

Cine-News, Paper Cinema, and Film Periodicals as Intermedial Encounters

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A hand-drawn sketch titled “The Future Kingdom of Silver (Screen)” depicts people flocking to the “Movie Theater for Today’s News.” The caption accompanying this scene declares, “Cinema replaced newspapers; all the news that happened yesterday will be seen in cinema today” (figure 6.1).¹ This utopian vision of cinema’s capabilities was portrayed in a 1943 issue of the Chinese periodical *Movie Pictorial* (*Dianying huabao* 電影畫報). The sketch highlights cinema’s potential as an archival medium driven by instantaneousness and as infrastructure for news production and dissemination. It assumes that the use of moving images and the placement of those images in the public space of the movie theater represents an upgrade from newspapers. This moment, envisioned in the 1940s, can be seen as a foreshadowing of the rise of digital networked video, smartphone footage, and user-led journalism via social media in the internet age.

However, the irony lies in the irreplaceable role of print in the then ongoing reality and future history of cinema, as exemplified by this small episode within the landscape of movie magazines in Republican China. It is the very format—magazines as a platform—that enabled and facilitated the playful, meta-cinematic, and self-reflexive take on the tension between cinematic apparatus and print journalism.

Chinese terms such as *dianying zazhi* (lit., film magazines) and *dianying qikan* (lit., film periodicals) are used interchangeably to refer to a diverse and heterogeneous range of film-related publications spanning various genres. These publications include film trade journals, film studios’ serial publications and publicity materials, news-oriented *huabao* (pictorial magazines) centered on the film industry, *wenyi* (letters and art) periodicals that explored the intersection of cinema



FIGURE 6.1. Binghua Gao, “Weilai de yingse guo [The Future Kingdom of Silver (Screen)],” *Movie Pictorial* (*Dianying huabao*), no. 5 (1943).

with other arts and media (drama, literature, opera, photography, broadcasting, and performing arts), and dedicated film-specific sections or columns within newspapers and tabloids. Accordingly, this chapter intentionally uses the concept of “film periodicals” for the wide spectrum of publications related to films (but not limited to trade papers) in China, which were released periodically (e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly).

This term, *film periodicals*, distinct from the more frequently used *movie magazines*, highlights the temporal organization and serial structure of the periodical

media format, invoked issue after issue through the repetition of specific formal features. Many of these film periodicals—including film trade journals, promotional booklets and prints tied to certain film productions, fanzines, and technical magazines—complicate or unsettle the boundary between established genres in the global film industry and show business. They serve as platforms where the realms of cinema and print media converge, creating a space for the interaction of various media, such as literature, film, photography, *manhua* (Chinese-language comics), design, typography, radio, graphic art, and stage play. Editorials, news stories, columns, movie reviews, special sections of photographs or illustrations, fans' sketches, readers' letters and contributions, and a wealth of advertising are all assembled and published as one piece of miscellany in print. In some instances, the intersection of different media and art forms is readily evident from the titles of the periodicals. Notable examples include *Screen Stage Monthly* (*Dianying xiju* 電影戲劇), published by the Screen and Theater Press in Shanghai in 1936; *Movie & Dance News* (*Wuying xinwen* 舞影新聞), which existed from 1935 to 1938; *New Movie Songs* (*Dianying xinge ji* 電影新歌集), published between 1942 and 1948; and *Film and Radio* (*Dianying yu boyin* 電影與播音), also published between 1942 and 1948. In other instances, different periodicals shared the same title as they gained popularity: *Movie Pictorial* (*Dianying huabao* 電影畫報) and *Film News* (*Dianying xinwen* 電影新聞). Certain rhetorical naming strategies subtly addressed the centrality of cinema in cultural life by incorporating *yinmu* ("silver screen," referring to the cinema screen) or other terms with the connotation of *yin*-, like *Silver City* (*Yindu* 銀都, indicating the city of cinema), *Silver Screen Singing* (*Yinmu gesheng* 銀幕歌聲), or *Silver Flower Monthly* (*Yinhua ji* 銀花記). In addition to *ying* (shadow), Chinese film periodicals established the word *yin* (silver) as one of the most fitting metonyms of the cinematic medium and the film industry.

Many historians and scholars have utilized Chinese film periodicals as faithful historical sources in their footnotes, investigated specific types of periodicals as linchpins of urban modernity from a media history and industry studies perspective, or explored their cultural and political significance within the dominant vocabulary of imagined communities. However, limited attention has been given to the mediated nature and interconnectedness of such magazines. This chapter seeks to place these Chinese film periodicals within a broader media history framework, departing from the conventional text-centered approach and instead focusing on the *intermedial dynamic* at play. As a keyword and one of the most challenging concepts in the critical vocabulary of film and media studies, the term *intermediality* refers to a variety of things: the dynamic and ongoing nature of media; the crossings and transformations between two or more forms of media; the presence of media within and through other media; the coexistence of multiple media; or the convergences of different media systems and networks. The shared aspect of the term's different meanings pertains to the interconnectedness of various media and their potential to interact, to transition between one

another, and to reside in-between. By highlighting the intermedial, this chapter aims to briefly explore and reveal the reciprocal relationship between cinema and print media, offering a potential direction for reflecting on the historiographic approach to global movie magazines. It suggests that Chinese film periodicals defy simple differentiation and categorization, do more than cater to industry professionals and communities, and should not be viewed in isolation. Instead, it is crucial to understand these periodicals, as Eric Hoyt notes, “in relation to one another and to various other players within the ecosystem of the film industry.”² What I refer to as Chinese film periodicals is a diverse category of media artifacts and hybrid genres (ranging from film journals, newsletters, and modernist literary magazines to pulp and glossy entertainment magazines, movie swag, fan-zines, and amateur periodicals) that are characterized by periodicity and a serial structure and that embody social engagement with cinema through print forms.

