

Screening the Poetic Space: XIE Jin, Collective Memory, and the ‘Air’ of Chinese Epic Cinema

Yiming Chen

Abstract—Chinese cinematics derive from the aesthetic traditions of classical Chinese theatre—given that China’s first film *Dinjun Mountain* (1905) was itself a filmed sequence of Peking Opera performance, ‘theatricality’ has become a vital concept contributing to our understanding of the Chinese cinematics. In what ways are the aesthetic traditions of classical Chinese theatre re-coded into the visual language of cinema? What cultural significance would such a relocation of the theatrical into the cinematic register? Whereas stage performance, in the context of classical Chinese theatre, entails a specific set of ritualistic connotations, how would it be translated into the aesthetic politics of cinema? In an attempt to answer these questions, this essay interrogates into the ways through which the manifestations of classical theatrical elements are highlighted in Chinese epic films produced during the post-Cultural Revolution era of the 1980s: *The Herdsman* (1982), *Hibiscus Town* (1987). By examining the aforementioned films’ investment in the recreation of a theatrical imagination of space and nature on the silver screen, this essay argues that contemporary Chinese cinema’s incorporation of an array of classical theatrical elements has illustrated the filmmakers’ elaborate reconceptualization of “epic cinema” in post-Cultural Revolution China. From a broader perspective, this attempt to theorize Chinese films’ aestheticized imagination of the Chinese landscape would not only broaden contemporary academia’s understanding of the relationship between cinema and theatre, but also remind us of the changes that are often associated with the formulation of a modern Chinese identity.

Index Terms—Aesthetics, epic cinema, public trauma, memory.

I. INTRODUCTION

Zhang Yimou, as a master of Chinese aesthetic formalism, has shot many award-winning films, including *Hero*, *House of Flying Daggers*, and *Curse of the Golden Flower*. In particular, *Hero* is also known as the “Chinese-produced Hollywood blockbuster,” Zhang Yimou uses splendid images, fantastic and bizarre action designs, and the fusion of Chinese and Western romantic music, which are seen by many people as an exemplification of the so-called “martial arts epic cinema.” However, Zhang Yimou did not produce *Hero* as an “epic film” with historical significance and humanistic depth that can match its audiovisual effects.

Central to conception of epic cinema is a sense of historicity. The reason why I call *Hero* a failed epic film is precisely because of the film’s lack of a sense of historicity. In this film, in addition to the visually confined and emotionally uneventful depiction of its interior space, Zhang Yimou also experimented with a lot of audiovisual effects to

illustrate his imagination of a magnificent ancient Chinese landscape, which means that more visual elements can be incorporated into his unique way of storytelling. By constructing a variety of visual spectacles in *Hero*, Zhang Yimou attempted to convey the interweaving of love and righteousness through his impressionist depiction of martial art combat scenes in the film; at the same time, Zhang’s extravagant deployment of visual spectacles, in the formulation of a symbolic relationship between space and people, has caused the film to lose its sense of historicity. Through his visualization, historical space has become a fantastical imagination of the past, establishing a cultural barrier between audience and the said history of the Qin empire during the warring states period.

Zhang Yimou’s epic cinema, which was nothing but “epic” with illusions, failed to respect and reflect a sense of Chinese historicity. However, scanning widely at the contemporary Chinese cinema industry, there are other directors who have achieved the Chinese expression of epic cinema. For instance, films like *The Herdsman* (Xie Jin, 1982), *Hibiscus Town* (Xie Jin, 1987) have handled the balance between artistic effects and a sense of Chinese historicity well. Without losing a sense of Chinese historicity, the aforementioned two films successfully combined the usage of classical aesthetic elements with their masterful elaboration on cinematic narratives about not only China’s past, but also its present. In this light, by examining those epic films, this paper argues that Chinese classical aesthetics is rendered in line with the conception of the scar cinema.¹ Through their elaboration on classical aesthetic elements to not only narrate, but also visualize historical events about China’s traumatic past, those films are thereby classified as Chinese epic cinema.

This essay will be divided into two parts as it analyzes two groups of visual motifs in Xie Jin’s epic cinema, attempting to make sense of the definition of classical Chinese aesthetics. As recurring tropes that appear among various productions of Chinese epic films, motifs such as the remote landscape, rain, cloud and more are recognized and therein praised by many scholars and cultural critics for their significance in the illustration of the correlation between epic cinema and classical aesthetics. Seeking to understand the cinematic deployment of different visual motifs in the context of post-Cultural Revolution China, namely representations of space and nature, this paper will attend to the following two questions: firstly, why are classical Chinese aesthetic elements such as space and nature particular to the making of Chinese epic films? Secondly, how do they contribute to the

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Yiming Chen is with Communication University of China, Beijing, China (e-mail: cym9801@163.com).

