

**THE ELEMENTS OF LIBERAL FEMINISM IN ANG LEE'S FILMS: AN  
ANALYSIS OF THE FEMALE CHARACTERS AND  
CHARACTERISTICS IN *CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON*  
(2000) AND *EAT DRINK MAN WOMAN* (1994)**

**QIU MINCHAN**

**FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS  
UNIVERSITI MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR  
2021**

**THE ELEMENTS OF LIBERAL FEMINISM IN ANG  
LEE'S FILMS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FEMALE  
CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISTICS IN  
*CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON* (2000)  
AND *EAT DRINK MAN WOMAN* (1994)**

**QIU MINCHAN**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF PERFORMING ARTS  
(DRAMA)**

**FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR**

**2021**

# ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

UNIVERSITI MALAYA  
ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

Name of Candidate: Qiu Minchan

Registration Matric No.: rob180006 (17199123/1)

Name of Degree: Master's Degree of Performing Arts (Drama)

Title of Project Paper/Research Report/Dissertation/Thesis("this Work"):

The Elements of Liberal Feminism in Ang Lee's Films: An Analysis of the Female Characters and Characteristics in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994)

Field of Study: Film

I do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- (1) I am the sole author/writer of this Work;
- (2) This Work is original;
- (3) Any use of any work in which copyright exists was done by way of fair dealing and for permitted purposes and any excerpt or extract from, or reference to or reproduction of any copyright work has been disclosed expressly and sufficiently and the title of the Work and its authorship have been acknowledged in this Work;
- (4) I do not have any actual knowledge nor do I ought reasonably to know that the making of this work constitutes an infringement of any copyright work;
- (5) I hereby assign all and every rights in the copyright to this Work to the University of Malaya("UM"), who henceforth shall be owner of the copyright in this Work and that any reproduction or use in any form or by any means whatsoever is prohibited without the written consent of UM having been first had and obtained;
- (6) I am fully aware that if in the course of making this Work I have infringed any copyright whether intentionally or otherwise, I may be subject to legal action or any other action as may be determined by UM.

Candidate's Signature

Date: Sep.3<sup>rd</sup>2021

Subscribed and solemnly declared before.

Witness's Signature

Date

Name:

Designation:

## ABSTRACT

In recent years, Chinese films have shown a lack of attention to women. The hollowed-out female images created in Chinese films are inconsistent with the real ones. With the development of China's economy, the economic status of women is constantly improving. However, the female images in the movies cannot meet modern Chinese women's spiritual and cultural needs. Director Ang Lee has created many female characters in his films: three-dimensional, realistic, and feminist consciousness. Chinese women in economic and social transformation can resonate with their roles, reflecting on how to deal with the contradiction between tradition and modernity under the background of tradition and modernity combining, and find a way out. It also provides references for Chinese film and television practitioners in shaping female characters. This dissertation summarizes the different characteristics of female characters with the changes in history and times since the film came to China. Taking the two films directed by Ang Lee, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* as examples, this dissertation analyzes the liberal feminist consciousness of six female characters. They pursue the equal right of men in education and work, pursue freedom of marriage and love, pursue woman's right of self-determination, as well as the right to resist the patriarchal system. The growth experience under the eastern and western living and studying background, and the two influential women in his life- his mother and his wife, are the inspiration sources for director Ang Lee to create female characters with a feminist consciousness. At the same time, this dissertation also analyzes the characteristics of Ang Lee's female characters from the perspective of tradition and modernity. The female characters in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* are "modern women" living in the traditional society. In contrast, the female characters in *Eat Drink Man Woman* are women who live in modern times but return to tradition finally. In addition, this dissertation analyzes Ang Lee's use of plots, lens, clothing, makeup, and

other film means to create female characters, which show the feminist consciousness of female characters, which has particular reference significance for other directors to create female characters.

**Keywords:** female characters, characteristics, liberal feminism, Ang Lee.

Universiti Malaya

## ABSTRAK

Dalam beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini, filem-filem Cina menunjukkan kurangnya perhatian kepada wanita. Gambar wanita berlubang yang dibuat dalam filem Cina tidak sesuai dengan gambar sebenar. Dengan perkembangan ekonomi China, status ekonomi wanita sentiasa bertambah baik. Walau bagaimanapun, gambar wanita dalam filem tidak dapat memenuhi keperluan rohani dan budaya wanita Cina moden. Pengarah Ang Lee telah mencipta banyak watak wanita dalam filemnya: kesedaran tiga dimensi, realistik, dan feminis. Wanita Cina dalam transformasi ekonomi dan sosial dapat bergema dengan peranannya, merenungkan bagaimana menangani percanggahan antara tradisi dan kemodenan di bawah latar belakang gabungan tradisi dan kemodenan, dan mencari jalan keluar. Ini juga memberikan rujukan untuk pengamal filem dan televisyen China dalam membentuk watak wanita. Disertasi ini merangkum ciri-ciri watak wanita yang berbeza dengan perubahan sejarah dan masa sejak filem ini datang ke China. Dengan mengambil dua filem arahan Ang Lee, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, dan *Eat Drink Man Woman*, disertasi ini menganalisis kesedaran feminis liberal terhadap enam watak wanita. Mereka mengejar hak lelaki yang sama dalam pendidikan dan pekerjaan, mengejar kebebasan berkahwin dan cinta, mengejar hak penentuan nasib sendiri wanita, serta hak untuk menentang sistem patriarki. Pengalaman pertumbuhan di bawah latar belakang kehidupan dan kajian timur dan barat, dan dua wanita berpengaruh dalam hidupnya - ibu dan isterinya, adalah sumber inspirasi bagi pengarah Ang Lee untuk mencipta watak wanita dengan kesedaran feminis. Pada masa yang sama, disertasi ini juga menganalisis ciri-ciri watak wanita Ang Lee dari perspektif tradisi dan kemodenan. Watak wanita dalam *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* adalah "wanita moden" yang hidup dalam masyarakat tradisional. Sebaliknya, watak wanita dalam *Eat Drink Man Woman* adalah wanita yang hidup di zaman moden tetapi akhirnya kembali ke tradisi.

Di samping itu, disertasi ini menganalisis penggunaan plot plot, lensa, pakaian, solek, dan filem Ang Lee untuk membuat watak wanita, yang menunjukkan kesedaran feminis terhadap watak wanita, yang mempunyai arti rujukan khusus bagi pengarah lain untuk membuat watak wanita.

**Kata kunci:** watak wanita, ciri, feminisme liberal, Ang Lee.

Universiti Malaya

## **Acknowledgment**

First of all, I would like to thank my thesis instructor Dr. Rosdeen Suboh from the Drama Department of the Faculty of Creative Arts of University Malaya. Dr. Rosdeen has made the guidance opinion and the recommendation to my thesis research direction. In writing the thesis, he gave careful guidance to the difficulties and doubts I encountered. Also, he gave many valuable suggestions for the improvement of my dissertation. Meanwhile, I would like to thank Dr. Farideh Alizadeh, who gave me many suggestions on the paper format guidance and content revision. I appreciate their help very much!

In addition, I would like to thank other teachers in the Faculty of Creative Arts and my friends for their strong support and help in writing the thesis, which has brought great inspiration. I would also like to thank the authors in the references, through whose research articles I had a good starting point for the research topic.

Finally, I sincerely thank my family, friends, and classmates for their encouragement and support in completing this thesis successfully.



## Table of Content

Preliminary	
Title Page.....	i
Original Literary Work Declaration .....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Abstrak.....	v
Acknowledgment .....	vii
Table of Content .....	viii
List of Figures.....	x
List of Tables .....	xi
List of Appendices .....	xii
Chapter1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of Research .....	1
1.2 Problem Statement .....	3
1.3 Research Objective .....	4
1.4 Research Question .....	4
1.5 Justification .....	5
1.6 Scope and Limitation .....	5
Chapter2: Literature Review.....	7
2.1 The female characters in Chinese films.....	7
2.2 Theory of feminism .....	8
2.2.1 Introduction.....	8
2.2.2 Mary Wollstonecraft and liberal feminism .....	10
2.2.2.1 Background of Mary Wollstonecraft .....	10
2.2.2.2 <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> .....	11
2.2.3 John Stuart Mill and liberal feminism .....	12
2.2.3.1 Background of John Stuart Mill.....	12
2.2.3.2 <i>The Subjection of Women</i> .....	12
2.2.4 Other elements of liberal feminism.....	13
2.3 Ang Lee and his films and feminist theory .....	14
2.3.1 Ang Lee's biography and behind the scenes film production.....	15
2.3.2 Ang Lee's films and feminist theory .....	16
2.3.2.1 Eastern and western culture. ....	16
2.3.2.2 Cultural identity and self-identity .....	17
2.3.2.3 Narrative research. ....	18
2.3.2.4 Gender image .....	19
2.3.2.5 Feminist theory.....	19
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	23
3.1 Methodology style .....	23
3.2 Theoretical framework .....	23
3.3 Theory of liberal feminism .....	24
3.4 The concept of resistance to patriarchy .....	27
3.5 The six female characters in the two of Ang Lee's films .....	28
3.6 Specific research methods.....	30

Chapter4: Analysis of female characters and characteristics in Ang Lee's films.....	32
4.1 Introduction .....	32
4.2 An analysis of Ang Lee's life and his films.....	36
4.2.1 Ang Lee's life experience and background .....	36
4.2.2 Female characters and characteristics in Ang Lee's life .....	37
4.2.3 The background of growth education in the East and the West ..	39
4.2.4 Ang Lee's and Chinese woman's social status .....	41
4.2.5 The element of dialogues in Ang Lee's films.....	43
4.2.6 The element of costumes and make-up in Ang Lee's films .....	46
4.2.7 The element of close-up photography in Ang Lee's films .....	55
4.3 An analysis of liberal feminism of female characters in Ang Lee's films.....	63
4.3.1 Equal rights as men for education and work.....	63
4.3.2 Freedom of love and marriage .....	76
4.3.2.1 Female characters actively pursuing love and freedom of marriage .....	78
4.3.2.2 Female characters passively pursuing love and freedom of marriage .....	83
4.3.3 Woman's rights of choice and self-determination .....	87
4.4 An analysis of the concept of resistance to the patriarchy of female characters in Ang Lee's films .....	90
4.4.1 The traditional women with modern consciousness - resistance to patriarchy in Ang Lee's two films .....	92
4.4.2 "Modern women" in traditional society -- <i>Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon</i> .....	101
4.4.3 "Traditional return" of modern women- <i>Eat Drink Man Woman</i> .....	102
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, Suggestions .....	105
5.1 Summary .....	105
5.2 Conclusion.....	107
5.3 Suggestions .....	107
Reference List.....	108

## List of Figures

Figure 4.1: Jen Yu in Manchu attire	P48
Figure 4.2: Jen Yu in nightclothes with a mask	P49
Figure 4.3: Jen Yu in Manchu male clothes	P49
Figure 4.4: Jen Yu in white martial arts suit	P50
Figure 4.5: Yu Xiulian in formally Han female clothes	P51
Figure 4.6: Yu Xiulian in martial arts suit	P51
Figure 4.7: Jiaqian in professional suit	P52
Figure 4.8: Jiaqian in soft knit at home	P52
Figure 4.9: Jiazhen in monotonous and dim colors dress	P53
Figure 4.10: Jiazhen in a bright red shirt and slim dress	P54
Figure 4.11: Jiazhen with light make up	P54
Figure 4.12: Jiazhen with heavy makeup	P55
Figure 4.13: Jiazhen in colorful sportswear	P55
Figure 4.14: The close-up photography of Jen Yu	P57
Figure 4.15: The close-up photography of Jiaqian in the hospital	P62

## List of Tables

Table 3.1: The six characters of two selected Ang Lee's films	P29
Table 3.1, continued: The six characters of two selected Ang Lee's films	P30
Table 4.1: Yu Xiulian's dialogues mixed with traditional and modern Chinese language	P44
Table 4.2: Jen Yu's dialogues mixed with traditional and modern Chinese language	P45
Table 4.3: Jade Fox's dialogues mixed with traditional and modern Chinese language	P46
Table 4.4: The close-up photography of Jiaqian	P59
Table 4.4, continued: The close-up photography of Jiaqian	P60
Table 4.4, continued: The close-up photography of Jiaqian	P61
Table 4.5: Jade Fox's dialogues	P68
Table 4.6: Jen Yu's dialogues	P71
Table 4.7: Yu Xiulian's client's dialogues	P72
Table 4.8: Dialogues of Jiaqian's boss and friend	P74
Table 4.9: Jen Yu's dialogues	P79
Table 4.10: Jade Fox's dialogues	P81
Table 4.11: Jiaqian and her best friend's dialogues	P82
Table 4.12: Jianing's dialogues	P83
Table 4.13: Yu Xiulian's dialogues	P85
Table 4.14: Jiazhen's dialogues	P86
Table 4.15: Jade Fox & Jen Yu's dialogues	P89
Table 4.16: Jen Yu's dialogues	P95
Table 4.17: Jade Fox's dialogue	P96
Table 4.18: Jiaqian's dialogues	P99
Table 4.19: Jiazhen's dialogue	P100
Table 4.20: Jianing's dialogue	P100

## List of Appendices

### (1) Films

*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* directed by Ang Lee

*Eat Drink Man Woman* directed by Ang Lee

### (2) Interview Videos

*A date with Luyu: Two sides of Ang Lee*

*Interview with Yang Lan: Ang Lee*

Universiti Malaya

## CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the female images in Chinese films have shown a phenomenon of "unreal" and do not conform to the actual situation. Moreover, the whole film industry does not pay enough attention to women, which can not meet modern independent women's spiritual and cultural needs. Chinese films need to create more female characters with rich connotations to meet modern independent women's requirements and authenticity.

### 1.1 Background of Research

Ang Lee is a world-renowned film director. His films have won many international film festival awards, such as the Academy Award, the Golden Bear Award in Berlin Film Festival, the Golden Horse Award in Taiwan Film Festival, etc. Ang Lee shows attention to cultural differences, family ethics, human nature in repression, and female emotions in his film works with an eastern and western growing background. It has become a unique artistic landscape in the world film industry with its thought-provoking story themes, novel expression techniques, and unique film aesthetics. Ang Lee is good at shaping female characters. He said that "Woman's plays or images are more suitable for what I want to express (Zhang, 2012)." Ang Lee has created many independent, strong, and confident female characters with feminist consciousness in his films, leaving a deep impression in the film industry.

After the French bourgeois revolution and the enlightenment movement, feminism developed since the second half of the 19th century and achieved great success. Liberal feminism, active from the 18th century to the 1960s, insisted that women should have the right to be given equal opportunities and to choose freely as men, advocating rationality and justice. Mary Wollstonecraft (1995), the most important representative of

early liberal feminism, put forward in her masterpiece *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that reason was the basis of citizenship qualification, and reason included the ability to overcome or control love and passion. John Mueller (1995) analyzes why women succumb to men in *The Subjection of Women* and demands that women have the same right to accept education and employment and participate in political affairs as men. The concept of patriarchy was defined as a systematic mechanism of male superiority and female inferiority. Feminist movements profoundly influence the equality of rights between men and women, the disintegration and reconstruction of patriarchy, and family relationships and structure development. Feminist movements promote the awakening of "female consciousness," emphasizing the critical subject status of woman's historical development, making people rethink the relationship between men and women in the criticism and reflection, and reconstruct the family and social roles of men and women.

Director Ang Lee is good at shaping female characters in the way of combining tradition and modernity. He pays attention to the construction of female characters' psychological world and their inner growth. In Ang Lee's films, the female characters are generally full of feminist consciousness, three-dimensional and plump with prominent personality characteristics. What are the characteristics of female characters Ang Lee created in the two selected films? What elements does Ang Lee use in creating female characters in the two selected films? How does Ang Lee create female characters with liberal feminist consciousness combined with tradition and modernity? Based on the above problems, this dissertation will draw on the experience of predecessors for further discussions, using liberal feminism and taking the representative female characters in two of Ang Lee's films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* as cases for analysis. It will also summarize the characteristics of female characters in Ang Lee's films and discuss how Ang Lee created those female characters.

Ang Lee uses film elements to create female characters from traditional and modern perspectives. This dissertation aims to provide a new perspective and reference for other artistic works to shape women's roles and provide a reference for modern women to think about their survival status.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

As a director who is good at telling woman's stories, Ang Lee has rich experience and unique aesthetic concepts in shaping female characters with the unique grasp of female psychology and the construction of story plots. In traditional male directors' films, women are usually shaped as the supplementary images of male characters. Ang Lee paid much attention to the female characters' growth of psychology in his films. The innovation of this dissertation uses liberal feminist theories to analyze the female characters' characteristics in two selected Ang Lee's films by combining tradition with modernity. Moreover, analysis from dialogues, pictures, plots, make-up, costumes, photography, and other elements provides guidance and reference for other films.

The traditional female images portrayed by early Chinese directors in films are repressed and miserable, unable to control their destinies, lacking the sense of independence and the courage to resist the patriarchal society. For example, the female character Cuifen Li in *The Cosmetics Market*, directed by Shichuan Zhang, has to go to the market store to sell cosmetics because her sister's husband was killed and the family's financial resources were cut off. However, finally, she realizes that she could only become a sales queen by pleasing different male leaders and bosses. In that society, women cannot control their destinies, and the only way of living for women is compromising. For another example, the female character singing girl Jenny in the action movie *The Killer*, directed by John Woo, always keeps a weak figure that needs to be saved and protected by men. She is powerless to resist injustice and harm, and her



destiny is in the hands of men. The female characters in the above two films both wear clothes that show female curves and always live in the gap of male society, pleasing men for survival. However, the female characters in Ang Lee's films are brave enough to break the inherent image definition that women are weak, attached to, and dependent on men. In *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Jen Yu's figure wears white loose clothes and trousers without any makeup on her face, holds a sharp sword, whose martial arts skills are as good and powerful as those of male masters. Jiaqian, in *Eat Drink Man Woman*, with her ability, holds her destiny to become an airline executive eventually. Ang Lee put the sense of independence which the women own in modern society to the roles of female characters in traditional Chinese patriarchal society. The combination of tradition and modernity makes these female characters more three-dimensional and reflects the value of female characters with the consciousness of independence and resistance. They can serve as good models and references for other films in shaping female characters.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

- ✘ To analyze the characteristics of female characters in selected Ang Lee's films.
- ✘ To compare and contrast with the characteristics of female characters in the perspective of liberal feminist consciousness combining aspects of traditional and modernity in selected Ang Lee's films.

### **1.4 Research Question**

- ✘ What elements does Ang Lee use in creating female characters in the two selected films?
- ✘ What are the characteristics of female characters Ang Lee created in the two

selected films?

✘ How does Ang Lee create female characters with liberal feminist consciousness combined with tradition and modernity in his films?

### **1.5 Justification**

Ang Lee is a director with a background in eastern and western cultures. The traditional eastern and the modern western experiences are integrated with Ang Lee. Therefore, the female characters created by Ang Lee in his films can better show the characteristics of modern Chinese women in the process of Chinese social modernization, who face the contradiction between tradition and modernity. Ang Lee has created many female characters in his films. I chose these two films because they take women as the themes for storytelling, and each film has created several female characters. Female images are rich and discussable in the two films.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation**

This dissertation takes six female characters in two of Ang Lee's films, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragons*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*, as examples to discuss the consciousness of liberal feminism and the consciousness of resisting patriarchy embodied by these female characters. The female characters in the two films are characterized by tradition and modernity, which clearly show modern Chinese women's independent and confident spirit and consciousness. However, because China has a vast territory, modern Chinese women come from different economic classes and regional cultural backgrounds, the six female characters in the two selected Ang Lee's films cannot represent all the modern Chinese female images with certain limitations.

Due to the limitation of experimental conditions, it is not possible to conduct personal interviews with the film's directors, actors, screenwriters, or other central

creative personnel. The data and materials collected in this dissertation are obtained through books, news, websites, documentaries, academic articles, interview videos, with certain limitations.

Universiti Malaya

## CHAPTER2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The female characters in Chinese films

There are many articles about the female characters in Chinese films, which have mainly been divided into the analysis of female characters in Chinese films in a certain period and contemporary Chinese films. Hongshi Lu, and Xiaoming Shu (1998), the authors of *The History of Chinese Films*, introduced the history of Chinese films from the birth of the first Chinese film *Dingjun Mountain* in 1905 to the development of Chinese films in the 1990s in chronological order, took classic films of different periods as examples, and analyzed the influence of social and political realities of different historical periods in the development of film industry. Jinhua Dai (1994), the author of *Invisible Women--Women and Woman's Films in Contemporary Chinese Films*, analyzed the characteristics of female characters in classic representative films and typical female films since the birth of Chinese films. According to He Jing and Hu Xin (2008), the female images during the Enlightenment period from 1915 to 1949 have been mainly divided into three kinds: the image of suffering oppressed by ethics, the image of women under the control of men, and the "perfect" image of "martyrdom" in the article *Perspective and the Scenery Seen -- Analysis of Female Images in Chinese Films from 1915 to 1949*.

