Desiring Feminism in Chinese Documentary

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Abstract

This article analyses a series of 'Desiring China: Sexuality and Female Subjectivity' screening and discussion of Chinese independent documentary films at the University of Hong Kong in 2016. It explores a feminist positionality in Chinese independent documentary film to deal with privacy, gender, violence, and trauma, including: 1) the filmmaker's position on the ethics of care and (intimate) solidarity with protagonists; 2) the protagonist's position of confession and appeal in reclaiming autonomy from gender based violence and discrimination; 3) the filmmaker's and the protagonist's different positions on reducing documentary's negative impact on protagonist's personal life through controlling distribution; 4) the evolving positions of protagonist and filmmaker on self-transformation and re-opening for screening; 5) the activist position of representation in politics and filmmaking's position of representation in arts; and 6) tensions between theory and practice that require scholars, filmmakers, and activists to situate and contextualise ethics for discussion and practice.

This article argues for the need to adopt a feminist ethics of care when producing, exhibiting, and critiquing documentaries about women and social margins in contemporary China. It promotes equal power relationships among documentary participants, and innovations of cinematic language, to deal with ethical dilemmas and the potential limitations of filmmaking and of exhibiting Chinese independent documentary films.

'Desiring China' poster (designer: Wang Wo 王我), which was designed based on feminist Ye Haiyan's (叶海燕) nude performance photo of advocating for women and children's rights

1. ‘Desiring China: sexuality and female subjectivity’

I curated with Sik Ying Ho (何式凝) ‘Desiring China: Sexuality and Female Subjectivity’, a series of screenings and discussions of Chinese independent documentary films at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), on Saturdays between 15 October and 19 November 2016.[1] This series was inspired by two books, *Desiring China* (Rofel 2007), and *Sex and Desire in Hong Kong* (Ho and Tsang 2012), to discuss sexuality, gender, and the representation of female subjectivity in Chinese independent documentary films. In the book *Desiring China*, detailing the neoliberal logic of governance dominated by the market economy through a Foucauldian lens, Lisa Rofel particularly scrutinises the pervasive, discursive, and disciplinary power being taken upon by individuals in everyday practice (2007). Desires of material, sexuality, and affection have been subjectified in public culture in the process of state reconfiguring Chinese citizenship (Rofel 2007). The second book, on the experience of sexuality and desire in Hong Kong and across China (Ho and Tsang 2012), illustrates how the individual’s sex and desire is conditioned by (post-)colonial, transnational, and social-political forces in the broad Chinese context. Adopting a Foucauldian approach and being informed by studies of desire in Chinese society and Hong Kong (Rofel 2007; Ho and Tsang 2012), this series explored the discipline of sex as the deployment of social powers on individuals, and desire is seen as a resistant power that ‘transforms one’s self, and reforms the society one is living in’ on screen.[2] In this article, my Foucauldian enquiry centres not only on the power relations among documentary participants, but also on scrutinising the reproduction of power structures in intellectual activity and representational politics, distinguishing the of seizure power, as well as partnership and resistance as positive forces.

Increasing numbers of Chinese independent documentaries on the theme of desiring (as subversive agency) and female subjectivity (which has been suppressed in worldly life and cultural/knowledge production) have been produced since the late 1990s (Yu and Lebow 2020). However, due to concerns around privacy, on-going ethical controversies, or tensions between filmmakers and protagonists, the series managed to select and screen eight documentaries/video documentations according to relevance to the series’ theme, filmic significance, and availability. Bao Hongwei（包宏伟） has discussed the queer space of *Women Fifty Minutes* 女人 50 分钟 (dir. Shi Tou 石头 , 2006) (Bao 2019) *and* queer feminist memory in *We Are Here* 我们在这里 (dir. Zhao Jing 赵静 and Shi Tou, 2015) (Bao 2020), screened in the series, therefore, amongst these eight films, the following six ones serve as basis for discussing feminism in Chinese documentaries in this article:

1. *Nightingale, Not the Only Voice* 夜莺不是唯一的歌喉 (dir. Tang Danhong 唐丹鸿 , 2000)
2. *The Love Life of Lao An* 老安 (dir. Yang Lina 杨荔钠 , 2008)

3. *A Song of Love, Maybe* 恋曲 (dir. Zhang Zanbo 张赞波 , 2010)
4. *Hooligan Sparrow* 流氓燕 (dir. Wang Nanfu 王男栿 , 2016), screened together with *Ai Weiwei's Interview with Ye Haiyan on August 26 2010* 2010年8月26日 对叶海燕（流氓燕）的采访 (dir. Ai Weiwei 艾未未 , 2013)
5. The short 3D animation *A Poem to Liu Xia* 致刘霞 (dir. Trish McAdam, 2013) was screened before each event's main schedule.

In addition, the ethical dilemmas raised by *Sister* 姐姐 (dir. Hu Xinyu 胡新宇, 2007) and *Wheat Harvest* 麦收 (dir. Xu Tong 徐童, 2008) are also discussed in this article, though the two documentaries were not screened in the series due to ethical concerns to be discussed in details later (Sniadecki 2014 and 2015; Edwards 2015b; Lu 2018).

Reflexive conversations with documentary participants — filmmakers, protagonists, or both identity holders — have opened up spaces for examining key ethical concerns in Chinese independent documentaries, including the treatment of protagonists before, during, and after filming; the question of informed consent; solidarity and the filmmakers' commitment to activist causes; the ethics of distribution and exhibition of films about domestic violence and other types of abuse; and, general concerns about the balance between privacy and the public right to know. These conversations have addressed the complexity of documentary participants' positions while privacy (inner; personal; family; and *si* (私) meaning profit *si li* (私利) or 'immoral' desires *si yu* (私欲), not appropriate for the public to view [McDougall and Hansson 2002, pp. 3-24], pain, and trauma are represented in documentary films. In this article, a feminist point of view is employed to understand sex, gender-based violence, and the representation of female subjectivity in documentaries, and filmmakers' ethic concerns. This feminist perspective differentiates gendered asymmetries of representation in the ethos of masculinity and domination (Evans 2009, pp. 29-40), even in the documentaries and literature regarding subaltern/vulnerable groups (such as in the ethical controversy over *Wheat Harvest*). It recognises femininity and the experience of disadvantaged documentary participants in representation and reasoning.

Theorising the positionality of documentary participants requires us to consider the practice of ethics being situated in specific cases (Nash 2012, pp. 318-331). Analysing my conversations with documentary participants, documentary film texts, and transcripts of after-screening discussions during the series of 'Desiring China' at HKU, this empirical study of local practice and filmmaker reflexivity, is my effort to theorise the position of a filmmaker, protagonist, curator, scholar, and feminist activist, and to advance constructive conversations on film ethics among documentary

participants and researchers.

This article provides different perspectives to discuss a feminist positionality in Chinese independent documentary film: 1) the filmmaker's position on the ethics of care and (intimate) solidarity with their protagonists; 2) the protagonist's position of confession and appeal in reclaiming autonomy from gender based violence and discrimination; 3) the filmmaker's and protagonist's different positions on reducing documentary's negative impact on the protagonist's personal life through controlling distribution; 4) the evolving positions of protagonist and filmmaker on self-transformation and re-opening for screening; 5) the activist position of representation as in politics and filmmaking's position of representation as in arts (Spivak 1988); and 6) tensions between theory and practice that require scholars, filmmakers, and activists to situate and contextualise ethics for discussion and practice.

In *Outcry and Whisper* 喊叫与耳语 (dir. Wen Hai 文海/闻海, Zeng Jinyan 曾金燕, and Trish McAdam, 2020), me talking to the camera to save myself from breaking down under surveillance due to memories of house arrest and the severe pain caused by political and gendered violence. This repeated self-whispering, a form of video diary, carries the haptic care and protection of a young women's privacy, dignity, and strength while vulnerable, and her desire for kindness and love while in desperation.

I argue for the need to adopt a feminist ethics of care when producing, exhibiting, and critiquing documentaries about women in contemporary China. This article promotes equal power relationships among documentary participants, and the innovation of cinematic language, to deal with the ethical dilemmas and potential limitations of filming and exhibiting Chinese independent documentary films.

2. Positions of care and feminist solidarity

Filmmaker-scholar Sniadecki encourages us to put 'care', along with 'sense of responsibility' and 'humanity', at the centre of the filmmaker-protagonist relationship, especially in response to the

documentation of violence, suffering, and injustice in Chinese society at large (Sniadecki 2014, p. 54, p. 57). Care, a key quality of feminist solidarity, is seen in ground-breaking studies of Chinese feminist filmmaking, with the first-person camera documenting women's experiences in response to the interplay of patriarchal, authoritarian, and transnational power (Marchetti 2020; Yu 2020; Yu and Lebow 2020; Zhang 2020). As Zhang Zhen (张真) illustrates in her study (2020), the veteran filmmaker Wen Hui (文慧), pioneering dancer, choreographer, and multi-media artist, has been living under the long term shadow of her ex-partner Wu Wenguang (吴文光), and Wen Hui's intellectual and artistic contribution to the co-initiated Caochangdi Studio (草场地工作站), and its noted Folk Memory Project (民间记忆影像计划) has been largely undermined.[3] In this context, Wen Hui directed *Listening to Third Grandmother's Stories* 听三奶奶讲过去的事情 (2012) and *Dancing with Third Grandma* 和三奶奶跳舞 (2015). Wen Hui transforms her 'forgotten' Third Grandma and her own bodies into an everyday stage, to activate, perform, and archive autobiographies in reconstructing female kinship beyond the patriarchy as well as healing Wen Hui's present and Third Grandma's past traumas. Women's expression is centred in these two documentaries and the protagonists' family connections re-built through the female experience of birth, family relation, memory, and everyday life. Haptic care of each other is delivered in Wen Hui and her Third Grandma's daily conversations, play, joy, and bodily movement/performance with domestic stuff, in front of the camera. Therefore, the two documentary films open up intimate-public space (Zhang 2020), a new kind of cinematic social spaces beyond the public, semi-public, and the private (Berry and Lü and Rofel 2010; Robinson 2010; Robinson 2012; Edwards 2015a).

In *Hooligan Sparrow*, which is about the feminist fight against child sexual abuse and political haunting of activists (Marchetti 2020), the young New York-based Chinese filmmaker Wang Nanfu did not include her filmmaking experience in the early editing drafts (Zeng and Tan 2019, pp. 126-133). In the end, she presented her filmmaking process as one storyline of the film, a documentation of the self's feminism awakening, a witnessing and testimony of her homeland's local feminist activists' fight against rape culture and dysfunctional government systems, as well as a feminist activist and cultural broker between realms of activism and art, China and world.[4] On-screen, she is the feminist filmmaker as the protagonist. Off-screen, she managed to not only bring the film story to the world, but also bring the teenage protagonist Yaxin (雅欣) — daughter of protagonist Ye Haiyan who has been repeatedly censored, forcibly evicted from her home, and prohibited from traveling internationally as state punishment for her activism (Ye 2021, pp. 153-156) — to the US for middle school study. Afterwards, Wang Nanfu edited short videos to advocate for the release of then imprisoned lawyer Wang Yu (王宇) and amateur filmmaker Huang (activist Deng Chuanbin [邓 传 彬], aka Huanghuang [晃 晃], named Huang in the film), who are part of the feminist activism in *Hooligan Sparrow*. The feminist fight, of the protagonist 'mine', protagonist 'hers', and

protagonists ‘theirs’, become a fight of ‘ours’ with support and care to each other, on-screen and off-screen, in solidarity (Marchetti 2020).

