

PARADE PROTEST

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ABSTRACT

PARADE PROTEST is a short experimental film comparing a 1930 Taiwanese film outtake of a procession during Japanese colonial rule to the 2014 Taiwanese student protests against pro-China economic policies. In 1896, the arrival of cinema to the East and Japan's colonization of Taiwan occurred simultaneously. The moving image was used in the natural sciences, animation, and entrepreneurial ventures, but they were often used for political activities. Educational films, such as the 1930 parade footage, were born from these activities by Japanese imperial forces in order to promote, inform, and often, manipulate, the public of a certain mandate. In 2014, the Taiwanese students' distrust against China's aggressive presence on the island culminated in the occupation of the Taiwan legislature and spilled over onto the streets for a twenty-one day protest. Hand-phone cameras were highly mobile audio and visual recording devices that were readily used by student protesters to document the event for their social media distribution. Both events are separated eighty-four years apart, representing various forms of control and protest on the island. Their audio-visual representations merge in the middle of the film as a question of how re-education and manipulation have manifested over time. In doing so, *PARADE PROTEST* looks to traverse across varying truths in audio-visual documentation between the past and the present, and offer a nuanced understanding of power and self-determination on the island of Taiwan.

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INTRODUCTION

PARADE PROTEST is a film project that wants to tell the truth but cannot; or at least not the entire truth. Since its inception, the motion picture invention and Euro-American import of ready-made film was a foreign tool that expressed foreign stories. Brief film clips of factory workers and couples flirting in a Western setting became fodder for Asian audiences for its eccentricities and spectacle. Early cinema was foreign and not considered to be an endemic part of East Asian heritage; an import that was not to be trusted. A series of Western economic and political incursions prior to and during the arrival of cinema set the tone for this mistrust. Every site along the Pacific (e.g. Hong Kong, Shanghai, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines) had encountered their own form of Western imperialism that set the tone for its relationship with yet another intrusion, the motion picture.

The mistrust of cinema was short-lived as filmmaking started to become part of the documentation of Asian cultural heritage such as Chinese opera and Japanese theatre. As cinema viewership grew, audiences became more comfortable with this new form of entertainment. With the growth from pure documentation to more fictionalized dramatic storytelling, cinema became a valued and multi-faceted tool to reach both the urban and rural masses. This led to the greater involvement of government agencies that utilized film as a tool to disseminate their political mandates (Baskett, 2008).

Today, the versatility of the motion picture is vast. From short form videos on mobile devices to long form feature films streamed on televisions, its influence has the widest reach on the planet. Again, the moving image is still capable of reaching urban and rural masses worldwide, and again, the opportunity for government manipulation is still prevalent. As modern protests against inequality and injustice become more common (e.g. 1998 Tiananmen Square,

2007 Malaysian Bersih Movement, 2014 Hong Kong Umbrella Movement, and the 2014 Taiwan Sunflower movement), government-led responses have countered the dissent through their own form of messaging offering different perspectives.

How does the construction of the moving image dictate its audience? The mise-en-scène and the camera's focus is articulated in a very specific way in order to conjure a specific mood or emotion. Educational films were created by government agencies looking to promote and inform its citizenry of a public matter yet what is considered informative to one group could be deemed propaganda to another. In an age of constant misinformation and social media fanaticism, is there room for truth in the moving image and if so, what does a truthful image look like? In *PARADE PROTEST*, a possible path in revealing a truth in colonial living is through a re-imagination and dis-association of the original archive, while at the same time, bringing in contemporary media representations of hegemony to act as a counterpoint.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

I started on this path of creating a found footage film during the Taiwanese colonial period during the second semester of my Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) at York University. Both the Chinese Cinema and Process Cinema courses inspired me and pushed me in a direction I was not familiar with yet was immensely intrigued by.

The Choice of the Taiwanese Colonial Period

As I had been living between Canada and Malaysia for a number of years, I have had the privilege of attending residencies and collaborating with artists throughout North East Asia (i.e. Japan, Korea and Taiwan). This has afforded me a glimpse into the lives of other East Asian film cultures yet I had never understood how cinema had come about from the West to the East. As I was raised in the West, my foundational knowledge in cinema had always been anchored in the American and European perspective. As a self-taught artist and filmmaker, my arts education was formed by my own readings, attending artists talks and public lectures. Having the opportunity to take the Chinese Cinema class with Professor Suzie Young helped me intellectually organize the various East Asian films I have viewed over the years while considering the political landscape of the time. As part of the class, I was given the opportunity to present two in-class seminars of a topic relevant to the three Chinas (People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan). In order to decentralize my knowledge of early cinema groomed in the West, I endeavoured to understand the logistical and cultural situations surrounding the early cinematic period in the East. This led to the creation of two ninety-minute seminars, *SHADOWS MOVE AS CHINA TRANSITIONS: Early Cinema in China from 1896-*

1912 and *FILMS IN FEAR: Taiwan Early Cinema before and after 1949*. The first seminar, *SHADOWS MOVE AS CHINA TRANSITIONS*, focused on the historical screen culture prior to the arrival of the Western moving picture and up until the formation of the Republic of China (1912). The second seminar was also focused on the early cinema period, but its main focus was on the island of Taiwan as it traversed through the tumultuous period of Japanese imperial rule, World War II, and the civil wars between the Chinese Communist Party and the Republic of China's Nationalist Party. The seminar also leads into the 1950s and 1960s where the Nationalist Party was using film as a nation-building tool in the midst of its separation from the mainland. It was this research into Taiwan that lead me to the discovery of the footage of the parade/procession in February 15, 1930 that is to become the focus of this thesis project. The footage had a profound effect on me as it presented a festive event in the form of a parade while the country was under colonial control. The juxtaposition of power and the manipulation of the gaze fascinated me, even though I had never worked with found footage before.

The First Found Footage Film Project

Although I was familiar, as an audience member, of the found footage genre, I had never engaged in the practice of utilizing the neglected image. The assumption was that the found footage genre required access to an institutional archive and since I had been based in Malaysia where archives were poorly maintained and difficult to access, the opportunity to activate this form of filmmaking was considered inaccessible. Hidden in plain sight, I also never made the connection that some images from an online source were also considered part of the found footage milieu as they too could be considered as unclaimed memories. In a sense, the online landscape can be identified as an institution. Through the Process Cinema course under the

guidance of filmmaker Phil Hoffman, we had discussed and identified several definitions of what found footage filmmaking could be and what techniques revolved around its production. From Arthur Lipsett to Louise Bourque, screenings of various master found footage works reminded me of the intricacies of the montage and how it can conjure an alternative storyline entirely independent of its original intent. It was during this class, that I had decided to utilize the footage of the 1930 parade in Taiwan I had previously discovered in the Chinese Cinema course. The controlled nature of a fictional film production made in Taiwan, whether it be opera, drama, or comedy, is vastly different from that of a newsreel footage shot during the same period, therefore I was attracted to the lesser-controlled image of a newsreel. Using unused newsreels of actual events during the colonial period provided me space to extrapolate the meaning of the images without the manipulations of a fictional storyline and other agendas of outside imperial forces.

The reasons behind selecting the three components: Taiwan, the colonial period, and the found footage genre, slowly solidified throughout the end of my first year MFA and continued into my second. The manipulative uses of the moving image prevalent in my previous works also directed me towards the colonial image as I had found their precarious position as historical evidence of false certainty (Zyrd, 2003) are relatable in today's climate of dis-information and image saturation.

AN ARCHIVE OF LIGHT

The history of the universe is measured by the light that travels millions of miles into our lens.

