女性復仇與母性回歸：1970 年代後期

臺灣新女性主義與社會寫實女星的形象轉變

卓庭伍

摘要

本論文從冷戰後期開始鬆動的東亞地緣政治、台灣鄉土文學發展和女性運動的歷史與社會脈絡切入，分析陸小芬、楊惠姍二位社會寫實女星於七〇年代末至八〇年代中期的明星形象轉變。在國際情勢遽變、政經政策轉向的七〇年代末期，台灣出現了社會寫實電影風潮，並快速演變為低成本、短線獲利、遊走在電檢制度與道德邊緣的剝削片，寫下台灣電影史上「最黑暗的一頁」。裸露的女體、血腥暴力的畫面、社會邊緣的主題帶來視覺震撼與快感，同時也是資本主義對國家審查的挑逗、對抗與合謀。社會寫實片中最受歡迎的「女性復仇」類型也捧紅了「二陸一楊」等穿著清涼薄衫、揮舞著刀械的女星，在銀幕上展現與瓊瑤明星孑然不同的大膽、墮落女性形象。社會寫實片沒落之後，許多女星消失在銀光幕前，而藉著《上海社會檔案》（1981）、《女性的復仇》（1981）等女性復仇片走紅東南亞的陸小芬、楊惠姍也開始轉型挑戰現代與鄉土文學改編作品，改變了體型與演出方式並得到國際影展與主流媒體的認可，使愛的身體承載了歷史傷痕，書寫了台灣政治、經濟與社會轉型的國族寓言。然而豐腴的胸脯與雪白長腿卻已烙下了「女性復仇」的印記。本文分析陸、楊二人的銀幕形象轉變以及聚焦於二人身體型態與展演的文化媒體論述，從乘載慾望的女人轉化為禁慾的母親，她們的形像貫穿於女性自主與保守意識之間，反覆勾起電影與大眾文化對女體的迷戀與焦慮，同時反映台灣女權運動發展的困境，體現互相矛盾的現實想像、意識型態。

* 紐約大學電影研究學系博士候選人。
Email: twc255@nyu.edu.
不斷對話與詰抗的文化歷史過程。

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Introduction

In the late 1970s, a group of locally produced exploitation films called “Taiwan Pulp” gain popularity overnight.¹ Taiwan Pulp films were exciting for the Taiwanese audience because they were the first Taiwanese productions that ventured into the most contentious topics such as crime, murder, and rape, showing gruesome violence and shocking scenes, often exploiting female bodies. Within the short timespan of 5 years (1979-1983), over 117 Taiwan Pulp films were produced and distributed abroad.² Emerging at a time of contested state control, a capitalist economy, and demands for democratization, Taiwan Pulp reflected the desire for sensual experience repressed under martial law.

One of the most popular sub-categories of Taiwan Pulp films is called “woman's revenge film.” Like other Taiwan Pulp genres, the woman's revenge film blends generic elements from Hong Kong gambling films, Japanese pink movies, and Western female exploitation films. What is more, the recurring rape-revenge plots, provocative violence, and female nudity can be replicated quickly to produce instant sensations for the domestic audience, showing images of women unprecedented in Taiwan cinema. Amongst the interviews that I have conducted for my research on Taiwan cinema.

¹ Taiwan Pulp film is originally called “social-realist film” (社會寫實片) when it appeared in the late 1970s Taiwan. However, these “social-realist films” are different from the Italian neorealism, the social-realist tradition in early Chinese cinema, or the social-realist films in other national cinemas. Instead of direct translation, I choose to use the term “Taiwan Pulp” to avoid confusion and to invoke its connections with exploitative story lines, cheap production, and popular culture—features reminiscent of that in the American pulp tradition.

² According to Hou Chi-Jan’s research, there were over 117 film entries in the Chinese Taipei Film Archive (now Taiwan Film Archive) between 1979 and 1983. However, the production of such genre and such filmmaking style did not stop in 1983. What is more, not all films documented are preserved in the archive. See Chi-Jan Hou, “‘Taiwan Black Movies’--The Making and Meaning of a Documentary,” M.A. Dissertation, National Chengchi University, Department of Radio and Television, 2006, Appendix, pp. 55-57.
Pulp films, the most common responses regarding women's onscreen images in these films were that: “It was shocking!” “No female star was as fierce, strong, and daring.” Whether for those who have seen Taiwan Pulp films or for those who have only seen movie posters and advertisements, the excitement and shock brought by the famous “two Lu and one Yang” —Lu Hsiao-Fen (陸小芬), Lu Yi-Chan (陸一嬋), and Yang Hui-Shan (楊惠姍)—were unparalleled. The roles they played—rape victims, prostitutes, avenging angels, gamblers, murderers, prisoners, ninjas, evil queens, and action heroines—became iconic and overthrew the conventional representations of Taiwanese “good women” on the big screen. However, under martial law, most of the Taiwan Pulp films were severely edited after struggling with the fickle censorship standards and were considered too indecent and vulgar to be preserved. The heyday of Taiwan Pulp films thus remained the darkest page in the writing of Taiwanese film history, which relied heavily on a government-sponsored film archive with insufficient documentation on films produced outside the state-owned film studios. I revisit the marginalized piece of film history using materials from various media texts—films, documentaries, news articles, and interviews—and re-examine the transformation of female star images as a symptomatic social phenomenon arising from the shifting East Asian geopolitics.

My research focuses on two actresses of the iconic “two Lu and one Yang” —Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan—both of whom emerged as Taiwan Pulp stars, but whose career surpassed the short-lived popularity of Taiwan Pulp. From 1979 to 1983, Lu and Yang were the most prolific Taiwan Pulp stars that starred in more than seventy films, and their names were the promise of

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4 Other actresses also known during this period are Lu Yi-Chan (陸一嬋) and Chen Li-Yun (陳麗雲), but none of them are as prolific and influential as Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan. Lu and Yang are also the only actresses that transformed their star images successfully. The other actress of the “two Lu and one Yang,” Lu Yi-Chan, disappeared from the big screen after Taiwan Pulp lost its audience.
overseas sales. As the Taiwan Pulp frenzy subsided, Lu and Yang transformed themselves into “professional actresses” by starring in prestigious literary adaptation films. However, with their dazzling careers, Lu and Yang remain marginalized in the writing of Taiwan film history.

In “Dancing in the Margin: Homosexual Films of the 1980s and Early 1990s in Taiwan,” Wang Chun-Chi (王君琦) argues against a slanted film history structured around the “over presence of Taiwan New Cinema,” which “underlines the exclusive importance of national cinema that foregrounds art-house style and concerns for male-centered and hetero-dominant nationhood.” 5 For Wang, the “shoddy, lowbrow, and the stereotypical” films about homosexuality produced around the same time as the Taiwan New Cinema—particularly the absence of them in Taiwan film history—reveal the tension between national construction and homosexual identity as well as the different attention paid to high art and commercial films. 6 Invoking Benjamin's Arcades Project, she proposes an excavation and examination of the marginalized films in order to understand the particular struggle and negotiation as a part of the genealogy of the representation of the Other. 7

The examination of the images and the transformations of the Taiwan Pulp stars resonates with such dialectical method and perceives the star images as manifesting the synthesized moment of the historical past and the present. More than other cultural phenomena, the star images as “overproduced commodities; the bad conscience of producers” captured Taiwan's struggle of nationalism, consumer capitalism, and the emerging

feminist movements in deviation, confrontation, and negotiation rather than in a homogeneous progression.  

The emergence of American slasher films and the rape-revenge films in the early 1970s were symptomatic of a broader cultural shift in the U.S. society resulted from the second wave feminist discourse, the heightened gender politics, as well as historical trauma. In Taiwan, the early production of the slasher-rape-revenge film followed the success of American rape-revenge shocker such as Last House on the Left (1972) and Hong Kong's erotic-crime films (社會奇情片). However, in the early 1970s, Taiwanese rape-revenge films such as Crimes Are to Be Paid (五虎催花, 1972) and Woman from Hell (地獄來的女人, 1973) did not create a cinematic fad like that of the Taiwan Pulp films until Lu Hsiao-Fen made her debut in On the Society File of Shanghai (上海社會檔案, 1981). The rise of the stardom of Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan, therefore, were not an overnight sensation but an accumulation of the changing dynamics in the social, political and cultural spheres.

