质疑好莱坞电影中的华人形象（1980~1999）

他者的再现

李渝凤 著

The Other Looks:
Interrogating Chineseness
in Hollywood Cinema
1980~1999

by Li Yufeng

中山大学出版社
Sun Yat-sen University Press

Series Editor's Preface

Mao Sihui

The basic editorial strategy of the series New Topics in Cultural Studies is to present a broad yet focused spectrum of thinking on contemporary literary/cultural studies and to challenge our conceptions of what postcolonial and feminist cultural studies in China and the West is and how we should think about it in the age of "glocalisation" — the dual process of globalisation and localisation. By presenting as many voices as possible, one of our major aims is to create a discursive space for (re)viewing and (re)writing about linguistic, literary and cultural texts in relation to our changing social, historical and ecological environment. Indeed, we want the series to open up our readers' mind about cultural studies beyond the confines of its linguistic and literary origins. This group of research projects reflects our concerted efforts in critiquing and combining certain insights of poststructuralism with certain insights of postmodernism, feminism, psychoanalysis, semiotics, and postcolonialism.

Literature, Culture and Postmodern Transformations: Eight Case Studies from William Shakespeare to James Bond by Mao Sihui, Wang Hong and Chen Xiangyang serves as a general introductory project to this series, covering new studies of theatre, poetry, fiction and

is now represented with plurality and sophistication, embodying complex power relationship in American society. As an interdisciplinary study, this book makes extensive use of Michel Foucault's theory of power and knowledge and Stuart Hall's analysis of media representation. Other schools of thoughts such as feminism, neo-Marxism, postmodernism, postcolonialism are also drawn in combination with the theories of culture, in addition to the recent studies of popular culture: the theories of fashion, subculture, television, and the culture of consumption. Different languages/meanings constructed in advertising are measured in relation to race, gender and sexuality and identity. Three analyses are employed for more exact measurement of discourse: a content analysis, a qualitative analysis, and a semiotic analysis. One of the main findings of this project is that women in advertising are generally represented as white and heterosexual with exhibitionist sexual appeal. Female images other than this category are marginalised: they are characterised by fetishisation, sexualisation, fragmentation, objection, underrepresentation, trivialisation, negation, commercialisation, in addition to a racialised and gendered representation. Female representation in advertising is saturated with the power of domination by the social institutions which represent the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy of the United States that always attempts to maintain its social, cultural, economic and political power by fabricating and dominating the "Other". One particular strength in Ding's project is her deliberate complication of this "Self-Other" relationship. She holds that advertising is also a realm where multiple powers contest for existence. The voices of the oppressed and marginalised are also articulated in the representation of

subordinate and inferiority complex in the latter. It is in this sense that we claim the cultural credit in Zhao's reconstruction of images of Chinese peasantry — they are treated as "us" rather than "other". But the struggle against the traditional prejudiced representations has never been easy as various cultural and linguistic strategies have been tactfully used in the form of popular culture. Zhao's artistic career as a popular comedian has been so successful that he himself has risen to a status of national celebrity. However, as many of his works have been highly popular in the whole country, Zhao himself has become a hegemonic figure, at least in the field of comic sketches. With the change of social status, Zhao's original role as a true spokesman for the Chinese peasants has gradually changed accordingly.

Li Yufeng's project *The Other Looks: Interrogating Chineseness in Hollywood Cinema 1980 ~ 1999* takes us from China back to Hollywood with her insightful examination of the cultural representations of Chineseness, the cinematic apparatus of Hollywood and her interrogation of such representations from early 1980s to late 1990s. By reviewing Chineseness as the "exotic", the "marginal", the "Other" in the Hollywood context, Li Yufeng seeks to find certain knowledge and also construct a set of critical discourses about the clashes, conflicts as well as confrontations between the two cultures in the world of cinema, thus providing us with the necessity and foundation for a dialogue between the two different cultures. Making use of different schools of thoughts and discourses such as postcolonial theories, feminist perspectives, Said's Orientalism, Stam and Shohat's critique of Eurocentrism, Metz's cine-semiology, Foucault's theory

