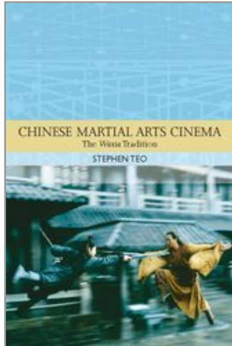
University Press Scholarship Online
Edinburgh Scholarship Online




Chinese Martial Arts Cinema: The Wuxia Tradition
Stephen Teo

Print publication date: 2009
Print ISBN-13: 9780748632855
Published to Edinburgh Scholarship Online: September 2012
DOI: 10.3366/edinburgh/9780748632855.001.0001

# Wuxia from Literature to Cinema

Stephen Teo

DOI:10.3366/edinburgh/9780748632855.003.0002

## [−] Abstract and Keywords

The literary and philosophical traditions of the historical *xia* (knights-errant) are investigated. The cinematic genre began in the 1920s in the Shanghai film industry (then the capital of the Chinese cinema), essentially with the success of *The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple*, released in 1928. The film's success led to a long-running serial adventure and to copycat productions of the same ilk – this phenomenon coming under the rubric of the 'Burning Revolution' in the Shanghai film industry – thus laying the foundation for the popularity of the genre that would last until the present. The serial nature as well as the fantastic characteristics of the cinematic genre itself was rooted in the literary tradition of long novels with a typical 'to be continued' cliff-hanging structure.

*Keywords:* Literary xia, the Shanghai cinema, wuxia novels, serials, 'Burning Revolution'

This chapter recounts the literary antecedents of *wuxia*, examining the ideals and characteristics of Chinese knight-errantry as they have passed down through historical records and fiction, before proceeding to a review of the *wuxia* literature of the early twentieth century which directly preceded the cinematic genre and helped to bring about its birth. The cinema in turn has become a major historiographic apparatus of the *wuxia* genre, creating new filmic texts often to support and bolster the literary opuses on which directors and screenwriters had drawn. I explore the beginnings of the cinematic genre in the Shanghai film industry, tracing its growth through the early studio system of production and its culmination, four short years later, as the genre fell out of favour with intellectuals and the government, which then declared a ban on the genre.

## Literary and Philosophical Traditions



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

The literary and philosophical antecedents from whence the character of *xia* was derived may be traced as far back as the Warring States period (403–221 BCE) and perhaps as early as the Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BCE). But it was not until the time of the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) that a substantive history of the lives and traditions of *xia* was written. Sima Qian's *Shi ji* (*Records of History*[1]), written between 104–91 BCE during the reign of Han Wudi (the 'Martial Emperor') contains two chapters, 'Biographies of Knights-Errant' ('Youxia liezhuan'), and 'Biographies of the Assassins' ('Cike liezhuan'), **(p.18)** which are usually cited as the historical records of remarkable personalities broadly described as *xia* and their feats of chivalry and loyalty in the Warring States and Qin periods.

Sima Qian described *xia* as members of a plebeian class hailing from 'humble alleys' and wearing 'common clothes'. In the Warring States period, this class included the likes of robbers and brigands, soldiers and freethinkers who were untenured warriors sometimes referred to as 'private swords' (*sijian*). In the Qin period (221–207 BCE), *xia* included political assassins sympathetic to righteous ministers or politicians trying to rid states of tyrants. Sima Qian noted that such men treated status and wealth lightly and were not afraid to die. They flouted authority, were loyal to friends and helped the poor and the oppressed.

Knights-errant upheld a code of professional ethics associated with the principles of the major philosophical schools during the Warring States period, principally Confucianism and Mohism. In the preamble to 'Biographies of Knights-Errant', Sima Qian identified righteousness (*yi*), trust (*xin*), meritorious service (*gong*), tidiness (*jie*), and tolerance (*rang*), as the ethical principles guiding the behaviour of *xia*.[2] Of all these principles, *yi* is the most mentioned in the mythology of *xia* as expounded in literature and in the cinema. The term *xiayi*, combining chivalry with righteousness, which James Liu defines as 'altru-ism',[3] is the motivating principle behind the knight-errant's mission to do good deeds, and to act from a sense of justice (*xingxia zhangyi*).

Xu Sinian has noted that in the Confucianist tradition, knights-errant act on the principle of *yi* largely as a bulwark against the notion of *li*, or self-profit.[4] Knight-errantry in its Confucianist spirit presupposes chivalry, altruism, benevolence and justice for the common good. In opposition to the Confucianists, the Mohists integrated *yi* with the concept of *li*, treating *yi* in terms of self-benefit.[5] The founding philosopher, Mo Zi, preached all-embracing love (*jian ai*): to regard others as one would regard oneself.[6] The Mohists embraced the idea of the chivalry of knight-errantry as a means towards achieving all-embracing love and organised themselves into a private army headed by a 'Great Master' (in Chinese: *juzi*) with authority of life or death over his members.[7] Some historians consider this the origin of the *jianghu*.[8]

Interpretations of *jianghu* are many,[9] but essentially, it refers to an abstract entity which can mirror the real world in which *xia* and their code of conduct are put into operation. As Hamm has elucidated, the *jianghu* can be concretised in 'the complex of inns, highways and waterways, deserted temples, bandits' lairs, and stretches of wilderness at the geographic and moral margins of settled society'.[10] They imply an illicit space nurtured by conflict and corruption, but functioning as an 'alternate society'. Chen Pingyuan gives two meanings of *jianghu*: 1 a secret society within the real world that exists in opposition with the government, 2 a semi-Utopia where *xia* are free to defy authority and act on their conscience to punish evil and exalt goodness.[11] In the practices of the **(p.19)** Mohists, the historical evidence suggests that *jianghu* was constituted as a super organisation or secret society. To the Mohists, violence was entirely



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

compatible with chivalry, and *xia* could legitimately use violence to achieve the aim of all-embracing love.[12]

The actions and principles of *xia* came under attack from the Legalist philosopher Han Fei Zi, who lived in the waning years of the Warring States period. He asserted that *xia* were selfish individuals operating a private code of *yi* (*si yi*). Han Fei Zi also castigated *xia* for their violence and lawlessness, and because people followed them, they were responsible for propagating a culture of outlawry and anarchy.[13] Han Fei Zi's famous critique that ‘knights-errant transgress the law with violence’ (*xia yi wu fan jin*) has resonated among *wuxia* detractors through the ages. Sima Qian's view of *xia* was more sympathetic. He thought their actions worthy of moral commendation, and indeed, that their conformity to a professional code of ethics had produced a *xia* morality. The private code of righteous behaviour (*si yi*) was not a self-serving morality but rather the conduct of a gentleman acting alone for the benefit of others. The private nature of *xia* stemmed from his disgust of the elite and his empathy with the lower classes.[14]

Sima Qian praised knights-errant for their steadfastness and bravery, emphasising deeds over words.

> They always mean what they say, always accomplish what they set out to do, and always fulfil their promises. They rush to the aid of other men in distress without giving a thought to their own safety. They do not boast of their ability and would be ashamed to brag of their benevolence.[15]

Sima Qian defended *xia* on their use of violence and their lawlessness. The breakdown of the imperial houses during the Warring States period had resulted in a perpetual state of political chaos and anarchy. The people could not count on the rule of law. In such situations, *xia* resorted to violence as the only way to ensure justice and defending the common people against tyrants and warlords.

Sima Qian's critical endorsement of knights-errant and their role in history have exerted a strong influence on the development of later literature in China. *Shi ji* was not only the first comprehensive history of China ever written, it was also, as C. T. Hsia tells us, the ‘noblest monument of classical narrative prose’ which latter writers used as a standard to judge the excellence of their own novels.[16]*Xia* literature as contained in the anthologies *Wuyue chunqiu* and the *Yue jue shu* of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220CE), and the *chuanqi* or proseromances of the Tang Dynasty (618–907), were often based on the records of historical knights-errant in Sima Qian's biographies.

The *chuanqi* stories spawned their own legendary figures including the Curly-Bearded Stranger (Qiu Ran), the Kunlun Slave, Nie Yinniang, and the Red-Thread **(p.20)** Lady (Hongxian nü) – the latter two being the earliest literary incarnations of *nüxia* (female knights-errant) who would be romanticised in latter Qing Dynasty(1644–1911) fiction, exemplified by Wen Kang's *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* (‘A Tale of Heroic Lovers’), first published in 1878, and in twentieth-century fiction, as in Wang Dulu's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

The military romance also developed from the time of the Tang dynasty and became a popular form in the Song dynasty (960–1279). Classics such as *San guo yanyi* (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Shuihu zhuan* (*The Water Margin*) are military romances-cum-tales of chivalry, celebrating historical personages and events set against the backdrop of ‘a large scale campaign



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

or a series of such campaigns'.[17] The central characters of *Romance* were famous generals or soldiers possessing exceptional fighting abilities (sometimes aided by supernatural forces) and superior grasp of military strategy.

