THE DESTRUCTION OF FAMILY INSTITUTION
IN THE FILM *Coming Home* （归来 Guilai）by Zhang Yimou （张艺谋）

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**ABSTRACT**

The film *Coming Home* （归来 Guilai）tells a story about a prisoner, Lu Yanshi, returning home. He returns home twice. Firstly, he returns home by escaping prison because he misses his family. Secondly, Lu comes home after receiving a notice of rehabilitation from the Government. Neither of his coming home makes him happy. He finds his family unable to be whole as it used to be. How did the destruction of Lu Yanshi family happen, and what are the reasons? To answer this question, the film was examined in three ways, by discussing the setting of the story, by revealing the characters and the characterizations in the film, and by uncovering how the story of *Guilai* was told. These three ways may expose the main story of the film and can help us understand Lu family’s suffering. Essentially, the film was dissected using intrinsic approach; meanwhile, the story and the dialogues presented in the movie would be interpreted to reveal meanings. The findings of the research suggest that the condition suffered by Lu Yanshi family is caused by the policy implemented during Cultural Revolution. Even though the Cultural Revolution is over, Lu Yanshi family cannot be whole and happy as it was before the Cultural Revolution in China.

**KEYWORDS**: Family Destruction; Cultural Revolution; The Film *Guilai*: Zhang Yimou

**INTRODUCTION**

*Coming Home* （归来 Guilai）is one of the literary adaptation films directed by Zhang Yimou （张艺谋）¹. The story was adapted from the last 30 pages of the novel entitled *The Criminal Lu Yanshi* （陆犯焉识） authored by Yan Geling （严歌苓）. This film was released in 16 May 2014. In 30 June, this movie received *Hong Kong Film Award for Best Chinese Language Film from the Two Coasts* in 2015. *Guilai* is starred by Chen Daoming （陈道明） as Lu Yanshi （陆焉识）, Gong Li （巩俐） as Feng Wanyu （冯婉瑜）, Lu Yanshi’s wife, and a

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¹Zhang Yimou is one of the fifth generation of filmmakers in China who produced a lot of well-known movies which many received various awards.
newcomer Zhang Huiwen (张慧雯) as Dan Dan (丹丹), Lu Yanshi’s daughter.

As suggested by the title, Coming Home (归来) tells a story about Lu Yanshi, a prisoner in the era of Cultural Revolution, who returns home to his family. In the movie, Lu returns home twice to meet his family. The first is when he tries to go home when he is still an inmate by escaping prison. The second is when he is officially released after the Cultural Revolution is over. None of his coming home brings him happiness. In his first return, Lu cannot find his wife, and his daughter refuses to meet him. After he is released and truly free to meet his family, Lu still cannot bring back the happiness he used to have.

In his article that reviews the film Guilai, Peter Sobczynski (2015) discussed the characters of the roles in the film. In his opinion, this film highlights the emotion of the three main characters in every scene. Gong Li plays an important role as she has to be a person who suffers memory loss. Chen also plays a significant role in which he has to help his wife recover from her illness. Zhang Huiwen that begins as an ambitious child turns into a devoted daughter to bring her parents together (Sobczynski, 2015).

Mila Rosalina Debbybriela also discussed the film Guilai in her journal article titled “Number Five (五) Wu) in the Film Coming Home (归来Guilai): A Semiotic Study” in 2015. Using semiotic approach, Mila Rosalina Debbybriela aims to discuss the symbol of number 5 which appears in the scenes of Coming Home as a portrayal of a family victim in the Cultural Revolution.

In short, Peter Sobczynski emphasizes his study on the emotional characterization of the characters, and Mila Rosalina discusses the symbol number five that appears in the movie through semiotic approach. Different from the two analysis mentioned above, this present study discusses the destruction of family institution by looking at the film’s time and location setting, character and characterization, and plot of Lu Yanshi coming home. We examined the movie using three ways, by discussing the setting of the story, by revealing the characters and the characterizations in the film, and by revealing how the film Guilai is told. Using these three means, it is hoped that the core story of the film can be revealed and the reasons of Lu family suffering can be understood.

