

WONG KAR WAI'S TREATMENT OF LOVE IN HAPPY TOGETHER, CHUNGKING EXPRESS AND IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE

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ABSTRACT

Wong Kar Wai's *In the Mood for Love* treats love as an ephemeral vapour, a missed chance and opportunity, a fleeting emotion which never acted upon becomes a ephemeral memory buried by time. Wong Kar Wai's *Chungking Express* is a film about urban alienation and broken relationships, and love as a rare connection that takes place amidst this gloom of social isolation in an urban context. The movie starts with the meditation that we are all strangers to each other in the city, but this may change, people who were once strangers can eventually know each other, and anything may happen from there, including hits and misses in relationships. In Wong Kar Wai's *Happy Together*, love is not treated as a form of fulfilment but a means to misery, pathology and indeed dysfunction. Yiu Fai and Po Wing are constantly seeking to re-invent their relationship in order to keep their passions alive, and do so by taking the brave step of migrating to Argentina, where they hope to 'start over', a recurrent motif in their relationship. Wong Kar Wai's explorations of love in his films will be discussed in this paper.

Love as ephemeral vapour in *In the Mood for Love*

Wong Kar Wai's *In the Mood for Love* treats love as an ephemeral vapour, a missed chance and opportunity, a fleeting emotion which never acted upon becomes a ephemeral memory buried by time. The protagonists Chow Mo Wan and Mrs Chan are neighbours who are cheated upon by their spouses, and they are thrown together by circumstances to find themselves falling in love with each other instead of their faithless spouses. Though proclaiming throughout that they 'will never be like them' as in like their adulterous spouses, they find themselves drawn to the edge of adultery like their spouses because of their chemistry and loneliness. *In the Mood for Love* thus precisely captures love as a kind of mood, a fleeting emotion that is set up by circumstances, in this case their mutual loneliness, need and chemistry, and a vapour which becomes a vague memory once it fails to be acted upon.

The courtship between Chow Mo Wan and Mrs Chan may be likened to the waltz that frequently plays throughout the film, toing and froing carefully without launching into full passion or a full tango. It is also captured by another latin song which plays frequently throughout the film ‘Quizas, Quizas, Quizas’ or “Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps,” their relationship is a constant possibility that never pans out into fruition or being realized. While Chow Mo Wan and Mrs Chan are too proper and caught up into decorum and societal propriety and expectations to ever launch into a fullblown affair, the film captures precisely this possibility, this constant open-ness to falling in love and being on the edge of an affair, just that the two protagonists are too proper and upright to ever launch into an affair like their hedonistic and careless spouses.

What Chow Mo Wan and Mrs Chan lack are precisely the recklessness and temerity that their spouses have to openly launch into a sexual affair before their eyes. It does not help that 1950s and 1960s Hong Kong is a place of decorum, its intimate corridors and neighbours being breeding grounds for gossip and scandal. Due to the amount of time that Chow Mo Wan and Mrs Chan spend together, they eventually become the subject of gossip of neighbours who suspect they are having an affair. While they know the rumours to be false, it is undoubtedly a factor in what brings the relationship to a grinding halt. The irony is that Chow and Mrs Chan who are sexually untainted and faithful to their spouses are brought to ruin by gossip when it is their sexually licentious spouses who are the true sinners in the story and worthy of scandal and gossip but who emerge unscathed.

One unusual aspect of their relationship is roleplay. Chow and Mrs Chan roleplay the beginning of the adulterous affair between their spouses, their spouses admission of adultery, and the eventual separation they will finally experience, only to find the line between acting and fantasy and reality blurring as they eventually fall in love and find themselves in a similar position to their spouses, on the cusp of adultery, only that they are too proper, formal and moral to ever launch into a similar sexual affair which is a breach of marriage vows.

Another aspect that prevents their relationship from coming into fruition is the intimate and gossipy proximity of the neighbours Mrs Suen and Mrs Khoo. As Mrs Chan says in one scene after Mr Khoo comes back drunk and they are trapped in Chow Mo Wans room, ‘One cannot put a foot wrong’. They come close to being subjects of gossip and scandal because of the intimate proximity of neighbours and the gossipy and judgmental setting of 1950s Hong Kong where its close corridors and the proximity of neighbours fiercely constricted the outward show of passion or launching into illicit affairs, which is why Mr Chan and Mrs Chow are so often overseas in order to conduct their adulterous affair.

