

East Goes West - Chinese Filmmakers in the United States

Tim Gruenewald

“Wayne Wang – Between Independent and Mainstream”

Wayne Wang has had an unusual career as he alternated between independent low-budget films (e.g. *Chan is Missing*, 1982 and *Blue in the Face*, 1995) and Hollywood studio productions (e.g. *Maid in Manhattan*, 2002 and *Last Holiday*, 2006). More recently, he directed the low-budget film *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*, 2007 and the ultra-low budget *The Princess of Nebraska*, 2008, which are both adaptations of short stories from the collection *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers* by Yiyun Li.

In both of these films, Wang returns to the theme of Chinese migrants and Chinese Americans after a series of Hollywood studio films. This paper examines recurrent themes in Wang’s oeuvre such as relationships between minority women and white men, racial discrimination, migration, and terminal illness. Focusing on his recent films, I will show how those themes reappear in both his larger budget studio movies and his low-budget independent films, but are framed quite differently. In this context the paper also explores experimental strategies of *The Princess of Nebraska* with regard to film form and distribution.