*The Water Margin* in particular established the literary formula emulated by later writers whereby righteous men choose to become outlaws rather than serve under corrupt administrations. The episodic sketchings of each individual character and their adventures are prototypical and in the episodes we see the seeds of the fighting styles and mannerisms of latter *wuxia* characters. The novel was published in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), but versions of the so-called 'Liangshanpo outlaws' (Liangshanpo referred to the mountain base of the rebels who rose up against the government) were already well known from the Song dynasty and popular stories about the outlaws began circulating into subsequent eras. Thus, Hu Shi called *The Water Margin* a crystallisation of 400 years of 'Liangshanpo stories'.[18] It possessed such a subversive, revolutionary appeal to Han Chinese readers that it was banned during the Qing dynasty.[19]

During the Song Dynasty, *wuxia* fiction was disseminated in the form of storytelling prompt books, known as *huaben*. This tradition continued well into the Qing period, until another form of *wuxia* fiction known as the 'Public Case' (*gongan*) novels became popular in the nineteenth century. The *gongan* novels were written according to a formula of adventure, gallant deeds and the solving of a plot involving murder or a conspiracy. Several knights-errant, or a central hero who could be a judge, are moved by an unjust act done to an innocent party and go about uncovering the perpetrator of the act and dealing him his just deserts. In some respects, this kind of fiction took on the quality of a whodunit and, as a result, was called 'detective novels'.[20]

The theme of chivalry and altruism marked such so-called detective fiction, made apparent in the titles of a series of novels containing the words *xia* and *yi*, as in *Sanxia wuyi (The Three Heroes and the Five Gallants*), and a latter version entitled *Qixia wuyi (The Seven Heroes and Five Gallants*). The *xiayi* or heroic chivalry fiction took on the currents of a movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century, following the popularity of *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* (*A Tale of Heroic Lovers*) which centred on a female knight-errant named **(p.21)** Thirteenth Sister, an archetype that distils earlier visions of female knight-errant figures who have appeared in *wuxia* literature (I will discuss the female knight-errant figure in more detail in Chapter 7).

The chief characteristic of *xiayi* fiction was a blend of action and romance, revolving around either female knight-errant figures or feminised or semi-feminised male heroes who proved irresistible to women. A typical hero of this type was romantic-sentimental as well as a highly skilled fighter, as exemplified by Wen Suchen, the central character of the late eighteenth-century novel *Yesou puyan* ('The Humble Words of an Old Rustic'). Wen displayed the traits of masculine sexual prowess on top of his other abilities in the military and civil spheres.[21] Such a literary prototype would prove to be an important one when filmmakers considered adopting it for the cinema (see the section on Zhang Che in Chapter 4).

In *xiayi* fiction, the romantic male hero became an entrenched archetype while his skills as a fighter become more and more fantastic. The *xiayi* fiction depicted the supernaturalistic abilities of knights-errant to vault over walls and fly over rooftops. According to Hsia, the *gongan* sub-genre of *xiayi* fiction gradually 'took over the supernatural aspects of the military romance in accordance with its own evolving conventions', and the *gongan* novel itself became a tradition



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

wedded to twentieth-century *wuxia* fiction (Hsia reckons that the actual *wuxia* trend began with the publication of *Sanxia wuyi*/ *The Three Heroes and the Five Gallants*).[22]

The fantastic strand of *wuxia* fiction was inherited also from the genre of the ghost story and tales of the strange, exemplified by the eighteenth-century anthology entitled *Liaozhai zhiyi* (translated into English as *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* by Herbert Giles), authored by Pu Songling. *Liaozhai* was arich source of *wuxia* stories for Chinese filmmakers in the twentieth century, and it yielded the one veritable masterpiece of the *wuxia* genre in the Chinese cinema, King Hu's *A Touch of Zen*, based on the story 'Xianü' (indicating a chivalric female knight-errant). Pu Songling styled himself a 'historian of the strange' (in Chinese, *yishi shi*),[23] and it is the strange and fantastic world of *wuxia*, marked by flying knights-errant both male and female, that the cinema has manifested particularly well.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

## *Wuxia* Literature in the Twentieth Century

The *wuxia* fiction of the twentieth century has been categorised by scholars into the old school (*jiupai*), referring essentially to the fiction published under the Republic of China regime from 1911 to 1949, and the new school (*xinpai*), referring to the fiction published in Hong Kong in the 1950s as China, under communist rule, continued to frown upon the genre and limit its distribution in the Mainland. These labels denote the regional and political differences of **(p.22)** the two schools rather than artistic disparity between them, as Chen Pingyuan has noted.[24]

However, the two labels have become entrenched in *wuxia* scholarship in the latter half of the twentieth century and Mainland scholars have since regarded the new school literature of Jin Yong and Liang Yusheng as forming an inherent part of their own tradition. The renewed popularity of new school literature in China has led to the emergence in the twenty-first century of a younger breed of writers in China who see themselves as inheritors of the ‘new *wuxia*’ (*xin wuxia*) as the Mainlanders tend to call the ‘new school’. With the reestablishment of *wuxia* as a legitimate genre in China, some scholars, such as Xu Sinian, have maintained that there is a need to examine the characteristics and historical status of the Republican era's *wuxia* literature. Xu notes that the old school distinction is useful not only to distinguish between the Mainland and Hong Kong-Taiwan but also to distinguish between *wuxia* literature and the new literature of the May Fourth Movement.[25]

Many *wuxia* fiction writers in the early twentieth century began writing before the 1919 May Fourth movement, making their names mostly in love stories in the genre known as *yuanyang hudie* (Butterfly and Mandarin Duck), a type of fiction aping classical romances and featuring effeminate male heroes romancing tender young women, with the stories usually ending tragically. However, old school martial arts fiction was mostly written during or after the May Fourth movement. The literature grew in popularity in the 1920s, with the publication of Pingjiang Buxiaosheng's *Jianghu qixia zhuan (Legend of the Strange Swordsmen*, first serialised 1922), Zhao Huanting's *Qixia jingzhong zhuan (The Valiant History of the Strange Knights-Errant*, published 1923), and Gu Mingdao's *Huangjiang nüxia (Lady Swordfighter of the South*, published 1929). The labelling of this fiction as ‘old school’ illustrated the fact that the genre was not recognised as being congruent with the modern, new style fiction of the May Fourth literary movement based on contemporary themes and drawing on social and political currents.

For example, while May Fourth literature spoke of opposition to feudalism and the need for progressive thinking, supernaturalism and fantasy remained embedded in *wuxia* fiction of the period, particularly the novels of Huanzhu Louzhu (‘Master of the Pavilion of the Returned Pearl’: the *nom de plume* for author Li Shoumin [1902–1962]). Huanzhu's novels depict *xia* as gods and spirits dwelling in caves and mountains, as in his most representative work *Shushan jianxia (The Chivalrous Swordsmen of the Szechwan Mountains*), which describes creatures and demons battling mortal heroes engaged in a Homer-like quest for gods and spirits to impose law and order on a chaotic and strife-torn earth – this was the basis of Tsui Hark's *Shushan jianxia* (Zu: *Warriors from the Magic Mountain*, 1983) and its sequel *Shushan zhengzhuan (The Legend of* Zu, 2001). The basis of the genre in the historicist traditions **(p.23)** of fantasy gave rise to the feeling that it was beyond the pale of the May Fourth Movement.

As to the literary differences between the old school and the new school, some scholars have detected ideological and artistic variations, as the following passage from a Chinese anthology of the genre demonstrates:



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

> On the artistic level, the new school lays a greater emphasis on descriptions of characters with the objective of enriching and drawing out their ideological emotions and inner contradictions. It also strives after a complicated and winding plot structure, each linking episode containing specific and detailed descriptions of plot development. … The tendency of the old school to simply assemble several independent stories into one long novel is no longer a tendency of the new school. … Certain novels of the old school have inherited the techniques of the detective novel. In the new school, similar novels have achieved an intimate fusion between *wuxia* and the deductive school of detective fiction. This aside, certain new school writers have adopted European phrases and European-American styles, an unprecedented practice that was never a part of the old school. In short, the new school *wuxia* novel has made substantial progress artistically and this tendency looks like it could continue into the future.[26]

Despite perceived distinctions that the old school is more traditional and the new school is libertarian and open to Western concepts, Chen Pingyuan has preferred a diachronic approach of viewing both schools as belonging to ‘the same developmental process of *wuxia* literature, from the 1920s to the 1980s’.[27] According to such a view, a writer such as Wang Dulu (1909–1977), known today as the original author of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, bridges both the old and the new schools. New school writers such as Jin Yong and Liang Yusheng are as prone as the old school writers to impute values of history and traditional knight-errantry and to invoke magic and fantasy. The novels of both Jin Yong and Liang Yusheng are also full of romantic-tragic knights-errant which are seemingly old school figures.

