the launch of Sina's blog platform in 2005 – precipitated a shift away from unheralded contributions on discussion boards to seeking substantial audiences, perhaps even becoming a famous blogger. The connection between blogging (and later, microblogging) and fame was explicit from the start: Sina's blog platform was built on the popularity of celebrities like Xu Jinglei, Ai Weiwei and Han Han.

Nearly all the *Rear Window* alumni had their own blogs (as did a third of Chinese internet users at one point in time) and some of them became minor blog stars. Blogs, and then microblogging, spelt the end of the BBS golden age, but they were instrumental in propelling many individuals into the public consciousness. In the case of *Rear Window*, a network that was initiated in cyberspace and concretized through the accumulation of social capital via online and offline connections, Zhang argues that they helped transform a "subaltern public" into a "regular public." One might logically ask what the implications of this transformation might be. The answer to that question awaits further study, but Zhang is convinced that "the politics of fandom publics is not democracy" (p. 134).

One further discussion, though embryonic, looks at how new technological affordances have reduced the distance between audiences and celebrities, making it possible for Chinese fans to experience (the illusion of) personal and reciprocal "relationships" with stars, via services like Weibo, Weixin or Fenda, the "ask-a-celebrity" mobile app that was recently banned. Zhang draws the tentative inference that people are no longer just "onlookers," but members of a network or community drawn to the same "fan object." This requires further investigation, but how fans and celebrities use the internet to interact is a fascinating question that Chinese celebrity studies is just starting to grapple with.

It is unfortunate that the book is pocked by infelicities and errors. We're told that China has 5.64 billion internet users, which is quite a feat even by Chinese standards (p. 16). A troubled narcissistic young woman and one-time internet meme becomes Forong Jiejie (p. 15). Former *Rear Window* contributors reportedly "quitted their jobs and became free-lancers" (p. 56). An understanding of power is described as "Foucaultian" (p. 139). Irrespective of these imperfections, this is an enjoyable study that raises numerous promising lines of inquiry.

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Cinema Approaching Reality: Locating Chinese Film Theory
VICTOR FAN
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What do we mean by the term "film theory"? Usually, as Victor Fan points out at the beginning of his book, various comprehensive explanatory models of cinema, developed across a carefully defined corpus of texts, all composed by a coterie of Euro-American scholars. Chinese-language scholarship has largely been excluded from this canon. And yet, Chinese intellectuals and filmmakers have written about cinema since the medium's emergence. Though Fan argues that such writing is often more akin to vernacular criticism than grand theory, it has nonetheless conducted a distant and unacknowledged debate with those figures at the core of the

Western tradition. *Cinema Approaching Reality* seeks to reopen this conversation, putting Chinese film theorists from the 1920s to the 1940s in dialogue with their Euro-American counterparts. The book thus seeks to locate Chinese film theory twice over: first, *vis-à-vis* the Euro-American tradition with which film scholars are largely familiar; and second, in relation to the complex social and political currents that shaped how cinema as a medium was understood during the Republican era.

As Fan outlines in the Introduction, the book's key point of reference is the French critic André Bazin. Bazin's work is traditionally associated with the theory of photographic indexicality, but has undergone a reassessment following the digital transition. No longer understood as the guaranteed link between a photographic image and its referent, the index has been reinterpreted as a marker of the ultimate incommensurability of the two. How to understand this gap between the cinematic image and the material world is, Fan suggests, the question that animates both Western film theory after Bazin and Republican-era film theory in China. The Chinese term *bizhen*, which Fan glosses as "approaching reality," captures this sense of cinema as lifelike but not exactly like life. It is *bizhen*'s various reconfigurations in the hands of different theorists that the book primarily explores.

