Crossing Cultures: Investigating Chinese Language Cinemas within and beyond 'the National'

Qiao Li

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Media, Art and Communications, University of Gloucestershire, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Film Studies

September 2010

Crossing Cultures: Investigating Chinese language cinemas within and beyond 'the national'

Abstract

Studies of national cinemas have identified auteur directors as important elements in the building of national cinemas and more especially the projection of national identities. This is partly due to the importance of international film festivals in the distribution and popularization of non-Hollywood cinema to the world and partly because these festivals by their nature privilege the auteur director.

This thesis explores this important link between directors and national cinema within a more complex context than has tended to preoccupy studies of national cinema, namely, the individual nation state. The first part of this thesis examines the three distinctive national cinemas that have close but problematic ties/links with each other – Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In this major part of the thesis I explore not only the emergence of auteur directors within the three national cinemas but also problematize the overemphasis of the nation state as a source of identity and meaning by examining the influence of deep-seated cultural factors/philosophies, such as those of Confucianism and Taoism, that can be seen to be shared beyond geographical and political boundaries. I draw on the concept of national cinema (Andrew Higson, 2002) and its integral notions of projecting the nation and in addition I also explore the concept of 'Imagined Community' (Benedict Anderson, 1991). Using textual analysis, I investigate the ways that certain auteur directors project ideas of national identity in these three Chinese language cinemas, paying particular attention to the convergence of cinematic style and traditional philosophies.

The final part of the thesis engages with three key auteur directors that emerged in the earlier section of this study (one from Mainland China, one from Hong Kong and one from Taiwan) and looks at films they have made either in, or for, a transnational context. This final part furthers the investigation of the role of auteur directors and the signification of complex national meanings in contexts beyond that of the nation state.

This thesis concludes that authorship can provide new interpretative and explanatory perspectives for reading the national in terms of cultural meanings across geographical and political borders and also in the transnational context.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In acknowledging the support given to me in both the approach to, and during the course of this thesis, there are many people to thank. Mostly I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisors. I am deeply grateful for Dr. Ros Jennings, the Head of the Postgraduate Research Centre, University of Gloucestershire. Her wide knowledge and her logical way of thinking have been of great value to me. Her understanding, encouragement and personal guidance have been invaluable. I embarked on this journey with a big suitcase from France where I completed my Master's degree and it is she who introduced me to the field of film studies from the very beginning. I am grateful for the ideas and concepts she 'passed to' me which had a remarkable influence on my thesis. I am also grateful for her passion for Chinese films and culture, though sometimes embarrassing me as a Chinese by her expertise in 'the Orient'.

Also I wish to express my warm and sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Tico Romao, who guided me throughout this research from the beginning. His insights into film scholarship and cultural studies have shaped this thesis and will be priceless for me. But most importantly I am grateful for his philosophy to study that he showed through his help (meetings, conversations and constant corrections), which enlightened me not only how to do research, but also how to be a scholar.

I owe my most sincere gratitude to Dr. Paul Shaw, Research Director of the MAC Faculty. Without his continuous support and corrections this thesis would not be achieved.

Warmest thanks are also due to my 'mates', fellow research students, Phil L. and Eva K., for their excellent advice and 'coffee meetings' on those British rainy days.

During this work I have collaborated with many colleagues for whom I have great regard, and I wish to extend my warmest thanks to all those who have helped me with my work in the Department of Media, Art and Communications at the University of Gloucestershire.

As the thesis has emphasized, the Confucian notion of family occupies a vital role in my studies, among which the most important element for a Chinese son is filial piety. I am therefore indebted to my parents who have forgiven me to be away for so many years and my special gratitude also goes to my brother in China who has encouraged me all the time.

The financial support of the University of Gloucestershire is gratefully acknowledged.

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, September 2010

Qiao Li

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed.....Date.....20/09/2010.....

THESIS CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

14. Alan Delon in *Le Samurai* Jean-Pierre Melville [online image], Available from: <http://i150.photobucket.com/albums/s120/pearlystagedoor/alaindelonab6.jpg> [Accessed 15 April 2010].

15. Film still from *Chungking Express* (Wang Kaiwei, 1994) [online image], Available from: <http://www.mtime.com/my/1714423/blog/1946704/> [Accessed 20 April 2010].

16. Film still from *Chungking Express* (Wang Kaiwei, 1994) [online image], Available from: <http://blog.far2000.com/attachments/2007/09/65500_200709031127495.jpg> [Accessed 20 April 2010].

17. *The Wedding Banquet* (Ang Lee, 1993) [online image], Available from: <http://www.virginmedia.com/images/wedding_banquet-280x400.jpg> [Accessed 7 March 2009].

18. Ang Lee [online image], Available from: <http://english.cri.cn/mmsource/images/2006/03/06/Ang-Lee-4079-2.jpg> [Accessed 16 January 2008].

19. Film still from *Sense Sensibility* (Ang Lee, 1995), film still from DVD.

20. Film Still from *The Ice Storm* (Ang Lee, 1997) [online image], Available from: <http://www.christinaricci.co.uk/icestorm/ice01.jpg> [Accessed 20 April 2010].

21. *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee, 2005) film still from DVD.

22. Taoist Painting of Qing Dynasty [online image], Available from: <http://fineartamerica.com/images-medium/a-part-of-giant-traditional-chinese-painting-a-trip-to-the-lakes-and-hills-in-spring-minglou-chen.jpg> [Accessed 11 July 2008].

23. *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee, 2005), film still from DVD.

24. Taoist Painting of Qing Dynasty [online image], Available from: <http://fineartamerica.com/images-medium/4-a-part-of-giant-traditional-chinese-painting-minglou-chen.jpg> [Accessed 12 July 2008].

25. Face Changing [online image], Available from: <http://www.mtv110.com/Aimg/G5/20091125231298894.jpg> [Accessed 3 August 2008].

26. *Face off* (John Woo, 1997) poster [online image], Available from:

<http://www.mtv110.com/Aimg/G5/20091125231298894.jpg> [Accessed 3 August 2008].

27. *Face off* (John Woo, 1997), film still [online image], Available from: <http://media.skateboard.com.au/forum/images/226595face-off-posters-tm.jpg> [Accessed 5 August 2008].

28. Beijing Opera, [online image], Available from: <www.ellerberoad.com/Travel_Asia_2005.html> [Accessed 5 August 2008].

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

When I came to choose a topic of research for this PhD thesis, there was only ever going to be one focus –film. At the heart of this thesis is a love of films and this love can be traced back to my childhood. I spent my childhood in the Guangxi Film Studio in the 1980s where my father worked as a film editor. There were free screenings every Tuesday evening in the studio and I never missed one. It was one Tuesday night in the summer of 1989. I was sitting with my father in the open air theatre of Guangxi Film Studio and my father said to me: "hi look, the man in white at the front row, that is Zhang Juzhao, the director of *One and Eight* (1983), he is also the schoolmate of Yimou Zhang and Kaige Chen, the Fifth Generation's filmmakers". I looked forward to the front row and saw the back of 'the man in white'. He was big, wearing a white vest and blue shorts, with a big fan in his hand. Although the summer in Guangxi was hot, his vest was a bit long and his fan a bit antique. His individual style suggesting that he might be an artist. Although my father explained to me that *One and Eight* (1983) was the first film of the Fifth Generation's filmmakers, I had no idea at that time about *One and Eight*, or what would be the significance of the Fifth Generation's filmmakers. For many years, to me, Fifth Generation's Filmmakers meant only the weird 'man in white' who always took the front row in the open air theatre of Guangxi Film Studio. The idea of the auteur as a film artist was, however, a real concept to me. I was exposed to their works and discussions about their choices, ideas and talents. What I also did not realise in the evening of that summer of 1989, was that many years later, I would embark on an academic and cultural journey which would engage with some of these auteur directors who were personally familiar to me in my childhood and that as a researcher in the UK, I would think about the meaning of 'Chineseness' in relation to film authorship in Chinese language and transnational films.

Studies of national cinemas have identified auteur directors as important elements in the building of national cinemas and more especially the projection of national identities. This is partly due to the importance of international film festivals in the distribution and popularization of non-Hollywood cinema to the world and partly because these festivals by their nature privilege the auteur director.

This thesis explores this important link between directors and national cinema developing a more complex context than has tended to preoccupy studies of national cinema – surely a narrow notion of the nation state. The first part of this thesis examines three distinctive national cinemas that have close but problematic ties/links with each other – Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In this major part of the thesis I explore not only the emergence of auteur directors within the three national cinemas but also problematize the overemphasis of the nation state as a source of identity and meaning by examining the influence of deep-seated cultural factors/philosophies shared beyond geographical and political boundaries (such as those of Confucianism and Taoism). Using textual analysis, I investigate the ways that certain auteur directors project ideas of national identities in these three Chinese language cinemas, paying particular attention to the convergence of cinematic style and the distinctive influences of traditional Chinese philosophies.

The final part of the thesis engages with three key auteur directors who emerged earlier in the study (one from Mainland China, one from Hong Kong and one from Taiwan) and looks at films they have made either in, or for, a transnational context. The chapter investigates whether they still remain signifiers of Chinese traditional cultures. This final part furthers the investigation of the role of auteur directors and the signification of complex national meanings in contexts beyond that of the nation state.

Chapter Two sets out the theoretical framework that I use for the whole thesis. In this chapter

I consider the contexts, concepts and constructs that have informed my research into cultural specificities of three Chinese language cinemas. Within this, I establish where my own work sits in relation to existing studies of the subject, and the interventions it will make in this field. It introduces the key concepts of my future analysis such as Orientalism, (Edward Saïd, 2002), the concept of national cinema, and the importance of projecting the nation (Andrew Higson, 2002) and film authorship (John Caughie, 1981; Victor Perkins, 1990; Ros Jennings, 2002b).Then I draw on the concept of national cinema and its integral notions of projecting the nation and the concept of 'Imagined Community' (Benedict Anderson, 1991). I highlight the importance of a better understanding of the cultural signifiers in Chinese films to fully understand them so I introduce Confucianism/Taoism and also the complexities of the three 'Chinas'.

Chapter Three develops a brief history of cinema in Mainland China and the post-Cultural Revolution context in which the Fifth Generation emerged. I introduce a typology of generations that acts as a periodization of directors in Chinese film history and argue that an auteurist approach is more suitable to investigating Chinese cinema than traditional national cinema approaches that focus upon the nation state. My analysis introduces a number of dominant auteur directors such as Yimou Zhang, Kaige Chen and Zhuangzhuang Tian as the cultural signifiers of Chinese mainland cinema in the 1980s. This chapter examines the Fifth Generation in relation to its difference from Chinese mainstream cinema and the more heavy-handed dominance of Maoism and Communism. It also positions the Fifth Generation as a 'new cinema' towards modernity which, in turn, announced its auteur credentials to the world stage via international film festival successes. By both explaining the influence of communist ideology and European art cinemas on the Fifth Generation, I argue the ways that the films of the Fifth Generation represent the consciousness of life and ultimately the rediscovery of the individual in a period so marked by Mao's programme of the Cultural Revolution.

Chapter Four focuses on the Fifth Generation and the rural identity projected in their films. I examine this rural identity which has long been misinterpreted as an Orientalist self-display and argue that these films projected a new vision for society based on traditional values and philosophies rather than mainstream communist ideologies. I also investigate how the Fifth Generation re-connected with the earth and returned to nature and their efforts in exploring the vitality of human beings that had been lost in the Cultural Revolution. As 'Intellectual Youth', transplanted by force to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, the Fifth Generation directors started a cultural journey both for themselves and filmically for China by undertaking a search for their (Chinese) roots. Their focus rested on the innate nature of human beings and their films projected an anti-mainstream ideology through the exploration of the past and traditional values.

I argue that the most significant contribution of the Fifth Generation, in re-envisioning mainland China and mainland Chinese cinema, is the relationship between 'roots-searching' and modernity. The Fifth Generation developed a new style or a new method which explored nature (and the inborn nature of human beings) as a recipe to regain individualism, and to reconnect with the traditions and folk-customs at the roots of national culture. Together these elements became the signifiers for a progressive mainland Chinese identity firmly based in the relationship between traditional values and modernity.

In Chapter Five I focus on the cultural complexities of Hong Kong cinema, whose distinctive history makes it a particularly interesting case for discussion in relation to notions of national cinema. Its multi-faceted relationship with Mainland China and the West has led me to investigate 'Chineseness' and 'Hongkongness' in Hong Kong cinema and of course the relationship between the two. I firstly set up the link between China and Hong Kong in terms of history, culture, politics and mode of film productions. Then I explore the representation of traditional influences of 'Chineseness' in the films of The Shaw Brothers and Bruce Lee's martial arts films. I move on to further investigate the cultural identity of Hong Kong New

Wave Cinema where the role of auteur directors comes into special attention is paid to Hong Kong New Wave director John Woo's heroism films (where emphasis is put on the influence of Chinese traditional culture within a modern context). I also examine Hong Kong's cultural hybridity: 'Hongkongness' and 'local space' as a form of Hong Kong imaginary. This chapter highlights both Hong Kong's cultural and later political link with Mainland China and also its cultural hybridity as a result of its colonial/Western influences.

In Chapter Six I explore the cultural complexities of Taiwanese New Cinema (TNC) as a particular kind of national cinema within an especially diverse national context. I consider how auteur directors (vision/styles etc.) emerged and the concerns of Taiwan as a nation were being explored since the 1980s onwards. I argue that, in the Taiwanese case, how national/cultural identity intersects with nativist movement, post-colonial discourse and ultimately the transition of national cinema in a global commodification culture. By focusing on TNC and the films which were elevated to the international pantheon of 'art cinema' and 'national cinema', I analyze how this complexity of national/cultural identity is constructed, interpreted and manipulated by a number of Taiwanese auteur-directors such as Hsiao-Hsien Hou, Edward Yang, Wang Tong and Ang Lee. This chapter also includes two case studies on Hou's cinema and Lee's cinema (with regard to auteurist visions of Taiwanese identities and TNC's transition to a transnational cinema). By focusing on the new wave movement in the 1980s, together with the previous chapters (studies of Mainland China--the Fifth Generation, Hong Kong--New Wave cinema and Taiwan—TNC), I investigate the representation of 'Chineseness'/Chinese traditional cultural influences within three Chinese language cinemas and demonstrate that there are commonalities of national culture (homogeneity) based on traditional Chinese philosophies which surpasses their territorial boundaries but which also produce distinctive projections (heterogeneity) of what Chinese cultural specificities might be.

My final analysis chapter further challenges the idea of 'the national' by looking at the ways

that three auteur directors of Chinese origin (John Woo, Yimou Zhang and Ang Lee) took their understandings of Chinese traditional culture to films that were intended for Western audiences (i.e. went beyond national and cultural boundaries). I examine the ways that their transnational/global filmmaking intersects with Chinese cultural identities and influences.

I firstly examine Lee's films which deal with the themes of Chinese/Taiwanese diasporic identities, homosexuality, and cultural identities in a transnational context. I then go on to argue that ideas of 'the national' or 'Chineseness' is manipulated in Zhang's films which are labelled as 'Chinese national cinema' but deliberately targeted a transnational/global market. Finally I investigate how Woo incorporates Chinese culture and traditions into Hollywood action blockbusters. This chapter justifies that 'the national' not only crosses national boundaries but also cross cultural boundaries and consolidates national and local identities in complex ways. The cross-examination of 'China' or 'Chineseness' represented in the English language/transnational films of three different auteurs of Chinese origin reveal that 'the national' possesses complex national meanings in contexts beyond the nation state. Thus it further questions the concept of national cinema has been at once useful and problematic, liberating and limiting. In a similar way to Jennings's (2002b) examination of Peter Weir as an Australian cross-over director in Hollywood, this thesis argues that the analysis of the authorial signatures can help us interpret more productively the interface between global and local, national and transnational.

In conclusion to this thesis, Chapter Eight brings together the various findings and themes from earlier. I consider 'the national' and its differentiations outside and beyond the national (nation-state). This thesis is an exploration of how authorship can provide new interpretative and explanatory perspectives for reading the national in terms of cultural meanings across geographical and political borders and also in the transnational context. There are complex issues relating to understanding notions of 'the national' in a cross-cultural context. By adopting Western theories and strategies of textual analysis, I draw on borderless Chinese

cultural specificities to try and enrich the tendency to limited and Orientalist readings of Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese films.

CHAPTER TWO:

APPROACHING CHINESE CINEMAS: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"I went to China because I was looking for fresh air...For me it was love at first sight. I loved it. I thought the Chinese were fascinating. They have an innocence. They have a mixture of a people before consumerism, before something that happened in the West. Yet in the meantime they are incredibly sophisticated, elegant and subtle, because they are 4,000 years old. For me the mixture was irresistible."

(Bernardo Bertolucci 1987, quoted in Chow 2006: 169)

Introduction

When facing the historical, cultural and political complexities of the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, problematic issues arise in relation to understanding the sorts of national/cultural identities that might be projected by them. With regard to these three Chinese language cinemas, a traditional national cinema approach focussing predominantly upon nation-state as a source of meaning would provide only a limited understanding of the meanings generated. This thesis, however, draws on what Benedict Anderson (1991) put forward as the theory of 'Imagined Communities' which assumes a large body of people regard themselves as members of a 'nation' (and here I interpret this term broadly and beyond understandings of geographical borders and political systems) through a variety of historical

legacies, cultural memories and acts of consumption. In the thesis I hold the assumption that there is a shared cultural meaning (namely 'Chineseness') that extends across the three Chinese language cinemas and constitutes at least one dimension of the national identity. In a post-colonial context it is almost impossible to define what exactly constitutes a nation. One of the central benefits of the thesis is that it is possible to argue that the cinemas of Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan share and portray a rich cultural heritage in their films despite difficulties and antagonisms that exist in the political relations between them. I would also argue that the appearance of a group of film directors taking on the role of cultural spokesmen for the cinemas that I am investigating will also be significant to my analysis.

The European director Bertolucci brought the West the highly successful *The Last Emperor* (1987). His fascination for China, however, consists of "looking for fresh air" and "an innocence" before consumerism. He is also impressed by what he calls a mixture (of culture) that is 4,000 years old (Chow 2006: 169). Apparently, Bertolucci ideologically positions himself in *another* culture or place when he looks at China. As a casual response to China from a European director, Bertolucci's remarks are symbolic. When a Westerner looks at China from such a culturally coded perspective, how much can he/she really perceive the cultural/national identity of China which is historically, culturally and politically different and removed (from the West)?

In this chapter I will consider a range of literature that has informed and advanced my research into the complexities of cultural/national identity within the three Chinese language cinemas (Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) and also beyond in terms of what happens when auteur directors of Chinese origin make transnational films.

The review of literature is necessarily wide-ranging and I will be addressing a number of studies of the three Chinese cinemas. Both individually and collectively it is difficult to answer how and why the complexities of cultural/national identity are constructed and projected in such a complex and distinctive way throughout the film history of the 'three Chinas'. I will therefore be drawing upon the idea of auteur-director as signifier of national style in the 1980s period in order to comprehend the specificities and complexities of the three Chinese language cinemas in terms of cultural/national identity. This signals both the lack of relevant research into this subject and the point at which this thesis will be making an important intervention. Different to Zhang's (2004) endeavour in defining the 'national' in the three Chinese language cinemas from an industrial and historical perspective, the thesis furthers the investigations into the cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity of the three Chinese language cinemas. By adopting an auteurist approach, it is more appropriate to investigating a more unified cultural identity manifest in the three Chinese language cinemas, while acknowledging and exploring their cultural specificities. Thus the thesis will provide in-depth cultural understanding of the three cinemas in terms of cultural identity and surpass traditional historical and industrial review.

The key theoretical approaches that I can draw on to study these Chinese language cinemas are theories of national cinema and film authorship but I will also draw on the philosophical and social legacies of Confucianism and Taoism and to some degree ideas of Orientalism and post-colonial theory to pursue this research. Because this is a cross-cultural study my main strategy for this investigation also involves a comparative reading of Chinese and Western film scholarship and reviews of a range of scholarly literature that engages with the cinemas of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. This chapter therefore sets out the theoretical framework that I will use for the whole thesis. In section one of this chapter, I will look at how 'the Orient' (where China is firmly situated in the Western cultural and geographical imagination) has been perceived in the West and introduce the influence of Orientalism and to some degree also Eurocentrism on the perception of 'the Orient' in the West. In section two I will introduce the problem of the national in relation to Chinese cultures (the intertwined

historical, political and cultural backgrounds of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan). In this section I will also introduce some of the key literature pertaining to Chinese film studies, including a discussion of the differences between Chinese film scholarship and Western film scholarship as a means to position my own approach to textual analysis in my following analysis chapters. Section three focuses on a discussion of Chinese traditional culture and the complexities in terms of nation-state of the three Chinese language cinemas. It introduces the important elements of Confucianism and Taoism setting out a basis for the later exploration on the relationships between tradition and modernity.

In sections four and five, I will introduce the concept of national cinema and its integral notions of projecting the nation and the concept of 'Imagined Community' (Benedict Anderson, 1991); and the political manipulation of the 'national' in the Chinese case. These two sections and the one that follows (on theories of authorship) are the two main theoretical strands that I examine throughout the thesis. In section six I will explore theories of film authorship and in particular illustrate the relationship between Western film festivals as vehicles for establishing the reputation of auteur directors in national cinemas and beyond. In the final section, I further introduce the auteur director as signifier of national style in a transnational film context, and ask how this might problematise 'the national' in transnational filmmaking and cross-cultural communication.

Seeing the Orient

Labeled both as an art movie, and as culturally fascinating, *Memoirs of a Geisha* (Rob Marshall, 2005, figure 1) was successful at both North America's box office and the Academy Awards, although both Asian and Western critics have found the film a product of Orientalism and an attraction of "romanticism of female subjection" (Ebert, 2005). Japanese scholar Kimiko Akita (2006) points out that the success of *Memoirs of a Geisha* "as cultural phenomena signified the Oriental as a sexualized and exoticized object to be commodified by the West" and the Orient has been treated "as an object to be sexualized, exoticized, and romanticized". Although criticized by Eastern and Western critics for its Orientalist tendency, public responses are quite different in the East and the West. According to Akita (2006), it seems a large number of European and American audiences in particular were attracted by this movie because of its beautiful 'exotic' heroines, enchanting visual representation of Japan and its Oriental soundtrack. However, while Western audiences seemed 'fascinated' by *Memoirs of a Geisha*, the film actually was found to be offensive in Japan, and in China and the film was banned from release by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of China in 2006. The reason for China to ban the film is because "the subject is sensitive", and for Chinese audiences "the Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi should not have played a Japanese

geisha" (Ping, 2006). Also, Japanese audiences disliked the film because "many Japanese were also unhappy about the American casting because they thought that this role should be played by one of their own" (Ping, 2006).

It would seem that if the attractions of adopting an Orientalist gaze are the main reasons for American and European audiences to find pleasure in this film, then the reactions in Japan and China highlight a particular tension in East/West relations of film consumption and reception. In this era of globalization, filmmaking has seen more and more transnational projects come into being both in terms of production and consumption (Sheldon, 1997). Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (2006: 4) suggest that "as a marker of cosmopolitanism, the transnational at once transcends the national and presupposes it". Though *Memoirs of a Geisha* is produced and funded by the Colombia Picture Corporation (a partially Japanese owned company), the film is a cinematic adaptation of the popular book of the same title (1997) by Arthur Golden, and is scripted by American Robin Swicord, and directed by American director Rob Marshall. The three female protagonists/heroines are all played by actresses of Chinese origin (Ziyi Zhang, Gong Li and Michelle Yeoh). Like many films, this film positions women in a role of being watched or the subject of a controlling gaze. Laura Mulvey has used a psychoanalytic approach to film as a political weapon to uncover the dominant, heterosexist culture of the West. In her essay, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Mulvey (1993: 111-124) makes a distinction between "woman as image" and "man as bearer of the look" stressing male power and activity in the process of looking and women positioned as passive images. In the case of *Memoirs of a Geisha* this presents not just a problematic of gender and power but one also of race. The central female characters in this film are particularly beautiful Japanese geishas and, unless particularly aware of the identities of the actresses who play them, for the majority of Western viewers, Sino-Japanese identities become elided. Thus the power of the male gaze in relation to this film is simultaneously one of patriarchal and imperial power perfectly illustrating the practice of Orientalism as discussed by Edward Saïd (2002) where he positions the former colonized Orient as being passively subject to the gaze of the colonizer, the Occident. Indeed the popularity of *Memoirs*

of a Geisha in the West can be considered as the success of selling strategy of Orientalism in filmmaking. The commodity to be packaged is Oriental/exotic visual representations (Japanese geisha, costume, exotic sceneries, Oriental soundtrack etc.). The portrayal of which clearly fulfills a set of ideological needs of the West.

These different responses to *Memoirs of a Geisha* from American, European, Japanese and Chinese audiences illustrate the relationship between film and cultural identity, and more specifically indicates the manipulated reception/perception of 'the Orient' in East/West dynamics. In her essay of film and cultural identity, Chow (1995: 171) argues the problematic of spectatorship, notably the perception of 'the Orient' in the West. Chow (1995: 171) writes that "much like representations of women in classical narrative cinema, representations of 'the Orient' are often fetishized objects manufactured for the satiation of the masculinist gaze of the West". She notes further that:

> ...critics who have been influenced by Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) can now make the connection that orientalism, as the system of signification that represents non-Western cultures to Western recipients in the course of Western imperialism, operates visually as well as narratologically to subject 'the Orient' to ideological manipulation.
>
> (Chow, 1995: 171)

Saïd's *Orientalism* (2002) is a milestone of post-colonial studies. In this book Said states that the ideological influence of Orientalism that primarily originated in England, France and then the USA has created a divide between the East and the West. Lewis notes:

> For Saïd, therefore, representations of the Orient produced by Orientalism are never simple reflections of a true anterior reality, but composite images which came to define the nature of the Orient and the Oriental as irredeemably different and always inferior to the West.
>
> (Lewis, 1996: 16)

According to Saïd, all discourses, especially discourses about other cultures, are situated

within a particular ideological context. In his view, the Orient is "characterized as irrational, exotic, erotic, despotic and heathen, thereby securing the West in contrast as rational, familiar, moral, just and Christian" (Lewis, 1996: 16). Thus the Orient is ultimately misrepresented through these Orientalist stereotypes. Although the Orient referred to in Saïd's *Orientalism* (2002) focuses on the implications for Arab nations, Islam and the Middle East, the critical discourses regarding 'the Orient' are also key to other geographically Oriental countries such as China, Japan and South Korea. Orientalism is produced by and, in turn, reproduced by a set of positions in which the Occident (the West) is positioned as 'the colonizer' and the Orient as 'the colonized other'. Using this as an active/passive binary the colonized other was often characterized therefore as 'feminine'. Gender and feminist scholarship are quite fraught issues in the studies of Chinese cinema and, as Chow (1995) indicates, the influence and also the scrutiny of Orientalism is enormous in Western film scholarship. Chow (1995: 177) highlights what she calls "the deadlock of the anthropological situation" in cross-cultural exchange. She criticizes the Western imperialism and colonialism and its influences stating that:

> In many cases, the methods and practices of anthropology and ethnography have simply served to reinforce and empower colonial administration, and thus to bring about the systematic destruction of these 'other' cultures.
>
> (Chow, 1995: 177)

Any textual analysis which interrogates images located in the Orient must therefore take the 'loading' of these images into consideration and as a researcher with a background in China but working within the British Academy I am in a good position to explore some of the tensions between Eastern and Western perspectives. My aim is that by bringing a deep knowledge of traditional Chinese cultures to my analysis, I will unpick both Western Orientalising tendencies and the reasons why self-Orientalisation might also be a particular strategy that some mainland Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese directors might choose to adopt in their filmmaking.

In the Chinese case, the perception of national/cultural identity or 'Chinesness' is more superficial in cross-cultural communication which involves, according to Hall (1999), different stages in terms of encoding/decoding. The understanding of a country via a two-dimensional and non-interactive medium limits possible understandings. This is especially so in China which, as an old, mysterious Oriental country, is geographically, culturally and politically far away from the West. According to the survey *Exporting China* conducted by Movie World magazine in 2007, which looked at Western audiences' attitudes to Chinese film, Chineseness is most frequently defined as kung-fu, flying warriors and swordsmen; and Chinese characteristics are defined by ancient Chinese architecture and traditional attire (Martinsen, 2007). This impression is directly gained from cinematic visual representation with an obvious historical influence of Orientalism. For Western film scholarship, Orientalism and the dualism of dominance/resistance (economic power relations that require non-Hollywood cinemas to develop alternative strategies to distribution) also take a central role regarding Chinese films and much emphasis has been put on the influence of selling strategies on national cinema.

> This might be characterized as a form of 'global nativism', in which exotic images of natives and national local histories and signs are employed as selling-points in the world cinema.
>
> (Chen, 1998: 560)

This strategy, in turn, is often associated with auteur directors. Dimitris Eleftheriotis and Gary Needham (2006a: 361) point out that "the director remains the figure, along with the star, who mediates between the industry and the public as a representative, a spokesperson for the film in promotional interviews, and often as the source film's preferred meaning". Eleftheriotis and Needham's assertion is useful when I draw on authorship to discuss the projecting of the national within and beyond the Chinese national context. For example, Yimou Zhang, a director of the Fifth Generation and also of the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games in 2008, has been considered as a cultural spokesperson for China. For the West, the reception of Zhang's works obviously led to the projecting of the national and hence Zhang can be considered as a perfect case of auteur as signifier of national style.

In the case of Chinese language cinemas then this "global nativism" (Chen, 1998: 560) inevitably involves self-Orientalisation. Apart from the geographical and political separation of the three Chinese language cinemas, the Orientalising tendencies further complicate 'the national' in the Chinese case. Chow (1995) analyzed *Ju Dou* (Yimou Zhang, 1993) in her book *Primitive Passion.* In it, the discussions of the sequence in which Ju Dou reveals her half naked body to Tianqin pre-sets the dichotomy of the lookers (the Occident) and the being looked at (the Orient). This is originally corroborated with Orientalism. However, Ju Dou's voluntary revealing of her half naked body towards Tianqin (the lookers) endows 'the Orient' with a self consciousness of criticising Orientalist tendency: the Orient accepts the historical fact of Orientalism and criticises it by presentation and travesty of the politics of vision of Orientalism (Chow, 1995). Homi Bhabha (1994) also attempted to use the idea of cultural hybridity and the colonized's performative mimicry of its colonizer to explore the complicated relationship between the West and the 'third world'. Nonetheless the basis of his arguments still falls into the dualism of hegemony/resistance. For a mainland Chinese director such as Yimou Zhang, the cultural identity projected in his films in the 1980s is significantly different when compared with his transnational projects such as the martial arts trilogy: *Hero* (2002), *House of Flying Daggers* (2004) and *Curse of the Golden Flowers* (2006). This will be further explored later in the thesis.

Chinese cultures and the problematic of 'the national'

Over the last two decades, Chinese film studies (and here I am referring to studies of not just mainland Chinese cinema but also of Hong Kong and Taiwan) have become the focus of intense interest in academia in both China and the West. The political separation (and of course the re-integration of Hong Kong in 1997 as a Special Administrative Region of China) of the three cinemas that I am studying has troubled film scholars for many years. For some, the history of the separation of film industries in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan has created "quite distinctive national cinemas within each territory" (Yueh,1998: 74) and, on the whole, the study of Chinese cinema has been conducted and organized by means of

geographical/political distinction and the notion of 'three Chinas' (Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan) has dominated in relation to studies of national cinema. This geographical determinism limits and, to some extent denies, the Chinese cultural tradition within the three cinemas. Within this geographical framework, studies of Chinese mainland cinema have been focused on national identity, realism, authorship, and gender. A number of historical studies of Chinese film industry in relation to Chinese historical politics have also been conducted (for instance Zhang, 2004; Chow, 1995; and Browne and Pickowicz, 1996). Studies of Hong Kong cinema have mostly focused on martial arts and Kung Fu films and their worldwide cult status (Bordwell, 2000, Hunt, 2003 etc.). Taiwanese cinema has been studied predominantly as an 'art cinema' with a pivotal role in terms of nationhood-building (since political as well as geographical separation took place from the mainland) and theses studies are mainly focused on Taiwanese New Cinema and its auteur-directors such as Hsiao-Hsien Hou and Edward Yang (Needham 2006b, Berry C. and Lu F., 2005; and Yip J. 2004).

It was in such a political context that Chinese intellectuals aimed to re-examine the roots of Chinese culture and traditions. Zhang's *Chinese National Cinema* (2004) is the first English academic book to offer a comprehensive panorama of Chinese film history. It is also so far the most systematic study of the three Chinese language cinemas (Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan) from a historical and industrial perspective. In this book, Zhang (2004: 243) identifies the "roots-searching" movement in Taiwanese New Cinema.

> The rise of New Taiwan Cinema followed a change in filmmaking that started in the late 1970s. A number of veteran directors embarked on a project of 'roots-searching' that traced the cultural origins of Taiwan to an early stage of Chinese settlement in Taiwan and its intimate relations with the mainland, thereby emphasizing a 'shared' sense of Chinese nationalism.
>
> (Zhang, 2004: 242-243)

Obviously, for Zhang, the 'roots-searching' refers more to a shared sense of nationalism for Taiwan than the search for the origin of Chinese culture and traditions which characterized the 'roots-searching' movement in Mainland China in the 1980s. Zhang's book does not

discuss much about this 'roots-searching' movement in Chinese mainland cinema. Although its title is *Chinese National Cinema*, the book avoids defining the 'national' and instead devotes much effort in theorizing 'the national' from a historical and industrial perspective. While Zhang certainly assumes the persistence of the 'national' in the three Chinese language cinemas, he chooses to replace a cultural approach with a historical approach. He notes:

> The question of the 'national' will not go away if we substitute 'national cinema' with 'nation-state cinema'. Indeed, the association with the nation-state is precisely what makes the term 'Chinese cinema' problematic.
>
> (Zhang, 2004: 3)

Zhang's statement justifies his insistence on the importance of the nation-state connected with a historical approach. Zhang's replacement of a cultural approach with a historical approach simplifies the complexities of the three Chinese cinemas. Although historical approach and cultural approach are not inherently antithetical, he avoids the complexities and the problematic nature of the cultural identities of the three cinemas by illustrating and establishing both a coherent and distinctive review of them from a historical (in fact often industrial) perspective. One way that I will try to approach this problem is by looking for signifiers of Chinese traditional culture and the ways that they might manifest themselves across the three cinemas through auteur-directors' projections of national style. In doing so I will place particular emphasis on both the connections and distinctions between the three Chinese language cinemas in terms of Chinese cultures and traditions. Hall (2006) points out the homogeneity and heterogeneity of cultural identity. Thus signifiers of Chinese traditional culture can be considered as a shared culture and history that permeate all three cinemas in their different ways. Cultural identity, as Hall (2006) suggests, is situated at the point of intersection of politics, technology and social transformation. Nations exist not only as functions of a particular kind of territory. Nations and their associated phenomena must be analyzed in terms of historical, political, economic and other conditions and requirements. This assumption leads me to investigate the historical, political and economic specificities of the Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 1980s period. In so doing, I am able to understand not only what the governments advocated, but more importantly, also the

assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people (the Zeitgeist if you will) which are reflected and represented by the auteur directors turned cultural spokespersons such as Yimou Zhang, Kaige Chen, Karwei Wang and Hsiao-Hsien Hou.

In the West (including works by scholars of Chinese origin) five main approaches have been taken when writing on these three cinemas:

1. The comprehensive reviewing of Chinese film history— Mainland Cinema, Hong Kong cinema and Taiwanese cinema—focused on the process of development of the local film industry, such as Zhang's *Chinese National Cinema* (2004) and Browne and Pickowicz's *New Chinese Cinema* (1996).

2. The investigation into national and cultural identities of Chinese cinemas, aiming to examine the representations, cultural implications and the "China" (or Chineseness) represented in filmic discourse, such as Chow's *Primitive Passions* (1995), Jerome S. and Silbergeld.'s *China Into Film* (1999), and Poshek Fu and David Desser's *The Cinema of Hong Kong, History, Arts, Identity* (2000).

3. The exploration of particular genres and authorship in Chinese cinemas, such as Hong Kong's Kung Fu genre and the Chinese Fifth Generation's filmmakers. Typical works here are Leon Hunt's *Kung Fu Cult Masters* (2003), Zhen Ni and Chris Berry's *Memoirs from the Beijing Film Academy: The Genesis of China's Fifth Generation* (2002).

4. The examination of Chinese cinemas in a transnational context, or the study of transnational Chinese cinema on an international scale, emphasized in its production, marketing, the narrative form and montage traditions; also the ideological and stylistic relationship between Chinese cinema and Hollywood in terms of filmmaking, such as David Bordwell's *Planet Hong Kong* (2000) and Gina Marchetti's *From Tian'anmen to*

Times Square: Transnational China and the Chinese Diaspora on Global Screens, 1989-1997 (2006).

5. Studies of gender and feminism, such as Reyaud Bérénice's *Glamour and Suffering: Gong Li and the History of Chinese Stars* (1997) and Chris Berry's *Sexual Difference and the Viewing Subject in Li Shuangshuang and The In-Laws* (1991).

Chinese and Western thinking in relation to two different scholarship traditions

The lack of film scholarship on mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan's shared Chinese cultural influences may be seen as the result not just of latent Eurocentrism/Orientalism but rather of Western scholars' preoccupation with theories concerning the dualism of dominance/resistance between East and West. Equally, the study of Chinese cultural influences has also been neglected within the transnational context in the films made by directors of Chinese origin working in, or towards, Hollywood. It is clear therefore that a theoretical and thematic textual analysis of cultural identity/identities in the three cinemas needs to be further explored with these more complex contexts in mind and that this will be a major contribution of this thesis.

In his study of Australian national cinema, Tom O'Regan (1996: 2) notes that Australian cinema is "fundamentally dispersed". Similarly 'the national' within the three Chinese language cinemas is also "a messy affair" (O'Regan, 1996: 2). 'The national' in these cinemas of Chinese influence/origin is messy not only in terms of history, geopolitics and culture, but also in terms of reception and their respective relationships to transnational filmmaking. I do not regard the 'nation' as a primary nor as an unchanging social entity. I further acknowledge Higson's (2006: 18) recent critique of 'Imagined Communities' (Anderson, 1991) where he suggests that Anderson's assertion "sometimes seems unable to acknowledge the cultural difference and diversity that invariably marks both the inhabitants

of a particular nation-state and members of more geographically dispersed 'national' communities." It leads me to examine the cultural specificities of each cinema while investigating their shared historical and cultural legacies. This is also based on Hall's (2006) theory of homogeneity and heterogeneity of cultural identity which argues identity belongs exclusively to a particular, and historically recent, period. Moreover, I would stress the element of artifact, invention and social engineering which enters into the making of nations, especially in the projecting of 'the national' (Higson, 2006). According to Eric Hobsbawm (1983), 'Invented Tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. Hobsbawm's argument helps to recognize the manipulated nature of the 'constructedness' of 'national identity' (using devices such as nostalgia) in the cinemas I am studying. My earlier reference to *Memoir of a Geisha* provides a good example of not only the confusion of viewing 'the Orient' both within and outside the East but also the messiness of perception in different cultural contexts.

As Oscar Van Leer (1987: 405) suggests, "Thinking is the process of searching for, ultimately discovering, and thereby creating, structures of and relations between existing elements. This amounts to increasing the order and so decreasing the entropy of bodies of knowledge." Each individual's thinking, however, is related and at some level, also conditioned by cultural factors. Thinking in different cultural contexts represents not only different cultural characteristics but also different 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986). By trying to build a bridge between Chinese film scholarship and Western film scholarship this research seeks to make a contribution to the study of the relationship between national cinemas and auteur directors in a more nuanced way than most existing studies. One of the central points is that one needs to have a better understanding of the cultural signifiers in Chinese films to fully *understand* them. If 'cultural capital' is the knowledge, experience and/or connections one has had through the course of one's life then different life chances and experiences determine different amounts and types of capital. As a Chinese researcher who completed his Masters

degree and conducted his PhD research in European academic institutions, I possess different forms of cultural capital based on different and diverging cultural experiences. As such, I am trying to acknowledge the epistemological and ontological differences between Chinese thinking and Western thinking and attempting to generalize the strengths of both to further and contribute to theoretical innovation of Chinese film studies.

The epistemological and ontological differences between Chinese and Western thinking are apparent in the approaches taken in Chinese language film studies and Western film studies. In the history of Chinese philosophy, the syncretism of heaven and mankind (the harmony between nature and human being) has dominated Chinese traditional thinking. Thus it differs itself from the binary opposition set up between the concepts of nature and human in the Western philosophy. Different cultural forms and philosophical patterns have resulted in the formation of different aesthetic and theoretical perspectives in the East and the West, and within the different cultural and ethnic groups they include. It also contributes to the significant characteristics and differentiations between Chinese film scholarship and Western film scholarship in terms of theoretical pattern. If Chinese cinema has been largely studied in the West by employing "the various strategies of textual analysis (psychoanalysis, structuralism, feminist and cultural theory)" (Reynaud, 1998: 544), then in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan the strategies (as I will now go on to discuss) have been somewhat different.

Early Chinese film scholarship appeared in the 1920s, Chinese scholars in mainland China believed that cinema should serve national politics. Film form has been considered as a tool for educating its audiences and the emphasis on subjective criticism has been missing. However, this situation has changed since the emergence of the fourth and fifth generations' filmmakers in mainland China, and the development of Hong Kong New Cinema and Taiwanese New Cinema in the 1980s. In Chinese traditional thinking, literature as a carrier of culture has been adopted by Chinese intellectuals and the filmmakers of these new cinemas as

well.

The emergence of early Chinese film scholarship is symbolised by the first publication of *Movie and Drama Magazine* in 1920. 'The silent picture' was considered as an alternative form of drama in China. Chinese filmmakers (Zheng Zhengqiu, Hong Shen) in mainland China believed that cinema should serve national politics. Film form has been considered as a tool for educating its audiences and the emphasis on subjective criticism has been missing.

The emergence of the Fifth Generation in the 1980s did however stimulate a critical film studies in mainland China. Since the emergence of the fourth and fifth generations' cinemas in mainland China, the concept of film has changed at certain levels. Following the release and success of *One and Eight* (Zhang Junzhao, 1983), *Yellow Earth* (Kaige Chen, 1984) and *King of the Children (*Kaige Chen, 1987), in 1985, *Film Art* hosted 'The Forum of Cinematography of Young Directors' and on September 1988, *Film Art* hosted another 'Forum of Chinese New Cinema'. Many debates (Li, 1985; Yang, 1986) regarding Chinese national cinema, film art, the fourth generation and the Fifth Generation, and their more commercial and mainstream styles have now been undertaken. To a certain extent these studies have shifted the basis of the theoretical framework of film studies to the studies of film art itself. Be it anti-colonialist ideology in Hong Kong, or nationalist ideology in Taiwan, it is still not difficult to feel that the main concern of Chinese film scholarship is still the social function and value of cinema.

Within the context of what Ni and Berry (2002: 199) call "the roots-seeking nativism of 1980s culture", the literary 'roots-searching' movement (Han Shaogong, 1985, Zhang Yuanxi and Li Tuo, 1984) in mainland China echoed the preoccupations of the Fifth Generation. It is also a post-Cultural Revolution search for identity in relation to nature and more specifically

to *tudi*[1] (earth). (I will discuss this further in the next section of this chapter and in more detail in chapters three and four.) This development, theoretically concerned with the core tenets of Confucianism and Taoism, led to new approaches to film scholarship within mainland China that focused on the relationship between film, drama and literature. Zhang Ruanxi and Li Tuo are two important scholars in this debate. In their article *About the Modernity of Filmic Language* (1979), they criticized filmmaking in China for being dominated by political ideology, arguing that film art has been depreciated within the mainland Chinese context to the extent that it is now a tool of propaganda. In essence this movement unveiled the limitation of previous theoretical engagements with mainland Chinese filmmaking and film studies.

National cinemas cannot disengage themselves from the global context of film production and reception. As Polona Petek points out:

> In the past decade or so, a significant body of work has emerged, which reflects the opinion that the nation-state – once the undisputed primary unit of economic, political and cultural differentiation in the world system – is being eroded by the processes of globalization, and that, as a result, national cinema, too, is becoming an increasingly problematic category.
>
> (Petek, 2007)

Even though, for historical and political reasons, mainland Chinese cinema (compared to Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinemas) has been more distanced from Western influences in general and the impact of Western films and film theories in particular, there has always been some influence. This became more evident after China's adoption of its 'Opening Policy' in the 1980s. From that point in time, many Western films were imported into China and became a resource/lens for Chinese filmmakers and scholars within mainland China to think about the possibilities and properties of film.

[1] The thesis adopts Chinese Pinyin system for the spelling of Chinese words.

Hong Kong and Taiwan film scholarship were developed more recently than that in mainland China. Since the 1980s', Hong Kong film scholarship has adopted conventional approaches of historical periodization and genre study such as Cantonese Cinema and Hong Kong martial arts film. *Film Biweekly* became sort of 'Cahier du Cinema' in Hong Kong and it focuses on film theories and film culture from Europe and Hollywood (Teo, 1998: 550-556). In Taiwan, many writings (Tung 1986, Chen 1993 etc.) centre on Taiwanese New Cinema since "Taiwan's film industry lost its battle with Hong Kong, which had gradually become the little Hollywood throughout" (Chen, 1998: 558).

Chinese traditional thinking emphasized moral education and a social realist tradition. In this cultural context Chinese filmmakers (this cinematic tradition having spread from mainland China to Hong Kong and Taiwan) have always taken social responsibility and the concern for national crisis on their shoulders. Thus it points to a number of themes such as humanist concern, the experience of joy and sadness, and the spirit of *Xiayi*. The spirit of *Xiayi* is the cultural core of Chinese *wuxia* literature and it finally contributed to a sub-genre of martial arts cinema: *wuxia* cinema. John Woo's 'heroism films' are a modern and Western adaptation of *wuxia* cinema. Its characterization is a combination of Chinese traditional culture and influence of European and Hollywood cinema, which will be further elaborated in later chapters. These themes became dominant in the films of the Fifth Generation post-Cultural Revolution, Hong Kong Cinema (particularly the Hong Kong New Wave and in the case of heroism, the films of John Woo) and the films of Taiwanese New Cinema, which I shall respectively explore further in Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

In this thesis 'Chineseness' may refer to a mixture of racial, national, spiritual, philosophical and territorial identities. I chose to use it with acknowledgement to its complex meanings: on the one hand, as an imagined cultural construction (in the Andersonian sense), 'Chineseness' refers to a shared cultural identity which links Chinese people and people of Chinese origin from different parts of the world into one community as 'being Chinese'; on the other hand,

in the fashion of Stuart Hall's (2006) approach to notions of cultural identity, I take 'Chineseness' to be a relatively open signifier, a fluid and contested category that encompasses a diversity of political and cultural meanings within varied and shifting contexts. 'Chineseness' is a dimension of identity that is contested and shaped within power relations and geographical / historical contexts and becomes salient in different ways within these contexts.

My own methodology in this thesis will be to draw on both Eastern and Western preoccupations and techniques. In particular, I will employ Western film theories to excavate the more traditionally Chinese cultural specificities that not only might influence Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese films but also certain Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese directors when making films in/for the transnational context. I am particularly looking at an auteurist cinema framework. Firstly, by adopting this approach, it will allow me to examine national meaning that expressed not only at national cinema level but also, more importantly, expressed at authorial cinema level. Thus an auteurist framework avoids the problematic of nation-state by allowing me to explore the full nuances of the cultural signifiers at work; an exploration that requires a deep knowledge of the cultural meanings employed and this is where my diverse background as a Chinese researcher in a European academic setting will be a strength that I can bring to the study. Secondly, I look at 'Chineseness' as a dynamic formation, especially as Chinese identities are produced simultaneously on different levels in different places at different times. The analysis also reveals not only the participation of mainland Chinese influences and histories but also those that are still at work in cultures of Chinese origin based in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and their diasporic filmmakers working in Hollywood and the West. Multiple ironies emerge as transnational connections both bring together and further differentiate Chinese people from different parts of the world. 'Chineseness' can therefore reinforce a sense of rootedness to some kind of Chinese identity, or can be turned into a commodity within the framework of auteur cinema. 'Chineseness' is not a fixed or boundried category, and its meaning only becomes relevant as people use it as a tool to define themselves in relation to others.

Chinese traditional cultures and modernity

The major part of the thesis focuses on the 1980s' period when three New Wave cinemas emerged in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The concept of the New Wave in film scholarship (dating from post WWII Italian Neo- Realism and the French New Wave), is essentially linked to modernity. As John Orr (1993: 6) states "...the neo-modern moment has its origin in the national cinemas of Western Europe and the United States where it engages with Western capitalist modernity". In terms of national cinemas, European art cinemas differ from others through their portrayal of specific class-formations. In particular as Vincendeau (2001) suggests the role of "Heritage Cinema" is to largely query the life-worlds of the upper middle classes. However, the three Chinese language cinemas that I am investigating have arisen out of the clash between the traditional and the modern (including capitalism and communism), between myth and religion on the one hand and political ideologies on the other. Out of the socio-political complexities and geographical separations of these three nations, history, tradition and continuity provide the links in terms of a shared cultural identity across them. Without this key recognition, the whole discourse of cinema and modernity becomes vacuous (Orr, 1993). The great paradox of film and modernization is that the New Wave cinemas in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan often deal with questions, if not always representations, of 'the past'. Any examination of the identity/identities of the three New Wave cinemas in my study must also consider notion of tradition, religion and religious-based philosophies and politics. Thus in approaching ideas of 'national identity' it is profitable to begin with the concept of 'tradition' as I would argue that the concept of national identity as projected by the cinemas that I am investigating are closely associated with concepts of tradition and issues to do with the past.

Traditions are usually regarded as practices, customs, or stories that are memorized and passed down from generation to generation (forming a rich part of oral history and oral culture from societies where the knowledge and means to write were not widespread). However, Eric Hobsbawm (1983: 1) states that "'Traditions' which appear or claim to be old

are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented". According to Hobsbawm (1983), some traditions were deliberately invented for one reason or another, often to highlight or enhance the importance of certain institutions. Traditions may also be changed to suit the needs of the day, and the changes can become accepted as a part of the ancient tradition. He states:

> 'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past"
>
> (Hobsbawm, 1983: 1)

This assumption regarding 'tradition' is important to my thesis because the understanding of the manipulated nature of 'tradition' will help to better understand the shared heritage, practices, and filmmakers' nostalgia that are manifest within films made in different geographical locations.

Definitions of the East and the West can be ambiguous in different literatures and usages. In this thesis, when I mention the Occident, I am referring to Western cultures and philosophies. And when I refer to the Orient I refer to Chinese philosophy: basically the Chinese Confucian-Taoist cultural system. Thus the Orient and the Occident refer to two different cultural traditions and entities: the East (China and some Asian nations) whose societies are mainly shaped by Confucianism and Taoism and are considered as 'the Orient'; and the West (mainly America and Western Europe) whose cultural roots are found in both Greek and Hebrew cultures, and whose societies are shaped by Christianity, the Enlightenment, science, and technology.

When film, an exotic thing for Chinese people, was introduced to Mainland China about one hundred years ago, the idea of film as a medium was also influenced by Chinese traditional

thinking. I will introduce key elements of traditional thinking based in Confucianism and Taoism in more detail in this section of the chapter, also outlining the more epistemological basis for them here in order to further pursue some of the differences between Western and Chinese language film studies and narrative content. My starting point is the idea that because of their shared cultural histories that forms of 'Chineseness' will be manifest and represented in the three cinemas constituting at least one dimension of 'national identity' (but not necessarily in a unified or homogenous way). In my thesis I use the term 'Chineseness' to refer to those historically recognized cultural factors/elements such as the philosophies and belief systems stemming from Confucianism and Taoism and also aspects of folklore, customs, allegories and symbolic cultural emblems as typified by the existence of the martial arts hero across the three cinemas and in many of the transnational films of directors of Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese origin.

The influence of Confucianism and Taoism is represented not only in Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese filmmaking practices (in the case of the latter two in a more complex way because of various colonial influences, such as British, Japanese and Dutch colonial experience) but also as a consistent frame of reference. Chinese traditional philosophy, which as I have indicated, is based on the syncretism of heaven and human being (heaven here refers to the universe/nature). This philosophical approach makes heaven the object of perception and human beings as the subject of perception. This philosophy provides the backbone of recognised social rules within Chinese cultures. Expressed as 'harmony' in Taoist philosophy and 'the golden mean' in Confucianism, Confucianism and Taoism accentuate the interdependent relationship between nature and humanity. In doing so, this neutralizes the conflict between subject and object, and between human being and nature. This epistemological basis leads to a preoccupation with reflections on the human condition and the experiences of sadness and joy and, as I will investigate through textual analysis in later chapters, I believe the result of these uniquely Chinese traditional conceptualizations also contribute to a distinctive authorial signature in Chinese language cinemas.

As argued in the previous section, understandings of morality in Chinese influenced cultures which have been shaped by Confucianism and contributed to the notion that Chinese film scholarship was orientated by the value of films' social function and political ideology. Although studies focused on film art did emerge from time to time in Chinese film scholarship, the majority of work has always been different in terms of the epistemological and ontological modes operating in film studies in the West. This can be seen most obviously in the way that Chinese traditional modes of thinking have emphasized sensibility rather than reason. Zheng Zhengqiu (2001, trans. Li) notes: "theatre is the lieu for social education; actors/actresses are good teachers of social education". In 1930s, Xia Yan (a communist filmmaker) developed new film theories while making revolutionary films: film is the tool for the revolution of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism (Xu, 1986). Thus Chinese cinema has been marked by a social-realist tradition.

In this thesis when trying to investigate influence of Chinese traditional culture and philosophies on filmmaking in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan it is also hard to pin down what Chinese traditional cultures are in an exact sense. On the one hand, there is a sense of the 'original essence' of Chinese philosophies and approaches to life (outlined briefly above in terms of ways of thinking, cultural beliefs and traditions). On the other hand, there is also an embodiment of the specific historical, political and social contexts in which such belief systems are created. I am seeking here to present an understanding of Chinese culture that sees it as complex in terms of its connection to and dislocation from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. This will lead me in turn to explore issues such as the relationship between modernity, cultural identities and traditional ways of thinking/belief systems.

The notion of traditional culture as an 'original essence' is especially interesting when explored in relation to three national/geographical identities that are distinct but also share

strong cultural roots. For instance, for five thousand years the majority of Chinese populations (mainland Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese) have been made up of peasants, which led to the culture of *tudi*. The Chinese term *tudi* may be translated as earth/land in English. However, the term embodies a more profound meaning in a Chinese context. It refers to the agricultural civilization which is traditionally considered as the principal part of Chinese civilizations. *Tudi*, or earth, is what has nourished Chinese people for centuries. From this perspective, *tudi* also takes on a similar role to that of *terroir* in French civilization which symbolizes a sense of place/belonging. Unsurprisingly *tudi* is highly venerated and it possesses paramount spiritual position among Chinese people. According to Yu Qiuyu (2007), Chinese civilization is in itself agricultural, and that is why Chinese empires have never advocated military expedition. Symbolically *tudi* is both the mother and the home for Chinese people. Its influence can be seen at the heart of Confucianism/Taoism and the ways that it has shaped Chinese societies for over two thousand years. Confucius (1996: 45) says: "while father and mother are alive, a good son does not wander far a field". Because *tudi* may be considered as the origin of Chinese civilization its influence on filmmaking can be seen in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong (particularly in the films of the Fifth Generation in mainland China, the Taiwanese New Cinema and Hong Kong cinema). It is no accident that the title of the first internationally acclaimed film of the Fifth Generation, *Huang Tudi* (*Yellow Earth*, Kaige Chen, 1984), signals a post-cultural revolution reflection on identity based on a return to 'countryside'. As Chow notes:

> ...reflecting on 'culture' inevitably involves the rethinking of origins—the 'pasts' that give rise to the present moment; the narratives, myths, rituals, customs, and practices that account for how a people becomes what it is.
>
> (Chow, 1995: 174)

In Taiwan, the direct reflection of *tudi* may experience certain transition or variation. The same happened in Hong Kong cinema since it is more a commercial cinema especially post-1980s. However, the ideology of *tudi* is not excluded in its martial arts films and gangster cinema, which is transformed into the protection of 'homeland' and worship of community. More pervasive than a particular relationship to the earth is perhaps the dominance of the spiritual and ethical framework for living that is supplied by Confucianism

and Taoism which constitute, like Hellenism, Hebraism and Germanic tradition in the West, the core of Chinese culture. They have shaped Chinese societies for over two thousand years and have become the core of Chinese civilization. The influence of Confucianism and Taoism also shaped many Eastern Asian countries such as Japan, Singapore and South Korea. As Mijun Park and Catherine Chesla state:

> Confucianism is not merely a Chinese philosophy. As with other great ancient philosophies, such as Buddhism and Daoism, Confucianism was introduced to EA countries and deeply influenced the formation of every aspect of life. Confucianism was the philosophic ground of much of the culture in East and Southeast Asia.
>
> (Park and Chesla, 2007: 297)

As indicated earlier, a major theme of Confucian/Taoist philosophies is nature. There are fundamental differences between Western philosophy and the Chinese Confucian/Taoist tradition regarding the relationship between human beings and nature. However, the dualism of man and nature formed the basis of Western mode of cognitive thinking: the pursuit of the Western philosophical and scientific thinking. This ideology led the positivism and form/logic thinking labeled by pure reason (advocated by German philosopher Immanuel Kant) and scientific reason.

> A major theme of Western culture is our separation from nature. Nature is *hostile* to us, as in the Christian tradition where it presents temptations to our desires when we are trying to reach God, or a realm to be dominated as in Renaissance humanism and contemporary Western science and technology, or a domain of facts to be studied, explored, and exploited.'
>
> (Rummel, 1975)

Rummel's statement clearly points out the difference regarding man's relationship to nature in Western philosophy and traditional Chinese philosophy. Richard T. De George further claims:

> The Western division led to considering nature as an object and its study as science; whereas the study of the human subject or spirit led to logic, to epistemology, and to the study of human psychology and freedom. By contrast the Chinese emphasis on monism and harmony led to aesthetics more than to logic, to a search for deeper meanings rather

> than for falsification or verification of propositions. As a result Chinese philosophy has less tension in it than Western philosophy. Where the contrasts present in the West were a source of dynamism, the harmony of the Chinese view, the respect for tradition and the search for wisdom led historically to a more static worldview.
>
> (George, 1989: 143)

As man's relationship to nature is not only a major theme of Confucian/Taoist philosophies, but also one core element in Chinese civilization. The different interpretations regarding man's relationship to nature between Chinese culture and Western culture is important for my further exploration of cultural identity manifest in the key Chinese films and how it also influenced the artistic visions of a number of auteur directors of Chinese origin.

To understand the role of Confucianism and Taoism in Chinese civilization will help us better understand how Chinese and nations of Chinese origin became what they are. If China does not have its own religion (Buddhism finds its origin in India), then Confucianism and Taoism, the two philosophical schools can be viewed as two 'religions' since ancient times in China. Max Weber shares the same view in his *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (first German version in 1915; English version cited in this thesis, 1968). In this book Weber provides explanations on the Confucian and Taoist life Orientation. He explores the indifference of Chinese to the natural sciences, the concept of the golden mean, piety, the Confucian "pathos", and the ideology of harmony. Weber (1968) also examines the doctrine and ritual in China. Weber's interpretation of the mysticism of Confucianism and Taoism shows a comparative understanding of Chinese and Western civilization. He notes:

> Confucianism hallowed alone those human obligations of piety created by inter-human relations, such as prince and servant, higher and lower official, father and son, brother and brother, teacher and pupil, friend and friend. Puritan ethic, however, rather suspected these purely personal relationships as pertaining to the creatural; but Puritanism, of course, did allow or their existence and ethically controlled them so far as they were not against God.
>
> (Weber, 1968: 241)

This Confucian ideology of order (more from a moral perspective) plays an important role in

the formation of Chinese society and family, and it is important for us to understand the theme of family, father-son relationship in the films of the three Chinese language cinemas that I am exploring (especially the films of Ang Lee and John Woo).

Taoism also has a significant influence in Chinese thinking. For Taoism, or Tao, the basic idea is that behind all material things and all the change in the world there lies one fundamental, universal principle: 'the Way' or Tao.

> The Way that can be told of is not an Unvarying way;
> The names that can be named are not unvarying names.
> It was from the Nameless that Heaven and Earth sprang;
> The named is but the mother that rears the ten thousand creatures, each after its kind.
>
> (Lao Tzu, 1997: 3)

The purpose of human life, then, is to live life according to Tao, which requires passivity, calm, non-striving, humility, and lack of planning, for to plan is to go against the Tao. Different to Taoism, Confucianism emphasizes the way of living in society. If Taoism can be viewed as the way of living in harmony with nature, then Confucianism is the way of residing within society. Confucianism emphasizes disciplines, beliefs and virtues such as loyalty, brotherhood love and filial piety. These Confucian codes have been found useful by Chinese emperors for their feudal governance and it has always been adopted by feudal regimes as the main spiritual belief in Chinese history for more than two thousand years.

