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What Remains of Tiananmen? Postpolitical Reduction to Bare Life in Emily Tang's *Conjugation* (2001)

Conjugation, Emily Tang's first feature film, describes the difficult love of a young unmarried couple, seeking to build a home away from the turmoil of the times after the Tiananmen events. Telling the story of their precarious active life, the sorrow about giving up their ideals, and the memory of fallen friends and comrades, *Conjugation* marks a *temps mort*, a time no verb can be conjugated with.

This analysis of *Conjugation* will focus on the idea that neoliberalism operates a reduction of the political to a *post-political*, economic management issue. Following on the work of Giorgio Agamben about the *homo sacer* figure, this reduction will be thought as an *extraction of bare life*. We will try to show how Emily Tang's film comes about as a cinematic itinerary illustrating the passage of the *form-of-life* to the "form of survival", or from whatever singularity to bare life. The analysis will ultimately try to isolate, as radically as possible, the components of this passage, which undoubtedly is an essential dimension of contemporary Chinese film production.