¹ Scar cinema is a type of film prevalent starting from the late 1970s, a counterpart of scar literature, which is a cultural phenomenon of depicting spiritual and material hurt from Cultural Revolution and rendering people’s rethinking of national prospect, in means of artistic expression.

cinematic expression of Chinese epic cinema? By the end of the paper, it is also necessary to point out that those audiovisual changes surrounding around representations of space and nature are often associated with the formulation of a modern Chinese identity.

II. PUBLIC TRAUMA, PRIVATIZED PASSION: XIE JIN AND HIS TWO FILMS

Xie Jin is the third-generation director and screenwriter in Mainland China. He has authored works such as *The Red Detachment of Women*, *Legend of Tianyun Mountain*, *Hibiscus Town*, and more. Countless popular characters and stars were nurtured in his films.

Hibiscus Town and *The Herdsman* are both his classic films, both of which show Xie Jin's profound skills and the artistic level of his works. Theatrical motifs in these two films not only enhance the aesthetics of the cinematic scene, but also feature and render an in-depth insight of historicity that derives from Cultural Revolution. Under the precarious climate of the Cold War, Cultural Revolution was an anti-bourgeois restoration movement initiated by the Chinese state by the late 1960s. It was used by counter-revolutionaries and caused great harm to the people, the party, and the country. The Cultural Revolution not only caused damage to the economy and society, but also left an indelible shadow on the artistic field. During the time, artists could only produce works that aestheticized the workers and peasants. Moreover, Zhou Xing [1] says, artistic practice during the period was drastically reduced to the production of the so-called model operas: the protagonists were absolutely righteous, and the villains were absolutely evil. That said, Cultural Revolution had severely disfranchised many artists and greatly dampened their enthusiasm for artistic practice.

In this paper, the correlation between Xie Jin's films and the Cultural Revolution is mainly discussed through the prism of two analytical keywords: public trauma and privatized passion. As Bazin says in [2] and Daniel Morgan says in [3], Desica's realism expresses its meaning by poetry, as in art, any realism principle must solve an aesthetic paradox that the depiction of reality is not art but art bears on choice and interpretation. In constructing the poetic space, Xie Jin's films use traditional Chinese aesthetic elements such as the rain to render people's despair for the revolution and damage. To many people including Xie himself, Cultural Revolution is often regarded as a public display of historical trauma. In *Hibiscus Town*, love affairs between Hu Yuyin and Qin Shutian tell us that emotions of everyone at that time were radically privatized—they had to hide and only show their affection in a small enclosed space for their love would be punished if it was found out. To certain extent, Xie's approach to romance in *Hibiscus Town* is similar to Fei Mu's *Spring in a Small Town*. In *Spring in a Small Town*, long takes and confined space creates a sentimental feeling of historicity. Similarly, the complicated and privatized passions between the sick Dai Liyan and his wife Zhou Yuwen, his sister Dai Xiu and the doctor Zhang Zhichen who suddenly breaks into their lives also surface in the story. Wang Der-wei[4] says, Fei Mu's signature aesthetic style is better summarized as his "Air theory." Ranging from Fei Mu's deployment of long take, narratage to Xie Jin's

elaboration on traditional Chinese aesthetic elements, it is common for them to create a sense of atmosphere within a poetic space. Their artistic works represent and witness development of Chinese film theory and film technique as David Bordwell[5] says. Fei Mu cleverly uses film art to achieve the artistic conception effect of Chinese painting style. He shoots films with the mood of producing Chinese painting and the film concept of fusion of poetry and painting, and consciously explores and interprets the poetic time and space of Chinese painting that can only be understood but cannot be theorized. In this light, this essay aims to set up a dialogue between Xie Jin's aestheticized recollection of China's traumatic past during the period of Cultural Revolution and Fei Mu's "air theory" so that we could redefine the concept of "epic cinema" in the light of *The Herdsman* and *Hibiscus Town*.