Furthermore, drawing on the critical approach to magazines and/as media proposed by scholars in modern periodical studies, this chapter foregrounds the importance of examining Chinese film periodicals in their entirety, including advertisements, design, and format, and seeing them as intermedial encounters within their material realities.³ Despite the tendency of film scholars to prioritize cinema over print and moving images over still images, a productive exploration of film periodicals should recognize the equal significance of print media alongside the cinematic medium and the inherent interplay and dynamic not merely between the two but also among multiple media forms.⁴ The picture shown in figure 6.1, which was printed on paper and concerned the fate of cinema, encapsulates three angles through which this chapter aims to explore Chinese movie magazines as intermedial encounters. These perspectives include, first, cinemascope (centered on the production of what I call *cine-news*): modes of human and nonhuman encounters with cinema in which ongoing interactions in and with the material, industrial, sociocultural, and discursive environments of films occur across screen and page; second, the portable style of “paper cinema” largely involving an arrangement of still frames in print (whether film-strip sequences or serialized pictures), which echoes the grammar and rhythm of the cinematic; and, third, material intermediality as a mode of thinking about cinephilia.

CINEMASCOPE ACROSS SCREEN AND PAGE

Chinese film periodicals were both born out of and instrumental in shaping the central aspects of what are known as cinemascope. *Cinemascope*, a term commonly used to describe the world of cinema, points to the expansive realm of film-related practices and discursive networks. Although likely taken for granted, it carries material significance and the potential to bridge the divides between the film industry, academia, the fan world, and everything in between. The multifaceted nature and richness of this term have made it particularly valuable

in studies that explore non-Hollywood and Global South cinemas, allowing for a shift away from conventional perspectives on the film industry and specific national cinema frameworks.⁵ I see cinemascape as material, bodily, tangible, discursive, and mass-mediated all at once. On many occasions that shaped the Republican-era cinemascape, filmmakers, journalists, activists, fans, audiences, readers, producers, writers, critics, artists, and business owners engaged with each other through cinema and its paratextual world. Film periodicals were by no means decorative backdrops of the cinemascape; instead, they documented things, voices, images, offscreen events, and behind-the-scenes frameworks, as well as activated and materialized the interactions, debates, and connections that lay at the core of such encounters. To fully understand the role of film periodicals, it is essential to recognize two interrelated aspects of the cinemascape across the screen and the page: the *transformation* of news into cinema and the *generation* of news through cinema (or within the realm of cinema).

The emergence of homegrown film publications as periodicals in early 1920s China was historically rooted in a compelling intersection of early filmmaking, sensational journalism, and entertainment culture. On the one hand, many newspapers and periodicals, despite not being exclusively devoted to films at the time, acted as intermediaries between current events and the emerging medium of cinema. One notable example revolves around the real-life murder case of Yan Ruisheng, an employee of a foreign trading company in Shanghai, who killed a well-known courtesan named Wang Lianying. This case garnered significant public attention and received extensive serialized media coverage, followed by numerous copycat publications, stage performances such as “civilized plays” (*wenming xi* 文明戲), and appearances in entertainment venues, including amusement halls and storytelling courts.⁶ The Shanghai Photoplay Society (*Zhongguo yingxi yanjiuhui* 中國影戲研究會), established in 1920 and renamed in May 1921 (*Zhongguo yingxi yanjiushe* 中國影戲研究社, hereafter referred to as “the Society,” also see Chapter 20 in this volume), was one of the earliest organizations in China dedicated to film research, education, and filmmaking. Inspired by the real-life case of Yan Ruisheng, the Society produced the first Chinese-made feature-length film, *Yan Ruisheng* (閻瑞生, dir. Ren Pengnian, 1921), commissioning the Commercial Press’s film department to do the filming.⁷ Major newspapers and periodicals, such as *Shenbao*, *Xinwen bao*, and *Shibao*’s pictorial weekly (*Shibao tuhua zhoukan*), along with leading theater-sponsored ephemeral pamphlets, closely followed both the murder case and the film adaptation.⁸ The film’s popularity and unexpected success at the box office can be attributed to the media sensation surrounding the case and the way in which the worlds of theater, film, journalism, and reality coalesced.

One might find it challenging to differentiate between actual press photos, like the series of pictures taken at Yan Ruisheng’s execution, and publicity for the film adaptation, which mainly consisted of selected sets of film stills pairing dramatic plot points with the display of major protagonists in a tableau-style setting

(see figure 6.4).⁹ The film *Yan Ruisheng* recalls one of the “two principal modes of staging cinematic spectacles of violence” in the context of early twentieth-century Mexico and Brazil, as noted by the film historian Rielle Navitski: films as “violent actualities,” which recorded and reconstructed real-life violent events.¹⁰ *Yan Ruisheng* shared several filmmaking techniques with the noted style in the Latin American case, including reenactment, location shooting, the appearance of participants or witnesses from the original incidents (or people who physically resembled them), and, in some cases, a combination of staged and unstaged footage. By reenacting the unpredictable occurrences of violence that eluded the camera’s lens during the original event, the footage develops an ambiguous relationship with the topical event.¹¹ In the end, the Yan case thrived both as news and as cinematic event, both previously nonexistent entities, mutually shaping and transforming each other.

