

Making the Familiar Strange and the Strange Familiar—*Farewell, My Concubine* and Its Crossing National Borders

LIANG Ying

Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China

Farewell, My Concubine strategically interplays between making the familiar strange and the strange familiar. Peking Opera, an explicit national art form used in the movie, provides room for CHEN Kai-ge to juggle, appropriate and mobilize the lines between fictive and real, symbolic and referential, familiar and strange, and particular and universal. CHEN successfully draws a connection between the sociopolitical world of modern China and the cultural-historical representation of Peking Opera. CHEN magnifies the symbolic implications of the culturally distinctive element in Peking Opera (such as female impersonation and physical punishment at theater schools). To attract the international audience, Chinese history and Peking Opera are drawn close while homosexuality, individual perversities and moral dilemmas are transposed distant. To Chinese audience, the strange issues such as homosexuality, sexual ambiguity and identity confusion look familiar and harmless through the veil of Peking Opera. The movie not only provides a viable strategy in nationalistic expression, but also exemplifies that there is not a view of the nation as a whole imagining itself to be the unified subject of history. National identity is founded upon fluid relationships. Thus, a Chinese movie crossing national borders should deconstruct and construct its Chinese identity.

Keywords: *Farewell, My Concubine*, peking opera, familiar, strange

Introduction

In recent years, Chinese film has entered the global network of production, distribution and consumption. Chinese movies are funded by foreign sources, released outside China to an international audience and exhibited in the international film-festival circuit. Chinese film culture thus has transformed itself into a transnational cinema. Cultural production of this sort has been necessarily part and parcel of the operations of global capitalism (Lu, 2001, p. 200).

When Chinese directors make a text available to other cultures, do they need to explore Chinese specificity and identity to meet western mainstream's expectations? According to Rosaldo (1993), social descriptions of distant cultures need "interplaying between making the familiar strange and the strange familiar", thus, foreign cultures will appear sharply distinct yet recognizably familiar (pp. 39-40). Emphasis on defamiliarization would make a foreign text appear exotic/bizarre while emphasis on familiarization would make it appear still humanly made.

LIANG Ying, Ph.D. of Purdue University; associate professor at Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation, Beijing Foreign Studies University.

We cannot separate issues of production and reception. Does the receiver, as expected, look for the familiar and the strange when reading foreign texts? The answer is yes. In *What Is World Literature?*, Damrosch (2003) mentioned Goethe's reading of the Serbian and Chinese works operates on three registers: "of likeness, of unlikeness and of a shifting like-but-unlike relation to our own world" (p. 159).

Any full response to a foreign text is likely to operate along all three dimensions: (1) a sharp difference we enjoy for its sheer novelty; (2) a gratifying similarity that we find in the text or project onto it; and (3) a middle range of what is like-but-unlike—the sort of relation most likely to make a productive change in our own perceptions and practices. (Damrosch, 2003, pp. 11-12)

Does Rosaldo's model provide a viable strategy for Chinese directors? When Chinese films are positioned within the transnational market, what strange elements should directors make familiar and what familiar elements should they make strange? To what extent should they use historically and culturally specific representations to embody national identities and attract international audiences? Should they magnify the cultural and historical particular or the universal? How can directors image China without orientalizing and exoticizing China? How can directors juggle the relationship between the nationalistic expression and international audience?

CHEN Kai-ge's movie *Farewell, My Concubine* (1993) garnered the FIPRESCI (The International Federation of Film Critics) Prize and the Golden Palm (tied with *The Piano*) at 1993 Cannes Film Festival, 1993 BSFC (Boston Society of Film Critics) Award, 1993 LAFCA (The Los Angeles Film Critics Association) Award, 1993 NBR (The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures) Award, 1993 NYFCC (New York Film Critics Circle) Award, two Oscar nominations in 1994 (best cinematography and best foreign language film), 1994 BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) Film Award, one nomination (best foreign film) at 1994 César Awards, 1994 Golden Globe (best foreign language film), 1994 Political Film Society Special Award, 1995 ALFS (The London Film Critics' Circle Film Award, instituted in 1980 and known for several years as the ALFS) Award, and 1995 Mainichi Film Concours. A much-debated-and-even-fraught-today issue about this movie is what exactly makes the movie an internationally arresting tale.

