Documentary as Alternative Practice: Situating Contemporary Female Filmmakers in Sinophone Cinemas

by

Novia Shih-Shan Chen

M.F.A., Ohio University, 2008

B.F.A., National Taiwan University, 2003

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Declaration of Committee

Name:	**Novia Shih-Shan Chen**
Degree:	**Doctor of Philosophy**
Title:	**Documentary as Alternative Practice: Situating Contemporary Female Filmmakers in Sinophone Cinemas**
Committee:	**Chair:** **Jen Marchbank** Professor, Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
	Helen Hok-Sze Leung Supervisor Professor, Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
	Zoë Druick Committee Member Professor, School of Communication
	Lara Campbell Committee Member Professor, Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
	Christine Kim Examiner Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literatures The University of British Columbia
	Gina Marchetti External Examiner Professor, Department of Comparative Literature The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Women's documentary filmmaking in Sinophone cinemas has been marginalized in the film industry and understudied in film studies scholarship. The convergence of neoliberalism, institutionalization of pan-Chinese documentary films and the historical marginalization of women's filmmaking in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China (PRC), respectively, have further perpetuated the marginalization of documentary films by local female filmmakers. The orientalizing gaze from the global north does not take into account local women's struggle in the industry whereas the local male-dominant industry in each region is strongly tied to and upheld by different discourses of nationalism. By addressing multiple layers of hegemony, my research examines the local and global impact on female documentary filmmakers in the above three regions since the 1980s and the ways in which they adjust their modes of production while continuing in their works to resist dominant ideologies that have shaped mainstream national/regional film culture. Drawing from production studies and feminist film criticism, I point out that each production trajectory reflects changing political systems, institutions and resources available over time. Female documentary filmmakers' interpretative and communicative power have rewritten the traditionally male-dominant and neo-national narratives of film history and industry. Since the 1980s, Taiwanese female documentary filmmakers have carved out alternative representations during a time when defining the meaning of a national cinema was an urgent task. Hong Kong female documentarians share a consistently radical and humanistic concern regarding gender and ethnic diversity without resorting to political or cultural essentialism or antagonism. Documentary films by women in the PRC expose the incongruence between the state's agenda and the lived reality of Chinese women. Sinophone female documentarians' radical resistance does not only reside in their works but in their filmmaking practices, which foreground the periphery as the site in which place-based and community-based stories and identities are shaped and told.

Keywords: Sinophone; documentary film; production studies; women's cinema

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family: my partner; my parents in Taiwan; my brother and his family in Taiwan; my parents-in-law in Japan; and Akira, my child. Thank you for your tremendous love and support throughout my study and for making me who I am today.

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Glossary

This glossary consists of the romanizations of the list Sinophone (*huayu*) names and phrases that appear in this dissertation. I stick to the titles that the referred filmmakers are popularly known of in the industry. When translations are necessary, I use Wade-Giles for Taiwanese names, Jyutping for Cantonese names and Hanyu Pinyin for Chinese names.

Ai Xiaoming (b. 1953)	艾曉明
Ang Lee (b. 1954)	李安
Angie Chen (b. 1949)	陳安琪
Ann Hui (b. 1947)	許鞍華
Annette Lu (Lu Hsiu-lien, b. 1944)	呂秀蓮
Anson Mak (b. 1969)	麥海珊
bai gong tu	百工圖
Barbara Wong Chun Chun (b. 1972)	黃真真
Chen Kaige (b.1952)	陈凯歌
Chen Yao-Chi (b. 1938)	陳耀圻
Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975)	蔣介石
Chien Wei-suu (b. 1962)	簡偉斯
ching shan chun hsiao	青山春曉
Dong Kena (1930–)	董克娜
Edward Yang (1947–2007)	楊德昌
Ellen Pau (b. 1961)	鮑藹倫
Fan Lixin (b. 1977)	范立欣
Deng Nan-Guan (1907–1971)	鄧南光
Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997)	鄧小平
Dominica Siu King Lo (1952–2020)	蕭景路
Esther Eng (1914–1970)	伍錦霞
Fruit Chan (b. 1959)	陳果
Guo Jianmei	郭建梅

guoyu	國語
Hakka	客家
Herman Yau Lai-to (b. 1960)	邱禮濤
Hoho Liu (b. 1976)	劉芸后
Hokkien	福建
Hou De-chien	侯德建
Hou Hsiao-Hsien (b. 1947)	侯孝賢
Hu Tai-li (b. 1950)	胡台麗
huayu dianying	華語電影
Huang Shuqin (b. 1939)	黃蜀芹
Hwang Chun-Ming (b. 1935)	黃春明
Hwang Yu-Shan (b. 1954)	黃玉珊
Jevons Ou (b. 1981)	歐文傑
Ji Dan (b. 1963)	季丹
Jia Zhangke (b. 1970)	賈樟柯
Ju Ming	朱銘
Hu Mei (b. 1958)	胡玫
KuanChi Cultural Group	光啟文化事業
Kuomingtang/KMT	中國國民黨
Lai Linda Chiu-han	黎肖嫻
Li Hong (b. 1967)	李红
Li Yu (b. 1973)	李玉
Li Shaohong (b. 1955)	李少红
Lina Yang (b. 1972)	杨荔钠
Liu Bi-Chia	劉必稼
Liu Chia-Chang	劉家昌
Liu Miaomiao (b. 1962)	刘苗苗
Liu Na-Ou (1900–1940)	劉吶鷗
Liu Xiaobo (1955–2017)	劉曉波
Lou Ye (b. 1965)	娄烨

Ma Liwen (b. 1971)	马俪文
Mao Zedong (1983–1976)	毛澤東
May Fung Mei-wah	馮美華
Minhsin Communications Company	民心影視公司
Minnanese	閩南語/閩南話/閩南人
Ning Ying (b. 1959)	宁瀛
Qing dynasty	清朝
Peggy Chiao (b. 1953)	焦雄屏
Peng Xiaolien (1953–2019)	彭小莲
putonghua	普通話
Sha Qing	沙青
Stanley Kwan (b. 1957)	關錦鵬
Su Chiu	蘇秋
Sylvia Chang (b. 1953)	張艾嘉
Tammy Cheung (b. 1958)	張虹
Tang Danhong (b. 1965)	唐丹鸿
Tang Shu-Shuen (b. 1941)	唐書璇
The Story of Liubao Village	柳堡的故事
Tian Zhuangzhuang (b. 1952)	田壮壮
Tiananmen Square Incident	天安門廣場事件
Tsai Ming-liang (b. 1957)	蔡明亮
Tsui Hark (b. 1950)	徐克
Wang Haowei (b. 1940)	王好为
Wang Hsiao-di (b. 1953)	王小棣
Wang Xiaoshuai (b. 1966)	王小帅
Wang Ping (1916–90)	王苹
Wang Shaoyan (1923–2018)	王少岩
White Terror	白色恐怖
Wu Wengguang (b. 1956)	吴文光

Wu Yii-Feng (b. 1960)	吳乙峰
Wong Kar-wai (b. 1956)	王家衛
Xinjiang	新疆
Xu Jinglei (b. 1974)	徐静蕾
Yau Ching	游靜
Zero Chou (b. 1969)	周美玲
Zhang Nuanxin (1941–1995)	张暖忻
Zhang Yimou (b. 1950)	张艺谋
Zhang Yuan (b. 1963)	张元
Zhongguo dianying	中國電影
Zhou Duo	周舵
zhuantipian	專題片

Chapter 1.

Introduction

In 2006, CNEX a non-profit organization, was founded to promote and support Chinese documentary films on an institutional scale. It currently has offices in Taipei, Taiwan (Republic of China), Hong Kong, the Special Administrative Region of China (HKSAR), and Beijing, China (People's Republic of China). Within ten years, CNEX, abbreviated from Chinese Next, has grown into a prolific Chinese-language documentary film production company and distributor. CNEX holds an annual documentary film festival that focuses on creating collaboration opportunities with international commissioners such as Sundance, BBC, and NHK through networking events. CNEX also hosts workshops for local documentary-makers to refine their ideas and hone their skills at different stages from pre-production, production, to post-production. CNEX has supported nearly 80 documentary films from the three regions within a decade—many of which are award-winning films. The institutionalization of documentary film festivals can be traced back to the early 1990s and has turned film festivals into an industry and marketing platform. In addition to the traditional exhibition sites, these film festivals have greatly influenced documentary film production and distribution (Vallejo 65–66). The institutionalization of documentary film festivals has a two-pronged effect. Firstly, it revitalizes the marginal genre by creating a sustainable production cycle via training and amplifying exhibition and distribution opportunities. Secondly, it substantially transforms documentary filmmakers' minds when coming to terms with the meaning of producing a documentary film in relation to the concepts of *independence* and/or *institutionalization*.

CNEX has created an international platform that brings forward unprecedented international attention including investment and distribution opportunities for independent documentary filmmakers, especially those based in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. CNEX held its very first pitching forum CCDF (CNEX Chinese Documentary Forum) in Taipei, Taiwan, in 2009 and brought in selected documentary filmmakers from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the U.S. (Asian Americans approaching pan-Chinese

subjects) after the first round of shortlisting by Taiwanese jurors.[1] The pitching platform has proved to be effective and successful. Not only is project pitching currently a widely adopted selection process in renowned international documentary film festivals such as Hot Docs, Sheffield Doc/Fest, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), and Sundance, but also enhances connections and exposure between filmmakers and their works to potential buyers in one single location. This one-stop-shop model has significantly helped remove barriers such as lack of funding or the means in promoting and exhibiting *independent* documentary films to global audiences. Prior to the Taipei pitching forum, workshops were also held for the participants to familiarize themselves with the function and execution of pitches, and helped strengthen the pitchers' ability to deliver successfully. CNEX brings in broadcast commission editors and private distributors worldwide with an interest to invest and/or distribute selected documentary film projects. Furthermore, as a result of the multi-accented nature of film productions that reflect different popular dialects used in the three regions, interpreters are hired to help non-English speaking presenters, CNEX pitching forums enable dialogues and networking amongst the filmmakers and commissioners alike including Tammy Cheung from Hong Kong and Fan Lixin from Mainland China.[2] CNEX's attempt to involve local talent in the process and to bridge the gap between local and international participants should not be overlooked; it has spurred a pan-Asian awareness and realization of culture utilization as powerful tools for ethos spreading and nation-building. In their online distribution catalogue, CNEX claims that it "strives to facilitate cultural exchange between Chinese and the rest of the world through supporting documentaries depicting contemporary Chinese—those people of Chinese ethnicity, their living and their society" (CNEX Studio Corporation 1).

The institutionalization of 'Chinese' documentary films bears critical attention. The unprecedented collaboration among documentary practitioners on a global scale signifies three things. Firstly, it demonstrates the blurring between commercialization and the independent, if not marginalized, nature associated with documentary films. Secondly, it is a reminder of the conformity to 'Chinese' documentary cinema among the

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[1] In eight years since its establishment, CNEX has extended to recruit filmmakers from Singapore, Macau, and other diasporas under the broader Chinese-extended regions.

[2] Tammy Cheung is a Hong Kong-based female documentary filmmaker. She currently runs Visible Record, an independent film distributor based in Hong Kong. Fan Lixin is known for his documentary *Last Train Home* that won the Best Feature Documentary Award at IDFA in 2009.

three regions that replaced previously disconnected documentary production in those regions. Lastly, local documentary practices cannot be simply viewed as emerging solely from the local culture. Rather, they are inflected by transnational forces, be they positive or negative. Furthermore, the term 'Chinese' has always been a highly-contested and hotly-debated term in Chinese-language film studies scholarship. The use of 'Chinese' places China at the centre of ethnic Chinese or Mandarin-speaking communities while subordinating dialect-using practices—particularly those in Hong Kong and Taiwan. As seen from the CNEX catalogue, the use of Chinese documentary films seems to be based on one overarching theme: the historical and cultural connection with China. This demonstrates that Chinese cinema from the three regions is in fact determined by the PRC hegemony. Furthermore, the imbalanced power relations between the West and the East in cultural production and consumption further subject CNEX to a position that (un)consciously caters to the gaze of the ex-colonizers (BBC, NHK, and Sundance are predominantly featured as key commissioners). Considering both Western and Japanese imperial pressure placed upon China throughout the nineteenth century—in addition to the long colonial history of Hong Kong and Taiwan under British and Japanese rule respectively—homogenizing these documentary films to be judged and approved of by powerful white male broadcasters resembles a self-orientalism that legitimates the West's gaze. At the intersection of globalization, neo-liberalization and neo-colonization, I cannot help but wonder if this is an ineluctable path for vernacular documentary practices and to what extent the rapidly-growing power of a West-dominant and West-validating industry mechanisms shape the positionality of local documentary filmmakers. What was the pattern of documentary film practice in the three respective regions prior to the tide surmounting to a pan-Asian, pan-Chinese identifier? Furthermore, if the colonizing gaze of CNEX is white, capitalist, and masculine, does the institutionalization of Chinese-language documentary films leave little to no room for female filmmakers?

My research began at the intersection of re-examining and identifying the local and global impact on female documentary filmmakers respectively in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the PRC since the 1980s. Women's documentary practices have developed quite differently in the three regions. Women's documentary filmmaking in Sinophone cinemas has been marginalized in the film industry and understudied in film studies scholarship. The convergence of neoliberalism, institutionalization of pan-Chinese

documentary films and the historical marginalization of women's filmmaking in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China (PRC), respectively, have further perpetuated the marginalization of documentary films by local female filmmakers. The orientalizing gaze from the global north does not take into account local women's struggle in the industry whereas the local male-dominant industry in each region is strongly tied to and upheld by different discourses of nationalism. By addressing multiple layers of hegemony, my research examines the local and global impact on female documentary filmmakers in the above three regions since the 1980s and the ways in which they adjust their modes of production while continuing in their works to resist dominant ideologies that have shaped mainstream national/regional film culture.

Recognizing the heterogeneity in the three regions, my goal is to unravel how certain films and themes are favoured in dominant cinemas while others are trivialized as a result of the multiple layers of hegemony. The entangled empires produce a matrix of domination that "encapsulates the universality of intersecting oppressions as organized through diverse local realties" (Hill Collins 228). For women documentarians, their marginalized status in the film industry as well as in film studies scholarship illuminates the places in which intersecting oppressions originate, evolve and crisscross. First, Hollywood has dominated other national film markets around the world for over a century. The East vs. West dichotomy, rooted in Hollywood global dominance, has swept regional gender, class and ethnic struggles under the carpet for the sake of a recognized domestic cinema. Second, the PRC-centred worldview deems Mandarin Chinese as the orthodox language and homogenizes non-Chinese-identified ethnic groups. Third, non-film studies feminist articles on documentary films and videos have tended to be issue-oriented but lacked contextual analysis of form and production. But when engaged with issues of representation, "there has been a tendency to avoid documentary forms to focus solely on feminist documentaries as if feminist thinking were inapplicable to documentary in general" (Waldman and Walker 3). Fourth, in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and PRC, women's documentary films remain in the backdrop of film movements or phenomena that are first identified in Western scholarship (Thompson and Bordwell 2010). The reason why these layers of hegemony are often obfuscated is that they thrive within a minor framework. The inter-regional or intra-regional power dynamics are easily subsumed under the East-West and global South-North binaries. The past three decades have seen dynamic social and political turbulences in which

female filmmakers' works remain invisible against the backdrop of the more well-known Fifth- and Sixth- Generation male directors in mainland China. In the case of Taiwan and Hong Kong, documentary and women filmmakers do not garner as much attention when compared to New Taiwan Cinema or the second Hong Kong New Wave, both of which birthed renowned male directors that centre their stories on the emergence and losses of local identities. In his conceptualization of national cinemas, Stephen Crofts describes that "national developments can occasion specifically national filmic manifestations which can claim a cultural authenticity or rootedness," and he placed Fifth Generation Chinese Cinema alongside Italian Neo-Realism and Latin American Third Cinema as examples that "arose on the crest of waves of national-popular resurgence" (62). This gendered and masculinized view of film criticism leads to a male-dominant film culture in which certain themes and aesthetics are more appreciated than others. In my dissertation, I trace three distinctive routes of women's documentary filmmaking that have led to the institutionalization of Sinophone documentary films, identify the historical fluctuation associated with the production of their documentary films, and assess the implications of independent filmmaking in the context of Taiwan Cinema, Hong Kong Cinema, and the Chinese Cinema of the PRC. I argue that women's documentary-making in three respective regions functions as an alternative practice to regional nationalism and the Western gaze.

Rejecting the labels 'Chinese' and 'Chinese-language', my research opts for Sinophone as the foundational framework in surveying female documentary filmmakers and their films. Coined by Shu-mei Shih in 2007, Sinophone has since gained traction. Shih successfully initiated a rigorous, self-reflexive, and place-based feminist discourse in the field of Chinese cultural studies, arguing that the China vs. non-China binary has been constructed by scholars who emphasize the East vs. West division in order to strengthen a competitive national film culture. By doing this, non-China-identified ethnic groups' voices have been suppressed. On the contrary, Sinophone studies pay attention to internal power dynamics and hierarchies between dominant and minor ethnicities, questions of postcolonial identity, and government policy against and for the open market economy (in the context of PRC following the cultural revolution and the surrounding issues pertaining to censorship and propaganda).). Shih reveals that cultural colonization is never one-way but instead multi-directional and multi-layered; China cannot assume the victim position without reflecting on its (un)conscious adoption

and maneuvering of neo-colonial and self-orientalizing measures. Therefore, my use of Sinophone reflects the multifaceted factors between production and consumption that involve the ever-changing roles of the producer(s), the labourer(s), and the consumer(s) in forming identities and a visual economy that could either replicate or resist the existing or reproduced power relations. It is in Shih's recognition of this unsettling nature of Sinophone visual culture that enables a critical reflection on the multi-accented, multi-located, and multi-economized visual production.

My work further investigates the connections, contentions, and constraints in discourses between documentary film studies, policy studies, feminist film theory and Sinophone cinema studies. Reductive readings of women as feminist filmmakers, or documentary films as independent productions, cannot sufficiently characterize the dynamics of the social, political, and historical development in female documentary filmmaking practices. Rather, I seek to adopt a wider range of parameters within production studies that not only allows me to understand production hierarchies among media producers, government institutions, and informal organizations, but also to "conceptualize practices within the political economy of labor, markets, and policy" (Mayer et al. 3). Production studies scholarship approaches and makes sense of media producers and their practices through interdisciplinary inquiry by seeking ways to understand culture-making as acts that reflect the social power dynamics, grounding social theory on various media sites, actors and activities, and highlighting the lived experience of cultural practitioners (ibid. 2–10). In order to discuss cultural practices through the lens of regulations, resources, and the evaluation systems that are conducted, provided, and implemented in particular periods of time in each of the three regions, the concept of "change and continuity" is central to each chapter. In *The Cultural Industries,* David Hesmondhalgh foregrounds the dynamics between "change" and "continuity" within cultural industries in terms of technology, policy, and creativity, and to what extent culture industries change and continue according to technological, economic, and cultural elements (2013). Hesmondhalgh argues that cultural industry is an object that fluctuates along with the dynamics of internationalization and digitalization. He further stresses that the complex interconnections between commerce and creativity are accompanied by shifts in international copyright law and national cultural policies that subsidize, manage, and regulate local arts (158-166, 2013). This shows that a cultural industry is not a fixed entity; it reflects shifts in policy, political systems and

cultural climates. In this view, Sinophone female filmmakers may alter and/or retain certain modes of production as a result of tensions between creative autonomy and authorial intervention. On the other hand, contemporary theorists and critics also argue that independent cinema has carved out an alternative market and women have become more visible in positions other than director; with many having begun their careers and entering the industry through their initial involvement in documentary-making (Jennings 2002; Tasker 2010). More critical attention is centred on different cinematic positions taken by women, as well as the social, political and economic reasons contributing to the (in)visibility of women in/on film. By studying Sinophone female documentary filmmakers' career trajectories and modes of production with an emphasis on change and continuity, I argue that women's documentary production is inherently gendered, classed and marginalized. Despite this, as they adjust their modes of production, their works continue to resist dominant ideologies that have shaped dominant national/regional film culture.

In order to nuance these gendered and marginalized cultural practices, I propose to use the framework of Sinophone documentary studies. Borrowing and extending from Shu-mei Shih's conceptualization of Sinophone visual studies, I demonstrate the ways in which female documentary filmmakers creatively attend to both local and community-based iterations of actuality. Particularly, the intervention of minoritized creative practices that take place across and within national boundaries ultimately suggests trans-locality and minor transnationalism. Francoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih coined the term minor transnationalism, a model to engage transnationalism through a minor lens. They are cognizant of the self-contained hierarchy in cultural studies as they state that "the deconstructive dyad center/margin […] appears to privilege marginality only to end up containing it" (3). To them, "vertical models of resistance have tended to impede interethnic solidarity and international minority alliance" (ibid. 4). By breaking the vertical construction of dominant and minor discourses, minor transnationalism connects marginalized groups by emphasizing lateral connectivities that were often neglected or subsumed into its relationship with the major. More importantly, by diffusing the global/local dichotomy—in which local sites are romanticized as pure resistance without inherent power struggles—minor transnationalism intervenes the national not as a single entity but rather "is increasingly inflected by a transnationality…[that] is not bound by the binary of the local and global and occur in national, local, or global spaces across different and multiple spatialities and temporalities" (ibid. 6). Sinophone female

documentarians demonstrate complex and multiple forms of cultural expressions of the marginal and engage the national and/or transnational in their alternative practice inside and/or outside the dominant systems by going beyond the dichotomy of textual analysis and political economy. Sinophone female documentarians also take into account the interactivity between media producers and the subjects when negotiating creativity, autonomy, and the economy of cultural production, as well as the needs of local communities, national agendas, and international recognition. My research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is women's cinema? How do documentary studies, feminist film theory and auteur theory inform each other in the studies of women documentary directors?
- How is independent production/cinema defined in Sinophone cinema? Why are women's documentary films often situated and conceptualized within studies of independent cinema?
- What are the mainstream subjects studied in the cinemas of Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China and what remains understudied? Can these discrepancies of popularity be addressed through the lens of women and documentary filmmaking in Sinophone cinema?
- How do organizations such as public service TV broadcasting companies, NPOs, and film festivals shape and are shaped by documentary film productions?
- What role does the state play in funding documentaries? How do Sinophone women documentary filmmakers negotiate the scale of transnational documentary co-production at an exponential rate?
- How and why do female filmmakers deal with cross-media and/or cross-genre productions? What are the influences, difficulties and benefits?

My research begins with cataloging all the films made by Sinophone female filmmakers as my primary sources, and further track the funding sources and their associated exhibition and distribution networks. I also collect and review bi-lingual scholarly articles, media reports, film reviews, and existing interviews with the filmmakers and analyze whether government intervention functions not only through technologies of cultural policy but also the regulation or deregulation of self. Specifically, I draw from media production studies scholarship that combines discourse analysis and institutional analysis. In addition, I integrate such macro examination into textual analysis to avoid removing texts from contexts. It is through an analysis of the empirical data that I seek to unravel "how specific production sites, actors, or activities tell us larger lessons

about workers, their practices, and the role of their labors in relation to politics, economics, and culture" (Mayer 15). The combination of discourse and institutional analysis is essential to dissect the specific cases respectively the in three regions. Here I am relying on the two sets of discourse analysis by Gillian Rose in her *Visual Methodologies* that covers both the "intertextuality for [the] interpretive power" and the Foucauldian "social institutions that produced, archived, displayed or sold and the effects of those practices" of images and texts (186–252). Building her arguments from Lynda Nead and Foucault, Rose articulates discourse to be meanings constructed through shared knowledge, social institutions, subjects and practices in relation to visual analysis and is a form of discipline (142–143). Norman Fairclough also explains how critical discourse analysis "oscillates between a focus on structures [of social practices] and a focus on strategies […] of how social agents manifest themselves in texts" (Fairclough 181). Therefore, discourse analysis is fundamental to my work in understanding the interaction between institutions, subjects and practices as it stresses social locations of production, effects, and reactions how these manifest through texts.

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. The first three chapters serve as theoretical underpinnings for this project. This introductory chapter includes the rationale that links to my research questions, the scope of research, and chapter overviews. While Sinophone film studies have gained momentum in narrative film studies, it is as important to poke holes in the purported cultural and political Chineseness in the documentary cinemas of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and PRC. The second chapter focuses on untangling the complex political history of the three regions and providing the genealogy of established paradigms in (un)naming Chinese cinema from national cinema, transnational Chinese cinema, Chinese-language cinema to Sinophone cinema (Lu 2011). I aim to highlight what *connects* and *separates* the understanding of Chinese cinema of the three regions. Under what circumstances do the scholars find it necessary to introduce an overarching label that groups the three together? And on what conditions do the particularities of each region take precedence? The third chapter lays out my theoretical framework in relation to three nodes of disciplines: documentary film studies, cultural policy studies, feminist film theory as well as the interconnections amongst them. It will cover, amongst other issues, how documentary films are understood as a technology of imperialistic colonial agenda in early British and French cinema, implementation of citizenship formation and national identity, and as parallels to feminist

film criticism. While the policy aspects serve as one vantage point to assess the formulation, fluctuation and mutation of cultural practices, I return to production studies as my main approach and explain how it compliments my research in Sinophone film studies.

Chapters Four, Five and Six are case studies from the three regions and demonstrate that their alternative practices resist the multiple layers of hegemony illustrated in the introduction. I examine different minoritization discourses in each region and unravel how women's documentary history of each region is overlooked in the national/regional film history. Their marginal positions and practices not only shine a light on themes and subjects that are obliterated by mainstream representation but demonstrate feminist transnationality that disrupts regional nationalism. There are about nine to ten female filmmakers who have made documentary films in each region. For each region, I choose two to five for a close analysis. In Chapter Four "Voices of the Margin: Taiwan as the Island of Symbiosis," female documentary production trajectory is best demonstrated through the careers of Tai-li Hu and Zero Chou. The former marked the beginning of independent documentary filmmaking and theatrical exhibition since the 1980s, whereas the latter demonstrates a symbiotic working relationship with the Public Television Service beginning from the late 1990s and moving into the 2000s. Chapter Five, "Diverse Styles and Approaches: Hong Kong as a City of Experiment," surveys the work of five documentary filmmakers: Yau Ching; Tammy Cheung; Ann Hui; Barbara Wong; and Anson Mak. Hui and Wong's production overlaps with the commercial sector whereas Yau, Cheung, and Mak work predominantly in the independent art scene in Hong Kong. Chapter Six, "Gender, Place, and Migration: Postsocialist Chinese Female Documentarians and Their Subjects," closely examines four films produced in 1999, 2002, 2007 and 2011 by four female documentarians: Li Hong; Ning Ying; Ai Xiaoming; and Ji Dan. Relying on DV technology, documentaries by Chinese female directors engage female subjects and women's migration that challenge dominant nationalist-socialist ideologies. Regrettably, this dissertation does not intend to survey all Sinophone documentary films by women due to the scope of this project as well as difficulties in acquiring film copies. Yet, I focus on the ones whose works mark important milestones in the documentary film history in each region. Hu and Chou's careers combined spanned over twenty years of women's documentary making in Taiwan since the martial law was lifted. The five female documentarians from Hong Kong not only

represent 20 years of documentary-making in the city but furthermore, their works collectively shape a documentary culture that raises gender consciousness. In PRC, Ning Ying is considered to be the pioneer of Chinese Urban Cinema coming out of the The Fifth Generation in postsocialist China (Zhao 1). In addition, Li Hong is recognized as the first female director who made an independent feature-length documentary film whereas Ai Xiaoming and Ji Dan are two of the most prolific female documentary filmmakers contemporarily. I aim to reflect on, explain and assess the production culture, administrative routines, and state policies that have affected female filmmakers' roles, choices and circulation resources in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and PRC since the 1980s. All three chapters explore how women's documentary practices counter the generational regimes of Chinese cinema in the case of the PRC and the new wave cinemas respectively in Hong Kong and Taiwan represented by their male counterparts. The concluding chapter reviews and summarizes the theses of each chapter, and shines light on the connections, parallels and heterogeneity on Sinophone women documentary filmmakers. Ultimately, I hope to bring attention to how female documentarians as a whole signal a call to urgently replace Chinese documentary film as a category with Sinophone documentary film. Chinese film studies have long privileged male directors and their narrative films. The global and intellectual attention has been given to new wave male directors, both ideologically and artistically, engaging the world with the mesmerizing stories previously inhibited due to the political contexts. In my textual analysis of works by the select Sinophone female documentary filmmakers, I contend that their radical resistance does not only reside in their works but also their filmmaking practices foreground the periphery as the site in which place-based and community-based stories and identities are shaped and told. Women filmmakers' choice of utilizing documentary as an artistic or political expression opens up new perspectives in understanding the relationship between gender, the nation-state, and non-fiction film production.

In the next chapter, I provide a brief historical and political background of the dividing of the three regions along with a genealogy of the debate over Chinese cinema studies. The intertwining of cultural, social, political and geographical factors and dissidents have resulted in the complexities in defining Chinese cinema. The coupling and decoupling processes of the three regions should be understood in geographical, political and economic senses and in turn shape three disparate cinematic developments

under three different regimes. By chronologically placing select publications of Chinese cinema according to their publishing years in order, I unravel that the complications in defining Chinese cinema reside in the complex political, economic, geographical, linguistic and cultural grounds. Yet, the precedence of Chinese cinema is predicated on a hierarchical nature subordinating other cinemas such as Hong Kong cinema, Taiwanese cinema and the diasporic cinema. I use the term Sinophone when discussing films encompassing film cultures that are not exclusively produced in the PRC, and favour the use of Taiwan, Hong Kong for individual case analyses. In doing so, I reject the symbolic colonial measures of the PRC government in their attempt to unify other entities and to respect a locally-grown identity that is place-based and community-centred. I hope that my research not only speaks to the continuous debate of Sinophone cinema studies but further compliments production culture studies with a closer examination on documentary film studies and women's cinema.

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Chapter 2.

From ‘Chinese’ to Sinophone

Geographically speaking, the term “greater China” is commonly used to encompass lands that include Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and mainland China. Culturally and ethnically speaking, greater China refers to dispersed international communities who share commercial ties and/or cultural interactions with mainland China to a certain degree but the definitions are never too clear (Harding 660). This term was first used by ethnic Chinese people and then adopted by the West for political and topographical purposes (ibid. 662). Its recent appearance in the 1970s signalled the increasing economic exchange between Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China as a result of post-Mao reforms within the PRC (ibid. 663) and has become a significant designation for the purpose of examining “the evolution and implications of this formative grouping in the economic and political context of East Asia” (Zhang 153, 2003). Politically, it suggests the prospects of political unification. Naming filmmakers from Taiwan or Hong Kong as ‘Chinese’ is often seen as a political choice rather than an organic one. The PRC government led by the Communist Party of China (CCP) is known for suppressing dissident views and local identities that derive from Hong Kong and Taiwan. In addition, the PRC government has coerced or threatened local Taiwanese and Hong Kong governments to give in in response to their call for ultimate unification on international media. This referent to mainland China has yielded dissent amongst people who do not share or identify with the classification of cultural or ethnic Chinese as the two regions—Hong Kong and Taiwan—develop in completely different political, economic and institutional backgrounds as a result of several international and civil wars that drive them apart.

The linguistic, geographical and political divisions of “greater China” can be traced back to the sixteenth century. In 1557, Macau was leased to Portugal as a trading post and later became a Portuguese territory in 1887. In 1841, China ceded the island of Hong Kong to the British, officially ending the First Opium War. Premodern China ended in 1911 with the collapse of the Qing dynasty. In the face of foreign aggression and local rebellions, Sun Yat-sen led with Kuomintang (KMT)/ Nationalist Party and established a republican government in 1912 called the Republic of China (ROC). Mongolia declared

independence in 1911 and achieved actual independence from the Republic of China in 1921. Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895 for 50 years until the Nationalist Party/KMT led by Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan after their defeat by the Community Party of China in the civil war in 1949 and claimed its ruling power following the termination of the Japanese colonial period. The leader of the CCP, Mao Zedong, founded the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the party has been in power since then. Hong Kong was formerly a British colony from 1842 to 1997 and experienced a brief period under Japanese rule from 1941 to 1945. Hong Kong and Macau were handed back to China in 1997 and 1999 respectively, and both are renamed into a Special Administrative Region. Whether Taiwan is a nation-state is still debatable, but it is internationally perceived, if not officially recognized, as a democratic country with its own sovereignty, military and constitution un-intervened by the Communist Party of China (Friedman 2015; Chiang 2017).

Taiwan, Hong Kong, and PRC have been greatly affected by local governments and their disparate political and ideological agenda and in turn constitute three diversifying yet culturally connected areas. My research focuses particularly on the development after World War II as the infrastructure strongly hinged on the modernization and industrialization of these areas and how the local agents interacted with the authorities. Taiwan is an island on the Southeast coast in relation to mainland China. Its population is estimated at 23.8 million people. In spite of its small population, Taiwan has benefited from its democratic political advancement and progressive gender politics after the martial law was lifted in 1987. Taiwan has its own constitution, laws, and presidential elections which has been determined by popular vote since 1996. Furthermore, Taiwan's High Court ruled in favour of same-sex marriage in 2017, marking Taiwan the very first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage. Taiwan has historically been marginalized. It is subject to different degrees of settler colonialism inflicted upon by the Japanese government (1895–1945) and the one-party ruling by the Nationalist Party (1949–1996). The Qing emperor ceded Taiwan during the First Sino-Japanese war in 1895. The Nationalist Party fled to Taiwan after their defeat by the Communist Party of China in the civil war in 1949 and claimed its ruling power following the termination of the Japanese colonial period. The Nationalist Party enacted a 38-year martial law, subjecting local residents to different degrees of terror and political suppression. Taiwan became stateless after losing its seat in United Nations in 1971.

The world then only recognized the People's Republic of China as the orthodox China, further perpetuating its marginal status. People who lived on the island, including the indigenous community, had been forced to receive colonial education demanded under different regimes. As a result, Taiwan is composed of a diverse ethnic demographic ranging from the aborigines, Hakka, Hokkien, and mainland Chinese, all characterized by a long colonial history that has yielded to a society with mixed identities. Since the lifting of martial law, Taiwan's cultural scene has developed collaterally with Taiwan's overall democratic and progressive social climate. However, the people on the island continue to experience threats and coercion from the PRC government which desires the ultimate unification regardless of what costs it will take.

Hong Kong experienced a surge of immigrants from Shanghai during World War II and the city continued to prosper in material terms and became the financial hub of East Asia thanks to the British government's hands-off economic policies. It was not until 1984 when the Chinese government and British government signed the *Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong* that determined the handover of Hong Kong to China on July 1, 1997. It coincided with a time when Hong Kong residents began to develop local identity as evidenced in the flourishing locally-produced popular TV shows that are prominently in Cantonese. Distrust towards the Chinese government further intensified after witnessing the Tiananmen Square Incident (1989) during which thousands of protesters and students were violently suppressed. Pre-handover Hong Kong cinema was known for its commercial nature sustained by a fully-fledged and competitive film industry and genre filmmaking. Hong Kong film production and distribution are also highly transnational and transregional for it entails talents ranging from diasporic Chinese, operated by Malaysian and Singaporean family conglomerates and reaches international audiences. Hong Kong cinema has experienced international recognition since the late 1970s, known for the Hong Kong New Wave and reached its commercial pinnacle in the early 1990s. However, Hong Kong cinema has continued to face various challenges as it has become the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) since 1997. Ngo Tak-Wing (1999) and James Hayes (2006) provide detailed surveys of Hong Kong's colonial history and postcolonial political status.

China entered a period of socialist regime after Mao came to power, resulting in the 10-year Cultural Revolution from 1966 and ended with Mao's passing in 1976. The new leader, Deng Xiaoping, adopted an open-door policy that embraced market economy and capitalism while retaining their one-party dictatorship. Chinese cinema entered world cinema in the early 1980s thanks to the reopening of the Beijing Film Academy in 1978 and its first graduates, known as the Fifth Generation. Prior to the rise of the Fifth Generation, there were four waves of cinema. Two occurred during the Republican era from 1912–1949, where the third and the fourth generations belonged to the socialist era from 1949–1976. With Deng in reign, cultural productions that came to a halt during the cultural revolution quickly revived and internationalized. The Fifth Generation directions brought forward New Chinese Cinema that is characterized by cinematic, narrative and character innovations. After the Tiananmen Square Incident, a group of filmmakers viewed as the Sixth Generation refocused on class issues in postsocialist and consumerist society that have garnered global critical attention. On the other hand, Chinese commercial cinema is also rapidly developing. China's economic growth and population have attracted film distributors worldwide for a share.

Chinese film studies quickly developed after film studies rose to be a critical discipline in the 1970s. Given the complex colonial history and regime change, the historiography of Chinese cinema has been a contested realm for scholars as it cannot be simply bound by geographical, linguistic or cultural parameters. While most scholars recognize that neither "Chinese" nor "cinema" is a fixed term prescribed on national boundaries, more cultural studies scholars have taken up the task to address the thorny issues and reasons behind the process of (un)naming Chinese cinema when considering its existing and growing political and ideological separation. Therefore in this section, I chronologize the advent of Chinese cinema studies and its development and expansion onto four major paradigms—detailing specifically the theoretical debates over categorization that scholars have conducted to complicate what used to be known unproblematically as 'Chinese cinema' (Lu 2012). While the majority of the theoretical debates on categorization are rooted in narrative cinema, a survey of (un)naming Chinese documentary studies will ensue to broaden and deepen the understanding of various perspectives in cinema studies. As such, my theoretical framework Sinophone documentary studies will be situated in this discursive field and I reflect upon each epistemological category's own merits and limits in relation to documentary studies.

The two editions of *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema* by Chris Berry, published in 1985 and the other in 1991, are considered to be the earliest books that collect scholarly works studying Chinese cinema. The rise of Chinese cinema studies proceeds hand in hand with the recognition of Chinese, Taiwanese, and Hong Kong film productions at an international level since the 1980s. Berry first removes Chinese cinema studies from its affiliation with literary studies in order to bridge Western film theory and criticism (Berry i). However, although acknowledging the diversity found in Chinese cinema (ibid. i), Berry's anthology has yet to theoretically distinguish the cinema of three regions as reflected in the book title. Chinese cinema, at its onset, is less about heterogeneity but more about homogeneity so that it would set itself apart from the Hollywood film production and to align with other national cinemas. In the second edition, only two articles address the characteristics of Taiwanese and Hong Kong cinema among 16 chapters, and both attempt to explore the distinctive filmic qualities of Taiwan and Hong Kong that stray away from China-centred cinematic traditions. For the time being, a singular, coherent framework designed for Chinese cinema studies can better chart itself against the dominant Western cinema culture. Such studies feed into the proliferation of national cinemas worldwide, serving as a collective, political, yet homogenous understanding of Chinese cinema. The number of chapters that concern Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinema selected for the collection entitled Chinese cinema is relatively out of proportion in comparison to China-centred cinema. This enables an imperialist reading, an internal colonization implicit in academic works that was not picked up until Shu-mei Shih articulates Sinophone in 2007. Yet, other scholars quickly pick up on the issues of naming. The proliferation of publications in redefining Chinese cinema studies demonstrates a collective effort in diversifying the understanding of Chinese cinema—a term that is highly political and contested that cannot be taken for granted.

The first attempt to pluralize Chinese cinema is seen in *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics.* Published in 1994, Browne et al. put together an important anthology that traces the aesthetic shifts in the three cinemas by examining changing genres, styles, and settings in relation to the larger social and political backgrounds influenced by Western modernization and Confucian ideology. One breakthrough of this collection resides in its recognition of Chinese cinemas as a plural term in the age of globalization. Furthermore, the editors recentre the cinemas of Hong Kong and Taiwan, giving substantive attention to new directors in the two regions such as Hou Hsiao-

Hsien, Edward Yang and many Hong Kong New Wave directors. Particularly, the "new" in the title is in reference to the three distinct art film movements initiated as early as 1979 in Hong Kong and the early to mid- 1980s in Taiwan, to post-socialist China, which "separate themselves from traditional and political culture, and explore in an introspective, or explicitly self-referential, mode the author's relation to the culture, often by taking up a position at the fringe" (Browne et al. 10). In this framework, Taiwanese and Hong Kong cinemas were strategically incorporated into one overarching theme: the connection and disconnection with the so-called "cultural" or "traditional" China. As described in the very beginning of Browne et al.'s remark, "to exaggerate the differences would be to overlook a common cultural tradition of social, ideological, and aesthetic forms that stands behind and informs Chinese cinema as a whole" (Browne et al. 1). In spite of the efforts to cast some light on Hong Kong and Taiwan cinema, the editors inevitably apply onto them cultural, social and ideological sameness. The sense of dislocation that has been emphasized in the book renders the subjects of analysis merely sojourners that aspire to return to the embrace of the motherland. The strength of this anthology lies in its great insights into identifying film form and genres caught and developed between traditions and modernization. Yet, the editors' stance in suggesting a cultural commonality amongst the cinema in the three regions—in spite of their political divides—poses as a weakness.

In 1997, Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu published *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender* in which the concept of "Chineseness" is first interrogated. Adopting the plurality of Chinese cinemas, this volume examines a century of film history, from 1896 to 1996, which marks a significant length of national/transnational migration within the three regions and beyond. Lu accounts for the global and transnational nature of film production that took place across different regions and nations—including regional, local and transnational connections and collaborations coinciding with world film history since the late nineteenth century. Lu dedicates the entire second section to examining the politics of cultural and national identity in the cinemas of Taiwan and Hong Kong. On one hand, the use of "transnational" specifically speaks to Fredric Jameson's article "Remapping Taipei," which first appeared in Browne's 1994 anthology that addresses the postmodern culture that transcends national boundaries identified in *Terrorizers* (dir. Edward Yang, 1986). On the one hand, it is emblematic in theorizing Ang Lee's career that is characterized both by his

transnational productions and his fluid identity shaped by his upbringing, his education, and his American collaborators (Lu 13–14). Similarly, the colonial Hong Kong film industry must be understood in its global appeal and influence upon world cinemas. To Lu, Chinese diasporic cinema also occupies a spot on the equation that problematizes Chinese national cinema, signalling an ongoing transnational formation, if not diversification, of film culture produced across local, national, transnational, and overseas Chinese (Lu 18). However, the use of transnational Chinese cinema still yields problems. First, if the three cinemas are transnational in nature, what does "Chinese" denote? Is it used to refer to the cultural heritage or the cultural boundary the marks Chinese different from the non-Chinese? Are Chinese cinemas only transnational in relation to the non-Chinese but still national when resorting to its cultural essence? The geographical and political fragmentations in the three regions after 1949, as Lu connotes, can be read as historical mutations that strengthen the image of a globally recognized 'Cultural China'. Indeed, postwar Hong Kong and Taiwan accepted millions of Chinese refugees and immigrants. The difficulty of naming the cinema has resulted from the fact that no title can accurately capture the diverse population in both regions. Nonetheless, the use of 'Chinese' inevitably subsumes the geographically separated demographics under the China-centred hegemony since a shared culture is still forced upon local residents of Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Chinese diaspora. On a thematic level, the absence of chapters dedicated to Taiwanese and Hong Kong cinema in the third part of this book entitled "Engendering History and Nationhood: Cross-Cultural and Gendered Perspectives" points to the underrepresentation of Taiwan and Hong Kong cinemas that intersect gender studies of a period of 100 years. Moreover, it perpetuates their marginal status in relation to PRC's cinema.

Kwok-kan Tam and Wimal Dissanayake's *New Chinese Cinema* published in 1998 follows a similarly totalizing path of Chris Berry and assumes China to be the centre. Resembling Lu's approach of periodization, the authors use "New Chinese Cinema" to designate the films made in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong from the late 1970s to late 1990s, a period that they argue where all regions concurrently construct a unique subjectivity and identity in response to contemporary societal challenges. Tam and Dissanayake see Chinese cinema as the unquestionable focal point and deem regional activity merely as a minor development that took place side by side along with the centre. On the contrary, titled identically as *New Chinese Cinema: Challenging*

Representation, Sheila Cornelius and Ian Haydn Smith in their 2002 book take a cultural studies approach and focus solely on the analysis of representations specific to mainland Chinese cinema. The “New” Chinese cinema in this case genuinely represents Chinese films produced after the cultural revolution without any attempt to conflate the three regions.