The haptic visual representation in Wen Hui’s documentaries centres care in women’s expression, as well as the *minjian* (among the people, non-official, non-institutional, see Veg 2019) construction of history and female kinship. The filmmaker’s commitment to her protagonists’ life and feminist activism in *Hooligan Sparrow* demonstrates the ethics of feminist solidarity. The title *Hooligan Sparrow* is taken from the protagonist Ye Haiyan’s pen name. Ye Haiyan’s video confession in Ai Weiwei’s interview appeals to the interviewer and audiences by reclaiming women’s autonomy, though suffering from gender based violence.

3. Protagonist’s position of confession and appeal

Ai Weiwei’s Interview with Ye Haiyan on August 26, 2010 (*The Interview* for short) was made in a context in which ‘there were many controversies about her [Ye Haiyan] and I wanted to understand her’, stated Ai Weiwei.[5] The documentary was released on YouTube on 3 June 2013, during Ye’s detention in the midst of protesting against the child sexual abuse documented in *Hooligan Sparrow*. The two were screened together in the ‘Desiring China’ series for an enriching representation and discussion of Ye Haiyan, enquiring into gender-based violence, sex, sexual capital, desire, and documentary representation (Zeng 2016a). *The Interview* is a talking head-style video documentation. Ye Haiyan is sat on a chair in Ai Weiwei’s Beijing Studio, facing the camera which is in a fixed still position. Ai Weiwei’s interview questions are presented via subtitles, which makes Ye Haiyan’s talk similar to a personal monologue. Ai Weiwei’s interview questions invite Ye Haiyan to introduce herself; explain her divorce and perception of marriage and aging; share other women’s similar experiences of sexual violence; recall her gender awakening process; detail sex work payment and strategies; discuss her single parenting practice; discuss explicit attitudes on discrimination against women; tell stories of violence against sex workers and police response; and explain her advocacy for legitimatizing sex work and the state crackdown on sex workers.

In *The Interview*, Ye Haiyan narrates and reflects on her life history of lived experience fighting against the stigmatization of sexual violence victim. She details her identity as a sex worker, an activist advocating sex workers’ rights, and a ‘slut’ who is a pioneer of sexual liberation and enjoying sexual pleasure. She sees herself a self-motivated activist speaking for other sex worker ‘sisters’ who experience sexual violence and discrimination, a self-educated NGO worker who is capable of civil organizing and independent thinking, and an open-minded independent woman who liberates herself in all dimensions. In telling her experiences of openly transforming herself into a

sex worker, she recalls a question from a Hong Kong sex worker activist: 'Can you accept yourself as a sex worker? If you cannot accept yourself as a sex worker, how do you pursue your anti-discrimination work?' (my translation). She explains that in order to do a campaign for sex workers who come from poor families and work under violent and insecure environments, she started to do sex work and publicly announced herself a sex worker.

In my 2016 interview with Ye Haiyan, Ye said that she is more than an admirer of Ai Weiwei, who is her ideal type of man for a romantic partnership. She also openly said as a playful 'joke' that one day she might sleep with Ai Weiwei, a way of 'retweet[ing]' Ai Weiwei's jester artist role (see [Callahan 2014] on Ai's jester's role, and see [Qian 2014] on 'retweet'). *The Interview*, somehow, is Ye Haiyan's nuanced video love letter to Ai Weiwei. Sharing her self-understanding of the separation of mind and body while doing sex work (Ning 2002 and 2004 and 2006), this is a message about her ability to keep her self-autonomy, and her desire to look for a soulmate like Ai Weiwei. The imagined and actual relationship between interviewer Ai Weiwei and interviewee Ye Haiyan, pushed Ye Haiyan to present her innermost authentic self during the video interview, creating intensive appeals to the interviewer and audiences. She became a confessor in this semi-personal and semi-public video letter, under Ai Weiwei's gaze — male and powerful in terms of social position, and desiring for the interviewer's reciprocal responses.

Nonetheless, Ye's confession in *The Interview* is powerful, for it adopts an NGO empowerment approach and depicts grassroots women's collective suffering, and their vulnerability to sexual violence in particular. Her position of appeal is grounded in demonstrating woman's agency in recognising female desire, dealing with sexual violence, and establishing their own autonomy. Though experiencing sexual violence and facing discrimination, a woman like Ye Haiyan is able to heal, to organise others for self-help and mutual support, to mobilize the public for social change, and to advocate equality for everyone, girls, women, and sex workers in particular.

The Interview is circulated on the internet as Ye Haiyan has been openly campaigning for sex workers, women, and children online. Some other filmmakers, to be discussed in next section, have concerns about the negative impact of their documentaries on their protagonists' 'unconventional' desires and intimate life, and therefore take rigorous control of distribution.

4. Filmmaker's position on informed consent and the risk of distribution

Do protagonists really understand the impact on their lives of giving filming informed consent to filmmakers? Do they understand in what kind of context their footage will be used? Do filmmakers,

ethnographic filmmakers in particular, clearly know during the shooting process what film they will make? Lastly, do protagonists really have control over how their footage will be disseminated (online and offline) in the future? Though commentary on ethical questions is hardly heard from protagonists directly (except those being edited into films), filmmakers indeed bear these concerns for protagonists. Filmmakers Yang Lina (*The Love Life of Lao An*), and Zhang Zanbo (*A Song of Love, Maybe*) reflected on their documentary ethical dilemmas during the 2016 'Desiring China' series. [6] These two films represent love stories and views from the perspective of 'unethical' extra-marital lovers—conventionally social defined. Both filmmakers revealed that they had invited the protagonists to watch the documentary footage during the editing process to enable the protagonists' understanding of themselves and the footage. Thus, the filmmakers and their protagonists mutually developed their documentaries with nuanced and evolving informed consent. Both filmmakers took rigorous control of screening and chose not to distribute their films in the PRC, in order to reduce the political and social impact on their protagonists' personal life. Yang Lina clearly stated in the after-screening discussion of *The Love Life of Lao An* that (Chinese Independent Documentary Lab's transcript, 22 October, 2016):

> The film's protagonists do not mind if I screen the film. However, I am clearly aware that their understandings about media are different from ours. They are not aware of the power of dissemination.

While the protagonists choose to show the public their 'immoral' positions, they provoke the public or intend to legitimatise their controversial practices from their own perspectives. This perspective often contradicts the interests of the other protagonists, such as the wives of those having extramarital relations. If the filmmaker acts in the interest of one protagonist, it may have negative consequences for the other protagonists, or often both. Therefore, rigorous control of distribution became the filmmakers' choice, while the protagonists might not even be aware of such an ethics of care.

5. Protagonist's position of prohibiting screening

Privacy conveys the notion of an inner, personal, and family realm (Zarrow 2002, pp. 121-146; Yuan and Feng and Danowski 2013, pp. 1011-1031), one not allowed to being intervened in by outsiders, especially for present-day Chinese women in the context of individualisation and transnationalism (Yan 2003 and 2010; Zheng 2013). Considering privacy matters, the protagonist of *Sister*, the sister of the filmmaker, makes it clear to director Hu Xinyu that if *Sister* is further screened, he would be in the court.[7] Family members regarded Hu Xinyu's filming as casual 'play'

wan (玩).[8] They were not aware of Hu Xinyu's role as a filmmaker and did not know about the production of *Sister*, its sequel documentary *Family Phobia* 家庭恐惧 (dir. Hu Xinyu, 2008), and his ongoing work based on family footage.[9] For Hu Xinyu, he does not like the camera to be 'the eye of the god' but 'enjoy[s] the equal relationship in front of and behind camera' — because according to Hu Xinyu's explanation, his protagonists do not know that the footage will be used for filmmaking. He admits that this way of dealing with documentary filmmaker-protagonist relationship might be a 'moral' question from a new generation's perspective. But for the 'old one like me working in the human realm', Hu says that he cares about creating a film as a piece of art. He claims neither the filmmaker nor the film has a standpoint. He calls his private cinema 'drawer films' (抽屉电影), not for distribution now but to be watched in the future.

Sister details tensions of in a mother-daughter relationship, when a teenage daughter who used to live with her Chinese father and Japanese step-mother in Japan and China, is newly arrived in the US to live with her mother and American stepped father. The mother protagonist's memories of experiencing long-term domestic violence and its consequence in her previous marriage were triggered in dealing with these mother-daughter relational conflicts. *Sister* indeed brings about healing and redeeming—a correction of actions according to new and modern family values: the American husband decides not to keep silent anymore, expressing care and love for his wife, '[I] worship[s] this woman' in his words, in a conversation with the daughter in the manner respecting her as an interlocutor who can reason. The daughter clarifies that she wants mutual understanding and recognition from her mother as a daughter, not as an appendage of the father who used to abuse the mother, and that she cares about her mother (e.g. save money), rather than hurting her mother by mentioning her life experiences with her father and step-mother. For example, she likes the food cooked by her Japanese step-mother who is a fulltime housewife, better than the food cooked by her working mother in the US. The mother promises in conversation with her daughter, to let petty things (and past traumas) go in daily life in this new Chinese-American family, and correct her own mistakes, if any, in dealing with mother-daughter relationship.

The mother and daughter protagonists redeem their actions on film, healing each other's pain and constructing a new mother-daughter relationship with love and care in a transnational context. *Sister* inexplicitly reflects the representation of the traditional aspect of patriarchal culture in modern Chinese and Japanese societies, especially taking the director's documentary sequel, *Family Phobia*, into consideration, in which we see the arguably violent intimate relational practices of *Sister*'s extended natal family. Meanwhile, healing and redeeming are mediated by an American husband in the film, not the Chinese director's calm (or cold) observational camera. The filmmaker occasionally conspired with the newly arrived East Asian teenage daughter's condemnation of her

mother's 'wrong doings' in front of the camera. The filmmaker provided emotional support to his niece from a perspective contradicting his sister's. While the director filmed another fierce mother-daughter quarrel from a relatively far distance, obviously without protagonists' awareness, the sudden enlarged framing of his sister's face, the shaking of the camera lens, brings to audiences the sensual trembling of the sister in pain and emotional turmoil, and the sensual feeling of, probably, the director's attempt to comfort his beloved sister.[10] However, this temporal and rare haptic gentleness in *Sister*'s visual representation—such a shot is not seen in *Family Phobia* with its calm observational camera—did not change the closure of the protagonist's decision on distribution. Considering the risk of the protagonists' private life being judged by public audiences holding conventional values regarding domestic violence, family, and intimacy, the mother protagonist in *Sister* was determined to ban the film's screening, backed up by legal means. Off-screen, reconciliation between mother and daughter is promised by the ethics of care in family practice.

6. Evolving positions of director and protagonist on self-transformation

Documentary film functions as a mirror for the protagonist to see their own self, memory, and individual/collective trauma (Jin 2013, pp. 209-222). It can also function as a shield for some protagonists, and at the same time as a sword for other protagonists in dealing with memory and pain—especially an protagonist's (un)willingness to engage in self-acceptance and self-transformation. Tang Danhong, director and one protagonist of *Nightingale, Not the Only Voice*, managed to rescreen the film in the 2016 'Desiring China' event. This was after approximately fifteen years of not screening the film to ease her pain and to avoid further tension between Tang and her parents, though 'the private pain is not really private' (Tang Danhong in: Zeng and Tang 2021, p. 236). In the film, Tang Danhong asks for an acceptable answer from her parents to explain their abuse of her as a child. This was during the Cultural Revolution, when her parents who were intellectuals suffered from public political violence. The parents explained their own past experiences in the way that was no different from

Tang Danhong watching her own self-image in the 2016 'Desiring China' screening after about fifteen years of not screening/watching the film. Following the screening, Tang reposted a poem written in August 2002 with this photo (Figure 3) on Facebook, 17 October 2016, to comment on her on-screen image of the Hong Kong screening.

what Tang Danhong experienced as a child being abused. They defended their family relational practice and their explanations of their political experiences—which of which were violent in Tang's view. The parents were hostile toward the documentary film.

