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From Hollywood to Huallywood—Through Visual Literacy

Dr. Yan Ma, Professor
Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, Film/Media Program
Harrington School of Communication and Media
University of Rhode Island, USA
Past President of the International Visual Literacy Association
Guest Editor of the Journal of Visual Literacy
yanma@uri.edu
Chinese Hollywood and Huallywood

Why Huallywood now?

As China’s economic forces advnces, Chinese film industry is rising.

Education for our students: In FLM 495 class, students are engaged in a learning experience for critical and cultural analysis of Chinese film as visual texts to learn about China and the world through film and film industry in China.
What does FLM495 Chinese Hollywood cover?

Objectives
Students will learn visual literacy to learn how to read Chinese film in this course. This course will focus on selected key film directors whose film allows students to explore Chinese film from historical, social, economic, political, and cultural perspectives. Students will be engaged in a learning experience for critical cultural analysis of Chinese film as visual texts.

Students will become familiarity with the ways China has addressed modern problems and its links with the world will broaden students’ views and enrich their understanding of the world through film and film industry in China.
What is Hollywood?

Physical location and its birthday place of American film industry located in a district of Los Angeles

How has Hollywood has shaped the US and global culture?

What is the social status of Hollywood stars?
Why Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

Is this in Beijing or Hendian?
Why Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

Physical location:
Since 1996, Hendian, the world’s largest outdoor film studios in China, located in Zhejiang Province on a 650-hectare land, equivalent of 1,600 acres, started film production in 1996 (Shao, 2013), “Chinese media claim that, including advertisements, 30,000 productions were shot here last year. The studios boast, among many vast sets, a full-scale replica of Beijing's Forbidden City.” (The Economist, 2012).
Why Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

What is Chinese Film Industry driving the US Film Industry and Market?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYPqN1FP6Og

By Louis McDaniel, graduate of URI Film/Media who took FLM495 Chinese Hollywood course in the spring of 2013.
Why Haullywood?

It is predicted that China will be the world's biggest film market by 2020. Industry driven by China's increasingly wealthy population looks set to overtake the US, claims Ernst & Young report Thursday 29 November 2012 06.42 EST

http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2012/nov/29/china-biggest-film-market-2020
Why Haullywood?

If this prediction is possible, how would you prepare yourself or your students or your company for this historical paradigm shift in film industry?

What made the film ‘Furious 7’ the most successful movie ever in China?

http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/04/29/furious-7-becomes-chinas-most-successful-movie-ever/?_r=0
Why Huallywood?

While the world is waiting for this “Chinawood” to be born, Los Angeles Times reported that “China's richest man, Wang Jianlin, announced to build what he is touting would be the world's largest movie studio investing $8.2 billion. The project will be named the Oriental Movie Metropolis, the development is to consist of 20 studios and a permanent underwater stage. It is to be located an hour outside Qingdao, a coastal city with more than 8.7 million people.” (Los Angeles Times, September 22, 2013).
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Why Huallywood?

Wanda Studios Qingdao Makes China Debut at 5th Beijing International Film Festival (4/16/15)

Why Huallywood?

Chinese company buys AMC movie theater chain (May 5, 2012)

http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/money/media/story/2012-05-21/china-company-buys-amc-movie-theater-chain/55106114/1
Why Huallywood?

China Escalates Hollywood Partnerships, Aiming to Compete One Day

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/06/business/media/china-escalates-hollywood-partnerships-aiming-to-compete-one-day.html
Why Huallywood?

China Overtakes U.S. at the Box Office

http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/02/china-overtakes-the-u-s-at-the-box-office/
Why Huallywood?

A China firm buys naming rights to Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles (January 11, 2013)

Why Huallywood?

China Rising: How Four Giants Are Revolutionizing the Film Industry

What is Chinese Hollywood/Huuallywood?

Does the location of Chinese Hollywood signify the importance or significance of a country’s film industry or a new beginning of Chinese film production?

How important is it?
What is Chinese Hollywood/Huularywood?

What is the name of this new Chinese Hollywood?

