

A Foucauldian Analysis of Taiwanese Youth Resistance in Contemporary Taiwanese Films



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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the representation of contemporary Taiwanese youth resistance in three Taiwanese movies released after 2008, the starting point of a new period in which Taiwanese film has regained local popularity. Youth resistances or youth movements seem to be a common occurrence within Taiwanese society. Two recent examples are the Sunflower Student Movement and Same-Sex Marriage Legalization. To understand Taiwanese youth resistance, the study will make use of Foucault's theories on power and resistance, and apply Critical Discourse Analysis and visual analysis in order to decode the conflicts between the youths and the superiors as represented in the movies. A common denominator of these movies is that they depict a power struggle between the youths of Taiwan, and the older generations. As will be shown through the thesis, these movies adopt different visual and discursive strategies to represent and reflect on various forms of resistance against the dominant power structures in Taiwanese society. Overall, the structure of the thesis is meant to gradually reveal the representations of Taiwanese youth resistance, which are temporary, full of hope, and self-actualization.

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Introduction

Taiwanese youths seem to be a major factor in Taiwanese social transformation. In order to articulate my motivations of this thesis, I will first provide a summary of two digital news articles concerning Taiwanese youths in the context of Taiwanese society.

As a first example, in May 2017, Taiwan's top judicial court, the council of grand justices, cleared the way for the island to grant same-sex couples the right to marry, which could potentially make Taiwan the first place in Asia to allow same-sex marriage (Hunt & Tsui 2017). Taiwan's youth has fought for this result for many years. Accordingly, when Taiwan's current president, Tsai Ing-Wen, supported same-sex marriage during her campaign, an impressive attendance at the voting polls was seen (Taylor 2017). Regarding the 2016 presidential elections results, *The Diplomat* wrote: "though there are several causes for Tsai and the DPP's remarkable electoral success, one crucial factor was their popularity with the Taiwanese youths. Over half of Taiwanese who voted between the ages of 20 and 29 favored the DPP to the KMT¹" (Panda 2016). The debate over the past year before 2017 on same-sex marriage and the court's ruling is unique in Asia, where attitudes towards gay couples remain hostile in many countries (Haas 2017). J

¹ KMT (Kuomintang) and DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) are two major parties in Taiwan. KMT, Chinese Nationalist Party, is a historically dominant party in Taiwan after its retreat to Taiwan in 1949 after being defeated by Communist Party of China (CPC) during the Chinese Civil War. KMT has been a single ruling party in Taiwan until 1987. DPP, founded in 1986, is a liberal political party which roots were in opposition to KMT. DPP has been traditionally associated with strong advocacy of a distinct Taiwanese identity. After the election in 2016, DPP became the majority ruling party, controlling both the presidency and the Legislative Yuan while KMT became the main opposition party in the Legislative Yuan.

Michael Cole, a senior fellow at the University of Nottingham's China Policy Institute says that "this (legalization of same-sex marriage) goes beyond the extension of the LGBT community's rights: it's about the young generation's identity as Taiwanese"(ibid).

Meanwhile, between March and April 2014, after a group of students occupied the Legislative Yuan (Taiwan's parliament) to protest the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement² with China, an island-wide movement blossomed, causing Taiwanese youths, who were not interested in politics before, to become engaged in political debates. These students believed that the agreement raises national security implications and posed significant risks to Taiwan's economy. This was the so called "Sunflower student movement"³, one of the biggest student movements after the Wild Lily student movement⁴, which had attracted over 10,000 students joining the protests to oppose the government's secret negotiations and handling of the Agreement. A form of subcultural youth activism emerged, with artists and

² Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) is a free trade pact with China that Taiwan's ruling party in 2014, KMT, believes that generates Taiwanese businesses in the service sector greater opportunities and better policy incentives in China. However, some of the Taiwanese students and citizen think the economic integration with China may affect Taiwan's economy and political future because they worry that the agreement will only facilitate more invasion of Chinese capital and migrant workers to Taiwan.

³ In spite of the unsatisfactory of the Agreement, Taiwan's economic stagnation contributes the cause of Sunflower student movement. Stagnation in salaries is problematic. For example, Taiwanese youths now are being called the "22K generation", an analogy to the starting salary for a young graduate, which is about 22,000 NTDs per month, approximately 625 Euro. This phenomenon prevents some of young Taiwanese from renting or purchasing real estate, and at the same time, also fuels the loss of the brightest and the best young talents to other countries.

⁴ Taiwan's Wild Lily student movement or March student movement was a six-day demonstration in 1990 for democracy lasted from March 16 to March 22. The sit-in protest was initiated by few students from National Taiwan University, but participation quickly grew to 22,000 demonstrators later. The main purpose of the demonstration is to seek direct elections of Taiwan's president and vice president and all representatives in the National Assembly. The adaption of the flower, wild lily, as an icon of freedom evoked a native tradition. At the beginning, for example, wild lily often used it to symbolize the Taiwanese aboriginal people's primitive purity of spirit. After Wild Lily student movement, it becomes a metaphor of simplicity and fortitude for democracy in Taiwanese culture (Yang 2003).

musicians getting together to support social movements.

As these developments clearly show, Taiwanese youths play an important role in contemporary social transformations in Taiwan. They seem dissatisfied with what older generations have provided, and can be regarded as a minority that urges to change and improve Taiwanese society. This phenomenon can be understood by looking at these youths through a sociological approach. Generally, common sense tells us that youth is a natural biological marker. However, sociologists such as Talcott Parsons challenges this view and enables us to see that that “youth is not a universal category of biology but a changing social and cultural construct that appeared at a particular moment of time under definitive conditions” (Barker 2012:426). For Parsons (1942, 1962), the social category of youth or adolescence emerged because of the changing family roles that were generated by the development of capitalism. Before capitalist societies, he argues, family was able to fulfill all the major functions of social reproduction. With the emergence of the capitalist society that demands different occupational and adult roles, there was a gap between family and the complex society. Such a gap requires a transitional space and time for young people to be socialized, and I argue that the social movements in Taiwan serve to fill that gap.

Youth is regarded as a preparation for leaving home and joining the adult world. In this sense, young people are given more responsibilities than children but are still under adult supervision. This supervision, however, does not only come from related adults, but also from the agencies of social control, such as politicians and policymakers. While adults view youths as simply a state of transition, young

people take advantages of this privileged time to develop their own sense of identity. This often includes a refusal to identify with the dominant governmental systems and rules, instead of having a desire for a different world. In other words, youth is “ambivalently valued” (Grossberg 1992): on the one hand, it is commonly considered as a potential threat to existing norms and regulations, and, on the other hand, it is an ideological signifier of a utopian future. Given the impact of two important social movements in recent years in Taiwan, it seems worthwhile to explore the social and cultural dynamics of this “ambivalently valued” group as represented in Taiwanese culture.

Why Taiwanese movies?

Films are one of the dominant mediums within contemporary society. Films are frequently tailored by and for a particular group of people, and thus films are never created within a social or cultural vacuum. For this reason, movies hold cultural meaning, revealing shared values, beliefs and imagined worldviews, while simultaneously shaping one’s expectations. I argue that films are one of the dominant forms of popular culture within Taiwan, and are considered as a way of gaining insight to the world. Moreover, film is also a narrative with a relatively linear storyline (Bordwell 2006), which usually features a struggle at the beginning and an end that is easily accepted by audiences (Voytilla 1999).

Recent Taiwanese films, through their content and their form, offer important insights about these social movements and the efforts at societal transformation, which is why I believe that analyzing Taiwanese movies can be substantial in order

to study the representations of youth resistance. From the early 1990s to 2008, it appeared that Taiwanese audiences were only willing to consume movies from Hollywood; it was not common for the local audiences to appreciate the local movies. However, in the latter half of 2008, when the movie *Cape No.7* (2008, dir. Wei Te-sheng) was released, it changed the face of the entire film industry in Taiwan. Additionally, it did not feature any famous movie celebrities. The box office returns of *Cape No. 7* were over 530 million NTDs, approximately 15 million euros, which were over ten times of its budget (Chiang 2013:12). At the same time, *Cape No. 7* was entitled “as the best-selling Chinese language film (including “national cinema” in Taiwan, Hong Kong cinema and Chinese cinema) in Taiwan’s entire film history” (ibid). Discovery channel⁵ even produced a program called *Amazing Taiwan: the big renaissance of cinema* to introduce this unexpected phenomenon (ibid). The series of successes of *Cape No. 7* was marked as “the renaissance of national cinema” by all kinds of media, social networks and even governmental reports (ibid). It was *Cape No. 7* that changed the way Taiwanese people perceived the locally made movies after 2008.

Since then, Taiwanese directors and the government have joined forces to produce more local movies, which brought about a new formation of Taiwanese cinema, never seen before in history. Instead of seeking global attention, Taiwanese movies after 2008 have shifted towards having the tendency to depict Taiwanese collective memories in lighthearted manners. Now movies seek to address difficult stories such as colonial history in the early twentieth century, social movements

⁵ The programme was released on 30 October 2011 in Taiwan and on 26th November 2011 in 34 countries in Asia.

during the Martial law period from 1949 to 1987, and strict school life, in the form of entertainment to represent the local landscapes and culture. In short, these popular cinematic representations of, and reflections on, Taiwanese history and culture are integral parts of the ongoing social transformations.

In this thesis, I will focus on Taiwanese youth film after 2008 as a way of understanding how youth resistance is represented. In this manner, understanding how youth resistance is represented in society, and how resistance is enacted from within the confined power structure, will, in turn, offer a potential interpretive lens to this thesis about the youth resistance in Taiwanese societies. In this account, Taiwanese youth cinema also provides a descriptive function of lived experience of youth resistance based on language and actions of social actors in the setting.

A Foucauldian Approach on Youth Resistance

In order to analyze the imagination of youth resistance in recent Taiwanese film, I propose to investigate three of major Foucault's major theories that focus on power – Panopticon, knowledge/power, and docile bodies – that evolved in each of the three movies as an entry point to unpack the imagination of youth resistance. The reason why I chose Foucault's theories of power is because they are useful in this thesis to juxtapose a dominant discourse over another one, which the youths attempt to resist.

The ideas of the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) have been used to illustrate the control that modern institutions have over human beings. He develops the various techniques of social control that shape modern

life's social standards, thus defining disciplines and practices which people are expected to adhere to. He suggests that human beings are a part of larger systems playing both control and obedience, which can be seen in every sphere of everyone's life.

However, Foucault (1979:95) asserts that "where there is power, there is resistance". Michel de Certeau (1984), as with Foucault, claims that there are no margins outside of the power. Rather, the illegible practices are forms of resistance that make creative and adaptive play inside power. De Certeau makes the distinction between strategies of power and the tactics of resistance. A strategy is the means by which power marks out a space for itself. The space of tactic is the space of the other. Thus the tactics of resistance play on and within a terrain that imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. For example, youth cultures buy their commodities from apparel brands and in the spaces of clubs, pubs and streets, make their own. They, young people, invest these products with their own meanings to negotiate their own place in the world (Barker 2012:457).

Foucault notes that ranging from parents, teachers, bosses, and all the way to government officials, there is always a power struggle between humans and the restraints of authority. Indeed, resistance is a critical point that depends on who is said to be resisting what, by whom, and under what particular circumstances. In other words, resistance is relational, conjuncture and normative (Barker 2012:460). In the following section, I am going to elaborate more of how I will apply Foucault's three major theories on power in the three selective films.

The Three Taiwanese Youth Movies

In this study, I will focus on three films that tell the stories from a youth's perspective, and that were released after 2008; a period which is considered as the era of Post New Taiwan Cinema. Edward Yang says (Han 2013:31), "there are only two kinds of Taiwanese movies: youth movies and the other kind." While Hong Kong cinema produces an enormous amount of action movies, Taiwanese cinema provides many youth films, which have become iconic features for Taiwanese cinema. Hence, youth cinema plays an important role in Taiwanese film industries, and is also considered as the entry ticket for the new on board directors.

The reason why I chose movies as studying cases is because youths in these films are never satisfied with the kind of society that older generations have provided for them, which resonates the social phenomenon that youth resistance stands for currently within Taiwanese society. In terms of Taiwanese youth cinema, according to scholars there are two opposing opinions. On the one hand, Taiwanese youth cinema currently tends to have lighthearted narratives that create fresh looks and might allow people to feel good after watching it. The narratives tend to focus on school life and involve heterosexual or homosexual relationships among the peers. Some scholars, however, indicate that Taiwanese youth cinema reveals the dark side of Taiwanese society that people tend to neglect, because the stories tend to focus on marginal people, or absence father figures. As far as it is concerned, both opposing claims are important elements for Taiwanese youth cinema. I will embrace both claims in this thesis, since they are also reflected in the movies I have selected.

The three selected Taiwanese youth movies are *Girlfriend, Boyfriend* (2012, dir. Yang Ya-Che) and *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* (2014, dir. Nelson Yeh) and *Touch of the Light* (2012, dir. Chang Jung-Chi) which will be analyzed in Chapter Two, Three and Four respectively. I especially want to explore the conflicts between the youths and the authorities in the different historical contexts as represented in the movies.

In Chapter Two, I will introduce the movie *Girlfriend, Boyfriend* which deals with the period before/after the termination of Martial law from the 80s and continue to the Wild Lily student movement in 1990. The movie depicts a love triangle relationship between three rebellious high school students, two boys and one girl, who actively participated in the protests, aiming to symbolize resistance as the ideals of democracy. While the three of them believe that the current situation needs to improve, they each have different ways to fight against the authorities, which also triggers the disharmony and conflicting emotions amongst the three of them. The movie gives a tragic ending that shows how the protagonists, in the end, cannot escape the power structure of their society (panoptic device) when they are young and how they eventually “surrender” their own egos and embrace the disciplines when they grow up. In this account, the movie shows that the youth resistance is ultimately temporary.

This case study will be examined closely with the help of Foucault’s theory on the Panopticon from *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977) where he asserts that “the major effect of the Panopticon is to induce the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power”. As such, it can be used to explain the power-relations that operate in the governance of KMT

regime and illustrate the invisible power and the response of the youths, especially in school.

In Chapter Three, the movie of *Twa-Tiu Tiann*, set in the Japanese colonial period, is about the resistance of the unequal treatments that the Japanese government imposed on local Taiwanese in the early twentieth century in the city of Twa-Tiu Tiann. This is a time travel movie that depicts the prosperous era of Twa-Tiu-Tiann in the 1920's when it was regarded as one of the most prosperous moments in Taiwanese history although it was under Japanese colonization. Yet, the plots of *Twa-Tiu Tiann* arose the Taiwanese youths nostalgic emotions and the hope to “win over the foreign authority”, which in turn is considered as good material for this study to examine youth resistance and their hope for better economic and national status in the future.

I will especially use *Twa-Tiu-Tiann's* focus on the “knowledge as representation” (Foucault 1966) to investigate how the micro (youth) power is formed and represented in the movie. Dr.Chiang, one of the critical figures in Taiwanese history and in the movie, serves as the representation of knowledge in the movie. Thus, Dr. Chiang is the medium through which the knowledge is being delivered, while the youth carry the knowledge on. In this sense, it is notable how the youths have formed their ideologies and what made them want to resist with the foreign force.

In Chapter Four, the last case study, a film called *Touch of the Light*, will be used as an example of a typical lighthearted Taiwanese youth film. This movie takes place in the current era, and is an inspirational movie depicting the love and dream-pursuing story through two parallel stories between an independent blind

boy and a frustrated sighted girl. Unlike the radical resistance in the previous two movies, the protagonists in *Touch of the Light* demonstrate relatively modest power struggles in the given situations they have encountered. They are both conditioned by social expectations, which hinder them in pursuing their dream at the beginning of the movie. The disciplinary control makes them gaze at their personal behavior and mold themselves into their perceived social expectations. Luckily, the two parallel stories eventually cross, igniting each other to embrace their own talents and to push themselves to shine. Through this film, I will take a closer look at Foucault's idea of docile bodies, which he believes are the visible constructions revealing social and political discourses, to uncover the control of social expectations imposing on the youths. And most importantly, how in the latter portion of the film, the protagonists take an advantage of the power of docile body to fulfill self-actualization.

I claim that *Touch of the Light* is a typical lighthearted Taiwanese youth cinema that expresses youth resistance in subtle and gentle ways. However, unlike other two films, *Touch of the Light* is the only one among the three movies in which youths successfully conquer the power struggle they face, and then step into what they are satisfied with in the movie. By way of explanation, in *Girlfriend*, *Boyfriend* the youths manifest strong rebellion to the superior but end up frustrated, and while the youths of *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* also gain the "hope" and strengths from nostalgic time travel experience, unlike the protagonists of *Touch of the Light*, they do not execute their dreams in the movie.

Academic Contribution, Methodology and Research Questions

This thesis aims to contribute to the analysis of the representation of Taiwan through cinema and to explore Taiwanese youth resistance from the lens of Foucault's theories that lack in the Taiwanese youth cinema. Compared to the long history of cinematic research in western academia and the growing interest in China cinema, the literature focusing on Taiwan cinema remains insufficient as the first exploratory volume is from 1995. Even if scholars have continued to release relevant articles, the results remain occasional and the methodology has been limited to certain cultural theories (Chiang 2013:16). In this account, it is evident to note the need for more contributions for the academic literature about Taiwan studies, as well as Taiwan cinema, which is the focus of this study.

Those three movies show the unequal power structures between rulers and young people and the resistant attitudes against the dominant powers. The analysis will be conducted by first looking at the languages from the youths in the movies and then understanding who they are against. Maboloc claims that, according to Foucault, "language is used as an instrument of resemblance, whereby words come to represent thought (2016:144)". As such, language is the apparatus to disseminate one's knowledge, which constructs the object in its abstract form. Therefore, in order to explore the underlying ideologies behind the knowledge, I will conduct the research with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how the power is operating within the two discourses of youth resistance and the dominant (adult) powers in society. In spite of the Critical Discourse Analysis, I will also deploy visual analysis to explore the representations of power dynamics

between the youths and the superiors.

This thesis uses Michel Foucault's theory on power, resistance, and critical thought in the context of contemporary Taiwanese movies after 2008, analyzing the conflict between youths and dominant powers (KMT regime, Japanese colonial government, and the social expectations that inherent the major two forces) in the society depicted in those films.

While central to Foucault's work is the analysis of how power comes to oppress people, Sara Mills says that Foucault is not satisfied with this notion that power is something that is only concerned with suppressing and constraining (Mill 2003:33). Foucault thinks that what is more important is to examine how power is distributed and exercised between people within institutions (Maboloc 2016:144). Mill (2003) says that for Foucault, power is "something more like a strategy than a possession"; therefore, "power should be seen as a verb rather than noun, something that does something, rather than something which is or which can be held onto" (2003:35). As a result, power "is not the privileges of the dominant class, which exercise it actively upon a passive, dominated class" (Sheridan 1980,137). It, in turn, explains that even if the youths are not dominated in society, they do embrace power to operate within the system.

In this account, I am interested in analyzing how power is operated between sovereigns and youths and how youths struggle against sovereigns in the movies. I will use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how the discourse is implicated in relations of power between youths and dominant (adults) in the movies. Critical Discourse Analysis sees the use of language as a form of social

practice, and all social practices are linked with specific historical contexts. As such, it is beneficial to conduct the studies with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the “existing social relations” and the “contested and different interests” from the use of the language in the movies (Janks 1997: 329).

Fairclough’s (1995) model for CDA consists of three interrelated processes of analysis, which are tied to three interrelated dimension of discourse (See Figure One). These three dimensions of discourse, which will also be applied in the thesis, are:

- 1) Analysis of text, including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts
- 2) Analysis of processes of text production, consumption and distribution, and
- 3) Sociocultural analysis of the discursive event that govern these processes.

