

**Multi-Platform Film-Viewing:
Taipei Audiences and Generational Variation**

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Declaration

I,

hereby confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

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Abstract

Thanks to the evolution of modern audiovisual technology, film audiences nowadays can enjoy the flexibility of watching movies at venues ranging from multiplex theatres to living rooms and bedrooms at home through various film-viewing platforms from broadcast television, cable movie channels, VCR, VCD, and DVD to internet downloading. With the increased amount of transnational audiovisual products imported over the years, Taiwanese audiences can also consume different types of films from different places in these ways. This thesis focuses on the relationship between different generations of film audiences and their 'film-viewing' practices via various viewing platforms, attempting to reveal the social, cultural and economic significance of their everyday practices, and frame them in the structure of the local film industry and the increasingly transnational local cinema culture.

The project employs various qualitative research techniques to collect Taipei film audiences' own accounts of their quotidian film-viewing practices through currently available viewing platforms. This multi-platform approach to contemporary film audiences in today's digital-rich media environment contributes to this understudied field of film audience research. Furthermore, the empirical data on the 'film-viewing' practices of five age groups yields an understanding of the complicated interrelationships among film audiences, film texts and viewing platforms. On this basis, it is argued that the conventional 'audience-film' relationship studied in audience research should be reframed as the study of the 'audience-film-viewing platform' relationship.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Arguments and Contributions

To my knowledge, this is the first thesis to address contemporary film audiences' multi-platform film-viewing practices by using detailed accounts of audiences' everyday film-viewing practices that also are contextualised by means of macroscopic approaches. My aim is to explore the impact of various platforms -- going to the cinema, watching DVDs, downloading, and so forth -- on the local film audiences' viewing practices, so as to analyse the complicated interrelationships between the film audience, media technology, film text, and film industry and understand better contemporary Taiwanese cinema culture in the digital era. On the basis of the analysis of the respondents' data, I argue that age and lifestyle differences have the most significant impact on the multi-platform film-viewing practices of viewers. I also argue that when contemporary audiences in Taiwan refer to 'film-viewing' they mean a combination of how films are consumed, the media technologies used, and the viewing environment. Moreover, although gender is not proposed as the main influencing factor, significant 'gender differences' in the respondents' multi-platform film-viewing practices are also considered. Finally, although contemporary Taiwanese audiences have more freedom to choose from a wide range of films which are easily accessible through multi-platforms, their film-viewing is still determined by the institutional

framework of local film industry and government film policy.

The research method used in this project can shed light on the different ways in which film audiences' multi-platform film-viewing may be approached. It also contributes to the field of film audience research by the attention that is paid to the viewing context where audiences consume film, instead of concentrating only on how the content is received. After detailed analysis of the current local film industry in Taiwan and multi-platform film-viewing practices, a greater understanding of how different generations of local audiences view films is possible. Likewise, the extent to which contemporary audiences' ways of visiting traditional cinemas or multiplexes has been influenced by the new technologies that have emerged will become clearer. This will contribute to the debate started by Docherty and colleagues (1987) in relation to VCR and cinema about whether domestic viewing platforms 'kill' cinema, or whether 'going to the cinema' and 'watching movies at home' can co-exist as parallel forms of entertainment, rather than as strict competitors. Finally, the assumption that different audience age groups engage in different film viewing practices and hold different attitudes towards the meanings and functions of how to view films through different platforms will gain further clarification.

However, I should make it clear that the analysis revealed here can not be generalised to give a universal picture of all Taiwanese audiences. It only represents the practices of the particular groups of respondents across different generations who volunteered to take part in this research. Furthermore, as the major objective of this thesis is to offer a more thorough picture of contemporary local audiences' multi-platform film-viewing practices in today's global and digital

environment, a detailed 'reception analysis' of specific films is not offered in this research. The concentration of the research is on the major film-viewing platforms of cinemas, DVDs, cable movie channels, and Internet downloading. Other film-viewing activities, such as in-flight movies on airplanes, mobile phones, or other portable media devices, are not included in the discussion.

1.2 How the Project Began and How It Changed as It Developed

When I first started this project in 2004, I was curious about why many critically-acclaimed Taiwanese movies have generated more interest abroad than domestically. Especially after the 1990s, only very few domestically-produced Taiwanese movies gave decent box office returns in Taiwan. Hollywood movies became the most popular cinema choices for Taiwanese audiences. As a result, the original research focus of the thesis was to investigate Taiwanese audiences' reception of Taiwanese films and other foreign films in order to find out why Taiwanese audiences are unlikely to go to the cinema to watch Taiwanese movies. However, after conducting the pilot survey during the summer of 2005 in Taipei, when I interviewed personnel from the local film industry and did research among ordinary Taipei audiences, I came to realise that the connection between Taiwanese movies and contemporary Taiwanese audiences might not be linked via movie theatres but via other viewing platforms, such as cable movie channels or Internet-downloading, and this realisation led my research in a different direction.

Until today, a lot of the literature concerning cinema and its national context

has focused mainly on the production of films, or on the political, economic, and social aspects of the film industry. In contrast, my research will focus on one of the most critical 'pre-conditions' that could significantly influence audiences' film-viewing activities by considering the viewing-platforms that contemporary Taiwanese audiences use to watch specific kinds of movies.

With the evolution of modern audiovisual technology, film audiences can nowadays enjoy the flexibility of watching movies through various film-viewing platforms from broadcast television networks, cable movie channels, VCRs, VCDs, DVDs and Internet downloading, to portable media players. The definition of 'film-viewing', then, is not limited to the activity of 'going to the cinema'. The domestic space has become an important venue for many film-viewing activities. Likewise, 'movie-watching' does not simply mean watching images from celluloid films projected on to a big white screen, but also by watching movies playing on cable television channels, digital VCD or DVD discs, and downloaded digital files on the small screens of television sets or computer monitors. However, the way in which audiences from different generations with different lifestyles and everyday routines engage in different multi-platform film-viewing practices, based on their varying expertise in and knowledge of using media technologies and the functions of film-viewing activities in their everyday lives, could be very different. Therefore, these critical issues are worthy of further interrogation, especially in today's digital media-rich environment.

Moreover, as the number of foreign films coming from various countries has increased and continuously affected and shaped Taiwanese film culture and the Taiwanese film industry over the years, the question of whether local audiences'

employment and appropriation of multi-platforms has facilitated this border-crossing flow of foreign films or has changed the way these transnational audiovisual artefacts are being perceived and consumed requires further examination.

In order to address these questions, the thesis will use Taiwanese film audiences of different generations from the capital city of Taipei as examples to demonstrate what film-viewing practices are preferred by different generations of contemporary film audiences, so as to understand better how both domestic and foreign films are consumed via various available media technologies in contemporary Taiwan. It will also offer detailed and analytical accounts of the sociocultural and economic meanings and significance of their film-viewing practices in their quotidian lives (both inside and outside the home) within the framework of broader political, economic, social and cultural conditions. Furthermore, how this transnationalised Taiwanese film industry can work, in conjunction with the local government's film policy, to influence Taiwanese audiences' multi-platform film-viewing practices will also be introduced as a topic.

1.3 Research Question

According to the brief rationale introduced above, the main research question is:

What does a multi-platform approach to studying film-viewing practices reveal about the sociocultural and economic significance of the film consumption of contemporary Taiwanese audiences, and how can such

research be conducted?

Scholars have observed the absence of research on audience consumption in film studies (Higson 1989; Turner 2002; and Jancovich *et al.* 2003). There exists even less research about the viewing context itself, or about the 'place' or 'venue' where audiences watch movies. For a long time, cinemas have been the primary venues for viewers to watch movies. The home started to become another important venue for movie-watching only after the popularity of VCRs in the 1980s. Docherty, Morrison, and Tracey (1987) undertook a large scale survey employing both statistical analysis and qualitative approaches in order to examine the attitudes towards cinema-going and watching movies via VCR at home at the time in the UK. They argue that their research has demonstrated that 'video did not poach the cinema audience. It proves that cinema and video are parallel entertainments, not strict competitors.' (ibid, 2)

Twenty years after Docherty and his colleagues' research, there has been no further research based on accounts of actual audiences that could tell us whether the argument of Docherty and his colleagues remains true after the coming of cable movie channels, DVDs, and the Internet. One of the rare pieces of research that has focused on movie-related activities, including how movies are viewed on cable channel, DVD and the Internet, is Barbara Klinger's study of the reception of films via new technologies in the household in the USA (2006). She targets specific aspects of film-viewing practices, such as home theatre, film collecting after the introduction of the VCR, the viewing and recording of classic Hollywood movies on cable channels and later through repeat viewings of movies via DVDs, and the sharing of short films made by fans themselves on the internet. Although Klinger

studies specific activities in today's digital-rich environment, she only uses a very limited group of university students as research respondents. Her research therefore does not allow us to gain any understanding of how other groups, such as full-time employees or parents, use these new technologies. It does not make any comparison with film-viewing in cinemas and home theatres so as to test the argument of Docherty and colleagues and what the relationship is between cinemas and domestic viewing platforms in this digital era. Furthermore, there are some other perspectives of film audiences' engagement with movies via new technologies, such as the sharing of copied DVDs or movie files and movie-downloading that are also worthy of further examination.

This research project, in contrast, will consider viewing activities through various viewing platforms, including public venues, such as multiplexes, local art cinemas, second-run cinemas, and also private places, such as the living room or the bedroom, via platforms such as cinema screens, network broadcasting, cable movie channels, DVD rentals, pirate DVDs, and Internet downloading. Klinger argues that watching movies at different venues or on different platforms can change audience consumption patterns and influence how audiences respond to films: 'If the same film were to be shown at an art house and a drive-in theater, the patterns of consumption already associated with each would influence the audience's viewing attitudes and behaviors' (1998, 16). Following on from this perception, the current thesis endeavours to articulate better the relationships that are taking place between audience, film, and the associated viewing platforms with the objective of discovering the sociocultural and economic significance of multi-platform film-viewing practices. The aim is not only to bridge the twenty

years' gap in research between Docherty and his colleagues' survey of cinema-going and watching video movies and Klinger's research of film-viewing via new technologies, but also to further develop their arguments to explain better contemporary audiences' film-viewing.

Baker, Arthurs and Harindranath have also addressed the issue of how audiences respond to films. In their research, they adopted the term, 'viewing strategies', to gain a broader understanding of the elements involved in the actual viewing processes that film audiences employ as an alternative to employing the strictly defined terms of 'interpreting strategies' generated from Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model (1980). In their own words,

...the concept of a viewing strategy is designed to capture the ways in which the following elements of film viewing are interlinked: people's prior knowledge, and expectations, of a film; their ways of attending to circulating information, images, and issues around the film, both from publicity regimes and from other competing accounts (for instance, fan, or sensationalist, or censorious); their choice of manner of seeing the film (what cinema; with whom; with what kind of preparation); their ways of attending to the film (accentuating parts, ignoring others, producing a specific kind of narrative account, *et cetera*); their immediate responses (sensuous, emotional, cognitive, *et cetera*); and subsequent work on those responses to turn them into an account of meanings to self and the world (2001, 158-159).

Barker, Arthurs, and Harindranath concentrate on how the audience perceives, interprets and thus generates meaning by what occurs before, during, and after watching a specific film, but they do not consider how this is affected by the choice of viewing platform.

In this thesis, the term, 'film-viewing practices' will be adopted to refer to a

broader idea of film-viewing activities via multi-platforms. Compared with the more abstract and theoretical term of 'film consumption', 'film-viewing practices' concentrates more on practical film-viewing activities which result not only from cinematic or technological preferences but are also due to social and cultural aspect of the peoples' quotidian routines, whether outside or inside their homes.

1.4 Methodology

The research studies multi-platform film-viewing both on the macro political, economic, social, and cultural level of institutional conditions such as effects of the film industry, media coverage and government involvement, and also at the micro-level of interactions between individual viewing practices, the effects of film texts, and the appropriation of media technologies. This complexity makes it inappropriate to apply only one methodology or research method. Thus this project adopts a multi-dimensional approach structured by a model with three dimensions: the first covers the distinction for the viewer between traditional venues like public cinemas, via screen and projector, versus alternative venues in the private space of home via recently emerged audiovisual technology; the second is structured between the macro infrastructure of the local film industry and the government, and the micro consumption processes of local film audiences; and the third explores the effects of film texts and the ability of audiences to appropriate these texts.

How can the multi-platform approach outlined above be conducted? It is another important objective of this project to propose an appropriate research design to answer this question. In view of the lack of research on contemporary

film audiences' multi-platform film-viewing, especially when it takes place at home, the existing research on domestic television-viewing becomes an important reference which needs to be considered for help in establishing a proper research approach. James Lull (1980) employs an ethnographic approach, using methods of participant observation and in-depth interviews to study the social use of television in domestic familial setting, instead of the more usual method of looking at reception or of relying on the 'coding/decoding' model (Hall 1980) in order to understand specific television texts. He concludes that 'social uses of television in the home are of two primary types: structural and relational' (Lull 1990, 35). By 'structural' he means the way viewers use television as an environment source and as a behavioural regulator. By 'relational' he means the way television facilitates communication, affiliation/avoidance, social learning, and competence/dominance (ibid, 35-44). Lull's categories of television use offer a reference point from which to analyse the social meanings of how domestic film-viewing platforms are adopted. David Morley investigates 'television viewing in a small number of families from different social backgrounds' (1986, 11). Morley employs in-depth interviews with families instead of individual respondents to examine 'the process of television viewing (the activity itself) over the understanding of particular responses to particular types of programme material' (ibid, 41). Morley's survey points to a new direction of media audience research that leads from analysing media content to the viewing context, especially when it occurs inside the family, which also functions as an important index for how to study domestic film-viewing practices in general.

Because the major goal of this project is to analyse audiences' own accounts of multi-platform film-viewing and its significance, a qualitative rather than

quantitative audience research method which combines multiple data-collecting processes, including questionnaires, in-depth interviews and diaries in which respondents recorded their own consumption of films, was employed as the main research method of this project. Furthermore, based on the results of the pilot survey, age seemed to be the most decisive factor influencing film-viewing and so the project concentrated on the extent to which age and life style influence everyday film-viewing practices rather than other demographic factors. Therefore data was collected from respondents from different age cohorts to represent different generations of Taiwanese audiences. To sum up, this multi-dimensional approach employs empirical qualitative audience research along with analysis of the contemporary Taiwanese film industry and the government's film policy to explore the sociocultural and economic meanings behind multi-platform film-viewing practices in the context of transnationalisation.

1.5 Thesis Structure and Chapter Outline

This thesis comprises two main parts. The first is a comprehensive study of associated theoretical concepts, existing literature, approaches to the study of film audiences, an analysis of the current Taiwanese film industry and a detailed introduction of the methodology and rationale of the empirical research design employed in this research. This set of chapters will function as the framework of this thesis for the second part. The second part consists of analysis of data collected from the respondents, who were recruited to recount their multi-platform film-viewing practices. The five chapters in the second part offer a detailed examination and analysis of the meanings and significance of this data.

This introductory chapter serves as an outline of the research, offering general and basic background information about the project. The main research question, methodologies, major arguments and contributions of this thesis are addressed; what will be, and will not be achieved at the completion of the thesis is outlined and the structure of the thesis is set out along with a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapter Two offers essential information about Taiwanese cinema culture and the current status of the Taiwanese film industry. Given Hollywood dominance in the Taiwanese film market, it is argued that Taiwanese film audiences' consumption of, and impressions of foreign movies and Chinese-language movies can be partially explained by concepts of 'cultural discount' and 'cultural proximity'. The film policy of the Taiwan government and of the local film industry is examined to determine how it might limit and control the access of Taiwanese audiences to both foreign and locally-made movies. Institutional factors of local government and the film industry are also considered for the extent to which they influence multi-platform film-viewing practices. (Empirical proof to support the arguments proposed in this chapter will be given in the second part of the thesis).

Chapter Three examines the existing literature on the study of film audiences, especially with respect to 'film-viewing'. By comparing the pros and cons of different approaches, I argue that an appropriate approach to the study of multi-platform film-viewing should be able to articulate the triangular relationship between audience, film text, and viewing platform, rather than considering the single dimension of the 'audience-text' or the 'audience-viewing platform'

relationships. Moreover, this approach also needs to consider the demographics of the audience, the audiovisual technology, the relation between film and text, and institutional factors to facilitate a more thorough discussion.

The theoretical formulations are put into practice in this methodological chapter, in which a particular model consisting of the interactions between film text, viewing platform, and film-viewing practices will be constructed to provide a basis for the analysis of the multi-dimensionality of contemporary multi-platform film-viewing practices that will be developed in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five analyses the film-viewing practices of a group of teenagers. It argues that how parents set up rules to control their children's use of media technologies and how they 'gate-keep' or 'censor' the movie content that their children consume becomes the most critical factor in influencing the way this group watches films. Their film-viewing practices in consequence are significantly regulated and limited. Cinema-going thus becomes a way to escape parental control and to find time to hang out with peers, while watching movies at home remains a familial activity rather than a form of solitary entertainment. The social meaning of the teenagers' attitude towards Hollywood entertainment is given clearer explanation, as a contribution to better understanding of the complicated 'audience-film-viewing platform' relationship.

Chapter Six consists of analysis of the everyday film-viewing of a group of university students. It shows that among the five groups investigated, this group has more free time to watch films as well as the capability to use all kinds of film-viewing platforms. However, their actual film consumption practices and the movies they watch and talk about are still conditioned by the dominant global

cinema culture, the structure of the local film industry and their current lifestyle as university students. The data shows that watching Hollywood blockbusters at first-run cinemas is seen by this group as a social event, while visiting second-run cinemas is a popular alternative to renting DVDs for these students when they want a more solitary personal entertainment. As for film-downloading, I argue that the peer identification that is obtained through sharing movies is more meaningful than the activity of viewing movie files. Downloading not only offers free access to movies, but it also functions as a social practice for interaction with other people. In addition, cable movies have the advantage of being almost free of charge and offering repeated shows of features. This enables the students to develop a 'non-linear' and 'cut-and paste' viewing strategy which enhances their enjoyment of cable movies, something which is not adopted by most respondents in the other groups. These young audiences also appear to have a greater interest in watching recent Taiwanese movies than respondents of older age groups.

The responses of a group of people in full time employment are discussed in Chapter Seven. Among the five groups studied, these respondents had been through a change of lifestyle and quotidian routines since their departure from school, and their 'film-viewing' practices have been adapted according to their changed everyday routines. With limited time for leisure activities and often suffering from a lack of energy after work, their film-viewing is dependent on whether they have the mood to watch movies whose length and narrative may be too demanding. Therefore, cable movies and television programmes watched at random or movies they have seen before are their more common film-viewing activity. Cinema-going is treated as a weekend or holiday-only activity which takes place in company with close friends or family. However, watching movies alone at

an art house or second-run cinema is not uncommon for some cinephiles in this group. However, the viewing of DVDs at home seems to have become the most popular film-viewing practice, although I argue that the collecting DVDs for this group is done more as a social activity by which people share their DVDs with others than, as other researches such as Barbara Klinger (2006) claim, for the purpose of repeat viewings of the films.

Chapter Eight looks at the film-viewing activities of a group of parents. When children are born into a family, this changes the film-viewing practices of the parents. In this chapter it will be seen how the parents in this group constantly have to adjust their film viewing practices in order to suit their children's changing needs at different life stages. The selection of films and the venues in which they watch has to take into account their children's daily schedule and education. As a result, 'film-viewing' mainly becomes a family event, not a solitary entertainment. Parents, who would not otherwise enjoy watching family movies, children films, or animation, also start to watch these films with their children. For example, multiplexes have been used as a 'one-stop' site to enable parents and their elementary school children to combine multi-activities. DVD-viewing, on the other hand, is a more straightforward way to enjoy movies with the family. Movies that have previously been seen are watched randomly and aimlessly on cable by some parents as a way to relax after finishing all the work and household tasks, without the presence of their children. Finally, these parents' lack of interest or expertise in downloading movies means that the Internet is not a usual film-viewing platform for them.

In Chapter Nine, the film-viewing practices of mature respondents over 50

years of age are examined. These mature respondents are as active and independent as younger respondents in going to the cinema to watch movies they enjoy without having to be accompanied by their children. However, this group is satisfied with film-viewing via ‘traditional’ platforms of cinemas and cable channels, rather than other digital platforms such as DVDs or the Internet, the main reasons being that they are not as familiar as their children with the use of those digital equipments. Most importantly, they do not usually feel the need to watch many newly-released popular movies, as many younger respondents do.

In the concluding chapter, all the issues raised in the previous chapters and the overall contributions and significance of this research will be discussed and I will consider how the research could be developed in the future and how it suggests other possible directions worthy of further study.

1.6 A Note on Romanisation and Translation

Before moving on to the next chapter, it is necessary to say a few words about the translation of Chinese movie titles, the names of people and companies’ names and terms. There is no standard way to Romanise Chinese characters. Even though the Pinyin Romanisation system is a world standard, some people and local councils in Taiwan still follow the Wade-Giles Romanisation system. To avoid confusion, this study will observe the following rules in Romanising and translating Chinese characters and names.

1. For non-English movie titles, the international English title translation will be used, if there is one. For those that do not have an official international English

title, the *pinyin* system will be adopted to romanise their titles, along with English translated titles in order to give the literal meanings of the titles. The Chinese titles of non-English movies used in Taiwan when they are distributed will be added in parentheses in the filmography section of the appendix.

2. For English movies, their Chinese titles as used in Taiwan during distribution will be added in parentheses in the filmography section.
3. All movie titles mentioned in this thesis will be introduced in the filmography section of appendix with information, such as the international English title, the Chinese title used in Taiwan, the director, country of production, and year of production in this order.
4. For film industry personnel and scholars in Taiwan, their familiar English names will be used, if available. If not, the *pinyin* system will be adopted to romanise their names. All the Romanised name orders will follow the same order as used in Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong. That is, the family name comes first.
5. For books, articles, texts and other bibliographical items, pinyin Romanisation will be used.
6. An English-Chinese filmography and glossary will be provided in the appendix at the end of the thesis for further clarification and reference.
7. Finally, quotations taken from Chinese-language references, transcriptions of interviews with respondents and their film consumption dairies are all translated from Chinese into English by the author.

Chapter Two

Contemporary Taiwanese Cinema Culture in the Context of Transnationalisation: From Local to Global/From Production to Consumption

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the problematic theory of media imperialism is reviewed to examine its applicability to the analysis of Hollywood dominance in the Taiwanese film market and the way that local film audiences consume films of different origins. It is argued that the simplifications of the media imperialism theory fail to explain every aspect of Taiwanese audiences' consumption of movies, whether foreign or Taiwanese. The concepts of 'cultural discount' and 'cultural proximity' should also be adopted to explain part of the reasons for Hollywood dominance in Taiwan on the one hand and the consumption by local audiences of Chinese-language movies on the other hand. Furthermore, the Taiwanese film industry and government film policy are discussed to examine their influence on Taiwanese audiences' selection of, and access to, movies. Over the years the range of foreign movies from various countries has broadened and the themes that Taiwanese movies have tackled have also been getting broader and broader, because government film policy has gradually loosened and local filmmakers are aiming to win back local audiences. Finally, thanks to the coming of new media technologies and innovative multi-platforms, audiences have freedom to choose

movies from a much wider selection without their access being controlled and limited by the local film industry and the government.

For Miller and his colleagues Hollywood's power is demonstrated by the form of globalisation:

The source of Hollywood's power extends far beyond the history of cinema, to the cultural-communications complex that has been an integral component of capitalist exchange since the end of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the twentieth century, Third World activists, artists, writers, and critical political economists nominated that complex as cultural imperialism. By the late twentieth century, it became fashionable to think of this power in terms of globalisation (Miller, Govil, McMurria and, Maxell 2001, 18).

In the world of cinema, Hollywood has been the greatest power in terms of economy and culture in globalisation, and has dominated the international film market for decades and most especially Taiwan's film market after the 1990s. For example in 1994, American films grossed 85.3% of total Taipei box office receipts, while Hong Kong films were ranked second with only 9.6%. All other foreign films shared only 3.1% of the total box office (for example, France: 0.9%; Japan: 0.7%; UK: 0.6%). Sadly, local films completed the rest with only 2.0% (Lu 1998, Figure 22f). Hollywood's dominance in Taiwan continued for a decade. In 2006 it had 82.8% gross of the box office, followed by Hong Kong with 6.2%, Japan with 5.5%, UK with 1.0%, France with 0.9%, China with 0.4% and Korea with only 0.3%. As for Taiwanese films, their share of the box office in 2006 was even lower than in 1994 with only 1.6% (Wang 2007).¹ If we compare the market share data in 2006 with the data from 1994, we can clearly see that Hollywood's market share

¹ This figure of film market share in Taipei in 2006 was recalculated by the research from the original data offered by Wang's article. (2007)

did not change dramatically; it remained at over 80% both in 1994 and 2006. At the same time, the overall market share for Chinese-language films including those from Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan suffered a significant loss from 11.7% to 8.2%, with films from other countries enjoying a boost from 3.1% to 9.0%. In addition, the number of non-American films and non-Chinese-language films shown at the cinema increased from 24 in 1994 to 141 in 2006 (Lu 1998, Figure 22f and Wang 2007). However, the variety and the increased number of these non-American films did not shake the dominant status of Hollywood products in Taiwan. Instead, these non-American films, and Japanese and Korean films in particular, compressed the screen time for Chinese-language films in the market.

The overwhelming popularity of American movies in Taiwan conforms to Andrew Higson's observation that, 'Hollywood has become one of those cultural traditions which feed into the so-called national cinemas of the western European nations' (1989, 39). Thomas Elsaesser makes a similar comment. 'Hollywood can hardly be conceived...as totally other, since so much of any nation's film culture is implicitly Hollywood' (1987, 166; quoted in Crofts 1993, 26). With this kind of absolute dominance, questions are posed about how and to what degree has Hollywood cinema culture influenced Taiwanese local cinema culture in terms of the development of the film industry and the way Taiwanese audiences consume films. This goes beyond production or aesthetics. As a matter of fact, very few international art films have gained popular national success, as is also the case for Taiwanese New Cinema, due to 'their modes of address and the international hegemony of Hollywood at the level of distribution, exhibition and marketing' (Higson 1989, 41). As a result, before further analysis of Taiwanese audiences' multi-platform film-viewing practices, it is necessary to focus on distribution and

exhibition within the domestic market to examine how inflows of foreign movies, and Hollywood movies in particular, have affected the Taiwanese film industry and Taiwanese audiences' consumption of foreign and domestic films. I argue that contemporary Taiwanese cinema culture is the platform where cinema culture from Hollywood (America), China, Hong-Kong, Japan, Korea and other places meets, interacts, and impacts on Taiwan. Therefore, the transnational influence of Hollywood movies on both local film industry and audiences' film consumption must be discussed.

Although detailed interrogation of Hollywood's impact on Taiwanese audiences' film-viewing activities will not be offered until analysis of the empirical data from Chapter Five to Chapter Nine has been examined, the current status of the Taiwanese film industry in the transnational context will be considered. Nevertheless, this chapter functions as an introduction of the contemporary Taiwanese film industry and its cinema culture so as to provide basic information about the institutional factors, that need to be considered when designing an appropriate research method to study contemporary Taiwanese audiences' film-viewing practices. In addition, the access of audiences to and their impressions of films of different origins, as well as their choices of movies to watch, could be shaped by institutional factors, especially by the policies of the Taiwanese film industry and the government. This chapter therefore explains the kind of framework and limitations set up by the local film industry and local government and the influence of global cinema culture, within which local audiences can conduct their everyday film-viewing practices.

Taiwanese audiences' impressions of films from Hollywood, other regional

places, such as Japan, Korea, China, and Hong Kong, and Taiwan itself, will first be introduced in order to offer discussion of how inflows of foreign films in Taiwan have an impact on audiences' film consumption.

2.2 Applicability of the Media Imperialism Approach to the Study of Taiwanese Cinema Culture

With constant exposure to the Hollywood style of visual text, including American TV dramas, many scholars started to question whether viewers from other countries, especially non-Western or Third World countries, are influenced by the visual experience as well as the Western ideologies that underlie those American audiovisual products. Are indigenous cultures endangered by the hegemony of Western ideologies behind this one-way flow of culture and media content throughout the process of globalisation? Boyd-Barrett (1977), Tunstall (1977), and Lee (1979) have all considered this question. The cultural imperialism thesis, as Tunstall puts it, 'claims that authentic, traditional and local culture in many parts of the world is being battered out of existence by the indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial and media products, mainly from the United States' (1977, 57).

The media imperialism approach has been advanced with empirical evidence by Nordenstreng and Varis as long ago as 1974 (Chadha and Kavoori, 2000, 415). However, it has also been criticised for several limitations such as oversimplification, ignorance of regional media flows, and putting too much emphasis on direct media effects, without considering their negotiation by local

audiences.

The discourse of cultural imperialism tended to set the scene for the initial reception of globalization, casting the process as 'an aspect of the hierarchical nature of imperialism,' that is the increasing hegemony of particular central cultures, the diffusion of American values, consumer goods and lifestyle.' (Jonathan Friedman 1994, quoted in Tomlinson 1997, 174)

The essence of the media imperialism theory is the hegemony of Western culture, especially American culture, over other indigenous cultures by delivering American values and ideologies to other countries or places through exporting its media products, and audiovisual artefacts. Nonetheless, the applicability and acceptability of the media imperialism theory is debatable. In Biltereyst's terms, two approaches to the media imperialism theory can be categorised as 'dependency' and 'free-flow' paradigms respectively. The dependency paradigm, based on neo-Marxist points of view and the theory and practice of political economy, treats the dominance of Western cultural products/media texts as a new version of imperialism or colonisation by which capitalist ideologies are disseminated. The free-flow paradigm suggests that the uneven cultural/media flow is the result of free market laws and the natures of different local markets (1995, 247-253).

However, over the years, both approaches to media imperialism theory have been criticised. Firstly, they oversimplify by picking up the argument of the political and economic relation of power between dominant and dependant countries without considering the social, economic, and cultural differences within the particular dependant countries. As Straubhaar says, 'in seeing the major industrialized countries as dominant and Third World countries as dependent, these

theories have missed much of the complexity of change in industries, genres and audience reception in the Third World or periphery' (1997, 284). Straubhaar's claim indicates another shortcoming in the media imperialism theory—it neglects the selective, interpretive and negotiating ability of the audience. The dependency paradigm relies on the hypodermic model of media effects by assuming a passive audience. On the other hand, the free-flow paradigm tends to presume that 'free market structures will produce products, satisfying viewers' demands' (Biltereyst 1995, 250). However, with the emergence of audience research theories, as well as evidence from different empirical research that employs reception analysis to support the argument of audiences' interpretive abilities (for example: Morley 1980; Ang 1985; Liebes and Katz 1990), the validity of cultural dominance described in the media imperialism theory is problematic. As James Lull argues, 'although popular culture forms such as TV shows, movies, and pop music clearly express particular cultural values, these popular forms and values are never simply received, digested, and acted upon in any uniform way by their global audiences.' (2000, 230) Although audiences are thought to have the ability to consume media texts with their own different interpretations, it is also an oversimplification to ignore 'media power', especially when discussing the absolute dominance of Hollywood movies in Taiwan in relation to the political dependency of Taiwan on the US. That is why David Morley claims that

The question is how we balance these two perspectives and how we discriminate between empirical situations where one or the other is more applicable, without presuming that either tells the whole truth, for all places and all time. (2006, 40)

What is more, other scholars criticise the one-way focus of media imperialism theory, concentrating on the uneven nature of international media flows from

developed countries to developing countries or from the centre to the periphery. They argue it fails to identify many other intra-regional media flows that are occurring in different corners of the world. As Appadurai observes, 'the United States is no longer the puppeteer of a world system of images but is only one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes' (Appadurai 1996, quoted in Sparks 2005, 21). As a media industry has developed in some non-Western countries, they have begun to generate the ability to export their own audiovisual products to adjacent countries with similar cultural backgrounds, as in the cases of the popularity of Hong Kong movies in Taiwan after the 1980s and the increased number of Japanese and Korean movies in Taiwan after the late 1990s. The media imperialism approach does not seem able to explain all of the issues of this regional phenomenon.

2.3 The Applicability of 'Cultural Discount' and 'Cultural Proximity' to Studying Taiwanese Audiences' Film Consumption

Once upon a time it was a small gathering of people around a fire listening to the storyteller with his tales of magic and fantasy. And now it's the whole world...It's not 'domination' by American cinema. It's just the magic of storytelling, and it unites the world (Steven Spielberg 1993, quoted in Branston 2000, 61).

Spielberg's quotation emphasises Hollywood's tradition of well-structured narrative principles and its characteristic of mastering the art of pleasure. Many audiences indeed get enjoyment and entertainment from watching Hollywood movies. Due to the fact that they are constantly consuming Hollywood audiovisual

products, film audiences might understand the Hollywood mainstream context, narrative approaches, and aesthetic styles better than they do their own locally produced cultural products. In the case of Taiwan, as Guo concludes, 'the major reasons that Taiwanese audiences go to the cinema are for entertainment and relaxation.' (1999, 261) Guo's conclusion can possibly explain why entertainment-oriented Hollywood films have a 90% gross of Taiwan's box office. For the past few decades, Hollywood films have been consumed by Taiwanese people, generation after generation. Consequently, it is difficult not to be curious about the predictions and assumptions made by the media imperialism theory.

By breaking away from traditional, class-based notions of 'good taste', these (American) products did make genuine connections with the actual tastes and desires of large members of working-class people. For those consumers, these products represented positive symbols of a massive improvement in the material quality of their lives. For them 'America' was a very positive symbol functioning largely by opposition to what they perceived as the dead hand of traditional English culture, as defined by the cultural elite (Morley 1992, 77-78).

Morley suggests the popularity of American culture as a positive symbol of modernity among ordinary working-class people in Britain, but also indicates concern among local elites about the effects of cultural imperialism. Many scholars agree with the claim that, 'Hollywood is no longer out there, beyond their national borders, but is instead very much a component of their own national cinema' (Rockett 1994; Magder 1993, quoted in Moran 1996, 7). In order to explain this global phenomenon of Hollywood popularity, the concept of 'cultural discount' might serve as an alternative to media imperialism to explain the domination of Hollywood movies in the international market.

A particular programme rooted in one culture, and thus attractive in that environment, will have a diminished appeal elsewhere as viewers find it difficult to identify with the style, values, beliefs, institutions and behavioral patterns of the material in question. As a result of the diminished appeal, fewer viewers will watch a foreign programme than a domestic programme of the same type and quality (Hoskins & Mirus 1988, 500).

Hoskins and Mirus argue that American TV programmes have a lower 'cultural discount' than their competitors in the international television market. Given the structural advantage of drawing the largest domestic market and the widest diversity of domestic audiences, American television programme producers tend to produce programmes with high entertainment value, like dramas or soap operas, that can appeal to as wide an audience as possible so as to sell space to advertisers and increase revenue. With similar advantages as the American TV industry, Hollywood movies are potentially able to minimise the 'cultural discount' and be accepted by varied audiences from different countries with different backgrounds worldwide, if we follow Hoskins and Mirus's argument. However, by applying this 'cultural discount' approach to explain the global success of Hollywood audiovisual products, it seems to presume the worldwide popularity of Hollywood products without considering the reality that many audiences from other countries would rather tune in to programmes or watch movies that are produced locally with an indigenous flavour. As Morley and Robins state,

US imports only do well when domestic television is not producing comparable entertainment programming—and whenever viewers have the alternative of comparable entertainment programming in their own language, the American programmes tend to come off second best (1989, 28).

As a matter of fact, audience ratings from several surveys also prove that 'in many European and other countries US fiction loses when competing directly with

comparable domestic productions' (Silj 1988; Tracey 1985, quoted in Biltreyst 1991, 476).

As a result of his research into the preference of Brazilian and Dominican audiences for television programmes originating in the US, regional Latin America, other international countries, and their own nation, Straubhaar also argues that, with the prosperity of national and regional cultural industries in Latin America, viewers are seeking programmes with 'greater cultural relevance and proximity'. That is to say, if local viewers can find national or regional audiovisual products that are suitable for their tastes and preference, these products can have great opportunities to compete with American products in the local market:

A preference first for national material and, when that cannot be filled in certain genres, a tendency to look next to regional Latin American productions, which are relatively more culturally proximate or similar than those of the United States. (1991, 56)

The concept of 'cultural proximity' could also be applied to explicate the success of Taiwanese-made comedy movies in the 1980s. This notion of 'cultural proximity'—described by Iwabuchi as 'a sense of living in the shared time and common experience of a certain (post)modernity which cannot be represented well by American culture' (2001, 56)—were originally applied to discuss the transnational phenomenon of TV programmes that are internationally successful. However, they can also be applied to explain some of the reasons behind the overwhelming popularity of locally-made comedy films from the Taiwanese comedian, Hsu Pu-Liao, in the 1980s.

Hsu Pu-Liao was trained as a clown/magician at a small local circus from

childhood. He was first featured on the big screen as a private in the first ever Taiwanese military training comedy, *Off to Success*, in 1979. He became the number one hotshot in the local film market after playing the lead role in the box office sensation, *The Clown*, in 1980. This low-budget slapstick comedy was director Chu Yen-Ping's first directorial work, which also started Hsu Pu-Liao's partnership with Chu Yen-Ping until Hsu's tragic death in 1985. Hsu mixed his skills learned from the circus into his acting which involved vivid facial expressions and funny bodily gestures. He always played ordinary people from the lower classes with a warm and kind heart.² 'Hsu Pu-Liao's performing style is a combination of Charles Chaplin's performance style imbued with a Taiwanese local background, which appealed to, and was recognised by Taiwanese local audiences in the 1980s.'³ From 1979 to 1985, he featured in almost 60 movies, which made this period of time the most popular years for locally produced slapstick comedies. Ye argues that 'Hsu Pu-Liao's comedies were the only box office guarantee competing against Hong Kong movies before 1985' (1999, 56).

Nonetheless, 'cultural proximity' is still a problematic notion, because it is constituted within an essentialist framework and assumes that an audience will accept all kinds of programmes or movies from their own local media industries or adjacent countries with similar cultural backgrounds. Similar to the concepts of 'media imperialism' and 'cultural discount', what these ideas fail to discuss is how

² The detailed discussion of Hsu Pu-Liao can be found from the following websites: <http://media.hcccb.gov.tw/otherweb/9405shi/01.htm> (accessed November 02, 2007), <http://media.hcccb.gov.tw/otherweb/9405shi/02.htm> (accessed November 02, 2007), and *Taiwan Cinema Note* website: <http://movie.cca.gov.tw/People/Content.asp?ID=222> (accessed November 02, 2007).

³ Quote from *Taiwan Cinema Note* website: <http://movie.cca.gov.tw/People/Content.asp?ID=222> (accessed November 02, 2007).

audiences consume different types of movies and what movies are affected by the 'cultural proximity' factor, when viewed by audiences. This idea of 'cultural proximity' does not take institutional differences within each country into account, such as the involvement of government in national media industries, the scale of media industries, the size of domestic markets, and the historic relationship between media-exporting and media-importing countries, or whether the colonising-colonised relationship is involved. As Iwabuchi's critiques of 'cultural proximity' show:

Its analysis tends to be based upon the assumption that the existence of some essential cultural similarities automatically urges the audience to be attracted to media texts of culturally proximate regions without considering historical contexts or internal differences within cultural formation. (2001, 57)

For example, this notion of 'cultural proximity' cannot explain the fact that many Chinese movies fail in Taiwan.⁴ As Chan notes, 'it is oversimplified to assume too much cultural similarity between China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In fact, each has developed a variation of Chinese culture that has its own distinct characteristics' (1995, 150). Given the cultural distance in ideologies and values after over fifty years of separation between China and Taiwan, and also the fact that there was a ban on importing movies made in China before 1990, Taiwanese audiences might not be familiar with the culture and the society of China under the Communist regime that is depicted in Chinese movies. Even though Chinese people and Taiwanese people share the same traditional culture and language, to many Taiwanese moviegoers, the 'cultural discount' of Chinese movies could be higher than it is for Japanese or Korean movies. However, in order to determine whether

⁴ Chinese movies here refer to movies with an origin of the People's Republic of China.

this assumption is true, further research is required into how Taiwanese audiences respond to Chinese movies.

So far, it seems that all of the theories or concepts we have discussed have their own defects. Yet this does not mean that these theories are totally redundant and should not be incorporated into discussions about film consumption in contemporary Taiwan. Hence, before trying to apply concepts like ‘media imperialism’, ‘cultural discount’, and ‘cultural proximity’ to Taiwanese cinema culture it is necessary to first highlight the historical contexts, internal differences and current challenges that exist within the Taiwan film industry.

2.4 Government Film Policy and its Impact on Taiwanese Audiences’ Access to Movies

In 2006, the number of foreign movies exhibited in Taiwan was 297 (including movies from Hong Kong and China), while only 17 Taiwanese movies were exhibited (Wang 2007, 234 and 246). Without a doubt these figures show that contemporary Taiwanese audiences can access foreign movies more easily than Taiwanese movies. I argue that one of the most critical institutional factors behind this phenomenon is the Taiwanese government’s film policy. This has had a significant impact on the development of the Taiwanese film industry, the themes that Taiwanese film makers can tackle and the access that viewers have to movies. Government involvement in the film industry can be seen through the control of the themes of locally-produced films and which foreign movies it permits to be imported. Therefore, especially before the emergence of new film-viewing

platforms and the lifting of martial law in the late 1980s, the government was able to decide both which locally produced Taiwanese movies and which imported movies were available to audiences.

Taiwanese Government Involvement in Local Film Production

From the 1950s to the 1970s, and especially before the coming of television, many Taiwanese films were produced by government-owned studios. This enabled the KMT government to propagandise its own ideology, such as its imaginary goal of 'the recovery of the mainland', and laying claim to the Chinese heritage and consciousness in order to achieve its political objectives. Among these studios, the most famous was CMPC (Central Motion Picture Corporation).

CMPC was established in 1954, funded by the ruling party – KMT (Kuomintang) (Lu 1998, 64). The major task of CMPC was to function as a propaganda machine for the KMT government, in order to promote anti-Communism and an ideology of Chineseness during the time when martial law was enforced in Taiwan from 1945 to 1987 (Lu 1998, 69-72). The direction of Taiwanese film production after World War Two was both deliberately and unintentionally under the guidance of the CMPC, for instance, from the 'healthy realism' movies in the 1960s, the propaganda war movies in the 1970s, and 'New Taiwanese Cinema' movies in the 1980s, to the 'film festival'-oriented art house movies in the 1990s.

After the success of Hou Hsiao-Hsien and Edward Yang at international film festivals and also in international art house movie circles after the late 1980s, with

the first ever Taiwanese-born president, Lee Tenghui, the KMT government saw Taiwanese cinema as a successful vehicle for marketing the national specificity and the uniqueness of Taiwanese high culture, and as an efficient tool to promote 'Taiwan' internationally. Therefore, the government set up the Domestic Film Guidance Fund mechanism to encourage filmmakers to make films good enough to win international awards in 1989 (Chang 2003). Moreover, Taiwanese films are usually sold internationally under auteur brands, such as Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Edward Yang, Tsai Ming-Liang or Ang Lee. Thus, many young directors shifted their emphasis from domestic to international audiences to be eligible for government and foreign funding. This art house approach certainly helped Taiwanese cinema to become an important part of world cinema and a strong force in the international film festival circuit, giving Taiwanese people a much-needed pride worldwide (Chang 2002, 21-28). However, this tendency has forced Taiwanese films to become even more disconnected from local audiences, because for many Taiwanese moviegoers, the label of Taiwanese cinema gives local audiences the impression that the film in question will not be very entertaining and will be similar to European art house cinema.⁵ They have no desire to enter cinemas and watch what they consider to be tedious and bourgeois Taiwanese films. As Yeh claims, 'Taiwan independent producers aimed for international exposure and prizes, while Taiwan audiences were served by Hollywood imports, happily distributed by local companies with no particular interest in maintaining indigenous production' (2006, 165).

Without sufficient financial support from the local box office and with the

⁵ This phenomenon will be given further analysis, based on respondents' own accounts in later chapters.

closure of CMPC's film production section after it was privatised in 2006, government funds have become the major budget source for Taiwanese filmmakers. However, even with government grants, it is still almost impossible for these filmmakers to make ends meet (Xie 2004, 66-70). Based on past experience, the Taipei box office accounts for half of the theatrical revenue a film will recover in Taiwan. After the local theatrical exhibitors take a 50% cut, the theatrical revenue of a movie shown in Taiwan equals its box office gross in Taipei. As a result, filmmakers desperately need revenues from DVD releases, showing on cable or other available exhibition windows, as well as international copyrights. That is why Li argues that 'for making Taiwanese movies with cost over 10 million NTDs, without a miracle; they are destined to lose money by the time their productions start.' (2007, 58) This high risk environment has made it very difficult for independent filmmakers to secure funding from local investors, which leads to the scaling down of their films and their production budgets and constraint of their creativity. These tightly-budgeted Taiwanese movies find it difficult to compete with Hollywood blockbusters in the local market. In the end, this becomes a vicious circle in which Taiwanese film production is weakened.

This situation also explains why Taiwanese films are not diversified in terms of genres, because some genres of movies require higher budgets, and why so many Taiwanese filmmakers concentrate on making relatively low-budget art house movies. This tendency has been even more entrenched since the 1990s, when governmental subsidy became the main resource for local film enterprises, further weakening the overall investment environment (Lan 2002). Filmmakers and producers were over-reliant on the subsidy and so did not attempt to secure other financial support.

Most recently, the GIO's selection criteria for its subsidy system have been adjusted to offer more grants to support local film projects with higher ambitions, bigger budgets, diversified themes and greater box office potential. GIO hopes that its grants can only contribute part of the finance of the movies it supports; and grant-awardees should use this grant to secure more support from other investors (GIO 2006, 193-198 and GIO 2007, 36-48 and 175-188). This adjustment of governmental funding mechanism has proved to be successful, because three of the box office hits in Taipei during 2008 were locally-made Taiwanese movies which had been awarded GIO grants in 2006,⁶ including *Cape No. 7* with a box office gross of 230.5 million NTDs,⁷ *Orz Boyz* with 17.3 million NTDs,⁸ and *Kung Fu Dunk* with 16.0 million NTDs.⁹

Recently, CMC Entertainment has become the leading local company which produces Taiwanese movies with bigger budgets, without having to resort to foreign financial support or government funding.¹⁰ Nevertheless, based on the

⁶ GIO (Government Information Office) is the competent authority of film-related affairs, film industry, and film policy in Taiwan.

⁷ http://app.atmovies.com.tw/movie/movie.cfm?action=filmdata&film_id=fltw49705151, accessed March 10, 2009.

⁸ http://app.atmovies.com.tw/movie/movie.cfm?action=filmdata&film_id=fotw59130741, accessed March 10, 2009.

⁹ http://app.atmovies.com.tw/movie/movie.cfm?action=filmdata&film_id=fsch20848538, accessed March 10, 2009.

¹⁰ CMC Entertainment is part of the CMC Group, which includes CMC Magnetics – one of the biggest DVD disc providers in the world. CMC Group enjoys the advantage of vertical integration in Taiwanese film industry, from blank DVD disk production (CMC Magnetics), to film production (CMC entertainment), to film distribution (CMC Movie Corporation), to film exhibition (Vie Show Cinemas). CMC Group is also the main investor of DVD movie distributor, Deltamac (Taiwan) Co., Ltd., and the local DVD rental chain, Asia 1. Please refer to the company website of CMC Magnetics Corporation: <http://www.cmcnet.com.tw/>, accessed May 23, 2009.

analysis of Taiwanese government control of local film production by means of government-owned studios and its funding mechanism, it can still be argued that the kinds of Taiwanese movies that can be produced for local audiences is still critically determined by the government. Therefore, the development of Taiwanese cinema and the way different generations of Taiwanese film audiences respond to Taiwanese movies are inevitably influenced by government policy. This argument will be verified by consideration of the respondents' empirical data in later chapters.

The Government's Role as 'Gatekeeper' through Censorship and Motion Picture Import Regulations

Before martial law was lifted in 1987 in Taiwan, films were treated by the government as a powerful propaganda tool. The themes and contents of movies were strictly censored by the GIO to decide whether an exhibition license could be issued to them. After the breakthrough of the Taiwanese New Wave cinema and the lifting of martial law, filmmakers started to challenge the censorship system established and controlled by the GIO by touching on issues that were politically taboo (Lu 1998, 257-259, 297-300). In an attempt to imbue films with greater realism, for example, filmmakers even adopted Taiwanese dialect in their films to challenge the monopoly of Mandarin set up by the KMT government. Under endless challenges from the public and local media, the GIO gradually yielded and censorship was lifted (Lu 1998, 310). Modern filmmakers now enjoy relatively unrestricted creativity and are able to discuss any topics they choose without being ideologically constrained (Lan 2002). Audiences can also enjoy films that focus on a variety of differing themes and topics.

As for foreign movies, the GIO cancelled the quota system on foreign films and the levy on tickets for foreign films in 1986 (Lu 1998, 322) in response to 'open market' policy pressures from the US. The end of the quota system gave audiences more access to films from many other countries as more foreign films were imported. However, Lan argues that since the quota system and ticket levy was cancelled, the monopoly enjoyed by Hollywood films in the domestic market has been strengthened (2002). On the other hand, in January 1997, the government also repealed the ban on films produced in China and established a quota system for the import of films from China, which was set at a maximum of ten films per year. (Huang 2005, 1210 and 1223) Before the lifting of this governmental ban, movies produced by China could not be exhibited for the commercial purpose in Taiwan. Ever since, Taiwanese audiences have been more easily able to access movies from Mainland China. However, despite the facts Chinese movies and Hong Kong movies are all in the Chinese-language and Hong Kong has been part of the PRC since 1997, movies from Hong Kong are still treated by both the Taiwan government and by audiences as different from those from the Mainland China. According to government regulations, only Chinese-language movies, with over a half of its financial support from the Mainland China or over a half of its crew, including actors/actress, directors, and screenwriters, are Chinese nationality, will be identified as Chinese-imported films, otherwise, they will be labelled as *guopian* (Huang 2005, 1210).

Taiwanese film audiences are used to calling Taiwanese films '*guopian*'. However, this is a confusing and often misunderstood term. The literal meaning of *guopian* is 'national films' or 'national movies', but the practical meaning of *guopian* is very different from 'national cinema' as understood in the field of film

studies. It also differs from the other often used term ‘Chinese-language cinema’. The official meaning of *guopian*, according to Taiwanese government policy,¹¹ is movies that are produced by a legally-registered local motion picture enterprise(s). Yet, motion pictures from China, Hong Kong, and Macao are not counted as foreign motion pictures by the government. General Taiwanese film audiences usually consider *guopian* to refer both to ‘Taiwanese locally produced movies and Mandarin-dubbed Hong Kong movies’ (Lu 1998, 355), but not films from the People’s Republic of China. Taiwanese audiences often found it difficult to distinguish Hong Kong movies from Taiwanese movies, especially in the 1970s and 80s, and this led to many people thinking that Hong Kong movies were a part of *guopian*. As Lu points out, ‘both Hong Kong-made Mandarin movies and Taiwanese-made Mandarin movies co-existed in the Taiwanese film market without clear labels to identify one from the other’ (1998, 202). Of course, the government film policy of treating Hong Kong movies as locally-produced movies without imposing a levy or quota system on them helped them to compete and become popular in Taiwan, and was partly responsible for their being identified mistakenly as *guopian* by Taiwanese audiences.

These examples show how the Taiwanese government functions as a ‘gatekeeper’ to decide the numbers and the kinds of movies that can be distributed and exhibited. However, it is not the only ‘gatekeeper’ that affects how movies are distributed in Taiwan. Private distributors, the major US studios’ local distributing branches in particular, play even greater roles in deciding which movies can be

¹¹ Government Information Office (GIO), Republic of China (Taiwan). 2006. *The Criteria Differentiating Domestically Produced Motion Pictures, Domestic Motion Pictures and Foreign Pictures*. <http://www.gio.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=31558&ctNode=4041> (accessed April 30, 2007).

shown at cinemas in Taiwan.

2.5 US Local Distributors as Major ‘Gatekeepers’ in the Taiwanese Film Market

How are programmes acquired overseas? Who engages in their appraisal and acquisition and what perceptions have they formed of peripheral programming? This ‘primary audience’ is the major source of informed ‘gatekeeping’ which regulates (in the widest sense) the flow of peripheral programming in the international market. (Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham 1998, 187)

These questions that Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham raise relate to research into television programme flows from non-Western countries. The idea of there being a ‘gatekeeper’ is applicable not only to the international television market but also to the examination of the international film market, because TV programmes and films share similar characteristics in international trading.

Ownership of entertainment distribution capability is like ownership of a toll road or bridge. No matter how good or bad the software product (i.e., movie, record, book, magazine, TV show, or whatever) is, it must pass over or cross through a distribution pipeline in order to reach the consumer. And like at any toll road or bridge that cannot be circumvented, the distributor is a local monopolist who can extract a relatively high fee for use of his facility (Vogel 1989, quoted in Balio 1996, 27).

The government is not the only ‘gatekeeper’ in the liberal film market. Private distributors also serve as ‘gatekeepers’ in the way they select films to be viewed by moviegoers. With globalisation and the conglomeration of the major American companies, they have begun to compete in the distribution of international films. In 2006, the major US studios had four local distributors in Taiwan – UIP

(distributing films from Universal and Paramount), BVI (distributing films from BVI and Sony Columbia), Fox (distributing films from Fox), and Warner Brothers (distributing films from Warner Brothers). They distributed 31 of the top 33 box office films in Taipei. They distribute not only Hollywood films but also European films, Asian films or local Taiwanese films (Wang 2007, 235). For example, the internationally co-produced German film, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, was distributed by Fox; and the best selling Chinese-language film, *Fearless*, was distributed by BVI. In 2006, movies distributed in Taiwan by US distributors accounted for 78% of total box office gross (Wang 2007, 236), which shows the absolute dominance of US major studios in the Taiwanese film distribution market.

This phenomenon demonstrates the power that US distributors have to maximise the access of films to as many audiences as possible. Under normal circumstances (excluding pirate versions and downloaded films) audiences cannot easily have access to films if they are not distributed. That is exactly the case for many Taiwanese movies. If a Taiwanese movie is not distributed by the local US distributors, it is unlikely to be able to have an effective marketing campaign and get local media coverage. Most importantly, local exhibitors will not be prepared to give screen time to such films when they could be scheduling more profitable Hollywood movies. For example, in 2003, only 12 Taiwanese films were shown at the cinema. Some of them had already finished production in 2002 but had failed to find a distributor and could not be exhibited during the same year (Liang 2004). As Kim observes, 'based on figures from Taipei, Taiwanese films are shown in two or less theatres for the maximum of a two-week period. In other words, the basis for a Taiwanese film's commercial viability is almost non-existent' (2002). That is why a majority of audiences have no information about which local films

are showing, due to a lack of promotion and advertising campaigns. When they do become aware of the showing of a specific Taiwan film the film has probably already been pulled out from exhibition by the time they go to the cinema.

With the trend towards multiplexes in Taipei local exhibitors can schedule their screens more flexibly with less risk.¹² Unfortunately, the increased number of screens did not open up the market to local films. On the contrary, local exhibitors demanded more foreign films, especially Hollywood films, and even more prints of them, so as to maximize their profits. Thus movies without high box office potential are scheduled on the screen which has the fewest seats. On the other hand, they can show blockbusters on several screens at the same time so as to maximize their box office gross. Consequently, the multiplex becomes a more efficient business practice for local exhibitors. That was why even the traditional Ambassador Theatre in Taipei which used to be a single-screen theatre with a gigantic auditorium with a capacity of 1,000 people was transformed into a multiplex in 2005 (Wang 2007, 247). Nevertheless, the good news is that with the emergence of new film-viewing platforms since the VCR in the 1980s, Taiwanese audiences could find new access to movies with a lot more freedom and in a way that suited their everyday schedules and film-viewing habits and that they did not have to be totally controlled by the government, distributors, and exhibitors.

¹² Currently in the great Taipei area, including Taipei City and Taipei County, there exist 30 first-run cinemas and 17 second-run cinemas. Only two of them are single-screen cinemas. The rest offer a multiple choice of movies for audiences. Among these 47 cinemas in Taipei, only 3 of them specialise in art house movies. (Data source of the number of cinemas in Taipei: <http://movie.atmovies.com.tw/showtime/theater.asp?area=a02>, accessed November 06, 2008)

2.6 The Emergence of New Exhibition Windows for Films in Taiwan

Other than traditional exhibition windows like cinemas and network TVs, the invention of new technology and equipment offers new exhibition windows, such as VCR, VCD, and DVD players, cable movie channels, online streaming movies, and Internet downloading. Inevitably, the film industry encountered an unprecedented change after the emergence in such a short period of time of these new viewing platforms. From the perspective of viewers, these new audiovisual technologies provide them with more options and ways to consume films. In this section, the current development of three of the most commonly used film-viewing platforms in Taiwan will be briefly introduced, in order to offer basic information before analysing audiences' multi-platform film-viewing. Although the films available on these multi-platforms are, more or less, controlled by the cable stations or local DVD distributors, audiences can choose to watch movies from a much wider range compared with theatrical exhibition. With the help of the Internet, audiences can even gain access to movies which have no distribution by local distributors, or even those which have been banned by the government.

In Taiwan, people used to call cable television 'Channel 4' because, before the KMT government loosened the regulations about setting up private television stations in 1994,¹³ there were only three government controlled television networks available. Cable started when, in order to make a profit by offering community residents more entertaining content, some businessmen started an

¹³ Please refer to FTV website for detailed history of the fourth national television network in Taiwan: <http://www.ftv.com.tw/>, accessed on May 05, 2009.

illegal community antenna television (CATV) station to provide service subscribers with otherwise unavailable programmes, such as Japanese TV dramas, Japanese pornography, and the latest first-run movies (Chang, 1991). Even though there are now almost one hundred channels available on any given cable television service in Taiwan, many Taiwanese people still call cable TV, 'Channel 4'. In 2004, there was one public television service (PTS), four terrestrial commercial stations, 68 cable operators, and 128 satellite channels (Liu & Chen 2004, 54). However, channel-providers have to compete to gain contracts with the cable systems as the capacity of cable systems is limited to 80 channels (GIO 2001, quoted in Liu & Chen 2004, 55). As Chan points out, cable systems are now available to more than 80% of the population in Taiwan. (2004, 107) Among these channels, eleven are movie channels. Lu claims that cable movie channels replaced theatres and video rental as the viewers' first choice when watching films, with Taiwanese films being most affected by the cable movie channels. The cable TV service provides cheap entertainment for working-class people, precisely the group which used to be the major audience for local films. Consequently, fewer and fewer people went to cinemas to see Taiwanese films (Lu 1998, 377). However, Lu's assertion may have become debatable now, especially after the box office success of Taiwanese movies in 2008, as mentioned earlier. In addition, as will be seen when the findings of my research among Taiwanese university students is analysed in a later chapter, it appears that they have an increasing interest in Taiwanese movies at the cinema today.

