

行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫  成果報告  
 期中進度報告

台灣電影影像風格與產製環境之趨勢研究，1947-2006

計畫類別： 個別型計畫  整合型計畫

計畫編號：NSC 96-2412-H-004-012

執行期間： 96 年 8 月 1 日至 97 年 7 月 31 日

計畫主持人：陳儒修

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計畫參與人員： 王玉燕、葉軒晨、邱詩淳

成果報告類型(依經費核定清單規定繳交)： 精簡報告  完整報告

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執行單位：政大廣電系

中 華 民 國 97 年 10 月 28 日

# 台灣電影影像風格與產製環境之趨勢研究，1947-2006

研究團隊：陳儒修、王玉燕、葉軒晨、邱詩淳

## 中文摘要

本研究在於分析整理台灣類型電影的說故事模式，也就是就影片的人物類型功能，以及敘事結構慣性，藉此統整並加以分類。在這一年的計畫執行中，第一階段以政宣片為研究主題，這部份的研究成果以期中報告的形式，發表於中華傳播學會的年會上。第二階段延續之前的研究模式，改以瓊瑤愛情文藝片為研究對象，同樣整理出該類型影片之人物類型與敘述結構。預期類似的研究應可繼續進行，重新檢視這些尚被忽視的影片之代表意義，也為台灣電影史研究留下記錄。

關鍵詞：台灣電影、政宣影片、瓊瑤、愛情文藝片、敘述結構

## Abstract

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the genre films of Taiwan cinema and explore their character functions and narrative structures. Within the span of one-year study, we analyze two kinds of genres: the political propaganda films and romantic films of Qiong-Yao. The first part of study results (on the political propaganda films) have been presented in the annual meeting of the Chinese Communication Society in mid-2008. The second part continues the model set up by the previous study and examines films adopted from Qiong-Yao's popular romance novel. The significance of this project is twofold: to study those neglected films and to leave some records on the history of Taiwan cinema. It is the wish from the study group that the same kind of study should continue.

Keywords: Taiwan cinema, political propaganda films, Qiong-Yao, Romantic films, Narrative structure

計畫編號：NSC 96-2412-H-004-012

執行期間：96年8月1日至97年7月31日

## 前言：

本研究接續上半年對於政宣片的分析整理，選定瓊瑤愛情文藝片為分析樣本。在上半年的研究計畫中，我們分析政宣片的人物類型與敘述結構，將此類型影片分為兩大類，主要依據在於影片主題是依據史實開展，或者是杜撰產生，兩者可以說是同中有異，異中有同。這部份的研究成果並於今年（2008）的中華傳播學會的年會上，以 panel 的形式發表。

下半年分析整理瓊瑤影片，在密集看片討論之後，我們選定下列八部影片為研究個案：窗外(1963)、啞女情深(1965)、浪花(1973)、月朦朧烏朦朧(1977)、一顆紅豆(1978)、金盞花(1979)、聚散兩依依(1980)、卻上心頭(1981)。八部影片涵蓋不同的瓊瑤作品分期，主題與內容亦各具代表性。

## 研究結果與討論：

以下就人物類型與敘述結構提出簡要說明——

### 一、人物類型：

#### 1. 人物類型說明：

本研究依循普洛普在《民間故事形態學》的人物角色分類，將其應用在瓊瑤電影研究當中，研究結果發現，可將瓊瑤電影中的人物類型大致分為七大類，分別是女主角、男主角、競爭者、妨礙者、協助者、媒介以及麻煩。以下將就此七大人物類型略做說明：

- A. 女主角：性別皆為面容姣好的女性，其目的在於找尋真愛，在劇情一開始時，就會遇見命中註定的愛人。女主角與男主角兩人互相愛慕，然而其愛情會面臨某些考驗，阻礙兩人關係順利發展，如雙方家庭從中阻撓，抑或有第三者介入，致使男女主角的感情遭致危機。
- B. 男主角：有能力滿足主角對愛的匱乏的角色，其目標在追求與女主角的完滿愛情。
- C. 競爭者：意圖滿足女主角或男主角愛的匱乏，卻苦無能力的角色，橫亙在男女主角的愛情關係中，目的在與男女主角競爭其中一方的愛情。
- D. 妨礙者：妨礙女、男主角相愛的角色，破壞或阻礙男女主角的愛情關係，其動機多元，可能是愛情的因素，或是諸如社會價值觀、社會背景等其他事件。
- E. 協助者：支持男女主角相愛的角色，協助男女主角情感的建立，具體促進雙方愛情關係的完成。
- F. 媒介：促使女、男主角相遇的角色或物件，角色大部份可能是男、女主角雙方的家人與朋友。
- G. 麻煩：製造非關主角愛情的問題，可能是其他角色的愛情問題，亦可能是男、女主角雙方的家庭問題。