III. A SPACE OF HISTORICITY

Firstly, landscape is a very popular part or genre in traditional Chinese painting or other kinds of art, which is in a black or dark green color in Xie Jin's epic films. In *Hibiscus Town*, for instance, the basic tone of the film's visuality are darkened as the dominant color, conveying a heavy and depressed feeling; and the dark green landscape is often used as an empty shot in the film to help narrative transition and render emotions.² These landscape are not what the films want to show directly, but they act an imperative role in rendering sentiments. As Feng Youlan[6] says, what the poem wants to render is often not what is said directly in the poem, but what is not said. Similarly, Li Zehou[7] says that beauty is a significant form, which derives from Clive Bell's perception. In this light, landscape, a pure form that can inspire and generate the aesthetic feeling of the viewer, is a form of beauty.

In the film, many propaganda newspapers and propaganda slogans appear on the walls everywhere. The scene arrangement shows the characteristics of the era of the Cultural Revolution. When these slogans become a part of the space, the audience will naturally regard them as the background information of the story, without the actors or plot specifically telling that this is the period of the Cultural Revolution. When the Red Guards come to the town to humiliate Li Guoxiang, the banner hanging above the stairs read "Welcome the Red Guards to send treasure to our town," so when the audience see this, they naturally know that this group of people are Red Guards. Ancient walls are now decorated with propaganda slogans, so the dichotomy between traditional Chinese folklore and the socialist ideology is tellingly visualized by this juxtaposition, which ingeniously and easily embodies the sense of historicity to make this a great epic film.

Clouds and doors and windows account for a large proportion, which also heightens the sense of historicity of this film. Most of the scenes are shot in a small confined space. The distance between people and the ratio of people to space show a strong sense of depression. As Dudley Andrew

² Finally, the Cultural Revolution was over. After the liberation of the mind, the tone of the film became brighter, and the landscape changed from dark green and black green to turquoise, symbolizing the people's regaining freedom.

[8] says, a single setup or master shots are convenient for directors to recount history by moving among and returning to a limited number of locations. Doors and windows symbolize The Cultural Revolution restrained the people's mind and body, and the clouds in the sky symbolize freedom. Most of the scenes in the film are shot from overhead or parallel perspective. It is difficult to see the sky, let alone clouds, both indoors and outdoors. There are two scenes, one in the first half of the film, Liu Guoxiang interrogates Hu Yuyin whether he made so much money is speculation, and the other scene is Hu Yuyin and Qin Shutian flirting in the room. The previous scene was confined to Hu Yuyin's new house. The room was very small and made of wood. The doors and windows were closed, which made people feel oppressive. At the beginning, the film was shot with medium and close shots. Hu was standing and Liu was sitting. Then it becomes two people sitting. At this time, the film uses a parallel perspective to shoot two people talking face-to-face, highlighting the tension of interrogation. The latter scene is in Qin's home. Only a small beam of light on the roof can penetrate the entire confined space. The rest of the scene is dark. With the performance of the actors, the space presents a sense of tension that is afraid of being discovered. In addition, after the death of Hu's husband Gui Gui, Hu went to the grave. Almost four-fifths of the picture was black. Even if the sky appeared, it was dark green. The protagonist appeared weak as a luminous dot. On the contrary, at the end of the film, the Cultural Revolution was over, and the picture suddenly became brighter, the field of vision widened, the green mountains and rivers could be seen, and the sky was so white that it was exposed.

Different from *Hibiscus Town's* emphasis on the poetic depiction of a public space of historical catastrophe, *The Herdsman* gives form to a sense of historicity against the backdrop of rural China. The Qilian Mountains, the prairie, and the sky are in sharp contrast with the big city, and the camera shuttles back and forth between the those and the city. The opening song of *The Herdsman* is the Wei-Jin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties poem *Teleg Song* (Chi Le Ge), and the film used it as background music to explain the location of the story implicitly. It also elicits the protagonist Xu Lingjun's self-introduction; the teacher is also explaining this poem in class, which is the earliest free verse poetry in China. Thus, Xie clearly intended to illustrate a comparison between free verse poetry and the Cultural Revolution, which symbolizes the freedom of post-Mao China and the bondage of historical trauma. Later, the hero and heroine also read this poem on the lawn, and this poem became a significant motif of the whole film. The poem itself is in a free verse, and its repeated appearances actually symbolize the change of the hero's definition of his own freedom, or even the change of his spiritual freedom. In fact, in order to make the story more vivid and better for readers to understand, the film uses a cross-narrative method to explain the story, that is, it is not in chronological order. Therefore, if we talk about it in chronological order, the poem appears for the first time in Xu's classroom when he was a student. At this time, his main identity was an orphan of a bourgeois marriage; the second appearance is on the prairie. The background music sings this song, leading to his self-introduction at the beginning. By this time, he is already a herdsman who had undergone labor

