

主编 徐真华

全球化背景下的外国语言文学研究丛书

美国电影塑造的中国女性形象：

1990-2001

THE PORTRAYAL OF THE CHINESE

WOMAN IN AMERICAN CINEMA: 1990-2001

杨 静 著

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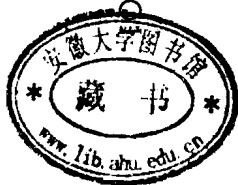
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总序

外国语言文学学科的发展是与国运衰微、西学东渐、现代大学勃兴紧密联系在一起。随着1840年鸦片战争的爆发,东西方文明在古老中国不断冲突、碰撞、磨合以及融汇,其剧烈之程度在中国对外交往史中前所未见。西方列强的坚船利炮使东方老大帝国的羸弱暴露无遗。清政府内洋务派为了挽救清廷的统治危机,主张引进、仿造西方的武器装备和学习西方的科学技术,兴办洋务,创设近代企业,将发展重点放在“器物”层面,“师夷长技以制夷”。1894年,中国在甲午海战中惨败,民族危机空前深重,引起思想文化教育界强烈震动,“中学为体,西学为用”受到空前挑战,“制度”革新摆上核心日程,变法维新运动持续高涨。

此时,时代需要中国与西方之间的“翻译者”,从一开始,外语就承担了读懂历史变迁、推动民族奋起自强的重任。中国一批最早接受西方思想的知识分子,如魏源、郑观应等,为译介西书和传播西方的政治体制、科学知识,发挥了很大的作用。1862年,被誉为近代第一所国立外国语学院京师同文馆应运而生,恭亲王奕訢等人在给清政府的奏折上阐明了建馆的意图:“欲悉各国情景,必先谙其言语文字,方不受人欺蒙。”作为清代最早培养译员的洋务学堂和从事翻译出版的机构,同文馆为推动中国近代化作出了积极而重要的尝试。此后,得益于外语的译介作用,西学在中国的发展步伐不断加快。曾负笈海外的严复翻译了一批重要的西方著作,他的译著(如亚当·斯密的《原富》、斯宾塞的《群学肄言》、孟德斯鸠的《法意》,尤其是赫胥黎的《天演论》,以“物竞天择”、“适者生存”、“优胜劣汰”的生物进化理论阐发救亡图存的观点)启蒙与教育了一代国人,产生了振聋发聩的影响。戊戌变法之年,中国第一所国立综合性大学——京师大学堂创立伊始,即开设英、法、德、俄、日五个语种的课程。1902年,京师大学堂复学,且随即合并了京师同文馆,次年更名为译学馆。随着现代高等教育在中国的兴起,外语专业作为一门独立学科在我国建立并逐步发展。揭橥“民主”和“科学”两面旗帜的“五四”新文化运动,为外语学科的发展增添了动力和活力。

适值“三千年未有之大变局”，以促进中国近代化为宗旨的海外留学热潮激情涌动。1872年到1875年间，由近代中国留美第一人容闳提议，清政府先后派出四批共120名幼童赴美国留学。这些留美幼童是中国历史上最早的官派留学生。此后，旨在求真知的官派和自费留学逐波激荡。这些留学生归国后分布在政界、军界、实业界、教育文化界等各个领域，不少人成为中国近代历史上的知名人物。及至民国时期，一批既饱览西学又具有深厚国学根底的“海归”执掌大学外文系或者从事外文教学研究工作。作为“睁眼看世界”的文化精英，他们学习和借鉴西方先进的理念、模式和方法，制订学术范式，建立课程体系，名师俊彦辈出，学术声誉远播。从当年北京大学、清华大学、西南联大等高校外文系的一流学术阵容可见一斑。在外文界，前辈不懈开拓进取，后学奋力继承创新，学术薪火相传，在短短数十年内为外语学科奠定了较为厚实的基础。1949年以后，由于国内、国际形势的嬗变，外语学科的持续发展受到很大干扰和破坏。1978年中国实行改革开放政策，长期以来对外封闭的坚冰开始消融，外语学科又受到重视，得以焕发新的生机和活力。