From about 1927 onwards, the Shanghai film industry began to take a leaf out of the publishing world's practice of serialising *wuxia* novels by adopting the same practice for the cinema, effectively ‘picturising’ *wuxia* novels. The popularisation of the genre was due to the symbiotic relationship between authors and the commercial publishing industry, both pandering to the Chinese public's idolisation of *xia* and their habit of reading long-winded and involved narratives.[28] The demands of the market prodded authors who had not previously written *wuxia* novels to write exclusively in the genre. The commercialism of the market produced a fundamental contradiction with the authors' tendencies towards literariness, but the authors and the commercial **(p.24)** publishing industry made mutual adjustments and artistic compromises so that the genre thrived.[29]



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

## Beginnings in the Shanghai Cinema

The origins of the martial arts cinema can be traced to the first costume pictures (*guzhuang pian*) ever produced in China. Chen Mo has argued a case for considering *Dingjun shan* (*Dingjun Mountain*, 1905), the first Chinese film ever made by Chinese artists, as a martial arts picture.[30] This consisted of three scenes, all shot outdoors, of a Chinese opera performed by the opera star Tan Xinpei. By rights, the film should be considered an opera film, but Chen argues that being a silent film, there is not a note of opera sung in the picture and that the three segments all show Tan Xinpei in martial-dress regalia performing sword choreography and acrobatic fighting acts. Subsequently, a series of films comprising opera style martial art extracts were produced, all of which could similarly be regarded as primitive martial arts pictures.

These experiments led early Chinese filmmakers inexorably to found an industry making films on a commercial basis. The actor-director Zheng Junli, in a synoptic history of Chinese cinema published in 1936, described the burgeoning Chinese film industry from 1909–1921 as a 'sprouting forth period'.[31] The main genres were actuality films, slapstick comedies and adaptations of *wenming xi* ('civilised drama'). In the early 1920s, several studios, including Mingxing (Star Motion Picture Company), Shanghai Photoplay Company, and Great Wall were established. The success of Mingxing's *Guer jiu zu ji* (*Orphan Saves His Grandfather*, 1923) initiated a cycle of 'society films' (*shehui ying-pian*), a contemporary genre dealing with social issues. The genre petered outin the middle of the decade when the ancient-costume film (*guzhuang pian*) became popular.[32] The company that initiated this genre was the Tianyi (Unique) Company, established in 1925.

The *guzhuang* genre was influenced by Western costume pictures and adventure epics, particularly the swashbucklers of Douglas Fairbanks, Sr, *The Mark of Zorro* (1920), *The Three Musketeers* (1921), *Robin Hood* (1922), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), *The Black Pirate* (1926), all of which were popular with Chinese audiences. Chinese filmmakers attempted to cash in on the popularity by creating a Chinese equivalent of these same genres. Zheng Junli described these swashbucklers as Hollywood's equivalents of '*wuxia shenguai* pictures' and their influence on the *wuxia* genre 'was undeniable' as was the fact that Fairbanks Sr had ingrained himself as a 'hero' into the hearts of Chinese audiences.[33]

Tianyi produced the first *wuxia* picture so acknowledged by film historians *Nüxia Li Feifei (Lady Knight Li Feifei*), released in 1925. Beijing Opera diva Fen Juhua played the eponymous lady knight and became the first of the lady **(p.25)** knights in the Chinese cinema. As with much of the output in the genre, the film is now lost. Zheng Junli called it a love story that was a 'straightforward imitation of the ancients'. A young couple in love are torn apart by a marriage broker and the machinations of parents, but they finally tie the knot with the intervention of the lady knight Li Feifei.[34]

The evidence suggests that *Lady Knight Li Feifei* is a costume picture. Though the *wuxia* picture is often a costume picture, the reverse does not necessarily apply. The costume genre took on a genre identity of its own as filmmakers reached into the repertoire of classical Chinese subjects from literature, opera, and the oral narrative tradition with music accompaniment known as *tanci* to cull suitable stories for adaptation to cinema. The genre evolved from *baishi pian* (meaning films based on popular accounts of history), which came into fashion also around the mid-1920s. The term referred to films adapted from classical novels, legends, and traditional performing arts.[35] Though *baishi pian* were historical in theme and content, they were not



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

necessarily dressed inancient costumes. Characters could appear in modern-dress to perform a historical story.

The Tianyi studio specialised in making costume subjects and later *wuxia* films. Its founding principles were to espouse 'old moral values, old family ethics, with the aim of carrying on Chinese civilisation and strongly rebuff Westernisation.'[36] Jay Leyda tells us that Shao Zuiweng (also known as Shao Renjie or Runje Shaw), the eldest of the fabled Shaw Brothers and founder of Tianyi, looked for classical subjects based on Buddhist literature to sustain the *guzhuang* cycle.[37] During 1926, Shao made ten films of classical subjects whose immediate success forced all studios to follow suit.

Tianyi's major competitor, Mingxing, was at this time concentrating on contemporary dramas with social themes and romantic melodramas of the Butterfly and Mandarin Duck school. Another competitor, Da Zhonghua Baihe Film Company (Great China Lilium), was immersed in so-called 'Europeanised' (*ouhua*) films, showing the lifestyles and values of the upper crust of Chinese society in urban Shanghai. Tianyi's *guzhuang* pictures were designed as a reaction against *ouhua* movies. They put forward traditional Chinese values, so that younger generations could know that the Chinese too possessed, as critics would argue, their own 'extraordinarily valiant and heroic nationalism.'[38] Other critics thought that the *guzhuang* film could echo imported foreign historical films. Thus, the historical costume genre could function as a medium for disseminating traditional Chinese culture while offering comparisons with and choices over the foreign import.

Tianyi's campaign of *guzhuang pian* reached a peak in the spring of 1927. A critic at the time likened the spread of the genre to the cholera epidemic that broke out in China in the summer of 1926.[39] Historical-costume films were doing such brisk business in the *nanyang* ('southern ocean', a term referring to **(p.26)** the littoral states surrounding the South China Sea and thus essentially referring to Southeast Asia) that all other studios fell over themselves to produce costumers using allegedly crude, slipshod production standards.[40] The films paid no attention to historical authenticity or getting right the details of period, costumes, sets and props. Critics also saw the genre as a regressive force that went against the spirit of progress and social change.[41] Something had to be done to reenergise the costume picture, and according to Li Daoxin, *wuxia* was the answer. It was the 'added attraction' put into the *guzhuang pian* which had grown stale from repetition and slipshoddiness. Movie companies began to transform the historical costume film by inserting martial arts and *shenguai* elements, and even at times, to make 'modern *wuxia shenguai*' films as a way of getting out of the *guzhuang* genre altogether.[42]

Thus the *wuxia* picture in the 1920s was not necessarily a costume picture nor did it always contain swordplay. Chinese scholars and the early filmmakers took a broad concept of *wuxia* where the forms of history and genre do not have to merge. Films set in contemporary periods featuring a Robin Hood-type figure who steals from the rich to help the poor, were regarded as *wuxia pian*, defined purely in terms of the chivalric concept of *xia*.

Chinese film historians regard the 1922 *Hongfen kulou* (rendered by Leyda as *Vampire's Prey*[43] but also known as *Beauty and Skeletons*; the film also went by the alternative title of *Shi zimei/ Ten Sisters*), as an early manifestation of the *wuxia* picture.[44] Though *Vampire's Prey* was set in the modern day, the director Guan Haifeng wanted to make a movie evoking elements of the *wuxia* genre.[45] The plot concerned a gang specialising in insurance scams. A female member of the gang kidnaps a young doctor in a park, right in front of his fiancée who mistakenly thinks that the woman has seduced him. The distraught fiancée returns home and cries on the shoulder



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

of her brother, a police detective. His suspicions aroused, the detective investigates. Meanwhile the young man is being slowly poisoned to death so that the gang can collect on his life policy.[46] What director Guan Haifeng referred to as '*wuxia* elements' in the film were scenes of action involving police in full uniform 'fighting members of the gang with real swords and guns' while rescuing the kidnapped doctor.[47]

The development of a genuine Chinese costume genre and the rise of the *wuxia shenguai* picture did not mean that such genres were immune from foreign influences. The Da Zhonghua Baihe Company's policy of 'Europeanisation' was applied even to its *wuxia* products. An advertisement for a '*xiayi* romance blockbuster' entitled *Rexue yuanyang (The Ardent Couple*), printed in the film magazine *Dianying yuebao* ('Film Monthly') in December 1928, shows illustrations indicating a mock-Mountie Western, with its lead characters dressed in cowboy hats, checked shirts, neck scarves and jodhpurs. Going by the evidence of *The Red Heroine*, a production of the Youlian Studio **(p.27)** released in 1929, the *wuxia shenguai* genre also dabbled in a reverse form of orientalism. Characters are dressed in a medley of exotic ancient-costume styles. The period is indistinct though the setting is a Chinese village invaded by a 'Western' army whose commanding general is dressed in a costume of dappled designs and beaded patterns, with a pleated hoop for a hat (roughly evoking perhaps Middle-Eastern or South Asian motifs). His soldiers, on the other hand, wear European-style musketeer costumes and cavalier hats.