The movie's plot summary is as follows: Xiaolou and Dieyi are young male students in a Peking Opera acting troupe. Their master is very strict. Xiaolou and Dieyi turn out to be the most talented students, and their master pushes them harder than his other students. Xiaolou always takes care of Dieyi because Dieyi is the youngest and smallest of all the students. Years later, Xiaolou and Dieyi's hard work has been paid off. They become major opera stars and their production, *Farewell, My Concubine* (namesake of the movie *Farewell, My Concubine*) is nationally known.

Their production *Farewell, My Concubine* is about the king of Chu, a legendary figure in 200 B.C. in China. He sets up a powerful kingdom and makes it closer to a regime that is about to unite China step by step. Yet in a decisive battle at Gaixia that he wages against the king of Han, he loses. Surrounded by enemies, he finds all his soldiers dead. Only his concubine and his horse remain with him. He is eventually captured and killed by the king of Han, but before he is captured, his concubine kills herself with his sword right in front of him, so she will not be disgraced by the enemy and can remain loyal to Chu king all her life.

In this opera, Dieyi plays the concubine role and Xiaolou plays the king of Chu. Their production is nationally famous mainly because Dieyi's performance is so moving. Actually, in real life, Dieyi identifies himself as a woman and falls in love with Xiaolou. He wants to be Xiaolou's woman, just like the concubine

does to her king in the play. Once he explicitly says to Xiaolou: "I want to be with you for the rest of my life". The subject of homosexuality between Xiaolou and Dieyi is basically implied and only once overtly referred to in the movie. However, Xiaolou does not identify himself as the Chu king off stage. He is aware of Dieyi's love but he neither accepts it nor rejects it. He says more than once to Dieyi: "I am a fake king, but you are the real concubine"; "the obsession with the stage, if you carry it over into your everyday life, how are you going to go through the days?". A woman Juxian comes between them. She is a prostitute who later becomes Xiaolou's wife.

The movie does not just depict the painful love triangle: The three central protagonists' lives are caught up in 60 years of turbulent Chinese politics and history—the end of the Qing dynasty and emergence of the Republic in 1910s, the 1920s warlord era, 1937 Japanese invasion, the victory over the Japanese in 1945, Communists' victory in 1949, and the devastating Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. In the end, both Dieyi and Juxian commit suicide; Xiaolou drags his feet for the rest of his life.

The movie has received both astounding acclaim and severe attack. The judges of the Cannes praised "its incisive analysis of the political and cultural history of China". In other words, Cannes read it as a historic epic about Chinese civilization and history. They believed the movie is indeed about China. But Cannes also lauded the movie's "brilliant combination of the spectacular and the intimate" (Canby, 1994, C13). However, both critics and general public doubt whether CHEN's way to image China in the movie is a true reflection of national identity. In fact, CHEN Kai-ge is labeled as one of the fifth-generation directors (other representatives include ZHANG Yi-mou, TIAN Zhuang-zhuang and so on), who, according to WANG (1989), make films about Chinese cultural identity that the current Chinese public are reluctant to identify with, but receive acclaim abroad as rendering cinematic representations of Chinese culture (p. 331).

