

THE MANY FACES OF FU MANCHU: WHITE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY IN TAIWAN AND THE GENEALOGY OF A RACIST STEREOTYPE

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Abstract

This study is the product of a four-year-long fieldwork in Taiwan. During that time, I examined the racist stereotypes of white, western people living in Taiwan on the natives. I compared the data I gathered from the field work with the Chinese stereotype that is prevalent in the popular culture. The results show the importance of racist generalization in white westerners' self-perception. The character called Fu Manchu, which emerges in various different media since 1913, appears to be an important means in measuring these changing perceptions.

Fu Manchu's fear factor is formed after the character's way of expressing its sexuality when it was first created. In the western world after the "sexual revolution" in 60s, Fu Manchu is depicted scary because of the repression of its own sexuality. This research associates the philosophical causes of this change with the contradictions in Freud's corpus. It also shows the importance of gender roles in the formation of whiteness.

The white mob describes their opposite Chinese, and therefore Fu Manchu, deviant when they want to perceive themselves as sexually purified, chaste and virgin. Later on, when they want to create themselves from scratch as individuals who liberated their sexuality, Fu Manchu is once more devised as a symbol of malignancy who represses its sexuality. The fieldwork during the research shows how this fluctuation appears in the daily lives of whites living in Taiwan.

Keywords: *Fu Manchu, Taiwan, white expatriates, stereotype, Chinese*

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Fu Manchu'nun Nice Yüzü: Tayvan'daki Beyaz Gurbetçiler ve Irkçı Stereotipin Kökeni

Öz

Bu araştırma, dört yıl boyunca Tayvanda yapılmış bir saha çalışmasının ürünüdür. Bu süre boyunca Tayvan'da yaşayan beyaz, batılıların yerliler üzerine kurgulamış oldukları ırkçı stereotipleri inceledim. Sahada toplamış olduğum verileri, popüler kültürde yaygın olarak görülen Çinli stereotipleriyle karşılaştırdım. Ortaya çıkan sonuç ırkçı genellemelerin, batılı beyazların kendilerini algılayışlarındaki önemini ortaya koyuyor. 1913 den beri farklı medyalarda ortaya çıkan Fu Manchu adlı karakter bu algı değişimlerini ölçmek için son derece uygun bir araç olarak ortaya çıkıyor.

İlk yaratıldığında karakterin cinselliğini sapkınca ifade ediyor olması Fu Manchu'nun korku unsurunu oluşturuyor. 60'larda Batı dünyasında yaşanan "cinsel devrim" sonrasında, Fu Manchu cinselliğini bastırıldığı için ürkütücü olarak tasvir ediliyor. Araştırma, bu değişimin felsefi sebeplerini Freud'un külliyatındaki çelişkilerle ilişkilendiriyor. Araştırma ayrıca beyazlığın oluşumunda cinsiyet rollerinin önemini gözler önüne seriyor.

Beyaz grup, kendisini cinsellikten arınmış, iffetli ve bakir olarak algılamak istediğinde, kendisinin zıttı olarak algıladığı Çinliler ve dolayısıyla Fu Manchu, sapkın olarak tasvir ediliyor. Daha sonra kendilerini cinselliklerini özgürleştirmiş bireyler olarak baştan yaratmak istedikleri zaman, Fu Manchu bu sefer cinselliğini bastıran bir kötülük simgesi olarak tekrar icad ediliyor. Araştırma sırasında yapılan saha çalışması, bu dalgalanmanın Tayvanda yaşayan beyazların günlük hayatında nasıl tezahür ettiğini inceliyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Fu Manchu, Tayvan, beyaz gurbetçiler, stereotip, Çinliler*

Introduction, Research and Fieldwork

The idea of doing a fieldwork about racism among expatriates in Taiwan occurred to me one night when I got to my flat in Taipei, only to realize that I had left my keys and my phone at my office in Hsinchu. Unable to reach anyone, I resorted to knocking the door of an acquaintance who was living on the same street as me. Upon entering, I found a group of young expatriate men smoking weed and watching the romantic comedy *Wedding Crashers* for the umpteenth time. After the movie was over, talk inevitably turned to an uncomfortable objectification of women. I had seen men beat their chests about their sexual 'conquests' before, but never had I witnessed someone brag about how they "had sex" with someone so inebriated they could barely stand up. The fascinating part in all of this is that in spite of their racism and misogyny, these men considered themselves as moral people. They bragged

about how easy it is to 'score' in Taiwan, but they simultaneously declared their desire for a 'deeper' satisfaction, that only a loving relationship can provide. Their discourse followed the moral of the movie we had just watched so perfectly, that it gave me the idea to conduct a study which correlates popular culture with everyday opinions and attitudes.

By the end of the 00's, racism and white supremacist politics were largely left outside the focus of mainstream Western public discourse. The island-nation of Taiwan between 2009 and 2012 might not seem the most obvious place to observe the subsequent rise of racist ideologies, but it gives a very interesting cross-section of white Westerners from various countries and how racist tropes represented by stereotypes like Fu Manchu were festering among them under a thin veneer.