The intimate and narrow corridors of Hong Kong, the gossip and policing of the protagonists private lives, is finally brought to an eternal perspective where the ancient corridors of Angkor Wat are juxtaposed with the corridors of their Hong Kong flats and it is shown that while their settings may have constricted them from allowing their passions for each other to be realized, love is an emotion which has persisted through the centuries, through eternal corridors and rooms, it is an eternal emotion and this ending sequence puts the romance between Mr Chow and Mrs Chan in an eternal perspective. Mr Chow indeed whispers the secrets of his affair into a hole in the temple’s walls and buries his secret there, lending their relationship a symbolic burial and a symbolic sealing of their passion as something timeless, the emotion and evocation of love which has persisted throughout the centuries as a timeless occurrence, unconstructed by gossipy neighbours and the decorum and social expectations of 1950s Hong Kong. Hence, while Mr Chow and Mrs Chan may have failed to realize their passion in their actual lives, the

evocation of love, the mood of love, the memory of love as something that persists through eternity is something that is highlighted in this scene.

Hence while Mr Chow and Mrs Chan never realized their passion physically in their lives, it is shown in the film that love is something which transcends mere physically and sexuality, it is shown to be evoked principally as a mood which is far from a mere vapour but has eternal significance which Mr Chow's eventual memorialization of the affair at Angkor Wat shows. While they are too moral and upright to ever realize their passions for each other in their actual lives, the memory, mood and evocation of love persists as Mrs Chan visits the old flat many years later with her son and as Mrs Chan visits Chow Mo Wan in Singapore. More than mere carnal pleasure or eroticism, Mr Chow and Mrs Chan experience a love affair which transcends mere physicality or time.

Love as a rare connection amidst urban alienation in Chungking Express

Wong Kar Wai's Chungking Express is a film about urban alienation and broken relationships, and love as a rare connection that takes place amidst this gloom of social isolation in an urban context. The movie starts with the meditation that we are all strangers to each other in the city, but this may change, people who were once strangers can eventually know each other, and anything may happen from there, including hits and misses in relationships.

The movie begins with Cop 223 acting rather pathetically in trying to reconnect with his ex-girlfriend May who has ended the relationship with him. He is seen calling her parents and trying to sound intimate with them still when it is clear from their tone that he is no longer welcome in their life. The isolation of living in a city and urban setting when relationships turn sour is made clear when Cop 223 turns to calling up his ex-girlfriends and classmates for company, all of whom have either married or have no time for him or do not even remember him. Cop 223 eventually starts likening his relationship to May as a can of pineapples with an expiry date, and to this end, because May likes canned pineapples, he begins devouring canned pineapples with the end date of May 1 which is his birthday and the ultimatum he gives himself to see the relationship as ended and to move on. The meditation on relationships as canned pineapples with expiry dates thus is about the transience of relationships, we as people are no different from canned pineapples when it comes to dating because we all have expiry dates when the people whom we love change and when they decide we no longer interest them enough to sustain a relationship. However he meets Bridgette Lin, a drug trafficker at a pub at the moment he declares he will fall in love with the first woman who enters the pub. At this point in time, Bridgette Lin is deeply troubled because her batch of South Asian drug traffickers have turned on her and left her stranded without executing the drug trafficking at the airport. Cop 223 strikes up a conversation with her in which she is distant and indifferent, but ends with the meditation that it does not matter what she likes in a man for now because people change and their interests in other people's qualities also change. After finding themselves drunk, Cop 223 brings Bridgette Lin to a hotel in which she just watches her sleep and devours a lot of Caesar salads. While it seems this relationship is destined to be one with no future as well, this segment of the film ends with Bridgette Lin paging Cop 223 to wish him happy birthday on May 1, the day he gloomily decided to run and give up hopes on all relationships because he has been let down too often, ending this section of the film on an upbeat note of hope for the possibility of love developing between them. Hence the film is about the randomness and anonymity of the city, we are first

strangers and may develop into friends and something deeper, even though these relationships may be fleeting and transient.

