

Gendered Self-Consciousness in China's Sixth Generation Women's Cinema:

a social semiotic analysis of female consciousness and self-identity in films from the
independent and commercial sector

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MA thesis
Asian Studies 120 EC: China Studies
Leiden University

Supervisor: A.S. Keijser
Hand-in date: July 1st 2017
Word count: 13.500
(excl. appendix)

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1. Introduction

This study examines female consciousness and self-identity in China's Sixth Generation women's cinema. Firstly, I will explore several topics regarding gender, female consciousness, self-identity and women's cinema in the literature review section of this thesis. The main chapters of this thesis study films from Sixth Generation female directors from the independent and commercial sector. I will use a social semiotic approach to film analysis to substantiate my research. Each chapter contributes to my research as a whole, to create a balance between breadth and depth. Finally, I will provide a conclusion section.

French film critic Regis Bergeron once said: "What most impresses the West about Chinese cinema is its contemporary realism."¹ We can also recognize this sense of realism in the films of China's Sixth Generation (post-1990) filmmakers. The Sixth Generation of Chinese filmmakers is said to focus mainly on the problems of contemporary China. According to Lu, for instance, many Sixth Generation films share a sense of realism that was most innovatively developed and explored in Italian Neo-realism, an Italian film movement characterized by stories focusing on the difficulties of everyday life, including difficult economic and social conditions, such as injustice, poverty and oppression. The goal of Italian Neo-realism is to create an anti-illusionist film culture that helps viewers to see and reflect upon this reality first from within and then beyond cinema.²

Female directors in China have received relatively little attention from researchers, although they make films in large numbers. Lingzhen Wang and Louisa Wei's book *Chinese Women's Cinema: Transnational Contexts* (2011) is the first anthology to focus entirely on offering critical insights and dialogues on female Chinese filmmakers and their films.³ Shuqin Cui's book *Women Through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema* (2003) contains a few chapters on women's films (Part 4)⁴, however, no Sixth Generation directors are addressed. If we look at sources written in Chinese, there is more to be found. However, these sources mostly generalize Chinese Women's cinema⁵⁶⁷⁸, or focus on commercial sector cinema only⁹¹⁰, viewing commercial successes and big box office hits as the ultimate goal a director can achieve.

¹ Zhong and Li eds., 2007: 2

² Lu, 2014

³ Wang, 2011

⁴ Cui, 2003: 169-238

⁵ Ge, 2016: 67-69

⁶ Zhou, 2013: 78-83

⁷ Zhang, 2010: 58-62

Since there are still many gaps in the literature, especially literature on the Sixth Generation, I have decided to look at the topic of female consciousness and self-identity in Chinese women's cinema. For the term 'women's cinema', I am using Judith Mayne's definition from her book *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema* (1990). She defines 'women's cinema' or 'women's films' as films made by women directors, not specifically for a female audience.¹¹ In my case that would be Sixth Generation female directors from mainland China. I will address the topic of female consciousness and self-identity in the literature review section of this thesis.

For my research, I have selected a group of films (from Sixth Generation female directors) that can be roughly divided into two categories: commercial sector cinema and independent sector cinema. These films have been chosen as they are among the most well-known films made by women directors from the two sectors. Considering the time frame in which I had to conduct this research, I decided to choose three films from each sector. From the independent sector, I have selected *Egg and Stone* (2012) by Huang Ji, *Oxhide* (2005) by Liu Jiayin and *Lost in Beijing* (2007) by Li Yu, from the commercial sector I have selected *Finding Mr. Right* (2013) by Xue Xiaolu, *Letter From an Unknown Woman* (2004) by Xu Jinglei and *You and Me* (2005) by Ma Liwen.

For this study, I have decided to take a social semiotic approach to analyze films from Chinese women's directors belonging to the Sixth Generation. A visual analysis of different elements has to determine if and how the aforementioned films express female consciousness and self-identity. I will look at individual frames, shots, scenes, sequences, generic stages as well as the work as a whole, and I will analyze their metafunctions (Lemke's 'representation', 'orientation' and 'organization')¹² in the chapter on my research findings.

The reason I have chosen to take a social semiotic approach is that social semiotics denies that there is a gap between the 'text' (which can be a book but also a film, television show, party or telephone call, etc.) and the audience. "Social semiotics centers on the issue of how I, the viewer, am positioned by the film in question, and how I see certain social allegiances and values as being promoted over others. In that case, social semiotics denies that there is a gap between text or product audience"¹³, writes Iedema. In the case of film analysis, social semiotics analyses certain techniques and elements in film to reason about the choices of the director in relation to the sociocultural fields on which he or she

⁸ Tian, 2010: 62-65

⁹ Fu and Liu, 2013: 35-37

¹⁰ Yue, 2014: 74-78

¹¹ Mayne, 1990: 2

¹² Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001: 191

¹³ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 187

focuses.¹⁴ Social semiotics provides us with a method to understand what might otherwise remain at the level of vague suspicion and intuitive response.¹⁵ I will discuss my research method extensively in the methodology section of this thesis.

By analyzing these six films I will be able to answer the following research question:

How are self-consciousness and self-identity expressed by female characters in China's Sixth Generation commercial and independent women's cinema? Is there a difference between the two sectors? My hypothesis is that commercial sector women's cinema displays a more traditional view of men and women, with less room for female agency and female consciousness. I predict that in the independent sector there is more space for the director to experiment and tell a story from a female point of view, and represent female characters in more inclusive ways. In general, I think that the films from the two sectors will both offer some form of female consciousness.

¹⁴ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 187-188

¹⁵ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 201

2. Literature review

In this literature review, I will address the following topics: gender discourse and self-identity (in modern China), female consciousness (in cinema), Chinese Sixth Generation (women's) cinema, and commercial vs. independent cinema in China. To provide some context while discussing the topic of female consciousness in China's Sixth Generation women's cinema, I would first like to address the topic of gender roles and (female) self-identity in China.

2.1 Gender discourse and self-identity (in modern China)

According to Shuqin Cui, a review of a century of Chinese cinema reveals that “gender issues do not arise merely from sexual difference but rather are embedded within the discourse of nationalism. As gender and nation intertwine, questions of identity and difference remain indistinct and ambivalent because the gender-nation complex shifts along with social transitions.”¹⁶ She also states that women themselves in China – including film directors – either show no particular interest in feminism (in its Western forms) or reject a feminist identity all together.¹⁷ Cui describes that the process of nationalizing gender in China foregrounds women as a symbol while wiping out her self-identity all together.¹⁸

According to Kipnis, any kind of gendering does no justice to a person's identity. In the book *Chinese Modernity and the Individual Psyche*, Kipnis states that gender directly speaks to the impossibility of any self-sufficient individual. “To be gendered is to be partial and divided; the gendered psyche is torn by social and sexual desire and the gendered family member is immersed in social, economic, and psychological relationships of mutual dependency.”¹⁹

In opposition of Kipnis, who claims the gender binary has negative connotations no matter what, Irigaray calls for a state of genuine sexual difference, rather than a traditional male/female binarism that has negative connotations for women. “Women in patriarchal discourse,” writes Irigaray, “do not have the tools with which to conceive of themselves, or be conceived by others, as another to men. Rather, they are confined to the parameters allowed to them as lesser men: ‘the feminine is now practically assimilated to the non-masculine. Being a woman is equated with not being a man.’”²⁰ Irigaray proposes that women need a female imaginary and female symbolic to achieve true disparity.

¹⁶ Cui, 2003: xix

¹⁷ Cui, 2004: xix

¹⁸ Cui, 2003: xiii

¹⁹ Kipnis, 2012: 8

²⁰ Irigaray, 1993: 71

“The way for women to be liberated is not by ‘becoming a man’ or by envying what men have and their objects, but by female subjects once again valorizing the expression of their own sex and gender.”²¹

Although Irigaray is a controversial philosopher (she is accused of biological essentialism and engage in the binarisms that she so strongly critiques herself²²), and I personally agree more with the standpoints of Kipnis, I think Chinese female directors in general are working more towards creating their own female imaginary and female symbolic in cinema.

Gender and self-identity are two interlocking concepts. Gender and gender expression (how one demonstrates gender through behavior, appearance and interaction) are part of one's identity. According to Harriet Evans, the individual ‘self’ (*ziwo*) and self-development play an important role in China's modern post-Mao cultural and social transformation. “Alongside marketization and urbanization, a family oriented and collectivist ethics of personal responsibilities molded by Confucian as well as socialist principles of personhood, has been increasingly replaced by an emphasis on self-fulfillment and individual rights.”²³ Zhang and Ong see China's individualization as “the product of the pull between the deregulated neoliberal market and the controlling impulse of the socialist state.”²⁴

The term ‘independence’ refers to the ability and willingness to act freely on one's own desires, without being dependent on or hindered by others. In Chinese, the terms *zili* and *duli* are used, similar to English terms such as autonomy, individualism, initiative and self-reliance.²⁵ Psychologists such as Iyengar and Lepper²⁶, Deci et al.²⁷, Mesquita and Walker²⁸ have stated that for example the achievement of personal goals and psychological well-being, happiness and health are values associated with independence. According to Fong et al., “we use the term excellence to refer to qualities associated with English terms such as achievement, ambition, outstanding qualities and competitiveness, and the Chinese terms *chuse* and *youxiu*, which in recent years have been specifically associated with academic and socioeconomic achievements in a highly competitive educational system and labor market.”²⁹ These values became important again during the economic reforms of the

²¹ Irigaray, 1993: 71

²² Moi, 2003: 137

²³ Evans, Kipnis ed., 2012 : 119

²⁴ Zhang and Ong, 2008

²⁵ Fong et al., Kipnis ed., 2012: 89

²⁶ Iyengar and Lepper, 1999

²⁷ Deci et al, 1999

²⁸ Mesquita and Walker, 2003

²⁹ Fong et al., Kipnis ed., 2012: 90

1980's.³⁰³¹ Although excellence and independence do not always go hand in hand, both are stimulated by the process of economic development.³²³³

According to Croll³⁴, Evans³⁵ and Fong³⁶, the values of excellence and independence are still considered less appropriate and suitable for women rather than they are for men in China nowadays. They state that "Chinese feminists have recognized the discouragement of women's independence and excellence as a key obstacle to gender equality."³⁷

2.2 Female consciousness and self-identity (in cinema)

Female consciousness is a concept that originally emerged in eighteenth-century Western literature, in writings from writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and Jane Austen (1775-1817).³⁸

Female consciousness has its source in feminist theory, however, it is seen as being somewhat less political. In this thesis, however, I do not want to focus on pure feminist theory, since this mostly has its roots in Western culture, and is therefore mostly a Western concept.

Later scholars also started using the concept of female consciousness to research cinema. In more recent years, for example, Lucy Bolton's book *Film and Female Consciousness: Irigaray, Cinema and Thinking Women*, explores films that steer away from the traditional positioning of female characters in dominant Anglo-American cinema and "represent them in more inclusive and engaging ways."³⁹

The films Bolton discusses emphasize the interiority of these women instead of their physical appearance. She compares films that offer something new in terms of the representation of female consciousness with films that offer more "standard" treatments of female subjectivity.⁴⁰ According to Bolton, by analyzing if female characters go through a process of personal transition, are engaged in a personal journey and cultivate self-knowledge, one can indicate female consciousness in a film.⁴¹

Furthermore, Bolton determines the presence of female consciousness by asking the question if the inner life and consciousness of female characters is the motor of the films she analyses, and if they are

³⁰ Hanser, 2005 & 2008

³¹ Ong and Zhang, 2008

³² Davis, 1999

³³ Yan, 2009

³⁴ Croll, 1995

³⁵ Evans, 1997

³⁶ Fong, 2004

³⁷ Fong et al., Kipnis ed., 2012: 91

³⁸ Johnson, 1995

³⁹ Bolton, 2011: 1

⁴⁰ Bolton, 2011

⁴¹ Bolton, 2011: 2

inviting the spectator to share their points of view and observations.⁴² According to Kaplan, another sign of female consciousness in a film is the display of female solidarity.⁴³

In short, female consciousness has to do with the importance of women to develop their own subjectivity and identity. Cui, who applies the concept of female consciousness to the films of Chinese female directors, understands female consciousness as being visible in a film when the film is focused on women and their experiences and allows them to develop their own subjectivity and identity.⁴⁴

In this thesis, I adopt a definition of female consciousness in cinema, like Bolton⁴⁵, Cui⁴⁶ and Vanderstaay⁴⁷, that views it as a concept in which female subjectivity and a female perspective is manifested through narrative, camera techniques and mise-en-scène. This female perspective incorporates the notions of female self-identity and female agency.

2.3 Chinese Sixth Generation (women's) cinema

Chinese female directors have directed a wide variety of films over the last few decades; from more mainstream and commercial to independent and more experimental films.⁴⁸ Currently, the Sixth Generation of directors is active in China. China's Sixth Generation of directors has been making films since the 1990's, and is said to focus mainly on the problems of contemporary China. Themes as prostitution, unemployment, cheating, drug and alcohol abuse, greed and chaos are not avoided by these directors.⁴⁹ Part of the Sixth Generation are, for example, directors such as Jia Zhangke, Gu Changwei, Jiang Wen, Zhang Yuan, Wang Xiaoshuai and Li Yang. This generation also includes a very varied group of female directors. The works of Chinese female directors have been studied by both Western and Chinese critics of Chinese cinema – such as Shuqin Cui, Dai Jinhua, Rey Chow, Lara Vanderstaay, Yue Xiaoying and Wang Lingzhen – who have discussed their films from various perspectives, including female consciousness, social value and the portrayal of women. Not many, however, have studied the works of Sixth Generation female directors.

