Wang Mingqi. *Projection Team on the Lake*. Cut-paper illustration by a projectionist of an open-air screening. From *Dianying fangying* (Film projection), no. 3 (1965).

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The Hot Noise of Open-Air Cinema

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In the quiet night of the countryside, when the roar of the generator thundered and the light of the projector pierced the dark, vast sky, the sleepy village awakened into hustle and bustle: kids' tussling and screaming, parents' shouts in search of their children, the laughter of young men and women were all intertwined into a pastoral symphony.
—Tan Hanxin, "Open Air Cinema"[1]

For my generation, cinema is the gatekeeper of our memory lane, the core and pivot of our childhood lives. When this gate is opened, all the smells and flavors of that vanished era will assault one's senses: roasted sunflower seeds, the unique scorched flavor of pumpkin seeds, the aroma of dust and rain, the scent of women's vanishing cream, the odor of petroleum emanating from the generator, the smell of mysterious nights of distant moon and stars.
—Ge Fei, "Village Cinema"[2]

From 1949 to 1983, the film exhibition network in the People's Republic of China developed from fewer than six hundred movie theaters to some 162,000 film projection units, mostly mobile movie teams conducting open-air screenings in rural areas.[3] Such an expansive media infrastructure helped the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) unite and mobilize a vast, diverse populace behind its utopian visions. In this sense, the Chinese Revolution was a media revolution. But were the Chinese people passive recipients of state propaganda? What was the experience of cinema like at the grass roots? What did the exhibition contexts contribute to the memory and nostalgia of those who came of age in socialist China?

Parsing the senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—with which grassroots audiences engaged with cinema *beyond* the film, this article argues that the multisensory environment of the screening space can contribute as much to the reception of cinema as the content of the films themselves. I synthesize and theorize these extrafilmic visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and haptic experiences of moviegoing as "hot noise." A key concept of Chinese popular religion, theater, and markets, "hot noise" describes the festive ambience generated through an assembly of warm bodies, a polyphony of participatory voices, and a kaleido-

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scope of sense impressions. As open-air cinema grew into a quintessential form of public life under Chinese socialism, its hot noise also contributed to a politics of mobilization and an economics of austerity, thereby challenging existing understandings of cinema's relationship to the senses and to the masses.

Film scholars have long connected the beginnings of cinema to the invention of a new modern sensorium, from Siegfried Kracauer's depiction of Berlin's picture palaces as a "total artwork" that "assaults all our senses" to Walter Benjamin's accounts of how urban industrial modernity altered modes of human perception.[4] In the Chinese context, Zhang Zhen shows how 1920s and 1930s Shanghai cinema contributed to a new sensorium that "helped absorb, deflect, and overcome the shocks and stress of modern life."[5] Not only film texts but movie theaters, amusement halls, parks, cafés, and dance halls came together in "a complex ecology of material conditions and sociocorporeal relations" that constituted what Leo Ou-fan Lee calls the "urban milieu of Shanghai cinema."[6] Weihong Bao also highlights the "mediating environment" of Chinese cinema of the 1920s to the 1940s, dubbing it an "affective medium" that acted on the sensory reflex of its spectators.[7]

Yet the vast majority of China's population lived in rural areas until the 1990s and would not have encountered cinema until the 1950s, when the CCP systematically sent out mobile film units to every county and township. More than entertainment and distraction, these mobile film units were tasked with labor mobilization and "socialist distant horizon education."[8] In the 1950s, they showed both imported films from the Soviet Union and a plethora of new domestic productions from film studios concentrated in Shanghai, Beijing, and Changchun.[9] The nationwide film exhibition network continued to grow even during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) with its censorship and suspension of most feature productions, so that the few sanctioned "revolutionary model works" (*yangbanxi*) were screened repeatedly along with newsreels and imported films from China's allies. A folk saying from the 1970s captures the period's cinematic diet: "Chinese films, documentary newsreels; Vietnamese films, airplanes and cannons; North Korean films, weep weep, smile smile; Romanian films, hugs and kisses; Albanian films, baffling and bizarre."[10]

Even more than *what* they watched, however, audiences hold vivid memories of *where* they watched films. Since the Chinese countryside had little infrastructure devoted to film exhibition, screenings took place mostly in open air, and the "environment" for cinema was more "natural" than "built," more improvised than designed. Even urban Chinese primarily encountered films in open-air screenings in nontheatrical venues such as school,

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work unit, and military courtyards from the 1950s to the 1970s. The open-air screenings intensified the audience's *physical* memories of cinema thanks to their embodied interactions with the material spaces of film exhibition. These screenings also demand critical reconsiderations of cinema's relationship to the masses—not in terms of industrial capitalism but of state socialism. How did mobile cinema reconfigure the sensorium of grassroots China and contribute to the making of socialist subjects? And how might extrafilmic sensory engagements go against or beyond state orchestration?

Studying extrafilmic senses associated with cinemagoing departs from scholarship on how film texts represent and stimulate the senses, whether Laura Marks's notion of "haptic visuality" or Vivian Sobchack's genealogy of the "cinesthetic subject."[11] Instead of hypothetical spectators, this article draws on the reminiscences of former audiences to conduct a historical ethnography and critical analysis of Chinese socialist cinema's multisensory environment.[12] To reconstruct cinema culture "from below," the article analyzes "memory-texts" such as memoirs, blogs, oral histories, and written questionnaires, as well as historical documents, film magazines, contextual sources, and even fictional works grounded in lived experiences.[13]

In addition to written sources from more than twenty Chinese provinces, the article draws on interviews with former projectionists and film audiences conducted from 2012 to 2019.[14] Since contemporary reports and recounted memories are selective and performative, no single source gives unmediated access to "real audiences." Yet personal accounts and creative works can still provide thick descriptions of the material conditions and diverse meanings of film exhibition and reception. As Jacqueline Stewart argues in her study of African American film culture, even literary fiction has the potential to "bridge the gaps between 'spectator' as textual point of address and 'viewer' as empirical unit."[15] Adopting Stewart's "kaleidoscopic approach," I let the various sources "address, contradict, and illuminate each other."[16] Taken together, these idiosyncratic accounts show how cinema did not hold homogeneous meanings for audience members and that reception varied greatly depending on the exhibition context.

Socialist China's mobile and makeshift screening venues and practices are reminiscent of the itinerant exhibitions of early cinema, whereas its grassroots cinematic experiences resonate with ethnographic accounts of moviegoing in Africa and South Asia.[17] Brian Larkin considers cinemagoing in Nigeria an "affective practice" that is "sensational in its literal meaning of working on the body to produce physical effects."[18] Amit Rai analyzes the "ecologies of sensation" as well as "the unpredictable experience of the visual, gastric, tactile, and aural pleasure of Hindi-Urdu

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film."[19] Similarly, Lakshmi Srinivas writes about an "active audience" in India whose cinemagoing has been "marked by spontaneity, improvisation, and performance" in contrast to "the silent absorption of film associated with mainstream audiences in Anglo-American and Western European exhibition (multiplex) settings."[20]

Where grassroots cinemagoing in socialist China may stand apart from other cinema cultures is its intense political charge and an aesthetics of austerity, which I theorize via the multisensory phrase "hot noise": at once visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and haptic. Analysis of extrafilmic sights, sounds, smells, taste, and touch reveals that the coming of the "movie team" constituted a heightened sensory experience for grassroots audiences in socialist China beyond the ideological content of the film texts. As festive occasions for mass congregation, spectacle, noise, commensality, intimacy, and nightlife against a backdrop of poverty, hardship, and dreariness, cinema was a central component of Chinese socialist public life. The dialectic between labor and leisure, aesthetics and anesthetics applied not only to cinema's place in urban industrial modernity but to its relationship to Chinese socialism in rural areas.[21] Cinema served as both labor mobilization and respite from labor; film screenings stimulated and amplified the senses but also implemented austerity measures through an economy of gratitude. While the state's aim was to attract, discipline, and collectivize a scattered population into "revolutionary masses," cinema audiences remained an unruly crowd whose hot noise eluded, even subverted, state control.

Hot Noise

Reminiscences of rural life under socialism often mention cinema as *the* "hot and noisy" (*renao*) event. When I asked Chinese villagers, especially female elders who spoke only local dialects, what movies they had seen or liked, they often replied, "Movies? We just went to 'watch hot noise' [*kan renao*]." Sometimes they also said "approaching/gathering hot noise" (*cou renao*), suggesting that they were not just passive audience members but active participants in the hustle and bustle. *Renao* compels us to reconceptualize what we mean by *noise*: both unwanted sound and disruption of signal. Jacques Attali's seminal book *Noise* argues that "noise is violence" and "had always been experienced as destruction, disorder, dirt, pollution, an aggression against the code-structuring messages." Yet, contrary to his claim that noise "in all cultures" is "associated with the idea of the weapon, blasphemy, plague," *renao*—a key concept and critical feature of Chinese popular religion, theater, and markets—describes what Adam Chau calls a "sociothermic affect," a lively, busy, and prosperous atmosphere sought after at New Year's celebrations, weddings, birthday parties, temple fairs, and even funerals.[22] An

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antonym of *lengqing*, "chilly and desolate," this amiable, noisy confusion of enthusiastic human interaction is nothing less than a celebration of life itself, the *yang* opposed to the *yin* in Chinese cosmology.