Since DVD players became popular in Taiwan in the early 2000s, watching movies through rented or purchased DVDs have also become common practices for many Taiwanese viewers. As one of them confesses:

Movie tickets are too expensive. One ticket could cost me two hundred NTDs, but it only costs me 60 NTDs at most to rent the latest DVD release. Besides, watching a DVD at home is very cosy and relaxing, I can hit pause or replay something whenever I want.¹⁴

DVD rental shops - including Blockbuster Taiwan,¹⁵ Asia 1,¹⁶ and other independent rental shops - are like grocery stores located in virtually every neighbourhood in Taipei, making it easy for audiences to get access to movies on DVD. Recently, there have also appeared online DVD rental shops, such as CatchPlay,¹⁷ which allow audiences to rent DVD movies through the Internet that are then posted to them so that they do not even have to leave their homes.

Not only can Taiwanese viewers use the Internet to rent or buy DVD movies, or search for film-related information, but they can also use the Internet to watch streaming online movies or to download movie files. According to a survey published about Internet broadband usage in Taiwan (TWNIC 2007), 67.03% of households in Taiwan have broadband service. This percentage reaches 78.88% in Taipei City. Although broadband usage on 'FTP/P2P file-sharing' and 'watching video online' is relatively low with 2.45% and 1.42% respectively, it is a phenomenon worthy of further examination.

¹⁴ Xiang, Yi-Fei (項貽斐). 2005. The Average Frequency of Taiwanese People Going to Cinema is Less than Once Per Year (台灣人平均一年進不到戲院一次). *udn.com*: 2005/04/11 (聯合新聞網), Taipei. (accessed April 12, 2005)

¹⁵ Blockbuster Taiwan, founded in 1997, as a part of the global DVD rental chains, Blockbuster, owned 129 rental shops in Taiwan. 59 of their branches are located in great Taipei area. (<http://www.blockbuster.com.tw/Movie/MovieDefault.aspx>, accessed November 07, 2008)

¹⁶ Asia 1, founded in 1997, along with Blockbuster Taiwan, are the two biggest DVD rental chains in Taiwan. Asia 1 became apart of the CMC Group in 2001. Currently, Asia 1 owns 108 shops nationwide in Taiwan, 60 of them located in great Taipei area. (<http://www.catchplay.com/tw/>, accessed November 07, 2008)

¹⁷ Please refer to <http://www.catchplay.com/tw/> for details. (accessed November 07, 2008)

...the parameter of a national cinema should be drawn at the site of consumption as much as at the site of production of films, an argument, in other words, that focuses on the activity of national audiences and the conditions under which they make sense of and use the films they watch. (Higson 1989, 36)

As argued by Andrew Higson, in addition to the development and status of these new film exhibition windows introduced here from an industrial perspective, further empirical research is necessary in order to understand how they are employed by Taiwanese viewers as alternative film-viewing platforms to traditional cinemas.

Chapter Three

Studying Film Audiences in the Digital Era

3.1 Introduction

This project is structured under a multi-dimensional model comprised of three axes: 'audience-institution', 'audience-text', and 'audience-media technology' with the aim of gaining better understanding of the relationships they entail. In the last chapter, the 'audience-media institution' relationship was examined. I will now examine the relationships between 'audience-film text', and 'audience-viewing platform'. The existing literature on film audiences can be divided into five different kinds of approaches, each with a different focus: the 'time-centred' approach, the 'film-centred' approach, the 'taxonomic' approach, the 'cinema-going-centred' approach and the 'domestic viewing-centred' approach. In this chapter, I adopt the 'time-centred' approach, the 'film-centred' approach, and the 'taxonomic' approach to consider the 'audience-film text' relationship, and I employ the 'cinema-going-centred' approach and the 'domestic viewing-centred' approach to explore the 'audience-viewing platform' relationship. As there is a paucity of research about how films are consumed through digital viewing platforms such as DVD and the Internet, it will be pivotal to study audiences' 'film-viewing' activities via both traditional and innovative platforms.

Other than the three relationships mentioned above, four other factors could influence viewing activities: demographic factors, the effects of audiovisual

technology, institutional factors, and textual factors. I argue that any research targeting contemporary film-viewing practices has to take these factors into account in order to gain a multifaceted and more thorough understanding of this phenomenon.

Since a series of moving images were projected at the grand café in Paris for the first time over a century ago, people around the world have watched films in various venues with the aid of a plethora of different technologies. Cinemas are not the only places for viewers to watch movies. And projectors and celluloid film are also not the only forms of technology and media available for playing films. Contemporary film audiences have multiple choices to watch movies, from public places like multiplex theatres to private spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms at home. With the introduction of portable digital media players they can virtually watch movies wherever and whenever they want. As Charles Acland says,

cinemagoing may not capture the entirety of one's engagement with cinema culture, as a wide variety of audiovisual forms (videotape, DVDs, television, CDs, websites, books and magazines) contribute to an apparatus of cinematic practice and knowledge. (2003a, 133)

Without a doubt, the evolution of audiovisual technology plays a pivotal role in the emergence of various film-viewing platforms from broadcast television networks, cable movie channels, VCR, VCD, DVD, and internet downloading, to mobile phones. Modern audiovisual technologies also provide film audiences with diversified viewing experiences, from the gigantic IMAX wide-screen to portable media players' miniature monitors. Barbara Klinger argues that not only has the variety of film-viewing platforms changed the landscape of film culture but it has also increased the links between movies and audiences' everyday lives:

Far from oversaturating the audience with the parade of films in multiplexes and other exhibition formats, cinema's omnipresence has served to broaden the horizons of public and private film culture. Cinema has become not only a commonplace element of leisure, but an inextricable component of everyday life. (Klinger 2001, 134)

Therefore, the meaning of watching movies for contemporary audiences is not only as a special event to break up peoples' everyday routines, something which, forty or fifty years ago, could only mean a visit to the cinema. It has already become an easily accessible and an indispensable part of most peoples' everyday lives. People can engage in film-viewing as part of their quotidian schedules, and more easily through multi-platforms either at home or in the public venue of the cinema.

3.2 The 'Text-Audience' Relationship

Although this project targets contemporary Taiwanese film audiences, the 'time-centred' approach to studying audiences' film consumption, i.e. a focus on the specific historical context, is still applicable. Past film-viewing experiences constitute patterns of early engagement in film-viewing and use of media technologies. Therefore, a 'time-centred' approach could be employed to analyse their early cinematic experience. Despite the fact that this project does not focus on specific films or one film genres, the examination of how audiences consume specific films or genres is still an important consideration. The 'film-centred' approach and the 'taxonomic' approach are adopted to discuss how viewers associate specific platforms with specific films or genres.

‘Time-Centred’ Approach to Explain the ‘Film-Audience’ Relationship during a Particular Historical Time

The first group of studies concentrates on film audiences’ historical reception and consumption of films during a specific historical period of time (see Hansen 1991; Staiger 1992; Stacey 1994; essays from Stokes and Maltby 1999a; and Fuller-Seeley 2008). The data from this research is mainly collected from written documents such as trade journals, reviews from popular magazines and newspapers, and reader correspondence. Film audience research adopting this ‘time-centred approach’ contributes to the understanding and reconstruction of how Hollywood films were received in a specific historical setting. However, as Gripsrud points out, ‘it is characteristic of film studies, though, that work on film audiences is still largely of a historical kind. Present-day, actual film audiences get very little attention’ (2000, 208). None of the above researchers offer an analysis of how non-Hollywood films were received or, most importantly, of how contemporary film viewers interacted with recent films.

A ‘Film-Centred’ Approach to the Study of Audiences’ Reception of a Specific Film

In order to rectify the lack of information about the experience of contemporary viewers, the second group of studies focuses on modern moviegoers. These researchers (Barker and Brooks 1998; Barker, Arthurs, and Harindranath 2001, Austin 2002, and Barker 2005) examine contemporary audience reception, perception, or attitudes towards one specific film, with attempts to construct a relationship between a specific filmic text and its viewers from a sociocultural

context. Unlike most of the research in the first group that deals with history using data principally collected from written materials, the researchers in the second group usually achieve their objectives by adopting an appropriate empirical audience research method to gather information. With research data collected not only from historical materials, but also from current accounts of contemporary audiences' perception of specific films, the 'audience-film' relationship can be better understood. Even so, a focus on the relationship between particular films and specifically-targeted demographic audiences cannot offer enough information to explain how other attributes of films, such as genres, country of production, auteurs, stars, and so forth have influenced the perception, reception, or consumption of films by audiences. In other words, research using this 'film-centred approach' may contribute to an understanding of the specific viewers' interpretation of a designated film text, but it does not offer a broader analysis of how audiences view films from one specific genre or one specific place.

'Taxonomic' Approach to the Analysis of How Audiences Perceive a Specific Film Genre

Rather than concentrating on specific films, the third group centres its study on devotees of specific genres, such as action or horror movies (Hill 1997; and Cherry 1999a, 1999b). This type of research applies a 'taxonomic approach' which endeavours to examine audience reception or viewing experience by means of a specific genre of films, concentrating on specified demographic categories such as age, gender, or race. Female and young audiences are among the most surveyed demographic categories in this type of research. For example, Brigid Cherry

studies female horror film viewers, focusing on the pleasure they take from horror films (1999a, and 1999b). Additionally, from his survey of young Flemish film viewers' attitudes and impressions of Hollywood films, European movies, and locally produced movies, Meers claims that audiences treat the 'origin' of films as a kind of genre with which they can identify. He states that, 'defining a film by its national production circumstances offers viewers as much a strategy for comprehending the movie as genre' (2004, 172). His research, claiming that movies from certain places, nations or regions seem to be treated by viewers as a special genre, is another example of this 'taxonomic' approach, which can also be extended to include focus on a specific star or director. Rachel Moseley (2002) applies this approach to the study of Audrey Hepburn's enduring appeal and stardom for British women from two different generations with data collected through textual film analysis, audience interviews, and archival materials. Moseley's study points out the different meanings of Audrey Hepburn's movies and sees Audrey Hepburn herself as a kind of symbolic sign relevant to different generations of women, which indicates how audiences from different age groups can perceive the same movies differently.

By not limiting the research focus to a given period of time or to specific films, this 'taxonomic approach' acts as a means to unveil the mystery of the under-studied contemporary film audiences. It provides a path to investigate the relationship between a designated audience and a specific genre of films. However, in common with other approaches mentioned so far, the majority of research that has adopted a 'taxonomic approach' tends to articulate an 'audience-text' relationship between films and audiences, rather than discussing or analysing how contemporary viewers use multi-platforms as a means of film-viewing, or taking

into account the 'audience-technology' relationship. Therefore, research that contributes to considering the interaction between audiences and viewing platforms, especially after the DVD rental market and Internet movie downloading became popular, will be reviewed and scrutinised in the next section.

3.3 Approaches to the 'Audience-Viewing Platform'

Relationship

The consumption of television is not just about the watching of programmes but also about the consumption of the technologies through which those programmes are accessed. This concern with consumption is largely absent from film studies, but audiences have been of key importance to the discipline. (Jancovich, Faire and Stubbings 2003, 6)

Jancovich, Faire and Stubbings here stress the lack of studies that focus on the interrelationship between film audiences, the films they watch, and the technology through which they watch films. Among existing film audience literature that focuses on film consumption, especially when we talk about cinematic experience, the discussion of 'movie-going' or 'cinema-going' accounts for the majority of the literature. In addition to most of the research discussed in the last section that aims to assess viewers' experience of watching films and their interpretation of film texts, there is some research that targets the wider context of 'movie-going' and tries to analyse how audiences engage in viewing films at the cinema and through other emerging viewing platforms. Given the emphasis of this project on Taiwanese audiences' multi-platform film-viewing, the existing literature in this area is highly relevant to this research, because it tries to engage with the 'audience-viewing platform' relationship.

'Cinema-Going-Centred' Approach to Examine Audiences' Film Consumption in a Sociocultural Context

In Taiwan, only a small amount of research about Taiwanese cinema has paid attention to film audiences, compared to literature about specific films, elite directors, or the film industry. Even among these studies, the activity of cinema-going is still the main theme. For example, Guo (1999) employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods but mainly takes a statistical approach in order to discover the interrelationship between personal evaluations and consumer behaviour in regard to Taiwanese films. He claims that the main reason Taiwanese audiences do not watch locally made films is because the films themselves do not attract audiences. However, this does not appear to be the whole truth. By relying so heavily on statistical analysis, Guo does not give us very much detail about how audiences are generating meaning before, during, or after consuming a film. In contrast, Chen Yu-Chi (2001) uses a qualitative approach to study the history and development of cinemas in Taipei and practices of cinema-going. He examined the attitudes of viewers before, during, and after viewing the film, collecting data through written materials and in-depth interviews of 11 respondents, divided into two groups, one of people over 25 years of age and the other of those under 25. This research covers a wide range of reactions with brief descriptions. However, a more detailed account of the differences between the two generations of respondents and the significance of these differences are not analysed.

As for film audiences elsewhere, Altenloh (2001) also uses statistical data collected through a large scale questionnaire survey conducted in a German

industrial town by interrogating the connections between the social backgrounds, cultural interests, and options for everyday entertainment among the members of the audience. The author claims that cinema-going is the major form of light entertainment for the majority of the people living in that industrial town and which takes place at the expense of people's involvement in traditional entertainment, such as reading or attending theatre performances. However, Altenloh does not consider how people engage with technology-related forms of entertainment like watching DVDs, surfing the Internet, or playing video games and no consideration is given to the effect of watching movies through other platforms.

Lakshmi Srinivas (2002) applies ethnographic methods of participant observation and interview to analyse the social dimensions and movie-going practices of Indian viewers. Srinivas makes comparisons between Indian movie culture and the movie culture in the US. She argues that the very active way in which Indian audiences participate at the screening of films separates them from the quieter and more disciplined viewing style of mainstream film viewers in Western societies. She conducted a cross-cultural study that compares Indian moviegoers to American ones. She argues from her findings that Indian moviegoers' distinct viewing practices result from the following reasons: the special structure of the local film industry; the narrative mode of popular Indian cinema; and the way audiences are 'habituated' to respond in a certain way when watching specific film genres. These possible reasons help to explain the uniqueness of Indian cinema culture and could offer some points of reference when studying Taiwanese cinema culture, and the narrative mode of artistically-styled New Taiwanese cinema. However, this research also does not

consider how viewers use film-viewing platforms other than movie theatres.

Based on data collected through interviews in Leicester, UK, Phil Hubbard (2003) examines the popularity of multiplex cinemas, because they not only are the venues for film-viewing, but also function as important and safe sites for leisure activities and entertainment for many city dwellers. He studies the location of the multiplex and the kind of facilities it can offer, such as easy parking, arcade video games, and restaurants in which cinema-goers can enjoy drinks and food. This offers a safer and more convenient evening out. He argues that cinema-going is 'a practice that involves the consumption of place as well as the visual consumption of film.' (2003, 255) Hubbard changes the focus from the 'film text-centred' approach to a broader and more contextual 'cinema-going-centred' approach with which contemporary cinema-going practices and the 'audience-viewing platform' relationship can be better probed from a sociocultural perspective. Even though Hubbard's study does not examine film-viewing activities and the meanings behind watching movies via other cinemas than the multiplex, such as art house cinema or second-run cinema, his research points out the importance of inspecting the sociocultural and economical meanings behind audience choices of viewing platforms or venues for enjoying movies.

The 'Domestic Viewing-Centred' Approach since the Popularity of New Film-Viewing Platforms

After the invention of movies, cinemas soon became the primary venue for audiences to enjoy movies. Accordingly, cinema-going practices have been the main topics for research that focuses on the sociocultural aspects of film-viewing.

However, since the VCR and other media technologies became popular, domestic places have become important venues for watching movies. Hence, scholars have started to pay more attention to film-consuming practices at home through platforms other than movie theatres. In a national survey of British film audiences' film tastes and cinema attendance, Docherty, Morrison, and Tracey (1987) adopt quantitative-based research methods combined with qualitative techniques, such as group discussions and questionnaires, in an attempt to establish a general picture of British film audiences. In their discussion on film-viewing as a popular leisure activity for British film audiences, they also consider the VCR as an alternative medium to the cinema for watching movies. They look at use of the VCR and compare it to movie-watching at the cinema and watching regular television programmes at home. They claim that 'video is closer to television than it is to the cinema' (1987, 61), which implies that the domestic viewing experience cannot be compared with the viewing experience of cinema-going. However, because their primary research data came through questionnaires and was analysed by statistical methods, detailed accounts of viewing practices either at the cinema or at home via the VCR are not offered. Additionally, their conclusions about film-viewing experiences via the VCR are different from the findings of Dinsmore-Tuli's survey of British film audiences conducted in the 1990s.

Dinsmore-Tuli's (1998) research on the consumption of feature films through VCRs at home, using a group of British video collectors and movie fans, tries to explore 'how the VCR can offer film-loving viewers a range of domestic cinephiliac pleasures which blur the distinctions previously drawn between cinematic and domestic viewing registers' (2000, 316). She attempts to offer a more detailed evaluation of the concept and phenomenon of 'home cinema' by

using interviews and questionnaires with the film lovers to investigate their film watching practices. She compares people's viewing experiences at the cinema with their film-viewing experiences at home on a small television screen. She argues that cinephile viewers can obtain a similar experience of attentive spectatorship from film-viewing through a VCR that they would usually only get from cinema-going by physically 'cinematizing' the domestic viewing environment and repeatedly viewing favoured texts (2000, 327). She elaborates the findings of her interviewees that would make different kinds of environmental alterations, including 'dimming lights and preparing comfortable seating and convenient refreshments in such a way as to facilitate uninterrupted viewings' (2000, 324). By doing so, the viewer could simulate a viewing atmosphere at home similar, to an acceptable degree, to the viewing ambience of the cinema hall. This appears to contradict the findings of Docherty, Morrison, and Tracey's research that 'video has to be treated as a very different film experience from that of the cinema' (1986, 62).

There are two possible explanations for the variant conclusions from these two surveys. Docherty and his colleagues conducted a survey in the 1980s when the home VCR boom had only just started. Peripheral audiovisual technology like the 'home theatre system' was not mature enough in terms of visual image quality or resolution during that period, and lacked an audio presence comparable with the audiovisual experience in movie theatres in the 1980s. However, by the time that Dinsmore-Tuli conducted her survey during the late 1990s, her informants could enjoy a better quality audiovisual presence from their VCRs and 'home theatre' systems and were able to create a cinematic experience similar to the one that they would find watching films at the cinema.

Another possible explanation for the different findings could be attributed to differences in the two groups of research informants. Docherty, Morrison, and Tracey's research was a large-scale national survey that did not target a specific social group, but Dinsmore-Tuli's was based on cinephiles and film fans, who hold different attitudes towards cinema from ordinary viewers. Therefore, whether the target informants of film audience research are film fans or not could have a critical influence on the survey results. That is why Dinsmore-Tuli points to the importance of probing the differences between film fans and non-film fans in terms of their viewing practices in the conclusion of her thesis: 'Areas for future research opened up by this project might include broader studies that would facilitate comparison between cinephiliac film/video culture and that of less committed viewers' (1998, 223). It is for this reason that, in the recruitment of respondents for my research I targeted not only cinephiles, but also common film audiences.

Generally speaking, in spite of only looking at cinephile viewers, Dinsmore-Tuli's project did leave a footprint on the field of film audience research, by focusing on domestic film-viewing practices via VCRs and providing a detailed analysis of the ways in which film fans' collected videos and would view movies repeatedly on video.

Tom Stempel (2001) dedicates a chapter to film-viewing experiences at home via the VCR in his book about American audience experiences and opinions towards films and movie-going since 1948. His information about the way VCRs were used was collected by means of an open-structured questionnaire. He briefly reports upon his respondents' opinions about watching films via the VCR, and how

their movie-going relates to the video medium. In addition to those aspects of the VCR discussed in Dinsmore-Tuli's research, such as 'repeated viewing' and 'acquiring film knowledge', Stempel's analysis suggests other interesting practices behind the use of the VCR by film audiences. For example, one of his male respondents mentions picking up girls in video rental stores or asking his dates to come over to his place so that they can watch films on video together instead of going to the cinema. Here, Stempel points out one of VCR's functions as a tool for users' social activities or engagements.

The success of the video rental market comes from two indisputable facts. The first is that people do not necessarily want to own every movie. The second is that, with the exception of alcoholics anonymous meetings, the video rental store is the greatest pickup place since public laundromats. (Stempel 2001, 172)

Stempel also notes that people are sometimes happy that they did not go to the cinema but watched the film of their choice on video because, finding it mediocre, they had not wasted their money having to pay at the cinema. Stempel's research contains useful data about film-viewing practices of video as a means to access cheaper videos. However, contemporary audiences have more alternatives than just video movies, such as DVDs, Internet-downloading, or cable movies, to watch movies if they do not want to pay for the expensive admissions at the cinema.

So far in this section I have discussed research on cinema-going activities and attitudes towards the VCR - the popular platform that made the concept of 'home theatre' possible from the early 1980s. More recently, with the coming of digital technologies, such as DVD and the Internet, there are still only a few studies that have examined multi-platform viewing in depth.

Jancovich, Faire and Stubbings (2003) have combined examination of history archives and done ethnographic audience research to study the meanings and the changing perceptions of different theatre places and the various ways films are consumed in those places at different time periods in the city of Nottingham, UK. They also try to analyse people's 'perceptions, experiences, and memories of film consumption' (2003, 24). What is worth noting about this research is that they investigated different sites of exhibition around the city and various viewing platforms inside the household. As they explain,

...while our research examined the meanings of film consumption as an activity, it focused on the ways in which these meanings were related to the meanings of sites of exhibition and distribution: city-centre cinemas; local cinemas; out-of-town multiplexes; inner-city multiplexes; terrestrial television; video rental and retail; and both satellite and cable (2003, 20).

In the first half of their book they focus on historical accounts of the evolution of various public exhibition venues in the city of Nottingham dating back to the early twentieth century, and then they examine exhibition sites other than cinemas, including television, VCRs and multiplexes. The authors discuss and predict certain possibilities and meanings for newly emerging viewing platforms like DVD. However, they were unable to conduct an in-depth empirical survey pertaining to DVD or other platforms like Internet downloading because DVD players and broadband Internet were not popular technologies when their empirical survey was completed at the start of this millennium.

Unlike Jancovich, Faire and Stubbings, Barbara Klinger (2006) does investigate film consumption at home in relation to new media technologies. She discusses topics including home theatre and film experience, film collecting

culture by means of DVDs, how classic Hollywood movies are 'reincarnated' for contemporary viewers (with the help of cable movie channels), the functions and pleasures of repeated viewings, and the way that viewers create their own short parody films for posting on the Internet. Klinger's research is one of the rare works that pay attention to film consumption taking place at home through new media technologies. She offers more detailed accounts of the under-researched area of film-consuming experiences and home film exhibition outside of cinemas. Klinger claims that her analysis 'engages audience research, industry history, textual analysis, and critical and cultural theory, I approach my subject primarily through reception studies' (2006, 5). In Klinger's research, qualitative data was collected through questionnaires which contained nine open-ended questions and targeted a specific group of university students. Yet, as all of the data was collected among university students, other demographic categories are not covered by this research.

What has rarely been addressed in any of the research is how new digital viewing platforms change the meaning of film consumption context-wise, especially in relation to an individual person's social relationship with their family members, friends, or other unknown audience members. With the proliferation of new media technologies, watching films is not necessarily a social activity that has to take place along with other people. People can easily and comfortably consume films alone, something which gives them total control of when to watch, how to watch and what to watch. Moreover, with the aid of technology, the audience can also discuss films after viewing them (and seek other people's opinions before they watch them) through Internet movie boards or discussion groups. As a result, whether these new technologies or viewing platforms are gradually changing film-viewing from a public and social activity into a private and solitary leisure or

whether it is intensifying the interaction between unknown netizens within the imagined virtual movie community are questions for further exploration. Moreover, as Henry Jenkins argues:

Cinema did not kill theater. Television did not kill radio. Each old media was forced to coexist with the emerging media...Old media are not being displaced. Rather, their functions and status are shifted by the introduction of new technologies (2006, 14).

When we are eager to explore audience film-viewing practices via newly emerged technologies, it is also indispensable to examine again how the traditional viewing platform of the cinema and audience cinema-going activities are changed and transformed under the impact of newly emerged platforms.

Research discussed here that concentrates on film consumption issues, via the various viewing platforms available, related activities, and any political, economical, social, and cultural meanings behind audiences' practices can be categorised as applying a 'domestic viewing-centred' approach. However, considering the complexity involved with, and the multifaceted characteristics of film consumption, it is difficult to examine people's complicated film-viewing practices by employing only either a 'cinema-going-centre' approach or a 'domestic viewing-centred' approach. For example, Annette Kuhn (2002) combines the 'time-centred' approach with the 'cinema-going-centred' approach, supported by research data obtained from both historical written materials and ethnohistorical inquiry into people who grew up in the 1930s. In order to study the impact of her informants' cinema memory in their everyday lives, she analyses their personal and collective memories about cinema and cinema-going in the 1930s in Britain. As this approach to studying the film audience is not rigid and

fixed, it can be mixed or adjusted in accordance with research topics, and therefore it provides a useful model for my approach in this thesis.

3.4 Factors that Influence Contemporary Film-Viewing Practices

After reviewing different approaches to studying film audiences, we have clearer articulation of the ‘text-audience’ and the ‘viewing platform-audience’ relationships, which could also function as one of the frameworks of the research design of this thesis. Nevertheless, in an attempt to understand better the complexity of people’s film-viewing practices and to set up foundations for my research, it will be important to consider how viewers decide what to watch, how and where to watch it, and with whom to watch it. These factors can be divided into the following categories: demographic audience factors, audiovisual technology-related factors, institutional factors, and film textual factors. There may be other factors having an impact on audience film consumption but I consider these four factors to have the greatest impact.

Demographic Audience Factors

Audiences’ personal backgrounds such as gender, age, family status, marital status, educational background, occupation, social class, house or personal income, living area, religion, ethnic origin, and political preference are grouped into this set of factors. Demographic categories more often than not serve as decisive factors that influence audience interactions with media, both textually and contextually. In

the field of film audience research, Annette Hill (1997) and Brigid Cherry (1999a and 1999b), for example, use female viewers as their target respondents to examine how they interact with specific genre films. Annette Kuhn (2002) examines older audiences who grew up in the 1930s to establish a connection between audiences' cinema memory and their everyday lives, and to consider British cinema culture in the 1930s. Barbara Klinger (2006) analyses university students' repeat viewing of films at home. These researches all take account of the critical impact of demography upon film-viewing.

When I undertook a pilot survey of film audiences in Taipei in preparation for this project, I became aware of different film consumption patterns for different generations of respondents. For example, respondents aged under 15 tend to watch movies with their parents and follow parental film choices. College or university respondents treat film watching as a major after-school activity. They are also the major movie theatre customer group. As for respondents with full-time jobs, they tend to be more selective when choosing the films they watch due to the fact that they have a decreased amount of time available to spend watching films after work. Married couples tend to watch more films on DVD at home rather than going to the cinema. Older respondents do not usually go to DVD rental stores to rent DVDs by themselves, let alone using the Internet to download movies. Because of these significant varied practices of film-viewing and their adoption of viewing platforms from different generations of audiences, it is crucial to take demographic factors into consideration, 'age' in particular, while assigning respondents in different age cohorts in this project.

Furthermore, viewers' marriage status, whether or not they have children or

grandchildren at home to look after, how old are their children, and whether they are living solitarily or with family, are all possible demographic factors that could result in viewers' varied film-viewing practices, within a particular age cohort. Thus, although 'age' factor is argued to be the most decisive demographic factor to differentiate audience film-viewing, other demographic factors, such as gender, should be considered, if significantly influencing audience film-viewing within specific age groups.

Audiovisual Technology-Related Factors

This set of factors involves the characteristics of various audiovisual technologies available to film audiences that may have an impact on their film consumption, such as going to 3D features at IMAX theatres, how audiences respond to surround sound audio from a home theatre system, the speed of their internet download, or the resolution of computer monitors and television sets. Other issues around these audiovisual equipments and services, such as the ownership of viewing platforms in the household, the features of their audiovisual apparatus, and how much knowledge they have of the functions of the apparatus, could also have profound impact on audiences' film-viewing. These media technology features can influence how audiences select a specific viewing platform. For example, some people say that the IMAX theatre is the only place to obtain full appreciation of 3D movies like *The Polar Express*. One viewer posted her comments about 3D movies on the Internet.

After watching the 3D version of '*The Polar Express*', I am so happy that I did not go to see the normal theatrical version. The storyline of this movie is very simple, I was watching those 3D effects during the entire movie...I

hope someday I could watch 3D versions of horror films. That would be awesome. (Xiao-fang 2005)¹⁸

Xiao-fang's view gives us an idea of how media technology can influence audience perception and attitudes towards a movie. For Xiao-fang *The Polar Express* was not a very good movie and it was only the 3D effects that made it interesting and fun to watch. Moreover, the emergence of new media technology can even replace the older media technology formats with improved audiovisual quality and innovative features. For example, after the emergence of DVD players and home entertainment systems, watching DVDs at home on a big screen television with a surround sound system, and dimmed light could give viewers a 'quasi-theatre' experience, which could not be achieved with older technologies like VHS tapes and VCDs. Besides, the interactivity of DVD features include 'scene selection', 'director's commentary', 'behind the scenes' footage and cast interviews which attracts many people to consume films through the only format that can presently offer this much flexibility and diversity.

Of course, the features and function of audiovisual technology are not the only factors that influence decisions about which viewing platform to choose. Whether audiences possess this kind of audiovisual equipment or not, their familiarity with, and perceptions about, these features can also play a significant role in the choices they make.

¹⁸ Extracted and translated from @Movie BBS:
<http://bbs.atmovies.com.tw/bbs/bin/bbscat.cfm?action=view&cid=FilmBBS&subjectid=AM0104002910123&type=B&said=fpen50338348&aname=%E5%8C%97%E6%A5%B5%E7%89%B9%E5%BF%AB%E8%BB%8A>. This message was posted on this BBS on January 19th, 2005. (accessed February 2nd, 2006)

Institutional Factors

Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham suggest that the application of a middle-range research that considers both wider institutional factors and individual reception is necessary for cross-cultural textual and audience analyses. In their own words,

when studies are restricted to reporting and analysis of the self-understanding of selected audience respondents, wider factors affecting the impact of programmes are often bracketed out, or treated superficially as just 'background'. Instead, the middle-range research advocated here should look at the broader context of viewer reception set by the social environment (1998, 186).

Even though Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham's focus here is on television programmes, these institutional factors also play an important part in how films are consumed in general. Therefore, any analyses that do not take institutional limitations into consideration when attempting to interrogate film-viewing practices would be incomplete. In addition, Thomas Austin argues that it is important also to examine 'issues of industrial activity and power' when researching film audiences (2002, 27).

Hagen and Wasko also emphasise the critical roles played by macro cultural, social and political frames within which micro activities in audience consumption take place: 'Research that offers only an understanding of the micro process of consumption without referring to broader cultural, social, and political patterns will have limited value' (2000, 23). In the context of globalisation, there might be global issues that have an impact throughout the world. Yet, the extent of the global impact varies from place to place owing to the various degrees of

localisation, and different governmental policy and industrial development levels mean that there is dissimilarity in local ways of viewing films in different places. The particular institutional factors discussed in this project are composed, as we have seen, of Taiwanese government film policy, but also of the associated regulations and laws, local film production, film distribution, film marketing, film exhibition, and local media coverage of film-related news and information.

One recent case of how institutional factors influence local audience film consumption is the protest that took place against Taiwan's leading DVD/VCD distributor, Deltamac (Taiwan) Co., Ltd., in February 2006. Deltamac is the official local distributor of the films of Eight Major US Studios (only Warner Brothers do not distribute their DVDs through it). Deltamac therefore distributes 80% to 90% of DVD/VCD film titles available at local stores. If local rental stores are not supplied with film titles by Deltamac, they cannot legally buy those film titles anywhere else. However, since October 2005 Deltamac have started to decrease the supply of copies of DVD/VCD film titles to two thirds of their normal volume, even for popular new releases like *The Legend of Zorro* and *Red Eye*. Under pre-existing contracts, both of the two movies should have been supplied to local rental stores in a greater number of copies than Deltamac were prepared to supply.

As a result, the association of Taiwan DVD/Video rental stores organised a protest against Deltamac, accusing it of being in breach of contract by reducing the number of copies of DVD film titles supplied without giving notice in advance. Deltamac's action has caused a great number of complaints from their customers because they were not able to rent films when they wanted to. Deltamac defended

themselves by accusing the local rental stores of illegally producing extra copies of DVD titles.¹⁹ This meant that if someone wanted to watch *The Legend of Zorro*, they either had to reserve it at their rental store beforehand and wait, buy the DVD, or else download it illegally from the Internet. This example demonstrates how local film distributors and exhibitors can have a critical influence on audience access and exposure to films. Without these distributors and exhibitors, audiences would not have opportunities to access various kinds of films.

Film Textual Factors

Film genres, origin, themes, and storyline; elements of film language including direction, cinematography, editing, special effects and art direction; together with the personnel involved in a film such as stars, directors, screenwriters, and producers, are all elements and characteristics of film texts that can influence viewing practices. These elements sometimes function as indices that help the viewer to form a certain image of a film before watching it. After seeing a film, these elements can continue to influence how a viewer interprets the film and engages in further activities after watching it. With accumulated film-viewing experience and a bit more knowledge of film language, these textual factors can also be important criteria in the way that people select which movies to watch.

¹⁹ For detailed coverage of this event, please refer to the following websites:
The Liberty Times: 08/02/2006:
<http://iservice.libertytimes.com.tw/IService2/PrNews.php?NNo=www.libertytimes.com.tw/2006/new/feb/8/today-e12.htm>, accessed June 09, 2009;
FTN News Online: 14/03/2006:
<http://news.ftv.com.tw/?sno=2006314L01M1&type=Class>, accessed June 09, 2009.

Among these characteristics, film genre is one of the most important, both for audience choice and for marketing. Local film producers in Taiwan have recently seen horror film as the genre having a great appeal for local audiences, especially after the commercial success of the US and Taiwanese co-produced horror thriller, *Double Vision*, which had a Taipei box office gross of 36.24 million NTDS.²⁰ This film was the number one selling Asian film in Taipei in 2002.²¹ Otherwise, Chinese-language horror films such as *The Eye* and *The Heirloom* were relatively more successful than other Chinese-language films at the Taipei box office.

For local film distributors, horror films from countries like Japan, Korea, Thailand and the UK offer one of the most effective ways of fighting Hollywood blockbusters. The reasons for local distributors concentrating on horror films can also be seen from the following example. From September 9th to September 11th, 2005, three out of the five top box-office films in Taipei were horror films, which demonstrated the popularity of ghost movies among moviegoers in Taipei.²² It is also a common marketing tactic adopted by local distributors in Taiwan to employ words such as 恐怖 (*kongbu*, horror), and 鬼 (*gui*, ghost) in the movie titles to advertise films based on the popularity of horror films as recorded in box office records. Based on the box office record, horror movies or ghost movies seem to be among Taipei audiences' favourite genres, as one local news report concluded,

²⁰ Please refer to the 2002 Taipei box office chart:
www.truemovie.com/records2002.htm, accessed May 09, 2009.

²¹ Please also refer to 2002 Taipei box office chart:
www.truemovie.com/records2002.htm, accessed May 09, 2009.

²² In the second weekend of September, the number two film at the Taipei box-office chart was *George A. Romero's Land of the Dead*; the number four film was the Japanese film, *Tales of Terror*; and the number five film was also a Japanese film, *Infection*. For the detailed box-office chart, please refer to www.atmovies.com.tw.

'this fact shows that Taipei film audiences enjoy being scared'.²³ However, whether this claim is true for Taipei audiences of different generations or it is only validated for younger movie-goers will have to be tested after analysis offered in later chapters.

²³ Please see FTN News Online 13/09/2005:
<http://news.ftv.com.tw/?sno=2005913B0807&type=Class>, accessed June 09, 2009.

Chapter Four

Studying Multi-Platform ‘Film-Viewing’ Practices: Methodology and Research Design

4.1 Introduction

The theoretical formulations of the previous chapters are translated into practice in this methodology chapter, in which a particular model is constructed. This model examines how media institutions, media contents, media technology and audience practices of film-viewing interact with one another. It aims to better account for the multi-dimensionality of local film viewing practices via today’s media entertainment technology, under the influence of the local film industry and transnational media flows. The model is designed to explain the sociocultural and economic significance of local film audiences’ everyday multi-platform ‘film-viewing’ practices. This chapter details the empirical research design, based on a qualitative research method, and the conduct of this research exploring Taiwanese film audiences.

This empirical research included both a pilot study and a larger scale field survey. The pilot study served to provide preliminary information and a foundation on which the major field survey could be based. The subsequent field survey was conducted by using various qualitative research methods, including questionnaires; in-depth interviews, and film consumption diaries which respondents agreed to

keep. The field survey aims to understand how different film audience age groups, with different degrees of contact with films via the available multi-platforms, consume films differently, and how they appropriate various media technologies accordingly to their quotidian film-viewing practices.

How the pilot study was designed, what its initial findings were, and how these findings were incorporated into the design of the later field survey will first be reviewed, to reflect the modifications of the main research focus from its original direction. The empirical research design that was structured on the basis of the main research question, central proposition, and theoretical concepts will then be given detailed elaboration. I argue in this chapter that the adoption of qualitative audience research methods combining various data-collecting techniques can offer an operational approach to study different generations of audiences' multi-platform film-viewing practices from their own accounts and perspectives.

4.2 Design and Application of the Pilot Study

The small-scale pilot study, based on the initial research design was used as a 'tester' to discover any problems I might encounter in actual empirical research. It offered an opportunity to test and practice the related research techniques and tools in advance. By doing so, the risks of unpredictable difficulties and mistakes during the actual field survey were reduced. Finally, the findings from this pilot project and the relationships established with the respondents could be fed into the larger-scale empirical survey.

As the pilot study was conducted on a reduced scale, compared with the

actual field survey, the respondents were chosen from only two different groups: (1) professional personnel working in the local film industry; and (2) local audiences. Data from the respondents in the first group were collected through in-depth interviews, in order to obtain detailed information about how institutional factors, such as the local film industry and local media coverage, have an impact on people's access to films and their film-viewing activities. The other data was collected from a local audience group, through in-depth interviews and group discussions. Respondents from local audiences were selected without a focus on specific age, gender, occupation or origin. The aim in recruiting pilot study respondents was to reach as wide and as diversified an audience range as possible, in order to examine which demographic factors had the greatest impact on film consumption.

Qualitative audience research methods with different research techniques and tools were used alternately to gather data about every possible aspect of audience engagement with films. Initially, a questionnaire was distributed to collect demographic information about the informants and their general exposure to media and movies in everyday life. Group discussions and in-depth interviews were organised to collect information about the respondents' film-viewing practices, their attitudes towards movies from different genres and origins, how they get their movie information from local media coverage, about their use of multi-viewing platforms, and generally about what they talked about in their everyday conversations about films with family or friends. After the questionnaires and interviews had been completed, telephone, email and online chatting were also used as an extension of the audience survey about their everyday film consumption. Finally, a special film screening was arranged for the group discussion, in order to

try to understand audience's viewing strategies and the ways they interpret film texts.

The pilot study was conducted in Taipei over a four week period from mid-August to mid-September in the summer of 2005. Taipei was chosen as the main survey site for the following reasons: First, as the capital city it acts as the most important political, economical, and cultural centre in Taiwan. Second, it offers its residents the most diversified types of venues to watch movies, from the widest range of options, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Third, the Greater Taipei area accounts for half of the box office gross in Taiwan. Fourth, owing to the time and budget availability for this pilot study, it was more efficient to concentrate the fieldwork only in Taipei, without having to travel to other parts of the country. The biggest drawback of selecting Taipei as the only survey site was that Taipei audiences' film-viewing practices cannot be generalised to represent other parts of Taiwan, such as rural villages in eastern Taiwan, given the different infrastructures as between a big city and a small village, the availability of different types of cinemas, lifestyles, and access to varieties of films.

Initial Findings from the Pilot Survey

Several interesting findings emerged from the data collected during the pilot survey, as follows:

1. Audiences from different generations, at different life stages, seemed to have different preferences both about which movies to watch and which viewing platform in order to watch them. There are different film consumption patterns for

different generations.

2. Most people go to the cinema with their family members, classmates, friends, or colleagues. Going to the cinema is a form of social activity. Movie watching serves as one of the activities that constitute a good 'night-out', along with dining-out, shopping, or chatting with friends at cafes. Hollywood films seem to be the first choice for people when going to the cinema with somebody else. On the other hand, people who enjoy watching art house films or festival films tend to watch them alone at the cinema, partly due to their difficulty in finding other people with a similar interest in art films to go to the cinema with.

3. DVD-renting has become one of the major channels for viewing non-Hollywood films, Hollywood films that were missed during their theatrical releases and for movies that people do not feel like spending money to see at the cinema. With the aid of modern home entertainment systems, the environment for watching DVDs at home can be adjusted to simulate the environment that would be found when watching films at the cinema. One of the advantages of DVDs is that people can always press the 'pause' button if they need to interrupt their viewing in the middle of a film and they do not have to watch the whole film in one sitting.

4. Almost all of the respondents in the pilot survey have a cable TV service at home. They surf different movie channels while watching TV. HBO is a popular choice for watching movies on cable, because it offers relatively newer Hollywood movies. Cable movie channels are also the major platform for watching Chinese-language movies. The other significant phenomenon about cable movie channels is that many viewers watch their favourite movies over and over again whenever they accidentally find them showing on cable channels, during channel hopping.

5. Like the cable television service, a broadband Internet connection is an almost 'must-have' service in most households in Taipei. Lots of respondents mentioned that they have experienced watching downloaded films or pirate DVDs, attained through downloading or by borrowing them from friends or colleagues. Almost all respondents talked about the poor quality of downloaded and pirate films, but the advantage of these illegal film copies is that they prevent them from wasting their money on bad movies at the cinema.

6. Among all varieties of film genres, the horror film is the most worthy of discussion, according to the initial findings, for the following reasons. First, audiences either love them or hate them, but they always have opinions about them. Second, there are few gender differences, as both male and female audiences enjoy the excitement of watching horror films although they are also often scared when watching them. Third, horror films are the most profitable and cost-effective genre in the Taiwanese film market, as mentioned in Chapter Three.

7. In addition, the origin of the film also functions in a similar way as film genre for many viewers. Many respondents can easily identify films from nearby places such as China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Thailand, because they have more knowledge and experience about these countries. On the other hand, many of the respondents tended to treat all European films as art house films, which echoes Meers' conclusion about young Flemish audiences' impressions of European cinema in which 'clichés about nationality were common in discussions of French cinema, which was considered to be the typical European cinema'. (2004, 165) Without enough understanding and experience of European cultures and languages, Taiwanese audiences cannot usually identify the country in which a European film is set as well as they can with Asian cinema. Even after watching a European film, if they have not read reviews or details beforehand, they usually cannot tell clearly

which language is used if it is not English, or where the film comes from. As for English-speaking films other than Hollywood films, they usually have little idea about whether they are from the UK, Australia or Canada.

Modification of the Research Design after the Pilot Survey

When this project was started, one of the major objectives was to investigate the influence of Hollywood films on Taiwanese audiences. However, after reviewing literature from the fields of international communication and audience research, and also based on the initial findings of the pilot study, it seemed that the way films were consumed through different venues and viewing platforms was worthy of more examination. Therefore, the research focus shifted to the multi-platform viewing practices of film audiences. In considering audience interpretation or the reception of different films, associated surveys would have had to be completed by selecting individual films and researching how different audiences related to them. However, to have done so would have meant that the focus of the research would have shifted to analysing specific films, rather than the broader aspects of multi-platform viewing practices. Thus, it was decided to target a major empirical survey mainly at different generations of local viewing practices via multi-platforms to provide the primary data, in order to support the major goals of the research and reveal local multi-platform film-viewing practices in the context of transnationalisation.

The pilot study showed that recruiting respondents through Internet movie boards was effective, especially for attracting cinephiles, because they are usually

keen to talk about movies and willing to share their opinions, as most of them already have experience of posting their opinions on Internet discussion boards. Furthermore, these fans were relatively easier to contact, both before and after the empirical survey, by means of email, Internet movie sites, or other online chat software, something which makes work along the lines of what Takahashi (2003, 123) calls 'virtual ethnography' possible. However, using this kind of method means that the demography of the available respondents is relatively limited. In the pilot study, it was found that possible respondents over 40 years of age were difficult to reach through the Internet. Older audiences who do not log on or surf Internet movie sites regularly are difficult to locate and recruit. Therefore, other traditional recruitment methods, such as giving out flyers (or simple questionnaires) at cinemas or DVD-rental shops asking for volunteers among ordinary audiences willing to participate, were an indispensable part of collecting audience data.

As regards dealing with concerns about research techniques, the combination of questionnaire and in-depth interview proved to be valuable. Qualitative research can clarify any vague points in the respondents' questionnaires by means of in-depth interviews. Through conversation with the respondents, many issues for research were discovered that had not been foreseen in the design of the questionnaire. From the respondents' points of view, to fill out an open-structured questionnaire about their experience and film-viewing practices can be a complicated task. Many respondents said that it was difficult for them to organise and recall their experience and everyday film-viewing routines in detail. This was especially the case for non-cinephile viewers who usually treated their film-viewing activities as part of their 'normal' routines, without thinking too much about the reasons and meanings behind their practices. However, after the

first questionnaire and interview, many respondents said that they had forgotten to mention some points during the first interview or the questionnaire survey, and they would add more details and even correct some of their initial answers in the first questionnaire, during the follow-up interview or questionnaire. Some also mentioned that, after participating in the survey, they often started to think, retrospectively, about their film-viewing experiences.

4.3 Research Design

The pilot survey findings indicated specific factors that seemed to have a more significant impact on Taiwanese multi-platform film-viewing. Thus, this project has been designed to focus on these influential factors in particular. A telephone survey of Taipei residents' film-viewing patterns undertaken by Luo concluded that most Taipei film-viewers were aged between 20 to 39 years of age (Luo 1994, 171), while the pilot survey findings showed that film viewers from different generations seem to develop different viewing patterns. The role that film-viewing plays in people's everyday lives is constantly changing, as their lifestyles and status change when they go from being students to employees, or from being single to being married.

Additionally, audiences from different generations have been exposed to different films and audiovisual technologies since their childhood. Ever since the Taiwanese government cancelled the quota system on foreign films and the levy on tickets for foreign films in 1986 (Lu 1998, 322), foreign films other than those from Communist countries have been freely distributed in Taiwan without government prohibition. Consequently, for viewers growing up in the 1980s, their

film-viewing options when they were young were either to see Chinese-language films from Taiwan and Hong Kong or foreign films from Hollywood. Viewers growing up in the 1990s on the other hand had a broader range of options, including films from Japan, Korea, China and almost anywhere else in the world. By the same token, other than watching films at the cinema, videotapes were the only popular home viewing platform available for people growing up in the 1980s. However, for those growing up in the 1990s, cable movie channels and VCDs joined videotapes as popular alternatives. Hence, the respondents of this project were grouped more by their age than by other demographic characteristics.

However, this does not mean that other demographic factors have not been considered in this project. For example, watching DVD movies are discovered to be a more frequently adopted viewing platform for adult respondents, such as the parent respondents, than the younger respondents of university students. Nevertheless, among the parent respondents, the fathers have more opportunities to enjoy DVD movies at home without interruption. The mothers have to sacrifice some of their evening DVD-viewing time to take care of little children and finish housework. In addition, although both male and female university student respondents view downloaded movies frequently, the heavy movie-downloaders are all male. Gender difference within each age cohort also requires careful attention. For this reason, while generational difference in film-viewing became the main research aim of the project, other influential demographic factors, such as gender, are important secondary focuses.

Qualitative Audience Research Method

The main reason for adopting qualitative audience research methods in this thesis is because they offer detailed accounts of the film-viewing practices of the respondents in their own words. As Barrie Gunter states the characteristic of qualitative audience research is that, it allows 'respondents to converse freely about their media experiences, choosing their own answers, their own language and terminology, and even their own questions' (2000, 42). This serves the main focus of the project, which seeks to probe and articulate at first hand Taiwanese audiences' film-viewing experiences, and not simply generalise the analysis to Taiwanese film audiences as a whole or try to forecast through a statistical approach based on the collection of data from large-scale samples. The following paragraphs will provide a brief overview of this research method.

One of the earliest research topics in media studies was on the effects of media, especially the effects of television. This was based on what was called a 'hypodermic-needle model', which, as the term suggests, sees 'vulnerable' audiences as passive receivers who are open to any persuasive and potentially harmful effects that the media may use. With the coming of 'uses and gratification' research based on the question – 'what does the individual do with the media?' (Jensen and Rosengren 1990, 210), the audiences' own interpretive ability came to be emphasised. The research focus also shifted from media effects to active audience engagement with media. However, 'the limitation is that the "uses and gratifications" perspective remains individualistic, in so far as differences of response or interpretation are ultimately attributed to individual differences of personality or psychology' (Morley 1989, 17). On the other hand, based on the

tradition of cultural studies, Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, which was proposed to examine how the audience interprets meanings of media texts as coded by media institutions and dominant ideology, attempts to incorporate 'the model of the active viewers making meanings from the sign and symbols which the media provide' (Morley 1989, 17). In relation to this model Ruddock claims that,

...the encoding/decoding model is a vital moment in audience research, since it ties together a number of themes within discussions of interpretative social science, ideology, semiotics and, crucially, how these ideas influence the approach we take to media audiences. (2001, 123)

Morley (1980) applies the encoding/decoding model to explore the relationship between audience interpretations of television news magazine programmes and their social backgrounds. After this groundbreaking research, cultural studies combined with reception analysis became an important approach towards studying the relationship between audiences and media texts and was followed by examples of empirical work such as Janice Radway's study of female romance novel readers (1984) and Ien Ang's research on soap opera viewers (1985). This approach not only operates in the field of television studies. For example, Jancovich *et al.* list three areas where reception analysis can be employed in film studies:

More recently, there has been a growing interest in reception, and it can be divided into three main areas. The first concerns the audience as a market, while the second concerns the inter-textual contexts within which the reception of films takes place, and is therefore concerned with the ways in which films are framed for audiences. The third and final area is the ethnography of film audiences, or work that examines audiences' own accounts of their relationship to film. (Jancovich *et al.* 2003, 6)

Reception analysis has also been adopted to study film audiences (see the literature mentioned in Chapter Three, such as Janet Staiger's research about the historical reception of American cinema [1992], Bridget Cherry's account of female horror film viewers [1999], and Thomas Austin's examination of audiences' reception of Hollywood cinema in the 1990s [2002]). Among the three areas that Jancovich *et al.* state, the third is the major focus of this empirical research because it would take more than a reception analysis approach to tackle the complicated interrelationships among Taiwanese film-viewing practices. As Höijer says,

When a viewer watches a specific programme, he or she bears within him or herself an array of collected experiences and world-knowledge, including the results of earlier television viewing... meaning is a question of a complicated relation between the television programme, social reality, the viewers and their lives and thoughts. (Höijer 1990, 30-32)

Höijer's observation about television viewers provides us with an idea of the complexity of the process of meaning-generation by audiences. In order to explain and analyse the interaction between media texts, audiences, and the context in which audiences consume texts, many researchers employ media ethnographic methods to collect and record audience information. This kind of ethnographic approach has functioned as an important tool, especially for studying audiences' media consumption and the social meanings behind audiences' media-consumption activities within domestic settings. Examples include James Lull's study of the social use of television inside of family (1980), David Morley's examination of the social context of domestic television-viewing and how it differs for different members in the family (1986), and Ann Gray's research on women's use of the VCR within the household (1992). In other words, with the

help of reception analysis, audiences' interpretation and understanding of the media texts they consume could be revealed. However, how they use media technology to facilitate their consumption of media texts remains unanswered. By also employing an ethnography-inspired qualitative research method, however, I aim to interrogate the sociocultural perspectives of audiences' media-consuming activities through multi-platforms and their relations with other audience members, such as other family members, as in the cases of Lull's, Morley's and Gray's studies, in a wider context. The ethnographic approach to media audiences offers a pragmatic solution to the problem of how to collect and to analyse audiences' data. Gillespie observes the advantages of employing ethnography to study the social significance of media audiences: 'ethnography can deliver empirically grounded knowledge of media audiences in a way that other, less socially encompassing methods cannot.' (1995, 54) Additionally, James Lull points out the kinds of objectives that ethnography can help achieve.

The more elaborate method of ethnography, which is organized around (1) participant observation, (2) the use of informants, and (3) in-depth interview, can be used by the social researcher as an integrated means of understanding the everyday world of social groups, their patterns of interpersonal communication, and their use of the mass media (1990, 31).

Based on Lull's definition, participant observation by observing the family in the living room is required to obtain data about the informants' interpersonal communications or other social implications as they consumer media. The ideal would be to follow respondents and record their everyday routines, (not just their film-viewing activities), in order to have a complete comprehension of their interaction with media, with other people, and their other routines. However, film-viewing is different from television-viewing. Therefore, this

ethnography-inspired approach to the collection of data on audiences' multi-platform film-viewing practices differs from a direct ethnographic approach to study TV audiences, as follows.

For many Taiwanese audiences, television-viewing is still conducted in the living room as a family activity. Therefore, for researchers to adopt participant observation, they would have to set up a specific period of time, (for example two hours from 7 to 9 in the evening), to monitor how television is used by family members. However, film-viewing can be conducted alone, with friends or with family members, either within the household or outside at the cinema. Besides, based on the pilot survey findings, some of the respondents' film-related activities were conducted alone in their bedroom during late at night, without being planned in advance. Under these circumstances, participant observation would be clearly inappropriate. As a result, one of the important elements of the ethnographic approach, participant observation, was not used as a primary tool for collecting data in this project. Thus the research approach is not strictly ethnographic, although it is inspired by media ethnographic work.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that film-viewing data could not be gathered thoroughly. In an attempt to match the more traditional (and stricter) requirements of an ethnographic approach, which 'is based on a long-term and multifaceted engagement with a social setting,' (Miller and Slater 2000) the empirical research in this project combines different qualitative audience research techniques. These include in-depth interviews, questionnaires, group discussions and film consumption diaries kept by the respondents, (which function as a particular substitute for participant observation). Among these tools and

techniques, the Internet has become a convenient means to obtain audience data and gain an appreciation of long-term consumption patterns, as well as an additional source of data to face-to-face interviews or questionnaires. Online 'chat' programmes, such as MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, Google Talk, or Skype, have been found to be most useful as they enable researchers both to build up a relationship with their respondents and acquire the necessary qualitative data, without physically being in the field with the respondents. Practically, from the experience of the pilot study, it seemed that this kind of 'online qualitative data-collecting' process could be valuable (and efficient) before, during, and after the fieldwork. It also provides another means by which to inspect audiences' everyday routines and their use of media.

Before the fieldwork commenced, respondents needed to be contacted so that I could become familiar with their general backgrounds. This enabled me to have a clearer understanding of the respondents, without having to start from scratch, which saved a lot of time and was intended to provide a higher validity to the qualitative data gathered. During the empirical fieldwork period, the application of an 'online qualitative data-collecting' process was helpful in gathering more explanations or additional information about the respondents. After finishing the field survey, these Internet tools also functioned as part of the ongoing long-term, qualitative data-collecting process from which other supplementary data were collected also in some cases. Nevertheless, data on the older respondents or respondents without access to the Internet service could not be collected through the procedures of 'online collecting', so the traditional tool of the telephone was used for this purpose.

Definition of the Five Audience Age Groups

The data associated with the film industry was collected through interviews with personnel within the local film industry and from related written materials and literature. This set of data offers critical information about how institutional factors control and influence not only audience exposure to films (and their knowledge of films) but also audience film-viewing practices. The other set of essential data is provided by recruited film audience members and concerns their everyday multi-platform film-viewing practices. As this set of data offers primary and abundant information for later analysis, establishing the research design and the research methods was a critical stage for this project. Besides the 'age' factor, the related, but different factor of 'life stage' has to be taken into consideration. The respondents in this research were divided into the following groups:

Group A: Teenagers from 12 to 17 years old;

Group B: College or university students from 18 to 24 years old;

Group C: Viewers from 23 to 39 years old who are employed full-time or part-time and unmarried or married without children;

Group D: Viewers from 30 to 49 years old who are married and have children;

Group E: Viewers over 50 years old.

The constitution of these five groups was based on the findings from the pilot survey. As previously discussed, this showed that audiences from different generations tend to have different attitudes and preferences both in the selection of film. Therefore, consideration was given to the fact that in the existing education system in Taiwan, high school education normally starts at the age of 12 or 13, and

pupils graduate at 18 or 19. For Group A--the teenagers—eight respondents were high school students and one was studying in elementary school. It was appropriate not to include teenagers not at school, because over 90% of Taiwanese teenagers are school students.²⁴ If Taiwanese teenagers continue their studies after graduation from high school without interruption, they usually become college or university students at the age of 18 or 19, and finish their 4 years of undergraduate education when they are 22 or 23. Among the ten respondents in Group B, all are college or university students. 83.58% of Taiwanese young people from 18 to 21 are continuing their higher education.²⁵ Therefore, the sample comprising this Group B is biased towards university/college students, although they are the great majority in their age group.