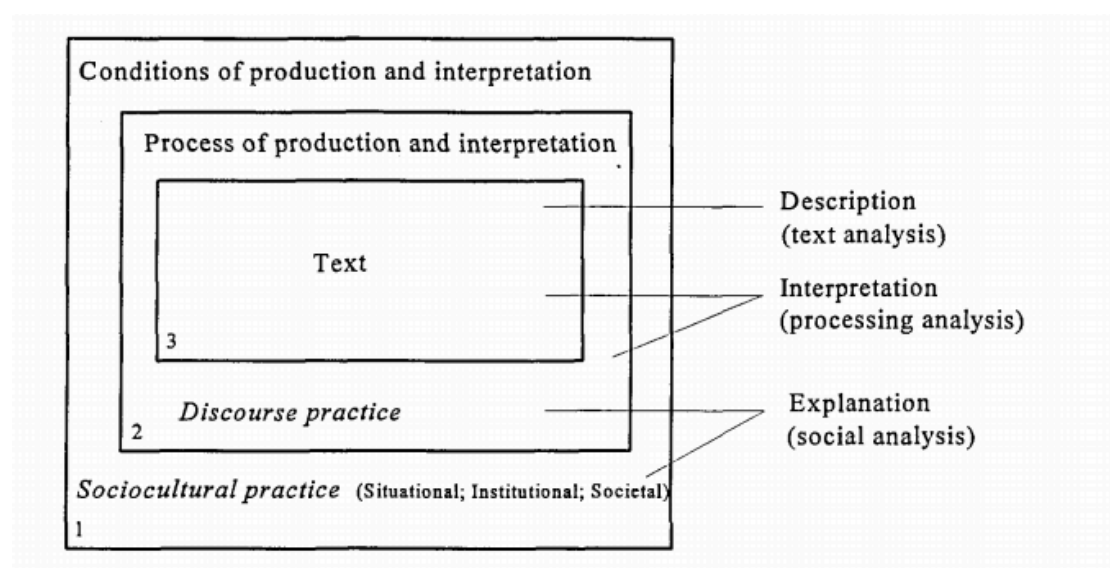


Figure 1. Fairclough’s dimension of discourse and discourse analysis. (Fairclough 1995:98)

Thus, firstly, I will describe the conflicts that formed by the youths and the superiors in the movie by analyzing the visual signs and verbal signs. It means to examine the filmic strategies directors from each movie deploy to manifest the

conflicts. Secondly, I will interpret the power struggles between the youths and the superiors in the “situational context” and the “intertextual context” (Fairclough 1995). It means that I will reflect on the temporal and spatial aspects of the situations depicted in the movies: by considering will this text be produced after the Martial Law? Will this text be produced outside Taiwan? What contextual factors affected the production and reception of this text? Those are the questions I will ask to approach each film. Thirdly, I will explain in what social-historical conditions the discourses are accepted. Janks (1997:340) asserts that “signifiers are constantly shifting”. It means, for example, the terminology used to signify something is now referred to as something else. Therefore, it provides other available discourses that constitute our new identities and our constructions of the world. In this case, it might even possible to witness the formation of a new discursive hegemony that replaces the old one. As a result of applying these three interrelated dimensions of discourses; it is possible to analyze how the text is positioned, whose interests are served, or whose interests are negated.

In addition to the CDA, the thesis will also focus on a visual analysis of the directors’ representation of youth resistance within the movies. I will look at two techniques governing the shot, Mise-en-scene and cinematography to examine how the directors depict youth resistance through various filmic techniques.

Mise-en-scene includes the following: settings, lighting, costume and makeup, and staging and performance (Bordwell & Thompson 2013:113). In this thesis, I will especially focus on the aspects of setting, lighting, costume and makeup. In this sense, we come to realize where the resistance take place; what lighting do the

directors deploy to emphasize specific objects or people and what kind of costumes or special makeup do the characters wear to represent identities in the movie.

Additionally, I will also be attentive of the cinematography; how do the directors frame the shots or how do the directors play with the angle of camera in order to represent opposing power structures. While exploring the techniques, which the filmmakers use in the movies, several key questions will be asked: In which setting does the resistance occur? What is the difference in costumes between the youths and their superiors? What are the recurring motifs in the movies that show youth resistance? How are two opposing positions framed within a shot? These questions will be used to analyze specific, individual shots within the movies, in order to answer the research questions.

The main research question, which I seek to answer, is the first one, whereas the latter are all sub-questions that emerge. These questions are as follow:

1. How do contemporary Taiwanese films represent youth resistance?
2. What kind of visual and discursive representational strategies are used in the movies in order to interpret youth resistance in contemporary Taiwan?
3. How can Foucault's work on power illuminate the dynamics of youth resistance in these movies?

In the following sections, I will first offer an overview of the research background of this thesis in order to gain the historical knowledge and the development of Taiwanese youth film starting from New Taiwan Cinema to New Century Cinema. Those developments are important foundations, which contribute to the way in which the current Taiwanese youth movies look like. In Chapter Two, I will introduce the first case study *Girlfriend, Boyfriend* to examine the tragic ending of the youth resistance by using Foucault's theory on the Panopticon. In Chapter three, I will analyze the nostalgic time travel movie *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* by taking a closer look of the theory of power and knowledge to understand how power operates within the youths and the trusted leader, and how the youths gain the hopes from the plots of future driven nostalgia. In the last chapter, I will offer the typical lighthearted Taiwanese youth movie *Touch of the Light* to enact how the social expectations has molded two protagonists, a blind boy and a drinks vendor girl, into the expected docile bodies and how they "gently" break the social bondages and seek their dreams. Overall, the structure of the thesis is meant to gradually reveal the representations of Taiwanese youth resistance, which are temporary, full of hope, and self-actualization.

Chapter One

Research Background and Literature Review

This thesis aims to explore the representations of youth resistance in the three contemporary Taiwanese youth movies after 2008 through the theories of Foucault with the Critical Discourse Analysis. By analyzing the resistance through three films, it may be expected that a number of different representations of youth identities can be revealed. Except for the examination of the discourse, it will also include the visual analysis to inspect the film techniques that directors of each movie deploy to represent the power struggles between the youths and the dominant voices, especially from the analysis of the different shots within the movies.

Taiwanese youth films after the 1980s are mainly based on the personal experiences and reflections of the directors and this way of making the films continues until now. Having sufficient budget for making the films is one of the critical issues for Taiwanese cinema. Therefore, youth cinema that does not cost a significant amount of the money serves as a good starting point for most of the Taiwanese directors, especially for the upcoming directors. It makes the young directors stand out from the other senior directors because they produce different youth films that are more fresh and recent. Therefore, young director's participation and impression of youth life becomes the recourses for their first production. Youth films are regarded as a specific cultural phenomenon in Taiwan, which maintains a stable position as average in the domestic film productions (Song and Hashim 2012:17).

In the following sections, I am going to introduce the history of Taiwanese youth cinema through the different periods, thus, from New Taiwan Cinema to New Century (twenty-first century Taiwan Cinema), aiming to understand the development of the Taiwanese youth cinema. Through this comparison, I will argue why the Taiwanese youth cinema plays a crucial role in the society, and how it reflects that given generation.

1.1 New Taiwan Cinema

When talking about Taiwanese contemporary movies, it is necessary to consider the history of “New Taiwan Cinema” that started in 1982 by the movie *In Our Times* (dir. Edward Yang). Developed by two major representatives figures, Hsiao-Hsien (1947-) and Edward Yang (1947-2007), the creation of New Taiwan Cinema aims to reflect local Taiwanese culture in films (Lu 2011:122). Song and Hashim (2012:16) also assert that the purpose of New Taiwan Cinema in the 1980s is to build its cultural and historical differences that attempt to establish “the concept of self (Taiwanese culture) and the others (other cultures)”. I claim that the disappointments and frustrations from the historical past and social turbulence contributed the birth of New Taiwan Cinema.

Due to many bitter historical circumstances, including the Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945), the arrival of Chinese nationalism of the KMT government after WWII, Cold War politics, the Feb. 28th Incident of 1947, White Terror era (1950s-1970s), and the Martial Law period (1949-1987), people on this small island were busy adapting to those social changes and never their own leaders (Chen 2013). Besides,

the New Taiwan Cinema movement emerged in the early 1980s and had been seen as a termination of the cultural nationalism that swept Taiwan during the 1970s (Yip 1996:711). That was a critical decade when Taiwan faced a series of embarrassing political setbacks. For instance, the forced breakup of diplomatic ties with USA, Japan, and other major nations, expulsion from the United Nations and exclusion from the Olympic games triggered a sense of national crisis. Consequently, Taiwan started a period of self-reflection that resulted in the awakening of nationalistic emotions, for example, a new interest in indigenous cultural traditions, and a new social-political awareness. While the contemporary Taiwanese past seems bitter and sorrowful, those emotions provide the unique features to Taiwanese cinema.

One of the iconic works of the New Taiwan Cinema is *City of Sadness* (1989) by Hou Hsiao-Hsien. The movie was the first Taiwanese film to win recognition at a major European film festival; for instance, the Golden Lion Award in Venice in 1989. It is the story of an extended Taiwanese family's experiences from 1945 to 1949, the turbulence and uncontrollable years of transition between the end of the Japanese colonization and the arrival of the Kuomintang (KMT) government from Mainland China. The movie is attempted to recover a period of Taiwanese history and contemporary Taiwanese society in order to pursue national identity. It depicts the tension between the government and the people, between mainlanders and the native Taiwanese⁶. In addition, it has generated the controversial debates because Hou, Hsiao-Hsien was dared to illustrate the negative images of KMT government,

⁶ Mainlanders are the people who arrived in Taiwan after t after the retreat of the KMT regime to Taiwan in 1949.

focusing on the brutal February incident of 1947⁷ in which the native islanders were savagely repressed and slaughtered (Yin, 1996:713). Therefore, Chen (2013) claims that the Taiwanese movies before 1989 can be concluded by one word: sadness. Ming-yeh T. Rawnsley (2012) says that *A City of Sadness* expresses “extensively an externally defined identity-based resistance”, which may not easily interpret or observe as a form of resistance for all the audiences. Due to the historical backgrounds and the domestic conflicts, the movies during the wave of New Taiwan Cinema are often hard to watch but worth enduring. Most importantly, it shows how people in that generation resist the high-pressure governance society, which in turn shape the style of New Taiwan Cinema and has given the academic world the abundant resources to examine the resistance of Taiwanese in that generation as well.

Scholars have distinguished two main features of New Taiwan Cinema. First of all, many of the new Taiwanese films deal with Taiwanese history and the formation of Taiwanese identity. Therefore, the historical events are often included as the landscapes in the movies, which bring the style of realism in New Taiwan Cinema. Realism styles can be seen in the works of Hou, Hsiao-Hsien and Edward Yang. Some critics claim that both Hou, Hsiao-Hsien and Edward Yang are consciously thinking about Taiwan’s history and the present society in making of their films. Lu (2011:128-129) summarizes the two directors as, “two great authors in the

⁷ Brutal February incident of 1947 is one of the most contentious political events in pre-democratic Taiwan, commonly known as the 2-28 Incident. The incident began with a relatively minor accident on the street on 20 February 1947, which ignited long social tension after. As a result, it is estimated between 10,000 and 20,000 citizens in Taiwan were killed by the Nationalist (KMT) army. The tragedy has haunted Taiwan’s politics and society for several decades until the lifted of the Martial law in 1987.

cinematic history of Chinese-Language communities, largely because they are products of Taiwan's unique cultural and social circumstances". Hong, the author of *Taiwan Cinema* (2011), calls New Taiwan Cinema is "an aesthetics that call attention to its own stylistics by positing itself as a historical presence within the cinematic frame" (p.108-109). Thanks to that, New Taiwan Cinema allows a group of fresh and young directors to perform their unique cinematic styles that are different from the 1960s (healthy realism⁸ movies which insist on the notion of stasis –familial relationships, Confucian ethics, national culture, and so on (Hong 2011: 81)) and the 1970s (utopian romance movies⁹ and Hong Kong style action movies). The Taiwanese movies in the 1980s are mainly the narratives inspired by the director's personal experiences, especially their growth stories. Besides, those unique cinematic styles in the 1980s offer the Taiwanese movies the international visibilities and recognitions. Consequently, the strong connections with history and re-situation of Taiwanese identity explain the feature of New Taiwan Cinema, and its influences are reinforced and expanded by the following Taiwanese films as well, such as the movies directed by Tsai Ming-Liang.

Secondly, many of the new Taiwanese films thematize and perform multilingualism. When the KMT retreated to Taiwan after being defeated by the Chinese Communist Party, KMT government imposed a "National Language

⁸ Healthy Realism movie was a film genre that proposed to build traditional moral values which were deemed important during the rapid transformation of the nation's socioeconomic structure. Healthy Realism was first introduced to Taiwan film industry in 1964 by the Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMPC), a studio owned by KMT. It claims lineage to postwar Italian Neorealist film, but intentionally avoids realism's darkness and pessimistic themes. It has often been interpreted as the KMT government's propaganda tool.

⁹ Utopian romance movies were mainly the novel adaptations that written by Qiong Yao. These romantic melodramas have helped mark the peak of Taiwan film's so-called golden age when Taiwan films were popular enough to get advance investment from around Southeast Asia.

(Mandarin) Movement” on the island where people mainly spoke Taiwanese (the Hokkien dialect) and Japanese, due to the fifty years of Japanese colonization from 1895-1945. Thus, during the 1950s to 1960s, the Nationalist government released the majority of the movies and they were mainly in Mandarin. The Taiwanese-dialect movie became less and less popular and the number of productions has dropped drastically. There were only six Taiwanese-dialect movies were made throughout the 1980s (Lu 1998:449). However, diversity of language usage, which includes Mandarin, Taiwanese, Japanese and English, becomes the essential element of New Taiwan Cinema. The purpose of doing so is to start a new kind of national cinema that is different from the “grand narratives” Nationalist government and Chinese traditions, and to pay more attention to ordinary people’s daily life in Taiwan.

Although some scholars claim that New Taiwan Cinema was died in 1987 (Zou & Liang 1991), the same year of the termination of the Martial Law, the spirit of Taiwan New Cinema was in fact maintained well by Hou, Hsiao-Hsien and Edward Yang in their works. Some scholars claim that the works of Hou, Hsiao-Hsien and Edward Yang should be considered as a continuation of New Taiwan Cinema (Chiang 2013: 10). In this thesis, it will follow a continuation of Taiwan New Cinema in line with an important scholar of Taiwan film, Ming-yeh T. Rawnsley, to fully explore the continuous efforts of New Taiwan Cinema in reflecting Taiwanese identity since the early 1980s (Ming-yeh 2009).

In conclusion, New Taiwan Cinema is the critical foundation of contemporary Taiwanese movies. It can be regarded as the light which enabled current movies to

be presented in a certain way. Besides, both Hou, Hsiao-Hsien and Edward Yang were beneficial from the movement of New Taiwan Cinema when they have established their fames and performances, and at the same time, they have provided certain directions and methods for the Taiwanese film industries which are apparent in New Taiwan cinema (twenty-first Century) too.

1.2 New Century Cinema (Twenty-First century Century)

When starting new century, Taiwan cinema changed its cinematic style to seek a wider audience. Starting from the excellent youth film *Blue Gate Crossing* (2002, dir. Yee Chih-yen), the lighthearted narrative with “easy to watch” plots opened the new chapter in Taiwanese cinema and also established some criteria for the films that were released after, which I will address more in detail later in the Taiwanese youth cinema section. The domestic box office was unpleasant for a long time until the beginning of the twenty-first century. According to the statistics from Chiang (2013), Taiwan cinema took only 0.40% of the domestic box office in 1999, and the percentage dropped to 0.10% in 2001. Chiang (2013) says that the popular cinema, meaning popular culture, was discarded, and the government preferred to invest in the art cinema, which assists Taiwan’s prominence on the map of world cinema. Conversely, since the early 2000s, some new emergent filmmakers, either trained during the New Taiwan Cinema as assistant directors/cinematographers or worked in the television behind the scenes. Alternatively, they began writing film scripts, and started a small-scale but solidly flourishing movement to create “audience-friendly” (Chiang 2012) narratives in Taiwan. However, the box office

still did not increase.

At that time, *Guo Pian* (Taiwanese national film) suffers from the import of foreign films after Taiwan's joined WTO in 2002. Domestic major studios tend to purchase overseas films, especially from Hollywood, because of the large amount of the productions, as well as the assured return on investment. As a result, Taiwanese films are always struggling to re-boom national films due to the inescapable foreign influences. It is only until 2008 when *Cape No. 7* (dir. Wei De-Sheng) released that Taiwan's cinema reached new heights and the phenomenon is best exemplified by the unprecedented box office success, both domestic and overseas (Hong 2011: 185). *Cape no. 7* is considered as a miracle in Taiwanese film industries due to its small budget, but unexpected large return during the downturn period of local cinema. It has also boosted the local audience's confidence on Chinese-language movies (Chen & Ning 2011), in which, in turn, also reinforces the determination of local Taiwanese directors for making more movies. The phenomenon has continued in the subsequence local movies, such as *Monga* (2010), which was the best selling local film in 2010 with its highly localized outlook and plots.

In the meantime, the success of *Cape No. 7* has brought an active discussion on the subjects of localization and decolonization in society (Lee 2010), which are the topics seldom to review previously. In terms of localization, the trend of globalization that draws people's attention toward protecting local cultures has reinforced the awareness of self-identity (Lee 2010). As such, it shows that the New Century Taiwan Cinema that started from *Cape No. 7* is more aware of making the

movies for the local audiences than seeking for the global attentions. In terms of decolonization, the retrospective depiction toward Japanese culture is different from the New Taiwan Cinema as well. As Lee (2010) claims, *Cape No.7* does not attempt to illustrate Japanese colonial past in the hateful emotions. Instead, it refreshes the collective memory of being colonized in which, in turn, helps people to re-identify themselves in the process of decolonization. Therefore, unlike the feelings of sadness New Taiwan Cinema attempt to express, in the case of *Cape No. 7*, one of the crucial representatives of New Century Taiwan Cinema, is that the directors in the twenty-first century tend to re-enact the histories in more positive emotions relatively.

The apparent difference between *Cape No.7* and the New Taiwan Cinema in the 1980s leads the new wave in the Taiwanese industries. The new wave after New Taiwan Cinema is called “Post-New Taiwan Cinema”, a word officially coined by the 2008 “Auteurism and Popularity: Taiwan Post-New Cinema” International Symposium held by the Institution of Chinese Literature and Philosophy at Taiwan’s Academia Sinica in Taipei in 2009 (Hong 2011:185, Chiang 2012:7). To compare the difference between the New Taiwan cinema and the Post-New Taiwan cinema, Hong (2011:185) points out that for some, the New Taiwan cinema focuses on the realistic portrayal of everyday life, which mainly captured from the personal experiences of directors in artistic formats. Artistic formats helps to fulfill one of the purposes of New Taiwan Cinema which is seeking a global look to represent Taiwanese local landscape and culture. In other words, producing Chinese-language films for Euro-American art-house audiences was what New

Taiwan Cinema excelled at (Chiang 2012:3). Whereas, Post-New Taiwan cinema is also mainly focused on the personal experience of directors, but it rejuvenates Taiwan's film industry with a specific format that aims to cater to the preferences of the majority of the audiences. In short, due to the different objectives for reaching out different audiences, New Taiwan Cinema and Post-New Taiwan Cinema show the distinct techniques when presenting the movies. In the next section, I will introduce one of the most iconic Taiwanese cinema genres – Taiwanese Youth Cinema- through the lens of New Taiwan Cinema and Post-New Taiwan Cinema.

1.3 Taiwanese Youth Cinema

As a movie genre, youth cinema originally comes from the United States. There are some of the classic teen movies, such as *American Graffiti* (1973) and *Breakfast Club* (1985). I argue that Taiwanese youth cinema tends to be influenced by the western youth cinema because of the various productions from oversea returnee directors, such as Edward Yang; however, at the same time it also includes Taiwanese local youth expressions. In this section, I will first review the youth films before the twenty-first century that directed by two famous directors in Taiwan, *Rebel of the Neon God* (1992) (dir. Tsai, Ming-Liang) and *Daughter of the Nile* (1987) (dir. Hou, Hsiao-Hsien). After that, I will discuss Taiwanese youth cinema that has thrived after the twenty-first century.