The movie came out more than a decade ago. Much of the research on the movie uses gender, homosexuality, culture and history perspectives, and those focus on the movie's entry into the international circuit tends to adopt a binary opposite position arguing whether the movie truly expresses Chinese nationalism or not. The author's argument is that Peking Opera, an explicit national art form used in the movie, provides room for CHEN Kai-ge to juggle, appropriate and mobilize the lines between fictive and real, symbolic and referential, familiar and strange, and particular and universal. First, CHEN strategically encapsulates the issues of national history and individual sufferings in the art world of Peking Opera. The story of the play Xiaolou and Dieyi perform on stage parallels the protagonists' lives off stage. The detailed struggles of the protagonists off stage mimic the turbulent modern politics and history of China. Thus, CHEN successfully draws a connection between the sociopolitical world of modern China and Peking Opera's cultural-historical representation. To the international audience, 60 years of vast and sweeping movement of Chinese history, along with Peking Opera, is drawn from distant to near. In the United States, the film is mostly read as a historic epic and an authentic portrayal of Chinese history. Therefore, the movie came out in the right place (western films' community) at the right time (when western viewers want "a film about China from China" (WANG, 1989, p. 36)).

Another strategy CHEN uses in the movie is female impersonation. In Peking Opera, a female role (called "dan") is played by males. Western audience is familiar with the female impersonation in dramas but mostly unfamiliar with the predominant use of female impersonation in Peking Opera, and CHEN magnifies the symbolic implications of this culturally distinctive element. Thus, western audience sees the on-stage female impersonation and off-stage homosexual relationship index, symbolize, act on, and reinforce each other. To

attract global audience, CHEN puts familiar wine (on-stage female impersonation) in a new bottle (Peking Opera) and transposes familiar issues such as homosexuality, individual perversities and moral dilemmas into a distant Eastern setting under an exotic veil: Peking Opera.

To the national audience, however, the classical art form of Peking Opera in the movie is familiar. Peking Opera evokes nostalgia and memories among those who lived through the era depicted in the movie. CHEN just tops off this familiar cultural form with homosexuality, sexual ambiguity and identity confusion, which are strange and dangerous issues in China in early 1990s. However, since Chinese audience is so familiar with the fact that female impersonation is a major form used in Peking Opera, they are not offended by the homosexuality issue or even unaware of the implied homosexual issue—the movie already makes it appear familiar and harmless through the veil of Peking Opera. Actually, when the author saw the movie back in China in the middle of 1990s, she just took Dieyi's obsession with Xiaolou off stage as an extension of Dieyi's obsession with his stage role (as Xiaolou's concubine). In fact, Dieyi can represent people who live according to the artistic values on the extreme side and value art above anything else.

Rely on History for Meaning

Peking Opera, as a cultural resource, is a complex form of stage art and has no Western equivalents. It brings audio and visual pleasures to the audience and presents a stimulating picture even to the uninitiated eyes. It stresses singing, dialogue, pantomime, acting, acrobatics, and dancing. It combines costume, facial make up, colors, and props. Even “facial expressions, the turn of a sleeve, an intricate movement of the body, variations in the singing, and modulation of voice, are all means of expressing a character's inner feelings” (HUANG, 1985, p. 7).

Peking Opera also has a deep sense of history and CHEN precisely relies on that for meaning. He interlaces the moral teachings of the play *Farewell, My Concubine* on stage with the protagonists' fates off stage; juxtaposes the on-stage masked art world with the off-stage modern Chinese history and individual sufferings; and makes their individual sufferings mimic the suffering China endures in the periods the film covers.

Although the play Xiaolou and Dieyi perform on stage may not be about a true tale back in 200 B.C., because in ancient China a woman was not allowed to go to battlefields, the Chinese derive several morals from this play: First, a true hero chooses death before dishonor. Second, each individual has his own destiny; therefore, if he cannot control his destiny, just accept it. Third, always be loyal to oneself, to one's lover and to one's master.

The Chu king that Xiaolou plays on stage is a powerful but historically fallen hero whereas off stage, Xiaolou is every inch far from being a hero. When at theater school the master beats Dieyi almost to death, it is Xiaolou who tells Dieyi: “Speak, say something, beg for mercy and say he's beaten you well”. During the Japanese invasion in 1940s, when Xiaolou is captured by the Japanese, Dieyi has to sing for the Japanese in exchange for Xiaolou. Japanese officials, the imperialists in China, exchange “the king of Chu” for a single performance by his “concubine”!

