

Chinese Movies in the 2005 Cannes Film Festival

Szu-Yin Yeh
University of Shih Hsin Taipei, Taiwan

Three Chinese movies, from Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Taiwan, were invited to attend the Cannes Film Festival Competition in 2005. The movies, which included *Election*, *Shanghai Dream*, and *Three Times*, represented different film cultures from the three different political-economic regions. During the Cannes Film Festival, the three regions made their best efforts to attract the international media to report on their movies. Each film also had a formal press conference in the Palais des Festival. In addition, different events, such as *Hong Kong Night*, *China Movies 100th Anniversary*, and *Taiwan Night* parties, were held on the Cannes beach for the access of international media. Based on the author's observation of the festival, this paper analyzes the events from the perspectives of the festival itself, movie participants, and the role media and reporters play in the competition process. The interaction or mutual effects of these perspectives on each other is also discussed.

The Cannes Film Festival is one of the three most important film festivals in the world. Participants at the 58th annual Cannes Film Festival in 2005 represented countries from around the globe including the U.S.A., the U.K., China, Taiwan, Iran, and Israel. In recent years, Chinese movies have excelled and won many awards at the festival. In 2005, three Chinese movies from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong participated in the Cannes Film Festival competition simultaneously.

To stand out from the Hollywood movies, the Cannes Film Festival strongly indicates that it is alternative. Even though there are business-marketing strategies involved, the Cannes Film Festival accepted more independent movies. Traditionally, each country would only present one film to attend the competition. Every government would do its best to support its film in order to promote its movies or culture. To get more attention, countries designed many strategies to attract media reporters and buyers. The strategies used often make a difference in which films win.

Peggy Chiao (2000), a famous film reviewer in Taiwan, said that there are great benefits associated with attending film festivals. Many years ago, when she attended the first Taiwan retrospective show in Rome, she invited the famous actress Rene Liu to go with her. Since Rene Liu has played in many dramas and is widely known, she could obtain several media reports. There were many symposiums discussing Taiwan culture, politics, and social issues that helped generate effective publicity. Thus, presenting a high-quality movie at a film festival is a powerful promotion tool for the film's country of production. Behind the scenes, however, we could say that there is an inseparable link between cultural industries and the political-economic factor.

Due to recent *Sinomania*, Chinese movies have drawn more attention at the Cannes Film Festival in recent years, and their reputation and awards are on the rise, particularly films from China. However, since the Cannes Film Festival is held by French and European cinema management and producers, it is necessary for films from non-Western countries to have good propaganda and use news strategies to win more awards and gain media exposure. First of all,

they have to catch the unique features of the Cannes Film Festival. Therefore, this research intends to examine the characteristics of the movie and culture industries in the context of the Cannes Film Festival and the strategies the three Chinese movie producers used to promote their films. How did the films advertise themselves? What did they do during the period of the Cannes Film Festival? Which was most attractive? Who gained the most reports and media focus?

Since research about the events and media activities of the Cannes Film Festival was not available in Taiwan, this paper would like to initiate research in this area. It's quite unusual that three Chinese movies – *Three Times* directed by Hou Hsiao-Hsien from Taiwan, *Election* directed by Johnnie To from Hong Kong, and *Shanghai Dreams* directed by Wang Xiaoshuai from China – were simultaneously chosen as the feature films in competition in 2005. It is a great opportunity to examine the different marketing approaches for the different Chinese movies and how they were worked out.

Furthermore, this study intends to explore the reasons why some events and news media were preferred over the others by both media and film producers.

Theories

Film and Culture Industries

Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) criticized the public culture and the culture industry that market art which has been mixed with commerce and has been subsumed to the market exchange system in such a way that its cultural value has been changed. The Frankfurt School argued that an important characteristic of the culture industry is its standardization. The public culture is a so-called phenomenon of *standardization*. There are standards and procedures to follow in the culture industry. Copying discs, movies, and photos in large scale, and the repeated publicity of successful works causes persistency in the popularity of songs and drama series.

Janet Harbord (2002) considers Film Festivals mixed spaces crossed by commercial interest, specializing in film knowledge and tourist trajectories. She describes film cultures as discursive formations, produced in opposition to each other, bearing testimony to the historical legacies that strike across the concepts of art, culture, and technology. Harbord argues that the formations of film cultures are not coherent, rounded hypotheses advanced by a prepositional logic, but discourses that come into being in transactions and exchanges, redefining limits and boundaries as they shift around one another.