The steps applied in this study is by watching the film Guilai many times, understanding the story as it is presented in the movie, then finding other sources related to the story of the film, and providing interpretations of the necessary parts to strengthen the analysis. By carefully scrutinizing the film using intrinsic approach, it is hoped that the result of the study will not only complement the existing study but also give new meanings to the film Coming Home.

According to Nurgiyantoro (2015: 314 and 318), settings are differentiated into three main elements: time, place, and socio-culture. This study only focuses on two elements, time and place. Time settings refer to the time when the events in a fiction work happened. The “when” is connected to the factual time or the time that relates to historical events. The reader’s knowledge and perception of the historical time are then used to enter the story. The place setting refers to the place where the events in a literary work happened.

Aminuddin (2000) suggested several ways to understand the characterization of a character. It is through (1) the description of the narrator about the characteristics of the character, (2) the portrayal given by the author through the character’s life environments or the way the character dresses, (3) showing how the character behaves, (4) paying attention to how the character
talks about her/ himself, (5) understanding the character’s way of thinking, (6) seeing how other characters talk about the character, (7) seeing how other characters react to the character, and (8) seeing how the character reacts to other character.

1. Film Setting

Before discussing the character, characteristics, and the plot of the film, the study will first discuss the setting in the film *Guilai*. This needs to be done because the time setting appears quite early in the film, in minute 29:00, when the sentence “Three Years Later, the Cultural Revolution Ends” as the marker of story transition.

1.1. Time Setting: Cultural Revolution Era

Using the sentence “Three Years Later, the Cultural Revolution Ends”, the audience is directed to understand that the story in the film *Guilai* is linked to the Cultural Revolution which occurred for ten years in China (1966-1976).

*Picture 1.*

Time setting that reads “三年后，‘文化大革命’结束” (Three years later, the Cultural Revolution ends) in minute 29:00
(Source: the film *Guilai*)

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution or commonly known as Cultural Revolution was announced in 16 August 1966 by Mao Zedong. At the beginning of Cultural Revolution, Mao closed many schools and universities, and mobilized the youth to form Red Guards. They criticized and attacked the old, Chinese intellectuals and party members who still held the traditional and bourgeois values. Anything that was not in line with Mao’s ideology were destroyed. Violence was widespread all over China causing hundred thousand people to die. The Cultural Revolution ended in 1976 (Bendini, 2016)
1.2 Place Setting: Lu Yanshi Family House

The discussion on place setting is important to help understand that the character has a fairly good position in the society. Lu Yanshi’s house is well-organized and spacious enough to place a piano and to be a place for Lu’s daughter, Dandan, to practice ballet. This family also has their own kitchen and bathroom inside the house.

From screen shots above, even though Lu’s character has not been revealed, the house signifies that the main character of the film is not an ordinary people and has a good position in the society.

2. Characters and Characterization in the Film Guilai

In the film *Guilai* there are three main characters. The story of the film develops through
these characters. The first character is Lu Yanshi, a professor who is under arrest and tries to escape during the Cultural Revolution. The second character is Feng Wanyu, Lu Yanshi’s wife. She is a teacher in Guangming middle school. During Cultural Revolution, she has to be separated from her husband and raise her daughter on her own. Lastly, Dandan is the daughter of Lu Yanshi and Feng Wanyu. Dandan had been left by Lu Yanshi since she was 3 years old. In this paper, we will only explain the characterization from the three main characters in the film *Guilai*.

2.1 Lu Yanshi: An Intellectual Character

Lu Yanshi is the most important character in the development of *Guilai* story, but the information about him is not much, brief, and spread in different parts of the film. Who he is and why he is arrested is not mentioned explicitly. To understand his character, it is important to look at what other characters talk about him or his dialogues with other characters.

2.1.1 A Lecturer, An Art Lover, and Able to Speak Foreign Language

Who Lu Yanshi is and what his job is only appear after half of the film in a dialogue between Lu and his wife who suffers memory disorder. To restore her memory, Lu tries to make a conversation to direct her memory to Lu. In this dialogue, the information about Lu in minute 68:27 appears. The following is the dialogue between Lu and his wife.