The second section of the film is about Cop 663 whose girlfriend likes Chef's salads. The fast food restaurant owner suggests he try buying his girlfriend fish and chips instead, and hesitantly 663 agrees. The next day it turns out that his girlfriend does not mind fish and chips after all, after which the restaurant owner suggests he buy his girlfriend pizza instead. At this point 663 returns crestfallen the next day as his girlfriend has decided to move on. Just like having choices with food, she has decided she has her own choices with men and 663 laments that he should have just continued buying her chef salad and not enlightened her about other choices in the market. Faye, working at the shop notices 663 and is attracted to him. The film likens relationships to food and a buffet, love is like being in a marketplace with a spread and endless choices to choose from. After a few days 663's girlfriend turns up at the fast food shop and passes them a letter to pass to 663. It turns out she is likening their relationship to a flight and she has cancelled his flight and returned his housekeys. Faye keeps the housekeys until there is an occasion for her to obtain 663's address from him on the pretext of mailing him the letter back. After this, Faye breaks into 663's house regularly and refurbishes his apartment, changing the sardines, canned food, toiletries, towels, fish in the tank and even his toys and clothes. This goes on for a period of time until 663 catches her in the flat and becomes enlightened as to why his house seems so different lately. He has been previously speaking to the household items, chastising the soap for turning so fat and the house for crying that the girlfriend has left, as well as the towel for looking different and Garfield the doll for looking dirty and fighting so that he has stripes on his cheeks. These episodes have much humour in them, it is seen that 663 is so lonely after his girlfriend leaves him that he takes to talking to inanimate objects in his house to relieve himself of his loneliness. After catching Faye at the flat, 663 goes to the fastfood shop to ask Faye on a date, at which she turns up early but decides to leave for California in place of the California restaurant where they were supposed to meet. She passes him a letter through her cousin the fast food shop owner, which 663 does not open till much later and it turns out to be a boarding pass to California dated on year later. One year later, on that exact same date, Faye returns to the fast food shop to find her cousin gone and 663 manning and renovating the shop. While rejecting him for dinner, Faye writes him another boarding pass when he asks if his boarding pass is still valid, signalling hope for a new relationship.

The film thus comments that, even amidst the randomness and anonymity of the city, with strangers we meet being completely random and whom we might or might not develop relationships with which may be transient, there is hope for genuine and deep connections that might take place over the course of time and with the hope of what was once a random connection developing into deep and beautiful relationships that last over time.

Love as pathology in Happy Together

In Wong Kar Wai's Happy Together, love is not treated as a form of fulfilment but a means to misery, pathology and indeed dysfunction. Yiu Fai and Po Wing are constantly seeking to re-invent their relationship in order to keep their passions alive, and do so by taking the brave step of migrating to Argentina, where they hope to 'start over', a recurrent motif in their relationship. However, their relationship soon sours when they fail to find the magical Iguazu falls. Their car breaks down and they soon find each other tiresome and part company. Yiu Fai finds a job as a doorman at an Argentinian club and Po Wing starts on a spiral of promiscuity

with white men. Po Wing is wild, promiscuous and abusive, seeking Yiu Fai out when he wants sex and runs out of money. Eventually, Po Wing is badly beaten up by one of his lovers and seeks Yiu Fai's care and company. In their time together, it becomes evident that Yiu Fai is the giver and Po Wing is the taker. Yiu Fai spends all his time and energies nurturing Po Wing back to health, but soon is abandoned by Po Wing when he recovers. Love is thus an obsessive pathology of dependence, indeed it is portrayed by the film as a disease, in which it brings out the worst in two individuals and mutual suffering rather than mutual edification. The absence of a clear male and female dichotomy also subjects the relationship to pathology as roles are not clearly defined though Po Wing comes across as the more feminine and fickle of the two. Love in this film is not intoxication but degeneration, disease, pathology, co-dependence and unfulfilment. I will thus be discussing the pathological aspects of love in my paper.

The relationship is characterized by a series of jump starts and fizzles, with seething animosity throughout. The passion is at best described as grudging and tempestuous. Early in the film after Po Wing parts company with Yiu Fai after they fail to find the mystical Iguazu Falls, Yiu Fai receives a call from Po Wing to visit his apartment. Yiu Fai turns up bitter and hostile, angry that Po Wing has launched into a string of decadent affairs with white men. He drinks and rants at Po Wing that he is showing off his loot from his prostitution and demands to know why he had called him up. Po Wing makes an attempt to kiss him, but is fought off violently by Yiu Fai. When pressed further Yiu Fai makes an attempt to strangle Po Wing for landing them stranded in Argentina by spending all the money and leaving him to struggle on his own while he leads a decadent life of prostitution. Po Wing cries after Yiu Fai leaves in a rage, showing that he does feel affection for him even though he lives a promiscuous life. There is little or no genuine affection between them and constant struggle and violence though it is quite apparent that Po Wing still desires Yiu Fai sexually.

