Literary techniques used for representing Asia based on orientalism in American popular media in the 21ˢᵗ century

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Abstract

The objectives of this descriptive study were to examine the literary techniques used to represent Asia including its people, places, and cultures based on the concept of *Orientalism* in American popular media in the 21st century, namely films, television programs, advertising, and comic books and to find out the most frequently-used techniques and possible reasons behind them. Besides, this study aimed at discussing the factors which influence such Orientalist representations. This study is based on Said's *Orientalism* as the theoretical framework in the analysis of the American popular media. To clarify, Orientalism refers to the construction of the East (Asia) based upon the binary opposition made between the superior West and the inferior East. The results of this study revealed that the portrayals of Asia in the selected American popular media relied on the binary opposition which depicted Asia in association with exoticism, mystery, irrationality, and threat. Further, the literary techniques that were mostly used in the American media included repetition and symbolism which were mostly found in the American films and television programs. The possible reasons for employing such literary techniques were that both of the techniques might probably be simple and appealing to audiences to interpret. Moreover, the Orientalist ideology and the white supremacy rooted in the very foundation of the Occidental construction of the Orient were the factors which influence the negative representations of Asia and could possibly open the door for the Occidental imperialism in the modern era.

Keywords: Literary techniques, Orientalism, the Orient, Asia, binary opposition

1. Introduction

It has been many centuries that the world has been divided upon the (supposed) East-West dichotomy. Geographical and cultural divisions between the East and the West have played a major role in creating identities, defining social classes and leading to a variety of differences grounded on assumptions between these two societies. While some believe in the superiority of the West, these differences have generated and been widely presented in a form of binary opposition; particularly of race and culture drawn between "the East" and "the West". This invention of a western superior mentality has ultimately become the imperial ideology of the "superior West" for justifying its invasions to dominate over the "inferior East". From that time on, the world has forever changed.

Since their reign of power during the Colonial Period and into Post-Colonialism, the West has continued to play a superior role in determining matters of the world. This role however has not come in the form of invasion and succession as seen in colonial or post colonialism, but rather in holding a certain authority to produce large bodies of knowledge based on the West itself as its center. This western originated knowledge has become the standard and accepted truth to be perceived by people all over the world in order to understand both Eastern and Western societies.

Soon after the West's presentation propagated, there have been a large number of controversies and issues concerning political and cultural conditions between the represener (West) and the represented (East). This Western unilateral truth does not only function as a lens to define the whole world's perception toward both Western and non-Western societies based on the binary opposition, but also formulates negative impressions in order to serve the imperial purposes of the West in the modern age.

With regard to the Western influences on the world's perception, there has been a critique of the Western depictions of the East, called *Orientalism*. According to Edward Said

(1978), a Palestinian-American professor, *Orientalism* is defined as a Western notion which determines the binary opposition drawn between the West and the Orient, which refers to the East. This Western conception is influenced by European imperialism with the idea that knowledge leads to power and control, a mean of subjugating the East (Sered, 2017). By this way, *Orientalism* is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" and it, thus, plays a great role in strengthening the argument of misrepresenting the East as being both "other" and "inferior" as widely depicted by Western supremacy (Said, 1978).

According to O'Heffernan (1991), "the globalization of mass media has been a particularly American process, so much so that due to its sheer reach and its volume, American mass media have become a worldwide cultural form..." This position as the world's projector makes it tenable to say that America projecting itself as "Orientalist", a person, especially a scholar studying the East, holds to misrepresent the "Orient", primarily referring to the Middle East and Asia, through the process of othering via global media as to preserve its superior position in the world's eye. As shown in, "A memo from Media Action Network for Asian Americans" (MANAA):

> American entertainment media have defined the Asian image to the [entire] world. And usually, that image has been shaped by people with little understanding of Asian people themselves--and with little foresight into how such images would impact the Asian-American community….[and] limited and unbalanced portrayals of Asians have been the norm in the entertainment industry. (Asian Stereotypes, par. 1)

To extend Western hegemony and Orientalist ideology, this process is made visible in various types of American popular media and widely reach millions of audiences around the world. For instance, according to the film *Iron Man*, a popular Hollywood film produced by

Marvel Studios in 2008, the Arab characters were portrayed as villains (terrorists) who are "technologically incompetent (or far less competent), their tools of persuasion being machine guns and primitive torture (submersion in water, burning with coals)", however many American characters such as Tony Stark was represented as being smart, competent, and civilized (Bryant, 2011). As can be seen, the totally different portrayals of Arab characters and the American character were portrayed based on the binary opposition in which the East was seen as backwards, barbaric, and inferior; while the West was the opposite. As this American film is extremely well-known, such negative stereotypes of Arabs can be carried out and perceived as a certain image for this racial group. Apart from negative portrayal in films, these Orientalist ideas are able to touch upon other types of popular media in the 21st century and moreover, in the production of television programs, advertising, and even comic books.

As a discourse, literary techniques are regarded as significant keys of representation since such techniques have been employed in constructing language in order to convey meaning to the reader or audience in both implicit and explicit ways. For this function, it is possible to state that literary techniques can be used for constructing Orientalist representations of Asia in American popular media and can possibly shape the way they are perceived.