The 1970s saw the beginning of autonomous feminist movements in Taiwan. The growing numbers of educated, working women challenged the traditional ideas of “a virtuous woman reserves her talent” (女子無才便是德) and the conventional conception of family rather than working field as the rightful place for women. Fearful imaginations towards women of higher education and intensified social contradiction thus ensued. 

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10 In 1951, the primary school attendance rate is 93.44% for boys and 68.58 for girls. In 1961, the primary school attendance rate for girls has risen to 94.34%. In 1976, the primary school attendance rate for girls has been elevated to 99.39% and the enrollment rate for secondary school for girls has risen from 32.06% in 1951 to 85.42%. See Yue-Fang Dai, Taiwan Sisters: Woman's Movement In-Process (Taipei:
(新女性主義), proposed by Annette Lu Hsiu-Lien (呂秀蓮), was the beginning of a new wave of feminist movement in Taiwan responding to the second wave feminism in the West, demanding equal rights in the public and domestic sphere. From the 1970s to the 1980s, the New Feminist movement was consciously feminized and de-sexualized in order to soften the image of the New Feminists and to negotiate their demands. However, as Ho Chun-Rui (何春蕤) points out, when Taiwan moves toward a highly capitalized economy in the 1980s, the “forces of erotic production,” through which the commodification of the erotic is made prominent and diversified, increases and brings tension to the existing family structure which regulates and curbs erotic activities.\(^\text{11}\) Such tension “makes even more palpable the various erotic activities and generates discourses between clashing ideologies, creating agency for mobilization and intervention”—the convergence of which, as demonstrated in the anti-sexual harrassment demonstration in 1994, is the awakening of female sexuality which finally leads to “a schism in the feminist camp over the open affirmation of (female) sexuality and pleasure.”\(^\text{12}\) The dialectical relationship between gender and sexualpolitics emerging from Taiwan's struggle in writing a modern national history while coping with the accelerating economic and social changes right before the lifting of martial law in 1987, are manifested not in the fixed star images of Lu and Yang but in the transformation throughout their career, as shown in the process of feminist negotiation in the genealogy of the representation of women. Their changing physical appearance and performances were neither a reflection of an imposed patriarchal psyche nor a full-on resistance influenced by Western feminism, but “a terrain of exchange and negotiation

\(^{11}\) Chun-Rui Ho, “Cultural Analysis of Feminism,” National Science Council (NSC) Foreign Languages and Literature, Research Report Conference, 8 Nov. 1997, p. 3.

of the two: a terrain...marked by resistance and incorporation.”13 Their bold and conflicting star images interweaved the capitalist aspiration and state control in the late Cold War period while negotiating the patriarchal society's demand for female virtues and the feminist pursuit of becoming economically and socially independent in the process of the nation's modernization. This study is an attempt to redefine these women's roles in the transitional period of Taiwanese history. It is also an intervention into a sanitized writing of Taiwanese film history—a rupture of trauma, blood, wounds, and abundant desires—the evidence of histories lived through a woman's body.

**Female Stars and the Economy of Excess**

Taiwan from the 1970s to early 1980s was a period of transition in economy, social structures, and political atmosphere. Caught between the international legitimacy crisis, threats of national security from China, and the economic pressure from the U.S., the KMT desperately needed a new image: a state that resists communism and welcomes democracy and capitalism.14 The gradual democratization and Taiwanization in both politics and economy was a response to the U.S.'s pressure to promote a more liberal society and market in Taiwan, which also demonstrates that the economic and political relationship between Taiwan and the U.S. was not weakened but strengthened even after the termination of diplomatic relations.15 The

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14 The Taiwan Relations Act signed in 10 Apr. 1979, it is specified in (b)-(3) that “to make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means.” See Chih-Chi Chen, “Meiguo dueihuajingtse sanshrnian (Thirty Years of U.S. Policy towards China),” *Taipei: Chinese Daily*, 1981, p. 273.
15 There was a tariff concession in the 1970s which led to an acceleration of the pace of reduction of tariffs after 1979, “as Taiwan embarked upon a course of bilateral trade consultations with the US.” See Chapter “Different Aspects of Economic Performance in Taiwan,” in Zhaicheng Mai and Jiansheng Shi's *Taiwan's Economic Success Since*
opening of the market means that Taiwan could no longer just play the part as the international production base but must work to keep up with the international consumerism. Often described as a period of prosperity by the slang “Taiwan's money is ankle-deep” (台灣錢淹腳目), the late 1970s to the early 1980s was the turning point of the changing international image of the Taiwanese people from cheap labors to affluent consumers.¹⁶

For the film industry, however, the blooming urban economy did not help the shrinking foreign film market or the declining domestic film audience due to the rise of new forms of mass entertainment such as home TV, VHS, and game centers. Taiwanese filmmakers took the advantage of the state policy to encourage domestic film production and started to invest in small, short-term projects which guarantee profits more easily than big studio films. Besieged by commercial films from Hong Kong and Hollywood, one of the successful domestically produced film genres was the romantic melodrama, or wényì films. The most beloved amongst the wényì films were film adaptations from romance novels by Qiong Yao (琼瑤), the popularity of which also initiated Taiwan's star economics. In 1974, Where the Seagull Flies (1974) broke the box office records with the “dream team”—Li Hsing (李行) as the director, Alan Tang (鄧光榮) as the leading actor, and Zhen Zhen (甄珍) as the leading actress. The stardom of Zhen Zhen opened the door for film companies to negotiate pre-sale prices with overseas distributors and film buyers. With the guaranteed overseas distribution, such as in Southeast Asia and South Korea, Taiwan's film industry gradually established a film production and marketing system depending on the stars' “trademark value.”¹⁷

The wenyi stars that emerged from the early to mid 1970s, such as Zhen Zhen, Joan Lin Feng-Jiao (林鳳嬌), and Brigitte Lin Ching-Hsia (林青霞), brought about complex depictions of modern, working women negotiating social contradictions with romantic love. As Wenchi Lin (林文淇) points out in “Working Girls and the Spirit of Healthy Realism in Qiong Yao's Films of the 1970s: The Young Ones, The Autumn Love Song, and The Hear Has Million Knots,” while Brigitte Lin and Zhen Zhen's roles in wenyi films showed youth rebellion against the old social hierarchy, most of their screen images, especially that of the working class women, were supportive of the ideology promoted by the state to bolster Taiwan's industrialization and economic growth with individual hard-work and perseverance. In order to gain the reward of love and the elevation of social status, the wenyi stars presented images of women that were captivating, inspiring, but never threatening.

While the wenyi stars represent the continuation of Healthy Realism in that, as Lin quotes Guo-Juin Hong's observation in Taiwan Cinema: A Contested Nation on Screen, the image of diligent labor “continues to figure centrally as a key trope for the ideal citizen, a state of work in progress,” the Taiwan Pulp stars I discuss in this article reveal a deeper anxiety and contradictions between the state ideology, the capitalist economy, and the development of feminist awareness in Taiwan. Since Taiwan Pulp film was called Social-Realist film (社會寫實片) in Chinese, these stars can be said to emerge from the un-Healthy Realism genre. Taiwan cinema in the 1970s was marked by the establishing of the star economics and private film companies making low-risk film investments—popular genre films that can

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be made with reasonable budgets. Entering the 1980s, the excess of melodrama and romance in wenyi films were replaced by the exploitation of violence and sex. As gangsters, ex-convicts, prostitutes, rape victims, avenging angels, and trained killers, Taiwan Pulp stars like Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan were no school girls but mature women exuding sexuality and physical strengths. They were the visualization of the darkest fears, desires, and fantasies of the collective living experience.

