The Frame of Asian Movement in Hollywood Films

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Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate how the Asian movement is portrayed in films produced in Hollywood. The methodological approach that was taken in this investigation was qualitative and descriptive. The research was conducted using an approach developed by John Fiske called *television ethics across three levels*. The level of reality, the level of representation, and the level of ideology are the three levels that are being discussed here. Researchers find the notion of an Asian movement packed in the characters and culture of Hollywood movies by using these codes. The findings of this study demonstrate how the East has been able to advance despite the images in the film that depict it as having to succumb to the West. Because the Asian character in Hollywood is shown as a figure that is active, courageous, honest, and virtuous, one might deduce that Orientalism is the philosophy that underpins this picture. As well as the culture is shown in a manner that is quite similar to that of East Asian cultures from the beginning to the end of the movie.

Keywords: Asian movement, hermeneutics, Hollywood movies, orientalism.

1. Introduction

The Western nation is considered a country that has brought progress to a very dominant human civilization, characterized by the existence of the first industry in England. Mohajan explained that the first industrial revolution in England was known as the Industrial Revolution (IR), and it took place in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, roughly between 1760 and 1840 (Mohajan, 2019). The Industrial Revolution (IR) was the transition from human and animal labor technology to machines, new chemical manufacturing and iron production processes, and so on, which resulted in massive socioeconomic changes in England. This perception gives rise to the terms third world or sub-alter or those who are not elite and are ruled by the ruling class. As modernization and westernization spread, the subaltern became more and more dependent on the first world, or developed countries, in terms of technology, culture, the economy, and everything else (Olazabal et al., 2021). It is another way of life that makes Western culture stand out even more. By seeing the reality in society, filmmakers also dare to raise the reality in a film because a film is made based on a portrait of the truth of what is happening in society. Hollywood has dominated the international film industry since the 1920s and has created numerous films released in nearly 150 countries (Hisham, Rahman, 2018). It makes sense that the most essential part of the film industry can make high-quality and varied movies. In addition to producing films, Hollywood has also made many films set in the East (the Orient). Hollywood used the Middle East and East Asia as a backdrop. Unfortunately, not all films set in the Middle East and East Asia produced by Hollywood are detached from Western stereotypes that view the East as something low.

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The Western production team produced the Asian-themed film. This has to do with Orientalism. Orientalism has been used in many ways, describing a geographical area and comparing civilizations. It is a word that has different meanings in terms of concept, scope, and terminology (Kalayci, Kuşçi, 2021). In other words, Orientalism is the Western way of dominating, restructuring, and ruling the East. The Asian-themed movies, such as *Crazy Rich Asians*, *Mulan*, and *After Yang*, show how the West and the East are portrayed differently. In both films, the storyline and characterization are different from those of the original films. Western characters are portrayed as superior to Asian characters. The West character is always associated with an intelligent character like a professor in the movie *After Yang*. In *Mulan*, East (China) is described as a dirty and shabby country. These instances show some Western people's views towards Asian culture. Ranji discovered that media study is characterized by using binary vocabulary, collective phrases and generalizations, a one-sided interaction between the 'West' and 'non-West,' and the idea that Anglo-American research is superior (Ranji, 2021). For further instance, one of the fictional action films that inspired one of the world's wonders, *Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings of China*, is also a Hollywood movie. *Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings* is a film that tells the story of a European mercenary who initially wanted only to steal black powder but instead participates in a war between the troops of *Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings* against the monster Ta Lo. The uniqueness of *Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings* is that the first American-Chinese movie collaboration incurred an enormous cost (US$ 150 million) because this film is included in the mainstream Hollywood productions category, which requires higher budgets to maximize its quality (Setiawan, 2020). This film entered the popular film of 2021 (IMDB, 2021). In addition to the film, this is also very close to the Chinese state, which uses the setting where *Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings* of the Tiongkok country, which has always been glorified by the Chinese people and built for more than 1700 years to protect its people from the onslaught of danger, both known and from legends. *Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings* are movies that highlight Chinese culture's uniqueness and beauty. This film shows the contrasting types of Asian-themed movies from Hollywood productions compared to the previous examples.