The multiple iterations of new or transnational Chinese cinema(s) may still fail to help destabilize the China-centred hegemony. If cultural heritage that rests on Confucian ideology does not work to subsume premodern and modern Korean and Japanese cinemas into cultural Chinese cinema, it can be argued that the call for Chinese cinema is more likely to be a political strategy rather than a cultural one. Confronted by writers predominately from Hong Kong and Taiwan arguing against the broad inclusion of Chinese cinema, the use of Chinese-language cinema (*huayu dianying*) emerged and can be traced as early as 2002 when Emilie Yeh published her article “Defining Chinese” in *Jump Cut* and proposed its use. This term has received popularity and acknowledgement from most filmmakers and critics from Hong Kong and Taiwan in a historical moment when Chinese cinema (*Zhongguo dianying*) received wide dissatisfaction. “Chinese-language film” appears to be a more comprehensive term that not only bypasses ideological differences but is helpful for an increased mutual understanding and exchange of films made locally or transregionally in all regions. On the production side, filmmakers across three regions are freed from the thorny political naming, enabling a more productive collaboration that circumvents political differences. Sheldon H. Lu further validates this term and co-edits with Yeh in their book *Chinese-Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics* published in 2005, in which their engagements in cross-cultural and cross-regional analyses principally on Chinese-language films and transnational Chinese-language films manifest. In order to justify “Chinese-language film,” Lu and Yeh highlight the use of a common language as the main token that helps cut across geography, national boundary, citizenship and identity (1–2). Moreover, it “forge[s] a fluid, deterritorialized, pan-Chinese among Chinese speakers” (4). This term seems valid as it implies the non-equivalence and asymmetry between language and nation in Chinese cinemas. However, Lu and Yeh’s analysis disseminates a hegemonic notion of China or Chinese-language as the centre of all cinemas for they resort to an ultimate referent to China as the mother nation. Not only do they admit that the use of Chinese-language cinema is a political inclusion of Taiwanese

film as Chinese film, but the push to enforce Chineseness as the base of all analyses also naturalizes Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and Chinese diasporic cinema as merely regional and dialectical, and lacking in autonomy.

Chinese cinema makes its comeback in 2004, when Yingjin Zhang publishes *Chinese National Cinema*, solidifying its presence in the Chinese cinema category debate. Zhang believes that the distinct national cinematic qualities that respectively thrived in PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, recognized by Yeh, may overlook the interaction between major cities in the three regions before and after 1945 (Zhang 1–5). To further discredit the subjects outside of China's aspiration to dissociate with China, Yeh's use of national cinema maintains that a collective agency is desired and constantly reproduced in films produced across the three regions, erasing peripheral subjectivities that defy the hegemony. Cultural essentialism appears to be the biggest issue in Zhang's approach. His Han-centric perspective taints the comprehensive and in-depth historical survey of Chinese cinemas of three regions.[3] It was not until 2007 that two scholars brought attention to the phenomenon of Sinicization. The first is Gary G. Xu's *Sinascape: Contemporary Chinese Cinema*, and the other is Shu-mei Shih's canonical work, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*. Xu's work provides a sharp insight as to the way in which transnational Chinese cinema is constituted through media manipulation rather than through local contexts at the turn of the twenty-first century. The "colonization of virtual space" has created many symbols of Chinese signifiers based on transnational media representations which he refers to as Sinascape (2). Situated in a transnational network, Xu settles for the term Chinese cinema for he believes that cinema is heterogeneous, transnational and political. Moreover, he insists on Sinascape, in spite of being a flexible network, represents films produced "of and about China" (17, 19). In combating the dominance of Hollywood cinema, the pan-sinicization lens will inevitably play into the hand of globalization and consumerism, failing to recognize independent filmmakers' efforts and engagement in local contexts. On the other hand, with an attempt to challenge the regimes of Chinese authenticity and coherency, Shih's book engages in signifying Sinophone as "a network

[3] *Han* is referred to as an East Asian ethnic group. It gained prominence when Imperial China reached international influence and is used to describe "the dominant ethnic group in China" in the Oxford Dictionary. For example, *han-ren* means Chinese people. Being Han-centric suggests an attitude of historical determinism that denies changes in view or dis-identification from people living outside of mainland China.

of places of cultural production outside China and on the margins of China and Chineseness" (4). It not only works to counter against the symbolically nationalist discourse enforced by China but also serves as a critique to the imperialist host land, such as the U.S., from a diasporic perspective (ibid. 4). Through her analysis of Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*—which casts four actors speaking in four jarring accents—how that works together to reject the dominant and supposedly normative use of Mandarin Chinese as the orthodox dialect in the martial arts genre, Shih states that not only the unique linguistic dissonance validates the existence of marginalized Sinophone communities, but that the director's identity is a temporal category that is not confined to cultural, political, or geographical determinations (186).

The linguistic incongruence has become a powerful tool for the local residents or cultural producers to separate themselves from cultural-China. Hong Kong TV and film production experienced a decline in mandarin Chinese productions and a continuous growth in Cantonese productions in the early- to mid- 1970s. The release of the film *The House of Seventy-two Tenants,* which was shot and recorded in Cantonese, debunked the long-term mandarin-dominant film production. People who lived on the island of Taiwan, including the indigenous community, had been forced to receive colonial education demanded under different regimes. As a result, Taiwan is composed of a diverse ethnic demographic ranging from the aborigines, Hakka, Hokkien (also known as Minnanese or Taiwanese), and mainland Chinese, all characterized by a long colonial history that has yielded to a society with mixed identities and linguistic diversity. Rather than privileging the Chinese identity, the preference of "Hong Konger" and "Taiwanese" over "Chinese" is one of the signifiers that signals a growing local awareness and therefore marks Sinophone as a preferable category to Chinese-language. Two important functions of Sinophone are emphasized by Shih. First, Sinophone is only a transitional category that may represent only partial groups within a certain period subjected to the agency of residents and the complexities of culture. Second, in response to the linguistic aspect of Chinese cinemas, Shih proposes that Sinophone articulation serves as a means to construct new identities and cultures in the trend of global capitalism. As such, Sinophone brings forward the marginal and yet diverse cultures and languages that is previously shadowed by Chinese cinema. In the same year, Olivia Khoo published *The Chinese Exotic: Modern Diasporic Femininity*, which brings the Chinese diaspora to the centre of Chinese film studies. Conceptualizing ex-

centricity, Khoo demonstrates the new representation of diasporic Chinese femininity that shifts from premodern colonial exoticism of the West to a self-consciously constituted “modern ex-centric representation” (23). De-centring Mainland China as the epistemological and cultural centre of ‘Chineseness’, Khoo proposes that a nascent subjectivity, which is the Chinese exotic, is generated from transnational practices and the exchange of gaze. Her analysis of the epistemological underpinnings to notions of exoticism, orientalism and postcolonialism forms a strong methodological bedrock that counters against the dominant China-centred representations of femininity. Nonetheless, her argument of transnational China being defined as “an increasingly integrated entity comprising mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and overseas Chinese communities around the world,” still implicitly upholds China as the centre of studies (13).

Despite that the notion of Sinophone is strongly critiqued by Zhang and Lu for its oppositional connotations (inside vs. outside, China vs. non-China), Shih successfully initiated a rigorous, self-reflexive, and place-based feminist discourse in the Chinese cultural studies field. The discourse reveals that the China vs. non-China binary has long been constructed by previous scholars who emphasize the East vs. West division in order to strengthen a competitive national film culture. Quite the contrary, in Sinophone societies, while whiteness is not the main issue, more attention is paid to the issues and the power play between dominant and minor ethnicities, postcolonial identity issues, and government policy against/for open market economy (contexts of cultural revolution, censorship, propaganda etc.). Shih reveals that cultural colonization is never one-way but is instead multi-directional and multi-layered. China cannot assume the victim position without reflecting on its (un)conscious adoption and maneuvering of neo-colonial and self-orientalizing measures.

Drawing on Marxist theory, visual theory, and production studies, Shih extensively lays out multifaceted factors between production and consumption that involve the ever-changing roles of the producer(s), the labourer(s), the consumer(s) in forming visual economy and identities that could replicate and resist the exiting or reproduced power relations. It is in her recognition of this unsettling nature of Sinophone visual culture that enables a critical reflection on the multi-accented, multi-located, and multi-economized visual production. Sinophone works on several levels. Linguistically, even though Mandarin Chinese has never been promulgated as the official language of Taiwan, the Nationalist Party/KMT has endeavoured—forcefully to some extent—to

foster the broader use and legitimation of Mandarin Chinese. In turn, this works to legitimize the ruling of KMT by its meticulous eradication of local cultures and the use of dialects be it Minnanese/Taiwanese, Hakka, Indigenous languages, or Japanese. The assimilation process therefore produces a group of "authentic Chinese culture preservers," who view themselves as culturally superior to the islanders (Shih 4, 2007). The superiority is further intensified as the political and economic resources were recouped under KMT by illegally redistributing wealth amongst themselves. Since the handover to the PRC in 1997, Hong Kong also has witnessed a rapidly diminishing local culture and language in the face of the PRC's authoritative control over its Executive Chief elections. Films such as *Midnight After* (dir. Fruit Chan) and *Ten Years* (dir. Jevons Au, 2015) express distrust and anxiety towards the imminent wipeout of Cantonese culture and dialects. As Khoo illustrates, "The characterization of Mandarin as linguistically constitutive of Chineseness merely reinstates China as the fixed center in discussions about Chinese ethnicity" (14, 2007). In both cases, Sinophone bypasses the linguistic dominance of Mandarin Chinese (putonghua/guoyu) and the extension of it by the KMT regime as the orthodox language.

Shih further elaborates on a new form of imperialism manifested through China's internal colonization and it can be subcategorized into three suits: continental colonialism (in the case of Xinjiang, Tibet and Mongol); settler colonialism (a sense of loyalty and belonging to the homeland imposed on Chinese diaspora); and (im)migration (the eternal Chinese status assigned to the diaspora particularly in the case of ethnic and linguistic minority) (2012). It is under these various forms of colonization that Sinophone communities are produced. In Shih's regard, Sinophone eludes the emphasis on ethnicities and nationality, rejects the abstract universalistic Chineseness enforced upon Sinophone communities, and enables a view that provides a new way of meaning production that "introduces difference, contradiction, and contingency into those [ideologically and politically fixed] Chinese identities" (35, 2007).

As discussed above, scholars have endeavoured to create a constructive dialogue in academia while looking for a term that is not necessarily more comprehensive but at least non-essentializing; one that could be inclusive of Chinese-language/Sinophone/Chinese diasporic cinemas. A 2012 issue of the *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* features these three important scholars—Lu, Shih and Khoo—and their recent articles that engage with the category debate. Lu, Shih and Khoo make efforts in

theorizing and extending their analyses of Chinese cinema studies, both contemporarily and historically, foregrounding the category debate as an ongoing, urgent, and imperative topic. Lu in “Notes on Four Major Paradigms in Chinese-language Film Studies” extends Song Hwee Lim’s earlier framework that identifies three major paradigms in Chinese film studies: “Chinese national cinema,” “transnational Chinese cinema,” and “Chinese-language cinema” (2–7, 2006). Arguing that the three paradigms allegedly serve to situate a unified Chinese cinematic tradition despite their methodological differences, Lu adds “Sinophone cinema” to be the fourth paradigm, which he believes is significant for its ability to critically challenge the China-centred positionality in Chinese film studies. In his overview of the four paradigms, he argues that material determinations, whether territorial, cultural or linguistic, must be at first clearly defined in order to use the Chinese national cinema framework. Similar to *Chinese National Cinema* (2004), Zhang in his *Cinema, Space, and Polylocality in a Globalizing China* (2010) uses translocality and polylocality to elaborate on the messiness of Chinese nationhood but still operates under the framework of Chinese national cinema. The second paradigm—transnational Chinese cinema—situated in the post-cold war period in the 1990s, coincides with the digital boom and transnational co-productions in the film industry that significantly break national boundaries as well as advance the circulation and perception of Chinese-language cinema to the world. Thus, the notion of transnational Chinese cinema reflects a scattered, postmodern, and flexible view, whereas the Chinese national cinema model emphasizes coherence, unity, and identifiable traditions. Under this paradigm, Lu proposes to further subdivide transnational cinema into smaller categories depending on their various attributes such as commercial, independent or diasporic because the idea of transnational Chinese cinema is not a one-way process but rather multi-directional. Lu in this article briefly summarizes the third paradigm: Chinese-language cinema, and argues conclusively that “the term entails scholars to circumvent certain thorny issues without getting into the pitfalls of the politics of modern Chinese nation state” (20). Interestingly, as one of the advocates, Lu fails to address any limits of this term. As a response to Shih’s “The Concept of the Sinophone” published in 2011, Lu enlists “Sinophone cinema” as a new paradigm in Chinese cinema studies. Compared to his silence to the limitation of Chinese-language as a category, Lu criticizes that Sinophone ostracizes China from the body of Shih’s analysis and is utilized as a force to purposefully oppose China. Instead, he proposes a wider definition of Sinophone that includes China along with Taiwan,

Hong Kong, Macau and the Chinese diaspora rather than excluding it. While acknowledging the idea of anti-centrism in Sinophone, he nonetheless believes in the interchangeability between “Chinese-language” and “Sinophone.” For him, neither of which is monolithic but rather unsettled. He invalidates Sinophone as a counter-hegemonic discourse for he believes that neither Greater China in his definition implies to be oppressive or colonial.

To her defence, Shih responds that the imposition of ‘Chinese’ has at the very beginning set up a hegemonic discourse and dismissed other linguistic minorities whether they are geographically inside or outside of the China territory through colonial and minoritization discourses. According to Shih, Sinophone departs from the notion of ancestral belonging of one ethnicity but rather takes into consideration the many different kinds of local, Sinitic experiences and engagements on their own behalf. Shih’s analysis of Taiwan in her recent article “The Sinophone as History and the Sinophone as Theory” addresses the issue of how indigenous culture in Taiwan also suffers from imperialism and assimilation enforced by the Nationalist Party under their ruling. Therefore, Sinophone is not only an effort to interrogate China as an empire but also reveals and challenges all probable forms of colonization and erasure of local culture. Audrey Yue and Olivia Khoo take part in the debate in their article titled “From Diasporic Cinemas to Sinophone Cinemas: An Introduction.” They provide an overview of the many arguments surrounding the methodological differences in studying Chinese cinemas from Shih, Lu, and Song. They recognize the inclination of adopting Sinophone in film studies and reaffirm Shih’s critique which considers the use of “Chinese diasporic” as Han-centric. At the same time, they address Sinophone’s limit for it cannot necessarily contain diasporic or non-Chinese language cultural practices and studies. Song in *The Chinese Cinema Book* also challenges Sinophone’s “lingua-centrism” as its linguistic purity and could possibly exclude ethno-specific localities when the language is no longer used. It is clear that the complex historiography in defining Chinese cinema will henceforth accompany an interrogation to the contemporarily acceptable model of Sinophone cinema studies. I observe the potential to apply Sinophone to diasporic cinema studies and how it could meaningfully engage transpacific cultural studies as evidenced in Khoo’s research.

The use of Sinophone in Hong Kong cinema takes a slightly different contour. One of Khoo’s key concepts addressed in *The Chinese Exotic* is positioning Hong Kong

cinema culturally and economically as a Chinese diaspora that occupies an alternative Asian modernity distinctive from the Chinese tradition. Chinese diaspora is also not confined to a fixed boundary-making process. Rather, it signifies new experiences and economy generated outside of the motherland as Hong Kong remains to be a unique cultural hub resulted from its popularity in visual and audio products and its established media economy. Shih, on the other hand, chooses to categorize Hong Kong into the Sinophone community similarly to Sinophone Taiwan. Yet, she foretells with caution that Sinophone Hong Kong may cease to be a Sinophone community when Mandarin Chinese is increasingly taught and spoken in the region (Shih 164, 2007). Recognizing that the contingency of Sinophone rests upon the political statuses of the regions, Yingchi Chu's analysis proposes to view Hong Kong cinema as one entity that has moved in and out of the framework of national cinema and stands as a unique case in relation to national cinema. In her analysis in *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self*, Chu scrutinizes the historical, political and cultural influences laid on Hong Kong cinema, manifesting as an ambivalent embodiment of national cinema as a result of the triangular relation between China, British colonizer and Hong Kong. Hong Kong cinema, according to Chu, throughout the century undergoes three phases: Chinese national cinema (a period where nostalgic Chinese cultural cinema dominated before the 1950s); Chinese diasporic cinema (during 1950s—1970s when South-East Asians enabled a film industry beyond the communist mainland) and Hong Kong quasi-national cinema (1970s-1997 when a strong national identity of Hong Kong community is established to negotiate politically with the British government and the motherland), which she believes is a continuing status even after the return. Chu's approach reaffirms my belief that a case-by-case take on cinema studies allows careful attention paid to various historical, governmental and local specificities.[4]

To summarize, the framework of Chinese cinema is no longer sufficient to encompass films affiliated with Taiwan, Hong Kong, or the diaspora. Lu's use of Chinese-language is overarching and flexible enough but yet is strongly inclined to uphold China as the centre, whereas Shih's use of Sinophone attends to intra-national and international politics. Sinophone functions to reveal the inherent power imbalances

[4] For the scope of this research, my use of Sinophone does not include works from Taiwanese diaspora, Hong Kong diaspora or Chinese diaspora. I hope to expand my research and include diasporic filmmaking practices in the future.

among all the regions with an engagement to foreground regional differences and particularities. Embodying an anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist spirit, Shih's adoption and theorization of Sinophone radically interrogate Chinese cultural imperialism and the minoritization of Cantonese, Southeast Asian, indigenous, Taiwanese, and Hakka cultures. I believe that the use of Sinophone best represents my work as I strive to challenge the Han-centric hierarchy and to explore the heterogenous engagements inside and outside of the regions. As Shih puts it eloquently, "The Sinophone frustrates easy suturing, […] while foregrounding the value of difficulty, difference, and heterogeneity" (ibid. 5). Similarly, my research aims to decentralize the dominance of narrative cinema, the cultural hegemony of China as well as the gendered oppression enacted by patriarchy, nationalism and capitalism in the three regions. The alternative cinematic practices in the three regions represent three different forces countering the mainstream Chinese-language cinema.

Towards Sinophone Documentary Studies

Documentary film studies in the three regions in current English-language scholarship have also engaged documentary studies via different lenses and taken different directions that reflect their own social, cultural, political and economic contexts. Documentary films from the three regions similarly provide their unique perspectives to the world. The New Documentary Movement, comprising urban filmmakers from the Sixth Generation and the youth cinema in the PRC, and embodying a collective spirit in opposition to the didactic "special topic program (zhuantipian)" previously implemented by the government, has been a central topic among literal Chinese cinema studies (Zhang 2007; Berry et al. 2010). Ian Aitken and Michael Ingham spent five years of research and published *Hong Kong Documentary Film* in 2014. This book provides a comprehensive survey of the history of Hong Kong documentary films from the late nineteenth century up to present date. It might come as a surprise that Hong Kong documentary films are much unnoticed and understudied before Aitken and Ingham took upon this incredible task. Two books have been devoted to the study of Taiwan documentaries in the English-language scholarship. They are *Documenting Taiwan on Film* (2012) edited by Sylvia Li-chun Lin and Tzw-Ian D. Sang and *New Chinese-Language Documentaries: Ethics, Subject and Place* (2015) edited by Kuei-fen Chiu and Yingjin Zhang. The former dedicates itself to Taiwan documentary film studies since the

lifting of martial law in 1987 and focuses on he diverse topics explored in various films and the thorny issues of ethics and representation in certain documentary films. The latter revamps the term ‘New Chinese-language Documentaries’ by grouping Taiwan and PRC-based documentaries together, examining the production, content, and aesthetics in several award-winning contemporary documentary films. This method of grouping coincides with my opening discussion about the institutionalization of documentary film. Contrary to the development of Chinese narrative cinema studies moving from homogenization to diversification, documentary film in the three regions has been studied separately and is rarely incorporated into the overarching category of Chinese-language cinema until 2015. This phenomenon reaffirms the global trend and the vision of CNEX, where reorienting and consolidating measures of regionalization seem to mesh well with visibility enhancing and brand promoting.

In light of this new direction in documentary studies of the three regions, I tackle the historical tactics of hegemonic politics implicated *within* Chinese, Taiwanese, and Hong Kong cinema across the different regimes. Sinophone documentary film studies serve to decentralize the dominance of narrative cinema, the cultural hegemony of China as well as the gendered oppression enacted by patriarchy, nationalism and capitalism in the three regions. In this project, I foreground the multi-Sinitic experiences that are produced in and across the three regions and with an emphasis on women filmmakers and the intersections between gender, class, and sexuality. Sinophone documentary cinema, to borrow Shih’s concept, also shares its form as “practice and action” (Shih 5, 2007). In my examination of women’s documentary films as a hybridized subject of artistry and activism, I suggest that the independent cinematic practices in the three regions also represent three different forces countering the contemporary mainstream Chinese-language cinema. By looking at the aesthetics, themes and labor conditions in producing documentary films, I hope to explore documentary as an *alternative* practice, drawing potential linkage between feminist transnationality and documentary, and bring significance to female documentary filmmaking practices.

The next chapter will locate and synthesize English-language works of literature with the correlated theories, concepts and intersections that concern feminist film theory, documentary film studies, and cultural policy studies. Specifically, I look into studies on national film policies, the history and the colonial aspects of documentary films and its relation to the state, along with the connections between feminism and documentary

filmmaking. My objective, on the one hand, is to identify relevant theories that intersect between documentary and government policies which encompass proto-documentary, governmentality studies, media and cultural policy and mediated citizenship. On the other hand, I examine a select number of national examples, identifying both theoretical and national differences in socialist, capitalist, and neoliberal contexts. With the integration of three fields of study: cultural industry, policy, and feminist film criticism, I discuss the extensions and limitations of these conceptualizations in relation to my research. I also shed light the methodological framework for my own research inquires: Sinophone documentary production studies.

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Chapter 3.

Approaching Documentary Production Culture: Theoretical Roots and Routes

The study of documentary production reflects the conditions of independent filmmaking in the three regions. The degree to which the scarcity of funding and of exhibition and distribution venues remain obstacles for documentary filmmakers to overcome, particularly when considering the relationship filmmakers hold with various agents. The once central role of TV broadcasting as public service providers of documentary funding and exhibition in Taiwan and Hong Kong is now slowly merging with the new platform of international documentary film festivals. The government sector has also increasingly expanded its organizations through which documentaries receive monetary and award-related recognition. However, it remains contested whether TV documentaries gain exposure at the expense of filmmakers losing ownership of their products. The inextricable relationship between the government, the institutions, and documentary filmmakers allows further exploration about what constitutes independent cinema and what they are independent of. Finally, the films being produced locally—sponsored or legitimized by state-owned or non-government organizations and channelled through international festivals—influence the social status, self-identity, and the negotiating power of independent female documentary filmmakers.

My dissertation contributes to documentary film studies and Sinophone studies by examining the positionality of Sinophone female documentarians amidst the changing social and political climates since the 1980s. The institutionalization of Chinese-language documentary films in the late 2000s obscures their marginalization in the past and dissolves the tension as to who legitimates third-world film culture. International and domestic critics' obsession with the patriarchal construction of national film culture homogenizes third-world film culture in general. In order to showcase how Sinophone documentary films by women have been marginalized by respective national film discourses in the three regions historically. I rely on the parameters highlighted in production studies to foreground power dynamics across various hierarchical interactions between institutions and practitioners in order to showcase how, historically, Sinophone documentary films by women have been marginalized by national film

discourses in the three regions. In this chapter, I present the roots and routes of my research with an aim to showcase the depth and breadth of the vexed relationship amongst cultural policy studies, media industry studies, feminist film theory and Sinophone studies. I outline the theoretical grounds of this research project and propose a model for viewing women documentary-making as an alternative practice to regional nationalism. My research does not invalidate any existing methods of reading documentaries but rather I concur that documentaries matter and are fascinating for they have "come to subsist, precariously, at a crossroads of contemporary culture, somewhere between journalism, film narrative and television entertainment" (Fraser x, xiv). My research is supplemented by textual analysis with the contextualization of the material conditions surrounding the production itself in order to expose the conundrum of documentary-making in the three regions. By combining views from production studies and Sinophone studies, I aim to deconstruct the implicit and explicit projections of nationhood permeating the mainstream cinemas of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

In order to choose the best tool with careful assessment, I focus on the ones that highlight the interplay of power relationships between the state and documentary filmmaking practices by drawing on film and media studies, cultural policy studies, and the historical and colonial aspects of documentary film and its relation to the state. My goal is to first identify methodological and theoretical crossroads and to detail the perspective that I will take to address the gaps and shortcomings in the scholarship. This chapter consists of four parts. Part one presents select key concerns in documentary film studies and showcases the increased awareness to study media culture with a policy perspective that is currently in shortage. Part two examines the relationship between film policy and national cinema, with an aim to identify how national narrative cinema and documentary cinema are differently approached and affected. Part three incorporates feminist film criticism and auteur theory to signal the overlaps and gaps between feminist film theory and documentary film studies. This part demonstrates that contemporary documentary films and women's films remain marginalized and subordinated to mainstream narrative cinema. This is not only as a result of the dominance of hegemonic Hollywood productions but also the inherently gendered, racialized and hierarchized processes of globalization (Wang 2011, 2). The last section reviews the theoretical frameworks identified and illustrates my research method. Ultimately, this chapter identifies a variety of theoretical frameworks that associate

documentary films with state intervention. I demonstrate how films have served national-building purposes historically with the exception of Sinophone women's documentary films.

Part One: Issues in Documentary Film Studies and Governmentality

Documentary film studies acknowledges the omission of documentary film in film theory and defies definition (Winston 1). Documentary as a term was first coined by the Anglophone documentary pioneer John Grierson after watching *Moana* (1926) but the Lumiere brothers' "actuality" films displayed in 1895 in New York City were credited to be the first documentary films in film history (Barsam 4, 81). Before and after its official coinage, the world film culture remains obsessed with narrative films as the profit-making machine and what represents film as an art form. Documentary film content and form concomitantly developed in accordance with technological development and filmmakers' intervention. In terms of content, documentary film claims to present actuality, namely real people, events and locations. Yet, it separates itself from journalism for it renounces an unbiased stance as with reportage. Documentary films also have a long history affiliated with propaganda during war times. During World War Two, films became one of the most effective tools in spreading and instilling national ideologies for either totalitarian or democratic governments (Barsam 122-133, 200–205). The Nazi Party relied on film as a medium to indoctrinate its people, under the disguise of educational purposes. In 1952, Rosaleen Smyth quoted the Director of Information Services at the Colonial Office of Britain who declared that the "British documentary movement was the "big brother" of colonial cinema" for the purpose of shaping public opinion and enlightening its viewers (81). Contemporary documentary films actually appear closer to the image of Griersonian documentary in which documentary films bear the responsibility of social critique. John Grierson's canonical short documentary film *Housing Problems* (1935) not only thematically concerns the "documentary sobriety, neutrality and objectivity," but aesthetically establishes a voice (male) that is capable of imparting issues and responsibilities to British urban dwellers (ibid. 70). Therefore, treating documentary as a fluid combination of social concern, actuality and artistic expression has become the norm.

Technologically speaking, like its fictional counterpart, documentary films similarly developed in stages from the silent era to synchronous sound and from film to the digital format. Nonetheless, unlike how narrative film form is broken down into various narrative-constructing registers such as mise-en-scène, story structure and genre associated with recurring motifs, documentary film analysis focuses on how the filmmakers engage the so-called "reality." Two broader approaches can be identified in documentary films: non-interventional and interventional. The two methods may coexist in one single film and may also be blended according to the creator's will. What belongs to the non-interventional is Direct Cinema, a style that gained prominence in the 1960s (Barsam 300). Filmmakers who appreciate the value of objectivity reject giving direction on the scene but act like a fly on the wall on location. However, according to Brian Winston, when direct cinema was first applied in documentary film history, it did not represent an ideological resistance but rather an adjustment to the heavy-weighted 16mm film cameras and sound equipment. It even retained a hegemonic status during the period (Winston 3–4). Yet, it should be emphasized that direct cinema represents unrehearsed, unscripted and spontaneous shooting with lightweight equipment that enables it. On the other hand, the interventionist approach can take place during both the production and post-production stages. *Nanook of the North* (dir. Robert Flaherty, 1922) captivated its audience not only by its rare documentation of the subject's everyday activity but the rearrangement of footages in postproduction that canvased a family melodrama. Similarly, *House Problems* (dir. John Grierson, 1935) adopted a commentary approach interspersed with interviews, resembling a newsreel but waives objectivity by probing deeper into social problems. In contemporary documentaries, reconstruction or re-enactment of a historical event is also commonly seen and used. All such interventions are rejected by direct cinema. Direct cinema emphasizes minimal-to-zero intervention and refrains from hiring actors to recreate scenes even though it is based on a true event. However, the division between interventionist and non-interventional could be blurred if we consider the shooting subject's awareness and behaviourial change in light of the presence of a camera and the issue of ethics that comes with it. Whether the subjects can act naturally with the presence of a camera remains questionable. Not only is the claim of pure objectivity distorted, but the documentary practice itself is continuously inflicted with ethical concerns over whether the filmmakers are giving voice to subjects or subjecting them to the gaze of unknown viewers. What is worst of all, the filmmakers might be accused of appropriating the

subject's story for their own reputation. Documentary, after all, is fraught with challenges with regard to issues of authenticity, objectivity, and authority.

Bill Nichols offers a definition that allows documentary filmmakers to take a breather. He argues that "documentary offers access to a shared historical construct" (109, 1991). As documentary film style and technique develop, the degree of filmmakers' involvement also changes. For direct cinema, the filmmakers adopt a non-intervening position and leave the judging to the audience. Cinéma vérité (Truth Cinema), first invented by French filmmaker Jean Rouch, rejects the use of omnipresent Voice-of-God style but provokes truth by the filmmakers' creative intervention via interviews or avant-garde editing. The best examples are *Chronicle of a Summer* (dir. Jean Rouch, 1961) and *Roger and Me* (dir. Michael Moore, 1989). Contemporary documentary films cross boundaries and experiment with mixed styles. The combination of styles serves the main purpose—the discourse of sobriety that includes science, economics, politics, and history discourses (Nichols 3, 1991). These discourses—constructed by real people, events and locations—are represented in various ways determined by the material conditions the filmmakers are in and the creative choices the filmmakers make. The filmmakers translate their perspective of the world into visual form. In this sense, what defines documentary is less of an issue, but rather, documentary provides a distinct point of view of addressing *to* the world. According to Nichols, "They are a representation of the world, and this representation stands for a particular view of the world. The voice of documentary, then, is the means by which this particular point of view or perspective becomes known to us" (43, 2001).

With its long existence throughout the twentieth century, documentary studies in English scholarship have solidified their academic position in the 1980s. Documentary film is studied via many different lenses including historiography, ethics, sobriety, form and content, genre and style, documentary future, and the interactions of these various elements. As previously noted, documentary films are always fraught with interrogations of objectivity, sobriety, and authority. Yet, documentary production culture remains understudied. Documentary production culture has yet been clearly defined. Documentary film straddles between community media, creative art and social activism, whereby documentary production culture is simultaneously shaped by filmmakers, subjects, professional and informal organizations and audiences that co-constitute the meanings of documentary. From a reception perspective, documentary films are upheld

by a variety of audience constituencies from popular, niche, educated and average viewers. Production-wise, it resembles fiction film production in production stages but differs in the inclusion and exclusion of real subject matter. In other words, documentary filmmakers acquire similar knowledge in film techniques but approach a subject matter in different styles. One assumption about documentary film production is that its production size tends to be smaller in scale and thus is cheaper to make. Documentary films have also been seen as an entry-level experience or a good practice before entering the multi-layered, hierarchically-structured narrative film production. Yet, unlike how average feature-length narrative film productions are able to complete shooting in a few months, the length of documentary production varies drastically and could sometimes take an indefinite amount of time. For example, *Grizzly Man* (2005), a documentary film directed by Werner Herzog, presents a 103-minute film about the 13 years of footage shot by the main subject, Timothy Treadwell. There is also *Up*, a documentary film series that spans 56 years following the lives of 14 British children from 1964 to 2009 and has undergone changes in production crew and distributors. The temporality of documentary productions fluctuates as a result of the uncertainty of working conditions as well as working with real subject matter. This volatile nature requires documentary filmmakers to be flexible at every production stage and be prepared for any changes that arise. Working with real subjects invites greater complexities. The subjects (i.e. interviewees, events, locations etc.) usually do not receive monetary rewards in narrative film production (unlike paid actors). This raises the issue of ethics as the relationship between the director and the so-called subjects blur the divide between the professional and the private. Documentary filmmakers, having obtained similar film production knowledge, operate in distinct production modes and cultures when compared to fiction filmmakers. The institutionalization of documentary films in a way sells non-profit subjects to profitable platforms as they propose their ideas to potential commission editors or buyers. Consent, trust, and dependability between filmmakers and subjects become the informal bond that sustains the invisible contract that could be terminated or extended on short notices. Nonetheless, without institutional support, documentary films end up being unseen works buried in the hard drives of less resourceful filmmakers. As Julia Lesage puts it, “a [documentary] voice without listeners might as well be silent” (266). All these uncertainties associated with documentary films make documentary production culture a fascinating and complex subject of study. The push and pull power

dynamics are constantly shifting as documentary filmmakers move along different production stages.

What I am particularly interested in at this juncture is how to theorize and historicize Sinophone female documentarians and their works in combination with production studies and documentary studies in light of the changing media landscape as a result of globalization, glocalization, and neoliberalization. Sinophone documentary films are marginalized on many levels as these works are trivialized as a result of the multiple layers of hegemony**.** Production studies as a field of study works to illuminate two things. First, it works to capture the ways in which "power operates locally through media production to reproduce social hierarchies and inequalities at the level of daily interaction" (Mayer 15). Second, it addresses "the real ways that local communities construct their subjectivities in the face of [the] consolidations of media capital and reconfigurations of media work" (ibid. 15). It may appear overarching, but the contributors in this field emphasize that production studies is less concerned about "the strategies of media industries or corporations or governments or their various institutions […] but in the goals of producers, in their own words" (Banks et al. xi). To expand on this, production studies scholarship approaches and makes sense of media producers and their practices through interdisciplinary inquiry. This includes seeking ways to understand culture-making as acts that reflect the social power dynamics, grounding social theory on various media sites, actors and activities, and highlighting the lived experience of cultural practitioners (ibid. 2–10). As an emerging field, production studies acknowledges that it does not purport to be the best solution to all inquires. Rather, production studies has enabled me to chart local and regional production hierarchies and inequalities while foregrounding the filmmakers' role in decision-making and content producing. Recognizing how important the process is in finding, seeing and using feminist documentary films (Lesage 266), my investigation of Sinophone documentary films by women sheds light on the scarcity and marginality of them in both academia and film production culture.

Documentary production culture should be understood on intra-personal, interpersonal and institutional levels. It not only represents how the filmmakers address to the world but also how filmmakers participate and interact with various social, cultural, political and economic elements. My method resonates with Bill Nichols as he provides four lenses when approaching documentaries: an institutional framework; a community

of practitioners; a corpus of texts; and a constituency of viewers (20–41, 2011). I believe that these four angles cannot be treated independently. I begin with Michel Foucault's essay on governmentality and demonstrate how governmentality has been applied to read culture and media.

"Governmentality" is a lecture delivered by Foucault in 1978. Government, first borrowed from Guillaume de La Perriere, was referred to as "the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end" (Burchell et al. 93). It is later redefined and reemphasized by Foucault as a departure from the politics of state control to "the conduct of conduct" (Burchell et al. 2). Governmentality thus holds a different meaning from "government" for it relies on the acts that are acted upon free subjects and the self that shapes the contour of government rationality. According to Foucault, this shift is signalled by the emergence of a renewed form of "art of government," which is an interchangeable term of governmentality if understood in a liberal context and is adopted by the government proclaiming its concern about the people and the state's security and prosperity, or more specifically, the economy. Extending Foucault's concept, Colin Gordon discusses the genealogy in governmentality dealing with the welfare state and neoliberalism. According to Gordon, policy, moving from minimal intervention (*laissez-faire*), works as a significant instrument to "[create] ethical and cultural values" (Burchell et al. 42) by embedding the social/individual with the mindset of governing his/her everyday life in an enterprise form. This means that neoliberalism furthers this approach and turns an individual into human capital, embodying the two qualities of producing and consuming, an entrepreneur. This correlates to one of the key concepts of governmentality—incessantly reemphasized by Foucault and Gordon—which is that it is manifested through the simultaneous process of *totalizing* and *individualizing (italics mine)*. In other words, Foucault stresses that the practices enacted, and thoughts put through to figure out effective governing depends on the inseparability and interdependence between governing all and the governing of the self. To be more specific, governmentality, in relation to liberalism, is understood to not to be based on one fixed top-down power structure but rather depends on the incorporation of various technologies that function in two ways. The first being operating from an authoritative position and the second is rendering private the power to free individuals for self-governing. Mitchell Dean furthers this notion and describes it as the mechanisms of government by looking into "how we govern and are governed" (Dean 23). Dean views it

in two active terms: to authorize and to facilitate. Dean refocuses Foucault's governmentality specifically through an analysis of several major concepts such as police, *raision d'état* (reason of state), biopolitics and their significant relations to governmentality, as well as studying its critical and political orientation in the genealogy of liberalism, neoliberalism and international spaces in which the styles of governing shift accordingly from dispositional, processual to reflexive. Dean's analysis of the rationale of government before and when the secular state emerged coincides with French colonial documentary cinema that embodies the essence of governmental apparatuses in the name of the salvation of humanity and thus was seen as an instrument to form a unified national ideology (Bloom 2008). On the other hand, Nikolas Rose articulates how the history of "psy" discipline (psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis) functions as an instrument connected to the history of government as a regime of regulating the ideal self. He illustrates that both the notion of "self" and the normative discourses have been widely challenged in many disciplines such as feminist studies, philosophy, anthropology and history. However, it is pivotal to understand subjectification "in a complex of apparatuses, practices, machinations and assemblages within which human being has been fabricated, and which presuppose and enjoin particular relations with ourselves" (Rose, *Inventing* 10). Rose's idea of the systemic freedom acted upon on human beings echoes Foucault's notion of the technologies of self through the fabricated games of truth. Rose further draws a tighter connection between psy and governmentality, and suggests the enterprise of ethics (autonomy, individuality and self-fulfillment etc.) are internalized and built upon economics, efficiency consumption and family. Such instruments work in tandem with neoliberalism, translating self-worth into the achievement of a successful way of life. Similarly demonstrating a historical continuum of the government mentality begun in the nineteenth century to the twenty-first, Rose argues that governmentality "can diagnose the multitude of relation of power, knowledge, technique and ethics through which the conduct of human beings is shaped by others and by themselves" (Rose, *Power* 274) varying in settings from the social, the community and the market in advanced liberalism. Rose neatly re-articulates and re-envisions the ways in which the state's role is reduced to one element that reacts to the changes of communication and reflexively acts upon individuals in the contingent discourses of power, freedom and control in the globalizing era. All in all, Foucault, Dean and Rose contend that governmentality reflects two simultaneous processes—totalizing and individualizing—or in other terms, to authorize and to facilitate, to regulate and to

self-regulate, to govern others and to govern oneself. It operates via a fragmented assemblage of instruments, institutions, and programs and is applicable to as large as biopolitics to as small as family economy.

Foucault, Dean and Rose's works were followed by many theorists, who sought to find out about the application of governmentality in cultural studies. In the realm of culture, the state plays the coordinator role, operating differently in various political and national contexts (Bratich et al. 6). Moreover, the scope of investigation straddles across formations from the nation, quasi-nation, to privatized institutions, which all in all exemplifies the complex relationship between culture and governing. Tony Bennet carries forth Foucault's notion of *raision d'état* that is comprised of the "games of truth," subjecting the ruled into a rationalization and legitimating process in the belief of art of government and the sanctioning of experts to regulate and sustain the technical apparatuses. The blurring between the two distinct definitions of culture: culture as meaning production and culture as everyday activity acted upon certain purposes and programs, situate governmentality as an analytical entry to cultural studies (Bennet 48). This means that it is through the mediation of technologies that advances the process of subjectification, which coincides with Rose's insight into personhood. A good case can be seen in Laurie Ouellette and James Hay's finding that the way the U.S. as a neo-liberal government fashions the notion of "reinventing government" allows it to occupy a dual locality of both the private and the public sector (473). The ways in which mediation, promotion, and the makeover of television constitute the image of an ideal citizen renders reality TV culture one privatized instrument that subjects citizens to self-regulation, guiding and shaping their daily conduct that conforms to the achievement of an ideal projection.

Governmentality clearly plays a central role in media production. The mainstream content reflects the double edges of governmentality, the representation of self-disciplined images and behaviours in the disguise of the attainment of individual control. This also ties to the concept of citizenship as Jeffrey P. Jones analyzes how citizenship is constituted through media, and how this form of mediated citizenship may assist in understanding the correlation between the state and the citizen. This is further supported by Lauren Berlant, who portrays the burgeoning and continuously mediated national identity that is imposed on Americans through the infantile citizenship discourse. This is a term she coined that reflects the pure and young patriotism embedded in the

construction of an idealized citizen. This idealized citizen holds true the freeness of nation and media culture and internalizes such righteousness of mentality which in fact is fashioned by the state in order to live and act successfully in the national and capitalist system. Berlant's notion of infantile citizenship can be seen in the case of Singapore. Terence Lee addresses the lack of individual freedom and autonomy in Singapore's cultural exemplification. He critiques the privileged Singapore government which confers itself with the right to the overall representation of Singaporeans through the technologies of media control conforming its citizens' everyday conducts to manipulated, monitored and controlled ideological and political subjects (2010). Singapore's government adopts technologies and games in the name of freedom and liberty, engendering a unified national, political, and economical identity among Singaporeans from childhood through governmental citizenship. The process of enacting subjectification of autonomous citizens resembles both Rose's personhood and Berlant's infantile citizenship where pastoral power is covertly at play for the ultimate national cause.

What has been argued so far indicates that citizenship can be strategically incorporated in various power operations and apparatuses through cultural mediation and thus becomes an effective tool used to regulate the population. Such cultural displays of power and the legitimation of power are not arbitrary but rather a product of cultural policies. Several scholars have emphasized the importance of the cultural policy perspective when analyzing culture. Current scholarship—such as feminist cultural theory and the orthodox political economy analysis of media control—may now be inadequate in cultural studies for their lack of interest in policy that hinders them from addressing the administrative process and pinpointing the actors of power in cultural productions (Cunningham 13–22). Jim McGuigan also explains that a policy-oriented perspective in cultural studies allows broader inquiries on the "conditions of culture" after reviewing the many social and cultural theories concerning the definition of culture, policing culture, Foucauldian theory and subsequent debates on culture and government (35). The cultural policy perspective interrogates that cultural products do not reflect merely autonomous or subjective expression but rather inflected by resources and regulations in an institution.

The importance of a policy perspective is further highlighted in the studies of cultural industries and creative industries. David Hesmondhalgh foregrounds the

dynamics between “change” and “continuity” within cultural industries in terms of technology, policy and creativity past, present and future. Hesmondhalgh covers aspects of production, circulation and the subjects comprised of the creators, company owners, and the audience in this industry that mark a shift in scholarship from sociological studies of media effects to the liberal-pluralist method examining the organization and production of media. This notion also strongly relates to Ouelette’s communication studies approach in pointing out the interconnection between media and the making of democracy among the public. Nonetheless, Hesmondhalgh believes that such an approach fails to account for the economic, cultural and social determinisms as well as human’s seeking of pleasure. As Hesmondhalgh’s thesis has consistently tied to the change and continuity of culture, including to what extent the culture industries have changed and continued according to technology, economics and culture elements. He argues that cultural industry is an object that fluctuates along with cultural policy. He stresses that the complex interconnections between commerce and creativity are accompanied by the shifts in copyright and cultural policy such as governmental subsidy. Cultural policy, in general terms, signifies the state’s effort in creating a cultural/national identity through the patronage process that legitimates certain types of arts. This is in fact considered by Hesmondhalgh to be the narrow definition of cultural policy, which always refers to the regulations and instruments adopted by the state. Hesmondhalgh traces the cultural policy transformation in the 1980s and 1990s in the U.K. when different institutions such as Greater London Council and local governments triggered many vexed factors in changing the culture (a shift of attention to low art, the distribution and marketing strategies, an influential connector between urban development and the cultural industry). This also coincided with the moment when the new interest of policy turned to the adoption of the term “creative” in order to amplify the economic effects and to improve city image associated with culture. The highlights of instruments include promoting multiculturalism, training art entrepreneurs and innovating existing architecture etc. Such phenomenon does not only permeate in local contexts but is reflected at a national level. In terms of the relationship between policy and creativity, with the growing attention and preference towards creativity, both the education and promotion of local economies are implemented in cultural policymaking. In this respect, Hesmondhalgh argues against Terry Flew, who advocates a free market cultural policy instead of the nationalist policy aim. For Hesmondhalgh, this might be unwise due to its

apparent alignment with capitalism and globalization, which could further result in oppression.

