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MASTER'S THESIS

SHAPING A NATION:

**Representation of National Cinema
in Taiwanese Cinema**

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ABSTRACT

In the hands of state-owned studios, indie amateurs, underground productions, and emerging revolutionists, generations of Taiwanese filmmakers envisioned their image of the "nation" in cinematic forms.

Whether films produced in the island can be regarded as part of a 'national cinema' has been a debated topic. While local scholars such as Ru-Shou Chen claimed that "Taiwanese cinema, as a certain type of national cinema, lacks not only a complete supporting national identity, but also sufficient films to prove as examples".[1] Other authors across the world, such as Ian Christie, on the other hand, attempted to demonstrate how a new different composition of national cinema can be conceived.[2]

Based on founding theories regarding the essence of national identity and its representations by Ernest Renan[3] and Stuart Hall[4], and studies in the past three decades to conceptualize the changing qualities that forms a national cinema by Andrew Higson, Steven Crofts, Michael Walsh, Toby Miller, and the aforementioned Ian Christie, this article seeks to track the changing course of how images of the nation were shaped in post-war Taiwanese Cinema. By going through a general course of the development of film industry, and pulling put three

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[1] Ru-Shou Chen, *Through a Screen, Darkly: One Hundred Years of Reflections on Taiwan Cinema*, 1st ed. Taipei: Bookman Books, 2013. 63 p. ISBN 9789574454433

[2] Ian Christie, Where Is National Cinema Today (and Do We Still Need It)?, *Film History*, 2013, vol. 25, no. 1-2, 19-30 p.

[3] Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, Paris: Presses-Pocket, 1992. (translated by Ethan Rundell)

[4] Stuart Hall, Cultural identity and cinematic representation, *Framework*, 1989, vol. 36, 68 p.

contrasting films across different periods and examine them through parameters gained from the studies, the article intends to form a course of how national identities in cinema representation reflect and evolve across this post-war period, and attempts to answer whether an idea of a 'national cinema' supported by a new face of national identity can be proposed.

ABSTRAKT

Obraz „národa" u taiwanských filmařů po generace povstával z rukou státem vlastněných studií, nezávislých amatérů, neoficiálních produkcí a vynořujících se revolucionářů.

Zda lze filmy vznikající na ostrově považovat za národní kinematografii bylo diskutovaným tématem. Badatelé jako Ru-Shou Chen tvrdí, že „taiwanská kinematografie, jako určitý typ národní kinematografie, postrádá nejen národní identitu, na které by se zakládala, ale také dostatečný počet filmových děl, které by bylo možné považovat za příklady."[5] Jiní teoretici se naopak snaží prokázat existenci vznikající identity reprezentované ve filmových dílech.

Na základě teorií vyvinuých Ernestem Renanem[6] a Stuartem Hallem[7] věnujícím se národní identitě a jejím reprezentacím se tato práce snaží určit způsob, jakým se formoval obraz národa v poválečné taiwanské kinematografii. Na příkladu tří kontrastujících párů filmů z různých období práce ukazuje, jak jsou filmové reprezentace národních identit propojeny a jak se vyvíjejí napříč obdobími. A ptá se po existenci „národní kinematografie" podpořené vznikající národní identitou.

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[5] Ru-Shou Chen, *Through a Screen, Darkly: One Hundred Years of Reflections on Taiwan Cinema*, 1st ed. Taipei: Bookman Books, 2013. 63 p. ISBN 9789574454433
[6] Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, Paris: Presses-Pocket, 1992. (translated by Ethan Rundell)
[7] Stuart Hall, Cultural identity and cinematic representation, *Framework*, 1989, vol. 36, 68 p.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the decades after World War II, clashing tides of the cold-war context shattered the forming of identities in Taiwan, making the small island with its 23 million population overwhelmed with arguably one of the most controverted self-recognition dilemmas in the world.

For the past century, the ruling power on the island shifted from Japanese colonial rule, to Chinese occupation by the Nationalists following World War II, and to democratic reformations lead by local elites in the late 80s, at each transition bringing significant clashes in the society. Attempts by each to reshape the ideology towards a new national identity heightened the complexity of views among the population, changing habits such as language preferences and the ways people see their origins. To this day, the country is perhaps the very few in the world with an ongoing national poll for 26 years already that asks the same simple question: "Who do you think you are?"[8]

Film productions play a significant role along this process. Cinema, since the 20th century, has been a major platform where representations of national identities were exercised. For years, filmmakers in Taiwan as well seek for the shape of their nation with their own renditions.

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[8] *Taiwanese / Chinese Identification Trend Distribution in Taiwan(1992/06~2018/06)* [online]. Taipei: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University. Accessed from:< https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/course/news.php?Sn=166 >

But what is a Nation? As French scholar Ernest Renan suggested, the idea of a nation was formed by people exercising wills of territory, political power, language, history, culture, and religion. And more importantly, a consensus to continue a *common* life together.[9]

By the latter half of the century, new approaches to revisit the concepts of national cinema and its bounding nature with national identity have been proposed by authors such as Andrew Higson[10] and Michael Walsh[11]. Traditional discourses of national cinema, when it elaborates upon its connection with national identity, associate it with a consolidating hegemonic nature. Yet, as newer texts in the past 20 years attempted to indicate, could difference itself within a nation, as opposed to a consolidating unity, present as a core nature of a new face of identity? When we adapt this angle toward films with contrasting views towards national identities from the same nation state, do the sum of them, with all of its collage of conflicting views, create a unique façade of itself that can still be called a national cinema?

The dramatic shift in the political context that Taiwan situates in, both internally and in a geopolitical scale, along with its unsettled dilemma of contradicting national identities across the population, which has been vividly expressed in its cinema productions across the years, make the nation an ideal subject for discourse of a new formation of national cinema.

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[9] Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, Paris: Presses-Pocket, 1992. (translated by Ethan Rundell)
[10] Andrew Higson, The Concept Of National Cinema, *Thesis Eleven*, 1989, vol. 22, 36-46
[11] Michael Walsh, National Cinema, National Imagery, *Film History*, 1996, vol. 8, 5-17 p. ISSN 0892-2160

Following early elements proposed by Ernest Renan, and later additions in both fields of cinematic representation of identity and recent re-conceptualizing of national cinema, by authors as Stuart Hall, Andrew Higson, Steven Crofts, and Michael Walsh, respectively in the works we will cover in the second chapter, we can harness ourselves with the parameters required to examine the representation of national identity in the context of a national cinema, if existing.