Depictions in films are important to research because films impact society. Film or cinema can significantly present social dynamics to society because it mirrors the social structure that guides society and social events (Karakartal, 2021). The relationship between film and society has always been understood linearly. That is, film always influences and shapes society based on the message behind it, without ever applying otherwise (Gupta, 2019).

This study was about the Asian movement in Hollywood movies. In this article, the New Paper mentions that Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings are Hollywood movies with a touch of Zhang Yimou. Based on the facts above, the researcher wants to know the depiction of Orientalism in Hollywood movies. The film's research uses hermeneutics. Research on representation also needs to be carried out to see how Orientalism is portrayed in films.

2. Materials and methods

This research uses a qualitative approach, and the method used is John Fiske's television semiotics, which are commonly used in the form of reality, representation, and ideology (Febryningrum, Hariyanto, 2022). In this study, researchers used documentation data collection techniques. Documentation data collection means getting information from documents, texts, works of art, or pictures. The data obtained by the researchers is a scene in the Hollywood movies. Researchers will take shots of images from the movie scene. Researchers will collect the shots and group them by each scene in the film for researchers to analyze based on John Fiske's "The Codes of Television" to see the meaning behind such signs. The subject in this study was Hollywood movies, which were packaged in Mp4 format.

In the process of analyzing data, researchers look at a lot of Hollywood movies in several stages. The next step is to explain the shots collected and looked at from three perspectives: the reality, representation, and ideology levels.. The next step is to explain the shots collected and looked at from three perspectives: the reality level, the representation level, and the ideology level (Sabarini, 2021). Researchers will look at how the codes are depicted in the film. After that, interpret the meaning of each code separately. Researchers will look at three levels. The levels of reality, the level of representation, and the level of ideology have different aspects. Researchers will look at every code in John Fiske's television code level. Analyze the codes in Hollywood movies based on what you know about Orientalism, the film's meaning, and its techniques from reading.

Then, divide the meanings into predetermined codes, compare them with the way they are used, and last is to conclude the results of the analysis and findings of the researcher in the chapter discussion. This study uses three levels of coding by John Fiske (Febryningrum, Hariyanto, 2022). The three levels of coding are reality level, representation level, and ideology level. Using these, the data findings found by researchers will be categorized into several categories, including character and cultural depictions.

3. Discussion

Culture is a complex set of things people learn as a group (DeMarco, 2019). These include knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and skills. Behavior, style of dress, customs, beliefs, and traditions are some of the things that make up culture in general. From the above cultural sense, some parts of culture are shown by the codes at both the reality and representation levels, depending on how the West sees the East (Sabarini, 2021). It can be seen that the emperor's appearance in this scene is a young emperor who reminds us that in the Chinese empire, an emperor can be led by a prince or a child who is still young. The appointment of the emperor occurs when the then-serving emperor dies. Usually, the eldest son will be his successor, but sometimes, it is not like that, depending on the family decision of the emperor and the people of the time. Through this scene, the color gold is highly respected by the Orientals because the color gold is closely related to the empire. Gold often dominates palaces, palace interiors, and even the imperial family.

Orientalism can be seen as an "official institution" that "takes care of" the Asian world by making different claims about the East, giving legitimacy to different ideas about the East, and describing the East as a way to teach it, find a solution for it, and control it (Hai-hua, 2021; Hassan, 2021; Hong, 2018; Hughes, 2019; Kalayci, 2021; Kang, 2021; Pembecioğlu, Çomak, 2021; Pennington, 2020; Serrao, 2022; Vijay, 2019). To sum up, Orientalism is a way for the West to control, reorganize, and gain power in Asia (Daud, 2020). Orientalism creates this schism between East and West and associates stereotypes with each side. It is a social construction made up of interpreted implications that may or may not be true (Kang, 2021). At its core, Orientalism is a way to defend imperialism by painting Asian culture as backward and "less than." Also, Orientalism is a way of thinking about the East that comes from the West and is shown in writing, art, or study. It fits with the goals of the Western empire (Daud, 2020). So, it became the responsibility of the "advanced West as a culture" to keep their colonies in other countries going. These colonies gave the "advanced West" a reason to occupy and rule over different states.