Baojuan Wang (2009) classified the female images in Chinese films after the 1980s into the image of the witch, strong woman, fair lady in *A Preliminary Study on Female Images in Chinese Mainland Films after the Reform and Opening Up*. He Zhen (2015) mentioned in *Film and Ideological Construction in the Early Years of New China* that in 1949, at the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, film, as "the most popular and powerful art form," played the role of "constructing the mainstream ideology politically." In *The "Female Complex" of the Fifth Generation Directors*, Li Ji

(2006) analyzed the fifth generation of Chinese directors, such as Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige, and regarded female images as "the representative of stable social images," to enhance the dramatic effect. In *Female Images and Characteristics in the Films of the Sixth Generation of Chinese Directors*, the authors Yanjun Liao and Lijuan Ao (2015) classified the female images and analyzed their characteristics created by the sixth generation of Chinese directors from 1990 to 2009. The sixth generation of Chinese directors is good at gathering women at the bottom of society. Their tortuous destinies highlighted the "survival and ethical dilemma interweaved between tradition and modernity" under the rapid development of the social economy. In *Research on Modern Female Images in Chinese Films in Recent Years*, Chengyue Wang (2019) analyzed the modern female images in Chinese films from 2009 to 2018 classified and divided female characters into an ally, rebel, and foil images of male characters from the perspective of the power structure relationship between female characters and male characters. In *Female Narratives in Recent Urban Films*, Xiaoyin Fu and Nixiang Li (2017) discussed the female images in Chinese films from feminism and consumerism. They believed that "In recent years, the female images in urban films are not only unable to get rid of the constraints of traditional concepts, but even wrapped in the so-called cloak of modernity.....Become a materialized existence for popular amusement."

## **2.2 Theory of feminism**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

After the French bourgeois revolution and the enlightenment movement, feminism has developed since the second half of the 19th century and has achieved great success. Feminist movements profoundly influence the equality of rights between men and

women, the disintegration and reconstruction of patriarchy, and family relationships and structure development. Feminist movements promote the awakening of "female consciousness," emphasizing the critical subject status of woman's historical development, making people rethink the relationship between men and women in the criticism and reflection, and reconstruct the family and social roles of men and women. Feminism has been divided into different genres according to different ideas and propositions, such as Liberal feminism, Radical feminism, Socialist feminism, postmodern feminism, and Ecological feminism. From the 18th century to the 1960s, the dominant trend of the woman's movement followed the tradition of liberalism, which focused on women's personal rights and political and religious freedom, women's right to choose, and self-determination. Liberal feminism advocates that women enjoy equal opportunities and the rights of free choices as men and equal rights for education and work (Wu, 2021).

Many writers connected liberal feminism with performance or films in articles. In *An Interpretation of Liberalism and Feminism of the Film Banditer*, the author Zhao Dong (2012) used the liberal feminist theory of Mary Wollstonecraft to analyze the fighting spirit of the female characters and the patriarchal oppression of women in the film. In the paper *On Jane Eyre's Liberal Feminism*, the author Song Liying (2018) used the theory of liberal feminism to analyze the rational spirit of Jane Eyre, and she pursued equality of education, opportunity, and love. In *On the Liberal Feminism in Thelma & Louise*, the author Luo Xueqing (2009) analyzed the female characters in *Thelma & Louise*, using the theory of liberal feminism. She thought that the characters had experienced the maturity from submission and weakness to independence and rational consciousness, showing the pursuit of freedom and equality, and the resistance to patriarchy in the patriarchal society. The liberal feminist theory of Mary and John has been used to analyze the female characters in films or other works of art. This

dissertation will also use them to analyze the female characters in Ang Lee's films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*.

### **2.2.2 Mary Wollstonecraft and liberal feminism**

As the iconic figure of liberal feminism, Mary Wollstonecraft (1996) criticized the social and political systems that oppressed women, challenged the traditional idea that women should be subordinate to men and excluded from public life. She believed that women should have equal rights with men and demanded that men and women enjoy equal rights to accept education, work, and vote in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. At the same time, she also advocated the concept of freedom of marriage and love. Based on Mary Wollstonecraft's theory of liberal feminism and her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* as the primary theoretical source, this dissertation will analyze female characters' feminist thoughts and consciousness in Ang Lee's films.

#### **2.2.2.1 Background of Mary Wollstonecraft**

Mary Wollstonecraft was a famous writer, philosopher, and feminist, born in 1759 in London, England, from an aristocratic family of farmers. She grew up in a wealthy family but unfortunately was bankrupt later. She used to work as a governess, a companion and ran her own school. Mary Wollstonecraft was deeply affected by the French Revolution of 1789. She published *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* in 1790 as a countermeasure to Edmund Burke's book *Reflections on the French Revolution*, which supported the hereditary power of the absolute monarchy. In 1792, Mary published her famous book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. She criticized that education made women in a state of "ignorance and slavish dependency" in the English society of the 18th century, believed that man's rights and woman's rights should be the same, and she insisted that the church, the military hierarchy, and even the absolute monarchy should

be abolished in order to achieve social equality. In addition, she also published the works *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, *Mary: A Fiction*, etc. Mary Wollstonecraft's masterwork, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, was known as "A foundational work in the history of feminism in Britain and America," which was considered to be the first feminist book in British history to call for the reform of woman's behavior and arouse woman's awareness (Wu, 2014).

#### **2.2.2.2 *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman***

*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is an article of female liberation consciousness published by Mary Wollstonecraft, a pioneer of the western feminist movement in 1792. In the article, Mary (1996) criticized the disadvantages of upper-middle-class women in Britain, believing that these women were poor in physical quality, knowledge level, and moral cultivation. Furthermore, the reason "is the natural consequence of their education and social status"(Wollstonecraft 1996:200). She advocated that family education should shape a woman's independent personality, school education should implement coeducation. She also advocated self-education of self-reliance and self-improvement and the policy system of equal opportunity, all of which were effective ways to solve woman's problems.

In the *Feminist Studies of Mary Wollstonecraft*, Jiao Tan (2012) elaborated and analyzed in detail the background reasons for the emergence of feminism, the content and thoughts of feminism, the ways of realization, and the significance of feminism. Xiao Teng (2011), the author of *A Study on Mary Wollstonecraft's Thoughts on Female Education*, mainly discussed the educational perspective of Mary Wollstonecraft, emphasized the importance of female education and its implications for modern society. These two articles will also serve as the theoretical reference articles of this dissertation and assist with the theoretical discussion and explanation to analyze the feminist



thoughts and feminist consciousness of female characters in Ang Lee's films.

### **2.2.3 John Stuart Mill and liberal feminism**

#### **2.2.3.1 Background of John Stuart Mill**

John Stuart Mill, born in 1806, was a famous British philosopher and political economist of utilitarianism and liberalism. *On Liberty* was a masterpiece of classical liberalism and had a significant influence on the classical Liberals in the 19th century (Christopher,2017). In terms of feminism, after Henry Hunt, he was the second to ask for woman's suffrage through a motion in the British Parliament. In 1869, Mill published *The Subordination of Women*, denying the common prejudice that the difference between men and women was natural and proving that the difference between the sexes was more due to social factors. Mill believed that Victorian marriage was almost the tyranny of men over women - just the difference between good and evil. However, women and society had no effective ways to restrain the husbands. From this point of view, he concluded that only by giving women the right to vote and divorce can women be liberated. In addition, he also wrote *A System of Logic, Principles of Political Economy, On Representative Government, Utilitarianism*, and so on.

#### **2.2.3.2 The Subjection of Women**

*The Subjection of Women* is a feminist ideological work published by the British political philosopher John Stuart Mill (2012) in 1869, which called for giving women equal rights and the right to participate in political elections. In the book, he criticized Britain's political and social system and demanded that women be given equal rights for education, work, and election the same as men. He advocated that women should enjoy equal rights in the family and society, that women should freely choose jobs, that

women should be given equal employment opportunities, and that women could compete well with men (Wu,2001).

He Weiwei (2018), the writer of *The Study of John Mill's Feminist Thought*, thinks that John Mill's feminism is based on liberalism and utilitarianism. He summarized the main content of John Mill's feminism in the following: to reform education, to ensure woman's political participation, and to implement equality between men and women. Only free competition can improve woman's rights and promote the harmonious and stable development of society. At the same time, he pointed out the limitations of John Mill's feminism and its influence on China. Deng Ying's (2007) *On Mill's Feminism* also analyzed the background of Mill's feminism, the way to realize it, and its significance to the Chinese woman's liberation movement.

#### **2.2.4 Other elements of liberal feminism**

Feminists have discovered from the long history of human beings that women are oppressed and discriminated against globally, and they are "others," which has been a common and lasting phenomenon. The scope of woman's oppression includes both the social field and the family field. Patriarchy refers to male rule. In society, all authority positions are reserved to men in politics, economy, law, religion, education, military, and family (Wu, 2012). The most significant inequality in human society is the inequality between the two sexes. Patriarchy is made by an invisible hand, making men dominant in society and women in a position of inferiority and obedience.

Kate Millet (2000) introduced the concept of Patriarchy into feminist theory and extended its meaning in her book *Sexual Politics*: Patriarchy was mainly manifested in the rule of men over women and the rule of elders over their children. One is male dominance over the female; the other is male elders' dominance over younger generations.

Ang Lee is good at shaping the female characters in repression, whose root is from patriarchy and the social system derived from patriarchy. He is good at shaping the female characters with feminist characteristics by combining tradition and modernity. Female characters in Ang Lee's films generally have a sense of resistance, denying and resisting patriarchy, demanding equality between men and women, and pursuing the same rights of education and freedom of choices as men, which has reflected the appeal of liberal feminism. This dissertation will analyze the six female characters and characteristics in the two selected Ang Lee's films by using liberal feminist theories, explore Ang Lee's methods of shaping female characters combined with tradition and modernity and its reference significance.

There are many articles about the spirit of fighting against the patriarchy of female characters. Guoting (2018), the writer of *A Study on Challenges to Patriarchy in Wonder Woman*, analyzed that the female characters in *Wonder Woman* had the characteristics of challenging patriarchal authority and resisting patriarchy from the perspective of patriarchal male discourse and the male gaze in this paper. In *Jane Eyre's Heroine's Resistance to Patriarchy*, the writer You Ruihua (2016) analyzed Jane Eyre's behavior and language to show Jane Eyre's spirit of resisting patriarchal oppression. Yao Jiaodi (2018), in *The Subversion of Feminism to Patriarchy in Langyabang*, through the analysis of the female role of Princess Nihuang, thought that she showed the consciousness of feminism, resisting the authority of patriarchy with rational characteristics, and had achieved the same status as men.

### **2.3 Ang Lee and his films and feminist theory**

Ang Lee has been on the international film stage since he directed the film *Pushing Hand* in 1991. He has directed 14 films until now and won many international film festival awards, including The Oscar. Audiences and critics have praised Ang Lee's

films for their profound themes, rich genres, cutting-edge cinematography, and distinctive character images. Scholars also have set off a wave of research on Ang Lee's films. There are various research works on Ang Lee, mainly divided into the biography of Ang Lee and research on Ang Lee's films.

### **2.3.1 Ang Lee's biography and behind the scenes film production**

The most important book about Ang Lee's biography is *Ang Lee's Biography: Ten Years of A Movie Dream*, dictated by Ang Lee and written by Liangbei Zhang (2012). The book recorded the growth of Ang Lee, the story of filmmaking, and his thoughts on life and art. As a first-person oral biography of Ang Lee, this book is the most valuable reference because it directly recorded Ang Lee's mind journey in writing scripts and shooting films and his thoughts on eastern and western cultures, tradition, and modernity. In addition to this, *Ang Lee's World*, written by Xinping Dou (2010), also recorded the growth experience of Ang Lee to become a film director.

There are some books on the research of Ang Lee's films with the reference value, which mainly focus on the connotation of Ang Lee's films, Ang Lee's concern for human nature, and his philosophical thinking. Whitney Crothers Dilley (2012), the author of *The Cinema of Ang Lee: The Other Side of the Screen*, explored Ang Lee's preference for multiple themes, his grasp of the cultural collision between east and west, his concern for human nature in universality and repression, and his philosophical thinking on life by analyzing the themes, dialogues, images and stories of film shooting and making. *The Philosophy of Ang Lee* is a book about the studies on Ang Lee's films written by Robert Arp, Adam Barkman, and James McRae (2015). From the perspective of philosophy, the three writers respectively analyzed the philosophical thoughts contained in Ang Lee's films by using the traditional Chinese philosophy, western philosophy, and Ang Lee's director philosophy, which consisted of eastern and western

cultural communications. *Reading Ang Lee*, written by Mo Wa (2008), the author told the growth experience of Ang Lee and the behind-the-scene stories of his film shooting. She also analyzed Ang Lee's directing style, images, his thinking on human nature, and his handling of the conflicts and fusion of eastern and western cultures.

### **2.3.2 Ang Lee's films and feminist theory**

There are many articles about Ang Lee's films and feminist theory research, mainly from the directions of eastern and western cultures, cultural identity and self-identity, aesthetics, narrative research, gender images, and feminist theory.

#### **2.3.2.1 Eastern and Western cultures**

In *An Analysis of Cross-Cultural Communication in Ang Lee's Films*, Liu Liu (2015) analyzed Ang Lee's films from cross-cultural communication and held that Ang Lee's east-west background enabled him to tell stories from both eastern and western perspectives. Ang Lee made traditional oriental aesthetics more acceptable to western audiences and interpreted the differences between eastern and western cultures by using the family as a bridge. Yun Liu (2017), the author of *A Study on the Conflict and Fusion between Chinese Culture and Western Culture in Ang Lee's Films*, believed that Ang Lee's success could be attributed to his skillful fusion of two different cultures across the cultural context of east and west. Furthermore, Yumeng Yuan (2017) believed that Ang Lee's films were based on integrating traditional Chinese culture and western culture and coexisted with the eastern vision and western techniques in *On the Chinese and Western Cultural Identity of Ang Lee's Films*. The above three articles analyzed Ang Lee's films from a cross-cultural perspective. *The Multicultural World in the Films of Ang Lee*, written by Xi Li (2017), analyzed Ang Lee's films from a multicultural perspective. Xi Li explained how Ang Lee eliminated the aesthetic differences among

audiences with different cultural backgrounds and considered that Ang Lee's films proved that human beings' common culture and emotions were the essential bridges to eliminate the cultural differences between the east and the west.

There is also research on eastern and western cultures from the perspective of a single film. In *When East Meets West: A Sweet and Sour Encounter in Ang Lee's The Wedding Banquet*, Elisabetta Marino (2005) compared the eastern and western cultures as sugar and vinegar. She believed that Ang Lee successfully mediated the two antagonisms of the eastern and western cultures in *The Wedding Banquet* and finally made them coexisted peacefully. In *An Intercultural Study of Pushing Hands—The Seeking, Losing and Acquiring of Harmony*, the author Wenjie Lee (2010) analyzed the film from the perspective of eastern and western cultures, emphasizing the importance of harmony and filial piety in the Chinese family. Samantha Roach (2013) considered that *Eat Drink Man Woman* brought local stories about life and sex to the world stage in food film in his article *Bigger Fish to Fry: The Global Appeal of Eat Drink Man Woman*. Furthermore, the articles analyze Ang Lee's films' eastern and western cultures by comparing two films. William Leung, the author of *Crouching Sensibility, Hidden Sense*, believed that the sense and sensibility correspond to Confucianism and Taoism in traditional Chinese culture by comparing the female characters in two of Ang Lee's films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Sense and Sensibility*.

### **2.3.2.2 Cultural identity and self-identity**

Some articles research the direction of cultural identity and self-identity in Ang Lee's films. Jiefei Yu (2019), the author of *Seeking Identities Across the Worlds---A Critical Analysis of Ang Lee's Film The Wedding Banquet*, used the film *The Wedding Banquet* created by Ang Lee as an example, analyzed the cultural identity politics of American immigrants. He believed that the relationship of "negotiation" between the two cultures

was crucial in cultural identity. Ting-Ting Chan (2017), the author of *Taiwanese Identity and Transnational Families in the Cinema of Ang Lee*, analyzed Ang Lee's films from Taiwan's history, politics, and society and held that Ang Lee's identity should be that of transnational filmmakers. Shaoyun Shi (2014), in *Research on Ang Lee's Film Self-Identity*, analyzed the phenomenon of self-identity in Ang Lee's films from the perspective of aesthetic culture. The author believed that Ang Lee's films were mainly about the self-identity problem of vulnerable groups, which had guiding significance for modern people's self-identity. Yumeng Yuan (2017), the author of *On the Chinese and Western Cultural Identity of Ang Lee's Films*, considered that Ang Lee's recognition of Chinese and western cultures was mainly reflected in harmony but different, that was shown in films as eastern elements added to western films, and the integration of Chinese and western elements.

### **2.3.2.3 Narrative research**

In the article, *The Thought of Philosopher -- and Lee's Film Narrative Aesthetic Interpretation*, Zhu Yuan (2015) considered Ang Lee, a recessive narrator. The key to the success of Ang Lee's films should be attributed to his oriental cultural deposits and perspectives and his perfect use of western cultural symbols. Zhu Yue (2016) analyzed the theme, structure, type, and image of Ang Lee's films based on the multifaceted narrative characteristics of Ang Lee's films in *A Narrative Review on Ang Lee's Movies*. Pengfei Ji (2017) analyzed the characteristics of Ang Lee's narrative concepts from narratology and held that the narrative concepts of Ang Lee's films were a discourse system that integrated the Chinese and the western in *Research on the Narrative Concept of Ang Lee's Films*.

#### **2.3.2.4 Gender image**

Chenxing Zheng (2014), the author of *A Study of the Gender Order in Ang Lee's Films*, researched the gender order in Ang Lee's films from patriarchy, women, and homosexuality. He believed that the concept of gender order conveyed by Ang Lee in the films is non-confrontational and pursues harmony and equality. The research of character image is also an important research direction of the study of Ang Lee's films. Qingjun Zha (2017), the author of *The Construction of Gender Roles in Ang Lee's Films Under Cultural Perspective*, introduced Ang Lee's films into the perspective of "gender and media" research. She combined cultural research with film author research and extensively used feminist and film author theoretical resources to discuss the construction of gender image in Ang Lee's films by combining western and Chinese cultural phenomena. The author classified the characters in Ang Lee's films into three categories: the image of the prodigal son, the image of the hero, and the image of the chivalrous woman. He considered Ang Lee treating different ideological and cultural identities to rebel against traditional culture and everyday narratives.

#### **2.3.2.5 Feminist theory**

Ang Lee created many rebellious, brave, and independent female characters in his films. Therefore, many articles are studying Ang Lee's films from feminist theory, mainly studying the feminism and interpretation of female consciousness reflected in Ang Lee's films. Cainv Zhan (2011), the author of *On the Female Consciousness in Ang Lee's Films*, considered that the shaping of female images in Ang Lee's films had a significant relation with the growth experience of Ang Lee and the social and political environment. He also discussed the female consciousness of Ang Lee's female characters from the perspectives of "body discourse power," film style, and film poetics. She held that Ang Lee paid attention to human nature and pursued harmony in shaping



female images. Xiaowen Gao (2010), the author of *Feminist Analysis of Ang Lee's Films*, used feminist theories to analyze the female consciousness of the female characters in Ang Lee's films from the perspective of subverting the image of the "other" and the perspectives of gender, and the integration of Yin and Yang between the same sex. She considered that Ang Lee's films had a highly flexible gender perspective and provided humanity a whole display space. Di Qian (2015) analyzed the female consciousness of the female characters of Ang Lee's early three films "The Father Trilogy" in *Female Consciousness in The Father Trilogy*. She considered that the emergence of "rebellious female characters" indicated that Chinese women had awakened their female consciousness but still needed to move on. *Metaphorical Interpretation of Female Consciousness in the Films from the Male Perspective of Ang Lee*, written by Bingzhang Bao (2015), considered that the female consciousness of the female images in Ang Lee's films was embodied in resisting the patriarchy, mastering the power of speech and controlling the body. There are also articles analyzing the feminism of Ang Lee's films from the single film. Catherine Gomes (2005), the author of *Crouching Women, Hidden Genre: An Investigation Into Western Film Criticism's Reading of Feminism In Ang Lee's Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, considered that due to the code of Confucian society, western film critics defined the female characters in Wuxia films, such as the female characters in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, as feminists. Alternatively, some articles analyzed the feminism of Ang Lee's films by comparing different films. Xiaodan Chen (2010), the author of *Interpretations of Female Violence in Films - Take Thelma and Louise and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon As Examples*, took the female characters in the two films and analyzed the desire of women to resist the patriarchal social system through violence.

The research on female characters in Ang Lee's films based on feminist theory mainly includes: *On the Feminine Consciousness of Women Characters in Ang Lee's*

*Films* written by Yuan Na. For analysis, Yuan Na (2012) put the female characters into Ang Lee's life experience and social environment. She believed that Ang Lee's traditional Chinese culture and modern western culture and his educational background were the reasons for his shaping of female characters with female consciousness. Female characters in Ang Lee's films generally have independent female consciousness, but they are not entirely free from the bondage of male consciousness. Yayun Liu (2008) summarized and classified the female images in Ang Lee's films from social and market contexts in *A Study on Chinese Female Images in Ang Lee's Films*. The author considered that Ang Lee portrayed women from an equal perspective. In Ang Lee's films, the female characters were individuals with their own life experiences by comparing the female characters in Zhang Yimou's films. *The Good View—A Preliminary Study on the Female Images in Ang Lee's Films* written by Liujun Yang (2008), combed the female images of Ang Lee's films from the perspectives of time and space dimension and the fusion of Chinese and western cultures, considered that the female characters in Ang Lee's films changed from the male perspective to the female perspective. The female characters gradually stepped out of the aura of patriarchy and got close to equal importance with the male. Zhizhao Xue (2017) classified the female characters in Ang Lee's films as those who resisted male power, actively pursued lust, and free love from the perspective of the awakening of female consciousness. She considered that Ang Lee had limitations in creating female characters with female consciousness because of his identity as a male director in his *Rebellion and Defend Traditional Moral Principles - The Interpretation of the Female Characters in Ang Lee's Films*. Some articles study the female characters in Ang Lee's films from a single film. Kristin Weaver (2015), the author of *Gender Inequality as Family Drama in Ang Lee's Eat Drink Man Woman*, analyzed the survival status of Taiwanese women in Ang Lee's film *Eat Drink Man Woman* from the perspective of conflict between modernity

and tradition and patriarchy. The author considered that modernization had helped women achieve success in contemporary Taiwan. Mingyuan Lee (2010) analyzed the female characters resisted patriarchy in *Female Characters in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

In the above articles analyzing Ang Lee's films with feminist theories, most articles mainly analyze female characters' female independence and resistance consciousness. These articles focus on analyzing the root of Ang Lee's creation of female characters with feminist consciousness by combining the growth experience of Ang Lee and Ang Lee's philosophical thought expressed through female characters in his films or classified female characters according to the different characteristics reflected by different female characters. The existing studies on female characters in Ang Lee's films are mainly limited to studying the embodiment of feminist consciousness in female characters and exploring Ang Lee's Chinese and western cultural background on his shaping of female characters. This dissertation will use feminist theories combine with film elements, such as dialogues, costumes, makeup, to analyze how Ang Lee uses traditional and modern means to create female characters with feminist consciousness and provide the reference significance to other Chinese films.

