


Eng and the Entertainment Film in the People's Republic of China

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**"Eng and the Entertainment Film in the People's Republic of China"**

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**Abstract:** In his article "Eng and the Entertainment Film in the People's Republic of China" Munib Rezaie discusses the rise of film as entertainment in the People's Republic of China with a focus on the accomplishments director Dayyan Eng, known in China as Shixian Wu. Rezaie briefly reviews the changing definitions and views towards film as entertainment in the PRC as well as some relevant changes in regulation and policy within the industry itself that largely stem from the ongoing process of globalization and China's accession to the World Trade Organization. Within this new cinematic landscape, Rezaie argues that Eng should be seen as a major creative force in contemporary Chinese cinema. Eng's unique biography as a "cross-cultural kid" enables him to mobilize multicultural sensibilities in unique and often unprecedented ways. Acknowledging the limits of a transnational approach to such a filmmaker, Rezaie calls for the development of multinational filmmaking in order to address the changing realities that globalization continues to bring.

**Munib REZAIE**

## **Eng and the Entertainment Film in the People's Republic of China**

The film industry in the People's Republic of China (PRC) has a long, rich history that reflect changes in the country itself. One relatively recent change has been a shift from a socialist cinematic model that sees film as an educational and political tool for the masses to a more capitalist model that treats film as part of a commercially viable, profit-driven entertainment industry. These changes have led to both a rise in domestic productions and to a race for the development of successful co-productions between the United States and China as the U.S. seeks to gain access to what is potentially "the world's biggest audience." Amidst this rapidly changing landscape, the filmmaker Dayyan Eng — known in China as Shixian Wu — repeatedly appears at the forefront of these transformations with unique and innovative cinematic accomplishments that have been largely ignored by the international press and scholars alike.

I begin with some contextual history with a dual purpose: 1) to trace the changing definitions and views towards film as entertainment in the PRC, and 2) to track recent changes in regulation and policy in the Chinese film industry that have increasingly emphasized the development of such films. My focus here is on PRC productions that both pass government censorship and receive nationwide distribution, not on the more frequently discussed oppositional cinemas, such as those of directors Yimou Zhang and Zhangke Jia whose films, while widely lauded in international film festivals, are often banned from nation-wide distribution in their native China. Providing examples from his various projects, I argue that Eng should be seen as a major creative force in the Chinese filmmaking scene, providing a multinational approach to filmmaking. Borrowing the term "cross-cultural kid" from sociology, moreover, I propose that Eng, as a "cross-cultural kid" has a major advantage in navigating the complex terrains of China's new globalized cinematic arena. He can easily incorporate Hollywood aesthetics and conventions into domestic productions in innovative ways that go beyond the limits of the term "transnational."

David Pollock and Ruth van Reken define "cross-cultural kid" (CCK) as "a person who is living or has lived in — or meaningfully interacted with — two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during childhood (up to age 18)" (31). The term is a recent expansion of an earlier term, "third culture kid", whose definition is also important for my discussion: "A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of [their] developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background" (13). The scholars who developed the model of the CCK have also identified numerous subcategories, to which the majority Eng can be said, including the following: child of multicultural home, child of multiracial home, educational CCKs, and child of minorities (see Pollock and van Renken for more). Although Eng does not employ this specific terminology, he appears clearly aware of his multicultural upbringing, as evidenced in an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter*: "Since you were born to parents of Chinese, Scottish and Persian heritage, how do you describe who you've become after living in Taiwan, Australia, Canada, Macau, China and the U.S.? Eng: I really don't have a label that fits. For me, it's like that saying, the world is my playground. It kind of feels like that. I thank my parents for showing me the world at such a young age. It gave me the ability to appreciate different cultures and people. You actually end up seeing more of the similarities in people than their differences. I'm American as far as passports go. Taiwan is a childhood memory. I've lived longer than anywhere else in Beijing, so this is home, though I'm not a Chinese citizen. Between seventh and 12th grades I was in four different countries" ("Q&A" <<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/qampa-dayyan-eng-21840>>). With no fitting label to describe his current position, Eng's experience mirrors that of China's own film industry as it enters a largely unknown landscape. In this regard, we can also think of the industry as a cross-cultural third culture kid, albeit a mal-adjusted one.

The metaphor can be further seen in China's dominant economic motto: "Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics." China is struggling to do away with its socialist upbringing in which films were

officially seen as political tools. With an active role in globalization in its adulthood, the industry is now trying to embrace and come to terms with the Hollywood model of seeing film as entertainment.

