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Calgary's East Asian Amateur Film Heritage

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Calgary's East Asian Amateur Film Heritage

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

This study explores the localized histories and identities of Asian Calgarians by examining their home movies, asking broadly: *how are the visual histories of Calgary and its Asian immigrant population reflected in home movies?* The project draws on earlier work from amateur cinema and film studies discourse and calls attention to the visual histories of four ethnic groups and the meanings behind their home movie making practices. Findings include the stories of the individuals and families, commonalities between similar projects, themes uncommon in existing home movie literature, and subjective images imbued with history and culture. By conducting a series of case studies inspired by ethnographic style interviews as well as textual and contextual analysis, my project identifies unique characteristics of Southeast and Northeast Asian Canadian home movies and shows why they are worthy not only of research and study but preservation for future generations.

Preface

This thesis is an original, unpublished, independent work by the author, S. Manabat. The case studies reported in Chapters 3-4 were deemed to be in accordance with University of Calgary Guidelines and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* 2010 (TCPS 2). Approval was issued by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) for the project “Alternative Histories: Calgary’s East Asian Amateur Film Heritage” on August 30, 2016.

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Introduction

Popular discourse surrounding Calgary's visual cultural heritage seldom includes Asian minority groups. Moreover, of the 11 archives in and around Calgary, none have significant holdings of moving images from Asians. Yet, those of Asian descent constitute a large and integral part of Calgary's ethnic landscape and history. According to Statistics Canada, for more than 20 years, Canadian immigration has come mainly from Asian countries.¹ Data estimates from Statistics Canada in 2016 reveal that there are over 122,000 Southeast and Northeast Asian immigrants residing in Calgary.² On a larger scale the Government of Canada has recognized the importance of this demographic, declaring in 2002 that May in Canada would be celebrated as Asian Heritage Month. Most recently, in June of 2018, the Government of Alberta declared June as Philippine Heritage Month in Alberta, noting that Alberta has the second largest Filipino population in Canada, and that Tagalog is the second-most spoken non-official language in Alberta.

While the acknowledgment from the state of the importance of some of these minority groups does exist, the lack of preserved and archived visual documents is troubling for Canadian multicultural society. Museums and archival practices are a significant part of modern nation building and the privileging of cultural hierarchies.³ Archives shape understandings of history and culture by preserving records or documents that they deem important. Without such inclusion in museums or archives, home movies may be perceived as unimportant and absent from the larger history of Canada. Scholarship on films by amateurs have identified how they

¹ "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada: National Household Survey, 2011," *Statistics Canada*, 2011, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.pdf> (accessed April 5, 2018).

² Statistics Canada. 2017. *Calgary, CY [Census subdivision], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017 <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 7, 2019)

³ Frick, Caroline, *Saving Cinema the Politics of Preservation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 159.

have challenged or have the potential to challenge the dominant historical narratives where microhistories are alternatives to hegemonic historiography.⁴ The issue of preservation and access in film archiving continues to be a relevant debate closely tied to historical and cultural significance.⁵ More broadly, since Critical Archival Studies has emerged, the idea that archives and heritage institutions are objective or neutral has been dismissed.⁶ However, there are no dedicated community archives in or around Calgary for Asians nor are there any holdings of such ephemera.

There have been no projects, similar in scope to this thesis project that examine home movies of Asians in Canada, Alberta or in the Calgary area. Recognizing the gaps in visual history and the potential for home movie ephemera to be lost, this thesis brings to light a neglected area of scholarship in Alberta and beyond. Furthermore, this project brings the voices of those minority groups into a recognized institution and allows for a nuanced contextual look at Asian individuals and families, their histories, and how their home movies have reflected the practices of the home mode of production.

⁴ Academics, archivists and film historians have argued for the potential of amateur films to supplement and challenge dominant narratives. See Charles Tepperman, *Amateur Cinema: The Rise of North American Moviemaking, 1923-1960*. University of California Press, 2014.; Liz Czach, "The Catherine Films: Rethinking Our National Cinema from an Amateur Perspective," *Take One: Film & Television in Canada* 11, no. 38 (2002).; Peter MacNamara, "Amateur Film as Historical Record-A Democratic History?." *Journal of Film Preservation* 25, no. 53 (1996): 41-45.

⁵ See scholarly arguments in: Janna Jones, *The Past is a Moving Picture: Preserving the Twentieth Century on Film*. University Press of Florida, 2012; Caroline Frick, *Saving Cinema: The Politics of Preservation*, New York: Oxford UP, 2010.; and, Snowden Becker, "See and Save: Balancing Access and Preservation for Ephemeral Moving Images," *Spectator-The University of Southern California Journal of Film and Television* 27, no. 1 (2007): 21-28.

⁶ See: Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1-2 (2002): 1-19.

Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore the localized backgrounds of Asian Calgarians by examining their home movies, asking: *how are the visual histories of Calgary and its East Asian immigrant population reflected in home movies?*

A) How do the home movies illuminate or reconceptualize visual history in Calgary or Alberta?

B) How is community, leisure or family life of Southeast and Northeast Asian Canadians documented through home movies?

C) How do these home movies give insight into Southeast Asian values, customs, or ideologies?

Overview

The project is composed of five case studies of Southeast and Northeast Asian families in Calgary and their home movies on Super 8 and VHS. The thesis explores the diverse backgrounds of each of the participants while contextualizing their family films and home movie making within the broader history of Calgary and Alberta. In addition to these studies is a short listing of known home movies of Southeast Asians or similar holdings in archives in Alberta. The project did not seek out similar holdings elsewhere in order to focus specifically on the Albertan history and context. However, similar holdings in North America were identified, and informed the thesis, such as the Chinese Canadian home movies of Mathew Ko in Victoria and the Japanese American films held at the Japanese American Museum.

Chapter one is an in depth look at the literature, including a definition of the home movie, a historical look at recording formats, and a discussion of the home mode of movie making. In chapter two of the thesis I provide a contextual background for the project, an overview of the

demographics of Canada and Alberta, archives with similar holdings, and similar projects.

Chapter three will outline the methods used in the study, including scope and limitations.

Chapter four consists of the case studies for each of the families and ethnic groups. I expand on their life stories, while also providing a textual analysis supported by the interviews conducted with them. I discuss and present the content of the films using amateur cinema and film studies discourse to elucidate the stylistic and technical qualities of the home movies. In these case studies I attempt to find links to visual histories of the specific groups, if they have any footage shot locally, how they communicate their leisure or family lives and how or if they give values to customs or ideologies. Finally, I conclude by summing up my findings as well as offering thoughts for areas of potential future research.

Chapter 1: Amateur Formats & the Home Mode

Defining the Home Movie

The history of home movies begins as early as the cinema itself. In 1895, the year of the official first screening of celluloid, the Lumiere brothers filmed *Feeding the Baby*.¹ Shot by Louis Lumiere, the film is under a minute long and depicts Auguste Lumiere and his wife Marguerite feeding their baby girl. This early film may have been intended to be publicly viewed and depicts an intimate domestic “everyday” scene.² Since *Feeding the Baby*, domestic content has proliferated as a moving image category and normalized in amateur movie making in the private and public spheres.

Amateur cinema or amateur movies have been defined broadly as non-professional cinematography with home movies being the largest category within it. While amateur cinema has been predominantly thought of as films created without intent to produce a profit, the home movie as an amateur film is one that has been generally thought of as more spontaneous and lacking any planning. On the other hand, polished amateur works follow similar conventions to that of commercial films created with an audience in mind with editing, storylines, planning, and actors.

For home movies documentation of families, especially in a jovial state, are the main themes, with recurring motifs such as children at play, weddings and holidays.³ Home movies have an emphasis on immediacy, a lack of mediation and editing, show events unfolding in real time, and home moviemakers share a direct and indexical relationship with the subject.⁴ Usually,

¹ See: Richard Chalfen, "Cinema Naivete: A Study of Home Moviemaking as Visual Communication," *Studies in Visual Communication* 2, no. 2 (1975): 87.

² See, Paul Arthur, *A Line of Sight: American Avant-Garde Film Since 1965*, U of Minnesota Press, 2005, 24.

³ Mikael Lindström, "Family Fiction," *Film International* 1, no. 6 (2003): 20.

⁴ Veena Hariharan, "At Home in the Empire: Reading Colonial Home Movies--The Hyde Collection (1928-1937)," *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014): 49-50.

home movies are created by those with close relationships to the cameraperson. Their audience is a unique domestic one which includes subjects that were captured in the movies.

Typical stylistic characteristics that may be unique to home movies include odd or poor movement such as uncontrolled shaky or jerky camera movements, swish pans and repeated panning left to right with tilts. Home movies may also have frequent zooms, long takes, various lengths of shots, out-focus shots, poorly exposed shots, jump cuts, poor lighting, and unusual angles. Content wise, unlike commercial cinema there is a breaking of the fourth wall with subjects looking directly into the camera, no continuity of time or place, no conventional order and no character development or a narrative to follow.⁵ Generally, the home movie “possesses a degree of randomness not present in more polished forms” and because of this they do not fit neatly into other categories of film.⁶ The formats on which home movie images were taken on also influence the home mode of production.

Home Movie Formats

In 1923, the semi-professional 16mm film format was introduced by Kodak with accompanying cameras and projectors. Although it cost less than a quarter of professional 35mm film production, it remained a luxury item for those with higher incomes and became popular among hobbyists. Other semi or non-professional gauges were introduced by film manufacturers for amateurs and home movie makers, including 28mm, 22m, 17.5mm and 9.5mm. Some of these amateur formats became popular in Europe, however they did not achieve the same success as 16mm. Moreover, 16mm also found popularity among avant-garde, amateur and professional filmmakers. Alan Kattelle explains that its introduction was “watershed” for the popularity of

⁵ See both: Patricia Erens, "THE GALLER HOME MOVIES: A CASE STUDY," *Journal of Film and Video* 38, no. 3 (Summer, 1986): 15-24; and, Richard Chalfen, *Snapshot Versions of Life*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, 65-66.

⁶ Fred Camper, "Some Notes on the Home Movie," *Journal of Film and Video* (1986): 11-12.

amateur moviemaking in the United States, since within a few months of the format's existence processing laboratories for the format were being installed in major cities across America.⁷

Before then, home movie filmmaking was impractical; the film was either dangerously flammable, bulky, awkward, or expensive to use.

While other film formats were introduced in the decade following, it was 8mm which was quickly embraced by amateurs and home movie makers in 1932 since it was more economical and more widely accessible. 8mm utilized the 16mm film format by adding another row of perforations opposite to the existing ones and exposed twice - once for each side. The film was then later split and joined during processing.

In later years, amateur filmmaking became ever more popular with the advent of the 'Super 8' format in 1965 by Kodak. The format had a larger frame size than regular 8, with reduced perforation size, and a longer distance between the perforations. Thus, the image definition for projection was increased and the format also allowed for an optical or a magnetic soundtrack. Super 8s debut also coincided with an increasing supply of used cameras, making amateur filmmaking accessible to those on low incomes. It was the last format to be marketed to amateurs before the consumer image technology transitioned to video in the 1970s.

Amateur films in Calgary are thus situated between the 1920s until the rise of the video camera in the early 1980s. Though rarer, some may appear to be shot after the 80s when analog filmmaking began to decline in popularity. The three major film formats which may survive in Calgary and were most widely embraced by amateurs are 16mm, 8mm and Super 8. However, even more home movies likely exist when home movie making became ever more accessible as

⁷ Alan Kattelle, *Home Movies: A History of the American Industry, 1897-1979*. Nashua, N.H.: Transition Publishing, 2000, 117.

formats become even cheaper, easier to use and more portable with VHS. Videotape became popular in the consumer market in the 1970s, with the introduction of U-matic in 1971 and Betamax by Sony in 1975, and the Video Home System (VHS) by the Victor Company of Japan (JVC) in 1976.

Sony and JVC were the two main competitors in the videotape ‘format wars’; Sony’s U-matic was dominant for professional and educational use while Betamax became the preferred format for broadcasters and VHS emerged as the dominant consumer format.⁸ A handful of different incompatible formats introduced were also by different companies whose players and tapes could not be used interchangeably. However, VHS came out on top due to JVC’s creation of international alliances with companies that supported the format, especially the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) who had the largest share of color TV sales in North America by 1976 at 49%.⁹ With these alliances came an openness to their technology which let other companies refine, develop and add new features to VHS. Some improvements were technical colour standards and most importantly the increase of playback and recording time, which gave VHS and their accompanying Video Cassette Recorders (VCRs) a leg up on their competitors. By 1978 VHS became the dominant standard videotape format worldwide, backed by large companies such as Matsushita in Japan and (RCA) in North America.¹⁰ This was in large part since pre-recorded programs such as films and television shows were more widely available for purchase on VHS than any other format was, increasing the value of owning a VCR. By the early 1980s, the sale and rental of pre-recorded tapes was a billion-dollar business.¹¹

⁸ S. J. Liebowitz and Stephen E. Margolis, “Path Dependence, Lock-in, and History,” *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization* 11, no. 1 (1995): 993.

⁹ Michael A. Cusumano, Yiorgos Mylonadis, and Richard S. Rosenbloom, “Strategic Maneuvering and Mass-Market Dynamics: The Triumph of VHS over Beta,” *Business History Review* 66, no. 1 (1992): 18.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹ W. Brian Arthur, “Positive Feedbacks in the Economy,” *The McKinsey Quarterly*, no. 1 (1994): 92.

The VCR itself surpassed color television in the United States to become the largest single consumer electronics product in terms of sales by the early 1980s, becoming a mass-market product.¹² Between 1980 and 1995 the number of VCRs in the United States increased dramatically from 1.8 million to 86 million; by 1995, 90 per cent of all American households with televisions had a VCR.¹³ Similarly, there was widespread penetration in Western Europe, with 96% of homes in Britain having one by 1994, and by the late 1980s it is estimated that two in three households in France and Germany had one.¹⁴ Worldwide, the VCR's penetration was estimated as high as 206 million video households or 31 percent.¹⁵ Indeed, the ubiquity of the VCR, particularly in North America no doubt made easier the usage of videotape amongst amateur and domestic moviemakers.

Though little has been written about the use of videotape in Canada for home movies, it's place in the home as part of a home entertainment system has been examined. It's original application, the ability to time-shift and legally record television programs on VCRs no longer required consumers to be present to catch a program at the scheduled time dramatically changed viewing habits. Moreover, videotapes can be used as a storage device and are erasable, reusable and can be duplicated. From the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, VCRs were increasingly adopted by Canadian consumers in the home with VCR penetration steadily rising from 6.4% in 1983¹⁶ to

¹² Michael A. Cusumano, Yiorgos Mylonadis, and Richard S. Rosenbloom, "Strategic Maneuvering and Mass-Market Dynamics: The Triumph of VHS over Beta," *Business History Review* 66, no. 1 (1992): 6-7.

¹³ Brian Winston. *Media Technology and Society: A History: From the Telegraph to the Internet*. London; New York; Routledge, 1998, 126.

¹⁴ André Lange and Jean-Luc Renaud, *The Future of the European Audiovisual Industry*, Vol. no. 10. Manchester, England: European Institute for the Media, 1989, 81.

¹⁵ Robert C. Allen, "Frequently Asked Questions: A General Introduction to the Reader," In *The Television Studies Reader*, edited by Robert Clyde Allen and Annette Hill, 14. Psychology Press, 2004.

¹⁶ Statistics Canada. "Household Facilities Survey 1994," Cited by Paul Attalah in "Narrowcasting: Home Video and DBS" *The Cultural Industries in Canada: Problem, Policies and Prospects*. Ed. Michael Dorland, 1996, 261.

as high as 83% in the early 2000s.¹⁷ The format began to decline afterwards, with consumers switching over to the Digital Video Disc (DVD), a more compact format that had become ever more popular since its introduction in 1997. In July 2016, the last known producer of VCRs and VHS halted their production due to parts shortage and declining sales.¹⁸

The advantages of videotape as a consumer format are many for home movie makers. Unlike Super 8 or 8mm which requires the use of a middleman to process the films, amateur movie makers can directly record and immediately view their materials on television sets. The cassette format was also designed with consumers in mind to eliminate reel handling complications and threading to make the format like audio tape recorders. Video also allowed for synchronous sound recording which allowed for longer on-camera narration.

Moreover, the length of VHS videotape recordings which were initially two hours were extended to a maximum of eight hours, substantially increasing the capability of recordings. In comparison to small gauge film, for example, recording on Super 8 at 18 frames per second would only yield three and a half minutes while filming at the lowest resolution on a VHS means recording time of six to eight hours. Instead of snapshots, consumers were now able to film entire events or even multiple events on one videotape and be much less selective in what they shot.

As video improved, 16mm was largely replaced as the home-movie exhibition format. TV producers and film schools still shoot with 16mm, with independent and avant-garde filmmakers using the stock for aesthetic reasons. Though 8mm and Super 8 also experienced a decline in the domestic sphere, Super 8 continues to be used by artists and enthusiasts today. In 2016, Kodak

¹⁷ Television Bureau of Canada, "TV Basics 2013-2014," 2014.
http://www.tvb.ca/page_files/pdf/InfoCentre/TVBasics2013-2014.pdf

¹⁸ Mark Walton, "BE KIND, REWIND — Last known VCR maker stops production, 40 years after VHS format launch," *Ars Technica*, July 21, 2016, <https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2016/07/vcr-vhs-production-ends/>

launched a Super 8 Revival Initiative which included services for film development, tools for postproduction, and the launch of a new Super 8 camera for the first time in more than 30 years.¹⁹

Studying the Home Movie

In the 1980s and 1990s film archivists and scholars began to seriously explore the history, value and meaning of home movies.²⁰ Anthropologist Richard Chalfen explores visual culture in the American home in his writings and 1987 book, *Snapshot Versions of Life*. Chalfen first introduced the concept of the “home mode,” a “pattern of interpersonal and small group communication centered around the home.”²¹ The home mode is created for a specific private and closed audience of people that the creator has a personal relationship with. Home movies according to Chalfen, are a symbolic form of social communication where creators tend to follow norms and patterns of the home mode.

Chalfen examined film behaviours and components and made some observations on home movie mode of communication. He first read prescriptive advice columns and movie making manuals and compared them against the behaviours of participants who were themselves home movie makers. He found that for the most part many prescriptive behaviours from manuals were not followed such as the encouragement to plan, use camera techniques, and edit. Home movie makers tended to be spontaneous, decide what they want and how to shoot in the moment and did not do any editing outside of the camera. Chalfen also identified the characteristics of shooting and common components that appeared in films such as young children, vacations, holidays, special events and local activities. He also noted a few other commonalities such as

¹⁹ “Kodak Launches Super 8 Filmmaking Revival Initiative at CES 2016,” *Kodak*, January 5, 2016, https://www.kodak.com/us/en/corp/press_center/kodak_launches_super_8_filmmaking_revival_initiative_at_ces_2016/default.htm.

²⁰ Andy Urich, “More than Memories: Studying Home Movies and the Families Who Made Them,” *Journal of Family Social Work* 11, no. 3 (2008): 340.

²¹ Richard Chalfen, *Snapshot Versions of Life*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, 8.

children walking toward the camera lens, a large amount of staring into the camera and participants waving or making faces at the camera. In sum, the idea of what to shoot or not to shoot is not random but “determined not by law or prescriptive manuals but by unwritten social laws.”²² According to Chalfen, rules of what can or should be captured include limitations on what should not be filmed: nudity, conflict, aggression, death or sexual activities. Home movies witness ordinary, mundane life and the controlled filming of it.²³ Chalfen writes that:

*...the home movie can show us how a native member of a particular society, with a particular culture, has used an inexpensive, simple to operate, piece of motion picture technology to record ethnographically detailed information about how he or she "is" as a part of that society.*²⁴

No doubt, a defining feature of society is the family and the home movie is a reflection of participation in this important unit.

Domestic Devices and the Home Mode

Patricia Zimmerman explores home movies and families in her book *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film*. The work is a historical study of amateur film, focused on American home movie making in the 1950s and 1960s and based on her study of prescriptive filmmaking texts and observations of home movies. In particular, Zimmerman argued that the subversive and political potential of amateur film had been lost, in part due to the relegation of small gauge filmmaking to the home.²⁵ Zimmerman notes that the family during the early 20th century became a continually expanding market for consumption of commodities, including amateur filmmaking technologies. The nuclear family became a distinct segment from commercial or other amateur filmmakers with a different social structure and prescribed filming

²² Ibid, 52.

²³ See also: Mikael Lindström, "Family Fiction," *Film International* 1, no. 6 (2003): 20.

²⁴ Chalfen, Richard. "The Home Movie in a World of Reports: An Anthropological Appreciation." *Journal of Film and Video* (1986): 104.

²⁵ Patricia R. Zimmermann, *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film*. (Indiana University Press, 1995).

content.²⁶ As early as 1917, film cameras were promoted with an emphasis on happy memories to record a family history that “invoked only good times, erasing struggle, contradiction or disintegration.”²⁷ Columnists advised that families film wider social events such as weddings, garden parties and birthdays. Moviemaking articles also suggested that family films could be given to children when they got older to show how they became more prosperous. Home movies could document an individual’s childhood progression and their “humble beginnings.”²⁸

Similarly, Haidee Wasson investigates 16mm projectors and screens in the United States domestic sphere during the 1920s, asserting that the emergent film technology brokered “a distinctly modern form of viewing that also asserted the centrality of an idealized and stable domesticity for managing moving images of a mobile world.”²⁹ Wasson notes how these technologies were concurrent with other domestic devices for the American family at the time like the phonograph and radio. To be in possession of such items complemented an idealized private space, where home ownership included all bells and whistles like modern electricity, heating and plumbing.

In the 1950s, statistically, the presence of nuclear families rose, along with increased birth rates, earlier marriages and the decline of single persons. Families became ends in themselves like children and hobbies. This rise of familialism helped spur home movie creation and consumerism of small gauge film products. As a result, children became, among travel films and special events, one of the most pervasive subjects for amateur filmmaking. In an internal

²⁶ Ibid, 43.

²⁷ Ibid, 45-46.

²⁸ Ibid, 46.

²⁹ Haidee Wasson, "Electric homes! Automatic Movies! Efficient Entertainment!: 16mm and Cinema's Domestication in the 1920s." *Cinema Journal* 48, no. 4 (2009): 2.

Bell & Howell study, families were compelled to buy home movie making equipment to photograph their kids and the typical consumers were families with one or two children.³⁰

In the 1970s when the shift occurred from film to home video, video as a medium defined itself in opposition to the nuclear family as a medium against the mainstream. Young filmmakers experimented with family portrait documentary using cinema verité techniques and families were less idealized.³¹ Video was also used as a subversive tool circulated by community activists, women and gay liberation movements, to spread ideas of lifestyle and identity different from images spread by the mass media.³² However, the use of video to capture families persisted, much in similar ways that they were first used by small gauge amateur filmmakers.

Writing in 2002, James Moran's book on home videos identifies the persistence of the nuclear family ideology in popular culture, media, political rhetoric and sexual education. Moran describes the pessimistic view that corporate capitalism with advertising and training manuals have caused home movies to lose their radical subversive potential. Instead, some believe that they reaffirm family values that support a bourgeois hegemony. Moran offers an alternative explanation for the persistence of the home mode based on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Habitus according to Bourdieu explains all of one's actions or practices that are objectively regulated as well as 'regular' according to their conditions of production.³³ In other words, an individual and a group's behaviours, perceptions, expressions and actions are limited by their historical and social situations, and in this way their dispositions appear natural to them. The family is and has been an important area of collective life and can account for why the home

³⁰ Patricia R. Zimmermann, *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film*. (Indiana University Press, 1995), 123.

³¹ As examples see: Rocío G. Davis, "Locating Family: Asian Canadian Historical Revisioning in Linda Ohama's Obaachan's Garden and Ann Marie Fleming's the Magical Life of Long Tack Sam," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 42, no. 1 (Winter, 2008): 1-22.

³² José Van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*. Stanford University Press, 2007, 134.

³³ Bourdieu, Pierre. "Structures, Habitus, Practices." *The Logic of Practice* (1990): 52-65.

mode has been the dominant amateur media practice. Moran offers a bottom-up model where ideologies and home videos are born and embedded in habitus. In this view, historical experiences, material practices and social environments of groups and individuals who share them are reflected by the home video.³⁴

Moran introduces a functional taxonomy of the home mode, bringing to light the positive impacts of home video and can be useful in examining other home movie formats. He identifies five cultural functions of home videos including: providing an authentic active mode of media production for representing everyday life, constructing liminal spaces to explore and negotiate identities, providing a material articulation of generational continuity, constructing our sense of place in the world, and providing a narrative format for communicating family legends and personal stories.³⁵ To elucidate the functions further, the home mode is creative and subjective as movie makers are not merely consumers. The liminal spaces are those between communal, public and private, personal identities and experiences. The home mode may also help trace roots and provide a way to unite past, present, and future generations. Home movies also construct our sense of place since “home” is transportable within space and imagination. Lastly, Moran notes that the home mode is linked to a longstanding tradition of folklore and autobiography where a tension exists between the autobiographical and the historical. This thesis shares the sentiments of Moran who sees the home mode and home movies in a positive light, highlighting their cultural, social and historical significance. Nevertheless, while home movies no doubt have potential value, questions of authenticity and realism should also be considered.

³⁴ James M. Moran, *There's No Place like Home Video*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 50-54.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 59-62.

Idealized Spaces and Subjects

While the indexical function of movie making is evident, arguably the home mode is subjective, since the cameraman always has a relationship to the subjects. Unlike other types of filming or videotaping, the presentation and manipulation of oneself is more important than editing or manipulation of content from behind the camera.³⁶ This could occur beforehand or in the moment during footage capture. Indeed, home movies should not be wholly taken as reality since they are selective representations of family life. While some might be unique or autobiographical many home movies may unintentionally mislead viewers and “merely perform the specific social function of projecting an idealized image back onto the participants.”³⁷ What is shot in these films might be carefully curated and shown within families with the lifestyle and resources to do so. On the other hand, they might intentionally mislead viewers as well, with carefully selected and curated images of families who may be less than picture perfect. Mikael Lindstrom identifies home movies as problematic since many assume the films are true depictions of the private sphere since they are thought to have been made in the private sphere, for the private sphere. However private they might seem to be, the home movie is self-conscious of the fact that the film might be seen by outsiders; they are displays of correct and “culturally sanctioned behaviour.”³⁸ We cannot assume that what we are watching is the true and natural representation of the domestic sphere. What we are observing rather, is the controlled filming of some aspects or events of ordinariness. Lindstrom argues home movies do not document memories but create them.

Furthermore, another question is whether participants may be performing for the camera,

³⁶ Richard Chalfen, *Snapshot Versions of Life*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, 58-69.

³⁷ Ryan Shand, "Theorizing Amateur Cinema: Limitations and Possibilities." *The Moving Image* 8, no. 2 (2008): 40.

³⁸ Mikael Lindström, "Family Fiction." *Film International* 1, no. 6 (2003): 21.

for example, by putting on a smile where there was none. Liz Czach identifies “home movie performativity” as the performance of people in an exaggerated and conscious manner for the camera. Her work, though it focuses on small gauge film performativity, can be applied elsewhere to other formats. The process of both filming and being filmed is a common attribute to a home movie performance and subjects are aware of their actions. Czach notes that this performance is essentially presentational and communicates the subject’s conscious and explicit self-presentation to the camera. Moreover, home movies are a performative exchange since the relationship of the subject to the filmer is a key characteristic of home movies.³⁹ Therefore, while prescriptive texts encourage that subjects act natural, and not perform by appearing awkward or acknowledging the camera, many home movie subjects do the opposite. As such, due to home movie performativity, the conscious presence of a camera, and the usual intimate relationship with the camera person, home movie footage cannot be classified as objective.

Chalfen for one is skeptical of the home movie as visual ethnographic evidence of domestic life, pointing out that home movies might in fact be a “special reality.”⁴⁰ That is, there is more to the mundane everyday activity or behaviour than is recorded. What is caught on film are people dressed, made up, and acting or performing for the camera. Though home movies may not be unbiased nor wholly objective they might be thought of as tools that allow ordinary people to “represent an insider’s point of view of society in culturally appropriate ways.”⁴¹ Family films can show how individuals have used photochemical technology to show that they are a part of a particular society. Participants in front of the camera conform to social norms and demonstrate

³⁹ Czach, Liz. "Acting and Performance in Home Movies and Amateur Films." In *Theorizing Film Acting*, 152-66. Ed Aaron Taylor, 162-164. Taylor and Francis, 2012.

⁴⁰ Chalfen, Richard. *Snapshot Versions of Life*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, 69.

⁴¹ Chalfen, Richard. "The Home Movie in a World of Reports: An Anthropological Appreciation." *Journal of Film and Video* (1986): 105.

their cultural membership by participating appropriately at events like birthdays, weddings, travels or holidays. According to Jan-Christopher Horak, home movies have within them competing layers of fiction, reality, and history.⁴² It is important to recognize these layers, and to view home movies with a grain of salt, understanding that what we might be viewing is part reality and part performance.

Although Chalfen is doubtful of the film's ability to undermine dominant narratives, he does recognize that on the whole, home movies have shied away from editing and they "de-emphasize[s] the manipulative potential of the recording technology."⁴³ In part this may be due to the difficulty of performing complex editing and special effects through older film and video technologies, rendering them more spontaneous and rough.

Still, home movies might inform us of cultural practices or be sources for regional history for social groups during a specific time period.⁴⁴ Their potential as culturally important visual histories has continually been validated through archives which have acquired home movies for preservation. Places of archiving and preservation of film like public libraries have been thought of as repositories for studying human history and processes.⁴⁵ Caroline Frick asserts that museums and archival practices are a significant part of modern nation building and the privileging of cultural hierarchies.⁴⁶ Film archives shape understandings of history and culture by preserving records or documents that they deem important. The practice of uncovering and exploring micro-histories or marginal stories of people are not only important but necessary as

⁴² Jan-Christopher Horak, "Out of the Attic: Archiving Amateur Film," *Journal of Film Preservation* 56 (1998): 51.

⁴³ Richard Chalfen, *Snapshot Versions of Life*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, 68-69.

⁴⁴ Susan Aasman, "Le Film de Famille Comme Document Historique." *Le film de famille: usage privé, usage public*. Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck (1995): 97-109.

⁴⁵ Elena Rossi-Snook, "Persistence of Vision: Public Library 16mm Film Collections in America." *Moving Image* 5, no. 1 (2005): 1-27.

⁴⁶ Caroline Frick, *Saving Cinema: The Politics of Preservation*. New York: Oxford UP, 2010.

they supplement and provides a counterpoint to the established narrative. Studying and viewing culturally important home movies may enrich the field of film studies to include marginal stories by creating knowledge in the realm of Asian Canadian history.⁴⁷ These histories and knowledges are embedded in the filmic and video forms and how minority groups ascribe meanings to them.

⁴⁷ Lars Gustaf Andersson, John Sundholm, Karlstads Universitet, Avdelningen För Humaniora Och Genusvetenskap, and Estetisk-filosofiska Fakulteten, "Amateur and Avant-garde: Minor Cinemas and Public Sphere in 1950s Sweden." *Studies in European Cinema* 5.3 (2009;2008;): 207-218.

