INTERSECTIONALITY OF GENDER AND RACE IN ASIAN FEMALE IMAGES—
A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF
U.S. ADVERTISING REPRESENTATION OF ASIAN WOMEN

By

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To my family, and all who nurtured my intellectual curiosity, academic interests, and sense of scholarship throughout my lifetime

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Media representation of ethnic minority groups has enormous impact on mainstream society's cognition and minority population's self-identification. Asian women for example, standing at the "intersection" of gender and race, have suffered oppression and marginalization through multiple dimensions. Asian women in U.S. media have been not only "gendered" to legitimize gender hegemony and male dominance, but also "racialized" to satisfy the long-existing "Oriental fantasy" embedded in American colonialism in Asia. Therefore, Asian female images in mainstream U.S. media have profound implications for ideology and power inequality, hegemony and dominance, as well as culture and society.

This study explores Asian female images in U.S. fashion advertising, especially in *Vogue* (U.S.A). This study aims to close three gaps in the literature. First, this study brings Asian women to academic focus and examines gendered and racialized Asian images in line with Marxist and neo-Marxist philosophies of ideology and consciousness. Second, this study employs the theory of "intersectionality" to account for how "gender" and "race" as two dimensions of oppression, function simultaneously

to construct Asian women and contribute to systematic social inequality. Third, this study builds upon the two dominant Asian female images promoted by the entertainment media—"lotus blossom" and "dragon lady," and investigates whether and how *Vogue* advertisements transfer or change the two dominant images to reconstruct Asian women. Therefore, this study is multidisciplinary, applying theories from feminist scholarship and sociology to examine Asian female representation in line with Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of ideology and media impact. By conducting a qualitative content analysis of Asian women images in advertisements in *Vogue* from 2008 to 2010, this study explores 1) how "gender" and "race" intersect in those images, 2) how the gendered and racialized images have been transferred or changed from the entertainment media to *Vogue* advertising, and 3) how the intersectionality implies about ideology and power inequality, dominance and hegemony, culture and society.

A total of 41 qualifying advertisements are identified and five categories are generated. In the first category, the "lotus blossom" image has been retained. Asian women are portrayed as delicate, vulnerable, and mysterious. Meanwhile, the Asian culture is feminized and objectified to reinforce the Asian femininity. In the second category, the "dragon lady" image has been deconstructed into two facets. One is the "deviant" strong woman image, which constructs Asian women as strong, hard, manipulative, and authoritative. The other is the focus on the Asian sexual appeal, which alludes to the historical "Oriental" female images with sensuality, sexual license, and mobility. The third category combines the lotus-like and dragon-like images. Asian women are constructed as the "dragon lady" in the body styling, but made less "deviant" by the "lotus blossom" face and more desirable for dominance and conquest. In the

fourth category, advertisements put special emphasis on the "Asian look," which depicts Asian women's facial traits exclusively. This image portrays Asian women as exotic, mysterious, and all looking alike. In the fifth category however, Asian women are completely "Americanized." Asian women are portrayed as willingly subjecting themselves to American ideology and fully assimilated into the American younger generation, who are no different from American models.

These five categories demonstrate that the dominant two stereotypes from the early entertainment media have cast considerable influence on contemporary fashion advertising. Asian women are not only gendered and objectified through the gaze of heterosexual White males, but also racialized to reinterpret the historical Orientalism embedded in American ideology and colonialism. These images legitimize male dominance and gender hegemony, and perpetuate power inequity in the capitalist, patriarchal, multicultural U.S. society. Alternatively, new ideological trends have been identified in advertisements which emphasize Asian women's efforts of assimilation into American society. These stereotypical media representations have enormous impact on Asian women's identify formation, their perception of peers in the Asian community, and mainstream cognition of the Asian population. This study has implications for consciousness and subjectivity of media "victims," media ethics, and media literacy education.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Mass media transmit not only tremendous amounts of information for purposes of enlightenment, education, or entertainment, but also affect attitudes and perpetuate stereotypes that influence society's cognition and perception of the world and people. Media portrayals of a certain social group, particularly an ethnical minority group, have significant bearing on how mainstream society views and treats members in the group. Media portrayals of the Asian population in the United States have been deeply embedded in the historical context and ideological discourse of the capitalist, patriarchal, and multicultural U.S. society. Stereotypes of Asian Americans have gradually arisen from their efforts to assimilate into American society, and this is especially true for Asian American women. Standing at the "intersection" of gender and race, they have suffered oppression and marginalization through multiple dimensions. Asian women in the United States have been not only "gendered" to legitimize male dominance and gender hegemony, (Connell, 1987, 1995; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Hill Collins, 1990; Pyke & Jonson, 2003; Schippers, 2007), but also "racialized" to satisfy the long-existing "Oriental fantasy" embedded in American colonialism in Asia (Feng, 2002; Hall, 1980; Kang, 2002; Kim & Chung, 2005; Lee, 1998; O'Barr, 1994; Parmar, 1987; Said, 1979). Thus, U.S. media portrayals of Asian women have profound implications for social inequality, which is perpetuated through stereotypical representations. Research in this field, therefore, has significance in unraveling how gender and race "intersect" to construct Asian American women in the current American sociopolitical situation, how the dominant ideology and power inequality have been legitimized, and what social change can be expected.