**Beginning of Taiwan Pulp: Lu Hsiao-Fen's Body and The Nation's Past and Future**

1979 was a significant year for Taiwan's democratization and media liberalization. After Taiwan withdrew from the United Nations in 1971, the United States soon terminated its official diplomatic relations with Taiwan (R.O.C.). The signing of the Taiwan Relations Act in the same year not only shifted the diplomatic relations between the United States and Taiwan to an “unofficial” status but also forced the KMT government to relent on its centralized control and military oppression. It was also the year when the first Taiwan Pulp film, *The First Error Step* (錯誤的 第一步，1979) challenged the state censorship with its graphic portrayal of violence and criminal activities. Director Tsai Yang-Ming (蔡揚名) was called into a meeting with the officials of the Taiwan Garrison Command for the controversial violent scenes and his shooting in the actual military prison.\(^{20}\) The film eventually passed censorship for being “politically correct” and “morally edifying” because the film was viewed as to teach the young people to learn from “the first error step” and return to the right path. The film was a huge success and film producers immediately recognized the trade-off—the KMT government was caught between the international crises and the pressure to liberalize state censorship. Transgressive depiction of

violence and sex was allowed as long as it was a diversion from transgression in political ideology. Thus began a period of filmmakers testing the waters, advancing and negotiating with the state censorship on their rights to profit as an industry and their freedom of artistic expression.

In 1981, as the Cultural Revolution in China came to an end with the downfall and trial of the Gang of Four, the Central Motion Pictures Corporation (CMPC) immediately made *The Coldest Winter in Peking* (皇天后土, 1981), a work that focuses on the tragic life story of Shen Yifu (沈毅夫) during the Cultural Revolution. The film was filled with ironic depictions of the Cultural Revolution, including Mao Zedong's images and the Red Guards, but it was allowed to be shown because of its anti-Communist implications. Catching the wave of making the state-favored patriotic anti-communist films, the manager of a private-owned film production company, Yung Sheng Film Company (永昇電影公司), gained direct permission from the Government Information Office to make *On the Society File of Shanghai* (上海社會檔案, 1981), and would later go on to become one of the major film companies producing Taiwan Pulp films. *On the Society File of Shanghai* is an adaptation from the Chinese “Scar Literature” that reveals the cruelty and absurdity of Cultural Revolution. In the film, a detective sets out to disclose the traumatic past behind a woman falsely prosecuted for murder. However, after investigating into the scandal involved in the woman's tragic past, the detective is taken away by the corrupted Chinese government—the real source of crimes responsible for the tragic lives of many Chinese people. The film was well-known for the last line of the movie: “All the crimes will be written down in the society file, engraved on the victims’ memories. No one can destroy them!” However, when the film became an overnight sensation, what was engraved on the

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21 The state-owned Central Motion Pictures Corporation was the major film production company with its own studio in Taiwan, established in the 1950s.
audience's memories was Lu Hsiao-Fen's bare breasts. In the infamous scene, Lu is being interrogated by the police for her involvement in the death of a young man. After being slapped, she bursts into hysterical laughter and tears open her white shirt, revealing the scars on her chest. Another shocking scene in the film is when Lu cuts across her chest with a chopper in front of a group of thugs on the street. These controversial images were “smuggled” into the film under the name of patriotism, and Lu Hsiao-Fen, the new star of the Taiwan Pulp films, was born.22

After the success of *On the Society File of Shanghai*, Yung Sheng Film Company quickly made Lu Hsiao-Fen a signed actress, and her next film, *The Lady Avenger* (瘋狂女煞星, 1981) was shot and released in the same year. *The Lady Avenger* was even bolder than *On the Society File of Shanghai* and more explicit in its intentions—exploiting elements of violence, horror, and sex for profit. In both films, Lu Hsiao-Fen's characters are capable women with great potential but eventually become revengeful and violent after being brutally raped. Before Taiwan Pulp film, rape plots in films were only suggestive or edited out due to the strict censorship. However, in *On the Society File of Shanghai*, the scene when Lu Hsiao-Fen's character is raped by the high-ranking official is shot with careful arrangements of camera angles and lighting. The climax of the rape scene is when Li Li-Fang, played by Lu Hsiao-Fen, lays naked on the bed with her head hanging off the edge, and the camera zooms in “to show her face upside-down and distorted from pain.”23 Later, she escapes from the room in

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22 In Yi-Wen Zhuang's article, she points out that behind the political theme of the film, there is excessive exploitation of female body and violence in the film's poster and content. See Yi-Wen Zhuang, “Reinvestigation of the Anti-Communist Films, the Adaptations of the Scar Literature: With the Attack-Defense Confrontation and the Historical Interlock in the 80th Cross-Strait Literature Film,” *Taiwan Literary Studies* 12.1 (Apr. 2011): 66-67.
23 In “Reinvestigation of the Anti-Communist Films, the Adaptations of the Scar Literature: With the Attack-Defense Confrontation and the Historical Interlock in the 80th Cross-Strait Literature Film,” Zhuang analyzes how the rape scene is set up in
fear, only to be captured by the official's son and be violated again. In The Lady Avenger, the rape scenes are formulaic—almost a direct copy of the 1978 rape-revenge film, I Spit On Your Grave. The detailed, repetitive, and lengthy depictions of the struggles and terror of women during the process of rape were never seen before and became the hallmark of the new genre of Taiwan Pulp films.

In both On the Society File of Shanghai and The Lady Avenger Lu's characters not only suffered from physical abuse but also discrimination from the society after losing her virginity. In The Lady Avenger, written and directed by female director Yang Chia-Yun (楊家雲), the protagonist is a feminist reporter who considers work before marriage and supports sexually abused women. After being gang raped by a group of hooligans, her fiancé abandons her because she is no longer “pure,” leaving her severe psychological trauma. Eventually, she enters a state of madness, transforming from a victim to a “deadly femme castrice” to take revenge on the abusers—setting up traps, cutting their throats, or penetrating them with an iron hook or a samurai sword.24 The arc of Lu Hsiao-Fen's character from being a feminist to a rape victim and finally a deadly avenger mirrors the precarious state of women living and working in developing cities and the spreading anxiety towards the New Feminists as avengers, piercing through the heart of the patriarchal social structure.

At the height of the Taiwan Pulp craze, Lu Hsiao-Fen was the superstar of Yung Sheng Film Company, starring in more than ten Taiwan Pulp films per year. Another film starring Lu was Exposed to Danger (冷眼殺機, order to argue the invasion of male gaze in the film. See Zhuang, “Reinvestigating the Scar Literature and Anti-Communist Films, the Adaptations of the Scar Literature: With the Attack-Defense Confrontation and the Historical Interlock in the 80th Cross-Strait Literature Film,” p. 67.

1982), directed by Yang Chia-Yun and Richard Chen Yao-Chi (陳耀圻), who was known for his works of other genre films, such as romantic comedy, wenyi films, and historical drama. Exposed to Danger is a psychological thriller blending elements from horror and suspense, in which Lu's character, Chow Tian-Chi (周天琪), is an alluring and mysterious woman recently released from prison. She arrives in a coastal city to start anew, but the plan is sabotaged when she goes to work for a newspaper publishing house. Accidents and deaths start to occur around her. Tian-Chi decides to use herself as a bait to investigate into the incidents, but eventually falls into the trap of the real killer—the daughter of the married man with whom she had an affair. The woman bears the hatred of her dead mother and becomes the crazy lady in the attics, or Norman/Mrs. Bates in Psycho (1960). Since all male characters in the film are either killed, crippled, or imprisoned, eventually, Tian-Chi alone fights against the crazy woman, and her strong body makes the final graphic beheading scene even more powerful. In Kill for Love (癡情奇女子, 1982) Lu Hsiao-Fen is the “jealous woman.” Her character, Hsin-Mei (信妹), is a country girl who works in a manufacturing plant. She becomes the victim of her capricious boyfriend with whom she moved in before marriage. When the boyfriend learns about Hsin-Mei's pregnancy, he tries to murder her so he could marry his boss' daughter. Since living with a man before marriage is against the traditional moral code for a virtuous woman, the pregnancy and her boyfriend's betrayal serve as a punishment to Hsin-Mei's blind passion and her naive idea of crossing over to a higher social class. The film ends with a red wedding, when Hsin-Mei returns from her assumed death and interrupts her boyfriend's wedding carrying a huge knife. In a state of paranoia, she stabs her boyfriend in the heart and more violently and obsessively, plunges the knife into her pregnant belly. Finally, the scene ends with the police arriving to remove her blood-soaked body.
Lu's works during this period also established her onscreen image as a blue-collar woman and a woman of the lower social class. In Temptation (誘惑, 1982), an action-comedy, she is a girl from southern Taiwan who just arrived in Taipei City with her little brother. She is naive and is duped by the gangsters to become a charlatan and a cabaret dancer. Since she is inexperienced, the gangsters have to train her for the “skills” of seduction, from winking, smiling, walking, to speaking English. The awkwardness in her mannerisms and her naturally curvaceous body are the trademarks of Lu Hsiao-Fen. Lu's real family background also reinforced her image as a woman of the proletariat. Lu Hsiao-Fen was the daughter of a poor miner in Jiufen, a small gold mining town in northern Taiwan. After moving to Taipei, she worked many different jobs and eventually became a singer, but was never popular until her performance in On the Society File of Shanghai. Her success as a Taiwan Pulp star, however, did not bring her respect as a professional actress or as a “good woman.” Lu's most iconic onscreen look came from that in On the Society File of Shanghai, and it was reproduced in her other films—an almost transparent tight-fitting white shirt, usually without brasiers to reveal the shape of her breasts, ready to be stained by blood. Unlike the wenyi movie actresses, Lu was not the good woman that every man wanted to marry, but with her “exceptional body... she could turn any 'normal' man into 'abnormal.'”