This study, therefore, attempts to study literary techniques used in representing Asia including its places, people, and cultures through Orientalist assumptions in American popular media in the 21st century, which include films, television programs, advertising, as well as comic books. Moreover, this study investigates how frequently such literary techniques are employed in the representations of Asia with a discussion of the possible reasons behind and also finds out the factors which influence such negative representations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literary Techniques

Literary devices refer to the techniques used in the telling of a narrative. Literary devices are also recognized as fictional devices through several specific approaches in which the author employs to express the ideas as well as drama of the narrative to words (Kisak, 2015). Interestingly, these devices can be categorized into two aspects including 'literary elements' and 'literary techniques.' Literary elements are necessary aspects or features of a literary work commonly found in all narrative such as character, setting, conflict, plot, symbol and theme. We can find these elements in general stories (McCarthy, 2000). However, literary techniques are defined as the constructions of language employed by an author in order to convey meaning. These techniques somehow attract the reader's attention and make the story itself more fascinating. It is considered significant that these techniques have to be identified and understood (Stark, 2016). In addition, these techniques are unlike literary elements as they seem not to be necessarily employed in every literary work. In other words, literary techniques are the specific ways language is used for the purpose of creating beauty in a literary work and encoding the author's message or meaning. According to Matrix Education, the list of common literary techniques which are employed for the representation of Asia is describe as follows (The English literary Techniques Toolkit for the HSC, 2021):

2.1.1 Allegory

A representation of a story which can be interpreted implicitly and explicitly. An allegory is an extended metaphor that objects, persons and actions in a story are equated with meanings outside of the story. The meaning of an allegory can be about moral, social, religious, or political point which is related to the context of the author.

2.1.2 Allusion

An implied or indirect reference to a thing, person, place, literary text, historical period, or religious belief.

2.1.3 Alliteration

The repetition of initial consonant sounds at the beginning of words emerging nearby in a sentence. Alliteration is normally employed in poetry, and, in some traditions, this technique is considered an integrating aspect of the verse. For the most part, alliteration is identified with deliberation. Alliteration is hardly ever employed in prose, and when it is employed in poetry, it frequently does not have a specific meaning, being rather a convention of the style.

2.1.4 Ambiguity

An expression or feature of a text that lacks an apparent or single meaning. Ambiguity in literary texts is categorized into four groups including syntactic ambiguity, semantic ambiguity, narrative ambiguity, and conceptual ambiguity.

2.1.5 Analogy

A comparison of two unrelated objects in order to create connections for the purpose of explanation or clarification.

2.1.6 Anecdote

A short or brief story which is commonly interesting and humorous. This technique is used in both fiction and non-fiction texts to enhance their ideas, illustrate components of a person's characteristic, or add to their world.

2.1.7 Anomaly

In a literary text, an anomaly is something that differs from what is standard or commonly expected.

2.1.8 Anthropomorphism

The act of interpreting human personalities to non-human characters.

2.1.9 Apostrophe

A rhetorical technique in which a character speaks or address to an object, quality, or idea, or discusses somebody who is not literally present.

2.1.10 Archetype

An idea, character, or object that happens again and again in a story. This technique also represents universal patterns of human nature. Throughout the history of literature, there is a hero archetype.

2.1.11 Assonance

The repetition of identical vowel sounds that take place in neighboring words. This technique probably appears anywhere in the word, not only at the beginning.

2.1.12 Bricolage

Construction of modern texts using pre-existing material, often derived from a variety of sources and text types.

2.1.13 Cliché

An expression or phrase which is over-used, common expression.

2.1.14 Consonance

The repetition of identical consonant sounds throughout a line of text.

2.1.15 Contrast

The deliberate positioning of two or more objects, events, characters that have different attributes. This technique is often used to emphasize their distinctive individual qualities. Paradox, antithesis, oxymoron, juxtaposition, contrast in description are all techniques which employ contrast.

2.1.16 Dialect

A form of English spoken by a particular group, such as a group of people from a specific region. If a text is written in a specific dialect, it can be explained why the author has

decided to adopt that language. Further, if a character in a story is decided to speak in a particular dialect which is part of their characterization and implies where they come from and their socio-economic status.

2.1.17 Dialogue

The significant technique is employed in association with other literary techniques. For example, this technique can probably refer to the diction in a speaker's dialogue, which can indicate his or her level of education. Also, dialogue can be employed to infer a speaker's intentions and his or her characteristics.

2.1.18 Diction

The selection of words and expression styles determined by an author. Diction is defined as the construction of expressions which allows a text to achieve its purpose. This technique can affect the tone and representation of characters and setting.

2.1.19 Didactic

The instruction of moral or political lessons in a text for its readers.

2.1.20 Deixis

The use of words or expressions in which their meaning depends on the context they are used. This technique aims to develop more understanding of the certain words or expressions in a dialogue. The most common examples of this are "me" or "here." These words require the reader to understand, or at least assume we understand, contextual information to develop meaning.

2.1.21 Disjunct

A type of adverb that functions to describe a whole sentence. This technique functions as introductory clause and is commonly employed in order to introduce examples or observations by commenting on them.

2.1.22 Disjunction

A conjunction which significantly disturbs the rhythm of the sentence in an effort to introduce a contrast.

2.1.23 Ellipsis

The technique an author employs to shorten quotations which are long by using three consecutive periods (…). In literature, it can be used in various ways. The most common example includes a dramatic pause which is signaled by (…) to create tension or imply words which cannot be spoken.

2.1.24 Emotive Language

Words and phrases chosen in order to evoke the readers' emotions.

