

Asian Stereotypes in American Films

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Movies are one of the entertainments that have a great influence on our society, but unfortunately, many films distort reality and offer simplistic pictures of the world divided into good and bad. Asian characters in 1920s American films were stereotypical villains. But they were often played by white actors. "Whitewashing," which is to cast white actors for non-white roles (Brook), is a serious problem in the American film industry and race affects actors' appearance in films. Statistics show that in the 100 top films of 2014, 73.1% of actors are white, 4.9 % are Hispanic, 12.5 % are black, 5.3 % are Asian and 4.2 % are other (McClure)). For decades, leading roles in Hollywood have been dominated by white actors while the criminals in movies are often played by people of color. Hollywood has been criticized for casting actors racially. This is not only dominance by white actors, but also stereotyping of non-white characters with Asian Americans. Asian characters were often the villains, especially Chinese and Japanese men from the 1900s to the 1940s, but many Asian actors still get stereotyped roles. "We're the information givers. We're the geeks. We're the prostitutes," said a Thai

American actor, Pun Bandhu in an interview (Levin). Asian actors rarely get leading roles while white actors are cast for Asian stories. When they do get roles; they are frequently tech nerds, assistants, yakuza, and doctors, sometimes desexualized. As for Asian women, they often get roles that are submissive, quiet or fragile, such as prostitutes. Through the decades, especially in the 1920s, a lot of films which portrayed Asian people stereotypically came out. In fact, Asian Americans protested against the media during the middle of the 1960s and 1970s for the stereotypical portrayal. Also, it is true that those Asian images can connect to hate crimes such as the Murder of Vincent Chin, which occurred on June 19th, 1982 (Matano).

This essay focuses on stereotypes of Chinese and Japanese men and women in American films made from the 1910s to the 1960s. Asian stereotypes in films reflect society, and so the purpose of this essay is to explain why Asian stereotypes were created. First, I will explain the background of Chinese immigrants and stereotyped Chinese characters. Second, I will explain the portrayal of an Asian man and a white woman's relationship in *The Cheat* (1915). Third, I will explain why Asian women started to be portrayed as Dragon Ladies and prostitutes and take examples of these stereotypes from *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924) and *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960). Fourth, I will explain the portrayal of the Japanese military in World War movie *Gung Ho!* (1943). Lastly, I will explain different stereotypes such as foreigners and desexualized characters that can often be seen on TV and films today with *The Hangover* (2009).

It is starting to be common to see Asian actors in Hollywood and other films such as *The Maze Runner* (2009) and *Pacific Rim* (2013). But their roles are still somewhat limited. Some historical events affected Asians and the portrayals of Asian Americans as evil and dangerous in American films from the 1920s to 1940s. It still influences Asians and Asian Americans today. According to Nadra Kareem Nittle in "What Is the Meaning of Stereotype?" stereotypes are thoughts, beliefs or prejudices about race, nationality, and sexual orientation that permeated groups of people and several people are labeled by stereotypes (Nittle).

Asian immigration led to negative images in the United States starting in the 1800s. In 1850, over 1,000 Asians came to the United States. In particular, numerous Chinese came between 1849 and 1882, 1882 and 1965, and 1965 to the present to look for a better life or work and send money back to China to support their poor families. At that time, America was a land of hope and freedom from living a brutal life. But the most important reason for Chinese immigration was because the period after the Opium War was a time of economic downturn; Britain dominated China after Britain defeated China in Opium War of 1839 to 1842 (Luo). After the war, unemployment became an issue. According to the website *Opium War*, the war led to the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, which included the opening of 5 treaty ports up to foreign consuls, businessmen, and missionaries in Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai. When Shanghai opened up for foreign trade, the boatmen who worked transporting