In terms of the Taiwanese youth cinema before the twenty-first century, it is suggested to talk about *Rebel of the Neon God* and *Daughter of the Nile*. Both films

are epitomes of the ethos of sadness commonly found among Taiwan films before the twenty-first century. *Rebel of the Neon God*, directed by dir. Tsai, Ming-Liang, who is considered not only the famous worldwide director but also the sincere reproducer of contemporary Taiwanese youth culture (Chen 2008:490). In the movie, the director creates the isolations of city spaces, alienation of interpersonal relationships, silence of the characters to depict the bitterness and frustrations of the youths in the society. Ho (2010) claims that the movie is the classic case to examine how the youths form the pattern to escape or to resist mainstream society. In the movie, the youth takes an advantage to pretend he is being God possessed in order to escape from the manipulations of his father. Ho (2010) asserts that it is the “mythical escape” that was created by youth’s mother, who claims that he is the son of Neon God; it is, in turn, reinforced by the youth to departure from the patriarchal authorization (p.108).

Besides, while being possessed by Neon God is the way to escape, gaming consoles, which the youth like to play in the movie, are the apparatus for the youth to gain the temporal domination and to release the limited resistance by consuming his time and money, which explains the inescapable social hegemonies. However, from the tension created between temporary escape and resistance, the youth becomes aware that the more he tries to escape the more resistances he will face. Thanks to his realization, the movie ends in an optimistic way by showing the sunrise which aims to manifest the new chapter of his life.

Another example is *Daughters of the Nile* (1987), directed by Hou, Hsiao-Hsien, a film that depicts the problems faced by Taiwanese youth in a fast changing society.

The film is a study of the life of young people in contemporary Taipei urban life, focusing on the marginalized figure of a woman and centered on a server in a fast-food store who has a crush on a gigolo. The initial sequence of the movie reveals a parallel between the difficulties encountered by people in the movie. Thus, we see Taiwanese urban youths transitioning from ordinary citizens into a changing world, which, in turn, suggest the collapse of traditional values in the period of American and Japanese cultural imperialism (Yin 1996 712). To sum up, the youth cinema in New Taiwan Cinema is often the reflections of that moment. The narratives usually imply other significant meanings that are not easy to understand at first glance which make people ponder and reflect. This raise the question what about the youth cinema after the twenty-first century. In the next section, the reviews of Taiwanese youth cinema after the twenty-first century will be provided.

According to the investigation of the Taiwanese youth cinema from Mainland Chinese scholars and Taiwanese scholars, there are two opposite ideas about Taiwanese youth cinema. Some scholars believe that the lighthearted narratives of youth cinema after the twenty-first century create fresh looks and attract more audiences, whereas some scholars conclude that the lighthearted narratives contain some dark sides that are easily neglected or taken for granted, but are worth taking a closer look at to understand Taiwanese youths. In the following paragraphs, I am going to provide two opposite perspective of how scholars interpret the Taiwanese youth cinema after the twenty-first century. I will first focus on the postive aspects of Taiwanese youth cinema, and then highlight the

negative sides.

Some scholars (Chen 2013, Song and Hashim 2012) claim that Taiwanese youth cinema after the twenty-first tends to portray lighthearted subjects that hold the power to make audiences “feel good” after watching these films, which encompass a genre that is different from the New Taiwan Cinema. *Blue Gate Crossing* (2002) by Yee, Chih-Yen, one of the examples of “walk out of sadness”¹⁰, is considered as a first masterpiece of 21st century in Taiwanese youth cinema and its influence has continued until recent. For instance, *Blue Gate Crossing* establishes several conventions for latter films to follow, such as high school campus, bicycle, and the mixing of heterosexual and homosexual relationships.

Chen (2013: 61) tentatively classified Taiwanese youth cinema as the “youth nostalgia” films. For instance, the narratives of Taiwanese youth cinema after the twenty-first century are mainly revolve school life, rites of passage, heterosexual and/or homosexual relationships among the peers. School life is portrayed as the good old days even if there are many of embarrassments, sad memories (ibid). He claims that the trend starts from *Blue Gate Crossing* (2002), in which friendship and sexual arouse were emphasized to depict the lives of three friends in their high school days. It was then followed by the films such as *Eternal Summer* (2006), *Summer’s Tail* (2007), *Secret* (2007), *Wind of September* (2008) and *You’re the Apple of my Eye* (2011), and the most recent one *Our Times* (2015). These films are usually shot in high schools, and rely on bikes as the predominant form of student

¹⁰ “Walk out of sadness”, according to Chen (2013), is a metaphor of saying good bye to the “hard to digest” movie, such as *City of Sadness* (1989) by Hou Hsiao-Hsien, and producing happier movie which is lack of during New Taiwan Cinema.

transportation (Chen 2013). Trains are highly visible in New Taiwan Cinema because they are a symbol of migrating from home to the big cities. Nevertheless, bikes are regarded as the key element after twenty-first century, because the narratives are basically based on the campus. Therefore, bicycles are the recurrent motifs in the recent Taiwanese youth cinema. Furthermore, Chen (2013) asserts that these films start a new opening to “walk out of sadness” because those films remove the serious topics such as social law and order, the burden of Taiwan history, which is the heavy focus in New Taiwan Cinema, and adult figures are barely featured from the narratives too.

In addition, according to the observation from Chen (2013), he claims that the filming style of youth nostalgia genre is also different from the New Taiwan cinema. He compares the filming style between *City of Sadness* and *Blue Gate Crossing* and claims that the youth nostalgia films no longer use the trademark of “the long take and deep focus camera lens”, which offers audiences the chance to ponder the relationship between human and environment. Yet, the director of *Blue Gate Crossing*, prefers to go against the grain and use shallow lens, together with quick cuts to shorten the length of every single shot, which results in the compression of characters and background environments and gives a film a faster pace. Consequently, the scenery no longer has the depth of field and the positions of characters are squeezed in the city environment in which makes the movie more like audience’ everyday life and lighthearted.

Song and Hashim (2012) also hold the similar accounts like Chen. They assert that Taiwanese youth cinema portrays “youth perspective and unique voice of

Chinese youth". The authors analyze the movies *Winds of September* (2008) and *Summer's Tail* (2007) and agree that the typical elements of Taiwanese youth cinema possess "slow narrative pacing, hypocritical characters, and unknown distress and sentimental struggle". Both authors argue that the slow narrative pacing may result in intensity. To some extent, the intensity is made from the isolation and muteness of the characters. They further claim that the discourse of Taiwanese youth cinema is created from the "simple dramatic conflicts and stock characters" which seems overly formalistic in many Taiwanese youth film after the twenty-first century. In the end, however, although the authors analyze movies that contain youngsters and violent scenes, a positive message is conveyed at the end of the movie which can give hope to audiences. Like what Chen has claimed above, they all tend to maintain that high school life is the essential element in Taiwanese youth cinema, which in turn makes it the "more lighthearted subjects"(p.18).

However, some scholars argues that even if Taiwanese youth cinema usually possesses optimistic and joyful spirits in the movies, the stories actually reveal some "dark" sides of Taiwanese society which local people are not aware of. Chen & Ning (2010) indicate in *Growth Story, Gay Culture and Colonial Memory in Recent Taiwan Film* that there are three essential elements in the contemporary Taiwan youth cinema. First of all, the growth stories in Taiwanese youth cinema tend to focus on the stories of marginal people, such as gangsters, rule-breakers, who are attempt to deny the values of mainstream or authorities. In other words, the framework of Taiwanese youth cinema pays more attentions on the growth stories of margined people (p. 88), because the protagonists in the Taiwanese youth

cinemas are often positioned in the margined roles; and school rules are the representation of mainstream values, which are the major growth barriers for the protagonists. However, the youth movies often end up in the positive attitudes, which manifest the independence and self-assurance after the struggles of young life. That explains the difference between youth cinema between Taiwan and China, where the stories tend to end up hopelessly.

Secondly, Taiwanese youth cinema uses homosexuality as one of the subcultures to resist the heterosexual value, which is regarded as mainstream hegemony. However, the authors also claims that the purpose of resisting mainstream hegemony in youth cinema emphasizes more on the emotions of the youths, rather than emphasizing on the collective oppression and individual resistance. As such, Taiwanese youth cinema creates the experience of unfamiliarity (subcultural resistance) and familiarity (hegemonic consolidation). Such reflection is synonymous with Baker's idea. Baker (2013:455) claims that "if resistance is taking place, it is happening inside the whale". What he means is youth culture is not seeking for resistance but for negotiation. Thus, ambivalence and ambiguity occupy the space of resistance.

Thirdly, the authors point out that "absence of father role" in the youth films is very characteristic which is very rare in the worldwide films industry. According to the authors, the phenomenon results from the Japanese colonial memory, which connects the colonial history with the father's role in the family. The connection with colonial memory creates the sentimental of close and distance, love and hate. In conclusion, the article asserts that the Taiwanese youth cinema can be the

reflection of current Taiwanese society which is satisfied with the condition of being in the role of marginal but is suffered from the contradictive emotions of Japanese colonial history.

In conclusion, the issues discussed by the above two distinct perspectives not only give the insights for Taiwanese youth cinema after the twenty-first century, but also provide the glimpse of the case studies of this thesis.

1.4 The Case Studies

Like I have mentioned above, the purpose of the study is to examine the conflicts between the youths and the dominant powers in the different historical contexts, Japanese colonial government and KMT regime. In multicolonized Taiwan, Japanese colonial government (1895-1945) and KMT regime (1945-2000) are the two major (colonial) forces that contributed the multi-colonized Taiwan (Shih & Chang 2010). Shih & Chang argue that in postcolonial societies, the subjectivities behind every identity – who we are and how we want to live – were emerged “from the hybrid nature of local culture” (p.454). Thus, the two major forces in Taiwanese history are regarded as the unavoidable contexts and that is why I select the movies that go on under these two regimes aiming to capture the representations of youth resistance from different historical contexts. The historical background of *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* (2014) is in the 1920s when Taiwan was under Japanese colonization. Anti-colonialism is considered as the typical example of studying resistance. *Girlfriend, Boydfriend* (2012) depicts the story in the end of the 20th century, when KMT is the solo government. *Touch of the Light* (2012) is the current

story, but I argue that the social expectations contain the spirit of both regimes and it is worthwhile to take a closer look of the combination of the two forces too. I will then investigate how the three movies employ cinematic strategies to deliver representations of youth resistance with the focus on how narratives and filming techniques are used by the directors in chapter Two, Three, and Four.

Chapter Two
Power, Resistance, and Freedom
in *Girlfriend, Boyfriend* (2012)

Girlfriend, Boyfriend (2012), directed by Gillies Ya-Che Yang, is a complex love triangle story that lasts for 30 years with Taiwan's political landscape as a background—before and after Martial Law was lifted (1987). In this movie, it articulates both politics and homosexual love, as director Gillies Ya-Che Yang believes both of them express specific emancipation (Alvarez 2012). The movie provides numerous plots that show how youths struggle against authorities to demand more freedom. For instance, free discourse on publications and less strict rules on uniforms.

In the case study, I will analyze the narratives with Foucault's notion of power especially from the angles of the Panopticon. Before that, I will first introduce the movie and its story line and setting to understand the progress of youth resistance. I will end up with the freedom of the motifs, which the director manifests from the social-cultural perspective in Taiwan, to ponder, "is freedom arrived" after the youth resistance. My main argument is that on the one hand, the film offers critical insight into radical youth resistance, which I argue legitimates youth resistance in Taiwanese society; however, on the other hand, the movie ultimately ridicules the desire of youth resistance. In other words, while the demonstration of youth resistance, such as student movement, sounds righteous and compelling for social

transformation, I argue that in the movie, it reveals that the youth resistance is temporary and is an implicit desire to hold power as the authorities have.

2.1 The Endless Love Triangle and the Explorations of Self

Girlfriend, Boyfriend (2012), also named GF*BF, is a Taiwanese film about a complicated love triangle between three rebellious students, a girl, and two boys, during the turbulent period. The pro-democracy “Wild Lily student movement” is a historic event that took place during the 90's in Taiwan, and the movie uses this event as one of the background stories. The three protagonists are best friends with each other, but the complexity of their relationships causes them to struggle with each other, even during their adulthood.

Mabel Lin (starring by Kwai Lun-Mei), the name of leading actress in GF*BF, is a member of the swimming club and is portrayed as having a tomboy personality during her time in high school. Unlike the other schoolgirls who tend to have a composed personality and keep their distance from the boys, Mabel usually acts similar to the boys and spends more time with male schoolmates. She likes one of the boys in the swimming club, whose name is Liam Chen (starring by Hsiao-Chuan, Chang). Liam is a shy boy who seems to hide his emotion with his uncertain sexuality. Even though Mabel attempts to show her obsession for Liam in various ways, he cannot fulfill her expectations, as Liam is secretly in love with another boy named Aaron (starring by Bryan Shu-Hao Chang). Sadly enough, Aaron, in turn, is in love with Mabel. Aaron, a member of the student magazine club, expresses more himself than Liam. Aaron is a “trouble maker” in the school, who often takes the

direct, aggressive action to fight against the drillmasters. In turn, he also gets the most punishments among other students. The way Aaron shows his love to Mabel is also more explicit and straightforward.

As life goes on the three of them occasionally have the chance to reunite together. Mabel is the manager of a gym, and Aaron now works for his father-in-law. However, their former entanglement with one another continues to pursue them, this time even involving other people. Apart from this love triangle, Sean (starring by Chang Shu-hao), a gay supporting character in the movie, embraces vivid characters, which are contrasting from Liam. Liam tends to hide his gay identity in the public sphere, but Sean always shows his gay identity explicitly. Unlike Liam, Sean identifies himself as a gay from the beginning of the movie; no matter how people tease him verbally, he does not change his self-determined identity from the external environments. While three of the protagonists entangle themselves with each other in different life stage which brings them the confusions and depressions, Sean seems to be the character who knows himself the best throughout the movie.

The movie contains both Chinese and Taiwanese languages, which are the common languages that use in the daily life in Taiwan. Although the movie is explicitly about the love story between three confused people, the movie conveys the progress and scarification of obtaining the “freedom” through the realistic social accidents from which makes it more “authentic” to study Taiwanese youth resistance. In the next section, I am going to introduce how the director creates the story and the characteristics of the protagonists.

2.2 Story Lines and Mise-en-Scene

Girlfriend, Boyfriend is a “frame story” where the main story line is framed by another story line. Thus, there are two main story lines. One is taken place in the recent past of 2012, and the other one is held during the last half of the 20th century (See Figure Two). It is important to understand the storylines and time scheme of the movie in order to look through the progress of the youth resistance in Taiwan from the 80s, to 90s and until first two decades of 21st century. At the beginning of each time scheme, the director adds superimposed titles to identify the time and place of the scene.

Story Lines	Time scheme	Season	Location	Life stage
Line 1	2012	Summer	Taipei	Parenting period
Line 2	1985	Summer	Kaohsiung	High school period/ Under Martial Law
Line 2	1990	Spring	Taipei	University period/ After Martial Law
Line 2	1997	Autum	Taipei	Working adult period
Line1	2012	Summer	Taipei	Parenting period

(Figure 2, the story lines of *Girlfriend and Boyfriend*)

The 1st story line starts in 2012, showing two twin girls who lead a protest with other girls in the morning assembly, demanding the right to wear pants instead of skirts at school. Their father, Liam, who is not officially recognized as their father, is invited by the drillmasters to deal with the rebellious action that twins created. Bordwell & Thompson believe that setting can come to the most prominent position. This opening setting provides the relevant information about the nature of the movie -the students that are not satisfied with the school rules and resist against the authorities in group. Additionally, setting is not only a container for human events but can demoniacally enter the narrative action. *Girlfriend, Boyfriend* begins with scenes of student’s rebellious actions during morning assembly in the

schoolyard without any prior notification. However, if audiences know about the news that happened in Tainan girl's high school in 2010¹¹ when the real rebellious action took place, the audiences might find the familiarities of the sequence and thus embrace certain expectations for the story. As such, the opening scenes of the rebellious action in the schoolyard suggest the sort of axis (resistance) in the movie, but not until the ending will we come to understand the purpose of the rebellious sequence at the beginning. At the end of the movie, the same sequence is displayed again, showing that Liam is the guardian of the naughty twins, and Mabel is implied to be the mother of the two.

The 2nd story line takes place in the year of 1985, 1990 and 1997. The various time schemes show the different life stages of the three protagonists, from high school life period to university life period (after the Martial Law), and finally their adult life period. The Wild Lily student movement plays an important political background in the 2nd story line. Director emphasizes the participations in the real event settings. In addition to apply the past events as one of the background stories, the director even has the film taken in the location that occurred the Wild Lily student movement, where is Chiang-Kai-Shek memorial hall, aiming to resume the history in the most authentic way. It, in turn, serves as a "referential meaning"

¹¹ Almost all the Taiwanese students from elementary school, junior high school to senior high school are required to wear uniform in the school and female students are required to wear skirts or long pants. If the students do not fulfill the school rules, they will receive bad records from ideological officers who are responsible for student's disciplines. In 2010, more than 2000 students from Tainan girl's senior high school arose the protest during morning assembly, aiming to request the right to wear either short pants or long pants by their own choice. This was a striking news in that time, and the director of *Girlfriend, Boyfriend* adapted this event as the opening scene in the movie. In addition, after this movie, there are another two similar anti-uniform protests happening in another two girl's senior high schools, which are Taichung girl's high school in 2015 and Taipei Jingmei high school in 2016.

(Bordwell & Thompson 2013:58) for the film that allows Taiwanese audiences prepare their background knowledge during that period while watching the film.

It is worthwhile to examine the costumes in the protagonists in 2nd storyline. “Costumes enhance characterization” (ibid: 119). The stylists for the film create the autobiography for each character and each of it has their own metaphor for life which reflecting on their appearance and fashion. Aaron is wind, Mabel is cloud, and Liam is tree (He 2012). Aaron tends to have more dramatic change both in his clothing style and hairstyle during 2nd storyline. Even if he has short hair in the high school in 1985, he keeps longer hair when he is in university in 1990 as there is no restriction during that period of time. Besides, he tends to wear brighter than other characters. Mabel’s style is flux too; her style is the reflection of what is regarded as stylish and fashion in that moment. Liam’s fashion is coherent from the student life to adult life. He does not change that much like the other two protagonists.

Concerning of the setting and filmic palette in 2nd storyline, the director distinguishes three life stages with different colors, which show the emotional transformations in the different period. In the year of 1985, the director shows more outdoor space and natural landscape; the use of colors in this stage is brighter and more diverse. However, in the year of 1997 it shows more indoor building and architectures; the color in this stage is darker and monotonous which signified the calmness and dull of adult life.

The 1st story line wraps the 2nd story line. While the 2nd story line is the main part of the film, 1st story line is the memory that Liam recalls and informs the

spectators why he is the guardian of the twins. In the end, neither Aaron nor Mabel shows up at the end of movie, but the presence of twins and Liam construct the image of three people like Aaron and Mabel are also there in which resonates the topic of last section “the endless love triangle, the explorations of self”.

2.3 The Movie and Foucault

In this section, I will analyze the narratives in which show the youth resistance in the movie with Foucault’s notions of power. I include the topics 1) Does school resemble prison? 2) The Panopticon – discipline or not? 3) Where there is power, there is resistance 4) Is freedom arrived? My objective of this section is to explore how power exercise in the movie between the authorities and the youths and how the youths rebel the oppressions. In the end of the movie, I will bring out the recurrent freedom motifs to discuss the question “is freedom arrived?”

2.3.1 Does School Resemble Prison?

In one of Foucault’s books *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, he introduces two concepts of punishment that can be applied today which are monarchical punishment and disciplinary punishment. I argue that both punishments are visible in the movie even in monarchical forms of punishments are less common in modern society. Throughout every person’s life, there are multiple authority figures that are superior to his or her place in the society. In this case, the drillmasters are naturally holding more powers in the school system and are empowered to execute the punishments. They are like guards in the prisons,

which resonates Foucault's question "is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospital, which all resemble prisons" (1977:228).