China's growing economic and political powers have corresponded with a significant increase in academic works focused on Chinese-language cinema. In their introduction to *Art, Politics, and Commerce in Chinese Cinema*, editors Ying Zhu and Stanley Rosen provide an excellent overview of the various approaches taken by recent monographs and the ways in which these conversations can be enhanced. Although works focused solely on developments in the Mainland are continually increasing, "they most often concentrate on certain historical periods, cinematic movements, or specialized issues" (2). Their collection of essays attempts to address the particular lack of academic attention paid to the important intersections between art, politics, and commerce. My article reflects a combination of these two approaches. The biographically unique case of Eng with his comfort in multi-cultural aesthetic norms is indebted to the interconnectedness of art, politics, and commerce in Mainland China. Traditional Chinese culture prioritizes the social (state or the family) over the individual. This influences China's films and is reflected in traditional Chinese film theory wherein the film's narrative is given precedence over individual images (Semsel, Xihe, and Hong xxiii). As such, films have been historically treated and studied like works of literature. The effects can be seen to this day in the renowned Beijing Film Academy, where students learn scriptwriting in the Department of Literature. Along with this clear focus on the narrative level, attitudes towards films have been shaped by Confucian aesthetics that emphasize the moral and educational values that can be gained from the medium (83). These views were more blatantly combined with politics after the establishment of the PRC in 1949 when the government turned film into a tool for political education. In its new role, the medium was burdened with the goal of social advancement and education for the masses ("education through entertainment," as one early slogan suggested), a tradition that did not allow the cinema to be seen strictly as a form of entertainment.

In 1978, under the leadership of Xiaoping Deng (邓小平) a new development program was launched to modernize the Chinese economy. A major component of this program was the "open-door" policy in which the outside world was welcomed into the Chinese economy (Yeh 124). The many socioeconomic reforms of the time "changed [people's] conception of social life and stimulated [their] awareness of consumption" (Yao 86). In addition, "works of art no longer serve[d] only as vehicles for moral principles and dogmatic teachings, but also [brought] pleasure and recreation" (86). This period of depoliticization and nascent consumer culture in the early 1980s brought with it a shift in the way films were viewed, most clearly characterized by the change in official slogans from "film is a tool for politics" to "film is art" (Semsel, Xihe, Hong xxii). Not surprisingly, the 1980s saw a surge of popularity for the entertainment film *sans* a blatant political agenda. With an increased presence in theaters, the entertainment film became the source of serious debates concerning its role in China, with many critics emphasizing opposition to traditional Chinese culture as a negative thing. An example of this disapproval is the argument that the entertainment film encourages the release of individual desires whereas traditional culture dictates its repression at all costs. Unfortunately the entertainment film was abruptly shut down and officially denounced following the traumatic events at Tiananmen in 1989.

It is in the unique context briefly summarized above that we can begin to discuss issues related to the mainstream/commercial/entertainment film in China, the first of which deals with the choice of terminology itself. While the three terms are often used interchangeably in the West to refer to films that embody the Classical Hollywood Cinema model thoroughly elaborated on by scholars like David Bordwell, their Chinese counterparts are often faced with various connotations. To begin with, the "mainstream" in China has a long history of association with state-approved propaganda, often expressed through the "main melody" film. Charged with invigorating a sense of nationalism, these propaganda films differ from earlier Maoist propaganda only in their direct attempts to emulate the commercial mainstream (Berry 181). The term "commercial" places an emphasis on the box-office potential of a film and its ability to make money from target audiences as its primary motivation. However, this term also proves to be problematic since in the still largely planned economy of China, many films are made that can "ignore or go against popular tastes and demands" (Yin and Xiao 44).

Finally, there is the "entertainment" film, a term which I find particularly useful because it acknowledges a shift in how the medium itself is viewed.

No longer strictly a tool for political or educational ends, cinema-going in contemporary — and especially urban — China is more and more a medium that allows people to sit back, relax, and be entertained. This should not be confused with a lack of political or social commentary, as many of these films often intentionally reflect various issues that plague contemporary society. A major difference, however, lies in their ability to attain approval from the censorship board. Although various articles and works employ some variation of these three terms, they frequently share the objective of addressing the gradual move that the Chinese film industry is taking towards being seen as a viable entertainment industry in direct competition with Hollywood. In the next section, I will discuss the various policies and changes in regulations that have taken place since the mid-1990s that are largely responsible for many of these changes.