Chapter 2: Archives, Projects and Ephemera

As evidenced by the Freiman family home movies held by Library Archives of Canada,¹ and the Mathew Ko films in held by the University of Victoria,² Canadians, especially those with higher incomes were filming their domestic lives and the communities around them. Small gauge film formats were introduced to middle class consumers beginning in the 1920s and domestic life began to be captured in moving images. The 20th century saw a dramatic decrease in the use and popularity of small gauge film formats as they were replaced with more economical videotape cassettes in the home market. In turn, with the emergence of DVD and BlueRay, videotapes were largely replaced by newer digital formats in the home for capturing domestic life. Due to obsolescence of all these formats, the lack of playback equipment, and deterioration of the physical objects, many of these rich cultural documents are in danger of being lost and unseen.

Projects in North America

Home movies have only recently been collected and celebrated more widely around the world. In 2003, the first Home Movie Day was held, as an international celebration of amateur films and filmmaking that encouraged families to share and save their home movies for posterity. Home Movie Day is supported by the Centre for Home Movies in the United States, but each event is organized independently across the globe. The event has continued since then and was held four times in Calgary. However, as an event it called attention to home movies and advised participants on how to save their home movies individually and was not attached to archives or museums.

¹ The patriarch of the family Archibald Freiman was an owner and president of an Ottawa department store. See: Freiman Family Home Movies, Freiman Family Fonds, *Library and Archives Canada*, Archival reference no. R6882-3-9-E.

² Mathew Ko was a successful Chinese businessman from Victoria. See: Mathew Ko, c.1939-c.1950, The Mathew Ko Colour Films: Victoria's Chinatown and Region, *University of Victoria Digital Collections*. <http://contentdm.library.uvic.ca/cdm/landingpage/collection/collection42>

In a similar vein, other North American projects have been conducted in efforts to examine, research, digitize and/or preserve the micro-histories of minority groups in North America. Two prominent projects in the United States include the South Side Home Movie Project³ at the University of Chicago, which solicits amateur films made by residents of the South Side of Chicago; and the Great Migration Home Movie Project conducted by The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture which focuses on digitizing films by African Americans and providing access to them.⁴ The Migration project was worked on by media conservator Jasmyn Castro whose 2015 thesis informed this project.⁵

Castro identified 16 institutions in the United States with existing collections of African American home movies and argues for a greater recognition of home movies as historical and cultural depictions of African Americans. She also provides a historical background on small gauge film and its usage by African Americans. Castro notes that home movies have been a low preservation priority for institutions and their orphan status makes it difficult to provide widespread access. Her thesis culminated in the announcement of the creation of an African American Home Movie Archive (AAHMA).⁶ The AAHMA is a registry which allows the public to see the extant films that Castro identified, and is continually updated when new information or

³ The University of Chicago. "South Side Home Movie Project." *The University of Chicago*. <https://sshmp.uchicago.edu/> (accessed January 20, 2019).

⁴See: National Museum of African American History and Culture (U.S.), 1940 - Ongoing, Collection ID: NMAAHC.SC.0001, National Museum of African American History and Culture, *Smithsonian Institution*. <https://sova.si.edu/record/NMAAHC.SC.0001>. and, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian, "The Great Migration Home Movie Project," *Smithsonian Institution*. <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/great-migration-home-movie-project>

⁵ Jasmyn R. Castro, "Unearthing African American History & Culture Through Home Movies," (MA Thesis, New York University, 2015).

⁶ See: "African American Home Movie Archive," *African American Home Movie Archive*. <http://aahma.org/>. (accessed May 2, 2018).

films are archived and preserved. The idea behind the registry is to encourage research and creative use of the materials, and generally increase awareness of the films.

In Canada, Home Made Visible solicits home movies of visible minorities and indigenous people, and is partnered with organizations such as Western University, the Royal Museum of Ontario, Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives and Ryerson University among others. The Family Camera Network is a similar photography centered project which seeks immigrant photographs and LGBT images from across Canada. Each of these projects reaches out to the general public asking them to share their ephemera, offers free digitization or preservation, and if possible, interviews the owners so that they can share their personal perspectives on the footage. All four are examples of projects attempting to fill gaps in the existing oral, visual and written histories of their respective places. Moreover, they are affiliated and funded by formal institutions who give legitimacy to the study of images of minorities in the domestic sphere whether they be still or moving. In a broader sense, these projects also highlight these histories for the community at large and provide documentation within their institutions for future generations to research and learn about. The two Canadian projects however are Ontario based and thus limited in scope, primarily to Eastern Canada.

One specific home movie project that informed this thesis is that of Patricia Erens who studied the films of the Galler family from Chicago, Illinois in 1986. Their home movies were taken over the span of 12 years and filmed mostly at their summer home in St. Charles, Illinois with some footage taken at their residence in Chicago. The home movies were viewed and analyzed by Erens who had known the family for five years before beginning her study. Instead of a shot by shot analysis, Erens treats the footage from the point of view of aesthetics and technique, identifying features that separate the home movie category from others. She identifies

the rough aesthetics of the home movie, much of which is unplanned and unedited. Erens also looked at the content of the movies, highlighting the activities that were recorded and any patterns that emerged. These include footage at the family country house, meals being shared, birthdays and the act of kissing which she concludes implies a warm intimacy between family members. Objects such as a glider bench and hammock also formed what Erens called an “iconographic” environment where these objects were repeatedly used in an outdoor setting—the bench by adults and the hammock by younger and middle generations. The Galler subjects did plenty of “performing” for the camera; they stand, pose and are aware of the camera filming them. A sense of family and togetherness was strong amongst their films, along with the impression of affection and the ideal life of a nuclear family. All the footage of the family is devoted to leisure activities and nothing was filmed that was work-related save for some housekeeping by the women.⁷ While Erens was a close friend of the Gallers, the family was not interviewed about their films. This project draws from Erens’ approach but also utilized interviews to inform the findings.

Calgary’s Demographics

In beginning my exploration of home movies, I look to the demographics of Canada, where those of Asian descent constitute a large and integral part of the ethnic landscape. According to Statistics Canada, for more than 20 years, Canadian immigration has come mainly from Asian countries.⁸ Numbers from the national statistics office give an overview of Calgary’s Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) which include nine municipalities: three cities (Airdrie, Calgary, Chestermere); one county, three towns, one village and one First Nations reserve

⁷ Erens, Patricia. "THE GALLER HOME MOVIES: A CASE STUDY." *Journal of Film and Video (ARCHIVE)* 38, no. 3 (Summer, 1986): 15-24.

⁸ Study: Projected trends to 2031 for the Canadian Labour Force. *Statistics Canada*, 2013, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/110817/dq110817b-eng.htm>.

(Tsuut'ina nation). Calgary's immigration statistics have echoed that of the national statistics, with numbers of immigrants from Asia steadily climbing since the 1980s.⁹ Nationally and locally, before 1980, the largest group of immigrants were from Europe. That has since changed with Asians now being the largest immigrant groups to Canada. In recent years, newcomers have also primarily immigrated to four provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta.

In Canada, immigration numbers can also be attributed to government policy. Scholar Alan B. Simmons identifies three historical phases of Canadian immigration policy, grouped together by policy continuity and key policy changes.¹⁰ These phases are 1950-1962, 1962-1989, 1989 to 'present' or until the year 2000 - the year which Simmons' work was written. Phase one is marked by a Euro-centric Canada, with strong ties to Great Britain where rules were still being established and aboriginal people were pacified. Canada's policy goals were at the time to expand the labour force through European immigrant farmers and factory workers. Phase two ended when Canada abandoned the preferential country selection for immigrants in 1962 and the third phase began. This last phase was also marked by Canada's peacekeeping and increased international trade. The point system however was not formally adopted until 1987 and assigned points to potential immigrants based on factors such as language, education, work experience, age and employability to allow them to enter the country. These factors, especially the adoption

⁹ "Immigrant population by selected places of birth, admission category and period of immigration, Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and areas outside of census metropolitan areas," Census 2016, Statistics Canada, 2016
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dv-vd/imm/index-eng.cfm>. An interactive chart was released on October, 27 2017 with data of the distribution of the immigrant population by selected places of birth since 1980. Statistics Canada's census on immigrant population was first conducted in 1980, but has been inconsistent. It has been administered only six times since the 1980s; first every ten years until 2000, then every five years until 2010, and again in 2016.

¹⁰ Alan B. Simmons, "Immigrant Policy: Imagined Futures," In *Immigrant Canada: Demographic, Economic, and Social Challenges*. Ed. Driedger, Halli, Halli, Shivalingappa S., Driedger, Leo, and Canadian Electronic Library, 40-46. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

of the point system no doubt influenced the increased immigration to Canada from Asian countries.

In Calgary, pre-1980, the largest ethnic groups from Asia that immigrated to the city were those from China, Hong Kong, The Philippines, and Vietnam (see table). In 2016, the Philippines, China, Vietnam and South Korea were the largest sources of Southeast Asian immigrants. Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants appear to be more consistent in recent years, while the proportion of immigrants from the Philippines and South Korea are steadily increasing.

Calgary CMA's Southeast Asian Immigrants by Year*

	Before 1980	1980 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2005	2006 - 2010	2011 - 2016	TOTAL
Philippines	2,040	3,210	7,900	6,410	11,940	21,960	53,450
China	3,470	3,370	6,405	9,180	6,245	6,265	34,945
Vietnam	1,860	7,245	3,200	970	1,195	1,220	15,700
Hong Kong	3,025	3,000	3,990	305	375	415	11,115
South Korea	360	335	1,540	1,575	1,560	1,910	7,280
Taiwan	190	165	960	315	280	325	2,235
Malaysia	345	635	310	240	255	310	2,100
Japan	215	100	260	280	365	330	1,550
Cambodia	85	915	220	75	110	60	1,415

Source: Statistics Canada

*Calgary's largest East Asian immigrant groups. Countries with less than 1,000 migrants to Calgary total have been omitted from the table, as well as mixed race persons.

Statistics Canada's Southeast Asian immigration numbers provides an idea of how many immigrants arrived and from which country. It does not however account for any internal

migration from other cities in Canada or from more rural areas. Supplementing these is the total cumulative number of Southeast Asians in Calgary (see table). The ‘Visible Minority Population in Calgary CMA: Southeast Asians’ table provides the ‘Census of Population’ numbers since the census was first administered in 1996. The Census of Population has been done five times, the last time in 2016.

Visible Minority Population in Calgary CMA: Southeast and Northeast Asians

	1996 ¹¹	2001 ¹²	2006 ¹³	2011 ¹⁴	2016 ¹⁵
Total Population	821,628	951,395	1,070,295	1,199,125	1,392,609
Total Visible Minority Population*	N/A	164,895	237,890	337,425	463,450
Total Southeast/East Asian Population	N/A	88,525	119,205	160,590	207,260
Chinese**	22,290	51,855	66,375	75,470	89,675
Filipino	9,015	16,380	25,565	49,515	67,650

¹¹ No visible minority data, rather data is generally on immigrants to Alberta, does not include non-permanent residents. See: “Alberta: Total Immigrants,” *Statistics Canada*. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/c1996-r1996/4129975-eng.htm>

¹² “Calgary, Alberta, 2001 Community Profiles,” *Statistics Canada*. Released June 27, 2002. Last modified: 2005-11-30. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 93F0053XIE.

https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/english/profil01/CP01/Details/Print.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMA&Code1=825__&Geo2=PR&Code2=48&Data=Count&SearchText=calgary&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=

¹³ “Visible minority groups, 2006 counts,” *Statistics Canada*. October 17, 2006. [https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-562/pages/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=CMA&Code=01&Table=1&Data=Count&StartRec=1&Sort=2&Display=Page)

[562/pages/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=CMA&Code=01&Table=1&Data=Count&StartRec=1&Sort=2&Display=Page](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-562/pages/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=CMA&Code=01&Table=1&Data=Count&StartRec=1&Sort=2&Display=Page) (accessed June 20, 2019).

¹⁴ “Calgary, CMA, Alberta (Code 825) (table). National Household Survey (NHS) Profile,” *Statistics Canada*, 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE, September 11, 2013.

<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed November 12, 2019).

¹⁵ “Calgary [Census metropolitan area], Alberta and Alberta [Province]” (table). *Statistics Canada*, Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001, Ottawa, Released November 29, 2017.

<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed December 8, 2017).

Southeast Asian (Laos, Vietnamese, Cambodian, etc)	N/A	12,560	15,750	21,730	21,610
Korean	N/A	3,885	6,835	8,520	10,635
Japanese	N/A	3,845	4,680	5,355	5,170

Source: Statistics Canada

*'Visible minority' is defined by Canada's 'Employment Equity Act' as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."

**1996 statistics, differentiates between the two (HK: 10,795, PRC: 11,495). 2006 and 2016 statistics do not differentiate.

The 1996 Statistics Canada census only includes the top ten immigrant countries to Calgary prior to 1961. Of these ten, eight are from Europe, the highest number of immigrants coming from the UK (28,315). The remaining two countries are the United States (fifth with 1,550) and The People's Republic of China (eight at 1,080). However, the 1996 statistics do include the total number of immigrants to Calgary - 170,875. Immigration has been influenced by numerous factors, especially those of political and economic in both Canada and the migrant countries. These numbers show that immigrants and Southeast Asians are a large demographic in Calgary yet underrepresented in visual histories, especially when we look at archival holdings in comparison to elsewhere in North America and beyond.

Archives: Images of Southeast and Northeast Asians in North America

In North America, moving images of Southeast and Northeast Asians from their own perspective exist in a few archives but are limited in their numbers. The Japanese American National Museum in the United States is the only museum dedicated to a specific Northeast Asian ethnic group with a moving image archive in North America. Other films exist, but in larger regional, or special interest archives. The Japanese American National Museum was incorporated as a private nonprofit in 1985 as the first museum in the United States devoted to

presenting the history and culture of Japanese Americans. Their moving image archive was established in 1989 as a part of the effort to preserve the material culture of Japanese Americans. Films selected for preservation must be either historically or culturally significant, allowing the museum to fulfill their mission to communicate the experience of Japanese in America.

Since 2000, 11 different collections of amateur films by or of Japanese Americans received grants from the National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF) for their preservation. The National Film Preservation Foundation is a nonprofit organization created by the United States congress to aid in saving America's film heritage. Receiving a grant for preservation from a national organization indicates that these films are culturally or historically valuable for the whole of the country.¹⁶ Evidently these films were important enough to preserve not only for Japanese Americans but for American citizens and the country as a whole.

The age and physical condition of the films are also a factor in their selection for preservation. The older the films, the more likely they are to be historically significant since images from older analog technologies are significantly rarer than born digital images. Physically, the films they select are also ones which have visually clear information. That is, the films have not degraded to the point where they are unable to be projected or the images are unclear and cannot impart any meaningful visual information. Mechanical mishandling of the film during processes like winding or projection through dusty or dirty equipment may cause physical damage such as scratches. Improper storage, where humidity, high heat, and water are present, may also affect the film's condition and lead to "vinegar syndrome."¹⁷ This is caused by the release of acetic acid during the decomposition of acetate film.

¹⁶ "About the NFPF." *National Film Preservation Foundation*. <https://www.filmpreservation.org/about/about-the-nfpf>.

¹⁷ "Common Types of Decay and Damage" *The Film Preservation Guide: The Basics for Archives, Libraries, and Museums*. San Francisco, CA: National Film Preservation Foundation, 2004, 13.

The NFPF films also reflect the criteria that the Japanese American National Museum utilizes when selecting films for preservation. The criteria stipulates that images of historical and/or cultural significance should be preserved, especially those that illuminate historical figures, events or eras in Japanese history; images that show Japanese Americans in the community, family, at work or at leisure; and films that provide insight into Japanese American customs, values or way of life.¹⁸ The films span from 1926 to 1960 and consist of home movies by prominent members of Japanese communities in the United States such as businessmen or business owners, films made in or of Japanese detention camps during World War II and the Wedding anniversaries of one couple. Films from these collections have been digitized and make up the museum's online collection of moving images which are publicly available for screening.

The collection consists of over six hours of home movie footage in 330 film clips and contains over 100 minutes depicting the experience of Japanese Americans forced into concentration camps. The clips were made available online from the NFPF funding in collaboration with Denshō, the Japanese American Legacy Project.¹⁹

The significance of internment camp footage preserved by the Japanese American Museum are obvious examples of historically important amateur film. They are primary evidence of an important and tumultuous time in American history and provide rare displays of moving images inside the camps. For example, the Naokichi Hashizume Collection depicts the life of Japanese Americans living at the Heart Mountain concentration camp in Wyoming in the

¹⁸ Karen L. Ishizuka, "The Moving Image Archive of The Japanese American National Museum," *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, ed., Karen L. Ishizuka, and Patricia R. Zimmerman (University of California Press, 2008), 124.

¹⁹ Densho's mission it is to preserve the memories and testimonies of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II. Visit Densho. *Densho: Japanese American Incarceration and Japanese Internment*: <https://www.densho.org/>.

month of February 1945.²⁰ Images from this collection are at once enlightening, melancholic and amusing. Black and white footage in *Hashizume_01* introduces us to the internment camp where a barren landscape is dotted with rows of buildings with no one in sight. The daily happenings inside the camp are shown, with women rushing between buildings, vehicles speeding by and children running through the snowy camp. Short clips (under 20 seconds long) show young children, and a baby smiling. Men both young and old strenuously shovel coal onto a cart in *Hashizume_04*. One clip shows families smiling and eating their dinner in a dining hall, while another displays older ladies crafting. Interior living quarters and traditional dress are also shown. Cultural displays are aplenty with young girls playing the Koto (stringed instrument) in *Hashizume_10* and many adults taking part in mochi making *Hashizume 14*.

While the images depicted in the films can be seen as valuable in their own right as historical and cultural documents, they also stand in contrast to popular representations of Japanese Americans in mass media. Most notably, after the attack on Pearl Harbor until the end of the Japanese occupation in 1952, Hollywood produced many films depicting Japanese persons in a negative light.²¹ Racist and propagandistic images of Japanese Americans proliferated before, during, and after World War II to increase anti-Japanese sentiment in support of the war effort at home and abroad.

While internment camp footage may be more obviously historically significant, the seemingly more mundane videos enhance the public record with images of life from a unique Asian perspective. These images present a new hybridized culture that is often marginalized by both the Japan and United States. Sociologically they provide tangible records of lifestyles and

²⁰ Naokichi Hashizume. "Naokichi Hashizume Collection (92.18.9)." *Discover Nikkei*, accessed July 8, 2018. <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/nikkeialbum/albums/278/>

²¹ See Anthony W. Sheppard, "An Exotic Enemy: Anti-Japanese Musical Propaganda in World War II Hollywood," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54, no. 2 (2001): 303-57. doi:10.1525/jams.2001.54.2.303.

behaviours but are also evidence of cultural adaptation and the blending of two distinct cultures.²² Individuals are shown to be fulfilling stereotypical American and ethnic Japanese functions or roles.

For example, *The Yamada Collection* (ca. 1930s - 1960s) consists of the home movies of Tsuneko Kato and Yaju Yamada and was gifted to the museum by a Yamada family member. The films include their wedding at the Kawafuku restaurant in Los Angeles, California, and their silver anniversary celebration 25 years later. There are 17 minutes worth of footage split into 15 film clips in both black and white, and colour. The clips range in running time from around 30 seconds to just over two minutes. The images document important life events for the Yamadas, but also the everyday.

Yamada_04 and *Yamada_05* are black and white clips that are roughly one minute each and are taken from the wedding footage in Los Angeles. They provide images of specific locales, with minimal time given to human subjects, save for the passing individual. The description for *Yamada_04* via the Discover Nikkei website is as follows:

*This black-and-white segment, from the late 1930s, shows the view west along First Street in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district; the exterior of the Kawafuku restaurant at 204-1/2 E. First St., with signs in Japanese; a view east along First St.; a streetcar rolls past Iwaki Drugs; a person carries a large floral arrangement into Kawafuku (01:01).*²³

This type of surface level description is available for all the Yamada clips and allows the viewer to know where the footage was taken and its general contents which can be observed through a simple viewing of the clips. However, the formal qualities of the clips have not been explored. Footage is clearly handheld with each shot being slightly shaky, lending to its amateur

²² Karen Ishizuka, "The Moving Image Archive of the Japanese American Museum" Ishizuka, Karen L., Zimmermann, Patricia R., eds. *Mining the Home Movie*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), 2007.

²³ "Kawafuku Restaurant and Little Tokyo in Los Angeles (Yamada_04)," *Discover Nikkei: Japanese Migrants and their Descendants*, Aug 25, 2012. Accessed November 7, 2019, <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/nikkeialbum/items/3774/>

aesthetic. While the film stock is not explicitly listed, the black and white footage could have been shot on 16mm or 8mm film. It is likely the latter since the clips are grainier, and 8mm was considered a consumer format, while 16mm was more geared towards semi-professional and avant-garde filmmakers. None of the Yamadas are identified by the Japanese museum as semi-professional and their short filming of two main family events support this notion.

In *Yamada_04* and *Yamada_05* the filmer employs standard film shots, utilizing conventional pans and tilts mixed with static shots. Interestingly, for these two clips the pans are all from right to left, and the tilts, save for one shot, are from top to bottom. This shot is shared between the two clips and follows a woman entering a building with flowers. *Yamada_04* ends with this shot and *Yamada_05* begins with it. In this shot the camera tilts upwards, revealing that she is entering the Kawafuku building. The rest of the tilting shots seem unremarkable since they are of street signs, or Japanese signs written top to bottom. But, given that all the pans are from right to left, coupled with the camera tilts, the filming seems to mimic conventional Japanese reading direction which is read in columns from top to bottom and right to left.

However, all the other clips from the Yamada collection feature human subjects and do not follow this convention. None share a shot, nor pan or tilt predictably; perhaps the filmmaker was unable to make more deliberate decisions on how to film actual persons. The subject matter within the remaining clips also portrays an interesting mix of Japanese Americanness. A Westerner could surmise from *Yamada_06* that a religious wedding ceremony of Asians is occurring: there is a bridal procession between rows of pews in what looks to be a church. Yet, below the film clip, the wedding is described as taking place at the Nichiren Buddhist temple in Los Angeles. In *Yamada_07*, the bride, groom and wedding party appear to be wearing standard western suits and dresses. However, cultural displays such as a tea ceremony occur where two

individuals are wearing traditional Japanese garb such as a *Kuntheaono* and a headpiece are present. Upon closer inspection of the film clips, despite the seemingly mundane subject matter, it is easy to see why such films have been preserved. Footage from the Yamada collection displays a unique combination of two cultures, and what the customs of Japanese Americans living in Los Angeles were in the 1930s. Still, the images could be enhanced further, with more depth of meaning if information from the family itself were given.

Mathew Ko Collection

In British Columbia, the University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and Archives recently acquired a collection from Victoria-born Chinese businessman, Mathew Ko (1909-2000).²⁴ Mathew Ko was one of nine siblings who resided in Victoria. Ko ran the family business inherited by his father, *GB Simon Jewelry and Watch Repair* which had several locations in Victoria. In 2013 Ko's films were donated by his daughter Valerie Ko but were discovered by happenstance. An artist and writer for the Victoria daily newspaper *The Times Colonist*, Robert Amos, was at a Chinese New Year's dinner when he found himself seated beside Valerie Ko. Amos had interest in Victoria's Chinatown and asked her if she had any photos. She informed him that she did not, but her father had taken some home movies if he were interested. A year later, Amos viewed the films and then contacted the University of Victoria as he was convinced that they were significant enough for preservation.²⁵ The films were then assessed, repaired and digitized in 2016. Ten films are now publicly available online via the University of Victoria website, accompanied by two albums of photographs. The films are all

²⁴ Mathew Ko, c.1939-c.1950, The Mathew Ko Colour Films: Victoria's Chinatown and Region, *University of Victoria Digital Collections*. <http://contentdm.library.uvic.ca/cdm/landingpage/collection/collection42>

²⁵ Watts, Richard. "Victoria Man's Home Movies Shed Light on Capital's History." *Times Colonist*, May 7, 2016. Accessed November 11, 2017. <http://www.timescolonist.com/life/islander/victoria-man-s-home-movies-shed-light-on-capital-s-history-1.2249347>.

silent and shot on 16mm Kodachrome, Kodak and Ansco stock. They provide a colorful depiction of events in Victoria's downtown, Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland and the City of Vancouver.

The University's digital collections website explains that the films are exceptional as historical records of family and community life from the late 1930s to around 1950. As home movies, they document significant cultural, social and political events from a uniquely Chinese Canadian point of view. In the film's descriptions, viewing notes are provided, broadly describing what is seen on the film. Each of the descriptions by the University also end with a note that "these clips were initially intended for home, personal use." While it is evident that the films were not made for commercial use, the information that the films were intended for personal use is somewhat vague. Why did Ko film what he did, and were these films intended for posterity? The films were donated by his daughter, and it is not possible to ask Ko himself what his original intention was, or if he perhaps filmed some of the home movies in the hope that they would be seen more broadly.

It indeed might be the case that some films were intended for Ko and his family, especially those which capture intimate family moments. Someone outside the family would not be unable to recognize any faces or understand the intimate moments that were captured. Some descriptions of the films do identify people filmed, like Patricia and Anita Tong in *Rice Bowl [Festival]*, but they offer nothing more than names. Who were these two girls to Mathew Ko and what were their histories? Without any further information, the films are not useful in garnering any deeper social or cultural meanings.

However, in looking closely at the Ko collection, it is obvious why they have been chosen to be preserved, archived, and digitized for public viewing, especially from a historical

perspective. The films are grounded in context, distinctly capturing intimate family interactions, but also the Chinese community in Victoria from the 1930s to the 1950s in vibrant color. Ko filmed recognizable places in Victoria and important events that occurred in the city. The film stock is very well preserved and provides the viewer with clear and careful compositions, vibrant colors, and crisp images. Also, while the shots are presumably mainly handheld, they are quite static and stable for the most part.

The subjects themselves are filmed in their traditional and daily clothing which reflect the times in their faces and mannerisms. Like many home movies, Ko's tend to capture special events like holidays or public celebrations, while also ensuring that the Chinese community was represented. Ko's films span the second World War and give a sense of Victoria and the Chinese community's contribution to the war effort. Ko especially gives attention to community and public events like the British Royals arrival, and parades through Victoria and Vancouver. Important Chinese Community happenings are also filmed, like protests and a fundraising event for the war. Still some of his footage focuses on the seemingly mundane like children eating ice cream, and shots of flowers in the sun. Many of his films show an interesting mixture of all of these, revealing what are uniquely Chinese Canadian people, places and times.

1939 Victoria Welcomes the King and Queen

Two films in particular could easily be of public interest due to their content: *1939 Victoria Welcomes the King and Queen* and *1939 Rice Bowl*. In *1939 Victoria Welcomes the King and Queen*, Ko films the preparation and arrival of the royals in just under five minutes. He films Victoria's Iconic Empress hotel adorned with large, decorative bright blue, red, yellow and white ribbons. Ko also has close up shots that set the scene such as an engraved frame from a prior visit from the Prince of Wales in 1919 and a coat of arms painting with the words "LONG MAY

THEY REIGN” and “MAY 1939.” Later, Ko shoots other parts of the hotel with numerous Union Jack flags hanging. Other shots show the city of Victoria in brief long shot of men and a boat on the harbour, long shot of the street with old cars passing by, a camp of boy scouts nearby, and close up shots of flowers blooming. At 1:38 Ko films a series of shots of an older Asian couple, sharply dressed and leaving a large home for what we later see is a procession for the King and Queen in front of City Hall on Douglas Street. Like other clips, peppered throughout the short film are moving portraits of the men and women of his time. Faces, both Asian and Caucasian, casually look into the camera and smile, knowing that they are being captured on film by Ko. Two elderly Asian people, a man and a woman, walk outside a home. Ko then cuts to the parade where military men are marching with their guns on their shoulders. Men in red uniforms escort the sleek black convertible that King George VI and Queen Elizabeth arrive in. At 00:03:25, a four second shot follows their arrival, depicting a welcome banner with presumably Chinese women underneath standing in satiny colourful dresses (it is difficult to be certain from the shot distance). The banner is in blue letters against a white background and reads “Chinese Community Greet Their Majesties.” Underneath are individuals standing in front of red and gold banners and four blue signs that say, “long live the king.”

Ko then shoots a high angle shot, perhaps inside a building of the royals being escorted to a second location, before he is back on the ground at eye level filming them drive by near the harbour and hotel building. At this open-air location there are crowds of people, along with Mounties, and other men in uniforms.

The royals arrive in cars and are escorted to a low wooden stage where they pose and take photos with others of importance. Ko films many of these shots quite close to the royals, directly behind their stage. However, the majority of the footage appears to be taken from the

crowd in point of view shots from where Ko was standing, lending to its realism. The royals are then driven away, and a seemingly random montage occurs for the next ten seconds. At 5:07, the film quality seems much lower and there appears to be an image on the film of the words “VICTORIA WELCOME THE KING AND QUEEN MAY 1939.” The words are barely visible, and hard to see since they are transparent against a montage of shots. Ko captures bright shots in the daytime of a home, tree-lined pathway, building in the background of trees, and a large white gate appearing to be the entrance to a property. All shots have the trace of those words over the image and the last shot long shot of the tall gate ends with white dots, signaling the end of a film strip. At 0:05:17 a new segment begins with a close up of a soldier followed by a medium long shot of him and others in the same brown and green uniforms and hats. Next are short shots from one second to a few seconds of regular boats and steamboats on the sea, framed in long and extreme long shots. At 00:05:35 when a large steamboat fills the frame, moving from right to left a small Union Jack flag is scene briefly in the bottom right of the frame in the foreground. Given the size of the UK flag, it’s possible that others are standing near the water, and that the boat may be the one that the royals departed Victoria from.

1939 Victoria Welcomes the King and Queen is a film which seems to have minimal editing or preparation and allows viewers to experience the King and Queen’s arrival. Ko is also careful to include the Chinese community, with shots of the elderly couple leaving their home - to presumably join the public celebrations of the British royals - and the welcoming banner of the Chinese community. The shot of the Chinese welcome banner appears to be from a different vantage point from the previous shot, showing that Ko was deliberate in his filming of the group amongst a sea of predominantly Caucasian Canadians.

Like his other films, when filming human subjects at close range, Ko seems to utilize the film camera much like a photo camera. In the absence of any forced movement as in a parade or dance, Ko instead has static shots of faces and people. They usually smile, perhaps happy or reluctantly agreeing to be filmed by Ko. In showing buildings, Ko films just enough to show the architecture but does pan and tilt to give a greater view. However, Ko does provide some shots framed further away, perhaps not as his first shot of scenes, but enough that they are somewhat establishing of the scene and recognizable spots in Victoria. These shots as well as very close and direct shots of the King and Queen as well as his shots of Chinese Canadian's participating in this event easily show why this film is important as a record of history in Victoria, Chinese Canadians and of Canada, a commonwealth country.