Flew's empirical studies discuss subjects from consumption, production, cultural economy, globalization, labour and public policy in relation to the creative industries. Tracing the origin of the term and its indivisible and interchanging tie to social and economic structures, Flew maps out the juncture historically and contextually where economy and culture meet, allowing cross-disciplinary research and dialogue to take place and develop. He also considers policy formation in various national contexts as one of the goals for impact. There are many factors contributing to the contingency in evaluating the dynamics between art and commercial as well as production and consumption under disparate state policies and interventions. There is always a concern about the complicity between the use of creativity and capitalist inclination. Both Hesmondhalgh and Flew foreground the organization of the industry and provide a way to draw deeper research and policy inquiries on this complex intersection between culture and economy.

Part Two: Film Policy and National Cinema

As discussed above, the interactions between culture, media, government and policy are not only close-knitted but also work hand in hand to turn citizens into voluntary articulators of nationalist agenda. A controlling government enacts media regulation that is incapable of producing a sense of belonging to culture but rather perpetuates the docility of citizens and a nationalistic profile of culture. It is clear that a policy perspective is essential when studying culture and it is imperative to recognize the means of government change over time. In this section, I examine the dynamics between the state and the function of film policy in various national contexts to demonstrate important findings the connect film policy and national cinemas. I seek to answer how national cinemas are defined, regulated and legitimized. The connection shines a light on the constant omission of women's cinema and how frequent documentary films are seen merely as instruments of the nation.

Historians and film scholars have endeavoured to look into the connection between film, colonialism and national film policies and revisited historical discourses (Taylor and Christie 1991; Kepley, Jr 1991; Amad 2010; Grieveson and MacCabe 2011;

Anthony 2011). Lee Grieveson provides a methodological guide bridging governmentality and screen studies. His genealogical overview on the history of film and the screen studies scholarship beginning with the period when Marxist and psychoanalysis were predominant for analytics in the early 1970s successfully opens up the dialogue between film and policy in academia. Borrowing Foucauldian governmental rationalities associated with the double discourses of the governing of self and others, Grieveson argues that the power to regulate individualistic conduct is not centralized to the state, but rather a mechanism in which self-disciplining individuals mature (Grieveson 180–187). He thinks that the significance of taking into account the analysis of governmental rationalities in cultural studies, or more specifically film studies, lies in the understanding of the "cultural formation of governance" (Grierveson 185). He uses examples such as British colonial cinema to demonstrate the effects of governmentality and how it renders the formation of liberal subjects, personhood and citizenship. Many scholars who take up cultural policy studies also zoom in and focus on film itself. Toby Miller also foregrounds the culture vs. commerce issue in cultural policy studies. However, Miller stresses that film should neither be viewed as cultural nor economic reduction (134–141). Dividing the change of governmental film policy into three categories in the 1990s in U.K., Miller explicates that the organization around funding and censorship has always been in favour of supporting the commercial film industry and is endeavoured to seek conglomerated coproduction for the purpose of countering against the dominant Hollywood. However, it fails to address the needs and concerns of the minority groups (Miller 140). Miller testifies that government film policy has always been a central element to the understanding of production, distribution and reception of films.

Similar to Miller's notion in defining film as both a commodity and cultural product, Albert Moran additionally takes into account the materiality of film, with an aim to foreground the notion of film as an industry for research entries. Moran analyzes film policy from three different perspectives, global industry policy, national film policies, and an intranational perspective with particular interests in regional cultural policies. Moran sets up a central analytical platform on "distribution," which he deems to be the most closely related to the idea of commodification for the large number of labour personnel and mundane sales processes that are involved. Moreover, an analysis of distribution helps characterize the relationship between the predominant Hollywood and other

national contexts for the exchange of labour, aesthetics, funding and outlets of sourcing. Through many forms of transnational collaboration, distribution has softened the oppositional border between national cinema and Hollywood. Euro-American authors incorporate analyses of the role of the state and its intervention that impact the production, distribution and exhibition of national cinemas. Scholars from Asia shed light on the interplay between the influence of colonial legacy as well as a new dynamic formed between the state policy and the national film industry. In a similar vein, Michael Dorland makes a great example of national cinema studies in which the policy discourse meets the industry. The establishment of the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC) marks the inception when industrializing the film business was taken interest by the government in the 1960s. Adopting the application of governmentality, Dorland explores three decades of historical background, the reasoning and the rationality of policymakers in the pursuit of finding out what led to the state's concern and the foundation of CFDC in 1968. For Dorland, the Canadian film industry is an outcome of "the economy of talk" (Dorland 86) lacking a substantive entity. He views Canadian state policy as a discursive field in conjunction with the commercialization and governmentalization of feature films for it is constantly framed as "an object of policy discourse" (Dorland 137). As a result of the double dependency on the state and the United States as well as the discrepancy between the scholarship and the political field, Dorland's work calls for a more informed knowledge between actual film practices and the discourse of "Canadian feature film" that is required in industry analysis.

As many works of literature have reminded us of the importance of examining the film industry as a historical, political and economic construct, now I must ponder whether the duality of film as art and/or commerce still persists in the context of documentary films. If the state has always had a high interest in institutionalizing the film industry whether in the discourse of imagined nationalism or the protective policy of local industry, how does documentary films play a part in the national cultural and creative industries? One of the earliest symbiotic relations that concerns the preservation of pre-documentary materials may be the Albert Kahn's Archives de la Planète in early twentieth century France. Paula Amad revolutionizes not only the way to understand the cultural and visual theory and history between the 1910s and 1930s, but she also wittingly constructs an overlooked dialogue between early nonfiction films and avant-garde cinema. Her two major foci of study are the "intentionality of the archive" on one

hand, and “the informality of the everyday” on the other (Amad 5). She concurs with Foucault in defying the innocence and neutrality of archival documents, with an aim to reveal the “historical connection between French archives and nation-state and colonial power” in the case of Albert Kahn’s Archive (Amad 20). Her observation also resonates with Peter J. Bloom, who demonstrates French colonial mentality in which reflects how documentary films are adopted for imperialist intentions in early cinema. Bloom argues that the varied medical, educational, tourist and archival documentary films produced and exhibited during the regime of the Third Republic embody the rationality of constituting a mediated apparatus that serves the nationalist, civilizing and imperialist paradigm. Supported by the functions of the camera as both a recording machine and materialistic colonial agency, Bloom presents the impetus for documentary projects to shore up the ultimate empire through various technologies enacted by the government such as hygiene reform, geographic awareness, and humanistic rescue. Moreover, the totalizing rationality is constantly justified through the discourse of postwar humanism and modernity as well as the cinematic internationalism manifested through the establishment of knowledge reservoirs such as archives. Even though Bloom’s work does not take a policy stance, one may still draw an analogy between his arguments and the notion of governmentality that intersects cultural studies for its use of culture as a means for the nation’s cause. Most importantly, Bloom’s work helps establish one of the early instances when looking into the correlations between the state and documentary.

When looking at American documentary films, Jeffrey Geiger illustrates the contradictions when situating the most powerful, dominant film culture ‘Hollywood’ in a national context. Geiger demonstrates a connection between national identity and documentaries signified by many but not exclusively historical, social, political and aesthetic elements of one singular or multiple films. Geiger carefully constructs a rationale in accentuating the contradictions and fluidity of national projections manifested in a century’s length of documentary filmmaking practices. Moreover, the national identity which Geiger attempts to clarify and complicate echoes Peter S. Grant and Chris Wood. Grant and Wood point out that the notion of cultural and national identification is constantly challenged in the globalized view of film coproduction concerning governmental interventions such as tax incentives, subsidies, and broadcast deregulation on cultural productions. Grant and Wood foreground the paradox of giving a national identity to a film; what one should consider is that the fact a coproduction relies

on the cooperation and negotiation among distinct nations and the citizenship of the creators. Detailing the dialectic nature of negotiation and compromise of identity that often exists between the largest culture export country, the U.S. and other countries, the authors argue that it is pivotal to "[make] a critical distinction between 'cultural' and 'industrial' definitions of cultural identity" in order to formulate effective policies and tests that emphasize both on the creative freedom as well as the efforts to be culturally specific (Grant and Wood 149).

As illustrated above, there is a close connection between film and state intervention operated within the concept of governmentality. What might appear innocent under the disguise of enlightenment may have been a colonial move. On the other hand, not all formal or information organizations bear the guilt of top-down indoctrination. The relationship amongst the state, state-sponsored organizations and the filmmakers is complex and cannot be simply boiled down to one-way communication. Shifting away from the Euro-American centred epistemology, this part also explores how the notion of governmentality that is extended beyond Western studies complicates the notion itself when situated outside of the liberalism context. Hamid Naficy puts in an extraordinary effort compiling and qualitatively analyzing the development of Iranian cinema in the national context (2011). Naficy's four volumes pay close attention to the social, political and historical contextualization with nuances to the aspects of gender, censorship, authorship, commercial/non-commercial boundary and regional and international perspectives that are all crucial in shaping the spectatorship, the industry and ideology of film as an important medium to the state. In Naficy's analysis of Iranian films, each of his volumes provides a linear narrative regarding the regime's role in the production of non-ficiton films but not in the name of policy analysis. Considered to be the first historical survey of Hong Kong Documentary Film, Aitken and Ingham provide an overview of Hong Kong documentary film history including colonial, TV and independent documentary films. The breadth and depth of their research highlight how documentary films fluctuate along with the interactions between government policies and commercial practices. The studies of Taiwanese documentary intersecting government cultural policy in public and private sectors has yet been taken up supplementary to the auteuristic and textual facets of analysis. The role of government in Taiwanese narrative cinema has been taken up by Taiwanese scholars. The failure of implementing a sustainable policy plus the inability to cultivate a cultural and creative industry remain as

thorny issues and obstacles faced by Taiwanese cinema. Lan Tsu-Wei in “The Role of Government: In the Development of the Taiwanese New Wave” argues that the inefficacy of government, its false policies resulted from unprofessional officials and the lack of protection of local industry were the corollary of a self-support and self-reliant film production environment. On the other hand, Ti Wei analyzes the many intersectional factors that culturally, historically and economically situate Taiwan New Wave in a specific place and time that coincides with the collapse of the Taiwan film industry. Lan and Ti both refocus Taiwanese cinema through the lens of government, which fails to provide timely support and management to the industry.

In her work, Elaine Jeffreys applies governmentality in the context of post-socialist China when the country shifted to ‘market socialism’ in the late 1970s. According to Jeffreys, this transformation marked as significant research inquiries on the relationship between government practices and the objects of government for its alignment with the neoliberalist trend that resulted in a “hybrid socialist-neoliberalist form of political rationality” (Jeffreys 2). Here, the status of the authoritative state coexists with the some of the technologies enacted that allow a certain degree of autonomy. The paradox is that despite its changing governance according to the marketization as well as economic reform, it is still under the sole ruling party, who managed to combine the old socialist and new neoliberal technologies and strategies and remain unshaken as a party-state. Different from Jeffreys’ theorization drawn from Foucauldian governmentality, Yuezhi Zhao relates to China’s changing modernity and democracy, and how the media plays an important part through the refocusing of rural subjects in the New Documentary Movement. The momentum for NDM is a collective sense of aesthetics that can be identified as on-the-spot realism with the merits of DV technology as well as the active social critiquing role embodied by many Chinese documentary filmmakers (Berry et al. 5, 113). Both Jeffreys and Zhao’s works assist in understanding China in this juncture where socialism meets neoliberalism. The conversation between Zhao and Lu Xinyu—a renowned Chinese scholar specialized in communication studies “both in the West and inside China” (Zhao 1)—is extremely invigorating for their critical engagement and analysis in the social, historical, and economical condition of the proletariat class and their subjective embodiment reflected through the New Documentary Movement. Going over many critical theories such as communication theory, Marxism, and Derrida’s deconstructionism, Lu problematizes the neoliberal and

marketization discourses engendered by many liberal democracy scholars, activists and citizens in the disguise of freedom and democracy after three decades of “reform and openness.” For Lu and Zhao, it is significant to not to fall West-centrist, both scholarly and pragmatically, and not to overlook China’s social development and varied movements, as well as the subjectivities of the historically present subjects—the rural proletariats. Lu situates NDM particularly in this backdrop and discovers a continuum of social subjectivities and realism among the works of NDM, and argues the films’ capability in “re-establish[ing] a dialogical relationship between visual imagery and contemporary society” (Zhao 14). This interview not only poses a critique to the state’s blind pursuit of neoliberalism but also makes an effort to reassert the need to align with the subaltern class from the state’s view. Zhao’s article sheds light on a non-essentializing, non-West-centric approach to examine the intersections of politics and culture in the context of globalization.

Part Three: The Ambivalences of Feminist Film Criticism and Auteur Theory

Sinophone documentary film, though on the peripheral, is a fledgling field that invites interdisciplinary research. In spite of increasing critical interests, Sinophone women’s cinema is equally marginalized. Many female filmmakers who have succeeded in obtaining international recognition among the judges and critics do not occupy a central position in Sinophone cinema. Women’s cinema studies tend to undergo debates and dialectics with regard to feminist film theory and criticism but also face similar challenges and complexities when situated in a globalized and transnational framework. Western scholarship is ambivalent towards feminist film criticism and female authorship as women’s filmmaking has sparked debates over whether it exemplifies feminist theory and praxis or not. B. Ruby Rich in “The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism” argues that “both feminist film or films by women are vague and problematic because the one disregarded or even denied by certain women filmmakers and writers, the other descriptive of nothing but a sex-determined ghetto of classification” (42, 1999). Similarly, women’s participation in filmmaking in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China is contingent on historical, cultural, and political factors. This section is dedicated to highlighting the development of feminist film theory that reflects both insights and contradictions. The

goal is to construe the development of women's cinema studies over the canon of female authorship and feminist filmmaking in the context of Sinophone cinema.

Women on film (as representation) and in film (production) are topics that have undergone rigorous conversations amongst Western scholars. Women as objects and women's agency are two larger themes first explored by Claire Johnston, Laura Mulvey, and Annette Khun. Johnston in "Women's Cinema as Counter Cinema" reveals the ideology in dominant Hollywood cinema as patriarchal and bourgeois as a result of capitalism and the male-centred, hierarchical studio system. Embracing the notion of "films as a political tool and film as entertainment," she calls for strategies in analyzing women's cinema that works against the 'realist' and 'illusionary' portrayal of women (Johnston 39). Johnston pioneers in theorizing women filmmakers—particularly Hollywood female directors in the 1920s and 30s. As a critic, she proposes two analytical perspectives on women's cinema: (1) the *exposition* of the sexist ideology of woman as spectacle through redirecting male's gaze back at themselves, and (2) subverting the classic happy-ending narrative that closes with the formation of a heterosexual union. The canonical concept "the male gaze," was first coined by Laura Mulvey. Mulvey proposed the notion of woman (characters) as 'image' as they are coded with 'to-be-looked-at-ness' in her piece "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," which has dominated the feminist film criticism in classic narrative film studies for decades. Mulvey's theory echoes Johnston in ways that the voyeuristic-scopophilic mechanisms between woman as passing raw material and men as active gazers are constructed within the patriarchal order in the form of cinema in three spheres: pre-production stage by male scriptwriters, on production sites by the male film crew members and in theatre by male audiences (Mulvey 1999). Whereas both Johnston and Mulvey interrogate female representations in mainstream cinema, Annette Khun takes the theoretical implications in both texts to the next level. She first raises questions of whether feminism in film is determined by the author (female filmmakers), the works (films made by female filmmakers), or the audience. By analyzing the textual politics underlying the two eminent female scholars, she argues that "the two areas of textual practice […] are constituted on one hand by a counter-cinema grounded in the deconstruction of dominant cinema, and on the other by a form of cinema marked as more 'other' to dominant cinema, as 'feminine writing'" (Kuhn 154–155, 1994). The term 'other' can be referred to as alternative, avant-garde and experimental subjects that are subversive to

the dominant ideology. Feminine writing (*l'écriture féminine*) is a concept derived from French feminist literary theory from the 1970s that foregrounds female subjectivity and its relation to language and text. Women, occupying a subject position, are actively involved in meaning production through writings that are capable of countering the unitary, patriarchal, and phallocentric structure. Certainly, several feminist film scholars continue to explore the connections between feminine literary writing and feminine cinematic writing based on their intrinsic qualities of language (formal qualities of film) and text (the screenplay). Feminine cinematic writing can also be transformed into a feminine voice that speaks for "the relations of looking, narrativity and narrative discourse, subjectivity and autobiography, fiction as against non-fiction, and openness as against closure" (ibid. 163). As Johnston proposes new perspectives as a critic in analyzing women's films in early Hollywood cinema, Mulvey's argument brings forward the concept of women's roles as visual objects for men as a spectator. In Khun's case, she analyzes women filmmakers as authors that actively make a feminine contribution through their artworks. Even though their studies are based on three disparate subject groups, their arguments are grounded within the contexts of Hollywood as a patriarchal entity. Regardless of what position women occupy (the author, the actresses, or the audience), women are central to the subversion of dominant perceptions in mainstream cinema.

Considering how feminism inflects the maker-spectator relationship in the cinema as well as inverts the subject-positions from male to female and from passive to active, B. Ruby Rich in "In the Name of Feminist Film Criticism" consolidates Johnston's and Mulvey's analyses into one crucial discourse: "women are absent on the screen *and* she is absent in the audience" (1998, 72; emphasis original). To put it more bluntly, women's subjectivities are not only deprived of due to the stereotypical portrayal on-screen but also are absent as a viewer. As previously discussed, female characters in Hollywood films are made *for* male spectators. They are often weak, emotional, and domesticated for the sake of satisfying patriarchal fantasies. Consequently, female audiences are neglected and rendered absent in exhibition venues. The disappearance of women evokes more discussions and strategies between theorists as they take on various analytical methodologies to unpack the conundrum of feminine and feminist writing. Focusing on the issue of the legitimate naming process, Rich's interweaves women's movement in history with the cinematic fields that inextricably connect to aesthetics,

production and reception. Historically, feminist cinema relies on those awakened, conscious female filmmakers and female audiences recognizing that they have been long ignored and underestimated in both the formalist Hollywood cinema and early avant-garde cinema. Here, a self-awakened consciousness is key to lending feminist subjectivity to women in and on film. According to Rich, the increasing visibility (even though it is still relatively low) of women's movements and female filmmakers brings feminist issues to light. It is imperative to note that women's art practices with respect to social movements, as well as feminist theory and criticism, operate both ways as a result of their continuous reciprocity. Women (who may not identify as feminists) serve as cultural producers, (un)intentionally creating new meanings and representations of women's cinema and (un)consciously disavowing the gaze, the classic narrative, the subordinated portrayal and the oppressive structures. Therefore, women's films signify two things: the cultural and social intervention and the interconnectedness between the two. Although one can argue whether film practices came first and then followed by theory and criticism, the cross-fertilization between the two contributes to the studies, the historical movement and the cinematic appropriations at various degrees. Rich raises important issues and contentions when naming feminist cinema and anticipates to preserve the inner strength of feminism and to "open the mind to new descriptive possibilities of nonpatriarchal, noncapitalist imaginings" (ibid., 74). She then proposes six probable components in constituting feminist filmmaking: validative, correspondence, reconstructive, medusan, corrective realism and projectile (ibid., 74–79). However, the reluctance among theorists in claiming female directors as auteurs because auteur theory is inherently masculine and gender biased further complicates the situation. After two decades of development in feminist film theory and criticism, Judith Mayne realizes that "even after many years of feminist study, surprisingly, little comparable attention has been paid 'to the function and position of the woman director'" (Grant, 119; citing Mayne, 1990). While it is undeniable that the number of studies on women directors is increasing and the subjects range extensively from Hollywood female filmmakers such as Dorothy Arzner, Ida Lupino, and Kathryn Bigelow, experimental filmmakers such as Maya Deren and Yvonne Rainer; to European female directors such as Agnes Varda, one can still be entangled in the polemics of reclaiming authorship of female filmmakers and identifying elements of feminism in the corpus of a non-feminist-identified woman director's works. Can one simultaneously be a feminist and an auteur? Can the respective ideology and interests behind feminism and auteurism coexist in the context of cinema?

Angela Martin in “Refocusing Authorship in Women’s Filmmaking” provides the bedrock in rethinking the connection between auteurism and women’s filmmaking. She traces the history of authorship studies and proves that the development of auteurism “has nothing to do with women’s filmmaking” (Martin 128, 2008). During French New Wave, to depart from the association in film from the theater, French critics suggested that one should gear the attention towards the film director rather than the screenwriter, whose screenplay is based on theatre scripts, but film directors are the ones that give “any distinctive quality it may have” (Grant 31, 2008). Hollywood quickly adopted it as they located similar interests such as iconography, recurring theme, aesthetic approaches etc. in the oeuvre of one director’s work. However, resulting from the relatively small number of women filmmakers whose works remain marginal to the male-centred film history, it is difficult to solidify auteurist qualities in female filmmakers. There are a few reasons to explain such a statement. First, feminist film theorists not only largely analyze male-directed films but work within a limited framework because its locus is narrow and only addresses “questions of the gaze, the representations of the body, desire, subjectivity and so on” (Martin 130). Second, the idea of feminist aesthetics might alienate some female filmmakers who are reluctant to work in such theory-informed and gendered structures where identifiers such as a female’s voice or the autobiographical reference to a female filmmaker becomes a barrier to elevate the woman filmmaker’s status (in their own definition). Hence, attempting to move beyond the dichotomy of feminist and auteurist, Martin calls for feminist authorship to be defined by a distinctive style, and a kind of “conceptual and aesthetic work around the production of a film” particularly for women filmmakers (ibid., 132).

The task becomes more daunting and problematic when female authorship is situated in the context of world cinema such as Sinophone cinema. Following a similar path of Western feminist film theory and criticism, discourses on women’s representation definitely got a head start in comparison to Sinophone female filmmaking despite the fact that both practices and scholarly works of women’s filmmaking in China remain disproportionally scarce. *The Global Auteur* does not include any female filmmakers (Jeong et al., 2016). To Lim, “the study of auteurs from Chinese cinemas has only just begun” (Lim 225, 2007) when it is compared to Western cinema and Japanese film studies. Yet, Lim’s statement also eludes that it is just too early to take account of female auteurs. The ambivalence towards feminism is also evident in Shuqin Cui’s research,

particularly when Western critics or scholars draw assumptions of Western feminist themes or inputs onto Chinese female directors (Cui 171–173). Cui further explores the transformation of gender representations in Chinese cinema within the rubric of nation-state construction as its narratives move from socialist cinematic productions to new wave innovations (2003). Gender is used as an analytical tool to investigate the mutual constitution between Chinese women and the nation as the oppressive representation of women suggests that men are the producers of the nation and women are always the subjects. On one hand, Cui shows that Chinese cinema in the twentieth century marks a transformation from producing national allegories through women by male directors. While on the other, presenting Chinese women's cinema against national ideology through self-representations. Specifically in the fourth part of her book, Cui suggests transnational feminism as a "constructive and necessary" method that will assist in opening dialogues between Western feminism and Chinese nationalism when female filmmakers are taken into account (177). In "Feminism with Chinese Characteristics?", Cui attempts to bridge the notion of Western feminism and Chinese women's cinema within the national and socialist discourse by scrutinizing Chinese women's cinema from post-1949 to contemporary female directors' involvement in the industry. She questions the early existence of women's cinema in China and argues that despite that post-1949 women directors entered the male-centred film industry, the films that they made are on the mainstream side. These films played into the hands of socialist heroine narratives while still lacking an individualist and feminine vision. Cui, as well, presents Chinese women's cinema capable of working against national conditions through self-representations. Cui's concept is similar to Claire Johnston's theorizing of women's film as a form of political counter-cinema capable of subverting the ideology in dominant Hollywood cinema as patriarchal and bourgeois as a result of capitalism and the male-centred, hierarchical studio system. Later, we see a turn in the 1980s when Chinese women directors share similar characteristics with underground filmmakers who also shy away from historical recounts and national allegory. Female characters are more visible with the insertion of female voices; however, Cui argues that their works still lack gender consciousness and feminist subject positions. Ning Ying, a female director from the Fifth Generation, on the other hand, embodies certain qualities similar to independent documentary filmmakers of the same period. Based on Cui's analysis, Ning favours non-professional actors, location shooting and subjects of urban, marginalized people's everyday lives in her films. Ning's aesthetics move beyond gender specificity and her

ability to embed sociopolitical insight through the representation of social realism resembles many contemporary independent filmmakers from the New Documentary Movement. The theoretical thrust of Cui ultimately resonates with Johnston's and Mulvey's arguments as their analyses concomitantly emphasize the representations of women as the spectacle in the films made by 'male' filmmakers. In the process, they discover that despite the women-as-spectacle problem, they are able to find a female voice or the presence of female desire that helps destabilize the patriarchal structures.

While Cui had a difficult time identifying feminist subject positions in the majority of Chinese female director's works, Shih discovers "feminist transnationality" in Chinese female artist Hung Liu's works (62). According to Shih, feminist transnationality should be understood as a different concept from transnational feminism, as the former ascribes the transnationality to the specific immigration status whilst the latter suggests a "coalition that engages in feminist work across national borders"(ibid. 62). With Liu's unique shifting and multiple positionalities, her work demonstrates a sense of feminist transnationality against different periods and states of patriarchy, the Western gaze, along with minoritization within and across the U.S. and China. While Shih's feminist analysis is based on a high-brow artist, Lingzhen Wang instead adopts transnational feminism in reviewing classical feminist theory and remapping Chinese women's cinema within an intersectional framework (2011). According to Wang, transnational feminist practices in many respects help reconfigure film discourses and Chinese women's cinema as they not only provide foundations for exploring the history of national cinema and a political perspective on globalized film movements but also work to rupture existing disciplinary boundaries in gender and area studies (21). She believes that "through transnational feminist understanding of patriarchy as scattered, overlapping, and multileveled, can we understand that women's cinema is not practiced against one dimension of a universal mainstream discourse (psychoanalytic interpretation of Hollywood cinema), nor does it constitute a uniform discourse (counter-Hollywood-cinema) in itself" (25). Although paradoxically situated in the contested 'cultural Chinese' women's cinema, Wang effectively brings forward the heterogeneous cinema engagements contributed by Hong Kong and Taiwanese female directors. Wang also argues that many Hong Kong female directors have had to continuously negotiate with multiple positions against nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism. Taking female directors like Tang Shu-Shuen and Esther Eng as examples, she argues that "the

collaboration of regional patriarchal culture and colonialism or racism is evident in their obliterating Tang and Eng from His-(s)tory" (20). Taiwanese women's cinema, on the other hand, have developed collaterally with Taiwan New Wave, as well as the rise and awareness of documentary and women's film festivals. Particularly focused on marginal sexuality and bodies, Taiwanese women's cinema conventionalizes the representations of (home)sexuality and helps constitute Taiwan queer cinema. Wang's elaboration on how the application of Western feminism in Chinese cinema contains both positive and negative effects brings awareness to the power discrepancy in the cultural and scholarly exchanges the two phenomena. To her, it is impossible not to consider how third-world women's filmmaking speaks to both feminism and nationalism under the framework of transnational feminism. As a female film artist, Jutta Bruckner argues that "feminist aesthetics, which is so much in demand, cannot suddenly emerge simply because women now are standing behind the camera (Bruckner, 122). Feminism in film is indispensable; however, the inextricability of feminism in films by women informs that it is not that women's filmmaking is situated in a contradictory terrain, but rather, positing women's film in a unitary feminist point of view is limiting. While women's filmmaking is constrained by the ideological demands of feminism, male directors are always immune from gender-specific interrogations. This to some extent sustains the regimes of men's filmmaking. My work is similar to Wang's in this respect, as I have made efforts to situate women artists as negotiating historical and authorial subjects with non-universal, anti-uniform aesthetics, ideologies and interpretations produced by women filmmakers.

In Sinophone cinemas, several acclaimed film directors are viewed academically as auteurs without a doubt. James Udden suggests that "The Fifth Generation in China, Hou Hsiao-Hsien and Edward Yang in Taiwan, and Wong Kar-wai in Hong Kong […] are the first directors […] having no local cinematic forebears, coming from 'national' cinemas with no previous festival presence or accolades" (158). Hou, Yang and Wong are deemed as the pioneers of national cinemas. Following the predecessors, Tsai Ming-liang, Jia Zhangke, and Fruit Chan that emerge in the 1990s bear the title of the second-generation auteurs. It is implied that Tsai, Jia, and Chan, with varying degrees of recognition in the world's cinema, manage to gain their auteurist signature for their respective cinematic styles that earn the allegedly appellation of national art-house auteurs. On the other hand, By contrast, male directors are constantly placed under the spotlight for their achievements in marking an alternative if not new era of Sinophone

cinema. Women's filmmaking, however, remains peripheral and is often considered either as a form of negotiation of feminist subject positionality or of sexuality politics. To borrow a statement from Brenda Austin-Smith and George Melnyk, "to treat some filmmakers largely within the context of their regions or political or creative or sexual communities can attract charges that such approaches diminish the accomplishments of these women" (Austin-Smith and Melnyk 7). It seems to me that these new wave/generation directors—particularly male directors—stand strong in reflecting the political, the socio-economic and the artistic in contemporary Sinophone cinemas, whereas Sinophone women directors fall unnamed, underestimated, and eventually anti-feminist. The problems underlying the feminist arts debate continue to arise "when the hierarchies in values at work are put into question, …it is not sufficient just to reverse them" (Ecker 16). Rather than associating certain female filmmakers' works as "a denial to feminist cinema," and considering that "making a woman's film may compromise commercial success, achieving commercial success may require rendering the female body as a commodity" (Cui 228–229, 2011), I concur with Gisela Ecker in *Feminist Aesthetics* that "what has been imposed on women through oppressive social conditions or prejudice should not be made part of our definition of women's art and thus be further perpetuated" (Ecker, 16).

Part Four: Moving Forward

I have attempted to organize the review that demonstrates how the various applications to governmentality are integral to understanding the relationship between the state and the governed in various contexts. As a much-discussed concept, the technologies of conducting the conduct are twofold: to govern all and the self. Media, in addition to its representational value, is an example of how culture can be carefully calibrated and harnessed to form the opinions of individuals through the discourse of citizenship. Comparatively, cultural policy reflects the fragmentation and establishment of institutions that function to micromanage individuality. Similarly, documentary film is not an innocent project completely insulated from external influence. No matter how independent it might appear, the material conditions affect each decision-making process from pre-production, production, to post-production. This might, in turn, shape the weaknesses of a film when feminist textual analysis is conducted in research. In light of insufficiency, many scholars have taken up the analysis of cultural policy, arguing that

policy studies is one vantage point to assess the formulation, fluctuation and mutation of cultural practices in relation to the implementation and regulation of state policy. Many others also identify and investigate how nationalist and imperialist agendas are implicated in cultural productions and industries as a result of government intervention. In the case of film, while several scholars have shown the inextricability between film and the state as it is one of the early mediums that have been historically seized and utilized to promote national ideologies. Eva Norvup Redvall provides an alternative view by sketching out a mutually supportive mechanism between the Danish government and the national film industry (2012). In spite of some limitations, this contemporary case study is valuable for it not only makes visible a policy that is designed to cater to a small national cinema, but it also results in a safer and trustworthy relationship between the state and the artists. Whereas governmentality works through culture to form subjectivities, and culture is used to create a national image, it is also true that each individual is at work in forming cultural policy. In this sense, the discourse of cultural policy and governmentality is not a confined area of focus, but rather involves many actors that interact with conditions of policymaking, cultural-producing, and citizenship formation in both public and private sectors. In addition, industry studies helps identify the distinctions between art and commerce, and provides a critical lens navigating through the economic, administrative and financing aspects associated with production, circulation and reception of creative industries.

As the above illustrates, much scholarship engages different theories and concepts at the intersections of gender, media, policy and (trans)national cinema studies, diversifying in research focus and methodology to foreground the significance of considering creativity, economy, labour and market within production studies and to draw connections between policy research and textual analysis. The application of governmentality in cultural studies resembles the construction of a nation-state and its regulatory practices. Kaplan et al. state that “The regulatory process of the nation-state are located at various institutional sites and are practiced in multiple ways, including a double process of subordination and contestation” (10). Yet, what separates the discourses between governmentality and the production of nationness is that latter relies on “specific versions of sex-gender systems that are essential in the distribution, redistribution, and regulation of property rights and cultural resources, […specifically], by masculinist nationalists narratives and accounts” (ibid. 10–11). In opposition to the

governmentality theory in which Foucault ignores the gendered dimension, my investigation of women's cultural production foregrounds the local community networks that contest and intervene in the masculinist nationalist cultural production (Wöhl 8). Here I return to production studies as my method. I take into account the ways in which local production culture and communities shape and are shaped by institutional forces and transnational production flows. In Banks et al.'s *Production Studies, The Sequel!,* the authors reiterate how the culture of production should be situated within production communities, material cultures and historical contexts rather than favouring one side of the duality:

> The phrase 'production culture' […] signals this tension between individuals' agency and the social conditions within which agency is embedded. Rather than reify the binary of singular creativity against structural constraints, the idea of production cultures allows for a more coherent examination of producers as they work, live, and organize together. (xi, 2016)

Scholars who study Sinophone cinemas are all highly aware of the social, political and cultural differences not only between Western discourses and the Chinese contexts but also the tension amongst the three regions: Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. The underground traditions may fit better in Chinese cinema particularly because of the PRC's specific socio-political circumstances. However, Chinese documentary cultural practices and identity are not limited to NDM and are still contingent on the constant alteration and impacts caused by globalized, regionalized and localized oppressions. Stephen Crofts discuss how transnational forces could affect the politics and rhetoric of a nation or the nationalism of its people (61–62). He further explains:

> In considering national cinemas, this implies the importance of a political flexibility able, in some contexts, to challenge the fictional homogenizations of much discourse on national cinema, and in others to support them. And it would be foolhardy to underestimate the continuing power of the nation-state. To acknowledge these powers, by the same token, is not to disavow the cultural hybridity of nation-states; nor to unconditionally promote national identities over those of ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and the other axes of social division which contribute to those identities; nor, finally, to buy into originary fantasies of irrecoverable cultural roots, or into the unitary, teleological and usually masculinist fantasies in which nationalisms display themselves. (62)

This also applies to the study of women's films. In *Women's Experimental Cinema*, Robin Blaetz comments that "what is more exciting about much of the analysis of the films […] is the degree to which the work often cannot be inserted in a coherent

way into any pre-existing history of avant-garde film" that is traditionally masculine, patriarchal and institutionalized (7). Women's cinema as counter cinema is one entry point and certainly the relationship vexed with independent/mainstream or documentary/narrative traditions in the Sinophone context remains significant. Women's documentaries in the three regions embody distinct routes to engage the social and the political. In light of the incongruence between feminist filmmaking and auteurism in narrative cinema, Janet Walker and Diane Waldman point out the lack of studies that connect feminism and documentary in the two disciplines: feminist film theory and documentary studies. In their view, feminist film studies' sole attention to representation in fiction film as well as how non-film-studies-based feminist articles tend to do be issue-oriented without addressing the characteristics of the mediums are both evidence of the lack of such connection (3). Recognizing the gap between documentary and feminism, Walker and Waldman argue that:

> Feminist documentary practices and studies have in fact looked for ways to avoid that illusionist pitfalls while at the same time acknowledging the political stakes in representing the images and voices of women who are not professional actors and whose documentary representation seeks to build consensus with actual women for the audiences of these films. (11-12)

To them, it is of the utmost importance to "further this evident but often overlooked interest in the connective and conflictual tissues of sexual, racial, and class differences as applied to documentary studies" (2). This also reflects how Teresa De Lauretis defines women's cinema to be which "crosses the boundaries between avant-garde and narrative cinema, independent and mainstream, but which is rigorously exclusive on political grounds" (Bulter 2002, 17).

Taking upon production culture studies enables me to examine the material conditions of Sinophone women's documentary production through their creative works and careers. As Banks et al. note "production studies understands producers as interpretative communities within media industries that wield considerable power, but do not distribute that power to all producers equally" (Banks et al. x). My research points out that each production trajectory reflects changing political systems, institutions and resources available over time, yet female documentary filmmakers' interpretative and communicative power helps rewrite the traditionally male-dominant, capitalist and neo-national film history. Combining feminist reading with production studies, I investigate

local, regional, and national cultures of Sinophone documentary production through the lens of female filmmakers. In the next three chapters, I turn to each region to illustrate the development of women's documentary filmmaking and their positioning in relation to the state, self, and audience. I present that Sinophone documentary cinema rejects one singular definition, but facilitates intra-regional and inter-regional undercurrents defying the ruling class and popular ideology. While governmentality implies the successful subjectification of a good, autonomous citizen through democracy, neoliberalism, and liberal capitalist ideology and morality as seen in their cultural products, many of the cases that I studied demonstrate that their earlier independent filmmaking rejects self-discipline and internalization of national agenda (Grieveson 180–187). Many female documentary filmmakers consciously or unconsciously maneuver feminine and feminist expressions across their works unlike their male counterparts who are seen as the sound beacon of national matters.

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Chapter 4.

Voices of the Margin: Taiwan as the Island of Symbiosis

Taiwan is an island of a diverse ethnic demographic ranging from the aborigines, Hakka, Hokkien, and mainland Chinese. All of whom have been subject to different degrees of settler colonialism inflicted upon by the Japanese government (1895–1945) and the one-party ruling by the Nationalist Party (1949–1996). After being defeated by the Communist Party in the civil war, the Nationalist Party fled to Taiwan and claimed sovereignty of all of China. During the transition, they enacted an emergency declaration, known as the martial law between 1949–1987 to suppress Communist and Taiwan independence supporters' activities. Under the turmoil, the authoritative Nationalist Party repressed Taiwanese rebels and people suspected as pro-Communists. The escalating conflict resulted in an eruption of protests on February 28, 1947, infamously known as the White Terror, and an estimate of 18,000–28,000 people died of suppression and illegitimate persecutions. The incident was banned from public discourse, and it was not until the lifting of the martial law that the restoration of the memory of the incident was enabled and a history covered up by the Nationalists was unravelled. Taiwan later lost its seat at the United Nations in 1971 to the People's Republic of China, perpetuating its marginal status to the world as well as its statelessness. Since the lifting of martial law, Taiwan cinema has developed collaterally with Taiwan's overall democratic and progressive social climate for it has its own constitution, laws, and presidential elections by popular vote since 1996.

Taiwan's unrecognized international status, colonial history, young democracy, and diverse ethnicities have contributed to the development of women's and documentary cinema to different degrees. The ongoing shift in and search of identity has been one of the controlling themes that characterize Taiwan New Cinema (1982–1990).[5]

[5] Also known as New Taiwanese Cinema or Taiwan New Wave (1982–1987). It refers to a cinematic phenomenon that features a group of filmmakers, whom grew up on the island and represented collective postwar memory and individual life in their films that are drastically different from the traditional confucian ethics of the healthy realist cinema promoted by the government between 60s and 80s, the escapist romance melodramas, and martial arts films popularized in Hong Kong between 1960s and 1980s. Some directors known internationally as

Given its colonial history, people who lived on the island, including the indigenous community, had been forced to receive colonial education demanded under different regimes. The sense of uncertainty and non-belonging has persisted and become a fruitful site in which Taiwanese filmmakers continuously excavate and are made known. Hou Hsiao-Hsien is unequivocally regarded as the paradigmatic Taiwanese narrative filmmaker that exposes the local identity and the conflicting ideology and politics to the world. Hou's films uncovered the taboos as a result of political suppression, providing insights into the split identities of Taiwan Natives and the settlers brought with the Nationalist Party from mainland China after their defeat. The suppression of the Nationalist Party and its organized forgetting of non-Chinese colonization history resulted in irreconcilable conflicts between Taiwan Natives and the mainland settlers. The 50 years of Japan's ruling, which included social and cultural reform, widened the gap between the local Taiwanese and mainlanders. Hou's films work to examine the taboos, the painful, suppressed memory of the difficult transition from Japan to the Nationalist Party. Despite its short-lived legacy, Taiwan New Cinema has marked its importance in the world's film history. The New Cinema is not only characterized by its rejection of the entry of martial arts genres popularized in Hong Kong but also represents an unprecedentedly collective effort to centre on the Taiwanese identity in film. Taiwan birthed several internationally recognized and award-winning directors since the 1980s. Taiwan's politically charged history and its remarkable cinematic achievements are absolutely connected. The complex history has not only provided the source of subject matter for many of the films and also enabled the production and international distribution of these works. Taiwan cinema continued to develop collaterally with Taiwan's overall democratic and progressive social climate since the lifting of martial law in 1987.

While Taiwan New Cinema has been widely studied—followed by an increased number and interest in women's and documentary film research respectively—woman documentarians and their works remain understudied. Taiwan's statelessness has posed both challenges and opportunities for filmmakers and scholars alike to circle

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part of TNC include Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-Hsien. Yang's films concern the middle-class crisis in urban Taipei whereas Hou is preoccupied with realistically filming Taiwan's colonial history. Directors of TNC uncovered the common experiences of individuals in the society of Taiwan and captured the social reality unseen in earlier genres. (Yip 2004, Berry and Lu 2005, Hong 2008, Wilson 2014, I-Fen 2019).

around re-examining or re-defining what a nation is and means for those living on it. In turn, the query of “what constitutes Taiwanese cinema” has garnered the most scholarly attention thus far. Because of this, the intersection between gender and documentary practices has not been the highlight of contemporary Taiwanese film and media studies. Women’s films and documentary films are often trivialized vis-a-vis the mainstream narrative cinema as well as the Taiwan New Cinema. This chapter attempts to recentre Taiwanese female documentarians’ practices beginning in the early 1980s. Occurring at a time when social awareness, personal expression, and compassion for the minority emerged, these practices persevered to counter the propagandist media controlled by the Nationalist Party. They also served to complement the guerrilla-style political documentaries in the vanguard. In this chapter, I survey previous studies on Taiwanese cinema and expose how both women’s film and documentary films have fallen in and out of the discourses of national Taiwanese cinema. Second, I examine the roles of government and non-government agents in women’s documentary filmmaking. The symbiotic relationship between government funding and women’s documentary practices is not organic. Rather, it reflects the long-term effect of negotiations between funding, creative autonomy, and bureaucratic measures. Third, by analyzing the production and aesthetic modes of a select number of important Taiwanese female documentary filmmakers, I address the fact that the majority of them eventually orient towards the symbiotic working relationships with the government as documentary film became institutionalized. Despite this, many of these female filmmakers successfully tap into issues and subjects that were often invisible or sidelined in mainstream media. Lastly, I closely examine the theme, style, and ideology in select works by Zero Chou, whose career spans over 15 years and serves as a great example of the dynamics of resistance, negotiation, and adjustment when working in the Taiwanese documentary scene. I argue that her works are rich in her use of intertextuality, philosophical muses, and lesbian imprints. Such features not only mark her as a new-wave documentarian that resists national cooptation but further establish her as a significant and well-known female and queer filmmaker both domestically and internationally.

Whose National Cinema?

"As a woman, I have no country." —Virginia Woolf (109, 1938)

Scholarship on Taiwan cinema has taken multiple directions in reflecting how the shifting political regimes have impacted Taiwan cinema. To date, there have been six books published on Taiwanese narrative cinema and one on Taiwanese documentary films. The topics range from Taiwan New Cinema, local identity, Taiwan film history, and Taiwanese directors taking into account various social, political, cultural and economic influences in shaping Taiwanese film culture. In addition to many sections devoted to Taiwanese cinema subsumed in the larger Chinese cinema or Chinese-language cinema frameworks, the rich scholarship on Taiwan cinema has tremendously contributed to understanding a part, if not all, of Taiwanese cinema (Berry 1991, Lu 1997, Tam and Dissanayake 1998, Zhang 2004, Lu and Yeh 2005, Wang 2011, Chiu and Zhang 2015). This is not a criticism, but rather a point of concern. The concern lies within how the scholarship focuses only on navigating a national (if not regional) cinema as a result of Taiwan's contingent political status. This preoccupation has both its pros and cons. On the one hand, it enables the local Taiwanese identity to emerge. On the other hand, it reaffirms the duality of Chinese vs. Taiwanese, thus re-centring the national identity issue but leaving other matters unattended. In her analysis of vernacular Taiwanese literature and film—which looks into the treatment of history, the role of language, the question of modernization, and the alternative conceptions of identity—June Yip argues that "What unites the literature of Hwang Chun-ming and the films of Hou Hsiao-Hsien and makes their works central to any investigation of Taiwanese nationhood is their common fascination with the sociohistorical specificities of the modern Taiwanese experience and their attempts to formulate a sense of Taiwanese cultural identity" (9–11). Amongst the publications, women's films, let alone women's documentaries, have rarely been the centre of Taiwanese film history. Wei-suu Chien, a prominent female documentary filmmaker in Taiwan, reflects upon how she feels excluded from the so-called 'Taiwanese experiences', an epitome of Hou Hsiao-Hsien's films widely accepted by global critics, scholars, and film buffs alike (*The Women's* para. 14). It is also in light of this rising self-awareness of her own absence and exclusion in history that has enabled her to tell woman-centred stories in her narrative and documentary films and eventually get noticed by domestic and global audiences.