25 In an online journal that documents the memories of being in the national army, the blogger writes,

I remember watching On the Society File of Shanghai in Kinmen island, during the military education broadcasting. There were dozens of thousands of soldiers, and no one dosed off on that day. When Lu Hsiao-Fen ripped open her shirt to reveal her breasts... the screaming of the whole

company of soldiers raised the roof.  

Finally, the blogger concludes ironically, “we were satisfied with her 'sacrifice in the name of art'. “\(^{27}\) In newspaper articles or interviews, Lu also struggled to “return to normal.” She constantly emphasized her “good nature” and her wish to be treated as a “real actress.” She said in an interview about her role in *Kill for Love*: “I might be like Sophia Loren, but I will not be—and don't want to be—'sexy-kitten' Brigitte Bardot.”\(^{28}\)

In 1983, as people's interest in Taiwan Pulp films gradually faded, Lu seized the chance to transform her star image. Entering the 1980s, with the full-fledged Nativist literary movement and the increasing influence of mass media in Taiwan, there was a trend to commercialize and popularize Taiwan Nativist literature through film and television adaptations. The beginning of the trend was the success of *The Sandwich Man* (兒子的大玩偶, 1983) and *A Flower in the Raining Night* (看海的日子, 1983), both adapted from the works of Taiwanese Nativist writer Hwang Chun-Ming (黃春明). In *A Flower in the Raining Night*, Lu Hsiao-Fen portrays the prostitute, Pai-Mei (白玫), a foster child sold to the brothel in a coastal village at the age of eight. She supports the foster family with the money she earns as a prostitute while her family looks down on her for her occupation. Upon seeing her friend entering marriage and having a baby, Pai-Mei decides to have a child of her own. After spending a night with a kind-hearted fisherman, she returns to her hometown to her birth mother and gives birth to a boy. She helps her family and the villagers with the money that she has saved and eventually finds happiness and hope through perseverance and

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26 60mm Mortar, “Old Magazine (7),” 60mm Mortar's Blog, 14 Feb. 2011, <http://a2928796.pixnet.net/blog/post/289484558-%E8%80%81%E9%99%B9%E8%AA%AA%8C(7)> (Accessed 1 Aug. 2018.)

27 60mm Mortar, “Old Magazine (7)”.

sacrifice in an agrarian life. Lu Hsiao-Fen made a successful transition in *The Flower in the Raining Night* and earned the Golden Horse Award for Best Actress as Pai-Mei. In the film, Lu's voluptuous body is transformed from that of a harlot to the Mother-Earth.\(^29\) Her breasts are no longer the attraction of excitement and crime but the breasts that feed the orphan island of Taiwan. Pai-Mei's childbearing scene is long and painful, but the fruit is sweet. Her incredible will eventually triumphs over her pitiful fate and cruel nature. The film is filled with symbolic imagery to emphasize the unbending “Taiwanese spirit” from the grassroots. The cross-cutting of the life of fishermen and that of the prostitutes is suggestive of fertility and the connections with the wild nature—they are like the fish that migrate each year to seek their mate and find consolation. The imagery of the bustling fish market and the busy farming season are reminiscent of that in the Healthy Realist films from the 1960s, displaying the abundance of nature and the beauty of rural life.\(^30\)

After the recognition for her performance in *The Flower in the Raining Night*, Lu continued towards building a prestigious acting career by starring in *Oxcart Filled with Dowry* (嫁妝一牛車, 1984), another film adaptation from the Taiwan Nativist novel of the same title. In 1988, her role in *Osmanthus Alley* (桂花巷, 1988) brought another challenge and success. The film is an adaptation from the seminal work of Hsiao Li-Hung (蕭麗紅), one of the most important Taiwanese female writers since the mid 1970s. It is co-produced by the state-owned CMPC and the commercially successful private film company, Scholar Film (學者電影), and directed by the

\(^{29}\) Although Lu Hsiao-Fen transformed her appearance and performance in *The Flower in the Raining Night*, the breast-feeding scene still became an attraction for the movie, and later aroused controversy over whether a model was used as a stand-in for Lu.

\(^{30}\) Healthy Realist Films were promoted by CMPC in the mid 1960s. Inspired by Italian Neorealism, the Healthy Realist Films focused on the lives of ordinary people and the lower class but consciously replaced the darker depictions of social reality with a pedagogical undertone.
important Taiwan New Cinema director, Chen Kun-Hou (陳坤厚).

The story of *Osmanthus Alley* was first serialized in the *United Daily News* in 1975 and was later published in 1977, when the Nativist literature movement was in full swing. Hsiao Li-Hung successfully blends Chinese traditional values with Taiwanese localism in the novel and attempts to view the history of Taiwan through the life of a woman. The novel spans across different periods in Taiwan history: the migration period in the late Qing dynasty, the Japanese occupation period, and the postwar takeover by the KMT government. The protagonist, Kao Ti-Hung (高剔紅), is a woman coming from the underclass. To escape poverty, she marries into a wealthy family, but she cannot escape the destiny written on her palms—she is an ominous woman who is destined for a life of luxury while bringing a curse to her husband. This fatalism, especially projected upon the life of a woman, is rooted in the traditional society. What is more, it is an allegory of Taiwan's struggle and frustration towards nation-building.

Kao Ti-Hung, the central character of *Osmanthus Alley*, was a challenging role for Lu Hsiao-Fen. She had to portray the life of a woman from youth to old age. Lu Hsiao-Fen transformed her body shape, putting on weight and special effects makeup, stepping into the period costume and the lotus shoes for traditional bound feet. Lu Hsiao-Fen's incredible performance as the woman that embodied the historical transitions of Taiwan won her the Best Actress Award at the Asia Pacific Film Festival. In the following year, she worked with director Richard Chen Yao-Chi in a period drama, *Spring Swallow* (晚春情事, 1989). In the film, she portrays again a young widow struggling between the patriarchal social rules and her sexuality. Her performance won her another Best Actress Award at the Asia Pacific Film Festival. What is often neglected in the discussion of these two films is how

they present women's suffering and coming to terms with the social conventions as closely tied to economy and class—a woman's body is consciously utilized, by themselves, as a means of survival in the patriarchal society.

