

Breaking the Chinese Stereotypes in Hollywood Films

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Abstract

The cinema of the United States, often generally referred to as Hollywood, has been the dominant force in the cinema industry across the world since the early 20th century. But it has also been criticized for promoting U.S. imperialism by creating and disseminating a number of racial stereotypes. Long known historically for its demeaning portrayal of African Americans, Hollywood has been also been guilty of stereotyping other racial and ethnic groups, notably Chinese. The purpose of the present project, then, is to critically examine the images of Chinese males in Hollywood films, and then present and refute them in a short film. The film will be disseminated and promoted via three major social media: YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. The ultimate goal of the project is to help American audience break the stereotypes of Chinese males in American cinema.

Keywords: Chinese stereotypes, Hollywood films, social media, two-sided persuasion

Breaking the Chinese Stereotypes in Hollywood Films

The beginning of the 2007 film *Shanghai Kiss* tells us a bitter experience of a Chinese American, Liam Liu (Ken Leung), who is a frustrated young actor living in Los Angeles. Liam auditions for a role in a toothpaste advertisement. He is rejected after giving a negative answer to the screener's questions about whether he knows Kung Fu and speaks Chinese. Liam then expresses frustration that there are only chances for him to play roles with heavily stereotypical "East Asian" characteristics, such as a Kung Fu fighter or computer professional. In *Shanghai Kiss*, we can get a glimpse of the difficulties for a Chinese American actor to land normal roles in Hollywood as victims of stereotypes.

Imagine a person, intelligent and evil, trying to use cobras, fungi, spiders, and secret societies to destroy Western civilization, and you have a mental picture of a Chinese master criminal like Dr. Fu Manchu. Imagine a person, always subservient to white people, speaking broken English and uttering Confucian quotations, and the image of a clever Chinese American citizen like Charlie Chan comes up to your mind. Imagine a person, small but strong, wearing a traditional Taichi suits, performing all kinds of mysterious Kung Fu stunts, and you'll recall a series of Chinese martial arts masters such as Bruce Lee, Jet Li, and Jackie Chan. These are some of the images produced by Hollywood cinema, which has offered perhaps the most visible and pervasive figures of Chinese in U.S. culture (Chen, 2006). The cinema of the United States, often generally referred to as Hollywood, has been the dominant force in the film industry across the world since the early 20th century. But it has also been criticized for promoting U.S. cultural imperialism, while creating and disseminating a number of racial stereotypes (Chen, 2009).

Studies on the media portrayals of minority groups have found that media frequently depict racial minorities in stereotypical and one-dimensional ways (Croteau, Hoynes, & Milan, 2012). With the largest population in the world, China is the world's fastest-growing economy, with growth rates averaging 10% over the past 30 years (NationMaster, 2013). Moreover, the Chinese American community, as the largest ethnic group of Asian Americans, comprises of 1.2% of the U.S. population and continues to grow at a rapid rate due to immigration. In recent years, the influx of international students and scholars from China has also brought a boost to the numbers of Chinese in the United States (Chinese Advertising Agency, 2013). However, Chinese share a long history during which they are stereotypically portrayed by the media in the United States, ranging from being denigrated as “coolies” in the mid-nineteenth century, being propagandized to be the “enemy race” during World War II period, to becoming the well-educated but excessively competent immigrants and silent “model minority” (Lin et al., 2005). Yet, while most of the related studies are focusing on the media stereotyping towards Asian Americans, only a handful of mass communication researchers have specifically examined the media images of this minority group in the U.S. and most of them are dated and therefore do not include the development of recent Chinese portrayals in American media (Miller, 1969; Chen, 1998; Lee, 1999; Shi, 2000; Wu, 2000; Zinzius, 2004; Chen, 2006).

Research has consistently shown that media use has a significant influence in the development of racial cognitions and intergroup behaviors. On one hand, the effects of consuming these stereotypical media images may cultivate and prime stereotypes in majority group members as well as contributing to a negative influence on the self-concept and

self-esteem of the minority group members (Mastro, 2009). On the other hand, the mass media can also function as a powerful engine in the process of re-shaping the social reality to redress the inequities (p. 325).