Lu Yanshi : 平常这个琴谁弹啊？
Feng Wanyu : 我爱人弹。
Lu Yanshi : 他是做什么的？
Feng Wanyu : 他是教授。去大西北了。马上回来。

Lu Yanshi : Who usually plays the piano?
Feng Wanyu : My husband.
Lu Yanshi : What is his job?
Feng Wanyu : He is a professor. He is in Xibei, but he is going to come back soon.

From the dialogue between the doctor and Lu Yanshi who consults his wife condition, an information about his ability in speaking French is stated in minute 54:30.

Doctor : 我看过一份英文资料，说到过一种“Déjà vu”现象。
Lu Yanshi : Déjà vu。似曾相识的意思。是吗？
Doctor : 对对对。就是这个意思。这是一个法语词对吧？
Lu Yanshi : 你懂法语？
Lu Yanshi : 啊一点儿。

Doctor : I have read an article in English that talks about “Dejavu” symptoms.
Lu Yanshi : Déjà vu. It means like you have already known it. Is it correct?
Doctor : Yes, that is absolutely right. That is the meaning. It is a French word, right?
Lu Yanshi : Right.
Doctor : You can speak French?
Lu Yanshi : Oh yes, a little.

Lu is a character that loves art. His love of art can be known from two dialogues in the film, when he reads a letter that he sent to his wife when he was still in prison in minute 83:10 and his ability in playing the piano in minute 71:13.

Lu Yanshi : “最近常常做梦。梦到你和丹丹。还梦到了她跳舞。像一个小仙女。非常好看。...”
Feng Wanyu : .... 她跳舞是焉识的愿望。跳。

Lu Yanshi : “I’ve been dreaming a lot lately. I dreamed of you and Dandan. I also dreamed of her dancing. Like a little fairy. Very beautiful....”
Feng Wanyu : .... That was Yanshi’s wish for her. To dance.

*Picture 6:*
Lu Yanshi plays the piano in minute 71:13 (Source: the film *Guilai*)
2.1.2 Labelled as a Rightist

During the era of Cultural Revolution, the people who were thought as rightist are considered as the enemy of the Communist Party. Lu Yanshi is also labelled as rightist. The allegation against Lu is discovered in minute 40:03, when the scene shows the Notice of Rehabilitation for Lu Yanshi. It is stated in the letter that the allegation towards Lu Yanshi of being a part of the right-wing is revoked. As he was accused of being right-leaning, Lu was clearly a political prisoner and not a criminal prisoner.

Picture 7:
A Notice of Rehabilitation for Lu Yanshi in minute 40:03
(Source: the film Guilai)

Based on the instruction of the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party in document number 11 (1978), the allegation of Lu Yanshi as a part of the right-wing is revoked in 20 November 1979.

The status of a political prisoner is a serious accusation a person can face. The person will be considered as a dangerous, cunning fugitive who is the enemy of the party. These accusations appear at the earlier part of the film, in minute 03:47 when Feng Wanyu and her daughter are told to come to the Propaganda Office to be informed of Lu Yanshi’s escape from the prison.
Party officer interrogates Feng Wanyu and Dandan about the news that Lu Yanshi has escaped in minute 03:47
(Source: the film Guilai)

Officer Liu : 陆焉识出事了。
Feng Wanyu : 陆焉识出事了？出什么事了？
Officer Liu : 逃跑了。
Feng Wanyu : 逃跑？怎么跑的？
Officer Liu : 这个老右派很狡猾。利用转场趁机潜逃。那个火车站离咱们市里不远。你们最近跟他有联系吗？
Feng Wanyu : 没有。十几年没他的消息了。
Officer Liu : 好。所以我今天把你们家属叫过来就是通知你们。一发现逃犯的行踪立即报告配合组织调查抓捕。二严禁与逃犯见面。站稳立场划清界限。听清了吗？
Officer Liu : .... 如知情不报，罪加一等....
Officer Liu : Lu Yanshi caused trouble
Feng Wanyu : Lu Yanshi caused trouble? What trouble?
Lu Yanshi : He escaped.
Feng Wanyu : Escaped? How can he escape?
Officer Liu : That rightist is very sneaky. He ran off during a prison transit. At a train station not far from our city. Have you been in contact with him?
Feng Wanyu : No. I haven’t heard from him in ten years.
Officer Liu: So I gathered you both here today to inform you. First, if you know his whereabouts, report him immediately and help the authorities apprehend him. Secondly, it is strictly prohibited to meet him. He is the enemy. Do not cross the line. Have I made myself clear?

