

### **Recreating Old Shanghai--- Eileen Chang, Ang Lee *Lust, Caution***

“To me, no writer has ever used the Chinese language as cruelly as Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang), and no story of hers is as beautiful or as cruel as “Lust, Caution.” She revised the story for years and years--- for decades---returning to it as a criminal might return to the scene of a crime, or as a victim might reenact a trauma, reaching for pleasure only by varying and reimagining the pain. Making our film, we didn’t really “adapt” Zhang’s work, we simply kept returning to her theater of cruelty and love until we had enough to make a movie of it.”

---Ang Lee

### **Old Shanghai**

“There is no city in the world today with such a variety of architectural offerings, buildings which stand out in welcome contrast to their modern counterparts.”<sup>i</sup> The major treaty port and financial capital of Republican China from 1928 until 1949, Shanghai was a Westernized, semi-colonial metropolis under the rule of foreign imperialists who enjoyed extraterritorial and extractive rights in its foreign concessions.<sup>ii</sup> Shanghai has long been stereotyped as the prime bridgehead for foreign encroachment on China and as the most Westernized city of the country<sup>iii</sup>. Some notable western scholarship refers to Shanghai as “the other China,” “in China but not of it,” “a foreign city even in its own country”<sup>iv</sup>. Shanghai itself offered a contrast of old and new, Chinese and Western. In contrast to the previous studies, Lee claims that “For the Chinese, the foreign concessions represented not so much forbidden zones as the ‘other’ world---an exotic world of glitter and vice dominated by Western capitalism as summed up in the phrase *shili yangchang* (十里洋場, ‘ten-mile-long foreign zone’), which likewise had entered into the modern Chinese vocabulary.”<sup>v</sup>

Shanghai fell in November 1937. There were three Shanghais, with different governments and regulation systems, at that time: the International Settlement (dominated by the British), the French Concession, and the Chinese Municipality. Until December 8, 1941, the foreign areas remained outside Japanese rule, and in this “free zone” the film industry, along with other cultural enterprises, revived and prospered after the initial disruption. However, on the same day as the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese also took over the foreign

areas, including all of Shanghai. (Fu, p.68, 1997)<sup>vi</sup> A mere hundred years (compared to the massive Chinese history) from 1842 when the *Treaty of Nanjing* was signed to 1942 when Japanese occupation was established, witnessed a small village that relied on fishery surging into the oriental Paris.

### *Lust, Caution*

In this paper, I will work with Eileen Chang's short story *Lust, Caution* and its cinematic adaptation by Ang Lee. As David Lee, the co-producer of *Lust, Caution* (2007) claims, "Even before preproduction began on *Lust, Caution*, a great deal of attention was focused on the re-creation of Nanking [Nanjing] West Road to be featured in the movie, and it had to look exactly the same as it had in 1942, when most of this story takes place...", much attention was given to Old Shanghai in both works. In fact, Old Shanghai as the stage and background to these two texts played equally important roles in the story as any other actor.

The novella, *Lust, Caution*, was written in 1950, yet it was not published until 1979. It tells the story of Wang Jiazhi, a young actress that takes up the role of mistress to a Japanese collaborator, Mr. Yi, during the occupation of Shanghai in order to kill him in a plotted assassination. However she eventually falls in love with him, betrays her comrades to warn him of the danger, and allows for his escape. Later, Mr. Yi, has the whole group of plotters executed, including Wang.

Though never as widely read as her other stories, *Lust, Caution* is a work that contained more historical references and political intentions among her earlier works. After the novella was shifted to the big screen by award-winning director Lee, it caused yet another round of "Eileen Chang Fever 張愛玲熱" in Mainland China. This particular story was chosen for people not only constantly assumed that this is the work that reflects Chang's own life the most but also because the work as well as the film aroused the nostalgia of Old Shanghai for Chang and Lee as well as for their readers and viewers.

Similar to Chang (who was born in the French Concession in Shanghai, studied at the University of Hong Kong, wrote in her home city that had been occupied by the Japanese, and moved to the United States in her later years), Lee also shares a cross-cultural background, as he confessed, "To me, I'm a mixture of many things and a confusion of many things.... I'm not a native Taiwanese, so we're alien in Taiwan today, with the native Taiwanese pushing for independence. But when we go back to China, we're Taiwanese. Then, I live in the States; I'm sort of a foreigner everywhere. It's hard to find a real identity."<sup>vii</sup>. Lee's diasporic experiences originated from his experience living in Taiwan and the US and his knowledge of Mainland China deprived him of his national identity. At the same time, Lee's lack of national identity enables him to acquire a global identity. As Ding argues, "This knowledge and experience enable him to break up the boundaries of the artificial construct of national identity, and to show a positioning towards an unfixed, ambivalent and fragmented identity---an identity for the equality and co-existence of all people in the world."<sup>viii</sup>

In contrast with Lee's self-identification, Chang characterized herself as a Shanghai "petty urbanite". Her loyalty to this metropolis was only enhanced after she returned from war-ravaged Hong Kong in 1942, when she began to write. She conceded to her readers that even though she wrote stories about Hong Kong, she was thinking about her beloved Shanghai readers, to whom the stories were dedicated: "I love Shanghai people; I hope they like my books."<sup>ix</sup> She defined them as clever, sophisticated, good at flattery and chicanery but not to the excess. "Shanghai people are distilled from traditional Chinese people under the pressure of modern life; they are the product of a deformed mix of old and new culture. The result may not be healthy, but in it there is also a curious wisdom."<sup>x</sup>

Hence, Lee and Chang, though both share multi-national backgrounds, assume disparate self-identifications. When approaching the topic of remapping Old Shanghai in their works, due to their different identities, they had discordant

approaches and had distinctive reader/audience groups in their mind to share this imaginary city with. Here the city that embodies multi-national identities, transformed into the mirror, on which the two authors' self-identifications was reflected.