## The Development of *Wuxia* Shenguai

By 1927, *guzhuang pian* was receding in popularity but its formula of historical-classical subjects would evolve into the conventions of the *wuxia* picture, and this in turn developed into the combined *wuxia shenguai* picture. The chronology of the evolution of *wuxia shenguai* is a matter of some confusion. Did the *wuxia* picture appear first without elements of *shenguai*, or did the *shenguai* picture appear first without *wuxia* elements? Chinese film historians Li Suyuan and Hu Jubin have asserted that *shenguai* and *wuxia* were two different genres.[48] They made the following distinctions. *Wuxia* expresses the warrior's lifestyle, his struggle against local tyrants and corrupt officials, and his fight for justice. The *wuxia* picture on its own has the potential to be a medium for raising and spreading revolution or social consciousness. The *shenguai* picture, on the other hand, contains gods and demons as chief protagonists, is 'detached from nature, its progress not limited by the laws of nature or the limitations of cause and effect.'[49]

The *shenguai* genre also became popular at around the time of the *wuxia* genre, thus again begging the question of which came first. Zheng Junli refers to *Pansi dong (Voyage to the Western World* aka, *The Cave of Silken Coil*), released in 1927, as the first 'unadulterated' *shenguai* movie.[50] The film was an adaptation of an episode from the classic *shenguai* novel *Xiyou ji (Pilgrimage to the West*, aka *Monkey*). It is possible to see the *shenguai* genre as an intermediate form between the *guzhuang* and the *wuxia* genres. In Zheng Junli's view, the *shenguai* picture never truly evolved into a solo genre; it was always combined with either the *guzhuang* genre or with the *wuxia* genre.[51] Another critic, writing in 1927, identified two types of *guzhuang* films: one type belonging to the *shenguai* genre, while the other type was rooted more solidly in historical folklore.[52]

The *guzhuang* genre shifted its focus from historical subjects based on popular anecdotes (the *baishi* tradition) to adaptations of classical *shenguai* novels such as *Pilgrimage to the West, Fengshen bang (Canonisation of the Gods*), and *Liaozhai zhiyi* (*Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*). When the *wuxia* picture became popular, the *shenguai* elements attached themselves to



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

the main theme of knight-errantry or chivalry (*xia*), and the marriage proved **(p.28)** to be compatible insofar as knights-errant could be invested with supernatural powers in their quest for justice and order in a chaotic world.

In fact, literary scholars have pointed out a close association between *shen-guai* and the early 'military romances' (the forerunners of *wuxia* fiction) and fantasy. It was also argued that *shenguai* elements transformed the *wuxia* genre into a more cinematic form, and that it was natural for the cinema to adopt fantasy.[53] Zheng Junli asserted that *shenguai* pictures were a product of the 'possibility of cinematic expression' and that their starting point was the Méliès experiments with camera trickery at the turn of the twentieth century.[54]

Evoking references to such Western fantasy equivalents as Peter Pan and the Arabian Nights fantasies, some Chinese filmmakers believed that 'fantasy' would render a greater service to the public than either a harmful historical play or a contemporary play.

> We believe that films based on *shenguai* sources are much better in expressing art than all other forms of drama because they are strange as well as fantastical; possessing new things, new lives, new ideas which we cannot imagine even in our dreams.[55]

However, the combination of fantasy and the *wuxia* picture eventually became a millstone for the genre, as detractors attacked it for purveying feudalism, superstition and anti-scientific thought. Such abominations were thought to stem primarily from *shenguai*. Detractors claimed that *wuxia* could no longer preserve its inherent realism or revolutionary nature and therefore had degenerated into 'a heretic genre that poisoned the masses.'[56] Cheng Xiaoqing, in a 1927 article entitled 'My View on *Shenguai* Movies' emphasised that China lacked a scientific paradigm due to its humanist outlook. Such an outlook stressed the individual's mental well-being rather than his scientific or rational state of mind, and this explained why China had a more ingrained tradition of fantasy than the West.[57]

The May Fourth Movement itself propagated the idea that democracy and science would make China a modern nation. It also brought about a new wave of literature written in the vernacular style (*baihua*). Stories were disseminated to the literate masses through the practice of serialised publishing. Both the vernacular style and the practice of serialised publishing were the means by which *wuxia* fiction became popular. This gave rise to a paradox. Though the young and educated were attracted to *shenguai* and *wuxia* literature, the impact of the progressive and modern-scientistic ideas promoted by the May Fourth Movement produced a backlash against the genre's supernaturalism and fantastic premises.

The genre was generally described as '*wuxia shenguai*' by the early 1930s, meant in a derogatory sense to denote the 'harmful' components of fantasy in **(p.29)** the combined genre. *Shenguai* is, in this case, used as an adjective to qualify *wuxia*; whereas other scholars in reversing the order of the sequence (namely, *wuxia shenguai*) tend to interpret the genre in a more calibrated sense as 'films about knights-errant, immortals and ghosts'.[58] Used by detractors, the term '*wuxia shenguai*' indicated contempt mixed with shame that took on social and even political dimensions. The genre was regarded as a mishmash of superstition, feudalism, knight-errantry, heroism and militarism – an unholy concoction which induced escapism in the audience when China was in the midst of a political crisis in 1931–1932. Henceforth, I will refer to the genre generally as *wuxia shenguai* to signify its existence as a single genre containing



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

both elements of fantasy and swordplay. In time, the word *shenguai* was dropped, as the fantasy element became such an inherent part of the *wuxia* genre that there was no need to qualify it.

A closer look at the *guzhuang pian* in its mature stage of development around 1926–1927 indicates that there was already a tendency to combine different genres to make up a distinct genre. An example may be seen in an extant though incompletely preserved work: *Xixiang ji (Romance of the West Chamber*, 1927), a *guzhuang pian* which contains elements of *wuxia shenguai*. Produced by Minxin (China Sun Motion Picture Company), the film is based on the famous Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) drama by Wang Shifu.[59] A scholar, Zhang Gong, goes on a study retreat in a temple only to fall in love with the prime minister's daughter, Cui Yingying, who happens to be staying in the temple's western chamber. A bandit, Sun Feihu, besieges the temple, demanding Cui Yingying as a bridal hostage. Zhang Gong extracts a promise from Yingying's mother that if he can prevent the daughter from falling into the hands of the bandit, she will be given to him in marriage.

From its source as a historical costume melodrama, the film transforms into a martial arts fantasy though this is clearly depicted as a dream sequence. The scholar-hero picks up a writing brush to use as his weapon when the bandit appears in the dream to kidnap Yingying.[60] The brush expands into a flying broom, and functions as a weapon smearing the bandit's face with ink. In creating this sequence, Hou Yao, the director, regarded the classical drama of *Romance of the West Chamber* as ‘a castle in the air, an idealized world’ that could only be appreciated as a synthetic beauty, not for ‘scientific, archaeological or analytical study.’[61] ‘Romance’ was one of the earliest Chinese films to be exported to the West, under the title *Way Down West*.[62] The extant five-reel version was cut down from the original ten-reel version, apparently to highlight extended swordplay and dream sequences.[63]

‘Romance’ was released just one year short of the picture considered by critics to be the one classic work that launched the cinema of phantasm and swordplay. This was *Huoshao Honglian si (Burning of the Red Lotus Temple*), adapted from Pingjiang Buxiaosheng's novel *Legend of the Strange* **(p.30)** *Swordsman*, first serialised in 1922. Produced by Mingxing (the Star Motion Picture Company), the largest of the studios in Shanghai, the first episode was released in 1928. Zhang Shichuan directed the picture from a script by his partner, Zheng Zhengqiu. The original first episode ran for three weeks to full houses at Shanghai's Zhongyang (Palace Theatre). Zhang quickly proceeded to make a second episode, and then a third, all released in 1928. The success of these three episodes launched the martial arts picture as a serial format.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

## The Burning Revolution

*The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple* ran for eighteen instalments between1928 and 1931. It inspired imitations containing the rubric of ‘burning’ (*huoshao*) in all the titles so that a sub-category of ‘Burning’ films was created. At this point, before examining the original ‘Burning’ films, it is helpful to consider both the contemporary explanations of the phenomenon and some of the historical circumstances of its emergence. The *guzhuang* picture and its interrelated genres, *shenguai* and *wuxia*, came into popularity at a critical moment in modern Chinese history – during the Guomindang (GMD)'s forceful unification of the country in 1926–1927 and the coup against its communist allies known as the April 12 Incident of 1927.

