University of Washington Department of Communication

Honors Thesis

Yellow Peril: a legacy or a forgotten past? A content analysis of Chinese representations in today's U.S. news media

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Introduction

How did the images of stereotyped Asians, Chinese specifically, come to be? Could they be products of a century-old legacy? The topic for my research is the possibility that the legacy of Yellow Peril in the 1880's echoes throughout modern media. For this research, I studied how the Chinese were represented in current American printed and broadcast news from 2005 to 2013, and then compare and contrast those images with the Yellow Peril stereotype of the 1880's after the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which outlawed the immigration of Chinese laborers into the United States (Lee 2007). Anti-Chinese sentiments in the United States were created and disseminated during the early 1900's when the portrayal of the Chinese was often as a yellow face villain or imbecile for males and a seductive siren or a dragon lady for females. According to Doobo Shim, a scholar of media and communications, "Even after 150 years of an Asian American presence on U.S. soil, on TV they are still portrayed as 'foreigners' who speak pidgin English, preserve only their 'old country traditions,' and refuse to assimilate into American culture". Shim's notion of Chinese's denigrating imagery is assumed by society to be different from the Yellow Peril stereotype. However, both imageries leave an impression of the "foreign other", which suggest that these two negative images are, in some way, related. Based on my research findings, the Yellow Peril stereotype still lingers in contemporary media portrayals of the Chinese.

There have been many studies on the racial stereotyping and racial profiling of African Americans in print and broadcast media (Entman 1994; Berry 1980). However, studies of media portrayals of Chinese Americans are surprisingly scarce and those available studies revolve more around the Asian criminal themes in television shows and films (Shim 2007). Shim's notion stands true regarding empirical studies, but in terms of cultural studies and Asian American studies, there are studies that were done on Chinese Americans and the Yellow peril notion. For instance, in a study titled *Automatic Activation of Yellow Peril Asian American Stereotypes: Effects on Social Impression Formation* by Abreu et. al. (2003), the authors studied both the Model Minority and the Yellow Peril Asian American stereotypes studied in previous research and proposed a study illustrating reverse priming effect in group stereotyping. In addition, Gina Marchetti (1993) analyzed Hollywood films and television shows, arguing that these media outlets have been participating in the propagation of racial and social disparities within the US. In her book, *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction*, Marchetti (1993) also discussed the "orientalist" ideas that have influenced the fundamental construction of American cultural identity. By observing how social norms have been established and shattered by Hollywood screen

writers, Marchetti has provided theoretical viewpoints on the current depiction of race and gender in her analysis.

Although this issue may seem to concern only a small group of Asian American studies scholars and a Chinese audience, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about the underlying origin of today's various representations of Chinese in the media. There are potential existing legacies of these images that affect our historical perceptions and understanding of people around us. In fact, my research finds that the Yellow Peril stereotype has yet to be brought to an end, and the social effects of the 1880's propaganda is still haunting the present. Furthermore, this research aims to inform media consumers about the inaccuracy of Chinese representations in the media and to put the century-old archaic and harsh legacy that molded the unfair conception of the Chinese behind the curtains of history.

Literature Review

Two bodies of literature were reviewed. The first body concerns the history of the stereotypes of Yellow Peril and Model Minority, the two most prevalent representations of Asians. The second body of literature covers the past legacy and present portrayals of African Americans. By reviewing the first body of the literature, I obtained the necessary historical background of Yellow Peril, learning about the beginning use of the term and its various associations with different Asian ethnic groups throughout the course of U.S. history. The history of Model Minority is equivalently important for the review as it tends to be viewed as a successor of the Yellow Peril. The second body of literature was essential to justify the possible relationships of present racial portrayals with past political, economic and social structures, based on the African American experience.

Asian representations: Yellow Peril and Model Minority

The stereotyping of Asians widely employs both negative stereotypes and positive stereotypes. The negative stereotype is often related to Yellow Peril while the positive stereotype is tied to the notion of the Model Minority (Kawai 2005). These stereotypes are important for the framework of my study as they provided backgrounds to the representation of Asians in a historical context.

Yellow Peril

The term Yellow Peril can be drawn back to the medieval fears of Genghis Khan and Mongolian invasions of Europe, combining racist terror of alien cultures, sexual anxieties, and the belief that the West will be overpowered and enveloped by the irresistible, dark, occult forces of the East. It was became a fear of the "flood of cheap labor threatening to diminish the earning power of white European immigrants" in the US (Marchetti 1993). The Chinese first became an object of hatred when they first arrived to US during the gold rush in the 1880's. In a cartoon illustration titled "What Shall We Do with our Boys?" the artist drew a Chinese labor worker monstrously possessing extra limbs, depicting a productivity that threatens the employment opportunities of the whites (Cheung 2007). The early projection of the Yellow Peril stereotypes that described Asians was not exclusive to the Chinese but also to other Asian ethnic groups. Asians were treated as social pariahs and were portrayed as an invading Yellow Peril, a horde consisting of depraved, uncivilized heathens who were less than human and threatened to undermine the American way of life (Suzuki 1969).

