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Identities in Motion:

Immigrant Representation in Sinophone Cinemas

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in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Tzu-chin Chen

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Identities in Motion:

Immigrant Representation in Sinophone Cinemas

by

Tzu-chin Chen

Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Professor Michael Sanford Berry, Chair

This dissertation investigates different types of immigrant representations in Sinophone cinema, including both inter-Asia representations and relationships with the world. The research analyzes the way in which immigrant cinematic representation intervenes with the issue of national identity in Sinophone communities, primarily during 2000-2020. My primary focus is the way cinema as a medium represents immigrants, reshapes the imagination about these immigrants, and also the way this process interacts with nation and society. The title of the dissertation "Identities in Motion" reflects the way identities shift in a rapidly changing world. The research explicates our understanding of Asian studies through a contemplation of immigrant representations' mobility and immobility. Seen in this light, I consider not only the heterogeneous aspects of Asia, but also the connections between different locations in Asia and the world.

This dissertation focuses on four different immigrant articulations. To place each Sinophone immigrant cinema as a site of complex cultural practices, my dissertation shows how cinema as a medium presents immigrants in different perspectives. Each of these four cases I select has unique contexts but all together posits questions about the concept of nations, identities, and the existing discrimination against immigrant groups. The first chapter examines two films: Ho Wi Ding's *Pinoy Sunday* (2009) and Tseng Ying-ting's *Ye-Zai* (2012), presents the groups of "migrant workers" (waiji yigong) in Taiwan. The second chapter examines Cheng Yu-Chieh's *My Little Honey Moon* (2012), a film centers on the subject of new immigrant women which challenges the conventional Xiangtu (nativist) concept. This chapter rethinks Xiangtu in a transnational relationship between Taiwan and Southeast Asia. Chapter three examines Midi Z's filmmaking, which highlights a special visualization of Sinophone Burma's landscape in providing precious viewpoints for the world to understand Sinophone Burmese. Chapter four focuses on the spatiality depicted within *The Receptionist* (2017) and attends to the ways in which this film explores how female immigrants interact with the spatiality as they navigate London. Through the analysis of these films, this dissertation contributes to the developing category of immigrant cinemas and generates an opportunity to rethink about the issues of nation, gender, and identities.

The dissertation of Tzu-chin Chen is approved.

Sean Arron Metzger

Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo

Jasmine Nadua Trice

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University of California, Los Angeles

2022

To my dearest family.

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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family. I want to give my greatest gratitude to my parents. Without their unconditional love and support, I could not have overcome all the struggle or completed my degree. I would like to express my appreciation to both my dearest younger brother and younger sister who always support my decisions with deep faith. I would like to thank my cousin Celine Yu and cousin-in-law Michael Yang who provided the warmest welcome during my stay in America. I would like to give special thanks to Wai-Chung Wong and Hsiu-Ping Lee who provided a lot of help from my first day arriving in LA. My friends in the North American Taiwan Studies Association (NATSA) who gave me great encouragement to finish this work, and my teachers and friends in Taiwan who believed in my ability to contribute to the world through this work have helped me throughout this journey. I want to thank Richard Chen provided many helps to apply doctoral program. I want to give a special thanks to Asiaman Chen who encouraged me to pursue my academic dream to study abroad. I dedicate this dissertation to Taiwan, a beautiful country with many courageous people.

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"In/Outsiders: Intersectional Comparison of Gender, Ethnicity, Nationality, and Class in *My Little Honey Moon*" at the 2018 Annual Conference of North American Taiwan Studies Association (NATSA), University of Austin, Taxes. May. 24-26th.

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"The Female, the Looking and the City: Viewing Contemporary Taipei Cityscapes and Gender Representation through Female Novelists in Taiwan in the 1990s" at the 23rd Annual Columbia Graduate Student Conference on East Asia (EALAC.) New York. Feb. 14th. 2014.

"A Room of Her Own: The Dialogue between The Space of Apartment and Home in Contemporary Taiwan Female Fiction." (in Chinese) at the 9th International Junior Scholars' Conference on Sinology. National Taiwan University, Taipei. July. 2011.

Introduction: Remapping Asia through Sinophone Immigrant Routes

This dissertation investigates different types of immigrant representations in Sinophone cinema, including both inter-Asia representations and relationships with the world. The research analyzes the way immigrant cinematic representation intervenes in the issue of national identity in Sinophone communities, primarily during 2000-2020. My primary concern is the way cinema as a medium represents immigrants, reshapes the imagination toward these immigrants, and the way this process interacts with nation and society. The title of the dissertation "Identities in Motion" responds to the way identities shift in a rapidly changing world. The research explicates our understanding of Asian studies through an understanding of immigrant presentations' mobility and immobility. I consider not only the heterogeneous aspects of Asia, but also the connection between different locations in Asia and the world.

The title "Identities in Motion: Immigrant Representation in Sinophone Cinema[1]" raises many questions: What are immigrant cinemas? What are immigrant cinemas in Sinophone studies? How do identities play an important role in these cinemas? To answer these questions, I identify and combine three major fields, Asian studies, Sinophone studies, and media studies, and draw upon the interdisciplinary nature of immigrant cinemas in Sinophone studies. In the first section, I answer the question, "What are immigrant cinemas?" to build a foundation for this

[1] The title of "Identities in Motion" has been used by Peter Feng's book: "Identities in Motion: Asian American Film and Video," which discusses how Asian American filmmakers and videomakers' works frame and present their histories and identities. Even though we share the same title, we concern different immigrant bodies. While his focuses are on Asian American, I consider more about the immigrants outside America, especially an intra-Asian context.

dissertation. In the second section, I discuss the way immigrant cinemas challenged current Asian studies and introduce a "mobility turn" from social sciences to illustrate the dynamic interaction with various places innovatively. The third section gives attention to immigrant cinemas that challenge current Chinese cinema and Sinophone studies. The fourth section further discusses the way to see immigrant cinema as mediascapes and provides two methodologies: (1) Immigrant Cinemas intersection with Different Genres, and (2) the Immigrant Gaze as an Analytical Tool. Finally, I provide a breakdown of the four chapters.

What Are Immigrant Cinemas?

Although film scholars have explored immigration narratives within film history, they begin to analyze immigrant film primarily in the 1990s. In *Oxford Bibliographies* (2019)[2], Lykidis (2014) discussed the relation between immigration and cinema and assembled a bibliography associated with immigrant cinema. He indicated "In the 1990s, film scholars sought to distinguish immigrant films from dominant modes of production, genres, and styles, developing a new critical vocabulary to explain how the exilic, nostalgic, and alienating aspects of immigrant experience could be expressed cinematically" (online). The relation between immigrants and cinema began in the early stages of film development, when the absence of spoken language in silent films overcame language barriers and attracted immigrant audiences. In the 1970s, the issue of immigration attracted the attention of scholars because of a new wave of immigrants that was attributable to economic and political crises. The theory of Third cinema emerged in the 60s and 70s which deal with extensively with questions of migration and exiles. In the 1990s,

[2] Oxford Bibliographies: **https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0230.xml**

scholars noticed the way immigrant filmmakers influenced the film industry and presented aesthetics different from the dominant Hollywood films. Notably, these filmmakers expressed unique immigrant themes of exile, nostalgia, and alienation. Building on this insight, recent researchers focus on more dimensions, including gender and sexualitiy (Lykidis, 2014).

Immigrant cinema is not easy to define, as it can be defined according to different aspects because of cinema production's complexity. Immigrant cinema is a multilayered concept that can be interpreted according to authorship, production modes, genre, aesthetic aspects, and location settings. Lykidis indicated two different ways to understand immigrant cinema. First, he notes "…a distinction is made between the work of 'émigré filmmakers' who travel abroad but might not explicitly address immigration in their films, 'immigrant filmmakers' whose work engages with immigrant issues in some way, and 'films about immigration' that deal explicitly with immigration but might not be directed by an immigrant filmmaker" (online). This interpretation focuses on immigrant filmmakers and the way they create their films, which is not related to immigration explicitly in their works. Second, Lykidis (2014) pointed to films that engage with immigrants' experiences, although the filmmaker may not be an immigrant.

Using the immigrant filmmakers and immigrant themes as two indicators, three types of immigrant cinema can be seen: (1) Immigrant filmmakers present immigrants' experiences in film; (2) filmmakers who do not have immigrant experience present immigrants' experiences, i.e., the protagonists are immigrants or the themes are related to immigrants' experiences, or (3) Immigrant filmmakers' film or work in host countries, but do not portray the immigrant experience explicitly. This dissertation discusses the first two categories largely, both of which are related to immigrants directly, and each chapter focuses on different issues.

In his early theory of immigrant filmmaking, Naficy (2001) refers to both the first and third categories of immigrant filmmakers' films as "accented cinema".[3] Naficy's theory highlights filmmakers who are under-recognized because of their background and acknowledges their contributions to major film industries such as the Western film industry, and divides "accented cinema" into three categories based upon the filmmaker's status: (1) exilic filmmakers; (2) diasporic filmmakers, and (3) postcolonial ethnic and identity filmmakers. Although he classifies them as three different types of filmmaker, he emphasizes that the status of diaspora, exile, and ethnicity are not fixed categories, but are transmutable for each filmmaker (Naficy, 2018). The categories do not conflict with each other arbitrarily; rather, one filmmaker can be situated in two or three conditions simultaneously (e.g., diasporic and ethnic other). The complexity of a filmmaker's status can be expected because largely, immigrant filmmakers are also changing their status and identities constantly over time (for example, migrants become ethnic minorities). For example, in Chapter three, I discuss the works of the director Midi Z, who is a Sinophone Burmese migrant who became a Taiwanese citizen later. Thus, he represents both a diasporic and ethnic filmmaker.

When immigrant cinema encounters the notion of national cinemas, many issues emerge because the immigrant questions the boundaries of national identity. Two books published in the late 2010s identifies immigrant cinema in their countries and discusses the relation between national cinema and immigrant cinemas in Europe. In *Marvelous Bodies-Italy's New Migrant Cinema*, Nathen (2017) investigates Italian migrant cinema and discusses the concept of "cultural hybridity", which explores the dramatically changed society and the way the polarized

[3] Naficy, Hamid. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. *An Accented Cinema*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

world reacts to immigration, particularly from the global South since the 1980s.[4] Nathen discoveres that many innovative Italian films present multi-ethnic society with which Italian viewers may not be highly familiar. Focusing on the question of cultural hybridity, *Marvelous Bodies* addresses the presentation of "bodies" and the way these presentations interacts with the issues of race, gender, and national identity during the 1990s and 2010s. He highlights this hybridity to bring movement and escape the fixed concept of colonial relationships in Italian immigration cinematic representation. He argues that "Italy sees itself as possessing the unique qualification as begging the quintessential internal Other in Western Europe, and this prescription directly influences its cinematic response to immigrants–Europe's external Others" (p. 5). In this sense, immigrant cinema helps Italians reposition their understanding of otherness both for themselves and immigrants.

While Nathen celebrates the notion of "cultural hybridity," Andersson and Sundholm (2019) propose another approach, "minor cinema" to study immigrant cinema. In *The Cultural Practice of Immigrant Filmmaking–Minor Immigrant Cinemas in Sweden 1950–1990*, the authors conducts a research project that focused on independent immigrant filmmaking in Sweden and held many workshops to discuss immigrant cinemas in Sweden. In their report, they drew two primary conclusions about immigrant films.[5] First, they view the process of filmmaking from the perspectives of filmmakers and their immigrant background reveals itself through this process of filmmaking (p. 5). Beyond the restriction of language barriers, immigrant films give filmmakers space to negotiate and articulate their existence and struggles to audiences.

[4] Nathan, Vetri. *Marvelous Bodies*. Vol. 70. Purdue University Press, 2017.

[5] Andersson, Lars Gustaf, and John Sundholm. The Cultural Practice of Immigrant Filmmaking: Minor Immigrant Cinemas in Sweden 1950–1990. Intellect, 2019.

Second, in relation to film theory, the immigrant filmmakers establish their languages in the ways they make films. Through archival research, scholars use different perspectives to interpret films that have been ignored because they present different experiences from national contexts, and therefore, local audiences cannot understand or recognize them fully. Although they appreciate Naficy's groundbreaking theory of accented film, Andersson and Sundholm regard "accented film as one particular mode of immigrant filmmaking" (Andersson and Sundholm, 2019, p. 25). They claim that his theory focuses only on the individual auteurs, and deviates from current film theories that emphasize collective works. Moreover, Naficy's assumption of accented cinema targets the North American cinema industry primarily, which differs from many other film industries in minor countries. Andersson and Sundholm note "…the style of accented cinema is characteristic of much of mainstream national cinemas of welfare states, or of existentialist auteur art cinema that focus on boundary situation stories" (p. 25). With respect to the limitation of Naficy's accounts, the authors prefer to use the concept of "minor cinema" that they argue is "more inclusive and production-oriented than accented cinema." (p. 25).

Minor cinema, taken from Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature, provides another perspective for immigrant cinema. Andersson and Sundholm states "[m]inor cinemas include all marginal cinema, out of which immigrant cinema is often one distinct form, but not necessarily so (it may also be major), whereas accented cinema is one possible mode of immigrant cinemas" (p. 25). The concept of minor cinema has been applied to many other film practices, such as women's cinema (Butler, 2002), avant-garde filmmakers (Gunning, 1990), lesbian cinema (White, 2008), and postcolonial cinema (Rocdowich, 1997), etc.

Inspired by Butler's discussion of women's cinema, minor cinema is a descriptive term for cinema about a minority or a marginalized group, and the concept of "minor" compared to

"major" is "relational" rather than oppositional or binary (pp. 21–22). Butler emphasizes that minor cinema creates a sense of community:

> The notion of a minor literature as involved in the projection of a community rather than its expression is particularly useful to the argument that the existence of a women's cinema need not be premised on an essentialist understanding of the category 'women.' The communities imagined by women's cinema are as many and varied as the films it comprises, and each is involved in its own historical moment." (p. 21)

Andersson and Sundholm (2019) argue that "for immigrants the minor is a site of production out of which the minor stands in a dialectical–and not necessarily oppositional – relation to the major" (p. 15). Instead, they emphasize that minor cinema is a new cinematic culture and filmmakers develop a new film language to express the minority's experience, which creates a new group of film audiences.

Filmmaker identity	Film focus	Examples
(1) Immigrant filmmaker	Presentation of the immigrant experience	*Pinoy Sunday*, *The Receptionist*, *Return to Burma*
(2) Filmmaker is not immigrant	Presentation of the immigrant experience	*My Little Honeymoon*, *Yezai*
(3) Immigrant filmmaker	Does not present the immigrant experience	X

Inspired by this inclusive cultural practice of minor cinema, I incorporate two modes of immigrant cinemas that present the immigrant's experience in this dissertation, but do not focus

necessarily on the directors as the main creators, but focus rather on the immigrants' cultural practice and production and their minor situation. The immigrant is situated often in an interstitial space "in-between" status of cultures, languages, and identities, and this dissertation examines the difficult transition from one status to another. In the analysis, I pay attention to the way the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization occurs and the way their identities are constructed or reconstructed during these complex processes. The films may traverse different sites that are related to the protagonist's journey. Even when a place does not show on the screen, the narratives are connected to it strongly. Immigrant cinema shares many features of "transnational and diasporic cinema" and highlights the transnational flow from many different aspects of political, social, financial, and media that challenge the concept of national borders. This dissertation is important because previous discussions of immigrant cinema are based upon Western experience, while my focus shifts from the Western lens to Asian presentations to fill this void in the extant research. In the next section, I discuss the way immigrant cinema serves as a way to rethink Area Studies and the way they contribute to the discussion of immigrant cinema in the non-Western context.

Mobilities as a Key to Rethink Asian Studies and Immigrant Cinema

This research is related to existing work in Asian studies under the umbrella of Area Studies, which developed during the Cold War period. Immigrant cinema challenges the conceptualization of Area Studies, which relies on the nation state as a unit of analysis. Immigrant cinema investigates the possibility of a fixed national boundary and highlights cross-cultural perspectives. In the dissertation, I propose a mobile thinking of the mutual subjectivities of Asian studies. Migrant cinema shows different patterns of mobility—with multiple locations, cultures, histories, and societies—that are not confined to the nation state. Each film is situated in

the complex contexts and unique routes that these immigrants create. Further, through movement, these immigrants deconstruct and reconstruct their own identities constantly. These identities challenge not only the original place from which they come, but also the destinations to which they intend to go. In this sense, these immigrants challenge homogeneity of national states.

Inspired by cultural geography and sociology, I propose that the concept of mobility is key to rethinking the conventions of Asian studies. The institutionalization of Area Studies is related to global power relationships that can be traced back to the bipolar world order after World War II. Historically, universities and institutions in the US have received funding from governmental or non-governmental organizations and have been encouraged to research "others" in different areas. These characteristics still formulate knowledge production in the discipline constantly, and in this way, Area Studies set strong analytical boundaries between different regions and have the tendency to separate sub-disciplines by focusing on their cultural and geographic origins. For example, in many cases, South Asian studies are separate from East Asian studies. In "Introduction: Knowledge Production, Area Studies and the Mobility Turn," Mielke and Hornidge (2017) indicate the way Area Studies operate in the academic context:

> The institutional backing, the build-up of study programs around language and the transmission of cultural competences in specially designed curricula, as well as organizational support (manifest in the establishment of department, boards, chairs, and journals) remained basically unabated until the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. (Mielke and Hornidge, 2017, p. 6)

However, with the advent of globalization, the authors note that Area Studies have taken on new directions and several approaches have been investigated:

> …with the increasing impact of globalization (Evers 2000; Prewitt 2003) and subsequently arising influences from different evolving "turns" in academia—the cultural turn (Lackner & Werner 1999; Bachmann-Medick 2007), spatial turn (Jessop et al. 2008; Leitner et al. 2008; Soja 1989; Massey 2005) and post-structuralism (Jackson 2003), including post-colonial perspectives and post-development, a debate set in. (Mielke and Hornidge, 2017, p. 7)

The authors investigate three main innovative approaches to amend the inadequacy of Asian studies: (1) from "trans-" perspectives; (2) Global Studies and Global History, and (3) Comparative Studies. First, the "trans-" perspectives include the concept of "transnational," "transregionalism and regional order," and "translocality". These "trans-" conceptions help scholars extend beyond the discussions that restrict a single area to multiple geographic locations. With respect to Global Studies and Global history, the second approach reconstructs the understanding of the way the world established and discovered the association of "spatial relevance," rather than focusing on the conventional reading of Area Studies. The third approach, "comparative studies", situates the arguments between Area Studies and systematic disciplines. One argument is that "Area Studies potentially challenge disciplinary fields" (p. 9) and "add empirical insights" to enlarge the vision of theories. Another argument states that area study specialists are "theory-distant" and "without proper methodologies" (p. 9). The tension between Area Studies and systematic disciplines causes anxiety that leads specialists to change their strategies and reconfigure the position of Area Studies.

To rethink the epistemology of Asia and knowledge production, it is necessary to recognize the interaction between different areas rather than isolating the knowledge within artificial national boundaries. In this project, rather than viewing Asia as a homogeneous entity,

each chapter focuses on one site, but connects each site to other places that are all relevant to building the knowledge we see on the screen. Each site also applies as a "multiple layer node", which allows space to discuss the way different agents work in immigrant films. Extending Bakhitin's chronotope (Time-space) in literature studies, it is worth noting the way the film presents the configuration of time and space, particularly in a mobile world.

The analytical approach of this "mobility turn" provides valuable thinking about the development of Asian Studies. Since Sheller and Urry (2006) announced in their article "The new mobilities paradigm", "mobility study" has grown as a strong field in sociology and geography, and influences other fields. In "The new mobilities paradigm", the authors indicate that it is necessary and important to develop a field of research abilities:

> Although some critics argue that there is no analytical purchase in bringing together so broad a field–encompassing studies of exile, migration, immigration, migrant citizenship, transnationalism, and tourism–we argue that the project needs to be developed further. Particularly valuable here are feminist transnational studies which examine the way migrant reconstitute belonging and mobilise place-based identities across geopolitical border. (p. 211)

A decade after its release, in the second edition of *Mobility* in 2017, Adey added a chapter on "Mobility study" to discuss the way it had matured from the first edition in 2009. Adey (2017) notes the interdisciplinary tendency, i.e., that mobility study intersects constantly with many fields. One of those fields includes migration studies. Migration studies addressed the question of mobility long before the mobility turn. There are three main research approaches to migration studies that consider mobilities. The first is referred to as "citizen turn", which concerns the way to govern mobilities. The increasing different bodies of subjects that cross

different regimes, “From migrant to refugee, asylum seekers, formal, legal and political categories of citizen, protected status, visitor programme, investor programme, alien, all of these labels and categories exist alongside other informal social and cultural meanings of mobility. The concern of mobility studies for regimes that govern mobilities is essential” (p. 34). The second approach recognizes that mobility researchers have developed connections to art and humanities: “Several fascinating research projects capture some of these tensions particularly well, but also invite our recognition of the ways mobilities research has built other bridges into the arts, humanities, and particular forms of creative practice” (p. 35). These observations show various ways in which mobility has become an important practice and productive concept.

In his work “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy”, Appadurai (1990) categorizes “five dimensions of global cultural flows, ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes and ideoscapes” (p. 296). These “-scapes” indicate different aspects of deterritorialization in the process of globalization and constitute different global cultures. These flows challenge the fixed boundary and focus more on the way these flows have affected the concept of “place” enormously. The study of new mobilities brings more attention to the process of the journey, which shows that people flow one to another, the meaning of life for each individual, and the power geometry behind the journey. In the introduction to *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities*, Adey, Bissell, Hannam, Merriaman, and Sheller (2017) suggest that mobilities research concerns the mobility and immobility of different groups:

> Mobilities research would account for displacement geographically and socially, attentive to social progress and categorical advancement within ‘power geometries’ composed through class, race, ethnicity and gender. Subjects not only moved through geographic

space, but were shaped by power relations of mobility and immobility, including rights to move, to enter, to dwell, to leave. (p. 4)

The "new mobilities turn" offers many innovations for research. In *Sociology After the Mobilities Turn*, Sheller (2013) reflects further on the new development of the "new mobilities paradigm." First, she indicates that "new technologies of communication and novel convergence between travel, mobile communication and infrastructures" have changed private/public notions. Second, mobilities research is concerned not only with mobilities but also the way it is associated with immobilities. The third approach places emphasis both on mobility and immobility. Sheller refers to scholars' concept of the existence of 'uneven mobility': "Here one can also begin to conceptualize 'mobility capital' (Kaufmann et al., 2004) as the uneven distribution of these capacities and competencies, in relation to the surrounding physical, social, and political affordances for movement (with the legal structures regulating who or what can and cannot move being crucial)" (online).

This fruitful research area provides a strong base for this dissertation research, as immigrant cinema captures this important research trend. In *Area Studies at the Crossroad-Knowledge Production after the Mobility Turn*, Mielke and Hornidge (2017) highlights the importance of "mobility turn" in response to the challenge of "a third wave in Area Studies (post-Cold War)" (vi). The research on immigrant film contributes to rethinking heterogeneous Asia and the connection and disconnection in different places.

Immigrant Cinema in Sinophone Studies—Challenging the Ambiguousness of "Chineseness"

In the previous sections, I focus on the definition of immigrant cinema and the way mobility is a keyword to challenge the field of area study. In this section, I discuss the way immigrant cinema

challenges the fixed notion of Chinese cinemas and the way it enlarges the field of Sinophone studies by way of multidimensional critiques of different locations.

Chinese studies is a branch of Area Studies in American academia, and many scholars have challenged the concept of "Chinese" and "Chineseness" (Ang, 1998; Chow, 2022; Shih, 2013). Over the past several decades, Sinophone study has become a growing field that challenges the assumption of Chinese study. The concepts of "Chinese" and "Chineseness" are ambiguous concepts, particularly in the English language. The term "Chinese" is a vague term in which multiple concepts from original contexts in Chinese language have been lost. The word "Chinese" can refer to different languages, nations, and ethnicities in different contexts. Using the term "Chinese" leads to a falsely homogeneous concept, in which heterogeneous groups are conflated. Many characters and terms in Chinese can be coined to signify the term "Chinese", including "Zhongguo 中國", "Zhonghua 中華", "Zhongwen 中文", "Huayu 華語", "Guoyu 國語", "hanyu 漢語", and "Putonghua 普通話". The "gou 國" in "Zhongguo" and "Guoyu" means "nation", while the "Zhong 中" in "Zhongguo", "Zhongwen", and "Zhonghua", signifies "center". The character "hua" refers to civilized people who distinguish themselves as a civilized group. "yu 語" and "hua 話" mean language, while "Zhongwen 中文," "Huayu 華語," "Guoyu 國語," "hanyu 漢語", and "Putonghua 普通話" means the use of language.

"Zhongguo" was formed as a notion of nation and adopted in China when its national name was constituted in the late nineteenth century, and it acquired a single and unified national identity gradually. As Anderson states famously, national states are imagined communities. Accordingly, "Zhongguo" was formed by several different factors. Historian Shen Sung-chiao (1997) shows the way intellectuals in the late Qing invented "Chinese ethnicity" through disputes over the problems of "culture" and "blood." China became a national state in the

modern sense for the first time in 1912, and was named the "Republic of China," "Zhonghua Mingguo 中華民國."[6] However, China was divided into two parts after the KMT government lost in the Chinese civil war. One is the original "Zhonghua Mingguo 中華民國", which was associated with Taiwan and supported by the American government that was invested in helping maintain a "free" China during the Cold War. Another is "Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo 中華人民共和國", which was established in 1949. Because the term "Zhongguo" has been integrated into both of their names, it can be a problem for people to understand these names without context. Similarly, because of the ambiguousness of the term "Chinese", it has always been a problem for scholars to name their field of study in cinema studies, since as "Chinese cinema" can be misleading and problematic.

This research addresses the discussions about Chinese cinema, Chinese language cinema, Chinese transnational cinema studies, and Sinophone cinema. Sinophone immigrant cinema challenges not only the paradigm of Chinese national cinema, but also the discourses of Chinese transnational cinema. Many scholars have examined the field of "Chinese cinema" as cinema with a single national imagination, which is misleading and can be confused with the cinema of the PRC. Consequently, nearly every book that includes "Chinese cinema" in its title has to clarify the understanding of its problematic definition. In the book *Chinese National Cinema*, Zhang (2004) places the word "national" in quotation marks to prevent readers from misunderstanding the political reality discussed in the book, which includes three different

[6] Sung-Chiao Shen, The Myth of Huang-ti (Yellow Emperor) and the Construction of Chinese Nationhood in Late Qing. Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies. Vo. 28. 12/01/1997, p 1-77.

territories, Mainland PRC, Hong Kong, and ROC in Taiwan.[7] Pang (2006) indicates that even the obsession with "Chinese cinema" as a valid field is problematic because of the pressure to institutionalize "Chinese" cinema in English academic cinema study. Chinese cinema has been a field of study since the 1980s and thus far, scholars have been more willing to allow the field to cover a wide range of Chinese cinemas.[8] However, I argue that, knowing that "Chinese cinema" tends to be criticized as a nationalized term, scholars continue to use it nonetheless, although using the term does not help readers understand the field effectively.

Because the term "Chinese transnational cinema" is misleading, Lu and Yeh (2005) used the term "Chinese-language cinema" to redefine the field of study from the perspective of language. The authors claim that "Chinese-language cinema is a more comprehensive term that covers all of the local, national, regional, transnational, diasporic, and global cinemas relating to the Chinese language" (p. 2). The linguistic aspect provides flexibility to include regional cinema production and avoids the national traps of unification from different dialects. Although Lu and Yeh use the term "Sinophone cinema," they did not take the post-colonial critical perspective

[7] In "National Cinema and China," the introduction to *Chinese National Cinema*, Zhang acknowledged that it is dangerous to use the title "Chinese National Cinema" and had to place the "national" in quotation marks because "… operations of multinational corporations have increasingly criss-crossed and sometimes entirely obscured or by-passed national borders, while local, regional and transnational forces continue to undermine the legitimacy of any nation-state" (1). He states the inadequacy of including three territories: the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong, and Taiwan within the framework of "China," because of the complex "national" situations.

[8] Pang, L. (January 1, 2006). The institutionalization of 'Chinese' cinema as an academic discipline. *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, *1*(1), 55–61.

from “Anglophone cinema” and “Francophone” because they consider that Sinophone is disseminate through *diaspora*, not colonialism. Indeed, “Anglophone” and “Francophone” films resist colonialism in their own original context. However, in the context of *diaspora*, there is more emphasis on the Chinese origin. Ang (2001) indicates that *Chinese diaspora* implies the essential nature of Chineseness whether you can speak Chinese or not.[9] This is the unavoidable Chinese-centrism when one uses the *diaspora* model. However, rather than considering that Sinophone is simply a language category, Shih (2013) conceptualizes Sinophone as a critical field of study, and rejects the *diaspora* paradigm.

In “Introduction: What Is Sinophone Studies,” he states that “Sinophone studies takes as its objects of study the Sinitic-language communities and culture outside China as well as ethnic minority communities and cultures within China where Mandarin is adopted or imposed” (p. 11). Thus, rather than conflating different cultural communities, such as Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and others under one umbrella of the terminology of “Chineseness,” Sinophone studies consist of multilingual, polyphonic, and poly-scriptic practices. Compared to “Chinese transnational cinema” and “Chinese-language cinema”, Sinophone cinema respects different realizations of each local practice and notes the different hegemonies in different contexts. For example, in Taiwan’s case, Han Chinese settlers suppressed the indigenous people routinely. According to Shih’s conceptual development, “Sinophone studies” concerns those peripheralized communities under Han Chinese hegemony, such as settler colonialism within China and the

[9] Ang, I. (2013). Can one say no to Chineseness? Pushing the limits of the diasporic paradigm. S.-m. Shih, T. Chien-hsin, & B. Bernards (Eds.). *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader.* (pp. 57-73). Columbia. Ang’s concept can be seen in the book: Ang, I. (2001). *On not speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West*. Routledge.

Sinophone communities constituted by migration and immigration from China in different historical contexts. Shih emphasizes that different places have different natures, that:

> [T]he complexities and challenges facing Sinitic-language cultures and communities with respect to their location, definition, production, and dissemination are inevitably manifold, such that one needs always to particularize a given cultural practice and explore its meanings in relation to a given place at a given historical moment. (p. 7)

My research engages with various critical aspects of Sinophone studies. However, this project differs in three major ways from the original conception of Sinophone studies as Shih proposed first. First, the research concerns not only Sinophone communities, but also (im)migrants within those communities. Further, language is not the exclusive concern of this project. Sinophone is related to the Sinitic language, but in the first and second chapters of the dissertation, Filipino and Vietnamese migrant workers or new residents do not belong to the Sinophone.[10] In the first two chapters, I analyze three films, *Pinoy Sunday*, *Ye-Zai*, and *My Little Honeymoon* that suggest identities for these immigrants that are born out of specific restrictions on their lives. These narratives push the boundaries of interethnic and transcultural relations and challenge not just mainstream Taiwanese ideas about immigrant workers, but also the definition of Taiwanese identity more broadly, as they are part of a new imagination of the heterogeneity in Taiwanese society. *Pinoy Sunday and Ye-Zai* examine the suppression of Southeast Asian

[10] New immigrant generally indicates those immigration/economic migrations from southeast Asia. The data show more than 600,000 migrant workers from Indonesia, Vietnam, The Philippines, and Thailand in Taiwan. Retrieved from **http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/talkingturkey/migrants-and-new-immigrants-how-taiwan-is-smartly-deploying-assimilation-and-integration-to-welcome-foreigners-into-its-fold/**

immigrant workers from an insider perspective. *Pinoy Sunday* looks at male Filipino migrant workers, while *Ye-Zai* is concerned with female domestic workers from Thailand. By considering these two representations of different populations, I suggest that both media productions are grappling with ways to negotiate the mutual understanding between Southeast Asia and Taiwan. Both offer self-criticism as well as strategies to build alliances and portray these immigrants' struggles. In this case, the increasing number of new immigrants from Southeast Asia have challenged Taiwan as a Sinophone community. I am concerned with marginality in Sinophone studies and take a self-reflective approach to investigate the mentality of Han settler society's homogeneity.

Second, this project is both transmedia and trans-disciplinary. Unlike Sinophone literature with an exclusively linguistic foundation, Sinophone cinema allows a multi-lingual presentation that does not require translation into Sinitic language. Sinophone (im)migrant cinema allows different interpretations depending upon the cinematic language. I argue that the visual recognition of minority groups is more powerful than the linguistic approach. In Taiwan's case, over the past decades, scholarship has examined Taiwan cinema increasingly by referring to the concept of Sinophone with a special focus on the aspects of multilinguality, multi-locality, and multi-ethnicity. Inspired by Shih's theory, Yue and Khoo (2014) edited an anthology entitled *Sinophone Cinema* and collected extensive scholarly works to frame the Sinophone in the realm of cinema. They adopt the concept, Sinophone Studies, as a replacement for Chinese Cinema models to problematize the position of the Chinese focus. In his review of the book, Wong (2015) askes, "Why focus on language as an anchoring point for study of global visuality and

cultures on the margin of China?"[11] He indicates that it is valuable to emphasize the linguistic aspect, but Cinema as a visual form may be missing. In the chapter "The Voice of the Sinophone," Lin takes Hou Hsiao-hsien's French-Taiwanese film, *Flight of the Red Balloon* (2007), as an example to complicate this issue further. Lin appreciates Shih's contribution to illuminate the voice of colonized people but is not yet convinced fully by Sinophone's lingua-centrism. By analyzing Hou's film, he emphasizes that visualization is one of the important components in film studies. Chan and Willis discuss the problematic representation of British Chinese short films. They ask, "If Sinophone 'articulation' is a 'minor articulation', that is articulation by the minor or the minoritized using the major language, might these minor articulations be read in the cinematic language of the films, in the way that the language of visual art is read in Shih's book?"[12] In summary, the formation of identity will not be restricted to Sinophone articulations, and visuality in cinema will have equal weight in this dissertation.

Third, Sinophone immigrant cinema is a site of complex cultural practice, which is related to the entire process from production to exhibition. As I have defined immigrant cinema, scholars have not addressed many questions fully: How should we define Sinophone immigrant cinemas? According to the director's definition? The casting? The shooting location? The narrative, or the distribution? In my research, I take each cinema as a site to see the way different immigration factors affect the presentation. Immigrant cinemas challenge the boundary of Sinophone cinemas. In the first two chapters, I analyze the way the films center on non-Han immigrants in Taiwan, but the film crews include many Taiwanese and the films were released in

[11] Wong, Alvin K. (2015). Book Review. Andrey Yue & Olivia Khoo (Eds.). *Sinophone Cinemas Situation*, *8*(2), 91-97.

[12] *Ibid.* p. 184.

Taiwan. It is common for all immigrant cinemas to be transnational. In all the cases I chose for this dissertation, the filmmaking process includes the production, funding resources, setting, casting, and distribution, which all lead immigrant cinemas to be varied and unique. To build the understanding of each case, I must include different social and cultural contexts to see the way films present immigrants. To discuss the way to examine Sinophone immigrant cinemas further, in the next section, I shift my attention to the way to perceive immigrant cinema in media studies and develop a concept of immigrant gaze to help us understand immigrant cinemas.

