楊德昌《恐怖份子》的內外攝影機：

照相、拜物主義與恐怖電影

Cameras Inside and Outside Edward Yang's *The Terrorizers*: Photography, Fetishism, and the Cinema of Terror*

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│ 摘要 │

楊德昌 1986 年的電影《恐怖份子》預示了後來在《一一》（2000）中探討的主題，強調攝影機對人類視野的延伸和人類理解自我與世界的慾望。不過，《一一》強調的是照片增進人類的理解能力，《恐怖份子》卻從負面的角度，探討了攝影、都市與拜物主義的關係。透過與詹明信〈重繪台北新地圖〉一文的對話，本文探討了偶發事件如何引誘年輕攝影師在日常陳腐又重複的生活中尋找意義，從而膜拜攝影照片為一種物神，如混血女孩回眸的放大照片。此外，通過「介面」的設計，楊德昌導演的攝影機破壞了電影縫合的機制，重拾了其震撼和威嚇觀眾的力量，尤其展現在混血女孩偶遇自己的放大照，以及攝影師在天橋上拍攝行人的無聊場景。透過標誌、凸顯出電影與真實世界的「交界」時刻，楊德昌以一種「恐怖電影」的形式，揭示了電影機制中攝影機的存在，並引導觀眾直面創傷性的「真實界」。

關鍵詞 │：楊德昌、攝影、拜物主義、縫合、介面

| Abstract |

In his 1986 film *The Terrorizers*, Edward Yang foreshadows themes he later explores in *Yiyi* (2000) by emphasizing the camera's extension of human vision. While *Yiyi* uses photographs as a tool for enhancing self-understanding, *The Terrorizers* explores the relationships among photography, fetishism, and the urban milieu. In dialogue with Fredric Jameson's "Remapping Taipei," this article explores how contingent incidents entice a young photographer to seek meaning in the banality of everyday life, leading to the worship of photography as a fetish, as made particularly evident in the photograph of the Eurasian girl's returned gaze. Additionally, through the device of "inter-face," the director's camera disrupts the process of suture and regains its power to shock and terrorize the audience, especially in scenes involving the Eurasian girl's encounter with her own image and the photographer taking pictures of pedestrians on a skywalk. Marking the moments of the inter-face between the diegetic and extra-diegetic worlds, Yang's cinema of terror unveils the existence of the camera outside, guiding the audience to confront the traumatic Real.

I. Introduction: Cameraman and His Double

In Edward Yang's 2000 film, *Yiyi* (*A One and A Two*), the young child Yangyang appears to be a minor character amid his family's various crises. While his family members grapple with their distinctive challenges, Yangyang, armed with a camera, often appears to stand apart from the drama, primarily standing as an observer and witness. Despite his youth, Yangyang's occasional wise comments and eccentric behavior carry symbolic significance that resonates with the main narrative. In one episode, he captures images of mosquitoes in the air to prove their existence to his mother. In another, he shows photographs of the backs of people's heads, revealing what they are typically unable to see by themselves. The former practice relies on the "indexicality" of photography, prompting viewers to see to believe. In the latter case, photography is employed to supplement the human senses and enhance self-understanding. During the final funeral sequence, Yangyang articulates his ambition in front of his grandmother: he is determined to pursue the vocation of informing people of things they do not know. In the modern world, where nearly every occupation involves some form of machinery, what could be more effective and appealing than cinema for unveiling what is ordinarily invisible and unknown? The young hero Yangyang might as well grow up to become another Director Yang, the type of filmmaker who aims to visualize the unseen through his camera and enlighten the audience about the unknown.

Immersed in diverse cultural influences, including Japanese manga and European modernism, Yang made *The Terrorizers* in 1986, anticipating his commitment to revealing the unknown to the audience. Despite Yang's refutation, many critics view his work as resonating with Michelangelo

Antonioni's classic *Blow-Up* (1966) (Huang 1995: 229). Now considered a classic Taiwanese film, scholars have interpreted *The Terrorizers* from various perspectives. Examining the portrayal of Taipei and cultural modernity, Kwok-kan Tam and Wimal Dissanayake observe that the film, by incorporating the term "terrorizers" in its title, draws attention to "the explosively dark underside of urban living" (1998: 66). Guo-Juin Hong also explores the film's cinematic representation of urban space where male and female characters are "equally devoid of true connection with their physical environment" (2011: 132). Yvonne Sung-sheng Chang views *The Terrorizers* as a cinematic reflection on the role of middle-class fukan literature, emphasizing Yang's elitism as indicative of the maturation of Taiwanese artists towards "formal self-consciousness" (2004: 160). Fredric Jameson's essay "Remapping Taipei" has proven to be most inspiring as he aptly employs the term "synchronous monadic simultaneity" to describe the multiple plot structure of *The Terrorizers*, in which disparate storylines occasionally intersect and influence each other (1992: 115).

