

Two Interpretations of the Chinese Film, *Shower* (With a detailed catalogue of scenes in the appendix)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ives

In 2001, I was visiting the home of my friend, Joe Heinlein in Torrance, California. Joe, knowing of my love of Asian culture (I have been teaching American and English Literature at Ibaraki Christian for 27 years; I had just returned from an exciting lecture-visit to Tianjin Normal prior to the Torrance visit), said to me, "I have a film you might enjoy." Without further comment, he instantly slipped in the video of *Shower*. Predictably, Joe had read me right. The film made a deep impression upon me, and at that moment I decided to eventually write an analysis paper with my new Chinese friend, Professor Zhao Lizhu of Tianjin. It has been five years since the idea for the paper first occurred to me.

My vision for the paper did not include a perfectly matched assessment of the film. In fact, what thrilled me was the prospect that I might interpret this Chinese work with reference to my own American, Christian, liberal arts background, and Professor Zhao would approach the subject from the vantage point of his own rich heritage.

2006 is turning out to be quite a fulfilling year; (1) Zhao Lizhu is doing a visiting professorship on this campus, (2) the president of Tianjin Normal extended an invitation to me and Professor Alan Partee to visit that campus for a week in June and speak on Nineteenth Century Missionary Work and the Taiping Rebellion, and (3) Professor Zhao and I are finally getting a chance to publish the paper on *Shower*.

In this paper, both of us will focus on three particular scenes or concepts for explanation. For my part, I have chosen to discuss three concepts : (1) The Father and the Returning Son, (2) Water as Emblematic of Ritualistic Cleansing and Purification and (3) The Persistent Story of "Warring" Brothers in World Literature.

Just below the major numbered sections of this paper are indications of which of the writers is responsible for that section. Overwhelmed by the wonderful citations from Confucius which Professor Zhao provides, I have taken the liberty to add footnotes citing quotations of remarkably similar sentiments from Jesus Christ.

II. INTRODUCTION (continued)

Zhao

I got to know Professor Harris Ives in 1999 when he visited Tianjin Normal University where I served as Dean of the College of Foreign Languages. I was deeply impressed by his good personality and excellent teaching. Immediately detecting in each other a passion for international education (I had taught ESL in America at Shenandoah College in Virginia; he has been teaching for many years at Ibaraki Christian), we often talked of methods of English Education in various cultures. Professor Ives visited my university many times since our initial meeting; however, there have been various obstacles to my arriving on the IC campus (my administrative work at Tianjin, the different academic calendars of the schools, etc) but with some planning on the part of IC, President Osamu Takino, and Professor Ives, and my own Tianjin Normal University, I am finally able to visit and even teach at the very campus which is the workplace of so many talented scholars. Professor Ives was so right when he told me that I would meet greatly responsive students and teachers at this school. Over the years, Professor Ives and I have discussed doing some writing together. This paper, a critique of a modern Chinese film, is our collaboration.

Recently, Professor Ives and I sat in the large projection room on the IC campus. We viewed *Shower* which details the experiences of a successful businessman during his return to his old homestead in China. For my part, I shall focus on the following three sections: (1) The relationship between the old father and his estranged elder son, (2) The relationship between the old father and his mentally retarded son, and (3) The relationship between a quarrelling married couple (they are able to avoid the divorce which had seemed so certain at the beginning of the movie).

III. The Father and the Returning Son

Ives

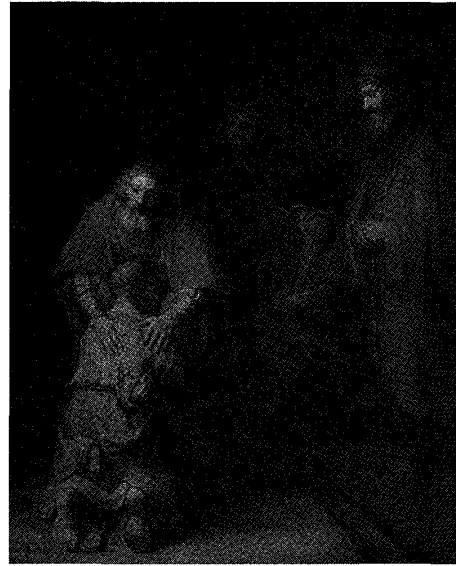
It would be unnatural for me as a professor of English and American Literature, as a Christian, and as a minister of the Church of Christ on the campus of Ibaraki Christian University, to miss the connection between this story and the famous Prodigal Son story of the Bible. I am not suggesting that Zhang Yang (the director) consciously contrived a story to resemble the tale so often told from Western pulpits. But good students of literature know of two things : (1) the truly great story plots are universal, and (2) a well-told tale of reconciliation always excites the human heart. Frequently, in our conversations, Professor Zhao and I exchange story summaries from our respective cultures; we often find ourselves saying, "Oh yes, we have that concept in our culture, too."

Rembrandt's Painting and the Bible Story

Before proceeding to a fuller discussion of the father and son scene in *Shower*, we must place Zhang Yang's film in overall context of the persistent story of an estranged son and father finally coming to an acceptance of each other. The great Dutch Master, Rembrandt, takes his cue from the old story told by Jesus in Luke 15: 11-31. The Renaissance artist painted the story, featuring the two major characters. The father, gorgeously arrayed, stands above his penitent and returned son, placing both hands on the shoulders of the kneeling young man. Using the dramatic lighting that is so typical of Rembrandt paintings, the artist bathes these characters in warm golden light against a dark background. The son is in tatters; he had previously demanded his inheritance before his father's death and departed to a far country where he spent his money on partying friends. Finally, when all of his money was gone, and when all of the "friends" had abandoned him, the son was forced to live and eat among pigs. Thinking that if only his father would receive him again into the house—this time as servant (the boy had no hope of being fully restored as a son), he walked back home where his gracious father received him as a son.

