I have discussed five films related to the Shanghai theme. All films were shot after 2000, but the sequence of my discussion is not chronological.

The first three are by younger filmmakers, though *The Postmodern Life of my Aunt* is a cooperation of two generations, and focuses on contemporary Shanghai. The other two are from two middle-aged directors more interested in old Shanghai. There are many other films focusing on the Shanghai Theme that I did not include here, but I think the five films are enough for us to glimpse into the character and trends of this postmodern era.

I must give credit to the first three films for their exploration of contemporary urban life, especially on the specific city of Shanghai, which always has the exceptional status in modern Chinese history. Though the three films are different in many ways, all of them have paid serious attention to realistic life and tried to probe people's feeling of the time. One thing that needs to be pointed out is that in China the literary and artistic works about city life are always in a neglected position, and this causes a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, urban life is dominating and becomes mainstream, and on the other hand, representations of contemporary life are considered second tier and the voice of city culture is always weak. The direct results are: the number of urban film is not considerable and their qualities vary greatly, and provocative works with depth are even rare. It is an era of tumultuousness that every voice has its right to be heard. While the dominant motif no longer exists, we certainly must face a pluralistic and mediocre reality. Hence, it is unfair to criticize Lee Xin's weakness and limitation, which are confined by the specific city culture he is immersed in, so that the "Dazzling"s of the characters in the film is also the director's quandary, that's the reason he was fumbling to give this ordinary and monotonous life

an eternal meaning. To Zhang Yibai, his fondness of Shanghai seems based on intuition, which is similar to a visitor who stays in Shanghai for a short time and will never deeply inquiry into every detail but enjoys everything that can give him pleasure. Hence, all elements of Shanghai appear as painted on the director's palette, and they are blended with a dream of his imagination. Such a dream arises from the depth of the city whose pristine beauty needs to be cherished and preserved, yet Zhang Yibai does not simply let them return to their original places like Lee Xin did. He provides the hope that a girl like Lin Xin can go into a new space where more novelties and opportunities exist. In general, both Zhang Yibai and Lee Xin's attitudes toward the city are lenient and mild, and mostly they hold the attitude of compromise and are always willing to negotiate with such an era and the complexity it brings. Lee Xin and Zhang Yibai apparently still belong to the Sixth Generation or "Urban Generation" defined by Zhang Zhen, but as a generation cultivated in urban culture, they have already got used to the urban surroundings. The early distinct character of rebellion of the group has nearly faded out. Maybe it precisely reflects their situation of today that let them have no reason to self-marginalize.

Unlike Zhang and Lee, Li Qiang, the screenwriter of the same age, is less sentimental about Shanghai, though he is somewhat sympathetic to his character "Aunt". His real feeling for Shanghai people's life is full of ridicule and contempt. He not only lets the emptiness and plainness of their life be exposed, but drives them to confront impulsion and finally failures. Furthermore, Li Qiang also has no intention to embrace the new Shanghai most people chanted. Though the old generation

represented by Aunt and Mrs. Shui are outdated and bound to disappear, their surrogates are not so sophisticated and advanced but more robust and ferocious. However, the comedic style adopted in *The Postmodern Life of My Aunt* is apparently a reversion to directly criticizing the new city, because the author does not want to give a preference to any side, everything is acceptable in this postmodern era.

Different from their younger colleagues on the issue of the city today, Ang Lee and Stanley Kwan keep their eyes on the past. Both *Lust, Caution* and *The Everlasting Regret* can be considered as continuations of the Shanghai nostalgia phenomena that rose from the 1990s. Though as time goes on, people's thinking has quite changed, and the anxiety or agitation of Fin de siècle of ten years ago is gone or has totally been forgotten, the theme of Shanghai Nostalgia remains and has become a repertoire, with some necessary ingredients: longtang, colonial-style building, cheongsam, gangster, and Eileen Chang, who is the best interpreter of old Shanghai. Ang Lee's film no doubt is an integration of all these elements, and through Eileen Chang's story, he conducted a revisit to a bygone time and led the Shanghai theme to a new peak. Meanwhile, as a long time researcher and enthusiast of old Shanghai, Stanley Kwan did not copy the same success, though his film nearly had the same configuration, and the adaptation is based on the acclaimed book written by Wang Anyi who is widely deemed as the best successor of Eileen Chang. Kwan obviously misunderstood Wang Anyi, who is not simply a replica of Eileen Chang. Returning to the world of Eileen Chang is actually not a safe route toward the Shanghai theme, and it must be futile to build a dream of the 1930s or 1940s in Wang Anyi's world. Shanghai is changing, and