Since Asian women's Hollywood debut in 1920s, with Anna May Wang in the movies *The Thief of Bagdad* (1921) and *The Toll of the Sea* (1923), there have been numerous studies of how Asian women have been represented through various venues of the entertainment media. Images of Asian women have been transferred from one media genre to another, for example, from the entertainment media to advertising (Huang, 2009; Kim & Chung, 2005; Monk-Turner et al, 2008; Paek & Shah, 2003; Taylor & Stern, 1994, 1997). The majority of studies have used dominant Asian female images in the entertainment media to categorize advertising representation of Asian women. "Lotus blossom" and "dragon lady" are the two most used categories that characterize Asian female images in a gendered and racialized manner. Currently, empirical observation indicates that many changes have been added to the traditional categories in contemporary advertising, particularly advertising in fashion magazines where female figures obtain utmost attention. For example, some fashion advertisements have retained the traditional images, some have deconstructed the dominant categories into a few variations, some have integrated the two dominant images, whereas some others have shown alternative trends completely different from the two categories. This study therefore, attempts to investigate how contemporary U.S. fashion magazine advertising transfers or changes dominant Asian female images and re-constructs Asian women. This study is multidisciplinary, employing theories from feminist scholarship and sociology to examine Asian female representation in line with Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of ideology and media impact.

Asian women have attracted less attention in theoretical or empirical research in feminist scholarship and gender studies than women of other ethnic origins such as

Black or Hispanic. Of the work that has examined representation of this population, the majority has discussed gendered portrayal or racialized representation exclusively. Few studies have tapped into the simultaneous intersection of gender and race and how the two dimensions co-function to construct Asian women. Within media research that has empirically examined Asian female images in varying genres, few studies have explored how advertising strategically selects, transfers or changes dominant Asian female images in early entertainment media to reconstruct Asian women in contemporary advertisements. Therefore, I attempt to close the above gaps by conducting a qualitative content analysis on Asian female images in U.S. advertising, especially in fashion magazines where female figures command attention. By analyzing advertisements from *Vogue* in line with Marxist theories of ideology, hegemony, and media impact, I wish to unravel 1) how "gender" and "race" as two dimensions of oppression intersect in those images, 2) how the gendered and racialized images have been transferred or changed from the entertainment media to contemporary advertising, and 3) what the intersectionality implies about dominance and hegemony, power and inequality, culture and society.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Intersectionality

The theory of intersectionality originated from Black feminist scholarship. Realizing that various oppressions of women of color contributed to systematic social inequalities, Black feminist scholars contributed much to feminist scholarship through their observation of the Black community. This body of literature has offered valuable expertise and lessons to scholars who have attempted to study Asian women, as the theory and findings indicated great potential to transfer from the Black community to the Asian community.

Intersectionality was advanced by Patricia Hill Collins (1990) as "Black feminist thought" that studied how various inequalities shaped the multidimensional oppression of Black women. The groundbreaking aspect of Collins' thought was that she rejected the traditional "additive approach" to oppressions. Oppressions were not one "added" to another but rather one intersecting with another. She re-conceptualized gender, race, and class as "interlocking systems of oppression" (p. 222) and thus advanced a new model of conceptualization—"matrix of domination." This paradigmatic shift illuminated how interlocking axes of gender, race and class oppressions operated on multiple levels—the personal, cultural and institutional levels (pp. 226-227). Collins' thought as a classic paradigm provided my research with the theoretical foundation to examine how gender and race "interlock," or to use Crenshaw's (1989) terminology—"intersect"—to construct Asian women.

Although Black feminist thought was advanced by Collins, she was not the first to define the concept of "interlocking." In 1989, her predecessor, Crenshaw, coined the

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term "intersectionality," which referred to the various socially and culturally constructed categories of discrimination and oppression on multiple and often simultaneous levels contributing to systematic social inequality. While Crenshaw's 1989 piece still focused on Black feminist critique, her 1991 piece broadened the scope of intersectionality to incorporate Asian women as well. Crenshaw (1991) then applied the theory to the context of violence against women of color. She conceptualized intersectionality as consisting of three levels—structural, political, and representational levels, and pointed out the implication of intersectionality on broader identity politics. The structural intersectionality referred to the tremendous obstacles for women of color to seek protection from domestic violence, such as the fear of deportation or dependence on the husband for legal status. The intersectional subordination thus "exacerbated the disempowerment of those already subordinated by other structures of domination" (p. 1249). The political intersectionality held that women of color are situated in "at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas" (p. 1252). She analyzed the relationship between domestic violence and antiracist politics where maintaining the "integrity" of the community often suppresses women's desire to report violence. The representational intersectionality concentrated on the cultural specificities of women of color under the confluence of race and gender, which mainstream society often disregarded. One layer that Crenshaw added to Collins' work was the intersectionality on Asian women. Although she did not provide detailed analysis, the indication was clear that the theory of intersectionality had strong potential to explain the dual marginalization on Asian women. Crenshaw's terminology of intersectionality opened up a huge research perspective for scholars to further examine the systematic

social inequality embedded in the heterosexual white male dominant U.S. society. Crenshaw's and Collins' conceptualizations are the primary theoretical foundation of my study to examine the intersection of gender and race in Asian female representation.