This political tendency reflects on academic writing regarding globalization and sexuality. I am referring to an emerging interpretative framework which takes pains to distance itself from Foucault's reading of power dynamics in sexuality (Foucault 1990), and instead celebrates Western modernity as a new age in which increasing freedoms have made such things as 'pure relationships' possible (Laqueur, 1997; Weeks, 2007; Giddens, 2013). The unaccountable absence of power relationships within this analytical framework becomes even more pronounced when applied to an international context. Some analysts cheer for colonialism because it has rescued British men from the clasp of an oppressive sexual regime of the Victorian era (Hyam, 1991), others denounce medieval legislation about 'fornicating' with slaves as repressive, as if slavery and consent are not already mutually exclusive (Dabhoiwala, 2012: 5). Others sing praises for global governance and modernity (Altman, 2002) without taking into account the power relations which have introduced these institutions. So simplistic are these accounts in weaving narratives over artificial binaries that they fail to account for how, in places like Taiwan global governance is responsible for introducing repressive legislation in the name of combatting 'sex trafficking' (Ho, 2017).

This research is the result of a three year fieldwork in Taiwan. The fieldwork was carried out at the peak of an optimistic period, soon after Barack Obama's election in the United States and before the police shooting of Mike Brown brought up issues of race in mainstream Western news outlets. Although common consensus among white expatriates was that Western civilization had reached a 'post-racial' stage, the evidences of colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017) were evident. When on rare occasions I hinted at my informants that some of their opinions might be considered problematic, I was either met with blanket denial, or worse, with accusations of "reverse

racism". These responses encouraged me to study racism, not as an accidental aspect of whiteness but as constitutive of it. Europe's response to the eruption of the refugee crisis and Donald Trump's election as president in the United States, confirmed my suspicion that the thin veneer of 'post-racial' utopia was about to crack.

Even during my fieldwork, tensions were beginning to escalate between expatriates and the Taiwanese. A row between students at National Taiwan University (NTU) dormitory made national news in January 2011. A Taiwanese student announced on a popular internet forum that her Danish neighbor tried to break into her room. The post quickly went viral and a group of over hundred students gathered to protest outside the dormitory. The tensions had escalated so much that the university president had to publicly announce that the university will not cease recruiting foreign students over the incident. The Danish student responded with a handwritten letter peppered with capitalized words like CRAZY and INSANE to argue that she was the real victim. As if this entire media spectacle was not disproportionate enough, the debates between locals and expatriates on social media spilled into over dramatization. I have even observed lengthy tirade by a European man, comparing the protests to the cultural revolution of the 1960's:

But alas - someone called the media, informed the head of the school and got a hundred people in front of the dorm to protest "bullying". All over a drunk incident involving a (potentially) stupid and irresponsible foreigner (or group of) and an easily-scared Taiwanese (herself accused of bullying by the other party). And I didn't call those people Communists, just the rally seemed a bit in the flavor of the Cultural Revolution, with a common enemy and phrases like (I quote from one guy speaking out at the rally): "違規同學應該寫下自白". (Students who break the rules should write self-criticism) Sorry, but this just brought to my mind the mass rallies in mainland China in the 60s and 70s.

During this fieldwork, my primary interest has been to investigate sexual stereotypes that were manufactured by Western expatriates. I have conducted semi-structured face to face interviews and participated in social activities which revolved around the consumption of alcohol in various bars and nightclubs that cater primarily to the expatriate community. The research also included gathering data online, either by connecting with the informants themselves or following blogs and forums that discuss issues related to interracial dating.

Regular participants were all aware of my ongoing project and their status as informers. The participants ranged from early twenties to mid-thirties. Younger participants were predominantly students, learning Chinese for a period of six months to a year or were fully registered in undergraduate/postgraduate courses ranging from three to four years. English teachers were over represented on the older side of the spectrum, but there were also workers in media and culture sector. This cross section presents an accurate picture of expatriates with an active nightlife. For locating informers, I relied almost entirely on snowball sampling. I met informers through common connections either on the nightclub circuit or by being urged to interview friends and acquaintances who have a reputation for having a very active sexual life or being exceptionally opinionated about interracial dating.

I reached for the figure of Fu Manchu because it is the most conspicuously bigoted, ostensibly outdated manifestation of yellow peril imagery. I wanted to go beyond making a mere catalogue of offensive discourses and investigate what these discursive practices reveal about the nature of whiteness. Aside from its iconic status, another crucial aspect of Fu Manchu is its longevity. The Evil doctor's career in villainy started with Sax Rohmer's first novel *The Mystery of Fu Manchu* in 1913, then reached peak popularity on the big screen with the Boris Karloff incarnation in 1932. After a period of minor re-appearances it resurfaced again in 1965, this time starring Christopher Lee. This incarnation produced 5 movies between 1965 and 1969. The novel franchise still continues to be published for cult followers to this day.

Chinese arch-villain characters inspired by Fu Manchu continue to be an omnipresent theme in contemporary popular culture. The iconography has sunk so deep that it is even visible in Scorsese's 1997 movie *Kundun* depicting the life of the Dalai Lama. The representation of Mao contradicts historic pictures of the pair, which clearly show that they are at about the same height. In the movie we see a diminutive Dalai Lama cowering in the shadow of the much taller Mao Zedong, who appears almost exactly as Rohmer's original description Fu Manchu "tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered with a

brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green" (Rohmer, 2001: 2).

