

Allyson Macci

Project Name: How Film and Literature Influence the Ways in Which East Asian American Identity is Formed

Abstract: This paper looks at the ways in which East Asian Americans sense of identity is formed through the representations of them and their culture in American film and literature. I will discuss through an analysis of rhetoric, theory, and criticism by East Asian authors, how the portrayal of a culture and people impact and influence their sense of identity. For example, I will answer questions such as what does it mean to be both Asian and American, especially when growing up in a Western society and culture? How does the portrayal of East Asians in popular American film and literature mold and shape their understanding of their sense of self? What are some East Asians stereotyped? How do these stereotypes fit into the ideas that popular Western culture perceives?

My primary novels are examples of Asian American authors writing about the Asian American experience and how they perceive what it means to be Asian American. The films I chose look at white American directors and producers and how they interpret Asian culture in their films. My primary and secondary research will further examine how film and literature impacts the ways in which Asian Americans view their identity, heritage, and culture. This will be done through an analyses of rhetoric and history, both Asian and American.

Key words: English, Asian American, Chinese American, American, Western, Asian, Chinese, East Asian, Asia, film, literature, media, identity, representation, heritage, ethnicity, culture, society, theory, rhetoric, criticism

Representation of a particular race and/or culture is crucial in understanding the ways in which society views that specific race, especially in terms of stereotypes. In this paper, I will be looking at how the representation of East Asian Americans through ideology and history are all based in Western construction of Asian cultures, which have been perpetuated through film and literature. Not only does the characterization and portrayal of East Asians in American media create an imagined sense of knowledge about these peoples, it also greatly influences their way of thinking and sense of self and identity within their own communities. Depicting a group of people in a way that mixes historical knowledge and ideological assumptions creates a false version of these marginalized people. With this comes a sort of reenactment of reality, a sense of understanding that was once grounded in history but has since become clouded by what ideology leads society to believe to be true. But what does it really mean to be “Asian American”? By examining depictions of history, ideas of assimilation, and geography and location, we can see how the understanding of East Asians are developing throughout Western culture and the ways stereotypes have been developed. In thinking about what “Asian American” means in America, we have to remember that what is represented in media, in particular film, is heavily impacted by the Western view of Asia. But as we watch film and read literature, we must learn how to navigate an ideology that is cloaked in Western thought, and instead look past it, breaking down the ideological order so that we may have a better understanding of the East.

I grew up going to a predominantly white school and from a young age I was frequently asked the question, “what are you?,” especially by my peers. While this question always threw me off, I would tell people that I am first and foremost a human person, and second that I am Chinese American. But there were times when students or strangers I met would automatically

describe me as “Asian American,” with no questions asked. But questions of identity, and how one identifies ethnically seemed to always appear throughout my life. Even filling out official forms for the SATs or ACTs, I had to identify what ethnicity I am and every time I would bubble in “Asian American.” For a while, a question such as “what are you” or selecting “Asian American” on a sheet would just roll off my back, but as I grew older I began to think about and consider what the connotations of the term “Asian American” really suggest. How does the term “Asian American” differ from being “Chinese American”? What comes to mind when someone describes the term “Asian American”? Is this phrase describing something real? How have society and ideology created this phrase and how has it impacted Asians living in America?

To describe one as “Asian” suggests lumping together of all Asians, without differentiating the number of countries that make up Asia. Thus, Peter Feng, author of “Being Chinese American, Becoming Asian American: *Chan Is Missing*,” describes the term “Asian American” as a “highly problematic label” because it “yokes together a continent and a nation” (Feng 89). The ways in which countries such as the United States or Britain think of who would be considered “Asian American” creates a label that does not acknowledge the diversity of the cultures that fall under the single term “Asian.” In the United States, many hear the term “Asian” and think of East Asia, while in Britain the phrase often refers to South Asians. Because of this, Feng argues that the term “Asian American” is a “political rather than a cultural designation” (Feng 90). Instead of being a culturally specific identifier, “Asian American” is an umbrella phrase used to describe a group of peoples. The term originated in the United States during the civil rights movement in the late nineteen-sixties as the transformation of racial politics began to take place. During this time, Asians in the United States began to “articulate the diversity of their

cultural and national traditions along with their shared histories of oppression” (Feng 90). They wanted to get rid of the offensive term “oriental,” opting instead to use a politically driven descriptor rather than one rooted in racism. Edward Said, a postcolonial theorist, stated that the term “Orientalism” was created by white European society in order to describe what they believed Asian culture was like. This term however, is imaginary and a slur used to define the “Other” and establish a power dynamic. According to Said, this power dynamic constructs the West, the “Occident,” as superior to the inferior East, or “Other.” By calling someone of Asian descent “oriental,” one expresses bigotry, and although “Asian American” continues to combine all Asians together, it at least does so in the service of a racial, rather than a racist logic (Feng 90).

While “Asian American” is a political label because of its generalization, Feng describes “Chinese American” as a cultural phrase due to its specificity. Feng discusses how accepting the term “Asian American” both recognizes and critiques the “externally imposed label which denies the specificity of one’s cultural heritage and defines one’s otherness in racial terms” (Feng 93). Identifying one’s self as Asian American then, is a political move (Feng 93). The phrase acknowledges the difference, the sense of being “other” that a person of color feels in a predominantly white America. However, the term does not allow for the recognition of a specific culture, as “Chinese American” would. Feng argues that “Chinese American” is a cultural label, one that acknowledges cultural heritage and specifies location. By allowing the use of “Asian American,” though, one adopts a hyphenated identity. Although the hyphen is not always written, this term preserves notions of duality and secures a binary opposition; the hyphen allows for a space that is supposed to be exceeded. The hyphen perpetuates the separation one feels

between being Asian and American, and does not allow for something whole. Acting as a bridge, the hyphen links the two terms, but also strains to hold them together and apart, denying a “creation of a stable third term in the space between the two” (Feng 93). This instability invites multiplicity and fluidity; instead of an identity that offers a sense of “being,” it is an act of “becoming.” Rather than have a solid idea of identity, “Asian Americans” feel, instead, movement; they are always changing, one thing or the other, but never both. The role of a Chinese American offers a fixed space, one that fulfills a specific role because it holds knowledge of both the Chinese culture and the American one. However, in America, many Asians, Chinese or other, must learn to navigate the culture and discover what the term “Asian American” means in understanding their identity.