Chinawood provides the identity of China and to rhyme with Hollywood and Bollywood

Chywood or Chiwood is also possible in sound?
What is Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

Huawood or Huallllywood is to embrace the rich Chinese civilization and culture in the world. “Hua” is the a key word to mean China or Chinese: “Zhonghua” (China), “Huaren” (Chinese people), “Huayu” (Chinese language”. “Hua” means Chinese civilization or Chinese culture.
What is Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

Film about China made in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, US, and elsewhere in the world will be under the umbrella “Hua” meaning “Huaxia” or “Zhonghua” meaning (China) to show Chinese culture through different types of filmmaking styles, cinematic techniques, and semiotically coded visual texts about Chinese culture. In essence, Huallywood, Chinese cinema, is a representation of Chinese civilization, culture, heritage, philosophy, history, politics, and contemporary daily life of the Chinese in the world.
What is Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

Hollywood is a global stage and a symbol of recognition in acting, directing, and film making.

Will China establish a Huascar Award to attract the brightest and the best in film making industry in Huallywood?
What is Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

Hollywood stars become idols or heroes of many American film viewers.

What is the social status of Chinese film stars and actors/actresses or Chinese performers in general?
What is Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

Hollywood has its own system to select the best script for film.

China has its own policy to censor or review how each film is made or how each script to be chosen.

It is an art to study Chinese politics and culture to gain confidence and acceptance for film directors who wish to produce film in China or for the Chinese’s film market.
What is Chinese Hollywood/Huuallywood?

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China has its own policy to censor or review how each film is made or how each script to be chosen.
What is Chinese Hollywood/Huallywood?

What does this Huallywood mean to the LIS profession?
What is Visual Literacy?

The term “Visual Literacy” was first coined in 1969 by John Debes. He is one of the most important figures in the history of the International Visual Literacy Association.
Debes’ offered the following definition of the term: “Visual Literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication.” (1969)
Visual literacy is the ability to understand (read) and use (write) images and to think and learn in terms of images. (More, David and Dwyer, Francis, 1994, p. 25).
Visual literacy refers to the learned ability to interpret visual messages accurately and to create such messages. A visually literate person can identify, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and produce excellent visual messages. (Sunders, 1994)
Research:

Visual literacy theories and methodologies prepares students to become cross-cultural visual masters like Ang Lee.
Shanghai Women

*Shanghai Women* (2001) by Peng Xiaolian

This film is chosen for analysis for this research project.
Research Methods

Research methods from social sciences such as surveys are used to collect data on the responses from viewers in the US and China. The research design consisted of a structural analysis for encoded message and a post structural analysis using reception theory to analyze the how viewers are positioned by the visual text (Shanghai Women) created by the director.
Research Methods

Focus Questions
1. Why do the Americans and Chinese like or dislike this film?
2. Who is being addressed by this film?
3. How does this movie position its viewers?
4. What are the cultural codes in this film?
5. What meanings are constructed when viewers interact with *Shanghai Women*? (Chinese viewers vs. US viewers).
6. “What is the intent of the director in making this film?”
7. “How do the viewers interpret the cultural codes in the film individually and as members of a community that have access to those signs and symbols?”
Research Methods

How does Chinese film director Peng Xiaolian construct their subject? Or, whom does the film director think their viewers are?

These questions have not been studied in the recent Chinese film research fully to invite future film directors to prepare themselves for their film making experience. The purpose of the study is to apply reader-response criticism to examine the meaning-making in reading Chinese film by US and Chinese viewers. It investigates the relationships between and among directors, texts and viewers. The study ascertains the intentions of the film director; examines the meanings made by the viewers through surveys; compares the similarities and differences of director' intentions with their film; and compares the similarities and differences between the director’s with views of the viewers.
Research Methods

Theoretical Background

Reception theory is an umbrella term used in this article to include terms such as reader theory, reader-response theory, reader-response criticism. They are used interchangeably in this article. For this study, the literary reading theory is appropriated. Structuralist theorists believe that the meaning of a literary work resides only in the text (i.e., the text has coded messages given by the author).
Research Methods

Theoretical Background

Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser, these theorists emphasize the relationship between reader, text, and author. Unlike structuralist theorists, "all reader-response critics focus on readers during the process of reading" (Mailloux).