goods from other areas to Canton lost their jobs. While tea and silk industries were favorable, other industries became unprofitable. It made the farmers switch to producing tea or silk from producing food. Because of this, the price of food rose. Textile workers also lost their jobs because homemade textiles that were produced in China could not compete with machines that made textiles from the west. Textile industries reduced the price so that they could compete with western goods, but the cost of production was the same (Goldfinger). As a result, by 1860, there were 34,933 Chinese in the United States ("Population of Chinese in the United States 1860-1940"). They worked in wool mills, cigar, shoe and garment industries. After the Gold Rush of 1849, they went to the West Coast and about 15,000 Chinese were hired on The Central Pacific Railroad Company and they helped to build the transcontinental railroad from 1864 to 1869 ("Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)"). They were called "coolies." Also, many Chinese and Japanese went to Hawaii as contract laborers to work on sugarcane plantations. The Chinese also worked as merchants, gardeners, laundry workers, and farmers, starting in 1865. They were hired because of their willingness to work for low wages. At The Central Pacific Railroad Company, Chinese workers were the majority. When the rail road was finished in 1869, many Chinese returned to farming. They settled in Delta, Mississippi growing fruits and vegetables. By 1870, Chinese immigrants made up 45 % of all farm laborers in Sacramento County, California ("Chinese Workers and the Building of the California Levees, 1860-1880"). The economy became worse in the

years following the Civil War and competition for jobs started to intensify among Americans and immigrants. Because of this, some laws were enforced to restrict Chinese immigration.

At that time, Americans thought Asians would dominate the US economy because Asians successfully worked hard, which turned into Americans' fear later. Their fear developed into the phrase, "yellow peril" in 1895. "Yellow peril" means "a danger to Western civilization held to arise from expansion of the power and influence of eastern Asian peoples" (Merriam-Webster). It was popular in the late 19th century in America and Europe. The origin of this phrase goes back to the 1880s. According to the author of *Yellow Peril!*, John Kuo Wei Tchen, German Kaiser Wilhelm had a dream that Buddha was riding a dragon storm to invade Europe. In 1895, he asked a painter, Hermann Knackfuss, to paint his dream and the painting was titled "Yellow Peril 'Peoples of Europe, Defend Your Hooliest Possessions' " (Tchen and Yeats 12).

Chinese immigrants' situation started to become worse. Chinese immigrants were discriminated against by law. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress. It lasted for 10 years and was made permanent in 1902. It defined what Chinese could and could not do. For example, Chinese non-laborers were required to get notification from the Chinese government that they were qualified to enter the United States. But it was difficult to prove that they were non-laborers because the Chinese Exclusion Act defined the terms as "skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese employed in mining ("Chinese Exclusion

Act (1882)," Our Documents). Therefore, there were very few Chinese who could enter America under the law. What is more, they were not allowed to get citizenship because Congress did not allow State and Federal courts to grant citizenship to them. The Geary Act, which extended The Chinese Exclusion Act, regulated Chinese immigration until the 1920s. It also required all Chinese residents in the United States to carry a certificate of residence. If they did not, they would be deported or put in jail as a punishment ("The Geary Act (1882)").

In addition to the laws, "yellow peril" propaganda started to appear in images. Asian images in magazines often told Americans that Asians were negatively influencing the US economy and increasing crime. Images of Chinese men often portrayed them as barbaric and threatening. The claw-like hands were common in some of the images and they became the most common stereotypes of "evil" Chinese ("Anti-Japanese Propaganda in WW "). An image called "Martyrdom of St. Crispin," painted by Thomas Nast, was published in a news magazine, Harper's Weekly on July 16th, 1870. Two Chinese workers stand behind a shoe cobbler and carry sabers that say "Cheap Labor" on the blades (Walfred). This image told Americans that it was dangerous to allow Chinese workers into the country. Another image entitled "The Yellow Terror in All His Glory" was published in 1899. It showed a Chinese man killing a white woman.

During World War II after the US entered in 1941, Japan was



Fig. 1. "The Yellow Terror in His Glory."

Source: "The 50 Most Racist Political Cartoons"



Fig. 2. "Martyrdom of St. Crispin."

Source: "Martyrdom of St. Crispin '16 July 1870"

an enemy of the US because of Pearl Harbor, so anti-Japanese propaganda posters started to appear. Japanese soldiers were portrayed exaggeratedly and the images told Americans that Japanese were dangerous enemies. The "Tokio Kid Say" series was one of the most famous. It was drawn by Jack Campbell and published by Douglas Aircraft Company (Online Archive of California). One showed a Japanese soldier that had buckteeth, small eyes and single eyelid with a bloody knife and wore round glasses, saying "Much waste of material make so-o-o-o happy! Thank you."