⁴² Bolton, 2011: 4

⁴³ Kaplan, 1982: 547

⁴⁴ Cui, 2003

⁴⁵ Bolton, 2011

⁴⁶ Cui, 2003

⁴⁷ Vanderstaay, 2008

⁴⁸ For more information on China's previous generations of female directors, read: *Chinese Women's Cinema: Transnational Contexts* (2011) by Wang Lingzhen and *Women Through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema* (Part 4) (2003) by Shuqin Cui

⁴⁹ Cui in Lu & Yeh eds., 2005: 96-120

According to Lara Vanderstaay, these directors make films that display a new form of female consciousness.⁵⁰ Dai Jinhua, however, states that female characters in films from Chinese women directors are also the subject of *to-be-looked-at-ness*. She feels that Chinese cinema still lacks a female voice and female perspective.⁵¹ According to Cui, it is no question whether or not films made by women directors display female consciousness or not. In the book *Women Through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema* she states: "In films made by women directors, we find evidence of a female consciousness: the exploration of a self, split between submission to sociopolitical ideology and allegiance to personal desire."⁵² I will explore this question myself further in my research.

Other scholars - such as S. Louise Wei, Fu & Liu, Ma - have studied Sixth Generation female directors to determine similar characteristics in their films. Wei finds that many women directors "emphasize the use of emotion or mood as the narrative drive to push the story forward, which is not exclusively a feminine trait but is often skillfully employed by women."⁵³ Lu and Liu agree with this, stating that female directors dominate the field of creating emotional depth within their films, also by paying more attention to detail.⁵⁴ Some scholars see this as gender features specifically belonging to female directors.⁵⁵ According to Ma, clear characteristics of Chinese Sixth Generation women's cinema are the focus on aesthetically pleasing cinema, self-expression and realism.⁵⁷ Other characteristics scholars point out are telling stories from a female point of view⁵⁸, discussing family relations⁶⁰, displaying new interpretations of love⁶², rejecting female objectification⁶³ and adding mild sarcasm and critique⁶⁴. In general, Chinese scholars see Chinese women's cinema as something fundamentally different from cinema made by male directors. Their points of view are often quite generalizing or even sexist, grouping all women directors into one subcategory. They see commercial

⁵⁰ Vanderstaay, 2008: 1

⁵¹ Dai, Noble trans., Wang & Barlow eds., 2002: 133

⁵² Cui, 2003: 200

⁵³ Wei, Wang ed., 2011: 139

⁵⁴ Fu and Liu, 2013: 35

⁵⁵ Si, n.d.: <http://wfh.wdfiles.com/local--files/dwfh-full-programme/Changing%20the%20Images%20of%20Woman%20in%20Contemporary%20Chinese%20Cinemas>

⁵⁶ Fu and Liu, 2013: 35

⁵⁷ Ma, 2015: 91

⁵⁸ Zhou, 2013: 82

⁵⁹ Ge, 2016: 67

⁶⁰ Zhou, 2013: 82

⁶¹ Ge, 2016: 67

⁶² Zhou, 2013: 83

⁶³ Yue, 2014: 76

⁶⁴ Yue, 2014: 74

cinema as the future, and praise independent directors (such as Li Yu) for going into a commercial direction.

Although scholars recognize similar elements in films from Sixth Generation directors, some say there is no such thing as a Sixth Generation. Li Yang, director of *Blind Shaft* (2003), stated in an interview in 2003 that he feels that a generation can't be determined by age, but by a common trend of thought or understanding.⁶⁵ Li doesn't feel that there is a drastic cinematic difference between the Fifth and the Sixth Generation of Chinese directors. Steve Rose also stated in *The Guardian* that "the Chinese film industry has changed so rapidly as to make the whole 'generations' system irrelevant."⁶⁶ Director Wang Xiaoshuai doesn't deny the existence of the Sixth Generation, but thinks the division of cinema by generation will cease to exist eventually: "A Seventh Generation will not arise, this generation advocates the director's individual character. This also means that forming a group with a common nature will gradually disappear, even more forming a so called Seventh Generation. Because they do not have any similarities, and basing the generations only on birth year or graduation year has no real meaning."⁶⁷

Admitting this is an interesting and important topic of debate, I suggest this as a topic for future research. Since Chinese cinema is generally addressed to in terms of generations based on age, and the question whether or not this division is irrelevant or not is not the focus of my study, I will continue referring to Chinese directors based on their generation.

2.4 Commercial vs. independent cinema in China

In this thesis, I make a distinction between two sectors of cinema: commercial and independent sector cinema. Independent films are produced by independent entertainment agencies, mostly on a lower budget. In these films, we can generally see the director's personal style and artistic vision shine through. Because they often address sensitive topics, most independent films are forbidden by the SARFT (State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television), and cannot be shown in Chinese cinema's. These films are produced outside the official production system and its ideological censorship. Western observers have acknowledged the newly emerged directors as outlaw moviemakers and their films as 'underground' or 'countercinema'. Official intolerance of these films and the lack of alternative distribution systems in China often compels these filmmakers to seek

⁶⁵ Teo, July 2003: http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/feature-articles/li_yang/

⁶⁶ Rose, 2002: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/aug/01/china.film>

⁶⁷ Ma, 2015: 91

recognition through international channels.⁶⁸ According to Cui, the term 'independent cinema' is "fraught with contradictions."⁶⁹ She states that although independent directors pursue independence from the official production system, she recognizes a commercial trend in alternative filmmaking that emphasizes market profit and audience reception. Cui writes: "The group of young film directors embodies a two-sided identity: a shunned minority within mainstream production in China and a valued dissident in the eyes of the film critics in the West. Thus, while eagerly sought by international film festivals or art-house distributors, their films remain inaccessible to general Chinese audiences."⁷⁰

Commercial films are films produced with a commercial aspect (within the official production system). According to Nicole Talmacs, "commercial filmmaking in China can only be understood as a mutually beneficial activity for all involved: the Party-state, filmmakers, commercial film exhibitors and film consumers."⁷¹

In reality, the boundaries of these sectors are not absolute, and some directors are defined by some as 'independent', and by others as 'commercial', or a combination of the two. The directors I study mostly fit into one of the sectors, except from Li Yu. Some critics regard Li Yu as a director belonging to the commercial sector of cinema⁷². Her films, however, are produced by Laurel Films, an independent production company in Beijing. Although Li Yu's style nowadays is becoming more mainstream and commercial than it used to be (*Dam Street* and *Fish and Elephant*), I view Li Yu and the film *Lost in Beijing* as belonging to the independent sector.

⁶⁸ Cui, Lu & Yeh eds., 2005 96-97

⁶⁹ Cui, Lu & Yeh eds., 2005: 96

⁷⁰ Cui, Lu & Yeh eds., 2005: 97

⁷¹ Talmacs, 2017: 4

⁷² Wang, 2011: 33

3 Methodology

3.3 Research approach and data collection

This research is based on the method of visual analysis of six selected films, combined with literature research (of literature both in English and Chinese). The literature (which I explored in the literature review) provides a broader framework for the visual analysis. The combination of these techniques is designed to get an appropriate balance between breadth and depth. I have chosen a social semiotic approach to visual analysis, as studied and described in depth by Carey Jewitt, Rumiko Oyama and Rick Iedema in *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*⁷³ and by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual design*⁷⁴. My research method is based on the theories and approach to (visual) social semiotics described in these two works.

For my research, I have selected the following films:

3.3.1 Independent sector

<i>Egg and Stone</i> (2012)	Huang Ji (1984-)
<i>Lost in Beijing</i> (2007)	Li Yu (1973-)
<i>Oxhide</i> (2005)	Liu Jiayin (1981-)

3.3.2 Commercial sector

<i>Finding Mr. Right</i> (2013)	Xue Xiaolu (1970-)
<i>You and me</i> (2005)	Ma Liwen (1971-)
<i>Letter From an Unknown Woman</i> (2004)	Xu Jinglei (1974-)

3.4 Data analysis & interpretation: a social semiotic analysis of film

This thesis deals with social semiotics, applied to film, to decipher intended meanings. According to Jewitt and Oyama, social semiotics of visual communication “involves the description of semiotic resources, what can be said and done with images (and other visual means of communication) and

⁷³ Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001: 134-156, 183-204

⁷⁴ Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996

how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted.”⁷⁵ It focuses on ‘texts’ (processes as a whole) rather than individual ‘signs’ (anything that can communicate a meaning). More specifically, Rick Iedema defines ‘texts’ as socially meaningful and entire processes, marked off by socially recognized beginnings and endings.⁷⁶ The term ‘texts’ then also encompasses, for example, television shows, books, plays, telephone calls and dinner parties. In social semiotics, it is therefore also common to refer to the medium of film as a text. There is, however, a difference between texts that are ‘presentations’ and texts that are ‘re-presentations’ of reality. ‘Presentations’, such as phone calls and dinner parties, take place in ‘real’ time and space, while, for instance, books and television shows are ‘representations’ of reality. In this thesis, I will only focus the medium film, which is a representation.

When analyzing representations of reality, such as film, it is vital to look at the construction of continuity in a text. “The construction of continuity has important implications for how we see (read: construct) reality”⁷⁷, states Iedema. What has the director chosen to edit in and how, and what has been left out? Was the content of the scenes that were deliberately left out seen as obvious or unimportant to the director?

When we talk about the construction of continuity in a text, we should also include rhythm. According to Van Leeuwen, rhythm is the prime organizer of filmic meaning.⁷⁸ The editor can play with rhythm to highlight important segments of the film. “Rhythmic grouping segments the text, at the level of perception, into units which are not only rhythmically but also semantically coherent. Without meaning in itself, rhythm is nevertheless a necessary condition for meaning”⁷⁹, states van Leeuwen.

In *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*, Iedema sets out six levels of film analysis: frame, shot, scene, sequence, generic stage and the work as a whole.⁸⁰ In addition to that, he sets out another tool with which social semiotics works: the hypothesis that all meaning-making always performs three ‘metafunctions’⁸¹: ‘representation’, ‘orientation’ and ‘organization’. Michael Halliday originally called the three metafunctions ‘ideational’, ‘inter-personal’ and ‘textual’ and applied them to language only. It was Jay Lemke who expanded the meaning of the terms to semiotics and renamed them ‘representation’(ideation), ‘orientation’ (interpersonality) and ‘organization’(textuality).⁸² In this thesis, I will use Lemke’s terms to describe the metafunctions. The goal of identifying these metafunctions is

⁷⁵ Jewitt and Oyama, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 134

⁷⁶ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 187

⁷⁷ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 188

⁷⁸ Van Leeuwen, Van Dijk ed., 1985: 223

⁷⁹ Van Leeuwen, Van Dijk ed., 1985: 223

⁸⁰ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 188-189

⁸¹ Halliday, 1987

⁸² Lemke, 1989

to recognize certain patterns in a text. “More importantly”, writes Iedema, “they [the answers to these metafunctional questions] may give clues about how the various patterns enrich each other.”⁸³ What do these patterns highlight or downplay?

3.3 Summarizing the analysis

For my research, I will look at Lemke's three metafunctions on six different levels. In my analysis, I will focus mostly on shots, scenes and the text as a whole.

The six levels of film analysis are:

1. Frame: representative still of a shot
2. Shot: camera movement is unedited
3. Scene: camera remains in one time – space, but is made up of more shots
4. Sequence: camera moves with specific character or subtopic across time-spaces
5. Generic stage: beginnings, middles, endings
6. Work as whole

Lemke's three metafunctions in short:

1. Representation: what meanings represent visually, verbally, musically or sound-wise. What is the subject? What is/are he/she/it/they doing?⁸⁴
2. Orientation: how meanings position characters and readers or viewers (distant, social, dynamic, isolated, etc.).⁸⁵ What techniques are used (cinematic composition/mise en scène)? What degree of social distance is construed between sound and the listener or viewer?⁸⁶ Who is the viewer favoring?
3. Organization: how meanings are sequenced and integrated into dynamic text (editing, structure and rhythm). How does rhythm interweave speech, sound, movement, image editing and macro-textual structuring?⁸⁷

⁸³ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 192

⁸⁴ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 191-192

⁸⁵ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 192

⁸⁶ Van Leeuwen, 1999: 28

⁸⁷ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 192

Iedema combines the two tools of analysis in the following overview⁸⁸:

	Individual frames and shots	Scenes and sequences	Stages and text as a whole
Representation: what is it about?			
Orientation: how does it enact the social?			
Organization: how is it put together as semiotic construct?			

For the analysis of the six selected films, I will use this overview as a basis. Since I won't focus as much on individual frames and shots, I will combine the first four levels into one. I will add the filled in overviews to my analysis. I will also include an extensive overview of all the scenes in each film to the appendix section of this thesis.

