

## Unit 1 Handout

### Introduction

Many factors (historical, social, political, economic and cultural) have contributed to Hong Kong's role as a major force in world cinema. In this unit you'll learn about some of them. We'll introduce you to various Hollywood images of Hong Kong, as well as to a few key terms to help you connect Hong Kong cinema with globalization. Next, we'll think about the Hong Kong-Hollywood-Global connection in terms of Hong Kong's own Jackie Chan. Chan is, of course, one of the best-known examples of connections between Hong Kong cinema and the world. Chan's life and films are a powerful example of globalization as well as glocalization. (Glocalization is a term describing how the global and the local are often inseparable.) Our journey begins!

### Learning outcomes

- Identify key historical, economic, political, social, and cultural factors in Hong Kong cinema's development as part of the story of globalization.
- Situate Jackie Chan's role in connecting Hong Kong cinema with Hollywood, mainland China, and Asian regional film cultures as well as minority (e.g. African American) viewers.
- Formulate and articulate opinions about globalization as it is conveyed through the lens of Hong Kong, Hollywood, and/or other cinematic traditions.

### Key Lecture Topics and Concepts

- **Introduction of Hong Kong cinema through a global lens.**
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What makes Hong Kong's screen image global in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Is it the view from Hollywood?

*Die Another Day* (2002)

*Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life* (2003)

*The Dark Knight*, 2008

*Contagion*, 2011

*Battleship* (2012)

*Pacific Rim* (2013)

*Transformers: Age of Extinction* (2013)

*Blackhat* (2015)

Tang Wei with Chris Hemsworth and Holt McCallany

- **Hollywood's Hong Kong**
  - "The Hong Kong of these films is Hollywood's Hong Kong, constructed out of the American imagination and decidedly unlike even the Hong Kong film industry's vision of its own city." (Marchetti, Romance and the "Yellow Peril," 110)

- *Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing* (1955)
- *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960)
- ***Enter the Dragon* (1973)**
  - Jim Kelly as Williams: “Ghettoes are the same all over the world. They stink.”
- **What are Hong Kong cinema’s Hollywood dreams?**
- **Wendy Gan on *Rush Hour 2* (2001)**
  - “The film has an emphasis on sameness throughout the globe, but its underlining of the importance of a U.S. particularity turns Hong Kong into an exotic outpost of the United States. While Hong Kong may lay claim to unique differences, differences that the film appropriates for its own purposes and thus mutes, the crucial matter is Hong Kong’s increasing orientation to the United States.[2]”
- **“film’s imagining of global relations as U.S.-centric”**
  - “Hong Kong, despite its presence in *Rush Hour 2*, thus tends to become marginalized in the film’s imagining of global relations as U.S.-centric. Since the film is a product of Hollywood, this should not surprise anyone. But it does beg the question of alternative imaginings of the global, especially from the vantage point of Hong Kong cinema.”
- **Orientalism**
  - ... a very large mass of writers, among who are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on. . . .
  - the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient . . . despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient. (3,5)
- **What is globalization?**
  - Is globalization more than “Americanization”?
  - Globalization refers to:
- “the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterize modern social life.”

■ John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (1999)

- -Scapes (eg. Financescape, ethnoscape, mediascape, ideoscape, technoscape).
  - Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
  
- **What is the view of Hong Kong from Europe?**
  - Wong Kar-wai at the Cannes Film Festival
  - Asia Argento in *Boarding Gate* (2008)
  
- **Does Hong Kong define its own global image?**
  
- **What makes Hong Kong's image global?**

**Hong Kong as a “laboratory for globalization”**

McDonough, Gary, and Cindy Wong. *Global Hong Kong*. New York: Routledge, 2005

Intersection of competing empires—China and Britain

- Political and economic interests intersect
- Opium trade
  
- **Post-WW II realignments (1945/1949 and after)**
  - Politics: At the edge of the “bamboo curtain”
  - Economics: Rise of American neocolonialism
    - Shift to Pacific Rim “tiger economies” based on cheap labor
  
