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Portrayal of Chinese People and their Chineseness: Contrasting Hollywood Blockbusters with Asian Media Productions

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Abstract

The Orient is often depicted as a dependent entity whose presentation is framed within a Western perspective. This paper explores the various presentations and perceptions of China, the Chinese, and their sense of Chineseness as shown in Hollywood blockbusters and Asia media productions. Through dissecting the media presentations of Chinese cultural identity, this paper raises the question of the possibility of delinking the East from Western monetary fantasies about the country. To achieve these aims, different genres across the media are discussed to determine whether Chineseness has been commodified. Specifically, would amalgamation of dissimilar Chinese communities appear? Are objective evaluations made in assessing the genuineness of these different Chinese communities while presenting their dissimilarities? Although Hong Kong is a Chinese city, this metropolis has developed unique and hybrid characteristics owing to its historical background as a British colony and financial role as a business hub. This paper investigates whether the exceptional features of Hong Kong and its people as shown from various media products can be differentiated from other Chinese elements.

Key words

orientalist perspective, Hollywood films, Asian media productions, Chineseness, Hong Kong

Introduction

As a pioneer who advocates the study of literary works in view of social and cultural politics, the eminent roles played by Edward Said (1935-2003) and his legendary work *Orientalism* (1978) remain exceptional. In explaining the relationships between Westerners and Orientals in the first decade of the twentieth century, he points out that "There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated" (Said 1979, 36). He further exemplifies the unequal power relations by saying that for the Orientals, it "usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power" (Said 1979, 36). Colonialism represents the

manifestation of Western desire in attaining wealth and power in the Orient. Other than being a prolific novelist, Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881) was famously known as a Conservative politician who was twice British Prime Minister (Feb–Dec 1868 and 1874–1880). These multiple roles affirm Said's stance on the possible linkages between literary creativity and the corresponding social and political spectrums. During Disraeli's time in office, the British Empire reached the peak of its power. An emblematic cue of Disraeli's connection with the East in his political life was the purchase of the Suez Canal shares in 1875. In addition to settling a transaction of one hundred million francs, "[g]reat sums [had] to be expended on thorough and substantial repairs," as the Canal's entrance at Port Said was "in a critical state" (Fitzgerald 1876, 296-297):

> There is an almost certain prospect of secure interest for the outlay, and there is an undercurrent belief that the shares would somehow secure the right of passage to India. But in this view the ownership of the shares is simply surplusage, as the right of way to India would have been claimed and asserted on broader and higher grounds. (Fitzgerald 1876, 296)

The benefits brought to Britain behind the tremendous sums of investment went far beyond the tolls. Besides securing Britain's colonial interests in India, the purchase of the Suez Canal shares also guaranteed the Empire's monetary benefits in the East. Therefore, the deal realistically actualized the Western invention of aligning the East with the promise of wealth.

Western fascination with China's profitable opportunities is a long-standing historical trend. It originated from Marco Polo's descriptions of the glamourous aspects of the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) under the great Mogol ruler Kublai Khan (1215-1294). The history of modern China witnessed both internal weakness and disunity, in addition to growing external threats that violate territorial integrity. This political backdrop, together with the colonial framework, objectified China as a passive entity of Western fantasy. Stuart Hall (1932-2014) points out the inclusion of the Far East and China in the general understanding of "the Orient", though Said's analysis of its referent is mostly confined to the Middle East (Hall 1992b, 205). The situation of China in the late Qing Dynasty was characterized by various forms of foreign aggression and economic exploitation. As Hall reminds us that discourse "always operate[s] in relation to power – they are part of the way power circulates and is contested" (Hall 1992b: 205), this paper dissects whether the evolution of powers and the replacement of cultural colonialism by European imperialism in the succeeding generation result in a different Western discourse on China, or what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers to as the "continuing construction of the