3.4 Difficulties and limitations

A practical difficulty for the collection of the research data has been finding copies of all the films I wanted to analyze. A selection of the films (*Oxhide, You and Me, Letter From an Unknown Woman* and *Lost in Beijing*) was available through the Leiden University Library catalog. An independent sector film such as *Egg and Stone*, however, was harder to find. The International Film Festival of Rotterdam (IFFR) was so kind as to provide me with a digital copy of *Egg and Stone* through their online database. The other movie (*Finding Mr. Right*) I have watched online through Youku, a (legal) Chinese online video hosting service. There were no English subtitles available for this movie, therefore I have translated the used quotes myself.

As far as the research method goes, there are a few limitations to (visual) social semiotics. The method of social semiotics is very laborious, technical and has a strong interpretive component. Iedema states that "social semiotics is an interpretive exercise, not a search for 'scientific proof'. Its purpose is to describe how texts construct realities, and to argue the sociohistorical nature of their assumptions and claims."⁸⁹ Other limitations might be that social semiotics focuses on the text itself, and on textual

⁸⁸ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, eds. 2001: 197

⁸⁹ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 198

structures, and not so much on the audience and their individual readings of the text.⁹⁰ Why, however, is the method of visual social semiotics so powerful, useful and important? I am strongly convinced that the pros of visual social semiotics outweigh the cons. Social semiotics is powerful because it allows us to understand a text on a meta-level and renegotiate meanings inherent in texts.

Another point I would like to address in this section, is that the research method I use in this thesis stems from the work of researchers, such as Kress and Van Leeuwen, that mostly see their work as valid for contemporary Western visual culture.⁹¹ They make no claims for the relevance of their ideas to visual communication in other cultures, such as the Chinese culture. Kress and Van Leeuwen, however, stress that the subject of different 'dialects' and 'inflections' in visual communication still needs to be explored more fully. Visual communication is not policed by the borders of a country. I would like to emphasize that I have a background in Chinese and Asian Studies, with knowledge of the Chinese language, which allows me to have more insight in whether or not the theories described in the literature would apply to my research.

3.5 Ethical considerations

There is minimal ethical consideration. All the information and films I obtained and watched in a legal way. I have received permission from the IFFR to watch *Egg and Stone* through their online database. I have watched *Finding Mr. Right* online through Youku, a legal online video hosting service. Youku used to engage in video piracy, but reviewed its strategy and is now helping to suppress piracy in China.⁹²

3.6 Summary

The method of social semiotic analysis "aims to enable us to question the ways in which the cinematic text presents social reality, and should provide means to talk back."⁹³ The overall study is to find out if and how female consciousness and self-identity are expressed in the six films directed by female directors from China's Sixth Generation. This chapter carefully prepares for the visual social semiotic analysis. The next chapters will address the results and conclusions. My visual analysis of the six films

⁹⁰ Iedema, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt eds., 2001: 200

⁹¹ Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 4

⁹² Taylor, April 2016: <http://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/040416/how-youku-tudou-replaced-pirating-china-yoku.asp>

⁹³ Nichols, 1981: 95

is a reading influenced by my social, ethnic, economic, gender and academic background, however, I do claim to be able to support my research with systematic evidence on which I base my conclusions.

4. Research findings: independent sector

4.1 Egg and Stone (2012)

4.1.1 Background on Huang Ji and her directing style

Director Huang Ji (1984-) was born in Hunan and graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 2007. In her first feature film, *Egg and Stone*, Huang Ji draws on her own experiences as a child. The setting of this film is the countryside village where Huang Ji herself grew up. She even casted her uncle as Yao Honggui's abusive uncle in the film.

Huang Ji is currently working on a trilogy of films about young women growing up in China today, of which *Egg and Stone* is the first part. The second part, *The Foolish Bird*, has premiered in February 2017. Her husband Ryoji Otsuka is the cinematographer of all her films.

Not much has been written about Huang Ji and her directing style so far, since she is a relatively new director and makes 'underground' cinema. Her style is highly individualistic and realistic. Huang Ji's films are not shown in Chinese cinema's; therefore, she doesn't receive attention from Chinese film critics. Her films do get shown at international film festivals. *Egg and Stone*, for example, premiered during the International Film Festival in Rotterdam (IFFR) in 2012. The following quote very clearly describes Huang Ji's drive to create the kind of films she has done so far: "Can a government wipe out the existence of those young women who have been sexually harassed? Precisely because the government continually seeks to obliterate these sorts of things, we therefore must not sing happy songs and put on a good show. We have to use film to record the existence of that which is obliterated and ignored."⁹⁴ She uses her personal experiences as a drive and inspiration for her films.

4.1.2 Film synopsis of *Egg and Stone* by Huang Ji

Egg and Stone depicts the story of a 14-year old girl named Yao Honggui, living in a small village in Yiyang, Hunan with her aunt and uncle. She is unwanted, both by her parents and by her aunt and uncle. Her parents have been working in the city for seven years. When Honggui tries to contact her mother, she is too busy to take her call and never calls back. *Egg and Stone* is about Honggui's personal tragedy, as well as the position of Chinese women in general. During the film, it gradually becomes clear that Honggui's uncle abuses her and she is pregnant. No scenes of violation are shown,

⁹⁴ "Huang Ji.", n.d.: <http://cinemaontheedge.com/huangji/>

and nobody ever discusses it, but by observing the behavior of both Honggui and her uncle closely, the viewer can draw this conclusion. We see Honggui struggling with fear, pain, and shame of her own body, while continually avoiding her uncle and locking her bedroom door and blocking her windows with cardboard. A returning source of shame for Honggui is the “Blood Pool Sutra”. Honggui’s grandma lets her read it and explains to her what it means: “The Blood Pool Sutra says that all the blood in a woman’s life from childbirth, miscarriages and menstruation is caught and collected by Yama, King of the Underworld. If we don’t recite the verse and appease him, when we die we will join him. He will hold our heads and make us drink away our own blood. Unless we recite the verse to relieve us from our sins.”⁹⁵ At the same time, the men in *Egg and Stone* are not that virtuous at all.

4.1.3 Analysis

	Frames, shots, scenes and sequences	Stages and text as a whole
Representation	All other actors apart from Honggui are shown in less logically connected snippets of interaction.	Honggui’s enacts the main narrative centering around her life and inner life.
Orientation	The story is told from Honggui’s perspective. She is often shown close-up, her face partly hidden by her hair. Visual motif of Honggui’s spread and closed legs.	Honggui is positioned as the sole main character of the film. As a viewer, you sympathize most with Honggui. Her aunt and uncle, as well as most of the other people in the village appear unsympathetic.
Organization	Honggui’s scenes decide the plot. Honggui is part of 95% of the scenes.	The structure and rhythm favor Honggui’s view.

4.1.4 Summary and conclusion

In *Egg and Stone*, the focus on Honggui’s spread and closed legs is a visual reminder of the tyrannical power her uncle has over her. This power is justified by the principles stated in the Blood Pool Sutra, which is taught to Honggui by her grandmother. She adopts these principles herself as well. Close-up shots of Honggui or Honggui’s legs are used in the film quite frequently, but not with the other characters. The use of these close-up shots is to further develop the character, rather than objectify her. This illustrates how camera techniques can be interpreted as being used in the film to display female consciousness. Huang Ji deliberately omits certain scenes and information, preferring to allow the viewers to fill the details in themselves. This also emphasizes the fact that Honggui is so terrified of

⁹⁵ *Egg and Stone*, 2012

what is happening and that the gruesome reality is alien to her. Every time we see Honggui in her room at night, the red toned lighting suggests aggressiveness and violence⁹⁶, and these scenes are often filled with Honggui hurting herself and loud banging on her door. Even though Honggui doesn't speak much, we can read her discomfort without the help of a voice-over. Her silence stimulates the imagination of viewers, making them wonder what secrets are hidden in the silence.

After a careful analysis of the film *Egg and Stone*, I can conclude that the female lead, Yao Honggui, is a narrating subject. The story is told from her point of view and leaves room to represent women in more inclusive ways. Honggui's journey, experiences and inner life are the focus and motor of this film, the other characters are simply supporting characters.

⁹⁶ Gianetti, 1992: 20-21

4.2 Lost in Beijing (2007)

4.2.1 Background on Li Yu and her directing style

Director Li Yu (1973-) was born in Shandong province and graduated from Shandong's Shifan University with a degree in Chinese literature in 1993. She started her career as a TV presenter for a local channel, but soon started making documentaries (such as *Sisters* (1996)⁹⁷) and feature films. Li Yu has directed six feature films up till now. She is known for her provocative films about contemporary China, which are often censored, edited or forbidden by the SARFT. In the book *Chinese Women's Cinema: Transnational Contexts*, Shuqin Cui describes Li Yu's first three feature films (*Fish and Elephant*, *Dam Street* and *Lost in Beijing*) as a "trilogy"⁹⁸. Not because of a continuing storyline, but because of a continuing theme (female sexuality). *Fish and Elephant* (2001), the first mainland Chinese to feature a lesbian relationship⁹⁹, is still not allowed to be shown in China nowadays. Li Yu's latest three films (*Buddha Mountain*, *Double Exposure* and *Ever Since We Love*) are approaching commercial cinema and address sensitive topics in a subtler way.

In an interview, Li Yu states that she finds that China has so many stories to tell, but that truly expressing them and showing them to the audience is very difficult under the current political system.¹⁰⁰

The film I chose to analyze in this thesis, *Lost in Beijing*, is part of Li Yu's earlier and more critical work. It represents her style from before she experienced her "transformation"¹⁰¹ into a more commercial style of cinema.

4.2.2 Film synopsis of *Lost in Beijing* by Li Yu

Lost in Beijing is Li Yu's third feature film, and it tells the story of a young migrant couple living in Beijing. Liu Pingguo (played by Fan Bingbing) and her husband An Kun (Tong Dawei) live in a small apartment and have low-paying jobs. An Kun works as a window washer, and Pingguo works at the Golden Basin Massage Parlor, run by Lin Dong (played by Tony Leung Ka-fai) and Wang Mei (played by Elaine Jin). When a colleague and friend of Pingguo, Xiao Mei (played by Zeng Meihuizi), is fired, Pingguo and Xiao Mei get drunk together. Although he claims that he is "not doing it on

⁹⁷ "Jiejie", n.d.: http://www.cctv.com/tvguide/0524_jilupian/zyzm/zyzm_46.html

⁹⁸ Cui, Wang and Wei eds., 2011: 179

⁹⁹ Cui, Wang and Wei eds., 2011: 168

¹⁰⁰ Li and Zuo, 2014: 73-74

¹⁰¹ Ni, 2011: <http://news.mtime.com/2011/03/04/1452614.html>

purpose”, Lin Dong rapes Pingguo when she is lying drunk and half-conscious on a bed. The rape is witnessed by An Kun, who later punishes Pingguo for it. He also tries to blackmail Lin Dong, but fails. After Pingguo finds out she is pregnant, her unborn baby soon becomes the cause of many fights and negotiations. An Kun tells Lin Dong he is the father of the child, while Pingguo debates to get an abortion or not. An Kun and Lin Dong sign a contract agreeing that An Kun will receive 120.000 RMB if Lin Dong turns out to be the father of the unborn child. Driven by his greed for money, An Kun bribes the doctor to change the blood type of the baby on the birth certificate, in order to get his money, even though he turns out to be the biological father and has to give up his child.

4.2.3 Analysis

	Shots, scenes and sequences	Stages and text as a whole
Representation	Many scenes that include the female main characters* show passive behavior; male main characters** are often shown initiating action and interaction. The female characters act according to the decisions of the male characters. Male characters influence the plot; female characters are shown in less logically connected sequences.	Male characters enact the main narratives centering around the future of the baby.
Orientation	The female characters are often shown closer up, focusing on their hands or face, and often filmed from behind. The story is told from a male perspective.	Male characters are positioned as those who deal with and face what is real; the female characters are positioned as those who deal with the consequences. As a viewer, you sympathize most with Pingguo, but near the end start developing sympathy for Wang Mei and Lin Dong as well.
Organization	Male characters are positioned as dominant, and female characters as subordinate; this pattern continues throughout the film. Male scenes are constructed on the basis of deciding the plot, while female scenes are constructed on the basis of dealing with the consequences.	The male-centered segments punctuate the female-centered ones.

*Female main characters: Pingguo and Wang Mei

**Male main characters: An Kun and Lin Dong

4.2.4 Summary and conclusion

With *Lost in Beijing*, Li Yu paints a portrait of (young) Chinese women living in Beijing. It shows their struggles and their position in society. The female main characters in *Lost in Beijing* are not simply “gazed” at by men, but also frequently humiliated and insulted. Their status is mostly influenced by their behavior, age and appearance. The story is told from a male perspective; An Kun and Lin Dong influence the plot, while Pingguo and Wang Mei deal with the consequences of their decisions. An Kun is mostly focused on money and is materialistic to the point where he ‘sells’ his own wife and child, while Lin Dong is mostly focused on securing his future, without consulting with his wife first. Even though this film paints a very negative picture of the male characters, the two-dimensional character of Lin Dong experiences a positive development near the end, turning into a more faceted character. When Pingguo is pregnant and An Kun tells him he is the biological father, Lin Dong starts acting more loving and caring towards Pingguo. This might be out of selfishness, but for the viewer the position of the ‘bad guy’ shifts from Lin Dong to An Kun.

After a thorough analysis of the film, I have concluded that the female characters in this film are no narrating subjects, and that there is little room for female agency and female consciousness. The story is not told from a female point of view and does not stray away from traditional male and female roles.