These negative stereotypes often reflected the notion that Asians, even Asian Americans, are foreigners who tend to associate with their countries of ethnic origins and who will never assimilate perfectly into the U.S society. Kawai (2005) adequately

illustrated the Yellow Peril threat during the Chinese exclusion in 1882. He stated that "Overlapped with the image of East Asia's large population size and the emergence of an Asian imperial power, the presence of ''Oriental'' faces in the United States evoked among White Americans an alarm that the yellow race might overtake the White nation by outnumbering and out-powering the White race." This American definition of the yellow peril was considered as a justification for excluding Chinese immigrants and for the colonization of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa and Philippines, continuing the U.S expansion beyond its west coast to Asia and Pacific regions (Lee 1999). During World War II , the epitome of the Yellow Peril shifted from the Chinese to the Japanese. As Japan revealed its ambition to become an imperial power and conflicted U.S interests in the Asia and Pacific region, the Yellow Peril came to mean Japan (Kawai 2005). As stated by Okihiro (1994), the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan in 1941 had "inflated" the Yellow Peril stereotype, which then led to Japanese Americans' detention in internment camps. After WWII, Chinese Americans again replaced Japanese Americans as the embodiment of Yellow Peril. According to Zhou and Gatewood (2007), Chinese Americans were highlighted as main suspects of treason and espionage, due to the communist takeover of China in 1949 and the Korean War. At the end of the Cold War, Japan has yet again regained the Yellow Peril title from China. "Anti-Japanese sentiment deepened with the recession of the early 1980s, especially in 1982 when many workers who lost their jobs blamed Japanese competition" (Heale 2009). According to Heale (2009), during the 1980's, Japan's rising economic power and its trade conflicts with the United States had passed onto them the title of "Yellow Peril", which led to an intense anti-Japanese sentiment exemplified by the death of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American who was beaten to death in Detroit by two unemployed white workers who mistook him as Japanese.

Model Minority

According to Suzuki (1989), the change toward a more positive image of Asian Americans first became noticeable in the mid-1960s in the wake of nationwide urban riots and amid growing unrest among blacks and other minorities. The Model Minority myth highlights the success of the Asian minority group who were able to "overcome racism and 'made it' in American society through hard work, uncomplaining perseverance, and quiet accommodation" (Suzuki 1989). In short, the Model Minority image depicts Asians or Asian Americans as being diligent, efficient and eager to sacrifice for the greater good, which leads to the success of their assimilation into the U.S. society.

Although the Model Minority stereotype is deemed to be the positive counterpart of the negative Yellow Peril stereotype, the two stereotypes, according to

Kawai (2005), are inseparable. Kawai quoted Robert Lee (1999), author of *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture,* in describing Model Minority, "The Model Minority has two faces. The myth presents Asian American as silent and disciplined; this is their secret to success. At the same time, this silence and discipline is used in constructing the Asian American as a new Yellow Peril." (p. 190). Kawai (2005) also mentioned that Gary Okhiro, author of *Margins and mainstreams: Asians in American history and culture,* agrees to the notion that the Model Minority stereotype, if taken too far, can become the Yellow Peril. Instead of racial background, the model minority stereotype stresses hardworking effort as the drive towards Asian American success stories, perpetuating the idea of colorblindness. Critical race theorists contend that the colorblindness idea "abstracts individuals from social and historical contexts and attributes the consequences of racial inequality to individual under-performance without acknowledging institutional racism" (Kawai 2005). In short, the model minority stereotype is inspired by the idea of colorblindness in a sense that the success achieved by Asian Americans is masking the presence of institutional racism with a façade of an open and fair American society that allows racial minorities to climb up the social hierarchy. Hence, by drawing from Kawai's claim, it is indeed possible for me to argue that the construction of the Model Minority notion is related to creating a "less threatening face of the Yellow Peril" (Kawai 2005).

In the next section I reviewed literature about the past legacy and present portrayals of African Americans, suggesting a potential relationship between present racial portrayals and past structures.

Racial Stereotyping of African Americans in the media: Past Legacy and Present Portrayals

The media has the ability to form beliefs in its portrayal of racial stereotypes. Most forms of the media -- films, television programs, newspaper reports and magazine publications -- are an influential tool of propaganda for developing ideologies. According to Omi and Winant (1995), "The power of the media lies not only in their ability to reflect dominant ideology, but in their capacity to shape ideology in the first place" (p. 17). Film and television haven been known for constructing and/or perpetuating racial minorities' images that establish the audience perception of the said racial minorities (Omi and Winant 1995). Television possesses the power to transmit meaning and values and the messages of television pervade our lives and establish profound mental sets that consciously or unconsciously influence our behavior (Berry 1980). According to Shim (2007), racial ideology is articulated in and through portrayals of race in the media. Drawing from Omi and Winant's, Berry's as well as Shim's arguments, it is certain that

the media possesses the power and ability to develop stereotypical images of racial minorities.

It is not unexpected that the racial stereotyping of African Americans in the media has become a dominant focus of academics in the United States. It is not surprising as African Americans are considered as one of the first minorities in America and various stereotypes assigned to this group have been among the most prevalent and negative within the American society (Dovido et. al. 1986). Berry (1980) points out that "Both the perceptions of blacks toward the way they are portrayed and the acceptance of whites of these portrayals are a result of a historical set of socializing experiences" (p. 246). Berry focuses on television portrayals of Afro-Americans and concluded that today's whites American attitudes towards blacks Americans came from the beginning of the slavery period and through the reflection of black contributions and black culture in the media. The legacy of slavery, the Civil War and the Reconstruction Period in the United States has constituted a "psychological legacy from the past" that influenced the present portrayals of African-Americans in television shows that perpetuated stereotypes like "inferior", "docile", "childlike", "happy in their condition", "coon", "mammy" and "brutal black buck" (Berry 1980). The patterns of dehumanizing black people were not accidental or haphazard but rather the products of a "culture" of discrimination and segregation (Berry 1980). The perceptions of black Americans and of their culture and social status are indeed "the results of a historical set of socializing experiences" (Lee 1999). In other words, it can be concluded from research on African American media that past legacies indeed affect the present portrayals of racial minority groups.