One example in which the school looks like a prison is a scene when students suddenly start taking off their skirts, throwing them in the air as an act of rebellion in the morning assembly when all the students need to gather in the schoolyard to receive the messages from the teachers on the stage. Morning assembly is the regular meeting in the high school in Taiwan. All the students need to stand still and listen carefully to what teachers say on the stage with the constant supervision from the drillmasters and teachers. Besides, wearing a uniform is mandatory for every student from elementary school to senior high school in Taiwan. The twins are not satisfied with this traditional rule and gather all the students to provoke the right to wear short pants. The twins affirm this act of rebellion with words loudly and collectively with other female students "We want to wear shorts"¹². The drillmasters, who act as the restricting force, frantically attempt to stop the students from removing their skirts and taking pictures with their phone. He shouts "This is wrong, step back, this behavior is unacceptable, everyone calm down, cut it out, do not mess up, sit down, settle down. I said no photos, show a little respect, this will not work".



¹² The dialogue quoted in this case study is based on the English subtitles provided by the link <http://sockshare.net/watch/7vNL9EGR-girlfriend-boyfriend.html>.

The students conduct the combination of one sentence and the rebellious actions to demand the right for wearing short pants. Their sudden action converts the morning assembly into the carnival when people are allowed to behave subversive. The twins and other girls are joyful temporary because their plan seems success; however, the repression from the drillmasters quickly stops this short festival. Even if the quantity of the students is much more than the authorities, the power of the superiors still terminates this riotous action in a short time. This sequence in particular takes the viewers back to the historical incident in 2010 in one of the female high school in Taiwan: more than two thousands of female students protested during the morning assembly, taking of their long pants and saying “we want to wear short pants” to demand the change of the “inappropriate” roles.



Just as a prison guard pays attention to flaws in the daily schedule, the drillmasters pay close attention to the students both as individuals and as a system. When Aaron and Sean, the members of the school magazine, are asking the approval for one of the sections of the school magazine, the drillmaster is not delighted of the content as it is against the will of the “correct” value. She says “An acrostic poem, very clever! Did you think I would not notice if you hid the message in the first character of each line? Read it!”. While the drillmaster is sitting on the chair with the wooden stick on her hand, Aaron and Sean are standing still in front

of the drillmaster trying not to look at the eyes of drillmaster. The drillmaster asks Aaron to read even if she can literally understand that herself. She does that because she wants to let Aaron know what he has done is wrong. Thus, he answers reluctantly "I am not your pet dog". Hearing these ridiculous words, she tears apart the draft and throwing in the face of Aaron and shouts hysterically "I am telling you I am in charge at this school. What I say goes".

It is the drillmaster that asks Aaron to read something that she already knew. However, she is even angrier when he reads it. In this sense, Aaron is constructed as a sinner who needs to be punished which shows he has no overall processes but is caught in a one-way conversation. As such, it is evident that authorities, such as drillmasters and teachers, often give command language, while students might only allow standing still or answering what is being asked. Extra opinion is not permitted in most of the circumstances. Students are unable to act except with the permission of the authorities.

From the gesture perspective, it also manifests the power structure between the two opposite parties. The drillmaster is allowed to sit comfortably with a threaten weapon "woody stick" on her hand which empowers her superiors status to relax on the chair and gives any speech, which she only gives to the people who is inferior to her. From the social-cultural perspective, standing still is considered one of the frequent punishments that school gives to the students and is a habitual gesture when students talk to the authorities in Taiwan. In a lot of representations of a power structure, however, the weaker people tend to be presented below the eye level of superior that makes weaker people look smaller. In this case, therefore,

the stronger people can look down on the vulnerable people. That case cannot apply in this situation because sitting conformably on the chair is for whom has more power, and standing still is considered as the labor work that belongs to weaker people even it holds greater level of the vision.

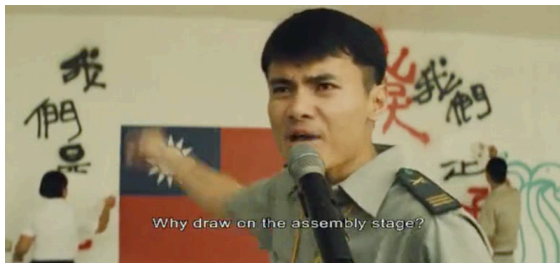


The other sequence shows how the punishment is enacted by the drillmaster. When assembly stage and other classrooms are being graffitied secretly by Aaron and other students, all the students are standing still in front of assembly stage, listening to the lecture that given by the fierce drillmaster. While all the people are silent in front of assembly stage, he roars radically

“Whose fault is it that you are all here? Not your ideological officer, not your teachers. It is your own fault! No respect! Vandals! Student, what is your duty? It is to study! Without education, what would you be? You would be scum! On the assembly stage, have you no sense of patriotism, no shame? How can you call yourself a student with no shame?”.

The drillmaster rebukes all the students with humiliating languages, which attempts to degrade their self-esteem. Some students are being punished by the mistakes that aren't done by them. They are asked to repeat the actions of sit down and stand up collectively by drillmaster. Some students even need to stand in front

of the stage where is highly visible for everyone to look at. It likes the public execution of Robert-Francois Damiens in 1857 after the attempted murder of Louis XV; the citizens gathered in the center of town for executions surveillance. While some people believe that public execution may lead to riot due to its inhuman action, I argue that it might make people feel superior than the criminal from which boost their egos and at the same time reinforced their disciplines through constant surveillances to others. In this sense, the normalizing gaze of surveillance is one of the ways for school to discipline and control students.



2.3.2 The Panopticon – Discipline or Not?

Foucault uses “Panopticon” to cite the techniques/regulatory modes of power/knowledge. Panopticon is an architectural design that put forth by Jeremy Bentham for prisons, insane asylums, schools, hospitals, and factories. Foucault claims that the design of Panopticon offers a powerful and sophisticated internalized force, which is achieved through the constant observation of prisoners, who are separated from the other, hindering interaction, and communication. This modern structure allows guards to continually see each cell from their vantage point in a central tower that situated in the high position, however, unseen by the prisoners. Thus, constant observation serves as a control mechanism from which internalized a constant surveillance consciousness.

Applying Bentham's Panopticon, Foucault elaborates on disciplinary theories stating, "a schema of exceptional discipline to one of the generalized surveillance, rests on a historical transformation: the gradual extension of the mechanism of discipline throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their spread throughout the whole social body, the formation of what might be called in general: the disciplinary society" (1977:473). In short, the metaphor of Panopticon is still useful even if in the twenty-first century.

Foucault adopts the Panopticon as a metaphor to explore the relationship between 1) the system of social control and people in a disciplinary situation and, 2) the power and knowledge. He believes that power and knowledge come from observing other people, which in turn internalized the knowledge and transferred into disciplinary rules. These rules determine "the gestures, behaviors, and circumstances that accompany speakers as they talk; these rituals reflect the meaning of the discourse" (Foss et al., 1985:219).

When protagonists are still students in the school, they behave like there is always someone observes them. Even if they want to do something they know are not allowed in the school, they still attempt to do it but consciously know what they do are unpleasant to the rulers. For example, when the group of them are smoking in the classroom where does not have drillmaster's existence, they try to hide behind some objects to avoid being caught. When Mabel suddenly shows up to scare them, they get panic because they thought Mabel was the drillmaster. As such, it indicates that people fear the panoptic gaze because they allow it to influence their behavior.

Another example is that when Mabel and Liam are selling prohibited books privately with regular books presented in the shelf in the night market, it also reveals the fear of not achieving discipline. When customer asks personally for the prohibited books, Mabel cannot trust at the beginning but hesitate if he is a real customer or a plainclothes police. It is until Mabel re-confirmed his intention; she sells the prohibited book to him.



Foucault asserts that the more visibility an authority figure has over the individual, the more likely it is that the person will be influenced by the authority over time. The drillmasters are one of the most visible figures in high school in Taiwan, as well as the statues and pictures of Chiang Kai-Shek. He is the intangible authority figure but people can feel everywhere in the movie. It, in turn, leads to the situation that “the effectiveness of power increase as its visibility decreases” (Foss et al. 1985:225).



It explains that they are the result of being surveillance, which they accept the regulations and docility at the first place stemming from the threat of discipline but

at the same time attempt to balance between with the rules and their desire privately. As such, the power is apparently operated within them, but the resistance is also slowly developed.

2.3.3 Where There is Power, There is Resistance

Foucault (1980) explains that power is ubiquitous, and its working complex. For him, “power lies not in political leadership, but in the productive forces of everyday life” (Tyana 2016:184). He suggests that human beings are a part of larger systems playing both control and obedience, which can be seen in every sphere of everyone’s life. It is evident that the drillmasters exist to avoid mayhem in the school. However, there is a fine line between coercion and obedience. It is encouraged to have order in the classroom and in the school so that productivity is constant. Thus, in a view to understand the need to satisfy the demands of authorities, one must go deeper into the mind of the obedient. It is understandable that every person is subjected to the guidelines that created by authority figures. Foucault says “do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order”(1972:17). Hence, it explains that it is human nature that attempts to strive for whatever other people desires. The motivation to be obedient push each individual in society place other people’s desire as priorities. As a result, there is a conflict between how one is told to act, dress, behave, etc., and one’s personal desires for how to live their life. There is hardly an agreeable point between personal desires and those of authority, which in turn lead to resistance.

In the movie, uniform, as a symbol of unity, serves as an example to explain the conflict between personal desires and the requirements of authorities. One of the major costumes in the movie is uniform, especially during the school life. The uniforms represent the power that authority aims to unify the ideologies on students. Foucault (1982) believes that uniform is a “dividing practice” that empowers certain subjectivities and excludes others, blurring individual bodies to enforce discipline. Thus, Tynan (2016: 193) claims that “uniforms are as much about promoting correct appearance as they are about locating deviation and fault.” The subjectification takes place through the body of the students in Taiwan, and they become an obvious subject that need to behave devoted who study hard in the library and do not access the places such as clubs or pool rooms. However, Dussell (2004:86) argues that uniforms are one of the effective apparatus of the body that combine “aesthetic, scientific, political and moral discourses”, but she concludes that uniform embody the implication of power as well as resistance. In other words, it means that “systems are created to govern bodies does not mean that they always succeed” (Tynan 2016:193).

In the movie of *Girlfriend, Boyfriend*, except the love story and friendship, challenging the dominant order is the central theme throughout the entire movie. This sequence below shows the acts of youth’s resistance against authority’s power. At the beginning of the sequence, Liam is invited to the school to deal with the subversive action (protest for wearing pants during morning assembly) created by the twins with the school principal and the drillmasters. While the twins and Liam are in the office of school principle, the director uses the long shot for this sequence

to present the whole situation that is participated by three parties: school authorities, guardian (Liam), and students (twins). All the people are allowed to sit down in spite of the students from which make twins stand out from all the people in the principal's room. It, in turn, shows that the twins are the biggest problem in this case, and all the observant are granted to judge and discuss twin's behaviors. The two opposite parties are created with two contrasting gestures (standing and sitting) and clothes (the uniforms and casual apparels).

The principal, who holds the strongest power among others in the room, initials the conversation and says to Liam "This school is a liberal and democratic place. We respect the opinions of our students. However, we feel that inciting students to take off their skirts at morning assembly was highly inappropriate". School principal is remarking their "inappropriate" behaviors but the twins are not satisfied with what the principle has said. While Liam should continue the conversation, one of the twins replied angrily, "We had no choice. Eighty percent of students want to wear shorts! But you lot say no is no". To confirm this statement, the other twin continues to say, "That's right! You say we can vote on it. But in the end you still won't let us! Why do we even bother voting? Isn't that right? Isn't it? ". At the same time, she is seeking the approval from the students outside the principal room to demand more supports and powers in this circumstance. The students standing out of the principal room are cheerleading for the twins in the room.

The lighting here is bright which revealing the energetic and fresh vibes. It shows the student resistance is the very common situations during school life; resistance

or rebellious actions are regarded one of the experiences in the school life that everyone will experiences both for the students and teachers. Although the students consider the resistance is a big thing for them, the authorities take it as one of the regular events and know the way to solve it. Interestingly, Liam used to be the one who wearing uniform and standing in front of the school authorizes and challenging superior power, however, now he is sitting in the dominant side. It implies that the youth resistance is the temporary incidents. As time goes by, people know how to position themselves in the power system.



Another similar situation also happens to Aaron and Sean in 2nd story line in year 1985, which has shown above in 2.3.1, when they, the members of the school magazine, are asking the approval for one of the section for the school magazine. The drillmaster is not satisfied with the content, tearing apart the draft and throwing in the face of Aaron. She says radically "I am telling you I am in charge at this school. What I say goes!". In the normal situation, students will just accept whatever the drillmasters say and pick up the draft on the floor and leave as soon as possible. However, Aaron doesn't behave in this way. Instead of compromising, he argues in Taiwanese "Yes. Of course! Everything you say is right. Everything we say is horseshit". The drillmaster is gone crazy and starts to find other irregularity

on him. She stands up finally, and points on his head “You have no shame! What is this haircut, a display of rebellion?”. Aaron continues the argument with his loudest voice “Aren’t you treating us just like dogs now? You gave me this “haircut”! It completely conforms to your standards”. Both of them eventually start the physical conflicts when the verbal arguments cannot conquer each other.



Foucault sees “discourse as a site of power but also resistance” (Tynan 2016:196). For instance, in that time before the lifted of the Martial Law, Mandarin is the official language in the public place. Taiwanese which considered as the dialect was banned to speak; however, people still spoke it when there was no supervision or officers around. Aaron’s argument with the drillmaster in Taiwanese provokes a taboo in that time but his discourse has threats the status of the drillmasters. In this sense, resistance is enabled which breaking down the system of control and the surveillance of the bureaucratic order.

2.3.4 Is Freedom Arrived?

The ultimate goal of the movie is to foreground the freedom that youth seeks for. Freedom in the movie is not born with naturally, but needs to fight for it. However, the movie also shows that not everyone believes the notion of freedom. The scripts from each character in the 2nd story line in year 1990, when the Wild Lily protest is, illustrate the attitudes that different characters possess on the ideal of freedom.

During the Wild Lily student movement protest sequence, Mabel, Liam, Sean, and Aaron are all in the protest. Aaron is one of the voices that giving a speech on the stage while Mabel, Liam, and Sean are the supporters seating on the ground. The purpose of the protest is to request better society, and the students in the movie believe that they are responsible for pushing the government for the better future. One of the protesters shouts on the stage emotionally,

"We protest! We protest! We protest! They are always putting us down. I do not believe. I do not believe. I do not believe. Fellow college students from all over the country, we are gathered here today. Hoping the future of Taiwan. There are peace, freedom, and equality".



The protester on the stage attempts to influence the emotions of the participants with repeated and emotional languages. She first blames the authority that putting them down and then encourages the participant to gather together in the hope of future of Taiwan. However, it sounds ironic for Mabel, and she says sarcastically "If I had known earlier, I would have come with sausages¹³ to sell. These days

¹³ Sausages is a snack that happen to see where there is the special events. People who sell sausages drive the scooter around the cities with the sausages and BBQ equipment behind the scooter. The smell of the BBQ sausage happen very often when there is a big concert, public gathering.

anything with “democracy “on the label goes for twice the price”. Such an assumption would account for Mabel’s idea that democracy is another form of capitalism from which people can take an advantage from advocating democracy. Liam does not agree with her idea, as he thinks the demonstration is a pure action that is real and meaningful. But, when Mabel takes out the surprise, the champion, in the middle of the protest, all of them start to drink the alcohol which they put the “democracy” sticker on the surface of the bottle and play the board game.



Polices and other law enforcements encircle the field which means that the students are allowed the protest, but they can only do in the assigned area. In other words, the protesters protest within the specific area that is controlled by superior powers.



All of the protagonists are partying in the middle of the protest where they regard as democracy and purity. Is that the so-called freedom they are requesting for? It can be argued that the film echoes Hollander and Einwohner’s (2004:537) observation that while “resistance is generally understood to be a political

action, ... resistance can also be identity-based". In other words, what the protagonists are resisted are not (only) political or social conditions but also the their desire identities.

2.4 The Motifs of Freedom

Bordwell & Thompson assert that "a motif is any significant repeated element that contributes to the overall form" (2013:63). Besides, motifs help to make the film cohere (Bordwell & Thompson 2013:407). In *Girlfriend, Boyfriend*, director implants recurrent objects, places, and narratives throughout the films to express the abstract concepts (freedom) with the **concrete motifs**, such as open spaces, and swimming pool, and with the **ideological motifs**, homosexuality, and ambiguity.

Open spaces represent the spirit of resistance and freedom which recur regularly in the film, especially during the school time. There are three sequences demonstrate these motifs. Firstly, in the initial sequence in 1st story line, the twins provoke the protest in the schoolyard where is usually for assembly or PE class. The girls suddenly convert the somber morning assembly into a short festival by throwing the skirts into the air. Secondly, in the time scheme of the year 1985, Aaron, a dreamer, is hoping one day all the students are allowed to dance in the schoolyard in which is not allowed at that time. To make a dream come true, the fellows practice how to dance in the construction site first. Consequently, they make it through team works with Mabel, Liam, and other schoolmates in the schoolyard when the drillmaster is on site. Thirdly, in the year of 1990, the year

after the termination of Martial Law, the protesters gather in the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall for democratic reform. Thousands of students sit in in the square to demand the reform. Nevertheless, open spaces do not show up in 1997 when the three protagonists enter the adult life in which represent less resistance at that time.

The open spaces in the school are regarded as the communicative platform between authorities and students in Taiwan. The unique feature of the schoolyard is that there is a little stage beside the yard. It presents how the messages are circulated from the stage: from top to down and irrevocable; the communication is one way only and is non-negotiable. While one of the functions of schoolyard often uses as the place for distributing the top-down instructions from the school authority, it is also the place for expressing the bottom-up voices from students when the collective consciousness reaches the certain level.

One of the examples for elaborating the open spaces as the communicative platforms between authorities and students is Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, as known as freedom square, and it is one of the representations of “pursuing freedom” in Taiwan. It was originally established to commemorate Chiang Kai-Shek after his decease. The Wild Lily student movement was held here where gathered more than thousands of students sit-in for four days for democracy in 1990. The pleas succeeded in the end, which made Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, in turn, became the symbol of freedom consequently. Like the display of the schoolyard and stage that are designed for the authorities, Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall also has the stage-like platform. During the Wild Lily student movement, however, it is the

students that stand on the stage to articulate their voices to the peers and to the society. Currently, it organizes various cultural activities and serves as a platform for creative and sophisticated art and cultural events.



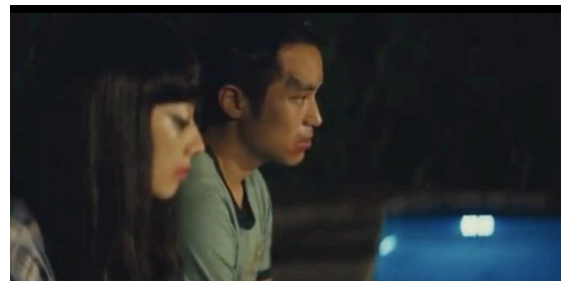
The **Swimming pools** are also the important motifs in the movie. They have appeared three times in 2nd story line from 1985, 1990 and 1997, but each period has different emotion attached to the swimming pool. In the year of 1985, swimming pool/river is the symbol of happiness and young life. At the beginning of the sequence, Liam and Mabel, as one of team members in the school team, are whispering with each other with the smile on the face while practicing swimming. After that, the three of protagonists play in the small natural river where Mabel tries to create an exclusive moment with Liam.