In *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*, Jolivette Mecenias explores the history and ideology that have impacted the ways in which Asians Americans find their sense of self and how they acknowledge and understand stereotypes imposed on them. Mecenias also discusses feminist theorist Judith Butler and her theory of performativity, but in reference to race studies rather than gender. Mecenias uses Butler’s description of parody to explain how race and cultural identities can be warped and disrupted. Judith Butler’s theory of performativity suggests that race is itself performative; race is an act that humans put on to help describe and understand cultures that are not their own. By accepting identity through language within a pre-existing ideology, one is agreeing that race is determined by what society and ideology deem “normal.” Since race has no biological basis, one must describe it through language in the service of institutional racism. Butler’s theory questions the structure of assumptions that naturalize or legitimize hegemonic power; she criticizes and critiques those in power who have established

these modes of thinking. Using this theory, Mecenas argues that there is no true Asian American identity behind one's own articulation of one—it is constructed.

Mecenas also writes about “identity fatigue,” a term that can be used to describe the weariness brought on from prolonged exposure to others' unimaginative representations of a particular culture and/or ethnic identity. By using stereotypes to describe a specific culture further perpetuates the repetitive nature of these descriptors. As Mecenas writes, “[i]dentities are thus normalized through repetition according to the discourses that govern what constitutes legitimate and intelligible humanity—the ‘reality’ that is invoked when people desire to be ‘just like everyone else’” (Mecenas 211). Racial identity is predetermined by the ideology that is spread throughout society; the thoughts and beliefs of how a particular race should be or act are imposed on these groups of people, making them believe they must behave a certain way. Seeing the cliches and the predictable ways in which a race is represented in media such as literature and film causes minorities to believe they too must be this way in order to fit in; they must act the way the dominant culture wants them to. But, subjects are not objects that are “fixed,” and for Asian Americans they cannot simply be filed in the “model minority” stereotype and those alike. Race is constructed through language, action, stereotypes, and most of all perpetuated ideology. In media such as literature, authors and filmmakers use their Asian characters to describe and show audiences how repetitive stereotypes exhaust Asian characteristics and limit their characterization. Their culture in particular serves as an object for them to traverse as they interpret their lives as Asian peoples living in American spaces, especially as they recognize and analyze stereotypes.

In Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, she explores the idea of an Asian or Chinese identity in America. By delving into the experiences of first-generation Chinese Americans and comparing that to their mothers, Tan inspects, questions, and breaks down the stereotypes that surround what it means to be a first-generation Chinese woman growing up in America. In particular, her character, Lena St. Clair, represents the duality and confusion experienced by a person who comes from two worlds. Unlike the other characters, Lena is half Chinese, her mother born and raised in China while her father is an English-Irish American. While the other girls physically look Chinese and were raised in an environment heavily influenced by Chinese culture, Lena differs in that her facial features are ambiguous due to her mixed heritage. Her upbringing is also impacted by her father's American background. Lena herself pays special attention to her eyes, the marker of her Chinese ethnicity: "[a]nd my eyes, my mother gave me my eyes, no eyelids, as if they were carved on a jack-o'-lantern with two swift cuts of a short knife" (Tan 104). By focusing on her eyes, it is evident that Lena realizes that they are what identify her as Chinese. However, Lena also notes that many people do know about her Chinese heritage, and it is not until they "looked really close, if they knew that they were there, they could see the Chinese parts" (Tan 104). LeiLani Nishime, an author of "Guilty Pleasures: Keanu Reeves, Superman, and Racial Outing," states, "race only appears when we go looking for it. Although it seems to have an existential existence that we 'discover,' it only exists in that moment of discovery" (Nishime 277). Lena's race is visible when people go looking for it and once found, becomes hard to ignore. Race is only visible if one is put in a position that makes them "other" and physically different from the "norm." Nishime also states that racial Otherness for those who are ambiguous is a threat to the individual and their relationship to the social order because it offers

a way out of the social norms. Since multicultural people, like Lena, have the ability to cross over from a racially subcultural audience to a mainstream white one, they are left with identity struggle and abjection.

LeiLani Nishime describes the tension between claiming, exploiting, and celebrating the “outing” of a person's race. She compares this “outing” to revealing someone's sexuality; both race and sexuality are emphasized by the performativity of either their race or sexual preferences, which can be a part of defining their identities. Nishime echoes Butler’s theory of performativity, again pointing out how race is an act, one that is only evident when being compared to someone who is different, or “other.” Nishime writes about actors who are half Asian, but whose physical appearances go from ambiguous to passing as white, allowing them to be “closeted.” Those whose appearance is ambiguous, like Lena, offer the idea of someone who both fits into the norm of the dominant cultures physical characteristics, but also has features that stand out and make them look different. According to Nishime, the racial Other is not able to control how others might read them, their multiraciality causing not only themselves, but others, to question the location of their race. Nishime describes society’s take on race as skin deep, residing at the level of the visual. Physical features such as skin tone, eye shape, and hair become fetishized. For Lena, her appearance is deceiving and physically shows the blending of American and China, as she shares attributes from both parents, but in particular her mother’s Asian eyes. Both Nishime and Butler describe the performativity and physicality of race; while not based in genetics, race is found at a visible level, but only when compared to what others view as the societal norm.

The title story, “Who’s Irish?,” of Gish Jen’s *Who’s Irish?*, takes a look at a Chinese grandmother and her relationship with her half Chinese granddaughter, discussing themes of mixed race children as Tan does with Lena. The grandmother in Jen’s story, who serves as the narrator, struggles with her granddaughter Sophie’s behavior. Sophie is a rambunctious child who does not listen well to her grandmother. However, part of the difficulties the grandmother has with Sophie originate in her expectations of what she should be like because of her heritage. The grandmother thinks, “[i]n China, people say mixed children are supposed to be smart, and definitely my granddaughter Sophie is smart. But Sophie is wild, Sophie is not like my daughter Natalie, or like me” (Jen 3). Since Sophie is half Chinese and half Irish, while also being raised in America, the grandmother believes, “her nice Chinese side [is being] swallowed up by her wild Shea side” (Jen 6). Sophie is not being raised in the same environment as the grandmother and because Chinese and American cultures are so different, the grandmother is unfamiliar with the more Americanised style of raising a child. She expects Sophie to be like Natalie or herself because of her Chinese heritage, but what she does not consider is that Sophie’s Chinese background does not mean she will automatically behave like her mother and grandmother. Her race does not give her predestined traits, her behavior and personality instead influenced by language and environment. Sophie’s demeanor is not the only thing that highlights the divide between granddaughter and grandmother: her physical appearance also shapes the way the grandmother sees her granddaughter, and the way her Americanness is further defined.