Robert Weller dubs Chinese popular religion a "hot and noisy religion," whereby a successful large event, "from a market to a ritual, provides plenty of heat and noise—it should be packed with people, chaotically boisterous, loud with different voices, and clashingly colorful."[23] Studying Taiwan's night markets, Shuenn-Der Yu highlights *renao*'s multisensory quality by describing how vendors attracted customers with bright lighting and decorations, loud music and sales pitches, smoke and steam, cluttered spaces, and overflowing wares and food ingredients.[24] According to Joshua Goldstein, audiences of Peking opera in teahouses around the turn of the twentieth century also behaved like customers of a raucous marketplace by "ignoring the performance, chatting, or loudly vocalizing their appreciation or discontent."[25] Besides acoustic loudness and polyphony, the market comparison further underscores the attention economy of hot noise and its associations with distraction and disruption:

> Just as in markets in which customers rarely part with their economic currency without haggling over and evaluating the merchandise, so in the teahouse customers did not dole out their aesthetic currency—their attention—without a healthy haggle, nor was one expected to keep silent and still so that others in the crowd could take in the show undisrupted. Disruption [*renao*] was part of the fun; indeed, it was an integral part of the communication between the audience and the actors.[26]

While Chinese state socialism suppressed traditional temple festivals, markets, and opera, their carnivalesque hot noise was displaced onto open-air cinema. Cinema's multisensory hot noise included the mass assembly of scattered populations, the pandemonium of participatory voices, as well as the amplification and disruption of audiovisual transmission. Cinema as hot noise was not just the film but a broader sensory environment, ambience, and vibe. While hot noise interfered with absorption into the film texts, it could also be the very purpose of the spectacle and the very object of attraction and consumption. Instead of drawing audiences into the film in centrifugal fashion, Chinese mobile cinema created an electrifying environment that radiated outward, entangling viewers in a centripetal fashion—like a disco ball and karaoke microphone-loudspeaker whose main functions are to emanate light and amplify sound. The favorite movies of rural Chinese audiences were often "hot and noisy" genres such as war films (with their spectacular, loud,

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smoking battles) and opera films (with their gongs and drums and colorful costumes).[27]

Rather than noise in the sense of unwanted disruption, Chinese hot noise has something in common with the emancipatory and exhilarating ambience of carnivals and bazaars theorized in other historical and cultural contexts.[28] Yet in the Mao era, hot noise was rarely a site of unofficial culture or commercial exchange and urban pleasures. Instead, socialist open-air cinema—as well as parades and rallies—were coordinated with political campaigns as festive gatherings of otherwise scattered grassroots populations in order to solder them into "the revolutionary masses." The staging of such hot and noisy events tapped into some of the perennial fears and desires of rural Chinese. As Zhang Ning points out, whereas "urbanites fear clamor and noise," Chinese tillers of the land "fear solitude, silence, and death," which take on concrete form in their imagination as "wandering ghosts and spirits." Those fears underlie everyday gatherings at sunning grounds, tree shades, and alleyway crossings, as well as collective rituals at shrines and graves that communicate with the past and the future.[29] Thus the sensorium of hot noise must be understood in dialectical relationship with the sensory austerity of rural life.

Eyes: Watching Hot Noise

Cinema is above all a *visual* medium, but cinemagoing has always meant seeing more than just the films, as Zhiwei Xiao argues:

> the site of film exhibition and the entire movie theater environment—from the ticket booth on the sidewalk to the posters in the hall, publicity materials in the display window, crowds in the lobby, and snack bars—all play a crucial role in shaping the audience's experience of a given film.[30]

As William Paul proposes in a study of cinema architecture, "looking at the container can also offer a way of understanding its contents."[31] The CCP, keenly aware of films' exhibition contexts as well as their ideological messages, sought to transform cinema from decadent bourgeois consumption into socialist mass culture after coming to power in 1949. In addition to swapping Hollywood movies for East-bloc films and Chinese socialist cinema, the new regime also constructed cinemas, clubs, and cultural palaces for its "proletariat masses" in the 1950s and 1960s, often stand-alone monuments in industrial districts on urban peripheries and modeled after Soviet architecture.[32] A 1963 Chinese cinema architecture textbook distinguished the educational mission of cinema in socialist countries from films as capitalist commodities: cinemas should look "welcoming" and "vivacious" but not "sumptuous and palatial." Since socialist

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cinemas received priority in urban planning, they did not "have to compete with crammed and colorful storefronts," nor rely on "giant brassy signs."[33] Under the socialist order, cinema audiences were no longer admitted on a rolling basis, as was the case before 1949, but filed into the auditorium at the beginning and cleared out at the end of every showing. Thus the audience lounge became an important space decorated with movie posters, star photos, and film reviews, whereas the box office became less prominent with advanced group ticket sales and shorter queues.[34] Overall, cinema architecture and decorations constitute a prominent portion of the visual experiences and memories of film audiences in cities, county seats, and some large townships, where movie theaters were often the highest and grandest architectural monuments.

Whereas extrafilmic spectacles of movie theater façades and decorations remained fixtures in the everyday lives of urban citizens, the coming of the movies marked a carnivalesque event for rural villagers. Although the projector, projectionist, and electricity that produce audiovisual images are usually camouflaged *infra*structure in purpose-built cinemas, the itinerant movie team—their embodied presence and the machines they brought—were spectacular attractions in the countryside.[35] Especially when encountering cinema for the first time, audiences went to screenings as much to marvel at the machines as to view the films.[36] Projectionist reports and memoirs from various parts of China are replete with examples of "bumpkin wonder" at the electrical miracle of film technology, such as old peasants trying to light their pipes at the projectionist's light bulb or audiences of a war film returning the next morning to look for leftover artillery, as if they wished to substantiate the cinematic images before their eyes with the sense of touch.[37]

After cinema stopped being a novelty by the 1970s, the coming of a movie team to a village remained a special yet uncertain event, augured by the sighting of the cart transporting equipment or a villager shoveling holes to erect bamboo poles to hang the screen. Such sights unleashed a swift wind of rumors that traveled to neighboring villages, followed by scores or even hundreds of individual decisions about whether to hike to the movie, decisions that would take account of distance, road and weather conditions, the company, and the availability of torches and moonlight. The rumors might not be true, so the sight of fellow travelers accumulating from other villages along the way, some holding flashlights, was reassuring.[38] Sometimes rural audiences traveled a long way only to see a "white cloth film" when the projector or generator broke down. Even when screenings went smoothly, audiences often watched a blank screen during the changing of the reels or when waiting for copy runners to arrive.[39]

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In open-air cinema, the screen, as the main architectural addition to the village, was like a flag, a sail, and a lighthouse all in one. Because the first film screenings in many parts of rural China followed the communist victory, hanging up movie screens was akin to raising flags of territorial conquest. Calling themselves "vanguards on the cultural front" who "hack through brambles and thorns" to "spread the seed of socialist thought to the broadest masses of people," mobile projectionists opened up "virgin lands" that did not yet know cinema.[40] For villagers, the fixing of the screen was an exciting, participatory spectacle; it involved stomping on the earth to stabilize the bamboo poles, tightening the rope that raised the screen, even playing hand shadows when the projector light turned on.[41] Lighting up a dark firmament, the screen had an enchanted quality, "enveloping thousands of troops," magnifying tiny insects, drawing the far near, conjuring the past, and divining the future.[42] Some compared the screen to a sailboat that navigated audiences across an ocean of dreams.[43] And if, in the words of a hosanna to Chairman Mao, "Sailing the Sea Depends on the Great Helmsman," then Mao's translucent image on the screen provided both the illusion of live presence and summoned otherwise dispersed villagers into a congregation at his beck and call. In this sense, the screen was a lighthouse that provided orientation and anchor in the midst of Mao's "revolutionary wind and waves."