(Swimming pool in 1985)

In the year of 1990, swimming pool represents the confrontation between Liam and Mabel. Liam and Mabel sit beside the swimming pool in the villa Liam and

Aaron live. It is the sequence that Liam writes Aaron's name on the palm of Mabel attempting to tell her that he is still in love with Aaron. Mabel is unwilling to accept this truth but writing her name on Liam's palm.



(Swimming pool in the year of 1990)

The last time that swimming pool appears is in the year 1997, and both Liam and Mabel are in this sequence; however, this time the water is almost empty in the pool. It represents the “turning page” for three of them. She invites Liam to play with her lastly in the pool even if the water is almost gone. They play like there is no tomorrow, but they are aware that they cannot ever return to their young life as shown in the lyrics of the background music.



(Swimming pool in the year of 1997)

Swimming is one of the official sports in Taiwan. As the water-locked place that fills with lakes, rivers, and streams, the number of drowning has been one of the serious issues in Taiwan. To tackle the issue, Taiwanese officials have announced a 12 years national swimming initiative to improve national swimming proficiency in

the small island above 80% of the population between which began in 2010 and will run until 2012 (Wu 2011). The initiative aims to hope that more than 80% of the students will be expected to know how to swim. As such, swimming pool is one of the facilities in the schools and communities due to the educational policy.

In addition to fulfill the educational purpose and self-protection, I argue that swimming is considered one of the ways to stay connected with the world. As an island that surrounding by the ocean, the importance of swimming capability is like English proficiency. In my opinion, swimming pool is a symbol of freedom that one is capable of experiencing the multiple cultures in the world.

Homosexuality, the unique feature in Taiwanese youth cinema after the twenty-first century century, serves as one of the essential motifs in the film. It is worthwhile to understand the development of homosexuality by looking at Taiwanese contemporary history. There are two major developments to explain why Taiwanese can be open-minded to queer expressions even if it was a taboo issue back then. On the one hand, it is because of the historical timing of the lifting of martial law (He, 2007). After the relation of KMT government's control, the movement of gay/lesbian/queer thrived in the 1990s, which has become one of the hottest topics in Taiwan in that time (He, 2007). Some might argued that this phenomenon is the consequence of globalization; it might be true, but in my opinion, it is after 1987, the termination of martial law, the control of printed matters were released which allowed the better circulation of the movement. Chen (2011) asserts, "One cannot fail to notice that a tide of homosexual visibility is

sweeping the island, and since its emergence in the early 1990s it has rapidly become one of the most energetic and influential forces of cultural intervention”.

On the other hand, some scholars believe the prevalence of the homosexual movement is because of its wiliness to receive Western ideas (He, 2007). Taiwan where has been struggled for its international recognition, endeavors to build its “good image” catering for attention from other countries. For doing so, Taiwan is dedicated to developing its infrastructure of ICT and its Academic Network throughout colleges and universities island-wide in 1990’s with the intention of catching up with its Western counterparts (He, 2007). That is one of the reasons that why Taiwan, among other Asian countries, is more liberal about queer expressions than all the others, from which have caught the attention from the West too.

In this account, homosexuality is a metaphor of freedom and liberal in the context of Taiwan due to its history and marginalized global status. It represents the desire of overcoming the governmental systems for equal right and the desire of global attention.

Ambiguity plays a critical role in the film too. The movie remains some ambiguities at the end that cannot be fully comprehensive. For instance, the purposes of blank love letter behind the clock, of the almost dry swimming pool, and of the biological mother of the twins remain unknown to the spectators. First of all, what does that mean of the blank love letter that Mabel gives to Liam? Why does Liam smile at the beginning of the sequence but cry after? Does that mean

Mabel expects Liam to fulfill her “blank” heart and Liam’s dramatic emotion means he is unable to do so?



Secondly, what does that mean for the dry pool where Liam and Mabel lay in the last sequence of the year 1997? The swimming pools are the motifs in the movie; however, before 1997, the water in the swimming pools are full, but not in 1997. What is director trying to express by the dry swimming pool? Does that mean the termination of young life? Or does the dry pool mean Liam can never fulfill Mabel’s expectation on him?



Finally, Is Mabel mother of the twins? If yes, where is she at the end of the sequence? Is she dead from the tumors? What is director’s intention for leaving the uncertain sequences for the spectators to ponder? According to the interview with the director, he wants the open answers and definitions for *Girlfriend, Boyfriend* with the absence of a narrative to provoke different interpretations from the viewers (Yang 2012).



I argue that the intention for the filmmaker to create the ambiguities in the movie is to express that every audience has their own “freedom” to interpret the sequences. In face, this is filmmaker’s intention to invite the viewers to perform the activities, here, building up implicit meanings, which guided by the film’s overall form. While the movie is about the “freedom”, the interpretations of the movie need not be an end in itself. As such, the ambiguities in the movie aim to provide the chances for audiences to enjoy the freedom. Therefore, to answer the question “Is freedom arrived?” while everyone has his/her interpretation, In my opinion, i states that freedom needs the constant and subtle action of resistance. Take Aaron as an example, he is the one demand freedom the most among other protagonists, however, he eventually suffers the control from his father-in-law who is the chief executive, the authority he used to struggle against when he was young. Hence, while the student movement he has involved successes in the end, he restricts his definition of freedom not by the system, but by himself or to be more precise, the social disciplines. In the end, the movie shows that youth resistance is temporary, as they will eventually get back to the social norms that are potentially impossible to get rid of.

2.5 Conclusion

Girlfriend, Boyfriend (2012) is established through referential meaning: the referential meaning of Wild Lily student movement plays a definite role in the overall setting. Under this historical event, we come to realize the contexts that resulted in youth resistance. From the theories of Foucault, it suggests that power is clearly exercised within the dominant authorities and the youths. The director manifests the resist actions with recurrent motifs and the discourses of the power struggle in the movie to express the purpose of the youth resistance --- freedom.

The movie touches audience's hearts because the plots seem to happen in everyone's school life. The past experiences continue to be remembered by the plots which reinforce the memories, and at the same time legitimize "youth resistance" in the society. Because of high-pressure education, youth resistance is regarded as a way to emancipate the pressure and in turn to get the freedom. Therefore, the social movement is highly worshipped by the youths in the movie, as youths believe it is holy and pure. However, what the movie wants to depict, I argue, is the powerful social discipline that no one can avoid. In the movie, Aaron is swallowed by the dominant power structure, while the ultimate fate of Mabel remains uncertain. Aaron's case also tells the audiences that the social movement is one of the weapons for him to fulfill his personal desire, not for the whole of society.

Lastly, although the overall power structure cannot be changed, the individual norms and values can in fact be changed, as is evident from Liam's end situation. Homosexual emancipation is an example in this movie to express the successful

power struggles from which shows that freedom is still possible to secure after resistance. In the end of the movie, the director brings out the idea of homosexual child adoption. Adopting children as a homosexual is a controversial topic, which is depicted in this movie as being something which should be accepted on an individual level, despite the opinion of the school as part of a larger dominant cultural ideology.

Chapter Three

Knowledge, Power, and Hope

in *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* (2014)

The name *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* refers both to the movie (2014) and to a western part of Taipei city. The movie is about time travel and follows the story of a young college student traveling back in time to the 1920s when Taiwan was under Japanese colonization. In the movie, the young college boy not only falls in love with a girl in the past but also witnesses Taiwan's significant historical events. Directed by blockbuster director Nelson Yeh, the movie was released as a Chinese New Year celebration film on the 30th of January 2014. The aim of the movie was to invite youths¹⁴ to look back at Taiwan's affluent past and colonial history (Hung 2014). The director wants the audiences to have a positive feeling after watching the movie. Thus, it is a "feel good movie" even if it contains bitter historical events.

The intention of the movie is to depict the flourishing past of Twa-Tiu-Tiann, the city, interweaving history with a love comedy story. In this thesis, however, I will focus on the clashes between two opposite parties. To reveal the underlying ideologies between two opposing powers, the discourse analysis of resistance conducted in this section will concentrate on power struggles between the trusted leader, local Taiwanese youths and Japanese colonial rulers in the 1920s. My main argument in this section is that although youth resistance might be a temporary

¹⁴ Before the movie releasing, the movie crews promoted the movie personally and interacted with students in the high schools (Taipei First Girls High School & Taipei Municipal Jianguo High School and university (National Taiwan University) in Taipei city, aiming to build up the popularity of the movie among youths before releasing.

event in society, like what happened in the last case study *Girlfriend, Boyfriend*, the discourses created by different knowledge generate hope in which youth is encouraged to follow.

Power is not only in the center, but it is everywhere (Foucault 1978). In this case study, I will focus on the Foucault's theory of knowledge as representation. Relying on his theory, the movie shows that the youths are being manipulated in this circumstance because they are being persuaded to resist and act based on Dr. Chiang's beliefs. In the movie, not all the local people want to fight against with the Japanese regime. Some people prefer compromise to resistance. However, because of different power accumulated by the youths and the trusted leader (Dr. Chiang), it transforms society and leads it to a different direction. As such, by following the trusted leader, the youths have got hope that they will create a different future which they believe will only be better than now. The discourses behind the other sides of power represent hope which is seen when people, in this case the youths, follow certain knowledge over another knowledge in the hope of a better future.

In addition, the movie will be examined through the theory of nostalgia, which means the past imagined story is the reflection of current desire. Thus, even if the discourse of resistance occurs in the historical event in the 1920s, it reflects youth ideologies in contemporary Taiwanese society. For instance, in the movie, the propagandist regains the confidence from the experience of the prosperous past of Taiwan and the victorious emotion of negotiating with the Japanese regime. In other words, regaining economic and nationalist powers are ambitions for the current Taiwanese youth generation.

3.1 Revisiting History: Where Will You be Without the History?

The movie starts with a discouraged college student, Jack (starring by Chris Wang), who has just been dumped by his girlfriend and loses his life orientation. At the beginning of the movie, Jack tends to behave isolated in the group that contains his good friends. He often looks upset even if his friends are all very cheerful. One day, on their field trip to the museum in Twa-Tiu-Tiann with Professor P's (starring by Chu Ko Liang) guidance, they come across a painting "*Festival on South Street*"¹⁵ that represented the busy landscape of Dihua Street¹⁶ in the 1920s on display.

Unlike other naughty friends who do not pay attention to the exhibition, Jack shows his ambitious about the future to the professor. Encouraged by the Professor P, a historian professor, Jack takes photography of that painting by a vintage camera randomly. Suddenly, everything in the painting comes to alive, and Jack finds himself transported back to the 1920s Twa-Tiu-Tiann where was a major trading hub for tea, textiles, herbal medicines and other commodities in that time.

Interestingly, all his good friends also travel back to the past unconsciously; only he is aware that he is from the present. At the same time, he also meets the other group of friends in the 1920s. Therefore, both his present friends and past friends

¹⁵ *Festival on South Street* (1930) is the painting created by Kuo Hsueh-Hu (1908-2012), a pioneer of modern art in Taiwan who was born in Twa-Tiu-Tiann. It is the painting (188 * 94.5cm) with dramatic and exaggerate expression that shows the busy landscape in front of Xia-Hai city God temple on South Street, where is Dihua street belong to. From the painting, it can be obviously observed the prosperous and dynamic of the city life in Taipei in 1930. Interestingly, the store sign of Sony is also included in the painting from which it shows the visibility of Japanese commodities in that time too. The set up of the movie is also referred to this painting too. (Taipei Fine Arts Museum 2014, March 11).

<http://www.tfam.museum/collection/CollectionDetail.aspx?CID=3175&ddlLang=zh-tw>

¹⁶ Dihua street, established in the beginning of 1850s, has been a important center for commerce such as Chinese medicinal herbs, tea, textile, incense materials ...etc.. Although the street remain calm during most of times of the year in the contemporary Taipei city, Dihua street bustles with people buying new year necessities during the two weeks before Chinese new year. Besides, the street now is flock with cultural festival regularly these days. It is also one of the important tourist destinations in Taipei city.

are blended to experience the fortunate of Twa-Tiu- Tiann and the conflict with Japanese rulers in the 1920s.

While the story is moving with love stories, there is one protagonist that is regarded as a significant representation in the film whose presence pushes the story to the climax. Chiang Wei-Shui (1891-1931) (starring by Lee, li-Jen), a folk hero, as known as the founding father of Taiwan in the history, is a leader of the democratic campaign in 1920's Taiwan. In the movie, he promotes the justice and equality that local people deserve. He also addresses the negative influences of opium to ignorant Taiwanese in that time. However, Chiang's democratic campaign does not success at the beginning but is locked in the water dungeon instead.

Because this accident is broadcasting widely by Jack and other youths, more people want to fight against with Japanese colonial rulers and become involved in Chiang's effort to petition the colonial government in front of the Japanese Crown Prince Hirohito, who visited Taiwan in 1923 in the history. Those sequences enable Jack to fall in love with Rose and also to experience the greatest resistance with Japanese colonial power. He finally finds the girl he likes and regains his confidences from the event from which make him want to stay in the past and never goes back to the present. However, it is also because of this historical experience, he understands he has the power to create history for future from which he decides to come back to the present and regains hope and life mission for the future.

Twa-Tiu-Tiann is a "frame story" where the main storyline is framed by another story line. There are two main story lines, one taking place in the recent past of

2014, and the other one taking place during the 1920s. The emotions of the movie are based on the main actor Jack. Initially, he is discouraged about his future at the beginning of the sequence in 2014 (1st story line), but he starts to develop his confidence when he is in the 1920s (2nd storyline). Eventually he regains his confidence and future orientation when he travels back to 2014 (1st storyline).

As such, 2nd storyline (the past) serves as the “nutrition” for Jack to develop his confidences that he needs in 1st storyline (the present). The embedded story (2nd story line) is the historical event that Jack experiences as a journey, an adventure in which he finds different ways to see the environments and himself. In other words, the embedded story within the frame story (1st storyline) allow Jack to trace back to his root and, in turn, makes him realize his life orientation for the future. It resonates the words that said by Professor P in the movie, “Where will you be without the history?”

3.2 The Representations of Power Struggles

Raymond William’s (1983) definition of culture is roughly a particular way of life and all the forms of meaning-making which circulate within society. This includes all the discourses, which are the result of the ideologies. The discourses influence our “particular way of life”, or in other words, how we act in our daily lives. It consequently, is also how identity is frequently defined: how our character, personal experiences, social climate/class, and cultural background influence our behavior. These things in turn influence the discourses of a particular place or instance: how we act in a given situation. In short, the discourses reveal the

underlying ideologies that one sometimes holds consciously or mainly unconsciously. Therefore, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the moment of resistance when there is a clash between two or more discourses, where one individual or one group rejects the discourses, and which are being enforced by an apparatus. By contrasting between the discourses, it becomes possible to analyze opposing norms, values and how these result in different forms of behavior with contrast with one another. People resist against a certain power structure, because they reject the norms and values of a particular discourse. Hence, identity (a way of life) will reveal from the action of resistance and it becomes possible to trace the discourses back to the particular ideologies, which, in turn, understand why people act the way they act.

The characters in the movie are divided into two categories (See Figure Three). The first category is comprised of the characters that hold the local ideologies and fight against the colonizers. The second category is the characters that represent the Japanese colonial rulers.

Local ideologies		Clash	Japanese colonial ideologies	
Leading voices	Dr. Jiang		visible rulers	Japanese law enforcement
Grassroot Followers	Jack		invisible rulers	Broadcasting
	Lin, Wen-Xiou			
	Youth groups			

(Figure 3 *the layout of two opposite powers*)

On the one hand, as can be seen from figure Three, Dr. Chiang is the leading representative for the local ideologies. Dr. Chiang, as the real historical figure in the history and in the movie, expresses the uncompromised ambition to strive for the freedom and equality for local Taiwanese. In the movie, Dr. Chiang is considered as a hero of justice. He often shows up in the extreme situations, either on the stage

that being admired by the youths, or imprisoned by the Japanese. Because of the recognitions of scarifications that Dr. Chiang have been through, the youths convey their ambitious through the sympathy to Dr. Chiang from which in turn reinforce their determinations to resist Japanese. Even if he only shows up in the middle of the movie, Dr. Chiang's presence unites the youths and gives them the sense of hope in the movie.



Except for the leading voice, there are the grassroots members who follow Dr. Chiang. The grassroots members are consisted of Jack, Lin, Wen-Xiou (the son of the tailor-made store and teashop owner) and the other youths. I define them as the grassroots followers because they are the crucial foundation and energy to support the resistant events. The grassroots followers often represent in the group with both genders; every one of them has different ways to be fractious in front of Japanese. For instance, while Lin-Wen-Xiou and other male youths prefer to show the direct expressions when facing challenging and unequal treatments, Rose and other female youths have softer inclination to distract the unavoidable power forces from Japanese. Besides, even if Jack is one of the leading actors in the movie, his role is to participate and experience the historical events with other “grassroots followers”.

On the other hand, the opposite side of the local ideology is Japanese colonial

ideologies that are formed by the Japanese law enforcement (visible rulers) and the sound-only broadcasting, which is invisible rulers but continually delivers the voice messages to brainwashing the colonized (invisible rulers). The Japanese law enforcements, as known as patrol officers, serves as the colonizers who directly involve with the colonized's everyday life and maintains the social order aligning with the Japanese law.

Mr. Kuroaki is the chief representative of the Japanese law enforcement. He interacts with local people directly and never shows up alone thanks to his fellows who always following behind him during the patrol. Besides, the Japanese rulers wear the uniforms and have guns with them. When they show up, they tend to be framed in the center of the shot. Local people are around the frame with some distance away from the Japanese. The arrangement shows that the powers of Japanese rulers are stronger than other local people whom need to give some space to the powerful people. However, when there are conflicts between the colonizers and the colonized, the distance between the local and the Japanese rulers become smaller from which shows that the power can no longer be exercised from the rulers.



In addition to the law protectors, the broadcasting of Japanese ideology occurs regularly in the movie too. For example, before the arrival of Japanese Prince

Crown, the messages, announcing from the broadcasting continuously, repeat the mandatory rules to the colonized before the arrival of Prince: “Due to the impending royal visit, use of language is restricted to Japanese only. To avoid unnecessary disruption, no working class is allowed in the presence of his majesty. No one is allowed outdoors without permission” or “Let’s prepare for the arrival of Crown Prince Hirohito. Every household hangs out your Japanese flag. Set off fireworks to celebrate. Long life the Empire of Japan”.

The invisible ruler acts as the apparatus to impose and reinforce foreign ideologies to persuade the colonized to familiarize the rules unconsciously. As a result, the ultimate goal for both visible rulers and invisible rulers is to protect and uphold the Japanese Prince Crown who is the symbol of Japan’s victory. In the following section, I am going to examine the discourses between Taiwanese youth and Japanese colonial rulers, and to analyze the ideologies and identities behind Taiwanese youth in the 1920s when is the reflection of the present desire. I divide the section into four parts which are 1) the other local voices 2) the trusted leader 3) the Japanese colonial rulers 4) the youths to reveal youth’s ideologies and identities through different contexts. In the end of this section, I will end up with the theory of future driven nostalgia which explain the hope that the movie created.

3.2.1 The Other Local Voices

Obedience and surrender were secularized in Taiwan in the 1920s when was under Japanese colonization. This manifest was the loss of humanist values in the society. Local people under colonized rules no longer act or speak the way they used to do.

The Colonized was reduced into those little pieces on a board game. The subjection of the individual through colonization became the subtle expressions of how dominant techniques (the colonizer) came into play in order to conquer the colonized. The colonized in turn surrendered part of their freedoms by succumbing to the colonial rhetoric. This indicates that the colonized has compromised their values to live as the second-class people in their own land. In these two instances, the power comes into full play, influencing and determining for local people in the everyday life of how things are supposed to fall into some form of order.

It is beneficial to examine the dialogues between the youths and the other local mainstream voices to witness how power comes into play to some of the colonized. Noticeably, not all the colonized want to resist the colonizer and Mr. Lin is a one of them who prefers surrender under the Japanese colonization. When Mr. Lin, the owner of the tailor-made and tea store, finds out his son, Lin, Wen-Xiou is aligned with Dr. Chiang to against Japanese authority, he does not like it. He asserts, "How many times have I told you not to get involved with politics?"¹⁷ Obviously, that is not the first argument Mr. Lin has with his son about this situation.