of power and knowledge, Bhabha's views on "Otherness", Mulvey's
on spectacle and visual pleasure, and Kaplan's on "looking relations",
this study is an interdisciplinary critique of some representations of
Chineseness in contemporary Hollywood cinema. Li Yufeng argues
that a fairly great portion of the images of the Chinese, as one part of
the "unspeakable" minorities in the American mainstream culture,
can be read as the representations of the "Other" to the Anglo-
Americans, and such "Otherness" can be interpreted in relation to
the issue of identity politics and power imbalance. The portrayals of
the Chinese males in films such as Rob Cohen's *Dragon: the Bruce
Lee Story* (1993), Brett Ratner's *Rush Hour* (1998), Michael Cimino's
Year of the Dragon (1985), Richard Donner's *The Lethal Weapon 4*
(1998), and Antoine Fuqua's *The Replacement Killers* (1997) are often
manipulated by the Hollywood hegemonic discourse into stereotypical
imagery charged with mysticism, exoticism, irrationality, primitivism,
fancifulness and/or malevolence, into the demonized, alienated, and
marginalized "Other". For the part of the Chinese females in Hollywood
films, such as Daryle Duke's *Taipan* (1986), Michael Cimino's *Year
of the Dragon*, and David Cronenberg's *M. Butterfly* (1993), one can
see that they are positioned as the "Other of the Other", since they
are not only the racial and ethnic Other, but also the sexual Other in
the imperial and patriarchal contexts. While exploring how Chineseness
has been perceived and represented in relation to power, racial
politics, identity politics, occidental and oriental relations, visual
spectacle and imperial gaze, centrality and marginality, Li Yufeng's
project constantly refers to the Otherized Chineseness in her reading
of theoretical as well as cinematic texts in order to demonstrate how

characterize the sitcoms in the 1990s in terms of racial or ethnic representation? How have these forms of representation contextualized themselves and what are the social, economic, political, and cultural intentions and implications behind these constructions of the images of the ethnic minorities? How has the genre of sitcom been employed and exploited to serve the purpose of conforming to and/or subverting the dominant WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) ideological hegemony in representing ethnicity? And what could be expected from future sitcoms in representing ethnicity? In Chapter One "The Making of Sitcom", the author introduces the genre of sitcom and discusses its characteristics and social ideology. Chapter Two "Representations of Ethnicity from 1950s to 1980s" examines the representations of ethnicity in sitcoms before the 1990s while Chapter Three "Representations of Ethnicity in Non-White Sitcoms in the 1990s" explores the representations of black Americans and Asian Americans in "black" and "yellow" sitcoms. In Chapter Four "Representations of Ethnicity in White Sitcoms in the 1990s", the focus of this study shifts to the representations of ethnicity in two of the most popular and influential sitcoms in the 1990s — *Seinfeld* and *Friends*. And the last chapter "Sitcom Situates Ethnicity" further looks into the relationship between comedy and ethnicity and concludes that sitcom, as an important part of televisual culture, challenges and even subverts dominant ideologies, thus empowering discourses of marginalised ethnicities.

When addressing the question of agency in *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994: 171), Homi K. Bhabha points out, "Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural

representation involved in the contest for political and socia
authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives ...
intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to
give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the
differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities,
peoples." With these New Topics in Cultural Studies, thanks to the
vision and understanding of the editors at Sun Yat-sen University
Press, especially Mr. Xiong Xiyuan and Chutian, we wish to present
to our readers an opportunity to hear a variety of voices in postcolonial
and feminist cultural studies, voices that explore the socio-cultural
significance of different discourses and personal meanings of the act
of literary and cultural critique in the age of glocalisation, the age of
uncertainty and the age of transformation. Let me conclude this
Preface with a quotation from the "Epilogue" of *Gaudete* (Faber,
1977:177-178) by the late British Poet Laureate Ted Hughes that
still speaks powerfully to us today:

At the top of my soul
A box of dolls.