Critics in China toeing the official left-wing ideological line usually put the rise of the *wuxia* picture against the backdrop of these currents of politics, stressing that the cinema should reinvent itself along the socio-political realities of the times. The *wuxia* genre was usually found wanting in all respects of political and social engagement. The GMD coup resulted in disillusionment among the left wing of the country in general. It was argued that the population had turned to *wuxia* as a form of wish-fulfilment: the exploits of the fictional *wuxia* heroes were ‘providing the enjoyment of vicarious victories where real-life victories were impossible.’[64]

Another perspective was provided by critics writing in the film magazine *Yinxing (Silver Star*) who called for a new doctrine in cinema based on a humanitarian perspective of heroism à la Romain Rolland. The doctrine was named New Heroism (*xin yingxiong zhuyi*).[65] The editor of *Yinxing*, Lu Mengshu, expounded its principles as follows: ‘to excel oneself, do away with the habit of following old customs, cowardly actions, and corrupt thinking; to ignore one's own self-interests and make sacrifices for the sake of humanity.’[66]

New Heroism arose in film circles in 1926 when the country was inspired by the Northern Expedition as the final realisation of Sun Yat-sen's dream of unifying the country. The doctrine ‘was a composite modernist discourse interwoven with a class-conscious social critique and a nationalist emphasis on Chinese cinema’,[67] which floated the idea of protagonists as heroes who could lead the nation out of its weak state, improve people's lives and bring them happiness.[68] **(p.31)** The *wuxia* genre was a natural heroic genre that could fit the concept of New Heroism like a glove. At the same time, martial arts heroes could be useful in emphasising military over civilian affairs; they could bring back a military tradition (*shangwu*) that had long disappeared in China.

The rhetoric of New Heroism in the late 1920s decried the weakness of the Chinese people in comparison with foreign nations. China was the ‘sick man of Asia’. It was felt that while European countries and the United States esteemed militaristic culture and heroes, China had venerated the civilian man of letters. The heroes in Chinese artistic works were always the literati but now it was time for warrior-heroes to return to centre stage. The enthusiasm for heroes and military values had reached the stage where proponents of *wuxia* films were actively encouraging actors to ‘learn boxing and all kinds of martial arts … to express heroism.’[69] Accordingly, Chen Zhiqing, who wrote the first article propounding New Heroism in 1926, himself wrote a script for a *wuxia* picture *Daxia Gan Fengchi* (*The Hero Gan Fengchi*, 1928), which was praised for its‘emphasis on the military spirit and its suggestion that the people should never put on a show of weakness.’[70]



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

Apart from the historical-political currents, the proliferation of *wuxia* literature, particularly in the popular press through the practice of serialised publishing (and publications of comic strips), was also a major factor influencing the rise of the cinematic genre. In considering how the cinema came to absorb literary genres, we might briefly look at the partnership between Zheng Zhengqiu and Zhang Shichuan, the writer and director respectively of *The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple*. Both men came from the theatre, staging *wenming xi*. They founded the Mingxing Company and made their first hit *Orphan Saves His Grandfather* in 1923. Zheng Zhengqiu has been called the'father of Chinese cinema' as a tribute to his pioneering work to wean Chinese cinema from *wenming xi* and making the transition from short films to long narrative features. Zheng realised that if Chinese cinema did not make long narrative fiction films, the fight for a local audience would be lost.[71] His partnership with Zhang Shichuan, a producer-director-entrepreneur, represented 'the desire of the first generation of Chinese filmmakers to reconcile art with profit, craftsmanship with technology.'[72] The partnership yielded some of the most profitable films for Chinese cinema in the 1920s. It is significant that these films were genre films (Butterfly and Mandarin Duck romances, and *wuxia shenguai* pictures) with established traditions in literature.

In adapting Pingjiang Buxiaosheng's novel, Zheng and Zhang exercised artistic licence that would characterise future cinematic adaptations of *wuxia* novels. Zhang said,

> I had a script when making the first episode, but we couldn't wait to make the second episode and we simply put aside the novel and worked **(p.32)** completely with our own imagination and did as we pleased with the surviving characters from the first episode. We shot up to the first half (of the second episode) and I myself didn't even know what was going to happen in the second half.[73]

Since the complete series is lost (reportedly, only fragments from the first episode have survived in poor condition and are kept under storage in the Beijing Film Archive), we must rely on published accounts of the plot. The synoptic description published in the memoirs of Robert Kung (or Gong Jianong, to use his Chinese name), one of the original players in the cast, is most often quoted:

> For generations, the families of both clans have fought over a patch of ground dividing their counties. Local governments proved helpless in coming up with solutions, the chiefs of each successive administration always ended up besieged by the local clans and were invariably drawn into the whirlpool. With no one able to stop it, the feud became fiercer and fiercer. Each side hired top hands from the circles of martial arts to assist. … After suffering a massive defeat, the Lu clan dispatches its youngest member, Xiaoqing, to learn the martial arts from the master of the Kunlun School. Having received his full instructions, Xiaoqing sets off to return home. He loses his way in the forest on the night of the Autumn Moon Festival. The next day, following the directions of a villager, he comes to the Red Lotus Temple to put up for the night but accidentally discovers that the temple is laden with traps. Once in a while, naked women would appear and depart …[74]

The young hero exercises his training in *qing gong* (the skill of applying weightlessness) to escape incarceration and finally allies himself with a group of other young heroes to rescue the provincial governor imprisoned inside the Red Lotus Temple. At the orders of the governor, the Red Lotus Temple is put to the torch. Thus ends Episode One. In Episode Two, the errant monks



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

of Red Lotus Temple escape and throw in their lot with the villain Gan Liuzi (‘Sweet Tumour’), to plot their revenge.

By all accounts, the basis of the genre's popularity in cinema was its depictions of supernatural feats of ‘flying sword combat, escape by stealth and other means of subterfuge achieved by cinematographic special effects.’[75] ‘The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple’ utilised the early process shots known as the Williams shot to depict characters achieving a transmigratory separation of body and soul.[76] Hand-drawn animated special effects were employed to simulate ‘laser-light swords in magical combat’; and wires were used to suspend actors to suggest ‘flights in the sky choked with fog.’[77] A critic of the period wrote: ‘These wonderful special effects contributed by our own Chinese filmmakers constitute an exceptional achievement, alongside which **(p.33)** they perform the meritorious service of stimulating the citizenry towards the militaristic spirit.’[78]

The success of the film sparked off roughshod imitations, as well as a cult. Audiences reputedly put up incense altars before the cinema to pray to the gods before watching the film, and young people were reported to be so affected that they ‘left their homes and took to the hills, heading to Mount Emei in Sichuan Province in search of immortals to teach them the supernatural arts.’[79] The writer and literary historian Zheng Zhenfeng recounts several such incidents. To Zheng, the movies constituted ‘a new and sharp tool of “civilisation” used to transmit the force of *wuxia* philosophy, more directly, widely and greatly than the novel ever could’.[80] The *Burning of the Red Lotus Temple* series amply demonstrated the power of the movies for good and for bad. As He Xiujun, Zhang Shichuan's widow, wrote much later, the films ‘made a lot of money for the Mingxing Company but inflicted great harm on young minds’.[81]

In the next chapter, we will look at how the genre caused moral panic in the country such that it became the target of censorship. Because of its associations with tradition, superstition, and its tinges of folk religion and cult worship, the genre was an easy target because it was never taken seriously as literature and would not be taken seriously as cinema.[82]

Notes

(1.) For an English translation of *Shi ji*, see Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), in two volumes.

(2.) See Xu Sinian, *Xia de zongji: Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shilun* (‘Trail of the Knight-Errant: A History of Chinese *Wuxia* Literature’) (Beijing: People's Literature Press, 1995), pp. 22–23.

(3.) See James Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, p. 4.

(4.) Xu Sinian, *Xia de zongji*, p. 23.

(5.) Ibid., p. 23.

(6.) See Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 53–55.

(7.) See Ye Hongsheng, *Lun jian*, p. 8. See also Han Yunbo, *Zhongguo xia wenhua*, p. 12.

(8.) See Cai Xiang, *Xia yu yi: Wuxia xiaoshuo yu Zhongguo wenhua* (‘Xia and Yi: *Wuxia* Literature and Chinese Culture’) (Beijing: October Arts Press, 1993), p. 4.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(9.) For multiple interpretations of *jianghu*, see Liu Tianci, *Wuxia bianju miji*, pp. 118–145.

(10.) John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen*, p. 17.

(11.) Chen Pingyuan, *Qiangu wenren xiake meng*, p. 108.

(12.) See Han Yunbo, *Zhongguo xia wenhua*, p. 12.

(13.) Han Fei Zi, ‘The Five Venoms’.

(14.) Xu Sinian, *Xia de zongji*, p. 23.

(15.) Quotes from Sima Qian's preamble translated by James Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, pp. 14–15.

(16.) C. T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel*: *A Critical Introduction* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 14.

(17.) C. T. Hsia, ‘The Military Romance: A Genre of Chinese Fiction,’ in Cyril Birch (ed.), *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1974), p. 339.

(18.) See Hu Shi, *Zhongguo zhanghui xiaoshuo kaozheng* (‘Textual Criticism of the Chinese Serial Novel’) (Shanghai shudian, 1980; reprint of original 1942 publication), p. 9.