Lin, Wen-Xiou replies "I know. It will spoil it for you with the Japanese". It indicates that the reason why Mr. Lin refuses to repel the foreign power is because he might have the connections with Japanese which benefit him in some ways. However, Mr. Lin immediately argues back

¹⁷ The dialogue quoted in this case study is based on the English subtitles provided by the link <http://sockshare.net/watch/qvo3Nkvl-twa-tiu-tiann.html>.

“What are you talking about? If it weren’t for the Japanese, how would we ever have done so well, selling our teas all over the world? And become the top tea trader in Twa-Tiu-Tiann. Now there’s the Japanese investment in our fabric business. It is the Japanese who show us how big the world is”.

It appears that Mr. Lin believes the Japanese expands their worldview and improve their family business both in the tea trading and the tailor-made business. Because of that, he prefers to stay in low profile and not to against with the Japanese rulers. He doesn’t find the need to struggle against the Japanese regime as the Japanese regime brings he and his family to see another level of the world, which might not be possible if the Japanese did not colonize Taiwan. However, his son points out that “They also make us realize how small we are”. In this circumstance, it shows that the local Taiwanese in the movie holds the different opinions toward Japanese and the differences are based on the values they hold onto their lives. While Mr. Lin believes the economic factor is more important than claiming the owner of the land, Lin-Wen-Xiou thinks it is more important to be treated equally and respectfully.



In this sense, the ideologies of Mr. Lin represent the compromise with the foreign

regime, because he transforms the loss of homeland into the acceptance of financial compensation. Lee (2010) claims that Japan as the first colony of a non-Western modern power, Taiwanese economic, agricultural, and industrial activities in that time, serves as the supplements for Japan's industrialization and war preparedness; in turn, modernized Taiwan in terms of urban development, electrification, railroading, education, census records, administrative and legal system, governmental structure, and other type of infrastructure. As such, due to those modernized constructions that still be used currently, Taiwanese people are ambivalent about Japan, Japanese people and culture and also the colonized history. Like Mr. Lin, he believes that Japanese in somehow do help their family in the economic way of which, in turn, allows the exercise of power.

3.2.2 The Trusted Leader

Michel Foucault believes in the freedom of people. He realizes that every individual reacts to situations differently. Mr. Lin tends to accommodate himself under the Japanese colonization, but his son and other youths incline to follow the local trusted leader who is not agree with the Japanese colonial rulers. In the movie, the trusted leader is a critical source to understand how youths develop their ideologies. Dr. Chiang is popular among youths and the youths trust his opinions and ideas. The youths acquire their knowledge and establish their identities from the iconic figure, Dr. Chiang.

Power is everywhere, so as knowledge. Knowledge influences what most people do or how people act. Foucault says that "knowledge linked to power, not only

assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true" (1977:27). Knowledge in this regard is all about knowing things or knowing how things are assembled in our head, providing some form of a "total description that draws all phenomena around a single center" (Foucault 1972:10).

It can be observed seemingly through the speeches from the trusted leader. Unlike the response the youths have with the Japanese rulers, the youths are quiet and peaceful during his speech. When Dr. Chiang gives a lecture on the stage, the director first frame Dr. Chiang in the center with the angle from below to give the sense of adornment from the youths; and then shot the youths from the stage or other angles from top, aiming to show the flow of the ideologies that are delivered from Dr. Chiang to the youths.



The youths look at Dr. Chiang with their heads up and with the admire eyes while Dr. Chiang says,

"Today Taiwanese are ill. From what I can see, we're suffering from severe cultural malnutrition. The Japanese tell us that opium is safe, why

encourage Taiwanese to smoke it but forbid their own people? They are practically slaughtering the Taiwanese, treating us as second-class citizens. This is the worst kind of tyranny”.

Unlike Mr. Lin, Dr. Chiang doesn't agree with the contributions from the Japanese in Taiwan. Instead, he believes that the Japanese colonial regime only does something in their favor. However, what worries Dr. Chiang the most is the knowledge local Taiwanese lack of. He combines his worry by degrading the Japanese regime, which persuades people to acquire more knowledge which makes them powerful to turn down the unequal treatment from Japanese rulers. Foucault says that master's discourse is “to talk, to explain, to persuade; he has to give the disciple a universal code for all his life, so that the verbalization takes place on the side of the master and not on the side of the disciple” (1993:205). In this case, Dr. Chiang is the source of knowledge that the youths are willing to receive. It means that the youths are grasping all things on the basis of Chiang's idea that they believe are reality in which reduced them into passive subjects --- or as objects for thought.

Alan Sheridan, in his book *Foucault: The Will to Truth* explains that “language is not a being, but a function: a system of verbal signs that represents representation” (1980:54). Dr. Chiang in the movie advocates his burden for Taiwanese local people through language during Japanese colonial period aiming to awake local awareness of being one's own master which means distinguish rights and wrongs in the given situations. However, it takes time for people to acquire the knowledge and on the process of applying the knowledge, it sometimes confuse people.

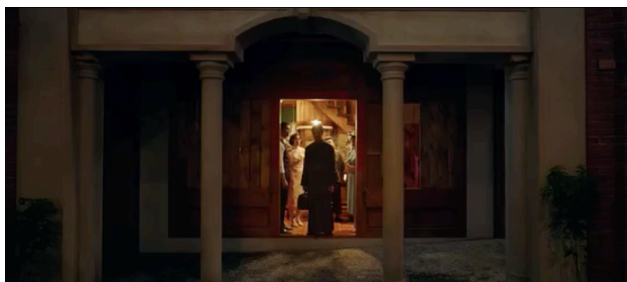
Therefore, the master plays a critical role to guide people to utilize the knowledge through language. For example, when one of the girls suffers from the side effect of opium, some other youths thought she needed to continue to do opium instead of quitting it or she will die from it. The youths are anxious about losing their friend, and one of the youths says emotionally "Is Jane going to die? Jane's on opium. What are we going to do? Please, doctor. Don't ask her to quit now. Don't ask her to quit now. She seems fine now. Doctor, please. She can not die". Dr. Chiang, with his frustration on the face and replies

"Opium addiction can be treated. But if even people like you don't know, what about the public. I can try to save them, one at a time. But time is running out. I can save maybe this area. But I can not save the whole island. The Taiwanese must wake up. Otherwise, The Japanese will never respect us. When will the Taiwanese ever wake up?"

The shot of Dr. Chiang's face becomes dark while he is addressing his worries of Taiwanese people's future but youth's face remains bright. On the one hand, the darkness wants to show the worry of Dr. Chiang. On the other hand, the darkness transforms Dr. Chiang from a person into a spiritual icon whose idea and hope are unconsciously influenced youth.



Additionally, before he walking away from the youths, the director transforms Dr. Chiang from a human being into an iconic statue which foregrounds his importance in the movie. The director presents Dr. Chiang with the backlight that creates “a subtle contour” (Bordwell &Thompson 2013:126), and a long shot that makes the body of Dr. Chiang prominent but the background (the youths) still dominates. This image intends to express he is not only an iconic figure that looks like a statue but also the reflection of the youth’s ideologies. As such, Dr. Chiang is regarded as the “mirror” that reflects the thought of the youths; the thought represents who they are in which they happily adapt themselves into.



The youths are employed into believing in certain things as opposed to other things depending on the source of information. In this case, Dr. Chiang, is the representation of knowledge, and he stands against Japanese forces. However, in the same time frame, other people feel that the Japanese oppressions are not necessarily a bad thing. Thus, Dr. Chiang’s vision created an army of revolutionaries who tried to break with the system. He educates them by offering one sided

knowledge, as opposed to giving the youth the opportunity to look at both perspectives. This shows how the youth might be more gullable, and therefore easier to convince to fight against Japanese oppression, whereas the older generation, being older, is less active and more set in their own ways.

3.2.3 The Japanese Rulers

Sheridan claims that “power is exercised rather than possessed”, and everyone is eligible for certain power (1980:137). In this account, the effective exercise of power is to “alter his position in a complex web of irreparably unpleasant relations and social positioning” (Maboloc 2016:153). Being influenced by the trusted leader in the movie, the youths come to realize their power to be rebellious to response the unequal treatments. The forms of resistances are manifested in few different ways that can be seen from the dialogs they have with Japanese and the film techniques the director portrays.

Regarding the conflict dialogs between the youths and the Japanese, it is worthwhile to take a closer look of one sequence that occurs in the theater. When Mr. Kuroaki walks into the theater with other Japanese officers in the middle of the show without prior notification, and walks up to the stage, he orders in Japanese to all the people in the theater, “Stop clapping. Everyone go home now. The show is over. The Crown Prince will soon be visiting Taiwan. From now on, all non-Japanese plays are banned”. It appears that the language from the Japanese ruler is direct, non-negotiable, and from top to down with threats. He simply gives the order and thought everyone should follow it.

However, Taiwanese youth do not accept those orders in the movie. Draw on the theory of Fairclough, he claims that resistance is mainly come from “subjects whose positioning within other institutions and orders of discourse provides them with the resources to resist” (1995:24). As such, based on the resources provided by Mr. Kuroaki, Lin, Wen-Xiou, son of Mr. Lin who often conducts explicitly confrontational actions, stands up and shouts at Mr. Kuroaki in Japanese “This is outrageous. What kind of rule is that? Are you sure this comes from the top?”.



Encouraged by Lin, Wen-Xiou’s courageous action, few of Taiwanese male youths also stand up directly question the rule and verbally decline to follow it. They argue however, in Taiwanese to the Mr. Kuroaki angrily “What are you talking about? Only Japanese songs? No Taiwanese plays? This is not fair! “You can not do this! You can not just walk in and stop our play like this. No way”. Although the youth resistance here looks strong, certainly, the Japanese rulers do not accept this refusal; he even uses the weapons to force people to surrender. Mr. Kuroaki continues to reaffirm his orders with the gun in hand and shouts, “No Taiwanese plays from now on”. Rose, one of the main actresses in the movie, notices the better solution for this situation, thus she stands up and sings a Taiwanese folk song from which generate strong collective consciousness. Hence, all the youths join and sing the song together which makes Japanese rulers leave the theater in rush. From the

above passages, we witness what means “both exercising power and resisting its effects at one and the same time” (Foucault 1980, in Knights & Vurdubakis 1994:192).



In terms of cinematography, the director often addresses the power structures by allotting the spaces. The Japanese rulers often just walk into the space in the group without invitation or prior notification. When they are in one space, they tend to occupy the stage and the middle of ally with the intention to impose the non-negotiable power on the local youths by weapons. Also, the director often deploys the Japanese rulers often in the center of the frame and local people around the frame to manifest the power structures. In this sense, people who position in the middle hold more power than people around the edge.



However, when the Taiwanese youths are not satisfied with the forced powers, they attempt to decrease the distances with the Japanese rulers who are in the center of the frame. It indicates that the closer the Taiwanese youths are, the less power the Japanese rulers perform.



Moreover, the director also shows the power structure in an equal way. When Dr. Chiang and the youths are ready to start the protest during the arrival of the prince, the two opposite powers are displayed in an equal way. Both are in the center of the road, and this time there is no one in the middle of the frame. This shot presents the equal power distributions between the colonizer and the colonized.



Diversity usage of language is one of the features in the movie. There are three languages spoken in the movies, which including Mandarin, Taiwanese and Japanese. Sometimes, the mixed usage of language will also happen in a single sentence but also in one conversation. Every character has its preference for a specific language. For instance, Mr. Kuroaki only speaks Japanese while Lin, Wen-Xiou speaks both Taiwanese and Japanese. Jack speaks Mandarin but he still understands Lin, Wen-Xiou when he speaks Taiwanese. The usage of language for each character shows their identities, and the choice of using which language reflects how they treat other people. Do they speak the language that can be understood by the correspondent? Or do they attempt to challenge the authority so they speak the language that is allowed under that given circumstance? In other

words, the usage of the languages shows the speaker's intentions, either to surrender or to resist.

3.2.4 The Youths and Future Driven Nostalgia

From the above examinations of the discourses in different contexts, we come to realize that the youths in the movie form their identities through following the trusted leaders and resisting the opposite power. After suffering from the unequal treatment, they learn to be dependent on each other to achieve what they have acquired from Dr. Chiang. The director uses Jack and Lin, Wen-Xiou, the leaders among youths, to stand in front of other youths and look at each other, aiming to manifest their agreement for success in the next protest. In the end, all the youths facing each other with their hands gather in the same point, and Lin, Wen-Xiou raises his voice and says, "Whatever happens, we can not afford to fall out anymore. We've got to stick together. We must be on the same side". All other youths are inspired by his words which reveal their collective identities are formed in order to win over the foreign power. The director implements a long shot to make youths more prominent.



It seems to be that Jack is full of confidence now. However, he was not like this when he just arrived the past. For instance, when Rose, his lover in the past, asks

him what future looks like, he answers calmly and sounds disappointed "The future. It is a very different world. You can buy anything anytime you want. Questions? You get your answers instantly. Everything's become so easy. So easy that you forget about dreams, forget about youth". Jack's face looks confused and upset. For Rose, he is from the future, but he seems that he is upset about the condition of the future. He first praise the future with the affirmed words, such as " you can buy anything", or "become so easy". But he ends up with the disappointment claims "forget about dreams, forget about youth". The discourses he structure are around what "I" like and what "I" do not like. The pattern of certainty and uncertainty is shown by his dissatisfaction with his present time (Rose's future); therefore, he is afraid of facing his future too.

However, it is evident to see his change when he travels back to the present with Rose, but does not travel to the past again with Rose. He believes that he belongs to the present and he has the responsibility for his future. He says "To be honest, I like the way I was very much. I was brave and reckless. But that is your golden age. Not mine. So I've decided to stay, and create my own golden age. I want to tell more people about our history". As such, because of time travel experience that triggers his nostalgic emotions, Jack realizes that he is in his golden age.

Therefore, when Jack meets up his friends again, who both show up in the past, and in the present time, they start talking about their ambitions after visiting Twa-Tiu-Tiann museum. Two of them decide to drop out of school and to learn how to grow organic vegetables. Or one of them is going on a working holiday to Australia. The other one wants to have his book published. Jack feels all of his

friends suddenly have hope toward their life, so he says to all of them "you have changed a lot". But all of them tell him "You are the one who has changed". The camera first sees the youths from below during their conversations. The shot underscores the sense of hope created by the light on their face which showing their futures are empowered. Then, they are seen from behind with their eyes set in the remote places and with their hands up, aiming to show their ambitious toward the future from uncertainty to certainty.



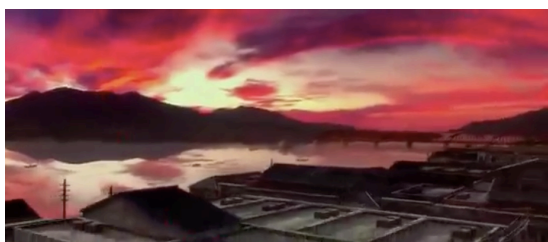
The last sequence in the movie shows that Jack's mindset has dramatically transformed his emotions from anxious to optimistic after he travels back to the present. He realizes that he is in his best time of the life after he has participated the best time of Rose's life in the 1920s. He eventually understands that the "best time" is not what the environment has provided but is when you are capable of establishing yourself. In other words, the future is embedded in the present, in the advancement of now.

In this sense, *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* can be regarded as a nostalgic movie that involves a belief in "the superiority of the past over the present" (Davis 1979:21). However, I argue that *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* is a future driven nostalgic movie, which the current desires of regaining economic and nationalist powers are depicted in the historical event from which can be apprehended by Weeks's idea "leading edges and open possibilities" (2011:189). As we can see from the movie poster (see below), the

painting of the *Festival on South Street* as the background with the major protagonists maintains a very colorful, warm color palette from which the busy and crowd market scene can be viewed. While *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* depicts the events of the Japanese colonial period, which might not be the wonderful memories for most Taiwanese people, it is precisely the period that allows the character, Jack, to resume his confidence. Jack finds that the youths in that period protect their own values and fight against the foreign authorities together no matter the consequences. Attitudes he finds very vital.



In addition, the director often uses wide-angle helicopter shots, which the human figure is lost or tiny, to show the prosperous past. The cinematography often doesn't contribute to the story, but aims to give the viewers an opportunity to look at the props and backgrounds. In this sense, the prosperous scene and nostalgic feeling are visible in the cinematography to celebrate the past as being prosperous.





Higson (2014:124) believes that the modern way of nostalgia is not to respond to an actual historical moment, but to imagine the past from the present. He further claims that the past is “constructed in terms of what the present is felt to lack of” (Higson 2014:124). In this account, although the story of *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* is about the historical event in the 1920s, which seems far away from the present time, it reflects the desire of people in the present who want to overcome the current obstacles in the societies and regain the life control, especially for the youths. Therefore, this movie resonates with the inner voices of young people who want to take life into their own hands to be “somebody”¹⁸ like Jack states in the movie but feel incapable of doing so at the beginning of the movie. In other words, it also reflects what the current society lacks, and the nostalgic emotion of movie provide the positive “imagination” for the viewers to fulfill the emptiness and to regain confidence in themselves.

¹⁸ There is one student movement can represent this phenomenon. Sunflower student movement is the protest in Taiwan from 18 March to 10 April 2014. Organized by a group of several hundred Taiwanese students, civic group members, activists, and other protestors, they were not satisfied of the KMT legislative majority’s ramming through, without an item-by-item review, of the controversial Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement between Taiwan and China, an agreement they feared would cripple the services sector of Taiwan’s economy and lead to significant Chinese control over the Taiwanese media. But most importantly, ever since the KMT government signed the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement with China in 2012, there had been growing anxiety in Taiwan over the stakes of doing more and more business with the colossus across the Taiwan Strait. The sunflower symbolizes the hopes of the protestors for openness, as to sunlight, in contrast to the perceived dark backroom trick of ruling KMT regime. This event represents the anxieties and disappointments of Taiwanese youths toward the government from which in turn push them to stand up to fight for what they think is right. From From: Chasing Sunflowers: Personal Firsthand Observations of the Student Occupation of the Legislative Yuan and Popular Protests in Taiwan, 18 March- 10 April 2014 <<http://jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/574> >(June 29, 17)

3.3 Conclusion:

This case study focuses on Foucault's theory of "knowledge as representation" to examine Taiwanese youth resistance to the Japanese regime. In the movie, it shows Dr. Chiang is an influential actor who forms a different power in *Twa-Tiu-Tiann*. He is the trusted leader of the youths; the youths believe in the knowledge from Dr. Chiang. In the analysis, it is suggested that the thoughts that Dr. Chiang delivers through his language, an instrument, serve as a mirror. This mirror is, at the same time, a reflection of the youth and the youth's beliefs. In other words, although the youths are supposed to stand and represent change, they follow what Dr. Chiang says, and therefore they become another impersonation of Dr. Chiang's thoughts.

The audience often witnesses the historical events through the eyes of Jack who he is both a participant and a creator in these events. From the time travel plot, youth audiences can experience the power struggles between domination and minority with Jack, who is a representative of the current young generation in the movie. The movie involves real events that happened in the past and also the made up stories that are surrounding the real event. The purpose of *Twa-Tiu-Tienn* is not only to see history triumph, but to collect the memories by using a narrative that feeds nostalgia, which in turn enables the youths imagination and the re-invention of hope through time travel.