近30多年来，科学技术迅猛发展，社会思潮与思想观念更趋丰富多元，学科既深度分化又高度综合，这些变化既拓展了外国语言文学的外延，又深化了其内涵。尤其是20世纪90年代后，全球化趋势深入发展，国与国之间的相互依存明显增强，对人类社会的影响涉及经济、政治、教育、社会及文化等各个领域，为外国语言文学创设了新的发展环境和条件。在这个进程中，我国外语界就全球化背景下外国语言文学的使命和责任、外语教育规划、外语学科发展路径、外语人才培养模式等理论和实践问题进行了积极的探索，为推动我国经济社会发展、促进中外文化交流、培养高素质国际化人才作出了重要贡献。在全球化背景下，我们面临进一步提升高等教育国际化水平、繁荣发展哲学社会科学、扩大中国学术的国际影响力和话语权、增强国家文化软实力、增进国际理解的艰巨任务。哲学社会科学要繁荣发展，既要“请进来”，也要“走出去”，对本国传统文化精髓，既不狂傲自大，也不妄自菲薄；对外国优秀文明成果，既不全盘照搬，也不一概否定。在纵横捭阖的大时代面前，我国学术发展更需要世界眼光、国际视野和“海纳百川、有容乃大”的广阔胸怀。面对新形势、新任务，外语院校和外语系学科有独特和不可替代的优势，有责任、有义务、有能力推进内涵发展、质量提升、品牌建设，服务于整个国家学术的发展，服务于国家外交战略能力的大幅提升。

国学大师、清华研究院“四大导师”之一陈寅恪先生曾经说，“读书必先识字”，他自己就精通梵语、英语、法语、德语、巴利语、波斯语、突厥语、西夏语，还修习过中亚古文字和蒙古语。时至今天，要了解古希腊、古埃及、古印度、古巴比伦文明的历史，要感受罗马帝国的辉煌和文艺复兴的灿烂，要领略工业革命和西方哲学的魅力，要把握当前国际社会发展的律动和人类进步的脉搏，外国语言文学仍然是一种十分重要而必不可少的工具、载体和媒介。在全球化背景下，普世价值往往更易超越民族、文化、宗教、局域认知等，通过外语这座桥梁得以交流和沟通、发扬和传播，从而提升人类社会的福祉。

高等学校的根本任务是培养人才。为适应全球化和高等教育国际化的需要，外语院校和外语学科一项很重要的使命和责任，就是要践行“立足平凡、追求卓越”的教育理念，创新人才培养模式，着眼于培养全球化、高素质公民。这种人才，具有较高的公民素养，“不能仅仅是语言、翻译方面的专家，更要在此基础上成为对象国研究和区域研究的专家，成为外语精湛、专业突出、高素质的复合型、复语型的国际化人才”（教育部副部长郝平）。简而言之，全球化、高素质公民的内涵可以用“中国灵魂、世界胸怀、现代意识”十二个字来表述，它包含了人与自我、人与国家、人与世界三个命题。第一，大学生要追求自我完善，务求“格物、致知、诚意、正心”，修身自持，赋予个体生命实际意义。第二，大学生要理性爱国，正确理解与认同传统文化，自觉参与现代中国的社会—文化转型进程。第三，大学生要用全人类而非单一国家民族的眼光关注诸如气候变化、核扩散、大规模传染病等国际性难题，不断提高跨文化交际能力，对外具有独立的品格和开放的心态。