## CHAPTER3: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Methodology style

This dissertation will use the theory of liberal feminism and combine it with the film elements to analyze the female characters in Ang Lee's films from the traditional and modern perspectives, analyze their spirit of resistance to patriarchy, and the reference significance. This dissertation will adopt qualitative research methods, including literature study, film observation, and interview methods. This dissertation will mainly use six female characters in Ang Lee's two films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*, as examples to analyze. For the literature study method, I will read and refer to other relevant books and articles such as *The History of Chinese Films*, *Reading Ang Lee*, *Ten Years of A Movie Dream*, *The Subjection of Women*, etc. For the film observation method, I will watch the two films, some of Ang Lee's other films, other directors' films about female characters, etc. I cannot do the face-to-face interview with director Ang Lee or other actresses in the two films for the interview method. I will use second-hand materials of interviews, such as the videos, the biopic of Ang Lee, and the news report about his interviews.

### 3.2 Theoretical framework

Liberal feminism demands equality between men and women, equal rights for education and work, equal rights for love and freedom of marriage, and woman's right for self-determination. This dissertation will start from the perspective of liberal feminism and collect data from two selected Ang Lee's films to demonstrate that the female characters in the two elected Ang Lee's films have the characteristics of liberal feminism.

While liberal feminism demands equality between men and women and advocates woman's resistance to patriarchy, the female characters in Ang Lee's films also reflect

the characteristics of resistance to patriarchal oppression. This dissertation will collect data from the perspective of fighting against the patriarchy and combine the traditional and modern perspectives to demonstrate that the female characters in the two selected Ang Lee's films have the characteristics of fighting against patriarchy. Due to objective reasons, the author of this dissertation cannot interview director Ang Lee or his film creators in person, and the materials used in this dissertation are second-hand data.

### **3.3 Theory of liberal feminism**

Feminism has a far-reaching effect on the equality of rights between men and women, the disintegration and reconstruction of patriarchy, and family relations and structure development. Since the second half of the 19th century, feminism has experienced three waves of development after the French bourgeois revolution and the enlightenment. The first wave was from the second half of the 19th century to the 20th century. The representative of this period, Harriet Tyler Mill, demanded equal rights for men and women in education, law, and the economy. Moreover, Simone Beauvoir believed that women were not naturally female but were shaped by society. Women were regarded as the "other," far from history and politics, and became the secondary sex subordinate to men in her book *The Second Sex*, published in 1949. The second wave was from the early 20th century to the 1960s, when feminism was divided into radical feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, and liberal feminism. The representative of radical feminism, Kate Millet introduced the concept of Patriarchy into feminist theory and extended its meaning in her book *Sexual Politics*, published in 1970. The representative of Marxist/socialist feminism, Juliet Mitchell, believed that the patriarchal and economic systems were the causes of the low status of women in *Women: The Longest Revolution*, demanding that women should be equal to men in class and economy. The representatives of liberal feminism were Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill.

They demanded reason and justice and believed that women should have equal opportunities and freedom of choice as men. The third wave was from the 1960s to the present, represented by "postmodern feminism," "ecological feminism," and "process feminism," breaking "male language" and advocating "female language" to be heard. Representative works include Judith Butler's *The Trouble with Gender*. The feminist movement promoted the awakening of "female consciousness," emphasized the critical subject status of woman's historical development, made people rethink the relationship between men and women in the criticism and reflection, and reconstructed the family and social roles of men and women.

Liberal feminism, active from the 18th century to the 1960s, originated from the French bourgeois revolution and the enlightenment, synchronized with the Industrial Revolution in Europe, held that women should have the right to equal opportunities and to choose freely as men, and advocated rationality and justice. The liberal ideological trend that emerged in Western Europe in the 19th century was the basis of liberal feminism and the continuation and development of natural rights philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries. Liberalism was opposed to feudalism, royalty, theocracy, and privilege and emphasized natural human rights. Liberal feminism accepted the subjective point of freedom and believed that women, as a group or individual, should enjoy equal rights with men. In addition, the Industrial Revolution also provided opportunities for the development of liberal feminism. The Industrial Revolution separated the family from the public place, isolating women within the family. Women in this period were seen as irrational, excluded from public groups without legally recognized citizenship. Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill represented early liberal feminism. From the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, Harriet Tyler Mill, as the representative of the first generation of feminism, demanded equal rights for men and women in education, law, and economy.

Mary Wollstonecraft, the most important representative of early liberal feminism, put forward in her masterpiece *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that reason was the basis of citizenship qualification, and reason included the ability to overcome or control love and passion. She rejected Rousseau's view of the difference between men and women and argued that the lack of educational opportunities oppressed women. In his famous book *The Subservience of Women*, John Stuart Mill argued that women did seem to be less capable than men, but that this was the result of long periods of social oppression and lack of education, of repressing one motivating the other. In addition, another representative of liberal feminism Elizabeth Cady Stanton argued that all men and women were created equal and rejected the double standard on morality between men and women. Betty Friedan, "the Mother of Modern Feminism Movement in the United States," mentioned the "nameless question," the vexing question that middle-class women felt in the "happy" life of a housewife in her book *The Feminine Mystique*. In 1966, she led and founded the National Organization for Women to fight for women's rights. She persuaded the President of the United States to sign an executive order prohibiting sex discrimination in 1967 and launched a nationwide woman's strike in 1970. Contemporary liberal feminism believes that the most critical goal of the woman's movement is sexual equality or gender justice. The core idea of liberal feminism is that women and men should enjoy equal opportunities and free choices in the economy, politics, and education and advocate rationality, fairness, and justice. Liberal feminist thought and movement have played a significant role in women's obtaining equal rights and liberation. Up to now, feminists are still fighting for the development of woman's rights. This dissertation will mainly use the related theories of liberal feminism to analyze the female characters in Ang Lee's films.

This dissertation will use the theories of liberal feminism that Mary Wollstonecraft mentioned in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and John Stuart Mill mentioned in

*The Subjection of Women*: women should be equally as men, men and women should have equal rights in education and work, and the rights of freedom of love and marriage, the rights of freedom of choice and self-determination. They criticized the society at that time about the existence of men and women of the wrong concepts and demanded that men and women enjoy equal rights for education, work, vote, and suffrage.

### **3.4 The concept of resistance to patriarchy**

Feminists have found that women are oppressed and discriminated against in the world for a long history of humankind. They are "the other," which is a common and lasting phenomenon. The scope of woman's oppression includes both the social field and the family field. Patriarchy refers to male domination in that most of the important positions are reserved for men in society. Kate Millet (2000) introduced the concept of Patriarchy into feminist theory and extended its meaning in her book *Sexual Politics*: Patriarchy was mainly manifested in the rule of men over women and the rule of elders over their children. One is male dominance over the female; the other is male elders' dominance over younger generations.

First, male domination: in the public and private spheres of society, all power positions are reserved for men; all criteria for measuring and evaluating women are developed with the participation of men. Women can not participate in setting their standards, let alone any standards and rules for men. Second, male identity: the core cultural concept of society, which is normal, praiseworthy, and valuable, is always associated with masculinity. It leads to a generally accepted division of labor between men and women that paid labor in the public sphere is labor and career. At the same time, society generally does not agree with the free housework dominated by women. Third, objectification of women: in male affairs and transactions, women become objects, depriving or restricting woman's rights to acquire knowledge, improve



understanding and develop creativity. Fourth, the way of male dominating thinking includes dichotomy thinking and opposite thinking between men and women. Hierarchy thought holds that all things in the world have a hierarchy; men are high-level, women are low-level (Shui,2020).

China is a country with thousands of years of feudal rule history. The patriarchal rule that men are superior to women has always occupied the dominant position in society. The social background of Ang Lee's movies *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* is that patriarchy dominates. However, the female characters in the two selected films pursue equal status with men, equal rights for education and work, freedom of love and marriage, and self-determination. They are constantly fighting against the oppression of women by patriarchy, reflecting their characteristics of fighting against patriarchy. This dissertation will analyze the characteristics of female resistance to patriarchy in two selected Ang Lee's films.

### **3.5 The six female characters in the two of Ang Lee's films**

This dissertation will take the female characters of two selected films directed by Ang Lee, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*. Reasons for choosing these two films as research cases: Firstly, the themes and genres of Ang Lee's films are diverse. These two films mainly depict female characters who play leading roles in developing the plots and tell women's growth experience and psychological course. Secondly, the female characters in these two films are numerous and distinctive and generally have the feminist consciousness of resisting tradition and pursuing independence.

**Table 3.1: The six characters of two selected Ang Lee's films**

<b>Films</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Story</b>
<i>Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon</i>	Jen Yu	The daughter of the noble Yu family	Brave and self-willed She steals the green destiny sword and stirs up the forces of all corners of the country. Finally jumped down from the cliff in the end.
	Yu Xiulian	The leader of the security agencies	Brave and traditional She hides her love for Li Mu Bai. However, influenced by Jen Yu, she finally expressed her love before he died.
	Jade Fox	The master of Jen Yu.	Cunning and hubris She has been chased by all people and hides in the Yu mansion. Finally, she was killed by Li Mu Bai.

**Table 3.1, continued: The six characters of two selected Ang Lee's films**

<i>Eat Drink Man Woman</i>	Jiaqian	The second daughter of Mr. Zhu is an airline executive.	Confident and independent She wants to get rid of her father's "control" but finally returned to the family.
	Jiazhen	The eldest daughter of Mr. Zhu is a teacher.	Subdued and cautious She hides her natural feeling but finally dared to face her own emotion and marry her lover.
	Jianing	The youngest daughter of Mr. Zhu, a college student and works part-time in KFC.	Intelligent, purposeful, and resourceful She steals her friend's boyfriend, pregnant with unmarried, becomes the first person to leave Zhu's family.

### 3.6 Specific research methods

Method one is text analysis. Text analysis mainly comprises dialogues, storylines, scripts, plots, etc., including characters' language, behavior, and character relationships. This dissertation will use liberal feminist theory and patriarchy theory to summarize the female characters' characteristics and the feminist consciousness reflected by the six female characters by analyzing the texts based on the selected Ang Lee's films, *Crouching Tiger and Hidden Dragon* and *Eat Drink Man Woman*. Furthermore, by analyzing the story background, environment, and other factors, this dissertation will discuss these female characters' situations and the reasons for the growth and change.

Method two is film analysis. Film analysis mainly comprises audio and video symbols, including pictures, photography, costumes, background music, etc. This dissertation will discuss how Ang Lee uses film elements to shape the female characters with a feminist consciousness by analyzing the dialogues, photography, costumes, and makeup. This dissertation will also discuss how Ang Lee combines tradition with modernity to show the female characters' struggle and resistance in the face of the patriarchal system and society and the pursuit of women as equal rights and freedom of choices as men. At the same time, this dissertation will summarize the characteristics of Ang Lee's portrayal of female characters and its reference significance.

Method three is literature research. By referring to the books and articles about the female characters in Chinese films, this dissertation will summarize the characteristics of the evolution of female characters in Chinese films and the deficiencies in the shaping of female characters in Chinese films. Meanwhile, I will sort out Ang Lee's Chinese and western growth background, remarks, and thoughts and analyze the reasons why Ang Lee creates female characters with feminist consciousness through the integration of tradition and modernity by reading Ang Lee's biography and relevant materials, watching interview videos and relevant films,

## CHAPTER4: ANALYSIS OF FEMALE CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISTICS IN ANG LEE'S FILMS

### 4.1 Introduction

French famous director Trevor ever said: "Film is the art of women." In the long history of film, the female roles have been a unique and splendid landscape. The female images have also become the source of inspiration for many film directors. Throughout the hundred years of film history, the female characters have been beautiful scenery that cannot be ignored. Because of their beautiful appearance, or because of their kind and noble moral characters, or their cute and flattering personality, the female characters in the film, leave an unforgettable impression on people and are remembered in the history of the film. One of the most representative Chinese directors, Zhang Yimou, once said: "Writing about women facing pressure can better illustrate social problems because women bear much more things. From the perspective of the social division of labor of all humankind, it may be easier for men to do something, while it is challenging for women to do something..." (Li,1998). Because of their unique gender identity, women encounter more difficulties in social life than men, and they bear tremendous pressure, so those female roles can better reflect social problems and practical difficulties. The female role has also become a picture that cannot be ignored in film artworks.

The film *Dingjunshan* was made in Beijing in 1905, marking that film officially stepped on the historical stage of China (Lu,1998). (refer to Chapter 2) In the past hundred years, films have recorded and reflected the changes in China's social, economic, and political situations. The roles of women in the films keep changing with the development of history. There were no female actors in early Chinese films, and male actors played all female roles until 1913 when Hong Kong director Weimin Li shot

a short film *Chuang Tzu's Wife Trial*, in which the female role had "become the first woman to appear on the screen in China (He,&Hu, 2008)." (refer to Chapter 2)

In the early days of founding the People's Republic of China, it was necessary to write and remember the history and construct the mainstream ideology's authority politically (He, 2015). (refer to Chapter 2) As "the most popularized and powerful art form," film has taken its responsibility. Chinese women played an essential role in the war for independence, during which Chinese women were liberated unprecedentedly. "Woman's civil rights as 'people' like man are finally recognized and protected by the Constitution and laws." During this period, many images of revolutionary women soldiers have emerged in Chinese films, such as Wu Qionghua in the Red Woman's Army, Zhao Yiman, the heroine of the Anti-Japanese War in Zhao Yiman the female militia images in *Haixia*. After China's reform and opening-up in 1978, the tide of market economy and commercialization hit China. The exchanges between China and the world have been increasing day by day. On the stage of globalization, the eastern and the western, tradition and modernity, are constantly conflicting and merging. "In this period, the female culture was no longer silent on the female norms of male culture, and the female consciousness was becoming more and more mature"(Wang, 2009). With the development of the social economy and the influence of western independent female thoughts, the female characters of Chinese films in this period gradually changed from traditional to modern.

In the 1980s, there were *Furong Town* and *Bell of Qingliang Temple* represented by director Xie Jin. *Furong Town* depicts Yuyin Hu, a woman who bravely protects men in political distress. The *Bell of Qingliang Temple* depicts a woman who raises Japanese orphans, thus showing the kindness and courage of Chinese women. The "Red Trilogy," directed by Zhang Yimou, includes three films: *Red Sorghum*, *Ju Dou*, and *Raise the Red Lantern*, in which all the leading roles are female who resists the patriarchal system

and pursue their lust in feudal society. Under the influence of social and historical progress and modern values, during the 1990s and the early 21st century, Chinese films created some female characters with calm, rational, and independent characteristics, reflecting the awakening of woman's self-consciousness. For example, in the film *The Good People in Sanxia*, Shen Hong does not cry in the face of her husband's infidelity but chooses to calm down and proposes a divorce. Tuya in *Tuya's Marriage* has to support the family alone because her husband was injured by accident and lost the ability to earn money. These female characters have broken the traditional and stubborn images of women who rely on men and family and cannot achieve economic independence. With the development of the social economy and the continuous improvement of women's social status, women can depend on their efforts and choose their ways of life according to their ideas, which has been the embodiment of the further awakening of woman's consciousness.

However, the “disappearing female protagonist” phenomenon has been shown in Chinese films in recent years. According to the *Chinese Film Media Co Filming Website* statistics, as of March 2018, among the top 100 films in China's box office list, at least in 68 films, the “female protagonist has disappeared” (Pan,2018). In more than two-thirds of the 100 films, women exist as supporting roles or male protagonists. For example, the film *Warwolf 2* ranks first at the box office, is a hero movie with a male as the leading role. Female roles only exist as the foil of the male lead, which is “unimportant” (Pan,2018). There are only a few films about woman's psychology and growth with women as the themes and female characters as the absolute protagonists. However, from 2015 to 2020, only one of the top 10 films in China's box office ranking list, *Mermaid*, takes a woman as the leading role but does not involve the topic of woman's growth. In addition to the lack of attention paid to female groups, and female roles are often in the supporting position for male roles, there are also some problems in

Chinese films, such as the deviation between female images and real-life hollowing out of female images. For example, in the movie *Mermaid*, Li Ruolan, the "strong woman" character, has been domineering, sexy, and beautiful from the very beginning, with hundreds of millions of wealth and innumerable bodyguards and luxury cars. However, she hurts others for the sake of economic interests and personal love issues. The image of such a rich and domineering woman is to satisfy the audience's imagination of money and materials, which is far from the image of free and independent women in real life. This kind of female image can neither give the female audience a real sense of substitution nor make the female audience find resonance from the role.

However, the female characters in Director Ang Lee's films have unique characteristics with a feminist consciousness. Ang Lee pays more attention to the inner growth of the female characters that are more in line with the images of modern independent women, that female audiences can have more resonance. "Ang Lee's films are famous for being female-centered and focusing on woman's views." (Dilley, 2012). Ang Lee has created a lot of female characters with various personalities in his films. Since becoming a director, Ang Lee has directed 13 films. Eight portrayed female roles with distinct characters, such as the brave and rebellious Jen Yu in *Crouching Tiger; Hidden Dragon*, the independent and strong woman Zhu Jiaqian in *Eat Drink Man Woma*. Even in the film *Brokeback Mountain*, which is themed by same-sex love, he also uses much space to shape the two leading characters' wives, Lureen Newsome and Alma. Ang Lee is especially good at shaping and dealing with the theme of "repressed women"(Dilley,2012). Ang Lee himself once said: "it is just that woman's plays or woman's images are more suitable for what I want to express."(refer to Chapter 2) (Zhang,2012). The female characters in Ang Lee's films generally have feminist consciousness and independent spirit, resisting the oppression of patriarchy, doubting the traditional patriarchal social system, and dare to challenge. They pursue equal rights



and status with men and equal rights for education, love, and free choice.

This chapter will take the six female characters in the two selected Ang Lee's films which mainly describe female characters as examples: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*, combining with the theory of liberal feminism and patriarchy, and analyze feminism consciousness and characteristics of female characters in Ang Lee's films. Combined with Ang Lee's eastern and western growth background and social environment, this chapter also analyzes why Ang Lee created female characters with a liberal feminist consciousness. At the same time, this chapter will also analyze the characteristics of Ang Lee's female characters with liberal female consciousness from the perspective of tradition and modernity, combining elements such as makeup, clothing, color application, and close-ups in the films.

## **4.2 An analysis of Ang Lee's life and his films**

### **4.2.1 Ang Lee's life experience and background**

The female characters created by Ang Lee in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Women*, show the feminist consciousness of resisting the patriarchy, embody the spirit of liberal feminism, pursue equal rights for education and free love with men. The reason is relevant to Ang Lee's background of growing up and education in the east and the west and the women in his life.

“The source of literature and art comes from human social life.”(D,1991). “Social life is the object and the only source of literary creation.”(Tong,2013) Andre Bazin, a famous French film critic, thinks that the invention of the film comes from a kind of psychological desire of human beings, and it is the restoration of material reality (Rao,2018). It can be seen that social life is the basis and fundamental source of all works of art. Art originates from life and is higher than life. Works of art come from

actual social life, and the characterization in artworks cannot do without the shadow of real people in life. As the creator of film artworks, the film creation and character image building cannot be separated from the director's own growth experience and cultural background. In Ang Lee's films, the female characters are generally independent, confident, strong, and constantly pursue equal rights and status with men. The reason why Ang Lee can create female characters with feminist consciousness in the films can be traced back to Ang Lee's growth environment and the two women who have played essential roles in his life. The characters of feminism created by Ang Lee in the films are inseparable from the two influential women in Ang Lee's growing-up experience and his eastern and western cultural background.

#### **4.2.2 Female characters and characteristics in Ang Lee's life**

Ang Lee was born and grew up in Taiwan. His father was a headmaster, and his mother was a primary school teacher. Growing up in an educational family, Ang Lee was deeply influenced by the cultural environment. As an educator, Ang Lee's mother was a professional woman with an independent economic career, successfully balancing work and family. At the same time, she was also a strong and independent woman. His memoir records that Ang Lee once went boating on the lake when he was a child but accidentally fell into the water pool. "My mother jumped into the water and pushed me up without any hesitation."(Zhang,2012) So Ang Lee also said in his memoir: "My mother gave me two lives."(Zhang,2012) In addition, when her mother was pregnant with him, she accidentally fell down the stairs when everyone was taking a nap, and she could not get any people or cars. However, there was a class of students waiting for her to teach. "Mother sat for a while, then got up and slowly walked to school, just until she went back home after class did dad know. He quickly took her to the hospital for examinations; fortunately, everything was fine."(Zhang,2012) It can be seen that Ang

Lee's mother is a strong and independent woman. She does not depend on men for everything. She has her career and is financially independent, and has a strong personality. It can be seen that Ang Lee's mother has exerted a particular influence on shaping solid and independent female characters for him in the future.