The four cardinal virtues of Confucianism are filial piety, brotherhood, loyalty, and trust; and the Taoist philosophy of harmony between nature and humanity are paramount in Chinese cultures. In this thesis I will argue that the codes of Confucianism and Taoism have shaped and constituted Chinese cultural/national identity in the cinemas of the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, these cultural codes persisting as mythic symbols of national identity and national narratives. Also, as noted by Weber (1968), the Confucian 'pathos' has traditionally become a characteristic for Chinese intellectuals. This will be further elaborated

in relation to auteur directors of the three Chinese language cinemas (especially the humanist concern of the films of auteur directors of Taiwanese New Cinema). Thus in the formation of the national in the three Chinese language cinemas I am investigating, the main tenet/beliefs of Confucianism and Taoism take central place. Despite this centrality, Confucianism and Taoism are not one single unified concept but a series of ancient traditions and approaches that, as I will argue, can endure across geographical and political separations.

Confucian and Taoist ideologies also act as a cultural core for the aesthetics of Chinese films. This will also be an important element for my arguments regarding the cultural identity of the three Chinese language cinemas and the authorial signatures of certain auteur directors. From an aesthetic perspective, Chris Berry and Mary Ann Farquhar (1999) have explored the relationship between Chinese painting and Chinese films. They note:

> Sinicization was also applied to the image, with a certain aesthetic decorative style, where the basic socialist-realist style was stuccoed over with Chinese motifs.
>
> (Berry and Farquhar, 1999: 83)

However, Berry and Farquhar's attempt to explore "what was new about the Fifth Generation" (1999: 82) has so far stayed on a technical level by arguing the relationship between Chinese traditional painting and the aesthetics of the Fifth Generation. What lies behind Chinese painting is the influence of Chinese traditional culture and what has shaped the aesthetic techniques of Chinese painting includes more profound cultural significances (that is, those that are deeper than the level of technique). The relationship between human being and nature, the Confucian/Taoist way of life, and moral disciplines remain superficial in Berry and Farquhar's discussions.

Without the knowledge of Chinese traditional culture, and acknowledging its interaction with modernity in specific historical context, we fail to interpret 'the national' with enough cultural significance. If language is well established as a carrier of culture, then a national

cinema can be seen as a new carrier of national culture/identity with the medium of film becoming one of the most immediate and popular ways for people to encounter another 'country' in the age of globalization. In the case of Chinese language cinemas very few Western scholars and even fewer Western audiences speak Mandarin and an important aspect of meaning is lost in translation.

> The quality of the acting is frequently noted as suffering in dubbed films, as the vocal qualities, tones, and rhythms of specific languages, combined with the gestures and facial expressions that mark national characters and acting styles, become literally lost in translation. While subtitling is acknowledged to have drawbacks as well—it is distracting and impedes concentration on the visuals and often leaves portions of the dialogue untranslated—it is seen to alter the source text the least and to enable the target audience to experience the authentic 'foreignness' of the film.
>
> (Betz, 2008)

For viewers who are not familiar with Chinese traditional philosophies then further nuances of cultural meaning are easily overlooked. However, my emphasis of Chinese traditional culture does not deny modernity in the three countries whose cinemas I am investigating. By the term 'modernity', I am speaking of modernity both in and outside of cinema: the modernity in Chinese cinemas and the modernity in Chinese societies. Esther C. M. Yau (2006) offers a formulation of China's relationship to modernity, noting that:

> Since the nineteenth century, major historical events in China (wars, national calamities, revolutions, etc) have made four topics crucial to national consciousness – feudalism, subsistence, socialism and modernisation – and discourses are prompted in relation to them in numerous literary and cultural text.
>
> (Yau, 2006:212)

As I will explore further, in future chapters, mainland Chinese Cinema, Hong Kong cinema and Taiwanese cinema all underwent their *modernization* in the 1980s which are characterized by the three film movements: the Fifth Generation, Hong Kong New Wave Cinema and Taiwanese New Cinema in the 1980s. In examining the interplay of tradition and modernity I will therefore mainly focus on this particular historical period in the thesis.

In a cross-cultural research, the impact of modernity (and its adjunct globalization) has had on the cultural traditions of Confucianism and Taoism is undeniable. Since 1949, Chinese traditional cultural values in mainland China have encountered Marxism and socialism, more specifically, Maoism. In fact this encounter has fundamentally shaped Chinese minds and societies in Chinese mainland and though more indirectly (certainly until the re-incorporation of Hong Kong into the People's Republic of China in 1997) that also of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

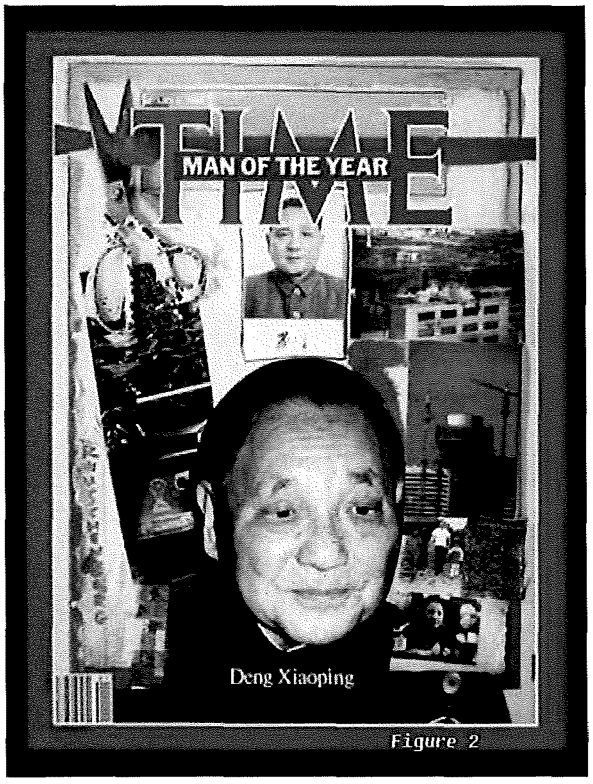


Figure 2

Between 1966 and 1976 the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in Mainland China created the catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution. When it came to an end in 1976, the CCP realised that China's economy was on the verge of collapse. In 1978 they launched the economic 'Opening Policy' and took economy as the core of the country, with the determination of developing economy by all means. Chairman Deng Xiaoping, the leader of the Second generation of the CCP, made the famous remark regarding the discussions of socialism and capitalism: "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice" (Strother, 2006: 36). Although Chinese capitalism was initially developed in China since 1840s following the Opium War and reached it peak between 1927 and 1949 before the establishment of the PRC (Zhang, 2008), it has never been fully developed pre 1949 because of China's political complexities. Capitalism was also completely eliminated between 1949 and 1976 due to the rigid communist/Maoist ideology. Thus Deng's black/white cat remark after the Cultural Revolution was quickly seized by the West for more sensitive political implication. On 6th January 1986, Deng (Figure 2) appeared on the cover of Time magazine as the Man of the

Year. Ever since the 'Opening Policy' advocated by Deng, capitalism and Western secularism have interacted with Maoism, communism and Chinese traditional cultures, and the representations of these influences on Chinese cinemas are worthy of further exploration.

Following the end of the ten-year Cultural Revolution in 1976, a cultural movement of searching for the roots was initiated in cinema and literature. For many who experienced the loss of faith and ideology, the spiritual vacuum that resulted converged with the emergent commercialism in the 1980s. In response to this, Richard Madsen (1998) describes the situation in post-Cultural Revolution China as follows:

> The Cultural Revolution destroyed the religious aura that Mao had created around the Communist movement...even as the state withdrew from its religious pretension, though, the senseless violence of the Cultural Revolution had left the Chinese people with more profound questions than ever before about the ultimate meaning of life. In this moral vacuum, many Chinese were predisposed to look to traditional religion to make sense of the tragedies of history and to sustain new hope for the future.
>
> (Madsen, 1998: 39)

Conceiving national cinema and the national

Mainland China is one of the oldest continuous civilizations in existence; in contrast, film is one of its most modern arts. Most westerners derive their understandings of 'Chineseness' through the media (news programming, novels, paintings, print journalism) and films reinforce such conceptions. As I have indicated, for the majority of Westerners, cinema is probably the most common way for them to encounter 'China' (where because of a lens of Orientalism little distinction is made between Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan – from the Orientalist eye there seems to be less of a problematic (the 'national') in terms of national cinema as the three are readily grouped as Chinese). This includes Western representations of China and the Orient on film as well as in more recent years, films from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It is from this mix of images that Westerners build up an understanding of Chineseness. When approaching non-Hollywood cinemas, the

concept of national cinema (Higson, 2002) remains of exceptional importance and along with theories of authorship is one of the pivotal strands to this research. Regarding the issue of national / cultural identity, my position in this thesis may be summarized as follows. I use the term the 'national' or 'national identity' in the sense defined by Anderson (1983), namely as an 'Imagined Community' which refers to the broader existence of a configuration of specific national/cultural identities. Higson's (2006) concept of national cinema which emphasizes the projecting of 'the national' gives me the tools to investigate the cultural identities that are projected in the three cinemas and I use the term 'Chineseness' to refer expressions of shared cultural, historical and philosophical continuity across the three New Wave cinemas.

Prior to the 1980s critical writing on cinema adopted common-sense notions of national cinema. The idea of national cinema has long informed the promotion of non-Hollywood cinemas (Crofts, 1998a: 385). The dominance of Hollywood meant that as far back as the 1920s and 1930s, France and Germany formed their national cinemas almost in ideological opposition to Hollywood. In her book *French National Cinema*, Susan Hayward (1993: 5) explains that by the 1920s calls were being made in France for "a truly national cinema as a defense against the American hegemony, all of which (in the implicit concern for the well-being of cinema) points to a historicism and narcissism of sorts".

It was not until 1989 that Andrew Higson defined *The Concept of National Cinema* in a broader sense: he suggests that national cinema should be defined not only in terms of "the films produced by and within a particular nation state" (Higson, 2002: 132-142), but also in terms of distribution and exhibition, audiences, and critical and cultural discourses. This is one of the first general considerations of national cinema. According to Higson (2002), there are four frequently used critical approaches to national cinema: an industry-based approach that defines national cinema in economic terms, and is concerned with such questions as: "where are these films made, and by whom? Who owns and controls the industrial infrastructures, the production companies, the distributors and the exhibition circuits?" The

second approach to national cinema is text-based, the key questions being: What are these films about? Do they share a common style or worldview? What sort of projections of the national character do they offer? To what extent are films engaged in constructing a notion of nationhood? (Higson, 2002) This will be one of the main approaches that I will be employing in this study due to its close relationship with the prominence of the auteur director and their association with the projection of personal visions in film (I will explore this further when I discuss film authorship). The third approach to national cinema is exhibition-led, or consumption-based. The major concern here has always been the question of which films audiences are watching - a concern that is generally formulated in terms of an anxiety about cultural imperialism. This approach will intersect with my study of cinema produced in the transnational context. The fourth and final approach is criticism-led and tends to reduce national cinema to the terms of a quality art cinema (Higson, 2002:132-142) and this will also touch the importance of film authorship, directors and international film festivals.

Higson (2002) indicates that national cinema should not only be considered in relation to where films are made but more especially in relation to what kind of cultural identity they projected and how they are consumed globally. Although Higson suggests that scholars should look beyond films produced within the territory of a nation-state it has still been easier in the most part for the majority of academic studies to concentrate on nation states as discrete geographical entities (for instance: *Australian National Cinema*, O'Regan, 1996; *British National Cinema*, Street,1997 and *French National Cinema*, Hayward, 1993). That is not to say, however, that the question of co-productions and the increasing impact of transnational elements of production are not problematised. Unlike in this thesis, transnational elements of production do not provide the primary focus of the research to the same degree. Higson's overall concept of national cinema which invites scrutiny of the national/cultural identity projected by a particular nation state cinema and its reception in a global cultural communication system will therefore be furthered by this thesis, through its examination of a complex cultural context that, firstly, looks beyond nation states and explores common cultural roots/beliefs and then, secondly, moves the analysis to the

transnational context of production and reception.

As mentioned earlier, Higson's (2006) concept of national cinema which emphasizes the projecting of 'the national' is vital to my studies and I use the term 'Chineseness' to refer to expressions of shared cultural continuity across the three New Wave cinemas. In terms of national cinema, 'Chineseness' becomes a form of cultural capital that is shaped through transnational discourses that are negotiated in history. Ideas about degrees of authenticity as Chinese, which are seen as derived from links to territory and knowledge of 'traditional' Chinese cultures such as Confucianism and Taoism, have become a basis through which diaspora Chinese define themselves in relation to one another. The complex ways in which 'Chineseness' as a form of identification can work as both a unifying and differentiating factor. Within discussions of national cinema, heritage cinema is another important approach to national cinema. The concept of heritage cinema emerged in film media discourse in the 1980s with the success of European period films such as *A Room with a View* (James Ivory, 1985) and *Jean de Florette* (Claude Berri, 1986). They are usually adaptations of classic literatures and most of them are made in Europe (Britain and France have a particular reputation for this genre of films but examples also exist in other national cinemas such as the Australian film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Peter Weir, 1975). According to Higson (1996: 233), "one of the central pleasures of the heritage film is the artful and spectacular projection of an elite conservative vision of the national past". Although the participation of Hollywood in making heritage films has pushed heritage films into what critics called 'internationalism', heritage films are still considered as Eurocentric (Vincendeau, 2001). Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) which will form part of my analysis in the final transnational part of this thesis is a good example of the internationalism of heritage films. It is directed by Taiwanese director, scripted by British actress Emma Thompson and performed/acted by a British cast. Heritage films place great stress on the relationship between literature and film. In the Chinese mainland cinema many of the films of the Fifth Generation can also be considered as heritage films because of their period setting and the fact that most of them are literary adaptations. The idea of heritage films as a focus in Chinese cinemas studies is however

strangely absent. One reason is that Western scholars are not familiar with Chinese literature (the majority remaining in Chinese language versions only and rarely (in contrast to their cinematic adaptations), have hardly gained international reputations. The concept of heritage cinema will be important to this thesis linking back not only to Chinese language literature/novels but also in revealing engagements with underlying traditional philosophies and belief systems that underpin understandings of the 'Chineseness' and identity that have previously remained under-discussed.

Zhang (2004: 2-3) also points out that Chinese cinema does not sit easily in existing definitions of national cinema. Facing the complexities of the three Chinese language cinemas, as argued earlier, Zhang (2004) feels that 'the national' is difficult to define and considers nationalism, instead of any particular cultural or artistic trait, as the most dominant characteristic of Chinese cinema. The political nature of nationalism cannot be disputed whether it is overtly expressed in film projects or not. The concept of nationality is similarly loaded. In the era of globalization, the studies of national cinema have been facing complexities brought by transnational cultural and capital flow. Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen (2006) stress the importance of the studies of national cinema and the need to continually revise the theories/concepts of national cinema. This thesis aims to interpret 'the national' from a cultural and artistic perspective, I need to further clarify the term 'the national'. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991) is perhaps the most-cited theory of nationalism. By nationalism, Anderson argues how people in different parts of a territory who have never seen each other conceive of themselves as an intimate community, which in fact, is an imagined identity. Anderson (1991: 4) claims that: "... nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind".

Consequently this 'imaged community' functions as a post-Enlightenment organizer of populations, affected by the huge migrations and diasporas resulting from post-Second World War processes of decolonization (Croft, 1998, 386-387). And the constructedness of 'the national', or "to construct the history of a nation or national cinema as coherent, unified, homogeneous, is to lend support to its erasure of difference and to the maintenance of a centrist and neo-conservative cultural politics" (Faulkner, 1994: 7). Faulkner's assertion is useful in supporting this research project's arguments as it simplifies the complexities of Chinese cinemas when the thesis underpins a Chinese traditional cultural perspective on the three Chinese-language cinemas.

However, this homogeneity cannot exclude the differentiation of the three cinemas in terms of cultural specificities, as each of them possesses different political and historical experiences. Hall (2006) emphasizes the nature of cultural identity as an ongoing formation and reconstruction. Chinese identities are produced simultaneously on different levels, e.g.: at local, state, and transnational levels. According to Hall (2006), there are at least two senses of identity: identity as being (which offers a sense of unity and commonality) and identity as becoming (or a process of identification, which shows the discontinuity in our identity formation). "The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (Hall, 2006: 435). This is particularly useful for this research project when highlighting the role of Chinese culture and traditions among Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Hall (2006) also points out the homogeneity and heterogeneity of identity. His assertion will help to support the cultural specificities of each of the three Chinese language cinemas while arguing their homogeneity and heterogeneity in terms of cultural identity. In his *Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation*, Hall (1996: 210) states: "Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact, which the new cinematic discourses then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a "production," which is never complete, always in process, and

always constituted within, not outside, representation." Thus the critical discourse in Hall's work is particularly useful in the Chinese case where three cinemas are geographically and politically separated but which retain strong cultural connections. I will therefore further apply Hall's concepts of 'cultural identity' regarding Chinese mainland cinema, Hong Kong cinema and Taiwanese cinema later in the thesis.

The role of culture in the constructedness of the national in the Chinese case is similar to Hayward's (1993) argument about French National Cinema. In her study of *French National Cinema*, Hayward states that:

> In response to how France was perceived from outside ... it will be useful to retain ... the essential notions of nation as myth and nation as difference and continuity as well as the notion of the enunciative role of ideology.
>
> (Hayward, 1993: 5)

Hayward emphasizes the role of national culture in the constructedness of national identity. Nation-ness is characterized by its own myth and allegory. It is clear that culture plays an important role in the formation of nation. Arjun Appadurai (1996) highlights the role of culture in the production of nationhood, and it is here that cinema occupies an important position as a mass medium:

> Modern nationalisms involve communities of citizens in the territorial defined nation-state who share the collective experience, not of face-to-face contact or common subordination to a royal person, but of reading books, pamphlets, newspapers, maps, and other modern texts together.
>
> (Appadurai, 1996: 161)

Anderson (1991:18) calls these collective experiences "print capitalism" and "electronic capitalism". However, recently Higson problematises Anderson's concept of 'imagined community' by making the following statement:

> The 'imagined community' argument thus sometimes seems unable to acknowledge the cultural difference and diversity that invariably marks both the inhabitants of a particular nation-state and members of more geographically dispersed 'national' communities.

(Higson, 2006: 18)

Higson's statement may well be applied to the three Chinese language cinemas. Although Hong Kong and Taiwan have been either geographically politically separated from Chinese mainland for years, I will argue in my analysis chapters that the collective experience remains through the influence of Chinese traditional culture. From this perspective, like both Hall (2006) and Higson (2006)'s arguments, I acknowledge the discontinuity and differentiation of cultural identity in the Chinese case where politics has played an important role, I will aim to explore the function of commonly held beliefs as part of three cinemas projection of nation.

National identity and political manipulation

In the case of all three cinemas that I am investigating, political intervention is an enormous influence in the constructedness of their nation-states. Regarding the cultural specificities of the three Chinese language cinemas, there is no way to escape an emphasis on the role of politics and political ideologies in the following chapters. This political or government connection is, of course, not that unusual in the formation and shaping of national cinemas. French cinema, for instance is a good case of illustrating this. Like in many other nations, there has been strong government involvement in the film industry in France. The Centre National de la Cinématographie was established in order to serve the need of the state to create a national cinema in 1946 (Hayward, 1993).

There is a fundamental question: what particular national identity a national cinema intends to project with the government intervention and nationalism ideologies in a certain historical period? In the Chinese case, the role of the political ideology has played an important role in the construction of national identity since 1949 both in Mainland China, Taiwan and to a lesser extent Hong Kong. The triumph of Communism and Maoism in mainland China and the retreat of KMT to Taiwan initiated political competition as each tried to construct itself as

the legitimate site of China. After the Second World War (especially the Japanese occupation), nationalist ideology was also spread and represented in Hong Kong cinema. This is seen in Bruce Lee's films and will be further elaborated in Chapter Five. Thus, national image and national identities shifted according to government interventions and their financial backing as well as different prevalent nationalist ideologies. As Hayward (1993: 6) indicates: "shifts according to which particular nation is being referred to because the concept of a nation's cinema will change according to a nation's ideology". This point of view is similar to Higson's argument (2002: 132-142): "the concept of a national cinema has almost invariably been mobilized as a strategy of cultural (and economic) resistance; a means of asserting national autonomy in the face of (usually) Hollywood's international domination". This is especially the case in Chinese mainland cinema and Taiwanese cinema post-1949 when both competed to construct themselves as the legitimate site for a Chinese nation-state. For Hong Kong, being a British colony for one hundred and fifty seven years, cinema has also been a particular site for the articulation of identity in a colonial contact. Such political intervention in the constructedness of national identity will be further explored in the following three case studies of Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. For example, Government intervention and especially the influences of a Communist ideology are of great importance to the projected national identity in mainland Chinese cinema after 1949.

Authorship and National Cinema

The first section contextualizes authorship in cinema. After introducing some key texts from classic writings on authorship it moves to more recent writings on authorship and introduces the key critical discourses employed in this thesis. The second section focuses on authorship and its function in a national cinema context which stands against Hollywood dominance. I introduce the importance of the auteur in the building of national cinema and also how the auteur has been privileged by film critics and international film festivals, with specific reference to Chinese language cinemas.

Auteur theory, which considers the director as the author of his/her films, is one of the most powerful and pervasive views historically and continues to be current thinking about cinema (Livingston 1997, Gaut 1997, Elsaesser 2005 etc.). In order to try to forestall some predictable misreadings, I will need to explain at the outset that there are multiple perspectives regarding auteurism. What I attempt to do is to use auteurism more pragmatically to generate different insights for my research. Fundamentally there are two types of phenomenon: auteur as marketing tool and auteur as agent of a film's meaning. Timothy Corrigan (1998) is a good example of the former. My own philosophical assumption inclines me towards the latter approach which is largely indebted to Paisley Livingston (1997) and Berry Gaut (1997). While I am looking and examining these two types of auteurism, what I put forward is the latter: director as agent of film's meaning.

Authorship in cinema

Auteur theory has argued that the role that a director plays in filmmaking is paramount. François Truffaut coined the phrase *la politique des Auteurs* in his essay 'Une certaine tendance du cinéma français' ('a certain tendency in French cinema'), published in *Cahier du Cinéma* in 1954. Auteur theory holds that a director's films reflect that director's personal creative vision, as if the director were the principle creator of meaning. Andrew Sarris is an important figure in authorship, as Caughie (1981: 26) says, "for it is Sarris who pushes to extremes arguments which in Cahiers were often only implicit". Drawing from the writings of Truffaut and other French critics in the 1950s, Sarris dubbed these viewpoints 'the auteur theory' in the 1960s. According to John Caughie, auteurism shares certain basic assumptions:

> Notably, that a film, though produced collectively, is most likely to be valuable when it is essentially the product of its director ('meaningful coherence is more likely when the director dominates the proceedings': Sarris); that in the presence of a director who is genuinely an artist (an auteur) a film is more than likely to be the expression of his individual personality; and that this personality can be traced in a thematic and/or stylistic consistency over all (or almost all) the director's films.

(Caughie, 1981: 9)

Victor Perkins (1990: 21-22) summarized the theory and critical practice of auteurism as looking for "the achievement within the single film of values like economy, unity, eloquence, subtlety, depth and vigour (on the one hand; and on the other) recurrent themes in a director's films considered as a series...themes, viewpoints and methods of sufficient personal significance to carry over from film to film". Perkins's assertion will be pivotal for my analysis as I will mainly focus on auteur directors' authorial signatures and examine their continuity within and beyond their national contexts (not only from film to film but also from national to transnational).

In his *European Cinema*, Thomas Elsaesser (2005) places the auteur as the most prominent feature for the representation of national themes. This is particularly useful for my argument in this thesis when considering the auteur as signifier of national style. Livingston (2009: 215) also contests two criticisms which reject or downplay the role of auteur in shaping a film's meaning and he argues that "the cinema can contribute to philosophical enquiry in part because some film-makers employ the cinematic medium, along with other means, to express philosophical ideas. A film-maker's vivid and stirring evocation of philosophical questions and positions can motivate and guide philosophical reflection". Needham (2006a) identifies the importance of auteur directors in the formation of a film's meaning. He notes:

> The simplicity of emphasis on style and thematic consistency means the critic who privileges these aspects of the unifying brand-name function of the director is able to negate the specific cultural forces and contextual parameters that form part of the film's meaning and cultural base, and can instead perceive the film as the directors' signature staging.
>
> (Needham, 2006a: 363)

Livingston (1997) applies analytic philosophy to film scholarship. In his 'Cinematic Authorship', Livingston (1997: 132-148) addresses the problem of whether the concept of authorship can be applied to commercial cinema. This is one of an agreed definition as what Timothy Corrigan (1998) states by using the construction of director Quentin Tarantino as

auteur by American mass media:

> ...both the unabashed self-promotion of this appearance and its deliberate attempt to ironize Tarantino as auteur-celebrity tells us that if auteurism – as a description of movies being the artistic expression of a director – is still very much alive today, the artistic expression of contemporary directors is fully bound up with the celebrity industry of Hollywood.
>
> (Corrigan, 1998: 36)

The appropriation of Hollywood of auteurism as marketing tool is undeniable. I do, however, argue that an understanding of "individual agency" (Livingston, 1997) is crucial to better understand a film's meaning. As film production companies and record labels stress the integrity of the auteur as a means of promoting their work, the idea of the auteur in contemporary popular culture may be as much a marketing tool as a theoretical concept. For Livingston (1997), the next problem is to apply this definition of author to mass-produced commercial films. The issue is to identify an author from the numerous makers of or contributors to a commercial film. Livingston presents four thought experiments, or hypothetical cases studies, of the different power relations that can operate between different agents in filmmaking as a way of distinguishing makers from authors. Furthermore, Livingston (1997) puts forward different traditions of film authorship and justifies that they are not contradictory. Indeed, these two types of phenomenon are not contradictory to each other as Livingston (1997: 134) offers a broad definition relying on the understanding of an author as a rational agent who expresses or communicates an intended meaning. He states:

> ...let me to state at the outset that my goal in what follows is not to defend the idea that solitary artistic genius is the fundamental unit of all valuable cultural analysis. I do, however, maintain that an understanding of individual agency is crucial to the latter. I hold that many films emerge from a process of collective or individual authorship; others may have makers, but no authors(s)—at least in the sense I elucidate.
>
> Livingston (1997: 133)

Bordwell and Thompson (1988) highlight that authorship is often defined in terms of control and decision-making. Livingston (1997) uses a case in which complex power relations dictate the production process of filmmaking to argue that it is sometimes difficult to define the

auteur of a film because various people and sources manipulated the filmmaking. This is especially the case in Hollywood where a producer's system functions throughout the filmmaking productions. Facing such complexities, Livingston notes:

> Being an author, I have claimed, is intentionally making an utterance, and an utterance is an expressive (and perhaps also a communicative) action, that is, one in which some agent (or agents) intends to make manifest some meaningful attitudes (such as beliefs and emotions.) To make an attitude manifest is to do or make something, the cognition of which is likely, under the right conditions, to bring that attitude to mind.
>
> (Livingston, 1997: 140)

Indeed in Hollywood, a producer-unit system functions throughout the whole process of a film's production. As the biggest 'national cinema' with matured industrial infrastructure, Hollywood is essentially commercial driven and box-office oriented. Bordwell (1988: 332) puts forward a producer-unit system which, as he states, "was a revision of the director-unit system but with the producer in charge and a central staff which planned the work process". In the same book, Janet Staiger (1988: 132) argues the transition of "a director-unit system to a 'central producer' system in which planning by a manager with a carefully prepared script controlled the design of the product". She (1988: 132) further argues that a producer's system split the function of director and producer in film production and it is often a producer "took over the management of the pre- and post- shooting work for *all* the films in the studio while the new manager of the production department coordinated the studio facility's planning". John Woo acknowledged in one interview that, contrary to his full control over his filmmaking in Hong Kong, he didn't have the directorial right for the final cut of his Hollywood films until his *Broken Arrow* (1997) became a huge success at box-office worldwide. This situation, however, it is somewhat different in national cinema context. Especially in an authorial cinema framework, established directors enjoy great power in making a film and are often the principle decision makers. For example, Karwei Wang, an auteur director who is known for making films without screenplays before shooting, is considered by Bordwell (2000) as a typical example of how auteur director shares primary creative control over a film's meaning in Asian cinema. In *Planet Hong Kong* (2000) Bordewell examines how Wang manipulated almost every aspects of his filmmaking (from

narrative to soundtrack and from cinematography to editing) and suggests that Wang became a shrewd guardian of his brand. In a recent essay, Bordwell further explains:

> Like many Hong Kong movies, nearly every of Wong Kar-war's films went through multiple version. But unlike many directors he seems to enjoy tweaking and rethinking his work. In production he shoots scenes, watches them, reshoots them, recuts them, and reshoots again. Editing and mixing the same play with variants. He adds different shots, juggles the order, adds or subtracts music at will.
>
> (Bordwell, 2010)

Wang's authorial power in his filmmaking is similar to many other auteur directors such as Yimou Zhang in Mainland China and Hsiao-Hsien Hou in Taiwan. Zhang's status as *auteur* marks his position within Mainland Chinese cinema and signifies his complete creative freedom and control of every facet of his films' production. Weiping Zhang, the manager of The New Picture Company is the long-term partner (producer) of Zhang's films. Weiping (Zhang, 2007) said in an interview that he gave complete control to Zhang for every film Zhang made. Hou is also exempted from that rigid producer's system in Hollywood and is able to produce films with his full control in the creative process. That is especially the case after he gained his status of auteur following the international success of his *City of Sadness* (1989), which gave him more freedom as the controller of his films in the Taiwanese film environment. Thus the meaningful attitudes (such as their beliefs and emotions) are often represented in their films. Livingston (1997) provides a broader context of authorship in the cinema and further consolidates the role of auteur from various perspectives. His critical discourse regarding authorship serves perfectly for my later analysis regarding the authorial expressions of a number of auteur directors in Chinese language cinemas.

However, the tendency of placing auteur as the only producer of a film is also problematic. Berys Gaut (1997: 149) argues that: "It has been held that the film author is the director, the screenwriter, the star, or the studio; that the film author is an actual individual, or a critical construct; that there is not one film author, but several; the claim of film authorship has been held primarily as an evaluative one, or an interpretative one, or simply as the view that there

are authors of film as there are authors of literary works". Gaut (1997) examines different dimensions of variation regarding authorship in cinema. He rejects the concept of single film authorship and argues for "minimal auteurism" and "multiple authorship". Gaut points out the problematic state of authorship. He (1997: 153-169) systematically establishes five basic concepts of film authorship: 1. The kind of claim auteur criticism makes that film author exists, author's decisive relationship to film's meaning, and auteurism as a critical approach (defined as an existential claim, a hermeneutic claim and an evaluative claim). 2. The ontology of the author which, as the above quote (Gaut, 1997: 149) shows, points to actual persons or critical constructs. 3. Authors and artists. 4. Occupiers of the authorial role from director to producer within the production system of a film. 5. Number of authors: single authorship or multiple authorship. Gaut argues that any particular auteur theory can be characterised by specific combinations of these basic concepts. But still, Gaut (1997: 167) acknowledges that "Given multiple authorship, there is no reason to disallow either the actual or constructed author as playing a role in film". He (1997: 168) also argues that it may be a good practice to "putting the minimal hermeneutic thesis together with the multiple authorship thesis" and the author as agent in bringing the film into existence. Similar to Gaut's position, Jennings (2002a: 356) considers a film as a product of collaborative efforts and questions themes of film authorship that privilege just the single author suggesting that "movies are the culmination process of collaboration..." The concept of collaborative authorship will be particularly useful when I investigate the authorial signatures of the Hollywood cross-over directors of Chinese origin when they make films outside their own national context or for a transnational audience.

Auteur and national cinema

The juxtaposition of authorship and national cinema, or auteur directors and national/cultural identity is at the centre of my analysis and this thesis as a whole. As I have asserted, national cinema is often associated with auteur directors and their *oeuvres*. For example, Akira Kurosawa is the representative of Japanese cinema between the 1950s and 1980s and Ingmar

Bergman, the representative of Swedish cinema for audiences outside of their home countries during the same period. Consequently the studies of a national cinema have often been focused on a handful of its auteurs and their cinematic styles and visions. As I have also asserted, the emergence of auteur directors has often been through film festivals. Jinhee Choi (2005) notes:

> The relation between auteur and national cinema is quite complex in that non-Hollywood auteur directors are often recognized as such at venues such as international film festivals, which form a market distinct from mass-oriented markets...Despite the pitfall of attributing the originality and creativity of the styles in traditional art forms unique to their respective cultures – films directed by auteurs do elicit in the viewer some conception of a national cinema.
>
> (Choi, 2005: 314)

In terms of the cinemas I have been exploring, their statuses as national cinemas have been consolidated by the emergence of auteur directors. In Mainland China, Yimou Zhang, Kaige Chen, Zhuangzhuang Tian, as I will argue later in this thesis, were crucial in the development of a Chinese national cinema that was to be recognised for the first time in the West. As Elsasser (2005: 46) points out: "For these films, international (i.e., European) festivals are the markets that can fix and assign different kinds of value, from touristic, politico-voyeuristic curiosity to auteur status conferred on the directors." In the Taiwanese case, Hsiao-Hsien Hou, Edward Yang and Ang Lee are also such examples of auteur directors who put Taiwanese cinema on the map as a national cinema worthy of critical attention. Interestingly, although Hong Kong cinema has its auteurs such as John Woo and Karwei Wang, it is more like Hollywood which has a more mixed economy that includes genre films such as martial arts films which are more for internal consumption but have also been successful elsewhere (Bordwell, 2000). These auteur directors, like any other auteurs of national cinemas, achieved their reputation by winning awards at international film festivals. Consequently, their international reputation further consolidated their statuses as the principle creative decision maker in their filmmaking. Choi's assertion establishes a clear link between auteur directors and the projecting of the national in national cinemas. This is especially true in the case of the three cinemas that I am examining. Chinese language films (especially the films of the Fifth

Generation and of Taiwanese New Cinema in the 1980s) were applauded at Western film festivals in the 1980s and 1990s. The projection of 'Chineseness' through Western film festivals raises a number of issues regarding interpretation and reception in cross-cultural communication. Chow (1995: 170) points out that "from the very earliest moments, the modes of identity construction offered by film were modes of relativity and relations rather than essences and fixities". According to Bourdieu (1986), there are multiple forms of capital such as material and also cultural capital. Capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange.

Janet Harbord (2002: 60) suggests that film festivals are "mixed spaces crossed by commercial interest, specialized knowledge and tourist trajectories". Harbord's remark indicates some of the reasons for the fascination with Chinese culture and Chinese films at Western film festivals such as the success of Yimou Zhang's *Red Sorghum* (1987) at Berlin International Film Festival in 1988, Hsiao-Hsien Hou's *City of Sadness* at Venice International Film Festival in 1989, and Ang Lee's *The Wedding Banquet* at Berlin International Film Festival in 1993. The festivals bring together the preoccupations of Western film criticism and production. In so doing they reinscribe the Orientalist lens (Harbord's point about tourist trajectories fits well with notions of the exotic Orient so prominent in Orientalist thinking). As early in 1990, Zheng Dongtian (2001) criticized Western film festivals for ignoring mainland Chinese urban films. He points out that Western film festivals are mostly interested in the exotic landscape and iconography of the Chinese countryside (including folk customs, costume and music) and have little interest in modern city films. For Zheng (2001, trans. Li), there lies a potential question in Westerners' minds: "why should you (Chinese) make films we (Westerners) have already made before"? Though Hong Kong cinema is mostly known for its action genre, and Taiwanese cinema for its social and cultural construction of its identity, overall the Oriental exotic is preferred at the international stage.

As argued earlier, if the reading of a film text is conditioned by the viewer's own cultural context, then in order to enrich reading, a broad range of general and specific cultural capital is useful. However, as illustrating in the case of *Memoir of a Geisha*, misrepresentation occurs not only in the process of reception but also because Orientalist and self–Orientalising tendencies specifically manipulated the filmmaking itself. The influences of Orientalism in film reception and filmmaking are like two sides of a coin and this becomes particularly interesting when exploring transnational filmmaking which aims to please audiences worldwide.

However, academic writings on auteur theory in relation to national cinema have been criticized by James Naremore (1990: 21) suggesting that: " ... the decision to write about specific directors, producer, writers, or actors doesn't in itself involve a commitment to theory, a method, a formal taxonomy, or even a politics". Needham (2006a: 362) tackles this assertion and argues that Naremore "is incorrect in assuming that auteur criticism is politically barren particularly when positioned against Asian cinemas' struggle to localise and nationalise simultaneously, as a challenge to Hollywood's hegemonic position in their region and to the more troubling issue of colonial history".

Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (2006) further relate auteur theory to the projecting of the national. They also point out the importance of auteurs as signifiers of meaning and national style in *Transnational Cinema*:

> ...national elites have sought to use film to establish or solidify official cultural narratives. (for example, the notion of the "auteur" as representative and bearer of national and/or ethnic identity has been central to the international reception and reputations of filmmakers as varied as Jean Renoi, Satyajit Ray, Lena Wertmuller, Akira Kurosawa, and Spike Lee.
>
> (Ezra and Rowden, 2006: 3)

This is a central idea for my analysis regarding the auteur and the projecting of the national

within and beyond the Chinese context. Elsaesser also points out the relationship between national identity and *films d'auteur* in Chinese language cinemas:

> Such might be the case with the films of Zhang Yimou's RAISE THE RED LANTERN or Chen Kaige's FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE, fanning out towards a broader festival and media interest in Chinese, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese cinema since the mid-1980s, where (to us Europeans) complicated national and post-colonial histories set up tantalizing fields of differentiation, self-differentiation and positions of protest.
>
> (Elsaesser, 2005: 46)

By focusing on auteurs such as Yasujiro Ozu and Hsiao-Hsien Hou Hou, Needham's *Ozu and the colonial encounter in Hou Hsao-Hsien* (2006b) is a good example of this critical discourse. Needham (2006b) explores authorial signatures and cultural identity of Japanese cinema and Taiwanese cinema. His insights into authorial signatures and cultural identity of specific Asian cinema will shape my later analyses in this thesis. However, like most writings on Asian auteur directors, these studies have regarded auteur directors as a signifier of national style and are all placed (geographically, historically and culturally) within a particular nation-state/territory.

The meaning of what or who is an auteur has been continuously contested. I have previously argued the shifted considerations of auteurism from classic writings on Cahier du cinema to more recent scholarship. More specifically, I have stressed on the two different types of auteurism: auteur as agent of film's meaning and auteurism as a marketing tool. From Ingmar Bergman to Federico Fellini, from Akira Kurosawa to Yimou Zhang, the fact that auteur as signifier of national styles or cultural bearer of national themes has always been identified by moviegoers or film scholars. While the title of an auteur suggests a continuous signature in his/her films, it is also used to promote an auteur cinema or national cinema for commercial purposes. As Elsaesser (58) states:

> In this respect, however, there is little difference between contemporary Hollywood and the European cinema because auteurs today have to be the promoters and salespeople of

> their own films at festivals, while one or two become pop star role models and idols for their fans.
>
> (Elsaesser, 1998: 58)

It is clear that Elsaesser outlines a different dimension of auteurism: auteur as marketing tool which is used as label for established artistic or commercial conventions, genres and their breakdown and reinventions of film to fulfil their fans' expectations. I have outlined the different two types of auteurism. The difference lies in the different dimensions these two types of auteurism point to: they describe different things and refer to two different phenomena.

National cinema and Transnationality

Taking action cinema as an example, Meaghan Morris (2004) outlines a historical approach to the transnational study of globally popular cultural forms. Morris notes:

> How do we *imagine* the 'transnational' flows and movements in culture so often invoked in critical rhetoric today? Acts of imagining enable as well as shape our research projects and in cultural domains of enquiry (as distinct from, say, the study of capital or population movements), the imaginings we work with are often surprisingly thin – a blurry wash of rhetoric about movement, speed and space, spread through a critique of national or 'bounded' categories and affects as though the transnational can be imagined only in terms of what it is not.
>
> (Morris, 2004: 181)

Morris (2004) points out the complexity of 'the national' in a transnational context. In this era of globalization, film has become a transnational language and the idea of transnationalism has become a critical concept in film scholarship. The category of national cinema is thus problematized by a number of factors. Ezra and Rowden (2006) provide an overview of the key concepts and debates within the developing field of transnational cinema. They note:

> The global circulation of money, commodities, information, and human beings is giving rise to films whose aesthetic and narrative dynamic, and even the modes of emotional identification they elicit, reflect the impact of advanced capitalism and new media

> technologies as components of an increasingly interconnected world-system. The transnational comprises both globalization—in cinematic terms, Hollywood's domination of world film market—and the counterhegemonic responses of filmmakers from former colonial and Third World countries.
>
> (Ezra and Rowden, 2006: 1)

According to Ezra and Rowden (2006: 1-5), the term transnationalism is determined by not only "the permeability of national borders", but also determined by "the physical or virtual mobility of those who cross them". In relation to cinema, an important phenomenon emerges: the transnational actions of a number of auteur directors moving from their national contexts to Hollywood. Indeed, auteur directors such as Pedro Almodóvar from Spain and Luc Besson from France have recently contributed to the cultural diversity of contemporary Hollywood cinema in the same way that Hitchcock, Billy Wilder and Charlie Chaplin made earlier. In his essay, Morris (2004: 181) points out that "The term transnational itself is heavily spatialized today, carrying an insistent flow of images about 'global' forces rolling round 'borderless' worlds." It is in such a transnational context that the projection of 'the national' can be challenged in cross-cultural communication. Jennings (2002b) problematises the relationship between auteur and 'the national' through a case study on Australian/Hollywood director Peter Weir. She (2002b: 379) argues that the dualism of national/transnational "has been sustained partly through a reverence of key directors and the establishment of the auteur as signifier of national style". Thus, when the national is constructed as an "artistic opposition to Hollywood style" (Jennings, 2002b: 379) this opposition must further problematize the complex meanings of 'national identity' or 'auteurial signatures' when a signifier of a particular national style is produced in a transnational (or another cultural) context.

When the key directors that I am focusing on looked beyond the national mode of production by creating transnational production or moving to Hollywood to work for major studios, how did the 'Chineseness' shape their films there? When auteur directors such as Ang Lee, John Woo furthered their career in Hollywood, they must have also encountered such cultural gaps. Is there any 'Chineseness' in Hollywood projects such as *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee,

2005) or the Hollywood blockbuster *Face Off* (John Woo, 1997)? Are there any similarities between the films they made in China and in Hollywood? What contributed to their success in Hollywood as 'foreigners'? Again Jennings (2002b: 384) points out that "there is always a requirement to try and move beyond narrow understandings and definitions of cultures and identities". I would also like to "argue for the rich fusion of all these elements" (Jennings, 2002b: 385). Thus the study of the films of key directors of Chinese origin in relation to films made within or directed at Hollywood provides us with an interesting chance of further problematizing ideas of national cinema as traditionally formulated in film scholarship that is, focused on the nation-state. It is my contention that cross-cultural production, in many ways, is already post-national and multicultural in nature and therefore offers us insight into how the national/cultural identity can be explored in cross-cultural interpretation of meanings created within and across national borders.

The traditional notions of national cinema can no longer satisfactorily define itself in terms of exclusion. National cinema today is multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, and its internal and external borders are porous following transnational co-productions in this era of globalization, and further challenged by the diasporic filmmaking movement of auteur directors. For example, how does one label Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* (1997), a film of a complex cross-cultural phenomenon: a unique combination of British heritage film, women's film (screenplay by British actress Emma Thompson), and the influences of Chinese traditional culture (directed by Lee) and brought together in a Hollywood studio mode of filmmaking? *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Ang Lee, 2000), a Hollywood production (own by Japanese capital), directed by a Taiwanese director and set in Mainland China but received mass success both in terms of box-office and Academy awards in the USA, is another example.

Facing the complexities of national cinema in this era of transnationality, Elsaesser (2005) offered a detailed insight into the changing configurations of the so-called *national cinema.*

What used to be mainly seen as art-house movies, represented by individual auteurs, has increasingly emerged as an important cultural practice for groups and communities to negotiate transnational identities and intercultural narratives. When once art cinema could reasonably be regarded as the synonym of Chinese language cinema, now Chinese language cinemas can be regarded as a subset of auteur cinema, a minority presence in the programmes of globally-orientated film festivals. Based on the above analysis and contestations of film authorship, I am also putting forward an authorial cinema framework by focusing on which one could examine national meaning beyond the national cinema level.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out the theoretical framework for the thesis. In particular, it introduced the key concepts of my future analysis such as Orientalism, Eurocentrism, the concept of national cinema, and the importance of projecting the nation and film authorship. The chapter highlights the influence of Orientalism and Eurocentrism in Western reading of 'the Orient' and acknowledges that Orientalism is always a danger when bringing Western strategies of textual analysis to bear without including some understanding of Chinese cultural specificities. I also set out to introduce the geographical, political, and historical complexities of the countries that I will be studying: Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. This included pointing out the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the cultural identity of the three Chinese language cinemas and, throughout the chapter, highlighting the role of Chinese traditional philosophical and spiritual values that will be important to my analysis of the films produced in these countries during the period of my studies. And finally, I have introduced the importance of film authorship which will be pivotal to the whole thesis.

CHAPTER THREE:

CHINESE NATIONAL CINEMA AND THE FIFTH GENERATION'S FILMMAKERS (1980S)

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One I have indicated that I would be drawing upon the idea of auteur-director as key signifiers of national meaning or imaginary through their filmmaking style/vision. An auteurist approach is highly suitable for investigating the cultural/factors philosophies of Chinese language cinemas than traditional industrial/historical approaches that focus upon nation states. It is thus important to locate directors in a more holistic way when investigating the cultural/national identity when facing the historical, political and cultural complexities of the three Chinese language cinemas. Elsaesser (2005) highlights the role of auteur cinema in defining the term national cinema and cultural identity. He suggests the following:

> ... "national cinema" is actually not descriptive, but the subordinate term within a binary pair whose dominant and referred point (whether repressed or implied) is always Hollywood...the term "national cinema" may disguise another binarism: an auteur cinema as sketched above can be more virulently opposed to its own national cinema commercial film industry than it is to Hollywood films. Such as the case with the *nouvelle vague* or the second generation of New German filmmakers: the "politique des auteurs" of Truffaut, Rohmer and Chabrol, or Wim Wenders' and Fassbinder's cinephilia were based on a decided preference of Hollywood over their own national cinema.
>
> (Elsaesser, 2005: 37)

An auteurist approach, according to Elsaesser (2005), will lead to an exploration of art cinema in opposition not only to Hollywood, but also to the indigenous national commercial film industry. Auteurism enables the issues regarding historical, political and cultural complexities of three Chinese language cinemas to be picked out more readily. An auteurist

approach provides a means by which to identity the broader more general (deep seated) elements of Chinese identity. Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan challenge static paradigms of national cinema. The historical and cultural complexities of the three Chinese language cinemas particularly challenges Crofts' claim (1993) of envisioning a 'state cinema'. We can strategically approach the 'national' in Chinese cinemas from an auteurist approach. The central argument that this thesis highlights is that one needs to have a better understanding of the cultural signifiers in Chinese films to fully understand them.

Through examining auteur visions it is possible to explore elements of common *Chinese* in the three Chinese language cinemas at the centre of this thesis. Historically an auteur approach constructs films made by an individual director as an oeuvre, seeking out recurrent thematic, generic and stylistic details of the film text. My approach in this research implies a slightly different model of authorship. It emphasizes the director's experience of a specific cultural context as well as the recurring underlying themes and signatures. In response to the momentous political, social, and cultural changes that have taken place in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan since the mid-nineteenth century, the auteurist approach taken in this thesis also attempts to undergo a process of redefinition of 'Chinesenesss' in the three areas that are being explored.

This early part of this thesis explores the emergence of auteur directors within three national cinemas. It also problematizes the overemphasis of the nation state as a source of identity and meaning when thinking about national cinema by examining the influence of deep-seated cultural factors/philosophies shared beyond geographical and political boundaries (such as those of Confucianism and Taoism). In particular, I will focus on the development of Chinese mainland cinema and the emergence of a distinctive auteur cinema associated with the Fifth Generation directors. The term Fifth Generation echoes the various 'New Wave' cinemas taking place in the early 1980s in the three Chinese language cinemas: mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The study focuses on what has become a privileged point of reference in

film scholarship: Chinese cinema of the 1980s. Since 1980s Chinese mainland cinema attracted international attention through a number of films and established its reputation as a national cinema. These films offer a vision of 'Chineseness' to the West and scholarship in the West has focused on the 'new' films and young filmmakers of the Fifth Generation as producing a highly distinctive and important projection of Chinese cinema.

I will begin here with a discussion of the development of cinema in Mainland China and the historical and cultural background to the emergence of the Fifth Generation directors. This will be followed by an examination of the formative causes of the Fifth Generation as a group or movement of directors which, in turn, leads to an examination of their filmmaking motifs. The overall aim will be to tease out the complexities of national cinema in relation to this period of mainland Chinese film production and in particular offer a consideration of the impact on Maoism and Marxism of Western influences; also the ways that the films of the Fifth Generation negotiate modernity and the influence of Confucianism and Taoism, leading to a special representation of the consciousness of life and ultimately the rediscovery of the individual in a period so marked by Mao's programme of the Cultural Revolution. The Fifth Generation's filmmakers have been perceived as 'modern', somewhat 'avant-garde' and often 'westernized' (Ni and Berry, 2002) because they used international language (i.e. filmic language) as their means of expression and thus subverted the traditional Maoist ideology in their filmmaking. Overall this chapter establishes a generational typology of filmmaking in China intersected with an auteurist approach to provide a more informed analysis to the cultural signifiers of Chinese national cinema.

The next chapter will further my argument about the importance of the Fifth Generation and focus on a number of films such as: *The Red Elephant* (Zhuangzhuang Tian etc., 1982), *Yellow Earth* (Kaige Chen, 1984), *Red Sorghum* (Yimou Zhang, 1987) and *On the Hunting Ground* (Tian, 1984), I will argue that the films of the Fifth Generation can be considered as a critical rethinking of Chinese traditional culture, and at the same time, a subversion of Maoist

ideology post Cultural Revolution. Thus, the films of the Fifth Generation can also be viewed as pivotal in enabling the transition of Chinese cinema to modernity because their innovation both in terms of filmic language and film subjects. The central point of this chapter, however, is to properly understand the work of the Fifth Generation, and to position it within a historical, cultural and political context that, in turn, allows an exploration of the relationship of the Fifth Generation to a forward thinking but backwards-looking Chinese mainland cinema.

A brief review of early Chinese cinema


Figure 3

Agents of the French Lumières Brothers Company first introduced films into China in 1896. Shanghai was the central stage of early Chinese film industry from 1896 to 1929, a year in which the now crisis-ridden film industry struggled to restructure itself in relation to the coming of American talking pictures, signalling 'impending technological change' (Zhang, 2004: 13) which, due to changing national events, the Chinese film industry was unable to match. As with most cinemas, early Chinese filmmakers were initially interested in recording rather than developing film as a medium for artistic creation. Chinese filmmakers employed the cinematic camera, a western device, to record their traditional art. The first Chinese film, *Ding Junshan* (Ren Qingtai, 1905) is a continuous record of a famous Beijing Opera of the same title (Figure 3).

The introduction of cinema to China coincided with many great Chinese historical changes

such as the fall of the Qing court in 1911, which symbolised the termination of a two thousand year imperial system of government in China. The Republican Revolution of 1911 precipitated a drastic change in Chinese history and a turn to modernity (although the influences were more symbolic than realistic as the influence of the feudal system remained for a long period). For most Chinese people, cinema, like democracy and science, represents a 'Western thing'. Known as *Bo Lai Pin* - 'imported goods' or 'new things from the West' - cinema was a western technological and ideological product, and was associated with modernity. In China, films are called 'shadow of electricity' (*Dianying* in Chinese Pinyin) and 'Western shadow plays' (*Xiyang Yinxi* in Chinese Pinyin). Cinema as a new mode of entertainment attracted great curiosity from Chinese audiences and:

> For foreign exhibitors and Chinese filmmakers alike, the primary concern in the initial phase was to attract the Chinese audience to Western shadowplays as an acceptable form of modern entertainment.
>
> (Zhang, 2004: 16)

The first film studio Yaxiya was set up by Benjamin Brodsky, a Jewish-American of Russian descent, in Shanghai, in 1909 (Zhang, 2004). In 1916 the first Chinese owned film studio was established. But it only produced one film due to financial difficulties. In 1917, the Commercial Press acquired cinematographic equipment at a low price and started filmmaking in China. The majority of their productions were short films and documentaries. In the 1920s, the Chinese film industry witnessed its spring. Many film studios emerged in China. There were more than 140 studios in Shanghai alone. Most of the films made were martial arts films and historical/period piece and there were hardly any political influence placed on the Chinese film industry during this period. The three earliest long features are *Yan Ruisheng* (Ren Pengnian, 1921), *Sea Oath* (Dan Duyu, 1922) and *The Vampires* (Guan Haifeng, 1921). These three films attracted huge audience numbers and as Zhang notes:

> The upshot of the success of the first three long features was the twin realization by Chinese filmmakers that film could be a profitable business in addition to a popular attraction...
>
> (Zhang, 2004: 22)

In the 1930s and 1940s two historical events had impressive influences on the Chinese film

industry. One was the birth of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), resulting in a 'Left-wing Movement' in literature, arts and films; the other was the Japanese invasion of North-eastern China, especially the Japanese occupation of Shanghai in 1932. As Hayward (2000) explains:

> ...during the 1930s, China witnessed the emergence of a second type of cinema, this time far more directly politicized, that of a nationalistic leftist cinema that would eventually become identified with the communist party in its fight to liberate China from Japanese imperialism (which lasted throughout the 1930s).
>
> (Hayward, 2000: 415)

Many representative works were released in 1930s (such as *The Highway*, Sun Yu, 1934 and *Crossroads*, Shen Xiling, 1937). The role of movie stars also emerged and during this period these were considered more important than film directors in that period. *The Goddess* (1934, Wu Yonggan) reached the peak of the art of silent pictures in Chinese film history. The leading actress Yuan Lingyu was "a star of the silent era nicknamed 'the Chinese Garbo'" (Reynaud, 1997: 24). She committed suicide one year later at the age of twenty-five. Her death invoked hot debates and discussions amongst fans and critics. Reynaud (1997: 24) states that "the procession following her funeral was five kilometres long, and half a century later she is still remembered with nostalgia". *Songstress Red Peony* (1931, Zhang Shichuan) was the first Chinese talking picture and in 1935, *The Spring of Peasants* (1935, Huang Tianzuo) became the first Chinese film to participate in an international film festival and won third place in the Belgium Science and Educational Film Festival. At the same time, the 'Left-wing Movement' also exerted ideological influences on Chinese filmmaking in the 1930s and 1940s. Many films invoked a sense of nationalism and anti-government ideology facing the invasion of Japan and the corruption of the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party, KMT) As Zhang explains (2004), Kunlun Studios in Shanghai was one of the leading studios of the era and released a number of important films such as *Myriads of Lights* (Sheng Fu, 1948), *The Spring River Flows East* (Cai Chusheng and Zheng Junli, 1947), and *Crows and Sparrows* (Zheng Junli, 1949).

With the Communist takeover of mainland China in 1949, the Government saw motion

pictures as an important mass production art form and tool for propaganda. From 1951 both Chinese films made pre-1949 and also Hollywood/foreign and Hong Kong productions were banned in mainland China as the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) sought to tighten control over mass media. Instead, they produced films centering on peasants, soldiers and workers such as *Bridge* (1949, Wang Bin) and *The White Haired Girl* (1950, Wang Bin). As Zhang (2004) suggests, from the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 a new term emerged in Chinese cinema: *Zhu Xuan Lv Dian Ying* (mainstream cinema). From that point in 1949, the Communist Party used literature and arts to instill the Chinese people with a uniform value-system determined by the requirements of official policy. "The Chinese government was keenly aware of the influence (both positive and negative) of which films could exert on the population" (Keyser, 1990: 64-71). Mainstream filmmaking dominated from 1949 until 1980s although its power began to wane with the rise of the Chinese Fifth Generation's Filmmakers (The Fifth Generation). Today mainstream cinema is still a special film genre in China. Although it is not welcomed at box-office, the Government keeps offering financial help for producing political propaganda films until today. A look at Chinese film history would suggest that: cinema has been brought into China as a 'Western thing' and Chinese film history has been a history of political manipulation. The introduction of early Chinese film history provides a context for the periodization of Chinese filmmakers of each historical period, which leads us to the articulation of the Fifth Generation in 1980s in later discussion. It also provides a contextual connection for later arguments about the Fifth Generation in opposition to the Chinese mainstream films. The review also serves as a historical context for the Chinese cinematic tradition between Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

Maoism and Chinese traditional culture

In any discussion of Chinese national cinema, the phenomenon and effect of mainstream cinema (the role of cinema in China since 1949) is an important factor. As I have indicated, in the PRC, literature and the arts were used by the Communist Party and the State for the

purpose of political propaganda. The ideological effect of this was to encourage the production of films that represented heroic protagonists; characters who were seen as politically positive. These films have a variety of characteristics in terms of film theme and film narrative. Chinese mainstream cinema is different to the common meaning of mainstream cinema in the West which usually refers to commercial films produced by major studios of a national film industry for both domestic and overseas consumption. Chinese mainstream cinema is essentially 'realistic', and depicts the effects of the 1949 revolution in optimistic and positive light. Chinese mainstream cinema has been viewed as a way of *educating* Chinese people in relation to communist government values and at the same time, showing 'the success' of socialism at an international stage (not that these films had a wide international reception). As Ying Zhu (2003: 101) writes: "The call for mainstream propaganda film did not find many supporters in film circles." Thus in the Chinese case, an auteurist approach is not only "virulently opposed to its own national cinema commercial film industry" (Elsaesser, 2005: 37), but also to the mainstream cinema in China.

Ni and Berry (2002) point out that the shaping force of the Maoism (1949-1976) had a huge and persistent influence on Chinese modernity. The emergence of the Fifth Generation in the 1980s cannot be exempted from such a historical context. Between the 1976 to 1989 (between the end of the Cultural Revolution and The Tiananmen Square confrontation), Chinese intellectuals underwent a 'Great Cultural Discussion' or the so- called Cultural Fever (Liu, 1992). When the Chinese woke up from their communist dream, they tried to walk away from their tribulations and began to seek political and cultural solutions for China's present and future (Liu, 1992). Hayward (2000: 417) indicates that "from 1977-84 a genre of films called 'scar' or 'wound' films emerged exposing the unjustified persecution that took place during the Cultural Revolution". A public political fever led to the Tiananmen confrontation in 1989. In the field of cultural discussion, new works emerged in literature and then in cinema. Chinese intellectuals not only questioned Maoism and Marxism but also rethought the role of Chinese traditions. These had undergone dramatic changes since 1949, as it was the intention of the Communist Party to reform Chinese cultural and social structure.

In the 1980s, China's growing engagement with transnational cultures and global political-economic forces were then accelerated in the 'Great Cultural Discussion'. In cinema, the films of the Fifth Generation represented such cultural ideologies. The representation and reexamination of Chinese traditional culture is an important theme of the films of the Fifth Generation.

Four Confucian codes have shaped Chinese society for centuries. These codes were pre-modern legal, moral, and hierarchical obligations: loyalty, filial piety, brotherhood, and trustworthiness. I would argue that these Confucian codes have circulated in Chinese cinema since its beginnings (including a subversion of them during the period of mainstream cinema). Zhang (2004: 86) identifies these in early Shanghai cinema and notes: "...Mulan joins the Army (Mulan congjun, dir. Bu Wancang, 1939) which...preached Confucian ideas of loyalty and filiality, proved immensely popular with Shanghai audiences..."

In early Chinese cinema, notions and codes of behaviour based on traditional values were firmly established (e.g. *Burning of Red Lotus Temple*, Zhang Shichuan, 1928; and *the Spring of Peasant*, Huang Tianzuo, 1935). This was especially true in martial arts cinema, where codes of brotherhood were reinvented as an egalitarian code of loyalty and emotional bonding between men who are sworn brothers but not necessarily 'blood brothers'. In martial arts films, the role of *Xia* (Chivalry) and *Yi* (loyalty) became a spiritual standard and absolute virtue of heroes. These pre-modern codes were fundamental to Confucian notions of ruling the nation through virtue. These Confucian codes have regulated male behavior and privileged men in governing the family (as fathers) and ruling the nation as emperor and as bureaucrats. Since 1949, Marxism, in combining Leninism and Maoism, has dominated Chinese thinking. Consequently Chinese traditions also underwent reformulations or reinventions. For example, the idea of comradeship is a Communist version of brotherhood as a political, emotional and class-bound bond that required collective sacrifice to the revolution under Maoism. Such an idea became paramount in Chinese mainstream cinema. Contrary to

the ideology of male dominance, the idea of comradeship is actually not gendered. Ideologically there is no sexual difference between male and female because all the comrades are united in egalitarian roles under Communist ideology. All the same, however, this communist ideology appeared to fail in its aim of changing the traditional preference for the male. Indeed, such dominance is a typical character in Confucianism and since the enforcement of the One Child Policy in China in the 1980s it is still clear that boys are preferred to girls in Chinese society today.