In the interviews with western writers, CHEN Kai-ge links the movie with his personal experience in the Cultural Revolution and a broader history outside the Cultural Revolution that he knows intimately. The movie's most emotionally shocking scene, to the author, occurs during a struggle session in the Cultural Revolution, when one was forced to speak the unspeakable and to confess everything about oneself. Xiaolou, the

Chu king off stage, first betrays Dieyi by revealing to the masses that Dieyi was first sexually exploited by a eunuch and then became a private prostitute to a decadent opera patron. Dieyi, extremely mortified, then reveals to the masses that Juxian was a prostitute before she married Xiaolou. A prostitute erodes society, so Xiaolou proclaims (or at least has to proclaim) immediately to the crowd that he will leave Juxian. Juxian commits suicide soon afterwards.

The on-stage concubine chooses death before dishonor, thus remaining loyal to the Chu king, whereas the off-stage Chu king first betrays Dieyi and then betrays Juxian—the former is the one who plays his woman and is loyal to him for a life time both on stage and off stage, and the latter is his wife in reality. Rafferty (1993) was right when he identified the ostensible theme of the film as “whether it’s possible, under the pressure of terrible and soul-battering circumstances, to remain true to anything or anyone: an art, an ideal, a friend, a wife, and oneself” (p. 122).

Clothing the bitterness of China’s struggles in an art world of Peking Opera not only helps *Farewell, My Concubine* win acclaim abroad, but also pays off back at home. It helps to make the movie “politically correct”. From 1983 to 1988, CHEN Kai-ge and other young directors worked in remarkable film studios like those at Xi’an, Shanghai and Beijing and made beautiful films tentatively critical of Chinese regime from before and up to the Cultural Revolution. At that time they found excellent strategies in producing narratives with double meanings—a family or individual’s narrative was often intended to be read as an allegory for the Chinese political scene; historical themes mirrored the present day life. ZHANG Yi-mou once explained about films on history themes: “Historical themes are less censored. Although a strict system of censorship has existed in China for many years, there is some leeway in historical themes” (as cited in TAN and ZHANG, 1999-2000, p. 10).

CHEN even went a step further in *Farewell, My Concubine* than his peers at the studios. In fact, even though the film was lauded as a masterpiece, it was banned in China at first, partly because communist movements are not shown in a positive light. CHEN Kai-ge himself claimed that *Farewell, My Concubine* did not belong to Chinese mainstream even as he sent it in 1993 to compete at the Cannes Film Festival. Nonetheless, eventually, the ban was removed, not just because the film won prominent international awards already, but more importantly, the author believes, because of the movie’s successful use of Peking Opera in the foreground and backdrop, which made the lines between history and play, between stage and life, between ancient and present hard to draw.

Female Impersonation and Homosexual Relationship

Using Peking Opera to address the issues of sexual ambiguity and identity confusion is an interesting point. Unlike Western societies, where “coming out” and gay studies have become commonplace, in China the subject of homosexuality was still generally a taboo and just became a subject of open discussion in the early 1990s. To broach the strange homosexuality subject and yet appeal to the Chinese audience, the movie makes the subject look familiar through the veil of Peking Opera.

Peking Opera is an exclusively male preserve because female roles (called “dan”) are played by male actors. The dan is akin to an English female impersonator. In order to achieve stylized artistry and great skills in female impersonation, a male actor learns for years the stage craft including dressing, walking, talking like a woman, and the artifices of costume and make up. Sometimes the trainings involve brutal, heartless and inexorable beating.

Punishment of this sort is expected to impart knowledge and self-discipline (CUI, 2003, pp. 153, 156, 168).