4.3 Oxhide (2005)

4.3.1 Background on Liu Jiayin and her directing style

Director Liu Jiayin (1981-) was born in Beijing and graduated from the Beijing Film Academy with *Oxhide* as her graduation project. In 2009, she released *Oxhide II*. In both films, Liu Jiayin casts her parents and herself as fictionalized characters of themselves, transforming documentary into fiction. “Small moments between family members reveal deep insights into the mysteries of family relations and the art of everyday living.”¹⁰² The narratives in *Oxhide* focus more on the father’s leather bag business, while *Oxhide II* is set around the family’s dinner table while they make dumplings. Both films are set in the family’s small and dark Beijing home.

For the same reasons as Huang Ji, Liu Jiayin has received little attention from film critics and scholars; she is relatively new to the field and directs more experimental films. Her style is highly individualistic and realistic.

4.3.2 Film synopsis of *Oxhide* by Liu Jiayin

Oxhide tells the story of a young woman (played by Liu Jiayin) and her parents (played by Liu Zaiping and Jia Huifen), living in a small apartment in Beijing. The storyline is mostly about the father’s leather bag business that is slowly going bankrupt. The film is made up of 23 static, one-scene shots, all filmed in the 50 m2 apartment the family lives in.¹⁰³ Scenes in the film include the father measuring his daughter, the parents discussing discount, the family having dinner, the father working on new bags, and the family arguing.

4.3.3 Analysis

	Frames, shots, scenes and sequences	Stages and text as a whole
Representation	Many scenes show the father as the dominant character. The family’s financial situation influences the plot. Since the father is the head breadwinner, he influences the plot.	The father enacts the main narrative, earning money with his business to support his family.

¹⁰² “Oxhide II (Niu Pi II)”, n.d.: <http://dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/oxhide-ii-niu-pi-ii>

¹⁰³ “Oxhide (Niu Pi)”, n.d.: <http://dgeneratefilms.com/catalog/oxhide-niu-pi>

Orientation	The father enacts a thematic consistency (earning money, teaching daughter). Both male and female characters are shown close-up. The story is told from all three of the character's perspective.	The father is positioned as the one who has the main responsibility for the family's future, but his daughter and wife help him.
Organization	The father is positioned as slightly dominant, but mother and daughter often fight with him. This pattern continues throughout the film.	The structure of the film does not favor a specific character. Since the style of the film looks like that of a documentary, the viewer can observe the characters in the same way.

4.3.4 Summary and conclusion

In *Oxhide*, Liu Jiayin displays the life and struggles of a Chinese family in a unique and innovative way. By using 23 static, one-scene shots, zoomed in on different parts of their apartment, she thrusts the viewer's attention onto a character of moment of importance. The extreme close-ups, which make the viewer aware of the dark and cramped space in which the family lives and works, also symbolize the entrapment of the family in the small apartment, both literally and figuratively. Because of their economic difficulties, they are unable to move out and are stuck with each other. This way, the setting of the film takes on a more symbolic meaning.

By keeping the camera on the family for a long time, any protective cut-aways, special lighting or flattering camera angles are removed: the family is completely exposed emotionally. They have to confront and solve their problems without any flashy, artificial cinematic techniques, which makes their situation even more realistic.

After a thorough analysis of the film, I have concluded that the film is mostly about the family dynamic as a whole. The father has a slightly more dominant role in the family, since he is the head of the family and the breadwinner, but there is also room for the inner life and consciousness of the female characters. In my opinion, the story is not told from a specifically female point of view, but also not from a male point of view. The film does, however, display emotional depth in all three characters.

5. Research findings: commercial sector

5.1 Finding Mr. Right (2013)

5.1.1 Background on Xue Xiaolu and her directing style

Director Xue Xiaolu (1970-) was born in Beijing and graduated from the Beijing Film Academy, where she also works as a teacher. Before she was a director, she was already a screenwriter for films such as Chen Kaige's *Together* (2002). Xue Xiaolu's first feature film was *Ocean Heaven* (2010), followed by *Finding Mr. right* (2013). In 2013, *Finding Mr. Right* came in as the tenth highest-grossing domestic release in China, with a total of \$76.1 million (471 million RMB) by the end of March 2013.¹⁰⁴ In 2016, the success of *Finding Mr. Right* led to a follow-up, titled *Book of Love* or *Finding Mr. Right 2*. *Finding Mr. Right*'s style is very fast-paced, commercial and international, appealing to a big audience.

5.1.2 Film synopsis of *Finding Mr. Right* by Xue Xiaolu:

Finding Mr. Right tells the story of the pregnant Wen Jiajia (played by Tang Wei), whose boyfriend in China, Old Zhong, is a corrupt and married businessman. When Jiajia goes to Seattle to have her baby there, she meets Frank (played by Wu Xiubo). He is her taxi driver, and drops her off at Ms. Huang's maternity center. Although Frank and Jiajia do not get along very well at the beginning, they gradually become closer. Frank continuously takes care of Jiajia, even though she is very rude, demanding and shallow. Later on, Jiajia also starts forming a relationship with Frank's daughter Julie (played by Jessica and Monica Song), as well as with the women she lives with in the maternity center.

5.1.3 Analysis

	Frames, shots, scenes and sequences	Stages and text as a whole
Representation	The female characters mostly influence the plot. Frank segments are shown when Jiajia's storyline needs Frank to be there.	Jiajia enacts the main narrative centering her future and her baby's future.
Orientation	The story is told from Jiajia's point of view. Frank is an important character and influences Jiajia's behavior, but his segments have less consistency.	The viewer gets to see most personal development and emotional depth in Jiajia. Jiajia is first positioned as a shallow character, but gradually gets

¹⁰⁴ Tsui, 2013: <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/china-box-office-finding-mr-439989>

		more depth.
Organization	Jiajia is positioned as shallow, rude and demanding, while Frank is positioned as caring and patient. This pattern changes during the film. Jiajia's character becomes less two-dimensional as the story progresses.	The female segments are central to the story. Frank is important to the story, but serves more a tool for Jiajia's personal growth.

5.1.4 Summary and conclusion

In the beginning of the film, Wen Jiajia embodies consumerism in any way. She wears flashy outfits which reflect the woman she wants to be: rich and respected. She constantly uses her boyfriend's creditcard and money to get everything she wants. When she arrives in Seattle, she soon finds out that having money is not all that is important in life. Jiajia's character progresses from a shallow and rude snob, to a caring and loving mother. Frank and his daughter Julie are a good example for her of how family life can also be. Jiajia gradually rejects her fancy life, and is even forced to because her boyfriend ends up in jail, but she works hard and finds out what is really important to her in life.

After a careful analysis of the film, I can conclude that the film *Finding Mr. Right* by Xu Jinglei does display female consciousness through the many female characters in this film. The main character, Jiajia, experience a big personal transition, which is the main focus of this film. The film invites viewers to share their points of view, while keeping the story fairly light, funny, and easy to watch. Although the film has an obvious romantic storyline as well, Jiajia's personal transition and cultivation of self-knowledge are the motor of the story.

5.2 You and Me (2005)

5.2.1 Background on Ma Liwen and her directing style

Director Ma Liwen (1971-) was born in Jiangxi, but moved to Beijing in the early '90's. She graduated from the Central Academy of Drama in 1994. Ma Liwen's first feature film was an adaptation of a novel by female writer Zhang Jie, titled *Gone is the One Who Held Me Dearest in the World* (2001). Even though her films are made with a smaller budget, they have been well received both domestically and internationally. This proves that successful films do not necessarily need a huge budget and star actors. Ma's second film, *You and Me*, is loosely based on her own experience of moving to Beijing, renting a small room in a courtyard (*siheyuan*) and starting university. Her landlady was also an elderly woman, who was keeping to herself at first, but the two of them gradually developed an emotional bond, just like Xiao Ma and Grandma Huang in *You and Me*. Ma Liwen's directing style in *You and Me* is clean, personal and realistic.

5.2.2 Film synopsis of *You and Me* by Ma Liwen

You and Me tells the story of Huang Xiao Ma (played by Gong Zhe) and Grandma Huang (played by Jia Yaqin). When Xiao Ma just arrives in Beijing, she is looking for a place to live. She eventually ends up in a small courtyard home, where she and her landlady have a difficult start. They constantly fight over small issues, such as telephone costs and electricity bills. As the seasons progress, however, Xiao Ma and Grandma Huang start getting more amicable. The focus is fully on the tension and relationship between the two main characters, which balances out the rather simple storyline.¹⁰⁵ At the end of the film, Xiao Ma and Grandma Huang are as family to each other.

5.2.3 Analysis

	Frames, shots, scenes and sequences	Stages and text as a whole
Representation	Female characters lead the plot, plot is influenced by the decisions of female characters only. Male characters are shown in very few scenes.	Female characters enact the main narratives.
Orientation	The story is told from a female perspective. Every scene focuses on both Xiao Ma and	The female characters as positioned as those who deal and face with

¹⁰⁵ Kane, 2010: 212-213

	Grandma Huang individually, as on their relationship with each other.	what's real. As a viewer, you sympathize both with Xiao Ma and Grandma Huang.
Organization	Female characters are positioned as dominant; this pattern continues throughout the whole film. Male characters are simply supporting actors.	The structure of the film favors both the view of Xiao Ma and Grandma Huang.

5.2.4 Summary and conclusion

In *You and Me*, Ma Liwen tells the touching story of Grandma Huang and Huang Xiao Ma. These two female characters are the sole focus and motor of this film. There are only two appearances of male characters in *You and Me*: Grandma Huang's grandson and Xiao Ma's boyfriend. They hold a very passive role in the story overall. The slow editing of *You and Me* matches the atmosphere of the film perfectly; nothing much happens, but as the seasons slowly progress, an important bond between Grandma Huang and Xiao Ma begins to form. The setting of the film is also very basic: Grandma Huang and Xiao Ma's courtyard home. Most of the scenes take place here. The setting can also be interpreted as a reflection of Grandma Huang's character. The place is quiet and basic, not many visitors come by. Grandma Huang lives a solitary life until she becomes closer to Xiao Ma. Another scene that symbolizes the effect Xiao Ma has on Grandma Huang's life is when Xiao Ma cleans and rearranges Grandma's house. Grandma seems not to like it at first, but becomes livelier afterwards. When Xiao Ma hears the news about Grandma Huang's death, Ma Liwen uses the effect of slow-motion to emphasize her intense emotional feelings, indicating Xiao Ma and Grandma's strong connection.

After a thorough analysis of the film *You and Me*, I can conclude that the female leads, Huang Xiao Ma and Grandma Huang, are narrating subjects and display female consciousness. Both characters go through a process of transition and develop their own subjectivity and identity. This film steers away from the traditional way of positioning male and female characters in Chinese cinema.

5.3 Letter From an Unknown Woman (2004)

5.3.1 Background on Xu Jinglei and her directing style

Director Xu Jinglei (1974-) was born in Beijing and graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1997. She has been an actress and popular idol for many years, and directed her first feature film in 2003 (*My Father and I*) in which she also played the female lead. *Letter From an Unknown Woman*, in which Xu also plays the main character, is the second feature film she directed. The story is an adaptation of Stefan Zweig's novella *Letter From an Unknown Woman* (1922). "Whereas the original story was a Freudian study of pathological female hysteria, Xu Jinglei's version suggests rather a classical tale of unrequited love, making no mention of mental illness."¹⁰⁶ The film is set in the late 1940's, which wasn't Xu Jinglei's original intention. She wanted the film to be set between the 1970's and 1990's, but due to the politically sensitive themes in *Letter From an Unknown Woman*, she chose a different time frame.¹⁰⁷ After *Letter From an Unknown Woman*, Xu Jinglei directed five more feature films, including *Dear Enemy* (2011) and *The Missing* (2017).

5.3.2 Film synopsis of *Letter From an Unknown Woman* by Xu Jinglei

Letter From an Unknown Woman depicts the story of Miss Jiang (played by Xu Jinglei) and Mr. Xu (played by Jiang Wen), two characters who rarely meet during the course of two decades. At the beginning of the film, Mr. Xu, a renowned writer, receives a letter on his birthday. The letter is from Miss Jiang, who has just died after her son passed away. As Mr. Xu starts reading the letter, the stories of the past come back to life. Throughout their lives, Mr. Xu and Miss Jiang meet on several occasions, one of them leading to Miss Jiang's pregnancy. For Mr. Xu, however, every time the two of them meet is as the first time, he does not remember her.¹⁰⁸ Mr. Xu ends their relationship twice, but he does not say he is doing so. Mr. Xu once even mistakes Miss Jiang for a prostitute and pays her for the night. Miss Jiang spends her whole life waiting to be recognized, and loving Mr. Xu regardless of anything. She cares for their son alone, and only tells Mr. Xu about his existence in her letter.