During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Maoist ideology transformed all Chinese, men and women, young and old, into 'red soldiers' (including all civilians who are not necessarily to be in army). This ideological act worked to eliminate the effects of human innate nature as well as sexual difference, and even the difference of gender. *Eight Model*

Figure 4

Operas (Ba Da Yang Ban Xi, see figure 4) were art forms on stages and were adapted to screen. Also, a series of highly politically motivated films were produced to present idealized Maoist soldiers. Ni and Berry (2002: 99) note that "...hundreds of millions of ordinary Chinese had, countless times, seen Beijing opera films such as *The Red Lantern* (1970, 1975), *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* (1970), In *Praise of Longjiang* (1972), and *On the Dock*

(1972,1973)". The ultimate goal of the protagonists in these films was to work under the guidance of the great Chairman Mao and sacrifice for communist ideology. For them, nothing in their lives was more important than achieving the communist utopia. Under such rigid political ideology, the sex/gender difference is ambiguous in these films because all Chinese, both men and women, are represented as loyal soldiers and workers under the guidance of Chairman Mao. From the 1960s until today, mainstream cinema was a propagandist tool of the ruling regime. During the Cultural Revolution, newspaper, magazine, film, TV and various other forms of mass media were in a heightened service to Maoist ideology and traditional culture was under siege in an unprecedented way.

Judged both from overseas distribution and Western film scholarship, Chinese mainstream cinema has very little reputation and is not widely known outside China. By contrast, the images represented by the films of the Fifth Generation were successful enough to attract the world's attention and establish an idea of 'Chinese' or 'Chineseness' in the West. As I will explore more fully later it has been argued that most western audiences gained an impression of China (Chow, 1995) as 'backward' and 'vulgar' through reception of the films of the Fifth Generation. Before I embark on detailed analysis of the Fifth Generation, it is necessary to understand the historical context of the term.

Chinese film history approaches to the development of Chinese cinema, from its origins in Shanghai until the present, have been dominated by the device/typology of periodization or generational periodization and as I will argue below this device has assisted in giving prominence to the importance of directors and thus privileging auteur directors in defining different periods of Chinese film history.

Periodizing generations: the emergence of auteur-directors

> It is difficult to prove who first coined the term "Fifth Generation." However, with the passing of time and increased use in critical and scholarly articles, it seems Fifth Generation cinema has almost become a synonym for Chinese cinema of the 1980s.
>
> (Ni and Berry, 2002: 1)

Historical analysis demands a concept of periodization. The theoretical implications of the study of a group of filmmakers as a generation represent a more historical approach to understanding the different periodization of film history. Nanna Verhoeff (2006) writes:

> As a consequence of these new approaches for the period before classical Hollywood cinema, a theoretical take on periodization is necessary. In terms of this "early cinema" and its stages of development, periodization with its double allegiance to the object of study and the history of its study becomes an issue in itself.
>
> (Verhoeff, 2006: 116)

Verhoeff (2006) points out the double emphasis of "the object of study" and the "history of its study" when employing the analytical method of periodization. The same importance applies to the intersection of generational approach with auteurist approach. Because auteurism considers a film's director as its primary influence and asserts a film may best be understood within the larger corpus of its director's oeuvres. However, the visions and styles of a director certainly come from the (historical, cultural and political) context he/she situates in. The cultural context of film and the context of its auteur together lead to the understanding of the meaning of a film text. Thus the intersection of the generational approach to Fifth Generation filmmakers with an auteurist approach provides a more informed analysis of the cultural signifiers of the three Chinese language cinemas. The different periods of Chinese film history have become synonyms for groupings of its auteur directors (in a similar way to how the French New Wave encompasses a group of innovative French auteur directors). A brief review of periodization will help to contextualize the study of the Fifth Generation. This, in turn, leads to the intersection of generational approach to the Fifth Generation filmmakers with an auteurist approach.

The first generation of directors refers to the directors such as Zheng Zheng Qiu and Zhang Shichuan in the 1910s and 1920s. They were the elites of Chinese filmmakers in the era of 'silent pictures'. The second generation refers to directors such as Cai Chusheng, Zheng Junli, Shen Fu, and Wu Yonggan in the 1940s. Representative works include *The Spring River Flows East* (Cai Chusheng, Zheng Junli, 1947), *The Spring in a Small Town* (Fei Mu, 1948) and *Crows and Sparrows* (Zheng Junli, 1949). The second generation's works reached the peak of film achievements in early Chinese film history. The third generation emerged from 1949 to 1966. In this period, dating from the founding of the PRC to the start of the Cultural Revolution, Xie Tieli, Cui Wei and Xie Jin were the most important figures among the third generation's filmmakers. Their films are closely associated with communist ideology and they were intent, according to Zhang, "on reinstalling a correct political ideology and nationalistic pride in the population" (Zhang, 2004: 240). These productions mainly involved the following three categories: firstly, the praise and nostalgia for the communist revolutionary era, such as *The Red Detachment of Women* (Xie Jin, 1961), *Guerilla of the Plain* (Su Li, 1955), *Little Soldier Zhang Ga* (Cui Wei and Ouyang Hongyin, 1963); secondly, the accusation of the 'old society' pre-1949, such as *White Hair Girl of Miu Shan* (Wan Bin and Shui Hua, 1961), *The Lin Family Shop* (Xie Jin, 1959), *The Song of Youth* (Cui Wei, 1959), *Early Spring in February* (Xie Tieli, 1963); thirdly, the admiration for the 'new society' of the PRC, such as *Sentinels Under Neon Lights* (Wang Pin, 1964), *Five Golden Flowers* (Xie Jin, 1959). These films were labeled as 'the romanticism of revolution' and 'socialist realism' films (Berry and Farquhar, 1999).

The Fourth Generation refers to those who graduated from Beijing Film Academy before the Cultural Revolution and who started filmmaking in 1979. The representatives are Wu Tianmin, Zhang Yuanfei, Xie Fei. They were fond of small love stories of a big era. *Evening Rain* (Wu Yigong, 1980) and *Little Flower* (Zhang Zheng, 1979) are two representative films. In these two films, the fourth generation seemed to use cinema as a way to memorize the youth they lost during the Cultural Revolution. They were quickly submerged by the sudden rise of the Fifth Generation in the 1980s. Most of the filmmakers who constitute the Fifth

Generation had graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982 and included directors key to this thesis such as Yimou Zhang, Chen and Zhuangzhuang Tian. These constituted the first group of filmmakers to graduate since the end of the Cultural Revolution. They were the ones who won prizes and established their fame at international film festivals after the long isolation of Chinese films from the outside world. Zhang Junzhao's *One and Eight* (1983) is the first feature film of the Fifth Generation. Then Chen's *Yellow Earth* and *King of Children* (1987), Zhang's *Red Sorhgum* and *Ju Dou* (1989), and Tian Zhangzhang's *House Thief* (1985) announced the birth of the Fifth generation. These directors quickly gained international attention as their cinema were 'something different' in Chinese film history. *Red Sorghum* won the Golden Bear in Berlin Film Festival in 1988 and another film by Zhang, *The Story of Qiuju* (1991), won Golden Lion at Venice. Chen's *Farewell my Concubine* (1993) won *Palme d'or* at Cannes and three nominations for the Academy Award. Their films rejected traditional methods of storytelling in mainland Chinese cinema and expressed strong individual vision. For example, the consciousness of individual and primitive desire and self-liberation of human nature appeared in the films of the Fifth Generation, which will be further analyzed in next chapter. In their films, the theme/story also became a tool for the expression of director's own vision.

The sixth generation emerged in the 1990s. Their films are regarded as underground films or independent films because the majority of their work was censored or prohibited by Chinese government. However, their films did get chances to circulate at a number of international film festivals (mainly in European festival centres such as Cannes, Venice and Berlin) and this helped them to establish their reputation in China. Jiang Wen, Zhang Yuan, Wang Xiaoshui are the leading members of this sixth generation. They directed films such as *In the Heat of the Sun* (Jiang Wen, 1995), *East Palace, West Palace* (Zhang Yuan, 1998) and *Beijing Bicycle* (Wang Xiaoshui, 2000). Since then, the periodization of generations has lost its meaning because of the development of independent filmmaking. The individual characters and filmmaking styles among this group significantly differ one from another. Thus these new directors are more known for their own styles and personalities than what

they have in common and are therefore not grouped in auteur movements. As a result they produce less coherent visions of national identify/Chinese mainland cinema.

By setting up the above generational and theoretical framework, I am intersecting the generational approach to the Fifth Generation filmmakers with an auteurist approach. In this thesis, this methodology provides a more informed analysis of the cultural signifiers in the Chinese case. The auteur theory points to one fundamental property of European cinema. It has, certainly since the 1980s, occupied the basis of Chinese film studies. National cinema, auteur cinema and art cinema have become the three dominant discourses that defined the Fifth Generation. As Elsaesser (2005: 37) states, the auteur cinema can be more virulently opposed to its own national cinema commercial film industry. By suggesting a generational approach and auteurist approach highlights the historical ground on which they have grown, flourished and re-aligned themselves.

It is fair to say that among these different generations the Fifth Generation are the best known internationally and they were almost all discovered by the West through film festivals. As O'Regan notes:

> The festival circulation of director as auteur and the close proximity of self-expression and personal vision to national and intersubjective vision, ensures that the kind of attention the festival and related circuits confer upon a film generates a certain kind of public reputation.
>
> (O'Regan, 1996: 59)

In the case study of Australian national cinema, O'Regan (1996: 59) claims that more value is given to national cinema because "it permits the construction (as with all auteur-based projects) of a singular career and a star persona." Although criticizing the overemphasis of the role of directors, Hayward (1993) also explores French National Cinema including the avant-garde, poetic-realist, and *Nouvelle Vague* in association with a handful of auteur-directors such as Jean Luc Godard, Francois Truffaut, Jean Renoir and Louis Malle.

Similarly, Italian Neo-Realist Cinema boasts its auteur directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni and Roberto Rossellini. These directors have become spokespeople, or 'super auteurs', for their national cinemas. Hayward (1993) explains that:

> Renoir is often singled out as one of the giants of the French cinema of this period (in a similar way that Godard has been canonised as guru of the last 30 years of French cinema).
>
> (Hayward, 1993: 184)

In the Chinese case, within the framework of the periodization of generations, a number of directors of each generation can legitimately lay claim to the status of auteur. In the 1980s, the Fifth Generation perhaps formed the most representative national cinema in Chinese film history. Thus the Fifth Generation, among all the generations' directors, can be seen as the synonym of Chinese cultural/national identity, certainly for Western scholars. Zhang and Chen are two 'super-auteur's among those of their generation. Hayward notes:

> Of all the filmmakers of that generation it is Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige who have successfully managed to combine experimentation with popular narration. And from that generation, it is their work that Western audiences get to see.
>
> (Hayward, 2000: 418)

In order to explore their particular contributions, I will present a case study of their two 'breakthrough' films (*Red Sorghum* and *Yellow Earth*), which introduced Mainland Chinese cinema to Western audiences for the first time, in the next chapter.

The case studies in the following chapter also take Chen's *Yellow Earth* and Zhang's *Red Sorghum* as explorations that attempt to *see* the other side of 'Orientalism': to interpret these non-Western texts from a Chinese traditional cultural perspective using Western scholarly techniques. These analyses will also serve to explore the authorial signatures of these key auteur directors of the Fifth Generation and will contribute to my further analysis later in the thesis regarding the representation and negotiation of authorial identity beyond national boundaries. This thesis tries to offer a thorough and much-needed historical textualization of

the three Chinese language cinemas (specifically their film movements and auteur directors) and aims to reposition them in their wider political and cultural context. What follows serves as such historical reference/context.

The formative causes of the Fifth Generation

In the above section, I have explained the phenomenon of the different generations of filmmakers in Chinese mainland cinema. However it is lost in textual analysis when and where the term 'Fifth Generation' firstly appeared. Ni and Berry (2002: 1) note that "the term 'Fifth Generation' does not sound strange to anyone anymore, but when the first Fifth Generation Chinese films appeared in the mid-eighties no one had ever heard the phrase before". Also the first two films of the Fifth Generation *One and Eight* and *Yellow Earth* were respectively released in 1983 and 1984. Thus research suggests that the appearance of the term 'the Fifth Generation' happened between 1983 and 1984 in Chinese film scholarship

The above section introduces the general background of the Fifth Generation by placing it in Chinese film history and emphasizing the role of a handful of auteurs in bringing mainland Chinese cinema to the attention of the West. The Fifth Generation directors graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982. Following the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 the Chinese Central Government 'reopened' the gate to University in 1978. After experiencing ten years cultural reform in the countryside, Chinese-educated young men (Zhi qin) could finally retake the University entrance examination and further their studies in Universities (Hayward, 2000: 418). Chen, Zhang, Xiao Feng and Zhang Junzhao, all entered the gate of Beijing Film Academy in 1978. A few years later, they became the most representative filmmakers of the Fifth Generations.

Guangxi Film Studio is a small studio among other studios in China. It is located in Nanning,

the capital of Guangxi province, a Zhuang minority autonomy province in southern China. In the 1980s, the government encouraged people to work and live in this province; however, many university graduates were not willing to work there because Guangxi was still economically undeveloped. In that period, Chinese university graduates were guaranteed to get a job from the government as 'official appointment', which meant you were offered a 'job for life'. At that time the centres of the film industry in Mainland China were Beijing, Shanghai and Xian and these locations attracted the most graduates. These studios produced a large number of 'mainstream films' every year but in 1982, when Zhang, Zhang Junzhao, Xiao Feng and He Qun graduated from the Beijing Film Academy, they chose to be sent to Guangxi Film Studio. A few years later, these four young men started a significant film movement that caught the attention of the whole world (Ni and Berry, 2002). The reason that these young men came to Guangxi Film Studio is clear that in small studios there was less competition and young graduates were more likely to get a chance to make feature films. Their choice appeared to be a fruitful one as three years later, *One and Eight*, directed by Zhang Junzhao announced the birth of the Fifth Generation.

The Fifth Generation filmmakers were the first class of University students to graduate after the recovery of the higher education system when the Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976. The cinematic activities of this group of filmmakers formed 'a new film movement' or 'a New Wave cinema' in the 1980s and the Fifth Generation became an accepted term of use as well as a chronological category. There was, however, a wide variety of styles among those directors who made up the movement and some were more typical than others of what the Fifth Generation became known for in terms of filmic language, filmic form and film styles For example, one of Zhang's film, *Operation Cougar* (1988), is not seen as a film of the Fifth Generation because of its imitation of Hollywood commercial cinema.

Currently, the Chinese film industry has been partially placed in the free market economy[2], and much of this is due to the initial successes of Fifth Generation directors and its key auteurs go their own way as commercial film directors. The collective film movement or cultural wave of the Fifth Generation is specific to the period from 1982 to the 1990s. However, their status as auteurs remain, in the same way as the auteurs of French New Wave Cinema or Italian Neo-Realist cinema.

In the more 'culturally open atmosphere' of the post-Cultural Revolution period, the Beijing Film Academy gave the Fifth Generation directors space for academic discussion and encouraged them to pursue free art creativity. As Du states:

> The early 1980s saw the resurgence of nationalistic, patriotic and optimistic sentiments on the part of a very broad spectrum of the Chinese who had just come out of the throes of the devastating Cultural Revolution.
>
> (Du, 2008)

The Fifth Generation was open to influence from a variety of films from different nations in different historical periods and it is evident that these Chinese auteurs were deeply influenced by European art cinema. According to Ni and Berry (2002: 99), "During the Cultural Revolution, there were no films produced between 1966 and 1970." But after that date, as mentioned earlier, the cinematic adaptations of eight model operas occupied Chinese mainland cinema during and post the Cultural Revolution. Jiangqing (the wife of Chairman Mao and the advocator of the Cultural Revolution) had special private access to American and European films, which were called "internal reference material film" (Ni and Berry, 2002: 99). She also allowed communist directors and screenwriters to see Western films to improve their filmmaking skills. It was this tradition that made it possible for the students of the

[2] The governmental interference is still evident in mainland Chinese cinema today. For example, in order to protect national cinema, when Chinese blockbuster *Confucius* (Hu Mei, 2010) was released in January 2010, the 2D version of global hit *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2010) was forced to be retreated from cinemas across the country by Chinese Government. However, this invoked complaints among Chinese audiences and ended with a poor performance of *Confucius* at box-office.

Beijing Film Academy to see American and European films. Ni and Berry (2002: 99) note that "The 'internal reference material film' system continued into the eighties, making the forging of film tickets a deliberate breach of the rules by the Film Academy students". Most films were representative works of Soviet-Union's ideological cinema, French New Wave Cinema, Italian Neo-realism Cinema and European Contemporary Cinema. A number of world-famous directors were considered by the Fifth Generation during their studies as their future examples. Ni and Berry note:

> ...it was not that they were cheap or that they wanted to look at the taboo and the obscene. They just wanted to be able to see films by Fassbinder, Schlondorff, Coppola, Oschima, and Scorsese as early as possible.
>
> (Ni and Berry, 2002: 99)

For the Fifth Generation, "filmmakers such as Bergman, Resnais, Godard, Truffaut, and Antonioni, and writers such as Kafka, Sartre, Camus, Wolfe, Garcia Marquez, Faulkner, Bellow, and Hemingway all became objects of intense fascination and half-comprehending worship" (Ni and Berry, 2002: 98). I would argue that the cultural and visionary implications of these European styles of narrative and also an accompanying liberation from the strong secularism of Mao's vision to a more spiritual one became the subconscious template for the Fifth Generation. Ni and Berry (2002: 99) note that "The understanding they gained of European and American directors' most up-to-date methods and technological standards would enable them to lift the quality of films made from the model operas." However, the film style of the Fifth Generation is not a simple imitation of these world-famous film movements or auteur directors. When placing the Fifth Generation on an international stage and in a broader theoretical context, their significance should also be articulated within its own cultural context and referenced to its cultural specificities.

Both Chinese and non-Chinese languages film scholarship has offered a cultural critique and historical reflection about the Fifth Generation, especially since the success of *Yellow Earth* in 1984. Ni and Berry (2002: 194) state "in the 1990s, there was strong interest in the use of

postcolonial critical methods to assess the Fifth Generation". Orientalism occupied the central place of the studies of the Fifth Generation. Ni and Berry (2002: 194) identify a number of Orientalist criticism regarding the Fifth Generation directors such as Zhang, stating that "an important characteristic of Zhang's discursive strategy is the construction of a contextual model consisting of a three-way exchange between the contemporary self, the traditional father, and the Western other. Within this model, the narrative tactics of 'striving for difference' and 'entertaining the guest' give Zhang's films an *exotic atmosphere* and make them *Oriental spectacles* for westerners". Criticising Zhang for his (yet arguable) self-Orientalist tendencies may be unfair. As Needham states:

> In many instances authorship, as a critical practice, often tells us less about cinema...than it does about the function of criticism itself as an institutional and ideological apparatus imposing and shaping the meaning of texts and influencing their reception. It is not unfair to even suggest that the 'discovery' of Asian directors by Western critical apparatuses, whether through fandom and appreciation or academic studies, has been the equivalent of a kind of excavation process with all the colonial meanings such an accusation implies.
>
> (Needham, 2006a: 360)

My contestation is that Ni and Berry's criticism of self-Orientalising tactics is inappropriate in the discussion of Zhang and the Fifth Generation in 1980s and 1990s because for the Chinese themselves it was a re-visioning of their relationship with culture, nature and identity. We need to replace the stereotype of 'us'/'others' or East/West binary with more insights into its cultural context of the text and its production. The overarching influence of cultural aspects (particularly the enduring influences of Confucianism and Taoism) is also what I would argue unifies the three Chinese language cinemas at the centre of this thesis in terms of cultural identity. As Hall (2006) states:

> ...our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. This 'oneness', underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence...
>
> (Hall, 2006: 435)

This homogeneity of cultural identity shaped the epistemological world of a number of auteurs and is consequently represented in their films.

The Fifth Generation: a 'Chinese Nouvelle Vague'?

The Fifth Generation has quickly taken a unique role in Chinese film history since the late 1980s. This phenomenon is like the French New Wave cinema in France nearly fifty years ago. The Chinese film scholars and critics observantly sensed the significance of the Fifth Generation. As they emerged in the 1980s, the studies of the Fifth Generation were often linked to the issue of modernity and many Chinese film scholars sought to explore this relationship (Liu 1992 and Chen 1995). Zhang (1989: 15) also pointed out that "the notion of modernity is an absolute approach to Chinese new cinema. This is not a remediation, but a need for a historical understanding". Indeed, the Fifth Generation possessed a new concept of cinematographic vision or a new concept of mise-en-scène that updated the traditional Chinese cinematic mode. These visions or concepts marked not only the Fifth Generation, but also elevated the role of auteurs, in a similar fashion to European art cinema. Caughie notes:

> Truffaut defines a true film *auteur* as one who brings something genuinely personal to his subject instead of merely producing a tasteful, accurate but lifeless rendering of the original material.
>
> (Caughie, 1981: 23)

Since the 1990s, Chinese film scholarship accorded the auteurs of the Fifth Generation high praise and recognition. "A tremendous earthquake occurred in Chinese cinema in 1984. Based on their unique élan and deep reflection of nation's cultural specificities, a number of young filmmakers created outstanding works that surprised the film society and stimulated echo from both China and abroad" (Shu, 1996: 229, trans. Li). "Undoubtedly, the Fifth Generation took a vital role in Chinese film history...Their works formed part of the historical and cultural self-reflection that spread all over China in the 1980s and changed the role of cinema which was used to ranked behind literature and theatre in China" (Dai, 1990: 7,

trans. Li). As noted by Ni and Berry (2002: 3), following the emergence of the Fifth Generation, "a cinematic groping movement of rewriting history" has begun.

Although common themes/ideologies are represented in the films of the Fifth Generation such as the approach to countryside and influence of Taoism/Confucianism, the auteurs of the generation possess their own authorial signatures. Among all the directors of the Fifth Generation, Zhang is undoubtedly a 'super-auteur' in Chinese film history. He was the cinematographer of the first two films of the Fifth Generation: *One and Eight* and *Yellow Earth* which received high praise and attention around the world. Apart from being a cinematographer, he directed a number of films such as *Red Sorghum, Judou (1990), Raise the Lantern (1991), To Live (1994)* and received numerous film festivals awards abroad. With what film scholars such as Chow (1995) calls 'primitivism', 'exoticism' and 'Orientalism', Zhang's films present "primitive, exotic scenes, barbaric, brutish yet noble and tragic protagonists and exhilarating or suffocating stories... Though received at home with very mixed views, his stature as an eminent, avant-garde artist has been unequivocally recognized" (Du, 2008). The title of avant-garde artist, as mentioned earlier on page fifteen, is similar to French auteurs of French New Wave cinema and, accordingly, the Fifth Generation is also regarded as a new cinema.

Since the end of 1980s, the term 'New Cinema' has been applied by Chinese scholarship to sum up the artistic achievement and historical position of the Fifth Generation. The term 'New Cinema' comes from the cinematic movement of the 'French New Wave Cinema' (Hayward, 2000). Just as its name implies, it refers to an innovative cinema which is different to old and traditional cinema (mainstream cinema, in the Chinese case) and the emergence of a handful of young auteur directors. Jill Forbes (1998: 463) relates the relationship between cinematic innovation and auteurs, stating that "despite this, the Nouvelle Vague represented a significant break with the *tradition de qualité* and brought into filmmaking a large number of younger directors". Western scholars' understanding of the Fifth Generation often started with

the meaning of 'new cinema'. They started to explore "what was new" (Berry and Farquhar, 1999: 82) and claimed that their films are "some ground-breaking experimental work produced by a movement of young film-makers, graduates of the Beijing Film Academy.....a testimony to a moment of film language experimentation and modernization" (Hayward, 2000; 418). These scholars introduced the films of Zhang and Chen (and vitally also to my thesis, John Woo and Karwei Wang in Hong Kong and Hsiao-Hsien Hou, Edward Yang and Ang Lee in Taiwan) as 'Chinese New Cinemas', and called the Fifth Generation as the 'Nouvelle Vague' of Chinese cinema. The term 'Fifth Generation' echoes the various new wave movements taking place in the early 1980s in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In 1998, a debate organized by the magazine *Film Art* led to the birth of a new term 'Chinese New Cinema'. Critics believed this to be a more appropriate term to sum up the artistic characters and value of the Fifth Generation. It refers to "the films with new world view, new concept of art and new art form created by a number of young filmmakers since 1983, such as Zhang Junzhao's *One and Eight*, Chen's *Yellow Earth*, *King of Children*, Wu Ziniu's *Die Xue Hei Gu* (1984), *The Last Day of Winter* (1986), Tian's *Black Cannon Incident* (1985) and Zhang's *Red Sorghum*" (Film Art, 1988: 5, trans. Li). The film scholarship has positioned the Fifth Generation as a 'new cultural wave'. It is not only a film movement of Chinese cinema; "it also belongs to an international film history through which China and the West have constructed exotic spectacles for each other" (Reynaud, 1998: 545). Thus film scholars have placed the Fifth Generation in a broader context to explore their collective artistic value. However, critics also criticized the Fifth Generation for their imitation of European 'Avant-garde Cinema' and their manipulation of film form. It is common for Chinese films which are awarded foreign prizes to be criticized at home for presenting a negative image of China: they are accused of catering to foreign taste by depicting only 'backward' and 'vulgar' elements of Chinese life, particularly in the countryside, supposedly because foreign viewers find them so picturesque. And these criticisms come from both Chinese government and audiences (Chow 1995).

Recent scholarship on Fifth Generation films and melodramas of the 1980s has tended to focus on the construction of sexual difference and the representation of women (Reynaud, 1998). As argued above, the concept of 'new cinema' played a vital role in the studies of the Fifth Generation. And this has mainly referred to 'a cinematic grouping movement'. This could be summed up in two categories: film aesthetics and self-reflection of history. The former could easily be observed from the cinematography or mise-en-scène of the films of the Fifth Generation. The latter is more of a cultural issue that is related and restricted to a Chinese historical context. Based on the innovation of filmic language and form, the biggest contribution of the Fifth Generation is probably 'a complete picturization: that is, the way Fifth Generation used filmic language to express ideas. Their strong consciousness of mise-en-scène not only enlarged film's expressional function, but also emphasized the protagonist's individual sensation. This film aesthetics updated the traditional 'cinematic drama aesthetics' in Chinese traditional films. "...especially in terms of mise-en-scène, cinematography is not a simple tool for narrative; more importantly, it is an important filmic language for creativity" (Fen, 1992: 485, trans. Li). As I have indicated earlier, this new concept of filmmaking led to the subversion of earlier modes of Mainland Chinese cinema.

Rereading the Fifth Generation and the motifs of their filmmaking

As Elsaesser (2005) suggests, an auteurist approach (by placing the director as autonomous artist and representative of his country) usually goes hand in hand with art cinema. Thus the formal, stylistic and narratological parameters which distinguish these auteurs from others and connect them within the same generation among the three Chinese language cinemas will help to better explore the cultural significance of their films. By centring on the auteur in a generational (historical) context, the auteur's stylistic signatures and representation provide us with a connection to articulate both the coherence and differentiations in terms of cultural national identity/identities among the three Chinese language cinemas.

Today, analyses of the films of the Fifth Generation in terms of narrative and mise-en-scène have been conducted by both Chinese and Western scholars. However, analysis regarding the cultural significance in the films of the Fifth Generation has remained relatively undeveloped. The positive argument for the Fifth Generation is the achievements made in film form and personal filmmaking styles. Many discussions have been focused on the Fifth Generation's 'consciousness of representation' or 'consciousness of mise-en-scène' (Chow, 1995; Browne, 1996; Berry and Farquhar 1999). In the discussions regarding the cultural identity and cultural connotations in the films of the Fifth Generation, it is clear that the Fifth Generation did something new (Berry and Farquhar, 1999) compared with the previous generations. Different to political themes in Chinese mainstream cinema, a few terms have been identified in the films of the Fifth Generation such as reflection of history, consciousness of modernity, cultural reflection (Chow 1995; Zhang 2004). However, the studies of the Fifth Generation still suffered both academic censorship (mainly in Chinese film scholarship) and the influence of Orientalism. On the one hand, like film censorship on Chinese cinema, Chinese scholarship also suffered from a kind of censorship. Like filmmaking, Chinese scholarship needs to avoid sensitive political issues. For example, until today the Cultural Revolution is still a taboo and is not allowed to be talked about publicly in China. This academic censorship obviously resulted in a 'unilateral reading' of the Fifth Generation. On the other hand, the reception of Chinese films worldwide and in existing Chinese cinemas studies in the West seem to lack cultural specificities. As argued by Chow (1995), post-colonial critique occupies the central place of Chinese film studies. This is partly due to the influences of Orientalism and partly due to a lack of attention to certain cultural specificities that have influenced Chinese cultures.

Thus a question arises here. Is the concept of national cinema (Higson, 2002) problematic in cross-cultural research, especially in the studies of the Fifth Generation, which emerged in such a complicated context? As I already argued in Chapter One, both the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) and the homogeneity and heterogeneity of cultural identity (Hall, 2006) are useful when engaging in cross-cultural research. In particular, this

enables the importance of cultural capital to be brought to bear. This is also the position I hold in this thesis: to use my own 'cultural capital' (my understanding of Chinese cultural specificities) to explore the cultural specificities of the Fifth Generation by focusing on its 'super auteurs'.

The discussions regarding the historical and cultural background of the Fifth Generation have led to the exploration of the formative causes of the Fifth Generation. The motif of filmmaking of the Fifth Generation is important and, at the same time, an interesting issue. Much criticism centres on the Orientalist tendencies in the films of the Fifth Generation, with many believing that the films of the Fifth Generation were made for foreigners. Chow (1995) also questions whether: "...the East uses these instruments to fantasize itself and the world?" This is probably the most common criticism that the Fifth Generation has received since 1980s. The director of *Yellow Earth*, Chen said in an interview "we must use an innovative language to narrate our early history" (Liu, 1992: 11, trans Li). As I will explore later in this thesis, influenced by French New Wave Cinema and Italian Neo-realism Cinema, the directors of the Fifth Generation tended to express their 'ideas' regarding the drastic period of Chinese history and the reflection and reconstruction of national/cultural identity.

In the 1980s, following the end of the Cultural Revolution, different schools of western thoughts and cultural ideology were introduced into China. This was a recurrence of the influence of the May 4th Movement that had originally appeared in 1919. The Enlightened Spirit once more illumined the hearts of the Chinese intellectuals in the post-Cultural Revolution period. Major cultural and philosophical themes were "anti-feudalism", "the rediscovery of human nature", "the conflict between civilization and blindness" and "the discovery and recast of nation's spirit" (Lui, 1992: 7, trans. Li). This accompanied a period of reform and openness. Within this specific historical context, the conflict between traditional culture and modern civilization quickly confronted each other. Chow notes that:

> During a talk he gave at the University of Minnesota in the summer of 1989, the Chinese director Chen described his interest in filmmaking as that of 'reform' ...someone who thinks, as someone who has emerged from a 5000 years old culture, you are bound to feel that you should do something, and bound to hope that your people do not have to go through yet another, greater tragedy.
>
> (Chow, 1995: 79)

Kaige Chen's remark implicated a kind of 'consciousness of anxiety' which, as argued in Chapter One, is shaped by characteristics of Chinese intellectuals since ancient times: the Confucian 'pathos'—the concern for the nation and its people. This 'consciousness of anxiety' became the main ideological form of Chinese intellectuals and it led to the Zeitgeist of 'the enlightened spirit' in 1980s' China. The auteurs of the Fifth Generation took these themes of enlightenment to the heart of their filmmaking.

The conflict between traditional culture, theories of enlightenment and the influx of more progressive ideologies in Mainland China in the post-Cultural Revolution period led to what has been described as 'Cultural Heat' in the 1980s and finally resulted in the Tiananmen Democratic Movement in the summer of 1989. As a film movement (pre the Tiananmen event of 1989), the Fifth Generation's filmmakers abandoned the political ideology of Chinese mainstream cinema and started a critical reexamination of Chinese traditional culture: anti-feudalism, individualism, the conflict between modernity and fatuity, and the discovery and recast of the nation's spirit. All these concerns evolved into a criticism of communist ideology and rethinking of Chinese traditional culture. Both auteurist epistemology and auteur signature such as cinematography, mise-en-scene and narrative will serve for better analysis of the cultural significance of the Fifth Generation films

Conclusion

This chapter develops a brief history of cinema in Mainland China and introduces the historical, cultural and political contexts in which the Fifth Generation emerged. It demonstrates that an auteur approach is particularly suitable for investigating the cultural/factors philosophies of Chinese cinema than traditional national cinema approaches that focus upon the nation state. Thus it intersects the generational approach to Fifth Generation filmmakers with an auteurist approach. The periodization of generations articulates some dominant directors such as Zhang, Chen and Tian as auteurs and the cultural signifiers of Chinese national cinema (Mainland China) in the 1980s. In particular it examines the Fifth Generation in relation to its difference from Chinese mainstream cinema and the more heavy-handed dominance of Maoism and Communism. It also argues in favour of the transition of Chinese mainland cinema to modernity by positioning the Fifth Generation as a 'new cinema', which, in turn, announced its auteur credentials to the world stage via international film festival successes. The chapter explores the complexities of national cinema in relation to 1980s' film movement in Mainland China and illustrates the influence of communist ideology and European art cinemas. It reveals the ways that the films of the Fifth Generation represent the consciousness of life and ultimately the rediscovery of the individual in a period so marked by Mao's programme of the Cultural Revolution.

CHAPTER FOUR:

PROJECTING 'THE NATIONAL': THE FIFTH GENERATION AND RURAL IDENTITY AS THE NEW CHINESE SPIRIT

"If national cinemas are an intrinsically international form, they are also national forms. As Schlondorff's comment suggests, national cinemas do not only persist as a means to counter or accommodate Hollywood, they are sustained and shaped by local purposes of a social, economic, cultural and national nature. Moreover they need to be conscious of these."

(O'Regan, 1996: 60)

Introduction

In this chapter I will be asking why a rural or peasant national identity has been projected for Mainland China and will explore the Fifth Generation's consistent approaches to *tudi* (the earth/the countryside). Contrary to much of the Orientalist criticism that has been put forward with regard to this rural focus (Chow 1995, Dai 1993, Zhang 1990), I will suggest that the rural identity projected in the films of the Fifth Generation creates a new Chinese spirit developed in the post-Cultural Revolution period. Taking the central notion of Higson's concept of national cinema, namely that of 'projecting the nation' as a central concern, this chapter uses Chinese ideas of 'roots-searching' as the key approach to my exploration of the ways that Chinese cultural identity ("Chineseness") is manifest in the films of the auteur directors of the Fifth Generation. In particular, this chapter also discusses the legitimacy of Chinese traditional culture and explores the influence of Taoism and Confucianism in this respect within the films of the Fifth Generation. It provides a detailed analysis of the films such as *The Red Elephant* (Tian etc., 1982), *Yellow Earth, King of the Children, Red Sorghum,* and *On the Hunting Ground* (Tian, 1984).

According to Elsaesser (2005: 23), national cinema is synonymous with 'auteur cinema', 'art

cinema' and 'heritage cinema', and auteur directors play an important role in my approach to the Fifth Generation. My aim is to argue that these auteurs of the Fifth Generation initially became the unofficial cultural spokespersons of China and then, as their domestic and international reputation grew, they achieved the role of officially sanctioned visionaries for Mainland China. One good example is the appointment of Yimou Zhang as the director of artistic events at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Caughie notes that:

> Truffaut defines a true film auteur as one who brings something genuinely personal to his subject instead of merely producing a tasteful, accurate but lifeless rendering of the original material...Instead of merely transferring someone else's work faithfully and self-effacingly, the *auteur* transforms the material into an expression of his own personality.
>
> (Caughie, 1981: 23)

Based on Caughie's assertion above, the question arises of how to interpret the relationship between the projection of the national and 'genuinely personal' style of the director. Auteur theory points to directors as being representative and standard bearers of the values and aspirations of their culture. As O'Regan states above, this may mean nothing more historically precise or metaphysically profound than the cultural, historical and political contexts under which filmmakers in a given country try to work. If national cinema privileges a perspective that takes the point of view of its auteur filmmakers, then the contexts of production may also function as the shaping forces for either a collective movement of film or for the authorial styles and signatures of directors of that national cinema. Since the 1980s, Mainland Chinese national cinema has been associated with names such as Zhang, Kaige Chen and Zhuangzhuang Tian. When considering the films of the Fifth Generation, it is necessary to analyze the ideas of the national that are projected in the films in relation to also understanding the film as an expression of an auteur filmmaker This, in turn, leads to the investigation into a corpus of films with distinct stylistic signatures and themes leading to a richer cultural interpretation of the identity projected in their films.

The earth as utopia and the 'roots-searching' movement

The Fifth Generation period has formed one of the most distinctive national cinemas in Chinese film history. The cultural representation, or the national identity projected by the films of the Fifth Generation has been crucial in allowing the West to gain an impression of "China", or "Chineseness". The representation of "Chineseness" projected by the Fifth Generation has also been a topical argument in China where its associations with the projection of a rural, backward and uncultivated Chinese national identity has been seen as problematic. Self-Orientalism has been a major criticism made against the Fifth Generation both in the Mainland Chinese media and in academic film scholarship (Chow, 1995, calls it 'Orient's Orientalism', and Cui, 2008 calls it a 'cooperative Orientalism'). Indeed, Orientalism has occupied a central place in the studies of the Fifth Generation. According to Kaplan (2006: 157), undertaking cross-cultural analysis requires sensitivity because "we are forced to read works produced by the Other through the constraints of our own frameworks/theories/ideologies". Saïd (2002) also warned that cross-cultural research is fraught with difficulties in succumbing to Orientalist discourse. For Saïd, the hegemonic Orientalist discourse has profound influences on cross-cultural research. Indeed, the Western readings of Chinese cinema may also form parts of an Orientalist cultural production: the apparent unity and homogeneity of imperial discourse. Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself or herself vis-à-vis the Orient and this self-positioning affects/contaminates the text and is ultimately communicated to the reader. Therefore, implicitly throughout this thesis, I attempt to remain sensitive to my own cultural upbringings and, in particular, my notions of Chinese culture, history and traditions whilst trying to combine them with the use of Western theoretical approaches to the text. Similarly I must also admit that gaps in my own understanding of Western cultural specificities will, of course impact my own research.

Chapter Three provided a discussion of the different generations in Mainland Chinese film history, encompassing a detailed analysis of the context in which the Fifth Generation

emerged. The cinematic wave of 'roots-searching' pursued by the Fifth Generation was actually prior to the literary movement of the same name in China in the 1980s (Zhang, 2004). In their return to *tudi* (the countryside, the films of the Fifth Generation rediscovered the beauty of nature and the vitality of life). Chow claims that:

> In the mood of a vast cultural devastation, the films of the 1980s and early 1990s actively seek alternative 'meaning' by what I will call 'returning to nature'. The prominent natural images and natural figures in these otherwise diverse films include landscape, rural life, and oppressed women.
>
> (Chow, 1995: 35)

With their consciousness of 'life', they re-examined one of the most important symbols in Chinese cinema – *tudi*. Their cinema of the countryside became a major representation in their exploration of Chinese cultural roots in the post-Cultural Revolution period. As argued in Chapter Three, compared with previous generations, the most important characteristics of the films of the Fifth Generation are that the Fifth Generation discovered the 'countryside' of quasi primitivism, folklore and nature, and they endowed the countryside with their own utopia of social idealism. The aesthetics of nature in the films of the Fifth Generation and the reconstruction of their identification by re-examining the cultural roots and re-connecting with a consciousness of life is in accordance with the philosophy of Chinese traditional views of culture based on Taoism and Confucianism. In the philosophy of Taoism, nature and the lives of human beings are equal and all deserve respect. The essence of Taoism, followed by the pursuit of the Fifth Generation, is the harmony between human beings and nature, and a broad and profound consciousness of life, which led to an exploration of the innate nature of Chinese people and a challenge to the manipulation of communist ideology in the contemporary context. Equally, this search for the (cultural) roots also questions the legitimacy of Chinese traditional culture.

In 1985, one year after the release of *Yellow Earth*, a number of works representative of roots-searching, emerged in Chinese literature (Han 1985, Chen 1985 etc.). The emergence of the Fifth Generation symbolized the transition of Chinese cinema from political films

(Chinese mainstream cinema) to cultural films (art/auteur cinema). It also demonstrates an approach of Mainland Chinese cinema to modernity as discussed in Chapter Three.

In the 1980s, roots-searching (The Xungen Movement) became a nationwide intellectual movement in mainland China. Nie (2003) writes that: "it denotes a return to the source of Chinese culture, and the recovery of national history, which is often obscured and distorted by authoritarian discourse". This cultural movement was primarily seen as a literary category and literature has a close relationship with the Fifth Generation, as many famous works of the Fifth Generation are literary adaptations (for example, *Yellow Earth, Red Sorghum, King of the Children*). This literary connection is also reinforced by the fact the resulting films could also be defined as heritage cinema. According to Higson (1996: 233), "one of the central pleasures of the heritage film is the artful and spectacular projection of an elite conservative vision of the national past". The link between literature and the Fifth Generation is undeniable but the interesting thing is that in most cases the elite conservative vision of the national past so prevalent in British and French national cinema becomes one of rustic and romanticized peasant identity in the films of the Fifth Generation. Cognizant of Saïd's (2002) warning of the dangers of succumbing to orientalist discourse in cross-cultural research, I feel that this rural identity represented by the Fifth Generation has largely and unfairly been interpreted both domestically and internationally (Chow 1995, Dai 1993) and this is mainly because the roots-searching movement has been largely ignored by current film scholarship.

One exception here is Li (1988), who outlines one of its fundamental rustic sceneries – that it represents the divorce of individual sentiment and is in search of strong and powerful origin of life. The latter is, in turn, equated with masculinity and as a result the power relations of gender became a major theme in many films of the Fifth Generation (such as Zhang's *Red Sorghum* and *Ju Dou*). In general, the concept of masculinity seldom occupies Chinese mainland directors unless it is defined in the political sense (i.e., communist heroes in Chinese mainstream cinema, as argued in Chapter Three). However, this changed in the films

of the Fifth Generation. Zhang and Xiao (1999: 240) describe the type of masculinity evident in *Red Sorghum*, saying: "Rather, it is the legendary 'Grandpa' that captured the public imagination of a new type of masculinity that depends on a primitive lifestyle, vulgar language and rude behaviour."

Han (1985: 4, trans. Li) has suggested that "The roots of literature should be deeply planted into the earth of traditional culture". Further, the purpose of roots searching "does not proceed from a sleazy nostalgia and localism" (Han, 1985: 4, trans. Li) but emphasizes the consciousness of the nation. Roots-searching is also part of the mainland Chinese intellectual elites' search for a historical context and narrative for China's present socio-political conditions. This is achieved by a rediscovery of the roots of Chinese traditional culture. However, what is Chinese traditional culture? Answers to this question within literary debates suggest that a uniform definition of roots-searching is not always possible.

Traditionally Confucianism and Taoism are regarded as the basis of Chinese traditional culture but another common view is the traditional virtues of the Chinese people can also be legitimately regarded as Chinese traditional culture. And some scholars, such as Han (1985) and Ah Chen (1985) believed the definition lies in the correspondence between the wilderness and countryside and in romantic myths and legends. Han (1985: 4, trans. Li) notes that "traditional culture as cohered within the countryside belongs to phenomena and experiences that fall outside the usual official histories. Slang, local histories, tales, stories of gods and spirits, traditional custom, and sexuality etc., are often neglected by official history; however, they represent life's authentic character".

The Fifth Generation is not the only group of Mainland Chinese directors to have looked to the countryside for inspiration. However, they have done so in a different and more sympathetic way from previous generations (particularly the Fourth Generation, whose

filmmakers, such as Wu Tianmin, Xie Fei, Huang Jianzhong, criticized traditional rituals and rural customs). As modernists the Fourth Generation challenged the formalities of Confucianism. Important differences lie between the Fourth Generation and the Fifth Generation filmmakers regarding rural identity, folk-customs and the culture of countryside. The Fourth Generation was more firmly in line with progressive communist ideologies and was hostile to the customs and practices of the countryside (particularly those linked to its feudal past). Their wish was to modernise and change the material condition of its inhabitants. The Fifth Generation had the courage to break away from the moral constraints and dominant communist ideology and propaganda. This is in line with the notion of courage that lies behind the concept of roots-searching in Chinese traditions and culture. When Chen talked about his film *Yellow Earth*, he said:

> I feel that one individual's tragedy can no longer represent what we see and feel in this era. We must find a new way to represent them... we need a more objective and generous attitude, and serious courage to face artistic creativity, because what lies in front of us is a sediment of history and culture.
>
> (Chen, 1986: 266, trans. Li)

Thus for the Fifth Generation, this *new way* is the rediscovery of *tudi*. However, this obsession of the Fifth Generation with the earth and the countryside has been interpreted as 'self-Orientalism'. Nie (2003) points out that "Chow (1995) for instance, attributes the success of *Yellow Earth* as well as Zhang's other films to the Fifth Generation's ability to cast the Orientalism of the Western mind to the screen". Many Western scholars (Berry and Farquhar 1999, Chow 1995 etc.) believe that Chinese cinema has been drawn to Orientalism, - that is, to "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Saïd, 2002: 3). However, I would like to argue that both the Chinese and Western academies have ignored the effect of Chinese cultural specificities in Fifth Generation cinema (as well that of Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinema) in the 1980s.

The films of the Fifth Generation are continually criticized for failing to represent an objective image of China and for projecting images of self-orientalism. The projecting of the

national in the films of the Fifth Generation results, of course, in an imaginary construction of 'Chineseness' in the West. Needham (2006c: 8) points out that the dominant ideology of Orientalism has raised an "awareness of how ideas, representations, criticisms and selections of Asian films in the West is not a neutral venture". He claims that:

> It is important to realise that the pleasures derived from, and the academic approaches to, Asian films cannot be divorced from their connection to historical discourses that have indeterminately shaped and distorted East/West self/other relations.
>
> (Needham, 2006c: 8)

The so-called 'rural, backward' identity (Chow 1995, Dai 1993) projected in the films of the Fifth Generation substantially 'demystifies' China in the West. "Demystification is commonly held to be a Marxist strategy which permits us to observe the origins and nature of 'false consciousness'" (Foulkes, 1983: 55). The demystification of imperialism and demysitification of Orientalism is a main critical discourse in Saïd's *Orientalism* (2002). However, this representation of rural identity has deep resonance within its cultural context. In the eyes of the Fifth Generation, the countryside is the location of nature, primitivism and folk-customs which stay embedded in the memory of Chinese people but are rediscovered in the cinematic return to it. The auteur directors of the Fifth Generation did not regard this idea of *tudi* as being backward and simplistic. In contrast, they sought to project its tranquility and grandeur and the vitality on which peasants rely. The countryside in their eyes represents a form of coexistence of primitivism and folk-custom which is exempted from present political ideology. In this context, roots-searching is a journey in search of life, the identification of nation and culture, which embodies the search of the original *us*. This *us* refers to a spiritual identification of nation (China) and culture (Chinese traditions and culture) and it lies both in the historical imaginary and in conceptions of the future.

In fact, the Fifth Generation's approach to countryside is a natural outpouring of their lives as *Zhiqing* (the 'Intellectual Youth') in cinema. It is a reflection of both their utopian and their empirical knowledge of the world. For them, a 'return to nature' is a spiritual journey, a

collective ceremony in search of spiritual end-result. During the Cultural Revolution, they lived in the countryside as bystanders and never really integrated into this rural life. However, the beauty of nature and a sense of primitive vitality have become their deep sentimental memory. On the one hand, compared with filmmakers of the Fourth Generation, they are more concerned with natural primitivism and the peasants' strong vitality in extremely poor and difficult conditions, rather than the poverty and leanness of countryside. On the other hand, for them, this 'countryside' only exists in the imagination and memory. When an individual tries to exceed the hardship of reality, the Fifth Generation believes, a 'return to nature' is the best end-result.

However, the acknowledgement of 'the earth' in the films of the Fifth Generation is not a simple identification. They added "something genuinely personal" (Caughie, 1981: 3) as would befit their status as auteurs. They created their own aesthetics as film artists in the representation of that identity. That is: their identification with 'the earth' through primitive folk-customs and traditions linked to the essence of life, a spirit that they exhibit and symbolize. Although the constant approach and the representation of 'the earth' are more the distinctive strategy of a film movement of the Fifth Generation, each director had his own distinctive way of using primitive folk customs and traditions to represent 'the earth' in their films. This will be explored respectively in the films of Chen, Zhang and Tian in this chapter.

In Chinese traditional culture, there is a tradition of emphasizing the skills and techniques involved in the process of writing. Chinese folk music and traditional painting also require and emphasize elaborate techniques. The application of these elaborate skills and techniques are also seen in the films of the Fifth Generation. Ehrlich and Desser (1999: 8) point out that "many Chinese and Japanese films have incorporated an aesthetic...following the traditional emphasis on calligraphic line, pattern and design, and 'flat' lighting..." However, the films of the Fifth Generation chose to recognize the less refined traditional peasant cultures and focus on folk customs rather than the more usual higher forms of traditional culture as so often

represented in other nations' heritage films. On the one hand, they crafted their films in the same elaborate way privileging visual aesthetics. On the other, they conducted an ideological subversion of the more formal properties of those customs as, for instance, documented in films by the Fourth Generation's directors such as Wu Tianmin and Xie Jin. They portrayed the spontaneous way of life of that the peasants live and concentrated on the underlining spirit of their existence.

When the crew was in Shanbei for the preparation of the shooting of *Yellow Earth*, they were deeply impressed by three things: the folk-songs of Shanbei, the Ansai waist drum, and the peasants' painting. The first two were represented in this film without any embellishments. Although the Fifth Generation has suffered much criticism for displaying an Orientalist tendency (Chow, 1995: 171) in their filmmaking through concentrating on what it the West might be deemed as exotic images, they did not, however, deliberately produce these images for Western audiences. They were genuinely captivated by the folk songs and dances that expressed the soul of peasant people without hardly any material resources. Chen said that the song of the peasant He Yutan possesses a kind of 'voice with primitive color and full of love and passion for life' (Chen, 1986: 266, trans. Li). Also, the peasants' drawings have helped them gain the name 'Eastern Picassos' (Luo, 1988). "Although the techniques of representation are simple and modest, the most valuable is the pure trueness and simplicity which are illustrated naturally" (Chen, 1986: 266 trans. Li). Zhang offers his own understanding of the arts of peasants on the yellow earth:

> Peasants live peacefully generation after generation, and they are not satisfied. Then, they put what they feel into folk songs. They yell and their voice flies over the yellow earth. And it became a kind of entertainment and release of their spirit. One sings day and night, and others listen to him day and night. They cry together and laugh together. Peasants also draw: green goats, red cattle, and flying pigs in the sky. Although it is not realistic, the more vivid the colour is, the more excited they feel. Their natural modesty and honesty are really impressive. Foreigners called these peasants 'the Eastern Picasso'. I think they are greater than Picasso. The peasants, both elderly and young, also like to play the waist drum. Everybody plays and when they become excited they dance together. A lot of people cheerfully dance in a group. I was impressed after seeing this. It is more

modern than Disco.

(Zhang, cited in Luo, 1988: 4, trans. Li)

Indeed, compared with highbrow traditional arts that involve elaborate skills and techniques that have to be mastered through practice and study, peasants have no professional skills. They are, however, full of vitality. People who barely have enough to eat have created brilliant national, idealistic and passionate art forms and this is what the Fifth Generation celebrates. In particular, the role of the Ansai waist drum within peasant culture is proof that there is a passion of life among these Chinese people who exist in this remote part of China. They manifest an outward cultural expression of vitality and passion innate in human nature which was rare during the Cultural Revolution. The fact that all the diversity of the Chinese people was regarded as uniform and homogenous under Maoism is one of the reasons that the Fifth Generation sought to construct and project a more diverse spiritual utopia in the post-Cultural Revolution context of 1980s. Referring to the film *Red Sorghum*, Zhang (1990: 49) claims that:

> The film aspires to a liberation of the human body, a liberation that will return the Chinese people from their now uniform life style and sterile way of thinking to their nurturing, re-generating origins (roots).
>
> (Zhang, 1990: 49)

The Fifth Generation's discovery of this force of life (vitality) in the countryside was the discovery of something they thought was lost in the Cultural Revolution. They believed that only arts full of this force of life are modern and true in the sense of individual identities being suddenly possible in the post-Cultural Revolution period. And they hoped to use this to remedy the loss of individual creativity amongst the Chinese people at this time. This touches the essence of Taoism where nature and man are considered as a unity. The influence of Taoism is obvious and enormous in the films of the Fifth Generation and this connection will be explored in more detailed in my analyses of *Yellow Earth*, *Red Sorghum*, *King of the Children* and *On the Hunting Ground* that form the later part of this chapter.

The Fifth Generation's obsession with nature sees its origin in Taoist philosophy. Taoist philosophy appeared strongly in the films of the Fifth Generation at a time when the country's culture was in the verge of collapse after decades of political manipulation and more particularly the Cultural Revolution. The historical context reminds us of the beginning of Taoism in Chinese history. Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu lived in the Zhou dynasty, a time when the old political and economic systems were in a state of decline. Jingfu notes:

> Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu developed Taoist philosophy and persuaded people to preserve their inborn nature by practicing inaction and by living in emptiness, silence, and purity. Their teachings acted as a note of resistance against the evils which were causing chaos among the people.
>
> (Jingfu, 1999: 119)

From this point of view, the return to Taoism by the Fifth Generation used the notion of tracing the roots as a way for Chinese intellectuals to think a 'way out' for Chinese national cultural/identity in response to the moral crisis of the post-Cultural Revolution period. As one major part of this cultural movement, the Fifth Generation returned to the earth/countryside and pursued and glorified the beauty of nature (and the innate spirit of human beings) as central to their works; and to creating a cinema that projected an optimistic view of Chinese national identity in the post-Cultural Revolution period.

For the intellectuals struggling in the post-Cultural Revolution, life seemed always to be in 'another place'. They transferred this to a far-flung rural landscape – the place of less political and social interference, full of anachronistic and folk customs. They transformed the actual culture manipulated by communist ideology to the primitive and natural vitality of the human. By using primitive culture and folk-custom as a base, they set up a new cultural logic. They transposed the positions between 'mainstream culture' (manipulated by communist ideology) and 'non mainstream culture'. And they made this non mainstream culture poetic: "a natural existence tallying with human nature, a cultural space which harmonizes the relationship between human beings. Thus it becomes a cultural setting for the broken society and lost human spirit" (Xu and Ding, 2002: 311, trans. Li).

The Red Elephant: the first exploration of nature by the Fifth Generation

The Fifth Generation's exploration of nature began with their graduation work: *The Red Elephant*. It is a children's film and the story centres on the adventure of three children searching for a sacred elephant in the forest of Xishuangbanna in Southern China. Yan Luo, Yan Shuai and Yi Xiang are told by their grandfathers that there is a mysterious elephant that is red from head to foot and is capable of flying in the forest. The story produces great curiosity among the three children and they decide to embark on an adventure and look for the red elephant in the forest during their summer holiday. The narrative explores important Confucian and Taoist themes such as disciplines and the relationship between man and nature. The three children start their adventure together and they are deeply impressed by the beauty of the forest. They witness enchanting scenes and encounter frightening animals such as leopards and snakes. During their search, the other two friends criticize Yan Shuai because he breaks the traditional hunting decree (which I will explore in more depth when discussion *On the Hunting Ground*) by shooting and injuring a beautiful little deer. Finally they save a trapped little elephant through their collaborative efforts. This act restores their friendship. The little elephant is the calf of the legendary red elephant and in returning the calf the three children discover the roots of the red elephant myth. They discover that he cannot really fly and he is red because he often takes a shower and get red mud on his body. The three children ride on the red elephant and start their journey home.

This film is in fact the first exploration of the Fifth Generation in terms of filmic language and cinematography. If *Yellow Earth* symbolizes the emergence of the Fifth Generation to Western audience, then *The Red Elephant* can be considered the seed on which the Fifth Generation fully grew. The directors of *The Red Elephant* were Tian, Zhang Jianya and Xie Xiaojing. Zhang, Zen Nianping and Hou Yong feature as the cinematographers. We can see from these names that the film actually involved directors who were to become the auteur elites of the Fifth Generation.

In terms of Fifth Generation's filmmaking *The Red Elephant* is more important with respect to its form rather than its content. It is a low-budget film produced by the Children's Film Studio, and most of the scenes were shot in the forest with the use of natural lights (Ni and Berry, 2002). According to Ni and Berry (2002: 134), "The plot was simple and the budget low at about RMB 3000,000 (approximately US$167,000)". As the whole film had to be shot in the forests, the working conditions were tough. However, the use of lights and the mise-en-scène at the beginning of the film where the children sitting beside the grandfathers and listening to the story of the red elephant shows some characteristics of the future Fifth generation: exoticism, brief dialogue, exaggerated composition (dissymmetry and disproportion in terms of filmic composition) and vivid colour. For the young filmmakers of the future Fifth Generation, this opportunity of filmmaking gave them a chance to explore nature. The province of Yun Nan (where the film was shot) is a mysterious and attractive place located in the south-western border of China. After the shooting of *The Red Elephant*, Tian acknowledged that Yunnan has since occupied a place in his heart. He said that "I heard about Yunnan constantly, the way of life … I am always thinking to go back there sometime" (Xu, 2005). Twenty years after the shooting of *The Red Elephant*, Tian went back to Yunnan for another film *Tea-Horse Road Series: Delamu* (2004).

Be it the red earth of Yun Nan, the yellow earth of Shanbei or the black earth of Bei Dahuan, once the Fifth Generation had set foot on it, they were never able to erase it from their memory. *The Red Elephant* has symbolic significance in an almost didactic way (the children learn about the mysteries of nature through the experience of being in close connection with it). During their exploration of nature, they become aware of the principles of Tao and learn that to love nature brings rewards. Harmony with nature was to go on to become a motif for the Fifth Generation and a core principle in their projection of Chineseness to mainland China itself and the rest of the world. The idea of the connection with nature acts as a utopian ideal for a damaged post-Cultural Revolution society.

As showed above, the role of nature occupied a central place in the filmmaking of the Fifth Generation. In the next section, I will investigate how the motif of nature functions in auteur director Chen's *Yellow Earth* in order to explore themes of anxiety and resistance.

Kaige Chen's *Yellow Earth*（Huang tudi): the anxiety and resistance of individual

"Captive birds love old forest / Fish in a pool miss the old deep water / Opening the uncultivated edge at wilderness in the south / Keeping my simplicity I returned to gardens and fields / ... It is as if I lived in an animal cage for a long time, and now, again, I am able to return to nature."

(Tao Yuanmin, 2008)

The first part of this chapter argued that the Fifth Generation's identification with 'the earth/the countryside' is one important part of the cultural 'roots-searching' movement that took place in Mainland China in the 1980s. Furthermore, this consciousness is also based on the individual experiences of directors with regard to the trials of peasant life in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution.

Academic writings (Berry and Farquhar, 1999; Jingfu, 1999) centred on this unique aesthetic contribution made by the Fifth Generation directors. Though Berry and Farquhar (1999: 83) have concluded that the major contribution of the Fifth Generation is a filmic "Sinicization" or "a certain aesthetic decorative style", I would argue though for a deeper significance in terms of the underlying meanings about Chinese culture and philosophy that are projected to China and internationally. If Saïd (2002) points to the Eurocentric construction of the East within Western writing, then it is important to ensure that an understanding of Chinese cultural specificities are introduced to explore the cultural/national identity projected in the films of the Fifth Generation.

Yellow Earth won eleven international awards. It is set in 1930s' Shanxi, which is located in

Western China where the yellow soil forms a distinctive geographical feature. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Chinese civilization is founded on agriculture. Yellow earth (*tudi*) is also symbolic of the home or the mother for Chinese people and Chinese civilization as a whole. In the narrative Communist soldier, Gu Qin, is sent in 1939 to a remote village to collect folk songs. He is appointed to stay with a taciturn widower, his teenage daughter Cui Qiao and his son Hanhan in the village. This narrative ploy reflects the communist strategy of what the Communist authorities called "going deep into a person's life" (Liu, 1992), where the army was commissioned to live with farmers in countryside for a certain period in order to develop closer ties between Chinese people and the party (advertised as the relationship between fish and water by the government).

It's through the exchange of songs that Gu gradually wins the trust and affection of his hosts. Cui Qiao is to be sold into marriage with a much older man, a common occurrence during this historical period. However, the soldier's talk of the need to break with feudal tradition in a modern communist society fills her with unrealistic hopes of escaping her fate. Gu's talk may refer to a *new China* that the Party has promised and advertised for Chinese people. From this perspective the narrative is similar to mainstream propaganda films. However, the film does not follow mainstream cinema ideology and instead, it tries to reflect China's long and difficult history. This encounter between feudal tradition and modern communist society represents a clash between feudal customs and modernity because the film shows cultural conflict among Chinese people in that period: the ignorance and backwardness of Chinese peasants which cannot be changed (even by Communist revolution) within one day. In the end it results in tragedy: the night before Gu returns to his base, the girl asks him to take her away, but he refuses to because this kind of personal action is not allowed by the party's disciplines.