Chapter one considers early Chinese "shadow play" theory. Chinese scholars such as Chen Xihe and Zhong Dafeng, writing in the 1980s, sought to emphasize the distinctiveness of early Chinese film theory, arguing that it advanced a primarily theatrical ontology of cinema, rather than one that was image-based and thus Bazinian. Fan suggests that, on the contrary, 1920s' theorists such as Hou Yao and Gu Kenfu understood the cinematic image, like Bazin, as a potential that could come close to, but never actualize, reality. This was *bizhen*. Chapter two moves on to Marxist film theory in the 1930s. Tracking the arrival of Lenin's theory of consciousness into semi-colonial Shanghai via Japan, Fan argues that the work of Lu Xun, Shen Xiling and critics writing in *Star Monthly* magazine, represents an explicitly political reformulation of *bizhen* through which the model of an engaged Leftist cinema was developed. Central to this process was the concept of *yishi* – usually translated as "consciousness" – a term which allows for comparison between 1930s' film theory in China, and, primarily, 1970s' apparatus theory in France. Chapter three considers "soft film" theory, as advanced in *Modern Screen* magazine between 1933 and 1934. Originally developed as a reaction against "hard" Marxist film theory, "soft film" theory reworked *bizhen* as an aesthetic experience during which spectator and cinematic image would become one. Fan reads this in relation to Buddhist reconfigurations of Kant, Weimar film theory of the 1920s and 1930s, and ultimately Gilles Deleuze, while emphasizing that "soft film" theory was also a response to the political events of the period. Chapter four is an analysis of Fei Mu's writing on cinema, as well as his films *Springtime in a Small Town* and *Confucius*. Comparing Fei's theories of *kongqi* (air) and *xuanxiang* (suspension-imagination) to the work of David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, Christian Metz, and Bazin, Fan argues that Fei's sense of *bizhen* – specifically, cinema's ability to make present an absence – underpins both his filmic aesthetics and his response to the political desolation of post-war Shanghai. The final chapter covers early Cantonese sound film in Hong Kong in the 1930s and 1940s. Here, the focus is on how theories of performance and music developed in Cantonese theatre influenced this cinema's approach to reality as a state of play. Sound and music were critical to this effect. The conclusion wraps up by considering the nature of the digital image, but through a Buddhist reading of cinematic ontology.

Cinema Approaching Reality is a dense and complex book. Its enormous intellectual and historical range requires concentrated effort to absorb. With so much packed

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into a single manuscript, the argument moves nimbly; while the Chinese texts are beautifully contextualized, their Euro-American equivalents are located more elusively, with the connections between them sometimes less immediately obvious to this reader. Nevertheless, as the first monograph in English to treat Chinese film theory so thoroughly, this is a ground-breaking work that sets the standard for subsequent research on the subject. It should be required reading for anyone interested in comparative film theory and the history of Chinese cinema.

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Faked in China: Nation Branding, Counterfeit Culture and Globalization
FAN YANG
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Over the past decade countless media reports and publications have highlighted the problem of goods that are made or processed in China. A great deal of the international coverage is negative; even within China many consumers exhibit mixed feelings about Chinese products. *Faked in China* represents a different kind of response to the ubiquity of the "Made in China" brand. The use of the vernacular expression "faked" is symptomatic of the fact that many products "made in China" contravene intellectual property laws. While "faked in China" ostensibly plays to a negative connotation, the book advances an alternative understanding by which people can make, remake and circulate their own "versions."

Fan Yang shows how counterfeit culture underpins a variety of manifestations ranging from physical objects to independent cinema to bazaars. Examples are largely drawn from popular culture. In re-evaluating China's global "brand" reputation, Yang adopts a textual approach, utilizing a wide variety of critical theory. There are multiple sources in Chinese and English. The texts include television programmes, TV commercials, cinema, news reports, blogs, interviews and online forums.

The book has four sections, a concluding essay and three short appendices. The first chapter, entitled "From made in China to created in China: nation branding and the global-national imaginary," begins with writer-journalist Sara Bongiorni's book *A Year without Made in China*, allowing Yang to introduce China's manufacturing economy and its repercussions on trade relations with the US. She contrasts a CNN documentary criticizing China's safety records and product recalls with a China Central Television (CCTV) special called *Believe in Made in China*. Yang shows how the state threw its weight behind Chinese products, effectively becoming a kind of brand manager.

The remainder of the chapter turns to an alternative discourse: "created in China." Yang says that a national policy mandate surfaced after 2001 that was called "From Made in China to Created in China." However, she provides no evidence for this policy. In fact, no national policy by this name existed at that time, nor is there one now. Certainly support for creativity was evident among education reformers, in design and advertising circles, and was widespread within the media, which is subject to constant censorship. A slogan of this name was briefly used by a Beijing-based organization called the Creative China Industrial Alliance in 2004 (I was associated with its inception).