Immigrant Cinemas as Mediascapes

With respect to visual study and cinema studies, this dissertation focuses on audiovisual presentation of immigrants, the way it shapes their imagination and the way these processes interact with the nation and societies. In Appadurai's (1996) theory of rupture, he argues that the combination of media and migration creates works of imagination that constitute modern subjectivity. He states his concept of rupture further:

This theory of a break—or rupture—with this strong emphasis on electronic mediation and mass migration, is necessarily a theory of the recent past (or the extended present) because it is only in the past two decades or so that media and migration have become so massively globalized, that is to say, active across large and irregular transnational terrains. (p. 9)

Appadurai (1996) indicates that mediascape "refer[s] both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspaper, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the world created by these media" (p. 35). Although the development of transnational media has exceeded traditional media (newspaper and television stations) now, when Appadurai conceives this idea (particularly the internet's

influence), the discussion of global flows in disjunctive worlds and mediascapes still provides a strong base to think about the way media and migration formulate the imagined communities. In the previous section on "What is immigrant cinema," I indicate that they intersect with "accented films", "third word cinemas", and "minor cinemas". I highlight "minor cinemas" particularly as my inspiration to examine two modes of "immigrant cinemas"—"immigrant filmmakers who present the immigrant experience in film" and "filmmakers who do not have immigrant experience present the immigrant experience." In this section, I propose two methodological approaches to examine the way immigrant cinemas are complex cultural productions that cross different cultures and societies. The first is to see the way immigrant cinemas intersect with different film genres, while the second is to theorize immigrant gazes as a tool to help viewers see immigrants' position in different power relationships.

Immigrant Cinemas Intersect with Different Genres

In this research, I argue that immigrant cinemas intersect with other genres as a tool to make their content more accessible. In French, genre means "type" or "kind". In the Cambridge dictionary, genre is defined as "a style, particularly in the arts, that involves a particular set of characteristics."[13] For practical reasons, genre research has been seen as an important approach to film study to defend different kinds of films for analysis, production, marketing, and circulation. Hence, a film's genre is very difficult to define because of films and the film industry's complexity. Stam (2000) poses several questions in genre analysis, particularly

[13] Cambridge Dictionary. **https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/genre** [searched 8/2/2022]

generic labels. He categorizes four dimensions: (1) extension—the range would be too wide or too narrow; (2) normativism—to perceive what a genre movie should present; (3) monolithic—one film belongs to one genre, and (4) biologism—to essentialize a genre with the life cycle (pp. 128–129).[14] Berry-Flint (2004) also states that "Genre studies set out to define and codify such an intertextual field, and thereby create their own object rather than simply discovering them" (p. 27).[15] She proposes to shift from "genre" to generic reading to respond to the problem of previous genre studies. Further, she notes that the phenomenon of "genre hybridity", particularly transnational circulation, needs to have more contextual understandings. Thus, she sees genre as certain form of communication:

Genres are socially organized sets of relations between texts that function to enable certain relations between texts and viewers. Because they organize the framework of expectations within which reading takes place, they help to enable the possibility of communication; the blurring of certain genres, therefore, can be seen as a political move to discourage certain forms of communication. (p. 41)

Immigrant cinemas can be seen as a genre that has not yet been recognized fully. However, this dissertation does not focus on creating a new genre; instead, it is more concerned about the way immigrant cinemas incorporate other genres. Chandler (2004) focuses on the more practical purpose of genre, and states, "How we define a genre depends on our purposes; the adequacy of our definition with respect to social science at least must surely be related to the

[14] Stam, R. (2000). *Interrogating authorship and genre. Film theory: An introduction* (pp. 128-129). Blackwell.

[15] Berry-Flint, S. (2008). Genre. Miller, Toby, & Robert. Stam (Eds.) *A Companion to Film Theory.* Oxford : Blackwell.

light that the exploration sheds on the phenomenon" (p. 3).[16] Genre provides a frame to interact with film audiences and also negotiate with cultural assumptions.

For example, in this dissertation, the first two chapters discuss two genres that have been used in the films. The first is road cinema. One theme that is pervasive in *Pinoy Sunday*, *Ye-zai*, and *My Little Honeymoon* is that all protagonists take a journey that deviates from their original lives, while in *Return to Burma*, the main character travels back to his hometown. All of these films contain road themes in their narrative and cinematic presentations. Another example is in *My Little Honeymoon*, in which the film uses many elements of nativist cinema and melodrama, but has new interpretations. This hybridity of genres provides different ways to understand immigrants' experiences and struggles.

Immigrant Gaze as an Analytical Tool

In this dissertation, I use "immigrant gaze" as a methodology to help us understand immigrant cinema and immigrants' positions. Taking inspiration from scholarship on the colonial and ethnographic gazes, I propose a paradigm of the immigrant gaze that occupies a distinguished position in the host society in which these immigrants live. Tracing back to the gaze theories, in 1972, Berger's "Ways of Seeing" began to challenge the idea that many historical factors and cultural assumptions affect the way we see an image. Berger discusses the way the art creator assumes that an "ideal" spectator, either a man or woman was objectified in painting. Later, Laura Mulvey (1975) developed the film theory of male gaze, which was groundbreaking in its

[16] Chandler, D. (2004). *An introduction to genre theory*. (p. 3). http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/intgenre/chandler_genre_theory.pdf [08/10/2022 Visit]

ability to reveal the unconscious structure of classical films during the 1970s. In *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, combining the trending psychoanalysis that Freud and his follower, Lacan, developed, Mulvey argues that the image is arranged sophisticatedly with a complex structure that related to a preexisting pattern of fascination in a patriarchal society. Spectator theory highlights the position of audiences who go to the theater and identify themselves with screen roles through deeper psychoanalytic structures. Through Mulvey's investigation, she defines the spectator as an imagined position that is specialized as a masculine subject in classical Hollywood narrative film. Two major techniques, voyeurism and fetishistic scopophilia, have been applied in film to help the subject escape from castration anxiety.

Mulvey's analysis creates a new realm of spectatorship in film studies. However, it is problematic to think of the audience as a unified entity when developing spectatorship. Many scholars have challenged the concept of the male gaze from different audience's positions. Scholars such as Mary Anne Doane (1982) and Manthia Diawara (1988) have asked how the spectator who is not the target audience feels. How do women view these films? What kind of mechanism lies behind or beyond the male gaze? Doane discusses the female spectator's role and recognizes that women's desires can be shown in the cinema, even women in a patriarchal society. In "Dark Continents: Epistemologies of Racial and Sexual Difference in Psychoanalysis and Cinema," Doane indicates that Freud's figurative use of the phrase "dark continent" reveals a white Western mentality. Diawara addresses the aspect of race and critiques the spectatorship theory for ignoring African Americans' viewing experience.[17] The feminist, bell hooks,

[17] Diawara, Manthia "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance" *Screen*, Volume 29, Issue 4, 1 October 1988, Pages 66–79

highlights the dual marginalization of race and gender for African American female spectators and emphasizes alternative ways to view a film through their eyes.

In "The Gaze as Theoretical Touchstone: In the intersection of Film Studies, Feminist Theory, and Postcolonial Theory," Columpar (2022) (Columpar)summarizes three different theories of the gaze: the male; colonial, and ethnographic. These extended discussions responds to the necessity to consider multiple gazes when different power systems have politicized visuality, particularly concerning others.[18] The colonial gaze is related to colonial history. When anthropology developed as a research field, the Western world projected their fantasies and imaginations on other non-White races and ethnicities. Taking inspiration from scholarship on the colonial and ethnographic gazes, I propose a paradigm in which the immigrant gaze occupies a distinguished position in the host society, such that these immigrants' lives and the complexities of gazes cannot be categorized simply as a colonial or ethnographic gaze. Cinemas' transnational feature complicates the viewing experience. Different cultural backgrounds can elicit different emotional reactions related to different cultural identities. Multiplicities are a major feature of the immigrant gaze and consist of different powers.

In various chapters, I focus on the way different gaze works for immigrants. In the first chapter, I focus on the Southeast Asian migrant workers in *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ya-zai*. From the perspective of gaze, I ask "How do the films create this subjectivism interactively?" In this chapter, I analyze the way these films also reveal complex mechanisms of migrant control

[18] Columpar, Corinn. "The Gaze as Theoretical Touchstone: The Intersection of Film Studies, Feminist Theory, and Postcolonial Theory." *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 1/2, 2002, pp. 25–44. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40004635. Accessed 12 Aug. 2022.

established by different powers that are at work on the migrants' bodies and identities. The image then stands as a complex area where power dynamics can be challenged through the act of looking and being looked at. I categorize three types of gaze that are present on the screen and constitute the complex interrelationships among the main characters, local Taiwanese people, and other migrant workers. In the chapter on *Return to Burma*, the film presents the fate of Burmese migrant workers through photos. Through gazing at a picture, the film emphasizes the absence of immigrants in their hometown. In the chapter on London, I revisit the male gaze and the way Sinophone female immigrants walk as female flaneurs. When *The Receptionist* presents prostitute life, is it possible to resist the male gaze to show these Sinophone women's subjectivity? I also consider the way "immigrant gaze" interwoven with "tourist gaze" lends a positive message to the film.

These two methodologies, "Immigrant Cinemas intersect with Different Genres", and Immigrant Gaze as an Analytical Tool", were developed through the process of my research. These two methods also contribute to ways to think about immigrant cinemas in existing media studies. In addition to these two methodologies, depending upon the film's content, I introduce other theories and develop different frameworks to fit the cases in each chapter. In the next section, I introduce each chapter and the way to respond to the questions of immigrant cinemas that lends a broader understanding of the contemporary Sinophone world.

Chapter Rationale

This dissertation presents each chapter in four different communities that are set in different locations. Each chapter is independent in its nature, but all respond to immigrant cinema's specialty and unique experience. In each chapter, I have different focuses that present different

immigrant experiences and use various research approaches to examine different topics. The dissertation will be organized in the following chapters:

In Taiwan, the term for "migrant workers" (waiji yigong) refers to non-Han immigrant populations—including those from Thailand and the Philippines—whose numbers have been increasing since the 2000s. As these populations have grown, they have become part of the public conversation, and cinematic representations of migrant workers have increased as well. Immigrant films function as a form of recognition, and thereby challenge the homogeneous Taiwanese national identity. Two questions arise: Is it possible to change existing stereotypes and cultural conflicts? Further, how can we avoid a crisis of oversimplified presentations of immigrants? To address these questions, Chapter I examines two films: Ho Wi Ding's *Pinoy Sunday* (Taibei Xingqitian 台北星期天 2009), a comedy that focuses on two Filipino immigrant workers' lives in Taipei, and Tseng Ying-ting's *Ye-Zai* 椰仔 (2012), a crime film with a plot that involves tracking down "runaway migrant workers" (taopao wailao).The author employs three different lenses or paradigms to consider the establishment of migrant-worker subjects in these films in order to fully understand the power dynamics at play in the workers' interactions with Taiwan's broader society. Because of state and social attempts to control these migrant workers, the first important paradigm is the act of "running away", which makes border restrictions in Taiwan clear and creates a space to explore strategies of escape from routine lives. Second, by considering the way different powers intersect, this article explores the relationship between the viewer and the viewed, and the way migrant workers can become the subjects, not just the objects, in this paradigm. By employing two techniques of visualization—the gaze and symbolism—these films present migrant workers' emotions and desires, which are portrayed rarely in mainstream cinemas, and encourage viewers to recognize the perspectives of migrant

workers. Finally, the author suggests that the use of the language serves as a means of resistance to show different affiliations and identities in both films in which the visibility of these migrant workers challenges their discrimination.

According to statistics from the Ministry of the Interior (Taiwan), new immigrant women have played an important role in Taiwan society because of the increasing number of transnational marriages. However, mainstream society has long considered these new immigrant women, who are legitimate citizens in Taiwan, "outsiders". These women, particularly those from Southeast Asia, experience many culture shock and discrimination. The research on new immigrant women derives largely from social science and education and some from the health, medical, and law fields. However, researchers have given less attention to the study of media representation. It is important to see the complex mechanism of mediation because these immigrant women's visibility is crucial to society's acceptance of them. To investigate these exclusions in more depth, Chapter II examines Cheng Yu-Chieh's *My Little Honey Moon* 野蓮香 (2012), a film from the unique TV film series *WE Are Family*, Neiren wairen xiyimin xilie dianying 內人 / 外人新移民系列電影 [translates literally as "Insider/outsider New Immigrant Series], which centers on the subject of new immigrant women. The title depicts their conditions in Taiwan society accurately: Although they live in Taiwan, they are excluded by its society. Through the notion of intersectionality, this section discusses the way these women are marginalized not only because of their ethnicities, but also because of gender, social class, and nationalities. Through this film, I would like to ask the following questions: How does the film as a medium present these intersecting discriminations? How did the Xiangtu 鄉土 [Literary countryside soil, which can translate to nativist] melodrama genre become a channel to integrate these immigrant women into Taiwanese society and provide an alternative dialectical

imagination to break up Han-centered society in Taiwan? To understand the way different powers intersect, I look first at a theoretical framework of intersectionality to explain the situation of new immigrant women who are suffering not one, but multiple, oppressions. Second, I argue that *My Little Honey Moon* challenges the conventional Xiangtu concept and drama. Finally, I discuss the way the film uses the road film genre to transform the immigrant subjectivity and bring the new meaning of Xiangtu.

Chapter III examines Midi Z's filmmaking, which highlights a special visualization of Burma's landscape and provides precious viewpoints for the world to understand Sinophone Burmese. The cinematic images of Burmese immigrants persistently question the fixed borderline and provide alternative perspectives for the audience to think about the existence of these Burmese immigrants and the idea of borders defined by modern nation-states. By looking into the complexity of Midi Z's filmmaking experience, I ask the following questions about different transnational trajectories: (1) How does Midi Z's personal journey from Burma to Taiwan, as a student, foreigner laborer, and filmmaker, exemplify the notion of the "Taiwan Dream", one of driving forces of transnationalism within Asia? (2) How do Midi Z's films present the brutality of Burma's reality given his status as both a Sinophone Burmese himself and an outsider who migrates to another place and returns to his homeland Burma? These inquiries will be addressed in the following three sections. In the first section, I focus on a historical understanding of Sinophone Burmese and how they complicated the idea of their homeland by analyzing Midi Z's short film, *Anlaoyi* (安老衣 *The grave clothes*). For most first-generation immigrants, they have a strong connection with their origin in China. However, for second or third-generation immigrants, their homeland is Burma and they have cultivated their identity as Sinophone Burmese. The second section then discusses how Midi Z's film is situated

in an intersectional theoretical frame, from film theories of poor cinema, accented cinema, and minor cinema. Midi Z explores digital filmmaking and delpolys guerrilla filmmaking in a difficult condition, which breaks the traditional limitation and creates his own aesthetics. And in the third section, I examine the first feature film *Return to Burma* [歸來的人 *Guilai de Ren*] (2011). The film illustrates a historical moment in which the Burmese people were optimistic about their country's future development. But, at the same time, Sinophone Burmese faced double structural difficulties. By creating his unique routes and alternative aesthetics of filmmaking, Midi Z explores the dual facets of both mobility and immobility of Sinophone Burmese in a transnational context of Asia.

In Chapter IV, the concept of "immigrant gaze" is used to highlight Sinophone immigrant women and their marginal position in London. Immigrant gaze is a complex multilayered notion built on discussions of gaze theories in different disciplines, including male, colonial, ethnographic, and touristic gazes. Intersecting with different gazes, immigrant gaze is a dynamic process that allows us to see the way these immigrant women are as objects to be gazed at and as subjects to gaze at others on the screen. First, immigrant women endure the unfriendly gaze from the locals because of their race, gender, and occupation, and they are discriminated against, exploited, and racialized. Further, *The Receptionist* distinguishes different spaces for immigrants with different color filters and forms a contrast between the massage parlor as a work and living space, and London city as a touristic space. Within the house, their life is presented in the living room, kitchen, and at the dining table, which helps these women build a family-like bond. The mirror as a cinematic device complicates the space through its reflection and functions as a mechanism to help them find self-identity when they gaze at themselves. Finally, the film presents the limitations on Sinophone women and their potential liberations in the city. One

Sinophone sex worker's death reveals their immobility in the city, while the other two protagonists' trip offers a positive perspective of these women's mobility. Moreover, wandering the city as a female flaneur provides them their own opportunity to gaze at the city and negotiate their self-identifications. Using "immigrant gaze" as an analytical tool, this film positions the Sinophone immigrant in the city to illustrate different topographies of the cityscapes in the process of globalization and deepens our understanding of London's multiplicity.

Conclusion

The framework of this dissertation is situated immigrant cinemas in three fields of Asian Studies, Sinophone studies, and media studies. Cinema has a long relation with immigrants and many related themes, such as exile, nostalgia, and diaspora repeatedly present on the screen. Immigrant cinemas have emerged as an important category because the immigrant experience is more and more common in the world. Immigrant cinemas touch on many issues of national boundaries and questions about the fixation of identity. In order to investigate immigrant cinemas, I first identified three different types of immigrant cinemas to define my research case. I selected films by two factors: filmmakers' identity and film focuses. According to Naficy's accented film, he proposes three categories of filmmakers and emphasizes how filmmakers vacillate identities according to their status. Nathen highlights "cultural hybridity" and the way immigrant cinemas help to think about the existence of "other" inside Europe. Andersson and Sundholm introduce the concept of minor cinema to investigate immigrant cinemas that can provide a vision for us to see the marginal status of these migrants and how they are presented on the screen.

Immigrant cinemas intersect with Asian Studies to challenge the fixed notion of Area Studies, and approach "mobilities turn" to emphasize the connection and disconnection between different places and the power dynamics in between. Contesting the ambiguousness of

"Chineseness," immigrant cinemas provide new directions to think about Sinophone cinemas in a way to include non-Han communities. The features of transmedia and trans-disciplinary research encourage us to consider more dimensions in researching Sinophone Studies. To place each Sinophone immigrant cinema as a site of complex cultural practices, my dissertation shows how cinema as a media presents immigrants in different perspectives. I propose two approaches: (1) Immigrant Cinemas Intersect with Different Genres; (2) Immigrant Gaze as an Analytical Tool. This method dialogues with the existing film study and helps me to analyze immigrant cinemas in this dissertation. Each of these four cases I select has unique contexts but all question about the concept of nations, identities, and the existing discrimination to immigrant groups. The cross-cultural situations that happen in the process of immigration can cause many misunderstandings and conflicts. Each journey of these immigrants does not have an ultimate destination and the meaning can change overtime depending on different immigrant statuses. The arrangement of the four chapters is related to the time when the major cinemas were released, but all cases are all equally important. By paralleling these four chapters, I hope to exhibit the possibility of researching immigrant cinemas and provide useful tools for future research.

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Chapter I Making Southeast Asian Migrant Workers Visible in Taiwanese Cinema: *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai*

Introduction

In 2010,[19] when Malay director Ho Wi Ding was seeking to release his film *Pinoy Sunday* (*Taibei Xingqitian* 台北星期天) in Taiwan, one theater manager rejected his proposal out of concern that if the film was released there, many Filipino migrant workers would gather in front of the theater and negatively affect business. This was not an isolated case as several other theaters expressed similar concerns. Even though *Pinoy Sunday* was released in very few theaters, it earned more than one million New Taiwan Dollars (NTD), a relatively strong showing at the Taiwanese box office (Taiwan Film Institute 2011, 62). This anecdote points to the complicated attitudes reflecting multidimensional social and cultural relationships in Taiwan, including the negotiations of power in urban spaces and the acceptance and recognition of migrant workers both as the subjects of film and as its consumers. The difficulties of distribution reflect fears about, and unfriendly attitudes toward, migrant workers. These fears and attitudes result from a social imagination suggesting that Taiwanese society is homogeneous, thereby sustaining a hierarchical differentiation of migrations. By shedding light on attitudes about who can use the city's spaces, the anecdote informs our understanding of how discrimination excludes certain groups in Taiwan. It is also a story of success, because *Pinoy Sunday* successfully attracted audiences despite these barriers.

Taiwan is an immigrant society. Waves of people have moved to the island from many different places, but historically the majority of the population has been made up of Han

[19] *Pinoy Sunday* was invited by NHK Asian Film Festival and first released in Hong Kong in 2009. The official releasing in Taiwan was in 2010. See website: https://www.nhk.or.jp/sun-asia/aff/about/index_e.html

immigrants from China who built a strong Han-centered Sinophone community.[20] These Han settlers consider themselves to be the dominant culture in Taiwan, pushing out or ignoring indigenous populations and excluding other immigrant populations from non-Han ethnic areas. After Japanese colonial rule ended in 1945, the Kuomintang (KMT) government retreated to Taiwan from mainland China in 1949 and established political control based on a stronger Han-centered "Taiwanese-as-Chinese" ideology aimed at continuing five thousand years of Chinese tradition. Although during the 1990s Taiwanese consciousness differentiated itself from *waishengren* 外省人 (mainlander) consciousness, it is still built on a Han-centric imagination that excluded the Austronesian peoples in Taiwan who had lived there for a thousand years. This ideology of settler colonialism excludes not only indigenous people but § also immigrants who arrived after the dominant settlers. This imagination of a homogeneous Taiwan has been challenged by changing demographics, ethnicities, and cultures, and has been especially influenced by non-Han migrants from Southeast Asia since the 2000s.[21]

[20] Chou Wan-yao describes the history of the large number of Han immigrants who moved to Taiwan starting in the late Ming period (the early seventeenth century) and whose numbers continued to grow during the Qing dynasty. As a result, many indigenous people lost their land and were either assimilated into Han society or forced to migrate into mountains. The Han settlers gradually became the dominant ethnic group, bringing their lifestyle from their homeland in China and narrating history from their own point of view (Chou 2015,102).

[21]Kuei-fen Chiu, Dafydd Fell, and Lin Ping report, "In Taiwan it has been customary to talk in terms of four ethnic groups: the aboriginals, Hokklo (Hokkien speakers), Hakka, and Mainlanders (*waishengren*)" (2014, P2). However, the migration trends of the past two decades have made this standard typology of

In Taiwan, the term *waijiyigong* 外籍移工 (migrant workers) refers to non-Han immigrant populations—including those from Thailand and the Philippines—whose numbers have been increasing since the 2000s. As these populations have grown, they have become part of the public conversation, and cinematic representations of migrant workers have increased as well. Immigrant films function as a form of recognition and thereby challenge the homogeneous Taiwanese national identity. Two questions arise: Is it possible to change existing stereotypes and cultural conflicts? And, how can we avoid the crisis of oversimplified presentations of immigrants? In order to address these questions, this article examines two films: *Pinoy Sunday* (2010), a comedy focused on two Filipino immigrant workers' lives in Taipei, and Tseng Ying-ting's *Ye-Zai* (2012), a crime film whose plot involves tracking down "runaway migrant workers" (*taopaowailao* 逃跑外勞) or "workers who cannot be contacted" (*shilianyigang* 失聯移工).[22] Before the release of these two films, Taiwan had produced very few full-length feature movies depicting migrant workers, especially "runaway migrant workers,"[23] and most films focused on the experiences of domestic

ethnic differentiation increasingly untenable. The new immigrant groups are now larger than both the aboriginals and first-generation Mainlanders.

[22]*Shilianyigong* is a more neutral term for migrant workers who leave their primary employers without permission, whereas *taopaowailao* has the negative connotation of a "runaway." In this article, I use *taopaowailao*, because it is the term used in the film.

[23]Before *Pinoy Sunday*, Li Chi's *Detours to Paradise* (2009) was the first feature film in Taiwan to depict the subject of "runaway migrant worker." However, the film did not perform well at the box office, and the DVD still has not been released.

female workers and the relationships between employers and employees.[24] In this article, I extend the scope of migrant workers outside the household and considers how the structure of Taiwanese society confines these migrant workers and their strategies to resolve their struggles.

Both *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* suggest identities for these immigrants that are born out of specific restrictions on life and identity. These films push against the boundaries of interethnic and transcultural relationships and challenge not just mainstream Taiwanese ideas about immigrant workers, but also the definition of Taiwanese identity more broadly. They are part of a new imagination of the heterogeneity of Taiwan's society. Both films examine the suppression of Southeast Asian immigrant workers from an insider perspective. *Pinoy Sunday* looks at male Filipino migrant workers. *Ye-Zai* is concerned with female domestic workers from Thailand. By considering these two representations of different populations, in this article I argue that both media productions are grappling with ways to negotiate mutual understanding between Southeast Asia and Taiwan. Both films offer self-criticism as well as strategies for building alliances and seeking new forms of resistance by showing these immigrants' struggles.

Immigrant cinema is also a mediascape in which cinematic practice is related to various local filmmaking conditions. Even though these two films present completely different articulations of the issue of invisibility, they challenge the dynamic relationship between Southeast Asia and Taiwan in order to expand the notion of "who fits" into society. These films challenge the Han-centrism and Han hegemony that have had an impact on the boundaries of Sinophone

[24]Tsung-yi Michelle Huang and Chi-she Li (2012) discuss three cinematic representations of domestic migrant workers in one documentary, *Hospital 8 East Wing* (2006) and two feature films, *Nyonya's Tasty Life* (2007) and *We Don't Have a Future Together* (2003). They indicate how the cinematic images draw these migrant workers as family and create a cinematic intimacy between the characters and audiences.

communities.[25] In both films, the figure of the "runaway" traces these communities and their margins and is a significant part of the way restrictions on these immigrants are enacted and their predicaments are explored.

In order to fully understand the history and impact of *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai*, in this article I consider their production process, audience, and social impact on Taiwan's mainstream society. I am also concerned with how the creators imagined and pursued their target audiences. These movies are not isolated phenomena. The filmmakers had to raise money for their productions in a variety of ways, and distribution was negotiated via particular challenges, all of which required the filmmakers to situate the films within other discourses. My exploration shows that mere representation is not enough—these immigrant films do not just play with the role of recognition. In their production and distribution, they also challenge the stiff and fixed mainstream articulations of Taiwanese national identity centered on Han ethnicity.

Significantly, these two films are situated in different genres, thus providing alternative perspectives to understand the immigrants they portray. *Pinoy Sunday* is a comedy that successfully brings its audience into immigrants' everyday lives. *Ye-Zai* is a detective film that presents tensions between local people and immigrants and eventually finds a way to resolve this

[25]Another important dimension of migrant worker representations in Taiwanese films is connected to discourses surrounding recent mainland Chinese immigrants to Taiwan. In recent years, films such as *Marriages on the Borders* (2003), *The Fourth Portrait* (2010), *The Moonlight in Jilin* (2012), and a series of microfilms produced by Mainland Affairs Council, Republic of China in 2019 have all explored these social phenomena. Because of the different set of political issues in relations between Taiwan and the Republic of China, discussion of those films lies beyond the scope of this article.

strain. By deploying different genres, these films create a variety of modes for audiences to understand immigrants.

Changing Demographics in Taiwan

Since the 1990s, the Taiwanese government has allowed many migrant workers, especially those from Southeast Asia, to be employed in Taiwan. Although the total number of migrant workers has increased to nearly 700,000,[26] they still face discrimination and stigmatization in Taiwanese society. Taiwan first opened its doors to low-skilled migrant workers in 1992, with the passage of the Employment Service Act. This act was meant to respond to the demands from industries to loosen regulations, and transformed economic structures so that migrant workers could be recruited as inexpensive labor. However, in order to protect job opportunities for local labor, the Taiwanese government restricted migrant conditions of employment by setting maximum limits on their stay and enforcing certain restrictions so that employers were only allowed to supplement local labor in certain job categories.[27] Male workers were confined mostly to manufacturing and major infrastructure construction, and female workers were hired predominantly as domestic caregivers. The act also set strict limits on the length of contract or length of stay in order to avoid

[26]According to statistics from Taiwan's Ministry of Labor, the number 700,000 includes migrant workers from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, and elsewhere. Specifically, from 2008 to 2018, the population of Filipino workers increased from about 80,000 to 150,000. By contrast, the population of Thai migrant workers decreased from about 80,000 to 60,000 during the same period. See http://statdb.mol.gov.tw/statis/jspProxy.aspx?sys=210&kind=21&type=1&funid=q13012&rdm=hodocUYc.

[27]Lan (2008) points to the binary system in which the length of stay for white-collar workers is unrestricted but blue-collar workers can only stay for a maximum of six years.

the possibility that these migrant workers might become citizens. Sociologists in Taiwan have critiqued the unfair structure of hiring migrant contract workers, suggesting that these contracts often place them in "legal servitude." According to a sociologist Lan Pei-chia, the structures controlling those migrant workers are composed of three major mechanisms: "quota controls and other rules that render migrants' transient and immobile," "aggravated competition among recruitment agencies," and "deprivation of the freedom for workers to transfer employers freely" (Lan 2007, 108). These restrictions have increased the segregation of these migrant workers, alienating them from the rest of the Taiwanese workforce. Taiwanese activist and writer Ku Yu-ling (2019) criticizes the habit of binding the right of residence with work, suggesting that this type of regulation deepens the power differential between the employer and employee. Migrant workers pay a lot of money to agents to secure work (many of them are in debt) and then find that their employers can quickly lay them off, forcing them to return to their home countries.[28] It is very hard for many migrant workers to negotiate any terms of employment with their employers. Those who want to stay in Taiwan longer than their time limitation might choose to leave their employers and become undocumented immigrant workers.

To put this phenomenon into a larger historical context, the openness of Taiwan to migrant workers is related to a particular national policy. In 1994, the Taiwanese government introduced

[28] Ku (2019, 101-103) indicates that the agent benefits from the fee paid by migrant workers. The employers do not pay any fee to hire these migrant workers. The workers pay half of the money before they go to Taiwan; the other half is deducted from their monthly salary. If a migrant is laid off by an employer, he or she cannot ask the agent for a refund. Ku argues that "the quota" of permission for hiring migrant workers becomes a commodity, so these agents can easily earn huge profits from these migrant workers.

the Go South policy to create alternative alliances with Southeast Asia in order to develop industry and policy coordination. It promoted trade diplomacy as well as investment and economic cooperation. However, Sociologist Chen Kuan-hsing (2010) has criticized this southbound policy, noting that it specifically legitimated the ethnic discrimination built into Han Chinese imperialism, substantiating the existing imaginary order. Moreover, the government in Taiwan uses the quotas as diplomatic tools to negotiate international disputes.

From a geopolitical perspective, migrant-worker flows are an international phenomenon that can be seen as an effect of both neoliberalist policies and the accelerated development of globalization. A Pilipino activist Antonio Tujan Jr. (2008, 8-9) argues that migrant workers are a result of the "flexibilization" of the host country's labor regimes and that they meet shortages in national labor market. Discussing the relationship between neoliberal globalization and migration, Raul Delgado Wise and Humberto Marquez from development studies note that "cheapening labor is one of the main engines behind the new capitalist machine," one of the features of neoliberal globalization (2013, 1). A lack of job opportunities at home forces these people to migrate. The original debates of neoliberalism focused on political and economic issues: lifting regulations, opening the door for foreign companies, privatizing state enterprises, cutting social services, and so on. However, behind the scenes, the consequences of these free-market policies include the rising inequality between countries or regions. Countries that accept migrants can benefit from the supply of inexpensive labor but also must deal with increasing burdens on social welfare (Wise and Marquez 2013). The commoditization of labor leads to exploitation in transnational processes and increases migrants' vulnerability.

Moreover, neoliberalism is not just limited to the economic and political arenas. Arguably, it also creates a feeling that affects subjects in their pursuit of individual fulfillment in the logic of

capitalism. The neoliberal feeling creates false consciousness for these immigrant individuals, requiring to some extent that they ignore exploitation.[29] Lan further points out a process of racialization that not only marks these migrants as distinct from Taiwan citizens but also constructs different foreigner groups via nationality-based stereotypes. She argues that the labor brokers implement "stratified otherization" in the process of recruitment, which not only shapes the inclinations of employers when hiring their employees from specific groups but also sets up a competitive dynamic between different nations (Lan 2006). The media also represents migrant workers from different places via different stereotypes and differentiate between stereotypes by class—for example, white collar versus blue collar. The mainstream media predominantly presents positive images that create support for the immigration of white-collar workers from developed countries and stigmatize working-class migrant workers from Southeast Asia, producing ill will toward them.

[29] Regarding the affective life of neoliberalism, Cultural-political geographer Ben Anderson has summarized several different scholars' cultural approaches—including those of Stuart Hall, David Harvey, and Michel Foucault—to understanding the process of making the "neoliberal subject." He redefines "particular neoliberalisms emerge as logics are actualized in diverse forms of 'neoliberal reason,'--by which I [Ben Anderson] mean the problematization and reordering of government and/or life through the market (in form of competition) via styles of thinking-feeling and diverse techniques of intervention (principally although not exclusively through formal mechanisms of calculative choice)" (2016, 740). Here, I extend the concept of immigrant subjects in transnational contexts to correspond to what Anderson emphasizes about "neoliberal atmospheres" (2016, 742), which is related to different conditions of neoliberalism "actually existing affectively" (2016, 735).

This chapter examines the representation of migrant cinemas, which allows us to rethink the issue of recognition and imagine possibilities for changing stereotypes and solving cultural conflicts. These (im)migrant movies provide an opportunity to question the legacy of the problematic discourses and policies deployed by the Taiwanese government over the past few decades.

Pinoy Sunday presents two Filipino immigrant workers, Dado Tagalog (portrayed by Bayani Agbayani) and Manuel De La Cruz (Epy Quizon), who work and live in a factory in the suburbs of Taipei City. Their only free day is Sunday. They pack this day with trips downtown that include attending church, enjoying food from their hometowns, meeting friends, and going on dates. The two protagonists (who have very different personalities) experience many frustrations in this comedic film. The film begins with both men failing in love. Manuel is a careless person who has a crush on Celia, a Filipina who is a domestic worker. He wants to win her heart, but instead his heart is broken when he finds out that Celia is dating her boss. Dado has a family in the Philippines but is having an affair with another immigrant worker, Anna. He finds out that his wife has been in a car accident and, as a result, he feels guilty and decides to break up with Anna. Mourning their lost loves, these two friends find an abandoned red sofa and decide to take it back to their dorm, believing that it will give them comfort during this time of sadness. On their journey, Dado and Manuel encounter challenge after challenge navigating the city. Ultimately, they abandon the couch but not their friendship, and eventually return to the Philippines. The abandoned red couch symbolizes these migrant workers' desire and hope for acceptance in Taiwan, which is constantly articulated as a burden that other people will not accept or help make happen.

Ye-zai, the titular protagonist of *Ye-Zai*, is a bounty hunter who tracks illegal workers who have escaped from their original employers. At the beginning of the film, Ye-zai (Shih Ming-shuai)

only cares about money: he blackmails employers by videotaping them while they are hiring undocumented workers, and then turns on those workers, handing them off to officers who will repatriate them. One day his sister-in-law calls him to the family home because their immigrant worker Ganya (Sajee Apiwong) has run away while Ye-zai's father is in bed. Ye-zai's brother and sister-in-law cannot do the heavy work of caring for the father, so they ask Ye-zai to trace Ganya. Ye-zai discovers that Ganya is searching for her mother—a woman who stayed in Taiwan and left Ganya in Thailand. Instead of bringing Ganya back, Ye-zai joins her search. Unfortunately, Ganya is caught by the police. Ye-zai continues searching on her behalf, finally finds her mother, and is able to reunite mother and daughter. At the end, a postcard from Ganya reveals that Ye-zai is also a Taiwan-Thailand mixed child who longs to find his own mother.

Both independent films were made through transnational cooperation efforts. And both encountered difficulties because they concentrated on migrant workers, content understood to be unattractive to mainstream Taiwanese audiences. Unsurprisingly, both struggled with funding and theater distribution. Eventually, both received funding from different public media companies. *Pinoy Sunday* is also a transnational production: the director Ho Wi Ding was born and raised in Malaysia, attended film school at New York University, and produced his film in Taiwan. Because of this transnational background and the reputation of his short films shown at international festivals, the director not only sought funding from Taiwan, but also received resources from the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (*Nippon hoso kyokai*, NHK), which selects and invests in films that promote cultural understanding each year in Asia. In addition, Ho Wi Ding received local funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government, which has a mission of promoting the image of Taipei as a city in film.