Since the present portrayals of African Americans come from legacies of past political and economic structures, the legacy of the Yellow Peril can likewise suggests that it is present in the portrayals of Chinese Americans or Asians Americans in today's media. This is because the foundation of the Yellow Peril is truly economic. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the bashing of Japan during the 1980's, it all comes down to the threats of financial domination by the Asians. In this study, I examined current newspapers and broadcast news reports perpetuating the stereotypes of Chinese Americans or Asian Americans. Hence, to address the gaps in the literature, I conducted a qualitative content analysis of evening reports from two broadcast news channels, CNN and Fox News and two major U.S. newspapers, *New York Times* and *Huffington Post*, focusing on Chinese Americans.

Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the legacy of the 18th century's Yellow Peril that is possibly influencing current U.S. news media representation of the Chinese, through these research questions:

1. What the stereotypes of Chinese of the Asian community are in today's U.S. print and broadcast news media?

2. What similarities that can be discerned with today's media representing the Chinese and the Yellow Peril stereotype, which suggests that the legacy is still present?

Data and Methods – Content Analysis

Research Design

These research questions were answered using a qualitative content analysis method. Content analysis has a long history of use in communication, journalism, sociology, psychology and business, and during the last few decades its use has shown steady growth (Neundorf 2002). This research method is suitable for the study as it allows for the testing of theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data. Through systematic content analysis the researcher can classify words or phrases of similar meanings into the same categories. The main purpose is to gain a comprehensive description of the phenomenon, using the categories that were produced from the analysis. There is a sizeable amount of research that has been devoted to the content analysis of the images of racial and ethnic minorities in the media (Neundorf 2002). According to Neundorf (2002), most of the studies have examined African American portrayals and few studies examined the portrayals of Asian Americans in entertainment, commercial or news media content. Hence, it is suitable that content analysis is to be used for my research method in investigating the portrayals of Chinese in the news media.

The reason why qualitative content analysis is chosen instead of its quantitative counterpart is because qualitative approaches focus on the qualities, meanings and defining the behaviors of people, occurrences, cultures and experiences, which emphasize an understanding the social aspects of the development of Chinese American stereotypes and how the news media process and respond to those stereotyped images in a cultural context. The data produced via qualitative approaches help us to understand the cultural values and symbols, which are more complimentary with the purpose of this study. This study is exploratory in nature: We are looking at Chinese American stereotypes in modern American news media, about which little is known. While both qualitative and quantitative methods aim to illustrate and elucidate patterns through the data, quantitative methods emphasizing numerical descriptions of variables and the relationship of those variables, which is a more "scientific" approach. For quantitative research, it is necessary to identify every would-be influence before the study begins. In short, every variable has to be included in the early steps of the research, which at times, misses out on the opportunity to identify new potential variables throughout the research process. Due to the fact that this study requires an inductive method of creating coding categories, a qualitative approach is more suitable for this study as new categories could emerge later. This qualitative approach is relevant to my study as it enables me to identify the various themes and categories of Chinese American stereotypes that can be observed in the collected news samples. From the

identified themes and categories, I was able to define the characteristics and experiences of Chinese Americans in modern news media, which provide profound and enlightening observations to the study's result.

Data Collection

Using mainly the LEXIS-NEXIS database, I examined transcripts from two broadcast news channels, CNN and Fox News, and articles of a major U.S. newspaper, *The New York Times,* from January 2005 to December 2013. The research question of the study requires the analysis of current U.S news media and hence articles and transcripts from the 21st century news media are essential for the study. In order to compensate the limited ability to collect and analyze considerable amount of data while maintaining its historical accuracy, years between 2005 and 2013 were selected for data collection. News articles from the *Huffington Post* were not included in the LEXIS-NEXIS database and, hence, were collected from its own website's search engine. Articles and news report transcripts drawn from the sources were searched based on the following key terms: Asian, Chinese, Asian American, Chinese American, East Asian, Stereotypes, Perceptions and Assumptions. Broader terms like "Asian", "East Asian" and "Asian American" were chosen as a number of news stories refer to Chinese as simply Asian or East Asian. Those terms were chosen not to favor Asians or East Asians, but due to the monolithic view of Asians which encompasses the Chinese in the America. Also, the term "Asian American" was used as one of the racial identifiers because the term is often associated racially instead of ethnically.

My first step of the search process was searching for Chinese images or stereotypes in the "body" of the segment. Articles or reports that only had the terms in the headline were omitted due to irrelevance. Hence, a second search was conducted in the entire text for Chinese stereotypes within a number of terms and topics to include all relevant material. The articles and reports were read and selected for coding. Articles and reports that were not about Chinese stereotypes and Yellow Peril were also selected when the key words matched a homonym of the term. A third, entirely independent search of articles from the LEXIS-NEXIS database was done by conducting a separate Google search of blog posts or comments critiquing news reports and articles of the chosen newspapers and news channels about the implication of Chinese stereotypes. This third search had enabled me to narrow down and effectively select the potential stories that highlight prominent stereotypes of the Chinese. Seven additional articles and news reports from the third search were included in the overall total of the sample. Hence, total sample of 52 articles from *The New York Times* and *Huffington Post* were analyzed, along with samples of another 55 news reports from CNN and Fox News, which constitute and overall total of 107 news samples.