Regarding the "existential experience" of modern Taipei residents, Jameson asserts, "[T]he individual life is driven so deep into its isolated 'point of view' that it is no longer capable of peeping out above the barrier" (1992: 115). Segmented and trapped in a "boxed dwelling space," these isolated individuals are initially shown in three plot lines that later converge by chance, revealing their surprising simultaneity and interconnection (1992: 154). For example, when the Eurasian girl prank calls Li Lizhong's wife, a simple phone call synchronizes the characters' different temporalities, and the phone wires connect their separate spaces. This communication technology illustrates the spatial interconnection and homogeneous time of modern life, a feature that the camera captures more vividly than any individual can perceive in reality

(Jameson 1992: 115). Evoking Kevin Lynch's classic, *The Image of the City*, and extending his idea of "cognitive mapping," Jameson proposes a new aesthetic that would map the "totality of class relations" on a global, or more precisely, "multinational" scale (1988: 353). In a dialectical and ironic fashion, *The Terrorizers*, a marginal film from a small island in the Third World, better attests to the postmodern representation of the world system in late capitalism than its Western counterpart. Substantively engaging with Jamson's argument, Emilie Yeh and Darrell Davis comment that although he "denies agency to the film's local production factors, including the director's consciousness," his essay deserves a review, as Yang's film does and "tends to call forth insights specific to different occasions" (2005: 129-130). Departing from the Western postmodern paradigm, this article reexamines the image of Taipei as visually remapped on the screen, which Taipei residents themselves can fully articulate. It also foregrounds cinema as a contemporary technology, offering the audience a lens through which they see not only the diegetic world of the film but also the actual, prefilmic reality that the former inevitably alludes to and comments on — the tangible world to which they have grown accustomed and may no longer perceive consciously.

Jameson's essay on *The Terrorizers* echoes David Harvey's conception of modernity, demonstrating how modern technologies create "a new sense of simultaneity over space and total uniformity in coordinated and universally uniform time" (Harvey 1985: 9). However, Jameson's analysis of the double ending and its "indeterminacy" (1992: 149-151) does not fully capture the role of contingency that emerges from the condition of modern homogenous empty time. Slavoj Žižek's discussion of Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Blind Chance* (1987) and its multiple alternative stories offers a more insightful perspective on how

contingency configures the temporality of modernity (2001: 78-82). According to Benedict Anderson, the temporal framework of the medieval era positioned events concurrently in the past, present, and future, as each occurrence could be invariably traced back to a transcendental origin, such as God's will. In contrast, modern homogenous empty time, which is divisible into measurable units, progresses linearly and irreversibly (1991: 22-27). This conception of time fosters and facilitates the imaginative exploration of alternative life trajectories. As Žižek argues, modern life experience has been "haunted by the chanciness of life and the alternative versions of reality" (2001: 79). This indicates that if life could be rewound like a film, the story could have a different ending. In cinema, time can be reiterated and manipulated, leading to different outcomes of the same storyline. In *The Terrorizers*, Yang visualizes this invisible contingency that gives rise to the illusory repetition of time and multiple alternative endings.

Reading *The Terrorizers* through *Yiyi*, we may infer that, like Yangyang, Yang reveals to the Taipei audience dimensions of the city that they do not typically see, in terms of simultaneity and interconnectedness as well as contingency and alternative versions of life. Equating Yangyang with Edward Yang, we must not overlook that both are also distinct, with the former as the cameraman inside and the latter as the cameraman outside. The significance of this duality lies beyond Yang's deliberate use of cameras and photography as props to enrich the meaning of his films. According to Roland Barthes, if photography is "never anything but an antiphon of 'Look'" (1981: 5), then by incorporating both devices into the film, the audience is encouraged to perceive the different ways of seeing, whether those ways are their own or those of the characters. Based on the premise of suture theory and the possible disruption of suturing, this article

argues that cameras and photography serve as mediating objects that keep the ways of seeing at a distance, enabling the audience to perceive consciously and reflect on the film medium accordingly. Therefore, in addition to Jameson's emphasis on the role of cinema in "cognitive mapping" (1988: 347-360), we can scrutinize the ways of seeing inherent in photography and the act of photographing in *The Terrorizers*, further investigating what the cameras, both inside and outside the film, intend for us to see.