Before travelling to Hong Kong for the screening, Tang wrote on her Facebook account on 21 September 2016:[11]

> There are fleeting moments—such as the dazzling white salt shores of the Dead Sea; the arid, desolate Negev Desert; a market in Tel Aviv filled with colourful fruits, vegetables, cheese, salted fish, and olives; the child who pulled on my clothes, asking me to buy a chocolate egg—that make me both incredulous and grateful that the Danhong Tang, who over ten years ago shot the film *Nightingale*, is already dead, or perhaps it's better to say she is finally reborn…
>
> Do You Know Who She Is?
>
> She is who upon a single human face?
> She is what upon a single flower?
> She is how in your arms?
> She is the light of death getting an erection—
> She is what has been cut, sliced disintegrated—
> In her own womb—
> In the basement of heaven—
> I saw you hurdling, pole vaulting.
> I saw your blackness and all of your beauty.
> Do you know who she is?
> She is one of your girlfriends and lovers.
> She is I, Danhong—
> your cousin or aunt.
> She is our family of incest.

Time passed and Tang became a mother herself, living in de-facto exile in Israel. Tang Danhong recalls her mother writing a memoir and a letter in response to the film *Nightingale*:

> [B]ecause I made *Nightingale*, accusing her of not protecting me, so she wanted to tell me the sufferings and struggles she went through, to make me understand… (Zeng and Tang 2021, p. 234)

Through the memoir, Tang realises that her mother had sealed herself in her childhood for self-protection and the mother's traumatic memory has had a long-term impact on their family's relational practice. In the memoir, Tang's mother says that as a child during the 1950s Land Reform movement, she was taken by the Communist Party cadres to search for her own landlord mother, so that her mother could be persecuted. At the end of more than one month searching without finding her mother, Tang's mother witnessed her grandmother's head being violently cut and robbed from the tomb by angry cadres, right in front of the eyes of Tang's mother, then a young school girl.

> Right before the 'Desiring China' screening, I re-read my mother's autobiographic text, and started to understand the relationship between her fate and mine … She thought everything was her fault, a sin she was born with. So she cut off her connection with her [landlord] mother and sisters … (Tang Danhong in: Zeng and Tang 2021, p. 234)

In the family relational practice, the mother admires her husband so much, looking to him for protection, and interpreting his domestic violence as a form of love for their child, Tang Danhong.

The year-long before-screening conversation between me (the curator) and Tang Danhong, and the after-screening discussion between Tang Danhong and her audiences in Hong Kong (Zeng and Tang 2021, pp. 228-237), has channelled Tang into re-dealing with her wounds 'being perplexed stitched' by the film's editing and ending.[12] Afterwards, Tang worked on family memory in connection with political trauma in her ongoing writings and filmmaking, about the stories of Tang herself, her mother, and her natal aunties (Zeng and Tang 2021, p. 232). Her focus attempts to build a new female kinship in healing personal traumas and revisiting family history during China's political movements since the 1949, from the position of female family members and their lived experience (Zhang 2020, pp. 7, 10, 12, and 17).

7. Positions of representing in politics vs. in arts in a digital era

Most Chinese documentary ethical controversies argue for different interpretations of authorship (auteur attitude vs. partnership), (informal) informed consent, and new values emerging in the film in contrast to mainstream values or state ideology (Edwards 2015b; Sniadecki 2015). However, the internal tensions of film's position of representation in politics versus in arts in the digital era have not yet been directly addressed, though film scholar Lü Xinyu's (吕新雨) 2018 article points at the problem of feminism in discussing the ethical controversy of *Wheat Harvest*. The notorious *Wheat Harvest* controversy (Edwards 2015b; Sniadecki 2015; Lü 2018), nonetheless reflects a power struggle between the filmmaker and distribution participants, and protagonists and their supporters

(sex workers, sex work NGOs in Taiwan and Hong Kong, feminist groups), on the issue of informed consent, the invasion of sex workers' privacy, the endangerment of protagonists' lives through the exhibiting of the documentary, and the shifting power dynamics around representing sex workers. Protagonists of the film have claimed that they did not know Xu Tong was shooting a film (they mis-understood the filmmaker as a [potential] client) until the documentary premiered in 2009 at Yunnan Multiculture Visual Festival.[13] From my feminist point of view, *Wheat Harvest* provides a powerful on-screen portrait of a rural woman (protagonist M) gaining her independence and agency through sex work on the outskirts of cosmopolitan Beijing.[14] M's own subjectivity as a modern Chinese woman from the bottom social strata emerges through images of her life travelling between her rural hometown and urban Beijing. However, sex work is illegal in China, and participants are discriminated against by the public, which poses great legal risks, threats of gender-based violence, and moral challenges for the protagonists. If protagonists have other choices of work, would they still choose sex work for financially beneficial sexual pleasure or self-liberation? [15] Furthermore, and distinct from Ye Haiyan's case, the protagonists of *Wheat Harvest* are sex workers rather than activists who have multiple identities and income sources.

Despite three requirements from his protagonists—'deleting online advertisement, prohibiting screening in mainland China, screening the film for [protagonists]', (Nü quan zhi sheng 2012) — Xu Tong, who is famous in director's statements for discussing his documentary representation of vulnerable people in Chinese society, or for taking advantages of the vulnerable protagonists through his voyeuristic camera (Kraicer 2011), continues to screen *Wheat Harvest*, with support from some curators, distributors, and scholars in the independent film realm (Lü 2018). Though Xu Tong promised the documentary would not be shown in the PRC and on internet (Lü 2018, p. 303), later on, the film has been uploaded on multiple internet platforms for public viewing (still accessible now), such as YouTube, Bilibili, and Sohu Video Channel. Sex work and activist groups have backed up the protagonists' prohibition of screenings of *Wheat Harvest*, by interrupting offline screening events and a 2011 academic conference at Fudan University, documented in Lü's article (Lü 2018). Feminists were in fury, for the protagonists' 'no' to screenings as a principle was interpretated as arguable permission in the name of filmmaking or the academy. Lü questioned the feminist intolerance of *Wheat Harvest* based on 'moral judgement' or 'moral trial' by hostile attitudes, and an unwillingness for open discussion (Lü 2018, pp. 296-308). Back to the documentary: it is regretful and questionable that director Xu Tong and his supporters refused to recognise his protagonists' deep anxiety as connected to sex workers' off-screen social status on the social margins, not to mention not showing the documentary to the protagonists. Xu's rejection of his protagonists' requests, partially a reaction toward feminist hostility against the film, is also reflected in the documentary's representational strategies and the filmmaker's arrogant and

exploitative attitude toward his protagonist's request in the digital era. For example, it is not a documentary narrative challenge to remove a protagonist's detailed home village address from the film (protection of privacy), not to mention striking the balance between the risk of online streaming and the desire for distribution.

Furthermore, the tension between sex workers' subjectivity in *Wheat Harvest*, and activist groups' political actions in supporting protagonists' pleas for banning the film's screening, illustrates the aesthetic and political dilemmas of social activism. Ye Haiyan, protagonist of *Hooligan Sparrow*, felt relief when the documentary did not receive an Academy Award, which, in her everyday life, would not relieve her political oppression and isolation (Marchetti 2020, p. 42). Ye Haiyan uses 'silence' as a strategy of (self-) censorship (Ristivojevic 2021, pp. 165-169; Ye 2021, pp. 153-156), a practice of activism with a long-term vision prioritising everyday survival under political isolation and oppression (Cui 2012, pp. 79-94). Representation of the oppressed in politics, using the political logic of social activism and the practical goals of worldly life, might partially sacrifice the voice of the subaltern; in philosophy and in arts (Spivak 1988; Zeng 2013), it is vice versa. The *Wheat Harvest* controversy nonetheless invites filmmakers to reflect on their care for their protagonists' worldly lives. It also urges activists to problematise the political representation of the subaltern, therefore, to discover and represent the voices of deprived groups, as in arts and in philosophy.

A Poem to Liu Xia was made with the motivation of representing Liu Xia as in arts and in politics. Liu Xia is, first of all, a forbidden artist (poet, photographer, and painter) in China, and the widow of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo (刘晓波), who passed away in 2017 while serving his eleven years prison term for 'inciting subversion of state power'. Liu Xia had been living under house arrest since Liu Xiaobo's last detention in 2008 until her exile to Germany in 2018. However, over the past decades, she has been mentioned by NGOs, media, and the general public as merely 'the wife' of a political dissent, while her own subjectivity has faded and even been erased from such discourses. I wrote a script and used Liu Xia's own photography, collaborating with visual artist Trish McAdam and her 3D animation team, to represent Liu Xia as if she speaks for herself through her own art, first of all, as a forbidden artist, a victim and survivor of political violence, and then as the wife of Liu Xiaobo. The decision to use 3D animation was based on controlling political risks for my interviewees—interview footage became my research material for the initially proposed feature. The short animation was released on 2015 International Women's Day online, in a gallery and at Irish Arts Council events, to deliver a message to Liu Xia that she and her art are not forgotten, and she is very much being loved and cared about by friends around the world. The short animation, together with a small camera to facilitate her photography work while under house arrest, were successfully delivered to her through activist means which cannot be detailed at this

moment.

The feminist solidarity forged around *Hooligan Sparrow* and *A Poem to Liu Xia* on/off-screen, care and support in particular, manifests in the aesthetic rejection of the violent aspects of social activist logics, the representation as merely speaking for in politics, and the camera's intrusion into the protagonists' vulnerabilities in real life—all in the name of filmmaking.

8. Tensions between theory and practice

Discussion of documentarian's positions often triggers tension between filmmakers and scholars (Kraicer 2011; Sniadecki 2014; Edwards 2015b). This tension reveals feminist questions regarding 1) gendered asymmetries in intellectualism regardless the biological sex of debate participants (Evans 2009; Kirkpatrick 2019); 2) the suppression of female documentary participants' voices and the insensitivity of gendered bias and violence in representing feminine experience; and 3) a duplication of dominating-being dominated and interpreting/representing-being interpreted/represented relationship in scholar/critic-filmmaker-activist, filmmaker-protagonist, protagonist-activist interactions. Criticisms of film scholar Lü Xinyu (though biologically a woman), in general reflect the tension between documentary ethics theory (with masculinity) and practice (with fluidity, individuality, diversity, and discontinuity). At the eighth China Independent Film Festival（中国独立影像年度展）in 2011, filmmakers felt alienated by scholar Lü Xinyu's analytic language when discussing the representation of subaltern *diceng* (底层) in Chinese documentary, while filmmakers did not have opportunity to speak for themselves on the panel (Kraicer 2011). This tension provoked the directors' emotional statement 'Shamans · Animals' in the form of big character posters (大字报), detailing the variety of directors' positions, in their own language (Kraicer 2011): rejecting the projection of filming the 'low' (*diceng*) from a superior 'high' position (directors' addressing equal position), denial of recognising protagonists as mutually creative participants (directors' dominant attitude toward authorship), and (practitioners') denouncing the relevance of 1990s and early 2000s' theoretical approaches for current discursive documentary practice. At the 2011 Fudan University academic conference, which planned to screen *Wheat Harvest*, feminists (the leading voice was Lü Pin [吕频], editor in chief of *Feminist Voices* [女权之声], exiled to the USA after the detention of the 'Feminist Five' in 2015. See Karl *et al.* 2015; Wang 2015) and scholar Lü Xinyu debated on who has the right to use 'we' and attacked the opposite numbers for their (and the filmmaker's) middle-class representation of sex workers (Lü 2018). Their debates on the one hand attempted to open a space for the reconfiguration of intellectualism, and on the other hand attempted to seize the power of representation for intellectuals. The film's sex worker protagonist's simple, clear, and principle voice of 'no' against screening was faded out by the rhetoric of academy and filmmaking, and inaction of specific

distribution control in the digital era. Lü Xinyu intends to resume ‘class’ and ‘socialism’ theories in feminist debates and to question ‘Why there is no feminist Chinese female director’ (2018). This is another example that the communication between certain feminist filmmakers and certain schools of scholars somehow fail. Practitioners are reluctant to use abstract, grand, or arguably class struggle concepts in independent filmmaking – often individual, from the perspective of margins and personal, and enquiring history in dis-contiguousness (Veg 2019). Nuanced strategies are used by many female filmmakers and scholars, to deal with the pressure of working in male dominated intellectual and filmmaking communities (Wang 2021).