subaltern" (Spivak 1994, 90). To avoid subjectivity generated by a biased gaze, a contrast over the presentation of Chinese people in Hollywood blockbusters with that of the insider-outside perspective as shown in Asian American writers' and film producers' works would be shown. An exemplification of Chinese people in Hollywood blockbusters enables exploration of whether the rise of China as a world economic power in the globalized age has reversed established perceptions of the West, and if the portrayal of China is still a prosperous career to those in the West. The discussion would therefore testify the applicability of Spivak's concept on "strategic essentialism" as "peoples stand in the same relation to global capitalism and should respond to it in the same way" (Leitch 2001, 2194). Inspired by Hall's theorization that the differentiation of "the West and the Rest" originates from stereotyping, "a one-sided description which results from the collapsing of complex differences into a simple 'cardboard cutout'" where "[d]ifferent characteristics are run together or condensed into one" (Hall 1992b, 215), further investigation will be made to check if the outsider mode can effectively distinguish Chinese people of different communities. The discussion gives an overview of the presentation of China and Hong Kong and the traits of their people. To concur Hall's reminder on the broad dimension of the East and his affirmation that "technologically speaking, Japan is 'western', though on our mental map it is about as far 'East' as you can get" (Hall 1992b, 205), a case study that features Japanese discourse on China is included in the discussion. In addition to Hall's categorization of Japan as the West by means of its level of technological advancement, the choice of focusing on Japan among other Asian neighbors can be explained by the age-long complex and evolving relationships between the two nations. An examination on the distinction of China from its close neighbor and historical rival, Japan, in the final part serves to provide an Asian glimpse on the depiction of a frenemy relationship.

Amalgamation and Differentiation in Contemporary Hollywood Films

In the process of imposing contemporary values on global audiences, Hollywood films affect Western apprehension of Chineseness in the modern era with its tendency of misrepresenting China, Hong Kong, and their people. Still, Stuart Hall affirms the understanding of one's identity through various forms of representation:

> [T]o speak of identity as constituted, not outside but within representation, and, hence, of cinema not as second-order mirror held up to reflect what already exists but as that form of representation which is also able to constitute us as new kinds of subjects and thereby enable us to discover who we are. (Hall 1992a, 106)

As a result of Hong Kong's position as a British colony (1841-1997), the major differentiations between Hong Kong and other Chinese cities in terms of the former's hybrid culture and multilingual environment have long been acknowledged by Hollywood productions. The success of Hollywood movies set in Hong Kong in the pre-multicultural era, such as *Love is a Many-Splendored Thing* (1955) and *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960), immortalizes Hong Kong as a territory where East meets West through the depictions of interracial romance. Specifically, both films feature taboo relationships between white males who sojourn in Hong Kong and women of Asian descent. In *Love is a Many-Splendored Thing* (1955), the married American war journalist Mark Elliot undergoes a trial separation with his wife. During his stay in Hong Kong, he falls in love with the widowed Eurasian doctor Han Suyin. Other than Mark's marital status, the identity of Suyin's husband as a Chinese Nationalist military officer who dies in the Chinese Civil War means that her interracial relationship is destined to be opposed and condemned under the conservative framework. The forbidden romance between Mark and Suyin illustrates the necessary alignment of one's patriotic awareness with the corresponding love interest. While Suyin is portrayed as the embodiment of oriental femineity and professional prowess, Suzie Wong in *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960) reinforces the Orientalist stereotype through depicting a Chinese damsel in distress awaiting a white savor for rescue. In this film, Robert Lomax is a middle-aged American who moves to Hong Kong to pursue his dream in becoming an artist. He then has an encounter with Suzie. That Suzie is both a prostitute and model of Robert's art piece jointly objectify her as a woman placed under male gaze. Daniel J. Huppatz delves into Hong Kong's local identity through the perspectives of design and heritage. He observes the ways that *The World of Suzie Wong* "helped forge a pervasive image of Hong Kong in the Western popular imagination" (Huppatz 2006, 67).