The light becomes a historical archive of truth and birth of our existence. Subsequently, light also projects our images and our stories through a projector or television but unlike the travelling light in the universe, the light we project does not necessitate nor obligate any form of truth or fact. Therefore, the history of light created by humans are a historical archive of half-truths. Manipulated images or educational films produced during the colonial period becomes this by-product of half-truths and half lies, and further becomes cemented into our histories as filmic artefacts. Despite our checkered stories of manipulated realities, the light still continues to shine through these artefacts of film and archives them in hopes that they will become evidence of how projected truths could become compromised.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Migration of Cinema during the Taiwanese Colonial Period

In 1895, the Sino-Japanese War saw China ceding the island of Taiwan to the Japanese victors in a war that lasted less than a year (Mamie, 2014). Taiwan became the first formal colony for Japan (1895-1945) who had grand ambitions of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere of influence following in the footsteps of imperialist powers of the West (Lee, 2020). As new Japanese administrators onto the island, the migration of the motion picture also began to arrive in the East. Pioneer inventors such as Thomas Edison and the Lumière Brothers actively sought to expand their market overseas by way of the Kinetoscope/Vitascope and the Cinématographe, respectively and one of their first migratory points of entry for exhibition was in Japan in 1896 (Baskett, 2008). In 1901, six years after its first film exhibition in Japan, the Lumière's Cinématographe was purchased and brought to Taiwan by Japanese entrepreneurs for the first ever motion picture screening in Taiwan history (Chen, 1998). Takamatsu Toyojirō, a socialist and activist who was savvy with oral performances, photography and film projectors, was one of the first film exhibitors in Taiwan (Lee, 2018) with imports of documentary and historical period films from the West and Japan (Daniels, 2004).

The first film ever made in Taiwan was a documentary educational film initiated, produced and directed by Takamatsu called *Introducing Taiwan Today* (1907) (Lee, 2018). This would be his first of twenty films that he would make in his career until his return to Japan in 1917 (Ibid, 2018). After his return, the local Taiwan governing body created the Taiwan Education Society to replace the gap of educational film production and distribution that Takamatsu left behind. Between 1922-1943, only seventeen narrative feature films were made in

Taiwan as Japanese-Taiwanese co-productions, but there was rarely a film made independently by the Taiwanese themselves due to highly regulated imperial film policies, little opportunity for financing, lack of script content, and inaccessibility of technical camera knowledge (Mamie, 2014). In 1925, the rarity of localized filmmaking was resolved when the Taiwan Motion Picture Study Society was formed of Taiwanese filmmakers with the goal of making Taiwanese films for a Taiwanese audience. Their first film was titled *Whose Fault is it?* (1925), a heroic tale of saving a local girl in distress, made entirely by a local crew with only a single Japanese consultant. Unfortunately, the film was considered a box office failure and to this day, the film is considered lost. A few years later, the same group endeavoured to make a second film, *Bloodstain* (1929), a martial arts romantic drama which included the first-ever Indigenous actor. The crew had changed significantly and although the director and writer was Taiwanese, the heads of the technical departments were Japanese. The film became a box office success and the co-production model between the Taiwanese and the Japanese was as close to a National Taiwanese cinema as could be imagined during the colonial period.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE TAIWANESE COLONIAL FILM

Of the films made during the Taiwanese colonial period under Japanese imperialism, two elements were prominent: the educational film and the film narrator. The educational film comes from a series of public service medias that include instructional and military films (Rice, 2019) while the film narrator comes from the history of Japanese theatrical presentations (Daniels, 2004).

The Educational Film

Upon its arrival to Taiwan, motion picture production was tied to Japanese assimilation policies also called the Kominka movement (Baskett, 2008). The educational film was known as an entertaining public event that could reach a larger audience than traditional promotional materials (printed posters or public speeches) made by the empire. Access to non-urban areas were also made possible due to the mobility of the projectors that Lumière and Edison had imported. The prevalence of the projector in the Taiwanese colony was not only from the Japanese Imperial officials personally transporting them in, but Taiwanese entrepreneurs also went to Japan to purchase projectors and the packages of films (Lee, 2018). Depending on who you speak with, educational films were also called propaganda films, social enlightenment films, or culture films. The use of educational films were to propagate a message to the Taiwanese colony, but they were also used as evidence for the empire of its own colonial productivity. In this way, educational films became a two-way street in a sense that they were utilized both for the colony and for the imperial forces simultaneously. As noted earlier, *Introducing Taiwan Now* (1907) by Takamatsu, was considered the first film made in Taiwan and it was identified as a

documentary educational film. Using footage of a Taiwanese wedding, agricultural and road developments, and Indigenous communities, the film presented how civilized the Taiwan colony had become under the guidance of the Japanese. The Indigenous community in Taiwan were predominantly anti-imperialist and therefore became a point of contention for the Japanese. This made their visual inclusion in the empire's educational films important as it showed a manipulated friendship between the Indigenous Taiwanese communities and their colonizers. At one point, Japanese officials had invited Taiwanese Indigenous leaders for a tour of Japan and filmed the event (Lee, 2018). The film was then later added to the educational film and shown back to Taiwan to exemplify a supposed partnership with Imperial rule, while in Japan, the film proved of the political progress and acceptance of coloniality by the Indigenous peoples to Japan's House of Lords and House of Representatives. Again, as a two-way street, the film was both shown in Taiwan and in Japan, with two different agendas. In the Taiwan colony, the novelty of film made it an exciting form of entertainment while portraying peace and productivity of their land under imperialism. The novelty of the cinematic invention became equated with the novelty of Japanese colonial rule; both new experiences during the turn of the century. In the metropole of Japan, the film became mainly the work the government had been doing in their first colony and how the financial and political support for the further imperial rule was necessary. Especially after their victory during the Russo-Japanese war (1904-05), Japan's continuing show of leadership and influence on their new Taiwanese colony necessitated the use of the educational films. For Japan, educational films became a physical and visual document of the present time period while still manipulated to portray a greater possibility for the future of a greater sphere of influence in East Asia (Chan, 2022). These opposing directions inevitably creates friction between the actualities of the time in the colony and the manipulated portrayals

in the educational film (Ibid, 2022). The gap/separation between actual experiences in the colony and the projected images, is therefore created by the subjective intentions of the filmmaker and political intentions of the imperial film policy they are beholden to.

The Film Narrator

As educational films imported Japanese nationalism to its Taiwanese colony and exported the manipulated images of the happy and content colonized Taiwanese, the early cinematic period in Taiwan may have seemed to be quiet two-way street. But as Kwon (2022, 9) said, “the story of film in Asia was never merely that of a one-way traffic or passive consumption from the metropolises to the colonies”. The gap and friction between the realities of colonial life to the manipulated realities of the educational film was able to have a voice in the role of the film narrator.

Film narration in Taiwan came about from Japan’s own cultural histories. As Japan entered Taiwan in 1895, so did the motion picture invention, therefore Japanese film culture became inextricably linked to Taiwanese film culture. Prior to the arrival of the motion picture, Japan’s cultural forms of entertainment revolved around puppet shows (*bunraku*) and live theatre (*kabuki*)(Daniels, 2004). Similar to the period of Chinese pre-cinema, live performances in spoken word or opera were carried forward into the platform of the motion picture invention upon its arrival. Live theatrical performances have a tradition of narrating the actions and emotions on stage therefore this sensibility was applied to the film screening as an addendum to the cinematic event. Upon the arrival of the motion picture to Japan, film narrators naturally emerged as conduits of the cinematic experience through expressive translations, physical performances and musical interpretations. The film narrators were called *benshi* (弁士) whose

characters were derived from words *advocate* or *lawyer*, and was commonly known to have been introduced by Takamatsu as well, who was also trained in the art of the traditional oral performance (*rakugo*) (Lin, 2022). As the motion picture was brought from Japan to its Taiwan colony, it also brought forth film narration and was later called *biensu* (辯士) in the local Taiwanese language of Southern Min (Ibid, 2022). The role of the Taiwanese film narrator was taken up by the Taiwanese intellectuals as they were literate, educated and comfortable in front of an audience. The performative aspects of the narrator required them to conjure multiple voices for multiple characters, translate inter-titles from foreign languages, and speak loudly (Hong, 2008). For the Taiwanese audience, the motion picture was never silent as it had always been accompanied by a narrator at the onset.