On the other hand, film periodicals increasingly turned into information factories and found a way to provide a logistical platform and exhibition space through which cinema itself became a source of news and topicality. In 1921, the Society founded the oldest surviving Chinese film periodical, the *Motion Picture Review* (*Yingxi zazhi* 影戲雜誌). During the period in which the *Motion Picture Review* was published and *Yan Ruisheng* was released, several other film periodicals made their debut. Notable among them are *Film Weekly* (*Dianying zhoukan* 電影周刊) and *Film Journal* (*Dianying zazhi* 電影雜誌), which were launched in Beijing in 1921 and 1922, respectively. Although both the Society and the *Motion Picture Review* were relatively short lived, many members of the Society and the magazine’s editorial collective eventually became significant players in the Chinese film industry. The booming growth of film studios led to the proliferation of film news: magazines specifically centering on current trends in the film industry (including pictorials that capitalized on popular film celebrities) and newspaper columns dedicated to film-related topics. Because the early Chinese film periodicals primarily focused on foreign cinema and its cultural impact, everything, big and small, that occurred in the global entertainment industry (particularly Hollywood) on a daily basis became commodifiable, possessing exotic attraction and embodying the allure of foreignness and heterogeneity in modern urban life.

Among the earliest Chinese film periodicals, three distinct groups emerged, with loosely defined boundaries.¹² The first group consisted of film studio publicity materials, what scholars have considered “supplementary film publications” as opposed to major “public-oriented film periodicals.” These publications were often attached to certain film projects and released either non-periodically as serialized booklets or as special issues.¹³ For instance, first published in late 1922, *Morning Star* (*Chenxing* 晨星) was the first studio-sponsored trade publication focused on domestic film production, particularly the productions of Mingxing Film Company. Another influential example is *Movie Monthly* (*Dianying yuebao* 電影月報), published by Liu-He Film Company in Shanghai from April 1928 to September 1929. The second group comprised scholarly journals that fostered theoretical

debates about cinema. Some of these periodicals were edited by individuals with leftist orientations: *Mingxing Monthly* (*Mingxing yuebao* 明星月報), *Stage and Screen* (*Wutai yinmu* 舞台銀幕), and *Film Art* (*Dianying yishu* 電影藝術), among others. However, *Modern Cinema* (*Xiandai dianying* 現代電影) stood out in resisting ideological imposition on cinema by political or moral interference. The third and largest group consisted of tabloid press publications that monetized the private lives of film stars and filmmakers. By 1935, more than two hundred film periodicals had been published and distributed in China. As documented in the *Complete Catalog of Chinese Modern Film Periodicals*, which is the most comprehensive collection of modern Chinese film journals, a total of 376 different film magazines were published and distributed before 1949.¹⁴ Two particularly noteworthy and long-running cases that incorporated elements and styles from all three groups were the best-selling *Movietone* (*Diansheng* 電聲) and the longest-lasting film magazine before the founding of the People's Republic of China, *Chin Chin Screen* (*Qingqing dianying* 青青電影).¹⁵

Crucial to the spectrum of film periodicals was the mass production of what I refer to as *cine-news*—compilations of events, gossip, scandals, and seemingly unremarkable information from the realm of cinema, on and off the screen, skillfully crafted, invented, and reinvented as *news*. Cine-news became a prominent shared category of content in film periodicals, making them artifacts created, regulated, and tempered within a formal framework that repeated from the past and reconciled difference. A wide range of topics were covered in columns with names such as “Yingxun” (Film-News) or “Dazhong yingxun” (Film-News for the Masses), “Yingquan suoshi” (Fragmented Matters within the Filmmakers’ Circle), “Yinhai xinwen” (News from “Silver-Ocean,” namely, the film world), “Yihai jinshi ji” (Records of Current Affairs in the Art Scene), “Yingren miwenlu” (Catalog of Secret Tales about Film Stars), and more. This generic category purported to provide readers with comprehensive coverage of the film industry and associated fields, catering to their varied interests and promising that they were up to date with the latest happenings in the world of cinema. For example, the special section in *Chin Chin Screen*, titled “news from silver-ocean” as mentioned above, frequently featured a catalog of cine-news with identifiable names, presented in one-sentence form. The news items ranged from secrets about film crews and quotations from renowned directors like Fei Mu, to anecdotes about actor-actress romances, vivid details from the personal lives of stars, and tidbits that claimed to be funny facts from behind the scenes of films. Customized information, including mailing addresses, birthdays, and information about the personal belongings of stars (particularly popular actresses) were published in dedicated sections of the periodicals.¹⁶ These sections were specifically designed to respond to readers’ and movie fans’ letters and to address their questions and requests (e.g., “Cinephile’s Mailbox” in the periodical *Hollywood* and “Readers’ Mailbox” in *Chin Chin Screen*). In this sense, the readers were allowed and invited to participate in the

coproduction of cine-news within individual film periodicals, as well as in the circulation across different publications.

One of the intriguing categories of cine-news revolved around anecdotal details from the movie set. An example of such cine-news, which served as a selling point in one issue of *Chin Chin Screen*, was a report about the actress Chen Yanyan (a well-known star nicknamed “beautiful bird”) experiencing her period on the set, causing distress to director Yang Xiaozhong.¹⁷ Interestingly, special sections for cine-news in periodicals like *Movie Sketch* (*Dianying manhua* 電影漫畫) were given the name *yuejing*, a term that literally refers to the menstrual cycle in Chinese. The deliberate use of this term in the magazine aimed to play with the ambiguity of its double meanings: one as “period,” with both feminized and sexual connotations, and the other rhetorically as “(news about cinema that comes) once a month.”¹⁸ Enabling multimedia strategies to entice readers and fans, the form of cine-news itself structured reader engagement by fueling the tabloidization of the female body and sexuality. These were just two episodes among many in which cine-news took shape as media artifacts that were not necessarily in the form of traditional press photos or textual reports. Rather, they operated through various other means and trivial details, such as the verbal, the rhetorical, the decorative, the typographic, and even as wordplay in a predigital form of clickbait.