The portrayal of Western males' gaze upon Eurasian women in these films is a symbolic representation of the West's interests in the East. In the post-colonial age, several Hollywood blockbusters have chosen Hong Kong as one of their settings. Among them, *The Dark Knight* (2008) in the Batman series and *The Transformers: Age of Extinction* (2014) aroused much attention. Different from their predecessors aforementioned, these films have focused on Hong Kong's iconic skyline. As a result, their plots show minimal connections with Hong Kong and its people. *The Dark Knight* follows the typical *Batman* convention that features Batman's intention to dismantle criminal enterprise led by the Joker. In addition to featuring the fictional Gotham City, the backdrop of the *Batman* series, *The Dark Knight* has several filming locations which include Chicago, London and Hong Kong. While this combination is a demonstration of Hollywood's recognition towards the sound financial position of

Hong Kong, the film's portrayal of corruption themes and Chinese involvement of organized crimes resulted in the ultimate decision of the Warner Bros. to avoid the release of the film in China. While this case exemplifies a failed attempt to profit from the East, *The Transformers: Age of Extinction* shows a successful Sino-American co-production. This blockbuster was jointly produced by Paramount Pictures and China Movie Channel, a Chinese government-affiliated production agency. Such a legendary partnership guarantees both global distribution and the selection of cast and materials that resonate with Chinese audiences. Specifically, the prominent Chinese actress Li Binbing (1973–) plays the role of Su Yueming in the film. She is the CEO of a factory that manufactures artificial Transformers.

Although these films may finally reverse the Hollywood culture of objectifying the Orient, they tend to present the congruous nature of Chinese cities. Tammy L.H. Ho, president of PEN Hong Kong, initiates that the genuineness of Hong Kong landscapes diminishes in the Hollywood films of the globalized era. In anatomizing the conflation of Hong Kong and Shanghai in the propaganda of the science fiction film *Arrival* (2016), Ho comments that "It is as if all Chinese cities are generically similar and interchangeable" (Ho 2018, 54). The following example anatomizes the amalgamation of Chinese languages in *The Dark Knight*.

In a Hong Kong scene of *The Dark Knight*, the use of Putonghua in conversation by the local villain, Lau, aroused heated discussion. The scene depicts Batman's intention to arrest Lau in Hong Kong so as to bring him back to Gotham police. In *The Dark Knight*, Lau converses in Putonghua, whereas two other characters use Cantonese. It is uncertain whether this arrangement represents the combination of different Sinitic elements in Hong Kong. The Education Bureau in Hong Kong released in September 1997 new guidance for secondary schools on the medium of instruction, almost immediately after the handover of Hong Kong's sovereignty from Britain to China. The guidance stated that "Our aim is for our students to be biliterate (i.e. master written Chinese and English) and trilingual (i.e. speak fluent Cantonese, Putonghua, and English)" (Education Bureau 2022). Cantonese is the native language used by the locals. In fact, many Hongkongers are disappointed that Cantonese as a distinctive feature has been overlooked and even grouped with the dominant Putonghua on the mainland. In the movie, the focus on skyscrapers may successfully illustrate the city's status as a world-class financial center. However, the uniqueness of local features is omitted.

Although it is the philosophy of movie makers to fulfill the dreams of the audience by turning impossibilities into realistic illusions inside a cinematic frame, Hollywood cinematography achieves success in the industry via the magic trick of transforming actors and actresses of various nationalities into Chinese or Hongkongers. For instance, actress American actress Jennifer Jones (1919-2009) is

casted as Han Suyin, a woman of Chinese and European descent, in *Love is a Many-Splendored Thing*. Leung Wing-fai studies the representation of Asian identities in Hollywood and remarks that "there has been a history of Hollywood's conflation of East Asian actors: Chinese, Japanese, and Korean actors often play a variety of Asian characters" (Leung 2012, 168). In the eighteenth James Bond film *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997), Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh (1962–) plays the role of Wai Lin, a Chinese secret agent who assists Bond in destroying the triad-based conspiracy that affects world peace. In *The Dark Knight*, Singaporean actor Ng Chin Han (1969–) plays the role of Lau. Unsurprisingly, Michelle Yeoh and Ng Chin Han are both of Chinese descent. Michelle Yeoh also starred in numerous Hong Kong movies since her engagement in the industry in 1983. The appearance of Michelle Yeoh in this production paved the way for her subsequent roles in many other Hollywood blockbusters, such as *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005) and *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* (2008). She became the first Asian to be awarded as the Best Actress in the Academy Awards for role as the Chinese-American immigrant Evelyn Quan Wang in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022). There are also cases of casting non-Chinese actors in Chinese roles. Philip Ahn (1905–1978) was a Korean-American. He was often regarded as the first Korean-American film actor. He became the first Asian to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame posthumously in 1984. His roles can be seen in *King of Chinatown* (1939) as Robert Rob Li, also in *Love is a Many--Splendored Thing* as Suyin's third uncle in China, and well-remembered role as Master Kan in the television series *Kung Fu* (1972-1975). The versatility of Asian actors in global cinema the succeeding generations could also be verified through another Korean-American actor Sung Kang (1972–). While he is famous for his portrayal of the Korean character Han Lue in the *Fast and Furious* franchise (2001–), he also features in *9:30* (2004), a short film of 13 minutes as Chan Kin Fai, a man of Chinese descent; and as Kwang in the thriller *Weekend in Taipei* (2004).