II. Concerning Photography: Homicide, Spectacle, and Fetishism

The Terrorizers unfolds entirely in Taipei, a highly capitalized society driven by the pursuit of maximum profit. Achieving this goal necessitates the rationalization of time, both in the micro-form of meticulously filling every minute with business and in the macro-form of repetitious engagement in regular activities that uphold the stability of the system. The imperative of maximizing each time unit has become so deeply ingrained in the minds of modern urbanites that it renders "all waiting and breaking of appointments an ill-afforded waste of time" (Simmel 1971: 328). The activities used to fill empty time often follow repetitive patterns, transforming human beings into mechanized creatures of routine. This entrenched predicament, ensnaring most urbanites, finds representation in the character of the female writer (Zhou Yufen) in *The Terrorizers*. She shifts her role to fill idle time, transitioning from a white-collar worker to a housewife to a fiction writer. However, each new "start-over" proves incapable of rescuing her from the torment of mechanical

repetition and banality of everyday life.

According to Mary Ann Doane, the regulation, rationalization, and abstraction of time characterize one tendency of modernity, along with the other that foregrounds "the contingent, chance, and ephemeral," functioning as the resistance and redemption of the former (2002: 10). From this perspective, the homicide at the beginning of *The Terrorizers* can be viewed as a contingent incident, while the police attempt to restore social order and fulfill the demand of rationalization by eliminating contingency. Meanwhile, the resistance of the contingent to system, structure, and meaning provides its own lure, offering urban residents the appearance of immediacy, newness, and difference (Doane 2002: 11). In the film, the young photographer is attracted to the sound of a police siren, a sign of danger that signifies a contingency outside the regulation of a rationalized society. Following this sound, he then goes to the crime scene and takes pictures of the dead body lying on the side of the road. Here, death manifests itself as the greatest contingent; it leaves no explanation for necessity and no answer for whom, why, how, and when. A corpse is simply in a place where it is not supposed to be. Incidental death provides freedom through resistance to meaning and supplies the boredom of everyday routines with newness and excitement.

If the use of a camera implies a way of seeing, the young photographer's enthusiasm for photography represents the urbanite's appetite for contingency and spectacle in general. Just as the urban crowd watches with excitement from a distance as firefighters work to extinguish a blaze, the photographer is present at the crime scene, witnessing and recording the entire incident without intervention, turning the scene of a homicide into a cinematic

sequence with himself as the cameraman, spectator, and even film editor. His desire for contingency and spectacle is most remarkable in his subsequent shots of the Eurasian girl jumping out of the apartment window and escaping the police. Not until the girl falls on the crossroad and loses consciousness does the photographer stop "filming" her. In this scene, not only is the homicide a spectacle for the viewer, but the girl is a sexual spectacle under the photographer's male gaze. After taking several pictures of her, the photographer finally sends the unconscious girl to the hospital but then loses her the next day. For the photographer, his affection towards the girl who disappeared in the crowd is not "love at first sight" but, in Walter Benjamin's words, "love at last sight" (1973: 125). The girl is gone as if she were dead. To cope with the loss/death, he blows up one of the photographs of the Eurasian girl that he takes at the crime scene and displays it in the apartment turned into a darkroom (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1

The enlarged photograph in the darkroom is not merely a simulacrum, as Jameson simplistically interprets it. By applying the postmodern concept of simulacra or images without depth, Jameson dismisses the need for further interpretation. Following Jameson, Yingjin Zhang views photography as a means of producing hyperreality and simulacra (2002: 308). His underestimation of its importance, akin to that of Jameson, lies in considering photography merely as one of the modern technologies without acknowledging its unique nature. As Victor Burgin reminds us, when taking and viewing a photograph, we participate in "the complicity to which we are recruited in the very act of *looking*" (1982: 148). Instead of viewing the enlarged photo as a depthless image, we should regard it as an object in which the photographer invests his desire, registers his gaze, and copes with his loss, as well as the site in which multiple ways of *looking* intersect and negotiate.

Inside the darkroom, isolated from the outside world and beyond normal time, the enlarged photograph is worshipped like a fetish on an altar. Žižek defines a fetish as "the embodiment of the lie which enables us to sustain the unbearable truth" (2001: 166). The unbearable truth, or in his Lacanian term, the traumatic Real, presents itself here as the death/loss of the girl, and the photograph that functions as a fetishistic supplement enables the photographer not to deny but to "rationally fully accept this death" and "to some feature to disavow this death" (Žižek 2001: 166). Through fantasizing the photograph into a fetish, he tames the Real and recreates an acceptable living condition, or "the real" in Lacanian's terms, in which he can rationally live and avoid confronting the Real directly.