Creating Coding Categories

An inductive method of content analysis was used in examining the texts of the news articles and news transcripts. The information about Chinese stereotypes from the extant literature was reviewed in order to identify the common uses of words or phrases related to Chinese stereotypes. Then, the materials were organized and analyzed qualitatively through a three-step process: *First*, the texts were read and at the same time notes inscribing possible categories were written along the sidelines of relevant texts from the selected news article or news report. The notes containing various categories were reread while more categories had emerged during the process of appropriately describing any related content. Free quotations were also created from the text and are associated with one or more categories. By associating quotes with categories, the identification of themes are more inclusive compared to word-by-word methods that are solely dependent on term repetitions. The captions were collected from the margins onto the coding sheets. A rough form of the coding scheme, comprising of a preliminary development of categories, was drafted. *Second*, the categories were then combined into code families based on their similarities. The main aim of grouping the categories was to reduce redundancy and minimizing the similar or different categories into a higher order of groupings. The resulting coding scheme was reviewed to ensure the categories match the research question and the variables that have been identified in the literature review. The other categories that emerged from the analysis are exclusively selected based on their relevance to the topic of the study for further analysis. The third and final step was the framing a broad depiction of the research topic through creating categories. Every category was termed based on words or phrases that originated or were deduced from the content. Subcategories that share similarities were coined together under the same umbrella terms of the list of main categories.

Data Analysis

The content was analyzed qualitatively to provide a thorough analysis and depiction of the stereotyped imageries and texts that were found in news articles and reports featured in print and broadcast media (*New York Times*, *Huffington Post*, CNN and Fox News). Eight main categories and their subcategories (some categories have only one subcategory) are discussed and shown in the following analysis.

Model Minority

The Model Minority category is the most prominent stereotype of Chinese Americans in modern US news media between the year 2005 and 2013, with seventy-two news samples in total. These seventy-two news articles and news reports generally portray Chinese Americans as the role models for other racial minorities in America by being

smart, outperforming peer, appearing compliant, certain for success and well-assimilated. There are three subcategories that branched out from the Model Minority category: The first subcategory, *Smart, outperforming others and compliant,* has been found in thirty-three news sample of the overall total; the second subcategory, *Certain to be successful,* has nineteen news sample attributed to it; the third subcategory, *Well-assimilated "Real American"*, has been observed in twenty news articles and news reports.

Smart, outperforming and compliant. In the largest portion of the coded news articles and news reports, Chinese Americans are seen as dominating in academic achievements. This stereotype dictates that Chinese Americans are universally excellent in math, science, technology and engineering, which directly contributes to the notion that every Chinese American students achieves perfect test scores and grades. A quote from a CNN news report uncritically reinforces the notion that all Chinese Americans or Asian Americans are high academic achievers. "…that if you're not a straight A's engineering or a science major -- and you're Asian -- there's something wrong with you. You're not authentically Asian." (Lin et. al. 2005) Likewise, these children of Chinese or Asian decent are not exempted from being the perfect-scorer. It is implied that Chinese children are universally smart and hardworking, which makes them more endearing. This Chinese trait of academic excellence has placed Chinese Americans at the top of the academic food chain, surpassing other races like Caucasian, Black and Latino in academia. Rather than outperforming solely in academic achievements, Chinese Americans are perceived to be generally outstanding. A common perception dictates that Chinese Americans are more diligent and have distinctive approach in learning, which contributed to their success. In this sub-category, Chinese Americans are also seen as quiet and modest, descriptions that we tend associate with the Chinese conformist attitude. An extract of a *New York Times* article adequately sums up this code: Chinese Americans are a "good minority that seeks advancement through quiet diligence in study and work and by not making waves,'' (Lewin 2008). Although it appears that the image of smart, outperforming and compliant Chinese Americans is used frequently, it is no surprise that there are news articles and news reports that critique this image of Chinese Americans being the Model Minority. Despite being a positive attribute, ten of the thirty-three news articles and reports accrued for this subcategory see this stereotype as a reinforcement of a more subtle form of racism. This notion is supported by a quote from the *Huffington Post*, stating that "believing all Asians are intelligent and meek is in fact racist, as these blanket statements cause one to ignore the skills of an individual instead of seeing their real merit. Even those who do

excel in intellectual fields are expected to give credit to their ethnic background for their success." (Williams 2012).

Certain to be successful. The notion of brainy and yet compliant Chinese Americans is then supported by the various successes achieved by Chinese Americans in various occupational roles. Roles like Chinese store owners and Chinese labor workers are now transitioned into celebrated fashion designers, sports superstars and political members. A *Huffington Post* news article stated that "The influx of Asians in fashion is hard to ignore. In recent years, the fashion industry -- once dominated by too-cool Europeans like Miuccia Prada and Karl Lagerfeld -- has been invigorated by a new crop of young designers, many of them Asian" (Lee 2013). Of the nineteen coded news samples attributed to this subcategory, a large portion of them revolves around the recent success of Jeremy Lin, famous Chinese American basketball icon. Not only made his name in the NBA, Jeremy also changed the way people look into Asian American playing sports, debunking the archaic assumption that Chinese or Asian Americans do not participate in one of the main symbols of American pop culture – American sports. Another excerpt from the *Huffington Post* explains that by "Seeing Jeremy Lin accepted and celebrated in this American sport, it makes us (Chinese Americans) more American, and it makes other people see us (Chinese Americans) as more American." (Washington 2012) Chinese Americans, through participating in American culture and being successful in modern American professions, have fully assimilated into the American community in these news articles. Despite the fact that most of the news samples associated with this category uncritically used this image, three of the included article count for this subcategory have inversely critiqued the notion of "success stories" for being fictitious and overrepresented. A quote from a *Huffington Post* article gave a comment debunking the successful Chinese Americans stereotype, "...many Asian Americans still live under the poverty line, despite the stereotype that Asian Americans hold high-paying jobs such as doctors and lawyers." (Williams 2012)