#### 2. 個別影片人物類型代表：

(第一類型影片)

電影名稱 人物類型	金盞花	月朦朧鳥朦朧	浪花		卻上心頭
女主角	韓佩吟	劉靈姍	戴曉研	秦雨秋	夏迎藍
男主角	趙自耕	韋鵬飛	賀子健	賀俊之	蕭人奇
競爭者	庾頌超	邵卓昇			黎之偉
妨礙者	慕愛蓮	裴欣桐	賀母	賀母	黎之偉
協助者	庾頌超	邵卓昇	秦秋雨	戴曉研	張韶青
媒介	趙纖纖	韋楚楚	晝	晝	電梯
麻煩	林維珍	路超	賀佩柔	賀佩柔	黎之偉

(第二類型影片)

電影名稱 人物類型	一顆紅豆	聚散兩依依	窗外	啞女情深
女主角	夏初蕾	賀盼雲	江雁容	方依依
男主角	梁志文	高寒	康南	靜言
競爭者	梁志中	鍾可慧	立維	同居女子
妨礙者	梁父?	可慧爸媽	康南之友、江母	壞大嫂
協助者	梁志秀	狗店	江爸爸	好婆婆
麻煩		死丈夫		
媒介		倩雲?	江的同學	傭人

二、基本敘述結構：

(原則上，六段敘述結構屬於單一線性發展，然而在劇情規劃上，3、4、5等敘述功能會在次序上略有變化或沒有全部出現。)

1. 主角登場
2. 相遇(媒介)
3. 競爭(男主角和競爭者的角力。競爭者必定競爭失敗，失敗後，競爭功能淡化，轉為其他功能)
4. 阻礙(妨礙者出現，考驗男、女主角的愛情，主角們的愛情必通過考驗)
5. 麻煩(非關男、女主角愛情問題的麻煩出現，以其他角色為主要描寫對象)
6. 收場(沒有開放式結局。兩種可能性：第一類型：愛情問題及其他雜事不再困擾男、女主角，圓滿結局；第二類型：男女主角無法結合，悲劇結束。)

三、個別影片劇情結構舉證：

1. 金盞花：

- A. 韓佩吟登場。

- B. 趙自耕之女趙纖纖需要家教，於是找到韓佩吟，兩人相遇。
- C. 庾頌超出現，有意追求韓佩吟，趙自耕與庾頌超相互競爭，但韓佩吟心在趙自耕身上，庾頌超競爭角色退場，另尋他愛，並轉為支持韓佩吟與趙自耕在一起。
- D. 慕愛蓮現身，向韓佩吟嗆聲，有意阻礙其兩人相愛，但終究不敵愛情魔力，兩人化解誤會，更加深愛對方。此後，兩人愛情問題不再出現。
- E. 庾頌超與林維珍過去的一段情，牽扯到現在庾頌超與趙纖纖的幸福，庾頌超向韓佩吟求助，韓佩吟與趙自耕合力解決其麻煩。
- F. 愛情問題及麻煩清除，韓佩吟與趙自耕愛的大結局。

## 2. 月朦朧鳥朦朧：

- A. 劉靈姍登場。
- B. 因劉靈姍管教韋鵬飛之女韋楚楚，於是促成兩人相遇。
- C. 一直喜歡著劉靈姍的邵卓昇出現，劉靈姍對他毫無意思，她心思已在韋鵬飛的身上，邵卓昇知難而退，另尋他愛，並轉為支持劉靈姍與韋鵬飛在一起。
- D. 裴欣桐出現，對劉靈姍造成威脅，劉靈姍因害怕而對韋鵬飛多次誤解，但終究解除誤會，兩人的愛情通過考驗。
- E. 路超與裴欣桐的愛情問題，讓裴欣桐自殺，劉靈姍和韋鵬飛出現幫助了裴欣桐渡過難關，麻煩除去。
- F. 愛情問題及麻煩清除，劉靈姍和韋鵬飛愛的大結局。