The exclusion of women in national cinema studies is systemic. Women are historically discouraged from participating in political, economic and cultural arenas and therefore are institutionally and systemically absent in the narratives of national construction. In film, women are the objects of gaze on screen and have had fewer opportunities to take the role of film directors to have their voices heard. The dominance of men is further perpetuated in the film critic circle. The implication of a male-centric taste dictates how the films that would have been recognized are directed by men. Similarly, in Taiwan, women's participation in film was very limited. While very few became directors, most of them play roles that display conventional femininity of motherhood in narrative films and popular television shows. Given the small number of women narrative film directors in the 1970s, women continued to be marginalized in the readily marginalized cultural scene (Huang and Wang 23).

The emerging scholarly attention to Taiwan documentary films has resulted in further complications in measuring the success of women participating in the art form. Kuei-fen Chiu states that "one of the prominent features of documentary filmmaking in Taiwan is that women directors make up a large proportion of the documentarist population" (Chiu 170, 2012). However, prior to 1984, men were still the dominant figures in producing TV documentaries and occasionally personal documentaries. Male employees are predominantly concentrated in newsreels and TV productions before 1984. In Wei-Tsu Wang's historical survey on Taiwanese documentaries, she points out that while there were a few documentaries that feature women as subjects, there was no record of female documentarians in the making (11–13). According to the Taiwan Film Digital Archives Databases, amongst the 129 directors who have produced feature-length films including both fiction and non-fiction films listed on the site—there are a total of 17 female directors. Amongst the 17, nine of them have produced feature-length documentary films. In other words, despite that there is only 13% of women directors in the industry, more than half of them are involved in documentary production. While this suggests that documentary is a much more versatile medium for women to get involved in, the current status of a gendered Taiwan film scene reflects the stagnant flow in the cultural industry throughout the years. Besides this, what perpetuates the exclusion of Taiwanese women in national cinema studies could be the obsessing interest in carving out a national cinema in a stateless locale. The domination of men's discourses in cinematic production coinciding with their recognition in engaging with a history under an

authoritarian regime renders other issues less immediate. This oversight should be questioned: Do female filmmakers play an equal part in the construction and configuration of the imagination of a nation? In the process, whose national identity is constructed and whose are erased? If female filmmakers do occasionally emerge in the male-centred discourse and industry, what does the disproportion signal?

In the six books published between 2004 and 2015 centring on Taiwan cinema, nationhood and identity are often at the forefront. In this rhetoric in which the authors attempt to identify the key figures that contributed to the formation of a "distinctive Taiwanese sense of identity," women are never a part of it (Yip 9). In order to fill in the absence of postcolonial nationhood construction discourse, June Yip identifies the root of Taiwanese in Taiwanese vernacular literature and New Cinema. Situating Taiwanese cinema in the framework of third cinema, she argues that Taiwanese New Cinema is characterized by its newly found Taiwanese consciousness. This is evidenced by her argument stating that:

> The New Cinema directors were further united in their firm commitment to the idea that, like literature and the other established arts, the cinema plays a crucial role in the sociocultural development of a nation—not only because it can hold up a mirror to contemporary society but also because of its potential for actively shaping a nation's self-image and cultural sensibility (59, 2004).

It is important to note here that to Yip, Taiwanese New Cinema does not present a unified or coherent image of the nation. Instead, many of the films, particularly the ones by Hou Hsiao-Hsien, display a fragmented identity embodied by the differently-identified groups of people living in Taiwan that goes beyond Taiwan vs. mainland China duality. Regardless, it is clear that Taiwanese cinema as a quasi-national cinema remains to be the centre of interest in the chapter and Hou is the representative figure. Berry and Lu's book also sharply points out the marginalization of Taiwan historically, geopolitically, culturally, and scholarly (2–4, 2005). Yet, the attention still dwells on Taiwan New Cinema and the male directors that are known internationally including Edward Yang, Ang Lee, and Tsai Ming-Liang. The book is certainly an expansion from Yip's, particularly in the respect of Taiwan New Cinema, yet women's and documentary films are still undiscussed. Darrel William Davis's book title switches the two words "Taiwan Cinema" around into "Cinema Taiwan," intending to dissociate it from its presumed national cinema framework (4). The editor recognizes the shifting of political

power when the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election in 2000 and temporarily terminated the 40-year quasi-colonial rule by Kuomingtang (Nationalist Party/ KMT) and praises Cinema Taiwan for its diversity, disunity and pluralism (5–6). To Davis, however, the relationship between government measures and film production is intertwined, and the new party's interest in reviving local films do not stray too far from KMT's civilization missions in the 1960s for its Mandarin-language production (2). Despite that, Cinema Taiwan after Taiwan New Cinema continues to flourish in type, theme, and form. Documentary film studies first appears in this anthology and illuminatingly, films selected are all directed by women. Yet, the chapter on Taiwan New Documentary seems to share the mission to reclaim a Taiwanese identity separated from the Chinese identity.

Guo-Juin Hong's *Taiwan Cinema: A Contested Nation on Screen* arguably is the first English-language book that historicizes Taiwan cinema. This book is also translated into Chinese and was published in Taiwan in 2008 where it became the only book that simultaneously focuses on the historical aspect taken back by the Japanese colonial legacy and makes visible the cinematic history that unsettles the notion of national cinema. To Hong, national cinema itself is unstable and dialectical for the theorization often wavers between nationalism and transnationalism, cultural diversity and national specificity. His book exposes Taiwan's cinematic history through "its ever-changing imagination of the 'nation' that shapes and is contested by the cinema" (4). Hong's driving motive resonates well with Davis because Davis also views Taiwan as "a lab experiment in national self-definition" (3, 2007). Given the expansive temporal parameters of Hong's work, it is affirming to see a scholar take up an unprecedented task in taking up a historiographical project of Taiwanese narrative cinema and putting it in relation to the construction of the nation-state, albeit a contested one. However, while Hong is stunned by the erasure of non-Taiwan-New-Cinema from world film history in the eyes of Bordwell and Thompson, women's cinema and documentary cinema again fall outside of the equation in Hong's book (1). The systemic favouring of men's narrative cinema presents the emblematic marginalization of women's films and documentary films in Taiwan's cinematic history.

Two of the most recently published books cast a transnational light on Taiwanese cinema. National cinema is no longer the focus, but a more nuanced textual analysis that positions Taiwan cinema in relation to transnationalism and global cinema is in place.

Flannery Wilson examines post-mid-1980s films of renowned directors including Edward Yang, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Tsai Ming-Liang and Ang Lee and identifies the unique space that connects Taiwanese films vis-a-vis Western impulses (2014). Similar to Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis's *Taiwanese Film Directors: A Treasure Island*, the focus is to analyze the relationship between the authors and the texts without explicit political investigations. The most recent book-length publication on Taiwan cinema is written by James Wicks titled *Transnational Representations: The State of Taiwan Film in the 1960s and 70s.* Wicks determines to re-examine how the films produced in the 1960s and 1970s implicate the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China, aiming to "contribute to the emerging body of scholarship concerning Mandarin films (*guoyu pian*)" (x, 2015). Wicks has opened up a new ground for exploration as most scholars of Taiwan cinema up to date have endeavoured to search for the lost Taiwan identity by dissociating Taiwan film history from the People's Republic of China's.

The exclusion of women in shaping Taiwanese cinema is critiqued and remedied by the emergent studies that examine Taiwanese women's cinema and Taiwan documentary films through various lenses. The inception of Taiwanese women's cinema occurred in the mid-1980s when the island was in transition to a democratic state from the martial law period. Taiwanese women's cinema is also multifaceted and cannot be pinned down to one coherent movement or phenomenon. Focused on marginal sexuality and bodies, Lingzhen Wang argues that Taiwanese women's narrative cinema conventionalizes the representations of (homo)sexuality and helps constitute Taiwan queer cinema (20). Examining the scene of Taiwanese cinema of the mid-1980s, Taiwanese scholars Yu-shan Huang and Chun-chi Wang point out that "The international acclaim of Taiwanese New Cinema did not provide much space for women to create independently" (134). Huang and Wang's statement seems to poke a hole in Lingzhen Wang's idea that Taiwanese women's cinema developed collaterally with Taiwan New Cinema. Two prolific female directors, Sylvia Chang and Yu-shan Huang, respectively produced and directed their first narrative feature-length films in 1986 and 1987. However, Zhen Zhang further notices the discrepancy in scholarship towards male and female directors during Taiwan New Wave (Zhang 89). The higher ratio of women documentarians further complicates the understanding of Taiwan women's cinema. When examining women's role in the Taiwanese documentary scene, Huang argues that facing the death of the Taiwanese film industry post new wave during the late 1980s,

documentary-making as the new, low-budget and immediate form of expression gained momentum. This resulted in a stabilized stream of outputting films and revived women's cinema (13).

Contemporary Taiwan documentary films hinge on a series of rebellious acts towards political oppression, social injustice, and the invisibility of the marginals, as well as manifest themselves along with the changing modes of the observatory, the participatory, and the reflexive in Bill Nichols' terms. This is rooted in its tradition in the new Taiwan Documentary's vision, in which holds the purpose of "interven[ing] in social debates by exposing the state apparatus' manipulation of media representation" and "[giving] voice to the voiceless and [speaking] in the interests of the marginalized and the powerlessness" (Chiu and Zhang 42–43). Two books have been devoted to the study of Taiwan documentary in English-language scholarship. They are *Documenting Taiwan on Film* (2012) edited by Sylvia Li-chun Lin and Tzw-Ian D. Sang and *New Chinese-Language Documentaries: Ethics, Subject and Place* (2015) edited by Kuei-fen Chiu and Yingjin Zhang. The former dedicates itself to Taiwan documentary film studies since the lifting of martial law in 1987. The film focuses on both the diverse topics explored in various films and the thorny issues of ethics and representation in certain documentary films. The latter revamps the term 'New Chinese-language Documentaries' by grouping Taiwan and PRC-based documentaries together, examining the production, content, and aesthetics in several award-winning contemporary documentary films. Chiu and Zhang have insightfully identified the trajectory of the new Taiwan documentary that consists of three stages: 1984–1990, 1990–2000 and 2000 and onwards (54–57). Chiu and Zhang define a more nuanced categorization of contemporary documentary film history of Taiwan cinema. One that differs from Lin and Sang's overall historical overview marked by three stages, the Japanese colonization from 1895–1945, the Nationalist party and the period of martial law from 1945–1987, and the democratization since 1987. Yet, the naming of Chinese-language documentaries triggers the category debate and demands scrutiny.

It is evident that Taiwanese cinema reflects male filmmakers' construction of a nation. They are privileged and are seen as active contributors to the cinema that is deemed valuable to world critics and scholars. The contour of Taiwanese women's film appears to fall inside and outside of the whirlpool of national cinema discourses. It is only brought to a similar equation of discussion when it contributes to shaping the

vaguely-termed national cinema and a homogenous identity—inclusive or exclusive of the government's intervention. Taiwanese women's cinema struggles in the limited space surrounding Taiwan New Cinema, and the dying industry as a result of plummeting box office sales following the new wave have put the readily marginalized woman filmmakers further in the periphery. While Huang is able to identify gender as a discernible marker in Taiwanese documentary film analysis, women's documentary practice has yet to be systemically studied and has rarely been a significant social identifier. Tying to the contingency in scrutinizing a Taiwan women's cinema due to its wavering position in relation to national cinema discourses, analyses of a gendered body of works may not be seen as urgent or the foremost. It is symptomatic as Taiwanese women's cinema excludes documentary filmmakers by focusing on narrative films and female documentarians become tokens in New Chinese-language cinema that projects a cinema of regionalism that excludes them in the first place.

Recognizing the (un)intentional erasure of women's documentary films in film studies scholarship, this chapter addresses the gap in scholarship by highlighting the "change and continuity" in women's documentary film practices in Taiwan. Women's documentary film is an emerging but precarious subject. Not only that their films are as important and bear critical attention, but also an analysis of the production culture helps signal the omission of women's documentary practices and their ongoing efforts in writing and rewriting histories. In the next section, I examine the controversial role of government institutions and policies, particularly with the ever-changing Public Television Service, government subsidies, as well as the rise of documentary and women's film festivals since the 1990s. Taiwanese female directors have worked inside and outside of the state system through processes of negotiation, creative intervention, and radical resistance with the goal to engage and prolong the dialogues of marginalized people. These obstacles were forced upon them as a result of the patriarchal, capitalist regimes under the control of Nationalist party post World War II and the economic boom. The overlapping of the two identities—woman and documentary maker—works to reflect the double oppression and marginalization enforced by the male-dominant, narrative-centred conditions. It also uniquely enables a dialogical space in which the voices of the margins can be heard while simultaneously rejecting the reckoning of a national cinema.

Women, Administration, and Documentary Pioneers

Women's documentary practices in Taiwan are interconnected with the government and the NGOs at work. The majority of Taiwanese films have sought or relied on funding from the government. In his discussion of American Independent Cinema, Geoff King argues that the definition of independent (or indie) is never a fixed identity. Rather, it is attributed to multiple elements such as the departure from the mainstream industry, form, aesthetics and filmmakers' socio-political intentions (10). On the other hand, Duncan Reekie identifies the paradigm shift in underground filmmaking in British Cinema. While initially emerged in the 1960s as a form of art that is equivalent to countercinema that confronts mainstream cinema (9), the underground cinema diverged into avant-garde and independent cinema between the 1970s and 1980s. The former is secluded along with the category of abstract films and the latter thrived among the sub-movements including community filmmaking, minority filmmaker groups, etc. However, underground/independent cinema inevitably got institutionalized due to their resort to state-funded sources. Therefore, state control becomes an interfering factor in (un)constituting a pure underground cinema. This symbiotic relationship between the state and the filmmakers involving funding is much analogous to both Taiwanese narrative and documentary cinema. Nonetheless, this dependency did not deprive women filmmakers of their agency. Taiwanese women filmmakers have created highly-acclaimed films while rejecting to participate in the nation-building agenda and sought to stand in solidarity with the marginalized**.** Taiwanese women's cinema has become a beacon for women's and queer movements in Asia particularly as a result of the collaboration between female scholars, filmmakers, film festival programmers, and NGOs (Huang 157). Patricia White recognizes how world cinema is signified by global women directors who have "navigated institutional politics and making films that have a chance to travel and be seen, […] project[ed] a transnational feminist social vision" (4). The streamlining of Taiwan women's cinema signals a rising social consciousness in gender equality. One that concerns itself with various women's issues from women and work, comfort women, women in politics, women at home, women and sexuality, women and media, etc. thanks to the island's democracy (Huang 158). The documentary films made by women also explore a variety of topics including women's role, women's sexuality, indigenous groups, migrant workers, and lower-class citizens.

The government of Taiwan has played a significant part in configuring Taiwan cinema, and its role is both positively and negatively perceived. In reflecting upon the dwindling Taiwan film industry after the New Cinema era, many scholars have criticized the role of government in (un)supporting Taiwanese narrative cinema. Other criticisms include the failure in its policy in cultivating a cultural and creative industry, as well as the ongoing issues and obstacles faced by Taiwanese cinema in relation to funding, personnel training, and the box office flop. For instance, Tsu-Wei Lan argues that the inefficacy of government, its false policies resulted from unprofessional officials and the lack of protection of local industry were the corollary of a self-support and self-reliant film production environment (2005). Documentary film practices and women's films are similarly affected by government policies. The prominence of documentary is relatively recent as a result of the political democratization and economic growth in Taiwan, and is intertwined with various government measures and NGOs' interventions. To counter the Nationalist party's propagandist film policy, the earlier guerrilla-style independent films gained popularity and momentum through its oppositional images to mainstream news media controlled by the government. Yet, the democratization process of Taiwan has enabled the establishment of film festivals, government subsidies, educational programs, and the public service TV that help tie in the training, production, exhibition, and distribution of Taiwan documentary films (Lin and Sang 1–4). During the years of martial law, newsreels and short documentaries were, at first, the government's instruments for enlightenment, while nationalist propagandist non-fiction films and censorship concomitantly took shape to ensure a totality of control post World War II. Documentary in Taiwan steps into a more institutionalized realm after the establishment of Broadcast Development Foundation sponsored by Government Information Office (GIO) in 1985, which in 1986 took charge of the Public Television Video Production (PTVP), a non-profit team that produced TV programs for educational purposes. PTVP relied on advertisement profits from the three monopolized official cable TV channels and majorly produced social education programs that are 25-minute in length (Wang 16, 2007). It later transformed into Public Television Service (PTS) in 1990, but still not an independent channel. The late 1980s and 1993 saw the two primary players in the documentary scene: the Golden Horse Film Festival (GHFF) and Women Make Waves Film Festival (WMWFF). The former has existed since 1962, aimed at promoting and recognizing excellent Mandarin-Chinese films. It did not make its turn to award non-state-produced, non-propagandist newsreels until the mid-1980s. WMWFF is organized

by the Taiwan Women's Film Association (formerly Taipei Women's Film Association) and is also one of the largest women-centred film festivals in Asia. Annette Lu (Lu Hsiu-lien), a member of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as well as former Vice President of Taiwan (2000–2008), worked with other female legislators to push forward the first women's film festival in Taiwan. It has not only dedicated to inviting and screening non-mainstream international women's and queer films, butt it also allocates one program specifically to films produced or directed by Taiwanese female filmmakers. The institutionalization advanced when the first graduate program in documentary studies was established in 1995, followed by the establishment of the first TV documentary exhibition channel Viewpoint at PTS in 1997 and the Taiwanese Documentary Film Festival Biennial (precursor to Taiwan International Documentary Festival) in 1998. Viewpoint regularly streams TV and theatrical documentary films in Taiwan up to today. Despite that the films shown on the channel are not necessarily TV documentaries but rather documentaries tailored to fit the need for broadcast purposes, the Public Television Service emerged to be the first documentary streaming channel now remains to be the sole, regular documentary exhibition site for local documentary filmmakers. Beginning in 1997, the National Culture and Arts Foundation was founded as the foremost organization that funds documentary projects under the category of Audio and Video Arts. The late 1990s saw the maturation of the institutionalization of documentary film productions in Taiwan. It became common knowledge for all emerging and existing documentary filmmakers that these are the three primary sources of funding if one is interested in producing a documentary. The Taipei Documentary Filmmaker Union routinely updates information and deadline for fellow union members to browse. Moreover, the institutionalization of documentary films has shifted the ways in which documentary filmmakers interact with authority, thus projecting a tightly-knit image between PTS, government subsidy, and the production value of documentary films. The institutionalization also produced a hybrid form of documentary between episodic documentaries and feature-length documentaries.

Prior to the institutionalization of documentary films in the late 1990s, there have been several female documentarians contributing to the scene. Since 1984, a significant marker that brought about the emergence of New Taiwan Documentary (Chiu and Zhang 54, 2015), there existed two female TV documentary producers: Chiu Su and Hsiao-Di Wang. These women created, directed and edited a significant body of TV

documentaries during a time when the operation of Public Television Video Production had been subject to scholarly critiques for its selective didactic propaganda while under the sole authoritative regime by Kuomingtang (KMT) in the name of citizen education (Wei and Lin 6, 2012). In spite of this, Su and Wang concomitantly directed theirs lens onto the marginalized, the aboriginal and the working class respectively. Su was recruited by the PTVP and produced 26 short episodes of a TV documentary titled *When the Spring Breaks over the Green Mountains* (self-translation; *ching shan chun hsiao*), in which she shows indigenous cultures, lifestyles and customs in Taiwan. Her works were criticized for lacking political agenda but rather, the images perpetuated the 'otherness' of indigenous cultures from a Han-centric perspective. By uncritically showing the staged indigenous costumes, traditions, and ceremonies, Su inevitably homogenized indigenous cultures and casting indigenous lives backward and undeveloped. On the institutional level, Su was the first female documentarian who won awards at the Golden Bell Awards, the largest, official awards in place to recognize Taiwan Radio and Television Participants. One characteristic of TV documentary production is that besides the meagre budget provided by the TV officials, Su had to purchase her own shooting, sound recording, and editing equipment out of her own pocket (Wang 1998a). Unlike how Hong Kong female TV documentary filmmakers who had access to plentiful technical and monetary resources from Hong Kong public television stations, documentary had yet to become an official or popularized format before the 1990s. Moreover, this has become a barrier for women who could not afford expensive equipment to enter the readily marginalizing cultural production.

PTVP also collaborated with Wang Hsiao-Di, a well-known self-identified lesbian TV producer and film director, in producing a series of episodic TV documentaries *The Portrayal of Hundred Labors* (*bai gong tu*) from 1984 to 1988. As a socialist, Wang had in her mind to centre this project on the portraits of the lower-class citizens, the often invisible groups on mainstream media. However, her proposal was initially rejected by the officials at PTVP due to her ill-intention to reveal scandals that could potentially pose a threat to the government. In order to soothe the officials, without receiving any funding in advance, Wang and her team (Minhsin Communications Company) self-produced the very first episode and thus enabled her ongoing collaboration process of PTVP (Wang 1998b). Her efforts and talents not only won her a legitimate role in the system, more female documentary filmmakers were on board in producing episodic TV documentaries

(Wang 17–18, 2007). Despite the content and administration control by KMT, Wang was able to produce more than 80 episodes of TV documentaries featuring marginal subjects including female labourers, construction workers, fishermen, etc. for several decades. Wang continued to delve into similar subjects in her later narrative film projects. Her down-to-earth yet not so aesthetically-inapproachable shooting style made her an influential but invisible figure during the period of Taiwan New Wave when compared to her male counterparts. In spite of the initial complication that Wang encountered with the officials, Wang's collaboration with PTS signals a hybridized video-making mode in which filmmakers must constantly negotiate between the official and the independent production.

The cases of Su and Wang consequently shine a light on the documentary production mode/format that was dominant in the early 1980s of Taiwan. Having to work one's way around the top-down authoritative system was a clear marker of the beginning of an unbalanced collaboration between the official institutions and the private forces. TV documentaries were only made possible by production companies that could self-provide necessary equipment and skills. The scant production budget was to be taken into account or financed by the documentarians themselves and was highly contingent on the very short, predetermined production periods. It established that in order to break into the limited exhibition venue on TV, the production teams ought to find alternative revenue sources in order to secure their exhibition space on the state-controlled television. Furthermore, it deprived any individual who did not own or was not affiliated with any scale of production companies to pursue a career in the television industry. In terms of program content, due to the social, cultural, and political control under martial law, any intentional and unintentional attempts to represent societal turmoils and insecurities were deemed threatening and would have suffered law enforcement. This is evident in the critiques of Su's works with regard to the over-simplified portrayals of Taiwan aboriginals imagined through the Han-centric perspective. Despite her efforts in promoting the marginal cultures, what her works did was far from probing into the political and social issues faced by indigenous groups but rather a by-product of the official's legitimation. Furthermore, these celebratory footages of cultural diversity yield mixed feelings in the eyes of local viewers. During a time when freedom of speech was suppressed and dissident views would not be tolerated, the local viewers could not help

but felt ambivalent about the festive mood projected on national television (Wang 15–16, 2007).

The lifting of martial law in 1987 and the accessibility to Betacam videos have contributed to the inflow of women participating in documentaries unprecedentedly. While participating in Public Television video productions remained to be a privilege to those who should be immediately resourceful, Tai-li Hu and Yu-Shan Huang were the two major female documentary pioneers who worked independently during the pre-institution years. Considered to be the first female documentary filmmaker in Taiwan, Huang, after receiving her Master of Fine Arts degree at the New York University, returned to produce short documentaries *Ju Ming* (1982), *Letters from Taipei* (1983), and *The Paintings of A-Sun* (1984). Huang is the very first female documentary filmmaker that was nominated for best documentary film with her *The Painting Of A-Sun* (1982) and finally won the award with her *Letters from Taipei* (1983) next year. Huang managed to steadily produce works after the lifting of martial law as the political climate has slowly shifted from authoritative to democratic. She founded the B & W Film studio in 1998 and released her fictional “women’s film” trilogy produced in 1988, 1990 and 1991. Huang set foot in steadily producing biography documentaries, and has continuously built a close relationship with broadcast TV channels throughout her career. Huang produced a documentary video *Women Who Changed Taiwan* (1993) in the same year when she co-founded Women Make Wave Film Festival (WMWFF). Huang continued to participate in several TV documentaries between 1993–1997 with two out of the four cable broadcast television channels, FTV and TTV, in Taiwan. Her films are both political and personal, delineating the life stories of key Taiwanese political figures with a touch of subjective infusion. She also collaborated with PTS respectively in 1999 and 2003 in making topical documentaries featuring two important Taiwanese women’s stories. During this period, women filmmakers were able to approach marginalized subjects and infused personal perspectives and artistic maneuvering through the making of documentary works. The documentary became a valid method to deliver non-mainstream content insomuch that the broadcasters provided a steady stream of funding opportunity.

On the other hand, Tai-li Hu rose and became a significant figure in expanding documentary exhibition venue from the broadcast network to the theatrical platform. Upon the conferring of her doctoral degree in Anthropology at the City University of New

York, she returned to Taiwan and began her research position at the Institute of Ethnology of the Academia Sinica. She was the first documentarian to employ a synchronized sound recording system with 16mm film cameras and completed *The Return of Gods and Ancestors : Paiwan Five-year Ceremony* (1984). She was also the first person to document indigenous cultural events that break away from the education-centred TV documentaries produced and exhibited on broadcast TV channels.

The production process for the very first colour, synchronized film is worth noting. It was a product of apprenticeship, minimal equipment, and under-ratio film footages. With the sole support from the Institute of Ethnology, Hu obtained access to an old Bell & Howell 16mm camera and then purchased Sony Professional Walkman D6 for synchronized recording (Wang 1999). While having to spend the remaining budget on the tripod, filters, light meter and such, Hu bought 20 rolls of 100ft film reels. Each film roll equals roughly three minutes screen time. In total, she was able to shoot 60 minutes of footage for a ten-day ceremony. The screen ratio and quality may not be top-notch; however, Hu was not afraid to explore uncharted territories. This film marks to be the very first independent documentary in Taiwan documentary history that rejects government intervention. With the help of other returnees such as Dow-Ming Li, Hu produced another documentary titled *Songs of Pasta'ay* (1993) that was nominated for the 25th Golden Horse Film Festival. Hu furthered the New Taiwan Documentary movement and established the very first Biennial Taiwan Ethnographical Film Festival (now the Taiwan International Ethnographical Film Festival) in 2001.

Hu is at the onset a scholar and her documentaries reflect her ongoing ethnographic research project along with her creative works. However, this by no means suggests that her works lack rigour or documentary aesthetics. On the contrary, her works deny the absolute claim of objectivity. Instead, they employ a first-person narrative, carefully unravelling the intimate stories and subjectivities of her subjects to the distant viewers. Hu's next film *Voices of the Orchid Island* (1993) won her the first Best Actuality Report Award and has been praised for its reflexivity (Chiu 123–126, 2007). Chiu also provides an in-depth analysis of the ways in which Hu's self-interrogation as an outsider/Han person mirrors the indigenous villagers' discontent towards mainland tourists, who were deemed by the villagers to be rude and making dehumanizing comments that hurt the indigenous community. Chiu also examines Hu's poignant commentary in revealing the evidence of self-orientalizing, an inevitable

measure that the already othered groups had to (un)willingly take when subsumed into a hegemonic society (ibid. 125).

The first documentary film exhibited in a theatre was Hu Tai-Li's *Passing Through My Mother-in-Law's Village* (1997), seen as one of the chief milestones in Taiwan documentary history. *Passing Through My Mother-in-Law's Village* (hereafter *Passing*) is a film that delineates Hu's personal experience as a Chinese diasporic daughter-in-law married to a traditional Taiwanese family located in a small village in rural Central Taiwan. Shot on 16mm, Hu documented the modernization and industrialization of the village and the film also became a part of her thesis dissertation in anthropology and ethnography at that time. Hu is viewed as the one and only female documentary filmmaker who persists in the industry with a focus on ethnographical films. Her scholar/ethnographer background and her unique focus on indigenous culture ensured a steady and recognizable reputation in attaining state funding as the institutionalization of Taiwanese documentary has taken flight. Nonetheless, the theatrical distribution of Hu's *Passing* is not to be celebrated but rather is situated in a condition when documentarians had no other outlets to showcase their films. Prior to *Passing, s*ocial movement documentaries that came to prominence in the late-1980s solely relied on cassette distribution. Without proper support and knowledge in marketing, the viewership of these video cassettes remained low. The exhibition of independent documentary films was non-existent, a serious issue experienced by many independent Taiwanese documentary filmmakers. The theatrical release of Hu's film is also a divide and led to a more complex mechanism both in content exploration as well as the production-exhibition-distribution network for contemporary Taiwan documentary films. The documentary scene has no other option but to hinge on a steady demand and supply through government allocation of funding and projects in the name of promoting community development and local diversity (Chen). Documentary cinema has always been rendered as products of no commercial value. In order to simultaneously survive economically and pursue their vision, local Taiwanese documentary filmmakers feed their talents into governmental cases and are able to sustain themselves in continuously producing works within or outside the system.

Across the body of her works, Hu has demonstrated a rich yet poignant view of indigenous groups through a variety of documentary techniques such as direct address and re-enactment. In her 1984 film *Voice of the Orchid Island*, Hu plays with the reflexive

mode of filmmaking by consciously making her presence as well as her filmmaking practice tangible by the viewer. *Voice of the Orchid Island* opens with Hu's offscreen voice addressing the rolling of the camera on a group of people who are the local residents sitting on the beach in a wide shot. She then asks the three men and a boy to take part in a film about Orchid Island. This seems to be an attempt to amend the didactic approach that exoticizes the aboriginals seen in Chiu Su's TV documentaries. She foregrounds the subjects and emphasizes the intruding qualities of film cameras on the minority groups, making aware that film is merely a medium to mediate between people of two different positions in the hierarchy.

Passing further demonstrates Hu's creativity in ethnographical/ documentary-making. She establishes her authorial presence through her voice, but the voice is never dominant but rather self-questioning. Opening with fainted, sepia-toned still images, Hu goes on to tell a personal story. The ways in which Hu utilizes sound effects amplify marginal voices. What accompanies the sequence of still photos is the sound effects of trains churning in the background, giving a sense of nostalgia unique to travellers in Taiwan. If viewing her works in chronological order, it is not surprising to see Hu quickly appear on the screen walking outside of a train station, and this time we wonder whose story she is going to tell, hers, or the aboriginals? The sound effect is then understood as a continuum of Hu's appearance at a train station. Was the sound effect mixed to encourage the viewers to ponder if she were reviewing the photos on the train? Or, does this narratological sound effect accentuate her capability as an ethnographical filmmaker to build an imaginary soundscape seamlessly? Later on, the film shows an intimate account of her pregnancy with the 16-year-old teenager sitting next to her in the taxi, recounting a feminine history that is unseen or uncommon on a larger screen or often through the male voice. In *Passing*, it is evident that Hu has made a creative effort to preserve stories that were deemed unworthy to be recorded at that time.

In 2004, Hu made *Stone Dream*, a documentary film about a discharged soldier whose name is Liu Bi-Chia who moved from the mainland to Taiwan and now lives in a village assigned by the government that consists of mostly discharged mainlander veterans who were in their 30s or 40s and married to mostly younger wives or different ethnicities (mostly the aboriginals) or widows with lower social status and living standard. Tracing the aesthetic mode of Taiwan documentary, it is argued that the poetic mode of documentaries was discerned in the 1930s. Shot in amateur film stock, Nan-Guan Deng

and Na-Ou Liu demonstrated bits of daily lives parallel to the cinema-vérité films popularized in the West in the 1960s (Wang 10, 2007). However, between 1945 and the early 1980s—the period when Taiwan was returned to the rulership of the Nationalist Party but under ideological control—the ideas of realistic portrayals were strongly tied to national development and policy propagation and are identified as an influence during Japan's colonizing period (Wang 10–11, 2007; Li 168–169). In this case, the expository mode of documentary-making was predominant. In 1966, Yao-Chi Chen, who received his M.F.A. in the Film Program at UCLA, is viewed as the first personal documentary filmmaker to turn a new leaf on Taiwanese documentary history. He shifted away from the propagandist mode of production with his film *Liu Bi-Chia* (1966). Identical to the main subject's name in the film, *Liu Bi-Chia* is important not because of its historical and aesthetic status, but rather, it signifies the beginning of a continuum that connects to Hu's film, which captured the story of the same protagonist Liu Bi-Chia, after 38 years of his first appearance in Chen's film. Bypassing the period when documentary productions were only made possible and were solely dominated by the state-owned broadcast channels, Hu reconnects long-lost authorship characterized by the indigenous spirits, political struggle, and her self-reflexive aesthetics.

To summarize, there existed two modes of documentary filmmaking before the institutionalization of documentary films in the mid-1990s: the TV documentaries and independent documentaries. Regardless of the scarcity of resources, female documentary filmmakers concomitantly turned their lens to the disenfranchised by recognizing the existence of minorities across age, gender, class and ethnicity and rejecting to participate in the dominant nation-constructing agenda. The institutionalization of documentary films provides more opportunities for all women filmmakers in relation to production, exhibition and distribution, but it remains secondary to narrative film production. As one of the most important female ethnographical/documentary filmmakers and administers, Hu plays a significant role in the history of documentary films with her subjective voice and her creative choices in foregrounding the stories of the disenfranchised. Moreover, she challenges the single narrative of nation-building not only through the exposure of multi-lingual dialect that but also how settler colonialism has significantly impacted the life of the aboriginals. Hu investigates the intrusion of mainlanders into the aboriginals and also reflexively juxtapositions her role as a filmmaker as an intruder. Moreover, Hu shows the co-

existence of different dialects not only in her family (*Passing*) but as Hu's subjects shift from the aborigine, the Taiwanese mother-in-law, to the discharged veteran who moved from the mainland to Taiwan (*Stone Dream*), the co-existence of different dialects between indigenous language, Hakka, Shanghainese, Minanese became a custom and cannot be overlooked. Hu's films give significance to the concept of Sinophone documentary, demonstrating a mode of filmmaking that cannot be bound by a singular geographical, cultural, or linguistic entity.

Redrawing Borderlines—Non(fiction), Marginal Identity, Sinophone

If Su, Wang, Huang and Hu represent the contributions to the Taiwan documentary scene during a period before the institutionalization of documentary practices, Zero Chou's career exemplifies the constantly shifting mode of production during the institutionalization of documentary films in Taiwan. Her works further demonstrate how women documentarians have emerged and occupied a space that cannot be confined geographically and linguistically, neither can they be viewed under a coherent scope of genre studies nor national cinema. Zero Chou is renowned for her award-winning narrative lesbian film trilogy inclusive of *Splendid Float* (2004), *Spider Lilies* (2007) and *Drifting Flowers* (2008). All of which have screened internationally and received critical acclaims. After garnering the Best Taiwan Film Award at the Golden Horse Film Festival with *Splendid Float* in 2004, *Spider Lillies* won Chou the first Teddy Award for Best Feature Film at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2007. *Drifting Flowers* brought Chou back to Berlin in 2008 for being selected in the Panorama program. After the box office plummeted with her historical drama *Ripples of Desire* (2012), Chou turned to cultivate a six-episode LGBTQ-themed TV-film web series that is titled *Over the Rainbow*. Funded by private investors, this project is transnational and transmedia as it is set to take place in six different cities (Taipei, Hong Kong, Beijing, Chengdu, Singapore, and Penang) in Asia and has aired on various streaming platforms. Infused with comedy and star cast, Chou has continued to chart new territories in her career and expanded her production mode beyond traditional film production and distribution outlets. Aside from her international recognition, there is also extensive scholarship on her narrative films and the documentary film *Corner's* (2001). *Corner's* is not only one of the most important queer films in Taiwanese cinema but also

marks her transition from nonfiction to fiction filmmaking and further establishes her as a self-identified lesbian filmmaker. In Yu-shan Huang and Chun-Chi Wang's close reading of Zero Chou's lesbian trilogy, they demonstrate how Chou focuses on Taiwanese working-class queer culture that not only disrupts the heteronormative visual culture but also suggests a lifetime lesbian companionship (147–150). Emerging as a post-New Taiwan Cinema female director, Chou's works not only challenge the predominant portrayal of an urban middle-class queer culture but deflect the exotic gaze and grant queer identity an innate and permanent status. Patricia White also enlists Chou in her study of the world's women's cinema in relation to the global film festival network. White agrees with how Chou stands against the Euro-centric queer portrayal, and further points out how she builds a localized representation that connects global and regional audiences. In Zoran Lee Pecic's book *New Queer Sinophone Cinema*, the author argues that her narrative films disrupt conventional queer culture affiliated with cultural Chineseness and are "invocations of culture that are simultaneously real and unreal, local as well as global" (72). The intertextuality across her works and other Sinophone queer directors, the de-territorial qualities manifested in her production, and the innovative genre reinvention situates her films as non-culture-specific but rather in-between the local and the transnational.

As illustrated above, Chou's narrative films are highly acclaimed and have garnered significant scholarly interest for them signalling transnational feminist authorship and subjectivity that is simultaneously rooted in local culture. Yet, such invocation of her auteurist signatures is not complete without the consideration of her documentary films. Chou joined and collaborated with the independent Firefly Film Studio in producing several themed documentary films of traditional culture preservation and marginal locality of Taiwan after a short period of working as a news journalist since 1984. It was a time that saw the emergence of "social movement documentaries" in Taiwan, questioning the authenticity of TV newsreels and documentaries (Wang 16, 2007). Firefly Film Studio—amongst many other smaller film studios such as The Green Group, The Third Image, New Taiwan Social Movement Audio and Visual Studio, and KuanChi Cultural Group—tackled the issues of war refugees, labour and agriculture movement, anti-nuclear movement, political resistance, and environment preservation. Their aim was to disclose the surreal and unlikely bright and progressive now and future broadcasted to their viewers (Li 179, 2007). After a few years of collaboration with the

grassroots Firefly Film Studio, Chou produced and co-directed *Floating Islands* (2000). *Floating Islands* is a collective documentary in which 12 filmmakers respectively contributed a short documentary/experimental piece, thematically in common, and engaged in subjects based on the 12 smaller islands peripherally surrounding Taiwan. Impassioned by marginalized subjects and localities, Chou effectively recruited independent documentarians to participate in this project with shared ambitions and their collective renouncement to government funding. Shot on 35mm film reels, the film has set to push the boundaries of feature-length documentaries and indeed paved the way for an even more diverse documentary culture and aesthetics in contemporary Taiwan documentary. Dow-Ming Li has argued that this film enacted a radical stance in challenging the conventional vérité style upheld by early documentarians (Li 184, 2007). Not only that the film is radical in its attempt to broaden and redefine documentary aesthetics, it unanimously refocuses on the peripheries—the territories that were often unrealistically addressed in the imaginaries of national discourse and military fortresses—in which the essences of humanism were erased. The 12 main islanders embarked on a trip to the smaller islands surrounding Taiwan, decentralizing the already politically marginalized Taiwan island itself. With *Floating Islands*, Chou marks a significant page in Taiwan documentary history as she gears the journalist and issue-oriented documentaries towards a more reflective, personal, and philosophical aesthetic. The film also signals a new phase of independent filmmaking of the Taiwan documentary, a production mode that rejects the contractor relationship, the official's legitimation, and the forgoing of ownership. In other words, by the renunciation of government interventions, the filmmakers reclaim rights to creative autonomy and agency.

With *Floating Islands* as an exception, Chou in fact has established a steady work relationship with the Public Television Service, which according to her, is a reliable and trustworthy source to collaborate with in making documentary films (*Corner's*). Her next documentary film *Corner's* is released by PTS's Viewpoint program. The film's international and critical success in theme, style and subject matter proves that the relationship between filmmaker and government commissioners could be not as daunting as one would imagine. She subsequently made two more feature-length documentaries, *Poles Extremity* (*Chi Duan Bao Dao*, 2002) *Visions in the Dark* (*Hei An Shi Che*, 2005), both partially funded by PTS and featuring minority subjects across

different race, class, gender and sexuality. Through the three films, Chou solidifies her authorial imprints with her partner/cinematographer, Hoho, and the duo has collaborated since and enriches the intertextuality across both their documentaries and feature-length narrative films. The Zero+Hoho signature preceding her narrative films in fact first appeared in *Corner's*. Chou and Hoho are the only openly lesbian filmmaker duo in Sinophone film studies, following Tsai Ming-liang as the sole Malaysian-Taiwanese auteur known for inscribing handwritten signatures across his films (Lim 237). Though often credited as the director, Chou's collaboration with her partner as the cinematographer has marked a feminist auteurist print.

After cross-examining the various techniques, themes, and aesthetic maneuvering in Chou's documentary films, I contend that Chou's works should be situated in an authorial framework that does not exclude her documentary films, particularly when considering not only the aesthetics but also the mode of production and her political and ideological impulses. Specifically, I analyze both the generic and intertextual elements that signify the imprints across her works. I argue that her consistent adoption of the three modes of production (poetic, participatory, and performative) leaves visible traces of subjective consciousness in the powerful intervention of social issues yet an open-ended structure that invites interpretation. Rejecting a pure objective, journalistic style of portrayal, Chou persists on a hybridized model of documentary narrative by infusing third-person interviews and first-person storytelling, shifting the focus of the film from knowledge conveying to self-reflection and personal expression.

Synopses

Corner's documents the closing of a gay bar at the end of 2000 as a result of malicious police raids that took place in Taipei City on November 7, 1999. The police raid has raised the deep-seated fear amongst the well-attended gay bar patrons when the policemen began illegitimately taking photos of the attendees without consent, and condoning hateful remarks. Accompanying the raid, outsiders barged in yelling at the inside patrons and humiliated them by calling them pigs, perverts and homos that have significantly violated the dignity and rights of the customers. The police raid is the pinnacle incident of the film, in which Chou simultaneously connects the subjects

(customers, bar owners, and the filmmakers themselves) through a more poetic and affective storytelling manner.

Poles Extremity uses locality as the signifier of the extremely marginalized groups living on the island. The film connects four different subjects residing on the farthest edges of Taiwan: the most northern, southern, eastern, and western points. Chou documents four groups of people: the illegitimate prostitutes (North), the elder woman who subsists on scrap metals (South), the oyster farmers (West), and lastly, the aboriginal children (East). Chou closely follows and interviews her subjects, interweaving personal narratives with poetic and philosophical symbolism to demonstrate the conundrums that are faced by the disenfranchised groups residing on the margins.

In *Visions in the Dark*, Chou and Hoho collaboratively documented the lives of a bunch of visually impaired students that attend the School of Special Education. Different from a journalistic perspective that tends to pathologize the disabled, Chou follows her typical philosophical and melodic approach in presenting her subjects. Employing the participatory approach, Chou seems to have won the trust of the group of students, and successfully brings forward her subjects' visions, living space, and the thinking logic that uniquely belong to them.

Analyses

The three films unanimously focus on the marginalized and reveal the patriarchal, capitalist and ableist view of Taiwan society. Chou's interviews with the subjects harshly disclose the hardships and the great amount of discrimination faced by the disenfranchised, whether it is from family or strangers. One of the gay subjects in *Corner's* mentions that his dad's reaction to gay parades held in Taiwan was that "they should all be executed." In *Poles Extremity,* the subjects point out that since the outlaw of prostitution in 1998, most sex workers operate under illegality but survive by building an illegitimate monetary relationship with the local police stations based on unequal power dynamics. One sex worker suffered physical misery for having aborted more than 20 children in addition to seven or eight miscarriages. Another was treated as property as she was asked to work as a prostitute by her parents (father and stepmother) before she hit puberty in order to help pay off the debt they owed. In *Visions of the Dark*, one subject addressed the discriminatory remarks from strangers and taxi drivers including

“don’t walk around if you’re blind” and “how unlucky to give a ride to you.” Additionally, in any discussion of the LGBTQ culture in societies influenced by Confucian teaching, it is inevitable to encounter narratives in which most individuals internalize the responsibility to fulfill the duties as children to get married and produce offspring. Confucianism dictates that family is defined under rigid gender roles and is the centre and the stronghold for the nation and the individuals. For many of the interviewees in *Corner’s*, they recognize that by straying away from traditional values, they are viewed as unfilial, rejecting to live a stable life and are destined to disappoint their parents who expect that their children would grant them grandchildren.