Well-assimilated "Real American". In this code, a cultural separation between first generation Chinese Americans and their later generation is evident in twenty of the overall total news sample. It is perceived that second and subsequent generation Chinese Americans have different cultural perspectives compared to their immigrant parents due to greater exposure to Western culture, ideals and standards, which makes them more "American". For instance, a *New York Times* excerpt asserts that the American value of assertiveness is more regarded by next generation Chinese Americans than the traditional Chinese appeal for moderation (Brooks 2011). Likewise, it is also stressed that Chinese Americans or Asian Americans are well assimilated and are deemed to fully adopt Western ideologies, "Let's be honest: We have grown up in a

Western culture, with Western standards of beauty and Western ideals of romance -- which is why we value 'assertiveness' at the bar in the first place. We prefer Western men because we grew up in a culture that prefers Western men." (Chen 2012) Apart from adopting American values, the adopting of the American diet is similarly considered as one of the passages of successful assimilation into the American society. For example, preferring cola over tea and favoring steak over rice denote the informal criteria of an American diet. A *New York Times* article support this idea, "But a rite of passage that used to take most immigrant families a generation or two -- fully adopting the American diet -- has accelerated for Asians…" (Santora 2006) This image of fully assimilated Chinese Americans is propagated uncritically by the news media, as is this idea of Chinese Americans being a "real American".

Perpetual foreigner
Thirty-five news samples in total mostly comprised of the perception of Chinese Americans as 'foreign others' were coded from the collected news reports and news articles ranging from 2005 to 2013. This *Perpetual foreigner* category is ranked the second most prominent trend of the Chinese American stereotype perpetuated by current American news media and the number of news samples attributed to this category is consistent every year from 2005 to 2013, which is an average of eight news articles or news reports per year. Two subcategories have also emerged from this category: *Constant threat* and *"Fresh off the boat"*. The *Constant threat* category is comprised of thirteen news samples while the *"Fresh off the boat"* subcategory consisted of twenty-two news samples.

Constant threat. Chinese Americans or Asian Americans in general were often portrayed as a constant threat to the American society. One of the threats is described as cheap Chinese labor workers that are taking what should be American jobs. The perception is that Chinese workers are employment rivals who have a higher likelihood to be hired due to low labor cost. Another reported threat revolves around the term 'anchor babies', where prenatal Chinese mothers come to America and give birth to their children, enabling those 'anchor babies' to be naturalized American citizens. The third apparent threat depicts the concern of Chinese students using skills and knowledge gained from American institutions against America. An excerpt from FOX News' news report clearly describes this threat, "…Chinese students are brought here, taught computers, go back home and hack us." (O'Reilly 2013) These stereotypical images describing Chinese Americans as a "threat" were attributed by selected news articles and news reports in a casual and uncritical manner, as if the comments were valid and true.

"Fresh off the boat". The phrase Fresh off the boat (FOB) is a term used to label immigrants that have yet to be assimilated into the host country's language, values and behavior. One of the most prominent ethnic groups who tend to be associated with such term is the Chinese or, in general, Asians. Among the codes relating to FOB, language and accent are the most apparent. The Chinese are portrayed as educated but tend to speak in broken English or heavily accented English. This 'phony Chinese accent' actually exemplifies the high rate of linguistic isolation faced by Chinese or Asian Americans. This then contributed to the widespread use of humor that revolves around English phrases spoken in thick Chinese accent such as 'shrimp flied lice' (shrimp fried rice) and 'herro' (hello).

In terms of values and behavior, Chinese have been referred as 'people of the book' who adopt foreign concepts that are often incompatible with Western cultures. Such difference in values resulted in a more the explicit choice between 'American' and 'Asian' culture. In a news article from the *Huffington Post*, Asian men were depicted as "authoritarian, conservative, religious and profess fealty toward their cultural values that are often incompatible with Western mores." (Adam 2011). The collision between American culture and Chinese culture has resulted in an "Asian FOB" image that paints Chinese Americans or Asian Americans as the constant outsider. Of the twenty-two news articles and news reports, most of them described the "FOB" image as common and attribute this characteristic to the "transnational identities" of Chinese Americans. This means that despite living in America and being Americans, Chinese Americans have yet to fully embrace the American identities because they are still connected to their ethnic identities of their ancestral land. An excerpt from the *New York Times* has provided a clear justification of this notion, "For at least a decade, academics have explored the idea that many immigrants possess 'transnational' identities. That is, aided by jet travel, technology and global commerce, they -- and their children -- maintain vital, current links to homelands that are never really left behind." (Sontag 2005).

Women
A total of thirty-one news samples dating from 2005 to 2013 were coded in the *Women* category, which makes this code for stereotypes of women the third most prominent stereotyped image of Chinese Americans. These news samples consisted primarily of sexualizing Chinese American women and depicting Chinese American parenting. Hence, the total of thirty-one news samples was divided into subcategories like *Chinese women as submissive and erotic* and *'Tiger Mother' parenting*, with fifteen and sixteen news articles and news reports associated with them respectively.

