CULS 5201

Basic Issues in Intercultural Studies

Final Paper

Third World Trash

——A brief analysis of the negative image construction of Africans on the Chinese Internet

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Introduction

"Ignorant, uncivilized and backward, drug abuse, poverty, and numbness...", if continue to add the word "the sick man of East Asia" to the list of words that are so sensitive and irritating to the Chinese, you are even more certain that those words refer to China a hundred years ago by westerners. However, these are the comments on black Africans that are easy to see on the Chinese Internet today.

From the "Shandong Student Companion Event"[1]（山東大學學伴事件）in 2019 to the "Protecting Chinese Girls Movement"[2]（守護中國女孩運動）and "Guangzhou Black Riot"[3] in early 2020. A series of online outbursts in China has captured the public's attention, but the squabbles have gone beyond the contentious issue and both incidents have turned into attacks on black and Chinese women. These attacks see all blacks in China as "others" who are harming Chinese society.

In search of relevant studies on African blacks, most studies in Chinese academic circles focus on official or central themes（主旋律）such as "China-Africa cooperation", "One Belt and One Road" and "community with a Shared future for mankind"（人類命運共同體）, or condemn the otherization and discrimination of American history and reality against black people. At the same time, Chinese academic circles are accustomed to stand in the position of "victim" or "weak", and actively criticizing the Chinese being othering by the West. They often refer to Said's "Orientalism" to criticize the distortion and misunderstanding of themselves western cultural hegemony, Such as the "Image of China" in Hollywood movies. They appear to lack introspection about their own society's indifference to black Africans.

On the other hand, the Internet and reality are interpreting and recording a different kind of narrative, which is in sharp contrast with the Chinese official discourse of China and Africa are one harmony family. The Internet is full of discriminatory remarks and behaviors that discriminate against black Africans and Chinese women. Africans and Chinese girls who contact with them are respectively regarded as "Third world Trash " and "easy girls" worshiping Black Africans. The same phenomenon seems to have a double-track narrative. This article takes the popular articles and comments circulating on the Internet as the research object and explore a more comprehensive and in-depth perspective from the perspective of cultural studies to analyze this phenomenon and discuss the reasons behind it.

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[1] Shandong Student Companion Event was in 2019, Shandong university sparked an online storm, their study partner policy "one international student with three study partners, mainly female students, making friends with foreign opposite sex friends" has aroused fierce controversy.

[2] Protecting Chinese Girls Movement was Issued by Chinese netizens early this year 2020.due to the "Draft regulations on permanent Residence of Foreigners", many people believe that the government introduces a large number of young people from Africa in the name of overseas students, and the government encourages female Chinese college students to marry with these Africans.

[3] Guangzhou Black Riot was in April. Video footage of Africans being forced out of their homes by Guangzhou police has circulated on the Internet. hundreds of people of African descent were expelled, quarantined, and had their passports confiscated in Guangzhou, leaving some black Africans on the streets.

The contradictions and rifts under the cover of the official discourse
（官方話語遮映下的矛盾與裂痕）

"China and Africa are one family, and Africa is China's good brother and good partner,"

--- Zhao Lijian, Chinese foreign Ministry spokesman

Under the theme of Chinese government propaganda, "China and Africa are one family" and "Africa is A good brother and partner of China", they called China-Africa relations a model of relations among developing countries and dismissed all kinds of phenomena as rumors. Chinese officials believe there is no discrimination or xenophobia against Africans in China. The alleged "discrimination against Africans " [4]is seriously untrue.

As China-Africa cooperation becomes more and more important and an important part of the Chinese government's "One Belt and One Road" initiative, and driven by economic factors, many Chinese have come to Africa to invest and start businesses. There are also numerous articles and videos about Africa on the Internet. The official mouthpiece of the Chinese government has made some African documentaries and shared them online. In China's official propaganda, China and Africa are one family, but there are hints of unequal relations. China is the helper, while Africa is the recipient.