Although the Taiwanese film narrator followed in the footsteps of the Japanese empire in the manner cinema was presented, the new role of narration in the colony also reflected an underlying friction and push-pull relationship between the agenda of the Japanese empire and the day-to-day experience of the Taiwanese colony (Dong, 2012). Taiwanese film narrators saw their voice as an opportunity to raise awareness and connect imported films to the current affairs of the Taiwanese people, a counter narrative to the official agenda of the empire. Unbeknownst to the filmmakers of the imported Japanese and American-European films, the narrators transformed their film screenings into films of resistance with the local language of Southern Min. Taiwanese narrators would change the words used in the film inter-titles, relate the film to the ongoing struggles of the colony, and contradict the images or the messaging on screen, all under the shroud of the local language the Japanese guards could not understand. Even as the guards stood beside the film narrator during the film, it still did not help them monitor the content that was spoken and therefore the guards themselves needed another a translator from

Southern Min to Japanese (Lin, 2022). This is further complicated by the fact that depending on the audience's location, a different dialect could be spoken by the film narrator to correspond with the dialect of the audience (Ibid, 2022). Like the two-way street of educational films, the nationalist Japanese film programming asserted a kind of soft power of an ideal transnational Asia unto the Taiwanese colony, yet the use of Taiwanese film narrators reversed the power position by re-contextualizing the films into a counter-imperial presentation.

The educational film genre and the film narrator are two unique components of Taiwanese colonial film. Both components create crisscrossing interpretations of control and manipulation where the intentions of the genre and the narrator may not be what the imperial rulers intended them to be. Therefore, the opportunity to review and re-imagine the colonial film allows for a new take on the people living in the colony and perhaps, take back the ownership of the colonial images themselves.

PRIMARY FOUND FOOTAGE: 1930 PARADE

The focus of this thesis project is centred on the 1930 found footage entitled *Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes* (1930 parade), currently archived at the Moving Image Research Collections of the University of South Carolina (USC). As mentioned above, I had discovered the 35mm sound, black and white film footage during my research for an in-class seminar on the early cinema of Taiwan. My research led me to various regional and international archives that include TAIWAN FILM & AUDIOVISUAL INSTITUTE, KOREAN FILM ARCHIVES, NHK ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, Moving Image Research Collections (Fox Movietone), SHERMAN GRINBERG FILM LIBRARY, and NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS administration. There were many iterations of how to speak about the educational film genre such as a comparison of educational films from different empires and colonies, a comparison of colony-to-colony, or a broad review of propaganda films in East and Southeast Asia. Upon the discovery of the 1930 parade footage, it became clear to me that this single found footage visually spoke extensively of the manipulation, hegemony, and the gaze of an educational film. With this footage determined, my approach became that of an intensive analysis of the observable film itself and then to re-imagine how the film could counter its own history of colonialism by re-arranging its mise-en-scène and bring forth the unobservable histories happening outside of the frame (Bhaskar, 1975).

Upon receiving the rights to use the footage from USC, I embarked on a comprehensive analysis of the period of time when the footage was produced from both the perspective of the empire and the colony. As per the USC archival notes, the filming date was approximately as February 15, 1930. The location only noted the country of Taiwan but upon further investigation, I was able to confirm with Dr. Lung-chih Chang (Director, National Museum of Taiwan History)

that the location was in Tainan, the former capital city prior to the Japanese colonization. The film footage is 14 minutes and 21 seconds in duration, shot on 35mm nitrate film, black and white, with sound, in a 1.15:1 frame ratio. The archive's content description for the footage is as follows:

“Scenes of a New Year’s Procession in Formosa (Taiwan) under Japanese colonial rule. Includes spectators. Children wearing traditional costumes, being pulled in rickshaws. Children carrying banners and bands. Priests carrying drums and banners. Men carrying portable shrines. High shot dignitaries being pulled in rickshaws. More of parade.”

(University of Southern California, Moving Image Research Collections, Item Description)

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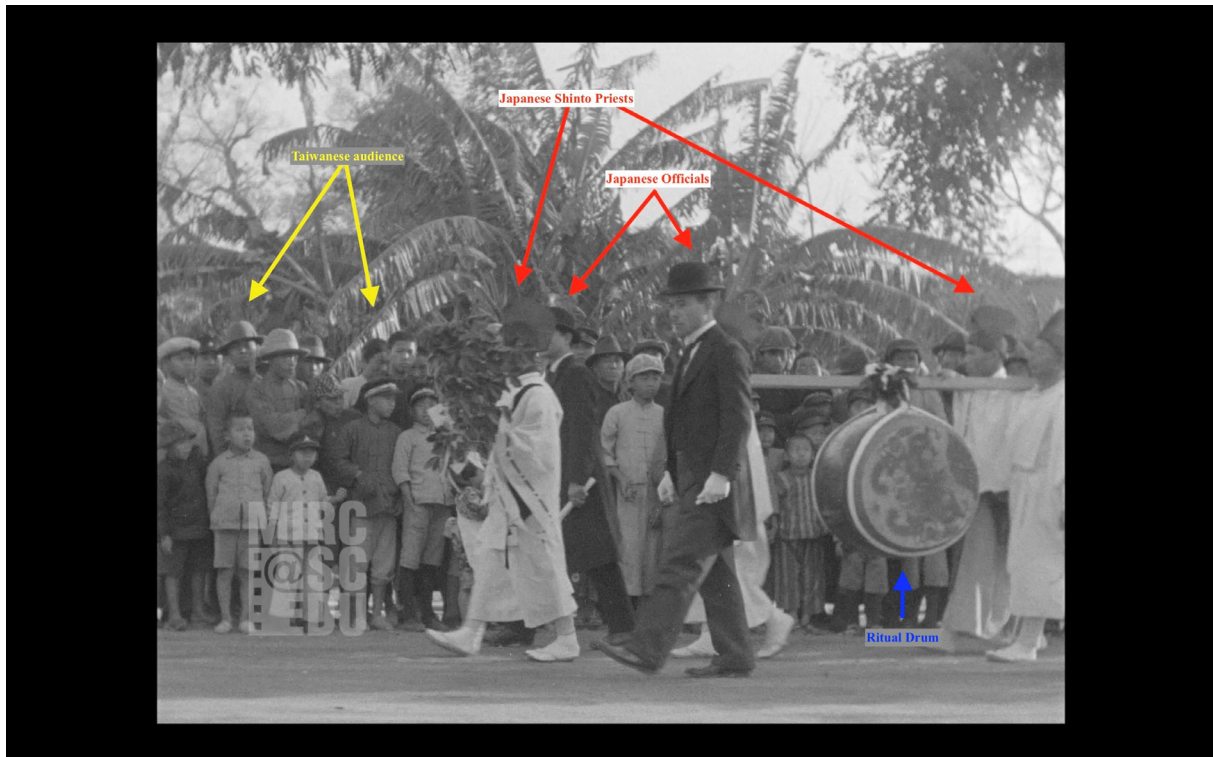
Image 1: File card (1930), courtesy of the Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina)

The initial empirical approach to this found footage requires a verification of the people, objects, location, activities and the purpose of those activities. In handling this footage, I started with identifying the simple observable elements within the footage before moving onto the interpolation of the unobservable elements. I approached several film and cultural historians in East Asian studies throughout the world to discuss the footage. The historians were: Dr. Takeshi Fujitani (Dr. David Chu Professor and Director in Asia Pacific Studies. Department of History, University of Toronto), Dr. Lisa Yoneyama (Professor & Associate Chair, Graduate, East Asian Studies, University of Toronto), Dr. Paul D. Barclay (Professor of History, Lafayette College), Dr. Earl Jackson (Chair Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Asia University, Professor Emeritus, National Chiao Tung University, and Associate Professor Emeritus, University of California, Santa Cruz), Dr. Lee Daw-Ming (Emeritus Professor, Taipei University of the Arts), and Professor Wang Ying-fen (Professor, Department of Musicology, Taiwan National University). After speaking with them, I was able to confirm the following details of ethnicity, class and activity (with corresponding screen captures) about the footage itself.



