COLLABORATIVE ORIENTALISM: FROM HOLLYWOOD’S “YELLOW PERILS”
TO ZHANG YIMOU’S “RED TRILOGY”

Xiaodong Liu

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ART IN LITERATURE

May 2010

Committee:
Khani Begum, Advisor
Erin Labbie
ABSTRACT

Khani Begum, Advisor

Cultural hegemony is not a set of theories or academic disciplines confined within the scholarly circle or philosophical sphere; nor is it being created to make Europeans feel good or superior. It is, in fact, a very practical means to gain control over the Other politically, economically and culturally. In a way, it is a crucial complementary aid to the military and political powers of Europeans. But how can European powers maintain their cultural hegemony after all of the former colonies have gained their independence? By exploring Edward Said's theory of Orientalism as well as Robert Young's Postcolonialism, this thesis proposes that cultural hegemony with its cultural values has never ceased to be an integral part of European dominance, and it continues to exercise its power even after decolonization. Both Said and other post-colonial theorists emphasize that Orientalism or cultural hegemony is a discourse between the West and the Rest. It is therefore a two-way traffic: a collaboration, either consciously or unconsciously, of the recipients of cultural hegemony. The study of Orientalism should not only focus on how the West uses different measures to gain control over the Rest, but also should examine how the recipients react to cultural hegemony. The author of this thesis provides a comparative study of the practice of cultural hegemony through an analysis of films produced by directors from both the West and East, namely D. W. Griffith in the U.S. and Zhang Yimou from China aiming in order to explore why cultural hegemony not only lingers in the post-colonial era, but can also be discerned among those who were colonized.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Khani Begum for her guidance and support of my study and research, her patience and enthusiasm, her professional expertise as well as the space she left for me to work in my own way. Without her timely guidance and persistent help, this thesis would not have been possible.

I also want to thank Dr. Erin Labbie, the committee member, for her encouragement, assistance and insightful comments, which demonstrated to me the importance of the connection between postcolonial theory and film studies pertaining to my thesis.

In addition, my sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Xiao-ming Yang, a professor of English at Ocean County College as well as a visiting professor at my university, Xi’an International Studies University, who introduced me to Edward Said’s theory Orientalism, and whose knowledge as well as enthusiasm for Cultural Studies has had great influence and lasting effect.

The assistants in Jerome Library provided sufficient help and support I needed to complete my thesis, and I'd like to offer my thanks to them as well.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my parents, my husband, my son, my sisters and brother, for assisting me throughout my life and career. Without their love and support, I simply could not complete my study here at Bowling Green State University in the US.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER I. LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................................ 9

CHAPTER II. THE "YELLOW PERILS" IN HOLLYWOOD .................................................. 22

CHAPTER III. EXOTICISM IN SCARLET: ZHANG YIMOU'S "RED TRILOGY" ................ 46

CHAPTER IV. THE GREY REALITY IN ZHANG YIMOU'S REALITY FILMS .............. 67

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION .................................................................................................... 80

WORKS CITED ........................................................................................................................... 83
INTRODUCTION

The term postcolonialism in its current usage began to gain popularity in the late 1980s when a whole array of literary theories began to surface. The term itself is a bit hard to define because it is somewhat controversial. It does not simply refer to the literal meaning of postcolonial, the period after colonialism. Rather, it can be related to what occurs or exists in both the period of colonization and the era after decolonization. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin regard the term postcolonial as applying to “all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (2). The economically advanced nations, mainly in the West, habitually set up rules, standards and models to evaluate others and themselves, which becomes an ever-lasting legacy of colonialism-----the domination of the West over the world in terms of knowledge and culture. Therefore, postcolonialism insists that economic development should be inextricably connected with cultural decolonization. In such a sense, issues of cultural dominance are regarded as an important perspective of postcolonialism, which functions in a way as a theoretical framework that destabilizes the domination of the West.

To challenge the legacy of colonialism, Postcolonialism, as a literary theory, covers literature produced in the once colonized countries, especially those of the European colonial powers, and it also includes literature of the colonial countries. The early works of postcolonial theories are Frantz Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth. In these works, the author, born in the French colony of Martinique, supports the opposition to French colonialism and advocates the ideas of decolonization in the areas of philosophy, social science and literature.

A landmark work in this area, Said’s Orientalism, published in 1978, sets the stage thematically and theoretically for postcolonial studies. Said was born in Jerusalem, and served as
the American spokesman for the Palestinian cause for many years. Being influenced by the writings of American linguist Noam Chomsky and French philosopher Michel Foucault, Said, in this monumental work, explores how "the West," in particular Britain, France, and North America, produces knowledge about "the East," and thereby exerts power. Said argues that the Europeans divided the world into two parts: the West and the East or the Occident and the Orient; in fact, this is an artificial boundary which is laid on the basis of the concept of us and them. The model of this division is what Said termed Orientalism, through which the Europeans define themselves as the superior race by producing the Orient as irrational, depraved, childlike and thus, different. Such an image created a bias in the western attitude to the East, which can be widely found in Orientalists as well as in their scientific research and literary works.

To the extent that Western scholars were aware of contemporary Orientals or Oriental movements of thought and culture, these were perceived either as silent shadows to be animated by the Orientalist, brought into reality by them, or as a kind of cultural and international proletariat useful for the Orientalist's grander interpretive activity. (Said, 208)

In a way, Orientalism deconstructs Eurocentrism and fundamentally changes the way of scholarship in the west, especially in the fields related to history, philosophy, and culture.

A prominent group of scholars who gained their currency from an engagement to Said's work are Third World writers such as Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak. In his book The Location of Culture, Homi Bhabha argues that the post-colonial world should valorize spaces of mixing. He deploys concepts of mimicry, interstices and hybridity to demonstrate that cultural production is productive when truth and authenticity give way to ambivalence. It is not the colonialist Self or the colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness” (Bhabha, 45). He further challenges the western production of
binary oppositions, defined traditionally as center and margin, civilized and savage, enlightened and ignorant.

Along with Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak is another influential scholar in this area. She employs double negatives as a way to describe her own distinct take on postcoloniality. Spivak regards hegemonic structures, either economically or culturally, as empowering as well as impoverishing. She elaborates these hegemonic structures as spaces one cannot want to inhabit but which one tries to change. The double negative indicates that for postcolonial, culture is an indispensible element of a desired future, and it is also an embarrassed sign of one's former and later colonization.

Other scholars under the influence of Said are the authors of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (1989). By examining postcolonial literature from the Indian Subcontinent, Australia, North America, the Caribbean and African nations, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin probe into the relationship between the colonizers' culture and that of the colonized, between the process of conquering and subjugating indigenous cultures and the process of indigenous culture being obliterated. They also contemplate their cultural identity as well as the genuine way to portray and ultimately represent themselves and their cultures. By doing so, they challenge traditional cannon formation and dominant ideas about culture, providing the power of representation.

Beginning in the twenty first century, this field has become even more multidisciplinary. One of the most comprehensive historical studies of postcolonialism is the encyclopedic work *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* by Robert Young. Postcolonialism, to Young, is the political, economic, cultural and intellectual resistance of people in the third world to Western domination. He heightens the link between Marxist theory to the study of postcolonialism,
regarding it as an indispensable part for postcolonial thought, which explains the third world realities and predicts its future politics. To better capture the essence of postcolonialism, Young suggests the neologism of "tricontinentalism," a study about the resistance of people from the former colonized nations in the tricontinents, namely, Asia, Africa and Latin America. He also presents micro analysis of individuals in the tricontinents in their different, yet common struggle against the institutionalized colonialism from the west. From Lenin and Stalin in Russia to Gandhi in India, from Mao Zedong in China to Nkrumah in Ghana and Guevara in Latin America, the waves upon waves of anti-colonialism and postcolonialist movements are still continuing. According to Young, this movement has kept shifting its focus from initial political struggle to gain national independence to developing economic power to counterbalance the economical oppression of the west, and finally to the recognition and assertion of cultural identity to break western cultural hegemony. While accentuating postcolonialism as a form of resistance to western domination, Young further argues that western thinkers and theorists like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, who deconstructed the fundamentals of western systems of knowledge, shaped or reshaped their thoughts under the influence of postcolonialism. In this sense, he proposes that throughout the centuries, the West and the non-West are in dialogue with each other already, and the two are dialectically related. Besides, Young situates postcolonialism in "after the onset of colonialism," starting from 1492 with Columbus’s discovery of America.

Postcolonialism covers a wide range of theories and criticism, and one of the key issues under discussion in each of the works is the resistance to the western domination. To employ Antonio Gramsci’s term, this is cultural hegemony, which refers to the "cultural, political and intellectual process related to dominant economic practices and activity within a given society by which domination of one class is achieved over another" (Wolfreys, 81). The Gramscian concept of
hegemony is used to suggest that the dominant group or ruling class exercises their control and authority over the subordinate classes without the use of overt force but through their ability to create intellectual and moral leadership. To further elaborate Antonio Gramsci, Said notes,

In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far. (7)

Cultural hegemony, in this sense, is not a set of theories or academic disciplines confined within the scholarly circle or philosophical sphere; nor is it being created to make Europeans feel good or superior. It is, on the contrary, a very practical means to gain control over the Other politically, economically and culturally. During colonial times, it was an effective measure to govern the subject race, such as the British colonialists did in Egypt, and it is a crucial complementary aid to the military and political powers of Europeans. It aided the oppressing regimes in certain areas where military and political powers could not reach. The proliferation of the English language and the study of English literature in colonies had a powerful impact on indigenous cultures.

British colonial administration, provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other, discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education.

(Ashcroft, et al., 3)
Cultural hegemony with its language, literature, aesthetics, philosophy and cultural values has never ceased to be an integral part of European powers, and it continues to exercise its power in the twenty-first century even after decolonization.

How can European powers maintain their cultural hegemony after all of the former colonies have gained their independence? The post-colonial theories try to attribute the continuation of European and American cultural hegemony to such phenomena as globalization and universalism advocated by European, especially American Orientalists.

The appropriation of recent European theories involves a number of dangers, the most threatening of which is the tendency to reincorporate post-colonial culture into a new internationalist and universalist paradigm. (Ashcroft, et al., 154)

However, there is another factor that is equally important, if not more so, in the perpetuation of European cultural hegemony; this is the collaboration, either consciously or unconsciously, of the recipients of cultural hegemony. The collaborators are, in most cases, social elites in the indigenous cultures, who are educated in the west; they introduce, transplant, elaborate and ultimately celebrate cultural hegemony in their own cultures. This process reinforces western cultural hegemony even after decolonization. Without their efforts, European cultural hegemony cannot have flourished. Said and other post-colonial theorists emphasize that Orientalism or cultural hegemony is a discourse between the West and the Rest. It is a dialogue between two cultures: the dominant and the dominated. Cultural hegemony is, therefore, a two-way traffic; not only measures taken by the West to gain control over the Rest should be studied, but reactions of the recipients to cultural hegemony should also be examined. However, on this crucial issue, Said said very little in his works; nor have other post-colonialists probed into this issue in some significant way. Nonetheless, the criticism of Orientalism and post-colonial theories cannot be
complete without rigorous investigation of this factor, for it explains the reasons why cultural hegemony not only lingers in the post-colonial era, but also is gaining momentum. This thesis explores the practice of cultural hegemony from two perspectives: how the West gains power by creating a cultural canon to define indigenous cultures as devious, dangerous, sensual and inscrutable Other on the one hand; and, how the recipients of such cultural hegemony assist the augmentation of Western culture by diminishing and destroying their own cultures on the other. In light of Edward Said’s theory of *Orientalism* and Robert Young’s *Postcolonialism*, this thesis presents a comparative study on the practice of cultural hegemony through an analysis of films produced by directors from both the West and East, namely Hollywood’s “yellow perils” created by D. W. Griffith and the “red trilogy” made by Zhang Yimou from China. This thesis is divided into five chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter one is the literature review, in which the major issues discussed in the two fundamental works *Orientalism* and *Postcolonialism* by the two seminal postcolonial theorists Edward Said and Robert Young, are reviewed. Chapter Two, “The Yellow Perils” in Hollywood, which focuses on the film *Broken Blossoms* by D. W. Griffith, and the analysis of which illustrates how the Other has been systematically misrepresented and how the misrepresentation of the other culture exalts the power of the west through literature and arts. Chapter Three, Exoticism in Scarlet: Zhang Yimou’s “Red Trilogy,” is devoted to the three films produced by Zhang Yimou with a focus on how the Chinese cultural elites strengthen the Western cultural hegemony by recreating the stereotypical image of a sensual, inscrutable and decadent China. Chapter Four, The Grey Reality in Zhang Yimou’s Reality Films, deals with the so-called reality films produced by Zhang Yimou and offers explanations of why the West has different attitudes toward Zhang’s films produced with different styles and different themes. The last chapter, Chapter Five, is the conclusion. The
analysis in the middle three chapters is intended to answer the question of why the cultural hegemony maintained by the west is able to perpetuate into the post-colonial era.
CHAPTER ONE
LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the most comprehensive works on postcolonialism is Robert Young’s *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001). Young presents a comprehensive historical account of the development of postcolonialism both in theory and practice, which provides an ideal guide for academics coming to post-colonial theory and criticism. The author begins the book with contending definitions of what colonialism and imperialism are, and proceeds to the history of anti-colonialism from Las Casas in the 16th century in Europe all the way up to the 21st century when most, if not all, former colonized nations in the tricontinents, namely, Asia, Africa and Latin America, had gained their independence from the western colonizers. While providing a macro view of the postcolonial phenomenon, Young also presents micro analysis of individuals in the tricontinents in their different, yet common struggle against institutionalized colonialism by the west. From Lenin and Stalin in Russia to Gandhi in India, from Mao Zedong in China to Nkrumah in Ghana and Guevara in Latin America, the waves upon waves of anti-colonial and postcolonial movements are still continuing. According to Young, this movement has kept shifting its focus from initial political struggles to gain national independence to developing economic power to counterbalance the economical oppression of the west, and finally to the recognition and assertion of cultural identity to break the western cultural hegemony.

In terms of the development of postcolonial theories, Young has made it clear that postcolonialism is not a system, but a mere response to colonialism. If it has any theoretical base, it is a part of or a constant revision of Marxist theory on capitalism and imperialism.
Postcolonial theory operates within the historical legacy of Marxist critique on which it continues to draw but which it simultaneously transforms according to the precedent of the greatest tricontinental anti-colonial intellectual politicians. For much of the twentieth century, it was Marxism alone which emphasized the effects of the imperialist system and the dominating power structure involved, and in sketching out blue prints for a future free from domination and exploitation most twentieth-century anti-colonial writing was inspired by the possibilities of socialism. (Young 6)

To incorporate postcolonialism into the Marxist domain is both insightful and problematic. It is insightful because it provides a clear historical picture of the origin of postcolonialism, its evolution over the last century, and the direction for further development. It is problematic in that it emphasizes the common goal to oppose western economic colonialism, but it neglects the cultural hegemony of the west over the colonized.

Being primarily an economic theory, Marxism sees the expansion of European colonialism as a natural course of the development of capitalism. As Young points out that Marxism, being a creation of the west, is inherently anti-western in its political, and more importantly, its economic colonialism. The significance of Marxism in its opposition of western colonialism is the fact that it is the first theory which systematically challenges both the moral and value system of the west, and it begins to gain ever increasing momentum in its force, and is recognized and practiced universally in the colonized world against western colonialism.