A photograph is likely a fetish that serves as a substitute for the dead for good reasons. First, a special ontological connection exists between the photographs of a person and the person photographed. Anthropologists studying non-Western traditional tribes long ago discovered their belief that photographers possess a unique, occult ability with power over the souls of those captured in images. Although this belief is considered naïve in modern societies, it lingers in the collective unconscious. Within the long tradition of Western philosophy, the mechanical image produced by the *camera obscura* was once regarded as an automatic copy of reality (Rubinstein 2023: 1-2). Since the invention of photography and before the advent of digital imaging technology, many theorists emphasized the indexical relationship of a photographic image to its object in the real world.[1] Andre Bazin asserted that through the mechanical reproduction of the photographic image, "we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually *re*-presented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space" (1967: 13-14). Echoing Bazin's distinction

[1] Drawing upon postmodernist philosophers such as Derrida, Baudrillard, and Deleuze, leading photographers and theorists have debated the indexicality of photography post-digitalization. While Daniel Rubinstein attempts to deconstruct the index and contest the representational model that always presumes a prefilmic entity (2023: 3-7), John Roberts is inclined to sustain a dialectical account of indexicality and its subjection to the "interpretative process of truth-disclosure, to the claims of realism" (2014: 31). Without exploring the debate of indexicality, I maintain the validity of classical theorists' insistence on the ontology of photography while acknowledging its discursive formation concerning the claim of being indexical to the world.

between painting and photography, Stanley Cavell noted that a painting represents a subject with a focus on likeness, whereas a photograph looks like "a transcription" from reality that always carries the past existence of its subject (1984: 4). In *Camera Lucida*, which Barthes wrote in the aftermath of his mother's death, he similarly argued that a photograph inevitably conveys the message that "the thing has been there," "the necessary real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph" (1981: 76). Based on this indexical relationship between photography and reality, the photograph of his mother as a child made her seem present to him once again, even though she was no longer there. It is this past presence that gives photographs their fetishistic tendency. For the disappeared Eurasian girl, any remainder of her might as well serve as a fetish, and the photograph of her best serves this purpose because it is part of her, as it were. Thus, a photograph paradoxically encompasses both the instant that endures forever and the past that has gone forever, representing a site where absence goes hand-in-hand with presence and vice versa.

Second, the reduction in exposure time throughout the history of the camera has expanded the scope of the photographic project and facilitated street snapshots as those seen in *The Terrorizers*. Taking photographs on the street is akin to "pointing" at someone without the acknowledgment of the other, and developing the film into a photograph then allows the viewer to fixate, concentrate, and linger over a single object for as long as desired. In contrast to motion pictures composed of characters, actions, images, and sounds, as Christian Metz cleverly suggests, photography's "poverty constitutes its force" (1990: 163). With advancements in telephoto lenses, the snapshot of the Eurasian girl's face is comparable to a still shot in film, a close-up shot.

According to Gilles Deleuze, a close-up of a face "abstracts it [the subject] from all spatiotemporal coordinates, that is to say, it raises it to the state of Entity" (1986: 6). The close-up of the face transforms into an "icon," free from distractions in its surroundings (Deleuze 1986: 7), dislocating and displacing the various acts of *looking* in the original context. Since photographs are portable objects with changing significance across contexts, the "intra-diegetic" looks between the Eurasian girl and the policemen are substituted with the photographer's gaze, as if the girl's own gaze is directed towards the viewer of the photograph. The shifting context of the act of *looking* and the illusion of her returned gaze conveniently satisfy the photographer's scopophilia. Therefore, the viewer tends to concentrate on the image in the photograph and reveres it as a sacred fetish.

Third, in contrast to the public space in which the girl is photographed, the darkroom is a private space that allows the photographer to fantasize, daydream, and confabulate. As stated, the photograph captures a decisive moment when the girl glances back, marking a moment of enchantment separate from mundane everyday life. Photography not only mummifies this ephemeral moment against the irreversible passage of time, as Bazin might suggest (1967: 9) but the photographer also endeavors to relive that precise encounter by disconnecting himself from the environment and normal time. This extends the decisive moment into eternity, allowing the viewer "a free re-writing time" to linger on the photograph as long as desired, in contrast to "an imposed reading time" predetermined by a motion picture (Wollen 2003: 76). In this respect, photography and cinema differ, despite their shared technological lineage. Moreover, the darkroom wall on which the enlarged photograph is displayed resembles the silver screen of a movie theater. The contrast between darkness

and the brilliance of the screen creates what Laura Mulvey terms "voyeuristic separation" (1994: 424). The condition in which the photographer/viewer dissolves into darkness, into absence, yet retains the ability to gaze at the presence in the photograph, serves to intensify voyeuristic desires and transform the photograph into a fetish. Similar to the two-dimensional silver screen, the close-up photograph of the Eurasian girl, with its flatness and fixation, is more likely to be a possession and an object of fantasy than a real person.