5.3.3 Analysis

¹⁰⁶ Zhang in Wang, 2011: 228

¹⁰⁷ Kane, 2010: 102-103

¹⁰⁸ Kane, 2010: 102-103

	Frames, shots, scenes and sequences	Stages and text as a whole
Representation	Many scenes that include Miss Jiang show active behavior. Even though she is obsessed with Mr. Xu, she makes her own decisions and influences the plot. Mr. Xu is shown in less logically connected sequences.	Miss Jiang enacts the main narratives centering around her future and the future of her baby.
Orientation	Miss Jiang is always in focus, while Mr. Xu is often looked at via a mirror or spied on secretly (gazed at), or blurry in the background.	Miss Jiang is positioned as the main character who has to deal with her love for Mr. Xu, but lives her life independently; Mr. Xu is positioned as unreliable. Viewer sympathizes with Miss Jiang.
Organization	Miss Jiang's scenes are constructed on the basis of deciding the plot, while Mr. Xu's scenes follow the plot.	The structure and rhythm of the film favor Miss Jiang's view.

5.3.4 Summary and conclusion

In *Letter From an Unknown Woman*, Xu Jinglei tells the story of Miss Jiang, a woman who is obsessively in love with Mr. Xu, a man she comes across as a child. Xu Jinglei uses a voice-over to access the inner thoughts of Miss Jiang, and to enhance the atmosphere in a gentle, unobtrusive manner. Miss Jiang as the narrator sets the mood, telling us more than about her life and experiences than a dialogue ever can. Miss Jiang's love for Mr. Xu makes her dependent on him in some ways, but she maintains a kind of dignity throughout her life by never telling Mr. Xu about one-sided her love for him. In her view, it is her free choice not to tell him about their child and raising him by herself.

After a careful analysis of the film *Letter From an Unknown Woman*, I can conclude that the female lead, Miss Jiang, is a narrating subject. Even though the entire film focuses on the asymmetrical relationship between Miss Jiang and Mr. Xu, the story is told from her point of view, supported by the use of a voice-over. Miss Jiang is the prominent character, this is supported by certain camera techniques throughout the film. Mr. Xu is often out of focus or standing far away, and the viewer never really gets to see his inner self. Miss Jiang's journey, experiences and inner life are the focus and motor of this film. She is influenced by her love for Mr. Xu, but is still the main character that influences the plot of the movie. In Miss Jiang's view, her devotion is not slavish, but a free choice.

6. Conclusions

Throughout this thesis, I have used the concepts of gender consciousness and self-identity as a way of analyzing the representation of female characters in films from Chinese Sixth Generation women directors. By using a combination of literature research and visual analysis (social semiotics), I have studied how and to what extent female consciousness is portrayed through female characters in films from both the independent (*Egg and Stone*, *Lost in Beijing* and *Oxhide*) and commercial sector (*Finding Mr. Right*, *You and Me* and *Letter From an Unknown Woman*).

Most scholars writing about China's female directors automatically make the assumption that their films reject female objectification and tell a story from a female perspective. In reality, however, this is not always the case, as we can conclude from Li Yu's film *Lost in Beijing*. In *Lost in Beijing*, the story is told from a male perspective and the female characters show no explicit display of female consciousness or personal growth.

Some of the films I have analyzed in this thesis, however, display new, non-standard representations of female characters in Chinese cinema and are striking expressions of emotional, intellectual, social and sexual female subjectivity. The best example of a new way of presenting female characters is, in my opinion, *Egg & Stone* by Huang Ji. The very personal story of Honggui is told in a refreshing and cinematographically pleasing way.

In contrary to what I predicted in the introduction section of this thesis, the portrayal of female consciousness and self-identity is not necessarily stronger in films from the independent sector than it is in films from the commercial sector. The approach and style of directors of these two sectors, however, is different. Commercial sector directors work within the system, and often choose a subtler approach to sensitive subjects. Independent sector directors have more space to experiment, and often adopt a very personal and realistic style of directing.

The field of women's cinema in China is still expanding, giving all kinds of directors a platform to tell their story, either within or outside of the official production system. I hope their films may inspire many film critics and scholars to study their work in the future.

7. Appendix

7.1 Scene overview of Egg and Stone

	Scene	Visuals	Relevant talk
5.3.4.1 Ya	Yao Honggui in her room	Red toned light. Hurting herself. Key around her neck. Windows are blocked with cardboard. Loud banging on the door. Door is locked.	
5.3.4.2	Next morning	Shot of house in mist. Honggui wakes up. Shot of only legs (from high angle). Is not bleeding. Honggui changes tissue paper in her underwear. Honggui leaves quietly, without saying anything to uncle. Honggui drives away with Ajiu on his scooter (with bag of eggs). Ajiu takes the eggs and gives Honggui a stone. Ajiu walks away.	Ajiu: "You wait for the bus here. I'm going to work."
5.3.4.3	Baiyu talks to Honggui	Focus on Honggui's hands. See seems nervous. Baiyu wants Honggui to help her win a drawing competition (by being her model).	Baiyu: "You know what happens when you get your period, right? She didn't know. Everybody was mocking her. Look what happened to her." Baiyu: "I want to surprise my parents. I'll show them a daughter is equally good as a son, so they won't adopt a boy."
5.3.4.4	Aunt talks to sister on the phone	They discuss money. Aunt complains about it to uncle.	Aunt: "Sister promised to pay us back and leave Honggui with us for only 2 years. It has already been 7 years now. She's already 14 years old!"
5.3.4.5	Honggui is in her room, using Baiyu's stamp	Aunt asks what she is doing up there. Honggui smears the ink over the paper.	
5.3.4.6	Morning exercise at school.	Girls wash their hands afterwards. Honggui is the last one left. Tissue paper falls out of her pants. Students shout at her.	Student: "Honggui, what are you doing over there by yourself? Gross!"
5.3.4.7	Women eat sunflower seeds and gossip		"Weren't you just talking about Little Lou? I can't believe what her father did. All their money was spent on abortions. She's not even 16 yet. If she keeps doing this, she won't be able to have children in the future. What's with these people?"
5.3.4.8	Honggui blow dries her hair	Aunt criticizes Honggui.	Aunt: "You used all the hot water. You knew I have guests!"

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5.3.4.9	Honggui in bed	Holds stone. Knocking on the door.	
5.3.4.10	Next morning	Honggui gets up. Stone is still on bed. Waits for uncle to leave. Delivers remembrance photo to old man with Ajiu. They hang photo upside down.	
5.3.4.11	Honggui models for Baiyu	Honggui gives Baiyu her stamp. Models for drawing.	
5.3.4.12	Uncle asks aunt to pick him up	Raining. Night. Aunt does not want to come.	Uncle: "Are you going to play mahjongg all night again?"
5.3.4.13	Honggui wants to talk to her mom on the phone	Little brother (?) picks up the phone. Mother is too busy.	Honggui: "Ask her to call me back. I need to talk to her."
5.3.4.14	Honggui waits next to the phone	Raining outside. Honggui rests her head on the table, looking outside.	
5.3.4.15	Photo studio	Ajiu plays with disco ball and changes backdrop for photo. Honggui takes a picture with her uncle.	Photographer: "Great, you look like his real daughter."
5.3.4.16	Honggui and Ajiu visit grandma	Grandma prays for grandpa.	
5.3.4.17	Reading the "Blood Pool Sutra"	Honggui reads out loud, grandma sits on the bed.	<p>Honggui: "The monk Mokuren traveled to Yang County, and saw a hell made of a pool of blood. A vast hell, 84.000 feet across. Hair hanging down, women were suffering. Women in pain yarning and aufflesing. Mokuren cried, why should they suffer so. God of the Underworld said: Women's blood spills onto the ground, their bloodstained clothes are washed in the river and pollute the water with their filth. Virtuous men use this water as offerings, so the gods are offended. Only by reciting this sutra, can women enter the eternal world."</p> <p>Grandma: "The Blood Pool Sutra says that all the blood in a woman's life from childbirth, miscarriages and menstruation is caught and collected by Yama, King of the Underworld. If we don't recite the verse and appease him, when we die we will join him. He will hold our heads and make us drink away our own blood. Unless we recite the verse to relieve us from our sins."</p>
5.3.4.18	Honggui takes a bath	Uses mirror to look between her legs.	
5.3.4.19 H	Honggui folds up copy of The Blood Pool Sutra and in tissue paper and puts it	Focus on legs and hands (from high angle). Hair hides her face. Key is always around her	

	in her underwear	neck.	
5.3.4.20	Ritual	Close-ups, blurry. Zoom-in on egg and stone. Outside, Honggui washes the dishes.	“Bring his spirit into the egg. Cover and protect the spirit. Send him to the place of no sorrows.”
5.3.4.21	Aunts plays mahjongg	Honggui sits in corner, doesn't speak or react. Hair hides face. Honggui walks outside. Tries to open car. Walks away with torch. Dark.	Aunt: “Honggui, go to bed. It's getting late. Are you going to bed? Tell Honggui to go to sleep. She won't listen to me.” Uncle: “Come on, let's sleep here. Did you hear me? Come over here.” Aunt: “Honggui, are you going to bed or not?”
5.3.4.22	Honggui tears up tissue paper and Blood Pool Sutra	Shot of feet and wash bowl. Honggui starts hitting her own stomach with her fist. On the floor lies a piece of the sutra with the character for “blood” written on it.	
5.3.4.23	Ajiu in hotel room with boss	Boss talks to daughter/son on the phone.	Boss: “A lot of factories are looking for workers. I can get you any kind of job there. The money's good down in Canton. I'm going to take a shower.” “Let me use your motorcycle!”
5.3.4.24	Honggui waits for Ajiu with bag of eggs	Scooter drives by. Starts raining. Ajiu walks up to her. She sits quietly. Ajiu checks out eggs and leaves Honggui money and a stone/stamp. Honggui holds the stone tightly.	
5.3.4.25	Ajiu gets his monthly wages and cleans scooter		
5.3.4.26	Honggui faints during exercising at school	Honggui is out of shot. Teacher runs across schoolyard, carrying Honggui in his arms.	
5.3.4.27	Honggui is pregnant	Honggui in bed, sleeping. Notebook has stamp in it: “Hong”. Aunt and uncle sit at table. Uncle has his hands hiding his eyes, they don't look at each other. Uncle doesn't seem to want to keep the baby.	Aunt: “I think the baby must be Ajiu's. Whoever the father is, we have to make sure she has the baby.” Uncle: “But if it's a boy, the father will want it. Then it would be a waste of time.” Aunt: “Just don't let Honggui tell anyone who the father is.” Uncle: “They could always do a genetic test.” Aunt: “I'm not worried about that. You have to make sure she keeps the baby. It's getting harder to get babies from other places. We will raise her baby like our own. Unlike Honggui who keeps a distance. This is an opportunity for us. I want that baby.” Uncle: “All because you can't have one yourself.”
5.3.4.28	Aunt and Honggui sit on bed.	Don't look at each other. Honggui's hair	

		hides her face. They don't speak.	
5.3.4.29	Uncle puts liquid and powder in glass for Honggui to drink	Shot of hands and glass on top of photos of scan (he is a doctor). He asks aunt to let Honggui drink the liquid.	Uncle: "Tell her if she doesn't drink it, then we tell her parents."
5.3.4.30 \	Honggui has miscarriage	Night. Honggui is in pain. She cries. Fireworks outside.	
5.3.4.31	Next morning: aunt finds out what happened	Aunt walks into Honggui's room. Shot of bowl of blood with lump in it.	
5.3.4.32	Honggui at doctor	Shot of spread legs and doctor at work. Honggui clutches the sides of the bed and breathes raggedly.	
5.3.4.33	Honggui in hospital	Sound of fireworks outside. Honggui lies in bed. Uncle visits Honggui. Honggui has put the key that's around her neck in her mouth. Honggui doesn't speak to him. Honggui breathes heavily. Uncle tries to take key out of her mouth, but she stops him. He runs out of room. She is holding a stone/stamp and cries.	Aunt to nurse: "I just have one small favor to ask. She is still in school, can we keep this a secret?"
5.3.4.34	Baiyu wins "Spring Flower Competition"	Not with picture she drew of Honggui. She thanks her friend Yangle for helping her.	
5.3.4.35	Uncle empties Honggui's bedroom	Uncle takes down cart board from windows, sells furniture.	
5.3.4.36	Honggui lives with grandma now	Honggui helps grandma around the house. Grandma kills chicken. Blood drips on sutra.	Grandma prays: "Please wash our sins and let us be innocent again."
5.3.4.37	Honggui takes a bath	She looks up, light shines on her face. She is bleeding (period). She inspects the blood on her hand.	