The concept of intersectionality soon became a key to understanding social inequality and multiple oppressions on women of color. This theory wields great influence in sociology—especially sociology of gender, and to a large degree facilitated the theory of "doing difference" by West and Fenstermaker (1995). "Doing difference" was a continuation and expansion of West and Zimmerman's original theory "doing gender" (1987) as a groundbreaking theory in gender sociology. The theory indicated that gender was "done," or rather, was situated and socially accomplished within a certain context through everyday interaction. "Doing gender" referred to the complex process by which people socially created differences between boys and girls, men and women—differences that were not based on natural, essential or biological factors, but instead, based on social interactions (p. 13). Therefore, the theory suggested that gender needed continuous construction, display, modification, or transformation to fit within situations or occasions where the outcome was "seen and seeable" (p. 125, p. 135). However, the theory was limited in that it assumed that men and women doing gender were White and middle-class, so that gender was disconnected from race and class and the theory was less capable of addressing issues of multiple oppressions. This was where "doing difference" came in and examined how multiple oppressions functioned simultaneously to create social inequality.

"Doing difference" enriched the theory of "doing gender," which also conceptualized "difference" as "an ongoing interactional accomplishment" (p. 9). "Doing

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difference" therefore, indicated that "gender," "race," and "class" were all situated and accomplished through interaction and human institution. Despite significant differences in their characteristics and outcomes, gender, race and class as three dimensions of oppression, were comparable as mechanisms that simultaneously contributed to social inequality and injustice (p. 9). Inequality was not only created by the gender hierarchy that legitimized male dominance and female subordination, but also by inscribing racialized characters and/or class distinctions to people of different races and/or classes. The discursive production of racial and/or class identities added to the social construction of the gender order and systematically contributed to inequity of power in the White-dominated patriarchal U.S. society. West and Fenstermaker (1995) discussed in great detail how gender, race and class functioned simultaneously and illustrated the implications of this approach to reconceptualizing difference in feminism theory. As was in Collins' work, Asian women were mentioned briefly in "doing difference" but not fully developed.

Coming from different paradigms—either feminism or gender sociology, the above scholars all acknowledged the significance of the interrelation among gender, race and class. There has been heated debate on whether Collins' and Crenshaw's "intersection" or West and Fenstermaker's "difference" was a more legitimate conceptualization to account for the multiple oppressions. Despite the ongoing debate, both theories had a common implication that the systematic and simultaneous oppressions on women of color were an important subject to research in social sciences. Time was ripe to theoretically take into consideration those multiple oppressions—gender, race, class, and probably sexuality, age and more. Collins' thought not only inspired scholars from

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both disciplines to continue exploration in Black community, but also opened up a new area to look at how the "interlocking system" affected women of other races. Therefore, my research attempts to shift the academic attention to the Asian community, and to unravel how gender and race intersect to construct Asian female image in contemporary U.S. society.

In order to investigate how Asian women, or Asian femininity is constructed, my research is also informed by studies on various configurations of masculinity and femininity. According to Butler (1990), the difference between masculinity and femininity lay in the symbolic meanings for gender difference, which was to a large degree demonstrated through the quality content of the categories "man" and "woman." For example, men are physically strong and authoritative; women are physically vulnerable and compliant. Butler further argued that masculinity and femininity were not only different from but also complementary to each other. "Heterosexual desire" was the defining feature of what bound the masculine and feminine in a binary and hierarchical relationship.

Building on Butler's dialectical relations of masculinity and femininity, Connell (1987, 1995) illustrated the notion of gender hegemony. Her path-breaking conceptualizations of "hegemonic masculinity" (1987) and multiple configurations of masculinity (1987, 1995) have been taken up as central constructs in gender sociology (see Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (1987) also promoted the concept of "emphasized femininity," and other multiple, hierarchical, and marginalized forms of femininities (p. 26). Therefore, gender hegemony operated not only through the subordination of femininity to hegemonic masculinity, but also through the subordination

and marginalization of multiple versions of masculinities and femininities (Schippers, 2007, p. 87). However, Connell concentrated more on masculinity studies so that the concepts of "emphasized femininity" and "subordinated femininities" were mentioned only briefly. Pyke and Johnson (2003) building on Connell's framework, empirically applied her theory to examine femininities. They identified a relation of domination and subordination between White femininity and Asian femininity through their observation of Korean and Vietnamese women. Their study broadened the academic attention to racialized gender performance and had implication for how gender and race intersected to construct the Asian women in a way that legitimized the subordination of "Asian femininity" to the White "hegemonic femininity" (pp. 50-51).

While Pyke and Johnson provided an empirical support of "emphasized" and "subordinated" femininities, Schippers (2007) conceptualized an alternative model to fully comprehend "the feminine other" based on her re-work of Connell's theoretical framework. Schippers advanced her own terminologies for one of the central features of gender hegemony—an ascendancy of "hegemonic femininity" over "pariah femininities" to serve the interests of the gender order and male domination (p. 94). Schippers put special focus to illustrate "pariah femininities." They represented the "deviant" characteristics, or rather, those quality contents of hegemonic masculinity embodied and enacted by women, such as women's desire for authority, violence, excessive sex, or the feminine object (p. 96). However, these qualities were no longer masculine, but were feminized and stigmatized (p. 95). Hence, Schippers' suggested that pariah femininities should be seen as "refracted through race and class differences" (p. 98). This contention opened space for empirically identifying hegemonic femininity in the

White and middle-class culture, and exploring culturally and community specific forms of pariah femininities in non-White and/or non-middle-class cultures (p. 98). Schippers' work provided direction and instruction for my analysis of Asian female images in terms of how their Asian "pariah" femininity is constructed in mainstream American fashion advertising.