While the descriptions of the footage are helpful for a non-native Victorian in understanding where particular places and events were filmed, they do not wholly correspond to the footage. Though what is filmed is described, their length and the prominence that Ko gives to certain subjects is missing. Recurring faces are difficult to identify, and any formal analysis is omitted.

1939 Rice Bowl

Another film that may be of greater public interest is a film that reflects the attitudes of Chinese Canadians during the outset of World War II, *Rice Bowl 1939*. The film mainly focuses on a protest through Chinatown and downtown Victoria, as well as a fundraising event for the war effort. It begins in black and white with the arrival of a seaplane moving quickly on water with a forested shore behind it. Asian dignitaries deplane, with one woman holding two large flower bouquets and walking with other Asian people. They are greeted by a crowd of people, some of which are lined up by a railing. The next few shots are of cars lined up in a procession,

containing those who have arrived by plane. One car passes by with a sign on the windshield handwritten in Chinese characters. The cars arrive to a building, and a high angle medium shot shows that same woman emerging from a car holding a bouquet and waving. The dignitaries climb stairs and enter a building. The street is busy with many Asian men in suits and ascot caps and fedoras.

At 00:01:48 a new segment begins in vibrant color with a medium shot of a metal scrap on the back of a truck. In the next shot Ko pans right from scrap on the floor to a shot of a boy holding a sign. Following these are images of the protestors with signs that say, “FOR HUMANITY FOR WORLD PEACE STOP SCRAP IRON FROM CANADA” and “FOR PEACE SUPPORT EMBARGO!” A crowd of workers are nearby with both Caucasians and Asian men milling about. Ko films the scrap of metal at the edge of the dock, where a policeman is standing, and blue-collar workers sit nearby. Men, both Asian and Caucasian hold other signs as scrap iron is being piled up onto a truck. One of the signs say, “Chinese Youth Forum PROTEST THIS SHIPMENT OF SCRAP IRON TO JAPAN,” while another sign points out an irony “Scrap iron to aggressors medical aid to China WHY?” Many shots follow of about half dozen to a dozen men walking one after another with rope over their shoulders holding two signs in front and behind them. Ko then films more scrap metal from various distances from long shot to close up in piles with people among them.

The next couple of brief segments are leisurely with people aboard a steamboat named the Princess Kathleen, people in swimsuits sunbathing on dock, and others enjoying the sun on a canoe including two Asian men. At 00:05:10 Ko then films a longer segment in Victoria Chinatown that features an official type of event with a stage set up and children standing, people taking photos, people addressing a large crowd in the street, two women performing a

dragon dance, and documents being signed. Asian families are in the street, smiling and posing for the camera. Ko also films little children playing and smiling. A sign over the road for a “Rice Bowl Festival” reveals that the event is a fundraiser for the war effort. There are also several Caucasians in the crowd that Ko films. Ko also captures the attendees arrange themselves in rows for a large group picture. The film ends with shots of women and some men in front of a colorful Chinese building.

The film is historically remarkable like that of the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth since it displays older parts of Victoria as well as the Chinese community during the start of World War II. The picture is clear and bright and displays the styles of dress, hair, and people of that time. Also noteworthy is the solidarity of the Caucasian and Asian community, as many Caucasian men also joined in the protest against sending scrap metal to Japan and many whites also attended the Rice Bowl event. Culturally, the film shows how Chinese immigrants continued their traditions with the lion dance, traditional clothing worn for special occasions, and the use of their language which is displayed throughout the film on storefronts and signs in Victoria.

There is also evidence in this film that Ko carefully edited and planned some of his films, since there is black and white footage as well as colour film. White dots also appear on this film at 00:11:30, which could also indicate the end of one reel. Ko also shoots from different vantage points including close up at eye level and long shots from above the action - likely inside buildings or even on rooftops. While the University of Victoria’s website states that all of Ko’s films were “initially intended for home, personal use” many of his films go beyond the home movie category as polished amateur works featuring subjects and events outside the domestic.

Due to the obvious historical and cultural value of the films it's easy to see why they have been selected by the University of Victoria and digitized for public access.

Archives in Alberta

Presently, of the 45 archives recognized by the Archives Society of Alberta, there are 11 archives in the Calgary area that hold membership with the Society. Stipulations of membership include operating procedures consistent with recognized archival practices and that archives provide public access to their archives. The Archives Society of Alberta was contacted and the description for the project and poster was circulated on their listserv, requesting members for information of any information on holdings of similar materials to contact the researcher. The 11 archives in and around the Calgary area were personally contacted and it was found that none of these archives have significant holdings of moving images from Asians residing in the Calgary area. It is unsurprising that many of these archives have no holdings of such films since many are special interest archives.

Similar, yet not significant to the project, were holdings identified from The City of Calgary, and the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies. The City of Calgary archives, which primarily holds those produced by the municipal government of The City of Calgary, has one moving image item showcasing Southeast Asians as part of the first Annual Multicultural Youth Talent Show in 1998 held at Devonian gardens and includes a traditional dance by youth members of the Filipino Community. While not all 'home movie' type films have been inventoried by Whyte Archives they have identified six items with 16mm reels that features East Asian content and people. These include depictions of Japanese tourists who have visited the Yukon (1964), Banff National Park (ca. 1975) and Jasper National Park (ca. 1975-1995), as well as the travels to Japan and China (ca. 1920s-1930s) of mountain photographer Byron Harmon,

whose vast collection of visual ephemera is held by the museum. While these films might feature some Southeast Asian culture and people, they are not by any Southeast Asians themselves and only feature them as minor characters, thus falling outside of the scope of the thesis research. While these films were identified, not all holdings by archives and museums may be processed. There could possibly be films that are unknown to their own museum or archival staff of Southeast and Northeast Asian Home Movies. However, one significant collection was identified at the Archives of Alberta: the Yamabe and Wright fonds.

Yamabe and Wright Collection

The content comes from the Yamabes, a Japanese Canadian family who are key members of the Western Canadian Church of God and the church's now defunct post-secondary institute, the Gardner Bible College (formerly the Alberta Bible Institute). The collection consists of almost four thousand photos and over 20 hours of footage on videocassettes and small gauge film.²⁶

Family History

Richard Yamabe was born in 1928 and is the son of Japanese immigrants who settled and worked in the Okanagan valley fruit industry in British Columbia. After the Pearl Harbor attack during World War II, the Yamabes were classified as enemy aliens by the Canadian government but were not forced into internment camps since they were further from the Pacific coast. However, as a result of this classification, Richard was delayed entrance into the University of British Columbia (UBC) and completed Grade 13 in Penticton. There he converted to Christianity and joined the Church of God. Richard was able to attend UBC from 1947 to 1951,

²⁶ Yamabe and Wright Family, 1985-2010, No. PR3683, Yamabe & Wright Family fonds, *Provincial Archives of Alberta*. <https://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/Details.aspx?ObjectID=PR3683&dv=True&deptID=1>

completing a Bachelor of Science degree. He then had hopes to become a missionary in Japan and attended the School of Theology at Indiana's Anderson Bible School from 1951 to 1954 in preparation to do so. However, Richard delayed his mission in order to teach high school science at the Alberta Bible Institute in Camrose since they needed a teacher. Richard continued to be an instructor and dean until 1974 when he left to work full time at the Western Canadian Church of God's publishing division. He remained there as editor and operator until 1988, while also pursuing his photography hobby.

Marianna Wright was born in Kirkcaldy, Alberta in 1930 to Caucasian immigrants, her father Walker was from England and her mother Eva was likely from the United States. Walker had joined the Church of God during World War I and trained as a pastor at Anderson Bible School from 1922 to 1924 where he met Marianna's mother. They moved to Canada in 1926, married and had three children, including Marianna. The family moved to around Alberta and Manitoba where they continued their pastoral work for various congregations. Marianna studied at the Alberta Bible Institute in Camrose where she met Richard. The two were married in 1955 and had two children. The couple travelled to several international missions before retiring and moving to Japan from 1996-1998 to fulfill Richard's dream of doing pastoral work in Japan.

The Church of God is a Pentecostal protestant Christian movement with roots that began in the late 1880s in Tennessee.²⁷ According to the Camrose Church of God, in the late 1910s a small teacher training institute created by a woman who began a bible study using materials published by the Anderson Indiana's Church of God.²⁸ Subsequently in the 1920s when the Alberta Bible Institute moved to Camrose an informal worship started in the library, out of which

²⁷ Crews, Mickey. *The Church of God: A Social History*. University of Tennessee Press, 1990, 1-6.

²⁸ Camrose Church of God. "An Introduction to the Camrose Church of God." <http://www.camrosechurchofgod.ca/about-us/> (accessed November 27, 2019)

grew an official church in the 1950s complete with a pastor. Thus, both Richard and Marianna were early members of the Church of God in Camrose who were important members of the congregation and perhaps of the town itself. The 1991 Government of Canada Census states that the population of the town of Camrose was only 13,420 and in 1996, the census indicated that only 10 people had knowledge of the Japanese language with only 315 visible minorities.²⁹ So the family, especially Richard Yamabe as a Japanese-Canadian, may have been quite prominent as Japanese Canadians in his church and the greater community.

Family Films

Digitized versions of the entire Yamabe and Wright home movies collection were provided for streaming by the Archives of Alberta for this project. The collection encompasses three different formats (8mm, Super 8, as well as videocassettes) and was taken over the span of 41 years (from 1964 to 2005). Some of their films may not be considered home movies, but rather, amateur films of subjects other than family. On the other hand, much of it does consist of footage taken of people the Yamabes might consider family, such as their pastors and those in their congregation.

The three 8mm films are each about half an hour long and are likely many individual films spliced together into three parts. The films were all taken during one trip to Japan in 1964 and silent and shot on colour film. The first of the films is called “Our trip to Japan” suggesting that both Marianna and Richard traveled together. They feature slice of life travel footage in varying lengths and framing such as rice fields, waterfalls, people dressed in traditional clothing, workers in a yard, boats on bodies of water, the view of a busy city street as well as tourist destinations like temples and shrines. The footage also distinctly features point of view

²⁹ Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 95F0181XDB96001.

travelling shots inside of a bus and in some cases train, showing the seats in the foreground and view outside of the windows. These travelling shots take up almost a third of the 8mm footage and seems mainly focused on the motion and landscape beyond the windows of the bus. Other tourist destinations and iconic images can be identified such as the cenotaph at Hiroshima's Peace Park, the White Stupa in Gotemba Peace Park and red torii gates. At 9:54 to 10:00 of part two, there are also two consecutive shots that show a crowd of people walking near a dozen or so sakura (cherry blossom) trees. This may place the filming sometime in the spring when the sakura blossoms flower.

Stylistically the shots are short, from less than a second to as long as around 15 seconds. Shots are all handheld, and mainly medium to long shots. There are also many dark interior shots due to the format needing more light to expose the image, many of these seem to be of theatre performances that the Yamabes attended. They also used intertitles in two instances to signal where they were in Japan. Part one, at the two-minute mark includes a shot of text for a few seconds that appears on the screen as follows in white letters against a black background:

NACHI
FALL
OSAKA
NARA
.
KYOTO

In part two at 00:20:06 displaying for about six seconds is:

HAKONE
ATAMI
AND
NAGOYA

The intertitles allow the viewer and likely the participants to know where the footage was shot in Japan during their trip in 1964. Since many 8mm films were spliced together, there may have been more editing than the intertitles and joining together of films. The first intertitles also say “FALL” while the second film shows a couple shots of cherry blossoms. This might point to an extended trip for the Yamabes. These first films in their collection are valuable documents of travelers from Canada and their experience of visiting Japan. It also immortalizes the places of travel on film and the people within them. However, they may not fully be seen as domestic home movies since they don’t mainly feature people, are not shot in the home and have editing done outside of the camera.

However, some of their other small gauge films as well as a large part of their videotapes are of their family. It’s uncertain to know whether the other two small gauge films feature the Yamabes since they are not shot in the home, and as an outsider to the family I do not know exactly what the family members look like. However, the Super 8 film shot in 1965 is of footage outside the home of Caucasians smiling and laughing and playing outside. The 16mm film shot in 1968 on the other hand might be of a mission that the Yamabes were on, or a travel film. There is some religious signage, distinct architecture, as well as a stone wall that appears for a few seconds near the end of the four-minute film. Writing symbols that are not English appear above a with a red triangle with “Y.M.C.A” written and the word “Jerusalem” underneath, suggesting they were in that city in 1968.

Most of the remaining footage centers around the family and their church community. More footage occurs in Japan in the late 90s and features some of their travels, walking around and learning how to cook. Much of the video tapes both in Japan feature Church of God services as well as the meals shared afterwards with the congregation. Sometimes the Yamabes split their

home movies with half as church services taken from one vantage point on a tripod and the other half home movie footage of their family. Other content includes one tape from travels in Germany, India and Africa, as well as a two-hour tape from one vantage point in a medium shot of what is probably the church bulletin board. The bulletin board's title is "Anniversary 40th" and might signal a milestone for their church community.

Undoubtedly the collection reflects the history and values of the Yamabes who were active members of their church. Much of the church footage is taped in that setting, with the camera static and behind the pews facing towards the front of the church with the backs of heads of churchgoers shown. This footage may not be considered home movies due to their content, static picture and potential to be shown easily to others and for them to understand or glean meaning from it. However, traditional home movie footage is mixed into the videotapes, and shows the Yamabes in more private settings with their close relations during mundane everyday activities as well as special events. One Yamabe videotape also goes against the grain of regular home movies since it captures the funeral service of Richard's mother.

Because of the mixture of various amateur film modes and content, the home movies are especially useful in looking at moving image formats in relation to Japanese Canadian culture, religion and travel. The Yamabes traveled frequently to Japan while also practicing their religion there. Since the filmers and subjects are also prominent members of a small community in Alberta, one can easily make the case that the movies were preserved and made accessible by the Archives of Alberta since they are significant to that community's history. However, without actual interviews of the moviemaker or participants, viewers can only glean meaning through contextual research and by making observations based on viewing. If one were to study the Yamabe and Wright collection without interviews, only assumptions and speculations could be

made. This project seeks to gain a more nuanced view of the families involved, their history and their films. It does so by going beyond the text and interviewing the moviemaker and subjects to provide a richer, more contextual and subjective reading of the home movie. Moreover, the movies are imbued with the experience of the families in both creating them as well as viewing them.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Unlike other forms of cinema, home movies tend to lack temporal continuity and have no character development or a narrative to follow. Families also tend not to produce written documentation or descriptions of their home movies. Home movie making technology is also one based on storing and creating family memories in the moment.¹ For these reasons, as well as the private and idiosyncratic nature of home movies, the most appropriate methodology for the project was deemed to be an interview of participants during a viewing of their movies and a general textual analysis of the contents of the actual home movies themselves. This thesis seeks to overcome some pitfalls of earlier scholarly works on home movies whose studies only rely on contextual and textual analysis. By supplementing my textual analysis with the interview, subjects can fill in the textual gaps, contextualize the film and help make sense out of private domestic footage.²

The Interview

In this project, the researcher utilized the semi-structured interview in tandem with viewing the home movies together with the participants in order to illuminate the life stories, background information, and memories of the participants and their family films. Film theorist Roger Odin argues that the film itself is secondary to its function of collective interactions and that gathering family or friends to create something together is more important than a finished product. Home Movies are intimate practices, calling forth a reading that is not like the documentary mode since it is private. Viewing films also invites a double process for

¹ Aasman, Susan. "Impossible Family Portraits: Users, New Media Technologies and the Writing of Amateur Media History." *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 11, no. 2-3 (2013): 111-125

² Morner regrets the lack of ethnographic methods in home movie studies in: Morner, Cecilia. "Dealing with Domestic Films: Methodological Strategies and Pitfalls in studies of Home Movies from the Predigital Era." *Moving Image* 11, no. 2 (2011): 22-45.

remembering: collective remembering and individual remembering. In viewing films, interactions occur, and memories may be triggered by the scene but may not necessarily be related to the images shown. Odin considers viewing a family film to also be a performance that reconstructs a family history. Individuals also remember their own experiences within the collective as a process of “returning to the self.” Moreover, according to Roger Odin “context resides in the experience of a Subject” and when reading a home movie “commentary imbues images with meanings.”³ Home movies are filmed among a close circle of relations, be that family or friends. Their viewing is intended for that same audience and thus the home movie image “depends on recognition for its pleasurable effect, most of the time.”⁴ Thus the interview is an ideal qualitative method for this project. Participants are able to share their background as well as the experience of creating, performing, remembering and experiencing the viewing of their private footage. The interview is open-ended and flexible, allowing more of a conversation than a rigidly set question and answer between the researcher and participants regarding both their home movies and life stories.

Unlike a truly in-depth life story in which multiple interviews might construct the life story of an individual or individuals, the research hones in on the background of the participants in relation to their home movies in one or two interviews. Moreover, due to time constraints, email correspondence was also utilized to enhance and clarify in-person answers by participants. However, the life story interview was used as an opportunity for participants to reconstruct their story in their own words, and also allowed them to bring forth subjective meanings within their

³ Roger Odin, "Reflections on the Family Home Movie as Document: A Semio-Pragmatic Approach," in *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*. Ed Karen L. Ishizuka, and Patricia R. Zimmerman, 255-271, University of California Press, 2008.

⁴Kleinmans, Chuck. "My Aunt Alice's Home Movies." *Journal of Film and Video* (1986), 26.
<http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/docview/2166702?accountid=9838>.

home movies.⁵ This project's approach also used participants life stories to explore the individual as both part of a family unit and ethnic group.

The limitations of interviews are parallel to home movies, where people may act or do things in a certain way in front of the camera that may not reflect reality. In interviews, participants are in a particular situation and one cannot assume that what the person says is what they believe or will say or do in another situation. People do not necessarily have fixed attitudes and may change them over time.

Interview Questions

To provide historical context for the family and their background, the conversations with participants solicited a life story from them as well as included other interview questions relating to the films itself. These resulted in four main groups of questions and other follow up questions which usually followed organically in conversation.

1. Background questions:

What is your ethnic background?

How long has your family been in Canada?

Why or how did you or your family immigrate to Calgary/Canada?

Why Canada and not elsewhere?

2. Context:

When and where were these home movies taken?

How and where were the films or videos stored?

Who is the cameraperson and what is their background?

What is your relation to them?

3. Memory:

Are you able to describe for me, in detail, the contents of your home movies?

When was the last time these home movies were viewed and who saw them?

⁵ The life story interview as a methodology was considered as explored by: Bertaux, Daniel, and Martin Kohli. "The Life Story Approach: A Continental View." *Annual review of sociology* 10, no. 1 (1984): 215-237.

4. Technical questions:

Was the cameraperson trained in any filmmaking?

Do you remember what type of camera or specific format type was used?

Along with these questions, more specific queries were made during the viewing of the home movies according to the content appearing on screen.

Textual Analysis

The researcher interviewed participants and viewed a select few home movies with them. However, most families provided a much larger media collection that was viewed later and required textual analysis. This project follows earlier case studies and projects of amateur film and uses their methods as a guide for contextualizing and analyzing Asian home movies from Calgarians. This thesis also attempts a “thick description” of the home movies as inspired by Clifford Geertz.

Building off previous writings by philosopher Gilbert Ryle who first introduced the concept for “thick description,” Clifford Geertz believed that the context of an author’s interpretations must be “thickly” described because inherently, conceptual structures in ethnography are complex or “thick.”⁶ Geertz writes that “what we call data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to.”⁷ Regarding home movies, examples of “thin descriptions” could include viewing notes provided by archives that only provide a description of what is captured on a tape or film. This thesis attempts a thick description of the home movies by providing life stories and in-depth descriptions of the footage captured. These life stories may provide a glimpse into the

⁶ Joseph G. Ponterotto, "Brief Note on the Origins, Evolution, and Meaning of the Qualitative Research Concept Thick Description," *The Qualitative Report* 11, no. 3 (2006): 538-541.

⁷ Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Cultural Geography Reader*, ed. Patricia Lynn Price and Tim Oakes (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 34.

circumstances of production and motivations or intentions behind the moviemaking. Moreover, the life stories themselves are given additional context through research on the immigration, culture, history, and traditions of each specific family or ethnic group. By providing a thick description of each of these home movies, I acknowledge that this thesis itself is an interpretation of individual and family experiences. However, providing a deeper analysis with more context by conducting research, textual analysis, and interviews, allows a more nuanced look at the movies and of the experiences of those who participated in this project.

Inspired by previous projects and studies, the thick description of the home movies in this research included viewing the footage for repeating themes or motifs. The project examined the patterns and “iconographic” objects, why they were recurring, and their relationship to the individuals in question. Some shot-by-shot analysis of the home movies was included in the attempt to see how each camera person captured footage. However, the focus is more on comparisons with existing writing from film theory and past research on home movie aesthetic, technique, and content, noting why or why not they conform or deviate from it. Because the project’s scope was not a large dataset for a true quantitative content analysis, but is informed by that methodology, it categorizes similar home movie data to identify similarities and differences of content and style.⁸ Since the project draws from specific ethnic groups it will look to their home movies for potentially unique views of the world and their significance as cultural, social and historical objects of value. Moreover, the project includes contexts of production and family history in the attempt to make specific inferences based on unique circumstances, modes of production and identities.

⁸ Stemler, Steve. An Overview of Content Analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 7 no. 17. 2001, 1-6.

Case Study Structure

The project provides case studies for each ethnic group and family including their history, home movie content and analysis, and memory and reception of their films. First, is an overview of the collections and an establishment of who participated in the research. Next, is a write up of individual and collective histories and identities based on the interviews that participants provided, and academic research conducted to enrich their stories. Afterwards, based on the above and on the viewing of their home movies, the footage is examined as textual documents in the context of this project's literature review and textual methods as outlined above. Finally, the memory and reception of the home movies and any other conclusions are made.

Scope

The research began by soliciting small gauge films (16mm, Super 8, and 8mm film) from all Southeast Asian groups in Calgary. People of Southeast and Northeast Asian descent include those from the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Koreas, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. Of interest were documents of historical, cultural or social significance unique to East Asians residing in the Calgary Region, however this could not be ascertained until movies were viewed and so any and all films needed to be asked for. Posters and information were circulated via email to all major ethnic community groups as well as to over 45 churches, community centers and Asian restaurants. Emails were circulated among major groups including the Asian Heritage Foundation, Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre, and Philippines Cultural Centre Foundation. From 2016-2017 only one participant was found, a Chinese gentleman with two reels of Super 8 film. A local CBC interview was also conducted in June 2017 to solicit more films, with continuing circulation of the poster, yet no other participants were found. The scarcity in these findings may

be due to a few factors. One such factor is the Canadian government's prewar and pre point system policies which discriminated against Asian Immigrants. As Simmons notes, the policies changed to give preference to skilled workers from anywhere, Canada became known as a peacekeeping country, and Canada was expanding their international trade efforts beginning in the 1970s. These factors all positively affected the flow of Asians to Canada and coincided with increased access to moviemaking technologies that were more economical and mobile.

Thus, the research scope was expanded to include videotape formats which are much more prevalent amongst Asian Canadian immigrants in Calgary. The scope of the project includes five participants [N = 5] from four different ethnic groups: Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino and Cambodian. Home movie formats in this project include Super 8 and the Video Home System (VHS). Over 65 home movie items were included in the project amounting to over 95 hours of footage.

Limitations

In addition to the inherent research limitations of a qualitative study utilizing interviews, some additional research limitations should be mentioned. These limitations include language barriers, time constraints, ethics and research scope. First, while I do understand and speak Tagalog (Filipino), I do not speak Cambodian, Vietnamese, Cantonese or Mandarin. For these languages I relied on participants to translate their home movies and relied on children to translate for their parents. While most parents did speak English, some of them were less fluent than others. Also, if I had more of an understanding of these other languages, my observations may much more nuanced. Since I had only a limited time to meet them to both watch their home movies and interview them, I was only able to view a select number of movies with them and have them translate for me.

As such, another limitation to this research was time constraints. Though I attempted to choose home movies I thought were of most interest to view with participants, because I had limited time with them, I was only able to view between two to five films with participants. Additionally, with extra time, more of the family members could be interviewed for the project. Each of the families had more than one child, though only one was interviewed and participated in the research. With more time to view the films with more participants and with translators I might have been able to glean more from just viewing them in solitary.

One other limitation is due to ethics. Since not every single person in each of the home movies is alive, identifiable and provided consent to be used in the research, no still images could be used within this thesis. In place I have provided detailed descriptions of the footage where relevant to provide an idea of what was in the home movies.

The scope of the research was also a constraint. Because there was only one initial participant the research was expanded, changing the nature and scope of the research. Moreover, since Henry Cheng was the first participant and had only one film, his case study is less rich than the others since the process and method of research was improved.

While the aim of the research is not to generalize about the people or groups studied, more participants within the same ethnic groups could provide a more nuanced look at each ethnic group's engagement with home movies. Also, since each family did use other film or video formats, a broader study that included all their footage on all formats would provide richer insights and content to view or analyze.

Data Analysis: Segmentation and Themes

Due to the varying lengths of footage in the home movies, each movie was segmented during viewing. In other words, in order to organize the shot information, footage within one

tape or film was grouped together by different locations, events, or days of shooting. Usually the segmentation was obvious when the location or setting changed. But, for example, a discerning eye was needed when different clothing was chosen yet time of day seemed the same. However, other groupings and categorizations were made when they made sense, since, like much home movie material, the footage is untidy.

While each collection was examined for recurring motifs or recurring objects, three general themes were identified in all home movies in the case studies: vacations, special events, and domestic everyday scenes. Local content included filming in recognizable places in Western Canada, as well as filming during events such as the Calgary Stampede and Canada Day. Due to strong variances among content and themes, it was concluded that creating a typology of such was not well suited to the project. Instead, the research was divided amongst ethnic groups and further into families in order to provide focus on each group's specific historical contexts and background in Calgary and Alberta.

Chapter 4: Case Studies

What follows are five case studies of Asians and their home movies beginning with the older format: Super 8. I expand on their life stories, providing a detailed textual analysis supported by the interviews conducted with them, and present the content of the films to elucidate the stylistic and technical qualities of the home movies. Additionally, I searched for traces of unique and distinct visual histories for each family and explored their footage in their specific immigrant, local and individual contexts. I also looked at how they communicate their leisure or family lives and/or if their visual records give value to or illuminate their customs or ideologies.

Henry Cheng Film

Henry Cheng, a Hong Kong native and Cantonese speaker, immigrated to Canada with his family when he was just 12 years old. He attended both junior and senior high in Calgary, and was quickly immersed in the Canadian school setting, learning English quickly. After graduating he attended SAIT for architecture courses and soon found work in drafting. Subsequently, after three to four years, Henry attended the University of Calgary and completed a degree in computer engineering. He then worked at an oil and gas company before retiring in 2015. In 1979, Henry began his hobby of capturing footage on Sony Beta videotapes when he was around 20 years old. After a trip back to China in 1981, he began using other formats. As a videographer, Cheng filmed his family, as well as volunteered or was hired to film events such as weddings and performances.

Two reels of Super 8 film were provided by Henry for the project and are the only two Super 8 films that he had in his possession. The honeymoon film reels are a distilled version of footage from 30 to 40 Super 8 film cartridges, each 300 ft long. Though the footage was

captured over the course of about one month, the combined duration of the two reels is about five minutes long. Cheng spliced together all the footage he filmed on and trimmed any underexposed frames. At the time of his participation, the researcher was only accepting film footage. Cheng explained after delivering the reels that he likely had hundreds of hours of home movie footage in his collection on 8mm videotape and S-VHS, all shot by him. He described the contents as being primarily of his wife and kids as well as their parents. He says that at one point he had digitally catalogued his home movie collection in excel spreadsheets with each tape numbered, described, and categorized. However, his computer broke and he regrets not printing any of the spreadsheets out. “All I have is a number, I don’t even know what’s in it” he explained.

As aforementioned, Cheng has been capturing footage on videotape since 1979. His steady, well-paying job in the oil and gas industry also allowed him the luxury of buying cameras as they were released. Cheng informed me that he purchased a Vidicon Camera in 1981 which cost him around \$3,000 at the time. The Vidicon camera was plugged into a portable Betamax recorder which was slung over the shoulder. The recorder was approximately 15 inches wide, 3 inches thick, and very heavy. Henry explained that because it was extremely cumbersome to travel with, he purchased a Super 8 film camera for its portability. Also, the Super 8 film camera was very inexpensive to purchase at the time since competitors such as Betamax and S-VHS had been on the consumer market for over ten years. Thus, the film stock was expensive, but the price of the camera was quite cheap. Cheng explained that he is a very rough equipment user, and when he picked up his Super 8 camera after his honeymoon, he accidentally dropped it, breaking the lens. He was not compelled to repair it since he still had his Betamax recorder. Therefore, of all his footage, only the honeymoon was filmed on Super 8 film.

Henry and his wife traveled from Canada to Europe in 1986 for their honeymoon. At the time, his wife Sandy was 24 and Henry was 27. The film primarily consists of footage from a 27-day bus tour Henry and Sandy took through Europe including France, Germany, Holland, Italy, and Austria. Stylistically the film is what you would expect from a tourist home movie trip, with shots focused on the landscape, monuments and of course Henry's travel partner, Sandy. As the sole filmer, Cheng's home movie travelogue captures main attractions of cities with his wife in much of the film. Henry follows norms of the home mode in that there are no shots of Sandy sleeping, nor are there the unpleasanties of traveling like finding bathrooms, long distances of walking, or a focus on strangers as subjects. Henry also does not follow standard conventions of classical cinema since there is no clear narrative continuity, there are jump cuts, and varying lengths of shots. Often Cheng had numerous close ups, one second or less, of buildings or objects. In the film, these brief shots are frequently back to back, resulting in a montage of architecture or artifacts. Most of the footage is shot outdoors in broad daylight, with some dark shots indoors in what appears to be historical looking buildings, and some shots from inside the tour bus. Cheng also has longer following shots behind his wife or across the street from her. Sandy did not wield the camera and so Henry does not show up in the footage at all. However, Henry's absence in front of the camera does not fully remove him from the home movie making practice. What Henry shot and what he did not reflects back to him and his beliefs and values, specifically his relationship with his wife.

The film can be segmented by five to seven parts, for each location filmed. However, the two main segments that can be identified are the honeymoon as well as about a minute filmed in Vancouver at the Expo and in his relative's home. Each shot is less than one second to not more than a few seconds long and handheld. Upon viewing the film, it was not immediately apparent

to the researcher where the filming was taking place. Most of the footage is very picturesque and taken in the countryside of older looking European towns or verdant landscapes. There were also many close ups of what appeared to be the inside of museums and renaissance-type sculptures. Only some places were recognizable, such as the Florence Dome, the leaning tower of Pisa and shots of German flags which would place the footage in Germany. However, from the interview, Henry explained that the tour bus began in London, drove through Paris for wine, Bern in Switzerland, Germany, the Italian alps, Milan, Florence, Rome, Austria and Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

Because the couple's connecting flight was from Vancouver to Calgary, they were also able to briefly catch the historic Expo 86' in Vancouver. Footage of rows of screens with 1980s futuristic robots and gadgets were shown in a few shots at the end of the second reel. Afterwards there are dimly lit interior shots, four or five of them under 30 seconds long. Henry explained he had visited his relatives in Vancouver and taken the remainder of the film there.