The grandmother notes that Sophie “looks like mostly Chinese ... Everything just right, only her skin is a brown surprise to John’s family” (Jen 6). The fact that Sophie has a darker skin tone than her mother and father illustrates Nishime’s statement that one of the most powerful

holds that race has over society is in the way it appears physically. Since Sophie is not as pale as her white father, nor is she her mother's "brown," her parents and grandparents are surprised and confused by her pigmentation. Based on what society expects, the family thought their daughter's mixed heritage would make her coloring a combination of both cultures, not darker. While race is not based in genes, and as Nishime writes, it is instead a myth, people still believe that "race must exist since we can see it" (Nishime 276). But like Lena, Sophie's mixed heritage does not allow her to be so easily definable and fit into a concrete racial category. Her skin tone only further illustrates her Americanness, and the blending of the Chinese and American cultures. Again, growing up in an environment that is culturally different than China, the grandmother must learn how to adapt to not only the way her granddaughter is being raised, but her appearance and culture that she is now living in. Like many multicultural children, Lena and Sophie struggle to find a place where they can fit into the hegemonic notions of race. The generational gaps between mother, daughter, and granddaughter continue to expand as each new generation becomes more assimilated into the dominant culture; the more they are immersed in it, the more blended their Chinese culture becomes with their American one.

As the *The Joy Luck Club* continues, we enter into a section titled "American Translation" which illustrates the discrepancy between Chinese and American cultural traditions, especially with through the generational gap between mothers and daughters and their understanding of their identity. This section reveals Lena and Rose's insecurity and worry about their relationships, especially in relation to how they were raised as Chinese American.

'At first I thought it was because I was raised with all this Chinese humility'... 'Or that maybe it was because when you're Chinese you're supposed to accept everything, flow

with the Tao and not make waves. But my therapist said, Why do you blame your culture, your ethnicity?’ (Tan 156).

In this exchange, we can see that Rose is trying to use her ethnicity as the reason behind her behavior; since she was raised by parents who are deeply connected to their culture even though they are in America, she felt that she too had to act Chinese. However, like Judith Butler’s theory of performativity suggests, race does not equal a true identity because “Asian American identities are constructed in various ways through the act of articulation” (Mecenas 202). Rose and Lena do not have to behave a specific way to be Chinese because there is no fixed definition of the way a person of Chinese descent should act. To “be” Chinese is made up of the language the dominant cultures uses to describe a culture that is different. The girls are not Chinese because of their parents, nor do they have to fit into the mold that Americans shape for the Chinese American. Like the grandmother in “Who’s Irish?,” Rose must separate her ethnic background from her identity; being Chinese does not mean she must identify or act a specific way. As Rose’s therapist points out, she cannot blame her relationship troubles or the way she behaves and handles a situation solely on the fact that she is Chinese and was raised as such in America. Her ethnicity has nothing to do with the way handles her relationship; while her culture is a part of her identity, it is not responsible for the way she leads her life.

Tan further examines the generational gap between mother and daughter when we learn that Jing-Mei must travel back to China to meet with her half sisters after the death of their mother. An aged Ying-Ying and An-mei tell Jing-Mei that when she meets her sisters, she must tell them all about their mother, a woman they never knew. In that moment, Jing-Mei worries

that she herself barely knew her mother, and it is in this instance that Tan reveals the space that exists between mother and daughter. Jing-Mei realizes:

They see daughters who grow impatient when their mothers talk in Chinese, who think they are stupid when they explain things in fractured English. They see that joy and luck do not mean the same to their daughters, that to these closed American-born minds ‘joy luck’ is not a word, it does not exist. They see daughters who will bear grandchildren born without any connecting hope passed from generation to generation. (Tan 41)

Not only do the mothers believe that the cultural traditions and lessons they taught their daughters had not stuck, but they also realize how the Chinese culture is not as important nor as significant and symbolic as it is to them. Since they are not surrounded by the culture, they do not have the same experiences as their mothers. The girls are a bridge between American and Chinese culture; by acknowledging their Chineseness in American spaces, they are able to create a dynamic that leaves room for both social spheres, unlike the mothers, who are used to only one. However, while they are able to exist in America as Chinese Americans, with that comes the Western thought of dominance over the Eastern “other,” which is demonstrated by mimicry and stereotypes, tools used to enforce and enact symbolic violence.

When thinking about Asian stereotypes, one trope in particular comes to mind: the model minority. The model minority is most often seen in media such as film and literature through caricatures. Often, when an Asian character(s) is introduced they are characterized as being ambitious, studious, intelligent, and the geek or nerd. Stephen Hong Sohn writes about the model minority and Asian’s place in America in his essay, “Minor Character, Minority Orientalism, and the Borderlands of Asian America.” He describes how, by holding the Asian American model

minority above other racial minority groups, “[t]he model minority paradigm thus elucidates exactly how one racial group is played off and against another, reminding us of what the political scientist Claire Jean Kim calls the ‘racial order’” (Sohn 162). The model minority trope creates a hierarchy in relation to other minority groups, which pits them against one another but maintains the dominance of the white, American/European. As a model minority, one expects the Asian characters be the perfect race that has assimilated to the dominant one. However, much like the term “Orientalism,” “model minority” is a phrase that was created by the dominant, usually white, American/European culture and is not a realistic representation of a person. The model minority trope exists in media, each one using characterization and relationships between Asian characters and actors of other ethnicities in order to further highlight the sense of otherness.

In Gish Jen’s *Who’s Irish?*, her story “Birthmates” analyzes the model minority and racial hierarchy through descriptions of a relationship between an Asian man, Art, and a black woman named Cindy. The pair meet in a welfare hotel after Art is hit on the head by a group of kids. Art is introduced as nervous, timid, and unsure of how to act in this strange the environment. Cindy picks up his discomfort, telling him, “[t]his ain’t no place for a nice boy like you” (Jen 30). Art, believing Cindy and her family do not belong in the welfare hotel either, tells her this. In response to Art’s sympathy, Cindy tells him: ““But that’s how the Almighty planned it, right? You folk rise up while we set and watch”” (Jen 30). Art is bother by Cindy’s saying “you folks,” he wonders, “[w]hat folk did Cindy mean? Maybe she was just being matter-of-fact, keeping her perspective. Although, how could anyone be so matter-of-fact about something so bitter?” (Jen 31). The “folk” that Cindy is referring to is Asian Americans. Sohn writes in his essay, the “Asian American model minority can be placed against the equally racist

conception of African Americans as pathological or criminal” (Sohn 162). Both races experience quick judgment and stereotypes that place them into spaces that maintain the “racial order.” For every race, there is a pressure from society, in particular the white hegemonic culture, that pushes minorities to behave the way they are “supposed” to, or expected act. The social hierarchies are created through the continued belief in making one race appear to be better, or more successful than the other. Jen’s description of Cindy’s reaction to Art’s being in the welfare hotel further illustrates the idea of Asian Americans being “held up and above other racial minority groups” (Sohn 162). Cindy sees Art as an Asian business man, clearly a fish out of water in the predominantly black hotel. Jen is noting how Cindy acknowledges the difference in racial standing in a blunt fashion, while Art avoids acknowledgment because of his standing. Art, pressured to maintain his model minority position, continues to perpetuate the racial hierarchy, further demonstrating the dangers of racial order and stereotypes. In this way, Art also demonstrates the role of the hyperassimilated Asian American; he has become so well adjusted in his role as the model minority that he has blended into the dominant, Western ideology and continues to maintain his role as the perfect minority.