all thinking about it is also changing. Shanghai Nostalgia is already a classic theme, but its connotation is not static and must be related to the spirit of the age. Ang Lee's film made a great success and caused controversy because when entering the world set up by Eileen Chang, he carries the spiritual condition of our time. As Ackbar Abbas says of Nostalgia: "[it] is not the return of past memory: it is the return of memory to the past" (Abbas, 83). There is only one old Shanghai in the history, but the films about it are varied and will keep changing, because the visitors returning to the old site are not the same.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have discussed a series of films focused on Shanghai theme most of which produced from 1990s to recent years, the very time that witnessed the rise of Shanghai phenomenon with the bourgeoning Chinese economy. Among the big cities of the world Shanghai is still very young, but with concentration of the quintessence of contemporary Chinese history, its past, present and future are always attractive and fascinating. To depict and explore such an object, film is no doubt a good vehicle, by which we can ride on to make a journey to the disappeared space and time, capture the details of the bygone existence and restore the city with lights and sounds. However, when enjoying the pleasure and intoxication brought by these films with different styles and contents, we also found that the image of the city appear on the screen is always fluctuating. Though the nature of cinema gives us the hope to rebuild the memory of the past, yet with the different perspectives and imprints of time, the final destination they lead us to arrive actually is space mixed with more imagination and sensibility.

During the writing, one specific place was frequently appearing in my mind; that is a small town called Chedun (车墩) located at the south-west suburban area of Shanghai. With one hour driving time away from the city centre, the town would be lacking any distinctions as most similar places if Shanghai Film Studio didn't begin to build a shooting base at its periphery. With the continues extension and improving, Chedun Film Shooting Base now has become a very important site to film production, especially to those films related Shanghai theme, because most characteristic landmark

of old Shanghai were all got reproduced here, including Nanjing Road of 1930s and 1940s, old bridge on Suzhou River, Longtang and Catholic church. Many films discussed in this thesis were shot in Chedun, such as *Center Stage*, *Temptress Moon*, *Lust Caution*, and it is not exaggerating that most movies in which there is a scene of old Shanghai are impossible not going to this duplicated city. Chedun also witnessed the Shanghai Fever from its lukewarm beginning to the peak of nowadays, and if one visits Chedun in a normal day, probably he or she can see there would be two or three crews are working, either for film or TV drama, in a reviving old Shanghai scene, which has nearly demolished brought by the economic boom in recent decades at their original sites. However, Chedun seems only important to film production; to most audiences, it is only a line of credits at the end of film. Contrasting the popularity of films and TV dramas on Shanghai theme, Chedun has never received wide attention, and some attempts to exploit it as a nostalgia sightseeing attraction finally proved to be illusion. Even to most filmmakers, Chedun is just a setting, of which the rebuilt old Shanghai is a hotchpotch of disparate time, or only a creation of conception, not belonging to either 1930s or 1940s, but of an ambiguous old time. Most productions are not so serious toward the details of the past, or technically could not be too fastidious on them. These films always began with a seemingly objective description, but after sketching some fragments and parts, what followed inevitably are more subjective imagination filling on those vacant spaces.

In short, investigating these films will not lead us to a real old world, and where we finally place ourselves is the text of the city, which integrates the past experience

and today's thinking under the different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, Shanghai could be the versions of Zhang Yimou's and Chen Kaige's, involving the pondering of the Fifth generation on the issue of the origin of Chinese modernity; or could be an interlocutor upon the circulation of urban culture between Hong Kong and Shanghai in Stanley Kwan's films; and in younger generation directors Lou Ye's, Zhang Yibai's and Lee Xin's films, the same modern city could be gloomy and depressing or bright and optimistic. All theses texts began their dance on the same platform, but with the changes of style, the narration apparently went to different directions and separated from the material properties of the ground. Hence, these multiple writings construct to us a compounded textual space; they are juxtaposed, complementing or sometime against each other. As a modern metropolitan, Shanghai always receives much concern, and with variety of discourses and expressions surrounded, it is greatly textualized, so that it is no strange that the meaning it represents is always floating and varying, and with the continuous development of the city, this kind of rewriting will keep going on.

Of course, though filmmakers have their salient characteristic, none of them can be a solo dancer; the cultural circumstance of the different era is the gravity always pulling behind them. Acknowledging such a limitation of time is inevitable; we can read these films not so fastidiously but with more understanding, by which we can accommodate disparate thought of different tastes, forgive the weakness of them by today's view. At the time of the 1990s, responding to trend of intellectual and literary circle, Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou began to inquire into the origin of modern China,

but their understanding represented through their films seemed just an initial exploration, which is far from having grasped the characteristics of the specific historic period. For Lou Ye and Lee Xin of the Sixth generation, their strong personal style made them too abstract and divorced from the reality level. Then toward Ang Lee's adoption of Eileen Chang's novel, we must read under the cultural context, otherwise we would not be able to understand why people hate it are as much as those love it. Furthermore, film productions are not only under the influence of cultural circumstance but also oriented by the market. Such an invisible hand might provide plentiful financial support, which means high quality of production and big cast, but at the same time makes the film an assembled commodity with less and less cultural quality. In some films, we only can see those glamour stylish actors or actresses running before the background of scene of streets, but the real smells of the city and the people living in it are absent.