2.1.25 Enjambment

A technique of poetry employed to continue a sentence or phrase running over more than one line or stanza. This technique visually offers the sense that the poem flows between lines but, in an utterance, this technique leads to a pause between lines while being spoken loudly.

2.1.26 Euphemism

Mild or indirect words and expressions used to replace severe blunt ones.

2.1.27 Exclamation

Exclamatory sentence ending in "!" to represent high emotion.

2.1.28 Figurative Language & Sound Devices

These techniques include metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, simile, personification, assonance, alliteration, consonance, onomatopoeia and more. These techniques have a great impact as they affect human senses to contribute the subject matter of the text.

2.1.29 Form

Purpose and features of a literary text which influence its construction and guides its structure.

2.1.30 Foreshadowing

An indication to a future event that will happen later in a story.

2.1.31 Flashback

A scene in a literary text appearing earlier than the main story. Significantly, this technique can create many effects in a story.

2.1.32 Fragmented Sentences

Incomplete sentences used to add pressure or haste, or reflect how characters talk to each other. Sentence fragments are sentences which cannot stand on their own. For instance, A single noun is a sentence fragment because it is considered a subordinate clause.

2.1.33 Gaps & Silences

Silences refer to spaces in which the text omits from any mention of certain groups or topics. However, gaps refer to spaces in the text where authors can open their mind and create connections by drawing on their understanding of the text.

2.1.34 Humour

The uses of incongruity, parody, satire, exaggeration, irony, puns and other techniques in order to illuminate the overall tone.

2.1.35 Hyperbole

A technique representing exaggerated statements.

2.1.36 Icons

A particular person, object or image which indicates complex ideas and feelings.

2.1.37 Imagery

Clear images created through words in a literary text which allow its reader to be able to visualize character or setting more apparently. This technique is employed through the use of language in order to encourage one of the five senses, and readers must always refer to the particular kind.

2.1.38 Imperative Voice or Mood

Certain use of the verb at the beginning of a sentence or phrase. The imperative mood is considered a part of grammatical moods in English. Other moods are the indicative and the interrogative. The imperative mood is useful to refer to as it expresses the mood for orders. Therefore, the use of imperative mood can probably indicate an authority within a character.

2.1.39 Incantation

A poetic feature which uses repetition or rhythm in order to create a sense of magic or magical power.

2.1.40 Intertextuality

The relationship drawn between literary texts. This technique can be an explicit quotation or implied and inferred by allusion, a technique of either direct reference or indirect reference.

2.1.41 In Medias Res

This ancient technique denotes 'in the middle of things,' and it refers to stories that start in the middle of action, in contrast to slowly building up to this action. Also, it can probably create various meanings. Most evidently, it is an effective way to draw the reader in. Moreover, this technique can be employed to create disorientation.

2.1.42 Irony

The expression of one's meaning through the use of language which usually means the opposite. In other words, it is a gap between what is said and what is meant.

2.1.43 Juxtaposition

The act of showing two or more things side by side in order to compare or contrast or to highlight their differences or create dramatic impacts.

2.1.44 Level of Language (also known as 'register')

The level of sophistication and formality in language use according to certain situation and context. High register is signaled by conceptual, 'bigger' vocabulary and complex, lengthy syntax. The common registers we refer to are: slang, colloquialism, informal or formal.

2.1.45 Linear Narrative

The way in which an author usually tells what happens in a story in chronological order.

2.1.46 Metaphor

A figure of speech used for comparing between two things which one means another. This fundamental technique creates further layers of meaning about the object being compared. Literary texts are usually full of metaphors.

2.1.47 Metonymy

A word or name of one thing which is used in the place of something it is closely associated with.

2.1.48 Modality

The certitude in which speakers use to represent in their language.

2.1.49 Motif

An image, sound, figure, character paradigm or object that contains symbolic reference to a specific theme or idea. This technique is a recurring symbol with a figurative meaning.

2.1.50 Non-Linear Narrative

The way in which events do not appear in chronological order. This technique is used as an opposition of linear narrative.

2.1.51 Onomatopoeia

A vocal imitation which echoes the sound it refers to. The reader can hear and understand what is happening.

2.1.52 Paradox

A statement which seems self-contradictory or logically unacceptable at first, however it has logical reasoning based on true evidence. It is a proximity of contradictory-yet-interrelated ideas which have a hidden truth.

2.1.53 Parody

Sensible imitation for a mocking purpose. Parody is defined a style used to ridicule the serious manner and characteristic aspects of literary works by imitation. This technique is done through an exaggeration of certain traits common to the work.

2.1.54 Pathetic Fallacy

The attribute of human emotions towards inanimate objects, especially objects of nature. Noticeably, this technique is suggested to be used to assign some quality or character to a person or thing, not thoughts or other qualities.

2.1.55 Person (point of view)

The narrative voice in which a story is told. This technique can be commonly divided into three categories including first person, second person, and third person.

2.1.56 Periphrasis

A roundabout way which uses excessive language in an effort to refer to an idea while a shorter one might be adequate. Periphrasis is popular, and considered a significant technique in literary works. Authors occasionally use this technique to signify an object or person in a more creative way, or to avoid duplication.

2.1.57 Personification

An attribution in which a human characteristic is given to non-human thing. A lifeless thing begins to acquire a life. This technique is commonly well-understood by readers. It is a particular type of metaphor in which human qualities are applied to non-humans. Notably, personification is unlike pathetic fallacy. It concerns the application of any form of a quality, not merely emotions. Similar to other forms of metaphor, this technique is widely employed in literature and daily life.