- **After the “opening” of the PRC (circa 1978)—HKSAR-after 1997**
  - Shift to management, finance, investment, currency exchange, other banking services, information and communications, transportation
  - Global system of neoliberalism
  - Service economy—sales, marketing, tourism
  
- **The merger of the local and the global in Hong Kong**
  - **Globalization & Hong Kong Movies**
  - “Along with migrant communities, media images, and imported music and arts, Hong Kong movies have become a highly visible component of changing world styles. The products of a world city and a colony lately transformed into China’s Special Administrative Region, many Hong Kong movies circulate widely throughout the global cultural marketplace.”

- Esther C. M. Yau, *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World* (2001)
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- **Jackie Chan and the new global Kung fu craze.**
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- **Transnational address**
  - Aaron Anderson, “Violent Dances in Martial Arts”
  - “...many of Chan’s films are created and marketed for transnational reception, so that their cinematic construction allows for an investigation into the cultural aspects of movement-understanding...”
  - <http://ejumpcut.org/archive/jc44.2001/aarona/aaron1.html>
- **Pang Laikwan on Jackie Chan**
  - “...Jackie Chan constantly changes his identity to suit different ‘markets’.” (214)
- **Jackie Chan’s biographical details and film career.**
  - Born in 1954 in Hong Kong
    - Parents from Shandong
    - HK-born in the minority until 1966
  - Studied Peking Opera at the China Drama Academy—The Seven Little Fortunes
- **Early film career**
  - Stuntman; laborer in Australia
  - Return to Hong Kong, managed by Willie Chan, worked under the direction of Lo Wei; breakthrough kung fu comedies with Yuen Woo-ping
  - Taken up various martial arts in the course of his career
- **Jackie Chan in America**
  - In the 1980s
    - 1980— *The Big Brawl*
    - 1981-- *Cannonball Run*
    - 1983-- *Cannonball Run II*
    - 1985-- *The Protector*
- **Jackie Chan takes on the world**
  - *City Hunter* (1993)
    - Jackie Chan as Ryo Saeba

- Japanese manga
- *Thunderbolt* (1995)
  - Multilingual
  - International locations
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- **Jackie Chan and the black connection.**
  - Does not mention black fans in autobiography, *I Am Jackie Chan* (with Jeff Yang, 1999)
    - Fan of Michael Jackson—moon walk in *Police Story* (1985)
    - Quote of Bruce Lee fight with Kareem Abdul Jabbar in *City Hunter* (1992)
- **Blaxploitation and martial arts**
  - Changing urban demographics for filmgoing
  - Rise of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power
  - Search for cheap alternatives for African American viewers weary of white heroes
  - Charles Johnson, “China,” 1983
    - African Americans and the U.S. military in Asia—Japan, Okinawa, Korea
  - New audience for Hong Kong martial arts cinema
- **Blending of the genres in kung fu films with African American protagonists**
- David Desser, “The Kung Fu Craze: Hong Kong Cinema’s First American Reception”
  - “Outside of the blaxploitation genre it largely replaced, kung fu films offered the only nonwhite heroes, men and women, to audiences alienated by mainstream film and often by mainstream culture. This was the genre of the underdog, the underdog of color, often fighting against colonialist enemies, white culture, or the Japanese. [con’t]
  - The lone, often unarmed combatant fighting a foe with greater economic clout who represented the status quo provides an obvious but nonetheless real connection between kung fu films and black audiences.” (38)
  - Bruce Lee and Kareem Abdul Jabbar *GAME OF DEATH* (1978)
- *Armour of God* (1986)