My question for filmmakers, critics, scholars, protagonists, and activists encountering documentary ethics controversies is what and how to provide specific techniques of care (as in worldly life and as in cinematic language) to documentary participants in practice, situated in relation to specific cases and contexts, rather than generalising abstract concepts as the tools of problem solving and theorising.[16] As a feminist scholar, I am aware that the cancelling of gender categories and the ambiguity of gender in visual arts and in theory could be used as a strategy to critique essentialism. In doing so, biologically different humans do not need to perform their behaviour according to gender norms (as ideally stated by Judith Butler). However, documentary film is an art involving real people in real life who are sustained with an ethics of care. People are the ends of documentary filmmaking rather than tools of the art. Furthermore, historical and contemporary social structures of intellectualism cannot deny gendered relations with knowledge by not ‘seeing’ gender (Evans 2009). Mary Evans' provoked question ‘Can Women be Intellectuals’ has pointed out the institutional ‘marginalisation of women and the feminine in intellectual traditions’ (Evans 2009, p. 39). So it is in the documentary realm. My feminist approach toward the question is to further open up as many public spaces and alternative spaces as possible, and to problematise the relationship between gender and theories of documentary ethics.

9. Toward a feminist positionality

This article has analysed the different positions of documentary filmmakers, protagonists, scholars, and activists in dealing with desire, privacy, self-transformation, violence, trauma, memory, the vulnerability of social groups on the margins, as well as tensions between theory and practice. A feminist approach of care, support, and solidarity will serve future documentary relational practices and representation strategies, thus democratising the filmmaking process—documentary as a method of social investigation—and equalising the relations between filmmakers and protagonists, as well as scholar-filmmaker and activist-protagonist relations. This article promotes a feminist positionality, respecting protagonists equally as filmmaking partners, even if their voice might be

low; mutually developing protagonist's subjectivity on-screen and documentary authorship in de-facto collaborative filmmaking; centring care and support if violence will further penetrate into the protagonist's everyday life due to the making and distributing of the documentary film; situating and contextualising theories rather than directly applying theory to a specific case study. On the issue of representational strategies, as a filmmaker and writer, I believe all the limitations of documentary shooting and editing can be transferred into potential elements for the innovation of cinematic language. This feminist positionality responds to the classical question of 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (Spivak 1988), by advancing the representation of the social margins, women in particular, both as in arts and as in politics.

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Notes

1 The series was curated by me (then a PhD candidate in Gender and Sexuality) and my PhD advisor Professor Sik Ying Ho, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, the University of Hong Kong (HKU). It was organised by the Chinese Independent Documentary Lab (CIDL, Hong Kong, 2014-2020) and sponsored by several film and university bodies: HKU, the University Service Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, CNEX (Chinese Next and See Next) Hong Kong, and CCFD-Terre Solidaire (Paris). The series transcript and editing was sponsored by the China Media Project, HKU.

2 Words from curators in the 2016 'Desiring China' catalogue. Related citations from Chinese are translated by me, except those with additional explanations.

3 For discussions on how women's cultural/intellectual work being shadowed, undermined, and arguably erased by their male partners, see (Evans 2009; Kirkpatrick 2019). This dimension is to be further discussed in the section on the relationship between theory and practice.

4 The role of 'broker' is discussed regarding Ai Weiwei's position as an activist and artist (Callahan 2014; Cheek 2014). Ai Weiwei serves as the inspiration for Wang Nanfu's filmmaking and transnational activism (Marchetti 2020).

5 Personal communication, 15 April 2021. Ai Weiwei purchased Ye Haiyan's belongings which were abandoned by the police during her forced eviction in 2013 after Ye's protest, and made a 'Ye Haiyan's Belongings' 2014 Brooklyn Museum installation.

6 Zhang Zanbo also reflected on *The Interceptor from My Hometown* 有一种静叫庄严 (2012), which documents a local government official intercepting hometown petitioners in Beijing in the context of a dysfunctional legal system. 'Petitioning is a phenomenon dating back to dynastic times in China, when any subject theoretically had the right to petition the emperor if he or she felt an injustice had been perpetrated by officials in their local area' (Edwards 2015b, p. 145). The practice of interception, arbitrarily along with violence, is widely accepted in Chinese context as an extra-legal means of achieving the government's pressing political agenda: stability maintenance (Lee and Zhang 2013). For example, Ai Weiwei's 2013 documentary *Stay Home* 喜梅 depicts local government officials living with the woman protagonist Ximei—an HIV/AIDS patient and activist—to stop her petitioning. Male officials even sleep on the same bed *kang* (炕) as her. The protagonist interceptor in Zhang Zanbo's documentary offers details of interception and his own criticism in the documentary, which might have a devastating impact on his life and work, including public criticism of the unethical and extra-legal practice of interception, and government punishment for his 'private' criticism on the widely

practiced interception. Edwards' article discussed ethics issue in the documentary *Petition* 上访 (dir. Zhao Liang 赵亮, 2009). On-screen petitioners mother-daughter relationship, and the tension between traditional Chinese womanhood and woman petitioners' quest for modern citizen rights (e.g. director Feng Yan's [冯艳] 2007 documentary *Bing Ai* 秉爱), are discussed in my book (Zeng 2016b).

7 Hu Xinyu's explanation to me (the curator) for why *Sister* could not accept the invitation to be part of the 2016 'Desiring China' series.

8 Hu Xinyu, personal communication, 16 April 2021. This is the same source for the quotations that follow in this paragraph.

9 Except Hu Xinyu's brother knows he is making film and his sister knows of the documentary film *Sister*.

10 Filmmaker Zhao Liang said in an after-screening discussion of *Petition*, his extra-ordinary enlarged framing of an aged petitioner's face and another sickness' legs and eyes, is the filmmaker's 'gentle touch' of his protagonists when they are in pain and difficulty. An audience member argued that the enlarged framing of the protagonists' cruel reality is the cruelty of the documentary camera in reproducing suffering and the cruelty of filmmaker in representing his relationship with the film's protagonists. CIDL's after-screening transcript, 25 July 2015.

11 Consent for using her two Facebook posts for this article is given by Tang Danhong. I am grateful to poet and artist Ian Boyden. He translated Tang's two posts from Chinese into English for this article.

12 Poet Zhai Yongming's words, cited in (Zeng and Tang 2021).

13 See discussions in (Edwards 2015b; Sniadecki 2015; *Nüquan zhi sheng* 2012).

14 For discussions on sex worker's agency, see (Ding 2008 and 2012; Ding and Ho 2012)

15 Sex liberation and sex work rights advocator Ye Haiyan has given accounts of the complexity of representing female sexuality and the identity politics in advocating for sex workers. See (Zeng 2016a; Ye 2021).

16 Technique is a term used by Michel Foucault in relation to the study of the Greek ethos of care. See (Foucault 1988b and 1988a and 1999; Heubel 2010).

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关键词：伦理与女权主义
中国独立纪录片的女性欲望

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概要

本文通过分析 2016年在香港大学举办的“情欲中国：性与女性主体”展映纪录片，以及受邀但因伦理问题未参展的影片，探讨中国独立纪录片电影在处理隐私、性别、暴力、创伤等议题时的女权主义立场性：1）电影人的关怀伦理立场，以及与影片主人公形成（亲密）团结立场；2）影片主人公从坦白和渴求的立场出发，从基于性别的暴力和歧视中重宣自主；3）电影人与影片主人公从不同的立场出发，通过发行控制来降低纪录片对主人公个人生活可能造成的负面影响；4）片中人物与电影人自我转变的演进，因此恢复一度禁止的放映；5）从活跃分子立场出发的政治代言以及从电影人立场出发的艺术意义上的再现；6）理论与实践之间的紧张关系要求学者、电影人和活跃分子反思性别与知识生产的传统关系，置身于具体处境中进行讨论和落实纪录片伦理。

本文认为在制作、展映、评论中国关于女性的纪录片时，有必要采取女权主义的关怀伦理。本文鼓励在纪录片电影参与者之间形成多重意义上的平等关系，以及通过电影语言的创新来处理中国独立纪录片电影面临的伦理困境、和电影制作与展映可能遇到的限制。

“情欲中国：性与女性主体”

2016 年 10 月 15 日至 11 月 19 日的每周六，我与何式凝在香港大学策划了以“情欲中国：性与女性主体”为主题的中国独立纪录片展映及研讨会。[1] 受《欲望中国》（Rofel 2007）和《情欲、伦理与权力：香港两性问题研究报告》（Ho and Tsang 2012）这两本书的启发，这一系列展映探讨了中国独立纪录片中对性、性别以及女性主体的再现。在《欲望中国》一书中，罗丽莎（Lisa Rofel）用福柯的理论详述了由市场经济主导的新自由主义治理逻辑，并主要研究了这种无所不在的、分散的和规训的权力对个人日常经验的影响（2007）。在国家重新塑造公民身份的过程中，个体对物质、性和感情的欲望已在公共文化中被主观化（Rofel 2007）。通过调研

“情欲中国” 海报（设计者：王我）根据女权主义活动家叶海燕为倡导妇女和儿童权利进行裸体表演的照片而设计。

香港及中国内地的性和欲望的个体经验（Ho and Tsang 2012），何式凝与曾家达的《情欲、伦理与权力：香港两性问题研究报告》描述了个人的性和欲望在广义的中国背景下如何受（后）殖民主义力量、跨国力量及各种社会政治力量影响。参考这两项关于中国和香港的欲望研究（Rofel 2007; Ho and Tsang 2012），这一系列展映从福柯理论的角度探讨了社会权力如何通过对性的规训来实现对个体的型塑，而欲望则被视为一种反抗的力量，在银幕上表现为“通过改造自我来改变自身所处的社会”。[2] 在这篇文章中，我的福柯式探究不仅聚焦于纪录片参与者之间的权力关系，还详细研究了知识分子活动和再现（representation）政治中，权力结构的再生产，区分了掠夺性的权力，将伙伴关系和抵抗看做积极的力量。

自 1990 年代末以来，产生了越来越多以欲望（具有颠覆因素的能动性）和（在世俗生活于文化 / 思想生产中被压制的）女性主体性为主题的中国独立纪录片（Yu and Lebow 2020）。然而，考虑到隐私、尚存的纪录片伦理争议，或者电影人和影片主人公之间的矛盾与冲突，该系列展映根据主题的相关性、影像上的成就及影片获取可能性进行权衡，放映了八部纪录片 / 纪录影像。在这八部影片中，包宏伟已讨论过《女人 50 分钟》（*Women Fifty Minutes*，导演：石头，2006）（Bao 2019）中的酷儿空间及《我们在这里》（We Are Here，导演：赵静与石头，2015）（Bao 2020）中的酷儿女权记忆。本文将基于其余六部影像，讨论中国纪录片中女权问题。这六部影像包括：

1. 夜莺不是唯一的歌喉，*Nightingale, Not the Only Voice*，导演：唐丹鸿，2000
2. 老安，*The Love Life of Lao An*，导演：杨荔钠，2008
3. 恋曲，*A Song of Love, Maybe* ，导演：张赞波，2010
4. 流氓燕，*Hooligan Sparrow*，导演：王男栿，2016；同时放映《2010年 8月 26日 对叶海燕（流氓燕）的采访》*Ai Weiwei's Interview with Ye Haiyan on August 26*，导演：艾未未，2013
5. 3D动画短片《致刘霞》*A Poem to Liu Xia*，导演： Trish McAdam，2015，在每次活动的影片展映前放映。