Ye-Zai also presents a transcultural encounter and adventure across generations and ethnicities, but as an MFA graduate work[30], *Ye-Zai* was a relatively small production that cost only 2.2 million NTD (supported by Taiwan's Public Television Service). *Ye-Zai* was not even released in theaters, but instead it was screened at film festivals and debuted on television on a program called *Life Story*, to which up-and-coming directors are invited to create or introduce their own stories. Even though *Ye-Zai* did not have international support, the film itself establishes transnational connections between Thailand and Taiwan. In contrast to *Pinoy Sunday*, in which the main characters are immigrant workers, in *Ye-Zai* the main characters represent a second-generation immigrant. This characterization serves to emphasize the cultural hybridity that comes with negotiating identity in this second generation.

On the one hand, the distribution of *Pinoy Sunday* reveals the prejudices of Taiwanese society—the struggles of bringing the film to audiences mirrors the struggles of *waijiiyigong* to be recognized and seen in Taiwanese society. On the other hand, the success of *Pinoy Sunday* suggests that the medium of film can function as a vehicle for mutual understanding between immigrant groups and the local society. Although the film was released in Taiwan, the most conversation between two main characters is in Tagalog. The Taiwanese audiences can only understand the dialogue through the Sinitic transcription. Take, for example, the film's title. The English title *Pinoy Sunday* and its Chinese title *Taibei Xingqitian* (Taipei Sunday) convey different meanings. The term "Pinoy" is an informal demonym referring to Filipinos, so its use emphasizes the Filipino

[30] The MFA degree National Taiwan University of the Arts requirement includes produce a film and a thesis to show the ideas behind the film, and the process of production, and result of the film. *Ye-zai* was the director Tseng Ying-ting's graduate production, and based this film, he also wrote his creative ideas and production process in his MFA thesis.

identity of the film's subjects, whereas the Chinese title emphasizes the city of Taipei. The different titles strategically address different audiences. Whereas the title *Pinoy Sunday* attracts migrant workers, *Taipei Sunday* attracts local Taiwanese audiences.

Even though the film, as a comedy, does not explicitly seem to offer moral judgments, the director Ho Wei Ding noted that he still encountered many distribution difficulties (as noted earlier). Most theaters rejected the film. These rejections embodied the very same discrimination that the film is attempting to point out. At first, only an art theater, the famous Taipei Film House in Zhongshan District, was willing to screen the film. Fortunately, even though the film was only released in a limited number of theaters, it received many positive reviews and had a relatively strong performance[31] at the local Taiwanese box office.

Unlike the Filipino cast of *Pinoy Sunday*, Taiwanese actor Shih Ming-Shuai was cast as Ye-zai, a part that required him to learn to speak the Thai language. Because the part is played by a local Taiwanese actor, at the beginning of the film, it is not clear to the audience why Ye-zai might speak fluent Thai. Ye-zai uses his Thai fluency to trace fleeing foreigner workers. The film ultimately reveals that he wants to go to Thailand to search for his mother, and it is this linguistic ability that connects him to that search. Thus, his hybrid cultural identity is shown through his language fluency. In an interview, director Tseng Ying-ting noted, "We might be a foreigner someday, and these new immigrants will be a part of us Taiwanese" (Tseng 2013). Through the transformation of Ye-zai's identity, the film also allows the audience to experience and participate in a cosmopolitan world.

[31]According to Changhe Films, box-office revenues were about NT$1,500,000 (US$50,000) in Taiwan, a record for Taipei Film House. [Information was provided by Changhe Films on Nov 11th 2019]

In order to fully understand the power dynamics in the workers' interactions with Taiwan's broader society, it is helpful to view the formation of migrant-worker subjects in these films through three different lenses. I will now move on to textual analyses of these three paradigms: how the films use the migrant worker's trajectory to remap Taipei's landscape, how the process of visualization can establish the subjecthood of the migrant worker, and how language can be a means of cultural identification for the migrant workers in these two films.

Escaping: Remapping the Cityscape through the Road Movie

Both *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* explore boundaries and present moments of tension between national control and individual freedom. Turning to an analysis of setting in the film, I draw on theories of cultural geography and anthorpology, including Edward W. Soja's "third place" and Arjun Appadurai's ethnoscape, that investigate who has the right to use the city, and how they are allowed to use city spaces, both of which are critical methods when it comes to defining culture, nation, and community. In these two films, mobility has been restricted for these migrant workers. The figure of the "runaway" then becomes an important thread. Both *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* have chase scenes that show the way foreign laborers' movements are restricted. Running away can be understood here as a significant phenomenon for understanding the restrictions and predicaments of immigrants living or working in Taiwan. These workers are legally bound to their employers. If they are fired, they have to return to their home countries. The act of running away is not simply an escape. It is a moment that puts their existence in Taiwan at risk.

In *Pinoy Sunday*, Dado's biggest fear is of not being able to get back to the factory on time. If he is late, he will lose his job and be forced to go home. The film heightens this source of tension through several events. At the beginning of the film, when Manuel and Dado arrive in Taiwan,

Dado encounters a handcuffed Filipino who is going back to the Philippines. This abject other signals their possible fate if they do not behave. Another more shocking moment for Dado is when he witnesses his colleague Carros being arrested by police officers (figures 1 and 2). Similarly, in *Ye-Zai*, Ye-zai's presence embodies the authority of national power toward these migrant workers (figures 3 and 4). He literally and figuratively captures them to remove them from the country after they have crossed boundaries.

Figure 1-1 (*left*). Dado sees his runaway colleague Carros forced to the ground by police officers. Source: *Pinoy Sunday*. Thanks to Changhe Films for authorization to use these images.

Figure 1-2 (*right*). In this reverse shot, Dado's face shows his shock at the consequences of his colleague running away. Source: *Pinoy Sunday*.

Figure 1-3 (*left*). Ye-zai chases A-pan down a narrow alley because A-pan is a runaway migrant worker (*taopaowailao*). Source: *Ye-Zai*. Thanks to the *Ye-Zai* production team for authorization to use these pictures.

Figure 1-4 (*right*). When A-pan is forced to leave with the officers, he calls Ye-zai a liar because he had trusted Ye-zai to help him. Source: *Ye-Zai*.

Ye-Zai also shows the suffering of these immigrants via their restrictions and many forms of oppression based on their ethnicity, nationality, and gender. To "run away" can be to resist structure. Through cinema as an audiovisual medium, these films enrich the audience's understanding of and compassion for these immigrants, and provide a chance for these marginal groups to articulate their voices. However, we have to be wary of any blind optimism in this mode of multiculturalism. The risk of the politics of recognition[32] is that it can become a government tool for comforting citizens when it becomes another form of assimilative discourses for the government which avoids more actual and practical reforms of policy-making. A more

[32] The term—the politics of recognition—has been discussed by scholars, including Charles Taylor Peter Kivisto, Thomas Faist, Nancy Fraser, and others, to rethink the concept of multiculturalism. The recognition for disadvantage group is a process which is interwoven between social, economic and cultural conditions. Charles Taylor (1992) emphasizes the equal dignity for individuals as an assumption of politics of recognition which links to liberalism and points out the possible conflicts of multiculturalism "as it is often debated today, which has a lot to do with the imposition of some cultures on others, and with the assumed superiority that powers this imposition" (63). Geography scholars Peter Kivisto and Thomas Faist (2010) bring Taylor's discussion to immigrant studies and argue that multiculturalism is "a potential mode of incorporation for contemporary immigrants" (171). Political scientist Nancy Fraser (2003) highlights the function of nation and discusses the relationship between recognition and redistribution. Fraser commends "cultural recognition displaces socioeconomic redistribution as the remedy for injustice and the goal of political struggle" (11). The risk of the politics of recognition refers to the recognition-redistribution dilemmas which Fraser analyzed. In brief, I emphasize here to remind the readers that the cinematic recognition is not equivlent to redistribution for these immigrants in their real lives.

complicated understanding needs to be established by observing a wide variety of different ethnic groups and their challenges. In this way, it is possible to avoid a simplified version of recognition. Noticeably, a movie intended to present these migrations can also possibly become another way of making stereotypes about these immigrants. For example, the representation of "runaways" could reinforce the negative impression of these immigrant workers, so it is important to see how these films present and interpret the actions.

In order to understand how these figures' surroundings influence and inform these moments, we can see the special formations of these two films by deploying the concepts of *ethnoscape* and the *third space*. First, both *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* show different ethnoscapes in their respective cities, Taipei and Taichung. According to anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, the concept of ethnoscape refers to "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourist, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree" (1990, 33). Different ethnoscapes are created in different cultural and social contexts by mobile groups. Cultural geographer Edward W. Soja discusses lived space as "the third space," which combines the first space (physical, objective) and the second space (symbolic, subjective) and then goes beyond the dualism of these two spaces (Soja 1996, 66–68). Soja, for example, analyzes how black feminist Gloria Jean Watkins (also known as bell hooks)[33] chooses marginal places to resist mainstream power and is inspired by her claim of "the margin as a space of radical openness" (1996, 99) to consider how marginal groups perceive

[33]The name "bell hooks" is an homage to Watkins' great-grandmother, and the intentional use of lowercase letters is to "remove the focus from her as a person and place it solely on her writing" (https://www.britannica.com/topic/University-of-Wisconsin).

themselves. This awareness of what Soja calls “trialectic” thinking in the spatiality (1996, 53-82) of race, class, and gender can help us read how these protagonists travel in Taiwanese society. Therefore, I argue that re-routing and re-rooting can be two key methods for subjects, especially marginalized groups, to redefine places.

In *Ye-Zai*, the pursuit of Ganya, an immigrant domestic worker, is also sparked because of worker registration—the family does not report the fact that their domestic worker fled. Therefore, they cannot hire another, and no one can take on the burden of caring for their father. Ultimately the focus of the journey is not on this search. Instead the focus is on Ye-zai helping Ganya find her mother. The trajectory of finding Ganya’s mother is a cinematic map of Thai immigrant workers’ ethnoscapes that includes a Buddhist temple and massage parlors (figure 5). Unfortunately, Ganya is caught by the police just when they discover where Ganya’s mother is. She is then sent to a detention center to wait for repatriation because Ye-zai’s sister-in-law has reported Ganya as a runaway worker. Thus in both stories, these migrant workers are restricted by their contracts and their interactions with the state, and they have only limited freedom.

Figure 1-5. Ganya prays about her search in a Buddhist temple. This scene shows the ethnoscape of Thai immigrants and provides a different imagination of Taiwan’s landscape. Source: *Ye-Zai*.

Pinoy Sunday prominently shows Filipinos’ ethnoscapes, which previously had never come to the foreground in mainstream Taiwanese cinema. Even the film’s name shows how Sunday is

important for these migrant workers, as it is the only day when they can escape their daily labor routine and engage in their own cultural practices.

Through this lens, the two films present third spaces with which most Taiwanese people are unfamiliar. In both movies, audiences can follow the protagonists' steps to see these city landscapes and the routes they take. *Pinoy Sunday* starts with a Sunday morning bus ride toward the inner city, following a typical daily routine for these migrant workers and the routes they take. Dado and Manuel first go to church, and then to a mall to buy necessities. The film was shot on location in Jinwanwan (also known as Little Philippines), a part of Taipei's Qingguang shopping district that has many Filipino shops, street food stalls, hair salons, mail services, gold stores, and grocery stores on the second floor. This shopping mall is located near St. Christopher's Church in Zhongshan District, which offers English services. Many Filipinos come for church and spend their time here. Although the church in the film is not St. Christopher's, the scene shows the religious and cultural life of these migrant workers.

At the beginning of *Ye-Zai*, Ye-zai walks in ASEAN Square—a space that is largely dominated by migrant workers in Taichung and thus represents Southeast Asia. The camera shows the square in two different ways. First, the camera is placed at a low angle, showing Ye-zai's power as a bounty hunter. Second, a handheld camera makes the viewer walk with Ye-zai through the place as he meets with a key character, Rige, who sells cell phones to immigrants and provides specific information about exchanging money in a local Thai restaurant. It is clear that food is one of the most important factors enabling people to connect to their hometown. In the sequences of Ye-zai searching for 1-7, the camera follows Ye-zai's steps to visit many local places, showing us the immigrant worker spaces as he moves through them. For example, Ye-zai visits a local convenience store to ask if they have seen Ganya. The store clearly displays the national flags of

the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, clearly identifying this as a multinational space.

Interestingly, both films belong to the genre of the road movie, which both directors admit they consciously attempted to evoke. Inspired by Roman Polanski's short film, *Two Men and a Wardrobe* (1958), Ho Wi Ding's *Pinoy Sunday* is the journey of two migrant workers moving a sofa through Taipei City. Although Manuel and Dado do not drive a car as a typical road movie, the narrative follows their steps. In his MFA's thesis, Tseng Ying-ting, the director of *Ye-Zai*, explicitly articulates his intention to draw on both road-movie and detective-movie genres to drive the curiosity of his viewers and motivate audiences to view the stories of migrant workers (figure 6).

Figure 1-6. Instead of sending Ganya back to Taipei, Ye-zai joins Ganya's search for her mother. This transition reveals that Ye-zai is not the cold-blooded bounty hunter shown at the beginning of the film; he is a compassionate person. Source: *Ye-Zai*.

To bring the genre of road movie and the concept of ethnoscape together, I argue that *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* show those ethnoscapes as not just background scenery but spaces that play an important role in both movies. In *The Road Movie—In Search of Meaning*, author Neil Archer states that "the road in the road movie is never just a background: it is typically both the motivation for the narrative to happen, and also the place that allows thing to occur. Instead of being just a

transitional space between A and B, it is this space itself between A and B that becomes the focus of the road movie" (Archer 2016, 3). Both films present the ethnoscapes of these migrant workers as the spaces where they live their trajectories.

All of these migrant workers make the difficult journey from their respective hometowns to the host country, Taiwan. The structure of these road movies could have embodied the hardship of those journeys, but they do not. Instead, they concentrate on the daily journeys of immigrant workers in order to explore the meanings of their lives. In *The Road Story and the Rebel*, author Katie Mills states,

Road stories usually narrate a conflict, some disruption in a preexisting power dynamic, which motivates a character to go on the road; consequently, a study of the road genre reveals how conflicts change over time, thereby providing a useful chronicle of changing "power trips." Furthermore, when writers and filmmakers exercise their agency by reinterpreting popular genres in order to reflect their subcultural identities, they often revitalize traditional tropes of autonomy and mobility falling back purposefully upon those vocabularies in order to speak new meaning. (Mills 2016, 10–11).

In *Pinoy Sunday*, Manuel insists that he and Dado must move the red sofa to their dormitory. The sofa is used as an allegorical tool to represent a place of comfort, where one can settle down and relax. Therefore, the sofa symbolizes home. However, in this film, the sofa is a constantly moving object filled with unrest, uncertainty, and weight (figure 1-7). Both movies are constructed as trips for the main characters to escape from their routine life. During their journeys, the protagonists may find their true desire or pursue their freedom and feel nostalgia for their hometowns. These trips may help these protagonists understand their purpose in life. This self-discovery process may change their perspectives on their lives and destinies.

Figure 1-7. The red sofa is an allegorical tool; the audience can see how difficult it is for Manuel and Dado to move the sofa and make a "home." Source: *Pinoy Sunday*.

The movies condense these life journeys, including the trials and tribulations of moving to a new country, into this short road trip. Through the process of moving, these protagonists gradually find themselves. Mills argues, "People rely upon genre as a way to organize and understand identity, not just narrative. Not only in travels, but also in the travails of lived human interaction, we have come, in the postwar and postmodern periods, to think of gender, sexuality, nationality and race as genres, if you will—that is, as cognitive systems that frame experience, system can be rebelled against and remapped" (Mills 2006, 29). In *Pinoy Sunday*, Dado seems more worried than Manuel, but he still supports Manuel's plan. At the end of film, he realizes that his true desire is to go home. To expand on this discussion of migrant desires, I next consider how migrant workers' subjecthood is established through the process of visualization.

Visualization and Subjecthood

Although these two films highlight immigrant struggles as a major theme, we still must ask: are these migrant workers subjects, or do they only serve as objects of the narrative? Both films establish migrant workers as subjects through major processes of visualization. The texts represent the main characters as subjects, and the audience also perceives them as subjects. How do the films create this subjectivism interactively? In this section, I consider two techniques used in both films

to create migrant workers' subjectivities through the process of visualization: through the dynamic of the gaze and through symbolism. When both techniques are deployed, audiences see the complexity and multiplicity of migrant workers' subjectivities.

In terms of the gaze, both *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* deploy a positive, nonstereotypical perspective of immigrant workers, which creates an affable sense that belies the serious matter of migration. Yet these films also reveal complex mechanisms of migrant control established by different powers that are at work on the bodies and identities of migrants. The image then stands as a complicated area where power dynamics can be challenged through the act of watching and being watched. This viewing process includes displaying the motivations and viewpoints of the filmmaker, the subjectivities of different characters and their roles in the film, and the identification of the viewers with these points. Because *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* were filmed and released in Taiwan, both anticipated a Taiwanese gaze as they were constructing the gaze of immigrants themselves within the films. Moreover, the power relationships both on and off screen are full of tension. Literature scholar Shu-mei Shih discusses the relationship between gaze and identity, noting that "the structure of the gaze [is] a positional relationship of power in the constitution one's identity" (Shih 2007, 17). I categorize three types of gaze that are present on the screen and constitute the complicated interrelationship between the main characters, local Taiwanese people, and other migrant workers.

The first type of gaze is from the perspective of Han Taiwanese looking at the migrant workers. For example, the position of Ye-zai as a bounty hunter represents the mainstream border control of the nation. The tension between Han Taiwanese and migrants is made obvious between people who assert the gaze and the people who are being gazed upon, because Ye-zai is constantly surveilling others in order to police them (and make money). This dynamic is articulated in the

opening scene, when Ye-zai holds a DVD camcorder to film undocumented workers moving a piece of furniture (figures 8 and 9).The camcorder represents a view of surveillance that will be consumed by authorities. This film-within-a-film (and surveillance within surveillance) scene immediately marks the "otherness" of the foreigner worker. The philosopher Michel Foucault discussed the surveilling gaze as one of the means of discipline in modern society.[34] Ye-zai's camera acts as a panoptic power by gathering evidence to oppress marginalized workers. Ye-zai's camera also can be seen as a metaphor or meta-position for both the director and the audience, who look at these films but are not participants in these communities. In *Pinoy Sunday*, there is a scene in which a television reporter tries to chase Dado and Manuel with a camera to figure out why they are moving this red sofa, and the footage is broadcast to a Taiwanese audience. This TV broadcast reveals that Han Taiwanese often misunderstand these migrant workers. It simultaneously articulates the fear that these migrant workers have of being in the public eye and fully participating in civic society.

[34]Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright summarize the relationship between power and the surveillance gaze: "In modernity, surveillance is one set of techniques used by institutions to discipline subject" (Sturken and Cartwright 2018, 109). A classic image from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* is a panopticon, or central tower, from which guards can watch prisoners. The prisoners feel like they are being watched all the time, even no one stays in the tower. This design reduces the demands of human labor and establishes an automatic system for governing the institution. The disciplinary gaze can thus become internalized in people's consciousness (Sturken and Cartwright 2018, 109–111).

Figure 1-8 (*left*). A camera technician operates the film-within-a-film shot in the opening scene. Source: *Ye-Zai*.

Figure 1-9 (*right*). Ye-zai holds a DVD camcorder to monitor undocumented workers Source: *Ye-Zai*.

The second type of gaze is the gaze of the migrant worker turned on his or her own people. In *Pinoy Sunday*, let's return to the chase sequence in which Dado witnesses his friend Carros pressed to the ground and arrested by the police. Carros had missed several curfews, so he ran away in order to continue working in Taiwan. In this sequence, Dado enthusiastically picks presents to compensate for his sorrow about being absent from his family. The sequence is jarring in part because of the arbitrary violence. In a shot-reverse-shot sequence, the camera, looking over Dado's shoulder, captures him witnessing his friend, Carros, being forced to the ground by police officers (figure 2). In a close shot, audiences can clearly see the shock and anxiety on Dado's face (figure 3). This arrest scene lets audiences see how limited employment can be for immigrant laborers, illustrating an everyday fear for those who may not be aware of it. Dado's gaze is a self-reflexive one in part because if he had become a runaway migrant worker, this might have happened to him (and he would no longer be able to support his family). His gaze is then an extension of the surveilling gaze. Dado internalizes the discipline of Han Taiwanese mainstream, which demands that he obey the rules in order to avoid punishment.

The third type of gaze is the migrant workers' gaze at the Han Taiwanese. In *Pinoy Sunday*, although both Dado and Manuel are situated in a marginalized group, they are able to observe their

host society through this lens and provide critiques. In one scene, Manuel watches a betel-nut beauty[35] crossing the street wearing a revealing blouse and mini skirt. Through two reverse shots, Manuel is articulated as the watching male subject attracted to this Taiwanese girl. The complexity of this scene makes explicit the relationships between sexuality, commoditization, and nationality. On the one hand, through the gaze, the film shows Manuel's masculine subjectivity, and his desire for this society. On the other hand, the film also problematizes its own gender dynamics in that Manual's subjectivity is created by his masculinity in opposition to the femininity of a Taiwanese girl.

These three types of gaze shape both how migrant workers perceive themselves and how society perceives them. In the first type of surveillance experience, the migrant workers are excluded from the society. This process is internalized by these migrant workers and manifests itself as the second type of gaze. However, it is possible for migrant workers to look back as subjects, even though the film depicts that ability marked via gender dynamics—pointing to gaps between gender and ethnicity. This kind of directed visualization is then contrasted with the objects that the filmmakers use to show migrant workers' desires and emotions.

In addition to the dynamics of the gaze, the subjectivities of migrant workers are both personally perceived and culturally constructed via symbols. Different objects serve as symbols of various desires. In *Pinoy Sunday*, the most important symbolic object is the red sofa, which embodies their dreams, desires, and unfulfilled futures: it is beautiful but not easy to carry. Visually, the choice of red makes the sofa continually dominate the screen, popping out and catching the audience's attention. Verbally, Manuel constantly reiterates his fantasy that he can sit on it and

[35]Usually a young woman selling betel nuts and cigarettes from a brightly lit glass case while wearing revealing clothing.

drink a cool beer after a tiring day, creating a sense of belonging. Every time the film shows this imagined scene, the two men sit on the rooftop of the factory. Thus, the red sofa does not just appear in reality—it is also part of the structure of Manuel's fantasies. Before they even found the sofa on the street, it had already appeared in Manuel's dream with his love interest, Celia. This is how the sofa is first articulated as a signifier of home. In the sequence in which Dado and Manuel see a commercial advertisement with a red sofa, they project themselves into the picture and the narrative is interrupted with an insertion of their middle-class fantasies. In Manuel's fantasy, he wears a suit and reclines on Celia's legs (figure 10). In Dado's fantasy, he is in a white-collar shirt with a tie and is able to stay with his family. These fantasies underscore why Dado and Manuel insist on carrying the red sofa back to their dormitory. Because they cannot afford a truck, they have to move the sofa on their own, on foot, through the heavy traffic in the Taipei street among unfriendly drivers, a scene that seems to epitomize their lives (figure 7).

Figure 1-10 (*left*). In Manuel's middle-class fantasy, he wears a suit and puts his head on Celia's lap. *Source*: *Pinoy Sunday*.

Figure 1-11 (*right*). In an imagined dream scene, Dado and Manuel are magically sitting on the drifting sofa and joyfully playing musical instruments, expressing nostalgia for their hometown. *Souce*: *Pinoy Sunday*.

The difficulties the two men encounter all correspond to their everyday struggles, the chief problem being that they cannot afford to rent a truck. Sadly, they do not succeed in carrying the heavy sofa to their dormitory. They get lost and try to cross a river with it, but it is too dangerous to cross, so they have to retreat to the riverbank. Having run out of ideas, they can only sit on the sofa to rest. Here, the film inserts an imagined dream sequence in which they drift on the river with Dado drumming and Manuel playing a ukulele. At this moment, they appear to feel free and joyful (figure 11). However, when they wake up the next day, they realize that they missed the curfew and their dream can never be fulfilled. In next scene, they take the bus back to their dormitory in a bad mood. The audiences see the red sofa drifting on the river, indicating that the men had to abandon it. In this way, the sofa plays the role of the unfulfilled dream as a signifier of what cultural theorist Lauren Berlant calls "cruel optimism," a concept that conveys the "relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered to be *im*possible, sheer fantasy, or *too* possible, and toxic" (Berlant, 2011, 24). The joy of everyday attachment motivates us to adopt a positive attitude, to attempt to strive for our dreams of a good life. But, according to the theory of cruel optimism, one restricts oneself in order to achieve or maintain attachment to an object that is either impossible to have or toxic to the self, thus resulting in the restriction of subjects.

The sofa is the symbol of Dado and Manuel's toxic, impossible desire: the ability of the migrants to relax, to be non-laboring bodies. Manuel keeps describing how it would be so relaxing if they could bring this sofa back to their dormitory, attempting to make the hardness of carrying the sofa bearable. When he has to abandon the sofa entirely, all of the restrictions, trouble, and hardness are made unbearable, and his fantasies are shown to be impossible.

In *Ye-Zai*, the most important symbolic object is the coconut (figure 12). The title of the film literally means coconut, which is also the main character's name. Thematically, Ye-zai himself is a child with Taiwanese father and Thai mother, so his own identity stands for interconnectedness. The coconut itself symbolically refers to the transnational process of globalization. In an interview, the film's director noted that he used the coconut as a symbol, because coconuts can drift many thousand kilometers away in the sea until they land and take root (Wu 2013). The ending invites a rereading of the film as mutual cultural integration: Ye-zai starts a new business where he mixes two different types of coconuts from Taiwan and Thailand in a new beverage. In this way, the new drink symbolizes Ye-zai's own identity that combines the strength of two cultures. Comparing *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai*, whereas the former refers to migrant workers only, the latter refers to both migrant workers and the second generation, born out of the joining of migrant workers and local Taiwanese. In this way, the mixed coconut drink suggests the complexity of hybrid identity, an act of creolization.

Figure 1-12. Ganya holds a coconut, a symbol of the creolization of different cultures. *Source*: *Ye-Zai*.

These narratives show the transformation of subjects, which simultaneously changes audience perceptions of immigrant workers. *Ye-Zai* begins with Taiwanese people set in opposition to Thai

migrant workers, and Ye-zai is presented as a person driven only by money. Yet, the film ends with a twist, revealing Ye-zai's true identity as a mix of Taiwanese and Thai. In other words, the core of the story is driven by the search for Ganya's and Ye-zai's respective mothers. *Ye-Zai* primarily articulates Ye-zai as Taiwanese, and it is only in the reveal that the viewer understands that he is a second-generation immigrant. By revealing Ye-zai's history, heritage, and identity, the film turns a conflict between employer and employee into a story that articulates kinship between Taiwan and Thailand. Unlike *Pinoy Sunday*, in which the migrant workers return to their origin, *Ye-Zai* uses kinship relations to suggest an inclusion that "they are part of us," and this cultural and ethnic hybridization (creolization) serves as another kind of strategy for recognition, something we find again and again in multicultural discourse. Because language also plays an important part in the process of identification, I next explore its use in both films.

The Language Act as a Means of Cultural Identification

In the context of Sinophone cinema, *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* challenge the homogeneous imagination of Taiwan society linguistically as well as spatially. The multilingualism on the screen is another way to construct the subjectivities of migrant workers. *Pinoy Sunday* especially challenges the concept of Sinophone cinema, because the major language used is not Sinitic; rather, the main language is Filipino (mostly using Tagalog, one of the major language in the Philippines.), mixed with a little Mandarin and Taiwanese. The film stars, Bayani Agbayani and Epy Quizon, are both Filipino actors who have never acted in Taiwan. Although these actors are not well known in Taiwanese society, they facilitate identification with Filipinos by appearing in these films screened in Taiwan. Language is a significant part of the constitution of identities, and the film

uses language transitions between the characters' mother tongue and Sinitic languages in interesting ways to show their identity in a different culture.

In the opening scene, Manuel and Dado first ride a bicycle—a kind of homage to the first film of *Employees Leaving the Lumiere's Factory* in 1895. The workers collectively leave the factory and show their joy after working the entire day. Manuel wears a red T-shirt with the slogan "Proud Pinoy" printed on it. Dado wears a blue T-shirt with the phrase "Independent." Both slogans are related to Filipino nationalism. "Proud" and "independent" also represent the men's respective psychological attitudes and the desires they will pursue. The film also presents a sophisticated notion of identity by illustrating how these migrant workers use different languages to interact with different populations in the city.

By examining how the films present language choice, the audience can see how the languages are related to these protagonists' identities. In *Pinoy Sunday,* the protagonists switch from Mandarin to Filipino to show different emotions. In one sequence, when Manuel arrives at the factory just a little late, the Taiwanese guard has closed the door. Manuel knocks on the window to call the security guard. First, he uses a very polite and humble tone in Mandarin to address the security bodyguard as "big boss." Immediately afterward, he switches to English to scold the guard, calling him stupid, a small act of rebellion because the guard cannot understand the language. This same kind of switching occurs when Manuel and Dado are deposed in the police office. Dado is worried they will be repatriated to the Philippines, but Manuel is only concerned about getting his sofa back. Manuel naturally switches between languages based on the subject and emotional tone of the conversation:

Manuel: (*in Mandarin*) Excuse me, boss.… (*in Tagalog*) You can't have my couch, halfwit.

Dado: (*in Tagalog*) Be quiet!

Manuel: (*in Tagalog*) He's a bit slow…. (*in Mandarin*) Thank you.

Dado: (*in Tagalog*) Thank you!

The film uses different languages not only in a strategic way for comedic effect, but also to show different cultures existing in the same spaces for these immigrant workers. The two protagonists encounter a taxi driver and his wife, a Filipina, and Manuel speaks with her in a local Filipino dialect, IIonggo, which Dado cannot understand at all. The scene shows how even though Manuel and Dado are both from the same place, there are exclusions and inclusions that are intra-lingual. Manuel rejects the woman's request for their sofa, and Dado does not even understand the situation until Manuel explains it to him. Dado gets angry because he wants to get back to the dormitory on time instead of carrying the heavy sofa. His choice is taken away by his fellow immigrant, even though they should both be sensitive to the troubles of language. This multilingualism helps the audience realize that even though these migrants come from the same place, they have different identities.

In *Ye-Zai*, multilingual articulation is a way to show not only two different cultures, but also the possibilities of intercultural dialogue and multilayered identities in Taiwanese society. Ye-zai is a multilingual person who can speak Taiwanese, Mandarin, and Thai. In the beginning of the film he constantly deploys his multilingual ability as a way to make a living. In the chase scene, Ye-zai speaks Thai to convince the immigrant worker, A-pan, to believe him. Ye-zai later hands him to two police officers. However, during the process of chasing Ganya, Ye-zai expresses his emotion through Thai as well. Ye-zai cruelly suggests that Ganya's mother doesn't love her, using as evidence the fact that the woman abandoned and left her in Thailand.

Ye-zai: (*in Mandarin*) You are just as selfish as your mom! How long has it been? Eight years? Ten years? She's already forgotten about you! She doesn't even care about you. (*in Thai*) You! Too innocent. You think she still misses you?

Ganya: (*in Thai*) Stop!

Ye-zai: (*in Thai*) Still love you?

Ganya: (*in Thai*) What are you talking about?

Ye-zai: (*in Thai*) If she really wanted to see you, she'd have contacted you long time ago.

Ganya: (*in Thai*) Please stop!

Ye-zai: (*in Thai*) She wouldn't have left you.

Ganya: (*in Thai*) Shut up! You know nothing.

Ye-zai: (*in Thai*) Can't you see?

Kanay: (*in Thai*) You know nothing.

Ye-zai: (*in Mandarin*) You want to find her? Okay. Go ahead! (*opens the door*) Go!

Ganya: (*in Thai*) Go away.

From this interchange, Ganya thinks Ye-zai has a heart of stone without any sympathy for her situation. However, when audiences understand Ye-zai's mother may have also left him in Taiwan, it creates a different interpretation of this speech. He may not just be referring to Ganya's situation, but also expressing his thoughts about his own mother's departure. Through the process of catching Ganya, Ye-zai speaks Thai not just to ensure Ganya's understanding, but also because he uses it for moments of emotional expression. When Ye-zai talks with Ganya's mother, he tells her in Thai that her daughter Ganya is trying to find her. In this scene, although Ye-zai is speaking for Ganya,

those words also serve as Ye-zai's words to his mother. As a result, the transformations of language used in the film are part of the process through which the characters search for their own identities. In conjunction with the language acts, the soundscapes of these two films also constitute ethnoscapes as the third space with their own voices.

Conclusion

Pinoy Sunday and *Ye-Zai* both focus on migrant workers who challenge the notion of a homogeneous, Han-centered society. However, as shown in this article, migrant workers are often excluded by this system for social, economic, and political reasons. Through cinematic representation, both films address this exclusion by presenting migrant workers to audiences and illustrating their lives in Taiwan. In order to show the interventions and fully illustrate the power dynamic at play in their interactions with Taiwan's broader society, I have employed three different paradigms that consider the establishment of the migrant-worker subject.

The first paradigm, because of state and social attempts to control these migrant workers, is the act of "running away," which makes border restrictions in Taiwan clear and creates a space to explore strategies of escape from routine lives. In order to consider how the films play with the format of the road movie, I deployed the concepts of third space and ethnoscape to consider the trajectory of these two movies. Second, by considering how different powers intersect, I explored the relationship between viewer and those being viewed, and how migrant workers can become the subjects, not just objects, in this paradigm. By employing two techniques of visualization, the gaze and symbolism, the films present migrant workers' emotions and desires, which are rarely shown in mainstream cinemas, and encourage viewers to recognize the perspectives of migrant workers. Finally, I suggested the use of language acts as a way showing different affiliations and identities in both films. In *Pinoy Sunday*, the protagonists use multiple languages to differentiate

themselves from Taiwanese mainstream society. In *Ye-Zai*, the film uses hybrid language to establish hybrid identities.

For each film, I suggested that the visibility of these migrant workers challenges their discrimination. Recently, progress has been made at the government level with the use of the more neutral phrase *shilianyigong*, or workers who cannot be contacted, to address migrant workers. Several groups, such as Taiwan International Workers' Association (TIWA) and Taiwan Association for Human Rights, promote the creation of a friendlier environment for migrant workers. Many researchers have noticed how migrant workers gather in specific locations, such as Taipei Railroad Station and Taoyuan Railroad Station, which form special ethnoscapes and soundscapes. However, prejudice toward migrant workers still exists in Taiwan's society,[36] and their marginalization in Taiwan's unfair employment systems still puts them in inferior, even dangerous, situations.[37] In this context, it is important not only for audiences but also for researchers to appreciate both films, which rethink the cultural connections between migrant workers and Taiwan as a host society. Breaking down the homogeneous imagination of Taiwan society, *Pinoy Sunday* and *Ye-Zai* present marginally positioned migrant workers who radically challenge those in mainstream society to open their eyes and notice the shifting world in Taiwan.

[36] For example, according a news from Central News Agency (CNA) in Taiwan, a Journalist Yu Hsiao-han (2018) interviews several migrant workers from different areas and reports that they still experience the discriminations from Taiwanese people at their workplaces, public space (such as stations), and even more a domestic female worker experiences sexual harassment.

[37] For example, on August 31, 2017, a Vietnamese migrant worker named Nguyen Quoc Phi refused to be arrested, and was shot by a Taiwanese policeman. Nguyen died, and the policeman was sentenced to only three months' imprisonment. For more on this incident, see Tseng Chih-yun (2018).

Moreover, these different ethnoscapes in Taiwan society allow us to better understand Taiwan as a nexus of different cultures, as a global island.