This article then seeks to trace down the changing course of representation of national identity in the Taiwanese Cinema, by first going for a brief review of its development along with the changing political and social settings, while identifying the constantly reshaping process of forming identities in a general scale.

We would examine 3 contracting films from different periods as case studies. *The Pioneers* (1979), a big budget historic epic feature produced by government-controlled Central Motion Pictures Corporation at the depth of cold war isolation, representing the legitimate grand narrative towards a national imagery that the regime eagerly attempted to impose.[12] *A City of Sadness* (1989), the first film to directly tackle the censored historical topics of ethnical clashes under the misconduct by the regime, released right after the end of the 38-year-long martial law and censorship, and also the first Taiwanese film to receive the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale, which resulted in a market phenomenon and pioneered widespread discussions regarding new perspectives towards a national subjectivity against the official stance.[13] *Cape No.7* (2008), released amidst years of market

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[12] Huang Ren, *Guo Pian Dian Ying Shi Hua (Tales From The Taiwanese Cinema History)*, 1st ed, Taipei: The Commercial Press, 2010. 64 p. ISBN 9789570524819
[13] Lu Fei Yi, *Tai Wan Dian Ying: Zheng Zhi Jing Ji Mei Xue (Taiwanese Films: Politics, Economy, and Aesthetics)*, 1st ed, Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing, 1998. 329 p. ISBN 957-32-3594-3

low and created a historical box office record of $17.6 million US dollars, second only to *Titanic* (1997)[14] at the time, took on the complexities in a much light-hearted comedic romance approach. The film broadened the perspective of the identity dilemma to cover the emotional entanglement of locals toward Japanese colonial rule and its people, and its almost sarcastic and chaotic rendering of the land and its people not only scored huge market success, but was also a reflection of the contemporary reality.

Each of those films was produced at a distinct turning point of political and social context. Their production scale and approach were considered landmarks for their times, and the latter two both generated significant influence among the local crowd.

By identifying the mirroring elements that form the national identities in those films, along with the aforementioned general course, and its interactions with the consumption side based on retrieved historical material, finally, this article seeks to answer this question: If the Taiwanese Cinema fits within the also shifting concept of National Cinema, could its internal contradictions and differences, as a whole, be considered a new type of consolidation - that defines the essence of a Taiwanese National Cinema?

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[14] Until 2017, Taiwan does not have an official census for box office sales. The common accepted practice then was to collect the sales number reported to the commissioned distributor by the cinemas in Taipei, and multiply that number by 2 to estimate the nation-wide gross sales. The practice was in common use for decades and was widely utilized and announced by distributors to generate records for mutual referencing. Figures here were announced on the film's official website: <http://cape7.pixnet.net/blog/post/21746004>

2.   THEORETICAL STUDIES

"Cinema is, first and foremost, the projection of a cultural identity which comes to life on the screen. It mirrors, or should mirror, this identity. But that is not all. It should also 'dream' it. Or make it flesh and blood, with all its contradictions. "[15]

"Nationhood is not given, it is always something to be gained." [16]

As thriving nation states took the world stage in the 19th century, attempts to define what a 'nation' is flourishes. In the sphere of political philosophy, one pioneering figure was France's Ernest Renan. Widely regarded as the founder of Civic Nationalism, Renan drew an early outline of the essential elements that constitutes a *Civic Nation,* and the national identity that is needed by the individuals within to form their meaningful, autonomous lives.

In Renan's impactful text delivered at the Sorbonne on March 11th, 1882, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? (What is a Nation?),* he argues that the nation, as a spiritual principle, is not formed by race, language, interests, religious affinity, geography, military necessities, but rather, a great solidarity constituted by the feeling of sacrifices made and those that one is still disposed to make. Renan's central idea for the identity of a nation is based on the *consent* of the individuals – a clearly expressed desire to continue a common life together. He analogize the

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[15] Walter Salles, 'Preface'*, The Cinema of Latin America*, London: Wallflower, 2003 ISBN 978-1903364833

[16] Stephen Heath, Questions of Property: Film and Nationhood, *Cinetracts*, Spring/Summer 1978, vol. 1, no. 4, 1978, 10. p.

existence of a nation to *a daily plebiscite,* the continuous reaffirmation expressed by the people to continue on a spiritual unity.

> "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things which, properly speaking, are really one and the same constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past, the other is the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present consent, the desire to live together, the desire to continue to invest in the heritage that we have jointly received."

With this active two-dimensional expression exercised through its people, the existence of the spiritual nation persists.

As the trends of idealistic cultural imperialism faded in the following 20th century, along with the two devastating wars and remapping of the world, the defining factors of a nation and its identity moved on from a singular analysis under a developed context of a European nation state, to a broader perspective along the global frontiers.

One much quoted example is the work of Benedict Anderson in his insightful publication Imagined Communities in 1983[17]. In his writings, Anderson seeks nationalism as the historical phenomenon whereby large groups, beginning with creole communities in the Americas, begin to imagine themselves, to consciously conceive of themselves, as sharing a common identity, different from that of other groups and linked to the possibilities of statehood.[18] From here, a new element of

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[17] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Revised Edition, London: Verso, 1991, 5 p. ISBN 978-1784786755
[18] Michael Walsh, National Cinema, National Imagery, *Film History*, 1996, vol. 8, 5-17 p. ISSN 0892-2160

difference emerges.

Around the same period saw the emergence of discussions on national cinemas beyond its literal definitions of national borders, and Stuart Hall's series of works on *representation,* and in particular, his article published on Framework in 1989: *Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation*.[19]

Projected from a position of an *enunciated* self, Hall stresses the importance of the position in context of a specific history and culture that write and speak from. From this position when proposing the idea of a 'cultural identity', he suggests two directions to consider.

The first defines culture identity in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. This indicates the population as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of their actual history.[20]

The second position suggests that, as well as the many points of similarity within the shared history and ancestry, there are also crucial points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute 'what we really are' or 'what we have become'. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side: the differences

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[19] Stuart Hall, Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation, *Framework*, 1989, vol. 36, 68-82 p.

[20] ibid., 68 p.

and discontinuities.

Serving as a solution for the post-colonial context in the Caribbean, Hall argues that one from this second position can we properly understand the truly traumatic character of 'the colonial experience'. The context here is Caribbean, yet is also applies to the vast sphere outside of the Western world with its colonial past and shifts of power, including East Asia.