另外，本文也会详细讨论由《姐姐》（Sister，导演：胡新宇，2007）及《麦收》（Wheat Harvest，导演：徐童，2008）所引发的纪录片伦理困境， 这两部纪录片由于伦理方面的考虑没有在该系列展映（Sniadecki 2014, 2015 ; Edwards 2015b; Lü 2018）。

我与纪录片参与者（电影人，影片主人公，或两种身份兼而有之）进行反思性的对话，为研究中国独立纪录片中的伦理议题开辟了讨论空间。讨论的议题包括：影片主人公在拍摄前、拍摄中及拍摄后的不同待遇；知情同意的问题；电影人对（影片主人公）的支持及其积极推动社会活动的决心；对展现家庭暴力及其他虐待行为的影片进行发行和展映的伦理思考；以及如何平衡隐私和公众知情权的关系问题。这些讨论都涉及到纪录片参与者立场的复杂性，以及隐私（即涉及内心的、个人的、家庭的，而且“私”也指私利或“不道德的”不宜公开的私欲 [McDougall and Hansson 2002, 3–24 页]）、痛苦和创伤在纪录片中的再现问题。本文用女权主义的方式来理解性、基于性别的暴力、女

性主体性在纪录片中的再现，以及电影人的伦理问题。这种女权主义视角区别于男性气质的、男性主导的、具有性别不对称性特点的影像再现（Evans 2009, 29–40 页）。性别不对称性甚至体现在描绘弱势群体的纪录片和文学作品中（如《麦收》的伦理争议）。女权主义视角在影像再现与论证（reasoning）中，承认女性气质和纪录片弱势参与者的经验。

将纪录片参与者的位置性理论化，需要我们在具体案例中的考量伦理实践而非泛泛而论（Nash 2012, 318–331 页）。通过分析我与纪录片参与者的对话、纪录片文本本身以及在港大举办的“情欲中国”系列活动中的映后交流记录，本文是对本土实践和电影人自我反思的经验研究， 也是是我对电影人、影片主人公、策展人、学者和女权主义活动家的立场进行理论化的尝试，希望借此可以推动纪录片参与者和研究者之间关于电影伦理的建设性对话。

本文提供了不同的视角来探讨中国独立纪录片中的女权主义立场性。1）电影人的关怀伦理立场，以及与影片主人公形成（亲密）团结立场；2）影片主人公从坦白和渴求的立场出发，从基于性别的暴力和歧视中重宣自主；3）电影人与影片主人公从不同的立场出发，通过发行控制来降低纪录片对主人公个人生活可能造成的负面影响; 4) 片中人物与电影人自我转变的演进, 因此恢复一度禁止的放映; 5) 从活跃分子立场出发的政治代言, 以及从电影人立场出发的艺术意义上的再现 (Spivak 1988)；6）理论与实践之间的紧张关系要求学者、电影人和活跃分子反思性别与知识生产的传统关系，置身于具体处境中进行讨论和落实纪录片伦理。

我认为在制作、展映、评论当下中国关于女性的纪录片中，有必要采取女权主义的关怀伦理。本文鼓励在纪录片电影参与者之间形成多重意义上的平等关系，以及通过电影语言的创新来处理中国独立纪录片面临的伦理困境和电影制作与展映可能遇到的限制。

在《喊叫与耳语》(Outcry and Whisper, 导演: 闻海、曾金燕和 Trish McAdam, 2020) 中, 我对着镜头自言自语, 保护自己免于崩溃, 被软禁的记忆以及曾经遭受的政治和性别暴力让我极其痛苦。这种反复的自言自语, 以视频日记的形式, 表现出对一个脆弱的年轻女性的隐私、尊严和力量的触觉关怀及保护, 以及她在绝望时对善意和爱的渴望。作为本文作者, 我自身的立场也兼具电影人、影片主人公、策展人、学者和女权主义活动家等多重身份。

关怀与女权主义团结立场

电影人、学者史杰鹏（JP Sniadecki）鼓励我们将“关怀”、“责任感”和“人性”放在电影人与影片主人公关系的中心, 特别是针对那些记录、探讨中国社会的暴力、痛苦和不公正议题的影像（Snaidecki 2014，54，57 页）。关怀，作为女权主义团结的一个关键品质，可以在中国女权主义电影的突破性研究中看到，包括通过第一

人称视角纪录女性应对父权、专制及跨国权力的经历（Marchetti 2020; Yu 2020; Yu and Lebow 2020; Zhang 2020）。在张真的研究中（2020），文慧，作为资深电影人，先锋舞蹈家、舞台编导及多媒体艺术家，长期生活在她的前伴侣吴文光的阴影之下。文慧对草场地工作室及其著名的“民间记忆计划”的思想和艺术贡献一直被低估。[3] 在这种情况下，文慧导演了《听三奶奶讲过去的事情》（*Third Grandma's Stories*，2012）与《和三奶奶跳舞》（Dancing with Third Grandma，2015）。文慧将她“被遗忘的”三奶奶和自己的身体转换成了一个日常的舞台，通过激活、表演和存档自传性影像而重构父权制之外的女性亲缘关系，同时治愈文慧现在的和三奶奶过去的创伤。女性表达在这两部纪录片中得到了集中体现，主人公的亲缘关系通过女性对出生、家庭关系、记忆和日常生活中的一系列经验得以重建。文慧和三奶奶在镜头前的日常对话、游戏、玩乐及与家庭用品互动的身体动作 / 表演中，传递着对彼此的触觉关怀。因此，这两部纪录片创建了一种亲密的公共空间（Zhang 2020），一种超越公共、半公共和私人的新的电影社会空间（Berry and Lü and Rofel 2010; Robison 2010; Robinson 2012; Edwards 2015a）。

《流氓燕》表现了女权主义抗争儿童性侵的抗争及当局对活动家的政治打压（Marchetti，2020）。年轻的纽约华裔电影人王男楸并没有将她自己的电影制作经历加入早期剪辑中（Zeng and Tan 2019, 126–133 页）。后来，她把自己的拍摄过程作为影片的一条故事线来呈现，这是对导演本人女权主义自我觉醒的记录，也是对本土女权主义活动家对抗强奸文化和政府系统不作为的见证，还是女权主义活动家在艺术与社会活动、中国与世界间进行文化协商。[4] 在银幕上，导演是作为影片主人公的女权主义电影人。在银幕下，王男楸不仅成功地将电影故事带到了世界，还将十几岁的雅欣——主人公叶海燕的女儿，由于当局对其社会活动的惩罚，叶海燕多次被审查，被强行赶出家门，被禁止国际旅行（Ye 2021, 153–156 页）——带到美国读中学。之后，王男楸编辑了短视频，呼吁释放当时被监禁的律师王宇和业余电影人晃（即活跃人士邓传彬，又名晃晃，片中名为晃），他们也参与了《流氓燕》中女权主义活动。影片主人公“我”、“她”及“ta 们”的女权主义抗争成为了“我们的”抗争，在银幕内外相互支持照顾，团结一心（Marchetti 2020）。

文慧纪录片中具有触感的影像再现将关怀集中在女性的表达上，建构了历史的和女性亲缘关系的“民间”（在人民之间的，非官方的，非机构的，见（Veg 2019））。电影人在《流氓燕》中对主人公的生活和女权主义活动的投入，展示了女权主义的团结伦理。标题“流氓燕”也取自主人公叶海燕的网名。在《2010 年 8 月 26 日对叶海燕的采访》一片里，尽管叶海燕曾经遭受了很多基于性别的暴力，她在艾未未的视频采访中呈现的恢复女性自主的自白，打动了采访者和观众。

主人公坦白与渴求的立场

艾未未说，《2010 年 8 月 26 日对叶海燕的采访》（简称《采访》）是在“关于她（叶海燕）有很多争议，我想了解她”的前提下进行的。[5] 这部纪录片于 2013 年 6 月 3 日在 YouTube 上发布，当时叶海燕因抗议《流氓燕》中纪录的儿童性侵而被拘留。为了对叶海燕这一人物进行更丰富的再现和探索，“情

欲中国”展映系列一起放映了这两部纪录片，进一步探讨基于性别的暴力、性、性资本、欲望和纪录片再现等议题（Zeng 2016a）。《采访》是一部访谈式的视频纪录影像。叶海燕坐在艾未未北京工作室的椅子上，面对固定不动的摄像机。艾未未的采访问题则通过字幕呈现，这使得叶海燕的谈话类似于个人独白。艾未未的采访问题引导叶海燕做自我介绍；解释她的离婚以及对婚姻和衰老的看法；分享其他女性遭遇的性暴力经历；回忆她的性别觉醒过程；详细介绍性工作的收入和策略；讨论她作为单亲母亲的经历；讨论她对女性歧视现象的态度；讲述针对性工作者的暴力和警察的反应；解释她的性工作合法化主张和警察对性工作者的打压。

在《采访》中，叶海燕讲述并反思了她与性暴力受害者污名化作斗争的经历。她详细介绍了自己的身份：性工作者、倡导性工作者权利的活动家，性解放先锋以及享受性快感的“荡妇”。她认为自己是一个积极主动的活动家，为其他遭遇性暴力和歧视的性工作“姐妹们”说话；是一个自学成才的民间非盈利组织工作人员，能够进行民间组织和独立思考； 是一个思想开放的，在各个层面上解放了自己的独立女性。在讲述自己公开转变为性工作者的经历时，她回忆起一位香港性工作者活动家的问题：你能不能接受自己是一个性工作者，（如果）你连自己都不能够接受，你怎么样去反对对性工作者的歧视？（3’55’’）。叶海燕解释说，为了帮那些来自贫困家庭、在暴力和不安全环境下工作的性工作者做宣传，她开始做性工作，并公开宣称自己是性工作者。

在我 2016 年对叶海燕的采访中，叶海燕说，她不仅仅是艾未未的崇拜者，艾未未还是她理想中的伴侣类型。她还开“玩笑”说，有一天她可能会和艾未未上床，这是一种“转发（retweet）”艾未未的艺术家戏谑者角色（Callahan 2014; Qian 2014）。《采访》在某种程度上可以看作是叶海燕写给艾未未的微妙情书。通过分享她对做性工作时身心分离的理解（Ning 2002, 2004, 2006），她传达了自己有能力保持自主性的信息，表达寻找像艾未未那样的知己的愿望。采访者艾未未和被访者叶海燕之间想象的和实际的关系，促使叶海燕在视频采访中呈现出她内心最真实的自我，从而对采访者和观众产生了强烈的诉求。在艾未未的凝视下，同时也是作为社会强者的男性凝视下，她在这封半个人半公开的视频信中成为了一个渴望得到采访者对等回应的自白者。

尽管有上述处境，叶海燕在《采访》中的自白很有力量，因为它采用了非政府组织赋权的方式和词汇，描述了基层女性的集体痛苦，尤其是她们在面对性暴力时的脆弱。叶海燕的诉求立场立足于展示女性在认识女性欲望、处理性暴力和建立自主权方面的能动性。像叶海燕这样的女性即使经历了性暴力和歧视，但仍能够自愈，并组织他人进行自助和互助，动员公众进行社会变革，倡导人人平等，尤其是女孩、女性和性工作者应该享有的平等地位。

由于叶海燕在网上公开为性工作者、妇女和儿童争取权益，《采访》在网上广泛流传。关于发行，也有不同的情况和考虑，一些电影人担心对“非常规的”欲望和亲密生活的记录会对主人公的生活产生负面影响，因此严格控制影片的发行。

