

The State of the Field in Taiwan Film Studies

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This paper proposes to review the state of the field in Taiwan Film Studies, focusing especially on publications in English. To date the most globalized part of cinema from Taiwan remains the so-called Taiwan New Cinema of the 1980s and 1990s. This is reflected in international scholarship, which has had a tendency to focus on the key figures of the New Cinema movement including Hou Hsiao-hsien, Edward Yang, Ang Lee, and Tsai Ming-liang. Of course, most of these directors have continued to make films long after the “New Cinema” moment passed; therefore, studies on them may be more appropriately classified as auteur studies. Major works in this regard include Yueh-yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors: A Treasure Island* (2005); Bérénice Reynaud, *The City of Sadness* (2008); James Udden, *No Man an Island: The Cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien* (2009); Ruchard Suchenski, *Hou Hsiao-hsien* (2014); John Anderson, *Edward Yang* (2005); Whitney Dilley, *The Cinema of Ang Lee: The Other Side of the Screen* (2007); Hsiao-yen Peng and Whitney Dilley eds., *From Eileen Chang to Ang Lee: Lust/Caution* (2014); and Song Hwee Lim, *Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness* (2014).

Compared to the scholarship on New Cinema and the major auteurs that broke unto the scene in the 1980s, there are relatively few publications in English that offer a long view of the development of Taiwan cinema. Guo-juin Hong’s *Taiwan Cinema: Contested Nation on Screen* (2011), which covers a broad sweep from the Japanese colonial era to the 1980s and 1990s, is a notable exception. Daw-Ming Lee’s *Historical Dictionary of Taiwan Cinema* (2012) offers an invaluable, comprehensive view of all aspects of Taiwan cinema.

A new trend that has appeared in Taiwan film studies is to situate Taiwanese film in comparative or global contexts. For instance, James Tweedie’s *The Age of New Waves: Art Cinema and the Staging of Globalization* (2013) analyzes similarities between Taiwan New Cinema and other New Waves around the world. Also beginning to appear are studies on the developments after New Cinema; for instance, Chris Berry and Feii Lu, eds., *Island on the Edge: Taiwan New Cinema and After* (2005); Darrell William Davis

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and Ru-Shou Chen, eds., *Cinema Taiwan: Politics, Popularity, and State of the Arts* (2007); as well as miscellaneous journal articles and book chapters that discuss recent

films such as *Cape No. 7*; *Seedig Bale*; *Monga*; *Seven Days in Heaven*; and *God Man Dog*. As fiction filmmaking, which had languished in Taiwan from the late 1990s through the early 2000s, is having a comeback, we have reason to believe that scholarship will soon catch up with this revival, and that greater attention will be given to the making and reception of very contemporary films.