On the other hand, we saw numerous attempts to theorize the idea and elements of what has been called National Cinema. For the past decades, the term has long been simply referred to the production of films from one particular state within its borders as a whole. Beginning in the late 80s, as cultural exchange along with late capitalism brought in possibilities to reconstruct what truly forms a *national* cinema, figures such as Andrew Higson, Stephen Crofts, Michael Walsh, Toby Miller, and Ian Christie proposed their own re-examinations along the course of these past three decades.

The text by Andrew Higson in 1989, *The Concept Of National Cinema*, attempts to depart from the then common definition of a national cinema simply as films produced within one particular state[21], exploring also from the side of consumption, how the term 'national' can be implied in a cinematic discourse, and the particular mode of practice, specific range of textual practices, and industrial practices that contributes to the naming of a national cinema.

"To identify a national cinema is first of all to specify a coherence and a unity; it is to proclaim a unique identity and a stable set of meanings."[22]

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[21] Andrew Higson, The Concept of National Cinema, *Thesis Eleven*, 1989, vol. 22, 36-46
[22] ibid., 37 p.

In addition to the economical practices, when identifying a national cinema through its practices toward the national identity, Higson stresses the importance of identifying a hegemonic unity, an imaginary coherence. This is generated either with a process of national myth-making by highlighting one unique body of images and values of the nation against others, or by the inward interactions of its cinema with other already existing economies and cultures within the same state.

In either aspect of forming a cultural identity that defines a national cinema, Higson highlighted the process by which a cultural *hegemony* is achieved. That brings us to the question mentioned in the opening chapter: instead of identifying a hegemony, could a collage of *differences* create a new subjectivity that also indicates towards a new type of national cinema?

On the other hand, regarding expending the concept of defining a national cinema, Higson suggested shifting the focus to the consumption: How the films were circulated, how they were *used* by the audience, and what are the range and relation between their audience and the discourses generated. In his own words, it is an "analysis of how actual audiences construct their cultural identity in relation to the various products of the national and international film and television industries, and the condition under which this is achieved."[23]

Four years later, as the collapse of the communist bloc dramatically changed the meanings of boundaries, as trading blocs replace the functions of national economies and ethnic violence took over the flags of national unity, Stephen Crofts published his article *Reconceptualizing National Cinema/s* in

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[23] ibid., 45 p.

1993.[24] Building upon the parameters proposed by Andrew Higson in the text above to put the focus on the consumption side, Crofts first questioned if traditional concepts for a 'nation' still apply in the face of all major changes that were taking place. With his attempt of "*disaggregating* the term 'national cinema[25]'", Crofts stressed the global influence of Hollywood distributions, and categorized ranges of sociologically specific audiences for different types of film against the global distribution context of Hollywood to generate his reconceptualization of national cinema.

More important for this article, Crofts pointed out the unique exception of South and Southeast Asia outside of this global trend. As Crofts indicated, most film viewing countries outside South and Southeast Asia have transformed its construction of cinema customs under Hollywood influence towards fictional entertainment along with its economic system in distribution and consumption. However, areas in South and Southeast Asia have nevertheless "significantly maintained their own terrain[26]" under their secluded political, economic, and cultural contexts. This resonates with our grounds to sustain the main approach of this article on the cultural aspect and its shaping of national identities forming a national cinema, instead of adhering to the trend in most other parts of the world to focus on globalized economic mechanisms while re-discoursing the essence national cinema.

The text by Michael Walsh in 1996, *National Cinema, National Imaginary*, shifted the topic back towards cultural identity and the essence that made up a

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[24] Stephen Crofts, Reconceptualizing National Cinema/s, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video,* 1994, vol. 14:3, 49-67 p. ISSN 1050-9208
[25] ibid., 49 p.
[26] ibid., 50 p.

nation.[27] Walsh indicated a new trend by the period of dealing "not simply with national cinemas but with the nations itself as a conceptual, discursively constructed entity that can be read from the media texts such as films." By refocusing back to the essence of a nation, we get more precise than the groundworks of nation-building in national cinemas laid by Andrew Higson.

Walsh further separates the distinction between a nation and a state. The latter describes the institutions, while the *nation* refers to:

> "a conceptual or mental territory, and the internalization of a set of cultural meanings …meanings that can be shared among a community, with nationalism entailing the view of oneself as a member of a common group bound by some set of a shared cultural and historical experiences and traits which will ideally, but not always, coincide with origin or residence within the physical boundaries of a state."[28]

This definition gave a more concise view, compared with previous articles, towards how national identities were formed either in artworks or other fields. Again the essence here is some set of *a shared* cultural and historical experiences. Given the complexities and conflicts within the subject of Taiwanese Cinema, this article would again like to ask toward its end: could the non-shared multiple complexity itself become *the* essence of the proposed Taiwanese National Cinema?

Regarding the approach to examine the role of the nation in national cinema, Walsh mentioned the practice of explicating a 'national imagery', from the analysis on film works. It thus demonstrated how nations were culturally constructed by

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[27] Michael Walsh, National Cinema, National Imagery, *Film History*, 1996, vol. 8, 5-17 p. ISSN 0892-2160
[28] ibid., 5 p.

privileging certain meanings and groups within the formation of a *national imaginary*. Also, it will explain state policies under its context by referencing to the power of this national imaginary as a motivating ideological set.

Further authors mostly extend their works on those established grounds. At the turn of the century in 1999, Toby Miller published his short article *Screening The Nation: Rethinking Options*[29]. While most of the text covers issues within the contemporary academic approach, there are two topics worth mentioning.

One is his view towards examining the cultural nation under the modern context of differences that no longer embraces a single value for *everyone*.

"We must deal with it as seemingly unified form that needs decomposing each time it is applied to particular circumstances."[30]

This transforms the view towards national identity, from a consolidating hegemony mentioned in Higson's time, to the flexible composition of a "seemingly unified form".

Another is a further concentration on not only text materials, but actual film going experience of the citizens of a nation, how the cinema, made in their name, engage them. This is especially fitting when covering films such as *Cape No.7*, which we will go into detail, that converted topics of identity into entertainment that generated significant audience responses and a market phenomenon.

From a much recent time, the work of Ian Christie in 2013, *Where Is National Cinema Today (and Do We Still Need It)?*, as the title suggested, further

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[29] Toby Miller, Screening The Nation: Rethinking Options, *Cinema Journal*, 1999, vol. 38, no. 4, 93-97 p.
[30] ibid., 94 p.

questioned the stance of national cinema in the contemporary context.