However powerful the theory is, Marxism basically remains theoretical in the west, and it would have little effect on the colonists who resort to canons and armed force to oppress indigenous people in the colonies. It is the Lenin led Russian Revolution, based on the Marxist theories of class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, which poses a genuine threat to
western political powers in their expansion of colonialism. Again, as Young points out the victory of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent establishment of a proletarian state, which begins a political and economic entity, stands in the way of western imperialism. What is even worse from the viewpoint of the west, an international organization of communism—Comintern was established, which has membership in the countries all over the world, many of which are colonized countries. If postcolonialism is a response, as Young deems, to the colonial powers, it is very much in line with Marxism in that both are formidable forces against western dominance.

To say that Marxism is problematic in its theoretical support of postcolonialism is the fact that while Marxism is in line with colonialism in opposing the political and economical colonialism of the west; it, however, maintains the position of cultural superiority of the west over the rest. In fact, when Marx and Engels composed the Communist Manifesto, they only had the proletariat of western Europe in mind because they believed that socialism could only be possible in the fully industrialized nations across the world. They disregard the non-western countries with agricultural economy as a viable force to counter capitalism as well as colonialism. By contrast, they regarded colonial capitalism as a revolutionary force to conquer and eventually replace the “backward mode of production” in the rest of the world.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, which it forces the barbarians’ intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production, it compels them to introduce what is calls civilization into
their midst, e.g. to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image…

Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made the barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West. (Young 103)

Who are the barbarians and what are the barbarian nations? It cannot be clearer that Marx here means colonized countries under colonialist rule as colonizers bring «civilization» to the barbarians. This is where postcolonialism should definitely deviate from Orthodox Marxism because culturally Marxism remains just as hegemonic as colonialists toward the colonized people. On the cultural front, Marx even sees the advantage of colonialism as it tears down and eliminates what he calls the walls of Eastern barbarism. In commenting on the British rule in colonized India, he further explores the conflicts of the two cultures:

### England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution. (Marx, 1973a. 306-7) (Young 108)

Young comments, —for Marx then, the moral and humanitarian argument against colonialism is ultimately less important than the benefits of its effects—the world historical movement” (108).

Young further illustrates that like Hegel who always claims that Africa has no history, Marx seems to echo Hegel’s view by saying, “Indian society has no history at all.” The arrogance and sense of superiority of Eurocentrism exemplified in the remarks of Marx makes it difficult for
colonized peoples to wholly embrace Marxism as their guiding principle to fight colonialism even though Young has repeatedly reiterated that postcolonialism operates within the framework of Marxism.

Another problem of Marxist theories as the guiding principles of postcolonialism lies in the fact that Orthodox Marxism believes that socialism can only be achieved by the united proletariat in the industrialized nations, and consequently, it neglects the peasantry as a viable force against capitalism and colonialism. In addition, it is believed that true Marxists are internationalists, who have no nations of their own. The national campaign to achieve independence from the colonizers in the tricontinental countries must be incorporated into the network of Comintern, which sends its representatives to different colonized countries as “advisors.” But these advisors follow a rigid political line directed from Moscow, which in many cases does not take into consideration the indigenous and cultural characteristics of the locals. The neglect of peasantry and disregard of indigenous cultures by Orthodox Marxism have led to anti-colonial movement to break away from the Comintern. In the meantime, the victory of the Chinese revolution, which is based on the peasant’s armed struggle against both the western colonialists and national capitalists, sets a good example for the tricontinental movement of anti-colonialism. For the first time in history, a non-western country of primarily peasant population gains its independence and becomes a socialist state. For a time, Beijing, not Moscow, according to Young, became the center of anti-colonial movement. After Mao, liberation movements in Asia, Africa and America were increasingly inclined to identify with the peasantry rather than the urban proletariat and to present themselves as peasant revolution” (Young 183).

In the aftermath of India’s independence from the British in 1947 and the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949, anti-colonialism picks up its momentum. When former colonized
nations gathered in Bandung in 1955 to attend the Bandung Conference, it reached the peak of the movement. —Bandung in many ways marked the beginning of the production of the postcolonial as an ideological and political position, beyond its historical descriptive reference. Indeed, ‘Bandung’ and ‘post-colonial’ sometimes function as almost synonymous terms…” (191). Young’s “beyond its historical descriptive reference” is interesting in that it connotes that it is not regarded by the west as a historical event or historically meaningful in their epistemology as most historians in the west who follow the footstep of Hegel or Marx totally disregard the history outside the west. More importantly, tricontinental nations become a part of history, according to the west, only when they are acted up on by the west. In their view, African countries or American Indians have no history until the west came to colonize them. But the Bandung Conference starts something unprecedented. For the first time since colonialism, it is the colonized nations, the oppressed who are calling the shots. And their theme is to unite to free themselves from the west politically, economically and culturally. It is little wonder that the Bandung Conference does not exist in western history books. But for the colonized countries in the tricontinent, the Conference marks the new beginning, followed by the Non-Aligned Countries in 1961 and the liberation of the entire African Continent with the exception of South Africa in the late 1960s.

The independent former colonies soon embark on a new phase of anti-colonialism—a concerted endeavor to combat cultural colonialism or cultural hegemony of the west. In this regard, Young, in the last part of the book, details the work of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, seeing them as intellectual inheritors of this genealogy. Young also credits Nandy and his Intimate Enemy as the first to introduce psychoanalysis in postcolonial theory.
One of the major contributions of Nandy to postcolonial theory is to reject the Orthodox Marxist notion that colonialism brings about social progress in colonized countries.

Nandy begins by positioning himself in Gandhian terms against Marx‘s problematic affirmation of colonialism as part of a progressive western modernity. It is Marxism’s universalist identification with modernity, not its social politics as such, that Nandy objects to, particularly Marx‘s argument that the violence and cultural dislocation of colonial modernity would ultimately operate as a force for liberation. (342)

In *Intimate Enemy*, Nandy elaborates the necessity for the former colonized people to liberate their minds:

…the one which at least six generations of the Third World have leant to view as a prerequisite for their liberation. This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once for all. In the process, it helps generalize the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside; in structures and in minds. (Nandy 1983: xi)

(Young 342)

The task of postcolonialism is to combat not only the physical oppression but also the psychological and cultural control found in the educational system, the political apparatus, business transactions, financial management, and so forth. For Nandy to reject the Marxist view of modern a west versus a backward East is to strike back at the oppressive forces and cultural hegemony of the west, including Marxism, and to establish a postcolonial identity of one’s own based on the indigenous cultures of the tricontinents.
Of the numerous works on postcolonial theories, one particular work has become the pivotal force of anticolonialism and has had a tremendous influence on western scholarship for over three decades in the fields of critical theory, cultural studies, and comparative literature. It is *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said. Regarded as the founder of postcolonial studies, Edward Said is best known for his monumental work, *Orientalism*, which presents his influential ideas on Orientalism, the Western study of Eastern cultures. With the start of western colonization, the Europeans came in touch with countries in the east, which were comparatively less developed and were considered non-western culture as exotic yet inferior, and established the “science” of orientalism. For centuries, the western, in particular, the European and North American scholars have written government reports, literary fictions as well as historical and philosophical studies about eastern cultures by creating an image of an inscrutable, backward and decadent East to foil the moral and intellectual superiority of themselves and their peers. “Such texts,” Said says, “can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author is really responsible for the texts produced out of it” (94). Said’s work, in a way, deconstructs the values of western scholarship, namely Eurocentrism, and fundamentally changes the way of scholarship in the west.

To understand what Orientalism is, one must know what the Orient is. Said argues that it is the Europeans who divided the world into two parts: the west and the east or the occident and the orient. This is, in fact, totally an totally artificial boundary. “The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences. Now, it was disappearing…” (1) For instance, names as China, Asia or Far East, are given to us by the Europeans. The people who live in what is now
called China had had over two thousands call this country "middle kingdom.” It is the Europeans who give the name China. These names are not just pure descriptive terms, but the ones with value judgment imbedded in them. “Chinese comes to signify not only ethic membership, but also reticence, impassive, poverty, treachery” (Allport, 288-289). To the Europeans, the Orient has been its deepest and most recurring images of the Other… the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (1).

However, these artificial characteristics associated with Orientals were portrayed in the western world through scientific reports, literary works and other media sources. What happened was that it created a certain image of Orientals in the minds of Europeans, and consequently, it infused a bias towards Orientals. Such prejudice could be found in Orientalists works. According to Said, Orientalism has three interrelated components. In academia, “anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient—and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian or philologist . . . is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism” (2). It is also a style of thought, which is “based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and ‘the Occident’” (2). There are a large number of poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, who have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, or “mind” (2-3). The third component comprises of institutions which deal with the Orient by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism is a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3). In general, Orientalism is the result of cultural hegemony at work. It is the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans as
against all non-Europeans; it conveys the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European people and cultures.

How is Orientalism at work? By defining what the Orient looks like, it helps the West to define themselves.

On June 13, 1910, Arthur Balfour, former Prime Minister, lectured the House of Commons on the problems with which we have deal with Egypt.”

First of all, look at the facts of the case. Western nations as soon as they emerge into history show the beginnings of those capacities for self-government… have merits of their own… You may look through the whole history of the Orientals in what is called, broadly speaking, the East, and you never find traces of self-government. All their great centuries have been passed under despotisms, absolute government… Is it a good thing for these great nations that this absolute government should be exercised by us? I think it is a good thing. I think that experience shows that they have got under it far better government than in the whole history of the world they ever had before, and which not only is a benefit to them, but is undoubtedly a benefit to the whole of the civilized West…We are in Egypt not merely for the sake of the Egyptians, though we are there for their sake; we are there also for the sake of Europe at large. (Said 31-33)

Said made the following comments on the above message.

Balfour’s logic here is interesting… Egypt is what England knows; England knows that Egypt cannot have self-government; England confirms that by occupying Egypt; for the Egyptians, Egypt is what England has occupied and now governs; foreign occupation therefore becomes the very basis” of contemporary Egyptian civilization; Egypt requires, indeed insists upon, British occupation. (34)
Said then illustrates how Europeans explain the reason why the Orientals are incapable of self-governing:

Cromer, the British consul-general in Egypt for 25 years had this to say:

Sir Alfred Lyall once said to me:” Accuracy is abhorrent to the oriental mind. Every Anglo-Indian should always remember that maxim.” Want of accuracy, which easily degenerates into untruthfulness, is in fact the main characteristic of the Oriental mind. The European is a close reasoner; his statements of fact are devoid of any ambiguity; he is a natural logician, albeit he may not have studies logic; he is by nature skeptical and requires proof before he can accept the truth of any proposition; his trained intelligence works like a piece of mechanism. The mind of the Oriental, on the other hand, like his picturesque streets, is eminently wanting in symmetry. His reasoning is of the most slipshod description…often incapable of drawing the most obvious conclusions from any simple premises of which they may admit the truth. His explanation will generally be lengthy, and wanting in lucidity. He will probably contradict himself half-a-dozen times before he has finished his story. He will often break down under the mildest process of cross-examination.

I content myself with noting the fact that somehow or other the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European. (38-39)

The main point advanced by Cromer is not quite how irrational or stupid the Orientals are. Rather, he used invented images as contrasts to show how westerners are rational, virtuous, mature and normal, and therefore, more fit to govern the Orientals. He gave a theoretical basis for conquering, colonizing, oppressing and ruling the colonized. Only by creating the negative features of the Others can the westerner finally be able define himself. Using the quote on the
characteristics of the Chinese as an example, the point is not to show how reticence, impassive, poor and treacherous the Chinese are; rather, it is to show how the westerner is, the opposite of the Oriental. It is to show the westerners' outspokenness as opposed of the Orientals' reticence, activeness as opposed to impassiveness, affluence as opposed to poverty, openness as opposed to treachery. But as Said points out, their depiction of other cultures and peoples is arbitrary and imaginative.

How does Orientalists accumulate and expand their knowledge? Said has this to say:

When a learned Orientalists traveled in the country of his specialization, it was always with unshakable abstract maxims about the « civilizati on » he had studied; rarely were Orientalists interested in anything except proving the validity of these musty « truths » by applying them, without great success, to uncomprehending, hence degenerate, natives.

(52)

In general, the Orientalist attitude shares "with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are because they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter" (70). Viewing the television coverage of the Olympic torch relay by the western media in the year of 2008, the Chinese audiences were baffled by the magnitude of the distortion and the lies created by the western media. What amazed them further is the concerted effort by almost all the media from the west. They are puzzled because they don’t understand why western journalists, especially those who stayed long time within China and witnessed first-hand the fundamental changes that occurred in front of their eyes, could turn a blind eye to what was happening. In the meantime, these journalists are poking their noses into every corner to search out the dark sides of China, even to the point of creating negativity out of thin air. What
the Chinese audiences don’t realize is the fact that this is Orientalism at work. In their minds, the Chinese cannot be creative, hardworking, imaginative—the characteristics only reserved for westerners. How could the Other, the opposite of the Westerner, possess such characteristics? In fact, the more expertise a western professional, a professor or journalist, possesses on Orientals, the more dedicated he/she will be in perpetuating the contrast between the West and Others.

What happens when non-western cultures have achievements in areas that catch up with or even surpass the West? To the Westerner, however, the Oriental was always like some aspect of the West; to some of the German Romantics, Indian religion was essentially an Oriental version of Germano-Christian pantheism. Yet the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else. This process of conversion is a disciplined one: it is taught, it has its own societies, periodicals, traditions, vocabulary, rhetoric” (Said 67). Such conversion exists in the minds of all Westerners, let alone Orientalists. Beijing’s Wang Fujing Street becomes China’s Oxford Street, Shanghai’s Pudong is China’s Manhattan…In the minds of westerners, nothing in the Other’s culture has any significance unless it is converted to something found in western culture.

In a way, the work by Said strikes back at the Empire which for a very long time dominated the world’s ideology. The consequence may not be felt in the west since the once dominated culture does not want to lose its grip of the Other. What is significant is an awakening or revelation by the peoples whose voices have for too long been silenced.
Since the last decade of the twentieth century, the field of postcolonialism has become more multidisciplinary, and its influence in academia has broadened from the humanities and social sciences to include visual culture in general and cinema.

Film emerged as a reproduced cultural form in the 20th century. With new technologies of mechanical reproduction that made possible simulations of the “real” world, film provided a new mode of culture that changed patterns of people’s social life. In his article, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Benjamin says, “Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public” (1168). Adorno and Horkheimer, in their collaborated work Dialectic of Enlightenment, also mention that, “Film, radio and magazines makes up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part” (1223). From the beginning, film, as a major force of socialization, has provided role models and instructions, in fashion, love, career and so on, and it is a reflection of attitudes, values as well as lifestyles. In short, it is a powerful agent for social change (Frame). The power of this technological product lies in that the communication of ideas through visual image moves far beyond verbal language. The visibility of films through commercial distribution channels and television broadcast makes the cultural reach wide-ranging and influential. In the United States, film, from its advent, became an extremely popular and influential form of media culture. According to Robert Sklar, from 1896 to the 1950s, film served as a central means of people’s leisure activities, which deeply influenced people’s ways of thinking and behavior. In this regard,
Hollywood films have played a significant role in establishing a cultural dominance of social attitudes and values to the exclusion of others.