Another influential woman in Ang Lee's life is his wife. Ang Lee's wife, Lin Huijia, is a biology doctor at the University of Illinois. Ang Lee and his wife met and married when they were studying in the United States. After graduating from NYU, Ang Lee had six years of silence. He had no job and stayed at home, cooking, picking up children, and sharing household chores. His family's economy mainly depended on his wife's salary as a researcher. In his biography, Ang Lee once expressed gratitude to his wife: "Huijia's greatest support for me is that she lives independently. She did not demand me to go to work." "If I had not met my wife, I might not be able to have a chance to pursue my film career."(Zhang,2012) Lin Huijia has a solid and independent personality. When she gave birth to her first child with Ang Lee, "She felt that her amniotic fluid was broken and drove to the hospital in a car that was almost running out of gas." "She does not want to trouble others if she can do it herself." (Zhang,2012) Lin Huijia has obtained a doctor's degree. She is a highly educated woman with her career and is financially independent. For a long time, the Ang Lee family has always been a life mode of "woman dominating the outside world, and the male dominating the internal," which is in sharp contrast to the concept of the patriarchal society. The success of Ang Lee's career is inseparable from the support of his wife and the silent dedication behind it. From the female characters in Ang Lee's films, we can always see his wife's independent shadow.

The two most influential women in Ang Lee's life, his mother and wife, have solid characters and independent characteristics. They both have good educational backgrounds and successful careers with independent finance and accessible choices for

love and marriage, never relying on men. The strong and independent female characters created by Ang Lee in the movies, such as Jen Yu in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and Jiaqian in *Eat Drink Man Woman*, have many similar characters and characteristics with his mother and his wife in real life. His mother and his wife have made important influences on Ang Lee in shaping female characters. They are also the sources of the characteristics of many female characters in Ang Lee's films.

#### **4.2.3 The background of growth education in the East and the West**

Born in a traditional family in Taiwan, Ang Lee spent all his years there before his junior college. Ang Lee's father was the headmaster, and his family was a traditional patriarchal family, deeply influenced by the Central Plains culture. Ang Lee mentioned in his biography that his birth "made his father so excited that he did not sleep all night. He said with mixed feelings that the Li family finally had a future."(Zhang,2005) In the father's eyes, only the son is the representative of the traditional patriarchal society in China, which is the most important for a family. "My father is a representative of the traditional Central Plains culture to me," Lee said (Zhang,2005). Their family still kept the custom of kneeling to their elders in the Spring Festival and that the children would be punished if they got poor academic performance. Because of the official patriarchal standard and Ang Lee's father was the headmaster, when he was a child, whenever there was a school performance, as the principal's son, he could sit in the middle of the front row to watch. Ang Lee grew up in such a traditional patriarchal environment. The traditional Chinese culture profoundly impacts him, and the patriarchy's repression gives him inspiration for shaping the repressed female characters under the influence of patriarchy. In Ang Lee's films, traditional and modern techniques are often used to tell stories and shape character images. The life experience under the patriarchal system of central plains culture has become the natural source of the traditional side of his films in

character shaping.

Ang Lee went to the United States in the 1980s to continue his professional study of drama and film since Western culture had had a tremendous cultural impact on Ang Lee. In his first year at the University of Illinois, "I experienced two greatest cultural impacts in the US" (Zhang,2012), one of which is drama. Western modern culture has dramatically influenced Ang Lee and made him see a new world outside the traditional Central Plains culture. After experiencing the baptism of the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1980s, American woman's education, employment, and political participation rates increased significantly. By 1982, the number of female college students studying for degrees had surpassed that of male students, reaching 6.39 million (Li,2004). In terms of the number of degrees awarded by various universities in the United States, about 1.353 million people obtained bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctor's degrees in 1982, 48.8% of whom were women(Li,2004). Almost 18 million women had jobs in the United States in 1950, and the number had tripled to more than 53 million in 1990(Liu,2006). In 1980, more than 1000 female mayors were in the United States (Benenson,1982). In the 1980s, when Ang Lee was studying in the United States, more and more women broke away from the shackles of the family, went to work, gained economic independence, and gradually got rid of the patriarchal family. Their ideas have become more open and independent.

The second wave of the feminist movement starts in the 1960s. China has experienced tremendous social change during this time. The feudal social system that had ruled China for thousands of years was collapsing, and the socialist system was gradually being established. With the improvement of the economy and industry, there was more and more labor force needed. Influenced by the second wave of the feminist movement and the demand for the development of society, Chinese women went out of family and found jobs. More and more women achieved economic and spiritual

independence.

Ang Lee's creating female characters were more or less influenced by the American woman's liberation movement and the actual situation of Chinese women, which laid a realistic foundation for the female characters in his films to have modern female consciousness, resist patriarchy, and pursue higher education independence and freedom.

#### **4.2.4 Ang Lee's and Chinese woman's social status**

Marx once pointed out that social progress can be accurately measured by women's social status (Mitchell,1997). With the continuous improvement of women's social status, economic independence, and women's liberation, they enjoy the same rights and obligations as men in economic, political, legal, and other aspects of social life. Woman's fair treatment is a vital sign of social development and progress. Since the reform and opening up in 1978, China's social economy has experienced a leap forward with people's material living standards constantly improved, and the social outlook significantly changed. With the development of the social economy, the social status of women has also been improved. The emphasis on woman's right to education has made more and more women obtain high education and get the ability to enter society. They went to work, participated in social and economic development, realized their economic independence, and got rid of the dependence on men and patriarchal families. Income independence has laid the foundation for Chinese women to realize their consumption independence, making significant contributions to China's social and economic development and progress. Social progress is not only reflected in material progress but also ideological progress. Woman's economic independence has laid a material foundation for woman's ideological independence. With the material conditions being met in today's China, Chinese women's pursuit of spiritual independence is constantly

improving. China has a long history of feudal rule. Due to the nature of agricultural society, men were responsible for the production of means of living, and women were responsible for taking care of the family. The living state of "men till and women weave" created a feudal social order in which men were superior. There is a famous saying in China that "Marry the chicken and follow the chicken, marry the dog and follow the dog," which is a visualized description of a woman's status in marriage and family at that time. Women can not control their destinies. Their husbands decide what kinds of life they live after they marry their husbands. Women do not have any dominant rights. A woman's destiny is passive and oppressed.

Because women rely heavily on men in the material aspect of their existence, women are always in the subordinate position of men and submit to the domination and jurisdiction of men. The subordination of material status determines the spiritual and ideological subordination. Yang Yuanying once pointed out that "the history of ancient Chinese women is a history of woman's consciousness disappearing in the patriarchal society and individual families"(Yang, 1990). Under the rule of feudal society in ancient China, woman's self-consciousness was silent in the plight of material existence and the oppression of patriarchal society. However, nowadays, most Chinese women have achieved economic independence. They do not need to rely on men in material matters, and they can even obtain better material conditions than men. Therefore, today's Chinese women are gradually independent in ideology and do not need to be subordinate to men, and gradually get rid of the shackles of patriarchy. They can decide the directions of their careers, freely choose love and marriage and grasp the directions of their own life. To sum up, since the reform and opening up of the People's Republic of China, significant progress has been made in society. Correspondingly, with Chinese women's economic and social status improved by leaps and bounds, many images of new Chinese women with independent economy and independent ideology have

emerged.

Thus, the female characters with feminism consciousness created in Ang Lee's films are closely related to the growth and learning background of Ang Lee in the west and the two influential women in his life. The independent and strong characters of Ang Lee's mother and his wife; the western education in the United States; the situation of American women in education and employment after the woman's movement, and the improvement of Chinese woman's social status have all made essential impacts on Ang Lee's shaping of female characters.

#### **4.2.5 The element of dialogues in Ang Lee's films**

“Dialogues are an indispensable factor in a play and the cornerstone of a play. The importance of dialogues in performance is to reveal the character's characteristics, accurately shape the character image, promote the development of the plot, and transmit much information to different characters.”(Wang,2020) The dialogues in the film are the key factors that constitute the film story, promote the development of the plot, reveal the relationship between the characters, and shape the images of the characters. The following will analyze the dialogues in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* in the construction of female characters. The dialogues of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* are very distinctive, combining classical Chinese and modern Chinese, and even English-style Chinese. Before shooting, the script of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, has been modified many times by people from different cultural backgrounds, including Ang Lee's production partner James, an American; Taiwan's screenwriter Wang Huiling, with an oriental cultural background; and Zhong Acheng, a writer proficient in traditional Chinese language and culture. People from different backgrounds participated in the writing of the script, so that "there are literary and artistic tunes, authentic, half classical Chinese and half modern Chinese, half western and half eastern,



all of which have been a mixture with many kinds of languages altogether.”(Zhang,2012) Therefore, the dialogues of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* are characterized by the combination of traditional and modern, and the combination of Chinese and western. At the beginning of the film, Li Mubai visits the Xiongyuan escort agency when Yu Xiulian greets him: “Brother Mubai, long time no see,” which is often used by ancient people when greeting after not seeing each other for a long time. Yu Xiulian continues to say: “Ni hao ma (how are you)?”, which is simple, direct, and vernacular, often used by modern people for greetings, while the ancients would say “Jin lai ke hao (how are you recently)?” In a dialogue with two consecutive sentences, one is traditional, while the other is modern, which would give audiences a sense of contrast and fusion.

**Table 4.1: Yu Xiulian’s dialogues mixed with traditional and modern Chinese language**

Traditional Chinese Language	Modern Chinese Language
<i>Yu Xiulian: Brother Mubai, long time no see.</i>	<i>Yu Xiulian: Ni hao ma (how are you)?</i>

Yu Xiulian goes to the Yu mansion to test Jen Yu for the lost sword. Jen Yu tells Yu Xiulian about her marriage. The words "Niang," "chao nei," and "Han lin" from their dialogues are all traditional Chinese expressions. Then she shares her opinions about marriage to Yu Xiulian by using modern Chinese dialogues, English-style Chinese. However, although the word "zi you(free)" is widespread in today's Chinese language, it has not appeared in China in the era of the late Qing Dynasty. It is a word with modernity. In order to close to the background of ancient China, the word "zi you(free)" has been modified to “zi you zi zai(free).” These dialogues aptly reflect Jen Yu's liberal

feminist consciousness, her yearning for free love life, her pursuit for the right of self-determination. However, she knows the importance of her marriage with a powerful family to her father's official career and patriarchal family. These dialogues also reflect her helplessness to enter into marriage.

**Table 4.2: Jen Yu's dialogues mixed with traditional and modern Chinese language**

Traditional Chinese Language	Modern Chinese Language
<p><i>Jen Yu: "My mother(Niang) said that old lord Lu was a senior official in the imperial court(chao nei), and he was also a noble family(Han lin) of three generations."</i></p>	<p><i>Jen Yu: "Marriage is a happy event. If you can live a free life, choose the one you love, and love him in your own way, then it can be regarded as real happiness."</i></p>

Another example is Jade Fox's dialogues. When she is fighting Li Mubai, she tells why she killed Li Mubai's master Jiangnan Ho. "Entering fangwei (bedroom)" from their dialogues is an obscure way to express the love between men and women in the ancient Chinese language, reflecting the traditional and conservative side of the ancient Chinese language. At the end of the film, when Jade Fox and Li Mubai are about to die, she tells Jen Yu about her honest heart. We can see from that in ancient Chinese, the word "qin (family)" cannot be used to express feelings directly, which is a modern expression. The combination of traditional Chinese and modern Chinese in dialogues makes the audiences realize that Jade Fox's idea is beyond the feudal, patriarchal system. She pursues equality between men and women and is not willing to give in to the rule of patriarchy. She pursues free love and self-determination. She is not the traditional female image oppressed by the patriarchal society.

**Table 4.3: Jade Fox’s dialogues mixed with traditional and modern Chinese language**

Traditional Chinese Language	Modern Chinese Language
<p><i>Jade Fox: It is a pity that he underestimated women. Even if he had entered fangwei(girl’s bedroom), he would not pass on his martial arts to me.</i></p>	<p><i>Jade Fox: Jen Yu..... My only qin(darling), my only enemy.</i></p>

The combination of traditional and modern Chinese makes the audiences, especially the Chinese audiences, have some sense of conflict. However, modern words make the whole film closer to life, and modern people like it more. The combination of traditional and modern dialogues coincides with the characteristics of female characters in the film. Although this story happened in the traditional patriarchal period of the Qing Dynasty, the female characters are not the typical traditional Chinese women. On the contrary, they embody the characteristics of modern female consciousness. The combination of traditional and modern dialogues also reminds the audiences that they are not watching an ancient film in the traditional sense.

#### **4.2.6 The element of costumes and make-up in Ang Lee’s films**

"The specific costumes worn by specific actors in specific film and television works will be produced and evolved with the development of the big era background, small specific environment and story plot in the film."(Lei, 1989)

"Clothing in films must have the features of the time with local and national characteristics that the audiences can recognize, and more importantly, it should also be

able to show the identity and personality of the film characters." (Cao,2015)

The essential function of the character's costumes in the film is to reflect the character's identity, occupation, and personality, and indirectly reflect the character's thoughts and consciousness. Ang Lee combines the traditional and modern clothing featured in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*, which reflects the different identities and personalities of the characters and the different mental processes and ideological changes under different circumstances. This chapter will focus on analyzing the feminist consciousness of the female characters in the two films and the shaping of the characters from the perspectives of clothing and make-up.

In *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Jen Yu is a young lady from a Manchu noble family in the Qing dynasty. Therefore, she appears in front of people in the daytime, wearing Manchu attire that fits her identity with exquisite makeup. The silk fabric is luxurious and precious, with bright colors, complicated and exquisite patterns. The hair ornaments are the hair bun only for noblewomen in the Qing dynasty who also wear Manchu shoes with the height of 5-10 cm, which is unique to Manchu women of the ruling class of the Qing dynasty. Usually, the traditional woman's Manchu dress is a tube skirt with which women feel challenging to run or exercise. They must pay attention to their manners when walking so that, in a way, it has become a shackle of freedom for women who have to be attached to men and succumbed to the whole patriarchal society. Jen Yu's Manchu aristocratic dress fits her status as a lady of the nobility very much, which also conforms to the dress code of the patriarchal Confucianism of the Qing Dynasty for women. At the same time, it also reflects the shackles of traditional Confucian patriarchy on women. However, when Jen Yu steals the Qingming sword at night as a burglar, she wears a black suit with a mask on her face. The nightclothes is made of ordinary cotton, without any patterns, and have the

aesthetic characteristics of modern simplicity. The style is modern with upper-body clothes and lower-body pants, which are convenient for fighting and escaping. The black color is used to hide identity in the dark, which indicates that as a woman under the patriarchy, Jen Yu can only have freedom in the dark. The contrast between the traditional Manchu dress with complicated patterns, and the night clothes with modern and simple elements, shows the different faces of Jen Yu in public and in private, reflecting the oppression of women by patriarchy and Jen Yu's determination and spirit to pursue freedom and resist patriarchy. When she escapes from marriage and steals the Qingming sword for the second time, she wears a man's Manchu clothes and hat to disguise herself as a man to protect herself better when traveling. It can be seen that in the patriarchal society, women can hardly stand on their own. At the end of the film, Jen Yu and Li Mubai fight in the bamboo forest when Jen Yu wears a modern white martial arts suit. Jen Yu takes off the complicated headdress of the noblewomen of the Qing dynasty and puts on ordinary cotton shoes, which symbolizes that she has completely given up her status as a lady of nobility, the complexity and the bondage of women forcibly given by feudal patriarchy. She pursues the freedom she wants, reflecting her resistance to patriarchy and firm pursuits for freedom.



**Figure 4.1: Jen Yu in Manchu attire**



**Figure 4.2: Jen Yu in nightclothes with a mask**



**Figure 4.3: Jen Yu in Manchu male clothes**



**Figure 4.4: Jen Yu in white martial arts suit**

There are two types of clothes for Yu Xiulian in the film. One is a formal lady's suit for meeting people, such as the suit she wears when visiting the Yu mansion. Typically her clothes are knee-length with wide sleeves and loose trousers, with more patterns and brighter colors. This dress code is the traditional clothing of Han women in the Qing dynasty with many traditional elements. The long dress also makes it difficult for women to walk and exercise, and it is also a symbol of feudal patriarchy restraining women. When Yu Xiulian escorts the goods to Beijing, looks for escaped Jen Yu, or fights with others, she wears clothes with modern elements such as short shirts and narrow cuffs, making her more convenient to walk. It is worth mentioning that Yu Xiulian's clothes are mainly light tone colors, in contrast to Jade Fox's dark colors, better highlighting Yu Xiulian's good personality.



**Figure 4.5: Yu Xiulian in formally Han female clothes**





**Figure 4.6: Yu Xiulian in martial arts suit**

Jiaqian is a senior executive in the company, whose clothes are mostly tailored suits with black, gray, and blue. The design of her clothes is fashionable and modern, which shows her ability to work well and handle affairs properly. Most of her clothes are casual and comfortable sweaters with low-key colors at home, which shows her independent, confident, and low-key characters.



**Figure 4.7:Jiaqian in a professional suit**



**Figure 4.8:Jiaqian in soft knit at home**

Jiazhen, the eldest daughter, is a middle school science teacher who believes in Christianity. She keeps her heart closed. In the film's first half, she is dressed in

conservative clothes with dull and dim colors, such as white and gray. The white long-sleeved shirt is matched with a black medium-length dress, and her hair is tied low at the back. The overall image is traditional, stereotyped, and lifeless, reflecting her repressive, traditional, and conservative characters. After being stimulated by the love letters prank, in order to find out the truth, she changes her stuffy image to the trendy appearance with perm big waves of hair, bright red lips, and a bright red shirt with a slim dark blue dress, forming a big contrast with the previous one. The prank of the students ignites the fire of pursuing love in Jiazhen's heart. The change of clothing and make-up is just the expression of her psychological process of getting rid of depression and closure to pursue free love. After she accepts the pursuit of the PE teacher, Jiazhen's clothes in the second half of the film become more colorful and modern, such as bright pink and purple sportswear and pink sweater, perfectly indicating the psychological state of the character to have found and enjoy love.



**Figure 4.9: Jiazhen in monotonous and dim colors dress**



**Figure 4.10:Jiazhen in a bright red shirt and slim dress**



**Figure 4.11:Jiazhen with light make up**



**Figure 4.12:Jiazhen with heavy make up**



**Figure 4.13:Jiazhen in colorful sportswear**

#### **4.2.7 The element of close-up photography in Ang Lee's films**

The so-called close-up photography is a kind of picture scene, explicitly referring to the partial shooting of the head portrait or other subjects where the frame of the lens is above the shoulder of the character.

“Close-up photography is the art of facial expression,” Balaz once said, “On depicting the characters and their psychology, the close-up photography can produce an unexpected shock effect, catching the audiences’ sights, arousing the audiences’ resonance, and leaving a deep impression in the audiences’ minds.”(Wang,p77)

Close-up photography can make the audiences see the characters' facial expressions and emotional changes, better understand the plots and resonate with the characters, which is also an essential means for the actors to express the characters' psychological changes. Ang Lee used a large number of close-up photography in *Crouching Tiger; Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* to shape and show the psychological activities of the female characters more accurately. The following is the analysis of the use of close-up photography in the two films.

In the film *Crouching Tiger; Hidden Dragon*, when Jen Yu and Yu Xiulian meet at the Baylor mansion for the first time, Yu Xiulian shows the Qingming sword to Jen Yu. It is a close-up shot of Jen Yu, where you can see her face and shoulder positions, who is wearing gorgeous earrings and embroidered clothes of Manchu attire for noblewomen of the Qing dynasty. The close-up picture shows the identity of the noble lady Jen Yu, from whose facial expression of taking over the Qingming sword, we can see her yearning for the sword and her yearning for the martial arts and the outside world. The audience can also see that Jen Yu is not a traditional noble lady. She wants to pursue equal freedom as men and the right to self-determination for life choice, reflecting her liberal feminist consciousness. After Yu Xiulian takes the Qingming sword out of the sword cover, the camera switches to the close-up shot of Jen Yu again, whose eyes are following the sword being taken out gradually. From the actor's expression, we can see Jen Yu's desire for the sword, which indicates the last plot that she steals the Qingming sword at night and further her challenges to the feudal, patriarchal system in ancient China.





**Figure 4.14: The close-up photography of Jen Yu**

When the father is about to speak in the first Sunday dinner party scene in the film *Eat Drink Man Woman*, the scene switches to Jiaqian, who is drinking a spoonful of soup from a bowl, frowning. Then the scene turns to the father, who asks: “What is the

matter?" The scene switches to Jiaqian again when she raises her head slightly and lies nervously: "No, it is good." The scene turns to her father and then switches to Jiaqian, who takes another sip of soup and makes an expression that the soup is hard to swallow. The father asks again, and the scene turns to Jiaqian, who shakes her head slightly and says "No" again. The father asks again, and when the scene turns to Jiaqian, she says: "The ham for the shark's fin boiled too much time." After that, the camera lens turns to Jianing and Jiazhen, who answer two vague sentences to avoid the father's anger and want to end the dialogue. At this point, the scene switches to Jiaqian when she carefully says: "Or has your sense of taste degenerated?" Hearing this, the father leaves the table angrily. In fact, his father's taste degenerated because of his old age, and the food he cooked does not taste right. However, Jiaqian knows that his father would not accept this reality and her criticism. Therefore, she lies about the taste of the food twice before until she finally gets the courage to say what his father does not want to hear. The six consecutive close-up shots show Jiaqian's series of psychological changes, from nervously denying to summoning the courage. The audiences can better understand the discordant relationship between Jiaqian and his father and the fear of the authority of the father's patriarchy, which has also laid a psychological foundation for The later plot that Jiaqian buys a house and moves out.