7.2 Scene overview of Lost in Beijing

	Scene	Visuals	Relevant talk
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5.3.4	Girl visits Lin Dong for sex	Girl walking up to Lin Dong's hotel room, filmed from behind.	Lin Dong: "I can't make love in a hurry."
5.3.4	Introducing the massage parlor	Lin Dong drives to work: Beijing scenery, lot of movement. Masseuses at work: Close-ups, focus on hands. Client tries to touch Pingguo. Lin Dong plays poker: filmed from a higher angle, playing with a lot of money.	Xiao Mei: "This guy sucks." Pingguo: "They all do nowadays."
5.3.4	Masseuses getting off work	In dressing room: zoomed in on faces Xiao Mei and Pingguo talk about men outside.	Pingguo: "Just go buy yourself a cherry."
4.	Pingguo comes home	An Kun eats dinner, Pingguo and An Kun have sex in the shower.	Pingguo: "Don't come visit me at work. If my boss knows I'm married, I'm finished."
5.	Start of a new day	Visuals of Beijing, An Kun washing windows, Pingguo getting ready for work. Lin Dong fires Xiao Mei	Lin Dong: "The trouble is not about you being touched."
6.	Pingguo and Xiao Mei get drunk after work	Unclear images, lot of movement, close-ups. Pingguo and Xiao Mei drink at restaurant.	Xiao Mei: "Beijing is so big, why is there no room for a little me?" Pingguo: "They are all jerks."
7.	Pingguo returns to massage salon drunk and gets raped by Lin Dong	An Kun views them through the window and attacks Lin Dong.	Lin Dong: "I'm not doing this on purpose."
8.	An Kun and Pingguo fight at home	An Kun rejects Pingguo, later has violent sex with her.	An Kun: "Get out."
9.	An Kun and Pingguo take a walk outside	Keeping distance, grim colors and atmosphere, Beijing as background.	
10.	An Kun takes revenge on Lin Dong	An Kun damages Lin Dong's car.	
11.	An Kun calls Lin Dong for money	Lin Dong is with another girl, denies rape.	Lin Dong: "How would I know who Liu Pingguo is? Whoever fucked your wife is a bastard."
12.	Lin Dong and Pingguo fight	Pingguo walks up to Lin Dong, they talk in the car.	Lin Dong: "You didn't tell me that you are married." Lin Dong: "It was you who started it." Lin Dong: "Didn't you get an orgasm."
13.	An Kun visits Wang Mei	An Kun and Wang Mei have sex. Afterwards, An Kun wears Wang Mei's sunglasses. Visuals of Beijing.	Wang Mei: "Why don't you fuck his wife to get back to him."
14.	Pingguo, Xiao Mei and An Kun have diner together	Xiao Mei shows gifts from customers. Zoomed in on faces.	Pingguo: "Did you let him touch you?" Xiao Mei: "Just a little."

15.	Wang Mei confronts Lin Dong	Focus on hands of Wang Mei while doing cupping, laughing becomes crying.	
16.	Pingguo and An Kun get a pregnancy test	Dark, candle-light, close-ups.	An Kun: "It's for sure not mine." Pingguo: "Since it's not yours, why keep it." An Kun: "If you dare to do it, I'll break your leg." Pingguo: "It's my belly, not yours." An Kun: "Don't do that, it's a chance from heaven."
17.	An Kun tells Lin Dong about pregnancy	In Lin Dong's office, no close-ups.	An Kun: "You should accept your responsibility."
18.	Lin Dong tells Wang Mei about pregnancy	In car, Wang Mei gets out angrily.	Lin Dong: "You have to accept it." Wang Mei: "I can't change what you have already decided."
19.	Lin Dong and An Kun negotiate about the baby	On the roof, they write with pebbles.	Lin Dong: "If this baby is born a 'B', then it's my child and I keep it. I'll pay you 100.000 RMB. If it's 'A', you will not lose anything. If it's 'O', then we will have to undergo a DNA test" An Kun: "Do you admit you have fucked my wife?"
20.	An Kun and Wang Mei have sex again	Wang Mei seems to start developing feelings for An Kun. They lie in bed together.	
21.	Pingguo goes to an abortion clinic	Unsteady camera. Pingguo walks to the clinic.	
22.	An Kun and Pingguo fight because he thinks she did the abortion	Sitting on a bench near the Forbidden City, mostly filmed from behind.	
23.	An Kun and Lin Dong sign a contract the four of them drive home afterwards	Pingguo and Wang Mei just watch, Wang Mei only asks Pingguo if she wants to get a facial at her salon. Lin Dong calls the baby deal a "successful partnership".	Lin Dong: "An Kun, here is 20.000 to compensate for your distress. And here is another 100.000."
24.	Pingguo at work	Masseuses dance.	Lin Dong: "Pingguo, go back and rest."
25.	Lin Dong visits An Kun and Pingguo's apartment	Dark, close-ups. Lin Dong brings vitamins for Pingguo and criticizes their apartment.	Lin Dong: "You to shower together? That's not right!"
26.	Lin Dong worries if the child is really his	Lin Dong talks to Wang Mei before bed.	Wang Mei: "It's a gamble, either you win or you lose."
27.	Lin Dong and An Kun fight over the baby	Lin Dong and An Kun both listen to Pingguo's belly. An Kun seems jealous.	Lin Dong: "He kicks as long as I am near."
38.	Pingguo and An Kun in bed	An Kun falls asleep while Pingguo is still talking.	Pingguo: "What if it's your kid?"
39.	Time passes by	Beijing scenery. Wang Mei and An Kun's affaire continues, Pingguo's pregnancy progresses, Xiao Mei still works as a prostitute.	
40.	Pingguo delivers the baby	An Kun first looks happy, but then bribes the	An Kun: "Dr. Zhang, there is something wrong here."

		doctor to change the blood type on the birth certificate.	
41.	Lin Dong visits the baby for the first time	An Kun receives the money, while Pingguo is sleeping and Lin Dong looks really happy to hold the baby.	
42.	Wang Mei and Lin Dong fight	Wang Mei drives away in her car, crying.	Lin Dong: "Pingguo will nurse him for half a year, then she will be gone."
43.	Pingguo and An Kun both look out of the window while baby cries	In hospital room. Baby lies in crib.	
44.	Wang Mei and Lin Dong throw a party	An Kun and Pingguo work in the kitchen, Pingguo feeds the baby while Wang Mei watches.	Wang Mei: "To others, you are our nanny."
45.	Pingguo lives with Wang Mei and Lin Dong	Wang Mei and Lin Dong both don't go to work.	
46.	An Kun plays with his money	At home. Pingguo collects some clothes to take to Lin Dong and Wang Mei's.	Pingguo: "Why have you not deposited the money yet?" An Kun: "The money is from trading my wife and child, I want to look at them [the money] every day."
47.	Pingguo massages Wang Mei's feet	At home, focus on faces. Not in a shot at the same time.	Wang Mei: "You think if you make a man comfortable he will fall for you, right?"
48.	An Kun visits Pingguo and the baby	An Kun holds the baby lovingly while Pingguo cleans up.	An Kun: "Call me dad."
49.	Xiao Mei and An Kun have diner	Wang Mei drives An Kun home when they see Xiao Mei. Xiao Mei and An Kun both look sad.	Xiao Mei: "I miss my mom."
50.	Lin Dong spies on Pingguo while she showers	Wang Mei catches Lin Dong while he uses a mirror to spy on Pingguo. Wang Mei hits Pingguo.	
51.	An Kun tells Pingguo he is the biological father	An Kun beats Pingguo up outside.	An Kun: "That child is mine, I changed the blood type behind your back."
52.	Lin Dong comforts Pingguo	Pingguo comes home crying.	Lin Dong: "It's alright."
53.	An Kun kidnaps the baby	Images of Beijing. An Kun breaks into the apartment and steals baby. He ties Pingguo up.	
54.	Lin Dong accuses Pingguo and Wang Mei	Lin Dong speaks while Pingguo and Wang keep silent.	Lin Dong: "Did you two conspire against me? Everybody is cheating on me."
55.	The police arrest An Kun	On a bridge, later he is in a cell.	
56.	The police tells Lin Dong he is not the	At work. Lin Dong tears up the DNA test and	

	biological father	cries while the camera zooms out.	
57.	Wang Mei and An Kun sit in the car	Both look the other way.	Wang Mei: "This is my new address. I know you will not come visit me, but I still hope you will come one day."
58.	Pingguo identifies Xiao Mei's dead body	Pingguo gets a call. She identifies Xiao Mei and touches her face before the body bag is closed.	Police: "We suspect a customer robbed and killed her."
59.	An Kun and Lin Dong fight over the baby	An Kun wants to return the money and keep the baby.	Lin Dong: "I feel he is my son the whole time."
60.	Wang Mei and Pingguo comfort each other and cry	They sit next to each other and hold hands.	
61.	Pingguo steals the money and leaves with the child	Visuals of Beijing. Pingguo (spontaneously) decides to leave, while the eggs she just prepared remain untouched.	

7.3 Scene overview of Oxide

	Scene	Visuals	Relevant talk
1.	Scene 1	[zoom-in on blankets] Daughter wakes up, father comes home, parents fight. Semi dark. See the characters for the first time, one by one.	
2.	Scene 2	[zoom-in on desk with printer] Father helps daughter typing out and printing a document (50% discount posters for his leather business). Faces not in shot. Semi dark.	
3.	Scene 3	[zoom in on dining table] Whole family in shot, having dinner.	
4.	Scene 4	[zoom-in on working table] Father works. Semi dark. Window provides some light. Father's face in shot sometimes.	
5.	Scene 5	[zoom-in on stove] Mother lights the stove to cook water. Mother's face not in shot. Semi dark.	
6.	Scene 6	[zoom-in on door] Father hangs up wooden bar	

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		for exercising. Daughter tries it. Semi dark.	
7.	Scene 7	[zoom-in on floor] Father works on bag. Focus on hands. Mother helps branding the bag. Semi dark.	
8.	Scene 8	[zoom-in on bed] Daughter walks around showing the bags. Father advises her. Mother lies on the bed. They laugh together. Father talks about his day at work. Mother and daughter check the earned money. Father teaches daughter to dance. Semi dark.	Father: "Business was bad for a few days, now our luck has changed." Father: "They said our bags look good because of our ideas."
9.	Scene 9	[zoom-in on door] Father measures daughter's height. Father thinks growing tall is important. Semi dark.	
10.	Scene 10	[zoom-in on father's head and back] Father works and saws. Mother complains about work and the gatekeeper. Mother and father fight. Mother slaps father. Semi dark.	
11.	Scene 11	[zoom-in on leather on work table] Father inspects the leather, mother helps. Leather has to many marks. Focus on hands rubbing the leather. Semi dark.	Father: "Selling them at such a cheap price makes me feel sorry for the cow."
12.	Scene 12	[zoom-in on kitchen] Mother and daughter clean the kitchen windows together. Faces not in shot. Semi dark.	
13.	Scene 13	[zoom-in on couch] Mother and father talk. High camera angle. Father seems desperate and fed up with clients. Semi dark.	Father: "I decided, no more discounts." Mother: "People just want cheap prices." Mother: "OK then, keep your dignity and wait for death."
14.	Scene 14	[zoom-in on table] Daughter peels garlic. Mother cooks. They eat noodles. Father gets angry at daughter twice: for putting too much sesame paste on his noodles, and for imitating him. Mother supports him, but mother and father start arguing as well. Semi dark.	
15.	Scene 15	[zoom-in on corner] Father and daughter look for the cat. Semi dark.	

16.	Scene 16	[zoom-in on nightstand] Mother and daughter stretch out father's shorts (he gained weight). Father brings home kebab. They eat and talk about the profit the kebab seller makes. Mother gets agitated and doesn't want to eat the kebab anymore. No faces are in shot. Semi dark.	Father: "For our shop, selling nothing day after day became a routine."
17.	Scene 17	[zoom-in on bed] Father arranges pieces of leather on the bed. No face in shot. Semi dark.	
18.	Scene 18	[zoom-in on mother and father sitting on bed] Discuss about discounts again. Mother is worried about money and costs. Father slaps himself in the face. Semi dark.	Mother: "You have to put an end to this." Father: "I'm the only one willing to stand."
19.	Scene 19	[zoom-in on calendar] Someone draws candle and sun on calendar. No face in shot. Focus on hand and calendar. Semi dark.	
20.	Scene 20	[zoom-in on door] Father measures daughter again. She hasn't grown taller. Faces are in shot. Semi dark.	Daughter: "It's not my fault." Father: "I just care about the results." Mother: "It's not her fault you can't sell anything." Father: "I'm so unfortunate."
21.	Scene 21	[zoom-in on wash bowl] Mother has feet in water bowl. Daughter joins her. Tomorrow is father's birthday. No faces in shot. Daughter imitates father's eating noises, mother gets angry. Daughter kicks over wash bowl and walks away. Semi dark.	Mother: "Don't talk to your father about his birthday when he comes back. He wishes he could sell more on his birthday. The more you expect, the less you get." Mother: "Several years ago when dad had money, I bet you would not have dared to." Daughter: "You think I am that kind of person?"
22.	Scene 22	[zoom-in on daughter's face] In bed. Father snores. Semi dark.	Mother (to daughter): "I think you dress to casually. Shouldn't you wear more delicate clothes?" Father: "I can't remember how it was when we were not in debt. This year, no matter what, we should clear all our debts." Mother: "You say that every year."
23.	Scene 23	[zoom-in on father's face] In bed. Father calls mother and daughter, they don't react (asleep). Father seems lost in thought and unable to sleep.	