In the middle of my soul
A circus of gods.

At the bottom of my soul
The usual mess of squabblers.

In front of me

possibility of reintroducing both politics and culture into the abstract model provided by Metz, who later contends that film, being a kind of spectacular language, is virtually a multi-leveled signifying practice with recognizable "ordering procedures", which constitutes itself as discourse rather than as an unmediated slice of life. Metz further illustrates that film becomes discourse by organizing itself as narrative: "It was precisely to the extent that the cinema confronted the problems of narration that it came to produce a body of specific signifying procedures. "[1] If what Metz stresses about cinema is its interwoven relation with cultural institutions and discursive practices, then what Edward Said holds, in this respect, is the "deceptive" power of language. In his "The World, the Text, and the Critic" (1983), he poignantly observes that in the case of mass media, "the world is degraded, betrayed, distorted by language, turned into a mere simulacrum of itself. " (Polan 1998: 84) The critic, then, will be that special figure — between culture and system as Said puts it — who will set language right. Fundamentally speaking, what Said reinforces here is a critical thinking toward the world "texts", a sort of critical "absolutism", or to borrow from bell hooks, a sense of agency (entitlement, imagination), for being an "enlightened witness", who will be able to resist and create new and exciting representations. In light of the above explications, this study chooses Hollywood cinema, the mediated signifying narrative discourse of American culture, as the starting-point of decoding the hegemony of American culture in the grand context of globalization. With a specific concern about promoting the real conversation between the Chinese and American cultures, I prudently set

---

[1]   Barton Palmer. *The Cinematic Text*. New York: AMS Press, 1989: 290.

a particular focus on the Chineseness in Hollywood films.

The title of this study "The Other Looks: Interrogating Chinese-ness in Hollywood Cinema 1980 ~ 1999" suggests a three-faceted ex-amination of the subject: a study of the cultural representation of Chi-neseness, the cinematic apparatus in American films that accounts for such representations, and an academic interrogation of such represen-tations during the past two decades. By reviewing Chineseness as the "exoticism", the "Other", the "Minority Discourse" in the American mainstream society, I seek to achieve a certain knowledge about the "clashes", "conflicts" as well as "confrontations" between the two cultures in the cinematic world, thus providing us with the necessity and foundation for the "dialogue" between the two different cultures. In this book, I would like to focus on such issues as the politics of identity; ethnicity and Otherness; representation and reconstruction; dominance and resistance; coding and decoding; etc. My observation is that, because of the specific changes in politics, economy, society and cultures in the postmodern era of the United States, there has been an increasing visibility and exploitation of the images of the "Other" in the visual art, particularly, those of the ethnic groups in American cinema. "For all the advances in gender and ethnic studies challenging traditional notions of manhood and womanhood and unset-tling stereotypes about people of color, as social beings we continue to react to or be shaped by sexually and racially coded characteris-tics. "[1] Generally speaking, among the cinematic representations

[1]   King-Kok Cheung . "Of Men & Men". In S. K. Stanley (ed.). *Other Sis-terhoods: Literary Theory and U. S. Women of Color.* University of Illinois Press, 1998: 173,175.

them ideologically, culturally, as well as cine-semiologically? In this regard, we must have a brief review on the critique about the racial stereotype in Hollywood cinema.