If exhibition circuits provide a complex interplay of these discourses, then the festival, a marketplace and designated space of transaction, brings together the determinates of film culture under the duress of space-time compression or the media event. Within the boundaries of the festival, at least four discourses operate in the field. First, discourses of independent filmmakers and producers circulate in catalogues, press releases, interviews and other texts. These statements draw on concepts and unformulated assumptions from the avant-garde, opposing not one another, but variously the values of bourgeois culture, nationalism, and commercialization (Harbord, 2002).

Second, discourses of media representation, particularly the press, provide a commentary on events, controversies, spectacles, and *the new*. These are the texts of local, national, and

international press and magazine publications. Third, a business discourse of purchase, price, and copyright, existing in the texts of legal transactions and contracts and in verbal discussion, is reported partially in the trades press. Traces of commercial discourse also appear in logos evidencing sponsorship. Fourth, the discourse of tourism and the service industry, local press releases, brochures, advertisements and guide books provide an intertexture between the filmic event and the location. Harbord considers that all of these constitute what we experience, whether in proximity or at a distance, as the media event of film festivals and what I will call the discursive formation constituting the film festival.

Orientalism and International Film Festival

Edward W. Said (1978) supposed that the Orient is not just a geographic area, and it is not just there, as *Western* is not just here. He argued that ideas, cultures, and histories could not be explained without society's power. Accurately, their power outlines should be brought into the research. The relationship between Orient and Western is primarily the powerful, controlled, and variable hegemony.

Said indicates three important points of view:

1. Under the Western-centered way of thinking, the Orient is always the competition of the West. It was often represented in the different and as *others* images. The West created a different system of self / others to help enhance its self-approval then shape itself into modernity with the Orient as the contrast.
2. The discourse tactics of a system such as vocabularies, academics, imagination, religious doctrines, and even colonialism filter into the Orient or even produce the Orient through system disciplines, politics, society, military, science, and ideological government.
3. *Orientalism* can be regarded as a bloc system for the West to control and place the Orient. However, there must be some mutually beneficial relationship so that the unequal relationship can exist between the ruler and the ruled.

Said considered that some cultural forms must surpass others, because some ideas are more powerful than others. This kind of cultural style is what Gramsci called *hegemony*, an important concept applied toward understanding Western industrial society.

In other words, when two different cultures meet, one of them must be more powerful than the other. They know each other by the interpretation of the historical and social culture, and what people know is always manufactured by the interpretation. For example, the success of *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* is due to the satisfaction of the Western imagination about the Orient. Combining the Orient connotation with Western technology, *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* has been criticized for satisfying Western representatives' *China Picture*, which in return largely increases the readable and acceptable degree of Western society.

Therefore, when we talk about Chinese movies in Western film festivals, it is necessary to understand how Western society interprets the Orient and Asian cinemas, especially in terms of their favorite perspectives of the reports and interpretations from the global media.

This research tries to analyze Western perspectives and ways of reporting the cultural features of the Western film festival, and it also examines how these factors influence Chinese film marketing tactics.

David Bordwell (2000) considered that the film festivals have boomed ever since the 1980s. There are 400 film festivals all over the world that form an independent network outside of the main commerce cinema. Film festivals have become an important part of *art marketing*, which merges dual faces of art and commerce. In the West, art marketing has been professional, particularly in the USA and Hollywood, where commerce marketing strategies have been used to solve marketing problems for a long time.

Yin Hong (2000) pointed out that since the 1980s, "Going into the World" has been a way to strive for entering cinema globalization. Many Chinese cinema workers adopt various ways to get into film festivals. Chinese movies depend on communication from international film festivals to be accepted and approved. Some Chinese movies follow the global standard to make up and re-create an ideology.

If we regard the competition and system in the international film festival with the view of *orientalism*, it could be viewed as the Western *bloc system* for absorbing, arranging and controlling the Orient. It could also be regarded as the tactic used by Chinese movies to get out into the world. Ching-huei Hu (2003) argued that the unfair power relationship behind the international film festival destines Chinese movies to challenge globalization.