Chinese women as submissive and erotic. There is a reductive view of Chinese women as objects of sexual desire and all of the accredited news articles and news reports have commented on and critiqued this image. Five articles from the fifteen articles attributed to this subcategory describe roles such as docile 'mail-order brides', sensual masseuses and erotic prostitutes as commonly associated with Asian women. Another five articles were coded for evident highlighting of the body of Chinese women. There are numerous stereotypical descriptions about Chinese women's physical appearances. For example a *Huffington Post* article described Chinese women as 'petite', 'thin', 'pale' and 'straight and jet black hair' echoing physical stereotypes. (Disgrasian 2009) Other than their body, the last five of the fifteen articles were coded for the stereotype of the submissive nature of Chinese women. In contrast to Western women's individualistic and determined nature, Chinese women are described as being 'hyper-feminine' and 'communal'. They are perceived as 'passive' and 'obedient', an ideal wife material for western men. Following the subservient wife-to-be label, the code of sexy but lethal 'dragon lady' is observed as well. For an example from a *New York Times* article, the character Nikita is depicted as seductive and deadly, habitually wearing close-fitting outfits while dispensing violence when necessary (Hale 2013). To sum up the representation of Chinese women by the news, despite being critiqued for its obsolescence, the issue of women being grouped collectively as objects of sexual fixation, regardless of age and experience, is still ongoing and has not yet lost its momentum in stereotyping Chinese Americans in terms of the female gender.

'Tiger Mother' Parenting. From the coded news articles and news reports, Chinese-style parenting is deemed as one of the main attributes that plays an important role to Chinese American success. Current news media has dubbed this fashion of parenting as the 'Tiger Mother' parenting. The 'Tiger Mother' is depicted as excessively strict and emotional manipulative, a harsh 'taskmaster' who is forceful and verbally abusive. Between working hard towards achievements and nurturing individual creativity, 'Tiger Mothers' tend to personally micromanage their children's path towards success by employing strict discipline and paying less attention to the children's self-esteem and creativity. For instance, according to the articles from both *Huffington Post* and CNN, Chinese parents are able to instruct their children to attain perfect grades for first-class college admission, in order to procure brighter and lucrative future career opportunities. (Washington 2011) Obedience became the essential regulator in this style of parenting. (Keltner 2013) Based on the articles analyzed in *Huffington Post*, *New York Times* and CNN, the value of parental respect is dominant in Chinese culture. It then became a reflection of the various sacrifices like time, wealth and effort borne by Chinese parents in providing for their children, which further reinforces the children's obligation to be obedient.

<u>*Underrepresentation and Discrimination*</u>

There are twenty-five news articles and news reports coded in this category. These news samples have featured Chinese Americans facing underrepresentation in the entertainment industry and discrimination in education, which resulted in the branching out of two subcategories. The *Underrepresentation in the entertainment industry* subcategory consists of fifteen news articles and news reports while the *Discrimination in education* subcategory has ten attributed to it.

Underrepresentation in the entertainment industry. The articles and reports in this category critically discussed the unfair treatment towards Chinese Americans in American television, from reality shows to dramas and sitcoms. The characterizations of the Chinese/Asian Americans and their experience tend to revolve around demeaning stereotypical humor and 'physical immigrant appearance'. Stock characters like the "Dragon Lady" Nikita and "brainy geek" Dr. Joan Watson have saturated the entertainment industry, overshadowing the 'untapped' vibrant culture of the Chinese/Asian American experience. From the coded news articles and news reports, it is observed that the Asian American experience has been widely mocked and commonly underrepresented in television shows. For example, a CNN news report articulated that Asian male characters in popular television shows like "Lost" and "Heroes" are depicted as foreigners. Despite how popular they are, they are still Asian and not Asian American. (Chetry & Kwon 2007) Another article poses the question, "Why has no Asian actor ever won an Academy Award?" Other than television shows, several articles from the *New York Times* also stated that the music business has shown little or no interest in promoting Chinese or Asian American pop stars. According to the articles, it is expected that Chinese Americans "play the violin or know kungfu", but is not expected to breakthrough and "sell like Madonna" (Navarro 2007). Instead, those who are still aspiring to venture into the music industry have created a 'parallel universe' to pursue their music dreams; in truth they are separated from and are overlooked by the mainstream market. In short, the 'Asian thing' has become a major obstacle for these Chinese/Asian American artists to flourishing in the American entertainment industry.

Discrimination in education. News reports argue that despite being high academic achievers, possessing almost-perfect test scores and grades, Chinese Americans are held to a higher standard in college admissions compared to other races. Articles associated with this subcategory frequently comment on this partial treatment towards Chinese American students. Articles from all four news media outlets: *Huffington Post*, *New York Times*, Fox News and CNN, have concurrently stated that, in order to be given an equal chance of admission into top colleges, Chinese American students are required to have higher test scores than other racial minorities. This

alleged race-conscious admission is made analogous to the outdated Jewish experience in a *New York Times* article when the numbers of Jews were prevented from growing too high by the reason of geographical diversity, which bestowed Chinese or Asian Americans a new branding: the' new Jews' (Bronne 2012). It also is observed in news reports from Fox News that there is a hierarchy of college admission based on race: The most favored are African Americans and Latino American, followed by white Americans while Asians are placed at the bottom of the food chain. There are two reasons given by the news media explicating why such phenomenon exists: First, the criteria of 'individuality' and 'uniqueness' that put Asian applicants at a disadvantage for admission into top elite colleges. Second, alumni children are given admission priority over non-alumni children. Other than being held to exceptionally high admission standards, Chinese American students, regardless of any levels, are also regarded as highly intelligent fast learners. The article assert that this assumption about Chinese students being one step ahead of other students of color has caused those average performing Chinese students to be constantly ignored by their educators.