In this 26-page pages short story, Chang exhibited a multidimensional Old Shanghai to her readers. In the story, we travel along West Nanjing road in rickshaws; enter the mansions of the collaborators; linger in the café, theater, and jewelry shop. Meanwhile, Lee presented us his "cinematic 'reading' that deepens our understanding of Chang's philosophy, style, and aesthetic."<sup>xi</sup>

In the following sections, I will investigate the Old Shanghai created by Chang and Lee with focus on two specific scenes and how they were constructed differently to argue that *Lust, Caution*, substantially, expresses Chang's uneasiness towards Old Shanghai, the forced cultural hybrid and how she was addressing to typical urbanites like herself in her writings. I will also analyze how Lee, by adapting the story, created another Old Shanghai that conveys different moods and sentiments. The two scenes are: (1) Yi's mansion and (2) Wang Jiazhi's tour on West Nanjing Road, Yi's mansion as a private space and West Nanjing Road as a public one. In the novel as well as in the film, "oriental" and "occidental" objects are being juxtaposed as an attempt to epitomize the Old Shanghai as a cultural mixture as well as to exemplify the complexity of the identities in Shanghailand. However, the discrepancies between the two texts also divulge that Chang and Lee were trying to attract different audiences by recreating different versions of Old Shanghai.

### **Private Space: Yi's Mansion**

In this section, I will undertake two major aspects of Yi's Mansion and the Mahjong playing scene, with focus on Wang Jiazhi's disguise as Mrs. Mai as the foreground and the inner decoration of the mansion as the background. From analyzing the private space, we can observe the typical apartment life style in the

Yi's Mansion shared by the urban dwellers. By introducing how Lee's redefinitions these elements, we can detect their different impressions of the life styles of urban dwellers in Old Shanghai.

The female characters and their fashion style are the center of attention in the original story as well as in the cinematic version. Mrs. Mai and the other women in the story are the new women that once represented the modernity of the city. Instead of setting forth the historical background and the two major characters in the novella, Chang started the story by depicting a group of women playing mahjong.<sup>xii</sup> There is no narrator in the novella incipiently. Therefore readers might find the story almost unintelligible.<sup>xiii</sup> Her syntax also makes her description function more similarly to an objective camera than to a third-person omniscient narrator.<sup>xiv</sup>

Chang, as a cineaste and a screenwriter herself, was chiefly adequate at working into her narrative effective cinematic techniques to create a list of memorable characters as well as build up a stage for the fabricated story.<sup>xv</sup> The camera pans from the different objects such as lamps, mahjong table, diamond rings, and tablecloth to Wang Jiazhi, who is casting the mahjong pieces under the spotlight. We, then, have a "close-up" of Wang Jiazhi's appearance.

The design of the paragraph constructs an analogy between the diamond rings and Wang Jiazhi. Just as the diamonds flashes under the glare of the hot lamp, Wang Jiazhi's physical appearance alters to object for observation. At the same time, the rings, Wang Jiazhi's "cheongsam of electric blue moiré satin" with a "Western style" collar, her glossy lips, brooch and diamond-studded sapphire button earrings are all props for Wang to suit Mr. Yi's apartment. As a spy, she needs to conceal her true identity and engage with the position of Mrs. Mai. Mrs. Mai is one of the women who belong to Wang Jingwei's political group but are quite apolitical. They are the women that idle away their time indoors. Chang's Mrs. Mai is an objectified symbol of this type of humble abode in Shanghai. Mrs. Mai lacks a defined complexion and obvious physical attributes for two reasons:

firstly she is a spy that is obligated to blend in; secondly, Chang is using her style to project the Shanghai-lady style at that time in order to captivate her native Shanghai readers.

Wang Jiazhi's costumes in Lee's portrayal, due to his constant tributes towards other films, lack the authenticity of a typical Shanghai lady. As Marchetti argues, Wang Jiazhi bears a resemblance to Ingrid Bergman<sup>xvi</sup> in learning how to act and seems to be "...annihilated and subsequently reborn (or not)..."<sup>xvii</sup>. Lee had most of the women dressing up in cheongsams holding bowls of wonton soups to enhance the Chineseness of the setting. However, in accordance with Chang's descriptions of the clothing style, Lee put them all in Western make up with trimmed eyebrows, rouge lips, and bright red nails. The group of women serves as mannequins that display jewels, dresses and their make up. Their conversation on the diamond rings proves that they celebrate the rise of commodity capitalism and pay no attention to other things in their lives.

After a detailed description of the clothing style of the women at the Mahjong table, Chang continues her storytelling by briefly introducing the historical background.<sup>xviii</sup> She shows that the accessories Wang Jiazhi is wearing, and her look, all represent her occupation; she is working as a smuggler so she can make some extra money to support the imaginary "Mai household". One thing worth noting is that she deals with mainly foreign objects: watches, medicines, perfumes and stockings.

Moreover, a more subtle description of the private space, the interior decoration of Yi's mansion is crucial to reconstructing life in Old Shanghai. A fact about Yi's mansion that stood out is that Mrs. Yi said, "Then it turned out Mr. Lee had invited so many guests we couldn't fit them all around our table. Even with extra chairs we couldn't all squeeze in, so Liao Tai-tai had to sit behind me like a singsong girl at a banquet." Here, Yi's mansion according to Chang, is cramped. There is a Wu dialect saying that is often quoted when describing a typical Shanghai apartment, "making a temple in the snail shell."<sup>xix</sup> It also

applies to Yi's mansion. Within the limited space of Yi's mansion, they manage to make their style of living tolerable. Chang centers the richness of apartment life by positioning her characters inside the house, while Lee chooses to show the outside view of Yi's mansion. He starts the movie by focusing on a German shepherd guard dog as well as some security guards with guns watching over the mansion. In order to highlight the location of Shanghai, Lee presents the viewers with "a cluster of elegant residences sits under gray skies. Once the height of Shanghai fashion and wealth, but now slightly seedy". On the one hand, this direct view of the apartments truly follows Chang's notion of a typical Shanghai *nongtang* (弄堂 alleyway courtyard). The addition of the bodyguards as well as guard dogs, on the other hand, creates a sense of intensity and suspense and thus implies to the viewers that this mansion is not but another average Shanghai apartment.