Zhang Yang's Characters

Of course there are significant differences between the sons of Jesus' story and Rembrandt's painting and Zhang Yang's characters. Most strikingly, the son in the Biblical account returned home in disgrace and was warmly greeted by the father. The son in Zhang's film returned home in a beautiful set of clothes which implied a successful life in the big city—he, however, was painfully ignored by the father at first. But we appreciate the similarities; both the Bible story and the Zhang Yang film feature a father with two sons, one of whom left the family compound. In both accounts, a difference in values is at the heart of the estrangement; the sons wanted money. They want to be free of the dictates of the father. The Biblical son learns of his mistake when he finds himself eating among pigs. He cannot afford anything now. He cannot even afford pride. He is desperate. He goes home in the hopes that he could possibly be employed in his father's house. But, of course, the loving father is so happy to be reunited



Rembrandt van Rijn's *The Prodigal Son* (1662; The Hermitage, St. Petersburg). This painting shows the penitent return of an errant son to his gracious father. For a good study of a quartet on this theme, the reader is recommended to consider this painting alongside Zhang Yang's *Shower* (1999) Ryunosuke Akutagawa's (1892-1927) short story, *Tu Tze Chun*, and William Steinbeck's novel, *East of Eden* (1952).

with his lost son that he lavishes wealth upon the prodigal son. In Zhang's film, it appears that the son is better off monetarily than his father. He does not need his father's money. In fact, he is slow to understand that he needs anything from his family. But as he observes the great love between the father and the retarded son, and as he comes to understand that his father is wealthy in wonderfully different ways, he moves back (at least emotionally) into the home he left.

IV. The Old Father and the Elder Son

Zhao

The Old Father is an example of China's traditional values, mainly the idea of being content with simplicity and even poverty. We can find this kind of acceptance in the teachings of Confucius, dating back some 2,000 years. Confucius praised his disciple Yan Hui who expressed satisfaction with his "single bamboo bowl of millet to eat, a gourdful of water to drink, and a back alley to live in."¹ Yan Hui never loses his pleasure in these simple things.²

The Old Father Formed by Life Circumstances

The old father is molded by his life circumstances; he is bereft of his wife not long after his marriage, and he thus serves as both father and mother to his sons, the elder son, Da Ming and his retarded brother, Er Ming. The old father is comfortable with the routines of his simple, hard life: the roof leaks, the food is plain, there is the repetitive rhythm to the bathhouse business; maintenance of the retarded son requires adherence to a daily pattern. Many people these days would consider such a life undesirable and unbearable. But the old father never complains; instead, he seems to find pleasure and meaning in his poor life. Reluctant to see his bathhouse demolished, he struggles to carry on the business despite government notice that the area will be torn down. The old father has inherited a way of life that he feels honored to continue. His ways are the ways of traditional virtue; he represents the old family and community values.

A Difficult Past Gives Mettle to His Character

The movie also reveals by means of flashback, the source of the old father's tenac-

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1. *Encyclopedia Americana*, International Edition, Grolier Incorporated, Danbury, Connecticut, 1989, p. 541.
 2. Ives: On a very recent tour of temples of various sects of Buddhism in Kyoto, both of the collaborators of this article noted the great similarities in motifs and themes among world philosophies; as our tour guide explained the philosophy of contentment and of minimizing of desire as expressed in one sect, I was reminded of St. Paul's teaching in the Book of Philippians, "...For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances; I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty." (Philippians 4:11)

ity. It seems that he has had a miserable childhood experience: during his youth, poor people traveled far to trade pots of grain for pots of water. Water is so scarce that a young maiden cannot fully participate in the ritualistic bath before her wedding ceremony. The miserable past experiences make the old father appreciative of things he does enjoy in the present.

Furthermore, in his simple life and hard work, the old father establishes very pleasant and harmonious interpersonal relationships which become an unalienable part of his life. To his dying day, the old father has a sense of connection to his community, and even to the memory of his deceased wife. His life involves sharing and touching; that is why he cannot accept the idea of the new massaging machines. When the businessman-son presents the father with a self-massaging chair, the old man expresses happiness with the gift, but he cannot accept it as a replacement for the hand massages his bathhouse provides

The Elder Son

The elder son, at the beginning represents the modern values, conflicting with those of his father. His past experience is not directly shown in the movie. Instead, the audience must assess this character only by his present appearance, emotion, speaking and behavior, etc. By analyzing these elements, the audience can assemble a clear picture of his past; he comes from a poor family; he, however, is unlike his father. He is not content with the plain living. He has tired of the bathhouse. In fact, we can say that his escape to Shenzhen, a commercial and economic zone, is a repudiation of his bathhouse past. Shenzhen is the pioneer city in China's new economic era—the reforms of that area represent the promise of modern life.

Geography and Character Differences

It can be seen from his appearance that he is successful. The audience can guess that Da Ming has made a "fortune" in Shenzhen; he comes back home like a businessman or a manager. He wears an expensive suit and carries a briefcase; he has all the accoutrements of a successful city life: he communicates with his wife via cell phone. The tension between the traditional and modern values is well-represented by the directional differences of the two locations: the old father lives in the North; the elder son lives in the South.

The elder son, upon his brief stay with his old father, has forgotten much. As I analyze the scene of his entrance, I suspect that he is somewhat disappointed to find his father alive—he had misinterpreted the postcard that the retarded brother had sent him, and he had assumed that he was coming home to a funeral. Emotionally, the elder son has become a renegade to his family, his father, his brother, and the old community values. With so many differences between father and son, it is inevitable that there are many conflicts.

V. The Conflicts between the Old Father and the Elder Son

Zhao

The elder son does not like the protracted ritual of the bath. Rather than showering and then relaxing a long time in the tub, the elder son prefers the quicker method of the South: a fast, standing shower. His home has become strange to him. At the dinner table, the retarded son and father relish their food, whereas the older son eats mincingly, causing the father to inquire if the old traditional foods are still delectable to him.

The elder son is not accustomed to the life of the bathhouse. On the second day in his father's home, he orders an airline ticket and prepares to return to his new home in Shenzhen. He gives his father an expensive self-massaging machine, thinking that it will replace him as a son when he leaves. But what the father needs is love and personal communication, not the machine. He does not understand his father.

The elder son's negligence results in temporary loss of the retarded son. When the elder son returns home without his retarded brother, the father flies into a rage and shouts: "We live pretty well without you. What is the sense of your coming back? I know that you look down upon the bathhouse and me. But as for me I am content to see the old familiar neighbors." This is the climax of their deteriorated relations, the moment the father cannot help venting his anger upon his elder son.

That the elder son has left his father and retarded brother in the first place is an offense to the Chinese moral code. He is undutiful and irresponsible. In the following quotation, the master refers to Confucius:

The Master said, "A young man's duty is to behave well to his parents at home³ and to have kindly feelings towards everyone, but seek the intimacy of the Good."⁴

The elder son fails to behave well to the father at home which is the main reason why the father is annoyed with him. In Chinese cultural tradition, Da Ming is not considered a good guy; rather he is to be regarded as an inferior man: "The superior man

3. Ives: This sentiment resonates especially well with followers of the Judeo-Christian tradition: their common scripture is Deuteronomy 5:17.

Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (New International Version)

4. Confucius, *The Analects*, translated by Arthur Waley, Foreign Language and Teaching Press, 1998, pp. 4-5.

understands what is right; the inferior man understands what is profitable.”^{5, 6}

In the eyes of the father, the elder son is only interested in profit; the elder son's neglect of the father and the retarded son is the basis from which the conflicts arise.

The problem nowadays is quite common in China. Of course human beings have the right to pursue happiness. China's reforms are intended to make people wealthy. However, it does not mean that we must live just for money. It does not mean that money is everything. The old father pursues a life of personal love, while the rich son pursues a life of money. So the lesson that the movie conveys here is that while we search for wealth, we can never forget human love and duty.

Reconciliation between the old father and the elder son

To settle the conflicts the movie chooses a solution of reconciliation between the father and the son. Both of them change their attitudes toward each other; finally, they are reconciled.

The son's short stay at home changes him perceptibly. The visit also eventually effected a change in the father. At home, the son observes the father's compassion: playing in the baths with the retarded son, dealing with the problems of various clients, etc. By and by he comes to understand why his father sticks to the old life. One particular scene seems to express the son's gradual appreciation of his father: a heavy down-pour causes the roof to leak. The old father climbs on the roof and makes temporary repairs. Seeing his father's efforts in the rain, the son climbs up and assists him. This is the turning point of their relationship. The old father thinks that the prodigal son is beginning to come back; he *shows* more appreciation for his son.

Unfortunately, the father dies shortly after this heartwarming scene on the rooftop. The elder son assumes the father's role and takes the retarded son South to Shenzhen. So the reconciliation does not simply symbolize the elder son's return to the old tradition. It implies the combination of traditional and modern values. The compromise involves the elder's son incorporating the compassion of the old father and his accommodation of his retarded brother in the modern city. The movie shows people the wisdom of integrating old and new values.

5. Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, Grolier Incorporated, Danbury, Connecticut, 1989, p. 541).

6. Ives: In Christianity, too, there is a healthy suspicion of profit-making as somewhat deleterious to the cultivation of a right spirit. I Timothy 6:10 declares quite famously "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains," (The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, 1989). William Wordsworth's poem, *The World is Too Much With Us* (1807) expresses that Christian sentiment in language very familiar to literate Westerners:

The world is too much with us; late and soon
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers,
Little we see in Nature that is ours,
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.

VI. Relationship between the Father and the Retarded Son

Zhao

Of course the movie features a great contrast in the different relationships of the father and his two sons. We have already discussed the relationship with the successful son, now let us regard the relationship between the father and the retarded son.

The father seems to love the retarded son more. Although the elder son has all of the prized traits (he is financially successful; he is intelligent; he has an excellent physical presence), it is the good traditional virtue of China to be especially loving toward the weak, the young. Confucius says, "Jen is to love men."^{7, 8}

As a teacher of humanity, Confucius stated his ambition in terms of concern for human beings: "To bring comfort to the old, to have trust in friends, and to cherish the young."^{9, 10}

In line with the Confucian virtue, the father does not tire of caring for his retarded son. The retarded son and the father enjoy several rituals. Among them, they enjoy a foot race every evening after the bathhouse closes. The father and the retarded son take their own baths, splashing each other like playful children.

The father takes the retarded son as an indispensable part of his life; he does not regard him as a burden. When the retarded son is lost, the father blames the elder son, "I have lost a son, and I cannot lose the other one." The former refers to the elder son who stays far away from the father both geographically and emotionally; the latter refers to the retarded son. The movie advocates the good virtue by means of the image of the old father.

The father's love for the retarded son is different from that of the elder son. Of course, he still loves the elder son, even though he estranges himself from the father.

7. Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, Grolier Incorporated, Danbury, Connecticut, 1989, p. 541)

8. Ives: The comparable teaching in the Judeo-Christian tradition is the refrain that the most "pure religion is the care of widows and orphans." James 1:27 (New Revised Standard Version, 1989).

9. The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 16, Macropedia in Depth, 15th Edition, 1989, Chicago, Illinois, p. 655.

10. Ives: Confucius (c. 551- 479 B.C.) predates Jesus, of course. And their cultures were different. Yet, we can find a certain philosophical "kindredness" among them. Similarly, Jesus articulated that his primary mission was to offer comfort to particular human beings:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has anointed me
To bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To let the oppressed go free,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18 - 19; NRSV, 1989).

But in his love there is affectionate blame which shows his complaint. He cannot understand his elder son's behavior. As for the retarded son who is weak, the father exhausts himself in loving and protecting him.

The retarded son considers the father as his closest friend. He understands that he is inseparable from his father. He has many of the good traits of the father. He is hardworking, honest, and full of love. Simple, honest and naïve, he never complains about the hard work. He does not avoid the routines of the bathhouse. When an angry wife comes to the bathhouse to chastise her errant husband, the retarded son prevents an angry confrontation. He simply hands the husband's clothes to the wife.

When people come to demolish the bathhouse, he gets angry and resists them. His behavior goes against the norm, but he is reasonable and lovable. When the father dies, he just scrubs the floor as his response. He tells his elder brother, "Our daddy dies a hero." He has devoted himself to his father so much, that he gets "crazy" when the old father dies. He resists the hospital where the elder brother places him. Although the facilities are modern and seemingly comfortable, it lacks the warmth he enjoyed in his father's bathhouse.

The Elder Son

In contrast to the old father, the elder son does not have so strong a love toward the retarded man. Putting money and business first, he thinks that the retarded brother is a burden for the father and himself at first. For example, when the elder son comes back home, his retarded brother smiles broadly and moves to meet him. But obviously the warm greeting is not returned by the elder brother.

He is financially rich and physically healthy, but his personality is distorted. Upon getting married, he could not admit to his new wife that he had a retarded brother. He cannot understand this great love of the father for the retarded son. Condescending to take his retarded brother along to the city, he fails to show proper care. In the city, he concentrates on the business of getting his return ticket at the airline counter. He neglects the retarded brother. Consequently, Er Ming gets lost.