To support dominant American values, Hollywood film, far beyond its entertainment purposes, tends to be quite “political.” In his speech “The Role of Movies in a Democratic Society,” John Cones observes:

We must all recognize that one of the important differences between a democracy and a fascist totalitarian state is that in a democracy, we don't try to control the masses with military force, rather we use information. Thus, control of any important form of communication in a democratic society is a critical factor in determining the thinking and behavior of members of that society because such a communications medium helps to determine the nature of the information to which our citizens are exposed. It does seem that Hollywood is very much into what Noam Chomsky referred to as “manufacturing consent.”

Such a political function played by Hollywood film easily can be seen in times of social crisis. Take the Russians in Hollywood as an example. From the 1920s to the 1950s, the depictions of Russians revealed the state of the U.S. and Soviet relationship at that time. Ninotchka, by Ernst Lubitsch, established a clear anti-Soviet attitude from the west due to the Soviet’s pursuit of communism. However, the films about World War II such as Mission to Mosco by Michael Curtiz and Action in the North Atlantic by Lloyd Bacon brought a slew by presenting a positive spin to this U.S. ally fighting against fascism. During the Cold War anti-communist period, Hollywood produced a cycle of anti-communist films that depicted the threat to America, and once again the Soviet was presented as the incarnation of evil in movies like Invasion, U.S.A. by Alfred E. Green and Walk East On Beacon by Alfred L. Werker.
Film, being an art form for entertainment at its initial phase, has thus become an ideological and political weapon during war times. But there is another important function that film plays. In the context of post-colonialism, it has become a part of the Orientalist web, which creates a more direct image of the Other, either to justify or glorify the colonizers during the time of colonization or to collaborate with western governments in a concerted effort to smear and relegate the Other after the former colonies have gained their political independence, or to demonize non-western cultures by casting fear among the white audience of potential threats.

In her edited book—*Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone Worlds*, Sherzer introduces a collection of essays which discuss how the films in France participate in the creation and maintenance of cultural hegemony. Focusing mainly on the three French colonies, Algeria, Monaco and Indonesia, Sherzer presents a brief overview of colonialism and the history of cinematic production in France from 1895 all the way to the present. The early films directed by French directors present the Other as foreign, exotic and decadent. Both the indigenous people and their cultures are completely dislocated into an imaginary land where the conquerors, namely the French, take complete control.

The films…presented the colonies as the French directors imagined them, as territories waiting for European initiatives, virgin land where the White man with helmet and boots regenerated himself and was destroyed by alcoholism, malaria, or native women. They display the heroism of the French men, along with stereotypical images of desert, dunes, and camels, and reinforced the idea that the Other is dangerous. They did not present the colonial experience, did not attach importance to the colonial issues, and were amazingly silent on what happened in reality. They contributed to the colonial spirit and
temperament of conquest and to the construction of white identity and hegemony.

(Sherzer 4)

Hegemony is achieved by the sharp contrast between the “civilized” white and the “barbaric” natives, between the superiority of the west and the backwardness of the rest. As Said elaborates, the constant motif in the contrast reinforces the justification of the colonization and the conquest. It is the whites who have both moral mandates to rule the natives for the good of the natives. The complete deletion of the colonial issues is not a matter of negligence, but a deliberate effort to dwarf the culture and the people of the colonized as they are no more than savages wrapped in human clothing. In one of the early films by Georges Melies in 1902 titled *Trip to the Moon*, the director presents scenes where scientists try to slaughter the inhabitants of the moon, who are portrayed as tribal people with body painting and spears, an allusion to natives to be eliminated. The attitude of the movie directors toward colonization changes after most of the former colonies gained their independence following World War II. As the soldiers from the former colonies fight the war side by side with the French soldiers during the war, and the anti-colonialist sentiment is gaining momentum in the former colonies, the directors of movie industries shifted their focus from the glorification of conquest and colonization to love stories or adventures. However, cultural hegemony remains intact as the natives are depicted as subordinates, in servitude or as simply irrelevant.

They were tales of love and adultery set in Africa, Algeria, and Indochina, and they staged French characters as the main protagonists, involved in issues that placed the natives in secondary positions, as servants, traitors, or exploited sexual partners. These films displayed the strength and courage of the French working for the developing the
colonies and again offered an apology for the colonizer and the colonizing process.

(Sherzer 5)

To say that oriental films are all directed from the imagination of directors is not entirely an accurate statement. Some of them are based on the then popular fictions, travelogues or historical archives. Although travelogues, especially historical archives could be regarded as being based on facts, they are nonetheless creations of Orientalists, who either consciously or unconsciously accentuate the contrast between western civilization and non-western savagery. One such “historical archive” is the “Thuggee archives,” consisting of several reports written by William Sleeman, a British colonial official in India in the late nineteenth century. Defining thuggee as a historiography, “the system of mass murder supposedly discovered by the British in India in the nineteenth century” in his article “Thuggee: an Orientalist Construction?” Macfie questions “how far the thuggee archive, created by William Sleeman, the British official mainly concerned, can be considered reliable” (Macfie 383). Drawing from various primary sources from the historical archives, the author tries to show how the reports came into existence, and casts serious doubt as to the authenticity of the documents. What the author questions here is not whether “thuggees” existed or not, or whether they are responsible for the murder of the natives. What the author is mainly concerned with is the effect that such archives create. What is more, a report of a single and isolated event has been used to represent the entire race of a people and their culture. That is Orientalism at its best. What is even more troubling is the fact that numerous literary works and films are created based on the initial reports, whose validity and authenticity is in question. Films based on the subject include: George Stevens‘ *Gunga Din* (1939), Ismail Merchant and James Ivory‘s *The Deceivers* (1988) and most of all Steven Spielberg‘*s *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984). In all these films, —thuggees are
presented as a strange and sinister oriental sect, led by a fanatical leader, intent on driving the British out of India and destroying western civilization” (Macfie 384). In the movie *Indiana Jones*, which has become a blockbuster movie in American households, “Once again the civilized West is contrasted with anarchy and violence of India; and once again a fanatical leader of the thugs aims at the defeat of the British raj” (Macfie 387). It is safe to say that most Americans have never been to India, but they have now become acquainted with India and Indian culture thanks to Hollywood movies. The directors of these Oriental movies know too well that their works could strike home the conspicuous contrast, a contrast between the benign, civilized, and adventurous west and the savagery of the barbaric rest. It would instill an unsubstantiated “feel-good” feeling for the home audience. As for what happened in the process of colonization and the brutality and inhuman treatment of the indigenous people, the directors of all these movies seem to have a collective amnesia.

If the early Oriental films aim at creating a contrast between the civilized west and barbaric rest in order to justify colonization in the first half of the twentieth century, the second of the last century witnesses the continuation of the momentum with a different motive. This is especially true in the aftermath of the Second World War when most of the former colonies gained their independence. This type of Oriental movies, most of which are produced by Hollywood, try to induce a fear among the domestic audience of the threat from non-western cultures on the domestic turf. For instance, the systematic and institutional slaughter of indigenous Indians by colonialists in North America has reduced and eventually wiped out the entire Indian population. However, in most of the so-called western films created by Hollywood, it is the indigenous Indians who are portrayed as the attackers of the “innocent white,” especially white women and children. John Wayne, one of the most famous Hollywood movie stars, is renowned for his
acting in western films. He is a hero, who always "rescues" the white settlers from the attack of vicious Indians who are portrayed as half naked savages. Unlike the old colonizers like France and Britain who may feel threatened by the shrinking of their former territories after increasing number of their former colonies had achieved independence, the indigenous Indians pose no threat to the US government and its sovereign territory since the Indian population has been reduced to next to nil. It is their moral standard that they feel being threatened. How come, one may ask, that the self-claimed champions of democracy and human rights have committed the most unspeakable atrocities the world has ever seen against another race of human beings? In the face of such a threat, Hollywood comes to the rescue by producing a large number of western movies in which movie directors try to reverse the history by placing whites as the victim.

The indigenous Indians are not the only victims of Hollywood’s onslaught. In the face of the vigorous development of voodooism, the non-Christian belief and practice by the Caribbean Creoles and in part of New Orleans, Hollywood once again created a new genre of films—Zombie movies, in which voodoo zombies rise from the grave to stir up horrors in white society. From 1932, when the first Zombie movie—White Zombie directed by victor Halperin all the way to 2009, there are more than 680 Zombie movies. As Kirk Bishop, a Ph. D. candidate whose dissertation is on zombie narrative, points out, unlike other monsters such as werewolves or Frankensten’s demons which are the creatures of Europe, the Zombie is rooted in the United States. Despite its popular cinematic device, Bishop asserts that Zombie is a creature which is a remnant of an imperialistic and racist era. It is a postcolonial creature that attempts to distort voodoo into a horrifying practice in the mind of westerners and diminish the importance of the religious tradition” originated from Haiti.
The zombie is, essentially, a colonial creation where the greatest fear is of a monster, a slavelike creature, and that those who had been enslaved would rise up and impose power on us... In many ways, "White Zombie" is getting to our fears of the other... For a western white audience, the real threat and source of terror in these films are not the political vagaries of a postcolonial nation or the plights of the enslaved native zombies, but rather the risk that the white protagonists might become zombies themselves. In other words, the true horror in these movies lies in the prospect of a Westerner becoming dominated, subjugated, and effectively "colonized" by the native pagan. (Bishop)

From glorifying colonization as the early French movies did to misrepresenting the colonized cultures as backward, barbaric and savagery as in the case of "thuggee" films, and from a concerted effort to reverse history as shown by western films in the US to creating a zombie monster to warp other religion, the movie industry, headed by Hollywood, has been waging a cultural war against non-western cultures in order to gain cultural hegemony. Being an integral part of what Adorno calls "cultural industry," films in the west, disguised in the form of entertainment, have been an effective weapon of ideology. As Adorno rightly points out, "...the favorite argument of the whole-and half-hearted apologists, that culture industry is the art of the consumer, is untrue; it is the ideology of ideology" (185).

Yet another example of the political or ideological role Hollywood plays is the portrayal of the Yellow Perils. Since Griffith’s representation of the Yellow Man in Broken Blossoms in 1919, a whole succession of "yellow peril," an imminent danger to white civilization from Asians, drew Hollywood depictions of Orientals. Films such as The Perils of Pauline (1919), Patria (1919), and Crooked Street (1920), to name a few, are some of the examples on this list. The period of the release of these films was a time when the American citizen has been defined over
against the Asian immigrant, legally, economically, and culturally” (Lowe 4). Asian countries have been portrayed by the Americans as exotic, barbaric, and alien, and Asian laborers immigrating to the United States from the nineteenth century onwards as a ‘yellow peril‘ threatening to displace white European immigrants” (Lowe 4). Consequently, Asians came to be associated in the public discourse with immigration restriction. The Immigration Regional Restriction Act of 1917 excluded all Asian groups from American society, except for Japanese Americans. “This historical period of exclusion was a time when popular stereotypes of Chinese as unassimilable heathens, economic sojourners, and the ‘yellow peril‘ prevailed” (Eng 66).

Newspapers sensationaly presented stories about the ‘yellow peril.” Fictional narratives often used inscrutable Orientals as villains, or located vices such as drug addiction in a U.S. Chinatown. It is within such a historical context that D.W. Griffith produced Broken Blossoms.

D.W. Griffith is regarded as a premier pioneering American film director. Born in 1875 on a poor Kentucky farm, he left home to learn the craft as an actor, and played a number of roles as an actor before being a director at the Biograph Company, the oldest movie company in America that is still in existence today. During this period of time, he produced and directed the first movie ever made in Hollywood, In Old California (1910), and he was regarded as the “father of film” and "the man who invented Hollywood" (Kaminsky). Later on, he left Biograph and started to work on his own on his most famous production, Broken Blossoms (1919), which was the first movie made by his new production company.

The release of Broken Blossoms received wide commendation at the time for its poetic beauty and aesthetic innovations. It is regarded as Griffith’s most serious, poetic, intricate, melodramatic and powerful masterpiece. In 1996, Broken Blossoms was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being culturally, historically or
aesthetically significant (―Broken Blossoms‖). In this film, Griffith presented a chaste and ideal interracial love story between a Chinese immigrant man and a young white girl. He adopted Thomas Burke's original short story, ―The Chink and The Girl‖ from *Limehouse Nights*, tales about lumpen criminal life, but he changed Burke‘s Chinese protagonist from a dishonorable young drifter who frequented opium dens and whorehouses to a highly educated Buddhist missionary whose initial goal is to spread Buddha‘s message of peace. The plot of the film is simple. The film begins in China with a young idealist, referred to only as Yellow Man going to the West to bring a message of peace of Buddha. When he witnesses the violent fighting between a group of American sailors, he is convinced that the Anglo-Saxons need spiritual guidance; thus he makes the journey to the West. However, soon after his arrival in the district of Limehouse, London, his aspirations are shattered into pieces by cruel reality, and he seeks refuge in the operation of a small shop. Driven to a state of disillusion, he visits the local opium den. Soon he is attracted by a young British girl, Lucy, whom he regards as the White Blossom, and takes good care of her when she is abused by her father and has nobody to turn to. When Lucy‘s brutal father discovers her in Yellow Man‘s store, he breaks in and beats her to death. Yellow Man kills the father, and then kills himself.

The western viewers widely praised the film for the liberal message of the romantic interracial love between a non-westerner and a white English girl. *The New York Times* dubbed it ―a masterpiece in moving pictures‖ (qtd. in Schickel 405). Some critics consider it Griffith‘s appeal for racial tolerance (Lee 128; Marchetti 33). And some others even regard the film as a ―sympathetic portrayal of the Chinese‖ (Sardar and Saunders 47). It seems that *Broken Blossoms* reveals a message of the superiority of Chinese Buddhist peacefulness over western brutality. If the binary relationship between good and evil, hero and villain is used for analysis, the only
villain in the movie is Battling, the boxer, who abuses his daughter to such an extent as to torture her to death. By contrast, the Yellow Man, who is an alien to the country and the culture, is tender and caring. He provides refuge to Lucy when she is abused by her drunken father. Out of whatever motive, his act of caring for her does give her a new meaning in life. Most of all, his final act is a noble one, killing himself for the love of the girl whom he hardly knows. However, there exists a discrepancy between the positive comments by western critics and the author’s negative feelings toward the portrayal of the character. It is obvious that the Yellow Man is depicted as standing on the “moral high ground”; it also clear that there are contrasting images between the tenderness of the protagonist and the brutality of Battling; however, the Yellow Man does not deserve commendation. In light of Said’s theory of Orientalism, such incongruity can be easily figured out.

One of the key issues raised by Said in Orientalism is the west’s ability to represent itself with regard to an indigenous culture. What Orientalists have done, according to Said, is falsely represent the Orient so as to create a contrasting image. It can be easily seen that the subtitle of the movie is *The Yellow Man and the Girl*. —Yellow Man,” which is used as a part of the subtitle of the movie, is not a purely descriptive term in fact. Rather, it serves as a contrasting image of whites, and carries with it all the negative connotations related to Chinese. By the time the movie was first released, the western audience could not fail to associate the title with a then popular term used to refer to Chinese——Yellow Peril.” —Yellow Peril,” used by the Whites to refer to the evilness of Chinese, is another example of this kind of labeling. It is from Sax Rohmer’s *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu*, in which the author conjures up an evil character Fu Manchu, who has been haunting the west to this very day.
Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green.