Eric Smoodin reveals that by 1933, there already existed "anecdotal evidence that the possibility of converting the Chinese into consumers of U.S. products had become something of an interest to the American public" (54). Smoodin goes on to cite two 1930s publications that testify to this interest: *Foreign Investments in China* (1933) and *400 Million Customers* (1937), as well as a lengthy document compiled by the US-American Consulate in Shanghai in 1932 titled "The Motion Picture Industry in China" (55). These efforts came to a halt in 1949 and were not to resurface until Deng Xiaoping's push for economic reform. Yomi Braester provides a frame through which we can approach the entertainment film in China in the last few decades: "To a large extent, the story of mainstream PRC cinema since the mid-1990s is that of adaptation to new rules and practices dictated by its increasing integration with the global film market" (176). China's road to accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been the driving force behind much of these "new rules and practices." The United States, with the persistence of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), has been particularly persistent in establishing the distribution of Hollywood films in China since the beginning of the open-door policy. Although the 1980s proved to be largely ineffective in establishing any major form of international cinematic cooperation, the next decade brought with it an unparalleled wave of negotiations, regulations, and compromises that would open the floodgates for near-Hollywood domination of China's box-office.

In 1994, the Chinese government decided to more directly apply the open-door policy to the realm of film by pledging to import ten foreign films per year. Warner Bros. moved swiftly to take advantage of the occasion, successfully negotiating the Chinese distribution of *The Fugitive* (1993). The film marked the first time since 1949 that China opened its market to Hollywood. Significantly, it was also the first film released on a revenue-sharing basis between China and Hollywood. Although the official rhetoric implied exposure to a wide variety of films from different countries, the reality was a dominance of Hollywood blockbusters, which in 1996 made up the entirety of annually imported films. A similar gap between rhetoric and action can be seen on the U.S. side as well. Ting offers the following eye-opening data: "Among 65 revenue-sharing films imported from 1994 to 2000, 48 (74%) were from the U.S., with the rest from the U.K. and Hong Kong. From 1995 to 2001, a total number of 134 films were imported from the U.S., 61 of which were big revenue-sharing films. Nevertheless, over the same period, no Chinese film was released via U.S. mainstream, commercial cinema chains" (<<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc49.2007/TingWang/>>). The numbers above reveal the general tendency of the U.S. and the MPAA to push for the opening of China's market with little room for reciprocity. Most disturbing of all is former MPAA president Jack Valenti's now infamous diplomacy, filled with verbal embellishments that tout the championing of equal sharing between the countries while fully approving trade sanctions against China for "persuasive" purposes. This apparent lack of cultural empathy and understanding is characteristic of many of the U.S. dealings with China and an issue of international co-productions.

The introduction of foreign films into the market gave way to critical debates on the costs and benefits such a change could entail. One camp felt that the move would encourage further positive changes within the domestic infrastructure that would enable Chinese films to become more competitive in the world market. Others, concerned with the negative effect it might have on an already struggling national cinema, often evoked their concerns through the imagery of a wolf (the

U.S.) ready to attack its weakened prey (China). In addition to fulfilling some of the preliminary rounds of WTO discussions, China's opening up in the mid-90s was meant to more generally boost theatrical attendance. While Hollywood imports did in fact dominate a large percentage of China's box-office revenues, the latter goal was also met, exemplified most clearly by director Xiaogang Feng, China's "box-office-king" who is often given credit for single-handedly keeping Hollywood imports at bay with big-budget, special-effects-heavy domestic productions (see Yin and Xiao 48). In 2001, with the signing of bilateral trade agreements, China was finally welcomed into the WTO in what has been significantly described as "a defining moment in the development and reconfiguration of China's film industry" (Wang, Shujen 65). Among the many changes expected in China's industry, the most significant to my discussions are 1) the doubling of the annual quota of imported films from ten to twenty, with the intention of a further increase in the future, 2) the reformation of the exhibition side of the industry with a focus on updating outdated equipment and building multiplexes, and 3) the invitation to foreign investors and incentivizing international co-productions. These three terms are particularly important in their further proliferation of Hollywood aesthetics into Chinese cinemas. Doubling the quota provides potentially twice as many Hollywood blockbusters for Chinese audiences to consume. The construction of multiplexes will provide more screens on which exhibitors may project mostly Hollywood-produced images. And finally, foreign investors and international co-productions are the smartest ways to tap into the world's biggest (potential) movie-going audience.