Ruth Mayer's study of the Fu Manchu series emphasizes how in each incarnation, the character appears in popular mediums that typify their time period (Mayer, 2013). Mayer draws a very convincing portrait of the evil doctor as a product of its age, not just in terms of ideological zeitgeist but also in terms of its material suitability for the economics of a changing cultural industry, which is becoming increasingly capable of monetizing accelerated serial production. Throughout this long and prolific career Fu Manchu appears in a lot of different forms. These different manifestations of the stereotype mirror certain intellectual trends in Western society.

The figure of Fu Manchu is one of the key icons around which white masculinity is performed against the effeminate degeneracy of the East. The type of danger presented by Fu Manchu and the threat of the yellow peril is always of an insidious kind. A great deal has already been written on how the imagery of Fu Manchu has been used repetitively in global political discourse as a representative figure for the yellow peril stereotype. Percival (2010), points out how Zhou Enlai's friendly demeanor toward the United States during the 1955 Bandung Conference has been interpreted by hostile Western journalists as a sign of restraint motivated by a characteristically Chinese inclination to subterfuge (Percival, 2010: 1020). Hanser (2012) follows the use of similar yellow peril imagery in the US press during the 2007–2008 Chinese export recalls. These horror stories usually revolved around contaminated Chinese products seeping into the private spaces of American homes for the specific purpose of causing harm "as if the dangerous toys, Trojan-horse-like, were placed on the doorsteps of unsuspecting Americans" (Hanser, 2012: 644).

One hysterical case is the allegation made by the director of the American Swimming Coaches Association regarding the possibility of Chinese swimmer Ye Shiwen owing her 2012 Olympic gold medal to "genetic manipulation." Anna Chen, writing for the Guardian points out how the logic casts back to Fu Manchu stories: "Let's remember that it's not Dr Fu Manchu who tried to copyright the human DNA sequence for profit, but Harvard biologist Walter Gilbert with his Genome Corporation" (Chen 2012). Commentators have also noted the coverage of Hong Kong's handover by the British press echoed images familiar from Fu Manchu (Frayling, 2014).

This picture of Fu Manchu as a highly sophisticated monstrous creature echoes theories about the pre-logical nature of the so called savage mind. Freud's *Totem and Taboo* argues that the inclination to feel rather than

thinkmakes primitive societies develop arcane mystical systems to suppress the urge for incest (Freud, 2001). The Western ascription of rationality to the self and projection of primitive emotionality on its other are so deeply entrenched that many anthropologists consider it to be a folkloric feature of modern Western society (Obeyesekere, 1997; Taussig, 2010; Latour, 2012).

According to Recapitulation theory, which was considered a widely accepted scientific consensus in the late 19th century (Gould, 2006) the life of individual organisms mirrored the evolution of entire species, otherwise known as “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”. This also meant that groups of people considered inferior to white men were associated with simian or infantile characteristics, “all inferior groups- races, sexes, and classes— were compared with the children of white males” (Gould, 2006). This idea was also called “the family of man” and it suggested that the infantile races, frozen in their pre-modern existence needed to be adopted by white men who would act as their enlightened benefactors.

This ideology came up repetitively during fieldwork. One of the most often cited examples of Taiwanese women’s alleged immaturity is the popularity of the Hello Kitty franchise. During my fieldwork, I can simply not recall a single instance in which the mention of Hello Kitty was not greeted with a disapproving grimace by white informers. One young woman complained about having to buy “something with Hello Kitty on it” for a Taiwanese friend whose birthday was approaching, implying that she was forced to encourage bad habits against her own better judgement. EVA air’s special Hello Kitty plane is persistently an object of ire, especially to male professionals who feel that their mature white masculinity would be tainted by simply boarding it. Some reported their discontent about boarding it on social media and were received by gloating banter from their friends. There is even a blog called “Hello Kitty Hell” where the author describes their distaste for the idea with sarcastic hyperbole: “there seriously couldn’t be any worse torture dealt upon a human being.” Scholarly anthropological articles display the same condescension for fans of the franchise and dismiss them for their uncritical admiration for the cartoon character as a manifestation of “circular reasoning” (McVeigh, 2000: 237). The irony of course is that racial stereotyping itself relies on “circular reasoning.” As Bhaba (1983) argues, stereotypes rely on the suggestion that the inherent inferiority of the berated race is common knowledge, yet it nevertheless has to be repeated incessantly as a performance to make sure that they become so. When pressed into elaborating their compulsive dislike for the Hello Kitty franchise, white expatriates often responded by re-iterating criteria of maturity that they take to be universal with propositions like “everybody knows...

that Asian women are subservient” or “you cannot deny... that Asian men look so gay! - ”

It is no coincidence that a lot of racial stereotypes emerge at the intersection between issues of gender and consumer aesthetics. Many Western expatriates consider gender equality and market capitalism to be inimitable aspects of their own culture. The infantilization of Taiwanese gender roles and consumer aesthetics often comes with the suspicion that something sinister is lurking behind superficial appearances. This suspicion is that once the Taiwanese or Asians in general manage to copy the West, then the systems of cultural superiority which sustain white privilege will come undone. The trope of infantilization is grafted into this fear.