Popular American culture is full of negative stereotypes towards Arab and Muslim people. In film and television, Arabs are associated with being bloodthirsty and dishonest. He appears to be an overly tall, capable, and ingenious individual. But basically, they are sadistic, dangerous, and low-key. In addition, they are depicted as slave traders, camel drivers, street vendors, and bastards; these are some of the traditional Arab roles in films (Daud, 2020). The Americans sought to portray the Asian region according to their imagination. The East is described as unique, ancient, and full of mystery. Therefore, the Western stereotypes that shape the audience's perception of the East are based solely on a film, without seeing Asians directly (Proudfoot, Kay, 2022). People say that this stereotype comes from Hollywood's desire to leave Asians out of their own stories.

Representation is an essential thing in the study of culture because it connects meaning and language to culture. It is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture (Hall, 2020). Hall stated that representation is the production of meaning through language and can suggest two relevant meanings for the word that can represent something to describe or depict and represent to symbolize (Hall, 2020). First, mental representation is the concept of "appropriate" that is in the heads of each of us (conceptual map). This mental representation is still something abstract. Secondly, "language" plays an important role in the process of constructing meaning. The abstract concepts in our heads must be translated into the usual "language", so that we can relate our ideas about something to the meaning of certain symbols. In representation, two possibilities arise. First, representation will confirm that ideology; second, representation will dismantle that ideology. Through representation, the author wants to see whether the Western stereotypes remain visible or fade.

As a communication logic, hermeneutics investigates the correspondence between the signs of written texts and their intended and understood meanings (Shpet, 2019). Fiske said that the study makes it clear that a cue, in this case a pronoun, is linked in a user's mind to its meaning

(Sabarini, 2021). For Saussure, a sign is a physical object with a meaning, or to use the term, a sign such as a signifier or a signified signifier. A marker is an image of a sign as we perceive it (Sabarini, 2021). Regarding sign categories, Saussure pays attention only to symbols, since symbols are words (Sabarini, 2021). For Saussure, this helps in understanding the signs in the film, especially the iconic ones, that is, the signs that crave something. If Saussure is known for his dichotomy (dyadic scheme), Pierce describes it as a triangle of meaning made up of signs, objects, and interpretants. Pierce stated one of the forms of signs is the word, whereas an object is something that the sign refers to. An interpretant is a sign in one's mind about the object to which a sign relates. If the three elements of meaning interact in a person's mind, then there is a sense of meaning about something represented by the sign. Barthes also came up with two levels of omen, which let him make meanings that were also layered based on the degree of denotation and connotation. The most critical factors in the language of communication are denotative and connotative (Pratiwi, Soemantri, 2020). Its reference to reality has an explicit, direct, definite, and apparent meaning. In short, denotation is a sign whose marker has a high degree of convention or agreement. Reality comprises the television code of appearance, costume, makeup, environment, behavior, dialogue, body language, facial expressions, and sound. Then, the representation level consists of the camera, editing, and music. The third level is the ideological level, which has social codes like individualism, patriarchy, class, race, capitalism, and materialism.

4. Results

Researchers have put Asian depictions into categories, such as how characters and cultures are shown in Hollywood movies. These categories make it easy to see how Asian characters and culture are represented in Hollywood movies. Looking at some of these depictions, the Asian character in Hollywood movies is different from the concept of Said's Orientalism, which states that the characteristics of the East are described as being easily deceived, having a "lack of energy and initiative," and "lick." Pretending is cunning and unwelcome to animals. The Asians are the liars of rust; they are "lazy and suspicious" in every way, contrary to clarity, straightness, and glory (Daud, 2020). The cultural depictions in the Hollywood movies are very clearly visible. Through this film, it seems as if the Western production team wants to introduce Asian culture to the audience. They present a vibrant variety of Asian cultures. Starting from the building of *Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings*, the interior of the palace, the pagoda building, and the clothes used in this film, values are also presented in this film, where it is shown that Western characters are portrayed as materialistic people, while Asian characters do not measure everything with money. So, it can be seen in this film that the Asian character is portrayed more nobly than the Western character.