After the funeral, Da Ming is overwhelmed with the responsibility of caring for Er Ming. Finally, Da Ming determines that he must take Er Ming to the mental institution and leave him there. He does not see that his brother, although retarded, requires affection and has the same needs as normal people. Only after having deposited the brother and after having driven away a few miles is he conscience stricken. He returns to the hospital, retrieves his brother and drives back to the bathhouse with him.

Finally, Da Ming sells the bathhouse and takes his younger brother to Shenzhen.

The triangular relationship between the old father and the two sons reflects the conflicts between the traditional and the modern values. As a result, the fine traditions triumph - although there is considerable capitulation to the modern values.

So, in modernizing China, we should cultivate two elements: material progress

and spiritual cultivation. Practice has proven that after some people get materially rich, they become corrupt with the money; their behavior includes gambling, prostitution, drug dealings, abandonment of parents. These things are not for our good as the film shows.

VII. Relationship between the Troubled Husband and Wife

Zhao

As minor characters, the troubled husband and wife do not appear often in the film. They, however, are far from unimportant, presenting another problem in present day China: divorce. In gently dealing with these troubled characters, the old father shows his wisdom. Divorce is common nowadays; it is even a serious social problem. After the opening up of China, people attached great importance to the quality of their marriage. The divorce rate is going up quickly as many people conclude that they do not have quality relationships. The side effects include homeless children and social unrest. So people are divided on the issue; some try to remain married, even if unhappily so; others stick to a divorce-is-freedom policy. The film, obviously, champions the maintenance of marriage.

The husband wants to divorce the wife for two reasons: (1) she, stark naked, runs after the robber who has taken her gold necklace, (2) he becomes impotent due to his mental anguish over the event. By traditional interpretation of these events, the woman really makes the husband lose face. She has behaved disgracefully and shamefully, sufficient cause for a divorce. But on the other hand, the woman is not so incorrigible as he thinks. She loves the necklace given to her by her husband. She treasures it so much that she forgets her nakedness in her effort to retrieve the necklace. Is she really guilty of such bad behavior? Secondly, the husband's impotence is due to a psychological problem. These latter two elements cause frustration; he cannot easily divorce her. The traditional virtue in China is that you can break up 10 temples, but not a marriage.¹¹

The family bond of the Chinese people is even recognized by people of other cultures in the world. The father is smart to work out a good idea for saving the marriage. Saving a marriage is a great virtue in China. In fact the movie uses the incident to admonish the world. Very often the situation is not as irredeemable as we imagine. The happy reunion of the troubled couple shows that understanding and love are needed in modern society. It also shows us that the number of divorces can be reduced.

11. Ives: a major embarrassment to Christianity these days is the number of divorces tolerated among "the faithful." Much time and scholarship are expended upon interpreting the words of Jesus who insisted that divorce is not ideal: ". . . And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery. . ." (Matthew 19:9, NRSV, 1989).

The Old Father's Personality

The divorce crisis in the film shows more than the big problem in China, it shows the father's great passion for human beings and his wisdom in helping to preserve the marriage. He works out a good plan: he entices each partner to enter the specially reserved bath, indicating that there is a "special Chinese medicine" in the waters—the special medicine is privacy and an opportunity for tenderness. This episode is closely related to the father's personality.

The film shows that the father not only loves his sons, but that he also loves other people. This love is the most important thing of the Chinese people in the reform period:

Treat the aged of your own family in a manner befitting their venerable age and extend this treatment to the aged of other families; treat your own young ones in a manner befitting their tender age and extend this to the young of other families (*Mencius*, translated by D. C. Lau, p.56, Penguin Books, Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1970)¹²

The father attends to everyone: he massages clients; he stops quarrels; he counsels the lovelorn; he even prevents a young man from being mobbed by angry underworld characters coming to collect a debt from the hapless young man. Does he do all of this for money? Absolutely not. He loves people—and love, rather than money, makes the world more harmonious and beautiful.

The bathhouse of this film is a place to acquire physical and spiritual cleansing. The film presents us with profound philosophical and ethical ideas through a simple story and photography.

VIII. Water as Emblematic of Ritual Cleansing and Purification

Ives

Shower belongs to a long list of world literature which makes emblematic use of water as a curative, purifying medium, cleansing agent, and catalyst for contemplation. Judeo-Christian books are replete with such images. Shakespeare incorporates it in Lady Macbeth's speech, "Out, out damned spot", Mark Twain builds a novel of a boy's escape from an unloving father and world. The greatness of the book involves the serenity which Huckleberry Finn and Jim find on the Mississippi River. Below, find a few of the important pieces of literature which share this mystical representation of

12. Ives: Of course Jesus echoes this in His famous statement: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 19:19).

water with *Shower*.

- A. The Book of Genesis; *The Flood Narrative*
- B. The Gospel of John; *The Woman at the Well Narrative*
- C. The Gospel of John; *The Story of the Angel-Stirred Waters of Bethesda*
- D. The Gospel of Matthew; *The Baptism of Jesus Christ*
- E. William Shakespeare: *Macbeth*
- F. Mark Twain: *Huckleberry Finn*
- G. Ernest Gaines, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*
- H. The Koran; *The Scene of Moses Striking the Rock to Procure Water*

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- A. *The Book of Genesis* is the very first book of The Judeo-Christian Bible. It contains the story of the creation of human beings, the great flood, and other stories so familiar to the literate peoples of the world, of course, shows God's anger at sinful mankind. Determined to purge the earth of the evils, God instructs one good man (Noah and his family) to build and get inside of the ark. They alone will be saved. Read the account in Genesis chapters 6, 7, 8, 9. The powerful waters rained for forty days. After that flood, the world was cleansed and creation began anew. Also see references to the Flood in the Koran: Sura 11:40 – The Koran, Everyman Library Paperback Edition, Charles E. Tuttle (London, 1994), p. 142, 143.
- B. *The Gospel of John* is one of the four different biographies of Jesus Christ included in the Bible. My personal opinion is that John's account is more literary than the other three. His story of *The Woman at the Well* (John 4: 3-41) concerns a conversation Jesus had with a Samaritan Woman during his daily walk. The woman, although apparently quite intelligent, was an outcast in her community because of her multiple sexual partners. Jesus, a stranger to her, asked her for a portion of water; startled that a Jew would address a Samaritan woman, she launches into a discourse on the adversarial relationships between the two groups. Jesus engages in a poetic discussion of water and its symbolic implications of purity, spiritual contentment, and grace.
- C. The Gospel of John, *The Story of the Angel Stirred Waters*. See this beautiful story in John 5: 1 – 17. There are variations on the name of the famous miraculous pool; *The Contemporary English Version* (1976) of the Bible refers to it as Bethzatha; *The New King James Version* (1982) uses the more familiar Bethesda (from which the important military hospital in Maryland in the United States derives its name). The story speaks of many handicapped people seeking the healing effects of the special spring waters.
- D. *The Book of Matthew, The Baptism of Jesus* (Matthew 3: 13 - 17) - . Jesus meets his cousin one day, also an itinerant preacher. John, the cousin, lived eccentrically; he dressed in wild animal skins and lived very ascetically. His followers submitted to a ritual cleansing in a body of water. Jesus showed up one day. John was surprised that the pure Jesus would submit to the rite. The event marked a beginning of a commitment on the part of Jesus to prepare Himself for the death on the Cross as a substitute for sinful mankind. Some scholars recognize baptism as a recreation of the birth of a child from the womb – the waters simulate the amniotic fluid from which the child emerges.
- E. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*. See Act 5, Scene 1. Feeling guilty for her part in the murder, Lady Macbeth becomes obsessed with imaginary hand washing. But there is no water or soap which will bring the cleansing she wants.
- F. Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*. Numerous academic articles have been written on the contrast of the relative peace and harmony Huck and Jim experience on the river with the chaos and cruelty they experience on land. As in *Shower*, water seems a calming agent.