By making something mundane and uneventful into something eye-catching, cine-news actively unsettled the line between tabloid, scandal, sensation, true crime, personal matters, and public affairs, as well as fact and fiction. As exemplified in the case of *Yan Ruisheng*, the interplay between news and cinema, facilitated by periodicals, established a recurring pattern in the creation of cine-news, which was later shared by many similar cases involving homicide, suicide, and scandals. In this pattern, real-life cases took on a new life on stage or screen and sparked controversies over violence, gender, criminal justice, and moral order. These scenarios—dramatic incidents about celebrities (especially film stars) involving violence, death, or legal processes followed by sensational journalistic engagement, media representation, and public debate—may be best seen in cases such as the suicides of the film stars Mao Jianpei, Ai Xia, and Ruan Lingyu in the 1930s.¹⁹ After all, the captivating power of cine-news, which was no less significant than any other type of news produced and disseminated by conventional newspapers, lies in the blurred distinction between actuality and fiction, reality and fabrication.

PAPER CINEMA

Historically rooted in and stylistically intersecting with the print genre of pictorial magazine (*huabao*), Chinese film periodicals contested the long-standing word and image divide, and they need to be understood as existing at the center of “the pictorial turn” in early modern China.²⁰ Film periodicals arose not only in print, but as prints, the viscosity and intermediality of which deserve more

critical attention. One specific form of cine-news in Chinese film periodicals is characterized by keywords such as *zhishang yingyuan* (movie theater on paper), *zhangshang dianying* (cinema on hand), and *zhishang dianying* or *zhi dianying* (paper cinema). Shaping the dominant categories in periodicals, this type of cine-news utilizes still frames or images grouped together to establish connections, create contrasts, or build tension frame by frame. Examples can be found in periodicals like *Movietone*, *Starlight* (Xingguang 星光), and *Film News*, where “cinema” in printed format showcased the step-by-step creation of a six-minute scene over the span of nine weeks, presented a pictorial biography of movie fans, or documented the boudoirs of female stars, all as a series of pictures (see figure 6.2).²¹ Whether through photomontage, film stills, or a more integrated approach that combines hand-drawn sketches, photography, and text, the pairing of the keywords *paper* and *cinema* highlights a fundamental reconfiguration of the printed page prompted by cinematic qualities such as elastic organization of time and space and an interplay between stillness and movement. In the paper cinema model, not only are the images interlinked and arranged in a sequential manner, but the captions, designed with specific fonts and styles, are meant to be read successively along with them. The one- or two-page spreads incorporate conventions of magazine layout and graphic design with the language of film and the spatial logic of editing (perhaps seen as *mise-en-page*), to encourage the reader’s imagination of a narrative sequence.

Film periodicals were a defining site in which paper cinema, including a network of genres at the intersection of cinema, print, and other media, emerged in the 1920s and thrived throughout the twentieth century. The portable form of paper cinema, driven by the mutual embrace of genre varieties and media differences, materialized and popularized the fascination with and charm of cinema to varying degrees and from various perspectives. One of the subgenres within the network of paper cinema is *yingxi xiaoshuo* (lit., shadow-play fiction, or cine-fiction), which entails fictionalizing film narratives based on one’s own perception and understanding after watching imported silent films. The genre could be understood as a unique or alternative personal cinephiliac archive. This genre was primarily developed by writers from the Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies School (*yuanyang hudie pai*) with the intention of introducing films to those who could not afford to watch the films themselves.²² Other relatable subgenres included film-narrative introductions (*dianying benshi*), which were used during the filmmaking process to outline plot developments and often merged with other genres such as lyrics, novels, and comics, giving rise to new hybrid forms. Both film novels (*dianying xiaoshuo*), which were fictionalized adaptations or retellings of film storylines and cinematic illustrated storybooks (hereafter referred to as “cinematic *lianhuanhua*”), were genres prominently featured in film periodicals and enjoyed a hybridity formed from drawing on various other genres.²³ Film novels traversed the realms of movie reviews, novels, and film stills (in cases where



FIGURE 6.2. “Shenghuo pianduan anni tailuyi” [Fragments of Anita Louise’s Life], *Movie News Weekly* (*Dianying xinwen*), no. 5 (1939): 114–15. Courtesy of the Media History Digital Library.

illustrations accompanied the text), resembling a form of (film) fanfiction, while cinematic *lianhuanhua* incorporated elements of montage, publicity stills, comic strips, poetry, photo stories, and illustrated literature.

Cinematic *lianhuanhua*, in particular, stood out as the most remarkable form of frame-by-frame storytelling in Chinese film periodicals, and the form resonates with David Company’s “paper cinema,” a concept describing the format of film-strip sequences in print as a mix of instructional and captivating material for viewers.²⁴ Sometimes translated as “linked pictures,” “comic books,” “serial-picture stories,” or “illustrated storybooks,” *lianhuanhua*, a broader category of illustrated sequential images, can be traced back to the transnational “kaleidoscopic aesthetics” of the 1920s and ’30s. It eventually became a popular format of pocket-size books enjoyed by readers of all ages in China during the twentieth century.²⁵ As both a subgroup of *lianhuanhua* and film spin-offs, cinematic *lianhuanhua* typically consists of a series of film stills accompanied by captions (see figure 6.3).²⁶ It is akin to a body of genres known as “photo-fiction,” “photo-stills,” “photo-novels,” “found film stills,” “photofilms,” or “still films,” among many others in anglophone and globally comparable contexts.²⁷