2.1.58 Perspective

A specific approach of exploring individuals, issues, events, texts, facts and so on.

2.1.59 Plosive consonants

Harsh sounds occurring in a sentence or phrase. While this technique can be employed to draw attention to particular objects in the sentence, more often than not it is purely a pleasing device.

2.1.60 Pun

An exploitation of two different meanings through words with the same sound.

2.1.61 Reference

Mentioning or concerning, usually obviously and explicitly, something else, whether it is a historical event, another author, another text, or even a set of ideas.

2.1.62 Register

The level of language employed for a particular purpose. This technique refers to the definition of level of language.

2.1.63 Rejet

This technique is an outcome of enjambment that causes a disjunction between the coming of a poem which flows between lines on a page and the stop which an author unintentionally inserts between lines when first reading a poem aloud.

2.1.64 Repetition

The recurrence of words or syntax (order of words) for emphasizing or convincing. This technique is considered a simple technique to identify, so it is sparingly referred to, and is analyzed additionally. Notably, this technique is worth being critically interpreted rather than focusing on its emphasis on words.

2.1.65 Representation

The depiction of people, things or ideas in which an author conveys meaning through textual features. This technique is a significant concept used in literary works and works of art.

2.1.66 Rhyme

The repetition of the same or similar sounds appears in two or more words. This technique is considered one of the most familiar techniques. Rhyme is oftentimes more of an organizing feature and used to satisfy aesthetically instead of having meaning. It must be employed to convey meaning with carefulness when appearing in verse. Normally, it does not contain any meaning.

2.1.67 Satire

Composition that ridicules in a disdainful or humorous manner. This technique includes common human behaviors, beliefs, and vices which appear to create shame and contempt. Satire is usually considered a high form of comedy and frequently used for mocking at social or political criticism.

2.1.68 Setting

Location and time frame taking place in a story-internal and external.

2.1.69 Sibilance

The recurrence of soft consonant sounds, such as "s" sounds. This is frequently employed to create an ominous or sensual tone or emotion.

2.1.70 Simile

A figure of speech which is usually made through the comparison of two different objects or ideas using 'like' or 'as,' whereas, metaphor tends to use a form of the verb 'to be'.

2.1.71 Symbolism

A significant literary technique which is considered the central technique in some literary texts. A symbol refers to any visual object which represents something else by convention rather than literal meaning, whether it can suggest another object, an idea, a process, or an emotion. Alphabets are counted as symbols; in that they represent speech sounds. Numbers are also symbols. Even all languages are symbolic, literary symbolism commonly points more particularly to the use of objects to express ideas and emotions.

2.1.72 Syntax (sentence structure)

The important elements of language which refers to the organization of words and phrases in a sentence and also shows their structural relations. The use of complex syntax can possibly signify a high education. This could suggest a narrative voice which is well-educated. However, simple syntax might probably be a sign of poor education, as might fragmented or incomplete syntax.

2.1.73 Tense

This technique is considered a significant and commonly grammatical feature which are familiar in many literary texts as it is a key of narrative form and functions to inform the reader the time (present, past, future) when events are taking place.

2.1.74 Textual Integrity

The unity of a text produced by its consistent use of form and language as to create a completely integrated work in terms of meaning and value. In other words, this term means the organic unit of a literary text used for universal themes.

2.1.75 Theme

A fundamental idea or moral that an author represents in a story.

2.1.76 Tone

The way an author or a character feels. Their feelings are portrayed through word choice. Tone is a very common technique in literature and is useful to discuss in reader's responses. Also, there are various ways to describe the tone of a text.

2.1.77 Word Choice

The words an author choose to communicate, particularly to convey information about the characterization of that person.

2.1.78 Zoomorphism

The attribution of animalistic characteristics to non-animals. Interestingly, this technique is more commonly employed in literary texts than many people expect.

2.2 Said's Orientalism

According to Edward Said, Orientalism is defined as a Western conception that defines the binary opposition and inequality made between the West and the Orient (1978). The East and Asia are seen as the subject of the West's operation in its role as the active definer of the relationship between the Occident and the Orient. This passivity of the East in relation to the Western positioning suggests "a relationship of power" and "domination" (Bahety, 2009). As the object of the Western imagination, the East is seen as something that is backward, passive, exotic and uncivilized, whereas the West is considered advanced, active and superior (Said, 1978).

2.3 Ideology of Orientalism

The term "ideology" is commonly identified as the construction of the values and interests that describe any representations of facts; "this meaning leaves untouched the question of whether the representation is false or oppressive" (Dirven, Roslyn and Cornelia, 2013). This

term refers to a system of symbolic representations which indicate an historical situation of domination by a specific class, and which serves to disguise the historical character and class prejudice of the system under falsifications of authenticity (Mitchell, 1993). Due to the fact that the ideology of the Western construction of the East is latent in Western thought, colonies are faced with new alien cultures, religions and ideas. To control these non-Western people, more knowledge about their cultures and religions is needed. It is possible that this need could be rapidly satisfied by secular Orientalism (Hussain, 2000). The West has made various attempts to dismiss and obliterate the history of the "Other" by replacing it with history that has been written by the West itself (Al-Mahfedi & Venkatesh, 2012).