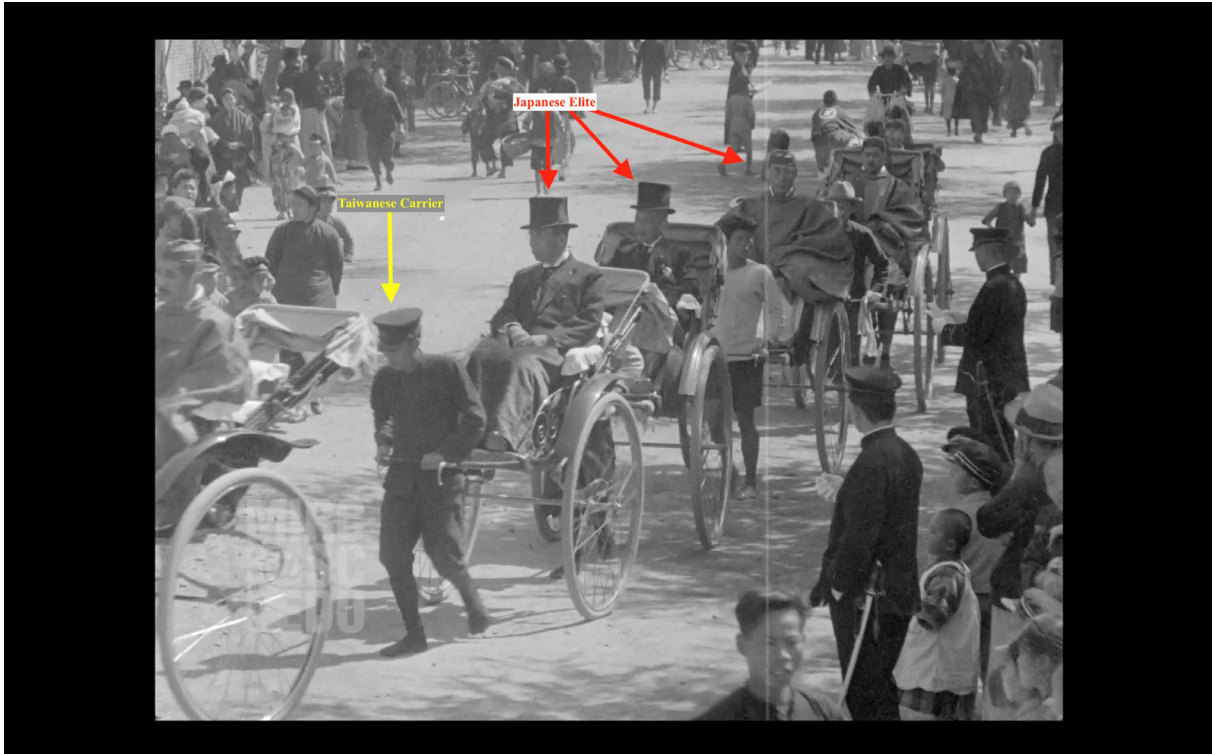
*Image 2: Film still (00:05) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*

(Image 2) During the Japanese colonial period, the ruling government imported palm trees into the Taipei main streets to mimic a tropical aesthetic. Throughout the footage, the main street is showing banana trees rather than palm trees which means that the location cannot be in Taipei. As I had mentioned earlier in this paper, Dr. Chang of the National Museum of Taiwan History had also confirmed that the footage is located in Tainan City and not in Taipei.



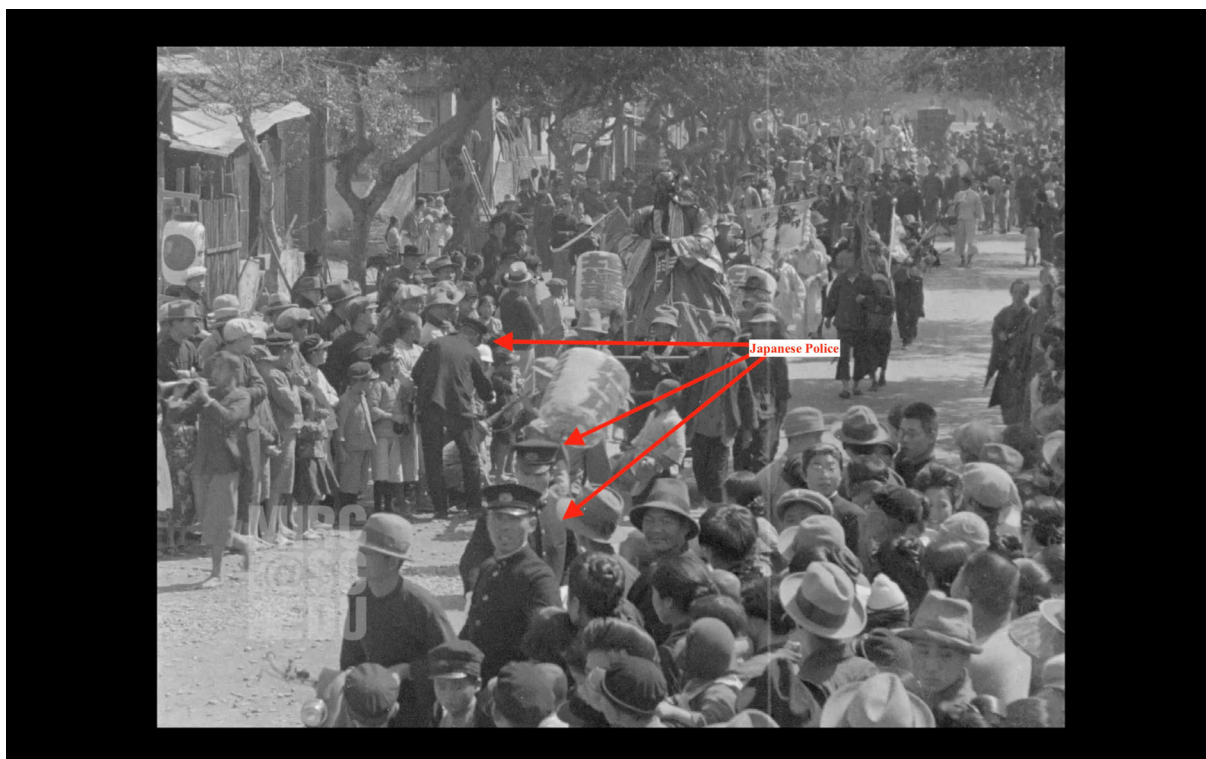
*Image 3: Film still (00:10) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*

(Image 3) At the beginning of the footage, it has been confirmed that the procession begins with the Japanese Shinto priests and prominent Japanese officials. The sound recorded during this first half of the footage contains a solemn whole note drum beat along with sporadic indistinguishable Japanese words. The crowd and parade participants were estimated to be approximately 2,500 people.



*Image 4: Film still (03:55) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*

(Image 4) The parade footage also contains images of Japanese elites (mostly in top hats) and Shinto priests on individual rickshaws being pulled by local Taiwanese carriers.



*Image 5: Film still (05:35) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*

(Image 5) Throughout the procession, Japanese policemen are managing the Taiwanese onlookers and guiding the parade participants.



*Image 6: Film still (04:19) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*

(Image 6) In this film still, young Japanese men are carrying a *mikoshi* (Japanese portable shrine). It was also assumed from this image that the procession is moving towards a stage where the components of the shrine will be re-assembled.

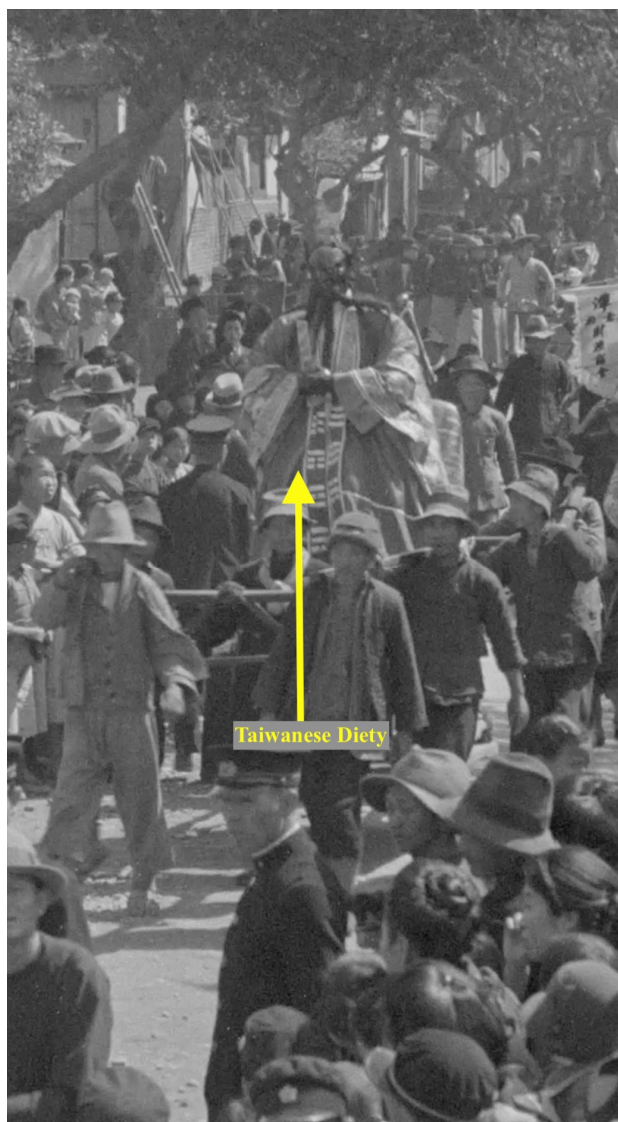


Image 7: Film still (05:38) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina). Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes

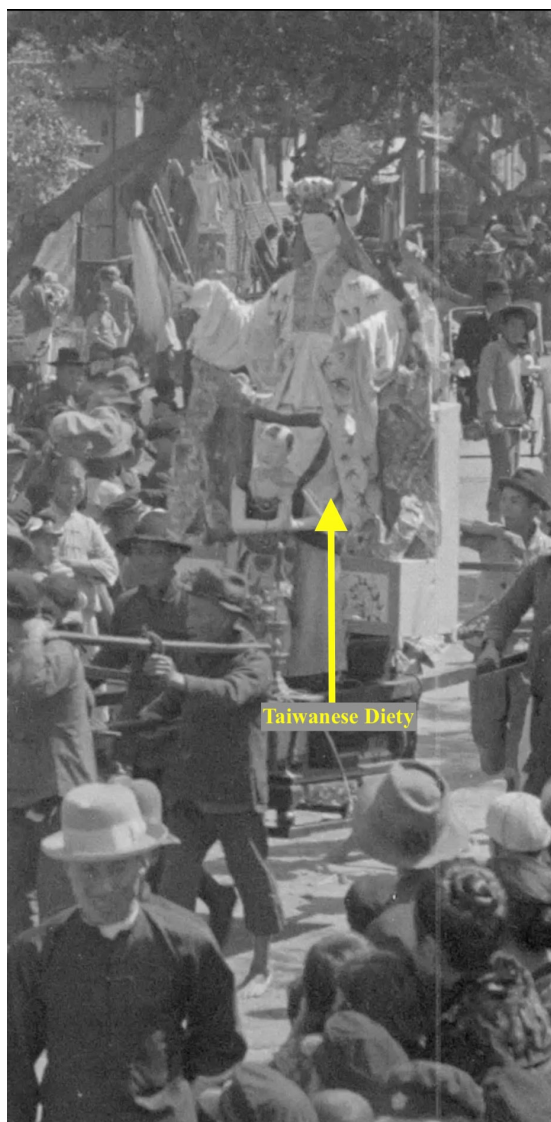
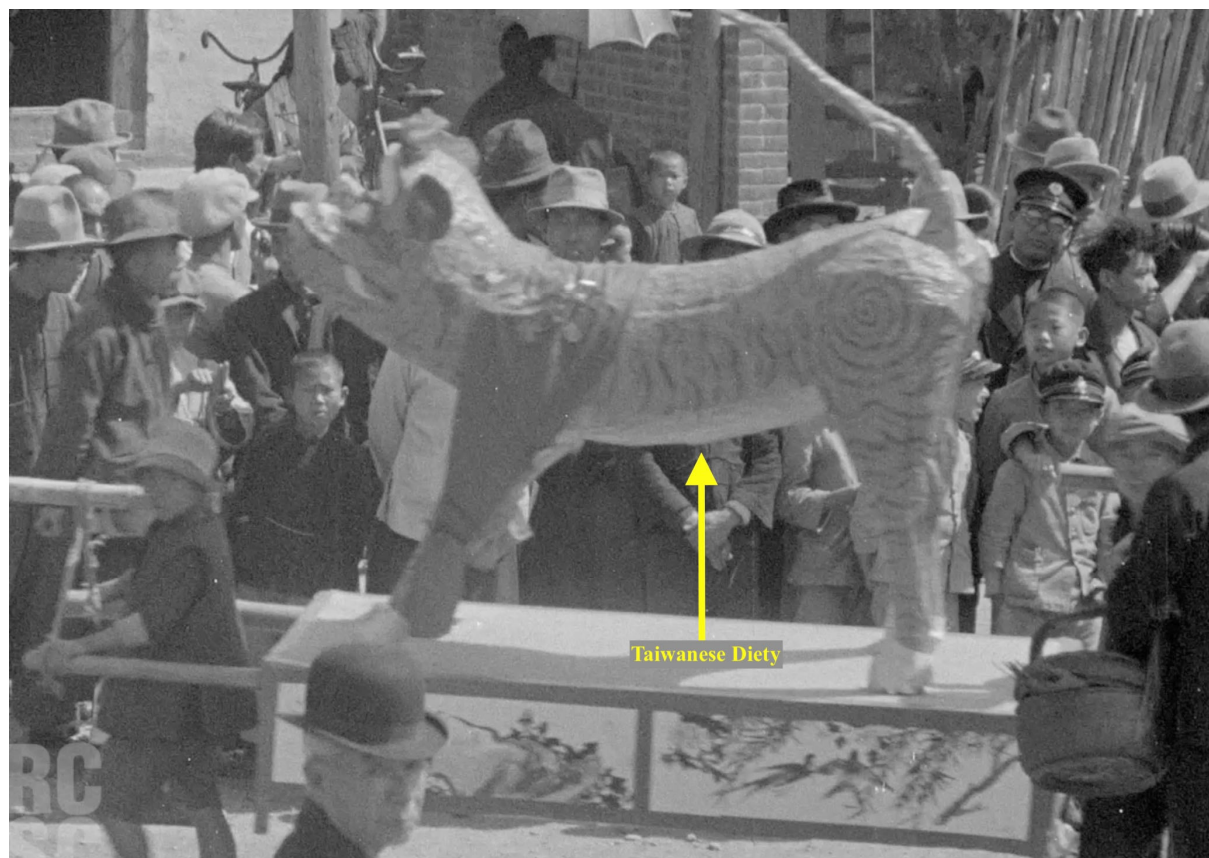


Image 8: Film still (06:08) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina). Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes



*Image 9: Film still (08:18) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*



*Image 10: Film still (09:03) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Years Procession / parade—outtakes*

(Image 7, 8, 9, 10) After the carrying of the *mikoshi*, the second half of the procession becomes more representative of the local Taiwanese culture in terms of parade participation, objects, and sounds. The position of the camera and the use of the zoom also becomes more dynamic. The traditional Chinese deities, a tiger, and stilt performers are more common during the Taiwanese New Year festivities during the January and February months, but from the 1930s onwards, the Japanese government tightened controls on their colonies and heightened the empire's nationalist messaging which diminished the cultural activities dissimilar to their own.



*Image 11: Film still (05:31) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*



*Image 12: Film still (08:58) from Moving Image Research Collections (University of South Carolina).
Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*

(Image 11, 12) Unlike the singular drum beat and rare Japanese words/phrases of the first half of the footage, the second half includes a cacophony of crowd sounds, and a variety of traditional Chinese instruments: *suona* (horn), hand gongs, drums, and cymbals. The footage includes more activities in the observable frame and the formal shooting style of the first half (horizontal and locked-down), is juxtaposed with the multiple changes in camera position and variety of angular compositions, of the second half. The onlookers of the procession also changed from a disciplined and ominous tone at the start, to one of festive and joyfulness at the finish. From beginning to end, the procession can be seen as a tableau of hierarchy (Fujitani correspondence, 2022) from the Japanese imperial masters at the front of the parade, and the local Taiwanese residents at the back. This tableau becomes the observable element of the image. My final thesis film will look to re-configure the footage so as to reveal the unobservable that hopefully re-imagines the colonial moment.