Dieyi joins in the opera company at nine as an apprentice. He is the youngest, sleekest and the most slender. Naturally he is assigned a role of “dan”. Dieyi spends years of very careful, strict and severe training to embody this feminine position in totality. Once he has to drill a refrain “I am by nature a girl, not a boy” in a play, which turns out to be very difficult for him. One day, a big patron visits the opera school and begins to have interest in Dieyi. He asks Dieyi to sing a line. Instead of singing the correct line “I am by nature a girl, not a boy,” Dieyi sings “I am by nature a boy, not a girl” instead. The patron loses interest and is about to leave. Xiaolou thrusts their master’s hot copper smoking pipe into Dieyi’s mouth and jerks it back and forth till Dieyi’s mouth is filled with blood. Dieyi immediately corrects himself and sings “I am by nature a girl, not a boy” instead. The very next scene in the movie is 13 years later when Dieyi gains national fame performing this role on stage.

In ancient China physical punishment is quite frequent in theater schools. There are lots of stories about physical punishment in ancient China as well, such as tying your hair on the house beam and jabbing one’s side with a needle to keep oneself awake during study. However, Western audience is mostly unfamiliar with the frequent use of physical punishment at theater schools. As for critics, both Chinese and Western, things are complicated. Some might have this background knowledge but some might not. But many critics cite this physical punishment scene to criticize CHEN Kai-ge for producing symbols in line with Western ideologies or theoretical assumptions or at least stimulating Western cultural imaginations. For instance, CUI (2003) interpreted the scene as producing “cinematic spectacles through the exhibition of the suffering of the body” (pp. 155-56). Lau (1995) interpreted the copper pipe as a phallic symbol and thus Xiaolou forces the pipe into Dieyi’s mouth is a “symbolic rape” (p. 23) especially because Dieyi is in the concubine costume and Xiaolou is in Chu king’s costume: “we see a symbolic rape when Xiaolou forces a smoking pipe into Dieyi’s mouth” (p. 23). Larson (1997) and ZHENG (1997) interpreted the scene as symbolic rape as well: “Dieyi must undergo symbolic rape with a pipe before he can proclaim his femininity” (Larson, 1997, p. 338) and “Dieyi lives and acts out the tragic life of the legendary concubine. The process of his womanization is completed with a rape, an act that seals his fate with irreversibility” (ZHENG, 1997, p. 355). Kaplan (1997) questioned the movie since it “follows a fairly stereotypical representation of homosexuals that gay and queer studies have exposed” (p. 270).

Basically, all these critics cite the pipe as the evidence to support their charges. Lau (1995) cited the concubine and king’s costumes as well. The author wants to point out that imagery is not accidental. The signs that are used in a text—such as a bouquet of red roses—carry a range of meanings and associations which contribute to our evaluations of the text’s message. A bouquet of red roses conveys associations with love, relationships and romance. However, the relationship of signs to other signs in a text also influences the overall meaning of a text. A bouquet of flowers in the hands of a young child conveys a very different meaning from a bouquet of flowers placed on a grave. Dieyi in fact appears in the movie almost always in the concubine costume (except two scenes: one is when he was first sent to the theater school as a kid; the other is that after Xiaolou got married with Juxian, Dieyi visits them. In this visit scene, Dieyi is dressed in a man’s outfit instead of his concubine costume). Therefore his concubine costume (or Xiaolou’s Chu king costume) does not necessarily associate with the image of pipe or the familiarly symbolic meaning of the pipe. Used singly, a copper pipe is just

a copper pipe.

In fact, most Chinese audience would not interpret this scene as a symbolic rape, but rather showing that Xiaolou is smooth, quick, practical and adaptable. Indeed Xiaolou tries to save the whole school and Dieyi. He intends to show the patron that he can destroy Dieyi's voice so Dieyi will probably never sing again. Dieyi gets punished, the patron takes out his anger and the whole school is saved.