Throughout this encounter, Gu is also portrayed as one of the more uniformed Chinese soldiers whose individuality is surrendered to the Party's ideology. This partly leads to the

tragedy of Cui as he refuses to take her away. After he leaves, Cui takes a small boat and tries to cross the Yellow River in order to escape from the marriage, with the hope of finding Gu (and also a new life) again. But she soon disappears in the darkness in the river. Two months after her death, Gu returns to the village and encounters the villagers' ceremony of begging for rain. Cui's father and brother are among the crowd. The ceremony assembles a huge crowd and when Hanhan notice the presence of Gu, he squeezes his way out of the crowd towards him. In this final sequence Hanhan's efforts seem to be useless as he is constantly squeezed back in the crowd. This scene shows Hanhan's hope and courage for breaking with feudal destiny; however, in a similar manner to the death of his sister, he is finally submerged by the crowd.

Yellow Earth is the first internationally acclaimed film for the Fifth Generation and has received widespread academic attention. The film, however, has never been studied in depth and in a way that draws on the context of mainland Chinese culture. For example, Berry and Farquhar (1999) and Yau (2006) have tended to examine the relationship between the mise-en-scène and Chinese painting rather than the films' values and codes. As Yau puts it:

> One may even suggest that *Yellow Earth* (1984) is an "avant-gardist" attempt by young Chinese film-makers taking cover under the abstractionist ambiguities of classical Chinese painting.
>
> (Yau, 2006: 203)

Yau (2006) employs various strategies of Western textual analysis on a non-Western text and examines the film's narrative structure, aesthetics and political discourse. In his analysis, Yau (2006: 202) points out the outstanding cinematography of the film by stating that "aesthetically speaking, *Yellow Earth* is a significant instance of a non-Western alternative in recent narrative filmmaking". Berry and Farquhar (1999: 82)) claim that with *Yellow Earth* the Fifth Generation has abandoned "the socialist-realist model of Chinese filmmaking". In their analysis, they emphasise the relationship between Chinese traditional painting and the mise-en-scène of the film, adding that:

> The "radical departure" in Yellow Earth is the creative use of a centuries-old aesthetic and cultural code in the new film medium.
>
> (Berry and Farquhar, 1999: 89)

Despite the claims that they make both Yau, and Berry and Farquhar, fail to sense the symbolic significance of this first internationally acclaimed film of the Fifth Generation. The film is in fact a brilliant case of collaborative authorship (Jennings, 2002a) and the cultural and political context in which these auteurs operated remains crucial in the reading of the film text. By looking beyond the figure of director as the only auteur of a film text, Jennings (2002a: 358) takes film producer Christine Vachon as a case study and argues for the film producer's "possibility of partial collaborative auteur status". As Perkins (1990: 61) has suggested, "authorship of movies may be achieved not despite but in and through collaboration" and *Yellow Earth* is indeed a case of collaborative authorship of the Fifth Generation's filmmakers, being directed by Chen, shot by Zhang, with production design by He Pin (director of the highly acclaimed *Red Firecracker, Green Firecracker*, 1993). The film thus reveals the collaborative talent of the Fifth Generation and symbolically announces the birth of the Fifth Generation whilst branding its success unequivocally at the feet of Chen as a newly emerging auteur director on the international stage.

The most distinctive success of *Yellow Earth* is undoubtedly Zhang's cinematography. This film made Zhang's reputation as the best cameraman in China. Graduating from the Cinematography Department of the Beijing Film Academy in the same year as Chen, Zhang's cinematographic style is unique in Chinese cinema and this gave the film *Yellow Earth* a significant character through its artistic composition. Again Taoist painting has influenced Zhang's cinematography but his style also connected the characteristics of both Eastern and Western aesthetics in his cinematography. For Yau (2006: 202), "the static views of distant ravines and slopes of the Loess Plateau resemble a Chinese scroll-painting of the Changan School". In fact, the vast landscape and the yellow earth, as argued earlier, also symbolise the home and mother of Chinese people and Chinese civilization. It is on such 'poor' and vast yellow earth that Chinese people struggled with their fate in the post-Cultural Revolution

period. Indeed, the effect of this collaboratively aesthetic achieved with Zhang's elaborate cinematography and He Pin's purposeful production design visually presents a metaphor for the socio-political context of this period.

Writing about this film tends to centre on the relationship between cinematography and painting. It needs to be added here that there is nothing new about investigating the relationship between film art and other forms of arts. The relationship between mise-en-scène, cinematic landscapes and painting has been acknowledged at least since 1970s and as Ehrlich and Desser (1999) suggest:

> The two fields have been linked; for example, both art historians and scholars of cinema studies employ common terminology in discussions of the use of space and depth in compositions, the ability of lighting to alter an object, the psychological effects of color, the masking effects of the frame, the problem of distortion caused by reproduction of the original, and so on.
>
> (Ehrlich and Desser, 1999: 4)

However, according to Aumont (1989), although some Western films, such as *Passion* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1982) have been inspired by paintings, these influences are mostly seen on visual art techniques: frame, lighting, space and depth in compositions. For Aumont (1989), although there are tremendous differences between the individual film frame and the image on the screen, the still images of a film have been considered as a similar art form to painting and they share the same aesthetic perspectives. For instance, the influence of Chinese paintings in the films of the Fifth Generation can be seen as a cultural issue rather than just a technical one. What lies behind the visual representation is the symbolism of Chinese philosophy and this is what I will now pursue in my analysis of *Yellow Earth.*

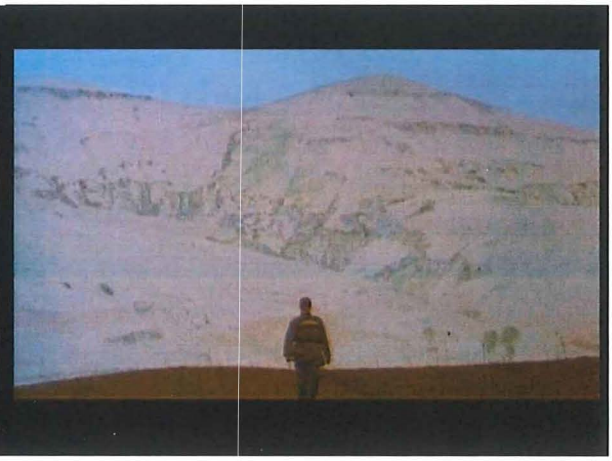
Liu (1979) discusses the relationship between traditional Chinese painting and Taoist principles. In particular he examines the idea of oneness with the object, where there is an identification of subjectivity with objectivity, and a sense of unification in multiplicity. Tao is

the ontological experience by which subjective and objective reality are fused into one. Taoist painting emphasizes spontaneous reflection rather than artificial effort. This is similar to the realist mode of cinematography adopted in French New Wave Cinema and Italian Neo-Realist Cinema. Because the idea of spontaneous reflection in Taoist philosophy is similar to the realist mode of filmmaking ideology (which emphasizes the employment of real shooting location, natural lights and amateur actors in the above two European art cinemas) there is an interesting connection between new wave filmmaking that the Fifth Generation directors bring together to create a distinctive cinema. The reflection of Taoist philosophy in both the mise-en-scène and in the narrative is one of Chen's distinct authorial signatures. The realist aesthetic is, however, used to different ends in European art cinemas. As Hayward (2000: 293) points out: "The realist aesthetic recognizes the reality-effect produced by cinematic mediation and strives, therefore, to use film technique in such a way that, although it does not draw attention to itself, it none the less provides the spectator with space to read the text for herself or himself. In other words, 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."

Berry and Farquhar (1999) considered Chen's *Yellow Earth* as a return to classical tradition previously not used in the socialist-realist films of the mainstream period. They point out that "like landscape painting, *Yellow Earth* (1984) emphasizes the natural over the human world, imagery over narrative, and symbolism over (socialist) realism" (Berry and Farquhar, 1999: 85). Berry and Farquhar (1999: 85) also recognize that Chinese traditional painting tends to "express an idea" (*xieyi* in Chinese) rather than to merely depict an image and argue for the similarities between the mise-en-scène of *Yellow Earth* and the technique of Chinese painting. Chen's *Yellow Earth*, like many other films of the Fifth Generation, actually presents powerful and often displaced critiques of Chinese culture and communist state ideology as a way of circumventing the Communist film censorship. By being aware of a Taoist perspective I will be able to excavate a cultural interpretation of Taoism in *Yellow Earth*. The following section looks at *Yellow Earth*'s cinematography in this way.

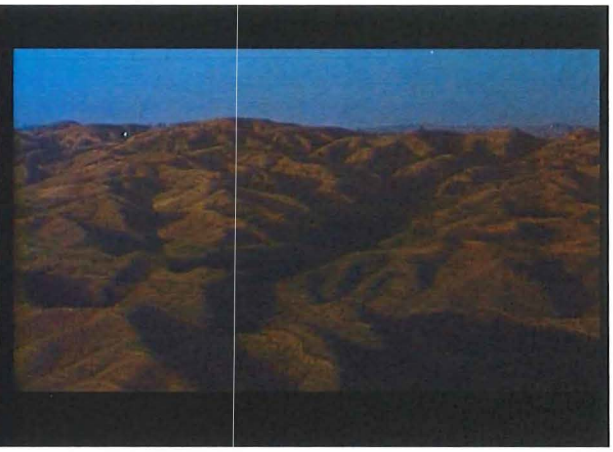
In the opening shots of *Yellow Earth* the landscape scenes are impressive and audiences can sense the power of Tao (see figures 5 to 10): the scenes are interspersed with such distant and empty shots. The landscape and the plateau reflect grandeur and quietness. The imageries (a

(Figure 5)



(Figure 6)

(Figure 7)



(Figure 8)

(Figure 9)

(Figure 10)

number of extreme long shots) of the soldier walking his way to the village indicate the juxtaposition of man and nature: the former only occupies a tiny portion of the frames which

symbolise both the harmony between man and nature and the helplessness of an individual's destiny when faced with the natural world. In the film Cui Qiao tries to break with the feudal system and pursue her own happiness. Tragically Cui Qiao's struggle ends up with her being swallowed up by nature as she disappears into the Yellow River.

Cui Qiao's struggle in *Yellow Earth* explores the consequences of repressing human nature. Although the film places this oppression squarely within feudal ideology and expresses an 'anti-feudalist' theme, it is still closely linked to the cultural and political context of 1980s' China when the conformity of communism in the post-Cultural Revolution period began to be questioned. If we position this discourse in relation to 1980s' China, then *Yellow Earth's* symbolic meaning becomes clearer. The individualism in the films of the Fifth Generation can be summed up in two words: oppression and resistance. Although for the director Chen, the oppression comes mainly from feudal influence and communist rigid political ideology, this kind of oppression is often represented by cinematic visualization in this film. The spiritual shackles are often represented by the immense of the earth, which is silent and sometimes creates a suffocating atmosphere for the viewers. Zhang's cinematography presents a coherent symbolic representation of the above intention. Zhang employs many *plan-vides* in this film. For Taoist philosophy, the emptiness embraces everything. Thus the *plan-vides* in this film actually possess profound symbolic meaning. In *Yellow Earth*, the infertile soil constructs a vast visual landscape and symbolizes a force (history, tradition and politics) that oppresses individual innate nature. The visual representation of this feeling of oppression on the big screen becomes the most distinctive and formative filmic language and mise-en-scène.

This oppression is also linked to the film's narrative. Cui Ciao's tragedy debunks the failure of the promised salvation advertised by the Communist Party and in this film, characterized by the soldier Gu. The tragic ending symbolizes the ageless suffering of Chinese peasants in the utopia of Communist ideology. This film, like many other films of the Fifth Generation,

moves its narrative to a remote countryside (the yellow earth of Western China) and presents powerful criticisms of both communist ideology and the Confucian and feudal tradition. Through Cui Ciao's attempt to run away from the marriage ordered by her father (the only powerful figure of a family), Chen is able to cover the themes of individual anxiety and resistance to communist ideology as well as exploring Confucian past.

Primitive cultural forms such as the folk songs of Shanbei and the superstitious ceremony to beg for rain are portrayed by Chen. The remote countryside (nature) of Shanbei becomes the major setting for the filmic narrative. This is partly due to a deep desire to engage with nature and partly because it was much easier to avoid film censorship by placing the narrative in more marginalized societies. In the next section, I will further investigate the meaning of returning to nature in relation to another Fifth Generation film, *King of Children.*

Returning to nature, the consciousness of the Fifth Generation in *King of the Children*

In this section I will focus on Chen's third film *King of Children.* Chen described *King of the Children* as "a film that surpasses the value of individual existence and is more interested in the phenomenological world" (Chen, 1987: 286 trans Li). The influence of Taoism and Confucianism is once again clearly reflected in this film both in terms of narrative and visual representation. The story is set in the middle of the Cultural Revolution when Chairman Mao called upon all the young students and intellectuals to go to countryside to receive re-education by peasants and workers there. Like thousands of 'Intellectual Youth', Laogar has been sent to a village in South-western China for seven years. Once there, Laogar receives an assignment to teach in a county school. The educational system is completely in shambles during the Cultural Revolution and Laogar soon realizes that his students do not even have textbooks. His student Wang Fu tells him that the main activity of a teacher is to copy text from a worn-out textbook to the blackboard in the classroom. Then the students copy the same to their notebooks. The textbook is saturated with communist slogans that are

useless to students' everyday lives. Laogar also realized that his students do not even know how to read and write beyond copying revolutionary slogans. So he decides to abandon this official teaching method and instead, teach his students how to express themselves. As a result he is fired by the school and is forced to go back to his previous production team. Before his departure, Laogar leaves his dictionary to his favourite student, Wang Fu, with his note on the dictionary "Do not copy anymore – not even the dictionary".

In this film, in contrast to many Chinese intellectuals in that period, being sent to countryside does not depress Laogar, who lives idly. Chen avoids both the self-pity of 'scar literature' and the idealised images of orthodox and pastoral ideas. As argued earlier, he uses the past to explore the present. Laogar's case in *King of the Children* portrays a character of "half Taoist" and "half Confucian" (Jingfu, 1999: 121). The reason for Jingfu (1999) to suggest that Laogar is a "half Confucian" may be that as a Chinese intellectual, Laogar is first of all a Confucian follower. However, the film traces the origin of the Cultural Revolution not only to communist ideology but also to traditional Chinese culture, since the rigid disciplines and rules advertised by feudal past and then by the CPC also oppressed individual initiative through the cultural practice of copying. When Laogar is ordered to be a teacher in high school, he hesitates because he believes that the acquiring of knowledge is useless in a period of chaos. Laogar's mind here is subject to Taoist influence.

> By emptying their hearts, and filling their bellies, weakening their intelligence, and toughing their sinews, even striving to make the people knowledgeless and desireless, indeed he sees to it that if there be any who have knowledge, they dare not interfere. Yet through his actionless activity all things are duly regulated.
>
> (Lao Tzu, 1997: 7)

It is due to Laogar's inner sense of Taoism that he frees himself from the chaos of the prevailing cultural and political climate. However, as a 'half Confucian', thinking for the first time that his knowledge is useful to others and there is still hope for next generation, he finally decides to take the job to teach the students. However, at the end of the film, Laogar teaches his students a good-bye song and tells them to live according to their innate nature.

This hope for breaking the cultural practice of copying (and obeying to both feudalism and communism) seems to be a good way to achieve a better tomorrow for individual Chinese.

The influence of Taoism can also be seen in the visual representation of this film. Chen sets the school in a mountain area on the border, which is a tranquil world far from the political regime of Beijing. The film emphasizes the beauty of nature. The cinematography is marked with long shots and extreme long short of scenery, as well as an extensive use of natural light. There are altogether thirty shots of dusk and thirty-four shots of morning. In particular, a set of *plan vides* at the beginning of the film illustrate the red foothill to the top of mountain, thatched cottage, numerous mountains, sunshine, shadow of clouds behind the cottage, all accompanied by a primitive folk song on the soundtrack. This set of shots also portrays the changes of sunshine and its shadow during different hours of a day. In these shots Chen positions the viewer so as to meditate on the passing of time in the way of a Taoist poet in faced with the natural world. "There is a shot of two and a half minutes long in *King of the Children*: the echo of valley embraced by thick fog. All I was thinking at that moment was the beauty of sound. It makes you inebriated. It is not intellectual, neither is it political. It is merely the enchantment of its cinematic colour" (Chen, 1987, trans. Li). This poetic sentiment expressed and depicted is undoubtedly Taoist. As Lao Tzu says:

> There was something formless yet complete that existed before heaven and earth; Without sound, without substance, Dependent on nothing, unchanging, All pervading, unfailing. One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven. Its true name we do not know; 'Way' is the by-name that we give it.
>
> (Lao Tzu, 1997)

Martin Heidegger claims that "The vocation of the poet is homecoming, by which the homeland is first made ready as the land of proximity to the source" (Beckman, 2000). Living in a Taoist and Confucian cultural context, the Fifth Generation had the same consciousness of homecoming: return to nature. And this consciousness helped them transform their sensibility of nature into an inner experience and visual representation which endowed their films with the characteristics of poetry. The discussion of home is always linked to place,

displacement, migrations and diaspora. National cinema has been increasingly challenged by the transnational cinema. Borders and boundaries are breaking down in terms of cultural exchange in this era of globalization. In the discussion here, the word home certainly has more profound meaning than our usage of the word in daily life. Sarup Madan (1996: 2) claims that "we speak of homecoming. This is not the usual, everyday return; it is an arrival that is significant because it is after a long absence or an arduous or heroic journey". Here in the case of the Fifth Generation, it is after the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (a long absence and arduous journey) that they started their cinematic movement of homecoming (roots-searching). Talking about home is talking about who we are, or where and what we belong to. Thus home is consequently linked to identity. The cinematic movement of homecoming in the films of the Fifth Generation is also an identification/re-examination of its cultural identity. In *King of the Children*, Laogar frees himself from political ideology and maintains his personality as 'half Taoist' and 'half Confucian'. It is also Chen's metaphor for homecoming. This metaphor is a utopian and idealised attempt which is mostly characterized by the spirit of poetry.

Chow (1995: 89-90) argues that in Chen's films "the image becomes a kind of alibi; with its full signifying power giving way to a significance that is musical in effect". Symbolic images such as the homestead, the earth, the village, the rain, the sun and the sea are important signifiers in Chinese traditional culture and they provide the same function in films of the Fifth Generation.

Although one reading of *King of the Children* could see it as seeking to position itself between culture and man, an alternative reading would situate the film between culture and life. Wu (1998) puts it in *Film Art* that if there is a conflict in *King of the Children*, then it is that between life and culture. If we examine the structure of its plot, the use of camera, color design and filmic language, the film could be divided into two opposite points: one of the representations of man and nature; the other of representation of culture. When presenting life,

the film depicts needfire on mountain, flowing clouds, children cowherds and moving cattle. Things symbolizing life and vitality are presented virtually without soundtrack. The world of life is a silent world. And when presenting culture, contrarily, it is a world with sound. Here the two poles are presented and a cultural and philosophical question arise: which force is more powerful, culture or life? (Wu, 1998: 2, trans. Li)

Another critic Li (1988: 2, trans. Li) notes: "the film represents a series of cultural and philosophical connotations, which illustrate the antimony of life and culture." For Li, barren and savage nature in the film has become a character opposing the human. And this opposition contains profound reflection and criticism. Thus, *King of the Children* could be viewed as a film of anti-tradition, anti-education and anti-culture. It is a film of cultural nihilism or of an alternative culture from a Taoist perspective.

As argued above, the protagonist, Laogar, is a typical Taoist or a character of 'half Taoism' and 'half Confucian', the viewpoints of Wu and Li appear to be incorrect. We cannot deny that the film implies 'anti-tradition' and 'anti-order' views. However, the most important theme of this film is the effort of trying to establish a cultural consciousness of 'non-order'. This consciousness can only exist in a primitive, natural and civilian society. The film offers a Taoist ideal society where people break with the routinism of communist ideology and live in accordance with Tao. The peace of nature and the strong force of life within nature stand opposed to the strong political ideology in Chinese society during the period after the Cultural Revolution. People were thirsting to break with the routinism and severe political manipulation of the communist regime, and sought to regain their individuality. Nature seemed to be the best means to do this. *King of the Children* gives audiences an answer: individual should live in harmony with nature; and culture itself can gain its life from nature. This is the ultimate theme of the film. It is not about the conflict between culture and life, but about the harmony and reconciliation between culture and life. The film symbolically reflects Chen's ideas of breaking with the mainstream culture manipulated by communist ideology. This once again, reminds us

the Tao.

> Without leaving his door, he knows everything under heaven. Without looking out of his window, he knows all the ways of heaven. For the further one travels, the less one knows. Therefore the Sage arrives without going. Sees all without looking, does nothing, yet achieves everything.
>
> (Lao Tzu, 1997: 101)

According to Lao Tzu, if one wishes a harmonious life, he or she should live in accordance to Tao, practicing inaction. This discourse points to a Taoist way of life which, for Chen, will be able to free Chinese people from the chaotic, vulgar world. Facing the chaos left by Cultural Revolution and the still rigid political pressure, it may be easier for Chinese people to adopt a Taoist way of life, which in turn, help one to regain his/her innate nature as an individual.

In a similar way to Chen, Zhang also portrays primitive culture in a remote countryside in his masterpiece *Red Sorghum*. Primitive culture and nature became two devices that the auteurs of the Fifth Generation used to present powerful critiques of the Cultural Revolution and to identify a more benign cultural identity for the Chinese people enduring the oppression of communist ideology (particularly the Cultural Revolution). In the next section I will focus on Zhang's *Red Sorghum.*

Yimou Zhang's *Red Sorghum*: primitive desire and self-liberation of human nature

According to Bordwell (2008: 153), "art cinema motivates its narrative by two principles: realism and authorial expressivities". Film scholarship has argued that the cinema of the Fifth Generation was a 'New Cinema' and it was often compared with French New Wave Cinema (Ni and Berry 2002, Zhang 2004). Indeed, their films are made with self-consciousness that marks them out from their predecessors. This differentiation occurs across all aspects of the films, from character types to plot structure, themes and locations. Explorations of sexuality

are also a hallmark of the Fifth Generation (e.g. *Red Sorghum, Jou Du* and *Farewell My Concubine*) and in addition to adding to the films' international appeal they also construct a particular kind of reality. As Bordwell (2008: 153) explains "part of this reality is sexual; the aesthetics and commerce of the art cinema often depend upon an eroticism..." After working as a cameraman on Chen's *Yellow Earth*, Zhang made his debut as a director with *Red Sorghum*, a portrait of Chinese rural life during the Japanese invasion in 1937. When Zhang decided to be a director, he felt that the novel *Red Sorghum Family* (published in China's most influential literary magazine *Harvest* by Mo Yan in 1987) was ideal for his directorial debut. As Chen explains: "Zhang's cinematography employs vivid color. When he read the novel *Red Sorghum Family*, he found that it was a perfect case for the art of cinematography. Of course, the story also captured his heart" (Chen, 1995, trans Li).

'My grandma and my grandpa' are two protagonists in the film. For Zhang, I think one important attraction of the story is the character "my grandma". Similar to the oppressed protagonist Cui Qiao in *Yellow Earth*, this character is also a sexually oppressed woman in *Red Sorghum*. "Recent scholarship on Fifth Generation films and melodramas of the 1980s has often focused on the construction of sexual difference and the representation of women" (Reynaud, 1998: 544). Zhang's films have consistently featured Gong Li and his casting of her has become a key focus of academic film studies in the West. For the Westerners, Gong Li brings sensuality and eroticism to Chinese Cinema (Reynaud, 1998). According to Mulvey (1993):

> The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking'. But this wish is first and foremost fulfilled on the female body. 'In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness.
>
> (Mulvey, 1993: 11)

However, Zhang's innovation is that *Red Sorghum* offers a reversal of the traditional subject/object of the gaze as described by Mulvey (1993) as being at the heart of visual pleasure. In the film there are several instances when there is an active female gaze on the male protagonist indicating an awakening of (and permission to have) an autonomous female sexuality. The historical setting of the film provides Zhang with a good excuse for this bold behavior in this film. It would have been impossible to have generated a contemporary exploration like this under the PRC regime because of severe film censorship. Zhang, as many other filmmakers of the Fifth Generation, used period pieces to discuss contemporary issues and construct idealized protagonists under the noses of the ruling regime.


Figure 11

Sexuality in *Red Sorghum* (see figure 11) is explored in relation to notions of the repression of drives and instincts but this exploration is not solely about the role of sexuality itself; it is also an allegorical exploration of the individual and the State. Obviously since 1949, the communist state was positioned in society as structurally superior to the individual. In a similar way to *Yellow Earth*'s exploration of human creativity and energy, *Red Sorghum* pursues questions of desire and sexuality to question the expected conformity of behaviour under the communist regime.

Red Sorghum uses first person narration to tell the story of 'my grandpa and my grandma'. The narration is of course unreliable, as the narrator does not have direct experience of many elements of the story. As a result the events take on a legendary aspect, which adds to the mythical exploration of identity (particularly individual human identities). At the beginning of the film, 'my grandma' the central female protagonist is forced into an arranged marriage with a much older man in exchange for a donkey that he offers to her father. On her way to

her new husband, a bandit attacks the wedding procession and the first reversal of the traditionally passive implications of the sexual gaze is explored. The lascivious response of this female character to the bandit (the film's male protagonist and the man destined to become 'my grandpa') disrupts viewing expectations based on Orientalist views of dutiful female passivity (Reynaud, 1997).

When the Fifth Generation caught the attention of Westerner film festivals, Gong Li, for many Western audiences, became the signifier of Chinese cinema (in the same way that actresses such as say Catherine Deneuve and Juliette Binoche became internal and external symbols of France). She played the female leading role in many of Zhang's internationally renowned films. It is *Red Sorghum* that helped Gong Li to catapult to domestic and international fame. The film is also significant because it challenges Confucian/Taoist models of male-female relations. The *placement* of femininity and masculinity within the Chinese tradition (especially Confucianism) does not coincide with the Western construction of gender. Within Confucian family values, the female is positioned at the lowest level of this patriarchy and is always oppressed in terms of sexuality. From this perspective, Zhang's *Red Sorghum* posed a new and revolutionary turn in the representation of femininity in China.

In the film 'my grandma' avoids her arranged marriage by use of her active sexuality. By having sex with 'my grandpa' in a red sorghum field her life takes a different turn. The bold expression of their sexual act is adventurous in Mainland Chinese cinema in the 1980s and would seem to deliberately suggest the idea of potency and autonomy. This is both sexual and political in terms of the power to break social, moral constraints and with feudal (and communist) society. Zhang directly attacks feudal ideology in this film and indirectly also communist ideology and, in so doing, he also generates a specific idea of nation that is not in line with a political version of feudalism and communism which is current in contemporary China. He draws on notions of loyalty and the collective memory of the Japanese invasion in the 1930s. At the end of the film, when facing the invasion of a foreign enemy, 'my grandma'

and the villagers where she lives sacrifice their own lives against Japanese for the sake of the country. The ending ties in with loyalty to the communist state but also expressed the emphasis in Confucianism of loyalty and patriotism to *tudi*. This is an obligation that takes precedence over all other moral obligations. In the film 'my grandpa and my grandma' win the trust of villagers and work hard to turn the wine workshop into prosperity before the Japanese invasion. This is an endeavor demanded by Confucianism. The theme of cultivation lies at the heart of Chinese civilization. As a key film of the Fifth Generation, *Red Sorghum* has a vital role in projecting a complex understanding of past and present Mainland Chinese national identity.

After the conformity of the Cultural Revolution, *Red Sorghum* shows Chinese audiences truly humanized characters for the first time in many years. The film emphasizes the need to live one's life according to one's nature and the spiritual necessity of freedom. As the film title suggests, Zhang paid particular attention to the use of the red colour. This could be considered a representation of freedom, exuberance and 'primitive passion' (Chow 1995), a passion that has been denied by followers the imposition of Communism that sought to homogenise Chinese people with rigid political ideology. Therefore, *Red Sorghum* examines a complicated historical and political territory and in a way that excited viewers in Mainland China and overseas alike. As Luo (1988: 39, trans. Li) almost evangelizes, the representations projected in *Red Sorghum* characterize "my soulful admiration for life". Soon after the film was screened, there emerged across the country a *Red Sorghum Phenomenon* with enthusiastic debates and box-office success. *Red Sorghum*'s exploration of nature and vitality sent a shock wave through Mainland China in the 1980s. As Du states:

> Red Sorghum is a product of such a roaring, optimistic time characterized by hope and national revitalisation and, in turn, promotes the prevailing spirit of the period. It is therefore no accident that the film reaped huge box-office profits and received wide acclaim from all sides.
>
> (Du, 2008)

Red sorghum field became one of the most powerful symbols being cinematically projected internationally. Both *Yellow Earth* and *Red Sorghum* have taken *tudi* as their spiritual inspiration and connection with the past and with the future. Zhang has endowed the earth with different significance from Chen. In *Red Sorghum*, the earth becomes a symbol of desire and vitality. This is Zhang's personal vision of the earth in *Red Sorghum.* It is not the poor infertile but sacred land portrayed in *Yellow Earth.* Instead, it is a powerful space full of desire where human passions can run wild. Wang (1998: 224-225, trans. Li) believes that a number of symbolic sequences such as the red sorghum fields refer to primitive, wild and continuous vitality. 'My grandpa' and 'my grandma' are not only young people pursuing individual freedom, but represent Chinese people with full vitality out of social and rational constrains. These ideas are boldly represented by Zhang in *Red Sorghum* (1987) and represented the changing sociopolitical context – that is, a more open atmosphere (Zhang, 2004: 249) which blossomed in the years immediately before the Tiananmen Square Event in 1989 and which made this film possible.

Although *Red Sorghum*, like many other films of the Fifth Generation, avoid urban environments and does not present a direct commentary on the contemporary political scene, the film takes on the cultural infrastructure embedded in both China post-Cultural Revolution and thousands of years of Chinese history. In returning to nature and primitivism, the films of the Fifth Generation expose and criticize the current communist ideology and existing feudal habits. Tian's *On the Hunting Ground* is another example of returning to Chinese cultural roots, in the way it reemphasizes traditions and Confucian philosophy.

***On the Hunting Ground*: a utopian conception of society and culture**

"Tian Zhuangzhuang's films, though less well-known by Western viewers, were well noted by directors such as Martin Scorsese."

(Rose, 2008)

In the following section I will be focussing on another key film from the Fifth Generation, Tian's *On the Hunting Ground*. The film explores life in Mongolia. Berry and Farquhar (1999: 82) have argued that "the film adopted an almost 'cinema-verité style' of ethnographic filmmaking". However, the film is actually not a documentary of life in Mongolia. My analysis of this film will build on the previous discussions in this chapter by further examining the ways in which key Fifth Generation directors contributed to Mainland Chinese cinema. I will argue that, by projecting a utopian conception of society and culture, these directors also addressed contemporary social, political and economic dilemmas.

Not as well known outside China as Chen and Zhang, Tian does however make an important contribution to the Fifth Generation's examination of the relationship between man and nature. Based on two differing philosophies, there are drastic differences between Eastern and Western conceptions of nature. As George explains:

> Western philosophy, with its roots in both Greek philosophy and the Hebraic tradition developed a dualistic approach to reality, distinguishing man from nature, subject from object, mind from matter. The Hebraic-Christian tradition added the notion of transcendence, completing the ultimate separation--that of God from this creation…Where Western dualism led to an opposition of man and nature, Chinese monism led to a harmony between the two.
>
> (George, 2008)

Fifth Generation films work to mediate the relationship between nature and mankind and their concern is for the reconciliation of nature and humankind. The synthesis of man and nature symbolises the very basis of Taoism. According to Lao Tzu:

> Tao gave birth to the One; the One gave birth successively to two things, three things, up to ten thousand.[3] These ten thousand creatures cannot turn their backs to the shade without having the sun on their bellies, and it is on this blending of the breaths that their harmony[4] depends...
>
> (Lao Tzu, 1997: 31)

The relationship between man and nature in the films of the Fifth Generation exactly mirrors this Taoist philosophy. Once nature is endowed with the attribute of life, man gains power from his interaction with nature. Unlike the polar and oppositional relationship between man and nature in Western modern civilization, when the Fifth Generation represented man's challenges to nature, they sought to embrace primitive sensations and passions instead of trying to conquer nature. In the films of the Fifth Generation, we see a kind of struggle between nature and life, but we also see more reconciliation and coexistence between the two. At the same time, the Fifth Generation's films contribute to a national Mainland Chinese cinema. They project passion and resultant possibilities for freedom and life.

On the Hunting Ground is a film about the grasslands in Inner Mongolia. Besides the simple plot of the story, the film uses the idea of the hunting ground and grasslands as two natural backgrounds in which human nature's connection to living is represented. The story starts in spring, and after going through the four seasons of a year, it returns to spring again. During the alternation of the four seasons, man's history elapses on the rural grassland and humankind's primitivism and humanism are harmoniously united.

As the literal meaning of its Chinese title *Lie Chang Zha Sa* suggests the film gives emphasis to the 'hunting decree' (the rules of hunting). These laws are different from laws in modern society, which are enforced by a national judicial system. The film proclaims three rules of hunting: the strict prohibition of poaching; the prohibition of killing protected species; and the

---

[3] i.e., everything.

[4] This symbolizes the fact that these elements are themselves a mixture of light and dark, hard and soft, water and fire, etc.

decree that the first kill should be given to an old person without family support. It is clear that this hunting decree is more a moral framework rather than an actual law. This moral criterion is exactly what Confucianism has emphasized for centuries in Chinese history. Originally developed among hunters of grasslands, the hunting decree has become a commonly accepted code and standard of morality, which has influenced and shaped the way of life for all Chinese hunters and their descendants. Confucianism points out the importance of moral leadership in society. As Confucius says:

> Lead the people with administrative injunctions and put them in their place with penal law, and they will avoid punishments but will be without a sense of shame. Lead them with excellence and put them in their place through roles and ritual practices, and in addition to developing a sense of shame, they will order themselves harmoniously.
>
> (Confucius, 1996: 3)

The 'ideal' society that the film tries to establish is a society in which human beings and nature live in harmony. To achieve this must be united under the power of the 'decree' which, in turn, becomes a kind of simple law to harmonize human relationships. The hunting decree in this film adds an element of control or a brake on human tendencies to evil and checks impulses towards barbarous behaviour. In the narrative, the protagonist Zhabu steals his component's quarry. According to the hunting decree Zhabu is punished to suffer humiliation by hanging the head of the quarry in front of Zhabu's house. The symbolic function of the decree in this film is to suggest that the Chinese people need to strive for a confident self-respect, which will also allow them to learn to respect others. The political overtones of this message are unmistakable. The decree is put forward as a benign natural law mirroring a set of moral standards proposed by Confucius. To govern by example and consensus or, as Confucius (1996) states, "to govern by virtue", challenges oppressive dictatorial rule. Thus, Tian uses a relic of Chinese traditional culture (the hunting decree) as an allegorical symbol for modern society. Tian's film suggests that life in the future would be improved by close adherence to traditional values/decrees of moral behavior in line with a Confucian moral standard. And this 'hope', signifies a utopian ideal for Chinese society to aspire to in the post Cultural Revolution.

A re-examination of *On the Hunting Ground* and its central concern with the decree, still has its significance in today's China twenty years after it was made. As I explained in Chapter Three, ever since the 'Opening Policy' came into being in 1978 Communist China has undergone drastic socio-political and economic changes. The world has witnessed the paradox of mainland China's economic miracle and simultaneous political status quo. The idolatry of money and extreme individualism have become, nevertheless, the central ideological commonality among the Chinese people. As Madsen (1998: 114) notes, the fact that since 1949 the Chinese have grown up in an atmosphere of atheism, religious practices having been restricted or driven underground since the people's revolution in 1949. After the Cultural Revolution, when communism as an ideology began to be questioned more widely (Madsen, 1998), a moral vacuum emerged. *On the Hunting Ground* therefore explores how the values of Chinese traditional culture might offer a way out of the conflicts of modern society. As argued by Berry and Farquhar (1999), this film generated heated controversy regarding the cultural perplexity and moral vacuum in 1980s's China and furthered a philosophical exploration of the relationship between man and nature, the past and the future.

In the next section of this chapter I will discuss the ways in which Fifth Generation directors became cultural spokespersons for China and in so doing reinforced their role in the construction and projection of a mainland Chinese identity.

The Fifth Generation: cultural spokespersons and avant-garde artists

The enthusiastic reception of Fifth Generation films in the West and their allied critical success on the international film festival circuit gave the key directors of the Fifth Generation special status as architects of an authentically 'national' mainland 'Chinese' cinema. In the 1980s, the Fifth Generation directors (Zhang and Chen in particular) became cultural critics in the Cultural Heat in the 1980s. Also, their status allowed them to be seen over time as more than cultural critics but also cultural spokespeople for China itself.

Generally speaking, the role of cultural spokesperson can be considered to be in tune with the spirit of the time. Indeed, the zeitgeist of 1980s Mainland China can be typified by a break with the propaganda of mainstream communist politics, and the ideologies put forward by mainstream cinema and literature. As cultural spokespersons the Fifth Generation did not echo the ideologies of the mainstream but, through their artistic practices, acted as critics of it.

During the 1980s in China an important mainstream slogan was 'looking forward'. The Fourth Generation filmmakers believed that darkness and anxiety belonged to the past and brightness and happiness would certainly follow in the future. It was usual for their films to have what P. B. Shelley (2008) calls "if winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" This perspective, of course, chimed perfectly with dominant ideology. The Fifth Generation, however, refused to join in this chorus. As Chen said: "there is a mood of euphoria and joy after the end of the Cultural Revolution in Chinese literature and cinema" (Chen, 1986: 264, trans Li). But for Chen himself, as other auteur of the Fifth Generation, a more complicated cultural/moral crisis existed beneath the surface of this superficial disengagement with the Cultural Revolution. The Fifth Generation did not want to follow this mainstream ideology and they intended to re-examine Chinese traditional culture and establish an alternative cultural framework for the Chinese.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, in classical revolutionary films (the Eight Sample Films) such as *The White Haired Girl*and *The Red Detachment of Women*, the slogan of 'Let's look forward' has acted as the main theme. *Yellow Earth* is the first film that questions this ideology. This film shows a drastic change from mainstream Chinese cinema in terms of filmic language and narration through its cinematography, mise-en-scène and by questioning the happiness promised by communism. In China, although the film was praised for its innovation in terms of filmic language, it was criticized for its 'self-Orientalism' and its exposure of the dark side of China to the West. This film lacks the mood of 'new era' espoused in dominant ideology for as Lin suggests, "no development of Chinese socialist society could be seen in this film" (1986:

17, trans. Li). For many other critics both in and outside of China (Chow, 1995, Dai, 2002, Dai, 1993, Zhang, 1995), the films of the Fifth Generation were understood to be informed by an Orientalist tendency. "This kind of film is really shot for the casual pleasures of foreigners" (Dai, 1993: 336). Chow also notes:

> ...The ethnicity—Chineseness—of Zhang's films is also the sign of cross-cultural commodity fetishism, a production of value between cultures. Precisely because ethnic practices are theatricalized as arcane and archaic, Zhang is showing a 'China' that is at once subalternized and exoticized by the West.
>
> (Chow, 1995: 170)

As demonstrated in this chapter and the previous chapter, the films of the Fifth Generation are not an exhibitionist self-display, or what Chow (1995: 171) calls "the Oriental's Orientalism".. In a country like China where communist ideology manipulated the face of history, the starting point of these films is to restore the truth of history and explore the innate nature of human being. These two points should be understood as linchpins of the films of the Fifth Generation. Their confrontation against mainstream ideology and their efforts in search of truth, as represented by the innate nature of human being, brought these directors to a point where they sought to re-examine Chinese traditional culture. The centuries-old earth outside of 'modern civilization' (where feudal influences dominates the village) in *Yellow Earth*, and people living on that earth for generations, could be seen as exact representations of 'the truth'. It is a truth of Chinese history and the original condition of the life of Chinese.

Auteurs of the Fifth Generation subverted the mainstream culture and filmmaking of communist ideology by placing their filmic narratives spatially outside the mainstream culture and by focusing on a marginalized community, characterized as primitive and free of modern influence. By so doing, the films of the Fifth Generation presented powerful cultural criticism of communist ideology. Thus their films formed part of the Cultural Heat in 1980s' China. From the 1990s onwards they became internationally renowned through international film festivals and their success made them attractive to the communist powers as a means to

represent a successful China. The national identity projected in their films also underwent changes. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the appointment of Zhang as the director of the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics 2008 and the director of the sixty anniversary of the founding of the PRC 2009 disassociated Zhang from his legacy as the auteur of the Fifth Generation in the 1980s.

It may seem absurd to say that the Fifth Generation initiated a turn of Chinese cinema towards modernity when the most of their filmmaking focused on countryside and peasants and projected a 'rural identity'. However, their obsession with primitive and folk customs through their cinematic 'roots-searching' reveals what might be called nostalgia for the present. As in the humanist tradition of Chinese intellectuals they tried to reconstruct Chinese cultural identity by criticizing communist ideology and its invoking of a feudal past in the post Cultural Revolution period. Or, as what Hobsbawm (1983) put forward, this rural identity might be considered as a re-invention of tradition in response to (and against) the Chinese government's own appropriation of 'Chinese' tradition.

John Orr (1993: 1) points out that "in the cinema the modern is already history. But it has never been replaced. This is the paradox which confronts us in looking at film over the last fifty years". The films of the Fifth Generation can be considered as a critical rethinking of Chinese traditional culture and at the same time a subversion of Maoist ideology after ten years of Cultural Revolution. Hobsbawm (1983) argued that we could best understand the nature and appeal of nations by analysing national traditions, and with the idea in mind that national traditions are one kind of invented traditions. Thus the cultural connotations of the films of the Fifth Generation are rich and worthy of further exploration within a Chinese context. The comparative open atmosphere in the 1980s gave the Fifth Generation more freedom to pursue their dream of filmmaking.

Although political ideology had great influence on China since 1949, the historical background that the Fifth Generation emerged from was not that negative. The achievements of the Fifth Generation are closely linked to the 'cultural heat' of the 1980s. Indeed, these achievements could be viewed as a part of the cultural innovation, although the Tiananmen Square Event on the summer of 1989 brought this state of affairs to a temporary end. As Hayward (2000: 418) puts it, the massacre "only brought further repression and censorship to film-makers (other than those attempting to produce commercial products such as action movies)". This is probably one reason for the decline of Chinese mainland cinema in terms of art creativity in the 1990s. Yet this is an issue hardly explored because of the sensitivity of the subject in China. In fact, although internationally acclaimed, the history of Chinese Fifth Generation has always been a history of censorship. The first Fifth Generation film *One and Eight* shares the same fate as many of their films: the authorities allowed the film only after censoring and re-editing. Surprisingly, the film was a great success in China and abroad.

After analysing the characteristics of the works of the Fifth Generation, I believe that the most distinctive character is that they possess a new concept of film narrative, vision and mise-en-scène. In Chow's (1995) *Primitive Passion*, she argues the relationship between China's modernity and the films of the Fifth Generation. Indeed, much scholarship emphasised the emergence of the Fifth Generation and China's road to modernity. Art, as a reflection of social phenomenon and consciousness, is always associated with its historical context. The films of the Fifth Generation can be viewed as a reflection (one that was also revolutionary) of both the historical period in question and also the mind of the Chinese intellectuals in the 1980s.

Conclusion

> A national cinema is obliged to enact, express and represent the national lifeways and aspirations of people…through projecting these specificities it finds its identity and its

market niche in the international cinema.

(O'Regan, 1996: 176)

This chapter has discussed the Fifth Generation and the rural identity projected in their films. The central point of this chapter has been to understand why the focus on rural identity emerged and how the films projected a new vision for society based on traditional values and philosophies rather than mainstream communist ideologies. The influence of Chinese traditional culture in the films of the Fifth Generation is unmistakable. Taoism actually demands people to practise inaction, living a simple life, and reducing desires in a state of genuine quietude (Jingfu, 1994). It emphasized that human beings can achieve freedom from the struggling, vulgar world. Under the influences of Taoism, the Fifth Generation re-connected with the earth and returned to nature. They sought to explore the vitality of human beings that had been lost in the Cultural Revolution.

Based on their real life experiences as 'Intellectual Youth', transplanted by force to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, the Fifth Generation directors started a cultural journey for themselves and, filmically, also for China by undertaking a search for their traditional roots. Their focus rested on the innate nature of human beings and their films projected an anti-mainstream ideology through the exploration of the past and traditional values. Facing the chaos and vacuum of belief after the Cultural Revolution, they tried to restore the broken bridge of Chinese traditional culture and history. But their vision is not a simple recognition of Confucian or Taoist, traditions. It is an interweaving of them in service of cultural critique of contemporary China. In this sense, Dai notes that:

> ...on the one hand, it is "roots-searching"—the renaissance of national culture, traditions and spirits; on the other hand, it is the enlightenment—criticism, and farther rejection of national culture, traditions and even exposure of the inferiority of nation.
>
> (Dai, 2000: 45)

However, what may be the most significant contribution of the Fifth Generation, in re-envisioning Mainland China and its cinema, is the concept that 'roots-searching' and

modernity were not to be perceived as oppositional. The key issue here is how to understand the traditional culture in their films. The position these directors adopted towards Chinese traditional culture is worthy of further exploration. Hobsbawm (1983: 2) argues that 'invented tradition' are "response to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetitions". Thus for Hobsbawm (1983), invented traditions must be distinguished from both custom and convention or routine. This is further complicated in China in the 1980s as the custom, convention or routine are re-interpreted or re-written by communist government. In this respect, it is not difficult to claim that the Fifth Generation are cinematically rebelled against, and reinvented, a past which is not in line with their present political mainstream propaganda.

Habermas (2001) also argues for a reflective criticism based on a common memory of the past. For Habermas, a critical attitude and common remembrance are an integral part of individual and collective historical identity. The Fifth Generation developed a new style or a new method, which explored nature (and the inborn nature of human beings) as a recipe to regain individualism, and to reconnect with the traditions and folk-customs at the roots of national culture. Together these elements became the signifiers for a progressive Mainland Chinese identity firmly based in the relationship between traditional values and modernity.

In the next chapter I will investigate the cultural complexities of Hong Kong cinema. Along with Taiwan and Mainland China, Hong Kong cinema is also regarded as a particular national cinema, though it is positioned within the framework of a Chinese national context. Special emphasis will be paid to the cultural identity of Hong Kong New Wave Cinema and the influence of Chinese traditional culture as part of the mixture of Hong Kong's cultural hybridity.

CHAPTER FIVE:

EXPLORING THE CULTURAL COMPLEXITIES OF HONGKONG CINEMA

"If identity does not proceed, in a straight, unbroken line, from some fixed origin, how are we to understand its formation?"

(Hall, 2006:436)

Introduction

Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are three distinctive Chinese language cinemas that have close but problematic ties/links with each other. However, while emphasizing the emergence of auteur directors as signifier of national styles within the three Chinese language cinemas, the thesis also problematises the overemphasis of the nation-state as a source of identity. Based on Hall's (2006) assertion regarding cultural/national identity, the thesis examines the influence of deep-seated cultural factors/philosophies such as those of Confucianism and Taoism that are shared beyond geographical and political boundaries.

Scholarship of Chinese cinema has generally been conducted in terms of geographical distinctions or 'three Chinas': Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Zhang (2004) criticizes Crofts for his positioning of Hong Kong cinema as a 'nation-state' cinema. Indeed, how can we ignore (if not erase) the fact that Hong Kong has long been a British colony until 1997 and is now a special administrative region of China? Hong Kong has never gained its national status. Zhang's book (2004) occupies a vital position in Chinese film scholarship suggesting that this geographical determinism limits and, to some extent, ignores the continuity of Chinese cultural tradition within the three cinemas. Higson suggests that:

> In considering cinema in terms of cultural identity, it is necessary also to pay attention to the process by which cultural hegemony is achieved within each nation-state; to examine the internal relations of diversification and unification, and the power to institute one particular aspect of a pluralistic cultural formation as politically dominant and to standardise or naturalise it.
>
> (Higson, 2002: 139)

Zhang (2004) argues that many 'Chinas' have been projected following the global circulation of films from the three Chinese cinemas and this thesis highlights 'Chineseness' as exactly such a "particular aspect of a pluralistic cultural formation" (Higson, 2002:139). This study explores the possibility of a more unified identity which, instead of being situated within one particular nation-state as Higson (2002) argues, surpasses territorial boundaries and is further manifest in Hollywood films directed by auteur directors of Chinese origin which will be explored in Chapter Seven. The previous two chapters have examined the cultural identity projected by Chinese national (Mainland, the Fifth Generation) cinema by conducting research intersecting a generational approach with an auteurist approach. This chapter and the following chapter focus respectively on Hong Kong cinema and Taiwanese cinema in order to examine elements of unity and differentiation in terms of the cultural identity of each cinema. These two chapters will also establish a critical context for Chapter Seven where I will discuss the authorial signatures of auteur directors of Chinese origin as signifier of 'Chineseness' in Hollywood.

Since 1997, interest in Hong Kong cinema has grown among film scholars and studies of Hong Kong cinema have been rapidly developed by both Western and Chinese film scholars. Hong Kong is one of the centers of global film industry, and the biggest film-exporting centre in South East Asia (Teo, 1998). Hong Kong cinema (more specifically martial arts films) has broad influence not only in Japan, South Korea, the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, but has also been widely circulated in Europe and America since 1970s. Teo (1998: 550) notes: "The discovery of Hong Kong cinema in the West essentially began in the 1970s with the importation of Kung Fu action pot-boilers". Genre study associated with nationalism in a post-colonial context has occupied a central position among Hong Kong film scholarship. As highlighted by Abbas (1997), however, ultimately post-colonial approaches represent the

majority of scholarship on Hong Kong cinema.

Instead of simply positioning Hong Kong cinema in a post-colonial or genre context, this chapter takes a different direction and traces its cultural roots to argue that the cultural identity negotiated between its cultural motherland (China) and political motherland (UK) is what is significant in terms of the kinds of national identity that is projected in Hong Kong films. Also, instead of repeating the academic interest in Hong Kong martial arts films, this chapter will investigate 'Chineseness' as a cultural origin/theme in Hong Kong cinema and also the idea of 'Hongkongness' as a local imaginary. A crucial point here is the fact that on the one hand, Hong Kong has the same Chinese traditional and cultural roots as the mainland, whilst on the other hand, *tudi* which, as argued in Chapter Three, is regarded as the roots of Chinese civilization is geographically a set of islands (separated from the mainland and subject to different political/economic influences (important here is that Hong Kong was a British colony for over a century and established itself as a free port, where Western and Eastern cultures encountered, reencountered each other and flourished). Also part of this cultural specificity comes from its use of a different spoken dialect (Cantonese instead of Mandarin) and Hong Kong cinema is often called Cantonese cinema (Zhang 2004; Teo, 1998).

The chapter starts with a brief contextualization of Hong Kong's history and its cinematic relationship with mainland China (particularly Shanghai) with the cultural roots and cinematic connections with mainland China leading me to investigate the representation of 'Chineseness' in the film productions of the Shaw Brothers (mainly between 1930s and 1970s) and Bruce Lee's martial arts films. The next section bring us to more recent years and I will then explore the cultural identity of Hong Kong New Wave cinema in the 1980s, with special focus on auteur-director John Woo's heroism cinema. Once more, this period in the 1980s proves to be the crucial one for my study (as with the Fifth Generation in Mainland China and as it will be for Taiwan in the next chapter) I will explore the essence of 'Hongkongness' in Hong Kong cinema and argue that it is a 'local space' that occupies the Hong Kong cinematic imaginary. Then, discussions will be focused upon the cultural hybridity of Hong

Kong and the ways that Chinese traditions of Confucianism and Taoism together with the effects of post-colonialism and ideas of Orientalism all influence a distinctive Hong Kong cinema.

Hong Kong's historical and cinematic links with Mainland China

"Any discussion of Hong Kong culture must sooner or later raise the question of its relation to colonialism."

(Abbas, 1997: 1)

Hong Kong has long been positioned in the centre of conflict between Western influence and Eastern tradition. At the heart of this conflict are struggles between Orientalism and Occidentalism, post-colonialism and also Hong Kong's links with mainland China, Taiwan and Hollywood. The sociopolitical complexities of Hong Kong obviously complicate the studies of Hong Kong cinema. To examine the cultural identity of Hong Kong cinema without referring to its past, where it is strongly marked as a British colony, would not be appropriate. But the simple framing and interpretation of Hong Kong cinema as being merely a post-colonial entity also limits one's thinking about Hong Kong cinema. An understanding of Hong Kong's links (both historically and cinematically) with mainland China will also lead to better interpretation of Hong Kong's cultural complexities. However, to do this is ambitious and difficult. Theorists such as Zhang (2004) have avoided such complexities by adopting an industrial approach to articulate the 'national' of Hong Kong cinema. He also offers detailed information on film industrial links between mainland China and Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is translated from the pronunciation of its Chinese name (*Xiang Gang*). As the term suggests in Chinese, Hong Kong means the 'port of perfume'. For a long time, Hong Kong was synonymous with the word *colony*, separating from mainland China in 1842 and continuing as a British colony until 1997. As one of the last British colonies, Hong Kong played an important role on the international economic scene. Since its return to the People's

Republic of China in 1997, the international focus on Hong Kong shifted to its political identity and its relationship and future with Chinese mainland (particularly the future of democracy). This transition attracted much attention from the Western world. Within this political and historical complexity, Hong Kong also established its fame as the 'Hollywood of the East' for its film industry.

Hong Kong cinema was hardly known to people in the West before 1970s. It was the actor Bruce Lee (figure 12) and his martial arts films that brought Hong Kong cinema to international attention. As Teo notes:

> It is really the action genres that gained a cult following for Hong Kong cinema, spawning a certain misconception that the strength of the cinema is founded on only one genre, and that its history started in the early 1970s, when Bruce Lee became popular.
>
> (Teo, 1998, 550)

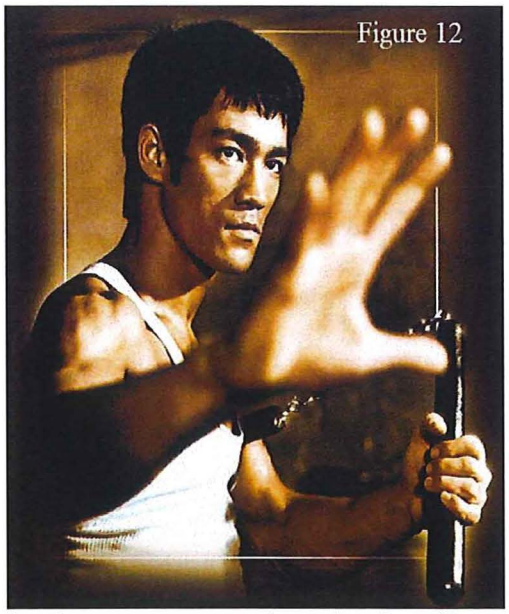


Figure 12

Indeed Bruce Lee is an icon for Hong Kong cinema and I will examine the representation of masculinity and nationalist ideology in his film when exploring 'Chineseness' in Hong Kong cinema. In fact, in terms of film history, the relationship between Hong Kong and Shanghai has long been a fruitful one and can be traced to the early twentieth century (Poshek, 2003). As discussed in Chapter Three, films were introduced into China by the agents of the Lumières Brothers in 1896. Hong Kong's film history started in the same year when the Lumières Brothers sent filmmakers to shoot documentaries in Britain's exotic colony. The first Hong Kong fiction film was produced in 1909 (Teo, 1998: 551). The prosperous period of Hong Kong cinema began in 1930s when *Lianhua Film Studio* was founded in Hong Kong (Zhang, 2004). During the Japanese occupation of China

(the Sino-Japanese War broke out in China in 1937), many Mandarin-speaking immigrants escaped from Shanghai to Hong Kong (including filmmakers, actors and production staff). The second wave of immigration occurred following the triumph of communism in mainland China in 1949. Again many filmmakers of early Shanghai cinema immigrated to Hong Kong (to name a few here: Li Hanxiang, Hu Jinquan, and Tao Qin). Film talent from Shanghai injected the Hong Kong film industry with influences from the Chinese cinematic tradition and in so doing they reshaped Hong Kong film industry. This also involved a psychological adjustment for the immigrants making Hong Kong and their cinematic experience was an important part of this.

The Shaw Brothers (Shaw Renmu and Shaw Yifu) became the major drivers for the development of Hong Kong film industry. In 1934 the Shaw Brothers set up a film studio in Hong Kong and they became the main film producers of Hong Kong films. According to Zhang's statistics in 2004, more than 1000 films have been produced by the Shaw Brothers. After the World War II, the Shaw Brothers' 'golden period' of filmmaking took place in Hong Kong between 1950s and 1970s. Approximately 700 films were produced and a number of stars emerged in this period (Zhang, 2004).

Teo (1998: 552) notes that "Cantonese movies never got over the image of being a 'fast-food' cinema: cheap, mass-produced, easily consumed and discarded". This ideology of film production is still dominant in today's Hong Kong film industry. Before the 1960s, Hong Kong had not entered its industrialized period and its economy was relatively under-developed. The social transition had not started and thus its local culture remained as a continuity of Chinese traditional culture. Hong Kong film culture was also a continuity of Chinese mainland film culture. This chapter concerns the close link between Hong Kong cinema and Chinese traditions and cultures and the Shaw Brothers' productions (which formed the majority of film production in Hong Kong) might be considered as key example of the continuing Chinese traditions and cultures within Hong Kong cinema.

'Chineseness' in Hong Kong cinema

According to Hall:

> ...it became clear that the idea of the nation is often based on naturalized myths of racial or cultural origin. That the need to assert such myths of origin was an important feature of much early post-colonial theory and writing, and that it was a vital part of the collective political resistance which focused on issues of separate identity and cultural distinctiveness...
>
> (Hall, 2006: 137)

The complexity of Hong Kong in terms of national/cultural identity can be seen to be a product of influences from China, Britain and its own Cantonese 'nativeness'. As a consequence, traditional concepts of national cinema become problematised in the case of Hong Kong. As Hall (2006: 137) suggests, however, accounts based on narrow conceptions of national identity have "come under question in more recent accounts".

Hall (2006) highlights the heterogeneity of cultural identity or cultural distinctiveness against collective imaginary. Due to historical reasons, Hong Kong has formed a particular type of local culture which I will refer to as 'Hongkongness'. I would argue that the key components of Hong Kong culture are: traditional Chinese culture (Chineseness), Western culture (which with British control on Hong Kong with strong ideological force) and the culture of Lingnan, the local area, which survived between the above two. Thus 'Hongkongness' is in fact a cultural complexity stemming from the mix of at least three cultures.

As I have indicated earlier, the Shaw Brothers were the main producers in early Hong Kong cinema and they came from Shanghai. Their early film studio in Shanghai, *Tian Yi Film Studio*, is famous for producing historical narratives, romance which advocated Chinese traditional culture. *Tian Yi Film Studio* is the predecessor of the Shaw Brothers in Hong Kong.

The tenet they embraced for their filmmaking is: reject Westernization and advocate old Chinese moral standards and develop Chinese civilization (Fu, 2003). With this in mind, they produced a number of films based on Chinese folk tales and legends in early Shanghai cinema. Thus, the Shaw Brothers developed their understanding of the interesting aspects of Chinese traditional culture and turned them into films for Chinese audience. This taste for Chinese traditions and culture inevitably influenced their filmmaking in Hong Kong cinema.

The balance between cultures is a factor as well. As argued, Hong Kong cinema deliberately avoided serious colonial (UK) censorship and focused on commercialism. Simply speaking, it has always been box-office oriented. Hong Kong cinema faced not only local audience, but it also targeted the South-eastern Asian film market where many Chinese immigrants resided. Although living in a foreign country, these Chinese immigrants could not cut their consanguinity with China. The longing for Chinese traditions and cultures spiritually helped them to 'be Chinese'. This is also an imagined (and, in Hobsbawm's (1983) sense, invented) tradition. Naturally they appreciated the representation of Chinese traditional culture in Chinese cinema. And they obviously became a potential market for the Hong Kong film industry. Thus, the representations of Chinese culture became a constant theme in Hong Kong cinema.

