

and with the cosmos, in a way that—thanks to the imaginary possibilities of cinema—transcends the constraint of the specific here and now. This transcendence is fantastical and antisocial. Romantic love becomes the signifier of emptiness—the emptiness and emptying of the social.

After this death, society goes on. The fantasy of romantic love is from now on remembered with nostalgia, as what happened at a different time in a different place. Importantly, it is the woman, Qiaoying, who carries death with her. She eventually leaves the community and donates her dowry to the cause of continual well digging. Wangquan, who found himself a mistress in the depths of his failed social labor, reemerges as a cultural hero who is aided not only by his mistress but also by his wife, who calls upon the entire village to give what they can to help his cause. While one woman gets nothing and the other retains her husband, Wangquan keeps his family, the memory of love,²⁶ and leaves himself a name.

The futility of the nation is thus signified by the barrenness of romantic love, the consummation of which takes place in the depths of a dry well at the moment of a collapsed effort at drilling. Romantic love is barren not because it is impoverished but because it is surplus: its excessiveness threatens economic productiveness because it prevents that productiveness from being stabilized. Another way of putting this is to say that the sacrifice of romantic love is pure: unlike the attempt to drill a well, it cannot be rewarded or “completed” in the way that the “In Memoriam” plaque, as I will go on to argue, completes and rewards the sacrifices of men’s lives down the centuries. If well digging generates the “value” that compensates for the loss of lives, the barrenness of romantic love lures modernity against itself and back toward the long-disputed family.

The Labor of Social Fantasy

Ethnicity can mobilize the vast majority of its community—provided its appeal remains sufficiently vague or irrelevant.

E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780:
Programme, Myth, Reality*

How is one to interpret the fact that large numbers of people collectively hold beliefs that are false?

Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World:
A Derivative Discourse?*

If one “foreign enemy” to the community is the romantic woman, who must be cut off, the other “foreign enemy” is the lack that is inside Old Well village—the dry wells themselves. This lack awaits being filled and, once filled, will give meaning to the community.

The theme of dry wells repeats the obsession that has characterized “Chinese modernity” since the nineteenth century: the power of technology. Although we are familiar with the many technological inventions that owe their origins to the Chinese—the compass, paper, printing, fireworks, gunpowder, deep drilling,²⁷ to name just a few—in the modern period, notably after Western imperialism became unavoidable, one might argue that “technology” situates the Chinese culture vis-à-vis the West in the form of a lack. Political trends in the twentieth century vascillate between the desire to fill this lack and the pretense that China needs nothing. In the post-Cultural Revolution period, following Deng Xiaoping’s modernization campaigns, we see once again the openness to technology, from the most mundane items for household use to computers. Contemporary Chinese films necessarily reflect these developments.²⁸ One of the narratives that have sustained China’s relationship with Western modernity can thus be described as a quest for technology—a quest for that “power” without which China cannot become strong.

At the same time, in this film, the quest for technology is legitimated not so much in terms of the elusive “nation” as in terms of a post-Cultural Revolution *humanism* that tries to preserve the traditional in modernization. As such, the film also repeats one of the basic fantasies that have run throughout the course of Chinese modernization since the nineteenth century, which is expressed in the aforementioned phrase “Chinese learning for fundamental structure, Western learning for practical use.” The fantasy is that the Chinese can have part of the West—technology—without changing its own social structure. Today, this fantasy continues in the evident split between official Chinese rhetoric, which still remains loyal to the classical themes of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism, and Chinese social practice, which now includes

all kinds of Western and capitalistic ventures and enterprises. Such fantasy is crucial to the narcissistic value-writing that I suggest as the alternative way of understanding “third world” cultures.

This narcissistic value-writing is, moreover, masculinist. *Old Well* begins with shots of part of a naked male body against a dark background hammering away in sweat. We read “determination” into these signifiers. The ending of the film *completes* these opening signifiers with an “In Memoriam” plaque indicating the lives (presumably all male) that have been lost in the centuries of failed attempts at well digging. The completion is the completion of the sacrificial process: finally, the film seems to say, the sacrifices pay off.