I depend greatly upon Professor Zhao Lizhu to inform me of Chinese culture. I trust his analysis of *Shower*. For my part, though, I think it a legitimate academic exercise to look upon an artwork of another culture and find personal meaning. I do not suggest that Zhang Yang, the producer of *Shower* wanted to call to mind Western and Christian values (Obviously though, by releasing his work worldwide, he must have suspected that international audiences, having only limited access to commentaries on Chinese culture, would draw upon their own value systems in making connections with the film). I only want to say that the film resonates with me because it connects with my background, too.

As a Christian and as a university literature teacher, I am particularly satisfied with the water emblem in *Shower*. Upon first viewing of the film, I had thought that the English title of the film had been erroneously translated. The actual establishment in the film is a bathhouse. However, at the very beginning, there is that seemingly disconnected scene of a businessman entering a shower device. The camera work makes much of the mechanical aspect of the process: brushes, sprays, helmets and a private space equivalent to that of a telephone booth. The short scene serves as a contrast to the relaxed scene of the traditional bath in which the master massages a client, while others luxuriate as they submerge themselves in the bath.

The title is accurately translated after all—though much of the washing in the film is in large bathing pools; it is the shower that is “the antagonist” of the film. The shower is private; it requires standing in a confined place; it is mechanically timed so that no one customer gets more water and soap than he deserves or has paid for. The villain of the film is not a person. It is the concept of cold, precise measurement. It is that lack of human compassion which is expressed by the aloneness of the individual in the shower, and by the “white noise” of the humming brushes and machines and by the mechanical jets and sprays of water. Cleansing occurs, but only the most perfunc-

G. Ernest Gaines, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, 1971. This first, highly praised novel recounts the story of a long-lived African-American woman. Born in slavery, she lived through the discrimination of the American South. In the 1960s, African-Americans were “free,” but still not fully embraced in the American society. The laws of segregation demeaned them and relegated them to second class citizenship. There were even places where Blacks were not allowed to drink the water from public fountains. The bold protest of the elderly Jane Pittman emboldened the youth to assert themselves and demand their rightful place in American society. Of course the imagery of the water as connected to “salvation” is unmistakable.

H. The Koran, translated by J.M. Rodwell and Alan Jones, Everyman Press, Vermont, 1994. There are a few stories which the Judeo-Christian Bible and the Koran share. *Moses Striking the Rock* is told in both scriptures. The story involves the newly-freed Israelites complaining to Moses that at least they had food and water in Egypt. God instructs Moses to command water from a rock to quench the people's thirst and convince them one more time of His power and protectiveness.

tory kind of cleansing. As I analyze the film, the emphasis is on the encroachment of machines and depersonalization which is the evil "star" of the film. The modern shower offers no community experience.

Personally, Calvinistic prudery¹³ pretty much limits me to the private shower. I do not personally relish the idea of disrobing in public, or of holding extended conversation while naked. What I want to say is that the public bath as a *symbol* of community sharing and catharsis is appealing to me. The following ideas are understandable to me: (1) Communities sin, (2) Communities are in need of purification (3) Many communities engage in public rituals involving water. These elements connect with my Christian heritage. Early in my initial readings of the New Testament, I was greatly moved by the story of the multitude of afflicted folk who thronged to the mystical pools of Bethesda in search of spiritual cleansing—and healing.

The men who come to the Bathhouse are troubled for various reasons in addition to the need to rid themselves of actual dirt: (1) one bathes in hopes of curing his sexual impotence; (2) another discovers that the comforting waters release his inhibitions and allow him to sing opera (comically, he can only sing when he is wet); (3) two old men come to the bath to relax, and then, after their bathing, to test their fighting beetles against each other; (4) still others come to tell their sad stories to the bathhouse master—as if he were a priest granting absolution for sins. Here we see "all manner of impotent folk" similar to the physically handicapped individuals who sought miraculous healing in the pools of Bethesda in John 5:1 - 4

After this there was feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool which is called

13. Although I definitely do not accept much of John Calvin's teachings, as an American and as a reader of the great writers of our culture, I am subject to his influence. Calvin has influenced the most prominent of the American writers, Herman Melville, Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner. See James D. Boulger, *The Calvinist Temper in English Poetry*, Mouton Publishers (The Hague, 1980).

John Calvin, (1509–1564), one of the great Protestant reformers whose works have highly influenced American religion and culture. To be American is, in many ways, to have been knowingly or unknowingly influenced by this rigid thinker. People who are only casually acquainted with the Calvin name readily refer to his teaching of Original Sin—the idea that babies are born sinful. There is a large segment of Christianity which teaches this idea. However, there is also a large segment of Christianity which repudiates such a doctrine. My own denomination, the church of Christ (which influences at least 20 different American universities) does not believe that children are born sinful. In fact, we often cite the famous passage in the Bible where Jesus summons little children to Himself and says to the adults standing by, ". . . Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). That children are born *innocent* is definitely the moral of this passage.

in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

The Bible depicts a “magical Jacuzzi” –the story features one particularly sad man who cannot take advantage of the healing of the waters. He can never manage to be first. The mystery of the place is that only the first afflicted person in the water gets the healing for that season. The fortunate ones are inevitably those who have strong supporters who lift them quickly into the waters. This man is without a friend. Jesus Christ happens upon him and listens to his complaint. Without relying upon the benefits of the pool, Jesus instantly, miraculously heals the man.