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Chapter II In/Outsiders: Gender, Ethnicity, Nationality, and Class Intersectionality in *My Little Honey Moon*

Introduction

In 2017, the Vietnamese actress Helen Thanh Dao revealed that she lied about her educational background and her heritage as a half-Taiwanese and half-Vietnamese woman. She claimed her intention was to avoid discrimination in Taiwan, and to ensure she would have access to good opportunities.[38] Leaving aside a moral judgement of this actress' actions, this anecdote nevertheless shows how widespread the sense of exclusion is in Taiwanese society for new immigrant women. Although she is an immigrant spouse with official identification, Helen still had concerns about discrimination against her heritage. This concern is exactly the same experience of many new immigrant women.

According to statistics from the Ministry of the Interior (Taiwan)[39], new immigrant women have played an important role in the society of Taiwan due to the increasing number of transnational marriages. However, these new immigrant women, who are legitimate citizens in Taiwan, have long been considered "outsiders" by mainstream society. These women experience more cultural shock and discrimination, especially those from Southeast Asia. The research on

[38] For this article, my focus is not on stardom, but Helen Thanh Dao as an actress and her experience in both Taiwan and Vietnam is also a good example which presents the marginalized position of new immigrant women. She is the only one lead actress from Vietnam and has the experience of international marriage in this series of in/outsider.

[39] According to the latest statistic from National Immigration Agency (December 2017), there are 532, 208 immigrant spouses, including 353,684 from China, Hong Kong, and Macaw, and 176,828 immigrant spouses from other places. The total of female immigrant spouses is 157,626, which is 8 times more than male ones.

the new immigrant women mostly comes from the fields of social science and education, though some health, medical and law studies also contribute to our understanding of this population. Most of the time this research pays little attention to media representation. Yet, it is important to consider the complicated mechanisms of media representation, and the way in which the image of new immigrant women has been mediated, because the visibility of these immigrants is a crucial element in the acceptance of these immigrant women by the larger society.

In order to more deeply investigate these exclusions, this section examines Cheng Yu-Chieh's 鄭有傑 *My Little Honey Moon* 野蓮香 (2012), one film from the unique TV film series *WE Are Family* Neiren wairen xiyimin xilie dianying 內人／外人新移民系列電影 [lit. "Insider/outsider New Immigrant Series] which centers on the stories of new immigrant women. This title accurately depicts their conditions in Taiwan society: although they live inside of Taiwan they are often excluded by its society. This section discusses how the immigrant women were marginalized not only by their ethnicities but also by an intersection of a number of categories: their gender, social class and nationalities. In the following analysis, I suggest that film, as a medium, attempts to present these intersectional discriminations. Moreover, the *Xiangtu* 鄉土 [Literary country-side soil, which can translate to localism] melodrama genre becomes a channel to integrate these immigrant women into Taiwanese society and dialectically provides an alternative imagination to break up Han-centered society in Taiwan. To understand how different pressures intersected in the work, I first look to a theoretical framework of intersectionality to explain the situation of new immigrant women who are suffering not one, but multiple oppressions. Second, I argue that *My Little Honey Moon* challenges the conventional

xiangtu concept and drama. Finally, I discuss that how the film uses the road film genre to transform immigrant subjectivity and bring the new meaning of *xiangtu*.

The immigrant Women in Taiwan

My Little Honey Moon depicts a cross-cultural marriage between Vietnamese woman Joan (Chinese name is Qiong-e, portrayed by Taiwanese-Vietnamese actress Helen Thanh Dao) and Taiwanese man Hsiao Tien-fu (portrayed by Taiwanese actor Chen Chu-Sheng) in the Meinong district in Kaohsiung, located in the southern part of Taiwan. Meinong[40] is a small agriculture town with a majority Hakka population: a group of people who have been marginalized in Taiwan society. The major problem between Joan and the Hsiao family is that the traditional ideology of procreation violates female bodily autonomy. The family wants a male offspring to continue their name but Joan feels they cannot afford a second child because of difficult agricultural labor and their financial issues. Joan secretly takes birth control pills, but eventually is caught by her husband and mother-in-law. Unable to resolve the conflict between husband and wife, Joan runs away and travels to a village in Taitung, Taiwan. Her husband finds Joan and, in an emotional scene, speaks Vietnamese to express his respect and love to win Joan back.

Prior to the women found in *We Are Family*, new immigrant women have been portrayed in a variety of different media, including news reports, TV Variety show, documentaries, and a few TV dramas and films. Different genres provide different mediating platforms which in turn

[40] Meinong is one of the important research field of the new immigrant women for researcher. Hsia Hsiao-Chuan researched the development of international marriages and also built up the school to help these new immigrant women to learn Chinese. The detail information can be seen on Hsiao-Chuan Hsia. "Beyond victimization: the empowerment of 'foreign brides' in resisting capitalist globalization."

affect audience perception. TV film[41] is one of the new categories of television entertainment that emerged in Taiwan in recent decades. It blurs the line between television and film, thus becomes a platform for directors to potentially tell a marginal stories. Cheng has discussed how the influence of HD camera and HD resolution have helped to develop this type of film production.[42] Directors can make do with a smaller budget and have less pressure because they are not concerned with the box office. As a result, this type of film can include more marginal themes and voices. On the other hand, these films also can become a proving ground for new directors to develop their experiences. This particular project was initiated by the producer, Li Khan 李岡, who conducted field research in rural parts of central and southern Taiwan and crafted four film outlines. After getting the support from the government, the National Immigration Agency of Ministry of the Interior, ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking) Taiwan, and the Videoland Television Network, Li Khan recruited four directors, including Cheng Yu-chieh, Chou She-wei 周旭薇, Fu Tien-yu 傅天余 and Chen Hui-ling 陳慧翎 to produce four individual films.

[41] Also called 'made-for-television-films' or television-films.

[42] Yang Chen-yuan. The Uncountable Value—Interviewing Cheng Yu-Chieh. 05/19/2012. HTHU Writing Center. http://writcent.nthu.edu.tw/writcent/main/gallery/3/4

Li Khan worked closely with these directors to develop complete scripts, so each film shows each director's individual perspective and interpretation.[43] Hsieh Hsin-Chin describes the whole series of *We Are Family*:

> Overall, the movie series romanticizes new immigrants' lives through fictional melodramatic representation, offering an alternative angle from which the audience can understand new immigrants' perspectives concerning their new families and homes in Taiwan. As opposed to the male-centered grand narrative of home as the imagination of homeland and nation-state, the ways in which women migrants reinvent the notion of home from a gendered perspective is especially crucial to understanding place-based cultural production." (240)

The Golden Children (Jin Sun 金孫, 2012), the We Are Family film directed by Chou She-wei, depicts a mother, who forces her son to marry with a Vietnamese woman, Jinzhi, to get an heir. This is despite the fact that he already had a girlfriend. That girlfriend, however, had already passed the age when she could give birth. Thus, Jinzhi faces the challenges in her new family and her husband has another relationship with someone else and is not interested in her. Finally, she is accepted by her mother-in-law and adopts her sister's son to fulfill her duty to the Kam family. *The Happy life of Debbie* (Daibi de xingfu shenghuo 黛比的幸福生活, 2012), directed by Fu Tien-yu, focuses on a mixed family: Indonesian woman Debbie, her Taiwanese

[43] The Editors of Funscreen. "After exiling to a foreigner country, longing to happiness—The interview of director of the *Insider/Outsider* series" (流徙異鄉後，追尋幸福的渴望：《內人外人》新移民系列導演專訪。)

husband Lu, and her son Han. Debbie works in a coffee farm (which connects her memories of Indonesia) and prepares to attend a coffee-making competition. Both her husband Lu and her son Han both were in troubles. Lu loses his job because he drank during work. Han is bullied by his classmate due to his dark skin. Debbie's ex-boyfriend (Han's biological father), Jama, comes to Taiwan, and the audience discovers Lu and Han do not have a blood relationship. However, Lu still loves Han as his child and Han also wants to stay in Taiwan. The story ends with Lu and Han supporting Debbie's journey to the coffee competition. *The Moonlight in Jilin* (Jinli de Yueguang 吉林的月光, 2012) directed by Chen Hui-ling, describes a Chinese immigrant woman, Bian Weiwei, who works in a massage parlor in Taiwan. She came to Taiwan because she had, unknowingly, married with a gangster in Taiwan in order to pay for her mother's hemodialysis. However, her husband escapes in Taiwan and is wanted by the police, so she is forced to fall back on her medical school training and earn money through massage. Her husband's sidekick, Chou, helps to take care of her and has a crush on her. A policeman, Jia-hao, also fixates on her. In order to preserve the illusion of her good life in Taiwan, Weiwei asks Chou and Jia-hao to help her deceive Chengliang, who is her former lover's sister, during her visit in Taiwan. Chengliang finds out Weiwei's life is not as happy as she pretends, and tells Weiwei that her brother is still waiting for her. Eventually, Weiwei gives up her Taiwan idenfitication which she is longing for many years and returns to her hometown, Jilin. The three stories show different dimensions of the immigrant women from different place, including from Vietnam, China and Indonesia. These films cover issues that show the accommodation of these immigrants, the changing society in Taiwan and how different people adjust themselves to these changes.

Among the four directors, Cheng Yu-Chieh is the only one male director to deal with these new immigrant women. However, even though he is the only male director, he is the only one who cast a new immigrant actress as the main character in his film, which is the main reason I selected *My Little Honey Moon* as my primary text to discuss. There are many discussions of how representation in film matters to minorities.[44] The choices of actor/actress can help the marginal groups to have their own self-perception. Cheng Yu-Chieh, a young director in Taiwan, has worked both in television and film productions. He mentioned in an interview that when he chose the lead actress he adjusted the storyline for her. The story original story was about an immigrant from Cambodia. He found out Helen Thanh Dao's previous TV drama *Love the Flavor of Papaya* (Lianlian Mugua Xiang, 戀戀木瓜香, 2011)[45] screening on television. In that drama, Helen also played a new immigrant woman, Ruan Lianxiang 阮蓮香, who gets married to a Taiwanese man and struggles to become part of this new family. Initially, Lianxiang's

[44] I do not suggest that other films in this series were not aware of this problem. It is possible that it was not easy to find a new immigrant actor who had experience, and it may have even been a budget issue, etc. Even though a film casts the ethnic actors, it does not necessarily mean that the film can authentically represent these ethnic groups. However, the narrative of *My Little Honey Moon* does concern the ethnic and ethnical representation and thus it fits with my overall project.

[45] The drama can be watched on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWWrh3v_MUk&list=PLbHKrIiTLOdfkmxyIUvGThj95ZcLXWdF3&index=84

mother-in-law Liao Limei (played by Taiwanese actress Mei Fang 梅芳) cannot accept her as a daughter-in-law because of both linguistic and cultural barriers. Eventually Liangxiang learns to make the signature Hakka dish from her mother-in-law and they cooperate together to win an international cooking competition in Taiwan by bringing Vietnamese Papaya Salad into their creative dish. This drama is based on a true story and it was first drama to cast Helen as a leading actress in Taiwan. Before this, she was an experienced actress in Vietnam and starred in many television dramas there. When she came to Taiwan, she started her performance as a model, but had little chance to act in Taiwan or achieve the same recognition she had in Vietnam. Yet Cheng watched the drama and decided to cast Helen as his leading actress and changed the plot from Cambodia to Vietnam to fit Helen's actual situation.

We also can see the interplay between *Love the Flavor of Papaya* and *My Little Honey Moon*. First, the Chinese title Ye Lian Xiang of *My Little Honey Moon* has two characters overlap with the protagonist's name in *Love the Flavor of Papaya*. Both *My Little Honey Moon* and *Love the Flavor of Papaya* focus on Hakka families and use the form of Xiangtu melodrama. Even though these two works are completely separated stories, we can still see the parallels. *Love the Flavor of Papaya* depicts a newcomer's fresh experience, whereas the protagonist in *My Little Honey Moon* has been stayed in Taiwan for a while. However, the challenge of exclusion for these immigrant women constantly threatens.

During an interview, Cheng said he created more space for actor and actress to interpret their characters in *My Little Honey Moon*.[46] As a result, Helen's personal experience contributed to her interpretation of the character. It is noticeable the film is not a documentary to record the real life, but the reflection from the film still can help us to think the situation what the immigrant women encounter. In fact, for immigrant women, the pressure is not from a single source but multiple arenas. In order to further understand what kind of the complicated pressures on those immigrant women, I turn towards a discussion of the different factors and pressures on these women.

Intersectionality

Based on the theoretical concept of intersectionality proposed by Black feminists Kimberlé Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins, I specifically discuss the cinematic representation of new immigrant women through an intersectional analysis of gender, ethnicity, nationality, and class. Kimberlé Crenshaw indicates how the analytic framework of single-axis analysis undermines and restricts understanding of the experiences of Black women. The exclusion of Black women cannot be reduced to a single dimension of race or gender. In other words, Crenshaw asserts that analysis of race should simultaneously consider sexism and patriarchy, and vice versa. Crenshaw points out that the neglect of these complexities has led to misconceptions about Black women: "This apparent contradiction is but another manifestation of the conceptual limitations of the single-issue analyses that intersectionality challenges. The point is that Black women can

[46] The Editors of Funscreen. "After exiling to a foreigner country, longing to happiness—The interview of director of the *Insider/Outsider* series" (流徙異鄉後，追尋幸福的渴望：《內人外人》新移民系列導演專訪。) http://www.funscreen.com.tw/headline.asp?H_No=408

experience discrimination in any number of ways and that the contradiction arises from our assumptions that their claims of exclusion must be unidirectional." (149) If we do not recognize the intersectionality between race, gender and sexuality, society will naturalize these structures or, even worse, stabilizes or reinforces these discriminations. Borrowing the theory of the multidimensionality of Black women, we can extrapolate that new immigrant women have similar situations, and are also discriminated against through multiple systems which we should not consider separately.

Patricia Hill Collins further develops Crenshaw's theory and, along with gender and race, adds one more dimension of nationality. Collins argues nationality mutually constructs other elements. Focusing on family values, she examines the intersections between "family as a gendered system of social organization, racial ideas and practices and constructions of U.S. national identities." (62) When family members are forced to appropriately fit certain expectations of family values, they also are imposed upon by social hierarchies, which are a result of an emphasis on how a family as a unit has naturalized these experiences. For example, the notion of the "traditional family" naturalizes male leadership and assumes that masculinity is a foundation of authority. These hierarchical relations often overlap with other kinds of inequalities, such as race. Applying family rhetoric in race, a parent-children relationships can be applied to people of color who are treated like children by white people. This naturalized hierarchical relationship of family also transplants to a national identity/family which differentiates first-class and second-class citizenship. Society maintains this hierarchy through violence. For the subordinated group, Collins argues that "maintaining racial solidarity at all costs often requires replacing hierarchies of gender, class, sexuality, and nation in Black civil society." (67) In other words, the Black community may prioritize race but to do so sacrifices the

inequality in women's rights. In addition, a concept of "home" as a territory produces a gendered concept of private (inside) as feminine space and public (outside) as masculine space. These home frames also apply to thinking about "homeland" or national territory where citizens are within these big national families. Because family rhetoric is very powerful, it is very hard to challenge the inequality of this hierarchical order. Collins suggests an approach of transforming the rhetoric of family, which can reshape and challenge the understanding of the unequal society. Although Crenshaw and Collins discuss different layers of discrimination about race, class, gender and nation, they do not consider the transnational situation or how family rhetoric functions when women come from another society. Immigration seriously impacts the cultural value of family and needs to revise and redefine the meaning of family. The case of *My Little Honey Moon* not only exemplifies intersectionality but also enlarges the understanding of intersectionality in the context of cross-border experience which has to handle not only a domestic series of inequalities that intersect via gender, ethnicity, and class but also an international relationship to nationality. Moreover, media plays an important role in reconciling these conflicts. Neither Crenshaw nor Collin's theories take up media as a space of discussion and production.

The marginalized status of new immigrant women

As I noted above, the new immigrant women have experienced not only one force of inequality, but several different forces interwoven together. Inspired by intersectionality, we first need to recognize different intersections that new immigrant women face, which construct the marginal position of these new immigrant women. In this section, I examine three different intersections of gender, class, nationality and ethnicity.

Intersectionality I: Gender X Class

In the film *My Little Honey Moon*, one of the most prominent instances of intersectionality is of the intersection of global capital and international marriage. The social economic labor market in Taiwan is related to the global capital flow. In order to maintain the traditional family structure and keep up production, international marriage is one of the choices for rural families in Taiwan. *My Little Honey Moon* takes place in Meinong, Kaohsiung, which is an agricultural county of southern Taiwan and has almost one thousand new immigrant women.[47] This international marriage not only meets the needs of patriarchal society in Taiwan, which longs to perpetuate the family name as just one aspect of that patriarchy, but also solves the problem of disappearing labor in agricultural production. In other words, these new immigrant women are not only the desired objects but also the tools of reproduction. They not only offer their ability to produce the next generation, but also their bodies as labor resources. In the film, Hsiao's family has their own land but their income is not quite enough, even though both Joan and Tian-fu work very hard. One reason Joan does not want to have a second child is that she exhausts herself doing agricultural work. Moreover, she worries she cannot afford to have a second child and is not healthy enough to do so. Her use of birth control becomes the major conflict between Joan and the Hsiao family. Even though women's status in Taiwan is better than other Asian countries[48],

[47] According to the latest statistic from Civil Affairs Bureau, Kaohsiung City Government (April 2018), there are 566 immigrant spouses from China, Hong Kong, and Macaw, and 464 immigrant spouses from other places who have come to Meinong area. The total of new immigrant women in Meinong is 991.

[48] According to Directorate-Gender of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, R.O.C. (Taiwan), the rate of Gender Gap Index (GGI) of Taiwan is at no.38 (compared to other rated countries)

many families in Taiwan still think quite traditionally about gender relationships in rural areas. While many Taiwanese women receive higher education, fewer of them are willing to stay in the countryside.

In one scene, when Joan is caught taking a birth control pill. Her husband, Tian-fu reacts angrily. In the beginning of this sequence, Joan takes the birth control pill, and Tian-fu drinks a beer and looks at her. (Figure 2-1) They stay on two sides of the frame. Then, Tian-fu walks into middle of the frame and asks what it was Joan took. Joan stays in the left-hand side of the frame. The composition of this scene shows visually how she is dominated by male power. And, then, her mother-in-law appears to the right side of the frame, hinting her mother-in-law is also part of the structure of patriarchal society. (Figure 2-2) The film gives the chance for Joan to explain that she does not think she is healthy enough to have a second baby. (Figure 2-3) Two camera techniques, panning back-and-forth between Tian-fu's face and Joan's face, and hand-held camera shaking the screen, creates a tension between the two main protagonists. Finally, Tian-fu wonders "if he can send her back to her country." (Figure 2-4) The conflict suggests that not only Tian-fu cannot fulfill his filial piety of his traditional duty to produce an heir. He is also frustrated that he cannot afford a second child. In this case, Joan's marginalization is not only related to gender but also their poverty. The vulnerability of agriculture as a profession situates Tian-fu in a lower position in society and threatens his masculinity. In this crucial moment of the

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in 2016. The GGI rate is better than Singapore, China, Japan and South Korea.

https://www.gender.ey.gov.tw/gecdb/Stat_International_Node0.aspx?s=tZ7cAGjLH7DDUmC9hAf%2f4g%3d%3d

http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/business/breakingnews/2011873

film, Tian-fu asks Joan if he can “send her back” to Vietnam. Joan cannot stand this humiliation and runs away from Hsiao’s family. In this scene, Joan is discriminated against not only for not fulfilling the traditional female role, but also is alienated by being treated like a commodity that can be returned. In this case, the immigrant woman was marginalized both by her gender and her existence as capital.

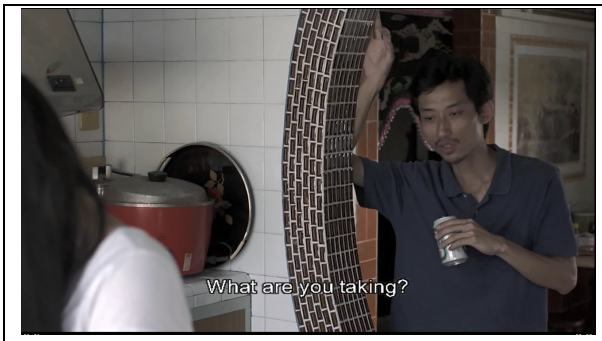

Figure 2-1

Figure 2-2

Figure 2-3

Figure 2-4

Intersectionality II: Gender X Nationality

Many traditional families in Taiwan find in these new immigrant women as an alternative choice to fulfill the empty spots of wives who will help maintain tradition. As a result, unsurprisingly, the families try to force these immigrant women into traditional gender roles. In traditional ideology in Taiwan, women are considered to be marrying "into" a husband’s family and are

considered as outsiders. Thus the title of the series, the part of "Neiren" means both insider and is also a synonym of wife for husband. "Wairen" means outsider, and it also refers to the women who is alienated from the family because their family name is different from the husband's family. The feeling of being an outsider for the new immigrant women is doubled, as they are alienated from their patriarchal family but also from the nation. This feeling of exclusion is related to how majority and minority identities are considered and constructed. In the film, in order to make more money, Hsiao Tian-fu secretly took their land ownership certificate to get a mortgage for his business of shrimp farming business. When Tian-fu's mother found the certificate was missing, she immediately thought that Joan took the certificate because there was another Vietnamese woman caught taking property from her husband's family. During the sequence, when the truth is revealed by her husband, Joan says to her mother-in-law's face her feelings about being treating as an outsider for many years. Joan's dialog reveals the exclusion of patriarchal society is also bound up in consistently differentiating the other. Obviously, the mother-in-law imposes a double standard which never considers her son to be a criminal because he is an insider, but sees her daughter-in-law as suspicious because she is an outsider. This double standard is mixed with prejudice based on Joan's gender and nationality, as the mother-in-law assumes Joan's Vietnamese nationality trumps her allegiance to the family, just like the other Vietnamese women she heard stories about.

Intersectionality III: Gender X Ethnicity

The third instance of intersectionality encompasses gender and ethnicity. Instead of mutually understanding different cultures, dominant groups intentionally blame or find fault with the subordinated groups. In a humiliating scene where the mother-in-law asks Joan if Agent Orange may possibly to affect her ability to have a healthy child, we see the intersection of gender

expectations with ethnicity. The mise-en-scene sets Joan in foreground and her mother-in-law in the background, but mostly the camera focuses on her mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law asks Joan's origin from when she is doing the dishes. Joan first responds joyfully that she gets attention. Her mother-in law hesitantly asks if her hometown was affected by the American army using the Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Because Joan's face is turned away from the camera, the audience cannot immediately see if her expression changes, but we do hear her indrawn through her breath, creating an audible sense of shock. Her mother-in-law soon walks away in order to avoiding the embarrassing feeling, and the camera focus comes back on Joan and the space which the mother-in-law left creates a sense of emptiness for audience to feel Joan's sadness.

Figure 2-5

Figure 2-6

Figure 2-7

Figure 2-8

In this case, Joan encounters two-dimensions of oppression: first, the mother-in-law questions her about her origins; second, the mother-in-law questions her qualifications for being a mother. Similarly, Tian-fu also attacks Joan's cultural identity when he is unable to communicate with his mother-in-law through the phone. In the bedroom, Tian-fu sits on the bed on the left-side foreground while Joan is drying her hair on the right-side background. (Figure 2-9) Tian-fu tells Joan that her mother called her, but he didn't respond his mother-in-law well. Joan then calls her mother and speak Vietnamese through the phone. In the scene, the camera focuses on Joan and the light is on Joan's side. Although the subtitle does not translate what Joan says in Vietnamese, her tone of voice is full of joyfulness. In contrast, Tian-fu in the foreground is out-of-focus and in the dark. He cannot understand his wife's language which makes him uncomfortable. Soon after Joan finished the phone call, she asks why he does not use the Vietnamese which she taught him before to communicate with his mother-in-law. Joan comes to Tian-fu's side to try to teach him some simple Vietnamese sentences. And then, he immediately gets angry, throws the notebook, walks out the bedroom, and left Joan alone in the room.

Figure 2-9

Figure 2-10

In many cases, new immigrant women were alienated in their transnational marriage. These women were asked to assimilate themselves into local culture in Taiwan, but this man and

his family have little interest in understanding the culture behind these new immigrant women, offering only suspicion, judgement and rejection.

	
Figure 2-11	Figure 2-12

Marginal groups often find their voices ignored or silenced. In *My Little Honey Moon*, the screenwriter introduces the speechless child Yu-ping, who represents both the reality of marginalization and operates as a metaphor. In the story, Yu-ping does not want to speak because she was bullied by other students for her mixed parentage. Neither Joan's mother-in-law nor her husband cannot understand Yu-ping's frustration. The only person who points out the reason is Teacher Sun (acted by indigenous actress Yangui's Yasiungu 安欽雲), an indigenous elementary school teacher. The film skillfully and subtly parallels the indigenous history and this second generation immigrant. The scene which Juan and Teacher Sun mirror each other reinforces the sense of alliance. (Figure 11 and 12) This parallel prominently implies Taiwan is a Han-centered society that forces other ethnicities to close their mouths.

In sum, the film *My Little Honey Moon* reveals and highlights many of the intersectional challenges facing new immigrant women and their marginalized status of new immigrant women. In the next section, I consider the ways this movie attempts to reconcile these conflicts and provide an alternative imagination of new immigrant women. In doing so, I suggest that the

genre *Xiangtu* drama genre is a useful tool for filmmakers to fulfill their goal. This film reinterprets what *Xiangtu* might be in Taiwan while simultaneously deconstructing the idea of Taiwaneseness itself.

Insider/outsider and the family rhetoric

International marriage does not just change the immigrant women, as a practice it also fundamentally changes the family structure and makes an impact on both the host family and society. However, the host family and majority of Taiwanese have not yet realized the many ways in which this impact has already happened. As a result, new immigrant women are considered a problem and are asked to adjust themselves in joining their host society. The series of *We Are Family* attempt to call attention to this set of expectations. Li Khan put his intention in the cover of the film cases:

> "The new immigrant is an important issue we have to face immediately. Nowadays, for 10% of new married couples, the bride is a foreigner bride who is from Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, and etc. This is a huge proportion and they obviously are the minority. However, they and their children's accommodation and happiness is a crucial issue for Taiwan and it is related to the future of Taiwan.
>
> The film series titled "Insider/Outsider" focus on new immigrant women with different backgrounds and how they deal with conflicts and challenges from their "second homes." [The film series] hope to eliminate the stereotypes between Taiwanese and the new immigrants which divides them as insiders (neiren) and outsiders (wairen). By doing so, the series hope to create some room for a happier, more civilized, equalized, and healthier development, and will transform Taiwan into a land with diverse cultures." (Li Khan) (emphasis mine)

Family rhetoric is a key element in this passage. The first family construction emphasizes how their happiness will affect the next generation, which is then related to the national future. Another evocation of talks about Taiwan as a "second" home for these women, and these films specifically focus on the conflict and challenges of this feeling of displacement. The third family considers the next generation of "Taiwanese." Although the intention of this series is to center on new immigrant women's experiences, the target audience is the citizenry (Guoren 國人) of Taiwan rather than these new immigrant women. It is a double-edged sword to deploy the rhetoric of for introducing these new immigrant women. On the one hand, it is a simple and easy paradigm that can clearly be grasped by Taiwanese audience. On the other hand, it also reinforces the importance of family, which brings the women's value back to family and restricts them to traditional gender structures. In order to counter this, although the series of "Insider/Outsider" has its own purpose, the filmmakers of this series describe also various stories from different places and different family structures which provide heterogeneous social imagination.

The English title *We Are Family* and the Mandarin title *Nairen (Insider)* and *Wairen (Outsider)* have opposite meaning. While the English Title *We Are Family* creates a sense of intentional of inclusion, the Chinese title are more emphasizes the potential segregation even inside of a family. This segregation exists in the Confucian culture that to this day asks remains women to stay inside the household. In Hsieh Hsin-chin's investigation of the series of *We Are Family*, she notes the Mandarin title not only refers to "an explicit and uncomfortable boundary lying between local Taiwanese and foreign spouses," but also "is related to geographic locals and

geopolitical imagination in migration." (255)[49] As I mentioned in the previous section, because these new immigrant women encounter multiple discriminations, this exclusion is subtly embodied in their daily life. For example, Joan's friend, Cho-xian 秋香, was caught by police.

Joan's mother-in-law chats with Tien-fu about this gossip (which she heard from street). The mother-in-law describes Cho-xian took the title deed and bank book, but the police came in time and caught her. When mother-in-law talks about the rumor that Cho-xian might be unfaithful to her husband, the camera pans from mother-in-law to Joan and the audience can see she glances at Joan. The conversation clearly makes Joan uncomfortable and she sharply puts down a cup of coffee with a big noise to express her anger. Speaking in the Hakka language, Joan reveals the domestic violence which Cho-xian experienced: "You all blame it on her. Her husband beat her up every day, every single day! Did anyone ever blame her husband? *We are human just as you are.*" (emphasis mine) Although this film does not show this violence on scene, it shows Cho-xian unwilling to go back to her family. She tells the police women that she is so frightened to go back when her husband stare at her in front of house. The gossip shows the unfriendly environment. The line "we are human just as you are" directly points out the unequal relationship between Taiwanese husband and these new immigrant women. "We" is referred to the new immigrant women, and "you" is referred to Taiwanese people. Joan asks for respectful relationship between the two. The mutual understanding is one of the key points for this series to break the division of two groups.

[49] Hsieh Hsin-Chin. "Multilingual Home: New Immigrants and Double Homeness in Sinophone Taiwan. *Life on the Move: Women's Migration and Re/making Home in Contemporary Chinese and Sinophone Literature and Film*. Ph.D. dissertation of University of Oregon. June 2015.

	
Figure 2-13	Figure 2-14
	
Figure 2-15	Figure 2-16

On the cover, the producer Li Khan emphasizes that Taiwan is “the second home” for these immigrant women. The homemaking process is difficult, including the women’s efforts to adapt themselves, and also win acceptance from their Taiwanese families. The conflict over the title deed event discussed above embodies how the insecurity and tension exists inside the household. Triggered from Joan’s mother-in-law finding their land title deed has disappeared, the mother-in-law immediately sees Joan as a suspect and calls the police to arrest her. Tien-fu embarrassedly has to admit that he took the land deed to borrow money for investments. After the police leave, Joan says to Tien-fu and mother-in-law with a smile: “I’ve been married here for six years. Since I’ve been married here, I’ll take this place as my hometown. So, I will devote myself to this home for the rest of my life. I beg you guys…don’t treat me as an outsider. Please.” Yet in the next scene, Joan closes herself into the bathroom and cries. It is clear that she

feels a strong sense of mistreated but she cannot show her weakness to either her husband or her mother-in-law. In her conversation with them, Joan has to emphasize her determination to be a wife and her willingness to devote herself to the Hsiao's family even though she has already married with Tien-fu for six years and have a daughter. Yet this sequence shows that the homemaking process is a negation where these new immigrant women must fight against different and intersecting prejudices.

Transformation of the meaning of *Xiangtu*

In the series of "Insider/Outsider," films, the filmmakers work within the popular genre of "Taiwan *Xiangtu* Melodrama, widely popular style. However, *My Little Honey Moon* does not completely follow the conventions, and challenges both the concept of Xiangtu and the genre of Xiangtu.

Xiangtu as a concept

Xiangtu (meaning native land, or homeland) as a concept has developed during the Japanese colonial period in the 1930s but also is still discussed today. The discussion of *Xiangtu* is constantly changing because of different forces. In the 1970s, a literary movement called the "Xiangtu cultural movement" was contrasted to Modernism.[50] The famous "nativist literature debate" fiercely argued over a definition of Xiangtu, each position articulating a different politics. However, although this debate leads to a deeper understanding of Xiangtu, it was too Han-male-centrism. This not only did not consider the experience of women, but also ignored

[50] More detail discussion of Xiangtu literary debate can be seen in June Yip's *Envisioning Taiwan: Fiction, Cinema, and the Nation in the Cultural Imaginary,*29-42.

indigenous people. In the original schema, it also did not consider later immigrants, especially non-Han immigrants. *My Little Honey Moon* challenges this hierarchical Xiangtu in two ways. First, the movie shows different imaginations of Xiangtu from new immigrant women. Xiangtu is Joan's hometown in Vietnam, not Meinong in Taiwan. In Joan's dream, she wears a traditional Vietnamese garment and drifts in a lake. When Joan is on her journey to Taitung like a road-trip movie, a non-diegetic song describes her homeland with the lyrics: "Homeland is a carambola, waiting for you to climb [the tree] and pick it up. Homeland is a boat, gently stirring up the water along the riverbank." Thus redefining Xiangu as somewhere else, somewhere not Taiwan.

In *Beyond a Border*, Peter Kivisto and Thomas Fasist states that "whereas assimilation attempts to explore if and how immigrants fit into and crave out a place for themselves in the receiving society, so transnationalism has provided a lens on when and how immigrants have managed to remain connected to and involved in their homeland." (159) Cheng Yu-Chieh explains in the behind-the-scenes video that the Sinitic title "fragrance of wild-lotus" not only indicates the local agriculture plant of wild-lotus in Meinong, but also refers to the Vietnamese national flower. The "wild lotus" can also suggest the notion of exile from Vietnam, and the fragrance is associated with femininity. In this case, *My Little Honey Moon* creates a platform for the audience to see not only the changing of the village in Taiwan, but also adds the transnational dimension to the meaning of Xiangtu.

Xiangtu Melodrama as a genre and feeling structure

Xiangtu Melodrama in Taiwan is a genre which has developed in 1990s. In the western context, theoretically, melodrama developed to deal with the impact of capitalism. This type of drama reduces anxiety from modernization. Family is one of the most popular themes in this drama because home is one of the places that embodies the modern crisis. Susan Hayward notes that

"[t]he melodrama as a popular cultural form takes this notion of social crisis and mediates it within a private context, the home." (229) Melodrama is also a genre fit to women's taste that attracts more female spectators. In theory, through watching melodrama, the masses are provided with a way to lessen the impact from urban changes. The Xiangtu Melodrama in Taiwan similarly developed during the development of urban life and attempts to deal with anxieties from capitalism. This genre more significantly attracts the audiences from outside urban places in the southern part of Taiwan because it is filmed using the Helou language (A.K.A. Minnan hua and Taiyu), which was suppressed before the lifting of Martial law. Thus, the Xiangtu Melodrama can be seen as a channel to revival of Helou language.

It is not a surprise that the filmmakers choose this genre to frame their exploration of new immigrant women in terms of representation and acceptance. As a genre, the Xiangtu drama is assumed to present or consolidate traditional values. Even though the television companies still produces Xiangu dramas with conventional themes such as the conflict between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, in recent years, xiangtu melodrama surprisingly includes some new controversial issues and experimental settings such as homosexual love, which reflects increasing awareness of new social acceptance. *My Little Honey Moon* innovatively brings multi-ethnicities onto the stage in two ways. First, the movie presents multiple languages on the screen, including Hakka (even Hakka, as a Han group, is marginalized in most major media representation in Taiwan) and Vietnamese. It is impressive that Joan can naturally speak in Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Hakka. This is in sharp contrast to her husband, who does not even try to understand his wife's mother tongue. Towards the end, the sentimental climax that brings the two together is that the husband eventually learns how to speak Vietnamese in order to tell Joan he loves her. In this way this film articulates a rhetoric of change: instead of only asking

new immigrant women to join in Taiwan's society, the film shows that Taiwan families must also actively understand new immigrant women's culture.

Second, this film parallels the situation of indigenous people with new immigrant women, which shows a potential alliance for transnational sisterhood. Teacher Sun demonstrates a new model of femininity for Joan. In one scene, she invites Joan to her house and Joan notices a number of postcards on her walls. These postcards show the Sun's mobility. It is clear she has decided what kind of live she wants. Although some might consider it to be too simplified and a romanticized a representation of indigenous peoples' lives, Sun inspires Joan, serving as a model of someone who has more control over her life. Sun motivates Joan to have more mobility, including learning how to drive and travel to other places. In this sense, *My Little Honey Moon* is no longer just typical Xiangtu Melodrama. Instead, this inclusion brings fresh perspectives into Xiangtu melodrama to encourage women's awareness of each other. In the next section, I discuss how the film combines the genre of road movie which extends the scope of Xiangtu to creates a new form of imagination.