Real wind blowing the screen, however, gave a twist to the metaphor of the sail, as the screen itself became distorted and film characters took on grotesque grimaces and warped bodies.[44] Bending the very surface of the screen, the wind created out of didactic film texts unpredictable comedy, farce, and a sense of the uncanny. Shanghai writer Wang Anyi describes in a novella how students sent to a collective farm in Anhui assembled at the sounding of a bugle for the screening of a revolutionary ballet film:

> The wind blew the screen like a sail on the sea, twisting the bodies of the characters onscreen so they all looked miserable. Zhao Zhiguo walked from behind the screen toward the audience. In the wind, the students sat on their backpacks in phalanx formation. The light and shadow of the screen reflected off their tanned, solemn, and indistinguishable faces. . . . The exaggerated gestures of the characters seemed absurd in this kind of night. The sound of music is engulfed by the wilderness, but the sound of the wind was omnipresent, filling the space between sky and earth.[45]

The film's visual and auditory signals were not only distorted by the wind but swallowed up, overpowered, and rendered infinitesimal by the sky, the earth, and the air in between. Besides the wind-blown screen-as-sail and thunderstorms, a major environ-

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mental challenge to open-air screenings was the impact of light on the film's visibility. "The absolutely dark theater," Noam Elcott argues, "was no less crucial to the experience of cinema than was the luminous moving image."[46] Since most of rural China did not have the infrastructural conditions to engineer "artificial darkness," the start-time of open-air cinema depended on nightfall.[47] Films on a short rental period might be screened on the same night in different villages. For example, the revolutionary model opera film *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* was released in 1970, after four years of paralysis in the film production and exhibition sectors. A former soldier stationed in the Sichuan countryside recalled how her regiment and local villagers waited from sunset for eight hours before the movie team's eventual arrival. Toward the film's triumphant climax, the sun began to rise, leaving at first faint shadows and eventually nothing but a blank screen, though audience members could still hear the film's heroic music and dialogue, as well as the snoring and laughter of their fellow viewers.[48]

Even under optimal conditions, open-air screens, often two-by-three meters or the size of a "two-person blanket," were tiny compared to the vast audience. Often those in the back could see little more than "heads and butts."[49] Reminiscences also mention the beautiful spectacle of audiences arriving or departing with flashlights, lanterns, and torches like twinkling stars scattered across the mountain paths and embankments of the paddies.[50] Film audiences looked at one another and compared whose clothes were newer and prettier and whose clothes were full of holes with cotton falling out. This heightened consciousness of the self as spectacle meant that moviegoers often dressed up in their best clothes. In many instances, however, even these were shabby. Recollections of a sense of pride or shame under the scrutiny of many eyes was thus for some villagers more memorable than the movie itself.[51]

Ears and Mouths: Sounding Hot Noise

Besides spectacles for the eyes, cinema's hot noise also attracted and assailed the ears. If Tom Gunning's "cinema of attraction" originally referred to early *silent* cinema, Chinese grassroots cinema featured a "noise of attraction" with loud sounds drawing scattered rural folk. As a former projectionist wrote for the *Qinghai Film Gazetteer*, in the early 1950s many Tibetans rode their horses for tens of kilometers to listen to the movie team's phonograph and perchance to sing a local song with their microphone. These audiences could not help but wonder, "How can a high-hanging wooden box speak in so many voices? . . . [H]ow can that 'lon lon' sounding generator draw electricity from thunder and lightning?"[52] Since one can better project sound than

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images across wide distances, the sound of the loudspeaker has been a mainstay of attracting audiences to open-air screenings to this day.

The noise of attractions was generated not only by the sound-(re)producing and amplifying technologies of gramophones, microphones, and loudspeakers but by the power generator, the bulkiest, loudest, and most failure-prone machine brought by the mobile movie team. Besides lively hot noise, the power generator also generated disruptive noise that could easily drown out the film sound. Projectionists thus usually brought a long cable so the generator could be positioned a good distance from the projector and loudspeakers. Someone also had to guard the generator to prevent the accidental electrocution of children running amok.[53] The generators' frequent breakdowns, along with other technical problems, contributed to an experience and aesthetics of "disrepair and noise." In the case of Nigeria, Larkin describes a media infrastructure where the blurred images and distorted sound of pirated videos created a "sensorial experience of media marked by poor transmission, interference, and noise."[54] Similarly, Chinese socialist film audiences also associate their filmic reception with "the noise of the real"—fuzzy, scratched images and hissing or crackling sounds that had less to do with copying than with overuse.[55] Scratches on celluloid were often an indication of a film's popularity and familiarity to audiences, who sometimes spoke memorized dialogue or commented on the plot. The snapping of film reels further provoked audiences to boo and hoot, while children jumped up to fight over the discarded "treasures" of celluloid fragments.[56] Thanks to haphazard, makeshift spaces without fixed seating, sometimes on a slope and often without clearly defined boundaries, much hullabaloo before and during a film had to do with frictions over desirable spots to sit or stand, over blockages of the projector or of audience vision, over the hurling of insults and food waste, or over unauthorized audiences forcing their way in or being forced out. From livestock noises to children's tantrums, from gossiping to catcalling, from smoking to spitting, much hot noise at the cinema might be considered "uncivilized" elements to be tamed in urban public spaces, but such audience noise continued to recur through the ensuing decades.[57]

Besides technical interruptions and the inadequacies of screening venues, comprehension challenges at the cinematic, cultural, linguistic, and acoustic levels also gave rise to audience noise. When watching Soviet World War II films in the early 1950s, army audiences sometimes applauded at the wrong places, such as when German troops appeared.[58] Even though imported films were dubbed into Mandarin, most rural folk understood only local dialects. Moreover, the quality of the loudspeakers and

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film prints were sometimes so poor that even projectionists had trouble discerning the spoken dialogue.[59] Last, some cinematic language, such as flashbacks and intercutting, baffled audiences. To address comprehension problems, projectionists provided introductions ahead of the screening, as well as explanations during it, and led discussions afterward. Their live interventions at screenings evolved into sophisticated repertoires by the 1960s, such as using a storyteller's bamboo clapper to perform an oral genre (popular in North China) whose rhythmic and staccato delivery method is reminiscent of rap. In regions populated by ethnic minorities, projectionists did full-fledged dubbing into local languages, even distinguishing between male and female voices, old and young characters.[60] Absorption into the film's diegesis, then, depended on the extradiegetic narrations of projectionists.

Some Chinese projectionist practices recall exhibition practices of silent cinema elsewhere, including such nonfilmic activities as lectures, sound effects, and live music that "lent the show the immediacy and singularity of a one-time performance."[61] In Japan until the 1930s, film lecturers called *benshis* played multiple roles as narrator, voice actor, and audience representative, leading communal responses to movies.[62] Talkies led to the gradual extinction of live narration during screenings, making the polyphonous coexistence of film sound and voice performances by Chinese projectionists all the more remarkable. As ventriloquist voices of the state, moreover, they aimed less to entertain than to cultivate revolutionary piety and to model correct behavior.

While adapting the films' stories and messages to the latest political priorities, mobile projectionists also invited local cadres and audiences to raise their voices: to shout political slogans, sing revolutionary songs, or speak up after the screening on how the film affected them personally. Channeling audience pandemonium as the sound and fury of the "revolutionary masses," projectionists solicited, even staged, postscreening testimonies of revolutionary faith, be they bitter memories of a prerevolutionary past, denunciations of local landlords or other class enemies, or vows to contribute to a communist future.[63] Projectionists facilitated the liturgical use of revolutionary music and quasi-congregational singing by playing LP records before the film, projecting lyrics on lantern slides, and leading audiences to sing line by line.[64] When waiting for the movie teams to arrive, schoolchildren and soldiers often sang revolutionary songs to pass the time.[65] Many Mao-era films embedded and repeated theme songs that continued to reverberate through the voices of audience members.

Audience noise could thus enhance and prolong the efficacy of film propaganda, but it could also disrupt and mock political

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communication. Consider applause, for example. Former projectionists recalled loud clapping at the sight of Mao or at the triumphant climax of war films.[66] Audiences also applauded when the projectionist fixed a technical problem or when the copy runner arrived with the next reel.[67] Yet applause could become booing when impatient children clapped to cut short cadre speeches.[68] Bored by repetitive and predictable films, audiences sometimes shouted lines before they were uttered onscreen.[69] Even disruptive mechanical noise could give rise to humor and parody that subverted propaganda messages. Writer Ah Cheng describes open-air screenings in rural Yunnan in the 1970s:

> From afar drifted the faint sound of the opening film music, the notes rising and falling. It wasn't that easy to screen a film in the mountains. You needed several men to take turns powering the generator by pedaling. Sometimes the man pedaling tired and the electricity would fluctuate, causing the sound from the loudspeakers to become slurred, distorting the well-known arias. Meanwhile on the screen, an uplifting scene of the "heroic deeds" might have started boldly but would suddenly lapse into hesitation. In the mountains, though, everyone enjoyed watching anyway. Other times the man on the pedals changed the tempo on purpose, creatively improvising, and the old films would send the audience into fits of laughter.[70]

If noise could become more meaningful than the film proper, different audiences could also pick out different signals and noises from the polyphonous sonic environment of an open-air film screening. Whereas village children often treated cadre speeches as boring noise to battle with their own noise-making, the local cadres often paid for these screenings precisely for the opportunity to address a concentrated group of villagers about policy implementation and labor mobilization. Thus the hot noise of rural cinema served political communication regardless of the films' content. Many adult villagers did listen patiently and carefully when the cadres laid out production plans, when newsreels showed them the latest political winds, or when "science education films" introduced new agricultural techniques. However long-winded or monotonous, those speeches and documentaries were more pertinent to their livelihoods than fictional features.[71]

The sonic environment of open-air cinema presents interesting applications of and challenges to theories of film sound. Consider, for example, Michel Chion's three listening modes.[72] Audiences in China attracted to the hot noise of film screenings practiced *casual listening* to identify the sound source or cause; those actually absorbed in the film's diegesis were *semantic listeners* who decoded the film's content; projectionists practiced

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a careful *reduced listening* to their machines to forestall breakdown and accidents. When I asked a former rural projectionist what her favorite films were, she said she never paid attention to the films because she was focused on the projector and generator. By contrast, other projectionists were so distracted by the films they were showing that the celluloid would snap.[73] Some audiences who could not afford to buy movie tickets also practiced another form of "reduced listening" when they eavesdropped outside cinemas or listened to a neighbor's radio for programs featuring sound clips from feature films.[74] Rural women who could not afford the leisure to attend even free screenings could listen to film sound only over the loudspeakers. Because most villagers had no access to music technologies beyond cinema, many rural youths also went to the same movies many times to learn the melodies and write down the lyrics for their own singing pleasure.