Film Marketing and Event Marketing

Orientation and marketing tactics decide whether a film promotion will succeed or not. Film marketing could be viewed from two aspects. First, cinema producers use many tactics to attract an audience. Second, movies are integrated with other industries to achieve box-office sales and to also enhance the sales of related commodities. The marketing and communication strategy could be further divided into advertising, public relations, activities, and events.

Public relations and public reports are also important. In order to get public reports, a cinema company will pay more money to support information and keep good relations. They usually hold events to win press spotlights, such as press conferences, celebrity appearances, film premieres, and so on. For events to be successful, it is important that they are held at the right time, with the right people, and with prepared, complete data. Celebrity appearances and issues can always get more media explosion.

The term *pseudo-event* was coined by Daniel Boorstin (1973) to interpret political or election activities. He opines that a *pseudo-event* carries the following characteristics:

1. A *pseudo-event* does not happen spontaneously. It is planned, devised or incited.
2. It is planted for the immediate purpose of being reported or reproduced. Therefore, its occurrence is for the convenience of the media. The success of a *pseudo-event* is measured by how widely it is being reported. Its time relations are mainly fictitious. The question of its newsworthiness is more important than whether it is real.
3. The underlying reality of a *pseudo-event* is ambiguous. The reason why it creates concern also lies in its ambiguity. Dealing with real events, we take note of what happened, their effects, and consequences. The occurrence of *pseudo-events*, however,

will entice us to become interested in what might have been the motive and its underlying implication.

4. A *pseudo-event* is intended to be a self-fulfilling promise. It is the result of an illusion (Boorstin, 1973).

In public relations and marketing terms, a pseudo-event is referred to as event marketing. Event marketing means the making of an event and uses the event to promote and enhance the level of popularity. Event marketing basically refers to the integration of a corporation's resources through creative and planned activities or events, to make it a cause of concern for the public, and thereby attract media reports and consumers participation; it goes on to promote the image of a corporation and the sales of its product. In the event of film exhibitions, it tries to make its activities and news eventful so that it can become the focus of the news and attract the interest of voters.

The creation of news differs from the fabrication of news. It means to skillfully arrange and package an ordinary event into a newsworthy event. A newsworthy event draws the interest and attention of the media, and entices the media to report on the event; therefore the intention of creating news is to use the power of the media to promote a person, a concept, or an event. A *pseudo-event* therefore draws more attention than a spontaneous event (Zhao-rong, 1998).

Methods

Participant Observation

In the period of the 2005 Cannes Film Festival, May 12 to May 21, I went to the Film Festival with newspaper reporters from Taiwan. There were ten days for me to attend some Chinese movie promotions and event activities. In the case of the Cannes Film Festival entrance limits, the main activities that I attended were unofficial parties, private reports, and red carpet events at the premiere of the film. These were usually not held at the official Palais des Festival but at the Cannes beach or outside of the Palais des Festival.

The propaganda activities and events of the three Chinese movies began after they arrived at Cannes. Hong Kong's *Election* was on May 13; China's *Shanghai Dreams* on May 14; and Taiwan's *Three Times* on May 18. These activities were all continued until May 20, 2005.

Content Analysis

Due to the limit of time and space, I could not attend every activity and press conference, so I also examined the Cannes Film Festival newspaper reports to get more movie-event information, especially the official events like press conferences and film premieres at the Palais des Festival. I got more detailed data about the three Chinese movies' marketing and events to examine the cultural communication of the Chinese movies. This study examines two major parts of newspaper report contents from three newspapers in Taiwan, and the official diary newspaper, *Screen*, of the Cannes Film Festival.

Sampling Units

1. Taiwan newspapers: China Times, Min Sheng Times, the Liberty Times – since these three newspapers have sent both script and photo reporters to the Cannes Film Festival, they support the first-hand information. This study includes all the news reports about the Cannes Film Festival collected from these three newspapers. The days sampled are May 12 to May 22, 2005.
2. Screen: In order to get more detailed newspaper content, this study also examined the report texts in the official Screen to understand the Film Festival's opinion of the Chinese films. The days sampled are May 11 to May 20, 2005.

In-depth Interview

This study aims to study the marketing and events, and the film cultures of the three Chinese movies by interviewing two Taiwanese reporters, one who has reported on the Cannes Film Festival four times and one who has covered another large international Film Festival. The study interviewed these two persons together and apart; it took 15 to 20 minutes during the Cannes Film Festival.