- **Flexible Citizenship.**
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- ***Rumble In The Bronx, 1995 (recut 1996)***
  - British Columbia stands in for New York City
  - Multi-racial/multicultural environment
- **Steve Fore, “Jackie Chan and the Cultural Dynamics of Global Entertainment”**
  - RUMBLE IN THE BRONX as an “attempt to define ‘global cinema’ as something other than the Hollywood entertainment film.” (245)
  - New Line Cinema’s initiative
    - Redubbing
    - Rescoring
    - Reediting
      - “presold product with a strong brand identity overseas”
      - “universal marketability”
- ***Mr. Nice Guy, 1997***
  - Melbourne, Australia
  - Lakeisha (Karen McLymont) in *Mr. Nice Guy*
  - Part of an Asian, black and white female trio
- ***Who Am I, 1998***
  - South Africa and Holland (Dutch Afrikaner connection) as well as British Commonwealth (British South Africa and Malaysia)
- **Jackie Chan’s African Roots**
- **Stephen Teo on *Who Am I***
  - “As Jackie Chan increasingly trains his eyes on the international market, his personality becomes more pliable, more rubbery. This makes Chan's characters in his international films less distinctively Chinese, or even distinctively Hong Kong, and quite intentionally so. His identity is amorphous at best, ambiguous at worst...which isn't necessarily good or bad -- only expedient.”
    - Teo, Stephen. “Local and Global Identity: Whither Hong Kong Cinema?”

[ <http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/content/s/00/7/hongkong.html>]

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- **Intertextuality.**
  - Interconnections among cultural texts (films, literature, music, popular arts) in which influence can be inferred by direct citations as well as more subtle allusions
  
- ***Rush Hour I, II, III, 1998, 2001, 2007*—dir. Brett Ratner**
  - US, Hong Kong, and Paris
  - Paired with Chris Tucker
  
- ***Rush Hour II: Vegas as the American Dream***
  - How does this compare to the “kung fu dream” in *Karate Kid* or Xi Jinping’s Chinese Dream?
  
- **Jackie Chan on the *Rush Hour* franchise**
  - "Nothing particularly exciting stood out that made this movie special for me ... I spent four months making this film and I still don't fully understand the humor."<sup>[i]</sup>
  - When we finished filming, I felt very disappointed because it was a movie I didn't appreciate and I did not like the action scenes involved. I felt the style of action was too Americanized and I didn't understand the American humor.<sup>[ii]</sup>
  - “Jackie Chan: I'm not a fan of 'Rush Hour' films,” CNN.com, October 1, 2007,  
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/SHOWBIZ/Movies/10/01/people.jackiechan.ap/index.html>
  - <sup>[ii]</sup> Ibid.
  
- **THE TUXEDO (2002)**
  - Jackie Chan and James Brown
  
- **Jackie Chan and intertextuality**
  - Links to Blaxploitation/African American kung fu culture
    - Carl Douglas’ “Kung Fu Fighting” (1975) in *Rumble in the Bronx*
    - Erwin Starr’s “War” (1970) in *Rush Hour* (Carter: “You sound like a karate movie.”)

- *Rush Hour II*—Ernie Reyes Jr.--*Berry Gordy's The Last Dragon* (1985)
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- **Rise of the Chinese mainland audience.**
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- ***The Karate Kid*, dir. Harald Zwart, 2010**
  - From Detroit to Beijing
    - (Hong Kong is not in the picture)
    - Jaden Smith as Dre Parker
    - Taraji P. Henson as Sherry Parker
- Recognizing the African American audience in casting and cultural references
- African American appreciation of Chinese culture
- Reliable audiences for Jackie Chan: Mirroring the African American fans for a new generation (including the Mainland and women from around the world)
- **Recognizing a rising China**
  - Beijing—ancient and modern
  - Red Star
  - Forbidden City
  - Great Wall
  - Ai Wei Wei's Bird's Nest—
    - reference to the 2008 Olympics
- **Jackie Chan as Mr. Han (S: 韩先生, T: 韓先生)**
  - Jackie Chan's character mediates between a rising China and the African American community's further decline
  - Chan's split image as both paternal and servile
    - Maintenance man
    - Kung fu teacher
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### Recommended Readings

Anderson, Aaron. "Action in Motion: Kinesthesia in martial arts films." *Jump Cut*. No. 42. Dec. 1998. 1-11.

83. <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC42folder/anderson2/index.html>

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