The case of *Yan Ruisheng* displays the earliest Chinese cinematic *lianhuanhua* in relation to the film's transmedia iterations through film periodicals. Publicity stills of *Yan Ruisheng*, as previously mentioned, paired key scenes with the portrayal of major protagonists. Frame by frame, the actions frozen in stillness ranged from gatherings at the crime scene, to the flight, arrest, and interrogation of Yan, to the trial. The photographic form of the film scenes signaled the transformative power of cinematic vision and the photojournalistic quality of crime news, which promised to unveil an unjust reality inaccessible through other media. However, the final execution of Yan was not shown as part of the paper cinema in the periodical *Shibao*, perhaps because it was one of the film's biggest selling points and attractions, which needed to be rendered invisible to promote suspense. As an apparently incomplete narrative, the film stills make sense of an unrelieved desire, echoing the earlier call of the theatrical version of *Yan Ruisheng*: "Men, women, old and young" would have to come to the theater in order to "see the news" (*kan xinwen*), to see the topical event *anew* (the reenacted execution on the big screen), and to see the topicality of *the new* itself (in this case, a resolution through cinematic means).²⁸ Cinematic *lianhuanhua* should be recognized as a collaborative creation of cine-news by the filmmakers, the editors of the periodicals in which they were published, the readers, and the film audiences. It embodies the potential for interactive vernacularization of the paper cinema form within the serialized format of a publication. The images, mediated and re-mediated by the form of paper cinema, invite readers to engage in serialized and frame-by-frame (or shot-by-shot) interpretations of the polytextual surfaces presented in the periodicals.

Within the printed space, cinematic *lianhuanhua* frames itself into an illusion of seriality and continuity, despite its inherent discontinuity. Fundamentally a series of still frames, cinema materially unfolds on paper and is captured in selected, suspended, and curated moments. Through playing with the cinematic and responding to the dialectic between stillness and movement, film periodicals manipulated readers-cum-audiences' perception of time. There was always a promise of the incomplete and the discontinued beyond the frames of cinematic *lianhuanhua* and film periodicals. Readers were enticed to watch and experience the films that could come to life on the big screen. Film audiences revisited the films, animating a passion for cinema as things, as collectible, and as prints that preserve the potential to freeze time in passing. More broadly, cinematic *lianhuanhua* was an integral part of the temporal structure of Chinese film periodicals, what may be called *the politics of periodicity*, shaped by the issue numbering system, ongoing columns and sections, intervals created by special issues or bound volumes, and interrupted or unfinished publication cycles. Such a temporal structure evoked and manipulated a sense of pleasure and anticipation through the tension between serialized continuity, frozen duration, and limited yet capturable timeliness.



FIGURE 6.3. Ming Qi and Er' Dian, "Lianhuan tuhua: jiming zaokantian" [Illustrated Pictures: The Dawn], Picture News (Dianying zazhi), no. 13 (1948): unknown page number.



FIGURE 6.4. “The Film of Yan’s Murder for Money,” film stills from *Yan Ruisheng* (1921), published in *Shibao Weekly Pictorial* (*Shibao tuhua zhoukan*), no. 49 (1921): 3.

Cinematic *lianhuanhua* relocated the cinematic experience from the confines of the theater into various surrounding spaces and mediascapes. Through the workings of paper cinema, as exemplified by the instance of cinematic *lianhuanhua*, film periodicals served to create a paratextual world of cinema. With a wide variety of film-related materials and their in-between forms, ranging from film stills, production photos, movie posters, commercials, and booklets to manipulated photographs based on the film and so forth, the paratextual world of cinema

points, as some scholars have suggested, to the “portability” of the film experience or the human encounter with fragments of cinema in daily life.²⁹ One may recall how Jean Cocteau created the scenario of his avant-garde film *The Blood of a Poet* (1930) in a way that visualizes a poet-director’s mind through a frame-by-frame structure.³⁰ Corresponding to what Caetlin Benson-Allott calls “the stuff of spectatorship,” the American book series “The Film Classics Library” bears a resemblance to Chinese cinematic *lianhuanhua* as it pioneered the use of film stills (or enlarged frames) and blow-up techniques to recreate popular films such as *Casablanca* in book form.³¹ Likewise, the book fully illustrated with black-and-white scenes from D. W. Griffith’s *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* (1913); the pages from the flipbooks depicting Georges Méliès’s lost films, which are considered “half book, half cinema”; and more intermedial artifacts that curate moments from film all speak to the old and new fascination with stilled movement. In addition to being present within film periodicals, the form of frame-by-frame still images as a series has found its way into literary works, tabloid stories, stage plays, and various popular prints and ephemeral artifacts that shape global film experiences outside the movie theater.

Indeed, throughout China’s socialist era, the style of paper cinema continued to flourish in different genres and forms of public display, serving accusation and denunciation purposes. Land Reform exhibition catalogs that took the form of pamphlets, for instance, employed frame-by-frame flipping from left to right to shape the graphic and emotional flow. Dramatic crops and “zoom in” close-ups mobilized the page, as seen in printed materials or photographic catalogs of counterrevolutionary evidence. Cinematic *lianhuanhua*, whether in the form of pocket-size books or materials included in film periodicals, along with other types of prints such as slides, comic strips, posters, or one-page instruction manuals for films, became influential portable media, reshaping films (including some presumed to be pirated) and cinematic encounters in motion (see figures 6.3 and 6.4).

CODA: MATERIAL INTERMEDIALITY AS A MODE OF THINKING

Film periodicals were both *new* media and a remediation of *old* media in their own time of emergence and proliferation in early twentieth-century China. As historical artifacts, they constituted and, in turn, were shaped by the cinemascape. Beyond just serially published collections of individual film-centered pieces, film periodicals emerged as film-inspired prints, objects, serial systems, trade networks, hybrid genres, and circulating media defined by their very periodical form and material intermediality. With the use of concepts such as “cinematic intermediality,” “cinema between media,” or “cinema by other means,” scholarship has increasingly revisited and rethought cinema through the politics of *inter-*, namely, a passion for in-betweenness.³² This ambitious approach leads to analysis of the multimedial components of cinema, the positioning of cinema across a variety of

media and arts, and the tensions generated by media differences from within and in-between. As this chapter proposes, we need greater consciousness of intermediality, not merely in terms of metaphorical tool sets or symbolic economies, but as the center of material conditions that constitute what is encountered, perceived, described, relived, and imagined as the cinematic.