In the film, the character who wrenches the heart of the viewer is the man who is sexually impotent. Physically little, he quickly gets the sympathy of the viewer. His impetuous wife was robbed while taking a public bath. The intruder depended upon her modesty: he figured that surely she would not pursue him as he grabbed her necklace and ran into the street. He misread her. Shaming herself and her husband, she went after her property. The diminutive husband was so embarrassed by the episode, that he beat his wife. From a Christian perspective, the woman may be guilty of immodesty; the husband is definitely guilty of violence and domestic abuse. He is a “sympathetic character” to me because he is guilt-ridden. He obviously loves his wife very much. In a moment’s loss of control, he abused his wife who had already been abused by a stranger. Hurting the one he loved (no matter what blame she may own) makes this man so human and so identifiable. He needs healing. And the wise Master of the Bathhouse designs a scheme of forgiveness for him—he arranges a private bathing session for the two of them in the Bathhouse.

For me the connection with this scene in *Shower* and in John Chapter Five is the irony of the circumvented magic: in John 5: 1-4, the “magical” waters were not needed after all; in *Shower*, it was not the water nor any special herbs of the master which effected the healing. In both cases the healing was brought about by the love and care of the “special other”: Jesus and the bathhouse master.

IX. The Recurrent and Universal Concept of the Father and Two Sons

Ives

A Few Variations on the theme of the Concept in World Literature

- A. *The Book of Genesis* - Cain and Abel
- B. *East of Eden* (John Steinbeck) Aaron and Cal
- C. *The Prodigal Son* - Unnamed characters
- D. *This Much I know is True* (Wally Lamb) -- Thomas, Dominic
- E. *Greenleaf* (Flannery O'Connor) - Scofield and Wesley; O.T.; N.T.
- F. *Titus Andronicus* (William Shakespeare) - Several sons
- G. *A River Runs Through It, Norman MacClean* - Norman and Paul
- H. *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* (Anne Tyler) - Ezra, Cody

Shower belongs to a category of literature: stories which develop the concept of a father and two sons (often the one son is a disappointment to the father, while the

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- A. Dianne Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Christian Art*, Continuum Press (New York, 1995), p. 14. The Book of Genesis is the very first book of the Judeo-Christian Bible. It details the creation of the universe. It contains the familiar story of the first human beings in the Garden of Eden. Michelangelo's famous ceiling (Ca. 1511) in the Sistine Chapel gives a beautifully graphic depiction of Adam at the moment of his awakening. Of course the book details the rivalry of Adam's two sons, Cain and Abel.
 - B. John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*, Viking Press (New York, 1952). This novel was published ten years before Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize. The equally famous film version was made in 1955 and was directed by Elia Kazan. Julie Harris and James Dean are the well-known stars of the production. The book and novel share the development of the familiar theme of the father-and-two-sons which Zhang Yang's film explores in 1999.
 - C. *The Prodigal Son* story occurs in Luke 15: 11- 31. The melodramatic story is one piece of a trilogy of stories told by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. Other stories in the set include: The Lost Coin and The Lost Sheep. This Lost Son story has all of the elements to grab the heart: a longsuffering father, a kiss, a gold ring, a confession, and an element of jealousy (on the part of the "good son" who had never left the homestead).
 - D. Wally Lamb, *This Much I know is True*, Harper Collins-Reagan (New York, 1999). Released the same year as Zhang Yang's film. Lamb's long novel is yet another treatment of the two-brothers theme. In Lamb's treatment, the brothers are twins. Dominic is normal; Thomas is schizophrenic. The healthier brother suffers from guilt because, though he loves his twin greatly, he cannot suppress feelings of anger and embarrassment. The novel opens with the mentally-ill brother severing his own arm in a public library (an apparent allusion to the message of Jesus that "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. . ." (Mark 9:47) The quotation of Jesus, obviously hyperbole, has been perverted by several mentally ill persons who understood the message to be an endorsement of self-mutilation. Of course such action is a gross distortion of the idea of Jesus. Significantly, in both the Zhang Yang film and the Wally Lamb novel there are the elements of a normal vs. mentally challenged brother as well as the implication of guilt on the part of the healthier sibling.

other son seems to enjoy great favor of the patriarch).

The story which comes to the mind of most Westerners, of course, is the Cain and Abel story of The Book of Genesis. Adam, the first man, "begat" two sons: Cain and Abel. This Biblical account has the added element of interest: Adam is indeed the father of the two boys, but God, Himself, as Great Creator, appears as a father-figure to the two offspring of Adam and Eve. Below is an excerpt from the famous King James Version (1611) which utilizes the archaic but highly memorable terminology (*knew equals had sex; had respect equals showed favoritism; wroth equals angry; countenance fell equals he assumed a downcast expression on his face*).

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain,
And said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of
Sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

E. Flannery O'Connor, *Greenleaf*, can be found in Laurence Perrine, *Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense*, Harcourt Brace and World (New York, 1970), p. 253 - 271. In this variation of the two-sons theme, an old aristocratic woman has fallen on hard times in the American South after World War II. Mrs. May has two sons, Wesley (an intellectual) and Scofield (a businessman). Though there are interesting contrasts among the two unmarried sons, the greater contrasts exist between Mrs. May's "boys" (adults in their 30s) and the sons of Mr. Greenleaf, an ignorant farm worker whose sons climb upward socially because of their soldiering during the war: they were able to travel to France and marry French war brides. Mrs. May is angered because her sons show no sign of producing heirs that will take over her farm, while the Greenleaf men have married intelligent women. Further Mrs. May is furious because the French women seem not to realize that they have married men who are "beneath them;" the French wives seem oblivious to the low social status and poor grammar of their husbands. Their new bi-cultural family seems to effect a role reversal in the community which Mrs. May is not willing to accept. The question of filial piety in this interesting short story is similar to the theme in *Shower*. Both stories have sons who fail to live up to the parent's expectation of continuing family values.

F. William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* (1594) One of the goriest dramas ever written, this work contains several pairings of warring sons. The complexity of the drama still does not impress most scholars. The work is in the vein of rape-multi-killings genre which finds great expression in Thomas Kydd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (Ca. 1587).