To Chion's trio of casual, semantic, and reduced listening can be added another mode: "emplaced listening" to the soundscape of the film screening location. Situated, live, and highly variable from person to person, emplaced listening tied audiences to their local environments so they could be as attentive to extrafilmic noises as to the film's diegetic sounds. For example, open-air moviegoers listened for distant thunder that signaled imminent rain, while elderly villagers listened for barking dogs warning against thieves.[75] Other atmospheric noises—such as howling wind, singing cicadas, or croaking frogs—could fall into the background as ambient sound, but they were still "noises of the real" that grounded audiences in the here and now. The natural environment could further generate reactive audience noise: buzzing mosquitos provoked smacking, heat prompted fanning, and cold compelled the stomping of feet.

Nose and Tongue: Cinema and Commensality

What did cinema smell and taste like? Film scholars have analyzed audiovisual representations, or evocations, of smell and taste in cinema.[76] Vinzenz Hediger and Alexandra Schneider have also discussed the public space of movie theaters as "an instrument for public hygiene and a technology for the creation of controlled olfactory environments."[77] As they point out, "the invention of cinema runs roughly parallel with the deodorization of public space and with the introduction of artificially produced fragrances."[78] In contrast to the deodorization of urban cinemas, open-air cinemas in rural China were heightened olfactory and gustatory experiences, as the writer Ge Fei suggests in the Proust-inspired text quoted in the second epigraph to this article. After all, grassroots moviegoing was often accompanied by homemade or peddler-sold snacks usually consumed only on

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Chinese New Year, as well as by feasts for the movie team, village cadres, and nearby relatives. Moreover, the coming of the movies occasioned gatherings of bodies that emanated scents, sweat, smoke, and other odors in open-air environments, also perfumed by fragrant plants and fetid manure.[79]

Smoke, not only a nuisance to the nose, could also blur the vision.[80] Yet in open-air cinema, fire and smoke could provide light, warmth, sustenance, and protection: a lantern or torch could illuminate the way home; portable bamboo hand warmers burning charcoal helped many withstand the winter cold; some learned to smoke to drive away the myriad of mosquitos drawn to the cinema's light; some made bonfires to roast corn or sweet potatoes.[81] Smoking was also part of local leisure and consumption. According to a Beijinger sent to rural Shanxi during the Cultural Revolution, cigarette vendors at open-air screenings bought cigarettes at fourteen cents a pack and sold individual cigarettes at three cents each. Teased for her "snowballing usury," the vendor "radiated a smile and said: 'Not expensive at all. For three cents you get to enjoy the life of a city person.'"[82] The smell and taste of smoke thus added to the alchemy of fantasy created by the audiovisual images.

The synesthetic delights of open-air cinema are reflected in one projectionist's 1959 poem on open-air cinema in rural Hubei Province:

> People gather at the square, lights shine, songs ripple,
> Men and women are merry, old and young are jubilant
> Onscreen, tractors roll, bountiful ears of grain curl
> Red apples, yellow pears, bunch after bunch of grapes make children salivate . . .
> The brigade leader says: watching movies made us work harder,
> That's how we filled up our boats with fish.[83]

In both contemporary and retrospective writings, cinema in the Mao era was dubbed "spiritual food" that motivated food production and/or compensated for food scarcity.[84] Projected images of plenty were intended to inspire audiences to work hard at turning utopian visions into reality. Yet even this propaganda poem suggests a tension between abundance and scarcity, aspiration and reality, production and consumption, as the food onscreen only pinpoints its lack offscreen. If we read this poem with retrospective knowledge of the Great Leap famine that killed tens of millions, we can see the delectable fruits as a mirage and taste the saliva as the gastric acid of hunger. What we have here, then, is phantom commensality.

In classical sociological theories of commensality, "sharing food is a way of establishing closeness, while, conversely, the

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refusal to share is one of the clearest marks of distance and enmity."[85] The public mess halls of China's Great Leap Forward, however, instituted what James Watson calls "coercive commensality" to mobilize women's labor from domestic chores as well as "imagined commensality" that fed on utopian fantasies.[86] The collective canteens collapsed a few months after their institution, but cinema as a form of phantom, illusory, or spiritual commensality continued in the absence of food.

The paradoxical role of food in socialist cinema deserves its own study. Suffice it to say here that the bounty and scarcity of food onscreen projected future utopias and recalled past sacrifices to contextualize the present in gustatory metaphors: past bitterness gave rise to present sweetness, and present bitterness would give rise to future sweetness. Meanwhile, lavish feasts and gluttony were negatively coded as the rapacious sin of Japanese invaders, Kuomintang officials, landlords, capitalists, and bandits.[87] And yet, many audiences living amid socialist austerity could not help but vicariously "consume" the onscreen food meant to inspire productive labor, even secretly identifying with the "bad guys."[88] Even in the 1970s, audiences salivated after foods in newsreels featuring diplomatic feasts, "science education films" teaching agricultural techniques, or the North Korean film *When We Pick Apples*, on making applesauce out of the harvest surplus.[89]

Beyond "feasting" their eyes, audiences also literally ate at the cinema. To get to the screening on time, many would hurry through schoolwork, farmwork, or domestic chores and eat early or skip supper altogether, instead bringing or buying food, which often meant not staples but snacks such as roasted peanuts, soybeans, or sunflower seeds, sweet potato chips, tea eggs, sugar cane, candied hawthorns, and red bean popsicles.[90] Homemade snacks required ingredients, time, and labor, so anticipation of the film was folded into the very production of the food. Prepared in haste, some snacks might still taste raw, but that, too, was savored as cinema's delight. From the 1970s onward, a growing peddler economy added steaming aromas and hawking cries to screenings. Snacks could be shared as tokens of sentiment, friendship, and infatuation—or rouse envy and aggression.[91] A memoir of rural Shanxi in North China describes how the open-air film screen would be encircled by the dim lamps of peddlers with baskets or carts selling roasted sunflower seeds, five-spice roasted peanuts, dried tofu, even lamb kebab, liquor, and homemade cigars. While onscreen newsreels showed laboring or fist-raising masses shouting anticapitalist slogans, offscreen "capitalist tails" continued to peddle their wares to eager consumers, sometimes beneath banners stating "Learn from Dazhai," the model communist village of the 1960s and 1970s.[92]

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Besides eating snacks at the screening, village cadres often invited the movie team to meals before or after the film. Projectionist reports and memoirs often mention the touching hospitality of the rural folk alongside comical anecdotes about naive villagers mistaking onscreen characters for live actors or cooking enough food to feed a large theater troupe.[93] Other stories, however, highlight abject poverty. A former projectionist I interviewed recalled a meal from the mid-1950s at the home of the party secretary, "the richest man in the village," who generously offered the movie team cured meat that his family had parsimoniously saved for two weeks since the Chinese New Year, not knowing that it was already rancid.[94] Although movie teams paid for their meals with cash and ration coupons, some cadres also drew on the collective budget to pay for the feasts and the movie fee, begrudging villagers who considered the practice corrupt or unfair.[95] Feasting the movie team also gave local cadres an excuse to drink, which in turn led to inebriated, long-winded speeches.[96] Beyond the movie team, local villagers had to feed relatives and friends who came for the screenings. Thus, many village women rarely had time to watch the movies because they were busy cooking for guests.[97]

Hands and Feet: Touching Hot Noise

In *The Skin of Film*, Laura Marks writes about how grainy, densely textured, and sensuous images taken by cameras close to the body evoke "haptic visuality" so that "the eyes themselves function like organs of touch."[98] In her phenomenology of film, Vivian Sobchack traces theoretical antecedents for the "carnal sensuality of the film experience": "Our fingers, our skin and nose and lips and tongue and stomach and all the other parts of us understand what we see."[99] More than just a place where images evoke the sense of touch through synesthesia, however, the cinema is a space of literal acts of touching, such as the "magic touch" of the projectionist, the footsteps that carried audience members to and from the screening, and the clash of bodies as audience members stood or sat during the film.