When it comes to the interior decoration of Yi's mansion in the film, the room appears to be comparable to a Victorian one instead of a traditional Chinese one. The pink clock, oil painting on the wall, the baroque style wallpaper and curtains as well as the art-glass lamp over their heads and the cream color lacey table cloth are all imported Western products that have European influences. In contrast to Chang's mentioning of the curtains in passing, Lee focuses on creating a Victorian and Baroque style space. This style was considered as modern in Shanghai in 1940s but now tinted with a sense of nostalgia and alienation to Shanghai audience of nowadays that can vaguely recall or imagine the glorious golden days of Shanghai.

The fashion and interior design all suggest that Yi's mansion is a romantic space. The whole space delivers an aura of romance, becoming the "literature depicting emotional matter in an imaginative form."<sup>xx</sup> Further into the film, we see another apartment Lee creates as a stronghold for the nationalist agents to exchange information. That apartment, in contrast to the Yi's mansion, is run-down. Lee also positions the characters on a creaky bed against bare brick walls.

The intrusion into a secret agent's conversation and the intrusion into a private bedroom engender the sense of insecurity in a private space. The second apartment, with its unpolished furniture and inner decoration, is an abandoned space that does not reflect Shanghai glamour. Viewers, instead of accepting the place as a common living space, would gain a sense of insecurity when they are being voyeurs observing this space. The insecurity is designed to alienate the viewers to bring them into a historical and political background that they do not register with.

Chang's fascination and attraction towards the city is nonetheless apparent in her sensuous description of the sights, sounds, and smells of city life.<sup>xxi</sup> For all its superficiality and glamour, the city contains for Chang an element of familiarity, intimacy, and reality. This familiarity lies within a private space, the typical Shanghai apartments. What is considered "artificial" has become a part of the everyday life of the city.<sup>xxii</sup> However, beneath the layer of "artificial", the interior decorations of the very important Yi mansion, the lair of a high-ranked collaborator, were not described in detail. Rather, the women became the carriers of the superficiality and glamour of the urban culture. These women are the bourgeois consumers who loved clothes and cosmetics just as Chang herself; in fact, she spent her first earning---five dollars, for a cartoon she drew that was published in an English-language newspaper---on a tube of lipstick.<sup>xxiii</sup> In other words, the detailed portrayal of women on the Mahjong table is appealing to the dispirited women living indoors and the bourgeois consumers the city nurtured during the accumulation of global capital who share similar experiences with her characters. Nevertheless, the lack of descriptions of the mansion suggests that Chang is placing them in a private space, a typical Shanghai apartment, a congested world of the Shanghai petty urbanities.

Indeed, the multiplication or multiplicity of Shanghai residences contained or confined in the same space not only suggests the impossibility of a proper bourgeois way of life, but further implies the inevitable arrival of the

post-socialist consumer masses in the not-so-distant future.<sup>xxiv</sup> In addition, these consumers are also the consumers of Chang's stories.

The descriptions of the typical apartment, then, suggest that the apartment life is the landmark of a realistic city life in Shanghai. According to Nicole Huang, in Chang's writings, the space of an apartment is presented as one such transitional site. It is a self-contained, private space, which enables a city dweller to escape the intensity of life outside the apartment when necessary, but more importantly, an apartment is also a locus point from which one can enter into various aspects of urban culture. However, during wartime, the structure of a modern apartment is threatened and on the brink of falling apart.<sup>xxv</sup> Her characters live in two kinds of interior spaces: either a typical Shanghai *nongtang* with old-fashioned houses inside stone gates (*shiku men*), or a rundown Western-style house or apartment building.<sup>xxvi</sup> As Zhang Xudong claims, "For the nostalgic Shanghai, what is held by the history of world capitalism as a moment in its global adventures is embraced as the city's entire life---its past glory, its present anxiety, as well as its future meant as the recapitulation of its Golden Age. The perseverance with which the lower-middle-class Shanghai dwellers build and live their minute everyday life into a concrete abstraction is a recurring theme, in which that model of bourgeois life---as a pattern, the original copy, the Idea---becomes paradoxical retrospectively."<sup>xxvii</sup> It is from the private living space do most see how Old Shanghai had functioned and it is through these modern women who was living decadent life in those apartments do people find the memories of the golden days of the city that they can identify with.

Consequently, Lee's adaptation of the scene created a space of the others. When depicting private spaces, Lee chooses to create an either romantic or alien space that is foreign to his viewers. His lack of experiences of 1940s Shanghai leads the Yi mansion to be more of an attempted forgery of Shanghai urban lifestyle instead of the authentic living experiences of the city dwellers in 1940s that Chang depicted.

## **Public Space: West Nanjing Road**

In this section, a few public locations will be discussed along Wang Jiazhi's trip along West Nanjing Road. I will analyze Kiessling Café and the Indian Jewelry Store cautiously to reveal how these two specific spaces create a sense of fantasy in contrast to the realistic living experiences in Shanghai apartments. Ping'an Theatre as well as a few other stores along the road will also be brought to attention. When comparing the two texts, we will see Lee recreated certain scenes with great fidelity while ignoring the other scenes and hence the public Shanghai Lee contracts is a unique Old Shanghai that Lee imagined for himself.

### The Café

Chang staged most of the story in private apartments. The first public space that appeared is a café.<sup>xxviii</sup> Wang made a brief phone call there. One thing the reader knows about the café is that from her conversation with Kuang Yumin, is that Kuang Yumin and the other comrades are on Hsai-fei road, also known as Avenue Joffre, a place that belongs to the French Concession. After hanging up the phone, she hails a rickshaw to move to a more important café, a café that belongs to her and Mr. Yi, Kiessling.