The Shaw Brothers' productions basically followed genre base mode of film production that focused on Hong Kong film market but also targeted South East Asia. Basic film genres included drama, martial arts films, *wuxia*, comedy and Chinese opera films. The time and space of cinematic narratives in these films vary significantly. Representations of Chinese traditions, histories and folk tales are also major themes in these films. Thus the Shaw Brothers' film productions fundamentally contributed to Chinese traditions and cultures. It is in such a context that Chinese traditional cultures of Confucianism and/or Taoism became key themes embedded in the genres of Hong Kong cinema and are manifest in the following concepts that I will discuss:

1. Ethics.

Among the productions of the Shaw Brothers, the theme of ethics frequently appeared. As argued earlier, there is a strong historical and cinematic link between Mainland China and Hong Kong. Ethics is a main theme in Chinese mainland cinema such as *An Orphan Rescues his Grandpa* (Zhang Shichuang, 1923) and *Sister Flowers* (Zheng Zhenqiu, 1934). *Year In, Year Out* (Zhu Shilin, 1955) is also an excellent film of this kind in Hong Kong cinema. For Chinese people, as emphasized by Confucianism, the importance of family is paramount. Family, which is bonded by consanguinity, is the basis of Chinese social structure and the most important 'social cell'. This Confucian ideology is based on family and extended to clans, countrymen, nation and ultimately nation-state. In Chinese traditional culture, Confucianism, as the mainstream culture of China, puts particular emphasis on ethics and its construction, leading to the establishment of a set of ethic rules. Weber notes:

> A true prophecy creates and systematically orients conduct toward one internal measure of value. In the face of this the "world" is viewed as material to the fashioned ethnically according to the norm. Confucianism in contrast meant adjustment to the outside, the conditions of the "world." A well adjusted man, rationalizing his conduct only to the degree requisite to adjustment, does not constitute a systematic unity but rather a complex of useful and particular traits.
>
> (Weber, 1968: 235)

Thus an ethical organizational structure of family has lasted for centuries in China: fatherly kindness, filial piety, elder brothers' friendliness, and younger brothers' respectfulness. There is hierarchy within family from the elders to the youngest. Extending this to the Chinese feudal society, a whole social order could be structured from emperor to his minister, from father to his sons, as illustrated in the following Confucian axiom:

> Duke Ching of Ch'I asked Master K'ung about government. Master K'ung replied saying, Let the prince be a prince, the minister a minister, the father a father and the son a son.
>
> (Confucius, 1997: 151)

The theme of ethics has not only constantly appeared in the Shaw Brothers' productions, but it has also dominated most Hong Kong martial arts and action films. In which protagonists are always bonded with family and brotherhood (such as John Woo's cinema which will be examined later in this chapter). According to Confucianism, every social role should strictly abide to his behavioural rules. The representation of Confucianism in Hong Kong cinema becomes evident for the continuity of Chinese traditions and culture in this British colony.

Among the productions of the Shaw Brothers, one typical film of traditional familial ethic is *The Magic Lamp* (Wu Jiangxiang, 1964). The story is popular among Chinese. It is about Chen Xiang who saves his mother by overcoming the toughest difficulties and fighting against evils. This film obviously follows the Confucian code regarding a son's filial piety. Another film, which should be mentioned here, is *My Young Auntie* (Liu Jiangliang, 1980). In this comedy a young lady becomes the aunt of an old man's nephews and at the same time, she has to come to terms with her social position on many levels as the old man's nephews who are also almost the same age as her. As emphasized by Confucianism, young people must respect eldership and eldership must be respectful. Although they are of almost same age, still they must follow the rules according to their positions in a family hierarchy. Thus comedies happen frequently in this film.

2. Nationalism in Hong Kong cinema

As a film genre, martial arts may be synonymous in the West with Hong Kong cinema. Li (2006: 100) states that "'Kung fu', as a cultural imaginary consecrated in Hong Kong cinema since the 1970s, was constituted in a flux of nationalism during the historical process whereby China catches up with modernity." Li's essay highlights the post-colonial concerns around national identity through Hong Kong's Kung Fu cinema. I will argue a cultural connection between this nationalist ideology and Chinese traditional culture.

Nationalism/patriotism against the Japanese occupation and imperialism is an important representation in Hong Kong cinema. Patriotism is always encouraged by Chinese traditional culture. Confucianism particularly emphasizes individual consciousness of responsibility, which is contrast to the conflict between being an individual and being a citizen in Western culture. In the West, the patriot who sacrifices his life for his country may be a good citizen, but for sure he will not be a good family person by reference to his abandon of his family. According to the teachings of Confucius, this conflict does not exist in Chinese culture. For Chinese, nation-state and family share homogeneity. Nation-state is an extension of family. For a Confucian, if the nation-state does not exist, where is the family? Thus loving nation-state means loving family: a bigger family. The duty of sacrificing one's all for his country is also a sacrifice for his own family. The theme of patriotism constantly appears especially in Hong Kong martial arts films.

Among many martial arts films, protagonists constantly feature as a national hero against foreign aggression. Many writings on Hong Kong martial arts films are more concerned with post-colonist ideologies. Needham (2006d) and Li (2006) respectively examine films like *Once Upon a Time in China* (Tsui Hark, 1993) in a post-colonist context. Needham (2006d: 68) states that "No set of films deal with post-colonial issues more concretely and explicitly than the *Once Upon a Time in China/Wong Fei-hung* series of films directed and/or produced by Tsui Hark between 1991 and 1997". Huang Feihong in *Once Upon a Time in China* and its sequels can perhaps be regarded as one of the most patriotic characters. The nationalism and the poetical justice are two main themes in the films of Bruce Lee as well as *Once Upon a Time in China* series. Both Bruce Lee's characters and the character Huang Feihong show their Confucian morality: wisdom, kindness, braveness, loyalty and forgiveness. These films also illustrated a spiritual world of Confucianism: Kung Fu is not a resort for conquering others and gaining power or profit. It is in fact a way for cultivating one's morality, self-dependence and practising poetical justice when necessary.

Bruce Lee's success was followed by the popularity of martial arts films world-wide. In the 1970s, Hong Kong martial arts films looked back to events in Chinese history, especially turbulent historical periods such as the Japanese occupation in the 1930s and Chinese civil war in the 1940s. In these films, the stories of the past illustrated the complicated relationship between individual and nation in terms of fate and destiny. They also praised loyalty and patriotism. These films, such as *Fist of Fury* (Luo Wei, 1972), *The Way of the Dragon* (Bruce Lee, 1972), touched national memory and cultural emotions and thus they achieved great success in Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan. As a Chinese born and grew up in the USA, Bruce Lee is a character of transnational identity. For Westerners, Bruce Lee represented a Western masculinity (hegemonic personality) with Eastern mystery (his Chinese Kung Fu and philosophy). The emergence of Bruce Lee brought them the discovery of a kind of vanished 'masculinity' in the 1970s. The carrier of this representation is one of the most entertaining film genres: martial arts cinema.

The representation of masculinity in Hong Kong martial arts films can be considered to promote an ideology of anti-Orientalism. As argued in Chapter Two, the Orient has long been represented / imagined by the West as feminine and erotic succumbing to the influence of Orientalism. The director of *Last Emperor* Bertolucci shares his idealization of China through the category of the feminine. Chow cites:

> They are very different. The Chinese, of course, are more ancient...The Chinese are the opposite, more feminine. A bit passive. But passive, as I say, in the way of people when they are so intelligent and so sophisticated they don't need machismo.
>
> (Bertolucci, cited in Chow, 2006: 170)

The masculinity of Bruce Lee's characters subverts the conventional Western perspective of China. Yvonne Tasker (2006) identifies this ideological subversion in the films of Bruce Lee. Tasker notes:

> As in his other movies, Lee's character holds back from fighting for some time and the film teases the audience as to when Lee will 'reveal' himself, a double moment in which he both reveals his body, removing his jacket, and his 'hidden' strength. The go-between functions not only as a passive figure against which the tough masculinity of Lee's character can be defined, but is also figured there in terms of a specifically (homo) sexual threat associated with Europe.
>
> (Tasker, 2006: 439)

It may seem ironic to say the representation of masculinity in the films of Bruce Lee is an ideological subversion. However, when the Orient has been characterized as feminine and passive, a sense of oppositional identification between the East and the West is created. Similarly, the representation of masculinity in the films of Bruce Lee also created a site where the conventional identification between the East and the West is challenged and culturally, artistically subverted.

If the Shaw Brothers were interested in producing historical epics and romances which invoked nationalist ideology in Hong Kong, then Bruce Lee inherited that tradition too. Teo notes:

> Kung fu films were particularly conducive to nationalism of the abstract kind. Its martial heroes shared a Masonic-like background harking back to traditions laid down by venerable Shaolin monk and their disciples who make vows to fight the foreign.
>
> (Teo, 2006: 417)

Indeed, the Kung Fu imaginary becomes a symbolic expression for Chinese cultural essence. It is represented in cinema through a festishization of the male Kung Fu body. No doubt Bruce Lee's characters are iconic for this imaginary. In *Fist of Fury*, Huo Yuanjia (Bruce Lee) is a national hero who fights against Japanese invaders in China. One sequence shows that the Japanese place a tablet outside a martial art house with an insulting term describing Chinese as 'Sick men of Eastern Asia'. Very soon a crowd gathers in front of the house and becomes angry for this 'national insult'. Huo arrives and sees the tablet. He fiercely jumps into the air and kicks the tablet into pieces. Before the Japanese manage to arrest Huo, he is already

persuaded to leave by those patriotic Chinese in the crowd. In *The Way of the Dragon,* Tang Long (featured by Bruce Lee) defeats Westerner fighters by using his Jie Quan Dao (a set of martial arts created by Bruce Lee). This, on the one hand, shows the superiority of Chinese martial arts as a cultural heritage and national pride, and on the other hand, expresses patriotism and nationalism when engaging with foreign invasions. Chinese national identity and nationalist sentiments are represented by Bruce Lee's masculinity: a subversion of conventional view of the Orient.

In these films, filmmakers show their acknowledgement and often respect to these patriotic characters. *Once Upon a Time in China series*, *Fist of Fury* and Jet Li's more recent film *Fearless* (Ju Jueliang, 2007) are good examples of how filmmakers express their respect of traditional patriotic characters and this in turn shows their identification with China as their motherland.

3. The Spirit of *Xiayi*

The spirit of Xiayi is the essence of *wuxia* cinema. However, *wuxia* cinema has often been falsely translated into English as martial arts cinema or Kung Fu cinema when it means much more than that. In fact, there are fundamental difference between *wuxia* cinema and Kung Fu films. The former projects the spirit of *Xiayi* while the latter focuses on the showcase of martial arts fighting sequences. The Culture of *Xiayi* is a special component of Chinese traditional culture. Since ancient times, the Chinese have had expectations and longing for legends/tales of *Xiayi*. Heroes of *Xiayi* often possess dualistic characters. On the one hand their actions are often against laws and governmental rules, but they follow moral/ethical disciplines. On the other hand, Heroes of *Xiayi* have highly defensive skills or techniques which enable them to save people who they encounter on their journey. *Xia* represents a unique characteristic in Chinese traditional culture and is very popular among ordinary Chinese people.

Wuxia cinema created concrete characters/heroes to represent the spirit of *Xiayi.* These warriors have a spiritual function as well as a martial arts function and psychologically, they offered ordinary people rich fantasy identifications (similar to the figure of Robin Hood in English culture) which enabled them to feel less powerless in the face of state oppression (a continuing theme from ancient times through to fears of the PRC state regime). With this psychological element, *wuxia* cinema became popular and took the leading role in Hong Kong film production. *Wuxia* cinema is the most important film genre between 1950s and 1970s. To name a few here: *Come Drink with Me* (Hu Jinquan, 1965), *Golden Swallow* (Zhang Che, 1968), and *Du Bi Dao* (Zhang Che, 1969) etc. A number of key *wuxia* filmmakers such as Hu Jinquan, Zhang Che, and Chu Yuan gained international recognition for *wuxia* cinema at film festivals around the world (such as *A Touch of Zen* (King Hu, 1969) winning the Technical Grand Prize award at Cannes Film Festival in 1975).

Hong Kong New Wave Cinema

Since the 1980s new kinds of cinemas have emerged on the Chinese mainland and in Hong Kong and Taiwan. As Zhang (2004) explains they projected different 'Chinas' to the world. Chinese mainland cinema, Hong Kong cinema and Taiwan cinema all find their roots in Chinese traditions and culture and they share the same cinematic traditions (namely early Shanghai cinema tradition pre-1949). It is after 1949 that the three Chinese language cinemas went in different directions due to their political and geographical separation. Hong Kong New Wave Cinema started earlier than the new wave movement in mainland China and Taiwan. In 1978, a group of young filmmakers involved in Hong Kong Television came back from the USA and Europe and began their filmmaking in Hong Kong. They produced a large quantity of *new* films. In 1979, *Ga Li Bei* (Yan Hao, 1978) attracted public attention in Hong Kong and became the starting point of Hong Kong New Wave Cinema. These young filmmakers brought Hong Kong cinema to another new height and into the international limelight. They made revolutionary efforts on differing from their own cinematic traditions and achieved international attention. It was also the crucial time that the West started to

receive what film scholars call 'Chineseness' (Berry, 2003 and Zhang, 2004) through the reception of Chinese films (for the West, Hong Kong cinema is of course often submerged in the term of 'Chinese films'). Zhang outlines the golden times of Hong Kong New Wave Cinema. He notes:

> The harvest moment came for the Hong Kong new wave in 1979. *The Butterfly Murders* (Tsui Hark, 1979), released by Seasonal Film, mixing a martial arts narrative with Japanese *manga* and new Hollywood science-fiction ingredients, and *The Street* (Ann Hui, 1979), a murder mystery stepped in a ghost story ambience, are both considered representative of the new wave.
>
> (Zhang, 2004: 250)

The role of Hong Kong New Wave Cinema is prominent in its film history. Teo (1998: 553) claims that "the New Wave ushered Hong Kong cinema into the modern age, winning international recognition for the industry and a cult following for some of its directors". According to Zhang (2004: 251), "...contrary to the avant-garde in the mainland, Taiwan and many other countries, the Hong Kong New Wave never became narcissistic in its auteur style..." However, a number of auteurs did emerge in Hong Kong New Wave Cinema (including Tsui Hark, Ann Hui, Allen Fong and Patrick Tam) with John Woo being one of the most important in terms of commercial success both in the East and the West. By loosening the rigid genres of martial arts, Woo made films both aesthetically appealing and commercially viable. Woo dominantly stands out for his action cinema. As set up in previous chapters, the juxtaposition of the projecting of the national and auteur occupies a central role of the thesis, I will take Woo's cinema as a case study to explore the representation and influence of 'Chineseness' in Hong Kong New Wave Cinema later in this chapter.

Because Hong Kong has long been squeezed between the political conditions of China, Britain and Taiwan, Hong Kong New Wave Cinema avoided serious political issues in its cinema and adopted an 'entertainment first' commercial motto. From drama/comedy to opera films, from Kuang Fu/*Wuxia* films to hero films, Hong Kong cinema has always been box-office Oriented. Teo (1998: 553) writes: "Hong Kong cinema has always remained true

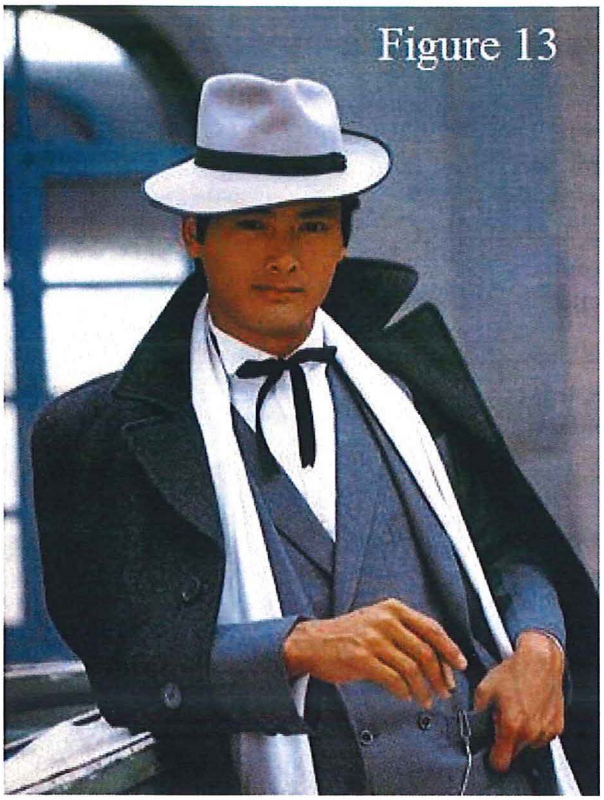
to the tenets of commercialism and popular cinema even in the films made by New Wave directors". However, it is impossible to deny the artistic value of Hong Kong new wave cinema. Many films also emerged in the Hong Kong new wave cinema, such as *Homecoming* (Yan Hao, 1984) and *Rouge* (Guang Jinpeng 1987). More recently *In the Mood for Love* (Karwei Wang, 2002) could be seen as a continuity of art films of Hong Kong new wave cinema.

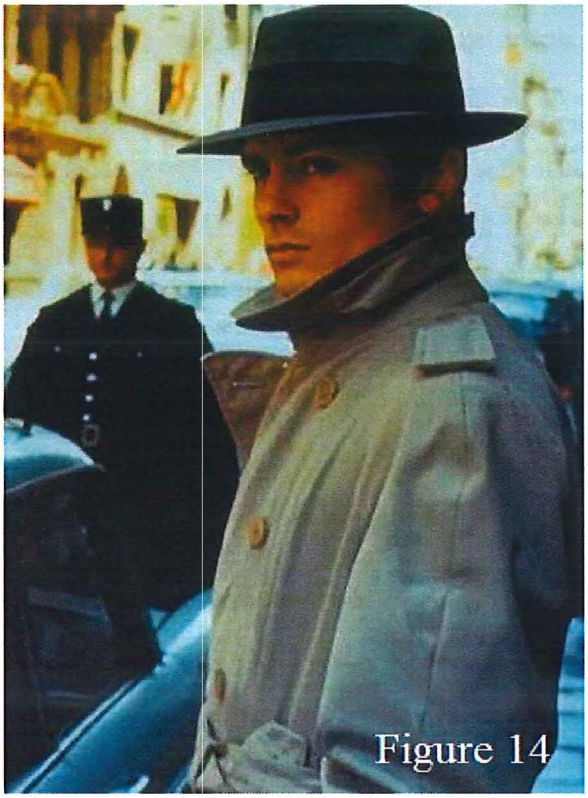
For the new wave directors, "innovations did not come from a complete rupture with the past or from self-reflexivity. Instead, old genres were freshened up with new approaches" (Zhang, 2004: 250). Contrary to the continuity of traditional themes and genres, Hong Kong New Wave Cinema started exploring new focus of filmmaking techniques, production modes and visual representation. Tsui Hark tried to use modern weapons to interpret ancient Kung Fu in *The Butterfly Murders* (Tsui Hark, 1979). John Woo, an early martial arts films director admitted that he was greatly influenced by French gunman films in the 1960s and he combined gunfights with Chinese martial arts techniques in his *A Better Tomorrow* (1986, 1987) series. His experimentation was a great success and today film scholars (Bordwell, 2000; Teo, 2007) have named Woo' cinema as 'aesthetics of violence'. As a distinctive auteur of Hong Kong New Wave Cinema, Woo developed what I would call heroism films in Hong Kong cinema.

John Woo: the aesthetic of violence and a Chinese concept of beauty

This section will examine the aesthetics of John Woo's heroism films alongside his deliberate construction as an auteur. Like other auteur directors, Woo also achieved his reputation by festival acclaim and European and American distributions of his films such as *The Killer* and *A Better Tomorrow*. Woo achieved his status as an auteur for his 'aesthetics of violence'. I will explore the cultural significance behind Woo's aesthetics.

The heroism film may be a Hong Kong genre which mixes elements from both Chinese cinema and Western cinema. Auteur as a critical concept has clear European origins. There is also strong connection between Woo as an auteur in the East and an auteur in the West. As a cinéphilie, Woo acknowledged that his films had been influenced by Jean-Pierre Melville, the master of French police films. Woo (Elder, 2005: 7) states: "For Western films, I liked to watch French and Japanese films. I especially admired directors Jean-Pierre Melville, Francois Truffaut, and Federico Fellini." This cross-fertilization is of course not unusual, for instance French New Wave directors in the 1950s and 60s were influenced by American film culture. Jean-Luc Godard, Francois Truffaut, and Jean-Pierre Melville in their films all paid homage to Hollywood film genres in innovative ways. As for Melville, he adored gangster films in the 1920s and 1930s. The style of Alain Delon's performance in *Le Samurai* (Melville, 1967) is a transformation of the classic detective character in police films turned into a hitman. The style of Chow Yun-fat in *A Better Tomorrow* series (John Woo, 1986, 1987) is obviously influenced by Delon's performance in *Le Samurai* (such as the dress style as shown in figures 13 and 14).





When we regard Woo as an auteur of heroism films, we also establish a connection between auteurist approach and genre studies. At first glance, it seems that there are some contradictory dimensions between auteur theory and genre studies. Today with the golden age of European art cinema gone (especially after the relatively recent deaths of Michelangelo Antonioni and Ingmar Bergman), auteurism has become more complicated in the face of a rapid growth of independent filmmaking. However, auteurism remains one of the most powerful and pervasive views in current thinking about cinema. As argued in Chapter Two, there are different dimensions of auteurism: auteur as marketing tool and auteur as agent of film's meaning. For the former, Hollywood cinema and other national cinemas market their films via the auteur (often via stars in Hollywood cinema as well) who is used as marketing tool, voice of meaning and signifier of value in a national cultural sense. For the latter, as I have stressed in Chapter Two, Livingston offered a definition of cinematic authorsip:

> Cinematic author = the agent or agent(s) who intentionally make(s)…an action the intended function of which is to make manifest or communicate some attitude(s) by means of the production of apparently moving images projected on a screen or other surface.
>
> (Livingston, 1997: 141)

Livingston's account seeks to apply the tools of the theories of agency to the question of cinema authorship. For this thesis, the critical discourse that director as agent of film's meaning enables me to examine the continuous authorial signatures in the films the auteur directors made in and beyond their national contexts. And this is vital to my approach in this chapter and in this thesis as a whole. Here I will combine auteurism and genre studies, these two approaches to explore Woo's cinema.

As Bordwell (2000) argues, there is a two-way traffic between Hong Kong cinema and Hollywood mainly in terms of film production and film techniques, with the Hong Kong film industry established along the same lines as the Hollywood model (the 'Hollywood of the East' being a common description). The formation of Woo's authorial signatures is partly derived from Hong Kong film industry, and partly from Hollywood film production and techniques. Woo also asserted his auteur status by integrating a layer of Chinese cultural meanings into the American style of commercial film production.

As an auteur, Woo's name signifies an easily identifiable filmic language and aesthetic experience in action films. His Hong Kong films, from *A Better Tomorrow*, *The Killer* (1989), *Bloodshed in the Streets* (1990) to *Once a Thief* (19991) and *Hard Boiled* (1992), all represent Woo's authorial signatures via clearly identifiable 'aesthetics of violence' and a narrative emphasis on traditional Chinese cultural values. Li Cheuk-to explains:

> The rise of the Hong Kong New Wave films had much to do with a sense that these filmmakers were indeed "genuinely local"—that is, born, reared, and educated in the territory—and thus apt to represent things from a Hong Kong perspective or aesthetic, albeit an often Westernized (internationalized) one.
>
> (Li, 1994: 161)

Audiences have been impressed by the visual representation of action and violence in these films: dazzling action style, formalistic editing and slow motion. Together they form and represent an aesthetic and formalized representation of violence. At the core of this filmic

ideology, as I will argue in the following section, is a vital relationship with Chinese traditional culture.

Woo furthered his career in Hollywood in the 1990s and since then, his 'aesthetics of violence' have received widely attention in the West. The 'aesthetics of violence' has been studied by film scholars (Bordwell, 2006; Teo, 2007 etc.) from different perspectives; however, so far a connection between aesthetics of violence and Chinese traditions and culture has not been established. As a connoisseur of action sequences, Bordwell acknowledges that he:

> became convinced that martial arts movies from Japan and Hong Kong constituted as important a contribution to film aesthetics as did the Soviet Montage movement. Through shot-by-shot and even frame-by-frame analysis, [he] tried to show that these movies were exploring ways that cinema could arouse us kinesthetically. Their use of composition, cutting, color, music, and physical motion was not only beautiful but also engaging on levels that we didn't fully understand.
>
> (Bordwell, 2008)

It is significant that Bordwell compares the contribution of Asian action films with that of the Soviet Montage movement in terms of film aesthetics. It renders traditionally 'chopsocky' Hong Kong martial arts and action films with the label of 'art' films. Yet Bordwell (2008) believes that there is something beyond the surface of the beauty of action. His feeling of "engaging on levels that we *didn't fully understand*" (Bordwell, 2008) can be well considered as a collective confusion towards the understanding/interpretation of the 'Chineseness' in Western film scholarship when Western scholars attempts to go beyond the superficial layers of Orientalism. Or, it is another kind of 'lost in translation': interpretations lost in cross-cultural translation. Chow (1995: 177) suggested that "the process of 'cultural translation' is inevitable enmeshed in conditions of power..." As mentioned in earlier chapters, one's epistemological and ontological world is conditioned by one's own cultural context. Woo's rising as a director stems from the Hong Kong film industry, which as argued earlier, has close ties with Chinese cinematic traditions and culture and as a result, as

acknowledged by Woo in different occasions, he is deeply influenced by Confucianism and Taoism. The expression of the beauty of actions is a central element in Woo's films. The reason that the action sequences in Woo's cinema have "constituted as important a contribution to film aesthetics as Soviet Montage movement" (Bordwell, 2008) is difficult for Western scholars to "fully understand" (Bordwell, 2008) as they tend not to be aware of the layers of meaning derived from Chinese cultural traditions.

The Chinese concept of beauty is reflected in the thoughts of Lao Tzu. According to the teaching of Lao Tzu, the Taoist concept of beauty may be viewed as "Great sound is hard to hear, great form has no shape" (Lao Tzu, 1997), which means that true beauty and greatness exist in the mind rather than in a temporal sense. The Chinese concept of beauty is deeply associated with Taoist philosophy. The aesthetics of Woo's cinema is also inherited from the aesthetics of verve and rhythm in Chinese traditional culture. More specifically, it can also be viewed as inherited from Beijing opera which pursues a smooth choreography of actions to achieve a formal aesthetic presentation. Culturally inspired by the Beijing Opera, Woo developed his authorial stylization in his heroism films through the use of camera movement, mise-en-scène, editing, and even slow motion cinematography. Chinese *wuxia* films explore the representation of the beauty of actions and Woo further developed this aesthetic ideology in his heroism films by adopting techniques from Western crime and action films. Thus martial arts sequences in Hong Kong *wuxia* films are replaced by modern gunfight sequences in Woo's Hong Kong heroism films. As illustrated earlier, martial arts sequences and gunfight sequences share the same cultural significance from Chinese traditional culture. Chapter Seven will further argues Woo's authorial signatures and 'Chineseness' in his Hollywood films.

'Hongkongness' in Hong Kong cinema

Anderson (1991) writes that national/cultural identity is a collective imaginary. After pointing out the homogeneity of cultural identity, Hall also asserts a second sense of cultural identity by emphasizing its heterogeneity. He notes:

> There is, however, a second, related but different view of cultural identity. This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather – since history has intervened – 'what we have become.
>
> (Hall, 2006: 435)

Based on these assertions regarding the homogeneity and heterogeneity of cultural identities, this section employs the concept of the collective imaginary to interpret the concept of 'nativeness'. Similar to national identity, 'nativeness' is also difficult to define. During the construction of this collective imaginary we can explore its national allegories. Here the arguments will take 'Hongkongness' as the focus of this section. The term 'Hongkongness' should be plural. First of all it is a particular kind of collective imaginary. If nation is an imagined collective politics in the Andersonian sense, then 'Hongkongness' is a more open symbol. It does not attach itself to the politics advertised by the government. On the contrary, it refers to an imaginary space and location coming among local civilians and the public.

The emergence of 'Hongkongness' can be linked to a specific historical, political and cultural moment – starting in the 1970s and growing in the face of the impending return of Hong Kong to the Chinese mainland. The consciousness of 'Hongkongness' has not only affected individuals' mind but became a kind of collective cloud of depression hovering over the heads of Hongkongnese during the run-up to being handed back to the Chinese administration. The formation and uniqueness of 'Hongkongness' stems from its close bond with the destiny of the city itself. For people in Hong Kong, it might just have been an unconscious mechanism to cope with the imminent political crisis and anxiety. What might

have started as an issue of individual emotion became evidence of a collective anxiety related to the re-thinking of the future of nation and society (in the context of Hong Kong). And this 'Hongkongness' also resulted in a consciousness of Hong Kong as a cinematic mise-en-scène and a location of origin for its own narratives.

What is Hong Kong in terms of culture? As Hall (2006: 438) states, Hong Kong is also "the beginning of diaspora, of diversity, of hybridity and difference". Hong Kong is firstly an immigrant society, and then a British colony. Represented in cinema, as argued above, Hong Kong cinema was boosted by Shanghai film talents especially with the post-war influx and they copied the production mode of Shanghai cinema. But those immigrants from mainland China never considered Hong Kong as their new home. Instead, they have always been thinking about going 'back'. It was not until the 1970s that the first trace of a consciousness of 'Hongkongness' might be identified following the growing up of a new generation of people in Hong Kong. This new generation was born during the Second World War and they received colonial education under British influence. Thus the idea of motherland became less prevalent and the consciousness of 'Hongkongness' started to develop and spread. This 'Hongkongness' is further strengthened by the importance of Bruce Lee. As Li (2006: 102) states: "His heterogeneity in martial arts and hybrid identity, diasporic journey and metropolitan aura account for the special imaginary link between his figure and Hong Kong, a place colonized, marginalized, hybridized, and yet privileged by a modernity given rise in the ambivalent interaction with the colonizer and Western culture."

Following the tragic death of this iconic martial arts actor Bruce Lee, 'Hongkongness' continued to develop and reached its summit in the Hong Kong New Wave Cinema. At the mean time, the economic boom changed social structure in Hong Kong: the middle-class grew rapidly. It is consisted of well-educated citizens born in the post-war period. This generation had stable jobs and incomes. As a result, they had a vested interest in the support of British rule. Consequently anti-colonialist ideology faded out among this new generation

(Zhang, 2004).

In 1984, China and Britain started negotiation regarding the return of Hong Kong in 1997, which signified the transition of Hong Kong in terms of political identity. Facing 1997, the Hongkongnese were put into crisis. It meant not only the end of British colonial rule; it also referred to the loss of the existing cultural identity of Hong Kong. For many Hongkongnese, the year 1997 symbolised a deadline. This anxiety was represented in many films. At the same time, accompanying the economic development of mainland China, Hong Kong people were also aware of the changes in mainland China, in that it has become more open and economically developed. Thus they positioned themselves in a difficult point between the motherland and the colonizer. During this process of remapping its own cultural identity, Hong Kong was in a limbo between ideas of nationalism and colonialism.

As argued above, especially for the new generation in 1980s, the Hongkongnese did not have an intention to construct or invent a so-called national allegory to stand against imperialism or colonialism. Whether in colonial period or in post colonial period, Hong Kong cinema is always a specific case as a national cinema. Pre 1997, Hong Kong strived for economic development following the British model. Post 1997, it returned (willingly or unwillingly) to its motherland China and politically Hong Kong still did not gain its independence. Its unique situation leads to its cultural complexities today. Cultural hybridity is the most important theme for post-colonial studies. One of the most disputed terms in postcolonial studies, according to Ashcroft (2003: 118) is hybridity and this commonly refers to "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation". In order to fully explore the cultural complexities of Hong Kong during the post 1997 period, the following section explores the cultural hybridity of Hong Kong.

The cultural hybridity of Hong Kong

In this era of post-colonialism, a unified national identity has been repeatedly challenged. In post colonial studies, the polarities of *us* and *other* or *the Occident* and *the Orient* have been de-constructed by cultural hybridity. Bhabha points out:

> The theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualising an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' - the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.
>
> (Bhabha, 1994: 38-39)

In a post-colonial context, after unburdening the cultural influence of colonialism, the third world nation-states started to reposition themselves to national culture (Dissanayake, 1998). Hong Kong has been constantly searching for its cultural identity within such a cultural morass: multi-cultures and cultural conflicts between motherland, colonizer and nativeness. The colonial history of Hong Kong for one hundred and fifty-seven years is full of conflicts/compromise and resistance/acceptance between the colonized and the colonizer. Before 1997, the consciousness of a rover without home and country is represented in Hong Kong cinema. The theme of 'orphans and searching for family' became a self-mocking allegory in Hong Kong films. Post 1997, the social change brought by the return of Hong Kong outlined the anxiety of the cultural status of Hong Kong in a post-colonialism context. Since the arrival of the Hong Kong New Wave Cinema, Hong Kong filmmakers have made efforts to endow Hong Kong with a particular kind of cultural identity which I address here using the idea of Hongkongness. Comparatively, Hong Kong cinema struggled to re-establish and represent its cultural identity by making films with subjects that would be taboo in Chinese mainland Cinema. It therefore opted for a cinema in opposition, exploring the urban as opposed to the pastoral, and so overtly engaging with issues detaining to gender and sexuality. When Hong Kong cinema tried to project its own cultural identity as a particular

kind of national cinema, its deviations from mainland China and Taiwan becomes clear.

More recently, *In the Mood for Love*, invented a kind of 'new Orientalism' bringing together allegories and symbols with deep Chinese cultural connotations such as Shanghai dialect, Chinese feminine dress *Cheong-sam,* with nostalgia for 1960's Hong Kong. The film is about the story of two neighbours whose spouses are having an affair. In this love tragedy a kind of poetic and injured 'Hongkongness' is projected stemming from its difficult position between its colonial motherland (Britain) and its cultural motherland (China) and struggling with differences between its colonial culture and home (Chinese) culture. The perplexity, oscillation and grief within this 'Hongkongness' are illustrated – physically, emotionally, intellectually, by the protagonist Su Lizhen. After she discovers her husband's betrayal (having an affair with their neighbour's wife), she attempts to overcome the psychological struggle but she fails. This film reveals the complexity of Hong Kong's identity in a colonial and post-colonial context. Abbas (2006) argues that nostalgia is one of the defining characteristics of Hong Kong at the end of the twentieth century: the experience of loss for something already gone, what he calls the *Déja Disparu.* This nostalgia is also manifest in Taiwanese New Cinema with a different cultural context which will be explored in Chapter Seven.

Facing the approach of 1997, people of all social levels in Hong Kong had to re-examine their identities. This caused the Hongkongnese to look back at their past, to meditate their present and to imagine their future. The 1997 'deadline' awaked the consciousness of 'nativeness/Hongkongnese' among the people of Hong Kong. Hong Kong cinema started to re-examine its relationship with Mainland China, which led to a sentimental and perplexed identity crisis. Hall suggests:

> Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists,

> transcending place, time, history and culture...But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.
>
> (Hall, 2006: 435)

The best symbol representing this perplexed relationship emerged in representations of women. Films based their narratives upon female protagonists and this became another major trait of the Hong Kong New Wave Cinema. *Song of Exile* (Xu Anhua, 1990) searches the ascription of identity from a feminine perspective. *Rouge* (Stanley Kwan, 1987) also uses a love tragedy to explore the cultural identity of Hong Kong by following a ghost's visit to contemporary Hong Kong. The ghost used to be a courtesan name Ruhua. In order to find her true love the Twelfth Master, Ruhua comes back to Hong Kong fifty years later after her death by paying the price of reducing her own life. However, the precondition for Ruhua to come back is that the Twelfth Master breaks the promise and betrays Ruhua. It fundamentally rejects the traditions of true love stories in Chinese history. Ruhua is betrayed and becomes a true portraiture of Hong Kong depicting with the doubt and uncertainty of its relationship to Mainland China. The story of Ruhua seems to be a love story. However, she is so clinging and we can sense a feeling of that she has 'no alternative way'. The past could be traced in memory, and the future is unknown. The film expresses a cultural identity of collective sentimental doubt among the Hongkongnese.

Contrary to the representation of masculinity in the era of Bruce Lee in the 1970s, the fact that the female protagonists took the centre of narratives of Hong Kong cinema reflected the reconstruction of Hong Kong cultural identity. At the same time, it acknowledged the evident or dark historical "messiness" (O'Regan, 1996: 71) between Mainland China and Hong Kong. This time the people of Hong Kong were remapping their cultural identity and they were positioned between nationalism for its motherland and nostalgia for its colonizer.

The 'political transaction' which took place on the 1st July 1997 did not terminate the previous complexities of Hong Kong's colonial experience and identity. After the return of Hong Kong to Mainland China, issues of identity of course continued. Compared with the rural identity projected by the Fifth Generation in Mainland China which acted as a challenge to the modernist but limited visions of communist ideologies, Hong Kong cinema deliberately explored its nostalgia for Chinese traditions and philosophies but because of its hybrid status it also projected a urban identity which distinguished itself from Mainland China through an alliance with Western economic and political freedoms. Ping-Kwan Leung (2000) examines specifically city films of Hong Kong cinema from mise-en-scène, narrative and significance of urban images. Leung argues that a filmic urban environment reveals the shifting cultural relations between Mainland China and Hong Kong. Leung's arguments are useful here as the urban identity projected by Hong Kong New Wave Cinema indeed differs Hong Kong cinema from the rural type of Chinese identity projected by the Fifth Generation in Mainland China (as argued in Chapter Three and Four). Karwei Wang's *Chungking Express* (1994) is a good example of utilizing the urban Hong Kong cityscape as mise-en-scène (see figures 15 and 16). The title of this film is rather confusing for Mainland

Figure 15

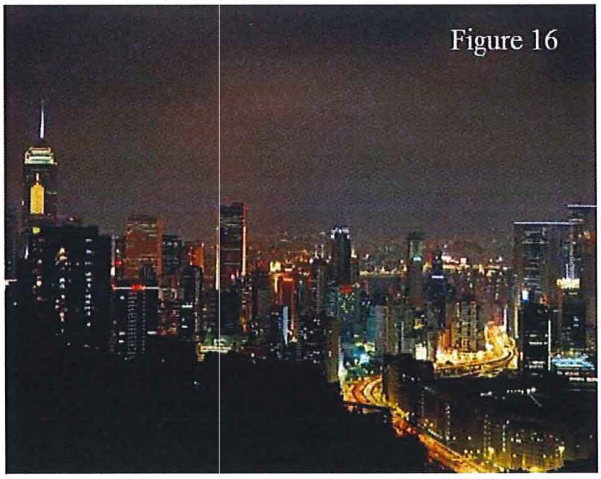


Figure 16

Chinese audiences (because Chungking is a famous city in South West China) and they would not expect the film to be set in Hong Kong. However neither the shooting nor the narrative of the film has anything to do with the Chinese city of Chungking but is firmly located in the urban setting of a metropolitan Hong Kong. The Chungking in the title refers to one of the key locations in the film, the Chungking Mansions, where the drug dealers live and station where the two protagonists, Cop 223 and Cop 663, habitually get off the Midnight

Express. Furthermore, it might be read allegorically so that Chungking symbolises a nostalgic Mainland connection between Hong Kong and its mother country. As mentioned earlier, Abbas (2006) identified nostalgia as one key characteristic of Hong Kong since 1990s. Nostalgia has become a key trope in contemporary Hong Kong films. In such a nostalgic context (post-colonial context), history is rewritten and retold through imagination manipulated by nostalgia of filmmakers. In *Chungking Express* Wang used Chungking's symbolic meaning to relate Mainland China and used urban settings to connect to a local identity. For the 'confused' Mainland Chinese audiences watching *Chungking Express*, the urban culturally hybrid Hong Kong is a distinctive space sharing many cultural factors but also differing in many (from Cantonese dialect, to the protagonists eating the classic British meal of fish and chips).

Today, compared with Mainland China, Hong Kong as an international metropolis, is distinguished by its cultural hybridity. However, Hong Kong's cultural hybridity is still dominantly marked by its 'Chineseness'. Hall (2006: 435) suggests that "cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories". As argued, from the early Hong Kong cinema to Hong Kong New Wave Cinema, Chinese traditional culture is one of the shaping forces of Hong Kong cinema. Despite the expressions of anxiety projected regarding the return of ownership to Mainland China in 19997, Chinese cultural identity has tended to have been projected and visualised positively on the whole by Hong Kong cinema.

Hall (2006: 436) claims that there are at least two different ways of thinking about cultural identity. According to Hall (2006: 436), the homogeneity and heterogeneity in terms of cultural identity exist and play "a critical role in all post-colonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world". The cultural hybridity of Hong Kong, according to Hall's assertions, cannot exclude itself from its shared cultural codes with mainland China. Hall notes:

> ...our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.
>
> (Hall, 2006: 436)

Hall' conception of cultural identity in post-colonial context is crucial in allowing us to underline the homogeneity of cultural identity between Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China. The link between Hong Kong and mainland China comes from both history and culture. Although living in Hong Kong, the filmmakers discussed above were still sentimentally attached to their cultural matrix and their native land. There is an undeniable tie between their spirit and Chinese traditional culture. Facing the cultural hybridity of Hong Kong and living in Hong Kong as *immigrants* made them more cherish their motherland and traditional culture.

In the cultural hybridity of Hong Kong identities is therefore also a cultural paradox; after being a British colony for more than a century, the Hongkongnese do not think of themselves as Chinese in terms of identity but the British never regarded them as British (and until the very recent explosion of capitalist materialism in Mainland China, the Hongkongnese were not regarded by them as Chinese either). The Hong Kong New Wave Cinema was only a short-lived eruption. The postwar generation never fully broke from their status in quo. Since 1997, Hong Kong has been adjusting itself to its new political identity. We may expect that Hong Kong cinema will have another 'New Wave' and ultimately turn to a new page one day.

Conclusion

Hong Kong's distinctive history makes it a particularly interesting case for discussion in relation to notions of national cinema. Its multi-faceted relationship with Mainland China and the West has led me to investigate not the only Hong Kong's cultural identity in a

postcolonial context but also the 'Chineseness' and 'Hongkongness' in Hong Kong cinema and of course the relationship between the two.

The first half of the chapter illustrates the link between China and Hong Kong in terms of history, culture, politics and mode of film productions. Then after exploring the representation of 'Chineseness' in the films of *The Shaw Brothers* and Bruce Lee's martial arts films, I further investigate the cultural identity of Hong Kong via New Wave cinema. It is here where the role of auteur directors (so vital to my overall thesis) comes into prominence as the innovations introduced by these auteur directors did not come from a complete rupture with the past or from self-reflexivity. Thus it also led me to investigate the cultural identity in the films of Hong Kong New Wave director Woo's heroism films (emphasis is put on the influence of Chinese traditional culture). The final section explores Hong Kong's cultural hybridity: Hongkongness and local space as a form of Hong Kong imaginary. By focusing on cultural specificities and rejecting Orientalist and Eurocentric reading, this chapter highlights Hong Kong's link with Mainland China and its cultural hybridity. I argue for a concept of 'Hongkongness' where the local (modern/urban) space interacts with traditional Chinese Cultural values (a form of nostalgia as a post-colonial characteristic) to form a Hong Kong imaginary.

CHAPTER SIX:

EXPLORING THE CULTURAL COMPLEXITIES OF TAIWANESE NEW CINEMA

Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the cultural complexities of Taiwanese New Cinema (TNC) as a particular kind of national cinema produced within an especially diverse national context. Needham (2006a: 363) criticizes the marginal position of Taiwanese cinema within the study of Asian cinema and further claims that "Taiwanese cinema as an object of study and film criticism, in an international framework, is solely defined by a now well-known roster of established film directors" (Needham, 2006a: 359). However, this chapter is not just a framework for discussing the various talents of auteur directors, but a necessary device for exploring the ways that the cultural identity of Taiwan is constructed, interpreted and explored by the authorial and artistic visions of a number of auteur directors involved in producing TNC. The cultural complexities of TNC, in turn, also contribute to how 'Chineseness' and 'Taiwaneseness' are projected and are manifest within an especially diverse national context. Since the 1980s a number of *new* films and new directors emerged. These films showed obvious difference compared with old Taiwanese political or commercial films. As I have argued throughout this thesis, the strategy of considering auteur director as the signifier of national style involves accounting for historical and cultural context in which directors find themselves situated. TNC has been a vital element in enabling the world to perceive Taiwan's cultural identity. In his essay *Taiwanese New Cinema* (1998), Chen identifies the TNC as the most important period in Taiwanese film history. As he states:

> The crucial point about TNC is not so much the originality of its aesthetic form as its strategic ideological function within the wider cultural history of Taiwan and, more precisely, its historical turn of the discovery and construction of the 'Taiwanese itself'.
>
> (Chen, 1998: 558)

This chapter, along with the previous case studies of Mainland Chinese cinema and Hong Kong cinema, reveal how auteur directors function as signifiers of national style and provide a valuable interpretive framework for exploring and mediating national and cultural identity. In the 1980s (the same period when the Fifth Generation and Hong Kong New Wave respectively took place in Mainland China and Hong Kong), TNC "is believed to have promoted a new type of cinematic realism and a new 'native soil consciousness'" (Zhang, 2004: 248). The 1980s is also the crucial period when Taiwanese cinema received international attention and Taiwanese cultural identity was projected through the films of a number of auteur directors. Kellner notes that:

> From the early 1980s to the present, Taiwanese filmmakers have produced an excellent series of films to explore social tensions and problems in cinematically compelling and often original ways, blending social realism with modernist innovation. Out of this cinematic production, several world-class directors have emerged including Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Edward Yang, and Ang Lee.
>
> (Kellner, 1998: 101-115)

These three young auteur directors, who emerged in TNC, along with the often ignored Taiwanese director Wang Tong, are also a central focus of this chapter.

I will start by introducing the historical and cinematic link between Taiwan and Chinese mainland. I will then explore the complexities of Taiwan in terms of national cinema by both employing and contesting theories of cultural identity and imagined communities (Hall, 2006; Anderson 1991, etc.), with special attention to the consciousness of 'nativeness' in TNC. This chapter also explores the link between auteur directors and the concerns of the national. It firstly investigates the influence of Chinese traditional culture in TNC, then moves its focus to a case study of auteur director Hsiao-Hsien Hou. In the process I will discuss Taiwan's cultural identity in a post-colonial context. This section is followed by another case study focusing on the films of Ang Lee because Lee's cinema reveals the transition of TNC towards a transnational cinema (for example, *The Wedding Banquet*). This

chapter examines how Chinese cultural specificities linked by emotional and blood links to Mainland China (what I refer to as nostalgia) interweave with the diverse concerns of a complex and hybrid nation-state (indigenous, Japanese, Western/American and Chinese influences) to bring a different nuance of Chinese identity to the screen.

Taiwan and China: a historical review

Writing about Taiwan's relationship with China is problematic since both countries have their own opinions regarding which one is the legitimate site of China as nation-state and Chinese culture. According to Yip (1997: 139), "One of the most crucial factors that binds a group of people into a 'nation' is 'the possession in common of a rich legacy of 'memories', a shared heritage which, through repetition, creates and reinforces a sense of historical continuity and sense of community". This is particularly the case in Taiwan when Kuo MinTang (KMT) relocated its government in Taiwan following its defeat in Mainland China in 1949 as the KMT's aim was to consecrate Taiwan as the rightful heir to China's five-thousand-year imperial tradition against the Communist regime in Mainland China. For the purposes of both reinforcing political control over Taiwan and competing with Mainland China, KMT focused on "building Taiwan as a legitimate site of the Chinese nation and culture" (Zhang, 2004: 113).

As argued in Chapter Four, traditional readings of national cinemas which focus on the development of a cinema within a particular national boundary are problematic in the broader Chinese case. The complex history of colonization, migrations, and disputed nation-state politics relating to Taiwan further complicates the study of Taiwanese cinema. In a similar way to Hong Kong, Taiwan's cultural complexities followed various political shifts in its history. The brief review of Taiwan's history which follows is intended to help provide a historical and political context for the discussions regarding Taiwan's cultural/national identity.

The Chinese began settling the island of Taiwan in the seventh century. However, The Portuguese explored the area in 1590, naming it Formosa ("the Beautiful"). In 1624, the Dutch set up forts in the south, the Spanish in the north. The Dutch forced out the Spanish in 1641 and controlled the island until 1661, when Chinese general Koxinga took it over and established an independent kingdom. The Manchus seized the island in 1683 and held it until 1895, when it was occupied by Japan after the first Sino-Japanese war. Taiwan was heavily bombed by the US during the Second World War and at the close of the war the island was restored to China (Guardian, 2008).

There are three dates which are crucial to the formation of Taiwan's political identity: the years 1945, 1947 and 1949. Japan's fifty-year colonial history of Taiwan came to an end following Japan's defeat in the Second World War and Taiwan was returned to China's sovereignty in 1945. The legacy of Japanese colonization in Taiwan is enormous and its subject matter is explored by auteur directors such as Hsiao-Hsien Hou. The second date, 1947, symbolises Kuo Ming Tan's autarchy in Taiwan. The government's corruption and rigid tax policy invoked the Incident of 28th February 1947, which ended with a military massacre of innocent protestors. The event is similar to that of Tiananmen Square in Beijing on 4th June 1989: both were anti-Government civil protests and ended with Government military repression. The Incident of 28th February caused political horror among Taiwanese in the following years (many protestors were prosecuted after the Event) and the incident itself remained a taboo subject until 1980s. The incident itself has become part of an 'organized forgetting' manipulated by the government of KMT. "Every narrative, however seemingly 'full', is constructed on the basis of a set of events which might have been included but were left out..." (White, 1990: 10) Politics in Taiwan is complicated, and for the Taiwanese it is cruel. Many people lost their lives in 1947 and further political prosecution termed as 'white horror' continued for a long period in Taiwan.

On the international stage, Taiwan's political identity has long been in uncertainty. In Taiwan,

everyone lost his or her home: mainlanders lost their motherland (Mainland China) and indigenous Taiwanese lost their native land (political suppression by *externals* such as Japanese colonizer and then KMT retreated from Mainland China). Later in this chapter I will also illustrate how Taiwanese director Hsiao-Hsien Hou challenged the political ideology by representing this incident in cinema. The third date is the year of 1949 when the military defeat of KMT to Mao's Communist army in Mainland China forced its retreat to Taiwan. Since then, the argument regarding who is the legitimate site for China as nation-state and Chinese culture has raged between Chinese mainland and Taiwan.

In terms of Taiwanese film history, "compared with the mainland and Hong Kong, Taiwan did not have a film production history of its own until the 1950s, although distribution and exhibition had been operative for a long time" (Zhang, 2004: 113). From an industrial perspective, Zhang separates early Taiwanese cinema into three phases: the post-war transition from 1945 to 1954; the emergence of two competing cinemas from 1955 to 1969; and the process of political and industrial restructuring from 1970 to 1978. The first phase is characterised by the importation and distribution of fiction films made in Hong Kong, mainland China, Japan as well as local productions of documentaries and newsreels. The second phrase involves the competition between local companies to produce popular Taiwanese-dialect films. The third phrase is associated with "Taiwan's loss of its United Nations membership and the normalization of the PRC diplomatic relations with Japan and the US in the 1970s" (Zhang, 2004: 114). The political sensitivity in the 1970s created an anxiety in Taiwan's identity. It was in this political context that TNC emerged as a film movement. In a similar vein to the Chinese Fifth Generation Cinema in Mainland China, TNC produced a variety of films which are internationally known and which established the reputations of a number of Taiwanese auteur-directors such as Hsiao-Hsien Hou and Edward Yang. The importance of TNC in terms of this thesis is primarily the projection of Taiwan's national/cultural identity through the artistic visions of a number of auteur directors. As indicated above, the construction of this 'Taiwaneseness' is unavoidably also part of a larger Chinese context. Thus the construction of this 'Taiwaneseness' further challenges the

concepts of national cinema because of its political complexities with Mainland China. In a similar way to the emergence of auteur directors in Mainland China and Hong Kong, certain Taiwanese directors also became identified as auteurs through the success of their films at Western film festivals. In the same way as Yimou Zhang and John Woo, these directors became the synonyms of Taiwanese cinema. The next section goes on to establish the theoretical base for my further discussions of cultural identity and authorship in the Taiwanese context.

Taiwan's cultural complexities

Taiwan has been dominated by different regimes since the twentieth century and it is in many ways an island without roots. Due to complicated historical and political reasons, the construction and development of Taiwan's culture is multifaceted. As part of China's territory since ancient times, Taiwan is influenced by the core Chinese traditional cultures such as Confucianism and Taoism but it is also shaped at certain levels by Japanese culture and Western culture (American culture).

As mentioned in earlier chapters, Hall (1993: 393) points out that there are two senses of identity: identity-as-being and identity-as-becoming. The first interpretation defines cultural identity as a kind of collective culture and a true oneness. "This oneness, underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence..." (Hall, 1993: 393) The second sense defines identity as discontinuous points of identification. Hall (1993) suggests that despite common ground, there are also some fundamental and important distinctions that construct the true and present *we*. Hall suggests:

> We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity,' without acknowledging its other side—the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute... 'uniqueness'.
>
> (Hall, 1993: 393)

Thus, cultural identities are far from being eternally fixed in some 'essentialised' past. They

are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Based on the above two definitions, it can be seen that cultural identity is not static, unchanged or "an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent which can be reproduced by any new cultural practice" (Hall, 1993: 392). On the contrary, it is always in a dynamic process of changing. Hall (1993: 392) points out that "we should think instead of 'identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation". As indicated in previous chapters, Anderson (1983) also emphasizes 'Imagined Communities' and argues that cultural identity is constructed by memory, 'the imaginary', narrative and allegory. Hall (1993: 395) furthers this, claiming that "cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*". Such careful positioning is necessary for the study of Taiwanese cinema which, as Needham (2006a: 363) claims, "is particularly true of Taiwanese cinema which occupies a fairly marginal position even within the study of Asian cinema simply because it is often subsumed under the all-encompassing rubric of Chinese cinema".

As mentioned earlier, KMT has sought to reform Taiwan in terms of building it as a nation-state since 1949. Within this politically-manipulated construction, there has been "a systematic suppression of the island's aboriginal past, of local history, and of Taiwan's complex heritage of non-Chinese colonization, particularly its development under the Dutch (1624-1662) and the Japanese (1895-1945)" (Yip, 1997: 139). When political pressure decreased following KMT's turn to a democratic ideology in the 1980s, the exploration and projecting of national identity was initiated by a number of auteur directors of TNC (similar to the case of the Fifth Generation in Hong Kong's new cinema) whose films addressed issues of 'nativeness' in relation to Taiwan's history. Thus the consciousness of 'nativeness' is one major ideology of the auteur directors of TNC. Contrary to such dominant Taiwanese ideology, Ang Lee who emerged in early 1990s, took Taiwanese cinema to broader international attention by making films addressing transnational markets. His auteur status also symbolises the promotion of Taiwanese cinema as a transnational cinema since 1990s.

As Needham (2006a: 363) points out: "the question of the appropriateness of the function of authorship in Asian cinemas also needs to account for the agency of the director as someone with the lived experiences of, for example, colonialism or diasporic identification". The concept of the author in the broader Chinese case has made it easier to discuss films without having any specialist knowledge of the institutions and ideologies that have shaped them. However, this may fail to recognize specific cultural forces and contextual parameters in which a film is made or an auteur emerges. If Hong Kong cinema is an example of how national/cultural identity is negotiated between its motherland and its colonizer, then Taiwanese cinema provides an interesting case of how national/cultural identity intersects with nativist movement, post-colonial discourse and ultimately the transition of national cinema in a global commodification culture. In Taiwan, different cultures (Chinese, Dutch, Japanese and American) encountered each other and interacted. At the same time a local Taiwanese culture also developed and assimilated with the influences of the above cultural ideologies. In the same way as Hong Kong, Taiwan is also marked by one of the characteristics of post-colonialism: cultural hybridity. Taiwan's cultural identity, instead of being one dimensional, appears to be pluralistic. The representations of these complicated cultural influences can be seen in Taiwanese cinema, especially in TNC of the 1980s.

The investigation of 'Chineseness' in Taiwanese cinema will illustrate a marked inherent connection in terms of cultural identity between mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, although this construction of identity includes similarities and continuities, as Hall (1993) suggests, it also includes distinctions and ruptures. Gomez-Pena (1989) states: "When they ask me for my nationality or ethnic identity, I can't respond with one word since my "identity" now possesses multiple repertories. . . . I am a child of crisis and cultural syncretism." He points out the multiple repertories of an individual's identity. The auteur directors of TNC aim to express experience by their sense of the diversity of their cultural influence in their films.

By focusing on TNC, I will analyze how this complexity of national/cultural identity is constructed, interpreted and manipulated by the list auteur-directors of TNC.

Taiwanese New Cinema and the consciousness of 'nativeness'

TNC began with the film: *In Our Times* (Tao Dechen, Edward Yang, Ke Yizhing, Zhangyi, 1982). This film is composed of four independent stories directed by four young directors. The film broke new ground by representing the social changes in Taiwanese society from the 1950s to the 1980s. The following year, *Growing Up* (written by Hou Xianxian, directed by Chen Kunhou, 1983) drew the attention of film critics in Taiwan. The film won several awards at the Taiwan Golden Horse Film Festival in 1983. In the following couple of years, more films, such as *The Sandwich Man* (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 1983), *Days of Watching Sea* (Wang Tong, 1983) and *One Day on the Beach* (Edward Yang, 1983) were released and a new wave of Taiwanese cinema emerged.

TNC is also new / different from Taiwanese traditional political films and commercial films pre-1980s in terms of film subject. Kellner suggests the following:

> This development is surprising since prior to the 1980s, Taiwanese cinema suffered from heavy repression and was constituted as a highly propagandistic and/or commercial cinema with few distinctive products or directors.
>
> (Kellner, 1998: 101-115)

These films brought a realism to Taiwanese cinema. The directors/writers of TNC were interested in stories of daily life in real social environment. Many of the films can be labelled as personal growth narratives, such as *In Our Time*, *Growing Up, One Day on the Beach,* and *Taibei Story (Edward Yang, 1985).* Autobiographical films such as *A Summer at Grandpa's* (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 1984) and *A Time to Live and A Time to Die* (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 1985) also took an important role in TNC. These films illustrate a collective record of the development

of Taiwan in the past few decades before the 1980s. They showed Taiwan's development and explored changes in thinking with regard to modernity. Before TNC, the ideology of 'Taiwaneseness' was absent from the island's literature and cinema.

The development of TNC can been seen in the Fifth Generation cinema in Mainland China and also the Hong Kong New Wave cinema of the same period. However, because these new films often focused on social tensions and problems, they were less commercially attractive and this led, in turn, to severe financial pressures on film makers working in what was a competitive industry in Taiwan. In 1987, many directors and writers of TNC called on the Government to provide help with these new films but the Government still failed to provide any practical assistance. (Chen, 2001, trans. Li). From 1987, TNC started to fade out. Critics such as Zhang (2007) have asserted that TNC actually came to an end in 1987 but the fact is, however, that since that date some directors/writers have continued to make new films and a number of artistically important films have appeared such as *A City of Sadness* and *Paradise of Banana* (Wang Tong, 1989). According to Taiwan film critic Jiao Xiaongpin, *A City of Sadness* is especially important as: "it symbolises that TNC has eventually entered its mature period" (Chen, 2001, trans. Li).

1980s' Taiwan was in a transition from agricultural society to industrial society and it was labelled as one of the "Four Tigers" of Asia alone with Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea (Chen, 1998: 556). The economic boom along with increasing urbanization encouraged Taiwanese filmmakers to explore and meditate on the notion of Taiwanese identity, a small island geographically separated but historically and culturally related to mainland China. Thus the 1980s is a period when the people of Taiwan became increasingly conscious of their own 'nativeness'. TNC also promoted a national cinema which as I have already said caught the attention of Western film critics.

As Higson (2002) suggests, the projection of a distinctive 'Otherness' is an essential strategy in order for a national cinema to compete with Hollywood. Fan (1996) explains that: "Out of Taiwan's total populations of 21.3 millions, there are more than three hundred and fifty thousand who are indigenous tribal peoples". In the Taiwanese case, 'native' not only refers to the island itself, but also Taiwanese indigenous people based in the region for centuries and their cultural tradition. However, the interesting point for Taiwanese filmmakers is their meditation and reflection on, and interpretation of, the images of natives and national/local histories and signs. Taiwan's specific geography, its mix of cultural identities (both immigrants and indigenous inhabitants) within Taiwan itself, and the ongoing political uncertainty all tend to complicate the nation's relationship with wider notions of 'Chineseness'.

As a *new cinema* TNC shares common strategies of filmmaking with other so-called New Wave cinemas such as the French New Wave Cinema and Italian Neo-Realist Cinema. Their core strategy was to abandon classical Hollywood style narratives and adopt forms of social realism as their ideology. In a similar way to their new wave counterparts in Europe, TNC adopted the strategy of 'imperfect cinema' (Espinosa, 1979). This is partly due to the nature of their ideology of filmmaking, and partly due to the relative difficult condition of filmmaking for these young filmmakers. Espinosa notes:

> Imperfect cinema is no longer interested in quality or technique. It can be created equally well with a Mitchell or with an 8mm camera, in a studio or in a guerrilla camp in the middle of the jungle…The only thing it is interested in is how an artist responds to the following question: What are you doing in order to overcome the barrier of the "cultured" elite audience which up to now has conditioned the form of your work.
>
> (Espinosa, 1979)

In order to portray the real life experience of the Taiwanese people, the filmmakers of TNC placed the protagonists in realistic life situations. They advocated that a film should neither idealise nor deliberately distort the lives of its protagonists. In terms of filming, they employed a large amount of long shots, deep focus shots and used realistic locations (a

documentary or realist mode of filmmaking style) with non-professional actors.