Ideology and Consciousness

The theory of intersectionality illustrated how women of color have been both gendered and racialized; this can be best seen through representations. Representation of foreigners, foreign women in particular, has been following a mainstream ideological guide that determines the relations between the insiders and the "other." A powerful tool of representation, media demonstrate such relationships between the "self" and the "other," "us" and "them." The underlying idea in media contents that supports this social order is known as ideology, which legitimizes and perpetuates a particular distribution of power through some of the most frequently used strategies including hierarchy, dominance, and subordination. Thus, within mainstream American ideology, the representation of Asian women has profound implications for power and dominance, consciousness and identity, and inequality and social change. I will now review the literature on ideology and consciousness from a Marxist standpoint. It helps to explain why and how certain types of representation of a certain group have been reproduced and replicated by the mass media over times, and illustrates the impact of such media representation on consciousness and self-identification of media "subjects."

In his classic *German Ideology*, Marx (1939) illustrated the dialectical relation of ideology and consciousness, making the now-famous statement that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas…The class which has the means of

material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production" (p. 61). This statement had significance in understanding the mass production and consumption of media and their hegemonic effects on the mass public, especially in contemporary America, including the large role played by TV and advertising. Meanwhile, the consciousness of man was "directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life" (p. 47). According to Marx, consciousness is a historical form of production conditioned by the development of social practices and artifacts such as language; it was also a social product characterizing a particular social situation as ideology. Therefore, Marx's theory was significant in understanding the impact of the mass media, which legitimized the dominant ideology, and the mass population, accepting the ideology, produced consciousness and reproduced their identity accordingly to perpetuate the ideology.

The relation of ideology and consciousness has been continuously refined and reworked through various neo-Marxist approaches. Althusser (1971), a Marxist structuralist, shifted Marx's preoccupation with economic determinism to seeing ideology as itself a determining force that shaped consciousness, embodied in the material-signifying practices of "ideological state apparatuses" (p. 135). Althusser considered a number of distinct and specialized "private" institutions—such as schools, religious organizations, political parties, and the media—as the ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). ISAs constructed people as "subjects" not only through ideology but also within ideology, known as the "elementary ideological effect" (pp. 135-139). The "subjects" were not only the material site where ideology was grounded and inscribed, but also the agents who possessed the subjectivity and consciousness that made them

autonomous, distinguishable individuals. In this way, ISAs—for example, the media—produced willing subjects on a mass scale. Individuals "willingly" subjected themselves to the ideology promoted by the media and the subjects were "interpolated" (p. 162) to recognize themselves as self-conscious agents. Althusser's theory was significant in recognizing the subjectivity of the media audience and had implications for media "victims"—for example, Asian women under stereotypical representations who nonetheless "willingly" subjected themselves to the dominant ideology—making sense of their identity and subjectivity.

Gramsci (1971), however, developed the Marxist ideology and consciousness through a humanistic viewpoint that examined Marx's earlier writings and emphasized human subjectivity. Gramsci found the traditional Marxist theory of power to be lopsided in that it emphasized force and coercion as the basis of ruling class domination. Gramsci illuminated a subtle but pervasive form of ideological manipulation—namely, cultural hegemony, which referred to a process of moral and intellectual leadership through which subordinate classes consented to their own domination by ruling classes. As a result, hegemony permeated society with an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, and morality that supported the status quo in power relations and was diffused by the process of socialization into ordinary people's daily life. In this way, this prevailing "consciousness" was internalized by the population and became part of what was generally called "common sense" (Boggs, 1976, p. 39). Gramsci saw the potential of capitalism to reach right into the heart of human life; thus, his hegemony included a "subjective" element concerned with how people made sense of themselves. Gramsci's theory subsequently became a key to understanding the mass media as an "ideological

site of struggle" that was constantly promoting the dominant ideology to the subordinated, legitimizing power structures, and hegemonizing minds of the subordinated into the mainstream.

Building on Gramsci's hegemony and Althusser's conceptualization of the media as an ideological state apparatus, Hall (1980) re-approached Marxism from a cultural perspective. In particular, Hall's Marxist media theory examined how the media as a "field of ideological struggle," reinforced a consensual viewpoint and reproduced dominant interpretations that served the interests of the ruling class. Hall argued that the media were "important sites for the production, reproduction and transformation of ideologies" (p. 19). Ideologies in Hall's media theory, worked by "constructing for their subjects positions of identification and knowledge which allow them to 'utter' ideological truths as if they were their authentic authors" (pp.18-19). As a cultural specialist, Hall focused especially on racism in media. He distinguished between two kinds of racism in the media: "overt" and "inferential" racism. Whereas the former referred to openly racist arguments, the latter referred to naturalized representations that had "racist premises and propositions inscribed in them as a set of unquestioned assumptions" (p. 30). "Inferential" racism was evident in a large number of Asian representations. It allowed a racist subtext to flow without any explicit reference to racism, without the awareness of the producers or even, Asian Americans themselves. Hall's theory was a key to understanding media's naturalization of dominance and power inequality; it also had implications for how people made sense of the media texts and themselves.