The images of "yellow peril" propaganda shaped American attitudes, and "yellow peril" from print media propaganda started to appear in films. From the 1910s to the 1940s, Hollywood films created "inscrutable Oriental" stereotypes. Asian characters in

American films showed that Asians were exotic foreigners and different from Caucasians by using makeup, costume, and performance. The most common Asian characters in Hollywood films spoke in broken English, had narrow eyes and did evil acts. Asian American actors never played leading roles, but supporting roles such as house



Fig. 3. "Tokio Kid Say"
Source: "Anti-Japanese Propaganda
in World War II"

boys, laundry workers, cooks and other characters (Benshoff and Griffin 116). Asian characters frequently appeared as villains in crime thrillers and mystery films and were played by white actors, so called "whitewashing." When it came to an Asian leading role, Hollywood almost always cast a white star. The exaggerated makeup "yellowface" continued in Hollywood into the 1960s and 1970s, which is an example of Orientalism. Orientalism is a theory popularized by Edward Said in 1978, which is a term that Europe and Western culture defined itself by creating image of the Orient (Benshoff and Griffin 117). One of the most well known stereotypes is Dr. Fu Manchu. Fu Manchu is a Chinese man who has a mustache, and wears a long Chinese clothes. He can use hypnotism and wants to conquer western world. The first appearance of Fu Manchu was in a book, *The Zayat Kiss* (1912), which was written by a British

novelist Sax Rohmer (1883-1959). It would be repurposed as the first three chapters of Rohmer's novel *The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu* of 1913. *The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu* was first adapted to film in 1923 in the United Kingdom, and in the following year *The Further Mysterious Fu Manchu* was released. In the US, *The Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu*, directed by Rowland V. Lee was released in 1929. After this, *The Return of Fu Manchu* (1930) and *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931) were released (Finnan). In the same year as the writer passed away, 1956, Republic Pictures subsidiary Hollywood Television Service produced the 13 episode series on the NBC network in the United States. Later, in 1965, *The Face of Fu Manchu* was released. Manchu was played by Christopher Lee, who later played Manchu in *The Blood of Fu Manchu* (1968) and *The Castle of Fu Manchu* (1969). Surprisingly, in 2015, a short film directed by Kyle Kelly, *Fu Manchu Ch. 13 Watch Your Step* was made. In this way, Fu Manchu series was a trend through decades.

Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu of 1929 is set in China during the Boxer Rebellion. A British man sends his daughter whose name is Lia Eitham to his friend, Fu Manchu, for safety. Meanwhile, a British regiment fires on Manchu's house killing his wife and son. When Eitham grows up, he uses her as a revenge to kill the British army officers. There are three subjects in this movie. First, all the actors are not Asian except Fu Manchu's son. Fu Manchu was played by a Swedish actor, Warner Oland, who also played in *The Return of Fu Manchu* (1930) and *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931). He also wore yellowface makeup and a mustache

and spoke in broken English. Manchu's maid, Fai Lu, was played by Evelyn Selbie, who was a Caucasian American actress. Manchu's henchman, Lio Po, was played by an American actor, Noble Johnson (Ashlin). Again, this is whitewashing. Second, Manchu is portrayed as inhuman. He sends a dragon card with a box to his targets. In the box, there is gas and when they open it, they die. There is no scene where Manchu kills people directly in the movie such as by physical violence or shooting, rather he uses Eitham and his henchman to kill the British officers. This reinforces the images of Asians as tricky and sly. Finally, by making the audience sympathize with Dr. Jack and Eitham, the film makes Manchu look more villainous. Dr. Jack Petrie is the grandson of General Petrie who has been killed by Manchu. Manchu commands Eitham to kill Dr. Jack with a "guest" tea that has poison in it. But she loves him and refuses to do this, so she replaces it with Manchu's tea secretly, while Manchu is looking away. Eitham and Dr. Jack love and want to stand by each other, which makes people feel sorry for them and hate Manchu.