The purpose of the present project, then, is to demystify the racial myths on Chinese males in Hollywood films in a short film aiming to help American audience break the stereotypical images of Chinese males in American cinema. The project will first investigate what are the major stereotypes against Chinese male in Hollywood films from 1910 till now. Presenting and refuting these stereotypes in a hilarious and exaggerating way, the project will then tell a story through a short film about how a white American's misunderstandings towards his new Chinese roommate under the influence of media stereotyping are tested wrong. The film will be disseminated and promoted using three major social media channels: YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.

Literature Review

Racial stereotypes against Asian Americans

Stereotype is a crucial part of social science. Quasthoff (1978) defined a stereotype as “the verbal expression of a belief which is directed towards social groups or single persons as members of these groups (p. 6).” Gorham (1999) described stereotypical perceptions by using the term “racial myths” to describe the manner in which stereotypes are manifested. It has taken years for researchers to look outside of the Black-White racial binary and pay attention to the minority group of Asian Americans when dealing with the issue of racial stereotypes (Lin et al., 2005). As one of the fastest growing racial minority groups in the United States, Asian

Americans have recently been lauded as the “model minority” and their accomplishments have been affirmed as the realization of the American Dream. Yet, Asian Americans have been traditionally perceived as foreigners in their adopted country and encounter discrimination in higher education and employment (Takaki, 1989).

Research has found certain traits of the stereotypes against Asian Americans such as affluent, highly educated, holding professional occupations, and rapidly growing in number (Fisher, 1994). Niemann et al. (1994) identified the stereotypes held of Asian Americans including such qualities as intelligent, soft speakers, and short in stature. Based on the twin interpersonal dimensions of competence and sociability (Rosenberg, Nelson, & Vivekananthan, 1968), in the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), Asian Americans, as members of an outgroup, commonly fall into the cluster that is respected for being high in competence but disliked for lacking warmth, which suggests a mixture of prejudice that includes admiration, resentment, and envy towards Asian Americans (Lin et al., 2005).

Images of Chinese Male in Hollywood Films

Despite the variety of culture and nationality in the Asian community, most of extant studies on racial stereotyping in media consider Asians as an undifferentiated whole. Few studies have focused on the Chinese stereotypes specifically. Generally, the Chinese images in U.S. media have changed with the relationship between the U.S. and China in different periods (Chen, 2006). Isaacs (1958) grouped American images of China into six historical periods: (a) the Age of Respect (Eighteenth Century); (b) the Age of Contempt (1840-1905); (c) the Age of Benevolence (1905-1937); (d) the Age of Administration (1937-1944); (e) the Age of

Disenchantment (1944-1949); and (f) the Age of Hostility (post-1949). In the first period, Americans had their contact with Chinese through trade. Chinese civilization was held in high esteem by Americans. During the second period, the rapidly increasing number and competition of early Chinese immigrants in American labor market soon resulted in a growing resentment by the white majority. The “yellow peril” was widely applied in popular entertainment media as the term to depict the vicious Japanese and Chinese in the United States (Isaacs, 1958). After World War II, Japan, a former enemy, became a friend of the U.S. while China, a former friend, became an enemy in the Cold War era. In 1972, the Sino-American relations had a friendly turn with the visit to China by President Nixon.

As one of the most powerful mass media in contemporary society, film functions as art, entertainment, propaganda, documentation of social change, and a transmitter of cultural values (Miller, 1978). “When one talks of cinema, one talks of American cinema... Every discussion of cinema made outside Hollywood must begin with Hollywood,” as the Brazilian avant-garde director Glauber Rocha wrote (quoted in Moretti, 2001). While having been the dominant force in the film industry across the world since the early 20th century, the cinema of United States has also been criticized as the instrument that promotes cultural imperialism to reinforce a narrow conception of American values and beliefs on the audience from other cultures. To this end, Hollywood filmmakers have been disseminating stereotypical images of members from minority groups in order to marginalize their cultures and values (Xing, 2003).

The stereotyping of Chinese in Hollywood films, as a reflection of the Sino-American relations, has existed and been changing for a long time. To narrow down the focus of the

present project on this topic, I chose to examine the Chinese male characters in the Hollywood films from 1910 till recent years. Varying from villain to hero, the images of Chinese in Hollywood films have been wavering between two opposing extremes (Chen, 2009). Having examined the results of extant research on the images of Chinese in Hollywood films, I found that the stereotypes of Chinese males could be divided into several categories, including yellow peril, model minority, Kung Fu master, and small potato.