The series of violence continues throughout their relationship. Po Wing continues cruising and promiscuity until one day he lands up on Yiu Fai's doorstep badly beaten up by one of his lovers. Yiu Fai feeling compassion for Po Wing takes him in and starts nursing him, cooking for him and bathing him. However attempts at intimacy by Po Wing on Yiu Fai are all violently rejected and fought off. Yiu Fai refuses to be used sexually by Po Wing after seeing him abandon him and take on a string of lovers time after time. It is a curious state of affairs in which Yiu Fai is willing to care for Po Wing and nurse him back to health, cook and clean for him, feed and bathe him while rejecting all his sexual advances and attempts at intimacy, threatening for example not to fondle him when Po Wing eventually manages to coax him into sharing the bed for a night with him. It is clear that in the relationship Yiu Fai is the giver and Po Wing the taker. One night, after persuading Yiu Fai to trek in the cold with him, Yiu Fai falls ill with a violent cold and Po Wing instead of feeling sorry for Yiu Fai after causing him to fall ill demands that Yiu Fai cooks for him. There is thus a series of abuses in the relationship with Yiu Fai by Po Wing, with Po Wing using him for company, care and sex, while remaining blissfully unfaithful and uncaring for Yiu Fai's well being.

The repeated and doomed attempts to 'start over' are symptomatic of a broken relationship that cannot be mended since it is based on an asymmetrical assertion of power and abuse. Blanchot's disaster is very much what Po Wing inflicts on Yiu Fai because he has no consideration of his needs and uses him only for sexual gratification. Claiming that he loves Yiu Fai is a farce considering the way that he treats him, turning up on his doorstep only when injured and abandoning him once he is well and bleeding him dry of money, emotions and

resources. The trauma that Yiu Fai experiences is seen in his emotional breakdown in the audiorecording scene and the fact that he wants to murder Po Wing for ill treating him and bleeding him dry to the point of exhaustion, refusing to return his passport thereafter.

The film seems to comment that the relationship is fuelled by emotional dependency and need rather than genuine love. Both men use each other to placate their sense of loneliness and the result is resentment at the other for failing to fill the void that each of them desperately senses. The film seems to comment on the emotional sterility of relationships that are based on emotional needs and dependency rather than mutual love and respect. Indeed respect is not a word that describes their relationship. They are constantly shouting at each other, attacking each other, verbally abusing each other because they resent being thrown together for lack of options.

There is also a series of jealousies and pettiness. One day Po Wing calls up the restaurant where Yiu Fai is working and Yiu Fai is temporarily called off to get some eggs. Yiu Fai's colleague picks up the phone to find out who Yiu Fai is chatting incessantly with and finds out it is Po Wing, a male, much to his shock as they seem intimate. Po Wing then begins questioning Yiu Fai on the male voice he heard on the other line when he called and asks him how many times they have had sex. Flabbergasted, Yiu Fai pushes Po Wing to confess to the number of boyfriends he has had, and it turns out to be countless. There are thus double standards in the relationship. Po Wing expects Yiu Fai to be faithful to him while he can continue having numerous affairs. The abuse thus continues. Po Wing is possessive and controlling towards Yiu Fai, ill-treating him on many accounts.

The trend of possessiveness and jealousy is seen in Yiu Fai as well. As Po Wing recovers, he begins dressing up and cruising for sex again. Yiu Fai, frustrated and jealous, buys many cartons of cigarettes to stop Po Wing from using buying cigarettes as an excuse to go out and cruise. When faced with the boxes of stored cigarettes, Po Wing throws a tantrum and flings the boxes to the floor. Po Wing is also chased out of the apartment by Yiu Fai for being, in Yiu Fai's terms, a slut.