While Hollywood tastes achieve varying degrees of success, "cultural and social empathy is crucial to the survival of local films" (Yin and Xiao 48). This is the key ingredient that I believe has been largely missing from the bulk of co-productions thus far. One such example is *21 and Over* (2012), the first film from Relativity Media's widely publicized co-production partnership with China. Meant to be relatable to both Western and Chinese audiences, the film tells the story of youth and alcohol (a traditional Western theme) in the vein of comedies such as *The Hangover* (2009) with the use of some location shooting in China. It seems that the Chinese backdrop provides the extent to which the country is being used in the co-production.

International co-productions are a major concern for the industries of both countries, clearly evidenced by the recent US-China Film Summit held in Los Angeles on 01 November 2011. The event's website provides a telling description of its own purpose: "Join film industry leaders from Hollywood and China including top executives, government officials, producers, professionals and creatives, for an informative afternoon on the latest trends in US-China co-productions and collaborations. The US-China Film Summit highlights the growing entertainment media opportunities between established Hollywood and rapidly-emerging China" (<<http://asiasociety.org/southern-california/events/us-china-film-summit-co-production-and-cooperation>>).

The distinction between "established Hollywood" and "rapidly-emerging China" is an important one. Implicit within such a statement is the acknowledgement that China is rapidly emerging to become established in the same ways that Hollywood has been for a long time. More specifically, and crucial to my argument, China is rapidly emerging as a bona-fide and commercially viable entertainment industry. While Hollywood has treated cinema as an entertainment medium from its earliest days, such a view is comparatively new in China and has brought its own unique set of challenges.

The two biggest obstacles China faces in the development of such an entertainment industry are a general lack of industrial experience and a history of evaluating films in terms of their political value. The spheres of marketing, distribution, and exhibition in particular have a long way to go to reach Hollywood's proficient and largely standardized structures. Many of the anxieties felt in China today reflect those shared by filmmakers and executives in the 1980s amid the entertainment film's brief rise and fall I discuss above. Speaking on the subject of entertainment films in 1986, but just as readily applicable today, Jiming Shen notes that "Many filmmakers are still greatly confused about the peculiarities and artistic principles of entertainment movies and have no clear creative understanding of them, because in the past we dared not discuss them openly for fear of being accused of ignoring politics" (98). To this day, productions which maintain the party line champion communist ideals under the sleek guise of commercial blockbuster fare. Filmmakers repeatedly bring to the screen stories set in ancient China with period dramas, *kung fu* pictures, or Hollywood clones. In this new and largely



unknown environment with its penchant for repetitive and often personally unrelatable narratives, it is no wonder that Eng made waves with the release of his 2005 feature film *Waiting Alone* advertised on its English-language website with the historically-aware tagline "No kung fu! No concubines! No Peasants! This is the real urban China you 'foreigners' don't see!" ("Colordance" <<http://www.colordance.com/waiting.html>>).

Eng has accomplished a series of impressive "firsts" for the Chinese film industry in a relatively short time. His 2001 short film *Bus 44* was the first Chinese-language short to be honored with awards and distinctions at some of the most prestigious international film festivals including Venice, Sundance, and Cannes. His first feature, *Waiting Alone*, was the first film to be nominated at the Golden Rooster awards directed by a non-Chinese director and virtually the first aimed directly at the young and growing consumer population. In 2007, he wrote and directed the first-ever original opening short film for the Golden Rooster awards. Titled *A Special Golden Rooster Mission*, the film follows a similar format popular to many U.S. media awards in which major films are spoofed by the host and other celebrities. His latest feature, *Inseparable* (2011), is the first PRC film starring a major Hollywood star (Academy Award winner Kevin Spacey) to be fully funded by domestic capital. Innovations have also been recognized within the films themselves, with media outlets often praising the newness of his direction. *Variety* describes the film's combination of humor and heart as invading "the romantic comedy turf of Woody Allen and Nora Ephron" (Edwards 46), which is a rare comparison for a Chinese film. Such reviews emphasize the importance of Eng's innovations to a domestic audience. It is easy to fall into the trap of dismissing his accomplishments if we feel that others have achieved similar things in the West. I believe China is a distinctive sphere that needs to be treated on its own terms. What these reviews often fail to investigate, however, are the possible reasons behind such a consistently fresh approach to Chinese film. Part of the answer to this question lies in Eng's unique biography as a "cross-cultural kid" as well as his ability to successfully appeal to a growing young and urban consumer population in China.