**Table 4.4: The close-up photography of Jiaqian**

Angle	Shot
<p><i>The first close-up photography of Jiaqian</i></p>	 <p>Jiaqian is drinking the soup, which is hard to swallow</p> <p>1.</p>
<p><i>The second close-up photography of Jiaqian</i></p>	 <p><i>Jiaqian: No, it is good.</i></p>
<p><i>The third close-up photography of Jiaqian</i></p>	 <p>Jiaqian is drinking the soup, which is hard to swallow</p> <p>2.</p>

**Table 4.4, continued: The close-up photography of Jiaqian**

<p><i>The fourth close-up photography of Jiaqian</i></p>	 <p><i>Jiaqian: No.</i></p>
<p><i>The fifth close-up photography of Jiaqian</i></p>	 <p><i>Jiaqian: The ham for the shark's fin boiled too much time.</i></p>
<p><i>The sixth close-up photography of Jiaqian</i></p>	 <p><i>Jiaqian: Or has your taste sense degenerated?</i></p>

Table 4.4, continued: The close-up photography of Jiaqian



The father left the table angrily.

Jiaqian once goes to the hospital and runs into her father's physical examination. She mistakenly thinks that his father is ill and comes to the hospital for treatment. Jiaqian leans against the wall, looking at his father's back in the elevator. Here is a close-up shot of her: the background is the clean hospital wall which can enlarge and highlight the facial expression changes of Jiaqian. She is wearing fashionable curly hair and delicate make-up with part of her shoulder showing up in the suit, indicating her identity as a capable, independent woman in the workplace. Jiaqian looks at her father's back with tears in her eyes for nearly 10 seconds before she covers her mouth with her hand for fear of crying out loudly until the scene is over. This close-up shot shows Jiaqian's worries about her father's health through the detailed performance of the actor's face. This close-up shot also lays the foundation for the psychological changes that she later decides to give up the opportunity to work in Amsterdam because she is worried about her father's old age and health. She wants to accompany him more, despite her wanting to escape from the patriarchal family.

Jiazhen, the eldest daughter, who is conservative, traditional, and closed, has received love letters for several days before she feels puzzled and wants to find out who is the one that wrote these letters. At this time, the director uses a close-up shot to show that Jiazhen sweeps all the male teachers in the office with her eyes, frowning and thinking that none of them writes the love letters. This close-up shot shows Jiazhen's

confused psychological state, eager to find out the truth but angry at this kind of teasing, as well as the inner longing and desire for love. This close-up shot lays the foundation for her psychological transition that she later opens her heart and accepts the love of the PE teacher. It also indicates the turning point of Jiazhen's psychological change from being bound by patriarchal ethics to breaking the shackles, following her own heart, and pursuing free love.

Jianing, the youngest daughter, uses all kinds of tricks and means to turn her friend's boyfriend into her own. When her girlfriend questions her, the scene gives Jianing a close-up shot with the background turning dark red, showing Jianing's inner sense of guilt and evil psychological characteristics. However, at the same time, it also shows Jianing's personality that actively pursues free love, disdains the traditional patriarchy's ideological oppression on women, and strives to pursue the right to decide her own life, which reflects her liberal feminist consciousness.



**Figure 4.15: The close-up photography of Jiaqian in the hospital**

Ang Lee uses traditional and modern techniques with the plots, dialogues, colors, costumes, photography, and other film elements to make the female characters more

authentic, rooted, three-dimensional, and persuasive. The use of a combination of tradition and modernity shows woman's oppression under the traditional patriarchy and their struggles against the contradiction between tradition and modernity in the society of modernization process, which can arouse the audience's resonance in the contradiction of the combination of tradition and modernity, and find a solution to the combination of tradition and modernity. At the same time, the female characters Ang Lee creates in his films show the spirit of liberal feminism.

### **4.3 An analysis of liberal feminism of female characters in Ang Lee's films**

Director Ang Lee has created many female characters against the passive and dependent images of traditional Chinese women. They have the characteristics of actively pursuing equal education rights with men, pursuing the rights of love and marriage freedom, pursuing self-control of the body, and resisting patriarchy. The following content will sort out the female characters in Ang Lee's films from these aspects and summarize their feminist consciousness.

#### **4.3.1 Equal rights as men for education and work**

China has a long history of more than 2000 years of feudal dynasty rule, during which women were required to obey “Three Obedience and Four Virtues.” The “Three Obedience” refers to the obedience to the father before the female marries, the obedience to the husband after the female has married, and the obedience to the son after the husband dies; the “Four Virtues” refers to woman's correct morality, proper speech, dignified appearance and the merit of not being frivolous. Women’s priority is to be diligent and thrifty, assist their husbands, teach children, respect the old, and love the young (2006). The patriarchal rule of the feudal dynasty represented by Confucianism has laid down strict codes of behaviors and moral standards for women

who were not independent individuals without independent identity, having to depend on men to survive no matter when and in what kind of situations. Father, husband, son, these feudal, patriarchal rulers play the roles of the "spokesmen" of women, who set the standards for woman's thinking and behaviors and control the fates of women. Women cannot have independent thoughts, whose words and deeds cannot go beyond the provisions of patriarchal feudal Confucianism. However, Simone Beauvoir, a feminist with heavyweight, pointed out in her famous feminist work *The Second Sex*: "Women are not born, but shaped"(Beauvoir,1998). She believes that women are not born inferior to men but are constrained by the social environment of acquired patriarchy. Mary Wollstonecraft, the representative of liberal feminism, also proposed in her feminist work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*: "Women are not inherently inferior to men, only when they lack adequate education" (Wollstonecraft,1996). She thinks that women have innate intelligence and rationality as good as men's, but only influenced by differentiated education methods. It can be seen that women are not born inferior to men. If there are appropriate conditions, women can also achieve the same achievements as men.

"Education is an important practical activity in human society. It plays an important role in improving human quality, the formation of national character, the inheritance and innovation of culture, and social civilization development." (Yang,2011)

Women, who account for half of the world's population, play a significant role in the whole social and historical process. However, throughout the history of China and the world, the education of women is a tortuous and lengthy process. Since the Han Dynasty created the era of "only respecting Confucianism," Chinese feudal dynasties had always respected Confucianism as the primary religious belief on which women's education was based. Two essential works for woman's education in Confucianism are Liu Xiang's *Biography of Female Martyrs* from the Western Han Dynasty and Ban

Zhao's *Woman's Commandments* from the Eastern Han Dynasty. Liu Xiang's *Biography of Female Martyrs*, based on the idea that men are superior to women, sets an excellent example for women to learn from: "Women are hoped to have such virtues as proper appearance, wisdom, benevolence, obedience, righteousness, and argumentation" (Yang,2011). Ban Zhao's *Woman's Commandments* holds that "Humility and weakness are the general characteristics of women, which is the basis of women and the goal of woman's self-cultivation"(Yang,2011). The educational idea of Confucianism for women is to educate them to become female roles that meet the needs of society. Ancient China mainly refers to conducting the three identities as daughter, wife, and mother. It can be seen that under the rule of Confucianism in ancient China, woman's education was always based on the maintenance of patriarchal rule. Women were educated to be images in line with the rule of feudal patriarchy, and their behaviors and thoughts were domesticated into the existence attached to patriarchy. However, the value of women as individuals was ignored and buried. Women were not regarded as individuals with independent thoughts and personalities but only accessories of patriarchy. In the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, when Yu Xiulian goes to the Yu mansion to test Jen Yu to find the lost Qingming sword, the servant girl reports that Jen Yu is practicing calligraphy while Jade Fox is embroidering. In ancient China, the education of women in Confucianism included music, chess, calligraphy, and painting, which could help cultivate elegant temperament and, most importantly, win the favor of her husband. Although in private, Jen Yu secretly practices martial arts and yearns for a free life, in public, she can only play the role of a lady, following the traditional Confucian ideas and the various norms and constraints of patriarchal society. As "parents should arrange marriage," Jen Yu has been engaged to a noble young man in the capital city and is supposed to practice embroidering and calligraphy or dress up to accompany her fiancé to attend various social activities. In ancient China, the Confucian

thought of feudal rule pursues the idea that “it is a virtue that women without talent.” “Talent” here means the knowledge of politics, society, and reason that only men have the privilege to learn. Women need to learn how to be good wives and mothers and be excellent accessories to men.

In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft said that women should have equal rights to be educated equally. The “education” she mentioned is not a kind of education specially designed for a woman's gender or in line with various social norms and expectations for women but should be the same rational education about subject knowledge and personal moral development as man's.

“If women are inferior to men in physical strength, their moral character, even different from man's in degree, is still the same in nature (otherwise, morality will become a relative concept). Thus, their actions should be based on the same principles and have the same purposes.”(Wollstonecraft,1996)

Therefore, “not only the virtues of men and women but also the knowledge of both sexes should be the same in nature, even if they are not equal in degree; women should not only be regarded as moral people but also rational people. They should take the same approaches as men to strive for human virtues (or perfect).....” (Wollstonecraft,1996)

Mary Wollstonecraft believes that women should receive social education, learn the same scientific knowledge, moral character, and morality as men, and cultivate their rationality. She advocates that women should be educated as human beings, not as appendages of men or victims of patriarchy. Women have the same ideological ability and rationality as men. Woman's qualifications are not born lower than man's. “Restore their lost dignity and make them try to transform themselves and the world as part of human beings.”(Wollstonecraft,1996) Mary believes that women should receive the same education as men and promote the progress and development of history together



with men as independent persons. “The improvement of human character and the advancement of human knowledge will inevitably continue to suffer setbacks until women are better educated.”(Wollstonecraft,1996)

John Muller, another representative of liberal feminism, believes that “an essential point in the treatment of woman's just equality lies in their admission to all the positions and occupations so far monopolized by men”(Mueller,1995). According to Mueller, the fundamental differences between men and women "should be just the natural results of their differences in education and environment, but not the fundamental sex differences, let alone extreme inferiority”(Mueller,1995).

Mueller also proposed to guarantee woman's right to be employed legally. Only by taking part in work and social-economic development can women enjoy equal rights with men and have independent personalities. (Zhang,2014) Liberal feminists believe that in a fair society, every member should be allowed to develop their potentials and that men and women should have equal opportunities to compete.

Jen Yu and Jade Fox of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* represent women resisting feudal Confucianism's imprisonment and oppression, pursuing equal education rights with men. Furthermore, Yu Xiulian, different from the traditional ancient Chinese women, is not attached to men and has her own business. Jade Fox, the master of Jen Yu, devoted herself to Li Mubai's master Jiangnan Ho, the leader of Wudang Sect, one of the most critical sects in the martial arts world, when she was young, in order to learn the martial arts from the *Martial Arts Secret Book*. However, Wudang Sect only accepted male apprentices, for which Jade Fox was not qualified. She could not learn the martial arts of the Wudang Sect even if she devoted herself to Jiangnan Ho. The film's martial arts and the *Martial Arts Secret Book* of Wudang Sect symbolize patriarchal male power. As a woman, Jade Fox is not qualified to receive Wudang Sect education or learn the Wudang *Martial Arts Secret Book*. However, Jade Fox does not

give up and believes that women should have the same rights to learn martial arts as men. Then she kills Jiangnan Ho, steals the *Martial Arts Secret Book*, and practices by herself, even with the price of being hunted by all the people in the martial arts world. When Li Mubai hunts Jade Fox to avenge his master, Jade Fox says to him: “It is a pity that your master underestimated women.” It can be seen that Jade Fox firmly believes that women should have equal rights to learn the Wudang *Martial Arts Secret Book* as men.

**Table 4.5: Jade Fox’s dialogues**

<p><b><i>Jade Fox:</i></b></p> <p><i>It is a pity that your master underestimated women.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Jade Fox:</i></b></p> <p><i>I follow the pictures, and you follow the words, so you are hiding something from me.</i></p>

Jade Fox hides in the Yu mansion as a senior servant to escape from the hunt of the people from the martial arts world. When Jen Yu was ten years old, Jade Fox began to secretly teach her the sword techniques in *Martial Arts Secret Book*. Coming from a low-income family, Jade Fox can not read much. She can only practice martial arts by imitating the pictures in *Martial Arts Secret Book*. It can be seen that in ancient Chinese feudal society, the lower-class women have no right to receive an education. However, Jade Fox always refuses to accept her fate, even if she can only rely on pictures to learn martial arts. She constantly pursues the equal right to receive education with men, hoping to practice the mysterious sword skills in *Martial Arts Secret Book* dominated only by men.

Born in an aristocratic family, Jen Yu can learn to read and practice the Martial

Arts Secret Book skills. Therefore, her martial arts skills are superior to her master Jade Fox's. In the film, Jade Fox says to Jen Yu: "I follow the pictures, you follow the words, so you are hiding something from me." Jen Yu studies music, chess, calligraphy, and painting as a lady from a noble family. However, in private, she is eager for *Martial Arts Secret Book* that is supposed to be learned only by men. She secretly practices martial arts with excellent skills and holds the dream of a free life, which lays a solid foundation for the later plot that she steals the Qingming sword and disturbs the whole martial arts world. Jen Yu is a young lady of the noble family in the Qing Dynasty of ancient China. Following women's education in the Confucian thought of the feudal dynasty, she should only learn the hobbies of music, chess, calligraphy, and painting, which conform to the various behavior norms of the feudal hierarchy.

In the film, to investigate the theft of the Qingming sword, Yu Xiulian goes to the Yu mansion to test Jen Yu, who is practicing calligraphy with beautiful handwriting, which shows her accomplishment as a noble lady. At this time, the maid comes in and informs Jen Yu of Xiulian's arrival, asking if she would see her. After getting the consent of Jen Yu, the maid brings Yu Xiulian in. It can be seen that Jen Yu has always lived in various etiquette and norms of the feudal hierarchical system. She has learned to act in line with the educated contents for women designed and formulated by Confucianism in feudal society. Yu Xiulian asks Jen Yu what she is doing. Jen Yu replies: "I am writing sister Yu's name, killing time." From Jen Yu's words, we can see that the education of Confucian thought for ancient Chinese women is mainly about pleasing the body and mind and various feudal etiquette and the codes of behaviors in dealing with people. Ancient women, especially aristocratic women, have leisure time all day without substantive work or things to do. Any substantive work in the imperial court or the society has nothing to do with women who are not qualified to participate. Women are educated to become excellent wives and qualified male accessories.

Lord Baylor takes Li Mubai to visit the Yu mansion. When Jen Yu sees him, she steps forward, bends half of her knees, and puts her hands on them, and says respectfully: "Jen Yu gives you the best regards!" Because the status of Lord Baylor is higher than Jen Yu, she is also the younger generation. According to the requirements of the etiquette and norms learned by women in the feudal hierarchy system of the Qing Dynasty, Jen Yu should greet Lord Baylor in advance. Although on the surface, Jen Yu maintains the appearance of a young lady of feudal nobility, accepts women's education from feudal ethics, and abides by various provisions of feudal ethics. In private, she is not satisfied with the reality of inequality between men and women, full of curiosity about men's education and the world they live in. Since ten years old, Jen Yu has secretly followed Jade Fox to learn martial arts of the Wudang Sect, which are never allowed to be studied by women. She is endowed with intelligence and high understanding ability, showing that she is a potential talent for martial arts. Even Li Mubai realizes and wants to recruit her as a disciple. Because she has a higher talent for martial arts and reading ability, Jen Yu's skills have already surpassed her master, Jade Fox. "Do you think it is you that has been teaching me the Wudang swordsmanship all these years?" "You cannot understand those words in the book even if you recognize them." Jen Yu said when Jade Fox asked her. It can be seen that Jen Yu is not satisfied with the education of female etiquette and norms in the feudal ethics Confucianism, the martial arts taught by her master Jade Fox, or the fate arranged by the feudal noble family. She uses her talent to study *Martial Arts Secret Book* and becomes a martial arts master herself. She steals the the Qingming sword, defeats many martial arts heroes, and pursues her dream of wandering the world.

**Table 4.6: Jen Yu's dialogues**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jen Yu :</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">I am writing sister Yu's name, killing time.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jen Yu :</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Jen Yu gives you the best regards!</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jen Yu :</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Do you think it is you that has been teaching me Wudang swordsmanship all these years? You cannot understand those words in the book even if you recognize them.</i></p>

Yu Xiulian is the daughter of the former leader of Xiongyuan Escort Agency, who studied martial arts since childhood. After her father died, she took over the escort agency and became the new leader. She is brave, calm, rational, and resourceful, valuing morality and righteousness. She is respected by people from the whole martial arts world, which continues the reputation of Xiongyuan Escort Agency. Yu Xiulian has always been single, in charge of the escort agency alone, and manages her own business, never relying on men. At the beginning of the film, Yu Xiulian escorts a batch of goods to the capital city, carrying Li Mubai's Qingming sword to Lord Baylor for safekeeping. She rides a tall horse, leading the escorting team, doing all kinds of customs clearance affairs on the road. When she meets Li Mubai, whom she has not seen for a long time, she clasps her hands to greet each other. This action is the etiquette of greeting each other among people from the martial arts world, showing that Yu Xiulian is not a traditional woman. She receives martial arts education which mainly men study since childhood. She is good at using double swords and has excellent martial arts skills. After taking over the escort agency, she has become a leader in this male field. She leads the male staff, and all have well recognized her ability. After she

delivers the goods safely to the customers in the capital city, her client says to her: “The reputation of Xiongyuan Escort Agency has never been down since the master died. After you have been doing successfully for these times, your father's soul should be at ease in heaven.” It shows that her ability has been fully recognized. In ancient China, standing firmly in men's fields and getting recognition is enough to show that Yu Xiulian is different from the women who are traditionally attached to men. She breaks the shackles of feudal Confucianism on women in education and career choices and controls the right to choose freely for herself.

**Table 4.7: Yu Xiulian’s client’s dialogues**

<p style="text-align: center;"><i><b>Yu Xiulian’s client :</b></i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The reputation of Xiongyuan Escort Agency has never been down since the master died. After you have been doing successfully for these times, your father's soul should be at ease in heaven.</i></p>
---

It can be seen that none of the three female characters in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is a typical traditional Chinese woman. They all have the spirit of pursuing equal educational rights. They are not satisfied with the shackles and restrictions of ancient Chinese feudal traditional ethics and Confucianism on woman's education, with the limited learning contents of embroidery, calligraphy, etc. They bravely break the social and secular norms for women's educational rights and constantly challenge and resist the secular social ethics, reflecting the active awakening of feminist consciousness. The three female characters present a unique charm different from the traditional Chinese women.

Relatively, the three female characters of *Eat Drink Man Woman* are living in Taiwan in the 1990s. Due to the increasing demands for skilled talents in the social labor market in the 1970s and 1980s, more and more activities for higher education and vocational skills education were carried out to attract more people to join, from which women also benefited. As a result, the social average educational level had increased with more highly skilled talents, indeed, including women, a large number of whom had successfully entered the workplaces. It is reported that the average female labor participation rate in Taiwan in the 1990s reached 45%(Cheng,2007). In the movie *Eat Drink Man Woman*, the three sisters of Zhu's family grew up in a middle-class family. Their father, Mr. Zhu, is the chef in charge of the Taipei City Hotel. Only a few masters can make Sichuan, Yangchao, and Zhejiang cuisines. The wealthy family conditions have laid an economic foundation for the three sisters to receive higher education. Jiaqian, the second daughter of Zhu's family, is most adored by her father, with the most substantial ability among the three. After graduating from University, Jiaqian works in an airline company and is gradually promoted to deputy director with her excellent working ability. In the movie, Jiaqian is dressed in a suit, confidently giving a speech to analyze the company's business strategy plan in an office full of executives, and gets praise from her leaders. It can be seen from the picture that all the executives in the conference room are men, with only Jiaqian a female. It also proves from the side that Jiaqian's excellent working ability has been recognized in the male-dominated business field and that she has obtained the same working rights and professional position as men. In one scene of the movie, when the leader of the airline recommends Jiaqian to take over the position of the deputy manager in the Amsterdam office, taking charge of all the business there, he says to Jiaqian: "To be honest, you are too young and beautiful to take this position. However, the men sent over there are getting worse than the other, so we have to send you there." From the leader's words, we can see prejudices and

barriers against women in the workplace, especially in the management layers. However, because of Jiaqian's excellent working ability, she has been trusted and appreciated, thus to be recommended to take the job used to be prepared for men.

John Mueller, a representative of liberal feminism, believes that women are no worse than men in moral quality, social experience, and cultural quality, so they have enough intelligence and ability to take up the positions only prepared for men(He,2018). Jiaqian always pursues equal rights with men at work and even works harder. In the film, her best friend asks her through the phone: “How can you work overtime on Sunday afternoon?” from which we can see that Jiaqian works very hard and often overtime. With her excellent working ability, she has achieved the same professional status and career height as men.

**Table 4.8: Dialogues of Jiaqian ’s boss and friend**

<p><b><i>Jiaqian ’s boss:</i></b></p> <p><i>To be honest, you are too young and beautiful to take this position. However, the men sent over there are getting worse than the other, so we have to send you there.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Jiaqian ’s friend:</i></b></p> <p><i>How can you work overtime on Sunday afternoon?</i></p>

Jiazhen, the eldest daughter of Zhu’s family, is a middle school chemistry teacher whose major in University is chemistry. In the traditional patriarchal society, woman's educational rights were not guaranteed. In western countries such as the Victorian era, women were trained according to the so-called “family angel.” Education for women focused on learning the skills for taking care of the family, such as sewing, baking, and clothing. However, men were trained according to their social needs, such as doctors, engineers, etc. All the positions needed by society were reserved for men, in which women were not qualified to participate. In the feudal traditional patriarchal society in



ancient China, women's education was also carried out to cultivate good wives and good mothers. Women learned the skills needed by the family, such as calligraphy, painting, embroidery, and sewing. All the education and positions needed by the outside society were reserved for men. John Mueller believes that the fundamental differences between men and women “are just the natural result of their differences in education and environment, and do not represent fundamental sex differences, let alone extreme inferiority”(Mueller,1995). John Muller criticizes the differentiated education of men and women in a patriarchal society. He thinks that women are not born worse than men or inferior to men in nature. If receiving equal education with men, women can also participate in social life and achieve the same as men.

