

論文題目 ADOLESCENCE, LOVE & THE MEANING OF LIFE IN EVERYDAY
TAIPEI: THE FILMS OF EDWARD YANG
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主論文の要約

Introduction

Edward Yang (楊徳昌 1947—2007) is one of the leading Taiwanese filmmakers and well-known for his realistic portrayal of modern Taiwan in his films. As one of the founding members of the Taiwan New Cinema movement during the mid-1980s, together with collaborator Hou Hsiao Hsien(侯孝賢), Yang pushed Taiwanese cinema into a new era with works that explored the island's rapidly changing present as well as its complicated history. He is also the only Taiwanese filmmaker to have won the Best Director at Cannes Film Festival.

Born in Shanghai, still as an infant Edward Yang emigrated to Taiwan from mainland China with his family, following the retreat of the KMT (Nationalist) government during the civil war with the Communist, and later he studied computer design and worked in computer industry for a decade in the United States. Then, his film dream, which he cherished since his youth and had to put aside to please his parents by studying science, led him back to Taiwan in 1981, just as the Taiwanese New Cinema was beginning to emerge.

Not long after he returned to Taiwan, Yang directed an episode in the four-part feature, “*In Our Time*”(1982) (『時の物語 (光陰的故事)』), the film which is considered the starting point of the Taiwan New Cinema movement. His 1983 debut feature, “*That Day, On the Beach*” (『海辺の一日 (海灘的一天)』), was a both critical and commercial success, while two years later critically acclaimed “*Taipei Story*” (『タイペイ・ストーリー (青梅竹馬)』) met with a complete commercial failure. Gradually gathering an international following, Yang won a lot of awards for “*The Terrorizers*” (『恐怖分子 (恐怖分子)』) of 1986 and “*A Bright Summer Day*” (『クリーンチェ少年殺人事件 (牯岭街少年殺人事件)』) of 1991. Working less frequently than most of his fellow Taiwanese directors, Yang continued with “*A Confucian Confusion*” (『エドワード・ヤンの恋愛時代 (独立時代)』) in 1994 and “*Mahjong*” (『カップルズ (麻将)』) in 1996, and then scored his greatest triumph with “*Yi Yi*” (『ヤンヤン夏の思い出 (一一)』), which won him a Best Director award at Cannes as well as the National Society of Film Critics' Best Picture award in the United States.

Purpose and Method

As the two main figures of the Taiwan New Cinema Movement, Yang is always compared with Hou, with many critics putting Yang, less well-known internationally, above his distinguished colleague Hou. It seems that Edward Yang and his films do not obtain as much attention as they deserve. In the eyes of many critics, Yang is “a master we barely knew”.

Yang's death from cancer complications in 2007 brings a conclusion to his cinematic career, and

now it seems an appropriate time to go through his works again and re-estimate the significance of his cinematic achievements in the history of Taiwan and even Chinese language film industry. Therefore, this thesis is devoted to the study of his whole eight cinematic works, and attempts to re-interpret his film works in the light of cultural studies.

Film studies continuously borrows the latest achievements of cultural studies to nourish its own development since it became recognized as a new academic discipline in the twentieth century. With the help of these original as well as plentiful theoretic tools borrowed from cultural studies, film studies continues enlarging its horizon beyond film production onto economic, political, sociological and cultural implications of the cinema. New perspectives lead to new discoveries. Many of Edward Yang's works have already been cherished as classics of Chinese language cinema as well as world film history, but a re-interpretation of his cinematic works in the light of cultural studies is yet seldom found. That is the reason this thesis aims to rejuvenate his cinematic works and bring the "barely known" master nearer to the audience's horizon through a very close reading of his works with these theoretic approaches borrowed from cultural studies.

Cinematic Analyses

Focusing on several recurring themes of Yang's films, the thesis attempts to probe into each of the several themes in depth within the context of Yang's whole oeuvre. It is believed that such an approach would help readers sufficiently explore the inner world of Edward Yang, a filmmaker who is widely celebrated as an "intellectual thinker" of Chinese-language cinema.

These themes discussed in this thesis are as follows——adolescence, love, life, death, and Taipei, each of which will be explored adequately in one or two chapters. The reflection on love and life is thought as the fountainhead of artistic creation at all times. Certainly, the scrutiny of Yang's representation of love and life on the screen will throw a bridge into the director's innermost spiritual world. And subject matter of adolescence is of particular significance to Edward Yang's studies, for adolescent characters run through nearly all of Yang's film works and assume an important role in his masterpieces such as *The Terrorizers*, *A Brighter Summer Day*, and *Yi Yi*. In addition, the theme of adolescence itself is also inescapably linked with other themes such as love or life. Therefore, the exploration of adolescence in Yang's films will be intentionally divided into two chapters, devoted to the discussion of Yang's cinematic representation of adolescent girls and adolescent boys respectively. As critic John Anderson points out, what Taipei means to Edward Yang, is just like what Dublin means to James Joyce, or what New York means to Woody Allen. They are intriguing cases in the world art history because seldom the creative career of an artist has such close link with a specific city like them. Taipei is the common backdrop for all of Yang's 7¼ films, and in a sense Yang's film works could be read as a chronicle of Taipei from the 1960s to the early 21st century. To analyze Yang's films, Taipei is a topic impossible to shun. Hence, the main parts of this thesis consist of five chapters, discussing Yang's representation of adolescent girls, adolescent boys, love, life & death, and Taipei in his films respectively.