Yet, Chou is able to poetically deflect the sense of pessimism by incorporating staged shots and symbolisms. By alternating between the real and unreal, Chou truthfully reflects the social reality that the LGBTQ community face on a daily basis and yet, provides an alternative futurity through imagination. After an interview with a woman discussing her first lesbian relationship with a teacher in her 30s when she was 15 years old in *Corner’s*, Chou cuts to a train passing in the foreground in slow motion, revealing two barbie dolls in wedding dresses holding hands in the background. Chou cross cuts with footages of a real man and a woman dressed up as groom and bride in the middle of a wedding photoshoot and applies a black and white freeze-frame to the couple. The slow-motion suggests a slow progression towards futurity, whereas the freeze frame suggests the doomed future of a heterosexual union. Furthermore, Chou rejects to pathologize the victims but rather reworks the mainstream values through occupying peripheral spaces. For example, in *Corner’s*, the narrator describes the gay bar as the warmest place in this alienating city. Implicit in the comment is a criticism of the mainstream values ascribed to the heteronormative society that discriminates the others. In *Visions of the Dark*, Chou foregrounds the visions, the realms, the thinking logic of the children, and their ability to claim their disability as empowering rather than feeling inferior. The opening sequence features a boy describing the different flavours that he perceives in relation to buildings. To him, the apartments are sour, the condos are bitter, the townhouses are spicy, and individual townhouses are sweet. She also showcases the different talents that the kids possess, such as knowing the days of corresponding dates, scriptwriting, writing letters for themselves, etc. If mainstream cinema tends to delineate the disabled as the ones with no future or a future that can only be imagined by the abled-bodied, Chou shows that none of the kids want to become a masseuse, a

stereotypical career path for the visually impaired. Furthermore, regaining vision is not a celebratory as those with eyesight think it is. To them, it is a bias. Feminist disability studies have endeavoured to locate a situated scholarship that encompasses analyses that serve to “humanize disabled subjects and to demetaphorize and depathologize disability” (Garland-Thomson 1573). Chou undertakes what is previously unrepresentable or misrepresented on the screen, granting her subjects agency that is often rejected in mainstream cinema.

Chou employs plenty of atypical approaches to her films including subjective narration, superimpositions (multiple overlapping images as a result of lower opacity), handheld camera, slow motion (stretched visual time) accompanied by non-diegetic, non-synchronous music and sound effects and lastly open-ended narratives. All of which combined—if examined using Bill Nichols’ lens—is an empowering mix of poetic, participatory, and performative modes of production. This mix not only builds intimacy and affect amongst her subjects and herself but also gestures towards creative storytelling that is unprecedented in Taiwan documentary history. Bill Nichols has introduced a method in differentiating documentaries with a premise that emphasizes how any sort of categorization of documentary film is fluid and the boundaries between categorizations could always shift, alter, and redraw themselves as time and technology evolve (143). Nichols identifies six modes of documentaries: expository, poetic, observational, participatory, reflexive, and performative by locating similar formal conventions as well as patterns and tendencies in the arrangement of sounds and images across existing documentary films. Chou’s particular use of the three modes—poetic, participatory and performative—in her documentaries effectively challenges how the abstract and disembodied knowledge“[is] transferred or exchanged freely and those who perform the transfer or exchange are but conduits for knowledge that remains unaltered by their personal involvement with it” (ibid. 201). In Chou’s documentary and narrative films, the non-diegetic accordion music and sound of ocean waves become a noticeable register accompanying a series of montage footage that may or may not contain the actual image of the sea. A visually impaired accordion player finally makes a diegetic appearance at the end of *Visions in the Dark.* The accordion association is further materialized at the end of *Drifting Flowers*, the third narrative film in Chou’s lesbian narrative trilogy, played by one of the major characters in the film. In Huang and Wang’s examination of *Drifting Flowers*, they argue that the three sections in the film are

not constructed linearly but rather juxtaposed to break the restraint of time and space for the purpose of constructing a collective memory unique to Taiwanese lesbians (56). To me, Chou has prefaced many of her characters as early as in her documentary films. In *Drifting Flowers*, two of Chou's cast are real subject drawn from her documentary films including Ocean (first appearance in *Corner's*) and Mei-go (first appearance in *Poles Extremity*). Chou establishes sound and character memory that is rooted in local culture, not only by embedding the same type of music but also casting queer subjects in her queer-themed films. As such, a queer continuum is discernible across her works. Chou demonstrates her vital role in and her respect towards the queer community in Taiwan by telling queer stories grounded in queer cast and crew.

Chou's style also works to bend the heteronormative, sexist, classist, and ableist materiality and timeline. Her repetitive use of narration, slow motion, superimposition and open-ending strengthens Chou's ambition and solidarity with the queer community. While slow-motion effectively extends the screen time on marginalized subjects, the use of superimposition links unrelated subjects of minority and grants them a sense of collectivity. If the voice of the narrator (usually male) in documentary films serves to address to all viewer as the voice of God, *Corner's* takes up a woman-centred narration addressing her desire to make her lesbian lover (evidenced by another woman's voice) hear the sound of her masturbating when thinking of her. Chou's deliberate rejection of dominant ideologies is further complimented by the open-ended narrative. Such a tactic not only leaves the audience with questions and ambivalences, but it also functions as a critique that addresses the government's failure to deal with complex issues. In *Poles Extremity*, Chou exposes that the government eradicated the red light zone in public without follow-up resolutions. As a result, many of the sex workers went underground and became subjugated to stigmatization and exploitation. The third segment in the same film shows the organizing of workers against one of the largest company Formosa Plastics Group and the industry zone's pollution that affects the seamen's (particularly oyster farming business) livelihood. Because of their marginal status, they are usually left unattended and uncared for by the government, whose interest aligns with the corporates'. Chou displays the multiple perspectives of the family members who speak in different dialects. She is, to some extent, equating the irreconcilable identities and positions between the younger and older generation as the gap widens since KMT's colonization and implementation of Mandarin-speaking policy. By intercutting the family

business' struggle with an adolescent couple and their commitment to each other, Chou tackles that when personal pursuit of romance becomes an immediately obtainable goal, the government and the corporate manage to elide the deep-seated structural problem that perpetuates the minority status of working-class families.

Conclusion

Women's participation in filmmaking is contingent on historical and political factors and in turn, mapping out women's cinema signifies a consciousness to rewrite, redefine and recentre the male-dominated culture. Taiwanese female filmmakers remind me of the meaning of avant-garde explicated by Lauren Rabinovitz in *Women, Power & Politics in the New York Avant-garde Cinema 1943–1971,* which is a notion that "rejects the cause-effect relationships and attempts to explore the spatial and temporal possibilities of the medium…may be further identified by its particular conditions of production in individual filmmaking or small group collaborations" (13). The history of Taiwan documentary film is male-dominant. Prior to 1984, there were no female documentarians on the record. Newsreels and reportage-like TV documentaries had dominated major broadcasting networks until Tai-li Hu's first ethnographic documentary film in 1984. The study of Chiu Su and Hsiao-Di Wang shows that TV documentaries were only made possible by production companies that could self-provide necessary equipment and skills. The scant production budget was to be taken into account or financed by the documentarians themselves and was highly contingent on the very short, predetermined production periods. It established that in order to break into the limited exhibition venue on TV, the production teams ought to find alternative revenue sources in order to secure their exhibition space on the state-controlled television networks. Furthermore, it deprived any individual who did not own or was not affiliated with any scale of production companies to pursue a career in the television industry. The Public Television Service (PTS) was established in 1990, marking the beginning of the institutionalization of Taiwan documentary films that provided further exhibition opportunities for male documentary filmmakers such as Yii-Feng Wu who co-founded Fullshot Studio and birthed the first feature-length TV documentary film *Moon Children* (Wang 21-23). Women filmmakers such as Wen-Chen Tseng, Yu-Shan Huang and Wei-Suu Chien gained traction after the founding of the Women Make Waves Film Festival in 1993. Coinciding with the ongoing women's movements in Taiwan, WMWFF enabled

contracting opportunities and hired female documentarians to shoot autobiography documentary films about important female figures in Taiwan history. Such films explore the upbringing and impact of outstanding women in Taiwan (Wang 29). The year 1999 marked an important history as Zero Chou renounced government funding and independently produced *Floating Islands*. With this exception, Chou continued to collaborate with Public Television Service for most of her later documentary films.

The symbiotic relationship between government funding and women's documentary practices is not organic but rather a long-term effect of the negotiation between funding, creative autonomy, and bureaucratic measures. I provide an analysis of the production and aesthetic modes of a select number of important Taiwanese female documentary filmmakers who have worked independently or with TV stations. This analysis then allows me to address that while the majority of them eventually orient towards the symbiotic working relationships with the government, many of which successfully tap into issues and subjects that were often invisible or sidelined in mainstream media. In spite of its marginality, Hsiao-Di Wang, Tai-li Hu, and Yu-shan Huang stand to be prolific, creative and pioneering filmmakers that carve out alternative representations during a time when defining a national cinema was considered to be the most urgent task. Chou's works serve as a continuum in terms of both form and content. Chou's films flourish during the institutionalization of documentary films and her involvement as a filmmaker instills new meanings to her subjects, making visible her subjective emotional involvement and her counter-hegemonic artistic expression through her participation, and yet leave uncertainty to the viewers for independent interpretation. All in all, Taiwanese female documentarians reject journalistic reportage but rather infuse their works with subjectivity, reflexivity, and concomitantly, criticality. By looking back at their own works and their position in relation to the subjects of the periphery, a dialogic space is engendered beyond time and space. Their works do not feed to construct a national discourse, but rather, they are potential feminist embodiments that critically question patriarchy, nationalism, and settler colonialism.

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Chapter 5.

Diverse Styles and Approaches: Hong Kong as a City of Experiment

"The documentary scene in Hong Kong is almost non-existent." —Angie Chen[6]

Hong Kong used to be a British Colony from 1842–1997. As signed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration, the People's Republic of China (China) promised 50-years of "one country, two systems" upon unification to slowly transition the once financial and cultural hub central to the pan-Asian economy to the sovereignty of Communist-led China. Now the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region from 1997 onwards (thereafter HKSAR), in spite of its dwindling cultural and economic importance, demonstrates civilian resilience when struck by the tightening control of the PRC and its crumbling liberty. Known as the Umbrella Movement in 2014 and the ongoing Liberating Hong Kong Revolution since 2019, the protesters of Hong Kong demanded universal suffrage for the appointment of Hong Kong chief executive and have strived to resist the controversial extradition law.[7] HKSAR politics are changing everyday, and at this point of writing its protestors are still facing severe police brutality and struggling to restore their democracy. Hong Kong's cultural scene is entangled with the continuous and discontinuous connections with the British and Chinese regimes. In John M. Carroll's review of postcolonial Hong Kong from 1997–2007, he points out the uniqueness of Hong Kong's decolonization for being the most economically successful colony and is considered to have brought Britain "a sense of prestige and respect" as opposed to embarrassment (12). As such, while Hong Kong is largely composed of ethnically Chinese migrants, the long colonial history along with the growing local identity yield to a society with mixed identities (Sussman 15–17). The people who live in the city are situated in a liminal space as it seems unlikely to forge an identity that is rooted in local

[6] See Tinny Cheng's journal interview with Angie Chen titled "Hong Kong Female Documentary Directors Series" published by *HKEj insight* in 2013.

[7] The draft of the law permits the extradition of Hong Kong criminal suspects to mainland China, Macau and Taiwan for trial. The protesters do not trust the judicial system of mainland China, worrying that extradition of suspects to the mainland will lead to unfair interrogations. Furthermore, it infringes the independent jurisdiction status under the Basic Law according to the premise of "one-country, two systems."

space where the dominant language (Cantonese) and nationality (British or Chinese) could seamlessly integrate. As suggested by Helen F. Siu, the Chinese in Hong Kong "avoided rigidly defined identities; they were comfortable with their multicultural qualities and had learned how to 'be flexible in themselves" (qtd. in Sussman 16–17). Though many Hong Kong women filmmakers tackle women's issues in both commercial and avant-garde settings, Gina Marchetti argues that some have been alienated from feminist politics. Marchetti's study of Hong Kong female filmmakers claims that the middle-class sensibility plus the rights gained since the Western second-wave women's movements have dissuaded some from addressing "the concerns of working-class, poor and third-world women" (237–238, 2015). Kin-Yan Szeto also sharply points out the paradoxical cosmopolitan politics in the case of successful diasporic martial arts male filmmakers. Szeto argues:

> Colonialism, Chinese nationalism, and Western orientalism and imperialism—along with their associated patriarchal discourses—shaped these film artists' complex identities. The film artists have not been passive observers or victims of these forces but instead have deployed cosmopolitical consciousnesses tactically in navigating through them, with an inventive resilience that has enabled them not only to survive but also to succeed commercially. (7)

Under these multiple ideologies, Hong Kong women maintain low sociocultural status as a result of a mix of Chinese-British cultures entangled with the capitalist economy (Pearson and Leung, qtd. in Ho 180). Whether it is cosmofeminism or cosmopolitics, the complex combination of economic affluence, patriarchy or the difficult oscillation between the socialist-communist Chinese regime and capitalistic-democratic British Crown colony, women filmmakers keep ebbing and flowing in the face of the colonial history and political turmoils prior to and since the reversion to the PRC in 1997.

Tracing Hong Kong documentary film history is not an easy task, let alone those made by female documentary filmmakers. While documentary filmmaking practices are often sidelined in Hong Kong cinema, scholars whose research focuses on Chinese women directors that include Hong Kong or Taiwanese filmmakers have also (un)intentionally overlooked documentary films made by female directors. It is not until Gina Marchetti's dedicated research in her article "Feminism, Postfeminism, and Hong Kong Women filmmakers" that women documentary filmmakers are mentioned and discussed (Marchetti 237; 239). Not only that the double marginality of women and

documentary film is an issue, but it appears that women's choice in making documentary films could be enabled or disabled according to the industry's preference or popular interests. The opening remark stated by Angie Chen hints at the scarcity of documentary-making practices in Hong Kong regardless of how she defines it. Chen is one of the first generations of returnees after studying filmmaking abroad in the 1970s and has made four feature-length commercial narrative films, one documentary short and three feature-length documentary films up to today. Interestingly, the two feature documentary films under her belt, *The Visit* (1978) and *The Darling Life* (2008) were made 30 years apart. Ann Hui, considered to be one of the most significant and highly acclaimed contemporary female directors in Hong Kong, also launched her career in the 1970s. After graduating from London Film School, Hui returned to Hong Kong and began her career in the public-service Television Broadcast Limited (TVB), the first free-to-air broadcast network in Hong Kong. Her narrative and documentary shorts shot in 16mm film gain recognition in 1977 (Aitken and Ingham 110). Similar to Chen, she did not make another feature-length documentary film (*As Time Goes By*, Co-director) until 1997, signifying a structural gap that disconnects documentary-making and women's participation in Hong Kong cinema.

These two female filmmakers' disconnection from documentary filmmaking provides an insight into how documentary film and its practices stood and could have been perceived in the Hong Kong film history. After making the documentary short, Chen returned to Hong Kong and began working as an assistant director to several renowned male directors including Jacky Chan and Chia-Chang Liu from Taiwan. She went on to direct three feature narrative films produced by Shaw Brothers Studios: *Chaos By Design, My Name Ain't Suzie,* and *Maybe It's Love* between 1983 and 1988, establishing her status as a commercial director. While some scholars have biographically pointed out how Hui served in Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) since 1978 as a content producer for short documentary and TV dramas, what attracted more attention were her four drama episodes produced by the RTHK television series *Below the Lion Rock* that aired between 1972–2006 (Ho 179; Chang 725). In "Hong Kong documentary: The Genre That Never Was," Philip Robertson explores the lost scene of documentary in Hong Kong, claiming that the genre "was hijacked early on to the propaganda purposes of government," specifically referring to the TV documentaries produced by the colonial government (Robertson 100). The absence of the documentary genre in Hong Kong's

film industry, in Robertson's analysis, is a result of a controlled media production by government officials which sustained the colonial regime. Resembling newsreels, this article posits TV documentaries that were produced by the colonial government are staged works that lack authenticity or personal artistic impulse. One example includes *Hong Kong Today* produced by the Hong Kong Film Unit from 1967 to 1973 (Aitken and Ingham 81–82). By factoring in the colonial legacy and the expected handover to the PRC in 1997, Robertson argues that there in fact exists a unique, hybridized genre—docudrama—that characterizes Hong Kong independent cinema in late 1970s. For Robertson, the historical and social backgrounds including Hong Kong situated in a postcolonial legacy as well as the emergent popularity and airing of television programs have contributed to a mixed genre characterized by "the experimentation with international film styles and genres; the deployment of documentary themes, techniques and images within dramatic forms; and a newly-articulated concern with contemporary social issues" (Robertson 101). He argues that Ann Hui's TV docudrama *The Bridge* (1978) not only blurs the boundaries between documentary and narrative film but also manages to negotiate between government funding and the perception of popular audience in Hong Kong. Even though Robertson does not take account into the organizational and programming shift from Hong Kong Film Unit to Radio Television Hong Kong, Robertson's analysis clearly opens up discussions on the long marginalized genre. His incorporation of Hui's TV docudramas affirms that documentary as a creative approach has existed as early as the 1970s and was adopted by the renowned female director, Ann Hui. This further illustrates another example of how female filmmakers' innovations are consistently overlooked. In light of this, Ann Hui's docudrama *Where Are You Going?* will be closely examined later in this chapter to demonstrate her innovation and contribution to the understanding of women's documentary filmmaking in Hong Kong.

There are a few interlinked factors that constitute the lack of documentary filmmaking by women as well as a lack of critical attention to it. First, Hong Kong's cinematic history has been viewed to be commercially inclined provided with its large domestic and international market in the golden years (Crofts 35; Wang 335). Hong Kong cinema is best known for commercial films made during the 1980s and 1990s. In the golden colonial years, Hong Kong cinema was the third largest film industry only after Bollywood and Hollywood and the second largest exporter second to the United

States. Hong Kong film industry recruited film talents fleeing from China after the civil war in the late 1940s and established studio-conglomerates that churned out popular movies. Hong Kong mainstream cinema boomed, reaching its pinnacle in the early 1990s by pioneering in the martial-arts genre as well as popularizing Kung-fu and bloodshed action sub-genres during a time when China and Taiwan closed borders as a result of political reform. Hong Kong action cinema has had a cult following worldwide and its ethnic-Chinese production (Cantonese speaking with Chinese subtitles) enabled a wide international distribution of its films. In addition, the first and second Hong Kong New Wave that respectively kickstarted in 1979 and 1984 birthed prestigious filmmakers across both commercial and art-house cinema, making Hong Kong one of the most prolific cities per capita. Ann Hui and Tsui Hark are known names from the first wave, whereas Fruit Chan, Wong Kar-wai, Stanley Kwan, Mabel Cheung, and Clara Law are amongst the ones affiliated with the second wave. Hong Kong film industry succeeded in both commercial genre films and art-house innovations within a few decades and as a result, garnered popular and critical attention. Second, the study of women's documentary works is conflated with the overall TV documentary history as well as the independent film and video history during the colonial years. The well-funded broadcast networks that focus on producing both narrative and documentary shorts to fill up the cable TV slots as well as the emphasis on teamwork composed by hundreds of TV crew members make it extremely difficult to single out women's contributions. The birth of independent documentary filmmaking in Hong Kong further complicates the discussion. While TV production flourished thanks to sufficient monetary and technical support, independent works were closely tied to the social and political climate in the 1960s and 1970s as student organizations took advantage of documentary media as a means to exert political ambitions. The development of the guerrilla documentary style has its roots in political participation during a time when documentary served as an alternative to mainstream media by documenting injustice uncovered in mass media. Interestingly, the members who shaped and developed the independent scene are largely middle-class and well-educated. A desire to participate in the alternative film scene has driven a radical group of people to self-consciously explore new vision, technology, and style unseen in mainstream media. However, many independent film and video works that burgeoned in the 1970s are lost and the record has become irretrievable as a result of the inconsistent preservation intervention.

Hong Kong women's participation in documentary filmmaking could be traced back to the 1970s but its marginalization is further perpetuated by other factors. In addition to independent filmmaking, many female cultural producers developed filmmaking skills through the process of making TV documentaries at commercial broadcasters such as ATV (Asia Television Limited) and TVB Television Broadcasts Limited as well as public service company RTHK (Radio Television Hong Kong). The RTHK has bred some female producers including Dominica Siu King Lo. By the early 1980s, RTHK attained full editorial autonomy. Under Siu's management, she and her team combined both cinema-vérité and re-enactment styles, dramatizing the quotidian's life with a touch of narrative storytelling (Ingham and Aitken 145). Her insights into various social subjects surrounding women's issues, urbanization, migration and national identity have garnered critical reviews and strengthened her position in the mainstream Hong Kong TV industry (Ingham and Aitken 144). Therefore, it is evident that female filmmakers, despite their small number, did participate in TV documentaries. Yet, because Hong Kong women's participation in film has largely been centred on commercial production, both Chen and Hui were quickly recruited in the film industry, producing commercial films demanded by the market. The lack of support in theatrical distribution and exhibition channels for documentary films was not consciously sought out for a solution.

The burgeoning and maturing of local identity since the 1980s that hinge on the antagonism between Chinese-identified and Hong Kong-identified communities has been a topic favourably explored by male filmmakers and is consistently investigated by scholars. Films concerning this topic have gained traction in the world cinema arena and received an unprecedented amount of scholarly attention. Contrary to this, women's filmmakers "tend to be attracted to specific subjects…notably, women's roles in the Chinese family, working women, women's position in public life and politics, domestic violence, female sex workers, consumerism, lesbianism, romance, and female desire," implying that women's works seem to be excluded from the thematic spotlight on Mainland-Hong Kong antagonism (Marchetti 239). Women's documentary films and their practices raise issues that are closely intertwined with the larger society and could easily be seen as insignificant when compared to the precarious political and economic matters in a narrative-dominant film industry.

This chapter aims to examine the relation amongst broadcast networks, women's filmmaking, and independent production in the broader framework of the Hong Kong documentary scene. My approach to it rests on two angles: locating women producers and identifying key elements that highlight their creative but precarious labour. With my efforts in tracing women's documentary practices in Hong Kong, I hope to shed light on a highly marginalized yet mature form of female documentary-making unique to this region. This section intends to not only locate the crossovers between gender and documentary studies in the context of Hong Kong cinema but also to map out the diverse themes and approaches discerned in women's documentary films. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section offers a brief introduction to the documentary history of the city after the 1960s. In the second part, I survey a select number of women documentary filmmakers in Hong Kong and investigate women's role in the history of documentary filmmaking in Hong Kong. By closely examining a select number of female documentary filmmakers including Ann Hui, Yau Ching, Tammy Cheung, Barbara Wong Chun Chun, and Anson Mak, I argue that Hong Kong female documentary practitioners demonstrate a radical and humanistic concern for ethnic diversity. These traits set them apart from the mainstream Hong Kong commercial and art-house cinema that is more concerned about the latent local identity. While all of them have utilized documentary style to engage with marginalized subjects in the public sphere, Yau, Wong, and Mak's works mediate class and gender discrimination by interweaving multiple women's voices. The multi-accented, multi-channelled polyphony not only unravels but also counters the capitalist-patriarchal complex prevalent in commercial films. The last section is devoted to a close analysis of Anson Mak's recent feature documentary/experimental films in relation to the Situationist International. Her works mirror the radical gestures ignited by the situationists and are deeply interjected with postcolonial critiques. Her intellectual migration between disciplines and genres grounds her works in a fluid site that shifts borders. This chapter seeks to crystalize the visions in Hong Kong women documentary filmmakers. Women negotiate working within a marginal and gendered space in the Hong Kong film industry, and their works manifest a profound understanding and acknowledgement of fragmented identities that challenge regionalist and patriarchal ideologies.

A History of TV and Independent Documentary

Ian Aitken and Michael Ingham published *Hong Kong Documentary Film* in 2014. This book is a thorough and comprehensive survey of the history of Hong Kong documentary films since the late nineteenth century as it developed from scenic documentaries made by the colonial British filmmakers to local documentaries before the end of the World War 2 (42). Aitken and Ingham argue against the assumption that Hong Kong documentary films did not exist by taking into account newsreels and TV documentaries produced by free-to-air broadcast networks including ATV (founded in 1957) and TVB (founded in 1967) during the colonial years. As such, documentary, in fact, has a long history in Hong Kong. It was first controlled by the colonial office and its affiliated Hong Kong Film Unit specifically to produce films for public relations purposes. Films produced under the Hong Kong Film Unit (1959–1973) eschewed social issues because the unit was instructed to produce "simple straight-forward films" and "was not expected or allowed to make a critical, analytical intervention" (Aitken and Ingham 77; 98). In spite of the critiques towards films produced by the HKFU, Hong Kong experienced a steady feed of TV documentaries that was the result of the well-funded and technically advanced government-run institutions. The mid-1970s saw the resettling and prospering of Hong Kong after a series of setbacks such as the leftist riots in 1967 and the stock market crash in 1973. Television documentary and independent documentary are two categories that simultaneously developed since 1973. The high-volume production of television documentaries since the 1970s and onwards has dominated several aspects of Hong Kong's culture, identity formation, and creative labour. The development of television since the 1970s has been crucial to habituate local viewers and also cultivate diverse linguistic production and consumption in the region. While ATV focused on Mandarin Chinese and English channels, the establishment of TVB has provided local Hong Kong Chinese an alternative outlet to access Cantonese dramas and soap operas. This comes in light of the diminishing of Cantonese cinema despite that both stations are managed by pro-PRC administration (Aitken and Ingham 110–111). According to Eric Ma, TVB's Cantonese channel secured between 70 to 90 percent of primetime share for two decades since its establishment, signalling a rising local identity centred on Cantonese culture (29).

The officials of the colonial administration of the Hong Kong British Government in the 1970s generally took a non-interventionist approach in media management but with some effort to increase the social welfare state by implementing public service television, the RTHK (Radio Television Hong Kong), in 1976. For example, the colonial government helped build public housing for the homeless in the 1960s and implemented primary schooling in 1971, both of which helped alleviate social instability in the face of the drastic increase of population (Zhou 30). The non-interventionist ruling of the city also allows space for local Hong Kong identity to shape and thrive. However, the sense of freedom and autonomy faced obliteration when the escalated political tension rose in the mid-1980s upon the reality of handover loomed over and hit hard with the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident. As a response, Dominica Siu, who was then an executive producer for *Hong Kong Connection,* which is an affair-based TV series that aired on RTHK, tackled controversial political subjects (Aitken and Ingham 144). Hong Kong new wave films such as Fruit Chan's Hong Kong trilogy, Wong Kar-wai's *Happy Together,* Herman Yau lai-to's *From the Queen to the Chief Executive* implicitly or explicitly touch upon the mixed feelings towards the inevitable process of sovereignty change.

With regard to their research method, Aitken and Ingham more than once stated that the emphasis of their research of TV documentaries is not about individual authorial work but rather about teamwork-based productions. By distinguishing between individual and team-based works, they indicate that TV documentaries produced by public-broadcast service lack authority and authenticity. This occurred particularly during a time when the movie businesses and local productions were largely influenced by the decisions made by film distributors and exhibitors, but not movie producers (ibid. 173–174). Their stance echoes Robertson's claim about the lack of authenticity in TV documentaries. However, in contrast to Robertson's argument, Aitken and Ingham are critical of team-based productions not because they do not follow authorial control but because they are obliterated by commercial interests that kept them from producing programs that concern minorities, social justice, or housing and immigrant issues. For example, RTHK produced TV series content that ranges from drama, education to documentary. The documentary sector includes various shows such as *Hong Kong Geographic* that showcases the landscape and scenery of Hong Kong, *My Childhood* which tells stories of the youth who live and grow in Hong Kong and various South East Asian cities, and *Success Stories* that profiles internationally acclaimed Chinese figures

of the century. As the content dwells on comprehensive knowledge of local geography or inspiring biographies but sidelines sensitive topics such as protests or riots, one can discern an intent to self-legitimize Britain's colonial measures.

Even though the majority of the content is arguably controlled by government officials, landing a job in broadcast television often meant a brighter outlook in the film industry for media content producers. Many renowned Hong Kong New Wave directors such as Ann Hui and Tsui Hark started their careers in producing television shows. However, from the reception perspective, the proliferation of TV documentaries has accustomed its viewers to free-to-air content on and about Hong Kong, hindering any potential demands for feature-length documentary films and the support thereof. Therefore, documentary filmmakers are situated in a conundrum where working inside the institution has secured funding and viewership for their works, but they lose authorial control and theatrical screening opportunities in return.

The development of independent documentaries take a different route. Between the 1960s—70s, two major types of theatrical documentary films were present: one is biopics that depict Bruce Lee's legend and the other is travel documentaries (Ingham and Aitken 173–174). While independent filmmakers were unable to secure financial backing, the well-educated, affluent middle-class intellectuals had initiated independent art publications that introduced Western art cinema and film criticism. In 1966, *College Life* and *Chinese Student Weekly* are two periodicals that encouraged members to shoot short films (Cheung 19). Between 1966–1971, more than 40 16mm films were produced as a result of the intellectual and artistic cultivation influenced by private screenings and conference meetings. The 1970s has bred a vibrant scene amongst the film intellectuals and practitioners. Law Kar and Tang Shuxuan, both independent filmmakers and critics alike, "were among the most critically respected writers who emerged from this period" (Ingham and Aitken 175). Law Kar, a film critic and activist, participated in a 15-min short documentary project in 1971 documenting a self-organized student protest against the ownership of Diaoyu Islands, a contemporarily disputed territory between China and Japan (Aitken and Ingham 176–177). Shot on 16mm black and white film rolls, this short documentary was not officially screened until the 12th Hong Kong International Film Festival in 1988 due to its controversial nature. Without in-sync sound, the film displays a somewhat poetic yet fast-paced editing style that highlights the students' preparation for the public protest. Not only do they occupy an essential role behind the editorial

board on the publications, but they also went on to make 16mm films. On the other hand, Tang produced *The Arch* (1972) and *China Behind* (1974), both viewed as independent film pioneers at that time that strayed away from studio production but were self-funded and self-distributed through cine clubs. *China Behind* is a banned feature-length narrative film upon release on the controversial topic Cultural Revolution. Shot in Taiwan about the political turmoil on the mainland, *China Behind* is undoubtedly a transnational piece that engages the unstable status quo of Hong Kong Chinese who migrated from China to Hong Kong.

There are several reasons behind the shift from commercial production to independent documentary-making in the 1970s: a growing niche appreciation of European art cinema thanks to the self-organized film clubs; a turn to spontaneity and immediacy influenced by direct cinema; and the flourishing social and political awareness and activism in Hong Kong (Aitken and Ingham 175–177). Cine clubs like Film Guard Association (FGA) and the Phoenix Cine Club (PCC) were founded in 1972 and 1974 respectively. The former took hold of the experimental film exhibition, previously held by the editors and members of *Chinese Student Weekly*, while the latter began to host film classes. In 1977, FGA and PCC cofounded Hong Kong Independent Shorts Festival. In the same year, Hong Kong International Film Festival was founded. However, Film Development Fund was not an option for documentary projects. Founded in 1982, Hong Kong Film Awards has yet established a documentary film category, indicating the entire city's neglect towards documentary projects. The period between the 1980s and the millennium saw the emergence of organizational roles played by film festivals, government sectors, namely Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), and private art alliances such as Videopower and Videotage all in support of the exhibition and distribution of documentary films. The interplay between institutional, technological, and personal interests in independent filmmaking has blurred the clear definition of "independent" documentary productions in later years. The next section introduces the few female filmmakers who have worked under or blurred the public and private systems. While documentary film is presumably marginal, female documentarians are able to address a vast diversity of audiences through their diversified themes, subject matter and styles.

Change and Continuity: Documentary Films and Videos by Women

Hong Kong women's careers in film fluctuate with the social, economic, technological, and cultural conditions of the Hong Kong film and television industry. In her account of women's filmmaking in Hong Kong, Lingzhen Wang identifies it as a cinema that is "transnational, transcultural, and border-crossing" (Wang 332, 2012). As the majority of female filmmakers at some point in their lives have studied or lived abroad, many woman directors collectively "demonstrated a much more pronounced preoccupation with transnational and transcultural issues, such as migration, diaspora, and reflections on Chinese identity in a global setting" (ibid. 336). Such qualities are evident in many of the fictional films produced by Hong Kong woman directors. As previously mentioned, the role of cinematic arts in shaping Hong Kong identity at the turn of 1984 is significant. The Sino-British Joint Declaration that determined the future of Hong Kong's sovereignty and the unstable financial conditions led to a proliferation of films concerning the uncertainty of Hong Kong's future. Yet, it bears the question, whose identity is being privileged and whose are being sidelined or erased?

It is not until the early 1990s that Hong Kong female documentary filmmakers emerged in the margins of cinema independently. When looking into how Hong Kong women documentary film practices have developed, two main issues need to be considered: (1) the filmmakers' existing social status (largely middle class); (2) the shift in their use of technology (super 8mm to video and new media; and (3) their attempt to challenge mainstream production and ideologies. The local identity that emerged upon the inevitable destiny of handover was shaped by educated middle-class intellectuals, artists and filmmakers alike. Non-profit organizations, such as the Phoenix Cine Club and Film Guard Association, which were established in the mid-1970s have secured a unique space for middle-class film buffs to explore film forms beyond mainstream narrative cinema. Their practices included independent feature narrative film, new media, performance, installation and video art. Moreover, witnessing the decline in super 8mm film stock and the birth of video in the mid-70s, Videotage and Videopower were established in 1985 and 1989 respectively. They represented a collective effort to refashion "video" as a creative tool that extends beyond its use in low-budget or low-quality narrative film production. Female video makers including Ellen Pau, Linda Lai, Yau Ching and Anson Mak who are doing multimedia and interdisciplinary art adopt a

variety of identities or self-branding including moving image artist, video artist, and new media artist. The versatility of the medium itself and the interplay with the medium not only lends alternative value to it but also signifies a vibrant art scene that compliments the Hong Kong screen culture. Lastly, by embracing a new form of cultural production that undercuts the New Wave phenomenon, female documentary filmmakers engage in a niche cultural scene that disrupts the dominant form of cultural production, circulation and reception. In this section, I explore the political, social, economic, and cultural factors that propel the evolution in the modes of their documentary practices. I focus on the production and aesthetics of four female documentary filmmakers: Yau Ching, Ann Hui, Tammy Cheung, and Barbara Chun Chun Wong. The four of them represent 20 years of documentary-making in Hong Kong and their works significantly shape a gender-conscious documentary culture. Yau Ching pioneers in her experimental film and video tradition, probing issues ranging from diaspora, race, class, and sexuality. Ann Hui, undoubtedly the most prolific female filmmaker that cuts across both independent and mainstream cinema, has contributed to docudrama and biographical documentaries. Tammy Cheung utilizes the direct cinema technique, presenting social, political, and class issues through the non-interfering lens of a video camera. Last but not least, Barbara Wong innovates a participatory mode of documentary production that highlights female sexuality and alternative femininity previously unseen in commercial films. The last part of this chapter will focus on Anson Mak, whose works blend and revolutionize the techniques and styles amongst Hong Kong female documentary filmmaking. Her works approach documentary filmmaking as an alternative practice that engages in trans-local, transnational, and intergenerational dialogues and critiques.

Yau Ching

As a writer, activist film artist and academic, Yau Ching has participated in the cultural scene through her examination of the identity issue alternative to mainstream media for over 30 years. Prior to the release of her first feature-length documentary film *Diasporama: Dead Air* in 1997, she had produced six short documentaries that are experimental in nature: *Is There Anything Specific You Want Me To Tell You About?* (1991, shot on 16mm film stock), *The Ideal/Na(rra)tion* (1993, SD Video), *Flow* (1993, SD Video), *Video Letter #1: A Letter to Mona* (1993), *Video Letter #2: or call me an essentialist* (1993), and *Video Letter #3: Why would a letter have a title?* (1993). She went onto make an experimental feature-length narrative film, *Ho Yuk (Let's Love Hong*

Kong) in 2002 and a feature-length documentary, *We Are Alive*, in 2010, while simultaneously contributing to the short film and video culture between 1997 to 2004. Yau's films engage deeper than conventional academic practices and apply theories in creating and publicizing ideas through media. Yau's creative application of scholarly concepts is evident in her first 12-minute short film. In the film, theories of the male gaze, identity construction, language and communication were incorporated in the plot of the film. She borrows texts from Foucault's *Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside* as a part of the narration, and this tradition is carried on when Anson Mak cites Walter Benjamin's writing as the basis of the narration in her *One Way Street on the Turntable* (2007). Yau's and Mak's works further share the commonality of demonstrating a non-essentializing but complex formations of identity. In this part, I will examine the connections between her production, subject matter, and the broader social factors that situate her as the pioneer of feminist experimental film and video making in Hong Kong.

Yau was an active participant in cine clubs and private screening venues in the 1970s such as Studio 1 and Phoenix Cine Club. During her college years, she was involved in Videotage, a media art society founded by Ellen Pau and May Fung Mei-wah in 1985, where she helped with coordinating and screening video artworks (Marchetti 214, 2010). Videotage is an artist collective that produces, promotes, and innovates video art and new media in the realm of visual arts. This initiative did not appear out of nowhere. The predecessor of Videotage is Phoenix Cine Club (PCC), founded in 1974 that endeavoured to set itself apart from commercial production. In promoting the culture and environment for independent filmmaking, PCC held an experimental film exhibition annually, which later was renamed into Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Exhibition in 1978 (Cheung 19). Because of her close relationship with Videotage, the majority of Yau's works were produced by Videotage. Her collaboration with Videotage signified a radical-marginal position that helps shape the underground/independent screen culture in Hong Kong.

In her debut film, the award-winning short film titled *Is There Anything Specific You Want Me To Tell You About?* (1991), Yau boldly experiments with the audio and visual elements of the medium and thematically explores the multiple locations of diaspora, gender politics, and colonialism. While Esther Cheung has argued that Yau's works "foster connections between documentary and fiction film" (2, 2010), I view Yau more radically as a maverick who raises awareness of film as a medium, an artificial

construct that works to mediate the paradoxical codes and ideologies of dominant cinema. The short experimental documentary was made before Yau was admitted to film school. Yau even speculated that the film opened up an opportunity for her to study with Yvonne Rainer, whose works greatly impacted her works (Yau 128). Shot from a first-person perspective, the film opens with a female narrator seemingly reading a letter addressed to Shu (a girl's name) in English, implying that the film is a part of a project that the narrator intends to complete for Shu. The footages at the beginning display visible icons in New York City. The film contains sepia-toned scenes of tourists and pedestrians on the streets of New York, underground subway stations, the twin towers and the Statue of Liberty. All of which are juxtaposed with a variety of found footages including young Queen Elizabeth's march and visual pieces of socialist China with subtitles that read "Chairman Mao guides us," "Communist labor college blossoming in fiery red," and "the east wind prevails the revolution in education." These visuals, connoting the British-Chinese empire, are complemented by the ongoing narration that resembles prose or academic writing, debating the purposes of language and art. While the film's diegesis is well situated as a nostalgic video letter to Shu, Yau does not shy away from but comments on issues of inequality and exploitation, particularly towards women. There are a few instances in the film that show how Yau defies patriarchy by establishing a sense of solidarity amongst the female subjects within the diegesis. Starting at 08:14, the film cuts to a wide shot of a series of silent footage in a fabric factory, showing a few women working behind the sewing machine tables. The narrator goes "I wouldn't be able to give them the voice. They wouldn't be able to sp… Let's assume that they wouldn't want to speak after all." The mechanical interruption of the incomplete sentence implies the systemic deprivation of women's voices. Interestingly, the sentence that follows seemingly suggests a self-recognition of this icky condition. Women's self-awareness of an unequal condition is an essential precursor for women to reject inferior status and demand equality. The narrator then goes on to describe that she is aware of herself being an intruder in this environment as the women were hiding away from the camera. "I am as much as an intruder as anybody else, even though I find the environment familiar and intimate," says the narrator. It is at this exact moment that her narration overlaps several medium close-ups of female labourers sewing and matches the shot of a woman looking up directly at the camera. The closeness and intimacy of the framing in addition to the use of direct address suggest a silent consent as if a connoted solidarity is sensible. Then, the narrator ties the scenes with her

childhood memories that she shares with Shu, illustrating that they both hanged out in the factory while they were small children. In this instance, the narrator fluidly moves in and out of the storyline, from an intruder to a girl who grew up in the same space with the on-screen subjects of her film. In this sequence, Yao builds a diegesis to be shared only with women while sharply criticizing how colonialism, assimilation and exploitation shaped mainstream history. Her oppositional attitudes are further complimented by her use of various film editing techniques. Yau demonstrates the playfulness of sound and visual editing with tools such as splicing, splitting and overlaying. She shatters the illusion of real-time by using various techniques such as repetition, superimposition, fast motion, slow motion, and freeze frame. Moreover, her sound design also troubles the presumably clear division between sound, dialogue, and music in narrative film production. At 06:58 of the film, she employs non-diegetic water bubbling sound effect as if one is drowning and that is followed by a sound distortion simulating a voice projected underwater over the found footages of socialist China. She also adopts the use of multiple soundtracks for narrations that overlap in order to create a sense of split identities. In line with Videotage's mission, Yau scrutinizes the materiality of film editing, embedding social meanings in intellectual and innovative ways.

Her later shorts and feature-length documentaries are evident of her feminist and experimental approach to cinema, pointing her cameras on marginalized subjects while refusing to be bound by one identity or one voice. Some of her works are also performative. In *A Letter to Mona* (1993), she points the camera at herself and plays with the rotation function. The work reminds me of Joan Jonas's *Leftside Rightside* (1974), a feminist art video piece created by the pioneer of video and performance artist emerged in the late 1960s. Yau's works play with cutting on action, creating symbolisms across- and inter-media. The fasting cutting gives her works a sense of edginess and audacity. The genre often cuts across experimental and avant-garde, providing a surreal look and ambience. All in all, Yau's works display qualities unprecedented in Hong Kong cinema and her radical stance to produce with non-profit organizations positions her on the peripheral yet firmly feminist spectrum of Hong Kong screen culture.

Ann Hui

Ann Hui is one of the most widely studied filmmakers in Hong Kong cinema. In her study of Hui's narrative films, Mirana M. Szeto argues that "Hui's best films are

about ordinary, invisible women in their most mundane contexts, and people marginalized by all the major discourses of Hong Kong" (51). Szeto is not alone in her exploration of Hui's works through the "cinematics of everyday life," many other authors analyze themes of marginalization in Hui's films (Marchetti 2015; Chang 2016). This section focuses on Hui's contribution to the documentary style and culture by examining the two titles: *Where Are You Going?* (1992) and *As Time Goes By* (1997). Hui's documentaries are in fact contrasting in genres and overtly political. *Where Are You Going?* (hereafter *Where?*), a docudrama and *As Time Goes By* (hereafter *As Time*), an autobiographical film, concomitantly revolve around two important political incidents that have huge impacts on Hong Kong residents—the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests and the 1997 Reunification of Hong Kong and China. Both films showcase Hui's non-biased, "peel the onion" approach towards sensitive political subjects. She delves deep into one issue, one layer at a time until she has thoroughly exposed the causes, the processes, and the consequences of the issue in the film. Hui is also a classic example of a filmmaker working inside the broadcast and studio system, where she obtained sufficient funding to explore various themes that tackled social issues. *Where?* is produced by RTHK as one episode of the *Below the Lion Rock* series, whereas *As Time* is a Taiwan-Hong Kong coproduction, sponsored by Chinese Television Company in Taiwan and Top Focus Production based in Hong Kong.