Despite the photographer's efforts to stabilize the real through the photograph as a fetish, the Real consistently returns to destabilize reality. At the beginning of the film, his appraisal of the girl as spectacular and beloved aligns with the desire to capture her in a photograph. However, when the girl disappears, the Real manifests as her loss or "death." The photograph of the dead fulfills the photographer's wishful thinking, allowing him to rationalize the loss and retain the real. However, the Real reemerges as the actual Eurasian girl, disrupting the photographer's idiosyncratic expectations and elaborate fantasies. Initially, she steals his camera equipment and, upon learning of her boyfriend's release from prison, she returns the equipment but reunites with her boyfriend without saying a word to the photographer. If the photograph once represented the mummified image of the "dead," she is now resurrected as the living dead, surpassing the photographer's control and possession. Disillusioned by the Real, he tears down the paper covering the room and reopens the window, letting the wind from outside blow the mosaic pieces of the photograph. This gust is the wind of the Real, fragmenting the complete image, revealing the materiality of the photograph, and exposing the falsehood of the fetish. According to Doane, the rationalization of time is "accompanied by a structuring of contingency and temporality through emerging technologies of representation," an effort

to temporarily release the urbanite from repetition and "make tolerable an incessant rationalization" (2002: 11). As a representative technology recording the contingent, photography provides redemption from the routine, epitomized by the photographer's desire to eternalize the moment and enshrine the spectacle. However, redemption is transitory; the repressed or the Real inevitably resurfaces to shatter the photographer's fantasy, compelling the viewer to confront the cruelty, banality, and repetition of modern urban life once again.

III. The Cinema of Terror: Suture, Violation, and Inter-face

Having explored the significance of photography in *The Terrorizers*, an examination is now crucial of the use of the camera and its connection to various ways of seeing in a modernized urban setting. Here, the dominance of the rationalization of time and space is evident, with occasional contingent events breaking the monotony of everyday life. After a dispute with his girlfriend, the photographer ventures out again with his camera in search of a spectacle. This time, however, instead of encountering a homicide incident or sexual spectacle, he captures the most mundane aspect of daily life: pedestrians traversing the city. Initially, by adopting an objective viewpoint, the audience tracks and frames a passerby on the skywalk (Fig. 2). However, the sudden clicks of the camera reveal that the audience is witnessing the scene through the eyes of a young photographer, capturing these pedestrians without awareness. The concluding moments depict the photographer leaning on the skywalk
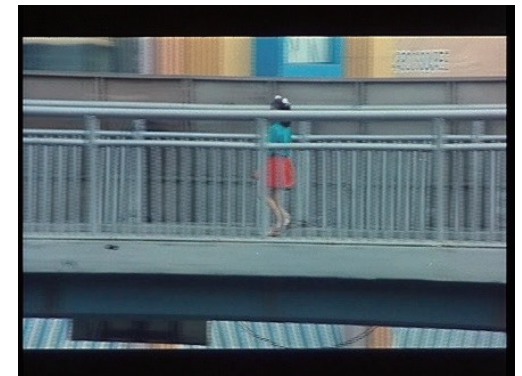

Fig. 2

railing with his camera dangling from its strap (Fig. 3).

According to suture theory, the dominant narrative film employs techniques such as continuity editing, point-of-view shots, and the reverse-shot structure to stitch the spectator into an imaginary diegetic film world. By suturing the spectator, the film conceals its constructed nature and encourages identification with the characters and events on the screen. However, some theorists argue that the suturing process can be disrupted, revealing the artificiality of the cinematic experience and prompting critical reflection on the medium itself.[2] Daniel Dayan suggests that framing and camera movement can disrupt the suturing process, making the spectator realize "that his possession of space was only partial, illusory" (1999: 127). Consequently, the cinematic apparatus, by veiling its uncomfortable offscreen space or the Absent One, plays upon the viewing subject's willingness to negate itself by allowing a fictional character to stand in for it (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis 1992: 170). In a conventional shot/reverse-shot structure, the subsequent shot typically assigns the viewpoint from which the offscreen character observes, aiming to suture the viewing subject into the chain of discourse and obscuring the invisible agent in cinematic representation. In this theoretical context, the photographer is intentionally revealed as a character with his camera in hand, and the audible click sounds signaling the presence of a camera disrupt the suturing process by laying bare the cameras inside and outside. "Laying bare the device" has not only been a technique of "estrangement" on the aesthetic level for Russian Formalism but also amounts to the "alienation effect" proposed by Bertolt Brecht to foster critical reflection on social reality (Stam et al. 1992: 199-200). In the absence of the completion of the suture that captivates the audience within the diegetic narrative space, an "inter-face," to borrow Žižek's
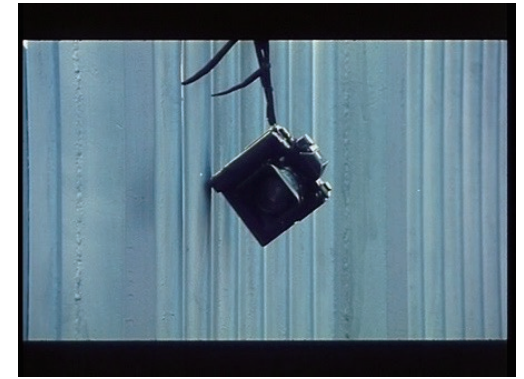