In the reports and official narratives of the mainstream media of Chinese society under the control and influence of the Chinese government, We can see official documentaries such as " Walk into Africa "（走進非洲） and "China's Peacekeeping Operations"（中國維和行動）. Chinese peacekeepers maintain peace, Chinese help local people build railways and stadiums. It seems that the advanced civilization brought by the Chinese provides a very just reason for the Chinese to come to Africa. African people need us, and it is quite reasonable for the Chinese to stay in Africa. And the image of the locals seems backward, such as crowded and dirty markets and pot-holed roads. In some African cultures, rather than as is common throughout Africa, women are naked, but nudity in the eyes and imaginations of some Chinese, especially in the traditionally conservative and shy Chinese culture, nudity seems to signify sexual openness and promiscuity. The indigenous African dance scene of singing and dancing also makes Chinese people think that Africans are ignorant and only know "silly joy"（傻樂）. These unidimensional, day-to-day propaganda may lead to stereotyped images of Africa, with proponents actively demonizing, discriminating, and attacking the constructed "other" Africans and rationalizing their behavior. The

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[4] 中國外交部網站. (2020). Retrieved from
https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjb_673085/zygy_673101/cxd_690475/xgxw_690477/t1769211.shtml

conflicts between Chinese and local people, such as Chinese mining, factories, and local employment and environmental conflicts, The collapse of Chinese capital and local government debts, and other practical issues are ignored and selectively ignored. It seems to show us an African image, but it is more an attempt to build the Chinese image.

Chinese official documentaries show an imaginary "family" to the public via the Internet and try to instill some grand and beautiful concepts of China-Africa relations, but they also subtly show the public an image of an Africa with dirty streets and poverty and backwardness. In contrast to the constructed relationship between China and Russia, many call the Russian president " The Great Vladimir Putin "（普京大帝） and Russians the "fighting people"（戰鬥民族）. It is hard to find supporters on the Internet who believe that China and African countries are a loving family.

Sinocentrism from a long time ago: a sense of superiority and other
（源遠流長的漢中心主義：一種優越感和其他）

As Edward Said put it in Orientalism, the otherness of eastern otherness is inseparable from Western Eurocentrism. "It is the very thing that gives this culture its hegemonic status both within and outside Europe - the idea that European peoples and cultures are superior to all non-European peoples and cultures," Said said. "Orientalism helps the West to establish its hegemony over the East by the main method of reasoning that the East is the 'other' inferior to the West and actively reinforcing[5] -- of course, even partially constructing -- the west's image as a superior nation." And try to find the origin of this phenomenon in China. In the ancient book Erya（爾雅） written in BC, the " people beyond civilization "（化外之民）in other areas were called "barbarians"[6]（蠻夷）.The Chinese are civilized, civilized, and the idea that people in other regions are barbaric and uncivilized has lasted thousands of years. A familiar representation of black people in Chinese society is that black people were sold as slaves by Western colonists from Africa to America. However, the history of the slave trade in ancient China is also quite long. The black slaves were known as Kunlun slaves（昆侖奴）in ancient China since the Tang and Song dynasties. There are two major origins of black slaves. One is that The Black slaves were sold to China by Arab merchants through the Silk Road, the other is that the Chinese ships in the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf directly captured and sold them to China's coastal and inland areas to serve as official slaves[7]（官私奴婢）.

In reality, Han centralism or Chinese centralism is no longer a new thing, also has a new development. As contemporary Chinese, we are always proud of our

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[5] Said, Edward W. "Introduction" in Orientalism. 1st ed. Pantheon Books: New York, 1978.

[6] Erya.Shidi（爾雅·釋地）：The four neighboring nationalities such as Nine Yi, Eight Di, seven Rong, and six Man live in places called the Four Seas（九夷八狄七戎六蠻，謂之四海）。

[7] 尚忠純, & 蘇紅. (2007). 僧祇奴、昆侖奴簡論——唐、宋、元時期的黑人奴隸. 渤海大學學報(哲學社會科學版)(03), 83-86.

five-thousand-year civilization history and our splendid and advanced ancient technology and culture. And we are proud of our long history and the vastness of our country and Our sense of superiority can't seem to hide. As a result, we often make fun of the largest developed country, the United States, which is only 200 years old, and the small size of Singapore and South Korea seems not worth mentioning. By this logic, it would seem that Africa is even worse off and should be at the bottom of the chain of contempt.