2.4 Orientalism in Western Media

Negative depictions of the East and Asia are almost always reflected through several forms of mass media, particularly films, television programs, and advertising. One could argue that the Western representations of the East are often stereotypical and at times even untruthful. The media recurrently constructs "Otherness" of the East, where their reality is exaggerated by means of distortion that can often be described as preposterous. Today, Western manipulation as a form of media makes it difficult for the East and Asia to think outside of them, and thus they are also seen as exercises of power and control (Childs and Williams, 1997). Media representations are able to influentially shape international audiences' perceptions of societies based on culture, from where the media has originated. One can notice that Western media institutions play a very central role in delivering all worldwide news (Hall, 2005). Such Orientalist prejudices not only assist the Western imperialist in justifying their ways of colonization, but it also functions in weakening the resistance of the East as there is a shift in the way in which the East views itself (Marandi, 2009).

3. Related Studies

Koonwimon (2015) investigated the ways to find out philosophical concepts and literary technique in science fictions of Win Leaowarin using descriptive analysis. She found 7 literary techniques in which Win Leaowarin frequently employed in order to convey his concept to readers, who had to interpret each element of his work and relate the philosophical concepts with their own experience in an effort to understand the massages of the author.

Phonkhunsap (2020) provided the understanding of the Buddhist concepts and literary techniques. The result revealed that there were four buddhist concepts appearing within the fiction as follow; 1.Karma 2.Passion 3.Trinity 4. Triple circle. Interestingly, Karma was often seen most divided into 2 techniques which are literary technique and language strategies.

According to Shafie and Aljohani (2019), the use of Orientalist discourse analysis and the rhetorical trope of Classification by David Spurr were employed in order to find out the negative portrayal of Arab city and village families appearing in two children stories written by an American author, Elsa Marston (1933-2017). It was found that Arab families including Jordanian and Egyptian, were evenly classified based on education, social class, and culture. On the contrary, urban families were viewed as developed and civilized due to their interaction with the west, whereas village families were represented as ignorant and uncivilized for their lack of communication with the west. The analysis also exposed the author's negative attitude towards village families.

Murphy (2005) explored in what ways the marginalization of Asian North portrayed in Hollywood films by examining depictions of Asians and "Asianness" using film techniques and narrative techniques. Murphy found that the Asian stereotypes portrayed in these four movies are transformed into fantasy in the Hollywood narrative to bestow any white hero with great power.

Wang (2013) conducted the analysis of women's portrayals in four representative Hollywood films spanning from 1930s to early 2000s through scrutinizing a variety of elements including Oriental dresses, geographies, ideologies and stereotypes. She revealed that Hollywood's representation of Oriental women has not shifted essentially as time has passed.

Sengupta (2011) utilized a theoretical analysis of the postcolonial films themselves to establish a theoretical basis for Indian films produced in the sixty-year time period after independence in 1947. Sengupta reported that that the real nature of Indians in the cinema is obviously exaggerated and caricatures.

Favi (2011) adopted Said's perspective based on his theoretical framework as a starting point and re-contextualized it to determine the exotic Orientalist stance and finally found that the Universalist attitudes of 16th century sources on Japan are in partial contrast to Said's hypothesis. The sources, however, do portray Japan in a reductionist way, which reflects European ambitions and concepts of self.

Akita (2006) examined the binary of fact and fiction in the book and film *Memoirs of a Geisha* and argued that these texts as cultural phenomena indicated the Oriental as an object of sexualization and exoticization which is commodified by the West using Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. This study revealed that Orientalism defines the Orient as being in direct opposition to the West. If the West is advanced, clean, pretty, and sophisticated, then the Orient must stand in contrast.

Fitzpatrick (2010) explored the underlying assumptions towards Muslims hidden in the text, to highlight some of the common narrative concepts used to cast the Middle East and the Islamic world in the role of the morally deficient opposite of the West. He employed the framework of criticism toward material culture elaborated first by Edward Said in his writings about Orientalism, and refined by more recent scholars to include a criticism of 'New Orientalism'. The result showed that these texts function as producers of meaning in

contemporary American culture in ways which are both problematic and limiting, and that the symbiotic relationship between texts of this nature and American foreign policy needs to be brought to light and subject to critical review.

To sum up, all the previous studies above have discussed many interconnected theoretical frameworks and techniques, especially the use of Said's Orientalism and literary techniques in the analysis of Orientalist representations of Asia through Western media. However, it was found that only few of them focused on different types of American made media which have been popular during the 21st century. Also, there is room for more discussions of Orientalist depictions of Asia, particularly its place, people, and cultures. Thus, this study aims to find out how literary techniques are employed in representing Asia including its places, people and cultures through the concept of Orientalism in American popular media in the 21st century including films, television programs, advertising, as well as comic books and to discover the frequency of such literary techniques possibly used for misrepresenting Asia. In addition, racial and cultural factors influencing such Orientalist representations will be discussed in order to give more understanding of the plausible causes which influence such misrepresentations of Asia in the American popular media.

4. Research Methodology

This chapter elaborates the research procedures used to investigate the use of literary techniques employed to represent Asia including its places, people and cultures through the Orientalist assumptions in American popular media in the 21st century. This chapter consists of subsections on research objectives, research design, sample data, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

4.1 Research Design

This study is based on a descriptive design which attempts to explain in what ways literary techniques are used for representing Asia including its places, people and cultures through the concept of Orientalism in American popular media in the 21st century. Also, this study aims to find out the most frequently-used techniques and possible reasons behind them. Besides, the factors which influence such Orientalist representations in the selected media are discussed.