Fig. 3

[2] For example, Peter Wollen calls for a counter-cinema, best exemplified by Godard's *Vent d'Est*, with such counter-strategies as "estrangement" and "foregrounding" against the seamless and illusory fabrication of mainstream Hollywood cinema (1982: 81-82). After delineating the development of the concept of suture in film studies, Kaja Silverman appropriates Barthes' idea of the "writerly text," which "divides one signifier from another," to propose the possibility of interrupting the linear progression of narrative and effecting the converse of cinematic suture (1983: 247).

terminology, is created between the cameras inside and outside. Given that the camera/photography invariably encompasses ways of seeing, the exposure of the camera introduces a separation from the photographer's vision, to which the spectator was previously sutured, thus enabling lucid perception and reflection.

Upon closer examination of the photographer's ways of seeing, one can discern parallels with the flâneur navigating the metropolis. Bestowed with the privileges of an affluent middle-class and male identity, the photographer enjoys "utopian mobility," enabling an "omnipresent adventure" that permits him to "experience city streets as interiors," echoing Anke Gleber's portrayal of the male flâneur (1997: 58-59). Serving as an extension of his eyes, the camera transforms him into an embodiment of what Susan Sontag describes as "the heroism of vision" (1977: 89), the pursuit of striking images without concern for danger, as exemplified by his presence at the crime scene. Contrary to the city of spectacle catering to tourists' gaze, Taipei in Yang's film offers only minor stimuli amidst an overload of information from everyday life. Developing Sigmund Freud's theory, Benjamin posits that human consciousness must adopt a highly protective stance against the proliferation of shocks in modern urban life. In attempting to shield against these shocks, the experiences linger on the surface without imprinting as "memory traces" (1973: 114). Consequently, urban residents endure a symbolic form of immiseration because of a lack of connection with others and their surroundings. The city becomes an infinite surface upon which one can skim indefinitely.

The act of photographing pedestrians on the street inherently involves a level of violation characterized by a voyeuristic, aggressive, and even cannibalistic approach. In *Relations in Public* (1971), Goffman proposed the concept of

"territories of the self," referring to the physical, social, and psychological boundaries individuals establish to preserve personal identity, autonomy, and security in social interactions. Respecting these territories is essential for upholding social order and harmony, as violating them can result in discomfort, anxiety, and conflict. In the bustling street environment where constant observation and visibility are the norm, an ordinary pedestrian must maintain a "normal appearance" to signal the continuity of one's activities, with "only peripheral attention given to others to check the stability of the environment" (Goffman 1971: 239). Otherwise, "the glance, look, penetration of the eyes that excess necessary notices would violate one's territory of the self," crucial for an individual's sense of autonomy and security (Goffman 1971: 45). Under such circumstances, eye contact must be kept to a minimum, and, in Žižek's terms, only an inter-face exists without interface. As it defies this social norm, the photographer's impromptu street photography is viewed as a violation. Moreover, the camera is explicitly compared to a gun. During a conversation with the Eurasian girl, he justifies his spontaneous photography as preparation for a future career as a professional photographer, asserting that his keen eyes would also make him a proficient shooter in the army. This comparison between a camera and a gun is not arbitrary; mastering both devices demands similar skills, such as aiming, focusing, and shooting, implying a certain degree of violence and violation.

Sontag's argument goes deeper, asserting that "to photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed" (1977: 14).When the Eurasian girl enters the darkroom and unexpectedly encounters her own enlarged photograph, she

loses consciousness from not only sickness and exhaustion but also the shock of interfacing with her image: seeing herself being seen. In the darkroom, she recognizes the photograph as "entrapment" and views herself as a possessed object under someone else's control and manipulation (Yeh and Davis 2005: 98). This state of shock, distinct from that caused by minor stimuli, arises from the voyeuristic violation and surreptitious image-taking known only to the photographer. If photographing people is deemed a violation, then, as Bill Jay suggests, "[T]o photograph a member of the opposite sex is to rape" (1984: 21). The photographer's sexual desire and implicit intention to "rape" the Eurasian girl become evident after she accidentally enters his darkroom: with no deeper understanding of her, he engages in a one-night stand with her. In addition to comparing the camera with a gun, we can equate the camera with the phallus and the act of taking a photograph with that of sexual intercourse.