Judging from Wang's monologue, Mr. Yi must be a regular of the place, because "he had told her that the place had been opened by a Chinese who had started out working in Tientsin's oldest, most famous Western eatery, the Kiessling."<sup>xxix</sup> Wang Jiazhi's impression of the second café, that is located around the corner of Ching-an Temple and Seymour road, is quite negative, "most of the café's business must have been in takeout; there were hardly any places to sit down inside. [Julia Lovell failed to translate the following sentence in the original text,] "though it is quite dark, it does not contain any romantic sentiments at all." Resonating with her negative impression of the place, the café seems to be crowded, "dingy", with "brown paint" on the "rough, uneven surface". To her,

with all the gowns hanging by the fridge, the place looks like a “secondhand clothing store” rather than a western style café.<sup>xxx</sup> Wang Jiazhi, upon observing, “there is no romantic sentiments” in the café thinks, “he must have chosen this place, because he would be unlikely to run into any high-society acquaintances here.” This mental process is distinctive because she is no longer speaking as a spy who is trying to seduce her prey but from the angle of a jealous mistress. This mood contradicts with the reason why she is thinking about asking him to give her an apartment a moment ago. She suspects that Mrs. Yi might notice something if the assassination fails. At the same time, she complains that “the last couple of times they’d met in apartments, different ones each time, left vacant by British or Americans departed to war camps.” Now we know that she wants an apartment not just for continuing the plot, but also for her vanity. This café apparently hurts her feelings because “high-society” would not be present in that space.

This sense of loss and vanity was not included in the scene of Wang Jiazhi in the café by Lee. In fact, the restaurant Lee built for Wang’s first romantic date with Mr. Yi in Hong Kong is high-end and classic, even with a live piano performance. Though Wang Jiazhi notices that there were few guests in that restaurant and Mr. Yi explains that because the dishes are too bad which makes it a perfect place to talk without anyone disturbing you, Wang does not seem to be offended by the location, an exclusive private club with romantic candlelight.<sup>xxxi</sup>

These two café are not aristocratic at all in Chang’s texts. However they are important stages on which story take place. The second café is significant as it is located very close to “Ping’an”, Siberian Leather Goods Store and the Green House Ladies’ Clothing Emporium and of course also the stage for the final act, the Indian jewelry store. While “Commander K’ai’s Café (Kiessling)”, “Green House Ladies’ Clothing” as well as “Siberian Leather Goods Store” were all real stores in 1940s and Ping’an Cinema is also a real cinema that existed, yet the

Indian Jewelry Store is imaginary. From the brief view Chang offers us of the two café and West Nanjing Road street scene when Wang Jiazhi is finally in Mr. Yi's car,<sup>xxxii</sup> we are absorbed into the Old Shanghai she created as a stage interwoven with reality and fantasies. Lee combined the two café into one, the "Kiessling". His "Kiessling" is much more elaborate than Chang's. In the café, there are well-trained waiters and waitresses wearing French style uniforms. There are macaroons, croissants and baguettes on display behind the clean wooden bar and on platters. Foreign cigarettes are on sale near the bar table. Wang is even served by a European waiter. She sits herself in a comfortable booth seat, and behind her on the wall there are a few posters depicting western ladies with the French names "Le Roux" written on them. The gold color railings as well as the chiffon white curtains covering the full-length French windows all suggest the café is an elite location. Wang Jiazhi uses English to place her order and also requests to use the public telephone. Here again, Lee creates a westernized public space that lacks Chinese attributes. The sense of loneliness and depression during wartime is only expressed through Wang Jiazhi's separation from the outside busy world by the windows.

### The Jewelry Store

The Jewelry Store is a symbolic scene in the storyline. This is the place where Wang Jiazhi's fake identity as "Mrs. Mai" conquers her true self and convinces her to warn Mr. Yi to flee from the assassination. The place is a dramatic stage with the power of possessing the characters. Looking at the design of this stage, we know that the jewelry store serves as a perfect location for spying. After walking into this destined location, Wang Jiazhi's awareness of being a nationalist spy reached to its peak. Since she does not know of the exact assassination plan, she appears to be unsettled. From Wang Jiazhi's angle, Chang exhausts her words to paint the jeweler for the final act.

When they just enter the store, the audience can see that, "though the shop was small, its interior was light, high-ceilinged, and almost entirely bare. (p.28)"

With its “glass doors”, this suspicious jewelry store is almost completely exposed to people who intend to observe what is happening inside. Later after the couple walks upstairs through a “pitch-dark” staircase and enters the office “on a little mezzanine set between the two floors of the building”, the space becomes semi-private. Yet, the feeling of being exposed haunts Wang Jiazhi, the structure of the shop gives her a strong sense of insecurity.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Chang especially mentions that the windows were clear— they did not even need “neon light”. So in contrast with the two stores right beside this imaginary jewelry store, this place appears to be cheerless and alienating. Wang Jiazhi, upon observing the place, could not help but trembling a little.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Her nerves are high-strung for the upcoming assassination to the point that she can no longer tell if she is in reality or in a fantasy.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Firstly, we can see the interior design of the store is westernized with a “cream-colored back wall” and its office located “on a little mezzanine set between the two floors of the building with a balcony overlooking the shop floor”. Secondly, though open and operated by a group of Indian merchants, (we see two of them in this specific scene) this store still has a strong residue of Chinese culture. The mirrors painted with “multicolored birds and flowers and inscribed with gilded Chinese calligraphy,” and “a third large mirror, decorated with a phoenix and peonies, had been propped up against another wall.” The content of the calligraphy in original text is written in classical Chinese.<sup>xxxvi</sup> However, Mr. Bada is not a Chinese name. This creates another layer of confusion. Thirdly, Chang inserts a few objects that seem to be unnecessary to highlight the sense of “modernity” hidden in the store such as “telephone”, “reading lamp”, and “typewriter”. These three objects do not belong to ordinary Chinese households; they contrast the superficial and materialistic culture enjoyed by city dwellers in Yi’s mansion and other Shanghai apartments. These objects are all introduced from the western culture and are symbols of literacy. After scrutinizing the arrangements of the objects, we can see that the