The Group C is designed to include respondents from 23 to 39, who are working full-time, part-time or as freelancers, and who are single or married without children. Employment distinguishes them from the students of Group B. Childlessness distinguishes them from the parents of the Group D. Group D is for respondents who are parents and aged from 31 to 49. As we can see, there is a significant overlap in terms of age between Group C and Group D, because the 'life stage' factor related to the age has been considered as the most important determinant of generational cohort membership rather than age alone. Therefore, a 35-year-old, single respondent would be assigned in Group C, but a 35-year-old

²⁴ During the 2006-2007 academic year, 94.91% of Taiwanese teenagers from 12 years of age to 17 years of ages were studying in high school. (Data source: National Statistics R.O.C. [Taiwan], Fig. 5 of the website: <http://www.edu.tw/files/publication/B0013/index1.xls>, accessed on June 27, 2009)

²⁵ During the 2006-2007 academic year, 83.58% of Taiwanese young people from 18 years of age to 21 years of ages were studying in schools or institutions of higher education. (Data source: National Statistics R.O.C. [Taiwan], Fig. 5 of the website: <http://www.edu.tw/files/publication/B0013/index1.xls>, accessed on June 27, 2009).

father would be assigned to Group D. If we examine the actual sample of respondents more closely, the oldest single respondent of Group C is 39 years old and the youngest parent respondent of Group D is 34 years old, so the actual age overlap between Group C and Group D is only 5 years.

As for the mature respondents of Group E, the definition is simpler. Those who are over 50 years old are assigned into this group, no matter whether they are single or married, with or without children, employed or retired. However, there still exist some viewers that are not included in the discussion. For instance, graduate students, twenty-something parents, or forty-something single employees are absent. However, none of the respondents, who participated in in-depth interviews, were from these demographic groups. Despite the absence of representatives from these particular demographic groups, this research still benefits from working with respondents from a very wide range of social backgrounds, who were willing to spend time sharing their cinematic experiences and film-viewing routines. More detailed information about the respondents from the five groups can be found in Appendix B of this thesis. The detailed composition of each respondent group and related issues will also be given in the individual chapters about each group.

In addition to 'age' and the 'life stage' factors, there are also gender differences within the different age groups. For example, for Taiwanese university graduates, if they do not immediately go on to postgraduate education, females can start work but males are unable to obtain employment until they have spent a year and a half in military service. So, for many Taiwanese young males, there exists a stage of 'military service' in between the 'student' stage and the 'employment'

stage. The film-viewing habits and multi-platforms practices of men in military service have not been considered here, not least because it would require cooperation from the armed forces. This would be a project for further research in the future. For Taiwanese parents, mothers are commonly expected to take more responsibility for housework and taking care of children than fathers. How these gender differences shape respondents' film-viewing within each age group will be discussed further in the relevant chapters.

Another point worthy of mention is the ethnic issue in Taiwan, where the offspring of several waves of immigration from different Chinese provinces and native Taiwanese aborigines have come to form four major ethnic groups. These are divided as follows: Aborigines, composed of 14 different tribes and comprising 1.9% of the total population; Hoklo, from Fujian Province, the majority group in Taiwan with 73.3% of the total population; Hakka, from Guangdong Province with 13.5% of the total population; and Mainlanders, the soldiers and people from all over China who followed Chiang Kai-Shek to Taiwan in 1949, with 8% of the total population (Council for Hakka Affairs Executive Yuan, 2004). Taiwanese aborigines, belonging to the Austronesian populations, were the very first residents in Taiwan. That is why they are usually called, *yuanzhumin* (literally meaning 'original residents'). The majority of Hoklo and Hakka people emigrated to Taiwan from Fujian or Guangdong in China during the Qing dynasty. They are usually called *benshengren* (literally 'native residents'). As for Mainlanders, because they came from other Chinese provinces, are usually called, *waishengren* (literally 'residents from outside of Taiwan'). All the respondents were recruited in Taipei City where the proportion of Mainlanders is higher than that across the island (Council for Hakka Affairs Executive Yuan, 2004). However, according to the pilot

survey findings, there did not seem to be significant differences between Taipei respondents coming from different ethnic groups, in terms of their film-viewing practices, at least compared to the differences arising from the 'age' factor or the 'life style' factor. Therefore, this ethnic factor was not explained as a major influence in this research.

A final point to be noted about the respondents is that all of the names appearing in this thesis are false, in order to protect their anonymity. If the respondent actually uses an English name as his/her nickname, then a false English name is adopted for him/her. Otherwise, a false Chinese name was assigned.

The Data-Collecting Process

The process of collecting audience data was broken down into the following phases with different research techniques applied:

Phase 1: The Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was distributed at the Vie Show Cinema Taipei Xinyi in East Taipei and the SPOT Taipei Film House in Central Taipei, and also through 'snowball sampling' those pilot study respondents who had shown an interest in participating in the further survey during August to September 2006, in order to reach as wide a range of people as possible and to collect general film audience information. This included demographic data, the employment of the different audiovisual technologies they used as film viewing platforms, their film genre and film origin preferences, their everyday involvement with movies, and their willingness to participate in the follow-up phases of this project. At the same

time, an advertisement was also posted on several Internet movie discussion boards to recruit respondents.

Phase 2: In-depth interviews

One 45 minutes-to-an-hour in-depth interview was arranged, for respondents willing to take part in the further survey between September and October 2006. Most respondents were interviewed alone. If respondents were related to each other (family members, colleagues, classmates, or flatmates), then the interview was conducted in pairs or as a group. To observe the respondents' home environments, they were asked if the interview could take place in their homes. If the respondents did not feel comfortable having an 'intruder' entering their personal space, the interview was conducted at another venue of the respondent's choice. As the target respondents were all from Taipei, the language used was predominantly Mandarin. All interview sessions were tape-recorded and transcribed into Word files. After the coding and analysis process, all of the respondents' interview transcriptions were translated into English by the researcher for the purpose of report and analysis presentation in the thesis.

Phase 3: The film consumption diary

After the in-depth interview, respondents were asked to keep a film consumption diary for two weeks. In this diary, they were asked to record any film-related activities they did as part of their everyday routines, such as going to the cinema, renting DVDs, chatting with others about movies, downloading films from the Internet, watching movie trailers on television, or checking movie news and movie information. All of the respondents' diaries recovered were typed as Word files for later coding and analysing procedures. As with the interview data,

these were translated into English by the researcher.

Phase 4: The follow-up interview

After an initial analysis of the respondents' data from the previous phases, in order to gather more explanations or clarifications and further interrogate certain issues several short interviews were conducted via email, Internet chat programmes, or the telephone.

Questionnaire respondents, who were living in the Greater Taipei Area including Taipei City and Taipei County when the survey was conducted, were counted as qualified questionnaire respondents for further research. There were a total of 372 qualified questionnaires received. 59 questionnaire respondents were willing to participate in and successfully finished their in-depth interview sessions, which is a high success rate considering how demanding the in-depth interviews were. Among the 59 interview respondents, 48 of them returned their film consumption diaries afterwards.

4.4 Limitations of the Field Work

One of the major difficulties was the recruitment of respondents who were willing to participate in all four phases of the data collection process. This was especially problematic for participants from Groups D and E. First, because they do not go to the cinema as often as younger respondents from Group A and Group B, so it was not easy to locate them in front of ticket booths in order to pass out questionnaires. Even then, they had much less interest in participating than younger people. For participants from Group C, their interest in the survey was

higher than those of Groups D and E but it was the people in Groups A and B who showed the greatest interest. However, some of the teenagers who were interested in taking further part were prevented from participating further by their parents, who did not want their children to waste too much time on activities irrelevant to their school study. Respondents recruited via Internet movie discussion boards, and respondents who thought of themselves as movie fans, demonstrated a greater willingness to be involved in all four phases of the survey. However, the difficulty of recruiting participants who were willing to dedicate the time necessary to participate in all four phases of the data-collecting procedures means that the sample recruited for this project may be rather biased towards cinephiles.

In order to recruit more respondents, convenience sampling and snowball sampling were adopted to recruit people who had expressed a willingness to take part. One advantage of snowball sampling is that the researcher can gain access to respondents' social networks, such as their family members, friends, classmates, colleagues, roommates or any other people with whom one specific respondent goes to the cinema, talks about movies, or shares downloaded movie files and DVDs. By doing this, the movie-related networks of respondents could be constructed and analysed.

Furthermore, the respondents' self-recorded film consumption diaries offered rich data on their everyday film-viewing practices concerning all aspects of their movie-related activities. These could not be easily collected through in-depth interviews. They offered a double-checking mechanism to validate the data gathered from the interviews. They also functioned as an alternative to participant observation where the uncomfortable or unnatural 'interference' of the researcher/s

could affect the validity of the data. However, even two weeks of diary-keeping are still not long enough to monitor audiences' everyday film-viewing practices. This was especially the case for respondents from Group A because their film-viewing practices depended heavily on their school exam schedules. Their film-viewing during the semester before term exams was usually only minimal. However, it can be imagined that if the diary-keeping period had been extended, the number of returned diaries would have dropped significantly.

The appropriate scale of actual empirical research, the recruiting of respondents willing to participate in all four data-collecting procedures, the collecting of the data and the analysis of the different types of collected data were the major concerns and challenges in developing the research. Moreover, because this research does not deploy empirical audience research from any sites other than Taipei, it cannot cover audiences' viewing practices across Taiwan.

Chapter Five

Teenagers under Control: 'Film-Viewing' Regulated by Parents

5.1 Introduction

Television programmes (Gillespie 1995; Gauntlett and Hill 1999; Davis and Dickinson 2004; Chen 2004; Hagen 2007; Holloway and Green 2008) or computer/Internet (Livingstone 2002; Lee 2005; Livingstone and Bober 2006; Hagen 2007) are among the favourite topics of many of the existing studies about teenagers or young people's domestic use of media technologies or the consumption of media texts. There is not much research focused on contemporary teenagers' consumption of films. The main argument in this chapter is that, owing to the domestic restrictions placed on teenagers by parents regarding the use of media technology and the consumption of film texts, the teenage group has the least freedom to conduct film-viewing activities, despite their technical capability in using various film-viewing platforms. Through the examination of Taiwanese teenagers' film-viewing practices, we can grasp the intense pressure on them to study, their lifestyle and the authority of Taiwanese parents.

This group of teenage respondents includes six males and three females. Six of them are high school students. Two are junior high students. One is studying in elementary school. The film-viewing habits of the less than 1% of Taiwanese

teenagers from 12 to 17 not studying in school during the academic year 2006-2007,²⁶ are not represented in this sample. Because of the pressure to get into good universities and senior high schools, those questionnaire respondents studying in the third year of senior high school or the third year of junior high school when the survey was conducted did not participate in in-depth interview sessions. Consequently, the analysis of this teenage group does not cover their film-viewing activities. Additionally, six of the nine respondents come from middle-class families, and only three are from working-class backgrounds, meaning the sample is biased towards the middle classes. One of the positive features of this teenage sample is that it includes brothers and classmates, as well as individuals, making it possible to examine corresponding social implications. Further details on the respondents making up this teenage group can be seen in Appendix B.

In order to analyse this group's regulated and limited multi-platform film-viewing and its significance I will start by examining how Taiwanese parents set rules to control their teenage children's use of media technologies, and how they 'gate-keep' or 'censor' the movie content that their children consume. The gap between the kinds of movies that parents want their children to watch and the kinds of movies the teenagers enjoy watching when they have free choice will also be analysed. The restrictions placed upon teenagers reflect Taiwanese parents' attitudes towards their 'teenage children' whom they treat as 'children' rather than as 'young adults'. A discussion follows on teenagers' memories of watching cartoons as children and how similar their experiences were. Their changing movie

²⁶ Data source: National Statistics R.O.C. [Taiwan], Fig. 5 of the website: <http://www.edu.tw/files/publication/B0013/index1.xls>, accessed on June 27, 2009

preferences are then analysed. Entertainment genres are their favourite genres across different multi-platforms, because these movies offer them an enjoyable period away from study pressure during which they do not have to think too much about story logic while viewing.

The subsequent section explores why 'going to the cinema' as a way of getting away from parental control at home and, most importantly, of enjoying getting together with their peers is so attractive to them. The social function of cinema-going is more significant than film-viewing through other platforms for this group of teenagers. As for their parents, it appears that some of them think cinema-going is a more suitable activity for their children than most of the currently available media-related leisure activities for teenagers, such as Internet-surfing, online chatting, playing computer/video games, and watching television. This is due to the narrative and length of films and the parents' impressions of movie-watching. The following sections are dedicated to the scrutiny of issues around the respondents' film-viewing practices at home, including watching rented DVDs, cable movie channels Multimedia on Demand services (MOD), Internet downloading and checking movie information respectively. How and why they use these platforms practically and the social, cultural and economic implications of their film and media technology consumption in a wider context are also discussed. The conclusion discusses the meaning of 'film-viewing' for this high school student audience group.

It is argued that to these teenagers, 'film-viewing' is more of a social practice than a solitary activity for personal pleasure. 'Going to the cinema' offers an opportunity for them to socialise with friends without being monitored by parents.

On the other hand, domestic 'film-viewing' becomes a familial gathering instead of a personal leisure activity. For this group, based on the data collected from these teenage respondents there seems no significant gender difference in terms of the social functions of cinema-going, parental regulation of media use, and the teenage respondents' familiarity with domestic media technologies. The only apparent differences between the teenage boys and girls are the film genres they prefer. For example, the boys tend to enjoy slapstick comedies, such as Stephen Chow's comedies, more than the girls do.

After entering junior high school, Taiwanese teenagers begin to face serious pressures from parents and teachers, who push their children or students to focus on schoolwork and to study harder in order to get into a good senior high school and then a good university or college three years later. When these teenagers were elementary school students they had more play time. However, since entering high school, they have had a tighter school schedule, compared to their carefree elementary school days. It is not unusual for many high school students to attend 'cram schools' to study more or to refine their studying skills after their school day ends. Studying has become the focus of the everyday lives of both Taiwanese teenagers and their parents. Therefore, their time available for conducting many after school activities, especially leisure activities not related to school study, is significantly limited. In fact, the free time of many teenagers at home and their after-school activities are managed and controlled by their parents. Teenagers cannot go out with their friends without their parents' permission. They cannot watch television and movies, use the computer, or play video games when they want to. Hence, in terms of film-viewing activities, this group has the least time and freedom to conduct movie-related activities among all the five audience

groups under examination in this research.²⁷

However, the findings from analysis of the data obtained from the teenage respondents show that they enjoy hanging out with their friends outside without any parental oversight; this is especially the case for senior high school students. 'Home' is not a very exciting place to be because it is subject to so many parental regulations. Other than studying, there are not many fun activities to do at home, in particular on weekdays, if they are under their parents' surveillance. For example, not only is their time to watch television or movies at home restricted, but parents also control the television or movie content they watch. They cannot always watch whatever programmes they enjoy at home. Going to the cinema with friends or classmates becomes an excellent opportunity to escape from all these domestic regulations and to socialise with their peers. It also offers a chance to be like an 'adult', watching movies they really like and enjoy. On the other hand, with the exception of a few teenagers who have to (or are allowed to) work part-time by their parents, most teenagers are completely dependent on their parents financially. As a result, they are not able to go to the cinema very often compared to watching television or listening to music. In contrast, they have to plan to go to the cinema, which is like a rare special event for the holidays or after school term exams.

Technology-wise, this generation of Taiwanese teenagers grew up with computers, the Internet, DVDs, video consoles, and other digital equipment, in a similar way to many of their counterparts in Western countries. The operation and use of audiovisual equipment at home is not a daunting task at all and downloading,

²⁷ For detailed discussion on Taiwanese teenagers' studying pressure or Taiwanese parents' authority at home, please refer to articles from Wu, Yen-Ho (1998), Chang Yu-Wen & Lin, Wen-Ying (2003), Zhou, Wen-Jing (2004), and Chen, Jhao-Rong (2006).

burning DVDs, surfing the Internet, chatting with other people via the Internet or playing video and computer games are very natural activities for them, as they belong to this 'digital generation – a generation defined in and through its experience of digital computer technology' (Buckingham 2006, 1). The only thing that prevents them from using computer or audiovisual equipment is that it may be subject to a ban or 'gate-keeping' by their parents. Parental interference and domestic rules set up by parents have been among the topics of discussion in the literature, especially on children or young people's television-watching (Lull 1990; Holloway and Green 2008), VCR viewing (Wood 1993; Regan, 1996), use of Internet or computer (Downes 1999; Livingstone and Bober 2006), or use of domestic media technologies (Livingstone 2002; Hagen 2007; Heim et al. 2007). The majority of these discussions are concerned with children under 12 years of age rather than young adults or teenagers. But in the Taiwanese context, according to my research findings, many parents continue to apply strict rules to their teenage children's domestic media while there are in high school. They have to wait till their graduation from senior high school for greater freedom in the use of domestic media to consume the media content they like, something which will be given further analysis in the next chapter.

5.2 'Gate-keeping' by Parents: Control over Teenage Children's Use of the Media and the Consumption of Movies

My parents set rules for going out. For example, I have to come home for dinner with the whole family on weekends, unless I am meeting friends that I haven't seen for a long time. In that case, I have to tell my father in advance.

(Pei-Kai, 15, Male)

Taiwanese parents still exercise a very dominant position in their power relations with their children, especially before their children graduate from senior high school. Pei-Kai's case is not a unique example of domestic rules that are set up by parents to prevent their children from spending too much time playing outside or socialising with friends. In this respect, as Morley (1986) and Lull (1982) claim, television is an important identifier of power relations inside a family because 'television is an object around which patterns of domestic authority and resistance are regularly played out' (quoted in Gauntlet & Hill 1999, 83). Among the respondents in my survey, watching television has remained a site around which adult authority and teenage resistance occur in the domestic environment. As Chun-Yu, the mother of two high school boys, says concerning her dispute with her oldest son when he violated her regulation about watching television on weekdays:

They only watch television on weekends. They are usually busy studying during weekdays. But I couldn't quite control my oldest son; he is in senior high school now. He is more of a rebel than my younger son. He wants to watch television on weekdays, too. We had lots of quarrels over this issue. So sometimes, I just let him watch. (Chun-Yu, mother of 12-year-old junior high school boy, Chi-I)²⁸

On weekends or during holidays, the regulation of teenagers' leisure activities is not as strict as on weekdays. As far as the parents are concerned, the teenagers' free time on weekday evenings should be dedicated to studying. Yet, the children

²⁸ Chun-Yu's oldest son is a 3rd year junior high student. However, she did not want her oldest son to participate in this research because he has to devote most of his time to preparing for the entrance exam to senior high school next year. Chun-Yu thought it was better for him not to take part in this survey, in order to keep him away from distraction irrelevant to school.

need to find some form of relaxation and get away from schoolwork. It is also important for them to manifest their rebellion towards their parents' regulations as a sign of growing-up. As Buckingham argues, the meanings and pleasures obtained by young people through their media consumption goes against their parents' dominant position.

[Youth culture and children's culture] are formed through their relationships with the dominant 'adult cultures', and through the institutional contexts in which – and against which – they occur... Young people's use of the media is heavily determined by its regulation by adults such as parents and teachers, and by the more distant control of the State. However successful young people may be in their struggle to avoid this kind of regulation, the meaning and pleasures they derive from the media are bound to be at least partly defined by it (1993, 15).

The control that Taiwanese parents exercise over their teenage children is demonstrated in almost every aspect of their everyday lives, such as the arrangement of their daily schedules, rules about going out, and the selection of friends or classmates to hang out with. Therefore, the teenagers' everyday lives, and their culture, are established through their interaction with their parents and the rules they set up. The most significant example is perhaps demonstrated by the way that children fight with their parents over the use of media technology. For instance, mobile phones are a very common possession for Taiwanese teenagers. Parents allow their teenage children to have one for the purpose of surveillance and control, because they enable parents to check-up on their children's safety and give orders when their children go out. However, for the teenagers mobile phones serve a communication function with their friends. As a 16-year-old senior high school boy (Mark) recounted after receiving a mobile phone call from his dad while I was interviewing him:

When I'm not at home, my parents like to use my mobile to check where I go, whom I'm with, and to ask me not to hang out with friends for too long. I think the only reason they allow me to carry a mobile is to give me orders when I'm not home (Mark).

Parents' Control over Children's Domestic Use of Media Technology

In addition to television, for contemporary teenagers, the other important site to fight against their parents' media use rules is the computer, as computers have become another must-have object in current domestic settings in Taiwan.²⁹ According to the responses received in the questionnaire from respondents in this group, computers and an Internet connection was a feature of every one of the respondents' households. Inevitably parents wish to establish regulations on the use of the computer at home. Connie, the mother of a 15-year-old boy (Ting-Wen) and 14-year-old boy (Ting-Wu) discussed her weekday computer use regulations with her boys:

Ting-Wen: We usually use the computer at weekends.

Ting-Wu: You should say 'play' on the computer at weekends.

Ting-Wen: I can check emails on weekdays.

Ting-Wu: I can't. I can only secretly use the computer on weekdays.

Connie: I have told them not to surf the Internet during weekdays. They can only check emails on weekdays. But if they use a computer secretly or break these rules, I can't really do anything about it. However, if they finish their assignments or housework as I told them to, they can use the computer for a while.

²⁹ According to a survey published in 2005 in Taiwan by NII (National Information Infrastructure Enterprise Promotion Association), the percentage of Taiwanese households equipped with a computer is 86.9%. The percentage of Taiwanese households with an Internet connection is 81.2%. (http://www.nii.org.tw/about/newsc_collect.asp?NewsY=2005, accessed on December 06, 2008)

This conversation shows the function of the computer for today's teenagers as both a form of entertainment and communication. As for parents, they certainly recognise the importance of knowing how to use computers and its essential position in teenagers' everyday lives. What they are afraid of most is that their children will spend too much time playing with computers, which might impact on their studies at home on weekdays, as in the case of Norwegian parents' 'mixed feeling about their children's use of computers, as PCs can be both tools for the future and sources of knowledge and (sometimes addictive) game machine.' (Hagen 2007, 388) In addition, where the computer is located in the household it is also a confrontational site for both parents and their teenage children, as many parents today believe that the computer has a more negative impact on their children than television. As two 15-year-old senior high school girls, I-Jing and Yu-Xin, and their ex-classmate, Mark, mentioned when discussing how their parents regulate the time they can spend on, and the location of, the computer compared with their television watching regulations:

I-Jing: My parents definitely regulate my use of the computer at home.

Mark: Of course, they do. It's impossible for them not to do.

I-Jing: I'm not allowed to use the Internet all evening.

Yu-Xin: I can't even touch the computer.

I-Jing: My computer is located in the living room. They always know whether or not I'm using the computer. For example, my mom asked me yesterday when she found out that I was chatting with my classmate on the Internet. She said, 'haven't you chatted enough at school? Why do you keep on chatting with her on the Internet at home?'

Mark: I don't care about their rules. My computer is on my desk in my room.

Yu-Xin: But they wouldn't care too much about watching television.

I-Jing: My parents don't regulate my time watching television on weekends. However, I can't watch a lot because they always watch television as well.

Mark: They do regulate my watching television as well. Yet, when I'm watching, they won't change it to another channel. In my place, whoever gets

the remote control first gets to decide what to watch.

For parents, monitoring their children's television viewing is not difficult, as the television set is usually placed in a shared space at home, such as the living room. This makes it easy to see when and what programmes their children watch. Parents with teenagers or elementary school kids are especially reluctant to put television sets in their children's bedrooms, because they do not want their children to spend too much time on watching television alone in their bedrooms. Consequently, it is very uncommon for a teenager to have his own television set in his room, which echoes Holloway and Green's findings of Australian parents' 'reluctance to locate television sets in their children's bedrooms'. (2008, 47) As a matter of fact, none of the respondents from this group had a television set in their bedroom. Television-watching remains, for most of the time, a family activity in the living room.

However, computers are usually placed by parents on the desk in their children's bedrooms, because they consider that they serve as educational tools for study and writing school works. The knowledge of how to use a computer is a must-have skill for their children. Yet, for these teenagers, it is specifically the entertainment and communication functions of computers that are the main reasons why they want to use computers at home, rather than treating it as a studying tool. The television set is usually in the shared space at home, and it is easy for every family member to see what programme is on TV. But because the computer is usually located in the 'private' space of the bedroom and because of its small screen and multi-tasked functions,³⁰ it is difficult for parents to monitor their

³⁰ 'Multi-tasked' functions here mean that all kinds of different programmes could be opened at the same time. Thus, it is easier for these teenagers to click back to

children's computer use, especially if they do not have enough IT knowledge or expertise. Therefore, parents still need to find a way to monitor their children's computer use and stop them from using the computer for too long and for 'non-permitted' usages, in case they are only 'playing' on it in a non-educational way. For instance, in the case of I-Jing, the easiest way for her parents to monitor her use of the computer is to place the computer in the living room just like the television set. Furthermore, the impact that watching television programmes has on children is less serious than the impact of using a computer from a parental perspective in terms of the consumption of information from the Internet. How this generation of teenagers obtains movie information through channels different from their parents and their parents' worry of losing track of their use of computers and the Internet can also be demonstrated in the following example.

Chun-Yu: I usually get movie information or news from papers or the radio, especially the radio. Whatever I do at home, I can always listen to the radio. It's very convenient for me.

Chi-I: I get it from the advertisements on the Internet. I can also look at the latest comic books on the Internet. I don't know how to download movies. I know how to download games, though.

Chun-Yu: When he is using the computer, I have no idea what he's doing.

Chun-Yu shows her reliance on the radio as her main source of information, and it also serves as company for her when she is doing her household duties. As for Chi-I, the computer and Internet are not only his main source of information but they also serve as his source of entertainment. Chun-Yu knows nothing more about what her son is doing on the computer other than when and how much time he spends on it. She does not know what kinds of websites or information her son

permitted use of computer, such as writing homework, while their parents are checking.

could get and consume via the Internet. That is probably what frightens these parents most about the impact that computer use has on their children. The varying abilities of parents and children to use new media at home further intensify parents' worries and their determination to regulate their children's media use. Nevertheless, instead of trying to narrow the knowledge gap by learning how to operate this domestic media equipment, many parents would rather lay down rules to demonstrate their parental authority. Some parents do not even bother to learn how to use the digital equipment they have at home. Pei-Kai expresses his total control over all these digital gadgets at home with pride: 'all this audiovisual equipment and the computer at home are managed by me'. And he adds, 'My parents don't know how to use them.'

Parents' Control over Children's Consumption of Media Texts

In addition to rules about access to the computer and television, some parents also set up censorship procedures to 'gate-keep' the media content that their children consume, not only for television programmes but also for the movies that these teenagers watch on DVDs and cable channels.

Connie: We go to the DVD rental shop together. I will let them pick whatever they want to see but I make the final decision (laugh).

Ting-Wu: She always gets to decide what movies to rent. That's not fair.

Connie: If they desperately want to see movies they like, we will rent cop movies, war movies, or sci-fi movies.

Ting-Wu: It rarely happens recently.

Connie: It rarely happens recently?

Ting-Wen: Yeah, you vetoed them all.

Interviewer: You enjoy movies chosen by your mother, or by yourselves more?

Ting-Wen: Of course by ourselves.

Ting-Wu: Agreed.

Connie: They are so stubborn. If I didn't choose films for them, they would only watch cop movies or sci-fi movies endlessly. Personally, I don't enjoy cop movies. But I still have to watch them sometimes.

Ting-Wu: We watch cable movies, especially when mother is not home after I come home from school.

Connie: They usually watch cable movies on weekends, or whenever I'm not home.

Ting-Wen: We have to watch them secretly, especially those Chinese movie channels she doesn't allow us to watch.

Ting-Wu: So we usually watch the Discovery Channel (laugh).

Ting-Wen: That's the 'legal' channel for us.

Connie: I think most of the Chinese movies playing on cable channels are nonsense. If you have time, it's better to watch programmes on Discovery or the National Geographic Channel.

This example highlights parental concern about meaningless entertainment movies, which they perceive as a waste of time. However, these teenagers enjoy these entertainment movies and try to break their parents' rules and watch the movies they like whenever they have the opportunity to do so. This echoes what Livingstone states about the meaning of spending leisure time 'well' from both the parents' and children's sides of the story.

While parents are concerned with spending time 'well' and with arranging the leisure timetable so as not to 'waste' time, their children are concerned to find free, unstructured time for play, for friends and for media, employing various tactics of evasion to achieve this. (2002, 108)

Furthermore, in this case, Connie shows her disapproval of watching action movies, cop movies and Chinese-language comedies, which she sees as 'meaningless'. She thinks of these movies as serving only an entertainment function, unlike programmes on the Discovery Channel or National Geographic Channel.

Programmes from these channels are seen to serve better as educational tools than genre movies. Similar findings of parental concern about youngsters spending too much time on 'low cultural TV programmes' can be found in Hagen's research on Norwegian families (2007), which demonstrates this cross-cultural issue of media use as one of the significant means for parents to exercise their authority over their children at home. However, teenagers' domestic film-viewing and Norwegian parents' attitudes towards the content of the movies they watch are not included in Hagen's research. The findings here show that the different meanings of 'good movies', as defined by parents and children, constitute another gap between them which is not easy to close.

5.3 Teenagers' Favourite Film Genres

Childhood Memories of Watching Cartoons

When I was a kid, we had a VCR at home. My parents used to buy cartoon tapes and play them for me at home (Yu-Xin).

The first movie I ever watched was Hayao Miyazaki's *My Neighbor Totoro* (I-Jing).

I think I lived through my childhood with cartoons. I watched nothing but animations (Mark).

Respondents from this audience group were born between 1990 and 1994, when the VCR player had become basic equipment in many Taiwanese households and digital viewing formats, such as VCDs, were just starting to emerge. For many parents, cartoons provide a very effective means of focusing kids' attention. With the prevalence of the VCR, it became very natural for this generation to watch

cartoons via videotape at home when they were kids, and their responses showed that they have strong memories of them. Apart from Disney cartoon features, Japanese *anime* films, especially Hayao Miyazaki's films, were among the popular choices for parents to play on their VCRs for their little children, because of their poignant and often environmentally conscious themes, adorable characters, and most importantly, non-violent content in comparison with other Japanese *anime* cartoons.

I took them to the cinema more often when they were younger than I do right now. Because there are many channels to watch movies now, you don't really have to go to the cinema. At that time, most of the movies they watched were movies for children, such as cartoons by Disney. I think Disney cartoons are good movies with a good soundtrack. I enjoyed them myself too. We seldom watched Japanese *animés* with the exception of Hayao Miyazaki's works because he is the most famous. Content-wise, his works are better for children than other Japanese *animés*. (Chun-Yu, mother of Chi-I)

Apparently, when these teenagers were kids, they had to watch whatever their parents chose for them. During the 1990s, Disney cartoon features were the parents' most popular choices when taking their kids to the cinema for family outings, especially after the success of films like *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Lion King*. These movies were entertaining for adults and children alike. In the 1990s, there were only one or two American cartoon features per year. This made their releases special events for parents, who took their children to the cinema, even if they only went once or twice a year. Cartoon features are released so frequently now that their releases are not special events anymore. Apart from Disney cartoons, Hayao Miyazaki's films are an important part of these teenagers' collective memories, since many remember watching them as kids on their television sets at home via videotapes.

As these children have grown up and became teenagers, not only have they started going to the cinema with friends or classmates rather than their parents, but they have also started to feel attracted by movies other than cartoons.

My memory of the first movie I watched seems to be *The Lion King*. When I was child, almost all the movies that I watched were cartoons. I barely watched horror movies at that time. I used to watch movies with my parents. I started going to the cinema with classmates after entering junior high school. (Pei-Kai)

When I was in elementary school, I remember most of the movies I watched were cartoons, especially those comedy cartoons. When I went to junior high school, I started to watch movies other than cartoons. I remember watching that movie with 3 girls on HBO. Oh, that's *Charlie's Angels*. Those 3 girls were so cool. (Shu-Rong, 16, Female)

Many still enjoy watching cartoons, with 6 out of 9 respondents from this group expressing their passion for them. However, there are now other genres of movies that provide different kinds of entertainment and meanings for these adolescents.

Teenagers Watch Genre Movies for Entertainment and Laughs

To be honest, my boys don't quite like movies we adults like. For example, they love Jackie Chan, Jet Li, or even Stephen Chow's movies. I remember once my old classmate asked me to go to the SPOT Taipei to watch a Vietnamese movie called *Three Seasons* together. Once he heard the name of the movie, he showed no interest in going with us (Chun-Yu, mother of Chi-I).

If cartoons are seen as the perfect family movies for parents and little children to watch together, teenagers are often interested in film genres very different from the movies their parents enjoy, as in the example of Chun-Yu and Chi-I. Chi-I likes movies full of action, fighting, and fun. He shows no interest in dramas or

melodramas. He can easily sense what kind of movie it is from the title. These teenagers interest in a movie is not based on its country of production, or format, but genre or categories that they define by themselves.

Chi-I: I don't like French movies.

Chun-Yu: Don't you love *Taxi 3*?

Chi-I: That's different. That one is a comedy.

Chun-Yu: He only loves comedies. He couldn't stand watching other French movies with a more artistic style. He doesn't even enjoy French cartoons like *Raining Cats and Frogs*, because they are not entertaining and funny enough.

What Chi-I emphasises here is that he likes movies with more action and fun. To Chi-I, French movies might represent dramas or melodramas without too much entertainment or fun. For movies like *Taxi*, although it is a French movie, it is not the kind of French movie towards which he has a stereotyped reaction. When he picks up DVDs at a rental shop, he still looks for movies with action and laughs:

When my mom takes me to DVD rental shops, I always pick Hollywood movies, especially action movies. I also love comedies, such as Stephen Chow's movies and French comedies (Chi-I).

From a parental perspective, they know what their children really enjoy watching and they certainly have their own criteria for what constitutes a good movie for their children. Apart from the Hollywood movies that the children love, their parents still try to find a compromise between their perception of good movies and their children's favourite movies. As for the children, when they go to the cinema with their parents, they make a compromise and accept movies that make both sides happy.

Connie: As a matter of fact, my sons prefer Hollywood movies. The only non-Hollywood movie they enjoyed watching was *Taxi*.

Ting-Wen: No. We also went to see *The Butterfly* and *The March of the Penguins*.

Connie: Oh, I remember taking them to the cinema to watch those movies. I know they wouldn't disagree with watching movies about the environment.

One possible reason for these teenagers to prefer action or comedy movies is that these movies offer them entertainment and laughs, which they cannot easily find through other activities, such as reading and watching television. Especially when they have heavy school study schedules and are put under pressure by adults, these entertainment movies provide them with 90 minutes of relaxation and escapism. The joyful feelings they have after watching comedies gives them some relief:

The reason that I like watching comedies at the cinema is because of the good atmosphere. Everybody seems happy (I-Jing).

Besides, for this audience, which does not have a great knowledge of the diversified themes and unconventional narratives of art house movies (European films in particular), it is difficult to develop an interest in watching art films or dramas, whether at the cinema or at home, as we see in the case of Chi-I. Shu-Rong could not recall much about her experience of watching European movies, nor did she know if any of her friends are into European movies:

I don't remember watching any European movies. I don't know any of my friends are watching European movies. When we go to the cinema, we watch Hollywood movies most of the time. (Shu-Rong)

Some of the teenage respondents worry about getting confused and not being able to follow the plot or storyline of those kinds of movies, especially after spending a lot of their money and time in front of the screen watching the film. When watching intensely narrative drama movies, they have to focus on the story. They

often find that these kinds of movies do not provide them with entertainment, relaxation, and the laughs they need, especially when watching them with a group of friends:

Basically, many genres of movies are fine with me. But you have to pay more attention to drama movies and think about plots while watching. I feel tired trying to catch up with the story (Pei-Kai).

Watching movies with entertainment value and many laughs might not offer these teenagers many meaningful ideas to talk about or discuss after watching the film, but they help them to relax after school. When going to the cinema with friends, Hollywood movies, such as comedies, action and adventure movies, or even horror movies are therefore their favourites.

The other possible reason for these teenagers to prefer Hollywood movies at the cinema might be their parents' censorship of the movie content they can consume at home, as the example of the brothers Ting-Wen and Ting-Wu shows. These teenagers cannot choose to watch the movies they most enjoy at home. Therefore, whenever their parents do not go to the cinema with them, it gives them an opportunity to watch the movies they really enjoy:

I usually go to the cinema during holidays or in the summer, and sometimes after finishing my term exams. Since junior high school, I have been going to the cinema with classmates. We usually watch comedies, funny movies, or sci-fi movies and war movies (Ting-Wen).

Ting-Wen points out three critical elements involved in teenagers' cinema going activities: genres, available time, and company. This suggests three factors determining these teenagers cinema-going: the film text, the viewer's personal schedule, and the social function of cinema-going.

A final point to be discussed about preferred types of movies before analysing cinema-going practices is that, although the teenage boys like slapstick Chinese-language comedies, some of the girls seem to have slightly different comedy preferences.

I-Jing: I've watched some of Stephen Chow's comedies. They are OK to me. I'm not a big fan of Stephen Chow like Mark. I personally enjoy comedies, such as Anne Hathaway's *The Princess Diaries*. I would like to go and see Anne Hathaway's recent movie, *The Devil Wears Prada*.

Yu-Xin: I've watched *The Parent Trap* on rented DVD. I like this kind of movie, a bit funny and a bit moving. I want to see *The Devil Wears Prada*, too. We should go to see this movie together after the mid-term exam.

Mark: I'm not interested in Anne Hathaway movies. I would rather watch Stephen Chow's old movies on cable.

According to this conversation, the two girls enjoy comedies with teenage girls in the leading roles, instead of slapstick comedies with stories centred on male characters, such as Stephen Chow movies. Female teenagers, such as I-Jing and Yu-Xin, can relate more to movies about young females. Comedies featuring popular young female stars like Anne Hathaway or Lindsay Lohan can draw young teenage girls' attention more easily than movies featuring Stephen Chow.

5.4 Going to the Cinema: A Legitimate Way to Escape

Parental Control

When my friends ask me out to watch movies, I would definitely go out even to watch movies I don't like, because I don't want to stay home (Mark).

With regulations on the use of the computer and television viewing set up by their parents, who are concerned to ensure they finish their studies, teenagers sometimes

feel stressed and bored at home. Being at home seems uninteresting, especially when parents are also there. Without much time and space for their favourite leisure activities and with parents constantly watching them, 'going out' enables them to get away from school work, to hang out with friends, and to avoid parental monitoring, as Livingstone argues. 'Indeed, this desire to go out with friends, away from the family, was a recurring theme...Going out is seen as offering independence, sociability and opportunities for exploration, with exciting potential for the unexpected' (2002, 81). 'Going to the cinema' offers a good 'excuse' to get permission from parents to go out with friends. For these teenagers, 'watching movies' therefore might not be the most important purpose when they 'go to the cinema':

I remember once when I was studying at junior high school, we had a whole bunch of friends that went to the cinema to watch *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The front two rows of seats were almost fully occupied by us. We were very loud and noisy. No one seemed to really watch that movie. (Shu-Rong)

'Watching movies' might be the notional centre of why they 'go to the cinema', yet, hanging out with peers is the most essential part of the activity. That is why, in their responses, both Mark and Shu-Rong expressed the fact that the most important aspect was going out with friends, rather than attentively enjoying movies. For the same reason, when I-Jing is asked by her parents to take her younger brother to the cinema, she is unhappy because she feels that her happy time out with her friends would be ruined by the addition of her younger brother:

My parents don't like watching movies. If I tell them that I'm going to the cinema, they ask me to take my younger brother along. That's what I can't stand most. I used to say 'yes' before. But I say 'no' now. (I-Jing)

Going to the cinema is not an activity that these teenagers can do very often. With an intense school schedule and study pressures, summer holidays and the weekend after end-of-term exams are usually the only times they are able to go to the cinema. When asked to keep a film consumption diary for two weeks, almost every respondent expressed their concern about not being able to conduct any kind of movie-related activity during that period before their exams. Some parents also remarked that 'going to the cinema' was a rare event for their high school children:

We seldom go to the cinema now, probably twice a year at most, because there are lots of movies available for rent, which is very convenient. Besides, they don't have much time available to go to the cinema. They have other activities at weekends. If someone recommends a specific new movie, I will consider taking them to the cinema (Chun-Yu, mother of Chi-I).

They go to the cinema probably two or three times per semester for those premiere blockbusters, either with us or with their classmates (Connie, mother of Ting-Wen & Ting-Wu).

According to the respondents' diaries, only two managed to go to the cinema during their fortnight of diary-keeping, which supports these parents' testimony.

I'm a grown-up now. I usually go to the cinema with friends, hardly ever with my family now. Going to the cinema is expensive, especially for the whole family (Pei-Kai).

For junior high school respondents, going to the cinema with parents is normal and acceptable. However, they prefer going with friends or classmates, which is a way of showing their independence. For parents, taking the whole family to the cinema is quite expensive, which is one reason why they rarely go as a family, as Pei-Kai and Shu-Rong mention:

My family rarely goes to the cinema together, so I usually go to the cinema with classmates. When we watch movies together, some of my friends choose movies based on the stars in them. For me, storylines and trailers are more important (Shu-Rong).

Shu-Rong here provides us with some insights on how teenagers choose movies to watch together at the cinema. Other than the previously discussed genre choice, the star is an important point in selling the movie to teenagers. Not surprisingly, most of the stars they mentioned during the interview were Hollywood stars, such as Johnny Depp, Angelina Jolie, Eddie Murphy, and Sean Penn. For non-Hollywood stars, the most frequently mentioned was Stephen Chow. Pei-Kai also explained that he thinks movies with big stars are a safer choice, especially when choosing movies for a group of friends, because the risk of watching a 'bad' movie is decreased. To avoid being 'blamed' by friends for choosing a 'bad' movie, he chooses movies with some specific features as 'safe bets':

When going to the cinema with friends, I'm the one who proposes several movies for them to choose from, because I check movie information often. Generally speaking, I choose famous movies with a good story and big stars first. If they [film producers] have spent large amounts of money on superstars, why would they make a bad movie and lose money? (Pei-Kai)

Choosing a 'good' movie to watch with his friends also allows Pei-Kai the chance to be identified as a 'group leader' for cinema-going, and this motivates him to look for more news about films. This feeling of belonging to and identifying with a group of peers resulting from engagement with cinema-going offers an example of how cinema-going has social significance for these teenage respondents. Watching movies via other domestic platforms like DVD and cable movies could not provide this.

Moreover, the origins of films and their genres are still among the most important criteria when selecting movies. Hollywood movies with their high penetration rates in Taiwanese film market are, without a doubt, their favourites. When it comes to non-Hollywood movies, horror movies are amongst favourites:

I've seen *One Missed Call*. I like Japanese horror movies (Ting-Wu).

Most of the movies I watch at the cinema are American movies. I don't watch Japanese and Korean movies at the cinema, either, with the exception of ghost movies. Especially when going out with friends, we pick ghost movies to watch. I like ghost movies from Japan. I enjoy the scary atmosphere created by Japanese ghost movies. However, I don't like American horror movies so much, because they are too bloody and gross for me (Pei-Kai).

Pei-Kai gives one reason why the teenagers enjoy Japanese horror movies more than American ones. Many other Asian-made horror movies also appeal to them, not only at the cinema but also on other viewing platforms. For these teenagers, their genre preferences also include movies that can only be fully enjoyed on the big screen with surround-sound audio system equipment at the cinema, which offers them 90 minutes of pleasure and entertainment free from parental control in the public-but-private, darkened cinema hall with friends. This also indicates the special relationship between teenage film audiences, Hollywood genre movies, and cinemas.

5.5 Film-Viewing at Home as a Family Activity

According to the interview data and the diary records from this group of teenagers, film-viewing is seldom a solitary activity either at the cinema or at

home. When they watch movies at the cinema, it is a social activity conducted with friends. When they watch movies at home, through DVDs, film-viewing becomes a familial activity. Only on a few rare occasions, when they are home alone or their parents are busy with other domestic work, can they watch movies alone without any parental restriction. However, while film-viewing at home for these teenage respondents is predominantly a social activity with family members, there are still different practices and meanings behind their domestic film-viewing via different platforms, namely DVD, cable movie channels, and MOD (Multimedia on Demand).

Watching Rented DVD Movies on Weekends as Part of a Family Movie Night

There are more options for me when renting DVDs, including Hong Kong movies. I don't usually watch Hong Kong movies at the cinema. Because we have a home entertainment system at home, for Hong Kong movies watching them at home is good enough for me. In addition, I have seen the comic book version of the recent Japanese hit movie, *Death Note*. I like the story but I think it's a little bit expensive to watch this movie at the cinema. I'd rather wait for the DVD release. I usually watch DVD movies or HBO movies at home with my family on Saturday and Sunday evenings (Pei-Kai).

We [my friends and I or my family and I] usually go to the cinema during summer vacation or on the day I finish my term exams. Watching rented DVDs has become of the most common ways for us [my family] to watch films (Ting-Wu).

DVD offers people an opportunity to watch movies that they do not feel the urgency to watch at a first-run cinema, as Pei-Kai mentions above. For these teenage respondents, popular Hollywood movies are their top choice when going to the cinema but non-Hollywood movies and certain other genres of movies, such

as dramas, are preferred when choosing films from a DVD rental shop. Watching movies through rented DVDs is easy for them. The ratio of respondents from this group who chose DVD rental as their primary viewing platform is high: 7 out of 9 said that DVD-renting is their primary film-viewing channel. This functions quite differently from 'going to the cinema' as a way to socialise with friends and escape parental control. Watching DVDs serves as a tool to spend time with the family and to enjoy a family movie night.

What makes 'watching DVDs' different from 'watching television' is the time schedule when watching DVDs together. It usually happens on a Friday evening or at weekends. Most of the time, the DVD movies they watch are specially rented either by the teenagers themselves or by their parents, and is a different experience from watching cable movies or other television shows, with their obvious scheduling restrictions. All of the family gets together when watching a DVD.

Connie: We rent DVD movies every two weeks. We usually rent a DVD on Friday evening, usually one movie at a time. We always watch DVD movies together.

Ting-Wu: Dad goes to bed half way through.

Ting-Wen: He only makes it till 9pm.

Even the busy working father, after a day's work, joins the family for their DVD movie night despite his inability to stay up for the whole film. Several reasons could explain the phenomenon of watching DVD movies as a domestic family event. First, it is unusual for these teenagers to rent DVD movies alone. They either go to DVD rental shops with their family or have their parents or elder siblings rent some specific movies for them, due to their limited financial resources.

Most respondents in this group have to rely on their parents for financial support. Second, because the DVD player is usually associated with the television set and located in the living room, when a DVD movie is playing, all the family members in the living room have no choice but to watch the movie. These teenagers are also allowed only a limited amount of time on the computer and so it is not common for them to watch DVD movies via the computer. Unlike television programmes, DVD movies are not watched on a daily basis. Thus, watching DVD movies is a special event, instead of a regular activity. Another interesting use of DVD movies is described by Shu-Rong:

We have recently been renting DVDs every week, because my dad terminated our cable television service. With cable television, my younger brother and sister would watch television all day without doing anything else (Shu-Rong).

Her father uses DVD movies as an alternative to his children's addiction to television. With hundreds of channels available on cable and the 24 hours non-stop flow of programmes, Shu-Rong's father feels that it is better to reduce the time his children spend watching television. With rented DVD movies, he can schedule movie watching when he thinks it is right, usually on weekends or during holidays. In this way, he hopes to force his children to concentrate more on schoolwork during the week. By doing this, Shu-Rong's father demonstrates traditional patriarchal authority by taking advantage of the DVD's specific features of giving users the choice of what to watch and when to watch it. This means he does not have to worry about monitoring his children's access to non-stop programmes on cable channels. He can bypass the cable channel managers and arrange his own family viewing schedule.

Cable Movies: An Instant Source of Laughs

I watch foreign movie channels more often than Chinese-language movie channels. The movies on the Chinese-language channels are shown over and over, so I can see Stephen Chow almost every day. I still watch Chinese-language movie channels sometimes, but there are good movies playing on HBO everyday (Pei-Kai).

I usually watch comedies at home because they make me laugh so often and so loud. I would feel embarrassed at the cinema. I prefer the Star Movie Channel because they play more comedies (Mark).

Similar to cinema-going and 'watching DVD movies', 'watching cable movies' is not a regular activity that they can conduct day in day out. Only 3 out of 9 respondents selected cable movie channels as one of their primary film-viewing platforms. Only 2 of the 5 respondents who kept a diary recorded watching cable movies. The primary reasons are that they have limited available time after school and that 'watching television' is under parental surveillance. However, when they find an opportunity to flip the channels, it is the Chinese-language comedies that are favourite source of instant laughs at home; this is especially the case for the boys. They enjoy watching Stephen Chow's classic Hong Kong comedy films above all else on cable movie channels. They remember his funny lines and still laugh after countless repeat viewings. Recently, cable movie channels which specialise in Hong Kong and Taiwanese movies begun showing Chow's comedies dubbed with a Taiwanese dialect, which draws more local audiences to watch. This was also reflected in Pei-Kai's diary, as he accidentally found Stephen Chow's *Forbidden City Cop* in the Taiwanese dialect version playing on a cable channel. He thought it was even more hilarious than the Mandarin version he had seen before. Dubbing them into Taiwanese dialect could give old movies some fresh

touches and add local flavour whose 'cultural proximity' could appeal to a wider Taiwanese audience base.

Apart from Stephen Chow's Hong Kong comedies, Taiwanese director, Chu Yin-Ping's old commercial children's comedies and military-training comedies are also seen as a good source of laughs on cable channels. 12-year-old Bryan happened to see Chu Yin-Ping's *Naughty Boys and Soldiers* playing on cable and wrote in his diary, 'this is a very funny movie'. For this group of teenagers, cable movies were the only platform available for them on which to watch Taiwanese movies, given the fact that they can watch cable movies without paying anything (their parents having paid the cable fees). Since the 1990s, not many Taiwanese movies could be found showing at the cinema. Most parents would rather select cartoons from Disney or from Japan when taking their children to the cinema or to rent DVD movies. Therefore, cable movies have become the primary means for these teenagers to access Taiwanese movies, as Pei-Kai points out:

I seldom watch Taiwanese films. Oh, I've seen *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Comes the Black Dog*. There are only a few famous Taiwanese films. I've never watched Taiwanese films at the cinema, only on cable channels (Pei-Kai).

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, indeed, as Pei-Kai thinks, there were no famous and popular Taiwanese movies that could appeal to these teenagers and, most importantly, their parents, for whom Taiwanese movies are either art house films for cinephiles or nonsense 'slapsticks' with no educational purpose. Therefore since these teenagers' childhood, it has not been a common practice for their parents to either bring them to the cinema to watch *guopian* or to rent *guopian* DVDs to watch at home. Under these circumstances, *guopian* channels

from cable TV have become the only source for teenagers to watch Taiwanese movies, especially regularly re-run comedies, such as *Naughty Boys and Soldiers*, as mentioned by Bryan.

I've seen some classic Taiwanese films from the Shaw Brothers, you know, those Kung-fu films (Mark).³¹

Ting-Wu: Taiwanese films are all about military training.

Connie: There are probably some Hong Kong films dubbed in Mandarin that you thought were Taiwanese movies.

Ting-Wu: No, no, no, I can tell the differences by looking at the weapons used in the film. Besides, any films that starred Andy Lau and Stephen Chow are Hong Kong films. They don't appear in Taiwanese films.

All Hong Kong movies are dubbed into Mandarin when playing on cable *guopian* channels. Therefore, some teenage respondents, such as Mark, easily mistake every old kung-fu movie as Taiwanese. By the same token, Ting-Wu's mother, Connie, also thinks that it is difficult for her children to identify Taiwanese movies from Hong Kong movies. As for Ting-Wu, based on his viewing experiences of Chinese-language movies, he has already developed a unique way to separate Hong Kong movies from Taiwanese ones. First, props used in Hong Kong movies apparently look more real than those found in Taiwanese movies, especially in military-training comedies, which indicates that the different production values of Taiwanese and Hong Kong movies are noticeable to these teenagers. Second, it is difficult for the teenagers to find big stars they are familiar with in Taiwanese movies. When they find Stephen Chow or Andy Lau in any Mandarin-speaking movies, they know that they are Hong Kong movies. It is also one of the weaknesses of recent Taiwanese movies that they lack star power. That is why

³¹ Mark mistakenly thinks classic movies produced by Hong Kong's Shaw Brothers are Taiwanese movies here.

Shu-Rong has lost interest in Taiwanese movies:

I seldom watch Taiwanese films because people in those films are weird, not attractive at all (Shu-Rong).

Not only were the actors in Taiwanese movies that Shu-Rong watched people she could not identify with, but also the storylines of the Taiwanese movies she watched were difficult to comprehend. Hence, Taiwanese movies fail to draw her attention. More recently, the most famous and popular composer/singer/idol in Taiwan, Jay Chou, has appeared in Taiwanese movies like *Secret* and *Kung Fu Dunk*, which have become box office successes in Taiwan in 2007 and 2008.³² Jay Chou's popularity and charisma means that his movies attract young audiences, especially Taiwanese teenagers. They are his fans, but otherwise rarely watch Taiwanese movies via platforms other than cable movie channels, and do not go to the cinema to watch Taiwanese movies.

MOD (Multimedia on Demand): A Converged Viewing 'Platform' for Different Generations of Viewers to Enjoy Classic Movies Together

We have MOD installed at home. There are movies to choose from. My father would recommend some classic movies that he knows to us and watch them with us. Actually, it's very difficult to find those classic movies at the rental shop (Pei-Kai).

Pei-Kai here mentions another emerging platform for film-viewing: MOD.³³ The

³² *Secret* was the third best-selling Chinese-language movie in 2007 in Taipei, with 26.8 million NTDs box office, behind only Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* and the Hong Kong blockbuster, *The Warlords* (Wang 2008, 131). *Kung Fu Dunk* also had a moderate box office success in early 2008 in Taipei with 17.3 million NTDs gross. (http://app.atmovies.com.tw/movie/movie.cfm?action=BoxOffice&film_id=fsch20848538&bo_code=taipeidays&more=Y, accessed on April 10, 2009)

³³ MOD service was initiated in April 2004. It offers a platform for its users to get

MOD service is provided by the biggest telecom company and broadband provider in Taiwan, Chunghwa Telecom.³⁴ It combines broadband service and cable TV with interactive functions. Therefore it offers its users another option to access movies at home. What is special about MOD's movie channel is not only that it offers many 'pay-per-view' movies for its users to select from, but that it also offers classic movie channels – free of charge for MOD subscribers - specialising in old Japanese movies, which cannot be found easily on currently available cable movie channels. MOD is the only platform that offers its audience classic movies round the clock. These classic movies are actually 'new' movies to Pei-Kai. He does not know much about them, so they bridge different generations and offer a platform by which 'movie talks' between father and son can be initiated.

Similar to the parents' educational aim of purchasing computer equipment for their children, they hope that the installation of the MOD service could function as an educational tool.

The reason why my husband and I decided to install MOD service is because there are many educational programmes available, such as English-learning programmes. You can watch them anytime you want without having to adjust your routine to the programme schedule. There're also some good

access to any specific channel made available by channel providers. As of October 2008, there were 82 channels available on MOD. Its total number of subscribers in Taiwan was expected to reach 0.7 million by the end of 2008.

(<http://www.nccwatch.org.tw/news/20081008/25092>, accessed October 21, 2008)

When the survey for this research was conducted in the summer of 2006, only 4 respondents were subscribing to the MOD service. Two of them are respondents in this group (Chi-I and Pei-Kai); and two of them are from the same household (Chi-I and his mother, Chun-Yu).

³⁴ Chunghwa Telecom, similar to the UK's British Telecommunications (BT), was reorganized from the business section of the Directorate General of Telecommunication (DGT), in the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MOTC) in 1996 as a government-owned company. It was successfully privatised in 2005. (<http://www.cht.com.tw/CompanyCat.php?CatID=238>, accessed September 30, 2008)

documentaries available, free of charge. Besides, compared to cable TV, the number of programmes, especially TV dramas, is very limited. Children won't be able to spend too much time on watching TV drama series. (Chun-Yu)

Of course, these teenagers cannot make decisions about what kinds of media equipment to buy or which broadband service to install. They just adapt themselves to whatever is available at home. For parents with high school children, such as Chun-Yu, whether media services or audiovisual equipment can offer their children an additional educational function is crucial. In choosing MOD, parents can use the educational channels included as a platform for their children to learn foreign languages or gain access to 'good' programmes as defined by parents, such as award-winning documentaries. These cannot be found regularly on cable channels. What is more important for the parents is that it does not give their teenage children much opportunity to watch 'nonsense' TV dramas or variety shows that their children can easily tune in to if they have a regular cable TV service installed. Moreover, with recently-released movies offered via a special charging mechanism, for MOD users, DVD-rental becomes a less necessary activity.

Chun-Yu: We used to rent DVD movies before, but we don't do that now. Because we have the MOD service installed, there are lots of movies to choose from; some of them are free of charge, some of them not. It's easy to use. All you have to do is use the remote controller to choose programmes from the menu.

Chi-I: I remember watching *Daredevil* through MOD. It's a bit like using a DVD player. The programme can be paused while watching.

Chun-Yu: The good thing about watching pay-per-view movies through MOD is that after paying 80 NTDs for a movie, you can watch it as many times as you want during 72 hours.

Chi-I: The period is 16 days, not 72 hours.

Chun-Yu: Oh, I don't know. I don't use it very often.

As both Chun-Yu and Chi-I mention, MOD offers various kinds of movies, from recent to old ones, for its users to choose from. Users do not have to go to the rental shops for movies. All they have to do is choose them from the menu on their TV screen in a way that is similar to movie-downloading. Downloaders can choose movies to download from their computer monitor without having to step outside. However, the image quality of movies offered by MOD is far better than downloaded movies. Besides, with the set-up box supplied, most of the features available on DVD players, such as pause, rewind, and fast-forward are also available when watching MOD movies. For both parents and children, watching MOD movies is simpler and more intuitive through the remote controller than downloading movies. Furthermore, in comparison with DVD-renting, the charging mechanism for watching recently-released movies is more flexible and there is no worry about late fees, as Chi-I points out. Finally, according to Chun-Yu and Chi-I's conversation, even though the operation of the MOD service poses no difficulty for either of them, Chun-Yu is not very familiar with the time span available to watch a 'pay-per-view' movie. Apparently, Chi-I and his brother use MOD to watch movies more often than their mother does, which also demonstrates that in spite of the fact that parents select and pay for all the media equipment at home and regulate their children's use of it, the children are still the ones who 'play' and are familiar with these equipments.

5.6 Restricted Use of the Internet Limits Teenagers'

Movie-Downloading Activity

I don't download movies, but I download movie trailers and music. I download music almost every day because music-downloading is a lot quicker than movie-downloading. If movie-downloading becomes faster, I will consider downloading movies (Shu-Rong).