Road movies and the immigrant women's agency

Cheng Yu-Chieh's *My Little Honey Moon* is significant because it challenges traditional family values but also breaks down cultural inequalities and rebalances the relationship between new immigrant wives and Taiwanese husbands. The film first establishes the subjectivity and agency of new immigrant women. Although Joan is under pressure from her husband and mother-in-law to reproduce, she secretly took birth-control pills in order to protect her body. She learned how to drive from the indigenous teacher, and then has the ability to escape her patriarchal family and travel by herself. Interestingly, unlike the portraits created in the other

three other that mainly focus on household, *My Little Honey Moon*, the story creates a chance for Joan to run away from the family. She flees to seek out an alternative life style.

The genre of road movies traditionally focuses on masculine journeys. However, this movie unconventionally represents a female figure on the road. In *The Road Story and the Rebel—Moving Through Film, Fiction, and Television*, Katie Mills notices that "Genre can legitimate and invalidate certain types of experiences and characters." (32) As we know, although the new immigrant women travel from other countries, most culture productions representing them show these new immigrant women become fixed and stationary in their new homes, instead of imaging them as a mobile subject. The arrange of *My Little Honey Moon* provides an unconventional way for the protagonist Joan to escape from her daily routine. Mills indicates the road story is one of the powerful genres which fits the changing of identity and the practice of rebellion. She notes "because of its content, the road story is a particularly restless genre, perfect for times of change, as new cultural producers and audiences actively construct new identities, remixing the matrix of medium, message and messenger." (34) The mobility of women has been long discussed by feminists. This mobility is not simply about the physical ability to travel but also how social constructions which influences women's relationships with the world move, change, and ideally grow. Susan Hanson summarizes two different approaches to investigate how gender and mobility shape each other and proposes we must look at the issue in both directions: "how does mobility shape gender?" (9) and "how does gender shape mobility?" (11)

In the case of *My Little Honey Moon*, Joan drives her husband's truck from Meinung to Taitung. She had only heard about Taitung from Sun, encountering the scenery from one of Sun's postcards. (Figure 17) Compare to the claustrophobic spaces of the household, when she

drives along the coast, the landscape of mountain and sea creates a sense of openness that mirrors her desire to be released from the pressures of her marriage. Through road movie story, we can see how the mobility reconstructing the women's subjectivity. In terms of the editing, the journey uses many diegetic and non-diegetic sounds which presents the mood of protagonists. When Joan and Yu-ping are eating in the car, they hear the sound of waves. (Figure 18) Then, the next shot jumps into Tien-fu siting in the living room, drinking the beer and missing his wife as he stares at a Vietnamese coffee maker dripping a cup of coffee. In this moment, the sound of waves become non-diegetic sound when the audience can see the male protagonist's eyes with tear which expresses his melancholy. (Figure 19)

Figure 2-17

Figure 2-18

Figure 2-19

Figure 2-20

	
Figure 2-21	Figure 2-22

Through a sophisticated editing sequences, the director overlaps the Taitung trip with Joan's homeland in Vietnam. When Joan drives toward Taitung, a Vietnamese folk song is a non-diegetic sound inserted into the sequence. "Every person has only one homeland; If one forgets his homeland, he can never grow up." The small truck runs out of the gas and stops in the middle of the road. However, the song still continues. Joan decides to abandon the truck and continues her trip on foot. In this scene, the song sings: "The homeland is a drifting boat, fiddling the water without noise." Joan walks with Yu-ping under the sun, who fainted because she had heat stroke. In the next shot, the audience see Joan wearing traditional Vietnamese garment drifting on a river, with the song in background. In this sequence, the editing masterly uses music to transplant Taitung to the Joan's homeland in Vietnam. In the end, Joan wakes up in teacher Sun's house: a temporary shelter.

The end of road trip culminates in Tien-fu's arrival in Taitung to wins Joan back. Although the film is about the new immigrant women, the male protagonist is also important. As we can see, the husband is representative of patriarchal society. He is not, however, the film, a stereotype, and the audience can see his transformation by actively learning the Vietnamese language he moves from rejection to acceptance of his wife's culture. The performance of Tien-

fu is persuasive (the actor also earned an award from Golden Bell festival) and in this way this unconventional film encourages mutual understanding from both sides. When Joan sees that Tien-fu has chased her from Meinong to Taitung, she still mad about him and walks away from him. Joan only stops when she hears Tien-fu's speaking of Vietnamese: "I am sorry (in Mandarin) Mom (in Vietnamese) (Joan stops walking.) How are you doing? I'm fine. Joan is not at home now. Please call her cell phone (in Vietnamese)" Joan turns around to Tien-fu. This sentences show Tien-fu's effort to communicate with Joan's family. Tien-fu confesses: "I know I am wrong… I am so wrong… From now on, I will take care of you, and respect you. No matter what happens, I will be with you forever. You love me. (in Vietnamese)" Tien-fu makes a mistake of pronunciation making "I love you" turn into "You love me" and Joan laughs. This laughter signals her forgiveness of Tien-fu's mistreatment. The backlight Joan's back and blurs Joan's face, making a romantic atmosphere. The strength of Cheng Yu-Chieh use creatively of light, along with a hand-hold camera style that can be found in his previous works, such as *Yinian Zhichu* 一年之初 (Do Over 2006) and *Yang Yang* (2009.) The backlight provides a sense of energy and motivation on Joan. (Figure 22) The romantic moment peacefully articulates their reconciliation, serving as a scene that eases the tension from the conflict between these immigrant women and local Taiwanese men. Although the film does not really solve the problems of complicated pressure for the immigrant women, it still shows the first step in understanding and inclusion.

Conclusion

New immigrant women in Taiwan experience many forms of exclusion: they are mistreated and considered outsiders, even though they are members of Taiwanese society. Through the

framework of intersectionality, it is clear that these many discriminations are compounded together. *My Little Honey Moon* contextualizes the difficulties for new immigrant women and also expands the social imagination to include different ethnic groups in the imaginary of Taiwan. The representation of "Xiangtu" as a concept in this film is no longer restricted to the locality of Taiwan itself, but rather, is contextualized by a transnational relationship between Taiwan and Southeast Asia (Vietnam, in this case). Through challenging the patriarchy of Han-centered structures and reconstructing a nativist view toward Xiangtu, this film encourages us to look beyond the geographical and cultural borders of Taiwan and to rethink what "Taiwaneseness" is.

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Chapter III: Midi Z's filmmaking and Visualization of Sinophone Burmese immigrants

Introduction: Border Crossing and Taiwanese Dreams

There is a question of whether "mutual invisibility" exists between Taiwan and Myanmar.[51] An interesting anecdote derives from the 53rd Golden Horse Awards, when Midi Z (A.K.A. ZHAO Te-Yin) was honored as the "Outstanding Taiwanese Filmmaker of the Year." At the awards ceremony, Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien, one of the leading figures in the New Taiwan Cinema movement, was invited to acknowledge Midi Z's achievements in a short video in which Hou described Midi Z inaccurately as a stowaway from Burma to Taiwan. When Midi Z accepted the award, he clarified that he did not smuggle himself into Taiwan, but had passed the Taiwanese government's examination and had studied in Taiwan legally since he was sixteen years old. Midi Z was not angry about Hou's misunderstanding, but was thankful instead for the ability to live in Taiwan, which had changed his life as a Burmese person. Thanks to the multicultural and liberal social conditions in Taiwan, he had an opportunity to stand on stage at

[51] Burma and Myanmar are interchangeable to indicate the country in English and Myanmar has become the country's official name since 1989. Since the 1930s, the meaning of names has been changed through the political changes. In the 1930s, the name of "Bama" was more inclusive of minorities than "Myanma," but since 1989, the new name "Myanmar" represents the dominant ethnicity of Burmese and "Burma" conversely as a name which includes minority. The reason I choose Burma rather than Myanmar in this chapter is to follow the film's English title *Return to Burma*. Reference: *Should it be Burma or Myanmar?* Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7013943.stm; Wikipedia: *Names of Myanmar* Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_Myanmar; Memmott, Mark. Why Burma? Why Myanmar? Why Both? Retrieved from: http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2011/12/02/143049567/why-burma-why-myanmar-why-both.

the Golden Horse Awards. Hou's comment about Midi Z drew attention not only to one of Midi Z's core concerns, the Sinophone Burmese experience of border-crossing, but also potential misperceptions between the Burmese and Taiwanese people. Before Midi Z, Taiwanese cinema had rarely represented Burma's ethnoscapes of Burma, and vice versa. In this context, Midi Z's filmmaking provides the possibility for "mutual visibility" between these two sites, particularly through the immigrant' eyes.

The director, Midi Z, born in Burma and educated in Taiwan, has produced several feature films that are related to Burmese immigrants' stories. I focus on him in this chapter and demonstrate the way Midi Z's films show the mobility and immobility of Sinophone Burmese migration. By focusing on the complexity of Midi Z's filmmaking experience, I ask the following questions about different transnational trajectories: (1) How does Midi Z's personal journey from Burma to Taiwan, as a student, foreigner laborer, and filmmaker exemplify the notion of the "Taiwan Dream," a driving force of transnationalism within Asia? (2) How do Midi Z's films present the brutality of Burma's reality given his status as both a Sinophone Burmese himself and an outsider who migrated to another place and returned? Midi Z's immigrant journey is not simply a personal journey, but his filmmaking process also has multiple relations with Sinophone Burmese refugees' history in the mid-twenty century, and Burmese nation building in the early twenty-first century.

Midi Z and His Films

In this chapter, deploying an auteur approach, I pay attention to the production mode that Midi Z adapts, which not only New Taiwan Cinema, but also third world filmmakers influenced. Midi Z emerged in the early 2010s with several short films, five feature-length films, and many documentaries. He has received global attention and attends many international film festivals,

including the International Film Festival Rotterdam and Venice Film Festival. It might be too early to periodize Midi Z's film career, as it has been relatively short and remains ongoing, but he was productive during the past decade, and rapidly changed over time. To understand Midi Z's films better, this chapter divides his career into three periods according to different production modes: (1) the short film period; (2) Guerrilla filmmaking period; Homecoming Trilogy, and (3) the commercialized film period.

During the first period of short films, Midi Z began shooting films in school, attended various film competitions, and won several prizes. The films he made during this period include *Motorcycle Driver* (2008), *A Man from Hometown* (2009), and *Huaxing Street* (2009). In an interview, Midi Z described himself metaphorically as a "bounty hunter", in that he entered film competitions for money, not to pursue art. However, several established filmmakers, including Hou Hsiao-Hsien, noticed his films and encouraged him to tell his stories. The second period is referred to as the "Homecoming Trilogy," which consists of *Return to Burma* (2011), *Poor Folk* (2012), and *Ice Poison* (2014). Midi Z returned to his hometown and Thailand to shoot on location to show the routes the Burmese immigrants took. Because of the difficult conditions in Burma and Thailand, he had no choice but to shoot the films without permission by using a hand-holding or hidden camera, small crews, non-professional actors, etc., which I refer to as a form of guerrilla filmmaking. The third phase of Midi Z's film career turned to commercial film production, including *The Road to Mandalay* (2016) and *Nina Wu* (2019). Because of the success of previous films in international film festivals, Midi Z received more funding to produce films from multiple international sources, and was able to show his ability to attract audiences other than those in the art house.

Midi Z's filmmaking reveals the desires that motivate border-crossing, and its difficulties, which provides a novel vision to remap a new transnational imaginary between Taiwan, Thailand, and Burma. Given that the border is constructed by complex historical, national, gendered, and linguistic landscapes, I discuss the way Midi Z's films navigate different notions of transnational logic, and provide a dynamic dialogue between not only Taiwanese studies and Burmese studies, but also transnational studies and immigrant studies.

Sinophone Burmese's Visualization–*A Home Too Far Away*

Midi Z's filmmaking provides the possibility of mutual understanding between Burma and Taiwan. To explain this possibility, I use the theory of Minor Transnationalism proposed by Shu-Mei Shih and Francoise Lionnet (2005). Shih and Lionnet have proposed the framework of minor transnationalism to emphasize mutual understanding between different marginal cultural studies and develop a horizontal, non-hierarchical network rather than a vertical model of recognition, as found in colonial and imperial systems. In the postcolonial system, minorities often adopt a resistant mode to achieve vertical recognition from the center, which ironically only reinforces the center's power and its cultural hegemony. Rather than using the model of post-colonial recognition as a resistant system, Shih and Lionnet suggest that we "take a horizontal approach that brings post-colonial minor cultural formations across national boundaries into productive comparisons and engage with multiple linguistic formulations" (p. 11). They emphasize "new forms of identification that negotiate with national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries" and constitute the complexity and multiplicity of ethnic minorities (p. 8). In the case of Burma and Taiwan, there is an invisible barrier between the two cultures and connections between them have not been fully recognized. The Taiwanese have long ignored the existence of the Burmese in Taiwan and lack an understanding of Burmese cultural and historical

connections with Taiwan. Midi Z engages in filmmaking not simply for personal satisfaction, but also because of the necessity and urgency he feels about making Burma visible to the world.

Midi Z's films provide a special visualization of Burma's landscape and offer precious viewpoints that allow the world to understand the Sinophone Burmese, images of whom audiences worldwide see seldom. Before Midi Z's films, a classic Taiwanese movie, *A Home Too Far Away* (Chinese title: *Yiyu* 異域, 1990, directed by Kevin Yen-ping Chu), can be understood as a prehistory of the social background of the Sinophone Burmese culture that appears in Midi Z's films. *A Home Too Far Away* is set during the post-WWII civil war between the Kuomintang (KMT), known also as the Nationalist Party, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The story depicts a soldier, Deng Kepao 鄧克保, who is affiliated with the KMT Party and flees from Yunnan Province with a group of his fellow soldiers led by his Captain (*tuanzhang* 團長), Li Kuo-hui 李國輝, and stays in Burma to find opportunities to defeat the Communist Party.

The film opens with a difficult decision for Deng Kepao: Should he flee with the rest of the KMT to Taiwan, or should he stay in Burma? Thereafter, the film shows a flashback to the way his troops fought against the Communist Party's "Liberation Army" (*jiefang jun* 解放軍) and survived on the borders of Burma, Thailand, and China. In addition to facing obstacles set by the Liberation Army, given their unauthorized entry into the country, Deng and his fellow soldiers were also forced to defend themselves against the armies of the Burmese government. Despite their defeat by the CCP army, Deng's troops defeated their Burmese opposition successfully, and ultimately, were able to reside safely in Burma.

The film was adapted from the novel *Yiyu* 異域, written by Guo Dingsheng 郭定生, known better by a pen name, Bo Yang, who is the author of several well-known essays,

including *Choulou de Zhongguoren* 醜陋的中國人 (Eng: *The Ugly Chinaman*[52].[OBJ] Bo Yang adopts a particularly unique perspective in *Yiyu*, as he reframes the book's narrative into a first-person account, and writes as Deng Kepao, a fictional character. *Yiyu* is based upon the memories of the members of the secret army troop who fled from Burma to Taiwan during the 1960s. However, the account of the stories provides only one of the perspectives of this secret army. [2]

In the film, the reason that Deng Kepao faces the question of whether or not he truly wants to go to Taiwan is because of international society's immense pressure on the KMT's party. For example, the Burmese government protested at the United Nations. The KMT could not support the secret army and ordered it to retreat from Burma and Thailand to Taiwan twice in the 1960s. However, some of them stayed along the border, either because of a personal decision or the assignment of a secret mission from the KMT. These troops had to survive by themselves in Burma and Thailand, all the while remaining unwelcome by both countries' governments. In the case of Thailand, because the secret army helped the Thai government defeat the Communist Party hiding in the mountains in Northern Thailand, soldiers of the secret army were able to obtain legal identification and citizenship from the Thai government. In contrast, the secret army members [53]… is primarily based upon membership of the 'national races' who are considered by the State to have settled in Myanmar prior to 1824, the date of first occupation by the

[52] The experience of the descendants of northern secret army.《與台灣漸行漸遠的泰北孤軍後裔》 https://vocus.cc/Liang_SoutheastAsia/5a121cffeceaed97b4027088

[53] Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law and Rohingya. https://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/media/Myanmar%E2%80%99s-1982-Citizenship-Law-and-Rohingya.pdf

British."[54]full citizens in Burma even though they have been in Burma for generations. Regardless of different states of citizenship, members of the secret army remained part of a marginalized group in Burma and Thailand because of their struggles to assimilate with the local culture, norms, and the general public's perspectives.

In an interview, Midi Z was asked if he had ever seen Zhu's *A Home Too Far Away*, and Midi Z admitted that the movie presents his great grandfather's generation. Accordingly, Midi Z is the fourth generation of the secret army. According to anthropologist Cheng Wen-Chin's (2014) investigation, the indication is that the majority of Yunnanese in Burma today are the offspring of these political refugees. Cheng states "over 80 percent of the Yunnanese in Burma today are descended from the refugees who fled Yunnan after 1949. They are second-, third- and fourth-generation migrants" (p. 8). Yet, after so many generations, these Sinophone Burmese are still marginalized by society. Midi Z's family story is a near epitome of that of the Yunnanese Burmese. Midi Z's great-grandfather moved from Nanjing to Yunnan as a worker in the construction of the Yunnan-Burma Highway during the Sino-Japanese War. Then, the family retreated to the border of Burma with the KMT's army. Their existence reflects the complexity of modern Chinese history. However, after several decades, although they maintain certain

[54] Red card, blue card, and green card? Discussion of identification in the historical context and 1982 Citizenship Law in Myanmar. https://myanmarwyneeintl.wordpress.com/2017/08/26/%E7%B4%85%E5%8D%A1%E3%80%81%E8%97%8D%E5%8D%A1%E3%80%81%E7%B6%A0%E5%8D%A1%E5%BE%9E%E6%AD%B7%E5%8F%B2%E6%B7%B5%E6%BA%90%E5%8F%8A1984%E5%B9%B4%E7%B7%AC%E7%94%B8%E5%85%AC%E6%B0%91%E6%B3%95%E8%AB%87/

Chinese customs, these Sinophone Burmese continue to have their own distinct identities that are defined by where they are and the way they perceive themselves.

Anlaoyi–Interrogation of Sinophone Burmese identities

These Sinophone Burmese's unstable lives force them to move to other countries, and all of these factors affect their identities. Midi Z's filmmaking is related in part to his question about his identity. His short film, *Anlaoyi* 安老衣, *The Grave Clothes*, depicts a Yunnanese tradition in which when a person is nearing the end of his life, he must cover himself with prepared grave clothes to symbolize his soul returning to his homeland. The film derived originally from a serious film project, *The Letter from South* 華人的原鄉與離散, Huaren de Yuan Xiang yu Lisan [literaraly means Chinese's homeland and diaspora], which Hong Kong Phoenix TV[55] proposed. The project invited six filmmakers from Southeast Asia to make a short film about their immigrant experience, and the series included filmmakers across Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and Myanmar. Midi Z indicated ion that the phrase "homeland and diaspora" triggers his emotions deeply. He asked where is the homeland of the generations of Chinese people who have left China and migrated all over the world? Crossing four generations of his family's migration from Nanjing, Yunnan, Myanmar, and Taiwan, the question of "where is the homeland" is nearly he film impossible to answer, but always in his mind. Several scholars have discussed Midi Z's question about "Chinese diaspora". In *Against Diaspora*, Shu-mei Shih (2013) questions the idea of "the Chinese Diaspora" and criticizes the Han-centered approach of

[55] Each short film in the series of *The Letter from South* is 15-minutes long. The six directors were Sun Koh, Tan Chui Mui, Aditya Assarat, Royston Tan, and Tsai Ming-liang.

discussing immigrants from China. She proposes that Sinophone Studies is intended to discover "the margin of China and Chineseness" which includes "outside the geopolitical China proper" or "in many parts of the world through historical processes of (im)migration and settlement spanning several countries" (p. 25). The film *Anlaoyi* contrasts the elder and the younger generation who have a different sense of where "home" is. The elder has a strong desire to return to his hometown, Yunnan, as he cannot die before he is covered with the shroud. However, Sammei, the granddaughter, who was born in Burma and married a Chinese man, helps bring back the shroud, although she does not consider China her home and wants to return to Burma.

In *Anlaoyi*, the grandfather's death elucidates these notions of a homeland. The viewer's understanding is increased by several conversations between the characters. When Sammei arrives home and tries to argue with a motorcycle taxi driver, her mother stops her and asks her to hurry up because her grandfather has been waiting for his shroud for a long time. This conversation also reveals that Sammei's father may be unable to come back in time because there is a war in the northern part of Myanmar. They live in a shack in which the sunlight penetrates the thatch walls, which shows these Sinophone Burmese's poor living conditions. The old man lays on the bed and moans: "I want to come home. Where are my clothes, where are my clothes?" When her mother asks Sammei if she has brought the shroud back with her, Sammei explains that the shroud has nearly turned into dust because the government forced people to abandon their old traditions during the cultural revolution in the 1960s. To try to preserve some of these traditions, Sammei's relatives buried the prepared burial clothes. The first notion of homeland shown in this short film is that even though the grandfather is going to die in Burma, he still wishes to connect with his hometown by being buried in the nearly destroyed clothes. However, his hometown has changed since he left and the custom can no longer continue.

Another complication of the idea of homeland in this short film is that most of the members of the Sinophone Burmese family are not in Myanmar; they migrate to other places for work. Sammei wants to tell her elder brother who works on a fishing boat that their grandfather has died. She sits in a grocery shop, which provides the town with phone service, because most people cannot afford to own a phone. In the scene, Sammei sits on the left of the frame which appears to squeeze her in the corner. However, before she can tell her brother that their grandfather has died, he says that he has sent a pair of shoes for him. Sammei feels unable to tell him the truth about their grandfather's death, and the film ends with her in a melancholy mood.

The film shows the relations between "roots" and "routes" as Shih discussed in her article "Against Diaspora" (2013). She claimed that "Sinophone studies allow us to rethink the relationship between roots and routes by considering the conceptions of roots as place-based rather than ancestral or routes as a more mobile conception of home-ness rather than wandering and homelessness" (p. 38). The character of the grandfather in *Anlaoyi* has his roots in Yunnan province, but his route ends in Lashio, Myanmar. However, Lashio is his granddaughter's hometown, but her travel to Yunnan province takes her to a place from which she is alienated. Thus, her grandfather's roots and route are opposite to those of Sammei. Although the elder still has strong nostalgia for his roots, the younger generation has different ideas about where their roots are. Most first-generation immigrants maintain a strong connection with their origin. However, the living conditions and places where second- or third-generation immigrants live differ completely from those of their ancestors. For example, when Sammei first arrives in Lashio, the motorcycle taxi driver tries to engage her in the Burmese language, but she does not respond until he speaks to her in Chinese. One might argue that this shows that language is a means to recognize each other, but the fact is that Sinophone Burmese are the minority in this

country, and they have to use language to identify each other. Sammei's family experience is one example of Sinophone Burmese's local practices, in that some of them insist on tradition, while others shift their identities according to their conditions. Moreover, these individuals are displaced continually. Both Sammei's father and brother cannot go home to attend the funeral because they work far from their hometown.

As Shih (2013) argues, "… when routes can be roots, multidirectional critiques are not only possible but also imperative. Transcending national borders, Sinophone communities can maintain a critical position toward both the country of origin and the country of settlement" (p. 38). The film *Anlaoyi* reveals that the Chinese government has eliminated tradition at its origin, while poverty motivates the younger generation in Myanmar to move away. This visualization of Sinophone Burmese not only reveals their marginalities, but also provides critiques to see the unfairness toward these people as they struggle to negotiate different national identities and the uneven development attributable to globalization. Midi Z's film is a special visualization of Burma's landscape and offers important viewpoints for the way the world can understand the Sinophone Burmese. Compared to Kevin Chu's *A Home Too Far Away*, Midi Z's films choose a position of observation rather than passionate nationalism, and his documentary style of filmmaking provides very different impressions of these people. In the next section, I contextualize Midi Z in the development of cinema study and show the meaning of Midi Z's Sinophone Burmese representation.

The Underdevelopment of Immigrant Cinema in the Digital Era

Immigrant cinema is an underdeveloped category in film studies, which are related to multiple different fields, including third cinema, transnational cinema, diasporic cinemas, and minor cinemas. As an immigrant filmmaker, Midi Z's work crosses several nations, including

Myanmar, Thailand, and Taiwan. His films present transnational—Sinophone Burmese—experiences of immigration as Midi Z has developed his own unique film language. Midi Z's cinematic representation of Burma is exceptional not only for Taiwan Cinema, but also Burmese cinema. In this section, I ask the following questions: What is Midi Z's significance as an immigrant filmmaker? Further, how should scholars situate Midi Z's work in the theoretical frame in film history?

Midi Z's personal journey began in 1998 when he obtained his student visa finally and flew from his hometown Lashio in Burma to Taiwan. In *Ju li Bing Du* [Unification, Separation, Ice Poision: Accounts of Zhao Deyin's filmmaking], he described the effect of seeing the enormous gap in technological development between Myanmar and Taiwan (p.16-17). Similarly, when the audience follows Midi Z's lens to his hometown, we find a large gap between the two worlds. Midi Z's film creates a self-portrayed, self-reflected, and self-questioning image not only for Sinophone Burmese people, but also for the global audience. Because of his strong interest in making a film in his hometown, he brought a small group and a small budget to shoot the film. The censorship and dangerous conditions for filming in Burma did not deter him. Moreover, he adopted a guerrilla filmmaking style to produce his "Homecoming Trilogy." My focus on Midi Z's filmmaking emphasizes not only an auteur's power, but also contextualizes his personal experience in the filmmaking production. As such, all of the decisions Midi Z made were based upon both his choices and the complexity of technical development, economic conditions, social structures, and aesthetic traditions.

Midi's Migrant and Hamid Naficy's Accented Film

Midi Z's exile and migrant background can be related to Hamid Naficy's (2001) theory of the accented film. Hamid Naficy's theory is one of the most influential theories in immigrant

cinema, as it applies to the discussion of immigrant and diasporic filmmakers' filmmaking. This theory can help us "situate" those filmmakers who are under-recognized because of their background and acknowledge their contributions to the major film industry. Naficy mapped the accented cinema according to three different types of filmmakers—exilic, diasporic, and ethnic. He emphasized that these statuses are not fixed categories but can be transformed for every filmmaker. The categories do not conflict with each other arbitrarily; rather, one filmmaker can be situated in several conditions simultaneously (e.g., diasporic and ethnic). The complexity of filmmakers' statuses can be expected because immigrant filmmakers largely are changing their status and identities over time constantly as well (for example, migrants become ethnic minorities). For example, Midi Z would never have imagined having a film career had he not immigrated to Taiwan as a student. He studied as a print major in high school and then studied in the design department in college.

His film journey began when he received a DV device from one of his Burmese friends, who entrusted him to buy a DVD from Taiwan and import it to his hometown on his way back home to record a wedding. However, at the time, Midi Z could not bring the device with him because the Burmese government censored journalists and prevented media from being imported to Burma and it was also forbidden to import film shooting devices. To avoid difficulty, Midi Z kept the device and paradoxically, he became a filmmaker to reveal the Sinophone Burmese's social reality.

When he attended the short film competitions in Taiwan, his unique voice attracted judges and Taiwanese film critics. He went to the Golden Horse Academy and learned many skills in film production directly from extraordinary filmmakers in Taiwan, including Hou Hsiao-hsien and Ann Lee, two of the most established and world-famous directors. The

recognition on the part of Taiwan's film industry and later at the international film festival gave Midi Z the confidence to make a film about his hometown.

Immigrant film may face the critique of falling into the old tradition of an author-centered approach that ignores post-structuralist or post-modernist critique of the author's death. Hamid Naficy (2001) refuses the charge of "the bond linking autobiography to authorship" as a postmodernist's concern and argues it should not "… dismiss the specificity of exilic conditions or defuse their subversive and empowering potentiality" (pp. 34-35). Accented filmmakers are individuals who are "empirical subjects who exist outside and prior to their films." The immigrants as historical subjects are indispensable components to see "for the diasporized subalterns of the world, history, historical agency, and autobiographical consciousness have become significant and signifying components of identity, artistic production, and social agency" (pp. 34-35). Although the authorship occupies a greater position in the analysis of accented filmmakers, Naficy also emphasizes "… their (dis) location as interstitial subjects within social formations and cinema practices" (p. 34).

As we mentioned, *Anlaoyi* is a story based upon Midi Z's experience, which was then expanded into his feature film *Ice Poison*. Notably, except for a small number of professional Taiwanese actors and actresses, he casts non-professional Sinophone Burmese in his films, largely his family members and friends. These non-professionals carry their own life experiences into their performances. These immigrant films create "a structure of feeling" that Raymond Williams and Naficy (2001) proposed originally and extended to immigrant film production. Naficy explains that a structure of feeling is "… not [a] fixed institution, formation, position, or even a formal concept such as worldview or ideology." Instead, it is "… a set of undeniable personal and social experiences" (p. 26). The experience of these structure of feeling, Naficy

claims, "… is rooted in the filmmakers' profound experience of deterritorialization" and the feeling of dislocation (p. 27). As was mentioned in a previous section, the Sinophone Burmese have their own history of dislocation and the desire to seek opportunities outside their hometown. One of the most significant features of immigrant film is their ability to capture this process, transition, or transformation. The multiple sites, their home, and the transnational locations are connected to a certain chronotope that is rooted deeply in immigrants' experiences.

Dangerous Film in Dangerous and Guerrilla Filmmaking

To present this special chronotope, we have to look behind the scenes to see the difficulties and the materialities for filmmakers who make films about immigrants. Before discussing Midi Z's film production, it is crucial to understand the restrictions on filmmaking in Burmese society. In Maria Ochwat's (2020) account, military governments have suppressed human rights and media significantly since the implementation of the Printers and Publisher Registration Act in 1962.[56] The military government censored any content that criticized the Burmese national ideology strictly, including revealing the reality of Burmese society. Mark Mangier (2013) reports that "In the 1960s, cinema was nationalized, the acceptable topic was narrowed, and industry was ordered to 'match to Burmese socialism'" (online).[57] The military government interfered with film production by issuing capricious guidelines to portray a glorious imagination of the Burmese nation. Further, government did not allow poverty to be depicted on

[56] Ochwat, M. "Myanmar Media: Legacy and Challenges". *The Age of Human Rights Journal*, no. 14, June 2020, pp. 245-71.

[57] http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Myanmar/sub5_5e/entry-3094.html

screen.[58] This restriction was relaxed in 2012 when the government began to reform. Ochwat records this change: "One of the most important steps towards media freedom was the abolition of the obligation of prior censorship, as well as the obtaining operating licenses by the print media. However, they still had to be registered with the Ministry of Information" (p. 260). Although the media's regulation has been relaxed, filmmakers are still very sensitive about avoiding the red line that the military government implemented previously. Midi Z's first film, *Return to Burma*, focused on the Burmese government's reform. When he began to make the film, he was aware of the government's taboo and the difficulties associated with receiving permission to shoot in the country.

Because of the restrictions on making a film in Myanmar, Midi Z had to be flexible in film shooting and the process of production. In 2013, when Midi Z shot his short film, *Anlaoyi*, the film production group encountered trouble with local authorities. On the seventh day of shooting in the town of Lashio, when Midi Z and his film crew shot the scene in which the female protagonist, Sammei, gets off the bus at the station, the police received a notice about the film group and their shooting. Midi Z set up a camera on the rooftop of a restaurant in front of the bus station and then used a long shot with a long take to capture the action of Xinhung working as a scooter taxi driver, and getting Sammei as his customer. This impromptu shooting

[58] "Guidelines ranged from the predictable to the quirky. The army had to be depicted gloriously. And despite its own reliance on astrologers for major decisions, the regime hated special effects or anything involving spirits, astrology or the supernatural. In the final scene of his 1960s biopic about a famous Burmese writer, director Myo Zaw Aung showed his subject withering away, leaving a skeleton. They said it was too scary and snipped it," he said. "They never even watched the whole film." https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-myanmar-film-20130402-dto-htmlstory.html

style was learned in part from Hou Hsiao-Hsien and in part reflected his intuition as a filmmaker. Hou used similar techniques in his works, such as setting up the film camera as an observation to immerse the real scene in his fictional film. Midi Z learned this technique when he was a member of the Golden Horse Academy film school and produced his short film *Huaxing Street*. When he applied the technique, he also needed to adjust the method to local circumstances. As a native [59] Burmese, he understood that making a film could be dangerous, and could potentially result in being arrested or even going to prison. In Midi Z's account, he states "It is very risky to set up this mode of filmmaking. First, the Burmese soldier and policy man are good at making trouble with people to gain some money from people. Second, there is station management. There are plainclothes police, drug dealers, gangsters and smugglers in between the travels. You have no ideas if you will be reported by someone" (p. 103). Luckily, although the Burmese Police interrogated the crew, they were allowed to shoot in front of the station after Midi Z convinced them that they [60]simply shooting a sightseeing video (pp. 103-106). This was a dangerous experience Midi Z had while shooting in Myanmar because the authorities change their principle and regulations. This impromptu method of shooting film can be related to the "guerrilla cinema" style of filmmaking, which Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino used in Argentina when they developed their assertion of third world cinema. The concept of "third cinema" (also called "third world cinema") was developed originally in South America during the 1960s. Solanas and Getino, two of the main figures in this movement, emphasized a de-colonial approach to fight against Westernized hegemony in film, particularly that of first world cinema (Hollywood/Eurocentric cinema) and second world cinema (European art cinema and the

[59] *Ju, Li, Bingdu*, p. 103.

[60] *Ju, Li, Bingdu*, pp. 103-106.

cinema of auteurs).[61] Solanas and Getino, both film directors, published their famous manifesto, "Towards a Third Cinema" (1969, reprinted in 1983) about the politicization process of filmmaking outside of mainstream production as a post-colonial practice against pro-capitalist messaging.

In their manifesto, the directors organized "a film-guerrilla group" and used the camera as their "rifle". In *Political Film*, Mike Wayne (2001) explains that the first meaning of "Guerrilla cinema" is that "the text concerns itself with *representation* of guerrilla warfare," such as *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) (p. 56). However, in most circumstances, the term "Guerrilla cinema" has a second meaning of "the conditions of production in which filmmaking was undertaken" (p. 57). The production model parallels the way groups of guerrilla fighters might work, which Solanas and Getino explain: "We do in fact move into guerrilla activity. This is why the work of a film-guerrilla group is governed by strict disciplinary norms to both work methods and security" (p. 49). Largely, the filmmakers have no option but to face many unstable, even dangerous, situations that may be attributable to politics, conflicts with state authorities, and censorship, among other circumstances. These conditions may lead to the filmmakers' arrest or imprisonment. As such, these groups have to shoot their films secretly or strategically.

In *The Motorcycle Driver* (2008), Midi Z's first film production in his hometown, he followed his childhood friend, Y-san, who was smuggling a motorcycle across the border from China to Myanmar. Midi Z knew this trip would be very dangerous and his family disagreed with his plan to film such a sensitive subject. Only a year earlier, in 2007, there was a revolution in Burma, which the Burmese government suppressed violently. A foreign journalist was killed during that incident, which raised concerns about the safety of Midi Z filming on the Burma-

[61] Hayward, Susan. *Cinema Studies-The Key Concepts*. Routledge, 2006, p. 383.