Manipulation in the Overall Structure

After the discovery of the footage, it was important to take a closer look at how it is identified as a piece of educational filmmaking. To accomplish this, a determination must be made of what constituted the image to be manipulative. Since the Japanese imperial government were the film producers and the censorship board, all films made during the Taiwanese colonial period are considered as educational films, and are therefore a form of manipulation. The specific elements of manipulation in the shooting of the parade itself also added to the visual sphere of influence in the footage.

The primary footage, *Formosan New Year's Procession / parade—outtakes*, was a unique discovery as it could be considered as a newsreel or outtake but it also portrayed a narrative arc since they filmed the parade from beginning to end. The creation of this arc, in itself, does not constitute an act of manipulation, but the fact that the empire heads the parade while the local colonies form the tail of the parade, does form an argument that the visual structure of the film acts to create a hierarchy as we saw from the previous visual confirmations by the historians. The Japanese elites at the start of the parade were isolated and distant from other participants and onlookers, while at the second half of the footage, more local Taiwanese were involved in the parade march showcasing their local customs. The visual order of the parade participants was a striking element of manipulation in the film footage which spoke to the psychological order of the colonial condition.

Manipulation by Proximity

It also became evident that the proximity between subject matters were presented as a visual element of manipulation. This was exemplified by the proximity between the parade participants and onlookers, and between the parade participants themselves. As with the overall structure of the parade conjured an arc of manipulation from beginning till end, so did the physical distance between the various demographics of people present in frame. The positions reveal both the class and ethnic differences between and within the Japanese and the Taiwanese. The Japanese elites were at the front of the parade, being pulled by Taiwanese rickshaw pullers, while the Taiwanese performers were at the back. The Taiwanese rickshaw pullers were the closest to the imperial elites and were located at the front of the parade, but they held the lowest social position as they were used as labourers. The more senior Taiwanese officials who assisted in the colonial rule were at the back of the parade as the festivities turned more localized. The onlookers also predominantly consisted of local Taiwanese with only three notable Japanese groups (some with children) spotted throughout the group of onlookers.

Movement, Angles and Directions

As mentioned previously by Fujitani on the verification of the footage, the *tableau of hierarchy* is structured from beginning to end, but to further dissect the form of the footage, the composition of the frame is also becomes revealing. The first section of the parade footage is shot in a locked-down camera position and in a horizontal perspective of the onlookers and the parade participants moving from right to left. This was a highly structured start to the film and showcased the formal and official nature of the imperial elites. From the half-way point to the end of the parade footage, the framing became angular and included more of the masses of

onlookers which subsequently created a more chaotic scene. As noted earlier regarding the angular position of the last sections of the parade, the composition created a lack of focus in the frame and could be used to visually exemplifying a stereotypical nature of an uncivilized colony. This was further accentuated by the sounds coming from the local Taiwanese playing festive instruments, as opposed to the singular drumbeat at the beginning of the procession with the formal imperialist elites. From the formal horizontal composition to the informal angular framing, the compositional positions offers an insight to how the visual image can re-affirm class and ethnic stereotypes as an act of influence in the form of an educational film.

COMPARATIVE FOUND FOOTAGE: 2014 PROTEST

As a comparative to the 1930 parade, I have introduced footage of a historic protest eighty-four years later in 2014 called the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan. In the spring of 2014, Taiwanese citizens discovered a unilateral decision made by congress to push through the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA), which allowed for greater mainland Chinese integration into Taiwan by removing economic trade barriers that protected local businesses. This was a move seen as a threat to Taiwan's sovereignty and yet another encroachment of the People's Republic of China's (PROC) claim on the island (Ho, 2019). The spontaneous protest was unprecedented in the history of Taiwan as young protesters stormed the legislature and occupied the offices for twenty-four days. The movement spread throughout the world and galvanized supporters against the unchecked displays of power by the PROC.



Image 13: Film still from AFP News Agency. Taiwan riot police retake govt HQ from Protestors (March 24, 2014)

The protest was a heavily documented democracy movement due to the prevalence of mobile devices, and those who captured the moment were not simply spectators but also active participants in the dissent. This was dramatically different from the manner in which the 1930 parade footage was captured. The 1930 parade footage used a single camera crew that was approved by Japanese imperial forces, and the crowd in attendance were passive onlookers. On the other hand, the 2014 protest footage used multiple cameras in a variety of mobile formats, and shot haphazardly. The order of the parade juxtaposes the disorder of the unplanned protest both literally and metaphorically.

OUTCOME: THE ASSEMBLY

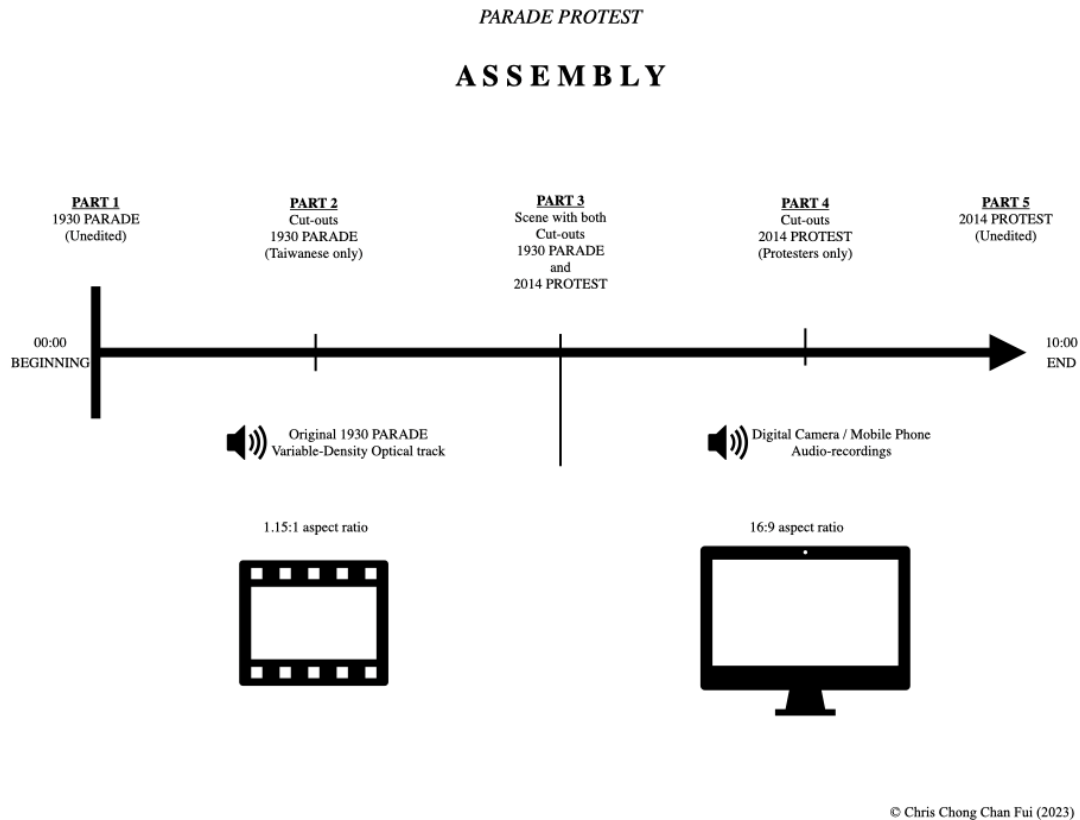


Image 14: *TIMELINE: A New Arrangement*

APPROACH: Parade as Protest, Narration as Manipulation

As the films of the early cinema period looked to manipulate the colonies and become an evidence for the empire through educational films, I found it relevant to consider reversing the role of manipulation and to *re-educate* these educational films produced by the empire as an approach to my thesis film. In the work of Jennifer Dysart's *Revisiting Keewatin* (2022), a part of the Archive/Counter-Archive's Nuit Blanche exhibition titled *Biophilia: Artist and Archive*, the artist utilized found footage from the Library and Archive Canada. Dysart identified all the