Invest him with all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race, accumulated in one giant intellect, with all the resources of science past and present, with all the resources, if you will, of a wealthy government— which, however, already has denied all knowledge of his existence. Imagine that awful being, and you have a mental picture of Dr. Fu-Manchu, the yellow peril incarnate in one man. (Rohmer 25-26)

This internalized image has become the “normal and standardized face” for any Chinese, and the Yellow Man in the movie is no exception. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth century academic and imaginative demonology of the “mysterious Orient” (Said 26). The creation of the East as an imaginary “demonology” in the film Broken Blossom, from Said’s perspective, exemplifies and popularizes the misrepresentation of the Orient produced by the Occident. As it is known that knowledge is power. The knowledge acquired by Orientalists about the Other enables them to gain more power to define other cultures, and the knowledge has been, henceforth, further studied, accumulated and ultimately reinforced by Orientalists. As Said asserts, “Knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control” (Said 36)

Broken Blossoms opens with acknowledgement of spiritual practice— temple bells before Buddha. We see that a Chinese man, Chen Huan, an educated elite in China with spiritual ideas, is in a temple getting advice for his planned trip to the west to spread the message of Buddha. He wants to work for improved communications between cultures. However, his mission is shattered
into pieces soon after he arrives in the cruel reality of London. Instead of being a Buddhist advocate, he is portrayed as an opium addict, and his humble image almost fades into the darkness of the heavy fog in Limehouse. His means for making a living is running a small store, and he is described as a "Chink shopkeeper." His status as an immigrant is signified by his utter anonymity, a man who is denied the basic acknowledgement of a name. His name "Cheng Huan" is never introduced by the film narrative or used to address him in the film. It is shown on the sign of a wall outside his shop, and in the film he is simply known as "Yellow Man." What is implied here is that "Cheng Huan's" personal identification as an Oriental does not matter at all; instead it is his skin color that matters the most. In fact, the westerners do not realize that for thousands of years, Chinese never regarded themselves as yellow; it is the label imposed by whites to create a contrast. Nor are the whites sensitive to the fact that the subtitle "the Yellow Man and the Girl" itself is offensive to the Chinese, not to mention that the term "Chinky," which Lucy uses to address the Yellow Man when she asks: "why are you so kind to me, Chinky?"

Being secluded, the Yellow Man is depicted as an emasculated Asian man in this film. If we look closely at his clothing, gestures, and appearance, and at the course of events in any given sequence, we will see the misrepresentation of Chinese clearly. His robe is excessively ornate. When he is in the Buddhist temple, he acts feminine---holding a fan, moving only with slight and restrained gestures, always twisting and squirming his body like a serpent. In contrast to the Yellow Man's behavior, we are also presented with the figure of Battling, whose gestures in the film are depicted as strong and stereotypically masculine. He stands with his feet set apart and his hands in his pockets. Very often, he looks around the room possessively, pulls his vest down and sways back and forth, declaring in a way that he is the master of the world. Back home, he
eats like a pig, throws a spoon at his daughter and forces her to smile. While angry, he knocks one fist against the other, and proclaims his opinion and emotions loudly. The Yellow Man, however, looks pale, as pale as a ghost, and his physically feeble body is a sharp contrast to that of Battling’s. His face hardly shows any easily identifiable emotions, which is completely contrary to the Western man whose emotions are all written on his face. With a pale face under his skullcap, feminized gestures, frail figure and dreamy facial expression with slant eyes, the Yellow Man is depicted as an emasculated yellow Other. Such an act is Orientalism at work. Here we have a Chinese man represented by a westerner in the movie as being sissy, sickly pale and feeble-bodied. Such an image is, therefore, a conscious effort by the movie producer to demonstrate a foil to the strong-bodied man as Battling. So, to portray an “acute” image of a Chinese man, the actor has to narrow his eyes all the time to produce a pair of “slant eyes.” He also walks back and forth on the street in a hunchbacked manner, stands by the side walk with his arms wrapped around himself, and leans on the wall huddling up to picture the image of a feeble-bodied man. As Said mentions, “the Orient was routinely described as feminine” (Said, “Orientalism Reconsidered” 103). Such physical inferiority is best exemplified in the final episode where two simultaneous acts take place. While the sick-bodied man is in front of Lucy, who is in bed listening to his flute, Battling is in the ring, fighting his opponent strictly by heavy slugging. The Chink is dressed in the weird long gown with a funny cap while Battling is stripped of all his clothing except his boxing shorts. He is all muscular and overpowering whereas the Chinaman is kneeling down, squirming his body with his funny instrument. The two alternate scenes cannot present a sharper contrast between the two men in terms of their physical attributes. Battling’s physical power is accentuated by the feeble Chink, and his manhood is
further augmented by the sissy-like demeanor of the protagonist. In short, the portrayal of Yellow Man in this film embodies the western perceptions and stereotyping of East as feminine.

Such a stereotype of the femininity of the Yellow Man is furthered by the sexual distortion depicted in the film. According to Said, “what they (westerners) look for often…was a different type of sexuality, and perhaps more libertine and less guilt-ridden…In time, ‘oriental sex’ was as standard a commodity as any other available in the mass culture, with the result that readers and writers could have it if they wished without necessarily going to the Orient” (190). This idea is clearly illustrated in the film-----the Yellow Man who falls in love with the white English girl is presented as a man of no sexuality. When Lucy appears at the window of the Yellow Man’s store and appreciates the doll on display, he is attracted by this small white blossom. He follows her sometimes to see her home. When Lucy is whipped by her father, she staggers out and falls into the Yellow Man’s shop. He shows great care to her. He first treats her wounds, and then takes her to his private attic to let her rest in his bed. To comfort her, he gives her finery to wear and plays the flute for her when she eats, and he even goes out on the street to buy flowers for her, treating her like a princess. The beauty and glory of the white blossoms shines in the little room. Standing beside the bed, the Yellow Man arches his body towards the beauty and intends to give her a kiss, but only ends up retreating. Offended by his daughter’s relationship with the Yellow Man, Battling beats Lucy to death. Seeing Lucy dead, the grieving Yellow Man shoots Battling and kills himself. As Oehling suggests there are no happy endings for interracial love.

If beauty is only skin-deep, so is ugliness. The ugly physical attributes of the Yellow Man are only a mask to conceal his supposed moral ugliness.” It is a device widely used to portray evil characters in Hollywood. The Queen in Snow White or the Stepmother in Cinderella are both given an ugly mask, and it is the same device used by the movie producer to represent people
who are the Other. Throughout the film, we can see that the image of the Yellow Man appears feminine; however, in the final scene, the passive Yellow Man turns to violence, pulls the trigger, and shoots to death Lucy’s father. He takes Lucy’s dead body back to the attic of his store, performs a prayer for her and plunges a knife into his chest, ending the film with the picture of a violent yellow villain. In the eyes of westerners, a person of a faith other than Christianity is an alien with no moral standards. In such a case, the Yellow Man cannot stand on the “moral highland.” As a non-Christian, he has no moral guidance for his conduct, and consequently, can only resort to his animal instinct. This view is implicitly expressed by Battling when he heard the news that his daughter had been “abducted” by a Yellow Man. “Above all, Battling hates those not born in the same great country as himself.” What he meant to say is “not born as Christians.” Furthermore, the gun the Yellow Man hides in his home reinforces the concealed threat and danger to American society, which, as a signifier, signifies the evil nature of the Yellow Man in particular, and the Other in general.

Being portrayed as a dangerous Other, the Yellow Man’s villainous intention is further depicted by his gaze at Lucy. With a dreaming face, Yellow Man stares at Lucy in a manner of being carried away when she appears at the window in front of her store. The script says: “The Yellow Man watched Lucy often. The beauty which all Limehouse missed smote him to the heart.” Such a love fantasy of the Yellow Man reveals potential danger for the white purity of Lucy. Another scene of Yellow Man’s evil gaze is depicted when Yellow Man, sitting near the counter and smoking, finds that Lucy is lying on the floor. He first takes it as his dreaming image, and then he looks again carefully. Being greatly shocked, he sees that Lucy is just in front of him. Kneeling down beside Lucy, he stares at her closely, and then moves his body towards her, making an attempt to kiss her. Even though he showed his tenderness to the poor Lucy who is
whipped by her father and loses consciousness at the counter in Yellow Man’s shop, his gaze at
the pure white child-woman again a hints at the potential Yellow Peril that threatens the white racial purity.

As a supplemental and complementary role of Yellow Man, the character of Evil Eye, a feminized merchant in the film, helps to confirm such a viciously evil image of Asians. Evil Eye represents a wicked villain who signifies a direct threat to white femininity. He follows Lucy, blocks her way on the sidewalk, disturbs her and targets her as a sexual object to take advantages of. In a sense, Evil Eye emphasizes the hostility and danger of the yellow peril for Lucy. In fact, the portrayal of Evil Eye as such a yellow villain reinforces the stereotypy of the false representation of Others.

Furthermore, neither the Yellow Man nor Evil Eye are not presented as individual characters. Rather, they are representations of an ethnic group, in this case, Chinese. They do not have names; they are only identified either by the color of their skin as in Yellow Man or the physical attribute as in Evil Eye. They, along with the yellow —Others” are introduced to the audience by having them appear at the opium den where, as the script describes, —the orient squats at the portals of the west.” —In this scarlet house of sin,” the yellow Others are either gambling or smoking opium while whorish girls are serving customers. The social environment depicted here is crystal clear to all Westerners: it is China Town, where the Chinese live and entertain. It is a known fact to this day that China Town in London is located in Soho, the red-light district of London. The general impression of a China Town in western countries is that it is dark, dirty and smelly filled with secrecy, gangsters, drugs and prostitution. One of the perpetual images of a Chinaman, which itself is a pejorative term for Chinese, is opium addiction. Early works of literature and movies frequently depict a Chinaman as someone who is lying on a bamboo couch,
together with a bunch of other smokers, inhaling and puffing a long pipe while he remains totally motionless like the Yellow Man in this film. Such an image has almost become stereotypical of a Chinaman depicted in early works of literature in the West. Of course, anyone who is an opium addict is depicted as morally degenerate. Consequently, a Chinaman, who is an opium addict, is automatically on the "moral low ground". The Yellow Man in the movie is no exception. But what the Western viewers do not know is that China never produced opium. It was the British who sold opium to China, which resulted in an Opium War between China and Britain in 1840, and poisoned the Chinese people. The film producer here, firstly, tramples the other people physically, and then continues to abuses the victims culturally by imposing and perpetuating a nastily negative stereotype about them. This is how Orientalism at work in force.

The introductory narrative in this film addresses one of its important themes ----- religious conversion. The narrative begins with an image of a Buddhist temple, "it is a tale of temple bells, sounding at sunset before the image of Buddha; it is a tale of love and lovers." Obviously, the temple is identified as a representation of the Chinese culture manifested by Buddha and Buddhism, the predominant religion in China at the time the movie was produced. However, the depiction of Buddhism in this movie is the largest misrepresentation of Chinese culture. In the prelude, the Yellow Man is given a mission-----to teach the "barbaric Anglo-Saxons" a lesson, and ultimately convert them. "The Yellow Man more than ever convinced that the great nations across the sea need the lessons of the gentle Buddha." To the western audience, the message revealed is clear-----a missionary from an alien religion will embark on a religious mission to convert western culture. However, the fact is that Buddhism is a humble religion, which emphasizes and practices self-discipline and self-cultivation. Buddhism never deems one single text as the sole source of truth, and the ultimate goal of Buddhism is not to convert non-believers.
It is believed that the truth is revealed to believers by one’s consciousness instead of having someone walking door to door to convert non-believers. The Buddhist monks practice their religion by begging, and they do not possess property and have no large organizations. By placing the Yellow Man in the position of a Buddhist missionary, the producer relies on two facts. The first one is the collective memory of how Christian missionaries converted non-Christian believers. The second is antagonism toward as well as total ignorance of foreign religions, including Buddhism. The second one is especially important in Orientalism because it guarantees that the only channel through which the western audiences acquire knowledge of the Orient or non-Christian cultures is through the Orientalist experts, whose task is to present the images of those “Others” in order to create the contrast. As a result, the general public as well as professionals are generally ignorant of what happens outside their own culture. In the mean time, they are spoon-fed with information by the Orientalists who present a twisted contrasting image of the “Other” for the purpose of creating a “feel-good image” of themselves.

As its title, *Broken Blossoms: The Yellow Man and the Girl* represents the visual portrayal of the Orientalist stereotypes imposed upon Chinese people and Chinese culture. Given the analysis of the misrepresentations from different perspectives like physical attributes, moral degeneration and religious conversion, we can see that the film *Broken Blossoms* is a visual manifestation of Orientalism which reinforces the social norms and the social system that subjects the “Orient” to ideological manipulation. Griffith’s visual narrative presents to western audiences the idea that Orientals are submissive, feminized, childlike, irrational, depraved, evil, threatening and insidious, and thus totally different from the West. However, what created these stereotypes is not an isolated or individual representation, but a historical discourse of race that is embedded in western society, and Hollywood’s Orientalist narrative tradition is a typical example. Television
continuously offers viewers images of whites defending the community against “aliens” from the Third World (Shim 385-409). In this process, the stereotypes of specific groups are reproduced and recycled.

Starting from the 1920s, after the release of the Yellow Man, American screens were filled with Chinese criminal characters. According to Doobo Shim, chief among these villains was the best-remembered figure, Dr. Fu Manchu, a character of evil criminal genius, who is physically ugly and morally degenerate. He first gaining popularity in a novel, *The Mystery of Dr Fu Manchu* written by the English writer, Sax Rohmer, and then became an extraordinary success in Hollywood films (385--409). In 1929, Paramount brought forth the first series *The Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu*, followed with *The Return of Dr. Fu Manchu* in 1930, *Daughter of the Dragon* in 1931, and *The Mask of Fu Manchu* in 1932. For a time, Fu Manchu was established as the most enduring stereotype of Asian villains, “the yellow peril incarnate in one man” as Rohmer depicts (26).

The creation of this Chinese super villain by Rohmer does not happen in isolation. At the time *The Mystery of Dr Fu Manchu* was published in 1913, Britain was still under the gloom of the Boxer Rebellion, the Chinese nativist unrest against Western power which resulted in the death of hundreds of foreigners, including missionaries and diplomats, as well as thousands of Chinese Christians and civilians. Consequently, this uprising was an astonishing challenge to British hegemony, especially its imperial power in China. In the year 1908, the last Manchu emperor, Puyi, was forced to step down from the throne, and Rohmer’s novel of Dr. Fu Manchu, published afterwards, is in a way a call to the memory of the last ruling power in China (Van Ash). When Rohmer drafted the first series of Fu Manchu in 1911, he claimed, “Conditions for launching a Chinese villain on the market were ideal… The Boxer Rebellion had started off rumors of a
Yellow Peril which had not yet died down” (Van Ash and Rohmer 75). In this sense, the portrayal of Fu Manchu is a response to the Boxers that capitalized on British prejudice against China.

Inspired by his own investigative journalism on the Chinese community in East London's Limehouse area, Rohmer reproduces in his series of Fu-Manchu many of the myths of Chinese national character that animated the "Yellow Peril": the narrow-minded immigrant community with close ties to political groups in China, the opium addict, the submissive immigrant laborer willing to work for subsistence wages, and the radical alterity of the East (qtd. in Wingfield 86). From the narratives of Fu Manchu, the contrasting images and values created by the author are crystal clear: West versus Orient, good versus evil. The West, leading the good fight against evil, the Orient in general and Fu Manchu in particular, is the incarnation of justice, law and order aided by the Enlightenment of science. Furthermore, the failure to capture Fu Manchu reveals an obvious message to the West: the hidden danger of the Yellow Peril.