Stereotype that has been portrayed repeatedly
(被反復刻畫的刻板印象)

Film is one of the vital factors of modern Chinese folk imagination of Africa. Before the rise of films in mainland China, the main sources were western films and Hong Kong films. Before the reform and opening up, China was closed off from the rest of the world, and Chinese people had almost no opportunity to go abroad, let alone to Africa. They know very little about Africa, which is more of an abstract image in political propaganda.

After China's reform and opening up, many films flowed into China from the West, Hong Kong, and other places. Chinese people experience the taste of Africa in western movies, Follow the white man's African imagination and imagine Africa[8]. In the '80s and' 90s, the golden era of Hong Kong movies was also full of ridicule and mockery toward Africa. such as 1993's " Crazy Hong Kong" （香港也瘋狂）, a story about an African native who stumbles upon Hong Kong and triggers a series of jokes. With the development of China's film industry, China has gradually developed its African imagination and narrative. In recent years, many popular Chinese blockbusters have also included African elements or set in Africa, such as 2017's Wolf Warrior 2 (戰狼 2)and 2018's Operation Red Sea(紅海行動).

With the popularity of smart phones, the Internet has gradually become the main way for us to get information as well, and most of the information we are exposed to in our daily life also comes from the Internet. When we searched the Chinese Internet through Baidu, the most used and most popular search engine in China, the first keyword from Africa was "African Swine Fever". Searching for Africans, the first keyword is the life expectancy of Africans, and the second keyword is why Africans are so dark. See Figure 1, the picture on the cover. All African pictures are guns, exotic makeup and costumes, primitive villages, and Africans singing and dancing. Cheng Ying, an associate professor at Peking University, shared an argument that she noticed that many books often portray Africa as a primitive continent. Discrimination lurks in seemingly harmless stereotypes. It is not difficult to imagine that even simple searches are affecting people subtly. The danger of these single stories is not that they are fake, but that they are incomplete. When we repeat these stereotypes over and

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[8] 張勇. (2018). 中國銀幕上的非洲:問題與反思. 當代電影, 271(10), 118-122.

over again, they become the only kind of story about Africa. Even most of Chinese have never been in contact with many black people, there are many anti-black thoughts on the Internet. The decibels of African blacks are extremely low, and they can only make weak and inaudible voices in the atmosphere of public opinion in China. They seem to be a group that has been forgotten by the mainstream and even rejected by the Chinese.

Figure 1, Africa's recommendation page in Baidu

In 2016, a domestic laundry detergent brand advertisement caused racial discrimination controversy, Christopher Powell, an American living in China, shared the video AD, which went viral on social media[9]. As shown in Figure 2, a young Chinese woman puts a stained black man in a washing machine and washes him, then turns into a white and clean Chinese boy. However, it reflects the aversion to black and the pursuit of whitening in Chinese society.

Figure 2, Controversial AD video with 2.3 million times views

9 BBC中文.黑皮肤成白皮肤？洗衣液广告引种族歧视争议. 2016,
https://www.BBC.com/zhongwen/simp/china/2016/05/160527_china_racist-ad

The imaginary writing of non-ours, the inferior other race
（非我族類的想像書寫，劣等的他者種族）

The other is essential to the definition, construction, and perfection of the "self". The formation of the self depends on the difference between the self and the other on the self's success in distinguishing itself from the other and the self's construction depends on the negation of the other. Otherisation refers to the act of identifying and labeling others as inferior. These netizens describe black Africans as uncivilized and backward, in turn, they reinforce and highlight "our" civilization and advancement.