## 3. 浪花：

- A. 戴曉研登場。  
秦雨秋登場。
- B. 因畫而使戴曉研、賀子健兩人相遇。  
因畫而使秦雨秋、賀俊之兩人相遇。
- C. 母親的反對，使賀佩柔與江葦的愛情出現危機，賀子健出現幫助兩人愛情渡過難關，麻煩除去。  
反對，使賀佩柔與江葦的愛情出現危機，賀俊之出現幫助兩人愛情渡過難關，麻煩除去。
- D. 賀母出現，反對戴曉研、賀子健兩人相愛，但終究排去除賀母此一障礙，兩人的愛情通過考驗。  
賀母出現，反對秦雨秋、賀俊之兩人相愛，但終究排去除賀母此一障礙，兩人的愛情通過考驗。
- E. 愛情問題及麻煩清除，戴曉研和賀子健愛的大結局。  
愛情問題及麻煩清除，秦雨秋和賀俊之愛的大結局。

## 4. 卻上心頭：

- A. 夏迎藍登場。
- B. 因蕭人奇掉了文件，讓他和夏迎藍同搭一台電梯，於是兩人相遇。
- C. 黎人偉出現，刻意破壞蕭人奇與夏迎藍的感情，彼此多次的誤解對方，但終究解除誤

會，兩人的愛情通過考驗。

- D. 黎人偉的愛情問題，由張韶青解決，黎人偉此一麻煩除去。
- E. 愛情問題及麻煩清除，蕭人奇與夏迎藍愛的大結局。

#### 5. 一顆紅豆：

- A. 梁志文、梁志中與夏初蕾與友人們一同在河邊遊玩。(主角登場)
- B. 夏初蕾與梁志中交往，兩人在交往過程中衝突不斷，使初蕾找志文抒發心中哀怨，也造成志中與志文兄弟鬩牆。
- C. 志中向初蕾提議分手，志文因此對初蕾呵護有加，但初蕾心情未定，不敢接受志文的感情，因此志文心情低落、決意離開台灣。
- D. 初蕾發現敬愛的父親竟然有婚外情，而情婦的女兒竟然與志中在一起，讓初蕾失控地跳河自殺，隨後趕來的志文也隨之跳下，企圖拯救她。
- E. (第二類型結局) 志文被機器砸傷而變成植物人，初蕾醒來後才明白志文對她的愛，初蕾在躺著一動也不動的致文面前歇斯迪里地告白，一滴淚從志文的眼角流下。

#### 6. 聚散兩依依：

- A. 蘇盼雲與高寒在寵物店邂逅，高寒將小狗讓給盼雲。再次見到盼雲，是這位名叫高寒的年輕人認識鐘可慧以後的事情。
- B. 高寒是樂團主唱。一次同學聚會上，高寒認識了鐘可慧並與其一同參加聚會，因而高寒又一次見到蘇盼雲，發現盼雲原來是可慧的小孀，盼雲的丈夫兩年前在一場車禍中遇難。
- C. 盼雲與高寒情投意合，但盼雲發現可慧愛著高寒時，盼雲選擇退讓並封閉自己的感情，但高寒卻更加堅定的追求盼雲。
- D. 可慧得知高寒與盼雲的感情，流著眼淚衝上大街而被迎面疾駛而來的汽車撞成重傷。可慧的失憶症讓盼雲選擇退讓，也讓高寒因同情而留在可慧身邊。盼雲因此搬回娘家，嫁給醫生楚志，隨楚志移居美國。
- E. 兩年後，高寒發現可慧偽裝失憶的手段，因此離開鐘家，放棄音樂，做了一名實習醫生。高寒在醫院病房偶然再次遇見盼雲，在盼雲即將登機飛赴美國時，終於挽留住了盼雲。