In those stories, Rohmer dismantles Chinese for generations. Published from 1913 to 1959, Fu Manchu as a stereotype appeared in his 13 novels moved from the page to the Hollywood screen in the year 1929. The uninterrupted Hollywood adaptations from 1929 to 1932, like the creation of the novels, did not happen in a vacuum; rather, they reflected the American political need to create a fictional enemy. The Great Depression in 1929 further enhanced American’s great concern with mass Asian immigration, which is similar to the situation at the time when the film Broken Blossoms was produced. The influx of Chinese immigrants caused great fear of disruption of the unity of America, and Rohmer’s depiction of Fu Manchu fits neatly into the American social contexts in which the ethnic groups were represented as different Others from Anglo-Americans.
The Fu Manchu films are notable for the consistency with which Hollywood manages to project an evil image of the Yellow Peril to satisfy political needs. On the Hollywood screen, this evil nature is greatly exaggerated. Like the Yellow Man in *Broken Blossoms*, Fu Manchu is firstly uglified physically: a full mustache extending downward past the lips and on either side of the chin, similar to the pigtail which symbolizes the coolie. To further smear this Oriental by building up his brutality, Hollywood, by fully employing the modern technology in film industry, presents an array of torture scenes. For example, *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932) is almost entirely set around torture: one victim is tied upside down inside a huge bell and tormented by dangling grapes over his lips and having salt water dripped over him; another is placed on a bed unstably suspended over a pit of crocodiles with a sand-timer that slowly causes it to overbalance. The most disgusting is that Fu always wears a wicked smile appearing to delight in the agonies he imposes on his victims. Again, like the Yellow man, Fu Manchu is portrayed as feminine as well as asexual. —Fu, a man wearing a long dress, batting his eye-lashes, surrounded by muscular black servants in loin cloths, and with his bad habit of caressingly touching white men on the leg, wrist and face with his long fingernails is not so much a threat as he is frivolous offense to white manhood” (Chin and Chan 60).

As the incarnation of evil, the early portrayal of the stereotype Yellow Peril appeared and reappeared before the mid 1930s‘. However, when Japan invaded China and attacked on Pearl Harbor in World WarII, this evil finally disappeared from the Hollywood screen; and the new Other became the form of stereotype. Chinese, instead, began to be portrayed as hard working people as in *The Good Earth* (1937) and *King of China Town* (1939). Unexpectedly, Fu Manchu, the unpardonably wicked evil who was once sentenced to death made his miraculous reappearance since the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Like a telling barometer of
political attitude, such reappearance reflects the political relationship between the two countries. By the end of the 1050's, the industry had clearly re-established the Chinese as America’s main enemy, overshadowing the Russian if only on the basis of race (qtd. in Shim 393). Again, another array of anti-Chinese films was made by Hollywood during 1950s and 1960s, for example, *The Adventure of Fu Manchu* released in 1956, *The Face of Fu Manchu* in 1965, *The Brides of Fu Manchu* in 1966, *The Vengeance of Fu Manchu* in 1967, *The Blood of Fu Manchu* in 1968, and *The Castle of Fu Manchu* in 1969. The repeated adaptations of Fu Manchu marshaled purposely visualize the nature of this Yellow Peril—inhuman humans and bestial subhumans, and signify the threat from the East, which, in fact provided moments of great tension in the U.S. In *The Adventure of Fu Manchu* (1956), each episode starts off with a chess game, with a narrator telling the audience that the white pieces are good/life and the black pieces bad/death; the Devil plays chess for men’s souls, so does Fu Manchu who is evil incarnate. At the end of each episode, after Smith and Petrie put a stop to Fu Manchu’s latest brutal scheme, he signifies that it is over by breaking a black chess piece. Obviously, Fu Manchu is always involved in a struggle between the East and the West both popularizing and normalizing the Orientalist depiction of the civilized West versus the evil Orient.

As discussed above, Hollywood created a series of stories about Chinese people and culture to serve its own purposes, and this is, in Said’s term, the practice of Orientalism or cultural hegemony Jonathan Spence, in his analysis of twentieth-century western fictional depictions of China and the Chinese, observes that westerners "do not understand China and so we constantly invent it" (100). It might be fair to say that the Orientalists do not entirely invent stories about other cultures. They sometimes use facts; but they only select those facts that will demonstrate the inferiority of the "Other” so as to show the superiority of themselves. They have
reconstructed‖ an entire Orient by firstly ―dissecting‖ or breaking the Orient into pieces and then ―reassembling‖ those pieces together to create a mirror image of the Other. The process is highly selective because only those facts that help relegate the Other to inferiority in moral, social, cultural, religious, artistic and racial aspects are selected, rearranged, and devoid of their context before they are finally presented to the west. —The growth of knowledge, particularly specialized knowledge, is a very slow process. Far from being merely additive or cumulative, the growth of knowledge is a process of selective accumulation, displacement, deletion, rearrangement, and insistence within what has been called a research consensus‖ (Said, 176). The consequence is that it is no surprise that people in the west think of the Chinese or other Orientals as yellow men, a race of generic inferiority in comparison to whites, a self-acclaimed color of purity. In short, it is the ingenious manipulation by the Orientalist experts in selecting materials, both factual and fictional, to present the contrasting image of the Other that constitutes the practice of Orientalists.
During the past century, Hollywood films, as a popular artifact, have dominated the world market. Today, under the influence of globalization, Hollywood films have special influence in terms of economic and political power. They inevitably contribute to shaping the tastes of audiences worldwide. The film industry in China, dominated by cultural elites, is also subject to cultural hegemony of Hollywood. In the last two decades, quite a few Chinese movies, either made in mainland China or Hong Kong, have won awards at international film festivals, including the Oscar. Unfortunately, the Hollywood industry, which dominates the communication medium around the world, is not a free market. It is highly selective about what ideas get expressed through this world-wide communication medium. Thus, not all ideas that could be promoted through film have an equal opportunity to be expressed. In other words, only those that follow in the Hollywood tradition become accessible to Euro-American audiences. To fully embrace such cultural assault from the west, the movie industry in China has forged ahead to be fully incorporated with western hegemony.

As discussed in Chapter Two, postcolonialism is a discourse, a discourse between former colonists and the colonized and the semi-colonized. Young calls it the “tricontinental,” referring to former colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America, between cultural hegemony of the west and indigenous cultures. Culture-wise, it is the first concerted cultural movement from the non-west cultures to initiate a counterattack at the cultural hegemony of the west since colonization. Apart from a conscious effort to de-center the established center, indigenous cultures from former colonized countries have been engaged in a comprehensive and complicated
communication with the west. This communication involves in the systematic accumulation of
selected knowledge of the Other so that such knowledge can be employed to sustain the
dominance of the Other on the part of the west and the response to the dominant forces by non-
western cultures. Film as a cultural carrier is a good example.

Although non-western cultures share a common goal, they differ significantly in how they
attain the goals as well as in what they eventually intend to achieve. The differences are derived
from their respective backgrounds in culture, history, the current political and economic status
and the level of interaction with the western powers. Diverse as they are, they can roughly be
categorized into three groups. The first group encompasses nations that have a long history,
which is much longer than that of the west. By the time they came into contact with the west,
they had an established civilization with their own system of values in culture, religion, language
and morality. This group of nations is the primary target of the Orientalism outlined by Edward
Said. The second group of nations is those that were non-existent as sovereign nations before
colonialization, but gained their independence after the Second World War. Most of them are the
nations in Africa, which have had their own indigenous culture and language for a long time. The
third group consists of nations or ethnic groups that are formed on the colonized lands, mostly in
Central and South Americas, whose culture is a mixture of the indigenous mores and the white
European’s cultures. The major difference of these groups lies in their priority of establishing a
cultural identification in the first place. Of the three, the third group is perhaps the one which
finds it most difficult, by comparison, to identify themselves culturally as the overwhelming
majority of the population the descendents are either former colonizers or the slaves brought
from Africa. Theirs is a hybrid culture of European, African and indigenous Native Indians.
Even though most of the African nations, belonging to the second group, have their own history
of culture, they have all adopted the western way of life after gaining their political independence in the 1950s and 1960s. These nations choose the languages of their former colonizers as the official language of their nations, namely English or French, and Christianity as their religion to adopting western style of government and economic policy. Culturally, these nations may be hamstrung by the lack of depth and longevity in their own cultures to combat the cultural hegemony of the west. With regard to the first group of nations, they have never been lacking in cultural identity. Many of them, like Egypt, India and China, possess a glorious ancient civilization that is comparable with that of ancient Greece and Rome, and unique cultural characteristics in language, religion, social and cultural customs. In *Clashes of Civilizations and the Remaining of World Order*, Samuel Huntington distinguishes three contesting civilizations in the contemporary world: Christian world led by the United States, the Arab world and the Sinic world with Buddhism at its core as each civilization claims its cultural uniqueness and believes in the superiority of its culture over the other. It is noted that both the Arab world and the Sinic world belong to the first group of nations. Huntington’s division, arbitrary as it might be, presents circumstantial evidence of both the interlocking and contesting relationship between the West and the East.

Understanding the unique cultural identities of the first group of nations is important in accurately depicting the postcolonial discourse between these cultures and the west. First and foremost, the rich and longitudinal repertoire of their cultural heritage enables them to withstand the constant assaults of western hegemony, and consequently, to be able to represent themselves. In the meantime, they also face the dilemma between adhering to their own cultural heritage and advancing with modernity, between combating western cultural hegemony and “convergence with the outside world,” mostly set by the west. Gandhi’s choice of wearing a Kathiawadia dress
of a Gujarati peasant rather than that of an upper-class English gentleman to lead the anti-colonialism movement against the British is both hailed as adhering to the indigenous Indian culture and criticized as “directed against the associated ideologies of masculinity and modernity” (Young, 328). On the other hand, Naguib Mahfouz, the prominent Egyptian writer who was the first Arab Nobel Laureate, chooses English rather than Arabic, his native language, to compose and publish his monumental trilogy of Cairo’s Saga. His works won him universal praise from the west, claiming his work to be a genuine representation of the Arab world and its culture, and ultimately earned him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1988. Domestically, he was sharply criticized and even denounced for producing a stark misrepresentation of the indigenous culture. Likewise, the movies directed by Zhang Yimou, the most recognized and internationally acclaimed film director in China, are receiving mixed responses from the west and domestic audiences. In a way, film production serves as a communicative medium in the dialogue that Zhang Yimou and his compatriots are engaged in with the west. This, in a sense, is a process in which the Self and the Other to meet.

Zhang Yimou is one of the best known directors of the Fifth Generation of Chinese film. Graduating from the prestigious Beijing Film Academy in 1982, he became a cinematographer at Guangxi Film Studio, and worked on a number of influential films like One and Eight (1984) and Yellow Earth (1984). He embarked on his directorial debut in 1987 with the film Red Sorghum, which won him the Golden Bear for Best Picture. This success helped him with international funding for his next two films, Judou (1990) and Raise the Red Lantern (1991). These three films form a trilogy that strengthened his reputation abroad. For more than two decades, he has produced up to 17 films, winning him various awards both domestically and internationally.
Being the representative director of the Fifth Generation of Chinese cinema, Zhang Yimou is caught up in the cultural discourse between China and the west. The timing of his career as an artist in general and as a movie director in particular coincides with one of the two Chinese cultural movements in modern Chinese history—the 1980s when China just reopened its door to the outside world after 10 years of the Cultural Revolution when almost all forms of art, either western or traditional, were banned. It was a time when Chinese intellectuals felt an acute sense of “lagging behind” the rest of the world, principally the west, and so were wholeheartedly willing to learn from the west and to “embrace” the world. It is by all means a golden opportunity to present China for the west with what Said called the accumulated knowledge with the Orientalist’s bent about the west, the world, and in particular about China herself. In the face of such bombardment of knowledge, the initial reaction of Zhang Yimou and his colleagues was to be overwhelmed, and they passively reacted by taking the bait thrown to them by the west. That would explain the characteristics of the trilogy of Zhang’s early filmmaking, which won him international recognition: *Red Sorghum*, *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*.

Reading the critiques from the west, one is struck by the chorus of praise of the film as allegorical repudiations of the totalitarian regime of the Chinese government. And this opinion was further accentuated in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the fall of the Berlin War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. So, from the very start, the dialogue between Zhang Yimou and the West has been political in nature. But to politicize art is not something new to Zhang Yimou and his colleagues of the Fifth Generation. Almost all forms of art, films included, prior to the 1980s were politically oriented under the doctrine of Mao Zedong that literature and arts must serve proletarian politics. The dominant or recurrent themes of the films made by Zhang’s predecessors are either about wars with the ultimate triumph of the Communist-led army over the
Japanese invaders and the Nationalist army or about the socialist re-construction after the founding of the People’s Republic. Such politicization of art reached its zenith during the Cultural Revolution when every form of art was regarded as a part of socialist propaganda. What Zhang tried to accomplish in the three films is to depoliticize art, a fundamental change from the orthodox doctrine previously prescribed for artists. The first step to depoliticize a work of art is to make it timeless or detach it from a specific location. In these three films, the real historic context does not intervene. All the three stories take place in “old China,” so old to the contemporary Chinese audience that both time and location become irrelevant. The concept of “old China” is not necessarily tempo, but cultural or conceptual. The story in *Red Sorghum* occurred during the anti-Japanese war in the 1930s and the 1940s. But the entire plot had very little, if anything to do, with the war itself, not to mention that there is no reference to the location of the event. The film opens with a voice-over of the protagonist’s grandson, who narrates the set marriage of his grandmother, Ju’er, with an old leper who is the owner of a sorghum wine factory. On the way to carry the bride to the groom’s home, the wedding party passes across a field of red sorghum, during which they are attacked by bandits. One of the bearers saves the bride, and they fall in love. Later, when the leper dies, the widow inherits the factory along with her lover, who, in fact, is the “Grandpa” in the voice-over. Then the film shifts to the Japanese invasion, which leads to the death of all but the “Grandpa” and his child with the protagonist. In addition to delocalization of the event, the ritual of carrying the bride in a sedan on the way to the groom’s house, the violent shaking and deliberate tossing of the sedan by the bearers to such an extent as to rock her to wet her pants is very alien to the domestic audience. The temporal remoteness in this sense is not as acute as the cultural one.
The film of *Ju Dou* is somewhat similar. Set mainly in a silk dyeing factory, it is about a young woman, Ju Dou, who is married off to an old man, the owner of the factory. The old man is in fact impotent and tortures his wife at night. The old man's nephew falls in love with Ju Dou. Later on, Ju Dou conceives him a child, but when the old man learns the truth, he tries to kill the baby, and is eventually stopped by the lovers. When Ju dou gets pregnant a second time, they are unable to conceal their relationship, and Ju Dou takes poison to abort her baby. The old man then falls into a vat of dye and dies, and the films ends with their child, a son, who drowns his biological father in the dye, while his mother's hysteria burns down the entire factory. Here, what alienates Chinese audiences is the female protagonist's "brave" self-display of her body and eroticism in the film. With the naked front of her body in full view, Ju Dou exhibits herself to her lover. In Chinese culture, for a female to expose her naked body in a work of art is either a cultural taboo or artistically offensive. Even though the film is rendered timeless as well as out of its cultural context, such bold display of a female body is primarily for western audience.