A typical plot of Fu Manchu involves the evil doctor capturing a Western scientist to gain command over secrets that will help him to take over the world. Each time he fails miserably, yet each time he is born from his ashes to try again. Likewise the myth of infantilization serves to reassure that Asian attempts to copy the West are miserable failures. By being repeated incessantly, they serve the very real purpose of berating Asians and making sure that their expressions of individuality are excluded for being 'inauthentic'.

One European female informant who showed me a picture from a supermarket chain in Taipei is a good example of how the trope of infantilization is loaded with fears of Western irrelevance. The picture was of a shelf packed with sanitary pads, which also had rows of Toblerone bars. What my informant and for a moment myself found amusing, was the vulgar assumption this approach had regarding the psychological state of women during the menstrual cycle. I am referring to the condescending patriarchal belief that women have a universal tendency to behave 'hysterically' during menstruation and that this tendency can be mitigated through consuming chocolate.

We were also both undergoing the surprise described by Mary Douglas (Douglas, 2003) upon the revelation that another society's understanding of *Danger and Purity* does not correspond with ours. Following this interpretation we can identify our mutual surprise by the perceived vulgarity of placing an alimentation product, next to one that is meant for soaking menstrual blood. Later however, it has occurred to me that in spite of our condescension of the product placement strategy, in Western countries both products are also marketed together. When I suggested to my informant that the commercial breaks during Television shows targeted for women will most likely advertise these two products side by side, I was simply told that this was not as vulgar as physically placing the two objects together.

My informant not only insisted on the immaturity of the product placement strategy but also on the naivety of Taiwanese female consumers who she portrayed as falling into a trap. She considered Taiwanese women to be more susceptible to vulgar marketing tricks, in contrast to their emancipated Western counterparts. She deployed the trope of infantile naive Oriental women to construct a picture of unscrupulous Taiwanese business strategists who goad consumers into purchasing items with problematic political undertones.

Freud's Savages

As hinted above, the assumptions underlying stereotypes propagated by the Fu Manchu series and expatriates in Taiwan tend to pivot around Freud's notions of primitive sexuality. Freud speculates that primitive societies create "obscure" totemic kinship systems, because "savages are even more sensitive on the subject of incest than we are. They are probably liable to a greater temptation to it and for that, stand in need of fuller protection" (Freud, 2001: 11). However, the contradiction is already evident. On the one hand Freud's savages have uncontrollable childlike appetites, but on the other they are capable of developing extremely sophisticated social systems which confuse Western observers. In his later text, *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud seems to revise his position on rules that regulate sexuality and comes to see the repressive rules imposed by civilization as a necessary evil: "it is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means?) of powerful instincts" (Freud, 1961: 44). Both my informers during fieldwork and the symbolism of Fu Manchu create their stereotypes around this contradictory ambivalence. Are Asians highly sophisticated aberrations who resort to obscure rules to repress their sexuality? Or are they infantile savages who are incapable of creating a civilization due to their insatiable appetites? The fluctuations in Fu Manchu's representation mirror these contradictions almost identically.

Both the sides of Freud's theory are visible on the character evolution of Fu Manchu between 1916 and 1969. While in the early depictions the frightening aspect of Fu Manchu's personality is the insatiability of his sexual appetites, in later versions it is the unnatural suppression of his urges that cause alarm. In each case, he is contrasted to the white male protagonist Nayland Smith, who appears as chaste and proud in early version, then as virile and chivalrous in later ones.

The shifting imagery of Fu Manchu is endemic to the nature of stereotypes. Bhaba (1983) makes the case for why stereotypes rely on ambivalence for their effectiveness: "For it is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization; produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed" (Bhaba, 1983: 18). Stoler (2010) points to such a precise change in colonial discourse which is guided by economic and political interest. Around the turn of the 19th Century the colonial project changes from an enterprise carried out by individual adventurers, to full military occupation by the state. The early form of colonialism encouraged the taking of local concubines to "satisfy" the needs of the small community of male settlers; as settler communities grew and the fear of white properties falling into the hands of mixed race children increased, states encouraged settlers to marry European wives. This policy deepened segregation between settler and local communities. Between these periods official discourse switched from describing local women as helpful for acclimatization to suggesting that they are conductors of venereal disease.