From the perspective of Wangquan, technology is strictly a means to an end. Technology is instrumental in fulfilling the mandate that is loaded on him and that he cannot resist. He cannot protest against that mandate because in it lies a communal meaning of responsibility; he cannot decline it because in it lies the very personal identity he receives from society as a reward. The mandate not only takes from him his life energy; it also gives him his life and his immortality.

What is interesting is not the simple affirmation of humanistic values and a process of identity production through stamina, effort, and willingness to self-sacrifice but how such an affirmation is at the same time part of that cultural narcissism that exoticizes its own alterity, its own otherness. The fact that the affirmation of humanistic values takes place not in metropolitan centers such as Shanghai and Beijing²⁹ but in backward villages in remote mountains suggests that the reinvestment in humanism in contemporary Chinese cultural production is at the same time an uncanny *ethnographic* attempt to narrate a “noble savagery” that is believed to have preserved the older and more authentic treasures of the culture, in ways as yet uncorrupted by modernity.

At the center of the treasures to be preserved is a system of production in which the will to work will be duly rewarded—if not in the form of an immediate gratification to the individual, then definitely in the form of the reproduction and continuance of the life of a community. The fascination not only with technological production or genealogical reproduction alone but with the welding of the two in the successful perpetuation of a culture is probably the most important fascination of the post-Cultural Revolution period, in which the diversion from the mindless destructiveness of the previous two decades needs to graft

itself onto something substantial and concrete. These two kinds of production together make up the economy of the third kind—the production of value/ideology, a production that is at the same time a series of translations, decodings, and recodings between “contemporary” and “rural” China, between communism (with its emphasis on loyalty to the party) and humanism (with its emphasis on loyalty to the clan and the family, and on individual effort), between China’s status as other to the West and the status of the “other” cultures of China’s past and unknown places to China’s “present self.” In *Old Well*, the “lack” of China (in terms of technology) is projected onto the “lack” of China’s rural area, which is further projected onto an actual lack, the lack of water. In this series of projections and substitutions, the “lack,” always at once frustrating and empowering, finally gives way to a filling that stabilizes signification for survival.

At this point, we need to say, But wait, it’s not only the “filling” and the production of water that enable the survival of the community. The *failure* to produce water is what has already sustained the culture of Old Well village for generations!

What indeed is the old well?

In terms of narrative structure, the old well is, of course, nothing: it is the lack that makes narrative possible. The old well is the obsession that, precisely because it remains unfulfilled, perpetuates itself in the village as a kind of collective memory, collective responsibility, and collective desire. Do the men in Old Well village know what they really want? Or do they continue digging simply because their ancestors have formed that habit—simply because it has become a *tribal ritual*? The sense of absurdity that figures in what looks like a revered tradition is clearest in the scene where villagers from a neighboring village attempt to close up a well that the Old Well villagers claim to be theirs. This competition over the rights to the well leads to the question as to the whereabouts of the plaque indicating the well’s “ownership.” Finally, it is the women who produce the “original” plaque, which has, it turns out, long become a latrine stone.

But the absurdity of this discovery does not change the powerful impact that the obsession has on the village. And such is the power of social fantasy: even when the “original” plaque has been turned into a latrine stone and is thus shown to be, after all, *no more than a (shitty) stone*, the belief that it is *more* persists. In a discussion of Eastern Europe

after the collapse of communism, Slavoj Žižek writes about the fantastical nature of what he calls the “nation-Thing” in a way that is equally applicable to the old well:

The Thing is not directly a collection of these features [composing a specific way of life]; there is “something more” in it, something that *is present* in these features, that *appears* through them. Members of a community who partake in a given “way of life” *believe in their Thing*, where this belief has a reflexive structure proper to the intersubjective space: “I believe in the (national) Thing” is equal to “I believe that others (members of my community) believe in the Thing.” The tautological character of the Thing—its semantic void, the fact that all we can say about it is that it is “the real Thing”—is founded precisely in this paradoxical reflexive structure.³⁰