4.2 Sample Data

The sample data of this study were selected from popular American media from 2001 to 2020 using the purposive sampling method. The sample data consists of four types of media including films: *Rambo 4* (2014) and *Aladdin* (2019); television programs; *Fresh Off the Boat* (2015-2020), *The Big bang Theory* (2008) and *The Simpsons* (2019); advertising: *Target* (2009) and *Mountain Dew* (2010); and comic books: *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang (2006) and *The Totally Awesome Hulk #15* by Greg Pak (2017).

4.3 Research Instruments

The instruments of this qualitative research were the list of 78 literary techniques by Matrix Education and Said's *Orientalism*. The data for analysis were obtained from examining the language use in the form of literary techniques based upon the Orientalist point of view in the American media.

4.4 Data Collection

First, various kinds of American media produced between 2001 and 2020 were searched and collected for a comparison of their popularity. Next, the four most popular media in America, namely films, television programs, advertising and comic books with portrayals of Asia and produced by Americans were selected. After that, the selected media mentioned above are filtered as to search for representations of Asia based on the Orientalist perspectives. The

media chosen for analysis must have high ratings in order to guarantee its popularity and great impacts on a large number of audiences and viewers worldwide. In terms of film, the American films grossing over $ 100 million were selected. For television, the American TV programs and advertising in which their episodes were available on YouTube with more than 1,000,000 views were selected. And for comic books, the American comic books with high ratings (more than 3 stars) in a website called 'Goodread', the world's largest site for readers and book recommendations, were selected. Then the selected media were watched and read in order to understand their narrations and descriptions. Lastly, dialogues spoken using literary techniques in each of the media were categorized and prepared for the analysis.

4.5 Data Analysis

In terms of qualitative data analysis, literary techniques used in dialogues and conversations in the media relating to the representations of Asia based on the concept of Orientalism are examined and discussed. This process is carried out by applying the functions of each literary technique integrated with Said's Orientalism as an analytical framework in order to understand the negative portrayals of Asia including its people, places and cultures which are constructed based on the Orientalist assumptions through the constructions of the language. To clarify, the term Orientalist representation refers to the ways in which the West constructs an image of the Eastern and Asian people based on the binary opposition that exists between the Occident and the Orient. An example of this includes the way that the Orient is shown as being ignorant, passive and backwards. This often stands in contrast to the way the West is shown as a "superior" entity, and this is suggestive that the East is nefarious and harmful to Westerners.

For quantitative data analysis, the use of literary techniques to represent Asia based on the concept of Orientalism were recorded and categorized in the form of a table in order to find out the most frequently-used techniques in those American popular media often employ in

chronological order. Then those recorded techniques are taken into account in an effort to be discussed for describing possible racial and cultural factors which have a great influence on the Orientalist representations of Asia in those American popular media.

5. Results

Through the investigation of the Orientalist representations of Asia using Said's *Orientalism*, there are 31 literary techniques found in the American popular media selected. The frequency of the use of literary techniques in each medium are illustrated as follows:

Table 1 Literary Techniques Used for Representing Asia Based on the Concept of Orientalism in the Selected American Media between 2001 and 2020

Media / Literary Techniques	Films	Television Programs	Advertising	Comic Books	Total
Repetition	3	2	2	-	7
Symbolism	2	5	-		7
Metaphor	4	1	-	1	6
Diction	2	4	-	-	6
Metonymy	-	2	-	2	4
Allegory	2	-	-	1	3
Anomaly	-	-	1	2	3
Dialect	1	2	-	-	3
Imagery	1	1	1	-	3
Allusion	-	2	-	-	2
Anthropomorphism	1	-	-	1	2
Flashback	1	1	-	-	2

Media / Literary Techniques	Films	Television Programs	Advertising	Comic Books	Total
Hyperbole	-	1	1	-	2
Irony	-	1	1	-	2
Paradox	1	-	-	1	2
Alliteration	-	-	1	-	1
Anecdote	-	1	-	-	1
Deixis	1	-	-	-	1
Emotive language	-	-	1	-	1
Imperative voice	1	-	-	-	1
Incantation	1	-	-	-	1
In medias res	-	-	1	-	1
Motif	-	-	1	-	1
Parody	1	-	-	-	1
Periphrasis	-	1	-	-	1
Personification	1	-	-	-	1
Reference	1	-	-	-	1
Rhyme	1	-	-	-	1
Satire	-	-	1	-	1
Tone	1	-	-	-	1
Zoomorphism	1	-	-	-	1

5.1 Film

5.1.1 *Rambo* 4 (2014)

The most frequent literary techniques found in *Rambo 4* were repetition and metaphor. Through the Orientalist depiction, it can be stated that these techniques reinforced the way that Asian people and their places, especially Thailand and Burma, were negatively stereotyped as barbaric, uncivilized, and cruel races. Besides, the other literary techniques including diction, symbolism, paradox, dialect, deixis, and reference evidently reflected the Occident's racial prejudices towards Asia in white characters' perceptions. Such prejudicial depictions of the South-East Asia regions conformed with Said's statement that most Orientalists believe that the orient can never change and it has remained fixed in time and space for the West (1978).

5.1.2 *Aladdin* (2019)

Allegory and metaphor were mostly found in this American film. These techniques played a major role in the Orientalist portrayals of people of the Middle East in a subtle manner. Also, the other techniques found in this film including imagery, rhyme, symbol, diction, anthropomorphism, personification, flashback, incantation, imperative voice, and zoomorphism possibly created and perpetuated the sense of Western fantasy and exoticism within the Eastern world.