Chapter Four
Objectification, Docile Bodies and Self-Actualization
in *Touch of the Light* (2012)

Touch of the Light is a story of love, determination, and self-actualization. Inspired by the true story, *Touch of the Light* is related to the life of blind Taiwanese piano prodigy Siang who plays himself in the film (starring by Huang Yu-Siang) and a drinks vendor who dreams of becoming a dancer one day. Their relationship becomes uplifting when they both step into their passion, playing a piano in the competition and going back to dance school. The film was selected as the Taiwanese entry for the Best Foreign Language Oscar at 85th Academy Awards, but it did not make it to the final list (Mudge 2013). However, *Touch of the Light* received the Best Director Award and Outstanding Filmmaker of the Year at the 49th Golden Horse Film Festival and Award¹⁹ in 2012 (Mudge 2013). In the same year, it was also nominated in the New Currents Competition section at the Busan International Film Festival, the biggest film festival in Asia (Ho 2012). *Touch of the Light* is Chang Jung-Chi's²⁰ first feature-length film, after having directed the documentaries *Overture* and *The End of the Tunnel* in 2008 (Ho 2012), which both

¹⁹ Golden Horse Film Festival and Award is a film festival and awards ceremony held annually in Taiwan. Founded in 1962, the ceremony is usually held in November or December in Taipei. The awards are competed not only by the submission from Taiwan, but also another Chinese-language submissions from Hong Kong, People's Republic of China and elsewhere. It is considered one of the four major and prestigious Chinese-language film awards, along with Hong Kong Film Award, Golden Rooster Awards, and Hundred Flower Awards,

²⁰ Director Chang and main actor Siang were senior and junior relationship when they both studied in Taiwan University of Arts. Chang indicates that Siang's daily life is his inspiration for this movie. Director Chang points out that what seems to be easy and common for ordinary people may feel completely the opposite for blind people. However, when Siang is playing the piano, he looks completely different from his normal life (Ho 2012).

dealt with Huang Yu-Siang's life. Thanks to the encouragement and inspiration from other senior directors, such as Wong Kar-Wai, director Chang continues to work on the story and finally makes the productions and filming of *Touch of the Light*.

In this case study, I will apply Foucault's theory of objectification and docile bodies to examine how cultural and social expectations, or ideological violence, shape the behaviors of Taiwanese youths, and most importantly to explore how the youths negotiate between the social expectations and their inner desires. By experiencing life through the "eyes" of Siang, it appears that the actor Siang is a suitable case for this study, because the story of Siang reflects what normal or what not normal is from which in turn reveals how power exercises through our bodies and change the ways people behave in the movie. In this sense, the viewer becomes aware of the way society is organized and how it constructs subjects.

My objective of this case study is to explore how power produces docile bodies. My main argument is while our body is kept docile by the power from authorities in which conditioned us in a certain way to be a manageable individual, however, this case study suggests that the body can be a vehicle of resistance as well. In other words, our bodies can be molded both by the ideological violence and our desires, and both these two forces co-existed.

4.1 Before Touching the Light

Unprepared born as a blind, Siang is a curious and precocious child who comes from the rural in the middle of Taiwan, Taichung. With the love of his mother and

family who are florists, he grows up in the environment that allows him to discover his own interest and talent --- playing a piano. Touch and sound are everything to him. Before university, he goes to special education school that offers to the students like him who has the “abnormal” (visually impaired) feature in the body. To “normalize” his “abnormal” with the use of his outstanding talent, his mother sends her to the general university in Taipei, the capital city, where he has to face the “real world” and compete on the same playing field with sighted students. Jie (starring by Sandrine Pinna) whose voices have been around Siang several times before they meet, is a beautiful girl but frustrated of everything who wants to be a dancer but struggles with the harsh realities of her family’s economic status. Jie is forced to drop out of dance school and work full time at drinks vendor²¹ to support her family.

The two parallel lives consequently come across together when Jie assists Siang finding the way to special care school where he teaches other blind children music. After several events, Jie is inspired by his optimism and inner peace, which ignites her determinations to hold on to her dream to be a dancer. Siang in turn also gains the strengths from Jie and his friends at school to challenge his negative memory from the past.

Touch of the Light is a film of youth resistance. However, unlike the representations of youth resistance in the last two case studies which are more

²¹ There are many drinks vendors that customized the drinks for each customer and freshly prepared as ordered in Taiwan. The shops are easy to find, and the price is fair. Majority of the drinks vendors are belonged to one of the tea franchises. Typical drinks vendor sell cold teas and bubble teas in Taiwan. Tea drinking is one of the cultures in Taiwan. And Bubble tea, as known as pearl milk tea or boba milk tea, originated in the 1980s in Taiwan. It was created as a beverage that mixes juice or milk with tea, adding texture like bubbles made from tapioca starch or fruit jelly. Some of the drinks vendors also deliver the drinks to doors if they order the enough amounts.

obvious and radical, *Touch of the Light* depicts youth resistance in more subtle way. The reason why it is subtler is because the youths in the movie do not evidently struggle against with the superior power. To be more precise, Siang's superior power is social expectations from different groups of people which means he is expected to behave like the blind person or sometimes the sighted person. For Jie, her superior power is her mother who is one of reasons why she gives up dance. However, it is also because both protagonist resist the power in a gentle way, they have more energy to transform the resistance into self-actualization.

4.2 Mise-en-Scene

Before going into a Foucauldian analysis, I would like to introduce the mise-en-scene that the director deploys in the movie to give a more comprehensive overview of the movie. Filmmakers can use mise-en-scene to achieve realism, giving settings an authentic look or letting actors perform as naturally as possible (Bordwell and Thompson 2013:113). In the following paragraph, I am going to show how the director of the movie employs mise-en-scene economically to advance the narrative and to create a pattern of motifs through the creation of setting, lighting and costumes.

Touch of the Light, as one of the typical Taiwanese youth cinematics, the director selects an existing locale, a university campus, as one of the major settings for the action. The first encounter of Jie and Siang is at the school's opening day in the university when Siang and his mother pass by Jie, while Jie is delivering the flyers with a promotional slogan. At that time, Siang hears Jie's voice. We are left in

suspense about the fate of Siang and Jie.

The settings help divide the film into contrasting sections. While Siang is often at the school, Jie is often at her work. Jie's working place at a drinks vendor is a recurrent setting in the movie where her facial expression is supposed to smile but is grumpy. The setting implies the narrative that she is not happy with working there but she has no other choices. In addition, Jie needs to travel between different settings to deliver the drinks, such as the university and the dance studio. Bags of the drinks, therefore, become the motif for her from which summarizes her role as visitor and wanderer who wants to go back to school but could not. However, after the middle portion of the movie, Jie is dancing in the studio which is also an important setting in the movie, and her facial expression is no longer grumpy but content and joyful.

Lighting is more than just illumination that permits us to see the action in the movie. Lighting in *Touch of the Light* represents the distinction between other characters and Siang. The director often employs the sounds and lights together to show what we take for granted in everyday lives are something different for blind people. For instance, when Siang stays in the dormitory for his first night alone, he goes to turn off the light before going to bed. He constantly turns off and turns on the light because he does not know if the light still on or not. That sequence shows that he is doing something that against his nature; in order to be "normal", he trains himself like everyone else, "sleeping with the light off", although the light is "always off" for him. There are more "dark" and "light" scenes that the director plays in the movie to show the stories between Siang and normal people, which I will examine

further in the following sections.

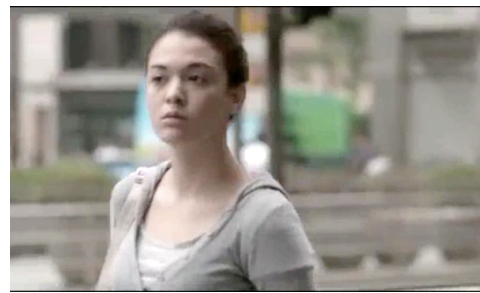
Bordwell and Thompson (2013:119) point out that “costumes can become motifs, enhancing characterization and tracing changes in attitude. Borrowing from the languages of Bordwell and Thompson, I will introduce the strategies of costumes in the movie that the director deploys to 1) enhance the personalities and to 2) trace the change in the attitude of the characteristics. In terms of enhancing the personalities, I would like introduce the contrasting costume between Ching and Siang. Ching, Siang’s roommate, is one of the best friends Siang has at the university. They are not only the roommates, but also the in the same student club called Super Music (SM). Ching is depicted as an out-going chubby boy who is the founder and leader of Super Music. His presence shows a contrasting personality to Siang, and it is evident to notice from their costumes. The costume speaks before doing. Costume provides a reference and it gives context about the other characters and their relationships. As a major sports student, Ching often dresses sporty but with very bright colors or tight short pants and tops. He is confident of his body although he is a chubby boy whose body shape is not widely popular in Taiwan. In the society, he might be regarded as a normal person who just wants to stand out from the crowds with bright clothes whereas Siang is considered as an abnormal person who dresses as normal as possible like the majority of people in the school. Their costumes speak of their relationships with each other.



Meanwhile, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the interactions between Ching and Siang. An individual element almost always has several functions, not just one. In the movie, Ching is not only Siang's friend or roommate, the function of Ching in the movie is to normalize Siang's defeated feature. Ching does not have any special empathy for Siang from the first day they met which plays a big contrast with other classmates in the school. He knows he is blind, but he does not pay more attention to his defeated feature. Instead, he often forgets Siang is a blind which can be seen from the small actions in the movie. For example, he shows him a playboy magazine to ask Siang which girls Siang likes, or he walks very fast while Siang is next to him. Although Siang cannot see, Ching often asks him to describe what kind of girls he likes which is a regular conversations between young boys in the movie.

In terms of tracing the changes in attitude, Jie's costume in the movie provides the best example of this. Jie affords a clear example of how her costume contributes to the film's narrative progression. The opening scenes portray Jie working life, delivering flyers at the school by means of her working uniform in costume and setting. She only wears uniform or casual clothes at the beginning of the movie. However, in the middle portions of the film, as the characters discover her passion, she starts to wear the clothes for dancing, but working uniforms are still her most often shown clothes. The last sections of the movie take place both at her working place and dance studio as she manages to work and pursue her dream at the same time, and thus, Jie is shown with two different types of clothes, not only uniform. The narrative is reinforced by costumes, which enable the viewers to witness the

change in her attitudes as well.



4.3 Objectification and Docile Bodies

In order to understand the process of normalization of Siang's life, it is worthwhile to see how Foucault defines the modes of objectification. Foucault provides three modes of objectification of the subject in which he believes that "human beings are made subjects" (1982:208). One of the objectification of the subject is typically called "dividing practices" (Rabinow 1984:8), which he claims, "the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others" (1982:208). In the process of social objectification and categorization, human beings are given both a social and a personal identity. As such, human beings are manipulated by "dividing practices" that work together with mediation of a science and the practice of exclusion (Rabinow 1984:8). Seemingly, Siang is being divided but not exclusively in the university even if his mother tries to raise him in "normal" way.

How does Siang's mother normalize Siang's "abnormal" feature? On Siang's first school day in the university, Siang's mother is having the conversation with the teacher. The teacher initiates the conversation by asking how she feels when she finds out Siang is blind. Siang's mother attempts to normalize Siang's situation by

first seeing his abnormality like other people: “I was so shocked. Think about it. What did we know about caring for a blind child? It crossed my mind that I should just abandon him at the hospital”.²² She talks about her anxieties and worries like other people have to a blind child initially, because she knew how people would think of his son; therefore, she first addresses her experiences that she had of having a blind child in order to make school teacher know she understands her worries. From there, however, she leads the conversation out of anxiety and toward hope, stating that “Later I felt an idiot. He could walk; he could run. He could hear and he could speak. Why would I give up on him”? Seemingly, she intends to let the teacher know he is like everyone else, and it will be a pity to give up on him.

The teacher seems to be more relaxed than before; thus she asks, “Did Siang ever go to public school”? His mother replies “He went to a public elementary school. But the kids, well, you know what kids are like. A little mischievous. They did not understand. So, I put him in a special school for the blind”. It is evident that Siang’s mother treats Siang like all the other children, but the people around him do not. As Foucault notes in an interview with Pol-Droit “if you are not like everybody else, then you are abnormal, if you are abnormal, then you are sick. These three categories ... are in fact very different but have been reduced to the same thing” (Pol-Droit 1975). From this point of view, the teacher releases her worries and replies honestly, “Actually, his enrolling here puts a lot of pressure on the school. He’s our first blind student. We are worried that he might not fit in here”. To

²² The dialogue quoted in this case study is based on the English subtitles provided by the link <http://sockshare.net/watch/qd7a7zxK-ni-guang-fei-xiang.html> .

further determine Siang's normality, Siang's mother immediately response without hesitation, "He'll fit in. Just give him some time; give him a chance. He'll fit in for sure".

From the above passages, we come to realize that Siang is being objectified by two different parties; one thinks he is more suitable for special care school, while the other thinks he fits "normal" education like everyone else who can walk, run, hear and speak. It is suggested that there are two binary opposed expectations from the outside environments on him, which in turn not only influence the way people treat Siang but also affect Siang's behavior in the given situations.

Siang's mother wants him to be like everyone else. When Siang tries to give her mother massage at the end of first school day, his mother refuses to receive the massage from him. She says "Listen; do not go around giving people massages. Are you listening to me? Those hands are for playing the piano, not for doing massage". The combination of the suggestion and threat voice indicates that she does not want her child to be labeled as "blind masseur"²³, the job that blind people typically have in Asia. In this regard, Siang's mother is divided "blind masseur" into the category that she doesn't want his son to be labeled in this category, but it also appears that she labels "blind masseur" in an abnormal category.

²³ In some Asian countries, for example, in China, Taiwan, having massage is one of the ways to release the tenseness. blind massage therapists are very popular. Since blind massage therapists lack the sense of sight, these masseurs rely on their sense of touch. It is believed that due to their inability to see, a blind massage therapist channels his or her energy toward his other senses. Blind masseurs make use of their feet, knees, arms and most especially the hands. There are several kinds of massages which have different techniques. The massage service can be done at home, in the hospital, clinic or in spas or saunas. Visually-impaired people in some parts of Asia, such as Taiwan, have made massage therapy their source of income.



However, Siang is still being categorized into the position that he needs extra care in the school. For instance, at the beginning of the semester, everyone in the same class is assigned to guide Siang from his dormitory to the classroom on foot by turn while he does not need to do that to other classmates in return, nor do other classmates need this “extra” service.

Although everyone sees him as abnormal, he tries to be normal like everyone else in the school aiming to decrease the inconveniences he causes to others and the empathies he receives from others. The purpose of docile body theory is to mold the difference (flaw) into a controllable part, and as Foucault clarifies, “ordinary people who have knowledge of their circumstances are able to express themselves independently of the universal theorizing intellectual”(1979:126). In this sense, Siang, as an ordinary person who appreciates the general knowledge in the society, is prompted to morph his difference (visually impaired) into a manageable whole. To achieve that, his mother, who also wants him to be independent, is one of the primary helpers to “train” him into “normal”. They practice “the way” to travel between his dormitory and the classroom at night when there is no one in the school at the beginning of the semester. He counts the number of the stairs and the columns to orientate himself in the new environment

from which in turn molding himself into the space he needs to go through every day.

Blending oneself into the space without seeing it resembles ballet dancers who train every day to normalize the movements in the dance studio to become robotic and docile. Foucault claims that people are in the form of docile bodies, “ones that maybe be subjected, used, transformed, and improved. And this docile body can only be achieved through the strict regimen of disciplinary acts” (1979:136). This “regimen” is established by the majority of people and becomes the basis for all judgments of human behaviors. Never thinking of giving up, in order to not bother other classmates, or to be “normal” like all the others, Siang gradually shapes his behaviors until the “norm” is established. Through the continual training, the norm is accepted as a means to regulate himself and keep himself within the “norm”. For instance, how he travels from dormitory to classroom by counting the numbers of the stairs or how he distinguishes the traffic light by hearing the direction of cars. Consequently, Siang subjects his body to fit the standard.

The docile body not only happens in the body of Siang; it also occurs in the body of Jie. In order to share the financial burden with her family, she drops off from the dance school and works in the drinks vendor. Her parents are not able to be financially independent themselves; therefore, Jie needs to earn money not only for herself but also for her family. The director introduces Jie’s mother as the form of outside pressure she must deal with in her life. Jie’s mother is a shopaholic who likes to do home shopping and often complain the insufficient money Jie provides for her. Instead of encouraging Jie to follow her dream, Jie’s mother often prompts

her to take the job that is considered stable and have decent benefits, such as a position in civil service. However, what Jie wants to do the most is to study dancing, which Jie's mother regards as useless because it cannot lead to a stable and good money job. When Jie visits her parents at their home, she is so disappointed and shouts: "Every month, the same annoying conversation. You do not enjoy it either. But my salary's what it is, and the whole thing goes toward paying your credit card bill. Will you stop buying all this trash? "

Here, Jie finally gets a chance to express her stress and dissatisfaction with the situation. At the same time, however, she also feels guilty to talk to her mother in this bad attitude because she is expected to behave and act as a good daughter who does not argue with her mother following the social norms. Therefore, she lowers her voice, puts the money on the table, and gently says, "I am off to work".

Jie is neither satisfied with her mother's lifestyle nor content with her current situation. She is controlled by her mother's expectation or social expectation of being a good daughter who has the responsibilities to share the burdens of the family; therefore, to achieve it, she gives up her dream and restricts herself into a money-earning machine. However, she thinks she doesn't perform well at this part. Most disappointedly, she also isn't able to be a dancer either. In short, she is frustrated from not being able to live up the expectations that her mother has of her, and nor to the dream in her heart.

The two characters, thus, face similar challenges. The motivation of being normal shapes Siang to guide himself even if that is against his nature. The idea of being approved by mother and society pushes Jie toward doing what she doesn't like and

also interrupts her desire to pursue her passion. People are seen as puppets that can be molded and moved around. We are trained within the institution that we belong to at that given moment – a family, a school, a company -, to follow “norms”, and we are punished (social judgment) for the violation of those norms. As a result, obedience becomes a subconscious quality that is implanted among humans.

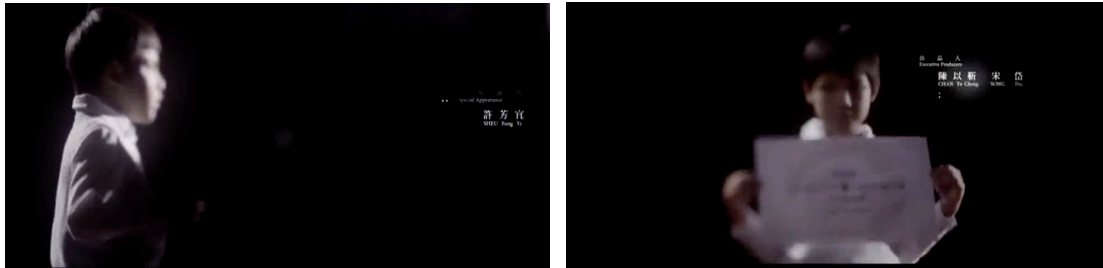
4.4 When Touching the Light

What happen if the social expectation does not match with our personal passion? In the following section, I am going to tell you how the two protagonists break the objectification that they do not want to be associated with, and how they encourage each other to fulfill their self-actualization. We will first go through together the dark period of their lives when they are living under the social expectation that they do not like. After that, we then can witness how they “touch” each other to fulfill the subjectification that they desire, which, in turn, “light” up their lives to embrace self-actualization.

4.4.1 The Darkness and the Blur

The movie begins with the childhood of Siang when he was in the elementary school. He plays the piano with great skill, and is even awarded the prize in the school piano competition. The opening shots are dark and blurry, with piano playing in the background, representing one of Siang’s crucial memories. It seems someone is saying something, but the viewers cannot clearly understand it. These blurred shots raise suspense: what is it we are watching? Suddenly, the viewer

comes to realize Siang is a blind as the camera focuses on his ears and his hands that touch the walls, the stair holders around him. By combining various ever-loader sounds with fast-moving images the viewers get a proverbial “glimpse” of Siang’s sensory world. The vague and contrived nature of these shots, however, also suggest that Siang’s world resists representation and understanding.