The touch of the projectionist's hands brought films to life, repaired old machines, and spliced together broken celluloid. Before showing a film, the projectionists hands might also play bamboo clappers and show lantern slides dubbed "rustic film."[100] Cheap to purchase and easy to produce, lantern slides could be projected using gas lamps without bulky generators in areas without electricity. While some slides were mass-produced, many projectionists made their own by first interviewing local heroes, gathering local histories, and then writing a script and painting a slideshow.[101] Some even "animated" their slideshows using a three- or four-lens projector so audiences could see red

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flags waving, horses running, people walking, and birds flying and landing on plum blossoms.[102] Just as their productions depended on handicraft, the temporality of the slideshows depended on the hand that pulled the slides and on the commentary that accompanied the show—what Tom Lamarre calls a "time of gesture and speech" that endows every magic lantern show with a performative quality not found in ordinary film projection.[103] At its best, the cooperation among members of the movie team resembled the virtuosity of a chamber music trio.

Some uses of the projectionists' hands were clumsier and naughtier. For example, although they might be told to censor erotically charged scenes, such as a ballet and a kiss in the film *Lenin in 1918*, by putting their hands in front of the lens of the projector, their attempts at digital censorship could have the opposite effect of enhancing a tantalizing eroticism. Some projectionists would even open their fingers a crack to give audiences a glimpse of the forbidden images.[104] In county seats or townships, audiences who had seen *Lenin in 1918* multiple times often left the film in droves after the *Swan Lake* scene, their flapping seats making quite a racket.

Many reminiscences of rural moviegoing begin with the journey to the cinema. For some, the *going* was more memorable than the film, their feet bearing the corporeal brunt of the adventure. Some villagers without adequate shoes walked barefoot along kilometers of mountainous paths, making this an era not only of "barefoot projectionists" (as commune movie teams were dubbed) but "barefoot audiences." Some villagers in Ningxia in Northwest China recalled having to wade through streams in a mountain valley, making it necessary to take off their shoes and roll up their pants. Because many screenings were held during winter months (typically a time of leisure from farm work), the streams would be frozen, but it was still easy to break the ice and splash water on one's pants and shoes, which were made of worn cotton or straw because most villagers could not afford rubber boots. The wet pants and shoes in turn froze as temperatures dropped during the screening, "but our hearts were hot and we might just take off our wet shoes and jump up and down to get warm."[105] This added a special sound effect to the hot noise of cinema: the thunderous sound of stomping feet.

In contrast to the soft sofas of today's multiplex cinemas where we might forget our bodies, open-air cinema often stimulated an intense awareness of one's body between the sky and earth, vulnerable to wind, rain, snow, mosquitoes, heat, and cold. Bug bites and frostbite, scratches and rashes all became corporeal souvenirs of moviegoing.[106] When Siberian winds brought the temperature to minus thirty degrees Celsius, according to a memoir by a former sent-down youth in Xinjiang, open-air film audiences

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> had frost on our lashes, fog coming out of our breath, and icicles growing from our nose and lips. We all folded our arms inside opposite sleeves or rubbed our faces and noses. Celluloid became even more brittle in the cold, so when the projectionist spliced broken celluloid together, everyone returned to their dorms to warm up before coming back outside to finish the film.[107]

In answer to my questionnaire, another former sent-down youth recalled an open-air screening in a school drilling ground in Inner Mongolia in 1974:

> Each of us sat on a brick or stone found on the spot. After the first reel, we had to wait in the cold night for the copy runner to bring a second reel. The cold air seeped into my military coat and cotton shoes. My face, hands, and feet became numb. We rubbed our hands and faces and jumped up and down. Even though nobody forced us to stay, hardly anyone left. We could no longer distinguish between enjoyment and torment, or judge whether the film being screened was even worth such endurance. The loudspeaker kept reporting how close the copy runner was, but the second reel still hadn't arrived. When it finally came and was screened, we had to wait for the third reel and so on and so forth. I've forgotten if we eventually finished the movie. I can only remember the growing pain, fatigue, and the numb stupidity of not leaving. I returned to the dorm at dawn and went to work in the fields the next morning, but by the end of the day I began to urinate blood and was diagnosed with severe nephritis.[108]

Open-air screening locations not only had no roofs but no seats. Every shred of bodily comfort depended on makeshift bricolage and personal resourcefulness. Local villagers brought benches from schools, stools from home, and stones from the rivers. Audiences who arrived later and from farther away climbed on trees, walls, roofs, haystacks, bicycles, and shoulders.[109] Most simply stood, some on their tiptoes. A former sent-down youth recalled, "You needed a strong body to go to the cinema in the countryside, because the crowd sometimes left you nowhere to stand. The elderly who got tired and took a break often lost their spot when they came back."[110]

Where one sat or stood at a screening could also indicate the social and political mapping of a community, its hierarchies and networks, its centers and margins, inclusions and exclusions. The village leader usually sat next to the projectionist and could decide when the film was to begin. Young people came early to occupy the best spots for their friends and relatives. While waiting for the film to start, audiences would chat, snack, knit, play

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cards, or get into scuffles.[111] Some went to open-air cinema as a family, with children sitting in their grandparents' laps or riding on their fathers' shoulders, but most socialized with members of the same generation.[112] Although the "social horizon of reception" was also prevalent in early American cinemagoing, it persisted in Chinese open-air cinema throughout the socialist era.[113] As the only nightlife available to Chinese villagers without electricity, open-air cinema broke down everyday rules and separations. Adolescents fraternized and flirted. The shadows of lovers could be spotted farther from the screen, while some pairs disappeared from view altogether.[114] Cinema thus provided a camouflage for couples who otherwise might find no occasion to touch, talk, or even look at each other under the moral surveillance of other villagers. Many later cited open-air cinema as their matchmaker.[115]

Yet open-air cinema was not just a milieu for bodily intimacy; occasionally, it was the scene of bodily clashes. Flirting could turn into blatant sexual harassment that provoked scuffles, often between young men of different villages, for whom moviegoing served to release pent-up energy.[116] In roofless but enclosed spaces such as the courtyards of schools, barracks, or shrines, crowd management was a perennial issue. Grassroots audiences often practiced "guerrilla tactics": "sneaking in" when movie teams sold tickets or otherwise limited admission.[117] The boundaries of makeshift film screening locations were often porous to unauthorized audiences, who tried to enter by climbing through windows, picking up discarded tickets, or arriving early and hiding until dark. According to a 1963 report, a movie team in Hunan tried charging admission at a screening inside the courtyard of a big ancestral shrine. Local cadres assisted with tickets and maintained security, but they managed to sell only two hundred tickets while the actual number of audience numbers climbed to one thousand—most of whom entered by scaling the walls or rumbling in through the door, in the process wounding and tearing the clothes of the commune's party secretary, who was guarding the entrance. The stampede also wounded several children, destroyed the ancestral shrine's roof tiles, and damaged the door and many tables and chairs.[118] Film gazetteers also document fatal accidents: walls crashing down on audiences or moviegoers falling into rivers.[119] Such accounts suggest that, even at the height of Maoism, the "revolutionary masses" that films and projectionists tried so hard to discipline could transform at any point into an unruly mob.

Epilogue

In the postsocialist era, the hot noise of open-air cinema has cooled and abated, faded and drifted to the margins of the Chinese

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sensorium. Grassroots film exhibition, which saw its golden age in the early 1980s, met its demise in the 1990s with the rise of television and VHS, followed by pirated VCDs, DVDs, Internet, and smartphones. The changing media ecology coincided with mass migration of the rural labor force to the cities and the growing desolation of the countryside. Many projectionists took up other jobs, with only a minority still making ends meet in the 1990s and early 2000s by showing movies in schools and at private celebrations still in need of hot noise. Thus, instead of supporting communist cadres convening political meetings, movie teams lent their lights, microphones, loudspeakers, and bodily performances to birthdays, weddings, funerals, and advertisements for local companies.[120]

The hot noise of cinema has died down because it has been overwhelmed by other noises in the sensorium, with more screens and loudspeakers than ever featuring ever-flashier sights and ever-louder sounds. In the late 1990s, the Chinese Ministry of Culture tried to revive rural mobile cinema with the "2131 Project"—aimed at achieving "one movie per month per village" in the early twenty-first century. During fieldwork in Hubei and Zhejiang Provinces from 2015 to 2019, my research assistants and I followed various mobile projectionists to open-air film screenings with high-definition digital projectors on minivans or pickup trucks. Most such screenings attracted only a handful of villagers, who stayed for about half an hour before heading home to their TV sets, while the projectionist looked at his cell phone. Sometimes a projectionist lost his audience completely to drizzle or a nearby "square dance" with booming loudspeakers. Still, he would finish showing the film to nobody—or, rather, to the GPS surveillance chip built into the projector so that he would be paid later.