Another stereotyped character is Charlie Chan, which was created by an American author, Earl Derr Biggers. Charlie Chan was a Chinese American detective and a member of the Honolulu police force. According to Yunte Huang, an English professor at the University of California, Charlie Chan was based on a real Chinese policeman, Chang Apana. He worked as a Hawaiian cowboy and in 1898, the same year as the United States officially annexed Hawaii, he joined the police force ("Investigating The Real Detective Charlie Chan"). Chan was as popular as Fu

Manchu and there were also the Charlie Chan series of movies. Biggers published *The House Without a Key* in 1925. In the following year, it was adapted as a film. In the same year as the film was released, the author published *The Chinese Parrot*. In 1927, it was also adapted to film. After that, he wrote another four books about Charlie Chan and three of them became films. In total, there are over 50 films about Charlie Chan. From 1957 to 1958, *The New Adventures of Charlie Chan* made by Vision Productions (the first 5 episodes) was syndicated and broadcast on television. Even though Charlie Chan was a hero, he embodied the stereotype of the inscrutable Chinese characters.

There is criticism of the series. First, Charlie Chan was never played by an Asian actor. The Swedish actor, Warner Oland was famous in his roles as not only Fu Manchu but also as Charlie Chan. After Oland passed away, the American actor, Sidney Toler, played him in a series of low-budget films and both of them wore "yellowface" makeup and spoke in broken English. Second, even though he was educated very well, he would make cryptic quips that implied both sayings of Chinese philosopher Confucius and predictions of fortune cookies (Benshoff, Griffin 121). This also reinforced the inscrutable stereotype. Finally, Chan's Chinese heritage was not really dealt with in the films. His home life was portrayed not so much and his sons, who tried to be involved in his investigations, seemed to exist for comic relief.

In addition to creating negative stereotypes, American silent films produced some narratives of love between Asian men and

white women. Before The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930, which forbade international relations on screen was written, many American films sensationalized romance between Asian men and white women, especially in the early 1900s. For example, *Broken Blossoms* (1919), which was based on Thomas Burke's short story, *The Chink and the White Girl* from his 1916 collection, *Limehouse Nights*, directed by D.W. Griffith portrayed the tragic love story of a Chinese man and a white woman. In the film, the Chinese man is referred as "The Chink", which is a discriminatory term for "Chinese", but it was common in the early 1900s. The Chinese man, Cheng Huan, was played by a white actor, Richard Barthelmess, again, wearing "yellowface" make up. In the film, Huan goes to London to spread the teachings of peace by Buddha and meets a girl named Lucy Burrow who has been abused by her father. He falls in love with her, but when her father beats her, she dies. After this, he kills himself. It is a tragic story of an impossible love, but also this film tells audience that mixed race relationships end in disaster (Benshoff and Griffin 118).

The most famous and critical movie that portrayed a relationship between an Asian man and white woman is a silent melodrama called *The Cheat* (1915), directed by Cecil B. DeMille. The Asian man was played by Sessue Hayakawa, who often played leading roles in romance movies, which is a rarity. He played a Japanese business man, Hishituru Tori (Haka Arakau in re-released version of the film in 1918). In the story, Edith Hardy is the socialite wife of Richard Hardy, a stockbroker. Their

friend, Jones tells Edith that he will invest in United Copper and pay the investment back to her the doubled price. So, she steals \$10,000 from fund of the Red Cross and gives it to him. But the next day, she learns that United Copper has gone belly-up and she has lost the \$10,000. Also, the Red Cross official tells her that he will present the \$10,000 to representatives of the Belgium government. So, she visits Arakau and takes his check. The next day, she gets \$10,000 from her husband, telling a lie to him. She tries to pay it back to Arakau, but he refuses it. Then he starts to do something to her that makes her scared. So, Edith shoots him and it leads to a trial. But Hardy pretends to be the suspect for Edith.