5.2 Television Program

5.2.1 *Fresh off the Boat* (2015-2020)—*Poet Boy* (2015), *Eddie Needs to Date a Chinese Girl* (2016), *The Huangs' Dishwasher* (2017), *Only in Mandarin* (2018), *Jessica Hits it Off with Eddie's Girlfriend* (2019), and *Eddie Makes a Deal to Help Evan* (2020)

Through the investigation of the literary techniques serving for misrepresenting Asia from the six scenes of the six episodes in this American sitcom television series between 2015 and 2020, dialect, diction, and symbolism were mostly found in multiple conversations given by Chinese-American characters. These techniques associated this Asian family with alienation

and the otherness of Asian cultures which never fit in with the American society. Other techniques which contributed to the Orientalist ideas based on the binary opposition drawn between the West and the East included tone, flashback, periphrasis, allusion, repetition, dramatic irony, metaphor as well as metonymy.

5.2.2 *The Big Bang Theory* (2008)—season 1, episode 15

This American television sitcom employed various literary techniques which consisted of anecdote, diction, symbolism, repetition, and allusion. These techniques were mostly discovered through the dialogues of the only Asian character, Raj Koothrappali, an astrophysicist portrayed by a British-Indian actor. In terms of the Orientalist view, the employed literary techniques depicted this Asian character as being strange, exotic, sensual, as well as annoying to the eyes of other American characters and viewers.

5.2.3 *The Simpson* (2019)

The findings of literary techniques in this popular American animated sitcom revealed that symbolism was the most frequently used technique which represented India as a land of mystery, danger, and backwardness. Similarly, hyperbole, diction, metonymy, imagery, and parody were employed to induce the Orientalist stereotyping of Indian people based on the imagination of the Occidental.

5.3 Advertising

5.3.1 *Target* (2009)

The techniques used for the Orientalist depictions of Asia in this American advertisement included in medias res, repetition, anomaly, hyperbole, alliteration, and motif. These techniques could possibly reflect the Orientalist generalization of Asians, especially Asian women who were portrayed through the audio description as threats or somehow the "Yellow Peril" to American society.

5.3.2 *Mountain Dew* **(2010)**

It was found that this Mountain Dew advertisement constructs the images of Shaolin monastery and its martial arts based on the Orientalist imagination of the Orient. The negative perspectives towards Chinese monks and traditional Chinese culture were revealed through imagery, satire, emotive language, situational irony, as well as repetition.

5.4 Comic Books

5.4.1 *American Born Chinese* **(2006)**

There were five literary techniques found in the three chapters of this comic book; the Monkey King's story, Jin's story, and Danny and Chi-kee's story. Those techniques consisted of paradox, metonymy, anomaly, anthropomorphism, and metaphor. Such techniques done by an American cartoonist played a great role in distorting and exaggerating Asian cultures and religious, particularly Buddhism. Moreover, the use of metaphor in this comic seemed to strengthen the racial bias constructed from the binary of position between the Occident and the Orient.

5.4.2 *The Totally Awesome Hulk #15* **(2017)**

The literary techniques including anomaly, allegory, and metonymy found in this American superhero comic made it possible for the viewer to experience the cultural hegemony of the West over the East through the portrayals of Asian looks. In addition, those techniques somehow negatively shaped the identities of Asian superheroes in response to becoming inferior in the American society.

6. Discussion

This study examined the literary techniques used to represent Asia including its places, people and cultures based on the concept of Orientalism in American popular media in the 21st century. In terms of the findings, it was found that the American popular media conducted

between 2006 and 2020 including the films, television programs, advertising, and comic books appearing in the analysis apparently represented Asia based on Orientalist depictions. Such representations reflected the way Asia was depicted as negative and inferior to the Occident (American and Western European regions). Particularly, Asia was made in association with exoticism, mystery, backwardness, irrationality, femininity and threat. These negative depictions of Asia completely contrasted to the portrayals of the Occident which was perceived as civilized, competent, masculine, rational and completely superior to the Orient.

Noticeably, the findings revealed that the most frequently-used literary techniques employed to represent Asia based on Orientalism included repetition and symbolism which were mostly found in the American popular films and television programs. For possible reasons behind the use of these two techniques, it could be discussed that repetition and symbolism according to the explanations of the terms in the section of literature review are considered simple and appealing techniques which could easily attract the audience's attention to interpret for more understandings of implicit meanings and hidden ideas. Also, these two techniques are commonly employed in a myriad of literary works in order to create more beautiful wording. In terms of *Orientalism*, repetition allowed the negative depictions of Asia to appear to the audience repeatedly. This technique could function to familiarize the audience with the Western fantasy and prejudice towards Asian characters. Besides, the use of symbolism could encourage the audience to decode and interpret a variety of symbols in relation to the Western imaginations based upon the concept of *Orientalism*. Thus, repetition and symbolism can possibly be employed as effective tools to disseminate the Orientalist ideas in various popular American media.