Christie stated that national cinema, while being a founding sphere of cinema history, has now been widely "stigmatized as an equivalent of the national literature promoted by nineteenth-century bourgeois elites."[31]

Face with grow challenges to replace the national cinema with a transnational context, Christie's solution is to put even more focus on empirical side of audience studies, with that he argues:

> "We do need national cinema histories that are grounded in the study of diverse audiences and reception within the nations that are still our primary frames of reference."[32]

With the nations still in place, and faced with the complexities that had long been mentioned, Christie suggested that the national canon need not to be homogeneous anymore. While it may contain the anarchic or countercultural, there is also evidence of a continued attachment to traditional institutions of nationhood.

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[31] Ian Christie, Where Is National Cinema Today (and Do We Still Need It)?, *Film History*, 2013, vol. 25, no. 1-2, 19-30 p.
[32] ibid., 28 p.

2.1 SUMMARY AND DIRECTION

This gradual shift from a hegemonic consolidating national identity towards attempts to define a non-homogeneous nature of the national canon, became the main direction of this article. As mentioned in earlier paragraphs, could we move one step further from the flexible definition of *non-homogeneous*, and utilize the conflicting nature of identities itself as the essence that defines Taiwanese National Cinema?

Therefore, instead of Crofts and Higson who put the majority of attention on the economical side of distribution and consumption when approaching national cinema, this article will focus more on the cultural representations surround national identities when examining the films, using aspects covered in the previous chapter. The social and historical impacts of them on their contemporary audiences will also be considered – how the audience acknowledge the film and its theme, and how this interacts with the simultaneously evolving political and social context. All this contributes to the current conflicting complexity, and will help answer the final question.

Nevertheless, as Crofts hinted with the unique political and social context of South and Southeastern Asia, which includes Taiwan, we will also cover the development of cinema industry in general, how it correlates with the historical background, before going into detail regarding the selected films.

3. LOOKING BACK ON TAIWANESE CINEMA

This chapter will attempt to go through the brief history of Taiwanese cinema industry, to provide a general course of background before going for individual films. Between sections, the article seeks to mirror the events with their contemporary social and political backgrounds to provide information and analysis.

The major reference for this chapter is the work by film historian Huang Ren, from his publication Tai Wan Dian Ying Bai Nian Shi Hua (Hundred Years of Taiwanese Film History).[33] Specific cited sources will be noted, while additional materials for general referencing will be included in the bibliography.

The time when the Lumiere films were first screened in Taiwan, according to records in newspaper, was June of 1900. The island has just freshly fell into Japanese colonial rule on the year the Lumieres created cinema. Japanese projectionists toured the island, the most important of them being Toyojirou Takamatsu, a well-known left wing activist back home who used screenings to promote labor rights. His popularity caught the attention of ex-prime minister Ito Hirobumi, who then recommended him to the Taiwanese governor for cultural publicity works in the newly acquired colony. Since 1903, Takamatsu toured the

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[33] Huang Ren, *Tai Wan Dian Ying Bai Nian Shi Hua (Hundred Years Of Taiwanese Film History),* 1st ed. Taipei: Chinese Society Of Film Critiques, 2004 ISBN 9786660954006

island every winter, screening films while delivering speeches for labor movement. Despite his leftist background, he maintained close relationship with the colonizing authority, and their collaboration gave birth to the first Taiwanese film *An Introduction to the Actual Conditions in Taiwan* (1907), which was essentially a montage of newsreels demonstrating modernizations across the island under the colonial rule. However, the projection toured around the island in popularity and became the public's first exposure to the film-going experience.

Although cinema production was underdeveloped, if not primitive, projections in major urban areas thrived. In 1917, purpose-built cinema houses only numbered to three to four across the country, this number will reach 48 by the beginning of World War II. Film critic circles were born in this period as well, the first of them, Taipei Film Association, was founded on 1932, and followed four years later by Kaohsiung Film Association. Formed by intellectuals devoting into appreciation of western productions with aesthetic approaches. Their publications introduced for the first time cinema theories, aesthetic critiques, and translation of screenplays. For the general audience, their early taste in cinema was dominated with imported Chinese films. Gap emerges across the audience between the intellectually elites and the illiterate commons, and persisted until the colonial government banned Chinese-related cultural performances in its entirety, at the beginning of war with China, fearing the themes of the Chinese movies, associating with the Taiwanese population's Chinese ancestry, will undermine the pursuit for national solidarity under the newly shaped Japanese identity that was being imposed by the colonialists.

Meanwhile, cinema production was already servicing the needs of war. The government produced wartime newsreels like *Taiwan Under Current Situation*

(1938), and also co-produced feature films that used plots of local and aboriginal characters devoting to national deeds, to promote its invasion policy, such as *Sayon's Bell (1943)*. After the government owned Taiwan Cinema Association took over cinema production across the island, they expanded production scale to one film every two months.

When the war came to a sudden end, the sovereignty of the island was handed over to the Chinese Nationalists in a still disputed occupation. Most of the population were unprepared for the change, and now faced with a new mother nation that spoke a foreign language, Mandarin, and eager to impose the new Chinese identity. Clashes between ethnical Chinese and local Taiwanese population escalated with the imposed policies and conflicting difference between the two sides, eventually led to the 228 incident which begun with an island-wide riot by the locals and ended with the Nationalist army genocide of thousands of locals, resulting in the ethnic hatred that still persists today.

As the Japanese colonials transferred the governing forces to the Nationalists, personnel and equipment from the Taiwan Cinema Association were taken over and were reformed into Taiwan Film Studios as one of the main official film institutions. From this moment to the 1970s, official productions of Taiwanese cinema will be dominated by government-led productions, with their contents largely restricted to newsreels and propagandas similar to their Japanese predecessors.

By 1949, the Nationalist government has lost the civil war with the Communists, and has retreated to the island. Brought with them were the government-owned China Film Studios, Agricultural Education Film Company, and a large number of their personnel and equipment. These resulted in government-

dominated cinema development in following decades. The film traditions of Shanghai in the thirties with its drama productions, along with civilian talents and equipment, were largely transferred to Hong Kong, forming the basis for future Hong Kong cinema industry. On the other side in Taiwan, directing, scripting, and acting talents were lost, and the regime suffered from left-wing activists during the lost war, resulted in Extreme control over cinema productions. Productions in the 1950s, especially Mandarin speaking features, were comparable to Stalinist Soviet productions of the same period, tightly following legitimate ideology, turning into an outlet for political services.