In retrospect, Eugene Franklin Wong's *On Visual Media Racism* (1978) remains one of the earliest and best studies of the function and production of the stereotype in Hollywood film. In his work, he shows a specific concern with the reduction of the diverse histories and cultures of Asians in the American media, and his analysis exemplifies the way the stereotype has been critically approached for other racial-ized cultural identities. For Wong, the stereotype is a form of repre-sentation in films that produces non-white cultures and characters as static and one-dimensional. Acting is therefore more gestural than per-formatively complex, more about the cliche than emotional range. For this reason, a group's stereotyped image tends to oscillate between two simple poles: good and bad, noble and savage, loyal and traitorous, kind-hearted and villainous. He points out that it is by virtue of this condensation that an image becomes a stereotype; its racialization is achieved by an implicit or explicit moral assessment concerning the group's inherent "essence". What he endeavors then, is to provide with a materialist analysis of the stereotype, its ideological production and its function as an element of the symbolic structure of the filmic text.

Following Wong, Steve Neale cannot be ignored, for his early critique about the stereotype proves to be very significant as well. In "*The Same Old Story: Stereotypes and Difference*" (1979), Neale de-fines four primary critical problems resulting from the stereotype. First, the emphasis on stereotypes constrains critical analysis by re-maining too rigid to the level of character and characterization, there-

aggression" (Polan 1998: 237). For the concrete forms of racism, Shohat and Stam (1995) illustrate that what is racist is the stigmatizing of difference in order to justify unfair advantage or the abuse of power, whether that advantage or abuse is economic, political, cultural, or psychological. Within the transformational grammar of colonial-style racism, several key mechanisms stand out: (1) the positing of lack; that is, the projection of the racially stigmatized as deficient in terms of European norms, as lacking in order, intelligence, sexual modesty, material civilization, even history. (2) the mania for hierarchy, which ranks not only peoples, but also artifacts and cultural practices (farming over nomadism, brick over thatch, melody over percussion). Racism also entails the interrelated processes of (3) blaming the victim and (4) the refusal of empathy: the withholding of sympathy for people caught up in the struggle for survival within the existing social order, and the maintenance of a cool, skeptical distance in the face of claims of oppression. Racism involves (5) the systematic devalorization of life, which sometimes takes the extreme form of open calls for murder. (Shohat & Stam 1995: 23) What is conspicuous here is the notion of "devalorization". As the authors explicate, the devalorization of life has the media penchant for associating the Third World with violent, unnecessary, random death, or with disease and natural disaster, whereby "the dead or dying body has become in itself the visual sign of human reality in the Third World." (Shohat & Stam 1995: 24) In the light, when reading Hollywood films as coded texts, we may discover that racism is thus an effect of its aesthetic language and formal features of production and not simply a matter of narrative or characterization. In demonstrating that racial discourse is more than a citation of its logically racialized

bodies, Stam and Spence theoretically identify a "structuring ab-
sence" fundamental to the segregationist logic of many Hollywood
films. For scholars of film studies who are concerned with the way cin-
ema shapes the cultural imaginary, this "fact" has generated a large
body of scholarship dedicated to cataloguing and critiquing stereotypi-
cal images.

　　Theoretically speaking, we can view the stereotype as a reflection
of Eurocentrism. In *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (Shohat & Stam 1995),
the authors generalize Eurocentric discourse as complex, contradicto-
ry, and historically unstable. Discourse here is again used in the Fou-
cauldian sense of a trans-individual and multi-institutional archive of
images and statements providing a common language for representing
knowledge about a given theme. As "regimes of truth", in Foucault's
words, discourses are encased in institutional structures that exclude
specific voices, aesthetics, and representations. Returning to the is-
sue of stereotype, Homi Bhabha (1983: 29) penetratingly argues
that knowledge of the inaccuracy of the stereotype does not forestall
the political effect of the stereotype; indeed, the stereotype is effective
on a colonialized subject precisely through its distortion. In other
words, the fixity of stereotypes is intricately connected with the coloni-
al discourse. Then how to define the colonial discourse? In Peter
Hulme's view, colonial discourse may be defined as "an ensemble of
linguistically-based practices unified by their common deployment of
colonial relationships" (Hulme 1998: 18). Looking back at Eurocen-
trism in the light of the implication of discourse, we may discover that
in a kind of "composite portrait", Eurocentrism as a mode of thought
might be seen as engaging in a number of mutually reinforcing intel-
lectual tendencies or operations. On the whole, Eurocentrism sanitizes