Movie-downloading is not popular among these teenage respondents mainly because they cannot access computers whenever they want to, unlike university students or other groups. Furthermore, movie-downloading requires spending time on the Internet searching for the available files and waiting for the downloading to complete. As Shu-Rong points out, downloading music or movie trailers takes less time to complete, which also demonstrates that movie trailers are one of the main sources for her to obtain movie information, especially when movie trailers of newly-released movies are very easily viewed online through streaming videos on leading portal sites in Taiwan, such as Yahoo Taiwan and MSN Taiwan. These respondents also use the Internet to check on other people's movie reviews.

I check movie information mostly through the computer and Internet right now. I check through newspapers sometimes. If I don't quite understand a movie after watching it, I will check what other people say about the movie on the Internet as well (Shu-Rong).

Other than using the Internet to obtain movie information, Internet chat software, such as Yahoo Messenger or MSN Messenger, provides an instant platform to chat with friends after school about everything, including movies. Most of the diary records show that movie talk was conducted with classmates or friends. Movies are also a discussion topic between parents and children.

Connie: Sometimes, we will have discussions after watching a movie together, especially for a movie like *The March of the Penguins*. Yet, after watching a Hollywood movie or movies that are only entertainment, we won't discuss them much.

Ting-Wen: It is like a two hour special effects show. That's it.

After watching Hollywood movies, Connie and Ting-Wen think that there would not be much to discuss, because Hollywood movies just offer them some entertainment and audiovisual spectacle. However, lots of movie talk between these respondents and their friends are about recent popular movies or movies they see trailers for on TV or when travelling on the bus. As Gauntlett and Hill's research (1999) suggests,

teens often watch TV in order to socialize, to have common frames of reference through which to talk to others and [that] their desire to view is frequently motivated by peer pressure and a need to 'belong' through a discussion of the media, rather than more conscious personal impetus (Davis & Dickinson 2004, 2).

Although these teenagers do not have the luxury of spending time watching popular movies that look appealing to them, they will look for movie information or updated movie news on the Internet, in order to have conversations with friends. Most importantly, by catching up on the hottest and most popular topics, no matter whether it is about TV drama series, movies, or comic books, these teenagers can easily have lots of things to chat about with their friends. In doing so, they can feel more popular and get more prestige among their peers. This kind of feeling of 'belonging' is very important to teenagers at this stage of life.

5.7 Chapter Summary

Compared to other groups of adult respondents, the most fundamental difference between these teenagers and adults is the domestic media use regulations. For this group of teenagers, cinema-going is a pure social and entertaining event, mainly conducted with peers or friends. They do not usually go to the cinema alone or just to enjoy a good movie, as some of the older respondents from the university student group or employee group would do. Nor do they use cinema-going as family events for having a happy family outing, as some married respondents or parents would. What excites these teenagers most, when they go to the cinema, is getting away from their parents' orders and pressure to study, and finding some valuable happy hours to meet with friends. Movies, especially popular movies or Hollywood blockbusters, also serve as popular topics for discussion with friends. Art house movies, European movies, or Taiwanese movies, on the contrary, rarely draw these teenagers' attention because they rarely become hot topics for them to discuss with their peers. The analysis of the research into the teenage respondents indicates that cinema-going activity is an irreplaceable tool for socialising with friends and classmates.

'Watching movies' at home via different platforms is a more convenient practice than cinema-going. The operation and use of domestic media technology and equipment, such as DVD players, cable TV, computers, or MOD service, are not difficult for these teenagers. However, as their everyday routines and activities are limited and influenced significantly by both their school schedules and by their parents' control, they cannot freely use all these domestic platforms to watch movies. My research indicates that cable channels have become the most often

accessed platform for these teenagers to watch movies of their preferred genres, such as comedies and cartoons, which offer them instant laughter and entertainment. But they are not usually allowed to watch whole movies on cable due to their parents' rules. Of course, they cannot spend the whole evening flipping through different cable channels without a purpose, as many other adult respondents do. As for DVD movies, owing to 'censorship' by parents of which movies they can rent at the rental shops, these respondents cannot always select the movies they want to watch freely. They therefore do not regard watching DVD movies at home with the whole family members as an alternative to the activity of 'going to the cinema' with a group of their friends. Likewise, movie-downloading is restricted and rarely done. In contrast, the converged viewing platform of MOD that combines the functions and advantages of cable movies, DVD movies, and Internet-downloading provides some of the teenage users in this group with a simple and easy means to watch movies at home.

The other inference about these teenagers' film-viewing worth mentioning is that parents seem to hold more positive attitudes towards film-viewing than television-watching and internet-surfing. Some parents think that watching a movie is a more meaningful activity with more educational functions than television-watching, as Connie mentioned. Some other parents think their children's engagement with the computer is more dangerous than going to the cinema, because they fear that their children may just be playing on the computer and it is difficult for them to monitor their use of it. For some of these parents, film-viewing is not the kind of activity that they allow their children to conduct on a daily basis. However, it takes only two hours to finish a movie. If a teenager decides to watch a TV drama, he/she will have to spend more than two hours to

finish the whole series. Parents do not have to worry that their children could spend too much time on watching a movie.

In this chapter, it is argued that among all the five groups this is the most confined audience with the least freedom to watch films they like, even though they have the technical capability to use various film-viewing platforms. It has been shown that for these teenagers, film-viewing serves as a means to be entertained, to laugh, to relax after school, and most importantly, to socialise with friends or family members. Although the findings and analysis of Taiwanese teenagers' multi-platform film-viewing practices presented in this chapter are based on the local context, they reflect some cross-cultural issues when discussing how this 'digital generation' of teenagers consume media products and issues related to them such as parental control over their teenage children's use of the media, how negotiation takes place between parents and children about how the media is used, and what the preferences the teenagers have about film genre and film origin. Hopefully, these findings could offer a reference point for the examination of contemporary teenagers' film-viewing practices in different local settings or in a broader global context.

Chapter Six

University Students' Unrestricted Film-Viewing Practices

6.1 Introduction

This group of university/college students includes four males and six females, ranging from freshman to senior. The less than 16.42% of Taiwanese young people from 18 to 21 not studying in school during the academic year 2006-2007,³⁵ are not represented in this sample. Seven of the ten respondents think of themselves as film fans, and three of them think of themselves as ordinary viewers, meaning the sample is biased towards cinephiles. The positive features of this university student sample are, first, that classmates and friends are also included, along with individuals, making it possible to examine some of the respondents' film-related activities and interactions within their circles of social connections. Second, all university student respondents' film consumption diaries were successfully returned, making the analysis of this sample more complete and credible. More details on the respondents of this group can be seen in Appendix B.

If we compare the lifestyles of the university students who participated in the research with the high school teenage students, the biggest difference is that the pressure to study drops significantly after they enter university or college.

³⁵ Data source: National Statistics R.O.C. [Taiwan], Fig. 5 of the website: <http://www.edu.tw/files/publication/B0013/index1.xls>, accessed on June 27, 2009

Additionally, many of the parents of these student respondents start to offer them more freedom, allowing them to manage their own time after class without constantly pressing them to study. Although some respondents still live with their parents,³⁶ they can feel the difference in their parents' attitudes and there is a more relaxed atmosphere in the family after they start studying at university. They realise that their parents are starting to treat them more like adults rather than little children. Their parents loosen the regulations on their domestic media use and allow them to conduct many other leisure activities, such as going to the cinema and hanging out with friends. At university, even though they have lectures and classes to attend, compared to high school students, university students have more flexible schedules and more free time. As a result, university students can spend more time on recreation, which also means that they can dedicate more time to all sorts of movie-related activities, with parents no longer controlling and censoring the films they watch. Not only can they watch R-rated films, but they also can choose films to watch based on their own interests or on peer recommendations.

University students have grown up witnessing the replacement of the VCR with VCD and DVD digital viewing platforms in the living room and the dynamic evolution of internet applications from a plain text based format to being able to process audiovisual-rich contents. As members of the 'Net Generation'³⁷, they are

³⁶ Many Taiwanese parents would not ask their children to move out after high school graduation. It is not unusual for Taiwanese to live with their parents, even after getting married. Some of the respondents in this group live with their parents. However, some, born and raised in other parts of Taiwan, came to Taipei to continue their higher education, so they rent a room or stay in a school dorm. Of course, in these cases, there will certainly be no media use regulations enforced by their parents.

³⁷ According to Tapscott's definition, the baby boom echo, which refers to people who were born between 1977 and 1997, became the Net Generation, because 'this wave of youth coincides with the digital revolution which is transforming all facets of our society'. (1998, 22) This generation is also 'the first to grow up surrounded

no strangers to modern media technology. They are able to make the most of it in order to facilitate various film consumption activities in their everyday lives, from film-viewing, film-downloading and ascertaining film-related information, to having film discussions. However, there is little detailed analysis of multi-platform film-viewing practices of audiences from this 'Net Generation'. The limited number of studies that discuss some features of contemporary young adults' film-viewing practices inside or outside of the home do not offer a multifaceted description. For instance, Klinger (2006) examines the functions and pleasures of repeated viewings of films by analysing the responses to her open-ended questionnaire targeting American university students. Kerr, Kücklich, and Brereton (2006) discuss the concept of pleasures provided through audiences' employment of new media, such as digital games, DVDs, and digital television, with empirical data collected from different households and a focus group of university students in Dublin. This research offers useful accounts of concepts, such as play, control and flow, immersion, performance and competition, narrative, and intertextuality, arising from how their informants enjoy using new media. However, the analysis of film-viewing activities via new media only accounts for a small part of this research.

Accordingly, this chapter begins with the university students' childhood memories of film-viewing. These students grew up during the 1990s when Taiwanese film production was in decline. They recall viewing Taiwanese, Hong Kong and Hollywood movies especially through the emergent form of cable channels as well as the traditional cinema. One of the surprising discoveries within this data is this group's increasing interest in recent Taiwanese cinema compared to

by digital media'. (Ibid., 1)

older respondent groups. The reasons will be discussed in detail. The following sections will examine their use of various film-viewing platforms, including cinemas, cable movie channels, and internet downloading respectively. What similarities and differences are there between their cinema-going practices and those of other groups, especially the high school students analysed in the last chapter? How and why they arrange their cable movie-viewing flow as they do, and the meanings behind their downloading practices and the movie-sharing culture they have with their friends will be analysed in depth. It is noted that although both male and female respondents from this group have downloaded movies, it is the males who have done so more enthusiastically. This group do not have a great interest in renting DVDs and there will be discussion of why this is so. Other activities and related issues concerning film consumption at home, allowing the social dimension of film-viewing to be demonstrated more clearly, will be delineated, as well as how these respondents search for movie information and respond to movie trailers, as well as how 'word of mouth' about movies from friends or family members can have a significant impact on how they choose which movies to watch. The concluding section will discuss how 'film-viewing' is seen by this group as good after-school entertainment and an important tool for socialising with other people.

6.2 Childhood Memories of Film-Viewing through Multi-platforms

The respondents in this group were born between 1982 and 1986. Their memories of watching movies began from the early 1990s when they were

elementary school pupils. This generation was born during the heyday of the VCR and grew up with the birth of cable movie channels and the digital format of Video Discs (VCD). Unlike older generations of film audiences, who only have memories of watching movies at the cinema and through network television, or perhaps on a VCR, many audiences of this 'Net Generation' have been able to watch movies through different viewing platforms since their childhood.

Classic Movies as New Movies on Cable Channels

I clearly remember watching *The Child of Peach*³⁸. My father had recorded this movie on tape, so I could watch it over and over again. Actually, I watched both western movies and *guopian*. But I think I watched more western movies then. When I was in the fourth grade or fifth grade, we got cable TV. There were many movie channels on cable, especially HBO, which meant I could watch more Hollywood movies, such as *Jurassic Park*. On the other hand, I think I was influenced by my father, because he prefers Western movies and stars. Once he switched to HBO, he would stay there and watch whatever was on (Tommy 21, Male).

Tommy's statement recounts his childhood experience of watching movies through a VCR and cable movie channels. Tommy expresses his early interest in Hollywood movies, due to influences passed down by his father. However other respondents were also interested in Chinese-language movies on cable channels when they were children.

I used to watch lots of *guopian*. It seems to me that I watched every one of them when I was a kid. Once I switched to the cable channels playing *guopian*, I would stay there watching, non-stop. As a matter of fact, almost all the first-run *guopian* that I watched when I was a child I saw at the cinema (Eileen 21, Female).

³⁸ This movie is an adaptation of the famous Japanese fairy tale, *Momotaro* (The Peach Boy).

Cable movie channels only renew and upgrade one of the functions traditionally done by television in offering a 'recycling' service and exhibition platform to movies after their theatrical run has ended. As Stempel states, 'from the fifties on, many moviegoers saw their first movies on television' (2001, 58). Klinger also notes the importance of cable movie channels, such as American Movie Classics (AMC), in assuring that the legacy of classic Hollywood movies gets passed on to contemporary audiences.

With its round-the-clock programming, cable has become a repository for what is popular referred to as "classic Hollywood cinema". ...As they persistently re-present classic films to contemporary home viewers, cable stations help to create a home film culture devoted to the commemoration of vintage American cinema. (2006, 92)

For young audiences, these old movies are like new movies, when they see them for the first time. This is exactly the same feeling that I had while watching *A Fistful of Dollars* for the first time on Taiwanese network television in the 1970s. However, cable movie channel audiences nowadays are able to choose from a wider range of films every day of the week, without having to wait until weekend evenings, as audiences in the past had to when watching movies on network television. What is fascinating about this generation's childhood memories of watching movies on cable is that even without going to the cinema, these old movies playing on cable channels can still become young audiences' favourite movies.

The reason why I choose *Back to the Future* as one of my favourites is because its story is excellent, even though I've never had a chance to watch it at the cinema. I saw all three parts on HBO when I was in junior high school (Tommy).

Currently, there are no public venues dedicated to showing classic movies in Taipei, with the exception of certain film festivals scheduled irregularly at art house cinemas and the Chinese Taipei Film Archive. Cable movie channels and MOD service give young audiences a chance to watch many old movies that they have never watched or heard of before. As in Tommy's case, through cable movie channels, young audiences can have the opportunity to appreciate the original and defining moments of classic movies. By watching classic movies, the gap in the collective memories of the younger and older generations is bridged.

Childhood Memories of Going to the Cinema in the 1990s

After the coming of cable TV in Taipei, due to its 'one fare for all channels' policy, audiences did not have to pay extra for any movie channels. Watching movies on cable channels became a very economical activity. As Lu claims, 'not only has it taken over audiences from cinemas, it has also replaced VCR-renting and become one of the primary channels for Taiwanese audiences to watch movies' (Lu 1998, 377). However, going to the cinema was still a popular family activity. It was a place where parents could take their whole family to enjoy a movie, have a dinner-out, do some shopping and, most important of all, spend 'family time' together on weekends or holidays. As the centre of other activities in this way, going to the cinema cannot be replaced by watching cable movies at home. In addition, the cost of taking the whole family to the cinema was cheaper in the early 1990s than today. It is no surprise that some respondents clearly remember going to the cinema as a routine family activity when they were kids.

My parents would take me to the cinema once or twice a month to watch hit

or popular movies, including *guopian*, foreign movies and Hollywood movies during the period when I was studying at elementary school (Wei-Han, 24, Male).

Unlike the respondents from the teenage group, who watched animation movies from Hollywood or Japan when they were children, this group remember going to the cinema to watch *guopian* and Hollywood blockbusters with their parents.

I don't remember watching many Hollywood movies with my parents. They took me to watch more *guopian* instead. The first movie I ever watched was a Taiwanese movie about twelve animal symbols.³⁹ When I was a kid, I remember that most of the movies I watched were *guopian*, with only a few being Western movies (A-Ming, 20, Male).

When I was a child, my parents took us to see a lot of *guopian*, such as *Seven Wolves*,⁴⁰ *New Seven Dragon Ball*,⁴¹ and *Lifeline*⁴² (Xiao-Jie, 20, Male).

When I was a kid, my mom took us to watch Jackie Chan movies. His movies were like a must-see for us. As early as I can remember, the first movie that I watched was Jackie Chan's *Rumble in the Bronx* (Xiao-Gao, 20, Female).

All three respondents remember their pre-adolescent experience of watching *guopian* in the early to mid 1990s. If we take a close look at the movies the respondents mention, they can all be categorised as family movies. During that

³⁹ The movie that the respondent talks about here is *New Twelve Animal Symbols* (1990). It is a locally produced adventure/fantasy genre film with a small budget. Its storyline is about Buddha sending one of his messengers, who is transformed into a little girl, to the human world to unite all twelve animal gods to fight against the dark demon rising from hell and save the world.

⁴⁰ This movie is one of the early locally made young adult movies that starred several Taiwanese pop singers and groups. A couple of songs from the soundtrack became pop hits. Due to the box office success of this movie, the production company quickly made a sequel the same year in 1989.

⁴¹ The storyline of this locally produced, small budget movie, *New Seven Dragon Ball* (1991), basically follows the Japanese Manga, *Seven Dragon Ball*, only with characters played by real actors/actresses.

⁴² *Lifeline* (十萬火急) (Johnny To, Hong Kong, 1996)

period, before the boom in computer-generated cartoons from studios like Disney or Dreamworks, only a few cartoons were shown in cinemas each year. This is significantly different from recent years where audiences can always find a cartoon showing at the cinema. For example, in 1990, the only animation films shown in Taipei cinemas were *The Little Mermaid* and Walt Disney's re-release of *Fantasia*. The box office receipts for these two films were only mediocre.⁴³ If parents wanted to take their kids to the cinema for a happy family gathering, then locally-made movies for children, such as *New Twelve Animal Symbols* and *New Seven Dragon Ball*, were favourite choices. When these students were children, the elements of a simple plot, cheesy fun and pop idols found in many Taiwanese commercial kids' movies provided them with 90 minutes of guaranteed laughter. As for parents who could not stand the format and the same stereotyped plots of low budget Taiwanese made-for-children movies, Jackie Chan's kung-fu comedies and other Hong Kong entertainment movies worked well for both parents and children alike.

During the 1990s, Taiwanese movies started to suffer a dramatic decline in the local market (Lu 1998, 350). After 1994, factory-line Hong Kong movie productions also began to lose popularity in Taiwan because, according to Lu, of a loss of originality and a tendency to make similar genre films copying earlier successes (Lu 1998, 351). Foreign movies, especially already-dominant Hollywood movies, gradually filled the market that Taiwanese and Hong Kong movies conceded. With so many Hollywood movies to choose from on any given weekend or holiday, some parents would rather take their children to see

⁴³ The box office record for *The Little Mermaid* was 2,849,850 NTDs and 2,744,050 NTDs for *Fantasia* (GIO, 1994, 188-189).

Hollywood movies and Hollywood blockbusters in particular:

The first movie that I remember watching at the cinema was *Titanic*. I watched this movie with my family during the Chinese New Year holiday. I think it's very entertaining and the leading actor is very handsome (Sara, 20, Female).

I couldn't quite remember the first movie I ever saw. It's very difficult. However, the clearest memory I've got about movies is watching *Titanic* at the cinema with my whole family when I was in junior high school. My parents don't like to watch movies but they did take us to the cinema to watch *Titanic* (Annie, 23, Female).

The coming of New Hollywood, after the worldwide success of *Jaws* in the mid-1970s was a turning point. Schatz argues that 'the Spielberg-directed thriller [that] recalibrated the profit potential of the Hollywood hit, and redefined its status as a marketable commodity and cultural phenomenon as well' (2003, 24). These Hollywood blockbusters were advertised as being different from normal Hollywood movies and as 'a new "must see" attraction' in order to create 'audience awareness' (Stringer 2003, 1 & 5). With help from the Hollywood studios' marketing machines and spectacular audiovisual effects, blockbusters made the already strong audience base for Hollywood movies even stronger globally. The generation to which the students in this study belonged might have missed the opportunity to watch the Spielberg-Lucas-related blockbusters of the 1980s at the cinema. However, as their responses show, blockbusters like *Titanic* seem to be part of the collective memories of current university students. They might not all choose *Titanic* as their favourite film, but this film does seem to bring back many memories and is good for initiating many peer-based discussions.

6.3 Increasing Interest in Taiwanese Cinema: the Connection between New Directors, Genre Films and Young Audiences

Generally speaking, this group showed more interest and enthusiasm for Taiwanese films than older generations. This is despite the fact that they grew up in a more globalised, transnational and diversified film-viewing environment. They also have a different impression of Taiwanese cinema. Today's youngsters think that current Taiwanese cinema is more internationalised due to the increasing number of international co-productions, and also more diversified, owing to the growing number of local genre films currently being made. Not having very much experience or memories of watching movies from acclaimed Taiwanese New Cinema directors, these young respondents belong to what has been called the 'Post New Taiwanese Cinema' era. They hold more positive attitudes towards Taiwanese movies, in distinction to Guo's claim (1999) that Taiwanese audiences in general were losing interest in Taiwanese movies.

New Filmmakers' 'Genre Movie' Approach to Young Audiences

The quality of current Taiwanese films is getting better and better, not like the raw quality of early Taiwanese films. Taiwanese films, right now, are more and more internationalised and Hollywood-like. I don't like small budget Taiwanese films, though (Xiao-Jie).

Taiwanese films are more thought-provoking, but many Hollywood movies leave you with nothing but some laughs after watching them. However, many people think Taiwanese films are boring. I think this depends on the audience.

For me *Catch*⁴⁴ is a funny movie that gives you something to think about after watching it (A-Ru, 20, Female).

In the aftermath of the Taiwan New Cinema movement, the local film industry failed to make any breakthrough to recover from its decline in the local film market, either in terms of box office gross or the number of movies produced. Following the footsteps of internationally acclaimed elite auteurs such as Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Edward Yang, and Tsai Ming-Liang by making films targeting international film festivals and the art house cinema circuit, there seem to have been few options left for new filmmakers to produce movies after the mid 1990s. If we examine Taiwanese films' box office records in Taipei from 2000 to 2005,⁴⁵ very few Taiwanese films were successful in the local market and these were usually internationally co-produced blockbusters, such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* or *Double Vision*. However, since then several young filmmakers have attempted to find other ways to break the vicious circle whereby Taiwanese audiences have little interest in locally produced movies. One of the reasons for this was that local filmmakers were ignorant about local audience tastes. In order to reduce the gap between filmmakers and local audiences, directors began to target young audiences, especially high school and university students, the groups which comprise the greatest number of cinemagoers. In contrast to the auteur film tradition of the Taiwanese New Cinema, these new directors turned to making genre films (Yang 2007, 69-70). Their intention was to change the image of Taiwanese cinema as only about making art house movies. One of the successful examples of this new genre filmmaking was *Formula 17*.

⁴⁴ *Catch* (國士無雙) (Chen Yinrong, Taiwan, 2006)

⁴⁵ Please refer to *Taiwan Cinema Year Book* from 2001 to 2006 for Taipei box office detail.

This young adult gay comedy movie made around 5,380,000 NTDs at the Taipei box office.⁴⁶ Although not impressive compared to Hollywood movies, *Formula 17* was the second best selling Taiwanese movie in 2004. Moreover, made on a low budget, *Formula 17* became a rare example in recent years of a Taiwanese film that covered its production cost from local box office receipts (Wen 2005, 194). In interviews and in her diary, Sara, a 20-year-old, (one of the seven out of ten respondents from this group who described Taiwanese films as among her favourites), expressed her appreciation of the new image of Taiwanese cinema. She also points out the difference between Taiwanese TV dramas and Taiwanese films, reflecting the relationship between media use and age factor.

I quite like Taiwanese films, especially documentaries. Other than documentaries, I have seen Taiwanese feature length films, such as *Formula 17* and *Blue Gate Crossing*. Taiwanese films are so different from Taiwanese TV dramas. Those TV dramas are made for moms and films are made for young people. I prefer watching Taiwanese films.

While I was conducting fieldwork in Taipei in 2006, another Taiwanese young adult gay themed movie, *Eternal Summer*, was playing at the cinema. No one was surprised when this movie became the second best selling Taiwanese movie of 2006.⁴⁷ The popularity of this movie was also shown in several respondents' diaries:

My colleague and I went to the Warner Village Cinema to see *Eternal Summer* this evening. I think this is a decent movie (Quote from Sara's diary, 15/10/06).

⁴⁶

http://app.atmovies.com.tw/movie/movie.cfm?action=filmdata&film_id=fftw60687520 (accessed April 10, 2009).

⁴⁷ The best selling Taiwanese movie of 2006 is *Silk* with 22.28m NTDs Taipei box office receipts. Taipei box office receipts of *Eternal Summer* are 5.31m NTDs (Wang 2007, 260).

Xiao-Gao asked me this morning whether I would go to see *Eternal Summer* or not. I said that I would prefer *The Prestige*. As a matter of fact, we should show our support to Taiwanese films more, but I'm not confident that this movie is worth the money to watch it at the cinema (Quote from A-Ming's diary, 16/10/06).

If we analyse these quotes, there are several interesting points worthy of discussion. The first one is why do so many recent Taiwanese movies have a gay theme? In 2007, a Taiwanese movie called *Spider Lilies* on a lesbian theme was also one of the most popular, with Taipei box office receipts of 7.14m NTDs.⁴⁸ Let's first consider this question from the filmmakers' perspective. The producer of *Formula 17*, Li Yao-Hua, has said:

In the very beginning, we focused on only three genres: gay, children's, and horror, because these three types of films are all well supported by certain audiences. Besides, within our budget limit, we can make quality movies in these three genres (Li 2005, 37).

From a marketing perspective, a gay theme starring pop idols is a good selling point to attract audiences and gain media coverage. The familiarity with Taipei street settings and depiction of young Taiwanese in these movies is also part of the appeal. Most importantly, however, the confusions of love, affection and friendship among peers that occurs during adolescence, which these movies discuss, attract Taiwanese audiences, especially the young. As one Taiwanese Internet user said about going to see *Spider Lilies*, 'the reason why I was willing to pay for this movie at the cinemas is because of its inexpressible affection and closeness to our feelings.'⁴⁹

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http://app.atmovies.com.tw/movie/movie.cfm?action=filmdata&film_id=fstw20891457 (accessed April 10, 2009).

⁴⁹ Loveforlin, comment on '*Spider Lilies: Another gay movie copycat*' Yahoo

The Success of Locally Produced Blockbusters

It is also worth discussing A-Ming's hesitation above about paying to watch *Eternal Summer*. He fears possible disappointment and persuaded Xiao-Gao to go with him to *The Prestige* instead. Many people like Xiao-Gao and A-Ming, although they may be interested in specific Taiwanese movies, do not feel comfortable about paying for expensive first-run movie tickets to see them because they doubt whether the movie is any good or to their taste. Hollywood movies, on the other hand, are a much safer bet, even though the storylines of Hollywood movies might be predictable. At least, the production and entertainment values are more guaranteed.

If you ask this generation of young audiences about Taiwanese cinema, you probably will get answers close to Xiao-Shan's:

I remember I've seen Taiwanese films, but I couldn't remember which ones, probably just a few of them. But I know friends who support Taiwanese films and some Taiwanese directors (22, Female).

They definitely have watched Taiwanese movies on cable channels and probably have seen one or two at the cinema, but usually they are not as impressed by them as some of the Hollywood movies they have seen. If you ask them about Taiwanese auteurs, they will come up with names such as Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Tsai Ming-Liang and Ang Lee without a problem. If you go on asking them about their movies, except for Ang Lee, they might reply like A-Ru: 'I couldn't follow Hou

Taiwan Movie Discussion Board, comment posted as No. 128 replies on April 01, 2007,
<http://tw.mb.yahoo.com/movie/board.php?&bname=152955249&tid=321588&action=m&keyword=%A5x%C6W%A6P%A7%D3%B9q%BCv&type=contents&p=2>
(accessed April 17, 2007).

Hsiao-Hsien's films and films like *The Wayward Cloud*' (directed by Tsai Ming-Liang). Actually, the overriding feeling is that these auteur films will not really attract these youngsters' attention. For Taiwanese filmmakers, making horror or ghost movies is a smarter way to attract local audiences, as well as to get financial and technical aid from other countries. The international co-production horror blockbuster, *Double Vision*, set a good example of how to beat Hollywood movies in 2002. Following a similar pattern to *Double Vision* only without foreign financial support, *Silk*, the most expensive Taiwanese movie ever, was shown in cinemas in Taipei in October 2006. Box office-wise, *Silk* was not as successful as *Double Vision*. However, based on the diary records of respondents in this group, eight out of ten mentioned or discussed this movie with others, and six watched this movie at the cinema. This ratio was higher than for any Hollywood movie showing in October 2006 in Taipei.

I'd heard that *Silk* is a good movie and I wanted to see the level of special effects produced in Asian movies, so I went to see *Silk* with my sisters today. I think it is one of the rare successful Asian movies (Quote from Xiao-Shan's diary, 03/10/06).

I went to see the movie, *Silk*, this evening with two friends. It is really wonderful that a Taiwanese film can be of such a high quality (Quote from Xiao-Jie's diary, 12/10/06).

The reason why I watch Taiwanese films is a simple one, to show my support. That's why I went to watch *Silk*, even though I don't like ghost movies (Xiao-Gao).

Xiao-Gao mentions that she went to the cinema to watch *Silk* to show her support for Taiwanese cinema. Yet she was really showing her support for Taiwanese blockbusters. However, can such made-in-Taiwan blockbusters compete with

Hollywood movies? Generally speaking, audiences seem satisfied with this movie. Even some of the respondents who generally preferred Hollywood films started to think positively about the future of Taiwanese Cinema afterwards. 'Because of the success of *Silk*, I think the future of Taiwanese Cinema should be promising' (Quote from Xiao-Jie's diary, 16/10/06).

6.4 Watching Hollywood Blockbusters at the Cinema: Social Event and Entertainment

While video may supply narrative to its audience, it does not offer them the event of cinema-going, nor does it replicate the experience of the darkened cinema with its larger-than-life images and Dolby stereo sound (Turner 1999, 114).

Even after the popularity of cable movies, DVDs, and Internet downloading, one of the essential characteristics of cinema-going that has remained important since the invention of cinema is, as Turner clearly puts it, the audiovisual viewing experience at the cinema itself. As all 10 respondents from this group agree, first-run cinemas are one of their major venues for watching movies. What draws these youngsters to sit in front of the big screen? Xiao-Shan describes her choice of movies at the cinema:

Generally speaking, I don't think cartoons and melodramas are worth the money to watch them at the cinema. For me, I usually go to the cinema under three conditions: Firstly, cinemas with a big screen and good sound system are perfect matches for blockbusters, such as *The Lord of the Rings* series, or action movies. Secondly, if I have extra cash and I don't want to wait for the DVD release of some dramas or melodramas, I would consider watching them at the cinema, such as *Brokeback Mountain*. Thirdly, if I'm bored and have excess cash and my friends happen to ask me to go to the cinema

together, I would watch whatever movie my friends decide to see, even if the movie is pretty mediocre and not special at all, such as Jim Carrey's *Fun with Dick and Jane* (Xiao-Shan).

Xiao-Shan's statement here points out three possible scenarios behind this group's cinema-going: audience identification of certain movie genres as especially suitable for watching at the cinema; second-run cinemas as economical and popular venues to watch movies; and cinema-going as a social event.

Audience Identification of Certain Movies Genres as Suitable for Watching at the Cinema

There are some movies that can only be fully enjoyed at the cinema with a big screen, such as *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*. Those action and special effects-packed movies are suitable to be watched at the cinema. For melodramas or more narrative type movies, watching them at home is fine with me (A-Ru).

Film genre seems to be one of the decisive factors involved in how people decide whether and where to watch a specific film. For example, audiences tend to enjoy action and special effects-packed Hollywood films at the first-run cinema because they think that only the bigger screens and surround sound systems that first-run cinemas offer provide the proper environment to appreciate special audiovisual effects. However, for melodramas (*wenyi pian*) or dramas (*juqing pian*), people think that smaller screens work fine. Tom Gunning argues that the popularity of special effects in Hollywood blockbusters resemble the appeal of the early films as 'a cinema of attractions': 'Clearly in some sense, recent spectacle cinema has re-affirmed its roots in stimulus and carnival rides, in what might be called the Spielberg-Lucas-Coppola cinema of effects' (1986, 70). Film genres such as horror,

thriller, science fiction, action and adventure, war movies, cop or crime movies, and martial arts films are among the favourite genres for this audience group. What these movies offer are not only spectacular images but also impeccable surround sound audio effects that can only be experienced in the cinema auditorium. This makes it preferable to watch these genre films at the cinema rather than at home.

I think the biggest difference between watching movies at home and at the cinemas for me is the sound, not the image (Annie).

As the technology manager of an Australian post production lab, Dominic Case vividly shows why sound effects technology on audience viewing experiences at the cinema is even greater than the image:

I am more and more convinced that the big story about film technology, as far as audiences are concerned in the past few years has been sound. Because, although you can do fancy digital things, the image remains glued to that bit of screen in front of your eyes, and it's not really any bigger...But the sound has gone from one woolly sound coming from the back of the screen with virtually no frequency range or dynamic range whatsoever...to something that fills the theatre in every direction with infinitively more dynamic range and frequency range (Quote in McQuire 2000, 44).

As the sound quality at the cinema cannot be fully simulated at home with any currently available viewing platform, audience identification with the cinematic spectacle of Hollywood blockbusters and certain genre movies becomes a major reason to go to the cinema. However, there are additional social meanings behind watching first-run movies at the cinema.

Watching First-Run Movies as a Social Event

I've never been to the cinema by myself. Either my friends ask me to go to

the cinema, or I ask them. It seems to me that whenever new movies premiere with a significant advertising campaign, my friends will talk about that movie and feel like watching it. As a matter of fact, the movies that everybody wants to see are quite similar (A-Ru).

If you go to the cinema alone, there won't be anyone to discuss the film with after watching it. So I never go to the cinema alone (A-Ming).

Movies, such as *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*, are perfect for watching with a whole bunch of friends. But if I go to see drama movies or melodramas, it requires some thinking while watching. I would rather watch them by myself. (Tommy).

For this audience group, going to first-run cinemas is more of a social event, an excuse to hang out with friends. This is similar to the responses of teenage informants. When they go to the cinema with family or friends, as Tommy explains, Hollywood blockbusters and certain genre movies mentioned earlier are always among these youngsters' top choices. Heavy media exposure of Hollywood films often means that these young people feel they cannot miss them, as A-Ru says. Hollywood films are more popular choices for a group of friends to watch together rather than European movies or Taiwanese movies. The entertainment and the spectacular audiovisual effects offered by Hollywood movies seem to match perfectly with the audiovisual systems at the cinema.

Moreover, most major multiplexes in Taipei are either situated in big shopping malls, such as the two Miramar Cinemas in northern Taipei and the Cinemark Cinema in eastern Taipei, or in business areas like the Warner Village Cinema in the Xinyi District of eastern Taipei and the Ambassador Theatre in Hsimenting in western Taipei. For audiences going to these first-run cinemas, cinema is used 'as a special event, as a particular conception of an evening's

entertainment', as discussed by John Ellis (1992, 27). They usually go to first-run cinemas with other people and very often, watching movies would not be the only thing they would do during their evening out. According to their diaries, none of this group went to the cinema alone during the two weeks period that the diaries were kept. They spent some time discussing which movies to watch and then discussed which movie they wanted to see together. After watching the film, they discussed the movie with other friends who had already seen the movie. Some would persuade others to go to see the movie (as in the case of *Silk*), or discourage them from wasting their money (as in the case of *World Trade Center*, which will be discussed later in this chapter). The whole process of going to the cinema--before, during, and after--creates numerous channels for these audiences to socialise with other people in person or online. Hence, watching first-run movies is an important social event for these respondents. However, the biggest difference between the university students and the teenage respondents, in terms of cinema-going as a social event, is that the university students here care more about the content or theme of the movies.

The Popularity of Second-Run Cinemas among University Students

Going to first-run cinemas is the most expensive way to watch films, when compared to other viewing platforms and venues. For these students, therefore, the cheaper second-run cinemas become popular alternatives. They appear to have considerable interest in watching films at second-run cinemas, with all 10 respondents saying that they went to them. Six out of ten say that second-run cinemas are their primary film-viewing platform. Without the support of university students, the second-run cinemas in Taipei could find it difficult to survive in the

face of the challenge and the increasing number of first-run multiplexes.

Actually, compared to first-run movies, we watch more second-run movies. The ticket is cheaper. Besides, you can watch two movies at a time (A-Ming).

There's a second-run cinema around my place. I watch movies quite often there either with friends or by myself. I regularly check the schedule of that second-run cinema via the Internet (Eileen).

Second-run cinemas appeal to university students for the following reasons: firstly, they only have to wait a few weeks for movies to move from first-run cinemas. Yet, the price of ticket admission is around one-third of what they have to pay for first-run movies. They also get to see double-bills. Second, movies are released to second-run cinemas quicker than on DVD. They can discuss current movies with friends while they are still hot topics. Besides, for students living alone, without family around, watching movies at second-run cinemas is actually cheaper than renting DVDs. Third, the quality of films showing at second-run cinemas is far better than downloaded film files. Fourth, watching second-run movies is a leisure activity giving these students three or four hours of entertainment at little cost.

Furthermore, watching movies at second-run cinemas in Taipei is quite different from going to first-run cinemas, due to their location. Currently, they are not located in prosperous business areas, in shopping malls or near department stores. On the contrary, they are situated on high streets in local neighbourhoods with traditional Taiwanese night markets nearby, so going to second-run cinemas is like buying goods from local shops. People do not usually plan ahead. If they are free they can just check the programming and schedule, and go without even asking friends to come along, as Eileen did. Another thing is that there is not usually a queue to buy tickets. They can get into the cinemas anytime they want,

without having to wait for the exact time the movie starts. The double-bills simply repeat throughout the day.

To sum up, second-run cinemas offer audiences a viewing environment with film viewing pleasure similar to what they get at first-run cinemas. What is more, they do not have to commute, queue, pay for expensive tickets or be around with lots of strangers. Therefore, watching movies at second run cinemas provides them with greater convenience and privacy, similar to what they might experience when watching movies at 'home'. To some of the respondents, second-run cinemas function like the upgraded versions of their 'home theatres'.

6.5 Instant Free Movies at Home: University Students

Viewing Cable Movies

I really love cable movie channels. I even check their daily schedules on the Internet. For example, if I know a movie I feel like watching is on ETTV Movie channel or Star Movie channel, I will wait in front of my television before the movie starts. I particularly love watching some old movies (Xiao-Gao).

Xiao-Gao talks excitedly about her love of watching cable movies and the way this is part of her everyday routine, or part of her embodied television watching routine. Like the other 9 respondents in this group, watching cable movies is not a new addition to their home leisure activities in today's media environment. Nevertheless, only one respondent in the questionnaire ticked 'watching cable movies' as one of their current primary film viewing platforms. As a matter of fact, with 4 respondents recording their cable movie viewing activities in their diaries, they watch more movies on cable channels than any of the other viewing platforms

discussed in this thesis. Ideally, if time and the cost of admission were not a consideration, watching movies on a large screen at the cinema remains the favourite film viewing platform for audiences across all generations. However, in reality, cable movie channels are the viewing platform used most by viewers. This is because they are easy to access, and require no additional charge, scheduling, or companionship. These features also make cable movies rather than DVDs the major viewing-platform for these university students to watch movies more than once.

The 'Cutting and Pasting' Practice of Watching Cable Movies

I just keep on surfing up and down through the different channels. I don't sit and wait for movies to start (Xiao-Jie).

The way I watch movies on cable channels is random. For example, if I switch to HBO, and find a movie that I haven't seen or a movie that I remember had an interesting trailer, I go on watching that movie (Tommy).

Some viewers, like Xiao-Jie and Tommy, watch movies on cable channels almost by accident. They surf up and down through almost one hundred available channels, and whenever they find something interesting on a particular channel they will stay and watch it until they feel bored, or until there is a commercial break. By the same token, when they spot a movie they have heard of, a movie they had planned to watch, a movie starring their favourite stars, or a movie they have watched many times but want to watch again, they will stay on that movie channel and watch until the movie ends or the most interesting parts finish. In terms of viewing experience, 'watching movies' on cable channels is similar to watching other television programmes. Audiences sometimes watch a movie on a cable channel for just 5 minutes, before switching to another channel. They can

also start watching a movie on a cable channel half way through or even switch back and forth between several channels simultaneously. A-Ming noted his experience of watching two movies playing on two different channels at the same time one Sunday evening when he was bored.

I switched back and forth between Star Western Movie Channel and AXN Channel to see *Robots* and *Legally Blonde*. I've seen many of those movies way too many times. I switch to other channels when commercials are on, and then switch back, without any problems catching up with the story (A-Ming).

Furthermore, some viewers watch the whole movie bit by bit as they watch different parts of it at different times and on different days, thanks to the fact that showings of movies on cable channels are frequently repeated. Xiao-Gao described her viewing of *Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo*. 'This movie was shown repeatedly many times. I wanted to refresh my memory, so I watched part of it this evening' (Xiao-Gao's diary, 05/10/06). 'I kept on finishing the movie this morning. It was still very funny' (Xiao-Gao's diary, 06/10/06). As they have seen these movies before, they do not have to follow the narration linearly. They create their own viewing pleasure by watching different movies at the same time, or watch the same movie at different times. Moreover, the movies mentioned by the two respondents here are basically comedies without complicated plots. By switching back and forth between different channels, these respondents mix two movies into one combined film, cross cut by means of using their remote control, as in A-Ming's case or, in Xiao-Gao's example, she unintentionally transformed a comedy movie into a comedy television show in two episodes. This kind of autonomous 'cutting and pasting' of cable movies from different channels and during different showing time by viewers completely breaks what Williams (1974) calls the 'sequence and

flow' of programmes as scheduled by cable channel managers. This phenomenon is similar to the way that VCR users arrange their own viewing schedules without being controlled by the fixed schedules of networks, which is referred to as 'schedule cannibalization' by Poltrack (1988, 39, quoted in Ang 1991, 74). For these young respondents, this kind of 'cutting and pasting' viewing practice of cable movies does not spoil their viewing pleasure. It can also give them instant entertainment and a bit of nostalgia.

Hong Kong Comedies as Home Relaxation after School

Actually, I prefer watching *guopian* at home because my brain needs rest. I don't have to look at subtitles. I can just hear what they say. I also watch some new movies that I've never seen before, such as some comedies on Star Movie Channel. In addition, it is difficult to watch Western movies at home because there are always interruptions, or I am up to other things. Watching Western movies needs more concentration (A-Ming).

Watching Hollywood movies through cable channels, as A-Ming points out, requires more attention than watching Chinese-language movies. This may be because when they watch Hollywood movies, they have to rely on subtitles to be able to follow the story. When watching Chinese-languages movies, on the other hand, they can easily follow the storylines from the dialogue of the characters. Additionally, when these students return home after university, the first thing they do is turn on the computer and television, as Eileen mentions when she talks about her basic routine at home:

I would turn on both the computer and television when I get home, and then turn them off before I go to bed. One minute surfing on the Internet, the next minute looking at what's funny on the television. My attention is sort of back and forth between the television and computer.

With foreign movies playing, especially new movies that they have never seen before, they cannot execute multi-tasks at the same time. However, with Chinese-language movies on, watching television complements surfing the Internet, chatting with friends via MSN, or whatever else they are doing. From time to time, they can switch back to movies playing on a cable channel and have a laugh at a comedy. Hong Kong comedy movies play an important role in the lives of these young students.

Xiao-Gao: I watch Hong Kong movies on cable channels, mostly classic ones, sometimes the latest as well.

A-Ming: I keep watching *Fat Choi Spirit* over and over again.

Xiao-Jie: I also enjoy this movie very much.

Xiao-Gao: I've watched this movie, probably hundreds of times, and also other movies about playing mahjong.

Xiao-Jie: I like that kind of movie a lot. Every time I surf channels playing these mahjong movies, I can't help watching them for at least half an hour.

A-Ming: Yeah, me too. (Laugh) I think young people are similar. We like those very funny movies. It's not because of mahjong. It's because those movies are hilarious.

Xiao-Gao: Yep, even though they are no-brainers, talking about nonsense.

Xiao-Jie: I agree. The main reason that I watch these Hong Kong comedies over and over is because they always make me laugh.

These young people happily discuss their repeated viewings of Hong Kong comedies. Hong Kong movies are still welcomed by television viewers even after repeated showing, as reported from local news report saying that, 'the rating for the tenth showing of Andy Lau's 1991 comedy, *Dances with the Dragon*, was much higher than the premiere of the winner of the 2006 Golden Horse Awards, *Perhaps Love*.'⁵⁰ According to the diary entries of 4 of the respondents, when

⁵⁰ Xie Xue-Feng (謝學豐), 'Just love the repeat showings of cable movies (就愛看重播! 百看不厭 劇情爛熟)', *TVBS News*, March 18, 2007, under *Yahoo Taiwan News*, March 18, 2007, <http://tw.news.yahoo.com/> (accessed March 19, 2007).

watching cable movies, most were indeed movies they had seen before.

The other reason for audiences to choose cable channels as their main viewing platform to watch Hong Kong and Taiwanese movies is because they appear on cable channels a lot quicker than do Hollywood movies. For example, the Hollywood movie, *Firewall*, premiered in Taiwan on February 10, 2006⁵¹ and yet it would have to wait until May 13, 2007 for its cable premiere on HBO.⁵² In contrast, the Hong Kong kung-fu blockbuster, *Fearless* premiered in Taiwan on January 26, 2006⁵³ but had already appeared on Star Movie Channel by the end of 2006.⁵⁴ For Hollywood movies, the 'theatre-to-cable channel' time window is usually longer than a year. For Hong Kong movies, less than a year is not uncommon. Taiwanese movies appear even sooner, which makes audiences' viewing habits of watching Chinese-language movies on cable channels hard to break.

6.6 Internet Movie Downloading and Its Social Uses

According to the questionnaire results from the respondents in this group, 7 of the 10 have downloaded a movie before. 4 out of 10 consider Internet downloading as one of their currently preferred ways to watch movies, and

⁵¹ Please refer to @movies website for detail:

http://app.atmovies.com.tw/movie/movie.cfm?action=BoxOffice&film_id=ffen30408345&bo_code=taipeidays&more=Y, accessed on July 8, 2009.

⁵² *CATV Guide* (台北都會生活月刊). 2007. Programme Listing of HBO. May 1.

⁵³ Please refer to @movies website for detail:

http://app.atmovies.com.tw/movie/movie.cfm?action=BoxOffice&film_id=ffhk30446059&bo_code=taipeidays&more=Y, accessed on July 8, 2009.

⁵⁴ *CATV Guide* (台北都會生活月刊). 2006. Programme Listing of Star Movie Channel. December 1.

downloaded or try to download movies during their 2 weeks of diary-keeping. Without a doubt, the speed at which technologies are developing and the gradual reduction in price of associated equipment makes access to Internet downloading and movie-copying easier than ever. However, these economical and technological factors are not the only reasons for movie-downloading.

Some of those who download movies become 'addicted' to it, not just for the pleasure of film-viewing, but also for collecting and sharing the movie files with other people. In this way, movie downloading has become another tool for these university students to socialise. Furthermore, as DVD-purchasing is not a popular practice among this group of students, movie-downloading becomes one of the primary means for some of them to collect and build up their movie collections.

Sharing Downloaded Movies with Family and Friends

I don't know how to download movies. I watch whatever my brother has downloaded, but only those movies I haven't seen before (Sara).

I don't download movies myself because I'm worried about computer viruses. Besides, I have friends with faster broadband connections. They download lots of movies. I could give them a list of movies that I want to see, they will download them for me, and then I will go to their places to watch them. Anyway, they have paid lots of money for their faster broadband. Those movies are all free to download (A-Ru).

My ex-roommate and one of my seniors are regular movie-downloaders. Sometimes, I will ask them what new movies they have downloaded, and then I will copy their downloaded movie files directly to my portable media player. I personally think that downloading is not an easy task. In order to save trouble, I just ask them for the movie files (Tommy).

Based on these quotes, we can discover that all three respondents here have friends or family members who can download movies for them. They do not really need to learn or feel the need to learn how to download movies themselves. One distinguishing feature of digital movie files is that the reproduction is low-cost, easy and fast. Previously, when someone else wanted to borrow one of your favourite books or CDs, you had to think twice and worry about the possible damage that might be done before they are returned. Now, not only are downloaded movie files virtually free of charge (if the broadband service fees and electronic fees are not counted), but the reproduction of digital files does not deteriorate the quality of the original files. This means that downloaded movie files are not as valuable as other objects, such as purchased-DVDs, Laser Discs, book, or old vinyl records. Besides, with the price of blank discs and hard disks constantly coming down, copying files to DVD discs or a hard disk is very cheap, even for poorer students. As a result, downloaders do not have to worry about damage or loss of their movie files. This explains part of the reason why sharing downloaded movie files is a common practice among friends and classmates.

Nevertheless, there exist both cinematic and social meanings behind their downloading practices. For instance, Eileen talks about how her major source of downloaded movies is one of her good friends, Wei-Han, another respondent from this group.

I know how to download, but it takes time. It's easier to get downloaded movies from one of my good friends. He downloads movies almost everyday. He has all kinds of movies. All I have to do is go to his place and copy files to my hard disk or borrow his hard disk directly.

As for the downloaders, they seem to be happy sharing movie files with other

people:

Many of my friends or classmates will directly come to my place, check my files by themselves, and then copy the files they want to their hard disc (Wei-Han).

After I finish watching my downloaded movies, I don't immediately delete them. I ask other people whether they would like to see them as well (A-Ming).

These downloaders do not just download or copy films for their personal collection or interest, but also for their friends or family, in order to share movies with them. Downloaded movies are not just something to watch for entertainment purposes, but also a means to socialise. It enables them to form a bond with other people, especially among their peers, or gives them something to talk about with other people, without having actually to watch the movies together. At the same time, sharing is also important. Even though these files are not precious, they did make an effort to search for those files on the Internet and spent time completing the downloading process. If someone else enjoys and appreciates the files they have downloaded, it supports peer identification. Some of the female respondents in particular, such as Eileen, who do not download movies very often, can always find someone, male friends in particular, who are happy to share their movie files.

The Choices of Movies to Download: New Movies, Favoured Movies, and Undistributed Movies

I think almost everybody is downloading these days. It's a waste of money to watch some genres of Hollywood movies at the cinemas, such as love and romance and some comedies (Xiao-Gao).

Recently, I've seen *Ice Age: The Meltdown* downloaded by my friend. For

downloaded movies, I wouldn't ask too many questions about their quality. For *Ice Age*, I just want to check those funny scenes. I had some laughs. That's good enough for me (A-Ru).

With so many first-run movies showing at the cinema at the same time, Internet downloading also functions as a way to filter out mediocre Hollywood movies or movies that seem unworthy of the cinema admission fees. Especially for this audience group it is not possible to see all the popular first-run movies at the cinema, yet they remain eager to see all of the movies in some form, either to satisfy their curiosity or simply to provide them with 'current' topics to talk about. As in A-Ru's case, although *Ice Age* is not her type of movie, she wanted to see what was so funny about it. Internet downloading offers her an opportunity to see this movie without having to pay for it.

According to Xiao-Gao's diary, from October 04, 2006 to October 18, 2006, she did not visit the cinema but downloaded three movies. Among her downloaded movies were *World Trade Center* and *The Devil Wears Prada* which were first-run movies, and *The Lake House*, which was a second-run movie at the time. All three are Hollywood films. *World Trade Center* and *The Devil Wears Prada* were both top movies of the week at the Taipei box office. Although she was interested in watching *The Devil Wears Prada* at the cinema and asked her sister to go with her, her sister had seen it on a downloaded copy. So Xiao-Gao borrowed the downloaded copy. That's how she ended up watching this movie through a downloaded file. Not all downloaders are looking for first-run movies to download. Some download movies according to personal preferences or desire to watch specific movies that are unavailable on other viewing platforms:

The last time I downloaded movies was for last year's nominated movies for

the Golden Horse Awards,⁵⁵ such as *Three Times*. Those Taiwanese movies and Hong Kong movies had already shown at the cinemas and the DVDs were not available then. The only way I could see them was by downloading them (A-Ming).

Even though Chinese-language movies are usually watched on cable movie channels, as discussed earlier in this chapter, internet downloading frees people from the programming schedules of cable movie channels. Once they finish downloading, they can choose to watch the movie any time they wish. One other definite advantage of downloading movies is that they can keep the movie files for as long as they want. This is a real plus for collecting and research purposes. Audiences can watch each copy hundreds of times without paying a penny.

I watched *Memoirs of a Geisha* at the cinema the first time. I really enjoyed that movie, so I downloaded it later and watched it two more times. I only download movies that I really like. I don't usually download movies. I download music more (Annie).

Annie's example demonstrates one of the features of repeated viewings of downloaded movie files and the purpose of a personal collection. A-Ming points out that if people want to see a specific movie after its theatrical exhibition and before it is available on DVD Internet downloading is the only channel by which they can gain access to it.

In addition, Internet downloading offers a wider choice of movies, free of 'gate-keeping' by local distributors and exhibitors. For example, Xiao-Jie described downloading movies that he had not heard of before. The first was an action movie about black gangsters called *Waist Deep*. The other was an

⁵⁵ This award is the Taiwanese counterpart to the US Oscar Awards. It is open to all Chinese-language films.

action/horror vampire movie called *BloodRayne*. Both fall into Xiao-Jie's favourite genres, and neither was shown at a cinema in Taipei. He downloaded them because he happened to find them available and they interested him, even though he didn't know much about them. Without Internet downloading, Xiao-Jie would probably never have had a chance to see those movies. In this digital era, local distributors cannot function as the powerful 'gatekeepers' they used to be. With the global connectivity of the Internet, the choice is passed to movie enthusiast netizens all over the world who share their movie files on the Internet.

Availability, Image Quality, and Collecting of Downloaded Movie Files

I only download 7 or 8 films a day. But I only save those DVD quality movie files. I probably have hundreds of films stored on my hard disc. However, I still go to the cinema for movies premiering on the same day worldwide, if I don't want to wait for DVD quality files on the Internet. That's because we have to wait until the DVD of that movie is released in China or the US, before we can have DVD quality files (Wei-Han).

For many people, watching 7 or 8 movies per month could be quite a task. However, for regular downloaders, such as Wei-Han, downloading 7 or 8 movies per day seems to be a regular routine. All they have to do is turn on their computers and the downloading software. As long as there are movie files available on the Internet, given the speed of today's broadband service, downloaders can download many different movies at the same time. They can let the computer finish the downloading, as some respondents say, while they go to bed or do something else. The task of searching for available movie files actually requires more of the downloaders' time than downloading itself. Whether they

have time to finish watching all of their downloaded movies is another matter. Wei-Han's account also explains why local distributors try to get movies, especially Hollywood blockbusters, to premiere in Taipei as soon as possible after their world premiere. According to Wei-Han, the longer it is since a movie has premiered, the better quality the download is likely to be. Wei-Han also points out that many websites in China provide source files to download after the DVD release. Many movie file providers mark the quality of the downloader to benefit others, as Wei-Han explains:

There are 3 different types of movie files based on their image quality: DVD quality, VCD quality, and 'recorded at the cinema'.⁵⁶

Other than image quality, translation is another factor that can ruin viewing pleasure when watching downloaded movies. As mentioned earlier, Xiao-Gao downloaded *The Devil Wears Prada* but she also said that she could not fully follow the movie owing to a lack of Chinese subtitles. That is a common problem for newly released movies available for downloading. Even when movies have subtitles, it is common for them not to match the shot or the dialogue may be mistakenly translated, because those subtitles are normally added by volunteer netizens. This might also explain why European movies do not appear in any of the respondents' downloading diaries. Image quality also acts as a criterion for these movie downloaders to decide whether they want to keep the files after watching them.

⁵⁶ 'Recorded at the cinema' versions (偷拍版) of movie files refer to those pirate movies originally made by using a video camera to record movies directly when they are playing at the cinema. That is why the image quality of these pirate versions is the poorest, but it is the fastest way to get pirate version of movies after they have been released.

I only save those files with good image quality, and keep them in my shared file for other downloaders to use. As for those with bad image quality, I usually delete them after watching (Xiao-Jie).

After watching downloaded movies, I usually delete those files, in order to save my hard disk space, with the exception of classic or excellent movies. But I have friends who have asked me to burn copies of downloaded movies before. My roommate doesn't burn extra copies for his movie files, either. He thinks it's easy to download movies nowadays, if you want to see a particular movie again later on, all you have to do is download it again (Tommy).

For this generation, film-downloading and watching downloaded movies offer 'disposable pleasures'. They save good quality movie files, movies they really enjoy, and movies that are meaningful to them. Most downloaded movie files are deleted after being viewed. They therefore seem to function like a tabloid newspaper, offering them free and quick access to popular hot topics and news. After watching them, they delete the files as they would throw a paper away. The most important thing for them is to keep up with popular information, news and movies. After all, there are always other new movies available to download tomorrow.

For some heavy movie downloaders, such as Wei-Han, according to his diary, he downloads 6 or 7 movies a day. However, over the two-week span, he only watched two movies. This shows the freedom of university students in their routines at home. He can turn on his computer and download movies day in day out, and watch a movie at 1 a.m. if he chooses. Movie-downloading is an inseparable part of his everyday routine. With his 10MB super fast broadband, he can finish downloading a movie with a file size of less than 1G in a couple of hours. He seems to have a compulsion to download and collect as many movies as possible, especially new movies, even if he doesn't have time to watch them all.

Basically, I download all kinds of movies. I also watch all kinds of movies. Once I find out there are new sources available, I will start downloading them right away (Wei-Han).

With faster and faster Internet connections, the impact of movie downloading can only increase. Movie-downloading, combined with the sharing of unauthorised non-profit copying of legal DVDs (which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter) has already had a significant impact on the local pirate DVD markets. Since the quality of downloaded films has improved, and the cost of DVD burners has gone down, many audiences have lost interest in buying pirate DVD films. Wei-Han explains humorously: 'Earlier, when the downloading speed was not as fast as today, I had experience of buying pirate DVDs from night markets, but there is no need to buy pirate DVDs anymore with faster downloading speeds. Besides, chances are the sources of pirate DVDs are the same as those of downloadable movie files on the Internet.'

6.7 Movie Information, and Movie Talk: The Critical Supplements to Film-Viewing Practices

Other than watching cable movies and downloading movies, checking the latest movie news, reading other audience reviews on the Internet, and watching movie trailers are regular film activities which these university students incorporate into their everyday home routines. They pay significant attention to which movies are showing at the first-run cinema. They try to catch up with the latest blockbusters or hit movies that are heavily covered in the press.