China border. During the trip, Midi Z and his friend were stopped by three soldiers who found his Digital Video (DV) camera. He explained that he brought the DV from China to film his sister's wedding. However, the soldiers did not believe him and took his memory card, and he had to beg and bribe them to solve the crisis. This incident can be seen as his first attempt to use guerrilla filmmaking techniques, which continued to be his mode of production throughout his Homecoming Trilogy.[62]

As a film student, Midi Z understood the historical context of Third Cinema as a form of social movement against authority. In his account, he regards the First Cinema, the Second Cinema and the Third Cinema as different film languages. For different perspectives, he emphasizes that the different evaluation systems interpret the same technique differently and do not judge a film according to a different film language. He is more concerned whether a filmmaker can be open to different ideas and has his/her own original style: "A true filmmaker must still be able to fully be open with their ideas, and by being free in one's original style, one can present the story they want to tell in their heart." However, although he does not have a strong political stand (as Solanas and Getino did), his recording of Sinophone Burmese's marginality responds to what the Third Cinema concerns:

What determines third cinema is the conception of the world, and not the genre or an explicitly political approach. Any story, any subject can be taken up by the third cinema. In the dependent countries, third cinema is cinema of decolonization, which expresses the will to national liberation, anti-mythic, anti-racist, anti-bourgeois, and popular. (p. 19)

The question here is not whether Midi Z fits the category of a third cinema filmmaker; instead, the question is how does guerrilla filmmaking allow Midi Z to record what he is

[62] *Ju, Li, Bingdu*, p. 240.

passionate about, the changing Burmese society in the historical moment of its democratic and economic transition during the early 2010s? His films show his perspective that what film can do is not simply for filmmakers per se, but it can act also as a medium to awaken the global audience to the underrepresented world.

Digital Film and DV Realism

The guerrilla style is one of the film languages Midi Z has chosen. The digital camera opened new possibilities for the current generation of filmmakers to create more diversified content. In *Low-Cost Independent Digital Film Production* (2010), Midi Z acknowledge in his summary of his master thesis that his success in filmmaking is attributable to the development of digital cameras, digital post-production, and internet dissemination. (III) Midi Z is fully aware that the revolution of digital cinema has become a new field, not simply a new means to produce films (2005) , but a new way to think about film itself. He understands that the constant development of cinema technology in film history is a crucial part of the development of movie aesthetics, including the sound movie in 1927 followed by the color movie in 1935. With respect to digital film, the film theorist Lev Manovich (2005) define[63] the new film technology as the combination of live-action material, painting, image processing, composition, and computer animation. Many scholars and filmmakers focus on the special effects digital cameras' of post-production in digital filmmaking; however, according to Manovich, the supporters of DV realism rather favor "multiple, often handhold, inexpensive digital cameras to create films characterized by a documentary style" (p. 21)[OBJ] Digital cameras' advantages include that it is easier to capture actors' performances, and

[63] Manovich refers to "American films Mike Figgis's *Timecode* and *Blair Witch Project*, and the European films the Dogma 95 group made (*Celebration*, *Mifuen*)" as examples.

they allow for a more intimate filmic approach, and a longer duration of filming. In this way, Manovich claims, “the increased quantity of (cheaper!) material gives the filmmaker and the actors more freedom to improvise around a theme” (p. 21). Manovich traces’s these developments back to the cinema movement in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, such as the concept of “direct cinema”, “candid cinema”, “uncontrolled cinema”, and “observation cinema”. These experimental film concepts have very similar goals, which can be related to today’s DV realism, its “immediacy.” Manovich’s discussion of “DV realism” shows that inexpensive digital film devices can help filmmakers create images more easily and allow for more simultaneous interventions.

Although Midi Z embraces the concept of “DV realism,” he has no objection to post-production. In Midi Z’s master’s thesis, he discussed clearly how he used post-production as a way to replace expensive high-speed cameras in his short video, Baige/*Paloma Blanca* (2006.) *Paloma Blanca*’s story presents a “pigeon race”, which is a special gambling activity in Taiwan. In this film, the primary actor and actress play pigeons to show the way they fly from one place to another, as well as how many obstacles they encounter on their journey. He used a great deal of slow motion to present the race scene, but had no budget to rent an expensive high-speed camera. Thus, rather than renting such equipment, he used an expensive commercial digital camera and post-production to create such a convincing slow-motion effect that even professional filmmakers believe they used a high-speed camera. Because of this experience, as a young filmmaker, Midi Z has no fear of exploring digital filmmaking to tell his story.

A point I argue here is not the way DV realism can produce an image “[closer] to the real,” but rather that DV realism is a mediated image through the new technology that allows filmmakers greater flexibility to create their own aesthetics despite the traditional limitations of budget constraints. Taiwanese scholar Wang Wan-jui (2017) discusses the gradually maturing

digital technologies' to increase the number of young filmmakers who devote themselves to filmmaking.[64] This development can be seen as a new mode of cultural production and social practice.[OBJ] DV realism also addresses the old-fashioned question "What is realism?" Thinking of film as a medium, "realism" has been discussed as one type of film aesthetic that produces reality-affected images. Filmmakers intentionally do not want to provide too much interpretation for the audience and show a natural-like representation instead. Susan Hayward (2006) indicates that "technique functions in this instance so as not to provide an encoded preferred reading. Rather, it seeks to offer as objectively as possible a form of realism" (p. 313). Evidently, Midi Z's films have many features related to realism as those new wave directors established, including location shooting, natural lighting, a documentary style, shaky hand-held cameras, non-professional actors, long takes, or using a great deal of static camera movement, etc. Midi Z inherited this aesthetic style from Taiwan New Cinema (also referred to as taught New Taiwan Cinema) that developed in the late 1980s and was a movement to bring social reality to the screen. In an interview, Midi Z compared his work to Taiwan New Cinema in two ways. Firstly, his movies share similar humanistic themes and concerns with Taiwan New Cinema and other new wave cinemas. Secondly, he also admitted that he learned shooting skills from Hou Hsiao-Hsien when he was a member of the Golden Horse Academy in 2009. The Academy is a film camp to cultivate young filmmakers. In *Huaxing Street* (2009), Hou taught Midi Z the way to use non-professional actors to create a feeling of reality, and inspired by the famous Hollywood filmmaker, Ann Lee, to explore subjects that interest you, which he applied and introduced in his first three films, known as the "Homecoming Trilogy." In the next section, I will begin with

[64] Wang, Wan-jui. "No Country for Young Man—DV Realism, Popular Songs and Midi A's 'Homecoming Trilogy'" 中外文學。第 46 卷。第一期 。2017 年 3 月, p. 153.

Return to Burma to analyze the way Midi Z's films make use of digital film technology to present Sinophone Burmese's life.

Return to Burma–The Marginality and Question of Development for Sinophone Burmese

In this section, I focus on *Return to Burma*, which I argue presents the way marginalities in Taiwan and Burma, including ethnic and class-based marginalization, affect Sinophone-Burmese life. This film criticizes not only the ignorance of immigrant workers in Taiwan, but also the predicament attributable to Burmese nationalism.

Poverty is a central issue in Midi Z's films. Zhao (2015) points out that "[e]scaping poverty is the main cause of their [Burmese workers'] migration, and acquiring wealth is their earnest wish (Zhao, 2015, p. 65). Different scholars have approached this agenda in different ways. The first derives from an anthropological perspective, and uses Midi Z's film as a case study to see the relation between poverty and culture. The anthropologist Wen-Chin Chang (2015) discusses Zhao's background and the presentation of poverty and migration in his film. Chang appreciates that Midi Z's film presents a native's perspective to portray the poverty of his own community and explore the structural problems related to the socio-political situations that many non-native scholars have ignored. Chang criticizes anthropologists, such as Oscar Lewis, who misunderstand "the culture of poverty" as "the cause of poverty" rather than "its result" (p. 49). The poverty these migrants experience never derives from a single factor, but instead, is attributable to the combination of multiple factors. It is important to contextualize the way this poverty began, and show "migrant's self-reflections on their transnationality and multiple experiences of discrimination as they connect with differences and inequality in culture, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status" (p. 51).

The second approach is from a film scholar's perspective. Borrowing from poor theater theory, Song Hwee Lim (2018) argues that Midi Z's film does not simply reflect impoverished peoples' scenarios; instead, he emphasizes that poverty is used "… both as a method for film production during which trafficking becomes ubiquitous and as a problematic that foregrounds how the poor characters in his film deal with poverty (rather than how thy might have suffered because of their poverty)" (p. 4). In this way, Lim emphasizes the agency of the poor who do not just accept poverty passively, but take the initiative to escape it. As I mentioned in the previous section, Midi Z's guerrilla style is not simply an objective recording of the poor's reality, but is also an active practice when they produce the film. Based upon Chang and Lim's discussion, I propose that "the question of the concept of development" is the key notion to mobilize both character and film production.

The Great Contrast between Taiwan and Burma

The opening scene in *Return to Burma* sets the tone of these transnational contrasts, showing the disjuncture between the two worlds of Taiwan and Burma. The first scene takes place in Taipei, in front of a construction site where the workers are waiting for their salaries. The people are silent but the background is filled with traffic noise. Once the construction site manager comes, the workers walk in front of the camera and get their salaries. In the scene, when these workers are standing under the shadow of the building, their bodies look relatively small. The protagonist, Xinghong (Wang Shin-Hong), waits with his fellow workers for their salaries, which he plans to bring back to Burma during his Lunar New Year vacation. He has lived in Taiwan for twelve years and seldom returns to his hometown of Lashio, Burma. During his vacation this year, Xinghong has an additional mission, to deliver his friend, Rong's, ashes to his family in Burma. Rong was also a Sinophone-Burmese worker who endeavored to earn more

money by working overtime night shifts at the construction site where Xinghong works before returning to Burma. Unfortunately, Rong fell from a building and was killed. Xinghong is entrusted to deliver Rong's salary and the financial compensation that the Taiwanese construction company provided for Rong's death, as well as funds his colleagues and friends gathered on behalf of Rong's family before going back to their hometown. However, rather than delivering the money to Rong's family, Xinghong keeps the money himself and attempts to use his savings and his newly acquired money to open his own business in Burma. Thus, the narrative is divided into two parts: the long journey of Xinghong's return home and the search for a new business in his hometown. Although the plot may seem straightforward, the film is deeply analytical because of the added historical complexity in Xinghong's journey, which includes the democratic transformation and economic reforms in Burma.

The structure of the story—Three storylines (Xinghong, A-Rong, and the Younger brother)The journey home and the journey to a new country

Return to Burma illustrates a historical moment in which the Burmese people were full of optimism for their country's future development. In the sequence following Xinghong's (A-Hong) journey, the film sophisticatedly arranges the travel images, diegetic and nondiegetic sounds, and subtitles. Xinghong takes a plane first and the diegetic background sounds broadcasting boardingthe flight in Standard Mandarin. He is sleeping in the seat. In the next scene, he looks out the plane's window as he approaches Myanmar. At this moment, the diegetic sound arises, and a subtitle appears: "Let's welcome this brand-new Congress." The film screen shows the date, "On November 7, 2010," which is the date of the congressional election, when Xinghong held his luggage and took a truck from Yangon to his hometown. The subtitles describe the recent election: "According to the constitution... with a fair and just election... In a

fair and just election... We have elected the congressional representatives... In Burma, this is a day of historical importance... We have freely cast... Our sacred votes.... For the first democratic country (to) insert new energy... The great congressional representatives... will discuss affairs (that) matter to this country" (*Return to Burma*). Obviously, this setting is designed purposely to create a connection between Xinghong's homecoming journey and the new start of the nation. Thus, Xinghong returns home with the hope to be involved in this nation building.

On the surface, the story depicts Xinghong's return, but in depth, the underlying question is how to perceive Burma as a new country at this historical turning point. According to the account of Midi Z's filmmaking career found in his book, *Ju, Li, Bingdu* ["Gathering, Departing, Ice Poison] (2015), Midi Z reveals his initial thoughts about the film *Return to Burma*. In the interview, he describes that he was motivated particularly by Burma's first democratic election in 2010, which marked the historic change from Burma's military-controlled government. Historically, like many other Southeast Asian countries, Burma (Myanmar), has endured a long struggle with its colonial past, and its process of decolonization has been far from smooth. In 1962, the military, led by General Ne Win, took control of the government by coup, and then suspended the constitution and dissolved parliament, ending the short-lived democracy that followed Burma's independence from British colonial rule in 1948. The military government, run by the Burmese Socialist Programme Party, implemented their concept of a "Burmese Way to Socialism"" which they claimed was "Marxist in inspiration, Leninist in implementation and Buddhist in its goals," and the core of this idea was to establish "… a communist-style nationalized economy" (Cockett, 2015, p. 54)[65] The Party's major policy goal was to expel

[65] Cockett, Richard. *Blood, Dreams and Gold: The Changing Face of Burma*. Yale University Press, 2015.

foreign and private companies and create an economy favorable for ethnic Burmese. Implementation of these policies destroyed Burma's economy for more than fifty years. Cockett comments that "[T]he imposition of military rule in 1962 thus led to the heartbreaking ruination of the country. As racism drove out diversity and creativity, so commerce dried up and Rangoon, in particular, began to fall into a state of miserable disrepair" (p. 54). Thereafter, Myanmar's economy virtually collapsed and most of the population lived in poverty. Thus, the Burmese government's democratization brought hope that the Burmese economy might improve.

There are two major narratives in Xinghong's homecoming: One is bringing his friend A-Rong's ashes to his family (the next section will address this issue) and the other is searching for a potential business in his hometown. During the stay in his hometown, Xinghong wanders around different places to see potential businesses in which he can invest with the little funds from his savings and A-Rong's compensation that the construction company entrusted to him to give to A-Rong's family. Through his adventure, the audience perceives the economic conditions in his hometown. The businesses include an oil factory, an electronic product shop, motorcycle market, and jade trading market. He asks different people about the tricks of their business constantly while chatting. In these parts, the film is shot more like a documentary to present a sense of everyday life. Asking prices is one of the most common conversations in Midi Z's film. During the repetition of these discussions, the audience has a sense of the gap between these Sinophone-Burmese and their world. In this way, the locality is presented.

Broken Country and Unsolved Ethnic Conflict

Although the film does not show the disadvantages of being a Sinophone Burmese in Burma explicitly, it deploys the scenes of Sinophone Burmese daily life that reflects the characters' Sinophone identity and the crisis for these people. The film adds cultural elements to

help the audience understand the individual's cultural identity. One example is the scene of the commencement of a Chinese language school. In this scene, the film juxtaposes the way Confucian ideology is still part of their education system with the way Xinghong was treated as a successful man with a work ethic. The school invites him to give a commencement speech. In this scene, the film shows the people's cultural identities and the ideology of development. As we mentioned before, these individuals were descendants of the KMT troops and they still make efforts to preserve their identities through education. The name of the school, "Guo Qiang school," is shown in the lecture hall, where it is decorated with a couplet in traditional characters on a red curtain on either side of the stage. The couplet indicates the school's effort to inherit the teaching of Confucianism. The date reads February 6th, 2011. Xinghong delivers a speech in which he tells the students that "there is no free lunch" and encourages them to be diligent and work enthusiastically to achieve success. For the final blessing, Xinghong says "Yuanzougaofei" in Chinese, and the English subtitle shows "I wish you could go abroad" which is an expansive interpretation of this four-word idiom. In general, the phrase "Yuanzougaofei" means "wish you to go far away," but the English subtitle here urges them to go abroad explicitly. Although this is an elementary school graduation ceremony, the audience is largely adults who exhibit no visible emotions, and sit in silence.

Literate Sinophone Burmese still rely on the Sinitic language to obtain information. When Xinghong visits his childhood friend, a teacher and poet in his local community, he brings two books as a gift for him. One is a translation of the Indian poet Robndronath Thkur's poems *The Crescent Moon Collection*, and another is a translation of the Nobel prize winner *One Man's Bible*. This segment also exemplifies the cultural circulation through the Sinitic language in

Sinophone Burmese Society, which is unique to Myanmar. Because of this cultural connection, these Sinophone Burmese yearn to go to Taiwan.

The film also inserts non-diegetic scenes of children playing games to present hidden issues. There are two such scenes. First, the children imitate a robbery. In the sequence, two children face each other across a table. Each of them has a gun laying on their pants. The boy asks the girl: "We've never robbed a restaurant before. Do you want to try it this time?" The girl replies: "Sure!" Then they stand up on the table and yell: "Don't move!" to pretend they are robbers. After this sequence, the film jumps directly into another game scene of children fighting. Four older kids hold rifles, hide behind cement walls, and fight against their enemies. In a reverse shot, other groups of kids also hold rifles and hide behind a mound before finally running out to fight. They pretend to be shot to death and lie on the ground. Chang (2016) indicates that the inserted scenes of children play fighting imply "the ethnic conflicts and military violence in Burma" (p. 69). Some people may argue that it is unnecessary for children's behavior to reflect reality; however, the scenes' insertion in the film is an intentional selection. Many researchers have also indicated that the ethnic conflicts and military violence in Burma are two major problems in Burmese society that serve as obstacles to development and result in poverty.

Lashio, Midi Z's hometown, is the largest administrative unit in northern Shan State, located in northern Burma, with multiple ethnic groups, including Chinese (Sinophone Burmese), Shan people, and Burmans.[66] The military conflict between Myanmar's government

[66] David Thang Moe describes the ethnic situation in Myanmar: "Ethnically, Myanmar is a diverse country, where more than 100 languages are spoken. According to the government report in 2003, there

and the army of minority groups in Burma lasted for more than fifty years after World War II.[67] The ethnic conflict in Burma is also a British colonial relic of the "divide and rule" policy to make one ethnic group fight against others. The conflicts are not only ethnic, but are related to economic interests also, such as jade mining and drug dealing. In addition, the Burmese communist party attempts to cooperate actively with local ethnic leaders to extend their influence. The increase in Burman militarism and nationalism facilitates the conflict between different ethnic groups. To build a new national identity, the diverse ethnic identities have been pushed away from the ruling government by emphasizing Burmans' identities and Buddhist beliefs.[68] Steinberg (2001) states that "[f]orce held the Union together, not a sense of national unity or ethnic equity" (p. 187).[69] The attempt to promote a unified national ideology is

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are 135 racial groups with a total population of 55 million. There are six major ethnic groups, Chins, Kachins, Karens, Shans, Mons, Rakhines and the one dominant Burman ethnic group, which [is] represented in terms of Buddhism" (p. 69). Thang Moe, David. "Burman Nationalism and Ethnic Identity: Toward an Ethnic Postcolonial Theology of Resistance and Reconciliation in Myanmar." *Black Theology*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2019, pp. 69-88.

[67] The reason for, and the process of military conflict are extremely complex and many issues have to be traced back to British colonial history and their attitude toward different ethnic groups. There are several references that discuss Burmese history, the details of the historical process, a discussion of the Burmese military conflict, and ethnic identity: Thang Moe, above. Chen, Hong-yu. 陳鴻瑜 The history of Myanmar. Taipei, The Commercial Press, Ltd. 2016. Pp. 252-263.

[68] David Thang Moe argues that "Myanmar has two forms of colonialism." One is an "external form from British colonialism" (1824-1948), and the other is an "internal form of colonialism" (1962-).

[69] Steinberg, David I. Burma: The State of Myanmar. Georgetown University Press, 2001.

impossible in this diverse ethnic country, and results in minority groups' resistance in Burma. In many cases, the military actions and war not only destroy the local economy, but also force many people to move out of the area. Reconciliation is nearly unobtainable because when the government wants to unify the country under Burmans' rule, the minority ethnic groups claim a federal system to retain autonomy for each ethnic group and its army.[70]

The third example of integrating the issues into daily life is the scenes about power outages. The first example is a night scene in which people have to use candles to light the interior of their house, which demonstrates the infrastructure's weakness. The second scene related to power cuts is in the sequence in which Xinghong enquires about the process of making oil. He and the oil factory owner have a conversation about electricity and the development of industry. Xinghong asks: "Electricity should be pretty good now?" The oil factory owner replies: "Electricity in the past was horrible. Recently, it's [been] pretty good." Xinghong asks: "If electricity is stable in Burma, then the place can be developed, right?" The factory owner replies "As long as the electricity [is] good, everything can be developed. Burma will get better and better." Through this conversation, the audience understands that the lack of electricity had a terrible effect on industrial development, but the electricity supply has improved since. The scene appears very optimistic about the future. However, in another night scene, the electricity is still unstable. Xinghong is watching people gambling on the street. He is holding a light in the middle of the screen and asks "When will the electricity come back on?" Someone responds, "Who knows when it will be back on?" This scene shows that the Sinophone Burmese people are accustomed to these power cuts and have no way to solve the problem. On the one hand, in this

[70] Chen, Hong-yu. 陳鴻瑜 The history of Myanmar. Taipei, The Commercial Press, Ltd. 2016. p. 298.

low budget film, Midi Z makes use of the poor light setting to present the darkness of Sinophone Burmese life successfully. On the other hand, even in the dark, the people still enjoy their lives.

Seeking Opportunities and a Development Mindset

The key to Xinghong staying in Burma is finding a sustainable business. In this process, the film shows that Sinophone subjects do not simply accept reality submissively, but rather have the agency to realize their future possibilities. The comparison of the wages and prices of products is mentioned repeatedly in conversations between characters. Through these conversations, the audience obtains a basic understanding of the local poor people's situation. The fact that there is such an enormous wealth gap between Burma and countries abroad motivates Sinophone Burmese to become migrant workers. However, it also brings the problem of property in a globalized structure. As an underdeveloped country, these people serve to supplement the cheap labor in other countries. Chang (2016) indicates that the comparison of wages is a way to show "… a laborer belongs to the underclass in both societies [Burma and Taiwan]" (p. 67). However, rather than presenting Sinophone Burmese as submissive victims, Song Hwee Lim (2018) argues that Midi Z's films "grant agency and lucidity to the characters and illustrate the ways the characters deal with their attempts to find solutions" (p. 8). Moreover, Lim points out that the protagonist's process in seeking a business invites the audience to engage in this process as well, and leads them to realize "poverty-as-problematic." This approach makes the issues of "poverty" not merely the protagonist's problem, but causes the spectators to be "cognitively (and emotionally) invested" (p. 7). I argue that the "cognitive" investment is a developmental mindset that is associated with believing that one's personal efforts can generate future opportunities.

In his book *Ju, Li, Bingdu* (2015), Midi Z discusses Sinophone Burmese's value change from "Zao huolu" ("find road to live") to "Zao luzi" ("find a better job"). On the surface, Myanmar's economy has improved since it opened to the world, but the problem is that the development of industry is still in a preliminary stage. Therefore, there are not many well-paid jobs for working people in the area. Through the process of searching for a job, the viewer experiences what Sinophone Burmese can do for a living. In the border city, Lashio, most industrial products are imported from China. In the film, the oil factory owner says that his machinery comes from China, but his filter is produced in Myanmar. The tricycle and motorcycle taxis are also imported from China. It is evident that under these circumstances, the Burmese people still suffer in an underdeveloped economy that is stifled by a reliance on imported goods and manufacturing.

The process of seeking a business also shows the Sinophone Burmese chronotope, which Naficy (2001) borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin's concept and developed as a special construction of space-time for ethnic groups. As we mentioned before, Midi Z's guerrilla style of filmmaking allows the viewers to see the local motorcycle and jade market. The hidden camera follows Xinghong's steps as he searches for a motorcycle, which he plans touse in a small business. In the scenes in the motorcycle market, Xinghong asks the prices of motorcycles constantly and people who sell them answer with the product's origins and prices. Sometimes the motorcycle sellers find the hidden camera and stare into the lens. During these scenes, the audience feels the presence of the camera strongly and seems to be voyeurs of a hidden world. In this way, the film

makes a space for the audience to understand the world in which the Burmese[71]. In the end, Xinghong fails to find a suitable career path, which contradicts the positive feeling of building a new country that we see in the beginning of the movie.

A-Rong's Return and Pictures

The narrative of A-Rong's homecoming is subsumed in the journey of Xinghong's return. In the beginning of the story, the audience is informed of A-Rong's death through a conversation between Xinghong and his colleagues. The film uses two different photographs of A-Rong to produce the effect of "a pseudo-presence and a token of absence" (p. 12), as Susan Sontag mentions in her book *On Photography*. Midi Z parallels the two different destinies of Sinophone Burmese migrants who work overseas intentionally. Every immigrant holds a dream to go out to pursue a better life, but there is no guarantee to return in happiness. The first photograph is a portrait of A-Rong that is placed on his urn (Figure 4-1). In the airport scene, Xinghong falls asleep holding A-Rong's urn, which is set in the center of the frame and shows his profile picture clearly. The purpose of this scene appears to be to show two different outcomes for these immigrants: On the one hand, life that Xinghong represents, and on the other, death that A-Rong

[71] The advertisement for this movie is "The first Burmese movie shot in the location of Burma." In the interview, Midi Z explains that although there are directors who are making films in Burma, *Return to Burma* is the first film shot completely in Burma and shown to audiences worldwide. This film is a genuine film that discusses the reality of Burma. 王昀燕 命運交織的當代緬甸-專訪《歸鄉二部曲》導演趙德胤。Online. Apr. 23 2013. https://flashforward.pixnet.net/blog/post/30574527

represents. Midi Z's film did not make a direct accusation of the brutality of immigrant life, but shows the people's vulnerability through A-Rong's death. Midi Z's films tell tragic stories, including people injured during work, indulging in drugs and becoming insane, etc. These stories show that the Sinophone Burmese live in precarious circumstances.

In the second photograph of A-Rong, we see him as part of a group of workers sitting on the road eating their lunch. This picture appears twice in the film. We see it for the first time after Xinghong arrives at his home. While staying with his family and sharing stories of his experiences in Taiwan, the power to their home fails, and they hold up a candle in the dark to see the picture. Xinghong's father asks, "What about the covered up?", and Xinghong replies that "It's Rong." In the picture, A-Rong's face is not shown, but the picture is evidence that he survived abroad and triggers the desire to know how A-Rong died in Taiwan. During this sequence, Xinghong tells A-Rong's tragic story in a very dull tone, stating that A-Rong attempted to work overtime leading up to the New Year, but fell accidentally off the building on which he was working. In the meantime, ironically, one person is counting money while they discuss A-Rong's death. A-Rong's death illustrates the vulnerability of the Sinophone Burmese in Taiwan, where they worked often in dangerous working environments that lacked self-protection equipment.

The second time that the picture of A-Rong eating appears is when Xinghong brings A-Rong's ashes to his family. The film uses several long takes to show how far away A-Rong's family is from the city, as they live in a very remote region of Burma. The roof is covered by straw. In the scene, the container of ashes is set on a table and A-Rong's relatives pass around it and look at his picture. A relative of A-Rong's points out the picture and says to some children: "This is your uncle." This implies either that they have never seen their uncle before or they may

have blurred memories because A-Rong departed such a long time before. As a result, these children do not recognize their uncle in a photograph. It is possible that A-Rong's death has tremendous effects on his family. In the film, looking at his picture is an action for them to attend his immigrant life which is a single frozen moment in his journey. A-Rong ended his journey at that moment with sorrow and melancholy.

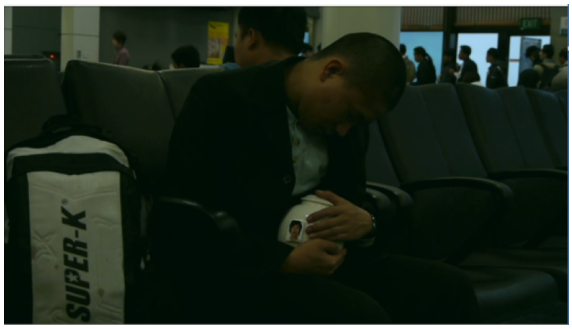

Figure 3-1 A-hong fell asleep at Airport. He hold a-rong's urn and the viewer can see A-Rong's profil picture.

Figure 3-2 A-rong's family look A-rong's picture.

Figure 3-3 A-hong walks a long distance to A-Rong's family.	Figure 3-4 the container of ashes is set on a table and A-Rong's relatives pass around it and look at his picture.

The Youth's Departure from Myanmar and Sinophone Burmese Soundscape

In contrast to Xinghong, who seeks opportunities to stay in Burma actively, many young adults there are attempting to leave their hometowns. The third storyline in *Return to Burma* focuses on Xinghong's younger brother, A-De, who is preparing to go abroad to work. As soon as Xinghong arrives in his hometown, he meets his brother at a construction site. Their conversation reveals that he is earning only 3000 Kyats per day, which is much less than the 30000 kyats Xinghong earned at construction sites in Taiwan. Because of these enormous differences in wages, A-De and many young adults in Burma want to leave their hometown to improve their financial situation. In these scenes, when Xinghong and A-De discuss his plan to go abroad, A-Rong's urn is setting on the table. Although A-De understands the risk of leaving the country, he still falls into huge debt eagerly to apply for his visa to go to Malaysia.

These young adults have very limited job opportunities in Burma. There is one scene that shows how cheap the labor is there. Midi Z shoots a building construction site that employs many people to carry heavy materials rather than using machinery. Several times in the movie, these young adults simply gather outside of their houses without any purpose. Largely, these individuals are not very articulate in Midi Z's film. However, Midi Z employs sound design successfully to help these Burmese express their emotions and deepen the audience's understanding of their culture. Many scholars have noticed that the polyphonic soundscape is a

prominent aesthetic feature in Midi Z's film (Shen Kun-Xien, 2017, Wang Wen-jui, 2017). There are three predominant ways that Midi Z uses sound in his films. First, they present the polylingual situation in Burmese society. The conversations between characters take place in a Sinophone language that is a mix of the Yunnanese Mandarin accent from the southwest of China, and local Burmese languages (Brian, 2016). This multilingual audio-scape allows the audience to confront the questions of physical and mental borders.

Midi Z's second use of filmic sound design is his incorporation of popular music, both in Burmese and Sinophone languages. Wang (2017) investigates Midi Z's three films in the "Homecoming Trilogy" and indicates that Midi Z's use of popular music has two major effects. On the one hand, popular music serves the narrative of his films. On the other, it can be seen as a transnational practice of Sinophone music that is related to the Chinese diaspora's cultural identities. In his analysis, he points out that in most singing scenes, Midi Z uses a fixed camera with long takes, and these settings create a type of intimate space where the characters express their emotions by singing the lyrics. There are two sequences in which he uses these popular songs.

The first sequence depicts four young adults lying on a bamboo bed, chatting casually and singing with a guitar. In the conversation, these young men discuss their plans to go abroad. One sings a Burmese song called "Street Corner". This song expresses the sadness of a young couple that is going to separate in the near future. The lyrics sung by the male lead are meant to tell his partner that even if she never returns, he will love her forever. The song represents the uncertainties in these young adults' lives, as they may inevitably give up what they love to migrate to other countries. When they finish the song, A-De and his friends discuss their dream to work abroad in the future. First, they ask each other whether they will be able to get a visa and

how they will afford to pay for one. It is not easy to obtain a visa in Burma, and they must apply through agents who charge a large amount of money, and charge different amounts depending upon the destination. In the conversation, they mention that a passport to Malaysia costs one million and forty thousand Kyat, which is very expensive given that they earn only 3000 kyat per day. These young people have a vague understanding of the places where they wish to go. They argue about whether Taipei and Taiwan are the same place, and even make the false claim that Taipei is closer to the mainland, while Taiwan is closer to Japan.

Another song, “The Nature of Mother”, is played at A-De’s farewell party. In this scene, A-De finally obtained permission to go to Malaysia, so Xinghong and A-De’s friends gather on KTV to say goodbye. The lyrics of this song are a prayer to live in a place that is far from warfare, a place where people love and help each other, and where they can live in peace as equals. In this song, they desire a utopia which is contrary to the state in which they live. The film uses these songs to express not only the depression of these Sinophone young adults who are leaving their hometown, but also the uncertainty of their futures as they migrate to other countries.

Figure 3-5

Figure 3-6

	
Figure 3-7	Figure 3-8 Singing Scene

In addition to conversation and music, the third soundscape is the silence in the film. Shen Kun-Xien (2018) notices innovatively that the silence of Sinophone Burmese characters contrasts with the official media propaganda. Shen indicates that these characters often keep silent in the film, which can be seen as a metaphor for their ethnic minority status in Burmese society. In this way, the film criticizes the discourse of the Taiwanese dream, and the contrast between sound and silence serves as an ironic indictment of those official denouncements. In the end, A-De finally departs from his hometown, and brings his luggage, including a bed quilt set. Xinghong remains silent when his brother departs on his unpredictable journey.

Conclusion: Toward Minor Cinema

In this chapter, I focus on the way to understand the meaning of visualizing Sinophone Burmese in the context of the cold war, and Burmese and Taiwanese nationalism. Midi Z is a descendant of the secret army after World War II. This unique history makes his identity complex and contested with different forms of nationalism, including Burmese, Thai, Taiwanese, and Chinese nationalism. The world has ignored Sinophone Burmese, and their marginality gives us a new perspective on transnationalism. Midi Z's film is a special visualization of Burma's

landscape and offers singular viewpoints for the world to understand Sinophone Burmese. These cinematic images of Burmese immigrants question the fixed borderline persistently and provide alternative perspectives for the audience to think about their existence and the idea of borders that modern nation-states define.

In the first section, I focus on a historical understanding of Sinophone Burmese and the way they complicate the idea of homeland. The second section discusses the way that Midi Z's films are situated in an intersectional theoretical frame between transnationalism, poor cinema, accented cinema, and minor cinema. In the third section, I examine his first feature film, *Return to Burma*, which illustrates a historical moment in which the Burmese people were full of optimism for their country's future development. Sinophone Burmese face dual structural difficulties. One is the economic recession in Burma while the other is the exclusion and suppression of "Burmese nationalism". With respect to minor cinema, the definition of major and minor is relational, not arbitrary. Lars Gustaf Andersson and John Sundholm (2019) argue that "… the key problem for the immigrant filmmaker is not so much the question of how the Other is to be presented, but how your position as the Other may become a productive starting point for self-organization and filmmaking as a cultural intervention" (p. 28). The concept of minor cinema helps me think about Midi Z's film and the way he creates his film aesthetics. Situating Midi Z in the age of digital camera and self-reflecting his immigrant experience in his filmmaking, Midi Z creates unique filmmaking routes.

His four feature films, *Return to Burma*, *Poor Folk*, *Ice Poison*, and *The Road to Mandalay*, present vivid and rich pictures of Sinophone Burmese immigrants. There are several directions to pursue to investigate Midi Z's films further. In the future, I would like to investigate the intertextuality between Midi Z's films, which refer to or indicate each other often. In fact,

except for *Nina Wu*, all of Midi Z's short films, feature films, and documentaries focus on, and are concerned with, Sinophone Burmese's struggles. Many themes appear repeatedly in his films and highlight such issues as poverty, uncertainty, waiting, immobility—waiting to receive permission, a visa, or identification—mobility—border-crossing—drug dealing, etc., and many others. Although each film has a different storyline and plot, collectively, they also have continuity, in that Midi Z constantly uses the same actors, including professionals and non-professionals (most of the latter are Midi Z's family members and friends). Midi Z creates a border narrative to show these Sinophone Burmese's border consciousness, and all his films contribute to our understanding of immigrant films.

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Chapter IV Invisible London—Unveiling the Immigrant Landscape through Immigrant's Gaze in *The Receptionist*

This chapter is focused on the spatiality depicted within *The Receptionist* (dir Jenny Lu, 2017a) and attends to the ways the film explores how female immigrants interact with this spatiality as they navigate London. Specifically, the film depicts both the ways female Sinophone immigrants are gazed at by society, while also actively gazing at the city through their ability or inability to claim mobility. *The Receptionist*'s director, Jenny Lu was born in Taiwan but is based in the UK and the film presents how a group of Sinophone women, all immigrants to the U.K., survive during the global financial crisis of 2008. The narrative spotlights Tina Yuan (nicknamed Xiao-yuan and portrayed by Taiwanese actress Teresa Daley), a well-educated Taiwanese girl freshly graduated from university who ends up working in a massage parlor as a receptionist. Through Tina's eyes, the film explores the world of Sinophone women and their predicaments, narratives that are seldom present in British or Taiwanese films. Whilst London as a global city has been represented in many films, these films seldom highlight the Sinophone community (Duguid and Pak, online; Chan & Willis, 2012, 28).