In contrast to the girl serving as the sexual spectacle that ignites the photographer's desire, each pedestrian on the skywalk is homogenized and stripped of their individuality. A skywalk, which serves as a transitional space between different locations, is devoid of in-depth social interactions and distinctive local atmospheres. Using a camera appears to assist urbanites in deepening their tenuous connection with the urban environment and inscribing "memory traces" through automatic mechanical reproduction. Embedded in the philosophy of ordinary language, Cavell does not so much endorse the Bazinian ontology of photography as he examines the ways in which people talk and think about photography (Morgan 2016: 165). Centered on photography's indexical relation to prefilmic reality, the discourse surrounding photography represents "the human wish …… to escape subjectivity and metaphysical isolation," a desire for the ability to access the world (Cavell 1979: 21). Thus,

the mechanical reproduction of photography provides an apparent solution to Cartesian skepticism by affirming the objectivity of the external world beyond subjective human perception. Expanding on his thesis, I suggest that the photographer in the film has become so alienated from the outside world that he needs the camera as a spectral object to reestablish his connection with reality. While the confined Eurasian girl reaches out to the outside world at home through random telephone calls, the photographer records and inscribes his experience of engaging with the world through photography, an experience of shock that would otherwise fade after a brief existence on the surface of the mind. However, parallel to the girl's compulsive telephone calls, the hundreds of undeveloped photographs he produces signify his insatiable appetite for spectacle and reflect the impulse of photography to reawaken his perception of the world. Like her random telephone calls, which lack consistent logic and coherent experiences, his random shooting on the street is equally disorganized and fragmented. His collection of films and photographs in his apartment represents a meaningless accumulation of random minor stimuli in modern society, and his eventual failure to belong to the city (Fig. 4). From this perspective, his dangling camera can be interpreted as a form of impotence in response to these "mere visible" pedestrians existing as minor stimuli and to the banal and repetitive daily routine lacking in contingency and spectacle.

Fig. 4

The above sequence also resonates with that of Li Lizhong stealing a gun from his policeman friend and walking on the skywalk, ready to kill anyone on his way. Behind the skywalk are massive billboards for various Hollywood movies (Fig. 5). The billboards, which belong to a movie theater in Taipei, indicate the act of viewing a movie and thus remind the audience of their ongoing activities. Moreover, for the Taipei audience in particular, the boards could be self-

Fig. 5

referential: the audience might be inside the theater that the director has shot from the outside (Chen 1997: 107). Regarding the reflexive and self-referential qualities of *The Terrorizers*, further reflection on cinema in general, and Yang's film in particular, is crucial.

Examining the sequence in detail, we can observe that the images on the boards echo the photograph of the Eurasian girl; all the images are composed of smaller pieces but, as a whole, are larger than real people. Furthermore, Leo Chanjen Chen notes, "The segmentation of plot and characters have a perfect correlate in the aura of this image" (2001: 3). Considering the mutual reference of film and photography, we may propose a dichotomy between "the cinema of spectacle" and "the cinema of terror" implicit in Yang's viewpoint of filmmaking. Similar to the enlarged photograph discussed above, the cinema of spectacle tends to disguise the Absent One and suture the audience with fictional characters. Through its realistic illusion, it invites the audience to enter "narrative space" step by step and seduces them to forget the theater space and their act of viewing. Absorbed into the diegetic world, the audience treats the film as a type of fetish that compensates for the lack of pleasure in reality. In contrast, the cinema of terror, as Markus Nornes characterizes Yang's film, consistently reminds the audience of its illusive nature and denies the typical cinematic pleasure of emotional identification (1989: 45). The skywalk Li Lizhong traverses echoes the previous scene in which the photographer took pictures, and his "normal appearance" is the same as that of all the other pedestrians. However, Li has become a killer about to deliver terror and shock the audience. The exposition of the cinematic apparatus, the rewinding of cinematic time, and possible alternative endings prevent the audience from being entirely absorbed into the cinematic world and foster self-awareness

regarding the act of viewing, unveiling the implicit elements of violence and violation associated with this cinematic engagement.