	Semi dark.	
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7.4 Scene overview of Finding Mr. Right

	Scene	Visuals	Relevant talk
1.	Wen Jiajia arrives in Seattle	Plane lands. Jiajia arrives at airport full glam. She applies make-up before going to customs. Trying to hide belly. Speaks English poorly.	
2.	Frank (taxi driver) picks Jiajia up too late	Jiajia gets angry at Frank. Orders him around. Jiajia is impressed by view of Seattle. Relationship Frank – Jiajia: tense.	
3.	Jiajia and Frank arrive at illegal maternity center	Franks sees police and takes Jiajia to different center. Jiajia doesn't trust Frank at first.	Frank: "These kinds of centers are against the law."
4.	Jiajia and Frank arrive at second maternity center (run by Ms. Huang)	Jiajia gets a tour around the house. Is unhappy with the small room. Complains about everything and is rude. Frank brings suitcases up. Jiajia sees Frank with his daughter Julie for the first time. She also meets Zhou Yi (another pregnant woman who lives with Ms. Huang). Jiajia tries to call her boyfriend (Old Zhong) in China, but he doesn't pick up.	Jiajia: "Are you kidding me, this room is so small. Please move me to a bigger room, I can pay double."
5.	Next morning	Loud noise wakes Jiajia up. Zhou Yi is drilling. Ms. Huang returns with groceries. They have breakfast. Jiajia still wants a bigger room, Chen Yue swaps rooms with her.	Zhou Yi: "Ms. Huang, you would do anything for money, right? How about I pay you to take a shit for me?" (joke in English, Jiajia doesn't understand)
6.	Frank takes Jiajia to see a doctor	Frank helps Jiajia filling in the forms in English.	Jiajia: "Doctor Tang said you used to be a doctor as well. You don't look like one."
7.	Jiajia buys crab with Frank	Jiajia wants to pay for Frank, he declines. Jiajia want to treat Frank to a meal at the fanciest restaurant in Seattle, he declines.	Jiajia: "I'll treat you to a meal." Frank: "I have to pick up my daughter." Jiajia: "What about her mother?" Frank: "She's in China."
8.	Jiajia and Frank return to maternity center	Jiajia sees Zhou Yi with an American man and his girlfriend. When Zhou and Chen Yue watch	Jiajia: "Zhou Yi, you speak English so well. Have you learned that in bed?"

		a movie, Jiajia starts a fight with Zhou Yi.	
9.	Jiajia and Frank are at a nightclub	Frank doesn't want to dance. Jiajia drinks. Jiajia is joking around with Frank when suddenly becoming serious and sad. Frank takes care of her.	Jiajia: "I didn't hear from him for 2 days, and now he only asks about money."
10.	Next morning: call from Old Zhong	Old Zhong wants to know who Frank is. He is happy to hear the baby is a boy. Suddenly money is not important anymore.	Old Zhong: "During Christmas I will visit you for sure. Wait for me."
11.	Jiajia shops for Christmas present	Jiajia asks Frank if he can drive her and Old Zhong around during Christmas (and pay him extra).	Frank: "I can't during Christmas. Julie's mom is coming over." Jiajia: "Let's go together then." Franks: "That's not appropriate. Let's just go separately."
12.	Jiajia waits for Old Zhong	Jiajia gets ready. Waits a long time, then a handbag arrives with a note. He can't come.	
13.	Jiajia visits Frank	Jiajia walks around the neighborhood and sees Franks car. Frank is surprised. Jiajia praises his house. Julie is at a party with her mom. Jiajia cooks and tells Frank to wear fancier clothes. They talk and Jiajia finds out Frank is a doctor and gave his career up to take care of his daughter. Frank and Jiajia warm up to each other. Frank gives Jiajia a gift to protect her baby.	Jiajia: "You are a really a good man. Your wife must love you very much." Frank: "My wife thinks I am stuffy and unromantic, and I don't earn enough money." Jiajia: "Sometimes money is really not a good thing."
14.	Frank and Jiajia drive to party to pick Julie up	Linda (Julie's mother) forgot to bring Julie's medication. Frank helps Julie and takes her home. Jiajia helps him getting her in the car. Turns out Julie is faking it to leave the party early.	Julie: "Are you two on a date?"
15.	Jiajia, Frank and Julie watch the fireworks in Jiajia's hotel room	Frank sings Christmas songs. They play and dance.	
16.	Zhou Yi's water breaks	Jiajia helps her getting to the hospital. Tries to call Frank. When Frank comes to see Jiajia, her baby kicks for the first time. He reassures Jiajia and talks to the baby. Zhou Yi gives birth. Her girlfriend and the father of her baby are there as	

		well.	
17.	Zhou Yi and Jiajia's relationship gets friendlier	Jiajia wants Zhou Yi and the baby to have the big room.	
18.	Jiajia gets scan in hospital	Is happy and touched to see her baby. The clothes she wears become less fancy, attitude changes as well.	
19.	Jiajia and Julie spend time together when Frank is in New York for board exam	Festival, cinema. They talk about boys.	
20.	Jiajia and Julie go to New York together	Jiajia wants to go to the Empire State Building. Julie doesn't, and asks a police woman to help her. Because of the language barrier and Julie's behavior, they end up in jail. Frank comes to pick them up, and pretends Jiajia is his girlfriend to avoid her being send back to China. Outside, Frank gets really angry. Julie cries.	Frank: "What gives you the right to take my daughter to New York?"
21.	Jiajia wants to check into a hotel but creditcard gets declined	Frank comes to help her, but he only wants to pay for a motel.	Jiajia: "But I have already booked a room her. I will lose face."
22.	At motel	Jiajia calls Old Zhong but he doesn't answer. She panics. Franks reassures her.	
23.	Back in Seattle	Chen Yue is going into labor, and Ms. Huang takes her to the hospital. Jiajia calls Old Zhong's wife back. Old Zhong is in prison. Jiajia cleans and does laundry.	Ms. Zhong: "It would be best if you wouldn't come back."
24.	Jiajia sells her designer bags on the street	Frank is there as well. Nobody wants to buy the bags.	Frank: "These days, I'm worrying that you will not want to have this child."
25.	Chen Yue is back with her baby and packs bags	Chen Yue gives Jiajia diapers, Jiajia gives Chen Yue a bag. They hug and cry.	Chen Yue: "When you go back home, you should find yourself a good man."
26.	Jiajia and Ms. Huang talk in the garden	Evening. Ms. Huang brings Jiajia a blanket. Ms. Huang has to leave to take care of her daughter They hug.	Ms. Huang: "I have to tell you something, I cannot help you with your delivery. My daughter is getting married next week and is 4 months pregnant. She needs me now." Ms. Huang: "Jiajia, everything will be fine."
27.	Frank and Jiajia go to a bridal shop to pick up Linda's dress	Jiajia wants to cheer Frank up. Julie's mother is getting remarried, and Julie is going to live with	Jiajia: "Maybe this is the only time in my life I will ever wear a wedding dress."

		her. Jiajia wants to try on wedding dresses. Jiajia and Frank take a picture together.	
28.	Frank and Jiajia talk	Jiajia is in bed. Frank brings her tea. He asks for clothing advise. He is going to Linda's wedding. Jiajia irons his shirt.	Jiajia: "Do you know what your biggest problem is right now? You are just too nice."
29.	Frank drops Jiajia off at doctor's appointment	Jiajia gives Frank a bowtie to wear to the wedding	
30.	Linda's wedding	Jiajia unexpectedly joins Frank to Linda's wedding. She wears a wedding dress. Frank takes his ring off. Julie is not at the wedding. Jiajia pretends to be Frank's girlfriend. Frank and Jiajia dance.	Frank: "Why don't we just leave. I feel so uncomfortable." Jiajia: "Don't be sad. It's a good thing that woman married." Frank: "I meant uncomfortable dancing with you [with the pregnant belly]."
31.	Jiajia faints and has to go to the hospital	Frank takes her. He is worried.	Jiajia: "Tell them to keep the baby safe. Also, I don't have any money for an operation." Frank: "Don't worry, I got everything."
32.	Jiajia wakes up	Frank is by her side. Nurses said he never left. Frank and Jiajia hug, and Frank tells her everything will be alright.	
33.	Baby comes home from the hospital	Frank takes care of Jiajia, Julie and the baby. They are happy together. Frank and Jiajia walk hand in hand.	
34.	Old Zhong's driver comes to pick Jiajia up	Frank and Jiajia say goodbye. Julie cries behind the window. Frank is supportive but sad and when Jiajia drives away he thinks of all their happy memories.	Frank: "He divorced and is waiting for you."
35.	Jiajia in Beijing	Live a luxury life, but Old Zhong is never home. Jiajia want to separate.	Old Zhong: "If you leave, you won't get a penny from me." Jiajia: "This isn't about money, you are not in my heart anymore."
36.	2 years later	Jiajia and son live a happy life. Jiajia has set up a food website. Frank applies for a new job in New York (as a doctor).	
37.	Empire State Building	Julie and Frank visit the Empire State Building. Julie wants to send Jiajia a picture. Jiajia sees the picture and is also on the Empire State Building with her son. They meet again. The kids play together, while Frank and Jiajia hold	Frank: "The first time we met it also rained."

	hands. The camera zooms out. City view of Seattle.	
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7.5 Scene overview of Letter From an Unknown Woman

	Scene	Visuals	Relevant talk
1	Mr. Xu receives a letter and starts reading it (1948)	Dark, visuals of Beiping neighborhood, Mr. Xu's face not visible, zoom-in on mail	Voice-over: "Now I have only you left in the entire world, yet you know nothing. Voice-over: "I want you to know that my life has always belonged to you." Voice-over: "If you hold this letter in your hands, you will know that a dead woman is telling you the story of her life."
2.	Mr. Xu moves to the same courtyard (<i>siheyuan</i>) as Miss Jiang and her mother (1930)	Miss Jiang walks past the cart with Mr. Xu's belongings and is impressed by all his books	Voice-over: "That was the first time I heard your name. I tried to picture you in my mind." Voice-over: "Three days long, all I heard was music and laughter from your house."
3.	Miss Jiang sees Mr. Xu for the first time	Mr. Xu waves at her	Voice-over: "I finally saw you. You were so different from my childish picture of a grandfather. I was astonished."
4.	Miss Jiang falls in love	Miss Jiang spies on Mr. Xu and runs into him. She is very shy.	Voice-over: "I have loved you ever since that moment. I know women have always told you this, you pampered man, but believe me, no one has ever loved you so slavishly. From that moment I had only one person in my heart."
5.	Chinese New Year's Eve	Night. Mother wants Miss Jiang to bring Mr. Xu <i>jiaozi</i> , she doesn't want to. She spies on Mr. Xu through the window. Fireworks.	
6.	Miss Jiang looks through Mr. Xu's apartment		Voice-over: "These fleeting moments were the happiest of my childhood."
7.	Mother and aunt talk about moving to Shandong	Miss Jiang is sad and mother complains about her bad daughter	Mother: "Like her dead dad, she just can't stand seeing me well."

8.	Evening before move	Empty house, Miss Jiang is sad. Dark, night. Zoom-in on face. Miss Jiang knocks on Mr. Xu's door. She waits outside for him and sees him coming home with a woman.	
9.	Transition to 6 years later (1936)	Mother and Miss Jiang are sitting in the train. Train rails, landscape, dark. Miss Jiang keeps longing for Mr. Xu.	Voice-over: "My son died last night. If I really must go on living, I shall be all alone again. There is nothing more terrible than to be alone with people around. In those six years in Shandong I felt it deeply. All I did was thinking of you."
10.	Miss Jiang returns to <i>siheyuan</i> in Beiping	Night. Miss Jiang moves into the house across from Mr. Xu.	Voice-over: "These six years I have never parted from you. These six years I could only think of one thing and that is coming back to Peking."
11.	Miss Jiang spies on Mr. Xu	Spies on Mr. Xu through window, doors, etc. Not many other activities. Never see her at university. Mr. Xu gives Miss Jiang a long look one day when they are passing each other on the street.	
12.	1937: Anti-Japan Demonstration	Busy street. Mr. Xu takes pictures. Miss Jiang joins the demonstration. Xu looks at Miss Jiang. Demonstration escalates. Mr. Xu takes Miss Jiang into a building to hide. They don't speak.	
13.	Evening	Mr. Xu and Miss Jiang walk and eat together. Mr. Xu invites Miss Jiang to come home with him. Night.	Mr. Xu: "My house is just ahead, would you like to stop by? If it's convenient." Miss Jiang: "Sure, it's always convenient for me." Mr. Xu: "I must have seen you somewhere before."
14.	Miss Jiang and Mr. Xu have sex	Miss Jiang is shy at first. She looks at Mr. Xu while he sleeps.	Voice-over: "I'm in your arms. This is my dream. A dream that has been realized."
15.	The day after	Miss Jiang looks at herself in the mirror while Mr. Xu is looking at her. His image is blurry. Mr. Xu kisses her on the cheek and gives her a white rose. Miss Jiang leaves happy.	
16.	Mr. Xu has to leave for Wanping	Mr. Xu packs. House steward waves him goodbye. Miss Jiang spies on Mr. Xu as he leaves.	