No one knows when CHEN Kai-ge picks out the copper pipe, does he want to use it as a common physical punishment tool at theater schools and the main purpose is thus to portray Xiaolou's personality or does he want to use the pipe as a symbol because it is so rich with internationally recognizable functions? But we can claim that CHEN Kai-ge at least familiarized the culturally distinctive elements used in Peking Opera and drew them closer to the global audience through blurring the border lines between the referential and symbolic. Even if CHEN embraces Western forms uncritically, he does this under the veil of Peking Opera's aesthetics, such as female impersonation, costumed art, etc., and it is under this veil that CHEN Kai-ge produces a text on "Chinese sexuality in general and/or homosexuality in particular" (Lau, 1995, p. 22) so distinctively and yet familiarly.

Nationalistic Expression and International Audience

Some critics are concerned that the visual and artistic settings employed in the movie are too culturally distinctive. And yet they are internationally applicable and consumable. These symbols, political icons and anthropological details turn into "colorful Oriental spectacles" that arouse Westerner's fantasies (Lau, 1995, p. 22-23). They "exoticize, eroticize or politicize" the image of China (Lu, 2001, p. 20). China is used as an object of signification, a sign vehicle of exhibition and a selling point. Thus they charge the movie for "dancing to the tunes set forth by the Western cultural imaginary about China" (CHEN, 1997, p. 124). Physical punishment mentioned above is one such icon. Others icons in the movie include Dieyi's cutting off finger at the beginning of the movie, Chairman Mao, Cultural Revolution, Red Guards, folk songs, traditional rituals and customs, and even big mansions shot in black and white.

Some critics point out this relates to the fact that CHEN lives in America, and he knows the international audience would be his main target, so he knows how to "tell a story more comprehensible to Westerners" (Lau, 1995, p. 26). He knows the international audience's attitudes and reactions toward Chinese history, sexuality and Peking Opera.

Before *Farewell, My Concubine*, CHEN had not found a popular form that would communicate with a broad audience. None of his first four films won any major international awards. In an interview after *Farewell, My Concubine*, he indicated that he considered his first four films to be "personal, direct and primitive". They were merely preparatory for his future films (such as *Farewell, My Concubine*) which will "involve the consideration of the audience and commercialism". (Lau, 1995, p. 19)

The movie exemplifies very well the Rosaldo model "interplaying between making the familiar strange and the strange familiar" (Rosaldo, 1993, pp. 39-40). A unified identity is nothing more than the privilege of being at home in the dominant culture of feeling integrated within it. "A literary work manifests differently abroad than it does at home" (Damrosch, 2003, p. 6). It is subject to "manipulation and even deformation in its foreign reception" (Damrosch, 2003, p. 24). In fact, a foreign work has "difficulty entering a new arena if it doesn't conform to the receiving country's image of what the foreign culture should be" (Damrosch, 2003, p. 117).

When Chinese cinema enters and translates into western film's interpretive field, we cannot insist upon a Chineseness that is "self-contained and insulated from the West", because this is guilty of "an essentialized conception of cultural practices" (Yeh, 2000, p. 6). National identity is founded upon fluid relationships. There is not an accepted view of "the nation as a whole imagining itself to be the unified subject of history" (ZHANG, 1997, p. 76). Chinese movies in the global market can be a hybrid, in the middle of either/or, which resists classification.

A crossing boundary figure needs to negotiate various dangers. One strategy he can employ is to deconstruct and fracture himself as well as construct it. He needs to fracture, share and make himself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking, and surrender all notions of the safe and of the familiar (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 82-83, emphasis in the original). He needs to learn to shift shapes. And yet he also needs to construct, since the fractured self, who has been forced to learn to shift shapes in foreign worlds and can teach important lessons about how to be a subject in playful and adaptable nonimperialist modes. He can assemble the resources to construct himself as transgressing, if not entirely resistant to the discourses that seek to contain him (Bordo, 1998, pp. 309-310, emphasis in the original).