Where? is about the political struggles faced by the four student activists Hou De-chien, the late Liu Xiaobo, Gao Hsin, and Zhou Duo during the Tiananmen Square protests. In June 1989, the PRC government suppressed a series of student-led and labourer-led pro-democracy movements that embarked in April 1989. The crackdown claimed to have taken hundreds of lives of protesters involved but was denied by the government. As a result, the incident has greatly impacted how the world views the PRC regime. As a savvy film and TV producer, Hui employs a variety of documentary techniques such as talking heads, b-roll, archival footages and most importantly, re-enactment to maximize the potentiality of documentary as an effective artistic expression. *Where?* is 45 minutes in length, a standard length for a one-hour TV programming. The reenactment occupies the majority of screen time, sandwiched between the two documentary segments in the beginning (~10 minutes) and the end (~7minutes). The film uses intertitles, still images, interviews, and b-roll footage to capture the justification by Liu, Gao, and Zhou as well as the resentful reaction from the

public towards Hou at his CCTV interview in which he claims that he *did not* witness any violent or bloody oppression of the students protesting during the incident. His statement aligned well with the public media report released by the Chinese authorities, but are in direct opposition to the sensationalism of Western media that captured the brutality of the suppression. The re-enactment sequence is shot in Taipei, in which many Taiwanese actors were employed in simulating the soft surveillance and interrogation imposed upon Hou. By interweaving the four subjects' statements, and in the intercutting of the interviews of which, Hui manages to present the critical worldview towards Hou's statement as a form of self-defence under the communist party's coercion. While *Where?* is not an experimental documentary in nature, what Hui successfully achieves is her multi-narrative tactic in shaping the storyline. Echoing the multi-vocal technique employed by Yau, Hui rejects a single narrative, but rather, presenting the incident in an indirect yet well-crafted manner that invites interpretation from the viewers. No one is vilified or glorified, and it is up to the viewer to actively engage in the content, regardless of one's political inclination. Stylistically speaking, for a TV show designed for dramas that unintentionally omit actualities and political sensitivities, Hui cleverly engages journalistic materials with creative maneuvering and genre-bending.

As Time Goes By, though commonly characterized by critics as an autobiographical piece by Ann Hui, is in fact similarly composed of different accounts and memories of Hui's educated friends who were then in their 40s and 50s. The film is a collaboration between Chinese Television Company from Taiwan and Top Focus Production based in Hong Kong. It involves key players in the TV and Film industry from both places including Peggy Chiao, an active member in the Taiwan film industry as a producer, educator and critic. At the beginning of the film, Hui makes viewers aware of her self-reflexive approach to this documentary film by addressing the presence of the camera to her friends. The film utilizes the majority of talking heads along with found footage, archival still images, and b-roll in reflecting the memoir aspects of the film. Not imposing a certain standpoint, Hui again treats the sensitive topic of the transferring of sovereignty Hong Kong in 1997 as an incident that triggers multiple responses and attitudes embraced by different individuals.

The inability to maintain cohesiveness between one's cultural heritage, the use of language, and national identity is one important theme/narrative of this film. In most of her interviews, Hui talks to the camera in Mandarin Chinese, but in Cantonese with her

friends and her mother. Hui addresses how her background is shaped by a set of colonial discourses when English is the first language to study under her Catholic school curriculum, and Mandarin Chinese became the second language. This has resulted in the fragmentation of her identity. The film further discusses that many of those who grew up under British colonial years after they migrated from China since 1945 are caught in the middle ground. They feel guilty for not being able to maintain their own cultural heritage, but rather had to catch up with the colonizer's agenda so not to fall behind. The schizophrenic sense of oneself is further complicated by Hui's mom's Japanese ethnicity. In negotiating an anti-Japan sentiment, Hui further learns about the impossibility of a determinate attitude towards what is politically correct or incorrect. On the receiving end of colonial education, in which what is learned is drastically different from the lived reality, Hui is constantly situated in a disequilibrium resulted from colonization, and a new equilibrium is never restored. Yet, at the end of the film, Hui proves to be a versatile subject that negotiates between the messy past and the uncertainty of the future of Hong Kong. To her, despite the increased immigration population leaving Hong Kong at the cusp of the handover, she decided to stay because she was curious how Hong Kong would be like after the transfer.

Her documentary/docudrama thematically concerns the inseparable dilemma between political and personal struggles, and on a production level, she engages larger viewership particularly due to her fame. Her broadcast network circulation for *Where?* secured steady viewership, whereas the Video CD release of *As Time* by Unlimited Film Sensation Ltd. in Hong Kong coincided with the increased awareness towards the changing political climate. Hui's works differ from the journalistic TV documentaries popularized throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and probe into political and personal issues with her sophisticated maneuvering of film language.

Tammy Cheung

Tammy Cheung is a seasoned documentary filmmaker and film festival organizer. She founded Visible Record in 2004, a non-profit organization dedicated to independent and documentary films and later implemented the Sinophone Documentary Festival in 2008 affiliated with Visible Record. Cheung operates Visible Record like a miniature documentary institution that takes care of everything from training, producing, production, exhibition and distribution. In addition, Cheung made her first documentary

film *Invisible Women* in 1999 and has steadily produced eight documentary films throughout the 2000s. She is the most prolific documentary filmmaker in Hong Kong and has restlessly dedicated herself to promoting documentary films concerning Esther M.K. Cheung conducted an interview with Tammy Cheung with the main concern of E.M.K. Cheung's research focus: independent film scene in Hong Kong. In the research, the author reveals how Tammy Cheung defines her documentary differently from TV documentaries. Particularly, Tammy Cheung emphasizes the high level of freedom in content producing that is in direct opposition to many of the limitations such as length, show time, targeting demographic, and top-down management associated with TV documentaries (Cheung 102). Yet, Tammy Cheung also denies that her documentaries are made for social movement or awareness-raising purposes (ibid. 102). For her, she gains pleasure in the production process and learns more about the issues that she films through the filmmaking process (ibid. 102).

Tammy Cheung's films are widely discussed for her use of Direct Cinema, influenced by Frederick Wiseman's *High School* (1968). Her first five films *Invisible Women* (1999), *Secondary School* (2002), *Moving* (2003), *Rice Distribution* and *July* (2004) adopt this technique and her filmography establishes Cheung as the first filmmaker known for this style in the Hong Kong documentary scene. Her films concern various issues from gender, race, elderly, poverty, Hong Kong politics, customs, and education systems. Here I closely examine her first film, *Invisible Women,* which is about Indian female migrants in Hong Kong.

Taking place in Hong Kong, the film opens with a first-person female voice-over talking in English narrating her family who has lived in Hong Kong for over 20 years. The narration is accompanied by a visibly Indian family dining in a restaurant, with room tone in the background suggesting another language. It is followed by an interview with the subject, wearing a formal suit, describing how she is often perceived differently from traditional Indians. The film then cuts to a Hong Kong street, showing a group of Indian women sitting on a staircase discussing their work as maids and the poor pay. The film is about half an hour in length, intercutting between these two stories of women that belong to two classes. Through direct cinema, the films reveal the unfair working conditions of migrant workers not only from the domestic workers themselves but also the educated Indian woman who is a key figure involved in an NGO organization that addresses gender and race inequality. She helped found HARD (Hong Kong against

Racial Discrimination), and continued to point out issues of worker exploitation and sexual harassment inflicted upon Indian migrant domestic workers. Many do not get any vacation days. Some never got a salary raise even after having worked for ten years and some got their money stolen by manipulative Indian middlemen.

This film strikes me with its multi-accented nature as well as breaking down stereotypical assumptions. The female member of HARD is a professional, educated woman who is fluent in at least three languages, Cantonese, Indian and English. In her interview, she mentions that she is constantly mistaken as Spanish, American or Italian in Hong Kong. She points out how Hong Kong society sees her differently because of her lighter skin tone. Issues of racism, internal community conflicts are common topics. Competing ideas exist in the same community and even in the same family. In one scene at her home in the film, the female professional and her mother are reviewing old album photos. Looking at one photo, she gasps “Gosh I’m so white,” and the mother replies, “Some people would love to have your skin.” This conversation follows right after a disagreement that just transpired between the two generations. The daughter criticized women’s circles in the same ethnic community often judge each other and refuse to give sincere or generous compliments, to which her mother quickly replied, “Why are you putting your people down… I agree with you but I wouldn’t like to voice it out. After all, I can’t betray my own community. I’m one of them.” This conversation highlights that women’s issues are not universal and competing ideas between the traditional and the modern carry over even in a diasporic setting. In addition to the split opinions between mother and daughter, the film also foregrounds two worldviews. The lower-class woman was constantly told to accept her fate. Often carrying a smile on her face, she internalized to self-console and to look at the bright side regardless of her oppressed situation. On the other hand, women working for HARD organize to promote International Women’s Day and to eliminate racism. Yet, they also expose their privileges for having attended international schools as a teenager that hired all Caucasian teachers. The ability of self-reflexivity requires education and middle-class background. With Cheung’s direct cinema and her use of crosscutting, *Invisible Women* powerfully implies that class to some extent determines women’s lives. Women’s issues are not universal but they are heavily influenced by one’s upbringing, class and society’s recognition.

Barbara Wong Chun Chun

Currently based in China, Barbara Wong Chun Chun (hereafter Wong) is a prolific commercial film director. Since her feature-length documentary debut *Women's Private Parts* (2001), she has directed 17 films up to date. She has successfully completed several feature-length narrative films including *Break Up Club* (2010), *The Stolen Years* (2013), *Girls* (2014), and *The Secret* (2016), and most of which focus on female-centred human relationships. After making *Women's Private Parts* (hereafter *Women's 1*) in 2001, she went on to produce *Women's Private Parts 2* in 2004. I will analyze Wong's debut film and discuss how she develops a new mode of documentary practice that departs from Yau, Hui, and Cheung's works. Screened at many film festivals worldwide and awarded with the Best International Feature Film at the New York International Film Festival, *Women's 1* is an interview-centred documentary that explores women's sexuality. In an effort to de-stigmatize women's sexuality, Wong interviews female subjects from all walks of life, including sex workers, strippers, mistresses, sex activists, lesbians, transwomen, porn stars, teenagers, the sex woman Annabelle Chong who broke the world record of having 251 times of sex in ten hours, bartenders, female filmmakers including the director herself, and others. In addition to all-women subjects, Wong also hired an all-women crew. In spite of her heavy reliance on talking heads, Wong uses intriguingly metaphoric b-roll footages that ooze sexual tones that accompany many of the interviews. Moreover, she includes 18 minutes of surveillance footage in one take showing a female sex worker at work. This part of the film stands in stark contrast to the majority of talking-head footages in which medium shots and close-ups are predominantly featured. The surveillance camera is placed in the corner of the room, capturing in a wide shot the live-action transaction of sex where no exploitation or emotion is involved. This scene does not feel sensationalized nor does it invite a voyeuristic gaze. Rather, it is simply a sex worker at work. As I will illustrate below, through a woman-centered and sex-positive documentary, Wong strategically contributes to the invalidation of men through her documentary.

Accompanying a mix of funk and wu-xia style of the fast-paced soundtrack, both the opening and ending credits highlight women as a subject. The opening of *Women's 1* places a green sign of a woman in the credit, a common sign that we see in public washrooms. The film crew credit rolls above it, emphasizing the gendered aspect of her crew. Whereas in the ending credit sequence, the credits roll with a video showing

women's reproductive anatomy. The film opens with Wong's own remarks stating the focus of the film, which is about women, a woman-centred film in which women can talk freely without any presence of men. Wong's role throughout the film is the interviewer, occasionally sharing insights given the circumstances. In some cases when some women decide to appear anonymously, Wong usually occupies the screen space in the shot through an over-the-shoulder shot. The range of topics in the film is extensive, most of which centre on taboo sex-related subjects that one does not normally hear or see in popular media. There are two larger themes: sex and relationships. In the former, women discuss the use of sex toys, masturbation, female condoms, sex autonomy, menopause, precarious sex work, etc. On the other hand, women broadly talk about their distrust in men, their ways of manipulating men, and their overall impression of married life. While watching the film, due to the careful selection of interview content that surrounds the topics of sex and relationship, I notice that I do not know or care much about these characters. This is neither a positive or negative observation, but rather, it can be concluded that the large amount of information on female sexuality has somewhat separated the subjects from their words. It does not matter who is saying what, but rather, the film foregrounds women's sexuality without tying any stigma or judgement to the interviewees. Although this approach might have alienated some audiences from identifying with any of the characters, the film successfully unlinks women's body from women's reputation that is always scrutinized by men.

The actual scene of sex work that takes place one hour into the film stands out as one of the very few moments in the film when no one is in the middle of an interview. Transactional sex carries out uneventfully. The sex worker and the client greet, have protected sex until the man ejaculates. The scene is followed by a sex work activist discussing the dynamics between the sex workers in general and men who buy sex. I believe that the sex scene serves a few purposes. First, while it is one single case rather than a statistical report, it works to demystify the discourses of dominant anti-sex campaigns that treat sex work as men's dominance over women. In the scene, not only that they have casual conversations, the woman is in control during the entire process. Second, sex work is validated by the sex activist's commentary as she helps further the understanding of the changing roles in women in Hong Kong. Women have become financially independent and critical about gender inequality in society. The problem resides in the unchanging concepts of marriage held by men, who treat wives as the

sole bearer of domestic labour. At the end of the film, as a response to the interviewer, most women believe that they are great women and would date themselves. While the interviewees are not shown actively changing the status quo of women in the society, it is made clear that it is men who should change. Wong's film takes Hong Kong women's documentary practices in a new turn, where the private has become the public, and when women-centred stories surface to become commercial and profit-making subjects. This is evident in her later commercial films when women's relationships become the main theme of many of her films.

As seen through select works by Yau, Hui, Cheung, and Wong, they are highly intelligent and tackle politics via diverse approaches and styles. Production-wise, Yau Ching and Tammy Cheung remain in the arts circle while Ann Hui and Barbara Wong started off making documentary films and were quickly recruited into the commercial industry. Tammy Cheung's career crosses over between film festival organizer and filmmaker while Yau maintains her dual scholar/artist position. Similar to how Hong Kong documentary development takes two different routes: TV and independent, female documentary filmmakers also work in both settings. One commonality is these female filmmakers are middle-class and well-educated. Whether maintaining independence or switching to commercial, their documentary films expose the conundrum of women's liberation and the capitalist economy. In addition, their films emphasize the multi-accented nature of Hong Kong without reducing the city to one singular identity. In the next section, I closely examine two of Anson Mak's recent documentary films. Her *One-Way Street on a Turntable*, in my opinion, is one of the most intellectually stimulating and astoundingly crafted documentaries done as far in Hong Kong documentary history. Mak's films share a similar engagement with film medium, intellectual traditions, and political critiques, joining her fellow female documentarians in shaping and sustaining a mature film culture.

Hong Kong as a City of the Spectacle: Reading Anson Mak's Experimental Documentaries

Like many other experimental video artists in Hong Kong, Anson Mak has quickly emerged as an important subject of study in English-language scholarship in recent years. As a film, sound, and moving image artist based in Hong Kong, she has made more than 20 moving images, music and web-based artworks. Her most recent feature-

length documentary films: *Fear(less) and Dear* released in 2020, *One-Way Street on a Turntable* released in 2007 (hereafter *One-Way Street*), and *On the Edge of a Floating City, We Sing* released in 2012 (hereafter *On the Edge*), have screened at festivals internationally. *One-Way Street* premiered at the Hong Kong International Film Festival, was selected as a nominee for the Grand Jury Awards for Best Feature-Length Documentary Film Award at The Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, and was screened at the Vancouver International Film Festival in 2007. *On the Edge* brought Mak back to the HKIFF in 2012, and was screened at the Golden Horse Film Festival in Taiwan in addition to many others. Her most recent film, *Fear(less) and Dear,* screened at the 25th Busan International Film Festival and the Hong Kong Asian Film Festival. Utilizing diverse visual and audio techniques to demonstrate the playfulness and reflexivity of the medium itself, Mak astutely documents, critiques and reflects on the spatial and temporal shifts and class struggle embedded in the historical construction of the cityscape of Hong Kong. It is exactly Mak's distinct style, aesthetics, and independent uncanniness that attract attention from Western scholars to such a highly marginalized art form in Hong Kong. According to the DVD cover, Shelly Kraicer, a Curator of the Vancouver International Film Festival, calls Mak's films as a form of "experimental documentary," a term which adequately describes Mak's deliberate act to question mainstream documentary film form and language. Timothy Corrigan in his research describes *One-way Street* as an essay that "discovered complex ideological and psychological significance through the journey, the walk, or the exploration" which is comparable to renowned filmmakers such as Chris Marker, Luis Bunuel, Trinh T. minh-ha, and Yasujiro Ozu (Corrigan 105, 2011). Hong Kong-based scholars Ian Aitken and Mike Ingham in their book *Hong Kong Documentary Film* identify Mak's distinctly postmodernist approach in *One-Way Street* (Aitken and Ingham 209, 2014). Later, Ingham revisits her works including the newly released *On the Edge* and gives significance to them for its "distinctive sociopolitical critique" with an "intellectually stimulating film-essay style"(Ingham 165).

Recognizing the complexity in Mak's themes, techniques and aesthetics, I propose to read her works in relation to the intellectual, radical and political thought of the Situationist International (1957–1972) particularly for their critical views against capitalist urbanization and the spectacle. The spectacle is defined by Guy Debord as "the social relationships mediated by images" (Debord 1967). Mak, adopting similar

elements and ambiances, unabashedly criticizes capitalism, the developer's hegemony via the process of gentrification, and the consumerist lifestyles mediated and sustained in Hong Kong society since the industrialization period that took flight in the 1950s. Moreover, Mak's works construct a unique psycho-geography that is connected through non-chronological personal memories and stories that reflect the effects of a city's geographical environments "on the emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Debord 1955). Mak's films politically and creatively engage her subjects and viewers, canvasing Hong Kong not merely as a city, but a fluid site of economic, cultural and political struggle that is constantly re-mediated and re-negotiated through everyday life, activism, and marginal artistic practices.

One-Way Street is an interactive moving image piece that explores issues of representation, identity, postcoloniality, and urbanism that oscillate between two fundamental philosophical concepts: rootedness and movement, which allude to the uncertainty of Hong Kong identity. The film traces two personal stories, one being the director's story (who is a local-born Hong Konger) and the other, Leung, the talent/a new immigrant from China to HK in the 1980s. The DVD release of *One-Way Street* has nine chapters, constructed in a non-chronological order provided by the instructions on the DVD menu that allows the viewers to self-select any chapter in their favoured order. In this sense, *One-way Street* does not contain a linear narrative to begin with. However, if you click play without any intervention, you will be introduced to the main character, played by Leung, in the very first scene. The film opens with a static shot showing Leung walking into the frame of a turntable sitting on a grass field. She then places the needle on the record player and walks away from where the camera is. She repeats the same action multiple times, as supported by the use of jump cuts, and lastly, she breaks the fourth wall by directly looking at the camera. The introduction quickly establishes the tone, the style, and a clear sense of reflexivity of the film. In addition to the creative take on the establishing scene. The non-diegetic sound design of *One-Way Street* further unsettles the visual and audio-scape of the film, which I will examine in the later part.

On the Edge, on the other hand, may not immediately appear as complex in terms of its visual and sound design when compared to *One-Way Street*. Yet, it emanates an even stronger political aura that condemns the Hong Kong SAR government's policy, the real-estate hegemony, and the reality of decreased freedom upon the residents. *On the Edge* tells a three-part story, connected through three

different lived experiences of three Hong Kong independent musicians. It is through the narrations of these subjects that interweave the imagined past, present and future of Hong Kong altogether.

Situationist International is most renowned for their publication of *The Society of the Spectacle* in 1967, in which Guy Debord first provided "a comprehensive critique of the alienated society" (Ford 102). The work has been widely adopted to address and criticize how the class society and capitalist productions of commodities have resulted in social alienation between the goods that one produces and consumes. People of the society have become the spectators of their own lives and thus are robbed of their desires, creativity, pleasures and imaginations (Plant 1, 5). In *One-Way Street,* Mak incorporates various elements in the film that accentuates the existence and the construction of the spectacles in past and present Hong Kong. The two primary elements are, first, the appropriation of archival footage drawn from propagandist documentaries produced by the British Hong Kong Government in the late 1960s, and second, her narration of Walter Benjamin's prose poem *One-Way Street* published in 1928. The dense use of intertextuality in the film not only displays the nature of the spectacle but further reveals the construction of the spectacle by the ruling class, the British Hong Kong government. As Thomas Y. Levin notes, "The spectacle is always the spectacle of the victor" (362). The visual design of Mak's *One-Way Street* resembles the imageries evoked by Benjamin's writing characterized by Michael Jennings that plays with "a seemingly random sequence of aphorisms, reminiscences, jokes, off-the-cuff observations, dreamlike fantasias, serious philosophical inquiries, […] and trenchant political commentaries" (1). It is the combination of dual subjects' narrations of Benjamin's writing and the upbeat voiceovers culled from propagandist newsreel footages entitled *Hong Kong Today* in response to issues of immigration and industrialization in the 1950s that made possible of what Sadie Plant argues "the acts of rebellion, subversion, and negation […that] assert the discontent and disrespect inspired by the economic, social, and discursive relations which define contemporary capitalism" (Plant 1). The extensive use of non-diegetic elements in the film, the jump cuts, or the breaking of the fourth wall, do not intend to immerse the viewers in the propagandist agenda produced by Hong Kong Film Unit during the colonial period. Instead, one is made aware of the social and cultural construction of the sheer spectacles that permeated Hong Kong in which the inflow of capital is indispensable for the growth of it,

as evidenced by journalistic narrations such as “six working weekdays, economic miracle, that you don’t find on a postcard, but this is where they create wealth,” and “people who wear fashion clothes are the Chinese came with nothing” (Mak). Such statements along with imposing questions such as “What kind of people are the belongers?” that foreground the Hong Kong dream narrated by a white man on and off-screen, legitimated the Western’s gaze, the colonial agenda, and cultural dominance.

Class struggle is also mirrored in the representation of the spectacle, and yet, it is the realization of “the possibilities of challenging and negating capitalist social relations” that makes the situationists exuberant (Plant 186). In *On the Edge*, one of the interviewees, Ah P, cannot afford to pay sky-high rent in the city as an independent musician due to the gentrification project led by the corporates and the government in contemporary Hong Kong. As a result, Ah P resides illegally in one of these low-cost, illegal industrial buildings that were in queue for demolition. To him, this is a gesture to take his life back by occupying a cheap, industrial space outlawed for residential purposes and to obtain pleasure in the neighbourhood at the same time. He thus represents an increased class consciousness that takes initiatives in challenging and negating capitalist social relations, a subversive move called for by the situationists.

In Susan Sontag’s introduction to an anthology of Benjamin’s writings, she recounts how *One-Way Street* was “the only book of a discreetly autobiographical nature published in [Benjamin’s] lifetime” (10-11) as Benjamin attempted to position himself in the city of Berlin and navigates through it. According to Sontag, “Benjamin’s goal is to be a competent street-map reader who knows how to “stray,” and to locate himself, with imaginary maps” (Sontag 10).

Benjamin’s radical rejection of “mediated modernity, capitalist consumption and technical reproduction”was carried over to Situationist International (Hansen 306). Yet, what marks Benjamin and the Situationist International’s difference is how the SIs did not merely choose to destruct the mediated culture but to engage the city by actively constructing situations in order to change the culture (McDonough x). Mak’s *One-Way Street* resonates well with Benjamin’s reminiscences of the “self” based on the reminiscences of a place. However, as she further embeds her own life stories superimposed upon the historical newsreel, compressing space and time and projecting a nostalgic lens over it, Mak constructs a unique psycho-geography that is connected

through personal experiences, remediated images, and a sense of dislocation. She inserts title cards of her Dad's home from 1963–68, and footage of the building in which her parent's wedding party took place in 1968. Both are memories traced through TV documentary but painted in a different light. Mak organizes such psychogeographical investigation rooted in hers and the main character's hometown *Kwun Tung* and *Mei Foo Sun Chuen*. Though rooted in memory, it is through the process of foregrounding a mediated, specularized city that one's used-to-be coherent memory and existence becomes fragmented. Mak also favours super 8mm film stock that blurs the division between found footages and freshly captured footages. As such, it breaks a linear narrative from old to the new and the linear historical development of technology, and by doing so reinscribes the grand narratives created by the colonial and post-colonial ruling class.

The idea of a nomad and organic movement is further materialized in image and sound design. Image-wise, Mak has utilized the technique of split screens and motions to suggest that screen is a materialized space in which frame position, frame size, as well as frame borders can be altered and moved. On the other hand, challenging the dominant narrative code of a clean, well-mixed soundtrack that only one element—whether sound effects, dialogue or music—will stand out, Mak in *One-Way Street* employs trio language tracks that alter between Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, and English. Moreover, she sets the volume of the soundtracks of these three different languages at the same level. When two voices of two different languages play simultaneously, the effect of dominant ideology wanes, and so does a singular identity. Both devices trouble the location politics of movement and rootedness. In other words, to Mak, it is important to not frame Hong Kong identity as neither. Movement or rootedness should not be understood as oppositional forces hindering the formation of identity. Rather, by paralleling the two subjects, the filmmaker's and the talent's stories side by side, their co-existence forms a resistance in colonial discourse that has groomed them to believe in one or the other's narrative.

Mak integrates, imposes, and rewrites the history as she blurs the line between re-enactment, reality, and history. Her works mirror the radical situationists and are further interjected with postcolonial critiques. For *One-Way Street*, the borrowing of TV documentary footage made a perfect example of how the creation of the city's wealth, a capital-centred narrative has excluded personal stories and experiences in the vast of a

prosperous, fast building city. In the case of *On the Edge,* the insertions of two singers performing on the same song in continuous temporality but in multiple non-identifiable locales in Hong Kong similarly resembles detournement (which can be translated into rerouting or hijacking). The employing of conventional cultural practices such as film and music are not in the service of recuperating mainstream culture, but rather they serve as methods to "testify the wearing out and loss of importance of those spheres" (ibid. 37; Debord et al. 22). The following case also supports self-reflexivity and an ability to constantly reflect upon one's position in relation to the subjects of critique. In one of the sections titled "MongKok subway station c3 exit alley" in *One-Way Street*, the subject who appeared in the very opening sequence turns to hold the camera herself participating in the shooting/ fabricating the reality. What intercuts with this shot is a title page that says "perhaps, movement is the fear of confront reality, or fear to realize that the Park'n'Shop branded wrappers which locks up the truth is actually me." The statement sarcastically and reflexively looks inwards in one's position in shaping, sustaining or justifying the dominant discourse. Such examples reappear a few other times in *One-Way Street* as well as *On the Edge*. To me, they are valuable lessons to those who are in any position of power, or are privileged to any sources regardless of education, knowledge and technology, to always reassess ourselves in order to make the most radical gesture.

The significance of the situationists does not belie a coherent social movement. As they defined for themselves there came a critique so strong that it forced one to try to understand its sources and its shape, no matter how much of it one might see through. In spite of, or better yet, because of Mak's incoherent approaches to her two feature-length experimental documentaries, she destabilizes the aesthetic expectations of auteur theory and replaces it with a politically charged yet fragmentary exhibition of art/political commentary. Simultaneously postmodernist and situationist, Mak's works "collapse distinctions between the aesthetic and the everyday, and are in search for the loci of social power in relations of language, knowledge, and everyday experience" (Plant 5–6).

Conclusion

The production culture of Hong Kong documentary film practices by women has concerns with the following intertwined factors: the filmmakers' middle-class social

status; the shift in their use of technology from super 8mm film to video and new media; and their attempt to challenge mainstream production and ideologies. The local identity was predominantly shaped by educated middle-class intellectuals, artists and filmmakers alike. Non-profit organizations such as Phoenix Cine Club and Film Guard Association have secured a unique space for middle-class film buffs to explore film forms beyond mainstream narrative cinema. Their practices manifest in diverse realms including independent feature narrative film, new media, performance, installation and video art. Moreover, witnessing the decline in super 8mm film stock and the birth of video in the mid-70s, Videotage and Videopower were established in 1985 and 1989 respectively. They represented a collective effort to refashion “video” as a creative tool that extends beyond its use in low-budget or low-quality narrative film production. Female video makers including Ellen Pau, Linda Lai, Yau Ching and Anson Mak fashion their identity along the lines of moving image artist, video artist, or new media artist. The versatility the medium itself and the interplay with the medium not only lends alternative value to it but also signifies a vibrant art scene that compliments the Hong Kong screen culture. Lastly, by embracing a new form of cultural production that undercuts the New Wave phenomenon, female documentary filmmakers engage in a niche cultural scene that disrupts the dominant formation of cultural production, circulation and reception.

The absence of women participating in documentary-making is a paradoxical statement. Female documentarians exist and are extremely political. They engage in similar issues but received less attention. Female documentarians find space in both studio and independent production settings, inserting critiques that challenge the patriarchal-capitalist-nationalist world view. Stylistically, female filmmakers make documentaries in a diverse range of styles, themes, and production methods. The expository mode of documentary has dominated Hong Kong TV documentary for decades, yet other alternative modes of practice persist. Tammy Cheung is well known as the one and only observational documentarian in the city. Both Barbara Wong’s and Ann Hui’s works are simultaneously reflexive and participatory. Yau Ching and Anson Mak pioneer poetic and performative modes of experimental documentary expression. The limitation in production and circulation may have hindered some of them, but it does not reduce in any way their artistic and intellectual engagement in, with, and to the city by operating within the different systems that they chose to work with. Thematically, they probe into various socially urgent issues from different perspectives, blending social

critiques with creative approaches that invite the viewers to engage in private or marginal matters with political overtones. By making the private public or pluralizing a single story, they share a consistently radical and humanistic concern regarding gender and ethnic diversity without having to resort to political or cultural essentialism or antagonism. Perhaps, they never intend to search, restore, or recompose an old or renewed identity in the first place.

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Chapter 6.

Gender, Place, and Migration: Postsocialist Chinese Female Documentarians and Their Subjects

This chapter exclusively examines Chinese women's documentary filmmaking after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. As stated in the introduction, the geographically and politically distinct formations of the three regions ensuing the termination of World War Two and Chinese Civil Wars have led to three distinct trajectories of film production contingent upon local, settler-colonial, and global influences. The heterogeneity in language, custom, colonial background, political system and economics observed in the three regions calls for a nuanced analysis of women's documentary-making. In the case of the PRC, a communist state that has endorsed communism and opened up for economic reform since 1978, women's self-identity and participation in film are simultaneously shaped by socialist views of equality and postsocialist capitalism. This chapter examines the works by postsocialist female Chinese filmmakers and how their works sharply expose the incongruence between the state's agenda and the lived reality of Chinese women. After surveying the works of literature on Chinese women's cinema and Chinese documentary film, I contend that the scholarly construction of independent documentary filmmaking that overlaps the labels of underground/sixth/urban generation is not unilateral but changes over time, place, and player. Recognizing how women are underrepresented in documentary filmmaking, my research focuses on women documentarian's unstable positionality influenced by state feminism and postsocialist capitalism. I closely analyze four films by Chinese female documentarians to demonstrate that women documentarians place emphasis on the movement, migration, and circulation between urbanity and rurality. If men portrayed in the Sixth Generation films move to the urban and *become* new subjects as youth subculturers, rock and rollers, or working-class labourers, women's (un)becoming often takes place *during* the move. It is in this process that women recognize that the pedestal that they are put on under Mao's ideology could collapse anytime as a result of the unchanged patriarchal system and the lack of institutional support. The equality achieved during the socialist era obscures the inequality faced by Chinese women on a day-to-day basis. As the Chinese Communist Party came to power, the state's cultural production was firmly under the control of the leadership of Mao Zedong and private

studios ceased to exist. Mao enacted the proletariat revolution between 1949 and 1976, during which films produced were implicated with propagandist intentions. Mao's socialist agenda that refuted Western bourgeois and Chinese feudalism brought Chinese women's status to a different level. The socialist revolution was meant to emancipate the labour class, workers, soldiers and peasants regardless of gender differences. Women were actively participating in all walks of life from engineering, oiling, construction, and cultural production. Though in the service of nation-building, women during Mao's rulership, for the very first time in life, defied historical marginalization and rigid gendered roles (Wang 603; 605, 2015). The end of Mao's ruling marked a new page in Chinese film history. The new leader, Deng Xiaoping, adopted a new policy called "reform and openness" that embraced market economy and capitalism with Chinese characteristics. This new mentality of China playing an active member in the global market has a paradoxical impact on filmmakers resulted from the government's persistent grip on cultural production through censorship while embracing global attention. The paradoxical measures can particularly be observed in the government's respective attitudes towards the Fifth Generation and the Sixth Generation filmmakers. In the 1980s, New Chinese Cinema that was brought to light by a group of male filmmakers commonly understood as the Fifth Generation filmmakers garnered critical acclaim and many of which are still active today such as Zhang Yimou. The Fifth Generation is the first group of filmmakers that graduated from the Beijing Film Academy after it reopened in 1978. They are known to share a similar background growing up during Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and were the first to be exposed to non-socialist education at the Academy. On the one hand, the government recognizes the Fifth Generation's fame as it helps spread the ethos of Chineseness to the world. On the other hand, the government suppresses certain expressions when the Sixth Generation filmmakers rose to prominence after the political incident/repression "Tiananmen Square Protests" that took place in 1989. The Sixth Generation filmmakers are marked by their separation from their Fifth Generation predecessors. This group of young, disillusioned filmmakers diversifying in theme and style made different types of films ranging from independent, underground, urban and documentary film. The most notable commonalities are their preoccupation with realism and a shared vision concerning marginal subjects. Much research has examined Chinese cinema in relation to these two generations of filmmakers, as well as their interaction, negotiation and resistance to the state's cultural policy and censorship. Yet, women filmmakers that belong to these two generations receive much less attention

compared to the male counterparts. There have only been two book-length publications available in the English scholarship about women's cinema in the Sinophone context and both are centred on narrative filmmaking (Cui 2003; Wang 2011).

The history of documentary filmmaking in China appears to be quite different from the two other regions. There are two distinct and dominant periods: the socialist era (1949–1976) and the New Chinese Documentary Movement (1993 and onwards), respectively marked by technological and ideological shifts (film/propagandist to video/personal). While documentary film as a distinct mode of filmmaking is most evident in the above mentioned two frameworks, documentary and its realistic registers also often appear in describing several narrative films made by generational directors. In light of this, I specifically target my investigation in the historical construction of documentary filmmaking in the PRC through "the documentary impulse," a term that is prevalently used to describe the realistic mode of filmmaking and characterized by its spontaneity and rawness across many generations of filmmakers regardless of age, gender, and self-identification. The documentary impulse, specifically in PRC's cinematic history, has been identified to stand in contrast to (1) the mainstream Chinese cinema including the socialist propaganda during Mao's era, (2) the historical melodrama made by the Fifth Generation filmmakers as they strayed from their initial avant-garde stage, and (3) the "special topic" television programs administered by the postsocialist governance as China transitions to a market economy. It also signals filmmakers' self-awareness in resisting to comply with top-down ideological control. Yet, as many of the Sixth Generation filmmakers deny an oppositional stance, the documentary impulse quickly falls into a stylish descriptor and seems to have lost its political edge (McGrath 168; Berry 128, 2017). Chinese documentary filmmaking is further complicated as it criss-crosses the studies of underground and independent Chinese cinema. However, there is no doubt that "the documentary impulse" should be seen as one of the key features that connects the broader urban/youth/sixth generation. Furthermore, it bridges Chinese women's cinema across different generations. Independent and underground cinema crisscross at documentary impulse and work hand in hand in shaping a unique alternative, if not antithetical, film form and practice to the mainstream scene.

In addition to the documentary impulse, the formation of Chinese women's cinema lies within the development of women's rising consciousness. This developed as a result of socialist feminism as well as women's resistance and negotiation with

Western feminism to different degrees. Chinese women's films are often subsumed either in the nation-building agenda during Mao's era, or the urban generation filmmaking that came to prominence in the international film festival circuit during the postsocialist era. The former elides sex difference for the sake of class equality whereas the latter preoccupies itself with teleological debates over branding a movement or a phenomenon. Therefore, my work traces Chinese women's documentary filmmaking and investigates the ways in which it simultaneously sheds light on and eschews the various scholarly discourses that include and exclude them. In my cross-examination of women's role in national cinema, women's cinema and the New Chinese Documentary Movement, I hope to provide a systemic yet nuanced understanding of the readily marginalized Chinese female documentarians.

This chapter begins with the survey of three emerging and proliferating studies on Chinese women's cinema, independent Chinese cinema, and the New Chinese Documentary Movement. Hinging on the documentary impulse, the survey not only canvases the rich research and interdisciplinary methods applied to Chinese cinema but also shines a light on a linear construction of documentary-style across different generations of women's filmmaking. I engage in the following research questions: Is the documentary-style a Western construct or locally established? How does the meaning of documentary change and how do women react to it as the nation alters its ideological control and exercises under different economic premises? What types of feminism are endorsed by female Chinese documentary filmmakers? I seek to offer an organized perspective in understanding Chinese women's and documentary cinema particularly along the lines with the nation's political and economic transitions.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section examines the feminism conundrum amongst Chinese women filmmakers. The second section reviews existing scholarship in naming and defining Chinese independent cinema. The third section pays attention to women's role in relation to the New Chinese Documentary Movement. In the last section, I examine a list of documentaries made by and are about women and women's migration. Rather than focusing on one filmmaker, my research demonstrates that the "change and continuity" of Chinese women's filmmaking is best illustrated through their collective attention to women's migration. By showing women travel between rural and urban, local and global, the filmmakers apply a road-trip-like aesthetic

that recentres women's intersectional struggle, women's political consciousness, and feminist solidarity that destabilize geographical and national confinements.

The Feminism Conundrum

Women's status in China saw significant improvement as a result of Mao's socialist construction of the nation. The ideological shift during Mao's rulership dwells on an abolitionist view: ridding the influences of Western bourgeois and Chinese feudalism altogether. Socialist feminism posits that women can hold half of the sky and are as essential as men to take upon leadership roles or traditionally masculine jobs. Female filmmakers such as Wang Ping, Wang Shaoyan and Dong Kena that were prominent during the socialist era "received institutional endorsement from state film studios" (Wang 28, 2011). Chinese women filmmakers and their incongruence with Western feminism are evidenced by some filmmaker's denial to be labelled as a feminist filmmaker. Shuqin Cui in her important work "Feminism with Chinese Characteristics?" offers a great insight into the uneasy relationship between Chinese women filmmakers and feminism (Cui, 2003). In her interviews, many of the interviewees point out the irrelevance of feminism. To them, "male intellectuals have for a long time clearly realized the significant connection between women's emancipation and national salvation. They provoked ideas of gender equality and put them into practice" (Cui 174). In other words, the improvement of women's status was not a result of Western feminism, but Chinese socialism. Women's liberation during Mao's era emphasized unity and sameness between men and women instead of difference. The emancipation of women predicates on class revolution; both men and women were equally recruited and valued for the contribution to the advancement of the nation. Chinese female filmmakers believe that Chinese women's status was not based upon gendered antagonism but collaboration. However, Cui questions whether replacing patriarchal order with the collective nation-state truly brought emancipation to Chinese women (175). The lack of female subject, ambiguous narrative, the shunning of female sexuality in Chinese women's cinema are all evidence of an illusion of women's self-worth dependent on the well-being of the nation-state. This is also exactly what led to the lack of Chinese women's cinema that should have emphasized women's self-consciousness and agency, as argued by Cui (ibid. 180).

Contrary to Cui, Lingzhen Wang in "Wang Ping and Women's Cinema in Socialist China: Institutional Practice, Feminist Cultures, and Embedded Authorship" re-examines Wang Ping's films and in turn proposes a framework of women's cinema in socialist China (2015). She first criticizes the first-world cine-feminist positionality in assuming women's cinema as minor or counter cinema without considering the institutional forces particularly symptomatic in third world countries that enabled and disabled it. To her:

> In foregrounding the independent role of women's cinema in resisting and changing misogyny and patriarchy, feminist theories of counter cinema and minor cinema bypass questions concerning the institutional forces and powers that enable and constraint such feminist endeavors, particularly in relation to class dominance, racial discrimination, and imperialist expansion. (595)

Wang justifies the Communist Party's top-town, state-sponsored measures and policies in practicing socialist feminism by freeing women from feudalist marriage, illiteracy, and their segregation from social and political production. The inclusion of rural, peasant women, as early as the 1920s amidst the time of Western imperialism, class struggle, and poverty was indeed radical and allowed women to "combat patriarchy, advocate for women's interests, and promote the new proletarian, socialist woman subject in the 1950s" after the founding of the PRC (601). The author examines the career of Wang Ping, and her making of one of the most popular socialist classics *The Story of Liubao Village* (1957). Wang Ping ushers a heterogeneous socialist-feminist culture that is rooted in mainstream cinema. The emergence and prominence of the First Generation Chinese women directors was interdependent to the institutional support from the party.[8] This included formal education, training, production, and childcare as they advanced in their careers and made visible their self-conscious agency in exerting authorial maneuvering that foregrounds peasant women's emotions, romance, and selfhood.

The debate on Chinese female filmmakers' agency as well as the erasure of gender during the socialist-nationalist era remind me of the ongoing uneasy relationship between contemporary Chinese female filmmakers and feminism. In Wang's analysis, it

[8] Technically, male and female filmmakers who participated in socialist cinema are broadly understood as the Third Generation filmmakers. The First Generation of Chinese filmmakers are the ones that worked in silent film era, and the Second Generation filmmakers are known to be making films since the invention of sound in the late 1920s to the end of the republican era in 1949. Wang implies that there is a lack of systemic women's filmmaking before the World War Two and therefore deems Wang Ping as the first generation of Chinese female filmmakers after the founding of PRC.

appears that Western feminism has never made its route into Chinese women's films. Instead, women's films, divided by the two political periods of Chinese history, were affected by state-socialist feminism and Hong Kong-style feminism, "which seeks harmony rather than confrontation with men or patriarchal gender roles" (16, 2011). Production-wise, women's films were continuously protected during the socialist era until hit by Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). After China reopened, women's films were still funded by the government well into the 1980s until the film industry took its commercial turn and became privatized (Zhao xiv). If Wang Ping is to be viewed as a proto-feminist during the mobilization of the proletariat revolution in Wang's view, how have female filmmakers' relationship with the state changed as China adopted the open-door policy and entered the reform era? The Cultural Revolution put a pause on women's film careers as the state's cultural production was on a halt. Women who received official education ceased filmmaking for a decade and did not make a comeback until the late 1970s. In describing the Fourth Generation female filmmakers, Lingzhen Wang states that "the most influential group [that] included Zhang Nuanxin, Huang Shuqin, Wang Haowei [and etc.…] helped diversify mainstream films in the 1980s and pioneered new cinematic practices" (31–32, 2011). Born in the 1940s and firmly believing in gender equality, these filmmakers make a difference in making new cinema, children films, minority films and commercial films (Yang and Wei 6). Amongst which, Zhang Nuanxin and Huang Shuqin are most known as their films received wider distribution. Somewhat vaguely presented, Wang attributes Zhang to be "the first to introduce the new wave documentary style to China […as] she reorganizes [Western influences] in her films to enunciate historically constituted personal voices from the early postsocialist era" (Cui 32). Influenced by Italian neo-realism, Zhang worked with a non-professional actress who plays the female lead and incorporated life events into her storylines in her 1981 film *Shaou* (Liu 2017).

The female group of filmmakers of the Fifth Generation, despite having received significantly less attention when compared to their male counterparts, also contributed to innovating and diversifying in film subjects and practices in narrative film production. While the internationally renowned fifth-generation male directors created historical epics and national allegories, Chinese female directors of narrative films demonstrated women's consciousness, illustrating women's voice, desire, pain and contradictions (Yang and Wei 6–7). Several known filmmakers include Peng Xiaolien, Li Shaohong, Hu

Mei, Liu Miaomiao and Ning Ying. Amongst which, Ning's Beijing Trilogy: *For Fun* (1992), *On The Beat* (1995) and *I Love Beijing* (2001) capture stories that transpire in Beijing. Ning obtained her education in Italy and favours on-location shooting. She captures the rapidly-changing cityscape of Beijing and brings forward a sense of realism and documentary impulse of the 1990s. As a bearer of documentary impulse, this chapter also closely analyzes her recent documentary *Railroad of Hope*.