Bhaba and Stoler both indicate that colonized people can be stereotyped in different ways depending on political needs. Indeed, the devil doctor exhibits similar oscillations from his entry in Sax Rohmer's pulp novel "The Mystery of Fu Manchu" in 1913, to his final appearance in the Movie "The Castle of Fu Manchu" (1969), played by Christopher Lee. What lies at the core of this change is the shift in Western perception of sexuality and perversion. Being the embodiment of sexual perversion in each era, the shifting depictions of Fu Manchu serves as a barometer for changing attitudes about what it means to be a sexual aberration. Whereas the earlier works insinuate that Fu Manchu and his daughter Fah Lo Suee are sexually taking advantage of their prisoners, in the 60's reincarnations, when showing nudity on the screen has become a lot more acceptable, any such suggestions indicating their sexual appetite is removed. Their fear factor becomes not their lasciviousness but their single minded, unnatural asexuality. A comparison of testimonies by the actors playing the role of Fah Lo See illustrates this change perfectly. While Myrna Loy, who played in the 1932 *Mask of Fu Manchu*, found the script to be "obscene" and lamented having to play the part of "a sadistic nymphomaniac" (Benshoff, 1997: 58), Tsai Chin, who stars as the same character in the 1960's reincarnation of the film, had this to say:

All I had to do in these films was to follow
my father around and say a few banal lines

while trying to look evil. How I envied Myrna Loy in her series. She was allowed to pepper up her part by being a nymphomaniac, while I was just plain wicked (Chin, 1988: 189).

Placed in the Freudian paradigm, the early Fu Manchu represents the lustful savage. This is the 1932 Boris Karloff incarnation in *The Mask of Fu Manchu*, as a lascivious monster who exhibits a captive white woman - who is also the main protagonist's love interest - to his followers and asks, "Would you have maidens such as these for your wives?" When greeted with approval, he continues, "Then conquer and breed! Kill the white man. And take his women." The 1960's incarnation played by Christopher Lee, is the flip side of the lustful savage. This is the Freudian savage who has invented rules "which remain obscure to us" (Freud, 1961: 7) to regulate his sexuality. In the 1960's Christopher Lee incarnations, the doctor appears almost entirely sexless. *Brides of Fu Manchu* (1966) and *The Blood of Fu Manchu* (1968) both have plots which involve the doctor kidnapping various women and holding them as hostages in his dungeon. In each of these films Fu Manchu is depicted as having absolutely no sexual interest in his captives who are displayed with scant clothing in typical erotic B-movie style. Fu Manchu's lack of arousal is not a feature that is supposed to make him more sympathetic compared to the earlier incarnations. Freud makes it very clear that the "obscure" rules of abstinence practiced by "these poor, naked cannibals" are not out of any "moral" concern, but because this is the only way they can reign down on their supernatural incestuous urges (Freud, 1961: 2). These naked cannibals have such supernatural sexual urges that they literally inflict pain upon themselves to suppress it. In other words the severity with which Fu Manchu restrains himself is precisely what is meant to be frightening about him.

The contemporary stereotype of Asian men being sexually immature and effeminate has a strong precedent in the 60's Fu Manchu. These stereotypes have a profound impact on Asian men, who often respond with the misguided strategy of embracing a strident cultural nationalism and compulsory heterosexuality (Eng, 2001: 20). These stereotypes of Asian masculinity were often deployed in Taiwan by white men and women. The trend for Taiwanese men to carry their girlfriend's handbag was almost universally ridiculed by expatriates as being gay. These observers failed to register the relational significance of the handbag as a patriarchal gesture by men and merely assigned the feminine attribute to it. This is almost identical to Western anthropologists in Melanesia, who argued about whether Sambian flutes

are male or female without grasping their relational significance (Strathern, 1988: 127). This theme of basing gender stereotypes on consumer aesthetics occurs very frequently. One blog entry called *Dating in Taiwan: A Foreign Woman's Perspective* clarifies why Taiwanese men's fashion is naturally repulsive to Western women:

Physical attraction to locals for me- dwindles at a very, very low percentage. Puffy hair, shiny marshmallow jackets, skinny jeans and flip flops in the winter don't exactly get my panties soaking. Maybe local men are an acquired taste, like betelnut? I find both revolting but, that's just me...

The emasculation of Asian men in mass media emerged at a juncture in Western history when young Europeans and North Americans attempted to redefine their sexuality under the slogan of "sexual revolution". The 1960's Fu Manchu movies are very much a product of their time and exploit the sexual permissiveness of the period with abundant shots of nudity. Fu Manchu's change has happened during a time when the script for white sexuality was being rewritten by men like Harry Alan Towers - the producer of the last five movies - whose autobiography (Towers, 2013) is a testament to the failure of the "sexual revolution" to challenge patriarchal norms. Towers makes no secret of how the film crew referred to the "obvious assets" of one female actor on the set as "busty substances" (Towers, 2013: 55). He shares detailed accounts of how he has directed various young women to work in "Bordellos" in Paris (Towers, 2013: 58). Towers is a little less brash about his relationship with Mariella Novotny, the "attractive, eighteen year old model" (Towers, 2013: 48) who implicated him in the Kennedy assassination and subsequent accusations of operating a prostitution ring. The unprofessional attitude and sexual harassment of women on set clearly irritated Tsai Chin, who complained in her memoirs that there was "a lot of tomfoolery about" (Chin, 1988: 188).

The 60's version of Fu Manchu is very much inspired by James Bond's image of the new and hip white male sexual virility. Both the books and movies of James Bond topple previous British Imperial literary tradition of the likes of Sax Rohmer and John Buchan. While the male protagonists of these crime thrillers and adventure stories were incorruptibly asexual, James Bond established a new kind of masculinity which made it desirable for men to embrace sexuality (Black, 2005: 108). By contrast, Asian villains like Dr. No have come to present a counterbalancing act of sexual repression.