“telephone” and “reading lamp” are placed on top of a desk “ebony railing”, which is a traditional Chinese type of furniture. The typewriter is “covered with an old piece of glazed cloth”, suggesting that it has long been set aside, yet it is still placed on top of a “tea table”, another piece of Chinese traditional furniture. From this arrangement we can see that Chang is juxtaposing the oriental objects with the western commodities. By the location of the three decorative mirrors, different layers of reflections are created. On this well-designed stage, Chang shows her anxiety towards this imaginary cultural mixture Shanghai created. By highlighting the western objects, her worries towards being “overwhelmed” by western culture are expressed in a nuanced form.

Wang Jiazhi recognizes that the ring is nothing but a small prop serving its purpose in the drama, and she is just playing another “role” in the whole plot. But at the same time, this store, the stage she has chosen for the play, is made into a fantasy. It is in a way reflecting the reality of Shanghai during that time period, yet in another sense, strengthening the sense of alienation. In fact, we are so unfamiliar with this supposedly designed space to be a “real” jewelry store. As Wang Jiazhi herself, we found ourselves bemused in a story in *Thousand and One Nights*.

Lee successfully duplicates the final scene in the jewelry store. As he gives Mr. Yi a full name to suggest the character’s relationship to two historical persons, Hu Lancheng and Ding Mocun, he creates a name for this jewelry store, “Chandni Chowk”. “Chandni Chowk” originally means the moonlit square or market. It was one of the oldest business markets in Old Delhi. The imposing thoroughfare of the Chandni Chowk witnesses the creation of Shah Jahan’s great Friday Mosque. Thus, the name is often associated with mannered Orientalism and sensuality of *Arabian Nights*.<sup>xxxvii</sup> These associations intensify the symbolic importance of this jewelry store.

Furthermore, Lee, with great fidelity, reincarnates the store with its “little mezzanine”, full-length windows and “pitch black stair-cases”. All the objects

Chang describes, including the mirrors with calligraphy and phoenix and flowers, complete the mosque styled inner decoration. How the calligraphy mentioned in the original texts is done with great effort should also be noted.

### Stores and Theatres

In Chang's work, the "Green House Ladies' Clothing" and "Siberian Leather Goods Store" share "large display windows filled with glamorously dressed mannequins". But rather than alluring consumers with their aura, their function here is to contrast the cheapness of the jewelry store. Furthermore, later, after the failed assassination, Wang Jiazhi relates her fate with the mannequins in the windows.<sup>xxxviii</sup> She is isolated from the world as the mannequins are segregated from her. The elegant mannequins transform into a cynical allegory suggesting Wang Jiazhi's life. Lee presents this isolation faithfully. He puts Wang Jiazhi in front of the window and has her dress similarly to the mannequins. Her individuality then is cast into doubt as a duplicate of an empty commercial fashion design.<sup>xxxix</sup> The sense of the public space being surreal finally came into existence after the assassination.

"Ping'an Cinema", also, is specifically pointed out in Chang's work, to be a "second-run" cinema. The movies that are actually played there are the ones that have already been screen in the first-run cinemas. Though "respectable" or in the original Chinese text, "clean", this theatre to Wang Jiazhi's eyes is actually a great place for "lookout".<sup>xl</sup> This casts a suspicious shadow over the theater. Later, we learn that it is through Ping'an Theater, does the head of the assassination group get away, leaving all the students to their execution. In Lee's adaptation, Ping'an Theater becomes a popular venue for film watching. Wang Jiazhi actually attends *Penny Serenade* (1941) in Ping'an Theater and also walks pass the poster of *Suspicion* (1941).<sup>xli</sup> Lee uses these films to produce an intertextuality towards Wang Jiazhi's story; however, these films are unlikely to be played in a second-run theatre. Instead of being a humble neighborhood

theatre, the Ping'an Lee creates is popular and glamorous under the neon lighting.

In fact, the entire West Nanjing Road then is cast under a gloomy lighting in Chang's work. Chang is not drawing a picture of the glamour "Shanghai" and its colorful cabaret culture.<sup>xlii</sup> The glamour of all the settlements and a fast-paced urban culture are all in the past tense. The entire city scene, with real historic sites and imaginary stages, seems isolated and even surreal. Chang's attitude towards the surreal and depressed street scenes can be also found In "Daolu yimu" (Scenes from the Streets); to her, on one level, the street scene of Shanghai is most distinctively characterized by the window displays and neon lights on Avenue Joffre (which is the road that is mentioned in *Lust, Caution*).<sup>xliii</sup> This fascination with window displays and neon lights is staged at a moment that belongs to the past--- "four or five years ago." Chang's West Nanjing Road is a place that is familiar yet alienating to the Shanghai readers of 1940s. They are familiar with all the real stores and their decorations, thus the route Wang Jiazhi travelled along serves as a prop to bringing the readers into the historical environment. Furthermore, since she did not finish revising the short stories until late 1970s (when her works were banned in Mainland China), thirty years away from when she started the project. We can feel the Old Shanghai is shadowed with the heaviness of history and yet radiating a sense of nostalgia and depression. Lee's West Nanjing Road, on the contrary, including the café and the jewelry store he built and Ping'an Theatre, is too bustling and prosperous. With countless foreigners and urbanites walking along the streets and tons of rickshaws and cars swimming along the street intersections, West Nanjing Road lacks the wartime intensity. To Lee, the luxurious apartments and the boisterous street scenes became a historical attraction.