电影人的立场：知情同意与发行风险

纪录片主人公们，是否真的了解向电影人提供拍摄的知情同意对他们的生活可能产生何种影响？主人公们是否了解自己的影像会用于什么样的语境？电影人，特别是民族志电影人，在拍摄过程中是否清楚地知道他们将做出的影片是怎样的？最后，纪录片主人公们真的能控制自己的影像通过何种方式（线上及线下）传播吗？虽然纪录片主人公几乎没有直接参与过伦理问题的讨论（除了涉及论题的场景被剪辑进影片的情况），但有些电影人确实为影片主人公进行了这些考虑。电影人杨荔钠（《老安》）和张赞波（《恋曲》）在 2016 年“情欲中国”系列活动中反思了纪录片的伦理困境。[6] 这两部纪录片都从传统意义上“不道德的”婚外恋角度表现情感和欲望故事。两位电影人透露，她 / 他们在剪辑过程中都邀请了主人公观看被拍摄的影像，从而使主人公了解影像中的自己。因此，随着这种微妙的知情同意的不断发展，电影人和主人公共同创作了纪录片。这两位电影人都严格控制放映，选择不在中国内地发行影片，以减少政治力量及社会舆论对主人公个人生活的影响。杨荔钠在《老安》的映后讨论中明确表示（CIDL 的记录稿，2016 年 10 月 22 日）：

> 这些当事人都很不介意我放映。但是我很清楚他们对于媒体的理解肯定不是我们想像的那样，他们想不到那种传播的力量。

当影片主人公们选择向公众展示自己“不道德的”立场时，她 / 他们从自己的角度挑衅公众或有目的地使她 / 他们有争议的行为合法化。这种观点往往与其他影片主人公的利益相左，比如那些面对丈夫有婚外情的妻子。如果电影人从一个影片主人公的利益出发，则可能会对其他主人公造成伤害，或者往往利害兼具。因此，严格控制发行成为一些电影人的选择，而影片主人公们可能没有意识到这样的关怀伦理。

主人公的立场：禁止放映

隐私一词传达了一个内在的、个人的和家庭的概念（Zarrow 2002, 121–146 页；Yuan and Feng and Danowski 2013, 1011–1031 页），这是一个不允许被外人干预的领域，特别是当下在个体化和跨国主义的语境下生活的中产女性有这样明确的隐私观念（Yan 2003, 2010; Zheng 2013）。说到隐私问题，《姐姐》的主人公，也是纪录片导演胡新宇的姐姐，明确表示，如果导演继续放映《姐姐》，他将被起诉。[7] 对于拍摄过程，胡新宇的家人认为他是随意拍着“玩”的。[8] 他们并不知道胡新宇作为一个电影人的身份，也不知道他的纪录片《姐姐》、《家庭恐惧》（Family Phobia，导演：胡新宇，2008）及他正在进行的基于家庭影像的制作计划。[9] 对胡新宇来说，他不喜欢摄像机作为“上帝的眼睛”，而是“享受摄像机前后的平等关系”——根据胡新宇的解释，他的主人公并不知道这些镜头将被用于影片中促成了这种相对平等。他承认，在年青一代的眼光来看，这种处理纪录片电影人和主人公关系的方式可能存在“道德”问题。但对于“像我这样在人文领域工作多年的老人”，胡新宇说他更关心的是把电影创作视为一种艺术。他声称电影人和电影都没有立场。胡新宇把他的私人影像称为“抽

屉电影”，不是为了现在发行，而是为了在将来观看。

《姐姐》详细描述了一段紧张的母女关系。这部影片记录了之前一直在日本和中国、与她的中国父亲和日本继母生活的一个青春期女孩，刚搬到美国，与她的母亲和美国继父开始一起生活的经历。在处理这些母女关系冲突时，作为母亲的主人公在前一段婚姻中长期经历家庭暴力的记忆被唤醒了。《姐姐》确实带来了治愈和救赎——产生一系列基于新的现代家庭价值观的救赎行为：美国丈夫决定不再保持沉默，在与继女的对话中，表达对妻子的关心和爱护，说“我崇拜这个女人”，他也尊重继女作为一个平等沟通而非有代际权威差别的对话者。女儿明确表示，她希望作为女儿得到母亲的理解和认可，而不是作为父亲（曾经虐待母亲）的附属品，她关心母亲（比如省钱），而并非通过提及她与父亲和继母的生活经历来伤害母亲。例如，她很喜欢日本继母做的食物，因为她是一个全职家庭主妇，日本继母做的食物比在美国工作的母亲做的好吃。母亲在与女儿的谈话中承诺，在这个新的华裔美国人家庭的日常生活中，忘记这些小事（以及过去的创伤），并调整自己在处理母女关系中的错误方式。

母女俩在片中与对方和解，在跨国的语境下，用爱和关怀疗愈对方的痛苦，构建新的母女关系。《姐姐》表现了现代中国和日本社会中的传统父权文化，特别是在导演的系列纪录片《家庭恐惧症》里，我们可以看到原生家庭的互动也是明显具有暴力内容与形式的亲密关系模式。同时，治愈和救赎是由片中的美国丈夫来调解的，而非中国导演平静（或冷酷）的观察性镜头。在镜头前，导演偶尔会与新来的东亚少女合谋谴责她母亲的“错误行为”。拍摄者从一个与他姐姐的观点相左的角度为他的侄女提供了情感支持，反之亦然。同时，有一个片段是导演从相对远的距离拍摄另一场激烈的母女争吵——显然是在主人公没有意识到的情况下。导演突然放大争吵后姐姐独处时的脸部特写，摄像机镜头晃动，让观众体会到姐姐的痛苦和情绪波动，以及可能是导演自己的情感表达——试图透过镜头安慰他心爱的姐姐。[10] 然而，《姐姐》中这种短暂且罕见的触觉温柔——类似的影像并没有在《家庭恐惧症》及其平静的观察性镜头中出现——也并没有改变主人公姐姐禁止发行的决定。考虑到自己的个人生活有可能会被对家庭暴力、家庭和亲密关系持有传统观念的公众评判，《姐姐》中的母亲主人公决心运用法律手段禁止影片发行放映。在银幕外，新家庭关系的关怀伦理预告着母女之间的和解。

演变的立场：片中人物与电影人自我转变

纪录片可以作为一面镜子，让主人公看到自己、记忆和个人 / 集体的创伤（Jin 2013, 209–222 页）。在处理记忆和痛苦的过程中，影片可能是一些主人公的盾牌，也可能是其他主人公的利剑——特别是对那些（不）愿意接受自我和自我转变的主人公。唐丹鸿，《夜莺不是唯一的歌喉》的导演同时也是主人公之一，决定在 2016 年的“情欲中国”活动中重新放映这部纪录片。在此之前，这部电影大约有 15 年没有公开放映，原因是为了减轻唐丹鸿的痛苦，避免她和父母之间的关系进一步紧张，尽管“私密的悲痛并不真的私密”（Tang Danhong in Zeng and Tang 2021, 236 页 ）。在影片中，

唐丹鸿要求她的父母给她一个可以接受的答案，来解释在儿童时期父母对她的虐待。在文化大革命期间，身为知识分子的父母遭受了公共政治暴力。父母解释了他们过去的经历，与解释唐丹鸿作为一个孩子被虐待的经历没有什么不同。他们用被迫害的政治经历为自己的家庭互动辩护——在唐丹鸿看来，这两者都是暴力的。她的父母对这部纪录片充满了敌意。

在前往香港参加放映活动之前，唐丹鸿于 2016 年 9 月 21 日在她的 Facebook 账户上写道。[11]

> 有些瞬间，比如死海白得刺目的盐岸，干燥荒凉的内盖夫沙漠，摆满斑斓果蔬、干酪、腌鱼和腌橄榄的特拉维夫市场，或揪住衣角要我买巧克力蛋的孩子…都会让我怀疑和庆幸，十多年前拍《夜莺》的那个唐丹鸿已经死了，或者说终于重生。

在大约十五年没有放映/观看影片后，唐丹鸿在2016年“情欲中国”的展映中观看自己的影像。放映结束后，唐丹鸿于2016年10月17日在Facebook上转发了一首写于2002年8月的诗与这张照片（图3），以评论她在香港放映时的银幕形象。

《你知道她是谁吗》

她是一张人脸上的谁?
她是一朵花上的什么?
她是你怀中的怎样?
她是死亡的光芒正在勃起——
她是被切割的，被分解的——
在自己的子宫——
在天堂的地下室——
看见你跨栏，撑杆一跳
看见了你的黑和全部的美
你知道她是谁吗?
她是你的爱人和女友中的一个

是丹鸿我——
你的表妹或婶婶
是我们乱伦的全家

若干年后，唐丹鸿自己也成了母亲，在以色列过着流亡生活。唐丹鸿回忆说，她的母亲写了一本回忆录和一封信来回应电影《夜莺》：“正是因为我拍了《夜莺》，指责她不保护我，所以她要告诉我她经历的磨难和奋斗，要让我领悟……”（Zeng and Tang 2021, 234 页）。通过回忆录，唐丹鸿意识到她的母亲为了自我保护，在童年时期把自己封闭起来，母亲的创伤性记忆对他们家庭关系产生了深远影响。在回忆录中，唐的母亲说，在 20 世纪 50 年代的土改运动中，她还是个孩子，被共产党的干部带走寻找自己躲起来免得被批斗迫害的地主母亲。在找了一个多月都没有找到母亲的情况下，唐丹鸿的妈妈亲眼看到，愤怒的干部粗暴地从坟墓中铲下她祖母的头，而当时她还只是一个年幼的女学生。“就在‘情欲中国’放映前，我重读了母亲的这篇自传性文字，开始领悟她的命运与我的命运的关系……她一直以为自己所遭遇的一切，是她的错，生而有罪。她逐渐断绝了与母亲和姐姐的关系……”（Tang Danhong in Zeng and Tang 2021, 234 页）。在家庭关系中，母亲非常崇拜她的丈夫，期待他的保护，并把他的家庭暴力解释为对他们的孩子唐丹鸿的一种爱。

我（策展人）和唐丹鸿之间进行了长达一年的映前对话，以及唐丹鸿和她在香港的观众之间的一次映后讨论（Zeng and Tang 2021, 228–237 页），让唐丹鸿得以重新处理她因电影的剪辑和结局而“心烦意乱地缝合”的伤口。[12] 之后，唐丹鸿在她的写作和电影创作中，致力于研究与政治创伤有关的家庭记忆，关于她自己、她的母亲和她的姨妈们的故事（Zeng and Tang 2021, 232 页）。从女性家庭成员的立场和生活经历出发，她尝试在治愈个人创伤和书写 1949 年以来中国政治运动的家庭历史时，建立一种新的女性亲缘关系（Zhang 2020, 7, 10, 12, 17 页）。

数字时代：政治代言的立场与艺术再现的立场

大多数关于中国纪录片的伦理争议都集中在对以下几个概念的不同解读：作者性（导演作为作者，另一种是导演视片中人物为创作上的合作伙伴），（非正式的）知情同意，以及片中传达的与主流价值观或国家意识形态相悖的新价值观（Edwards 2015b；Sniadecki 2015）。然而，在数字时代，电影自身作为政治代言的立场与其艺术再现的立场之间的紧张关系不但没有很好地解决，而且容易更加紧张。电影学者吕新雨在她 2018 年的文章中讨论《麦收》的伦理争议时，认为中国的女权主义本身有问题。《麦收》的争议（Edwards 2015b; Sniadecki 2015; Lü 2018），除了涉及电影导演和发行人员与影片主人公和她们的支持者（性工作者，台湾和香港的性工作者非政府组织，以及女权团体）之间的权力斗争；同时涉及知情同意问题、对性工作者隐私的侵犯、由于纪录片的播放影片主人公可能会遭受安全威胁，以及围绕代言性工作者产生的一系列权力转移变化等问题。影片主人公们声称，直到该片 2009 年在云之南纪录影像展首映时，她们才知道徐童在拍摄电影（她们之前误以为电影人是潜在的客户）。[13] 从我的女性主义视角来看，《麦收》强有力地展现了一位农村