When the model minority has assimilated so well into Western culture, they have become hyperassimilated, meaning, they understand and perform just as they are expected to within the dominant society to the point of perfection. The hyperassimilated model minority, while they are ethnically different, not only blends into the dominant culture, but they also behave like them too. According to Anita Mannur, author of “Model Minorities Can Cook: Fusion Cuisine in Asian America,” the hyperassimilated Asian American is a newer stereotype, one that defines Asian Americans who are “attractive, and yuppified ... who seamlessly integrated into American

cultural life” (Mannur 78). To be accepted into the dominant ideology, Mannur also writes that the “lesser” race has to become upwardly mobile, well assimilated, and will not discuss unpleasant racial experiences. If they can do all of this, then they have “made it” in the United States. However, even if the model minority has blended in enough with the dominant, white culture, they are still Othered through the use of language, the expectations placed upon them, and the fetishization of their physical features.

Gish Jen continues to address the idea of Asian Americans being thought of as hyperassimilated in “Who’s Irish?” by looking at the relationship between Natalie and her white mother-in-law Bess. Bess tells Natalie’s mother, “I was never against the marriage, you know, she say. I never thought John was marrying down. I always thought Nettie was just as good as white” (Jen 7). Bess’s opinion of Natalie’s Chinese heritage being “just as good as white” echoes what David Palumbo-Liu suggests: that Asian Americans are somehow not seen as minorities because minorities are often thought of as people in a category of economic disadvantage into which Asian Americans do not fall (Oren 353). Since Asian Americans are expected to be perfectly assimilated into American culture, they end up fitting in so well that they are “‘within’ the white wedge” because “their consumer and taste habits ... resemble whites” (Oren 354). The hyperassimilated, or model minority is so well adjusted that their race is ignored because they can work within the white wedge and do as the dominant culture asks, however in erasing their race, their understanding of their identity gets lost. The model minority only exists in comparison to other races, especially in relation to the relationships they have with the dominant culture.

Much like the daughters in Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*, the children in Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior* experience life in America through both a Chinese and America

upbringing, a hybrid of cultures where they must learn what it means to be Asian American. As the mothers and daughters assimilate, they begin to perpetuate ideas of the model minority. In Wang's critical essay, from an Asian perspective, "Asian American, when it is perceived in Asia, suggests a distinct combination of both 'America' as a symbol of modernity and 'Asian' as a transnational metaphor of flexibility and convertibility" (Wang 141). To be "Asian American" is to have a combination of Eastern and Western cultures, the "Asian" flexibility allowing for assimilation. The "Asian" is "converted" into an American lifestyle, one that is enforced ideologically in order to maintain white dominance and structure; the Asian Other is forced to change their way of living in order to fit into the culture they have moved to. For example, Brave Orchid's daughter, who is also the narrator, notes the differences between Chinese speaking and walking to American. Because of ideology and the controlling Western thought, in order to fit in better, she thinks, "[w]alking erect (knees straight, toes pointed forward, not pigeon-toed, which is Chinese-feminine) and speaking in an inaudible voice, I have tried to turn myself American-feminine. Chinese communication was loud, public" (Kingston 11). In order to blend into American society and have her daughter most effectively assimilate, Brave Orchid decides to teach her how to be more American. By walking and talking as Americans do, Brave Orchid is setting her daughter up with lessons that will make her become the model minority. For many Asians like Brave Orchid and her family, upon coming to the United States they had to learn and change how they behaved in order to integrate into the American culture, which then made them become the model minority.

When Brave Orchid's sister, Moon Orchid, finally travels to the United States to reunite with her husband, she learns that he has hyperassimilated into American culture; he is no longer

recognizable as a man who was born and raised in China. Brave Orchid confronts him and observes, “[h]e looked at Moon Orchid. Again the rude American eyes. ‘You go live with your daughter. I’ll mail you the money I’ve always sent you. I could get arrested if the American knew about you. I’m living like an American.’ He talked like a child born here” (Kingston 153). The husband, who travelled to America as a young man eventually grew accustomed to life in the United States, assimilating and advancing in this society as a doctor. While he was not born in America, he stayed long enough to work his way into this new culture and excel. According to Wang, Moon Orchid’s husband has tapped into “the aura of *Americanity* that would shed glorious light on one’s transnational movement and upward mobility. To obtain a *huaren*/ABC identity is to possess a cosmopolitan Chinese subjectivity that is blessed with an honorary white status” (Wang 141). Although being an Asian American is still considered an outsider, the husband has managed to assimilate so well into this new culture that he no longer resembles his old. Kingston even writes, “[h]e looked and smelled like an American” (Kingston 152), and describes his suite as “western” in order to emphasize how different he is from Brave Orchid and Moon Orchid. The husband tells Brave Orchid about his time in America, stating he felt he had “turned into a different person. The new life around [him] was so complete; it pulled [him] away. You become people in a book [he] had read a long time ago” (Kingston 154). The husband got swept up in American idealism, becoming the model minority that acts and behaves as a “white” person in order to be accepted into society. Wang adds that America has always been a sign of modernity, but also an idea. America, “provides an image of modernity that is subscribed, albeit often naively, by many people in the world. What America signifies to them is a utopian dream, one that is, via imagination, accessible to and realizable for all” (Wang 138). The America that is

represented and expressed onto the world is a tempting one, an image that entices all to come and seek their ideal world. Much like Moon Orchid's husband, other immigrants come to America in search of a new life, but along the way they lose the values of their home country and instead spend so much time assimilating because of the pressure from the dominant culture that they become the very stereotypes that the dominant culture has created.