In this film, Arakau embodies "Oriental" stereotypes. Firstly, the lighting and properties in Arakau's room make him look uncanny. It is semi dark in the room and there is a small statue of Buddha. They make the room look strange and the darkness and shadows have an effect in the film. Secondly, Arakau smiles mysteriously when someone is in a bad situation. In the beginning, he looks like a good man, smiling nicely. But when Jones tells Edith that her \$10,000 is gone, Arakau sees them, smiling with a mysterious smile on his face. He is glad because he can approach her and offer her help. Also, in the trial scene, when Richard is questioning the defendant and Edith sees him anxiously, Arakau sees her, smiling in a mysterious face again. This smile is one of the things that makes him look more like a villain. Lastly, his most infamous act, he puts a hot iron on Edith's shoulder as he puts it on his belongings. When Edith tries to es-

cape, he grabs her, telling his henchman to lock the doors and go. Then he forces her to put it on her shoulder as a symbol of his sexual ownership. Asian men and white women's relationships tended to be not happy ending in this era's movies.

Not only Chinese American men but also Chinese American women actresses played stereotyped characters. One of them is the Dragon Lady. It is a term that describes Asian women who are "inherently scheming, untrustworthy, and back-stabbing" (Larson 70). The origin of the word is a 1934 comic strip, *Terry and the Pirates*, created by Milton Caniff. In the comic, the Dragon Lady known as Madame Deal, an evil Asian pirate is stereotypically portrayed as beautiful, and seductive. She was based on a real Chinese pirate in 20th century, Lai Choi San. The expression "Dragon Lady" started to be used and became common in the 1930s, but before this, representations of Asian women as Dragon Ladies in films started in the 1920s. Newspapers wrote about a Chinese woman, Tzu-hsi. She was a Chinese Empress from 1861 to 1908 who ruled the country. A journalist stated that she was "a reptilian dragon lady who arranged the poisoning, strangling, beheading, or forced suicide of anyone who challenged her rule." (Gareia) As a result, Hollywood thought the Dragon Lady would be a great idea and took the concept of the Dragon Lady into films.

The first appearance of the Dragon Lady stereotypes was in a silent film, *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), directed by Raoul Walsh. The Mongol slave, played by a Chinese American actress, Anna May Wong, embodied the Dragon Lady stereotype. In the

story, a thief named Ahmed played, by Douglas Fairbanks, sneaks to a palace to steal treasure, but when he discovers a princess, played by Julanne Johnston, he falls in love with her. He pretends to be a prince and the princess comes to like him, but he starts to feel guilty. He reveals to a Holy Man, played by Charles Belcher, what he has done. Man sends him to find a magic chest. After he gets it, he uses its powers to save the princess.

The Mongol slave girl is portrayed as mysterious and inscrutable in the film. First, the Mongol slave girl is a contrast to the princess' innocence. The Mongol slave's costume is exotic while princess is dressed in a white long dress. The Mongol slave wears a short bandeau top and very short pants and a covering like an apron. Her costume is different from other two slave girls. She reveals her skin the most that she stands out clearly from other two slave girls. When Ahmed threatens her by pointing a knife at her back, the knife draws audience her naked skin. This suggest a sexual threat. Second, she poisons the princess twice. First, she puts drugs into the incense and it starts to produce poisonous gas. Then, she fans it towards the princess so that the princess will breathe it in. The princess loses consciousness. Soon after this, the Mongol slave girl poisons her again. When she does this, she looks around, making sure that no one sees her, which she looks mysterious and an evil figure. This scene shows a contrast between the Mongol slave and the princess, suggesting that Asian women are "bad." They are enemies of white women and white women are "good." Lastly, the Mongol slave is

a spy of a Mongol prince who is a villain and one of the suitors of the princess. The Mongol prince, Cham Shang wants to marry her and control Bagdad and the Mongol slave is his ally. When the Mongol prince realizes he's lost, he commands his guard to cut off his neck. When his neck is about to be cut off by his guard, the Mongol slave stops it and suggests the Mongol prince escape with the princess using a magic carpet, which prince of India has found. She just serves and help him become the prince, of the princess and take the city.