The above popular articles and comments try to construct the fact that black people spread and spread AIDS and African are scum and criminals in China. Illegal blacks "illegally reside" and "engage in criminal activity" and rob jobs and women. Legal African students, on the other hand, rob education opportunities. They are all dangerous, and together they rob Chinese women. It is worth pondering that negative images are mainly classified as infectious diseases (such as "syphilis", "AIDS"). These diseases are almost always linked to unclean sex, promiscuity in the public eye of Chinese society. These netizens try to intimidate Chinese women by creating an image of black men as criminals and dangerous people with deadly and infectious diseases. They are openly racist, and they label Africans, discriminate against and attack Africa.

These netizen's remarks represent a part of Chinese mentality. Black people can't even be called "people" in the eyes of these people. They are the dirtiest things and deserve to be discriminated against. They believe that they belong to a class separate from the blacks and this class is divided based on race and color. Race classification has taken root in their minds, creating a huge class gap, thus they are free to abuse. Shen Xuhui (沈旭暉) also found that there are a lot of stereotypes and prejudices towards Africans, such as "poverty", "laziness", "venereal diseases" and "danger" in china's online communities . Black people are lazy, and the reason they are poor and backward is that they are lazy, whereas Chinese are industrious, thus China has achieved unprecedented rapid progress. These labels make black Africans different from us, black Africans are not our kind. And based on that label, online campaigns were launched to boycott and expel Africans, to distinguish black people from us".

Chinese netizens have also created offensive hashtags and labels toward some female Chinese. For example, girls associated with black people would be considered as " buses "（公交車）, "easy girl"（好睡）. Attacks on Chinese women imply that blacks are inferior. Attacking Chinese girls is to prove that black people should not be complacent, because black people are only dating despised inferior Chinese women. These girls are green tea sluts[10]（綠茶婊），and they don't know how to keep clean and black men don't even deserve these inferior Chinese girls.

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[10] Green tea slut is a Chinese word that refers to a woman who looks pure and free from vulgarity in appearance, but a woman with loose morals.

Protect the girl to guard her fantasy property
（保護女孩守衛自己幻想中的財產）

"You must date a Chinese boy you like and not marry a foreigner"

"Home country doesn't want Chinese girls anymore? I only dream of marrying a Chinese boy"

"We Chinese boys, no matter how bad they are, A Chinese boy marries ten Chinese girls, and It's never Dark chocolate beans ' (Africans) turn to marry Chinese girl"

"We Chinese boys, no matter how bad they are, A Chinese boy marries ten Chinese girls, and It's never ' Dark chocolate beans ' (Africans) turn to marry Chinese girl"

"We don't need other countries' descent"

"Chinese girls belong only to Chinese boys"

"We don't need it (African)to guard Chinese girls"

----Quoted from popular online comments

One of the most important mechanisms of Chinese racism is the illusion that black people are taking away Chinese women. Sexually, Chinese netizens have a hostile fantasy toward black people, and they imagine that black men have the strong sexual ability. That is why Chinese women like black people. Thus there is a very popular saying on the Internet that black people have bigger phalluses, and then they capture and impregnate Chinese women. Then, there are all black people's offspring, and the blood is no longer pure in China.

They imagined that black people were robbing precious female resources, while Chinese girls belonged to Chinese boys, Chinese boys had the responsibility to protect Chinese girls from black people. They issued the Chinese boy guarding the Chinese girl movement, they imagine we are one and think they should protect the Chinese girl and the Chinese girl need their protection. Therefore, they are creating public opinion and forming a new discourse that makes Chinese women believe that Chinese women are only suitable for Chinese men.

Enemies of imagination - three cults
（想像的敵人-三大邪教 ）

The original articles (see Figure 3) and their forwarding have been deleted many times, but countless times have been forwarded to Zhihu, Weibo , WeChat and other platforms . One of the latest "Queen Spades" retweets was read more than 100,000 times. And a post on the question-and-answer platform Zhihu about anti-Chinese nationalism garnered 10,000 views and 3,000 comments. A well-known Hong Kong scholar Shen Xuhui（沈旭暉）has collected thousands of comments on several