The Internet has replaced the newspaper and magazines as many of the

respondents' major source of news and information, especially movie information. They regularly check new movie information and news on the Internet, in order to get some idea about which upcoming movies might be worth watching. Movie trailers that they accidentally come across on TV, when watching cable movies or other television programmes, are also important sources of information. That is why film distributors place increasing emphasis on the editing of promo trailers. The following discussion between 3 respondents in this group shows the importance of trailers in forming their first impressions of and interest in a movie.

Xiao-Gao: I'm very easily attracted by movie trailers but they have to be edited well.

A-Ming: If all the interesting scenes are put in the trailers, we don't have to see that movie.

Xiao-Jie: There are also trailers designed to deceive audiences, such as *Jarhead*. They put all the fighting scenes in its trailer; however, it's not a war movie at all.

Xiao-Gao: The trailer of *Silk* is also deceptive. It makes you feel it will be a ghost movie, but it's not a ghost movie.

A-Ming: I think that depends. If you go to see *Silk* and hope to be scared, you might be disappointed.

Xiao-Jie: But I guess that's why they want to make trailers look as good as possible. After all, they want to get you to buy tickets. That's all that matters.

Nonetheless, while movie trailers may draw audiences' attention, it takes more than just attractive trailers for a film to succeed. 'Word of mouth' or personal communication is also a pivotal element helping audiences to decide whether go to the cinema to see a movie. Based on the diary records, when *World Trade Center* began its theatrical run, many respondents were interested in watching this movie. However, later on, they started to hear negative reviews about it, either from friends who had seen it, or from messages posted on Internet discussion boards by other people. This is where movie talk has a critical influence on how people

decide which movies to watch.

I'll check other viewers' opinions from Internet movie discussion boards sometimes, especially for some first-run movies that interest me, if I'm not sure whether they are worth the money (Eileen).

I think recommendations from friends or family have a great influence on my decision whether to go to watch a movie or not. For example, after I watched the trailer of *Memoirs of a Geisha*, I didn't feel like watching that movie. But one of my friends strongly recommended me to watch it, so I went on to see it (Annie).

Based on these respondents' accounts, given the fact that not many youngsters in this group use newspapers or magazines as their primary sources of movie news or information, it can be argued that nowadays the impact of professional film critics on which films people choose to watch is less important than 'word of mouth' from friends and family, or other reviews on the Internet posted by unknown viewers. This is common not only for the youngsters of this group, but is also a phenomenon that can also be found among some of the older respondents from other groups, providing they have access to the Internet from their workplace or home.

With the growth of Internet discussion boards and personal blogs, easy-to-follow reviews are often more welcome (and influential) than hard-to-understand criticism from professional critics. People can easily find numerous reviews on the Internet without having to rely on published film reviews or critiques. For local distributors of non-Hollywood movies, without a large enough budget to run big marketing campaigns to challenge the better funded Hollywood movies, Internet discussion boards or movie-related websites are a good tool on which to run an alternative marketing campaign to gain the attention

of these young audiences. Eileen describes her experience of posting some positive reviews on an Internet movie site deliberately to create 'word of mouth' in the virtual world:

I posted some positive reviews about the movie, *Banquet*, to help out one of my friends who was working for its local distributor.

Movie talk is involved in various different stages of their film consumption activities. When they are interested in a specific movie before watching it, they will chat about it with friends or family to ascertain their opinions. If their friends or family members also show an interest in it, they can fix a date to watch it together. Afterwards, they will discuss aspects of the movie, such as the interesting parts, irrational parts of the plot or any other aspects of the movie. They will also give their opinions about the movie to other friends or family members who have not seen it yet. One respondent also regularly uses his blog to post movie reviews or check other netizens' responses to his reviews.

There are not many marketing campaigns that promote European movies, so we are not aware of reviews and critiques about them. That's why we know little about most European movies out there. That makes it difficult for us to make up our minds about watching European movies (A-Ming).

I watch European movies but I don't have many channels to get to know about them. As a matter of fact, there are many European movies on the Internet to download; some of them might be very famous and successful at film festivals. Yet, I've never heard of many of them. I usually wouldn't want to see those movies that I've never heard of because there are still many other movies to see out there (Wei-Han).

Although these respondents have access to various reviews and information about movies through different media and channels, the movies they talk about or show

interest in are still predominantly the latest newly released hit movies, such as blockbusters, or those from genres like horror movies. This shows that marketing and media exposure to movies still conditions whether people want to see a specific movie. Unfortunately, for many non-Hollywood movies, it is difficult to create a large enough impression in these respondents' minds, as they do not have advertisements that can be seen across different media and news reports to generate enough interest to make the film a hot topic for people to talk about. This is one of the reasons why European movies are not popular among this audience group.

6.8 Chapter Summary

The analysis of the respondents' multi-platform film-viewing practices of teenagers and university students suggests that the biggest difference between these two groups could be the meaning of 'home'. For the teenage respondents, 'home' is not a place to conduct their preferred film-viewing because of parental rules on domestic media use. However, the university student respondents treat 'home' as a centre of their entertainment and leisure activity, no matter whether they are living in the school dorm or with their family. Unlike respondents from the teenage group, the employee group, and the parent group, whose film-viewing is conducted in accordance with their school or work schedule, or by housework routines, university students can watch films at home virtually anytime of the day through various platforms, either alone or with family members or roommates. Compared to other groups of respondents, their daily schedule, ability to manipulate various media technologies, and interest in different kinds of movies,

allows them to explore distinct viewing practices for cable movies, downloaded movies, and DVD-viewing.

When watching cable movies, although they have no control over when the film starts and ends or when the commercial breaks will be, they can just watch a scene they find hilarious, or channel-hop to establish their own film-viewing flow by 'cutting and pasting' cable movies from different channels. Most of these university students engage in movie-downloading, yet it is the men in this group who download movies far more often than the women. However, whether this 'gender-downloading' relationship is just a coincidence within this smaller sample, or whether it has broader applicability needs to be further examined. Moreover, with cable movies offering these students an instant source of movies for repeat viewing, downloaded movie files offering free access to newly-released movies, and the availability of cheap second-run cinemas, it is not economical or necessary for these students to spend money on renting or buying DVD movies. Therefore, DVD players are a viewing-platform that respondents in this group do not employ very often, especially compared to the respondent group of employees and parents analysed in the next two chapters.

In a similar way to the group of teenage respondents, 'going to the cinema' is also a kind of social activity allowing them to meet with friends, classmates and peers. Unlike the married respondents and parent respondents, cinema-going does not function as an important activity for them to have a happy family outing. Cinema-going therefore functions as a social form of entertainment. Because they can visit cinemas more frequently than the teenagers can, and have greater viewing experience, they can accept more varied genres of movies than the teenage

respondents, although Hollywood blockbusters and hot newly-released movies remain among their popular choices when visiting first-run cinema. Compared to cinephiles and movie fans with more film knowledge and film-viewing experience, watching art house movies or other non-mainstream cinemas is not a popular practice among these students. However, this group of university students share some similarities with respondents in the mature audience group. They are also frequent visitors to second-run cinemas because they have more time available during weekdays. For this audience group, the selection of different viewing platforms is due to the type of movies they watch and the social meanings behind their viewing activities. As a result, 'film-viewing' for these respondents is not only a personal leisure activity revolving around entertainment, but also a social tool enabling them to interact with their peers, friends, family, and other people.

In addition, compared with other groups of respondents, these students show more interest in Taiwanese movies, especially recent Taiwanese movies directed by a new generation of directors, who take a genre approach to their filmmaking rather than an art house or film festival approach like the famous Taiwanese directors of the 80s and 90s. This explains why their impression of Taiwanese movies is totally different from that of older groups, who experienced the commercial success of Taiwanese cinema in the 70s, or the Taiwanese New Cinema of the 80s. These youngsters hold a more positive opinion towards Taiwanese movies and the future of Taiwanese cinema than the other groups of respondents.

Yet, even though they have more available time to consume movies, their actual movie preferences and choice of which movies to watch are constrained by

the influence of global popular cinema culture, and predominantly Hollywood cinema culture. Hollywood dominance features in almost every aspect of their movie consumption. Most of the movies they watch and talk about are from Hollywood and this influence has not faded with the popularity of DVDs and Internet downloading. The revenues for the Hollywood studios might drop a bit over the coming years but their penetration has become even greater and deeper in every aspect of the movie-related activities in these young audiences' everyday lives.

Chapter Seven

Employees with More Money and Less Time to Spend on Film-Viewing

7.1 Introduction

The respondents analysed in this chapter consist of people aged between 23 and 39 years of age, who are either single or married but without children. Among the 25 respondents from this group, 18 are single and 7 are married. The sample is therefore predominantly singles, although it is unclear to me whether this is or is not demographically representative of those people without children in this age group. 11 respondents are aged from 23 to 30. The rest are aged from 31 to 39. The male to female ratio of this group is approximately one to one. Other than the age range, the other essential feature of this group is their professional status. None of them are studying in school. All are working full-time, part-time, or as freelancers. 20 of them are working full-time, 2 of them are working part-time, 2 of them are freelancers, and 1 of them is a small business owner.⁵⁷ Although the majority of this group of respondents are employees, in recruiting these respondents an effort was made to reach as diversified a range in terms of employment status as possible, including freelancers and small business owners,. Furthermore, the sample of this

⁵⁷ Two of the twenty-five respondents were between jobs and counted as temporarily unemployed when they filled out their questionnaires. However one of the two respondents got a job and the other became a freelancer before later data-collecting phases of this project.

group is the largest, compared to other groups, making the comparison within this group between married and single respondents and males and females possible.

Unlike the student respondents, who organise their daily routines around their school schedule, such as term breaks, exam dates, etc., most employed respondents have to take part in daily activities centred around their working schedule. As a result, their 'film-viewing' practices are heavily influenced by how much free time they have available after work.

Respondents working as full-time employees do not usually have much available time after work or during weekdays to engage in film-viewing activities. 'Watching movies', especially 'watching movies at the cinema', has largely become a weekend or holiday-only activity. After a long day's hard work, they rarely have either the energy or the mood to go to watch a film. In addition, travelling to a cinema and then back home after work is too exhausting on a weekday evening. This is even more the case for the married respondents in this group. In general, their film-viewing activity requires 'special' arrangements to be made, and becomes a 'special' leisure event for weekends or holidays. On the other hand, they are more financially independent than the student respondents and so have more money to spend on leisure activities than their younger counterparts. Accordingly, their choice of film-viewing platforms and the criteria they use to select which movies to watch are different from the student respondents.

This chapter will start by looking at the respondents' early film-viewing memories from the 1980s. We will discover, on a micro scale, how they built up or changed their impressions towards both local films and foreign films over time and how they used different viewing platforms as media technology evolved. Through

their memories, we will also be able to see how the local film industry and local cinema culture changed from the early 1980s through the 1990s. For this generation, the VCR functioned as an important medium by which they could gain access to a wider range of movies when they were children.

The chapter will then consider how daily work schedules and financial independence has influenced their film-viewing in terms of when to watch movies and via which platforms. They indicate that cable movies are more like a form of television programmes for them to watch randomly like other variety shows, as they keep them entertained for a very short period of time.

Among this group of respondents, DVD is their primary platform to watch movies. They often rent DVD movies. This conforms to Peter Dean's article (2007) in which he examines viewers' appropriation of DVD technology, such as unauthorized ripping of rented DVDs, from a business and industrial perspective in the UK/US contexts. However, his work was not supported by empirical research into actual viewers. The analysis in this chapter explains how audiences appropriate media technology to facilitate their 'film-viewing' practices and to expand their own movie collection without spending too much money. The analysis of some of the respondents' movie-collecting practices also supplements the paucity of existing literature on video-collecting (Tashiro 1996; Dinsmore 1998; Klinger 2000; Bjarkman 2004), which has not so far included discussion of viewers' DVD-collecting practices.

For most respondents analysed in this chapter, going to the cinema is a social event conducted with their close family, partners, or friends, especially watching a newly released film at a first-run cinema. However, the focus and meaning of the

cinema-going activity are different from cinema-going for the younger teenager or university student respondents. For these employed respondents, while going to the cinema, the choice of movies to watch and the pleasure obtained from their consumption of film texts are no less important than the social function of hanging out with friends. Moreover, they do not employ downloading as an important source for accessing movies, due to the image/quality issue with downloaded movies and the time needed to download. They would rather spend more money watching a movie at the cinema or renting a DVD for the better audiovisual quality.

7.2 Memories of Watching *Guopian* at the Cinema and Using VCRs as ‘Home Cinema’ in the 1980s

The majority of respondents in this group were born between the 1970s and the early 1980s. Their childhood ‘film-viewing’ memories, therefore, can be traced back to the 1980s and 1990s. This section will endeavour to explain why many of them enjoyed watching *guopian* (‘national films’) when they were children. Taiwanese-made or Hong Kong-made genre movies were very popular in the late 1970s and 1980s, especially comedies and martial arts movies, and there was a much better market for *guopian* than there has been in recent years. This gave their parents easier access to Chinese-language movies, which they could watch without having to worry about the language barrier. These genre movies provided these respondents with great entertainment value when they were children.

The addition of the VCR as a popular form of media equipment alongside

network television in many Taiwanese households in the 1980s offered this group of respondents a wider and more diversified selection of movies to watch at home. It will be argued that the VCR changed the context of 'watching movies' socially after it was introduced in the early 1980s.

Why was *Guopian* the Children's Favourite Type of Film during the 1980s?

The first movie I saw, as I remember, was a Jackie Chan movie, either *Project A*, or *Wheels on Meals*. I watched more *guopian* and Hong Kong movies when I was a kid (Zhi-Cheng 28, Male).

Most movies that I watched as a child were *guopian*. I remember going to the cinema with my uncle watching Hsu Pu-Liao's movies and Zhong Zhentao's movies.⁵⁸ At first, I thought of Zhong Zhentao and many other actors as Taiwanese. Later, after I grew up, I finally realised that they were from Hong Kong (Nicole 32, Female).

Zhi-Cheng and Nicole state their preference for Chinese-language movies in their childhood. The respondents in this group generally watched more Taiwanese and Hong Kong movies at the cinema as children than the previous two younger audience generations. One of the main reasons for this was that the total number of films produced in Taiwan and Hong Kong from 1980 to 1989 maintained an average one to one ratio with the foreign films licensed for distribution in the local

⁵⁸ Zhong Zhentao is a Hong Kong singer/actor, also known as Kenny Bee. He started his career as the lead singer of a Hong Kong popular idol band, Winners, in the early 1970s. Kenny started acting in 1978. He was recognised as leading actor in a few realist Taiwanese films in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including Lee Hsing's Golden Horse Awards winners, *Story of a Small Town* in 1979 and *Good Morning, Taipei* in 1980. He also played leading roles in Hou Hsiao-Hsien's first three movies, *Loveable You*, *Cheerful Wind*, and *Green, Green Grass of Home* from 1980 to 1982. Later on after the late 1980s, he featured in many Hong Kong comedies. The most famous performance is a supporting role in Stephen Chow's Bruce Lee parody, *Fist of Fury 1991* (Lee 1997, 263-265).

Taiwanese market (Lu 1998, Fig-3b). Consequently, audiences had more *guopian* to choose from when they went to the cinema, in contrast to the reduced exhibition opportunities for *guopian*, especially Taiwanese movies, after the 1990s. What appealed to local audiences most, young audiences in particular, was the entertainment value offered by these commercial genre movies. Zhi-Cheng and Nicole also point out that two of the driving forces of the box office success of *guopian* in the early 1980s were the popularity of two stars: Hong Kong's Jackie Chan and the Taiwanese Hsu Pu-Liao.

It is worth noting that in their childhoods these respondents were confused about the distinction between Hong Kong and Taiwanese movies, because they were both dubbed into standard Mandarin with a Beijing accent by professional dubbing artists. No matter that the actors were from Taiwan, Hong Kong or other places, they all spoke perfectly dubbed Mandarin on screen. That is perhaps why Nicole could not tell that Zhong Zhentao was from Hong Kong when she saw him starring in Taiwanese movies. Hong Kong movies were at this time competitive and easily accepted by Taiwanese audiences because of the uniformity of language. On the other hand, the language barrier made it difficult for these children from the 1980s to enjoy foreign language films. Since English was not officially taught until junior high school in Taiwan in the 1980s, many elementary school pupils were not familiar with English. It was difficult for these school pupils, who were still learning Chinese characters, to follow foreign-language films easily while relying on Chinese subtitles. Mandarin-language movies were easier to comprehend and therefore, more entertaining, as Eric remembered. He expressed his discomfort when watching foreign films at the cinema:

I preferred *guopian* when I was a kid, because I could understand what they said. For *guopian*, the language sounded familiar, which made me feel comfortable. As for foreign movies, I couldn't really sit tight and enjoy the movie because I didn't understand any English at that time (Eric, 31, Male).

In the early 1980's, comedy was one of the most popular genres in the Taiwanese film market. From 1980 to 1985, comedy movies topped Taipei's box office list of *guopian*, every year except 1981 (Wen 1986, 66).⁵⁹ Among the six best selling *guopian* in Taipei during this time, Hong Kong movies starring Jackie Chan account for four. This explains the popularity of Jackie Chan's martial arts comedies in Taipei. In 1984, Jackie Chan's *Project A* not only topped all other *guopian* but also beat the best selling foreign movie of that year, *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, at the Taipei movie box office (Huang 1984, 15). *Project A's* huge success established Jackie Chan's reputation and made his later movies in the 1980s blockbusters that were able to compete with Hollywood's own, as well as attracting audiences to go to see his movies at the cinema as a special event.

VCR as the Most Used Platform for Children and Young People to Watch Movies in the 1980s

I rarely went to the cinema very often when I was a kid. I only watched movies on the VCR occasionally. Mom would take us to the video rental shop to rent movies. But we seldom watched rented VCR movies after we had cable TV (Pearl).

I didn't watch movies very often when I was a child because I lived in Nankang where there were no cinemas. It was not very convenient to go to

⁵⁹ The best selling Chinese-language movies (movies from Hong Kong and Taiwan only, because movies from China were banned during this period) in Taipei from 1980 to 1985 are as follows: *The Young Master* (1980), *King of Gamblers vs. King of Con Artists* (1981), *Dragon Lord* (1982), *Winners and Sinners* (1983), *Project A* (1984), and *Mr. Vampire* (1985) (Lee 1997, 263-265).

the cinema. I watched rented videos more instead, such as Hong Kong *wuxia* TV series or Hollywood movies. I think I watched more Hollywood movies at that time for the reason that they were easier to find in the video shop (Mei-Ling, 30, Female).

Watching rented movies was a common practice for children and young people before the arrival of the cable television system in the late 1980s. The VCR brought movies from the cinema into the living room inside these respondents' homes. As in Pearl's case, her parents did not have to spend time and money taking the whole family to the cinema. They could bring the cinema to their home space instead. Unlike most first-run cinemas situated in one of the earliest developed business areas called *Hsimenting*, on the west side of Taipei City at that time, video rental shops were readily located on street corners. In Mei-Ling's case, as she lived in the suburban District of Nankang in east Taipei, where no first-run cinemas were located, it was impractical for high school students like her to take a bus trip of one or two hours to *Hsimenting* to watch a movie. Watching rented movies via the VCR was a more practical means for her and her family to watch movies.

Long before the VCR became a popular platform for audiences, three terrestrial television networks in Taiwan had regularly scheduled movies. However, only with the VCR could audiences choose the movies they wanted to watch from a wider and more up-to-date selection than national television could offer. All the same, what movies were available for renting depended on the video rental shops. Paralleling the sorts of movies exhibited at the cinema in the 1980s, Hollywood and Hong Kong movies dominated video shop shelves. As Mei-Ling mentions, Hollywood movies were easier to get from video rental shops than other movies. Otherwise, Jackie Chan's movies and other Hong Kong martial arts movies were also popular in the local rental market.

I didn't go to the cinema frequently when I was a child. My dad would rent VCR movies so we usually watched movies at home. Most of the videos that my dad rented were Hong Kong movies, such as Jackie Chan's *Police Story* (Shin-Ru, 31, Female).

I remember when I was an elementary school pupil. I was crazy about Hong Kong martial arts movies. I watched lots of Hong Kong martial arts movies on rented videos (Avril, 35, Female).

Watching rented video movies was a family activity that could bring the whole family together, instead of taking a time-consuming, expensive trek to the cinema. This phenomenon was also common for teenagers in Chapter Five. The only difference is that video movies have been replaced by DVD movies for teenagers today. This conforms to the research of Levy and Gunter on home video use in Britain in the 1980s. They found that '74% of their sample of VCR householders reported that watching a video was an enjoyable way for the family to spend some time together' (1988, quote in Gunter and Wober 1989, 55).

7.3 How Employees' After Work Routines Influence Their Film-Viewing

When I studied at university, I would watch probably 2 to 6 movies per week at the second-run cinema. But right now, working full-time, I can only manage to watch one movie at the cinema per week. I think there are two reasons for this. One is the cost of watching a movie at the cinema is not cheap. The other is that working full-time is very exhausting, so I don't want to spend too much of my free time watching movies. As a matter of fact, I usually get back home around 8pm to 9pm and go to sleep around 11pm to 12 pm. I just don't have much time left for watching telly, let alone watching movies. If I watched movies, the whole evening would disappear too quickly (Ya-Li, 29, Male).

One of the reasons why these employed respondents cannot go to the cinema as regularly as they used to when they were students is financial. Of course, compared to students, these employees have good salaries. However, as they start earning their own money and gradually become financially independent from their parents, they develop a different mindset and allocate money in a different way and according to their everyday budget. The main purpose of 'film-viewing' gets transformed from being a means to hang out with peers, giving them some common topics to talk about, into being an entertainment tool that provides relaxation and peace of mind after work. Consequently, before deciding to engage in any film-viewing activities and going to the cinema in particular as it is the most expensive platform for film-viewing, they will think more carefully about whether this is how they want to spend money.

Being tired from their weekday work routines and lack of free time, these employees are usually too tired to make a visit to the cinema when they have to go to work the next day. For Zhi-Cheng, for instance, 'film-viewing' is a weekend-only activity:

When I have nothing to do on weekends, I will watch movies to kill time. I rarely watch movies or go to the cinema during weekdays. I just stay home most of the time watching the sports channel (Zhi-Cheng).

This is confirmed by Zhi-Cheng's film consumption diary according to which, indeed, he only conducted film-viewing activities on holidays or weekends. Chi-Fu also explains why he cannot enjoy movies on weekday evenings.

I only have time to watch rented movies on weekends because I need a longer available time to watch movies. On weekdays I always have one to two hours available after work; however, I don't feel like spending this free

time watching movies. It seems to me that I have to be in a special 'mood' to be ready to watch a movie. During weekdays, if I watched a movie I would feel that my available one or two hours after work would have gone too easily. As a result, I'd rather watch telly instead. By watching telly I can just watch ten minutes or longer without feeling like having thrown away all my free time (Chi-Fu, 36, Male).

Chi-Fu brings out several noteworthy points concerning 'film-viewing' and after-work routines. Firstly, he has to be in a 'relaxed-but-not-feeling-tired' kind of mood. The format of the feature-length film does not make this easy. Viewers have to devote at least 90 minutes to 2 hours of their free time to be able to watch a feature-length film from beginning to end. This means that more than half of their evening would be spent solely watching the film. Watching movies also calls for greater attention than watching television programmes:

You have to be attentive when watching movies to be able to follow the narrative because all the storylines are compacted into one or two hours. Storylines and settings are much simpler in TV dramas. Even if you miss some episodes or scenes in the middle, you can still follow the storyline. It's difficult to do this when watching movies (Nicole).

Owing to the format of TV dramas, in which stories are told in easy to follow episodes, the progress of the story is much slower than the pace of movies. This allows audiences to watch TV dramas in a more relaxed way. John Ellis confirms this, in discussing how audiences feel relaxed because they do not need to pay much attention when they consume the short and segmented format of television programmes.

The consumption of TV is often described as 'relaxation', indicating a process that demands little concentrated attention, and is concerned with variety and diversion rather than enlightenment and excitement (1992, 162).

For full-time working audiences, the concentration needed for 'film-viewing' might not provide them with the relaxation and rest that they desperately need physically and mentally after an exhausting day's work. For Fu-Ping, being in the mood to watch a movie is the most essential requirement for deciding whether to watch a movie and the kind of movie he plans to watch:

I think whether I am in the mood or not is the most important concern for me when deciding if I want to watch a movie. If I feel like getting some relaxation on a particular day and don't want to think too much, I will choose movies that do not require too much thinking to follow them. Usually at weekends, when I don't have to work, I will pick movies that take some thinking when watching, if I don't feel too sleepy (Fu-Ping, 37, Male).

Fu-Ping has more rest during holidays and weekends and therefore more energy and is in a better mood to consume movies, such as dramas and art house movies, which require more attention and thinking to fully digest. The university student respondents in the last chapter did not reveal any such hesitation in speaking about how they decide whether to watch a movie. Presumably university students do not suffer from the same tiredness after attending school lectures as employees do. They do not have to go to bed as early or as regularly. Thus, spending one hour or two on watching a movie during weekday evenings is not as big a deal for them as for many of these employed respondents.

7.4 Cable Movies Function as Randomly Watched

Television Programmes

Fifteen out of the twenty-five respondents in this group selected cable movies as one of their primary platforms to watch movies. Other members, such as Pearl,

do not enjoy cable movies because they think that the cable versions of movies are different from the theatrical versions: 'I don't like cable movies because of their special editing to fit programme schedules and commercial breaks' (Pearl). For some R-rated movies, cable channels have to cut out explicit scenes or shots in order to follow government regulations and fit the channel's programme schedule.⁶⁰ For many respondents in this group watching cable movies, cable movies function as part of the programmes available on cable channels. They surf different channels randomly for programmes that attract their attention. By constantly switching to different channels, they mix different types of programmes into a pastiche, which is similar to the kind of 'cannibalising' schedule (Poltrack 1988, 39, quoted in Ang 1991, 74) that university student respondents adopt when watching cable movies, as analysed in the last chapter. This is what two respondents said:

I usually come home after work around 10pm. By watching TV I can rest my mind. I just randomly surf the cable channels. I will watch sports channels first, then Discovery channel or National Geographic, or news channels. If I don't want to use my brain at all, I will switch to movie channels or some variety show channels. As a matter of fact, I don't watch movies I've never heard of on cable. I only watch movies I know or movies I've watched before (Chi-Fu).

I only watch cable movies when I feel in the 'mood'. For movies that I've

⁶⁰ According to the government's cable movie regulations, R-rated (restricted to audiences under 18) movies can only be shown on an encrypted channel; PG-12-rated (restricted to audiences under 12, for audiences between 12 and 18, parental or adult guidance is strongly recommended) movies can only be shown from 9pm to 6am; PG-rated (restricted to audiences under 6, for audiences between 6 and 12, parental or adult guidance is recommended) movies can be shown 24 hours with the exception from 4pm to 7pm. G-rated (for general audiences) can be shown for 24 hours. (<http://info.gio.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=15195&ctNode=3359&mp=1>, accessed July 22nd, 2007).

never seen before, I can't start to watch them from the middle if I happen to find one playing on a cable channel. However, for movies I've seen, it doesn't matter (Chi-Ya, Female, 30).

As discussed in the last section, it is not very common for these employees to be in the 'mood' to watch a feature movie on weekday evenings. However, this does not mean that they do not watch movies at all on weekdays. Among the twenty diaries received from the respondents in this group, ten of them, just like Chi-Fu and Chi-Ya, did indeed watch cable movies on weekday evenings. For example, according to the diary of 31-year-old, male respondent Jeremy, watching cable movies is a routine activity in the evening at home. This is predominantly due to boredom at home after work. He randomly searches for interesting movies, or uses cable movies as something to watch while eating dinner. On October 3rd, 2006, a Tuesday night between 12:10am to 12:40am, before going to bed, he recorded in his diary that he watched a Hong Kong movie starring Simon Yam. He did not know the title of the movie and was not quite sure on which channel he saw it, because he was surfing through the different channels. He did this just to kill time. For many of the respondents in this group, watching cable movies is different from other film-viewing, such as watching DVDs. For them, cable movies are not like 'watching movies', but just a part of what Williams (1974) calls their 'television-viewing flow' on weekday evenings. Movies showing on cable channels are just like news programmes, sports shows, or dramas that are also playing on the cable channels. It is only when they decide to watch a rented DVD movie, that they adopt the sort of mindset for spending two hours attentively watching a specific movie. Otherwise they just flip across different cable channels aimlessly to see whether they can find any interesting programmes worth watching for a couple of minutes.

John Ellis discusses the commonality of 'watching telly' as opposed to viewing a pre-planned event: 'Broadcast TV is also intimate and everyday, a part of home life rather than any kind of special event' (1992, 113). Cable movies only form part of the programmes offered by the 100 or more channels available to subscribers in Taipei. In 2005, five major multi-system operators (MSO) initiated a 'channel segment' policy that places channels that offer similar programmes into blocks adjacent to one another on the cable spectrum. These ten blocks are public channels, family channels, variety shows, dramas, news, *guopian*, foreign movies, sports, music, and shopping channels (Sun, 2006, 22). For example, if we look at the line-ups in the northern Taiwan region in October 2006⁶¹, the *guopian* channels were composed of the Star Movie (Channel 61); ETTV Movie (Channel 62); Videoland Movie (Channel 63); and LS Time (Channel 64). The foreign movie channels consist of HBO (Channel 65); ETTV Foreign Movie (Channel 66); AXN (Channel 67); Hollywood (Channel 68); Star Western Movie (Channel 69); Videoland Western Movie (Channel 70); and CINEMAX (Channel 71). If viewers want to watch a foreign movie, they can easily search through all the foreign movie channels. If they do not find anything attractive, they can check all the *guopian* channels without having to cross different blocks of other types of channels.

This 'block segmentation' policy allows viewers to locate the type of channels they are interested in easily and to surf across similar types of channels. Viewers can combine segments of programmes from different types of channels freely, as they wish. What on traditional terrestrial television are different types of

⁶¹ Cable Broadband Institute in Taiwan (CBIT) website: <http://www.cbit.org.tw/index.php?PageID=6a7f0c8780466c7bd1b85af5c4478228> (accessed November 29th, 2007).

programmes therefore become different types of channels on cable, catering to different audience needs at different times of the day. By taking advantage of various programmes offered by multi-channel cable television, viewers can freely create their own 'television flow', combining different types of programmes from different channels. However, within this 'flow', the movies on cable channels lose their distinctive formal and narrative features, and the qualities that distinguish movies from television programmes. Therefore, they start to become treated as another kind of television programme. This is especially so for the respondents of this group. Additionally, most of them enjoy watching movies that they have seen already on cable movie channels:

I will surf up and down through different movie channels to find movies that I feel are interesting. If I happen to find a re-run movie that I like, I will watch it again. For example, I can't help watching Disney's movies over and over again, if I find them showing on cable channels (Lisa, Female, 25).

HBO is my favourite movie channel. Watching HBO to me means watching movies that I've seen before. I don't have to watch these movies very attentively (Shin-Ru).

One of the reasons why Lisa and Shin-Ru prefer movies they have seen before is because of this characteristic of watching cable movies as a part of the 'flow' of watching television. They never make a plan to watch movies they have seen before. They just happen to tune into the channel and find that a movie they know and have already seen is showing. This conforms to Barbara Klinger's studies of how university student informants watch movies repeatedly:

...repeated encounters with film seem an almost inevitable part of life, given the omnipresence of VCRs and cable TV – an experience that is not special, simply hard to avoid. This penetration of film into everyday life caused one

student to remark of repeat viewing, "I never make time for it; it always just seems to happen." (2006, 142)

Movies they have seen before have the advantage that they do not have to be watched attentively, as Shin-Ru points out. They do not have to spend their precious evenings watching the whole movie. They can rest their minds without having to make an effort to follow the story too closely. As a result, they can use the movie for the relaxation they need after work. They become 'couch potatoes' in the way that Klinger demonstrates when discussing how the familiarity of watching movies that have been seen before offers audiences relaxation and comfort they cannot get from watching new movies.

Familiarity enables viewers to experience both comfort and mastery. Foreknowledge of the story alters the narrative experience by lessening the tension associated with suspense. Viewers can be more relaxed, shifting their priorities to a knowing anticipation of events to come (Klinger 2006, 154).

Familiarity with the stories of movies helps views to relax. However, the findings of my research suggest that this kind of viewing is mainly associated with cable movies. Even though some respondents in this group do purchase the DVDs of movies they love, it is not a common practice for them to watch the movies over and over again. Their repeat viewing activities are more often conducted through cable movies which do not have to be planning ahead. It creates a kind of pleasant surprise when they find that one of their familiar movies is playing on cable channels, and it appeals to them to continue watching it. This creates a temporary pause in their aimless channel-surfing. This kind of repeat viewing is rarely done through other platforms, whether cinema, DVD, or downloaded movie. It seems to be a 'cable movie only' activity, at least for most of these employed respondents.

7.5 'Easy Watching' Genres of Movies Offering

Stress-Free Relaxation

The film genre is among the most important criteria considered by respondents in this group when choosing which movies to watch. Love and romance, adventure and action, and comedy are among their favourite genres. What is common to these genres is that they offer entertainment after they have finished work. This is especially true for comedies, with the respondents pointing out that they are perfect options for resting their minds, in a way that is similar to how teenagers enjoy comedies after doing tiresome school work. The difference between this group of respondents and the teenagers is that these mature employees prefer comedies that mix love and romance. Slapstick comedy is far less popular for this group than it is for the teenagers.

I like movies that offer me relaxation, such as comedies or love and romance comedies (Mei-Ling).

I rarely watch serious drama recently, only movies could be watched for relaxation. Most of the movies that I watch now are comedies, love and romance, or romantic comedies, such as *The Break-Up*. I think comedies can really relieve some of my stress; however, there are not many comedies today that make me laugh hard. That's a problem (Jeremy).

What these comedies or love and romance movies really offer to these adults in their twenties and thirties are slow-paced and warm-hearted stories in which affection is combined with some laughter. I shall therefore call these films 'easy watching' movies, just as love songs in slow to medium tempo are usually labelled as 'easy listening' or 'contemporary adult'. Each individual might have their own

definition of what 'easy watching movies' might mean based on their film-viewing experience and genre definitions. Nevertheless, for this group of respondents, comedies and light-hearted romance movies seem to fit the definition of 'easy watching' movies. On the other hand, movies that disturb are avoided.

I think watching horror movies is a waste of time because I don't have to experience those chilling feelings and I don't like the way filmmakers create that kind of feeling intentionally (Pearl).

I don't watch ghost movies because watching ghost movies is like paying money to be scared. I don't like that kind of feeling. Additionally, I'm an engineer, so I pay great attention to the logic of a story. Ghost movies and some sci-fi movies are not logical to me at all (Ya-Li).

Horror movies were the least favoured type of movies among these respondents. Some of them particularly disliked ghost stories with more than half of them expressing a negative attitude to them. This was a contrast with the younger Taiwanese studied, for whom, as we have seen, horror movies are among their preferred film genres because they offer them stimulus, excitement, and perhaps, a kind of mental challenge when they watch with their peers. For the employed respondents, however, this kind of stimulus appears too strong for them when they only want some relaxation and entertainment. The female respondent, Pearl, for instance, thinks that the audio and visual effects of horror movies are too unnatural and manipulative while the male respondent, Ya-Li, does not accept the kind of narrative logic they adopt. According to the responses of other respondents, they seem to dislike horror movies simply because they don't like to be scared:

I don't watch horror movies very much. I remembered after watching *Ring*, I kept thinking about that movie for a while. Even though I'm not really scared by horror movies, I don't enjoy them (Zhi-Cheng).

I don't like horror movies because I can have nightmares after watching them. Sometimes when I take a shower, those scary images will come to my mind. I even feel uncomfortable watching horror movie promos on TV (Shin-Ru).

People who love horror movies may do so because of the scary moments. As Brophy says, 'the pleasure of the text is, in fact, getting the shit scared out of you – and loving it' (quote from Tudor 1997, 434). However, for these respondents, what scares them most are not the feelings they have during the viewing but the shocking images that pop up in their minds afterwards. Those shocking images are like funny scenes in comedies which linger in their minds for a long time. This is especially so when the scary scenes can produce a link between real life and the fictional story world. Zeng Yi-Zhu, for instance, argues that the *Ring* uses the concept of 'urban myth' or 'urban legend' to successfully create an eerie atmosphere:

The most powerful effect of horror movies is the fear that audiences associate with, rather than detailed visual shock presented on screen. *Ring* successfully let audiences believe that television sets and telephones around our everyday lives are, indeed, threatening (2005).

After the huge box office success of Japanese horror movies like *Ring*, many Japanese and other Asian horror movies have used this kind of 'urban legend' story setting to depict technological equipment or other ordinary objects in our modern lives as being a special medium that connects human beings and ghosts. This has become a common theme and trademark in Asian horror movies, so that email (in *Pulse* [*Kairo*]), mobile phones (in *One Missed Call*), tap water (in *Dark Water*) shoes (in *The Red Shoes*), subway trains (in *Redeye*) and a camera (in *Shutter*) assume malevolent forms. This might help to explain why some respondents feel that ghost movies depicting contemporary modern life are scarier than horror

movies about monsters or psycho killers, and why Asian ghost movies are deemed scarier than western horror movies by these respondents:

I like horror movies and thrillers, but I don't dare watch *Pulse*, because this movie is about email. I use email a lot. But I can watch movies like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* because the story has nothing to do with my real life. I think Japanese horror movies are scarier than American ones because the Japanese look like us. Stories in American horror movies seem to happen far away from us (Vanessa, Female, 26).

I don't watch ghost movies, but I can accept thrillers. I can watch movies, such as Bruce Willis's *The Sixth Sense*. I think ghosts in western movies are less scary than ghosts in Asian movies. Because many ghosts in western movies are vampires, culturally speaking, those vampires are so far away from you, and you know they are just fictional. Besides, western ghost movies are not associated with your own life easily. Nevertheless, Asian ghost movies can have an impact on your everyday life. For example, if you see a ghost movie about a subway station, you might feel scared when taking the subway train. So I usually don't watch ghost movies from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea (Nicole).

The idea of 'cultural proximity' (Straubhaar 1991) helps explain why respondents in this group think Asian horror movies are scarier than western ones. For Vanessa and Nicole, the feeling of the existence of the invisible and spiritual ghosts in Asian horror movies is much stronger for them than the existence of western vampires or werewolves in their real lives. The spiritual and religious concepts in Asian cultures are similar to each other. Therefore, whether they are Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese or Thai, Asian people have a very different idea about vampires, zombies, or werewolves as they appear in western cultures. That is probably the reason why only one respondent in this group went to see the Taiwanese-made horror blockbuster, *Silk*. In contrast, most of the university student respondents showed their support and went to see it at the cinema.

7.6 Going to the Cinema as a Weekend or Holiday-only

Activity

As discussed earlier, going to the cinema is not something this group of respondents are able to do frequently. Unlike those in the university student group, they cannot generally go to the cinema on weekdays. Yet, they can still enjoy their weekend visits to the cinema. In fact it seems that for them 'going to the cinema' has become a weekend or holiday-only activity to be done with close friends or family members. Hollywood movies still remain these employees' preferred choices among first-run movies.

Hollywood Movies with Special Effects as Favourite Choices for Going to the Cinema

If the movie has splendid special effects, it's best watched at the cinema. Average dramas can be viewed at home (Xiao-Wei, 28, Female).

I will watch movies with great scenes and visual effects at the cinema, such as *King Kong*. I will watch dramas, action and adventure movies, or thrillers like *The Black Dahlia* at the cinema as well, and comedies occasionally. But I don't usually watch love and romance movies or European movies at the cinema (Fu-Ping).

Movies with tremendous settings, such as *World Trade Center*, are better viewed at the cinema. Visual effects can be enhanced by watching them in a cinema. If a 3D version of a movie is offered, I will watch its 3D version, rather than the normal theatrical version, because the 3D version offers even better visual effects (Lisa).

It costs people 300 NTDs for admission to a first-run cinema. Therefore, these

respondents want to make the most of the big screen and the surround sound system and expect a kind of experience that cannot occur anywhere but in the cinema. Therefore Hollywood movies, and blockbusters in particular, provide them with the 'content' to make the most of these audiovisual facilities. Hollywood blockbusters with spectacular settings and state-of-the-art audiovisual effects have become the main cinematic attractions. Dynamic and fast-paced movie genres, such as action and adventure movies, sci-fi, thrillers, and war movies, are the popular genres to be watched at the cinema. That is why more and more 3D versions or IMAX versions of films are exhibited in Taipei, along with their normal theatrical versions. As Lisa mentions, 3D versions of films give audiences an even more spectacular audiovisual presentation. The viewing environment and experience generated by a 3D film or IMAX cinema cannot be reproduced with their own domestic film-viewing equipment or so-called 'home entertainment systems'. This gives film exhibitors an advantage, because they can make sure that 'cinema' is the only place these special event-like films can be experienced.

Seven respondents in this group did go to the cinema at least once during their two-week period of diary-keeping. Apart from two art house cinephiles who went to the annual 06 Women's Film Festival, the other five went to see Hollywood movies: Jeremy saw *World Trade Center* (Jeremy's diary 04/10/06). Vanessa, Jeremy, and Nicole saw *The Departed* (Vanessa's diary 08/10/06, Jeremy's diary 07/10/06, and Nicole's diary 09/10/06). Jeremy saw *The Devil Wears Prada* (Jeremy's diary 09/10/06). Zi-Chiang saw *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* (Zi-Chiang's diary 14/10/06). And Kenny and April went together to watch *The Prestige* (Kenny and April's diary 22/10/06). It is worth noting that none of these five Hollywood movies are categorised as

blockbusters. Traditionally, Hollywood blockbusters can only be scheduled by local distributors during two time windows every year in Taiwan. The first one is between Christmas and the Chinese New Year, which covers students' winter vacation. The second usually matches the students' summer vacation from late June until late August. The respondents' film consumption diaries were recorded from late September 2006 to November 2006. This may explain why there are no Hollywood blockbusters mentioned as viewed at the cinema. Although *World Trade Center*, *The Departed*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, and *The Prestige* are not considered as Hollywood blockbusters, they all became the best grossing movies respectively over four continuous weekends during October, 2006 in Taipei.⁶² This fact explains not only the employed respondents' preference for watching Hollywood movies at the cinema, but also Taipei moviegoers' preference for Hollywood films.

The Social Event of Watching First-Run Movies with Family Members and the Solitary Activity of Watching Art House Movies

In the phrase 'Let's go see a movie', the stress is on 'let's go!', not on 'see a movie' (Bachmann 1997, 7).

As with the previous two groups examined, cinema-going for these respondents remains a social activity most of the time. This conforms with the finding of Bachmann that whom audiences choose to go to the cinema with is sometimes more important than the movie itself. For the respondents in this group, opportunities to go to the cinema with friends are much less than for the teenagers

⁶² Please refer to 2006 Taipei Box office data source from www.atmovies.com.tw (accessed on December 06, 2008)

or university students. For these employees, especially those who are married or in a stable relationship, watching a movie is a core part of an evening out with his/her partner. However, as argued earlier, cinema-going remains a social activity for this group of respondents. To have a companion or two to go to the cinema with is definitely a plus for them:

If I find nobody to go to the cinema with, I just stay home and watch DVDs (Vanessa).

I go and watch film festival movies by myself. But for first-run movies, I watch them with company most of the time. The good thing about watching movies with company is that you can have someone to talk with after watching the film. It is also a reason for going to the cinema (Chi-Ya).

As Vanessa reveals, if she finds no one to go to the cinema with, she stays at home watching DVDs. These employees seem more reluctant to leave their homes when they have free time, compared to younger teenagers and university students. Without doubt, going out and travelling in any modern metropolitan city like Taipei is not hassle-free. Traffic jams, lack of parking places and crowds of people on subway trains contribute to making some respondents hesitate about leaving their comfortable, fully-controlled and secure homes. Considering how much it costs, the convenience of cinemas and multiplexes located in Taipei, the entertainment value, and the popularity of movies as everyday chat topics, cinema-going is the kind of multi-functional activity for these 'tired' respondents to spend time with family or close friends and to be entertained. This finding partially echoes the results of research into movie-going in India conducted by Lakshimi Srinivas, who claims that, 'it appeared that movie-going was never constructed as a solitary act' (2002, 161). Compared to the two younger groups of student respondents, this group of respondents shows more willingness to go to the

cinema with family members, including parents, brothers and sisters, which implies that these respondents have adjusted their attitudes towards 'family members' between youth and adulthood. Family members are not just the people they live with. They also want to spend more of their free time with them.

If we examine the respondents' film consumption diaries, all five respondents who went to first-run movies went with friends or family members. There is no record of the respondents watching first-run movies alone, although they did when going to art house cinemas. In fact the two respondents who went to art house films went alone because they found it difficult to find friends or family members who wanted to go to see these movies with them. Based on interview data, some respondents have been to second-run cinemas alone. However, it is not easy for them to find time to go to second-run movies regularly. None of their diaries record going to see second-run movies.

7.7 Film-Viewing on DVD at Home: The Most Popular Viewing Platform among Employed Respondents

The respondents from this group were similar to those in the pilot study in showing a higher percentage who watched rented DVDs at home. Nineteen of twenty-five respondents from this group chose DVD-renting as their main platform for watching movies. In addition, sixteen of the twenty-five borrowed movies from other people. It seems that the image and sound quality of DVD movies, the easy reproduction of DVD copies, the convenient access to DVD-renting and DVD-retailing, and the cheaper cost of watching DVD movies make this the

perfect viewing platform for these busy working respondents .

DVD-Renting as the Major Source for Respondents' 'Home Cinema'

The concept of 'home cinema' has been practically feasible since the coming of the VCR in the 1980s. However, it was only after the emergence of the digital format of the DVD and its accompanying home entertainment system that the audiovisual quality of 'home cinema' could compare with the audiovisual experience of the cinema auditorium. The choice of film-viewing platform does not solely depend upon the image quality but also on its cost and how soon a movie will be available after its theatrical release.

We haven't gone to the cinema for a long time. I think the main reason that we don't go to the cinema that frequently is because fewer and fewer movies are worth watching at a first-run cinema (Kenny, Male, 36).

At the time the research was conducted in Taipei, the cost of watching movies at a first-run cinema was around 300 NTDs for one adult, whilst renting a newly released DVD only costs 100 NTDs for two days. For a married person like Kenny, he has to spend 600 NTDs if he and his wife go to the cinema. However, if he waits for three to four months he will be able to find the movie on the shelves of DVD rental shops and watch it with his wife at home for only 100 NTDs. Given the audiovisual quality that current home entertainment systems and DVD movies offer, more and more movies can be enjoyed happily as 'home cinema'. Many respondents in this group did not feel the urge to see popular movies upon their release at the first-run cinema. They are content to wait three or four months to find them at the rental shop.

I don't care whether the movies that I want to rent are new releases or not, as long as I haven't watched them. When I step into DVD rental shops, I don't usually have target movies in mind. I don't rent newly released movies; I just go for those old movies. It's cheaper if I don't go after those first-run or very popular movies. The movies that I rent are probably on their twentieth run (Chi-Fu).

The rule of thumb for the cost of film-viewing is that the quicker you want to see a movie after its release, the more it will cost you. Cinema-going is more expensive than renting a DVD movie, which costs more than watching cable movies. Generally speaking, there are two tiers of DVD-rental fees charged in most shops in Taiwan: 100 NTDs for a newly released DVD rented for two days; 50 or 60 NTDs for an older DVD which can be kept for one week. In Chi-Fu's case, like some of the other respondents in this group, he does not rent newly-released DVDs because he is content to wait until they are cheaper and he can have them for a longer period.

One critical difference between cinema-going and watching rented movies at home is that when they go to the cinema, people watch the film straight away. However, with rented movies there is a two-phased process. The first is renting the movies from the shop, and the second is that they have to find time to watch them. They might have errands to run or may not immediately be in the 'mood' to spend two hours watching the movies. They only have two days to watch their rented movies before the due return date, but they might not find a suitable time or have the impulse to do so. As a result, they have to watch their movies without being in the proper mood in order to be able to return the movies on time and avoid late return fees. Shin-Ru complained about late fees, and she would sometimes rather go to the second-run cinema than rent movies.

I used to go to DVD rental shops very often but I'd rather go to the second-run cinema now. Because the way those shops charge late fees doesn't seem fair, I've paid lots of late fees. Sometimes, I have to stay up late to finish watching those DVD movies to avoid the late return fees (Shin-Ru).

Fortunately, for respondents who do not want to pay late fees or have to watch rented movies in a hurry, technology has come to the rescue.

I don't download movies. I only burn rented movies on DVDs. Because I don't have time to watch those rented movies immediately before returning them, I decrypt and burn them for later viewing. Right now, I still have many burned DVD movies stocked for me to watch (Chi-Fu).

Since DVD burners became reasonably priced, they have become a standard piece of equipment for computers in Taiwan. With suitable software and a bit of know-how, making a copy of a DVD movie is no more difficult than making copies of CDs. Copying DVD movies is far easier than copying VHS tapes. Most importantly, unlike when VHS tapes are copied, there is no degradation in quality when a DVD is copied. This is true even if one takes into account the issue of compression ratios for copying Double-Layered (DL) DVD disc onto common and popular Single-Layered DVD+R or DVD-R discs, where movie files of 6G or 7G have to be compressed to fit into the space of under 4.7G of blank DVD discs. Compared to its original DVD, the inferior quality of the copied version is hardly noticeable. Chi-Fu, for instance, used his DVD burner to save copies of rented movies for later viewing and to avoid late fees. This 'rent, rip, return' practice, as Dean calls it, (2007, 120-122) is a good example of the users' appropriation of technology and also allows them to facilitate their film-viewing free from institutional rules – in this case, the 2-day or 7-day time frame for keeping rented DVDs:

There are many Korean movies available now. I don't watch them at the cinema but I do rent them. I've rented and watched movies, such as *Lover's Concerto*, *Brotherhood (Taegukgi)* and *Shiri*. (Eric)

I go to rent DVD movies every two weeks at Blockbusters around Rui-an Street because I can find more non-Hollywood movies there. When I rent movies, I usually first consider newly released DVD titles, then art house movies. There's one shelf designated to art house movies in that Blockbuster shop, where movies are labelled 'Cannes Film Festival Selections' or 'Winner of the Golden Palm', otherwise nobody's gonna notice those DVDs. Recently, I found out that those Sundance movies were available at that Blockbuster shop, so I could have just rented them later instead of watching them at the cinema (Fu-Ping).

Hollywood movies might be the most popular selection for watching movies at the cinema. However, when renting DVDs to watch at home, respondents are much more adventurous. Given the cheaper fees charged by DVD rental shops compared to cinema admission prices, people tend to be less constrained when renting movies at a rental shop, as in the case of Eric. He may never go watch Korean movies in the cinema but he will rent them to watch at home. At the same time, for respondents like Fu-Ping, it is important that the DVD rental shop should offer a wide selection of movies. He chooses the shop which offers more than Hollywood movies. Not only do DVD rental shops offer movies that have been shown at the cinema but they also provide movies that fail to get a theatrical release. For example, Michael Winterbottom's *A Mighty Heart*, even though it had a star like Angelina Jolie, was still released directly onto DVD without having been shown at the cinema in Taiwan. This is because it did not succeed in the US market and did not get any Golden Globe or Oscar nominations, so the local distributor thought its takings would not justify its being exhibited at the cinema. Watching it on DVD is therefore the only 'official' way that people in Taiwan can have access to this

movie. With a broader selection of movies at rental shops than movies available at the cinema, rented movies have therefore become a good alternative to cinema-going for this audience group.

DVD-Sharing among Family, Friends, and Colleagues: A Social Activity for Free Movies

I enjoy staying home and watching DVDs instead of going out at weekends. But I don't usually rent DVD movies, I just watch DVDs that I bought or burned or that are borrowed from friends. Besides, my sister brought back lots of DVD movies from China for me to watch (Mei-Ling).

Sometimes, I will discuss movies with friends or colleagues. We share DVD movies with each other as well. Some are official copies, some are burned copies (Li-Ning, Male, 29).

Movies have been stored in different formats since the medium was born, from celluloid film rolls, to magnetic tapes, to various digital formats, such as LD, VCD, DVD, and other kinds of digital video files. The features of current digital formats of being easy to reproduce and transport facilitate movie-sharing. Before the coming of VCR tapes, people could only share with other fans their opinions or critiques of the movie they had seen. Only after the reproduction of movies on to tapes or discs has it been possible for them to share the movie itself with other people. As both of the above respondents mention, the sharing of movies with family, friends, and colleagues is a common practice for them. That is why one of the local distributors, Patrick Huang, expressed his concern about the box office loss caused by this kind of movie-sharing: 'The majority of the pirate versions of movies are not sold through illegal businesses, rather they are reproduced by consumers and used as a kind of gift, which could make more serious box office

damage than illegal pirate business' (Lin, 2005, 69). There are several significant aspects of movie-sharing. First, it is the most economical way to watch movies. Not only are all these shared movies free of any fees, but also they can be watched at any time. Furthermore, the cost of purchasing DVDs is cheaper than ever, especially for pirate DVDs from China (as in Mei-Ling's example). Along with the low cost of digital reproduction of either DVD discs or downloaded files, this makes it easier to build up a movie collection than it was years ago. Besides, the quality of digital files will not quickly degrade after constant repeat viewings as magnetic tapes or film rolls did. Consequently, these collected DVD movies, whether they are official, copied, or pirated versions, are not as precious as earlier formats - celluloid film rolls, magnetic VHS tapes, or LD discs (Laser Disc). It is easier for people to share their own collected movies with others. Even if their films become damaged or go missing, it requires little effort and expense to make another copy or buy a new one.

Li-Ning points out that sharing movies with friends or colleagues is also a way to initiate conversation and interaction. Before lending movies, the lender can recommend the ones he possesses to his friends or colleagues. Later they can discuss their views about the movie together. In a way, this process functions like a book-reading club. Several friends or colleagues can watch the same movie separately and then discuss it together. Some respondents had indeed established a kind of movie-sharing club among their colleagues and friends, as in one case in the pilot study mentioned in Chapter Four. In another example, Chun-Ho was the major movie-provider to some of his office colleagues and Fu-Ping and Ya-Li were among those to benefit from his generous movie-sharing:

We have an unofficial DVD-sharing club in my office. One of my colleagues, Chun-Ho, will rent newly released DVD movies and make copies, in order to share those movies with us (Fu-Ping).

I can get DVD movies from Chun-Ho. He offers us one or two movies per week. Sometimes, he even designs covers for his copied DVD movies. He doesn't charge us a penny. He makes one copy for one movie, so we have to line up for certain popular movies (Ya-Li).

You won't hand me over to the police? (Chun-Ho asks jokingly.) I started to copy movies onto VCDs when I studied at university. After getting a DVD burner, I started to make copies of rented DVD movies. I only make copies of movies that I like. As for making covers for my copied DVDs, that's just my boring habit. My handwriting is not neat. Therefore, I use the computer to print out DVD labels so that my copied DVDs can be identified easily by other people. Actually, I'm not really collecting movies, because usually after lending my copied DVD movies to others, I don't even know whether those movies are returned or not. It's more like a volunteer service for my family, friends, or colleagues. I don't charge them any money. Since I have paid to rent those movies, I can make the most of my rental fees by sharing burned copies with other people (Chun-Ho, Male, 26).

All three respondents here are engineers in the IT industry. Their knowledge of computer hardware and software means it is easy and trouble-free for them to decrypt rental DVD movies and make burned copies. Nevertheless, Chun-Ho still has concerns about legality, even though he does not make any profit out of this practice. For Chun-Ho, making copies of rental DVDs and covers for the burned copies is an everyday habit. This kind of *bricolage* leisure activity is similar to other domestic handcrafting activities, such as making miniature models or D.I.Y. furniture from whatever resources are at hand. It is a labour intensive activity at home after work, which not only kills time and relaxes him, but also serves a social purpose. By sharing copied movies, Chun-Ho establishes a cinephilic bond with his friends or colleagues. The feedback and thanks he gets from his colleagues for

his generous movie-sharing motivates Chun-Ho to keep making copies of newly released movies.

We haven't gone to the cinema for five or six years. We watch almost every movie at home these days. Especially after the unofficial DVD-sharing club among my colleagues, one to two weeks after the release of new DVD movies, I can get burned copies of those movies from my colleague. There's no need to waste money and time going to the cinema (Feng, Male, 36).

Unfortunately for the film industry, the loss of profit that results from this practice is difficult to estimate. Not only do DVD rental shops and distributors suffer from loss of revenue but local exhibitors and distributors also lose significant audience numbers as people would rather stay at home and watch free movies, rather than go to the cinema. As Feng reveals, with so many copied DVD movies available, watching shared DVD movies at home has completely replaced the activity of cinema-going for him and his wife.

Collecting DVD Movies as an End in Itself

I rarely watch those DVD movies that I bought again and again. I bought them mainly for the purpose of collecting (Chi-Ya).

Most of the movies that I collect I haven't watched again. I don't have much time to watch them. I would rather watch HBO when I come home from work (Nicole).

These respondents confess that they seldom watch their collected movies. They buy or copy DVD movies for the purpose of collecting them, not for watching them. Nicole mentions in her diary that all of her repeat viewings were via cable movie channels, and no respondent recorded watching their own collected DVD movies repeatedly. Some did watch their newly bought DVDs movies for the first

time. One of the main reasons for not watching the movies they have collected again is the attraction of new movies, as Feng points out:

I've collected more than 600 movies, I guess. Not all of them are burned, I buy movies that I like to watch, or movies that I have seen and enjoyed very much. As a matter of fact, I seldom watch those movies that I have collected again and again. There might be once or twice when I have thought about watching those old movies again. Yet, there are always newly burned movies waiting for me to watch (Feng).

As there are various platforms available for film-viewing, it is very easy and convenient to get access to unseen movies. With limited leisure time after work or over weekends, it requires a spur of the moment decision for them to bring out their collected movies and insert them into their DVD players to watch:

It takes an impulse to watch my own DVDs sometimes. I might watch a particular movie after I have seen a review or heard something about that movie. Normally, I think that since I already have the DVD, there's no hurry to watch it immediately (Pearl).