## **Conclusion**

From the two scenes, one being a place in the private space, a typical Shanghai apartment, and one being a place in the public space, West Nanjing Road, we can see that Chang and Lee sometimes have very disparate approaches to reconstructing Old Shanghai. As argued above, these disparities, to certain degree, are caused by their different imagination of the readership/viewership.

In all, unlike Chang, who dedicated herself into recreating Old Shanghai by lining up private and public spaces and revealing it as the cultural hybridity that moves between reality and fantasy, Lee does not fully catch her effort into making Old Shanghai a symbol of nostalgia and a familiar space for petty urbanites.

To Chang, the real Old Shanghai lifestyle rests in the private spaces, the apartment life style and the women who represent the urban culture at that time. Public spaces, on the contrary, give her readers the sense of fantasy. After the fall of concessions in Shanghai, the glamour and cabaret culture of 1920s and 1930s Shanghai are tainted with depression and insecurity. According to Leo Ou-fan Lee this wealth of objects---the old juxtaposed with the new---bespeaks a deep-seated ambiguity toward modernity that is the distinct hallmark of Chang's fiction. In both fiction and reality, Chang's attachment to modern life can likewise be traced through aspects of Shanghai's material culture. As her characters move from the domestic and semi-public space of the *nongtang* and enter into the public arena, they frequent restaurants, Chinese and Western, as well as coffeehouses.<sup>xliv</sup> The globalized Shanghai is not simply "Westernized" but combination of Western Culture with indigenous oriental culture. This means, "Western modernity" was also nurturing and protecting the most ancient Chinese lifestyle at the same time. That is the reality of *yangchang* society.<sup>xlv</sup>

Lee's Yi mansion and West Nanjing Road, on the contrary, are active and noisy. In Yi's mansion, the Victorian decorations and objects reflect his own imagination of what modernity means in the households of 1940s Shanghailanders. And the female characters, as a way to attract viewers that love

puzzles, became combinations of film characters and objects of appreciation. On West Nanjing Road, countless foreigners and urbanites are roaming along the streets and tons of rickshaws and cars swimming along the street intersection. West Nanjing Road lacks the wartime intensity. To Lee, the luxurious apartments and the boisterous street scenes became a historical attraction. It is the world of Suzy Wong, a dazzling and captivating world that attracts not only nostalgic Shanghai audiences but also western markets. Hence the sense of Chineseness being compressed in Chang's text is not expressed in the cinematic adaptation.

Another example that is worth mentioning would be the ring in the film. In Chang's story, the ring is an object that reminds Wang Jiazhi of her secret affair with Mr. Yi. With close attention to the conversations regarding the ring, we can see that there is no connotation of commitment being exchanged when Mr. Yi gave her the ring. Upon closer analysis, when Wang Jiazhi is observing the ring, she is thinking about the assassination, rather than her love for Mr. Yi. However in Lee's film, the ring became vital for it carries the commitment of Mr. Yi towards Wang Jiazhi. And viewers can sense that Wang Jiazhi sees or projects love in Mr. Yi's facial expression. The connection between the ring to commitment or love is Western. Lee creates this scene with the Western viewers in his mind.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that Lee is recreating Old Shanghai with pure commercial intentions. He is approaching the Old Shanghai as an outsider because he lacks the collective memory of city life during wartime. He, carefully, brings back to the Mahjong table, to the Kiesslings, and the jewelry store. One detail worth noting is that Lee puts many clocks into his scenes. By including the clocks, firstly, the intensity of a political plot is created as if in every scene, Wang Jiazhi and other spies are searching for alibis. This detail strengthens the nervousness in the film. Secondly, as a symbol of time, the clocks are reminding us that we are watching something that might be historically true. This way,

even though *Lust, Caution* is a fictional story based on historical events, viewers would grasp the sense of Old Shanghai being realistic in the film.

Lee, as discussed above, also has a cross-cultural background. This is also one of the reasons why he took up the project. However, he does not merely focus on the Shanghainese audience of today's China. By reconstructing the romantic Shanghai with traces of Orientalist traces, he is introducing the film to western markets and global audiences. Without showing the depression of foreign concessions in Shanghai but focusing on introducing Victorian and baroque elements as well as famous western films, Lee is focusing on a group of filmgoers with interests in Chinese history and also audiences that are probably attracted by the Orientalism shown in the film. This strategy can also be found in his cast and crew. Indeed, *Lust, Caution* earned \$62,486,933 gross in foreign reigns and \$4,604,982 (6.9%) in the United States.

Lee does not just stop there. *Lust, Caution* was an extreme box office success in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. He employed Asian superstars such as Leehom Wang and Tony Leung to play some of the major characters. Tony Leung, who often times works with Wang Kar-wai, Hou Hsiao-hsien and John Woo, is not only an award winner in Hong Kong and Taiwan film festivals. His association with Shanghai-based films can be traced back to *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998) and *In the Mood for Love* (2000). He seems to be a must-see in Shanghai-based cinematic stories and thus is extremely popular too in Mainland China. Leehom Wang, as a famous singer in Asia, is an American Born Chinese musician. His popularity has lasted for more than a decade. The choice of these two actors shows Lee's ambition into conquering the East Asian market. In fact, China contributed \$17,109,185 in total gross. Regions as Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and Singapore's contribution to total gross can be compared to United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and France.<sup>xlvi</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Tess Johnson, *A Last Look: Architecture in Old Shanghai*, Hong Kong: Old China Hand Press, 1993, p.9.

<sup>ii</sup> Poshek Fu, *The Ambiguity of Entertainment: Chinese Cinema in Japanese-Occupied Shanghai, 1941-1945*, *Cinema Journal*, Vol.37, No.1 (Autumn, 1997), pp.66-84.