Western history while patronizing and even demonizing the non-West; it thinks of itself in terms of its noblest achievements — science, progress, humanism — but of the non-West in terms of its deficiencies, real or imagined. In other words, Eurocentrism divides the world into "the West" and "the Rest" and organizes everyday language into "binaristic" hierarchies implicitly flattering to Europe: our "nations", their "tribes"; our "religions", their "superstitions"; our "culture", their "folklore"; our "art", their "artifacts"; our "demonstrations" and "defense", their "terrorism". To a certain degree, ethnicity is defined in very similar, often feminized terms in relation to the dominant, implicitly male group. He is ethnic because he is other. She is other because she is ethnic. This kind of characterization of ethnicity as Otherness conforms to the basic model that Edward Said established in *Orientalism* (1978). The Oriental Other's only identity comes from its relation to the West, and not surprisingly turns out to be nothing more than a mirror in which the West sees the rejected and disavowed parts of itself. The actuality of what is really there never affects the identity of the other as Other. For the same reason, Said argues, the Orient as such does not exist. There is no "real" Orient because the Orient was a Western construction in the first place. The Orient is a part not of the East but of the identity of the West. The Orient is like Dorian Gray's mirror — its image is made up of everything disavowed by the West. In the same way, patriarchal male identity needs a submissive female identity as a part of itself in order to be itself. One cannot exist in isolation without the other.

Therefore, in defining the signification of Chineseness in the Hollywood discourse, Otherness becomes a core issue to be discussed. For Homi Bhabha, Otherness can be viewed as an object of desire and

a lecture entitled "Representation and Contemporary World" in 1999. ① He generalizes the traditional notion of representation as the reflection/distortion of reality, which is apparently derived from Aristotle's theory of "mimesis", meaning: (1) to re-present something that is standing in for us; (2) to depict something as it is the way meaning is given to; and (3) to image the things that have been depicted. Quite frequently, such a traditional perspective about representation has virtually been reinforced by numerous scholars. As Inez Hedges states in *Breaking the Frame* (1991), representation, which gives back to society an image of itself, is, of course, one of the oldest functions of art. Like the religious ritual with which it has often been associated, art reinforces a structure of beliefs that defines and limits the possibilities of identity in an otherwise chaotic and random universe. "From the earliest drawings of stone-age cave dwellers to today's computerized special effects in film, the mimetic impulse has been one of the great forces in human society." (Hedges 1991: 6) Nevertheless, the reading of contemporary cultural "texts" cannot be limited to the old theory of mimesis any more, so Hall proposes a new understanding of representation on the basis of the traditional idea, combined with the deconstructive way of thinking, which holds representation as constitutive of the world events. Accordingly, when immersed with various images in mass media, the viewer should always bear in mind such questions as: "Do events in the world have simply one, essential, fixed or true meaning?" "In what way do people make representation?" "What kind of meanings do such representations

---

① This lecture of Stuart Hall was given to Open University in 1999, and was also made into VHS, published by the Media Education of America.

work inside the cinema's deceptive and transparent appearance of real-
ity. That appearance of reality was, furthermore, suspect for having
ideological effects (e. g. naturalizing that which is historical or cultur-
al, etc.) and for creating ideal and false subjectivities. Viewed in
these terms, film history is the history of discourse, and the relation
between film and the world is a matter of representational convention.
As Stephen Prince has written, "That reality, in the match of film
and world, is a matter of representation, and representation is in turn
a matter of discourse. "①