Whereas Hall developed Marxist understanding of ideology and consciousness through a cultural and racial perspective, Marcuse (1955) approached Marxism from a

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Freudian perspective and with a critical feminist focus. He investigated the social and psychological mechanisms that perpetuated the sex/gender system in the post-industrial capitalist society and discussed the issues of sexism, classism, and racism in a civil society. Marcuse argued that "domination is exercised by a particular group of individuals in order to sustain and enhance in a privileged position" (p. 33); this dominance created a "surplus repression"—a two-level oppression consisting of an economic-political oppression built on the basis of sexual repression—upon which civilization was founded. As a result, libidinal energy was redirected and channeled into progress and productivity of "the alienated labor", a key feature of capitalist society (p. 42). However, as productivity increased and the actual need to work declined, a greater level of constraint of sexual desire was required, which led to "perversions"—an oppositional response that took on either destructive forms (e.g., rape) or benignly non-normative forms (e.g., promiscuity, homosexuality, hypersexualization of women of minority races). Thus, this paradoxical coexistence of repression and license provided a valuable insight to understanding the sex/gender system and other mechanisms that served to perpetuate current conditions of post-industrial capitalism (p. 83). In particular, Marcuse discussed the media's function in fostering people's libidinal needs and urges—sexualized images of young women along with hyper-sexualized commodities in advertising that became "not only fetishes, but also our only source of hope and comfort" (Holland, 2011, p. 74). Marcuse's theory helped to understand the desire for the female "Other" as a "non-normative" form of sexuality, and helped to understand media sexualization of women of color in the White-dominated, patriarchal, capitalist society.

The Marxist theory of ideology and consciousness indicated that the mass media were a powerful tool that transmitted and naturalized the dominant ideology in the capitalistic, patriarchal society. It became a site of struggle where ideas of various forms of power inequalities—such as male dominance over female, White over minority races, rich over poor—were articulated, worked, transformed, and elaborated. Therefore, stereotypical representations of the subordinated groups (in the current study, Asian women) were repeatedly reproduced and replicated to influence the minds of the mass population and legitimize the status quo power relations. Meanwhile, media representations of the dominant ideology significantly impacted people's consciousness and self-identification. For example, stereotypical representations of Asian women that perpetuated the gender hierarchy and racial inequality had profound implications on the mainstream cognition of Asian women, Asian women's self-perception and identification, their subjectivity and agency within the dominant ideology, and their socialization through which the ideology was transmitted and reinforced.

Based on the theoretical terrain of ideology and consciousness from a Marxist (and neo-Marxist) standpoint, I shall now illustrate two complementary theories of this study—the "male gaze" and "Orientalism." These theories will provide a deeper understanding of how Asian women have been represented in a gendered and racialized manner that follows the ideological paradigm of a capitalist society and legitimizes the power inequity of male over female and White over Asian.

Male Gaze and Orientalism

The "male gaze" theory was originated from the term "spectatorship" grounded in the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Lacan (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 74). It referred to the situation in which women were subjectively constructed as "objects"

according to the male spectators' gaze. The theory has wide application in critical analysis of critical analyses of how stereotypical female representation reinforces the patriarchal hierarchy. Mulvey (1975) was the first to apply this theory to feminist film studies. She uncovered the ways in which patriarchal society structured the sexual subject where women stood as a signifier for the male other. As the pleasure in looking had been split between active/male and passive/female, gazing became a male activity while being looked at was the domain of females. Thus, the determining male gaze projected its "phantasy" on the female figure. Mulvey discovered that Hollywood cinema was a typical exemplar that put the spectator in a masculine subject position, with the woman on screen as the object of desire.

Other significant studies on gender representation that informed my research are Goffman's (1979) and Courtney and Whipple's (1983) works. Goffman's (1979) classic *Gender Advertisements* was dedicated to a semiotic analysis on female representation in advertising, revolving around the key concept—"gender display." Goffman argued that if gender was defined "as the culturally established correlates of sex," then gender display referred to "conventionalized portrayals of these correlates" (p. 1). He believed that advertisements depicted not necessarily how we actually behaved as women and men, but a social presumption that convinced us how women and men wanted to be or should be (p. vii). Goffman concluded that advertisements portrayed "an ideal conception of the two sexes and their structural relationship to each other, accomplishing this in part by indicating, again ideally, the alignment of the actor in the social situation" (p. 84). Goffman's study not only suggested a practical methodology to examine advertising female representation, but also laid the philosophical foundation for

contemporary gender sociology. His concept of cultural interactionalism cast its early influence on West and Zimmerman's groundbreaking theory of "doing gender" (1987). On the other hand, Courtney and Whipple's (1983) book was a cornerstone that documented advertising sex-role portrayals of women during the past 10 years throughout some 250 published sources worldwide. Findings showed that advertising commonly used extensive sexual appeals, such as complete female nudity, sexual suggestiveness and innuendo—stereotypical images of women that were objectified and commodified. The study had significance in assessing communication effectiveness through objectification of women and advised advertisers to take caution in using sexual appeals.