Meanwhile seen the rise of Taiwanese-speaking cinema. Amidst the language differences that separated the population, civilian productions of dialect speaking cinemas flourished. Though Mandarin Chinese has been designated as the new official language, the Taiwanese language was still the main language in common usage of most of the population. In 1955, Cheng-San Chen, leader of the famous Geong- Lok Theatre, collaborated with film director Chi-Ming Ho, putting his popular play *Xue Ping Gui And Wang Bao Chuan* (1955) onto the silver screen. The production was the first prominent Taiwanese-speaking film after the war to score nation-wide market success, and marked the beginning of a 20-year golden age for Taiwanese-speaking cinema.[34]

The craze more or less reflects what middle and lower class Taiwanese audience finally found as a resort for their oppressed language and culture under the Chinese rule in Cold War context. Taiwanese speaking cinema first focused on opera plays, folklores, or news events, with its theme mostly tragic, more or less

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[34] Lu Fei Yi, *Tai Wan Dian Ying: Zheng Zhi Jing Ji Mei Xue (Taiwanese Films: Politics, Economy, and Aesthetics)*, 1st ed, Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing, 1998. 83 p. ISBN 957-32-3594-3

in connection with the discontent of most of the oppressed ethnic locals. By dawn of the 60s, farce, musicals, spy films appear, adding colors to its spectrum. When Taiwanese speaking cinema reached its decline in late 60s, sexually-themed exploitation films begun to dominate. Overall, these local films were mostly low budget, and their investors lacked vision for long-term development. Result was poor production quality, stingy use of film rolls and production resource, and rushed production schedule.

By 1960s, the Nationalist regime started their promotion of standardized language policy, Mandarin, Taiwanese-speaking cinema was largely labeled as vulgar indecencies. Strong governmental support for Mandarin cinema, newly established censorship regulation, plus the poor environment that is already damaging the industry, resulted in the final end of this period. For the rest of the decades until the late 80s, Mandarin speaking films produced by the official studios will dominate the viewer's choices.

As official productions took over, the so-called Healthy Realism Cinema rose as the dominant trend.

By the 1960s, situation across the strait was stabilizing. The Nationalist regime gained support from United States, and its authoritarian regime was in firm control in all aspects. Economy of the nation turned from import substitution to export-orientated, and industrial sector was on steady growth. The society was bit more relaxed from the turmoil of 228 massacre and threatening of another war on the horizon.

Nationalist Party-owned Central Film Corporation, under the guidance of general manager Hong Gong, proposed a new course that they called Healthy

Realism – Taking its style from western realism cinema while avoiding exposing dark sides of the society.

In the totalitarian environment of the time with film productions dominated by political ideologies, this was already a pioneering act. The Corporation-produced films like *The Oyster Girl (1964)* and *Beautiful Duckling (1965)*, which received popular response in the market, and finally production quality of Mandarin cinema reached a new height. Successful productions were even exported to overseas Chinese-speaking market for the first time.

Overall, these films emphasize on traditional ethics and moral values, while lacking the courage to criticize reality. However, they did establish a new style for Taiwanese Cinema, setting it apart from Chinese Cinema in the Shanghai period or drama films in Hong Kong. From this moment on, serious Taiwanese films more or less continues on ethic values developed during this period, an extension of Confucius ideologies highly regarded by the Nationalist regime, and the positive image of nation-building as background. Leading directors of the time like Xing Li, Jing-Jui Bai, Jia Li became prominent figures that set the course of cinema in the years till 70s.

Yearly production number of these Healthy Realism films quickly rose to exceed the dying Taiwanese-speaking civilian cinema. With full support from the Nationalist regime, Mandarin cinema with its theme dominated by official censorship, finally became mainstream in Taiwan across the general audience. On the contrary, Taiwanese speaking productions have already suffered from poor production; audience were lost due to rise of television programs; and the government's ignorance and censorship add the final toll that sealed its fate. The revival of Taiwanese-speaking cinema will have to wait until New Cinema period

in the 1980s.

Before the arrival of Healthy Realism, Mandarin sector in Taiwanese film market has been long dominated by Hong Kong productions. Since 1949, Hong Kong cinema industry has been the battlefield of Nationalist and Communist powers. Taiwanese government used all incentive policies to encourage Hong Kong production houses to produce in Taiwan. By 1963, Han-Xiang Li left the famous Shaw Brothers studio and came to Taiwan to establish Union Pictures, bringing institutionalized studio system to the island, and therefore modernized cinema in Taiwan. Among the 22 films they produced, one significant genre that created remarkable following trend was romance films adapted from Chiung Yao's novels. Films like *Four Loves (1965)* and *Love of the Mute Girl (1965)* were similar to Hollywood romance dramas, with their time background often set in 1930s-40s China or indefinite time. Characters were frequently trapped with class, educational, or gender differences, and their faith in affections became the only redemption. Strictly speaking, these films were still safeguarding ethical boundaries of traditional society, but in 60s and 70s, they still became comfort and emotional outlet of popular audience, and were generally well received. These audiences shifted their focus to television in the 80s, and the popularity of romance dramas of this kind continued in television productions.

In 1971, following termination of post-war occupation, United States transferred sovereignty of controversial Diao-Yu Islands to Japan. This event triggered a wave of protests among Mandarin-speaking expat population around the globe. In Taiwan, the Nationalist regime was suffering with waves of diplomatic frustrations. The same year Taiwan was expelled from United Nations, shortly after Richard Nixon made the historical visit to China, Japan recognized the Beijing

government instead of the Nationalists that fled to Taiwan, and then the first oil crisis came. Political and Economic tensions had made turbulence in the general social atmosphere.

Inside the ruling party, conservative members strived to stabilize their power, while reformers were beginning to gather their influence. After Chiang Ching-Ko took over as new president, the government started responding to calls for change. But the cinema industry was slow to react.

At the height of international kung-fu popularity, Chang-Ling Mei took over as general manager Central Film Corporation. It was the time when Taiwan and Japan cut their diplomatic relationship; Mei therefore produced the World War II-themed *Everlasting Glory* (1974) that told stories of Chinese resistance against Japanese invasion. From traces like these, it is evident that cinema productions and its themes were largely in accordance with the political context and official preferences of ideologies, which will remain until the New Cinema period.

Reception was favorable however, films like these earned the preference of a majority of audience who are already far away from the dialect cinema period when choices were still available. Moreover, younger generations of this period were baby boomers less exposed to the traumas of transitional times, rendering significant portion of them content with the regime's status quo. Years later, they will clash again with the even younger generations who experience the violent reforms in the 80s and 90s.

Patriotic films therefore created a strong following since mid 70s. Especially after the death of Chiang Kai-Shek in 1975, South Vietnam and Cambodia fell to communist hands, China was under new leadership and reformation, voices for

self-determination among intellectuals escalated, and at last the United States cut its diplomatic relation with Taiwan in 1979.