G. Norman MacClean, *A River Runs Through It*, Pocket Books (New York, 1992). A Presbyterian minister has two sons, Norman and Paul. Obviously, then, a true story. The former pleases his father and becomes a writer. The latter, given to drinking and gambling, is a disappointment though much loved by the father. The book was made into a memorable film starring Brad Pitt, in 1992.

H. Anne Tyler, *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, Knopf (New York, 1982). A dying old woman, Pearl, has three children. She realizes upon her deathbed that she has not been an especially loving single parent. She has two sons: Cody and Ezra. Cody is wild and unpredictable; Ezra is her favorite child.

And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the
First fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and the
Fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.

But unto Cain and his offering he had not respect. And Cain was
Very wroth, and his countenance fell.¹⁴

The well-known conclusion of the story is “the first murder”: Cain, unable to satisfy the high demands of God, becomes jealous of his favored brother and kills Abel.

X. The Persistent Concept of Warring Brothers in World Literature

Ives

American Literature Abounds with Allusions to Cain and Abel

— *Shower* Contains Hints of the Same Idea —

Readers of American Literature are very familiar with the many allusions to the Biblical account of Cain and Abel. John Steinbeck developed his own intricate story around the father-and-two-sons outline; *East of Eden*, tells the long tale of Adam Trask, an unflexible and religious entrepreneur and his two sons, Cal and Aaron (Steinbeck intentionally selected names that would suggest the Biblical characters). Though the boys are twins, they are very different in personality. Cal is restless and seemingly non-responsive to his father's deep religious convictions. Aaron is the favored son; he shows signs of following the life pattern his father extols: success in business, eventual marriage to a “nice girl”, continuation of the family name etc. James Dean, the teenage actor and heart throb of the 1950s, was a logical selection to dramatize the part of Cal. Though murder is not the final outcome of the drama, the return of the “bad” son is. The final scene of the novel is the disappearance of the good son and the return of Cal who sits beside his father's sick bed and nurses him. Audiences of course, respond to the sentimental device of the once-outcast son finding favor in the sight of the father who must now understand that he has underappreciated this complex offspring.

In *Showers*, Da Ming makes a visit home because of a misinterpretation of his retarded brother's half-written, half-drawn postcard. He had understood from the pic-

14. Genesis 4: 1-6.

ture that the father was dead, and he was coming home to “wrap things up,” (possibly to bury the father, institutionalize the retarded son, shut down the family business, etc.). It is interesting that Da Ming’s wife does not accompany him. If the journey were indeed a funeral mission, it would only seem appropriate to have the support and physical presence of his wife. However, the viewer of film is left to muse upon the marriage relationship as possibly not completely satisfying. Da Ming does dutifully call his wife at various points during his visit, but it becomes apparent that he has withheld the information of the retarded brother. Were there no previous family gatherings where the wife could have met the family? Were not the father and retarded brother invited to the wedding?

The father does die at end of the film. And the viewer sighs with relief that some sort of bonding did take place between Da Ming and his father and brother. Unfortunately, when Da Ming telephones his wife and confesses the condition of the brother, she hangs up on him. The viewer is left to ponder the probable dissolution of this marriage.

CONCLUSION

In writing about this impressive film, both authors of this paper have relied heavily upon their respective cultures and upbringing. Perhaps it is the measure of the power of any work of art that it lends itself so beautifully to such personal interpretation. Professor Zhao discussed specific scenes in the light of the ancient thoughts of Confucius and the modern reforms of China. Professor Ives relied upon his love of Christian Scripture and his appreciation of great works of Western literature to address the issues of this Chinese film. This project has convinced both writers that there are verities that are at the core of the best teachings in all cultures.

— Two Interpretations of the Chinese Film, *Shower* —

Appendix

Scenes from *Shower*

1. The opening sequence is of a neatly dressed businessman entering a booth.
2. Quickly, the viewer is surprised by the booth – it is an automated shower for workers in the busy city.
3. A series of brushes and buffers alternately lather, scrub, rinse and dry the man, much as if he were a car in an automatic car wash.
4. Even the shampooing of his hair is amusingly mechanized – A helmet drops down upon his head and provides the thorough cleaning and drying of his hair.
5. The next frame shows a man walking into a traditional Chinese bathhouse.

6. As the well-suited man enters the establishment, the place is bustling with naked and toweled men in various stages of a communal bath.
7. Instantly the viewer is made aware of the contrast in the mechanized showering of the earlier frame and this highly socialized bathing.
8. The men in the old bathhouse bathe, converse, get messaged by the master, argue among themselves, etc.
9. Two elderly men sit and squabble over two crickets engaged in battle inside of a little dish.
10. The elderly master of the bathhouse has to calm down the excited owners of the crickets.
11. The two cricket owners, apparently friends for years, are in danger of breaking up friendship that has obviously survived many years.
12. A corpulent young man sings in the shower.
13. He is encouraged by the mentally retarded adult son of the master.
14. The retarded man is a great fan of the budding "opera singer" (it seems *O Sole Mio* is the only selection in his repertoire).
15. The singing is not good, although there are brief moments of resonance and bravado in the performance.
16. The oddity is that the young singer can only perform as the shower pours over him.
17. When the water stops flowing, the young man stops singing.
18. It is the retarded worker-son's intention to keep the water flowing as long as possible so that he can enjoy the music.
19. However, not everyone in the bath house shares the retarded son's enthusiasm for the singing.
20. A middle-aged fellow bather is irritated by the singing; he turns off the water, thereby silencing the opera singer.
21. The retarded son restores the flowing waters, asserting himself as the son of the owner of the establishment.
22. It becomes clear that the irritated middle-aged man has other issues.
23. He is not getting along with his wife (the full story of that comes out toward the end of the film).
24. The elder master attends to everyone: he massages clients; he stops quarrels, he counsels the lovelorn, he even prevents a young man from being mobbed by angry underworld characters coming to collect a debt from the hapless young man.
25. Back to the well-suited man at the entrance.
26. He is the other son of the master of the bath house.
27. The retarded son is the first to see his brother standing in the doorway.
28. The retarded son smiles broadly and moves to greet his brother.
29. Obviously the warm greeting is not returned.
30. The retarded man is effusive in his greeting.
31. The intelligent (and apparently successful brother) is unresponsive; instead, he looks in the direction of his father.
32. The old father and the successful son make eye contact, but exchange no words.
33. Immediately the viewer understands that there is some estrangement here.
34. As the normal son unpacks his clothing on the bed (he has come for a short visit), the retarded son enjoys playing with the accoutrements of a successful city life: a cell phone, an expensive suit coat.
35. The normal brother tolerates this rummaging.
36. Finally, the normal son presents a postcard which he received from the retarded son.
37. The postcard features a childish scrawl and a picture which shows the old father in repose.
38. The normal son had apparently interpreted the drawing as a statement that the father has died.
39. But the retarded son instantly interprets his own drawing; their father was enjoying a happy, living sleep.
40. At the evening dinner, the retarded son and father relish their food. The successful son eats