TNC committed itself to the cinematic representation of Taiwan's local histories and explored issues of 'nativeness/Taiwaneseness' identity. These films also expressed a positive attitude towards Taiwanese society. Scholars such as Jiao (1990) have highlighted the term of 'consciousness of nativeness'. However, the majority of Taiwanese people are also Chinese. The influence of Chinese traditional culture in the films of these Taiwanese auteurs is enormous. The discussions of Taiwan's cultural identity would be superficial without reference to its cultural roots linked with and from Mainland China. In the next section I will explore the continuity of Chinese traditions and culture in the films of a number of auteurs of TNC.

'Chineseness' in Taiwanese New Cinema

As I have suggested, the concept of diaspora is important in explaining the continuity of Chinese traditional culture in Taiwan. Although Taiwan has undergone some extreme political changes in its history, none of the political regimes has severed Taiwan's connection with Mainland China. Since the 1930s many Taiwanese inhabitants have come from Fu Jian and Guang Dong, two provinces in the Southern China. As argued earlier in the thesis, due to the influence of Confucianism, the concept of family has great importance among people of Chinese origin and they treasure the relationship of consanguinity (Consanguineous affection advocated by Confucianism) and ceremonies for their ancestors. These Chinese traditions and cultural characteristics were preserved and developed in Taiwan by Chinese immigrants. These influences can also be seen in many films of TNC in the 1980s. I will examine the influence of Chinese culture and tradition from the following three perspectives: firstly, self-reflection: the history complex; secondly, sadness and humanism; thirdly, the consciousness of misery.

Self-reflection: the complex of history

As a film which symbolises the emergence of TNC, *The Sandwich Man* is composed of three different stories: *Son's Doll* (Hou Xianxian, 1983), *The Taste of Apple* (Wan Jen, 1983) and *That Hat of Xiaoqi* (Zeng Zhuangxiang, 1983). In *Son's Doll*, the young protagonist Kun Shu makes a living by being disguised as a clown for a local cinema's advertising. Later on when he takes his disguise off, his little son fails to recognise him. Sadly, he has to disguise himself again as a clown and to be his son's doll. This film reveals ordinary peoples' difficult situation of making a living during the development of Taiwan from an agricultural to industrial society. *The Taste of Apple* tells a story about an unfortunate character Ah Fa. In a car accident, Ah Fa's leg is broken by American captain Greg's car. When the family of Ah Fa enters an American Navy Hospital, Ah Fa and his family keep acclaiming and admiring the magnificent hospital. Ah Fa repeatedly keeps saying: "Thanks! Thanks! Sorry! Sorry!" when he receives his compensation. The film criticizes Taiwanese blind worship for the US through Af Fa's deferential behaviour. In *That Hat of Xiaoqi*, a Japanese salesman is attracted and follows a beautiful girl Xiaoqi who always wears a hat. Finally when she takes it off, he sees an ugly scar on her head. This film symbolises what lies under the surface of economic prosperity; Taiwan has been invaded and colonised by Japan and this history has become a painful scar for Taiwanese who are unwilling to mention and acknowledge.

As argued in Chapter Three, deep concern with history and social responsibility has always been a central ideology for Chinese intellectuals in Chinese history. *The Sandwich Man* is an important film in TNC. Hou is also sensitive to represent history in his films. The most acclaimed contribution he made to Taiwan's politics is *A City of Sadness*. Together with another two films: *A Time to Live and A Time to Die* and *The Puppet Master* (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 1993), these three films are labeled as Hou's 'Taiwan Trilogy'. *A City of Sadness* refers to a number of important historical events between 1945 and 1949: the surrender of Japan at discretion and the repatriation of Japanese in Taiwan; KMT's takeover of Taiwan; and the incident of 28th February. By focusing its narrative on the fate of a family, the film opens out

the cruelty and violence of Taiwan's politics and history by focusing on the fate of a common Taiwanese family. Also, positioning characters in a series of historical contexts (such as the end of Japanese occupation and Taiwan's separation from Mainland China), the film also represents Taiwan's cultural hybridity: colonial occupation, political horror, and multiple waves of refuges.

A City of Sadness speaks of the bitterness of the islanders' memories, without directly representing the trauma of the incident of 28th February. The intertwining of public and political history with this network of personal narratives links the fates of the Lin family and their friends with the fate of Taiwan. In the film, the third brother Wen Liang becomes neurotic as he is condemned by the public as a traitor working for the Japanese army. Being deaf and dumb, the fourth brother Wen Qin is speechless, which symbolically implies that Taiwanese are unable to speak about themselves and their own history. This is the allegory of the tragedy of Taiwan. It is also the true allegory of Taiwanese misery. Hou also uses the protagonist Wen Xiong to address the following words: the most miserable is local Taiwanese. They were ruled by Japanese and then by Chinese. Nobody really cared about them other than taking profits from them (film dialogue, trans. Li). Hou's concern for Taiwanese indigenous people by using regional dialects reveals the complexities of Taiwanese cultural identity within its own historical framework. However, as Vitali (2008) suggests, without a proper understanding of the language, the deliberate use of dialects by auteur director Hou in this film is easily elided in western distributions including festival screening which is simply subtitled in English. *A Time to Live and a Time to Die* illustrates the historical changes in Taiwan during the past forty years since 1945 by basing its narrative on the experience of the protagonist, Ah Xiao, growing up Benjamin (2005) says that "to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger". The directors of TNC were careful to seize those crucial moments that possessed symbolic significance to explore, interpret and construct Taiwan's identity. By re-examining and questioning Taiwan's history they also explored the future of Taiwan, which for most Taiwanese was uncertainty.

Sadness and humanism

Films made in Taiwan since early 1980s are marked by a preoccupation of sadness and humanist concern. The subjects, filmic language and aesthetics of these films challenge the stereotype of old political films or commercial films in Taiwan before the 1980s. These new films possess rich connotation in terms of historical review, political concern and self-reflection of modern civilization. In many cases, they show deep concern for the lives of common people. As a consequence, the displays and representations of Taiwan's rapid changing history are a major concern of the auteur directors of TNC. By telling misery stories of common people in a specific historical period, these films show profound humanist concern. Hou's *A City of Sadness,* Edward Yang's *A Brighter Summer Day* and Wang Tong's *Speechless Mountain* are all good examples of this. Hou's films show his constant preoccupation with the Taiwanese past that might easily be seen in Livingstonian terms as "an intended function of an utterance" (Livingston, 1997: 135). Hou continuously reconstructs the past that is useable in understanding current crises in Taiwanese history.

Along with Hsiao-Hsien Hou and Wang Tong, Edward Yang stands as one of the most recognized of Taiwan's 'New Wave' directors. Yang is called "the calm anatomist of middle-class" (Lu, 2008). He is keen on the exploration of urban culture. Yang said in an interview: "my intention is clear. That is to cinematically portray the city of Taibei. I intend to explore the ways that Taibei underwent its changes recently and how these changes influenced the citizens of Taibei" (Chen 2001, trans. Li). Cinematically, the capital of Taiwan, Taibei takes on a similar visual and cultural importance to that of Paris in the films of the French New Wave and French national cinema in general However, Taibei does not possess the profile or the historical resonance and associations of mainland Chinese cities like Beijing, nor had it already developed as a cosmopolitan metropolis like Hong Kong, therefore its status as (national) capital was ambiguous. In the Taiwanese case, rather than the countryside, which so obsessed the Fifth Generation directors in Mainland China, it was the representation

and significance of the urban space that was central to the auteur directors of TNC. In *Taibei Story* (Edward Yang, 1985), Yang invited Hsiao-Hsien Hou and Caiqin (a famous Taiwanese pop singer) to feature in the film, which centres on the two lovers who grew up together. But in a society of materialism, their love fades and the male protagonist finally commits suicide in despair. The film suggests that individual tragedy is decided by social changes.

In 1991, Yang released his classic film: *A Brighter Summer Day.* The story is set in 1960s' Taiwan and reveals the transition of Xiao Si from a good middle school student to a teenage murderer under the influence of Taiwanese gangsters. The film criticises the era as a murderous one by depicting the story of the tragic teenage killer. The parents of Xiao Si suffer discrimination for political reasons. The girl that Xiao Si loves depends on others for a living (she lives in a family in which her mother works as a servant). The social difference and inequality between the poor and the rich, together with the rigidness of the educational system leads Xiao Si, a good student and idealistic teenager, into a tragic journey. In 2000, *Yi yi: A One and a Two* (Edward Yang) used the perspective of a child to structure the whole journey of the ups and downs of a family. Each character has a secret which cannot be told. So they start to talk to the grandmother who is in a coma. The director almost gives every character the same duration of shots. It indicates that everyone among us needs to be concerned and no one's pain or worry should be ignored.

Taiwanese director Wang Tong is often ignored by film scholarship. His films address strong concerns about ordinary people. Tong believes that "film art should be rooted in its own national culture, and record the emotion of a nation. The subject should be based on the concern for its people and explore the lives and truth of people in different historical period" (Zhang 2007, trans. Li). Tong's assertion emphasizes the social responsibility of filmmakers and what might be termed this consciousness of responsibility is continuous in TNC. It is also seen as a strong tradition of Chinese intellectuals in its history. Thus this consciousness of responsibility may well explain their obsession with history and social tensions. *Strawman*

(Wang Tong, 1987) takes the poor Chen brothers as the protagonists of the film. The film illustrates these small characters' sadness and happiness. The title *Strawman* may contain a symbolic meaning: common people are like a straw that can not hold their fates in their own hands in the whirlwind of times. This film is followed by another film *Hill of No Return* (Wang Tong, 1992) which also depicts the stories of ordinary people in historical times. As I argued for the Fifth Generation directors in Mainland China, deep humanist concern is an important theme for Chinese intellectuals and it is also a consistent theme in Wang Tong's films.

The consciousness of misery

Taiwan has undergone drastic political changes and cultural conflicts for the last few centuries, which has led to a crisis of identity. Taiwanese people lost their sense of belonging in this turbulent history. This floating island in the Pacific seems doomed to be politically forlorn and abandoned. The identity of Taiwan has become a central concern for the directors of TNC and they have worked to reposition Taiwan's identity within the present political situation. Thus they started to search Taiwan's roots in reflection of its history. Chen notes:

> In this sense, the TNC's obsession with history signals the end of an era and the beginning of a new one: the move from agricultural to an industrial society, from poor rural life to the urban centres, from political identification with China to that with Taiwan.
>
> (Chen, 1998: 559)

Many artists of the new cinema regarded themselves as Chinese intellectuals (Zhu, 2006) and they were obsessed with the spirit of national suffering which is advertised by Confucianism. Taiwanese filmmakers intended to use cinema to represent public misery and this is one reason why realism shaped TNC. In a similar way to the French New Wave Cinema of the late 1950s/early 1960s, TNC offers a voice to the reconstruction of a national identity in crisis. In the French case the issues were the after-effects of the WWII occupation by Germany and the struggle for a French identity in fear of American cultural imperialism (Hayward and

Vincendeau, 2000). In the Taiwanese case, the issues (identity in crisis) were more complicated and by adopting the radical film language of the European new wave film movements the auteur directors of TNC created a particular vision of, and for, Taiwan on the world stage. However, despite drawing on European film references and techniques, the main subject of the films engaged with important themes and concerns of traditional Chinese traditional culture such as self-reflection/criticism, the history complex, sadness and humanism, and the consciousness of misery. The construction of a Chinese Taiwan in the 1950s was manipulated by the KMT's political agenda and created a particular type of cinema through negative depiction of communist regime in Mainland China. Works of the TNC constructed a more cultural and artistic exploration. Abandoning the Governments' explicit political ideology, these auteur directors explored the complex nature of Taiwanese identity and illustrated the importance of a deep rooted connection with Chinese values at its heart.

Although symbolically projecting historical and political issues, TNC's concern with the 'common people' is a dominant theme. Again in a similar way to the directors of the French New Wave, who were rebelling against the cinema of old men (see Hayward's (1993: 235) argument about the Oedipal intentions of French new wave directors on the '*cinéma de papa*'), these new directors turned the camera onto the young generation of Taiwan. Edward Yang (Chen, 2001, trans. Li) said: "no one knows what he wants in this world. Everyone is waiting for others to tell him what to do." This could be seen as a metaphor for Taiwan's loss of political identity. *Papa, Can You Hear Me Sing?* (Yue Ham Ping, 1983) explores the psychological conflict of Taiwanese during the rapid economic growth between the 1950s and the 1970s.

The search to imagine Taiwan's future is a major concern for the TNC directors. Integral to this is the binary opposition between countryside and city often seen in Hou's films. Hou's unstained and innocent countryside always remains in idealistic opposition to the city, which

is usually portrayed as the embodiment of deception, corruption, and exploitation. His films criticize the materialism of urban culture and, in the same way as the Fifth Generation directors in Mainland China, he promotes an ideology of simplicity by returning to the countryside. This also draws on the Taoist philosophy which I have discussed in detail in chapters Three and Four. However, the tide of history, like industrialization and new technologies, means that Taiwan keeps moving forward into the more urbanized world. The fate of the young characters in their films often ends up as a tragedy in their experience of 'growing up', from countryside to cities and from rural culture to the industrial civilization of Taiwan.

Hsiao-Hsien Hou, a Taiwanese auteur director

Needham points out that:

> Authorship is no longer the limiting domain of the cinephile's appreciation or the industry's promotional mediator but, rather, an active source of dialogue with the regional and cultural concerns of Asia. This is central to an understanding of the politics of authorship and Taiwanese cinema in relation to historical representation and the anti-essentialist Taiwanese identities that are intrinsic to the films of Hou Hsiao-Hsien and Edward Yang.
>
> (Needham, 2006a: 363)

As an auteur director of TNC, Hou is a representative of contemporary Taiwanese cinema. Similar to the auteur directors of the Fifth Generation, his international recognition came from Western film festivals such as the Venice Film Festival in 1989 for his *A City of Sadness* and journals, i.e. *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Needham (2006a) challenged the construction of an Ozu-like Hou (as a direct comparison with Japanese auteur director Yasujiro Ozu) within the framework of film criticism. In this section I try to place Hou in a wider national context. Hou's cinema may be viewed as a mixture of colonial histories and post-colonial identity, Japanese influences and Chinese aesthetics. As a dominant auteur of TNC, studies of the cultural identity of Taiwan as projected in Hou's cinema need to highlight its historical and

cultural specificity. Hou's films project neglected (in the sense that they were censored) social and political problems in Taiwan. These historical narrations are placed on the shoulders of the ordinary people in Taiwanese society. Thus Hou's films specifically question national/cultural identities that have been manipulated by KMT and attempt to guide viewers to be self-reflective about issues such as who *we* were, and who *we* are.

Hou's auteur status rests mostly in his film style. Hou's most dominant stylistic feature is the use of long takes and amateur actors in real (non-studio) shooting locations. In Hou's cinema, medium shots and long shots are also frequently employed and he works with a technique of limited camera movement (Zhang, 2004). As mentioned earlier, the auteur directors of TNC also adopted the realist mode of filmmaking which has been so prevalent in European art cinemas. In the French New Wave, it was about energy, pace and interiority rather than profound dialogue. Generally it was also the projection of a love affair with the city of Paris which made the landmarks almost tourist adverts for non French viewers (Hayward and Vincendeau, 2000). For Hou's cinema, as with most films, the mise-en-scène is about the creation of atmosphere. That atmosphere may be Hou's personal interpretation of a specific historical movement. In *A City of Sadness*, Hou's filmic language leads to a sense of the mood, the emotional tenor, the moral and psychological atmosphere of that specific moment in Taiwanese history. The mise-en-scène in Hou's films is also influenced by Taoist philosophy. The use of landscapes is similar to the significance of Taoist painting. The long shots of natural scenery become metaphors for human emotions and *plan vide* is also frequently used to create atmosphere rather than content in his films.

As mentioned above, the concern for history is a major theme of TNC. Hou has been specifically preoccupied with Taiwanese history and identity. Hou's films possess a kind of 'exoticism' (certainly to Western eyes). Yip (1997:140) states: "His films take as their grand theme Taiwanese identity, looking to the island's past in order to better understand the complex historical relationships—with China, Japan, and the West—that have shaped modern

Taiwanese society". This 'exoticism' stems partly from his cinematic representation of Taiwan and partly from Hou's use deep focus and long takes. His films do not have complicated narratives. His historical films neither project the grandeur of history (for instance the way of the European Heritage film) nor the same portrays of history in the films of the Fifth Generation (more artistic manipulation), but on the contrary, by adopting a realist mode of filmmaking, his narratives focus on ordinary families and ordinary people in specific historical contexts. *A City of Sadness* is a useful example. Its context is the Incident of 28th February of 1947. Instead of directly presenting the taboo status of this political event, the narrative focuses on the fates of four brothers of Lin family. In this film the Lin family is portrayed as a microcosm of Taiwanese society.

Good Men Good Women (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 1995) is devoted to the political victims persecuted in Taiwan in the 1950s. The narrative changes within three spaces and times, reducing a grand historical event into small and tranquil fragments flowing through these visual reconstructions. The film focuses on a contemporary film actress who is preparing to star in a movie based on the lives of two Taiwanese patriots whose communist political activities during the 1930s and 1940s made them political targets of KMT's regime. Haunted by her personal past, the young actress often contemplates the historical experiences of the Taiwanese patriot she stars as. In this film the scenes of the actress and the scenes of the actual patriots constantly appear. Such deliberate visual techniques deliver juxtaposition between history and fiction which allows the audiences to mediate Taiwan's past and present. This filmic style also shows Hou's poetic aesthetics.

Hou's particular type of poetic expression is influenced by Chinese traditional culture. Like most Chinese intellectuals, Hou is influenced by Confucianism and Taoism and tries to reconcile the combination of the Confucian ideology of living in society and the Taoist one of perceiving life as a philosophical vision. Many of Hou's films represent a longing for democracy, freedom and happiness. In films such as *Good Men Good Women*, *A City of*

Sadness, and *Three Times* (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 2005), most of the characters are young people who devote their lives to this pursuit. As argued in Chapter Four, historical narration is always manipulated by the author in terms of who has the power to write history, in what direction and for what purpose. By looking at the fates of families and individuals with a kind of calmness, as expressed in Hou's realist mode of filmmaking style, Hou stated the belief that "anything recorded is evidence that can not be manipulated or eliminated. Isn't this the eye of history? I can not imagine how the world will be without this pair of eyes" (Zhu, 2006, trans. Li). This is perhaps over-simplistic because cinematic re-construction does not guarantee the authenticity of history itself. It does, however, indicate that he has endowed his films with the responsibility of being the 'eyes of history' and in order to think through Taiwan's cultural identity, Hou constructs narratives where Taiwan gets the chance to face its historical reality. An example of this is the line on the poster of *A City of Sadness* which states: "Before today, you have never heard about this story, and nobody ever dared to tell it either".

Chow (1998a: 170), in her essay *Film and Cultural Identity,* argues that "people's identification of who they are can no longer be regarded as a mere ontological or phenomenological event. Such identification is now profoundly enmeshed with technological intervention". This technological intervention adds to different constructions of national identity and this is where the auteur directors of TNC make a valuable contribution.

There is an interesting plot in *Dust in the Wind* when the fishing boat from mainland China gets lost and lands on Golden Gate (Taiwan's territory), in which the fishermen on the boat are received by the Taiwanese army of Golden Gate. These mainland Chinese are afraid of the Taiwanese army but the Taiwanese army warmly welcomes them with a impassioned reception. The army gives the fishermen's family gifts and in a long farewell scene the army emotionally watches the fishing boat leaving Taiwan. This sequence seems to suggest that the other side of the sea, where the Chinese mainland is situated, is the native land of Taiwanese

ancestors. There is a deep-rooted connection between people on the two sides of the sea. This may be viewed as Hou's cultural feeling towards mainland China. It is related to his personal diasporic experience and it is also the representation of an emotional longing of many Taiwanese of Chinese origin for mainland China. For many Taiwanese, Chinese traditions and culture seem to be the memories of their childhood which may fade with years but which are still deeply rooted in their heart. If KMT has attempted to construct Taiwan as a 'legitimate China' that is in completion with the People's Republic of China, Hou sets out to challenge this officialdom by strengthening the remembrance of Chinese mainland as a collective nostalgia. As mentioned earlier, the nostalgia comes from both the historical link between Mainland China and Taiwan, and the diasporic experience of these Taiwanese filmmakers.

Cultural hybridity in Hou's cinema

As in Hong Kong, the dominant cultural mode in Taiwan is a synthesis of Chinese customs and values (which are observed, revived, and passed on from one generation to the next) and both Japanese and Western (following American involvement at the end of WWII) forms of social organization practised during and after Taiwan's colonial experience. The Japanese colonisation left traces in many aspects of Taiwanese society and is also represented by the TNC. As a postcolonial critic, Bhabha (1994: 178) advocates a fundamental realignment of the methodology of cultural analysis in the West away from metaphysics and toward the 'performative' and 'enunciatory present'. Bhabha (1994) identified a relationship of antagonism and ambivalence between the colonizers and the colonized. This antagonism and ambivalence form a colony's cultural hybridity and, in the Taiwanese case, they further complicate Taiwan's identity and the identity of cultural hybridity which is also seen in Hou's films. The desire for modernity in Taiwan was inextricably bound up with the process of Japanisation. Thus a clear-cut opposition between a 'victimised Taiwan' and a 'bad imperial Japan' does not exist in this colonial relationship. This also differs from the Chinese Mainland and the post Japanese invasion relations.

If Taiwan's identity is mainly represented as antagonism (Bhabha, 1994) from a nationalist perspective, then for Hou's cinema it is more about ambivalence. In *A City of Sadness*, Hou emphasizes the friendship between Kuangrong, Kuangmei and their Japanese friends as a sincere emotional relationship. For *The Puppet Master*, Hou uses a Japanese character to interpret the colonizer's emotional attachment to Taiwan: "I feel so bad for leaving Taiwan. Taiwan is my second home" (film dialogue). Colonization is not a simple duality of one opposing the other. For the public what is more important is civilian communication, cultural encounters and assimilation. Although the political relationship between Taiwan and Japan is complicated and in many cases painful for the Taiwanese people, Japanese cultural influence on Taiwan is undeniable. From Taiwan's architecture to its education system, Japanese influence is evident and even today Japanese culture (such as pop music, food and fashion) is still popular among the young generation in Taiwan.

What further complicates a nuanced reading of these cultural specificities are the characteristics of Japanese culture which are also influenced by Chinese traditions and culture. For example, Confucianism spread its influence across the whole of South-eastern Asia since the Tang dynasty (BC 618-907). Local culture and the continuity of Chinese traditions encountered Japanese culture in the process of forming Taiwan's cultural identity. Thus the cultural hybridity of Taiwan becomes difficult to articulate when mapping its boundaries. Taiwanese identity can be viewed as an amalgam of Chinese (Confucian and Taoist), aboriginal/indigenous and its ancestry, Japanese culture and, since WWII, the increasing influence of the West (especially in an increasingly global technological society).

Café Lumière (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 2003) is a film made in honour of the Japanese auteur director Yasujiro Ozu and was premiered on Ozu's 100th anniversary. Hou has been constantly compared with Ozu (Needham, 2006b). Needham (2006b: 371) notes that "the habit of constructing an Ozu-like Hou is practiced even by the most diligent of post-colonial critics who have fallen in to an all-too-easy association between the two

directors when discussing the formal and thematic elements of Hou's earlier films". Indeed they share many similarities in terms of film style, filmic language and filmmaking techniques. But more profound similarities come from their perspectives and concern for the mundane experience of daily life and the characters' emotions. As a citizen of post-colonial Taiwan, Hou shows his understanding and absorption of Japanese culture and traditions in *Café Lumière*. In terms of film aesthetics, the Japanese cultural influence that Hou chose to represent in this film is *monoaware*.

Meaning literally "a sensitivity to things", Mononaware is a literary concept proposed by Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga (Hiroyuki, 2000). The term was coined in the Eighteenth century by him and was originally used in his literary criticism of The Tale of Genji, becoming central to his philosophy of literature, and eventually to Japanese cultural tradition (Hiroyuki, 2000). Monoaware has become the essence of Japanese beauty aesthetic, literally 'the pathos of things'. In Japanese culture, monoaware refers to one's outpouring of true feelings. 'Mono' is the object of perception, and 'aware' equates to the subjects of perception and emotion. Monoaware, thus, is the aesthetic harmony when the two are united. The aesthetics of monoaware does not come from intellectual judgment; instead, it comes from a combination of instinct and sensibility. It is a leitmotif for many Japanese literary works and artistic films. However, as a Taiwanese intellectual, Hou has explored monoaware by emphasising a Taoist perspective. That is to say, he used a transcendent perspective to look at people's daily lives. This transcendent ideology combines sense and sensibility and unites nature and human beings, enabling them to surpass the mundane constraints of the material everyday and perceive the essence of life. Thus the cultural echo between Japanese monoaware and a Taoist *Weltanschauung* is created.

Café Lumière reveals Hou's authorial signatures while emulating Ozu's artistic characteristics. In terms of cinematography, Hou employs a number of long takes for

interior sequences which are similar to those used within Ozu's filmic style. Also, in order to depict the actual environment in which the Japanese in Japan live, Hou adopted the ideology of 'imperfect cinema' and 'guerilla cinema' (Espinosa, 1979): to secretly shoot outdoor sequences and edit them into the film. Japanese audiences were surprised that a Taiwanese director was able to represent such a realistic Japan (Mei, 2005). The same interpretation to urban culture is also seen between Ozu and Hou in *Café Lumière*. Tokyo in *Café Lumière* is not a typical modern city. Like Ozu, Hou intended to capture the very details of city life: a small and crowded bookstore, quiet cafes, and electric cars. The representation of these small aspects of life is in contrast with a metropolis like Tokyo which is shaped by numerous skyscrapers and a high speed life style. This contrast, as a result, delivers a familiarity for audiences, enabling them to approach characters and their lives through a familiar cinematic construction. *Café Lumière* is a perfect illustration of the assimilation of Chinese and Japanese cultures. In terms of narrative, the relationship between the Japanese girl and her Taiwanese boyfriend also symbolically represents a certain cultural connection between Taiwan and Japan.

A number of Hou's films (*All the Youthful Days*, 1983, *A Summer at Grandpa's*, *A Time to Live and A Time to Die*) centre on the theme of 'growing up'. The intersection of historical contexts with personal narratives links the fates of certain individuals with that of Taiwan as a nation. Through individuals' experiences of growing up, the representation of a 'collective flux' of Taiwanese society is created. In this sense, the way children grow up is symbolic of the growth of Taiwan. Further, the relationship between an individual's identity and Taiwan's identity is like the relationship between a drop of water and the sea. Growing up here refers to the awakening of self-consciousness which leads to the construction of a kind of subjectivity. Hou and other TNC directors (such as Edward Yang and Wang Tong) have repeatedly used stories of growing up to practice this construction of identity. For example, Hou's quasi-autobiographic film *A Time to Live and A time to Die* illustrates the growing up of a child and its separation from the family. Hou's personal growing up experience was put into the film but at the same time he changed its historical context.

At a certain level, Hou might have unconsciously corresponded to the development and changes of Taiwan's cultural identity. His early works focused on countryside and many stories of the children's development are set in beautiful rural sceneries. Taiwan has undergone drastic change from agricultural to an industrial society. The materialism of urban civilization has had a large impact on Taiwan's society. Between 1960s and 1970s, the change from agricultural to an industrial society and the rapid growth of the economy made cities such as Taibei and Gaoxiong prosperous. These cities became places that young people dream of in Hou's films. For example, in *All the Youthful Days*, the protagonist Ah Qin and his friends leave the quiet and idyllic countryside for Gaoxiong. There they go through completely different life and experience the cruelty and sadness of growing up. The world *outside* has always been an idealized attraction to them, offering prosperity, materialism, growing desire, disordered information and complicated human relationships. It is a place where one easily gets lost in city's neon lights: forgetting one's origin, obscuring one's unique identity and fading out of one's dream. This is perhaps associated with the ethnic (diasporic) background of the directors, as well as those who were in control of the film industry (the majority of them such as Wang Tong and Edward Yang and are immigrants from mainland China).

Because of these teenagers' problems in Taiwan, Hou extended his concern for the young generation in films such as *Daughter of the Nile* (1987) and *Millennium Mambo* (2001). These films, as Yip (1997: 140) states: "have depicted the consequence of Taiwan's rapid urbanization and internationalization, as Taiwanese youths find themselves caught up in a society where traditional Chinese values are collapsing in the face of American and Japanese cultural imperialism". These films tackle the degradation of Taiwanese pop culture and express Hou's worries about the superficial nature, fickleness and degradation of urban culture.

Hou's most recent film, *Three Times*, summarized Taiwan's last one hundred years by

presenting three dreams that symbolise three different periods of history. This can be read as a fragmental retrospection of Taiwan's experience of development. The three dreams in the film are the dream of love in 1966, the dream of freedom in 1911, and the dream of youth in 2005. The dream of love delivers simplicity and warmth; the dream of youth is full of fickleness; and the dream of freedom relates to the contemporary political situation of Taiwan. However, Taiwan's identity is still ambiguous. After experiencing struggles and suffering during the process of growing up, the core of Taiwanese culture seems to enter the adolescent period.

As Hall (1993) suggests, it is difficult and complicated to identify the cultural identity of a specific geographical area. Cultural identity is itself an ongoing process. Thus visual representation of cultural identity, instead of defining, becomes a kind of exploration with certain tendencies (enmeshed with technological intervention). Hou's films present different aspects of Taiwan's history (including Taiwan's forgotten historical experience) with abstinence. He seems to be a calm observer, and endowed his films with profound meditation and deep emotion. Taiwan's cultural identity may be like what the *plan vide* in his films such as *Good Men Good Women* imply: the lights and shadows reflected by mountain in distance, blue sea and thick cloud slowly floating and changing all the time. However, there is always a sense of changeless permanence in his film: Chinese cultural roots. A few years later this 'Chinesness' is more directly represented to the West by the films of another Taiwanese director Ang Lee.

Ang Lee: national cinema to transnational cinema

The interesting point for Taiwanese director Ang Lee to stand out among the earlier discussed auteur directors is the 'transnational identity' in his films. "Ang Lee's films are powerful evocations of cultural preservation as well as intercultural (mis)communication" (Dariotis and Fung, 1997: 187). When TNC seemed to be coming to an end in the early 1990s, Lee

emerged and his filmmaking reestablished the reputation of Taiwanese cinema on an international stage. His first two feature films *Pushing Hands* (1991) and *The Wedding Banquet* (1993) both deal with older Chinese/Taiwanese parents coming to an understanding with the European American friends of their sons. Both films imply the negotiation of personal identity through the changes caused by immigration and relocation. *Pushing Hands* is about the story between a Mainland Chinese father and his European American daughter-in-law when he moves to upstate New York to spend his retirement with his son's family. *The Wedding Banquet*, again tells a story between Taiwanese (Confucian) parents and their Americanized son who is homosexual. In these films an ideological as well as cultural binary opposition between the East and the West is set up. Such diasporic experience is also part of the director's personal background.

Lee, grew up in Taiwan where his family has settled from Mainland China, and he then completed his studies in drama and filmmaking in the USA. The cross-cultural characteristics of Lee's films are distinctive enough to have received international attention. Lee started his career in Taiwan and directed a number of internationally acclaimed Chinese language films such as *Pushing Hands, The Wedding Banquet, Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994) and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000). He has since also directed English language films made outside Taiwan such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *Ice Storm* (1997), and *Ride with the Devil* (1999). In 2005 his film *Brokeback Mountain* won three Oscars including Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Original Score. These achievements make Lee an important internationally acclaimed director and he is the premier director of Chinese origin with such a distinctive reputation in today's film industry. Based on his deep understanding of Chinese traditional culture and his insight into Western culture, the themes in his films often discuss cultural conflicts between the East and the West. He is also gifted at interpreting Western stories from a Chinese traditional cultural perspective which will be examined in Chapter Seven. In this chapter I will mainly focus on his Taiwanese projects in terms of transnational identity while highlighting 'Chineseness' as the cultural core of his films.

Although a Taiwanese director, as I will argue in his case study, the influence of Chinese cultures and traditions can be seen as Lee's authorial signature although his films since 1990s also embody aspects of transnationalism. As Higson points out:

> Indeed, film-making and film exhibition have been transnational since the first public film shows in the 1980s. Or rather, developments were on the one hand decidedly local – as in the case of the film-makers and showmen working in Brighton and Hove on the south coast of England in the early years; but on the other hand, they rapidly crossed national borders, as film entrepreneurs like the Lumières shot films around the world and arranged for them to e shown equally widely.
>
> (Higson, 2008: 70)

In this era of globalization it is problematic to argue for a pure national cinema. The key auteur directors of the three Chinese language cinemas have made films either in, or for, a transnational context since the 1990s, which further complicates the projecting of the national. The next chapter furthers the investigation of the role of auteur directors and the signification of complex national meanings in contexts beyond that of the nation state and investigates if the key directors which emerged earlier in the study remain signifiers of Chinese traditional cultures. This investigation leads to a new paradigm that recognizes the heuristic force of the concept of 'national' cinema, while challenging a singular identity and notions of nation-state and emphasizing the complex constructions of identity which are negotiated between different cultural entities, between the East and the West.

Higson, in his essay *The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema* (2006), rejects the notion of the 'national' as an essentialized construction in the study of the contemporary politics of national cinema. Higson (2006) argues that a stable notion of the national cannot fully or even adequately account for the fundamental role played by globalization. Lee's Taiwanese cinema is a perfect case of transnational ideology in the era of transnational filmmaking. By both deploying and contesting the notion of 'Imagined Communities' (in the Andersonian sense) and the concept of national cinema, and considering auteur director as signifier of national style, Chapter Seven will investigate if they remain signifiers of Chinese traditional

cultures and the transformative and transcultural nature of the national beyond the nation-state.

In Lee's cinema, his films often focus on characters with various forms of displacement. Dariotis and Fung (1997) suggest the following:

> Lee's characters, whether they are members of Taiwanese or Chinese diaspora, or they are merely undergoing smaller forms of displacement, are each affected by the difficulty of negotiating identity not only as individuals moving from place to place but as members of families that become dislocated-literally and figuratively.
>
> (Dariotis and Fung, 1997: 187)

Lee's filmmaking may be seen as a starting point for the transition of Taiwanese cinema to a transnational cinema. The highly successful reception of his films *Pushing Hands, The Wedding Banquet* (won the Golden Berlin Bear Award from the Berlin International Film Festival in 1993) at Western film festivals promoted Taiwanese cinema to the level of transnational cinema. Although gaining the status of auteur through successes in Western film festivals, in the same way as Mainland Chinese Fifth Generation and Hong Kong new wave directors, Lee's emergence provides a new perspective on how the standard of selection of Western film festivals changes over different periods. This possibly also symbolizes that understanding of cultural identity (and here I am referring to notions in particular of Chineseness) might be differently received by Western film festivals. Lee's films often deal with cultural conflicts between East and West, and he also explores subjects of homosexuality. The cultural conflicts in Lee's films may also be seen to play out as a site of cinematic cultural encounters. Lee's successes suggest that cross-cultural subjects are popular in the era of globalization. The 'Chineseness' represented in Lee's films is often explored around topics of misunderstanding between Westerners and people of Chinese origin and these cultural conflicts form the basis of Lee's comedy drama (particularly in *Pushing Hands* and *The Wedding Banquet*). Thus the examination of what 'Chineseness' amounts to in the different contexts found in Lee's films has contributed greatly to his success at Western film

festivals and in subsequent film scholarship. Since 1990s, Taiwan has achieved relative political independence and it has become a member of the global economy. In such a global context its national/cultural identity is opened up. Thus the cross-cultural characteristics of Lee's cinema not only serve to help reshape Taiwanese cinema in terms of national/cultural identity, but also provide a new context for 'Chineseness' in cross-cultural communication.

Ang Lee's *The Wedding Banquet*

Figure17

In Taiwanese cinema, Lee's most important works are his trilogy of the family: *Pushing Hands*, *The Wedding Banquet* (Figure 17), *Eat Drink Man Woman*. These films explore the cultural phenomenon of Chinese family in the cultural conflicts between the East and the West. *The Wedding Banquet*, in particular, sets up a new path for Taiwanese cinema by building a bridge between the East and the West. This is different to Westerners' Orientalist fantasy in relation to the Fifth Generation's films in Mainland China, or the obsession with Hong Kong martial arts genre. Lee's films directly deal with 'transnational issues' as the characters in his films often travel between the East and the West and experience diasporic identification. Such displacement in terms of space and culture often leads to cultural conflicts and negotiations which create an interesting, culturally complex situation for both Chinese/Taiwanese and Westerners. As mentioned, Lee's personal background made him familiar with both Easter and Western culture and traditions. Lee's trilogy of family indicates his deep understanding of Chinese traditional culture: the Confucian ideology of family. He has showed his cinematic techniques in representing the complicated and subtle relationship between people in and outside of a Chinese patriarchal family in these films.

Written and directed by Lee, *The Wedding Banquet* deals with Chinese traditional notions of family in relation to American ideologies of gender and sexuality. The film is also cross-cultural in two ways. First, the cultural background of the filmmaker (Ang Lee) is positioned between Asia and the USA. Second, the subject concentrates on an encounter between Chinese and American culture. According to Bhabha (1990: 2), "the society of the nation in the modern world is 'that curiously hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance' and the two realms flow unceasingly and uncertainly into each other 'like waves in the never-ending stream of the life-process itself.'" Lee's films specifically address the complexities bound up with notions of the national in cross-cultural communication. According to Dariotis and Fung (1997: 201), *The Wedding Banquet* explores the binaries of "East versus West, old and young, and female versus male". Using cultural differences between East and West (of which he is acutely aware because of his own background), Lee addresses the conflicts that can arise when intrinsic values seem to differ.

As argued earlier, in Chinese traditional culture, the father is at the top of a family hierarchy. He possesses the absolute power. Fathers determine the relationships and the structure of a family. Confucius notes:

> The Master said, while a man's father is alive, you can only see his intentions; it is when his father dies that you discover whether or not he is capable of carrying them out. If for the whole three years of mourning he manages to carry on the household exactly as in his father's day, then he is a good son.
>
> (Confucius, 1996: 7)

Thus, a Chinese family is structured by positioning the father at its centre. This is different to the concept of family culture represented in many Western films where the family is unified by the concept of love rather than obligation.

In *The Wedding Banquet,* Lee sets up tensions within the family unit. And within these

conflicts, the centre is still the image of *father*: a father who has lost his control over the family once his son has left Taiwan and moved to America. Lee pays particular attention to the father's feelings and his emotional world in this film. It is undeniable that sexuality dominates the relationship of the characters in this film. Because of their backgrounds and cultural beliefs, Weitong's parents find homosexuality unacceptable. Thus Weitong tries to hide his sexual orientation and satisfy his parents by engaging in a false marriage with a woman. In one sequence of the film Weitong's parents arrive in New York to prepare his wedding banquet and they stay at their son's home. The father is tired and he falls asleep. At this moment, Weitong approaches his father's bed, looking at his father quietly. Suddenly he reaches his hand to test his father's breathing. This unexpected move surprises the audience. Lee presents Weitong's contradictory emotions. Would the death of his father be the best for him? After all, Weitong has been caught between his father's love and power to repress his true sexual identity.

Over time he has developed a way of overtly agreeing with his father but covertly acting and thinking differently. Weitong is thought by his mother to have turned gay after his immigration to the USA. Here Immigration becomes both a spatial/geographical and cultural dynamic in this exploration of father/son and East/West cultural differences. Away from Taiwan, away from his father, and away from Confucian patriarchy, Weitong explores the self he is not able to when under his father's control and when immersed in Taiwan's traditional Chinese philosophies. Weitong's being gay is on the one hand a personal identity but on the other a symbolic factor of cultural difference,

Unlike most contemporary Hollywood films, where the representation of sexuality and sex involves scenes of lovemaking that involve various levels of nudity, Lee avoids this completely. The representation of sex in *The Wedding Banquet* has strict limitations in line with (partly because of Taiwanese/Chinese expectations in relation to representation of desire and sexuality and partly because this film was financed by Taiwanese government and was

made to be screened in Taiwan).

Although sexuality is a key element in the narrative of *The Wedding Banquet* sex itself is never the subject and motive of this film. Lee has indicated that *The Wedding Banquet* is not a film that is pro-homosexuality (Dilley, 2007). (In many ways it obviously is, although what is at stake, arguably, is the conflict between Chinese family morality and Western more liberal moral concepts.) He explores people's reactions in a context where traditional moral standard encounters drastic changes. As stated in his biography, Lee believes that this film is more like a family drama and sex is reduced to the level of a tool for creating dramatic conflicts (Zhang, 2007: 182).

The influence of Chinese traditional culture, philosophy and morality is clearly evident in *The Wedding Banquet*. At the beginning of the film, the parents who represent the dominance of Chinese traditional culture come to New York. As agued in earlier chapters, within such a Confucian familial hierarchy, Weitong and Simon, while representing Western culture, show great respect for the parents. However, after the encounter of the two cultures both sides have to make a compromise in order to facilitate an enduring relationship. Lee's control of characters is also influenced by the philosophy of 'the golden mean' of Confucianism which highlights the need to be moderate. His uniqueness lies in the way this philosophy is represented cinematically. In his cinema, he combines more sensitive Chinese cultural characteristics, such as deepness, mystery and tenderness, with freedom and individualism of the West. The narrative, as in many of his films (such as *Pushing Hands, Eat Drink Men Women*), possesses the style of Chinese traditional literary narratives: ambiguity, refinement and obscurity.

Taiwan and Mainland China: TNC and the Fifth Generation in the 1980s

TNC's consciousness of 'nativeness' and the anti-cultural revolution tendency of the Fifth Generation in Mainland China showed the efforts made by young filmmakers in Taiwan and the Mainland in terms of searching for cultural identity. In their cinematic explorations, both TNC and the Fifth Generation created a unique cultural experience which differs from that of their predecessors and which can be seen to offer some form of common ground. However, this does not eliminate the cultural specificities of the two cinemas. Because the young filmmakers, both in Taiwan and mainland China, were post-war generation and respectively grew up in two separated geographical spaces (Taiwan and mainland China) and political spaces (KMT' regime and Communist Party's regime), this resulted in different cinematic representations and explorations in terms of searching for identities in their films. Firstly, TNC intended to present 'Taiwaneseness' or 'nativeness' while the Fifth Generation presented their self-reflection on the Cultural Revolution. Each responded to the realities of their own political time. But there are no direct dialogues between Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese cinemas. This is different to the pre-1980s relationship when 'Anti-communism films' in Taiwanese cinema and 'Revolutionary films' in Mainland Chinese cinema: firstly, each depicted the image of the other in an unfavourable way. This created an oppositional cultural and film relationship between Taiwan and Mainland China. Secondly, in an attempt to create Taiwan's identity, TNC directly explored issues of 'nativeness', although the films of the Fifth Generation chose to present their experience of Cultural Revolution in an indirect way which was mostly due to the rigid political censorship.

Thirdly, TNC adopted a positive attitude towards their 'nativeness'. However, the Fifth Generation criticised and subverted the social reality left by ten years' Cultural Revolution. Fourthly, TNC presented individual people's experiences through focusing on their daily lives and expressing concern and respect towards unrepeated individuality and value of Taiwanese people. The Fifth Generation, then, was more concerned about collective experience. The auteur-directors of the Fifth Generation focused on the individual; however, the individual

created often became the individual of common sense: a symbolic individual in a particular historical period. Thus their films are often a self-reflection of history and culture. Fifth, the emergence of 'Taiwaneseness' simplifies the liberation of the Mainland complex: Taiwan has pulled itself away from old psychological condition and tried to reconstruct a new cultural experience. This cultural experience is based on the reality of Taiwan and thus helped Taiwan to re-map its cultural identity. On the contrary, the Fifth Generation's anti-Cultural Revolution tendency is a self-reflection. As argued in previous chapters, this self-reflection is both a return to Chinese cultural roots and a criticism of the present political reality. They tried to rebuild a cultural space for Chinese people by searching, criticizing and even reconstructing Chinese traditional culture and allegories. The previous arguments reveal the ideological difference between TNC and the Fifth Generation; however, as I have highlighted in this thesis, the influence of Confucianism/Taoism on these auteur directors and the representation of 'Chineseness' in their cinema are key in linking the three Chinese cinemas in term of national/cultural identity. This perspective also allows us to understand the whole picture of the three Chinese cinemas while exploring their cultural specificities.

Conclusion

This Chapter concentrated on Taiwanese cinema and in particular TNC. It examines how auteur directors (vision/styles etc.) emerge and the concerns of the nation that are being explored. It explored the ways that certain auteur directors (with distinctive vision/styles etc.) emerged and examined how ideas of the Taiwanese nation were represented by these directors. By focusing on TNC and the films which were elevated to the international pantheon of 'art cinema' and 'national cinema', I analyze how the complex nature of national/cultural identity was constructed, interpreted and manipulated by a number of key auteur-directors such as Hsiao-Hsien Hou, Edward Yang, Wang Tong and Ang Lee. In particular the distinctive factor here is how Chinese cultural specificities linked by emotional and blood links to Mainland China (what I refer to as nostalgia) interweave with the diverse concerns of a complex and hybrid nation-state (indigenous, Japanese, Western/American and

Chinese influences) to bring a different nuance of Chinese identity to the screen. With special focus on the new wave movement in the 1980s, these chapters exploring Mainland China (the Fifth Generation), Hong Kong (new wave cinema) and Taiwan (Taiwanese New Cinema) investigate the representation of 'Chineseness'/Chinese traditional cultural influences within three Chinese language cinemas and suggest that there are commonalities of national culture based on traditional Chinese philosophies which surpass their territorial boundaries but which also produce distinctive projections of what Chinese cultural specificities might be.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

OUTSIDE AND BEYOND 'THE NATIONAL': CASE STUDIES OF THREE KEY DIRECTORS OF CHINESE ORIGIN

Introduction

"Prior to the 1980s critical writings on cinema adopted common-sense notions of national cinema. The idea of national cinema has long informed the promotion of non-Hollywood cinemas" (Crofts, 1998: 385). Although national cinema is seen as a resistance to Hollywood, and many efforts have been made to prosper national cinemas in many countries both in terms of commercial appeal and artistic achievement, today Hollywood has not yet been 'beaten': it is not only the biggest film market, but it is also the biggest film distributor (Zeidler, 2009). The global film box office in past decades has been monopolized by the films produced and distributed by the American film studios. "The box office in international markets, excluding Canada, for U.S. movies climbed to a record $18.3 billion, up 7 percent from 2007, and accounted for 65 per cent of the global total (Zeidler, 2009). As I have indicated in previous chapters, classic theoretical views such as 'imperialism/nationalism', 'Orientalism' and the dualism of 'dominance/resistance' became the basis of academic views on the relationship between Hollywood and other national cinemas especially Third World Cinemas. Among many issues, the 'Otherness' of national cinema has been historically emphasized in relation to Hollywood. "As a marketing strategy, these national labels have promised varieties of 'otherness'—of what is culturally different from both Hollywood and the films of other importing countries" (Crofts, 1998: 385). The previous four chapters explored the concept of national cinema from a key moment in the 1980s and take an auteurist approach. In this chapter, I would like to explore/surpass models of dualism and 'dominance/resistance' that have dominated studies of national cinemas and use another perspective to reflect a more flexible notion of 'the national' and its relationship to Hollywood. The possibility for this argument: firstly, Hollywood is in a process of transformation and the symbol of this transformation is the impact that independent filmmaking has brought to and is still bringing to it (Holmlund and Wyatt, 2004: 183); secondly, in a global context, there is a new sense of the 'universal' appearing in Chinese language commercial films and independent/artistic films, which then further complicates

traditional understandings of the term 'Chinese national cinema'. Thus when both Hollywood and national cinemas seek to promote the 'universal' in their cinemas in order to capture a transnational market, the products must confuse notions of 'the national'. If film is designed to offer transnational language, what is the impact on gender, culture, ethics and eventually 'the national' in a transnational context? What happens when certain auteur-directors of Chinese origin successfully cross cultural boundaries and make English language films which are successful both in the East and the West or make films for a transnational context? Do they remain signifiers of Chinese traditional cultures? These are the key questions that I will explore in this chapter. To investigate these questions, I will examine three of the most successful filmmakers of Chinese origin (Ang Lee, Yimou Zhang and John Woo) and discuss their work outside of their Chinese contexts and investigate their filmmaking in a Western transnational context. It should be noted that the above three directors are not the only ones who made films outside of their national contexts. Hsiao-Hsien Hou also directed a French film *Le Ballon Rouge* (2007) starring French actress Juliette Binoche. But Hou has only made one western film so far and this film was not as successful as those made by the three above directors. I have therefore chosen to mainly leave discussions of Hou in a Taiwanese context within the thesis.

As quoted in Chapter Two, Livingston argues that contributing some form of agency to the production of an artefact is insufficient to be counted as an author of it; a communicative or expressive intention must stand behind the contribution. It is in this respect that I assume the authorial expressions and concern for national themes of these auteur directors of Chinese origin are also expressed in their filmmaking outside of their national contexts.

Firstly this chapter presents a case study on Ang Lee. By conducting a detailed analysis of his major films made outside Taiwan I explore how global filmmaking intersects with Chinese cultural identities and influences (my emphasis of 'Chineseness' here does not efface American and British influences but, rather like my own film scholarship, it offers a space to bring new or multiple meanings by crossing cultures). In my analysis I ask the following questions: what is his personal signature (i.e. what were the preoccupations and stylistic choices of his Taiwanese films? Do they carry over to his non-Taiwanese films and what changes are there when he makes films outside Taiwan?

My second case study is Yimou Zhang. Here I investigate 'Chineseness' in Yimou Zhang's transnational projects. First I establish Zhang as the cultural spokesperson of China (his role orchestrating the Olympic Opening Ceremony 2008 being paramount), and then I explore the different reception of his films *Ju Dou* (1987) and *Raise the Red Lanterns* in both the East and the West. Finally I argue the contradictory nature of 'the national' in Zhang's transnational films (*Hero, House of Flying Daggers* and *Curse of Golden Flower*).

In the third case study of John Woo, I explore how Woo carries over his authorial signature and the influence of Chinese traditional culture evident in his Hong Kong films (the concept of *Xiayi* and Confucian notions of brotherly love and family) to his Hollywood films. This case study is focused on *Face/Off* and later his transnational project *Red Cliff*. I analyze and compare his authorial choices in relation to his Hong Kong and American films.

To conclude this chapter, I explore how elements of self-Orientalization employed by the auteur directors operate in the transnational context and work to problematise fixed notions of national cinemas and the nation.

Ang Lee: Chineseness in cross-cultural communication

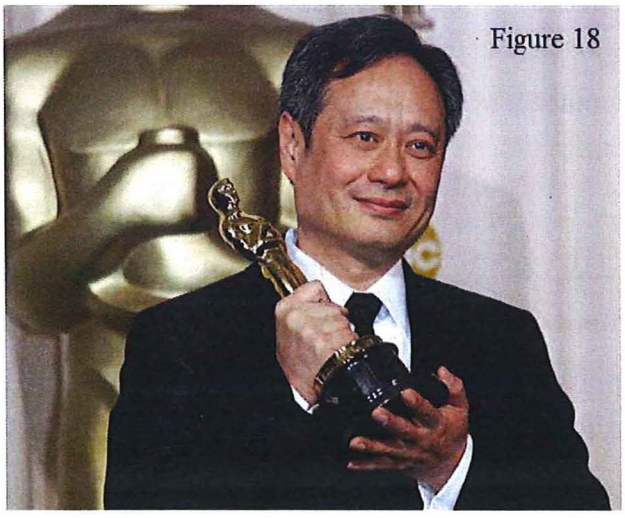


Figure 18

Ang Lee (Figure 18) started his career in Taiwan and directed a number of internationally acclaimed Chinese language films such as *Pushing Hands (1992), The Wedding Banquet (1993), Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994) and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000). He has since also directed English language films made outside Taiwan such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *The Ice Storm* (1997), and *Ride with the Devil* (1999). In 2005 his film *Brokeback Mountain* won three Oscars including Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Original Score. These

achievements make Lee an important internationally acclaimed director and the premier director of Chinese origin. With his deep understanding of Chinese traditional culture and his insight into Western culture, the themes in his films often discuss cultural conflicts between the East and the West. He is also gifted at interpreting Western stories from a Chinese traditional cultural perspective.

As I outlined in Chapter 5, Lee was born and educated in Taiwan. In 1977 he went to New York to study theatre at New York University and he switched to film. Since his first feature film *Pushing Hands* his career developed quickly. The cross-cultural characteristic of Lee's films is distinctive enough to have received international attention. His educational background and life experience in the West enable him to travel between the East and the West, between two different cultures. As I will demonstrate, Lee's films represent a variety of themes/subjects and project a complicated, multi-cultural cinematic world. Lee has carefully explored the 'intercommunity' of multi-cultures and bridged the aesthetic gaps between different film cultures. In turn this has led to a widely acknowledged reception of his films in a multi-cultural context. Whether in his Taiwanese films or Hollywood films, Lee is preoccupied with the cultural characteristics and the wisdom of Confucian tradition. For example, the Confucian ideology of 'Golden Mean' influenced his way of dealing with film narrative, which will be explored later in this section.

Lee's cinema is a perfect case of cross-cultural film. No matter how the setting changes and how the subjects/themes vary in Lee's films, they still achieved success both at film festivals and at the box-office around the world. As a director he crosses cultures in his filmmaking – embracing the popular American/Hollywood mode while insisting on the essence of his own Chinese/Taiwanese culture (Confucianism and Taoist traditions). By exploring the intercommunity of different cultures, he successfully moves towards bridging the gap of cross-cultural communication. In 2005 his film *Brokeback Mountain* won three Oscars including Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Original Score. These achievements make Lee an important internationally acclaimed director and is the premier director of Chinese origin with such distinctive reputation in today's film industry. Based on his deep understanding of Chinese traditional culture and his insight into Western culture, the themes in his films often discuss cultural conflicts between the East and the West.

Ang Lee' cinema: the diversity of film subjects and genres

"Taiwan-born Ang Lee is that most unlikely of filmmakers: a man equally at home with Jane Austen or Marvel Comics, the American West or Qing Dynasty China, the family drama or myths of unrequited love" (Minnihan, 2009). In his films, Lee projects a complicated multi-cultural cinematic world. In terms of the setting of his film narratives, he utilizes the City of Taibei in 1990s (*Eat Drink Man Woman*); Chinatown in New York *(Pushing Hands, The Wedding Banquet*); rural Sussex in the eighteenth century (*Sense and Sensibility*); a small American town in Connecticut in the 1970s (*Ice Storm*); the battlefields in Kansas and Missouri during the American Civil War in 1860s (*Ride with the Devil*) the American Western mountain wilderness of Montana in the 1960s (*Brokeback Mountain*). There are also the worlds of *Wuxia,* a mixture of reality and fantasy and which is derived from Chinese literature (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) and the fantasy of science fiction world with American significance (*Hulk*). The cultural identities of characters in Lee's films are even more rich and complicated: a Chinese traditional shadowboxing master, a calligrapher, a cook of a state banquet, a retired general, new immigrants struggling between Eastern and Western cultures, British upper-class gentleman and ladies in the eighteenth century, middle class couples in an American small town in 1970s, a brave cavalryman during the American Civil War, heroes in Chinese traditional *wuxia* literature, and men and women psychologically locked inside modern cities. Besides mainstream cultural identities, Lee also extends his perspectives to more sub-cultural/marginal ones such as the Taiwanese immigrant Weitong and his male lover Sam (*The Wedding Banquet*) and the sexual relationship of two cowboys Ennis and Jack (*Brokeback Mountain*). These films explored notions of cultural identity, marginal and homosexual identities. Apart from the diversity of themes and narratives in Lee's cinema, one can still claim that Lee is the author of these films. As Livingston contends:

> ...that spectators and scholars alike ought to be attuned to such differences in histories of production. In short, critical insight, appreciation, and explanation are better served by an interpretative principle according to which it is the viewer's and critic's goal to arrive at interpretations which match, as opposed to diverge from, the work's features, including those involving its causal history".
>
> Livingston (1997: 146)

Despite the transnational nature of contemporary cinema, and the way a film may be identified and labelled in relation to marketing and promotion, a film will still have meanings in relation to how the auteur intended it to mean. As I have argued in Chapter Two,

conceptions of the auteur as marketing tool or agent of a film's meaning are not contradictory. I would argue that Lee as director is not a simple part of the promotional discourses that contextualize his films, but the agent or primary decision maker that determined his sensibilities and concerns (from a Chinese cultural perspective) – as displayed in his previous Taiwanese films.

Cross-cultural communication and interpretation

As Ezra and Rowden (2006: 2) state: "...it is also important to recognize the impossibility of maintaining a strict dichotomy between Hollywood cinema and its "others." Cinema has from its inception between transnational, circulating more or less freely across borders and utilizing international personnel. This practice has continued from the era of Chaplin, Hitchcock, and Fritz Lang up to contemporary directors like Ang Lee, Mira Nair and Alfonso Cuarón." In such a transnational filmmaking context, 'the national' is complicated by personal experience (especially auteur directors' diasporic filmmaking) and bicultural identification has become relatively common. An investigation of authorial identity and cross-cultural communication in the films that I am investigating reveals how these issues extend beyond the boundaries of nation-state. As mentioned in previous chapters, Anderson (1983) has argued that an 'imagined community' refers to the existence of a specific national/cultural identity. Different nations have different cultural origins; and their traditions and customs are formed by these origins. It is through language, behaviours, sense and sensibility (in its true sense) that people from different cultural backgrounds and groups identify their own cultural identities. However, no one lives in isolation. People always coexist and interact with histories of socio-political and cultural development. Culture is frequently pluralistic. As Habermas (2001) argues in his *The Postnational Constellation*, there is a historically possible, and politically and ethically necessary, transformation of existing nation states into a social and economic order that can respond to the challenges of globalization. These transformation depends upon the development of a cosmopolitan consciousness that will replace existing national and cultural identities as the basis for a new political order, as put forward by Habermas, 'the postnational constellation'. Thus ultimately the boundaries of each national culture will become ambiguous. In this context, cross-cultural communication is the cultural trend and imminent drive for today's global cultural development. In the era of globalization, with high speed media and technologies, cross-

cultural communication has even become central to the life style of many people who use the internet for social communication. Film, as medium of mass communication and an ideological carrier also takes a central role in cross-cultural communication. Lee's cinematic world is one that specifically explains the ambiguity of the notion of 'national' in cultures.

Appadurai (1993: 411) notes that: "We need to think ourselves beyond the nation. This is not to suggest that thought alone will carry us beyond the nation or that the nation is largely a thought or imagined thing. Rather, it is to suggest that the role of intellectual practices is to identify the current crisis of the nation and, in identifying it, to provide part of the apparatus of recognition for post-national forms". Jennings (2002b: 379) points out that "in the study of national cinemas, there has been an impulse to focus on historical, stylistic, linguistic and thematic concepts of 'the national'. This approach has tended to maintain a notion of 'the national' as separate and distinct from its international/global relationships". When 'the national' is constructed as an "artistic opposition to Hollywood style" (Jennings, 2002: 379), what happens when directors, like Weir, cross cultures and their artistic style become incorporated into Hollywood? Lee, a successful director both in the East and the West, provides an interesting case study in this respect. What I am asking here therefore is what happens when a signifier of a particular national style makes films in a transnational (or another cultural) context. How is their authorial identities represented and negotiated in cross-cultural communication? It is my contention that cross-cultural production, in many ways, is already post-national and multicultural in nature and therefore offers us insight into how the national/cultural identity can be challenged in cross-cultural interpretation.

Crossing cultures: exploring the English language films of Ang Lee

Besides focusing on subjects with wide public cultural resonance, Lee deeply understands the reception habits of audiences from different cultural backgrounds. Bringing perspectives from Confucianism and Taoism to those of Hollywood cinema and bringing a cinematic personal vision that bridges gaps in cross-cultural communication, these are the main characteristics of Lee's cinema. Lee's knowledge of Hollywood filmmaking modes is assimilated in his own filmmaking style; contributing to his success in understanding audiences' aesthetic perspectives when making films outside Taiwan (Lee, 2007). While

adopting Western perspectives and techniques, he also incorporates Chinese cultural principles and emotion. His signature is to focus on characters, story, and emotion. He also beautifully crafts his films from an aesthetic perspective.

When thinking through what might constitute a Chinese national cinema, my earlier chapters suggested that it must be considered beyond national boundaries and it is my claim that at the very least cultural traditions must be assumed to be important factors. In this chapter I further this argument analyzing cultural/national identity in a transnational context by focusing on authorial identity and cross-cultural interpretation in cross-cultural communication. This case study follows the trace of Lee's English language films, to articulate his authorial signatures and argue the representation and influence of 'Chineseness' in these Hollywood projects. Thus, these three case studies not only seek to 'think beyond nation', but also theorize beyond the concept of national cinema to form a systematic investigation into 'Chineseness', its transformed identity, in the Hollywood and transnational films of the three cross-cultural directors.