Insider-outsider Dynamics in Asian American Works

Pheng Cheah suggests that "[w]e live in an era where nationalism seems to be out of favor" (Cheah 1998, 106). He adds that "[S]ince contemporary critics of nationalism regard it as a particularistic mode of consciousness or even a private ethnic identity which disguises itself as a universalism, cosmopolitanism is the obvious choice as an intellectual ethic or political project that can better express or embody genuine universalism" (Cheah 1998, 106). While the differences between Chinese Asians, mainland Chinese, and Hongkongers remain unnoticeable to global viewers, Hong Kong audiences hold a drastically different perspective on maintaining localism in the age of globalization. At the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in

2018, the world-renowned martial arts superstar Jackie Chan expressed his view that there should not be any distinction between Chinese and Hong Kong films:

> Now, we don't say whether a film is a Hong Kong film or a Chinese film – Hong Kong films are Chinese films as well. It's only about whether you are making local films – like in Shenyang you make Shenyang films, in Shandong you make Shandong films, many of them can't get out of Shandong or Chaozhou. (Cheng 2018)

This remark emphasizes how successful blockbusters are almost solely dependent upon the audience's size in generating box office revenue. Other than aesthetic contribution, the portrayal of local features is disregarded. Jackie Chan's remark immediately led to condemnation from Hong Kong filmmakers and ordinary viewers who support local film productions that illustrate Hong Kong outside a conformed Chinese framework.

Although many Hongkongers are descendants of Chinese immigrants who arrived during the Second World War or the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), a strong sense of distinction exists between these second- or third-generation Chinese immigrants who are rooted in Hong Kong from those whose citizenship remains in China. While Hollywood producers may have ignored cultural and dialectal differences, American writers with Asian origins, such as Amy Tan (1952–) and Kevin Kwan (1973–), are relatively more aware of this distinction. Claire Jean Kim, specialist of ethnic-civic dichotomy in America, remarks that Asian Americans during the generation of *Suzie Wong* conceded their outsiders status under mainstream marginalization:

> [T]he United States is the adoptive land of Asian Americans and celebrates Nancy Kwan's discussion of Asian Americans as "we" versus "them" (White Americans) in a way that powerfully inscribes Asian American "otherness." As always, relative valorization implies civic ostracism. (Kim 1999, 122)

A comparison of Amy Tan and Kevin Kwan's presentations of different Chinese people in their novels reveals the importance of securing the Chinese market. This is particularly true when Kevin Kwan's novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) has been adapted by Jon M. Chu (1979–), an American filmmaker whose parents immigrated to the States from Taiwan and Hong Kong, into a Hollywood movie in 2018. Adele Lim (1975–), a Malaysian of Chinese descent, serves as the co-screen writer of the film. The Asian crew in this American production emphasizes the importance of maintaining a worldwide reputation in making the East a sustainable career.