Jiazhen chooses chemistry, a science and engineering subject considered exclusive to men. She studies in university and becomes a high school chemistry teacher, working in fields and subjects once dominated by men. When Jiazhen enters the office, she finds a love letter lying on the desk. She looks around, trying to find out who wrote it. We can follow Jiazhen's eyes to see that most teachers are elderly males in the science office, which indicates that males used to occupy most teaching positions of science and engineering. In the film, there is also a scene in the evening where Jiazhen still reads books and corrects the students' chemistry test papers after coming back home from work. It indicates Jiazhen's hardworking attitude, reflecting her consciousness of pursuing equal education and working rights with men.

Jianing is the third daughter of Zhu's family. In the film, she is sitting in a noisy classroom, learning German through the earphones. She is also a well-educated woman like her sisters, working part-time in KFC in her spare time. We can see that the three daughters of Zhu's family have received higher education. They have entered male-dominated fields in their professional choices and have made remarkable achievements with their excellent working performance. Some even surpass men. Those women who

dare to break through the tradition get equal rights in education and work in the new era.

To sum up, the female characters in Ang Lee's films generally have the consciousness to pursue equal rights for education and work. Not satisfied with the biased social arrangements for women, they bravely enter the fields dominated by men and challenge the confinement and restraint from society. Through their efforts, they have made the same or even more outstanding achievements than men eventually.

#### **4.3.2 Freedom of love and marriage**

In the view of marriage, liberal feminism opposes the oppression of the patriarchal system on women, advocating woman's independence and freedom of love, including the voluntary dissolution of marriage, woman's property rights after marriage, and the opposition to the discrimination against divorced women (Tan,2011). John Mueller, a representative of liberal feminism, accuses men of oppressing women in the subordination of marriage under a patriarchal society. He points out that women have been regarded as "legal domestic slaves"(Mueller,1995) and that "marriage is the only legal practical constraint which has eliminated legal slaves, but what has not disappeared is the female attendants in each house"(Mueller,1995). John Mueller believes that many women are forced to say "I do" during their weddings in church under the oppression of patriarchy. "This does not mean that woman's consent is not out of compulsion, and, if the father insists, girls barely can disobey because unless she is determined to engage in religious practice, she will not be protected by religion."(Mueller,1995) Therefore, a woman has no choice but to be transferred from one man (father) to another as an object.

"The wife is her husband's signed servant. She vows before the altar to obey him all her life and to keep her promise all her life."(Mueller,1995) John Mueller believes that women become the legal attendants of their husbands under the patriarchal system

through marriage. Women are in a submissive position and become the appendages of men. Marriage is often not a free choice for women but the balance of various interests of fathers or patriarchal families. Women are only used as a tool for trade. He opposes female marriage under the control of patriarchy, advocating the concept of free love and marriage and that women should enjoy the right to choose love and marriage freedom.

In ancient China, marriage is said as “Marriage should be arranged by parents.” “Parents refer to the elders in the family. In the wedding ceremony, the elders have the decisive right on the marriage of their children. They are not only the planners of the marriage but also the leaders of the weddings. Their children have no decision-making power.”(Feng, 2018) Women have no right to make choices in their marriage, which their parents should arrange. In ancient China, the engagement process, which was the primary form of marriage, had to go through “six rites: accepting betrothal gifts, asking for names, divination of auspicious days, accepting coins, asking for the date and welcoming in person”(Feng, 2018). The wedding must be introduced by the matchmakers and approved by parents from both sides. A man can only marry a woman after he gives her family enough money and gifts as betrothal gifts in advance. Therefore, under such a marriage system, women usually become tools of interest exchange and money-making whether women are happy after marriage is not in the scope of consideration.

The six female characters created by Ang Lee in the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* all have the independent consciousness of feminism in pursuit of love and marriage freedom. Among them, four female characters have the feminist independent spirits of actively pursuing love and freedom of marriage. At the same time, the other two hold traditional ideas in the initial stage of marriage and love concept, and later, after being influenced by other people or events, change to pursue free love and marriage. This part will analyze woman’s feminist consciousness

of both “actively” and “passively” pursuing love and marriage freedom in Ang Lee's films.

#### **4.3.2.1 Female characters actively pursuing love and freedom of marriage**

“As the last feudal dynasty in China, after a long period of accumulation, the patriarchal ethics with Confucianism as the core still occupied the main position in Qing dynasty.”(Feng, 2018)

“The marriage system of Qing Dynasty followed the principle of feudal etiquette, which was also reflected in the following aspect: the marriage was decided by the parents.”(Feng, 2018)

The story of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, takes place in the Qing Dynasty. As the daughter of a feudal aristocratic family, Jen Yu was arranged to marry as soon as she arrived in Beijing. Her fiance is the son of the Lu family, a famous family in Beijing. Commonly, daughters' marriages in ancient noble families were used to connect other noble families or enhance the official careers or wealth of the elders in patriarchal families. When Yu Xiulian comes to the Yu mansion to ask Jen Yu implicitly for the Qingming sword, they talk about Jen Yu's marriage. Jen Yu says: “My parents decided on the marriage. As soon as they arrived in Beijing, they arranged this marriage for me.” It can be seen that Jen Yu was unable to decide on her marriage. In the traditional feudal society, the daughters' marriages, especially from upper-class families, were entirely decided by the patriarchal parents. She continues to say: “My mother said that old Master Lu was a senior official in the imperial court with three generations of noble family. It would be good for my father's career if I marry the Lu family in Beijing.” It can be seen that as the daughter of a noble family, Jen Yu's marriage was used as a tool for her father to rise to a higher official rank. However, Jen Yu does not want to be bound by feudal arranged marriage, and she yearns for free love and marriage instead.

She says to Yu Xiulian: “I like the heroes and heroines in the martial arts novels..... If I can live freely, choose the one I love, and love him in my own way, it can be regarded as natural happiness.” This dialogue has clearly shown that Jen Yu yearns for a free life in the martial arts world where she can freely choose love and marriage and be with her beloved, which should be the real happiness.

**Table 4.9: Jen Yu’s dialogues**

<p><b><i>Jen Yu:</i></b></p> <p><i>My parents decided on marriage. As soon as they arrived in Beijing, they arranged this marriage for me.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Jen Yu:</i></b></p> <p><i>My mother said that old Master Lu was a senior official in the imperial court with three generations of noble family. It would be good for my father’s career if I marry the Lu family in Beijing.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Jen Yu:</i></b></p> <p><i>I like the heroes and heroines in the martial arts novels..... If I can live freely, choose the one I love, and love him in my own way, it can be regarded as natural happiness.</i></p>

In fact, before Jen Yu and her family went to Beijing, she met her love on the way to Ili, Xinjiang, where her father was transferred to for work. She and Luo Xiaohu, a desert robber, met each other when he robbed Jen Yu of her comb, regarded as one of the love tokens between lovers in the Qing dynasty. Later, they fell in love. Since she had been in the patriarchal society with much etiquette for a long time which had made her oppressed and bored, she was conquered by his wild male charm and then devoted

herself to him in the cave of the desert where Luo Xiaohu lived. The classic Confucian book *Mencius-Lilou Shang* defines “morality” as “man and woman can not touch each other unless married.” In ancient China, the relationship between man and woman was strictly regulated in morality and etiquette, which emphasized isolation and estrangement. It was strictly forbidden for the non-husband and wife to have too much contact. A woman was not allowed to have love and sexual relations with any man who was not her husband. During the ancient period, the body of an adult woman could not be seen or touched by any man except her husband. There was also a record of the physical examination method “taking pulse through hanging silk” in ancient times. The doctors could not conduct physical examinations for female patients in the royal palace or noble families. One end of the silk thread was fixed on the female patient’s pulse, with the other end in the doctor's hand, who felt the pulse to diagnose the disease(2020). It can be seen that Confucianism, which has been inherited since ancient times, has formulated various moral and etiquette norms for women for the feudal “patriarchal” rule that a woman’s dignity is the priority and that the female body is sacred and inviolable. However, Jen Yu does not care about the shackles of Confucian feudal ethics on women. She always follows her heart, bravely resisting oppression and bondage and pursuing freedom for love and marriage, as well as the right to control her own body. Finally, at Luo Xiaohu's persuasion, when Jen Yu had to return to her feudal family, she gave her comb, the love token between them, to him. Although Jen Yu and Luo Xiaohu failed to get together in the end, it can be seen that Jen Yu has a feminist consciousness of resisting patriarchy, the arranged marriage system of parents, and pursuing the freedom of love and marriage.

Jade Fox is the master of Jen Yu. When she was young, she devoted herself to her teacher Jiangnan Ho to learn Wudang martial arts skills. When Li Mubai duels with Jade Fox to avenge his master Jiangnan Ho, she says to him: “It is a pity that your

master underestimated women. Even if he had entered Fangwei (bedroom), he did not pass on his martial arts to me.” From this dialogue, we can see that Jade Fox had been dedicated herself to Jiangnan Ho for a long time. However, since Jiangnan Ho despised women, he was not willing to teach Jade Fox the skills of Wudang martial arts even when they were together. Therefore, Jade Fox chose to kill him and stole the *Martial Arts Secret Book*. We can see that Jade Fox is not influenced and bound by feudal ethics and Confucianism. She always has the right to choose her own life and control her own body.

**Table 4.10: Jade Fox’s dialogues**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jade Fox:</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>It is a pity that your master underestimated women. Even if he had entered Fangwei (bedroom), he did not pass on his martial arts to me.</i></p>
---

Jiaqian, in the film *Eat Drink Man Woman*, is an airline executive living in Taipei in the 1990s. She is well-educated, open-minded, and economically independent. In the plot, when Jiaqian’s ex-boyfriend Raymond appears, she is calling her best friend, who asks her out for a chat. She refuses: “No, I have an appointment with Raymond.” Her best friend responds: “Raymond? Hey, hey, hey...” From Jiaqian’s friend, we can see that Jiaqian is a woman with rich love experiences before, indicating that she can choose love freely. Jiaqian is economically independent, not relying on men. Thus she has more rights to choose. After breaking up with her ex-boyfriend Raymond, she has still maintained a physical relationship with him. Later, Raymond is about to get married, but she rejects him when he suggests that Jiaqian keep their physical relationship. It can be seen that Jiaqian always holds the right to control her own body without the influence of the shackles from social ethics. Moreover, in front of Li Kai, whom she adores, she can freely choose to love or keep a distance. To sum up, Jiaqian

has a feminist consciousness of pursuing freedom of love and marriage, as well as the right to control her own body.

**Table 4.11: Jiaqian and her best friend's dialogues**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jiaqian:</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No, I have an appointment with Raymond.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jiaqian's best friend:</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Raymond? Hey, hey, hey.....</i></p>

Jianing from *Eat Drink Man Woman* is the third daughter of Zhu's family. She is a college student doing a part-time job in KFC. She is intelligent, open-minded and resourceful, and will take the initiative to get whatever she wants. She snatches her best friend's boyfriend, who works with her, step by step to pursue love. After knowing that there is a rift between her best friend and the boy, she advises: "If you want to torture him, why not let him wait for another two hours?" Then Jianing takes the opportunity of the two hours while the boy is waiting outside, talking with him to deepen his impression of her. Once she finds the boy waiting again in frustration, she invites him to eat at a roadside stall. The boy still believes that her best friend loves him when Jianing lies and tells him: "But she told me she did not love you!" After being ignored many times, the boy decides to give up her best friend and turn to Jianing. When they come to the boy's house's darkroom to develop the photos, Jianing actively takes his hand. It can be seen from the details of the film that Jianing is always the leader in this relationship. She seizes the initiative to pursue love, even if she may be morally condemned. She holds the dominant power and actively pursues the love she wants.



**Table 4.12: Jianing's dialogues**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jianing:</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If you want to torture him, why not let him wait for another two hours?</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jianing:</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>However, she told me she did not love you!</i></p>

Jianing chooses to leave the family when she finds herself pregnant while unmarried. Among the three daughters, she is the first to leave Zhu's family and start a new life. It can be seen that Jianing is a woman who holds her own opinions and goals to control love and her body rights. She is not confined in the shackles of feudal patriarchy on woman's thoughts and behavior norms. From here, we can see the feminist consciousness of independence and freedom of love.

#### **4.3.2.2 Female characters passively pursuing love and freedom of marriage**

Yu Xiulian is the leader of the Xiongyuan escort agency. She is highly skilled in martial arts and widely respected, managing the business successfully. Although not born from a noble family like Jen Yu, as the daughter of the former leader of the escort agency, Yu Xiulian had arranged an engagement when she was still a child. Her fiancé, Sizhao was a good friend of Li Mubai but later died in order to save him. In the beginning, Yu Xiulian maintains the traditional Confucian marriage concept. When telling Jen Yu the story between her and Li Mubai, she says: "Although we have experienced many things together, and our feelings on each other have become deeper and deeper, we all insist on being loyal to Sizhao and that engagement." Confucianism has a "one-man" rule for women. That is, after the death of her husband or even fiance, a good woman should be widowed for him and should not remarry to others. Therefore, although Yu Xiulian deeply loves Li Mubai, she cannot be with him bravely because of the shackles of

feudal Confucian ethics on a woman's marriage concept. She says to Jen Yu: "Although not born in an official family like you, a woman like me should obey no less morality and ethics than you." It can be seen that Yu Xiulian is very traditional in the concept of love and marriage at first, abiding by the norms and requirements of patriarchal Confucianism. In the middle part of the film, Li Mubai and Yu Xiulian stop in the bamboo forest for a tea break on the way to hunt Jen Yu, who has stolen the Qingming sword and enraged the martial arts world. When Yu Xiulian hands a cup of tea to him, Li Mubai holds her hand suddenly. She does not shy away from him as before. Instead, she puts her hand on the table and lets him grip it again. It can be seen from this that Yu Xiulian gradually accepts Li Mubai's feelings for her, and the traditional concepts she has been holding are gradually broken. At the end of the film, after being stabbed by Jade Fox's poisonous needle to save Jen Yu in the cave, Li Mubai shows his love to Yu Xiulian before his death, and Yu Xiulian kisses him in the last. At this time, Yu Xiulian completely accepts Li Mubai's love, putting aside all kinds of consideration for feudal Confucianism. Yu Xiulian has gone through an ideological transformation process from the traditional feudal, patriarchal marriage concept to pursuing the freedom of love. Unlike Jen Yu, who actively pursues the right to freedom of love and marriage, she passively completes the ideological change due to the influence of what she has passed.

**Table 4.13: Yu Xiulian's dialogues**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Yu Xiulian :</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Although we have experienced many things together, and our feelings for each other have become deeper and deeper, we all insist on being loyal to Sizhao and that engagement.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Yu Xiulian :</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Although not born in an official family like you, a woman like me should obey no less morality and ethics than you.</i></p>

Similar to Yu Xiulian, after the stimulation and influence of the event, the female character who has completed the ideological transformation from the traditional marriage concept to the concept of pursuing freedom of love and marriage is Jiazhen in the film *Eat Drink Man Woman*. The feudal Confucianism about filial piety profoundly influences Jiazhen after her mother died when she was a child. As the eldest daughter of the family with three daughters but no son, she thinks she should stay at home and care for her aging father. Therefore, she represses her longing for love and marriage, devoutly believing in Christianity. In the film, she regularly goes to church to worship and listens to Christian songs through earphones on the way to and from work. Jiazhen is closing herself, rejecting the complicated outside world, not brave enough to face the natural yearning for love and marriage in her heart. Li Kai is her best friend Jinfeng's boyfriend. However, she imagines Li Kai is her boyfriend in college and has abandoned her, so she does not trust and gives up on love. Her imagination is mainly to comfort herself and give others an excuse. In fact, she does not have a boyfriend. Depressed for a long time, daring not to face the real feelings, Jiazhen gradually develops a sensitive and suspicious character. When a friend tries to introduce a boy to her, she not only does

not thank her but says: “If there is too much trouble, then do not do it!” Her younger sister Jiaqian goes to her room to look for the wrong clothes their father put and casually says, “Cannot find it.” Then Jiazhen sensitively thinks that Jiaqian means that she cannot find a boyfriend. Jiaqian is scared and has to apologize to her. She also complains when she hears the neighbors and lovers singing love songs at home. In the middle of the film, when the youngest sister Jianing suddenly announces that she is pregnant and will leave the family, along with the stimulation of the love letters and mischievous events from the boys in the class, Jiazhen finally bursts out her real feelings. She releases her inner longing for love and marriage by hugging and kissing the PE teacher she has already fallen in love with. Finally, she marries him and becomes the second to leave Zhu's family. Jiazhen, as the eldest daughter, has experienced from suppressing the longing for love and marriage to breaking through the shackles of the unconscious concept of patriarchy and eventually dares to face her inner feelings. Finally, she embodies the feminist consciousness of pursuing love and freedom of marriage.

**Table 4.14:Jiazhen ’s dialogues**

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Jiazhen :</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If there is too much trouble, then do not do it!</i></p>
--

To sum up, the six female characters in Ang Lee's films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* all have the feminist consciousness of pursuing love and marriage freedom and mastering the right of body control, whether actively or passively.

### 4.3.3 Woman's rights of choice and self-determination

“Liberals believe that everyone is a free and equal subject, with autonomy to arrange life plans according to his own will. They also believe that as long as people are free, they will choose their way of life according to their ideals.” (Yao,2016)

“As half of the human beings, women should have as much freedom as men and be able to determine their social roles.”(Li,1997) In this regard, Mueller points out: “People are no longer born with or nailed to their living status, which can not be changed, but can freely use their talents and favorable opportunities to obtain their most desired destiny” (Mueller,1995). According to liberal feminism, women should have the same personal rights as men. That is, they should have the right to free choice and self-determination. They can decide on their destiny and choose the life they want.

Chinese history has experienced more than 2000 years of feudal rules, with Confucianism deeply rooted as the orthodox ideology of the feudal dynasties. Confucian ethics requires women to do “Three Obedience and Four Virtues.” "Three Obedience" refers to obedience to the father when the woman has not married, obedience to the husband after the woman has married, and obedience to the son after the husband dead. "Four Virtues" refers to a woman's morality, a woman's speech, a woman's appearance, and a woman's merit. Chinese women have been subordinate to men since ancient times, subjecting to the rules made by men without the rights of self-determination. Therefore, the female images in early Chinese films can not get rid of the traditional Chinese female images of virtuous wives and good mothers. For example, in the film *The Singing Girl Red Peony*, the female protagonist rescues her husband in jail by selling her daughter and murdering people.

Another example is Yu Wei in the film *The Orphan Saving His Grandparents*, who is always faithful to her ex-husband. “They endure humiliation and live for men.”(He,&Hu, 2008)(refer to Chapter 2). With the spreading of western enlightenment

thought in China. With the influence of the New Culture Movement with the theme of “Anti Tradition, Anti Confucianism and Anti Classical Chinese,” many “new women” images appear in early Chinese films from the 1930s to 1940s. However, although having the consciousness of women’s liberation, they still cannot get rid of the fates of relying on men and being oppressed by a male-dominated society. Alternatively, “incomplete new women whose thoughts and actions cannot be unified”(Xu,2011). For example, Wei Ming, who pursues independence but is finally oppressed to death by society in the film *New Woman*, and Xiao Mei, who cannot get rid of the male in *The Light of Motherhood*. During this period, the female characters in Chinese films with slightly awakened liberation consciousness are still unable to eliminate the shackles of traditional feudal thoughts on women, whose overall consciousness is still firmly controlled by traditional ideas.

The three female characters of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* live in the Qing Dynasty. In ancient feudal society, women are man’s appendages, with no independent identities and individual rights, nor the right to freely choose their own destinies or decide on their own life directions. As a young lady of the feudal aristocratic family, Jen Yu should marry a well-matched family and become a noble wife, like her mother, who lives a wealthy life without freedom. Jade Fox once said to Jen Yu: “If you become the noble family’s wife, you will suffocate.” It is a very accurate statement of Jen Yu’s real thoughts. On the first day of meeting Yu Xiulian, Jen Yu says: “I am going to get married, but I have not lived the life I want.” It can be seen that Jen Yu is not willing to live a life without freedom. Instead, she is eager to walk and live freely in the world like Li Mubai and Yu Xiulian. On the day before the wedding, Luo Xiaohu’s arrival arouses Jen Yu the memories of the free life in the desert, making her more reluctant to marry and be a wife without freedom. So she runs away from the wedding the next day, which is her choice for herself. She chooses to live the free life she always longs for and

decides her own destiny, even if it would cost a lot.

**Table4.15: Jade Fox & Jen Yu's dialogues**

<p><b>Jade Fox :</b></p> <p><i>If you become the noble family's wife, you will suffocate.</i></p>
<p><b>Jen Yu :</b></p> <p><i>I am going to get married, but I have not lived the life I want.</i></p>

Yu Xiulian, born in a martial arts family, is the daughter of the leader of the Xiongyuan escort agency. According to the provisions of feudal patriarchy, she should marry a man and live a life of supporting her husband and raising children. However, Yu Xiulian chooses to practice martial arts, taking over the escort agency's business as the new leader. She has the initiative in the choice of her life direction. Although it is not in line with traditional feudal ethics, society recognizes her because of her high-level martial arts and moral character.

Born in a low-income family that could not afford children's education, Jade Fox has been illiterate. In the feudal, patriarchal society, women from low-income families have no right to choose or decide, whose fates are even more tragic. However, to change her life, Jade Fox takes the initiative to get close to Jiangnan Ho to learn martial arts. After being betrayed, she kills Jiangnan Ho, steals the *Martial Arts Secret Book*, is hunted by people from the martial arts world, and finally becomes a victim of the feudal patriarchy. It can be seen that none of the three female characters in *Crouching Tiger; Hidden Dragon* is willing to be attached to men under the patriarchal system. They strive to pursue personal rights and finally obtain the rights for the directions of their own lives.