In *The Joy Luck Club*, Tan explores this assimilation and examines the idea of the model minority and the extremes that this stereotype can be stretched to, in relation to the relationship dynamic between Rose and her husband Ted Jordan and his all American family. With Ted's family, they see Asian Americans as either the model minority or yellow peril, which is the model minority pushed to extremes. Ted's mother, Mrs. Jordan, mentions to Rose the Vietnam War, and implying that, because of how unpopular the war was, it has impacted the opinions people have of those who are Vietnamese. She even tells Rose that Ted's future profession will judge him by different standards, ones that are not so understanding of racial background. With this comment, Rose tells her, "Mrs. Jordan, I am not Vietnamese," (Tan 118). Mrs. Jordan's comment outlines how ignorant she is in her understanding of Asian cultures; by assuming Rose is Vietnamese, Mrs. Jordan indicates how uneducated she is about how different the countries in Asia are and how varied their people look. Here, Mrs. Jordan demonstrates how the model minority can very quickly become the "yellow peril;" she has no problem with minorities like Asian Americans if they are quiet and do as they are told, but when they pose a threat, as during the Vietnam War, then they are a danger. Mrs. Jordan not only assumes Rose's race, but she also asserts her dominance by discussing how her son will not be allowed to associate with a woman who she believes to be a threat. Rose's identity and understanding of who she is are juxtaposed

through her experiences with her interactions with Ted, as well as her own her own American lifestyle, and her traditionalist Chinese mother.

When Rose meets Ted's family, she experiences his mother's ignorance of her race. Much like many Asian Americans who have, according to the dominant white culture, assimilated well into the culture in the United States, their race is not acknowledged unless it concerns those who are not Asian, especially in terms of relationships. LeiLani Nishime writes, "[i]f race does not have an existential reality, then it follows that race only becomes evident in difference, difference to and difference from some agreed upon norm" (Nishime 277). Rose's Asianness is evident and visible only in reference to how she is very different from Ted and his all-American, white family. Ted's mother assures Rose that "she had nothing whatsoever against minorities; she and her husband, who owned a chain of office-supply stores, personally knew many fine people who were Oriental, Spanish, and even black" (Tan 118). Mrs. Jordan's reassurance to Rose justifies her way of thinking that lumps all Asians together instead of acknowledging cultural differences. Although she tells Rose she and her husband are not judgemental of minorities, the simple fact that she is pointing out how Rose is a minority exemplifies how she is asserting her dominance. By Othering Rose, Mrs. Jordan gains more power by reducing her to a person who does not get to be culturally defined or even acknowledged within the dominant culture as something other than the "other." Rose then must continue to learn how to navigate what it means to be Asian American in a Western controlled environment, especially in understanding the stereotypes like the model minority and other depictions of Asians that surround her.

The exotic ethnic is a subset to the model minority trope and often depicted as exotic, beautiful, cool, and sexualized. Even those who are hyperassimilated are considered “ethnic” or “exotic,” which points out their physical difference, but not acknowledging their specific race or heritage. Instead, their ethnicity is seen as an optional adornment and one that is fetishized. The exotic ethnic serves as a subset of the model minority. In Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*, Lena compares her appearance to that of other women she has met. Lena thinks, “I may not be a raving beauty, but a lot of women in my aerobics class tell me I’m ‘exotic’ in an unusual way” (Tan 156). For women like Lena, who are Chinese American, they are considered attractive, but also sexualized, which renders their race invisible. Her beauty is acknowledged but not her race. For minority women especially, their physical appearances are judged, unless they are considered “exotic,” and even then their features are often sexualized. They are seen as attractive because they are racially different, their ethnicity being pointed out when compared to others. Even when this is the case, people of color are welcomed into the United States provided they assimilate to the norms and expectations of white, English speaking United States.

The “exotic ethnic” is used most often in film to depict Asian women in particular. The exotic ethnic are women who are so attractive and sexualized that their race becomes the object of sexual desire, or invisible all together. According to Mannur, sometimes their ethnicity is as an optional adornment; they can choose whether or not they want to identify as Asian, especially if doing so is to their benefit. In Mark Waters’s 2004 film, *Mean Girls*, the character Janis educates Cady on the different cliques found at their school. Two of the groups are identified as the “cool Asians” and the “Asian nerds.” These two cliques are examples of the two extremes of the model minority. The “Asian nerds” stand in for the dorky, math or science geeks whose only

care is excelling at their schoolwork, while the “cool Asians” represent the hypersexualized exotic ethnic. In addition, the “cool Asians” are almost all women, shown wearing low-cut shirts and tight-fitting clothing. One girl even lifts her shirt up to reveal a belly ring. These characters are also shown and heard only speaking Vietnamese. Although the model minority would usually be able to speak English, the “cool Asians” represent the “exotic ethnic” Asian Americans, ones whose ethnicity and foreign language make them so desirable and exotic. Within the film, it is revealed that two of the “cool Asian” girls have been having secret relationships with their gym teacher, although neither knew the other was. This relationship is treated with dark humor in the film and the audience only finds out about it after two of the main characters walk in on the gym teacher and Asian girl kissing. Their relationship highlights the inappropriate nature of an underage student having a sexual relationship with their teacher, while also perpetuating the fetishizing of young Asian woman. Combined with the lack of their English speaking skills, this relationship further exoticizes the “cool Asians.” The white gaze is enforced by the objectification and symbolic solidifying of racial hegemony. The Asian characters become passive objects, which is further enforced by the white characters inability to understand what the “cool Asians” say. For example, when the two girls who were dating the gym teacher argue with one another in Vietnamese, the other white characters are left looking lost and confused, but assume they have worked out their problems. Tina Fey’s character’s eyes widen, expressing her uncertainty before she nods and says, ““Okay. Good!,”” as if she followed what was said and that the girls resolved their issue. Although this scene is used as comic relief, it clearly shows the unwillingness for the dominant culture to try and learn to understand the Asian characters, while also making fun of the exotic ethnic by characterizing them as not knowing English. Fey’s

expression is humorous, revealing her ignorance and maintaining the Asian girls as foreigners. Since it is their race that is being sexualized, it is no wonder their language is also being exoticized. Unable to speak for themselves in a language that others would understand, the “cool Asians” are quickly ignored and attention is moved on. Because they speak in a foreign language, the “cool Asians” are misplaced and distant from the white Americans in the film.

By making the “cool Asians” speak in Vietnamese instead of English, the film is establishes the stereotypes that classify Asians as perpetual foreigners, people who never truly seem to belong or fit in Europe or America. The perpetual foreigner can be understood through Edward Said’s imaginative geography, a phrase he used to describe how American representations of Asia and its differences define and maintain the “proper” places and the balance of power between “Asia” and “America.” Imaginative geography, according to Said, is a concept of space and place that “help[s] the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away” (Roan 3). As in *Mean Girls*, the distancing of the “cool Asians” from the white characters through language intensifies the othering of the Asian characters. A white audience would then be able to better identify with the other white characters because they are more familiar, especially in speaking English. So, since the “cool Asians” speak a language that is not the dominant one, they are distanced from America and thought of as foreign.