The existence of the honeymoon and the filming are indicative of the couple's ability to spend leisure time as well as money on almost four weeks of vacation on another continent. Moreover, the film is a physical representation of the value they placed on their marriage and honeymoon. The honeymoon itself has European roots, meaning "month of honey."¹ The ancient Nordic tradition was to give the new couple enough mead—brewed from fermented honey and water— to drink for an entire month in order to encourage fertility. A honeymoon has also been studied as a rite of passage which performs the social function of "taking the newlyweds through status change rituals and gaining both financial and social independence as

¹ Lihong Xu, and Meihong Xu, "Comparison on Wedding Culture between China and Western Countries," Paper presented at the 2018 8th International Conference on Education, Management, Computer and Society (2018):425.

well as autonomy in the eyes of the society (family, friends, and relatives).² Different parts of the world including Asia, North America and Europe have post-marital traditions and rituals, many of which include a “honeymoon” where a newly wedded couple travels together after their union. The honeymoon is symbolic since it may not be the first time a couple has travelled together and is an extension of the marriage ritual.³ Sandy and Henry embarked on a honeymoon where they partook in a post wedding ritual and captured it on film. The film is evidence of their participation in a custom standard for many Canadian couples and may not be traditional for Chinese couples. Historically, local communities dictated the norms that governed the wedding. As an extension of the wedding, Sandy and Henry may have been following a standard honeymoon tradition that North American couples have been participating in for decades.

The honeymoon in North America has evolved from a 19th century “wedding trip” tradition where couples would travel with their friends and relatives. Beginning in the 1840s and 1850s, upper class couples and their relations would practice their marital roles and fulfill social obligations through a post-wedding trip. It was not until the 1970s that etiquette books promoted the idea that couples should go travel by themselves. By the 1900s, trips to more idyllic sites became more accessible and more common for newly wedded middle-class couples.⁴ Interestingly, similar circumstances influenced the evolution of filming formats as well as the modern North American honeymoon; both of which evolved in the span of the last 120 years.

Arguably, social forces, industrialization and modernization are factors that contributed to both the modern honeymoon and to the existence of the Cheng Wedding films. With

² Jakub Isański, "Honeymoon as a Rite of Passage: Sociological Analysis of Changes in the Phenomenon" *Folia Turistica*. 28. No. 2 (2013): 114.

³ *Ibid*, 124-125.

⁴ Kris Bulcroft, Richard Bulcroft, Linda Smeins, and Helen Cranage, "The Social Construction of the North American Honeymoon, 1880-1995," *Journal of Family History* 22, no. 4 (1997): 468.

industrialization emerged a middle class with economic means of travelling as well as the promotion of the nuclear family. Technological advancements in transportation and tourism changed the scope and the destination of honeymoons. The private trip was only possible since the rising middle class could now fly and afford airplane travel.⁵ Social forces such as the shift to romantic emotions in a wedding union also influenced changes to the honeymoon.

Advancements and modernization of moving picture technology allowed Cheng to have an affordably priced portable sized camera that he could take on the trip. With industrialization the emphasis on capturing the nuclear family on film was promoted by home movie and film magazines.⁶ Home movie filming was encouraged in order to capture an idealized nuclear family and their histories. The Cheng couple may have been influenced by these forces leading to the existence of their honeymoon film.

Reception and Memory

At the time of the research in 2017, Cheng was 59 years of age and Sandy was 56. 2016 was the Cheng's 30th wedding anniversary and therefore the film was over 31 years old at the time of the interview. The couple had never watched their film since they did not have access to a projector. Cheng had been concerned about its physical status musing that "hopefully the film emulsion doesn't stick together, the emulsion could bond together and then separate from the plastic and then disintegrate." However, the film was stored as old film should be, in their basement, in a cool dry space. Cheng explains that he did not put it in cardboard since a lot of old cartons can have chemicals, especially colour dye, that can fade the contents of the film. Even

⁵ Ibid, 469.

⁶ Zimmermann, Patricia R., *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film*. (Indiana University Press, 1995), 43.

though he had never seen it, the film was clearly important to Cheng, as evidenced by his careful handling and storing of it.

The Chengs were very happy and excited to be viewing their honeymoon for the first time. They remembered their trip but had no idea what was captured. The two also brought along a digital camcorder in order to record the projected film and re-watch it with their family. This viewing allowed the home movies to function as generational continuity, showing their kin their experiences, values and what their former selves looked like since they also recorded the film onto another medium to show their children. The lack of access to viewing equipment, as well as the excitement of viewing a small gauge film properly for the first time, is shared by the Julios who also provided Super 8 home movies for this project.

The Julio Super 8 Collection

16 reels of Super 8 film were provided by Art and Rose Julio for this project. The Julios are Filipino immigrants who captured unique family recordings on Super 8 from 1976 to around 1985. There are three pairs of reels in the collection: each of the daughter's christenings, two for Shelley Julio's baptism, two reels of Art and Rose's wedding, and a pair from outdoor events. Sheena Julio's baptism spans two and a half reels, with the other half capturing the family and relatives in Riley Park. One of the reels in their collection spans nine minutes long and appears to be three Super 8 reels spliced together with leader in between. The remaining eight films stand alone as three-minute recordings of the family. The reels can be segmented into as little as one part to four parts, a number much fewer than any of the videotape segmentations.

When asked about other media formats and the families' use, the participants explained that in addition to their Super 8 films and taking photographs, they began recording on 8mm videotape as soon it became available. Also, in viewing the films, it seemed possible that there

were missing films or a gap in recording. The Julios wedding was filmed in 1976 and there are no films of their eldest son as a newborn, nor are there any films of his baptism. However, there are films of both of their daughters' baptisms and footage of them as infants less than two years old. When asked, Rose believes other Super 8 films were misplaced or stored somewhere else. Rose says that "At the time when I was storing, if it doesn't fit then I move it. And I just don't know where they are, and there were so many of us putting everything in the basement after."

Like many home media collections, the Julios did not stick to one home movie format and did not systematically store or label their films. Thus, they were unsure of exactly what the content of their films were, save for a rough idea of a few of them based on memory and scant labelling. Besides the wedding footage and a nine-minute-long film, which was kept in opaque plastic containers, all other reels were stored in original yellow Kodak boxes that had a few words as titles in a plastic storage container about the size of a shoebox. Since they stored the films in an airtight container in a cold dark place, the films did not have any signs of "vinegar syndrome" or degradation. They were in excellent condition save for a few broken sprockets in two reels that were easily cut and spliced by the researcher during the preliminary viewing. There was also one standalone Super 8 cartridge that had not been processed yet.

The Julio Family History

The Julio's family history began when Rose first met Arturo "Art" in 1968. Rose recalls that her family would frequently move around since her father was a soldier in the Philippines. That year, when her father was stationed at an air force base, her mother found a rental home in the city of Las Piñas in Metro Manila which was Arturo's hometown. Rose explains:

Las Piñas is just like when you go to a small town - they know everybody. So of course, we're foreigner to them. So, they're all male singles in the group. They just knock on the door they wanted to meet the new girls in town. That's what happened.

24-year-old Arturo knocked on Rose's family home and about a year later, the two started dating. For three years the two went steady while both studying at post-secondary: Rose in nursing school and Arturo in civil engineering. According to Rose, in 1974 their relationship "naturally cooled" and the two broke it off, leaving both with good reasons to leave the Philippines. Art took a job at an oil and gas company in Tehran, Iran, and Rose immigrated to Canada as a nurse in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Rose explains that her mother had registered her to become a nurse in order to sponsor their family. "You know, we were really poor in the Philippines. So, we thought we would be better here in Canada or anywhere else in the States," Rose says. Her mother was given an application form by a friend whose daughter immigrated to Canada. That friend did everything in her power to help Rose immigrate to Canada. Rose says that at the time she knew nothing about Canada but trusted the friend. In order to help her mother immigrate to Canada as soon as she could, Rose dutifully completed the application. Following a review by a travel agent in the Philippines she then had a successful interview with the director of nursing in Newfoundland. St. John's was especially attractive to Rose and her peers because they were easily registered by reciprocity. This meant that Rose and other Filipino nurses' credentials were easily recognized in Canada and they did not have to retake their nursing exam to maintain their RN (Registered Nurse) license.

However, adapting and acclimating was difficult for Rose, although she did have help.

Rose recalls:

We didn't realize how far Newfoundland was. With time change and everything. And then we went there, there's this huge snowstorm. We were crying the whole time. And the director was good to us. We went there with no money; 50 dollars. That's all we have. But we have a job, so we took it. And they helped us. They let us stay in the nursing residence for three months until we found an apartment or something.

Also, because Rose and her cohort were fluent in English, they may have not faced the same language barriers as others immigrating. As nurses they had less difficulty in communicating with patients to provide accurate care and assimilating into their new home. Rose was a part of a wave of Internationally Educated Nurses (EINs) who sought better or different opportunities abroad than in their home country. A 1979 World Health Organization report which surveyed over 140 countries noted that the Philippines had the most migration of nurses out of the country.⁷ On average, the study estimated that around 2400 Philippine nurses were registered in foreign countries each year from 1965-1979. Canada was in the top three of receiving countries which included the United States and the United Kingdom. However, the number of Filipino nurses fell to 12% (159 nurses) of all foreigners licensed or registered in Canada by 1971. In the scope of the study, the peak of that percentage was 39% in 1966 at 1104 nurses registering to move to Canada. Thus, by the time Rose had applied and been accepted to migrate to St. John's in 1974, Canada had already established a history of approving a large number of nurse migrants into the country.

Canada's acceptance of nurses can be linked to a much more complex and wider discourse of American colonialism and labor migration in the Philippines.⁸ The United States occupation led to Americanized training and education of Filipino nurses that prepared them to find work in the Philippines or abroad rather than at home. As scholar Catherine Ceniza Choy explains, the unique context of nursing out migration from the Philippines "reflects the individual and collective desire for a unique form of social, cultural, and economic success

⁷ Pizurki Mejía, Mejía Royston, Ed Alfonso, Helena Pizurki, and Erica Royston, *Physician and Nurse Migration: Analysis and Policy Implications: Report of a WHO Study*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 1979, 44.

⁸ Barbara L. Brush "The Potent Lever of Toil: Nursing Development and Exportation in the Postcolonial Philippines." *American Journal of Public Health* 100, no. 9 (2010): 1572-1581.

obtainable only outside the national borders of the Philippines.”⁹ The culture of migration is evident to Rose’s story of studying to become a nurse in order to leave the Philippines and sponsor her family. In retrospect, Rose thinks that she would have taken any opportunity in a Western country like all her peers in nursing school. She states:

We would probably go anywhere, whatever opportunity to get, I would. That's what everyone did when graduated. We only took a few months of experience [in the Philippines] and then everyone was ready to go anywhere.

Rose, her family, and her peers believed that immigrating to a more developed country such as Canada would benefit them greatly. While there were a high percentage of nurses moving from the Philippines to Canada, it is by happenstance that her mother’s friend had immigrated to Canada and not anywhere else.

A year after Rose arrived in Canada, she and Art began writing letters and sending voice audiotapes back and forth through the mail, rekindling their romance. In 1976, 28-year-old Art sent Rose a ticket to Tehran in the mail. What Rose thought would be merely a vacation turned into a destination wedding. After resigning from her nursing job in St. Johns, at the age of 24, Rose flew to Iran in August of 1976. On September 28, the two signed papers for a civil marriage and later were married at a church in Tehran on December 8. Their reception was held at the U.S. embassy and attended by many in Tehran’s Filipino community. Just two months later, in February of 1977, Rose and Art left Iran for Calgary. Rose had previously begun the process of sponsoring Art as her fiancé while he was still in the Philippines. His papers were restored and within weeks Rose was able to sponsor Art as her spouse. Rose had always planned to move to Western Canada since she believed St. John’s was too expensive at the time. Calgary

⁹ Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 7.

was especially attractive to Rose, since her best friend and husband had moved there from St. John's.

In Calgary, Rose was easily able to secure a nursing job while Art found engineering work downtown. The family purchased their first house just a year later in 1978 for the purpose of sponsoring their parents and starting a family. The next year, in November of 1979, their firstborn child Andrew was born. Art and Rose also had applied and obtained their Canadian citizenship as soon as they could. At the time, it took three years; Rose obtained hers in 1979 and Art received his in 1980. No doubt the home purchase as well as obtaining their citizenship helped them to sponsor Rose's parents. The process took about a year and a half to successfully sponsor and bring her parents to Canada in June 1980. In April 1982, Rose and Art's second child Sheena was born, followed by their third and final child Shelley. The two continued to work in their respective field until the mid-2010s. While their son Andrew currently lives in Calgary, their daughters have green cards and are currently working and living in the United States. At the time that this project was written, Rose and Art were happily retired and still living in Calgary.

Aesthetics & Content

The Julio films are mainly focused around the children and important events in their life. As previously mentioned, the earliest film in the collection is the wedding of Rose and Art in 1976. Afterwards, the second oldest film would have to be sometime in late 1979 or 1980 since Andrew was born in 1979 and is shown as a toddler in the films. The family films include special events such as their wedding, birthdays, baptisms, scenes at home, as well as outings around Calgary such as the zoo, Riley Park and downtown around the Calgary Tower.

About two thirds of the Super 8 Julio films were taken by Art on a Bell & Howell camera he purchased in Iran sometime between 1975-76. The special occasions where they were both filmed, such as their wedding and the girls' christenings, were filmed by friends on his camera. Rose explains that she filmed when she was able to, but when the kids were younger Art did the filming. "I always tell him I'm better than you because I do it really slow," Rose quips. It's difficult to tell if Rose did any of the filming, since all the footage where Art is present in front of the camera, Rose is also present. It's safe to assume in those instances a friend or family of theirs wielded the camera.

Due to the high amount of lighting needed to expose a Super 8 film, about one third of the footage shot indoors with artificial light appears to be very dark. Some of the footage does appear to have a light shone on the subjects in order to illuminate them. However, for most of this footage, the darkness combined with the high granularity of Super 8 and out of focus images make much of it unclear with blurry faces and objects. Still, about half of the footage is shot in broad daylight outdoors, providing bright and clear images.

About two thirds of the footage was filmed by Art. The remainder was filmed by family friends in events that required Art's participation such as his wedding and both of his daughters' christenings. Along with some harsh lighting and unfocused images, there is also the poor framing in many shots as well as shakiness of the camera. All the footage is handheld, and it is apparent that there were no tripods used for the filming. Most of the shots in the footage span between one to ten seconds long and are framed between a close-up to medium shot. Presumably the short span of individual shots corresponds to the overall length of the film reels which are the standard filming length of about three minutes shot on 18 frames per second. No doubt brief filming lengths in comparison to videotape formats forces amateur filmmakers to be more

selective and forego the use of a tripod. Tripods may only allow for one vantage point for moving subjects, are less portable and force more planning when shooting excitable children who may not be aware of the filmer's framing. Art never planned out any of his shots nor learned how to shoot from manuals or courses but rather through trial and error. All the editing is in camera for the Julio films, except for splicing which occurs explicitly on two reels; the first part of their wedding video and a nine-minute-long reel with three films spliced together. However, in three films Art has included intertitles at the beginning of the them. Art filmed a birthday card as well as his handwriting for Andrew's fifth birthday which stated the date "NOV. 24, 1984". For their one film dedicated to Christmas at their home Art filmed a printed card attached to their Christmas tree where red and green lights flash in the background. On the card is "Christmas at Home" with "Christmas" in red, "at" in white and "Home" in blue inside a cartoon bird ornament of a white bird with an orange beak. This indicates that Art did some planning for some of his filming if not only to signal what day and what event was captured.

All the Super 8 contained soundtracks except the wedding video. However, the sound was often difficult to hear due to the poor quality of the magnetic track playing through the projector, as well as the overwhelming sound of the projector itself. When viewing the films, it was challenging to hear what people were saying. Likewise, during the viewing of the films with the Julio family, the sound was turned off due to this reason. This also allowed the researcher to pose questions simultaneously while watching the films with them.

Catholicism and Catholic Events

During the research, special religious events were identified and stood out amongst the rest of the films as important material reflection of the family and of their Filipino values and history. Roman Catholicism is one of the central themes of the Julio films and is reflected in their

wedding and Christening films. As Filipinos who were born and raised in the Philippines, the Julios were among a majority religious group whose religious roots stem from Spanish colonialism.¹⁰ In 2001, Statistics Canada identified that Filipino immigrants in the country were more than 80% Catholic with 15% belonging to either a Protestant denomination or another Christian group.¹¹ The Julios were a part of the Catholic demographic who continued to practice and worship in their new immigrant country.

The Julio's wedding was filmed in Iran by a family friend in 1976 and was split into two reels; the first reel is five minutes and 23 seconds long and the second a short 45 seconds. Each of the two reels were stored in two blue plastic canisters with the handwritten words in blue ballpoint pen *Art & Rose Wedding*. The filming duration suggests that two standard Super 8 cartridges were used to film on and then spliced together. The film was also not originally intended to be used since it was filmed by someone outside the family. However, its unique status as having never been properly watched, as well it being the earliest film in their collection warranted attention. The films depict their wedding day: their Roman Catholic ceremony inside of a church and their wedding reception held at the U.S. embassy in Tehran. Since the filming occurs on one day and follows the same event, the two reels can be segmented into one part for the entire day.

The first reel opens with a ring bearer holding a white pillow, followed by Rose and Art standing in front of a Catholic priest in robes. Rose is dressed in a long sleeve white dress with floral embellishments and a diaphanous white veil. Standing beside her is Art in a bowtie and light neutral coloured suit. Overall the shots in the reel vary in length from two seconds to a

¹⁰ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines : Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700*. New Perspectives in Southeast Asian Studies. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

¹¹ Lindsay, Colin, "The Filipino Community in Canada." *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-621-x/89-621-x2007005-eng.pdf> (2001).

maximum of 18 seconds long. The filmer shoots in a linear fashion catching all the big gestures of the event. Most of the shots are in medium frame or medium close up with the filmer standing on the left of the couple facing towards the entrance. From the same vantage point, for two seconds at 0:23, the priest's hand is seen holding a metal aspergillum to sprinkle holy water on what appears to be the pillow that the wedding rings are tied onto with ribbon. At 0:25 the couple is standing and Art hands something to Rose and in the next shot she is holding Art's hand and putting a ring on him. In the following shots, the filmer pans shakily across the people in the pews; the church appears to be full of other Filipinos attending the wedding.

At 0:48 a bridesmaid in orange and a groomsman are also seen placing a chord over the shoulders of Art and Rose. Known as the Lasso or Chord Ceremony, this Filipino Catholic tradition occurs after the wedding vows and is an infinity symbol which may illustrate the couples everlasting union and fidelity. In this case, the bridesmaid and groomsman place a figure eight rope over the Art and Rose and pin it to their clothing. Some of the earlier shots had the bridal party as incidental persons in the background, all in matching outfits so we know that these two were a part of their wedding party. Afterwards, from the same angle with Art on the left and Rose on the right, Rose then lifts her veil to receive Holy Communion from the priest in a medium shot. The priest's hand is shown at the right side of the frame placing a circular piece of unleavened bread onto her tongue. This act is a small part of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, a central ritual in the worship of Christian Communities and is one of four sections of Roman Catholic Mass. The main sections of a Catholic Mass include the Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist and Concluding Rites. The Liturgy of the Eucharist can be subdivided further into the preparation of the bread and wine, the prayer and the Communion

Rite.¹² The only ritual that is explicitly shown in the wedding film is the Communion Rite where Rose receives the eucharistic bread, a symbol of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Since the central, most important ritual was performed, it's safe to assume the entire mass took place for the wedding.

What follows the Eucharist are dimly lit medium shots of the signing of the marriage certificate by the couple and two witnesses from their bridal party. At 2:10, Rose and Art are then shown in a medium close up standing beside each other smiling still in front of the altar; this is the final shot inside of the church. Abruptly in the next shot at 2:21 the setting changes, as the camera person shakily pans across the wedding party standing in a line, later revealed in the next shots to be the head table of the reception. Pot lighting inside the venue makes for stark illuminated and dark contrasts within the venue and framing. For instance, people step in and out of the light and once out of it are very dark and difficult to see. What is striking inside the reception venue is the architectural design shown behind the wedding party. A royal blue wall with semicircular horseshoe archways is shown with white curtains covering what might be windows in the arches. These keyhole arches are not symbolic of anything but have been commonly used by Christians, in Moorish architecture, Spain and by Islamic religions (the majority of Iranians follow Islam).¹³

The reception was held at the U.S. embassy in Iran, and the archways as well as a Christmas tree are notable within the mise-en-scene of the remainder of the footage. A vast majority of North Americans celebrate Christmas and the wedding took place on December 8th, just before the Christian holiday. The melding of the two cultures is evident and an interesting

¹² Margaret Mary Kelleher, "The Communion Rite: A Study of Roman Catholic Liturgical Performance," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 5, no. 2 (1991): 102-103.
<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rh&AN=ATLA0000847758&site=ehost-live>.

¹³ Mohammed Mahbubur Rahman, "Islamic Architecture and Arch," *International Journal of Built Environment and Sustainability* 2, no. 1 (2015): 11-12.

venue for two Catholics who chose Iran as their temporary home. The film is a rare depiction of life abroad, one that many Filipinos choose in order to bring prosperity to their families. While it falls into a regular home movie category and is shot in the typical way, it is a unique instance of Filipinos continuing their rituals in a foreign country. It also is the first film they own, and the beginning of their lives together. According to Moran's taxonomy of functions, this film also could unite past and present histories of their family and is an important way for them to communicate and remember their personal stories.

Another example of religious footage is the Julio's baptism reels. A christening or baptism is one of the Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church.¹⁴ The word "sacrament" is derived from the Latin *sacramentum* meaning "a sacred pledge of fidelity publicly symbolized by a visible sign. It often carried the meaning of a military oath of obedience."¹⁵ Sacraments are visible symbols of a spiritual reality and are meant to be performed throughout a Christian person's life. In the holy ceremony of baptism, an individual is bathed, or has water sprinkled on or poured over their heads. The water symbolizes rebirth, new life and is a symbolic rite of passage into the Catholic Church.¹⁶ The baptized will also wear white as a sign of their purity. Depending on an individual and their family's beliefs, they may be baptized as adults or as infants. Infant baptism has been documented since the third century and may have origins in the desire for children to die baptized due to the high mortality rate in the ancient world.¹⁷ The assumption was that if a child were to die within the church they would be saved, that is, they would enter heaven.

¹⁴ See John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, (London: SCM Press, 2013).

¹⁵ Donald G. Bloesch, *The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission*. Vol. 6. (InterVarsity Press, 2002): 147-48.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 155-156.

¹⁷ Everett Ferguson, "Inscriptions and the Origin of Infant Baptism." *Journal of Theological Studies* 30, no. 1 (1979): 46.

Of the 16 films total films provided for the research, five of them contain baptism related footage. There are two reels of Shelley Julio's, and two and a half reels are of Sheena Julio's Christening and reception. Half of the third reel for Sheena's christening is footage shot in Calgary's Riley Park for a different occasion. Rose appears in most of the footage while Art only appears in front of the camera in the church. For the shots taken during the baptisms a friend captured the footage since Art was required to take part in the ceremony. Art filmed the remainder of the footage before the church and at the receptions of the two baptisms. Both baptisms were held at the same church while their receptions were at different venues.

Sheena's Christening spans three film reels and was filmed sometime in 1982, the year of her birth. The first reel is two segments and focuses on the infant and her close family getting themselves ready for the christening. The first segment is 12 seconds - five quick shots - and are likely taken right after her birth. An infant is framed in the first shot in an eye level close up, with light streaming through from behind a window. The baby is tiny, wearing yellow and on her left wrist, which is closest to the camera, a thick white tag wrapped around it. The baby's wrist, the quality of the light, square windows behind Rose's father, and bottom of a metal bed frame in some shots would suggest that these are shots within a hospital.

At 0:013:00 a baby Sheena in a white dress is lying down on a bed and Rose, leaned over her from the left of the frame is getting her ready for the party, putting tiny jewelry on her. Art is filming both of them in a high angle medium shot as another pair of hands put some shoes on her on the edge of the bottom left of the frame. The next few shots are medium close ups and depict Rose's parents, her sister and some other family members in the living room and kitchen getting their things ready. The furniture includes 1980s type domestic objects including a scalloped light fixture, and beige plaid chair cushions. At 00:01:46 the scene moves outside as they get ready to

leave for the church. Several shots follow of their quiet neighborhood street, Rose's father waiting near a silver-grey car, her mother walking towards the camera between two cars in the driveway, and Rose locking their door. Afterwards are baby Sheena in the car with her grandmother and their arrival to the church. Art captures Rose opening the church doors for one second and then cuts to a medium close up following shot of Rose's mother cradling Sheena as she walks up a few concrete steps to the wooden church doors. She stops before opening the door to turn towards the camera and smiles in a white top and dark pants. The next shot at 00:03:00 is a dozen or more people walking into the church, framed almost in profile at eye level as the camera firehoses right, left, and right again in a long shot very shakily. The final shot is a shaky pan left in a long shot across people sitting in pews. It is very dark and shot against the light with windows illuminated from behind.

The christening continues onto another reel where the entire three minutes and 17 seconds are filmed inside the church. This time the camera is wielded by a friend of Art's and the shots seem more varied. The cameraperson does not "firehose" (panning uncontrollably) but holds the camera more still and varies his shot types and vantage points. The shots change from long shots, to medium shots, with close ups in between of the baby Sheena. First are shots of the parents, then a slow pan across guests in pew then to a shot behind the godparents, priest and parents facing the altar. The camera person ensures that all the godparents are shown between closer shots of the child, parents and priest. Afterwards a medium shot at 0:00:55 of Rose on the left bringing the baby towards the priest is shown while the other adults are reading from pamphlets, likely the program and prayers for the ceremony. Next, the camera is on the other side of the priest as he anoints Sheena touching the top of her chest. Afterwards at 0:01:30, the priest gestures for them to come closer, where a glass bowl is in front of him. They all step up

onto the altar area carpeted in red towards the priest and gather around in a circle. The next shot is a medium close up as Rose holds the baby smiling. The camera moves in even closer as a part of the circle, just to the left of the priest as everyone has their hands towards the middle touching a lit candle - a baptismal candle. The lighting here is dark as the camera has caught light from the windows at the very back of the church room. The priest's lips move as he likely says a prayer and in the next couple shots, the adults continue to stand around seeming to listen and wait. At 0:00:25 a man in a hazel brown shirt obscures the view on the left of the shot. Likely that was the point that Sheena was baptized with water sprinkled or poured over her head. This is safe to assume since in the next shot the priest is signing a document and the shot after that is a long shot of the priest holding the baby with Rose and the godmothers on his right and Art with the godfathers on his left. Everyone is smiling as the camera pans slightly right and left. The ceremony has finished, and the parents are filmed milling about and mingling with the guests. A couple more formally set up shots of guests standing in front of the altar in long shots with the baby are shown before the end of the reel.

The final reel contains footage at the baptism reception as well as Riley Park, with the baptism taking up two thirds of the reel or two minutes and 17 seconds out of three minutes and 15 seconds. The reel begins with a medium close up of Sheena and her two grandmothers standing and posing for the camera, they look off to the right of the frame perhaps for photos, Rose's mother on the left holding Sheena. The remaining shots are of the guests lined up at a buffet table, a high angle shot of Andrew, and medium long shots of guests at the table eating and talking. The venue appears to be somewhere like a hotel and the guests are dressed semi-formally. Most of these interior shots are very dark, and it is very hard to tell who is being filmed and what their features are. The buffet table is candle lit and so some faces are easier to see,

however, many of the shots are out of focus in this sequence. The buffet table looks plentiful with plates of food on a long rectangular table as people move around it to grab food. A long shot across the room shows that the room is lit by pot lighting which is why the shots appear so dark. at 00:02:07 finally the lighting is very bright and a high angle medium close up of Rose holding baby Sheena on her lap as she rests her head on her left side and bottle feeds her. She is sitting on a couch and behind her is patterned, carpeted flooring. Rose looks up to the camera and seems to be talking to someone as she shifts her gaze to the right and smiles before the camera cuts to a scene in Riley Park.

According to the label the Julio's youngest daughter, Shelley, was christened in 1983. The christening was captured on two reels. The first can be segmented into one big segment since it filmed on the same day. A first shot is of the Shelley dressed in her gown at home with Rose and a few others The second shot, at 0:16, is in a church and would be the start of the filming by whoever family friend the Julios had tasked capturing the baptism with. Inside the church a line of people, presumably the godparents, are standing and filmed in a medium long shot with four women on the right and two men on the left of the frame. Rose holds baby Shelley with Art beside in the middle of the lineup. A Caucasian catholic priest dressed in a white and red chasuble enters the shot from behind the parents and godparents. The subsequent shots capture the ceremony as the baby is held and the priest gives blessings and prayers. Some incidental people are shown in wooden pews behind the formally dressed godparents. The framing is all at eye level from the same vantage point either beside or from the altar and towards the pews - from the left of the altar facing the pews. In the next shot the priest steps down as one of the godmother's hold s the baby. There are intermittent flashes from cameras. The baptismal rite happens in the middle of the frame when the priest pours water over the baby's head as she is

held. The camera follows the baby as she is held upright revealing that Rose was holding her, as one of her godmothers puts her baby bonnet back onto her head. In the next frame, at 0:01:27, a medium shot shows the priest in profile as he touches the baby's head - perhaps to anoint the child as the godparents look on with open pamphlets. At 0:01:42 the priest reaches out to hand Rose a tapered lit white candle - Shelley's baptismal candle. An instance of explicit home movie performativity occurs when two women in the first pew are sitting and centered in the shot as they smile towards the camera and the woman closest to the camera playfully puts a pamphlet up to cover her face. At 00:02:00 the camera is further away from the godparents as they are framed in a long shot with all six of the godparents within the shot and Rose and Art in the middle. All the godparents are reading from their pamphlets now. In the next shot at 0:02:11, a medium long shot, shaky and handheld, frames and faces the altar - the baby has completed her christening. She is now being held by the priest who is smiling happily towards the right of the frame and posing with the parents and godparents for photos. Camera flashes go off. Behind them a shiny mosaic, and banner hang in the background. Two godmothers are in the right, then the first holding the baby in front of him, beside him is Rose, Art and behind them a Caucasian godfather who is very tall. A wider medium shot showing more of the godparents and the altar is next followed by a jump cut as Rose takes the baby from the priest.

At 00:02:25 a long shot of the doors of the front of the church show the family and friends who participated and watched the christening exiting. The next shot, the lighting is a different quality as if the sun came out from under the clouds. Rose stands next to a woman with Art behind her with a man as she gestures with her hand for others to join her in standing on the concrete church steps. 00:02:32 a long shot handheld and shaky pans quickly to the right and

shows everyone who has attended the christening. They are standing under a bright sun and getting ready to be photographed.