17.	Mr. Xu returns to Beijing	Mr. Xu is not shown. Miss Jiang is spying on him again.	Voice-over: "A few days later you came back, but you never looked for me."
18.	Three months later	Miss Jiang leaves for Shandong (pregnant), war breaks out. Camera doesn't show Miss Jiang or the baby.	Voice-over: "Soon I realized I was having your child. I decided to move away. How could I have told you? You would never have believed and accepted the child as your own." Voice-over: "I'd rather take everything on myself, than be a burden to you." Voice-over: "Our lives are bound together. This was why I was so happy. Now you could never run away from me."
19.	Eight years later in Beijing	Miss Jiang and her child live a luxury life. Miss Jiang is with Captain Huang. Mr. Xu doesn't recognize Miss Jiang when being introduced.	Voice-over: "Your child should have everything. He should have a life like yours. For this reason I sold myself." Voice-over: "You forgot me once again. I became used to it."
20.	Miss Jiang sends Mr. Xu white roses on his birthday every year	The house steward arranges the roses in Mr. Xu's apartment	Voice-over: "I sent them as a remembrance of the forgotten moment."
21.	Miss Jiang, Captain Huang and the child go bowling	Miss Jiang and Captain Huang talk (sitting next to each other, not looking into each other's eyes). Captain Huang is agitated.	Captain Huang: "You should think about the future. You are not young anymore." Miss Jiang: "So what?"
22.	Miss Jiang and Captain Huang visit the Peking Opera with friends	Atmosphere is tense. Miss Jiang gazes at Mr. Xu. Miss Jiang wants to leave early. At home she seems sad and deep in thought, unable to sleep.	Miss Jiang: "Men, they think to be in love with you they ought to be given a medal."
23.	Miss Jiang and Captain Huang go dancing	Miss Jiang and Mr. Xu are introduced again. Mr. Xu and Captain Huang talk and laugh, while Miss Jiang dances with other man and spies on them. Afterwards, she starts a conversation with Mr. Xu.	Miss Jiang: "To know me is easy. Everybody can." Mr. Xu: "When can I see you again?"
24.	Mr. Xu and Miss Jiang have sex again	Miss Jiang and Mr. Xu ride to his house. They have passionate sex. White roses are in a vase on the table. Miss Jiang looks at Mr. Xu while he sleeps.	Voice-over: "What is dignity? I will do just the same next time. Your voice has a magical power, makes it impossible to resist. After years of change, it was just the same."
25.	The next morning	Mr. Xu reads the paper. Situation in China is deteriorating again. Miss Jiang looks at Mr. Xu via mirror. Mr. Xu puts money in her coat	Mr. Xu: "I'm going to Zhang Jiakou, perhaps for a couple of weeks." Mr. Xu: "All those who left will come back, sooner or later."

		pocket. Miss Jiang leaves sad and disappointed. The house steward immediately recognized her. They exchange long glances. Miss Jiang gives the money to the house steward and leaves.	Mr. Jiang: "But once they come back they forget everything." Mr. Xu: "Do you feel what happened just now seems to have happened before? We must have been lovers in our previous lives." Mr. Xu: "I'll go look for you as soon as I come back." Miss Jiang: "Can I have a rose?" House steward: "Good morning, Miss."
26.	Miss Jiang rides away in cart	Sad	Voice-over: "My son died yesterday, our child. Now I have no one else to love in this world but you. But who are you to me?"
27.	Mr. Xu reads letter (1948)	Seems emotional, reading in chair, empty vase	Voice-over: "You never recognized me. For once I thought I could hold onto you. Hold onto you and the child. But who will send you roses on your birthday now? The vase will stay empty. I cannot go on writing, darling. Farewell."
28.	Ending	Zoom-in on Mr. Xu's face. He looks over the courtyard and sees Miss Jiang (as a child) looking at him through her window	

7.6 Scene overview of You and Me

	Scene	Visuals	Relevant talk
1	Winter: Xiao Ma is looking for a place to live	Wintery landscape, Xiao Ma rides her bike through the snow. First time meeting Grandma Huang. Grandma shows her the room (she is hostile). Harsh cuts in between shots.	

2.	Winter: Xiao Ma moves in	Xiao Ma and grandma fight constantly about everything: telephone, money, electricity, Xiao Ma throwing away old stuff, cooking, fridge. Xiao Ma tries to compromise. Harsh cuts. Grandma cuts telephone cable. Big fight. Grandma wants Xiao Ma to move out. Xiao Ma leaves.	Grandma: "She broke the peace of this yard." Grandma: "There she is again. Not good news." Grandma: "Xiao Ma, you drive me crazy."
3.	Winter: Xiao Ma comes back	Grandma is angry. Reported Xiao Ma to the police. Wants Xiao Ma to move out. Xiao Ma is sad. Grandma talks to new potential renters. Xiao Ma sees them when she comes home. Xiao Ma prepares to leave when Grandma's grandson arrives. Grandson tries to mediate between Xiao Ma and Grandma.	Xiao Ma: "I want to have a good look at you. It's hard to meet someone as smart as you."
4.	Winter: Grandma starts to warm up to Xiao Ma	Grandma tries to set up Xiao Ma with her grandson. Grandma wants to see Xiao Ma's room and offers her a better room. Xiao Ma fights with her brother.	Grandma: "Why don't you invite me to your room."
5.	Winter: almost New Year's	Xiao Ma and Grandma fight about telephone bill. Grandma wants Xiao Ma to move out. Xiao Ma is angry and cries. Grandma takes down New Year's decorations	
6.	Winter: grandson confesses he made the long-distance call	Grandson gives Grandma money and leaves. Grandma seems sad. She decorates the courtyard again with New Year's decorations	Neighbor: "It's the Spring Festival. What's the point of this fight? If you refuse to change, you'll end up in loneliness."
7.	New Year's Eve	Neighbor brings Grandma fish. Xiao Ma comes back. Grandma calls Xiao Ma but she doesn't respond at first. Then they have dinner together. Fireworks.	
8.	Spring: Grandma helps Xiao Ma with homework	Xiao Ma films Grandma's day. They get closer. Xiao Ma hears about Grandma's husband from neighbor. Xiao Ma can handle Grandma's attitude better now.	Neighbor: "She became widowed the 2 nd year after getting married. She has no children. She adopted one daughter."
9.	Spring: Xiao Ma and Grandma's relationship progresses	Grandma and Xiao Ma often talk. Grandma is always sitting outside when Xiao Ma comes	

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		home.	
10.	Spring: Grandma wants Xiao Ma to be her grandson's girlfriend		Grandma: "If it works out, you don't have to pay the rent anymore."
11.	Summer: Grandma and Xiao Ma get more comfortable with each other	Xiao Ma walks straight into Grandma's room and lies down to sleep. Grandma talks about how Xiao Ma has changed.	
12.	Summer: Grandma gets angry at Xiao Ma for taking bird eggs from nest	Grandma wants to call the police. Xiao Ma tries to stop her by pulling faces and pretending to die. They shout at each other.	
13.	Summer: Xiao Ma has fallen ill	Grandma makes soup for Xiao Ma. Xiao Ma's boyfriend takes care of her. Grandma asks her about him.	
14.	Summer: Xiao Ma helps Grandma with cleaning and rearranging her place	Grandma relaxes. She is agitated that Xiao Ma rearranged her stuff. Xiao Ma hung up posters, but Grandma doesn't like them.	
15.	Summer: Xiao Ma breaks up with her boyfriend.	Rain. Dark. Xiao Ma comes home crying. Grandma comes to check on her. Xiao Ma's boyfriend comes to the courtyard, but Xiao Ma is not there. Boyfriend stays for a few days.	
16.	Summer: Xiao Ma comes back from her trip to hometown	Grandma is worried.	Grandma: "You seem to have lost some weight." Grandma: "You really drive me crazy. You guys are all the same. When you leave, you leave."
17.	Autumn: Grandma's daughter comes to visit but leaves soon	Xiao Ma helps Grandma washing and cutting her hair and massaging her back. Xiao Ma cooks for Grandma.	
18.	Autumn: Xiao Ma leaves with her boyfriend (Xiao Ma moves out)	Grandma is alone. Jumpy cuts. Xiao Ma has found a new house. Grandma seems sad.	
19.	One month later	Xiao Ma gets a call and hurries to Grandma's house. Grandma is sick and unable to talk.	
20.	Grandma drives away in car with family	Grandma is sad and holds Xiao Ma's hands. The car drives away.	Neighbor: "She feels closer to her than to her own family. She is just a stranger. After all this, she feels attached to her. It's so strange."
21.	Xiao Ma visits Grandma for the last time	Hold hands. Grandma and Xiao Ma cry. Xiao Ma cries on the way back in the bus.	

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22.	By the end of the year	Xiao Ma gets a call. Everything is in slow-motion. Xiao Ma cries. Xiao Ma goes to her old home one more time. It's empty.	
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9. Filmography

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- Dear Enemy* (Qinmi Diren). Dir. Xu Jinglei. China Film Group Corporation, 2011. Film.
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- Ocean Heaven* (Haiyang Tiantang). Dir. Xue Xiaolu. Edko Films, 2011. Film.
- Oxhide* (Niupi). Dir. Liu Jiayin. DGenerate Films, 2005. Film.
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- Together* (He Ni Zai Yiqi). Dir. Chen Kaige. Moonstone Entertainment, 2002. Film.
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10. Chinese Glossary

Selected names and terms:

1.	An Kun	安坤
2.	Beijing	北京
3.	Beiping	北平
4.	Beijing Dahuayi Film and Culture Co Ltd	北京北大华亿影视文化有限责任公司
5.	Beijing Daxue Chubanshe	北京大学出版社
6.	Beijing Film Academy	北京电影学院
7.	Beijing Film Studio	北京電影製片廠
8.	Beijing Normal University	北京师范大学
9.	Blind Shaft	盲井
10.	Book of Love/Finding Mr. Right 2	北京遇上西雅图之不二情书
11.	Buddha Mountain	观音山
12.	CCTV	中国中央电视台
13.	Central Academy of Drama	中央戏剧学院
14.	Chen Kaige	陈凯歌
15.	Chen Yue	陈悦
16.	China Film Group Corporation	中国电影集团公司
17.	chuse	出色
18.	Dai Jinhua	戴锦华
19.	Dam Street	红颜
20.	Dangdai Dianying	当代电影
21.	Dear Enemy	亲密敌人
22.	Dianying Wenxue	电影文学
23.	Dianying Xinzuo	电影新作
24.	Double Xposure	二次曝光
25.	duli	独立
26.	Edko Films	安乐电影发行有限公司
27.	Egg and Stone	鸡蛋和石头
28.	Ever Since We Love	万物生长
29.	Fan Bingbing	范冰冰
30.	Finding Mr. Right	北京遇上西雅图
31.	Fish and Elephant	今年夏天
32.	Frank/Hao Zhi	郝志
33.	Fu Xiaoyin	付筱茵
34.	Ge Liming	葛黎明
35.	Gone is the one who Held me Dearest in the World	世界上最疼我的那个人去了
36.	Gong Zhe	宫哲
37.	Grandma Huang	演大妈
38.	Huang Ji	黄骥
39.	Huang Tai	黄太
40.	jiaozi	饺子
41.	Huang Xiao Ma	演小马
42.	Jia Huifen	贾惠芬
43.	Jiang Wen	姜文
44.	Jiangxi	江西
45.	Jin, Elaine	金燕玲

46.	Julie	朱利
47.	Laurel Films	勞雷影業有限公司
48.	Letter From an Unknown Woman	一个陌生女人的来信
49.	Leung Ka-fai, Tony	梁家輝
50.	Li Ershi	李二仕
51.	Li Yang	李楊
52.	Li Yu	李玉
53.	Lin Dong	林東
54.	Liu Jiayin	刘伽茵
55.	Liu Pingguo	刘苹果
56.	Liu Lu	刘璐
57.	Liu Zaiping	刘在平
58.	Lost in Beijing	苹果
59.	Ma Liwen	马丽文
60.	Ma Ting	马婷
61.	Mei Yu Shidai	美与时代
62.	Miss Jiang	江小姐
63.	Mr. Xu	徐先生
64.	Ms. Huang	黄太
65.	Mtime	时光网
66.	My Father and I	我和爸爸
67.	Ni Zifang	倪自放
68.	Ocean Heaven	海洋天堂
69.	Old Zhong	老钟
70.	Oxhide	牛皮
71.	Poly-bona Film Publishing Company	保利博纳电影发行有限公司
72.	Renminbi (RMB)	人民币
73.	Renminwang	人民网
74.	Sanyue Guyu Meida Co.,Ltd	三月谷雨文化传媒有限公司
75.	SARFT	国家新闻出版广电总局
76.	Shandong	山东
77.	Shandong Shifan University	山东师范大学
78.	siheyuan	四合院
79.	Sisters	姐姐
80.	Sixth Generation	第六代
81.	Song, Jessica	宋美漫
82.	Song, Monica	宋美惠
83.	Tang Wei	汤唯
84.	The Foolish Bird	笨鸟
85.	The Missing	绑架者
86.	Together	和你在一起
87.	Tong Dawei	佟大为
88.	Wang Mei	王梅
89.	Wang Xiaoshuai	王小帅
90.	Wen Jiajia	文佳佳
91.	Wu Xiubo	吴秀波
92.	Xiao Mei	小妹
93.	Xingbao Jituan Youxian Gongsi	星寶集團有限公司
94.	Xinxing Chubanshe	新星出版社
95.	Xu Jinglei	徐静蕾
96.	Xue Xiaolu	薛晓璐

97.	Yao Honggui	姚红贵
98.	Yiyang	益阳
99.	You and Me	我们俩
100.	Youku	优酷
101.	youxiu	优秀
102.	Yue Xiaoying	岳晓英
103.	Zeng Meihuizi	曾美慧孜
104.	Zhang Dong	张东
105.	Zhong Dafeng	钟大丰
106.	Zhongguo Dianshi Jilupian Yantaohui Zhuanji	中国电视纪录片研讨会专机
107.	Zhongguo Dianying Shichang	中国电影市场
108.	Zhou Xia	周夏
109.	Zhou Yi	周逸
110.	ziwo	自我