The interview questions are separated into three subjects:

1. What events do the three Chinese movies have in the Cannes Film Festival? Official or unofficial?
2. Which Chinese movies attract more global and Chinese media to focus on and to participate?
3. Why and how do you choose to report the Chinese movies? From which perspective and what do you focus on?

Data Research and Interpretation

Marketing and Promotional Events for the Three Movies

Johnnie To's *Election*, Wang Xiaoshuai's *Shanghai Dream*, and Hou Hsiao Hsien's *Three Times*, which represented Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Taiwan, respectively, had their official and unofficial promotional activities. This research is an analysis of the activities' models, contents, times, places, attendance, and the invited guests.

Official Activities. The official activities of *Election* included an official press conference, the premiere, and a red carpet event. The official press conference was held at the Palais des Festival at 10:00 a.m. Attendants included directors and the many main actors. The majority of media representatives present were Chinese. The premiere and red carpet events were held inside and outside the cinema at the exhibition hall at 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Participating media representatives and fans were few compared to those at events for movies of Western production. Fans wishing to come near the stars were blocked by security guards. They were also allocated fewer ideal seats.

As reported in *Min Sheng Times* (2005, May), on the promotional activities:

The official premiere for *Election* was held last night. The Audience stood and applauded for ten minutes. Black filled the red carpet. The only variety was a minty green sexy gown on actress Qi Qi, who created the design on her own.

Reported by *China Times* (2005, May):

The scene of a car race with Simon Yam Tat-Wah, Tony Leung Ka-Fei, and Louis Koo's cool facial expressions featured in *Election* were outstanding. The group finally came to Cannes in sunglasses. With the cool facial expressions and dark complexions, they looked like the real mafia in action.

There was also a press conference, a premiere, and a red carpet event for Mainland China's *Shanghai Dream*. The premiere and red carpet event were held inside and outside the small cinema at 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. This caused objection from the representatives from Mainland China.

Reports by *Min Sheng Times* and *China Times* (2005, May):

Conflict broke out during the trial show when Mainland China's *Shanghai Dream* was shown. The small cinema assigned by the organizer as the trial show could not accommodate the number of media representatives. It was a weird arrangement, as the trial show was held at a small cinema with limited seats instead of at a larger one. The time for the trial show also clashed with another movie, *Broken Flowers*. The time for the red carpet event was also at a weird time – 4:00 p.m. (*Min Sheng Times*, 2005, May).

The Premiere for *Shanghai Dream* by a director from Mainland China, Wang Xiaoshuai, was held at Cannes. The nominated movie was shown at a small cinema, which could not accommodate the number of media representatives. Conflict broke out outside the cinema. Media representatives from Mainland China showed objections. Foreign media representatives were displeased. They stayed outside the cinema for half an hour, refusing to leave! (*China Times*, 2005, May).

Official activity for Taiwan's *Three Times* included an official press conference, a premiere, and a red carpet event. The official press conference site was at the Palais des Festival. The premiere and red carpet events were held inside and outside the cinema at 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. As Hou Hsiao Hsien has gained recognition over the past several years at the Cannes Film Festival, he managed to attract the attendance of numerous Chinese and foreign media representatives. The majority of turn-ups were Chinese media representatives.

A report by *Min Sheng Times* (2005, May):

Hou Hsiao Hsien's *Three Times* was the repertoire. The director held his wife's hand, Hsu Chi was in a low-cut lace Prada gown, and Chang Chen was in a black suit without a tie, as they walked down the red carpet accompanied by music. Hou Hsiao Hsien thanked the audience twice in French. Chinese media representatives

shouted Hsu Chi's name. Chang Chen used English to answer interviewers' questions, displaying his charisma and calmness.

Unofficial Activities. Unofficial activities for the three Chinese movies were mainly beach parties. Times, places, participating stars, and media were different than at the other events. This reflects the emphasis and expectations of media at the parties. The participating stars and the parties also differed in style. The focus of Western and Eastern media was different.

There were two official activities for *Election*. One was Hong Kong Night at the hotel at 8:00 p.m. and focused on the movie director without the attendance of the actors. Many movie dealers and media representatives were invited. Taiwanese media did not get the invitation. Another activity was a celebration banquet held at the Hilton Hotel after its premiere at about 10:00 p.m. The banquet was attended by the director and the actors. Invited guests were mainly movie producers and sales representatives. Media were not welcome; the directors and actors accepted brief interviews, though.