00:02:37 the setting changes to a restaurant. Rose's father standing and talking as the camera tilts down to show women and their kids sitting and eating at a table. The camera pan "firehoses" around the room tilting and panning in a medium shot as mostly Filipino families are sitting and enjoying their meals. There are red tablecloths, and all are dressed semi-formally. The next few shots cut from medium close ups to medium shots of the guests sitting, chatting and eating. The second reel continues the reception with two Caucasians, a man and a woman, sitting and eating across from a woman, man and Filipino child. Here Art pans left and right very shakily across his guests, not lingering too long on anyone but his wife and kids. The footage from the baptism reception ends at 0:40 of this second reel.

The baptisms, much like the Julio's wedding, consist of the ceremony at the church and the reception at another venue. Guests from the ceremonies are shown at the receptions where they share a meal with the newly baptized daughters and their family. However, Art also captured the family at their home getting ready beforehand in one of Sheena's baptism films. Each of the baptisms also change filmmakers from Art to family friends so that he could participate in the baptism ceremonies which are captured in depth. Each ritual is captured in the baptisms with the involvement of the parents, grandparents and onlookers. The more frenetic filming seems to belong to Art who took shorter, less stabilized shots. All the shots range from one second to as long as 15 seconds but never any longer.

Clearly the baptisms were very important to the Julios since they captured the entire event from getting ready, to the entire church baptism program, to the reception afterwards. Of the Julio films included in the research, almost half of them are of the wedding and baptisms;

seven out of 16. One can assume the importance of the Julio's Catholic religion and religious observances on this fact alone, especially since these Super 8 films were the only moving pictures that the family had taken at that time before switching to a new format. One of the film labels indicated that Andrew had attended a school called "Holy Redeemer." Indeed, Andrew as well as his siblings attended Catholic school from kindergarten to grade 12 and grew up in the Catholic Church. These films are evident of the family's participation in their communities and give insight to the standard rituals that Filipino Catholics perform. They are also significant events for the family and help them trace their family history. The baptisms also display a continuation of rituals for Filipino immigrants who are in a new country. The participants were also asked about their current participation with the Catholic church. Art and Rose confirmed that they currently attend Catholic mass on a weekly basis and are actively involved with their parish community.

Other Special Events

The remaining Julio films are Christmas related, centered around birthdays and are general domestic footage of the Julio family with a focus on the children. Christmas, as a Christian Holiday was celebrated and captured by the Julios on film. Two reels contain Christmas footage: Andrew at his Catholic School, Holy Redeemer and a reel dedicated to a Christmas party hosted by the Julios at their home. Following a two minute and 50 second segment of Andrew's fifth birthday, a 30 second segment occurs of Andrew and his schoolmates at Holy Redeemer for a Christmas show. In a medium close up Andrew and his peers walk from right to left diagonally closer to the camera. They are dressed up and holding red banners with a rope attaches around the banner hanging from their necks. Behind them is a classroom setting with posters and numbers. Afterwards the children are seen in a line and the banners are in full

view. They all say “Merry Christmas” in sparkly letters. Art pans to the right passing Andrew as well as his classmates who are all different ethnicities and appear that they could be Asian, Indigenous, Latin American or Caucasian. Their mouths open in the next couple shots - they could be singing - and the film ends. This short segment shows Andrew’s participation in multicultural Canadian culture that also celebrates a cultural and religion day. Capturing their son in this setting may point to their pride as immigrants who belong and partake in celebrations familiar to their culture.

The other Christmas video is an entire reel of the Julio’s hosting a small group of their extended family for the holiday. It is shot similar to the other videos in that it features all the guests mingling and eating with an emphasis on Andrew who is about 3-5 years old. The guests are familiar faces; Rose’s parents, her sister, and other family and friends who are all Filipino. A prominent shot of Andrew includes a ten-second high angle shot following shot of Andrew in a red sweater with a white collar and grey pants dancing around their living room with piles of colorful presents around him. Art also has two shots of Rose’s sister and her father, while for the most part the others get much less filming time. The shots capture the guests eating, enjoying each other’s company as well as some shots of people opening presents. This film also displays their participation in a ritual of gift-giving, as well as the importance of the event to their immediate and extended family.

There are four birthdays depicted in the Julio films, on four different reels. Two of the reels are entirely of birthdays while the other two reels contain other footage besides the birthdays. Two of the birthdays are Andrew Julios’; labels on the films indicate that one is of Andrew’s second birthday and the other is his fifth birthday. The fourth birthday is a short 14

seconds long segment produced in one take. The birthday films are evidence of the Julios participation in birthday traditions and the importance they placed on their family.

The entire segment is a medium long shot, slightly high angle, of a dozen or so children sitting at tables inside a fast food restaurant. The table is L-shaped with a long line of booth seating horizontally shown in the frame, and the bottom of the L revealed as the camera pans to the right. There are typical fast food items such as soft drinks in small cups with straws, food wrappers, and cardboard boxes. Most of the children appear to be of East Asian descent, likely Filipino, and there are a few adults peppered amongst them. All the kids are all wearing cardboard crowns. It was not immediately apparent to the researcher where this footage was shot, but during the interview with Andrew Julio, he immediately recognized the fast food restaurant as Burger King. There is no cake present in the shot and no one stands out as the birthday celebrant in this shot, so one may assume that it is not Andrew's birthday. However, the setting and footage are interesting reflections of how some North American birthdays were celebrated at that time.

Andrew's second birthday stands out as the longest film of the entire collection, at nine minutes long on one reel. This birthday is exemplary of Art's stylistic tendencies and the content he would focus on, including short shots, shaky handheld movements and the focus on his children while capturing extended family and friends. It's clear that the reel contains three Super 8 films spliced together since there are blank frames between them at 3:11 and 6:33. The film begins with an intertitle "Happy Birthday" in bubbly blue block letters inside of a cartoon style cake with a red background. It is a close up of a birthday card that is balanced on its long edge in landscape orientation on a chair. The next shot at 0:04 is tighter, as an extreme close up of the card. At 0:08 the camera cuts to a medium shot indoors inside the Julio's kitchen where four

Filipino women are standing; there are two in the foreground and two deeper in the shot. The two in the background are standing closer to a coil cooktop stove where the older woman in the middle is stirring something in a shallow metal pan over the stove with a wooden spoon. From viewing and interviewing the participants, the older woman cooking is identified as Rose's mother, Andrew's Lola (Grandma, in Tagalog). Rose's parents, especially her mother, are highlighted in a few of the films. Her presence could highlight the importance of elders to Filipinos and point to memories of food that are important to the culture and shown in the next few shots. At 0:20 the camera frames a young Andrew in a highchair at another table in medium close up. He is sitting in front of a big serving dish with dip in the middle of it. Andrew is a toddler with short dark hair and is wearing a bowtie, white long sleeve dress shirt and a dark coloured vest. He looks towards the camera as the camera tilts down and pans left in a firehose type shot across dishes on the table. There are at least half a dozen different plates and casserole dishes containing different food items. A few shots follow of Andrew's chubby face, who's hair is combed to the side and smiles toward the camera as he sits in front of the food. In the next three shots from 0:42-0:47 Andrew is walking around the house in his outfit smiling towards the camera in a bedroom and hallway in high angle shot medium close ups. At 0:47 a high angle close up frames a cake shaped as batman in the blue and yellow costume. The next shots move the filming into the living room where Art pans left to show the couch and adults sitting with kids in the foreground. It is very dark in these shots since it is filmed at nighttime indoors without much artificial light in the living room. One can just about make out the outlines and silhouettes of the party attendees. Beginning at 1:43, the camera follows Andrew in high angle medium or medium close up shots while he dances in the dark living room with two adults who periodically are in the shot. They dance in the dimly lit living room, Andrew bouncing up and

down with his hands awkwardly moving up and down. Two women dance beside him, the camera follows him as he slowly steps around and smiles while he dances in front of the couch. At 2:46 the camera shakily pans around the room, revealing other kids milling about and adults sitting on the couch. Andrew claps his hands and continues to bounce for the remainder of the first reel.

At 3:12 the screen goes blank for two seconds before the second reel begins at 3:14. The first shot is of Andrew falling over in the same dark living room before the film cuts at 3:20 to a high angle medium shot above Andrew and three other children dancing and playing in the front door entrance area. These shots are much brighter as there is a bright light above them, however the shots are reddish in quality. Andrew looks up and smiles towards the camera from shot to shot as the kids play around him. In the next shots he continues to bounce and clap his hands. Filipino women are sitting and chatting and the camera then cuts to men around a circular table. Afterwards at 00:04:07 At 0:04:33 Andrew shown for two seconds in an out of focus shot with an arm over him as he looks down. In the next a medium high angle shot captures him standing on a chair and directly in front of his birthday cake. The dishes still surround the cake that now has a number 2 white birthday candle outlined in red on the top. Two seconds later at 0:04:37 the rest of the children are around the table while Rose and one of the aunties tries to turn him around towards the cake. The candle is then lit in the next shot and blown out by Andrew with the next few shots only a second or two long of the kids surrounding Andrew. At 0:05:15 a point of view shot just over the right shoulder of the cake cutter is taken in a close up as the knife slices through the left side of the cake. A few more shots later are very dark in the living room and a final shot pans right slowly in over the tops of the kids. This concludes Andrew's birthday footage on this reel at 0:06:33. As the firstborn of the Julio children, it is no surprise that

Andrew's second birthday stands out as the event with the most footage captured. The emphasis on their child and the participation of their extended relations is evidence of the importance they place on family.

The other birthdays are depicted in much the same way; however, one is of Andrew at his school. He celebrates with his schoolmates who are seated at a square table facing inwards. Art captures Andrew eating a meal with his classmates, enjoying cake and interacting with a multi-ethnic group of school children. His sisters are also at his school participating in eating and celebrating with him and his friends. Clearly the Julios wanted their children to join together in these types of celebrations both together as a family and with the wider community. The birthdays were well attended by their family and friends and give a sense of abundance. The footage in the home displays food familiar and important to the Filipino culture and their presence within the films highlights their importance within a Filipino context.

The Everyday Domestic

Much of the footage centers on Andrew as a child at home. Arturo captured Andrew on the toilet, having a bath and playing with his toys. Some footage also captured Rose feeding an infant Sheena. A quarter of the collection is specifically of the kids and Rose at home performing mundane everyday actions. Much of this type of footage is of Andrew as a toddler. In the longest reel mentioned in the above section on birthdays, the final spliced together reel follows two seconds of leader before a brightly lit shot of Andrew appears at 00:06:36. Andrew is framed in a medium close up sitting in almost in profile on a toilet, naked. The bathroom counter is seen in the bottom left corner and the toilet roll hanging from the wall in the right of the shot. Andrew looks down and holds a Roly Poly Chime Fisher Price toy - a spherical blue toy with clear top covering figurines inside the ball. The toilet has a small attachment toilet seat allowing him to sit

on an adult toilet without falling in. Four seconds later a jump cut occurs, and Andrew looks directly into the camera and smiles, his short hair messy. This footage of Andrew on the toilet could run counter to the prescriptive texts in showing an individual naked and performing an activity is normally not recorded. However, it reveals the intimacy between the family members and is in no way obscene.

At 0:06:52 Andrew is seen in a medium close up sitting up in a bathtub a quarter of the way full and staring towards the camera. The following shots are six short jump cuts, each of them a second or two of Andrew looking or smiling into the camera. At 7:02 Rose is seen in a pastel patterned shirt and curly hair from behind coming into the frame from the bottom left and leaning over into the bathtub on the top right of the frame. The camera cuts to her on the bottom left bathing Andrew with some sort of small towel as the water in the tub shakes to the right of the frame. The film captures Andrew as he was in that moment as a toddler and shows calm intimate moments between parents and their child in the bathroom segment. The action and content are very private and can be seen as part of the home mode of filmmaking within a nuclear family with Art behind the camera and Rose and their son in front of it.

The remaining footage is of the Julios hosting their family at their house. Presumably it is the same day as Andrew's bathroom shots since Rose is wearing the same shirt as she was when she was bathing him. Art first shoots medium close ups of those in attendance for one to three seconds including Rose's sister, her father, two guests, and a high angle following shot of Andrew running from left to right. In half of the shots the subjects are silhouettes since the only lighting is artificial and dim. Art pans around the rooms after to catch everyone as they are sitting. Rose's father is seen in a medium shot hugging Andrew on his chest lying down with his head towards the left of the frame at 0:07:53. Three jump cuts follow before Andrew is then seen

in a close up with his head nuzzled against his auntie. The subsequent shots are of Andrew running around the kitchen and playing with her. Finally, at 0:08:33 they sit down for dinner and are illuminated by a scalloped hanging light from above the kitchen table. Art pans left to right and back again as Rose sits with Andrew, their backs towards the camera. Her sister is deeper in the shot, with her mother on the left. Art then focuses on each person's face in close up shots of all the guests, seated around the round table. The guests smile and look into the camera or make a funny face as gestures of home movie performativity before the reel ends at 0:09:56.

Leisure Time

While all of the footage besides the wedding were shot in Calgary, almost a quarter of the footage features recognizable places in the city, namely Riley Park, the Calgary Zoo and the Calgary Tower. Art recalls that Rose's parents enjoyed going to Riley Park with their family, especially because it was easy to get to and there is a wading pool for the kids to play in. There are four films with footage inside Riley park, two of them likely be filmed on the same day as they both have footage of an event held in a park in the Julio's old neighbourhood with Chuck-E-Cheese. These two unlabeled films have segments filmed at a green space where children and parents are picnicking, and a person is dressed in a Chuck-E-Cheese mascot suit. The one film is solely filmed at this green neighbourhood space, while the other has footage first at Riley Park and then in that neighbourhood field. Likely, Art filmed continuing filming the event in the neighbourhood onto another film reel. Two thirds of this first film are filmed in Riley Park until the 0:02:15 mark. It begins with a longer shot at 13 seconds. It is an off kilter panning shot which moves quickly right and then left where it lingers on Rose who is holding a young child. The shot continues to pan across the Riley Park wading pool where a few young Asian kids are at the edge of the pool sitting. Afterwards the film cuts to the wading pool itself where maybe only a

dozen kids are dotted throughout the pool. The camera pans right to a field area beside the pool with many groups of Caucasian people standing, sitting on blankets and relaxing outside. Afterwards, a medium shot of a Rose's mother is holding one of the Julio girls on her lap. Behind her is a green bush and she wears a ¾ length sleeve shirt and squints in the daylight towards the camera. Two seconds later a medium long shot is filmed over four Filipino kids at the edge of the wading pool. A cut at 0:00:42 feels like an abrupt stop as a close up static shot of the baby wearing a pink button up coat. The infant looks towards the camera and smiles while taking out a piece of fruit out of her mouth. She looks left and bites the fruit while squinting. A five second shot close up more tightly on the child's face is next as she chews through the food. Afterwards Rose's father in a cowboy hat and striped collared shirt holding the baby and bouncing her on his lap is seen at 0:00:57 sitting on a wooden bench in a medium shot. Rose's mother's arm is seen just in the shot on the right of the frame. Eight seconds later the shot is closer in a medium close up as Rose's father laughs and looks left with the baby now looking into the camera as he speaks to someone offscreen to the right. The next six shots are medium to long shots, each five to 12 seconds long of the kids in the wading pool and the adults on picnic blankets enjoying each other's company.

At 0:02:24 the location changes to the neighbourhood green space. There are many families with lawn chairs and blankets in a field surrounded by houses on one side. Art films much like he has the other films, focusing on his family while capturing incidental people. A mascot Chuck-e-Cheese anthropomorphic rat is also featured in these two reels with kids surrounding it. In the second reel a sign hangs over a table where a few adults are sitting. The adults appear to be middle aged and are Caucasian. The sign says "PLEASE REGISTER HERE" so it is it can be assumed that this is an organized event from either the community or Andrew's

school. Andrew at this time is likely five or six and is seen wearing a Calgary Flames jersey in red, yellow with a white flaming C.

There is only one sequence that shows the Calgary Tower. In one of the reels that features mostly family footage, there are only three shots in front of the Calgary Tower. It is the second segment in the film reel and filmed from 0:00:23 to 0:00:38. All four shots in the segments are long shots of Rose, Andrew, an infant, and four to six more Filipino adults. In the first shot the group is walking in a hallway towards the camera with light coming through transparent curtains covering the windows on the left, with a wall on the right. Seven seconds later the group is standing in front of a crosswalk which itself is in front of the Calgary tower on 9 Avenue SE. Art stands and films the group from the west corner of center street south and 9th avenue across the street. CALGARY TOWER is visible in the background in thin dark sans serif letters across a white building behind that disappears above. The group are first shown for seven seconds standing, with Rose's father holding Andrew's hand, all waiting to cross while cars drive by from right to left in the frame. Next is a nine second shot as they stand across the street chatting and waiting for the light to change. Afterwards, the last shot is of the group crossing the street with other people. A couple of incidental people walk towards the tower while a few others walk towards. One Caucasian man waves towards the camera before a cut at 0:00:49.

The next segment consists of static shots. It begins with two long shots of Rose, Andrew, two other children and three other Filipino adults at the Calgary Zoo. The two children are in metal and wooden strollers and the group stands by a fence. It appears to be mild weather since the woman is in a t-shirt, and one of the children is wearing a dress. At 0:01:13 the group is shot in front of the giraffe enclosure with three giraffes seen in the distance behind them, deep into the shot. To the far left is dusty looking brick building. Some other zoo goers walk from right to

left of the frame. Ten seconds later from the same vantage point two of the giraffes stand upright, one is closer to the building, another is at the base of a tree in the middle of the shot. Two adults in the foreground look towards the giraffes with their back towards the camera. The camera is shaky with slight movements left and right. Both settings and content depict a shared leisure time of both the individual and collective. Riley Park is a popular spot among Calgarians too spend leisure time with family. Visiting the Zoo may also fall into this category of local attractions and seems a perfect place for the participants to observe and be observed by the camera. The presence of Andrew wearing a local hockey jersey also shows a participation in the Calgarian and Canadian culture. In these instances, the private is filmed amongst a backdrop of the local collective, showing their participation in local activities in a more intimate way through the mediation of Art as filmmaker.

Reception and Memory

For the purpose of the research both Arturo and Rose, as well as their son Andrew, were interviewed on two separate occasions. Their daughters at the time of the researcher were both living in the U.S. and were not available for participation. The Julios viewed their films while answering questions posed to them. Between both of the interviews, almost all of their films were viewed with the researcher. There also appeared to be gaps in the filming and participants could not recall whether or not more films existed. Art's camera was purchased in 1979 and all of the films were shot with the same camera. It is highly probable that they filmed on more Super 8 cartridges but misplaced the footage them since there are none of Andrew as an infant or having a baptism.

The Julios enjoyed re-watching their films, with Rose commenting that she "loved it" and Art saying that he was "very happy" to view them. The Julio family seldom viewed them due to

the lack of equipment. The last time Art and Rose remember viewing some of them was almost a decade ago when their daughter became interested in the films and brought home a projector. Before then they are not sure when they were seen. Neither Art, Rose, nor Andrew had recollections of what was on their films. Rose says that she knew that they filmed during those occasions, such as the wedding and baptism but did not remember what exactly was captured. The labelling may have helped them know somewhat what was on the tapes, however the labels were very minimal and only had a few words written on them. The family did not write more descriptive labels or organize them in any deliberate manner.

Rose also explains that she likes to get rid of things that aren't in use after five years and unfortunately, she got rid of their projector. After watching a few of their home movies, Rose regretted that they have given it away. "We just disposed of it. But now after watching that, of course I wish I kept it," Rose says. Art says they took films and videos "so we have a souvenir; so we could have a collection of what happened in the past." He explains that as soon as video became available they also purchased a camera since they "didn't want to miss the kids." Andrew, did not recall any of the footage either, commenting that "It feels weird because I don't remember living this life. It's like two different lives. I think I remember each decade in different segments and different situations.

Andrew especially remembered specific objects and people that showed up in the film, not necessarily the actual film content itself. In particular, he recognized wallpaper, his father's handwriting as well as his grade schoolteacher while viewing his 5th birthday video. He also recognized some other people who weren't blood relatives and some of who he is still in touch with. Andrew also remembered his old suit jacket he was wearing as a child and also the Julios television and cabinet console from their old house.

As with the Hoangs, the Julios used filming for its indexical function in order to remember what they currently cannot. Art especially wanted to capture his children while they were younger. In the case of the Julios, the footage was taken over three decades ago and seldom watched, increasing the indexical function than say, a more modern technology such as videotape or digital video that is more accessible due to the availability of the viewing equipment. When asked why he thought his father filmed, Andrew thoughtfully commented that:

I think it's mostly for family memories. I think this is the 1980s version of what we see today with the iPhones. You know, parents are constantly snapchatting or Instagramming or putting up Facebook photos of their child, taking small photos. This is the 80s version. I think it's better, though not as accessible and film isn't as good.

Indeed, the shorter format of the Super 8 film, at just over three minutes could arguably be closer to that of the modern social media family post than longer recording formats. Social media platforms such as Instagram or Snapchat are geared towards short recording times and shorter attention spans. Each allows a user to take a minute-long recording at a time; filming through Snapchat occurs in videos of ten seconds. However, their Super 8 films were intended for private use whereas social media allows parents to share photos and videos of their children to their family and friends, and even strangers.

Watching their wedding film was particularly special for the couple since it was their first time viewing it fully right side up. As mentioned, the wedding video was incorrectly spliced or processed, since more than half of the first reel was upside down. The film was given to them that way after it was processed and had never been adjusted. When received for the research, the film was put right side up in order to view it properly. Art says that they turned the projector upside down in order to view the parts that were upside down. Rose and Art reminisced about their time in Iran during the viewing, with Rose remarking that she doesn't remember anyone in the film.

“Would you believe I don’t know anybody there except my husband. We have so many guests. But I don’t know them,” Rose said. As Art and Rose recall, the Filipino community that they were a part of was a working group who were employed at two big oil companies, one of which Art worked at. That working group were the guests for their wedding, filling a church and the venue (around 50-100 people). From those that they recognized, the two struggled to figure out who was who and attempted to remember where they are now.

Andrew in particular was very happy to see his grandfather and grandmother looking spry and in good health in the films. Rose’s mother recently turned 90 while her father passed away nearly 20 years ago in 1999. Andrew commented that, “It’s good to see him in a manner that wasn’t near when he passed away. He looked very sick before he passed away. Here, he’s obviously a lot more healthy.” These comments echo one of the functions of home movies to unite generations identified by Moran. Even after the death of subjects in a film, their reception by family members allows them to be memorialized and remembered by moving images of them that capture their unique physical characteristics and mannerisms.

After watching a few films including his fifth birthday at school, Andrew also remarked, “wow my parents really wanted my family to hang out and be part of the community.” Both community and family are themes that are apparent from the Julio films. Although the Julios are what can be considered a nuclear family, all of their films are of their family amongst a broader community whether that be their church, school, ethnic or family community. Indeed, for Filipinos in general, the family is the “cornerstone of social relations and identity.”¹⁸ Filipino scholar Maria Root explains Filipino kinship patterns where the welfare of the family is more

¹⁸ Root, Maria PP. "Filipino Families." *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, ed. Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano, Nydia Garcia Preto (New York City: Guilford Press, 2005): 322-232.

important than the individual. However, the wellbeing of the family contributes overall to the individual's happiness and wellbeing. "Family" is also construed very broadly with affiliations as tribal or as connections to the clan. Filipinos may keep their extended family close, and those who have no blood connections may be considered family. For example, the Julios' godparents may be considered kin, especially since they were chosen by the Julios to participate in such momentous occasions and chosen to fulfill important roles. In Iran, though Rose and Art had no relatives in Tehran their wedding was well attended by members of the Filipino community as depicted in their films.

Overall the Julio films adhere to the home movie conventions and there are no filming of work, death, or conflicts. There are oddly also no travel films, but again, there may be missing films that may have this footage, and the Julios have no reason for not filming that type of content. However, the speaking position from whence the text comes (Filipino-Canadian immigrants) also imbues the home movies with a unique flare from the participants. Taking into consideration the life stories of Rose and Art, one does get a sense of abundance and happiness from the films. The films function to show how they have succeeded over time and are now able to afford the technology and leisure time associated with home movie making. They reflect the Julio's identity as Filipino-Canadians who place high importance on family relations, Catholicism and community.

Vietnamese Refugees Boat People

From the late 1970s until the mid-1990s, over half a million Vietnamese and other ethnic minorities fled Vietnam by boat to a neighbouring country to flee the growing civil unrest and hampering of political, economic and civil rights such as free speech and press, forced labor, relocation and forced loss of land. Malaysia and Hong Kong were among "first asylum"

countries or territories, where migrants were granted temporary asylum in temporary housing and refugee camps in the hopes of being permanently resettled by a third country overseas.¹⁹ In the worst-case scenario if they were not resettled, they would be sent back to Vietnam. The early 1980s were especially favourable for those refugees seeking a new home abroad since they were more easily resettled than those who fled Vietnam after 1989 due to changes in immigration/resettlement policy for asylum countries. Canada had been accepting refugees from Vietnam and the surrounding area since the fall of Saigon in 1975 when the first wave of refugees sought to leave the troubled area. After the fall of Saigon, Vietnam's borders were closed, and the country experienced an economic crisis. In addition, Vietnam was hit by floods, droughts and defoliation by the U.S. army stripped the country of one-fifth of their fruit and lumber forests.

In the following years, the Canadian government increased the intake of refugees. Canada was a participant in a 1979 conference held by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva. The event brought together both western and Asian countries to discuss solutions to the growing refugee crisis and consequences of the political turmoil in Vietnam. Following a second wave of refugees fleeing the area, in 1980 Canada had announced it would accept 60,000 refugees from Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea (now known as Vietnam). By 1985, Canada resettled over 110,000 Vietnamese refugees.²⁰ The following two case study participants were a part of were part of this wave of migrants and were labelled the "Vietnamese Boat People" who fled Vietnam by boat and were resettled in other countries.

¹⁹ James C. Hathaway, "Labelling the" Boat People": The Failure of the Human Rights Mandate of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indochinese Refugees," *Human Rights Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (1993): 686-687.

²⁰ Morley Beiser and Morton Beiser, *Strangers at the Gate: The" Boat People's" First Ten Years in Canada*. (University of Toronto Press, 1999):16.

The Chan Family Collection

The largest collection of home movies in this project was provided by the Chan family. A total of 30 moving image artifacts were given to the researcher: 22 VHS tapes and six DVD copies of VHS tapes. Two were copies of VHS tapes provided to the researcher, meaning that the Chans provided duplicate footage of two tapes on DVDs. The footage spans 14 years with the oldest tape from 1990, and the most recent from 2005, the latter of which is a VHS copy of footage taken on the family's Mini DV recorder from a trip to Japan. Each tape contains around two hours of footage, equaling about 56 hours of original footage. The tapes can be segmented in as little as four to as many as 10 to 13 segments. Some tapes also span multiple years, with one having footage from 1994 and 1997; likely the family realized there was unrecorded tape and taped on it much later. Due to the limitations of the project scope media type, the DVDs were not viewed and thus not included in the research. The family says that all of their home movies were stored in their family room or basement. At the time of their participation, only the Chan's VHS tapes were accepted. But the family also shot on Mini DV and Cindy suspects there may be more footage stored in their basement or elsewhere. For the purposes of the project, only the middle daughter, Cindy Chan, and her father Tom Chan were interviewed. In nearly all of the footage, the participants are speaking Cantonese. A few parts of different videos were viewed with the father and daughter and translated since the videotapes were long, and an interview was also conducted at the same time.

Family History

Like the Hoangs, Tom and Mai Chan are Vietnamese born immigrants who moved to Canada to escape the political turmoil of communist Vietnam in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Both Tom and Mai each had six siblings and grew up speaking the Vietnamese language. Mai

was born in the central coastal city of Da Nang to a Vietnamese mother and Chinese father. Tom was born in the south of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon. Tom's parents were ethnic Chinese who immigrated to Vietnam sometime during or after World War II. As his daughter Cindy explains, their family fled communist China to Vietnam since it was more democratic under the French regime. However, as Vietnam's political landscape became increasingly unstable, both Tom and Mai escaped the country as teenagers.

At the age of 19, Tom and his younger brother fled Vietnam in 1979 to avoid being drafted into the Vietnamese army. The two did not want to fight in the army since they were recognized as part of the Chinese or "Hoa" community, a group that faced discrimination in Vietnam. Cindy translates from her father and explains that:

They didn't want to fight in the army because they were still known as a part of the Chinese community. And so, people kind of frowned upon them since they wanted the Chinese community out of Vietnam. So that's why they started looking elsewhere which is why they came to Canada.

From 1976-1977 around 1,200 people arrived seeking asylum from Vietnam to Hong Kong. The number increased in 1987 to around 6,600 when reports emerged suggesting that the Vietnamese government may expel the minority Hoa population. In 1979, the number of asylum-seeking Vietnamese boat people peaked at over 68,700. Only 27% of the refugees that year were Vietnamese while the rest were ethnic Chinese Hoa.²¹ The departure of the Hoa had roots in complex Sino-Vietnamese relations where Vietnamese society as a whole perceived them as unassimilated and loyal to the Chinese government. In the late 1970s, the government of Vietnam began to anticipate a war between themselves and China. As they began to prepare for a military confrontation their policy developed toward discouraging the Hoa's loyalty to China. As

²¹ Chan Kw Bun, "The Vietnamese Boat People in Hong Kong," *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration* (1995): 380.

a result, the Hoa were treated as second-class citizens, had lost much of their economic privileges, and were pressured to accept a Vietnamese nationality. Acceptance of the Vietnamese nationality would mean that the Hoa youth would be, for the first time, conscripted.²² No doubt, Tom and his brother were a part of this wave of Hoa youth, who sought to escape conscription and the rising tensions in the country.

The two teenagers boarded a large ship whose destination was Hong Kong. Tom says that there were over 2,600 people aboard. When they arrived at the Port of Hong Kong the city would not let any refugees off the ship to enter. So, Tom, his younger brother, and a group of people swam to shore. However, they were caught and held for one day before being sent back to the boat. The ship was anchored for six months, from January 5th to June 29, 1979. When they initially arrived at the Port of Hong Kong, those who operated the vessel took out the gear mechanism so that the ship would be immovable. However, to force Hong Kong into accepting the refugees, some of the men on the boat cut the anchor on June 29. In doing so, the boat floated onto land and Hong Kong had to accept the refugees temporarily.

Tom says that he spent several months in Hong Kong before immigrating to Canada. At the time, Tom had the opportunity to immigrate to either Australia, Canada or the United States. Tom says that he specifically immigrated to Canada because it was the first to offer sponsorship and that he had a positive perception of the country as being peaceful. He explains that: "Canada is already peaceful. No war, nothing. Because my grandpa and my father and all the wars, the second world war too. And then Vietnam. So that's why I want to try the country, very peaceful. Canada is the best one."

²² Porter, Gareth. "Vietnam's Ethnic Chinese and the Sino-Vietnamese Conflict." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 12, no. 4 (1980): 55-60.

The Canadian government sponsored both Tom and his brother, granting them landed immigrant status. At first their papers were for Ottawa but changed to Calgary due to the demand for workers in the Western city.