Yellow Peril. With regard to the “yellow peril” image, Dr. Fu Manchu would definitely be the No.1 famous villain in the Hollywood films. After Sax Rohmer created the fictitious character in 1913 in his novel *The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu*, Fu Manchu soon became a famous master criminal who provided Hollywood with a model for most “yellow peril” figures in later films (Chen, 2006).

The series of Fu Manchu film noir share one common theme, that is, Fu’s schemes to destroy the western values and dominate the western world by using all kinds of newly invented secret weapons, but each time is ultimately defeated by a white person. In these films, Fu was always photographed in the dark with deep shadows, as a way to present his evil and mystery.

Intelligent and diabolical, Fu combined the western scientific knowledge and technologies as well as the mysterious Oriental “occult” power such as the use of spider and fungi. He committed numerous monstrous crimes, including smuggling drugs, organizing secret societies, gambling illegally, raping white females, and killing white people. The China town where Fu’s camp was based was depicted as a place of absolute evil. Even though the character was Chinese, the casting was not open to Chinese Americans because Chinese men were not

supposed to play leading roles in films at that time (Chen, 2006).

We can still find quite a few Chinese characters similar to Fu Manchu in contemporary Hollywood films, such as a Chinese criminal gang leader in America played by Simon Yam in the 2003 film *The Cradle of Life*, the Orient captain villain played by Chow Yun fat in the 2007 film *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*. In the 2012 film *Premium Rush*, the Chinatown was still depicted to be filled with smuggling gangs, illegal money exchanges, illegal casinos, violence, and murders.

Model Minority. During the 1920s and 30s, with its military expansion, Japan gradually became the enemy of the U.S. while China became U.S.'s temporary ally with a common enemy: Japan. In that environment, Charlie Chan, a fictional Chinese-American detective created by Earl Derr Biggers, was born as an alternative to the Yellow Peril stereotype, which had become the most famous Chinese model minority in American films. Although Chan was portrayed as intelligent, benevolent, and honorable, critics stated that Chan was presented as a model minority who reinforces certain offensive Chinese stereotypes (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003).

Charlie Chan was depicted as a positive role model of Chinese, but always subservient to white people, which made him absolutely unthreatening to the majority. Chan was endowed with good qualities as well as "Oriental" otherness that enabled American audiences to identify him in terms of race, which marginalized him as a minority (Chen, 2009). For example, Chan was always slow moving, speaking in broken English, and mysterious in his crime-solving techniques. Although Chan's character seems totally different from Fu Manchu, they are actually

both depicted in one-dimension. Chan was depicted as ambivalent in sexuality and never involved in any romance. The character of Charlie Chan may be positive in many ways, but the one-dimensional image could never exhibit the comprehensive personality and rich emotions a normal Chinese person would have (Chen, 2006).

Kung Fu Master. In the 1970s, with the warming-up of diplomatic and trade relations between America and China, more and more Americans became interested in traditional Chinese culture. At that time, Chinese Kung Fu, as one of the representative and mysterious elements in Chinese culture, aroused Americans' interests (Chen, 2006). It was then that the Chinese Kung Fu Hero began to gain popularity in Hollywood films. Bruce Lee became the first Chinese American male starring as a Chinese hero and in leading roles in Hollywood films, following by Jackie Chan, Jet Li, etc.

Bruce Lee not only introduced the Chinese Kung Fu to Western audiences but also represented the nationalism and remasculinization of Chinese in America through the tough guy image of his masculine body and superhuman ability (Shu, 2003). During that period China was suffering from Western and Japan's imperialism while Chinese had been experiencing the institutional racism in the United States. Lee's Kung Fu film demonstrated the underclass needs and values and the problem of social injustice. He reconfigured Chinese's cultural identities and redefined the once subservient, effeminate images of Chinese males in Hollywood films (Tasker, 1997). Jackie Chan started a new genre of Kung Fu cinema, which adopted the humor and comedy in his action films instead of Lee's image of infallibility and toughness. Chan showed the humane aspect of the once inhumane and superhuman Kung Fu hero, which has become

subversion to the once one-dimensional images of Chinese males in Hollywood films (Shu, 2003).