The female directors who were born in the 1970s face a similar challenge like their male counterparts of the Sixth Generation where finding room between state legitimacy and private investors' support poses a challenge. Only Li Hong, Ma Liwen, Li Yu and Xu Jinglei have solely produced independent films (ibid. 7). Many of these sixth-generation female filmmakers have received critical acclaim and international film awards for their novice techniques and attention to the female voice and homosexual subjects. Li Yu, who is known to have shot the first-ever Chinese lesbian film, *Fish and Elephant*, started her film career as a documentary filmmaker when working full-time for a state-owned television company in Beijing in 1995. From 1996 to 1998, she produced three documentaries that won national film festival awards successively. Li's known for her narrative films, and it is evident that her narrative films were profoundly inspired by the techniques, styles and ambience of documentaries. According to Cui, Li's first three narrative films, "taken together, demonstrate why women's filmmaking in China persists on the social-cultural margins while remaining ambivalent about feminist representation" (215, 2011). In her view, female directors have to negotiate between femininity and feminism, and be capable of deconstructing the hegemonic discourse. While Li Yu manages to express female subjectivity and foreground women's voice, her refusal to take a feminist stance signals a collectively ambivalent attitude towards feminism. Her rejection also exposes the contradictions and the (im)possibility of feminist cinema in China.

It is clear that the documentary impulse has been present across the many generations of Chinese female filmmakers including Zhang, Ning and Li. Scholars continue to (dis)identify feminist aesthetics and/or authorship of the many important Chinese female directors who become prominent alongside the Sixth Generation male filmmakers (Wei 2011, Marchetti 2011, Cui 2011). As a result, it is also difficult to thoroughly define to what extent these films are independent in postsocialist China. The understanding of independent filmmaking as a mode of practice requires us to revisit the

historical construction and theoretical conceptualization of Chinese independent cinema. In the next section, I turn to examine a similarly popular and highly debated topic “the underground and independent Chinese cinema.” I aim to further examine the cause that complicates or elides women’s contribution in the backdrop of state intervention.

Underground Cinema and In/dependent Filmmaking in the PRC

The emergence and conceptualization of “independent” and “underground” cinema in the PRC and their determining factors are largely due to a well-established and highly-controlled state studio system and censorship mechanism. In understanding how film censorship impacts Chinese filmmakers, many scholars have dedicated their research to the ways in which the Fifth and the Sixth Generation filmmakers negotiated national film policy and in turn shaped the Chinese underground cinema. The open-door economic turn with its paradoxical cultural policy that hinges on censorship and ideological control reposition the presumably marginal scholarship in a relatively dominant discourse in Chinese film studies to the centre. Despite its inconsistency, arbitrariness and unpredictability, Chinese film censorship in postsocialist China has not only ushered simultaneously volatile and versatile filmmaking practices amongst filmmakers, but also an ongoing debate on the status and definition of “independence” amongst critics and scholars (Xiao 125). In my attempt to present the debates in naming Chinese independent or underground cinema, I intend to demonstrate that the study of independent cinema relies on a holistic overview overarching the production, exhibition, distribution and reception of the films analyzed. This will include how the status of being independent or underground is never fixed but changes over time and place and involves different players.

In American cinema, independent films are often seen existing outside of the dominant Hollywood conglomerate of which production, exhibition and distribution are vertically integrated. Geoff King in *American Independent Cinema* argues that the definition of independent (or indie) is never a fixed identity. Rather, it is contributed with several elements such as the departure from the mainstream industry, form, aesthetics and filmmakers’ socio-political intentions. Tracing the history of American independent cinema, King marks the 1980s as the major appearance of the indie scene for its established success in cultural consumption after films like *Stranger Than Paradise*, and

sex, lies and videotape were released. Aside from this independent sector, the more radical movements such as avant-garde, experiment or underground cinema took place during the American New Wave as early as in the 1960s. Renowned artists, to name a few, include Andy Warhol, Maya Deren and Stan Brakhage. This movement, which is characterized by these so-called radical artists, symbolizes a type of counterculture during this period. In order to differentiate independent cinema from radical cinemas, King argues that:

> The characteristic location of that which is designated by the terms 'indie' or 'independent,' in the dominant senses in which they are used here, is a space that exists between the more familiar-conventional mainstream and the more radical departures of the avant-garde or the underground. (10, 2005)

If thought in an industrial sense, the term "independent" was first attributed to producers who are delegated to the independent sectors that often seek niche audiences such as black-oriented filmmaking. Distribution does not become one key factor that contributes to the maturity of the indie scene until the late 1980s. Moreover, the distinction between mainstream Hollywood and independent cinema has always been contingent in which there lies "Indiewood." According to King, "a central characteristic of Indiewood cinema [...] is a blend comprised of features associated with dominant, mainstream convention and markers of 'distinction' designed to appeal to more particular, niche-audience constituencies" (2, 2009). Indiewood also signifies a region of the hybrid spectrum when defined by the industrial location and textual definition. King also discusses how Indiewood is in fact a form of subsidiary and subcontractor capitalism. The idea of smart cinema corresponds to how cultural preferences come into play that results in a "customized 'niche' consumption" (ibid. 15). The hybridity of Indiewood is further explored in the aspects of audience studies, cultural production, aesthetics, distribution, and marketing, which all in all mark the dynamic structural play between Hollywood, Indiewood and art-house cinema. Hence, though predominately used to denote narrative films that are alternative to Hollywood and have gained critical attention, independent films are often situated right in-between Hollywood commercial films and experimental, avant-garde films. To some extent, independent filmmakers exert their political and creative vision that canvas narratives alternative to classical Hollywood and received distribution outside of the conglomerate majors.

On the other hand, Duncan Reekie in *Subversion: The Definitive History of Underground Cinema* explores how the history of British Underground cinema since the 1960s marks a new form of art that is equivalent to counter cinema. This new form of art confronts not only mainstream cinema but also "the theory and theorists of recuperated independent sector" (9). In terms of definition, Reekie mentions how avant-garde is separated from independent films between the 1970s and 1980s. The former is secluded along with the category of abstract films, whereas the latter thrived among the sub-movements including community filmmaking, minority filmmaker groups, etc. Expanding on this, independent films could also signal a collective awareness amongst minority filmmakers. Reekie further details how underground/independent cinema inevitably got institutionalized due to their resort to state-funded sources. Therefore, state control becomes an interfering factor in constituting a pure national underground cinema. This symbiotic relationship between the state and the filmmakers involving funding is much analogous to the case of Taiwan and Hong Kong cinema for both rely on institutional support for the initial stages of production.

Contrary to the West European/American contexts, in which free market is a default, the divide between underground/independent and the "official" is usually determined by state legitimation in the Chinese cinema context. While King and Reekie provide two different conceptualizations of independent and underground cinema respective of American and British cinema, it turns out that either term could be directly applied to the context of Chinese cinema. Chinese filmmakers retain a relationship with the government on two spectrums. On the surface level, they produce state-approved films and bear the title of national filmmakers. On the underground level, they accumulate cultural capital to produce projects that are illegitimate in the government's view due to their (un)intentionally controversial political and social statements. Particularly, the underground status is broadly determined by three social factors including state's approval, filmmaker's identification, and ironically, the global gaze and assumption. Since the 1990s, there had been "illegal" underground filmmaking practices that developed against state control as state permission is required for major distribution channels and exhibition venues inside the country. There are generally characterized by illegitimate production and individualistic expression with a strong focus on personal values and marginalized groups. It is almost unequivocally agreed that there is a distinct

personal vision and thematic concern across the films produced outside of the state system.

Unlike the symbolically subversive undertones that are carried over by British-American radical or underground cinema, it is the limited (if not denied) access to production, distribution, and exhibition that makes it literally underground. In the case of the Sixth Generation, they are understood as marginal filmmaking that rose outside of the economic, institutional, and ideological centre of image-making in China that has created a new hub of artistic influence as well as the impact on world cinema (Iordanova 5). They also mark a departure from the complicity between the Fifth Generation directors and the state through self-orientalization that functions to appease the foreign market (Dai 198–199). When analyzing the theme and style in underground films, Paul Pickowicz argues that they seem to concurrently display a sense of sadness, shallowness, and placelessness situated in the postsocialist era (16). Chen Mo and Zhiwei Xiao also contend that the groups are also considered to have adopted me-me-ism by which "resurrects individual subjectivity" (148). The illegitimate undertones are further accentuated by their intentional rejection of national and historical allegories. National and historical allegories are seen in many of the Fifth Generation filmmakers' works including *Farewell My Concubine* (dir. Chen Kaige, 1993), *Blue Kite* (dir. Tian Zhuangzhuang, 1993) and *Raise the Red Lantern* (dir. Zhang Yimou, 1991). In these historical epics, Chen, Tian and Zhang not only explore the lost history and memory erased during the Cultural Revolution but also created symbolic national victimhood that embodies the suffering and perseverance of a nation. On the contrary, underground films operate on objective and detached modes so that they can truthfully represent the humanistic aspect and social reality. One can denote more nuances as different labels such as the Youth Generation, the Urban Generation, and the Sixth Generation circulate both in academia and among the critics. The different labels together denote that underground filmmaking manifests through a group of younger filmmakers who focus on issues of urbanity in contemporary times that counter the Fifth Generation's preoccupation with the historical past.

However, there is a tendency for non-Chinese viewers to conflate political subversion with illegitimate filmmaking. Western critics tend to view underground filmmakers' works as politically subversive by assuming their direct opposition to state control. Mo and Xiao analyze the discrepancy of how underground films are viewed

between international viewers and Chinese critics. Mo and Xiao question whether ideological reorientation or political intention exists in underground films or not. While most of filmmakers seek artistic freedom through innovative filmmaking, Western critics' inattention to the films' technical flaws in films serves to legitimize the Western discourse of Chinese underground films as political rebellion. Pickowicz also comments that there had been an underground filmmaking "boom" given the international attention Chinese films experienced in 2003. In the respect of recognition, many underground filmmakers actually retain their fame abroad in light of its censored nature that attracts international viewers who seek banned films in China. With regard to the aspect of Chinese filmmakers' self-identification, Pickowicz prefers "underground" to "independent" as a more favourable identity which filmmakers of this category voluntarily apply to themselves for their "unofficial" nature. He also suggests that the status of being an underground filmmaker is not permanent. Underground filmmakers and the state operate flexibly, much like how one may cross the boundary and become a part of state-owned productions. Yet, Pickowicz also notes that one of the main reasons is that the directors intentionally chose subjects that were not susceptible to political implications. The theme of underground films is centred on identity explorations and the content appears to be self-indulgent, ahistorical, and immersed in global cultural references, shedding light on its apolitical nature of the films.

Embracing the contingency and heterogeneity of Chinese filmmaking, Sheldon Lu pays attention to the relativity of defining Chinese independent cinema. According to Lu, underground cinema is originally situated in the periphery as opposed to the centre, which on the other hand obtains a central position at the international film festivals (104-108, 2010). Lu further draws a parallel between the Sixth Generation and the Urban Generation for the lack of rural experience which manifested in most Fifth Generation filmmakers. The interchangeability between the Sixth Generation and Urban Generation is supported by Xiaoping Lin as Lin also discovers certain avant-garde traditions that lie in the Sixth Generation (2010). Lin favours avant-garde over experimental when used to describe Chinese contemporary art because avant-garde not only suggests a subjective social- and self-critique but also works as an institution that rebels against state authority. However, due to the dualist identity occupied by Chinese avant-garde artists—a relationship signified by positions of the contractor and the subcontractor between Western orientalists and the Sixth Generation cinema—Lin poses the question of

whether these independent/avant-garde artists can still maintain the antagonist role in the "state-funded but controlled" narratives. He argues that these urban, avant-garde artists and filmmakers embody "a hybrid of two conflicting yet coexisting systems, ideologies, cultures—Mao's socialism and global capitalism" (15).

Given its complex and overlapping characteristics, urbanity works the best to unify this generation of filmmaking amongst the youth generation, the sixth generation, the new documentary movement as well as mainstream filmmaking. Many notable sixth/youth/urban generation filmmakers include Wang Xiaoshuai, Lou Ye, Zhang Yuan and later Jia Zhangke became known for their unique takes on urban subjects from migrant workers, student protesters, homosexuals, urban youths, etc. The appearance of Jia Zhangke's later films in the late 1990s—2000 embarked a new phase of independent movement that embraced the instancy of DV technology as he turns away from his earlier elitist, film school-educated experimental disposition, which "effectively ended the era of the Sixth Generation" (Zhang 15, 2007). In addition to urbanity, another important thing to note here is that in spite of documentary films being the root of Chinese independent filmmaking, what is best known is still the "documentary impulse" discerned in independent narrative films. For example, Lou's *Suzhou River* (2000) and Wang's *Beijing Bicycle* (2001) feature long-shot and long-take cinematography on city dwellers and street scenes. This denotes a change in practice as the young filmmakers moved away from the budding avant-garde film style and later ventured into a longer format of filmmaking (usually feature-length narrative films) and this applies to both the Fifth and the Sixth Generation filmmakers. These filmmakers matured their storytelling skills and this publicized phenomenon of independent filmmaking at the urban platform blurs the boundaries between documentary and fiction, amateur and professional filmmaking in Chinese cinema.

As such, Chinese underground film is not a fixed category but embodies different meanings at different times and places and to different people who are a part of it. In fact, it is enacted through multiple players at work including the state, the filmmakers, and international viewers. It could mean that, on the one hand, a Chinese filmmaker makes a film that does not pass state censorship but circulates overseas for its sensation regardless of its content. Or, it could mean that a Chinese filmmaker makes a political film that is pirated and is consequently seen by both domestic and international viewers. It could also mean that a used-to-be underground filmmaker now receives

funding from the government and makes state-sanctioned films. The underground or independent cinema does not preclude narrative, documentary or experimental films but mainly operates in opposition to the studio-based Fifth Generation productions as well as their themes that are in service of creating national or historical allegories. Underground filmmakers favour realism as opposed to classical storytelling or the government's constructed images. Their creative output might also lead to consequences of censorship such as rejections, conditional approval, or banning of the film, the filmmaker's career or both. However, despite its existence outside of state legitimation, whether the films carry political intentions should always be questioned but not taken for granted. While there bears very little difference between naming it independent or underground, this group of filmmakers remain on the peripheral, intentionally or not. The duality of peripheral vs. centre and its ever-changing demarcation line points to vibrant and diverse Chinese independent and underground filmmaking practices. These practices are bound to change according to temporal, social, economic and political shifts. Unlike the relation between underground/independent film and commercial filmmaking in U.S./European contexts, the relation between "underground" and state-sanctioned filmmaking in the PRC is fairly complicated.

Women and New Chinese Documentary Movement

As mentioned above, urbanity works the best to unify this generation of filmmaking amongst the youth generation, the sixth generation and the new documentary movement. Moreover, the filmmakers of the Sixth Generation are hybrid subjects that are constantly negotiating different ideologies and working conditions between global capitalism and state socialism. When it comes to female filmmakers, Chinese women generally do not see gender oppression as a major issue as the socialist revolution has restored class difference and elevated women's status. This might help to explain why Chinese women's cinema stands uniquely on its own and does not follow suit with North American's women cinema that develops in tandem with the second and third feminist movements. Yet, how have the working conditions changed since the Chinese government adopts the open-door policy? Do Chinese female directors still hold the same views regarding their status in one of the largest film industries in the world? What would be the best critical lens into independent or

documentary female directors in the readily marginal film scene? As shown in the two sections above, women's cinema and the discussion of independent and underground cinema do not overlap. If the independent Chinese filmmakers already occupy the peripheral, does being the other gender perpetuate double marginality? These questions must be tackled along with the recent critical research on the New Documentary Movement (hereafter NDM). I argue that the NDM cannot be viewed as a standalone project but must be further interwoven into the discourses on underground and independent Chinese filmmaking.

Most contemporary documentary filmmakers work with the socialist-capitalist system in securing funding for their films. The late 1980s marks the inception of Chinese independent filmmaking initiated by the documentary director Wu Wengguang, who began to produce work independently from state funding and administrative control (Zhang 120, 2004). His film *Bumming in Beijing: The Last Dreamers* is considered to be the founding work of NDM and was first screened outside of China in 1991 including the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival. At the same time, along with Wu, Shi Jian and Chen Jue—who were then producers from China Central Television—also decided to distance themselves from the pre-scripted, highly polished Special Topic programs and produced *Tiananmen*, an eight-episode documentary about Beijing (Wang 300, 2007). This is significant as it signals that the departure from official filmmaking is rooted in documentary filmmaking. Documentary-makers in this movement do embody a collective spirit situated in a particular historical moment in opposition to the didactic "special topic program (*zhuantipian*)" previously held by the state, and further prefer a new representation of social reality. Arguably following the traditions seen in the propagandist films during socialist China, these special topic TV programs work to instill state ideologies and consciousness through the expository mode of filmmaking, albeit they focus on special issues. Wu creates a new version of reality, and this poses a challenge to the state, which typically sanctioned and approved special topic programs. He also explores new ways to present reality and generate new social meanings particularly during the social, economic, political and ideological changes in China in the 1980s. NDM therefore represents both a stylistic and ideological transformation from the socialist era towards postsocialist observational and reflexive modes in light of the development of DV technology. Owing to Frederick Wiseman and Ogawa Shinsuke, many of the documentary filmmakers favour the approach of Direct Cinema, equivalent

to the fly-on-the-wall approach, non-interfering and objective. (Lu 34–35). As the market faces more competition from TV programming, younger filmmakers that make films at the turn of the century “emphasize their individuality through self-reflexivity and share a commitment to artistic exploration” (ibid. 25). Yet, Direct Cinema remains to be the most dominant feature in contemporary Chinese documentary films.

NDM not only represents a deeper reflection on social reality but also a mechanism that withstands censorship to some extent. Chris Berry identifies four characteristics of the NDM in relation to theme, subject, style and production. Particularly speaking, Berry points out the commonalities amongst Chinese independent documentaries are (1) the structural absence of the Tiananmen Incident, (2) a focus on urban life, (3) spontaneous shooting, and (4) eschewing state productions (Berry 118, 2007). Interestingly, the latter three overlap with the generic characteristics of Chinese underground cinema. But it is the first characteristic that enables the withstanding of state censorship. Yet, Berry points out several important functions that derive from spontaneous shooting. For the purpose of “getting real,” the documentary instantaneity not only takes the blow away from the filmmakers for not having to submit a script for initial censorship but further grants ordinary people a channel to “[seek] out a public space for airing otherwise unresolved grievances” (ibid. 126–127). The proliferation of DV technology that enabled NDM allows to subverting the usually top-down, state-sanctioned productions and grants a voice to the less privileged. The accessibility, instancy, and free form challenge the highly-controlled, narrated, and pre-scripted programs aired on national televisions directed to the civilians. Importantly, this is also a characteristic shared by postsocialist Chinese female documentarians.

Defined by the first independent Chinese documentary/experimental group “Structural Wave Youth Cinema,” the concept of independence is built upon two foundations: economical independence and ideologically independence from the officials (quoted from Cui, 120). Yet, the modes of operation have undergone some shifts. Chris Berry points out that contemporary documentary filmmakers tend to associate themselves with independent filmmaking for their particular position “in relation to the three-legged system: party-state apparatus, the marketized economy and the foreign media and art organizations that have built up a presence in China today” (109). In this sense, the filmmakers are operating not quite independently but rather co-independent. Berry foregrounds the conceptually different explanation of “independent” in the China

context for it is in fact produced through state power rather than completely independent from Hollywood in the Western context. The independence in the Chinese context is not necessarily dissident to the state apparatus but produced through multiple factors from the state, the private corporate funding and the international exhibition opportunities. Moreover, it can be deemed as a positive mode enabled by the power dynamics between documentary filmmaking practices and the state control (111). Independent documentary filmmakers admit themselves to be partly dependent on state-owned facilities and stable funding sources from TV programming while at the same time operating at an innovative level that straddles global marketization. Berry and Rofel argue that China's NDM stands as an "alternative" culture to the mainstream cinema rather than being 'oppositional', 'underground', or 'resistant' (142–143). Lu Xinyu also supports the idea that independent documentary-makers are in fact closely related to and dependent on the television system without having to submit to forced alterations on personal subjects or controversial contents (20).

The discussion continues as two scholars explore the question of whether NDM is too strong of a term to represent the overall style, aesthetics and characteristics manifested in documentary films produced in the 1990s. Luke Robinson in *Independent Chinese Documentary: From the Studio to the Street* rejects the collective action specified by Lu for "their lack of systematic coordination in particular was not characteristic of a sustained artistic movement" (16). Considering its limited accessibility in circulation, Yingjin Zhang is also in favour of this idea by additionally taking into account of the "unavailability of its representative works to the public and its little impact on domestic audiences" (120, 2004). For Robinson, independent Chinese documentaries are strongly upheld by the cinema-vérité style, which is associated with the liveliness of shooting on location, a term he coined as Xianchang. Robinson's analysis highlights Xianchang, the contingency and interdeterminancy manifested through not only independent documentary filmmaking practices and aesthetics but also the distribution and reception of these works. Similarly, Zhang draws parallels from Euro-American documentary and argues that the style which belongs to the grassroots documentary movement may, at first, serve as a collective effort resisting the voice-of-God, propagandist strategy adopted by the official programming. Nonetheless, the changing socio-economic conditions plus the shift of policy in TV programming blur the divide between official and non-official documentary filmmakers. The distinctions

become slippery and their artistic concepts, shooting style and selection of subjects begin to merge. NDM practices emphasize social engagement with a hint of humanistic and personal expression. For contemporary documentary filmmakers, the era of affordable and portable DV equipment continues to reshape the nature of documentary filmmaking practices, allowing a freeform exchange between subject and object.

For a few reasons, a pattern can be identified here: the coupling between "independent" and "documentary." First, the mode of documentary filmmaking allows the filmmakers to dodge censorship from the authorities as the stories are not technically told by them but by the interviewees. Second, the prevalence of documentary filmmaking signals a low-budget, low-quality but spontaneous, truthful and creative response that is in stark contrast to the polished or scripted mainstream media. Yet, while both underground and independent denote the lack of state sanctions, the ambivalent and ever-changing position of the filmmakers in negotiating their practices in reality while pursuing artistic visions proves the ineffectiveness of clear labelling. Similar to Chinese underground films, the status of being independent fluctuates depending on one's own decision to maintain a tight, loose, or absent relationship with the government. This shared characteristic makes it particularly difficult to unify any category in postsocialist Chinese cinema without having to arbitrarily choose a category in the research's favour.

Chinese women's documentary filmmaking appeared amongst the independent documentary scene beginning in the 1990s. Yet, the documentary impulse can be observed throughout three generations of narrative filmmaking in the works of Zhang Nuanxin, Ning Ying and Li Yu. Unlike Taiwanese or Hong Kong filmmakers, Chinese independent documentary filmmakers do not have access to government support but rather, they seek private or international financial support on and off. The portability of DV cameras enabled a cheaper form of filmmaking that separates independent documentary filmmakers from official TV journalists. However, gender imbalance remains to be a perpetual problem in the readily marginal documentary scene (Mei and Zhu 15). In the canonical text *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record*, Berry et al. compiled a list of key documentarians in the appendix. In the list of 43 documentarians, ten of them are women, making less than 25 percent of the total number. Eight out of the 43 filmmakers, who are all male, produced works before 1995, and are discussed widely as the pioneers of the NDM. The only three films made by women between 1996–2000 are *Out of the Phoenix Bridge* by Li Hong, *Old Man* by

Lina Yang and *Nightingale, Not the Only Voice* by Tang Danhong. The lack of women's participation during postsocialist China seems to resonate well with the historical marginalization of women in media but stands as a stark contrast to the expectation of state feminism. If the Fifth Generation filmmakers make use of female subjects as allegories to the nation's trauma and perseverance, then issues of gender inequality, accessible and affordable education, unpaid domestic labour, feminization of poverty, violence against women, human trafficking, stereotypical expectations of gender roles, and minor sexuality become constant reminders of women's reality and continue to haunt the viewers. Women's rights as universal human rights is an ongoing fight and Chinese female documentary filmmakers address these issues collectively.

Analyzing Four Postsocialist Female Documentary Films

In this section, I select four films by four female documentarians to explore the relationship between women and public space through the theme of migration. I first provide a short biography for each filmmaker, followed by individual film synopsis. Next, I analyze the theme and style of the film and explain to what extent these documentaries challenge the orthodox New Chinese Documentary Movement. I then discuss the four films in relation to theories that intersect at gender and geography, and the cross-subject connectivities that shed light on a critical understanding of contemporary Chinese documentary films by women. In chronological order, the films to be analyzed are *Out of the Phoenix Bridge* (dir. Li Hong, 1999), *Railroad of Hope* (dir. Ning Ying, 2002), *Care and Love* (dir. Ai Xiaoming, 2007) and *When the Bough Breaks* (dir. Ji Dan, 2011). I argue that these films should be ambivalently situated in the New Chinese Documentary Movement for their diverse approaches that nuance the direct cinema style. Moreover, female documentarians present diverse techniques that transform the subjects into active agents in carving out the understanding of self, subjectivities, and identities of their own. Additionally, they further connect female subjects and female filmmakers, thus establishing lateral, temporal, and spatial connectivities.

Out of the Phoenix Bridge

Directed by Li Hong, *Out of Phoenix Bridge* is an important film as it is not only the first feature-length documentary made by women in China situated in the NDM but also for having been greatly discussed in length in relation to her feminism-imbued

content and aesthetics. Li Hong was born in Beijing in 1967. She studied at the Communication University of China (formerly Beijing Academy of Broadcasting) and began documentary filmmaking in 1997. She has made two documentary films thus far: *Out of the Phoenix Bridge* (hereafter *Phoenix Bridge*) and *Dance with Myself* (2002). The former screened internationally and won the Ogawa Shinsuke Prize at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival. *Out of Phoenix Bridge* is an important film for it not only being the first feature-length documentary made by women in China situated in the NDM but also for having been greatly discussed in length in relation to her feminism-imbued content and aesthetics. Alternative to direct cinema, which is the most prominent feature in many of the films affiliated with the NDM, Li uniquely inserts her subjective statements into the film through her documentation of the four migrant girls' lives when living in Beijing. The four subjects' names are Jialing, Afeng, Xiaowang, and Xiazi. Jialing and Afeng are sisters; yet, as the story develops, one can tell that Xiazi has become the centre of the story. Li's first-person narration lays out the backdrop of the connection between herself as someone who grew up in Beijing and the migrant girls that she met in Beijing. Renting a tiny and shabby place, four different stories unfold and showcase what it means not only for them but also for the viewers to travel from a small village called Phoenix Bridge in the Anhui Province to Beijing as a part-timer and as a woman. Through the day-to-day conversations and quotidian activities, Li interweaves her subjects' gender and class consciousness, her avant-garde narrative style, and cross-subject minor connectivities that project minor notions of feminist awareness.

The film focuses on women and illustrates several instances of women's oppression that intersects class and gender. The film opens with an intertitle that reads "A maiden's nipples are gold, a bride's are silver, but after kids, they are dog tits—A Chinese Proverb." The provocative proverb denotes that not only women's social roles but also women's bodies are scrutinized by the public discourse. This suggests an ambivalent understanding of socialist feminism. In a way, women's bodies are open for discussion and not to be ashamed for. But what Li actually foregrounds, through the proverb, is the subordination of women and women's values that are solely dictated by their relationship with men. In the film, none of the girls are educated. The four women work low-laid, precarious hourly jobs and live in an unsanitary environment. Their bodies suffer from irregular periods. Jialing has not showered for almost a month because taking a shower is frowned upon by the landlord as it increases utility bills and therefore

should be kept a secret. While one might presuppose that Chinese women working independently is a sign of economic independence, this is not the case. For women who leave home from the country to work in the city, they share the same goal—making money for their brothers, the male heirs—as they are the ones that are entitled to better education. The same issue is also explored in Ji Dan's *When the Bough Breaks*. Most of the time, these women are treated as outsiders in the eyes of Beijingers. What perpetuates this is the common view amongst the city people believing that bike thefts are the worst urban problem and migrant workers are to be blamed for this; blame which stems from the belief that they do not belong to Beijing.

The conditions seem to be worse back at home. According to them, it is an omen to be born at home as a girl. Men beat women, throw baby girls into the river; moms and aunts' husbands beat them, and the girls were further abused by the stepfathers. These girls' sexuality is likewise regulated. Four years ago, when Xiazi left her hometown, her mother warned that if anyone attempts to assault her, she should just jump off the train because women's (sexual) reputation is the most important thing in her life. Xiaowang is the only person that seems to embrace her sexuality living in the city as she occasionally sleeps at her boyfriend's. Yet, the other girls believe that she would have to hang herself if she sleeps around like this back home. In a sense, these girls are completely displaced as they do not belong to either home or the city. Patriarchal doctrines drive them away from home, yet, the purpose of their lives continues to be dependent on the male siblings. While living in the city grants them some economic and sexual freedom, evidenced by their first time shopping during the Chinese New Year in Beijing for themselves with their hard-earned expendable income. However, this sense of freedom and happiness only reside in the fleeting moment as the girls seem to be unable to obtain a sustainable way of living that escapes patriarchy and/or capitalism. Class, gender, and their rural status put them in a multiply-oppressed position that denies them individuality and agency.

In spite of the heart-wrenching content, Li's artistic maneuvering to one's delight breaks the norm of NDM and enables a creative and active viewing experience. There are several instances that demonstrate how she rejects a common observational approach. Furthermore, her editing strongly suggests an attempt for narrative continuity. The film first opens in the evening on the street. The exterior scene is shown with a cold and blue ambience. The camera then pans to the left to reveal a small brick house. The

film then cuts to an interior shot, where girls enter from the right-hand side of the screen into a warmly lit space. Using a wide-angle lens, Li accentuates how tiny their place is when filled by five people (four girls plus the landlord) at the same time. The first few shots also signal a conscious display of continuity in both shooting and editing, and in a way negates the non-intervening observational approach that is highlighted by the NDM. The use of close-ups and inserts livens the film. In addition, there are several moments when Li incorporates narrative devices to deepen and suspend the viewers' understanding of the characters. For example, the characters in the opening scene discussing issues of domestic violence and women's fear in a way functions as an inciting incident in narrative screenplays as the viewers quickly root for the characters. Moreover, Li does not reveal each girl's reasoning for leaving the home village until 90 minutes into the film. Defying chronological storytelling, Li adds narrative elements that enhance suspense in this documentary work. For example, Li switches the narrator position from herself to Xiazi as she showcases the inner thoughts of Xiazi. By lending control to the internal thoughts of her character, she remedies the subject-object hierarchy intrinsic to documentary films. She also closely follows Xiazi as opposed to equally distribute screen time to the four girls. The majority of the later part of the film follows Xiazi who seeks jobs locally and her inability to find happiness for her own while occasionally inserting footage from the other three girls. The film ends with a still photo of the four girls taken in Beijing in front of Tiananmen Square, bookending their first encounter in Beijing. It is when the viewer begins to piece the information together then one realizes Li's unique play with a temporality that resembles narrative storytelling and separates her film from her male counterparts.

Railroad of Hope

Having won the Grand Prix du at Cinéma du Réel (Cinema of the Real)—an international documentary film festival in France in 2002—Ning Ying's *Railroad of Hope* was produced right after her widely-known Beijing Trilogy released in 2002. Ning was born in Beijing and is an alumna of the Beijing Film Academy. Her Beijing Trilogy—three narrative films titled *For Fun* (1993), *On the Beat* (1995), and *I Love Beijing* (2001)—focuses on the changing urban landscape establishes her as a renowned filmmaker alongside her male counterparts but her theme separates herself from them. She was enrolled in the program in 1978 and is considered to be the rare and only female pioneer amongst the Fifth Generation Chinese directors. *Railroad of Hope* also breaks the norm

by predominantly relying on interviews as opposed to the fly-on-the-wall approach. The film is about one hour in length, and the only two locations that appear in the film are the train station, and the train itself on its way from the Sichuan Province to Xinjiang, the autonomous region in Northwest China. The first part of the film shows the chaotic scene when hundreds of people waiting anxiously at the train station to get on the train to Xinjiang for cotton harvesting, while the rest of the film takes place on the train during which many of the passengers were interviewed. Unlike typical journalistic interviews that tend to focus on facts and reality, Ning organizes the film through existential questions that draw out an imaginary but seemingly doomed future that is contrary to the hopeful title of the film.

The film follows hundreds of passengers anxiously waiting to get on the train leaving for Xinjiang. The majority of the passengers are peasants who are originally from mountainous Sichuan but leave to harvest cotton for a higher wage than home. Some others travel for personal reasons. What binds the film is these consistent questions organized by the interviewer: What is the most important thing in your life? What does happiness mean to you? If you can make a wish, what would it be? When asked upon, the film truthfully documents the length of silence before the subject speaks and the expression sometimes changes from hopeful to awkward as seen on the footages. The silence and their answers signal the impossibility to dream big, and their small wishes in fact imply a consciousness of gender and class inequality. Right before the train departs, a kid wishes that the train is less crowded. Later in the film, two women say awkwardly that happy people do not have to travel to make money. In fact, the majority of the subjects wish to make more money. Harvesting cotton appears to be a job that allows women to make more money as it requires careful and delicate handling. Another woman is going to Xinjiang to see her lover behind his back because she has not seen him for over two years. To her, the most important thing in her life is her lover, and the biggest fear is that he will not support her anymore. The camera dwells on her during her interview and you can see the emotion shift from being hopeful, anxious to hopeless. Towards the end of the film, a 35-year-old woman interviewee talks about how she got tricked into a scam marriage by her brother to marry a fifty-year-old man when she was in her 20s. She expresses that she thought about committing suicide but she now has to live for her son. In the end, she bursts into tears.

Whether intentional or not, the film apparently features more female interviewees than men. Ning's expository mode of filmmaking allows female subjects to express vulnerability on the screen. Most documentary films require the filmmakers to work with the subjects for one to few years in order to win and establish trust and dependability. For instance, Li spent three years with the four girls before *Out of Phoenix Bridge* was completed. The time frame of Ning's film is within three days from passengers boarding to some time when the train approaches the destination. Besides interviews, the film is interspersed with transitional sequences in which you see passengers napping, eating, or simply waiting on the train, accompanied by melodic music that turns out to be diegetic sound from the PA system on the train. This is a shocking revelation as what I thought was a deliberate placement of non-diegetic music by the filmmaker to contrast the reality of people on the train is in fact a gloss-over by the Bureau of Transportation—a.k.a. the government. The peaceful and upbeat music that plays regularly on the train throughout these sequences stand as a stark contrast to the narratives that I just witnessed from the interviews. The train may be carrying people with hope, but in reality, they can only make small wishes as simple as making ends meet. In reality, the train carries people with sorrow, anxiety, and uncertainty about the future that are behind the initially friendly smiles. Ning challenges the observational mode featured by NDM but takes on a participatory stance that actively engages her subjects. Ning showcases the subjective truths of the ordinary. Furthermore, Ning interweaves both diegetic and non-diegetic melodic music to interject the observational mode of filmmaking, and her emphasis on women passengers gives women of lower-class some voice and to learn the ambivalent feelings and emotions towards migration.

Care and Love

Directed by Ai Xiaoming, who is considered to be the most prolific of the bunch, *Care and Love* is an issue-based documentary that focuses on the villagers from Hebei Province. The film details their excruciating journey and the fight against the authorities after thousands have either contracted or died from AIDS as a result of blood transfusion sourced from illicit blood supplies. Ai is a feminist scholar, human rights activist and documentarian (Ting and Berry 237). She shared the glory to have won the Simone de Beauvoir Prize with another women's rights activist and lawyer Jianmei Guo in 2010. She has made 17 mid-length to long documentaries since 2004 throughout her career and many of which dealt with controversial issues that are deemed illegitimate in the

view of authority. Because of this, she has suffered varying degrees of surveillance and rights violations. In *Care and Love*, Ai follows several victims, along with the activists and journalists who were key players that stand on their side in pursuing justice. While the film provides invaluable information about the struggle faced by the AIDS victims, the film similarly teases out a relation to women's migration and cross-subject connectivities. As an example that is on the farthest end of the NDM spectrum, Ai uniquely documents the transition of one female subject—Liu Xianhong—from a victim to an activist and eventually a spokesperson for many other families in seeking justice.

The film tackles urgent issues of systemic discrimination towards AIDS patients and intersectional oppression upon the victims who seek government compensation in an authoritarian state. According to the film, there are about 70,000 victims, and amongst which many children contracted AIDS as a result of their mother's blood transfusion during labour. All the victims face extraordinary discrimination. Children are isolated in school; doctors refuse to provide medical care and adult victims are unable to find jobs. Furthermore, family members who attempted to collect medical documents for lawsuits from municipal hospitals were threatened or beaten up. The film shows that there is a powerful structure that links the hospital staff to the municipal level of officials and a tendency to evade responsibility. In addition, foreign activists are treated as ill-minded reactionary professors with an intention to ruin society and filmmakers received uncalled attention from officials when pursuing the subject.

Observational documentaries often require viewers' active engagement and attention on the film because such films are void of a central figure that guides the viewers through the plot. On the contrary, *Care and Love* is a very engaging film not only because of the severity of the issue but Ai's efficient editing and storytelling that lures the viewers in. The film opens with a train entering the village, signalling someone coming to understand the situation from an outsider's perspective. In the first half of the film, Ai covers as many subjects as possible to lay out the background and work-in-progress by activists and journalists. They helped with organizing and eventually the victims organized a Care and Love support group in the town and demanded free medication and free check-ups from then on. Ai successfully demonstrates how the hard work is paid off and the victims gain more confidence through organizing.

Ai similarly applies a creative approach to her film. While the first half of the film introduced a number of people involved, the tone changed halfway and the film became slower and more poetic. The film follows Liu's family visiting tombs and their daily routine, extending the quotidian aspect. But more importantly, the film begins to centre on the coming and going of Liu between cities and hometowns, and her presence that gradually dominates the screen at conference meetings, private gatherings, and home. Liu's activist role is also shaped by her travel between home and the city, Beijing. This change is then highlighted by Liu's active role in assisting the families and her pursuit for government intervention. Liu became aware of injustice, and the system behind it. There were also setbacks; Liu's family is constantly running out of money for the lawsuits and many sessions of trials and appeals. Furthermore, the township governor received an order from the officials to arrest Liu and crackdown their 'illegal' activities. In the process, Liu also realizes that she could only work with private journalists as public media would attempt to alter the images to the positive end favouring the government. Between November 2006 and March 2007, officials from the township came to tell the filmmaker and the victims that they would receive a one-time settlement of RMB $20,000 in addition to RMB $300 monthly payment. The government was improving their living conditions but the officials requested not to show this film in public. The director also stayed informed through the villagers' group messages that the activists were all monitored in case they got in touch with international NGOs for the world's HIV/AIDS day. The political consciousness to challenge the official image is crucial. Liu counters the acts of public media as well as government-instructed watchmen to prevent her from seeing any other NGOs or activists and gains power through organizing and eventually wins the lawsuit. Despite the long journey, Liu eventually received a final settlement of RMB $400,000 from the local hospital.

When the Bough Breaks

Ji Dan is a prolific documentary filmmaker. She has many titles under her belt including *Japanese Women After WWII in China* (1998), *The Elders* (1999), *Gongbo's Happy Life* (1999), *Wellspring* (2003), *Spirit Home* (2006), *Dream of the Empty City* (2007), *Spiral Staircase of Harbin* (2008), *When the Bough Breaks* (2011) in addition to another work-in-progress. Ji also sometimes collaborates with her partner, Sha Qing, who shares the co-director title. She is also known to have approached Chinese ethnic minorities particularly the Tibetans. Completed in 2011, Ji Dan's *When the Bough*

Breaks (hereafter *Bough*) closely follows a poor migrant family's life living on the outskirts of Beijing. Two teenaged girls become the centre of the story as they, on the one hand, deal with their temperamental parents, and on the other hand, struggle to make money in order to provide for their younger brother's education. Ji's work resembles most closely to the common NDM characteristic as her non-interventionist approach renders the filmmaker's position readily invisible and successfully documents and presents several intimate and intense conversations and fallouts between the family members.

The film is essentially about these two girls' movements between home, school and the city, and it illustrates the predicament of poverty, gender politics, and interconnection between class and education. The parents, unemployed, live in a rundown place by a garbage field. Their son, Gang, goes to a school for migrant children from the countryside to the city and lives in a dorm. The two sisters, Xia and Ling, though having a strong will for their own education, are aware of their place and simply want to focus their lives on taking care of the parents and watch over the brother's studies. At home, the sisters do the chores, cook, bring clean water for the father to bathe his feet in, and even trim his beard. At school, they are keen on making their brother eat so he has the energy to study. They also bring water for the brother to wash his hands before food, and they study on their own to make sure the brother is not falling behind on his studies. Despite the lack of respect, agency, and access to education, Ji continues to follow the sisters and reveals their complex emotions and level-headed attitudes via the film.

While Ji's opts for the direct cinema approach, it is through her editing and selection of footage that the viewers are hit upon unexpected dynamics amongst the family members. It is not until 30 minutes into the film that we learned that the family has an elder sister that disappeared and is presumably sold to a brothel. The father's idiosyncrasy and disability (wearing a prosthetic leg) were also not revealed until halfway through the movie as he recounted the memory of him as a member of the Red Army marching across China from the 1930s to 1940s. The mother also hates her husband. She seems to be fully aware of how terrible he is as a person but manages to maintain peace in the family. The sisters also reveal how unreliable and ill-minded their mother is. One of the mother's connections, Mr. Chen, who promised to lend the kids money for school told the girls that he was in poor health, hinting that he wanted to sleep with them

because his doctor told him that sleeping with virgins could restore his health. The disconnection between the girls and the mother showcases a new generation of girls that renounces the effects of socialist feminism. The scene where the family is together for the Chinese New Year oozes a lighthearted atmosphere despite the division created between the family members who are standing and eating dumplings compared to the father who is sitting and issuing demands. A family feuds ensues as the children and the mother debate whether they should continue to disregard the father's disrespectful remarks and actions. No resolution is achieved. The final part of the film follows the girls walking in the snow in the dark, throwing a few jokes around but looking as determined as they were at the beginning of the film. It is within this almost unbelievable absurdity that the film appears surrealistic. Yet, the girls remain on the move; for better or for worse, nothing seems to stop. Their rejection of settling might be their menial means to reject patriarchal and capitalist expectations.

Feminization of Migration and Women's Place

There are apparent differences in the respective aesthetic and thematic choices in these four films made by women. Yet, in these four independent documentary films, I see a vibrant feminine or even feminist intervention through the documenting of the movements and processes conducted by women on and behind the screen. First, the four films engage with female subjects' accounts of their negotiation between home, school or work, and their precarious social and working conditions. As they leave their hometown, travel voluntarily or involuntarily to the east of coastal cities or the west for more opportunities, it is clear that their migration marks an important aspect of women's lives and issues. In transnational migration studies, neither here nor there is better—a common sentiment experienced by migrant subjects. According to Boris Nieswand, "migrants' cross-border relationships are a self-evident element of many migrants' daily lives and that they are in themselves neither more nor less beneficial or threatening than other social activities" (1). Yet, what is less discussed is the *process* of moving between places. Feminist geography first emerged in the 1970s and has "dedicated itself to the task of "mapping" women and making their lives visible in geographical scholarship" (Calkin and Freeman 35). Feminist geography also challenges the global-local divide, of which is inherently hierarchized as "this global–local divide tends to be gendered: the everyday domestic spaces associated with the local are also associated with the

feminine and thus positioned as distant observers (or victims) of global politics" (ibid. 40). Moss and Al-Hindi also state that "feminisms in geographies tend to amplify the gendered and spatialized dimensions of social, political, and economic activities, developing more precise concepts that depict a phenomenon or process that produces inequality, and drawing out masculinist claims about knowledge and science" (3). Geographically speaking, these characters leave their roots, explore new routes, return home (old social structure) with new perspectives, and leave again. In the process of travelling, whether omitted or shown in the films, the subjects become more aware of social injustice and their precarious status in fighting for justice against a patriarchal, hierarchical and authoritative system. It is in this becoming that connects female filmmakers and female subjects in mapping out women's space in a traditionally masculine discourse.