The genealogy of these iconic images of sexual emancipation starts with Freud and proceeds to the writings of sexologists like Havelock Ellis and Wilhelm Reich. Many feminists question this narrative of sexual emancipation and argue instead that it “should not be seen as ‘liberating’ but rather as an attempt to eroticize women’s oppression, and making a significant contribution to the maintenance and reproduction of male supremacy” (Jackson, 1987: 75). In her essay “Independence from Sexual Revolution”, Dana Densmore translates the euphemistic language of sexual liberation as the latest manifestation of male entitlement: “When men say to us ‘But aren’t you already liberated?’ what they mean is, “We said it was okay for you to let us fuck you, that guilt was neurotic, that chaste makes waste; you’re already practically giving it away on the street, what more do you want or could you stomach?” (Densmore, 1973)

Expatriate Spatial Politics

This logic of sexual liberation is very much present in the life of expatriates in Taiwan. Many almost consider themselves to be the emissaries of a sexually emancipated civilization. This illusion is to a great extent facilitated by the expat community’s creation of spaces where their own alternate perception of the world prevails. Some nightclubs in Taiwan operate with a business model based on facilitating meet ups between white men and Taiwanese women. One of the classic policies for arranging this is having the entrance fee discriminate against Asian men, particularly on events like “ladies night” when women are allowed in free of charge. Officially the policy is that “foreigners” have a discount on entrance. What is meant by this, however, is anyone not looking Asian. Indonesian, Japanese and Korean men are told to pay the “native” entrance fee. These spaces are almost entirely frequented by white men and Taiwanese women who have a desire to meet them. One informer described the bar where he met his ex-girlfriend as follows: “I mean if I’m going to walk into a lingerie store, I’m probably buying lingerie. You know what I mean? And Carnegie’s, that’s the older professional foreigner store. So that’s what you’re looking for.”

Through her archival research of literature ranging from colonial housekeeping manuals to court proceedings and newspapers, Stoler argues that “it was in the disarray of unwanted, sought after, and troubled intimacies of domestic space that colonial relations were refurbished and their distinctions made” (Stoler, 2010: 6). Although contemporary expatriates do not have the same recourse to a colonial state apparatus that settlers did, they nevertheless use similar strategies to uphold their sense of superiority. This

sense of superiority is maintained meticulously, since it allows Westerners to appear as the custodians of a superior culture. This custodianship in turn, gives access to privileges denied to locals. When combined with the acceptance of English as a lingua franca it opens the doors for a Swiss national with blond hair, blue eyes and an average command of English to have more work opportunities than many qualified local language instructors. Lan's(2012) study of expatriates in Taiwan confirms the racialized privilege involved in English teaching. Lan describes this privilege as a "hegemonic linguistic and cultural capital" which "has to be attached to white skin" (Lan, 2012: 1670).

This type of privilege goes beyond command over the English language. The great majority of expatriates I have spoken to, have expressed a sense of feeling more "free" in Taiwan. Although only a few acknowledged that this was because their local cultural knowledge came to be appreciate as a 'skill' upon relocation (Lan, 2012: 1671), others usually overlooked their privileged. Jeff, who was in his mid-twenties and pursuing opportunities in the art world, avoided confronting issues of his privilege by imagining Taiwan as a welcoming place for all marginalized visionaries, like himself:

[Taiwan] breeds a very interesting group of people. People who managed to find a space on the margins of the world system. That's the beautiful thing in Taiwan. You can find yourself on the margins. If you can embrace that, you can do so much here. Kind of anarchically.

Jeff's words ring particularly detached when considering South Asian immigrant communities in Taiwan who are truly marginalized by persistent xenophobia. White expatriates, purely due to their country of origin are greeted as "global talents" (Lan, 2012: 1679) and thus seldom question their own merit. Jeff and many others like him attribute their failure in their home countries to their marginal "anarchic" approach to life.

The disproportionate value given to Western cultural products facilitates numerous failed DJs and musicians from North America and Europe to package themselves as the 'authentic' representatives of authentic "cosmopolitanism". Such characters are so common all across Asia that they have acquired archetype status and there are even abbreviations like LBH (Loser Back Home) or FILTH (Fail In London Try Hong Kong) to describe them. There is an entire subculture of so called "pick up artists" who travel to East Asia, because they believe that Asian women can be co-

erced more easily. One such high profile man is Julien Blanc who ran a successful business making YouTube videos and teaching seminars on picking up women. A footage from one of his seminars in 2014, show him encouraging other men to travel to Asia to harass women on the streets:

If you're a white male in Tokyo, you can do what you want. I'm just romping through the streets, just grabbing girls' heads, just like, head, pfft on the dick, head on the dick, yelling, 'Pikachu,' with a Pikachu shirt.