....

Officer Liu: .... Withholding information is a very serious crime.

From the description of Lu Yanshi character and the dialogues, it can be concluded that Lu Yanshi is a university lecturer addressed as jiaoshou or professor which is not used to address a regular teacher. He can be considered as an intellectual. Besides able to speak French, which might be his field of study, he also has a love of and interest in art. This conclusion can be drawn from the portrayal of him playing the piano and his support to his daughter to become a ballet dancer. The reason why he was accused as rightist is very likely because of his status as an intellectual. Moreover, he can also speak a foreign language and has interest in music not originating from China, the piano.

Before the Cultural Revolution took place, there had been an Anti-Right campaign. All Chinese intellectuals who criticized and opposed party policies at that time are labelled as rightist and are punished (Landín, 2013). This kept on going until the Cultural Revolution. Accusation and suspicion towards the intellectuals remain. The main objective of the Cultural Revolution is to get rid of the capitalist and the bourgeois and to eliminate everything traditional. The groups that are most attacked at that time was writers, intellectuals, and party members who were suspected of right-leaning (Tai Sung An, 1972).

2.2 Feng Wanyu: A Middle School Teacher

Feng Wanyu is the wife of Lu Yanshi. She is not an ordinary housewife. Like her husband, Feng Wanyu is also an educator, but unlike her husband, she does not teach in higher education institution. That is why people addresses her as laoshi or teacher. This information can be found in minute 07:50, when Deputy Li introduces Feng Wanyu to the comrades who accompany her.

Deputy Li: 冯婉瑜光明中学的老师。

Deputy Li: This is Feng Wanyu, a teacher in Guangming Middle School

As an educator, Feng Wanyu has her on views over her daughter ‘s interest on ballet. She disagrees, and even opposes her daughter to be a ballet dancer. In her view, those with science and technology background are more valuable for the country. This dialogue is in minute 83:42.

Lu Yanshi: “....还记得。当年你反对她跳舞。说只有做科技工作才能为国家做更大的贡献”。

Feng Wanyu: 当时我是不同意丹丹跳舞。
Lu Yanshi: “.... I can still remember how you didn’t want her to be a dancer. You said only science and technology could make a meaningful contribution to the country.”

Feng Wanyu: Back then, I was against it.

Besides the information about her job as a middle school teacher, there is no further information about her job or interests. She is depicted as a wife who loves her husband and daughter very much. A more thorough analysis on Feng Wanyu will be discussed in the plot analysis.

2.3 Dandan and Her Change of Profession

Dandan is the daughter of Lu Yanshi and Feng Wanyu. Her father left her when she was 3 years old, and she does not know her father well. Dandan has practiced ballet since she was a little, and she practices diligently to be the leading role in a performance held by the Dance Academy she is in. However, her ambition to be the leading role is thwarted, and she changed her profession to be a factory worker.

2.3.1 Her Father Status as A Cause of Failure

Since the beginning, from minute 03:00, the character Dandan is depicted as someone who has an exceptional ability to be a qualified ballet dancer. She also has a strong desire to be the leading role in a dance performance held by the dance academy.

Dandan’s strong desire to be the leading role has to wither, not because she is incompetent, but because of her father’s status as a political prisoner. The party pays a close attention to dancing. The party has the right to decide who can and cannot be the leading role. The following is the conversation between the dance teacher and the party officer related to the selection of the leading role in a dance performance held by the dance academy.