In this chapter, I propose a concept of "immigrant gazes" as a key to center Sinophone immigrant women and examine the power dynamic within cinematic cityspaces. I consider that "immigrant gaze" is not simply immigrants' gaze at the city but is a complex process of communication between society's gaze toward these immigrants and immigrants as subjects gazing toward the society depicted in the film. In other words, the gaze directed toward these female immigrants has many social layers, including marginalization and discrimination. Even though these Sinophone immigrants were restricted by unfriendly social structures, the film does not just view them as submissive receivers but also provides them with ways of looking at the

city to show their subjectivity as they reclaim their mobility. In this way, this chapter reshapes our understanding of immigrant experience to position London by interrogating the power dynamic between Sinophone women and the members of London city in the global socio-economy network.

London as a Hub: Asian Ethnoscape and Sinophone Representation

Many films represent London as a global city, but they seldom present the Sinophone community. Even though Asian ethnography has historically been shown on the screen, the presentation of Asian faces does not avoid stereotyping, which still exist in today's British films. Only a few films center Sinophone immigrants. In 1986, the film *Ping Pong* (1968) focuses on Sinophone immigrants in British cinema. *Ping Pong*, directed by Po-Chin Leong, presents the transition of identities and cultural mentality for immigrants from Hong Kong. The film is set in Chinatown and shows how the Sinophone community operates. Felicia Chan and Andy Willis scrutinize the film from the perspective of Chinese diasporic cinemas in which the main language is not Chinese language but shows the struggles of identities in the British context. (Felicia Chan & Andy Willis 33)

The director Po-chin Leong was born in the UK in 1939 and worked in the Hong Kong TV and film industry during the late 1970s and 1980s. Chan and Willis analyze how the beginning of *Ping Pong* presents Chinatown in London through cultural elements, such as Bruce Lee's *The Game of Death* image, streets, restaurants, and the sound of Cantonese. Chan and Willis wrote about how *Ping Pong* presents the landscapes of Chinatown and demonstrates how the complexity of Chinatown related to Chinese and Sinophone communities:

> So begins Ping Pong, with a shot that is as cinematically sophisticated as anything produced in the United Kingdom during the 1980s, a shot that sums up the concerns of the film that follows like an opera's overture. Leong's opening image of London's Chinatown, behind the well-known facade of its 'authentic' restaurants, suggests a setting and a community that is much more complex and varied than the usual representations of it imply." (Chan and Willis 35)

The Receptionist opens with the iconic landscape of Chinatown in London. The red memorial arch and Chinese restaurants illustratively show an old and oriental imagination of China. In this place, Tina originally wants to apply for a job in a Chinese restaurant but instead receives important information about the receptionist. When the audience follows Tina's steps from Chinatown to the suburbs, the film shows different Sinophone ethno-landscapes beyond Chinatown. In this case, we can see networks in Sinophone communities that are not restricted to landmark tourism spots.

In fact, many Sinophone ethnoscapes are more beyond the space of Chinatown and hidden in local communities. In 2006, British film director Nick Broomfield shot a film, *Ghosts* (2016), which shows a tragedy of Sinophone immigrants. The title of "ghost" has different meanings in English and in Chinese. In the Chinese title, "鬼佬" Guilao was a nickname for foreigners in China. In a British context, the title means these undocumented immigrants live as ghosts in British society. The title has a double entendre which expresses different meanings of foreigners.

The film is based on a true story that happened in a small town called Morecambe Bay in northwest England. A group of undocumented Sinophone immigrants drowned at sea when they were hired to pick cockles off the Lancashire coast in 2004. Although the film is fiction, it

utilizes a documentary style. The opening shot starts from a village in Fujian located in southeast China. The female protagonist, Ai Qin, is a single mom who wants to provide a better life to her only son. In order to make more money, Ai Qin decides to search for a better opportunity in England by making an agreement with a local agent. However, before she earns the money, Ai Qin has to pay a huge fee to the agent in order to smuggle herself from China to England. The film demonstrates a map showing the route that consists of a very long and extremely dangerous journey. Instead of taking a flight, these undocumented immigrants take a huge risk of hiding in a truck not designed for humans. The film speaks to the several tragedies that undocumented immigrants suffer, including how it is possible to be suffocated in trucks during the process of smuggling.

To work as an undocumented immigrant is to have to endure unfair treatment. She lives in a house with a group of undocumented immigrants from different places. The film shows the poor living conditions, including living in a crowded room with other immigrants and being abused by the Chinese foreman. The Chinese foreman provides documents for these immigrants to work in Britain and helps them find a job by bribing the local officers. Most jobs, like in slaughterhouses, are low-skilled and intensive, with long work hours. These undocumented workers endure long hours of labor but earn low income to support themselves, which is detrimental especially since these workers must save up money to pay their debts and help their families in China. However, the local laborers do not welcome these immigrants because they thought that these immigrants would take away their job opportunities. The conflict between the local laborers and these immigrants makes it difficult to obtain a job, pushing them to more marginal places.

After the police break into their apartment, this group of Sinophone immigrants plan to move to other places to work. In one scene, the foreman asked Ai Qin whether she wanted to work in a massage place in London or follow him to another town to do labor-intensive work, and Ai Qin chose the second option. Then, she followed the foreman to Morecambe Bay in North West England to pick up cockles. Other local cockle collectors had an aversion to these undocumented Sinophone immigrants and threatened them. To avoid the violence from gangsters, these undocumented immigrants were forced to work in dangerous situations at night. Unfamiliar with the tide in the intertidal zone, they did not realize the water would come suddenly, resulting in them drowning at the sea.

The film was shot on location at Morecambe Bay. The saddest scene was where Ai Qin and her coworkers stand on top of a white truck and have to take turns using the only phone they had available to talk to their family members and say goodbye. The female protagonist Ai Qin was one of the few survivors, but we all know that many of the other characters will never see their families again. In this film, we can see the flow of immigration on a global scale and an alternative imagination of globalization. These immigrants are willing to pay a huge debt to work in another country. Because of the disadvantages of language, cultural and legal status, they are easily exploited. The worst situation is that they sacrifice their life and never return to their hometown. *The Ghost* presents the globalization of low-income laborers who may pay more than they gain. However, this kind of human trafficking still exists underground which still attracts many immigrants to take the risk. The film only demonstrates the tip of the iceberg.

The Receptionist focuses on a massage parlor that doubles as a brothel. In the brothel, Tina observes three Sinophone prostitutes from Taiwan, Malaysia, and China, as well as their marginal lives and floating identities. Through this observation, the film explores the way

separation and suppression of different classes/ethnicities/genders happen in London on visual, physical, and psychological levels. In this film, we can see the film depicts three different types of sex workers, each with different Chinese accents, referring to different transnational backgrounds. They each have different motivations for earning money at the brothel. In the Receptionist, the film shows the diversities of Sinophone prostitutes which enriches the images of Sinophone women and challenges stereotypes of Asian women.

The Gaze Toward Female Immigrants

Taking inspiration from scholarship on colonial and ethnographic gazes, I propose a paradigm of the immigrant gaze occupying a special position from the perspective of an outsider in the host society in which these immigrants live. Corinn Columpar summarizes three different theories of the gaze in cinema studies: the male gaze, colonial gaze, and ethnographic gaze with interdisciplinary approaches (Columpar, 2002, 26). Since the 1970s, many film scholars revisit Laura Mulvey's film theory of male gaze which was groundbreaking to reveal the unconscious structure of classical films. Combining psychoanalysis, Mulvey (1989) argues that the image was sophisticatedly arranged by a complex structure which related to a preexisting pattern of fascination in a patriarchal society. Spectator theory highlights the position of audiences who go to the theater and identify themselves with screen roles through deeper psychoanalytic structures. Through Mulvey's investigation, she defines the spectator as an imagined position that is specialized as a masculine subject in classical Hollywood narrative film. Mulvey's analysis creates a new realm of spectatorship in film studies. However, it is problematic to think of the audience as a unified entity, so the theory has been challenged by various film scholars, such as Mary Anne Doane and Manthia Diawara, to further consider different audiences' identities and how audience identify themselves on the screen. Columpar examines the 'gaze' from the

perspective of postcolonial film theory which "ha[s] further complicated the male gaze as monolith and allowed for the emergence of a more nuanced feminist practice within film studies" (2002: 26). Ethnographic gaze and colonial gaze within the anthropological context racialize the non-white subject: "the interpellation of the film spectator into hegemonic viewing position in which Western, white, male identity is normative." (Columpar, 2002, 40).These extended discussions respond to the necessity of reading multiple gazes when visuality has been politicized by different power systems, especially concerning others.

The immigrant gaze has a similar mechanism to the three gazes discussed above (male gaze, colonial gaze, and ethnographic gaze) in that those immigrants are alienated from the host society. However, the immigrant gazes cannot be categorized as a colonial or ethnographic gaze because the subject is situated in a more complicated situation within the host society. Urry and Larsen state that "Gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world" (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 2). The immigrant gaze is composed of a set of multilayered gazes that are involved in different power systems from both local and transnational contexts. In *The Receptionist*, the immigrant women endure not only the male gaze that objectizes their bodies but also discrimination based on their nationality and ethnicity. However, in the film, I will argue, these immigrant women do not serve completely as a gazed object. The film is able to show their own agency to gaze at the city.

The opening shot of the film consists of several London cityscapes, including tourist spots such as the London Eye, Big Ben, London Bridge and Chinatown. The camera follows Tina as she walks from the stunning London city center to the suburban area where she discovers a brothel hidden in a quiet community. She is forced to accept a job as a receptionist there due to the global financial crisis. The work of the receptionist is to answer phone calls, tend to the

business, and clean up the rooms. This work situates Tina in a special position where she can observe sex workers and eventually becoming involved their lives. In the film, the four main women, Sasa (Chen Shiang-cyi), Anna (Teng Shuang), Mei (Amanda Fan) and Madam Lily (Sophie Gopsill), represent four different types of Sinophone sex workers and the arrangement of the story shows their similarities and differences. Sasa is a middle-aged woman from Taiwan who had a romantic relationship with a British man, who she had a child with before he abandoned her. In order to provide for her child, Sasa is forced to become a sex worker. In the beginning of the film, Sasa is defensive and intimidating, though Tina gradually understands Sasa's sadness and anger at the unfairness of her situation. Older, than her sex worker colleagues, Sasa is clearly aware of the manipulation and danger within their situation and so she advocates for another young sex worker, Mei, when she was harmed by a client. Mei, who is in her early twenties and from Malaysia, cares more about materialism. Her relatively cheerful and straightforward personality creates a balance for the film to contrast with the dull and oppressive life presented in the brothel. Anna is a docile girl from an impoverished family in China and works in the massage parlor to support her family, even though the work has seriously affected her mental health. Madam Lily is the boss of the brothel and paradoxically represents both the systematic exploitation of these Sinophone women and a source of a shelter for Tina when she is evicted by her boyfriend. Each of these immigrant women present different background and dimensions, but all of them face pressures from the outside world.

In *The Receptionist*, the majority of scenes are set inside the massage parlor, but clients and local gangsters represent the outside world and both constantly threaten the main characters' safety and embody the unbalanced power relations in male-dominated societies. The film depict sexual relationships that have been racialized and how submissive Asian women are seen by

these clients and local gangsters as easy to take advantage of. The film includes many sex scenes; however, instead of presenting in attractive or romantic ways, these scenes intentionally reveal abusive relationships between the clients and the sex workers. Those scenes trigger the spectator's uncomfortable feeling and understanding of how unbalanced the power dynamics are for the central sex workers.

Figure 4-1: The bookstore owner propositions in exchange for the opportunity of working in his bookstore.

Figure 4-2: The young man insults Sasa with racist language: "You are like Jackie Chan in an old fucking wig man."

In the film, the male characters not only enjoy the sexual services provided by the sex workers but seem to derive even more pleasure from the psychological power they exert over these women. The film shows how Sinophone women experience a process of commodification from those clients. For example, even though Tina works as a receptionist whose job is only to introduce clients to the sex workers, many men easily assume she is a sex worker. Sasa recommends that Tina wears modest clothes to avoid attracting men in order to protect herself from trouble. Hoping to find a normal job, Tina has no intention of staying in the brothel for long and eventually receives a rare job interview for a local bookstore. However, Tina encounters the bookstore owner who interviews her at the brothel she works at. As soon as the bookstore owner

finds out she works in the brothel, he immediately propositions her in exchange for the opportunity of working in his bookstore. When Tina rejects his request, the bookstore owner tries to force her to submit and Tina refuses. In these scenes, audiences can see how these women are situated in vulnerable surroundings. (Figure 4-1)

Not only are these marginalized women threatened by white men, they also face pressure from within their own ethnic communities. A group of local Chinese gangsters constantly harass and demand money from Madam Lily who runs the brothel. After Madam Lily misses a payment, the gangsters and Lily's boyfriend Sam plunder the brothel at night when Lily is distributing salaries to her employees. A fight sequence ensues as the gangsters break into the brothel. Tina, Lily and Mei are captured by the gangsters, but Tina and Mei are able to escape by running into Sasa's room and hiding under the stairs. At the same time, Anna is caught by Sam, who then rapes her. While Sasa holds the door, Tina jumps out from the window and ring the front door bell, pretending to be the police and forcing the gangsters to retreat from the massage parlor. The handheld camera shows the intensity of the violenceW. This sequence shows how vulnerable these Sinophone women are.

Besides the threat from outside, the gaze between different characters shows the power relationship between them. The men who visit the massage parlor are seeking a manipulative relationship. Madam Lily's young boyfriend Sam is from a local labor class and profits from Lily by pleasing her as a sex partner, but also desires other women in the massage parlor. In one scene, the camera shows Sasa walking into the living room, and then a reverse shot shows how Sam stares at her body whilst talking to Lily. Once Lily leaves to go shopping, Sam immediately takes the opportunity to force Sasa to serve him. Wanting to engage in S&M with Sasa, he asks her to obey his orders. Even though Sasa does follow his orders, she at one point flashes him an

angry stare, suggesting her unhappiness. At this moment, Tina yells from outside and pretends Madam Lily is back, forcing Sam to leave the room and saving Sasa from the humiliation. In these sequences, we can see the exploitative power dynamic: Lily uses money and materials to control Sam, who in turn uses the money he receives from Lily to control Sasa. By doing so, Sam transfers his frustration from Lily onto the torturing of other Sinophone women. However, by showing Sasa's angry gaze back at Sam acts as a resistance, the film avoids simply presenting these sex workers as only objects of a male's gaze.

Besides these male gazes, social structures format the gaze toward these immigrants and discrimination is omnipresent. The film shows how the gaze from local communities is full of contempt and disdain. In one scene, a woman passes outside the house when Tina is cleaning the yard. She stands outside the yard and look at Tina with an unfriendly expression. Sinophone immigrants are marginalized by stereotyping and racism.[72] For local communities, a foreign culture threatens the authenticity of the culture they are used to through what Sophie Watson describes as "stranger danger" of the city and indicates that "[f]ear of others who are different, unknown, and thus perceived as threatening, is a related source of constraint to living with difference." (167) In this film, the sex workers are both gendered and exist as cultural threats. In another sequence, a young adult asks Tina about sexual services, but when he finds out he cannot afford the cost, he turns his anger directly to harass Tina. When Sasa comes out of the

[72] In Hidden from public view? Racism against the UK Chinese population, the report investigates the racial discrimination toward Chinese in London, Manchester and Southampton. The research issues includes race-hate harassment and attacks between urban and rural communities. (7) The researcher finds that UK Chinese people prevailingly endure many racist abuse including racist name-calling, damage to property and businesses, arson, and physical attacks.

house and pushes the man back, he insults Sasa with racist terms by mocking her as 'Jackie Chan in a wig'. These offensive gazes and behaviors are mostly used to distinguish the self and others. Once the young adult is not satisfied with the response from these women, he easily implements cultural symbols to assault their identities (Figure 2). Moreover, xenophobia also exists in the neighborhood. Towards the end of the film, the sex workers are arrested by policemen. A shot-reverse-shot shows the white woman who stared at Tina with an unfriendly gaze in the scene discussed above, watches the arrest scene and shows her unwelcome attitude by screaming to them: "Piss off to your own country." This discriminatory language shows the tension between the local communities and immigrants (Figure 3&4).

Figure 4-3: When the police arrest Sasa, she looks back at the white woman who insults them.

Figure 4-4: A reverse shot: A white woman asks them to "piss off your own country."

The Contrast Between Interior (Massage Parlor) and Exterior (Tourism City)

The Receptionist's main characters' status as objects that are gazed *at* is reflected in the film's depiction of space and the characters' ability to move within and through spaces. Firstly, I will discuss how *The Receptionist* creates the interior space of the massage parlor. I will then move

on to how this interior space is contrasted with London as a tourism space. In this way, the film reveals an unbalanced power dynamic between London as a global city and as a place with exploited laborers.

The film differentiates the interior (massage parlor) and exterior (city) by filtering colors and camera movements that reflect the Sinophone women's emotions. The majority of the scenes are inside the house, but the beginning of the film is a series of London tourism landscapes. When following Tina's steps, the audience also follows her journey from inner city (Chinatown) to the suburbs. The outside of the brothel is mostly shot with a grey-blue tone that reflects Tina's depression and the helplessness of her status. The film is anchored on the emotions of Tina—a well-educated person with high self-esteem. When she first starts her work as a receptionist in the brothel, she thinks it will be a temporary job and wants to create distance between herself and the sex workers.

The film was primarily shot in the house (the massage parlor) which has one large dining room, a kitchen and at least three bedrooms. In an interview, Jenny Lu explicitly talks about how she uses two different camera languages to present the inner house of the massage parlor. First, in order to show the vigor of a busy brothel, the photographer uses a hand-held camera to chase the movement of clients and workers. Second, sometimes the camera is placed in a high-angle position to present an omniscient view of how they survive in the brothel. Through these two different uses of camera movement and framing, the audience is given two different viewpoints to observe the relationship between these characters from both subjective and objective perspectives. (Lu, 2016b, online). The cinematography not only shows the different relationships between Sinophone women and other characters, helping the audience understand their situation, but also shows the interaction with spaces to present their subjectivity in taking control of their

lives. These subjectivities are presented through the film's use of interior and exterior spaces, that I will further explain in next two sections.

Interior (Inner Massage Parlor) - Sinophone Immigrants Gaze at Themselves and Their Sisterhood

The massage parlor is located in an ordinary house that is difficult to recognize from the outside. When Tina first walks into the house, the house is decorated with many Chinese style items, such as red wall hanging decor and a lucky cat which symbolizes fortune and money. They also use red light and red textile to create erotic atmosphere which can attract their clients. The brothel is a space with multiple functions: a workplace, and simultaneously, a living space for the main characters. Centering the two spaces of the living room and dining table, the film presents the brothel life through everyday life performances. In the brothel, the kitchen and the dining table are two social spaces that allow these Sinophone sex workers to connect with each other. The kitchen is a long hallway and multifunctional space for cooking and laundry. In the kitchen, through small talk and sharing food, they exchange information and gradually become more familiar with each other, including to discuss their different origins and backgrounds.

At the beginning of the film, Tina is not willing to assimilate into the brothel's culture and attempts to separate herself from other sex workers. At the dining table, Mei, a younger sex worker, sensitively points out her intentions. Even though Tina cooks meals for others, she is not willing to share meals with other women and would rather eat a cold sandwich by herself. However, the boundary between Tina and others is gradually broken through the process of getting to know each other (Figure 5&6). The film strategically uses food to show how Tina little by little opens her mind to other girls, because the food also reflects their identities and a sense

of belonging. For example, when Tina cooks sesame oil chicken, which is related to her grandmas' recipe, Sasa also knows how to cook it properly because it is a Taiwanese traditional dish. In one sequence, after Tina is forced to move out of her boyfriend's home, Lily, who exploits other girls, warmly treats all people to a hotpot meal to comfort her. The scene where the characters circle around the dining table and eat hotpot symbolizes their acceptance and understanding of each other.

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<td>Figure 4-5: Mei finds out Tina is not willing to eat with other sex workers and says she join this place like a family: We're like a family now.</td>
<td>Figure 4-6: Dining room: after Tina was expelled by her boyfriend, they have a hotpot together.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Mirrors are another visual motif that helps to present different dimensions of these Sinophone sex workers, and the multilayered images create an effect of reflecting the self-consciousness of these Sinophone sex workers through a sense of space. First, the film uses mirrors to show the sexual scenes indirectly. In this way, as a film that focuses on sex workers, the film reduces the level of explicit provocation and avoids pornographic simulation (Figure 7). Second, when Tina and other sex workers face the mirror, they easily to show their sadness or cry to release their emotions when they look at the reflection of themselves. The film also

repeatedly presents different female characters standing in front of a foggy mirror in the bathroom. These bathroom sequences symbolize that they cannot see themselves clearly and their self-identity is unclear, blocked, or shadowy (Figure 8). Oftentimes, these mirror scenes come after characters have felt frustrated and sensitive. In most scenes, Sasa wears heavy make-up which is not only for the purpose to attract men but also to cover her true self. Towards the end of the film, Sasa looks at her plain face in the mirror and silently cries. The audience looks through a reflection from the mirror at Sasa's emotional release. Thirdly, the mirror metaphorically shows how different characters mirror each other's situation. For example, Tina and Sasa are two contrasting characters and mirrors are used to show this contrast. In the scene discussed earlier, in which Tina saves Sasa from humiliation, the camera pans through the room and reflects an image that shows one mirror that sits on the bed and reflects Sasa's back, and another mirror showing Tina standing in front of the bed (Figure 9). Without dialogue, the reflection frames them together to share this moment in which Sasa shows her weakness and vulnerability, and Tina presents her understanding and sympathy. In another scene, when Tina bids farewell to Sasa, the audience sees from the mirror that she hugs Sasa to say thank you to her. In this way, even though they are not family, they build up an intimate sisterhood (Figure 10). These mirror moments create spaces to present subtle emotional transitions which help audience to recognize their feeling of connections between these characters.

In the film, the massage parlor is a complicated space because it mixes a place of exploitation and a family-like community. When Tina tries to distance herself from other sex workers, Mei said to her "we are family." to make them closer. Positively, after Tina becomes homeless, the massage parlor becomes a shelter for her to stay. In the sequence of her moving into the brothel, several characters squeeze into Tina's room and the camera pans from one face

to another in medium close shot which creates a sense of intimacy. The place becomes the warmest place for Tina in this most isolated and sentimental situation. However, it is not so optimistic to celebrate the sisterhood, because this sisterhood is built upon the lack of a wider social support system for immigrants. The massage parlor is a space which combines both a foundation of living and frustration for these Sinophone women. For next section, I will focus on how these immigrant women explore London which presents their mobility or immobility.

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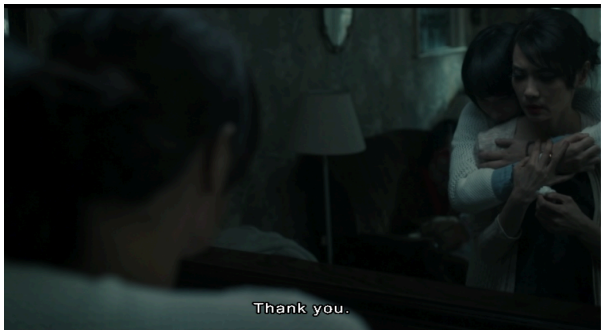
<tr><td>Figure 4-7: Reflect scene: a reflected sex scene.</td><td>Figure 4-8: Mirror scene: Mai looks at herself.</td></tr>
<tr><td>  </td><td> 
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<tr><td>Figure 4-9: Reflect scene: the mirror reflects Sasa and Tina parallel.</td><td>Figure 4-10: Through reflection to see Tina hugs Sasa.</td></tr>
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Exterior (Airport and Tourism City)–Immigrant's Gaze toward the City

From the previous section, I discussed that the audience could see how society is not friendly to these Sinophone sex workers and the massage parlor becomes a mixed place of exploitation and a home-like community. In this section, I focus on the immobility and mobility of these women, especially Anna, Tina and Sasa. While Anna's storyline shows the limitation of mobility for these Sinophone sex worker, Tina and Sasa's narratives present an alternative story that they have agency to be able to walk around the city.

Anna's background reveals many social issues she has endured, including fake marriage immigration and poverty. When Anna first appears in the middle of the film, she does not enter the house from the front door, but from the back of the house which seems to hide her arrival. At first sight of her appearance, she looks like a country girl without makeup and her hair in two braids. She is very shy and often holds her head down when she talks to people. When she changes to sexy pajamas, Anna is anxious about the exposure of her body and constantly tries to cover her body by her hands. Later she tells others she is from the countryside of southeast China and her family needs her support including her younger brother, which is a clue that Anna is from a conservative family. Having a second child was against China's 'One Child' policy and Anna's family might favour a male heir and put pressure for her to support her brother. Before working in a brothel, Anna worked in the U.K. for a year, but the income was far less than her family's needs in China. In order to support her family, she volunteered to work in this brothel. Director Lu discussed how the prototype of Anna was inspired by one of her friends who was secretly working in a massage parlor and then ended her life by suicide (Lu, 2016). However, the film is not just a personal autobiography of Anna but can be seen as an assemblage of many sex workers' situations. Their immigration journeys are connected to the poverty they experienced in their home countries and in the U.K. Hsiao-Hung Pai has argued that many immigrant women

have limited choices for work as their language ability is not sufficient for them to find a job, leading them to work in restaurants and endure underprivileged working conditions (Pai, 2013). This issue is represented in the film, when Tina wants to go to a job interview and Anna expresses concern about her English language skills. These disadvantages make many impoverished women turn to sex workers.

Anna's story is an allegory of many immigrants that even though she experiences the global flow, as Appadurai states, from one country to another, she experiences limited mobility throughout the city (Appadurai, 1996). In a sequence, Anna expresses her longing to see the center of London when she first arrives in the U.K. However, her work keeps her away from her dream of traveling the city, and sadly, she never fulfills her wish to take the cruise on the Thames River before her death. Through this sequence, the viewer can see Anna's expectation of global flows from China to Britain is built upon a tourist's imagination but her experience in the U.K. is rather traumatizing. The brothel is in suburban of London which is away from the center, and Anna feels stuck and marginalized. The sex work and boss Lily's verbal abuse seriously affects Anna's mental health, but she has no way to resolve it. During the robbery event which mentioned before, a man cruelly rapes her. After this traumatic incident, she collapses and leaves the brothel to walk in the street. In this sequence, the hand-held camera follows her steps as a voyeur. First, in a medium shot, she walks along a railway and the camera catches in front of her and shows her eyes without focus. Here, the film inserts a clip of Sasa and Mei serving a man who lies naked on the bed, and Tina stands and observes at the same room. After several montages inside the brothel, the scene jumps back to Anna walking through a tunnel. In these scenes, a medium shot shows her face with tears which indicates her sadness, and then a long shot from her back in which audience can see one foot with high heel on but another foot is bare

and the shoe is missing. In these scenes, she seems to have lost her mind and looks as if she is being chased by someone. A jump cut shows Anna appearing at Heathrow international airport wanting to fly back home. At this moment, the audience can see she has lost her coat and both shoes. It is a mystery how Anna is able to walk to the airport and the inconsistent cut of Anna's experience corresponds to her mental illness. (Figure 12)

This scene in the airport presents the immobility of these Sinophone immigrant workers. In this scene, Anna appears and has been seen in public for the first time. In the study of globalization, the airport is the node of time-space compression, and the transportation by jets between different locations shrinks the world like a village (Harvey). However, when Anna walks into the airport, she cannot simply get on a plane (it is hard to know if she has no access to the funds that would buy a plane ticket, or her mental illness forbids her to purchase the ticket) to go back to her hometown. In other words, her immobility shows her noncompliance with the world. Noticeably, the camera angle is from birds-eye level like a surveillance camera and looks down on the process of Anna being expelled by the bodyguard at the airport (Figure 13). The audience is placed in a position of bystander which imitates the way people see the pain of others. After a canted shot of a footbridge and a sound of body crashing on the ground, Anna is shown laid on the ground without anyone around. A panning shot starts from her legs, which are full wounds and scars and she wears the same clothes which she wears on her first day in brothel. The camera pans from her legs to her face and stops at a close shot on her face with blood flowing out from her noses and mouth. The final scene of Anna presents the painful experience of an immigrant who is seeking an opportunity but ultimately dies in a foreign land. From Anna's story, we see an immobile body which is restricted.

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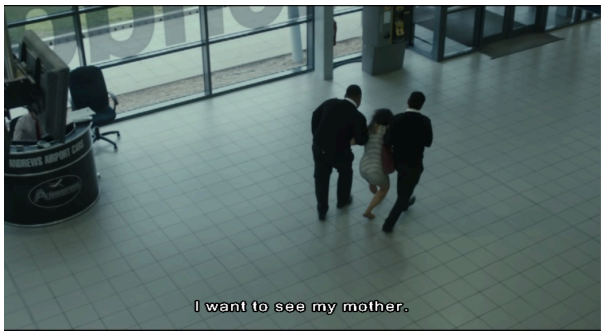
<tr><td>  </td><td> 
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<tr><td>Figure 4-11: Anna is walking through a tunnel.</td><td>Figure 4-12: A high-angle shot: Anna appears at the airport and is expelled by bodyguards.</td></tr>
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<tr><td>Figure 4-13: Anna: “Do you know that I haven’t been to the center of London City?”</td><td>Figure 4-14: Body engagement: Tina uses her finger to measure London Bridge.</td></tr>
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Creating Mobility: The Flaneuse (Female flaneur), Displacement and London as a Tourism City

Even though most of the is set in London’s suburbs, the film starts in tourist London and returns to it at the end of the film. The film does not stop at Anna’s tragedy but provides another storyline for audiences to see an alternative scenario of immigrant mobility. In this section, I

connect the concept of the flaneur to the discussion of mobility to examine how these Sinophone immigrants can be subjects of urban observers.

Toward the end of *The Receptionist*, in order to fulfill Anna's dream of boating on the Thames River, Tina and Sasa arrange a trip to the center of London. Before Anna's death, she had never been to the center of London because she was working hard and afraid of exposing herself to the public (Figure 11). The action of touring the city is a positive experience for these Sinophone immigrants in that they have their agency to be able to gaze at the city. During this trip, they change their identity from sex workers to subjects of consumerism. Anna's immobility reveals the fact that walking in a city is still a privilege, which in turn raises the concept of "flaneur." In the study of modernity, flaneur is a theoretical figure who actively wandered in the city and observed urban spaces without purpose. This type of urban observer reflected the emergence of visual culture and public culture in modern industrialized cities with specialized experience with spectacle stimulations. Feminist scholars have questioned whether the flaneur is masculinized and considered whether the flânerie (female flaneur) existed. Janet Wolff argues that discussions of the flaneur did not include women in the nineteenth century, because "women could not stroll alone in the city" at the time, and only a few special women like the prostitute, the widow and the old lady could walk by themselves. (Wolff, 1985, 41) However, Deborah Parsons argues against "the dichotomous concept of separate private/public spheres as evidence for the exclusion of women in the city'. Instead, Parsons argues for the flaneur as a more complex concept which develops how to identity self from the uncertain environment. (Parson, 2000: 41). She indicates the flaneur was a masculinized figure who was able to stand in a position of observer and portrait as a man, but also he endures the anxiety which comes from modernity. (Parsons, 2000: 22). Extending this conversation, a flaneur metaphorically experience

of walking in street as an observer and through this process to define themselves by wandering and gaze other people. Aimée Boutin reclaims the modern meaning of flânerie with the senses and materials connection in today's world, and writes "although originally a nineteenth-century Parisian type, the postmodern flaneur has become a tool for conceptualizing urban mobility and encounters, and a symbol of self-conscious awareness of urban experience" (Boutin, 2012, 130). Using flânerie as an approach, in the film, Sasa and Tina replace Anna to fulfill her wish to become a flaneur which provides a space for them to rethink their positions without focusing on their works.

Taking a boat trip on the Thames River allows Sasa and Tina to jump out of their normal daily lives. When they leave the massage parlor, they also break away from their original identities and become tourists. During the scene, when the light of sunset shines behind their bodies, they enjoy the moment without pressure from outside society. In these sequences, Sasa and Tina discuss their dreams and consider their next steps. In this scene, Sasa's appearance is totally different from her sexy image in the brothel, and Sasa takes off the performative disguise as a sex worker and temporary release her sensations to feel the air and light and becomes a 'tourist' rather than an 'immigrant'. To understand Tina and Sasa's position as a tourist, I borrow the concept of "tourist gaze" from the sociologist John Urry, who developed the idea in the 1990s and extended his perspective to focus on how tourism develops in the globalized world. For Urry and Larsen "gazing at particular sights is conditioned by personal experience and memories and framed by rules and styles, as well as by circulating images and texts of this and other places (Urry and Larsen, 2011, 2). In other word, the way tourists gaze at the city results in the dynamic of their thoughts of the place. For individuals, the sensation of a tourist trip is conducted both physically and mentally experience. The concept helps guide our understanding

of the latter part of the film, which presents London through Sasa and Tina's eyes. As we understand, Sasa and Tina's trip purposely completes Anna's dream which adds a layer of their emotion when they have a tour in the city. The first shot on the boat is a close-up of a wristband which is a gift from Anna, symbolizing Anna's unfilled dream. When Sasa and Tina gaze at the landscape, it is a sentimental moment in which they understand how dreams are so difficult to achieve.

During the trip, Tina and Sasa interact with landmark London and self-reflect on their identities. Tourism is a constructed process: "where social interactions occur and self-identity can be pursued and developed through the combination of different places, peoples, cultures, and societies" (Wearing and Foley, 2017, p. 103). On the boat, Tina asks Sasa: "don't you think you dream less when you're getting older?" Sasa responds with a smile and takes out a book which is a Chinese translation of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being'* from Czech writer Milan Kundera. Sasa expresses that this book is her favorite and wants to give it to Tina. Through this gift, Tina realizes that Sasa might be more well-read than Tina had previously assumed. After the conversation, Tina pretends to measure the London Bridge with her finger from a distance to make an illusion that she can take the bridge. Even though they do not take a photo, they engage with the space and immerse themselves in the sunshine. At the same time, this action also metaphorically implies that Tina is measuring her dream of staying in London (Figure 12).

Tina and Sasa's framing as tourists during this sequence represents a moment where they reclaim a sense of mobility. To understand the concept of mobilities, John Urry and Mimi Sheller propose a "mobilities paradigm" and emphasize the interconnectedness between different places through both material and non-material forms. The authors state that "all places are tied into at least thin networks of connections that stretch beyond each such place and mean that

nowhere can be an 'island.'" (Sheller and Urry, 2006, p. 209) This statement applies to the characters in the film. Notably, the trip to the center of London is in the opposite direction of the beginning when Tina's searching for a job. These two ways are completely different modes of moving. As a form of the materiality of mobility, the viewer can see different transportations including buses, trains, and flights on the screen, and, interestingly, every transport scene implies a transition for the characters in the film. In the film's opening sequence, there is a train scene that transfers Tina from the urban environment to a marginal life. In the end, a tour bus scene brings Tina back to the urban center and she seems to make up her mind to leave the country. During the boat trip scene, after they discuss dreams, a diegetic sound of a plane is heard and Tina and Sasa look up at the sky. A plane flies across the blue sky which implies the determination of Tina to return to her hometown, Taiwan.

The characters' ability to reclaim their mobility also involves non-material forms. With ever-changing technologies, the digital and imaginative world is as important as the physical and material world to affect every individual. One thread of the story in the film is how these Sinophone women situate and identify themselves in the world. As mentioned before, Tina was uncertain about her stay in the U.K. At the beginning of the film, her reason to stay in London is that she has a local boyfriend but later she is evicted from their apartment and almost becomes homeless. The sense of displacement has strongly impacted her as many Sinophone immigrants have experienced. As she decides if she wants to go back home, she engages with many different media sources, including TV, phone, and the internet that connect her with Taiwan. A nostalgic feeling is also evoked when she watches a road destroyed by a typhoon in her hometown from a video on the internet and the catastrophe images triggers an emotional desire to return to her hometown.