The contemporary anthropological trend to disassociate from the admittedly nationalistic tendencies of the 70's has restricted the discipline from responding to very real issues of racial and sexual exploitation. Celebrating male expatriates' status as "mini rock stars" and the ease with which they "close a deal with a woman" (Chun, 2010: 97) as a manifestation of cultural hybridity, risks legitimizing very harmful behavior. Farrer and Field's (2015) study of Shanghai's nightclubs follow this trend by rejecting "a generalized cultural account of postcolonial or racial mentalities" (Farrer and Field, 2015: 188) due to said accounts failure to capture individual variation in behavior. This unyielding tendency to avoid all generalization makes for some awkward reading. We learn for example, that white men who get disproportionate attention from Asian women are relying on their "cosmopolitan sexual capital" (Farrer and Field, 2005: 191) and nouveau riche Chinese rural immigrants are making up for their inherent lack of such capital with money (Farrer and Field, 2015: 194).

By maintaining their performance of cultural superiority, the expatriate community carries the white privilege they have inherited from colonialism, this time rebranded with internationalist euphemisms. Why certain Taiwanese women are interested in pursuing relationships with white men is beyond the scope of this paper. I consider it safe to assume for the purpose of this research that the section of Taiwanese women who have a preference for Western men do so out of a particular cultural conditioning and not due to the objective intrinsic qualities embedded in whiteness. In her study of the *akogare* culture among urban professional Japanese women, Karen Kelsky (2001) argues that the feeling of yearning for the West arises from a desire to defect from tradition and relocate themselves within an idea of the West "which is synonymous with the international" (Kelsky, 2001), within this economy of desire, white men become the "fetish object of modernity" (Kelsky, 2001).

Contrary to the ascription of internationalism, many of the white men spend their times hanging out in social enclaves designed to pamper their parochial tastes. Their romantic engagements are also often with women who frequent these enclaves with the specific purpose of meeting white men. Most end up imagining themselves as doing a favor to local women by “liberating” them from their backward sexual norms. What is concerning about the tendency to gloss over the racial politics of expatriate sexuality, with euphemisms like 'cultural hybridity' or 'cosmopolitanism' is the extremely alarming opinions on sexual consent I have recorded during my fieldwork.

One North American female informer recounted several stories she had heard from her Taiwanese female friends, of white men interpreting sexual liberation as giving themselves the liberty of manipulating native women. One woman had reported to her that a white man convinced her he doesn't need to wear condoms because he can identify if someone has sexually transmitted infections by “checking behind the ears.” Many also wave the carrot of “sexual emancipation” in front of native women, to press them into forms of sexuality they are not comfortable with:

With Western guys, they try to trick you. And I don't know how much of that I had from back home, and how much of that is in my head now from stories I heard from Taiwanese girls... At one point, ok my Taiwanese roommate and her girlfriend; they're both dating Western guys. They both ask me, are threesomes going on in America? I'm like what do you mean? And they're like, both of our boyfriends are telling us that: “look in America every girl has a threesome. Everybody who ever dated has a threesome.” And they're like “you need to open up” like “be more Western.” Be more like the rest of the world. And I was like: no. I was like; maybe you have a boyfriend who watches too much porn...

The promise of sexual emancipation is a tool used to cajole Taiwanese women into fulfilling white male fantasies. Slut shaming is also a powerful weapon to supervise behavior of Taiwanese women. Both of these strategies rely on the expatriates' self-positioning as custodians of a superior sexuality. These expatriates undergo the same delusion described by Obeyesekere (1997) in his discussion of the apotheosis of Captain Cook. Obeyesekere

argues that anthropologist Marshal Sahlin's (2013) story of Cook's deification has no real basis in native mythology. Instead it is based on similar stories that are repeated so often in the Western canon that they have acquired a mythological status (Obeyesekere, 1997: 8).

Just like in Freud's supposition, Western sexuality is assumed to be more free, yet also more virtuous. They hold the privilege to interpret somebody else's freedom as slutty and virtue as prudishness. The pressure women face by being forced to walk a tight rope between being a prude and a slut become particularly acute when aggravated by racism. The stereotype of Taiwanese women lacking virtue is particularly propagated by white women who refuse to date Taiwanese men. These women consider themselves to be naturally more desirable and are confused by male expatriate's preference for local women. One female expatriate revealed her sense of mystification in these words:

I have no idea. I'm asking them. I mean like what the hell. I mean. For example, I like a guy. He has a girlfriend. Taiwanese girlfriend. I see in pictures. And she is... OK, if she is beautiful, I'm ok with it. But when she is, a little bit weird. She's like... This is something like. You know. I'm a girl, can I do this? I put myself and herself. Why the hell is she better? What's wrong with me? What do you want? What else do you want?

This informer reveals that her sense of insecurity about her own desirability has turned into frustration against Taiwanese women. The trope of the Dragon Lady who mysteriously seduces white men is deployed to express this frustration. Fu Manchu's daughter Fah Lo Suee is a perfect illustration of this trope. In the 1932 *The Mask of Fu Manchu*, the devil doctor uses a mind controlling drug to turn the white male protagonist, Terry, into his daughter's slave. Terry only snaps out of his state after his fiancée Sheila throws herself into his arms. This time it is Snow White's turn to rescue prince charming. Either way, whiteness continues to prevail even when the roles are reversed. After converting Terry back, she chides Fah Lo Suee for thinking that Terry could ever love her.