Picture 9: Dandan practicing ballet in minute 02:00 (Source: the film Guilai)

Picture 10: The selection for the leading role of Wu Qinghua scene in minute 09:20 (Source: the film Guilai)
The failure to be the leading role brings a great sadness to Dandan. This can be seen in minute 69:41. Although there is no dialogue, the two screen shots below show her sorrow.

*Picture 11 dan 12:*
Dandan cries under the rain because she fails to take the leading role of Wu Qinghua in minute 69:41 (Source: the film *Guilai*)

### 2.3.2 The Effect of Disappointment: A Change of Profession

Dandan’s great disappointment because of her lost opportunity to become the leading role in the dance performance is evident in minute 09:41. As a result of the failure, Dandan decides to leave the Dance Academy and works in a textile factory.
3. The Story of Guilai: Lu Yanshi Coming Home to His Family

As mentioned in the beginning, this film tells a story about the attempts made by the character Lu Yanshi to go home and see his family when he was still a political prisoner. Lu Yanshi is truly able to return home to his family after he has got the notice of rehabilitation. None of his coming home brought him happiness. The analysis in this chapter does not only discuss the process of Lu Yanshi coming home but also explain the negative impacts of the Cultural Revolution suffered by Lu Family.

3.1 The First “Coming Home”: His Status as a “Political Prisoner”
3.1.1 His Wife and Daughter’s Response to The News of Lu Yanshi’s Prison Escape

When they are first told that Lu Yanshi ran away, and the party told them to report, Feng Wanyu and Dandan react differently, which can be seen in minute 04:52. From her sad expression, it can be inferred that Feng Wanyu is hesitant to report Lu Yanshi to the authorities. Although it is not spoken, the hesitation can be seen from her expression and gestures. It is different from Dandan’s response who immediately and confidently said that she would obey the party’s decision to report Lu Yanshi.
The scene when the party officer asks Feng Wanyu and Dandan to cooperatively work with them to capture Lu Yanshi in minute 04:52
(Source: the film Guilai)

....

Dandan : 他跟我没关系。我服从组织决定。
Officer Liu : 冯老师你女儿的态表得没错。你呢？冯老师。我可把话说清楚了。如果知情不报罪加一等。我这也是为你们好。你得为你女儿前途着想。我的话听明白了吗？

Feng Wanyu : 明白。

Dandan : 妈。

Feng Wanyu : 是的，我听明白了。

....

Dandan : I have nothing to do with him. I will obey the party's decision.
Officer Liu : Mrs. Feng, your daughter’s doing well. Withholding information is a very serious crime. I’m doing this for your own good. You need to think about your daughter’s future. Do I make myself clear?

Feng Wanyu : Yes, I understand.

Dandan : 妈。

Feng Wanyu : 是的，我听明白了。

The difference is also visible when Feng Wanyu and Dandan knows Lu Yanshi’s whereabouts. When they know where Lu Yanshi is, Feng Wanyu immediately prepares bakpao and other amenities for Lu. Knowing that makes Dandan furious until she cries. Dandan is scared that if her mother goes to see Lu Yanshi, it will destroy her future as a ballet dancer. Moreover, as she has just failed to take the leading role, she still hopes that if she discloses her father’s whereabouts to the party officer, she can be chosen as the leading role. Her obedience to the party is also the reason Dandan reports Lu Yanshi’s location. The scene in which Dandan reports Lu Yanshi’s whereabouts to the party is in minute 18:44.
Officer Liu: 有情况？
Dandan: 学校不让我跳主演。《红色娘子军》吴清华。
Officer Liu: 为啥呢？你还犹豫啥呢？你这叫大义灭亲算立大功的。只要你提供的情况重要，我跟你们学校一说。想跳啥跳啥。你们学校啥地址？你现在告诉我。

Officer Liu: Did something happen?
Dandan: The academy rejects me to take the leading role Wu Qinghua in “Red Female Army”
Officer Liu: Why not? What is there to think about? It’s for a righteous cause. You will be justly rewarded. Give me good information, and I can talk to your school. You can have any role you want. Where’s your school? Tell me now.