Lu Hsiao-Fen's “transformation” in the later years of her career won her critical acclaim, but it was still questionable whether Lu Hsiao-Fen's star image had fundamentally changed. The star image of Lu as the sexy Taiwan Pulp actress never disappeared but became the subtext to the more mature and complicated characters she portrayed in the latter years of her career. The media never ceased focusing on Lu Hsiao-Fen's body: from the “motherly” breast-feeding scene in *The Flower in the Raining Night*, her weight gain in *Osmanthus Alley*, to the “exquisite, implicit, yet enticing” sex scenes in *Spring Swallow.*

In *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*, Adam Lowenstein analyzes how in the rape-revenge plot of exploitation-horror films such as that in *The Last House on the Left* (1972), women are located within the process of history and national trauma by forcing “an acknowledgment of the impact that a lived and embodied femininity makes in representing class conflict according to savage/civilized difference.” In *On the Society File of Shanghai*, Lu's scarred body is the evidence on which the national trauma engraved. Her body excites and remembers. In the woman's revenge films, such as *The Lady Avenger* and *Temptation*, Lu Hsiao-Fen assumes the role of the *femme castrice* who carefully designs and executes her revenge plan, including goading and stimulating men before the final castration. She is no longer the passive victim or an abstract symbol of the “male” national trauma but “vital

agents in the shaping and living of that trauma.” What is more, the anxiety and horror experienced by men in these rape-revenge films were a reflection of the anxiety of men facing the rising feminist awareness and feminist activism in the 1970s. The autonomous women's movements led by Lu Hsiu-Lien put great emphasis on raising issues related to abused women and stressing women's potential to be as powerful as men. Accompanied by the growing economic independence of women and the changing social structure, the women's movements drew criticism on the image of these “contentious women” attempting to overpower men. Similar to the rape-revenge films made in the United States, such as *The Last House on the Left* (1972) and *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978), the Taiwanese rape-revenge films were produced in the period of heightened feminist activism. Subconsciously, it can be considered as a warning to men. However, Lu Hsiao-Fen's struggle to stay “normal” despite her onscreen image as a seductive avenger was an example of the overwhelming conservatism of the society. In Taiwan, the feminist activists also had to compromise with the traditional ideology that women should be virtuous and chaste in order to negotiate their goals of equal rights with men.

offscreens, Lu Hsiao-Fen made efforts to shape her image as a naive and down-to-earth girl, but the newspaper and magazine articles were still more interested in showing photographs of her appearing attractive and sexy in order to generated sales. Lu's body was still the “attraction”: her body was not only the perfect publicity for movies but also for politics. Lee Ao (李敖), one of the most controversial writers and political commentators, wrote in an article in 1985:

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33 Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*, p. 135.

There are many problems under the KMT rule. Lu Hsiao-Fen's breasts, for example, is a problem. Amongst all beautiful women's breasts, hers are the most problematic... She is the pioneer in “liberating” women's breasts! The KMT keep their eyes on her breasts..., because when they censored the scenes of her exposed breasts in *The Flower in the Raining Night* and when she accidentally reveals her breasts on a television show... people's attention was drawn to the enlarged pictures of her in the newspapers. At the height of media frenzy about Chiang Nan's assassination, Lu Hsiao-Fen's news piece appeared. It is sexy and entertaining, is like casting a rock into a pond and causing temporary ripples.\(^{35}\)

Lee Ao's ironic accusation of Lu Hsiao-Fen's “pink news” diverting people's attention from a heinous political assassination ordered by the KMT government can be analyzed in two layers: first, the implication that the erotic content on media was the government's political strategy to distract people. Second, he too, was using Lu Hsiao-Fen's breasts, but as the attraction to draw people's attention back to politics. On both levels, Lu Hsiao-Fen's body was the body that “cannot be contained”— Her body could be useful in (mis)directing people's attention, but it was also like a derailing train and must constantly be checked, censored, and to be kept within safe parameters.

**Yang Hui-Shan: Spectacle, Sexuality, Womanhood**

Yang Hui-Shan was another household name in the late 1970s and early 1980s Taiwan, although her acting career started in the early 1970s.

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She first appeared in television melodramas, commercials, and some films as minor or supporting roles before starring in the martial arts films directed by Tsai Yang-Ming, who later ignited the Taiwan Pulp craze with *The First Error Step*, in which Yang also starred. In the film, she plays a diligent Hakka girl who works at a printing factory. She meets the protagonist in the film, Masa, and is empathetic towards his life story—an ex-convict struggling to be an “upright citizen.” The success of the film brought Yang Hui-Shan fame and a long-term working relationship with Tsai Yang-Ming in most of his Taiwan Pulp films. As Taiwan Pulp and the rape-revenge films became a trend, Yang started to appear in a wide range of genre-blending Taiwan Pulp films, shape-shifting from one iconic Taiwan Pulp character to another: gambler, gangster, disco owner, ninja, and evil queen. Known for her “angelic face, devilish body” (天使面孔，魔鬼身材) and the ability to challenge all kinds of characters—regardless of how little she had to wear, Yang was always in charge of the visual spectacle of the film, like an alluring chameleon on screen.

In the gambling film, *The King of Gambler* (賭王鬥千王, 1981), she is the secretary working for a Japanese card sharp who has been swindling money from Taiwanese gamblers. In order to bring down the famous king of gambler, Sha Tong (沙通), she pretends to be one of the grand-daughters of

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36 Yang, Hui-Shan starred as the sexy and intelligent secretary and professional gambler in a series of gambling films: *The Giant of Casino* (賭國仇城, 1979), *Play Con Game* (十張王牌, 1981), and *The King of Gambler*; and as the avenging angel in the notorious woman's revenge films such as *Woman Revenger* (女性的復仇, 1981). She was also the action heroine, as in *Virago* (胭脂虎, 1981), *The Modern Spy* (摩登情報員, 1981), *Seven Knights* (七武士, 1982), *Golden Queen’s Commandos* (紅粉兵團, 1982), or the beautiful ninja who tricks the minds of others with her beauty, as in *Impossible Woman* (飛簷走壁, 1983), *A Life of Ninja* (亡命忍者, 1983), and *The Challenge of the Lady Ninja* (浪女神龍劍, 1982). She also put on dramatic costumes to portray queen-like figures in fantasy exploitation films like *The Thrilling Sword* (神劍動山河) and *The Country of Beauties* (美人國, 1981), just to list a few.

the Sha family to gain trust and obtain useful information in the final gambling match. As a spy and a beautiful diversion for the villain's scheme, Yang's wardrobe changes from that of a reliable assistant—a simple white cheongsam—to that of a mysterious visitor—a stylish dark suit with a homburg and a pair of sun-glasses—and finally, to that of a female gambler—a sophisticated and gorgeous sheer black gown. In a scene when she plays mahjong in a team with three other women from the Sha family, she shows off her mesmerizing skill and becomes a part of the spectacle in the gambling movie. Similar gambling scenes with Yang appearing attractive while gambling were also used in other Taiwan Pulp movies, such as *Woman Revenger*, in which she is dressed in a slanted kimono like Fuji Sumiko in the notorious 1960s “Red Peony Gambler” series. Another example of Yang as the films' visual spectacle is *The Challenge of Lady Ninja* (女忍者, 1981). In the film, Yang plays a “lady ninja,” Hui (小惠), who can create illusions when facing enemies. The film opens with a series of action scenes involving Hui being chased by a group of male ninjas. When she is surrounded by them in a forest, she creates an illusion of herself as an erotic dancer wrapped only in a pink bikini and a floating scarf. The camera lingers on her bosom and her waist as she twirls and tantalizes the male ninjas before vanishing into a blast of psychedelic smoke.