(19.) See Jean Chesneaux, ‘The Modern Relevance of Shuihu Chuan: Its Influence on Rebel Movements in 19th and 20th Century China’, *Papers on Far Eastern History*, No. 3, March 1971, 1–25, esp. p. 2.

(20.) See Lu Xun's description of this genre of fiction in *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* (translation of the author's *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe*) (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1982), pp. 336–351. For an account of *gongan* fiction before and after it became wedded to the *xiayi* form, see Y. W. Ma, ‘Kung-an Fiction: A Historical and Critical Introduction’, *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 65, 4–5, 1979, pp. 200–259.

(21.) See Martin Huang, ‘From Caizi to Yingxiong: Imagining Masculinities in Two Qing Novels, “Yesou puyan” and “Sanfen mengquan zhuan”’, *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, Vol. 25, December 2003, 59–98, esp. pp. 73–76.

(22.) C. T. Hsia, ‘The Military Romance’, p. 384.

(23.) See Judith T. Zeitlin's *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

(24.) Chen Pingyuan, *Qiangu wenren xiake meng*, p. 98.

(25.) Xu Sinian, *Xia de zongji*, p. 99.

(26.) Xiao Zhijun, Dai Yijun, Chen Erxun (ed.), *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo daguan* (‘An Overview of Chinese Wuxia Novels’) (Kunming: Yunnan People's Press, 1993), p. 121.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(27.) Chen Pingyuan, *Qiangu wenren xiake meng*, p. 98.

(28.) Ibid., p. 101.

(29.) Ibid., p. 107.

(30.) Chen Mo, *Daoguang jianying mengtaiqi*, pp. 78–79.

(31.) See Zheng Junli, 'Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe' ('Historical Sketch of the Modern Chinese Cinema'), in *Jindai Zhongguo yishu fazhanshi* ('The History of the Development of Contemporary Chinese Arts') (Shanghai: Liangyou Company, 1936), reprinted in *Zhongguo wusheng dianying* ('The Chinese Silent Cinema') (Beijing: China Film Press, 1996), p. 1386. *Zhongguo wusheng dianying* is hereinafter abbreviated to *ZWD*.

(32.) See Pu Dishu, 'Guochan diaying zuofeng de gaibian ji jinhou de qushi' (The Reform and Future Trends of The National Cinema'), *Yingxi shenghuo* ('Film Life'), No. 33, August 1931.

(33.) See Zheng Junli, 'Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe', *ZWD*, p. 1412.

(34.) Ibid., p. 1403.

(35.) See Wenwei Du, 'Xi and Yingxi: The Interaction between Traditional Theatre and Chinese Cinema', *Screening the Past*, www.latrobe.edu.au/www/screeningthepast, issue 11, uploaded 1 November 2000.

(36.) Quoted in Yu Mo-wan, 'Xianggang dianying shihua' ('A Historical Narrative of Hong Kong Cinema'), *Dianying shuangzhou kan* ('Film Biweekly'), No. 50, 18 December 1980, p. 30.

(37.) Jay Leyda, *Dianying, Electric Shadows: An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), p. 52.

(38.) Chen Zhiqing, 'Duiyu shezhi guzhang yingpian zhi yijian' ('Opinions on the Making of Guzhuang Pictures'), *Shenzhou tekan 'Daoyi zhi jiao' hao* ('Shenzhou Special Issue "The Meeting of Morality and Justice"'), February 1926, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 639.

(39.) Sun Shiyi, 'Dianying jie de guju fengkuang zheng' ('The Film World's Fervour for Costume Films') *Yinxing* ('Silver Star'), no. 3, 1926, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 644.

(40.) Ibid., p. 643.

(41.) See Kristine Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber" and the Classical Subject in 1920s Shanghai', in Yingjin Zhang (ed.), *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922–1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 51–73, esp. p. 57.

(42.) See Li Daoxin, *Zhongguo dianying wenhua shi*, p. 92.

(43.) Leyda, *Dianying*, p. 22.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(44.) See Gu Jianchen, ‘Zhongguo dianying fada shi’ (‘The Development History of Chinese Cinema’) in *Qingqing dianying zhoukan* (‘The Chin Chin Screen’), No. 32, 1939, p. 17. See also Chen Mo, *Daoguang xiaying mengtaiqi*, p. 80. *Vampire's Prey* is regarded in some quarters as China's first full-length fiction film: see Gongsun Lu, *Zhongguo dianying shihua* (‘Conversations on Chinese Film History’), in twovolumes (Hong Kong: Nantian Books, no year specified, but probably 1961), Vol. 1, p. 36.

(45.) Guan Haifeng, ‘Wo paishe hongfen gulou de jingguo’ (‘The Process of My Filming Ten Sisters’), *Zhongguo dianying* (‘Chinese Cinema’), No. 5, 1957, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 1492.

(46.) This plot outline is taken from Guan Haifeng's own description. See Guan, ‘Wo paishe hongfen gulou de jingguo’, *ZWD*, p. 1492.

(47.) Gu Jianchen, ‘Zhongguo dianying fada shi’.

(48.) Li Suyuan and Hu Jubin, *Zhongguo wusheng dianying shi* (‘A History of the Silent Chinese Cinema’) (Beijing: China Film Press, 1996), p. 222.

(49.) Bai Jian, ‘Tan shenguai yingpian’ (‘On Shenguai Films’), in *Lianhua huabao* (‘Lianhua Pictorial’), 7:1, February 1936, quoted in Li Suyuan and Hu Jubin, *Zhongguo wusheng dianying shi*.

(50.) Zheng Junli, ‘Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe’, *ZWD*, p. 1412.

(51.) Ibid., p. 1412.

(52.) See Zhu?, ‘Lun guzhuang ju: shenguai ju yu lishi ju’ (‘On Guzhuang Films: Shenguai Films and Historical Films’), *Dazhonghua baihe gongsi tekan ‘Meiren ji’* (‘Dazhonghua Baihe Film Company Brochure “The Beauty's Stratagem”’), 1927, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 651.

(53.) See Zhou Jianyun and Wang Xuchang, ‘Yingxi gailun’ (‘An Introduction to Cinema’), *Zhongguo dianying lilun wenxuan* (‘Chinese Film Theory: An Anthology’) (Beijing: Culture and Arts Publications House, 1992), p. 26.

(54.) Zheng Junli, ‘Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe’, *ZWD*, p. 1412.

(55.) Ying Dou, ‘Shenguaiju zhi wojian’ (‘My View on Shenguai Drama’), *Yinxing* (‘Silver Star’), No. 8, 1927, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 662.

(56.) Zheng Junli, ‘Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe’, *ZWD*, p. 1413.

(57.) Cheng Xiaoqing, ‘Wo zhi shenguai yingpian guan’ (‘My View on *Shenguai* Movies’), published in the film brochure *Xiyouji pansidong tekan* (‘Visit to the Western World’) (Shanghai Photoplay Company, 1927).

(58.) See Zhiwei Xiao, ‘Constructing a New National Culture: Film Censorship and the Issues of Cantonese Dialect, Superstition, and Sex in the Nanjing Decade’, in Yingjin Zhang (ed.), *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai*, p. 190.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(59.) The earliest English translation is that of Henry H. Hart, *The West Chamber* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1936). For other texts and more recent translations, see Kristine Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber" and the Classical Subject in 1920s Shanghai', notes, p. 273.

(60.) For a more detailed discussion of this dream sequence, see Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber"', pp. 68–71.

(61.) Hou Yao, 'Yandi de xixiang' ('West Chamber Before Our Eyes'), originally published in *Minxin Special Edition* ('Minxin tekan'), No. 7, 1 September 1927, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 327.

(62.) According to *Shanghai dianying zhi* ('Shanghai Cinema Annals'), Wu Yigong (ed.), (Shanghai: Social Science Academy Press, 1998), p. 192, the film was released in Paris in the summer of 1928 and in London in the summer of 1929. Kristine Harris gives the French title as *La Rose de Pu-chui*; see Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber"', p. 276.

(63.) Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber"', p. 53.

(64.) E. Perry Link, Jr, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, p. 20.

(65.) See Zheng Junli, 'Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe', *ZWD*, p. 1414. See also Wang Haizhou, 'Gangtai wuxia pian gailun' ('An Outline of Hong Kong and Taiwan *Wuxia* Pictures'), *Dangdai dianying* ('Contemporary Cinema'), No. 4, July 1994, 76–83, p. 77.

(66.) Lu Mengshu, 'Xin Yingxiong Zhuyi' ('New Heroism'), *Yinxing* ('Silver Star'), No. 4, 1926, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 737.

(67.) See Weihong Bao, 'From Pearl White to White Rose Woo', p. 207. Bao 61. explains that the tenets of New Heroism as a neoromanticist sub-movement grew out of the May Fourth tide towards modernity in Chinese letters and in society at large: see pp. 207–209.