In response to the repeated abuse dealt out to him by Po Wing, Yiu Fai retaliates by hiding Po Wing's passport. When confronted, Yiu Fai denies keeping his passport until it becomes undeniable and finally defiantly tells Po Wing that he will not be returning the passport to him. This is in retaliation to the multiple let downs and abuses that Po Wing has dealt him in the relationship, using him for money, sex, care, companionship. The result is an impasse between them in which the relationship turns bitter and cold. Yiu Fai reflects that the happiest days were when Po Wing was still recovering and under his care, too weak to be promiscuous. There is a scene of him tenderly stroking Po Wing while he is sleeping, showing that, despite being abused on multiple levels, he still cares for Po Wing.

The result is a deep unhappiness in Yiu Fai. He cares for Po Wing, but cannot accept the constant ill-treatment, abuse, and being taken for granted. He exhausts himself in giving and caring for Po Wing, who is ungrateful and uses him only for sex and when he needs money and care. He goes drinking with the colleague who he develops a close friendship with, who notices his deep unhappiness and asks him to leave a voice recording as a memento of him since he is leaving Argentina to journey to the end of the world. Yiu Fai is eventually heard sobbing deep sobs of unhappiness, because he has failed to find fulfilment in a relationship. The destructive impulses in the relationship have left him lonelier than ever, and in one scene he succumbs to having sex with a stranger and realizes he is no different from Po Wing, because at the heart of the matter lonely people are all the same.

The key feature of the relationship is its abusive nature. Po Wing plays mind games with Liu Fai, and seeks to isolate him from other lovers by getting possessive even though he takes liberties to be promiscuous himself. He also controls Yiu Fai by ordering him to do all the cooking and household chores, to bathe and feed him, while he passively lives off Yiu Fai, and tries to use him sexually by making advances at him whenever he is lustful or lonely. Yiu Fai in return receives virtually nothing from Po Wing and does not benefit from the relationship at all, indeed it causes him much aggravation and harm instead. He has many outbursts of anger at Po Wing for taking him for granted and using and manipulating him.

Also key in the relationship is its degenerative nature. Both men cannot live and stand each other, yet they repeatedly ‘start over’ destructively in a relationship that does not thrive on much other than sex and pacifying each other’s loneliness. It is a relationship heavily based on need. Po Wing approaches Yiu Fai only when he needs him for money, care and sex. Yiu Fai in return cares for Po Wing, but grudgingly as he is often bitter and hostile to him for manipulating and using him so heavily. Po Wing uses and abandons Yiu Fai repeatedly and exhausts him of all his emotions and resources. The result is that Yiu Fai, shell-shocked and emotionally battered, hates Po Wing and will not return his passport. The so-called love between the two men degenerates into mutual hostility, violence and ill-will towards each other. The film is ironically named *Happy Together* when both partners bring each other more misery and suffering than genuine companionship. They are constantly flinging things at each other, accusing each other, acting violently towards each other, rarely bringing each other any fulfilment. It is a battle of wills and manipulation to suit each other’s needs, though Po Wing emerges as the clear winner in terms of taking advantage of situations and manipulating Yiu Fai.

The highlight of the relationship is then just the pacifying of each other’s loneliness and the fleeting satisfaction of each other’s need. The love between the two men does not transcend needs, wants and ameliorating each other’s loneliness. The hostility between the two men arises from the fact that they are trapped together in a foreign land with no money to return to Hong Kong. Their attempt at reviving their relationship in an exotic location like Argentina fails miserably because they do not love and respect each other, perhaps because of internalized homophobia. They lunge at each other destructively, reuniting only in a desperate attempt to escape loneliness and failing to find comfort in each other’s company, only amplifying each other’s loneliness. At the heart of the relationship is thus the void of loneliness which both parties strive but fail to fill, because there is no genuine love between the two, it is one based on satisfying the fleeting moment of need and companionship. They lack respect and goodwill for each other. They are constantly fighting because they resent being thrown together for lack of options.

