

# Recent World Film

December 5, 2005

- Wong Kar-wai, *In the Mood For Love* (Hong Kong, 2000)
- Recent Chinese film: China, Hong Kong, Taiwan
- Recent Japanese film
- Film in Iran, post-revolution
- South Korea, Thailand
- India: Bollywood

# Films of Wong Kar-wai

- Early films: nostalgia and genre evocation
  - *As Tears Go By* (1988)
  - *Days of Being Wild* (1991)
- Genre experiment: *Ashes of Time* (1994)
- Reinventing filmmaking
  - *Chungking Express* (1994)
  - *Fallen Angels* (1995)
- *Happy Together* (1997)
- *In the Mood For Love* (2000)
- *2046* (2004)

# *In the Mood For Love*

## 1: First Impressions

- Nostalgia (set in 1960s)
- Improvisation (shot over 15 months, with continual changes, reshoots, etc)
- Almost no plot: what, if anything, happens?
- Emphasis on mood, and on the characters and their emotions
- Everything is conveyed indirectly (this is both the manner of the main characters, and the style of the film as a whole)
- Suggestions of melodrama -- but without the drama

# *In the Mood For Love*

## 2: Cinematic Style

- Mise en scene:
  - Dense and realistic (recreation of period milieu)
  - Poetic and symbolic (the red hallway, for instance)
  - Emphasis on beauty of particular objects
- Cinematography:
  - Mostly static camera
  - Unusual framings
- Editing: what to leave out; straight cuts, elision of time between scenes
- Soundtrack: Argentine tangos, Spanish ballads sung by Nat King Cole; period music, melancholy

# *In the Mood For Love*

## 3: Moods and Themes

- Frustration, delay, indirection
- Regrets and missed opportunities
- We never see the faces of the adulterous spouses
- How do Li-Zhen (Maggie Cheung) and Chow (Tony Leung) convey their sense of being betrayed? or their growing affection for one another?
  - Body language; small, ambiguous gestures
  - They never speak of any of this directly
- Is their relationship ever consummated?
- A sense of the passage of time: scenes after 1962
- Final sequence in Angkor Wat (Cambodia)

# New Chinese Cinema

- Hong Kong
  - Martial arts (Jackie Chan, etc)
  - Spectacle/adventure (Tsui Hark, Ching Siu-tung)
  - Violent action (John Woo)
  - The Second Wave (Stanley Kwan, Wong Kar-wai)
  - Recent directors (Johnnie To, Stephen Chow)
- Taiwan
  - Hou Hsiao-hsien
  - Edward Yang
  - Tsai Ming-liang
- (Mainland) China
  - Fifth Generation (Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige, Tian Zhuangzhuang)
  - Sixth Generation (Jia Zhangke, Wang Xiaoshuai)
- Going International (Ang Lee, John Woo)

# Film in Iran, post-1979

- Islamic Revolution of 1979
- Abbas Kiarostami (*Taste of Cherry*, 1997)
  - Minimalism
  - Neorealist influence (use of non-actors -- sometimes playing themselves; real situations; real locations)
  - Self-reflexive
- Mohsen Makhmalbaf
- Samira Makhmalbaf