Artistic freedom and the literary marketplace is a forever concern. In fact, Chinese movie makers who make a text that circulates in the international market still juggle different tasks: uncovering the distinctive Chinese ethnic traditions and challenging racist representations; questioning Orientalist's habits of thought and obtain recognition of broader foreign audiences; risking "dilution by becoming mainstream and retaining purity by remaining separate" (Rosaldo, 1993, p. xi); prospering on its way to modernity and guarding against the loss of minority cultures and their languages and a "harrowing down" that would leave only a commercialized global monoculture (Damrosch, 2003, p. 121, emphasis in the original).

Conclusions

In *Farewell, My Concubine*, CHEN Kai-ge strategically interplays between making the familiar strange and the strange familiar by using the art form Peking Opera. He manipulates the distinctive elements in Peking Opera—female impersonation and physical punishment—and successfully makes Chinese history and Peking Opera familiar to international audience whereas sexuality and moral issues strange. "There is no natural way to read a text: ways of reading are historically specific and culturally variable, and reading positions are always constructed, assigned or mapped" (Fuss, 1989, p. 35). History will testify the validity of the cultural stance the film *Farewell, My Concubine* represents. Whether CHEN's strategy to win the audience, particularly the international audience, is emblematic of later cultural developments or not, the movie has already displayed a valuable model about making a text available to other cultures.

References

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands: The new mestiza*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute.
- Bordo, S. R. (1998). The feminist as other. In J. A. Kourany (Ed.), *Philosophy in a feminist voice: Critiques and reconstructions*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Canby, V. (1994, May 25). Top prize at Cannes is shared. *New York Times*.
- CHEN, X. M. (1997). The mysterious other: Postpolitics in Chinese film. *Boundary*, 24(3), 123-41.
- CUI, S. Q. (2003). *Women through the lens: Gender and nation in a century of Chinese cinema*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

- Damrosch, D. (2003). *What is world literature?* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Fuss, D. (1989). *Essentially speaking: Feminism, nature and difference*. New York: Routledge.
- Hsu, F. (Producer), & CHEN, K. G. (Director). (1993). *Farewell, my concubine* [Motion picture]. China: Beijing Film Studio.
- HUANG, S. (1985). *Tales from Peking Opera*. Beijing: New World Press.
- Kaplan, E. A. (1997). Reading formations and Chen Kaige's *Farewell, my concubine*. In Sheldon H. Lu (Ed.), *Transnational Chinese cinemas: Identity, nationhood, gender*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Larson, W. (1997). The concubine and the figure of history: Chen Kaige's *Farewell, my concubine*. In Sheldon H. Lu (Ed.), *Transnational Chinese cinemas: Identity, nationhood, gender*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Lau, J. K. W. (1995). *Farewell, my concubine*: History, melodrama, and ideology in contemporary Pan-Chinese cinema. *Film Quarterly*, 49(1), 16-27.
- Lu, Sh. H. (2001). *China, transnational visuality, global postmodernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Rafferty, T. (1993, October 11). Blind faith. *New Yorker*.
- Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis: With a new introduction*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- TAN, Y., & ZHANG, Y. M. (1999-2000). From the fifth to the sixth generation: An interview with Zhang Yimou. *Film Quarterly*, 53(2), 2-13.
- WANG, Y. J. (1989). The cinematic other and the cultural self? De-centering the cultural identity on cinema. *Wide Angle*, 2.
- Yeh, W. (Ed.). (2000). *Cross-cultural readings of Chineseness: Narratives, images, and interpretations of the 1990s*. Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley.
- ZHANG, Y. J. (1997). From "minority film" to "minority discourse": Questions of nationhood and ethnicity in Chinese cinema. *Cinema Journal*, 36(3), 73-90.
- ZHENG, Y. (1997). Narrative images of the historical passion: Those *other* women—On the alterity in the new wave of Chinese cinema. In Sheldon H. Lu (Ed.), *Transnational Chinese cinemas: Identity, nationhood, gender*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.