images that involved animals and created a story that spoke of the relationship between the animals and the Indigenous Cree community. At the same time, Dysart also removed the imagery of residential school activities and the hegemony induced by the settler presence. By removing and re-editing the archival footage, Dysart has taken control of the imagery and created a new memory of the community's past. For my thesis film, I, too, will take a similar approach and re-assemble the narrative originally framed by the coloniality and re-create a speculative history focused on the local communities in the colony. Instead of reconfiguring and removing entire scenes from the source material, as Dysart had done, I will look to remove and reframe people and objects within each single frame for the entire archival footage, essentially placing the colonized peoples away from their colonizer. I will mask out the moving images of all the Taiwanese individuals in every frame and create a stockpile of moving cut-outs of the local community to be placed back into a scene of its own. By creating this displacement of the individual cut-outs of moving video, the setting, the landscape, and context of the original archival footage will change. The cut-outs of the Taiwanese individuals will be floating, dissected away from the colonial space of the original film; a series of moving image transplants looking to find context again in a new space. The original footage of the parade showcased an image of a happy colony (Ahmed, 2010), an aspiration of the empire and of a greater sphere of influence in the region, yet it was not indicative of the actual happenings of the time for the colonized people. The manner in which educational films were used during early cinema in Taiwan forced it to become an "asynchronous medium misaligned with the fractured temporalities" (Chan, 2022, 12) of the colonial period. The civilized construction and composition of the 1930 parade film was jarring to the actual violence and inequity happening outside of the frame that was prevalent at the time, and contradicted the future-minded

aspirations of the happy colonial imaginary. In other words, filming the actualities of the parade never synchronized with the actual experiences of the colony. As Chan noted when speaking of the colonial documentary *Five Faces of Malaya* (1938):

“The connective tissues possible in the cinematic documentary apparatus—such as the editing, the structural rearrangement of sound and image, and the voice-over—facilitated large-scale imaginings of Malaya as a coherent polity by organizing and hierarchizing Malaya’s various ‘races’ as an unfolding of cinematic duration and a structuring of colonial time on the material surface of celluloid.” (Chan, 2022, 26)

The role of the subversive Taiwanese film narrator becomes important in the treatment of the 1930 parade footage and aligns the colonial time with the actual mood and sentiment of the colony.

As a counterpoint to the 1930 parade footage, modern protest footage of the 2014 Sunflower Movement in Taiwan is introduced in the second half of my thesis film, similar to the way the more festive parts of the parade occurred in the latter half of the found footage. The 2014 protest footage visually mimics the movement of a large group of people in a parade, but now, the group represents the true sentiment of the Taiwanese community rather than a highly controlled atmosphere of fear and control during the colonial period. As a partially orchestrated and spontaneous protest, the videos shot of the event synchronized with the actualities of the place (Ibid, 2022) since the chaotic spirit (e.g. multiple mobile phone sources randomly recording) of the protest images offer an uncompromising and unedited voice of the Taiwanese citizens.

TECHNIQUE: Cutouts and New Scenes

PARADE PROTEST attempts to synchronize the parade footage with a re-imagined un-colonialized Taiwanese space. This thesis film fictionalizes the original non-fiction 1930 parade by removing and re-organizing the Taiwanese people from its colonial time onto the surface of their own digital frame and timeline.

The digital technique of removal or cut-out of a subject within a video requires the masking out of that subject as a moving image file. After the images are cutout from their original spaces, the next step is to determine what space they will occupy next. As noted previously, proximity of the various peoples and subject matters was a tool of manipulation therefore the relationship proximity of these cutout or transplanted images needs to be re-established onto a new cinematic frame, a new setting unlike that of the parade. This scenario with cutouts was created previously by animator Zbig Rybczynski's Oscar winning film, *Tango* (1980), where a series of human cut-outs converge onto a single room, conjuring different scenes with different narratives with each combination of people. The distance from one figure to another, from one grouping to another, or the blocking of actors in the frame, was mapped out onto the frame therefore creating a new series of scenes within a single shot.



Image 15: Film still from Tango (1980) Zbig Rybczynski

The jittery movements of the cut-out images from the 1930 parade will be a dominant aesthetic of this thesis film as the on-screen duration of each cut-out would last approximately 1-3 seconds (as the cut-out image is normally disrupted by a passing figure during this short time frame). The grouping of jittery images becomes an awkward visual sensation for the viewer who has been normalized to the seamless movement of a 24 frames per second film. This jittery-ness, in essence, acts as a kind of protest and resistance to its original placement in colonial history. As we cutout the Taiwanese people's images from their place in the original colonial parade footage, they are displaced and re-placed into another landscape (scene).

After cutting out or masking out all the Taiwanese individuals, their numerous faces and bodies will occupy these new scenes similar to the visual group compositions of David Rimmer's *Watching for the Queen* (1973). The cutout collage of multiple faces and bodies are assembled together to form various groups and therefore various compositions within a scene. Each scene becomes a new re-imagining of cinematic history without the colonial presence.



Image 16: Film still from Watching for the Queen (1973) David Rimmer

At the halfway point of the thesis film, the cutout figures and objects from the original 1930 parade will slowly transition to include cutouts of contemporary figures and objects from a Taiwanese street protest of the 2014 Sunflower Movement. As the 1930 parade scene of cutouts slowly dissipates, a new grouping of Taiwanese people, in the form of the 2014 protest event, slowly emerges. Instead of the 1930 parade during colonial times in black and white, a protest march in colour on the streets of Taipei will reveal itself cutout by cut-out, slowly forming a complete, unedited piece of protest found footage in 2014. This acts as a counterpoint to the colonial image.

ASSEMBLY: Visual & Audio Narrative Arc

As for the construction of the re-imagined narrative arc, I have created a bookended structure where the beginning is a direct juxtaposition to the ending. This is also the reason for the film title, *PARADE PROTEST*. Essentially, my question surrounds the differences between the starting image (1930 parade in Taiwan during Japanese colonization) to the ending image (2014 Sunflower Movement student protest against pro-PROC economic policies and impending

occupation). What is the difference between Taiwanese colonization in the past and the current power relationship between mainland PROC and Taiwan?

PART 1 OPENING SEGMENT - 1930 PARADE: The first three minutes of the film is the unedited opening clip of the original archival footage from 1930. The reason for presenting the raw footage untouched was to allow the audience to sit with the image and the ominous rhythm of the drumbeat. The procession conveys, perhaps inadvertently, a funereal mood yet within a larger ‘celebratory’ event of a parade. The faces of the Taiwanese bystanders and the Japanese parade participants are somber. The relationship between the two should be questioned by the audience at this early point in the film. As an aesthetic side note, there are original in-camera edits during this opening three-minute clip where the cameraperson rotated to multiple lens for medium and close-ups shots. I have decided to keep these mechanical camera movements in the film to present the film as a construction of parts rather than an orchestrated seamless assembly of prescribed moments. Another reason I wanted to include this unedited sequence was because of the horizontal and formal nature of the framing. The bystanders are standing side-by-side facing the camera directly, while the parade participants march from right to left in the same locked-down perspective. The highly formal nature of this opening scene sets a tone of control and colonization, and as the images become masked and cutout, their chaotic placement becomes more representative of an uncontrollable movements of the Taiwanese citizens without the presence of the Japanese colonizers. This formal framing also acts as a counterpoint to the 2014 protest footage at the end of the film where the students and police are trying to move in a single destination but are constantly interrupted by one another.

The audio recording attached to the original 1930 parade footage was also maintained and re-edited in the early segments. The sound not only captured background sounds of the crowd but also short and muffled incongruous sound bites of the camera crew in the Japanese language. A sampling of sound bites from the early segments were approximated as follows:

03:19 Hey, there's no sound.

03:20 Although there is no sound they say something more and more.

03:24 If someone speaks, the sound will be recorded somehow.

03:30 You should hurry up.

03:32 Hey come on, hurry up.

03:34 Start recording now.

03:36 Record it. Record it.

03:37 You should hurry up. Otherwise...

03:44 If there is no soundtrack, it can't be a movie.

As noted earlier regarding the tradition of film narrators, performative oral storytelling were commonly paired with silent films. In *PARADE PROTEST*, I have used the variable-density optical track recordings original to the parade as a way to offer a perspective on the films materiality; emphasizing the celluloids imperfections in image and sound and bringing it forward into the over-arching narrative of the film. The muffled voices speak of the technical recording process itself without context of the event, but more importantly, it also signifies to the viewer that some of the people involved in the recording were Japanese. The nationality of the recorders are important as they show who has control of the image and the sound, and hence the re-educational process of representation.