在全球化语境下，外国语言文学需要遵循学科发展规律，顺应国家政策安排，不断加强自身建设，逐步提升学科的影响力和话语权。推进外国语言文学基础理论研究，密切追踪国外学术前沿，注意学习和借鉴，但不能满足于“跟随”和“阐释”，要力争取得有突破性的、具有国际影响的原创性外文理论成果。充分发挥外语学科优势，整合相关学科资源，开展全球问题、国际区域和国别问题的长期跟踪研究，为国家外交战略服务。积极主动对接国家和地方战略需求，就外语教育教学和对外交往的重大理论和实践问题，鼓励个人自由探索，支持学科集体攻关，为党和政府提供高水平的决策咨询服务。比如，广东外语外贸大学在广东省政府的鼎力支持下组建的广东国际战略研究院，近年来就国际金融危机、中国—东盟自贸区成立、日本地震海啸等重大问题对广东的影响及对策，组织外语专

家和相关学科学者进行专题研究,向有关方面提交了高质量的调研报告,对政府施政和企业决策产生了积极的影响。“走出去”,是繁荣发展我国哲学社会科学的重要环节。外语院校和外语学科可充分发挥自身独特优势,健全高端国际型人才培养体系,重点培育一批高水平、专业化的翻译团队,培养造就一批造诣高深的翻译名家,翻译并向海外推介一批中国文化经典和学术精品。要适应学科分化与综合的趋势,加强外语与经济、管理、法律、文化、军事、信息技术等学科的交叉和融合,在保持传统语言文学学科优势的基础上,努力催生出一批能与国际学术界直接对话、具备学术话语权的新型特色交叉学科。加强与港澳台外语界的交流与合作,积极参与国际学术活动和学术组织,积极参与和推动国际学术组织有关政策、规则、标准的研究和制定。

以“工程”、“项目”和“课题”等名义对高等学校发展实行管理和调控,是我国高等教育体制的重要特色。目前,少数外语院校进入国家“211工程”建设高校行列,外国语言文学学科也拥有一批国家级重点学科、教育部人文社科重点研究基地、教育部特色专业建设点、国家精品课程、国家教学名师等,这些总体上构成了外语学科领域的学术制高点。2008年,广东外语外贸大学“全球化背景下的外国语言文学研究”入选广东省“211工程”三期重点学科建设项目,其系列专著凝聚了“语言·文学·文化”、现代技术与语言教学评估、跨文化交际与管理、翻译研究与实践等研究方向,来自政府的支持为广外外语学科的创新发 展提供了新的机会和平台。出版“全球化背景下的外国语言文学研究丛书”,一来可作项目成果的初步展示,二来以此就教于同行专家学者。

慢工出细活,厚积才能薄发。全球化背景下外国语言文学学科的发展,与中国改革开放与现代化建设事业一样,依然任重而道远。

是为序。

徐真华^①

2011年6月

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Introduction

My initial interest in this project stems from my annoyance with Hollywood's presentation of Chinese women. The cinematic construction of submissive or treacherous women in an exotic China causes discomfort partly due to my own position as a Chinese woman with an academic background in American literature. The mixed feelings of indignation with the cinematic "distortion" and my vague contempt towards mass entertainment nonetheless give way to an interrogation of the screen images. Given that film has been a popular form of cultural consumption in the United States of America (U.S.) since the 1920s,^① the entertaining medium in the age of mechanical reproduction provides vivid knowledge of contemporary American life and helps shape the collective American consciousness. As a discursive construct interwoven with multifarious social discourses, cinema contributes to the production of subject positions and the construction of social, racial and gendered identities for its audiences in the very process of viewing. Christian Metz's observation that "a film is difficult to explain because it is easy to understand"^②

① Edward Buscombe, "Film History and the Idea of a National Cinema." *Australian Journal of Screen Theory* 9. 10 (1981): 141153; Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "But Do We Need It." *British Cinema Now*. Eds. Martin Auty and Nick Roddick (London: BFI Pub., 1985) 147 - 158; Douglas Gomery, "The Popularity of Filmgoing in US: 1930 - 1950." *High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film*. Ed. Colin McCabe. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) 71 - 79; Michael Ryan, "The Politics of Film: Discourse, Psychoanalysis, Ideology." *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988) 477 - 486; Marsha Butzel and Ana M. Lopez, "Mediating the National." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 1543 - 5326, 14. 3, 1993; John Izod, *Myth, Mind and the Screen: Understanding the Heroes of Our Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

② Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*. Trans. Michael Taylor. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974) 69.

reminds us of the need to unpack the cultural constructs of the films for critical understanding. To explore the socioeconomic, aesthetic and ideological implications of the cinematic narratives regarding the Chinese woman constitutes a key part of this thesis. Some of the questions I have in mind include: What are the conventional images of Chinese women and China in American cinema? How are the visual, aural, and linguistic components assembled to create those images? For whom and for what are these images constructed? How do the processes of film production, promotion and reception interact with the historical circumstances? What kind of cultural assumptions are produced and reproduced in these films? If the Western construction of the inferior oriental other justifies the nineteenth century European colonial expansion to some extent,^① how would the filmic presentations of Chinese women interact with the on-going process of the American formulation of self? Before exploring these questions in an early Hollywood film which establishes a prototype of the Chinese woman in the American imagination, I will investigate the evolving images of China in American discourses.

The American imagination of China

The creation of imagined others has often been incorporated into America's quest for cultural identity/identities in different historical periods. As a young immigrant nation with no unified ethnicity or shared historical memory, the U.S. has sought to define itself in relation to foreign countries since its birth. Correspondent to the rise of consumer materialism and the emergence of a bourgeois public sphere in Europe in the eighteenth century,^② the elites and the common folks in the North American continent were indignant at Britain's imperial exploitation. The rising revolutionary sentiment was brought to a sharp focus with the publication of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* in 1776. Selling over 100,000 copies in the first three months, the political pamphlets convinced the American people to fight for independence against

① Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

② Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580 – 1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 388 – 430.

the corrupt British Empire.^① In *The Declaration of Independence*, the proclamation of “life, liberty and pursuit of happiness” manifested a lofty dream to create a new world different from the autocratic Europe. John de Crevecoeur’s utopian vision of an American “new man” who “acts upon new principles” under “one of the finest systems of population” in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) helped mold a collective sense of national pride. In contrast to the otherwise “familiar” nationalist imagery based on common language, ethnicity, history or territory, the founding fathers of the U.S. held out “a commitment to liberal political principles” as “the leaven of American identity.”^② Since the wide circulation of these writings played a crucial role in the creation of “an imagined political community,”^③ the construction of others has been interwoven into the American social fabric.

As part of the U.S. nation-state building project, China was often utilized as a reference point by the American elites. Along with the many other ideas absorbed from the European Enlightenment thinkers who admired the moral excellence of ancient China in the eighteenth century,^④ some of America’s first and most important leaders respected Chinese civilization. Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin and

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- ① Craig Nelson, *Thomas Paine: Enlightenment, Revolution, and the Birth of Modern Nations* (New York: Viking, 2006).
- ② Jack Citrin, Ernst B. Haas, Christopher Muster and Beth Reingold, “Is American Nationalism Changing? Implications for Foreign Policy.” *International Studies Quarterly* 38. 1 (1994): 1–31.
- ③ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991) 6.
- ④ For China’s cultural impact upon the European intellectual climate from the late 17th century through the 18th century, see Adolf Reichwein, *China and Europe* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1925); G. F. Hudson, *Europe and China* (London: E. Arnold & Co., 1931); Arnold H. Rowbotham, “China and the Age of Enlightenment in Europe.” *The Chinese Social and Political Review* 19 (July 1935): 176–201; Lewis A. Maverick, “Chinese Influences upon the Physiocrats.” *Economic History*, III. 13–15 (February 1938): 54–67; Donald Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter between Asian and Western Thought* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997).