#### 7. 窗外

- A. 江雁容是數理科目不佳的文學才女，父母對她態度嚴厲。學校老師康南擔任江雁容班上的導師，他們透過週記的往返，逐漸發展出男女之情。
- B. 學校傳出兩人的流言蜚語，康南因兩人年紀差距與師生倫理的違常，兩人決心不再來往。
- C. 康南被學校解聘，加上雁容大學聯考落榜，因此服毒自殺。雁容被搭救醒來後，向母親坦白了與康南的情事，並請求母親同意她與康南結婚。母親佯作同意這樁婚事，但要求他們一年不能見面，並介紹江父的學生李立維與雁容相識。
- D. 雁容仍暗地與康南會面，江母發現報警控告康南勾引少女，康南因此又被省立女中解聘，被迫離開臺北到南部鄉村學校任教。

E. (第二類型結局)雁容與李立維結婚，因不堪丈夫凌辱提出離婚，並到南部找尋康南。校長羅亞文不讓雁容再打擾他的生活，雁容見到康南時，康南精神萎靡、形同枯槁，他不再是雁容記憶中的康南。

## 8. 啞女情深

- A. 靜言和依依為夫妻，儘管親友均欺負依依聾啞，但兩人感情仍然甚篤，並育有和依依一樣聾啞的女兒雪兒。
- B. 依依再懷第二胎時，靜言強迫依依墮胎，依依抗拒，靜言於是拋妻出走。
- C. 依依獨自一人努力持家，親友逐漸由排斥轉變為支持、喜愛依依。
- D. 靜言在外另結交女人，依依屢次寫家書給靜言，但被靜言的女友攔截。
- E. (第二類型結局)十年後，依依病危，其女雪兒寫信求父親靜言回家，當他趕回家時，依依卻已撒手人寰。

## 研究小結：

依據本研究分析，瓊瑤電影中的人物類型與敘述結構有其基本公式。在人物類型部分，可以改變普洛普的分類法，將主要人物分為七大類，大致相符。在敘述結構部分，依照敘述功能的出現次序，可以分為五個或六個段落。另就結局而言，由於瓊瑤電影皆為封閉式結構，故可以整理出兩種收場，分別為男女主角結合的圓滿結局，另外則是有一方發生不幸或意外事件，導致兩人終究無法結合。

以下為附件：

1. 參與國際會議心得報告
2. 所發表之論文

## 出席國際學術會議心得報告

計畫編號	96-2412-H-004-012
計畫名稱	台灣電影影像風格與產製環境之趨勢研究，1947-2006
出國人員姓名 服務機關及職稱	陳儒修，政大廣電系副教授
會議時間地點	2008/6/28-29, 日本仙台
會議名稱	2008 Cultural Typhoon in Sendai
發表論文題目	<b>Being in the Emptiness: on the visual phantasmagoria in Tsai Ming-Liang's Taipei</b>

### 一、參加會議經過

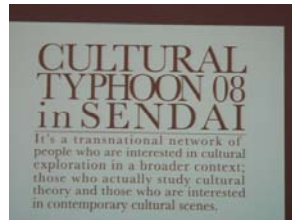
「文化颱風」國際學術研討會自從 2003 年創辦以來，每年總吸引五、六百位來自世界各地的文化研究學者參加。它主要是由日本各地的大學承辦，會議名稱用上「颱風」這樣的字眼，比喻這個研討會如同颱風一樣，行蹤與方向不定，所以它每年論流在日本不同的城市舉辦，有沖繩、名古屋、大阪、東京，以及 2008 年的仙台等，而每年的主題也不一樣，今年的主題是「空・間」。一方面反映主辦城市仙台的都市性格：仙台不大不小，不古也不新。不如東京、大阪等世界型的城市，卻是日本東北地方最大的城市；另一方面，仙台不如京都具有歷史久遠的文化根基，卻也是幕府時代以來重要的領地。簡言之，仙台可以說是處於日本邁向現代化與全球化的「夾縫」「之間」。而抽象概念的「空・間」，可以說是人文地理學近年來的重要研究課題，也就是面對虛擬影像與實境體驗再也難分難捨的數位化時代，該如何重新看待「空」（夾縫）與「間」（之間）這類的空間性，從而反思諸如 place 與 space 等概念。

因為上述原因，今年的會議場址選在仙台市 Sendai Mediatheque（仙台媒體館），這棟建築物是由伊東豐雄設計完成，主要功能為圖書館、多媒體中心、以及大小不等的展示空間。它的外貌是透明玻璃帷幕，很像一個個立方體積木堆砌而成，又像是一個巨大的透明方盒子。室內有 13 根類似建構主義式的圓柱體，貫穿整個樓層，作為電梯與逃生梯的空間。整體而言，整個建築體打破實體虛體、室內室外與樓層間間隔，使用的材料讓這個媒體中心呈現開放有機性，令人無法想像這是一間圖書館。



會場上投影出一段文字，說明「文化颱風」的特性：





It is a transnational network of people who are interested in cultural exploration in a broader context; those who actually study cultural theory and those who are interested in contemporary cultural scenes.