Against intense calls for a change in the control of ideology, official cinema studios even strengthened their production of patriotic dramas. *Eight Hundred Heroes* (1975), *Victory* (1975), *A Teacher of Great Soldiers* (1978) were all patriotic films of this time, while the first depicted the Chinese struggle against Japan, the latter focused on the longing of the Taiwanese people toward motherland China in those challenged times. Xing Li's film *He Never Gives Up (1977)* was itself a metaphor of the drifting nation under indefinite international situation. After Ji Ming became the new manager of Central Film in 1977, a pioneering period which launched the final modernization of Taiwanese cinema was about to begin.

Up till this point, under tight control of the Nationalist regime, officially-produced Taiwanese cinema has used genres like anti-communist propaganda, military-themed comedy, historical drama, healthy realism, and elements like historical heritage, national language, cultural root in China, colonization themes portraying Taiwan under Japanese rule and waiting for its "liberation" by the Nationalists, to strengthen the population's recognition with Chinese identity.

In the beginning of 1980s, a new local movement in literature that focused on revealing real situations and conflicts in local settlements has launched a revolution in all forms of expression.

With sales of official productions declining, Ji Ming, the new general manager of Central Film, made the bold move by recruiting a generation of young new directors to adapt those local movement literatures. The film among this

movement that set the underlying style and theme for others to follow was The Sandwich Man (1983).

The film was an adaptation of Chun-Ming Huang's three short novels, using fluent modern film language to present unprecedented themes that were staged in rural villages facing industrialization. The film received widely positive critical response while also being a market success, and thus ignited a new wave period of Taiwanese film under the name of New Cinema.

Resistance from political regime and conservative members in the film industry was still strong, but with supports from critics and market, Ji Ming and his new directors were able to break the barrier and fight for freedom of creation. From this moment on, new directors as Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Edward Yang, Yi Chang, Kun- Hou Chen, and experienced directors from previous period as well, gained better chance for their proposals, and created films that displayed new forms, established individual styles, and expressed progressive themes. Some important film in this period were *The Boys From Fengkuei* (1983), *That Day On The Beach* (1983), *A Flower in The Raining Night* (1983), *A Time to Live, A Time to Die* (1985). Using recollection in their narration, New Cinema realistically displayed petit local figures and the 'genuine' appearance of the local society, and continued on the localism that first embarked on its course in literature. This movement distinguished itself from the grand narrative in original official productions that strived to construct a legitimate national image.

In the 1980s, after films from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China earned exposure and critical acclaim in international festivals, on one hand they were each occasionally associated with a Chinese linkage - this ambiguity itself was also a reflection of the internal dilemma in Taiwan after waves of conflicting ideologies,

now mostly represented by the Chinese / Taiwanese identity dilemma that also exists in the presentations of contemporary Taiwanese Films, either thematically or practically when the films went on for international distributions (The commonly used name approved by UN for the official delegation of Taiwan in all official international events, including delegations for major film festivals, is still Chinese Taipei)

On the other hand , the clear cultural differences in contents that displayed their individual identities has given them individual status as 'national cinemas'. 5th Generation of Chinese films became the West's window on China, Hong Kong films were interpreted as common anxiety to the coming 1997 transfer of sovereignty; As for Taiwan's films, they were understood as cultural representation of the beaming self-identity.

The new cinema movement did reach its height with *A City of Sadness* (1989) and *Banana Paradise* (1989). On the transition from Nationalist authoritarian regime to democratization with the final end of the martial law period, these two films, with their portrayal of originally forbidden political taboos, clearly marked the wake of a self-established identity and discourse, that was born locally, that was different from a given one.

As we moved into the 21th century, rather than the tried-and-proven tackle with the old establishments under very specific topics. We see more films exposed these issues as a collage that is much representing the contemporary reality of contradictions. Films as *Cape No. 7* (2008), which its light-weighted comedic plot and shocking historical box office success of $17.6 million US dollars ticket sales domestically, marks a new reality in this long-going course. Is this fractured reality the end of a dissolving course, or is this collage our new face as a whole?

4.1 THREE CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, we examine three iconic films from Taiwanese Cinema, from *The Pioneers* (1979) which represented the official propaganda production, *A City of Sadness* (1989) that marked the height of New Cinema autonomous authorship, and the abovementioned *Cape No.7* (2008) that indicated the new popular trend. We will examine how images of the nation and the identity/identities of the people are expressed in them cinematically, and how they interact with their contemporary context.

4.1 The Pioneers (1979)

这裡就是蓬萊仙島台灣

[35]

"Lin-Fang, do you remember where you are from?"

"Jiaying, Guangdong."

"And where are we now?"

"The heavenly island of Taiwan."

Set in the early 19th century adapting from historical records of Hakka immigrants excavating oils in central Taiwan, *The Pioneers*, directed by Chen Yao-Qi, told the life story of Wu Lin-Fang, a poor Hakka youth that crossed the sea from China with his parents to find their new home in Taiwan. Wu devoted his adulthood establishing a new settlement of immigrants on the edge of the mountain range. While challenged by the *savage* aboriginals who did not even speak a proper language and beheads the immigrants from time to time, they strived to maintain their cultural traditions from China. An accidental discovery of

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[35] Screenshot of *The Pioneers* (1979) from official DVD published by Central Motion Pictures Corporation, 2004, ISBN 4717482405730

petroleum in the settlement spurred the greed of British trading companies that attempted to invade the mountains and occupy the oil reserve. Wu managed to repel their attempt, and with the help of new policies of the imperial Chinese government, introduced independent foreign technicians from the United States to start his own excavation. The attempt with the foreigners failed nevertheless and a devastating explosion killed Wu. Amid the ashes, it was Wu's son at the end, with the teachings from ancient Chinese engineering books, successfully found the oil without the help of others.

The literal translation from the original title is "The Origin". Given the political situation when the film was released, it was evident why the Central Motion Pictures Corporation (CMPC), under guidance from the Nationalist regime, devoted significant effort into the making of this film. One year before the production of *The Pioneers*, the United States cut off diplomatic relations with the Nationalists and turned towards Communist China as their recognized legitimate government of China. Faced with the anxieties of local population and the budding questioning of the legitimacy of the Nationalist regime under the proposed Chinese identity, the government was eager to utilize a prominent film production to reconsolidate the historical narratives that it has been putting upon its subjects.