Fitri Uniar’s undergraduate thesis entitled “The Inner Wound of Wang Xiaohua in Short Story The Wounded by Lu Xinhua” explains that the greatest inner sadness felt by the character Wang Xiaohua is to cut ties with her mother during the Cultural Revolution. Wang Xiaohua was depicted as a teenager who leaves her mother because she is ashamed to have a traitor mother. Wang Xiaohua suffers negative consequences by having a mother labelled as traitor (Fitri, 2016: 39-41). It means that cutting ties with family members was common during the Cultural Revolution. The teenagers were brainwashed to put the party first. This is similar to Dandan who cut ties with her father during that time and choose to report Lu to the party.

It can be concluded that Feng Wanyu expects Lu’s return, while Dandan does not accept his return at all. She even accuses her father as an enemy and alerts the party officers of Lu Yanshi and Feng Wanyu’s meeting location that causes Lu Yanshi to be arrested for the second time.

3.2 The Second “Coming Home”: Granted Official Notice of Rehabilitation

3.2.1 A Change in Family Condition

After Cultural Revolution, Lu Yanshi is officially released. He can finally return home and meet his family. However, the happiness he has been dreaming about is not in line with the reality. After he returns home, Lu realizes his family has changed.

3.2.1.1 Feng Wanyu’s Memory Loss

During the capture of Lu Yanshi at the train station, Feng Wanyu hit hear head until it bled while she was being pulled by party officers and Dandan to prevent her coming to Lu. Since the
incident, she has begun to fall ill and lost her memory. Feng Wanyu also cannot remember Lu Yanshi’s aging face. Every time she sees Lu Yanshi, she always thinks he is a stranger or Mr. Fang. Mr. Fang is a party officer. Feng Wanyu has a trauma caused by Mr. Fang. Mr. Fang once beats Feng Wanyu using a cooking utensil as a reward for helping alleviate Lu Yanshi’s sentence after he was recaptured by the party. The following is the dialogue of Feng Wanyu who always forgets Lu every time they meet in minute 41:33.

Deputy Li: ... 我现在以组织的名义向你保证，站在你面前的这个人就是你的爱人陆焉识同志。
Lu Yanshi: 婉瑜。
Feng Wanyu: 我知道他是谁。他姓方。他是方师傅。我不愿意让他在我家。你让他出去。出去。我不要他在这儿。你让他出去吧。
Deputy Li: … In the name of the party I can assure you that the man standing in front of you is your husband, Comrade Lu Yanshi.
Lu Yanshi: Wanyu.
Feng Wanyu: I know who he is. He is Fang. He is Mr. Fang. I don’t want him in my house. Tell him to go away. Go away! I don’t want him here. You tell him to go away.

3.2.1.2 Dandan’s Regret

Dandan feels very sorry for what happened to her family. She feels guilty because her mother cannot remember her father’s face. Dandan apologizes to Lu and admits to him that she is the person who reported him to the party. Her apology to Lu Yanshi is in minute 01:16:07.

Dandan: 你不知道上次你跑回来以后。我妈看我做什么事都不顺眼。自从得了病连门都不让我进。她都不知道我改行了。也不知道我住哪儿。我对不起你和妈。都怪我。
Dandan: 爸，抓你是我报告的。
Dandan: You know, since that day you tried to come home, she can hardly look at me. Since she got ill, she won’t let me enter the house. She doesn’t know I quit dancing or where I live. I’m so sorry about you two. It’s all my fault.
Dandan: Father, I was the one who reported you.
3.2.1.3 The Breakdown of Family Relationship

Dandan cut out all of Lu Yanshi’s face in all their family photos. It is unclear why she cuts all the photos, but it can be inferred that she does it because she hates Lu Yanshi who is a political prisoner at that time. This information can be found in the scene in which Lu Yanshi was looking for his pictures with Feng Wanyu in a photo album in minute 55:49.

![Images of family photos with Dandan cutting out Lu Yanshi's face.]

_Dandan:_ Don’t look for it. You won’t find it.
_Lu Yanshi:_ Who cuts all these pictures?
_Dandan:_ Me.