The focal point here is again an appeal to understand cinema as
discourse, as a matter of representation, an apparatus. As Stephen
Heath says, "In the first moment of the history of cinema, it is the
technology which provides the immediate interest: what is promoted
and sold is the experience of the machine, the apparatus" (Heath
1981: 1). The term apparatus connotes some ambiguities: the instru-
mental, the technological, the ideological and the symbolic. As we
come to concepts like the basic apparatus, the cinema-machine, the
institution of cinema, we are not just talking about the cinema industry
but the "interior machine" of the psychology of the spectator, the so-
cial regulation of spectatorial meta-psychology, or what Christian Metz
calls the "mental machinery" of cinema, cinema as "technique of
the imaginary". Accordingly, what is relevant here for my study is
how the question of "cinematic apparatus" can be critically re-read
from the concerns of the analytic description of cinema as "mental ma-
chinery", as the "technique of the imaginary", as "historical and

---

① Stephen Prince. "Discourse of Pictures. " *Film Quarterly*. Vol. 47. 1993 – 4
(1): 16.

Here again, the discreet readers may have noticed that right be-
neath the various representations in Hollywood films, there always lies
a core issue, that is, the power relation, so whatever approach one se-
lects, he/she can never successfully avoid it. To quote Hall's words:
"Nothing meaningful exists outside of discourse."① Indeed. Holly-
wood discourse is extremely "meaningful" because of its overwhelm-
ing impact upon almost every corner of this globe.

1.3 Structure

Structurally, this study on the Chineseness in Hollywood cinema
consists of six chapters. Besides Chapter 1 about a general introduc-
tion, Chapter 2 is a literature review, which aims at offering a grand
theoretical context for the concrete film re-viewing. Chapters 3 and 4
are the detailed analyses about the representations of the Chinese male
and female in Hollywood cinema, revolving around the issue of Chi-
neseness as Otherness in the American dominant discourse and cul-
ture. Since the focal images from the selected films all cluster within
the last two decades, from 1980 to 1999, the treatment of them is, in
a strict sense, not chronological. Chapter 3, "The Myth of Violence
and the Other 'Chinaman'", attempts to build up the basic theoreti-
cal framework for my inquiry about the representation of Chinese men
in Hollywood cinema by the utilization of three influential concepts in
contemporary cultural studies: Barthes's conception of "myths",
Bhabha's view about the "Other", and Said's "Orientalism". In defi-

---

① This lecture of Stuart Hall was given to Open University in 1999, and was also
made into VHS, published by the Media Education of America.

are familiar with him, or those who are not. Therefore, inscrutability has become the recurrent theme of this latest version of Bruce Lee: despite the superman-like physical power, why is Lee doomed to a mysterious death? What has been haunting the world of the "dragon"? Why can't he surmount his own inner fear? What do all those "superstitious" Chinese Taoist signs mean?... These questions, I believe, will lead to a profound interrogation about mysticism in the Hollywood discourse, which is essentially inter-related with the myths of violence and Orientalism.

Through questioning whether Jackie Chan is the continuation or rejection of Bruce Lee, the second part of this chapter examines Chan's 1998 film *Rush Hour* (Brett Ratner). Differing in many respects from Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan has indeed created another genre of kung fu fighting in Hollywood films, from *Red Bronx* (Stanley Tong 1995), to *Rush Hour* (Brett Ratner 1998), *Shanghai Noon* (Tom Dey 2000), and *Rush Hour* 2 (Brett Ratner 2001). While being entertained with the sensational digital effect produced by the Hollywood blockbuster, and amused by the Jackie Chan humor, I can't help wondering about such questions as: What has made the two "colored cops" (Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker) so funny? In what form does race become implicit in Chan's accented English and Tucker's teasing about the Chinese? Why does the Jackie Chan genre appeal to the Hollywood audience? To answer these questions, we need to take race, ethnicity, and commercialization of films into serious account. What lies at the core of the Chan genre, personally speaking, is a sort of commodified Chineseness packaged for the Hollywood audience. The next part of this chapter deals with two very important dimensions in relation to masculinity: (1) racial politics; (2) femininity in the