After receiving The Golden Bear Award at *Berlin International Film Festival* for his second feature-film *The Wedding Banquet*, Lee cut a figure on the international film stage. His third feature-film *Eat Drink Man Woman* was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Picture for Oscar Award in 1995. As I have argued frequently throughout this thesis, these achievements at international film festivals opened the gate to Hollywood and European film industry for Lee. As a result, Lee directed his first English language film *Sense and Sensibility* in 1995. *Sense and Sensibility* is Lee's first Hollywood project and English film. Although Jane Austen's authorship is already a factor as of the novel, the cinematic adaptation in 1995 moves beyond being a simple text of one particular cultural context. The film is a complex cross-cultural phenomenon, a unique combination of British heritage film, women's film (screenplay by British actress Emma Thompson), and the influences of Chinese traditional culture (directed by Lee) and brought together in a Hollywood studio mode of filmmaking.

In this interesting cultural nexus establishing the auteur of this film becomes problematic. Just as we cannot erase the role of Austen as the author of the novel, neither can we deny

Emma Thompson as auteur to the screenplay. *Sense and Sensibility* is an interesting mix of the East and the West. My intention is not to try to ignore British cultural identity, or even its American production pedigree for what is widely regarded as a British heritage film, but, based on auteur theory, I will try to articulate how Lee's authorial visions, namely the influence of Chinese traditional culture has contributed to the shape of the film in a certain way.

As a British heritage film, Chineseness would seem to be less a factor than in Lee's Taiwanese films. However, Lee's authorial signatures are also seen in this film and they shaped the film both in terms of aesthetics and film narrative. From his early Taiwanese films, as argued, abstinence and restraint are Lee's authorial themes. Based on the original novel by Austen, Lee added more contrasting elements of abstinence/restraint and passion/enthusiasm to the film's narrative. At the same time, Lee's perspective remains extremely calm and objective. While exploring the emotional complexities of his filmic characters, his directorial perspective always keeps a certain distance which seeks to instil an objective and calm feeling in viewers. His talents in illustrating detail for family drama are also represented in this film, which is one reason that Emma Thomson welcomed Lee to direct this film.

> After she (Thompson) saw *The Wedding Banquet*, directed by Lee, she discovered that Ang Lee's meticulous talent for details and candor in family dramas made him the most appropriate candidate to direct and bring forth the complexity of emotions and relationships central to the English family drama (by Austen)... He also helped to interject many Eastern cultural expressions in a world renowned English novel...in expanding and articulating interpersonal relationships, a topic inherently congenital and intrinsic to all cultures...
>
> (Doran and Thompson, 1996: 214)

Lee's Eastern cultural expressions contributed to film especially in the mise-en-scène and cinematography. In the sequence where Marianne is sick, Lee employs strong contrast of black and white. The scene is divided by a diagonal line by light and shaded portions (Figure 19). Marianne is positioned in the lighter portion as if she is standing in front of the gate of death. Her clothes and bedding are all in white and the expression on her face is composed. In the other portion, her sister is accompanied by a lighted candle, wearing dark clothes cast in shadow. This scene obviously transfers the serious theme of life and death. Lee portrays calm by constructing the shot in this way.

(Figure 19)

Life and death are frozen in this moment and there is only one step of distance between the two. This kind of polar opposition and contrast between black and white has its ideological roots such as Yin and Yang in Chinese traditional culture (the opposition of life / death, sky / earth, sun / moon, day / night, and feminine / masculine etc.). As argued previously, Chinese philosophies pursue the balance between man and nature, and between the active and the passive. The Yin and Yang create the possibility for realizing the Confucian ideal of 'The Golden Mean' and Taoist insight of 'Harmony' and the equilibrium between one's mind and his/her external world. These philosophic and aesthetic ideals manifest themselves within the dramatic narrative of *Sense and Sensibility* and, in the cinematography as well. The contrast may also amplify on the cultural differentiation between the East and the West. In the West, black is considered as the colour of death and people traditionally dress in black at a funeral. The situation is revised in China where people dress white at a funeral.

In terms of narrative, it may seem absurd to say the concerns manifested in Lee's Taiwanese films are seen in British heritage films, especially when both authors (Jane Austen as the author of the original novel and Emma Thompson as the author of the script) are British. Indeed, directing *Sense and Sensibility* is a great transition for Lee in terms of film genre. As mentioned, Lee's films possess different subjects, genres and film styles. However, in all these films, there is an unchanged cultural core endowed by Lee as the auteur. The conflict

between traditional custom/social constraints and individual emotions is the main theme in Lee's early films such as the trilogy of the father (*Pushing Hands, The Wedding Banquet* and *Eat Drink Man Woman*). This theme has been carried on to his English language films. In *Sense and Sensibility,* the three daughters are placed in strained circumstances and are forced to marry for social and financial survival. The protagonists are also struggling between sense (traditional conventions) and sensibility (individual emotion). Also, as one his dominant authorial signatures, Lee is obsessed with the representation of the father and his patriarchal power in traditional Chinese family in his previous films such as the trilogy of father. It seems that, in *Sense and Sensibility*, there is no strong father figure. However, if the image of the father has played a central role in Lee's Taiwanese films, then, in *Sense and Sensibility*, the influence of patriarchy can still be considered as the wind which drives the characters to their destiny. The death of the father creates an anxiety for them and their struggle is placed within this context. From this perspective, the film is about attempts to restore the patriarchal order so as to recuperate the familial and societal harmony which is gone (as the father is gone). Thus Lee's efforts in reconstructing the family and a patriarchal order are still a potential (and powerful) theme in this British heritage film. Lee obviously draws on the intimacy and complexity of relationships between parents and children within a familial and social context in which the Chinese setting is switched to a British one.

Lee's authorial signatures in *The Wedding Banquet* and *The Ice Storm*

While exploring Lee's expression of Chineseness in the cross-cultural context of his Hollywood films, I will refer back briefly to his early Taiwanese films to see how his authorial signatures have been carried on in his later Hollywood films. Elsaesser (2005: 23) points out that: "Auteur cinema (the director as autonomous artist and representative of his country) usually goes hand in hand with art cinema (the formal, stylistic and narratological parameters which distinguish art cinema from classical i.e., Hollywood narrative...". Lee, as auteur of Taiwanese cinema, has certainly infused his signatures in his Taiwanese 'art house' movies into *The Ice Storm.* However, if the early works of Lee are about Chineseness, here a visual layer of Chineseness is for the most part erased. Still, this American literary adaptation inherits Lee's authorial "expressive utterance" (Livingston, 1997: 135). As in *The Wedding Banquet*, the narrative centres on the betrayal between family members, which create dramatic conflicts.

As a family drama and an exploration of sexual complications, *The Wedding Banquet* becomes a good reference for Lee's *The Ice Storm.* The mode of narration is an important element in Lee's films. Lee graduated from *Taiwan National Drama School* and then he received Western theater education in Illinois State University in the US. This educational background has given Lee's filmmaking a theatrical quality. His plots are often simple but he is gifted at using dramatic conflicts to construct filmic narrative. In *The Wedding Banquet*, the narrative centres on the son's wedding banquet. The conflict between a traditional Chinese concept of family and the Western, modern, non-traditional conception of family is represented and explored in this crucial scene. This tradition has been carried over to his Hollywood films. The narrative of *The Ice Storm* focuses on two families (the Hood family and the Carvers) in a small town. The husband Ben has an affair with their neighbor and his wife Elena is tired of his deception. Their relationship with their adolescent children is also in trouble. The conflicts of these families reach a climax at a swingers' party: at the end of the party, wives are supposed to randomly pick up a key and go home and spend the night with the key's owner. An unexpected ice storm however causes the wife swapping party to have an unpredictable ending. The whole film is imbued with a heavy atmosphere: the psychological dynamics echoes the unexpected but unavoidable ice storm. The two couples, while being ready to go to the wife swapping party, are at the same time also worried about the disintegration of their families. All these elements in combination strengthen the dramatic tension of the film.

In Chinese traditional culture, the father possesses absolute power in the family. The influence of father decides the inner structure of family. In both Lee's Taiwanese film *The Wedding Banquet* and his Hollywood project *The Ice Storm*, families are in states of tension dealing with conflicts. At the centre of these conflicts is still the image of the father. Lee explored the feeling and emotion of the two fathers (Gao's father in *The Wedding Banquet* and Ben Hood in *The Ice Storm*) in the two films. As argued in Chapter Five, the father in *The Wedding Banquet* loses his power of control over his family. In *The Ice Storm*, on the one hand, there is a huge cultural gap between Ben and his daughter, but on the other hand, due to his immoral behaviour (an affair with his neighbour), he loses his dignity in front of his daughter when she discovers the affair by chance. Lee's technique is to project these elaborately selected problems in detail and then let audiences to make their own judgements. As a result, *The Ice Storm* is endowed with a Chinese cultural spirit based on values of self-


Figure 20

control and emotional restraint. In his representation of characters' psychological struggles his tendency is to keep them low key on the surface and to let the viewer work hard to interpret the emotional meaning. This is supported by careful construction of the mise-en-scène and cinematography. As a Hollywood melodrama, the above characteristics may coincide with Hollywood conventions, but in this film Lee also paid particular attention to the relationship between men and nature. *The Ice Storm* displays a family subjected to the forces of nature. For example, in the films the two teenagers head out for fun and finally start a panicked kiss. The sequence (see Figure 20) is shot in a drained swimming pool which is filled with dead leaves. Lee and his cinematographer carefully (and artistically) structure the mise-en-scène and present a frozen moment of autumn, in which the relationship between the younger members (symbolically as well as the old members) of the two families form a portrait of misery. The autumn atmosphere is a cold, spooky and morbid mood that enhances the tragedy of the characters in the film. For Lee, cinematically the ice storm may be allegorically read as a metaphor for tragedy, as in Chinese literature and poetry, when rain dies, it becomes snow. The ice storm (the frozen rain) may well emphasize this mood of the tragedy.

Lee can be seen to draw on Chinese perspectives and traditions in dealing with family. He brings Chinese perspectives to the way that families work and what families are committed to do. In doing this, he also explores very common Western familial problems and offers solutions that may be slightly unusual. In *The Ice Storm*, Hood's wife is tired of Hood's deception and after discovering Hood's affair with Janey Carver, their neighbour, a coming 'emotional storm' threatens to terminate the future of their family. What demands attention is Lee's way of representing family relationships and conflicts which is heavily influenced by Chinese cultural characteristics. He does not simply de-structure the notion of family in his films. On the contrary, he explores compromise and reconciliation (though often painful) to work through the family crisis they are embroiled in. In Chinese culture, compromise and

reconciliation are regarded as highly intellectual ways and are represented as the *Golden Mean* in Confucianism. Facing their responsibilities and agreeing to compromise, Ben and Elena finally walk away from the crazy wife swapping party. The safe return of their son then reunites their family in contrast to their neighbour: the Carvers' tragedy.

1970's America was in turmoil in terms of culture and politics. Watergate and the end of the Vietnam War led to the destabilization of the symbol of the father for many American citizens (Colangelo, 2007). American idealism and the American Way were called into question. As this national consensus slowly collapsed, it influenced the destabilization of the notion of family. The problems among the two families in the film can therefore be seen to mirror the social dynamics of that era.

The representation of sex in *The Ice Storm*

The Ice Storm presents a confrontation between post-war culture and new feminism in America in the 1970s, which created a decade where notions of politics and sex were in transition and crisis. Different to the comic wedding banquet in his Taiwanese film of the same name, the wife swapping party in *The Ice Storm* represents a problematic issue for the sexual liberation movement of 1970s' America. Here Lee is critiquing the more indulgent aspects of 1970s' American sexuality. The characters in *The Ice Storm* are trying to use sex to escape from their personal and emotional difficulties. The impending ice storm which echoes their psychological unrest provides the dramatic event (the death of the Carver's son Mickey) that shocks both families into reality rather than the 'fantasy' world they were indulging in through illicit sex.

Lee uses the aesthetic of 'distance brings about beauty' stemming from Chinese traditional culture as his main approach to the depiction of sex in this film. 'Distance brings about beauty' is an important Chinese aesthetic concept. Zhu Guangqian has argued this concept in his book *On Aestheticism* (2007). Distance refers to both spatial and psychological distance. This resonates with the choices he makes about camera position, frame and editing. As I have indicated in relation to *Sense and Sensibility,* this also distances the viewers from emotional

turmoil. The beauty of distance is an important concept in Chinese aesthetics although seldom employed in Chinese cinema. It is evident in classic Chinese arts such as painting, poetry, and novels. The significance that Lee carried forward from this Chinese aesthetics changes the representation of nudity and sex scenes in his films compared to more usual Western modes of representation. Lee deliberately uses distance to keep sex both discreet and less enticing. There are a number of scenes representing sex in the film but Lee deliberately avoids nudity. For example, Ben and Janey have sex under the covers and we only see some brief movement (no nudity) with some sexual sounds. In another sequence when Wendy heads to the bathroom where she runs into Sandy. They stand there for a moment until Wendy tells him, "I'll show you mine if you show me yours" (figure dialogue). Then they close the door and she exposes herself to him, again we do not see a thing but Sandy nervously escapes the bathroom. For Lee, the representation of sex is a way and tool to express and illustrate human nature rather than depict sex as spectacle and / or titillation. This perspective can particularly be seen to shape his Oscar wining film *Brokeback Mountain*, which will be explored later in this chapter.

Ride with the Devil: an Asian/Chinese perspective on American culture

Dominant in Lee's filmic style, as I have argued in Chapter Six, are the notions of compromise and reconciliation, and Lee's authorial signatures of self-control and emotional restraint. These authorial signatures are based on an emphasis on, yet downplaying of, characters' emotions. In *Ride with the Devil*, a film about the American Civil War, instead of projecting the scale of the war itself, Lee still focuses on the micro conflict of the characters' emotional world. As he indicates: "The war between the American North and South is a civil war in American history. However, for me, it is a war of men's inner worlds. Through the experience of two foreigners: the male leading role Jack Roedel and slave Daniel Holt, the film expresses my observation of freedom from the perspective of the liberation of slaves and of all men's inner psychological shackle" (Lee, 2007: 150, trans. Li). However, this film is less well known than *The Ice Storm* or *Sense and Sensibility* and it was also not as successful in the US both in terms of critical response and box-office returns. In my view, *Ride with the Devil* can be considered as one of Lee's most important films. In his Taiwanese trilogy of the father, Lee employs, as I have indicated, the confrontation of Eastern and Western culture as a dramatic element in the film narrative. *Ride with the Devil,* is also about conflict: the conflict

between the American North and South during the Civil War and also more philosophically the conflict between two American spirits. In Lee's view: one is the spirit of the North linked with modernism, democracy and freedom; and the other is the spirit of the South which is conservative, isolationist and anti-modernist (Lee, 2007: 148; trans. Li). The conflict between these two ideologies is the origin of the Civil War.

If *The Ice Storm* is a challenge and critique of 1970s' American culture, then, *Ride with the Devil*, is more a vehicle for the cinematic representation of American history and culture. Lee offers a critique of the American Civil War through careful characterization with the character Jake Roedel (Tobey Maguire) seeming to most closely express the director's perspective. Roedel crosses cultures through his developing relationship with the slave Dan Holt, moving from a southern allegiance to accepting the northern ideology of freedom and abolition. This does not happen without extreme emotional struggle on his part. If as Dariotis and Fung (1997: 187) suggest: "the overall philosophy of Ang Lee's films demonstrates the struggles of individuals within and between cultures", then Lee's own cross-cultural experience would seem to enable him to deal with the inner conflicts of the characters in *Ride with the Devil* particularly well. Lee's intervention as an outsider with particular notions of conflict and brotherhood drawn from his Asian background together with specific filmmaking strategies provides an interesting interpretation of this most American conflict.

I would go as far as to argue that Lee's own cross-cultural experience sensitizes him to these potential emotional and psychological struggles epitomized by both the author and the characters of the novel. Similar to *Sense and Sensibility* and *The Ice Storm*, *Ride with the Devil* is also a literary adaptation based on the novel *Woe to Live On* (1987) by Daniel Woodrell. Lee felt that there was a strong emphasis on the depiction of slaves in the original novel and unusually it also emphasized the role of slaves in the Southern Confederate army. This has been ignored by most American films. Lee explains that "because the author (Woodrell) is a southerner with his cultural roots in the South. Although he came to identify with the ideology of the North, his inner emotion still belongs to the South" (Lee, 2007: 151, trans. Li). This is fertile ground for Lee who is almost obsessive about the exploration of cultural conflict. In addition, Lee's research made him aware of the commonly overlooked fact that American slaves had previously been exploiters of other black Africans of different

tribes when they had been in Africa themselves (Lee, 2007). In Africa, slaves do not have names and they were like animals attached to their master. Lee deliberately arranges a sequence at the end of the film to evoke such relations. When the two depart, Jack Roedel and Daniel Holt shake hands and call each other's name which shows equality between the two. For Lee, this sequence symbolizes another important type of liberation for the slave Daniel. Lee's focus on Roedel, who identifies with the values of the American South, allows him to examine similar philosophical issues as in his previous Taiwanese films (as argued in Chapter Six) about the accommodation of differences of outsiders, suggesting that society would benefit from (cultural) compromise and reconciliation.

However, this film has not achieved success both in terms of critics and box-office response in the USA. "A classic criticism of historical and heritage films is that they turn away from a difficult present in order to comfort their audience with a rosy picture of the past" (Vincendeau, 2001: 31). Although *Ride with the Devil* addresses issues of quality and literary adaptation, it does not depict a rosy past in relation to the Civil War. As an outsider, Lee presents the Civil War in a way that its serious issues can not be avoided. It is not surprising that American audiences may not have wished to face this past and this is reflected in the poor performance at the box office.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: when East meets West

Although *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is a Chinese language martial arts film, it is in fact an international co-production in terms of both its talents and its production companies. This film was produced by both American and Asian companies such as Columbia Pictures Film Production Asia, Sony Pictures Classics and China Film Co-Production Corporation. Directed by Lee in 2000, the film also united a number of internationally renowned film talents of Chinese origin such as Chow Yun-fat, Michelle Yeon and Ziyi Zhang. The martial arts and action sequences were choreographed by Yuen Wo-Ping (a Chinese filmmaker from Hong Kong and well known for his work in *The Matrix* directed by the Wachowski brothers in 1999). As Lee's first martial arts film, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* was a world-wide cinematic phenomenon with hugely successful box-office performance in 2000-2001.

Lee's ability to fuse the stylistic and narrative concerns of the East and the West permits Teo (2000) to argue that *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* offers an induction into the concept of genre for the new millennium. "As the picture begins, it soon becomes clear that Lee is offering more than a mere recounting of generic forms. To begin with, Lee has conceived a martial arts picture as a mythical romance" (Teo, 2000). Yet romance is not a new thing for martial arts films. In the Chinese *wuxia* literary tradition, romance is a major subject, and cinematic adaptations made in the Chinese mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong have long focused on this romanticism (*Burning of the Red Lotus Temple, 1928; A Touch of Zen*, 1969; *The One-armed Sword Man*, 1969 etc.). Martial arts films have traditionally been regarded as B movies both in the East and the West. However, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* promotes martial arts film to the category of "art cinema" and presenting the genre almost as "a heritage film" for Western audiences. Vincendeau (2001: 15) argues that "as its name indicates, the concern of heritage cinema is to depict the past, but by celebrating rather than investigating it". From this perspective, Lee depicts 'the *wuxia* fantasy' by representing romanticism and aesthetic style rather than rendering realism.

As a marital arts film, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is famous for its aesthetic style. The aesthetic 'decoration' of this martial arts film is undoubtedly a key aspect for many of its viewers. In *Couching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,* Lee uses visionary images to allow viewers to suspend their disbelief (for instance, the sequences of fighting on the top of the trees and the chase on roof). Lee's innovation in the aesthetics of this film makes a huge contribution to the martial arts genre. I use the term 'decoration' to emphasize aesthetic manipulation of actual martial arts employed by Lee. In fact, it may seem illogical to say that a martial arts film is not about the authenticity of martial arts. My argument is that Lee's vision has focused on the aesthetic representation of martial arts sequences by beautifully crafting all the fighting sequences, and this, can be read as a new form of romanticism (different to what Teo, 1997, argues as literary tradition) to the new development of martial arts film genre.

Although focusing on film authorship, I have to highlight the collaborative dimension of this hugely successful film. Gaut (1997) argues that commercial films are the result of the work of many agents; and the import of this fact is that, typically, films possess multiple authorial inputs. Also Jennings (2002a: 356) questions notions of film authorship that privilege the

single author suggesting that "movies are the culmination process of collaboration..." *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is exactly such a case in which director, cinematography, and composer all play a vital role in terms of shaping the film's meaning. Lee practiced his romantic aesthetic ideology in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* with the help of famed fight choreographer Yuen. He did this by developing Yuen's mastery of technical fighting choreography and taking it to a new artistic/aesthetic level. As Lee said in an interview: "The biggest thing I learned from Yuen Wo-Ping is that martial arts films have very little to do with martial arts. It's cinema, it's expression, it's what looks good on screen, how to work out the shots, what's the best angle, what's the best way for the characters to present themselves to the audience. To me that was a great inspiration and I used it as a tool for drama" (Basoli, 2007).

Lee's importance in this film is in dramatizing of the martial arts film. As he explains: "The innovative part is adding acting to the action. What is not often done in martial arts film is to bring drama and acting into it, which may be dangerous for the actors and break their concentration" (Basoli, 2007). The reworking of these stylistic features is infused with further layer of meaning drawn from Chinese myths and traditions. Working beyond borders enriches the generic iconography. For instance, the Qing Ming Sword represents different meanings for the protagonists in the film. The film starts with the story of Qing Ming Sword and the whole narrative centres on its destiny. The Qing Ming Sword has accompanied the protagonist Li Mubai (Chow Yun-fat) for decades. It represents the principles in the world of *wuxia*: reputation, destiny, and kindness. Li wants to give the sword away to Sir Beile. Thus symbolically what he wants to give away is the principle of fame in the world of *wuxia*. Thus the sword is a symbol of a Xia's life. For Yu Xiulian (Michelle Yeon), Li Mubai's Qing Ming sword offers another symbolic meaning of the sword: love. In the narrative she searches the sword and protects the sword but what she is really searching for and protecting is a love deeply rooted in her heart. Yu Jiaolong (Ziyi Zhang), however, takes the Qing Ming Sword as her hope. The sword is the protector of her freedom and dreams. It is the only hope that she can find a foothold in the world of *wuxia*.

Lee deliberately attempts to produce films which can succeed in terms of cross-cultural communication. His films consistently negotiate cultures, particularly between the East and

the West. As argued in Chapter Six, the Confucian notion of the father-son relationship is an important theme in Lee's early Taiwanese films such as *Pushing Hands* and *The Wedding Banquet*. It seems Lee's preoccupation with the father-son relationship in his early Taiwanese films is somewhat absent in this international blockbuster. Livingston (1997: 141) has argued that the author is normally concerned with making specific attitudes manifest in their films. "In straightforward cases of individual or independent cinematic production, cinematic authorship is a matter of an individual's making such a text as a means to realizing an express intention (Livingston, 1997:141). However, Lee has transferred Confucian notions of the family into the pupil's relation to the master rather than children to the father. In other words, if the translation of family ideology towards the world of *wuxia* implies a near-erasure of the family, its underpinning values remain firmly in place. In this film, he subverts the traditional *wuxia* film genre, not in terms of bringing romanticism the narrative (as argued by Teo, 2000), but aesthetically in terms of the development of characters, and their psychological and emotional struggles. Regarding film narrative, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* abandons the traditional mode of *wuxia* films which emphasizes story and plot and ignores characters. At the heart of the film is the development of characters and their psychological and emotional struggles. The focus on Yu Jialong, for instance, adopts a motif that is common is European and American literary tradition—that of growing up and breaking away from family constraints. In many ways she symbolizes the rebellious teenager. This is morally against the codes of Confucianism where children must obey their parents and students must obey their masters. In this film therefore he takes his experience and knowledge of the West to the East unlike in the films I have discussed earlier in this chapter. The effect however is similarly powerful in the concepts that he fuses together.

The soundtrack of this film is also an important aspect of the way Lee develops the aesthetics of the martial arts film. The Chinese composer Tan Dun is another cross-cultural figure (with an educational background in both China and the USA) and for his collaboration with Lee on this film he was awarded the Oscar for the Best Original Musical Score in 2001. In his acceptance speech Tan (2001) declared: "My music is to dream without boundaries tonight with you I see boundaries being crossed ... I am proud to be honored here." Lee infuses the choreography of his fight sequences with the rhythm of music. As Lee explains: "With the weaponry, the sound was amazing. In Chinese films, they don't care about the sound. But we mixed for weeks and weeks, and I paid personal attention to it. Each sound you hear we built

with a combination of six other sounds" (Lee, cited by Basoli, 2007). Obviously Lee uses mise-en-scène, fight choreography and the soundtrack to achieve a distinctive set of aesthetics that are a product of collaboration and crossing cultures.

Hulk: Confucianism in a Hollywood sci-fi blockbuster

Hulk is quite different from Lee's other films in terms of film genre. This film is however more like Lee's Taiwanese trilogy of the father than one would imagine. Two major elements that link all these films together are the father-and-son relationship and the emotional/psychological complexity of the world they explore. The case of Lee's *Hulk* is similar to Woo's *Face/Off* in terms of bringing the theme of the family to fantasy sci-fi films. As I have argued in all Lee's films, family, traditional and cultural conflicts are major themes. Although the family is the fundamental element in Chinese traditional culture, it is also a universal subject in any other national cinema. Of course there are differences between the Confucian notion of family and Western tradition. Confucianism emphasizes the importance of rightly ordered family relations where a son should be filial and respect his father, which is contrary to modern Western understanding that emphasizes equality to protect everyone's private interests (Wang, 2005). In addition, according to Hugh David Roberts Baker (1979), the important function of Western family is to raise the individual in an environment that will enable him to cope adequately with the outside world in preparation for when the time comes to leave home. To this extent, the family exists to promote the interests of the individual. In Confucian notions of family, "it was not the family which existed in order to support the individual, but rather the individual who existed in order to continue the family" (Baker, 1980: 26). However, in *Hulk*, the Confucian notions of family are challenged by Western modernist ideologies of family (i.e. notions of Confucian familial piety set against important but looser relations that incorporate the concept of individuality).

Hulk is a sci-fi film with a fantasy style and is an adaptation of a popular Marvel comic strip in the USA. In the original comic strip, the Hulk (Bruce Banner) is the victim of radiation. But different to Spiderman or Superman, beyond the story itself, the Hulk has been traditionally interpreted as a victim of war and violence. For example, it has been regarded as a representation of psychological oppression of the arms competition between the Soviet

Union and the USA during the Cold War period. In *The Science of Superheroes*, "Gresh and Weinberg see the Hulk as a reaction to the Cold War and the threat of nuclear attack" (Weinstein, 2006: 82-97). In the 1970s, the comic strip *The Hulk* satired the Vietnam War. However, Lee transfers the relationship of war and human nature to that of a father-and-son relationship in this cinematic adaptation. The Confucian notions of family and father-and-son relationship are translated into a Western setting and Lee made significant changes to this cinematic adaptation. For Lee, the existence of Hulk (Bruce Banner) is not of his own wish: his is only the outcome of his father's bio-scientific experiments. His father David Banner works for the military and tries to create a kind of genetically enhanced super-soldier for the USA in the 1960s. When the lab is shut down by the government he injects himself with the experimental product which causes genetic mutation. This abnormality is inherited by his son Bruce Banner. As the father knows the danger his son poses to society, he tries to murder Bruce but accidentally kills Bruce's mother when she tries to save her son. The father is sentenced to prison for thirty years and Bruce is told that both his parents are dead. Once grown up, Bruce also becomes a scientist. In the course of his experiments Bruce Banner is exposed to gamma radiation which causes him to transform into the Hulk (a giant green monster) as soon as he becomes emotional. The Hulk possesses incredible abilities such as being bullet-proof and having the power to heal very quickly. The Hulk represents the monstrous, unrestrained self which is in total opposition to mild mannered, emotionally repressed Bruce. The Hulk is the expression of Banner's repressed self.

Unlike in his Taiwanese films where filial obligation is bound within the context of the Confucian notion of family, the father-and-son relationship in *Hulk* is mutated by the power of science. In *Hulk*, Lee's preoccupation with the father-and-son relationship is not the same as in his Taiwanese trilogy. Compared with the cultural conflict between father and son in his Taiwanese films, the conflict between Bruce and his father in *Hulk* is transformed to an unsolvable hatred. The Western setting of the story presupposes a hyperdramatic contract between his Taiwanese films and *Hulk*. As Lee said in an interview: "the Iraqi War has direct influence on me while making this film" (Lee, 2007, trans. Li), if *The Wedding Banquet* is a comic family drama, then the destiny of Bruce is more a tragedy: a tragedy of war, of science and of his own family.

As argued earlier, if Lee's films have focused on individuals' conflicts between and among cultures (Dariotis and Fung, 1997: 187), then for the specific case of *Hulk*, Bruce Banner struggles between the two identities of himself. These two identities form the psychological struggles of his inner world. Lee focuses on the exploration of Bruce Banner's psychological complexity: the conflict between his two opposing inner natures, which culminate in his monstrous split personality: naive and kind (Banner) vs. destructive and merciless (the Hulk). Lee also said in an interview: "Hulk is a product of psychological oppression" (Lee 2005, trans. Li). In *Hulk*, Lee bravely attempted to endow a Hollywood fantasy sci-fi film with more complex cultural implications than the norm. *Hulk* presents a case where the Confucian context of father-and-son relationship is twisted. While focusing on the father-and-son relationship, Lee is influenced by Freud's psychological theory of the unconsciousness as his approach to the protagonist's psychological struggle (Lee, 2007). The traumatic memory of the scene where Bruce's mother is killed by his father is frequently revisited in his nightmares is an element repressed in his unconscious mind. If, as argued earlier, the conflict of father-and-son relationship is communicated and finally resolved by the way of comprise and reconciliation from both sides (father and son) in Lee's Taiwanese films, then in *Hulk*, there is no such resolution. The horrors of their tragic conflict quite literally burst in the transformation of Bruce's other identity: the Hulk, the green monster. The transformation to *Hulk* is a psychological catharsis, an imagined mode of overcoming the tragedy of both Bruce Banner and the family.

As a typical Hollywood blockbuster, the commercial elements such as dazzling action sequences manipulated by CGI are essential for the film. However, Lee infuses the film with the emotional and psychological struggle of the protagonist. Unfortunately, *Hulk* did not meet its production costs at the US box-office. The reason may be that within commodity culture, explorations of serious social, cultural and psychological issues lose their significance in front of American young audiences of mass media.

'Chineseness' in *Brokeback Mountain*

Brokeback Mountain was Lee's second film to explore homosexuality. *The Wedding Banquet* tells a transnational story of homosexuality that is set in relation to a Chinese traditional

cultural context. It illustrates the conflict between Chinese traditional values and homosexuality. *Brokeback Mountain* is set in American West of the 1960s and tells the story of a relationship between two cowboys that lasts twenty years. Gender studies and queer studies have taken an important role in Western scholarship mainly because they theorize how gender as a social and cultural construction shape people's lives, their relationships, their workplace, institutional structures, public policy and the production of knowledge. Lee is not working in that kind of political space in his production of *Brokeback Mountain*. Lee has repeatedly said that *Brokeback Mountain* is not a film about homosexuality but an exploration of a universal human emotion. As in *The Ice Storm*, Lee uses cinematic representation in *Brokeback Mountain* more importantly to depict not just the sexual but also the emotional life of two men. In *Brokeback Mountain*, Ennis and Jack obviously indulge in homosexual behaviour but more importantly in terms of the narrative, their desire transfers from just a sexual impulse to an emotional love. Although they both come from different social backgrounds and have different personalities, their love endures for more than twenty years facing personal difficulties, hardship and social prejudice along the way. According to Lee, *Brokeback Mountain* provides us with a mirror of "another strange world" (Lee, 2007: 137) and is constructed to offer sympathy to the two protagonists whatever the viewers' attitudes are towards homosexuality. As argued earlier, the distance of beauty has been adopted as a key in his film production by Lee. This is clearly employed in *Brokeback Mountain*. The first passionate sexual act between the two protagonists is conducted in a brutal and violent way (in many ways reflecting the hardship of the environment). As is common in all his works, Lee shows restraint in representing nudity and sexual sequences which, as argued earlier, echoes his ideology of distance of beauty.

Brokeback Mountain does not proselytize for gay identities and lifestyles. The film works specifically to highlight a human desire for true love. In *Brokeback Mountain*, homosexual sex becomes just another aspect of a universal and natural human need, desire and love. Although *Brokeback Mountain* is an American film with a sensitive and even, to some extent within an Eastern context, taboo theme, Lee suggests that *Brokeback Mountain* "is actually very Chinese" (Lee, 2007: 142, trans. Li). This statement does not draw solely on the aesthetics of the film, but it also represents the influence of Chinese traditional culture in this film. The influence of Chinese traditional culture enabled Lee to deal with the tragic and sensitive theme with a kind of Eastern 'softness'. The influence of this Eastern 'softness' can

be seen in Lee's authorial signatures: abstinence and endurance; harmony and reconciliation. However, the concept of this 'softness' has more profound significance in Taoist philosophy:

> The highest good is like that of water. The goodness of water is that it benefits the ten thousand creatures; yet itself does not scramble, but is content with the places that all men disdain. It is this that makes water so near to the Way.
>
> (Lao Tzu, 1997)

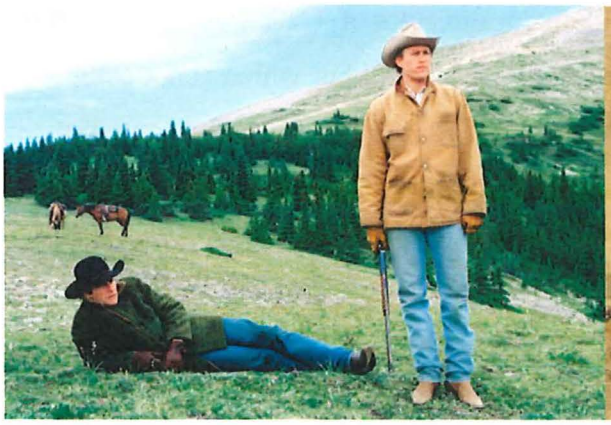
Water, as the symbol of 'softness' is an important image in Taoism. Taoists conceptualize nature by using organic metaphors. Water benefits thousands of creatures yet symbolically (perhaps like human nature) it always flows to the lowest level (or in terms of Chinese expression - it is content with the places that all men distain Thus through this spontaneous way of 'flow' harmony emerges between men and nature). Lee's filmic style is shaped by the Confucian/Taoist philosophy of harmony. As mentioned, harmony is the basis of Confucianism and Taoism and has long been regarded as an aesthetic concept in Chinese traditional art forms, which could be seen in many Chinese literary writings and paintings. Lee transferred these aesthetics of harmony to his filmmaking and created a unique visual style.

(Figure 21: *Brokeback Mountain, 2005*)

(Figure 22: *Taoist painting of Qing Dynasty*)

His visuals communicate important philosophical aspects. In his filmmaking, he combines the deepness, mystery and tenderness associated with the East and the freedom and individualism of the West. The narratives of *Brokeback Mountain* form the style of Chinese traditional narratives: ambiguity, refinement and obscurity. For example, during Ennis's visit to Jack's parents, neither Ennis nor Jack's parents say one word about the relationship between Jack and Ennis. Both Jack's parents and Ennis understand that homosexuality is taboo and not to be talked about; however, the love between Jack and Ennis is heartbreaking. For Lee, what is said and what not be said in their dialogue was paramount. Lee precisely

illustrates this visit with ambiguity, refinement and obscurity, and the effect is impressive.



(Figure 23: *Brokeback Mountain, 2005*)

(Figure 24: *Taoist painting of Qing Dynasty*)

In successfully adapting *Brokeback Mountain* to the screen, the desolate bleak scenes depicted in Proulx's novel which represents primitive passion and wilderness are rendered more picturesque mirroring characteristics of Chinese Taoist painting and implicating harmony between man and nature. Thus the visual representation suggests the preferred message that the film is about a love within human nature and not a love prohibited by society.[5] In Chinese painting theory, composition is secondary to the formal properties of the brush and ink strokes. To the director of *Brokeback Mountain*, however, composition is primary and was much influenced in the film by Taoist school of painting. The unique composition of this style of painting was developed to provide a sense of the relationship between human being and nature, and between the earth and its people. As illustrated from Figure 21 to Figure 24, the aesthetics of the mise-en-scène privileges the acceptance of homosexuality; making something that is often read against the grain in mainstream cinema as a central and preferred meaning. The overall composition enables the audience to experience a kind of spiritual pleasure while watching the film and while digesting the film's preferred meaning in relation to sex and love.

[5] In Chinese history, "Brokesleeve" (断袖) is a term referring to homosexuality for more than two thousand years. This is a literary quotation and it comes from an anecdote in Chinese history. It was the year of 5 BC. One afternoon, the Emperor of the West Han Dynasty came back to his palace. He saw a young man standing at the gate and the emperor asked: "Isn't this man Dong Xian. The emperor has seen Dong Xian when Dong Xian was a child a few years ago. The man kneeled down and answered: "Yes my majesty." The emperor looks at Dong Xian and suddenly noticed that he has become a handsome young man, even more beautiful than those imperial concubines. Thus the emperor asked Dong Xian to accompany him day and night. Dong Xian possessed very feminine personality and his behaviour also has a very feminine way. The emperor loves him deeply. One day, Dong Xian slept together with the emperor and he rested his head on the emperor's sleeve. While Dong Xian was sleeping, the emperor wanted to get up; however, the emperor doesn't have the heart to wake him up. So he takes a sword and cut his sleeve. Hence people use Brokesleeve to refer to homosexuality. This is the oldest literary quotation regarding homosexuality in Chinese history. When the film title of *Brokeback Mountain* was firstly translated into Chinese, it was a metaphase as Duan Bi Shan (Chinese pinyin, means Brokeback Mountain). However, Ang Lee has finally decided to translate it as Duan Bi Shan (same pronunciation but different meaning in Chinese) which sounds homophony with the Chinese translation of Brokeback Mountain, and has the same meaning as Brokesleeve in Chinese. So the Chinese title implies homosexuality and it is clearly a cultural connection between the East and the West.

As argued earlier, the diverse transnational filmography of Lee has distinguished himself as the most versatile and commercially successful auteur directors of TNC. Lee brings a unique cross cultural vision that is mostly very commercially successful but which is not completely so because he introduces different take of American /Western culture. At the same time, he also provides a Chinese perspective on American/Western culture. The exploration of 'Chineseness' in Lee's cinema reveals that 'the national' becomes no more a concrete and idealized construction within a national context but transgresses spatial, temporal, cultural, ethnic, moral and sexual boundaries. It is also important for us to understand such transgression within a diasporic Chinese context.

As the most renowned cultural spokesperson for China, Yimou Zhang also started his commercial and transnational filmmaking in 2002. What interests me is the ways that making films for a global market impacts on the expression of 'Chineseness' in Zhang's transnational cinema? The next section will focus on Zhang's transnational projects since 2002.

'Chineseness' in Yimou Zhang's transnational projects

The second case study of this chapter investigates Chinese mainland director Zhang. "...for the past two decades, he has inspired the world's fascination with China through his cinematic vision" (Spielberg, 2008). He is also the best-known Chinese director and spokesman for Chinese culture at the international stage. This is further confirmed by the fact that Zhang directed the Olympic Opening Ceremony in Beijing in 2008 and was nominated for *Person of the Year* 2008 by TIME Magazine. Steven Spielberg points out that Zhang had an important role in projecting a vision of Chinese culture on the world's stage. As he indicates, "In telling China's story (in the Olympic Opening Ceremony), Zhang explored the character *he*, or peaceful harmony — an ideal critical to Chinese culture" (Spielberg, 2008). As argued earlier, harmony is the basis of Confucianism and Taoism in Chinese tradition. In the same way as Zhang's films, the Olympic Opening Ceremony becomes a vehicle for him to express his vision and interpretation of Chinese traditional culture. Zhang therefore can be seen as the standard bearer for both Chinese national cultural identity and Chinese national cinema. Following his directorial successes at the Venice and Berlin international film festivals in the 1980s, his films were successfully distributed in the global film market with

his more recent films *Hero* (2002), *House of Flying Daggers* (2004) and *Curse of the Golden Flowers* (2006)) constituting transnational projects. This case study will explore how Zhang uses these projects to address transnational audiences. The case study will therefore reveal how the construction of national/cultural identity is manipulated in today's commodity culture.

As a researcher who relies on various Western strategies of textual analysis, it is easy to impose Western traditional modes when studying Chinese films. In a multi-cultural era, it is necessary to account for both cultural specificities and cultural/historical displacement and social change to capture the relevant meanings of a film text. The viewers' cultural capital also extends or limits the nuances of their interpretation. Reception is always relative and is a cultural behavior of understanding and interpretation is conditioned by one's cultural experience. As Hall (1999: 507-517) argues, preferred or dominant meanings encoded within texts are negotiated, accepted or resisted and the consequences, therefore, when films are read by different people in different cultural contexts.

Yimou Zhang's films and cross-cultural communication

Saïd (1994) points out that a hegemony of imperial ideology has formed a systematization of imperialism in cultural practice. This structure certainly influences if not determines Western critics and audiences in their reading of non-Western texts. Readings of Chinese culture are invariably influenced by colonial and Orientalist understandings and histories.

This may explain the contrasting reception of some of Zhang's films in China and in the West. Many of his films have been successful in the West but also a number of films (including his award wining work *Ju Dou* (1987) and *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991)) have suffered severe criticism in China (Chow, 1995). While these films were highly praised in the West, they were criticised by Chinese critics and audiences. For Westerners, "visual and literary culture played a crucial role in the construction of the 'imagined' national communities in Europe that underpinned the imperial ideologies..." (Lewis, 1996:13), As a consequence, exotic representations and mysterious custom in films such as *Raise the Red Lanterns* evoke either

an intertextual memory or fantasy of the Orient for Western viewers and in terms of a marketed film product, also satisfies their desire for novelty. For Chinese viewers, the situation is rather different. Zhang's films project an identity that is strange and new to them (an identity which doesn't exist in their current communist context). As argued in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, this Orientalist memory/imaginary has been manipulated by communist ideology since 1949 reaching its peak during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Also as mentioned earlier, the films of the Fifth Generation projected a cultural construction/representation for Chinese people post-Cultural Revolution. It is through the reception of Fifth Generation films that Chinese viewers come to reflect on the differences between their contemporary/recent lives and the memory of pre-Communist identities. It is clear therefore that 'Chineseness' in Zhang's films is a complicated combination of the 'Otherness' in Chinese eyes and the 'Otherness' in Westerners' eyes: namely familiar strangeness or strange familiarity. On the one hand, the Orient in these films acts as 'Otherness' that is not completely strange but somehow familiar to Westerners. On the other hand, 'the Orient' in these films also acts as 'Otherness' to the Orient itself: familiar but known little in the contemporary context. For the Chinese who just emerged from the catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution, they felt that the cultural identity in Zhang's films was not *real* but constituted a transformed (or manipulated) 'Chineseness' which is ambiguous to their memory. These different cultural contexts inevitably led to different reception of these films in China and the West. As argued in previous chapters, Chinese traditional culture has shaped Chinese society for more than two thousand years lingering on despite the onslaught of the Cultural Revolution, and the influence of Confucianism and Taoism is, despite their differing social, political and geographical contexts, the mutual shaping force of the three Chinese cinemas that I have explored.

The contradictory of 'the national' in Yimou Zhang's transnational films

As argued earlier in this chapter, Hollywood and non-Hollywood national cinemas both seek to depict 'universal' meanings to ensure better global distribution and reception. 'The national' in national cinema is also in a state of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994). Although the previous chapters have argued for a complex notion of the national/cultural identity in the three Chinese language cinemas that I have examined, 'the national' becomes even more complicated in this era of economic globalization. Hollywood continues to seek film talents

from every corner of the world and other national cinemas also import Hollywood's transnational capital and film professionals. Thus the boundary of national cinema becomes ambiguous. Since the new millennium, Zhang has tried to find a conciliatory approach for Chinese national cinema in this context of cultural hybridity: to use national images, allegories and emblems to make films of desinicization. One major characteristic of Zhang's recent *wuxia* films such as *Hero* (2002) and *House of Flying Daggers* (2003) is his (or his films' investors') ambitions of a global market. Thus inevitably he aimed to cater for Western audiences as well as Chinese audiences, which has resulted in a contradictory representation of 'the national'.

As argued in Chapter Two, the spirit of *Xiayi* is important in Chinese traditional culture and is one core element of *wuxia* cinema. Han Feizi has criticised Confucianism and the culture of *Xiayi*. As he contends, "Confucianism uses writing to disorder laws; *Xia* uses martial arts to disorder prohibitions" (Zhang, 2007; trans. Li). This is a rebellious ideology which in return makes *Xia* very popular among ordinary people in China since ancient times. Although *Xia* is able to challenge and destroy hierarchy of governance and disorder common customs, it can not overturn social morality and conventions. In Zhang's transnational works such as *House of Flying Daggers*, the spirit of *Xia* disappears and is simply replaced by the images of *Xia*: dazzling martial arts techniques. *Infernal Affairs* (Liu Weiqiang, 2002) is the most commercially successful film in Hong Kong film history and the film was adapted by Hollywood to an American film as *The Departed* (Martin Scorsese, 2006). The film won four Academy Awards at the 79th Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and a Academy Award for Best Achievement in Directing win for Scorsese (IMDB, 2009). The plot of under-cover and anti under-cover activities has obviously been imitated by *House of Flying Daggers*. The latter uses the love triangle of Xiao Mei (played by Zhang Ziyi), detective Liu and detective Jin as the main narrative, whereas the former tells the story of a police officer who infiltrates the Triads, and a police officer secretly working for the same gang. In Zhang's film, the traditional conflicts of *wuxia* films such as the conflict between governance and common people; the conflict between evil and goodness have all been curtailed and represented as sub-plots. The focus of narrative on personal deception, love and hatred distracted the spirit of *Xiayi*.

The narrative of *House of Flying Daggers* begins with deception and conspiracy between Xiao Mei, detective Liu and detective Jin. The film ends as detective Liu and detective Jin fight to the death for their love for Xiao Mei. Apart from the dazzling martial arts sequences manipulated by CGI, I would argue that the narrative of *House of Flying Daggers* is too simple and does not pursue the cultural significance of *Xia* in enough depth. Zhang offers a superficial and deconstructed concept of where the protagonists are in a desperate pursuit of a far too narrow sense of love.

Zhang's other martial arts film *Hero* is influenced by the Japanese film *Rashomon* (Kurosawa, 1950) in terms of its narrative and the way the narrative progresses. *Rashomon* uses different characters to tell a story from different perspectives. In *Hero*, similarly, Zhang uses different colours to tell a story. At the end of the film, Wumin (Jet Li) abandons the assassination for the concept of Tianxia (beneath heaven) and peace, and submits to the power of the King (the most merciless tyrant in Chinese history), betraying his promise to the other two assassins Vast Sky and Flying Snow. Here the spirit of *Xia* is represented as sacrifice for the emperor's tyranny, which is completely against the true spirit of *Xia*. This will be further explored in a later section.

Targeting at a transnational / global market, it may seem ironic that Zhang needs to locate/represent 'the national' in his trilogy of martial arts films because these films are labelled as 'Chinese national cinema' for global distribution. The promotion of 'national cinemas' and auteur cinema as a marketing strategy in the era of globalization makes auteur directors such as Zhang seek cultural alternatives to representations of 'the national'. It might seem a critical shift in terms to consider Zhang as cultural spokesperson for China in Chapter Four but here criticising him for his manipulation of 'Chineseness' for commercial purpose. But as I have indicated in Chapter Two, auteurism has been used in film theory to refer to two different sets of phenomena. Authorship here, as recognized by Corrigan (1998: 40), is bound up with promotional discourses with "industrial desires, technological opportunities, and marketing strategies". Even though one can look at this trilogy as a vision or coherent set of stylistic or thematic practices (auteur as agent of film's meaning), a film can be still categorized as a commodity for commercial distribution. This is particularly true in the case of Zhang's trilogy of martial arts. One of the strategies for him is to use a visual language to

draw in particularly Western audiences who would not be familiar with the more philosophical dimensions of the essence of Chinese culture. The following sections will respectively examine such cultural alternatives Zhang makes for his transnational attempts.

Curse of the Golden Flower: the deviation to 'Chineseness'

As I have argued, the martial arts film is the most commercially popular film genre to emerge from Chinese cinema. As I have also argued earlier, in order to succeed in cross-cultural communication, it is vital to provide familiar contexts for audiences from different cultural backgrounds. It embodies the choice of film genre, filmic narrative and aesthetic perspective. His ambitions to conquer the global market is evident in Zhang's choice of film genre, which might explain why an auteur director associated with the art cinema suddenly (and consistently) made three martial arts film within five years. If *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers* are both weak in terms of narrative and strong in terms of visual aesthetics, then, Zhang's latest film *Curse of the Golden Flower* can be considered as his serious attempt to bringing narrative and aesthetics together for the creation of 'Chineseness' which specifically targets Western audiences.

Zhang's most recent martial arts film *Curse of the Golden Flower* centres around the intrigues of the royal family. Although the film is adapted from Cao Yu's literary drama Thunder *Storm* (1933), one of most famous drama of contemporary Chinese literature), the film's narrative is encoded with themes from Western literature such as power, desire and patricide. "*Curse of the Golden Flower* borrows elements from Shakespeare's *King Lear* (here three sons instead of three daughters) and Mario Puzo/Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather I and II.* Unfortunately, the emphasis on palace intrigue, plots and counter-plots ends ups feeling like a Chinese soap opera with martial arts thrown in for purely commercial reasons" (Valentin, 2006). Here Valentin reveals Western literary influences on this film, although he ignores that the film is also influenced by Shakespeare's another tragedy *Hamlet* in terms of the Oedipus complex. Thus, for a film labelled as 'Chineseness', although the story and background are set in a dynasty of Chinese history, the cultural identities of characters are ambiguous.

Although *Curse of the Golden Flower* is labelled as Chinese national cinema, as argued above, it is *westernized* in terms of its narrative. Furthermore, it in fact betrays Chinese traditional aesthetics. As argued earlier, the distance of beauty is an important Chinese aesthetic concept and it has been examined by Ang Lee in his Hollywood films. In *Curse of the Golden Flower*, Zhang completely ignores Chinese traditional aesthetic perspectives. In Chinese aestheticism, nature, harmony, ambivalence and restraint are a highly praised aesthetic ideology. The characteristics of Chinese aesthetics consist of the ideas of profound implication, ambiguous connotation, and restraint (using techniques to create atmosphere and intrigue mediation), and *Liubai* (or *blank-leaving*). According to Jorce Chi-Hui Liu (1997: 272), "this blank spot, the so-called *Liubai*, is a traditional Chinese technique painters use in order to leave some space untouched by the brush so that the objects on the canvas do not appear too crowded. But, in Lai's version, the blank spot turns out to be a meaningful visual icon of interstices, a missing sigh, or a sign which escape the reader's (the audience's) interpretation." However, in *Curse of the Golden Flower*, in order to depict the splendid and rich royal palace, Zhang excessively employs all kinds of colours. this obeys Taoist philosophy where: "the five colours confuse the eye and the five sounds dull the ear" (Lao Tzu, 1997: 25). The wall, pillar, girder, floor and ceiling of the royal palace are painted by all kinds of colours and the visual representation is excessively colourful. The colourful royal palace represent Zhang's tendency of projecting a visual entertaining Oriental experience.

'Chineseness' as filmic visual symbols

National /cultural identity is constituted by a variety of elements in a national cinema such as the language spoken, the nationalities of the protagonists, the dress, the setting, the locale, and the music (Higson, 1989). "On the perennialist view, then national identity is a matter, not of the imposition of 'invented traditions' ... with largely fictive connection to the past, but rather of the rediscovery and authentification of already existing myths and symbols with collective value" (Hjort and Mackenzie, 2000: 6). The use of symbols is key and they are socially, culturally and historically inflected. Thus the meanings of symbols are developed through a lengthy process. They are marked with the brands of national spirit, culture, consciousness and significance. Symbols exist in a specific cultural context and their meaning can not be separated from it. Once these symbols become the symbolic of national/cultural identity, they are often used by artists. In the case of national cinema,

"shared memories, collective myths" (Hjort and Mackenzie, 2000: 6) are projected through cinematic representation.

Obviously, Zhang is good at utilizing symbols from Chinese traditional culture and representing them in filmic language. Red lanterns, the architecture of old building (compounds), red sorghum fields, shadow play and wedding ceremonies are all represented in Zhang's cinema and created as beautiful exotic/Orientalized visual images. However, when Zhang employs these symbols to create transnational films, two issues arise: firstly, the originality of the meaning of form; secondly, the conflict between the meaning of form and the meaning of presence. If the originality of the meaning of form is ambiguous, then it is arguable whether or not they could represent national culture. Secondly, if there is a conflict between the meaning of form and the meaning of presence, then it is unlikely to create meaningful significance for that symbol (these issue will be discussed in Zhang"s trilogy of martial arts films). Thus 'the national' is problematizsed in Zhang's transnational projects such as *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers.*

Symbols/emblems not only represent national/cultural identity, but they also should be connected with the film's narrative. As argued in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, Yimou Zhang is a master of inheriting, employing and inventing national symbols/allegories for the projection of 'the national' in Chinese mainland cinema. However, in a global context, with the purpose of giving attention to both the East and the West, Zhang has become impatient and eager for quick success and instant benefits. In his films, national symbols are little by little separated from national culture or 'Chineseness'. In *House of Flying Daggers* and *Curse of the Golden Flower*, the peony house and Chong Yan festival become pure ornaments. He uses them as tools to create elegant and beautiful images. Symbols have not been able to unite with narrative and neither do they represent national culture. The result is still the 'familiar strangeness' for Chinese and the 'strange familiarity' for Westerners. The casual shifts of colour expression in *Hero* and the pure and complete green colour for the fight sequence in bamboo woods in *House of Flying Daggers* have no deep connection with national culture but merely add a superficial acknowledgement. Consequently, these efforts have not helped to explore the protagonists' emotional/psychological world.

'Chineseness' as period martial arts drama

Zhang's trilogy of martial arts films (*Hero, House of Flying Daggers* and *Curse of the Golden Flower*) are all period martial arts films. I would argue that Zhang's tendency for self-Orientalism has been overly developed in these films. Period costume dramas are major box-office commodities in the West (Vincendeau, 2001). For Zhang, the choice of period martial arts films is a result of seeking 'universal' appeals in cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, period drama gives Zhang maximum freedom for artistic creation as it avoids conflict with contemporary Chinese political ideology. Also, the presupposition of history provides Zhang with abundant space for Orientalist manipulation. In all three there is a tendency of desinicization: behind the face of history, the histories portrayed in the films are all fictional devices which manipulated ideas of authenticity of history/culture itself.

Hero attempts to create imaginary historical heroic characters with the purpose of re-constructing history by the way of individual experience and idealism. The film has a magnificent subject in terms of narrative, encompassing ideologies such as worship of power (tyranny in this case), ignorance of humanism and cynicism. What Zhang delivers in this film is the ideology of individual's sacrifice for the peace beneath heaven. However, when Wumin abandons the assassination at the end of the film, what he actually gives up is the chance of assassinating the most tyrannical emperor, Qin Shi Huang (BC221-BC206) in Chinese history. Although united China as a nation-state for the first time in BC221, the emperor Qin has been criticized by today's Chinese historians for his abuse in killing a large number of Chinese people (Harper, 2009). The Qin emperor shares a negative image in Chinese history. For Chinese people, a true hero with the spirit of *Xiayi* should definitely not give up such a chance of ending the tyranny. In fact there have been a number of assassins attempting to kill the Emperor Qin but only ended with themselves get killed by the emperor's army. Therefore Zhang's Orientalist visual construction of history is contradictory to the truth of history. There is no deep cultural significance when juggling history and culture itself, except an anti-historical imagination of Zhang's own powerful unconstrained style.

House of Flying Daggers is an example of how history is lost in a period drama. The love triangle story is set in Tang Dynasty. But it can also be inserted into any other historical

periods, as the narrative has no historical reference except martial arts sequences and a love sub-plot. With such ignorance and narrative reference to actual history, the film presents its audiences with a splendid visual/audio representation. For *Curse of the Golden Flower*, as mentioned earlier, although it is an adaptation of the most famous Chinese drama in the 1930s, the sense of history and humanism is Western rather than Chinese: it belongs to the European period of Shakespeare and Renaissance. The subject it explores is still *desinicization* and *anti-history.*

The Orientalist aesthetics in Zhang's transnational films

As introduced in Chapter Three, film is a Western art and it is based on the reality of images. But the authenticity of images does not guarantee the artistic significance/meaning of them. When using pictures to depict characters, scenes and objects, films deliver emotions and filmmakers' interpretation of social and cultural issues. From this perspective, film is similar to Chinese traditional painting, Chinese painting, however, never negates the importance of rendering reality of images. Thus the reality of images is an important precondition to represent artistic significance. Of course, besides the reality of images, film's artistic conception/cultural significance is also associated with framing, mise-en-scène and picture composition.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, originally graduated from the cinematography department of Beijing Film Academy, Zhang's cinematography is famous for delivering profound significance. In the final sequence of *Story of Qiu Ju* (1992), the close-up of the confused expression on Qiu Ju's face leads audiences to mediate upon the image's deeper significance. In *Red Sorghum* (1987), the symbolic meaning of wild red sorghum fields in sunshine inspire audiences the ideas of freedom, vitality, and passion. However, in the context of globalization, Zhang changes his filmic ideology. Although he still deliberately use symbols/emblems of Chinese literary tradition such as defoliation, bamboo sea, chrysanthemum, *Guzheng* (a Chinese traditional violin) and desert, the aesthetic ideology of restraints and blank-leaving is replaced by modern aesthetic habits such as fast paced editing and visual stimulation. The result is the meaning of symbols only stays on a perceptual level instead of bringing audiences to meditate upon its profound significance. Compared with the previous case study

of Lee's cinema, it may seem that Zhang lacks Western cultural understanding and the ability to culturally (not manipulated aesthetically) represent 'Chineseness' in transnational filmmaking.

Be it the Huyang forest in *House of Flying Daggers*, the vast desert in *Hero* or the chrysanthemum fields in *Curse of the Golden Flowers*, due to a deliberate avoidance of point of view shots and close-ups which can imply subjective emotion and feeling, these natural objects only appear to be scenic background of mise-en-scène and they are far away from creating and reaching any significance. Thus symbols are separated from their signification. Exotic/Oriental national symbols provide audiences with visual satisfaction rather than representing national/cultural identity.

Furthermore, there is the gulf between emblems and significance. The formation of significance comes from emblems, and emblems are often developed to certain fixed significance after repeated use in traditional arts. For example, in Chinese traditional culture, plum blossom, orchids, chrysanthemums and bamboo have been endowed with characteristics of human being's dignity, nobleness, unyielding character and indifferent to fame or benefit (Xu, 2009). However, in *House of Flying Daggers*, the bamboo sea becomes a slaughterhouse and is full of blood. All these emblems are manipulated by Zhang for his Orientalist construction as he abandons the familiar contexts of these emblems in his visual representation. In this film, the bamboo is emerald green and elegantly attractive, and suddenly, the weapons made of bamboo become dangerous killing arms and the bamboo forest also becomes a trap of death. In *Hero*, the fighting sequence between Wumin and Vast Sky takes place in a temple where the camera takes us to see Chinese cultural emblems such as *guzheng*, Chinese chessboard and raindrops. These emblems are associated with lovesickness and grief in Chinese traditional culture. The battle between the two protagonists is obviously antipathetic to the original meanings of these emblems. Thus the high-speed cinematography of raindrops and close-up of Chinese chessboard become the director's aesthetic decoration and fail to reach any profound significance. Furthermore, defoliations in the sky and golden flowers are neither representation of characters emotions, nor national/cultural identity. The significance of their existence in these films may be Zhang's intention of creating/constructing a more commercially 'universal Orient'.

The above section examines manipulated 'Chineseness' represented in Zhang's transnational films as opposed to 'the national' in Zhang's previous works as an auteur of the Fifth Generation in the 1980s and 1990s. In next section, I will explore 'Chineseness' in the Hollywood films of Woo. As argued in Chapter Five, Woo is a distinguished auteur of Hong Kong new wave cinema for his heroism films. Facing the uncertainty of 1997, he started his transnational filmmaking in Hollywood.