You silly little fool! Lying to yourself. Believing that you had his love. But he was only drugged by this beast! You failed. Both of you.

This type of reaction often manifests in the ostracization of Taiwanese women by the expat community. This in turn makes it harder for white men who behave irresponsibly to be held accountable for their actions by their white peers. As for the Taiwanese women whose physical and emotional health is put at risk by contact with these white men, not only are they denied emotional support from expat women but they have to put up with their additional abuse and social exclusion. Two kinds of practices exist in expat spatial politics in Taipei. One is the pampering of white male egos in bars and nightclubs which facilitate the exploitation of local women. The other is the ostracization and slut shaming of local women who frequent these same environments. This distinction also parallels the polarity of popular culture stereotypes portrayed in works like *Fu Manchu*. On the one hand, the Chinese are sexually repressed, naive and easily impressionable, but on the other hand they are insidious and manipulative.

It is not only in nightclubs and bars that these hierarchies are constructed. Many white expatriates also project the combined stereotypes of infantilism and malevolence in other environments. A very good example of this was an informant who was running a small gym in Southern Taiwan. This informant was very much aware of how his status as a North American man was giving him a branding advantage over local competitors: "A gym is seen as an American thing. So they would want to see an American person in charge. If I were to learn judo, I would like to see a Korean instructor." With his sense of superiority partially confirmed by his consumers, he in turn, adopted an extremely disdainful view of them. He mocked them habitually and ridiculed their interest in the regularly organized lucky draws on the grounds that it's "not as common in America." On the flip-side of his infantilizing behavior he also often complained about the sinister nature of the Taiwanese and how they perpetually conspired to swindle him. He was particularly vexed by the suppliers of his gym equipment who "only sell the equipment and don't care about the rest." Even in a business environment where he had an undeserved advantage because of his nationality, he managed to victimize himself by complaining about the alleged unscrupulousness of local business practices.

A byproduct of the original Freudian duality is the self-reflection of expatriates in relation to the stereotype ascribed to the other. When the Chinese other is imagined as repressed and impotent like the Christopher Lee incarnation, the white self is virile and capable. When the Boris Karloff incarnation takes over, the white self is swiftly re-imagined as an innocent hogtied victim. The contortions of this worldview also reflect on some of the anthropological literature which claims that white expatriates are victims of their

own privilege. One such research claims that the privileges experienced by white expatriates (also known as *farang*) in the Isan region of Thailand undermines "their potential for incorporation, the trust and intimacy of their relationships, and some migrants potential for return home." (Maher and Lafferty, 2014: 438) Maher and Lafferty argue that white men's position of financial superiority compared to their local partners puts them in a vulnerable position of never knowing if they are truly loved. In his investigation of relationships between white men and Thai sex workers, Seabrook looks at a similar dynamic, with a different perspective. Seabrook argues that upon the revelation of their lover's pressing financial needs, white men tend to respond with anger and overtly hostile racism (Seabrook, 2001). The frequency of news about Western men who assault or murder sex workers all across Asian countries, puts into perspective the real victims of *farang* privilege.

Similar discourses of self-victimization were not absent among my own informants, regarding romantic possibilities for white women and occasionally about local business practices. In spite of these, my findings were largely in line with existing research (Lan, 2012) which suggest that white expatriates in Taiwan are not in total denial of their privilege (Lan, 2012: 1679). Unlike the expat community in Isan, I have not seen any informants seriously claim that they were a disadvantaged community in Taiwan. Not denying the presence of white privilege is definitely a step in the right direction to obtain a more realistic conception of the self which does not depend on the demonization of otherized fictive stereotypes.

Conclusion

The Freudian suppositions of imagining natives of colonized nations as being either overly sexual or repressed are reoccurring themes. Both my fieldwork in Taiwan and semantic readings of Fu Manchu indicate that contemporary stereotypes of the Chinese continue to oscillate between the same extremes. Freud's narrative of the sexually repressed native translates into the James Bond villain Dr. No and Christopher Lee incarnation of Fu Manchu in the 60's. The stereotypes that natives have unnatural arcane laws to regulate sexuality allow expatriates to perceive themselves as the emissaries of emancipated natural sexuality. The opposite stereotype of insidious hypersexuality is one that comes up both in the original Fu Manchu novels and the 1932 Boris Karloff incarnation. This tendency also translates into Taipei's expatriate life in the form of white women who stigmatize and exclude local women even further. My fieldwork also largely confirms the suggestions of Bhaba and Stoler, about the creation of discourses of stigmatization. These

discourses are not isolated to individual bigots nor are they simply manufactured by large political apparatuses with little to no effect on popular imagination. The discourses of global white supremacy created by large institutions percolate through popular culture and into the intimate lives of those invested in its maintenance. The academic trends to distance from the generalizing tendencies of post-colonial theory, often risk missing the ideological and structures which enable racist attitudes. Particularly elusive among these ideologies is the erasure of white privilege under revisionist euphemisms like 'cosmopolitanism'. The conceptualization of whiteness as a 'global' identity, in contrast to other 'parochial' cultures recreates racial stereotypes like Fu Manchu in new, less obvious forms.

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