On November 5th the brothers arrived in Canada, first in Edmonton before being transferred to Calgary. In Calgary, the two had a difficult time finding a place by themselves and so found another two people to rent a basement suite with. The other two renters happened to be Mai and her father. Mai was also in her late teens when she immigrated to Canada and attended high school in Calgary before dropping out to work full time. She went straight into the fast food industry working at both A&W and McDonalds chains. Tom on the other hand found work as a carpenter with other friends from Vietnam who were all hired for a furniture company. The two began dating in 1979 and were married in 1983. Subsequently the couple had three daughters: Christy was born in 1984, followed by Cindy in 1985 and their youngest daughter Dianne in 1988. Both Mai and Tom received their Canadian citizenships around 1993.

Both Mai and Tom speak Vietnamese, having both grown up in that country. However, Tom also speaks Cantonese as an ethnic Chinese whose family is from the Canton region of China. When raising their children, the family spoke Cantonese and the kids were never taught Vietnamese since the parents chose only one language to teach them. Tom says Mai actually did not speak Cantonese before the children were born and only ended up learning alongside them. The children actually were enrolled in English Second Language programs in early grade school since Mai and Tom ensured that they spoke only Cantonese in their home with each other, even amongst siblings. All three daughters also attended Chinese school every Sunday afternoon for 12 years. Their school was public and located in Chinatown. The Chan's also had to pay tuition fees but were able to transfer over credits for high school. Because of their Chinese education

and parents forcing them to speak it they did not lose their language and currently still speak Cantonese with each other. Cindy also states that she identifies primarily as Chinese first and Vietnamese second because she doesn't possess much knowledge of the Vietnamese culture. Presumably the ability for the Chan daughters to speak Cantonese and not Vietnamese contributes to this identification. Moreover, the family celebrates important Chinese holidays and events such as Chinese New Year's and Qingming festival, an ancestor worship day that the Chans had participated in the same weekend that the interview took place. Currently, the entire Chan family lives and works in Calgary. Mai continues to work at the same two A&W and McDonalds locations. Tom now works at a bottle depot owned by his brother, since the furniture company he had been employed at for years went out of business in 2012.

Aesthetics & Content

The Chan footage also follows standard conventions of home movies with handheld shaky filming, pans that go all over the place, as well as generally happy subjects and events. The Chan family traveled a great deal and captured it on video tape in the 14 years of their VHS. The travels were mainly family road trips during the summer holidays when the daughters were off school. About half of this footage is in the Southwestern United States. Cindy says that driving was more economical, and her father enjoyed it. Trips down to the United States were accessible and allowed the Chans to stop off multiple times to enjoy different locations during their travels. Locations in the United States include Yellowstone National Park in 1990 and San Francisco, Reno, and theme parks such as Disneyland and Universal Studios in 1991. Theme parks might be thought of as special events, but I classify it here since the two required travel by the family. The following year, the family traveled to San Francisco and Salt Lake City. Lastly, their final road trip to the U.S. in this collection is in the summer of 1992. That summer the

family drove to Las Vegas, Los Angeles (visiting Chinatown and Universal Studios), Anaheim (Disneyland), San Diego and they also stopped off somewhere in Nevada as evidenced by a sign outside their hotel. In Canada, the family traveled to Banff in 1992, Vancouver and Vancouver Island in 1994 and Toronto in 2002. There were also other multiple short trips to Sylvan lake. All of these trips were also taken by car. For the most part, the travel footage is not unlike other home movies and is taken by Tom of his wife and daughters as well as them taking in the sights. They are brief shots of the girls either crying or bickering but for the most part everyone is having a good time.

Special Events

The Chans filmed many special events that included extended relations and the community at large. These include holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, birthdays, as well as the traditions and rituals surrounding them like trick-or-treating and gift giving/receiving. Birthdays, like other home movies, with their accompanying rituals of candle lighting and blowing also show up in these films. On particular event of note is the Chinese Cultural Centre Grand Opening in 1992 videotaped by both Tom and another camera person or persons. Viewing this footage at first is odd, since it appears that Tom first captured the ceremonial introductions from one vantage point, before the same actions and footage appears from a different point of view. The segment occurs in from 00:57:25 to 1:19:15 of a tape from 1992. It begins with Tom holding the camera towards the entrance of the new cultural centre standing on the corner of 1 St. SW. Facing the entrance, he is to the right, standing in front of rows of chairs set up. A pink banner with English and Chinese characters in black is draped above the doors that reads: "CALGARY CHINESE CULTURAL CENTRE GRAND OPENING." Tom zooms in from an extreme long shot to a long shot and then pans right across people standing outside the entrance

and across the rows of chairs set up where the street has been blocked off. Upbeat instrumental music is heard in the background.

About a minute later he cuts to the seats up in rows on the platform beside the entrance. People are sitting down, and he zooms out to other families and pans right across a large crowd of people standing outside the centre. As he zooms out the figure of a long dragon appears attached to poles being held by a few men. A voice says, “please be seated...welcome to the grand opening of the Calgary Chinese Centre...welcome the dragon and the lions.” Colorful dancers enter wearing and holding the figures. A cut then occurs as the lions enter in a long shot. Three lions, a white and black, yellow, and a red one enter and begin to dance. The figure of the lion head bobbing up and down rhythmically to the sound of drums. At 1:01:59 a man begins to announce the dignitaries present at the opening ceremony. The camera then cuts to a long shot of the podium and riser seating beside the announcer. The seating is three people deep including important city officials and Chinese people who were important to the Cultural Centre’s opening including Calgary’s Mayor at the time, Al Duerr and the then Minister of the Environment, Ralph Klein. For around three minutes the man announces them, and they stand or wave as Tom pans somewhat shakily to find the specific person and zooms in and out from their faces. This continues until 1:05:18 when a cut occurs, and Tom is now on the other side of the building and focusing an extreme long shot on the topmost cone structure of the centre. Next, a two second shot occurs of the interior of the center before the content is repeated by another cameraperson or camerapersons.

The initial welcoming speech begins again and this time the images of the lions and dragon are from the left front of the entrance. Following the dances, the introduction of the dignitaries and important Chinese people occurs and is also shot much differently. The camera is

now steady and likely on a tripod instead of shaky or handheld. People are framed better, and the shots also begin to intercut between spaces of action. This new footage also has more people speaking at the podium past the introductions. A few people speak including Al Duerr, and as they stand and are captured in a medium shot, cross cutting occurs between the individuals outside and people inside enjoying the new cultural centre space. While the podium shot featuring different people is relatively the same and static, the inside shots show a variety of points of view and framing inside the building. Whoever edited this footage also maintained continuity through sound bridging across the shots. The second taping is clearly more sophisticated both in terms of filming and editing and utilizes techniques that are not seen in any of the other Chan videotapes. Thus, we can assume that the filmer was not Tom and they may even be professional or semi-professional shooters or editors. The footage ends with a ceremonial ribbon cutting as well as the release of pigeons and balloons and it's unclear who films those as they are relatively stable with no editing.

The event itself is important in that it marks the opening of a specific place that Chinese Canadians can go to, to reaffirm their identities and participate in cultural activities. The decorum surrounding the event, the carefully edited footage, and the participation of the Chan family as Chinese Canadians also attest to its relevance. In the research there was also no evidence of this local event in any archives and the argument could easily be made for the footage's preservation due to the rarity and important local cultural content.

The Everyday

Tom and Mai filmed many mundane images in the home and of their daughters. This includes the girls playing video games, watching TV, playing with their pets and enjoying each other's company. Video games and TV might be seen unique in that the daughters are filmed

consuming other media and that media makes an appearance on screen. One common motif is food and the consumption of meals in the Chan's everyday films. The family is often gathered in the kitchen cooking over the stove, preparing meals and enjoying them together. The family cooked a mix of both Vietnamese and Chinese dishes as shown on their tapes, reflecting their mixed identity. Tom also has many segments of his daughters enjoying their food and has many segments of the sisters as young girls eating. One example is from a tape from 1992, for around six minutes from 00:50:30 to 56:45 Tom films the three girls picking food off of what appears to be a large bone in a transparent bowl. The footage is sandwiched between images of them travelling to the U.S. and the footage from the opening of the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre. Tom films the girls sitting around one end of their circular kitchen table smiling, laughing and clearly enjoying eating the food with their hands. The girls are well aware of the camera and smile for it as they eat. The eldest daughter Christy is feeds Cindy with her hands as they continue to chew and get food on their faces. All of the shots are medium close ups or close ups of the three happily eating together. Tom also experiments halfway through this segment, first he puts the picture upside down for 20 seconds, turns it right side up with the colors negative and then at just a few seconds later turns it horizontal before it is right side up again. The girls are all wearing San Diego shirts, likely from their summer road trip that occurred just before this footage. The joy in their expressions and enthusiasm while eating is apparent in this segment. Arguably this small segment displays the family value of togetherness over shared meals, especially Asian type meals that might not be consumed by other ethnic groups.

Other images that may seem to fall outside of the scope of home movie filming conventions are images of the girls having a bubble bath together and playing. Elsewhere an extended young male relative of the Chans is also briefly seen naked in between putting clothes

on. Similar images occur in the case study with the Hoangs and are by no means negative or disturbing depictions of the body. Instead, the participants don't seem very bothered by their state of dress and their nakedness seems normal, even mundane. Again, this type of intimacy and imagery may be quite normal amongst other cultures and not seen as abhorrent or sexual at all. Moreover, the filmer and intended viewers are those with close relations to the family and the practice of filming this material would not be interpreted negatively.

Like the Hoang films, the Chans also used the format to videotape television programs. On a few tapes, a Chinese television shows are recorded. On a tape from 1994, two different programs are recorded back to back in between home movie footage. At 01:30:45 the image cuts from a young Cindy sitting on the couch to a Chinese period action drama, complete with fight scenes. Immediately following the drama at 02:17:20 is a part of a David Copperfield program recorded for almost half an hour. On another VHS from 1998 the first 15 minutes are of a Chinese detective drama before the image cuts to the family and extended family at home watching TV and playing video games.

The Chans are also the only participants in this study to have been more playful with their moving images, by having "magic shows." Similar to other amateur moviemakers and footage that may not be considered "home movies," the Chans experimented with in-camera editing. Specifically, the family tinkered with the ability of film and video to create the illusion of the appearance and disappearance of objects. This is created by cutting between two static shots and adding or removing an object in the second shot. The first instance of this is representative of the other magic shows that follows later and is a short segment just over a minute long. In it, Christy and Cindy stand together, and Christy holds a piece of cheese. They count down from three in

Cantonese and “magically” the cheese is gone. Next Cindy holds a paper mask to her face and again it disappears. They both laugh and wave after it occurs, ending their magic show.

Memory and Reception

When asked why he videotaped, Tom says that growing up he had seven siblings but from their childhood they don't have that many photos. And so, he wanted to document his daughter's childhoods for memories, taking both photos as well as videos. Cindy recalls that most of the documents were of special occasions such as birthdays, vacations and other events, and that “he never thinks of it as a sort of a cultural documentation.” The footage was mainly taken for the immediate family and extended family and never shared beyond that circle. Also, most of their extended family was sponsored to immigrate to Canada by the Chans or others and were able to view the films with the Chans in person.

The Chan family viewed their films often, during dinners or family events. The most recent viewing occurred around Christmas of 2018. Cindy explains that “my mom likes to bring them out and show people how we were like as kids.” Cindy, who is involved in media as a profession also helped digitize some on DVD's for her grandmother's birthday in 2017.

Sometimes, when the Chan's have family gatherings where all their siblings and spouses present, the family will watch some videos to show their partners what the sisters looked like when they were younger. Cindy says she like to watch the VHS tapes more because the footage is more entertaining since they are younger. Tom would film everything that the children did, even times when they were bickering or crying. The Chans say that watching their home movies is very nostalgic for them and helps them remember things. The indexical function of their videos helped them summon into their minds past memories and compare their past selves with

their present selves. In a proverbial comment, Tom says that his “age is no memory” while Cindy states that the videos sparked her memories that she had almost forgotten:

It's great because they're like memories that you didn't know you had, but then you watch them and then you're like 'oh wait I do remember this'.

Cindy explains that viewing the videos helps her to not take things for granted and she is grateful that her parents took so much footage of them growing up.

The taping was done by both Tom and Mai, with Tom wielding the camera most of the time. Mai would often capture footage as if she was taking a picture. Cindy says that she needed to be constantly reminded she was taking a video and not a photo. “She just stays on something for a really long time and then you're like ‘it's video you need to move!’.” Neither of them had camera training nor read anything specific to learn techniques for videotaping. Tom explains that he is entirely self-taught, and just improved his technique as he continued taping. His friend who was a wedding videographer hired him to help videotape the weddings, and he says this helped him improve his technique. Tom says, “the very first I make is no good. So, I know I have to make very smooth, move slowly. And then I know how to take it.”

Tom also remember when he bought the family's first VHS recorder. It was a shoulder-mount Toshiba camcorder sometime in 1990 or 1991 at a big-box consumer electronics store for around a thousand dollars. He says that it was very expensive, but he wanted to videotape the kids for memories. Later, he upgraded their equipment to a Sony Mini DV Digital Recorder sometime in the late 90s. However, as the children grew older, the Chan family began to film less and less. They believe the last tape was likely taken in the early 2000s when the girls were all teenagers and no longer wanted to be on tape. Cindy estimates those dates to be sometime around 2003 or 2004. Tom says that he filmed until no one wanted to participate or be captured

on video, “the last one I go around and nobody want to.” Currently the Chans hardly take any videos, but take many digital photos, usually from their mobile phones. Cindy states that her father takes many photos “but now that’s it’s digital it doesn’t get printed so then it’s just stuck on the computer.” Tom also added that after their taken and transferred to the computer they are hardly looked at again.

The Hoang VHS Collection

A total of 15 VHS tapes were provided by the Hoang family with their family content recorded from 1985 to the early 90s on nine tapes. The family had not yet moved to Calgary, so most of the footage is from their time living in Edmonton. When interviewing the participants, it was revealed that Tuan had also captured over 50 more moving image tapes on Video8. Thus, there are many more other videos that the daughters may not have been aware of and may account for why the recordings end sometime around 1992. Some of the dates of movie making were written on the VHS tapes on the top or side of the tape sticker labels. The participants also confirmed general dates of taping but were not precise in their memory and did not have any other documentation of what was on the tapes.

Unfortunately, two of the tapes were rewound but unable to play in a VCR player and were unwatched. The other seven tapes are each roughly two hours long and can be segmented into as little as two parts to as many as 26 parts. As expected, the tapes include the Hoang family’s vacations, domestic baby scenes, events and special occasions. The majority of content is of Tuan and Nguyen’s children at home, with a focus on the infants. All seven of the family home movies feature domestic at home footage of themselves and their daughters.

Additionally, five of the videos provided were labeled either as family documents or unlabeled. In actuality they are recorded shows, movies, and programs from cable television.

One of the family movies from 1987 is interrupted by almost three minutes of a scene from the soap opera *Another World* before it returns back to the family footage. Other tapes included recordings of two television network's primetime programming, a Backstreet Boys music special and two Gonzaga basketball games from 2006. The last of these videos was a 2006 recording of episodes of American medical dramas *ER* and *Greys Anatomy*. The vast differences in genres and date suggests that the different VHS were recorded from their televisions from different people in the family. For example, the recording of the basketball games is presumably by Tuan, Backstreet Boys was likely was recorded by Stephanie, *Another World* by Nguyen, and the dramas by either of the sisters.

Most of the home video taping was done by Tuan who purchased his first camcorder for the purpose of recording his three daughters grow up. Nguyen did not wield the camcorder at all for these tapes. However, some friends seemed to have picked up the camera in some shots, since Tuan and Nguyen appear together in front of the camera and the shots are handheld.

Hoang Family History

In the early 1980s, Hoang Anh Tuan and Nguyen Thi Thanh Nguyen immigrated to Canada from Vietnam to escape the country's political turmoil following the Vietnam war. In Canada, the family first settled in Edmonton and then moved to Calgary several years later. They relocated for better opportunities and futures for their three daughters, Jennifer, Michelle and Stephanie. Tuan explains that he escaped Vietnam because of the lack of freedoms he experienced, leaving the country by boat in May 1981 and arriving in Malaysia. There, the 24-year-old lived in a refugee camp for three months before flying to Canada by plane. As Tuan explained, at the time, the United States, Canada and Australia were accepting Vietnamese refugees. He did not want to move to the States and wanted to go to either Canada or Australia.

He chose to leave for Canada because it was the fastest means of escaping; Canadian government workers were the first to arrive to his refugee camp before the Australians to help resettle displaced Vietnamese. He describes the horrible conditions of the refugee camp, likening it to being incarcerated.

The refugee camp very bad. Looked like jail. Very poor conditions. Not enough food. No safety. So many thing. But look like people living there they are living in a prison; in jail. That's why I didn't like it. So I tried to escape as soon as possible. So they come in, I apply, and they say 'Okay. Welcome to Canada.'

Indeed, reports of Southeast Asian refugee camps had “relentless similarity” with conditions similar to prisons.²³ Refugees were made to live in human warehouses with three tiered bunks in rows lined up with 20 to 30 per section. The spaces looked like floor to ceiling shelves with dark isles. There was little privacy, never enough toilets, and drains backed up often spilling sewage onto the concrete floor and into the streets. It's no wonder that Tuan desired to leave the camps as soon as possible. In Canada, Tuan first landed in Thunder Bay, Ontario where he failed to find work. After three months he moved to Edmonton after learning that there were more opportunities there. Only two days after arriving in Edmonton, Tuan found a job as a janitor for commercial properties. The following year, Tuan had an arranged marriage with Nguyen Thi Thanh who then moved to Canada and started a family with him. Nguyen was best friends with Tuan's twin Khoi growing up. The twin's parents had previously attempted to arrange a marriage between Tuan and Nguyen at Khoi's wedding in 1977, four years before Tuan escaped Vietnam. However, the two had refused since they both had significant others and were not attracted to each other at the time. In 1982, Tuan's parents approached Nguyen while she was still in Vietnam, asking her again if she would like to marry Tuan. Marrying Tuan would mean an

²³ Morley Beiser and Morton Beiser, *Strangers at the Gate: The "Boat People's" First Ten Years in Canada*. (University of Toronto Press, 1999): 27.

opportunity to help her family as well as flee Vietnam which had become a communist country following the war. Though she was still in a relationship with another man, Nguyen agreed to marry Tuan solely to help her nine siblings and parents. She hoped that opportunities in Canada would allow her to support her family financially and, in the future, she would be able to sponsor them. When asked about the situation, Tuan jokes, “she used me.”

To do so, Nguyen escaped Vietnam by boat in December of 1982 and lived in a refugee camp in Malaysia for 11 months. From there, 26-year-old Nguyen was sponsored by Tuan and flew to Canada in October of 1983. Nguyen and Tuan were married that same year.

Aesthetics & Content

As to be expected with home movies, harsh lighting, poor framing, and out of focus shooting are commonplace in the Hoang Family movies. Tuan was self-taught and never followed any prescriptive behaviours from manuals; he did not do any planning for his shots, take any filmmaking courses nor read up on how to videotape through books or magazines. Most of the shots are handheld and shaky or lockdown shots placed on a tripod. The tripod is only set up in the home, otherwise the camera was held when the shooting occurs outside or elsewhere. On their only vacation tape, the camera is locked down and Tuan appears in front of the camera. The videos also consist primarily of long takes and pans or following shots of the main subjects - their daughters. The ability to shoot considerably longer lengths of videotape allows for looser curation, whereas on 2-3 minute films they truly are snapshots. Since videotapes can range from two to eight hours it's no surprise that Tuan's shooting favours the long take. Tuan also tended to zoom into the children's faces for close up and extreme close ups of their features. Often, he would call their name or try to get their attention for them to look towards the camera.

All of the editing for the home movies is in-camera in the Hoang tapes, except two videos, which appear to have some sort of credits. A digital list of five Vietnamese names and a date of 1985 scroll upwards on-screen on a tape labeled after the eldest daughter. This occurs randomly at the 00:04:20 mark of that videotape. The second tape is dated a month later and also scrolls the names of a few people as well as the words “The first birthday of Hoang Thuy Vy Jennifer 04-01-85/86”. The birthday scene occurs almost halfway into that tape. All other tapes do not have any intertitles or writing that appears on tape and appear roughly or spontaneously shot.

The Mundane

That same tape is the first tape of the series, being the oldest of the VHS tapes included in the research. It is labeled *Hoang Thuy Vi 10 11 85 - 02*; “Hoang” being their last name and “Thuy Vy” which translates to the Vietnamese name for the eldest daughter of the family, Jennifer. The date listed is either the in October or November of 1985. Jennifer is shown being a toddler in this videotape, as she was born in 1984, a year after Nguyen moved to Canada. The family of three was living in Edmonton in a modest apartment which is shown repeatedly as a main setting for the majority of the VHS tapes. This tape is noteworthy, being the first of the videotapes, and also because stylistically some small changes occur in Tuan’s techniques from this tape until his last video. This tape is the only one of two of have the digital name credit list as well as shots that are completely silent; all other tapes have sound. The silence may perhaps be due to the fact that he had forgotten to turn on a setting on his camera since the shots do appear to show mouths moving but no sound. This tape also uses natural light or lighting from lamps or lights, while in later tapes, Tuan uses a light fixture for his camera.

Hoang Thuy Vi 10 11 85 - 02 is just under an hour and 50 minutes long and most of it features baby Jennifer in their apartment. There are 17 segments in this tape, which are divided by different shoot or day, and identified by different clothing and people in the segments. In between, he tends to zoom out and in to capture the face of his child and does not always adjust his focus properly. The entire tape is shot indoors with one shot less than 15 seconds long that faces outwards towards a field while it snows. Primarily, the infant is the main focus of the shots and she is seen eating, standing in her crib, playing or being held by a parent. Often in this tape and others, the child is facing away from the camera and Tuan is repeatedly heard calling their name to get their attention and have them face towards the camera. While his wife, Nguyen does appear in much of the footage, in this tape and most of them, she is more of an incidental person. In many shots, if she does appear in the shot, she is situated at the corners of the frames, mostly out of frame with a body part in the shot. More often than not, Nguyen appears to be facing away from the camera towards the children with her head or back toward the camera, while the children have their faces towards the camera. Tuan often reframes to have the children centered in the shots as the primary subject.

Segment three of this tape, is representative of most of the footage that Tuan shoots within the home. There are four shots total ranging from three minutes to six minutes long. Within his longest take, Jennifer is the focus, with Nguyen coming in and out of the shot. It starts in a medium shot of the baby (Jennifer) being held up by her mother to a standing position to hold the edge of the couch. Her mother pulls off her onesie and walks off camera. The baby is staring and looking around, from the camera to the left of the frame, presumably where Nguyen is. There are two zooms which both zoom into her face to a close up and are followed by a zoom out a minute later and then a zoom in again ending in a similar medium shot from before. The

camera is handheld and shaky as it reframes slightly left or right to keep the baby centered. She stares towards the camera from time to time and you can hear Nguyen and Tuan speaking out of frame. The baby shifts around on the carpet, and then picked up by Nguyen who places her on a toy car and then moves her back and forth while speaking to her. Nguyen is just out of frame with her hands and arms showing. There is another zoom into the baby's face which fills the frame once Nguyen has stopped moving her. Nguyen's face comes into the frame as she gives the baby a kiss.

Birthdays

While most of the Hoang videos disagree with Richard Chalfen's writing that "commonplace behaviour, mundane activities, and everyday happenings do *not* get recorded," some are of extraordinary events. Tuan documented three birthdays as well as travelogue footage of the family in British Columbia. The three birthdays occur on separate occasions on three different tapes. The first of the birthday footage is the most noteworthy of the three and is of the first birthday of their eldest daughter, Jennifer.

The tape is the second oldest in the series, taken some time at the end of December 1985; the oldest is dated one month earlier. The tape is labelled "Hoang Thuy Vy 1 12 1985" and there is a total of 11 segments in the two-hour tape. Segments one through eight are domestic scenes at home of their baby girl with Nguyen, Tuan and their best friend's toddler son in some shots. Segment nine centers on the first birthday party of Jennifer, spans 40 minutes long, and occurs around the 52-minute mark. It begins with a list of four names as well as the aforementioned first birthday message and date:

"...The first
birthday of

Hoang Thuy

Vy Jennifer

04-01-85/86”.

This text is left aligned and scrolls up and down over 20 times over the course of two minutes, first on the left and then in the middle of the frame. Afterwards a close up shot on a photo of Nguyen and Tuan on their wedding day appears on screen for around 30 seconds, followed by a 15 second shot of a framed illustration of a dragon and phoenix. The dragon and phoenix are known in Chinese culture to symbolize success and prosperity with the dragon (yang) complimenting phoenix (yin). While the couple are not Chinese, as in many Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam was no doubt influenced by Chinese culture. The inclusion of the wedding shot and the illustration seem to point to an introduction to their family and pride in their new life in Canada. Their new life is one that acknowledges their cultural and also celebrates their child turning one. Like other western families they are also partaking in cultural norms of celebrating their child by throwing a party, blowing out cake, opening presents and documenting it through photos and videos.

After the two shots of the wedding and illustration is the documentation of the birthday party itself. It begins with Jennifer being held by a family friend wearing a black velvet dress with a white collar and white sleeves. The camera then cuts to a medium shot of three women and Nguyen sitting in the living room on a couch eating and holding plates of food. The camera then pans left to four men sitting at the kitchen table around plates of food. They are all speaking Vietnamese and are presumably are all immigrants from Vietnam. This segment continues to cut from the toddler walking around the living room to their friends and their toddler boy who is seen in other tapes. The couch is the same one scene in most of the videos, a light brown to beige

couch with chocolate brown vertical stripes. Notably there is one couch and two matching armchairs arranged in the living room with the armchairs beside each other at the back wall and the couch to the left. In the right corner of the room opposite the armchairs is the television. Eight minutes into the birthday segment the TV is heard in the background playing Hockey Night in Canada with a game between the Montreal Canadiens and the Calgary Flames. The guests are seated in the living room chatting while also watching the hockey game. The footage is notable in that it captures new immigrants to Canada who are at a birthday party but also partaking in a stereotypical Canadian pastime. The blending of the two cultures is evident here as they speak their native tongue but also decide to tune into a hockey game between two Canadian teams. The footage captures almost ten minutes of the game which plays in the background, while the party continues and Tuan records the toddlers and adults enjoying themselves, eating and drinking and beer. Three shots then follow that are very shaky and unfocused of the family (including Tuan) gathered around the coffee table with the lights turned down posing for photos and singing happy birthday to the child. They are high angle and pan horizontally in a shaky medium shot.

Another Birthday segment occurs at in their tape labeled *Sinh Nhat Thuy Vy 5 Tuoi 04.01.90*. “Sinh Nhat” translates to “Birthday” and Thuy Vy refers to the eldest daughter Jennifer thus we can assume from the footage that this tape features the fifth birthday of Jennifer. The beginning of this tape was viewed with the family while they were interviewed. The tripod is set up on in front of the couch on the right; the three girls are wearing dresses with their hair in bows and it’s clear they are behaving and posing for a photo camera. In front of them is a coffee table with a birthday cake places on top near them. Behind them is a couch with a blue cover with about half a dozen coloured balloons on the couch. Nguyen comes in and out of the shot holding

the infant Stephanie, while Tuan comes in and out of the shot with a camera. For a whole 37 minutes, the camera is placed in the same spot and only three cuts are made. For the majority of the footage the two girls (four and five years old) are standing in front of the cake facing to the left offscreen and smiling. Nguyen comes in with a stick (it appears to be a thin long stick less than half a meter long) and seems to be disciplining them to ensure that they stay in place and smile for the camera. She arranges the girls beside each other and puts their hands in front of them while flashes from a camera periodically go off. The girls are very well behaved for the most part but are also laughing and disobeying their mother. While they are speaking Vietnamese the entire time, at one point, Nguyen lights a few candles and they begin singing the Happy Birthday song. The first cut occurs, and the camera is close up on Michelle's face which is strewn with tears as she had been crying. She continues to pout as the camera zooms out to a medium close up to include Nguyen waving her finger in Michelle's face in a disciplinary way. Michelle walks out of frame and the sound of the parents chuckling is heard. Jenn comes into the shot from offscreen as the camera zooms out again, showing Nguyen holding the baby and beginning to nurse her. The sequence ends with Nguyen continuing to nurse baby Stephanie and the girls sitting on the couch beside her. What is also notable in this sequence is that the videotaping is second to the photographing and the staging of the shots. The daughters are dressed up with their hair in bows and posing towards Tuan while he takes photos and not towards the camera.

Tuan has also set up the baby blue coloured blanket on their white couch to stage the birthday. In other tapes and in a later segment in this tape the couch is visible, and it is actually white. Later, this same blue blanket appears in tape *Hoang Thuy Tuong Vy One Month Old* for the one-month birthday of Stephanie. For some Asians, especially Chinese (known as a

manyuejiu)²⁴, a newborn baby's one month of life is considered very important. Celebrating the milestone has influences from a time when infant mortality rates were high in Asia. The tape that features the birthday only includes an eight second close up of a cake decorated with white icing and flowers followed by a medium-close up shot of Stephanie as an infant laying on her stomach on a pillow on couch. The same blue blanket from the fifth birthday of Jennifer is draped over the couch. The staging of the shots with a blue blanket as a backdrop suggests that Tuan was conscious of the fact that the videotape might be viewed by outsiders of the family since most of the footage is not staged. While a small aspect of the mise-en-scene may have been set up, for the most part the footage does not seem staged with objects placed in front of the camera for the taping. However, one can also posit that Tuan and Nguyen cleaned up before videotaping as it is always very clean and tidy in the footage shots in their home.

In this tape and others, Tuan has also captured intimate family moments that might not be seen as ideal according to some world views. Roger Odin has written that "The home movie refuses to represent anything shocking and embarrassing (the intimate), to reveal a pessimistic view of family life (illness, suffering, misery), or too threatening to the image of the ideal family (household scenes, parental-child conflicts, familial dramas)."²⁵ Yet this is not the case with the Hoang tapes. In this segment the daughters are being scolded and disciplined, and Nguyen's breast entire breast is seen when she nurses the baby Stephanie. The Hoang videos could be seen as challenging the appropriate behavior of so called "Kodak Culture" written about in previous literature on home movies. What is commonly seen as ideal to record is captured but what is also

²⁴ See a brief explanation of manyuejiu in Sato, Wakana. "Sympathetic Relationships between Miao Mothers and Daughters as Mediated by Ethnic Costumes: Case Studies from Guizhou Province, China." *Japanese Journal of Cultural Anthropology*, Vol.79 No.3, 2017 pp.305-327.

²⁵ Roger Odin, "Reflections on the Family Home Movie as Document: A Semio-Pragmatic Approach." *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, ed., Karen L. Ishizuka, and Patricia R. Zimmerman (University of California Press, 2008), 262.

shown might be deemed unsuitable for home movies. Tuan captures his children at home crying, being disciplined, mundane everyday scenes and nudity. Besides Nguyen's breasts, the young girls are also shown changing or playfully "flashing" the camera with their private parts. While this might be seen by Western culture as inappropriate, all of this may be common and normal by Asian cultures who may not view it as improper. Children being disciplined might be seen as good parenting, while nudity is not necessarily shocking or inappropriate. However, it's important to keep in mind that the tapes were created with the family in mind as an audience and the inclusion of such things may be due to this simple fact of domestic privacy and the family spectator.