representative Online forums in China. He also concludes most Chinese people on the Internet have negative views toward black Africans[11], and the unusual but much friendlier comment also refers to Africans as "poor brothers"[12].
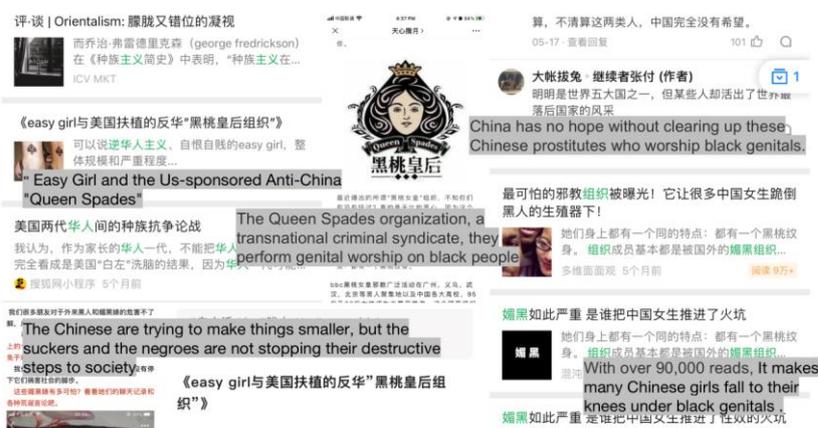

Figure 3, Popular posts and articles about Africa

" If you renounce nationalism, your daughter, girlfriend, or wife will probably be willing to become a foreign comfort woman. Many wives take the initiative to do sex slavery for foreigners, with countless cases. "

" These women are all feminists, using feminism as a cover for themselves to work as sex slaves for black men ."

" Some negroes gang-raped an African worshiper girl who was pregnant by them. One pointed to the exhausted Chinese girl lying on her bed and her boyfriend curled up beside the bed, and said to the other, look, this is a slave! Then the negroes shook off the pregnant African worshiper girl."

" Liberals and white Left internationalists, almost all of them anti-China, want all Chinese men to become losers and all Chinese women to become comfort women of foreign nationalities. "

----Quoted from popular online articles, More than

10, 000 likes and thousands of comments

Many articles on the Internet are constructing a new label for the opposite of the Chinese nation （中華民族）- the three Enemies or three cults: those who speak for black people are labeled anti-Chinese（逆華主義） and Chinese traitors（華奸）, while they also believe and imagine a vast community of Chinese women who despise and

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[11] SHEN, Xu Hui Simon 沈旭暉. "中國網絡社區的非洲觀." (2011).

[12] 同上注11.

hate Chinese men and only like black men, and form a massive transnational organization, which is called the worshiping black organizations（媚黑組織）. They are constructed and Imagine a transnational criminal organization, the Queen Spades, sponsored by the United States and located everywhere in China. These netizens seem to be fervent fans of nationalism. To be precise, it is a new type of nationalism different from the traditional kind.

Conclusion

In Orientalism, Said points out that the West always looks down from above to the East[13]. Michel Foucault's discourse and power theory are closely related to the concept of the other. He believes that the formation of subjectivity to certain extent depends on the discourse of a specific historical period [14]. The Chinese government is actively trying to lead and establish this discourse between China and Africa, and to exert influence on the Internet. However, the potential contradictions and hidden prejudice are in the government's propaganda as mentioned and the deep-rooted concepts formed by history and the conflicts in reality from time to time make it difficult for the official discourse to cover.

It's not surprising that there is a different picture on the Chinese Internet, many popular Chinese internet comments and posts are also in a privileged position to impose their own hatred values. And these negative images they constructed, which are repeated over and over again, are also subtly affecting more people and to a certain extent, it dissolves the official discourse. And when black Africans are mentioned, it naturally conjures up negative connotations. The original danger of this process of otherization is that it is easy for us to stereotype others without understanding the essence and truth of others or establishing a positive relationship with others. Many Chinese, especially many Internet users, can easily follow the pattern of otherization to understand all Africans, even if Africans are not represented in the image of otherization. And the effects of the network will also be projected and transferred into reality.

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[13] 同上注5.

[14] Michel Foucault. Panopticism. In Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison,195-228.

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