

STUDENT: ZH

ASSIGNMENT: FINAL META RESPONSE

Recurring Trends

In my responses, I try to focus on the socio-cultural aspects of whichever film I am talking about. For me, the most interesting important thing we can take from films is to see how they reflect a society and culture, in this case China. That being said, stylistic techniques used by the filmmakers are important in conveying the message they want to get across about their society. The most obvious example I can think of is the entire purpose of a film such as *The Red Detachment of Women*. The filmmakers are trying to persuade the audience that this is what their society is like, and it is better than any competing societies or ideologies. Looking at films this way makes a knowledge of history very important, because in order to view a film critically one must have knowledge of not only film techniques but of culture. The Urban Generation films are trying to do a similar thing by showing the world what the “real” China is actually like. Except, they are not saying join us, they are saying help us. Through my responses, I tried to focus on these issues.

Changes

The only significant change I can think of is that towards the end of the semester when we began to focus on mainstream Chinese cinema, I began to focus on the filmmakers and the industry as opposed to the actual text. For instance, in my response to *Inseparable* I wrote about mainstream cinema in general and made some arguments about quality in mainstream cinema in general. I think this is because the text does not really relate to anything that I have a background on, which makes it harder for me to put the film into context. Or at least I had some knowledge of the challenges being faced by the

characters in the films. *Still Life*, for example, dealt with big issues that are currently taking place in China that a lot of people know about. Although, *Inseparable* touches on some major issues taking place in China, it is focusing on a personal story that is very connected to the contemporary Chinese everyday life experience, which I am not apart of. Besides that, I don't necessarily see much change in my writing.

Assignment Evaluation

I think these film responses are helpful to a point. Any practice in writing and critical thinking is valuable, but I feel like only having these types of responses does not necessarily advance our learning. Responding to films is something film students at GSU have had to do since their very first class. Since the class was focused on a topic that many students were not familiar with, I think beginning the semester with these types of assignments can be helpful. However, I think there should be more focus on content, so students can better understanding what they are watching. Of course, history and culture are a focus of the class, but it seems to be taught around the movies, which makes sense, but can limit a student's reaction and understanding to the films they are watching. I do not remember if we had a class that kind of covered important intellectual, cultural, and religious ideas in China, but I think more information on those topics would bring a greater understanding to students. I know students are sometimes just after an easy grade, but I think when introducing a foreign topic to them it is important to give them as information as possible. Otherwise, the student will just fall back on whatever they know about their own culture. I think this is especially true about cinema, which is largely dominated by Hollywood. Looking at a foreign film through your own culture can bring out important connections between societies, but it is important to know whether or not

the characteristics native to both culture or otherwise. These responses can be a good place to bring out these various issues on paper, but only if the students have the information to bring out.

That being said, I think just having the option of a research paper could be helpful to students. Some students are going to want to continue their studies in graduate school, and they should have every opportunity to practice writing research papers, especially if it is a topic they are interested in. There may also be students who are just inspired by the material and want to do research to find all they can about a specific topic. Writing a research paper allows students to continue using their critical writing and thinking skills while also incorporating other important skills, such as researching in general and making an argument.