According to the respondents' film diaries, the pressure they feel about paying the late return fees when renting DVDs did force them to watch their rented movies immediately. When they collect DVDs on the other hand, with the exception of some rare movies that are hard to access via other platforms, it is mainly for collection purposes, rather than for repeat viewing. This is similar to Walter Benjamin's examination of his book-collecting habit, as elaborated by Barbara Klinger: 'In Benjamin's meditation on his own fascination with book collecting, he admits that amassing a library has very little to do with actually reading the purchased texts' (2000, 137). One thing different might be that Benjamin's collected books also function as a part of the domestic decor and as a way to

demonstrate the owners' identity and personal interests. However, not many of the respondents who collect different kinds of DVDs use their DVD collection as a part of their domestic decor. Most of them say that they just put their DVDs in the corner of their bedrooms or in the closet, without organizing them. This may partly be because of the easy access to any kinds of DVD movies and the low cost. It appears that the reason these respondents collect DVDs is different from the increasing trend of Americans who, according to the research of Peter Nicoles, (as mentioned in Klinger, 2000, 134), purchase videos for the purpose of viewing them repeatedly. Thus, with easier and more economical access to movies than before and also very limited time available for film-viewing, watching already-possessed movies repeatedly becomes a rarely-conducted practice for many respondents of this group.

7.8 The Internet as the Main Source of Movie Information

When I find out about an upcoming new movie from TV or Yahoo Movie, I'll look for reviews of that movie. If the reviews of that movie are positive, I'll try to see it. I will check the entertainment news on the Internet as well (Lisa).

Of course, other media, such as the radio, TV, newspapers, and magazines, are still channels by which these respondents are exposed to movie information and movie-related news at home or in their work places. Most of the time, they do not actively look for movie information from these 'traditional' media sources. However, with connections available in most of the respondents' living and work places, it is the Internet that has gradually become their main source for finding movie schedules and which cinemas to go to. It also functions as the respondents'

main reference point for reviews or other details about the movies they are interested in. They can go to websites that offer general movie news about newly released films or gossip about movie stars. In addition, they have more opportunities to get information from the Internet about non-Hollywood movies or non-mainstream movies that is difficult to find in other parts of the mass media.

As a documentary fan myself, it's difficult to see related information or movie promotions about documentaries covered in mass media, such as TV or newspapers. However, through the Internet, I can search for information or reviews from other Internet users about documentary films (Li-Ning).

I think it's very easy to get information from the Internet. You can even find news about European movies from the Internet, which will make me take these European movies into consideration when I choose movies. For Hong Kong movies, I will consider those movies mentioned on Internet discussion boards (Feng).

As Li-Ning and Feng point out, without using the Internet they might never even know whether some of those documentaries or European movies even exist. Just as respondents get access to unreleased movies via Internet shopping, without having to rely on distributors to release the movies they want to watch, people can free themselves from the media institutions by using the Internet. It also provides them with a platform to express their own opinions on a given movie. Audiences can get an idea about how other people think about a particular movie without having to follow professional or academic film critics. This kind of film criticism from ordinary film viewers to some degree affects the film critic's traditional role of being an opinion leader in terms of influencing people's perceptions about a movie and their decision as to whether to watch it or not.

Yet, compared to the university student group, only 5 of the 25 respondents

in this group currently use Internet downloading as a primary channel for watching movies. The reasons they give for not doing so are because of the inferior image quality of downloaded movies in comparison to DVDs, and the time needed for downloading movie files. As DVDs are easily available, movie-downloading is not a necessary practice for the majority of respondents in this group. The few respondents who constantly download movies are all single and work in IT-related industries. Those who do download do so in a very similar way to those in the university student group. The only difference is that they do not have as much free time as their younger counterparts to engage in this practice. Also, they would rather spend money on the original DVD versions instead of downloaded files.

7.9 Chapter Summary

Throughout this chapter, it has been very clear that after leaving school and starting work, the resulting change of lifestyle and financial status leads to changes in film-viewing practices. One significant difference between this group of employed respondents and the student group is that 'watching telly' is a preferred leisure activity rather than watching movies at home. Cable movies also function like a form of television in that they can watch them randomly, as they watch variety shows. DVDs are their primary choice when they do watch movies, either rented, purchased, or borrowed. Compared to cinema-going, watching DVD movies costs less and save time spent commuting to the cinema. DVD movies are also preferred because their quality is far better than downloaded movies. They also do not collect downloaded movies or share downloaded movie files with other people as often as the university students. DVD movies are their main target for

collecting purposes and for sharing with others. However, the Internet is gradually taking over traditional media and is used as the principal channel to access movie news and reviews, although some of the cinephiliac respondents check movie magazines or reviews in newspapers from time to time. The role of academic or professional film critics is gradually being replaced by banal film reviews posted on the Internet when these respondents seek advice and recommendations.

This change of lifestyle from students to employees alters the social meaning of cinema-going as well. For teenagers, cinema-going is a rare activity to escape from parents' orders and to hang out with classmates. For university students, cinema-going is a popular and often conducted activity to watch some specific movies they personally enjoy or popular newly-released movies with other friends, who have similar interests in watching those movies. As for these employees, cinema-going becomes a weekend or holiday-only activity that takes place in company of his/her partner, family members, or closed friends. It is uncommon for these respondents to go to the cinema with friends or colleagues. They are more concerned with watching the movie or enjoying its content than spending time with others. That is why some of the respondents go to the art house cinema or film festivals to watch specific genres of movies that they personally have great interest in. This kind of solitary cinema-going was not apparent among the teenager or university student respondents. Watching popular movies and getting up-to-date movie news is not as important as it is for younger respondents. Even so, Hollywood movies still dominate the choice of which movies to watch. However, they do show more interest in non-mainstream and non-Hollywood movies in comparison with the two younger groups. With a little help from media technology, they are willing to go beyond the limits and barriers established by the local film

industry and global cinema culture, and actively look for movies that respond to their own tastes. Each viewing platform is given its own special function and is employed under different circumstances and in consideration of its quality, time, and cost.

Chapter Eight

Film-Viewing as a Family Activity for Parents

8.1 Introduction

Most of the empirical audience research that has looked at domestic media consumption by parents inside the family focuses on three main areas: (1) TV or VCR (Lull 1990; Morley 1986; Levy & Gunter 1988; Gray 1992; Moores 1993; Gillespie 1995; Moores 1996; Gauntlett & Hill 1999; and Holloway & Green 2008); (2) ICT or new media (Silverstone, Hirsch & Morley 1992; Caron & Caronia 2001; Takahashi 2003; and Kerr, Kücklich & Brereton 2006); and (3) general media (Hoover, Clark, & Alters 2004; Mackay & Ivey 2004; and Hagen 2007). However, relatively, little has been written about how parents use films inside or outside of the home. Some exceptions include Sarah Regan's thesis (1996) on American parents and young teenagers' VCR viewing with a special focus on rental video movies, and Phil Hubbard's examination of multiplex cinemas in Leicester in the UK as an important site offering particular audiences a night out with 'bodily comfort and ontological security' (2003, 255). This chapter functions as a pioneer to study contemporary parents' multi-platform film-viewing practices and their use of various domestic media technologies, in order to offer in-depth analysis on parents' use of media technology and consumption of film texts. By examining how parents with children (whether toddlers, elementary pupils or high school students) engage in film-viewing activities through multi-platforms, this

chapter will compare how different viewing-platforms are employed differently by parents with children of different ages and explore the significance that each viewing-platform has in these parents' daily lives.

The group of eight respondents analysed in this chapter were aged between 35 and 49. All of them are parents with children of different ages, including toddlers, elementary school pupils, high school students, and adult employees, making possible the analysis of the film-viewing practices of parents with children of different ages within this group. Both the male to female ratio and the thirty-something to forty-something ratio of this parent group are even. The eight respondents include two married couples, enabling analysis of how viewing practices vary for mothers and fathers. Moreover, as two of the parent respondents are mothers of two respondents from the teenage group, the analysis of these two mothers' film-viewing activities can be compared with the analysis of their children's activities in Chapter Five. However, as all the parent respondents here have some level of higher education, parent viewers without higher education are not represented in this research.

After the children were born, their everyday routines shifted and became centred round raising and educating their children. They therefore cannot do whatever leisure activities they feel like, nor can they relax after work like the single and childless respondents analysed in the last chapter. They have to adjust their daily routines to the needs of their children. For some of the female respondents who take the traditional role of mothers and housewives without being otherwise employed, their daily routines are planned almost entirely round their children and family. However, some of the fathers in this group can see films after

work without having to contribute to household routines to as great an extent as their wives. Generally speaking, these parents subordinate their film viewing to both their busy workload on weekdays and their parenting duties after work. Film-viewing is not just a personal leisure activity for their entertainment and relaxation for them. It is a family activity engaged in by both parents and children.

Films also provide a kind of parenting tool to amuse little children in front of the television set, which offers parents some respite or the chance to do other domestic chores without having to worry about their children's needs. Cartoons are especially useful in this respect. When the children are elementary school pupils or high school teenagers, films become an educational tool and parents choose movies they consider suitable for their children to watch. This corresponds to their own sense of what is proper for the children to see, which very often will not correspond with what their children want to see, as some of the cases analysed in Chapter Five show. These parents thus act as 'gate-keepers', by selecting movies for their children to watch and filtering out those they think unsuitable.

These respondents grew up between the late 1960s and early 1980s when movies were predominantly watched at the cinema. The only domestic film-viewing was through movies playing on terrestrial TV networks and later through rented videos after the emergence of the home VCR in the early 1980s. Unlike younger generations of respondents and their own children, who have been used to watching movies at home on cable channels and DVD players, most of these respondents' early 'film-viewing' memories concern cinema-going in the 1970s and early 1980s in Taiwan. This was the heyday of Chinese-language genre movies from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Their memories and impressions of

Taiwanese movies will therefore be considered. After the analysis of their cinema memories, the subsequent sections will be dedicated to interrogating the ways in which these respondents have constantly had to adjust their film-viewing after the birth of their children and during different life stages.

How cinema-going functions as a pure social event for the whole family and how these parents choose movies in accordance with their children's ages will also be considered. Since it is expensive for parents to take the whole family to the cinema this activity is a luxury that can only be conducted occasionally. In contrast, watching movies at home through rented or borrowed DVDs has become a popular and economical alternative. Cable movies have also become important as a means by which some parents are able to watch films without their children. In concluding this chapter, I will discuss why traditional media (such as radio, newspapers, and television), play a more important role than the Internet for this group to obtain movie information. Taipei's public transportation system, including the MRT system (Mass Rapid Transit) and buses have also become important sources of information for this group. This is especially so for those who use Taipei's public transportation system to commute to work, as movie trailers are often played on buses or subway trains.

8.2 The Popularity of Chinese-Language Genre Movies in the 1970s and the Early 1980s

The cinema culture in the 1970s in Taiwan appeared prosperous and lively. The film industry was a profitable business with the opening of new local film studios, production houses, film-distributing companies, and cinemas. The export market for Taiwan movies was expanded from Southeast Asian

countries, such as Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and Vietnam to Chinatowns in Western countries and reaching Latin America and Africa. It was the peak era of Taiwanese commercial genre movies with the successful manipulation of the genre formulas of *wuxia pian*, kung-fu, *wenyi pian*, comedy and military training movies (Liao 2005, 34).

Respondents growing up between the 1960s and early 1980s witnessed the golden age of Taiwanese movies, especially the success of commercial genre movies. After the steep recession in the Taiwanese film industry from the late 1980s and the more artistic approach adopted by the majority of Taiwanese filmmakers after the New Cinema movement that emerged in the 1980s, the box office success of locally-produced genre movies has not reoccurred. During the period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, the number of *guopian* (movies from Taiwan and Hong Kong combined) that were made and shown at the cinema even matched and sometimes surpassed the number of foreign movies imported into Taiwan (Lu 1998, Fig.3C).

Owing to the improvement of Taiwan's economy during the 1960s, leisure and entertainment activities became much more affordable for the people, which contributed to the prosperity of the local film industry in the late 1960s and 1970s. Going to the cinema was among the most popular of all leisure activities for the people, especially as Karaoke, VCR, DVD, and personal computers were unavailable at that time:

When I was a student, the local film market was quite prosperous. I think there were not many leisure activities for entertainment available during that period of time, no KTV in particular. Watching movies and reading novels were my only habits (Chun-Yu).

Chun-Yu, a 45-year-old mother with two sons studying at junior high school,

recalls that cinema-going was one of the major leisure activities when she was young. Before KTV (Karaoke TV) became a popular leisure outlet and one of the important social venues for family and friends to gather together in during the 1990s, the cinema performed a similar function. The concept of KTV is a combination of the sing-along activity of Karaoke and the space of MTV cafes.⁶³ Compared to cinema-going, KTV offers people a private space to conduct various activities at the same time and in the same room. By going to KTV, people could not only sing but also eat, drink, smoke, dance, or have a party inside their KTV rooms for as long as they wanted. In other words, they could spend the whole evening and even the whole night at KTV without having to move to other venues (Zeng 2004). Given the quiet and dark public cinema auditorium, it is difficult for a group of friends to have conversations or interact when a movie is playing. In the noisy and discotheque-like private KTV room, however, a group of people can sing and chat as loudly as they wish. Consequently, the coming of KTV, offered an alternative to cinema-going for Taiwanese people. This is why for many audiences in the late 1960s and 1970s in Taiwan, including Chun-Yu, cinema-going remained one of the few available and affordable leisure activities, which definitely helped the prosperity of the local film market.

⁶³ MTV cafes were the by-product of the popularity of pirate videos and a special venue in Taiwan in the 1980s for people to watch all kinds of videos, including pirate versions of first-run movies, banned or un-distributed foreign movies, concert or music videos of popular foreign bands, and illegal porno videos (Lu 1998, 372-377). MTV cafes offer their customers private and closed rooms in different sizes to watch videos of their own choice, without interference by other customers.

Cinema-going When Kung-fu, *Wuxia* and Qiong Yao's Romance Movies Dominated the Taiwanese Film Market

Before the emergence of the Taiwanese New Cinema movement and the popularity of Jackie Chan's martial arts comedies and Hsu Pu-Liao's slapstick comedies in Taiwan in the mid-1980s, there were two kinds of Chinese-language genre movies that dominated the local film market for almost two decades from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. As some respondents in this group remember, these were kung-fu movies and Qiong Yao's movies:

Fei-Fan: When I was a kid, my mom would take us to the cinema to see *guopian*, especially kung-fu movies like *Drunken Master*.

Cindy: Oh, we watched different movies. My mom would bring us to see Qiong Yao's movies, such as *Fantasies Behind the Pearly Curtain*, and *A Love Seed*.

Fei-Fan, a 36-year-old architect and a father with a 3-year-old daughter, is here discussing his childhood memories of watching kung-fu movies. His mother brought Fei-Fan and his two brothers to the cinema to watch kung-fu or *wuxia pian* (martial arts films). *Wuxia pian* started to dominate the Taiwanese film market after the huge success of King Hu's *Dragon Inn* in 1966 and Zhang Che's *The One-Armed Swordsman* in 1967. After that and throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, *wuxia pian* and kung-fu movies were among the most distributed movie genres in Taiwan, along with comedies (Lu 1998, Fig. 12). Consequently, when parents took their children to the cinema, martial arts movies were sure to make the boys happy. That's why many Taiwanese who grew up then remember the *wuxia* or kung-fu movies, as Fei-Fan does.

However, Taiwanese-made martial arts movies could not quite match the originality of those from Hong Kong and gradually they lost the battle with them. This was because Taiwan's private production companies were managed like other small and medium enterprises in other industries. They therefore did not have the kind of structure or studio mechanisms of Hong Kong's big studios, such as the Shaw Brothers or Golden Harvest. Taiwan's production companies were looking for a quick turnover to make a profit. Most were just making as many as possible of whatever kinds of movies were popular at the time (Lu 1998, 137-139). Also, Hong Kong's martial arts movies were constantly changing and evolving, giving audiences new features rather than producing similar kinds of movies over and over again (Lu 2005, 52-54).

Hong Kong filmmakers altered the genre formula to create martial arts sub-genres and successfully fostered different stars for audiences to associate with these sub-genres. These included Jimmy Wang Yu's sword-fighting *wuxia pian* in the late 1960s and Bruce Lee's fist-fighting kung-fu movies in the early 1970s, and from the late 1970s, Jackie Chan's kung-fu comedies. Even though the success of King Hu's Taiwan-made *Dragon Inn* rejuvenated the *wuxia pian* in the late 60s and 70s, no other Taiwanese directors could match his standard, nor the box-office success of their Hong Kong counterparts (Lu 1998, 137-140; Lee 1998, 40-43).

However, Taiwanese filmmakers did find another formula to attract audiences during this era. That was the romance movie (*wenyi pian*), especially films adapted from the novels of Qiong Yao (Liang 2005, 24). Fei-Fan's wife, Cindy, now a 34-year-old project manager of an IT company, recalls that, for parents with little girls in the 1970s, Qiong Yao's romances were an alternative to

kung-fu movies.

During the 1960s and the 1970s, television sets were not as common as today and the programme choices were rather limited (Lee 1997, 254). Reading novels and watching movies were therefore the main leisure pursuits for young people, female in particular, growing up in the 1960s and 1970s. Qiong Yao's romance novels were among the most popular for female readers. CMPC produced the first movie adapted from a Qiong Yao novel, *Four Loves*, in 1965. After that, Qiong Yao movies dominated the genre for almost two decades. With a fixed 'three rooms' setting,⁶⁴ the cost of producing these romance movies was much less than Hong Kong's martial arts movies. Therefore, they became the best weapons for Taiwan's smaller production companies against Hong Kong's martial arts movies in both domestic and overseas markets in the 1970s.

The End of Qiong Yao Movies and the Production of Political Propaganda Movies in the Early 1980s

With private production companies working hard to produce as many romance movies or kung-fu movies as quickly as possible, the government-owned studios, such as CMPC, endeavoured to make big-budget propaganda war films about the triumph of the Republican forces in the Sino-Japan war from 1937 to 1945. These included such films as *The Everlasting Glory*, *Eight Hundred Heroes*, and *Heroes of the Eastern Skies*, made to maintain the morale of the Taiwanese people after the diplomatic defeats that resulted in the loss United Nations

⁶⁴ Chi points out that stars, a 'three room setting' (living room, ballroom, and café lounge), scenes of romantic running and chasing, the sea, and pop songs are the basic elements in the formula of the 'Qiong Yao' genre film. (1996, 163)

membership in 1971 and the breaking of official ties with Japan in 1972, both to the benefit of the PRC (People's Republic of China). These war movies tried to boost confidence in the KMT army's ability to defend Taiwan from invasion by the Chinese Communists in that 'strange' historical moment when both sides of the Taiwan Strait were fighting to be recognised as the official Chinese state, and when the majority of Taiwanese residents identified themselves as Chinese rather than Taiwanese. However, when government support and political motivation to promote 'Chineseness' declined after the 1980s, war films disappeared and became a lost genre in contemporary Taiwanese cinema.

For many respondents in this group, after they had entered high school, the Qiong Yao movies and the propaganda movies became outdated for them. Perhaps they got fed up with watching the same kind of movies, or their growing familiarity with English made them interested in Hollywood movies.

When I was a student, it was popular to go to watch film festival movies with a group of friends, even though I was not a fan of film festival movies. What I liked most and what were popular at that time were still Hollywood movies (Connie, Female, 48).

I wasn't interested in Taiwanese movies after high school because most Taiwanese movies at that time were Qiong Yao movies. I preferred foreign movies, Hollywood movies in particular (Yong-Mao, Male, 47).

Most of the movies that I watched after high school were Hollywood movies. There were many Hollywood movies imported at that time (Chin-Yu, Female, 45).

During the 1950s and 1960s in Taiwan, Hollywood movies, Japanese movies and Hong Kong movies were among the three major sources of imported movies (Lee 1997, 114). Given the fact that Hong Kong movies counted as *guopian*, when the

import of Japanese movies was banned in 1974 following the termination of diplomatic relations with Japan (Huang 2005, 690), Hollywood movies became the dominant foreign movie in Taiwan. However, Connie mentions that, when the first ever Golden Horse International Film Festival took place in 1980, watching rarely seen European or Japanese movies was a fashionable thing to do for young people and university students in the 1980s.

8.3 Cinema-going for Parents: A Special Family Leisure

Activity

Cinema-going functions as a social tool for teenagers to leave 'home' and spend time with their peers. In contrast, cinema-going for this group of parents is an activity conducted mainly with the family, or specifically with their children. As with the respondents analysed in the last chapter, cinema-going for them is also a weekend or holiday-only activity. Due to their busy working schedule or the school schedule of their children, this is the only time they can go to the cinema together.

Cinema-going as a Long Gone Activity: Stuck at Home Looking after Toddlers

Fei-Fan: It's been quite a long time since I went to the cinema.

Cindy: The last time we went to the cinema together was to watch *Kung-Fu Hustle*.

Fei-Fan: That was a long time ago. I remember we went to watch the late night show.

Cindy: We had to leave our baby daughter with my mother-in-law before going to the cinema. Since having our baby, we haven't been to the cinema as often as we used to. However, the number of movies that we watch has

increased. We just stay home watching rented movies. Right now, we can only manage to go to the movies, perhaps, once or twice per year. Before getting married, we even went to film festivals. Actually, I would like to go to the cinema very often, if possible.

Fei-Fan: But we don't have the luxury to do that.

Cindy: My parents-in-law help us with our daughter on weekdays, while we're working. It's not fair to leave her with them so that we can go to the cinema at the weekend or during holidays. Maybe after our daughter gets older, we could take her to see some movies for children.

Fei-Fan and Cindy are the parents of a 3-year-old girl. The above conversation took place in October, 2006 and their last visit to the cinema was over a year and a half ago before, when they saw Stephen Chow's *Kung-Fu Hustle* (in January, 2005). As both parents are working and have a little baby girl to watch over, going to the cinema is not possible either during weekdays or at the weekend without a babysitter. Fei-Fan's parents offer assistance during weekdays when both parents are at work. Of course, taking a baby or a toddler to the cinema is not a practical solution and so Fei-Fan and Cindy could not offer an account of cinema-going with their baby. Nevertheless, Cindy admits that after having their daughter the number of movies watched has actually increased. DVD movies offer them something to do at home after work, as they watch over their daughter. Their long-established movie-watching habits are still maintained without having to leave their child. Fei-Fan's and Cindy's film consumption diaries reveal that all of their movie-watching took place at home, either via DVDs or cable channels.

Multiplexes as a 'One-Stop' Site of Combined Multi-Activities for Parents and their Elementary School Children

Compared to when we didn't have children, we go to the cinema more often now. We go to the cinema probably once every two or three weeks. Because

we all enjoy cinema-going, going to a place where we can eat, watch movies and have fun, is a good activity for us to undertake. Our kids enjoy cinema-going very much. They will copy and repeat dialogue from movies they have seen. For example, we went to watch *Open Season* recently. They remembered almost every line in that movie after watching it (Lily).

Cindy looks forward to when, in a few years as her daughter gets a bit older, they will be able to go to the cinema more frequently with her. Lily, a 35-year-old full-time manager and mother of an 8-year-old boy and a 7-year-old girl, does what Cindy hopes to do, as cinema-going has become a regular leisure activity for her whole family. Both of her children enjoy watching movies and cinema-going is one of their favourite activities on weekends or holidays. Lily's children will even urge her to take them to the cinema to watch movies they are interested in after seeing the trailers:

Very often after seeing movie trailers playing at the cinema, they tell me which movies to watch and ask me to arrange a time to watch them. Sometimes, they remind me of the showing date of a particular movie that they want to watch and ask me to mark that date on my agenda. Most of the movies that they enjoy are animations (Lily).

Unlike most of the respondents' childhood memories of cinema-going in which it was their parents who usually decided which movies they saw. Lily's children actively decide which movies to watch and urge their parents to take them. This shows that these young kids are encouraged and are more likely to express their own opinions of which movies to watch. Additionally, what Lily says shows that movie trailers are very successful in attracting elementary school pupils, because they do not obtain movie information through the Internet as often as the teenagers or university students.

The multiplexes in Taipei in fact cater to small children by screening Disney cartoons, which have replaced the Kung-fu movies or Qiong Yao movies of twenty or thirty years ago that were enjoyed by their parents. The modern multiplex located in a shopping mall that has every kind of facility also offers parents like Lily and her husband a convenient place to do a range of different things at the same time.

The definition of a cineplex thus amounts to two identifiably separate constructs. In its purest sense, the 'stand alone' cineplex can be understood as a location or complex that exhibits simultaneously a number of different movies. In contrast, cineplexes that are housed within shopping malls, or a variety of retail outlets located within cineplexes, can be better understood as entertainment centres...Such cineplexes (the merger of cinemas and shopping malls) have effectively become a form of 'one-stop convenience lifestyle store' (Ravenscroft *et al.* 2001, 219 & 222).

Ravenscroft and his colleagues, examining cinema development in Singapore, argue that the combination of the shopping mall and cineplex offers a 'one-stop' venue for patrons of various ages to do many things in one place without having to move to other venues. Taipei is similar to Singapore. It is a metropolitan location with a dense population and a certain degree of globalisation. The first multiplex, the Warner Village Roadshow Cinema, opened in 1998 in Taipei as a 'one-stop convenience lifestyle store'. Since then this type of multiplex featuring various shops, restaurants, game arcades, and fast food chains has been the popular location of newly established cinemas. It matches the fast paced urban lifestyle in Taipei and reduces the need for patrons to move from place to place to conduct different activities or look for other services. For busy Taipei residents, taking the whole family to the multiplex means not only that they can watch movies together as a family but also that they can have a meal, shop, and play games:

Lily: We go to the Miramar Cinema in Dazhi very often.

Jack: It's very convenient and easy to park there.

Lily: Besides, there's also an IMAX cinema there. We go to see IMAX versions of movies if available. The Vie Show Cinema Taipei Xinyi is also our other option, as there are many department stores and shops around.

Even though Lily is living in Xindian City in Taipei County near the southern end of Taipei City, she and her husband, Jack, a 39-year-old engineer, are still willing to drive a long way to northern Taipei to reach the Miramar cinemas in Dazhi, or the The Vie Show Cinema located on the east side of Taipei to watch movies. Thanks to the well-connected peripheral expressways, driving across the city is easier than ever. Moreover, the 'one-stop' feature of multiplexes suits their leisure style. There is the cinematic experience of the IMAX cinema, easy parking, and so a half-day trip to a multiplex is an enjoyable experience for everyone in the family. Since most new releases are playing in almost every multiplex in Taipei, as is the case in Singapore (Ravenscroft *et al.* 2001, 221), the movies themselves are not the most critical factor when these parents decide which cinemas to take their children to. The facilities and accessibility of the multiplex become the key factors. From the 1960s to 1980s, when Jack and Lily were children, local distributors were associated with specific chains of cinemas, which meant that a movie could only be exhibited in the chain controlled or owned by the relevant local distributor (Lu 1998, 145-147). Therefore, if Jack's or Lily's parents wanted to take them to see, for example, Jackie Chan's *Drunken Master* from Hong Kong's Golden Harvest studio, they had to go to the cinema chains owned by Golden Harvest to see it. As a result, the kinds of facilities the cinema and its neighbouring area could offer a family were limited.

Conflicts in Movie Tastes between Parents and their Teenage Children

Jack: When we go to the cinema, we always choose movies that they want to watch.

Lily: Most of the movies that we've seen are cartoons. Before having these two kids, we had a broader choice of movies to watch.

Jack: Wow! That was long time ago. I can't even remember what movies we saw then. Personally, I like action movies. Without these kids, we could just watch whatever we wanted to.

For parents with pre-teen children like Jack and Lily, going to the cinema, and especially to multiplexes, has become a more frequent activity. However, for parents, the choice of films they can watch with their children is quite limited. Firstly, they can only choose 'G' movies or 'PG'. Secondly, as Jack and Lily mention, they cannot choose the type of movies they used to enjoy watching at the cinema before they had their children, whether romances or war movies, or action flicks with strong language. Nevertheless, there are always cartoons showing at the cinema, no matter whether they are from Disney, Dreamworks, or famous Japanese anime studios, so children can readily pick a cartoon to watch on any given weekend in Taipei. The only time and place that these parents can watch movies they personally prefer is at home through DVDs or cable movie channels at night after their children's bedtime:

My children don't really want to watch movies that I want to watch. For example, they like movies with Jackie Chan, Jet Li, or Steven Chow, or movies like *Spider-Man*, but I don't enjoy those movies as much as they do. Actually, we watch most of the movies on the television set. The number of cinema visits is getting less and less because first-run movie tickets are too expensive. Besides, my children do not enjoy going out with us now. They prefer going out with friends or classmates (Chun-Yu).

I don't like the kinds of movies that our children like. But I don't watch

movies just for myself; I have to adjust myself to their tastes, because we watch movies together (Connie).

Both Chun-Yu and Connie are mothers of two teenage boys. Since they are at high school, studying is the focus of the everyday lives of both parents and children. Therefore, the number of times parents can take their teenage children to the cinema has decreased accordingly, because this is considered a time-consuming activity that takes up too much of their study time after school. 'Going to the cinema' becomes an occasional special event after the end of term exams or during holidays. Besides, teenagers would rather go to the cinema with their peers than with their family, in order to feel independent. Furthermore, mothers like Chun-Yu and Connie have very different movie tastes from their boys. For their boys, entertainment, excitement and laughter are what they look for. However, for mothers, other than entertainment, something educational and meaningful for their children to think about is more important. What is more, this generation of parents also holds different attitudes towards Japanese and Korean movies than their children.

I don't watch many Japanese or Korean movies. I think that's due to my age. Those Japanese or Korean movies are for young people only and are not my favourite types of movies (Chun-Yu).

I don't watch Japanese or Korean movies often. I used to watch Kurosawa's movies before though. Recently, my 16-year-old daughter told me to see *Crying Out for Love, in the Center of the World*, but I haven't had the time to check it out. As for my 13-year-old son, he doesn't like dramas. He likes action movies and adventure movies that have excitement (Yong-Mao, Male, 47).

Growing up from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, these respondents did not have much opportunity to see Japanese movies due to the ban on their import in the

1970s, and Korean movies were rarely seen abroad at that time. Therefore these parents do not hold very positive views about Japanese or Korean movies. Chun-Yu thinks that Japanese movies are either cartoons or movies starring Japanese pop idols and made solely to target teenagers. This is because young people became attracted by dramas featuring Japanese idols after their legal distribution on Taiwanese cable channels from the early 1990s. Korean TV dramas were first aired in Taiwan in the late 1990s and more recently the cultural phenomenon of 'hanliu' (Korean wave) has been taking East Asia by storm, so the number of Korean movies distributed in Taiwan has increased significantly. However, other than horror movies, most Korean films do not succeed in the Taiwanese market. For parents of this generation like Chun-Yu and Yong-Mao contemporary Japanese or Korean movies might be thought to be no different from watching their TV dramas and therefore out of the question for them. For teenagers like Yong-Mao's daughter, who have become used to watching Japanese or Korean audiovisual products, the Japanese movies distributed in Taiwan (usually either ghost movies or 'innocent love' movies featuring Japanese idol stars) appeal.

8.4 Home as Parents' Primary Venue for 'Film-Viewing'

Even though seven out of eight respondents chose 'going to the cinema' as one of their major channels to watch movies, if we look at their film consumption diaries, only Yong-Mao managed to take his whole family to the cinema during the two-week period of diary-keeping. They went to see *Open Season* on a Sunday evening. Surprisingly, all other recorded film-viewing activities took place at 'home', which further validates the claim that cinema-going has become a special

event for the family, instead of a regular habit for these parents. Hence, in this section, how this group of parents watches movies at home via DVD and cable movie channels and the different meanings behind their domestic film-viewing activities as compared to cinema-going will be probed.

DVDs as an Economical and Time-Saving Family Activity for the 'Pure' Purpose of 'Watching Movies'

Except for some very popular movies, I would rather wait till the DVD release. Since the whole family can all watch one rented movie for the price of one rental fee, it's very expensive for the whole family to go to the cinema (Yong-Mao).

Actually, I don't like to go to the cinema. All the trouble of commuting is one thing, with the noise and interference caused by other viewers in the auditorium being another. There's no such interference at home. Besides, it's easier now to get DVD movies. I used to go to the Guanhua Bazaar to buy DVD movies.⁶⁵ Right now, it's convenient to buy DVD movies from the Internet from websites, such as www.hivideos.com.⁶⁶ Sometimes, buying a DVD movie is even cheaper than the price of one ticket for first-run movies (Tony).

One of the main reasons to watch movies at home instead of at the cinema is the cost of 'going to the cinema'. For parents taking the whole family it is not just the cinema tickets. There will be other costs, such as meals, snacks, and parking fees.

⁶⁵ Guanhua Bazaar is the most famous market, or area, in Taipei for cheaper prices of all kinds on electronic products, computer-related equipment, and multi-media products, including illegal pirate computer software and pornography. Guanhua Bazaar, in a way, is similar to Tottenham Court Road in London, or Akihabara in Tokyo.

⁶⁶ www.hivideos.com is an Internet shopping site specialising in selling DVD movies, especially world cinema, art house cinema and classic movies. This site is the main source for cinephiles and movie buffs in Taiwan to buy non-mainstream movies.

In addition, as Tony - a 42-year-old teacher and step-father of two twenty-something daughters - says, the fully self-controlled and interference-free environment of home provides him with a more comfortable atmosphere to watch films. With the proliferation of both DVD players and DVD burners, the lower costs of renting or purchasing DVD movies mean that these parents - without the need to catch up on popular first-run movies upon their theatrical releases, as many younger groups of respondents want to do - opt for DVDs as their primary platform to enjoy movies.

Fei-Fan: We choose movies separately. I start from the newly-released DVD chart.

Cindy: I prefer *wenyi pian*. He likes action movies. We usually rent two DVDs at weekends, one for me and one for him. We watch our rented DVDs at home on weekend evenings after finishing all other errands, which is our relaxing 'movie-watching' time.

Fei-Fan: We even watch DVD movies late at night over the weekend.

Cindy: Because we don't have the time or the mood to watch movies on weekdays, the weekend is the only time available.

Unlike cinema-going, watching DVD movies at home not only saves a lot of money and time, but is also a 'purer' activity that solely emphasises 'film-viewing', as Fei-Fan and Cindy mention. They can rent whatever movies they like without having to worry about what to eat, or where to park. The core function of DVD-viewing for parents like Fei-Fan and Cindy is to enjoy the movie. What makes 'watching movies' on DVD even more easy and convenient is that they may be freely shared among family members, friends, or colleagues.

Lily: We seldom rent DVD movies.

Jack: One of her colleagues constantly shares his movies with us.

Lily: He's got all kinds of movies. He knows that we have two kids; he will specially share cartoons or children's movies with us.

Jack: He has burned lots of movies for us, probably two or three movies per month.

Lily: I don't even have a big enough shelf to store those movies.

Despite the fact that Jack and Lily do not burn DVD movies themselves, they still have colleagues who are willing to offer them burned copies of DVD movies. In addition to burned DVD movie copies, cheap pirate movies bought from China are must-buy souvenirs for Taiwanese tourists and also popular items to share, as many of them are movies still showing at first-run cinemas in Taiwan. Kim Bjarkman argues that the pleasure of video collectors of television programmes is obtained through 'acquisition, ownership, guardianship, and membership' (2004, 240), whereas for many DVD movie collectors who took part in my research, I argue that the pleasure obtained from sharing their collection of DVD movies with other people might be the more significant:

I have probably 50 or 60 DVD movies now. I don't buy movies that are easily found or borrowed from other people. I'd rather collect movies that are difficult to find and have been shown at international film festivals, such as some European movies or movies from other third-world countries. There's no need to buy DVDs of Hollywood movies. You can find them at the rental shop. Most of the DVDs that I buy I just leave for later viewing until I have more time available. As for DVDs I've seen, I just put them aside or share them with other friends. Actually, I don't even remember who I lend my DVDs to sometimes (Tony).

Tony, as an elementary school teacher and amateur documentary-filmmaker, sometimes needs to use movies as auxiliary teaching materials or as a reference in class. This is one reason for his collection of movies, especially movies that are not popular and are difficult to find. Buying DVD movies, for those respondents who collect DVD movies in this group, is very often the only way for them to see movies they like that are not popular enough to be shown at the cinema for a

longer period of time or that are not easily found in rental shops. The rarity of non-popular movies, or art house movies, the uniqueness of special edition DVD movies and the bonus materials they include, and the quality of official DVDs enhances their collecting values. For these collectors, the popularity of mainstream commercial movies, the banality of copied DVDs, and the low-quality of pirate DVDs mean that they are not worth collecting, which echoes Jean Baudrillard's analysis that a unique or rare item is 'a symbol of the person who owns it' (1994, 13), and Bjarkman's claim that 'for television collectors, scarcity plays an important role in dictating which programmes are the most 'valuable' investments in the long term' (2004, 232). This kind of DVD-collecting is very different from that of the respondents who copy rented DVD movies for sharing and later viewing. The symbolic value of Tony's DVD collection of non-Hollywood movies does not depend upon the cost of these DVDs but is more a way to demonstrate that his movie taste is different from the popular Hollywood films, which can be manifested when he shares his collection with other people. Moreover, despite the fact that Lily is not as passionate a movie collector as Tony, both of them reveal that they handle their collected DVDs without much care.

Neither Lily nor Tony stores their DVDs for the purpose of displaying them. They just throw them in the corner or on shelves in their bedrooms. These burned or copied DVDs are identical in appearance, with some marks for labelling, along with the easily identifiable covers of pirate movies from China. Therefore as objects they are not precious or special enough to be put into the spotlight. They are just like any other cheap collected items. When Tony's DVDs go missing after lending to other people, the cheap cost of building up his DVD collection and the easy acquisition of a replacement, either via the Internet or through other friends

with similar interests, mean that this is not a big deal for him. This kind of attitude is very similar to how downloaders value their downloaded movie files. Modern digital technology not only lowers the cost of collecting, but because it is easy to copy digital files or DVDs, this also lowers their value as collectable objects:

For the movies I really like, such as *Pink Floyd The Wall*, I've got all different versions of that movie, from VHS tape, to Laser Disc, to DVD. I'm thinking about throwing away that VHS tape. As for the Laser Disc, I think I will just save it for now, because it was very expensive when I bought it. But it is of no use now because my Laser Disc player has already broken (Yong-Mao).

As Yong-Mao points out, his collection of Laser Discs has become nothing more than objects that reflect his memory, since they have not been viewed after his LD player has malfunctioned. His example of constantly changing the format of his beloved collection of movie titles as media technology evolves proves to DVD movie collectors that their DVDs will eventually be replaced by the next generation of audiovisual formats with a superior image and sound quality, just as VHS, VCD, and LD were overtaken by DVD a couple of years ago.

Watching Previously Seen Cable Movies Randomly as a Way for Parents to Relax after Finishing Work

DVDs might be the popular alternative to the cinema for these parents. Nevertheless, if we examine their film consumption diaries, we discover that the cable movie channel is actually the most frequently used platform for them to watch movies. However, this is not based on their specific need or desire to watch a movie:

After returning home from work, I look for Chien-Ming Wang's baseball games first.⁶⁷ If there are none of Wang's ball games, I watch some news. After news channels, I then switch to the cable movie channels. Most of the movies that I watch on the cable channels are movies that I have seen countless times, such as Stephen Chow movies. The only cable movie that I've watched recently on purpose is *Infernal Affairs*. Because I have seen different parts of the same movie every time I happened to find out that it was playing on cable, it was difficult for me to catch up with the narrative by this segmented viewing. In order to watch this movie from the beginning to the end, I had to check its scheduled time beforehand and wait for it (Fei-Fan).

Similar to the findings from the respondents in the employees' group, many of the parents treat cable movies as part of the range of programmes provided by cable television systems. After returning from work, turning on the television is probably the most convenient and restful way to relax. However, cable movies are not usually what they want to watch first after turning on their television sets, as Fei-Fan says. Sports and the news are among the favourite types of television programmes for some respondents in this group. The most significant feature of live sport or news, compared to other programmes, such as dramas or movies, is their immediacy. Not having been able to follow Chien-Ming Wang's live games in the morning because they were working, respondents like Fei-Fan want to catch up with what happened when the games are replayed in the evening. Ball games have the quality of immediacy, so if these respondents do not catch up with them on the day, it will not be possible to watch a replay later. In contrast, all movies scheduled on cable channels will be repeatedly aired over the coming days and weeks. Therefore there is no urgency about watching cable movies. Fei-Fan mentions that

⁶⁷ Chien-Ming Wang is currently one of the starting pitchers for the US Major League Baseball team, the New York Yankees. After he started pitching in the Major League Baseball in April 2005, every one of his ball games has been transmitted live on Taiwan's national terrestrial television network. Chien-Ming Wang, along with Ang Lee, are the icons of great Taiwanese success overseas.

he found time to watch the complete *Infernal Affairs*, as it was often re-run on the cable channels.

They (Lily's son and daughter) usually go to bed around 9:30 pm to 10pm. I would watch some news after they go to bed. I don't like to watch cable movies because it takes time. By watching news, you can just watch for several minutes, and you could switch back and forth from different news channels. Watching TV dramas is fine with me because it only occupies an hour. To spend two hours watching a movie, plus commercial breaks, is too long for me (Lily).

Lily also points out that most television dramas or news programmes will not be longer than one hour. The average length of each news report is around 2 or 3 minutes so viewers can spend only a couple of minutes watching a news item, and then switch to other channels. Some parents in this group enjoy surfing different channels. However, the normal length of a feature movie is around an hour and a half. For busy parents, it is difficult to find 90 minutes on a weekday evening to enjoy a movie, especially with babies or kids around. On the other hand, this group of parents does not seem used to watching cable movies in segments as some of the university respondents do. In contrast, Fei-Fan could not follow the story of *Infernal Affairs* by watching different parts of this movie whenever he accidentally found it playing. He had to finish it from the start to the end at once. This is especially the case for movies they have never seen, as Jack said when talking about a movie that he had not seen before:

I watched *I, Robot* alone in the living room at around 10:30pm, when I accidentally found it playing on a cable channel. It was a good movie. I just felt sorry that I couldn't watch the whole movie from the beginning (Quote from Jack's diary, 04/11/06).

These respondents' diaries reveal that none of them scheduled cable movies in

advance for viewing. Because TV dramas are composed of a series of episodes scheduled every day or once a week at the same time of day, the daily schedules of viewers can be adjusted to fit the schedule, allowing them to watch each episode consecutively.

It seems that they only watch cable movies when they are getting bored and have nothing better to watch late in the evening when their children or partner are in bed and they are alone and sleepy:

After going back home, I usually watch news first. I surf up and down movie channels to see if there's something to watch after the kids have gone to bed late in the evening when everything's more tranquil. I watch more foreign movie channels that show films I am more interested in myself, such as HBO or AXN (Jack).

I usually get back home from work around 8pm. Watching TV is probably the only leisure activity I conduct on weekday evenings. Fei-Fan enjoys Chien-Ming Wang's ball games. I prefer travel programmes. Sometimes, if I can't sleep at night, I will get up and watch some cable movies. I watched Woody Allen's *Husband and Wives* again on AXN last week when I couldn't fall asleep (Cindy).

For both Jack and Cindy and other respondents in this group, watching cable movies is not like going to the cinema or watching DVD movies. The cable movie rather functions as a kind of 'company' for them when they are alone and do not need to choose the kinds of programmes that are only suitable for their children. They can just flip through the channels for something they want to watch, in order to relax before going to bed. By watching movies they are familiar with, they can relax, without having to think too much or attentively follow a movie's story. In their diaries, they only recorded having watched movies they had seen before on cable channels. Some of the respondents' diary records show that they just surfed

through all the cable movie channels without even knowing the titles of the movies they had watched. In this case, watching cable movies is a way to kill some spare time and allows them to be a temporary 'couch potato' before they go to bed.

'Film-Viewing' at Home as part of the Traditional Role of the Mother

Cindy: Sometimes, I can't finish watching DVD movies because I have to take care of my baby.

Fei-Fan: She has to stay with our daughter on the bed till she falls asleep. I can just lie down on the sofa drinking beer and watching movies.

Fei-Fan and Cindy's description of their film-viewing in the evening indicates that the traditional role of the wife is to fulfil the task of the mother and take care of the children whenever needed. Cindy is a full-time employee rather than a full-time mother and housewife, but she is still the one who is in charge of most of the domestic tasks concerning her 3-year-old daughter. Fei-Fan seems to regard it as quite natural for him to continue enjoying his film-viewing when his wife has to attend to the child. That is perhaps why Cindy wished that she could have more opportunities to see movies at the cinema, because it is only there that she can concentrate on the movie without being interrupted in the middle as it usually happens at home. This generation of Taiwanese mothers are still expected to take responsibility for looking after their children most of the time.

When we watch movies at home, my kids and I watch together because we have similar tastes in movies. But their dad enjoys watching movies by himself, sometimes after midnight, when everyone else is in bed. We usually watch movies on weekends. It's not possible to watch movies on weekdays, only some cartoons playing on television, such as *Doraemon*. Because I'm concerned with the health of their eyes, they are not allowed to watch the television screen for too long. Only on weekends or holidays, when they

don't have to go to school the next day, then they are allowed to watch television longer (Lily).

I don't watch DVD movies myself because I don't have enough of time to sit down and spend an hour and a half watching movies. Most of the time, I'm busy doing housework. I only watch a bit of movies when my sons are watching, in order to check what movies or TV programmes they're watching (Chun-Yu).

Lily, a full-time employee as well, is used to watching cartoons and movies at home with her children, unlike her husband, Jack. She is also the one who sets up the domestic rules about when their children can watch the television. With Lily fulfilling most of the parenting tasks, Jack, like Fei-Fan, can relax more in the evening at home. He can wait until their children go to bed, and surf the cable channels for whatever programmes or movies that he wants to watch. He can be a 'pure' viewer without the task of 'being parent'. Spending her last bit of energy on the children after a day's work, it is no wonder that Cindy says that 'I prefer to go to sleep directly after my kids have gone to bed'. Because by the time her children are asleep, she has already run out of energy and does not feel like watching anything else. Moreover, Chun-Yu's testimony suggests that, with too many errands to run in order to look after her two high school boys, she does not feel like spending too much time on watching movies alone at home. She would rather watch movies with her sons, not for her personal enjoyment, but that she can 'gate-keep' and censor what her sons are watching.

8.5 Parents Rarely Adopt Domestic Media Technology to Watch Films

With the majority of their free time occupied by getting rest and fulfilling their parental duties, the respondents in this group hardly ever use Internet downloading to access movies, as compared with the university students and employees groups. They also have no desire to get more movies to watch from the Internet. Therefore, they are not active movie information searchers like other younger respondents. They tend to get movie information passively from the traditional media, such as newspapers, magazines, and radio, and the new marketing method of playing movie trailers inside buses and carriages in the public MRT system.

Use of the Internet to Purchase DVDs but Not for Downloading Movies

I don't download movies. I've never done that and I have no time to do it. I've been taught once how to download movies but I think the whole downloading process takes time and seems troublesome (Fei-Fan).

I've never downloaded a movie before because the image quality is poor and it is too slow. I expect good image quality from movies. I don't even watch pirate versions of movies. Their image quality and subtitle translations are very bad. The quality of VCD movies looks bad to me as well. For movies I want to watch, I'd rather go to the cinema or watch them on DVD (Yong-Mao).

I don't download movies. Downloading is a waste of time and life. Actually, you can always find friends around who are downloading and you can just borrow their downloaded files or burned copies of movies (Tony).

From the testimonies of these three fathers, it is very clear that movie-downloading is not one of preferred ways to access films. All three agree that movie-downloading is a time-wasting process. Fei-Fan and Yong-Mao also point out the technical and image quality as major drawbacks with downloading movies which also concern some respondents in other groups. Even an architect like Fei-Fan, whose work involves a certain degree of computer use, still feels that the downloading process is not only a waste of time but is also difficult to do. Yong-Mao, a filmmaker himself, never spoke about the ethical issues of illegal movie-downloading violating intellectual property rights; he was concerned more about the image quality and finds them inferior to movies showing at the cinema and released on DVD. The advantages of downloaded movies, such as their being free of charge, having faster access to first-run movies, and a wide selection of popular Hollywood movies, is not very important to these parents. Moreover, due to the sharing of movies with other people, as Tony specifies, it is easier to borrow movie files from friends who engage in downloading than to do it by themselves:

If the DVD movies that I bought are good movies, I burn extra copies and recommend them to friends (Yong-Mao).

I've burned movies from rented DVDs just a couple of times. Because most of the DVDs that my daughters rent are those no-brainer movies, or whole series of Japanese idol dramas, I'm not interested in saving copies of those DVDs (Tony).

For movie collectors like Yong-Mao and Tony, burning extra copies of their own DVDs or saving copies of rented DVDs is much more meaningful and practical than movie-downloading. In contrast, purchasing DVD movies via the Internet is much more time-saving and convenient than going to DVD shops to buy movies. For Cindy, who barely has time to find DVD movie rental shops or go to the

Guanghua Bazaar, internet shopping saves time and energy. As revealed in her diary, she bought the DVD of the movie, *A River Runs Through It*, on the Internet. Her husband, Fei-Fan, had been looking for this DVD in many rental shops but had failed to find it. With the help of the Internet, she was able to find it and received it just a couple of days after ordering it. Moreover, for respondents who buy DVD movies in Taiwan, as in the discussion with Tony and Cindy, the Internet is the main source for difficult-to-find movies because local record shops only have the more popular DVD movies.

Nevertheless, other full-time mothers in this group like Chun-Yu and Cindy only use the Internet for sending and receiving emails and to find information about daily life and the education of their children. They seldom use the Internet for film-related activities, not even to find movie information or take part in movie discussions. The use of the Internet and other media technology is not related to the film-consumption activities of these two mothers.

Getting Movie Information Passively from the Traditional Media and 'Bee TV'

Unlike some younger respondents, for whom the Internet has gradually taken over the information-providing function, many parents in this group still rely on the traditional media as providers of movie information. Based on the questionnaire in this research, only half of the respondents selected the Internet as a primary channel to get movie information. This ratio is much lower than the other three younger groups. Fei-Fan and Chun-Yu both discuss their personal habits of using traditional media regularly to find various kinds of information,

including movie information:

I obtain movie information more from reading magazines now, as I regularly read a few magazines. There are movie sections in some of the design magazines, pop magazines, or even in Next Magazine Taiwan. Besides, there don't seem to be many movie trailers playing during TV commercial breaks nowadays. Sometimes, I can get film reviews from radio shows (Fei-Fan).

I get most of my movie information from newspapers and radio. I think listening to the radio is very convenient, especially when I'm doing housework. I can just leave the radio on and get some new information. Sometimes, I get movie information from friends or from other people, or even from bulletin boards on the street (Chun-Yu).

Of course, Fei-Fan and Chun-Yu do not read magazines or listen to the radio just to acquire movie information. Fei-Fan regularly reads various magazines in which movie sections are included and Chun-Yu listens to the radio during housework. The radio serves as company for her while she stays home and works at routine household tasks. For both Fei-Fan and Chun-Yu, movie information is just a part of the information provided by the traditional media. They passively obtain movie information from magazines and radio shows, which become their major channels to get up-to-date movie information.

Other than receiving movie information passively from their regular use of the traditional media, these Taipei residents also receive movie information passively, and sometimes inescapably, during their everyday commuting routines and movements around the city. Chun-Yu notes advertisements on the streets of Taipei as one of her means to acquire movie information. Yong-Mao recorded seeing movie trailers for the Taiwanese documentary, *My Football Summer*, playing on the gigantic screen bulletin, while walking around Taipei's Hsimenting

roundabout (Yong-Mao's diary 02/10/06). Cindy wrote that she had heard radio shows promoting the Golden Horse International Film Festival by chance while taking a cab in Taipei (Cindy's diary 09/10/06). However, Cindy's experience is not the only channel by which Taipei commuters can find movie information by chance, as other respondents in this group mention getting information from the small screen bulletins installed inside public buses and on the platforms of MRT stations presented by the new marketing tool called 'Bee TV':

I don't search for movie information on the Internet myself. Sometimes, I get movie information from my colleagues or from trailers playing on TV. In addition, I think movie trailers playing at MRT stations or inside buses are even more effective than TV commercials because I stare at the screens playing those trailers when I am waiting for MRT trains or taking a bus without having other things to do. It's better than looking at other commuters or pedestrians on the street. I've even seen movie trailers playing on the screen inside an elevator. I think it's a very good way to promote movies (Jack).

I've taken a bus a few times recently. Taking the bus now is like getting locked up in a visual trap. The television screen inside the bus just keeps on playing movie trailers and other stuff repeatedly. It's difficult not to stare at it. It's a kind of forced marketing to me (Tony).

By the end of 2006, the Bee TV system had been installed inside 3,547 public buses, on 62 MRT station platforms, and on gigantic screens in Hsimenting and at the Vie Show Cinema Taipei Xinyi. The manager of Bee TV claims that an average of 260,000 people in Taipei watches Bee TV every day (Chen 2006, 97). For Taipei commuters, it is difficult not to notice Bee TV when commuting from home to school or work. Jack and Tony's experience of watching Bee TV reflects both positive and negative impressions that people have towards this new marketing tool. Even though movie trailers are not the only content playing on Bee TV, for

the parents in this group who commute in Taipei regularly it seems to have become an inescapable channel enabling them to get movie information whether they want it or not.

8.6 Chapter Summary

The initial commitment to family leisure for parents, and the importance parents attach to family activities, relates to the benefits that these activities are seen to provide for children. Activities, outings and vacations are typically selected, organized and managed for the sake of the children (Shaw, 2008).

Susan Shaw claims that contemporary parents think of the arrangement and organisation of family leisure as important duty they perform for the benefit of their children. It is not just for their own relaxation or enjoyment. This accords with the main argument in this chapter that 'film-viewing', as one of the primary leisure activities in Taiwan, is treated by this group of parents as an essential activity offering the whole family, especially the children, entertainment, knowledge, and a platform for them to interact. Thus, these parents' everyday film-viewing is conditioned not only by their usual schedule of full-time work or housework but also by the needs of their children. However, some of the parents still manage to find time for film-viewing without the presence of their children. As the children gradually grow up, especially after they enter high school, the parents' leisure activities gradually lose their bond with the children because the children tend to go out with their friends. After their children start working, the parents return to the sort of leisure activities they enjoyed before they had children.

In addition to the finding of film-viewing as a family activity, there are also

strong gender differences in the fathers' and mothers' film-viewing practices. Those mothers staying home without working outside do more housework and take more responsibility for parental tasks than their employed husbands. Therefore, they are the 'gate-keepers' regulating and censoring what their children watch. Even the mothers who are also employed outside the home continue to take up the traditional mother role after returning home from work. Housework and parenting duties heavily reduce the time available to watch movies at home. On the other hand, the fathers in this group can enjoy more stress-free film-viewing and devote themselves more frequently to film-related activities, such as collecting DVDs, purchasing DVDs, and checking movie information.

The parents in this group have even less time to go to the cinema than the employees group. Because of the cost and time involved in taking the whole family to the cinema, cinema-going has become a special event undertaken only occasionally. DVD movies, as a result, have become the major alternative for them when they want to watch movies. Like the employed group, these respondents commonly share DVDs with other people. The only difference is that family movies or cartoons are the main target of shared DVDs. On the other hand, watching cable movies has become the parents' best way of relaxing and not thinking about their daily work and parenting duties. Finally, the computer and the Internet do not play very critical roles in these parents' everyday film consumption, either for film-viewing or for the acquisition of movie information. The traditional media and the recently formed 'Bee TV' are their most important channels to find movie information, often by chance. Compared to younger employees and university students, these parents' adoption of media technology and film-viewing platforms is simpler and more traditional. Film-downloading does not seem to be a

practical platform for these parents to access movies. Posting their opinions about specific movies or discussing movie-related topics with other people on the Internet discussion boards or blogs is also uncommon for them.

Chapter Nine

The ‘Independent’ but ‘Traditional’ Film-Viewing Practices of Mature Audiences

9.1 Introduction

In the fields of media or film studies, most of the research about older viewers focuses on their use of TV or reception of TV programmes (Tulloch 1989; Cook 1990; Riggs 1998; Gauntlett & Hill 1999; and Kim 2002). However, these ‘mature’ audiences’ current interaction with films or multi-platforms through which they conduct film-viewing activities is not receiving enough academic attention. The only exception is studies on their memories of cinema-going when young, for instance, Annette Kuhn’s research on older respondents’ accounts of British cinema-going culture in the 1930s (2002). This chapter looks at how mature people (aged over 50) view films and hopes to broaden film audience research in the process. Although the number of respondents in this research is quite limited, their different film-viewing practices can still be presented faithfully.

Riggs claims that mature audiences are ‘diverse and creative’ (1998, 2) and Gauntlett & Hill see the retired and elderly audience as ‘a heterogeneous and diverse set of individuals’ (1999, 207). However, through the analysis of the mature respondents’ employment of multi-platforms and their consumption of films, it will be shown that their film-viewing remains more ‘traditional’ than that

of the other groups in the way they use domestic media technologies, and yet in other ways they are also as active and independent as the younger respondents. Some of the mature respondents regularly visit the cinema without having to be taken by their children. Whether they are still employed or have retired plays a critical factor in their film-viewing patterns.

All the respondents in this group were over 50.⁶⁸ Five are in their fifties and the other two are in their sixties. They include married couples, single women, and one widow.⁶⁹ Two are still in full-time employment; one is a part-time teacher; and one is a full-time housewife. Three are retired. As we can see, the marriage and employment status of the respondents in this group are not very homogeneous. As a result, each respondent has his/her own way of consuming films. Among the seven respondents here only one is male. The findings of this mature group are thus skewed towards female respondents. However, given the different ages and variations in marriage and employment status of female respondents in this group, the analysis is not confined to retirees and housewives. Therefore, this chapter offers a comparison of the mature female respondents' film-viewing practices according to a variety of social backgrounds. How 'age', 'marriage', and 'employment' can influence their everyday routines and associated multi-platform film-viewing activities will therefore be demonstrated. Other than probing the common and differing meanings behind each respondent's current film-viewing, I will also compare the findings with the respondent groups discussed in the

⁶⁸ Please refer to Appendix B in this thesis for basic information about this mature group.

⁶⁹ Here in this chapter, I borrow the term 'mature audiences' from Karen Riggs (1998), who originally based her research on audiences over 60 years of age, in order to avoid disputes when using other terms to describe this group of respondents over 50 years of age.

previous chapters.