This fantasy turns all accidents—events that are real but somehow cannot be accounted for coherently—into *mere* accidents, mere errors, which have no place in the actual functioning or *labor* of the fantasy. Similarly, all the lives that have been sacrificed in the course of searching for water are simply meaningless until the first well is successfully dug. Until then, we can say that the lost lives do not *matter*: they remain chance components waiting to be materialized into the full-blown fantasy peopled with real bodies. Instead of describing the history of Old Well village as one in which the villagers are united by a hope for the future (when water will be found), therefore, we should describe it this way: the discovery of water validates the sacrifices *retroactively* as parts of a concerted communal effort at well digging. This is the paradox of the ending, at which we are shown a close-up of the plaque “In Memoriam” of all the well-digging martyrs with the dates of their failed efforts and their deaths. Superimposed upon the rolling image of this plaque is the author’s/director’s inscription documenting Sun Wangquan’s accomplishment: “January 9, 1983: Water was found, and fifty tons of water were produced every hour from the first mechanized deep well.” The current “success” proves by its chance occurrence that “it” is what all the previous generations have been slaving for and that, moreover, their deaths were finally *worthwhile*.³¹

The act of discovering water, in other words, is like a signifier that enigmatically constitutes the identity of the past by its very *contingent presence* or *randomness*. If, because of its success, this act becomes endowed with the value of a “primary” act, then “primary” value itself must be described not as an absolute origin but instead as a supplementary relation: like all previous attempts of well digging, the latest attempt is a random event; at the same time, this latest attempt is marked by an *additional* randomness—the discovery of water, the accident of “success.” This additional randomness, this accident that is more accidental than all the other accidents, marks the latest attempt of well digging apart from the others, thereby constituting in the same moment the “necessary” structure that coheres the entire series of events in a meaningful signifying chain, a signifying chain that I have been referring to as social fantasy. The labor of social fantasy, then, comprises not only the random physical efforts at well digging and their failures but also the process of retroactive, supplementary transformation in which the random and physical becomes the primary, the necessary, and the virtuous, and henceforth functions and reproduces itself ideologically as such.

Crucial to this social fantasy is the danger represented by the romantic woman and the recurrent dry well, both of which are “taken care of” at the end. The fantasy is that the village can have the technology of the running well without the technology of the new (running) woman, that the village can turn into a self-sufficient community with only as much outside help as *it wants*—precisely at a time when Chinese countryside self-sufficiency, like that of other “third world” rural areas, has been irredeemably eroded by modernized production and distribution, and the permeation of global capitalist economics.

A film such as this, which demonstrates the fundamental nothingness of the labor of social fantasy, inevitably lends itself to a reading that is exactly the opposite. Attesting to that is *Old Well’s* warm reception by Chinese audiences at home and overseas, and its success at the Second Tokyo International Film Festival of 1987,³² in contrast to the regular official censorship of films by the Fifth Generation directors that are consciously critical of Chinese culture. The intense appeal of a film that celebrates the rewarding of a communal, collective effort makes little sense unless we understand the magnitude of the fantasy of collectivity on the largest scale—the Cultural Revolution—and its collapse. The emotional vacuum left behind by the latter awaits the legitimating *work*

Some Contemporary Chinese Films

of some other thing. This other thing is increasingly being sought in China's old and remote areas, where social fantasy, whose creation of a present identity is always through a nostalgic imagining of a permanent other time and other place, can flourish most uninhibitedly. And so, beyond the futility of the nation and the barrenness of love, the labor of social fantasy, like the muscular, masculine arms at the film's beginning, hammers on.

1. Digging an Old Well

Part 2: Some Contemporary Chinese Films

1. Digging an Old Well: The Labor of Social Fantasy

1. The Jameson epigraph at the opening of this section is from "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital," *Social Text* 15 (Fall 1986): 69. For the most widely cited piece of criticism of Fredric Jameson's position, see Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" *Social Text* 17 (Fall 1987): 3–25; and Jameson, "A Brief Response," *Social Text* 17 (Fall 1987): 26–27. (See also the relevant pages in Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* [London: Verso, 1992].) For a criticism of Jameson's "A Brief Response," see Kwai-cheung Lo, "Crossing Boundaries: A Study of Modern Hong Kong Fiction from the Fifties to the Eighties" (M.Phil. thesis, University of Hong Kong, 1990), pp. 165–73. For Jameson's recent reinstatement of the concept of national allegory, see his "Foreword: In the Mirror of Alternate Modernities," Karatani Kōjin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, a collective translation edited by Brett de Bary (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. vii–xx; see in particular pp. xix–xx, on which he issues the call for a moral rectification of "our" (i.e., the United States') "national" character. The epigraphs from Benjamin and Hobsbawm are taken respectively from *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 233, and from *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 152.

2. Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "Debating the Third Cinema," in *Questions of Third Cinema*, ed. Jim Pines and Paul Willemen (London: British Film Institute, 1989), p. 170.

3. For instance, see Paul Willemen, "The Third Cinema Question: Notes and Reflections," in *Questions of Third Cinema*, pp. 1–29.

4. "[The] dominant radical reader in the Anglo-U.S. reactively homogenizes the Third World and sees it only in the context of nationalism and ethnicity." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987), p. 246; emphasis in the original.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

6. "I shall argue, as a basic issue of the Third Cinema, that almost always the reference [to the 'outside,' to class struggle/imperialism/that which is documented] is used to *shore up* the discourse, and that the problem begins here—in the way the reference is submerged into the discourse, and then the discourse is submerged into the political act, and the act itself into the 'choices' set before it." Rajadhyaksha, "Debating the Third Cinema," pp. 174–75; emphasis in the original.

7. Among those who have used the concept of "national allegory" in relation to Chinese film, see, for instance, Yingjin Zhang, "Ideology of the Body in *Red Sorghum*: National Allegory, National Roots, and Third Cinema," *East-West Film*

Journal 4, no. 2 (June 1990): 38–53; E. Ann Kaplan, “Melodrama/ Subjectivity/Ideology: The Relevance of Western Melodrama Theories to Recent Chinese Cinema,” *ibid.*, vol. 5, no. 1 (January 1991): 6–27; Chen Ruxiu, “*Da hong deng-long gao gao gua yu tongsu lilun*” [*Raise the Red Lantern* and theories of the melodramatic], *Dangdai* (*Con-Temporary Monthly*), April 1, 1992, a special issue on Chinese film, pp. 52–61. The editors of this issue of *Dangdai* also echo Chen Ruxiu: “As Jameson says, all third world literature, including Chinese literature, is, to put it in a nutshell, political allegory, a product of the political unconscious. *Judou*, *Yellow Earth*, *Hibiscus Town*, and *Raise the Red Lantern* are all footnotes.” *Dangdai*, p. 150; my translation.

8. Jameson, “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital,” p. 66.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Liu Heng, “Fuxi Fuxi,” *Zhongguo xiaoshuo yi jiu ba ba* [Chinese fiction 1988], ed. Wang Ziping and Li Tuo (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1989), pp. 80–171. For an informative analysis of the story, see Marie-Claire Huot, “Liu Heng’s *Fuxi Fuxi*: What about Nüwa?” in *Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Chinese Literature and Society*, ed. Tonglin Lu (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 85–105.

11. This phrase is Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s. See “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 53. An earlier version of this essay was published in *boundary 2* 12, no. 3–13 (Spring–Fall 1984) and reprinted in *Feminist Review* 30 (Autumn 1988).

12. Teshome H. Gabriel, “Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films,” in *Questions of Third Cinema*, pp. 48–49. For a discussion of why pictorial aesthetics and “third world” ethnic identity/agency cannot be mapped onto each other in this manner, see the following chapter.

13. Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. and with an intro. by Charles Levin (St. Louis, Mo.: Telos Press, 1981), p. 93.

14. *Judou*, for instance, was nominated for “best foreign language film” at the Oscars in 1991 while being banned in China until the spring of 1992. Since June 1989, the Chinese authorities have been tightening control over “culture” by a conscious return to leftist educational strategies. The “nationalistic” view of Ai Zhisheng, the minister for radio, film, and television, that only Chinese people are eligible to praise Chinese films, is an example of this ridiculously reactionary turn in mainland Chinese cultural politics. For a relevant discussion, see Tony Rayns, “The Tunnel Vision of Minister Ai.” This essay appears as “L’étroitesse d’esprit du ministre Ai,” trans. Corinne Durin, in the program notes, *Festival international du cinéma chinois, 4e édition, du 23 mai au 2 juin 1991* (Montréal), pp. 65–67.

