

Hauntology of History: Intimate Revolt in Lou Ye's Summer Palace

Authors : Yueming Li

Abstract : This paper analyzes Lou Ye's Summer Palace (2006), an autobiographical film of the Sixth Generation of Directors in Mainland China, from the approaches of inter-textual analysis and intellectual history. It highlights the film's reconstruction of the June 4th Incident as an intermediary device for the revival and haunting of the 1980s' New Enlightenment Movement. The paper demonstrates how the June 4th Incident unfolds as historical trauma and collective experience of the Generation through Lou's flickering narrative in both plot organization and visual representation, under an individualized and internal viewpoint. It further proposes that these revenants of the June 4th Incident translate into "realms of memory," which lend themselves for biographical and historical reconstruction of the June 4th Incident based on a politics of embodiment. Through this, Lou and his contemporaries acquire agency to actively respond to the June 4th Incident as an "intimate revolt." In this sense, the film revisits the New Enlightenment Movement in that they similarly construct rebellious connotations in a seemingly depoliticized manner. As the paper examines how an autobiographical film reconstructs, revisits, and responds to a historical event and its absence, it answers how individuals' agency intertwines with and counteracts their historical living contexts.

Keywords : new enlightenment movement, summer palace, the June 4th incident, the sixth generation of directors

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