We thus see that the relationship is more based on mutual hostility and antagonism than goodwill and love for each other. They fight with each other out of frustration that they do not manage to overcome their loneliness in the relationship in the end. The film would thus be more aptly titled *Lonely Together* or *Miserable Together*. Because they have conflicting desires and needs and one party makes all the sacrifices to the point of murderous resentment and hatred the relationship spirals destructively and inevitably towards its death. An abusive and pathological relationship ends up with both of them bearing murderous intentions towards each other even though they occasionally desire each other sexually. The key element of the failure of the relationship is the lack of complementarity and the monodimensional sacrifice that is demanded on the side of Yiu Fai who cares for Po Wing to the point of exhaustion only to be abandoned by

him ungratefully when he recovers. The internalized homophobia between the two individuals also translates into a lack of respect and goodwill for each other. Because society has marginalized homosexuals they are unable to love themselves and thus each other genuinely. The relationship thrives on mutual suspicion and jealousy. The possessive nature of both individuals towards each other and suspicious nature taken towards each other indicates a lack of trust and respect. *Happy Together* is then not so much about the failure of homosexual love as the failure of achieving a reciprocal relationship that transcends needs, wants and petty desires and jealousies. Po Wing and Yiu Fai are unable to achieve fulfilment in the relationship because they are unable to transcend their pettiness towards each other and move beyond a relationship that goes beyond momentarily ameliorating one's loneliness. Indeed, the film is less about the failure of a homosexual relationship than a relationship that is based on emotional dependency and need. As they do not manage to transcend themselves to genuinely love each other, they batter at each other in resentment that their needs are not fulfilled and their sense of loneliness fails to be pacified by each other's company. It is to be noted that aside from the casual flings that they have outside the relationship, both men seem to lack the company of genuine friends. This is perhaps due to the homophobia of society, and this is a large factor that contributes to the destruction of a relationship. To be in a taboo relationship is to be in a relationship that is not visible and lacks the support networks that are available to those in heterosexual relationships. The high level of toxicity and pathology that accompanies the relationship can be derived from the lack of social acceptance and the stigma of homosexual relationships. Indeed, the men are barely even friends, just sexual companions and lovers in times of loneliness and need.

Indeed Wong Kar Wai affirms this when he says of the film that it is not a gay film but a film about being lonely with someone else. The highlight of the film is thus the lack of connection that takes place even in the midst of high amounts of interaction and time spent together. There is no emotional connection because the relationship is abusive and based on need. The film is essentially about two lonely people who imagine that they might be less lonely in each other's company only to find themselves lonelier than ever before because they do not derive comfort from each other's company. This is because they are unable to transcend themselves and genuinely love each other. It is not that Yiu Fai does not attempt to do this but as an oppressor in Blanchot's sense Po Wing crushes and suffocates all the emotions that Yiu Fai holds for him by using him emotionally, financially and sexually.

Happy Together is then about the essential loneliness of the human condition. Because we are unable to transcend differences and petty needs and wants, we launch into destructive relationships based on needs rather than transcending those needs and giving reciprocally out of genuine agape and Other-directed love for each other. The protagonists are unable to love because they are unable to transcend themselves. Their self-interests are at the heart of every conflict in the relationship and while it is true that Yiu Fai makes most of the sacrifices, he does not do so willingly because he is also doing it out of a grudging need for company and overcoming his own loneliness. *Happy Together* is then not so much about a doomed homosexual relationship but about the essentially selfish and solipsistic nature of humans who are unable to transcend themselves to love genuinely. Because they do not transcend the nature of needs and move into the sphere of mutual respect and agape, the relationship is doomed to fail because there will be a conflict of self-interests when it comes to satisfying mutual needs and wants. *Happy together* is then a study in solipsism and narcissism in relationships that brings these relationships to destruction. The narcissism of Po Wing in particular is what brings the

relationship to its doom as Yiu Fai is bled to death of his emotions by Po Wing. And yet it cannot be said that Yiu Fai is not narcissistic as he is equally violent to Po Wing and uses Po Wing for companionship. To constantly use each other out of emotional dependency and need is what brings the relationship to its inevitable doom. Were they able to trust and respect each other or transcend themselves into seeing the Other for what it is in a Buberian sense, in an I-Thou rather than I-It relationship, they would be able to last longer as a couple. Wong Kar Wai then captures the miseries of relationships in which two people are lonely together rather than happy together. This is not a comment on the nature of homosexual relationships but relationships that are based on emotional dependency and need. Heterosexual relationships are subject to the same problems if both parties are using their companions just to pacify their loneliness and unable to genuinely care for each other or respect each other. Happy Together is then a study in abusive relationships and emotional dependency of characters that are unable to find solace in each other's company because they are unable to transcend themselves and their petty needs, desires, wants and egos. Happy Together is then a universal film about human loneliness that cannot be transcended because of solipsism.

Works cited:

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