reforms on the Qilian Mountain grassland; once again, it is the wife he later met who is improving her literacy that reads this poem with him on the grassland. At this time, because he met a person who was willing to spend the rest of her life with him, his mind became more open and tenacious. Free verse poem elicits the freedom of Xu Lingjun's soul and spirit, which is in sharp contrast with the constraints of the Cultural Revolution on the people's spirit in the background of the story. Because of this, the film connected by *Teleg Song* is full of the sense of historicity. Gilles Deleuze says in [9] that, moving image and thought are dialectically unified, which means that we are supported to reflect on what films want to tell us in metaphor when we see and hear. *Teleg Song* is used as a metaphor in *The Herdsman*.

This film is similar to the poetry. It explains the background of the story in a cross-narrative way between the city and the countryside, passing the present and the past, and then narrate the story, constantly conveying emotions with aesthetic elements drawn from classical Chinese poetry. The imagery of prairie naturally also has extraordinary significance, symbolizing the protagonist's gradual broadening of heart and desire for freedom. Rey Chow[10] says the film *Song of the Exile* renders sentimental emotion, Chinese kinship and psychic interiorities with using cinematic flashbacks, which is also a similar method to create a cinematic poetic space in the film. The complete poem *Teleg Song* (Chi Le Ge) is translated by Arthur Waley, a British sinologist:

Teleg River lies under the Dark Mountains,
Where the sky is like the sides of a tent
Stretched down over the Great Steppe.
The sky is grey, grey
And the steppe wide, wide.
Over grass that the wind has battered low
Sheep and oxen roam.

This ancient folk song sings the magnificent and fertile scenery of the northern grasslands and expresses the passion of the Chile people who love their hometown and love life. The sky is like its giant domed tent covering the entire prairie. In the film, the sky in the ancient poems is like the shadow brought by the Cultural Revolution to Xu Lingjun, which has always enveloped his heart. The dome, tent in this translation version, is a living room for nomads. Cows, sheep and pastures are their sources of food and clothing. They have deep and profound feelings for these things related to their lives and destiny. This is also the feeling that Xu Lingjun wants to manifest in the film. He has an indelible deep feeling for the country, the hometown where he has lived for twenty years, and the people here.

The film uses the imagery in these traditional Chinese poems and uses traditional aesthetic elements to connect the era with the individual. Not only does it connect the personal growth and development with the changes in the background environment, but also these beautiful images convey the heavy facts in the epic film, avoiding directly rendering sad emotions. Through the new building built by the school, the film leads to the "breaking the four olds" movement of the Cultural Revolution. Red Guards break the glass of the school and built a new building. The old man says that after the revolution has been rehabilitated, teachers have been accordingly rehabilitated. The building has also been

refurbished. Although the film is a story that occurred during the Cultural Revolution, presence of this nation-wide movement is never explicitly depicted in the film through representations of class struggle. By doing so, the film has used this ingenious way to tell the audience the background and the painful consequences of the Cultural Revolution.

The dim city scene at the beginning of the film becomes brighter at the end, which symbolizes that Xu Lingjun's father has been also brighter, with rendering father's transferred feeling and expectation to China. His love and expectations for the motherland has been rekindled. The female secretary says, "Beijing, a week, like a dream," and the father replies to her, "No, better than a dream."

At the end, the protagonist's narration said, "Here is the land I have soaked in sweat, here is my relatives and friends who share weal and woe, here is my wife who is in love with me, here is the root of my life," which not only expresses his love for his wife, but also renders his deep love for the motherland. The whole film is narrated on the basis of certain kind of ideology. The reconciliation of traditional Chinese family values and the socialist national ideology is both vividly displayed in the film. Deleuze says in [11] that, the basis of modern political cinema is to be division and fragmentation, in this light, personal experience has related to collective memory, personal statements stands for collective statements, and private affairs become political affairs. For example, Qilian Mountain, in the film, concretizes the protagonist's love for his motherland. The protagonist's fascination with Qilian Mountain is best exemplified by Xu Lingjun's moving dialogue. Towards the climax of the film, Li says: "You can't carry Qilian Mountain, you can't carry the prairie." "Money can't build a heavenly palace" tells us that although Xu Lingjun has been abandoned by his father so many years, he loves his father still. Years of absence has made it impossible for a father who has countless money to win his son back, Chinese people attach great significance to the concept of family. A united family can create a better personality, and a united family can make everyone more cohesive; "This is because in China, the relationship between the country and the family is too close, and the destiny of the country is also the destiny of the family", "I am an orphan, outcast from bourgeois, who has also been bathed in the sunshine of New China", both of which reflect Xu Lingjun's love for the country and his firm belief in socialism. Many plots in the film reflect the differences in values between Xu Lingjun and his father. For instance, his father advocates freedom and individualism, and believes that personal success is above all else. With reading newspapers, Xu cares more about national affairs, which confuses his father. He loves to read Marx and Hegel, and he loves and believes in socialism with Chinese characteristics.