There were two unofficial promotional events for mainland China's *Shanghai Dream*. It had the highest attendance of media representatives and stars (both Chinese and foreign stars). The Mainland Night was held at the Hilton Hotel at 8:00 p.m. It was the largest event held among the three Chinese movies. Fabulous stars such as Ziyi Zhang, Jackie Chan, and Kim Hee Sun were the focus of the media, with the nominated movie *Shanghai Dream* left in desolation. Chinese Movies 100 Years Night was held the same night. Famous director John Woo's attendance became the focus of media coverage.

Reported by *China Times* (2005, May):

Ziyi Zhang in her blue Armani gown attended the Canne's China Night on the evening of the 18th and had finally soothed the anger of mainland China media, which called her a betrayer. Her appearance was short, however. China Night was launched on the 18th, finally. Just as it was beginning to get crowded, somebody shouted, "Ziyi Zhang is here!" and behold, hundreds of media representatives crowded in, causing havoc and confusion. VIP such as Jackie Chan and John Woo were deserted, and the organizer had to assign a fierce dog to guard the beach. So cruel!

Another event for *Shanghai Dream* was a celebration banquet, which was held at a small restaurant outside the Grand Hotel. It was at about 10:00 p.m. and was held after its premiere and was attended by the director and actors. The media representatives in attendance were mainly of mainland and Chinese media, followed by movie dealers. Compared to China Night, the event was on a smaller scale with fewer media in attendance.

The unofficial activities of Taiwan's *Three Times* were the last events held. The director and stars' appearances were the targets of the media. The party for the stars was held at 9:00 p.m. at the Grand Hotel. It was the furthest from the exhibition hall and the smallest in scale. Invited media representatives were relatively few. Director John Woo and Japanese director Tanadobu Asano attracted focus from Western and Chinese media when they arrived. One of Jackie Chan's statements during the China Night, however, had provoked reactions from the

Taiwanese government. This consequently caused the Chinese movie stars and mainland media to avoid the function.

Reported by *Min Sheng Times* (2005, May):

Taiwan Night had a grand opening in Cannes. Jackie Chan's remark carried an aftermath. John Woo, Hou Hsiao Hsien, and Yang Dechang provided feedback on the matter respectively. The best film winner of the previous year's Golden Horse Award, director Lu Chuan, was the only attendant from the Mainland China movie industry. He kept a low profile, though.

There was havoc when Su Qi arrived at Cannes as the main actress of the contesting movie *Three Times*. Media representatives rushed for interviews. Chang Chen and the Japanese director, Tandobu Asano, talked about their good old days. Hou Hsiao Hsien brought his wife, John Woo and his wife came to support Taiwan movie, Yang Dechang and Peng Kali came to congratulate, Michelle Yeo and her car racer boy friend attended all three functions to show support for the Chinese movies. (Min Sheng Times, 2005, May)

Coverage on the Three Movies by the Big Screen

This study is an account of analysis on the Cannes Film Festival's official daily publication Screen, and on how the three Chinese movies, namely *Three Times*, *Shanghai Dream*, and *Election* were being reported, in terms of the frequency of report, its pages, its content, size of the news article, etc.

According to the findings, there was more emphasis put on stories and issues from *Shanghai Dream*, with the main actress' clean and pure face appearing frequently in cinematic photos. There were two reports from Screen on the movie: on page 14 of the ninth day and on page 8 in the weekly review; both occupied one half of a page. The first was an introduction to the story with a cinematic photo featuring the main actress Gao Yuanyuan; the second one was published in the Focus section, in a story with two cinematic photos featuring Gao Yuanyuan.

Simon Yam Tat-Wah, who made frequent visits to Cannes for various movies' promotional activities, had his photo used as the main choice to represent *Election*. The bulletin reported briefly on the red carpet event for *Election* too. There were two reports on *Election* published by Screen. The first was a report on Yam on the red carpet, which was published on the second page of the fifth day issue. The report occupied one tenth of a page. The second report was about the story in the movie, which was on page 18 of the fifth day issue as well. This article occupied one half of a page, with a cinematic photo featuring Yam.