Jeanette Roan, the author of *Envisioning Asia: On Location, Travel, and the Cinematic Geography of US Orientalism*, writes about the idea of Asians being misplaced and not accepted in America. She states, “[t]his struggle over definitions of ‘the people’ and ‘the nation’ is evident every time an Asian in the United States is asked ‘Where are you from?’ This query is founded

on the belief that the space of the United States offers no place for a racialized Asian subject, therefore, that subject must be from elsewhere and could not possibly be at home” (Roan 6). Instead of becoming a part of the dominant cultural that they can relate to, understand, and sympathize with, the perpetual foreigner remains the model minority and exotic ethnic, the only familiar role they fit into. Being the perpetual foreigner further enforces the Other, while the dominant Occident maintain their power. Postcolonial theorist Edward Said states that racialized mimicry is a strategy by the West that perpetuates colonial power and knowledge, appropriating the Other. Along with Said, Homi K. Bhabha writes that stereotypes are a template from which to perform and enact racialized mimicry to propagate representation. Together, these tools exert power, control, and symbolic domination. According to Western thought, the Other’s difference makes them inferior to the Occident. Colonial mimicry is the Occident’s imitation of aspects or aesthetics of the Other. But colonial mimicry also denies the Others grounds for articulating an identity based on difference while also attempting to appreciate the identity of the Other. So, while the Occident wants to make the Other feel subordinate and separate from themselves, they also express interest in the Other’s culture and traditions, taking them and warping them to their own advantage and interpretation. The Western lens we put on our understandings of Eastern culture and tradition are where many stereotypes originate from. Film acts as a form of visual media that shows audiences the way Westerns view people of East Asian descent. Through characterization and location, films are able to convey the relationship between the West and East have, but in a way that perpetuates the ideology surrounding Asian Americans. Both film and literature create an idea of what Asian Americans should be like, however this is all done through the Western idea of Asians.

Many Hollywood films share a theme of the Americans being protectors of the Chinese or other Asian culture. Also, Asian characters are usually included as minor characters in the film to show how they are “like us” but also nothing like us. The Asian character is normally cast as a stereotype, revealing how Hollywood is reluctant to grant Asian Americans a subjectivity beyond their stereotypes. The women are sexualized, becoming the exotic ethnic, while the men are either neutered or over masculine. The Asian American masculinity established via a long accepted codes, cues, and conventions held by Hollywood itself, creates a tension. While there is a demand for close attention to the process of representation, ideological forces continue to shape them in a mold that perpetuates stereotypes. According to Tasha G. Oren, from “Secret Asian Man: Angry Asians and the Politics of Cultural Visibility,” “[t]he melancholy of racialized people ... is often sourced in their visual erasure—the refusal or casual inability of white mainstream culture to see, to pay attention” (Oren 341). Western films, in particular Hollywood, continue to perpetuate the same plot formulas, tropes, and stereotypes regarding Asian peoples because it is what the mainstream media and audience are familiar with. For instance, many films show American actors as the saviors of the Chinese, Asian characters as the model minority, the exotic ethnic, or the villain. Films like Rob Cohen’s 2008 film, *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* and Rob Minkoff’s 2008 movie *The Forbidden Kingdom*, illustrates the “white savior” and the exoticising of China. Films are visual representations of the interaction between different cultures, races, and even locations, acting as a bridge and key tool that informs others of cultures that differ from their own. However, when Western filmmakers produce movies that deal with non-white cultures, the films will often be shown and interpreted through a

Western lens, characterizations especially being shaped by the Western understanding of a particular culture.

When Western filmmakers create a film that is influenced by Asian culture, such as style of dress, decoration, locations, or belief systems, they must learn how to negotiate between the authenticity and accuracy of the representation of Asian culture, its people, and locations because of their unfamiliarity with Eastern tradition. Often, the representations are through the Western eye, a lens that is skewed and warped so their authenticity is even further from the accuracy of a particular culture. As explained by Said's Orientalism, the representation of Asia in Western film is not realistic, but is an exaggeration and interpretation of what they believe it is like. According to Jeannette Roan, authenticity suggests a looser representation of "reality" that is presumed to have some grounding to it, while accuracy is a close proximity to "reality," whether of a distant time or place. When creating a film that is based on a specific time period, local, and with a particular group of people, the question that is often asked is how many liberties are you allowed to take? All of these details will be found in the costumes, accents, makeup, and set pieces. Often, audiences will judge and identify a movie based on these details, and will expect certain aesthetics, tropes, and stereotypes.

In Rob Cohen's 2008 film, *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*, the historical setting of the movie serves as one of the primary focuses on the film's accuracy and authenticity. *The Mummy* takes place in Shanghai, China during the nineteen forties and fifties and during the Qin Dynasty. The movie follows Brendan Fraser as Rick O'Connell, an archeologist who travels with his family to China where they unknowingly become the catalyst for the awakening of the long dead Chinese emperor, bent on taking over the world. However, the first instance of what

Roan describes as authenticity is with the emperor that they created for the film: the actor is not portraying a (once) real emperor, but one that is inspired by the real-life Qin emperor Qin Shi Huang. The emperor in *The Mummy* is named Emperor Han, the Dragon Emperor. Emperor Han, along with his army of Terracotta soldiers, are not historically accurate, instead they play on the authenticity of a particular time and political figure. Roan writes, “[p]recisely this combination of showing and telling, of offering a seemingly unmediated vision of reality while simultaneously framing and interpreting ‘reality’ in a very particular way, makes cinema a uniquely powerful medium” (Roan 107). The magic and fantastical elements in the film, such as the emperor and his army rising from the dead, further the mystical and fantastical elements of this film. It wanders away from reality and into the realm of fiction based in reality that uses Chinese culture, tradition, and even location to popularize and make sense of this fiction. Because China is a far off land that is unfamiliar to Westerners, it serves as a perfect location for a film that is based in myth and magic.

Cohen’s film acts as a classic Hollywood fantasy/adventure blockbuster, following many stereotypes but also blending aspects of Chinese culture. The location in particular is used to further exoticizes China, in particular Shanghai, by representing it as a far off land full of magic, mysticism, adventure, and mystery. While most of the filming was shot in Montreal, many scenes were also recorded in China. However, as Roan states, filming movies in the East causes its locations and aesthetics to become a sort of commodity; commodification affects the reception of mass culture and fetishizes certain elements because they look different and are seen as attractive, causing people to become interested and intrigued. While filming in China makes the locations more realistic and grounded in reality or history, it does so in a way that values it

for its aesthetic and tourist attraction and recognition. The Terracotta Army is one of the most well known tourist artifacts, and easily identifiable as part of China's history. According to Roan, Asian films eventually became known as the "Chinese mystique" because of the way American orientalism presented a "romanticized, progressive, and highly gendered image of China, the 'new China'" (Roan 113). The United States thought that through their teachings, they would be able to bring about a China that is modeled on American ideals of liberal humanism and democracy. In *The Mummy*, the use of iconic Chinese landmarks and artifacts highlights this romanticized idea of China, one that is easily identifiable to Americans and familiar enough to not be too foreign that Americans would not understand.