The exoticism is also found in *Raise the Red Lantern*. It is set in 1920s and 30s China, in a compound of a traditional courtyard mansion in an indeterminate town; it is a story about an educated young woman called Songlian, who is married off by her stepmother to be the fourth concubine of an aged man from a well-to-do family. She is quick to learn all the tricks to compete with the other wives for the favor of the old man. In the hope of monopolizing the old man's time, she pretends to get pregnant. When her lie is discovered, she is punished by being made to live in solitude. The film ends with the introduction of the fifth wife into this household. It is not the timelessness or locationlessness of the story that sounds foreign to the Chinese audience; it is the alienation of cultural content that throws off the contemporary Chinese audience. The concubines, the raising of the red lantern as a signal of sexual Dionysus and the
bound feet of women are all cultural residues of the old China, with which domestic audience are only remotely familiar. By placing the story in a temporal and locational vacuum, the director can disassociate any event within the work from any familiar temporal or spatial order that could easily be linked with the concurrent political events.

The second step to depoliticize a work of art is the drastic shift from collectivism to individualism by creating a protagonist who plays a dominant role in the entire narrative. There have been no single individual heroes, like Hamlet or Othello, in traditional Chinese works of art, and later in revolutionary literature. The heroic acts are performed through collective effort. Even though there is personal or individual suffering, it is always treated as an integral part of the entire social group or class. From classic Chinese literature to modern revolutionary works of art, the individual is always insignificant compared to the societal forces. In a way, Zhang Yimou’s movies initiate a new narrative in modern Chinese art, in which individuality and personal perspective triumph over the collective. Whether the Grandma in *Red Sorghum*, or the protagonist in *Ju Dou* or Su Lian in *Raise the Red Lantern*, the life of the three individual females dominates the entire discourse, overpowering other characters and the plot to the periphery.

The third measure that Zhang takes to depoliticize the films is to mystify the folkloric elements drawn from Chinese culture. By comparison, folklore is a relatively “safer area” to create artistic effect, which would distance itself from political or ideological association. Furthermore, it is by default, closely related to the Chineseness, free from the contamination of any ideological bent. Cultural mystification is a process of selecting certain indigenous customs or social practices, and jumbling them together to create a new cultural phenomenon. For instance, the foot massage offered to the concubines before they retire to bed with their master is
an example of mystified folklore. Massage as an important part of Chinese medicine has been practiced for hundreds of years in China. It is unmistakably Chinese. It is used for medical treatment, and in most cases, the recipients of the treatment are male. However, foot massaging of the selected concubines for sexual pleasure is something unheard of. Nor is it mentioned in the Su Tong’s original novel, upon which this film is based. So, it is an artistic creation of a mystified folklore that Zhang Yimou and his crew create to add to the sensuality. Such creation has no political connotation, but produces a sense of indigenity. However, mystified folklore, or “filmic folklore” as Zhang (19) calls it, “does not mirror the culture and the people of a certain time and place…but it likewise does offer an interpretation of folklore as an entity of a culture” (Zhang, 267).

It is the third measure where domestic critiques differ significantly from western counterparts. And this is where the postcolonial dialogue between Zhang Yimou and western critiques and audiences occurs. The three films could be nicknamed the “red trilogy,” as Zhang Yimou once humorously called it, “I went from red to red. I don’t want audiences to say, ‘Ah, yes, another Zhang Yimou!’ whenever I make a film” (Farquhar). The trilogy establishes Zhang Yimou’s international reputation and has won him the major awards ---- Red Sorghum 1987: Golden Bear Award, Berlin International Film Festival; Best feature, Hundred Flowers Award; Best feature, cinematography, sound, music, Golden Rooster Awards; Best picture, best director, best artistic achievement, Zimbabwe International Film Festival; Film Critics Award, Sydney Film Festival; Best Picture, Brussels International Film Festival; Judou, 1990: Luis Buñuel Special Award, Cannes Film Festival; Golden Spike, Valladolid International Film Festival; Best Foreign Feature Film (Amanda), Norwegian International Film Festival; Gold Hugo, Chicago International Film Festival; Oscar nominee for Best Foreign Language Film; Raise the Red
Lantern 1991: Silver Lion Award, Venice Film Festival 1992; Oscar nominee for Best Foreign Language Film 1993; Best Film not in the English Language, BAFTA 1995; Best Cinematography, Los Angeles Film Critics Association.

This is just a partial list of the international awards for the three films. In a way, it is unprecedented for a Chinese movie director to receive so many awards from the west. Reading comments from the international journals from the west, one gets a clear picture of why the west has such a high regard of Zhang’s trilogy. The first message coming from the west is unmistakably ideological. The trilogy is regarded as a rebellion against the Communist regime in China as Farquhar points out, “Fifth Generation cinema, however, recast the Party as political patriarchy in a devastating cultural critique. Zhang goes even further in the trilogy. Old men personify a system that never relinquishes power. Freedom only comes from real or symbolic patricide that is carried out by the son but instigated by female desire.” Comments on the trilogy almost unanimously make reference to the fact that Ju Dou and Raise the Red Lantern had been banned by the Chinese government because of their rebellious nature:

His (Zhang’s) second and third pictures to be shown outside China, for example –Ju Dou (1990) and Raise the Red Lantern (1991)—were originally forbidden release to the Chinese public, in part because each was the winner of a prize at a major Western film festival. What surer sign that these works espouse bourgeois liberal values, to be seen in their flouting of sexual norms that define the institution of marriage, their harrowing portrait of the systematic oppression of women, and their allegorical implication that young Chinese should rebel against the brutal, autocratic rule of impotent old men?

(Cardullo, 130)
Zhang’s lush 1920s dramas *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern* proved eminently exportable, providing an international art-house icon in his glamorous lead actress Gong Li. But both films were initially banned in China; the government tends to explain its reasons, but among them were certainly the films‘ heated, if demure, sexual content, their images of personal rebellion and what could be construed as a depiction of a former “primitive” China. (Romney 47)

The message from these comments is crystal clear—Zhang’s works won the awards from the west because they embrace bourgeois values. The fact that they were banned by the Chinese government is a clear indication of repressive, brutal and autocratic regime which these films are encouraging Chinese people to rebel against. One cannot be more political or ideological than the chorus of comments toward a work of art. Mao Zedong once said, “We should oppose all those that are embraced by the enemy and embrace all those are opposed by the enemy.” These comments seem to be the flip side of Mao’s quotation, which is of very political nature. By condemning the repressive regime and praising the rebellious spirit shown in these films, the west placed itself on the high ground of morality, a self-appointed guardian of human liberty on behalf of the oppressed peoples in non-western countries. What is ironic is that westerners seem to have a very short memory of what colonizers did not too long ago. Here, the former abusers of fundamental human liberty begin to assume the role of “the catcher in the rye,” on behalf of the very people they brutally exploited and oppressed for centuries. Even more ironic is the fact that Zhang Yimou and his colleagues tried awfully hard to depoliticize their works of art, only to find themselves as well as their works at the center of the heated exchange of political and ideological warfare.
The second message from the comments from the west is that of exoticism, a favorite subject of Orientalists. Anything exotic is foreign and alien for the domestic culture. To see something exotic on a foreign land is totally natural. However, what interests Orientalists is not the mere differences between the west and the rest; rather, exoticism on foreign lands has become a cultural phenomenon that westerners use to define themselves. It becomes a demarcation between the “civilized world” of the west and the “barbaric world” of the rest. To illustrate his point, Said quotes from Flaubert:

To amuse the crowd, Mohammed Ali’s jester took a woman in a Cairo bazaar one day, set her on the counter of a shop, and coupled with her publicly while the shopkeeper calmly smoked his pipe…

…some time ago, a santon (ascetic priest) used to walk through the streets of Cairo completely naked except for a cap on his head and another on his prick. To piss he would doff the prick-cap, and sterile women who want children would run up, put themselves under the parabola of his urine and rub themselves with it. (Said, 103)

What impression do these images leave about Arabs or Arabic culture? Exotic, certainly, but there is certainly more than their being foreign. They are primitive, vulgar, sexual, decadent and most of all uncivilized, and they help fossilize stereotypical images of the Other: the belly dancing of the Egyptians, the blood worshipping of black voodoo doctors, the opium addition of Chinese men, and the three-inch bound feet of Chinese women. These images of the Other, then, become a indispensable part of the knowledge about the Other, which is used to define the west through contrast:

When a learned Orientalist traveled in the country of his specialization, it was always with unshakable abstract maxims about the “civilization” he had studied; rarely were
Orientalists interested in anything except proving the validity of these musty "truths" by applying them, without great success, to uncomprehending, hence degenerate, natives. (Said, 52)

…this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. I used the word "arbitrary" here because imaginative geography of the "our land-barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for "us" to set up these boundaries in our own minds: "the" become "they" accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from "ours." (Said, 54)

To the great delight of Orientalists, the movies that Zhang Yimou directed provide a rich pool of Oriental images which they could happily use to reinforce the stereotypes of the Orient. In this case, it is not they who conjure up these images; it is the Orient itself who lends a helping hand. The primitive and raw passion of Grandma in *Red Sorghum*, the incestuous act of *Ju Dou*, the three-inch bound feet of concubines in *Raise the Red Lantern* all help define a primitive and barbaric culture in the East as one that is opposed to the civilized society in the West.

In the face of the two messages from the west, Zhang Yimou is incapacitated in his own defense. With regard to the first one, it is completely against his initial intention of making the three films as ideological weapons against his own country. As mentioned earlier, he has tried every means possible to make his works apolitical. But he is powerless with the showering praises from Orientalists, who bestow him as a champion ideological warrior. On this issue, however, there is not much criticism either from the Chinese government or from the domestic critiques and audiences. It is with the second message that he encounters the sharpest criticism,
ranging from his works being considered as bad taste and cultural trash to “his ‘orientalist’ way of selling an exotic China to pander to the tastes of foreign devils…” (Chow, 680). The fact could be that it is not his intention to collaborate with western Orientalists to strengthen the cultural hegemony of the west. However, his works inadvertently play right into the hands of Orientalists. Orientalism, in fact, is a two-way traffic; it is a collaboration between the West and the Rest. This is especially true in the postcolonial era when the awareness of western cultural hegemony is very much in the mind of people in the tricontinent nations. So, Orientalism cannot be as easily applied as it used to be without the collaboration of the people within indigenous cultures. The collaborators are in most cases social elites, who are educated in the west, and who are the first ones to introduce western ideas into local societies. In its process, they either unconsciously or subconsciously play the same role of Orientalists.

In the case of China, there are, as indicated earlier, two cultural movements that mark the intellectual and cultural changes in China. The first one is the “May 4 movement,” which occurred in 1919, and the second one coincided with the ending of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in the early 1980s. Both cultural movements took place in the wake of China’s complete closure to the outside world. In the case of the first one, China had just ended its last feudalistic empire—the Qing Dynasty, and was plunged into civil wars among warlords. Poor, backward and still with feudalistic residues in society, the intellectuals embarked on a “new cultural movement,” in which they completely rejected the traditional Chinese culture and wholeheartedly embraced the west by introducing and adopting western ideas in government, education, language, literature, art, and most of all ideology. The second cultural movement erupted as a direct response to the domestic violence and political turmoil during the Cultural Revolution when China totally severed its ties with the west. Zhang Yimou and his
contemporaries, who lived through the suffocation of that period, vowed to strike something new in the arts. And this is where he becomes involved in the Orientalist communication with the west, and consequently falls right into the trap of the Orientalist web.

It is safe to say that he is not consciously collaborating with the west to enhance and reinforce Western cultural hegemony. Nonetheless, what he presents in his early works, especially in the trilogy, is an invaluable aid to cultural hegemony. The urge to converge with the outside world, combined with the lure from the west—awards and recognition of his artistic talents in his early works prior to the trilogy — prompts him to embrace the west. Compared with his earlier works prior to the trilogy which focus on domestic issues in contemporary China, the subject matter selected for the trilogy is mainly targeted to western audiences with minimal plot as Zhang understands perfectly that most westerners are ignorant about Chinese history. If the plot of his film depends too much on the political, social and historical conditions of China, his targeted audiences will find it hard to appreciate the films, and his dialogue with the audience will break. So, all three films are devoid of historical significance. What we know, as far as the plot is concerned, is that both *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern* took place in the 1920s. What is the historical or cultural relevance of the 1920s to the western audience? There is very little. So, his prospective audience will have no burden of trying to figure out the relevance. Stripping the plot of its historical and cultural relevance is part of his plan in making these films. Next, the subject matter must be appealing to the western taste. There seems to be no other subject than sex that has “universal appeal”, especially for the western audiences. Sensuality and sexuality dominate all three movies. The boldness of openly depicting sexual desire and sensual scenes is unprecedented in the history of Chinese movies: either the raw passion for sexual pleasure and physical conquest of the female body found in *Red Sorghum*, or the repressed sexual drive which
leads to incest depicted in *Ju Dou*, or the jealousy and competition among concubines in winning the favor of the master by sleeping with him in *Raise the Red Lantern*. They all send sex appeal to the audience. Upon commenting on Flaubert's experience of the Orient, Said observed:

> Woven through all of Flaubert's Oriental experiences, exciting or disappointing, is an almost uniform association between the Orient and sex. In making this association Flaubert was neither the first nor the most exaggerated instance of a remarkably persistent motif in Western attitudes to the Orient. And indeed, the motif itself is singularly unvaried, although Flaubert's genius may have done more than anyone else's could have to give it artistic dignity. Why the Orient seems still to suggest not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies, is something on which one could speculate: it is not the province of my analysis here, alas, despite its frequently noted appearance. (Said, 188)

As Said points out here, sexuality has become a motif in Orientalist's works in depicting the Orient, particularly female sexuality. It is an integral part of the exoticism that westerners project in their view of the Orient. To westerners, such a projected image presents an added appeal of the Orient, which, along with its vast natural and human resources, countless historical and cultural relics, is analogous to a female body to be possessed and violated. Was Zhang Yimou aware of the projected image of the East by westerners? It is doubtful. Did he intend to join the Orientalists to highlight the sexual appeal of Oriental women? It is probably not. But his works do help reinforced the stereotypical images of the Orient: weak, sexual, feminine and decadent. What Said refers to as the motif in Orientalist works is convincingly echoed in the works of the Orientals themselves. What a convenience! Comments on the trilogy have unanimously made
reference to the female movie star—Gong Li, the attraction of Oriental beauty, who plays the leading role of the all three films.