Thomas Jefferson saw China as a rational country worthy of imitation.^① The awe of the great Celestial Empire and admiration for the intelligent Chinese people permeated various writings of the period. A salutatory preface to the first volume of *Transactions* of the American Philosophical Society stated: “[C]ould we be so fortunate as to introduce the industry of the Chinese, their arts of living and improvements in husbandry ... America might in time become so populous as China.”^② Buttressed by the encouragement of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, the maiden voyage of America’s first clipper ship *Empress of China* from Massachusetts to Canton in 1784 established a lucrative new avenue of US-Sino trade and helped revitalize America’s depressed postwar economy under the British blockade.^③ As China trade helped to produce America’s first generation of millionaires like President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s maternal grandfather, it was seen as an American success story in outmaneuvering the British.^④ Based on their cursory knowledge of the eastern country plus wishful imagination, the founding fathers projected their ideals of “happiness,” “liberty” and “justice” upon China. In differentiation from the monarchical tyranny in Europe, a prosperous and free China in early American discourse to some extent functioned as a positive other in formulating the American self.

Such an imagined China as a model of civilizational progress faded away amidst the geopolitical and economic fluctuations in the nineteenth century. Having withstood various challenges posed by the Napoleonic wars (1799 – 1815), the young American republic took pride in distinguishing itself from Europe’s

① Leonard Labaree, ed. *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959); Alfred Owen Aldridge, *The Dragon and the Eagle: The Presence of China in the American Enlightenment* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993) 75 – 97.

② “Preface.” *Transactions* 1 (1771): vii.

③ Arthur Power Dudden, *The American Pacific: From the Old China Trade to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alfred Owen Aldridge, *The Dragon and the Eagle* (1993) 98 – 119; Dave Wang, “The Voyage to Win the United States a Place in International Commerce.” *Journal of Chinese American Studies* Spring 2006; Dave Wang, “With China We Trade.” *Asia Times Online* 11 March 2009.

④ Michael Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

international politics.^① Despite its cultural affiliations with European colonialism, the U.S. assumed a certain moral superiority in seeing itself more or less as an anti-colonial power advocating free trade and equality. Bolstered by its economic, military and territorial expansion, the U.S. declared the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 to assert its domination over the Western Hemisphere to repel European colonial powers. Meanwhile, following the imperial path blazed by Britain after the Opium Wars (1839 – 1842; 1856 – 1858), America signed the Treaty of Wanghsia and the Treaty of Tien-tsin with the Manchu government in 1844 and 1858 to penetrate the eastern land.^② The acquisition of trading privileges and extraterritorial rights in China not only excited American business circles, but also impressed the public mind as “a national concomitant of the westward course of empire.”^③ Embedded in the contemporary American discourses of Social Darwinism and Anglo-American superiority during the economic boom and industrial innovation after the American Civil War (1861 – 1865), the influential works of John Fiske and Josiah Strong purported to explain how nature and providence sanctioned the white mission to “civilize and Christianize” those “backward peoples” in the far-away places.^④ As the

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- ① Michael Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Rodney Carlisle, and J. Geoffrey Golson, *Manifest Destiny and the Expansion of America* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2007).
- ② When the British and French “expeditionary forces” tried to push their way to Peking in 1858, the supposedly neutral American squadron intervened to shield the British ships from Chinese gunnery. Following the British and French all the way north, the American envoy William Reed waited for them to extort the right of foreign embassies to reside in Peking and rejoiced when they received a guarantee of the protection of missionaries and their converts. Christopher Hitchens, *Blood, Class, and Empire: The Enduring Anglo-American Relationship* (New York: Nation Books, 2004) 98 – 100.
- ③ *Merchant’s Magazine* 12 (January 1845): 79 – 80; Ernest May, and John King Fairbank, eds. *America’s China Trade in Historical Perspective: The Chinese and American Performance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1986) 2.
- ④ John Fiske, “Manifest Destiny.” *Harper’s Magazine* (March 1885): 578 – 590; Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: The American Home Missionary Society, 1885) 139.