Female representation in media has perpetuated the power differential between the dominated male and the subordinated female. Furthermore, representation of minority races has reinforced the power inequality created by White dominance and hegemony. Dominance of the Asian ethnic group was discussed by Said in his postcolonial classic *Orientalism.* Said (1979) provided a thorough study and discourse analysis of the Orient as a Western projection of the East. He argued that Orientalism could be "analyzed as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (p. 3). Thus, "Orientalism" was a constellation of false assumptions underlying Western attitudes toward the East. This long tradition of false and romanticized image of Asia had served as a justification for European and American colonial and imperial ambitions. In addition, Orientalism reified the relationship of power between the West and Asia by constructing the Occident and Orient as cultural polarities defined by distance. It further imagined a world hierarchy

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underlying "the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority" (p. 42). Said's theory provided a direction of assessing racialized representation and helped to explain what that representation indicated about Western and "Oriental" power differentials, cultural differences, and political, historical and social contexts that played in the background.

The theories of "male gaze" and "Orientalism" have become foundations of many interdisciplinary studies. For example, two scholars that built on the critical foundation of the two theories were O'Barr (1994) and Dobie (2001). O'Barr analyzed advertising representation of foreigners and the implication for "Otherness," hierarchy, dominance and subordination (p. 2). He proposed three analytical questions to examine social ideologies in the discourse of advertising (pp. 2-3): 1) what is the idealized image of people in a particular social category? 2) what are their patterns of interacting with others? and 3) what positions are they in the social hierarchy? These questions laid the basics of many research questions afterwards and informed this study as well. O'Barr argued that in the White male-dominated Hollywood tradition, Asian women had been suffering a "double marginality" (p. 157). This point had been expanded by many Asian American media researchers. Dobie, on the other hand, studied foreign female bodies and French Orientalism. She focused on the figure of the "Oriental women" and illustrated the interplay of gender and race in the context of French domestic history and colonial discourse. Dobie found that the Orient was frequently feminized or associated with women. She argued that the feminization of the Orient found its corollary in the Orientalization of women in gender politics and Orientalism thus, was a facet of Western colonial power. Although the background setting was in France rather than the United

Sates, Dobie's study analyzed similar scenarios of racialization and fetishization of Asian women.

Review of the representation literature on "male gaze" and "Orientalism" indicates that while women in general were all subject to objectification in media, Asian women suffered multiple oppressions. However, one limitation of these studies was that they either focused on only one dimension of the oppressions, or examined gender and race oppressions one by one. Few studies have concentrated on how gender and race intersect and function simultaneously to created systematic social inequality. Therefore, there is a need to integrate the representation literature with the theory of intersectionality to understand how multiple oppressions construct women of color at the intersecting point. Nonetheless, due to the insufficiency of attention on Asian women inherent in intersectional studies, it is necessary to review another body of literature on empirical findings by Asian American media scholars that explored exclusively Asian female representation through various genres of media.

Findings by Asian American Media Scholars

A number of Asian American media scholars have explored how the U.S. entertainment media and advertising portrayed Asian women through gendered and racialized stereotypes (Fong, 2002; Hamamoto, 1994; Huang, 2009; Kang, 2002; Kim & Chung, 2005; Lee, 1998; Mok, 1998; Paek & Shah, 2003; Parmar, 1987; Taylor & Stern, 1994, 1997). Their findings showed the commonalities in Asian images among the three most examined genres of entertainment media—cinema, theatre, and television drama. Furthermore, those traditional Asian female images seemed to have been transferred to advertising. I will now review the literature in the above four genres.

Mulvey (1975) suggested that Hollywood typically put women in the "object" position through the male gaze. Hollywood's representation of Asian women has not only influenced U.S. social cognition, but also reflected the historical process of Asian assimilation, American politics, gender and racial ideology, as well as the "Orientalist fantasy." Robert G. Lee (1998) illuminated the "internal complexities of the Oriental representation," and "the way in which the Oriental is imbedded in the discourses of race, gender, class and sexuality in America" (p. 2, p. 85). He argued that the Oriental was constructed as a "third sex"—Marjorie Garber's (1992) term for a gender of imagined sexual possibility. He drew from two Hollywood films *Sayonara (1957)* and *Flower Drum Song (1961)* that both featured familiar plots of Asian women's assimilation through the domestication of their exotic (racialized) sexuality. Although the term intersectionality was not formally adopted, Lee's analysis indicated a clear awareness of and great insight into the intersection of gender and race in Asian female representation in cinema.