IV. CINEMATIC AIR AND THE POETICS OF XIE JIN'S EPIC CINEMA

In *Hibiscus Town*, rain, as an important motif in the film, is often used as a sign of sadness or rebirth. Similarly, visualization of the rain also helped Xie Jin restore what was initially envisaged by Fei Mu to be the 'air' of the cinematic art. In *Hibiscus Town*, rain first appeared when the young Red Guard appeared. Heavy rain fell on everyone and

punished the villain Li Guoxiang, who used to be the operator of a state-owned restaurant, and was lucky to become a member of the county party committee and the director of the commune. However, Hu Yuyin was hardworking and rich. Li was jealous of Hu Yuyin's beauty, jealous of her being loved, who experienced inner inferiority and conceited, so she frequently made trouble for Hu. The rain symbolizes the washing away of the grievances of Qin Shutian and Hu Yuyin. When the Red Guards appears, it starts to rain, and the camera switches back and forth between Gu Yanshan, Qin Shutian, Hu Yuyin, Li Guoxiang, and the Red Guards, as if the Red Guards are the judges, Li was being judged, and the others were bystanders. In the parallel shots, Li also stands in a more prominent position than others, just to highlight the role she is being tried. And with the departure of the Red Guards, the rain stopped, so the rain has an implicit meaning of trial in the film; and the second appearance of the rain is also to symbolize the grievances of the protagonist of the superiors discovering their love that caused them to be criticized. This time the rain appears in the trial of Qin and Hu. The judge is Li. Their roles are changed. The scene switches back and forth between them and the villagers. Interspersed with upside-down shots in between, it highlights the tension and depression of the protagonist's injustice. The villagers' eyes show pity and unbearableness, which is even more to the side. The accumulating grievances of Qin and Hu are paving the way for the ending to redress the grievances. It appears similar to melodrama which is kind of a sort of highly stressful plot, as Ben Singer says in [12] and Miriam Hansen says in [13]. Moreover, the shots of these scenes and even most of the film's shots are fixed shots, which renders a sense of calmness and itself likes being a bystander, which helps to enhance the sense of historicity and decorous feeling of the film.

Snow is also a motif regarded as a sign for rendering a deeply wronged feeling of protagonist or creator, apart from being used to render the beauty of nature. Snow appeared after Gu Yanshan reprimanded Li Mangeng for betraying Hu Yuyin. When he went out, it snowed heavily. Gu Yanshan said, "It's over, it's not over," which means they were treated unjustly. The appearance of snow in Chinese is usually to express grief and grievance, and here it emphasizes the class contradiction between the protagonist and the masses. In traditional Chinese paintings, snow scenes are often used to depict pure natural landscapes. For example, Xue Yongnian[14] says, *Snow Scenery Landscape Painting* is a silk ink and color painting created by Jing Hao during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. It is also known as *Snow Scene Traveling Map* and *Snow Mountain Traveling Map*, which are now in the collection in Nelson Atkins Art Museum, Kansas City, USA. The painting depicts the landscape in the snow, with mountains, rivers, boats, houses, and people traveling in the scenery. Conversely, *June Snow Madame Dou'e*, Peng Jixiang says in [15], which linked snow with heroine's wronged feeling, a Yuan - zaju composed by Guan Hanqin who is a dramatist in Yuan Dynasty, is one of the most renowned classical operas in China. The whole drama is divided into four parts. It is written that Dou'e, a weak widow, is framed by a rogue and beaten by a fainter official. She is beaten into a move and became a murderer. She was sentenced to behead for

publicity. Before her execution, Dou'e, full of grief and indignation, makes three vows: blood splattered with white silk, snow in June, and three years of severe drought. Sure enough, God is moved by her grievance, and the three vows are fulfilled one by one. The film uses snow, a representative motif of Chinese aesthetic elements, not only just for decorates the scenes, but also for manifesting protagonists' emotion to audiences, which makes audiences more of empathy like living in that period so that it could heighten the sense of historicity of this film.