Moreover, the Kung Fu element has become a key for Chinese filmmakers to open the door of the American film market. Recent years have witnessed a production surge of Chinese films featuring the Kung Fu theme to attract American audiences, such as the 2000 Oscar Award film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the 2002 film *Hero*, the 2004 film *The House of the Flying Daggers*, and the 2008 film *Red Cliff*, which have set the tone for Chinese cinema in American market.

However, while Kung Fu films have become the lifesaver for Chinese filmmakers and actors to realize their American dream, they also became the only major approach by which they could make their voices heard in the American market. In fact, the identification of Kung Fu master rules out other possibilities for Chinese in Hollywood cinema (Chen, 2009). Although more characteristics of Chinese male roles have been showed since 1970s, Jackie Chan wouldn't have become popular if he had known nothing about the Kung Fu stunts. The Kung Fu elements continue to be the stereotypical Oriental characteristics that differentiate the Chinese male characters from the majority in Hollywood films in terms of race.

Small Potato. While there may be only a few Kung Fu heroes from time to time, the most common Chinese roles in Hollywood films do not have a name—or hardly a line. They have become the most convenient way for Hollywood filmmakers to depict the images of the Chinese without taking up too much space in the film. Chinese are portrayed primarily as minor and nonrecurring roles, who are often characterized by their passive nature as traditional and

conservative. They are usually given stereotypical Oriental traits such as speaking in broken English and low social status. They may be waiters, visitors, chefs, robbers, gangster, etc. In general, the percentage of Chinese male characters in menial roles was respectively three times higher than those of Caucasian characters (Chen, 2006). Sometimes their roles not only counted for nothing but also became scapegoats or comical subjects (Chen, 2009).

In conclusion, the images of Chinese males in Hollywood films have changed for better or worse as Sino-American relations changed. Although progress and subversion has been made to the stereotypes with the appearance of Chinese American actors in leading roles as heroes on the screen, the stereotyping of Chinese males remains. Yellow peril, model minority, Kung Fu master, and small potato are the common images of Chinese males imbedded in American culture—mainly through portrayals in motion pictures.

Stereotypes and Media Use

There is a substantial history of theoretical and empirical research studying the effects of media exposure on the construction and maintenance of consumers' social perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in the domains of mass communication and social and cognitive psychology, which has found that media use has played a meaningful role in the development of racial cognitions and behaviors (Mastro, 2009).

Several mass communication theories collectively explain the link between existing stereotypes and media exposure. For example, the cultivation theory postulated that repeated exposure to media with a more-or-less consistent set of messages might cultivate a worldview that increasingly reflects the perspective of the media (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, &

Shanahan, 2002). Gerbner et al. (2002) asserted that viewers are more likely to accept media portrayals as valid and real when the media vision is consumed frequently, that is, cultivation works when one is heavily exposed to stereotypical content in the media.

While cultivation theory explains the media effects primarily from the perspective of media consumption, the social cognitive theory addresses the developing of individual cognitions resulting from observation, by explaining how attitudes, values, and behaviors can be learned through the process of observing others (Tan, Fujioka, & Lucht, 1997). The audiences may eventually perceive media images to be authentic as heavy exposure to the virtual world constructed by the media, which shapes the audiences' beliefs and conceptions of reality (Lee et al., 2009).

While consuming the stereotypical images in the mass media may cultivate and prime stereotypical images in majority group members and contribute to negative influences on the self-concept and self-esteem of the minority group members, the media can also function as a powerful engine in the process of reshaping the social reality to redress the inequities (Mastro, 2009, p. 325). As Gramsci argued that culture and media were used by ruling group in a society “to attain social dominance or hegemony (Durham and Kellner, 2001, p. 3),” although the economic and political institutions have greatly influenced on the media industry, the media personnel can actively respond to these constraints as agency to limit the institutional impact and navigate the decision-making process (Croteau, Hoynes, & Milan, 2012). Also, the citizen activists are rising as a fresh and influential force that generate public sphere and promote social changes, along with the development of the new technologies such as the Internet and social

media, which is beneficial for a more healthier and diverse media market. The once passive mass has now gained choices for customized and individualized media experience as well as capabilities to actively interpret the messages and participate in the communication (Croteau et al., 2012, p. 13). The rise of user-generated content has allowed amateurs to have access to become active participants in the media production as well as professionals (p. 150).