Nonetheless, the concept of migration is often based on border-crossing movements. The premise of migration is rooted in one's move away from the home country, whether voluntary or not. In this process, one's roots, the sense of national identity is challenged, and the cultural affiliations with home are diffused. In other words, the move away from home to land in a new country is the premise to the ensuing analysis of intersecting identities across from race, age, gender, class, sexuality and so on. What is missing is that inequality and tension do not only get reproduced in these binaries—the North and the South, the first-world and the third-world, the developed and developing, the white and non-white—but rather, unequal relations are embedded in women's local places. In the case of China, globalization does not only impact international relations or people travel internationally. The local economic restructuring puts local residents in constant renegotiation and renewing of their means of living. The wage gap and living standards between rural and urban insinuates a microcosm of globalization that reflects a "system of social relations of production and reproduction nourished by uneven development across a range of spatial scales, from the local or regional to the national or supranational" (Katz 1213). Specific to China, spatial discrimination is constructed and perpetuated by the PRC's *hukou* system. Literally meaning household registration system, *hukou* is a historical population managing program established in 1958. Initially, the population was divided into agricultural and non-agricultural *hukou* to prevent rural residents from moving to the city. Where one's born determines one's registration and entitlement to social benefits including local

education, medical care, employment opportunities, financial subsidies, etc. In 1984, this policy loosened and allowed migrant workers to find jobs in the cities, reflecting the dwindling of agricultural businesses and a rapidly growing need for labour for urban development. However, migrant workers maintain their rural *hukou* and are unable to access benefits and resources in the city. As a result, many migrant workers are exploited when employed in the city, and their children are unable to receive education because of the lack of urban *hukou*. To cope with this unfair system, migrant workers are forced to leave their children in their hometowns to be raised by their grandparents. The policy has gone through various changes in the past, but the central idea is for the government to effectively control and regulate the flow and direction of the population in order to monitor the process of urbanization and the distribution of various resources. As Tiejun Cheng and Mark Selden point out:

> The *hukou* system decisively shaped China's collectivist socialism by creating a spatial hierarchy, preventing population flow to the largest cities, enforcing the permanent exile urban residents to the countryside, and binding people to the village or city of their birth; and by transferring the locus of decision-making with respect to population mobility and work from the transformed household to the work unit or *danwei*, specifically, in the countryside, to the lowest unit of the collective. (Cheng and Selden 644–645, 1994)

The *hukou* system has gone through a few generations of change with some relaxation in policy in response to the increased demand of labour to proliferating manufacturing factories built in coastal cities. However, what remains intact is it offers limited access to education and health care to migrants.

The *hukou* system impacts local female subjects to different and often higher degrees as seen in the four films. Migrant women face intersectional oppression as a result of gender, class, and state policy hierarchy. We see local Chinese women's intimacy, emotion, and their routes of migration in the four documentary films. I contend that these four films—created by women and centring on women—produce a situated knowledge that "reveal[s] a local that is constitutively global" and helps "develop a politics that works the grounds of and between multiply situated social actors in a range of geographical locations who are at once bound and rent by the diverse forces of globalization" (Katz 1214). Feminist geography enables me to link different places analytically and build an oppositional politics on the basis of these women's situated knowledge.

In Cindi Katz's "On the Grounds of Globalization: a Topography for Feminist Political Engagement," she states that:

> Doing topography […] already assumes the historical examination of social process in three-dimensional space. It takes for granted that space is both the bearer and reinforcer of social relations, and that if these relations are to be changed so too much their material grounds. Topographies are a means to elucidate the intersections of these processes with others elsewhere and thereby inspire a different kind of politics, one in which crossing space and "jumping scale" are obligatory rather than overlooked (see Smith 1993; Marston 2000). This grounded but translocal politics offers at the very least the possibility of countering the ways that the maneuvers of globalized capitalism exacerbate and build upon gendered, racialized, nationalist, and class axes of oppression and inequality in different historical geographies. (1231)

Women's local movements reflect a larger problem that is not seriously dealt with by the Chinese government amidst globalization and neoliberalism. It is through mapping women's place, space and route that makes visible the historical, local, regional and global marginalization of women's voice. Allow me to remap the contours and movements of the women in the four films. Their move from local to a different location that suggests power and wealth ironically turns out to be a facade. Yet, home is hardly any better. In Li Hong's film, the title *Out of Phoenix Bridge* suggests the importance of the local. Phoenix Bridge is where the place that the four girls grew up at. Interestingly, the Chinese title of the film should be directly translated into "Returning to" Phoenix Bridge as opposed to "Out of." The two titles suggest two different possibilities for interpretation and denote a predicament that the girls are materialistically and mentally situated in. The description of Phoenix Bridge township appears to be romanticized as it is heavily associated with renowned poets who relied upon the bridge as a source of inspiration during premodern times. The disconnection between modernization and its romanticized image signals a gap in development and how people may have been left behind as China hops on the bandwagon of rapid economic reform and globalization. In the film, the footage shot at Phoenix Bridge demonstrates a town that lacks infrastructure. People are underpaid working in nearby factories, and most importantly, the town is linked to all the sexist and misogynist memories that some of the girls strive to dissociate with.

On the other hand, Beijing produces some degrees of happiness but with conditions. Urbanization and concentration of population are inherently masculine and

classist projects. The project determines who is qualified to live in the city and entitled to the benefits, while urbanization simultaneously requires lower class labourers to leave the countryside for higher wages but are still excluded from power, wealth, health benefits and education. With higher hourly wages, the girls are able to shop with disposable income that suggests upper mobility. Yet, they are concentrated in low-paid and feminized positions such as the service industry and perpetual poverty continues to hover over upon the girls regardless of their migration. In the case of *Railroad of Hope*, the actual locations are removed from the film here and there. The mountainous Sichuan Province versus the most productive land for cotton harvesting only exists in the imagination of the viewers. Thanks to the interviews, the female subjects provide first-person accounts of their impressions that are rooted in geographical and social differences. In a way, the inequality caused by global economic power imbalances is shaped and enacted through the accounts of someone that is neither here nor there. Yet, the viewers can feel that both here and there are sites of oppression. The viewers are also exposed to the highly feminized train that carries mostly women labourers to the largest cotton export city in China and one man is shown to be managing them. This implies a continuation of patriarchal domination at the expense of cheap labourers and in addition to inequality that exists at home and there, the unknown West. Both *Care and Love* and *Bough* expose the poor living conditions of the subjects and how their subjugation is multiplied by their gender identity, social class, and rural status. The gendered aspects of living are further demonstrated in *Bough* as the father continues to dominate the household as if his power is completely unaffected in spite of geographical differences.

If power imbalances continue to exist in both locations, here and there, the process of travelling that may seem tedious or unchangeable (for it does not promise an ultimate resolution to current conditions) is, in fact, central to expose and rework the existing hierarchical power relations between subject-object, urban-rural, and subjective-objective. At the beginning of the *Phoenix Bridge*, Li narrates that she first invited the four girls to go to the famous Tiananmen Square when they first met. Eventually, only two of them showed up because the other two were concerned about whether they would be kidnapped. This disconnection was soon to be conquered after a month when they began to refer to Li as the elder sister. The filmmaker is motivated to move away from Beijing and to follow Xiazi back to her hometown. Xiazi's mom and aunt were both

interviewed back at home, connecting a generation of women and their suffering. Xiazi's visible awareness of gender inequality is demonstrated when she says that if her marriage is like her mother's, she will kill herself. Women's voice, subjectivity and connection, whereas historically and geographically marginalized, are reconstructed and mediated through the films. By de-emphasizing the poorer or the richer sites, Ning in *Railroad of Hope* draws attention to the journey, to the moving between places, and to their growing awareness of the future that may not be as promising as they hoped for in the beginning. Her participatory method and her existential interview questions reject a masculine project of which as public space is exemplified through the fast-growing economy that the nation-state is building upon. The train is feminized and women's voice is amplified as underrepresented women occupied the train riding across half of the country. In *Care and Love*, the filmmaker shows that Liu takes aback the control of her life and transitions from victimhood to individualization when men fail to achieve so. Through the two sisters' interaction in *Bough*, one can sense a collective empathy, collaboration and self-care that keep the girls going. Ji's observational approach in *Bough* ultimately demonstrates that women spend a big chunk of time travelling to serve men or the nation-state at the points of departure and destination. Yet, the girls prove that traveling is highly feminized, and by foregrounding the time of passage, the filmmakers carve out a space that rejects masculinization.

Conclusion

Chinese women's documentary filmmaking appeared amongst the independent documentary scene beginning in the 1990s. Yet, the documentary impulse can be observed throughout three generations of narrative filmmaking in the works of Zhang Nuanxin, Ning Ying and Li Yu. The portability of DV cameras enabled a cheaper form of filmmaking that separates independent documentary filmmakers from official TV journalists. However, gender imbalance remains to be a perpetual problem in the readily marginal documentary scene (Mei and Zhu 15). The only three documentary films made by women between 1996-2000 are *Out of the Phoenix Bridge* by Li Hong, *Old Man* by Lina Yang and *Nightingale, Not the Only Voice* by Tang Danhong. The lack of women's participation during postsocialist China seems to resonate well with the historical marginalization of women in media but stands as a stark contrast to the expectation of state feminism. Contemporary female documentary filmmakers emerged after the mid-

1990s from diverse backgrounds and are largely concentrated in independent filmmaking. The increasing accessibility to shooting and editing equipment enables women to showcase their perspectives via documentary films. According to Chao:

> What connects these contemporary women filmmakers, in film scholar Zhang Zhen's view, is their focus on issues of social change particularly from the perspective of their effects on women. This approach diverges from that of their male peers in general, and, in particular, the epic and idealistic perspective of kino-eye. For these reasons, Zhang labels these women documentarists "women with video cameras. (77)

In addition to women's perspective, this chapter engages in the possibility of women's connection and social consciousness that is triggered by travel and migration. In return, they uncover the deep-rooted gender inequality that intersects with nationalism, patriarchy, and capitalism. Moreover, the documentary impulse that first appeared in fourth-generation narrative films by women has diversified and transformed into manipulating narratives and inserting continuity in documentary films. However, the feminism conundrum remains unresolved as no existing interviews attempt to particularly engage female documentarians with questions revolving around their feminist identity. This reminds me that it is never sufficient to simply categorize women's filmmaking as either feminist or non-feminist. These four films embody a multilayered manifestation of women's subjectivity, the expression of a female director, and female bonding. Rather than privileging either category—New Chinese Documentary Movement or Chinese women's cinema—while leaving the dichotomy in place, I hope to reveal how local women's documentary practices and their underlying themes work to negotiate with the changing socio-cultural-economic politics of the nation-state. Additionally, I hope to foreground women and women's issues in the male-centred film industry and cinematic representation.

I want to end this chapter by briefly discussing another female Chinese documentary filmmaker, Guo Xiaolu, and two of her documentary films that I watched at The Cinematheque in Vancouver, Canada in the winter of 2019. Guo is a prolific Chinese-born filmmaker and novelist currently residing in Europe. She has made five long-form documentaries and three narrative films. Her films are incredibly difficult to find, and I was lucky enough to catch the only screening curated by Michèle Smith, the programmer of Dim Cinema. Titled as "Wonderland – A Xiaolu Guo Double Bill," I watched *Five Men And a Caravaggio* (2018) and *We Went to Wonderland* (2008) back

to back on a rainy Wednesday evening in downtown Vancouver. *We Went to Wonderland* resembles a sightseeing video documenting the travels conducted by Guo's parents when they first visited her in Britain. In *Five Men And a Caravaggio*, Guo constructs a story based on the relationship between four of her artist friends who resides in Britain. One of which purchased a forged painting of Caravaggios by hand (John in the Wilderness, aka Saint John the Baptist) and it is revealed that it was reproduced by a male Chinese artist residing in Shenzheng, China. Coincidently, both films centre on connections through travel with a delightfully creative touch of Guo's experimental and bold editing style. What interests me the most is the fact that for the making of *Five Men And a Caravaggio*, Guo decided during the production that she was strongly urged to find the actual artist behind the replica and that led her back to China. While her film focuses on five men and presents dichotomized world views and cultural differences of men from East vs. the West, it is her intention to travel that marks the travelling as feminine. Female filmmakers' travelling as a part of production dissolves the attention to here or there and elongates women's space and time at both local and global levels. Whether the mobility of women is regressive or progressive still requires further critical engagement. Women's temporal and spatial commitment during travel is essential in shaping women's space and can no longer be overlooked.

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Chapter 7.

Documentary as Alternative Practice: Parallels and Heterogeneity

This dissertation does not intend to survey all Sinophone documentary films by women. In addition to acquisition difficulties, this dissertation acknowledges the pitfalls in synthesizing materials with a singular view as the multiplicities in women's documentary filmmaking cannot be fully encapsulated in this length. However, this dissertation endeavours to foreground understudied and under-discussed documentary films by female filmmakers. It also seeks to complement the current documentary film scholarship by providing a way of understanding and seeing Sinophone production studies and women's role on and off-screen via the documentary prism. This final chapter concludes this dissertation by (1) revisiting the theoretical foundations and main arguments for this research (2) identifying similarities and differences discerned in female documentary filmmaking across the three regions, and (3) addressing the limitations of the research and proposing a prospect for future research directions.

My research is supported by various conceptualizations in different disciplines with the goal to support my view of female documentary-making as an alternative practice not only to regional nationalism but also the Western gaze. As my dissertation title suggests, my research is situated in between production studies, area studies, gender studies and film studies. Sinophone documentary practices have developed quite differently in the three regions. Recognizing the heterogeneity in the three regions, my goal is to unravel how certain films and themes are favoured in the dominant cinema while others are trivialized as a result of the multiple layers of hegemony. Therefore, I tackle these multi-layered hegemonic discourses by first tracing the debate of the naming of Chinese cinema and how it has evolved into four paradigms: Chinese cinema, Transnational Chinese cinema; Chinese-language cinema; and Sinophone cinema. The uses of Chinese cinema and Transnational Chinese Cinema are often based on one overarching theme: the historical connection and disconnection with the cultural/traditional China. Filmmakers and critics alike favour Chinese-language cinema as it bypasses complicated political leanings and fosters trans-regional coproductions. This term is valid as it implies the non-equivalence and asymmetry between language

and nation in Chinese cinemas. However, this term still disseminates a hegemonic notion of China as the centre of all cinemas when Chinese is considered to be the dominant language while local dialects are neglected or deemed as 'dialects'. Whether it is Chinese cinema, transnational Chinese cinema, or Chinese-language cinema, it is implied that other cinemas resort to an ultimate referent to China as the mother nation. On the other hand, the opting of Chinese-language documentary film enables a wider distribution and attention as seen in Chiu and Zhang's editorial. In combating the dominance of Hollywood cinema, the pan-sinicization lens inevitably plays into the hand of globalization and universalism, without first recognizing independent filmmakers' efforts and engagement in local contexts. Yet, Sinophone studies foreground internal issues and the power play between dominant and minor ethnicities, postcolonial identity issues, and government policy against/for open market economy. Therefore, my use of Sinophone reflects the multifaceted factors between production and consumption that involve the ever-changing roles of the producer(s), the labourer(s), and the consumer(s) in forming visual economy and identities that could replicate and resist the exiting or reproduced power relations.

With Sinophone in mind, I am also cognizant of the interplay of power relationships between the state and documentary filmmaking practices. On the other hand, CNEX, as a non-profit film organization, signals the convergences of global, regional, inter-regional and local economies, institutions, personnel and technology. In light of this, I draw on media studies, cultural policy studies, and the historical and colonial aspects of documentary film and its relation to the state in order to identify the implications of independent cinema that wavers between the state, the informal organizations and filmmakers. Media studies are integral to understanding how government cultural policy in the three regions intervenes in different ways affecting production, artistic choices and the labour market. I begin with introducing Foucault's essay on governmentality for the purpose of tracing the fundamental meaning of this concept and to follow up with other scholars' works such as Mitchell Dean and Nikolas Rose who extend and elaborate on Foucault's governmentality and its effects. Governmentality, defined as "the conduct of conduct," is an important concept that signals the regulating thoughts and corresponding practices are to enact effective governing between governing all and the governing of the *self* (Burchell et al. 2). It is manifested through the simultaneous process of totalizing and individualizing. In other

words, it depends on the governed's internalization of the governing's agenda and facilitation for the concept of governmentality to carry out. The scope of governing can be extended to culture, ranging from formations from the nation, quasi-nation, to privatized institutions, which all in all exemplifies the complex relationship between culture and governing. Culture is not an innocent or autonomous realm, but rather exemplifies to what degree one has processed the demands from the top. It signifies a highly controlling governmental discourse closely linked to media regulation that is incapable of producing a sense of belonging to culture but rather perpetuates the docility of citizens and a nationalistic profile of culture.

One question that can be asked here is how one can distinguish mediated citizens from autonomous radicals. The cultural policy perspective comes into play when investigating how cultural products do not reflect merely autonomous or subjective expression but rather inflected by resources and regulations in an institution. However, David Hesmondhalgh challenges that cultural policy only signifies the state's effort in creating a cultural/national identity through the patronage process that legitimates certain types of arts and considers this as the narrower version of the definition. He notes that there is an increased interest in policymaking by adopting the term "creative" in order to amplify the economic effects and to improve the city image associated with culture. The highlights of instruments include promoting multiculturalism, training art entrepreneurs and innovating existing architecture etc. Cultural policy, along with cultural producers, constantly change and mutate to adapt to the ever-changing social, cultural and political climate. There are many factors contributing to the contingency in evaluating the dynamics between art and commercial as well as production and consumption under disparate state policies and interventions. Additionally, there is always a concern about the complicity between the use of creativity and capitalist inclination. As such, cultural policy research and inquiries meet at this complex intersection between culture and economy.

Government film policy has always been a central element to the understanding of production, distribution and reception of films. Lee Grieveson in his work bridges governmentality and screen studies. Borrowing Foucauldian governmental rationalities associated with the double discourses of the governing of self and others, Grieveson argues that the power to regulate individualistic conduct is not centralized to the state, but rather a mechanism in which self-disciplining individuals mature (Grieveson 180–

187). In this respect, the institutionalization of Chinese documentary films anchored by CNEX reflects the delegation of global power imbalances towards struggling independent artists. Local filmmakers, in response to the call to meet the expectation of global audiences, must translate their project to English but also adhere to the storytelling methods favoured by international commissioners. Furthermore, Albert Moran believes that distribution is the most closely related to the idea of commodification for a large number of labour personnel and mundane sales processes that are involved (1996). However, there is a shortage of analysis between government and documentary as a result of multifarious reasons. When looking beyond the Western liberal contexts, the notion of governmentality is complicated when situated in different political contexts. Non-fiction films experienced different stages (newsreels, propaganda, censorship and pluralism) of alterations along with regime shifts in Iran and Sinophone cinemas (Naficy). Contemporary documentary filmmakers continue to work under government subsidies but operating more on an inter- and transnational level. The widespread worldwide web, the holding of local and international film festivals, and most importantly the institution of national laws that recognize and reward non-fiction films all pave a brighter outlook to the future of documentary filmmaking.

One common theme that characterizes non-Western countries is the influence and resistance of dominant film culture that shape a hybridized culture within the national film history. National cinemas fall into the area of examples that either resists or imitates dominant Hollywood cinema. Sinophone women's documentary cinema is one of the exceptions that maintains its rigour, criticality and solidarity. Women's cinema studies tend to undergo debates and dialectics with regard to feminist film theory and criticism, but also face similar challenges and complexities when situated in globalized and transnational frameworks. Western scholarship is ambivalent towards feminist film criticism and female authorship as women's filmmaking has sparked debates over whether it exemplifies feminist theory and praxis or not. Similarly, women's participation in filmmaking in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the PRC is contingent on historical, cultural and political factors and often subject to a feminist critique.

Historically, feminist cinema relies on those awakened, conscious female filmmakers and female audiences recognizing that they have been long ignored and underestimated in both the formalist Hollywood cinema and early avant-garde cinema. Here, a self-awakened consciousness is key to lending feminist subjectivity to women's

in and on film. It is imperative to note that women's art practices in relation to social movements as well as feminist theory and criticism are both two-way feeds for their continuous reciprocity. Women (who may not identify as feminists) serve as cultural producers, (un)intentionally creating new meanings and representations of women's cinema and (un)consciously disavowing the gaze, the classic narrative, the subordinated portrayal and the oppressive structures. Therefore, women's films signify two things: the cultural and social intervention and the interconnectedness between the two. Although one can argue whether film practices came first and then followed by theory and criticism, the cross-fertilization between the two contributes to the studies, the historical movement and the cinematic appropriations at various degrees.

The study of female filmmakers seems to be at odds with auteur theory. Auteur theory was initially birthed in a male-centred film circles of which film values and accreditation were created. Traditional feminist film theorists also largely focus on male-directed films but work within a limited framework and only addresses "questions of the gaze, the representations of the body, desire, subjectivity and so on" (Martin 130). Additionally, the idea of feminist aesthetics might alienate some female filmmakers who are reluctant to work in such a theory-informed and gendered structure when identifiers such as a female voice or the autobiographical reference to the female filmmaker become barriers to elevate the woman filmmaker's status. Hence, my research attempts to move beyond the dichotomy of feminist and auteurist while focusing on the production culture as Martin calls for feminist authorship to be defined by a distinctive style, and a kind of "conceptual and aesthetic work around the production of a film" particularly for women filmmakers (ibid., 132). Martin's insight speaks to Miranda J. Banks in her work to locate below-the-line female labours in feminist production studies. Banks argues that feminist production studies "[grounds] a reading of production within a distinct sociohistorical and economic context to examine a text, a profession, a character—even an individual—as a cultural and anthropological artifact" (Banks 95–96). This framework, currently lacking in Sinophone cinema studies, enables a systemic discourse analysis surrounding the production itself.

In Sinophone women's cinema, transnational feminism that suggests a "coalition that engages in feminist work across national borders" has become a favoured theoretical framework (Shih 62). Transnational feminist practices in many respects help reconfigure film discourses and Chinese women's cinema. They not only provide

foundations for exploring the history of national cinema and a political perspective on globalized film movements but also work to rupture existing disciplinary boundaries in gender and area studies. Wang believes that “through transnational feminist understanding of patriarchy as scattered, overlapping, and multileveled, can we understand that women’s cinema is not practiced against one dimension of a universal mainstream discourse (psychoanalytic interpretation of Hollywood cinema), nor does it constitute a uniform discourse (counter-Hollywood-cinema) in itself” (25).

To briefly summarize, documentary film is not an innocent project completely insulated from external influence. No matter how independent it might appear, the social and material conditions would affect each decision-making process from pre-production, production, to post-production. This might, in turn, highlight the weaknesses of a film when a textual analysis is conducted. The discourse of cultural policy and governmentality is not a confined area of focus. Rather, it involves many actors that interact with conditions of policymaking, cultural-producing, and citizenship formation in both public and private sectors. In addition, industry studies help identify the distinctions between art and commerce, and provide a critical lens navigating through the economic, administrative and financing aspects associated with production, circulation and reception of creative industries. Having considered the diverse lenses and directions, my approach resembles production studies and accounts for the ways in which local production culture and communities shape and are shaped by institutional forces and transnational production flows. My approach also foregrounds intertextuality and interconnectedness across documentary films by and about women. Utilizing production culture studies enables me to examine the material conditions of Sinophone women’s documentary production through their creative works and careers. As Banks et al. note, “production studies understands producers as interpretative communities within media industries that wield considerable power, but do not distribute that power to all producers equally” (Banks et al. x). I then turn to each region to illustrate the unique development of women’s documentary filmmaking and their positioning in relation to the state, self, and audience.

The fourth chapter focuses on Taiwanese female documentarians’ practices since the early 1980s—a time when social awareness, personal expression, and compassion for the minority emerged and persevered to not only counter the propagandist media controlled by the Nationalist Party but also complement the

guerrilla-style political documentaries in the vanguard. After surveying previous studies on Taiwanese cinema, I expose how both women's film and documentary films have fallen in and out of the discourses of a national Taiwanese cinema. I also examine the roles of government and non-government agents in women's documentary films. The symbiotic relationship between government funding and women's documentary practices is not organic but rather a long-term effect of a negotiating between funding, creative autonomy, and bureaucratic measures. I analyze the production modes and aesthetics of a select number of important Taiwanese female documentary filmmakers who have worked independently or with TV stations. I also address that the majority of Taiwanese female documentarians eventually orient towards the symbiotic working relationships with the government—many of which successfully tap into issues and subjects that were often invisible or sidelined in mainstream media. Zero Chou, whose career spans over 20 years—making both documentary films and narrative films—particularly manifests the dynamics of resistance, negotiation and adjustment when working in the Taiwanese documentary scene. I argue that her documentary works—which are rich in her use of intertextuality, philosophical muses, and lesbian imprints—not only mark her as a new-wave documentarian that resists national cooptation but also establishes her as a domestically and internationally significant female and queer filmmaker.

The fifth chapter explores how Hong Kong female documentarians together have established an albeit marginalized but mature documentary scene evidenced by their diverse styles and approaches. I identify two interlinked factors that constitute the lack of documentary filmmaking by women as well as a lack of critical attention to it. First, Hong Kong's cinematic history has been viewed to be commercially inclined provided with its large domestic and international market in the golden years. Second, the study of women's documentary works is conflated with the overall TV documentary history as well as the independent film and video history during the colonial years. I locate the crossovers between gender and documentary studies in the context of Hong Kong cinema and map out the diverse themes and approaches discerned in women's documentary films. Focusing on a select number of female documentarians, I showcase how Hong Kong women documentary filmmakers have worked in a marginal and gendered space in the Hong Kong film industry. Ann Hui and Barbara Wong remain active in commercial narrative film production. Yau Ching, Tammy Cheung and Anson Mak migrate between academia and independent film production. Thematically, Yau

Ching, Barbara Wong, and Anson Mak mediate the class struggle between modernity and postmodernity through interweaving multiple women's voices. All of the above five filmmakers demonstrate the multi-accented, multi-channelled polyphony in their works that not only unravels but also counters the capitalist-patriarchal complex prevalent in commercial films. My close reading of Mak's works demonstrates her the radical gestures and postcolonial critiques that mirror the situationists.

The sixth chapter examines the works by postsocialist female Chinese filmmakers (1977–) in the PRC and how their works sharply point out the incongruence between the state's agenda and the lived reality of Chinese women. I survey the works of literature on Chinese women's cinema and Chinese documentary film and discover that women's self-identity and participation in film are simultaneously shaped by socialist views of equality and postsocialist capitalism. I also argue that the construction of independent documentary filmmaking that overlaps the underground/sixth/urban generation is not unilateral but changes over time, place, and player. Rather than favouring one category, my research explores how women documentarian's unstable positionality destabilizes the male-centred perspective and category-centred approach. I closely analyze four films, *Out of the Phoenix Bridge* (dir. Li Hong, 1999)*, Railroad of Hope* (dir. Ning Ying, 2002)*, Care and Love* (dir. Ai Xiaoming, 2007) *and When the Bough Breaks* (dir. Ji Dan, 2011) to demonstrate that women documentarians place emphasis on the movement, migration, and circulation between the urban and the rural. If men portrayed in the Sixth Generation films are allowed to move to the city and become new subjects as youth subculturers, rock and rollers, or working-class labourers, women's (un)becoming often take place *during* the move. It is in this process that women recognize that the pedestal that they are put on under Mao's ideology could collapse anytime as a result of the unchanged patriarchal system and the lack of institutional support. By showing women travelling between rural and urban, home and work, these four filmmakers apply a road-trip-like aesthetic that recentres women's intersectional struggle, women's political consciousness, and feminist solidarity that destabilizes geographical and national confinements.

Sinophone Female Documentarians: Parallels and Heterogeneity

As my chapters demonstrate, “woman filmmaker” is not a fixed identity but rather a fluid and flexible one negotiating, resisting and changing the industry. By analyzing their career trajectories and their participation in either independent or semi-independent productions through the lens of production studies, my research indicates that female documentary practices in the three regions represent three different forces countering the contemporary mainstream Chinese-language cinema. My method speaks to Bill Nichols as he provides four aspects to be considered when approaching documentaries: an institutional framework, a community of practitioners, a corpus of texts, and a constituency of viewers (20–41, 2011). As I review the documentary films made by Sinophone female documentary filmmakers, I believe that these four angles cannot be treated independently. First, Sinophone female filmmakers build upon a corpus of texts that inspire them and make symbolic connections via intertextuality. Zero Chou consistently transports her subjects in her documentary films to her queer narrative films, breaking the boundary in documentary definition by having her subjects both naturally “appear” and “act” in film. Tai-li Hu reconnects a long-lost authorship characterized by the indigenous spirits, political struggle, and her self-reflexive aesthetics in her film *Stone Dream* (2004). Hu captured the story of the same protagonist Liu Bi-Chia, after 38 years of his first appearance in a Taiwanese documentary film in 1966 by bypassing the period when documentary productions were only made possible and were solely dominated by the state-owned broadcast channels. Yau Ching and Anson Mak both enrich their films by incorporating theoretical writings and tightening the connection between artistic expression and strategic activism. Their sharp critiques of the male gaze, patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism are embedded in their poeticism, creating clashes of romanticism and ruthless developmentalism. Ning Ying’s *Railroad of Hope* reminds of *Chronicle of a Summer* (dir. Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1961) by documenting the subject’s response to existential and philosophical questions. *Chronicle of a Summer* is a canonical work that lays the foundation for cinema vérité, and Ning’s film, perhaps a homage, similarly interweaves powerful presentation of truthful emotions at the specific moment of history. Second, Sinophone women’s documentary cannot be seen without considering the institutional framework. Independent or private filmmaking becomes a means of survival when lacking institutional support or state legitimization. PRC female

documentary filmmakers subsist on minor private funding. The middle-class Hong Kong female filmmakers have accumulated a certain amount of cultural and economic capital that enables their documentary-making practices in addition to institutional support. Tammy Cheung runs Visible Record, whereas other filmmakers participate in cross-disciplinary practices between narrative and documentary filmmaking (Ann Hui and Barbara Wong), or between academia and the visual art scene (Anson Mak and Yau Ching). Similarly, in Taiwan, Xiao-Di Wang, Yu-Shan Huang and Zero Chou are favourites of Public Television Service whereas Hu transitions from independent ethnographic filmmaking to winners of national funds. Third, when taking into account the constituency of viewers, the role of international film festivals chimes in. Brian Winston states that “Documentary is a minority audience taste” (Winston 1). As such, the constituency is cultivated through attending film festivals that set them apart from Hollywood commercial theatrical releases or tireless search for under-distributed materials. The lack of interest in distributors trickles down to inaccessibility that eventually leads to insufficient funding and monetary rewards for the filmmakers, tying back to the institutional analysis. While I did not intend to complete an audience analysis of Sinophone documentary films, my observations constitute a part of reception. My analysis highlights that as a viewer surveying Sinophone documentary films by women, I have obtained knowledge and inspiration learning the ways in which they creatively represent the actualities regardless of institutional constraints. This brings to Nichol’s fourth framework: a community of practitioners. PRC female directors engage the concepts of space, place and migration, foregrounding women’s space through movement. Hong Kong female directors canvas Hong Kong’s film scene with diverse approaches and styles, intellectually engaging political and social matters and defying a singular narrative. Taiwanese female directors root for the marginalized amidst the popular political climate in searching for a national identity. The increased visibility of women’s documentary films should undoubtedly pay tribute to the different generations of women working in politics and film festival circuits. It is a collective effort that shapes the community and the community, in turn, strengthens the culture.

There is one perspective that Bill Nichols overlooked: feminism. According to Waldman and Walker, “feminist documentary practices and studies have in fact looked for ways to avoid that illusionist pitfalls while at the same time acknowledging the political stakes in representing the images and voices of women who are not

professional actors and whose documentary representation seeks to build consensus with *actual* women for the audiences of these films" (11-12; emphasis mine). At the outset, I aim to decentralize the dominance of narrative cinema in Sinophone cinema scholarship, contest the cultural hegemony of China, and address the interlocking oppression enacted by patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism in the three regions. Women's documentary films not only provide another access to the world but effectively challenge men's aesthetics and preoccupations that have reigned historically. It is also important to reemphasize that women's cinema does not exist in a vacuum, but rather, it is a process of tireless gleaning, researching, curating, discourse constructing and dismantling by women educators, curators, film and video makers. Julia Lesage points out how scarce it was when it comes to locating women's films back in the 1970s in the states (266). It was the pioneers' efforts in shaping a counter-patriarchal discourse and generations of women's movements that enabled women's cinema. International women's cinemas also vary from country to country, subjecting to different relations between "political activism, money and cultural possibilities" (ibid. 267). The visibility of women's cinema also lies upon alternative exhibition outlets such as conferences and film festivals that are different from commercial theatrical releases. From production, exhibition, to distribution, women and feminist allies work together to ensure women's culture, vision, and creativity, long marginalized in history, are finally given the same opportunities to be seen, to grow and shine. Founded in 1993 in Taiwan, Women Make Waves Film Festival(WMWFF) is the first women's festival founded in Asia. WMWFF has developed to be a well-rounded organization that provides educational resources, networking, journal publishing and DVD distribution. Alongside the Taiwan International Documentary Festival (founded in 1998) and the Biennial Taiwan International Ethnographic Film Festival (also the first ethnographic film festival in Asia), these platforms have increased publicity and visibility for women's and documentary films alike. In Hong Kong, the long-standing visual art organizations have driven an ongoing pursuit for multimedia art excellence. Phoenix Cine Club (founded in 1974), Videotage (founded in 1985), leftist Video Power (founded in 1989) and Ying E Chi (founded in 1997) developed and have evolved into channels for independent film production and distribution. A dedicated group of cinephiles either maintain its niche, independent status or cross over to mainstream film and TV productions but these non-profit organizations elongate the screening life of documentary, experimental or multimedia works. In China, in spite of official crackdowns, underground film festivals (such as Beijing independent

film festivals), film clubs, private screenings and even pirate videos became important venues for circulation. In Sinophone female documentarian's practices, documentary participants (filmmaker, subject, participant) are not viewed in positions of opposition, taking advantage or erasing each other's subjectivity. Rather, they work together to challenge dominant discourses and to generate new queries for film critiques through dynamic and constructive conversation.

As documentary film develops with social science studies and political movements, its marginality and indispensability ironically persist. In spite of limited visibility and circulation, documentary films subsist on national funding and educational releases thanks to university instructors and non-profit distributors who recognize the significance of them (Lesage 267–269). Unfortunately, my dissertation is not able to review all the documentary films by women in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the PRC. There is also a dire need to investigate diasporic and transnational documentary films directed or co-directed by women. Here, I turn to my final remarks. During the initial stage of this project, I intended to bring attention to how female documentarians as a whole signal a call to urgently replace Chinese documentary film as a category by Sinophone documentary film. The convergence of documentary films in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the PRC through CNEX (that stands for Chinese Next) cautions us to beware of both internal and external processes of minoritization. Moreover, Chinese film studies have long privileged male directors and their narrative films. Global and intellectual attention has been given to new wave male directors, both ideologically and artistically, engaging the world with the mesmerizing stories previously inhibited due to the political turmoils. If feminist film theory has developed to provide critical insights into male-dominance and West-centrism in narrative cinema, contemporary documentary films contribute to production studies, feminist film theory and documentary studies for they embody an extremely minoritized form or expression. As noted by Foucault:

> Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it […]. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart. (340)

To some extent, the actualities presented in documentary work clearly to tackle social and political issues without having to jump through hoops in the representation vs. reality debate in narrative cinema. Sinophone women's documentaries have existed in the margins. Yet, Sinophone female documentarians' radical resistance reside in both their works and their mode of production, which foregrounds the periphery as the site in which the place-based and community-based stories and identities are shaped and told.

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Appendix.

A List of Documentary Female Filmmakers and Their Filmography

English Name	Chinese Characters	Filmography	Country/ Region
Ai, Xiaoming	艾曉明	*White Ribbon*/ 白絲帶 (2004) *Vagina Monologues*/ 陰道獨白 (2004) - Co-director *Painting for the Revolution: The Peasant Painters of Hu County* (2005) *Taishi Village*/ 太石村 (2005) *What are you doing with the Camera* (2006) *Epic of Central Plains* (2006) *People's Representative Yao* (2006) *The Garden of Heaven*/ 天堂花園 (2007) - Co-director *Care and Love*/ 關愛之家 (2007) *The Train to My Hometown* (2008) - Co-director *Our Children*/ 我們的娃娃 (2009) *Why Are Flowers So Red?*/ 花兒為什麼這樣紅 (2010) *Jiabiangou Elegy: Life and Death of the Rightists*/ 夾邊溝祭事 (2017)	PRC
Feng, Yan	馮豔	*Dreams of Changjiang*/ 長江之夢 (1997) *Bingai*/ 秉愛 (2007) *Daughters of the River* (2020)	PRC

English Name	Chinese Characters	Filmography	Country/ Region
Guo, Xiaolu	郭小櫓	*Far and Near* (documentary short, 2003) *The Concrete Revolution* (2004) *We Went to Wonderland* (2008, UK) *Once Upon a Time a Proletarian* (2009, UK/China) *Late at Night* (2013) *Five Men and A Caravaggio* (2018, UK)	PRC (diaspora)
Ji, Dan	季丹	*Japanese Women After WWII in China*/ 日本战后残留妇女在中国 (1998) *The Elderly*/ 老人们 (1999) *Gongbo's Happy Life*/ 贡布的幸福生活 (1999) *Wellspring*/ 在一起的时光(2003) *Spirit Home/ 地上流云* (2006) *Dream of the Empty City/ 空城一梦* (2008) *Spiral Staircase of Harbin/ 哈尔滨·回旋阶梯* (2008) *When the Bough Breaks/ 危巢(2011)*	PRC
Liu, Xiaojin	刘晓津	尋找眼鏡蛇	PRC
Li, Hong	李紅	*Out of Phoenix Bridge/ 回到鳳凰橋* (1997) *Dancing with Myself*/ 和自己跳舞 (2002)	PRC
Li, Yu	李玉	姐姐 (1996) 守望 (1997) 光榮與夢想 (1998)	PRC
Ning, Ying	寧瀛	*Railroad of Hope*/ 希望之旅 (2002)	PRC

English Name	Chinese Characters	Filmography	Country/ Region
Shi Tou	石頭	*Living Buddhas*/ 活佛 (2001) *Looking for a Job in the City*/ 進城打工 (2003) *Dyke March*/ 女同志遊行日 (2004) *Women Fifty Minutes*/ 女人五十分鐘 (2006, Co-directed with Ming Ming) *Wenda Gu: Art, Politics, Life, Sexuality*/ 古文達訪談：藝術、政治、人生、性傾向 (2005) *We Want to Get Married*/ 我們要結婚 (2007)	PRC
Tang, Danhong	唐丹鴻	*Nightingale, Not the Only Voice*/ 夜鶯不是惟一的歌喉 (2000)	PRC
Yang, Lina	楊荔鈉	*Old Man*/ 老頭 (1999) *Home Video*/ 家庭錄像帶 (2001) *My Neighbors on Japanese Devils*/ 我的鄰居說鬼子 (2007) *The Love of Mr. An*/ 老安的愛情 (2008) *Wild Grass*/ 野草 (2009)	PRC
Ying, Weiwei	英為為	*The Box*/ 盒子 (2001)	PRC
Zou, Xueping	鄒雪平	*The Starving Village*/ 飢餓的村子 (2010) *Satiated Village*/ 吃飽的村子 (2011) 孩子的村子	PRC
Ann Hui	許鞍華	*Where Are You Going?* (1992) *As Time Gores By*/ 去日苦多 (1996, Co-directed with 崔允信)	Hong Kong

English Name	Chinese Characters	Filmography	Country/ Region
Chan, Angie	陳安琪	*The Visit*/ 探訪 (1978) *This Darling Life*/ 愛與狗同行 (2008) *One Three Three Lives*/ 三生三世聶華苓 (2012) *I've Got the Blues* (2017)	Hong Kong
Cheung, Tammy	張虹	*Invisible Women*/ 看不見的女人 (1999) *Secondary School*/ 中學 (2002) *Rice Distribution*/ 平安米 (2003) *Moving*/ 搬屋 (2003) *July*/ 七月 (2004) *Speaking Up*/ 問(2005) *Village Middle School*/ 農村初中 (2006) *Speaking Up 2*/ 問—大陸小學 (2007) *Election*/ 選舉 (2008)	Hong Kong
Mak, Hoi-shan (Anson)	麥海珊	我略知關於她們的二三事 (1991; short) *Look! Documentary…*/ 玩玩紀錄片 (1993) *Invisible Bodies (and so the cities)* (2001) 佇著良久 (2004) *One-way Street on a Turntable*/ 唱片上的單行道 (2007) *On the Edge of a Floating City*/ 在浮城的角落唱首歌 (2014) *Fear(less) and Dear*/ 誠遑不誠恐 (2020)	Hong Kong
Tsang, Tsui Shan (Jessey)	曾翠珊	*Flowing Stories*/ 河上變村 (2014)	Hong Kong

English Name	Chinese Characters	Filmography	Country/ Region
Wang, Barbara	黃真真	*Women's Private Parts/* 女人那話兒 (2001) *Women's Private Parts 2/* 男人這東西 (2002)	Hong Kong
Wei, Shiyu	魏時煜	*Storm under the Sun*/ 紅日風暴 (2011, Co-directed with Peng Xiaolian) *Golden Gate Girls*/ 金門銀光夢(2013)	Hong Kong
Yang, Ruby	楊紫燁	風雨故園 *The Blood of Yingzhou District*/ 潁州的孩子 (2006) *My Voice, My Life*/ 爭氣 (2014)	Hong Kong (diaspora)
Yau, Ching	游靜	*Is there anything specific you want me to tell you about?* (1991) *Ideal Nation/Flow/Video Letters*/ 理想家國/流/錄像書簡 1-2 (1993; shorts) *Diasporama: Dead Air*/ 另起爐灶之耳仔痛 (1997) 白雪仙的妹妹 (1999; short) *Let's Love Hong Kong*/ 好郁 (2002) *We are Alive* (2010)	Hong Kong
Chiang, Hsiu-Chiung [Jiang Xiuqiong]	姜秀瓊	ㄋㄟˇㄋㄟˇ (2004; short) 乘著光影旅行 (2008) *The Further End Awaits* (2014)	Taiwan

English Name	Chinese Characters	Filmography	Country/ Region
Chien, Wei-Ssu	簡偉斯	*Echo with Women's Voices: Their Involvement in Political Movement*/ 回首來時路 (1997) 台灣女性主義詩人之先驅—陳秀喜 (1999) 馬祖舞影 (1999-2000, a collaborative work with Zero Chou) 玩布的姊妹 (2004) *Viva Tonal*/ 跳舞時代 (2004, Co-directed with Guo, Chen-ti)	Taiwan
Chou, Zero	周美玲	*Floating Island*/ 流離島影 (2000) *Corner's*/ 私角落 (2001) *Poles Extremity*/ 極端寶島 (2002) *Dark Vision*/ 黑暗視界 (2005)	Taiwan
Chu, Michelle	朱詩倩	兩個女生 (1998) 暑假 (2000) 台北發的南下尾班車 (2001, Co-directed with Yang, Li-Chou) 紀念日 (2002) 飄浪之女 (2002) 新宿駅，東口以東 (2003)	Taiwan
Ho, Chau-ti	賀照緹	*Country Road*/ 縣道 184 之東 (2001) *The Gangster's God*/ 炸神明 (2006) *Wandering Island*/ 穿在中途島 (2009） *My Fancy High Heels*/ 我愛高跟鞋 (2010) *Sock'n'Roll*/ 台灣黑狗兄/(2013)	Taiwan

English Name	Chinese Characters	Filmography	Country/ Region
Hu, Tai-li	胡台麗	*Songs of Pasta'ay*/ 矮人祭之歌(1988) *Voices of Orchid Island*/ 蘭嶼觀點 (1993) *Passing Through My Mother-in law's Village*/ 穿過婆家村 (1998) *Sounds of Love and Sorrow*/ 愛戀排灣笛 (2000) *Stone Dream*/ 石頭夢 (2004) *Returning Souls*/ 讓靈魂回家 (2012)	Taiwan
Huang, Yu-Shan	黃玉珊	*Ju Ming*/ 朱銘 (1982) *Letters from Taipei*/ 四季如春的台北 (1983) *The Painting of A-Sun*/ 陽光畫家吳炫三 (1984; 16mm) *Women Who Changed Taiwan*/ 旋轉乾坤的台灣女性 (1993) *The Song of Chatian Mountain*/ 插天山之歌 (2007)	Taiwan
Tseng, Wen-Chen	曾文珍	心窗 (1991) 我的回家作業 (1998) 春天—許金玉的故事 (2002)	Taiwan
Wu, Wuna	吳汰紝	*Echo*/ 快不快樂四人行 (2002) *Farewell 1999*/ 一九九九! (2003) *C*/ 囍 (2005) *Transfer*/ 夢遊境 (2006) *The Character*/ 彼岸花 (2007) *The Moonland*/月夢土 (2007) *Pass By*/ 我所經過的誰的等待 (2007) *Let's Fall in Love*/ 尋情歷險記 (2008) 日落大夢 (2011)	Taiwan