Lee's analysis was further developed by Fong (2002) and Kang (2002). They both agreed with Lee that Hollywood movies reflected race, class and gender ideologies and social and political concerns. Fong's work was of great significance in that it distinguished between two categories of stereotypical Asian images in Hollywood cinema. The "bad" sense of the stereotype was the "dragon lady" image that featured Asian women as exotic, manipulative, and licentious, best seen in the early films such as *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931) and *Shanghai Express* (1932). The "good" version of the stereotype was the "lotus blossom" that featured Asian women as mute, submissive, docile yet also sensual, best seen in *Sayonara* (1957). The two seemingly extreme

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types of images offered a valuable guideline for scholars afterwards and became the

two most recognized Asian female images resulting from the intersection of Asian

gender and race. Kang further developed the two categories by examining three recent

films in U.S. cinema, *Thousand Piece of Gold* (1991), *Come See the Paradise* (1990),

and *The Year of the Dragon* (1985). Kang argued that the Asian gender hierarchy

seemed reversed, "positioning the Oriental female as aesthetically superior to the

Oriental male" (p. 75). Kang claimed that this gender non-equivalence allowed Asian

women more "agency" to leave their partners and seek for liberation in the arms of the

Western male. Kang concluded that images of the Asian male's failed tyranny and

Asian female's easy availability, submissiveness and licentiousness functioned to justify

and affirm the American imperialism in Asia (p. 77).

The two types of Asian female images in the Hollywood cinema seemed to have

continued their expression in other media genres as well. Television drama is a genre

where Hollywood stereotypes continue to dominate. As illustrated in Hall's (1980)

"inferential" racism, television drama has perpetuated an implicit racial subtext.

Nonetheless, the dual oppression created by the intersection of gender and race still

exists, only in a less ostensible fashion. Hamamoto's study (1994) examined through

network television programs how a racialized discourse was transmitted, "which

conferred legitimacy to white supremacist social institutions and power arrangements"

(p. xi). The television programs Hamamoto's examined covered the entire five decades

of commercial network television, including situation comedies, serial dramas, made-for-

television movies, action-adventure programs, and more. Fong (2002) praised

Hamamoto's book as the best analytical work on this subject, noting that "even the most

seemingly benign TV programs articulate the relationship between race and power, either explicitly or through implication" (p. 3). Through his analysis of one episode of *Gunsmoke* (1955-75)—*Gunfighter, R.I.P.* and one episode of *How the West Was Wo*n (1978-79)—*China girl,* Hamamoto discussed how interracial marriage was treated in television drama. Hamamoto demonstrated that television portrayals of Asian women allowed an assumed racist subtext to be communicated, featuring the Asian women as both exotic and erotic—essential to both the "dragon-lady" and "lotus blossom" images (p. 207). Hamamoto argued that "the domination or sexual possession of nonwhite females by the white males of the master race" (p. 46) was also a way to demonstrate unequal power relations between the West and the East that had been embedded in U.S. society since American colonialism in Asia.

Besides television drama which continued Hollywood stereotypes, the theatre is also a venue where gendered and racialized portrayals take place. In Broadway two plays—*M. Butterfly* (1988) and *Miss Saigon* (1990) focused attention on Asian women. These popular plays introduced the era when Asian women were portrayed in detail and demonstrated how gender and race intersected to construct them in theatre. *Miss Saigon* continued the "lotus blossom" image and told a familiar tale of a Vietnamese prostitute's marriage and dedication to an American soldier. On the other hand, David Hwang's *M. Butterfly* attempted to challenge the American "Oriental fantasy." It told a story of a French diplomat who had a love affair with a female Chinese opera singer, who eventually turned out to be a male spy. After facing his crushed "Oriental fantasy," the diplomat committed suicide while the spy laughed at his foolery. David Hwang intentionally surprised the theatre world and sought to "subvert" the long existing fantasy

towards Asian women by the diplomat's failed relationship and tragic death. The play provoked heated debate and controversial opinions on whether the subversion of Orientalism was really successful. However, more people thought that the challenge was ineffective, arguing that the play challenged some stereotypes but perpetuated many others, like the "cunning, shrewd, manipulative, and deceptive" character of the "dragon lady" (Fong, 2002, p. 208).

Fong (2002) and Peter Feng (2002) discussed the role that the gendered and racialized Asian bodies played in the American imagination based on the two plays. Both plays communicated a White male fantasy and dominance over the submissive and sensual Asian woman. The only difference was that *M. Butterfly* aimed to "subvert" the mediated stereotype while *Miss Saigon* perpetuated it. Nonetheless, the commonality was that both employed "a metaphor of the traditional colonial and neocolonial attitude demonstrating Western superiority over the East" (Fong, 2002, p. 207). The sexual and racial stereotyping were "mutually implicated and embedded in discourses of Asian cultural inferiority" (Feng, 2002, p. 10).

While the "dragon lady" and "lotus blossom" stereotypes have dominated the entertainment media in gendered and racialized representation of Asian women, it is worthwhile to examine advertising as the media's "not-so-silent partner." I will now review the literature on Asian female images in advertising.

Taylor and Stern (1994, 1997) set the stage for investigating Asian female images in advertising. In their first study, they conducted a content analysis of Asian representation in four types of magazines—the popular business press, women's magazines, general interest magazines, and popular science/mechanics publications.

They discussed potential negative impacts of many stereotypes of Asian people reinforced through advertisements. Their second study was a continuation but shifted to television advertising, and focused more on Asian women. The authors analyzed more than 1300 television advertisements from one full week of prime time programming (8 pm to 1pm) on the four major television networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC). They assessed the frequency, proportion, and nature of Asian representation such as Asian models' roles, positions, and interactions. They concluded that Asian women were less well represented and were perceived as less important than any other minority women. Asian women in this sense were most marginalized through the co-function of their gender and race.

