

SINGLE-BOOK ESSAYS

From Fu Manchu to Kung Fu Panda: Images of China in American Film. By NAOMI GREENE. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014. 280 pp. ISBN: 9780824838355 (cloth).
doi:10.1017/S0021911816000061

Naomi Greene's book *From Fu Manchu to Kung Fu Panda* is an excellent look at the history of representations of China in Hollywood films. From the silent era to the present day, Greene describes the ways in which Hollywood's images of China reflect the historical periods in which they are made. She relates the films to US-China relations, exploring the rapidly changing dynamics between the two countries and their peoples, and how Hollywood films from various eras reflect those dynamics. As Greene observes, "In the case of American perceptions of China, screen images bear on a relationship between two countries—that is, China and America—that is as deeply problematic as it is critically important" (p. 1).

Greene explains the significance of China's relationship with the United States over the past hundred years or so and the ways in which Hollywood movies are a reflection as well as an influence on that relationship. She outlines what she describes as the pendulum swings found in the political and cultural relationship between China and the United States, noting that "Americans tend to swing from intensely positive images of China to those that are relentlessly negative" (p. 3). The book then outlines how those swings have affected cinematic portrayals of China in Hollywood.

The book is structured chronologically, beginning in the early 1900s and concluding in the twenty-first century. Greene begins each chapter with an examination of the historical period explored, investigating the relationship between China and the United States at the time. These sections of each chapter stand on their own as historical summaries and solidly ground the film readings that follow. Greene then provides close readings of a few representational films from each period. For example, in the first chapter she discusses what she calls the two "marks of difference" (p. 17), sexuality and religion, that led to the othering of China and Chinese culture in the American imagination in the early twentieth century, then utilizes readings of *Broken Blossoms* (D. W. Griffith, 1919) and *Shadows* (Tom Forman, 1922) to illustrate her argument.

Throughout the book, Greene successfully establishes several recurring themes, tying together longstanding misconceptions about China to current trends in anti-China sentiments in the United States. For instance, she links early twentieth-century Orientalist stereotypes about China's "barbaric" practices, such as opium dens, white slavery, and torture, to present-day fears of China's tainted environment, human rights violations, and diseases such as SARS. Greene also astutely observes that cinematic representations of China "served as a reflecting mirror of America" (p. 98). When examining the Cold War period she notes, "If China poses such a threat in *The Manchurian Candidate*, it is because America appears to be collapsing from within" (p. 98).

Greene also notes that "cinematic representations of China and the Chinese inevitably raise the division between the self and other" (p. 11), and for most of the book she adheres to this binary reading of the histories and films she explores. As the book moves into the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, however, Greene notes the presence in the United States of works by directors such as Jia Zhenke and Hou

Hsiao-Hsien that break up that dichotomy and present a third way of seeing China and the Chinese people.

For the most part, Greene sticks to canonical films, which is a fine strategy when considering iconic Hollywood representations of China. In the last chapter of the book, however, as she moves closer to the present day, Greene looks at two films directed by Chinese Americans, *The Wedding Banquet* (Ang Lee, 1992) and *Chan Is Missing* (Wayne Wang, 1981). Although those movies are significant and worthy of study, Greene does not delve into independent Chinese American production that falls outside of narrative feature filmmaking. She instead hews fairly closely to classic ideals of film production output, which privileges full-length fiction films, and which results in Greene bypassing important cinematic contributions by Chinese American documentarians such as Christine Choy (*Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, 1988) and Arthur Dong (*Forbidden City USA*, 1989; *Hollywood Chinese*, 2007), both of whom have been nominated for Academy Awards for their work. A closer examination of films by these directors might have added an interesting layer to Greene's investigation.

Throughout *From Fu Manchu to Kung Fu Panda*, Greene's writing is clear and understandable and her analysis and observations, in both her historical framings and her close readings, are thoughtful and interesting. The book is an outstanding survey of several significant Hollywood films about China and expertly relates those films to the historical periods from which they emerge.

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CHINA

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Wives, Husbands, and Lovers: Marriage and Sexuality in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Urban China. Edited by DEBORAH S. DAVIS and SARA L. FRIEDMAN. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2014. xii, 326 pp. ISBN: 9780804790628 (cloth).

doi:10.1017/S0021911816000073

Deborah Davis and Sara Friedman's *Wives, Husbands, and Lovers: Marriage and Sexuality in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Urban China* opens with a description of a thirty-one-year-old Taiwanese woman who, in an elaborate public ceremony, marries herself. This vignette is followed by reference to a BBC story about a Hong Kong shipping tycoon who recently offered 40 million pounds (about 60 million US dollars) to "any man able to woo and marry his lesbian daughter." These striking scenarios serve notice that Chinese ideas about marriage and sexuality have changed substantially over the past thirty-some years, and the dozen chapters that make up this volume certainly bear this out. Given these changes, this is a timely and important addition to scholarship on