While Lu Hsiao-Fen is usually presented as the naïve girl from the countryside or a lower social class who seeks revenge after traumatizing events, Yang Hui-Shan is the agile shapeshifter who acclimatizes to the precarious environments—usually the underworld in modern cities—with her chameleon appeal. Whereas Lu is the survivor, Yang is the “adapter” of the modern city. The Taiwan Pulp films featuring Yang as the female lead are often mix-genre films that combine *wenyi*, action, fantasy, and the rape-

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38 The Japanese *Red Peony Gambler* (Hibotan bakuto) film series, starring Fuji Sumiko (also known as Fuji Junko), includes 8 films from 1968 to 1972, produced by Toe Company.
revenge plot. In *Who Dare Challenge Me* (1981), a collaboration between novelist Hsuan Hsiao-Fo (玄小佛) and director Yang Chia-Yun, Yang Hui-Shan takes on the role of a casino owner and leader of a crime ring, Shia Hong-Chen (夏紅塵). She rescues a girl who is involved in a murder incident, and finds out that this girl might be her long lost daughter. At the same time, she is falling for the eye-witness for the murder—an attractive businessman named Tao Ya-Cheng (陶亞誠), starring the famous TV drama heart-throb Chiang Hou-Jen (姜厚任). As Shia starts mending the relationship with her daughter and accepting the romantic proposal from Tao, she realizes that one of them might have an ulterior motive for approaching her. The film is a type of Taiwan Pulp movie with mix generic elements, but the focus on domestic melodrama and romance besides the crime and action sequences, as well as the hidden rape-revenge plot, creates an interesting fusion of wényì and Taiwan Pulp.

The film that established Yang Hui-Shan's ability to bring together wényì and rape-revenge elements is *Woman Revenger* (女性的復仇, 1981), directed by Tsai Yang-Ming. The story of *Woman Revenger* is based on the real-life news report of a group of young Taiwanese girls who went to Tokyo in search of more opportunities but were forced into prostitution by the gangsters in the city. The film follows the journey of Ah-Lin's (阿玲) rescue mission of Mei-Feng (美鳳), the sister of her friend who was murdered by the gangsters in Japan. The film switches modes as Ah-Lin meets with her friend in Tokyo, San-Lang (三郎)—played by Liu De-Kai (劉德凱), the famous actor in Qiong Yao's television adaptations, wonders around the streets and clubs in Tokyo, engages in flashbacks of her past as a gymnast, challenges the leader of the gangsters, loses one eye in captivity, and revenges for herself and her friend in the final climax. The narrative of the film is more inclined to that of the detective-action film, but there are scenes of women being tortured and a symbolic rape plot: When the gangster pokes
out Ah-Lin left eye, the scene is done with an extreme close up combined with a sequence of multiple angles of shots, including the subjective shots from Ah-Lin's point of view, to maximize the dramatic effect and to enhance the audience's identification with Ah-Lin. Later, Ah-Lin appears in the image of the female avenger with an eyepatch. This iconic image seems like a direct copy from the Swedish rape-revenge film, *Thriller—A Cruel Picture* (1973). In the final battle, Ah-Lin leads a group of female fighters to revenge the intrusive violence done to her, literally “an eye for an eye”—by stabbing into the eye of the gangster member who blinded her.

Often portraying the leader of a group of assassins, gangsters, or female warriors, Yang Hui-Shan the “chameleon” was able to bring femininity into strong and versatile female characters. She partnered with not only the Taiwan Pulp stars such as Ma Sha and Wang Kuan-Hsiung (王冠雄) but also wenyi actors like Chiang Hou-Jen and Liu De-Kai, and could also be seen in top-grossing romantic comedies and wenyi films such as *Up-Train* (上行列車, 1981) and *Asking the Sunset* (問斜陽, 1981). While Yang's flexibility enabled her characters to roam the city streets and even dominate the city spaces where desires dwell—casinos and night clubs—Yang's transition into a more prestigious category of film was a big challenge for her. In 1984, Yang took on the leading role in *Madam Yu Ching* (玉卿嫂, 1984). The film was directed by Chang Yi (張毅), who was the writer of the novel and screenplay of *The Pioneers* (源, 1982) and one of the four directors of the earliest Taiwan New Cinema film, *In Our Time* (光陰的故事, 1982).

39 In the notorious exploitation film, *Thriller—A Cruel Picture*, also known as *They Call Her One-Eye*, a sexually abused girl Madeline is forced into prostitution and loses one eye for refusing a client. The story progresses as Madeline learns about the death of her parents and takes revenge on the pimp who abducted and abused her, thus the iconic image of a young woman holding a rifle, wearing an eyepatch. The film was banned in Sweden for the explicit sex and violent scenes, and the rape-revenge plot as well as the image of a woman wearing an eyepatch were the inspiration for many other exploitation films, including Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* trilogy.
Madam Yu Ching marked the ending of Yang Hui-Shan's long-term collaboration with Taiwan Pulp director Tsai Yang-Ming and the beginning of a new partnership with a new cinematic movement and film styles. It was also a controversial adaptation of a short story by Pai Hsien-Yung (白先勇), whose works challenged conventional sexuality and moral boundaries. What is more, the historical intricacy of the story and the psychological depths of the character “Madam Yu-Ching” made the film adaptation an extremely difficult task. The choice of casting Yang Hui-Shan, who was known for showing off her gorgeous body in low-quality Taiwan Pulp films, also raised people's curiosity.

The story of Madam Yu Ching is set during the second Sino-Japanese war. Madam Yu Chin is a widow who refuses to keep a “widow's chastity.” She chooses to work as a nanny in a wealthy family and rejects an appropriate suitor, only to be with her younger lover, Ching-Sheng (慶生). In the end, Madam Yu Ching, devoured by passion and jealousy, kills Ching-Sheng and then commits suicide by his side, with a knife in the heart.

As Shen Shiao-Ying observes, in the film adaptation, alterations were made for Yang Hui-Shan's version of Madam Yu Ching, particularly regarding the depiction of sex. In the novel, for the ten-year-old narrator, Madam Yu Ching is a fair but already wrinkled woman. The sex sequence between Madam Yu Ching and her young lover is witnessed by the young protagonist and retold as a horrific primal scene that involves the predator and its prey:

Suddenly, as if mad, she was chewing Ching-Sheng's shoulder and tearing open his flesh with her teeth..., her hands holding him were like an eagle's claws, sinking deep

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into Ching-Sheng’s back.... Ching-Sheng’s arms were trembling. He was weak, like a wounded rabbit stumbling onto the ground. When Madam Yu Ching bit his shoulder once more, he struggled with all his might and fell onto the bed moaning. Madam Yu Ching’s lips were stained with blood. Ching-Sheng’s shoulder was also marked red, with blood dripping down his pale back.\(^{41}\)

In the film, however, Yang Hui-Shan is beautiful and elegant. In the sex scene, the camera does not show the audience the cruelly scratched back of Ching-Sheng but the smooth and alluring back and the raising leg of Yang Hui-Shan—Madam Yu Ching.\(^{42}\) The horrifying moment in the novel is turned into a sensual and enticing scene in the film. Even though Yang Hui-Shan didn’t reveal her breasts, the sex scene was censored when it was shown in the theater in Taiwan. While Lu Hsiao-Fen’s breasts and film sequences of women being raped were granted acquiescence from the Film Censorship Board during the Taiwan Pulp frenzy, the sex position of a woman not being dominated by a man was considered “against the traditional virtues of women” (不符合傳統婦道) and “damaging to the image of Chinese women.” (破壞中華婦女形象).\(^{43}\) Probably due to the controversy over the four-minute sex scene which was eventually edited out, Madam Yu Ching failed to receive the nomination of Best Actress for the Golden Horse Award.\(^{44}\) Ironically, Yang Hui-Shan did win the Best Actress

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\(^{44}\) Madam Yu Ching was one of the biggest winners for the Golden Horse Awards in the year of 1984, receiving seven nominations (Best Feature Film, Best Director, Best Child Star, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Art Direction, Best Original Score, Best
Award that year—not as Madam Yu Ching, but as the role of a strong mother who protects her family against a fugitive in *Teenage Fugitive* (小逃犯, 1984).

The raised legs of Yang Hui-Shan were, of course, the scapegoat for the anxiety towards a female character with sexual passion and agency. A woman actively pursuing sexual pleasure rather than curbing her desires is considered destructive. From the clash between traditional values and a woman's sexuality emerges her subjectivity—a woman is more than a beautiful face and desirable body but is capable of feeling and pursuing her desires. Now, she is “doubled,” or tripled powerful, being at the same time desirable, capable of desiring, and dissatisfied.