The Chinese film industry is attempting to build its relationship to other cinematic cultures and has found someone "with a similar background" in Eng who is already established and is well-adjusted to the various cultures in question. His particular situation allows him several advantages over much of the local talent working in China's entertainment film industry today. First, Eng does not bear the "typical crushing burden of 'responsibility for the Nation' [that China's] artists have borne since at least the Qin dynasty" (Kraicer <<http://cinema-scope.com/wordpress/web-archive-2/issue-47/features-let-the-readings-fly-jiang-wen-reaches-for-the-mainstream/>>). Unlike many Chinese directors, Eng's project is not the reinterpretation or reconfiguration of Chinese history. By extension, then, Eng is also free of the burden of symbolism that has often gone hand in hand with the responsibility to the Nation. Where "boy loves girl" might symbolize "man loves China" in films with political aspirations, Eng's films allow "boy loves girl" to really mean "boy loves girl." The recent push for a gradual divorce between film and politics has left many native filmmakers stuck and unsure of how to proceed, with their confusion often leaving both their film's narrative and its ideologies vague and inconclusive. One does not have to go very far back into Chinese history for an example of government retaliation to perceived threats in the anti-rightist campaign of the late 1950s that may contribute to a continued sense of fear today. Eng, however, appears comfortable in leaving politics to the side, a decision in line with the behaviors of not only the characters he depicts on screen, but of the movie-going demographic: the urban, under-35 consumer. Eng's second major advantage lies in his ability to directly relate to the movie-going crowd. *Waiting Alone* tells the story of a group of young friends whose occupational aspirations are indicative of Eng's target audience. Among them: struggling writer, design student, TV sound guy, local musician, struggling actress, corporate English instructor, and pirated-DVD hawker. They have expendable income to spend on movies, video games, and drinks, and perhaps more importantly, speak in the appropriate and ever-growing slang vocabulary of contemporary urban youth. In short, they are enjoying the comforts that modernization and globalization have brought to many of China's major cities.

A 2007 survey revealed that moviegoers under the age of 35 accounted for more than 80% of all cinema attendees ("Survey" <<http://ent.sina.com.cn/m/c/2007-07-03/10011622808.shtml>>). The same survey also reveals Eng to be one of two filmmakers young movie-goers want to see more from.

This is the same population who would have been in its adolescence when Hollywood blockbusters first emerged on Chinese cinema screens. Fully at home on the Internet, this audience has more direct access to cultures (and movies) than would have been impossible for the previous generation to experience. *Waiting Alone* is significant for being one of the first domestic productions to address and be directly relatable to the growing segment of the population that actually goes to the movies seeking entertainment.

Another way in which Eng stands out from other filmmakers in China is in the mobilization of Hollywood genre conventions. Exposure to the Classical Hollywood Cinema model from an early age has undoubtedly given Eng a certain amount of familiarity and comfort in using these forms, which native Chinese filmmakers do not share. This is particularly evident in the treatment of corruption in *Inseparable*. In one of the film's subplots, the protagonists Li (Daniel Wu) and Chuck (Kevin Spacey) turn to vigilantism to expose a factory's willing production of tainted pre-natal vitamins by confronting the joint-venture company's foreign CEO (Peter Stormare). Under socialist or neorealist aesthetics, stories are not necessarily about one character, but about ways in which the experiences of the one character we see represents the experiences of the larger society. Under such a model, corruption is shown to be pervasive in all levels of social life, making its cinematic representation particularly threatening under strict government rule. In utilizing genre conventions of the exposed corrupt businessman, however, *Inseparable* brings such representations down to the personal level, making it a struggle between the good guys (Li and Chuck) and the bad guy (the company's CEO).

Such an approach might be criticized for being less critical or non-threatening for putting the blame on a single person as opposed to an entire nation's infrastructure, but such criticism is unfounded. Critical and oppositional films with neorealist aesthetics, Chinese filmmakers or other independent and underground films are often denied censorship approval if they seek it out at all, making them virtually inaccessible to a domestic audience. At the same time, these films gain fame and recognition at international film festivals. *Inseparable* is a much more effective and useful means of criticism precisely because of its role as an entertainment film that has been approved by government censors and which will be seen by a large domestic population with whom such images will resonate much more powerfully.