女性（主人公 M）的银幕形象，她通过在国际大都市北京郊区从事性工作获得了个体独立和能动性。[14] 作为一个来自社会底层的现代中国女性，M 的主体性通过她在农村家乡和北京城市之间活动的影像浮现出来。然而，性工作在中国是非法的，参与者受到公众歧视，这给主人公带来了巨大的法律风险、遭受基于性别的暴力的威胁（《采访》中叶海燕详述了针对“小姐”即性工作者的暴力）和道德挑战。如果主人公有其他的工作选择，她们会为了有报偿的性快感选择继续从事性工作或是自我解放呢？[15] 此外，与叶海燕当时的情况不同的是，《麦收》的主人公们只是性工作者，而非拥有多重身份和收入来源的活动家。

尽管《麦收》的主人公们提出了三点要求——“删除网上宣传、禁止大陆播映、（给主人公们）看片”， 在独立电影界的一些策展人、发行商和学者的支持下，徐童选择继续放映《麦收》。[16] 徐童以他代言社会底层弱势群体的纪录片声明而闻名，或者用谢枫的话来说（Kraicer 2011），实质是通过镜头偷窥，站在一个优势位置上剥削了主人公。虽然徐童承诺这部纪录片不会在中国与网上放映（Lü 2018, 303 页），但这部影片后来被上传到多个互联网平台供公众观看（现在仍然可以看到），如 YouTube、Bilibili 和搜狐视频。支持影片主人公们禁止放映《麦收》的性工作者活动团体，采取行动干扰其线下放映活动及 2011 年在复旦大学举行的学术会议，吕新雨的文章中记录了这些过程（Lü 2018）。女权主义者怒不可遏，因为“不同意”放映是影片主人公们的原则，但却被阐释为在电影制作或学术讨论的名义下进行的放映是获得许可的。吕新雨质疑女性主义者对《麦收》的不容忍，是基于“道德判断”或“道德审判”的敌对态度，以及缺乏公开讨论的意愿（Lü 2018, 296–308 页）。回到关于这部纪录片的基本情况：令人遗憾和质疑的是，导演徐童和他的支持者们拒绝承认影片主人公的深层焦虑与性工作者在屏幕外的边缘社会地位相关，也没有向主人公展示这部纪录片。徐童对主人公们诉求的拒绝，一定程度上也是他对女权主义者敌视这部电影的应激反应，同时这也反映在这部纪录片的再现策略上，以及数字时代电影人对主人公傲慢和剥削的态度。例如，从影片中删除主人公家乡的详细地址（用来保护隐私）并非纪录片的叙事难题，更不用说在发行和流媒体放映的风险中寻求平衡。

此外，《麦收》中性工作者的主体性与社会团体支持主人公请求禁止影片放映的政治行动之间也存在紧张的关系，这也说明了活跃分子的审美和政治困境。在得知《流氓燕》获得奥斯卡提名但没有获奖时，主人公叶海燕感到某种压力的缓解，但这并不能缓解她在日常生活中所遭受的政治压迫和孤立（Marchetti 2020, 42 页）。最近几年，由于政府压制叶海燕无法开展组织化、网络化的行动，叶海燕的网络言论也受到严密审查、删除发表流通严重受限，她转向画画等独立艺术创作。叶海燕把“沉默”作为一种（自我）审查的策略（Ristivojevic 2021, 165–169 页 ; Ye 2021, 153–156 页），这是一种具有长远眼光的行动主义实践，她把政治孤立和压迫下的日常生存放在首位（Cui 2012, 79–94 页）。在政治学中，根据社会活动的政治逻辑和世俗生活的现实目标来代言被压迫者，可能会以牺牲底层人民自己的声音为代价；在哲学和艺术中，斯皮瓦克肯定了底层无需政治代言也可以自己发声（Spivak 1988；Zeng 2013）。《麦收》的争议应该促使电影人反思自己对主人公世俗生活的关怀。它也促使活动家们注意为底层的政治代言的问题，学会在工作中让被剥夺群体的声音得

到再现而非被代言淹没——在艺术与哲学意义上的再现。

《致刘霞》这部影片是为了从艺术和政治上表现刘霞而创作。首先，刘霞在中国是被禁的艺术家（诗人、摄影师和画家），也是诺贝尔和平奖得主刘晓波的遗孀。2017 年，刘晓波因“煽动颠覆国家政权”罪被判入狱 11 年，服刑期间去世。自 2008 年刘晓波最后一次被捕以来，刘霞一直处于被软禁状态，直到 2018 年流亡到德国。在过去的几十年里，她被非政府组织、媒体和公众反复提及，但往往、仅仅是作为一个政治异见者的“妻子”，而她自己的主体性已被淡化，甚至被从这种论述中抹去。我写了一个脚本，与视觉艺术家 Trish McAdam 和她的 3D 动画团队合作，用刘霞的摄影作品表现她自己，以便她通过自己的视觉作品为自己发声。她首先是一位被禁的艺术家，一位政治暴力的直接受害者和幸存者，然后才是刘晓波的妻子。考虑到我的采访对象可能面对的政治风险，我们决定使用 3D 动画——采访视频影像则成为创作的研究材料。这部动画短片于 2015 年国际妇女节发布。通过网络传播、画廊放映和爱尔兰艺术委员会活动的方式，我们向刘霞传递了一个信息：她和她的艺术没有被遗忘，她受到世界各地朋友的深切喜爱和关心。这部动画短片，连同一台小型相机，通过活动家的途径成功地送到了她的手中，以方便她在被软禁期间进行摄影工作，具体细节现在还不能详细说明。

女权主义团结立场，特别是（女权主义者的）关怀和支持，在《流氓燕》和《致刘霞》的银幕上下形成，这表现为从审美的角度拒绝社会运动作为一种体制的逻辑具有暴力的一面，拒绝仅仅为政治目的而进行的代言，以及拒绝摄像机对主人公脆弱的现实生活的侵入——所有这些都是以电影制作的名义。

理论与实践之间的紧张关系

对纪录片作者立场的讨论往往会引发电影人和学者之间的紧张关系（Kraicer 2011; Sniadecki 2014; Edwards 2015b）。这种紧张关系揭示了女权主义的问题：1）无论参与者是何种生理性别，智识主义，抑或说文化和思想的生产的传统，存在性别不对称（Evans 2009; Kirkpatrick 2019）；2）压制女性纪录片参与者的声音，以及在表现女性经验时对性别偏见和暴力的不敏感；3）在学者 / 批评家 – 电影人 – 活动家、电影人 – 影片主人公、影片主人公 – 活动家的互动中，支配与被支配关系主导了解读和被解读、代言和被代言的关系。对电影学者吕新雨（虽然其生理上是女性）的批评，总体上反映了（具有男性气质的）纪录片伦理理论和（具有流动性、个体性、多样性和不连续性的）实践之间的紧张关系。在 2011 年第八届中国独立影像展上，电影人在讨论中国纪录片中“底层”人的再现时，对学者吕新雨的分析性语言倍感疏离、隔阂，但他们却没有机会在研讨会正式议程上发言表达自己的观点（Kraicer 2011）。这种紧张关系引发了导演们以大字报的形式起草“萨满·动物”声明，用自己的语言详细描述了导演的种种立场（Kraicer 2011）：拒绝从一个充满优越感的“高”立场对“底层”进行拍摄（导演主张平等的立场），拒绝承认影片主人公也是影像创作的参与者（作者态度占主导），以及（从业者）质疑 90 年代和 21 世纪初的理论方法与当前散漫的纪录片实践的相关性。

2011 年复旦大学的学术会议原本计划放映《麦收》，女权主义者（主要由《女权之声》的主编吕频发声，吕频在 2015 年“女权五人组”被捕后流亡美国（Karl et al. 2015; Wang 2015）与学者吕新雨就谁有权使用“我们”进行了辩论，都批评对方（和电影人）站在中产阶级立场上再现性工作者（Lü 2018）。她们的争论一方面为智识主义的重构开拓了一个思辨的空间，另一方面也试图为知识分子夺取代言的话语权。影片中的性工作者主人公们只有一个简单明确的原则，就是对放映说“不”，但这一声音在数字时代的学院派和电影制作的修辞中，以及不作为的发行管理中被淡化。吕新雨旨在恢复女权主义中的“阶级”和“社会主义”相关 理论，并质疑“为什么中国没有女权主义女性导演”（2018）。这又是一个女权主义者、电影人和某些学院派学者沟通失败的例子。实践者不愿意在独立电影制作中使用抽象的、宏大的、或是说是阶级（斗争）的概念，而往往是从个体出发，尤其是从边缘人物的视角着手，在非连续性中探究历史（Veg 2019）。许多女性电影人和学者也使用种种微妙的（妥协性的）策略，以应对在男性主导的知识界和电影制作界工作的压力（Wang 2021）。

我对遭遇纪录片伦理争议的电影人、评论家、学者、影片主人公和活动家提出的问题是，在实践中，我们要采用什么样的方式关怀纪录片参与者（从世俗生活和电影语言的角度）？要如何结合具体的案例和背景来落实关怀，而不是仅仅将抽象的概念作为解决问题和将问题理论化的工具？[17] 作为一个女权主义学者，我理解在视觉艺术和理论中，取消性别类别和模糊性别可以作为一种批判本质主义的策略。这样一来，生理性别不同的人类就不需要按照性别规范来演绎自己的行为（正如朱迪·巴特勒所主张的）。然而，纪录片是一门涉及现实生活中真实人物的艺术，真实的人与生活是依靠关怀伦理维系的。人是纪录片制作的目的，而不是艺术的工具。此外，历史和当代社会结构中的智识主义，不能通过不“看到”性别来否认知识生产与性别的关系（Evans 2009）。伊万斯（Mary Evans）提出“女性能成为知识分子吗”这一问题，并指出体制性的“在思想传统中女性以及女性气质被边缘化”（Evans 2009, 39 页 ）。在纪录片领域也是如此。我解决这一问题的女权主义方法是，进一步打开尽可能多的公共空间和另类空间，并针对现有规范问题化（problematise）性别和纪录片伦理理论之间的关系。

迈向女权主义立场性

本文分析了纪录片导演、影片主人公、学者和活动家在处理欲望、隐私、自我转变、暴力、创伤、记忆、边缘社会群体的脆弱性以及理论与实践之间紧张关系等方面的不同立场。女权主义的关怀、支持和团结的方法，将服务于未来的纪录片关系实践和再现策略，从而使电影制作过程民主化——纪录片作为一种社会调查的方法——并使电影人和影片主人公，学者 -电影人和活动家 -影片主人公之间的关系平等化。本文提倡女权主义的立场性，平等地尊重作为电影制作伙伴的影片主人公，即使她们的声音可能很微弱；在电影人和影片主人公合作的电影制作中，共同探索主人公的主体性和纪录片的作者身份；以关怀和支持为实践的核心，避免因纪录片的制作和发行而产生的暴力进一步渗透到影片主人公的日常生活中；将理论置于具体语境中分析，而不是将抽象的理论直接应用于具体案例。在再现策略的问题上，作为电影人和作家，我认为纪录片拍摄和剪辑的所有限制，都可以转变成电

影语言创新的潜在元素，在艺术与政治意义上，推进对社会边缘群体尤其是女性的再现——这种女权主义的立场性回应了“底层能发声吗”这一经典问题 (Spivak 1988)。