15. Baudrillard, *For a Critique*, p. 94; emphasis in the original.

16. The recent films by Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou obtained financial support from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, England, Germany, and Holland. As Jean-Paul Aubert writes about Chen’s 1991 film *Life on a String* (a philosophical treatment of contemporary Chinese culture): “Le plus étonnant sera d’apprendre que ce film si profondément chinois est en fait une production anglo-allemande . . . le gouvernement chinois n’a pas mis un seul yuan dans la production. C’est peut-être même la première fois qu’un film chinois . . . est entièrement financé par des producteurs occidentaux.” See “Le retour des enfants prodiges,” *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 442 (1991): 85. Zhang Yimou, for his part, apparently had no problem accepting exclusively Japanese financial backing (from a company called the Tokuma Group) for *Judou* even though in *Red Sorghum* he expressed “nationalistic” sentiments by portraying Japanese violence against Chinese villagers during the period around the Second World War.

17. In an interview with Chinese and non-Chinese reporters in early 1991, the Chinese premier Li Peng responded to questions about the Tiananmen massacre with the following kind of “rationality”: “It has already been two years since the June Fourth incident; there is no need to discuss it any more. . . . Under the urgent circumstances of the time, had the Chinese government not acted decisively, we would not be able to have the stability and economic prosperity we see in China today.” “Zhong wai jizhe zhaodaihui shang Li Peng huida wenti” [Li Peng’s responses to questions at the press conference for Chinese and foreign reporters], *Ming Pao Daily News* (Vancouver ed.), April 11, 1991; my translation.

18. I am grateful to Teresa de Lauretis for telling me that I needed to clarify my point about “coloniality.”

19. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value,” in *In Other Worlds*, p. 158. This essay was originally published in *diacritics* in 1985. See also Spivak, “Speculations on Reading Marx: After Reading Derrida,” in *Poststructuralism and the Question of History*, ed. Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington, and Robert Young (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 30–62.

20. For a discussion of how the (re)invention of native and national origins functions within Western discourses as a way to mask the realities of Western imperialism, see Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

21. Zheng Yi, *Lao jing* (Taipei: Haifeng chubanshe, 1988). The novel was first published in a literary magazine in China in February 1985. It is also available in English. See Zheng Yi, *Old Well*, trans. David Kwan, with an intro. by Anthony P. Kane (San Francisco: China Books and Periodicals, 1989).

22. Such a reading informs, for instance, the discussions collected in *Lao jing* (*Dianying/Zhongguo mingzuo xuan*, no. 1), ed. Jiao Xiongping (Taipei: Wanxiang tushu gufen youxian gongsi, 1990).

Part 2. Some Contemporary Chinese Films

23. "Hence, as we can now see in melancholy retrospect, it was the great achievement of the communist regimes in multinational countries to limit the disastrous effects of nationalism within them. . . . Indeed, it may be argued that the current wave of ethnic or mini-ethnic agitations is a response to the overwhelmingly non-national and non-nationalist principles of state formation in the greater part of the twentieth-century world." E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 173.

24. For a discussion of the construction of the "Chinese" ethnic identity, see David Yen-ho Wu, "The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities," *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 120, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 159–79. For a discussion, of related interest, of the traditional ethnic conflict between the Hans (who make up 94 percent of the Chinese population) and the Huis (Chinese-speaking Muslims), see Jonathan N. Lipman, "Ethnic Violence in Modern China: Hans and Huis in Gansu, 1781–1929," in *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture*, ed. Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 65–86.

25. The common view among some feminist China scholars is that issues of female sexuality have been subsumed under either the traditional kinship family or the modernist discourse of the nation. In the early twentieth century, when nationalism was replacing familial pieties as the valid self-strengthening discourse in the "third world," the family and the nation could indeed be looked upon as equally "major" historical forces that dwarf and erase women in different but comparable ways. However, the major shortcoming of this view lies in that, after pointing out the masculinism of nationalism, it cannot explain why nationalism has such a great appeal to women as well as men. The analysis of the relation between "woman" and "the nation" I offer here is quite different from this common view.