Advancing Doane's thesis, the cinema of spectacle can be viewed as an artificial provision of contingency, alleviating the pain of rationalization and dulling the urbanites' capacity to reflect on the problems of capitalism. In contrast, the cinema of terror initially presents an extreme form of contingency but subsequently exposes its own constructed and manipulative nature, mirroring the trajectory of the enlarged photograph that starts as a complete image, akin to a fetish, and then unveils its inherent falsehood and materiality. Engaging with the cinema of spectacle becomes a ritual for urbanites, offering an outlet for their unmet desires. Conversely, the cinema of terror illustrates the journey from absorption in fetishism to a confrontation with the Real, a reckoning with the repetition, banality, and ennui of urban life and the violence that ensues. While Huang Jianye suggests that *The Terrorizers* in the film refer to the murderer Li Lizhong, all the other characters, and even the city of Taipei itself (1995: 136-137), we might go a step further to posit that the film itself acts as a terrorizer, aiming to terrorize the audience by compelling them to notice terror beneath the veneer of "normal appearance" and confront the Real when the real has been destabilized. Moreover, the cinema of terror serves as a means for Taipei residents to rekindle their perceptions of the world through a deliberate process of estrangement, a form of artistic alienation against urban alienation. While watching a film typically involves observing things other than that which is physically present, with *The Terrorizers*, things are outside the movie theater. Here, we can posit the existence of inter-faces between the city on the screen and that in the real world, facilitated by the camera's inside-out perspective. When the Taipei audience witnesses the pedestrians on the skywalk, they are

confronted with their alienated selves and everyday lives saturated with banality and meaninglessness. In this light, the cinema of terror emerges as profoundly reflexive, compelling the audience to confront the Real and contemplate their living conditions outside the movie theater.

IV: Conclusion: Photography Inter-facing Cinema

In hindsight, Yang's *The Terrorizers* foreshadows several motifs later explored in *Yiyi*; however, in the conclusion of this article, I underscore the distinctions between them. Both films resonate with the concept of Kino-Eye advocated by Dziga Vertov in the early 1920s, emphasizing the camera's capacity to extend the ordinary optical radius of the human eye. While the photographs of human heads captured from behind in *Yiyi* contribute to self-understanding, those of the Eurasian girl in *The Terrorizers*, particularly the enlarged photograph of her returned gaze, signify a profound connection between photography and fetishism in the urban milieu. Drawing from Doane's thesis, I propose that in a highly capitalist city dominated by the rationalization of time and space, contingent incidents become a spectacular lure for the young photographer grappling with the banality and ennui of everyday life. His capturing of the girl in photographic images is followed by a loss or symbolic death, which transforms the enlarged photograph of her into a fetish. Its installation in a darkroom intensifies its fetishistic characteristics until the Eurasian girl herself steals the photographer's cameras after a one-night stand. The wind of the Real blows into the room when the photographer finally confronts the reality he has

been avoiding.

Comparing the photographer's camera with that of Yangyang, one immediately observes the violent nature of the former as aggressive and cannibalistic when taking snapshots on a city street. For the photographer, random shooting falsely serves as a means by which alienated urbanites attempt to reconnect with the outside world; however, the accumulation of numerous undeveloped photographs only proves the act of photographing is futile for redemption. If the mental mechanism of self-defense against shocks in the urban milieu leads to numbness in urban residents, the director's camera regains its ability to shock and terrorize the audience in the city through the device of the inter-face. When the Eurasian girl returns to her previous apartment, now a darkroom, and encounters her own enlarged photograph, she loses consciousness due to her illness, exhaustion, and unexpected encounter with her face close-up. Certainly, being seen without seeing the seer causes sudden damage to her psyche, but the moment of the inter-face also prefigures the power of terror that awakens the audience and forces them to confront an unbearable reality. Later, in the skywalk scene, the sound of the camera's clicks disrupts the suturing process and maintains distance from the various ways of seeing involved in photographing and filming. This also marks the moment of inter-face between the camera in the diegetic film world and that in the extra-diegetic actual world, evoking a sense of reflexivity, estrangement, and displacement in the audience.

To conclude with a metaphor, as spectators of the shadow show in Plato's cave, the cinema of spectacle and that of terror guide us in different directions. The former tends to substitute the show for the real world, ensnaring the audience with its fetishistic illusion, while the latter aims to unveil the

candle and guide the audience out of the cave to witness the actual world. Echoing Plato's allegory, Barthes in "Leaving the Movie Theater" suggests at least two ways to escape the entrapment of the screen: establishing a critical distance through Brechtian techniques and a reflexive awareness of the extra-diegetic surroundings (1986: 348-349). Following Barthes' instructions, Yang introduces a cinema of horror that cultivates critical distance through the disruption of suture and, by invoking the indexicality of photography, prompts a state of reflexivity in his audience living in the urban milieu. Through the device of inter-face with *The Terrorizers*' projected shadow, the real world is not only perceived as genuine in contrast to the fictional but also revealed as the traumatic Real in Žižek's sense to terrorize the audience.

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