The popularity of the Shanghai theme brought about the exceptional content to the film market, but the qualities of them is inevitably uneven. It's an era of noise and impulsiveness, and every voice has the right and chance to speak out. However, when investigating them, there must be some least standard and expectation, which is to anticipate these cinematic works can approach the reality of city, representing the pulse of the era and probe the depth of people inner world. This is not saying that a good film about this city must be a comprehensive and integral work; every film has its way to touch the ground, and with the combination of different aspects, a panoramic picture will emerge out in front of us.

Bibliography:

Abbas, Ackbar. Culture and the Politics of Disappearance. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1997.

Berry, Michael."From spectral nostalgia to corporeal desire". Speaking in Images: Interviews with Chinese filmmakers. New York: Columbia University Press. 2005.

Chen, Mo. Chen Kaige dian ying lun 陈凯歌电影论 Beijing : Wen hua yi shu chu ban she : Xin hua shu dian jing xiao, 1998

Cheung, Esther M.K. 张美君 ed.《關錦鵬的光影記憶 : 既近且遠、既遠且近》In critical proximity : the visual memories of Stanley Kwan 香港 : 三聯書店(香港)有限公司, 2007

Chiao, Hsiung-Ping 焦雄屏, ed. 1987. Xianggang dianying fengmao, 1975-1986 香港电影风貌 （Aspects of Hong Kong cinema, 1975-1986）. Taipei: shibao chuban gongsi.

Cheng, Qingsong, Huang, Ou. My Camera Does not Lie. 我的摄影机不撒谎 Beijing: Zhongguo Youyi Publish Press, 2002.

Chow, Rey: Woman and Chinese Modernity: The politics of reading Between West and East, Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1991.

Chen, Xiaoming. "The Mysterious Others: Postpolitics in Chinese Film." Postmodernism and China. Eds. Arif Dirlik & Xudong Zhang. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.

Dai, Jinhua. Cinema and Desire: Feminist Marxism and Cultural Politics in the Work of Dai Jinhua. Eds. Jing Wang and Tani E. Barlow & London: Verso, 2002.

Dai, Jinhua. "Imagined Nostalgia". Postmodernism and China. Eds. Arif Dirlik & Xudong Zhang. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.

Feng, Xin. "Lust, Caution, narrative analysis of ideology". Beijing: Dian Ying Yi Shu, No318, pp35. 2008.

Hjort, Mette. Stanley Kwan's Center stage . Hong Kong : Hong Kong University Press, 2006.

Jameson, Fredric. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." Social Text. No. 15 (Autumn, 1996). Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986.

Li, Erwei. Zhang Yimou Shuo (张艺谋说) Liao Ning, Shenyang, Chun Feng Wen Yi Chu Ban She, 1998

Lee, Leo Ou-fan. Shanghai Modern: The flowering of A New Urban Culture in China 1930-1945. Cambridge, Massachusetts. London, England. 1999.

Long, Yingtai. "Wo Kan Se Jie" Southern Weekly. Guangzhou, 26 Sep. 2007: Special Column.

Pickowicz, Paul G. "Huang Jianxin and the Notion of Postsocialism." New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics. Eds. Nick Brown, Paul G. Pickowicz, Vivian Sobchack and Esther Yau. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Silbergeld, Jerome. Hitchcock with a Chinese Face: Cinematic Doubles, Odeipal Triangles, and China's Moral Voice. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2004.

Teo, Stephen. Hong Kong cinema: the extra dimensions. London : BFI, 1997.

Wang, Anyi. The Song of Everlasting Sorrow. New York. Columbia University Press. 2008.

Wang, Anyi; Zhang, Xing. Tanhua Lu (谈话录). Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press. 2008.

Wang, Dewei. Dang Dai Xiao Shuo Er Shi Jia. (当代小说二十家). Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company. 2006.

Zhang, Xudong. Pi Ping de Zong Ji （批评的踪迹）. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company. 2003.

Zhang, Yingjin. Screen China: Critical Intervention, Cinematic Reconfiguration, and the Transnational Imaginary in Contemporary Chinese Cinema. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 2002.

Zhang, Yingjin. "Rebel without a Cause? China's New Urban Generation and Postsocialist Filmmaking." The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007.

Zhang, Zhen, "Introduction: Bearing Witness: Chinese Urban Cinema in the Era of Transformation." The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007.

Zhang, Zhen. "The 'Shanghai factor' in Hong Kong Cinema: A Tale of Two Cities in Historic Perspectives." Asian Cinema 10.1 (Fall): 146-59, 1998.