Jiaqian, the second daughter of *Eat Drink Man Woman*, decides to buy a house to move out because of her incompatibility with her father. After being cheated to invest in real estate and losing money, she decides to work in Amsterdam. However, at last, she decides to stay at home to consider her father's health. A series of decisions made by Jiaqian can be seen as being influenced by patriarchy. However, Jiaqian herself has the right to choose and decide. She finally buys the family's old house and chooses to return to tradition. Jiaqian is leaving, and returning decisions are all under her own control. However, from Jiazhen's previous self-closure, being trapped by the patriarchal family, to leaving Zhu's family for her own life with her beloved in the end, we can see that Jiazhen also controls the initiative in her life. Jianing, the youngest daughter, has always been the image of active pursuit. She actively pursues love, chooses to have a baby with her boyfriend, leaves her father's home to start her own life.

It can be seen that the female characters in Ang Lee's films have the feminist consciousness of pursuing individual rights and freedom and striving to master the right of choice and decision in life. They are unwilling to accept the arrangements for their own destinies, strive to pursue the right to choose the directions of their own lives, and strive to control the decision-making power of their own lives and destinies.

#### **4.4 An analysis of the concept of resistance to the patriarchy of female characters in Ang Lee's films**

Ang Lee created the female characters with liberal feminism and the consciousness of resisting patriarchy in his films under tradition and modernity. "Tradition mainly refers to the cultural tradition, including ideas, cultures, morality, customs, art, systems and behaviors that have been handed down from generation to generation, and belong to the historical category."(Peng,2019) Modern society began with the capitalist countries established by the bourgeois revolution, which formally made humankind enter modern



society. The enlightenment started the pursuit of modernization in the history of humankind and made modernity an essential fundamental concept in the history of human civilization (Peng,2019). The evolution of western social tradition began with the Renaissance and the enlightenment. However, China is a country with thousands of years of traditional feudal dynasties with patriarchal rules. The Opium War in 1840 broke the traditional society of China for thousands of years. The May 4th New Culture Movement in the 1920s made the traditional society split. The founding of the new China in 1949 marked the breaking of China from the old traditional society. In recent decades, China has experienced rapid progress towards a modern society.

In a short period of more than 100 years, China has stepped from the traditional society into modern society. However, the traditional culture with thousands of years of history will not be changed entirely within more than 100 years. The culture of Central Plains, which has a deep foundation, affects people's growth environment and all aspects of social life. Born in a family of traditional Central Plains culture, Ang Lee once said: "My father is a representative of the traditional culture of Central Plains to me"(Zhang,2005). Growing up in a traditional patriarchal family, Ang Lee has been deeply nurtured by the oriental culture since childhood, developing his feelings and opinions on traditional culture. After studying in the United States, Ang Lee has been influenced by the modern social culture of the west. The contradiction and integration between the tradition represented by the ancient east and the modern represented by the advanced west have also become the expression object in Ang Lee's films. In the way of expression, Ang Lee often combines tradition with modernity, looks at modernity from tradition, and looks at tradition from modernity, contrasts with each other. He gives the audiences a profound impact, makes them think about their positions in the modernization process, and finds the outlets in the contradiction between tradition and modernity. From the female characters created by Ang Lee, we can see the traditional

side and the modern side. Ang Lee is good at putting female characters in the interweaving tradition and modernity, shaping them through the combination. The following content will explore the ways Ang Lee combined tradition with modernity to shape female characters with a feminist consciousness.

#### **4.4.1 The traditional women with modern consciousness - resistance to patriarchy in Ang Lee's two films**

Kate Millett introduces the concept of Patriarchy in her book *Sexual Politics*: One is the dominance of the male over the female; the other one is the dominance of male elders over younger generations. In society, all positions of authority are reserved for men in the political, economic, legal, religious, educational, military, and family spheres. One of the most critical signs of patriarchy is that men oppress women; women are subordinate to men. In *The Second Sex*, Simon Beauvoir points out that women are regarded as “second sex,” which means that women are different from men in social status or civil rights and the “inferior race.” It indicates that no matter how hard they respect themselves and strive, women will always be inferior in a patriarchal culture and will never be surpassed(Luo,2002). For thousands of years, China's feudal rule is the rule of patriarchy that men are superior to women and that men are in charge of the outside and women are in charge of internal affairs. Women must obey the so-called “Three Follows,” namely the “follow the father, follow the husband, follow the son,” which indicates that a woman's status in the patriarchal society is meager. It can be said that women who do not have independence as personnel must always be subordinate to men without independent thoughts and identities. According to Dai Jinhua's book *Floating Out of the Historical Surface*, “Since the patriarchal society replaced the matriarchal society, China's patriarchal centralized society has adopted coercive strategies against women through political, economic and ethical values, and pushed

them into the bottom of the society.”

In the feudal society of ancient China, men regarded women as private properties or tools for the patriarchal class to inherit their families. Women did not have the dignity and qualification as independent human beings, and they were the appendages of men in the oppression of patriarchal society. Under the patriarchal system, women were often oppressed, insulted, and aggrieved, with their anger swallowed. For example, in Zhang Shichuan's early film *The Singing Girl Red Peony*, the Peking Opera female artist Red Peony has been seriously insulted with the abuse of her rogue husband. After her husband, who has sold their daughter and accidentally killed people, was put into prison, Red Peony still tries to rescue him from prison! (He&Hu,2008)(refer to Chapter 2) Red Peony is a typical female character under the oppression of patriarchy. Her husband abuses her, but she still adheres to feudal rule. The Confucian thought on a woman's "loyalty to husband" makes her still not leave her husband after he is in jail. However, the female characters in Ang Lee's films generally have the spirit of resisting the oppression of patriarchy. Whether in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* in the feudal ruling background of the Qing Dynasty in ancient China, or *Eat Drink Man Woman* with Taiwan background in the 1990s, the protagonists are more or less under the influence and control of the patriarchy but do not yield to it. They constantly challenge the oppression and bondage, struggle with patriarchal society unremittingly, and strive to break away from patriarchy's control, which reflects the feminist consciousness of resisting patriarchy.

The Wudang Sect in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, has a prominent position in the martial arts world. Its leaders, Jiangnan Ho and Li Mubai are masters of martial arts with high skills. Respected by all factions in the society, they are guests of Lord Baylor, the royal representative of the feudal dynasty. As a symbol, patriarchy represents a male-centered social power relationship model, including the class or state behind the

male authority. Therefore, Wudang Sect, Jiangnan Ho, Lord Baylor, Li Mubai, including the Qingming sword, can be seen as symbols of patriarchy. As a woman living in the feudal system of the Qing dynasty, although born in an aristocratic family, Jen Yu still cannot exist as an independent person, subordinate to males and the patriarchal system. However, Jen Yu questions and ignores patriarchy and male authority, not believing that women should be inferior to men.

From the beginning of the film, entrusted by Li Mubai, Yu Xiulian carries the Qingming sword to Beijing and gives it to Lord Baylor. When she and the housekeeper take the sword to Baylor's study, they see Jen Yu standing in front of the calligraphy. The housekeeper is surprised to see Jen Yu and asks her: "This is Lord Baylor's study. Who are you?" According to the regulations, female visitors in feudal society should follow their fathers or family members rather than walking around at will. Jen Yu breaks into Lord Baylor's study without permission. She calmly answers the housekeeper: "I am dizzy because there are a lot of people outside. I want to find a quiet place to breathe." It can be seen that Jen Yu does not attach importance to the study room of Lord Baylor, which represents the patriarchy, and enters and exits at will, which shows her disregard for patriarchy. When Yu Xiulian shows the Qingming sword to Jen Yu, her eyes are full of desire. As the sword is taken out of the sword cover, Jen Yu's eyes keep following it. After overhearing that practicing Li Mubai's Wudang sword technique in *Martial Arts Secret Book* requires the Qingming sword, Jen Yu, who has secretly learned Wudang sword technique with Jade Fox, steals the sword. These plots have shown Jen Yu's ignorance and struggle for the authority of patriarchy. In her mind, women can also have the Qingming sword, which symbolizes male power. Li Mubai takes a fancy to Jen Yu's martial arts talent. Even if she steals his sword, he does not blame her. Instead, he wants to break the precedent of the Wudang Sect to take Jen Yu as a female disciple. However, Jen Yu refuses: "Wudang Mountain is a tavern prostitute

kiln. I am not rare.” Jen Yu describes Wudang Mountain as a “tavern prostitute kiln,” of which she does not want to be an apprentice, even if it has high prestige in the society and is respected by lots of people. We can see that Jen Yu despises patriarchy with doubts and resistance. Even Ang Lee wrote in his biography that “She is like the Monkey King, kicking over the orthodox banner of Confucianism and suppressing human nature”(Zhang,2012).

**Table 4.16: Jen Yu’s dialogues**

<p><b><i>Jen Yu:</i></b></p> <p><i>I am dizzy because there are a lot of people outside. I want to find a quiet place to breathe.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Jen Yu:</i></b></p> <p><i>Wudang Mountain is a tavern prostitute kiln. I am not rare.</i></p>

Jade Fox is another representative from *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, who rebels against patriarchy. When she was young, Jade Fox once fell in love with and devoted herself to Jiangnan Ho, the Wudang Sect leader and the master of Li Mubai. She wanted to learn *Wudang Martial Arts Secret Book* with Jiangnan Ho. However, because Jiangnan Ho despised women, he refused to teach Jade Fox the *Martial Arts Secret Book* of Wudang Sect, believing that only men can learn. However, Jade Fox did not give up. She killed Jiangnan Ho and stole the *Martial Arts Secret Book*, secretly practicing by herself. It can be seen that Jade Fox did not succumb to the confinement and bondage of patriarchy to women and resisted the system of inequality between men and women.

From then on, Jade Fox began to hate men and the patriarchal society and became insidious and vicious. She hid in the Yu mansion and secretly taught Jen Yu martial arts

when Jen Yu was only ten years old, regarded Jen Yu as her only relative and the only love. After Jade Fox killed the officer chasing after her and revealed her identity, she advised Jen Yu to run away with her and roam the world together. Jade Fox says: “Go where you want to go. If anyone wants to stop us, kill him, even your father.” It can be seen that in Jade Fox’s mind, patriarchy is entirely despised and denied. In the patriarchal society, as the direct symbol of patriarchy, the father is the most essential and authoritative person in the family. In persuading Jen Yu to escape with her, Jade Fox mentions that if Jen Yu’s father blocks them, she can also kill him, which shows Jade Fox’s complete resistance to patriarchal society. However, her resistance is violent, which cannot be achieved and will produce many side effects, bringing more troubles to herself.

**Table 4.17: Jade Fox’s dialogue**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Jade Fox:</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Go where you want to go. If anyone wants to stop us, kill him, even your father.</i></p>
---

The oppression of patriarchy on women is mainly reflected in the fact that women are the appendages of men and do not have the status as independent individuals. Compared with Jade Fox, who fights against patriarchy violently, and Jen Yu, who despises the authority of patriarchy, Yu Xiulian follows the traditional Confucianism more. She believes that “marriage is a major event in a woman’s life.” She sticks to her loyalty to her fiance and never dares to face and admit her love for Li Mubai. We can see Yu Xiulian’s adherence to the feudal, patriarchal tradition. However, Yu Xiulian is not subordinate to men’s accessories. After her father’s death, she takes over the escort agency's business and manages well, widely recognized by society. She is highly skilled in martial arts and values morality and integrity, doing what she says. Running an escort

agency also enables her to be economically independent of men and even better than most men. It can also be seen from here that Yu Xiulian breaks the patriarchal norms and oppression on women and the traditional pattern that men dominate the outside while women dominate the interior. She enters the field of male domination, reflecting her struggle for the authority of patriarchy.

The story of *Eat Drink Man Woman* takes place in Taiwan in the 1990s. The story's main characters are the three daughters of Mr. Zhu's family, the chef in charge of the Taipei Hotel. Mr. Zhu lost his wife in middle age and raised the three daughters all by himself. As the three daughters grow up, both the eldest and the second daughters have their jobs, while the youngest daughter is in college and works a part-time job at KFC. There is a tradition in the Zhu family that everyone must go home every Sunday to attend the family dinner. As the father, Mr. Zhu represents the authority of patriarchy in the family, makes the family dinner on Sunday. At the beginning of the film, Mr. Zhu is busy cooking rich dishes for Sunday dinner in the evening. However, as the daughters grow up, they have their concerns. Facing the table full of rich dishes, they are not fully attracted. Jiaqian, the second daughter, is the director of the airline company, who is capable and successful in her career. In the film, when Jiaqian dates her ex-boyfriend Raymond after work, she tells him that she has just signed a house purchase contract, putting almost all her savings into it, and then she says: "But it is worth it to think of leaving that home." This dialogue reflects Jiaqian's desire to escape from the patriarchal family. When Raymond asks her to visit his art gallery, Jiaqian refuses: "I have to go home for Sunday dinner." This dialogue also shows that although Jiaqian wants to escape from the patriarchal family, she does not dare to resist the father's authority in the patriarchal family. Raymond drives her home. When they arrive, she hurriedly gets out of her boyfriend's car and runs to open the door. Jiaqian's nervousness reflects her fear of being late for dinner on Sunday, possibly making her father unhappy. Although

she is a successful woman in the new era, she is always hindered by the patriarchal family. Jiaqian is tired of Sunday dinner and the oppression of the patriarchal family, which can be seen from the first Sunday dinner in the film. When Jiaqian repeatedly makes the expression that the food does not taste right, but she can only cautiously says: "Maybe the ham that simmered the shark's fin boiled too much time." "Or has your sense of taste retrograded?" After hearing this, Mr. Zhu stands up and leaves the table angrily, saying, "My tongue is perfect." A few dialogues show that Jiaqian and her father are drawn at daggers. The authority of patriarchy makes Jiaqian dare not positively communicate with his father. However, to maintain the authority of patriarchy, the father never accepts his daughter's criticism. Being suppressed by his father's authority, Jiaqian becomes the first to buy a house to leave the family. However, later, she is cheated on in buying the house and has to stay at home and then decides to go to Amsterdam. Jiaqian always wants to escape from the oppressive atmosphere of the patriarchal family, and the invisible constraints brought to her. We can see that Jiaqian constantly tries to resist the pressure brought by patriarchy. Jiaqian liked cooking when she was young. She often went to the hotel where his father worked. However, the family kitchen is a forbidden area, which belongs to the father alone, where the daughters are never allowed to enter. The kitchen has become a symbol of patriarchy. Jiaqian has been longing for her father's kitchen since she was a child. She is distraught by her father's refusal to let her in. She has always wanted to break this invisible patriarchal authority's rule and constantly tries to enter her father's territory. We can see her resistance to the patriarchal authority and her consciousness to break it. Until the film's end, Jiaqian buys the old house and finally uses his father's kitchen at will. From a feminist point of view, this is a symbol of Jiaqian's victory against patriarchy.



**Table 4.18: Jiaqian's dialogues**

<p><b><i>Jiaqian:</i></b></p> <p><i>But it is worth it to think of leaving that home.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Jiaqian:</i></b></p> <p><i>I have to go home for Sunday dinner.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Jiaqian:</i></b></p> <p><i>Maybe the ham that simmered the shark's fin boiled too much time.</i></p> <p><i>Or is your sense of taste retrograded?</i></p>

The concept of filial piety in Chinese feudal, patriarchal ideology requires that children be responsible and obligated to care for their parents. Jiazhen, the eldest daughter in Zhu's family in *Eat Drink Man Woman*, lost her mother when she was young. Therefore, she believes that she has the responsibility to help her father take care of the family and stay at home to provide for his father's old age. She represses her feelings for love, believes in Christianity, imagines an ex-boyfriend for an excuse in case of being asked why she does not want to marry. While chatting with her best friend Jinrong, she says: "No matter how My dad will be with me." It can be seen that the idea of patriarchy oppresses Jiazhen like an invisible mountain. The concept of patriarchy has been holding her back, making her subconsciously unwilling to go out of the house and start her new life. Even if the PE teacher has feelings for her, she dares not to accept. Later, stimulated by the students' love letters and the pranks, Jiazhen finally encourages herself to face up to her true feelings. At the routine Sunday dinner, she suddenly announces that she is going to get married. She leaves home with the PE teacher as soon as the dinner is over. Jiazhen breaks through the shackles of patriarchy

and her ideological bondage. She shows a sudden and resolute performance, which can be seen as a victory against the oppression of patriarchy.

**Table 4.19: Jiazhen's dialogue**

<p><b><i>Jiazhen:</i></b></p> <p><i>No matter how My dad will be with me.</i></p>
---

Jianing, the youngest daughter, is a college student, working part-time in KFC. In the film, Jianing is busy working at the KFC counter, discussing with her best friend about their shifts on Sunday. When leaving the KFC, she tries to say “My Sunday time...” to the supervisor, who is walking in a hurry and interrupts her: “I will adjust.” It can be seen that Jianing is discussing with the supervisor about adjusting the working hours for every Sunday afternoon. From the following plots, it can be seen that Jianing has to rush home on time every Sunday night to attend the regular family dinner, to which she has attached great importance. After accidentally being pregnant with her boyfriend's baby, she announces the news of leaving home at a family dinner. Then she becomes the first person to leave Zhu's family with her boyfriend. After announcing the news and leaving, we can see Jianing's eagerness to set up her own family, her determination to break through the patriarchal family, and her feeling of no nostalgia for the patriarchal family.

**Table 4.20: Jianing's dialogue**

<p><b><i>Jianing:</i></b></p> <p><i>My Sunday time.....</i></p>
---

In Ang Lee's films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*, the female characters generally have a feminist consciousness. They resist the

patriarchal society's oppression and restraint, questioning and challenging the patriarchal system, and fighting for the authority given to men by the patriarchal system. It shows women's continuous struggle in the face of patriarchal influence and oppression, which finally breaks through patriarchy's shackles and pursues the spirit of equal rights with men.

#### **4.4.2 “Modern women” in traditional society -- *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon***

The story of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* takes place in the Qing Dynasty of ancient China, which is ruled by feudal patriarchy. Jen Yu is a noble lady, and Jade Fox is from a low-income family, while Yu Xiulian is born in a merchant family, living in the era of the patriarchal Dynasty. According to the provisions of Confucian thought of the feudal dynasty on women, the three female characters in the film should live a life of supporting husbands and taking care of children in marriage. However, the director endows the women who live in feudal times with the thoughts and characters of modern women. Jen Yu despises male chauvinism and pursues the love and life she wants. Jade Fox breaks down the discrimination and prejudice of male chauvinism and pursues the martial arts secrets she wants. Yu Xiulian has excellent martial arts skills and has achieved the same status as men in the world. The director puts modern woman's liberal feminist consciousness such as the pursuit of equal rights as men for education and work, the pursuit of love and freedom of marriage, and the right for choice and self-determination in the shaping of female characters under the background of the feudal, patriarchal dynasty in ancient China. By combining and setting off the traditional confinement and modern resistance, the director better shows the seriousness of patriarchy for women's oppression and the difficulty of women's resistance and embodies the precious feminist thoughts against patriarchy. It makes traditional society's “modern women” characters more three-dimensional, complex, and full of

emotion. As the ending of the last three female characters of the film, Jen Yu commits suicide by jumping off a cliff with guilt, Jade Fox is killed by Li Mubai and pays off her blood debt, while Yu Xiulian loses her favorite. The tragic ending of the three brings a trace of sadness to the film. In the patriarchal society, women pursue freedom and gain the same status as men. The price of fighting against patriarchy is heavy, making the audience feel empathy and easily arouse the reflection and resonance, especially the contemporary female audience.

#### **4.4.3 “Traditional return” of modern women--*Eat Drink Man Woman***

The story of *Eat Drink Man Woman* takes place in Modern Taiwan in the 1990s. During this period, with the development of the economy and the integration of culture, Taiwan is deeply influenced by western thoughts, including introducing feminist ideas. A large number of women receive education, enter society and participate in work. However, the Central Plains culture has a deep foundation in Taiwan, with patriarchy being the dominant culture for a long time. At this time, Taiwan is also in the historical process of transformation from traditional society to modern society. In the film, people in Mr. Zhu's generation have all been brought up under patriarchy, deeply influenced by which, they naturally show the authority of traditional patriarchy in their own families. The three daughters, who grow up under the influence of modern western thoughts, integrate traditional patriarchy and modern independent thoughts, struggling and constantly balancing in the traditional and the modern. Jiaqian, the second daughter, has always been the representative of modern women. She is confident and independent with excellent working ability and sound financial status. However, she is still unable to escape from the shackles of traditional patriarchy. From the first attempt to escape, to the failure to invest in real estate, to the decision to go to Amsterdam, she finally chooses to stay at home out of concern for his father's health. At the end of the film,

Jiaqian buys the old house that symbolizes patriarchy, with the kitchen that his father could only use. She chooses to finally return to tradition to defeat patriarchy rather than succumbing to it. In this film with modern background, Ang Lee uses traditional Chinese food, Sunday family dinner, and father's kitchen as the traditional symbolic ties. He shows women's struggle, contradiction, and confusion in the transformation from tradition to modernity and gives a mild solution of harmony and mutual integration. Audiences, predominantly female audiences, can re-examine their own relationship with patriarchy, think of how to coordinate the contradiction between tradition and modernity, and find the most suitable solution in the transition period.

In shaping female characters, Ang Lee does not blindly construct the feminist consciousness of the characters. He uses the combination of traditional and modern techniques to deeply reflect the struggle and hesitation of the characters when facing traditional feudal patriarchy and modern female consciousness, and finally finds a balance point and a suitable solution. This way of shaping makes the overall images of the characters more three-dimensional and persuasive, better arousing the audience's resonance, rather than just highlighting the female consciousness and making the characters trapped in conceptualization and hollowing out.