The hottest and noisiest screenings I attended were held by a "model projectionist" in rural Wenzhou in the courtyards of various ancestral shrines, some of which have been renovated as "cultural ritual halls" (*wenhua litang*). One guardian of a "cultural ritual hall" told me that film screenings and other communal activities were crucial for the government's spiritual competition with local Christian churches. At these well-attended screenings, however, mahjong and other forms of gambling were often of greater interest than the films. In rural Hebei, not too far from Beijing, by contrast, I waited around for days for an open-air screening that never took place because "the wind is too great," or "there will be a sandstorm," or "the air quality is bad." I never saw the moon or the stars in open-air screenings, which took place not in fresh air but in air rendered toxic by the smog of the nearby factories banished from the big cities. Air pollution, light pollution, noise pollution, as well as mass deracination through

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demolition and migration, assail the sensorium of today's grassroots China. Sensory overstimulation can lead to shock and numbness, so open-air cinema has become dull and muffled, invisible and inaudible against audiovisual saturation, just as satiated bellies blunted the flavors of traditional snacks. Sensory overload can go some way to explain the paradoxical nostalgia for the sensory austerity under socialism, nostalgia that gave rise to most of the sources for this essay.

What, then, was cinema in socialist China? The village elders I interviewed were probably right: cinema was not so much the films shown as the hot noise of extrafilmic sights, sounds, smells, taste, and touch. Emanating from the apparatus, the audience, or the atmosphere, hot noise included heat and cold, wind and rain, moon and mosquitos, snacks and feasts, shoes and roads, hand shadows and stomping feet, screens and seating, power generators and loudspeakers. Cinema as hot noise was a participatory and heightened sensory experience for grassroots audiences. As special occasions for mass congregation, carnival, and consumption against a backdrop of sensory deprivation, open-air cinema brought together bodies that moved and acted, sensed and reacted; bodies that emanated and absorbed sights, sounds, and smells; bodies that touched and were touched. Instead of being soldered into the "revolutionary masses" by cinema's electrifying hot noise, however, the extrafilmic visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and haptic noises at open-air screenings often dwarfed and drowned out the films' propaganda messages. If socialist cinema's open-air screen was intended as a flag, a sail, and a lighthouse, its utopian visions arrived at the grass roots as mirages and phantoms that paled against the noises of a lived reality. Therefore cinema in socialist China was a "physical medium" whose physicality consisted of both the corporeality of bodily senses and the materiality of the technological infrastructure that undergirds cinema's seemingly immaterial images and sounds. Only by listening for such extrafilmic hot noise can we discern the diverse and visceral cinematic experiences of grassroots audiences.

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Notes

1. Tan Hanxin, "Lutian dianying" [Open-air cinema], in *Yiwang qingshen* [Deep feelings] (Dongguan: Dongguan Cultural Center, 2009), 247. This memoir discusses open-air cinema in Tan's hometown in rural Guangdong in the 1970s. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Chinese are my own.

2. Ge Fei, "Xiangcun dianying" [Village cinema], in *Yigeren de dianying* [An individual's cinema] (Beijing: Zhongxin chubanshe, 2008), 1–2. This reminiscence refers to open-air cinema in rural Jiangsu in the 1970s.

3. *Yunnan sheng dianying faxing fangying gongzuo jinian tekan* [Commemorative publication on film distribution and exhibition work in Yunnan Province] (internal publication, 1984), 2.

4. Siegfried Kracauer, "Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces," in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. and ed. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 323–28; and Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (London: Penguin UK, 2008). Also see Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism," in *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), 332–50.

5. Zhang Zhen, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema, 1896–1937* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 1–5.

6. Zhang, 4; and Leo Ou-Fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 82.

7. Weihong Bao, *Fiery Cinema: The Emergence of an Affective Medium in China, 1915–1945* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

8. "Guanyu kaizhan chunjie nongcun wenyi huodong xiang nongmin xuanchuan zongluxian de zhishi" [Directives on propagating the General Line to peasants through the arts during Spring Festival], *Dianying fangying ziliao* [Film projection materials], February 1954, 2–3.

9. For an overview of film production and distribution in the Mao era, see Paul Clark, *Chinese Cinema: Culture and Politics since 1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Zhuoyi Wang, *Revolutionary Cycles in Chinese Cinema, 1951–1979* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

10. Jie Li, "Gained in Translation: The Reception of Foreign Cinema in Mao's China," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 13, no. 1 (2019): 61–75.

11. Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); and Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 54–56, 84. Also see Emma Widdis, *Socialist Senses: Film, Feeling, and the Soviet Subject, 1917–1940* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017).

12. Ina Rae Hark, ed., *Exhibition, the Film Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002); and Richard Maltby, Melvyn Stokes, and Robert C. Allen, eds., *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2007).

13. From the 1950s to the 1960s, projectionists across China contributed reports about screening practices and audience responses to magazines. In the 1980s and 1990s, provincial film histories included reminiscences by former projectionists. Memoirs and autobiographical fiction by the generation born in the 1950s and 1960s also give nostalgic accounts and rich descriptions of moviegoing in the Cultural Revolution decade. For an early cinema history from below in Great Britain and for the term *memory text*, see Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London: IB Tauris, 2002),

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6–11. Kuhn also coedited a special issue of *Memory Studies* on cinemagoing that calls for more comparative inquiry given the "relative underdevelopment of cinema memory research outside of Europe, the US, Australia." See Annette Kuhn, Daniel Biltereyst, and Philippe Meers, "Memories of Cinemagoing and Film Experience: An Introduction," *Memory Studies* 10, no. 1 (2017): 11.

14. My early interviewees were found among my parent's network of friends from Shanghai and Beijing who were sent to different parts of the country during the Cultural Revolution, especially Northeast China but also Inner Mongolia. From 2015 to 2019, I took five field trips to Zhejiang, Hubei, Hebei, and Northeastern Provinces in collaboration with history professor Feng Xiaocai and/or his graduate students from East China Normal University, who were conducting local archival research and villager interviews for other projects on Chinese economic, social, cultural, and religious histories. Drawing on their local contacts, graduate student research assistants (RAs) helped me find grassroots projectionists and audiences, translate between Mandarin and local dialects, and take notes at interviews. A few RAs also conducted interviews on my behalf using a questionnaire I had prepared in advance. An average interview lasted about half an hour, but we also held many casual conversations and several extended oral histories that totaled three to four hours each. Three graduate student RAs in particular—Li Bingbing, Lyu Hongyun, and Wang Sisi—asked questions about moviegoing on my behalf when conducting interviews for their own M.A. or Ph.D. research on opera troupes, electricity usage, and Buddhist practice. Using a similar set of questions about memories of open-air cinema, my Harvard Ph.D. advisee Hai Peng conducted and transcribed interviews with fifteen rural villagers in Ningxia in Northwest China. I extend special thanks to all the RAs and interviewees for enriching the sources of this study.

15. Jacqueline Stewart, *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 95–97.

16. Stewart, 97. My methodology is also indebted to Yuri Tsivian's notion of "cultural reception," consisting of "active, creative, interventionist, or even aggressive" responses to cinema. See Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia and Its Cultural Reception* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1.

17. For studies of itinerant film exhibition in the early twentieth century, see Charles Musser and Carol Nelson, *High-Class Moving Pictures: Lyman H. Howe and the Forgotten Era of Traveling Exhibition, 1880–1920* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); Cara Caddoo, *Envisioning Freedom: Cinema and the Building of Modern Black Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), chs. 1–2; and Sudhir Mahadevan, *A Very Old Machine: The Many Origins of the Cinema in India* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015), ch. 2.

18. Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 13, 153.

19. Amit Rai, *Untimely Bollywood: Globalization and India's New Media Assemblage* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 9, 54.

20. Lakshmi Srinivas, *House Full: Indian Cinema and the Active Audience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 3.

21. Susan Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered," *October* 62 (1992): 6.

22. Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1985), 27; Adam Yuet Chau, "The Sensorial Production of the Social," *Ethnos* 73, no. 4 (2008): 485–504; and Shuenn-Der Yu, "Hot and Noisy," in *The Minor Arts of Daily Life: Popular Culture in*

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Taiwan, ed. David Jordan, Andrew Morris, and Marc Moskowitz (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 138–39.

23. Robert Weller, *Resistance, Chaos, and Control in China: Taipei Rebels, Taiwanese Ghosts and Tiananmen* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 118.

24. Yu, 138–40.

25. Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-creation of Peking Opera, 1870–1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 72.

26. Goldstein, 72.

27. Liu Guangyu, *Xin Zhongguo chengli yilai nongcun dianying fangying yanjiu* [Study of rural film exhibition since the founding of New China] (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2015), 222–23.

28. Celebrating the carnival as unofficial culture that inverts elite values and hence offers an emancipatory space to the lower classes, Mikhail Bakhtin gave special attention to the soundscape of the medieval city, its music, bells, shouts, curses, and bodily sounds, asserting that "the culture of the common folk idiom was to a great extent a culture of the loud word spoken in the open, in the street and marketplace." See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 182. The Chinese phrase "gathering hot noise" also resonates with Amit Rai's study of "loitering" in Bollywood cinemagoing as "a historically nonlinear movement of bodies in bazaar culture" that adds "density to the scene of [film] exhibition." See Rai, 38. Hot noise is also akin to what Brian Larkin calls an "excess of affect," whereby moviegoing "is a visceral event, often charged with feelings of danger, illicitness, eroticism, and excitement." Larkin, 149, 153.