(68.) See Wang Haizhou, 'Gangtai wuxia pian gailun', p. 77.

(69.) See Yi An, 'Xin shidai de yingxiong' ('Heroes of the New Era'), *Yinxing* ('Silver Star'), No. 4, 1926, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 669.

(70.) Wen Xiang 'Da xia Gan Fengchi' ('The Hero Gan Fengchi'), *Zhongguo dianying zazhi* ('Chinese Film Magazine'), No. 13, 1928, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 1173.

(71.) See Gongsun Lu, *Zhongguo dianying shihua*, p. 48.

(72.) See Zhang Zhen, 'Teahouse, Shadowplay, Bricolage: 'Labourer's Love' and the Question of Early Chinese Cinema,' in Yingjin Zhang (ed.), *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai*, p. 46.

(73.) See He Xiujun, 'Zhang Shichuan he Mingxing yingpian gongsi' ('Zhang Shichuan and the Star Motion Picture Company'), in *ZWD*, p. 1528. He Xiujun, Zhang's widow, gave an oral account of her husband's pioneering involvement in Chinese cinema that was first published in *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* ('Selections of Literary and Historical Materials'), No. 67, 1980, reprinted in



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

*ZWD*. For more on Zhang Shichuan, see Harriet Sergeant, *Shanghai* (London: John Murray, 1991), pp. 250–56, which quotes from He Xiujun's original oral account.

(74.) Robert Kung, *Gong jianong congying huiyi lu* (‘Robert Kung's Memoirs of His Screen Life’) (Hong Kong: Culture Book House, 1968), pp. 158–159.

(75.) Kung, *Gong jianong congying huiyi lu*, p. 157.

(76.) Zheng Junli, ‘Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe’, *ZWD*, p. 1415.

(77.) Kung, *Gong jianong congying huiyi lu*, pp. 162–163.

(78.) Qing Ping, ‘Cong wuxia dianying shuo dao ‘Huo shao Honglian si’ he ‘Shui hu'’ (‘From *Wuxia* Films to a Discussion of ‘The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple’ and ‘The Water Margin'’), *Yingxi shenghuo* (‘Film Life’), Vol 1, No. 3, 1931, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 1177.

(79.) Kung, *Gong jianong congying huiyi lu*, p. 157.

(80.) See Zheng Zhenfeng, ‘Lun wuxia xiaoshuo’ (‘On the *wuxia* novel’), originally published in *Haiyan*, July 1932, reprinted in *Zheng Zhenfeng xuanji* (‘Zheng Zhenfeng Collected Works’), in two volumes (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1984), pp. 1125–1129, esp. p. 1127.

(81.) He Xiujun, ‘Zhang Shichuan he Mingxing yingpian gongsi’, *ZWD*, p. 1529.

(82.) Paul Pickowicz reminds us that May Fourth intellectuals never regarded cinema ‘as a serious form of art’. The film medium belonged ‘to the realm of popular culture and placed a premium on simplicity of message’ and was because of this not the favoured medium of the May Fourth literati. ‘The illiterate and semiliterate film audience had little in common with sober-minded May Fourth intellectuals’. To the intellectuals, the *wuxia* genre was the vehicle that drove their contempt for the cinema. See Pickowicz, ‘The Theme of Spiritual Pollution in Chinese Films of the 1930s’, *Modern China*, 17:1, January 1991, 38–75, esp. p. 70.

Notes:

(1.) For an English translation of *Shi ji*, see Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), in two volumes.

(2.) See Xu Sinian, *Xia de zongji: Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shilun* (‘Trail of the Knight-Errant: A History of Chinese *Wuxia* Literature’) (Beijing: People's Literature Press, 1995), pp. 22–23.

(3.) See James Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, p. 4.

(4.) Xu Sinian, *Xia de zongji*, p. 23.

(5.) Ibid., p. 23.

(6.) See Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 53–55.

(7.) See Ye Hongsheng, *Lun jian*, p. 8. See also Han Yunbo, *Zhongguo xia wenhua*, p. 12.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(8.) See Cai Xiang, *Xia yu yi: Wuxia xiaoshuo yu Zhongguo wenhua* (‘Xia and Yi: *Wuxia* Literature and Chinese Culture’) (Beijing: October Arts Press, 1993), p. 4.

(9.) For multiple interpretations of *jianghu*, see Liu Tianci, *Wuxia bianju miji*, pp. 118–145.

(10.) John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen*, p. 17.

(11.) Chen Pingyuan, *Qiangu wenren xiake meng*, p. 108.

(12.) See Han Yunbo, *Zhongguo xia wenhua*, p. 12.

(13.) Han Fei Zi, ‘The Five Venoms’.

(14.) Xu Sinian, *Xia de zongji*, p. 23.

(15.) Quotes from Sima Qian's preamble translated by James Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, pp. 14–15.

(16.) C. T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel*: *A Critical Introduction* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 14.

(17.) C. T. Hsia, ‘The Military Romance: A Genre of Chinese Fiction,’ in Cyril Birch (ed.), *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1974), p. 339.

(18.) See Hu Shi, *Zhongguo zhanghui xiaoshuo kaozheng* (‘Textual Criticism of the Chinese Serial Novel’) (Shanghai shudian, 1980; reprint of original 1942 publication), p. 9.

(19.) See Jean Chesneaux, ‘The Modern Relevance of Shuihu Chuan: Its Influence on Rebel Movements in 19th and 20th Century China’, *Papers on Far Eastern History*, No. 3, March 1971, 1–25, esp. p. 2.

(20.) See Lu Xun's description of this genre of fiction in *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* (translation of the author's *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe*) (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1982), pp. 336–351. For an account of *gongan* fiction before and after it became wedded to the *xiayi* form, see Y. W. Ma, ‘Kung-an Fiction: A Historical and Critical Introduction’, *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 65, 4–5, 1979, pp. 200–259.

(21.) See Martin Huang, ‘From Caizi to Yingxiong: Imagining Masculinities in Two Qing Novels, “Yesou puyan” and “Sanfen mengquan zhuan”’, *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, Vol. 25, December 2003, 59–98, esp. pp. 73–76.

(22.) C. T. Hsia, ‘The Military Romance’, p. 384.

(23.) See Judith T. Zeitlin's *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

(24.) Chen Pingyuan, *Qiangu wenren xiake meng*, p. 98.

(25.) Xu Sinian, *Xia de zongji*, p. 99.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(26.) Xiao Zhijun, Dai Yijun, Chen Erxun (ed.), *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo daguan* ('An Overview of Chinese Wuxia Novels') (Kunming: Yunnan People's Press, 1993), p. 121.

(27.) Chen Pingyuan, *Qiangu wenren xiake meng*, p. 98.

(28.) Ibid., p. 101.

(29.) Ibid., p. 107.

(30.) Chen Mo, *Daoguang jianying mengtaiqi*, pp. 78–79.

(31.) See Zheng Junli, 'Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe' ('Historical Sketch of the Modern Chinese Cinema'), in *Jindai Zhongguo yishu fazhanshi* ('The History of the Development of Contemporary Chinese Arts') (Shanghai: Liangyou Company, 1936), reprinted in *Zhongguo wusheng dianying* ('The Chinese Silent Cinema') (Beijing: China Film Press, 1996), p. 1386. *Zhongguo wusheng dianying* is hereinafter abbreviated to *ZWD*.

(32.) See Pu Dishu, 'Guochan diaying zuofeng de gaibian ji jinhou de qushi' (The Reform and Future Trends of The National Cinema'), *Yingxi shenghuo* ('Film Life'), No. 33, August 1931.

(33.) See Zheng Junli, 'Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe', *ZWD*, p. 1412.

(34.) Ibid., p. 1403.

(35.) See Wenwei Du, 'Xi and Yingxi: The Interaction between Traditional Theatre and Chinese Cinema', *Screening the Past*, www.latrobe.edu.au/www/screeningthepast, issue 11, uploaded 1 November 2000.

(36.) Quoted in Yu Mo-wan, 'Xianggang dianying shihua' ('A Historical Narrative of Hong Kong Cinema'), *Dianying shuangzhou kan* ('Film Biweekly'), No. 50, 18 December 1980, p. 30.

(37.) Jay Leyda, *Dianying, Electric Shadows: An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), p. 52.

(38.) Chen Zhiqing, 'Duiyu shezhi guzhang yingpian zhi yijian' ('Opinions on the Making of Guzhuang Pictures'), *Shenzhou tekan 'Daoyi zhi jiao' hao* ('Shenzhou Special Issue "The Meeting of Morality and Justice"'), February 1926, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 639.

(39.) Sun Shiyi, 'Dianying jie de guju fengkuang zheng' ('The Film World's Fervour for Costume Films') *Yinxing* ('Silver Star'), no. 3, 1926, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 644.

(40.) Ibid., p. 643.

(41.) See Kristine Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber" and the Classical Subject in 1920s Shanghai', in Yingjin Zhang (ed.), *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922–1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 51–73, esp. p. 57.