Material intermediality, in this regard, deserves to be an object of historical analysis as well as methodological inquiry in scholarship on global movie magazines. Cine-news and paper cinema in the Chinese context, as discussed above, were only two among many mundane and yet key aspects that shaped the intermediality of the periodicals' material realities, where a consistent interplay between cinema and print media occurred and thrived between and across space, screen, and page. Intermedial interplay, in this case, moves beyond the process whereby one medium embraces another; it benefits from blurred boundaries among cinema, print, and other media, but does not elevate one at the cost of the others. Many studies of periodicals "privileg[e] the story over the advertisement, the enduring over the fashionable, or, more broadly, the exceptional over the repetitive."³³ To recognize the ubiquity of cine-news as a product of mass mediation in and through the Chinese film periodicals helps to resist such an implicit hierarchy of content. Paying close attention to *paper cinema* as a format that is both Chinese and global, that is primarily associated with magazines as media, and that exists in a generic network formed at the intersection of cinema, print, and in-between forms invites potential methodological reflections on the study of film periodicals and archival work in general. To read film periodicals *forensically*, then, is a key mode of thinking about and working with the hidden material details of the subject matter and format, which are complex media artifacts in themselves. Far more than transparent repositories of historical information and ancillary records of cinema, periodicals must be regarded as primary materials and secondary sources simultaneously, with their mediated essence requiring clear recognition and contextualization. Given the technical challenges of rigorous fact-checking and limited access to multi-perspective archives, our task is not to distinguish fiction or exaggerated imagination from fact in film periodicals. Instead, our focus should be on tracking the curation of what is presented as fact (such as the category of cine-news) within and across the printed pages. It is necessary to consider what matters and what is excluded from mattering; the material mechanism of inclusion and exclusion should be at the core of our inquiry into the periodicals as media creation. In a way, film periodicals can be viewed as both the self-archive and autobiographic fiction of the cinemascapes. As I have argued elsewhere, cinephilia is not the precursor or aftermath of filmmaking but the nonlinear, intertwined relationships among film production, distribution, circulation, and reception; in China, film periodicals have played a crucial role in developing the roundtable, notably as an intermedial genre by materializing live film discussions and their mediated documentation. This has been evident since the Republican era and the socialist period, and it remains relevant today.³⁴ Material intermediality gives us

the very language and mindset through which we conceptualize cinephilia as a range of human encounters with cinema across time, space, and scale, as well as across print, audiovisual, electronic, and digital platforms.

Due to the limited scope of this chapter, the exploration of intermedial elements in Chinese film periodicals and their material complexities remains incomplete. Inspired by emerging studies driven by the “forensics of magazine materiality,” what I provide in this chapter is a point of departure for envisioning how to locate global movie magazines as intermedia encounters in history. It entails understanding them as material objects, social practices, and a form of technology in transition. By committing to this approach, it becomes possible to imagine a comparative framework for discussing the unexpected and unlikely connections between film periodicals across borders, time, and regime. For example, one potential avenue may be to historicize the creation and material culture of *yingmi* (film fans, or cinephiles) in *Movietone* and *Mass Cinema* (or *Popular Cinema*, *dazhong dianying* 大眾電影). *Movietone* was one of the longest-running and most popular magazines in Republican China, while *Mass Cinema*, widely known and circulated, emerged during the socialist era with a focus on “cinema for the masses” as indicated in its title. Despite being produced under different political regimes, the two periodicals share a comparable mass appeal to the public interest. To conduct such archive-based comparisons, it is necessary to create and enact a meta-database in which film magazines, functioning fundamentally as a miscellany, network, and database themselves, can encounter and speak to one another in unexpected ways (as the still growing Media History Digital Library at the University of Wisconsin–Madison has done fruitfully).³⁵ The key method for exploring the very different film magazines beyond ideological binaries is to begin with a critical understanding of periodicals and the platforms in which they are (digitally) archived both *as*, and *in relation to*, media. An exciting opportunity awaits us: to dig into the materiality of print, cinema, and their relationships with other and different media forms and interlocking systems of mediation. In the meantime, it is more urgent than ever to approach and reflect on the role of the rapidly expanding digital archive itself as a multiauthored, crowdsourced media artifact, as well as a comprehensive system of material mediation.

NOTES

1. Binghua Gao, “Weilai de yingse guo” [The Future Kingdom of Silver Screen], *Dianying huabao* (Movie Pictorial), no. 5 (1943). As documented in Paul Fonoroff’s book (2018), there are eight kinds of film periodicals titled *dianying huabao*.

2. Eric Hoyt, *Ink-Stained Hollywood: The Triumph of American Cinema’s Trade Press* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), 3, <https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.122>.

3. Faye Hammill, Paul Hjartarson, and Hannah McGregor, eds., “Introducing Magazines and/as Media: The Aesthetics and Politics of Serial Form,” *English Studies in Canada* 41, no. 1 (2015): 1–18; Faye Hammill, Paul Hjartarson, and Hannah McGregor, “Introduction: Magazines and/as Media: Periodical Studies and the Question of Disciplinarity,” *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 6, no. 2 (2015): iii–xiii.

4. I am inspired by and also share the view of a few exceptional historiographical examinations that still images are of no less significance than moving images; photography (or print) and cinema intersect with and mutually enrich each other. See Thomas Elsaesser, "The Architectural Postcard: Photography, Cinema, and Modernist Mass Media," *Grey Room*, no. 70 (2018): 80–101; Noam Elcott, "The Cinematic Imaginary and the Photographic Fact: Media as Models for 20th Century Art," *PhotoResearcher*, no. 29 (2018): 7–23; Belinda Qian He, "Socialist Multimedia Warfare: Cine-Exhibition of Class Struggle in 1960s China," *Grey Room* 89 (2022): 6–41.