說明了本研討會的文化研究學術特性：它並沒有一般嚴謹的學術會議規範，所著重的在於文化景觀的探索，例如今年就有一位來自克羅埃西亞學者的報告主題是關於他所居住的城市 Zagreb 裡一個人工湖的命運。而在這段文字裡面強調文化理論的鑽研探討，並且使用‘actually’這樣的字眼，令人印象深刻。

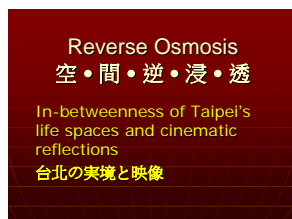
在兩天（6月28-29日）的議程裡，同時有五場 panel 在進行，主題從實體的都市空間（如貧民窟與老舊社區的活化改造），到文學與藝術裡的空間都有。雖然主辦國為日本，還是有超過一半以上的場次是以英文發言。而大會的重頭戲之一，是第一天下午的主題講座，請到了 Michael HARDT（《帝國》作者之一）等人。這場的主題是“Reorganization of working condition under global situation and Multitude”，似乎在向即將於北海道洞爺湖舉辦的 G8 高峰會議喊話。



其中一位發言的 Keiko KAIZUMA（海妻徑子），從女性立場說明日本的勞動市場是如何地對女性勞動力視而不見，甚至在各種統計數據上，不管是就業、待業或失業的資料上，如何地被忽略甚而被歧視。Michael HARDT 則就全球化勞動市場中，服務業興起的狀況，重新省思馬克思提出的生產與再生產的勞動關係，以及商品的交換價值與象徵價值等意義的變遷。兩者的發言都可轉而思索台灣當前的狀況。

## 二、與會心得

本組 panel 被排在第二天下午最後一個時段（3:40-5:40），觀眾不多，然五位發表人皆全程以英文順利把論文宣讀完畢，並以英文版的簡報頭影片補助說明（主要是展示相關影像與圖片）。報告後並與觀眾有問答互動。



本人報告主題為：**Being in the Emptiness: on the visual phantasmagoria in Tsai Ming-Liang's Taipei**，主要在探討蔡明亮電影中的台北是如何地被「鬼魅化」，而形成與我們日常生活經驗感受不一樣的台北影像呈現。影片文本有：青少年哪吒、愛情萬歲、河流、天橋不見了、不

散與天邊一朵雲等。

<p>Being in the Emptiness: on the Visual Phantasmagoria in Tsai Ming-Liang's Taipei</p> <p>Ru-Shou Robert Chen Associate Professor National Chengchi University</p>	<p>Four phases of observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observe the characters in film: – <i>Rebels of the Neo God, Vive L'Amour</i></li><li>• Show the collective behavior of city dwellers: – <i>The River, The Hole, The Skywalk is Gone</i></li><li>• Observe the action being with Tsai for quite a long time: – <i>What Time Is It There, Goodbye Dragon Inn, The Wayward Cloud</i></li><li>• Observe himself: – <i>I Don't Want to Sleep Alone</i></li></ul>	<p>Purpose of the talk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To examine the role of urbanity in Tsai's films</li><li>• To reflect on the visual phantasmagoria of Taipei and the effects on its denizen</li><li>• To excavate the remnants of human relations among his characters</li><li>• To diagnose the breakdown of human communications from opening sequences</li></ul>
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整體而言，「文化颶風」國際學術研討會提供了一個文化研究理論與實務交流的理想平台，各種議題皆可以在此找到對話的對象，而參與者也可以由此得知各地的文化研究所關注的角度。這次台灣去的若干學生與研究者把屬於台灣的在地文化議題帶到會場，相信也會把其他地區的議題帶回台灣散播發揚，後續的相互影響值得期待。

Panel presentation for the Cultural Typhoon 2008 in Sendai, Japan

Panel theme: Reverse Osmosis: In-betweenness of Taipei's life spaces and cinematic reflections

Presentation topic:

**Being in the Emptiness: on the visual phantasmagoria in Tsai Ming-Liang's Taipei**

**By Ru-Shou Robert Chen**

(Slide 1)

Tsai Ming-Liang once said that there are two subjects evolving in his films. The first subject, as the audience can easily recognize, is Taipei itself, the city he has been living since 1977. Starting from his first film, *Rebels of the Neon God* (1992), Tsai has documented Taipei's metropolis—about its environment and its changes.