number of American businessmen, diplomats and missionaries in China had risen fivefold from 1875 to 1900,^① America's commercial penetration into China intermingled with its missionary endeavor to transform the vast throng of "heathen souls." Between 1879 and 1929, a total of thirteen American missionary colleges and universities were established in China along with a large number of America-sponsored hospitals, orphanages and charity organizations.^② These missionary institutions, as Edward Said succinctly points out, despite their contribution to the local people's well-being, "were no different from their French and British counterparts in the Orient" for their "specifically imperial character and their support by the US government."^③ Buttressed by the Puritan myth of American exceptionalism, the U.S. saw itself as a "youthful and redemptive force" to transform the savage world.^④

A prostrate China trapped between colonialism and feudalism indulged the American desire for salvation. Concurrent to America's rise on the world stage, there happened in China natural calamities, official corruption, the Taiping Uprising (1851 – 1864), the Boxer Uprising (approximately 1899 – 1900) and imperial exploitation. Facing the partition of China by avaricious powers like Britain, France, Germany, Russia and Japan, the latecomer U.S. declared its "gallant" intervention with John Hay's proposal of the Open Door Policy in 1899. The principle that all nations would have equal trading and development rights justified American penetration into China and sounded somehow protective of China. Without open involvement in the notorious opium trade or joining the imperial powers' vigorous bids for territorial claims in China, America's lofty claim to respect the administrative and territorial

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- ① Theodore Christlieb, *Protestant Foreign Missions, Their Present State: A Universal Survey*. Trans. D. K. Reed. (Boston: Congregational Publishing House, 1880) 192 – 194; Charles Frederick Remer, *Foreign Investments in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1933) 250.
- ② Paul Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890 – 1952* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1958) 89 – 92.
- ③ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978) 294.
- ④ William V. Spanos, *American Exceptionalism in the Age of Globalization: The Specter of Vietnam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008) 107, 207.

integrity of the Chinese empire was applauded as a “transcendent exhibition of American leadership” by the leading American magazine *The Nation*.^① To preserve and protect American interests in China, a chorus of trade associations, chauvinistic politicians and active diplomats urged the McKinley administration to take intervening measures.^② On the other hand, John Hay’s recognition of the limited American influences to “prevent others from robbing her [China]” was contextualized by America’s relatively new presence in the Asian Pacific region.^③ After securing its eastern strongholds in the Philippines and Guam by defeating the Spanish colonial power in 1898, the U. S. “emerged from its habitual, self-sufficient abode in the Western Hemisphere and entered the limitless realm of world politics, naval rivalry, and imperial domination.”^④ In his famous 1900 speech “In Support of an American Empire,” Senator Albert Beveridge saw the Filipino people as “children” incapable of “self-government” and vowed no “retreat” from “China’s illimitable markets.”^⑤ As similar “symbolic characterizations” like emotional irrationality and childlike instability were often attributed to women, “nonwhite races” and less developed countries,^⑥ the sentiment of paternal condescension and patronizing sympathy applied well to American perception of China. China now seemed a barbarous country of primitive people and decadent conventions, and stories of female infanticide, child slavery and opium addiction proliferated in various missionary writings. Arthur Smith concluded in his influential *Chinese*

① Norman A. Graebner, “Realism and Idealism.” *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy* (The Gale Group Inc. 2002) <<http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/O-W/Realism-and-Idealism.html>>.

② Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America’s Quest for Informal Empire, 1893 – 1901* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967) 73 – 95.

③ Alfred Lewis Pinneo Dennis, *Adventures in American Diplomacy: 1896 – 1906* (New York: Dutton and Co., 1928) 258.

④ Whitney A. Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and company, 1938) 3.

⑤ Kaplan Amy, “Romancing the Empire: The Embodiment of American Masculinity in the Popular Historical Novel of the 1890s.” *American Literary History* 2. 4 (1990) : 659 – 690. For the whole speech, see <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ajb72.htm>>.

⑥ Emily S. Rosenberg, “Gender.” *Journal of American History* 77 (June 1990) : 116 – 124.