In the earlier woman's revenge films, the female avenger will eventually be caught by the police. The formulaic “handcuffing” shot at the end of these films, whether the avenger is alive or dead, is significant for containing the *femme castrice* and for recovering the patriarchal law. What is frightening about Madam Yu Ching is that she cannot be handcuffed or killed. Her sexual drive is so powerful that she could kill herself, and she does not die in pain—she dies by the side of her lover, looking peaceful, almost smiling. Her passion and desire are beyond the confinement of law and order. This is the real horror for the Film Censorship Board and the Golden Horse Award judges—Madam Yu Ching should be punished by law.

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like the female avengers in Taiwan Pulp films, but she cannot be punished. She is the monstrous-feminine holding something more powerful than a chainsaw—her desire. Her desire leads to her downfall, yet it is her downfall which frees her and brings radical possibilities in a film in which Yang makes her attempt to negotiate her old star images with the new.

Throughout her career, Yang has won recognition for taking on various challenging roles. However, her offscreen life has stolen the spotlight from her onscreen performance. The media was constantly probing into her relationships with film directors, of which the most dramatic incident would be the love triangle between Yang Hui-Shan, Chang Yi, and Chang Yi's wife Hsiao Sa (萧飒), which ultimately led to Yang's retirement as an actress. The collaboration of the award-winning team—Chang Yi as the director, Hsiao Sa as the writer, and Yang Hui-Shan as the leading actress—began in Kuei-Mei, A Woman (我這樣過了一生, 1985). Before the collaboration in Kuei-Mei, A Woman, Chang Yi was already an emerging writer and director who has successfully reshaped Yang Hui-Shan's star image in Madame Yu Ching. Hsiao Sa, on the other hand, was one of the most influential Taiwanese female writers in the 1970s and 1980s. She was prolific and the topics of her writings ranged from youth problems to urban decay, capturing vividly the desires, alienation, and women's predicaments at a time of rapid urbanization.

In The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, Barbara Creed develops her analysis on the monstrous-feminine based on Susan Lurie and Linda Williams's arguments, challenging the traditional Freudian position of the source of castration anxiety being women seen as the castrated men. In an attempt to reverse the stereotypical representation of woman as victim in the horror genre, she asserts that woman “terrifies because man endows her with imaginary powers of castration.” Man's efforts in finding the penis in woman “represents first and foremost a convulsive attempt to deny the existence of the sinister female genital” that, in his phantasy, would devour his penis. What is more, woman can be more terrifying and more powerful than man as the castrator because she is already “physically whole, intact and in possession of all her sexual powers.” See Creed, pp. 5-141.
Kuei-Mei, A Woman was the film adaptation of Hsiao Sa's novel, Home of Xia Fei (霞飛之家), published in 1981. Hsiao Sa adapted the novel into the screenplay herself, and Yang Hui-Shan portrayed the protagonist in the story, Kuei-Mei (桂美), a rootless immigrant in Taiwan during the civil war. In the film, Kuei-Mei marries a divorced man with three children and struggles to build a “home” (家), like many Chinese immigrants that followed the KMT government to Taiwan. The story incorporates the twenty years of industrialization of Taiwan. Kuei-Mei and her husband's striving and laboring for a better life is the collective memory of many Taiwanese people from the 1950s to the 1980s. The two start as hotel waiters, then as manufacturers of cottage industry, housekeepers in Japan, eventually they are able to start their own restaurant in Taipei. Kuei-Mei also echoes Lu Hsiao-Fen's character, Pai-Mei, in The Flower in the Raining Night. Pai-Mei resembles the perseverance and procreativity of the grassroots, and her power comes from the agricultural society's connection with nature. Kuei-Mei on the other hand is the woman of the industrial Taiwan. She is caring, forgiving, industrious, and resolute—all of which are crucial to the economic boom of Taiwan in the 1970s and 1980s. As a mainlander building a new family in Taiwan, Kuei-Mei, the “good wife” and “good mother,” is the model postwar Chinese woman: a productive and supportive woman who sustains the family through hard times and contribute to the nation's stability and prosperity.

To portray Kuei-Mei as pregnant and later, as a chubby woman in her fifties, Yang Hui-Shan gained forty pounds and completely changed her onscreen image. Her sexuality in the film is not aggressive like that of Madam Yu Ching, but is used as a way for negotiation. In a scene when Kuei-Mei is in bed with her husband, she uses sex as bargaining chips to

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48 In the novel and the film, the name of Kuei-Mei's restaurant is “Home of Xia Fei,” named after the famous Avenue Joffre (Xia Fei Road, 霞飛路) in Shanghai.
make her husband quit gambling.\textsuperscript{49} She is not a predator but a negotiator between her aspirations and the social conventions. For example, learning about her husband's affair, she leaves home to work on her own, but when she finds out that her daughter too has run away from home, she returns to the house to safeguards her family. As Shen Shiao-Ying analyzes in “The War Between Body and Pen: the Cultural Phenomena of Yang Hui-Shan, Chang Yi, and Hsiao Sa,” those difficult negotiations pose great pressure upon her, and the psychological trauma is exemplified by her bodily disease when Kuei-Mei is diagnosed with uterine cancer—illness of the organ that symbolizes motherhood.\textsuperscript{50} In order to pursue a better life for her family, Kuei-Mei pays the price with her body. Her motherly, sacrificial body is praised, while the body of Madam Yu Ching is oppressed. In \textit{Kuei-Mei, A Woman}, Yang's body was once again the attraction that drew people to the theater—the film was the top ten best-selling films of the year—and her transformation was applauded this time. \textit{Kuei-Mei, A Woman} won the Golden Horse Awards for Best Film, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Actress.

The collaboration of Yang, Chang, and Hsiao in \textit{Kuei-Mei, A Woman} was a huge success. In their second film, \textit{This Love of Mine} (我的愛, 1986), Yang portrays Wei-Liang (唯良), a woman who attempts to leave her cheating husband but failed because she lacks the skills to support a life on her own. She is like every other housewife: meticulous and obsessive in preserving the harmony of her domestic realm, yet lacks the skills and mentality to become economically and psychologically independent in a society where women are trained and demanded to follow the “Three Obedience and Four Virtues” (三從四德) in order to become a good


household caregiver. The scene where Wei-Liang sits quietly in front of her vanity and cuts off her long hair with a knife is extremely powerful in articulating the disillusionment and desperation of a woman who is forever attached to her husband and her family, which leads to her final act of self-destruction—also the destruction of the whole family because she is inseparable from them.

Ironically, the film also led to the falling apart of Chang Yi and Hsiao Sa's marriage. Right before the theater release of *This Love of Mine*, Hsiao Sa published an article titled, “A Letter to My Ex-Husband” (給前夫的一封信) in the literary supplement section of *China Times*. The letter revealed the affair between Chang Yi and Yang Hui-Shan from the perspective from a wife whose marriage was ruined because of Yang's intrusion, and it immediately turned the award-winning collaboration into a huge scandal. Shen Shiao-Ying examines Yang Hui-Shan's response to the scandal: she attended the Golden Horse Award, but wearing trousers and with light makeup instead of a glamorous night gown like other actresses. She had a crew cut, “almost like that of Joan of Arc in Carl Theodor Dreyer's movie..., she was like the French woman who was humiliated and forced to shave her head after the Second World War, for having a relationship with a German soldier.”

Shen describes Yang's appearance at the award ceremony as an act of asserting her position and desire, and at the same time an act of accepting public accusations and showing humility. Whereas in the film, the act of cutting her own hair was a failed attempt to break through a woman's social role as a wife and a mother, in real life, Yang's short hair became a statement of her agency and her resolution—an overture to her retirement from the film industry as a reconciliation between the traditional social structure, the Confucian moral codes, and a woman's desire.

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In general, Lu Hsiao-Fen's star images echoed Taiwan's grassroots spirit and its triumph against Taiwan's grim political reality and historical trauma, whereas Yang's roles were city-centered characters that lived through the tragedy of Taiwanese women in the process of the nation's modernization. Both Lu and Yang were the few stars in Taiwan cinema whose body of works systematically reflected Taiwan's postwar economic and political transitions, yet whose trajectories of performances and star images strayed far away from the “official” history that the state wanted to preserve and present.