Both Amy Tan and Kevin Kwan apply insider-outsider dynamics in designing

their characters with varying levels of Chinese or Asian connections. In Tan's debut and bestselling novel, *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), one of the Chinese mothers named Gu Ying-ying (a.k.a. Betty St. Clair) is an immigrant from Wushi, near Shanghai in China. Similar to the experience of many new immigrants, Ying-ying faces communication problem as she is not proficient in English. This isolates her from her English Irish husband and mixed-race daughter, Lena. Ying-ying also fails to engage in the Chinatown neighborhood in Oakland, where most Chinese Americans speak a different Chinese language. Ying-ying's mother tongue is Mandarin, but "[w]here we lived and shopped, everyone spoke Cantonese or English" (Tan 1989, 117). As an insider of the Chinese-American community, Tan's careful observation and knowledge of the different varieties of the Chinese language help her provide a vivid and truthful evaluation of the hardships faced by Ying-ying in the foreign land. In Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians* trilogy (2013, 2015, and 2017), many typical, if not stereotypical, characteristics of wealthy Asians are depicted. More than merely informing Western audiences about the speedy transformation of China into a country of enormous wealth through ridicule, the series contains careful observations on the dissimilar characterization of various Asians sharing the same Chinese ancestry. For instance, Kwan's sequel *China Rich Girlfriend* (2015) illustrates how a simple phrase referring to a hotel can be an indication of the speaker's origin:

> "I'm surprised you wanted to meet here. Don't you think the tearoom at the Four Seasons is much nicer?" Valerie asked.
> "Or even the Peninsula," Lester chimed in [...]
> "The Peninsula gets too many tourists, and the Four Seasons is where all the new people go. The Mandarin is where proper Hong Kong families have been coming to tea for generations. My grandmother Lady Ko-Tung used to bring me here at least once a month when I was a girl," Corinna patiently explained, adding, "You must also leave out the 'Oriental' – we locals simply call it 'the Mandarin'". (Kwan 2015, 19)

Opened in 1928, the Peninsula has been an iconic hotel in Hong Kong since the colonial era. As the oldest hotel in Hong Kong still in operation, this legendary status enhances its popularity. While the prestigious position and historic background allow worldwide tourist attraction, its crowded state drives away many locals who really would like to have quiet and relaxing afternoon tea. "The Mandarin" has a humble façade. Although it is located in Hong Kong's central business district, its serene interior design offers its guests a luxurious retreat. The short conversations in Kwan's novel reveal the different identities of the three people involved, with the couple Valerie and Lester who recently come from China as elite immigrants and Corinna as a member of a pedigreed family in Hong Kong. The Hollywood movie

based on Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians* premiered in 2018. Cultural reporter and writer Karen K Ho confirms that the East and its people have been commodified as a result of the overwhelming success of the novel and its film adaptation:

> [B]oth for fans of Kevin Kwan's best-selling book series, which inspired the film, and for Asian audiences the world over who have waited decades to see themselves represented onscreen in all their diversity. Hollywood has grown increasingly dependent on Asian financiers and global audiences to turn a profit. (Ho 2018)

Twenty-five years after the release of the film adaptation of Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* in 1993, *Crazy Rich Asians*, which features majority Asian cast, became a global hit. This phenomenon demonstrates that the East is still a promising career.

Chinese people and their Chineseness in Japanese Television

To provide a direct response towards the claim of categorizing Japan as "the West", and to comprehend how this maritime neighbor of China perceives China and its people in the recent generation, this part analyses the dynamics of Sino-Japanese frenemy relationship through a Japanese television drama. How the world perceives a country is highly related to its history and development. Before the 2022 Winter Olympics, Pew Research Centre conducted a survey on the global perception of China:

> Most of the 17 global publics surveyed by the Center in 2021 had a negative view of China. Unfavorable views were highest in Japan, where nearly nine-in-ten adults (88%) said they had an unfavorable opinion. In many publics, unfavorable views of China were at or near historic highs in surveys going back to 2002. (Connaughton 2022)

As the participants were citizens of seventeen highly developed countries, a previous survey – the 2018 China National Image Global Survey – serves as a reference for the global image of China. In it, China scored 6.22 out of 10 in terms of its overall image. The survey comprised citizens from 22 countries regarding their impressions of China. Developing countries generally had a better impression of China than developed countries, and respondents from Japan showed the most unfavorable impression, giving the country a score of 3.7 points out of 10 (Center for Communication International Studies 2018). While Kevin Kwan presents super-wealthy Chinese as people who lead a lifestyle beyond ordinary imagination in his works, the following part explains how ordinary Chinese people are represented in those countries in which the respondents reported an undesirable impression of China.