Audiences or viewers over 50 years of age are not often considered part of the 'target audience' by many local film exhibitors. As one local film distributor said, 'most of the audience in Taiwan is young – teenagers and single people in their twenties' (Wolf Chen, quoted in Curtin 2007, 87). However, this does not mean that mature audiences over 50 do not go to the cinema. In fact, two retired respondents say they currently visit the cinema more frequently than ever before. Data gathered from these mature respondents also shows that their film-viewing is done quite actively and independently, without dependence on or the company of their children. Over the years, they have developed their own taste in movies. With more free time and without having to pay too much attention to their already grown-up children, some of them dedicate more time to the kinds of movies they enjoy. Growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, when watching movies at the cinema was a more popular form of entertainment than television and cinemas were the only venues in which to watch movies, these mature respondents went to the cinema frequently during their childhood and adolescence, and more frequently than the respondents from younger generations. 'Going to the cinema' has remained a major and irreplaceable part of their film-viewing activities. Even now, traditional cinemas and easily operated cable movie channels remain their main ways to access movies.

This chapter will begin by considering their memories of film-viewing, especially in the 1950s and 1960s when the landscape of the local film industry was significantly different from today. The subsequent sections will examine how these cinematic memories and experiences have influenced their current tastes in

movies, cinema-going and domestic movie-watching. The reasons why this group of mature respondents feels it is unnecessary to conduct film-viewing via digital platforms will also be discussed. How their current lifestyles and relationships with other family members - partners and children in particular - are reflected in their everyday film-viewing will also be considered. Finally, as there is only one male respondent in this group, female respondents' film-viewing practices and how they are different from those of female respondents of younger groups can be given further attention.

9.2 Memories of 'Cinema-Going' in 1950s and 1960s

Taiwan: Foreign Movies in Taipei and Taiwanese-language

Movies in the Countryside

Cinemas were the only places to watch movies when I was a kid. I used to go to the cinema and watch foreign movies, such as *To Sir, with Love* and *Roman Holiday*. I enjoyed Audrey Hepburn's movies very much. I think these classic movies are still good movies to watch, even today (Rita, 51, Female).

My mother and my elder sister used to love foreign movies. When they took me to the cinema, we always watched foreign movies. I remember the first movie I ever saw was *Hatari!*, an animal movie. I also remember watching a Spanish movie called, *Un Rayo De Luz*, about a pretty little girl who can sing and dance well. It had a very touching storyline. I also remember watching *Gone with the Wind* and Elizabeth Taylor's *Little Women* at the cinema with my family (Shu-Mei, 50, Female).

As Rita mentions, in the 1950s and 60s in Taiwan, especially before the first national broadcasting TV network was established in 1962 (Huang 2005, 404), cinemas were the only venues in which Taiwanese people could watch movies.

Consequently, for this 'pre-television' generation born and raised in the 1950s and 60s, their early film-viewing experiences are completely associated with cinemas. However, their early cinematic experiences might be very different depending on which region of Taiwan they lived in, because different movies were shown in a big city like Taipei and other parts of Taiwan (Lu 1998, 111). At that time, foreign movies dominated the Taipei film market, as highlighted by both Rita and Shu-Mei who recall their childhood memories of watching Hollywood and European movies. However, reasons for the hegemony of foreign films then are not the same as today.

From what the respondents in this group say about their early cinema-going, as well as from the literature about the popularity of *guopian*, it is clear that audiences during the 1950s and 60s were generally willing to go to the cinema to see Taiwanese movies, especially Mandarin movies produced by the government-funded studio, CMPC. At this time the production scale and budgets of Mandarin movies produced by CMPC were much greater than that of Taiwanese-speaking movies, which were predominantly produced by small private companies with small budgets and short production schedules (Lee 1998, 23). As Mandarin was the only official national language and was taught in elementary school, its use was promoted at the expense of local dialects, in spite of the fact that Mandarin was not the mother tongue of the majority of Taiwanese people, among whom were Hoklo, Hakka, and Taiwanese aborigines (Lee 1997, 120-132). As a result, Mandarin movies were thought to be a more refined choice than Taiwanese-language movies, especially for audiences in Taipei.⁷⁰ Second,

⁷⁰ Please refer to literature, such as Lee, T. D. (1997, 120-132), Lee, Y. (1998, 11-44), Lu (1998, 78-95; 111-124; and 153-178), and Chang (2005, 27-29), for detailed analysis about the decline of locally-produced Taiwanese-speaking films

Mandarin movies had an advantage over foreign movies in terms of cultural proximity, especially when English was not a required part of elementary school education and the ratio of elementary graduates continuing to high school education was much lower than today.

Even with audience support, however, locally-produced Mandarin-speaking movies could not satisfy the demands of the Taipei film market. Quantity-wise, from 1956 to 1968, locally-produced Mandarin movies were outnumbered by Taiwanese-language movies (Lu 1998, Fig. 11a). The Taiwanese film industry was not large enough to provide sufficient Mandarin movies for the Taipei market. Therefore, local distributors and exhibitors had to buy a lot of foreign movies to fill the screens. Not surprisingly, classic Hollywood movies with big stars, such as Audrey Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor and John Wayne were among the favoured choices, as Rita and Shu-Mai say.

As for respondents growing up in the central or southern parts of Taiwan, Taiwanese-language movies offered audiences instant entertainment.⁷¹

That was really a long time ago. I went to the cinema in Changhua County to see Taiwanese-language movies. Because I grew up near the Beidou Theatre in Beidou Town and my uncle lived right behind the theatre, I used to go to that theatre and watch movies for free with my cousins by climbing over the wall (Yan-Po, 55, Male).

Yan-Po's case illustrates the popularity of Taiwanese-language movies in smaller towns, such as Beidou in central Taiwan. For children born and raised in rural

and the prosperity of Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese films after the late 1960s.

⁷¹ They are usually called *Benshengren*, or Hoklo people in Taiwan. According to a survey report, Hoklo people account for nearly three-quarters of the total population in Taiwan (Council for Hakka Affairs 2004).

regions in the 1950s and 60s, Taiwanese-language movies offered them the most accessible and 'down-to-earth' cinema experience. Because Taiwanese-language movies were cheap to make they were treated as a quick way to make money by many local production companies before local TV dramas became the major form of evening entertainment from the mid-1960s.

For Yan-Po, growing up in places near to a cinema, the cinema was like a childhood playground. It gave him opportunities to see more movies than other rural children of his generation. This experience was no doubt crucial in making him a dedicated moviegoer, something that has remained to this day when he has retired. In contrast, his wife, A-Ru, another respondent in this group, grew up in a small village in Changhua County where there was no cinema. Her childhood memories are therefore not about 'going to the cinema'. Instead she would go 'to the ballroom or the theatre' for live performances or traditional plays:

I didn't go to the cinema often when I was a kid. I used to go to the ballroom to listen to singers singing in my hometown in Changhua. After meeting my husband in Taipei, he always took me to the cinema while we were dating, and then I started to watch movies more often (A-Ru, 55, Female).

Fuller-Seeley and Potamianos have pointed out that 'the "modern event" of film production and film's cultural reception was overwhelmingly urban – something that was by, for, and of the big city' (2008, 5). As most cinemas were located in big cities or bigger towns,⁷² before the birth of television, 'going to the cinema' was only really possible for residents of industrialised cities or towns, especially in the

⁷² For example, in 1955, there were only 47 cinemas in Taiwan – 26 in Taipei City and Taipei County; 7 in Keelung City; 6 in Taichung City; and 6 in Hsinchu County. Cinemas could not be found in 14 out of 21 counties and cities (Data source: Lu 1998, Fig.18).

1950s and early 60s in Taiwan. For people located elsewhere it was a special event because they had to travel to the bigger towns or cities to watch a movie. Consequently, watching a live performance at local ballrooms or theatres was the main kind of public entertainment for people such as A-Ru. On the contrary, for contemporary audiences, attending a live singing performance, traditional theatre, or folk arts is now like a special event that is not part of their everyday lives. 'Film-viewing' has gradually changed into a form of private entertainment that can be conducted at home, without the need to travel or commute.

9.3 Movie Tastes: Memories of the Good Old Days

The majority of this group agree that they enjoy old movies more than recent ones. The same thing was true for some of the respondents in the employees' and the parents' groups but this group of respondents expressed more nostalgia for old or classic movies than other groups:

I don't enjoy recent movies as much as old ones. Even Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain*, which I watched via DVD and borrowed from my friend, did not impress me much. I used to pay attention to directors and actors. I like Akira Kurosawa's movies. Even his later pieces, such as *Dreams* and *Madadayo*, are very good movies. However, I don't know many newer directors or actors. I can barely even remember the actors in, or the directors of, movies I've seen recently. Right now, before going to the cinema to see a particular movie, because I'm not generally familiar with the stars or director, most of the time I can't tell whether it's gonna be a good movie or not. So I guess I need some 'luck' to end up watching good movies (Fei, 64, Female).

I think movies that give you something to think about afterwards are good movies. For example, Meryl Streep's *The Bridges of Madison County*, *Out of Africa*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and *The Hours* are all movies

depicting female characters' emotions very subtly. After watching these movies, you can't help but think about the stories and characters. As for many other recent movies, you can't remember anything after viewing them (Shu-Mei).

There are a few possible reasons why this generation of respondents recalls movies that they have seen a long time ago more easily and has much higher opinions of older movies than more recent ones. Firstly, they recollect old movies based on their impressions and memory of a movie they viewed a long time ago. This conforms with Annette Kuhn's research that, 'memory is regarded here as neither providing access to, nor as representing, the past, 'as it was'; the past, rather, is taken to be mediated, indeed produced, in the activity of remembering' (2002, 9). Having been constantly 'mediated', or thought about, in this way, as time goes by their emotional attachment to their favourite old movies will only increase. Consequently, in both Fei's and Shu-Mei's examples, it is difficult for recent movies to establish a stronger bond with them than Meryl Streep or Kurosawa movies, which, have become irreplaceable parts of not only their most memorable cinematic experiences but also a kind of reflection of the long-gone good old days.

Second, for people who used to choose movies based on leading actors or the director, new movies feature unfamiliar actors or directors. Even after viewing most recent movies, they often have no idea who plays the leading roles or who the director is. This can cause them to fail to identify a certain kind of film style with a particular actor or director, which can lead to great uncertainty or confusion when selecting new movies to watch. If recent movies that they happen to choose fail to raise their interest, they might feel unconfident about selecting or even watching new movies later. In the end, they will feel that movies featuring actors or directors that they are familiar with are a safer bet. Old movies that they love can provide

them with a clear and comfortable reference point.

The old movies that these mature respondents prefer and remember clearly are generally movies they saw at the cinema, perhaps even having watched them several times. As A-Lan points out,

Huangmei Opera movies were popular for a while. I went to see *The Love Eterne* over and over again.⁷³ I also watched *Gone with the Wind* a few times. I first saw it when I was still in high school. After that, I watched it a few more times when it was re-released at the cinema (A-Lan, 65, Female).

Other than some old movies playing on terrestrial television, cinema was the only venue for this generation of audiences to watch movies repeatedly before the arrival of VCR, when the concept of 'home cinema' became feasible. Moviegoers from that period of time had to go back to the cinema to see the movies they enjoyed again, as A-Lan remembers. Compared to contemporary audiences' practices of watching movies repeatedly via cable movie channels or DVD at home, for them repeated viewings meant cinema-going, which means all of their early repeat film-viewing activities were engaged with attentively in a public and dark cinema auditorium through the big screen without the kinds of interruption usually experienced when watching movies at home. Five out of the seven respondents in this group mention or list, at least, one classic movie as their all time favourite movie. *Gone with the Wind* was listed or mentioned by four

⁷³ *Huangmei* Opera film is a unique and popular genre in Chinese-language film history. *Huangmei* Opera film adopts the style and stories of a traditional local Chinese opera form, *Huangmei* Opera, and blends it with modern film technology and film language to create this unique film genre. The storylines of *Huangmei* Opera movies are traditional Chinese fairy tales or stories set in ancient China. The most successful *Huangmei* Opera movie is Li Han-hsiang's *The Love Eterne*. 'This movie broke box office records by showing for 162 days non-stop in Taipei in 1963' (Lu 1998, 102).

respondents.

I don't like thrillers, sci-fi movies, or ghost and monster movies because these movies are not real. They don't seem to be logical to me. I like movies about reality and that have some kind of connection to our everyday life (Shu-Mei).

Personally, I prefer documentaries or dramas with some documentary touches, which lead you to think a lot. I remember watching some Iranian or Iraqi movies, I can't remember the names. They are simple but very meaningful. I think good movies are for you to read, not to watch. (Fei)

I prefer Iranian movies because they are pure, simple and very touching, especially the series of movies with 'heaven' in their titles. I can't quite remember the titles and the director of those movies⁷⁴ (Rita).

Although remembering the names or recent actors or directors might not be an easy task for these mature respondents, film genre remains a criterion for them when selecting which movies to watch. If we analyse these respondents' questionnaire data, we can see that horror movies, thrillers, sci-fi, kung-fu and animation are among their least favourite film genres, echoing Shu-Mei's statement. On the contrary, the three quotes listed here indicate that movies with a more realistic approach and stories depicting fully formed emotional characters attract these mature respondents. As a result, dramas, melodramas, family movies, classic movies, documentaries, and comedies are stated as their preferred genres. This is why documentary-like Iranian movies, which are not mentioned much by the younger respondent groups, are appreciated by Rita and Fei. The label of 'Iranian movies' thus becomes a positive reminder for them when choosing movies to watch in the future. They consider them to match some of the qualities they

⁷⁴ The series of Iranian movies that Rita talks about could be films directed by Majid Majidi, including *Children of Heaven* and *The Color of Paradise*, which have been exhibited in Taiwan.

associate with a 'good movie'. Other story-driven art house movies are also enjoyed by this group:

I used to watch Hollywood movies. However, when I first watched some art house movies at the Golden Horse International Film Festival in the 1980s, I was attracted by the unique and diversified styles and ways of story-telling of art house movies. Current Hollywood movies, to me, are not very original. They just follow a similar pattern (Yi-Rong, 58, Female).

Again, Yi-Rong's case demonstrates how film style is a reference point to select which movies to watch. Yet, these respondents try to avoid some kinds of films, even without having any prior viewing experiences of them:

I don't watch Korean movies, because most Korean movies are love and romance movies, which I'm not interested in. Besides, I couldn't even recognise any Korean stars on screen (Yan-Po).

I'm not interested in either Japanese movies or Korean movies. I don't even watch TV dramas from Japan and Korea, either. Contemporary Korean TV dramas look like Qiong Yao films. (Shu-Mei).

I watch Japanese or Korean TV dramas with my daughter. I think Korean or Japanese movies are similar to their TV dramas. There's no need to watch their movies when I can watch their TV dramas at home (A-Ru).

I refuse to watch Korean movies because Korean people cheat at many sports games, such as the World Cup. They also used to sell many low-quality goods to Taiwan. I haven't even watched the very famous Korean TV drama, *A Jewel in the Palace* (Fei).

As mentioned earlier, the film's origin is often taken as a kind of reference or index for them when selecting movies to watch. However, some of the respondents here seem to have formed negative impressions about Korean movies without any intention of checking to see how justified they are. Mature male respondents like

Yan-Po do not appear to be interested in Korean TV dramas and are unable to recognise any Korean stars, and therefore do not watch Korean movies. For Shu-Mei and A-Ru, Korean movies are just big screen Korean TV dramas telling clichéd love stories - which can be found regularly on cable channels in Taiwan - cut down to 90 minutes. Many of the marketing campaigns for Korean movies in Taiwan revolve around famous Korean TV stars, who have gained a certain degree of publicity in Taiwan based on their successful TV dramas. That is why local distributors have imported and distributed Korean movies featuring famous Korean TV stars over the past few years. However, even the presence of popular Korean TV stars at the premiere of their movies in Taiwan fails to reflect their fame at the box office. As one local report concludes,

The box office for Bae Yong-jun's *April Snow* during its premiere night in Taipei was mediocre... Korean stars are popular in their TV drama series in Taiwan, but their charisma in the movies is yet to be found.⁷⁵

This suggests that Korean movies with TV stars are not able to attract an audience, and for Shu-Mei and Yan-Po, are too much like Korean TV dramas with themes and stories similar to the Qiong Yao films of thirty years ago. Fei simply refuses to see Korean movies because of negative impressions she personally has towards Korean people in general, which has nothing to do with the themes or stories in Korean movies. The examples that Fei gives about Korean people are not based on her personal experience of real Korean people but on the media coverage about Korea. As a result, it is her 'mediated' experience of Korean people that stops her from watching Korean movies. Fei's example shows that the film's origin is a way

⁷⁵ Chien-Yu Wang (王建宇), 'Bae Yong-jun, Box Office Failure of *April Snow* at Its Premiere Night in Taipei (裴勇俊「外出」首夜票房失利),' A19, *Min Sheng Daily*, September 11, 2005.

for people to gain an impression - positive or negative, cinematic or non-cinematic – about movies from a given place or country, and that this affects their decision about whether to see them.

From the results of the questionnaire, ‘film origin’ preferences can be seen. None of the respondents in this group favour Korean movies. Hollywood is still the most popular origin for this group, which is the same as in all the other four groups. This shows how strong Hollywood’s influence has been not just for the past ten or twenty years but ever since the end of Japanese occupation. The recent globalisation trend has only intensified Hollywood’s power in the local film market in Taiwan. Yet, for the two oldest respondents in this group, born during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan in the early 1940s, Japanese movies are one of their preferred origins. This might stem from their Japanese language ability and familiarity with Japanese culture compared to the younger respondents in this group. Also, they were able to see Japanese movies during their golden age in the 1960s, before the KMT government banned the import of all Japanese movies in 1974 to punish the Japanese government for establishing diplomatic relations with China.

9.4 Mature Audiences’ Selective and Diverse

Cinema-Going Practices

For while many of the traditional consumers – predominantly older people – have given up movie-going in favour of watching television and video at home, the cinema remains a key leisure attraction for young people (Ravenscroft *et al.* 229).

Ravenscroft and his colleagues' account of how older audiences prefer to watch television instead of going to the cinema is not entirely applicable to the respondents from the group examined here, even if some of them say they have less interest in first-run cinemas than previously:

Recently, I don't go to the cinema often, mainly because recent movies are not very interesting. Yet, if some of my colleagues recommend a movie, the trailer of that movie looks good, or it happens to be my favourite genres or features my favourite stars, such as Al Pacino or Meryl Streep, I will definitely go to the cinema to see it. Most of the first-run movies that I watch are still Hollywood movies (Shu-Mei).

As discussed in the last section, these respondents have developed their own tastes or habits which are difficult to break. Compared to other groups, they are more careful about which movies to watch. Unlike many of the younger respondents, who often go to the cinema to meet with friends or enjoy the environment and leisure activities that many multiplexes in Taipei offer, for Shu-Mei the 'textual pleasure' of the movie itself is what she really cares about most when visiting first-run cinemas. She has to make sure that the film meets her strict requirements based on word-of-mouth recommendation from friends, an exciting trailer, and her preferred genres, and stars she likes. Consequently, it is difficult to find many movies that match all her criteria, so the frequency of her cinema visits has decreased. Nevertheless, there are other reasons that explain why these respondents are not often to be observed in front of the ticket booths at first-run cinemas:

We don't go to the cinema very often because going to the cinema is expensive right now. The last movie that we watched at the cinema was *Brokeback Mountain*. But that was at least half a year ago. Recently, most of the movies that we have watched at the cinema are documentaries because

we can get free promotional tickets from friends. We went to the Majestic Cinema to watch *Sounds of Love and Sorrow*, just because we got free tickets from friends. The director of the documentary, *Gift of Life*, also offered us free tickets to watch his documentary (Rita).

If the movies that I watch are not the kinds of movies that I feel interested in, I start to nod off in the cinema, and then my husband has to wake me up and tell me not to miss the critical scenes. So I don't go to the cinema as often as he does. A while ago my son gave us a pair of first-run cinema tickets, so my husband and I went to see Jet Li's movie in which Jet Li got beaten badly. I like Jackie Chan or Jet Li's movies, because if I watch other foreign movies, I always feel sleepy because I don't recognise the foreign actors. They all look the same to me (A-Ru).

Like some of the respondents in the parents' group, Rita thinks that the cost of watching first-run movies for a couple is too expensive, especially because she and her husband, Tony – another respondent - are not particularly interested in fiction movies. It takes a very popular cultural phenomenon like Ang Lee's Oscar-winning film to attract them to actually buy expensive tickets for first-run movies. As both a documentary-lover and amateur documentary-maker, Tony can easily get promotional tickets to see documentary films at the art house cinema. There is no need for Rita and Tony to spend time and money visiting first-run cinemas, where, most of the time, they only find Hollywood movies. Even for non-documentary or non-art house movie buffs like A-Ru and her husband, Yan-Po, watching first-run movies still remains a rare activity. A-Ru, as she mentions, has difficulties recognising foreign actors and so paying to watch foreign movies is not an attractive option. Thanks to the popularity of Jackie Chan and Jet Li, she can still find something interesting to watch at the first-run cinema. A-Ru's husband, Yan-Po, a long time movie fan with lots of available time during weekdays since his retirement, has started to go to cheaper cinemas:

I go to the cinema more often now after retiring from work. I usually go to the cinema alone. If I feel bored at home during daytime, I will go to the second-run cinema to watch movies that I've seen trailers for on TV. I usually go to a second-run cinema nearby called the Universal Theater. They have three screens. Two different movies will be showing alternately on one screen. You can check one movie for half an hour and switch to another screen later. You can get into any screen any time you arrive. There aren't many people in the audience during the day. If you are free, you can spend 130 NTDs to watch 6 movies in one day. I only choose the screen with the two movies that I feel like watching most, because I get dizzy, if I watch too many movies in one go. I saw *Poseidon* and *Girl of the Hill*⁷⁶ the other day (Yan-Po).

Similar to those respondents studying at universities, with plenty of time available during the day, second-run cinemas have become Yan-Po's main choice for watching movies, instead of the more expensive and crowded first-run cinemas. Apart from the cheaper admission price, a second-run cinema offers Yan-Po a flexible movie schedule to suit his needs. Going to a second-run cinema is therefore not an activity that needs to be planned beforehand for Yan-Po. On the other hand, going to a first-run cinema, for most of the respondents in this group, is like a special event that offers them a break from their everyday routines. With a second-run cinema nearby, Yan-Po can make a visit there part of his regular retirement routine. Like the majority of respondents in this group, Yan-Po does not buy or rent DVD movies, and has no interest in downloading. Therefore, other than watching cable movies, cinema-going seems the only option for viewing movies. Second-run cinemas provide more movies to choose from and a viewing environment with a larger screen and much better sound than the TV. As a matter

⁷⁶ Yan-Po could not remember the exact title of the movie he watched earlier at the second-run cinema. According to the name and description he gave about the movie, *Girl of the Hill*, the movie that Yan-Po mentioned may have been *Silent Hill*. This, again, proves the difficulty for this group of respondents to remember movie titles that they have seen.

of fact, a second-run cinema combines the viewing environment of a first-run cinema with the flexibility of DVD- rental and provides Yan-Po with some 'freedom' and an 'opportunity' to enjoy movies alone.

Yan-Po: I go to the cinema probably once or twice a month, when my wife goes out with her sisters.

A-Ru: I go hiking with my sisters or female friends very often. He doesn't like to go out with us, because he feels bored going out with a bunch of women. He would rather stay at home watching telly or go to the cinema.

Yan-Po: I enjoy watching movies alone. It's convenient, flexible, and free.

A-Ru: He enjoys going to the cinema by himself. He can eat and drink whatever he wants. If he goes to the cinema with me, I stop him from buying Coke and popcorn. I just take along a bottle of water instead. Going to the cinema is like going on a picnic to him; he eats and drinks lots of stuff. Once I stopped him from buying snacks and he told me that if nobody consumed them, then the growth of national economy would be stopped.

After Yan-Po's retirement both he and his wife, A-Ru, spend most of the time during weekdays at home, while their children go to work. Visits to second-run cinemas give Yan-Po a chance to enjoy movies and 'junk food' that he would not usually get while his wife is around. Since A-Ru is not a movie fan like her husband, she does not want to watch movies with Yan-Po whenever he decides to visit the second-run cinema. She would rather go out with her sisters or friends. By the same token, Yan-Po likes to do what he likes, watching telly or cinema-going, and not going out with his wife's 'mates'. Interestingly, for couples or husbands and wives from the younger groups, they usually try to go to the cinema or even watch rental DVD movies together. Going to the cinema offers them the chance to spend some 'quality time' together on weekends or after a day's work. However, this long-term couple, Yan-Po and A-Ru are content to do things separately, without having continually to bond together. This is not to say that they do not go

to the cinema together anymore. According to their film consumption diary (30/09/06), they actually planned ahead and went to the first-run cinema together to catch a Saturday morning showing of *World Trade Center*, which they had been attracted by its TV trailer and because 'disaster movies' happen to be one of the rare genres that A-Ru enjoys.

Yan-Po was not the sole respondent who regularly visits cinemas since retirement. Yi-Rong, a female retiree, even goes to the cinemas that are more difficult to find in Taipei than second-run cinemas:

I go to the SPOT regularly to watch art house movies. I used to work around here as a shop clerk. After the opening of the SPOT Taipei Film House, I started to go there and watch movies after work. When I told my colleagues that there was a cinema in the area, many of them didn't even know. They only knew that there was a bookstore and a café restaurant. When I retired two months ago, I started to go to SPOT Taipei even more, especially during the day when I have nothing special to do at home. I think that I've seen almost every new movie showing at SPOT Taipei recently. Because I'm a member of SPOT Taipei, I get cheaper movie tickets (Yi-Rong).

As the only respondent in this group who goes to art house cinema, Yi-Rong is fortunate to have SPOT Taipei near to her old workplace. She can easily get there. There are only four to five cinemas devoted to art house movies in Taipei. Nonetheless, SPOT Taipei is famous for its historical architecture, and the fact that it was the site of the former US embassy in Taiwan. Yet, as Yi-Rong says, many people do not know it is a cinema. What is special about SPOT Taipei is that it is the only second-run cinema for art house movies in Taipei, and its admission price is lower than other art house cinemas. As a member, admission at SPOT is even cheaper for Yi-Rong. However, unlike other second-run cinemas, only one movie can be seen at SPOT for the admission price.

There are several similarities between Yi-Rong and Yan-Po. First, both retirees are film fans, although they have different preferences. With lots of extra time available, they regularly go to the cheaper second-run cinemas. Second, the second-run cinema they visit often is conveniently located for them. Otherwise they would not go, as mentioned by Yan-Po:

The reason I visit the Universal Theater regularly is that it is only a few bus stops from my place. I can get there easily by bus or scooter. Other second-run cinemas are a bit far for me.

Third, both find watching second-run movies gives them the kind of ‘company’ that was originally filled by work. Finally, both go to the cinema alone most of the time. Yan-Po, prefers going to the cinema alone than with his family. Yi-Rong, however, goes alone because of her unusual taste for art house movies:

Not many of my friends and family enjoy and appreciate art house movies like I do. Most of the time, I have to go to SPOT Taipei alone. My husband watches art house movies with me sometimes, but he’s not really a film buff. He just goes to the cinema to keep me company. I’ve tried to persuade some of my good friends to watch art house movies with me. After taking them to SPOT Taipei to watch art house movies, they were joking and blaming me for taking them to watch movies that were difficult to understand. They said that they had expected to watch more entertaining movies (Yi-Rong).

Yi-Rong has tried to introduce art house movies to her friends and family members, but they have their own preferred types of movies. If they are used to watching mainstream films, it is difficult to attract them to art house movies, although they might go to films by directors like Ang Lee. It might take a few more viewings of art house movies to get familiar with their diversified themes and styles before they can appreciate them, as Yi-Rong says about her own experience of watching art house movies.

I used to enjoy Hollywood movies. When I first watched art house movies, it was not easy to follow them. However, after viewing a few movies at the Golden Horse International Film Festival, I started to enjoy movies different from those Hollywood ones.

Unlike younger respondents who favour art house movies and share their opinions with friends or unknown netizens via the Internet, it is difficult for Yi-Rong to find anyone to accompany her to the cinema. This also means she has no one with whom she can share her opinion after the show.

On the contrary, the two female respondents in this group who were over 60 both think of themselves as film fans but do not go to the cinema in the way that Yan-Po and Yi-Rong do.

I don't go to the cinema by myself or actively ask other people to go with me. Most of the times, my friends drag me to the cinema, which gives me a chance to spend time with them (Fei).

During summer vacation, I brought my grandson to the cinema to watch that pirate movie,⁷⁷ because my daughter had promotional tickets. Once in a while, especially during school breaks, I take my grandson to the cinema during the day time, while his mother is working. By taking my grandson to the cinema, the time he spends on watching television can be reduced (A-Lan).

Going to the cinema is something to be done together with their friends or family members. They do not go by themselves. Fei takes the opportunity to go to the movies to meet friends, while for A-Lan cinema-going allows her to take her grandson there during the summer vacation. Furthermore, she could keep her

⁷⁷ This pirate movie that A-Lan refers to here was *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*, which was showing in Taipei during the summer of 2006, according to data from www.atmovies.com.tw. A-Lan's in-depth interview was conducted in October, 2006.

grandson from watching too much television or playing computer games for too long by taking him to the cinema. This is similar to the findings from some of the teenage respondents' parents, for whom going to the cinema is thought to be a better leisure activity than watching television. After going to the cinema with her grandson, A-Lan can have something to talk about with her grandson.

9.5 Watching Movies at Home: Active Viewing of Cable Movies and Passive DVD-Watching

The results of the questionnaire show that none of the respondents in this group have ever tried movie-downloading. Only two choose DVD movies as one of their major platforms. Overwhelmed by the complexity of operating new media technology at home might not be the only reason why they seldom use these audiovisual facilities. Another reason could be that they do not feel the need to use—or even to learn how to use--these facilities. As Shu-Mei points out:

I don't watch DVD movies myself. I don't exactly know how to play DVD movies. The DVD player is used by my kids most of the time. There are lots of movies and television programmes on cable channels. I can easily find something to watch by turning on the TV set. It is not necessary for me to use the DVD player.

Shu-Mei's words also explain why five of the mature respondents accessed movies predominantly through cable channels. Cable movies provide them with 'company' at home. Nevertheless, some of them leave the selection of which programmes to watch to their grown-up children.

Easily Accessing Cable Movies as the Most Used Viewing-Platform

Most of the movies that I've seen recently were on cable. Movie channels are my favourite cable channels. By watching cable movies, I can still concentrate on the movies, even though they're showing on TV. But I don't watch *guopian*. Most of the cable movies that I watch are foreign movies (Shu-Mei).

Going to the cinema is still the best way to enjoy movies. I watch cable movies sometimes. However, I only watch foreign movies and I don't watch *guopian* now. I think I only watched *guopian* when I was young. When I surf the channels, if I find movies with actors I like, I will stay and watch. For example, I like Robin Williams very much and will watch his movies on cable channels (Fei).

When I watch TV, I just surf up and down through all the different channels. I usually watch the news first, and then sports channels. If I can't find any interesting programmes, I switch to the movie channels. HBO is my first choice, because there are no commercial breaks in the middle of the movie on HBO. ETTV Foreign Movie Channel is my second choice. I watch more foreign movies on cable channels (Yan-Po).

No respondents in this group would disagree with Fei's statement that cinemas are the best venues to enjoy movies. Nevertheless, as Shu-Mei points out, watching cable movies is their most frequent film-viewing activity, as also verified by their film consumption dairies. Five respondents returned dairies and watching cable movies clearly outnumbers cinema-going and watching DVDs. However, they do not, like younger respondents, use cable channels to watch movies that they do not go to see at the cinema. Their tastes seem quite consistent, no matter whether they go to the cinema or watch cable movies. All three respondents who like watching foreign films follow their preference on cable channels, although they could also view one of the several channels specialising in Chinese-language and other Asian movies.

Various reasons can be offered for the popularity of cable movies. They are shown on eleven channels and when people turn on the TV they can easily tune in to them. Cable movies might not be the programmes that they wish to watch when they turn on their televisions, as Yan-Po notes. It is very rare for these respondents to plan in advance which cable movies they will watch. Rather, they surf through the channels without having decided which movies to watch. They first decide whether to watch foreign movies or *guopian*. Having decided this, they consider which familiar and favourite actors are in the films. Fei, for instance, said that spotting Robin Williams on screen offers her enough reason to stay with that channel. However, flipping through almost one hundred channels could be what some viewers really do, rather than finding a specific programme to watch:

My husband enjoys surfing the cable channels. We just sort of let him play with the remote-control. I don't really know what kinds of programmes he's looking for, sometimes. I think he's not watching TV. The TV is watching him instead (A-Ru).

A-Ru observes that her husband, Yan-Po, seems continually to flip through all the channels, without ever stopping at one channel and concentrating on one programme. This kind of channel-flipping practice was also observed among the younger respondent group. For the employed respondents, surfing channels was a way for them to rest their minds. Because they are not watching the programme or movie attentively, they do not have to think too much about the contents of what they watch. For the retired Yan-Po, channel-surfing might be a habit he already had before retiring. It may also be because he does not have a specific programme in mind before he turns on the TV. Not having much expertise in computer use or the Internet, television-watching is a quite natural domestic activity for him and for the majority of these mature respondents. The process of looking for interesting

programmes may even be more interesting than watching the actual programmes or movies.

Whenever I have free time after work or during holidays, I just check whether there are any movies worth watching on the cable channels. It doesn't matter if I don't watch cable movies from the beginning. Anyway, watching cable movies is just a way to kill time (Shu-Mei).

If I start to watch a cable movie, I try to stay with it until the end. Killing time is the main reason for watching cable movies at home (Yan-Po).

Even though many respondents regard watching cable movies as mainly a way to kill time, in Yan-Po's case, once he decides to stay tuned to one channel for a specific movie, he will concentrate on it and try to watch it through. These respondents do not usually watch a cable movie only to catch the funny scenes or memorable shots. Nor do they try to watch two movies at one time by switching back and forth between two channels like many of the respondents in the university student group. Their film consumption diaries reveal that most of their cable movie-watching was conducted over a longer period of time, lasting at least one hour or more, unlike many of the younger respondents who recorded that they watched cable movies only for 10 or 15 minutes at a time. In addition, the mature respondents watch cable movies more attentively than the younger respondents.

When I'm busy with household duties, I won't turn on the TV. I will play some music and finish all my errands first before concentrating on watching TV (A-Ru).

I particularly enjoy watching cable movies late at night because there are many good movies playing after midnight and I can decide what movies to watch by myself without being interrupted (A-Lan).

Generally speaking, different respondent groups have different time windows for

watching cable movies at home. Most of the time, the teenager respondents watch cable movies on weekends or during holidays. The university student respondents enjoy staying up and tuning into cable movie channels when they are using the computer for school work or chatting with friends online. The employed respondents watch cable movies after returning home from work in the evening as a way to relax and rest. Some parent respondents only watch cable movies late in the evening after putting their children to bed. For most of the mature respondents in this group who do not have to work full-time, daytime and late nights when their children are away working or sleeping at home are the best times for them to watch cable movies. The mature respondents in this group enjoy watching cable movies attentively, just as they would at the cinema, as both A-Ru and A-Lan agree. Most of them also do not make the decision about which TV programmes to watch on a given evening when other members of the family are around.

During the daytime, when our children are working, my husband is the one to choose which programmes to watch. After our son gets back from work, we'll let him choose whatever he wants to watch, because we've watched enough TV during the day. I am only in charge of the remote-control when I'm home alone. I usually just watch whatever they want to watch (A-Ru).

When my daughter comes home from work, she's the one who chooses which programmes or movies to watch. I can watch TV during the daytime when I'm all alone at home, or late at night when everyone is in bed (A-Lan).

A-Ru and A-Lan explain why they let their children select which programmes to watch in the evening. As both point out, they give control of the TV remote to their children. They are last in line – with A-Ru even behind her husband - which is very different from the power relationships in the families of the younger respondents. For example, parents remain the ones who decide which programmes to watch in

the families of both the teenager and parent groups. In A-Ru's and A-Lan's families, like many traditional Taiwanese parents, they still give their children top priority even after they have retired. They care about their children and live with them as long as their children wish. In addition, they are happy to let their children to stay with them, without forcing them to move out. They will sacrifice their leisure time by letting the children choose what to watch without any complaint. Actually, the majority of the mature respondents, especially those parents with grown-up children, seem to enjoy a united family atmosphere at home in the evening. Enjoying family time with their children is, indeed, more important than watching particular programmes or movies of their choice. After all, they can always find time to watch their preferred programmes on cable during the day or late at night.

Passively Watching DVD Movies Chosen by their Children

I don't buy or rent DVD movies very often, only on some very rare occasions when I miss out on a very good movie when it's showing at the cinema. Otherwise, there're enough movies on cable channels for me to watch (Shu-Mei).

We used to rent movies or video tapes to watch. However, after installing cable TV, there are too many channels for us to watch. Consequently, we hardly rent tapes or DVDs anymore. We don't even use our DVD player either but my son uses it most of the time (A-Ru).

I don't rent DVD movies myself now because I forget to return the DVDs or return them to the wrong rental shops. If I like certain movies, I would rather buy the DVDs directly (Fei).

Because there are eleven 24-hour non-stop cable movie channels in Taiwan--seven foreign movie channels and four *guopian* channels--there are more than enough

movies for the respondents in this group to watch everyday, free of charge. Therefore, watching DVD movies is not a common part of these respondents' everyday lives. Compared to cinema-going, DVD rental is cheaper and the audiovisual quality of DVD movies is better than cable movies and downloaded movies. They enable people to watch more recent movies than those offered by cable movie channels. Thus, for the employee and parent groups, DVDs are their most common viewing platform. However, for these mature respondents, these advantages of DVD movies become disadvantages because DVDs are more expensive to buy or rent than watching cable movies. As these mature respondents do not go to the cinema to watch recent movies or follow current information about newly-released movies, many cable movies are like new movies to them. Newly-released DVDs do not appear much newer than cable-premiered movies, and so watching cable movies is not really different from watching DVD movies.

Besides, as Fei suggests, renting-DVD movies is troublesome because she has to remember to return them in time and to the right shop to avoid overdue fines. In terms of accessibility, renting DVDs is no match for 'on tap' cable movies. Nevertheless, compared to movie-downloading, playing DVD movies is not technologically challenging. So, some respondents in this group still watch DVD movies, as Fei's diary shows: she watched *A Touch of Spice*, which was recommended by one of her students who loaned her the DVD (Fei's diary, 06/10/06).

For other respondents in this group who live with their children, although they do not actively buy or rent DVD movies themselves, they do watch DVDs rented or bought by their children:

We seldom rent movies now. We just watch whatever DVDs my daughters rent, although they do like to rent Japanese TV idol dramas (Rita).

I don't rent movies myself. I just watch whatever DVD movies my daughter rents and plays (A-Lan).

My mom wants to go to the cinema to see *Granny Gabai* but she doesn't have time to see it at the cinema. I have to remember to buy a DVD copy for her later, after it is released on DVD (Quote from Lily's diary 25/10/08).

As analysed earlier, the parent respondents in this group tend to let their children choose what to watch on television. Rita and A-Lan say that they are happy to watch DVD movies played by their children, even if the movies are not in their favourite genres and feature actors they are not familiar with. It appears that being together with the children means more to these parents than the content of the given movie that is being played. On the other hand, as Lily wrote, some of the children will buy DVDs for their parents knowing that they might not have the opportunity to watch recent movies that interest them. Sometimes, they will also rent DVDs that their parents might like in order to watch them together with them. Renting, buying, or playing DVD movies also encourages interaction between parents or children. Especially when it is sometimes difficult for both parents and their children to arrange to go to the cinema together, watching DVDs together is a viable alternative.

9.6 Getting Movie Information via Traditional Channels and the Comparison between Cinema-Going and Domestic Film-Viewing

Watching trailers is still the most common way for me to get movie information. Right now, movie trailers can be seen at the cinema, on TV, or even on the bus. In addition, other people's recommendations are influential. I also enjoy watching *World SCREEN*, where new movies are introduced.⁷⁸ I have colleagues who enjoy watching movies very much. We chat about movies in the office (Shu-Mei).

Shu-Mei discloses three major channels for these respondents to get movie information: trailers, word-of-mouth, and magazines. These are all very traditional. Shu-Mei does not mention the Internet. As one of the few people in this group still in employment, she is very familiar with the computer, which she uses often when working. However, she does not use the Internet as her main source of movie information, unlike the other younger respondents from this research. Reading movie magazines is a rarer source for the younger respondents. They are more likely to read popular entertainment magazines, such as *Next Magazine Taiwan*. In addition, many younger respondents have got used to look for the screening time of the movie via the Internet before going to the cinema. When they are planning to go to the cinema, most of these mature respondents still checked the screening time in the newspapers, as Yan-Po reveals:

⁷⁸ *World SCREEN* with *i LOOK Movie Magazine* are the only two Chinese movie magazines published in Taiwan and specialising in introducing newly-released movies and related news. Both magazines work closely with local distributors to promote newly-released or upcoming movies in the Taiwanese market. *World SCREEN* has been published in Taiwan since 1966. During the pre-Internet era, this magazine was an important source of up-to-date movie information.

If I want to go to the cinema, I check the movie schedule from newspapers first, especially the schedule of the second run cinema that I go to (Yan-Po).

Other than trailers shown on TV and news in the print media, recommendations and 'word-of-mouth' from other people are also critical sources for this group. The most significant difference between them and the other younger respondents is the source of 'word-of-mouth' about movies. For the younger respondents, recommendations from unknown netizens, who post their opinions or reviews on the discussion boards of the Internet or directly on their blogs, have become their main source of information on specific movies that they are interested in. However, for the mature respondents, as Shu-Mei mentions, recommendations from their friends, family, or colleagues via face-to-face chats are the source of the 'word-of-mouth':

We don't go to the cinema with our children now. They don't want to take us with them either. They have their preferred movies to watch, we have ours. Nevertheless, they will share their opinions with us after watching a movie. I don't use the computer as much as my husband does. He gets lots of information on movies and documentaries from the Internet. I listen to his recommendation and watch whatever movies or documentaries he brings home with him (Rita).

Although parents in this group might not go to the cinema with their children often, as Rita says the children and other family members are important channels for them to get up-to-date movie information and recommendations. In spite of the fact that the majority of respondents in this group do not actively use the Internet to get movie information, they still acquire some information that their children or other family members have originally got from the Internet.

Despite the fact that many local film distributors do not consider mature

audiences as target moviegoers, some of the mature respondents go to the cinema more regularly than might be expected. What is more, most of the respondents in this group appreciate the kind of enhanced viewing experience and enjoyment that cinemas can offer as opposed to the domestic viewing environment:

A-Ru: I think sound effects from cinemas are more realistic. Television sound has its limitations.

Yan-Po: Screen size matters as well.

A-Ru: Going to the cinema gives you better audio-visual pleasure. But watching television at home is much more convenient. You don't have to come a long way to the cinema and line up with crowds of people. You don't have to feel apologetic and embarrassed, when going to the toilet in the middle of the film.

I prefer watching movies at the cinema. It's like the difference between studying at home and studying in the library. The only thing you can do in the cinema auditorium is watch the movie on the screen (Shu-Mei).

The three respondents point out three of the most significant differences between watching movies at the cinema and at home. First, the audiovisual effects of movies experienced in the cinema are far better than at home. Second, watching movies at the cinema, in the dark hall as part of an audience, is still a public activity which could not provide the kind of convenience and privacy that watching movies at home could offer. Third, cinema-going is a better way to enjoy movies more attentively than at home.

Furthermore, while we might think that these mature respondents would have nostalgia for traditional theatres with a single screen and bigger auditoriums, some of them actually appreciate modern multiplexes more than the traditional theatres where they saw movies in the past:

Yan-Po: I prefer current small multi-screen cinemas. There aren't many in the audience, but there is more choice.

A-Ru: He can try different screens easily.

Yan-Po: The traditional cinemas with one big auditorium were more crowded. Besides, if you get the front rows of seats, you get tired easily when watching constantly. Watching movies in the current small auditorium is more comfortable.

A-Ru: As long as the air-conditioner works well and the seats are comfortable enough for me to take a nap. That'll do for me.

For respondents like Yan-Po, multiplexes offer various movies for him to choose from. They do not have to decide beforehand which movies to see but can just go and make a choice there. Besides, with audiences being divided into different screens, each auditorium has fewer viewers than the traditional one-screen theatre. This offers more comfort and privacy and less pressure for someone who might want to go to the toilet in the middle of viewing.

9.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined film-viewing among respondents over 50. They were all born and raised when digital audiovisual technology was not available. Cinemas were the only venues for them to watch movies. They witnessed the change of focus from local film production of Taiwanese-language films to Mandarin films and from commercial genre movies to art house movies. Because not enough Taiwanese movies could be made to satisfy the needs of the local film market, foreign movies, especially from Hollywood and Japan, dominated local cinema screens. Therefore, most of these respondents started their childhood cinema-going by watching foreign movies rather than *guopian*. They enjoy movies

about real life with realistic styles and traditional ways of story-telling. Many genres, such as horror movies and sci-fi movies, favoured by many youngsters, are not among their favourite movies.

These mature respondents do not employ as varied film-viewing platforms as younger respondents. Traditional platforms, such as cinemas and cable channels, are their most common ways of watching movies. Even though the frequency of their cinema-going is lower than that of the younger respondents, once they decide to watch a movie, the cinema is always their top choice. For some of the retired respondents, watching movies at second-run cinemas has become a regular routine. Compared to other respondents from this group, the retirees can dedicate more of their time to cinema-going. Similar to the university students, with lots of time available, the economic factor of ticket prices and their taste in films become the decisive considerations. Yet, without the company of their children or partners, their cinema-going can be a solitary activity. However, for the grandparent respondents, little grandchildren accompany them to the cinema, instead of their busy children. As for the single respondents, family members and friends are the only people that they can go to the cinema with.

Generally-speaking, going to first-run movies remains a special family activity. However, visiting second-run cinemas is a more personal activity, which is similar to some of the university students' practices. Finally, we might suggest that local exhibitors, who usually target younger audiences, should start to pay more attention to mature citizens, especially retirees. They do not just passively stay at home watching TV. As a matter of fact, other than cable movies, cinema is the only venue for them to watch movies. With reasonable admission prices,

suitable genres of movies, and more healthy food and snacks available, these mature audiences would feel more than happy to step into the cinema frequently.

Other than cinema-going, watching cable movies is the most frequent film-viewing activity for this group of respondents. Some use cable movies as a kind of 'company', similar to the social use of television proposed by James Lull – as an 'environmental resource' - (1990, 35) to offer viewers companionship and a way to kill time when their children are not home. Compared to the youngsters, these mature respondents watch cable movies by focusing on one channel and one movie. If they find a movie that attracts them they will watch it. Cable movies are also the major means for them to watch classic movies or movies with their favourite stars. However, among the eleven cable movie channels available, none specialise in classic movies for them to recall movies from the good old days.

Not only do most of the respondents in this group employ traditional platforms for film-viewing, but they also use traditional channels or media to get movie information. None of them have ever tried movie-downloading. Most do not even rent or play DVD movies actively. Although some use the Internet for the purpose of communicating with family and friends, or online shopping, they still get movie information through papers, magazines, TV trailers, or 'word-of-mouth' from family or friends. However, with various kinds of cinemas available to provide them with enough choices to suit their everyday routines and movie tastes and also eleven cable movies channels to offer non-stop and instant movies to watch at home, watching DVD movies or Internet-downloading is not necessary. As one said:

I think the themes of movies are more appealing to me. Big cinema, small

cinema or watching at home doesn't really matter. The movie itself is the most important thing (Fei).

To most of the respondents in this group, the point of watching films is not how soon they can watch a new movie after its release, how many movies they are aware of, how many actors or directors they are familiar with, or how big their personal collection of movies is, but purely and simply to relax and enjoy a good movie.

Chapter 10

Conclusions

10.1 Social Implications of Cinema-Going in the Digital Era

This research investigates and extends the hypothesis proposed by Docherty and his colleagues about the relationship between cinemas and domestic viewing-platform: ‘video did not poach the cinema audience...cinema and video are parallel entertainments, not strict competitors.’ (1987, 2) The relationship between cinema and contemporary viewing-platforms, such as DVD, cable movie, and downloaded movie is the contemporary equivalent of Docherty *et.al.*’s focus. This entire area has not been subjected to extensive empirical analysis since Docherty *et.al.*’s project twenty years ago. Through the analysis here, not only is it found that these contemporary viewing-platforms do not ‘kill’ cinemas, but it is further argued that these platforms become both parallel entertainment and competitors for different age groups of respondents under circumstances in which access to screen-based entertainment and media pervades a far wider range of venues and times in everyday life. ‘Cinema-going’ for today’s audiences plays a range of significant social roles in addition to textual pleasure at a variety of times and in a variety of places. Precisely what those roles, times, and places are has been investigated through the case study of audiences in Taipei conducted here.

Based on the Taipei respondents' accounts of their film-viewing, cinemas are still thought to be the best venues to fully experience the audiovisual effects and moving stories that movies can offer. Yet, enjoying the excitement and delight offered by film texts is not the only reason for people to go to the cinema. Going to the cinema is a special event to be conducted during the vacations or after term exams for Taiwanese teenage students, whose domestic consumption of media and use of audiovisual equipment and computers is regulated by their parents. Most of the time, teenagers enjoy going to the cinema with a group of friends or classmates, rather than with their parents or family members. Compared to watching television programmes and using computers, cinema-going only takes place occasionally. Parents do not regulate the cinema-going of teenagers as strictly as they do their viewing of domestic media. Cinema-going therefore offers a good opportunity for them to take a break from parental monitoring and study pressure and to spend time with friends. For these teenagers the most important thing is to meet with peers, which is more important than consuming the content of the movie. Thus, they do not care too much about the textual meanings of the movies. Hollywood blockbusters and newly-released popular movies offering straightforward excitement and easy-to-follow narration are their main choices when they go to the cinema.

For the university student respondents, with more free time available, going to the cinema is not a special event. They can go whenever they feel like it. Nevertheless, first-run movies or watching movies at multiplexes is also for them a kind of social activity that is mostly done with friends. Yet, their choice of movie is more discriminating. If their friends ask them to see a movie that does not appeal to them, they may not go just so that they can be with their friends. These

university students make broader choices of movies to watch. Due to the differences in location and facilities of most second-run cinemas in Taipei and also in the scheduling and economic nature of second-run movies, they can go to the second-run cinema on their own if they are interested in a particular film. This is an alternative both to watching first-run movies and to renting DVD movies.

Cinema-going for the employee group is not only social entertainment they had with friends or colleagues, but is also treated as something to be done with the family. It also gives couples a chance to spend quality time together. Cinema-going as a way to socialise with friends becomes less significant in comparison to their younger counterparts. Because of their busy working load, it is rare for them to go to the cinema after work during weekdays. Cinema-going remains a holiday or weekend only activity. The content of films becomes more important to this group. They do not choose to see only Hollywood blockbusters or effects-packed movies. They have broader experience and greater knowledge of films and more personal interest in particular genres or themes of movies. Thus, it is not uncommon to find dedicated cinephiles in this group who go to art house cinemas alone.

Nevertheless, after having children, cinema-going becomes more of a family event most of the time, done almost exclusively with children. The multiplex offers parents and children a venue in which to spend the whole day or evening and do more than just go to the movie. The multiplex therefore functions for them as a kind of 'urban resort', offering the whole family a 'one-stop' venue to conduct different leisure activities, so saving them time and trouble in negotiating the busy and traffic-congested big city life. As children are the top priority in most of these parents' lives, their choice of movies has to be suitable for their children to watch.

Therefore, family movies, cartoons or movies with educational elements are among the most favoured genres. Their personal preference is not always the most important film-selection criterion.

For respondents over 50, cinema-going can still be a family activity. First-run cinemas remain the venue in which these mature respondents prefer to watch movies with family or friends. Cinema-going can also function as personal entertainment and may be done without company. Especially for those respondents who have retired, as they have a lot of available time, they would rather go to the second-run or art house cinema, which is less expensive and caters to their own preferences or interests, and they do not have to consider their children's needs. These mature respondents' cinema-going can therefore be as independent and active as those of university students, primarily because their use of other domestic film-viewing platforms is rather limited.

To sum up, multiplexes or first-run cinemas are used by all five groups of respondents either with friends or family members. Second-run cinemas or art house cinemas are used as a more solitary form of film-viewing. The importance of the film's textual factors for different age groups also varies. For younger respondents, the social functions of cinema-going seem to be more critical for them than the content of the film. However, for older respondents the content seems to be no less important than the social function of cinema-going. That is to say that what to watch is for them at least as important as with whom and where to watch the film. Even with the option of watching movies through other platforms, the social function and incomparable audiovisual viewing environment that modern cinemas offer means that cinema-going remains an irreplaceable activity

for contemporary Taiwanese film audiences. Moreover, because the audiovisual effects cannot be simulated easily at home, Hollywood blockbusters with great special effects are so successful at the Taiwanese box office and the favourite type of films to watch at the first-run cinema. One possible way for cinema to develop and maintain its audience is the IMAX cinema where 3D versions of movies can be shown. This enables cinema to widen the gap between what an audience can experience in the cinema auditorium and in their living room.

Compared to DVDs and Internet-downloading, cinemas are adopted widely by respondents of all five groups. However, as the analysis in this thesis has demonstrated, the meaning of cinema-going and the films respondents choose to watch varies for different groups. The findings confirm the argument advanced in relation to existing scholarship in this area in Chapter Three that the “audience-film” relationship that has been so dominant in the field needs to be replaced by the wider concept of the ‘audience-film-cinema-going’ relationship.

10.2 ‘Family Theatre’ in the Living Room: Watching DVD Movies with Family Members

Succeeding videotape, laser discs, and VCDs, DVD has become currently the major display format for ‘home theatre’. Compared to its ancestors, the audiovisual quality of DVD movies is undoubtedly superior and closer to the kind of audiovisual presentation that audiences expect from film-viewing at the cinema. However, facing competition from other domestic film-viewing platforms, DVDs are not the major viewing platform among respondents in all five age cohorts.

As discussed earlier, generally there exist four major factors that influence the medium by which people choose to do their viewing. When considering audiovisual and technological factors, renting DVDs costs less than watching first-run movies, yet is more expensive than watching cable movies and movie-downloading. Image quality-wise, DVD movies are superior to cable and downloaded movies, but inferior to those shown at the cinema. For the teenage respondents, not having enough money or parental permission to rent or purchase DVD movies, watching DVD movies at home is regulated by their parents and usually is part of a family gathering. University students download movies and can watch newly-released movies without having to wait for DVD releases. Thus, Internet downloading or even visits to second-run cinemas are chosen more frequently than DVD movies as their favoured film-viewing platforms. Both teenagers and university students consider that watching DVDs at home does not serve the social function of going out with friends.

However, for many of the employed and parent respondents, DVD movies offer them a way to watch movies with family members, without having to leave their homes and paying for expensive first-run cinema tickets. Although the audiovisual quality of DVD movies cannot quite match the standard offered by cinemas, it is far better than the image quality of downloaded movies. The use of DVD players is also much more convenient and easy than Internet-downloading, which also allows the viewer to watch films whenever they like. This makes them unlike cable movies, because people have to adjust their viewing schedule according to the programmes that have been scheduled by the cable channel managers. When watching DVD movies, audiences do not have to put up with the commercial breaks inserted in the middle of films by the cable movie channels.

Hence, for respondents from the employee or parent groups who watch films for their content, DVD movies are their predominant platform.

The mature respondents do not usually rent or purchase DVD movies, without having specific movies in mind. They would rather watch whatever DVD movie has been chosen by their adult children. When they want to watch a specific movie, they are more likely to go to the cinema, instead of watching a DVD. At home they favour the non-stop cable movies offered by 11 movie channels over DVD movies. The operation of DVD players or 'home cinema' systems is also less intuitive than that of the cable TV system for some mature respondents. Thus, watching DVD movies is seldom actively done by the mature respondents.

In a way that is similar to Dinsmore-Tuli's observation of her respondents' preference for uninterrupted viewing of video movies (1998, 202-204), most respondents in this project prefer to watch a DVD movie from the beginning to the end without interruption. Dinsmore-Tuli argues that her respondents demonstrate 'respect through uninterrupted and complete viewings' (1998, 202). However, the respondents' accounts of their DVD-viewing suggest that for them to decide to watch a DVD movie they have to be in a 'movie-watching mood'. It is not just out of respect for film narrative. It also shows their determination to devote two hours of their precious leisure time to the consumption of the movie, especially for those from the employed group or the parent group who have busy working schedules. This kind of mindset is apparently different from that for watching cable movies or downloaded movies. Thus, the fast forward, rewind, or scene-selecting functions of DVD movies were not used very often by most respondents, with the exception of the pause function. This is only usually applied when respondents need to use

the toilet or are interrupted by telephone calls.

The bonus materials on many DVDs, such as behind the scene footage or director's comments, are rarely watched by the respondents from the employed or parent groups. No doubt this is because, after spending two hours watching the whole film, they do not have the energy or desire to watch anything more. However, for some of the university student respondents and cinephiles, it is the bonus materials that influence them when they rent or purchase a particular DVD.

Due to the nature of how DVDs are watched at home, most of the respondents watch them because they are interested in that particular movie. They seldom play a DVD movie that fails to interest them. This makes the social aspect of film-viewing less significant to domestic DVD-viewing than when going to the cinema. Nevertheless, in choosing DVD movies to watch they still do not take as much care as when they go the cinema. This is due to the fact that DVD movies are much cheaper than the cost of going to the cinema and also offer a wider selection of films to choose from.

It is likely that current format of DVDs will be replaced by the Blue-ray DVD format (which won out over Toshiba's HD DVD in February 2008) with its high definition pictures and sound quality.⁷⁹ Blue-ray will make the viewing experience of 'home cinema' closer to that of 'real cinema'. However, the social functions of cinema-going cannot be substituted completely by watching Blue-ray DVDs. Nonetheless, it may be that people having Blue-ray DVD players equipped

⁷⁹ The Associated Press. 2008. Toshiba Quits HD DVD Business. *The New York Times*. February 19, 2008. (http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/business/AP-Japan-Toshiba.html?_r=1&oref=slogin... 2008/2/19, accessed February 20, 2008)

as their 'home theatre' could invite friends around for a cinema experience 'at home'.