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注释

1 这一系列展映是由我（当时的性别与性研究博士生）和我的博士生导师、香港大学社会工作及社会行政学系的何式凝教授共同策展的。它由中国独立纪录片研究会（CIDL, 香港, 2014-2020年）组织, 并由几个机构和高校赞助, 包括: 香港大学、香港中文大学中国研究服务中心、香港CNEX（Chinese Next and See Next）和CCFD-Terre Solidaire（巴黎）。该系列的文字记录和后期编辑得到香港大学的中国传媒项目支持。

2 来自2016年“情欲中国”场刊中策展人的话。

3 关于女性的文化/思想工作如何被其男性伴侣所削弱, 甚至被抹杀的讨论, 见Evans （2009）和Kirkpatrick （2019）。我将在“理论与实践之间的紧张关系”章节进一步讨论。

4 艾未未作为活动家和艺术家的角色被学者用“中介”这一概念来讨论（Callahan 2014; Cheek 2014）。艾未未是王男枞电影制作和跨国社会活动的灵感来源（Marchetti 2020）。

5 个人交流, 2021年4月15日。艾未未购买了2013年叶海燕抗议后被警察强制驱逐时遗弃的物品, 并于2014年在布鲁克林博物馆展出名为《叶海燕的物品》的装置艺术。

6 张赞波的纪录片《有一种静叫庄严》（2012）讲述了一个地方政府官员在法律体系失调的情况下, 在北京拦截家乡的上访者。“上访这一现象可以追溯到中国各个朝代, 当时任何臣民如果觉得当地官员有不公正的行为, 理论上都有权利向皇帝请愿” （Edwards, 2015b, p. 145）。政府拦截（上访）的做法常常伴随着暴力, 这在中国的语境下被广泛接受并被看做是政府迫切实施政治议程的法外手段: 维稳（Lee and Zhang, 2013）。例如, 艾未未工作室2013年的纪录片《喜梅》描述了当地政府官员为了阻止女主人公喜梅上访而与她同住。喜梅是一名艾滋病患者及活动家， 而男性官员居然与她睡在同一张炕上。张赞波的主人公截访者在纪录片中提供了截访的细节和他自己的看法, 包括公开批评超越法律和道德底线的截访行为, 以及政府对截访行为进行“私人”批评的惩罚, 这些都可能会对他的生活和工作产生毁灭性的影响。Edwards的文章讨论了赵亮的纪录片《上访》（2009）的伦理问题。在我的书中, 我讨论了银幕中上访者的母女关系, 以及中国传统女性身份（和美德）与女性上访者对现代公民权利的追求之间的紧张关系（例如导演冯艳2007年的纪录片《秉爱》）（Zeng, 2016b）。

7 胡新宇对我（策展人）解释《姐姐》不能接受2016年 “情欲中国”系列邀请的原因。

8 胡新宇, 个人交流, 2021年4月16日。这也是本段后面引文的来源。

9 胡新宇的哥哥知道他在拍电影, 他的姐姐知道《姐姐》这部纪录片。

10 电影人赵亮在《上访》的映后讨论中说, 他对一个年迈的上访者的脸和另一个病人的腿和眼睛的超常规特写, 是电影人对遭受苦难的主人公的“温柔触摸”。一位观众认为, 对主人公残酷现实进行放大体现了纪录片的残酷, 也体现了电影人在表现他与影片主人公的关系时的残酷。来自CIDL的映后交流记录, 2015年7月25日。

11 唐丹鸿同意在本文中使用她的这两篇Facebook帖子。感谢诗人和艺术家Ian Boyden将唐丹鸿的两篇帖子翻译成英文。

12 引自诗人翟永明的话, 转引自Zeng and Tang （2021）。

13 见Edwards （2015b）; Sniadecki （2015）和Nüquan zhi sheng （2012）的讨论。

14 关于性工作者能动性的讨论, 见Ding （2008, 2012）; Ding and Ho （2012）。

15 性解放和性工作者权利倡导者叶海燕已对女性性行为的复杂性和倡导性工作者的身份政治进行论述。见Zeng （2016a）; Ye （2021）。

16 Nüquan zhi sheng （2012）.

17 技术是Michel Foucault在研究希腊的关怀精神时使用的一个术语。见Foucault （1988b, 1988a, 1999）; Heubel （2010）.

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Keyword: Ethics

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Abstract

This article briefly introduces and evaluates the ethical issues Chinese independent cinema has encountered since it was born. I examine the changes in the boundaries of ethics in defining the concept of 'Chinese independent cinema'.

Does Chinese independent cinema have its own unique ethics? I think at least it has its own unique ethical issues. When we have defined the term 'independent', independent cinema has set itself up with corresponding ethical requirements. The connotation of independence in independent cinema has different meanings in different countries. In the field of Chinese independent cinema, the early concept of independence was derived from a specific historical background. It meant that the production of films was no longer dependent on the old television system and the state-run film studios. It developed its own, new production path, and it also required the subjectivity of the filmmakers. 'I made an independent film' – the question is, is it really an independent film that you made? Can you really call yourself 'independent'? Are you praising yourself for the purity of your filmmaking process, your good motivations, and your ability to make unique works of art?

Therefore, independent cinema does not only require the filmmaker to just be intellectual in terms of the filmmaker's subjectivity and qualification, but it also requires moral awareness. For the limited audience of Chinese independent cinema, independent cinema, which emerged in a unique historical context, must be truthful. It means that it should not endorse certain political ideas but measure and reset everything based on individual experiences and insights. It must express one's own unique experience and individuals' real struggles – all within a particular historical context. It also requires the filmmaker's talent, as well as their courage.

The filmmakers' artistic cultivation, perspicacity, moral awareness, and courage of expression are significant indicators for Chinese independent cinema, in which ethical issues are very firmly embedded. China's unique history of film and television development determines that the independent film, which emerged around 1990, has an important reference; it has its own enemy, the counterpart it must oppose and transcend – the film studio or television station. The primary ethical relationship

behind this is cinema's adherence to reality. I used to call Chinese independent cinema 'honest cinema' (诚实电影). Although since its beginning independent cinema has developed multiple dimensions, this very stringent requirement for realism dominated the ethos of independent cinema for a long time.

Perhaps today, one would use philosophical terminology to discern the relationship between artistic creation and reality, debating in very profound terms about how unprecedented it is to bind cinema to reality. But that is how the history of independent cinema unfolded back then. It had a tremendous cultural impact at the time. And realism still has extraordinary meaning today. Although we cannot impose it on the filmmakers, we must provide space for its existence.

After its production practices and aesthetics had developed further, independent cinema began to be treated with more scepticism. The aesthetic issue was also an ethical issue. At the time, people thought that independent films were too keen on using long takes to present marginalised characters, the poor, and the vulnerable, such as thieves, prostitutes, and gangsters, which in fact indicated their lack of care for reality. Today, perhaps it still conveys the interests of male filmmakers, although caring for the bottom rungs of society is still their principal value.

Independent cinema began to shift gradually. It became more concerned with the 'mainstream' groups in society, with structural issues such as national politics, moving its camera to a certain extent from the poor, the vulnerable, and the suburbs, to the cities and the so-called mainstream groups.

Later on, after 2010, the primary ethical debates in the field of Chinese independent cinema mainly related to documentaries. In particular, the emergence of Xu Tong's (徐童) documentaries gradually brought about an awakening and a long-term debate on the ethics of Chinese independent documentaries. The work of other filmmakers, such as Wei Xiaobo (魏晓波), has also been discussed on various occasions. Can we 'exploit' the subject on such a scale and show the privacy of others to the audience? Of course, some asked, what if everything was done by consent but not by force? From my point of view, people had previously had some private conversations about independent documentaries. Still, ethical discussions had not become widespread, and ethical issues were rarely raised publicly, out of affection for, and in defence of, independent film. In screenings in Hong Kong and the documentary forum of the China Independent Film Festival (中国独立影像年度展) (CIFF) in 2011, this issue was brought up, which stimulated extensive discussion. In particular, the 2011 CIFF established a 'Real Character Award' (真实人物奖) (the first one went to Tang Xiaoyan [唐小雁] in *Fortune Teller* 算命 [dir. Xu Tong, 2009] and *Old Mr Tang*老唐头 [dir. Xu Tong, 2011], the second to Lao Hao in *Born in Beijing* 京生 [dir. Ma Li 马莉, 2011]), encouraging film subjects to come to the

fore and discuss together the ethical issues in documentaries, as well as the ontological issues such as the relationship between objective truth and represented truth in documentaries. The topic of ethics has since become more and more public. In terms of practice, the independent documentary circle has become more cautious when it comes to relevant subject matter and subjects, which in fact indicates that since then, people have gone through a process of ethical reflection.

Ethical issues in Chinese independent cinema are very complex, especially after independent film festivals were forced to shut down and independent production became increasingly difficult. Moreover, many independent filmmakers have extended their works into the (mainstream) theatrical realm, so the perception of ethics and the sense of self-discipline are also changing. The intervention of commercial capital and higher authorities has placed the field's ethical issues in a larger context, complicating them further. Many issues become increasingly unclear in changing contexts. I suggest that we do not generalise about the ethical issues of Chinese independent cinema but rather analyse them in the context of specific cases. We should consider the context of the time, historical change, and the development of a domestic moral consciousness. In this way, we could obtain constructive views rather than applying an absolute standard and value to everything.

Appendix: Explanation of the annual 'Real Character Award' (Wang Xiaolu, 2011)

The CIFF has created an award for the subjects filmed in documentaries: the annual 'Real Character Award'.

We mean by 'real character' here is a concept of 'archetypal character' (原型人物) that focuses on documentaries' subjects. The term 'archetypal character' is used here in recognition of the relationship between documentary and reality. This relationship is sometimes inevitable and ontological and sometimes unethical. When the archetypal character comes and communicates with us, we can see a reverse intervention. In documentary history, we are familiar with the director using footage of the subject to complete their intervention or interpretation of reality. Nowadays, the subject's presence often has the power to deconstruct the director's work. Of course, this is not necessarily the case.

The purpose of our annual 'Real Character Award' is therefore obvious – above all, we hope it could deepen our understanding of documentary ontology. Of course, we do not necessarily assume that the truth, as stated by the archetypal character, contains a higher authority than the truth as interpreted by the filmmaker. Meanwhile, this does not diminish the subjectivity of the documentary director, nor

does it deprive their right to subjective expression.

The establishment of the 'Real Character Award' is also based on recognising the particular stage which Chinese documentaries are at. With the development of Chinese independent documentaries over the past twenty years, more and more ethical disputes have emerged. We do not shy away from the fact that the 'Real Character Award' is intended to balance the filmmaker's authority in interpreting the footage. But we do not advocate an overly strict ethic; we want to create an atmosphere of negotiation.

Again, this 'Real Character' will bring out more dimensions of reality. We are willing to trace reality more deeply, to interact and facilitate dialogue with a richer reality. This intention seems to derive from outside the ontology of documentary. This is not the case. We hope that certain realities can be more fully expressed and presented. And the archetypal character has that power.

The above is part of our intention. So how do we choose the annual 'Real Character' – or the archetypal character? We want to see if the archetypal character can generate a certain kind of on-the-spot dialogue. He/she should potentially stimulate aesthetic and social discourse in academia.

We also consider how well he/she is represented as an archetypal character, both in his/her own life and in the documentary. We sometimes also need to consider the symbolic force he/she has in history and society, such as their profound representation of a certain aspect of contemporary reality. Of course, he/she may also be a historical figure.

The award does not encourage the artistic creativity of the filmmaker or the performance of the subject. It is more about looking at the archetypal character as a medium to expand scholarly discourse, calling for a warm and caring touch, and inspiring a kind of power to intervene in the present.

Tang Xiaoyan, winner of the first 'Real Character Award', as noted below:

> We're inspired by her expression in the film, that is, her courage to live, by the rich social issues she conveyed and by our doubts about her way of living in the film. Her presence will help explore the questions of the ontology and ethics of documentary, as well as to indicate our own existential situation.