Another Asian women's stereotype is the China Doll. China Doll means Asian women who are "supposedly sexually active, exotic, overly feminine and eager to please" (Mahdzan and Ziegler). The current views about Asian women are rooted in the history of Asian women's immigration to the United States. After Chinese men entered the United States themselves alone first, some Chinese women also came to the US and immigrated with their children. Around 1850, there were only seven Chinese women in San Francisco (Randall). In 1852, only four Chinese women were recorded as prostitutes, but in 1870, 2,157 out of 3,536 Chinese women who lived in California were recorded as prostitutes (Randall). Through the 1850s, Chinese women were also represented negatively in the press although there was a small number of Chinese women in the US. An article published in the Daily Alta California in 1852 stated that Chinese women in California were queer and diminutive specimens of the human family. In 1854, the municipal committee in San Francisco reported that most Chinese women in the city were prostitutes and

this became the general conviction. In 1858, an article in Harper's Weekly described Chinese women they had grotesque hairstyles, bound feet, and manner of dress (Randall). In 1875, Congress passed the Page Law, which prohibited Chinese, Japanese and other Asian women from immigrating to the United States as prostitutes. Medical experts, politicians, and anti-Chinese groups continued to argue that corruption and contamination were caused by Chinese prostitutes. By 1880, the number of Chinese women decreased to 3,171 and 759 Chinese were listed as prostitutes. On the other hand, between 1880 and 1890, a small number of Japanese women came to the US as picture brides. Brides in Japan and grooms in America exchanged photos of themselves before agreeing to marry. However, within a few decades, many Japanese men started to take their wives with them to the US. In 1900, there were 985 Japanese women in the US. The US allowed Japanese women to join their husbands in The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 and 1908. By 1910, there were 38,303 Japanese women in the US (Randall). Americans used the Japanese custom of importing picture brides to indicate the differences between Japanese and white culture. This custom led to a wrong belief that many of the women who immigrated as picture brides were prostitutes. From 1910 to 1921, more than one-third of Japanese marriages were by picture bride system (Randall). As same as Chinese women, opposition to Japanese immigration focused on the problem of Japanese prostitution and picture brides raised anti-Japanese sentiment.

One famous movie that portrayed the China Doll lady is The

World of Suzie Wong, directed by Richard Quine. A British author, Ricard Mason, wrote *The World of Suzie Wong*, and it was adapted as a film in 1960 in the United States. In the story, an American architect Robert Lomax, played by William Holden, moves to Hong Kong to be an artist. He meets a young single mother, Mei Ling, played by Nancy Kwan, who later calls herself Suzie Wong. She tries to get him arrested on purpose for stealing her purse, but the cop tells her that she has misunderstood and they go to their different ways. Because Lomax has limited money, he finds an inexpensive hotel in Wan Chai known for prostitution. He happens to see Ling there again and falls in love with her. Due to a flood, her baby son dies. Later, Lomax proposes to her. It is an international romance between a Chinese woman and a white man.

This movie also has negative sides. Peter Feng, a professor at the University of Delaware, describes the movie as "classic racist and sexist context" (Shimizu, 78). First, the Chinese woman, Suzie Wong, is portrayed as a prostitute who is sexually alluring and pleasing to white men. For example, Suzie Wong charms every American man when she talks with them. At the beginning of the film, in a bar where a lot of American men gather, Wong who dressed in Chinese dress asks Robert Lomax if he's looking for a girlfriend approaching him and says, "I'm here for a whole month." But when Lomax answers he's not, she goes to another American man and kisses him. When she talks with a co-worker of Lomax, Ben, she asks, "You like me?" and allures him. Lomax calls her to model for a painting in his room. She