- mincingly, causing the father to inquire if the old traditional foods were still delectable to the citified son.
41. The retarded son and father enjoy a regular ritual: they enjoy a foot race in the evening after the bath house is closed.
 42. The successful son is merely an observer. He is not a participant in the loving family rituals of the father and the retarded son.
 43. The old man and the retarded son take their own baths, playing in the water like two little children, spraying themselves with hoses, etc.
 44. Gradually the visiting son slips into a relaxed mode and seems to enjoy the family and work routines, though he speaks quietly into the cell phone several times telling his wife in Shenzhen that he will return home soon.
 45. He only meant to stay a few days, but he seems to find his "soul" as he revisits the old routine of his former family life.
 46. He takes a shower, but his old father is disconcerted that his estranged son does not take full advantage of the routine and enjoy a leisurely lingering in the bath.
 47. Now we see the Shenzhen son working in the establishment.
 48. He is slowly taking on some of his father's habits.
 49. He talks to the middle aged man troubled in marriage.
 50. He learns the full story.
 51. The middle aged man is angry with his impetuous wife.
 52. In an earlier incident, she had embarrassed him greatly.
 53. While visiting a public bath for women, she showered with a precious necklace on her body.
 54. A male criminal entered the bathhouse and grabbed the necklace from the naked woman, feeling secure that she would never pursue him the street.
 55. The criminal misread the impetuous wife.
 56. She was determined to retrieve her property. She ran naked into the street and got her necklace back, all the while being gawked at by the passersby.
 57. The husband, was furious. He was made to lose face by an undisciplined wife.
 58. The husband confesses to beating his errant wife.
 59. Further, he confesses to the old father and young son that he is impotent.
 60. The traumatic embarrassment is apparently the cause of his inability to perform sexually.
 61. Several times during the film, there are flashbacks to the story of a drought in the desert region of China.
 62. Families are desperate for water.
 63. Poor people travel far to trade pots of grain for pots of water.
 64. One particular young woman despairs of marriage.
 65. There is not sufficient water for her to take the bath that precedes a marriage ceremony.
 66. Forlornly, she dampens a comb in a mere basin of very shallow water and passes it through her hair.
 67. Sacrificing family members eventually secure enough water for her to fill a tub so that she can have a bath that is both ritualistically and hygienically efficacious.
 68. She weeps and sits back in the high water of the tub, knowing that her life is now changed forever: she will leave her father's house in the morning and be ridden on the horse to her groom's house.
 69. One evening, after the establishment is closed, the old father tells the middle aged man and that he can cure the impotence.
 70. He instructs the middle aged man to go into the bathhouse and to enter the water which he has treated with an excellent Chinese "restorative".
 71. The middle aged man enters the bath to find his naked wife relaxing in the water.
 72. She is the "excellent Chinese restorative".
 73. They are awkward with each other at first, but soon they are able to express tenderness toward each other in the water.

74. At the summer festival, the opera singer again attempts to sing in public. He is dressed in formal black suit.
75. He misses his cue for starting the song.
76. The audience waits patiently for him, but he cannot open his mouth.
77. Nervously, the audience laughs.
78. The retarded son, empathetic, is greatly pained.
79. The retarded son gets a "brainstorm"; he finds a hose and pours water on the formally dressed singer.
80. Instantly, the water frees the man from his "paralysis", and he gives a good performance.
81. The normal brother recognizes the depth of his brother's feeling, friendship, and fidelity.
82. Having fallen on the floor in an earlier scene, the old man begins to appear weaker.
83. He dies abruptly.
84. The retarded son is completely devastated.
85. As the bath house is closed for the funeral observation, the retarded son attempts to carry on with the routines he has known all of his life: he scrubs the floors; he arranges the towels, he watches television.
86. He watches a scientific documentary in which a scarab rolls his ball of dung.
87. The retarded son is trying, unsuccessfully to understand death.
88. Now the citified son wants to return to his wife and his work in Beijing proper.
89. He drives his retarded brother to a mental institution.
90. The retarded son had never been confined in an institution and had always enjoyed the respect and love of his doting father.
91. The successful son leaves his brother. The staff nurse assures him that his brother will eventually adjust to the place.
92. But having driven only a short way away from the hospital, the son feels tremendous guilt.
93. He arrives back at the hospital in time to see his brother screaming uncontrollably and being restrained by workers.
94. He removes his brother from the hospital and takes him back to the bathhouse.
95. Meanwhile, the city has condemned the bath house. It will be leveled in an urban renewal project.
96. The old patrons are distraught, but they are resigned to their fate.
97. They all move away.
98. On the day of the demolition, the opera singer gently places earphones in the ear of his retarded fan. He places the tape recorder in the hands of his friend. Now, the retarded man will be able to hear *O Sole Mio* repeatedly on the player.

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Two Interpretations of the Chinese Film, *Shower* (With a detailed catalogue of scenes in the appendix)

This paper combines the thoughts of two professors: Zhao Lizhu of Tianjin Normal University, The People's Republic of China; and Harris G. Ives, Ibaraki Christian University in Japan. The paper is an analysis of the important 1999 film by Zhang Yang. The film won many awards. Each professor looks at the film from the viewpoint of his culture. Professor Ives examines the film from the perspective of a Christian teacher of English and American literature. Professor Zhao examines the film from the perspective of a Chinese citizen who is aware of the influence of the teachings of Confucius on his culture.

中国映画「こころの湯」の二通りの解釈 (詳細な場面カタログつき)

この論文は天津師範大学の趙立柱および茨城キリスト教大学のハリス・アイヴズによる論考を組み合わせたもので、多くの賞を与えられたチャン・ヤン監督による中国映画「こころの湯」(1999年)の分析である。アイヴズは英語と米文学の教員であるクリスチャンとしての視点から、趙は儒教の教えの影響を受けた中国人としての視点からこの映画について考察している。