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<sup>iv</sup> Marie-Claire Bergère, “The Other China”: Shanghai from 1919 to 1949 in Christopher Howe ed. *Shanghai, Revolution and Development in an Asian Metropolis*, pp.1-34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; Rhoads Murphey, *A History of Asia*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc; Nichola R. Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire: Westerners in Shanghai and the Chinese Revolution of the 1920s*. Hanover and London: Middlebury College Press, 1991.

<sup>v</sup> Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern, The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, Harvard University Press, 1999.

<sup>vi</sup> Poshek Fu, *The Ambiguity of Entertainment: Chinese Cinema in Japanese-Occupied Shanghai, 1941-1945*, *Cinema Journal*, Vol.37, No.1 (Autumn, 1997), pp.66-84.

<sup>vii</sup> Berry, Chris. 1993. Taiwanese melodrama returns with a twist in ‘The wedding banquet’. *Cinemaya* 21(Fall): 52–54.

<sup>viii</sup> Ding, Shaoyan. Beyond Language: the Postmodern Poetics of Ang Lee's Adaptation of *Lust/Caution*, *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies* Volume 25, Issue 1 (2011):88-101.

<sup>ix</sup> Zhang Ailing, “Daodi shi Shanghai ren” [I am after all a Shanghai person], in *Liuyan* [Gossip], Taipei: Huangguan, 1984, p.57.

<sup>x</sup> Zhang Ailing, “Daodi shi Shanghai ren” [I am after all a Shanghai person], in *Liuyan* [Gossip], Taipei: Huangguan, 1984, p.56.

<sup>xi</sup> Hsiu-Chuang Deppman, *Seduction of a Filmic Romance*, in Eileen Chang, *Romancing Languages, Cultures and Genres* edited by Kam Louie, Hong Kong University Press, 2012, p.155.

<sup>xii</sup> “Though it was still daylight, the hot lamp was shining full-beam over the mahjong table. Diamond rings flashed under its glare as their wearers clacked and reshuffled their tiles. The tablecloth, tied down over the table legs, stretched out into a sleek plain of blinding white. The harsh artificial light silhouetted into full advantage the generous curve of Jiazi’s bosom, and laid bare the elegant lines of her hexagonal face, its beauty somehow accentuated by the imperfectly narrow forehead, by the careless, framing wisps of hair. Her makeup was understated, except for the glossily roughed arcs of her lips. Her hair she had pinned nonchalantly back from her face, then allowed to hang down to her shoulders. Her sleeveless cheongsam of electric blue moiré satin reached to

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the knees, its shallow, rounded collar standing only half an inch tall, in the Western style. A brooch fixed to the collar matched her diamond-studded sapphire button earrings."

xiii Leo Ou-fan Lee 李歐梵, *di se jie, wenxue, dianying, lishi*, 睇色, 戒 文學 電影 歷史 [Viewing Lust, Caution, literature, film, history], Oxford University Press, 2008.

xiv Hsiu-Chuang Deppman, Seduction of a Filmic Romance, in *Eileen Chang, Romancing Languages, Cultures and Genres* edited by Kam Louie, Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

xv Hsiu-Chuang Deppman, p.159.

xvi Gina Marchetti, Eileen Chang and Ang Lee at the Movies: The Cinematic Politics of Lust, Caution in *Eileen Chang, Romancing Languages, Cultures and Genres* edited by Kam Louie, Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

xvii Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out*, New York: Routledge, 1992, p.44.

xviii "Isolated from the rest of the world by Japanese occupation, Shanghai had elaborated a few native fashions. Thanks to the extravagantly inflated price of gold in the occupied territories, gold chains as thick as these were now fabulously expensive." "After the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the fall of Hong Kong, Mr. Mai went out of business. To make some extra money for the family, Mai Tai-tai decided to do a little smuggling herself, and travelled to Shanghai with a few luxury goods---watches, Western medicines, perfumes, stockings---to sell."

xx Elizabeth Millan, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy*, SUNY series, Intersections: Philosophy and Critical Theory, 2007.

xxi Eileen Chang, "gongyu shenghuo jiqu" (Pleasures in Apartment Life), Zhang Ailing sanwen quanbian, p.28, "I like to listen to city sounds...those who are more poetic than I listen to the rustling of pine trees or the billowing of the sea when they are about to sleep, but I cannot sleep unless I hear the sound of street cars....only in the winter, when the north wind blows the evergreen trees can you smell the scent of street cars...in the minds of the city people, the background is a curtain with design, the light white strips are the running street cars- parallel, even and clean, the sound of the river flowing, gurgling, flows into people's unconscious", translated by Eileen Cheng, 1996.

xxii Eileen Cheng, *Eileen Chang and an Alternative Vision of Modernity*, a thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in East Asian Languages and Cultures to University of California, Los Angeles, 1996.

xxiii Zhang Ailing, "Tongyan wuji" [Childish words], in Liuyan, 7.

xxiv Shanghai Image: Critical Iconography, Minor Literature, and the Un-Making of a Modern Chinese Mythology by Xudong Zhang, *New Literary History*, Vol.33, No.1, *Reconsiderations of Literary Theory, Literary History* (Winter, 2002), pp.137-169.

xxv Nicole Huang, *Women, War, Domesticity, Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s*, Published for the Institute for Chinese Studies, University of Oxford, edited by Glen Dudbridge and Frank Pieke, Brill Leiden Boston, 2005, p.147.

xxvi Leo Ou-Fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern, The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 1999, p.272.