Race association

Fifteen news samples in this category total were coded from selected news samples, dating from 2005 to 2013. These samples consist of words and sayings associated with the Chinese race.

Chinese puns. There have been numerous Asian-centered terms that exist throughout the coded news articles and news reports. These terms were used casually instead of being critiqued for its harmful association with Chinese Americans. These terms tend to be derogatory and their focus usually revolves around the culture, values, practices and the body of the targeted member (Chinese/Asian American). In terms of culture, food is the common denominator associated with these Asian-based puns: fortune cookies, dim sum and stir-fry. Other than cultural food, ancient Chinese philosophies and practices are another one of the subsets of these race associated terms. From an excerpt coded from a FOX News report, the saying of an ancient Chinese military philosopher, "You massacre one, terrorize a million" was used to insinuate the violent nature of Chinese values (Hannity et. al 2005). Another associated term underscored in news articles and news reports is the Chinese body. In a story in *Huffington Post* about Jeremy Lin, a rising NBA superstar, his 'manhood' became the center of an unkind racist remark regarding the Chinese body (Washington 2012). Other than private body parts, terms regarding height, 'sexiness', appearances and strength associated negatively with the Chinese were discovered as well.

Generalized racial grouping

A total of fourteen news articles and news reports have observed the category of *generalized racial grouping*. These news samples generally group Chinese Americans into a larger racial class: Just '*Only another Asian*'.

'*Only another Asian*'. News samples collected for this category mainly critiqued society's obliviousness when distinguishing different Asian ethnicities. It appears to be a norm that Chinese Americans are seen in a reductive way: They are believed to look the same as other Asian ethnic groups; despite their achievements, they are still generally grouped as a member of the larger group labelled Asian. Chinese Americans are evaluated not as individuals, but against other overachieving Asians. In the eyes of many Westerners, Chinese Americans are placed in their own segregated pool, an Asian only pool, which includes other Asian ethnic groups like Japanese, Thai, Korean and Vietnamese people. This troubling notion maintains that if someone looks Asian, he must be a foreigner. For instance, in an article from the *Huffington Post*, Chinese American writers tend to be compared against other Chinese or East Asian American writers, and that is as far as it goes (Ng 2009). Another example from a FOX News reinforces this unfair generalization. Vincent Chin, a victim of racial violence, was "an assimilated son of Chinese immigrants somehow came to be identified with Japanese automakers." (Wu 2012) These excerpts selected from both *Huffington Post* and FOX News perfectly exemplifies the generalization of Chinese Americans as Asian Americans, a term that even the group itself does not use often. Instead of a community that comes from shared language, religion, history or culture, they are more of a demographic category.

<u>Violence</u>
There are twelve articles and reports associated to the *Violence* category, which is the least among other codes.

As victims of violent assaults and sexual violence. In terms of racially driven assaults, Chinese or Asian American students are presented as a common target by their African American and Latino American counterparts. It is perceived that such violence signifies the overextension of racial strain between Asian immigrants and other minorities' students. In a news article of the *New York Times*, four young Asian-American men were attacked in Queens on the month of August 2006, which was described by the police as a racially motivated assault (O'Donnell 2006). There are numerous reported cases in the news involving Chinese or Asian American students being physically assaulted by students of African and Latino decent, starting from hostile taunts to violent beatings. (O'Reilly 2006) Additionally, Chinese women are also subjected to race-based sexual violence. Tragically, they became rape victims, stemming from a common stereotypical view of Asian women: quiet, erotic and submissive. There

are numerous discussions and comments about such race-targeted sexual violence. For instance, a *Huffington post* article commented that this "racist nature of the crimes go unrecognized and unpunished, as if there is nothing wrong with choosing a rape victim because she is Asian." (Kim 2009).

Discussion

The news media are a broadly circulated resource that delivers not only public information but also collective beliefs, dominated by a Western ideology about race and gender. Omi and Winant (1995) supported this notion stating that the media has the power to not only to reflect dominant ideologies, but also to shape them. This research aims at examining how Chinese Americans, often times called Asian Americans, are stereotypically portrayed in many news articles and news reports presented by American print and broadcast news media. Based on the findings from the data analysis, it was found that the portrayals were both positive and negative, which answers the first research question: "What are the stereotypes of Chinese of the Asian community are in today's U.S. print and broadcast news media?"

The images that print and broadcast news media are trying to portray of the Chinese are mixed. Even though the news media positively label Chinese individuals the 'model minority' by featuring Chinese as hardworking students who are universally intelligent top scorers who surpass other races, presenting Chinese American as dutiful and conforming citizens, describing second and later generation Chinese Americans as fully assimilated with American values and culture, and highlighting them as successful professionals in fields like politics, sports and fashion, there are also several means by which Chinese people are portrayed negatively in news articles and news reports.