Conclusion

Known as the “social-realist” film in Chinese, the visually daring Taiwan Pulp genre had a deep connection to the contemporary social reality. To bolster the “social-realist” aspect of the genre, Taiwan Pulp films were often based on crime news and employed formulaic film openings with still images that resembled news footages. The genric tradition and filmic conventions simultaneously helped bridging the gap between the fantastic images of powerful, avenging women and that of the strong feminists in the contemporary social reality. In the 1970s and 1980s, women gradually became outspoken and active in political and social movements. The “feminists” who exited from their family roles, received higher education, and started to tackle issues such as rape, prostitution, and abortion were demonized—they were the female avengers overthrowing a male-dominant world.\(^2\)

\(^2\) During the 1970s, many conservatives, even male intellectuals, accused the feminists of being overly aggressive and “anti-male.” Lu Hsiu-Lien often received attacking mails calling her a “psychopath” or saying that she was “manipulating men.” See Hui-Feng Hsieh, “A Preliminary Study on the Opinion and Attitude of Taiwan Elites towards the New Feminism in 1970's.” *Dong Hwa Journal of Humanities* 8 (January 2006): 173-212. It is pointed out that Lu Hsiu-Lien collected and showed the defamatory mails and threats as “historical evidence of a male-centric society.” See Lu, *Counting the Footsteps of the Pioneer* (Taipei: Pioneer Publishing, 1976), p. 3. and Chinese Forum, *Female Intellectuals And the Development of Taiwan*, p. 117.
The conflicting ideologies in the 1970s and 1980s created a rupture in Taiwan cinema which was filled quickly by Taiwan Pulp films. However, not much attention had been placed upon Taiwan Pulp—one of the most influential cultural phenomena in the late 1970s—because the genre was thought to be exploitation of women and only contain crude and unsophisticated representation of sexuality and horror. My examination of the star images of Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan does not promote exploitation of female body but reveals the multiple dimensions of the star images in order to understand how ideologies clash, compromise, negotiate, and evolve through the changing shapes of a woman's body. The seductive, strong, and traumatized bodies of Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan were the animated evidence of the fierce clash of codes in Taiwan in the 1970s: rising feminist awareness, crumbling patriarchy, changing socio-economic structure, state nationalism, nativist resistance, and Western trash culture due to the fast-developing mass media. In the early 1980s, CMPC collaborated with a group of young directors that brought forth Taiwan New Cinema, which enabled Taiwan to re-enter the international arena via cinema. The suppression of Lu and Yang's images as Taiwan Pulp stars was not only because they violated the conservative moral codes but also because their exploitative features were at odds with the government's nationalist goals, such as elevating Taiwan's international image and competing with People's Republic of China (PRC) in a battle of culture and ideology. Lu and Yang's sexiness generated profits for film companies and filmmakers but lacked "artistic value" for the national culture as a whole.

Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan's fortunate and hard-earned transition from exploitation stars to respectable actors is not uncommon in the film industry. Hou Hsiao-Hsien's longtime muse, Shu Qi (舒淇), also began her acting career with Hong Kong soft porn films and eventually
became an international star.\textsuperscript{53} Lu and Yang understand very well, just as their characters Kao Ti-Hung in Osmanthus Alley and Kuei-Mei in Kuei-Mei, A Woman do, a woman's body is a crucial tool to gain economic independence in a patriarchal society. For Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan, their star images are closely connected to their body performance and are strategically built not only by the mass media, film directors and producers, but also by themselves. In an interview director Yang Chia-Yun mentioned that during the filming of a scene in \textit{The Lady Avenger}, Lu Hsiao-Fen brought her own wardrobe and asked Yang, naughtily, to pick between a normal dress and a sheer, revealing shirt. “She was not stupid and saved me from the embarrassment of asking her to wear less,” Yang said.\textsuperscript{54} Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan knew what attracted the audience as well as what made positive star images. They appeared in more innocent or educated manners in interviews and participated in patriotic events for soldiers. In terms of struggling for survival in a patriarchal society, Lu and Yang were not passive victims torn between state nationalism and liberal feminism but active players that reinvented the rules through playing different roles on and off-screen. Instead of simply identifying with the traditional good women or the transgressors of gender rules, Lu and Yang's images were always multi-layered unstable. Similar tactics were used by activists of New Feminism in Taiwan in the 1970s, repackaging the Western progressive protests with “humanitarian” pursuits to avoid direct confrontation with the existing social system. They adopted the discursive tactic to moralize desires, especially sexual desires to gain the society’s acceptance. Long before the

\textsuperscript{53} According to the “Film Censorship Guidelines for Censors 1999” provided by Hong Kong Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration for Censors, the Category III films are “approved for exhibition only persons who have attained the age of 18 years. See “Film Censorship Guidelines for Censors 1999,” Hong Kong Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration, <https://www.ofnna.gov.hk/eng/code/> (Accessed 1 Aug. 2017.)

debate about female sexuality and desires which divided the feminist camps in Taiwan in the 1990s, the Taiwan Pulp stars emerging from the rape-revenge films were the cultural icons that embodied the dialectical relations between gender and sexual politics, which is often manifested in the conflict between women's victimhood and sexual subjectivity.\(^{55}\) While in the filmic narratives the sexualized performances of the Taiwan Pulp stars were connected to violence and crime, they were also the tool to seduce the male abusers and to engage the spectators, thus turning the protagonists' victimhood into female agency and power.

A woman's body has always been a part of the negotiation with existing cultures, ideologies, and social realities, the process of which is made visible through the transformation of a woman's images. From Taiwan Pulp stars to award-winning actresses, Lu Hsiao-Fen and Yang Hui-Shan have demonstrated mastery over their bodily performances. What is more, Lu and Yang's star images are unique in Taiwan film history because of their uncontainable nature. The state's wartime mobilization and economic policy not only liberalized the libidinal energy of men but also that of women. While both actresses tended to shape their offscreen images according to the traditional codes—much like the compromise made by the feminists in the 1970s and the 1980s—they were well aware of the fact that their past could not be erased. The “burden” of their body became different layers to their roles and star images: enticing, sacrificial, and disturbing. Full of scenes of violent penetration, blood, and wounds, Taiwan Pulp was an unprecedented visual exhibition of the tension and potential created by the forces of erotic production. Although the transformation of most of the Taiwan Pulp stars were conditioned by the social reality, Lu Hisao-Fen's breasts and Yang Hui-

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Shan's legs could not be kept from arousing honest manifestations of the deep obsession as well as anxiety towards empowered women.

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Ting-Wu Cho*

Abstract

Taiwanese cinema in the 1980s saw the rise and fall of the “Taiwan Pulp” films—a group of hybrid exploitation films capitalizing on themes related to crime and sex. This article contextualizes the transformation of the star images of the Taiwan Pulp film actresses from late 1970s to mid-1980s within the shifting geopolitics of the late Cold War, the rise of the nativist literature and a modern national narrative, and the obstacle-ridden journey of women’s movements in Taiwan. My research focuses on the career trajectories of Lu Hsiao-Fen (陸小芬) and Yang Hui-Shan (楊惠姍)—two of the most prolific actresses that rose to stardom in the Taiwan Pulp mania portraying seductive and deadly lady avengers on screen. Later, Lu and Yang starred in critically acclaimed literary adaptations and won significant film awards. Even then, their onscreen images remained problematic and controversial. In films, news, and gossip, their voluptuous bodies were the battlefield of the capitalist economy, political anxiety, feminist awareness, and nationalist ideology. Analyzing their changing onscreen representations and the conflicting media discourses centered around their bodies, I argue that their shifting star images should be understood as a process of struggle and negotiation between the grim social and political reality and the booming nativist and feminist activism in the 1980s. Using the theory of cultural hegemony influenced by Antonio Gramsci, the study opens up political possibilities to view the mass cultural fictions of femininity not as

* New York University, Department of Cinema Studies, PhD Candidate. Email: twc255@nyu.edu,
either an accomplice of the dominant patriarchal ideology or a resistance to it but as a dynamic historical process of change and negotiation.

**Keyword:** Star studies, Taiwan Pulp film, rape-revenge film, New Feminism, cultural hegemony