The second subject is both personal and private, which is his relationship with himself.

(Slide 2 and 3)

Film to him acts as a self-observation tool through which he locates his position in Taipei, as an overseas student coming from Malaysia. Every time he makes a film, it is an attempt at dialogue with himself. His very last film *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (2006) best exemplifies the second subject. The film is not only his first film shot in Malaysia, after doing 7 features and 1 short in Taiwan, but also his personal meditation on Malaysian culture and politics, as if updating his profound childhood memories he had in Kuching, a small town in Malaysia. (This is will be the topic for the next semester. I will skip it here.)

The purpose of my talk will mainly focus on the first subject, i.e., Tsai Ming-Liang's portrayal of Taipei in his previous films. There are four issues I would like to address:

- To examine the role of urbanity in Tsai's films
- To reflect on the visual phantasmagoria of Taipei and the effects on its denizen
- To excavate the remnants of human relations among his characters
- To diagnose the breakdown of human communications from opening sequences (Slide 4)

Tsai Ming-Liang was described as “a poet of solitude”. As a matter of fact, he is not lonely because he is an outsider. His loneliness comes from his feeling about Taipei. He wants to show Taipei as he saw it. And he wants to show Taipei as a lonely city.

(Slide 5)

From the first day he arrived in Taiwan till now, he has witnessed drastic changes of Taiwan in terms of political deregulation and economic prosperity. However, social progress does not guarantee personal happiness.

In his early days, he had a habit of walking around “Ximeng Ting” (West Gate District), used to be the theatre district in Taipei. This is also the area where youngsters of Taipei gather to have fun. Tsai Ming-Liang finds out that these young men are actually bored and spending their time and life aimlessly. This is the main subject in his first film, *Rebels of the Neon God*. (Slide 6)

Those young men love to ride motorcycles around Taipei. So in the film Tsai uses a long sequence showing them passing through different parts of Taipei as if we the audience is given a tour of Taipei. However, the scenery of Taipei is far from beautiful. Tsai showed the construction site of the Taipei MRT railway, once ridiculed as the most expensive MRT in the world, and old districts of Taipei.

In addition to showing the youth doing nothing and wasting their lives, Tsai’s camera also captures the banality of everyday life. (Slide 7) In all of his films he spent many times showing characters eating. But two strange phenomena struck the audience, especially for those who never see his films before. One is that they rarely sit and eat together. It is not like Hou Hsiao-Hsien’s movies in which everyone sits around the table and eats (for instance, *City of Sadness*). Tsai never shows that. Secondly, even if they eat together, they never talk to each other. This brings up another topic I am going to discuss later, namely, the breakdown of human communication. And because his camera shot is very long, the audience is forced to watch, such as the scene from *The River*, in which 苗天 eats his breakfast for a long time. It is indeed an uncanny feeling.

The next subject is city in the film. This is the opening scene from Tsai’s short film, *The Skywalk Is Gone*. (Slide 8) The main character, 湘琪, stands there and watches the LCD screen for more than 3 minutes. Tsai seems to imply that she was shocked to see such a huge screen hanging above the department store building. Both the LCD screen and the department store, one might say, are products of modernity. On the other hand, the character is portrayed in the film as a traveler who just comes back from Paris. And suddenly she finds out that she does not recognize Taipei anymore. It is as if the city has a life of its own. It keeps on changing and transforming. One day there is a skywalk and another day the skywalk is gone! City just keeps on changing.

(Slide 9) On the other hand, because the city is in a constant transformation, Taipei is therefore like a forever construction site. This is another characteristic of Tsai's Taipei. The construction site appears in all of his films.