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xxvii Shanghai Image: Critical Iconography, Minor Literature, and the Un-Making of a Modern Chinese Mythology by Xudong Zhang, *New Literary History*, Vol.33, No.1, *Reconsiderations of Literary Theory*, *Literary History* (Winter, 2002), p.157.

xxviii "Getting in, she gave the chauffeur instructions to drive her to a café; once arrived, she sent him back home. As it was only midafternoon, the cafe was almost deserted. Its large interior was lit by wall lamps with pleated apricot silk shades, its floor populated by small round tables covered in cloths of fine white linen jacquard---an old-fashioned, middlebrow kind of establishment.", p.11.

xxix p.14

xxx "Toward the back of its dingy interior was a refrigerated cabinet filled with various Western style cakes. A glaring bright lamp in the passageway behind exposed the rough, uneven surface of the brown paint covering the lower half of the walls. A white military-style uniform hung to one side of a small fridge; above, nearer the ceiling, hung a row of long, lined gowns---like a rail in a secondhand clothing store---worn by the establishment's Chinese servants and waiters.", p.14

xxxi Int.Private Club at Repulse Bay---Hong Kong:

Exclusive. The only other diners are three elderly English ladies at a faraway table.

xxxii "The car made a U-turn at the next crossroads, and then another a little farther on to get them back to the P'ing-an, the only respectable second-run cinema in the city. The building's dull red façade curved inward, like a sickle blade set upon the street corner. Opposite was Commander K'ai's Café again, with the Siberian Leather Goods Store and the Green House Ladies' Clothing Emporium next, each fronted by two large display windows filled with glamorously dressed mannequins bent into all manner of poses beneath neon signs. The next-door establishment was smaller and far more nondescript. Although the sign over the door said JEWELER'S, its single display window was practically empty.", p.27.

xxxiii "Sitting to one side of the desk, she couldn't help turning to look down over the balcony. Only the shop window fell within her line of vision. As the window was clear and its glass shelves empty, she could see straight out to the pavement, and to the edge of the car parked next to it." P.31

xxxiv "All these scenarios danced vaguely through her mind, even as she realized that noen of this was her concern. She could not lose the feeling that, upstairs in this little ship, she was sitting on top of a powder keg that was about to blow her sky-high. A slight tremble was beginning to take hold of her legs." P.32.

xxxv "She felt a numb chill creeping up the back of her head; the display windows downstairs and the glass door between them seemed to be broadening out, growing taller, as if behind her were an enormous, two-story-high expanse of brilliant, fragile glass, ready to disintegrate at any moment. But even as she felt almost dizzy with the precariousness of her situation, she shop seemed to be blanketing her in torpor. Inside she could hear only the muffled buzz of the city outside---because of the war, there were far fewer cars on the road than usual; the sounding of a horn was a rarity. The warm, sweet air inside the office pressed soporifically down on her like a quilt. Though she was vaguely aware that something was about to happen, her heavy head was telling her that it must all be a dream." P.34.

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xxxvi "To one side of the cream-colored back wall of the showroom was a door leading to a pitch-dark staircase. The office was on a little mezzanine set between the two floors of the building, with a shallow balcony overlooking the shop floor--- presumably for surveillance purposes. The wall immediately to their left as they entered was hung with two mirrors of different sizes, each painted with multicolored birds and flowers and inscribed with gilded Chinese calligraphy: THIS ROC WILL SURELY SOAR TEN THOUSAND MILES. CONGRATUALTIONS, MR.BADA, ON YOUR GRAND OPENING. RESPECTFULLY, CH'EN MAO-K'UN. Too tall for the room's sloping ceiling, a third large mirror, decorated with a phoenix and peonies, had been propped up against another wall.

To the front of the room, a desk had been placed along the ebony railing, with a telephone and a reading lamp resting on top. Next to it was a tea table on which sat a typewriter, covered with an old piece of glazed cloth. A second, squat Indian, with a broad ashen-brown face and a nose squashed like a lion's muzzle, stood up from his round-backed armchair to move chairs over for them." p.29

xxxvii Waldemar Hansen, *The Peacock Throne: The Drama of Mogul India*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1986.

xxxviii "Pedestrains and vehicles flowed on by, as if separated from her by a wall of glass, and no more accessible than the elegant mannequins in the window of the Green House Ladies' Clothing Emporium---you could look, but you couldn't touch. They glided along, imperviously serene, as she stood on the outside, alone in her agitation.", p.41.

xxxix Gina Marchetti, Eileen Chang and Ang Lee at the Movies: The Cinematic Politics of Lust, Caution in *Eileen Chang, Romancing Languages, Cultures and Genres* edited by Kam Louie, Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

xl "The P'ing-an Theater directly oposite would have been an obvious choice, its corridor of pillars offering the perfect cover for a lookout. People were, in any case, always hanging around theater entrances; one could easily wait there without arousing suspicion.", p.23.

xli For more information on films in *Lust, Caution*, see Gina Marchetti, Eileen Chang and Ang Lee at the Movies: The Cinematic Politics of Lust, Caution in *Eileen Chang, Romancing Languages, Cultures and Genres* edited by Kam Louie, Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

xlii For more information, see Andrew David Field, *Shanghai's Dancing World, Cabaret Culture and Urban Politics, 1919-1954*, The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 2010.

xliii "Designing shop windows is a fascinating job, since there is motionless drama in each display... [I remember] a mid-winter night four or five years ago when my cousin and I were strolling down Avenue Joffre, looking at shop window displays. Under neon lights, the slanted faces of those wooden beauties were adorned with slanted hats and dangling feathers. I did not wear western suits, had no need of a hat, and did not want to buy one. And yet I still looked at them with admiring eyes..."

"Scenes from the Streets" in *Written on Water*, by Eileen Chang, p.62.

xliv Leo Ou-Fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern, The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 1999.

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<sup>xlv</sup> Zhao Yuan, The Window facing the “Yangchang Society” of Shanghai and Hong Kong--- A Close Analysis of <Legends> by Eileen Chang  
開向滬、港“洋場社會”的窗口——讀張愛玲小說集《傳奇》 in *Eileen Chang, Sixty Years*,  
edited by Zitong, Yiqing, Oversea Chinese Publisher, 2001.

<sup>xlvi</sup> Lust, Caution, Box Office Mojo,  
<http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=main&id=lustcaution.htm> accessed on 2012-11-04.