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A Futile Battle against the Cliché? The Role of Media in Jia Zhangke's *Still Life*

Chinese filmmaker Jia Zhangke has long been extremely sensitive about the role of media in contemporary Chinese culture, which he extensively explores in his films. In *Still Life* (2006), the silent and quiet life of the characters is rendered completely porous under the powerful invasion of all kinds of media, such as movie, pop song, opera and propaganda broadcasting. With unique cinematography in his film, Jia endeavors to criticize and resist the Deleuzian cinematic clichés and the Adornian cultural industry, both of which tend to be anti-enlightening. However, the film, itself a kind of media, invites examination whether it contributes to new clichés when his rebellion is co-opted by the cultural industry. This paper aims to generate discussion not only of Jia Zhangke's film in particular but also of the role of media in general, i.e., whether it is possible for any media to transcend the anti-enlightening clichés of the cultural industry.