

Recent World Film

December 5, 2005

- Wong Kar-wai, *In the Mood For Love* (Hong Kong, 2000)
- Recent Chinese film: China, Hong Kong, Taiwan
- Recent Japanese film
- Film in Iran, post-revolution
- South Korea, Thailand
- India: Bollywood

Films of Wong Kar-wai

- Early films: nostalgia and genre evocation
 - *As Tears Go By* (1988)
 - *Days of Being Wild* (1991)
- Genre experiment: *Ashes of Time* (1994)
- Reinventing filmmaking
 - *Chungking Express* (1994)
 - *Fallen Angels* (1995)
- *Happy Together* (1997)
- *In the Mood For Love* (2000)
- *2046* (2004)

In the Mood For Love

1: First Impressions

- Nostalgia (set in 1960s)
- Improvisation (shot over 15 months, with continual changes, reshoots, etc)
- Almost no plot: what, if anything, happens?
- Emphasis on mood, and on the characters and their emotions
- Everything is conveyed indirectly (this is both the manner of the main characters, and the style of the film as a whole)
- Suggestions of melodrama -- but without the drama

In the Mood For Love

2: Cinematic Style

- Mise en scene:
 - Dense and realistic (recreation of period milieu)
 - Poetic and symbolic (the red hallway, for instance)
 - Emphasis on beauty of particular objects
- Cinematography:
 - Mostly static camera
 - Unusual framings
- Editing: what to leave out; straight cuts, elision of time between scenes
- Soundtrack: Argentine tangos, Spanish ballads sung by Nat King Cole; period music, melancholy

In the Mood For Love

3: Moods and Themes

- Frustration, delay, indirection
- Regrets and missed opportunities
- We never see the faces of the adulterous spouses
- How do Li-Zhen (Maggie Cheung) and Chow (Tony Leung) convey their sense of being betrayed? or their growing affection for one another?
 - Body language; small, ambiguous gestures
 - They never speak of any of this directly
- Is their relationship ever consummated?
- A sense of the passage of time: scenes after 1962
- Final sequence in Angkor Wat (Cambodia)

New Chinese Cinema

- Hong Kong
 - Martial arts (Jackie Chan, etc)
 - Spectacle/adventure (Tsui Hark, Ching Siu-tung)
 - Violent action (John Woo)
 - The Second Wave (Stanley Kwan, Wong Kar-wai)
 - Recent directors (Johnnie To, Stephen Chow)
- Taiwan
 - Hou Hsiao-hsien
 - Edward Yang
 - Tsai Ming-liang
- (Mainland) China
 - Fifth Generation (Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige, Tian Zhuangzhuang)
 - Sixth Generation (Jia Zhangke, Wang Xiaoshuai)
- Going International (Ang Lee, John Woo)

Film in Iran, post-1979

- Islamic Revolution of 1979
- Abbas Kiarostami (*Taste of Cherry*, 1997)
 - Minimalism
 - Neorealist influence (use of non-actors -- sometimes playing themselves; real situations; real locations)
 - Self-reflexive
- Mohsen Makhmalbaf
- Samira Makhmalbaf