Less attention seemed to be placed on *Three Times* comparatively, probably due to the fact that the director and the actors were the last to arrive at Cannes. Trade exhibition had almost come to an end by then, and the time for the announcement of the competition results was near. The report therefore focused on the director. This reflects the director's reputable style. The movie's concept was introduced directly by the director. Comparatively, the actors and actresses in *Three Times* did not get their share of attention. According to the findings,

there was only one report on the movie, and it was on the sixth page of the ninth day issue. The article occupied one sixth of a page, containing Hou Hsiao Hsien's personal interpretation and introduction to the movie, with a photo of Hou.

Summary

The Ever-Presence of Orientalism and Cultural Domination

According to this study, the promotional activities for the three Chinese movies were rather similar. There were official activities such as official press conferences, premieres, and red carpet events. Times and places arranged for the movies were different, though. Slots for the premiere and red carpet events from Mainland China's *Shanghai Dream* were set at an inconvenient time in comparison to those for the other two Chinese movies. The red carpet event for Hollywood's commercial blockbuster *Star Wars III* was allocated the premium time of a weekend evening.

Shanghai Dream was treated unfairly when sites were allocated for activities. The mainland media commented that this was 'discrimination.' Contestants and movie contents from the Orient were often viewed from the cultural spectacles of Western domination, particularly in the commercial interest of Hollywood.

The movies *Three Times* and *Election* also had their premieres and red carpet events at non-premium time slots in spite of their stars' popularity. The innermost ring for 'star watchers' was opened only to Westerners. No one resembling Asian descent was allowed to enter even during the red carpet events for Chinese movies. This created an implication of Western domination for the whole festival.

Many Chinese media reporters faced dilemmas with the spots allocated by the organizing host for them to take photos and conduct interviews. With such spots given and being surrounded by reporters from Western media, they had almost no way to stage good photo-shoots or to come close enough to interview the stars. It was only during red carpet events for Chinese movie stars and only when the Western media showed no interest in the event that they had the chance to come close to the stars and move to better locations for taking photos.

"Touch of Chinese" was the theme when parties were held for the Chinese movies. Chinese cuisine was always present. China Night was held at the biggest activity spot at the centre of Cannes Beach; there was an abundance of food served by Western waitresses dressed in cheongsam, and the performance stage was red. All these touches were for the satisfaction of the imagination of Westerners about China and the Orient.

Emphasis on the Significance of Stars and Directors in the Marketing Approach

Be it official or unofficial, the attendance of stars and their significance often determined the popularity of activities and media exposure. A directors' fame and his or her records for media exposure rates, in addition to his or her record nominations, often served as the index of interviews and exposure rates.

With his record of 6 nominations and speculations about his possibility of winning, Hou Hsiao Hsien seemed to have caught more limelight from international media compared to his

two counterpart directors of Chinese movies. His *Three Times* gained the best attendance in the premiere.

In contrast, *Shanghai Dream* from Mainland China, directed by Wang Xiaoshuai, which seemed to receive less attention, finally excelled as an award winner. It is believed that Wang Xiaoshuai's popularity point will excel to a greater level in the future.

Johnnie To's *Election* received polarized comments but nevertheless gained attention as a result of his accumulated fame. All of the actors walking on the red carpet were smartly dressed in black in an effort to reflect the image of true gangsters. This created a topic for news and conversation.

The stars' popularity carried more weight in determining the popularity of the activities in unofficial functions than the official ones. Ziyi Zhang, as an international star, had become the focus of media attention, overshadowing the other stars and reputable directors. Even her guard-dog had the opportunity of having its photograph shown in all the major newspapers.

Hsu Chi was the focus of the news when a party was held for the Taiwanese movies. Her make-up helped fill the content of media reports. Some reporters even requested her to take off her vest in order to show her breast line in photos. The significance of actors in the movie played an important role in determining the success of its activities and its rate of exposure.

The focus of the official media, Screen, on Chinese movies focused on the styles of the movies and on introducing reputable directors and actors. The size of advertisement templates was also undeniably important for enhancing the movies' exposure rates and media attention. The cost of advertising and exposure rates was apparently a big issue at the festival.