DeVaney’s model:
Post structural reader-response theory has been applied to examine the relationships between and among author, text, and reader of educational television programs (De Vaney and Elenes, 1991).
De Vaney emphasizes that a reader/viewer creates meaning when interacting with a media text that is coded and in which the author's intent is embedded (De Vaney, 1993). In order to adapt reception theory for the analysis of Chinese film, the following definitions of concepts are provided.
Research Methods

Reading, in this study, is the process of creating meaning while interacting with the text, which is the Chinese film, *Shanghai Women*. It is the reader/user who creates meaning.

Text, in this study, is defined as a communication that has been constructed by the directors. It is *Shanghai Women*. 
Research Methods

Viewers, in this study, are defined as those who participated in viewing the film selected for the study.

Director, in this study, is Peng Xiaolian.

Communities of viewers refer to a group of people who share similar social, cultural, economic and other positions. Sixteen US university students and 10 Chinese university students participated in the survey of this selected film.
Research Methods

Semiotics and cultural codes are analyzed for the study. Semiotic is the science of signs. It studies the relationship between form and meaning.

A sign comprises two types of meanings: syntagmatic and paradigmatic meanings. Syntagmatic meaning refers to the meaning that is assigned based on syntax, or based on the relationships among signs. Paradigmatic meaning is derived from other systems or codes.
Research Methods

For example, color white is often used to symbolize purity in Western culture. Brides wear white gowns. While in Eastern culture, color white symbolizes sorrow and sadness and it is associated with death. Brides in the Eastern civilization wear red, which conveys the meaning of celebration, good fortune, happiness, and prosperity. However, color red often suggests danger and stop in Western culture. (Ma, 2006).
Research Methods

Film, television program, and visual images are visual texts. They all bear culturally and socially constructed codes, which shape the meaning of messages conveyed in a visual text. Viewers of a community have access to those codes of signs and symbols.

In film or television programs, another example of code is code of realism (DeVaney, 2001). She reminded us that camera and structural codes are used to imitate reality. (Ma, 2006)
Analysis

Responses were collected from 19 viewers who are university undergraduate students at the University of Rhode Island and the School of Journalism and Communication, Southwest University of Political Science and Law, China. The online survey questionnaire consisted of ten open-ended questions, of which seven contained scenes from the film.
Analysis

The first question asked was:
In your opinion, why do Americans like or dislike the film "Shanghai Women"?

The second question asked was:
Why do you like/dislike this film?
Analysis

Scene #1 What does this scene below remind you of?
Analysis

4th Questions: Scene #2  What does this scene below remind you of?
5th Questions: Scene #3  What does this scene below remind you of?
Analysis

What is the intention of the film Director?

The director’s intention of this film is to portray the values of three generations of women in Shanghai or in China. Throughout history at anytime, women are constantly seeking their own space in life. (Peng, October 24, 2013)
Analysis

Meanings are constructed out of this visual text in conjunction with the socially situated viewers. Viewers created meanings when they interact with the visual tests through visual intertextuality. Viewers’ prior knowledge and experience shape their meaning creation. Community of viewers of US cultural background share similar interpretations of this film. So does the community of viewers of Chinese cultural background.
Conclusions

Chinese Hollywood, Huallywood, Chinese cinema, is a representation of Chinese civilization, culture, heritage, philosophy, history, politics, and contemporary daily life of the Chinese in the world. Historically, Chinese film is art for art’s sake. Filmmaking is an art rather than solely for the market. Film is part of the government’s overall agenda or program. Private film companies are few and they are new enterprises.
Conclusions

Market is not a priority for filmmakers. Market is always there domestically as the film is made for predetermined purposes. How will this change as China enters the market driven film world? If China is going to be the largest film market in the world before 2020, how to prepare and educate film making directors for this market will become a pressing educational agenda.
Conclusions

Film studies majors are available only in specialized film academies for the most talented and brightest students. It is not a regular major in comprehensive universities.

At the same time, if Chinese film industry is going to seize the film market in the world in the future, training, orienting, and educating audience will become an educational enterprise.

Are we ready to train students to become directors like Ang Lee for the Chinese film market?
Thank you!