For all the above reasons, such as the breakdown of human communication, city in a constant change, etc., the denizens and their state of minds are actually influenced by them. (Slide 10) Tsai's characters are always longing for something which they are not so sure of. It is as if they want to have someone company, or, maybe a sexual gratification. The truth is that they might have sex, but they are not happy anyway. So at the end of *Vive L'Amour*, the female character sits there and cries nonstop for 3 minutes.

Here are two examples of the breakdown of human communication. The first one is the opening scene of *Rebels of the Neon God*. It begins with an empty public phone booth. Two youngsters initially ran into it to avoid the rain. They then vandalize the machine and take away coins inside it. It signifies that there is no more communication for characters from now on. (Slide 11)

And another example is from *Vive L'Amour*. The film starts with a close up shot of a key hanging on a lock outside an empty apartment. The key is soon taken away by 李康生 who will sneak into the apartment to do all sorts of strange things. It is ironic that this apartment is supposedly to be adopted into someone else's home. But all the characters who frequent this apartment never think this way. They use it for taking a bath, sleeping, and making love. After they are done and they are gone. They never invest any feeling in this apartment. (Slide 12)

Water brings life and death. It is like a double-edge sword, which it kills and cures. But in Tsai's films, water is a destructive force. The followings are three examples.

(Slide 13) In *The River*, the director in film-within-film wants to use a dummy to play dead man, which does not work well. So 李康生 is persuaded to act as a dummy playing dead man. So he is more like a dead man than a dummy. But this stunt performance, Lee contracts a strange disease which paralyzes his neck throughout the film.

(Slide 14) In the same movie, the power of water is strong enough to destroy a family. Members of a family in the film stop communicating with each other to the degree

that the wife does not know her husband's room is leaking water until the very end.

(Slide 15) This is a scene from *The Wayward Cloud*. There is again a filmmaking within the film. And they are making a pornographic movie. The director pours water on characters making love, as if extinguishing the heat. But everything is so artificial and fake that the audience won't relate such a filmmaking process with the pornography we normally know. Tsai successfully exposes the ugly and unpleasant side of pornography. There is no visual pleasure to be found possibly to be found from such a setup of the scene.

(Slide 16 and 17) In sum, Tsai presents an incomplete and unknown Taipei in his films, even for those who live in Taipei for all their lives. He uses symbols to represent his notion of Taipei as a lonely city. And people are unhappy, etc. I think his films provide a unique opportunity for us to reflect our relation with the city.

**Being in the Emptiness:  
on the Visual  
Phantasmagoria in Tsai  
Ming-Liang's Taipei**

**Ru-Shou Robert Chen**

**Associate Professor**

**National Chengchi University**

# Two subjects in Tsai's films

- The environment and changes in Taipei
- Relationship with himself (self-observation)



# Four phases of observation

- Observe the characters in film:
  - *Rebels of the Neo God, Vive L'Amour*
- Show the collective behavior of city dwellers:
  - *The River, The Hole, The Skywalk is Gone*
- Observe the actors being with Tsai for quite a long time:
  - *What Time Is It There, Goodbye Dragon Inn, The Wayward Cloud*
- Observe himself:
  - *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone*

# Purpose of the talk

- To examine the role of urbanity in Tsai's films
- To reflect on the visual phantasmagoria of Taipei and the effects on its denizen
- To excavate the remnants of human relations among his characters
- To diagnose the breakdown of human communications from opening sequences

**I want to show my  
feelings about Taipei.**

**I want to show Taipei  
as a lonely city.**

# Bored and alienated youth



# Banality of everyday life



# Fluctuating cityscapes



# City in the form of ruins, or, forever 'under construction'



# Unfulfilled emotional longings





# Breakdown of human communications 1



# Breakdown of human communications 2



# Water in Tsai's films 1

- Association of disease and corruption



# Water in Tsai's films 2

- Objective correlative of the collapse of the family



# Water in Tsai's films 3

- Symbol of the irrepressible and destructive libido





**End of the talk.**

Thank you for your attention!

# Appendix: Tsai's Filmography

- *Rebels of the Neon God*, 1992
- *Vive L'Amour*, 1994
- *The River*, 1997
- *The Hole*, 1998
- *What Time Is It There*, 2001
- *The Skywalk Is Gone*, 2002
- *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*, 2003
- *The Wayward Cloud*, 2004
- *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone*, 2006
- *It's a Dream*, 2007