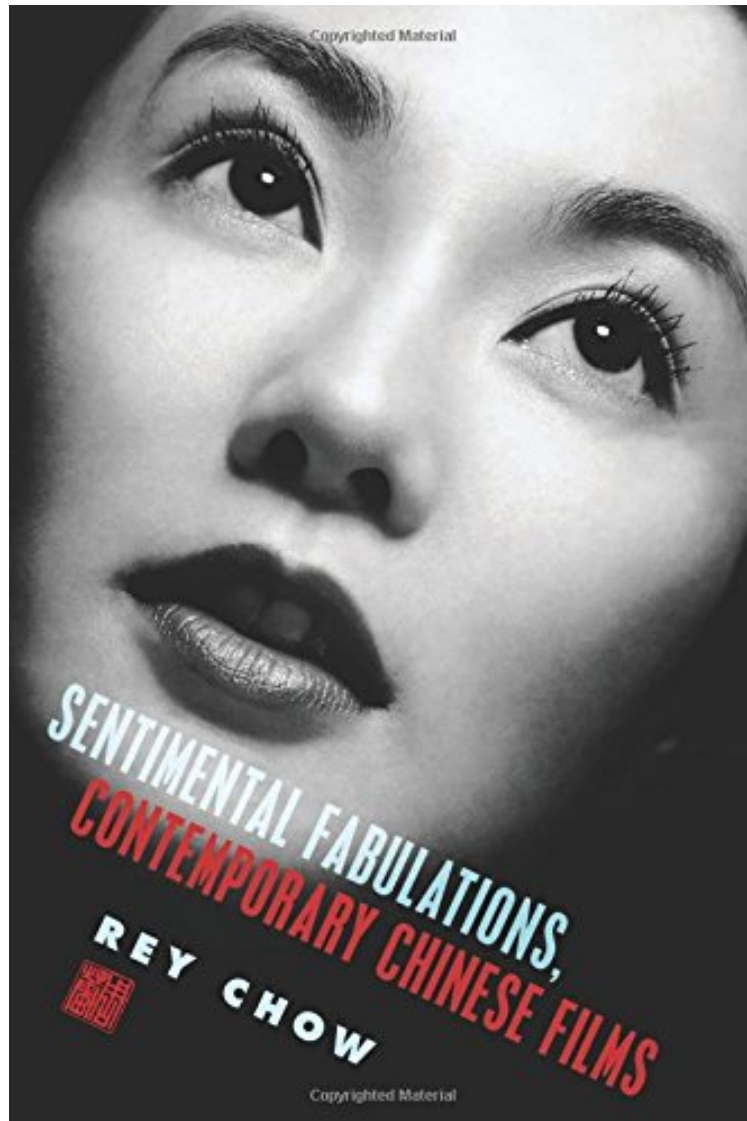


[E-BOOK] Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility (Film and Culture Series)

## Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility (Film and Culture Series)

Rey Chow

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**Rey Chow : Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility (Film and Culture Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility (Film and Culture Series):