The female characters created by Ang Lee in the films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman* all have feminist consciousness. They pursue equal rights as men for education and work, pursue freedom of love and marriage, pursue woman's rights for choice and self-determination, with resistance to patriarchy. Ang Lee's eastern and western living and educational background and the strong and independent personalities of the two most influential women in his life have become the ideological sources to shape the female characters with a feminist consciousness. Moreover, due to the growing background of Ang Lee's oriental traditional culture, the

female characters in his films show the characteristics of seeking balance and solution in the contradiction between tradition and modernity.

Universiti Malaya

## CHAPTER5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, SUGGESTIONS

### 5.1 Summary

Since appearing on the historical stage of Chinese films in 1913, the female characters have experienced from the traditional female images of male accessories to the “new era” female images with enlightenment consciousness, and from the “desire symbols” being gazed at by men, to the modern female images of independence and self-confidence. With film development for more than 100 years, women's characters have changed with different historical periods. In recent years, the phenomenon of “disappearing female protagonist” has appeared in Chinese films. Among the famous and high-box-office Chinese films in recent years, there are very few films in which women play the leading roles or only tell women’s stories. However, the only few films in which women play the leading roles or the female characters play slightly higher parts present unreal and hollow problems. With the continuous improvement of social and economic levels, women continue to enter society, undertaking more social responsibilities and achieving economic independence. In real life, more and more women are strong, independent, and confident. However, the whole film industry does not pay enough attention to women. The female characters portrayed in the films are not in line with women in real life. The “disappearing female protagonist” and hollow female characters cannot meet the needs of modern female spiritual culture. The emergence of these problems is unfavorable to the development of the whole film industry.

Ang Lee is a famous film director globally, with films winning many domestic and international film awards. Director Ang Lee is good at shaping female characters. Based on his representative films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Eat Drink Man Woman*, this dissertation analyzes the female characters created by Ang Lee in these two

films. They pursue equal educational rights with men and gain equal or even more outstanding career achievements than men through their efforts. These six female characters rebel against the arranged marriage of patriarchy and bravely pursue the freedom of love and marriage. In choosing life direction, they bravely grasp their destiny, pursue the life they want, and strive for their self-determination. Moreover, these six female characters are all under the oppression of patriarchy. Although the degrees of oppression by patriarchy are different because of the different times, they are hindered and influenced by patriarchy in all aspects of life. However, these female characters have the consciousness of resisting patriarchy and finally find a way to get along with it. The female characters in the films pursue equal education and work rights with men, pursue freedom of love and marriage, pursue the rights for independent choice and self-determination, and have the consciousness of pursuing independence and equality with men. They all resist the oppression of patriarchy and fight bravely against patriarchy. Through analyzing Ang Lee's life experience, we can see that Ang Lee's shaping of female characters with feminist consciousness is related to his growing and studying background in the East and the West. The two influential women in his life: his mother and his wife, also played influential roles.

Due to the growth and learning background of the east and the west, Ang Lee is good at shaping female characters by combining tradition and modernity. Ang Lee integrates modern elements into traditional themes or brings traditional elements into modern themes. In combining tradition and modernity, Ang Lee uses film elements such as plots, dialogues, costumes, colors, photography, and other film elements to shape women's characters, making them more real, three-dimensional, more source, and persuasive. In terms of plots, dialogues, and costumes, the combination of traditional and modern elements endows the female characters with a sense of contrast. In the process of modernization, women's struggle in the face of patriarchy and traditional



culture is more likely to arouse the female audience's attention and resonance, who may think about themselves. The audience, especially the female audience, can be more integrated into the films by using the colors to express the characters' psychological-emotional changes and the technique of close-up shots to enlarge the characters' psychological activities. Those audiences will have resonance with the characters, thus to think about their feminist consciousness in the process of transformation to the modern society and to examine their relationship with traditional culture and patriarchy.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Ang Lee pays much attention to the inner growth of the female characters with a feminist consciousness. The female images in Ang Lee's films are more authentic with rich characters, full of liberal feminism and the spirit of resisting patriarchy. Moreover, Ang Lee is good at shaping female characters by combining tradition with modernity through makeup, clothing, colors, and other film elements, making the audience, especially female audiences, resonate with the characters, thus thinking about themselves.

## **5.3 Suggestions**

Compared with the hollow and unreal female characters in modern Chinese films, Ang Lee's female characters are more convincing and full-fledged. The combination of traditional and modern techniques can highlight the characters' sources and psychological changes, providing references for today's Chinese films in shaping female characters.

## REFERENCE LIST

- (2009). *Ang Lee's Interview: Freedom in Film*. Retrieved October 18, 2009 from: <https://www.douban.com/group/topic/8361538/>
- (2020). *hanging silk to check pulse/悬丝诊脉* Retrieved (2020) from:<https://baike.sogou.com/v23483214.htm?fromTitle=%E6%82%AC%E4%B8%9D%E8%AF%8A%E8%84%89>
- Arp,R., Barkman,A. & McRae,J. (2015). *The Philosophy of Ang Lee* (W.Sh. Shao, Trans. ). Harbin: Heilongjiang Education Press.
- Aston, E. (1994). *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Bao,B.Z. (2015) Metaphorical Interpretation of Female Consciousness in the Films from the Male Perspective of Ang Lee. *Film and Television Media*. 000(005), 94.
- Baudrillard,J. (2008). *Consumer Society*, (C.F.Liu, & Z.G.Quan, Trans.). Nanjing:Nanjing University Press, p120.
- Beauvoir, S.D. (1998). *The Second Sex* (T.Z. Tao, Trans.). Beijing: China Ancient Books Publishing House.p367.
- Benenson,R. (1982). Women and Politics. *Editorial Research Reports*,(11), 707-708.
- Cao, W. (2015). *Research on Arts of Costume in Zhang Yi mou's Movies*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Hunan University of Technology, Zhuzhou, China. p9.
- Chan, T.T. (2017). *Taiwanese Identity and Transnational Families in the Cinema of Ang Lee*. Unpublished PHD dissertation, Northern Illinois University, DE Kalb, America.
- Chen,H. (2011, November).Comparison of the Modernity and Cultural Identity of Chinese Films in the Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong. *Literature and Art Criticism*, 54-60.
- Chen,X.D. (2010,November,12). Interpretations of Female Violence in Films - Take Thelma and Louise and Crouching Tiger ,Hidden Dragon As Examples. *Movie Review*,21-22.
- Cheng, S. (2007).An Analysis of the Changes of Woman's Career Development in Taiwan. *Taiwan Research*, volume(1), 1-8.
- Di,Q. (2015) Female Consciousness in The Father Trilogy. *West China Broadcasting TV*. 000(004), 110.
- Da,Y.B.(2008).Mary Wollstonecraft Retrieved, (December20, 2008) from: <https://baike.sogou.com/v340883.htm;jsessionid=F3B7BC74B60066775E6B5176CB38E03>
- Dilley, W.C. (2012). *The Cinema of Ang Lee: The Other Side of the Screen* (Y.W. Huang, Trans. ). Jinan: Shandong People Press.

- Ding, S.Y. (2011). Beyond Language: the Postmodern Poetics of Ang Lee's Adaptation of *Lust Caution*. *Critical Arts, Volume 25*, (1), 88-102.
- Document Editing Committee of the CPC Central Committee. (1991). *Selected Works of Mao Zedong (Vol. 3)*. Beijing: People's Publishing House. p860.
- Deng, Y. (2007). *On Mill's Feminism*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Nanchang University, Jiangxi, China.
- Dou, X.P. (2010). *Ang Lee's World*. Beijing: The People's Daily Press.
- Feng, X. (2018). *Research on the Marriage System of Qing Dynasty*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Heilongjiang University, Harbin, China, p12.
- Gao, Y. (2016). *Ang Lee's Film Aesthetics and Its Performance*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Shandong Normal University, Jinan, China.
- Guo, T. (2018). *A Study on Challenges to Patriarchy in Wonder Woman*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Sichuan International Studies University, Sichuan, China.
- Gao, X.W. (2010). Feminist Analysis of Ang Lee's Films. *Journal of Ningxia University (Humanities & Social Sciences Edition)*, Vol 32, (5), p155-p164.
- Gomes, C. (2005). Crouching Women, Hidden Genre: An Investigation Into Western Film Criticism's Reading of Feminism In Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. *Limina, Volume (11)*, 47-56.
- He, J. & Hu, X. (2008). Perspective and the Scenery Seen -- Analysis of Female Images in Chinese Films from 1915 to 1949. *Jiangxi Social Sciences*(02), 244.
- He, W.W. (2018). *The Study of John Mill's Feminist Thought*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Guizhou Normal University, Guiyang, China. p26.
- He, Zh. (2015). Film and Ideological Construction in the Early Years of New China. *Lantai World*.(11), 2. 85.
- Huangpu, J.Q. (1995). Cultural Comparison of Works of Chen Kaige and Ang Lee. *Journal of Wuhan Institute of Education, Volume (14)*, 11-15.
- Le, B. (2019). *Top5 Films in China Box Office in Recent 5 Years: Have You Seen All of These Classics?* Retrieved November 27, 2018 from <https://xw.qq.com/cmsid/20201127A0C0IG00>
- Lee, W.J. (2010). *An Intercultural Study of Pushing Hands—The Seeking, Losing and Acquiring of Harmony*. Unpublished MA dissertation, South China University of Technology Guangzhou Automobile Academy, Guangzhou, China.
- Lei, W. (1989). *Clothing Encyclopedia*. Beijing: Xueyuan Press. p36.
- Leung, W. *Crouching Sensibility, Hidden Sense*. In L. William (Ed.), Unnamed.

- Li, D.K. (2004). *American Government and American Politics*. Beijing: The Commercial Press. p150.
- Li, E.W. (1998). *Zhang Yimou Says*. Shenyang: Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House. p72.
- Li, Y.H. (1997). *Women: The Longest Revolution -- A Selection of Contemporary Western Feminist Theories*. Beijing: China Woman's Publishing House. p284.
- Li, J. (2006). The "Female Complex" of the Fifth Generation Directors. *Art Criticism* (3), 19-20.
- Li, Z.N. (2011). *A Comparative Study of Zhang Yimou's and Ang Lee's Films*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Hunan University, Changsha, China.
- Li,M.Y. (2010). Female Characters in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. *Appreciator*, 000(016), 98-100.
- Liao, Y. & Ao, L. (2015). Female Images and Characteristics in the Films of the Sixth Generation of Chinese Directors. *Seeker*: 174.
- Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee.(1993). *Selection and Compilation of Important Documents Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*. (5th ed.,rev.). Beijing:Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee.p18.
- Liu,H.R. (2006). *On the Development of Science and Technology and Its Impact on Employment in the United States after World War II*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Inner Mongolia University, Hohhot, China. p28.
- Liu,L. (2015). *An Analysis of Cross-Cultural Communication in Ang Lee's Films*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Qufu Normal University, Qufu, China.
- Luo, X.Q. (2009). On the Liberal Feminism in Thelma & Louise. *News Lovers*. 189-190.
- Liu,L.D. (2006). *Ang Lee/ 李安*. Retrieved April 23, 2006 from:<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%9D%8E%E5%AE%89/16812>
- Li, N.X. & Fu, X.Y. (2017). Female Narratives in Recent Urban Films . *New Films*(2).
- Liu,Y. (2017). [A Study on the Conflict and Fusion between Chinese Culture and Western Culture in Ang Lee's Films ]. *The Movie Review* , 13, 92-94.
- Liu,Y.Y. (2016). *A Study on Chinese Female Images in Ang Lee's Films*. Unpublished MA dissertation, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China.
- Lu, H. & Shu, X. (1998). *The History of Chinese Films*,p5. Beijing: Culture and Art Press.
- Luo, H.L. (2002). *Femaleology*. Beijing: China International Broadcasting Press. p18.

- Macleod, Christopher. Zalta, Edward N. , ed. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. 14 November 2017 Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
- Mill,J. (1869). EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY ,ed. *The Subjection of Women*(PDF). London: London : Longmans, Green , Reader, and Dyer.
- Marino, E. (2005). *When East Meets West:A Sweet and Sour Encounter in Ang Lee's The Wedding Banquet*. Retrieved Vol 1, No 2 (2005) from: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%9D%8E%E5%AE%89/16812>
- Millet,K. (2000). *Sexual Politics*. (W.W. Song, Trans.). Suzhou: Jiangsu People's Publishing House.
- Mitchell, J (1997). *Women: The Longest Revolution*. Beijing: Joint Publishing. p105-p107.
- Mo, W. & Fu, H.M. (2008). *Reading Ang Lee*. Beijing: Beijing University Press.
- Mueller,J. (1995). *The Subjection of Women* (X. Wang, Trans.). Beijing: The Commercial Press. p282.
- Mulvey,L (1988). Visual Pleasure and Narrative Film. *Film and Television Culture*.
- Pan, M.M. (2018). *After Studying the TOP100 Domestic Films at the Box Office, We Found that "The Female Protagonists Disappeared"*. Retrieved March 20, 2018 from: [https://www.sohu.com/a/225916996\\_699621](https://www.sohu.com/a/225916996_699621)
- Peng,C.(2019). *The Multivariate Reconstruction and Reflection of the Media of Gender Culture--Based on the traditional, modern and post-modern three priority domains*. Unpublished PHD dissertation, Jilin University, Changchun, China. p32.
- Qu, X.Q. (2013). *Culture Exploration of Father Image in "The Family Trilogy" of Ang Lee*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Hebei Normal University, Shijiazhuang, China.
- Rao, S.G. et al. (2018 August 20). [Film with Reality: Attitude and Spirit of Realistic Film.] *Contemporary Cinema*, 14-23.
- Red Leaf Video Creation. (2020). *What's Your Favorite Movie in the Box Office of the Chinese Mainland in the Past 5 Years*. Retrieved May 19, 2020 from: [https://www.sohu.com/a/396191288\\_120135717](https://www.sohu.com/a/396191288_120135717)
- Roach,S. (2013). Bigger Fish to Fry: The Global Appeal of Eat Drink Man Woman. *Kino: The Western Undergraduate Journal of Film Studies, Volume (4)*, 1-6.
- Shi,S.Y. (2014). *Research on Ang Lee's Film Self-Identity*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Yangzhou University, Yangzhou, China.
- Song, C. (2007). *Practical Tutorial on Feature Film Photography*. Xi'an:Shaanxi People's Publishing House. p164.
- Song ,L. (2018). On Jane Eyre's Liberal Feminisms. *ENGLISH ON CAMPUS ,Volume (399)*.

- Shui,J (2020). Patriarchy Retrieved, (June17, 2021) from:  
<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%94%B7%E6%9D%83%E5%88%B6?fromtitle=%E7%88%B6%E6%9D%83%E5%88%B6&fromid=6871276>
- Tan, Y. (2011). On the Development of Feminist View of Marriage. *Business & Culture*, 361.
- Tan,J. (2012). *Feminist Studies of Mary Wollstonecraft*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Xiangtan University, Xiangtan,China.
- Tang,S.L. (2014). A Brief Analysis of Traditional Chinese Aesthetic Application in Ang Lee's Films. *Literature Life*, 144-145.
- Teng,X. (2011). *A Study on Mary Wollstonecraft's Thoughts on Female Education*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Sichuan Normal University, Chengdu,China.
- Three Obedience and Four Virtues/ 三从四德* . Retrieved July 28, 2020 from:<https://baike.sogou.com/v180351297.htm?fromTitle=%E4%B8%89%E4%BB%8E%E5%9B%9B%E5%BE%B7>
- Tian,M. (2017). From Stubbornness to Compromise -- On the "Father" Image in Ang Lee's Films. *Journal of Hainan Radio & TV University, Volume (4)*,39-43.
- Tong, Q.B. (2013). *Course in Literary Theory. (4th ver)*. Beijing: Higher Education Press.p 109.
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy 3. Mill's Liberalism. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. The Metaphysics Research Lab, Center for the Study of Language and Information (CSLI), Stanford University.[2020-02-18].
- Vincily,A.(2018). Behind the Screen: The Challenges of Film Adaptations in Yann Martel and Ang Lee's *Life of Pi*. *An International Refereed/Peer-reviewed English e-Journal, Volume 3, (6)*, 148-152.
- Wang, B.J. (2009). [A Preliminary Study on Female Images in Chinese Mainland Films after the Reform and Opening Up]. *Movie Literature*, 8, 54.
- Wang, G. On the Charm of Close-Ups. *New Century Theater: 77*.
- Wang,Q.S. (2020 April 11). *The Importance of Lines in Acting*. Retrieved April 11, 2020 from:<https://www.douban.com/group/topic/8361538/>
- Wu,Y.(2014). On Mary Wollstonecraft's Feminist Thought. *A Foreign Language*. Vol.03.
- Wollstonecraft,M. (1996). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. ed. Candace Word (New York : Dover Publications Inc.)
- Wu,H. (2001). A Study of Women's Rights from the Principle of the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Majority—On John Mill's *The Subjection of Women*. *Journal of South China Normal University (SOCIAL SCIENCE EDITION), Volume (03)*.

- Weaver,K. (2015). *Gender Inequality as Family Drama in Ang Lee's Eat Drink Man Woman*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Bryn Mawr College,Philadelphia,America.
- Wei, S. (2011). *A Dictionary of Chromatics*. Beijing: China Building Industry Press.p89.
- Wu.O (2021). Liberal Feminism Retrieved, (April 16, 2021) from:  
<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%87%AA%E7%94%B1%E4%B8%BB%E4%B9%89%E5%A5%B3%E6%80%A7%E4%B8%BB%E4%B9%89/15851828?fr=aladdin>
- Wu.Y(2012).Female Illusion and Fetters Retrieved, (June17, 2021) from:<https://baike.baidu.com/reference/12755429/f759d6Yr6AyRjXbDR6OvJk5vtgnbgQtyQv1r5-KXVcaB-S9bbYJ9I4Nrk50Wt2hMWRHUedMk-XHzYU7cvjxLOraOtfNay6spo2ZDC4-hynObJvwi1XWfmWA>
- Wollstonecraft,M. (1996). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. (Q. Wang, Trans.). Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Xu, H. (2018). *Research on Ang Lee's Films from the Perspective of Technical Aesthetics*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology, Xi'an , China.
- Xu,Z. (2011). [The Incomplete New Woman Images in Chinese Films --During the Time from 1930 to 1940 ]. *The Movie Review*, (17), 3.
- Xue,X.Y. (2012). *On the Father in the Ang Lee Movie Image and Cultural Significance*. Unpublished MA dissertation,Shandong College of Arts, Jinan, China.
- Xue,Z.Z.(2017).Rebellion and Defend Traditional Moral Principles - The Interpretation of the Female Characters in Ang Lee's Films. *Journal of News Research*, Volume 8, (24),125-126.
- Xi, L. (2017) The Multicultural World In The Films Of Ang Lee. *Transactions on Social Science Education and Human Science* (icssm).
- Yang, H.Y. & Liu,P. & Kong, Y.F (2013). Multi Faceted Female Consciousness in Xu Jinglei's Films. *Journal of Nanjing Institute of Industry Technology*, Volume 13, (4), 91-94.
- Yang, Y. (2011). *Research on The Confucian Thought of Female Education in Han Dynasty*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Southwest University, Chongqing, China. P1.
- Yang,L.J. (2008). A Study on Chinese Female Images in Ang Lee's Films. *Movie Literature*, Volume (11), 86-87.
- Yang,Y.Y. (1990). Feminism and Chinese Woman's Films. *Contemporary Film* (30).46-53
- Yao,D.Z. (2016).An Analysis of Liberalism Feminism. *Social Science Journals*, volume(5), 10-14.
- Yao,J. The Subversion of Feminism to Patriarchy in Langyabang, *Literary Criticism*, 152-153.
- You,R. Jane Eyre's Heroine's Resistance to Patriarchy, *Shanxi Youth*, Volume (014).

- Yu, J. (2019). Seeking Identities Across the Worlds---A Critical Analysis of Ang Lee's Film The Wedding Banquet. *Asian Culture and History, Vol.11*, 91-101.
- Yuan, N. (2012). *On the Feminine Consciousness of Women Characters in Ang Lee's Films*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China.
- Yuan,Y. (2017). On the Chinese and Western Cultural Identity of Ang Lee's Films . *Film Literature*, 157.
- Zha, Q.J. (2017) *The Construction of Gender Roles in Ang Lee's Films Under Cultural Perspective*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Jinan University, Guangzhou, China.
- Zhan, C.N. (2011). *On the Female Consciousness in Ang Lee's Films*. Unpublished MA dissertation, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China.
- Zhang, K.R. (2005). *Chinese Cross the World -- Ang Lee*. Beijing: Beijing Modern Publishing House.p8.
- Zhang, L. (2012). *Ang Lee's Biography : Ten Years of A Movie Dream*. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House.
- Zhang, W. & Dong, M.Y. (2014). Study of Liberal Feminist Thought in the Enlightenment Period. *Youth and Society, volume 547*(1), 343.
- Zhang,G.K. Female Images in the Eyes of Chinese Male Directors. *Film Art*, 49.
- Zhou,J. & Chen,Z.Y. (2015). On the Characteristics and Charm of Ang Lee's Adapted Films. *Movie Literature, Volume* (17).
- Zhu, X.H. (2015). *Woman's Liberation in the Early Days of New China: from the Perspective of Human Rights/中国建国初期的妇女解放：人权视角的透视*. Retrieved Vol 3, (September08, 2015)  
from: [http://www.humanrights.cn/html/2015/zxyq\\_0908/9055.html](http://www.humanrights.cn/html/2015/zxyq_0908/9055.html)
- Zhao ,D. (2012). An interpretation of liberalism and Feminism of the film *Banditer*. *English Square,Volume* (015).