

Eat Drink Man Woman, dir. Ang Lee 饮食男女，李安

- Taiwanese and Hong Kong cinemas can be appreciated as a stage devoted to the formation of cultural identity both inside and outside Mainland China. Also known as Sinophone cinemas, such film productions lend themselves to the studies of Chinese diaspora experiences such as represented in *Comrades*, *Almost A Love Story* by Peter Chan and *Chinese Box* by Wayne Wang that we have studied. The viewer notices the linguistic diversity (local dialects, English, Spanish, etc.) as well as a cultural pluralism not usually found in national cinemas.
- Central to Taiwanese identities is perhaps an ambivalence that we have seen masterfully displayed in Chan and Wang's films, so much so that the term "Chineseness" is not necessarily meaningful unless a problem to be confronted and interrogated. For this reason, what we need to keep in mind is a critical perspective on identity itself, and the issues of transnationalism and diaspora.
- Ang Lee was born and raised in Taiwan. He studied at the Film School of New York University. He also directed such English language films as *Broke Back Mountain*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Ride with the Devil*, etc. that were made for Hollywood audiences. His directorial career and artistic achievements in transnationalism develop the issue of Taiwanese cultural identity. The story of Zhu family offers a visual narrative to account for the changes in which cultural identity proliferates to become fluid and hybrid.
- Confucians constructed the mosaic of personhood or selfhood through elaborate cultural rituals regarding food and sex. These rituals as cultural constructs collapse when family members are no longer willing or able to observe them. The traditional family becomes malfunctioning when individuals seem unable to maintain the balance between self-enjoyments and family obligations. Their choices in sexual partner, personal intimacy, location of residence, career goals, and long-term lifestyle, no longer revolve around the traditional family. Values are being reprioritized to honor free-will over collective solidarity.
- Here are the signs of a new normal where everyone identifies with the greatest common denominator for Taiwan as a modern democratic society rooted in its own history and traditions. The ubiquity of this bifurcating issue, strangely, unifies rather than demoralizes the Taiwanese as one people who are defined by their unique history, former colony of Japan, Guoming Dang occupation, rapid democratization and global commerce.
- It is these experiences unique to the Island of Formosa that go to make every character, bound by a common language and past experiences while also lured by opportunities available in a free global economy of which Taiwan has become an integral part.
- The last scene in which Old Zhu and Jia Qian are reconnected as father and daughter serves to synthesize many centrifugal forces. The final scene shows that the father becomes rejuvenated after he ends his life as a widower and single parent. His second marriage to a divorcee with a young daughter who calls him "Grandpa" opens a new chapter for Old Zhu. Change not only brings an end to things or institutions we have cherished but also opens new opportunities to individuals and nations willing to accept social progress.