asks, "Take clothes off?" When he responds that he's never done it before, she says, "Good time to try." Because of the Chinese dress, when she's sitting on the bed to be painted by Lomax, it looks like she is alluring him and there is an element of exoticism in the scene. Second, Wong tries to make Lomax jealous. When Wong gets beaten up by an American sailor, she shows her bloody lips off to the girls as a token of Lomax's jealousy. Despite the fact that Lomax punches the sailor for revenge and takes care of Wong's wound, she pulls blood out of her mouth and goes to the bar to show off the wound saying, "Robert, he beat me up. He's jealous." In another scene, when she is asked by Ben to be his girlfriend, she asks Lomax if it is a good idea even though she knows he likes her. Later, she tells him that Ben will take her to England with him and says, "He's good to me. I'd never had a man who's good to me before."-- as if it meant Lomax was not a good man despite the fact that he had taken revenge on the sailor for her and taken care of her wound. Lastly, Wong is portrayed as submissive. She prioritizes her man's desire and is regarded as more feminine compared to an aggressive white woman. The English woman exploits her rich father to bankroll Lomax's dream as an artist and as a possible husband while Wong tries to support him with her earnings. When Lomax proposes to her at the end of the film, she says, "I'll follow you until you say 'Suzie, go away,'" which makes her look subservient woman. She swears to dedicate herself to him.

During the World War II, Japanese men were also portrayed as villains because Japan was an enemy of the US. After Japan

attacked the US at Pearl Harbor in 1941, the stereotype of sly characters was then toward Japanese military and propaganda films started to come out. *Gung Ho!* (1943), directed by Ray Enright, is one of the movies that presents the Japanese military as sly characters. In the story, seven weeks after Pearl Harbor, the United States Marine Corps seeks volunteers for raiding Japanese-held islands. A large number of men volunteer and train for the combat. After the training, the men head to Makin Island where their mission is to attack the Japanese garrison. There are four subjects in the film. First of all, some of the American military's reasons why they want to join the combat are hatred of Japanese people and show Japanese people are terrible. Lieutenants ask the men, why they want to join the raid battalion. When a lieutenant asks Rube Tedrow (Rod Cameron) "Why do you wanna kill japs?" Tedrow responds, "Sheffield's in the war. Why I wanna get into this is just I wanna kill more Japs." Another man says, "My brother died at Pearl Harbor. They didn't find enough of them to bury." A Filipino man says, "My sister was caught by the Japanese. We never heard a word from her, but we're reading the newspapers what they did." The other man says, "I just don't like Japs." Second, the Japanese military is not played by Japanese. They were played by Filipinos and Chinese. There are some scenes, which they speak Japanese, but it is not clear what they are saying. Third, the words of American military is racist: "Monkeys will run over you." "The Japs have blasted now. We're just drawing those monkeys." Several times, the Japanese men are called "monkeys."

A lieutenant commands the men saying, "Seize it and kill every Jap and destroy the installations." "By sunset, all our missions must be carried out. Not a jap alive on the island." They have much hatred toward Japanese that their mission is to kill the Japanese military. Finally, the Japanese military is portrayed as sly. During the combat, 'Pig-Iron' Matthews is taken care of by two companions. The two Americans leave him to see what is going on. But there is a Japanese man lying on the ground and pretending he is dead. He awakes and tries to shoot from behind. But Matthews notices him and throws a knife to his back. The two Americans are saved. In other scene, three Japanese men come saying "Don't shoot please. We surrender." So, one of the two American men goes to see them without shooting. But suddenly, one of the Japanese men, who has put guns on his back squats down and the other two Japanese men shoot the American man. In this way, Japanese military is portrayed as sly in the film.

In the 2000s, despite the fact that Asians have become a growing minority in the US, they are often stereotyped as exotic people. According to 2010 Census Bureau data, over 17 million people are identified as Asians or Asian Americans, which is 5.6% of the US population ("Asian Population - US & State Data"). "Where are you 'really' from?" This is a question that Asian Americans are likely to be asked. Assuming all Asians are from abroad is one of the assumptions that perpetuate the stereotype that Americans are always white (Iwamoto and Liu). Asian men often play roles as doctors, nerds, housekeepers and desexualized

roles, and some Asian American actors like Masi Oka, and Daniel Dae Kim play foreigners instead of Americans on TV and in films. In addition, Asian stereotypes in the 1920s can still be seen in American films of the 2000s, such as villains, and exotic foreigners. One of the big hits, *The Hangover* (2009), directed by Todd Phillips, portrays those and the 2000s Asian stereotype, the desexualized character. In the story, Philip Wenneck (Bradly Cooper), Dr. Stuart Price (Ed Helms) and Alan Garner (Zack Galifianakis) wake up from a bachelor party in Las Vegas. They realize the bachelor, Doug Billings (Justin Bartha), is missing, so they go to look for him. The Chinese characters who appear in the movie are Leslie Chow, played by Ken Jeong, and his henchmen, played by Ian Anthony Dale and Michael Li.