The Movie Industry's Inseparable Link with the Sociopolitical Structure

In unofficial events, the holding of parties and the attendance of popular VIP reflected the inseparable link between the movie industry and its sociopolitical structure. This was especially true in the context of a party held for Taiwan, which attracted the fewest stars and media attention from Mainland China and Hong Kong as an aftermath of the Jackie Chan phenomenon and the political sensitivities over the cross strait issue.

Taiwan's movie industry seemed overshadowed by China's open-door policy and funding. Mainland fever had attracted the attention of media representatives and Hollywood movie dealers. Mainland China is also far richer in its resources for the movie industry. To hold on to its excellence, the Taiwanese movie had to depend heavily on the joint effort of its country and social resources.

The Hong Kong party showed its commercial orientation by inviting many movie dealers. Many Hong Kong directors equipped with scripts and concepts were there to look out for funding and distributors. This stands to show that distributors and funding play important parts in developing the movie industry. The feasibility of a movie production and its success is inseparable from its commercial feasibility. The fact is, it is always easier for a saleable movie to obtain funding and marketing efforts from its dealers. To produce a movie that is of quality and marketability, the sociopolitical factor is something that should never be overlooked.

The Cross Cultural Theme as the Best Means to Provoke Resonance

According to this study, Mainland China's *Shanghai Dream* won the jury's hearts by its touching story and 'power.' Hou Hsiao Hsien's *Three Times* was considered artistically excellent but insufficient in its impact. Johnnie To lost marks due to his illustration of gangster-culture, which was relatively incomprehensible from the Western point-of-view.

To gain resonance with an audience of a vast variety of cultural backgrounds, a movie's content and theme must have depth and be of common human concern. Marketing efforts may influence a movie's ticket sales and its popularity, but the key to determining the success of a movie is in its content and intrinsic value.

Touching and impacting movie content with humanity in display easily gains resonance with an audience and the recognition of distributors. Let a movie be a movie. Marketing efforts may increase the exposure rate of a movie and thereby enhance ticket sales, but a movie's intrinsic value is irreplaceable.

Conclusion

As a grand international event, the Cannes Film Festival can be described as the world's movie fair. It is a window to movies around the world and a platform whereby media and people from the movie industry, despite their different cultural and political backgrounds, get together. It allows more directors and stars to have greater rates of exposure, and in particular, non-Hollywood movies can gain exposure. It also provides a means of reaching out for directors whose work touches on prohibited issues in their own countries. It is an opening to more recognition and support.

However, research done on the three Chinese movies revealed that even though the Cannes Film Festival has helped to enhance the success of non-Hollywood movies, there is cultural domination in this Western-organized grand event. From the selection of nominated movies to the ways activities are arranged, Western culture seems to be dominant. This stands to say, the Cannes Film Festival, which claims that it is different than Hollywood's commercialized film fair, and a cross-cultural event, has not successfully freed itself from the influence of Hollywood's industrial culture.

The promotional activities of the three Chinese movies were similar to the marketing model of Hollywood's commercialized movies. The holding of events such as red carpets and parties gained the favor of the media. The appearance of stars and issues that arise often add bonus to the effect. Be it for mainstream movies or otherwise, marketing and stars, news and issues have always been the influencing factors that shape movie arenas. Movies are no longer movies. Issues need to be created to attract media attention, as this will push exposure rates to a greater height and thereby attract audiences and push ticket sales.

Although its extent and focus may vary, there is a cultural model within which the movie industry operates, be it in Hollywood or at the Cannes Film Festival. To excel in the international film market, emphasis must be placed on each movie as an industry and its promotional activities, which require much planning. With this, a film is able to draw recognition from audiences and the media.

Limitation on Research and Recommendation

This research was held based on observations and many short, in-depth interviews during the Cannes Film Festival. More data were also collected from Taiwanese press after the event. Failure to obtain a press pass from the organizer due to the researcher's identity as a non-reporter posed limitations on the research work. This is due to the fact that entrance was not allowed for the researcher in many official functions. The researcher had to depend on press releases and information obtained from the reporters who carried out the interviews first hand.

Apart from that, due to the limitations of time and budget, this research had to base itself only on the 2005 Cannes Film Festival. There was no way to conduct a fully comparative study on the festival over a period of years. This may lead to a lack of completeness and a lack of analytical review on the historical account. Time is needed to build trust and recognition from interviewees. Therefore, there are not many in-depth interviews done in this research. It is hoped that this will be corrected through future research.

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