26. The story ends with these lines: "Below, on the flowery banks of the Qinglong River, in the little village half hidden by the morning smoke, lie his dry land, his small son, his virtuous wife, his dearest elders and brothers, and memories of the love that he will never forget." Zheng, *Lao Jing*, p. 224; my translation.

27. For a recent discussion of how the Chinese extracted brine for making salt by drilling the deepest well (one kilometer) in the world over a century and a half ago, see Hans Ulrich Vogel, "The Great Well of China," *Scientific American*, June 1993, pp. 116–21. According to Vogel, the Xinhai well, which is located in Sichuan Province, "was the culmination of an 800-year-old technology." The epigraphs by Hobsbawm and Chatterjee at the beginning of the present section are taken respectively from *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 169 (emphasis in the original), and from *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World—A Derivative Discourse?* (United Nations University, Tokyo: Zed Books, 1986), p. 11.

28. The "technological" interest is evident even in films that are not explicitly about technology. For instance, in Zheng Dongtian's *Yuanyang lou* (*Young Couples*, 1987), we find the stories of six couples living in the same apartment complex that

2. Silent Is the Ancient Plain

are cinematically narrated against a background of new common household objects, from the vacuum cleaner to the cassette tape player. Even as mere silent background, technology in the home effectively demonstrates the changes in cultural value.

29. The films that are set in big cities are, by contrast, always about the loss of such humanistic values. Recent examples include Zhou Xiaowen's *Fengkuang de daijia* (*Obsession*, 1989), and Xie Fei's *Ben ming nian* (*Black Snow*, 1990).

30. Slavoj Žižek, "Eastern Europe's Republics of Gilead," *New Left Review* 183 (September–October 1990): 53; emphases in the original. As he argues in another context, social fantasy is "precisely the way the antagonistic fissure is masked. . . . Fantasy is a means for an ideology to take its own failure into account in advance." See Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 126.

31. If we substitute the word *communal* for *national*, the following quotation would apply well to our present discussion: "Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort." Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?" trans. and annotated by Martin Thom, in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 19.

32. *Old Well* won four of the thirteen awards given by the festival, including the "special affirmation award by international film critics."

2. Silent Is the Ancient Plain: Music, Filmmaking, and the Concept of Social Change in the New Chinese Cinema

1. *Playboy* (Chinese ed.), no. 22 (May 1988): 44. Hereafter page references are given in the text. All translations are mine.

2. Yuejin Wang, "The Cinematic Other and the Cultural Self? Decentering the Cultural Identity on Cinema," *Wide Angle* 11, no. 2 (1989): 35. For another example of a discussion of the "othering" of China, see Esther C. M. Yau, "Is China the End of Hermeneutics? Or, Political and Cultural Usage of Non-Han Women in Mainland Chinese Films," *Discourse* 11, no. 2 (Spring–Summer 1989): 115–36.

3. Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital," *Social Text* 15 (Fall 1986): 69.

4. Ann Kaplan, "Problematising Cross-Cultural Analysis: The Case of Women in the Recent Chinese Cinema," *Wide Angle* 11, no. 2 (1989): 47. Kaplan's piece can also be found in *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*, ed. Chris Berry (London: British Film Institute, 1991), pp. 141–54.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

6. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto has criticized the notion of "cross-cultural" exchange/analysis adopted by many Western critics in the following manner: "By designating only one direction of subject-object relation, this popular notion elides the issue of power/knowledge. While Western critics as subject can analyze a non-

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

New York

Clemons
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1993.5
.C4
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Columbia University Press
New York Chichester, West Sussex
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Chow, Rey.

Primitive passions : visuality, sexuality, ethnography, and
contemporary Chinese cinema / Rey Chow.

p. cm.—(Film and culture series)

Includes bibliographic references and index.

ISBN 0-231-07682-7

ISBN 0-231-07683-5 (pbk.)

1. Motion pictures—China. 2. Motion pictures—Social aspects—
China. I. Title II. Series.

PN1993.5.C4C465 1995

791.43'0951—dc20

94-27796

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*To my father, Chow Chak-hung,
and to the memory of
my mother, Tuet Wai-ching*