The plot jumps ahead many years to begin the main action, with the grown up Siang ready to leave home to go to university. Thanks to his talents, Siang is an outstanding student at university. One of his teachers tries to have him compete in a piano competition. The teacher strongly encourages him to join the competition because she thinks it is an excellent opportunity that will give him a big boost. The teacher says firmly “You need to take every opportunity to let people see you”. However, instead of being excited competition chance, Siang says “I do not care about the competition”. Siang normally is an obedient student who follows whatever the superiors have asked; however, this time he chooses not to follow but challenges, “If I’m not in the competition, will people not be able to see me?” That reply surprises the teacher; nevertheless, we still do not know the reasons why Siang doesn’t like to join the competition.



After the above sequence, the viewer is brought into Siang's childhood again. In this time, the viewer eventually learns why Siang avoids participating in the competition. The shot turns dark again, which resonates with the opening, but this time with a little boy saying behind Siang "It's just because he's blind that he came in first". The voice is so subtle that only Siang can hear that and stays in his mind for a long time until now. Although her mother is next to Siang, she doesn't hear that until Siang tells her after.



Siang starts to believe that he is awarded is not because of his talents and devotion, but is because of the compassionate supports from the judges. Therefore, ever since, he refuses to compete even if that the thing he is most confident about. Subsequently, it also affects his motivation to be independent like other "normal" people, as he doesn't want extra attentions and empathies from other people. He tells to Jie one time, *"I am trying hard not to rely on others all the time. I want to know what I am capable of"*. As such, the dark memories convert him into behaving like sighted people even if it is against his nature.

Meanwhile, Jie has her darkness in life too. When Jie is fighting with her dancer boyfriend who is constantly cheated on her, her boss reminds her that the reason why she adores him is not because of him she likes, but how he dances. Her dream to be a dancer is taken from the family burden; therefore, she projects her dream on her boyfriend who is a professional dancer. Besides, when there is a chance for her to deliver the drinks to the dance studio, where she sees her future dance teacher performs the dance, it triggers her desire to dance again. She stares at the teachers appreciating every movement the teacher makes. The director deploys the natural backlight, which creates a contour and blur on the face of the teacher, to make Jie imagines she is the one who dances.



This serves as a direct link to Foucault's studies which symbolizing the disconnection Jie feels from her actual body. In watching herself from a different perspective, she gains a different point of view and begins to see herself as an individual. This discovery leads to the motivation to uncover who that person could be --- a dancer.

4.4.2 Touch

Two of them eventually "touch" with each other when Siang is losing his direction on the street, and that touch serves as a strong attack that breaks the docile bodies

they used to have. When Siang asks Jie “Is there anything you want to do but can not?” It touches Jie’s inner desire to be a dancer but seems not possible to fulfill it. While Siang has never seen what it looks like to dance, she says, “When I am dancing, my heart beats so quickly. And then, only when I am dancing do I feel that I actually exist”. She says it in a very gentle voice with her eyes stare in the remote distance, seems like it can only happen in her mind but not in the real life. However, Siang answers firmly, and lights her up, “If that’s how you feel, you really should give it a try. If you do not, how will you ever know what you can do?”.

While Siang speaks to her inner heart, Jie’s presence also comforts Siang’s darkness. After Siang is asked to join the piano competition, it makes him remind of his bad memory in the past. He normally walks slowly with the help of the cane, but in this sequence, he walks faster than his normal speed with his hand pumping the locker along with him. Subsequently, the opening sequence re-occurs again which brings the viewers back to his childhood when other children verbally bully him.

Thankfully, the arrival of Jie saves him out of that circle. In that time, Jie is delivering the cold drinks to the school and she comes across Siang in the school. In this sequence, it is Jie face that gets greater emphasis while she is walking toward Siang. The result of such front lighting which eliminates most surface shading and makes Jie’s shadow fall directly behind her, is a fairly flat-looking image. However, Siang is emphasized in another way, through the shading of the light on his face. The contrasting use of different lightings creates the opposite emotions of the two: mourning Siang and comforter Jie. In this sequence, yet, the arrival of the light doesn’t scatter the darkness. Instead, the light joins the darkness which intends to

show Jie's participation of Siang's life. Using lighting to convey emotions make the scene more vivid.

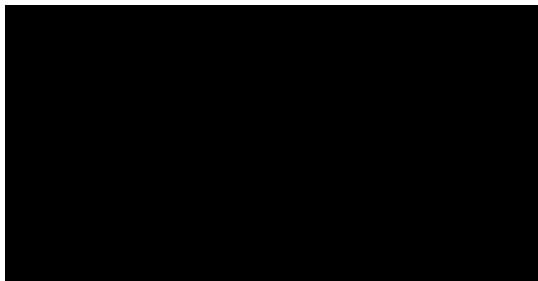


Therefore, in the next sequence, it shows how two of them experience each other's life. Jie brings Siang to an abandon piano room at night on the adventure, where Siang can play piano and Jie can dance. While most of the sequences are shot in the daytime when the daylight is more prominent, this sequence occurs in the nighttime in which intend to manifest how Siang's world "looks" like for the audiences and Jie. At the same time, Siang also realizes how it feels like to dance as Jie teaches him how to do that.



Eventually, two parallel lives have connected together, and the director represents this connection with the plays of lighting. For example, when two of them travel together back to Siang's home in the middle of Taiwan by Train, the director implements tunnel as a symbol of darkness. On the way, two protagonists are seen by a zoom lens that provides "a continuous range of focal lengths"(Bordwell & Thompson 2013:199) and a mobile framing. Even if the

camera stays in one spot, the static objects in the moving train, in which tracks between the darkness (inside the tunnel) and the light (outside the tunnel), represent the interweaving of the two people's lives.



When both of them stroll around the beach, Jie invites Siang to touch her face, as she wants to know how he thinks she looks like. While Siang touch Jie's face, it helps Jie to see herself in another way that she never being told or thought before. That touch gives her other subjectivity that hides in her heart for a long time but is never being discovered. At the same time, it breaks the docile body that created before which leads her to develop another form of the body that is employed by the new subjectivity.



4.4.3 The Lights

As can be seen in the movie, we come to realize that we can either to be fully subservient or fulfill a rebellious nature that everyone embodies. It means that we can either choose to ignore the concept of “docility” or use it as a tactic to discover new ways to preserve individuality from social expectations and pressures. Despite the darkness encounters, both of them acquire strengths from each other to tackle their own problem and pursue their self-selected dreams eventually after two protagonists have interwoven their life together. The light eventually illuminates their life in the latter half of the movie.

Encouraged by her boss and Siang, Jie decides to go on the international dance audition. Before that, she prepares herself in the studio with the teacher. The first thing the teacher says is “Let your body melt away”. It alludes to Foucault’s idea of “lose self” in order to embody the professional dancer. It seems to be the case that to be docile by the dream, we first need to dissolve something we acquired before, aiming to empty the pre-conditioned rules in our body. In this case, draw on the work of Foucault concerning about “subjectification”, individuals lose themselves in regimes of power, but ironically, individuals are established as subjects or other forms of selves from these same regimes too. He asserts that “there are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity and conscience or self-knowledge”(1982:781).

Therefore, it explains that Jie is trying to get rid of (melting) the previous regime (parent’s expectation), and now starts to depend on another regime (dance teacher/ dream). In short, she cannot form her subjective without the power of

regimes. The teacher continues and moves with Jie and says “Perhaps I’ve been flying after others. This time, I will fly my own way for once. Lift up your chin, look into the distance. Look into your dreams”. After cleaning the pre-conditioned rules (parent’s expectation), it is time to focus on another regime (dream). In this shot, Jie is seen from below which intend to manifest her regaining confidences and ambitions. The teacher carries on encouraging her, “Let every cell in your body come alive. Have confidence in your breath. Believe in your body. Believe in yourself”. Consequently, the new mode of power exercise is now alive and it is time to make every cell functions to be a dancer.



After acquiring new subjective, and preparing to fly to the place for the international audition, She leaves the voice message to Siang:

“I close my eyes and experience things as you do. In a world without light, where every step requires great courage. I think we all exist for a reason. It’s because of you that I believe **what I’ve been through doesn’t stop me from moving forward, but helps me become even more determined.** Thank you. You make me see if I’m passionate about something and cannot give it up, **I should work harder at it, and show others that I exist**”.



It is a noteworthy articulation that reveals resistance is not always created by the contradiction between adult and self, but by the conflicts in mind. Although Jie needs to sacrifice her time to support the family but sacrifice isn't always negative. By contrast, the barriers, in fact, help her to be more determined on her dream. Thanks to that determination, she is able to transform the power exercise on her body into the distinct form. This time, she is trained to be a docile body by her own autonomy, which may make her outstand from the crowd.

Meanwhile, Siang eventually conquers his past bad memory and goes for the competition with his club members. As they did not register the competition beforehand, they sneak to the backstage trying to get a chance to perform on the stage with the help from Siang's piano teacher. Four of them successfully play their created song on the stage, which makes them notice by the judges. Dramatically, in the end of the playing, the light suddenly goes off. Everyone stops playing except Siang. It tells judges that he is a blind and it shows that his defeat feature does not influence his talent. This helps us to understand that while Siang doesn't want to be attentive to the public, his talent scatters the darkness and becomes a spotlight which empowers him to work on her own dream, not others.



The movie uses staging in depth to present two narrative events simultaneously, which obliging us to scan back and forth between them. When both of them are performing their desires, the two parallel stories are interweaving together: Siang is playing the piano for the competition in Taiwan and Jie is dancing for the audition aboard. Concurrently, the past highlighting stories from each of them replay again, which repeat the recurrent positive and negative discourses and scenes in conjunction that occur before. It intends to explain how they produce their subjectivities through specific historical discourses. Thanks to such spatial arrangements, we are able to pack together two story events, resulting in a tight narrative construction and in a relatively unrestricted narration. Siang is recalling his childhood, and his first time in the school with her mother who helps him to adapt the new environment:

-“It’s just because he is blind that he came in first”. (the child)

-“I am right behind you. Do not be afraid”. (Mother)

Meanwhile, for Jie, while she is preparing herself for the audition, she keeps her dance teacher's word in her mind and recalls the encouragement from Siang and her boss and her mother's hesitation of her interest.

-“Do not be rush. Listen to your inner voice. Follow the voice. Slowly move forward”. (Dance teacher)

-“What does dance look like?” “I want to know what I can achieve”. (Siang).

-“What is the use of studying dance?” (Mother)

-“Do you want to try out for the audition?” (Boss)

-“Perhaps I've been flying after others. This time, I will fly my own way for once”. (Dance teacher)

Foucault illustrates a subject is the product of powers which in turn individualizes each subject. For him, power is not simply a control or manipulation but is “productive” of the self. Everything for him, as an anti-essentialist, is historically constructed, in accordance with system of knowledge that caters specific power interests (Tynan 2016:186). In this account, to understand a body is to understand its history as the subject is the result of historical and social formations. Moreover, Baker claims it for Foucault, “the body is the site of disciplinary practice that brings subjects into being”(2013:230). Taking this theory into the passages above, it implies that what happens before shapes who they are today. Therefore, those passages are the contributions that bring them to perform self-selected dream today.

The story doesn't end up ideally but inspirationally. In Foucault's early work, he asserts that the self of any form is deprived of the notions of subjectivities and

docile bodies. However, in his later work, he turns to the questions of how subjects are “led to focus attention on themselves, to decipher, recognize and acknowledge themselves as subjects of desire” (1978:5). In this account, take Siang and Jie as the example, the process of self-construction, recognition, and reflection enable them to recognize themselves as the subject for themselves. Although Jie finally goes to the audition, which is a symbol of “a subject of desire”, she doesn’t pass the audition; and she still works at the drinks vendor. However, it doesn’t mean she gives up dancing. Instead, she adds extra disciplines in her bodies, which include her own aspirations ---dancing. She goes back to the dance school and continues to participate auditions. Moreover, she still has a shopaholic mother who makes Jie still need to work hard for the money. Nevertheless, thanks to that, she knows how to manage others and manage herself, and plans the strategies.

4.5 Conclusion

Being far from the sentimental, disability melodrama that its premise suggests, the movie tends to depict its narrative in a more optimistic way which we can see from Siang's quick developed friendships in the school or his ability to adapt well in the campus environments. In this account, the film illuminates his blindness as a simple, unavoidable fact of his life. Thus, this immediately directs the narrative to another direction, which is opposite to the usual kind of struggle against cruel society. Concurrently, it is aligned with the lighthearted taste of Taiwanese youth cinema after the twenty-first century.

The case study articulates much more an externally defined, identity- based resistance, which not all observers may interpret as a form of youth resistance. The struggle between following social expectations and following desire unleashes the concept of seeking personal aspiration. It explains that once people are aware that there are other choices to how they choose to live their lives, an alternate option emerges in spite of previous docility. Take the two protagonists as an example, both of them do not give up their previous trained life style, such as to be "normal" in his daily lives, or still works at the drinks vendor to support her family; but they at the same time, work on the things they like to do which they were scared to go after before.

From this point of view, the movie tells us that as a human being in society, our role demands us to be both "obedient " and "rebellious". In the context of Taiwan, the youths there tend to behave obedient of what older people have asked. It seems that some other people have made a decision that is considered the best for you.

For example, get the stable job with good salary even if that is not fit one's passion. As such, an individual, in this case, a youth, is not capable of doing what other people have decided for he/she; at the same time, he/she is not content of his/her life because he/she is fulfill other people's dream. However, in the discussion between the two characters, *Touch of the Light* provides a positive result for the audiences that are possible to be both "obedient" and "rebellious". It is noticeable that both protagonists try to blend into society; simultaneously, with the help from each other, they are able to present their own unique qualities to be different and desirable. This movie, in turn, provides hope for individuality in which we are docile from personal choices. In other words, the movie gives the good example of how to break the objectifications gently that people around them attempt to impose on them, and the positive consequence of self-actualization.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have used the lens of Foucault's theories of power to analyze how contemporary Taiwanese youth films adopt visual and discursive strategies to represent Taiwanese youth resistance. Upon close examination, three of the movies can be categorized as youth resistance films, although they offer different cinematic strategies adopted by filmmakers to manifest youth resistance in different contexts.

Embedded in the time period of the Wild Lily student movement, *Girlfriend*, *Boyfriend* (2012) associates youth resistance as a form of securing freedom. The movie ends up with the stance that youth resistance may be only temporary and is a form of youths expressing their desire to be part of the regime. *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* (2014) uses a time travel narrative to shed light on a rich past and to gain a sense of triumph that victory over a foreign power that enables the modern protagonist to regain the hope for the future. The youth resistance is triggered when a foreign colonial power imposes unequal treatment on the local Taiwanese people in the movie. The youths require the knowledge from their local trusted leader, Dr. Chiang, who, when given, empowers and equips them to be able to unite together and react against the foreign power. However, concurrently, the movie also implies the chronic insecurities and anxieties of Taiwanese youths toward future. The typical lighthearted Taiwanese youth cinema *Touch of the Light* (2012) has the most subtle youth resistance sequences of the three movies. The two protagonists are struggling with the objectifications by which people around them attempt to shape or categorize them. They resist those categorizations and are trying

throughout the film to find their own subjectification. Thanks to these acts of resistance, the youths in the movies are able to negotiate between social expectations (objectification) and personal aspirations (subjectification) in which in turn makes them walk toward their own individualities.

All three of films under discussion in this thesis demonstrate the youth resistance in both visual and discursive strategies. In terms of visual representation, the acts of resistances in the movie often occur in open spaces, such as schoolyard, which is normally used for morning assembly. Due to the number of the students, their resistance is best held in the open spaces. In addition, the compulsory actions that are imposed on the youths are the also become the objects of resistant that the youths tend to “play” with in order to show objections. For example, when requesting fewer rules on the uniform dress-code. Additionally, the dynamic of a small number of characters, who hold the most powers, and the group of the young people, who struggle against their power is a typical formation of Taiwanese youth in cinema, and is also one of the most vivid visual representations of youth resistance. For example, the drillmasters in the school, and the colonial regime are two major parties that the youths intend to resist. In the movies, there are always a large group of youths who are forced to stop their actions by few superiors despite the large numbers of students. In these situations, although the youths are often depicted in the group of who supposedly should have collective power, they are actually marginal people in the overall power structure of the movies.

In terms of discursive representation of youth resistance, the discourse between the youths and the dominant powers are, on the one hand, represented in a radical

way. The movie will frequently first depict the unequal treatment from the superiors, and then the youths will unite together to fight against this mistreatment. Eventually, they shout with each other to show their dissatisfaction, sometimes combined with physical violence. On the other hand, the youth resistance happens in a passive aggressive way, which the youths attempt to be silent to avoid any communication and confrontation with the superiors in the movie.

In addition, the three films portray both overt and covert resistance. On the one hand, in terms of overt resistance, the directors create the narratives that Taiwanese youths normally have either experienced or are experiencing, to evoke the viewers emotions while watching the movies such as strict school life, ambiguity of national status, and economic pressure. The directors also deploy numerous recurrent visual objects that surround youth life, such as school campuses, swimming pools, uniforms, or drink vendors to visually illustrate the Taiwanese student life. As such, the audiences easily project their self-imagery and associate the movies with their own stories. These affiliations are in turn inscribed into collective sentiments. On the other hand, in terms of covert resistance, *Touch of the Light* embraces subtle and passive endurance while the first two case studies *Girlfriend*, *Boyfriend* and *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* depict youth resistance, directly with representations of verbal and physical violence on-screen.

Simultaneously, the senses of freedom, hope, and self-actualization are foregrounded when efforts are made to react against superior powers. In this sense, by combining similar encounters from the audience's experiences together with the experiences of the protagonists, the films legitimize the youth resistance in the

hope of fully exiting current power structures, through actions like as arguing with the drillmaster, participating in student movements, or fighting against a foreign regime.

However, despite the sympathy for resistance portrayed in these movies, according to Foucault's theories, human beings can never fully exit our current power structures, as power is simply everywhere. Take as examples the theories of Panopticon, knowledge as representation, and the docile body, it can be claimed that we cannot stop the operations of power on/within us. Although power may be unavoidable, my conclusion from these films is that we can take an advantage of power structures to execute our own self-actualization as in the case of *Touch of the Light*; while we are conditioned by ideological violence, we can also be conditioned by personal aspirations.

Broadly speaking, while Foucault believed we will never fully exit from the power structure, he also believes we can acquire some power from resistance. As such, the powers are not only reserved for those dominant in the society but can be accessed by those outside, and specifically the youth. However, the negative consequences of youth resistance in the movies are depicted as the temporary impulse, the way to achieve hopes/dreams, but which will not have lasting impact on society or ultimately re-structure the power relationships in society. In other words, the youth resistance in these three movies is not aligned with Foucault's notions of power. Instead, the movies bring youth resistance into representation, lending it some degree of legitimacy, but at the same time they the protagonists in the movies underestimate this legitimacy by relativizing the strength, perseverance,

and necessity of resistance. In short, those movies are thus generally ambivalent in relation to social reality in Foucault's idea.

This thesis intends to contribute to literature of Taiwan studies or Taiwanese cinema. At the same time, it also contributes the understandings of the youth culture in examining the youth resistance in the Taiwanese contemporary movies, which often reflect social phenomena in Taiwanese societies, through the lens of Foucault's idea. However, youth behavior is very complicated. There are definitely other representations of youth resistance in other Taiwanese youth cinema, but they are not fully discussed in this paper. Therefore, recognizing the limitations, I would recommend a different possible entry-point for the future research. For example, I would suggest that a possible future direction for research into the representations of the Taiwanese youth resistance should look into more Taiwanese youth cinema and engage with other theories. I will also encourage examining youth resistance in the similar themes from Taiwanese youth cinema. For example, *Au Revoir Taipei* (2010), *Taipei Exchange* (2012), *Café. Waiting. Love* (2014) are the movies all set in Taipei, and they are all the typical lighthearted Taiwanese youth cinema in which resistances is subtle but powerful. Or the young gangsters movies, such as *Winds of September* (2008), *Monga* (2010) *Gatao* (2015), in which the resistance is evident and dramatic. In doing so, we might collect more literatures on youth resistance that represented in the different films, and might further speculate on how the youth resistance is formed and how the directors re-enact the youth resistance in the movies from various genres.

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