

Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

Assessment of the Master's Thesis

Author of thesis: Lin Lung-Yin

Title of thesis: Shaping a Nation: Representation of National Cinema in Taiwanese Cinema

Assessment of the primary advisor

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace):

Jiří Fligl

Evaluation of the content and final form of the thesis (A/excellent – B/very good – C/good – D/good with objections – E/satisfactory – F/unsatisfactory – not recommended for defence)

Suitability of the selected objective and work approach.....C:
The core theme of the thesis, the changes in conceiving a national identity in Taiwanese cinema, is on one hand interesting and important and at the other very complex. It would deserve a much more thorough and in depth examination than was or could be provided over the range of a 40 pages thesis. That being said with the formal and other limitations of a FAMU International the thesis manages to open up the theme and can serve as an introduction to the many historical approaches to national identity on Taiwan and its reflections in cinema, which is a theme seldom discussed in English language literature.

Relative completeness of the literature used for the selected topic.....B:
Again, the theme itself is very broad and it could and actually does cover whole books and many articles. So there could always be a lot more literature and other sources, which could be included. But given the aim and final scope of the thesis, the sources are utilised to a satisfactory extent.

Ability to critically evaluate and use professional literature.....C:
There is not much critical evaluation in the thesis when it comes to the source literature. The thesis mostly just describes things, without the need to oppose or question its sources too much.

Logicity of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters.....C:
In this regard the thesis shows that the author did not invest enough time into it to shape it better and to dig really deep. I personally understand the thesis thanks to the few times when the author met with me and explained the whole idea behind the thesis to me. He did manage to make the thesis more coherent than its initial version. But it still would benefit from some editorial work and better structuring of the introductory chapter and especially of the Looking Back at Taiwanese Cinema chapter to make it more understandable for someone not familiar with Taiwan's cinema, not to mention someone with only a vague idea of the island's history.

Language and stylistic level of the thesis.....??:

Here lies one of the main hurdles of this thesis. The author is not a native English speaker and the limits of his vocabulary show extensively in the work. How much that should be considered a flaw I leave up to the committee. However, even though one must employ the help of deduction and reverse auto-translation in deciphering the text, it is actually quite understandable.

Compliance with citation norms (should the text repeatedly contain adopted passages without citing the source, the work cannot be recommended for defence).....A:
The author chose one citation norm and employs it consistently throughout the thesis. Also he does quote direct sources in the text.

Sufficient extent of image attachments, justifiability and suitability of attachments, graphic layout.....D:
This being a theoretical thesis it could actually do even without the three screenshots. They actually have little relation to the text, so they feel mostly as some sort of unnecessary obligation to some norm saying a thesis should include images. On the other hand the theme could benefit from actually more pictures, since visual representations of national identity and its construction through external and visual symbols could be one whole chapter or book related to the theme of representations of national identity. For example it could be enriching to see how the films official posters and other promotional materials were approaching the target audience and what visual symbols of the nation they did employ.

Originality of the thesis, contribution to the development of the field of study.....B:
I doubt that the thesis will contribute in any significant way to the field of national representation in cinema, mainly because it does not explore the subject in any significantly thorough and analytical way. But that being said, there actually is a solid foundation in this thesis that, if it were to be developed thoroughly and with more time and ambition, it could be turned into a great contribution to the field. This is at the same time evidence of the authors interest in the theme and insight, but sadly also an evidence of how insufficient time he dedicated to writing it. The thesis thanks to its Taiwanese perspective and sources can be an interesting source for people interested in the topic, who because of their language barrier were so far limited to resources from outside of Taiwan.

Overall evaluation of the thesis.....C:

Verbal evaluation of the thesis including questions that the diplomate must address in his/her thesis defence:

I would like to state that in a way I was pleasantly surprised by how the thesis turned out. The student contacted me once at the beginning of his work, we met once briefly, talked about the subject in a general way and agreed to get in touch soon again. Next time I heard from the student again was after three years and it took several more months before I got to see any text. That was a few days before the deadline for the thesis and the text was disastrous. However, the student used my notes and suggestions and has shaped the text into a coherent result which, at least to some extent manages not just to make a general sense, but even get some interesting facts and observations across.

The student should address the following questions:

Since the films he selected each typify the specific decade when they were made, is it safe to assume there always was a rigorous general image of the nation at a certain time?

Is there a plurality of national representations in current Taiwanese cinema, or is there one predominant?

How as an Taiwanese filmmaker will he personally approach the theme in his own films?

Date: 10th September 2018

Signature: Jiří Flígl