As a close neighbor of China, Japan viewed this country as a model of learning long ago during the Tang dynasty (618–907) and later a target for annexation during the Second World War (1939-1945). The changing relationship between the two countries shows how Japan was initially fascinated by China's wealth and prosperity. For instance, monks, scholars, government officials, and artisans were sent on missions to China to enrich themselves in various areas. However, as China became weak and corrupt during the Qing dynasty (1636–1912), Japan joined the Western powers to exploit China. Sino-Japanese relationship in the contemporary era is characterized by close economic ties.

The discussion in this part intends to illustrate how a 21st century media production attempts to portray the complex Sino-Japanese relationships that blend friendship with outwitting acts in achieving a mutually beneficial equilibrium. The multi-layered relation between the two countries beyond the surface level is reflected in a 2016 Japanese television drama entitled *Naomi and Kanako* (ナオミとカナコ), produced by Fuji TV. This television drama features two notable Chinese characters. As the title suggests, the plot centers around two women named Naomi and Kanako, who used to be college friends. One day, Kanako confesses to Naomi that she is victim of ongoing physical violence. Kanako can no longer bear the abusive behavior of her husband. These two women then start to hatch a perfect plan to murder Kanako's brutal husband.

The first notable Chinese character in this Japanese television drama is Madam Li Zhu Mei, a migrant who runs a Chinese grocery store in Japan. Her first appearance is a very unpleasant one. She is presented as a greedy Chinese woman who steals an expensive watch from where Naomi works during a VIP function for a group of wealthy Chinese customers. The role of Li is played by the experienced Japanese actress Atsuko Takahata (高畑淳子). Despite Li's greedy behavior, she later becomes Naomi's friend and trusted advisor. Li's words inspire Naomi to be a tough, if not a cold-blooded, woman:

> Naomi: Actually, I have a college friend who is suffering from family violence inflicted by her husband.
> Li: Kill him!
> Naomi: Eh?
> Li: That man does not deserve to continue living. A man who beats his woman should be killed.
> Naomi: But the police will arrest us.
> Li: Then think of a way that you won't be caught.[1]

[1] *Naomi and Kanako* (ナオミとカナコ), directed by Kô Kanai, Hiroki Hayama and Shunsuke Shinada (Fuji TV, 2016).

Li is portrayed as an ambivalent character. It is unclear whether she is a real ally of Naomi. From the feminist perspective, she is responsible for turning Naomi into a fearless woman to assist her friend in fighting against the tyranny of patriarchal brutality. From the legal perspective, her words are powerful enough to trigger a disastrous crime.

Another Chinese character in the same television drama is the illegal migrant Lin Hong Hui. Lin and Kanako's husband look alike, and indeed, both roles are played by the same Japanese actor Ryuta Sato (*佐藤隆太*). After killing Kanako's husband, Lin takes the former's identity for a while until his ultimate return to China and Kanako's safe departure from Japan. Lin's caring aspect sharply contrasts with the abusive nature of Kanako's husband.

The two Chinese characters, Li and Lin, jointly exhibit China as a nation of many faces. Specifically, China represents wealth by having a large consumer market awaiting top quality and premium products from Japan. China also provides cheap labor for its neighboring countries. The way in which Li stimulates Naomi's immoral aspect for the sake of her friend Kanako implies that tough actions may be necessary in order to achieve certain aims. The director leaves room for the audience to consider whether the presentation carries derogatory implications.

Concluding remarks

This article provides an overview on the presentation of China and Hong Kong, and the traits of their people in both Hollywood movies and other cross-cultural creative works from Asia. Each case examined here confirms how the East has always been a career for Westerners. Marco Polo's descriptions of the glamourous and fascinating aspects of the Orient as the object of Western fantasy, as much as Hollywood's visualization of the textual depiction of the Orient into images, have eternalized stereotyped perceptions in Western minds.

Modern Hollywood depicts Hong Kong as a city with skyscrapers without personality and photogenic residential estates. The sharp differences between China and Hong Kong remain minimal in Western media productions. The contrast between Hollywood's approach of collapsing various Chinese communities and the insider-outsider dichotomy of Asian American writers suggests that established Western conceptions are curbed by producers who could project more faithful reflections. Luckily, Asian American writers grasp the essential differences between the two, demonstrating the necessity of presenting the East using an insider-outsider perspective for a more genuine and faithful presentation.

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