Travel Footage

Only one of the tapes features travelogue footage of Tuan, Nguyen and Jennifer travelling with family around British Columbia in 1987 in the spring or summer. At first, when viewing the first segment of this particular home movie, it appears that the footage could have been taken near a lake or a park within the city. However, some segments later we see the family at distinct locations with signage, indicating that they are in British Columbia. Moreover, the tape showing picnics and fruit-picking which are common leisurely activities to do in BC. The group is all dressed in warmer clothing such as t-shirts, skirts and shorts. The travelogue begins with a 20-minute segment of the family relaxing and playing frisbee by a lake. The handheld footage is shot primarily in long shots and quick pans by Tuan who captures a young Jennifer attempting to catch the frisbee as it is thrown amongst the Vietnamese adults. Their leisurely time spent by a lakeside seems quintessentially Canadian; Canada has a large number of lakes and many Canadians flock to lakesides for vacations and holidays. The next few shots are locked down with Jennifer, baby Michelle, and their four extended family members in the shot (three males and one female). In one shot, a man squats in the background over a fire pit where he is cooking

something; Tuan is on the blanket with the baby and young Jennifer is sitting with the rest of the adults at the picnic table.

The next sequence follows the same group in a medium long shot as they walk through flower beds and trees in a long shot. A cut occurs and shows Nguyen walking while holding Jennifer's hand beside a sign that says "Cominco Gardens." The gardens are a five-hectare property in Kimberly, B.C. with thousands of flowers being grown there²⁶. Following this segment is around 15 minutes of fruit-picking by the family; many of the shots focus on Michelle who is sitting on a blanket in the orchard while Jenn helps other family members pick fruit on ladders. The group is in an orchard, as they are surrounded by leafy branches. Shots follow of the adults on ladders holding white buckets and picking fruit off the trees.

The other adults in the shot were unknown at the time of the viewing. However, a conversation between a stranger and Tuan in English on the tape reveals that one of the males and the other adult female is Tuan's brother and his sister in law. Since this particular tape was not viewed with the family, we can assume that the other two males may be Nguyen's siblings or family friends. Next in that tape is a short four-minute segment of the group eating again at a picnic table in another location by a lake, followed by a longer sequence at Ainsworth Hot Springs. The camera focuses on Nguyen and baby Michelle, and on the left, Jennifer in the hot springs with their friends/family. There are eight shots total in this segment. The first is a close-up eye level shot of Nguyen holding Michelle while she sits on a wooden railing. It then cuts to the three men and one woman with a young Jennifer inside the hot springs surrounded by strangers. The adults pass Jennifer around as she faces towards the camera and waves to her

²⁶ Kimberly, BC, Canada. "Cominco Gardens," accessed June 9, 2017, <https://www.tourismKuntheaberley.com/attractions/cominco-gardens>.

father. The sequence then cuts to Nguyen sitting at a bench as the others come out of the entrance to the hot springs with wet hair and towels. The sequence ends with a couple point of view shots looking out towards a lake with the sign “Balfour Beach Inn,” a location just over half an hour from the Ainsworth Hot Springs.

Reception & Memory

Tuan, Nguyen and the youngest daughter Stephanie were interviewed for the project, while the other two daughters were not involved. The interview was conducted in their home where we easily viewed the tapes on a VCR that was currently still set up as a part of their entertainment system. The Hoangs also said that they watched the tapes a couple times a year, at special occasions or holidays when the family was together. Stephanie was surprised hearing that her father had recorded more than the VHS tapes. Because she had assumed that these tapes were the only moving images from her childhood, she had treated them very preciously. She explains that previously Tuan had only been able to take photos of her oldest sister since they could not afford a video camera until later. “When they had Jen, they were so poor and could only afford a camera. So that’s why there’s more pictures of Jen as a baby than there is of me and Michelle. But we have more videos.” Indeed, much of the footage captures Stephanie as a newborn and toddler while the other sisters are slightly older. However, the oldest tape from 1985 does center on the eldest sister; the other two daughters were not born yet.

During the interview Tuan says that he spent four or five thousand dollars at the time to purchase the camera. “I make a very good money at that time. A month, at least five thousand dollars a month as a janitor working very hard.” However, in their travelogue tape shot in 1987, an offscreen voice is heard speaking to Tuan in English. It is the some of the only English speaking that occurs on the entire tape, and one of the longer conversations that occurs in

English amongst their videos. A man's voice is heard offscreen, while the camera is focused on one of the Hoang's relatives and one of the daughters laying down on the blanket with him. They are sitting in an orchard, the segment has followed the relatives, wife and two daughters as they are picking fruit, presumably somewhere in British Columbia. The man has a Canadian accent and asks Tuan what kind of camera, and comments that they are expensive. Tuan responds, "Yeah, this one, including accessory, [is] around three thousand dollars." According to a Canadian Alberta inflation calculator, \$3,000 in 1987 in today's dollars would be over \$6,500. So, while the numbers are off, the camera was expensive at the time. Tuan was proud of his purchase, happily noting that he did not know anyone with the same camera. "I can say that I am the first Vietnamese has that, the best video camera in Edmonton. Because no one can spend about four to five thousand dollar by that time for the camera. Very expensive back then," Tuan explains.

The Hoangs wished to preserve the memories for themselves and for their daughters. "My parents thought it was important to document things like this, so you know, even though they didn't have much money they spent it on cameras and videos," Stephanie says. As Richard Chalfen notes, as people age, "personal photographic images, including snapshots and home movies, become more and more important."²⁷ The referential indexical function rather than the participation or making of the video becomes the most important to stand in place of failing memory. In this case, the children were so young and now over 25 years have passed since the tapes were made. Therefore, the footage stands in for memories and aids the participants' in remembering. When asked when they had last watched the home movies on other video formats, Stephanie was not sure if they had seen them ever together as a family. Presumably they were

²⁷ Chalfen, Richard. *Snapshot versions of life*. (University of Wisconsin Press, 1987):15.

unseen is due to the inaccessibility of those other formats whereas VCRs and VHS are easily accessible and simple to use. As an anthropologist, Chalfen is also interested in the question of which life circumstances trigger or regenerate an interest in photography. In the case of the Hoangs and others in this study, it is the ability to capture family and familial relations. Tuan would have never purchased a camera or recorded as much as he did if it were not for the birth and new experiences of his daughters. While the experience of newcomer immigrants traveling may have been captured regardless of having children, the focus on the kids and amount of videotaping may have been scarcer.

Towards a Vietnamese Canadian Identity

The videotapes were recorded in Edmonton and British Columbia, alluding to the fact that immigrants may not necessarily stay in one place or have the initial power to choose which city to live in. Like the Chan father, Tuan first landed in Thunder Bay due to placement by the government and later moved to Edmonton and Calgary for better opportunities. By the time they moved to Calgary, Tuan had switched recording formats. Yet, because of the ease of use, the VHS tapes taken before they settled permanently in Calgary became the most watched and the most precious to the family.

What is recorded and what is not also reveals the values of the Hoangs. The focus on the domestic sphere and the children emphasizes family and the importance of parenting to Tuan and Nguyen. Tuan, as mentioned, also captured Nguyen disciplining their children on tape. While they are not corporal punishments, during the interview, Nguyen expressed regrets about disciplining her children so much. The disciplining is verbal and happens several times on different tapes. Twice because Jennifer and Michelle are fighting, and once when the girls are not standing nicely for the camera for Jennifer's fifth birthday. On the tape *Sinh Nhat Thuy Vy 5 Tuoi*

04.01.90, the first 39 minutes of the tape are of the girls and Nguyen posing in front of a photography camera for Jennifer's birthday. This segment, as previously written about under "Birthdays," consists of Nguyen ensuring the two daughters are posing and presentable, her breastfeeding baby Stephanie, a brief Happy Birthday singing with candles, the family eating cake and them continuing to post for more photos taken by Tuan.

On another tape, *Hoang Thuy Vy Hoang Thuc Vy, Hoang Thuy Tuong Vy*, labeled with the three daughters' Vietnamese names, Michelle and Jennifer are disciplined and crying for almost 12 minutes. Michelle in the prior shot is seen taking a toy from Jennifer and upsetting her. Next is a high angle shot of Michelle being spanked on her thigh and crying. The two daughters had been fighting over toy blocks. In what appears to be a bedroom, the camera then zooms into a medium close up of Nguyen speaking sternly to Michelle and Jennifer. While I could not understand what they were saying, since it was in Vietnamese, Michelle is disciplined much more than Jennifer. In the next shot, Nguyen is kneeling beside Michelle. She picks up a black wired telephone and speaks into it in Vietnamese. In the interviews Stephanie explained that her mother was pretending to call the police with a phone that was unplugged from the phone cable. Michelle yells "no!" and pushes away her mother and hits her. Nguyen continues to speak into the silent phone while Michelle continues to shake her head and yell. She then points a finger in Michelle's face and tells her to speak into the phone. Michelle, still crying, is given the phone and repeats after her mother. Tuan zooms the camera into a close up shot while she repeats in English: "I promise," "I'm sorry," and "I don't do that anymore." In the following shots Jenn is also crying and blowing her nose into tissues and sitting with the baby on the bed.

While the tapes come from a contextually and culturally unique place, their approaches to parenting are arguably shared with other ethnic minority communities. For instance, Maiter and

George studied South Asian immigrant women's parenting in Canada and found that mothers placed value in and organized parenting around "character development" and "identity formation."²⁸

"Character formation," as described by Maiter and George, is the personal qualities internalized by the cultural value system of the mothers. Some of these include the respect for elders, modesty, humility, hard work, perseverance and living a disciplined life. These qualities are taught by mothers to "...help their children be useful and productive citizens of their new country; respect for elders, for example, is viewed...as resulting in good behaviour in society and ultimately in success for children."²⁹ The Hoangs captured this in their videos when they would forbid bad behaviour and discipline their girls. Similar findings from a study of immigrant Chinese parents in America noted that a focus on obedience and respect for parents was linked to positive authoritarian parenting and collectivist cultures.³⁰ While "authoritarian" may sound extreme, echoes of the Hoang's heritage from growing up in Vietnam spill into their own parenting of Jennifer, Michelle and Stephanie. Tuan and Nguyen came from a collectivist culture that emphasizes family, cooperation and group goals. For the Vietnamese people, this comes from centuries of teachings from the philosophical school of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism as well as the "legacy of self-preservation as a nation from invaders" such as China and France.³¹ The family attempted to preserve their culture as well as instill collectivist values onto their

²⁸ Sarah Maiter and Usha George, "Understanding Context and Culture in the Parenting Approaches of Immigrant South Asian Mothers," *Affilia* 18, no. 4 (November 1, 2003): 419. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109903257589>.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 420.

³⁰ Chao, R. K., "The Parenting of Immigrant Chinese and Euro-American mothers: Relations Between Parenting Styles, Socialization Goals, and Parental Practices," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 21, (2000): 234.

³¹ Gemma Dolorosa Skillman, "Intergenerational Conflict within the Family Context: A Comparative Analysis of Collectivism and Individualism within Vietnamese, Filipino, and Caucasian Families," (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1999):12-13. <http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/docview/304551676?accountid=9838>.

children. Within the framework of character formation, Tuan also valued hard work when he described the family's financial struggles and the cost of a good camera. Much of the footage reveals a modest home with clean furnishings free of any indications of wealth which may suggest the character development value. The simple lifestyle that Tuan shows might be due to their lower income or socioeconomic status, but Tuan was not afraid to spend money on things like an expensive camera which hints at what he valued.

“Identity formation” is the value placed on developing a sense of cultural identity in order for children to belong and have a sense of connectedness or community. Due to the absence of support from extended family or a neighborhood in a new country, mothers try to impart their cultural values as much as possible.³² In the absence of a “village” that helps raise a child, mothers and parents are more isolated in imparting norms and values to their children. The videotapes mainly show the same handful of people - the immediate family - as well as a few friends and extended family. Other incidental people are shown when the girls are having a farewell gathering at their daycare and at the Ainsworth Hot Springs. But for the most part, the subjects are Vietnamese speakers and it's clear that the children's first language is Vietnamese. The importance of the language to the Vietnamese culture and to the Hoangs is evident. Though their children grew up and were raised in Alberta, a predominantly English-speaking province, Tuan and Nguyen spoke Vietnamese in the home and ensured that their children were fluent in their language. Indeed, these South Asian mothers have a lot in common with Nguyen and Tuan who also value character development and identity formation in helping their children thrive in Canada. In keeping their cultural values in a new country, the Hoangs created for themselves and

³² Sarah Maiter and Usha George, “Understanding Context and Culture in the Parenting Approaches of Immigrant South Asian Mothers,” *Affilia* 18, no. 4 (November 1, 2003): 422. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109903257589>.

their daughters a bicultural identity. Viewing the images taken by Tuan from this lens might make them seem more ideal and ordinary after all. The videotapes might actually be “culturally sanctioned behaviour” as Lindstrom wrote of and represent a culture that is both Canadian and Vietnamese.

The Chey Videotape Collection

Four VHS tapes were provided for this project by a Canadian Cambodian family, the Cheys. Two of them are of the couple’s wedding in 1987 while the other two feature vacation and travel related footage. Of the two travel videos, one had only 21 minutes of footage before cutting to black and white static noise with nothing captured for the remainder of the two-hour tape. The other video was mainly filmed by their male relative living in Massachusetts. The tapes are between one segment--the wedding--to as many as nine segments. Subjects also speak Khmer throughout the tapes which little to English words appearing unless they are from non-family members.

Chey Family History

In 1979 Kunthea and Samnang fled Cambodia by bus in order to escape the oppressive communist regime. The situation had worsened following the Cambodian Civil war when Vietnam invaded Cambodia ending the Pol Pot communist regime and creating enough disorder to allow to make escape possible. With the help of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Thailand was currently accepting refugees from the area including those from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. A UN sponsored accord to address the refugee crisis was created. “First asylum countries,” such as Thailand, would readily admit refugees to camps with the understanding that other countries part of the accord (mainly Canada, the U.S. and Australia) would offer permanent

asylum.³³ In 1979 over 40,000 Cambodians fled their country to seek asylum in Thailand. A large factor in thousands of Cambodians escape was Cambodia's most devastating famine occurring in April to August of that year. By September of 1979 the number of Cambodians seeking asylum surged to almost 500 thousand, causing the international community to pressure Thailand to open their borders and allow holding centers by the UNHCR. By 1980 Thailand closed its borders and did not accept any further refugees.³⁴ Since Thailand was situated on the northwest border of Cambodia, refugees could reach the country by foot.

Kunthea and Sam first met each other on the bus to a refugee camp at the Cambodian border in 1979. As their daughter explains, people would line up to get on a bus and each busload determined with camp "group" you were placed in. Each bus had the capacity to transport anywhere between 50 to 70 people and were filled as much as possible. Kunthea and Sam's families were together on that same bus and placed together in the same group. The first relief camp they were placed in was named Khao-I-Dang or "Black Mountain." Although UNHCR camps offered regular supplies of food, water, medical treatment, international aid and retraining programs for men, the overall camp conditions remained poor.³⁵ Translating from her parents, Eva Chey explains that:

Each camp had around 10 families or so. Upon arrival, each family was given a "plot" to build their tents on. They were provided with bamboo and tarps allocated based on the size of the family. If you had a larger family, you would get a bigger piece of tarp and more bamboo. Bamboo was also used to make makeshift bedding so that people could sleep slightly above the ground, each person was also given a small blanket and mosquito net. Toilets were dug out in the ground and were one meter by five meters in size. Bricks were placed on top and large leaves were used as walls. Eventually people started picking at the leaves to use as wipes, so the toilets were completely open. It was set up like an outhouse but was way worse. Everyone had to share, so men and women were not separated. Water was brought in by trucks, each camp group was

³³ Morley Beiser and Morton Beiser, *Strangers at the Gate: The "Boat people's" First Ten Years in Canada*. University of Toronto Press, 1999.

³⁴ Janet McLellan, *Cambodian refugees in Ontario: Resettlement, Religion, and Identity*. University of Toronto Press, 2009, 30-31.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 32.

given a specific day and time of when the trucks would stop in so they could bring their pail to collect water for the week. Each family was given canned food, dried sardines, vegetables and grains of rice, twice a week that they had to cook themselves. And once in a while they would get chicken.

Kunthea was 10 years old while Sam was 19; Sam was close in age to Kunthea's older brother and so they easily became friends. As Sam says, "we happened to be her neighbour and her brother happened to be my best friend." Because of their proximity to each other's families, their grandmothers also became close friends. For eight months they camped at Khao-I-dang before they were moved together to another camp known as Sa Keo. Kunthea explains that Khao-I-Dang was reaching maximum capacity and since their group was registered with the UN they were moved to another Thai-based UNHCR camp, Sakeo, to allow new refugees to be resettled. Sa Keo or Sa Kaeo was one of the first organized Thai-based refugee UNHCR camps in Thailand.

As a young adult, Sam was eager to learn new skills. He had already begun learning English from a professor in Kao-I-Dang in 1979 and in 1981 began working as a nursing assistant in Sa Keo. Along with other refugees, Sam was taught and paid by the UN workers as nursing or doctors assistants. Since the UN workers could not provide around the clock care, the camp would be left without any medical assistance. So, refugee assistants would provide the same work as the UN workers during evening and early morning hours. In Sakeo, Kunthea began attending school and learning to read and write in Khmer, Cambodia's official language. Kunthea attended grades 1 through 3 at the camp. Although she was already nine when she first entered the refugee camps, Kunthea unable to attend any school prior Sakeo since Khao-I-dang did not provide classes for younger children.

In 1982 Kunthea and Sam had to again relocate to a third camp with their families. The two of them were separated since Sam was placed in Chonburi in eastern Thailand and Kunthea

was sent with her family to Kamput, another camp nearby. At the third camp, the families were finally accepted to immigrate to Canada from Thailand. Kunthea explains that they first applied to the United States but failed the test needed to be accepted. Both of them were required to complete rigorous testing including a physical and health examination and education test in order for them to be accepted as landed immigrants (not refugees). So, they applied for countries accepting refugees including Canada, New Zealand, the United States and France. Sam was accepted to both New Zealand and Canada but chose the latter thinking that he would be provided with more opportunities. 24-year-old Sam was first placed in Brandon, Manitoba while 15-year-old Kunthea and her entire family were placed in Red Deer in April of 1983. Kunthea and Sam were part of a demographic of refugees that were accepted into Canada during the 1980s. Most Cambodians arrived to Canada in one refugee flow during the 1980s and there were about an equal number of male and female refugees, the majority of them under 34.³⁶ The two and their families immigrated to Canada to escape the poor conditions of the refugee camps and create a better life for themselves abroad.

Sam travelled to the Vancouver Expo in 1986 where he stayed for a week to experience the Expo. Along the way back, he stopped in Red Deer to visit 17-year-old Kunthea and her family. Sam explains he also had been fishing crabs with his friend in Vancouver and couldn't bring them all back to Manitoba. Because he decided to visit Kunthea's family, he brought a catch of two buckets of fresh crabs home for them to enjoy. After that visit, Sam says that they essentially had an arranged marriage. "Her mom gave a picture, then I show to my mom and she said, "oh she beautiful." And she my neighbour and we got engaged. We start from there."

³⁶ Ibid, 36.

In Red Deer, Kunthea worked for Michael's sewing bows, while Sam began working as an assembler for a sofa company called Parkland Furniture. Their eldest daughter Eva was born in Red Deer in 1990. In 1991 he was offered a job at National Oil Well and began his career as a machinist. The family moved from Red Deer to Calgary in 1992 when Sam was laid off from his machinist job due to the company shutting down. Sam's family had already immigrated to Calgary and there were more opportunities in Calgary, allowing him to find work easily. In Calgary, both Sam and Kunthea then attended SAIT. Sam enrolled in an apprenticeship program earning his Journeyman Machinist certificate while Kunthea enrolled in a month-long course to learn electronic soldering techniques. Their second daughter was born in 1993 while their son was born in 1996.

Aesthetics and Content

The content and style vary greatly across the small Chey collection. This can be attributed to the different events captured as well as the three different camera people for the tapes; the wedding films were captured by one person, and the travel films are each filmed by different people. The content is much different for each videotape and the strategy of filming may be different. The wedding would probably be filmed differently since the subjects are not moving around to different spaces. On the other hand, vacations and travel films feature different subjects travelling and moving around in different places. Thus, there are different styles for the Chey weddings and the two vacation videotapes.

Wedding

Kunthea and Sam were married in 1987 in Red Deer. The majority of their wedding ceremony took place within their apartment with their family in attendance. The video was filmed by a hired family friend and then given to the couple on two separate videotapes. This

video originally was not intended to be used for the study since it was not filmed by any of the participants. However, due to the small sample size of films from the Cheys and given that the participants were interviewed while viewing the video it has been included in the analysis. It can be segmented as one entire event occurring consecutively on one day, or as many as five: titles, portraits of the couple, Khmer wedding rituals, transport to the reception and dinner reception. Notably the video has elements of a more polished film with a title sequence in the beginning introducing the couple and announcing the tape as their wedding video. It begins with a text over a photo of Ankor Watt that is arranged in a triangle that says “Khmer Ankor Wat” followed by “Cambodia Custim” [sic]. The image of Ankor Wat shows up in two of their home movies and could be considered an iconographic home movie subject. Like the Ankor Wat’s appearance in the wedding footage, the camera also lingers on a framed illustration or photo of Ankor Wat around footage of a birthday celebration. The camera person in both cases are Cambodian immigrants who no doubt reveres the Wat as a symbolic holy mountain even from a distance and as a twice reproduced image as a two-dimensional illustration and photo and recorded on videotape.

The wedding video continues as traditional sounding music including a steady beat and a wind instrument begins. A slow choppy left swipe occurs from a black screen to a reveal of a piece of shiny golden low relief art in a golden frame. It depicts a woman and a man in what is likely a marriage ceremony. The couple looks like they are being showered in what looks like rice and they sit in the shape of an element that looks like fire. At one minute into the tape the sequence of titles and introductions begins with much of it in animated Khmer script. Navy blue Cambodian words scroll upwards slowly against a muted lighter blue background until the screen is entirely blue with no words. A shaky tracking shot moves left to right over more

writing in the next shot. Afterwards the animation begins of the letters, this time inside a decorated pink heart. White, pink, red and yellow ribbons surround the pink felt heart and a flower decoration is at the top of the heart. The Khmer script moves inside the heart, appearing to create words and then disappearing. Another slow jerky swipe with an animated feel occurs to the heart to more writing, followed by a square transition that closes onto the heart onto a black screen. Again, the words that first opened the video appear in all capitals followed by a “produced by” name and the names of Kunthea and Sam’s parents. Like writing for a wedding invitation, the video tape has text stating that both parents “request the honour of your presence at the wedding of their children.” This text is followed by the names of Sam and Kunthea as well as the date of the wedding, Saturday, July 11, 1987 and the place, Red Deer. This invitation text occurs once more before the couple is shown in front of the camera.

Before the ritual ceremonies begin, the camera person films Sam and Kunthea stylistically. First, he videotapes them with a honeycomb effect with four images around their heads and then with cascading images of their faces. Then, he films Sam in a medium shot, then Kunthea and then the two. First with the honeycomb and then with the cascade effect. Both are dressed up, Sam in a suit and tie, and Kunthea with makeup and a silver sparkly dress with a curled updo. They pose for the video camera and for photos, standing still. People talk to them both getting them to smile as they stand somewhat awkwardly. Afterwards begins the Cambodian wedding customs.

At 00:14:10 the procession begins towards the family apartment. A long, deep, handheld static shot shows around two dozen people dressed formally in suits and colorful dresses lined up on a sidewalk in a residential area. Sam and Kunthea are at the front left of the frame leading the procession, along with a man and woman who hold bright red and pink umbrellas. Ten seconds

later the procession begins to move left towards a building. The cameraman zooms and pans left in as they walk by from the middle of the shot towards the bottom left corner. All of the participants in carries a wrapped item in bright yellow-orange cellophane. As Sam walks by he holds a shiny silver candle holder object. Traditionally, the rituals would be completed at the bride's home and the building that the procession walks towards is indeed Kunthea's family's apartment.

At 0:15:55 the video cuts to the inside of an apartment where the wedding rituals continue for over an hour. This segment is filmed entirely in the living room of Kunthea's family apartment where over two dozen people witness the traditional Khmer wedding rituals and are seated around the ritual specialists and couple on the floor. The camera person has also filmed it all, opposite of the couple where they are mostly framed in a medium long shot. However, the shots are not static, and the cameraman pans left and right, tilts up and down, and zoom in to capture action. He also periodically zooms into the groups of people to the left, behind the couple and to the right of the couple. It's obvious that the camera is on a tripod since the camera does not move from its vantage point, seems to perform movements on a joint, and the picture only shakes when someone walks by and likely is bumping the tripod legs.

Recorded music plays in the room during the rituals, changing from time to time, with a man also hitting a metal object to create metallic clinking sounds in a rhythmic manner. According to McKinley et. al. live music was an essential part of traditional Khmer weddings, and the entire event in Cambodia would last three days. Written in 1999, the authors state that most Khmer weddings in the capital Phnom Penh last five hours and include between 13 to 15

separate rituals.³⁷ The Chey tape does capture their wedding rituals and is about an hour long. But it's likely that at least half an hour, if not more, was not caught on tape since there were a few dress changes, movement of people and cuts that occur where people and objects have moved.

Intermittently, and perhaps during the less formal, less important rituals there is chatter in the room. Laughter is heard, and young kids sit in the background. The atmosphere is reverent at times, but also casual. Kunthea explains that they had ritual specialists come in to help them perform the ceremonies. The specialist or "accar" leads the rituals and makes sure that they are done correctly. In their wedding there were two or three people helping the couple in their marriage traditions. Kunthea also says that the specialists provided some of the traditional outfits as well as objects used in the rituals that they did not have on hand. The specialists are heard throughout the ceremony chanting, showing the couple what to do and performing the rituals. Since the entire wedding featured only Cambodians conversing and the Chey participants did not view the entire tape during the research, it is difficult to know which rituals were performed and why. Moreover, the cameraman tended to firehose around the room during the less prominent rituals and thus some nuances may have been missed on tape.

A number of rituals do happen before and in between these three rituals but were not immediately apparent to the researcher upon viewing. However, much like a traditional North American wedding, an exchange of rings occurs in one long shot between 00:23:10 and 00:31:30. The cameraman zooms out from a medium shot to a long shot to capture the action. An older woman enters from the left of the frame, likely one of their mothers and then sits beside

³⁷ Kathy M. McKinley, James A. Deaville, Marc-André Roberge, Susan F. Fast, Beverley Diamond, and Robert Witmer, "Tros, Tevodas, and Haircuts: Ritual, Music, and Performance in Khmer Wedding Ceremonies," *Canadian University Music Review* 19, no. 2 (1999): 48-51.

Sam. Another younger woman sitting to the right of the frame beside Kunthea and bows a few times to the right and to the left with her hands in prayer pose. The sound of a woman speaking Khmer occurs as the woman hands Kunthea something. The couple then face each other for a prayer pose and Kunthea puts a ring on Sam. The camera zooms and pans around before coming back to the couple where the woman specialist on the right provides Sam with a ring and they again do a prayer pose before he puts a ring on Kunthea. As the couple stands, the cameraman zooms out and the two leave the room through the entrance on the far left. The ceremony appears to continue as an older woman sits and speaks in front of the silver dishes and other objects in front of her, including all of the gifts from the procession outside the apartment which appear in the foreground.

At least three important wedding Khmer rituals can be identified by sight and occur in the first videotape. These include a ritual luck haircut, fertility candle ritual and ritual of protection, three out of four important rituals for Khmer weddings. The ritual haircut known as “kat saq” is performed on the couple in order to bring them good luck and erase any past misfortune. It also is a physical mark of the couple’s transition to a new adult status. This ritual is around ten minutes in duration and shows the couple in bright outfits sitting at a table with metal objects and a colorful tablecloth on top. Traditional Khmer music is played from a recording and two men dance, one with scissors in his hands, in a counterclockwise circle around the couple either pretending to cut or cutting pieces of their hair.

The Cheys guests and specialists also performed the “bongwoel popil” where three leaf-shaped metal objects each topped with a candle are passed around the couple several times. During this ritual the couple sat cross legged and were in prayer pose and made to lean forward with their posed hands on pillow for support. Then, adults in the immediately around them who

were also sitting passed the candles around them, waving one hand over the flame before passing it off to the person on their right. The metal objects (popil) are of Hindu Brahmanic origin and represent the female sex, and the candle represents the male sex. The union of the two, the lighting of the candle, the action of the waving of the smoke from the candle towards the couple are all to guarantee them fertility.

The other important ritual that was recognizable was the “cong dai.” In this ritual, the tying of the wrists of the couple with cotton threads and is performed by the accar (specialists) as well as guests and family members. The ritual is to protect the couple and incorporate the two into the community. By tying the strings, the threads keep the bride and groom’s vital essences inside their bodies and protects them.³⁸ A fourth important ritual which was likely performed is the “saen/pen cidon cita” where spiritual entities, including ancestral spirits, are invited to partake in the ceremony, accept the offerings, witness the event and give blessing and protection to the couple. Likely this was verbally performed but not obvious by sight alone.

The final parts of this tape, as well as the next are of the car ride to their reception, dinner, and dancing at their reception. The car ride is captured in one shot and features a decorated car with pink plastic poof balls dotting a white sedan. A line of four to five streamers also vertically line the back window and a “Just Married” cursive sign covers the back-license plate area. The camera man videotapes car from a front passenger point of view where the couple and few others are inside as it drives past his car to the right and then speeds up and merges in front of his lane. There is a lot of honking in this shot, either from the wedding car or the car that the cameraman sits in. Afterwards for a couple minutes, the cameraman films himself in the right-side mirror before panning left and capturing the inside dashboard and wedding car in

³⁸ Ibid, 48-51.

front. They arrive at the restaurant which is a part of a strip mall where the parking lot is quite full of cars.

From 1:34:08 to the end of the tape at two hours the cameraman perches his tripod in the middle of a Chinese restaurant where the reception is held. A light is on from the camera as everything closer to the tripod is very brightly bathed in artificial light. Again, we can assume that the camera is on a tripod from the movements of the camera on a joint, the unchanging horizontal filming level as well as the image shake that occurs from people walking by. Most of the footage is shot in medium to medium long shots, with people up close and further away deep in the corners of the restaurant. The restaurant venue is entirely taken up by the Chey reception and is a large square with six to seven circular tables. The camera tripod is one table deep from the front of the entrance. The footage inside begins with the guests arriving and being greeted by the couple. Sam is back in his suit, and Kunthea in a magenta taffeta type dress material. Sam first greets them with a prayer pose followed by Kunthea who greets them with a prayer pose and then pins a flower on each of the breasts or lapels of the adult guests as they arrive. Three women stand by her with one holding a silver bowl of flowers and another next to Kunthea handing her pink-reddish flowers.