5. For example, the term encompasses the multifaceted ways in which "films navigate the structures and pathways of society and the infrastructures of film production, distribution, exhibition and consumption." See Haseenah Ebrahim, "Traversing the Cinemascope of Contemporary South Africa: A Peripatetic Journey," *Black Camera* 9, no. 2 (2018): 197–215. For an exploration of cinemascapes as key to a postnational critical praxis, see Ann Marie Stock, "Migrancy and the Latin American Cinemascope: Towards a Post-national Critical Praxis," *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 20, no. 1 (1995): 19–30. An intriguing concept that echoes the idea of cinemascapes is what Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Enoch Yee-lok Tam call "the movie field" (or "the early filmscape" as an evolving, cross-disciplinary terrain) in Republican China. As they argue, the formation of this movie field was highly associated with the unique position of "film literati" (*dianying wenren*) in bridging the filmic and literary fields. See Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Enoch Yee-lok Tam, "Forming the Movie Field: Film Literati in Republican China," in *Early Film Culture in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Republican China: Kaleidoscopic Histories*, ed. Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh, 244–76 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018).

6. Laikwan Pang offers a compelling discussion around the Lianying case in the theatrical world at the time. See Laikwan Pang, *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 161–63.

7. The Chinese Film Research Society functioned primarily as a speculative company and was disbanded shortly after the production of *Yan Ruisheng*.

8. "Moubi Lianying an yaofan jiang chu sixing" 謀害蓮英案人犯將處死刑, *Xinwenbao*, November 19, 1920; "Moubi Lianying an yaofan yiding chu sixing" 謀害蓮英案人犯已定死刑, *Xinwenbao*, November 23, 1920.

9. "The Film of Yan's Murder for Money," *Shibao tuhua zhoukan* 49 (1921): 3; Hui Fang, "Yan ruisheng moucaihaiming zhi jieguo," 閻瑞生謀財害命之結果 [The Retributive Consequence of Yan Ruisheng, Who Murdered for Money], *Shibao tuhua zhoukan*, November 28, 1920, 4.

10. Rielle Navitski, *Public Spectacles of Violence: Sensational Cinema and Journalism in Early Twentieth-Century Mexico and Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 6.

11. Navitski, *Public Spectacles of Violence*.

12. Yingjin Zhang and Zhiwei Xiao, *Encyclopedia of Chinese Film* (London: Routledge, 1998), 271.

13. For scholarship that distinguishes "public-oriented film periodicals" produced relatively independently from "film's special publications" (*dianying tekan*) or "supplementary film publications" (*fushuxing dianying kanwu*), which were largely sponsored by leading studios and theaters, see Shan-shan Ding, *Zhongguo dianying kanwu shigao* 中國電影刊物史稿: 1921–1949 [A Historical Study of Chinese Cinema-Related Publications: from 1921 to 1949] (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2017), 74–146. Xiaoyu Xia's work in progress also touches on such special journals (*tekan*) associated with specific film productions as film-studio sponsored publications, as well as early Chinese cinema's intertwining with other media, such as typography. I am indebted to Xiaoyu Xia for her insights on "cine-bibliophilia," shared during the virtual roundtable event "A Deep Focus on Global Chinese Cinephilia," which I co-organized with Timmy Chen in April 2022, at the Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

14. Shanghai Library, eds., *Zhongguo xiandai dianying qikan quanmu shuzhi* 中國現代電影期刊全目書志 [Complete Catalogue of Chinese Modern Film Periodicals] (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu wenxian chubanshe, 2009). Another remarkable large-scale archiving and publication project about Chinese film periodicals is the "Compilation of Movies Magazines from the Republican Era," carried

out by Shanghai Library, renowned for its extensive collection of over three hundred film periodicals from Republican China, and Chinese National Library Press. This compilation comprises seventy-three mainstream film periodicals from the 1920s to the 1940s in the Republican era, totaling 167 volumes. See Shanghai Library, *Minguo shiqi dianying zazhi huibian* 民國時期電影雜誌彙編 [Compilation of Movies Magazines from the Republican Era] (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2013).

15. *Chin Chin Screen* and *Movietone* are two of the major Chinese film periodicals documented in the China collection of the Media History Digital Library. See <https://mediahistoryproject.org/collections/china/>.

16. Examples include “Zuixin nannü mingxing zhuzhilu” 最新男女明星的住址錄 [A Catalogue of the Most Updated Male and Female Stars’ Addresses], *Chin Chin Screen* (*Qingqing dianying*) 8, no. 21 (1939): 17; “Duzhe xinxiang nǚmingxing de dizhi” [Readers’ Mailbox: Addresses of Female Stars], *Chin Chin Screen* (*Qingqing dianying*) 40 (1948): 3; “Yingmi xinxiang shengyu he dizhi” 影迷信箱: 生日和地址 [Movie Fans’ Mailbox: Birthdays and Addresses], *Haolaiwu* (Hollywood), no. 54 (1939): 23.

17. “Chen yanyan yuejing laichao jihuaile daoyan yangxiaozhong” 陳燕燕月經來潮急壞了導演楊小仲 [Chen Yanyan Got Her Period, Making Director Yang Xiaozhong Greatly Anxious], *Chin Chin Screen* (*Qingqing dianying*), no. 3 (1939): 9.

18. For one such example in the *yuejing* section, also about Chen Yanyan, see Bai Ding and Mei Zi, “Yuejing meiyuejian zhi dianying jingye chen yanyan zainanjing shengzi zhi chuanwen” 每月間之電影經也: 陳燕燕在南京生子之傳聞 [Monthly Chronicle of Cine-News: Rumors of Chen Yanyan Giving Birth in Nanjing], *Movie Sketch* (*Dianying manhua*), no. 5 (1935).