1 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Collection letterBy WeiweiHi' Stuff'We need send our books as new year gifts.So far , we just get 2 books.( one hardcover and one paperback).The total is 23 books. (10 Hardcover and 13 Paperback)When can I get others? I need to send them before Dec 31.Thanks a lot.Vivi12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Sentimentalism as the Great Chinese ThemeBy Etienne RPOrdinary viewers like myself like to see Chinese movies because they constitute a window into the realities and dreams of contemporary China. In other words, "the movie is about them". Academic types take a more reflexive attitude and view them as contributions to the genre of Chinese cinema, often in conjunction with identity politics and the problematic of becoming visible. "The movie is about me". Rey Chow, a Humanities Professor at Brown University, takes her distances with the two attitudes. In her film commentary, she wants to move beyond film criticism as information retrieval and historical reconstruction, and avoid a canonization of film periods as traditions and film directors as individual authors. First, she refuses to see movies as documentaries highlighting recent history and political developments. For instance, she rejects the temptation to view all films directed around 1997 as metaphors of Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty, or the common analysis of director Zhang Yimou's return to a realist cinematic style as a way to get acceptance and endorsement by political authorities. Second, she has little interest for the geographical and chronological compartmentalization that forms the hallmark of film studies as an academic discipline. Her studies mix movies from Beijing, Taipei, Hong Kong, and Hollywood, and give equal consideration to iconoclastic avant-garde works and to mainstream blockbusters. As she notes, "consciousness raising, contemporary Chinese cinema suggests, does not have to take the route of the avant-garde; conversely, aesthetic and theoretical avant-gardism, so valued in certain academic sectors for purposes of intellectual renewal and regeneration, does not necessarily lead to a progressive or democratic politics." The common element she sees in the cinema emanating from Greater China is the persistence of a predominant affective mode, an ideology of warm feelings that insists on the values of moderation, of the homely and of filial piety. These movies stage romances, domesticity, and a longing for happiness that find their ways in the most diverse situations. As she writes in the introduction, her goal is not to demystify the sentimental or to denounce its ideological assumptions, but "to come to terms with older-or increasingly estranged-forms of interpellations such as self-restraint, frugality, filial piety, compliance with collective obligations, inconspicuous consumption, modesty about exhibiting and thrusting oneself (including one's body parts and sexual interests) forward as a cause in public, and so forth." Paradoxically, these social norms that eschew visibility have become more and more visible at the global level. The films are grouped in three parts, each highlighting a particular articulation of the sentimental: (1) films in which the past, in the form of a time, place, or relationship, is consciously or imaginatively invoked and idealized; (2) films in which the experiences of migrancy, so often aggravated by economic hardships and ethnic discrimination, are staged against demands of the traditional kinship family with its inordinate emphasis on genealogical continuity, financial stability, filial loyalty, and the subordination of women; (3) films in which disenfranchised populations-migrant workers, impoverished schoolchildren, and those who are handicapped, unemployed, sexually deviant, and lonesome-are explored in such manners as to make way for unconventional affective connections, which emerge, at certain junctures, simultaneously as innovative possibilities. Rey Chow's essays usually exhibit the same structure. They typically begin with the presentation of a theoretical text raising abstract issues: Gilles Deleuze's concept of visibility as the structuration of the knowable; Sigmund Freud's neurosis as the compulsive repetition of a primal scene or trauma; Jacques Lacan's conceptual breakthrough introducing the possibility of thinking about structure in terms of otherness; Karl Marx's critique of reified commodification and subsequent analyses of the fetishism of commodities; Michel Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis and his theorization of sexuality as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power; and so on. She then explores the tensions between these theoretical perspectives and the narrative or aesthetic of one particular movie. The result is sometimes hard to grasp, and comes with a heavy dose of political correctness, but her discussion of contemporary Chinese films gives depth and meaning to the genre. There are films that I will view again with a completely different angle, others that I haven't seen yet and that I would like to discover based on the book's guidance, and still others, provocative tracts made to disturb or unsettle audiences, that I certainly do not want to see. 9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Plot synopses, in-depth analysis, and thoroughly extensive notes characterize this thoughtful critical analysis. By Midwest Book Review Humanities professor Rey Chow presents *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films*, a thoughtful discussion of what nine contemporary Chinese directors and their cinematic accomplishments have to say about the sentimental side of the human experience. The Chinese directors studied are Chen Kaige, Wong Kar-wai, Zhang Yimou, Ann Hui, Peter Chan, Wayne Wang, Ang Lee, Li Yang, and Tsai Ming-liang; their works touch upon subjects ranging from nostalgia and everyday life, to the feminine, biopolitics, and migration, to homosexuality, kinship, and incest. A handful of black-and-white photographs illustrate this thoughtful critique of films that can be termed "sentimental fabulations", or screen representations of culture possessing irreducible aesthetic, conceptual and speculative logics unique to themselves. Plot synopses, in-depth analysis, and thoroughly extensive notes characterize this thoughtful critical analysis.

What is the sentimental? How can we understand it by way of the visual and narrative modes of signification specific

to cinema and through the manners of social interaction and collective imagining specific to a particular culture in transition? What can the sentimental tell us about the precarious foundations of human coexistence in this age of globalization? Rey Chow explores these questions through nine contemporary Chinese directors (Chen Kaige, Wong Kar-wai, Zhang Yimou, Ann Hui, Peter Chan, Wayne Wang, Ang Lee, Li Yang, and Tsai Ming-liang) whose accomplishments have become historic events in world cinema. Approaching their works from multiple perspectives, including the question of origins, nostalgia, the everyday, feminine "psychic interiority," commodification, biopolitics, migration, education, homosexuality, kinship, and incest, and concluding with an account of the Chinese films' epistemic affinity with the Hollywood blockbuster *Brokeback Mountain*, Chow proposes that the sentimental is a discursive constellation traversing affect, time, identity, and social mores, a constellation whose contours tends to morph under different historical circumstances and in different genres and media. In contemporary Chinese films, she argues, the sentimental consistently takes the form not of revolution but of compromise, not of radical departure but of moderation, endurance, and accommodation. By naming these films sentimental fabulations—screen artifacts of cultural becoming with irreducible aesthetic, conceptual, and speculative logics of their own—Chow presents Chinese cinema first and foremost as an invitation to the pleasures and challenges of critical thinking.

a thought-inspiring work of scholarship (*Journal of Film and Video*) [Chow] captivates us with her challenging and refreshing arguments. Highly recommended. (*Library Journal*) A thoughtful discussion of nine contemporary Chinese directors and their cinematic accomplishments. (James A. Cox *The Midwest Book*) Through Chow's perspective, the sentimental thus becomes a productive and promising concept for understanding national cinema. (Kristi McKim *Film Quarterly*) Chow's scholarship is consistently superior in its provocative arguments for humanistic concerns and its impressive coverage of secondary sources. (Howard Y. F. Choy, Wittenberg University *The China Journal*) *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films* is a thought-inspiring work of scholarship. (Jie Li *Journal of Film and Video*) A brilliant new book... Essential for all literary, cinema, and cultural studies scholars. (E. Ann Kaplan, Director of the Humanities Institute at Stony Brook) About the Author Rey Chow is Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities at Brown University where she holds appointments in comparative literature, English, and modern culture and media. The books she has authored since 1991 include *Woman and Chinese Modernity*, *Writing Diaspora*, *Primitive Passions*, *Ethics After Idealism*, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and *The Age of the World Target*. Rey Chow is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities in the Department of Comparative Literature at Brown University. She is the author of *Woman and Chinese Modernity* (Minnesota, 1991), *Writing Diaspora* (Indiana, 1993), *Primitive Passions* (Columbia, 1995), *Ethics After Idealism* (Indiana, 1998), and *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (CUP, 2002).