Apart from repetition and symbolism, the use of metaphor and diction followed close behind in second place. For metaphor, it was reasonable to state that this literary technique numerously found in the American films and television could help avoid directly negative

representations of Asia since such Orientalist representations might be offensive to non-western and/or non-American audiences. Also, this technique required the audience some level of interpretation skills in order to understand implicit meanings. Thereby, metaphor could be another effective tool to serve the Orientalist constructions of Asia. For diction, the word choice appearing in various conversations spoken by American and Asian characters, especially in the films and television program, could assist the viewer with the reinforcement of the binary opposition. In doing so, negative words such as 'exotic', 'liar', and even 'fucking' often appeared with the portrayals of Asian characters. These negative words could induce a sense of Orientalist biases. Interestingly, many other literary techniques such as periphrasis, zoomorphism, motive and anecdote least appear in the American popular media. It might be due to the unpopularity and difficulty of the use of such techniques in visual media that made them unfamiliar and unpopular to be employed. Also, interpretation and intertextuality were needed in order to explore and understand the Orientalist representations of Asia circuitously shown in the American media. As a surprise to this study, it was found that the advertising and comic books contained the least use of literary techniques because these media, especially advertisements, were somewhat short and not favored compared to films and TV programs. Additionally, contents in American advertisements are supposed to be direct, simple, and easy to understand. By this way, literary techniques were not possibly employed in this medium. Overall, the Orientalist representations of Asia in the American popular media in this study confirmed the Orientalist perspectives which constructs Asia as inferior to the West (and America) based on the binary opposition drawn between the Orient and the Occident.

Interestingly, it is found that the negative portrayals of Asia as inferior to the West, especially in the American film '*Aladdin*' and the television sitcom series '*The Big Bang Theory*' clearly conform to the results found in Shafie and Aljohani's study that the idea of the binary opposition in the literature depicted the East, particularly Arab families who were far

from the West as poor, ignorant, and uncivilized compared to the West (2019). Moreover, the portrayals of Asian characters and their cultures, in '*Rambo 4*' and the comic books '*The Totally Awesome Hulk #15*' were clearly based on Western imagination. These portrayals correspond with being alien 'Other' based on Western fantasy as reported in Murphy's study (2005). Therefore, it is probably clear that such negative representations of the Orient in the American popular media in this study proves the existence of Orientalism in the present era and it is not much different from what it used to be.

In terms of the factors which influenced the Orientalist representations in the American media, it is likely to state that the Orientalist ideology, as a part of Western culture, plays a major role in maintaining the binary opposition made between the West and the East through the representations of the 'Other'. To explain, this oppositional West-East ideologies crucially extends Western influence and its culture over non-Western world in which the Occident is perceived as a superior race with its cultural hegemony over the East (Asia). Such dominance of Western culture ideology which functions to set two different regions apart has been reproduced and applied in the form of ideological discourse in various types of American media and it has continuously served to provide an authority of the Occident to 'otherize' the Orient. Besides, this Occidental culture perpetuates the way the East (Asia) perceive themselves based on the Orientalist ideas. As can be seen through the selected films and television programs, many Asian characters, especially Chinese and Indian characters from *Fresh off the Boat* and *The Big Bang Theory*, were portrayed to devalue and humiliate their own cultures while such portrayals never happen to those Western characters. Hence, it is certain to say that the Orientalist ideology as a part of Occidental culture is the main factor which greatly influences the way Asia and the 'Other' represent and are represented in American media.

Apart from the Orientalist ideology, white supremacy as another factor, is worth discussing in terms of the justification for the Occidental construction of the 'Orient' in the

American media. White supremacy refers to the concept that lighter-skinned or white people are considered inherently superior to other races (Jenkins, 2022). Although this racial term is somehow similar to the term Orientalist ideology, white supremacy exposed to this study was significantly in charge of legitimizing and perpetuating the negative portrayals of Asia as if it were naturally a land of uncivilized cultures and inferiority itself from the beginning. In other words, this Occidental belief righteously functions to normalize the negative representations of non-Western society. By this way, some audiences of those American media might not suspect and realize such unrealistic depictions made by those American producers (the Occident). The myriad of the negative presentations of the Orient then became the familiar images and stereotypes that have been rooted in the very foundation of the Occident and have been common to the eyes of the world. Thus, it is reasonable to state that the Orientalist ideology and the concept of white supremacy are the important factors which control the representations of Asia portrayed in the American media and they even serve for the imperial purposes of the superior West in the modern era.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the literary techniques used to represent Asia including its peoples, places, and cultures through the American popular media in this study fell in line with the concept of Said's *Orientalism*. Repetition and symbolism were found as the most frequently used techniques in the American media, especially in films and television programs as these two techniques seemed to be uncomplex and engaging for audiences to decode the representations of the Orient (Asia). The other 29 literary techniques were found from the analysis in terms of how the negative portrayals of Asia were produced in different ways through different media. In addition, the Orientalist ideology and white supremacy were considered the probable factors affecting the negative presentations of Asia in the American

media. These two factors influencing the negative representations of Asia in this study could possibly reflect the manifestation and existence of the Orientalist construction of the Orient in the American media industry in the 21st century. Yet, it merely changed its form according to the period of time and technology. The findings in this study may possibly assist researchers in the area of postcolonial studies, more or less, with the understandings of how Asia or non-Western regions are represented through media and how literary techniques can be employed in terms of cultural manipulation in different contexts. Besides, the results of this study are beneficial for audiences and viewers who consume American and Western media in the matter of portrayals of cultures and identities and, how these are significant for their perceptions of others. For future studies, representations of Asia or non-Western regions in different contexts could be investigated and the results of this study could be utilized as basic knowledge for future argument.

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