It is widely recognized that Zhang’s visual imagery redefines the politics of Chinese self and identity. In the first decade, this imagery focused on the sexual power, reproductive continuity and spectacle of the female body onscreen. Beautiful young women, played by Gong Li, are wife-daughter-mother-lover-virgin-vamp in the trilogy. *Red Sorghum* breaks cultural taboos against representing female ecstasy, orgasm, and fecundity onscreen. Bold close-ups of Jiu’er’s face — panting and wide-eyed in the sedan-chair wedding sequence and again in the wild-sorghum abduction scene — were unprecedented in mainland Chinese cinema. In *Red Sorghum*, female desire is not only a force of nature but also the foundation of a vibrant, productive community until destroyed by Japanese invaders. Erotic close-ups continued in the next two films, such as the bathing and seduction shots in *Judou* and the ritual foreplay around foot-massage and lighting lanterns in *Raise the Red Lantern*. (Farquhar)

In a way, Gong Li has become a source of exoticism for western audience and commentators. Alan Stone, who writes for *Boston Review*, even suggests that all these three films — are best understood neither as political parables nor as attempts to create an authentic China, but as Zhang’s prolonged artistic meditation on Gong Li as desire, as beauty…” (qtd. in Chan 118). She and her immediate follower—Zhang Ziyi, who also appears in Zhang Yimou’s films, have made outlines in the western media for their feminine and sexual appeal to west. It is perfectly normal for a film critique to make comments on the leading actresses in movies. As I mentioned in Chapter Two what the Westerners look for is — a different type of sexuality, perhaps more libertine and less guilt-ridden…In time ‘Oriental sex’ was as standard a commodity as any other
available in the mass culture, with the result that readers and writers could have it if they wished without necessarily going to the Orient” (Said 190). But for the domestic audience, there seems to be uneasiness in the collective psyche about openly praising the sensuality of these female stars. Such uneasiness could be better understood through the perspective of postcolonialism, particularly in the light of the typical Orientalist view regarding the association between the Orient and sexuality.

The feminine characteristics of non-western cultures are also echoed by Young as he observes, “Imperial culture was also augmented in the nineteenth century by racial theories that portrayed Europeans as masculine and non-Europeans as feminine races; the cult of masculinity became hegemonic” (Young, 326). In almost every Orientalist work, being it fictional or non-fictional, the portrayal of non-western men and women is quite different. Male characters are universally portrayed as feeble, physically weak, and morally decadent whereas female characters are sensually beautiful. Young’s observes that the exalting female beauty of non-western cultures further reinforces the cultural distinction between the power of the masculine west and the fragile and feminine rest. Some critiques even suggest that the accentuation and augmentation of female characters in the trilogy is to show the female power or independence. Vincent Candy of the New York Times interprets Ju‘er’s sexual activity as such a sign: “Nine (Ju‘er)…does not resist. She looks at the bandit eye-to-eye. In what is to be the best moment in all of Red Sorghum, it is realized that, for Nine, rape by a masked bandit is preferable to marriage to a rich, aging leper” (74). The question here is female power in what sense or for what purpose? Could it be said that the female independence is for the purpose of being raped by a bandit? Songlian in Raise the Red Lantern is another example. She is manipulative, shrewd and brutal, especially when she exemplifies her power over her female servant. But all that means is that she resorts to gain
control over other competitors and ultimately win the favor of the master, who will arbitrarily grant a favor to one of his women by sleeping with her. Is this the female power that the western commentators, especially western feminists value in their own culture? In fact, the three films share remarkable similarities in the sense of female powerlessness and destruction. They are all about a young woman subject to patriarchal domination rather than female individual independence-----they are all married to aging, feeble, impotent men, who are exposed to physical, mental as well as emotional tortures from men. They all appear in the films as young and energetic, but leave the film dead, disillusioned or insane.

The sexual/sensual appeal is further augmented by his employment of mystified folklore mentioned above. Any folklore is uniquely rooted in the indigenous culture, and will present a window through which outsiders can gain understanding of a native culture. However, Zhang Yimou’s use of the Chinese folklore is not just to provide a window, but to make a sensational sale of Chinese feudalistic residues to the west, which may have been forgotten by many contemporary Chinese. In doing so, he creates a cultural myth, not for the appreciation of the domestic audience, but to cater to the taste of western audience. The myth is that when you look at it from a distance, it seems indigenous Chinese, but when you examine it closely, it looks so alien. —The familiar becomes the remote past; the vaguely memorized past becomes familiar. The invented becomes the identifiable” (Zhang, 271). One of the key elements of Orientalism is the false representation of the East by the western Orientalists so as to create a contrast between the civilized West and barbaric East. Consequently, the cultural hegemony results from both the inability of the Other to represent themselves on the one hand and the false representation of the Other by the west on the other. So, to be able to truly represent oneself, one’s genuine and indigenous culture is the very first step in postcolonial dialogue. But the mystified folklore in
Zhang Yimou’s movies is just as false as the Orientalist portrayal of the Other, and it is even more damaging to the course of self-representation because it comes from within. As Zhang observes, “John Ford created the ‘Hollywood Indian,’ an international false representation of the Native Americans in his films, which often encouraged ignorant audiences to make this kind of mistake, ‘that taking the fictional as the fact’” (Zhang 268). Similarly, the mystified folklore exemplified in Zhang Yimou’s movies is an invented fabrication, falsely representing the Chinese culture. For a white man such as John Ford to falsely represent other cultures is not new, at least in the postcolonial era. But for a native of the formerly colonized culture to misrepresent his own culture for the sake of appealing to the former colonizers is more damaging to the course of postcolonialism. Take, again, Raise the Red Lantern as an example, which is almost universally viewed by the west as the best representation of modern Chinese films.

The title of the film refers to a ritual within the household of erecting red lanterns outside and the within quarters of the favored wife. In fact, the ritual of raising a red lantern as a signal for sexual pleasure at a private home is yet another mystified folklore that Zhang Yimou invented in this film. Dai Qing criticizes that the ritual pertaining to the red lantern in Chinese history, society or literature. It is without a doubt that red lantern is very indigenous to Chinese culture. As Zhang points out that red lantern is widely used in public places like restaurants, public buildings during the holiday seasons, or even private homes during the Chinese New Year. In Chinese culture, the red color is associated with happiness and celebratory mood as one can see an ocean of red at weddings and national holidays. But for a red lantern to be associated with sexuality there is only one place that one can think of—brothels, which, to most of contemporary Chinese, are only remotely familiar because brothels have been legally banned since the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949. In old China, prostitution was legal, and there were
specific areas in a city where brothels were found. At night, all licensed brothels would hang red lanterns on their building to lure customers, and that is how the area of brothels gained the name—red light district. What Zhang Yimou did in his film is to transform the concept of red light, which only associates with sex in a public place like brothels, to a private home. Again, it should be noted that there has been no reference made to the raising of red lantern in Su Tong's novel, Wives and Concubines (1990), and it is, therefore, a pure fabrication of Zhang Yimou and his screen writer to create a sensual appeal to the intended audience.

It is not fair to speculate the motivation of Zhang Yimou in inventing such mystified folklore as shown in the examples. Regardless of his motive, the consequence of creating a false representation of Chinese culture in the dialogue with the west remains the same, a case that an insider attempts to market a self-Orientalised culture for an ignorant outsider's consumption. The first message is political in that China remains a repressive society, especially with its women, and the second one is that it is exotic, just like the Orient in general being culturally inherent of sexuality. By exoticizing China and creating such folkloric myth, not only did Zhang Yimou and his contemporaries forfeit the golden opportunity to truly represent their culture, they also play into the very hands of western Orientalists in strengthening the already existing stereotypical image, an image of a poor, backward, repressive and decadent East.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE GREY REALITY IN ZHANG YIMOU’S REALITY FILMS

However, Zhang Yimou’s filmmaking significantly changed its style since 1992. The films that he directed from 1992 up to the early 2000s, including *The Story of Qiu Ju* (1992), *Not One Less* (1999), *The Road Home* (1999) and *Happy Time* (2000) deviated sharply from his earlier trilogy discussed in the previous chapter. While some attributed such a change to his employment of the Italian neo-realistic style with the use of non-professional actors and actresses, the use authentic locations, an attention to glaring social problems, and documentary-style photography, others believed that this was a way for Zhang Yimou to divert critics from his Orientalist interpretation of Chinese people and Chinese culture by mystifying China. Whatever the reason, the fact is that when China’s domestic cinema in the 1990’s experienced a hard time in terms of audience numbers or box office sale (Lu), Zhang’s films produced in this period of time enjoyed an increasing popularity in China. According to Lu, the box office sale for *Not One Less* throughout the country had reached the highest record in Chinese domestic market in 1999. Positive attitudes could be easily viewed in Chinese Newspapers such as the Southern Weekend. One of the viewers, Li Shoutong observed

> I saw the film *Not One Less* in a movie theatre. Deep in my heart I never think this is a film. The truthfulness of the film comes out of not only Zhang Yimou’s directional talent, but also real feelings. Thank you, Zhang Yimou! You allowed me to see the conscience that should be in art. (qtd. in Lu, 134)

While the domestic audience is almost unanimous in praising these realist films, the western chorus is once again resonant in reaction. The critique of these films ranges from bewilderment
or puzzlement to sheer condemnation. What could account for this sudden shift of aesthetics and ideology marked by *The Story of Qiu Ju*? What would such a critical account of textual rupture tell us both of Zhang’s artistic practice and its social relevance…?” asked Li (293). The answer to these questions from the western commentators is quite straightforward. In his article titled “The Great Fall of China Film,” Romney offered the following reason for the shift, “Zhang subsequently made *The Story of Qiu Ju*, a more sober exercise in present-day realism, only to be accused by some critics of cynically appeasing the government” (47). Joining the criticism is Cardullo, who commented, “Not by chance, this (the shift) was reportedly the first Zhang Yimou picture to please Chinese government censors…” (130). What is more, Gilles Jacob, the director of the Cannes Film Festival for the year 1999, rejected Zhang’s two films sent for competition, *Not One Less* and *The Road Home*, and he said that the two films were vehicles of government propaganda in spite of the artistic values (Lu). These are just a few comments from westerners. One may wonder why there is again a gigantic discrepancy between western critics and Chinese audiences? The answer lies in the different viewpoints.

At the very beginning of his book, Said uses the quote from Karl Marx, “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.” From Saxon’s depiction of Dr. Fu Manchu, to Griffith’s illustration of *The Yellow Man* discussed in Chapter Three, we can see that Westerners present the stereotypical of images of the Other as irrational, fallen, childlike, different, which constitutes the essential part of Orientalist knowledge about China. For the Chinese audience, to be able finally to represent themselves and their culture in a movie made by Chinese directors instead of westerners is something worthy of celebration. They would not regard sending a movie to the international film festival as mere entertainment. Rather, it is a chance to show the world a real China and her cultural relics. When Zhang Yimou finally made a shift from his early...
Orientalist styles, which reinforced the worn stereotypes of Orientalist images about China, to realist styles that portrayed ordinary people's lives in contemporary China, this appeared somewhat perplexing and baffling to western audiences since their knowledge about China tells them that what they viewed in these movies is a "fake."

Unlike the subject matter in the red trilogy, which depicts a mystified timeless China, The Story of Qiu Ju tells a simple story about a peasant woman, Qiu Ju, played by Gong Li, who wants an apology from the village head for physically attacking her husband. While being rejected, she embarks on a journey, traveling through the various levels of bureaucracy, say first to the local policeman, then to the higher town and city authorities, and finally to court, to seek the justice she believes she deserves. All she wants is nothing but an apology and an acknowledgement since she has no interest in financial reparation. However, her request for simple justice turns into a series of frustrations as she is kindly rejected by the officials at different levels. At the conclusion of the film, Qiu Ju goes back to the village to give birth to her baby, which provides her an opportunity to make up with the village head. However, at the feast for the celebration of the new baby, justice finally reaches Qiu Ju when the police arrive and arrest the village head for his act of violence. They take the village head away from the celebration, leaving Qiu Ju in bewilderment. The deceptive simplicity of this film reveals a complex account of human emotions and interactions about issues that are deeply imbedded in ordinary people's lives. More importantly, the director bestows pride, dignity and beauty on the humble and ordinary Chinese people in this film.

As opposed to the mystified China portrayed in the trilogy, this film, appeared on screen unrehearsed with a social theme of justice, provides audiences with a glance of authentic China. In one of the interviews with Michel Ciment, Zhang Yimou says that "It is not important to know
if I am Qiu Ju or if her story reminds me of my own because this story is very ordinary and happens often in China” (qtd. in Chan 127). However, this film seems to leave the western audiences disappointed. Alen Stone regards it as a “shaggy dog story with an unhappy ending” (qtd. in Chan 125). He further observes that:

Zhang Yimou had no interest in painting a realistic picture of the Chinese communist legal system. Given the delays that are typical of courts, the fact that Qiu Ju could move through three levels of mediation and then litigate in one trimester of pregnancy is certainly not plausible. Just as Qiu Ju is not a real person, so the officials she meets are equally unreal. There are just too many other implausible details to be explained away. The conclusion is inescapable that the Chinese are correct and that all this is part of the director’s design. (qtd. in Chan 126)

In a similar tone, Richard Grenier made an even elaborate comment about The Story of Qiu Ju:

A ruling principle of irresponsible bureaucratic systems, particularly authoritarian ones, is that the higher a private person goes in seeking some service, the more aloof and the less accommodating the officials tend to be. Here is the great falsification in The Story of Qiu-Ju. For as Qiu-Ju proceeds from local officials, to “the district,” to “the city,” the Communist-party officials get nicer and nicer. The higher she goes, the kinder, gentler, and more courteous they become, always willing to hear the grievances of the poorest and humblest in their domain…

Such behavior reminds me of nothing I ever saw in my own trips to China, and I can only assume that a flattering portrayal of Communist officials—with the exception of Chief Wang—was a price that director Zhang, with his two preceding films banned, thought it wise to pay. (Grenier, 52)
Compared with the ordinary audience of Chinese films, these commentators are "China experts," considering their knowledge of the political, historical, social and artistic developments. However, it is precisely the knowledge of China that they possess that enables them to carry on the dialogue between West and East along the dogmatic line of Orientalism. First of all, they have the expertise on China, so that they can offer an authoritative opinion on the subject. More importantly, they know China better than the Chinese themselves as their tone is so assertive and their comments show no hesitation. China is an authoritarian society where there is no freedom of expression. So, for a film director such as Zhang Yimou to release a work of art, he has to appease the government censors, or even bribe them by capitulating to the government, and consequently sacrificing both the moral and artistic standards of art. Grenier’s comment is the most typical of Orientalism. He can claim that *The Story of Qiu Ju* made Zhang Yimou the "toast" of Chinese authority with favorable portray of officials, which finally led to the lifting of bans on his other films. What has been revealed in the film is false because he has been to China and he has never seen in reality what he sees in the film. It is to these kinds of comments and self-claimed expertise that Said’s observation seems to be directed:

When a learned Orientalist traveled in the country of his specialization, it was always with unshakable abstract maxims about the "civilization" he had studied; rarely were Orientalists interested in anything except proving the validity of these musty "truths" by applying them, without great success, to uncomprehending, hence degenerate, natives.

(Said, 52)

The key words are "a learned Orientalist." By being "learned," these experts are not interested in anything novel or contradictory to their accumulated knowledge about the Other. If there is something incongruent to this body of knowledge, it is either deemed as irrelevant, insignificant
or completely dismissed. Any new development of the Orient must be contained in the old orbit of Orientalists’ knowledge system. Said once commented on the lecture by Arthur Balfour, former Prime Minister of Britain, to the English House of Commons on the British occupation of Egypt, “Egypt is what England knows; England knows that Egypt cannot have self-government; England confirms that by occupying Egypt; for the Egyptians…Egypt requires, indeed insists upon, British occupation” (Said, 52). One finds a similar tone and confidence when reading the critiques from the commentators on Zhang Yimou’s movies. China is what these Orientalists know. They seem to be more concerned than the Chinese about the well beings of Chinese people, who are brainwashed by Communist propaganda or censored from the autocratic government. So, the abandonment of the old China portrayed in the “red trilogy,” to modern China, especially focusing on the unprivileged, is the capitulation and appeasement to the Chinese government. What has been portrayed in these films is consequently a “great falsification” because the subject matter is not something that Orientalists feel comfortable with.