Filming movies in Asia popularizes Asians and their culture, using the Oriental exotica to sell tickets more effectively due to its sense of foreignness, but maintaining a predominately white cast. In *The Mummy*, even though the entire movie takes place in China, the Chinese actors are secondary characters and villains, which continues to perpetuate their role as the "other." Roan writes about Asian actors versus white ones, claiming that "[t]here exists a tension between the traits that make a star a valuable commodity and the temporal or cultural specificity of the role" (Roan). There is tension in casting decisions, and more often than not, especially in older films, the use of Caucasian actors as Asian ones further subordinates the desire for authenticity, and instead illustrates the need for famous people in a prestigious Hollywood film. Asian actors are normally secondary to their white counterparts: many films will only have Asian actors if there is a as culturally specific role for them. Rarely are Asian actors the leads instead they are supporting characters or villains. In *The Mummy*, Emperor Han is, according to Said, the "Other." While the heroes of the day are the white "Occident." As the antagonist, Emperor Han

is also seen as the archetypal enemy to the white race, a prime example of the yellow peril. As the white characters are cast as the saviors of China, the movie promotes an idea created throughout the duration of the Sino-Japanese War where “the myth of the American protector permeates pro-Chinese Hollywood films” (Chung 158), in which the “white American...heroically support, protect, or save their Chinese subordinates” (Chung 158). The O’Connell family enters China with the “paternalistic pro-Chinese sentiments of the American populace” (Chung 158-159) that echoes what went on in filmmaking during the Sino-Japanese War. Following the formula perpetuated by Western films, the white protagonists job is to save the day and defeat the evil, a thematic scheme that many Western viewers are familiar with. Along the way, this Hollywood film also uses romance to add to the plot and develop the relationship between China and America.

Helping the O’Connells defeat Emperor Han is Lin, played by Isabella Leong, who also serves as the romantic interest for Rick’s son, Alex, thus becoming the exotic ethnic. Lin and her mother, Zi Yuan, are introduced in the film as immortal sorceresses; Lin’s mother is the one responsible for imprisoning the Emperor and his army in the terracotta soldiers. However, both women are exoticized and romanticized by the men they meet and interact with throughout the film. Lin’s relationship with Alex, illustrates the idea of “interracial romance (or sexual contract) entrenched in the Orientalist imaginary of racialized and gendered others” (Chung 154). While Lin is a powerful woman, she is also shown as a mystical being who gives up her immortality to be with Alex. Although starting as an independent woman, it becomes clear through Lin’s sexualization that she and Alex would end up together. Following the typical Hollywood formula, it is difficult to see Lin act as anything other than the love interest for the white savior

and heroic foregiener of China. Like many Western produced films, the white foreigner enters Asian countries such as China and proceeds to save the day, while also presenting China as a place of exotic wonder and ancient power.

The Forbidden Kingdom, a 2008 film directed by Rob Minkoff, is an example of a Hollywood, America-centric film that exoticizes the East through Western popular culture. The interest in the Asian aesthetic is found in the notion of “Orientalism,” which Edward Said describes in his book *Orientalism*. Staring Michael Angarano as Jason Tripitikas, the film follows a teenager obsessed with martial art films. Based on the book, *Journey to the West*, which was published in China in the early 16th century, Angarano’s character, Tripitikas, is changed from being a Buddhist monk to an American teenager, Westernizing the story even more. Tripitikas frequently visits a pawn shop in Chinatown run by Jackie Chan’s character Lu Yan, and eventually gets mixed up in events that take place in Ancient China. This film, like *The Mummy*, has a white protagonist who saves the day. Said discusses the origins of Orientalism and describes the West’s obsession and interest of the “Orient” through Raymond Schwab’s interpretation. Schwab’s notion of Orientalism is, “an amateur or professional enthusiasm for everything Asiatic, which was wonderfully synonymous with the exotic, the mysterious, the profound, the seminal” (Said 51). While those in the West are curious and intrigued by the East, they do not fully understand it. They are fascinated by the exoticness, and how different Asia is from their own Western lifestyle. But, instead of learning about it from someone who is Asia, the West uses their own understanding to describe and interpret what they believe Asia is like. Cultures will try to change other cultures that are different than their own to be more like them because it is what they are familiar with and feel is the best. Said’s response to this is that

“cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be” (Said 67). The West, seeing itself as the dominant culture, will view the East as always in need of improvement or transformation in order to become like them. Western thought will represent the East as an interpretation, an idea that the West created in order to understand it; in film, the East is established as what the West they believe it is or should be. Through the use of film and location filming, the separation between the reality of the East and the idea of it is clearly evident through contrasting Eastern and Western thought, location, and characterization.

In films about the far East, juxtaposing the setting in the East versus the West impacts the viewer’s relationship to the narrative, characters, and their own relationship to the setting. According to Roan, often in earlier films, the shooting of a movie in the far East was done in order to situate the United States in the world. In Roan’s *Envisioning Asia*, she describes how American films shot in Asia produced knowledge of “Asia,” or the Asia that Americans knew and understood. These films furthered the objectification of US orientalism and produced cinema as social ideology. Viewers associate their knowledge of what Asia is like through the lens of people who are not from Asia or of Asian descent. Roan writes about these commodified differences as “highlighting the contrast between an exotic otherness and the European American norms, and functioned as a way for people to see the world and understand their place in it” (Roan 79). When filming in the East, cinema’s representation of things such as travel and transportation construct a hierarchical division of the world between Europe and America vs. the Orient. More often than not, the locations depicted in the scenes shot in the East appear more crude and exotic, nothing like what one would find in the European or American West. In the

film 2000 directed by Tom Dey, *Shanghai Noon*, the audience can see the juxtaposition between China and the Wild West in the United States. The scenes depicting both locations show clear differences in clothing, architecture, characters mannerisms, and most obviously their names.

Shanghai Noon not only brings China to the West, but fuses together these two worlds in a way that also separates the two, showing just how different the East and West are from one another, according to Hollywood.