In *The Herdsman*, a prominent motif of air is the wind. By the beginning of the film, the uncle in Qilian Mountain used cloth to help Xu Lingjun's home without a door blocking the wind, and said, "The wind blowing down on Qilian Mountain at night is very cool." The wind here symbolizes the emptiness of regaining freedom after class struggle and his inner coldness. The color tone of the picture is slightly yellow, and the lens begins to describe Xu Lingjun passing a chimney on the roof, and later it becomes a moving lens to follow Xu Lingjun to the ground, basically maintaining a panoramic lens, allowing the audience to pay more attention to the environment in the background, the unclear chimney and the absence of the door of the house fully shows the protagonist's poverty in his family, which is a contrast with the protagonist's affluent family life as a child, as well as with the protagonist's rich spiritual world. The autumn wind, also called the west wind, often symbolizes the feeling of killing in the story, and most of it contains solemn sadness. For example, in Li Qingzhao's *Zui Huayin*, "Only, when the west wind stir the curtain, I see that I am more gracile than the yellow flowers;" The winter wind, also called the north wind, is often used to symbolize the bitter cold of winter, and most of it embodies the grievances and miserable feelings of poets. For example, in Zheng Sixiao's *Chrysanthemum in winter* (Hanju), "I would rather die with incense on the branch before blowing the north wind." In this film, people wear long and thick clothes, which should be in the autumn and winter seasons. The wind also means that the protagonist's feeling is wronged and helpless for the unfair treatment he has suffered.

V. CONCLUSION

Overall, traditional Chinese aesthetic elements can greatly help us understand and redefine Chinese epic cinema, and traditional Chinese aesthetic elements can help epic films depict the social changes in the story and the difficultly perceived thoughts and feelings of the characters in a subtle and poetic manner. Wang Hongjian says in [16] that the beauty of artistic works derives from artistic perception and taste of the work. Just like the film *A City of Sadness*, directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien, takes the February 28th incident as the background and tells the experience and lives of the four brothers of the Lin family. There is almost no direct telling of the background of the war in the beginning of the film, but the background of the story is clearly explained through some aspects that people usually don't pay much attention to, such as the news on the unconditional surrender of Japan in the Second World War on the radio, and the use of the birth a baby symbolizes another rebirth of China. The same is true for the above-mentioned films. They do not directly explain

the story background, but use traditional Chinese aesthetic elements such as wind, rain, clouds, flowers as well as imagery such as banners and slogans to render the theme of those films and the inner feelings of the protagonist. And these aesthetic elements blended into the background do not make the audience feel abrupt, and even further enhance the sense of historicity of the film.

The inheritance and application of traditional Chinese aesthetics elements infuse traditional Chinese philosophical and historical concepts in Chinese cinema. The Cultural Revolution is an unforgettable period in the history of the PRC's national development. Chinese films do not directly criticize the faults during this period, but use the fate of ordinary people in this period to reflect the impact of changes on everyone. When it comes to the Chinese epic cinema, it is the same. Films that just tell stories from a large macro perspective are not called epic films, nor are they called epic films purely to describe the entire process of the epic. These films are not like *Brave Heart*, which demonstrates that using the life of the inconspicuous characters can also depict an epic.

These films not only help us broaden the academic's understanding of Chinese epic cinema, but also give us a clear understanding of the changes in the identity of modern Chinese in the process of recalling the history of the Cultural Revolution. It is because the background of film is set during the Cultural Revolution, these films can be called epic films.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Yiming Chen completed the whole process of the research and finish the essay independently.

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Yiming Chen graduated from the Communication University of China with a bachelor's degree in cultural industry management. As an independent researcher, Yiming is broadly interested in the interconnections between classical Chinese aesthetics and contemporary Chinese cinema.

He has worked as a teacher of high-quality English courses in spark education. He has several internship experiences, such as being a film planning in Guangdong Duoduo Television Media Co., Ltd., being a curatorial assistant in South China Art Museum and Beijing Inside-out Art Museum, being an entertainer planner in Xiamen Feibo Co-created Network Science and Technology Co., Ltd. and being an assistant to PHTV in Hong Kong in American Phoenix Satellite television.