The guests slowly trickle in and are mostly families and adults. There are also a handful of Caucasians, some of which are a family unit with a husband, wife and two young boys who appear to be 14 or younger. During this time the camera pan cuts from the entrance to the tables, and then pans left and right across the guests. The cameraman sometimes zooms into a medium close up of the furthest back tables. Opposite to the entrance appears to be an area for the servers and the entrance to the kitchen behind. The restaurant has a wine-red carpet and is decorated modestly with Chinese type wall hangings such as a four seasons panel and a red fan with Asian

writing on it. Music plays intermittently in the first tape but mainly sounds like Asian music, either Chinese or other.

Wedding II, the second and final videotape from their wedding begins with all guests seated. Shots are under ten seconds to over four minutes with longer shots being when the dancing has begun. The camera pans left and right and zooms randomly in as before to the guests. Some male Asian servers appear in and out of medium shots serving beer to the guests who are waiting for the dinner service to begin. At 00:07:20 a cut occurs, and clinking is heard as the cameraman zooms into the couple who are partially obscured by people in front of them seated. They stand up and are almost in silhouette. Sam tries to kiss Kunthea and she ducks away as chuckles are heard and they sit down. The camera pans left as people begin to eat what appears to be dumplings with their chopsticks. More than a dozen shots follow of the clinking scenario, and most of the clinking is from people hitting their chopsticks against porcelain dinnerware. First a few times with Sam and Kunthea, and then with other heterosexual couples around the room. Each of the couples shyly stand and the male partner kisses the woman's cheek and sometimes her lips. Between this clinking the guests are videotaped enjoying their meal as many courses come out from the kitchen, including a seafood dish with crabs and lobsters.

Beginning at 00:35:54 when most of the guests have finished eating and some are still picking away at their meals, the couple begin to make their rounds. A handful of people also stand with them as they go from table to table and greet each adult. First Kunthea greets an individual in a prayer pose and puts a cigarette in their mouth and stands aside. Sam then appears to greet the person in a prayer pose as well and then lights their cigarette. The cigarette gift is one that, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, was prevalent during traditional Khmer weddings. When Cambodia adopted a free-market system in the early 1990s, one of the first consumer goods

introduced on a wide scale was cigarettes. In a 1994 survey on street advertising in Phnom Penh, almost 50% of the ads were for tobacco products.³⁹ Cigarettes were ingrained in the Khmer culture; they were seen as a symbol of power, prestige and sophistication, were given freely during Pol Pot's regime to control mosquitoes and given to monks to increase virtue or good karma (merit-making).⁴⁰ At weddings, guests were expected to accept gifts of cigarettes⁴¹ to honor the bride and groom.⁴²

The camera follows the couple around the room in medium to long shots as they repeat this action for most adults in the room who happily receive their cigarette. It takes them around half an hour to finish this process, as they also take photos with some of the guests. At 1:06:00 the camera begins to pan around to other parts of the room and guests mingling, standing and chatting. A couple of times, two men are seen moving a large circular wooden slab - the tops of the tables. Ten minutes later the camera is now facing the back of the room in a medium long shot towards a makeshift dance floor. The framing hardly changes in this sequence but moves from left to right to show the guests at either. The room has been cleared of all tables save for one in the middle adorned with a red tablecloth where a small vase with a few flowers sits on top. Chairs like the left and right sides where the remaining guests are now seated and where most of the chairs face inwards towards the dance floor. The remainder of the tape is of the guests dancing to different songs, most of them Cambodian or other Asian language, varying in tempo and feel, from upbeat to very traditional sounding songs. A couple of English language

³⁹ Marshall Smith, "Advertising in Cambodia," *Tobacco control* 5, no. 1 (1996): 66-68.

⁴⁰ Marshall Smith, Takusei Umenai, and Colin Radford. "Prevalence of smoking in Cambodia." *Journal of epidemiology* 8, no. 2 (1998): 85-89.

⁴¹ Carolyn Kramer Lafferty, Catherine A. Heaney, and Moon S. Chen Jr. "Assessing Decisional Balance for Smoking Cessation Among Southeast Asian Males in the US." *Health Education Research* 14, no. 1 (1999): 139-146.

⁴² Satcher, David. *Tobacco Use Among US Racial Ethnic Minority Groups: African Americans, American Indians & Alaska Natives, Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders, Hispanics*. DIANE Publishing, 1998, 211.

pop songs are also played, and the dance floor is full, showing these particular Cambodian's participation in the popular culture of the time. These are songs that were popular that year such as "Geronimo's Cadillac" by Modern Talking and "You're my Love, You're my Life" by Patty Ryan. Kunthea dances for a few songs while Sam mingles and sits with guests. From time to time the dancefloor is empty and soon fills with people, or the cameraman cuts until there is a new song and people dancing. Towards the end of the tape there are less people in the chairs and only a handful of people dancing as people leave the party. The tape ends at 1:55:97 with people still standing around and chatting.

Again, this home movie like others in this study focuses on marriage, the couple and the beginnings of an ideal nuclear family. Indeed, the pomp and circumstance of the entire event with the objects and clothing is a material display of their culture and the video itself is a recreation and reminder of where they came from. This film could also be negotiated as both belonging to the home movie mode of recording as well as to a broader extent, amateur cinema. As part of the home mode, arguably only the very tight Cambodian families of Red Deer attended the ceremonies which took place inside their private home of only happy moments. On the more polished amateur cinema side, the beginning of the first video has animations and credits embedded in them along with music. Likely the letters in Cambodian also tell a story of the couple, though without being able to read the language it's impossible to know for sure without an interpreter. Additionally, this filmmaker used a tripod and focused solely on capturing the important parts of the day. He did not film any dead time between ceremonies and tried to avoid them during the reception. He also mainly centered the couple as the subjects while also capturing the people and actions around them. While there are aspects of both modes, there is also the functions of both that serve to display their identity and private histories. The animations

and credits enrich the movie as a textual document that could perhaps be understood more deeply without an interview by a Cambodian and Khmer speaker. The taping in the home displays a modest apartment as a backdrop to beautiful ceremonial silver objects and dazzling traditional wedding outfits. Each allow viewers and participants to recognize unique culture that provide a family narrative, a link to the past and a space to explore identities.

Vacations

Two of Chey's four tapes are of family vacations, the purpose of which appears to be to visit family while also sightseeing. As mentioned, one tape, *Vacation from Lowell to Toronto, Calgary*, is mostly empty with only five segments and 21 out of 120 minutes videotaped on. The footage is of the Cheys and their extended family in Massachusetts and Toronto. The Chey family had already relocated to Calgary by that point but there is no obvious footage taken in Calgary. The video was taken in 1997, a year after the birth of Kunthea and Sam's son.

The tape begins with a sequence of bunnies hopping around outdoors with a makeshift plastic shelter nearby. That sequence is followed by two shots of people outside in a wooded area enjoying what seems to be a picnic. In the first shot a few women are on a blanket outdoors with various bags around them. In the next medium shot at eye level there are older female Asian women and a man, and some young people speaking Cambodian and standing around. 18 seconds later at 0:06:38 a new segment begins with a birds eye extreme long shot that zooms shakily into a long shot of people walking on the pavement with blue plastic rain covers on. Eight seconds later a long shot pans from left to right over a teal bridge over a large body of water. A faded green railing is in the foreground as the camera pans quickly right and tilts upwards towards a tower like structure. People mill about in front of the camera, looking off into the distance. Presumably they are also tourists enjoying the view since they stand about in a leisurely manner.

Only three seconds later an extreme long shot follows that pans and shakily zooms into a skyline of buildings where a bridge and roads are off to the right of the shot. Afterwards is a slight high angle shot of four young Asian girls standing next to a railing. The camera zooms into Eva, her sister and the two others. Next is a long shot panning left across a bridge with rushing water underneath. The scene may be of Niagara Falls, a popular tourist destination. Ten seconds later is a zoom from an extreme long shot to a close up of the water's edge. Sam zooms so deeply into the water that it becomes abstract in this 27 second shot, akin to amateur avant-garde footage.

In the next segment three young girls are shot from behind on a sunny day and Sam speaks Cambodian from behind the camera. The camera pans left as the girls walk in front of Sam. Next is a ten second shot of flowers and other flora in a green space followed by a longer pan left across a paved pathway and flower beds. The group is clearly enjoying a leisurely stroll through a park. The end of this segment is of three of the young girls eating something from a cup, perhaps ice cream, as Sam pans right again across the green space.

The second longest and most humorous of the segments abruptly begins at 0:08:50. An extreme close up of an Asian man who is sleeping and snoring loudly is the first shot for a total of 40 seconds. The camera zooms out from the man's face whose head is diagonally placed in the center of the shot with his head towards the top right corner. The camera then pans right over two young Asian girls, Eva and her sister, who are lying in blankets and pajamas and smiling towards the camera. A cut at 0:09:30 zooms into a baby's face into a close up that is very unfocused. As the camera zooms out in the shot the face comes into focus and reveals Eva's mother who turns her head to look towards the infant now lying down. 43 seconds later Kunthea is in a medium shot in profile facing the left of the frame as the infant is lying down and begins to cry. The sound of the man is still prominent in the background as Eva's sister walks briefly in

front of the camera and her teeth fill the entire frame as she smiles, laughs and speaks Cambodian towards the camera. At 00:11:17 Sam cuts back to the man sleeping again and zooms in slowly towards his mouth as he snores for just over 30 seconds. Finally, a cut back to Kunthea is shown with her holding her son and he jumps up and down in front of her and seems to whine. Wood-type paneling and a white mini fridge are behind suggesting a basement or living room area.

The snoring segment is quite comical and unlike other home movies that may come off as “boring” due to the lack of recognition between viewer and subject image, one does not need any sort of knowledge to be entertained. The subject itself is inherently funny, since it is a close up of someone snoring very loudly, and since there is no continuity, there is an abrupt cut from a wide shot of a park to a close up of the man snoring. This cut is surprising and random, which also contributes to why it elicits a laugh. Moreover, the framing of the man is in close up which gives an immediate feeling of closeness to the subject, as if we were right next to his snoring face.

Finally, the last and longest segment begins at 00:12:13 and is just under nine minutes long; almost half of what is filmed on the videotape. It begins with a point of view shot looking out from inside a glass elevator overlooking many buildings in a city. A male voice begins to narrate as if Sam were on a tour, with information on the time it takes to go up the elevator and height of the building. It’s difficult to hear every single word said, however the man’s cheery voice is heard saying “highest observation point in the world.” The camera then moves shakily to focus the floor as Sam exits the elevator. The camera picks up a young voice that says “I’m dizzy” followed by some conversation in Cambodian. The camera continues to film the floor in a high angle shaky handheld shot which is now a pink carpet. Feet are seen in and out of the shot

walking. Clearly Sam has forgotten that the camera was on still and continued to videotape as he exited the elevator. However, at 00:14:32 the camera zooms out from a medium shot to a long shot of a city landscape featuring the Skydome, a sports stadium in Toronto now known as the Rogers Centre. Eight seconds later the camera pans left from the same position to dirty windows in the foreground of the cityscape. At 00:15:00 the camera pans left in the distance to a long shot of the Toronto Islands where it zooms into a slightly high angle, grainy long shot of the group of them. 25 seconds later a high angle extreme long shot that tilts straight down over roads and buildings in the distance through a glass window below as they seem to be on sort of observation deck.

At 17:00 the frame is back to an extreme long shot through the windows and at buildings below with metal structures in diagonal lines framing the windows. In somewhat quick, shaky movements, Sam tilts down, up and then pans right and zooms into the top a nondescript neutral coloured city building. The next shot is an extreme long shot of someone's collar before a slight tilt down occurs towards the back of someone's head which shows an ear with two earrings - possibly a woman. Whistling and some noises from around the camera are heard of movement and people talking. An extreme close up occurs as someone's face and then the nape of someone's neck appear in front of the camera.

In the next shot Sam begins to intentionally shoot again with a medium long shot of people touching a window with lights above. At 00:18:19 a point of view high angle shot zooms out from the glass observation deck indoors where Sam stands on the glass. Pathways and roadways are shown below as laughter and a woman's voice from offscreen is heard saying "scary." Sam is shown with Eva's brother supporting him as he stands above the glass. It is a high angle and the infant is barefoot. A silhouette of another kid appears as they laugh. Faces are

dark inside as an adult Asian man appears and lies down. On the glass. The camera attempts to adjust slightly focusing on the people in the foreground before they darken again against the bright landscape beyond the window. At 00:20:19 a medium shot of a few kids are shown as they lie down in the same framing as the previous shot. Seven second later more Asian people appear silhouetted in the shot - about a half dozen children and a few adults. Before the footage ends in this videotape are two more shots of the landscape below and the view from the tower - the CN tower.

This short video of their travels is interesting in that it hones in on the human subjects, injecting humour and play into them with the man snoring and the playfulness inside the CN tower. Since the footage is so short, it is almost similar to the shorter filming formats, with slices of life only seconds long. Still, the medium and videotaping are highlighted when Sam forgets that he is taping and leaves the camera on, recording feet and carpet for about a whole minute. This is similar to other so called “mistakes” of home movie making that calls attention to the act of recording and pulls the viewer back to reality that the moving images are reproductions. This occurs again at Riverside Park in the tape described below.

The final video is labeled “Vacation in U.S.A.” on the top sticker and “Eva & Brian in U.S A.” on the side. This videotape is two hours and was mostly filmed by an adult male relative of the Cheys living in Lowell, Massachusetts, a city only a 40-minute drive outside of Boston. Peculiarly, from start to finish the footage captured is not linear. Rather, if we are to trust the date and timestamps on the bottom of the frames, the videotape jumps around dates within four years. The first few sequences are shot in 1992. From there, there is footage from 1990, then 1989, afterwards the footage is taken in 1991, and finally the last sequence is from 1992. Without a doubt, the first and final sequences are when the Cheys visited so it’s likely that the

other dates are accurate. Since the main filmmaker for this video was not Sam or Kunthea and their relative was not a part of the research it's not certain why the tape is as such. However, their footage was submitted by the Cheys and included as part of it since it features their family for much of the tape - and it was one of only four tapes they could find. Possibly, the tape could have been digitally edited, or given the messy timeline, the filmmaker may have taped over existing footage, realized they had done so and thus fast forwarded to the end and taped more. However, all of this is conjecture. In fact, the Cheys identify the tape as a copy, given to them by their relatives who may have toyed around with it before gifting it to them.

The film begins with a segment of a picnic in the park and much of the footage focuses on both Eva and her cousin Brian who appear to be around one or two years of age. The shots range from a few seconds to a couple minutes in one long take. The kids and their mothers sit with them on a green space feeding them. The camera cuts from each kid, to both together, to some adults sitting, eating from paper plates and relaxing near a picnic table. Brian sometimes has his bottle as he explores the scene while Eva munches on some corn on the cob. The grass is sloping and in this first sequence the rectangular transition first appears. This rectangle transition is one consistently used by Eva's uncle when he filmed. The transition is of a square of the next shot beginning as a tiny picture in picture centered in the middle of the shot that increasingly becomes larger until it fills the screen. The Chey relative would use this transition back to back where sometimes it would occur at least five times consecutively between two spaces. In what appears to be the same day, the group moves to a lookout point where it is windy outside, and they stand next to a railing. There are other incidental people at this location who also appear to be tourists. Kunthea and Sam are in many of these shots holding Eva. Other family is nearby also enjoying the scenery.

The next segment is of the three Cheys, Sam, Kunthea and Eva as well as Brian, his sister and his mother. Since Sam is in these shots for the two-minute segment, it's safe to say that it was filmed by Brian's father. The group stands near a wetland area next to very large leaves that look like lily pads growing from the water. They smile and pose for both the camera and for photos that Sam takes from a photo camera. Afterwards is the longest segment of the entire home movie, filmed entirely at an amusement park. At one point during this segment, about 40 minutes long, a ride operator says, "enjoy your day at Riverside park." Riverside Park in Massachusetts is about an hour and 45 minutes away from Lowell, where Brian and his family resided. Likely the family drove out for a day trip out to the amusement park which is now known as Six Flags New England. The footage follows the two families in broad daylight dressed in summer clothing as they walk around the park, ride amusement park rides, and view some of the entertainment offered by the park. Each ride different rides, with the children videotaped on the rides of younger kids and parents riding some of the rides built for adults. It appears that this sequence was filmed by different people as different adults appear in different shots. Also, the square transition is very frequent during this segment suggesting that their male relative filmed the majority of it. Many of the rides that the kids and adults are videotapes riding are those familiar to fairs, carnivals and other amusement parks. These include a boat that swings in a back and forth pendulum, adults riding in a clockwise centrifugal cart ride and the kids riding various different slow-moving metal cars, cartoon animals, planes and more in a clockwise circle.

In this segment there is also a sequence almost a minute of footage taken by accident. From 00:21:37 to 00:22:28 is a very handheld, high angle long take of a ramp before a ride, torsos, and railings. Rock music plays in the background during this extremely shaky shot.

Afterwards the amusement footage continues where Kunthea and Brian's mother ride in a clockwise ride. It moves in a circle and the two adults move away and then come towards the camera a few times in a medium shot. More footage follows of people getting off the ride with the adults. At 00:24:00 a long shot zooms into a clown figure who is juggling bowling pins on a unicycle in the middle of the fairground. Rides are on the left and the right with people watching around. Subsequently are shots of the kids with one or both parents. Eva sits with her father while Brian sits with his mother in a medium shot. Both families then ride a carousel together with horses and benches in the shot. Brian and his sister are also shown together on rides by themselves without any other people from the family. Often, the children do not have very strong reactions when videotaped. They look somewhat neutral on the rides, as if they were placed there by their parents and are content to go along with it. In the rides the shots are usually framed in a medium close up in an attempt to capture their faces and reactions while the other shots are long shots to show the amusement park setting.

More transitions occur consecutively and differ from the square. It is a wipe from left to right from Sam walking towards the camera to the pendulum boat ride. Afterwards the transitions change to a dissolve of a spinning clockwise ride to the pendulum, back to the adult's heads. Three more dissolves occur of three different spaces before the group moves to a gondola type ride. Brian's father films Eva and her parents in the cage ahead in the long shot where a large white roller coaster fills the screen on the left. Throughout are snippets of conversations in Cambodian. Brian's father focuses on his wife and two children as they sit suspended on the ride. Afterwards are shots of Brian and his sister on a swing ride followed by circular boat ride. At 00:51:06 is a medium close up of Kunthea, Sam holding Eva and Brian, his sister and mother

inside of what appears to be a train ride. The 40 second handheld shot is the final shot of the segment and is mostly static as they enjoy the ride.

One feature of this tape is that it has the most in camera transitions of the four. There were many to the point of it being irritating to not be able to see the images for longer than a second since some transitions occurred consecutively, one after another over. Eva explains that her uncle in Lowell learned some of the effects and was more playful with his camera because he was actually only 24 at the time. Likely her uncle taught her father how to use these transitions as evidenced by the transitions in the tape of their vacation to Lowell. This playful use of in-camera editing could be seen again as breaking the fourth wall and calling attention to the artifice. While the images might seem “fun” the transitions do not offer many functions of this home movie aside from keeping the viewer more engaged. Perhaps this could be a function used when the events or subjects in front of the home movie camera are not performing enough or there is not enough action to sustain attention.

The next five segments from 00:51:45 to 01:29:19 are of the Chey relatives in their home in Lowell, Massachusetts. While much of it could be interpreted as intimate family moments, there is a large part of it this footage that tells their family’s story as if for a wider audience. There are three static shots with digital text scrolling slowly upwards. Pieces of the same information scroll three times and include birth dates and places of birth for each member of the family, and other important dates such as when the couple was married and when the children were born. Three times the exact same information scrolls, ending with a happy first birthday greeting for young Brian. Afterwards is more footage of their family inside their home including the kids playing and entertaining a few guests in their living room.

The final segment is about 25 minutes long and is primarily shot from inside their male relative's black Toyota. This last bit of footage is mostly shot by Sam but begins with a shot of Eva, Kunthea and Sam exiting the front door of the house in Massachusetts. Brian is held by his mother who says, "bye bye Eva, bye bye!" from inside the house in front of a storm door that is half open. Brian smiles at the camera and his mother with bangs and short hair speaks Cambodian and tells Brian to "say bye." After these first two shots the camera is now inside the car and being held by Sam. Sam sits in the front passenger seat on the right and alternates from point of view longer shots towards the highway, side driving plates and medium shots behind him of his wife and daughter. He also briefly shows Brian's sister who is seated on the right in the left of the frame beside Eva who sits in the middle sleeping. Sam alternates shakily throughout this segment, with Kunthea hardly taking notice and looking out the window and trying to sleep. Eva has fallen asleep for the entire car ride and is sometimes shown with her mother leant in the car seat towards her. Sam also captures the traffic, a toll booth and signs that point toward their destination "BOSTON LOGAN AIRPORT." A few square transitions do occur during this sequence which suggests that Sam was taught how to use the camera by his relative in order to use transitions. He transitions with the square to a medium close up of Kunthea yawning, to another sign for Boston Logan Airport, back to Kunthea and then to a tunnel. Following that is a dissolve behind a bunch of cars to Kunthea and then a side swipe transition back to the road. Sam continues to alternate back and forth between his family and the road, sometimes panning from left to right and zooming into the road. The scene ends at 00:57:45 after the car has crossed over a river.

This last segment is striking in that it is focused on the journey between two spaces and not of an arrival, departure or event in one place. The movement of the family within a car from

Lowell to Boston Airport is the main event itself. Sam films from the outside of the car, to the inside where his family sits, waiting to arrive. At times she appears board, other times she seems to be falling asleep. Sam on the other hand is an active passenger, cutting between his family and the roads and landscapes beyond the confines of the car. Though he does not film in one long shot, this segment has more elements of realism as it as if we are in the car ride with the Cheys for an entire car ride that lasts almost half an hour (the duration of the segment). Unlike the other videotapes in this segment that have long takes, this segment somehow feels more real because of the limits of the recording space and content being filmed. Participants and viewers move through space and time both literally and figuratively with the help of the home movie. Since the subjects hardly move or talk, we seem to experience the car ride with them, waiting for the arrival to our destination.

Memory and Reception

Kunthea, Sam and their eldest daughter Eva participated in the research and were interviewed together. Only their wedding video was viewed altogether with the three of them, while Eva was also interviewed while watching one of the two travel videos.

Before viewing any of the footage, when asked what was on their tapes the participants had a rough idea based on the labels, but they could not remember exactly what was on them. Eva recalls that the last time they had watched any of the four tapes was before their VHS player had broken down sometime in 2014 or 2015. Shortly after it had broken, they moved into their current home and never replaced the VHS player. The Cheys are certain that they took other videos and cannot locate them since they are somewhere deep in their basement storage. Eva says that the family stored everything mixed together - DVDs, karaoke videos, Disney movies -

and the home movies were on the top of that pile. These four specific tapes may have also floated to the top of the Chey's media storage pile because of Eva.

Sam had also purchased a pricier Sony camera for home movies and remembers filming quite a lot. It seems that Sam did not know how to connect the video camera to the television, or he was missing components that would allow them to watch home movies filmed on smaller cassettes.” The reason I put to VHS for the kid cannot see the small. Only see the camera. So we copy to VHS so the kid can see it,” Sam explains. Sam had filmed everything on a smaller format and then converted them to VHS later so his kids could enjoy the footage. This might also account for why they could not find more VHS or even S-VHS since the tapes are smaller and perhaps easier to remain hidden. For the Cheys, the VHS format was accessible, likely because of their VHS player and the ease of use of putting tape in and pressing a button in order to watch it. Eva says that she watched these the most frequently, especially the vacation to Lowell because it has all of her cousins. “I just like watching the visit with our cousins and whatnot” she explains. Her cousins lived in Boston and they seldom see each other. The last time that the tape was viewed with her relatives was a few years ago when their grandmother passed away and then before that they don't recall when they were viewed. Like the other families, the Chey videos were not viewed often but served important functions of uniting the family over remembering their past.

When asked if they had seen the videotapes, Sam quipped that “I think we never watched it,” causing his wife and daughter to chuckle. Kunthea and Eva reacted as such because they both had watched the tapes more than once, sometimes with Eva's siblings. Sam explains that sometimes, they did not even watch the tapes after they videotaped them - suggesting that, at least for Sam, the act of videotaping may have been more important than tape or footage itself. In

this way, Sam agrees with Odin who argues that the pleasure of home movies comes from the production and not the final production.⁴³

Sam, who shot most of the family videos says that he took all of the footage to remember his kids. He explains that for him it was “just for memories...[to] look back and see what they look like and how they acted.” He also explained that he liked to videotape them when they were acting outside of the ordinary. “Especially when they are not in a normal mood. You know, like they crying, they dirty, they running around like crazy--that’s what I take,” he says. The desire to capture their children in what home movie maker magazines may deems less than ideal are comparable to two other participant families in the study, the Hoangs and the Chans. Each have instances of participants where they are either unhappy, annoyed or crying. This might suggest that norms for these Asian Families do include the acceptance of negative moods and modes of behaviour that prescriptive home movie texts tended to discourage.

Kunthea and Sam remember buying the camera in 1992. Kunthea says that the camera was purchased in the U.S. because it was cheaper to purchase - about 1,500 USD or 2,000 Canadian at the time. According to the Bank of Canada inflation calculator,⁴⁴ 2,000 in 1992 would currently cost \$3,235 in 2019. Like the other participants, clearly, they prioritized videotaping and capturing their children on tape. Eva also specifically says the purchase was to film the footage in Lowell of Eva and Brian. Yet the tape from their vacation in Lowell, the footage jumps around in a non-linear way with half of it filmed by their relative. This suggests that the camera used by Eva’s uncle or that the footage was edited from different tapes, likely by their relative.

⁴³ Odin, Roger. "Reflections on the family home movie as document: A Semio-Pragmatic Approach." *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories* (2008): 255-271.

⁴⁴ Bank of Canada. "Inflation Calculator" Accessed November 2, 2019. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

The Cheys recall the last time they recorded was in 2004 or 2005 when they visited Disneyland in California as a family. However, none of the tapes were found and they could not recall where they were. Thus, the perceived value of these VHS may have increased for the family as objects that help them remember, bring them together and reflect their unique historic past and current identities.

Conclusion

This project set out to explore the lives and home movies of Southeast Asian Calgarians as objects containing among others, cultural, social and historical value. The thesis was inspired by home movies discourse, Home Movie Day, as well as the researcher's background as a Filipino-Canadian. The lack of home movies in institutions, as well as the interpretation of these domestic films without their creators was also an impetus for the study design and research.

Overall this project, from solicitation of films to the write of this thesis, was completed over the span of three years. Initially, since the researcher assumed the rarity of small gauge film stocks, the scope of possible participants began quite wide to encompass all Southeast Asian immigrants. When only two reels of Super 8 film were found for an entire year, the research as increased in scope. After some research, the VHS format was deemed to be the best way to expand the research due to its ubiquity in the 1980s and 1990s over other amateur formats. Increasing the scope caused a flood in research opportunities and forced the researcher to choose the families which were currently in the project based on commitment, participation, and collection.

In conducting this exploration of Southeast Asian home movies, I identified the current gaps in preservation in Canada and the potential for challenging dominant narratives. In that same vein the project filled a gap since no home movie research has never been conducted before in these specific contexts. The case studies themselves revealed a few commonalities. Aesthetically they behaved in much the same expected ways of the Chalfen home mode with characteristics like shaky or jerky movements, extreme panning within one shot, poor exposure, and no continuity across shots. Two home moviemakers seemed to capture their subjects slightly differently. With the Hoangs, Tuan was interested in the faces of his children over himself or his wife, filming many close up longer takes. Tom Chan also seemed interested in the interactions of the three girls and

often captured them together in wider shots with angles that allowed more than one of them to be seen.

Each of the participants mainly focused on subjects directly within the family and captured footage of their intimate relations. All the home movies are direct and subjective views on family, travel, food and everyday life. Each observed their family and cultural rituals in a Canadian setting and in some ways partook in Canadian or North American traditions. They also capturing footage of subjects that were culturally specific and important to them. For example, many of the Julio family films centered around their Catholic religion as well as their family and extended family – two very important facets of Filipino life. The Hoang collection had unique footage of disciplining their children, which illuminated their Asian parenting style. One motif that also was evident in the Julio and especially the Chan home movies were shared ethnic meals important to their culture. All the videos and films are direct reflections of each of the families and their experiences as Asian Canadians.

Participants were acting within a habitus, and not following any prescriptive manuals, texts, nor trying to copy commercial cinema. Each of the home movies were recordings of the family practicing rituals or performing actions important and natural to their culture such as traditional wedding ceremonies, baptisms, eating specific types of food in certain ways, or educating their children. The making of their videos was often active, with participants performing for the camera and families consciously creating a home movie together.

For all the participants, the family is a signifier for success and the home movie apparatus and home movie footage is also a reflection of that success. Most of these Southeast Asian cultures value the family and children. Participants in this study mainly came from modest backgrounds and grew to be prosperous in a new country. Thus, their ability to possess an apparatus to record

and view their footage over time can serve the function to remind them of their past and celebrate their present success as immigrants in Canada. Viewing their home movies allowed them a remembrance of their histories and helped them consider their collective and individual identities. Their life stories combined with a contextual background in this project helped construct their personal narratives as well as gave a sense of many of the Asian Canadian immigrant experiences. Each microhistory provided a competing yet parallel narrative to current narratives of the home mode and of the family.

Potential Research

There are several threads of potential research that could build on this project. Notably, members of three of the families in the research were refugees. Each of them spoke quite matter-of-factly about their refugee experiences and their home movies did not bear any trace of sadness or trauma in relation to that past. Additionally, many of the participants were found by word of mouth. Since they are private collections it's easy to see why they might be apprehensive of providing their home movies to a complete stranger. Without knowing the families deeper, it's hard to know if there was any type of deeper performance involved in their home movies or during interviews. A deeper relationship with participants and more interviews may garner insights beyond this thesis.

Other areas of possible exploration could be a deeper dive into one specific ethnic group and perhaps also a specific format. Though I provide a brief overview of a family's history and their engagement with a moving image format, one might see patterns that emerge among groups. How an ethnic group's personal and collective histories are influenced by one home mode of recording related could garner deeper more nuanced insights.

One idea that remained unexplored in this thesis is the potential access to these home movies. Early on, I identified similar projects that both solicit films and digitizes them for public access. Some of these projects operate outside the realm of institutions in order to provide greater access without having to consider the copyright or unreleased nature of home movies. That is, many home movies are difficult to share on a wider scale without the consent of every single person and creator of the movie. This may be hard given that many incidental people are shown, and it would be very challenging to track them down. This thesis had also not considered having the movies digitized or stored somewhere for access. Doing so would mean the need for funding and likely, partnerships or connections with an archive. However, providing access to the home movies would enhance the reader's understanding of this thesis and may enrich the holdings of Asian Canadian moving images in local archives.

Another thought is that the home mode continues to persist across digital formats in similar ways. New inherently public reception models such as YouTube and TikTok have replaced the videotape which still had roots in the private sphere. A comparative study of this work alongside newer digital media with similar features to the home movie may provide more insights on a wide range of subjects like history, formats, culture and more.

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