19. For some of the most well-known cases, see Kristine Harris, “The New Woman Incident: Cinema, Scandal, and Spectacle in 1935 Shanghai,” in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, ed. Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, 277–301 (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1997); Bryna Goodman, “The New Woman Commits Suicide: The Press, Cultural Memory and the New Republic,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 64, no. 1 (2005): 67–101.

20. For discussions about “the pictorial turn,” see Laikwan Pang, *The Distorting Mirror*; John A. Crespi, *Manhua Modernity: Chinese Culture and the Pictorial Turn* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020).

21. Examples include Ming Li, “Chen yanyan guifang cangan ji” 陳燕燕閨房參觀記 [A Record of Visiting Chen Yanyan’s Boudoir], *Chin Chin Screen* (*Qingqing dianying*), no. 6 (1937): 10; Unknown author, “Shenghuo pianduan anni tailuyi” 生活片段: 安妮泰露惹絲 [Fragments of Anita Louise’s Life], *Movie News Weekly* (*Dianying xinwen zhoukan*), no. 5 (1939): 114–15; Unknown author, “Zhis-hang dianying yinmu liufenzhong gongzuo jiuxingqi” 紙上電影: 銀幕六分鐘, 工作九星期 [Cinema on Paper: Six Minutes Onscreen, Nine Weeks of Work Offscreen], *Starlight* (*Xingguang*), no. 17 (1946): 4–5.

22. For an exploration of *yingxi xiaoshuo*, see Shawn Shao, *Zhishang yinmu minchu de yingxi xiaoshuo* 紙上銀幕: 民初的戲影小說 [The Silver Screen among Pages: A Study of Yingxi Fiction in Early Republican China] (Taipei: Xiuwei jingdian, 2017).

23. For examples of *dianying xiaoshuo* as a journalist’s report that documented the story from the big screen, see Zhengqiu Zheng (jizhe), “Dianying xiaoshuo zimei hua” 電影小說: 姊妹花 [Film Novel: The Sisters], *Xiaoshuo* (*Novels*), no. 1 (1934): 22–25. The list of film crew members of the narrated film is included alongside this piece of film novel.

24. See David Campamy, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 66.

25. John C. Hwang, “Lien Huan Hua: Revolutionary Serial Pictures,” in *Popular Media in China: Shaping New Cultural Patterns*, ed. Godwin C. Chu, 51–72 (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1978); Julia F. Andrews, “Literature in Line: Picture Stories in the People’s Republic of China,” *Inks: Cartoon and Comic Art Studies* 4, no. 3 (1997), 17–32; Kuiyi Shen, “Lianhuanhua and Manhua—Picture Books and Comics in Old Shanghai,” in *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books*, ed. John A. Lent, 100–120 (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2001); Jianing Yang,

“Hudong shuangsheng dianying yu lianhuanhua de kuameijie lüxing” 互動雙生：電影與連環畫的跨媒介旅行 [Interactive Twins: Cross-Media Travel between Films and Comics], *Movie Review (Dianying pingjie)*, no. 20 (2019): 75–81. About kaleidoscopic modernism, see Paul W. Ricketts, “Kaleidoscopic Modernisms: Montage Aesthetics in Shanghai and Tokyo Pictorials of the 1920s and 1930s,” in *Liangyou, Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926–1945*, ed. Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang, 15–44 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013).

26. For examples, see Ming Qi and Er’ Dian, “Lianhuan tuhua: jiming zaokantian” 連環圖畫：雞鳴早看天 [Illustrated Pictures: The Dawn (1948)], *Picture News (Dianying zazhi)*, no. 13 (1948): unknown page number.

27. Raymond Bellour, “The Film Stilled,” trans. Alison Rowe and Elisabeth Lyon, *Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 1990 (24): 99–121; Margarita Tupitsyn, “Photo-Still versus Photo-Picture: The Politics of (de)Framing,” *The Soviet Photograph, 1924–1937* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 66–98.

28. “Hepingshe bianyan huazongli moushaan di xuanyan,” *Xinwenbao*, November 25, 1920. The periodical *Laughter Stage (Xiaowutai 笑舞台)* made an explicit claim earlier about people’s experience in the theater as *kan xinwen*, suggesting the beauty of theatrical experiences concerning news that mixes life as drama and drama as life.

29. For such insights, see Thomas Stubblefield, “Disassembling the Cinema: The Poster, the Film and In-Between,” *Thresholds* 34 (2007): 84–88; Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004).

30. Jean Cocteau, *The Blood of a Poet: A Film*, trans. Lily Pons (New York: Bodley Press, 1949).

31. Richard J. Anobile, ed., *Michael Curtiz’s Casablanca* (New York: Avon, 1974); Caetlin Benson-Allott, *The Stuff of Spectatorship: Material Cultures of Film and Television* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021).

32. For example, see Jørgen Bruhn and Anne Gjelsvik, *Cinema between Media: An Intermediality Approach* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018); Kim Knowles and Marion Schmid, *Cinematic Intermediality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

33. Hammill, Hjartarson, and McGregor, “Introduction: Magazines and/as Media: Periodical Studies and the Question of Disciplinarity,” iv.

34. Belinda Qian He, “Cinema at the Table, Cinema as Roundtable,” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 15, no. 2 (2021): 176–99.

35. Another noteworthy and growing database of Chinese periodicals, with some restrictions in both material and digital access, is housed in the Paul Kendel Fonoroff Collection for Chinese Film Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. The special collection contains 436 titles (5,901 issues in total) from China’s pre-1950 era, including sixty titles not cited in the standard reference work *Complete Catalogue of Chinese Modern Film Periodicals*.

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