Chinese Americans were generalized into a larger racial category Asian. On the extreme side of these depictions, the most prevalent characterization of the Chinese in the news is as job stealers, disloyal double agents and 'anchor baby' schemers. In terms of gender, the stereotyping of Chinese women is prominent and it embodies two sorts: submissive and hyper feminine object of sexual obsession, and sexy but lethal 'dragon lady'. Also, the Chinese were perceived as people who are still adopting foreign values, behaviors and practices. The 'Tiger Mother' style parenting, the ancient mysterious philosophies and the 'phony' accent are considered as "Un-American". In short, Chinese Americans are positively portrayed by the news media as the model minority while, negatively, they are perpetual foreigners.

In addition, I compared and contrasted the trends of current stereotypes of the Chinese by the news media with the Yellow Peril portrayals from the literature review. This has allowed me to answer the second research question: "What similarities can be discerned between today's media representing the Chinese and the Yellow Peril notion, which suggests that the legacy is present?"

The historical Yellow Peril notion depicts Chinese men as a yellow face villains or social imbeciles who threaten the employment opportunities of the whites (Cheung

2007), while Chinese women are depicted as seductive sex sirens or dragon ladies. In general, the Chinese Yellow Peril represents the stereotype of "depraved, uncivilized heathens who were less than human and threatened to undermine the American way of life" (Suzuki 1969). As argued, the stereotyped imageries of Chinese Americans in current news media suggest the existence of the idea of Yellow Peril's "foreign others" , based on the findings of the research. The depiction of Chinese Americans being job stealers, disloyal spies and 'anchor baby' schemers by news articles and news reports is comparable to the xenophobic fear of the Chinese being the invading Yellow Peril and a national threat. These negative images prove the consistency of the "foreign others" stereotype, which suggests that the negative images of the Chinese in current news media and the older Yellow Peril notion are related, showing the effect of the Chinese past legacy on modern representations of Chinese Americans.

Despite being labelled as a positive stereotype, news media depiction of Chinese Americans as the Model Minority likewise has its inclinations towards Yellow Peril. The Model Minority myth commonly underscores the Asian minority's successes, who "overcome racism and 'made it' in American society through hard work, uncomplaining perseverance and quiet accommodation" (Suzuki 1989). In sum, the Model Minority is a symbol of success in assimilating with the American society. However, Lee (1999), author of *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, suggested that the Model Minority has two faces: The portrayal of Asian Americans as silent and disciplined has marked their success. But at the same time, it can be used to construct Asian Americans as a new Yellow Peril. This notion can be verified from the research findings regarding underrepresentation and discrimination of Chinese Americans in their pursuit of education. According to the data analysis, Chinese or Asian American high school students, despite being perceived as universally intelligent and diligent, were held at a higher standard than other races in terms of grades and scores for admissions into top elite colleges. They are seen as a major obstacle by other minority groups in pursuit of quality college education. Labelled as the "new Jews", Chinese American students are given an unfair treatment in college admissions to a point that implies discrimination. In short, Chinese Americans are too smart for their own good so that they became a threat in the realm of academia. This phenomenon of limiting the number of overachieving and outperforming Model Minority Chinese Americans from being admitted into top colleges shares resemblance to the regulation of Chinese labor workers during the Yellow Peril era of the 1880's. By assuming that all Asians are smart and submissive, it perpetuates subtle racism, as it ignores individual skills and uniqueness rather than seeing them for their real value.

Although this research has brought a new light to these images, it has its limitations. The quality of the research was heavily reliant on individual skills. At times, the analysis may not correspond with other researchers' interpretations due to the nature of operationalizing obtained information. By conducting the qualitative research alone, there is a risk of misinterpreting and personal biases. In order to mitigate this limitation, I requested assistance from another undergraduate researcher to facilitate my progress in attaining the most clarity in text interpretation with a detailed checklist. Examples of the questions from the checklist will include: What is the subliminal message behind the text? How is this influencing how I think? Future study could identify additional important variables in today's media representing the Chinese. A similar study with more research samples would allow more detailed analysis and would provide more insights through a historical lens. For example, news articles and news reports that were covered from the 1880's until 2000's could be included to gain more insights in the historical trend of media representations of Asian Americans or Asians in the US.

Although there are a few noteworthy positive changes that have taken place in the portrayal of Chinese Americans in the news media since 1880's America, the presence of the Yellow Peril stereotype is still lingering in the portrayal of Chinese Americans in modern US news media. After analyzing various news articles and news reports, it became evident how subjective it is that some races and ethnicities are allowed into the US as "true Americans" while others are not so lucky. Negative portrayals of Chinese people are presented in a clichéd and uncomplimentary way, recreating the image of the "foreign others" that mimics the older Chinese stereotype of Yellow Peril. Conversely, the most prevalent positive Chinese stereotype highlighted by news media today is the Model Minority stereotype, putting Chinese Americans or Asian Americans on a national pedestal that glorifies their intelligence, diligence and submission. However, this research suggested that the Model Minority stereotype was being 'taken too far' by the news media and Chinese Americans have become victims of underrepresentation, discrimination and violence, which bears a stark resemblance to the treatments suffered by Chinese labor workers during the Yellow Peril era. In sum, the similarities between the Chinese and the Yellow Peril notion are apparent: the "foreign others" impression and the denigrating treatment in the form of underrepresentation, discrimination and violence. This subsequently suggests that the Yellow Peril legacy is present, and that it contributes to the present portrayals of Chinese or Asian Americans even in today's media.

Ethical and Legal Issues

Use of news content

For this study, most of the content for analysis was newspaper articles, news report transcripts. Although the news content was be used for solely research purposes, handling and storing the news content were handled with care in order to prevent copyright infringement.

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