

When Cinematic Time Folds into Embodied Time: Emergence of the Affective Landscape in *The Last Rice Farmers*

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Abstract

The Last Rice Farmers, a Taiwanese documentary film released in 2004, concerns the future direction of Taiwanese agriculture in the wake of Taiwan's joining of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2002. The film has elicited negative responses from various critics, who have complained that the co-directors failed to find political solutions to the problems faced by agriculture in Taiwan. This essay argues that the film makes a singular statement on these problems with an "affective" take: the film appeals to the affective force of moving images to bring the personal experience of four farmers to its viewers. The essay will draw on Mark Hansen's theory of embodied time consciousness to explore the relationship between cinematic and embodied time: when watching the film, the viewers are aware of clock time but can also respond to the images via their own embodied time consciousness. It will be argued that when cinematic time is enfolded within embodied time, the interstices between the images open up an "outside" and render possible what Hansen calls "affectivity." In *The Last Rice Farmers*, affectivity as an interface between the movement of images and the viewer catalyzes an affective landscape which emerges from the embodied memories of the characters and their unique local culture.

Keywords

The Last Rice Farmers, cinematic time, embodied time,
affectivity, Taiwanese documentary

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