Overall, this thesis pushes the envelope of studies on DVD use by examining a wide range of aspects of viewers' DVD-related activities, including viewing practices, renting, purchasing, copying, collecting, and sharing, rather than only focusing on how they watch DVD content. Viewers' practices of copying, collecting and sharing of DVD movies have not been given enough attention and research from a wider angle until the final stages of this thesis. Through the examination of respondents' DVD-related activities, the different uses of DVDs and their significance for different age groups are demonstrated. It is argued that the textual characteristics do play a critical role in motivating DVD movie viewers or collectors when choosing DVDs, especially over cable movies or downloaded movies. The social functions of DVDs are expressed more significantly through viewers' sharing activities with other people, rather than watching movie contents together, as in the case of going to the cinema.

10.3 Watching Cable Movies as Part of Television-Viewing Practices

One of the features of the cable television service in Taiwan is its 'flat fees for all channels' policy, which means that its subscribers can watch all the channels offered by the local cable TV service provider without having to pay extra fees. So subscribers do not have to pay different fees for different packages, as in the case of the UK's Sky TV. For Taiwanese audiences, once they have the cable TV

service installed, they have access to 11 different movie channels. In addition to the fact that it is virtually 'free of charge', another important feature of cable movies is that they are constantly being repeated.

Since the teenage respondents cannot go to the cinema or watch DVD movies as often as they wish due to their parents' rules, the cable movie channel becomes the easiest way for them to access movies. Whenever they are able to watch TV, they can tune in to cable channels for movies they are not usually allowed to watch or which cannot be accessed through other viewing platforms. For example, Chinese-language comedies from the 1980s or 1990s that are constantly showing on some of the movie channels, such as Stephen Chow's or Chu Yen-Ping's works, which many parents think of as 'non-sense' or meaningless offer teenagers instant laughs. If they were not being continuously rescheduled on cable movie channels, this generation of young audiences would not have the opportunity to watch these classic comedies as they are impossible to see at the cinema and are not available on DVD.

For the university respondents, their options of viewing platforms are more flexible. Most do not rely on cable channels as their major gateway to movies. Rather they use cable channels to watch movies they have seen before. For many respondents, most cable movie-viewing is conducted by accident, not by special arrangement. Therefore, when viewers flip through different channels, the movies that attract their attention are usually those they have seen before. By repeated viewing of movies they are familiar with, the university students develop a kind of 'cut-and-paste' viewing strategy when watching cable movies. By switching between different channels, or by watching the different parts of the same movies

playing at different times or on different dates on the same channel, they do not have to follow the linear narration of movies as designed by filmmakers or the scheduling of programmes as arranged by the cable channels. However, unless they have already seen the movies, this 'cut-and-paste' viewing strategy is not possible. Cable movies are also often employed by many of the university students to provide a kind of 'background companionship' (Lull, 1990, 36). They can tune in while conducting other routines at home and without having to concentrate on watching the movie.

For the employed respondents, watching cable movies is like watching other television programmes. It is one of the things they are likely to do after returning home from work, especially on weekday evenings. Because they are tired and need to relax, they are not very often in a 'movie-watching' mood or able to spend two hours watching a DVD movie or going to the cinema. Consequently, cable movies are part of their regular TV programming and they watch them randomly without planning ahead. The parent respondents select programmes to watch on the basis of how suitable they are to be watched together with their children. If they want to watch a movie of interest to themselves, it has to be done while their children are studying or in bed. Similarly to the employed respondents, cable movie-watching for the parent respondents functions as company for them at times when they have nothing particular to do at home.

This function of cable movies as company is also adopted by some of the mature respondents, especially those who have retired. Cable movies offer them access to movies at home 24 hours a day, 7 days of the week. The cable movie channel is the only viewing platform to watch classic movies they have seen long

time ago at the cinema.

With the wide range of movies from various places and across different periods of time provided by the 11 cable channels for no extra charge, the cable channels are the most frequently used viewing platform for respondents from all five age cohorts. They are also the major platform for respondents to watch movies repeatedly. By accidentally tuning in to movies they may have a pleasant 'surprise' of the same sort as when hearing one of their favourite songs suddenly playing on radio.

Whether current viewing practices will continue in the future depends on the 'one flat fee for all channels' policy. If this is changed so that there are different channel packages with different service fees, as in the UK, then aimless viewing of cable movies will become more difficult. This thesis contributes most to the relatively neglected topic of viewers' viewing practices of cable movies. Through the analysis of these respondents' viewing of cable movies, how media policy can significantly influence viewers' choice of viewing platform is clear. Due to the constant re-running of cable movies, they have become the primary platform for Taiwanese viewers to what films they are already familiar with. This is different from the findings of other research, that often traces viewers repeated viewing of movies to DVDs, for example, Barbara Klinger's research (2006). Government policy and regulation of media is clearly a crucial factor in these differences. Furthermore, the 'one flat fee for all channels' policy, cable channels' scheduling practices, and the easy use of the cable TV system means that, surprisingly, for the respondents participating in this project, cable movie channels are actually the most frequently used domestic viewing platform, rather than DVDs, for

respondents from all five age groups.. As a result of the examination of respondents' cable movie-viewing practices, the interrelationship between audience, film, viewing-platform, and institutional factors is better delineated.

10.4 Collecting for Sharing: Movie-Downloading and the Social Dimension of Contemporary Movie-Collecting

Internet-downloading of movies is the latest platform to have emerged, but is also the least user-friendly among the four major viewing platforms discussed in this project. The use of movie-downloading requires a broadband internet connection, computer equipment and knowledge of the process of Internet-downloading. None of the respondents in the mature group had any motivation to download movies, as they do not feel the need to watch movies playing on the small-sized computer monitor with poorer image quality and to follow every newly-released movie. It is the university student respondents who download most. They are familiar with this practice and are used to viewing video files on the computer. They also have a passion for watching as many newly-released movies as possible, which downloading facilitates. As they are logging onto Internet constantly while staying at home they can easily perform the downloading operation.

While the teenage respondents have the know-how and equipment downloading they do not have the free time and the permission from their parents to do it. Similarly, movie-downloading for most of the respondents from the employed group and the parent group is too time-consuming. In addition, the

audiovisual quality of downloaded movies is not acceptable, especially when compared to rented or purchased DVD movies. For movies they are interested in, they would rather spend a little more money at DVD rental shops, or go to the cinema. Additionally, for some of the respondents from these two groups, the technical issue is still an obstacle. The operation of downloading is thought to be difficult and troublesome for some respondents.

Downloaded movies allow people to keep up with newly-released movies without having to pay expensive cinema prices. Downloads function as a filter by which they can find the films they are interested in, but are not sure whether they are worth going to see at the cinema. Some of those who do most movie-downloading among the university students group download as many as 7 or 8 movies per day. However, they do not actually watch all of them. After the downloading, they will check the image quality and only save those files with an acceptable image quality as parts of their huge downloaded movie collection for later viewing, and most importantly, for sharing with their peers. They will share movies and also 'take orders' from their friends to download for particular movies. The sharing of movie files is quick and easy. I argue that for these respondents downloading functions as a kind of communicative tool for them to socialise with their peers and also to express their knowledge of rare movies or of popular new-releases. If the downloaders have the movie files that their friends ask for, they can discuss the movie with their friends or suggest similar movies they have collected. That explains why most of them are very generous about sharing their files. The biggest pleasure does not come from watching the movies but from sharing the movie files with other people.

For the respondents from the employed or the parent group, most of their movie-sharing occurs through DVDs. They rip and copy rented DVD movies to form part of their DVD movie collection. They also share their purchased official version of DVDs or pirate versions. Of course, in order to rip DVDs the associated facility, expertise, and cost is required. There exist some significant features of contemporary movie-collecting and movie-sharing. First, the cost of obtaining digital files, either in the format of DVD discs or video files, is relatively cheap. If the movie files or DVDs are lost or damaged, they can easily be replaced. Second, the image quality of digital files will not easily be degraded after constant replay. Therefore, digital movie files are not as precious or valuable for contemporary movie collectors as the analogue formats used by the last generation of movie collectors. Most collectors' movie collections are not as rare as out of print books or vinyl records. As a result, the sharing or exchange of collected movie files is a very common practice in today's digital-rich environment.

Internet downloading is thought by some of the respondents as time-consuming. Also, the audiovisual quality of downloaded files is unpredictable. It cannot match the quality of other viewing platforms. However, with faster and faster broadband connections available, the time-consuming and image quality issues will improve. New generations with the expertise and equipment to conduct movie-downloading will no doubt lead to movie-downloading flourishing in the future. The question of how to incorporate this illegal activity into legal practice is critical for the film industry to think about. As for the movie-collectors, with the non-stop evolution of media and ICT technologies, their current collection of downloaded movie files or DVD discs will eventually be replaced by movie files with better audiovisual quality or by the newly-emerged format of Blue-ray DVDs.

Despite the fact that currently available DVD movies can be played and last for a few decades, if stored and taken care of properly, the current DVD disc might not be able to retain its dominance as the major platform for 'home theatre' in the future.

Movie-downloading practice has not been examined properly by existing literature so far. Based on the downloaders' own accounts, this thesis hopes to function as a starting point for larger future projects. Among the four major viewing platforms discussed in this thesis, Internet-downloading is the only platform where viewer autonomy, in terms of selecting whatever movies they want to watch, without being limited by the government or the industry, can be seen. However, due to the greater skills required and the time-consuming process of movie-downloading, this platform is only used widely by younger respondents. Moreover, it is argued that for the respondents who collect downloaded movies or DVD movies, the social implications of sharing their collected movies with other people are more significant than repeated viewing.

10.5 Epilogue and Suggestions for Future Studies

It is clear that the meanings and functions of 'film-viewing' today are not limited to the enjoyment of movie contents or to understanding film texts. Through the analysis of the multi-platform film-viewing of different generations of respondent who participated in this research, not only has the 'audience-film-viewing platform' interrelationship become better articulated, but the sociocultural and economic meanings in film-viewing have also been discussed in detail. From this research, 'age' and 'lifestyle' appear to be the most decisive

demographic factors in accounting for how people use different multi-platform means of film-viewing.

I argue that domestic viewing platforms like DVDs, cable movies, and Internet-downloading do not 'kill' cinema. The social functions of cinema-going and the kind of audiovisual experiences gained from watching movies at the cinema are things with which it is still difficult for 'home theatre' and so-called 'home entertainment systems' to compete. Rather, these domestic viewing platforms offer contemporary audiences more flexible and diversified means to interact with films, in ways that are better suited to their varied lifestyles, quotidian schedules, and personal habits or interests. Therefore, 'film-viewing' for contemporary audiences is not only about sitting in the dark cinema auditorium attentively but passively, and following the linear narratives of movies and the movie programmes scheduled by the exhibitors.

On the one hand, audiences' movie-related activities have diversified. They can watch movies repeatedly via cable movies, DVDs, and Internet-downloading. Their sources of movie news or movie information are not limited to traditional newspapers, magazines, TV commercials, or movie trailers. They can obtain movie information on the Internet and inside MRT stations or on buses. Consequently, everyone can post their criticisms or reviews on the Internet and look for reviews or critiques offered by other viewers without having to follow professional film critics' recommendations. On the other hand, they can develop their own non-linear ways of viewing, as in the case of the university student respondents' 'cut-and-paste' way of watching cable movies, which enables them to consume film texts without following the narrative designed by filmmakers. They can also

watch movies any time they want without being restricted by managers of cinemas or cable movie channels and by the length of movies.

Despite the fact that respondents of different age cohorts use different viewing platforms to consume films differently, it is fair to say that Docherty and colleagues' argument (1987) remains applicable in today's multi-platform film-viewing environment. Moreover, through this multi-platform approach to the studying of Taiwanese film audiences, it can be shown that although Hollywood movies dominate the Taiwanese film market, this does not mean that Taiwanese audiences do not watch non-Hollywood movies. They just tend to use other viewing platforms to consume these movies. Only this multi-platform approach to Taiwanese film consumption makes it possible to examine different ways in which people use different platforms to watch different types of films. Hopefully, this multi-platform approach to contemporary audiences' film-viewing practices can function as the starting point for more research and discussion about the complicated interrelationships among film audiences, film texts, and viewing platforms.

The ethnography-inspired qualitative research method, based on the accounts of respondents from different 'life stages', mixes various qualitative-data collecting techniques with supplementary information from government film policy and the development of the local film industry. Hopefully, this original research method can be applied to studying contemporary film audiences' film-viewing practices in other local contexts. Besides, I hope this research might function as a pilot study inspiring the government or the industry to conduct a larger national research project. Finally, from the research findings on different age

groups, it is clear that gender differences are clearly presented within some of the groups. This indicates that further studies focusing on the gender issues with more detailed analysis are warranted. The existing study has been focused heavily on the urban middle-classes, but given the clear role that working schedules and lifestyle plays in shaping the viewing practices of respondents examined here, further study on additional work on rural and working-class viewers is also necessary in the future.

Reviewing the analysis offered in this project, without a doubt, there still exist some further issues that have not been given detail analysis in this project. All of these issues and concerns are worth further examination in the future. First, this project does not explain whether audiences' reception of specific movies will be varied if watching the same movie via different viewing platforms. That is to say, does the use of a particular platform influence their perception of film texts? Second, how media institutions in the local film industry and the policy of the local government function as a framework or limitation upon film-viewing has not been given enough discussion, although it has been briefly discussed in Chapter Two. Third, the transnational effects of global cinema culture and Hollywood dominance have not been considered in detail. Fourth, other technologies and devices that have recently emerged, such as mobile phones, portable media devices, portable video game consoles, and MOD service have not been covered in this thesis, with the exception of a brief analysis of respondents' employment of MOD service in Chapter Five. Finally, this multi-platform approach and research model could be applied to audiences from other countries or places with different local contexts, such as a different film industry structure, government film policy, and penetration rates of different viewing platforms. By doing so, the similarities and differences

between the findings of different local audiences could offer useful data for cross-cultural comparison.

Appendix A

Pilot Study

Survey of the informants from local film industry:

The first set of data was collected through in-depth interview from informants working for different sections in the Taiwanese film industry including production, distribution, exhibition, and Internet film information providers. All informants from local film industry are listed as following:

1. In-depth interview of local film producer

Interviewee: Ms. Jufeng Yeh (葉如芬)

Credit: Producer/Executive Producer of several Taiwan films including: *Silk*(*Gui si*) 鬼絲(Su Chao-bin, Taiwan, 2006), *The Wayward Cloud*(*Tian bian yi duo yun*) 天邊一朵雲 (Tsai Ming-liang, Taiwan, 2005), *Fishing Luck*(*Dengdai fei yu*) 等待飛魚 (Tseng Wen-chen, Taiwan, 2005); Executive Director of local film production company – Ocean Deep Films(威象國際影視有限公司); and Member of GIO's(Government Information Office, Taiwan) “Committee of Review and Promotion of Film Policy”.

2. In-depth interview of independent film distributor—Ta Lai Films Co., Ltd./ Hwa Jaan Film Co., Ltd. (大來/華展影業公司)

Interviewee: Marketing Manager—Ms. Vicky Chang (張雅琪)

3. In-depth interview of American major film distributor—Twentieth Century Fox Taiwan

Interviewee: Senior Marketing Manager—Mr. Dennis Wu (吳明憲)

4. Telephone interview of local film exhibitor—Warner Village Cinema Taiwan

Interviewee: Former Managing Director: Mr. Steve Kappen

5. In-depth interview of local film industry investor—CMC Entertainment Group (中環娛樂集團)

Interviewee: Special Assistant of Vice-President—Mr. Yang Liu (劉揚)

6. In-depth interview of internet movie site—Yahoo Movie, Taiwan

Interviewee: Production Coordinator—Mr. Kenny Chen (陳于塵)

Survey of the informants from local film audiences:

All informants who participated in this pilot survey volunteered either via an Internet advertisement that I had posted on the Yahoo Taiwan Movie Board before the survey or recruited through my personal connections. The combination of research techniques, containing in-depth interview, questionnaire, group discussion, and special screening was used in order to obtain information for this part of survey. Additionally, an open-structured questionnaire and a semi open-structured questionnaire were both employed in this part of survey, in order to test which kind of questionnaires could get useful information more efficiently.

Group 1:

A group of four female friends living in Taipei, aged 24—29, with Bachelor's degree. Two of them are working full-time, one of them is working full-time, and the last one is working for family business.

Group 2 (with questionnaire): Special screening of a non-Hollywood film (*Bad Education*, Pedro Almodóvar, Spain, 2004)

A group of five participants, aged 22-35, with two males and three females, all with bachelor's degree. Two female participants strongly favor Hollywood films. One male participant strongly favors art house movies and festival films. The rest of the participants are neutral between Hollywood and non-Hollywood films.

Pair 1 (with questionnaire):

A married couple, aged 35 and 34, with master's degree. The husband is an engineer and the wife is a financial consultant.

Pair 2 (with questionnaire):

An unmarried couple, aged 34 and 28, with bachelor's degree. The male informant is an industrial designer. The female informant is an assistant in the R&D department of an IT company.

Pair 3 (with questionnaire):

Two sisters, aged 22 and 18. The older sister just graduated from university. The younger sister is about to start freshman year in university.

Pair 4 (with questionnaire):

A married couple, aged 41 and 50, working as elementary school teachers, with master's degree.

Personal in-depth interview only:

Two male informants were interviewed.

Questionnaire survey only:

Five informants filled out and returned the questionnaire.

Questionnaire survey with personal in-depth interview:

Ten informants were interviewed and filled out a questionnaire.

Appendix B

Major Research Design and Respondents

Questionnaires received: 396

Qualified questionnaires received: 372

Questionnaire respondents who are currently living in the Great Taipei Area including, Taipei City and Taipei County, are counted as qualified questionnaires.

Respondents' age groups

Qualified questionnaire respondents are divided into the following groups:

Group A: Teenagers from 12 to 17;

Group B: College or university students from 18 to 24 years old;

Group C: Viewers from 23 to 39 years old who are employed full-time or part-time and unmarried or married without children;

Group D: Viewers from 30 to 49 years old who are married and have children;

Group E: Viewers over 50 years old.

Group A: Teenagers from 12 to 17

No	Name	Age	Sex	Living with	Occupation	Education	Film diary
A1	Bryan	12	M	Family	Student	6 th grade Elementary school	Yes
A2	Chi-I	13	M	Family	Student	1 st year Junior high school	Yes
A3	Ting-Wu	14	M	Family	Student	2 nd year Junior high school	No
A4	Ting-Wen	15	M	Family	Student	1 st year Senior high school	No
A5	I-Jing	15	F	Family	Student	1 st year Senior high school	Yes
A6	Yu-Xin	15	F	Family	Student	1 st year Senior high school	Yes
A7	Mark	16	M	Family	Student	1 st year Senior high school	No
A8	Pei-Kai	15	M	Family	Student	1 st year Senior high school	Yes
A9	Shu-Rong	16	F	Family	Student	1 st year Senior high school	Yes

Notes: 1. Respondents A3 and A4 are brothers.

2. Respondents A5, A6, A7 are junior high school classmates. They go to different senior high schools.

3. Respondents A8 and A9 are classmates. They go to the same evening class.

Group B: College or university students from 18 to 24

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Living with	Occupation	Education	Film diary
B1	Sara	20	F	3 other roommates in school dorms	Student with a part-time jobs	Freshman Year	Yes
B2	A-Ru	20	F	Flatmates in school dorms	Student with a part-time job	Sophomore Year	Yes
B3	Xiao-Gao	20	F	Alone in a studio	Student	Junior Year	Yes
B4	A-Ming	20	M	Alone in a studio	Student	Junior Year	Yes
B5	Xiao-Jie	20	M	4 other flatmates in a flat	Student	Junior Year	Yes
B6	Tommy	21	M	1 other roommates in school dorms	Student	Senior Year	Yes
B7	Eileen	21	F	Family	Student	Senior Year	Yes
B8	Annie	23	F	Alone in a studio	Student	Senior Year	Yes
B9	Wei-Han	24	M	Alone in a studio	Student	Senior Year	Yes
B10	Xiao-Shan	22	F	Family	Student	Senior Year	Yes

Notes: 1. Respondents B1 and B2 work part-time together.

2. Respondents B3, B4, and B5 are classmates.

3. Respondents B7 and B8 are classmates. Respondent B9 is their major source for copying downloaded movie files.

Group C: Viewers from 23 to 39 years old who are employed full-time or part-time and unmarried or married without children

No	Name	Age	Sex	Marital statue	Living with	Occupation	Edu-cation	Film diary
C1	Pearl	23	F	Single	Family	Full-time marketing assistant	B.A.	Yes
C2	Lisa	25	F	Single	Alone in a studio	Full-time researcher	M.S.	Yes
C3	Chi-Ya	30	F	Single	Family	Full-time researcher	M.S.	Yes
C4	Vanesa	26	F	Single	Family	Temporarily Unemployed (Freelancer)	M.A.	Yes
C5	Xiao-Wei	28	F	Single	1 other friend in a flat	Temporarily Unemployed (part-time employee)	B.A.	Yes
C6	Hua-Ying	28	F	Single	1 other friend in a flat	Full-time café manager	B.A.	Yes
C7	Zhi-Cheng	28	M	In a couple	Family	Full-time bank employee	B.A.	Yes
C8	Ya-Li	29	M	Single	Family	Full-time engineer	M.S.	No
C9	Fu-Ping	37	M	In a couple	Family	Full-time engineer	M.S.	No
C10	Li-Ning	29	M	Single		Full-time radio journalist	M.A.	Yes
C11	Mei-Ling	30	F	Single	Alone in a studio	Full-time high school teacher	M.A.	Yes

C12	Eric	31	M	Single	Family	Part-time employee	B.A.	Yes
C13	Shin-Ru	31	F	Single	Family	Small business owner	MBA	Yes
C14	Jeremy	31	M	In a couple	His partner	Full-time designer	HND	Yes
C15	Wei-Kuo	32	M	Single	Alone in a studio	Freelancer	HND	No
C16	Alice	32	F	Single	Family	Full-time sales representative	HND	No
C17	Nicole	32	F	Single	Alone in a studio	Full-time project manager	M.S.	Yes
C18	Chia-An	39	F	Single	Family	Full-time engineer	B.S.	Yes
C19	Chun-Ho	26	M	Married	Family	Full-time engineer	M.S.	No
C20	Sam	33	M	Married	Family	Full-time shop assistant	B.A.	Yes
C21	Wen-Ying	35	F	Married	Family	Full-time shop manager	A-levels	Yes
C22	Feng	36	M	Married	Family	Government officer	M.S.	Yes
C23	Avril	35	F	Married	Family	Full-time marketing representative	MBA	Yes
C24	Kenny	36	M	Married	Family	Full-time engineer	M.S.	Yes
C25	Chi-Fu	36	M	Married	Family	Full-time engineer	B.S.	Yes

- Notes:
1. Respondents C2 and C3 are colleagues.
 2. Respondents C5 and C6 live in the same flat.
 3. Respondents C8, C9, and C19 are colleagues.
 4. Respondents C21 and C22 are married couple.
 5. Respondents C23 and C24 are married couple.
 6. Respondents C3 and C25 are brother and sister.
 7. Respondents C4 was between jobs and temporarily unemployed when she filled out the questionnaire. She was a freelancer when her in-depth interview session was conducting.
 8. Respondents C5 was between jobs and temporarily unemployed when she filled out the questionnaire. She was a part-time employee when her in-depth interview session.

Group D: Viewers from 30 to 49 years old who are married and have children

No	Name	Age	Sex	No. of children	Age of children	Occupation	Edu- cation	Film diary
D1	Cindy	34	F	2	3, 1	Full-time project manager	M.A.	Yes
D2	Fei-Fan	36	M	2	3, 1	Full-time architect	B.S.	Yes
D3	Lily	35	F	2	8, 7	Full-time manager	M.S.	Yes
D4	Jack	39	M	2	8, 7	Full-time engineer	M.S.	Yes
D5	Chun-Yu	45	F	2	14, 12	Unemploye d	B.A.	Yes
D6	Conni e	48	F	2	15, 14	Unemploye d	B.A.	No
D7	Yong-Mao	47	M	2	16, 13	Documentar y director	B.A.	Yes
D8	Tony	42	M	2	28, 26	Full-time teacher	M.Ed.	Yes

- Notes: 1. Respondents D1 and D2 are married couples.
 2. Respondents D3 and D4 are married couples.
 3. Respondent D5 is respondent A2's mother.
 4. Respondent D6 is respondents A3 and A4's mother.

Group E: Viewers over 50 years old

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Marital statue	Living with	Occupation	Edu-cation	Film diary
E1	Shu-Mei	50	F	Single	Her sister's family	Full-time secretary	HND	No
E2	Rita	51	F	Married	Family	Full-time teacher	B.A.	Yes
E3	Yan-Po	55	M	Married	Family	Retired	HND	Yes
E4	A-Ru	55	F	Married	Family	Unemployed	GCSE	Yes
E5	Yi-Rong	58	F	Married	Family	Retired	HND	No
E6	Fei	64	F	Single	Alone in a flat	Part-time teacher	B.A.	Yes
E7	A-Lan	65	F	Widow	Family	Retired	A-levels	Yes

- Notes: 1. Respondents E1 is Respondents C3 and C25's aunt. They live in the same flat.
2. Respondents E2 and D8 are married couples.
3. Respondents E3 and E4 are married couples.
4. Respondent E7 is respondent C18's mother and respondent A1's grandmother. They all live in the same flat.

Phase 1: Taipei Audiences' Film Consumption Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this research on Taipei audiences' activities of film consumption. This questionnaire takes about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. All your information collected in this questionnaire will be analyzed and published anonymously. Furthermore, all your information here will not be leaked to any other people, institutes, or organizations irrelevant to this research. If you still have any other concerns, comments, or questions, please feel free to enquire at any time. Finally, thanks again for your kindly help and participation.

Vinnie Guo-Chiang Yu

(Dept. of Media & Comm., Goldsmiths College, Univ. of London)

1. Information about yourself

Age : _____ Sex : male female

Birthplace : Great Taipei Area non-Great Taipei Area

Current living place : Great Taipei Area non-Great Taipei Area

Education : elementary school junior high school senior high school college university post-graduate

Occupation : full-time employment (please specify)_____ part-time employment (please specify)_____ freelancer student military service unemployed retired other (please specify)_____

Current marital status: married with no children married with children (please specify how many and what age)_____ single in a couple separated/divorced/widowed other (please specify)_____

2. Media or audiovisual equipments owned at home(please circle as many items as you have)

television cable television personal computer DVD burner broadband connection VCR tape player/recorder DVD player recordable DVD player home entertainment system video game console portable media player (IPOD video, PSP, PDA etc.)

3. Which of the following platforms that you have ever visited or used in order to watch films? (please circle as many platforms as necessary)

IMAX cinema first run cinema second run cinema art house cinema film festival DVD/VCD/VCR rental borrowing films from your family/friends/colleagues/classmates cable movie channels internet

downloading MTV cafe free movies playing at public venues such as school, library, park, or community centre other (please specify)_____

4. Which of the following platforms are your currently main viewing platforms of films? (please circle as many platforms as necessary)

IMAX cinema first run cinema second run cinema art house cinema
 film festival DVD/VCD/VCR rental borrowing films from your family/friends/colleagues/classmates cable movie channels internet downloading MTV cafe free movies playing at public venues such as school, library, park, or community centre other (please specify)_____

5. Which of the following media are your currently main channels to get film-related information? (please circle as many channels as necessary)

newspaper magazine book radio television internet your family/friends/colleagues/classmates public transportation cinemas other (please specify)_____

6. What are the main factors in deciding your choice of films to watch? (please circle as many factors as necessary)

movie trailer director (please specify)_____ actor/actress (please specify)_____ films made in some particular periods (please specify)_____ plot production scale genre film origin original novel/animation/video game ticket fares or rental fees quotidian schedule mood recommended by family/friends/colleagues/classmates invited by family/friends/colleagues/classmates media campaign film critics internet discussion hot and hip conversation topic repeated viewing awards and nominations box office record professional requirement other (please specify)_____

7. What are your favorite film genres? (please circle as many genres as necessary)

drama/melodrama love and romances horror or thrillerscience fiction
action and adventure war moviescop or crime moviesmartial art sports gross-out comedycomedy sentimental opuscul family art house films animal moviesmusicals westerns road movies film noir historical classic gay and lesbian erotic animation documentary experimental porno other (please specify)_____

8. **What are your favorite origins of films (please circle as many origins as necessary)**

contemporary American cinema(Hollywood) classic Hollywood cinema
Canadian cinema Australian or New Zealand cinemas European cinema
(please specify)_____ Latin American cinema (please
specify)_____ African cinema (please specify)_____ Taiwanese
cinema classic Taiwanese cinema Hong Kong cinema classic Hong Kong
cinemaChinese cinema Japanese cinemaKorean cinema Thai cinema
other (please specify)_____

9. **What are your favorite movies of all time? (please write down as many as 3 movie titles)**

10. **What are the main functions of film-watching in your everyday life?
(please circle as many functions as necessary)**

entertainment hobby and pastime inspiration offering an opportunity to
escape from the reality relaxation stimulation obtaining new knowledge
adding more experience killing time offering gossip topics professional
requirement fashion and hip nostalgia of the past social event other
(please specify)_____

11. **Do you identify yourself as a film fan or a cinephile?**

definitely yes probably yes neutral probably no definitely no

**If you are interested in participating in the follow-up survey, please leave your
name and contact details below. Thank you again !**

Name : _____ Phone number : _____

Email or MSN : _____

Phase 2: Guidelines for the in-depth interview

1. Information about yourself

- Where did you graduate from, and what is your major?
- Which company or institute do you work for, and what is your current job title?
- Who do you live with right now, and the description of your family?
- What is your average income per month?
- What do you usually for leisure or what is your hobby?

2. Audiovisual facilities in the household

- How many television set are there in your household?
- What kind of channels do you watch most at home?
- What are your favorite TV programs?
- Who gets to decide which channels or programmes to watch at home?
- How many hours do you usually watch television per day?
- Do you know how to use your DVD player or recordable DVD player, and for what reasons do you want to use it?
- Do you play video games very often, and what are your most-played games?
- How many hours do you usually use internet per day, and why do you want to use internet?
- Do you know how to use your DVD burner, and why do you want to use it?
- What kind of portable media players you have, and why you want to use it to watch movies?

3. The employment of different viewing platforms of films

Cinemas including, IMAX, first run multiplex, second run, and art house:

- How often do you go to the cinema?
- Do you have any preferred cinemas, and why?
- What are the factors that could influence your choice of cinema to go to?
- Are there any certain kinds of films that you always want to see at the cinema?
- When do you usually go to the cinema, during the weekends, on weekdays, or only on holidays, and what time (e.g. in the morning, in the afternoon, or in the evening)?
- Do you usually go to the cinema by yourself or with other people?

- Who gets to choose which movies to watch while watching movies with other people?
- What are the differences between watching a film alone and with others in the cinema?
- Have you ever watched the same movie twice in the cinema?
- Do you usually eat snacks while watching a film in the cinema?
- Before or after watching a film in the cinema with other people, do you usually do anything else?
- Could you compare cinemas in Taipei to cinemas in other cities?
- What are your general feelings about watching a film in the cinema?

DVD-renting, DVD-purchasing, and DVD-burning:

- How often do you rent DVDs?
- Why do you want to watch a film on DVD or rent DVDs?
- Where do you usually go for renting DVDs?
- How do you choose which DVD films to rent?
- Have you ever returned your rented DVDs without watching?
- Are there any particular kinds of films that you usually want to watch on DVD instead of going to the cinema or using other viewing platforms?
- Where and when do you usually watch DVD films, and with whom?
- Do you usually dim the indoor lights while watching a film on DVD?
- How do you watch films on DVD (e.g. from the beginning till the end, directly go to your selected scene, etc.)?
- Do you use the fast forward or rewind function while watching DVD films?
- Do you watch trailers, director's comments or other extras included in the DVD?
- Do you buy DVDs for your personal collection, and where?
- What kinds of films do you usually buy for your collection?
- Have you ever copied a DVD film using your DVD burner, and why?
- Do you usually watch your collected films over and over again?
- What are your general feelings about watching a film on DVD?

Cable movie channels:

- How often do you watch a film on cable?
- Why do you usually want to watch a film on cable?
- What are your favorite movie channels, and why?
- Where and when do you usually watch films on cable, and with whom?
- Are there any particular kinds of films that you usually want to watch on cable instead of using other viewing platforms?

- How do you watch films on cable (e.g. from the beginning till the end, only some selected scenes, flip over other channels back and forth, etc.)?
- Have you ever record films from movie channels?
- What are your general feelings about watching a film in the cinema?

Internet downloading:

- How often do you download films on?
- Why do you usually want to download films?
- Which software or websites do you usually use for downloading films or watching streaming film videos?
- When do you usually download films during a day?
- Are there any particular kinds of films that you usually want to download?
- Do you watch
- How do you watch a downloaded film (e.g. from the beginning till the end, only some selected scenes, only the beginning of films to check the image quality, etc.)?
- Do you usually watch a film right after finishing downloading, or save it for later available time?
- Do you usually save or delete a downloaded film file after finishing watching?
- Have you ever watched a downloaded film for the first time, and then watched it again in the cinema or on DVD?
- What are your general feelings about watching a downloaded film and the activity of film-downloading?

Film-sharing:

- Have you ever borrowed a film from other people, and from whom?
- Have you ever shared a film with other people, and with whom?

4. The acquisition of movie information:

- How do you usually obtain movie information?
- What kinds of information do you usually want to know before watching a film (e.g. plot, genre, director, actor/actress, etc.)?
- Which websites or internet discussion boards do you usually use for getting movie information?

5 The preference of films:

- Please explain why those factors that you have chosen from the questionnaire could influence your choice of films to watch?
- Please rank those genres that you have chosen as your preferred genres of films, and explain why?
- Do you have any preferred themes of films, and please explain why?
- What's your general impression of films made from countries or places that you do not particularly prefer?
- Please rank those countries or places that you have chosen as your preferred origins of films, and explain why?
- Have you ever watched any Taiwanese films, which ones?
- Have you ever watched a Taiwanese film in the cinema?
- What is your general impression of Taiwanese cinema?
- Will you be willing to watch any Taiwanese films in the cinema in the future?
- Please explain why you have chosen those films as your favorite films of all time?

6. The differences between watching movies and watching television programmes:

- Do you watch any TV dramas recently, and your preference of TV dramas?
- Please make a comparison between watching films and watching TV dramas.

7. Activities after watching a film:

- Who do you usually discuss with after watching a film?
- Have you ever recommended or stopped someone to watch a film?
- Have you ever posted any critics on internet after watching a film?
- Do you read film critics before or after watching a film?

8. The personal history of film-watching:

- Do you still remember the first movie that you watched when you were a kid?
- Where did you go to the cinema when you were a kid, and with whom?
- What kinds of films did you watch most when you were young?
- When did you start to watch films a lot?
- Have you ever changed your preference of films over these years?

Phase 3: Film consumption diary sample

Recorder: (B4) A-Ming

Date: Oct. 06, 2006

Start time	20:00	22:00
End time	20:10	00:30
Activity conducted	Checking the website of a second run cinema	Watching movies
Medium used	Internet	Cable movie channel: HBO
Venue	My place	My place
Participant	Myself	Myself
Film title	“Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest” and “The Lake House”	“Batman and Robin”
Reasons for conducting This activity	I want to see which movies are showing today at this second run cinema	I have nothing else to do tonight. So I switch to cable to see whether there are movies to watch.
Comments afterwards	I’m so disappointed that the movies I would like to watch were not showing anymore.	The plot is so stereotyped. I still manage to watch the whole movie, though.
Start time	00:40	00:50
End time	00:45	01:20
Activity conducted	Checking the bidding website	Watching movies
Medium used	Internet	ET Movie channel
Venue	My place	My place
Participant	Myself	Myself
Film title	“Silk”	“The Twins Effect 2” (HK)
Reasons for conducting This activity	I want to see how much a poster signed by the cast of this film cost.	Just happen to switch to this channel.
Comments afterwards	I can’t believe that someone has bid 3,500 NTDs for this poster. I can’t afford to win this bid.	I watch it distractedly till the end. However, I still don’t know what this movie is about.

Filmography

Chinese-Language Films

- Banquet, The* (夜宴) (Feng Xiaogang, China, 2006)
- Blue Gate Crossing* (藍色大門) (Yee Chin-Yen, Taiwan/France, 2002)
- Cape No. 7* (海角七號) (Wei Te-Sheng, Taiwan, 2008)
- Catch* (國士無雙) (Chen Yinrong, Taiwan, 2006)
- Cheerful Wind* (風兒踢踏踩) (Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Taiwan, 1981)
- Child of Peach, The* (新桃太郎) (Chen Chun-Liang, Taiwan, 1987)
- Clown, The* (小丑) (Chu Yen-Ping, Taiwan, 1980)
- Comes the Black Dog* (黑狗來了) (Yin Chi, Taiwan, 2003)
- Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (臥虎藏龍) (Ang Lee, 2000, Taiwan/Hong Kong/USA)
- Dances with the Dragon* (與龍共舞) (Wong Jing, Hong Kong, 1991)
- Double Vision* (雙瞳) (Chen Kuo-Fu, Taiwan/Hong Kong, 2002)
- Dragon Inn* (龍門客棧) (King Hu, Taiwan, 1966)
- Dragon Lord* (龍少爺) (Jackie Chan, Hong Kong, 1982)
- Drunken Master* (醉拳) (Yuen Woo-Ping, Hong Kong, 1978)
- Eight Hundred Heroes* (八百壯士) (Ting Shan-Si, Taiwan, 1976)
- Eternal Summer* (盛夏光年) (Leste Chen, Taiwan, 2006)
- Everlasting Glory, The* (英烈千秋) (Ting Shan-Si, Taiwan, 1974)
- Eye, The* (見鬼) (The Pang Brothers, Hong Kong, 2002)
- Fantasies Behind the Pearly Curtain* (一簾幽夢) (Pai Ching-Jui, Taiwan/Hong Kong, 1975)
- Fat Choi Spirit* (嚟咕嚟咕新年財) (Johnny To & Ka-Fai Wai, Hong Kong, 2002)
- Fearless* (霍元甲) (Ronny Yu, China/Hong Kong/USA, 2006)
- Fist of Fury 1991* (新精武門 1991) (Choh Chung-Sing, Hong Kong, 1991)
- Forbidden City Cop* (鹿鼎大帝) (Stephen Chow & Vincent Kok, Hong Kong)
- Formula 17* (十七歲的天空) (Chen Yinrong, Taiwan, 2004)
- Four Loves* (婉君表妹) (Li Hsing, Taiwan, 1965)
- Gift of Life* (生命) (Wu Yi-Feng, Taiwan, 2003)
- Good Morning, Taipei* (早安台北) (Lee Hsing, Taiwan, 1980)
- Green, Green Grass of Home* (在那河畔青草青) (Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Taiwan, 1982)
- Heirloom, The* (宅變) (Leste Chen, Taiwan, 2005)

Heroes of the Eastern Skies (笮橋英烈傳) (Chang Tseng-Tse, Taiwan, 1977)
Infernal Affairs (無間道) (Lau Wei-Keung, Hong Kong, 2002)
King of Gamblers vs. King of Con Artists (賭王鬥千王) (Cheng Gang, Taiwan, 1981)
Kung Fu Dunk (功夫灌籃) (Chu Yen-Ping, Hong Kong/Taiwan, 2008)
Kung Fu Hustle (功夫) (Stephen Chow, China/Hong Kong, 2004)
Lifeline (十萬火急) (Johnny To, Hong Kong, 1996)
Love Eterne, The (梁山伯與祝英台) (Li Han Hsiang, Hong Kong, 1963)
Love Seed, A (一顆紅豆) (Liu Li Li, Taiwan, 1979)
Loveable You (就是溜溜的她) (Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Taiwan, 1980)
Lust, Caution (色戒) (Ang Lee, USA/China/Taiwan/Hong Kong, 2007)
Mr. Vampire (暫時停止呼吸) (Ricky Lau, Hong Kong, 1985)
My Football Summer (奇蹟的夏天) (Chang Rong-Ji and Yang Li-Chou, Taiwan, 2006)
My Whispering Plan (殺人計劃) (Arthur Chu Younging, Taiwan, 2003)
Naughty Boys and Soldiers (狗蛋大兵) (Chu Yin-Ping, Taiwan, 1996)
New Seven Dragon Ball (新七龍珠) (Chen Chun-Liang, Taiwan, 1991)
New Twelve Animal Symbols (新十二生肖) (Chao Zhong-Xing, Taiwan, 1990)
Off to Success (成功嶺上) (Chang Pei-Cheng, Taiwan, 1979)
One-Arm Swordsman, The (獨臂刀) (Zhang Che, Hong Kong, 1967)
Orz Boyz (囧男孩) (Yang Ya-Zhe, Taiwan, 2007)
Perhaps Love (如果愛) (Peter Chen, China/Malaysia/Hong Kong, 2005)
Police Story (警察故事) (Jackie Chan, Hong Kong, 1985)
Project A (A計畫) (Jackie Chan, Hong Kong, 1983)
Rumble in the Bronx (紅番區) (Stanley Tong, 1995, Hong Kong/Canada)
Secret (不能說的秘密) (Jay Chou, Hong Kong/Taiwan, 2007)
Seven Wolves (七匹狼) (Chu Yen-Ping, Taiwan, 1989)
Silk (詭絲) (Su Chao-Bin, Taiwan, 2006)
Sounds of Love and Sorrow (愛戀排灣笛) (Hu Tai-Li, Taiwan, 2000)
Spider Lilies (刺青) (Zero Chou, Taiwan, 2007)
Story of A Small Town (小城故事) (Lee Hsing, Taiwan, 1979)
Three Times (最好的時光) (Hou Hsiao-Hsien, France/Taiwan, 2005)
Warlords, The (投名狀) (Peter Chan, China/Hong Kong, 2007)
Wayward Cloud, The (天邊一朵雲) (Tsai Ming-liang, France/Taiwan, 2004)
Wheels on Meals (also known as *Spanish Connection*, *Spartan X*, *Weapon X*, or *Powerman*) (快餐車) (Sammo Hung Kam-Bo, Hong Kong/Spain, 1984)

Winners and Sinners (五福星) (Sammo Hung Kam-Bo, Hong Kong, 1983)
Young Master, The (師弟出馬) (Jackie Chan, Hong Kong, 1980)

English-Language Films

Back to the Future (回到未來) (Robert Zemeckis, USA, 1985)
Beauty and the Beast (美女與野獸) (Gary Trousdale & Kirk Wise, USA, 1991)
Black Dahlia, The (黑色大理石花懸案) (Brian De Palma, USA/Germany, 2006)
BloodRayne (Uwe Boll, USA/Germany, 2005)
Break-Up, The (同床異夢) (Peyton Reed, USA, 2006)
Bridges of Madison County, The (麥迪遜之橋) (Clint Eastwood, USA, 1995)
Brokeback Mountain (斷背山) (Ang Lee, USA, 2005)
Charlie's Angels (霹靂嬌娃) (McG, USA/Germany, 2000)
Chronicles of Narnia, The: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (納尼亞傳奇) (Andrew Adamson, USA, 2005)
Daredevil (夜摩俠) (Mark Steven Johnson, USA, 2003)
Departed, The (神鬼無間) (Martin Scorsese, USA/Hong Kong, 2006)
Deuce Biglow: Male Gigolo (哈拉猛男秀) (Mike Mitchell, USA, 1999)
Devil Wears Prada, The (穿著Prada的惡魔) (David Frankel, USA, 2006)
E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (外星人) (Steven Spielberg, USA, 1982)
Fantasia (幻想曲) (James Algar et al., USA, 1940)
Firewall (防火牆) (Richard Loncraine, USA/Australia, 2006)
Fistful of Dollars, A (荒野大鏢客) (Sergio Leone, Italy/West Germany/Spain, 1964)
French Lieutenant's Woman, The (法國中尉的女人) (Karel Reisz, UK, 1981)
Fun with Dick and Jane (我愛上流) (Dean Parisot, USA, 2005)
Gone with the Wind (亂世佳人) (Victor Fleming, USA, 1939)
Hatari! (哈泰利) (Howard Hawks, USA, 1962)
Hours, The (時時刻刻) (Stephen Daldry, USA/UK, 2002)
Husband and Wives (賢伉儷) (Woody Allen, USA, 1992)
I, Robot (機械公敵) (Alex Proyas, USA/Germany, 2004)
Ice Age: The Meltdown (冰原歷險記二) (Carlos Saldanha, USA, 2006)
Jarhead (鍋蓋頭) (Sam Mendes, Germany/USA, 2005)
Jaws (大白鯊) (Steven Spielberg, USA, 1975)
Jurassic Park (侏儸紀公園) (Steven Spielberg, USA, 1993)
King Kong (金剛) (Peter Jackson, USA/New Zealand/Germany, 2005)

Lake House, The (跳越時空的情書) (Alejandro Agresti, USA, 2006)

Land of the Dead (活屍禁區) (George A. Romero, Canada/France/USA, 2005)

Legally Blonde (金髮尤物) (Robert Luketic, USA, 2001)

Legend of Zorro, The (蒙面俠蘇洛2: 不朽傳奇) (Martin Campbell, USA, 2005)

Lion King, The (獅子王) (Roger Allers & Rob Minkoff, USA, 1994)

Little Mermaid, The (小美人魚) (Ron Clements & John Musker, USA, 1989)

Little Women (小婦人) (Mervyn LeRoy, USA, 1949)

Lord of the Rings, The: The Fellowship of the King (魔戒首部曲: 魔戒現身) (Peter Jackson, New Zealand/USA, 2001)

Lord of the Rings, The: The Two Towers (魔戒二部曲: 雙城奇謀) (Peter Jackson, New Zealand/USA, 2002)

Lord of the Rings, The: The Return of the King (魔戒三部曲: 王者再臨) (Peter Jackson, New Zealand/USA, 2003)

Memoires of a Geisha (藝妓回憶錄) (Rob Marshall, USA, 2005)

Mighty Heart, A (無畏之心) (Michael Winterbottom, UK/USA, 2007)

Open Season (打獵季節) (Roger Allers, Jill Culton, Anthony Stacchi, USA, 2006)

Out of Africa (遠離非洲) (Sydney Pollack, USA, 1985)

Parent Trap, The (天生一對) (Nancy Meyers, USA, 1998)

Perfume: The Story of a Murderer (香水) (Tom Tykwer, Germany/France/Spain/USA, 2006)

Pink Floyd The Wall (迷牆) (Alan Parker, USA, 1982)

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest (加勒比海盜: 神鬼奇航2) (Gore Verbinski, USA, 2006)

Polar Express, The (北極特快車) (Robert Zemeckis, USA, 2004)

Poseidon (海神號) (Wolfgang Petersen, USA, 2006)

Prestige, The (頂尖對決) (Christopher Nolan, USA/UK, 2006)

Princess Diaries, The (麻雀變公主) (Garry Marshall, USA, 2001)

Red Eye (赤眼玄機) (Wes Craven, USA, 2005)

River Runs through It, A (大河戀) (Robert Redford, USA, 1992)

Robots (機器人歷險記) (Chris Wedge & Carlos Saldanha, USA, 2005)

Roman Holiday (羅馬假期) (William Wyler, USA, 1954)

Silent Hill (沉默之丘) (Christophe Gans, Canada/France, 2006)

Sixth Sense, The (靈異第六感) (M. Night Shyamalan, USA, 1999)

Spider-Man (蜘蛛人) (Sam Raimi, USA, 2002)

Texas Chainsaw Massacre, The: The Beginning (德州電鋸殺人狂: 從頭開始) (Jonathan Libesman, USA, 2006)
The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (玩命關頭3: 東京甩尾) (Justin Lin, USA, 2006)
Titanic (鐵達尼號) (James Cameron, USA, 1997)
To Sir, With Love (吾愛吾師) (James Clavell, UK, 1967)
Waist Deep (Vondie Curtis-Hall, USA, 2006)
World Trade Center (世貿中心) (Oliver Stone, USA, 2006)

Films of other Languages

April Snow (外出) (Jin-ho Hur, Korea, 2005)
Brotherhood (Taegukgi) (太極旗: 生死兄弟) (Kang Je-gyu, South Korea, 2004)
Butterfly, The (Le Papillon, 蝴蝶) (Philippe Muyl, France, 2002)
Children of Heaven (天堂的孩子) (Majid Majidi, Iran, 1997)
Color of Paradise, The (天堂的顏色) (Majid Majidi, Iran, 1999)
Crying Out for Love, in the Center of the World (在世界中心呼喊愛情) (Isao Yukisada, Japan, 2004)
Dark Water (鬼水怪譚) (Hideo Nakada, Japan, 2002)
Death Note (死亡筆記本) (Shusuke Kaneko, Japan, 2006)
Dreams (夢) (Akira Kurosawa, Japan, 1990)
Granny Gabai (佐賀的超級阿嬤) (Hitoshi Kurauchi, Japan, 2006)
Infection (感染) (Masayuki Ochiai, Japan, 2004)
Jewel in the Palace, A (大長今) (Byoung-hyeon, Lee, South Korea, 2003-2004) (TV Series)
Lover's Concerto (向左愛 向右愛) (Lee Han, South Korea, 2002)
Madadayo (一代鮮師) (Akira Hurosawa, Japan, 1993)
March of Penguins, The (La Marche de L'empereur, 企鵝寶貝) (Luc Jacquet, France, 2005)
My Neighbor Totoro (龍貓) (Hayao Miyazaki, Japan, 1988)
One Missed Call (鬼來電) (Takashi Miike, Japan, 2003)
Pulse (Kairo) (迴路) (Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Japan, 2001)
Raining Cats and Frogs (La Prophétie des Grenouilles, 大雨大雨一直下) (Jacques-Remy Girerd, France, 2003)
Rayo De Luz, Un (不如歸) (Luis Lucia, Spain, 1960)
Red Shoes, The (鬼紅鞋) (Kim Yong-jun, Korea, 2004)
Redeye (恐怖夜車) (Kim Dong-bin, Korea, 2005)
Ring (七夜怪談) (Hideo Nakata, Japan, 1998)

Shiri (魚) (Kang Je-gyu, South Korea, 1999)
Shutter (鬼影) (Banjong Pisanthanakun and Parkpoom Wongpoom,
Thailand, 2004)
Tales of Terror (鬼嚇八) (Akio Yoshida and other seven directors, Japan,
2004)
Taxi (終極殺陣) (Gérard Pirès, France, 1998)
Taxi 3 (終極殺陣3) (Gérard Krawczyk, France, 2003)
Three Seasons (戀戀三季) (Tony Bui, Vietnan/USA, 1999)
Touch of Spice, A (香料共和國) (Tassos Boulmetis, Greece/Turkey, 2003)

Chinese Glossary

Cable Channels

Discovery Channel 探索頻道
ETTV Movie Channel 東森電影台
ETTV Foreign Movie Channel 東森洋片台
National Geographic Channel 國家地理頻道
Star Movie Channel 衛視電影台
Star Western Movie Channel 衛視西片台
Videoland Movie Channel 緯來電影台
Videoland Western Movie Channel 緯來育樂台

Cinemas

Ambassador Theatre 國賓戲院
Beidou Theatre 北斗戲院
Cinemark Cinema 喜滿客京華影城
Majestic Cinema 真善美戲院
Miramar Cinema 美麗華影城
SPOT Taipei Film House 台北之家: 光點電影院 (光點台北)
Universal Theater 全球影城
Vie Show Cinema Taipei Xinyi (Formerly known as Warner Village Roadshow Cinema) 台北信義威秀影城 (原華納威秀影城)

Companies and Associations

Asia 1 亞藝影音
BCC 中廣
Blockbuster Taiwan 台灣百事達
Cable Broadband Institute in Taiwan (CBIT) 台灣有線寬頻產業協會
Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMPC) 中央電影事業股份有限公司 (中影)
Central News Agency 中央社
Chinese Taipei Film Archive 國家電影資料館
Chunghwa Telecom 中華電信
CMC Entertainment 中環娛樂

CMC Group 中環集團
CMC Magnetics 中環公司
CMC Movie Corporation 中藝國際影視公司
Deltamac (Taiwan) Co., Ltd. 台灣得利影視股份有限公司
Golden Harvest Ltd. 嘉禾電影公司
Market Intelligence Center, Institute For Information Industry 資訊工業策進
會資訊市場情報中心
Public Television Service (PTS) 公共電視
Shaw Brothers Ltd. 邵氏電影公司
Taiwan Network Information Center (TWNIC) 財團法人台灣網路資訊中心

News & Magazines

iLOOK Movie Magazine iLOOK 電影雜誌
Min Sheng Daily 民生報
Next Magazine Taiwan 台灣壹周刊
World SCREEN 世界電影雜誌

People

Bae, Yong-jun 裴勇俊
Chao Zhong-Xing 趙中興
Chan, Jackie 成龍
Chan, Peter 陳可辛
Chang Pei-Cheng 張佩成
Chang, Rong-Ji 張榮吉
Chang Tseng-Tse 張曾澤
Chen Chun-Liang 陳俊良
Chen Kuo-fu 陳國富
Chen, Leste 陳正道
Chen, Peter 陳可辛
Chen Yinrong 陳映蓉
Cheng Gang 程剛
Choh Chung-Sing 左頌昇
Chou, Jay 周杰倫
Chou, Zero 周美玲
Chow, Stephen 周星馳
Chu, Arthur Younging 瞿友寧

Chu Yen-Ping 朱延平
Feng Xiaogang 馮小剛
Hou Hsiao-hsien 侯孝賢
Hsu Pu-Liao 許不了
Hu, King 胡金銓
Hu Tai-Li 胡台麗
Hung, Sammo Kam-Bo 洪金寶
Hur, Jin-ho 許秦豪
Kaneko, Shusuke 金子修介
Kang, Je-gyu 姜帝圭
Kim Dong-bin 金東斌
Kim Yong-jun 金用均
Kok, Vincent 谷德昭
Kurauchi, Hitoshi 倉內均
Kurosawa, Akira 黑澤明
Kurosawa, Kiyoshi 黑澤清
Lau, Andy 劉德華
Lau, Ricky 劉觀偉
Lau Wei-Keung 劉偉強
Lee, Ang 李安
Lee, Bruce 李小龍
Lee, Byoung-hyeon 李丙勳
Lee Denghui 李登輝
Lee Han 李翰
Li, Han Hsiang 李翰祥
Li, Hsing 李行
Li, Jet 李連杰
Li, Yao-Hua 李耀華
Lin, Justin 林詣彬
Liu Li Li 劉立立
Miike, Takashi 三池崇史
Miyazaki, Hayao 宮崎駿
Nakata, Hideo 中田秀夫
Ochiai, Masayuki 落合正幸
Pai, Jing-Jui 白景瑞
Pang Brothers, The 彭氏兄弟
Qiong Yao 瓊瑤
Su Chao-Bin 蘇照彬

Ting, Shan-Si 丁善璽
To, Johnny 杜琪峰
Tong, Stanley 唐季禮
Tsai Ming-liang 蔡明亮
Wai Ka-Fai 韋家輝
Wang, Chien-Ming 王建民
Wang, Yu (Jimmy Wang Yu) 王羽
Wei Te-Sheng 魏德勝
Wong Jing 王晶
Wu Yi-Feng 吳乙峰
Yam, Simon 任達華
Yang, Edward 楊德昌
Yang, Li-Chou 楊力州
Yang, Ya-Zhe 楊雅喆
Yee Chin-Yen 易智言
Yin, Chi 尹祺
Yoshida, Akio 吉田秋生
Yu, Ronny 于仁泰
Yuen, Woo-Ping 袁和平
Yukisada, Isao 行定勳
Zhang, Che 張徹
Zhong Zhentao (Kenny Bee) 鍾鎮濤 (阿B)

Terms

Akihabara 秋葉原
Austronesian 南島民族
Beidou Town 北斗鎮
Benshengren 本省人
Channel 4 第四台
Chinese-Language Cinema (Huayu dianying or Zhongwen dianying) 華語
電影 中文電影
Chinese-Language Cultural Domain 華語文化圈
Chuanghua County 彰化縣
Communications (MOTC) 交通部電信總局
Council for Hakka Affairs 行政院客家委員會
Criteria Differentiating Domestically Produced Motion Pictures, Domestic

Motion Pictures and Foreign Picture, The 國產電影片本國電影片及外國電
影片之認定基準

Dazhi 大直

Directorate General of Telecommunication (DGT), Ministry of Transportation
and Communications (MOTC) 交通部電信總局

Domestic Film Guidance Fund 國片輔導金

Doraemon 小叮噠

Fujian Province 中國福建省

Golden Horse Awards 金馬獎

Golden Horse International Film Festival 金馬國際影展

GIO (Government Information Office) 行政院新聞局

Greater Taipei area 大台北地區

Guangdong Province 中國廣東省

Guanghua Bazaar 光華商場

Gui (ghost) 鬼

Guopian 國片

Hakka 客家人

Hanliu (Korean wave) 韓流

Healthy Realism 健康寫實主義

Hoklo 河洛人

Hsimenting 西門町

Hsinchu County 新竹縣

Huangmei Opera 黃梅調

Juqing pian (Drama) 劇情片

Keelung City 基隆市

KMT (Kuomintang, The Nationalist Party) 國民黨

Kongbu (horror) 恐怖

Momotaro (The Peach Boy) 桃太郎

MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) system 大眾捷運系統

Nankang District 南港區

People's Republic of China (PRC) 中華人民共和國

Qing Dynasty 清朝

Republic of China (ROC) 中華民國

Rui-an Street 瑞安街

Taichung City 台中市

Taipei City 台北市

Taipei County 台北縣

'Under One China' Policy '一個中國' 政策

Waishengren 外省人
Wenyi pian 文藝片
Wuxia pian 武俠片
Xindian City in Taipei County 台北縣新店市
Xinyi District 信義區
Yuanzhumin 原住民

Websites

@movie (開眼電影網): www.atmovies.com.tw

@Movie BBS (開眼電影網討論區)

CatchPlay: www.catchplay.com.tw

FTN News Online (民視新聞網): news.ftv.com.tw

Liberty Times, The (自由電子報): <http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/index.htm>

MSN Taiwan (MSN 台灣): www.msn.com.tw

National Statistics R.O.C. (Taiwan) (中華民國統計資訊網):
<http://www1.stat.gov.tw/mp.asp?mp=3>

Taiwan Cinema Note (台灣電影筆記): movie.cca.gov.tw

UDN.COM (聯合新聞網): udn.com

Yahoo Taiwan (台灣雅虎奇摩): tw.yahoo.com

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