PART 2 PARADE CUTOUTS SEGMENT: The first segment of original footage was in the original 4:3 aspect ratio, but when it transitions into part 2 with cut-outs of the Taiwanese people without the Japanese colonizers presence, I expanded the frame to a 16:9 aspect ratio so as to offer a new expanded space just for the colonized Taiwanese. By doing this, I hope to offer a new tone to the images that separates itself from the feeling of colonial oppression in the opening segment. This aspect ratio change will also accommodate the modern day camera shooting ratios which appear later in the film.

Cutouts of the Taiwanese in the parade footage was accomplished through the Runway ML online editing platform and offered a faster and more efficient way to green screen through machine learning. The reason why I placed the cutout figures throughout the frame was to create a more collegial and less-dictatorial mood in the archive image. As opposed to the original parade footage where the Taiwanese bystanders looked at the Japanese in the parade yet the Japanese do not look back, I wanted the cutouts to represent the Taiwanese looking at one another rather than looking at their colonial oppressors in hopes of shifting the oppressive gaze into a gaze of citizenry and comradeship. The cutouts of the Taiwanese people are a combination of single individuals, couples, and groups, and the composition was based on their movements and the size ratio occupied on screen. Although the composition of the image is less formal and more disorganized, the visual “messiness” caused by multiple cutouts and jittery movements can be considered as an anti-colonial act since the Japanese empire had aspired for a coherent and ‘happy ’sphere of East Asian influence under their control.

PART 3 TRANSITION BETWEEN PARADE & PROTEST CUT-OUTS SEGMENT: This

transitional section, which uses the 16:9 aspect ratio, will re-configure the space that the local Taiwanese citizens live in during the 1930s and slowly incorporate cut-outs of the Taiwanese protesters from the 2014 Sunflower Movement against pro-China economic policies / CSSTA.

I wanted the 1930 figures to look upon the 2014 protesters. Witnessing, through a temporal shift, what is happening in Taiwan eighty-four years later and what forms of hegemony they are enduring as compared to colonial period. The 2014 protest figures introduced during this part 3 transition mostly include speakers and peaceful sitting / standing protesters without the oppressive forces of the police. This calming sense of protest was utilized to match the calm walking figures of the 1930 figures during this transition.

PART 4 PROTEST CUTOUTS SEGMENT: This segment mirrors part 2 but includes only cut-

outs of Taiwanese protesters. The tone of the images used in part 4 are more active and riotous than in part 3 so as to garner more momentum that leads to the climax in part 5. This includes protesters being attacked by police forces, protesters climbing over barriers, and physical movements of dissension. The audio component mimics the strategy of the earlier segments using the original optical film tracks. The voices and background audio are taken directly from the digital cameras and hand phones including all the distorted and unbalanced recordings. In contrast to the quiet muffles of the optical recording of Japanese voices heard in the 1930 parade, the chaotic nature of the digital records Taiwanese students (e.g. screams, overlapping voices, and distortions) during the 2014 protests once again talks to the materiality of the modern tools in audio-visual recording. The image and sound recording of Taiwan has changed hands from the Japanese colonial masters of 1930 to the young Taiwanese protesters of 2014.

PART 5 FINAL CLOSING SEGMENT - 2014 PROTEST: This final protest segment closes the film in the same way opening parade segment begins. Part 5 closes with series of long takes of 2014 Sunflower Movement protests that have turned violent. There are no cutouts nor is the audio from a different source. The final images are clear visualizations of the protest with its corresponding live audio. At this point in the film, I hope that the bookended nature of the film's structure will come through. The singular movement (from right to left) of the 1930 parade is disrupted by the disorder in multiple directions of the 2014 protest; forces pushing each other in sporadic directions. The singular drumbeat and verbal silence of the parade is disrupted by shouts of discontent. The first frames of the film begins on a black screen with a funereal drumbeat, perhaps a foreshadowing rhythm, and the final frames of the film ends again on a black screen but with screams of violence.

RELATED WORKS

One of my first experience in the filmic arts came from a film studies introductory class.

Watching Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950) in class for the first time helped me understand that the film narrative could be broken or re-organized in many ways. In both story and composition, Kurosawa exemplified that a film was not obligated to tell the truth. This experience became the foundation of my future works that moved between film and the visual arts.

One of the key approaches that have followed my works from the beginning of my career had involved the approach of *removal* and *replacement*. Likened to the scientific method, I have been inclined to keep a certain filmic element as a *constant*; a technique that is fixed or conventional, while the other elements are free, *variable*, and reactive to the narrative of the film. For example, with my film installation *BLOCK B* (2008), the single element that was constant was the framing of the image as it was a locked-down, wide-shot of an apartment building disabling the ability to move the frame. This unmovable moving image was framed completely still for 20 minutes, negating any medium shot and close-ups of the characters walking throughout the balconies of the building. The narrative continued with the interactions between actors, props and lighting effects, and a narrative arc that goes from the beginning to the end.

Another removal method that I used was with one of my earliest films, *minus* (1999). The film was created during Philip Hoffman's Independent Imaging Retreat - Film Farm at Mount Forest, Ontario, where I learned, for the first time, the technique of hand-processed filmmaking. My intent with *minus* was to test how much of an image could be removed through the uncontrollable chemical process of hand-processing and solarization (i.e. exposing light to the celluloid) yet still capture the soul of the image. This methodology resulted in a series of faint

bodily images that pushed through the black background despite the attempts to chemically remove them. In another hand-processed project made during the same retreat, *Music Might Have Deceived Us* (1999) took a more physical approach to the removal methodology by using a makeshift mask. The purpose of the mask was to remove the conventional canvas of the celluloid and look at the projection of light as morphologic and random rather than within the confines of a two-dimensional frame. In a sense, this became a type of in-camera rotoscoping. This technique of masking also allowed me to dis-assemble an image and re-assemble it together with other images but in the same frame with the hopes of creating an entirely new moving image altogether. This approach comes closest to the approach I am taking with my current thesis film, *PARADE PROTEST*.

My previous work, *KARAOKE* (2009), looked to take the approach of *replacement* in the form of texts on screen. In a foreign language film as seen from an English-speaking world, the texts on screen take the form of subtitles as translations for the narratives in a non-English language. These English language subtitles become the primary voice of a conventional foreign language film. In *KARAOKE*, I wanted to subvert this English subtitle narrative by creating another subtitled narrative in the form of foreign language karaoke songs. In a typical karaoke video, subtitles are provided for the singers to read and sing in the song's original language. In my film, since the karaoke songs are in the Malay language and the karaoke subtitles are in Malay as well, then an English subtitle was required to translate the song to an English-speaking audience. At the same time, a simultaneous dialogue between two actors are also happening in Malay which then required an English subtitle. In total, three subtitles or texts are appearing on screen simultaneously, which offered me an opportunity to use the subtitles of the songs and the dialogues to tell contradictory stories in a text-format. The texts of the song could be considered

as a *replacement* for the main narrative supported by the actors' dialogue. I wanted to maintain the conventional narrative of a homecoming trope while using the karaoke songs to tell a more truthful story of what is happening off-screen inherently replacing the original narrative.

CONCLUSION

The original intent of the thesis project, *PARADE PROTEST*, was to strictly de-construct the 1930 parade found footage in a manner that removed it from its colonial context. After further research, my personal inclinations towards comparative analysis took hold of the creative process. As a cinematic image is based on the persistence of vision or movement from one frame to another, I took the same approach with this film analysis by posing one set of film footage towards another essentially using one film to talk about other. Speaking about and analyzing a single piece of found footage (1930 parade) required the comparison to another piece of found footage (2014 protest) but eighty-four years later. The attraction to this comparative binary allows for a clear analytical space in between the two pieces of footage from 1930 and 2014, and therefore providing space that accommodates ambiguity and interpretation. History, too, is a binary of fact and fiction, and the space in between becomes a place where artists can extrapolate and project a light onto the mechanisms that produce our past and our present.

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