CMPC invested $2 million US Dollars to produce the film, a high mark for the time being. The shooting took 227 days to finish, employing more than 30000 extras on the set.[36] The production even hired Hollywood star John Phillip Law to play the American engineer in the film. The director's cut was over 3 hours and 30 minutes long. By every aspect, the production scale was significant.

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[36] Huang Ren, *Guo Pian Dian Ying Shi Hua (Tales From the Taiwanese Cinema History)*, 1st ed, Taipei: The Commercial Press, 2010. 64 p. ISBN 9789570524819

One detail worth noticing is its use of language preferences to create distinctive spectrum between the savage and civilized. Though all major characters were clearly Hakka immigrants from rural areas of Guangdong, all of them spoke in perfect Mandarin while adhering perfectly to Confucius ethics as if they were noble elites from the north. The first time the local dialect lines were finally inserted into the film, was when the drunk priest in the village was performing an unholy ritual, which instantly resulted in a disaster that took away the lives of the Mandarin-speaking good people. And beyond the superstitious dialect-using locals, there were even the aboriginal tribe who spoke nothing but mumbled. An portrayal against the already well-known fact of the Taiwanese tribes having their own well-developed language system. On the other extreme, we saw the Westerners arriving in palanquins carried by the locals while delivering their commands in English.

Through differentiating the language preferences, the film drew lines between 4 groups of people in this land. The aboriginals, the dialect users, the Mandarin-speaking educated population, and the foreign elites, from the savage to the civilized. In a not-so-surprising twist at the end, the Mandarin speaking son of the protagonist triumphed over of West and claimed the final success.

The Pioneers was a classic example of how cinema was utilized under political influence at the time to shape the desired imagined national imagery proposed by the regime. Through party-controlled distribution systems, the film received wide exposure across the island. Before the end of Martial Law in 1987 lifted the censorship in film productions, similar state-produced films such as *The Land of the Brave* (1981), and *The Heroic Pioneers* (1985) will continue to tell stories of the imagined identity proposed by the state, leaving their influence on

the vast film-going population.

4.2 A City of Sadness (1989)

"In life, far from the motherland."

"In death, returning to the motherland."

"Both life and death are governed by destiny."

At the blink of the conclusion of martial law period, Hou Hsiao-Hsien launched the production of *A City of Sadness* with private funding, and departed from the official narratives to become the pioneering film to tackle upon the previously mentioned 228 incident and its surrounding ethnic conflicts.[38]

Centering around the rise and fall of the Lin brothers of a prominent local gangster family in the port city of Jiufen, Hou staged the story at the end of World War II, with the Japanese retreating and the new occupying powers arriving. While

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[37] Screenshot of *A City of Sadness* (1989) from official DVD published by ERA, 1999, ISBN 4710423285927

[38] Lu Fei Yi, *Tai Wan Dian Ying: Zheng Zhi Jing Ji Mei Xue (Taiwanese Films: Politics, Economy, and Aesthetics)*, 1st ed, Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing, 1998. 329 p. ISBN 957-32-3594-3

celebrating peace and the arrival of the supposed mother nation, the family also found it struggling to maintain its grounds with the arrival of Chinese magnates that took over their influence. Meanwhile, the great war still left its turmoil, it has taken away their second brother while rendering the third insane. As the initial calm between each side soured, the Lins found themselves trapped between both sides: influence from the Japanese times that were never away, and the Chinese that alienated them since the beginning. As situations worsened, the regime's oppression following the 228 incident, combined with collaborations from the newly established Chinese magnates, took away their lives and influences, one by one.

In sharp contrast against previous epics that retell the stories of a ready-made national myth, *A City of Sadness* dug deep into the shift of power at a crucial turning point of national history, and the scars in each of the conflicting ethnic groups it generated. In this attempt, it dissected the unified national identity of the past, and identified the distinct unbalanced power relations within it that created an otherness. In the lines delivered by Taiwanese characters in the film, as conflicts escalated, there was a significant increase of the word *they* when indicating the Chinese new arrivals. Such subtle changes in details formed the film's discourse of subjectivity and objectivity regarding the island's identity. A complaint by one of the Taiwanese characters towards the latter half of the film indicated this explicitly:

> "First the Japanese, then the Chinese. *They* all exploit us and no one gives a damn."

In another occasion, the same character gave an even clearer statement:

"Have we sunk so low as to want to become slaves again? ... Who asked us if we wanted to be ceded? How long before we can lift up our heads with pride?"

Compared with the overwhelming passion expressed through one character, the final fates of each of the Lin brothers emerge as Hou's metaphor for the fate of the nation. The eldest leading the gang was gunned down by the Shanghai magnate while still waving his knife trying to revenge; The second was forever lost in the Pacific while fighting for the Japanese; The third turned into insanity after serving both the Japanese and the Chinese; And the fourth, being deaf and mute, unable to speak for himself, was silently captured by the regime for a prearranged trial.

The film became the first Taiwanese film to score an award in the top international festivals, receiving the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale.[39] As a result, it created an unexpected market acceptance when released in local cinemas, with the box office sale in Taipei city alone reaching more than 200 thousand US dollars. [40] The resulting discussions among both intellectuals and common audience were regarded as a cultural phenomenon[41], and the film spearhead a series of others that also attempted to pick up on other topics in the previously censored parts of Taiwanese history.

Through reexamination of a historical period, *A City of Sadness* successfully demonstrated a new approach toward the national identity in Taiwan.

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[39] Lu Fei Yi, *Tai Wan Dian Ying: Zheng Zhi Jing Ji Mei Xue (Taiwanese Films: Politics, Economy, and Aesthetics)*, 1st ed, Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing, 1998. 329 p. ISBN 957-32-3594-3

[40] ROC Film Archive, *Cinema In The Republic Of China: Yearbook 1990*, 1st ed. Taipei: ROC Film Archive, 1990.

[41] ibid.

4.3 Cape No.7 (2008)

"Without your ID card, how can I tell if you are local or foreign?"

25 years after the New Cinema movement, Wei Te-Sheng's *Cape No. 7* picked up a brand new angle towards both the lingering historical dilemma and the modern reality.