29. Zhang Ning, *Tudi de huanghun: Zhongguo xiangcun jingyan de weiguan quanli fenxi* [Land at dusk: A micropolitical analysis of Chinese village experiences] (Shanghai: Dongfang chubanshe, 2005), 53.

30. Zhiwei Xiao, "Movie House Etiquette Reform in Early Twentieth-Century China," *Modern China* 32, no. 4 (2006): 514.

31. William Paul, *When Movies Were Theater: Architecture, Exhibition, and the Evolution of American Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

32. Sun Jianwei, *Heilongjiang dianying bainian* [A hundred years of cinema in Heilongjiang Province] (Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2012), 55; and Jiang Zequan, *Dianyingyuan jianzhu* [Cinema architecture] (Beijing: Zhongguo gongye chubanshe, 1964), 2–4, 85–148.

33. *Dianyingyuan sheji* [Cinema design] (Nanjing: Nanjing Institute of Technology Pedagogy and Research Group, 1963), 36, 72.

34. *Dianyingyuan sheji*, 33, 36–38.

35. John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 34.

36. Tom Gunning, "A Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 383.

37. *Yunnan Sheng dianying faxing fangying gongzuo jinian tekan*, 14, 121–22; Guangxi Film Distribution and Exhibition Company, *Guangxi dianying faxing fangying shi* [History of film distribution and exhibition in Guangxi] (Guilin: Guangxi Film Company, 1995), 26–27; Li Gexin, *Jiangshu Qingdao de gushi* [Telling Qingdao's story] (Jinan: Shandong sheng ditu chubanshe, 2013), 90; and Yu Dongxing, *Ma la huoche de defang* [A place of horse-drawn locomotives], http://qiancenglang.com/NewsTitle.aspx?ID=1942. The last item is a memoir about growing up in rural Henan.

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38. Ge Fei, 2. Hai Peng, interview with Teacher Li (b. 1959) in Ningxia, April 2017.

39. Guangxi Film Distribution and Exhibition Company, 51.

40. Lu Chun, "Zuo yige mingfu qishi de wenhua zhanxian shang de jianbing" [Be a veritable vanguard on the cultural front], *Dianying fangying* [Film projection], no. 4 (1957): 16–19; and "Ba dianying song dao nongcun li qu" [Send movies into the countryside], *Dazhong dianying* [Mass cinema], no. 5 (1952): 28.

41. Mu Xiaoli, *Yigeren de xingzou* [One person's journey] (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2011), 146–47; and Wang Xinpeng, *Women xin sanjie* [We three new classes] (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 2008), 145. Mu's account is based on her childhood memories from rural Henan in the 1970s and 1980s, whereas Wang writes about open-air cinema in both his Anhui hometown as well as rural Jiangsu, where he was sent down during the Cultural Revolution.

42. *Qinghai dianying zhi* [Qinghai film gazetteer] (Xining: Qinghai sheng wenhua ting, 1989), 194–95.

43. Guo Wenlian, *Yili Wangshi* [Memories of Ili] (Hefei: Anhui wenyi chubanshe, 2013), 117. This memoir is of Guo's experiences as a sent-down youth in Xinjiang in the 1970s.

44. Fan Xiufeng, *Cun shang de shi* [Village matters] (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2010), 264 (memories of rural Hebei); Yu Liang, *Naxie nian naxie shi: Yige nongmin de jiyi* [Those years: A peasant's memories] (Beijing: Haichao chubanshe, 2014), 29 (memories of Beijing suburbs); and Lian Xiaohua, *Ge'ermu de tiankong* [The sky of Golmud] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2005), 157 (memories of the steppes of Qinghai).

45. Wang Anyi, "Wenge yishi" [A tale from the Cultural Revolution], in *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue jingdian bidu* [Chinese contemporary literary classics], ed. Wu Yiqin (Nanchang: Baihua zhou wenyi, 2016), 136–37. This fictional account is based on Wang Anyi's experiences as a sent-down youth in rural Anhui in the 1970s.

46. Noam M. Elcott, *Artificial Darkness: An Obscure History of Modern Art and Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 6.

47. Elcott.

48. Zhuang Zhijuan, "Sanci teshu de kan dianying jingli" [Three special film-viewing experiences], *Shiji*, no. 2 (2012): 44–45.

49. For memories of open-air cinema from Shaanxi and Gansu, both in Northwest China, see Qi Yujiang, *Hongdu qingshen* [Deep sentiments for the red capital] (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2011), 117; and Bei Yan, *Shan de nayibian* [The other side of the mountain] (Guangzhou: Jinan University Press, 2012), 102. For reminiscences of a sent-down youth in Xinjiang in the 1970s, see Yao Juntao, ed., *Yilingba tuan zhi* [108th Regiment gazetteer] (Xinjiang: Xinjiang dianzi gongye chubanshe, 2005), 378.

50. For reminiscences of open-air cinema from rural Wenzhou, see Tang Hongxiang, *Lengnuan rensheng* [Life's vicissitudes] (Beijing: Zhongguo minzu shying yishu chubanshe, 2005), 10.

51. Hai Peng, interviews with female villagers born in the 1950s in Ningxia, April 2017.

52. *Qinghai dianying zhi*, 194–95.

53. This was the consensus of former projectionists and audiences I interviewed from 2012 to 2019.

54. Larkin, 218–19.

55. The phrase is quoted in Larkin but is originally from Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999),

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14.

56. Yu Liang, 219. Yu's memories are of a rural village near Beijing in the 1960s and 1970s. For a similar account from rural Anhui, see Wang Xinpeng, 149.

57. Xiao, 516–27; and Liu Yingying, "Tiantang dianyingyuan" [Cinema Paradiso], *Baihuazhou*, no. 3 (2010), 131.

58. "Nongcun fangying xuanchuan gongzuo jingyan jieshao" [Introducing experiences of rural film propaganda work], *Dazhong dianying* [Mass cinema], no. 17 (1954): 33.

59. Author interview with former projectionist Zheng Yaoyu in Zhejiang, June 2019. Also see a reminiscence from Gansu in Bei Yan, 102.

60. Chen Qie, "Bozhong, kaihua, jieguo—Ji Yanbian yong chaoyu jieshuo yingpian de jingyan jiqi tuiguang" [Sowing seeds, blooming flowers, bearing fruits: How Yanbian projectionists used Korean to explain films], *Dianying yishu* [Film art], no. 1 (1964): 27–30.

61. Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 93–94. Also see Richard Abel and Rick Altman, eds., *The Sounds of Early Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

62. Hideaki Fujiki, "Benshi as Stars: The Irony of the Popularity and Respectability of Voice Performers in Japanese Cinema," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 2 (2006): 68–84. In Taiwan under Japanese colonial rule, local *benshis* served as translators for their audiences and inserted subversive comments into their narrations. See Kuei-Fen Chiu, "The Question of Translation in Taiwanese Colonial Cinematic Space," *Journal of Asian Studies* 70, no. 1 (2011): 77–97.

63. "Pinxiazhongnong kan dianying" [Poor and lower-middle peasants watch films], *Dazhong dianying* [Mass cinema], no. 2–3 (1965): 47.

64. Author interviews with former projectionists in rural Hubei and Zhejiang, 2015 and 2017.

65. Sun Jian, *Chun zai wuren chu* [Spring is where nobody is] (Nanjing: Jiangsu University Press, 2014), 184 (reminiscence of open-air cinema in rural Jiangsu).

66. See reminiscences of open-air screenings in rural Henan, Shandong, and Ningxia Provinces from the 1960s and 1970s: Mu Xiaoli, 146–47; Li Yanlin, *Chuntian zhu zai wo de cunzhuang* [Spring lives in my village] (Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2011), 58; and Hai Peng, interviews with villagers in Ningxia, April 2017.

67. See reminiscences of open-air cinema in the 1960s and 1970s from rural Shaanxi and Jiangsu: Chen Jiarui, *Ren zai Chang'an diji qiao* [On which bridge of Chang'an] (Xi'an: Xi'an chubanshe, 2010), 270; and Ge Fei, "Xiangcun dianying," 12.

68. Li Yanlin, 56–57 (account from Shandong); and Qi Yujiang, 116 (account from Shaanxi).

69. Based on childhood memories of growing up in a Beijing military compound, Jiang Wen's 1994 film *In the Heat of the Sun* features an open-air screening of *Lenin in 1918* at which audiences off-screen shout in unison, "Careful, it's poison," before the camera tilts up to the screen, where a villain utters the same line, provoking roaring laughter from the crowd.

70. Ah Cheng, "The King of Children," in *The King of Trees: Three Stories by Ah Cheng*, trans. Bonnie S. McDougall (New York: New Directions, 2010), 173. First published in 1984, this novella is based on Ah Cheng's experiences as a sent-down urban youth in rural Yunnan in the 1970s.