As mentioned before, Dandan reported Lu Yanshi to the party. It is obvious that there is a distanced relationship between Lu Yanshi and his daughter. During the Cultural Revolution, the youth are brainwashed to obey the party to the extent they have to cut ties with their parents. If the father is accused as a capitalist, there is no other way for the child but to deny the relationship with the father (Wibowo: 194). The party also once stated that “sacrificing family ties for the party is a righteous cause”. This idea is engraved in Dandan’s mind. Thus, it is not a problem for her to report her own father to the party.

Furthermore, Dandan-Feng Wanyu relationship also worsens after the arrest of Lu Yanshi at the train station. Feng Wanyu is also aware that Dandan is the person who reports Lu’s whereabouts to the party. Feng Wanyu cannot forgive her daughter’s action of cutting out his father’s face from the photos. Then, Feng Wanyu forces her daughter to leave the house. This information is known from Feng Wanyu’s narration in minute 01:01:39.
CONCLUSION

The film *Coming Home* (归来) directed by Zhang Yimou is adapted from the last 30 pages of the novel *The Criminal Lu Yanshi* (陆犯焉识). Although the story starts with the story of Lu Yanshi running away from the prison, it does not explicitly describe Lu Yanshi’s character. To understand the portrayal build upon this character, a preliminary study by examining the time and place setting is necessary. The time setting of the film is during and after the Cultural Revolution era. By examining the time setting, it can be seen that the story in the film has a close connection with the Cultural Revolution in China that occurred in 1966-1976. By examining place setting such as Lu Yanshi family house that are neatly arranged, spacious enough for a piano and for Dandan to practice ballet, and even has inside bathroom and kitchen, it can be concluded that the character is not an ordinary person and has a good place in the society. From the study of character and characterization, it can be concluded that he is an intellectual that has a good position in the society.

From the dialogues in the movie, it can be inferred that Lu Yanshi is a lecturer, *jiaoshou*, who can speak French, can play the piano, and has an interest in dance. The film does not clearly mention or depict the crime committed by Lu Yanshi that gets him arrested. It can be implied that his profession as a lecturer, his ability to speak French, his house condition, and his interest in arts very likely becomes the main factors for him to be accused as a right-wing intellectual that has to be arrested.

Two other characters that also have important roles in the film is Lu’s wife, Feng Wanyu, and Lu’s daughter, Dandan. Similar to Lu, Feng is also an educator, but since she works in a middle school, she is addressed as *laoshi* (teacher). As an educator, she has the view that someone who works in science and technology field is more valuable for the country. Dandan, the daughter of Lu and Feng, is an excellent dancer, but she eventually leaves the dancing world and changes her profession into a factory worker. Her change of profession happened due to her father’s political prisoner status that leads to her failure to take the leading role, although she has excellent dancing skills.

This film is called *Coming Home* because it tells the story of Lu Yanshi’s return, a prisoner who escapes prison to return to his home and his family. His first coming home does not bring him happiness as his daughter, Dandan, reported Lu to the party to his recapture. His second return takes place after the end of Cultural Revolution, after he was officially released by the government.
and the allegation of him being a rightist is revoked. The second coming home also cannot bring him happiness as expected because his family is no longer together. Feng Wanyu, his wife, does not recognize Lu due to her memory disorder, while his daughter has quit dancing and no longer lives with her mother because she was forced to leave the house that reports Lu Yanshi’s whereabouts.

The analysis of time and place settings, character and characterizations, and plot suggests that the destruction of family institution in this film occurred because the character Lu Yanshi was accused as a rightist intellectual who becomes a political prisoner during the Cultural Revolution. The arrest of Lu Yanshi and the condition in Cultural Revolution destroy family relationship. Parents and children hate each other. The children hate their parents because the father are labelled as the enemy of the party, and the mother would rather support the father. Because the daughter reported the father to the party and cut out all the father’s picture at home, the mother forced the daughter to leave the house. From these events, it is evident that Lu Yanshi family sufferings are caused by the “rightist” accusation made by the party to the intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution. Although the cultural revolution is over, Lu Yanshi family still cannot live happily as before.

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