The film's ending ultimately presents three different perspectives on the immobility or mobility of immigrant women through the different endings of Anna, Sasa, and Tina. Unable to return, Anna's death shows the immobility of immigrant women, but her death affects the decision of Tina and Sasa. The film ends with Tina going back hometown to be a farmer, presenting a contrast between urban London and rural southern Taiwan. After Tina returns to Taiwan, the police search the brothel and arrest Lily, Sasa and Mei, at which point Sasa still decides to stay in London with her children. Their choices and decisions are determined by both where they physically stay and where they feel they belong to. Nevertheless, whether they stay or depart, it is meaningful that the film creates the mobile understanding of London as a global city from the perspectives of immigrant women and the place allows many possible identities to present.

Conclusion

In *The Receptionist*, the concept of "immigrant gaze" is used to highlight Sinophone immigrant women and their marginal position in London. The immigrant gaze is a complex multilayered notion built on discussions of gaze theories in different disciplines, including male gaze, colonial gaze, ethnographic gaze, and touristic gaze. Intersecting different gazes, the immigrant gaze is a dynamic process that allows us to see how these immigrant women are objects to be gazed at by others on the screen and subjects who can gain agency to gaze at the city by reclaiming mobility between different kinds of spaces. First, immigrant women endure the unfriendly gaze from locals because of their race, gender and occupation, and their existence is discriminated against, exploited, and racialized. Further, *The Receptionist* distinguishes different spaces for immigrants with different color filters and forms a contrast between the massage parlor as a work and living space, and London city as a touristic space. Within the house, their life is presented in the living

room, kitchen and at the dining table, which helps these women build a family-like bond. The mirror as a cinematic device complicates the space through its reflection and functions as a mechanism to help them find self-identity when they gaze at themselves. Finally, the film presents both the limitations on Sinophone women and their potential liberations in the city. Anna's death reveals their immobility in the city, while Tina and Sasa's trip offers a positive perspective of these Sinophone women's mobility and the agency it offers them. Wandering the city as a female flaneur provides these immigrants their own chance to gaze at the city and negotiate their self-identifications. The "immigrant gaze" analytically help us to see the relations between mobility, space and the subjectivity of Sinophone immigrant women that provides a new dimension of thinking London's multiplicities.

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Coda: The Past and Future of Immigrant Cinema

Introduction

This dissertation presents four different locations and types of immigrant cinema. The first chapter investigates how *Pinoy Sunday* (2009) and *Ye-Zai* (2012) portray Southeast Asian migrant workers in Taiwan. Through the theme of "runaway migrant workers," the films show existence of discrimination toward these southeast migrant workers. The second chapter focuses on how *My Little Honey Moon* (2012) presents new immigrant women in Taiwan. Deploying the analytical concept of intersectionality, I examine the marginalized status of these women in Taiwan in different aspects because of their gender, class and nationality. My exploration of the first two chapters challenges the stiff and fixed mainstream articulations of Taiwanese national identity centered on Han ethnicity. The third chapter discusses Midi Z's filmmaking and the visualization of Sinophone Burmese. Historically, Sinophone Burmese were military refugees who had complicated relations with Myanmar, Taiwan, and China. Midi Z's films show their complicated identities and their predicaments which encourage them to move out and search for new possibilities. The fourth chapter depicts the way Sinophone sex workers live in London. The film distinguishes different spaces for immigrants to show their subjectivities. Through the discussion of immigrant gaze, the film presents how these Sinophone immigrant women can have their agency.

To sum up, this dissertation demonstrates how immigrant cinemas are present in Asian studies. In this way, this research contributes to three major aspects. The first contribution is to highlight immigrant cinema as a developing category and bring it into discussion of Asian studies. The second contribution is to bring the concept of "mobilities turn" into the discussion of Asian Studies. By emphasizing connections and disconnections between different places,

immigrant cinemas show many different layers and dimensions to respond to the rapidly changing world. The third contribution is to propose two major methodologies for future researchers: (1) Immigrant Cinemas Intersect with Different Genres; (2) Immigrant Gaze as an Analytical Tool.

While this project maps four disparate routes that Sinophone immigrant cinema has taken, these are but a handful of the numerous trajectories that the immigrant experience and the cinematic tradition portraying that experience in the Sinophone world have taken. Instead of a traditional conclusion, I propose to conclude my study with a handful of alternative sketches of other examples to highlight the diversity and unevenness of immigrant cinema for my future research. These examples serve different aspects to understand Sinophone immigrant presentation which provide great potentials for us to enlarge the field.

Hong Kong's Vietnamese Immigrants

Hong Kong has constantly been an immigrant destination and transition point since it became a colony of the British government and then was turned over to the Chinese government in 1997. In the 1980s, Hong Kong witnessed the rise of films in which refugees were the subject. However, this type of film has received little attention thus far, particularly films on Vietnamese immigrants in the 1980-2000s. These movies belong to several different genres and provide various perspectives on the phenomenon of Vietnamese refugees. This body of work is best represented by a group of films by Ann On-wah Hui (Xu Anhua), one of the leading figures in the Hong Kong New Wave. Hui's Vietnamese trilogy, *The Visitor* (*Laike*) 來客 (1987), *The Story of Woo Viet* (*Wuyue de gushu*) 胡越的故事 (1981) and *Boat People* 投奔怒海 (1982), which explores the taboo geopolitical themes that were highly sensitive when the films were produced in the 1980s.

Formerly, Hong Kong was one of the most important destinations for immigrants and it has experienced different immigration trends and accepted people from different places during different periods of time. Hong Kong is situated in Southern China and was ceded to Great Britain after the First Opium War (1842). Originally a fishing village, it developed into a highly urbanized modern metropolis with the contributions from different immigrants in different periods of time. This project will focus on the Vietnamese immigrants during the formulation of the Cold War system when Hong Kong was in a special position among different powers, including the British, U.S., PRC in Mainland China, KMT in Taiwan, and Vietnam governments. In this project, due attention will be given to these Vietnamese immigrants who had a significant influence on Hong Kong's local society.

A large number of Vietnamese refugees arrived in Hong Kong by boats after the communist unification of Vietnam in 1975. Unlike the immigrants from China, the British colonial government did not allow these boat people to stay locally at first and they were located in refugee camps. With the closure of the last refugee camp in 2000, the Hong Kong government and society faced an ethical dilemma: if the boat refugees were accepted, Hong Kong would have to withstand the ensuing social disorder. In this case, we can also see a hierarchy of different attitudes on the government's part, as the refugees from different areas were treated differently. In her insightful article, Vivian Lee examines the relation between the Hong Kong New Wave and migration. She elaborates on Hong Kong movies' tendency to represent "otherness." This process of "otherness" occurs in the sense of perpetual flux. The Hong Kong New Wave cinemas depicted those trans-border stories in the form of "decentering" or "othering" which is a self-articulation of the local. Because of the multiple social, cultural, and

linguistic presentations in the films, it is difficult to imagine an essentialized "Chineseness" and "Hongkonger." [7]

As a pioneer of the Hong Kong New Wave, Ann Hui chose immigration as the theme for her cinematic practice that was not as simple as presenting the reality of immigrants' social problems. I argue that the films that present immigration also present uncertain nationalities. Hui's works touched on geopolitical problems and were banned by multiple governments, including those of Hong Kong, Mainland China, and the KMT government in Taiwan government.

As a female director as well, Hui provides a delicate observation of this immigration. Hui began her career in the mid-1970s in television production. She directed *The Visitor* in a social TV drama series, *Below the Lion Rock* (*Shizi shanxia*) 獅子山下. *The Visitor* describes a young Vietnamese man smuggled from Vietnam to Hong Kong and his difficulties while living there. After this TV production, Hui became interested in the stories of Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s, and made more two feature films, *The Story of Woo Viet* and *Boat People*, which combined, constitute her Vietnamese trilogy. *The Story of Woo Viet* describes the way a boat refugee, Woo Viet (played by Chuw Yun Fat), was smuggled into Hong Kong, where a Hongkong pen friend helped him flee to America. However, when they were stopped in the Philippines, a gangster abducted his girlfriend. He gave up the opportunity to go to America to save his girlfriend, but died at the end of the story. Compared to *The Visitor* and *The Story of Woo Viet*, which largely depict life after arriving in Hong Kong, *Boat People* describes the story in Vietnam through a Japanese photographer's lens. *Boat People* was the peak in Ann Hui's early career and is also regarded as one of the best *Huayu Dianying* 華語電影 today. In addition,

many critics respect this film as one of the beginnings of the Hong Kong New Wave, which provided a new aesthetic for industrialized Hong Kong movies.

Ann Hui also has transnational and transregional experiences. She was born in Anshan in northeast China, and has a Chinese father who worked for the KMT and a Japanese mother. Ann Hui was 16 before she learned this and it inspired her to make the semi-biographical film *Song of the Exile* (Kehen Qiutu) 客恨秋途 (1991). At five, she moved to Hong Kong, where she was educated and graduated from the English and Comparative Literature Department at the University of Hong Kong. Thereafter, she trained to be a filmmaker at the London International Film school. These transnational and transregional experiences have affected her cinematic practices. Ann Hui does not limit her filmmaking to specific genres, but her films touch primarily upon the many issues of ambiguous identities and the attempts to find personal subjectivities.

Ann Hui's Vietnamese trilogy intervenes in several different national imaginations between Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, and Vietnam, and the way the films portray the struggle among different national identities, including British colonialism. In one of her interviews, she revealed that the series of TV programs she made was an advertisement for the Hong Kong Immigration Office, and as such, was related to colonial management. The original TV series includes other areas, such as Thailand, but only Hui developed the theme from the small to the large screen. For example, the ending of *The Story of Woo Viet* was remade for release in Taiwan without Hui's permission. Because the protagonist broke the law, they had to add several scenes on "justice" and educational meaning. Another example is the political and ideological conflict between China and Taiwan, although the content is about Vietnam (Berry, 2005, 427-428).

Because of its sensitive theme, Hui encountered the problem of censorship in different places for different reasons. *Boat People* is the first Hong Kong movie shot in Mainland China after the open-door policy. Because the Vietnam scenes were shot on Hainan Island, the actor Chow Yun-fat rejected the offer for Taiwan's market and recommended that a new actor, Andy Lau, play the film's hero who wants to escape. As a result, Hui changed the protagonist to a Japanese journalist, who was played by the famous actor George Lam Chi Cheung. As a result, she had to adjust her film production from the Vietnamese to the Japanese journalist perspective for *Boat People* (Berry, 2005, 428). The setting reminds us of the objective position of these migrant cinemas' representation of Vietnam. The setting is an interesting change because it also turns the film to an objective position to present communist Vietnam. However, it is unclear why Hui chose a Japanese actor rather than one of another nationality, which could be a worthwhile topic for future research. Although we have no clear answer about the questionable setting, the actor Lam speaks only a few sentences in Japanese and speaks fluent Cantonese primarily, as do other actors who play Vietnamese roles. Although the director and screenwriter invested effort to investigate and research Vietnamese immigrants and shot the film in a realistic style, the language spoken provides evidence that *Boat People* is a Hong Kong imagination of Vietnam. Vivian Lee argues that "Vietnam" in Hui's trilogy replaces unspoken communist China and projects the anxiety of Hong Kong's forthcoming return to China. She wrote:

> [I]n her 'Vietnam Trilogy' local sentiments and anxieties are filtered through the experience of an 'other' person/country: Vietnamese coping with the trauma of war and a tyrannical authoritarian regime. The tragic fate befalling these asylum seekers and

victims of domestic political violence resonates with the condition of migration and exile of Hong Kong in the latter half of the twentieth century.[73]

Contesting Chineseness: Border-Crossing and the "Homeland" in Tang Shu-Shuen's *China Behind*

The British Colonial government ruled Hong Kong during the Cold War, and on the surface, it appeared to be primarily a commercial society that encouraged audiences to watch soft entertainment and avoided controversial political issues. Yet it was still an underground battlefield of different left and right ideologies from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Taiwanese Kuomintang (KMT) party during the 1960s and 1970s. *China Behind (Zai Jian Zhongguo*) (1974), made by Hong Kong filmmaker Tang Shu-Shuen (Tang Shuxuan), was a unique film that explored these contradictions. Tang Shu-Shuen was another female director who was a leading figure of the Hong Kong New Wave. She engaged boldly with the Cultural Revolution (which was still ongoing in Mainland China) by making a film about four people who were trying to escape the Revolution by fleeing to Hong Kong. Because of the sensitive topic, Tang faced challenges finding locations to film, producing the film, and finally, upon release, the film was censored both in Hong Kong and Taiwan (the two major film markets of Sinophone cinemas during the 1970s). Although film scholar Yau Ching emphasizes that Tang Shu-Shuen de-politicized the content intentionally, the representation of the Cultural Revolution broke the taboo against addressing politics in media inevitably, and thus, the film's release was delayed for a decade. Rather than maintaining Hong Kong media's separation of art and politics,

[73] Lee Vivian P.Y. "The Hong Kong New Wave—A Critical Reappraisal." In *The Chinese Cinema Book*, edited by Song Hwee Lim and Julian Ward. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York; London: Palgrave Macmillan; British Film Institute, 2011. p 132.

I argue that we should rethink *China* Behind's aesthetics: the film uses artistry to suggest that Hong Kong should be reconsidered/understood as an immigrant society. The representation of immigrants/refugees traveling from China to Hong Kong presents not only outsiders' viewpoint, but also reconstructs Hongkonger's identities by articulating their "Chineseness" controversially.

Although *China Behind* is a story of the Cultural Revolution, Hong Kong's position in the film has significant meaning related to its history. Hong Kong has received immigrants from different places constantly since it became a British colony. Thus, Hong Kong's subjectivity is uncertain and is often placed in a marginal position to the Empire. Moreover, Hong Kong was becoming "the other", not only from the perspective of the gaze of British colonial rule, but also the Chinese viewpoint. Under these circumstances, Hong Kong film production was not merely a medium that accepted foreign cultures, but it also served as a way to construct a specific identity by rethinking these immigrants in relation to the space itself. Thus, through the cinematic gaze on these immigrants, Hongkongers can identify their own subjective position. Hong Kong scholar ' discusses *China Behind* as a precursor to the 1980s' handover consciousness (a time when anxieties about the 1997 exchange of rule from the UK to the PRC began to occupy Hongkongers' minds) which made China's gaze an object. Ostensibly, Tang's *China Behind* presents the issue of the Cultural Revolution, but the film also touches on many of Hong Kong's dilemmas.

Thus, *China Behind* differs thematically and technically from mainstream Hong Kong films. It captured the ongoing Cultural Revolution sensitively, and at the same time, emphasized the damage of destroying individualism. The observation was not only highly avant-garde in the 1970s, but also addressed problems that other Culture Revolution films hesitate to present today. Because of the Cultural Revolution, many political refugees crossed the border to Hong Kong,

which became a noteworthy issue for both the Hong Kong government and society. Although these refugees were largely from China, their motivations differed. By depicting various characters' motivations, the film avoids simplifying these refugees and their flight. The film presents four college students (Song Chuan, Song Lan, Wang Han-run, and Chin Hao-Tung) who flee to Hong Kong and a doctor (Yang Er-ching) who helps them plan their escape route.

Technically, the film purposely uses cold-colored filters to create the sense of a rational observer and achieve an effect of alienation. Many critics have suggested that Tang Shu-Shuen's style is akin to Italian Neorealism: She uses non-professional actors, a documentary visual style, and shoots on location (rather than in a studio). Interestingly, although the visual images attempt to present a very objective vision, the narration in *China Behind* takes the subjective viewpoint of one protagonist: Song Chuan. Compared with Tang's previous movie, *The Arch*, a sweeping historical epic, both films emphasize psychological descriptions.

The narrator, Song Chuan, does not really question the Cultural Revolution's ideological faults, and still believes the national discourse even as he flees. He wants to escape because his family is one among Mao's Five Black Categories (the five political identities considered enemies of the Revolution). As a result, there is no way for him to contribute to China's future while there. He decides to run to Hong Kong to seek opportunities to serve his "homeland" while living in another country. Ironically, Song Chuan's choice of exile is his choice to serve his country. Song Chuan's sister, Song Lan, and her lover, Wang Han-run, decide to escape because they will be separated after their graduation. On the other hand, Chin Hao-Tung suffers as he cannot become a member of the Communist party because of his family background, and yet he attends the movements, writes public posts actively, and plans secretly to find another route for his future.

Although they have different motivations, none of these characters really attempts to challenge China's new political structures. Instead, they feel they must take action only when the Cultural Revolution becomes increasingly violent. In one scene, the four encounter a dead body covered by a white sheet. This shows the serious result of the Red Guard movement, while a propaganda slogan ironically shows Chairman Mao's longevity. The dark blue color of the scene makes this juxtaposition even more depressing and threatening. In some sense, this foreboding tone evokes a horror movie atmosphere. The Red Guards' fanaticism is contrasted with the cold elimination of dissent. The irrational threat to life makes our characters' choice to flee the country rational. The use of voiceover emphasizes the individual's and outsider's voice in the face of the Cultural Revolution's collectivism.

The process of escaping occupies a significant portion of the length of the film and the process not only challenges each character's faith, but also transforms them and lends them new identities. Tang recreates the entire escape journey based upon the real memory of those refugees. Interestingly, the title, *China Behind*, was changed from the original title, *The Dissidents*. The title, *The Dissidents*, makes clearer the protagonists' political position as anti-communists, but *China Behind* situates the film clearly in relation to their identity of Chineseness instead.

Although Tang does not critique the Cultural Revolution explicitly, the film shows institutionally and repeatedly the way nationalism is interwoven with the cult of Mao. During the Cultural Revolution scenes, Mao is omnipresent and appears in every transition. For example, in the beginning of the film, when they finish their swimming training, the coach reviews the group's training and emphasizes Chairman Mao's teaching against individualism, praising collectivism. The swimmers recite Mao's words that advocate patriotism of Chinese ethnicity,

while the propaganda slogan of "longevity of Chairman Mao" is shown behind them. Moreover, on their journey, our protagonists see the Red Guard being mobilized to another city to support the "revolution." Strategically, when those Red Guards doubt their identity, they reaffirm their loyalty by singing "The East Is Red" (Dong Fang Hong), the most popular song during the Cultural Revolution. Unsurprisingly, the lyrics praise Mao as a great leader. During their escape, the song appears in another scene in which our refugees hide in a farmer's backyard. The radio broadcasts with a very high-pitched female voice that praises Chairman Mao and encourages the peasants to attend revolution. When they feel hungry and threatened, the song penetrates through the countryside, underscoring that they are trapped. Even at the end of the film, when they arrive in Hong Kong, they cannot escape Mao's shadow. Instead, a signboard with the words "Longevity Chairman Mao" sets ironically on top of the roof of the Bank of China building in central Hong Kong.

Rather than depicting Hong Kong as a capitalist paradise, the film shows the way the capitalist system rejects and marginalizes these refugees as well. As a result, they feel unsatisfied and unhappy although they have already "escaped" China. Ching Hao-tung was enthusiastic about Maoism, but took a risk to seek a better opportunity in Hong Kong. However, he fails to find a decent job because he cannot speak fluent Cantonese. In the final scene, he stands in front of the train station and hesitates, considering whether he wants to return to his "Homeland."

In the next scene of his confession in a church, he intertwines his identity irrevocably with the feelings of in-between-ness that he experienced as he crossed the border. As he describes the experience: "I seem to be struggling between two worlds. If I do not pay attention, I will be swallowed and buried by the crack between the two worlds. My body was cold, numb and hungry, but the waves mercilessly heated me again and again. My tired body was struggling

on the dark sea. For the first time, I feel so lonely. I never prayed before because I have never had this chance. But I only heard one sentence from the bottom of my heart: Ching Hao-tung, be brave. The gods will help you succeed." Ching's confession captures many refugee's experiences and exemplifies the struggle between two different systems.

Song Lan, as the main female character in *China Behind*, allows Tang, as a female director, to challenge the values of the patriarchal society in both China and Hong Kong subtly. Song Lan's entry into Hong Kong reflects personal desire rather than an attempt to contribute to the nation in whatever way possible. Her relationship with consumer products is also articulated at the level of personal choice. During movement, her body and autonomy are challenged in intimate ways that suggest an irrevocable change in her identity. Yet Tang does not suggest a fairy-tale-like happy ending for Song Lan. Instead, she is caught in much the same way as Song Chuan—between two worlds.

Unlike her male counterparts, Song Lan likes literature. She has no ambition to save the country. She disagrees boldly with the national policy that all culture, literature, and art should serve the proletariat and knows she is not suitable for the current political atmosphere. However, a male comrade denounces her as having an anti-revolution attitude and encourages her to use other ways to serve the country. She rejects this suggestion and escapes to Hong Kong because she wants to stay with her lover, Han Run.

During the Cultural Revolution, the party provided no opportunity for women to support the revolution. Further, the party also suppressed the uniqueness of women's bodies by eliminating the differences between men and women: standardizing clothing and labor. In one scene in which women who wear the newest non-sexualized clothes are compared, Song Lan's auntie recalls 1930s fashion, and articulates it as a time when women had more choices.

Although the entire story uses a male as the primary outsider voice, Song Lan's female body was emphasized prominently during their flight as an autonomous body attempting to control her own fate. She slows the group's progress constantly because she physically cannot move as fast as the men. Because of her pregnancy, she feels highly uncomfortable during the trip. Her actions are often motivated by particularly strong drives that revolve around her pregnancy, including hunger. In the most pivotal scene, she goes into a farmer's house secretly, where a child finds her. She grabs a knife and becomes violent because she must protect her own child.

Eventually, Song Lan crosses the border into Hong Kong successfully, yet her emotional and mental changes are reflected in the way she relates to other women. When she goes to the beauty salon, she cannot help but laugh, yet her facial expression is very horrifying to the audience. She still wears dark clothes and is uneasy around other Hongkongers. Although she gained what she desired, it was a bittersweet victory because she paid a very high price—she lost her brother and changed irrevocably. At the end of the film, she is sitting with her big belly in a tiny room watching the city of light outside. There are no certainties, and the barren room suggests that she is in a new kind of prison.

China Behind represents the dilemma faced by four young college students who escape from communist China and then feel displaced further in capitalist Hong Kong. Their dual marginalization and alienation from the two worlds are a manifestation of the Cold War ideologies in the 1970s. In the film, Tang not only depicts the horror of the Culture Revolution in China realistically, but also presents the dystopia of the capitalist world in Hong Kong. This paper argues that these fugitive subjects challenge both centers critically—the collectivization of

the communist government in China and stratification of the capitalist colonial government in Hong Kong in the 1970s.

Intriguingly, this narrative of political refugees is difficult to integrate into national discourses because the film was censored in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China in the 1970s and screened only in the 1980s. The film shows the controversial use of "homeland", which exposes the uncertainty of Chineseness. In the film, the communist political system marginalized the students structurally. The male protagonists believed that fleeing China was the only way to make a contribution to their "homeland" because the constraints in China made their utopian dream unattainable. The female protagonist is removed from this further, as all of her conflicts are on the personal rather than the ideological level. The lens deconstructs the imagination of "homeland" through the realistic style of the border-crossing scenes, in which their physical experience has changed to uncertain and unstable identities.

Chinese dystopia—Visualizing Social Transformation in Jia Zhangke's *Mountains May Depart*

As China is emerging as a strong economic entity and new power, the local-global axis between China and the world has shifted. This project reflects on the changing social landscape since the new millennium in China. Nonetheless, this shifting relationship between China and the remainder of the world has not been considered carefully.

The radical changes in Chinese society, particularly the transformation from socialism to capitalism, have been one of the most important motifs in Jia Zhangke's films. His films typically concern individuals' life experiences that unexpectedly have a significant effect because of China's tremendous economic development. Jia Zhangke's film *Mountains May Depart* (*Shanhe guren*) (2015) not only continues to examine these concerns, but also focuses on

the consequences of an extremely polarized Chinese society and brings it into a transnational circumstance that differs from the focus of previous movies. The narration of the film extends geographically from the backwater of Fenyang in Shanxi province [Jia's hometown] in 1999 (China's past), to Shanghai in 2014 (roughly contemporaneous with filming) to Australia in 2025, respectively.

The story builds on a love triangle involving Shen Tao (aka Tao-er, portrayed by actress Zhao Tao, who is Jia's wife and has been in nearly all of his feature films), Zhang Jinsheng (played by actor Yi Zhang), and Liang Jangjung (aka Liangzi, portrayed by Liang JingDong). The linear story begins with Shen Tao's struggle with two different men from different classes in 1999, and presents the enormous social and economic transformation in Chinese society through these three different figures' life journeys. Zhang Jinsheng is a mine owner who grasps the new opportunity in China to privatize. To attract Zhao Tao's attention, he forces his best friend, Liangzi, a miner, to leave his mine. Liangzi, the representative proletariat, is defeated and migrates to other provinces to work. Shen Tao, a small store owner's daughter, chooses Jinsheng as her husband and they have a baby, Dollar (aka Zhang Daole).

In the film's second section, which takes place in 2014, Tao has divorced Jinsheng, who has moved to Shanghai with their son Daole. Tao manages a gas station that Jinsheng owned originally. Although she lives in a good house, she faces many separations and feels great loneliness. Daole flies back to Fengyang to attend Tao's father's funeral before he immigrates to Australia with Jinsheng. At the same time, the film shows the miserable life of Liangzi, who returns to Fengyang with his wife and baby because he suffers an incurable disease caused by working in the mines, and asks helplessly for Tao's financial support to buy medicine.

In the third section, set in 2025, Daole has grown up in Australia and lost his memory of China because of his uncommunicative father, Jinsheng. Daole has a May-December romance with his Chinese teacher, Mia, who has just divorced a white man. Mia helps Daole communicate with his father and encourages him to search for his roots. On the other side of the world, Tao still lives in Fenyang with a dog. In the last scene of the film, she recalls an old memory of her younger years and dances poetically in a snow field along Yellow river.

Through these three dramatic trajectories of the three main characters, the film presents the polarization of society in China—the emerging nouveau riche stratum lost in the capitalized world while the working class suffers in poor working conditions. The film contextualizes this using different visual technologies and social landscapes, which resituates the issues of cultural identity in China's past, present, and future within the progress of modernization and capitalization.

Jia Zhangke admits his obsession with different new photographic technologies and pursues his adventures in upcoming film techniques in his films constantly. In the three sections, the film adopts different aspect ratios remarkably to correspond to the different eras. In Jia's interviews, he claims he presents the sense of time intentionally through the correspondence with the visual presentation in the period of time. This statement is worth examining further because it reveals a complex dialectical relation between the realism and formalism that has been discussed in film studies. It is arguable that every aspect ratio change is a change of cinematic aesthetics. Visually, it appears that the audience accepts the different presentations of the movie objectively, which evokes different aesthetic sensations. For example, in *Mountain May Depart*, Jia attempts to use different senses of spatiality to present the film's temporality through different visual forms of film technologies.

The film's narrative structure is chronological. We can see many reflections of Jia's previous works in the movie's content. The first section in Fenyang describes the effect of capitalism that causes every individual to face an unstable life and uncertain future, which in certain ways repeats the motifs in *Xiaowu* (1997), *Platform* (2000), and *Unknown Pleasure* (2002) [also referred to as the Hometown Trilogy]. The second section of the film shows the exodus of a small town's population and discusses the theme of different mobilities, which is related to *The World* (2004) and *A Touch of Sin* (2013). The final part of the film presents a special displacement of immigrants in Australia, which remarkably, is the first time that Jia has set the scene outside of China.

Jia experiments with different aspect ratios in the narratives and attempts to turn the medium itself into a form of "reality" that is based upon a historical sense of a visual experience that the audience has had before. The film adopts an aspect ratio of 1:33 (4:3), which is the same as in television. He inserts many documentary film clips from DV, which Jia and his photographer Nelson Yu recorded in 1999. The film clips inserted also contextualize Jia's previous movies, for example, the scene in which Liangzi leaves Fenyang and sees a truck overloaded with coal stuck in a field. Obviously, we can see the change in the different camera effects, in which one part of the image is shot in DV quality and another is shot with a better digital camera. This scene recalls our memory of *Platform*, in that both are a metaphor for the proletariat. However, these inserted sequences that seem to be generated by the computer layer have two different screen resolutions, and those low-quality images can distract the audience immediately. Paradoxically, when the audience watches these "real images," rather than feeling the reality of the scene, it simulates a feeling of alienation, reminding us that the film is a reconstruction. For example, in the scene set on Chinese New Year's Eve, Jia cuts the

documentary materials from the past and the newly filmed scene, which transports the audience into the past intentionally.

The cinematic landscape differs significantly when various aspect ratios are applied to different landscapes. Chris Lukinbeal states that, "Landscape is central in the formation of cinematic space. Landscape gives meaning to cinematic events and positions narratives within a particular scale and historical context. Where place and landscape ground action and the construction of meaning, space provides the stage for the story to unfold" (3).[1] In general, the wide-screen is able to present natural landscapes better. Although these landscapes themselves may not change greatly, the different aspect ratios, from 1.33:1, 1:85 to 2.39:1, emphasize these natural landscapes prominently. Landscape is one of the vital components of this film rather than an objective element. In the Chinese title, *Shanhe Guren*, Shanhe literally means Mountain and River, which can be a synonym of national land. By presenting the Yellow River and Wenfeng Tower (a Buddhist pagoda) repeatedly, these landscapes layer on different meanings each time they appear. The audience can see a great contradiction between the beginning shot of a group of people dancing in a disco dance hall, and the final shot when Tao dances alone in a natural landscape. The changing aspect ratios help the audience see the transformation from interiority to exteriority. Although they show different temporalities, the different aspect ratios constitute a metaphor of a gradually enlarged world view and this visualization also helps show a transnational story that deals with the complex relationship between the East and West.

The futuristic dystopia, as it is depicted in the third part of the film, suggests one of the potential ways to reimagine the relationship between the Self and the Other in China and the Western world critically in the trend of Chinese immigration to Western countries. By rethinking

the concept of Occidentalism, I will discuss the rupture between different generations and the way the film rebuilds a new imagination of social landscape.

While addressing China's transformation, the way to address the "West" is one of the subthemes in Jia's film. After the open-door policy, Western culture began to affect Chinese society strongly. In many discussions, some people are concerned that by accepting Western culture, one is accepting an invasion of Western imperialism. Inspired by Said's Orientalism, Scholar Xiaomei Chen proposes a counterpart argument of Occidentalism that addresses the acceptance and transformation in the post-Mao era. She argues that in the non-Western context, the acceptance of Western culture in the non-Western discourse can have a positive political meaning or provide emancipation for certain discourses rather than simply receiving it passively.

Jia's view of the concept of "the West" also experiences different stages in his films. Pop Music, one of the most significant examples, allows different emotional expressions, which contrasts with the emptiness of patriotic socialist songs. When Chinese people accept Western songs like Rock & Roll and Disco music, they not only accept the music, but also develop a resistant attitude. For example, two songs, "Go West" (a disco piece by the Pet Shop Boys, 1992, which is a cover of an earlier song by the Village People) and "Zhenzhong (Treasure, a Cantonese song)" appear repeatedly in different situations in *Mountain May Depart*. In Chinese society, "Go West," literally means going to Western countries, which decontextualizes the original context of "the West." This acceptance ignores the context of homosexuality in Western culture. The West refers to "going to San Francisco" which was a center of the Gay Rights movement in the 1960s. This ignorance of the Western context, purposefully or non-purposefully, transfers this song into the local context and generates different meanings. In *Mountain May Depart*, the music, Go West, appears three times. In the opening shot, three

protagonists dance in the Disco Dance Hall, joyfully celebrating the Millennium. Although the song was not permitted officially, it was already very popular in 1999. Based upon Jia's real experience, these scenes duplicate the imagination of freedom in 1999 that fostered rebelliousness, which allows a different interpretation from its original context.

The relationship between the East and West is not simply a binary opposition and the flow of people's changing dynamic between the two. From the very beginning of his work, such as in *Platform*, Jia's films speak of globalization and the movement of people. In *Mountain May Depart*, Jia crosses the national boundary first to present the newest situation in immigration and discusses two different transnational flows. One category is the rich class of immigrants that is benefitting from the economic reform and bringing this capital to the Western world. Zhang Jinsheng is the representative of this class, and his immigration is related to the government's anti-corruption action. The implication of these new rich immigrants is their loss of self-value through this process. Another category in the transnational movement is immigrant workers. Han Samming (portrayed by Jia's Cousin, who appears in some of Jia's other films, such as *Platform*, *the World*, and *the Touch of Sin*), one of Liangzi's friends, wants to be a skilled worker in Almaty. However, to work outside of China, he has to borrow a large amount of money to obtain a visa and pay the agent's fee. As a result, he has to pay the debt as soon as he begins to work. Although the audience does not know the consequences that Samming faces as a migrant worker, the movie shows Liangzi's miserable life as an example of migrant workers' fate.

In the first scene in 2014, the camera captures an upside-down image of a group of mine workers. Then the mass disperses and only Liangzi remains in the middle of the scene. This sequence indicates that Liangzi is one of these workers. The audience knows that Liangzi's disease, neumoconiosis, has forced him to return to his hometown, where he swore never to go

again. In contrast, Zhang Jinsheng brings his son Dollar to Shanghai and prepares to immigrate to Australia without considering any potential financial problems. As David Harvey articulated the concept of the time-space compression, the world has sped up through the development of economy and technologies. However, this development accelerates a social-spatial hierarchy not only within national boundaries, but also in transnational situations. In *Mountain May Depart*, it is easy to see the separation between two different classes through the visualization of these social landscapes.

Compared to his previous work, *The World*, which I argue is a transnational imagination within the national boundary, *Mountains May Depart* is a transnational reality, but the mentality of these immigrants does not cross the border. In *The World*, the film presents a theme park in Beijing that is a simulation of the real world. The protagonists are unable to travel the world, but the theme park provides a special heterotopic place to imagine it, an illusion through which to imagine a cosmopolitan lifestyle. In contrast, in *Mountain May Depart*, the protagonists, Jinsheng and Daole, have opportunities to travel the world because of their wealth, but they struggle with a feeling of being set adrift and are still unsatisfied with their life. It is interesting that Jia presented immigration to Australia as China's future, which can be seen as a fictionalized place. In one scene, Daole brings his Chinese teacher, Mia, to meet his father Jinsheng to discuss how he wants freedom. The shot shows Jinsheng becoming drab first and losing his glorious appearance. The camera pans from him to the table, which shows many different guns and Chinese objects, such as a Chinese book, a fan, and medicine. Here, we can see that although Jinsheng immigrated to Australia, he does not really appreciate the freedom he has and ironically, questions it.

Although the film attempts to bring the audience into a transnational circumstance, it portrays the great anxiety of losing the Chinese identity. It is interesting that the film presents a future that is outside of China. Rather than viewing Australia as the promised land, the film depicts it as a dystopia where people suffer from alienation and miscommunication. In 2025, Daole has forgotten how to speak Chinese and can only communicate with his father through Google Translate. Although the plot is not very convincing to the audience, we can see the great concern that these Chinese immigrants will forget their roots. Dollar (Daole)'s name represents explicitly that the generation is born with capital, but ironically, he loses his memory of his mother and his Chinese origin. Daole falls in love with Mia, who is approximately the same age as his mother. In a sequence about a road trip, Daole experiences déjà vu, in which he has already forgotten he sat in Tao's car. An obvious Oedipus complex connects him to the motherland. At the end of the story, the scenery suddenly changes from Australia back to China, which implies that the story of Australia may be an imagining of Tao's. This dystopian imagining appears to relate still to the concern of nationality, which need further examinate in the future.

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