The story followed young half-aboriginal man A-Ga who was in his late twenties and fed up with his life as an unknown musician in Taipei and decided to return to his hometown Hengchun in the southernmost tip of Taiwan. While working part time as a postman, he discovered a package from Japan which was meant to be delivered to a pre-war local address. Meanwhile in the town, Japanese girl Tomoko just finished her job organizing photoshoots of foreign models and got another commission for an upcoming concert for a Japanese singer in

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Hengchun. She was requested to form a local band as show opener for the singer, and held an audition in the town hall. A makeshift band of losers and weird figures quickly formed, including A-Ga, a Chinese-mandolin-playing grandpa who sings nothing but pre-war Japanese folklores, a violent aboriginal cop, a schoolgirl playing piano at the church, and a liquor salesman from city. As the band prepared for the concert, Tomoko told A-Ga that the letters inside the mysterious package were actually love letters written by a Japanese man to a local girl, also named Tomoko, 60 years ago when he was on the ship being deported from Taiwan to Japan after the war. As A-Ga sought for the old Tomoko, he and the new Tomoko also grew a romance. The film revolved around A-Ga's pursuit for the recipient, pieces from the letters, and the band's show with the Japanese artist.

Since *A City of* Sadness which created a strong following, Taiwanese films approaching historical issues had mostly taken a considerably serious angle. Produced in a modern context, Wei tried to deal with the issues in a much different perspective. The light-hearted comedic-romance approach toward the historical entanglement even drew criticism as "marred by colonial thoughts from the Japanese era."[43] on major media.

Instead of the often considerably highbrow angle or films following New Cinema, either in the story staging or in the storytelling, Wei's character setting in *Cape No.7* was almost farce-like. Mingled with the fast intercutting storylines, it sometimes almost seemed vulgar, but was also Wei's reflection of the modern reality in Taiwan.

Moreover, embedded details in the film, such as the dialogue line quoted in

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[43] United Daily News, 25 September 2008, A15

the previous page from a scene where participants for the band audition were asked for their ID cards, showed Wei's attention to the agendas hidden under the surface. In another scene where A-Ga had a fight with the aboriginal police, several army trucks loaded with soldier passed by in the background.

10 minutes into the film you have the aboriginals, the buzzing European models, the local Taiwanese, and the Japanese as characters. The search for the band members quickly demonstrated numerous bizarre figures in the town; scene of the deported Japanese writing sad love letters was inserted into the middle of a temple carnival scene with pole girls and karaoke, not to mention various out-of-nowhere cut-scenes with figures that will never appear again.

This multi-ethnic destructed setting was Wei's portrayal of the actual face of Taiwan. The seemingly vulgar fragmented setting was the actual reality the Taiwanese were living in every day, with its everyday figures, everyday gags and everyday problems, all floating above the much buried historical dilemmas. From this chaotic collage, the multi-faced nation was Wei's answer to modern Taiwan.

The film ended with the locals and the Japanese singer singing *Heidenröslein* together on the stage, each in their own language. As old Tomoko unfolded the letters A-Ga secretly sent to her, time flowed back to the 1945 deportation at the dock, with Tomoko on the pier, searching for her departing loved one, surrounded by flags of the Nationalist China with its soldiers taking over the dock. This was Wei's reconciliation with the history. With his reconciliation and collaged images of modern Taiwan, Wei deconstructed either the consolidated national-myth of the past or the bi-polar dilemma of recent times.

The film grossed the historical box office record of $17.6 million US dollars,

second only to *Titanic* (1997)[44] at the time, and can be considered a landmark turning point leading newer local commercial film productions in Taiwan. Since 2008, more commercially successful films had appeared, such as *Warriors Of The Rainbow: Seediq Bale (2012),* also by Wei and dealt with aboriginal struggles with Japanese, and *David Loman* (2013). Until now, *Cape No.7* is still the highest selling Taiwanese film in the domestic market throughout the local film history.[45]

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[44] Until 2017, Taiwan does not have an official census for box office sales. The common accepted practice then was to collect the sales number reported to the commissioned distributor by the cinemas in Taipei, and multiply that number by 2 to estimate the nation-wide gross sales. The practice was in common use for decades and was widely utilized and announced by distributors to generate records for mutual referencing. Figures here were announced on the film's official website: < http://cape7.pixnet.net/blog/post/21746004>

[45] Based on aggregated data from Taiwan Film Institute (reorganized from ROC Film Archive) in recent Taiwan Cinema Yearbooks since 2008. Latest 2017 issue: *Taiwan Cinema Yearbook 2017*, 1st ed. Taipei: Taiwan Film Institute, 2017. ISBN 978-986-91399-9-1

5. CONCLUSION

The film examples in chapter 4 demonstrated how the representation of national identity/identities shifted across three significant periods, how it moved on from the active shaping of one consolidating ideology, to the deep-down discourse for a new subjectivity under a bipolar context, and finally, to the light-hearted more objective portrayal of the collaged modern times.

This shift for the recognition of complexity in the Taiwanese identity, with its existing inner conflicts from the historical background of this multi-ethnic society, correlates with the change in the social climate. *A City of Sadness* was born on the same period when clashing social movements with contrasting ideas begun to appear and gradually flourish. As the ongoing poll quoted in the introduction that asked "Who do you think you are?" has indicated, the population's view toward national identity has also gradually shifted from a significant majority of the Chinese identity towards an even distribution across different identities.[46] As we moved into later 2018, the recent headline in the Taiwanese news was the proposal to move the Chinese history section in high school text books from its own chapter to becoming a part of the East Asia history. To the writing of this article, the proposal is still spurring violent debates in local

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[46] *Taiwanese / Chinese Identification Trend Distribution in Taiwan(1992/06~2018/06)* [online]. Taipei: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, 2018. Accessed from:<https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/course/news.php?Sn=166 >

medias.[47] Meanwhile, discussion continued on how to conceive Taiwan as a nation, both locally and internationally.[48]

As chapter 2 has covered, recent discussions on the topic of national cinema also displayed a comparable movement from stressing the importance of hegemony, coherence, and unity in its identity, to accepting non-homogeneous qualities that also contained the continued attachment to traditional institutions of nationhood[49] as a part of it, as Ian Christie has indicated. The recognition of complexity as a subject in recent Taiwanese films has adapted the similar context in the evolvement of discussions regarding national cinema.

As opposed to researchers as Ru-Shou Chen who claimed that Taiwanese cinema lacked both the supporting national identity and sufficient film examples to be considered a national cinema[50]: This article, with both the reexamination of the evolving identities in Taiwan and representing examples in its cinema history, would then like to propose to consider an *existing* Taiwanese National Cinema, with its identity being the internal contradictions and differences as a sum – as a founding nature.

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[47] *Apple Daily: Let free market of ideas play a role* [online]. Taipei: Focus Taiwan, 2018. Accessed from:<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/awps/201808120013.aspx>
[48] *Reconceiving Taiwan as a Pacific Island Country* [online]. Washington: The Diplomat, 2018. Accessed from:< https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/reconceiving-taiwan-as-a-pacific-island-country/>
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