(42.) See Li Daoxin, *Zhongguo dianying wenhua shi*, p. 92.

(43.) Leyda, *Dianying*, p. 22.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(44.) See Gu Jianchen, ‘Zhongguo dianying fada shi’ (‘The Development History of Chinese Cinema’) in *Qingqing dianying zhoukan* (‘The Chin Chin Screen’), No. 32, 1939, p. 17. See also Chen Mo, *Daoguang xiaying mengtaiqi*, p. 80. *Vampire's Prey* is regarded in some quarters as China's first full-length fiction film: see Gongsun Lu, *Zhongguo dianying shihua* (‘Conversations on Chinese Film History’), in twovolumes (Hong Kong: Nantian Books, no year specified, but probably 1961), Vol. 1, p. 36.

(45.) Guan Haifeng, ‘Wo paishe hongfen gulou de jingguo’ (‘The Process of My Filming Ten Sisters’), *Zhongguo dianying* (‘Chinese Cinema’), No. 5, 1957, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 1492.

(46.) This plot outline is taken from Guan Haifeng's own description. See Guan, ‘Wo paishe hongfen gulou de jingguo’, *ZWD*, p. 1492.

(47.) Gu Jianchen, ‘Zhongguo dianying fada shi’.

(48.) Li Suyuan and Hu Jubin, *Zhongguo wusheng dianying shi* (‘A History of the Silent Chinese Cinema’) (Beijing: China Film Press, 1996), p. 222.

(49.) Bai Jian, ‘Tan shenguai yingpian’ (‘On Shenguai Films’), in *Lianhua huabao* (‘Lianhua Pictorial’), 7:1, February 1936, quoted in Li Suyuan and Hu Jubin, *Zhongguo wusheng dianying shi*.

(50.) Zheng Junli, ‘Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe’, *ZWD*, p. 1412.

(51.) Ibid., p. 1412.

(52.) See Zhu?, ‘Lun guzhuang ju: shenguai ju yu lishi ju’ (‘On Guzhuang Films: Shenguai Films and Historical Films’), *Dazhonghua baihe gongsi tekan ‘Meiren ji’* (‘Dazhonghua Baihe Film Company Brochure “The Beauty's Stratagem”’), 1927, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 651.

(53.) See Zhou Jianyun and Wang Xuchang, ‘Yingxi gailun’ (‘An Introduction to Cinema’), *Zhongguo dianying lilun wenxuan* (‘Chinese Film Theory: An Anthology’) (Beijing: Culture and Arts Publications House, 1992), p. 26.

(54.) Zheng Junli, ‘Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe’, *ZWD*, p. 1412.

(55.) Ying Dou, ‘Shenguaiju zhi wojian’ (‘My View on Shenguai Drama’), *Yinxing* (‘Silver Star’), No. 8, 1927, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 662.

(56.) Zheng Junli, ‘Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe’, *ZWD*, p. 1413.

(57.) Cheng Xiaoqing, ‘Wo zhi shenguai yingpian guan’ (‘My View on *Shenguai* Movies’), published in the film brochure *Xiyouji pansidong tekan* (‘Visit to the Western World’) (Shanghai Photoplay Company, 1927).

(58.) See Zhiwei Xiao, ‘Constructing a New National Culture: Film Censorship and the Issues of Cantonese Dialect, Superstition, and Sex in the Nanjing Decade’, in Yingjin Zhang (ed.), *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai*, p. 190.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(59.) The earliest English translation is that of Henry H. Hart, *The West Chamber* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1936). For other texts and more recent translations, see Kristine Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber" and the Classical Subject in 1920s Shanghai', notes, p. 273.

(60.) For a more detailed discussion of this dream sequence, see Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber"', pp. 68–71.

(61.) Hou Yao, 'Yandi de xixiang' ('West Chamber Before Our Eyes'), originally published in *Minxin Special Edition* ('Minxin tekan'), No. 7, 1 September 1927, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 327.

(62.) According to *Shanghai dianying zhi* ('Shanghai Cinema Annals'), Wu Yigong (ed.), (Shanghai: Social Science Academy Press, 1998), p. 192, the film was released in Paris in the summer of 1928 and in London in the summer of 1929. Kristine Harris gives the French title as *La Rose de Pu-chui*; see Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber"', p. 276.

(63.) Harris, '"The Romance of the Western Chamber"', p. 53.

(64.) E. Perry Link, Jr, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, p. 20.

(65.) See Zheng Junli, 'Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe', *ZWD*, p. 1414. See also Wang Haizhou, 'Gangtai wuxia pian gailun' ('An Outline of Hong Kong and Taiwan *Wuxia* Pictures'), *Dangdai dianying* ('Contemporary Cinema'), No. 4, July 1994, 76–83, p. 77.

(66.) Lu Mengshu, 'Xin Yingxiong Zhuyi' ('New Heroism'), *Yinxing* ('Silver Star'), No. 4, 1926, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 737.

(67.) See Weihong Bao, 'From Pearl White to White Rose Woo', p. 207. Bao 61. explains that the tenets of New Heroism as a neoromanticist sub-movement grew out of the May Fourth tide towards modernity in Chinese letters and in society at large: see pp. 207–209.

(68.) See Wang Haizhou, 'Gangtai wuxia pian gailun', p. 77.

(69.) See Yi An, 'Xin shidai de yingxiong' ('Heroes of the New Era'), *Yinxing* ('Silver Star'), No. 4, 1926, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 669.

(70.) Wen Xiang 'Da xia Gan Fengchi' ('The Hero Gan Fengchi'), *Zhongguo dianying zazhi* ('Chinese Film Magazine'), No. 13, 1928, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 1173.

(71.) See Gongsun Lu, *Zhongguo dianying shihua*, p. 48.

(72.) See Zhang Zhen, 'Teahouse, Shadowplay, Bricolage: 'Labourer's Love' and the Question of Early Chinese Cinema,' in Yingjin Zhang (ed.), *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai*, p. 46.

(73.) See He Xiujun, 'Zhang Shichuan he Mingxing yingpian gongsi' ('Zhang Shichuan and the Star Motion Picture Company'), in *ZWD*, p. 1528. He Xiujun, Zhang's widow, gave an oral account of her husband's pioneering involvement in Chinese cinema that was first published in *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* ('Selections of Literary and Historical Materials'), No. 67, 1980, reprinted in *ZWD*. For more on Zhang Shichuan, see Harriet Sergeant, *Shanghai* (London: John Murray, 1991), pp. 250–56, which quotes from He Xiujun's original oral account.



PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018

(74.) Robert Kung, *Gong jianong congying huiyi lu* (‘Robert Kung's Memoirs of His Screen Life’) (Hong Kong: Culture Book House, 1968), pp. 158–159.

(75.) Kung, *Gong jianong congying huiyi lu*, p. 157.

(76.) Zheng Junli, ‘Xiandai Zhongguo dianying shilüe’, *ZWD*, p. 1415.

(77.) Kung, *Gong jianong congying huiyi lu*, pp. 162–163.

(78.) Qing Ping, ‘Cong wuxia dianying shuo dao ‘Huo shao Honglian si’ he ‘Shui hu'’ (‘From *Wuxia* Films to a Discussion of ‘The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple’ and ‘The Water Margin'’), *Yingxi shenghuo* (‘Film Life’), Vol 1, No. 3, 1931, reprinted in *ZWD*, p. 1177.

(79.) Kung, *Gong jianong congying huiyi lu*, p. 157.

(80.) See Zheng Zhenfeng, ‘Lun wuxia xiaoshuo’ (‘On the *wuxia* novel’), originally published in *Haiyan*, July 1932, reprinted in *Zheng Zhenfeng xuanji* (‘Zheng Zhenfeng Collected Works’), in two volumes (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1984), pp. 1125–1129, esp. p. 1127.

(81.) He Xiujun, ‘Zhang Shichuan he Mingxing yingpian gongsi’, *ZWD*, p. 1529.

(82.) Paul Pickowicz reminds us that May Fourth intellectuals never regarded cinema ‘as a serious form of art’. The film medium belonged ‘to the realm of popular culture and placed a premium on simplicity of message’ and was because of this not the favoured medium of the May Fourth literati. ‘The illiterate and semiliterate film audience had little in common with sober-minded May Fourth intellectuals’. To the intellectuals, the *wuxia* genre was the vehicle that drove their contempt for the cinema. See Pickowicz, ‘The Theme of Spiritual Pollution in Chinese Films of the 1930s’, *Modern China*, 17:1, January 1991, 38–75, esp. p. 70.

PRINTED FROM EDINBURGH SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (www.edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com). (c) Copyright Edinburgh University Press, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Under the terms of the licence agreement, an individual user may print out a PDF of a single chapter of a monograph in ESO for personal use (for details see http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/page/privacy-policy/privacy-policy-and-legal-notice). Subscriber: Harvard University Library; date: 28 August 2018