Therefore, the media can be considered as the institute to promote social progress, especially to develop counter-dominant cultures and help people break the stereotypes, particularly by making use of the technological progress (p. 34). Having examined the extant stereotypes of Chinese male in Hollywood films, the further goal of the present project, then, is to bring the attention of American audiences to the potential influence of Chinese stereotypes, and as a result, to help them break the stereotypical images of Chinese male in Hollywood films.

Methodology

Platform and Format

To these ends, the present project will present and refute the stereotypes of Chinese male in a short film to be posted on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, the three main social media sites for American audience. Recently, social media, defined by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) as “a group of Internet-based applications that ... allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content,” has become a fresh but powerful force that greatly influences the world. Notably, with its convenience and interactivity, social media has played a more and more important role in affecting how young audiences think and act. Thus, I chose social media as the platform to disseminate my film.

Social media users tend to spend their time only on the content they are interested in among the enormous amount of information online. So the film will be 5-10 minute long and fit the fast-tempo reading habits of online audiences. Also, considering the racial stereotype is a serious and sensitive topic, most of people might feel uncomfortable to watch a film on this, the film will touch the theme in a humorous way through a fictional comedy. I hope in this way, the film will make the audience feel comfortable and entertaining, while the messages are disseminated in a more implicit way.

Target Audience

A late survey by the Pew Research Center (2012)'s Internet & American Life Project shows that young adults are more likely than others to use major social media. Internet users under 50 are particularly likely to use a social networking site of any kind, and those 18-29 are the most likely of any demographic cohort to do so. Those living in urban settings are also significantly more likely than rural Internet users to use social networking. Therefore, my target audiences are Americans from 18 to 49 years old. White Americans from 18 to 29 years old make up my core audience group. Most of my target audiences should live in urban settings and be technologically savvy.

Two-sided Persuasion

Over the years researchers have studied the effectiveness of one-sided and two-sided arguments in persuasion and there is substantial research suggesting that including some negative information in the communication can be more effective than only the one-sided positive information (e.g. Etgar & Goodwin, 1982; Golden & Alpert, 1987; Pechmann, 1992). Two-sided

message consists of both positive and negative views on one issue. According to the inoculation theory developed by McGuire (1961), including mild counterarguments and then refuting the negative arguments can stimulate the receiver to be active and motivated in refuting counterarguments and thus help the receiver become immune to the subsequent attack. McGuire (1985) considered two-sided messages more involving and “attention getting” than one-sided messages in the communication (p. 294).

Moreover, early research consistently found that two-sided persuasion are more effective on those receivers who are initially opposed to the ideas argued in the message, that is, two-sided messages are effective for changing negative attitudes (e.g. Sawyer, 1973). Sawyer (1973)’s marketing study suggested that two-sided ads tend to be effective for new products and brands with a low market share and competitive products or brands in the market. The adaptation-level theory (Appley, 1971) explained that when the receiver is negative in his attitude towards something, a two-sided message containing negative information may be more consistent with the receiver’s attitudinal schema and may thus encounter less resistance. On the other hand, if the receiver is not aware of the negative information, there will be inoculation effects which might reduce the future attack of negative information.

One of the important variables that determine the two-sided persuasion effects is the message structure (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994). First, the negative information should be weaker or milder than the positive information in a two-sided message. Extreme amounts of negative information could lead to low believability and negative attitudes (p. 568). Second, the order of information presentation also has an impact on the persuasion effects. According to the primacy

effects (Asch, 1952), placing negative information early in the message may make a negative first impression on the audience. On the other hand, recency effects suggests ending the two-sided persuasion with the negative information would left the audience with a highly strong negative summary. However, most two-sided empirical studies provided evidence that presenting the negative information early in a two-sided message is more effective than placing at last or not mentioning at all (e.g. Hass & Linder, 1972). Besides, McGuire (1961) emphasized the important function of refuting the negative information in the inoculation theory that moderates the impact of negative information, especially when the negative attribute is an important aspect in the message.

Film Structure

To break the stereotypes against Chinese males in Hollywood films, the short film will disseminate two-sided message in the story, including presenting the stereotypes and refuting the stereotypes, which will make the story more involving, dramatic, and “attention getting” than one-sided sermon. The stereotypes against Chinese males will be portrayed in the beginning as the counterarguments, following by the refutation of these stereotypes after a turning point. The story will reach a conclusion on breaking stereotypes and practicing human understanding as a resolution at the ending. The positive information will be left to the audience to make the two-sided persuasion powerful with the recency effects.