71. Li Jiantong, *Na nian na ye* [Those years, those nights] (Shijiazhuang:

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Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2013), 33 (account from rural Shandong); and Xia Lei, *Qiu yi wei qi* [Due in autumn] (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe, 2009), 159 (account from rural Jiangsu).

72. Michel Chion, "The Three Listening Modes," in *Audio-Vision*, trans. C. Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 25–34.

73. Author interview with a former projectionist in Wenzhou, July 2017.

74. Dong Zhi, "Lao dianyingyuan" [Old cinema], *Junma*, no. 3 (2012): 53–57. This account is from Hailar, in Inner Mongolia. Also see Nicole Huang, "Listening to Films: Politics of the Auditory in 1970s China," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas 7*, no. 3 (2013): 187–206.

75. Hai Peng, interview with Villager Mu (b. 1949) in Ningxia, April 2017.

76. Marks, 144, 204–5; and Hajnal Király, "The Alienated Body: Smell, Touch and Oculocentrism in Contemporary Hungarian Cinema," in *The Cinema of Sensations*, ed. Ágnes Peth (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 185–208.

77. Vinzenz Hediger and Alexandra Schneider, "The Deferral of Smell: Cinema, Modernity and the Reconfiguration of the Olfactory Experience," in *I cinque sensi del cinema/The Five Senses of Cinema*, ed. Alice Autelitano, Veronica Innocenti, and Valentina Re (Udine: Forum, 2005), 243–52.

78. Hediger and Schneider, 244.

79. These details are drawn from the following memoirs of growing up in rural Jiangsu and Hainan Island: Li Xiaojun, *Hou geming niandai de tongnian* [Postrevolutionary childhood] (Nanchang: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 2015) (memoirs of rural Jiangsu in the 1980s); and Luo Haibo, *Yongyuan de xiangshou* [Forever together] (Hainan: Hainan chubanshe, 2007), 157–58.

80. Xiao, 521; and Li Aidong, ed., *Dianying: Women gongtong de jiyi* [Cinema: Our common memory] (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2007), 3: 103–4.

81. See cinemagoing accounts from Hunan and Gansu: Liu Dacheng, *Xiangxi tongnian* [West Hunan childhood] (Hefei: Anhui wenyi chubanshe, 2016), 126–28; and Qi Yujiang, 116.

82. Cui Jizhe, *Zuihou de lang* [The last wolf] (Taiyuan: Sanjin chubanshe, 2014), 98.

83. Zhang Daquan, "Diyici zai shuixiang fangying" [Showing film in a water town], *Dianying fangying* [Film projection], no. 11 (1959): 21–22.

84. Qi Yujiang, 116 (account from rural Gansu).

85. Maurice Bloch, "Commensality and Poisoning," *Social Research* 66, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 133–49.

86. James L. Watson, "Feeding the Revolution: Public Mess Halls and Coercive Commensality in Maoist China," in *Governance of Life in Chinese Moral Experience: The Quest for an Adequate Life*, ed. Everett Zhang, Arthur Kleinman, and Tu Weiming (New York: Routledge, 2011), 33–46.

87. See scenes of feasting, for example, in Xie Jin's 1961 *Red Detachment of Women*.

88. A former moviegoer in Guiyang in Southwest China recalls identifying with the chubby sailor on a balcony box seat who gnawed on a chicken leg, staring at and leaning toward the "little swans" on stage in *Lenin in 1918*. See Wang Erliu, "Hebin dianyingyuan" [Hebin cinema], *Guiyang wenshi* [Guiyang literature and history], no. 1 (2012): 18–19.

89. See accounts of moviegoing from Liaoning, Jiangxi, and Jiangsu in the 1970s: Li Aidong, 1: 214, 4: 8–9; Mu Xiaoli, 146–47; and He'ergou, "Zuori zhi ri buke zhui, chuntian niannian dao renjian" [We cannot catch yesterday, spring comes every year], [blog], February 26, 2016, https://read01.com/NoADQa.html.

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90. These memories of eating at open-air film showings are drawn from reminiscences of moviegoing in Northeast, Northwest, and East China, including Li Aidong, 4: 136; Lian Xiaohua, 157–58; and Shi Sanfu, *Qiao shui lazhu qu* [Knocking water candles] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2013), 91.

91. For an account of sharing snacks at the movies in rural Ningbo, see Zhou Jianqiang, *Wo ge Jiangbei* [I sing of Jiangbei] (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2016), 165.

92. Cui Jizhe, 98 (account from rural Shanxi in the 1970s).

93. Li Yanlin, 58 (account from rural Shandong); and Yu Dongxing, esp. ch. "Xiangcun dianying" [Village cinema] (account from rural Henan).

94. Author interview with former projectionist Zheng Yaoyu in Zhejiang, June 2019.

95. Articles from *Dianying fangying* [Film projection], no. 2 (1957): 17; and no. 4 (1957): 40.

96. Wang Xinpeng, 149 (account from rural Anhui).

97. See Tang Hongxiang, 11 (account from Wenzhou). In my interview with a former projectionist in rural Hubei in summer 2015, his wife interjected to say that she never had time to watch the films because she was cooking for guests. In another interview I conducted in Zhejiang, the former party secretary of a mountainous village recounted frequent opportunities to see films at cadre meetings, whereas his wife could not remember watching a single film.

98. Marks, 162.

99. Sobchack, 56, 84.

100. "Zhongnan zhaokai nongcun dianying yu huandeng faxing fangying huiyi" [Central-South region conference on rural film and lantern slide distribution and exhibition], *Dazhong dianying* [Mass cinema], no. 6 (1965): 23.

101. "Dianying zai nongcun" [Cinema in the countryside], *Dazhong dianying* [Mass cinema], no. 4 (1964): 22–23; and "Jiantiao huandengji, laidao qunzhong zhong" [Carry a slide projector on a shoulder pole and arrive amidst the masses], *Dazhong dianying* [Mass cinema], no. 2–3 (1965): 44.

102. "Nongye zhanxian shang de wenhua jianbing—Ji Hebei sheng Laishui xian 'san jiemei' dianying fangyingdui" [Cultural vanguards on the agricultural front—On the "Three Sisters" movie team from Laishui County, Hebei Province], *Zhongguo funü* [Chinese women], no. 1 and 2 (1965).

103. Thomas Lamarre, "Magic Lantern, Dark Precursor of Animation," *Animation* 6, no. 2 (2011): 127–48.

104. Wu Hehu, "Liening zai yijiuyiba: Zhifeng jian de dianying" [*Lenin in 1918*: Movie between the fingers], in *Jiyi wencong: Liushi niandai jiyi* [Recollections: Memories of the 1960s], ed. Zhu Yong (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2002), 127–9.

105. Hai Peng, interviews with a village bricklayer (b. 1962) and a village teacher (b. 1969) in Ningxia, April 2017.

106. Wang Xinpeng, 149 (account from Anhui); and Lian Xiaohua, 157–58 (account from Qinghai).

107. Yao Juntao, 378.

108. Xu Xiaoli (b. 1953), answer to the author's questionnaire on "your most memorable moviegoing experiences," November 2016.

109. Wang Xinpeng, 145–48 (account from Anhui).

110. Cao Xiu, *You yizhong qianshou jiao wennuan* [A kind of handholding called warmth] (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2009), 48.

111. Wang Xinpeng, 145 (account from Anhui).

112. Yu Liang, 219 (account from the Beijing suburbs).

113. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, 94.

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114. Tang Hongxiang, 11 (account from Wenzhou); and Hai Peng, interviews with villagers in Ningxia, April 2017.

115. Bei Yan, 102 (account from Gansu).

116. The groping of young women at open-air cinema is dramatized in both Joan Chen's 1998 film *Xiu Xiu: The Sent-Down Girl*, set in the steppes of Sichuan in the mid-1970s, and Jiang Wen's 2007 film *The Sun Also Rises*, set in the summer of 1976, somewhere in East China. Audiences I interviewed in rural Hubei and Zhejiang as well as Shanghai also mentioned the prevalence of sexual harassment in passing. Reports of bodily clashes at rural cinema appear in Liu Guangyu, 213–14.

117. For an example of how excluded audiences tried to sneak into an "internal screening" in Chinese cities, see Li Yabai Yi Meng, *Shishang wushinian: Baixing shenghuo wushinian wangshi huishou* [Fashions of the last fifty years: Looking back on everyday lives] (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 1999), 222.

118. Hunan Provincial Film Distribution and Exhibition Company, "Guanyu nongcun dianying fangyingdui shoufei wenti de baogao" [Report on the issue of charging for film by rural movie teams], *Dianying fangying* [Film projection], no. 7 (1963): 9–13.

119. For example, see Guangxi Film Distribution and Exhibition Company, 52, 54. Also see Bian Zhenhu, *Ai zai Dunhuang* [Love in Dunhuang] (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 2007), 34.

120. For two case studies from Southwest China of rural film exhibition from the 1980s to the 2010s, see Liu Guangyu; and Yu Ji et al., *Quxian dianying shichang tianye diaocha* [District and county film market fieldwork investigation] (Beijing: Zhongguang chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2009).

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