Another influential film made in this period is *Not One Less*, set in a small village in Hebei province. When the only teacher in the village school, Gao, has to leave school for some time to take care of his sick mother, the village head finds a 13-year-old girl, Wei Minzhi, to temporarily replace Gao as a teacher. The teenage girl has just graduated from elementary school herself and is barely older than her would-be students, and she is asked to write the daily lessons on the blackboard every day and to keep the class going with 28 students, “not one less.” She is promised in return to earn fifty yuan plus ten yuan bonus for doing this job. When Zhang Huike, a brilliant naughty boy disappears from her class to work in the city in order to help his bedridden mother, Wei Minzhi rallies her students to the cause of searching for him. After exhausting effort, she finds the student and brings him back to the village.
The film seemingly ends with a kind of happy ending, but one can hardly feel happy. With the return of the lost boy and his teacher followed by a truck loaded with stuff for students donated by the city people, including boxes of chalk and TV sets, the TV host asks the boy what is the deepest impression the city left on him. The boy says begging for food. The simple answer offers a cruel reality of what urbanization, a symbol of modernity and civilization so prominently advocated by the west, means to people in the country, especially those who are poor and powerless. Another scene at the end of the movie shows the boxes of chalk being carried into the classroom where students are permitted to choose a piece of chalk of their own preferable color to write a word on the blackboard to express their feelings and emotions. When the boy’s turn comes, he writes three words seriously: Wei Lao Shi, which means literally Teacher Wei. Simple as they are, the three Chinese words, however, expose the deep longing for knowledge from the country boys and girls as well as the fate of rural children who are neglected and abandoned by society in the rush to modernization. The ostensibly light ending, in fact, reveals a kind of heaviness conveyed in the film.

In a similar vein to *The Story of Qiu Ju*, this film is also set in a contemporary Chinese village, and the message conveyed is that ordinary people can reach their purpose with determination and perseverance. Both of the films depict the determination of the loveable, humble and honest people persisting in the things that they believe are right and worth doing. It is hard to sat that Wei Minzhi is a hero like those in Hollywood movies; rather, she is simply one of the ordinary girls in the Chinese countryside, who is a kind of “silly”, one-track-minded but lovely in a way. It is such stubbornness and single-mindedness that appeals to Chinese audiences, especially in today’s China. No wonder, *Not One Less* won Zhang greater fame in his home country, China.
with the Obelisk Film Award, Outstanding Film Director Award, Outstanding Feature Film Award, to name a few (Chen).

However, like *The Story of Qiu Ju,* *Not One Less* also sparks criticism from the West. Bert Cardullo in his article “Homeward Bound” makes the comments:

*Not One Less* seemed to express Zhang’s concern over the dehumanizing impact of capitalist practices on Communist China, or to portray the conflict between his country’s socialist humanism and the competitiveness-verging-on-exploitation of the market economy it had imported. Not by chance, this was reportedly the first Zhang Yimou’s picture to please Chinese government censors. (130)

For the same accusation, as mentioned previously, *Not One Less* was rejected by Gilles Jacob, the director of the Cannes festival in 1999 when Zhang sent this movie for competition. Interestingly, Stone proposes that “whatever he was doing, Zhang Yimou the artist was absent from this film” (qtd. in Chan 129). Really, Stuart Klawans notes:

*Raise the Red lantern* seemed enough like *Ju Dou* to fix in American minds a certain notion of Zhang Yimou, even if they couldn’t remember his name. He was a maker of splendid-looking period melodramas, who offered enough sex appeal and exoticism to pull in an audience. (qtd. in Chan 129)

The selection of such subject matter is one of the primary reasons why the red trilogy has won the universal approval from the west. All the three movies deal with “old China,” a China that Orientalists are the most familiar with and would like very much to preserve as a permanent image in the minds of westerners. This is a China that is backward, exotic, poor, decadent and sexually appealing, all of which creates a sharp and convenient contrast from the civilized, wealthy and moral west. These are the images of the Other that are mostly seen in the western
media in the present day. The sudden disappearance of these images from Zhang Yimou’s reality films” makes the Orientalists uneasy because the China they are familiar with in their mind is vanishing and the exoticism is gone as Nerval lamented:

I have already lost, Kingdom after Kingdom, province after province, the more beautiful half of the universe, and soon I will know of no place in which I can find a refuge for my dreams; but it is Egypt that I most regret having driven out of my imagination, now that I have sadly placed it in my memory. (Said 100)

Just as the debate among American politicians of who had lost China after the People’s Republic was founded in 1949, here we have “China experts” who accuse Zhang Yimou of abandoning the Old China in exchange for favors from a repressive government. That is the only reason that they can think of to account for the shift in Zhang Yimou’s films from exoticism to barren reality.

Perhaps there is one more reason the “China experts” can think of, but don’t want to say—the repudiation, accusation and condemnation of the newly developed capitalism in China, which plunges the poor and unprivileged into despair and unprecedented helplessness. The acute sense of alienation culminates in Happy Time (2000), a tragic comedy which depicts two of the societal changes that take place in contemporary China: the unprecedented unemployment or forced early retirement of the urban workers, represented by Old Zhao and his colleagues, and the massive migration of the rural population to the urban area to seek opportunities for economic advancement, exemplified by Wu Ying, whose father left her in the care of his previous marriage to work in the Southern city of Shenzhen. Under the disguise of the bustling city lie the several human relations and individual sufferings. Society is laid bare with one thing worthy of living—money as Chow points out, money and money alone is the agent—and arbiter—of reason and power” (Chow, 683). Of money is Old Zhao lacking to get married—50,000 Chinese Yuan,
equivalent of at least two years of his meager pension; by money does the opportunist fat woman judge her suitors, Old Zhao included, to build her next love nest; and for money is Wu Ying's father leaving her teenage daughter to head to an unknown future in the South. This is what contemporary China is facing in the new phase of social development. Two particular scenes in the movie warrant special scrutiny. One of them occurs when Wu Ying, the blind girl is dumped by her stepmother and deprived of her tiny room in the apartment. With nowhere to go, she rushes into the streets and vanishes in the dark, only to be rescued by Old Zhao, who finds the girl standing in the middle of the street. When it goes dark, all the street lights and the lights of the stores begin to illuminate the city. In front of the blind girl on the opposite side of the street, you see the fancy neon lights of a store or a restaurant with a domed building looming in the distance. In the meantime, cars, buses and taxis swirl around her, honking their horns as if to tease. Amidst the hustle and bustle of the busy streets, the clamorous night life of the city and seemingly affluent crowd stands this blind girl, lonely, alienated and completely helpless. This is a classic Kafkaesque scene where extreme alienation of individuals is manifest in a busy crowd. But for the lack of money, her father would not have left her and she would have enjoyed the warmth of a home that she is entitled to. In another scene, we see Old Zhao sitting on the cement stairs of an overpass. In front of him is a bouquet of roses that he intends to send to the fat woman, who again dumps him for another richer man, and a half empty bottle of hard liquor. Half drunk and drunk sober, he laments his misfortune, and in a casual exchange of verbal abuse in his drunkenness, he is beaten by three well dressed faceless men. Fast moving vehicles passes below the overpass. Once again, a lonely man, sitting amidst the vibrant city, feels the extreme solitude with nowhere to turn. Even though he has a tiny apartment, he is psychologically
homeless as opposed to the homelessness of the blind girl. Two individuals are left behind the fast growth of a society, which is cold and uncaring of their existence.

The two homeless people in *Happy Time* find comfort and warmth in each other. They discover each other not in harsh reality, but in the surreal circumstance of good-intentional lies and fabrication. The final scene is quite touching with Old Zhao’s colleagues gathering in the Zhao’s apartment, listening to the voice of a recorded message from the blind girl, which is superimposed by the reading of the blood stained letter composed by Old Zhao, who has just had a final accident. In her message, the blind girl thanks Old Zhao and his colleagues for their kindness and caring, only shown in their collective effort to fool her into believing that she had earned money by practicing her expertise, giving massages to fake customers who are none other than Zhao’s colleagues. She says that she knew from the beginning that the whole scene is fabricated, and the money she received from all her customers is fake. But it is precisely the fabrication of the scene and the fake money she received that gives her warmth, knowing that there is such a thing as caring and decency among people. Mingled with her voice is the reading of Old Zhao’s fake letter, in which he played the role of her father, telling her how much she was loved and all he wanted to do was to make enough money to help her regain her eyesight. Here, the real feeling between Old Zhao and the blind girl is found in lies and fabrication while the harsh reality renders everything cold. Just as Samsa finds temporary comfort by reading train time tables all by himself in his own room instead of joining his family members, both Old Zhao and the blind girl discover a human connection in the fake. The movie ends with the blind girl walking alone in the bustling street with the repeated message from the fake letter that her father would make enough money to help her reopen her eyes. The question is—will she want to see the harsh reality?
Scenes like these created by Zhang Yimou show the prevalent climate of commercialization, utilitarianism and money-worshiping. Like the theme reflected in *Happy Time*, money plays an important role, which eventually manifests a kind of economic rational and social relationship. For money to make a living, the 13-year-old girl comes to the village to serve as a substitute teacher; for money to get medicine for his bed-ridden mother, the 11-year-old boy drops out of school to work in the city; for money to buy the bus ticket, the girl teacher asks her students first to calculate the total amount that is needed, and then she puts her students at work by carrying bricks in a factory. With only 9 Yuan, she is treated indifferently in the city, and with no money, she is completely denied by the receptionist of the TV station. As China becomes more globalized at the turn of the twenty-first century, it seems that it develops into a society in which only money talks.

When China, under the huge wave of globalization, is set at a time of rapid transition to market capitalism from its former state-owned system, this capitalist globalization has caused a series of problems as depicted in the film. The representation of China in this film is a kind of self-rediscovery or self-pondering. To quote Paula Rabinowitz, “it represents itself to itself----an act of identity----as it represents its position to a wider community” (11-12). Chinese audiences are not only impressed by the stubbornness and determination of the female protagonist, Wei Minzhi, but also by the grave magnitude of social problems the movies have depicted. But how could commentators from the west overlook this simple fact? How could they collectively be silent on the critical view of these movies on the cruelty that modern society brings to those unprivileged? The answer once again lies in the Said's wisdom on how Orientalists react to new development in formerly colonized regions. “Unable to recognize “its” Orient in the new Third World, Orientalism now faced a challenging and politically armed Orient. Two alternatives
opened before Orientalism. One was to carry on as if nothing had happened. The second was to adapt the old ways to the new” (Said, 104). What is depicted in these reality movies is certainly something the old Orientalists are not familiar with. They, therefore, resort to the “old ways” as they try to position themselves on the moral high ground by accusing the director of capitulating to the Chinese government. But with the sharp critical view of the pain and alienation inflicted by newly developed capitalism as portrayed in these movies, the Orientalist response is to turn a blind eye, pretending not to see it at all. They could tolerate criticism from within, but cannot and will not even acknowledge similar criticism from the Other, for doing so would undermine their superiority in both moral standard and cultural hegemony.
To move to the conclusion of the study of cultural hegemony, it is necessary to emphasize why the practice of cultural hegemony continues long after postcolonial nations have achieved their independence? The answer lies in the collaboration between the West and the East. It is, in short, a two-way traffic.

In order to maintain the Western domination of the Orient, the Orientalist discourse makes every effort to demarcate the Other with its own identity as different from the West. The Other then are unanimously represented out of “the archive of ‘the self’”, which also depicts the Other as unavoidably different. In this sense, “Otherness can thus only be produced by a continual process of what Bhabha calls ‘repetition and displacement’” (Ashcroft, et al., 102).

Hollywood has become a fundamental instrument in the forming and imposing the stereotypes created by dominant colonial powers. In the process of globalization, it is the linkage between capitalism and cinema, which, on the one hand, serves as a touchstone of taste and value in western culture, and on the other, fosters a certain disciplinary and professional misrepresentation and distortion of the Rest. In this respect, Hollywood presents a whole array of images of the Other as morally decadent, intellectually stupid, culturally alien and exotic and physically feeble as in Griffith’s depiction of the yellow perils in Broken Blossoms. In fact, these misrepresented individuals are simply the symbols of an entire ethnic group as well as the culture behind them. The Yellow Man’s moral depravation, as analyzed in Chapter Two, is further emphasized by the social and cultural environment. Consequently, the western audience, who generally has little information about cultures outside their own, is provided with knowledge of a
distorted and misrepresented image of the Other by the Orientalists. In this process, the stereotypes of the Oriental are reproduced and displaced, and cultural hegemony is therefore maintained by the West.

Such powerful influence dominates cultural production not only in the west but in the postcolonial world as well. An obvious indication of persisting cultural hegemony from the west is the collaboration of members from indigenous cultures. Under the influence of globalization, film production in China forged ahead to be incorporated with international standards and the same process of selection and displacement was adopted by Chinese collaborators. “To make films commercially acceptable to foreign financiers and audiences” (Chaudhuri, 97), the filmmakers carefully select the materials that will feed the psyche of the westerners, and in doing so, help reinforce and confirm the Orientalist’s knowledge about the Orient. They strip the movie of its historical significance, of its deep-rooted cultural heritage. So, what the Chinese collaborators try to present is something that western audiences want to see. Without the voluntary assistance from Chinese collaborators, the western Orientalists could not have been so successful in maintaining their cultural hegemony. The collaborators are in most cases social elites, who are educated in the west, and are the first ones to introduce western ideas into the local cultures. In this process, they either unconsciously or subconsciously play the same roles as that of the Orientalists. This is how cultural hegemony continues to be strengthened.

This issue needs to be studied further. When the represented has the power to represent themselves, their representation should only be absorbed into the Western framework as a mirror image of the archive self-----the Other to the western norm. In other words, in the production of film work, the fabulous antiqueness and exoticism must echo the Oriental clichés: harems, princesses, princes, slaves, veils, dancing girls and boys…” (Said 190). With this regard, the
concept of films made by the Other should function to cater to the taste and value of the West on the one hand, and to fossilize the "form of growing knowledge Orientalism resorted mainly to citations of predecessor scholars in the field for its nutriment" on the other (Said 176-177). Once this Other moved out of the this framework, the European domination of the Orient, and sought to establish its new identity, the response from the west was the interference, if not possible, the severe criticism within the context of Orientalism. As the negative critiques relating to Zhang Yimou’s reality films, the west has strongly resisted attempts to dismantle the contrasting image of the Other, and any challenge to the western system as well as western authority from the Other is definitely unacceptable. Even when such attempts began to work, the unquestioned nature and tradition of Orientalism has remained potent in western ideology.

Thus, it is not enough to respond to cultural hegemony by studying the practice of Orientalism in the west only. It is equally important, if not more, to observe this issue from the recipients of cultural hegemony. After all, the embracing of western cultural invasion has strengthened in an effective way the practice of Orientalism long after decolonization. This is necessary not only in order to re-think the question of cultural hegemony that has been practiced for centuries, but rather to arrive at the ultimate for the true representation of the Other, which, in fact, leads to all cultural systems as the same. The concrete struggle against cultural hegemony therefore must involve a persistent movement away from the domination through western values and systems, such as Hollywood which carries all these values.
WORKS CITED


<http://uanews.org/node/20144>


<http://www.homevideo.net/FIRM/crimes.htm>


<http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/02/zhang.html>


<http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_books>


<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000428/bio>


