

Summary

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



The article by zhang xudong (nd) d “ Poetics of vanishing- The Films of Jia Zhangke” specifically focuses on how the Chinese cinema has entered the global culture market in the late 1980s with directors such as Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige collecting international awards and critical acclaim for films such as Red Sorghum and The King of Children (both 1987). This type of film later became known as the Fifth Generation and the challenge encountered by these film producers is that they were operating under a repressive government. Anything that was deemed subversive was suppressed by state censorship. The government advocated socialist ideologies but which however could not be marketed on the global market since these did not appeal to the post modern types of films. It is for this reason that the Fifth Generation films took a radical approach in their development and could be viewed as rebellious. Though they were banned on the domestic market, they received significant appreciation on the global market.

The fifth generation films specifically moved from a usual Chinese Kung fu movie towards depicting a disintegrating socialist background. This is illustrated in the film tilted (Platform 2000) which shows the successful troupe of cultural workers from Fenyang to the countryside. The other issue is that Jia’s films are primarily concerned with portraying a sociological perspective with regard to the social problems caused by the Chinese development. For instance, the films focused on issues such as destruction of the environment, neighborhood s as well as the destruction of families as some of the problems caused by contemporary Chinese development. Jia also incorporated pop music in his films as a form of entertainment given

that his childhood was characterised by complete lack of entertainment. The arrival of Japanese pop music and Hollywood films had a liberating effect since these revolutionized the Chinese film. The other issue that characterized Jia's films is that he was concerned about portraying reality through the camera.

The sixth generation on the other hand not only rejected the metaphysical image of China but reflected a polarized society. However, the sixth generation film is of the view that a paradigm transformation about the way the camera portrays reality should be confronted and all the contradictions should be captured. For instance, *xiancheng* is a true reflection of socialist industrialization failure. This has in fact led to cultural poverty as depicted in Jia's films. The other interesting aspect portrayed by Jia's films is that they portray multiple realities. For example, brutal battles of cultural transformation are fought in China and this often happens silently and out of sight.

This has helped towards the achievement of Jia's poetics of vanishing. Jia focuses on a national scale portraying a wider political significance. The locus of Jia's film is to portray how social transformations are taking place in China contrary to the widely acclaimed socialist perspective. This is portrayed through the movement of migrant laborers to unspecified destinations in search for work and livelihood. Socialism forms the political ideology in China but a closer look at the situation obtaining on the ground shows that this is not real. The current developments in this giant nation have in fact impacted on the lives of the people in different ways.

References

Zhang Xudong. (nd). P O E T I C S O F V A N I S H I N G

The Films of Jia Zhangke