'Chineseness' in John Woo's Hollywood films

As I outline in Chapter Five, Hong Kong is an international metropolis. Although six million people are packed into a small geographical space, Hong Kong has the world's third largest film industry behind Hollywood and Bollywood. For many decades, Hong Kong cinema has long been transregional and transnational. Its audiences are spread across South-eastern Asia and Hong Kong films have been commercially successful in Europe and the USA since the 1970s. Woo is a distinguished filmmaker of Hong Kong cinema since the 1980s. Chapter Five highlighted the cultural hybridity of Hong Kong cinema, including an awareness of 'local imagination' (or 'Imagined Communities' in the Andersonian sense) and the status of Woo as auteur of Hong Kong new wave cinema. If Chapter Five explored the possibility of narratives of national identity in the Hong Kong context, when Woo relocated to the USA (making English language films in Hollywood), how are his authorial signatures and the influence of Chinese background represented and negotiated in a transnational context? As an established action film director, facing the uncertainty of Hong Kong's transition back to Chinese authority in 1997, Woo has pursued his career in Hollywood since the 1990s and his transnational action filmmaking style has made him one of the most successful Hollywood directors of Chinese origin. His early Hong Kong films such as *A Better Tomorrow* (1986) and *The Killer* (1989) are popular worldwide and are the films that recommended him to Hollywood. As an established figure of film scholarship, Woo is considered as an auteur, especially for his aesthetics of violence. At a certain level, Woo is almost the figurehead of Hong Kong cinema in the same way that Zhang is for Mainland Chinese cinema. His Western films such as *Hard Target* (1993), *Broken Arrow* (1996) and *Face/Off* (1997) successfully crossed national and geographical boundaries in terms of commercial cinema. in Chapter Five I explored the theme of 'Chineseness' in his heroism films, but here what I want to focus upon in this section is the way his films cross cultures. In discussing auteur cinema, as

Livingston (1997) and Elsaesser (2005) suggest, in critical practice, an auteur is still often thought of as the single dominant personality behind a work of film art, a creative personality whose imprint should be discernible throughout the body of his or her films (in the Livingstonian sense that an auteur is the agent of his/her film's meaning). I will specifically explore the continuous influence of 'Chineseness' in Woo's action cinema a transnational context.

Woo has acknowledged the influence that Western filmmakers have had on his filmmaking. As Bordwell claims in *Planet Hong Kong* (1995), Hong Kong cinema has an ideological and technical link with Hollywood as many young filmmakers came back to Hong Kong film industry after practicing filmmaking in Hollywood. Woo adopted these influences in his Hong Kong filmmaking as well. In addition, his influence is also seen in Hollywood. Established Hollywood directors such as Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez practiced and developed Woo's aesthetics of violence in their filmmaking. Rodriguez's *Desperado* (1995) is a brilliant case of practicing and extending the aesthetics of violence in a Hollywood film in terms of action sequence. The representation of violence in Tarantino's *Kill Bill* series (2003, 2004) is another example. Woo's filmic style has had an enormous influence in contemporary Hollywood cinema and this has largely been studied as the aesthetics of violence where Woo has been discussed as an auteur specifically in reference to his use of aestheticization and formalism to represent violence with special editing and slow motion cinematography. Woo's filmic style does not, of course, solely come from his Chinese cultural understandings. As indicated in Chapter Five, Woo, as many other directors of Hong Kong new wave cinema, have been influenced by Western directors. As well as being influenced by the style of Jean-Pierre Melville, Woo's slow motion cinematography in action sequences is also influenced by American director Sam Peckinpah. As Woo stated: "*The Wild Bunch* by Sam Peckinpah is one of my favorite westerns. I liked the way he used the slow motion shooting. It conveys an extra sense of romanticism." (Woo cited in Elder, 2005: 12). In this chapter, I will argue that the basis of Woo's authorship and success in Hollywood is actually the cultural core in his films and that this further problematises authorship and cultural identity in a transnational context.

John Woo as auteur director

For many Western audiences, Woo is 'only' an action director. However, film scholars (Bruder, 1998; Bordwell, 2000) have regarded him as an auteur director and almost all studies have placed emphasis on his action style based on a recognizable aesthetics of violence. Margaret Bruder (1998) describes the aesthetics of violence as 'stylistically excessive', in a 'significant and sustained way'. When violence is depicted in this fashion in films, television shows, and other media, Bruder (1998) argues that audience members are able to connect references from the play of images and signs to artworks, genre conventions, cultural symbols or concepts. Yet as argued in previous chapters, this connection is conditioned by one's own cultural context. In this chapter, I draw upon Bruder's notions above to connect 'plays of images and signs' to Chinese 'artworks, genre conventions, cultural symbols or concepts' in the themes, styles and concerns of Woo's Hollywood films. Although some attention will be paid to the aesthetics of violence in his cinema, the emphasis is put on the relationship between filmic style and Chinese traditional culture. I will go beyond the usual discussions regarding the aesthetics of violence and explore more the cultural meaning and significance beyond the technical level.

For Woo, be it his action films made in Hong Kong or later in Hollywood, he always strongly emphasizes culture and art. In particular he draws on traditional Chinese values such as brotherly love, the notions of family and the spirit of *Xiayi*. All his films are about heroism, including his Hollywood projects such as *Hard Target, Broken Arrow, Face/Off* and *Mission Impossible 2*. As a master of Hong Kong heroism films, Woo incorporated this expertise in his Hollywood films, transforming Hollywood generic concerns and conventions by emphasizing Chinese understanding of brotherly love and family.

Very few directors are thought of as auteur directors. As I have suggested, his action films have a close relationship with Hong Kong martial arts films, *wuxia* films, and of course with Western police/gangster films. I would argue that as a director he has pursued a distinct filmmaking style and offers a coherent signature in his heroism films whether in Hong Kong or Hollywood.

The Concept of *Xia* in Woo's cinema

Woo (2005, trans. Li) states that: "Chinese traditional culture possesses universal characteristics. I stress the spirit of *Xiayi*, brotherly love, the concept of family and self sacrifice. These themes often appear in my films. When I make Western films, I try my best to represent them in these films as well." The concept and culture of *Xia* has been discussed in previous chapters and represents a symbol or a code for certain aspects of Chinese traditional culture. When Woo moved to Hollywood, he did not abandon this core cultural element of his filmmaking in his Hollywood projects. Instead, he wished to include the spirit of *Xiayi* into his transnational works. In *Hard Target* (1993), the protagonist Chance is more like a *Xia* in Chinese traditional culture. He helps Natasha find out that her father was killed by an organization who sells the opportunity to hunt human prey. Chance also takes over the responsibility of revenge for Natasha by risking his life. Here Chance is a different hero compared with other classic Hollywood action heroes. In Chinese traditional culture, *Xia* is different to fighter or warrior. *Xia* is always ready to help others (even strangers) for a just cause. This spirit does not exist in common warriors or fighters.

Woo did not abandon his personal style in his Western projects. Be it *Hard Target, Broken Arrow* (1996) or *Face/Off* (1997), Woo's heroism films possess a basic difference to action or police and gangsters film in Western culture. His Hollywood blockbuster *Face/Off* is typically such a case. The following analysis of this film will show how Woo's auteur stylization of heroism films enriches the Western action genre.

Face/Off and Face Changing: a Chinese perspective

It would be disingenuous to deny American influences even when privileging the articulation of 'Chineseness' in Woo's Hollywood films. Hollywood generic conventions are of course also in play in Woo's Hollywood films. Both in terms of box office and critical responses, *Face/Off* has become a summit of Woo's filmmaking career in Hollywood so far. Instead of making the film in the exact way of the majority of contemporary Hollywood hybrid sci-fi action blockbusters at the time, Woo particularly emphasizes the spirit of humanism and the concept of family in this film. Many Hollywood action films have obviously centred their

values upon humanism and family (*Die Hard*, McTiernan, 1988; *Lethal Weapon*, Donner, 1987; *Terminator 2 – Judgement Day,* Cameron, 1991; *True Lies*, Cameron, 1994; etc.), however, Woo stresses the importance of familial reconciliation (harmony as advocated by Confucianism) in his narratives emphasizing the importance ascribed to harmony as crucial for families and by extension also for society. In the film Castor Troy (Nicholas Cage), a terrorist, was in coma; Sean Archer (John Travolta), whose son Castor had killed, underwent plastic surgery to switch not only faces with him but voice and body. With Troy's face, Archer goes into the prison to approach Troy's brother for information. Then the faceless body of Troy (who came out his coma) forced the doctor to give him Archer's spare face. Each man slips into the life of his deadly enemy. Archer and Troy respectively represent goodness and evil, however, after changing their faces, they seems to be two sides of the same person. The brain of each is in the body of the other. Thus a strong suspense is created when Archer goes 'home' (Troy, with Archer's face, goes to Archer's home). Apart from the emphasis of the concept of family, in *Face/Off*, Woo does not abandon the spirit of *Xiayi* and romanticism. Contrary to Western traditional action blockbusters, while pursuing the aesthetics of violence, Woo also stresses the protagonists' emotional world with detailed psychological depiction. Thus action heroes with more human feelings are created and these make the action heroes in *Face/Off* different from traditional Hollywood action heroes such as Rambo (Sylvester Stallone) and the Terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger).

An analysis of the title *Face/Off* reveals a strong connection with Chinese traditions. It is a perfect connection between Western and Chinese culture. Face Changing is a famous term in Chinese traditional culture. It is a technique used in Chuan drama in Chinese traditional opera. Chuan drama used the technique of face changing as a way of interpreting protagonists' complicated psychological states.

Face Changing has a long history in China and it was developed as a technique in Chinese traditional art. Originally in Chinese history, in order to scare away wild animals, people used different colors to paint their faces. Chuan Drama has transformed this tradition to the stage and developed it as a unique form in Chinese art. Tragedy and comedy in Chuan drama both have unique characteristics and face changing is used to interpret the conflicts and changes of characters' emotion and

psychology. It uses uncanny and ferocious masks to represent characters' psychological complexities. Performers can change approximately fourteen faces without being detected and they manage to do it within a few seconds. Not surprisingly it has become a Chinese theatrical technique with international reputation.


Figure 25

Figure 26

The design of the poster of *Face/Off* using two halves of the different faces of the protagonist and antagonist to form one face (one person) obviously shares similarities with this Chinese art tradition (see figures 25 and 26). Woo did not merely create this superficially but he also captured the essence of Face Changing as to the narrative portrayal of the complicated psychological emotion of characters.

The screenplay of *Face/Off* was originally a science fiction action film but Woo decided to stress the psychological complexity of the protagonists in the film. Following his communication with the film's producers, the screenplay was rewritten to meet his requirements. Thus the screenplay places more stress on notions of family, brotherly love and emotional conflict, providing a subtle reemphasis of Western values with the lens of Chinese values. A clear example here is the spirit of *Xiayi*. Woo wanted the protagonist Archer to take care of Castor's (the villain) son at the end of the film. This was questioned wholly by his production company but after an American preview this was endorsed and the director of the production company apologized to Woo and accepted his version of the ending (Woo, 2005).

At the beginning of the film, in terms of cinematography and narrative, Woo positions the whole family of Sean Archer in visually darkness and is overtly sorrowful because of the death of their little son. Sean shoulders great responsibility for the family and the pursuit of

Castor Troy who killed their son. Thus Troy is a nightmare in the psychological world of Archer's family. At the end of the film, Woo decided to shoot the sequence in slow motion when Archer comes home. In the last sequence Archer walks through mist and slowly but then clearly appears in front of the house in warm sunshine. This symbolizes that as Troy dies, the whole family has freed themselves from a psychological struggle, and they also accept their enemy's son as a member of the family. The previous depiction of the family's problematic status on the edge of disintegration is rescued by the ending which stresses unity. This highlights the theme of family and emphasizes the emotional world of protagonists. As argued earlier, Archer's adoption of Castor's son (although initially thought to be the wrong type of ending by the production company) allows Chinese family ideologies to remain firmly in place. The Chinese and Hollywood values coincide with Woo, as I would argue, enhancing the final product by the fusion of true cross-cultural values.

The Confucian concept of family is paramount in Chinese traditional culture. In *Face/Off*, family is a major motive for both protagonists Archer and Troy. In prison, the greatest motive for Archer to escape from prison is his extreme anxiety and worries for the safety of his wife and daughter as Troy now has Archer's face and infiltrates deep into Sean's family. The action that Archer saves Troy's son may also be interpreted as the influence of the spirit of *Xiayi*. In addition, in such action blockbusters, Woo projects themes of brotherly love. In the film Castor binds the shoe laces twice for his brother. These depictions not only stress the brotherly love and family affection, but it also created a villain with strong human feeling. This makes this character different from the inhuman villain in most classic Hollywood action films.

(Figure 27)

(Figure 28)

Another of Woo's interesting signatures is his use of Mexican stand off where two protagonists are captured within a two shot pointing at each other. In a two shot (see Figure 27 both characters remain highly vigilant and at the same time, elegant. By holding fire for a coming burst, they generate a significant pause in the middle of the action. As frequently appeared in Woo' Hong Kong films, This framing as seen above illustrates that in the middle of life and death a moment of confrontation is achieved as they face their own mortality. In his studies of Asian action films, Bordwell (2008) calls this technique "the pause/ burst/ pause structure". This is in fact a traditional technique of choreography of staged fighting in Beijing opera (see Figure 28). As with his use of face changing to explore ideological and psychological struggles, he uses aesthetics drawn from the Beijing Opera to explore and represent crucial tension between the protagonist and the antagonist Archer and Troy. This signature from his Hong Kong films introduces a further stylistic layer to his Hollywood works.

John Woo's transnational perplexity

As I have attempted to demonstrate, there are some dimensions of 'Chineseness' expressed in Woo's Hollywood blockbusters. However, it might also be claimed that 'Chinesness' provides us with some new interpretative and explanatory perspectives to read such films made in such a complex context. Woo's recognizable signatures and styles in his Hong Kong movies and now in his Hollywood blockbusters, lead to the sense that he is the auteurial agent of the film's meaning. However, the above analysis also leads to another issue that can only touched upon here: the auteurial expressions and stylistics are transformed and complicated by global industry-based concerns. I should also acknowledge that there are some clear differences between the films he made in Hong Kong and the films he made in Hollywood. When he crossed cultures, there were compromises and changes to be made. The transition from making films in Hong Kong to Hollywood shows the influence that different film industries and film cultures can have on authorship.

From an industrial perspective, making a film in Hong Kong is easier for an established director than it is in Hollywood. With a complicated hierarchy of film production, Hollywood has rigorous rules and procedures for how a film's pre-production, production and post-

production should be undertaken (Woo, 2005). In Hollywood Woo needed to sacrifice some authorial control for commercial considerations. In Hong Kong, once production finance is secured, the director possesses the freedom to make the film in the way he prefers. However, in Hollywood, a film's production is controlled by a set of different people working in a hierarchical but also collaborative relation.

His first transnational film, *Hard Target,* did not perform as well as expected at the American box office. For most Chinese audiences, this film also disappointed, as there was less of his authorial signatures/style in evidence compared to the films he made in Hong Kong. This lack of freedom to superimpose style strongly may be one of the limitations of Hollywood filmmaking. In order to cater for American audiences, *Hard Target* was re-edited by the production company after Woo finished the post-production. Woo's (2005) explanation for this is: "I wanted to shoot it in my way, however, for Hollywood, a comedy is a comedy and an action film is an action film. Things should not be mixed. They can not accept an action film with rich emotional and cultural implications". Woo however gained experience from this first project and tried to build bridges between his authorial style and Hollywood commercial considerations. As argued earlier, his *Face/Off* is such a transnational project.

Woo's latest film is *Red Cliff* (2008). This film may represent the beginning of his post-Hollywood era. *Red Cliff* is a literary adaptation of one of the 'four classic Chinese literatures', *Romance of Three Kingdoms* (Luo Guanzhong). It is a historical war film. The film creates a new record in Chinese film history with a budget of eighty million dollars. Woo's *Red Cliff* is an example of how nation cinema continues to adapt and re-adapt itself in an age of globalization. In this literary adaptation, Woo is not loyal to the original literature. Instead, he filmed it with obvious Orientalist tendencies. The film is clearly influenced by Hollywood historical films such as *Troy* (Wolfgang Peterson, 2004) and *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson, 1995). It is divided into two separated parts (each lasts about two hours) and these were released in China in 2008. However, for Western audiences, Woo has decided to edit the two films into one film running around four hours in length. Similar to Zhang's *Hero* (2002) and *House of Flying Daggers* (2003), there is a contradiction within the film regarding its 'Chineseness': namely *desinicization*, a betrayal from original literary work, with the intention of creating a more commercially popular 'universal'.

Woo's success as a director relies on the persistence of his authorial status both in terms of the aesthetics of violence and Chinese cultural traditions. As he said: "if we want to make an international film, we must know how to use a set of international filmic language to tell stories without losing ourselves" (Xiaowanzi, 1996: 4). Woo is precisely using a set of international filmic conventions to include Chinese traditional values/stylistic visions within a transnational progress. Woo's cinema, especially his Hollywood films (together with Yimou Zhang and Ang Lee), have provided film scholars with an interesting case of problematizing notions of film authorship and its relationship to specific cultural identities. The case of these Hollywood cross-over directors of Chinese origin shows that notions of authorship and national/cultural identity are challenged in a transnational context where the pre-set contexts of theoretical framework are switched, transformed and eventually challenged. Although arguments have been furthered regarding the inclusion of 'Chineseness' in Woo's Hollywood films, the articulation of 'Chineseness' in these Hollywood films problematises the notion of authorship and cultural/national identity. As mentioned, this chapter takes Woo, Lee and Zhang out of their own cultural contexts, the specific locality. 'Chineseness' in their Hollywood films is also out of its common realm. If cultural/national identity is an 'imagined artifact' (Anderson, 1983), it is associated with history and culture of a particular locality. The articulation of 'Chineseness' in Western films may be viewed as a continuity of authorship or a cultural reconstitution, or a superorganic remaking. Thus on one hand, it problematises the concept of national cinema of how national/cultural identity is projected by a particular national cinema (Andrew Higson, 1989). On the other hand, it challenges the notions of authorship in a transnational context when the auteur seeks to construct his particular cultural identity in transnational narrative. Thus cultural identity and authorship are self-negated in this transnational context and a new transition of contemporary film and cultural studies seem to be important in this era of globalization.

Conclusion

This chapter takes three most successful filmmakers of Chinese origin (Ang Lee, Yimou Zhang and John Woo) out of their previous contexts of discussion and investigates the ways that their transnational/global filmmaking intersects with Chinese cultural identities and influences. This further problematises the concept of national cinema and notions of 'the national' as being defined within the boundaries of a nation state.

In the era of globalization, the fixed notions of national are problematic in thinking through cross-cultural communication (which is not unidirectional if it is to be successful). The importance for this thesis of the Hollywood cross-over directors of Chinese origin investigated in this final chapter is that they illustrate how authorship can provide new interpretative and explanatory perspectives for reading the national in transnational context. Bordwell (2008: 48) states that "perception in all phases of life is an activity associated with one's habitual pattern", this "habitual pattern" can be defined as individual's own cultural context. When each element in film narrative is rooted in a specific 'imagined' space (Anderson, 1983) for a particular national/cultural identity (Higson, 1989), audiences without this cultural context will not be able to understand the nuances of the cultural meanings within these elements. Hence, allegories, symbols/emblems and languages (codes) become obscured and ambiguous for audiences without the knowledge or the codes. Within a transnational context, it is therefore of vital importance to provide sufficiently familiar texts for audiences to engage with the necessary task of cross-cultural communication. That is to say, the representation and subjects of films which are familiar to audiences will create an easy context for audiences of different cultural backgrounds to conduct their cross-cultural interpretation. As the USA is itself an immigrant country which has embraced the complexities of various cultures, Hollywood, since its classic period, has developed the ideology of making films that cross cultural boundaries even for the audiences within the USA. However, today this nature of cross-cultural communication is still shaping other national cinemas in the era of globalization.

Similar to Jennings's (2002b) examination of Peter Weir as a cross-over director in Hollywood, the analysis of the authorial signatures of auteur directors as signifiers of national style in transnational/Hollywood cinema help us interpret more productively the interface between global and local, national and transnational. Lee's films take place in cross-cultural, transnational settings and deal with the themes of Chinese/Taiwanese diaspora, homosexuality, and cultural identity. Woo incorporated Chinese culture and traditions into Hollywood action blockbusters. 'The national' or 'Chineseness' is manipulated by Zhang who made films labelled as 'Chinese national cinema' but deliberately targeted a transnational/global market. In the above case studies, 'the national' not only crosses national boundaries but also cross cultural boundaries and consolidates national and local identities in uncanny ways.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
CONCLUDING THE THESIS

The thesis has explored the heterogeneity of national identities in three Chinese language cinemas. It examined the cultural specificities of each cinema influenced by Hall's (2006) theories of cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity, with specific reference to the sociopolitical contexts of each cinema in the 1980s period. The analysis aimed to explore the cultural differentiations of cultural identities respectively projected by three new wave cinemas in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In particular it has focussed on three new wave movements that emerged within these cinemas in the 1980s and has explored the ways that certain auteur directors have acted as signifiers of national styles and national meanings. Key auteur directors from these three cinemas were then chosen to further problematize notions of national by using them to look at what happens when they make films outside their countries of origin or intended for film audiences beyond their countries of origin. This study has therefore taken key Western theories and tools of analysis (the concept of national cinema and the importance of auteurs) and enhanced them with understandings of traditional Chinese cultural understandings drawn from Confucianism and Taoism in order to argue that national cinemas are not contained by the borders of the nation-state but are complex and evolving creations that rely on the re-circulation of cultural signifiers. As a result it is possible to argue that the cinemas of Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan share and portray a rich cultural heritage in their films despite difficulties and antagonisms that exist in the political relations between them. Culture rather than just the nation-state (geographical and political boundaries do still have meaning) enables three 'Chinas' to be portrayed to the world. Reading the full nuances of these signifiers requires a deep knowledge of the cultural meanings employed and this is one of the contributions I make with this study. The transnational films that I discuss in this thesis would, however, indicate that for audiences with little knowledge of Chinese traditional philosophies, their effect is more subtle and unspecific but nonetheless important in terms of adding to the films' artistic vision.

In Chapter Two I located Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan within their geographical, political, cultural contexts. I suggested that the lack of film scholarship on Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan's shared Chinese cultural influences may be seen as the result not just of latent Eurocentrism/Orientalism but rather of Western scholars' preoccupation with theories concerning the dualism of dominance/resistance between East and West. I also set out the key theoretical concepts for the thesis, namely: theories of national cinema, film authorship, Orientalism, Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinema studies and the importance of cultural signifiers (especially Confucianism and Taoism) in the understanding of the 'national' in national cinema. In particular the idea of 'projecting the national' (Higson, 1989), the limits and benefits of the idea of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991) linked with the vital role of auteur directors and their distinctive personal signatures (Jennings, 2002b) shaped this project. Higson's notion that national cinema should be defined not only in terms of "the films produced by and within a particular nation state" (Higson, 1989: 36-46), but also in terms of distribution and exhibition, audiences, and critical and cultural discourses together with Jennings' (2002b) questioning of what happens when a national cinema auteur goes to Hollywood provide the core approach for this research. In addition, I also wanted to challenge the dominance of Orientalist models in the Western study of Chinese cultures by drawing on my knowledge of Chinese cultural specificities to study Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinemas with regard to the ways that their auteur directors project 'the national'. I then decided to take this a step further and look at the ways these auteur visions might operate in the international arena.

In Chapter Three, I presented a brief history of cinema in Mainland China and set out the historical, cultural and political contexts in which the movement of film directors known as the Fifth Generation emerged in the 1980s. I also explained the typology of the generational approach that has been used to identify different periods or movements of filmmaking in China. This chapter revealed the ways that the films of the Fifth Generation represent the consciousness of life and ultimately the rediscovery of the individual in a period so marked by Mao's programme of the Cultural Revolution.

I suggested that an auteur approach was highly suitable for investigating the cultural

factors/philosophies of Chinese cinema compared to more traditional national cinema approaches that focus upon the nation state (e.g. industrial and historical approaches) and thus it combined the generational approach to Fifth Generation filmmakers with an auteurist approach.

This chapter also argued in favour of the transition of Chinese mainland cinema to modernity by positioning the Fifth Generation as a 'new cinema' that announced its auteur credentials to the world stage via major international film festival successes.

Chapter Four discussed the Fifth Generation filmmakers in Mainland China and explored the rural identity projected in their films. The central point of the chapter was to understand why the focus on rural identity emerged and how the films projected a new vision for society based on traditional values and philosophies rather than mainstream communist ideologies. The influence of Chinese traditional culture in the films of the Fifth Generation is undeniable. Under the influences of Taoism, the Fifth Generation re-connected with the earth and returned to nature. They sought to explore the vitality of human life that had been lost in the Cultural Revolution.

Based on their real life experiences as 'Intellectual Youth', transplanted by force to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, the Fifth Generation directors started a cultural journey both for themselves and filmically for China by undertaking a search for their (Chinese) roots. Their focus rested on the innate nature of human beings and their films projected an anti-mainstream ideology through the exploration of the past and traditional values. Facing the chaos and the vacuum of belief after the Cultural Revolution, they tried to restore the broken bridge of Chinese traditional culture and history. Their vision was not, however, a simple recognition of Confucian or Taoist, traditions but rather an interweaving of them in service of cultural critique of contemporary China.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Fifth Generation, in re-envisioning Mainland China and Mainland Chinese cinema, is the concept that 'roots-searching' and modernity

were not to be perceived as oppositional and the key issue here is how to understand the traditional culture in their films, namely, that together these elements became the signifiers for a progressive mainland Chinese identity firmly based in the relationship between traditional values and modernity.

In Chapter Five I turned my attention to Hong Kong Cinema. Hong Kong's distinctive history makes it a particularly interesting case for discussion in relation to notions of national cinema. Its multi-faceted relationship with Mainland China and the West have led me to investigate not only Hong Kong's cultural identity in a postcolonial context but also the manifestation of 'Chineseness' and 'Hongkongness' in Hong Kong cinema and of course the relationship between the two.

The chapter set up the link between China and Hong Kong in terms of history, culture, politics and mode of film production. Then after exploring the representation of 'Chineseness' in the films of *The Shaw Brothers* and Bruce Lee's martial arts films, I further investigate the cultural identity of Hong Kong via new wave cinema which brings this study into the key time frame for my research – the 1980s. It is here where the role of auteur directors (so vital to my overall thesis) is important as their innovations in filmmaking emerge from a relationship with the past and a self-reflexive consideration of the future. John Woo's heroism films for instance emphasize the influence of Chinese traditional culture in relation to modernity and at a time when Hong Kong was particularly anxious about what would happen when its administrative and political control returned to China in 1997. This links to the distinctive element of filmmaking in Hong Kong at this period which is related to Hong Kong's cultural hybridity. I argue for a concept of 'Hongkongness' where the local (modern/urban) space interacts with traditional Chinese Cultural values to form a Hong Kong imaginary.

Chapter Six concentrated on Taiwanese cinema and in particular TNC. It explored the ways that certain auteur directors (with distinctive vision/styles etc.) emerged and examined how ideas of the Taiwanese nation were represented by these directors. By focusing on TNC and the films which were elevated to the international pantheon of 'art cinema' and 'national

cinema', I sought to analyze how the complex nature of national/cultural identity was constructed, interpreted and manipulated by a number of key auteur-directors such as Hsiao-Hsien Hou, Edward Yang, Wang Tong and Ang Lee. In particular the distinctive factor here is how Chinese cultural specificities linked by emotional and blood links to Mainland China (what I refer to as nostalgia) interweave with the diverse concerns of a complex and hybrid nation-state (indigenous, Japanese, Western/American and Chinese influences) to bring a different nuance of Chinese identity to the screen.

With special focus on the new wave movement in the 1980s, these chapters exploring Mainland China (the Fifth Generation), Hong Kong (new wave cinema) and Taiwan (Taiwanese New Cinema) investigate the representation of 'Chineseness'/Chinese traditional cultural influences within three Chinese language cinemas and suggest that there are commonalities of national culture based on traditional Chinese philosophies which surpass their territorial boundaries but which also produce distinctive projections of what Chinese cultural specificities might be.

My final chapter pushed the boundaries of the idea of the national in national cinemas by looking at the ways that three auteur directors of Chinese origin (John Woo, Yimou Zhang and Ang Lee) took their understandings of Chinese traditional culture to films that were intended for Western audiences. In so doing they further problematized notions of the national by embedding understandings based on Chinese culture within their transnational films.

In many ways, my work in this research repeats their task. They address a Western audience by utilizing Western filmmaking tools and drawing on Chinese perspectives whilst I draw on Western theories and approaches but also on Chinese cultural specificities to try and complicate the tendency to limited and orientalist readings of Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese films.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbas A., 1997, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press.

Abbas A., 2006, "The New Hong Kong Cinema and the Déja Disparu", in *Asian Cinema: a Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriotis D., and Needham G., Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Ah Chen, 1985, *The Chess King*, Beijing, Authors' Publication.

Akita K., 2006, *Orientalism and the Binary of Fact and Fiction in Memoirs of a Geisha*, [online] (cited 23 August 2008), available from: <http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/fa06/gmj_fa06_akita.htm>.

Anderson B., 1991, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London, Verso.

Appadurai A., 1993, "Patriotism and its Futures," in *Public Culture*, 5.3: 411. [online] (cited 2 May 2009) Available from: <http://publicculture.dukejournals.org/cgi/pdf_extract/5/3/411>

Appadurai A., 1996, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy", in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalisation and Modernity,* ed. by Featherstone M., London, Sage.

Ashcroft, B., 2003, Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts. London, Routledge, 2003: 118.

Aumont J., 1989, *L'Oeil Interminable: Cinema et Peinture*, Paris, Librairie Seguier.

Baidu Dictionary, Xungen Literature，[online] (cited 12 April 2008) Available from: <http://baike.baidu.com/view/665745.html?wtp=tt>

Barker C., 2004, *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, Sage Publication.

Bourdieu P. and Passeron J. C. and Nice R., 1977, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, London, Sage.

Baker D. R., 1979, *Chinese Family and Kinship*, Macmillan.

Basoli A. G., 2007, "Ang Lee is Changing the Rules", in *MovieMaker*, [online] (cited 14 November 2008), available from: <http://www.moviemaker.com/directing/article/changing_the_rules_2417/>

Beckman T., 2000, *Martin Heidegger and Environmental Ethics,* [online] (cited 8 March 2009), Available from < http://www2.hmc.edu/~tbeckman/personal/HEIDART.HTML>.

Benjamin, 2005, *On the Concept of History*, trans. Redmond D, [online] (cited 26 September 2008), available from: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm>

Berry C., 1991, "Sexual Difference and the Viewing Subject in Li Shuanghuang and the In-laws", in *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*, London, British Film Institute.

Berry C., 2003, *Chinese Films in Focus, 25 New Takes,* London, British Film Institute.

Berry C. and Farquhar A. M., 1999, "An Analysis of Yellow Earth and Black Canon Incident", in *Cinematic Landscapes*, ed. by Linda C. E. and Desser D., Texas, University of Texas Press.

Berry C. and Farquhar A. M., 2006, *China on Screen, Cinema and Nation*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press.

Berry C. and Lu F., 2005, *Island on the Edge: Taiwan New Cinema and After,* Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press.

Betz M., 2008, *Dubbing and Subtitling*, [online] (cited 12 June 2007), available from: <http://www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Criticism-Ideology/Dubbing-and-Subtitling.html>.

Bhabha H. K., 1990, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation", in *Nation and Narration,* ed. B. H. K., New York, Routledge, 1990, 2.

Bhabha H. K., 1994, *The Location of Culture*, London, New York, Routledge.

Bordwell D., Staiger J. and Thompson K., 1988, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*, Routledge, New edition.

Bordwell D., 2000, *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and The Art of Entertainment*, Cambridge Mass, Harvard University Press.

Bordwell D. & Thompson K., 2004, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 7th ed., Boston, McGraw Hill.

Bordwell, D., 2008, *Poetics of Cinema*, New York, London, Routledge.

Bordwell D., 2008, *A Glance at Blows*, [online] (cited 21 June 2009), available from: <http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/?p=3208>.

Bordwell D., 2008, *Film Art: an Introduction*, Boston, McGraw Hill.

Bordwell D., 2010, *Observations on Film Art*, [online] (cited 16 August 2010), available from: <http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/?p=3133>.

Bourdieu P. and Passeron J. C. and Nice R., 1977, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, London: Sage.

Bourdieu P. and Nice R., 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1 edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu P., 1986, "The Forms of Capital", in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (241-258), ed. by Richardson J. G., New York, Greenwood Press.

Browne N. and Pickowicz G. P., 1996, New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics, Cambrige, Cambridge University Press.

Bruder, M. E., 1998, *Aestheticizing Violence, or How To Do Things with Style, Film Studies*, Bloomington IN, Indiana University Press.

Cai H. S., Song J. L. and Liu G. Q., 2000, *Eighty Years of Hong Kong Cinema,* Beijing, Beijing Broadcast Academy Press.

Caughie J., 1981, *Theories of Authorship: A Reader*, London, Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul in association with the British Film Institute.

Chen and Li, 1995, *Chinese Film Development History*, Beijing, Chinese Film Publication.

Chen K. G., 1985, *A Thousand Mile Journey to Shanbei – the Notes of Poverty and Hopes* in "Film Art", volume 4, Beijing, Chinese Film Publication.

Chen K. G., 1986, *The Discussion of The Yellow Earth,* Beijing, Chinese Film Publication, 266.

Chen K. G., 1987, "How I shot The Yellow Earth", in *The Exploration of Film Directors*, Beijing, Chinese Film Publication, 286-287.

Chen M., 1995, *Yimou Zhang Dian Yin Li Lun* (*Yimou Zhang's Film Theory*), Beijing, China Film Publication.

Chen K. H., 1998, "Taiwanese New Cinema", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies,* ed. by J Hill and P. C. Gibson, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Chen R. R. S., 1993, *The Historical and Cultural Experiences of the Taiwan Cinema*, Taipei, Wuan-Hsiong.

Chen Y. N., 1994, *The Historical Studies about the Cohesion of the Chinese Nation (Zhonghua minzu ningjuli de lishi tansuo),* Kuning: Yunan People's Publishing House.

Chen M., 1995, *Yimou Zhang Dian Yin Li Lun* (*Yimou Zhang's Film Theory*), Beijing, China Film Publication.

Chen X. H., 2001, *"Chineseness" in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwanese New Cinema* in "Film Art", volume 1, Beijing, Chinese Film Press.

Choi J., 2005, "National Cinema, the Very Idea", in *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: An Anthology*, ed. by Carroll N. & Choi J., Wiley-Blackwell.

Chow R., 1995, *Primitive Passions, Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema,* New York, Columbia University Press.

Chow R., 1998a, "Film and Cultural Identity", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, ed. by Hill J. and Gibson P. C., Oxford, Oxford university Press, 169-175.

Chow R., 1998b, "Between Colonizers: Hong Kong's Postcolonial Self-Writing in the 1990s", in *Ethics after Idealism: Theory-Culture-Ethnicity-Reading*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press

Chow R., 2006, "Seeing Modern China", in *Asian Cinemas: A Reader And Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriois D. & Needham G., Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Colangelo J., 2007, *A Continuation of Myth: the Cinematic Representation of Mythic American Innocence in Bernardo Bertolucci's Last Tango in Paris and The Dreamers*, [online] (cited 20 July 2009), available from: <http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd/send-pdf.cgi/Colangelo%20Joanna.pdf?acc_num=bgsu1194017456>

Confucius, 1996, *The Analects,* Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Editions Limited.

Cook, Pam, 1980, *The Cinema Book*, London, BFI.

Cook A. D., 2000, *Last Illusion: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam*, 1970-1979, New York: Scribner's.

Corrigan T., 1998, "Auteurs and the New Hollywood", in *The New American Cinema*, ed. by Lewis J., Duke University Press.

Crofts S., 1993, "Reconceptualizing National Cinema/s", in *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 14.3: 49-67.

Crofts S., 1998a, "Concepts of National Cinema", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies,* ed. by J Hill and P. C. Gibson, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Crofts S., 1998b, "Authorship and Hollywood", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies,* ed. by J Hill and P. C. Gibson, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Cui S., 1997, "Gendered Perspective: The Construction and Representation of Subjectivity and Sexuality in *Ju Dou*", in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas* (Lu S. H., ed.), Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Cui S. Q., 2008, *Women Through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema*, University of Hawaii Press; illustrated edition.

Dai J. H., 1990, "Broken Bridge: the Art of the Sub-generation", in *Film Art*, volume 3, Beijing, Chinese Film Publication.

Dai J. H., 1999, *Rewriting Chinese Women: Gender Production and Cultural Space* in "The Eighties and Nineties," Yu N. and Yang M (ed.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota.

Dai J. H., 2000, *The Scene in Fog: Chinese Film Culture 1978-1998*, Beijing, Beijing University Publication, 45.

Dai J. H., 2002, *Cinema and Desire: Feminist Marxism and Cultural Politics,* in "The Work of Dai Jinhua", Jing W. and Barlow T. E. (ed.), London: Verso.

Dai Q., 1993, *Raised Eyebrows for "Raise the Red Lantern,"* ed. by Tai J., *Pubic Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 336.

Dariotis W. M. and Fung E., 1997, "Breaking the Soy Sauce Jar: Diaspora and Displacement in the Films of Ang Lee", in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas*, ed. by Lu S. H-P., Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Dilley W. C., 2007, *The Cinema of Ang Lee: the Other Side of the Screen*, London and New York, Wallflower Press.

Dissanayake W., 1998, "Issues in World Cinema", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, ed. by Hill J. and Gibson P. C., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 527-533.

Doran L. and Thompson E., 1996, *Review of Sense and Sensibility*, Guojiribao (International News), January 22 1996, translated by Fung E.

Du R. Q., 2008, *Primitivism in Yimou Zhang's Films*, in "East Asian Cinema". [online] (cited 23 February 2008), Available from <http://www.albany.edu/faculty/hargett/eas140/ZhangYimou.html>

Ebert R., 2005, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, [online] (cited 23 April 2009), available from: <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051215/REVIEWS/51213001>.

Ehrlich L. C. and Desser D., 1999, *Cinematic Landscapes*, Texas, University of Texas Press.

Elder R. K., 2005, *John Woo: Interviews*, University of Mississippi.

Eleftheriois D. & Needham G., 2006, *Asian Cinemas: A Reader and Guide*, Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Elsaesser T., 2005, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam University Press, 1 edition.

Espinosa J. G., 1979, "For an Imperfect Cinema", trans. by Burton J. in *Jump Cut*, no. 20, 1979, pp. 24-26, *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, 1979, 2005, [online] (cited 11 May 2007), available from: <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC20folder/ImperfectCinema.html>.

Ezra E., Harris S., 2000, *France in Focus: Film and National Identity*, London, Berg Publishers.

Ezra E. and Rowden T., 2006, *Transnational Cinema*, London, 1 edition, Routledge.

Fan R. C., 1996, *Indigenous People of Taiwan*, [online] (cited 11 October 2008), available from: <http://www.indigenouspeople.net/taiwan.htm>.

Faulkner C., 1994, "Affective Identities: French National Cinema and the 1930s", in *Canadian Journal of Film Studies,* 3, 2:3-24.

Fen M., 1992, *The History of the Chinese Film Art*, Nanking, Nan Kai University Press.

Freud S., 1980, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, New York, Avon.

Foulkes P. A., 1983, *Literature and Propaganda*, London, Routledge Kegan & Paul.

Forbes J., 1998, "The French Nouvelle Vague", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, ed. by Hill J. and Gibson P. C., Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Fu P., 2003, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong: the Politics of Chinese Cinemas*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press.

Fu P. and Desser D., 2000, *The Cinema of Hong Kong History, Arts, Identity*, Cambridge, UK New York, NY, Cambridge University Press.

Gaut B., 1997, "Film Authorship and Collaboration", in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, ed. by Allen R. And Smith B., Oxford, Clarendon Press

George R. T., 1989, "Western and Chinese Philosophy on Man and Nature", in *Man and Nature: the Chinese tradition and the Future*, ed. by Tang I. C., Mclean G. F., Li C. and Tang Y., University Press of America.

Gieselmann Martin, 2006, *"Chinese Film History – A Short Introduction"*, [online] (cited 21 May 2008) Available from: <http://www.univie.ac.at/Sinologie/repository/ueLK110_ChinFilmgesch/filmgeschichteSkript.pdf>.

Gomez-Pena G., 1989, "Documented/Undocumented", in *L.A. Weekly*, Summer.

Godard J. L., 1959/1972, "Debarred Last year from the Festival, Truffaut will Represent France at Cannes with Les Quatre Cent Coups", in *Godard on Godard*, ed. by Narboni J. and Milne T., trans. Milne T., London, Secker and Warburg.

Guardian, 2008, *Taiwan and China: A History of Mistrust*, [online] (cited 4 June 2009), available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/taiwan/flash/0,,201994,00.html>.

Hall S., 1993, *Culture, Community, Nation.* University of Sussex.

Hall S., 1996, Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation, University of Chicago Press.

Hall S., 1999, *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. by During S., Routledge, 2nd revised edition.

Hall S., 2006, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, ed. by Ashcroft B., Routledge, 2 edition.

Han S. G., 1985, *The Roots of Literature* in "Writers", volume 4.

Harbord J., 2002, *Film Cultures*, London, Sage Publications Ltd.

Harper D., 2009, *China*, Australia, Lonely Planet Publications.

Hayden W., 1990, *The Content of the Form: Narrative, Discourse and Historical Representation,* Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press; Reprint edition.

Hayward S., 2000, *Cinema Studies, the Key Concepts*, London, Routledge.

Hastrup K., 1992, "Anthropological Visions: Some Notes on Visual and Textual Authority", *in Film as Ethnography,* ed. by P. I. Crawford and D. Turton, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Hayward S., 1993, *French National Cinema,* New York, Routledge.

Hayward S. and Vincendeau G., 2000, *French Cinema,* London, Routledge.

Harbord J., 2002, *Film Cultures*, London, Sage Publications Ltd.

Higson A., 1996, "The Heritage Film and British Cinema", in *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema*, ed. by Higson A., London, Cassell.

Higson A., 2002, "The Concept of National Cinema", in *European Cinema Reader*, ed. by Fowler C., Routledge.

Higson A., 2006, "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema", in *Transnational Cinema*, ed. by Ezra E. and Rowden T.,1 edition, Routledge.

Higson A., 2008, "Transnational Developments in European Cinema in the 1920s", in *Transnational Cinemas*, 2010 Intellect Ltd Article. Volume 1, Number 1.

Hijort M. and MacKenzie S., 2000, *Cinema and Nation*, London, Routledge.

Hiroyuki F., 20002, "Rethinking Motoori Norinaga's Reflection on Kado: Starting with the Literary Autonomy of Beauty", in *Aesthetics*, Aesthetics 51(1), 59-70, [online] (cited 4 February 2008), available from: <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110003714381/en>

Holmlund C. and Wyatt J., 2004, *Contemporary American Independent Film: from the Margins to the Mainstream*, London, Routledge.

Hoveyda F., 1961, "Autocritique", *in Cahiers du Cinéma*, no.126, December, special issue on Criticism.

Hunt L., 2003, *Kung Fu Cult Masters*, London, Wallflower.

Huntington S. P., 1998, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* London, Simon & Schuster; 1st Edition.

Hu K., 1997, "The Influence of Hong Kong Cinema on Chinese Mainland" in *Contemporary Cinema*, No.4, Beijing, Chinese Cinema Studies Research Centre.

Hunt L., 2003, *Kung Fu Cult Masters*, London, Wallflower.

Jarvie I. C., 1977, *Window on Hong Kong: A Sociological Study of the Hong Kong Film Industry and its Audience*, Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies in University Of Hong Kong.

Jennings R., 2002a, "Making Movies That Matter: Christine Vachon, Independent Film Producer", in *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers*, ed. by Tasker Y., London, Routledge, 2002.

Jennings R., 2002b, "Peter Weir: an Australian Auteur / Hollywood Director", in *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers*, ed. by Tasker Y., London, Routledge.

Jerome S. and Silbergeld J., 1999, *China into Film,* London, Reaktion.

Jiao X. P., 1990, *In Search of Taiwan's identity: The Consciousness of Nativeness of Taiwanese New Cinema and Hsiao-Hsien Hou's A City of Sadness*, Journal of Beijing Film Academy, Vol. 2.

Jingfu A., 1999, "The Pain of a Half Taoist: Taoist Principles, Chinese landscape Painting, and *King of the Children*", in *Cinematic Landscapes*, ed. by Ehrlich L. C. and Desser D., Texas: University of Texas Press.

Kaplan E., 2006, "Problematizing Cross-cultural Analysis: the Case of Women in the Recent Chinese Cinema", in *Asian Cinemas: A Reader And Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriois D. & Needham G., Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Kellner D., 1998, "New Taiwan Cinema in the 80s", in Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media, no. 42, December, pp. 101-115.

Keyser A. S., 1990, "Chinese Cinema: Recent Debates in the Chinese Press", in *China Information*, Vol. 4, No.4: 64-71.

Lao Tzu, 1997, *Taoism*, Cumberland, Wordsworth Editions Limited.

Lee A., 2007, *A Cinematic Dream in One Decade*, Beijing, People's Literary Publication.

Leer O. V., 1987, ""Upwards and Across": An Essay on Cross-Disciplinary Thinking", in *Thinking, The Second International Conference*, ed. by Perkins D. N., Lochhead J., and Bishop F., Routledge.

Lewis R., 1996, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*, London, Routledge.

Lee, Leo Ou-fan, 1991, "The Tradition of Modern Chinese Cinema: Some Preliminary Explorations and Hypotheses", in *Perspectives*, ed. by Berry C., 6-20.

Leung P., 2000, "Urban Cinema and the Cultural Identity of Hong Kong", in *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*, ed. by Fu P. and Desser D., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Li C., 1994, "The Return of the Father: Hong Kong New Wave and Its Chinese Context in the 1980s", in *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics*, ed. by Browne N. and Pickowicz P. G., Sobchack V., and Yau E., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Li S. L., 2006, "Kung Fu: negotiating nationalism and modernity", in *Asian Cinema: a Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriotis D., and Needham G., University of Hawaii Press.
Li T., 1985, "What did Yellow Earth bring to us?", in *Contemporary Cinema*, volume 2, Beijing Film Press.

Li T. X., 2005, *Chinese Film Culture*, Beijing, Beijing University Press.

Li Z. H., 2003, *The Discussion of Chinese Modern Thinking*, Social science Publication of Tianjin, 257.

Lin Z. F., *A Few Words about The Yellow Earth*, Beijing, Chinese Film Publication, 17.

Liu, D., 1979, *The Tao and Chinese Culture, New York, Schocken Books.*

Liu J. C., 1997, "Cultural Memory and Contemporary Taiwan Theatre", in *East Asian Cultural and Historical Perspectives: Histories and Society*. ed. by Zepetnek S. T., Research Institute for Comparative Literature.

Li Y. M., 1988, "The Characters of Structure of non-narrator", in *Film Art*, Volume 2, Beijing, Beijing Film Art Publication.

Liu D., 1979, *The Tao and Chinese culture, New York, Schocken Books.*

Liu S., 1992, *The Cinema of the Chinese Fifth Generation,* Beijing, The Broadcast and Television Press of China.

Livingston P., 1997, "Cinematic Authorship", in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, ed. By Allen R. And Smith B., Oxford, Clarendon Press

Livingston P., 2009, Cinema, Philosophy, Bergman: on Film as Philosophy, USA, Oxford University Press.

Lu F. Y., 2008, "Statistics and Fifty Years of Taiwanese Cinema", in *The Database of Taiwanese cinema*, [online] (cited 2 June 2008), available from: <http://cinema.nccu.edu.tw/cinemaV2/squareinfo.htm?MID=13>.

Lu S. H., 1997, *Transnational Chinese Cinema, Identity, Nationhood, Gender,* Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Lu T., 2001, *Confronting Modernity in the Cinema of Taiwan and Mainland China*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Luo X. Y., 1988, *Red Sorghum: a portray of Yimou Zhang*, Beijing, Chinese Film Press.

Lynch G., 2005, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, Wiley-Blackwell, Illustrated edition.

Madan S., 1996, *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*, Georgia, University of Georgia.

Madsen R., 1998, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society*, California, University of California Press.

Marchetti G., 2006, *From Tian'anmen to Times Square: Transnational China and the Chinese Diaspora on Global Screens*, 1989-1997, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Martinsen, 2007, *Foreigners surveyed about Chinese cinema,* [online] (cited 23 April 2009), available from: <http://www.danwei.org/film/foreigners_surveyed_about_chin.php>.

Mei C.J., 2005, *Café Lumiere: Hsiao-Hsien Hou on Journey*, [online] (cited 2 August 2008), Available from: <http://fanhall.com/news/entry/10745>

Morris M., 2004, "Transnational Imagination in Action Cinema: Hong Kong and the Making of a Global Popular Culture", in *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Volume 5, Number 2, 2004.

Minnihan D., 2009, "Ang Lee's Fine Line Between East and West", in *Sense of Cinema*, [online] (cited 30 December 2009), available from: <http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/08/ang-lee.html>

Mulvey L., 1993, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, reprinted from Screen, 16:3 (Autumn 1975), pp.6-18, in "Contemporary Film Theory" by Anthony Easthope, London, Longman Group, pp.111-124.

Musterberg H, 1970, *The Film: A Psychological Study*. New York, Dover Publications.

Naremore J., 1990, "Authorship and the Cultural Politics of Film Criticism", in *Film Quarterly*, vol.44, no. 1, Fall.

Needham G., 2006a, "Questions of Authorship and Taiwanese Cinema", in *Asian Cinema: a Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriotis D., and Needham G., University of Hawaii Press.

Needham G., 2006a, "Film Authorship and Taiwanese Cinema", in *Asian Cinema: a Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriotis D., and Needham G., Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Needham G., 2006b, "Ozu and the Colonial Encounter in Hou Hsian-Hsien", in *Asian Cinema: a Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriotis D., and Needham G., University of Hawaii Press.

Needham G., 2006c, "Japanese Cinema and Orientalism", in *Asian Cinemas: A Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriois D. & Needham G., Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Needham G., 2006d, "The post-colonial Hong Kong cinema", in *Asian Cinema: a Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriotis D., and Needham G., University of Hawaii Press.

Ni Z. and Berry C., 2002, *Memoirs from the Beijing Film Academy: the genesis of China's fifth generation*, Durham, N.C.; London. Duke University Press.

Nie J., 2003, *Contemporary Chinese Cinema, Fifth Generation films, urban films, and Sixth Generation film,* [online] (cited 8 March 2009), Available from <http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd/send-pdf.cgi/Nie%20Jing.pdf?acc_num=ohiou1061419663>.

O'Regan T., 1996, *Australian National Cinema*, 1 edition, London, Routledge.

Orr J., 1993, *Cinema and Modernity,* Cambridge, Policy Press.

Park M. and Chesla C., 2007, "Revisiting Confucianism as a Conceptual Framework for Asian Family Study", in *Journal of Family Nursing*, [online] (cited 23 June 2008), available from: < http://jfn.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/13/3/293>

Perkins V., 1990, *Film Authorship, the Premature Burial*, Cineaction, 21/22.

Petek P., 2007, "The Cinema of Small Nations", in *Sense of Cinema"*, [online] (cited 12 May 2007), available from: <http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/books/08/48/cinema-small-nations.html>

Ping C., 2006, *How Memoirs of a Geisha Became "Sensitive"*, [online] (cited 12 May 2007), available from <http://www.zonaeuropa.com/culture/c20060202_1.htm>.

Poshek F. and Desser D., 2000, *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*, New York, NY, Cambridge University Press.

Poshek F., 2003, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong: the politics of Chinese cinemas*, California: Stanford University Press, 165.

Proulx A., 1999, "Brokeback Mountain", in *Close Range: Wyoming Stories*, New York, Scribner.

Reynaud B., 1998, "Chinese Cinema", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, ed. by Hill J. and Gibson P. C., Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Reynaud B., 1997, "Glamour and Suffering: Gong Li and the History of Chinese Stars", in *Women and Film, A Sight and Sound Reader*, ed. by Cook P. and Dodd P., London, Scarlet Press.

Reynaud B., 1998, "Chinese cinema", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies,* ed. by J Hill and P. C. Gibson, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Rummel B. J., 1975, *Understanding Conflict And War*, [online] (cited 3 March 2007), available from <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DPF.CHAP35.HTM>.

Rose, S. "The great fall of China", *The Guardian*, [online] (cited 11 May 2008), Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/aug/01/china.film>.

Strother S. And Strother B., 2006, *Moon Living Abroad in China*, Avalon Travel Publishing.

Saïd E., 1994 *Culture and Imperialism*, London, Vintage.

Saïd E., 2002, *Orientalism*, London, Longman.

Shelley P. B., 2008, *Spring*, [online] (cited 12 April 2008), Available from <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/37536.html>.

Shohat E. and Stam R.T., 1994, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, London, Routledge.

Shu X. M., 1996, *The Tutorial of Art History of Chinese Cinema*, Beijing, China's Film Press.

Spielberg S., 2008, *Yimou Zhang, Person of the Year 2008*, TIME, [online] (cited 10 March 2009), available from: <http://www.time.com/time/specials/2008/personoftheyear/article/0,31682,1861543_1865103_1865107,00.html>.

Staiger, J., 1992, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Star Bar, 2005, *Japan Criticized Memoir of a Geisha*, [online] (cited 12 June 2007), available from: <http://ttt.xingkong.com/b/455/1344.html>.

Street S., 1997, *British National Cinema,* Routledge.

Tan D., 2001, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' Wins Best Foreign Film Oscar*, [online] (cited 12 March 2009), available from: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/english/200103/26/eng20010326_65998.html> (10 February, 2009).

Tao Y. M., *300 Tang Poems*, 2008 [Online] (cited 21 June 2008), Available from < http://www.lingshidao.com/hanshi/tang.htm>.

Tasker Y., 2006, "Fists of Fury: Discourses of Race and Masculinity in the Martial Arts Cinema", in *Asian Cinemas: A Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriois D. & Needham G., Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Teo S., 1997, *Hong Kong Cinema: the Extra Dimensions*, London, BFI Publishing.

Teo S., 1998, "Hong Kong Cinema", in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, ed. by Hill J. and Gibson P. C. (ed.), Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Teo S., 2000, "Love and Swords: The Dialectics of Martial Arts Romance", in *Sense of Cinema*, [online] (cited 6 August 2009), available from: < http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/11/crouching.html> (22, January, 2009)

Teo S., 2006, "Bruce Lee: narcissus and the little dragon", in *Asian Cinemas: A Reader and Guide*, ed. by Eleftheriois D. & Needham G., Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Teo S., 2007, *Director in Action: Johnnie To and the Hong Kong Action Film*, Hong Kong university Press.

Tung, W., 1986, "Language Law and Colour Pen: Notes on the 1985 Taiwan New Cinema", in *Film Appreciation Journal*, 22: 29-36.

Valentin M., 2006, "Curse of the Golden Flower, far from Yimou's best", in *SFSTATION*, [online] (cited 15 March 2009), available from: <http://www.sfstation.com/curse-of-the-golden-flower-a2351>

Verhoeff N., 2006, *The West in Early Cinema: After the Beginning*, Amsterdam University Press.

Vincendeau G., 1995, *Encyclopedia of European cinema*, London, Cassell, British Film Institute.

Vincendeau G., 2001, *Film/Literature/Heritage,* London, British Film Institute.

Vitali V., 2008, "Hou Hsiao-hsien Reviewed" *in InterAsia Cultural Studies*, Special Issue, Kuan Hsing Chen, ed. by Wei Ti and Paul Willemen.

Vitali V. and Willemen P. (eds.), 2006, *Theorising National Cinema*, London, BFI Publishing.

Wang D., 2005, "Comparative Philosophy: Chinese and Western" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, [online] (cited 11 July 2009), available from: < http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/comparphil-chiwes/> (Accessed on 06th March 2009)

Wang Y. C., 1998. *The End of the Myth of Yimou Zhang*, Henan, Henan People's Press.

Wang Y. J., 1991, "Red Sorghum: Mixing Memory and Desire", in *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*, ed. by Berry C., London: British Film Institute, 1991, 85.

Weinstein S., 2006, *Up, Up, and Oy Vey!*. Baltimore, Maryland: Leviathan Press. pp. 82–97.

Woo J., 2005, *Chinese Traditional Culture Possess Cosmopolitan Characteristics*, [online] (cited 10 January 2009), available from: <http://news.xinhuanet.com/overseas/2005-05/19/content_2976369.htm>

Weber M., 1968, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism,* New York, Trade Paperback Publisher: The Free Press.

Welsh F., 1993, *A History of Hong Kong*, London, Harper Collins.

Wen C. M., 2004, *A Brief Study of Sentimentalism in Sino-Western Literature*, Foushan, The Techonolgy Institute of Foushan, vol.5.

White H., 1990, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical representation,* The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Wu T. M., 1987, "The Artistic Conclusion of Life", in *The Exploration of Film Directors*, Beijing, Chinese Film Publication, 84-86.

Wu Y. M., 1988, "The Cultural and Philosophical Implication", in *Film Art*, no.2, Beijing,

Beijing Film Art Publication.

Xaio W. Z., 1996, "The Filmic World of John Woo", in *Film Journal*, p46.

Xiao Zhiwei, 1997, "Anti-Imperialism and Film Censorship During the Nanjing Decade, 1927-1937", *in Chinese National Cinema*, ed. by Zhang Y. J., London New York, Routledge.

Xu, 1986, *Dictionary of Film Art* (Dianying Yishu Cidian), Beijing, China Film Press.

Xu N. M., 2005, *Dictionary of Film Art*, Beijing, Chinese Film Press.

Xu P., 2005, "The New Folk-Custom Movies", in *Contemporary Cinema*, Beijing, Beijing Film Art Publication.

Xu Y., 2009, "Four Gentlemen in Plants", in *Chinese Art, Chinese Culture, Chinese Tradition*, [online] (cited 10 January 2009), available from: <http://blog-en.chinesevoice.com/?tag=chrysanthemum&lang=cs>

Xu Z. Y. and Ding F., 2002, *The Main Trend of Chinese Novel in New Era*, Beijing, People's Literary Publication, 311.

Yang P., 1986, "Interviews with Zhuangzhuang Tian", in *Contemporary Cinema*, volume 4, Beijing, Beijing Film Press.

Yau E. C. M., 1989, *Cultural and Economic Dislocation: Filmic Phantasies of Chinese Women in the 1980s*, in "Wide Angle", 11/2: 6-12.

Yau E. C. M., 2006, "Yellow Earth" Western Analysis and a Non-Western Text", in *Asian Cinemas: A Reader and Guide*, ed, by Eleftheriois D. & Needham G. Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press.

Yeh Y., 1998, "Defining "Chinese"", in *Jump Cut*, 42, 73-6, [online] (cited 2 March 2008), Available from: <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC42folder/DefiningChinese.html>.

Yip J., 1997, "Constructing a Nation: Taiwanese History and the Films of Hou Hsiao-hsien", in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender,* ed. Lu S. H., Honolulu, HI, University of Hawaii Press.

Yip J., 2004, *Envisioning Taiwan: Fiction, Cinema, and the Nation in the Cultural Imaginary,* Durham, NC, Duke University Press.

Yu Q. Y., 2007, *What is Missing for Chinese Culture to Spread across the World*, [online] (cited 12 July 2009), available from: <http://www.bjhushe.com/hlhl/yszt/200707/158.html>.

Yueh Y., 1998, "Defining "Chinese"", in *Jump Cut*, 42:73-6, [online] (cited 7 March 2008), available from: <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC42folder/DefiningChinese.html>.

Zeidler S., 2009, *Update 1-Global Box Office Hit Record in 08-group*, [online] (cited 10

January 2010), available from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN3144101520090331>

Zhang H. P., 2008, *The Development of Contemporary Chinese Capitalism and the Future of Socialism,* trans. Li, [online] (cited 12 July 2009), available from: <http://hist.cersp.com/kczy/xwss/200801/8983.html>.

Zhang J., 2007, *Han Feizi*, Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publication

Zhang L. P., 2007, *Ten Years' Dream of Cinema*, Beijing, People's Literature Press.

Zhang, Y., 1990, *Ideology of the Body in Red Sorghum: National Allegory, National Roots, and Third Cinema,* in "East-West Film Journal", 4:2, 38-53.

Zhang Y. J. and Xiao Z. W., 1999, *Encyclopaedia of Chinese Film*, Routledge, annotated edition.

Zhang J. Z. and Xiao F., 1989, *From One and Eight* to *Arc Light*, in Film Art, no.1, Beijing, Beijing Film Art Publication.

Zhang R. X. and Li T., 1979, "About the Modernity of Filmic Language", in *Film Art*, volume 3, Beijing, Chinese Film Publication.

Zhang X. D., 1989, *Film Art*, volume 5, Beijing, Chinese Film Publication.

Zhang Y., 2004, *Chinese National Cinema*, London and New York, Routledge.

Zheng D. T., 2001, 'The Future of Cinema' in *Contemporary Cinema*, Vol. 6., Beijing, Beijing Literature Publication.

Zhu G. Q., 2007, *On Aestheticism*, Nanjing, Literary Publication of Jiangsu.

Zhu Y., 2003, Chinese Cinema during the Era of Reform: The Ingenuity of the System, Praeger Publishers.

Zhu T. W., 2006, *Three Times: A Bibliography of Hou Xianxian's Cinema*, Shangdong, Shangdong Pictorial Publication.

General online resources:

The Database of Taiwanese cinema
<http://cinema.nccu.edu.tw/cinemaV2/index.htm>

International Movie Database
<http://www.imdb.cn/>

IMDB.CN
<http://www.imdb.cn/title/tt0412596>

Chinese Movie Database
<http://www.dianying.com/>