The different theoretical approaches applied in each chapter are as follows. The chapter two entitled "The Body That Hurts" adopts theories of body studies and gender studies, and it aims to scrutinize the representation of adolescent girls in Yang's films and revalue the widely-accepted

view that Yang's films are feminist tendentious works which could be classified as women's films. Through a close reading of the representation of different bodies——female and male——in Edward Yang's films, especially through a relatively detailed exploration of those adolescent young females in Yang's works, a misogynistic attitude hidden deeply under Yang's cinematic texts could be sensed. Perhaps to the surprise of some critics, it is found that the representation of girls is still firmly confined to the basic dichotomy of women stereotypes——whores and mothers, and the girls who represent whores could never escape the final punishment in their life and none of the girls revolting the mainstream values could achieve a real success. For those who symbolize motherhood, their weakness, timidity and helplessness only underline the conventional belief of women's inferiority to men in our society.

The chapter three entitled "Struggling Through the Rites of Passage" capitalizes on the concept of rites of passage, which is initiated and elaborated by anthropologists Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, and attempts to explore Yang's inner spiritual world behind those adolescent boys in his films, who are usually regarded as Yang's semi-autobiographical alter egos. Through detailed analyses of these boys in Yang's work, it seems for Yang that adolescence is not a rebirth, and the adolescent ordeal is not a ticket to a new world. All those joy and sorrow experienced during adolescence are just a rehearsal and a preparation for a much longer period of ordeal in our life, which is not essentially different from that of adolescent years. And in Yang's films, the young generation's rite of passage often extends into the old generation, and the old generation's continuous struggle also forecasts the young generation's infinite ordeal in their future life.

The chapter four entitled "The Bittersweet Eros" employs theories on desire and eros by Sigmund Freud, René Girard, Denis de Rougemont and other theorists, and probes into the cinematic world of love and desire in Yang's films. Several archetypal narrative patterns of Yang's love stories have been discovered in his films, such as triangle of desire, unrequited love and ubiquitous infidelity. The readers will find that there is almost no place left for a lasting love or a happy marriage in Yang's films. A strong sense of disbelief and detachment is permeated among the lovers and partners in his love stories. This sense of disbelief and detachment even diffuses more widely into the relationships between other characters, such as parents and children, friends and colleagues.

Since many critics often compare Edward Yang with European film giants Michelangelo Antonioni and Ingmar Bergman, both of whom are considered as filmmakers strongly influenced by existentialism. With this in mind, the chapter five entitled "The Weight of Being" focuses on the representation of life and death in Yang's films and discusses the impact of existentialism upon Yang's works. Through the analysis, it becomes rather clear that existentialism has a lasting and weighty bearing on Edward Yang's film works throughout his cinematic career. As to its origin, if looking back to the growing experience of Yang, the audience could find that Yang's adolescent years—which is the critical period of values shaping for the adolescent—overlap the years that the thoughts of Western modernism were imported and spreading far and wide in Taiwan. Existentialism, generally considered a branch of modernist thoughts of the twentieth century, has played an important part in these new trends of Taiwan literature during that period.

Utilizing theories of alienation by Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Karl Mannheim, the chapter

six entitled “Lost in Metropolitan Taipei” examines the city Taipei and its people represented in Yang’s films and analyzes Yang’s close observation on contemporary urban life. Since the 1980s economic prosperity promoted the process of urbanization in Taiwan and Taipei as the capital of Taiwan encountered its chance of high-speed development. In the midst of the 1990s, Taipei has already achieved its position as a cosmopolitan metropolis in the world, on a par with Tokyo and Hong Kong in many aspects. Accompanying the fast-moving process of industrialization and urbanization, the estrangement and isolation among metropolitan inhabitants become more and more conspicuous. This chapter ushers the readers into the wide and close portrayal of the problem of alienation occurring in everyday life of metropolitan Taiwanese in Yang’s film works. Though usually a bleak and gloomy city picture through Yang’s camera, there is no denying that Yang really loves this city, really loves the people living in Taipei, and really hopes that the future of this city and its people will become better and better. For this reason he willingly takes pains to disclose the often-ignored hideous parts of this city and its people and to send his timely and significant reminder.