Researchers interpreted the data analysis carried out on Hollywood movies. Researchers found that through Hollywood movies, the representation of Orientalism has been more colored by Western culture. This film shows that the Asian nation can already develop and is not entirely submissive (submissive) to the Western nation. Asia's role in American films has evolved dramatically over the last 40 years, from that of a comic book character to that of the main character in a major box-office hit. Because of the influence of films in America, these films have built many different stereotypes (Kang, 2021). At first, it seems that the Western nation is used as the hero who helps the Asian nation, but if you look deeper, it is precisely the characteristics of the West in this film that are portrayed as thieves, liars, and cunning. Although this film is a Western production, netizens admit that this film feels very close to the Asian feel that shows a landscape that is very closely related to Asia, such as *Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings*, the royal palace, and the scenery of the others. In addition, many netizens also feel that the Western actors in this movie are forced. This film should only involve actors from Asia. Therefore, not all of Hollywood's coercion through actors is seen as good by the audience; it actually looks bad and imposes its will, which doesn't fit with the movie's story. In addition, netizens seem more interested if this film is only played by actors from Asia, without involving actors from the West. Through Hollywood movies, it can be seen that America and China have re-established a relationship in the film industry because China is one of the countries advancing in the industrial field of cinema. It is increasingly seen that not all Asian nations have always been looked down upon, but the Asian nations have been more developed. Therefore, *Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings* are used as chi-wood (China-Hollywood) genre films with a cultural mix between Western and Asian nations.

Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings fortress are often seen preparing positions to fight the impending danger. Through the realistic level of appearance and dress in this scene, the troops in the colored clothes are seen in archery, and the troops with the clins are seen jumping down, using swords and ropes. The appearance and clothing of the soldiers of *Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings* are like those of other Chinese war soldiers in war, complete with steel clothes and weapons of war. Through this scene, it can be seen that the East has prepared themselves carefully by dividing the troops into groups. They have already practiced and prepared strategies to fight the upcoming enemies. In addition, in the picture, Western figures can be seen admiring the war troops of *Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings*. In this scene from *Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings*, William and Tovar, along with several bear soldiers and Commander Lin, one of the leaders of The Nameless Order, are seen on stage. In the first picture, two Bear Squads pull on the cover robes used by William and Tovar and discover they are wearing army clothes. Knowing this, Commander Lin directly thrusts a sword towards William's face. Through these scenes, it can be seen that in this film, Asian characters are not easy to deceive. Asian figures are not easily trusted by people who are new to them. William claimed to be a merchant, but Commander Lin didn't believe it, so he first checked the origins of William and Tovar. In many scenes, the commander is seen talking about Sir Ballard. Sir Ballard was one of the Westerners who had lived on the Great Wall for a long time with other Chinese troops. In the scene, William asks about Sir Ballard, whom Commander Lin did not release. Through the dialogue conducted by William and Commander Lin, it was as if Commander Lin had already believed in Sir Ballard, who had lived with them for a long time and was unwilling to let him go because Sir Ballard had taught him English and Latin. It can be seen that Commander Lin (East) also wants to learn about one of the Western cultures, namely English or Latin. In addition, this scene also shows that the East is not always ancient; they want to learn something new and not just be nailed into their culture.

In short, film has become one of the ways that people can send messages to other people. In Hollywood movies, Orientalism is shown as a more recent way of showing how culture has been brought to the world. So, neither of them makes either group look too much like they are better or worse than the other.

5. Conclusion

As a result, researchers conclude that the view of Orientalism in the film is more colored by Western culture through the depiction of characters and the depiction of culture. The characteristics of the East in this film are already described as the characteristics of yang initiative, rational, energetic, and full of glory, in contrast to Said's view of Orientalism, which says the East is an irrational, lazy character, a liar, etc. Hollywood movies show that the characters from the West are sneaky, irrational, and thieves.

In Hollywood films, it is seen how the West admires Asian culture in a way that Western nations lack, particularly when armies in Hollywood films prepare for war with expressions of awe. As a result, the Asian nation is not always submissive towards the Western nation. Through the Hollywood movies, it can be seen that America and China have again established a cooperative relationship in the film industry, because China is one of the countries advancing in the field of industry cinema. It is increasingly seen that it is not as if the Asian nation has always been looked down upon, but that the Asian nation is more developed. Even though China has its own material goals, this movie allows it to show the rest of the world more of its firm culture.

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