In contemporary Hollywood, movies duplicate their own conditions of production with endless narratives where capable Asian foreigners arrive to assist the local American and then disappear to their home country. According to Tasha G. Oren, “[t]ropes and formulaic textual constructions are among the building blocks for popular mainstream culture. They are ‘built in’ to the industries’ modes of production, our genre-based expectations, and the demographically minded patterns of marketing and consumption” (Oren 341). Within *Shanghai Noon*, the film captures tropes and uses formulas from the American Western combined with Asian action and aesthetics. The movie is stereotyping and parodying both Western and Asian films, placing Chinese characters in the middle of a highly Americanized setting. However, historically, the Chinese were in the West during this time, being used as laborers on the transcontinental railroad. Within the film, Jackie Chan’s plays Chon Wang, a member of China’s Imperial Guard, who arrives in the United States to rescue Princess Pei-Pei, after she is kidnapped. Along the way he meets outlaw Roy, played by Owen Wilson. In the process of saving the Princess, Chon Wang and Roy team up, helping one another. Taking place in 1881, the film’s contrast of China and the West is shown through locations such as the Forbidden Kingdom versus the West’s desert frontier town. Aesthetically, the West is a stylized reenactment of reality, playing on tropes such

as saloons, cowboys, outlaws, and Native Americans. In China, the aesthetics are much more subdued and traditional to China's dynasty. While Chon Wang is in America he later becomes known as the "Shanghai Kid," which others him by calling out his ethnicity and its difference from Roy and other cowboys which bring race into visibility as Nishime writes. The portaryl of Chon Wang clearly identifies him as the perpetual foreigner; he does not fit into Western society, his behavior, dress, kung fu fighting style, and even his long braided hair contrasts dramatically with the Western aesthetic. Both the Asian culture and old Western depiction plays off "[f]ormulaic repetitions and clichés" (Oren 341). As Oren suggest, the aesthetics are present because "they are presumed to tap into a cultural imaginary (that amorphous collection of images, frames of reference, textual knowledge, and collective experience that together make up the closest thing to a shared symbolic alphabet through which we make meaning out of culture" (Oren 341). *Shanghai Noon* introduces audience to both American and Asian cultures in a way that juxtaposes the two cultures while also creating a hybrid representation. China and America's most iconic and conventional characteristics and aesthetics are blended together, their stereotypes acting as tools to progress the story. The film shows interpretations of what each culture is like, and by using location as a sort of character itself, the audience is given a physical representation of the cultural difference and mix.

My experience with the way film and literature represent Asians and Asian Americans has changed as I have grown older. When I was younger, I did not notice the stereotypes, such as the model minority, yellow peril, or exotic ethnic, that were so regularly used to depict Asian characters. Often, I was just happy to see another person in a movie that was Asian or to read about a young Chinese girl in a book. It was not until I grew older that I began to understand

how typecasted Asian actors are and how familiar their characterizations have become; I could almost predict what the Asian characters would do or say next, their roles were so easily identifiable. Personally, these stereotypes have had an impact on me throughout my life, especially the model minority. Throughout school I was asked about math homework, frequently assumed or joked that I would be a genius when it came to this subject matter. For a while these comments bothered me, and I did not quite understand why they were being made. After writing this paper, I have come to understand the background of this stereotype, and many others, why it they have become so regularly used. Writing this thesis has been therapeutic in a way, helping me to learn more about Western ideology concerning Eastern Asia and understanding the choices authors and filmmakers make when creating Asian characters. Phrases such as the “perpetual foreigner” and hyperassimilation were not expressions I was familiar with until doing research, but I now can understand and put a name to the reasons why many Asian characters in Western films speak in their native language or are often represented as “model” minorities. Writing this paper has helped me in understanding my ethnicity in relation to my location, environment, and most importantly others.

The presentation of East Asians has been widely spread, accepted, and perpetuated throughout film and literature because of the institutionalized and ritualistic rendering of these ideas, which naturalises them into culture. Based in the understanding and interpretation of Asian culture through a Western lens, the portrayal of Asians in literature and film are far from a realistic depiction of them. Stereotypes are all tropes created by the West that are used in order to describe Asians and help Westerners to better understand Eastern culture and traditions. But

these traits do not paint a clear or true picture of Asian Americans, rather they represent caricatures of them; there is more to Asian Americans than these descriptions have to offer.

Works Cited

- Chung, Hye Seung. "Between Yellowphilia and Yellowphobia: Ethnic Stardom and the (Dis)Orientalized Romantic Couple in *Daughter of Shanghai* and *King of Chinatown*." *East Main Street: Asian American Popular Culture*, edited by Shipla Davé, LeiLani Nishime, and Tasha G. Oren, New York University Press, 2005.
- The Forbidden Kingdom*. Directed by Rob Minkoff, Lionsgate and The Weinstein Company, 2008.
- Feng, Peter. "Being Chinese American, Becoming Asian American: 'Chan is Missing.'" *Cinema Journal*, vol. 35, no. 4, Summer 1996.
- Jen, Gish. *Who's Irish?*. Alfred, A. Knopf, Inc., 1999.
- Mannur, Anita. "Model Minorities Can Cook: Fusion Cuisine in Asian America." *East Main Street: Asian American Popular Culture*, edited by Shipla Davé, LeiLani Nishime, and Tasha G. Oren, New York University Press, 2005.
- Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. Vintage International Edition, 1975.
- Mean Girls*. Directed by Mark Waters, Paramount Pictures, 2004.
- Mecenas, Jolivette. "Beyond 'Asian American' and Back: Coalitional Rhetoric in Print and New Media." *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*, edited by LuMing Mao and Morris Young, Utah State University Press, 2008.
- The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*. Directed by Rob Cohen, Universal Pictures, 2008.
- Nishime, LeiLani. "Guilty Pleasures: Keanu Reeves, Superman, and Racial Outing." *East Main Street: Asian American Popular Culture*, edited by Shipla Davé, LeiLani Nishime, and Tasha G. Oren, New York University Press, 2005.

Oren, Tasha G. "Secret Asian Man: Angry Asians and the Politics of Cultural Visibility." *East Main Street: Asian American Popular Culture*, edited by Shipla Davé, LeiLani Nishime, and Tasha G. Oren, New York University Press, 2005.

Roan, Jeannette. *Envisioning Asia: On Location, Travel, and the Cinematic Geography of U.S. Orientalism*. The University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, 1978.

Shanghai Noon. Directed by Tom Dey, Buena Vista Pictures, 2000.

Sohn, Stephen Hong. "Minor Character, Minority Orientalisms, and the Borderlands of Asian America." *Cultural Critique*, vol. 82, Fall 2012, pp. 151-185

Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1989.

Wang, Chih-ming. "Thinking and Feeling Asian American in Taiwan." *American Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 1, Mar. 2007, pp. 135-155.