There are three subjects in the film. First, they are the villains who are gangsters. When Wenneck, Price, and Garner are in a patrol car they have stolen, the two Chinese henchmen appear and suddenly start hitting the patrol car's front windshield with a bat and ask them where Leslie is. Then one of them threatens them with a gun. Because they start to drive when he threatens them, the patrol car runs over his foot and he shoots a person by mistake. When the three main characters open the trunk of Billings' car thinking the one who knocks is Billings, a naked Chow jumps out of the trunk and get on Wenneck's shoulders. Then he immediately starts to hit him with a pipe. The gangsters also crash into the three main characters' car from side on purpose when they are in the car. In this way, all the Asian characters are portrayed as very violent. Second, all three Asian

characters are portrayed as "foreigners." When the two henchmen threaten the three main characters who are in the patrol car, Eddie who is one of the henchmen shoots says, "Hey Chinese guy, why you making trouble for my business, man?" This line suggests that Asian immigrants are foreigners who have a bad influence on the country. What is more, Leslie Chow speaks in broken English like Warner Oland did for Fu Manchu. Finally, Leslie Chow is a mysterious villain. In another scene, he wears white clothes and pants, a glitter gold track jacket and glitter women's glasses, putting some accessories on his fingers, which make him look mysterious. But these costumes also make him look feminine. In another scene, he wears women's shoes as well. According to Professor Chung Hwang Chen of BYU, "Asian men are portrayed as feminine to the extent that they are 'silent' and 'obedient'. They can't fulfill their roles as 'real men' because they are 'weak', 'passive' and 'eunuch-like.'" (Kim). Asian men are portrayed as feminine and unattractive in recent films because they are considered to be "weak" and "silent."

In conclusion, because of historical events such as a lot of Chinese and Japanese coming to the US, Pearl Harbor and World War II, stereotypes were created to make American citizens think that Asian Americans were dangerous for the country. Economic, political and social causes led to Asian immigration in the 1850s. As they worked successfully, American citizens started to fear that Chinese people would dominate the US economy. Because of this, Chinese people started to be portrayed as evil and mysterious villains in films such as Mysterious Dr. Fu

Manchu (1929). In many of these films, white actors played Asian roles with "yellowface" makeup. Also, many silent films that portrayed tragic love stories between Asian men and white women came out in the early 1900s, such as *Broken Blossoms* (1919), which told audiences that mixed-race relationships end in disaster. There are not only Asian men's stereotypes but also Asian women's stereotypes. One of them is the Dragon Lady, which describes Asian women who are "inherently scheming, untrustworthy, and back-stabbing" (Larson, 70). Because the newspapers told Americans about Tsu His suggesting she was a "reptilian Dragon Lady," the concept of the Dragon Lady was created by Hollywood in movies such as *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924). Another Asian women's stereotype is the China Doll, which describes Asian women as "supposedly sexually active, exotic, overly feminine and eager to please" (Mahdzan and Ziegler). Because many Chinese and Japanese women came to the US as prostitutes from 1850 to 1910, Asian women were also often portrayed as prostitutes in films such as *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960). After Pearl Harbor in 1941, the stereotype of sly characters was used toward Japanese people and the Japanese military was portrayed as sly villains in *Gung Ho!* (1943). In the 2000s films, some stereotypes of Asians are different from the 1920s to 1940s, but still, those stereotypes are seen in films like *The Hangover* (2009). Stereotypes are serious problems in our society. They limit people in how they should act because of their race, gender, or sexuality. What is more, negative images of stereotypes can make people hate minority groups and

it can lead to hate crimes. Asian and Asian American actors still often get stereotyped roles in American movies while white actors still get Asian roles today, which is a serious problem because it gives audiences negative images and wrong information. Hollywood needs to stop casting actors racially and portraying stereotypes.

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