Given the many complex ways in which Eng is situated within the Chinese film industry, I suggest that he goes beyond the limits of the "transnational" and is characterized instead by a multinational approach to filmmaking. The term "transnational" has been closely linked to the study of Chinese cinema since the publication of Sheldon Lu's 1997 anthology *Transnational Chinese Cinemas*. As Chris Berry has noted, the term itself has been used in Chinese cinema studies "not only widely but also loosely and sometimes in ways that are contradictory" (9). Berry goes on to trace the various uses of the term and the many debates and criticisms around it, summarizing three main patterns of usage as identified by Will Higbee and Song Wee Lim: "The first rejects 'national cinema' as a theoretical model that cannot accommodate the movement of films across borders, reception of foreign films and so forth. The second focuses on cultural formations that sustain cinemas that exceed the borders of individual nation-states or operate at a more local level within them... The third is a focus on diasporic, exilic, and other cinemas that challenge ideas of stable national cultural identity" (9). Later in the article, Berry cites Yingjin Zhang and suggests that "The term 'transnational' remains unsettled primarily because of multiple interpretations of the national in transnationalism. What is emphasized in the term 'transnational'? If it is the national, then what does the 'national' encompass – national culture, language, economy, politics, ethnicity, religion, and/or regionalism? If the emphasis falls on the prefix 'trans' (i.e., on cinema's ability to cross and bring together, if not transcend, different nations, cultures, and languages)" (11).

The excerpts above clarify the many ways in which the term "transnational" is loaded with meanings as well as limited by the prefix on which Zhang specifically elaborates. Eng can be categorized under all of the various meanings above and still leave us with questions about their limitations. His films cross national borders and are focused on cultural formations while the director himself is not only part of the Chinese diaspora, but a unique exilic space challenges ideas of national cultural identity. Significantly, the crossing and bridging of cultures is not accomplished by thinking about each as being mutually exclusive; rather, Eng brings about a more cosmopolitan approach that



celebrates the universality of human experience with his ability to simultaneously access multiple cultural experiences, sensibilities, and conventions and switch between them with relative ease. Such an approach applies not only to the narrative content and themes of a film, but to the more formal qualities of lighting, cinematography, and editing as well. In Eng's case, his films' unique formal qualities are additionally informed by the international nature of his creative team, which has included cinematographers from Australia (Toby Oliver) and France (Thierry Arbogast) and several US-American composers. It is a model that will inevitably grow in our increasingly globalized world and one that holds the key to the development of the Chinese film industry as a commercially viable and internationally competitive entertainment industry.

As China adopts Hollywood elements into its industrial framework, changes will be needed within the narratives and aesthetics of the films themselves. Eng is one filmmaker whose unique biography as a "third cultural kid" gives him an advantage over other local filmmakers in his ability to balance Chinese and Hollywood elements within his films in a way that matches the industry's and audiences' own transformations and needs. Eng's unique approach can be described by the term multinational since his competence and apparent comfort in simultaneously mobilizing multiple cultural experiences and sensibilities go beyond the limits of what "transnational" has to offer. Eng has established himself as an insider, often representing the Chinese film industry in various panels and events both inside and outside the country, including the recent US-China Film Summit mentioned above. His multinational approach to filmmaking is consistently praised by the domestic and international media as something refreshingly original in Chinese cinema. His innovations have inspired trends throughout the industry, from filmmakers who pay more serious attention to the constantly growing movie-going crowd to Zhang's casting of Christian Bale in *The Flowers of War* and Xiaogang Feng's upcoming production starring Adrien Brody and Tim Robbins (on Zhang, see, e.g., Zhu <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss2/X>>). Eng was lucky to be accepted into the Chinese film industry at a specific time when industry changes and audience needs coincided with the particular approach he had to offer. As developments in technologies and policies increase China's exposure to both foreign films and foreign audiences, more local filmmakers will have the chance to develop their own transnational approaches, although it remains to be seen if its effects will be seen on as deep a level as Eng, whose multinationalism is clearly internalized in his very identity. In this period of globalization and change emphasizing entertainment films "with Chinese characteristics," China will need more culturally sensitive multinational filmmaking especially attuned to its consumer audience in order to become a legitimate competitor to Hollywood's cultural and industrial domination.

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