We’ll have three characters in the film. The first one is Tom, a young white American male, who is a super fan of TV & film. Film cultivates his paranoid personality. Tom is from a traditional southern farmer family and he is the first person in his family to go college. Right

now he is a freshman in English major and he has had little contact with people from other cultures. Tom's family background from a lower socioeconomic group, and his limited educational level contributes to the dominant influence of film on his racial perceptions towards Chinese. Jerry, the other young white American male, is Tom's close friend. He is a junior college student double majored in mathematic and biology. He's kind of nerdy and crazy about science. Jerry has been to other countries for travel and most members in Jerry's family are intellectuals. These make Jerry the right person to stand up and refute Tom's stereotypical perceptions against Chinese. The third role is Xiaoming, Tom's mysterious roommate from China, who has just arrived in the United States for graduate study in computer science.

The story begins by Tom telling Jerry about his stereotypical assumptions on Xiaoming as evil criminal, Kung Fu master, and crazy hacker. Jerry then uses the scientific method to test Tom's stereotypical hypothesis and proves that Xiaoming's not like those stereotypes at all. Although Xiaoming comes from a totally different Oriental culture, he's just like other normal youngmen with their own stress and hobbies. Finally Xiaoming and Tom get to know each other and become friends.

For the audiences who hold stereotypical attitude towards Chinese, as explained by adaptation-level theory (Appley, 1971), the two-sided message containing the portrayals of Chinese stereotypes will result in less resistance in the audiences because of the consistency in their attitudinal schema with the stereotypes portrayed in the film. For the audiences who are not aware of the negative information, the weakened exposure to the stereotypes will help them resist the future attack of stereotypical images, as articulated by the inoculation theory.

As stated before, after production the film will be posted on YouTube and shared on Facebook and Twitter. The short-term goal for the project is to reach 1,000 views on YouTube (as the views on Facebook and Twitter will be automatically included in the number of views on YouTube). The long-term goal is to help the audiences realize the existence of stereotyping against Chinese in media and eventually change their misperceptions about Chinese. We will interact with viewers via the comment and mail functions of YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to monitor whether the long-term goal is fulfilled.

Discussion

In the present project, I have examined the images of Chinese males in Hollywood films, and I will present and refute them in a short film as two-sided persuasion aiming to help the audience break the stereotypes. The inoculation theory, adaptation-level theory, and recency effects are used as theoretical guides for the effective persuasion in the film.

There are several limitations in this project. First, I narrowed down the stereotypes against Chinese males in Hollywood films to be the focus of my project. The images of Chinese females in Hollywood films have not been examined. However, it is of great significance for further research to study on the combination of gender and racial stereotypes of the Chinese female roles in Hollywood films. Second, the Hollywood cinema is only one of the dominant media forces in the United States. Researchers and media practitioners can explore the stereotyping of Chinese in other media platform in the United States, such as advertising, soap operas, news, and the new media. Moreover, stereotypes are a crucial and complex part of social science, which has been evolving with the human history. I can only touch limited aspects of the

issue within one short film. In future films I can add more complexity to both American and Chinese characters and explore more cultural conflicts in the multicultural communication between Americans and Chinese.

When I began this project, the whole Chinese nation stood with Ang Lee at the threshold of an extraordinary moment in the Hollywood cinema history in 2013 when he won the Academy Award for Best Director for the second time. As the first person of Asian descent to win an Oscar and win twice, Ang Lee shed light on the road that Chinese actors and filmmakers had walked with great difficulty. We have reasons to believe that it was a significant step for the minority group of Chinese to make its voice heard and to make it stronger and more powerful in Hollywood films. The mass media can be instrumental in the shaping of stereotypes, but it can also be a “powerful mechanism for re-shaping and re-defining social reality to redress current inequities” (Mastro, 2009, p. 337). As the stereotyping of Chinese in Hollywood films has been in existence since the early twentieth century, we should recognized that it is not something that can be changed in a short time or by the efforts of Chinese alone. The present project may make only a limited contribution to redress the current inequities in mass media, but the efforts from more researchers, media practitioners, and citizens activists, along with the technological progress, would make a big difference to create a more diverse and equal world of media.

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