Paek and Shah's study (2003) in response to Taylor and Stern's 1997 work utilized both content analysis and qualitative textual analysis to better examine how gender and race intersected in Asian female images in advertisements in three top-ranked general news magazines—*Times, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report*. They found that representation of Asian women was dominated by images that appeared typically silent, subservient and exotic, consistent with traditional images in the entertainment media. They also accounted for how race intersected with gender in that the general view of Asians as affluent, intelligent and technology-oriented became very fragile and volatile when it came to Asian women. Regardless of many depictions of Asian women in professional roles, the image of petite and exotic beauty remained an overwhelming visual theme. Unlike previous scholars, Paek and Shah took age and class into consideration. This provided an empirical support for the potential of

intersectional studies to incorporate more dimensions—for example, gender, race, class, age, sexuality.

One more study that corresponded to findings in the entertainment media was conducted by Kim and Chung (2005) in their discourse analysis on Asian female images in magazine advertising. Their study set up an outstanding example of qualitatively analyzing magazine advertisements and to large degree inspired my research. First, they reviewed the literature in a systematic and succinct manner and covered all leading scholars and important findings in this field. By briefly reviewing the history of American Orientalism and how dynamics of the Oriental discourse constructed Asian women in advertising, Kim and Chung resonated with Lee (1998), Hamamoto (1994), Fong (2002), Feng (2002), and Kang (2002). They all agree that in the discourse and ideology of American Orientalism, not only had the Orient become a territory to conquer but also the Oriental women became the target of White male-heterosexual desire. By depicting White males as masculine and superior and Asian men as emasculated and inferior, the Orientalist fantasy of Asian women was exalted, along with the portrayal of Asian women as exotic sexual objects to satisfy the sexual voyeurism of White males (pp. 75-76).

Second, the authors conducted an insightful qualitative content analysis to examine how the "dragon-lady" and "lotus blossom" images had been transferred, reconstructed, and re-presented in the contemporary society. They attempted to place the gender-race discourse in the contemporary trend of globalization and examine how the gender and race hierarchies were re-presented in contemporary advertisements. They analyzed three advertising campaigns—Virginia Slims®, Hennessy®, and

Ofoto®—to reconsider "the cultural constructs of multicultural advertisement strategies in the new global era" (p. 67). They found that Asian women were gendered, racialized, and commodified in those advertisements in a way that alluded to the historical Asian female imageries in the "Oriental fantasy." They came to the conclusion that U.S. White masculinity and supremacy was built upon the racialized and gendered representations of ethnic minority groups as the "Other" (p. 67), during which process the historical discourse of American colonialism and Orientalism were rearticulated in the contemporary context of globalization (p. 68).

Third, Kim and Chung's study also contributed to the literature by linking objectification of Asian women in advertisements with commodification of the Asian culture. For example, in the Virginia Slims® advertising campaign the Chinese written characters behind the Asian female model made no sense at all and were not to be understood, but "to be objectified by viewers in their visual consumption of the Asian female model." They concluded that such advertisements provided little education about the Asian culture, but were merely a "commodification and objectification of their people" (pp. 82-83), who were the Asian females. This finding provided me with great insight in analyzing advertisements that feature both the Asian female and the Asian cultural setting.

One limitation of Kim and Chung's work was that there was not an overarching theory that encompassed their empirical findings and guided their analysis. Therefore, my research will build on Kim and Chung's work and attempt to apply the theory of intersectionality to examine Asian female images in advertising.The literature indicated that both the entertainment media and advertising have been playing key roles in

reinforcing the dominant ideology and perpetuating the dual marginalization of Asian women through gendered and racialized images. However, historically there has been little change in the two categories of images. Furthermore, most advertisements with Asian female images analyzed in the literature were in the 1990s. Most recent advertisements (e.g., after 2003) have not been fully studied. Therefore, how contemporary advertising selects, employs, or changes the two dominant images and reconstructs contemporary Asian women remains uninvestigated. This provides an opportunity for my study to examine how gender and race intersect in contemporary advertising with possible new features.

Research Questions

Based on the literature review, my research questions aim to close three gaps. First, this research applies the concept of intersectionality to investigate the ways in which gender and race simultaneously contribute to social inequality, rather than to discuss gender and race in a singular manner as in the representation literature. Second, this research seeks to bring Asian women to academic attention and expand the scope of intersectionality, which originally focused on Black women. As such, this study provides an empirical support for the theory from an Asian perspective. Furthermore, this study focuses in particular on how contemporary advertising draws from traditional Asian female images that have dominated the entertainment media since the 1920s and how it strategically selects, adopts, alters, or changes those images to reconstruct Asian women. Therefore, this research addresses the following questions:

(1). How is the Asian female image constructed in the selected advertisement (e.g., dressing style, appeal type, facial expression, body language, position in the

picture, pattern of interaction)? How do gender and race intersect in each element of the advertisement? What does the intersectionality imply about the Asian/Oriental culture seen as from the Western/American point of view?

(2). Can this Asian female image be related to any existing types of images previously constructed by the entertainment media? If yes, how are they related? If not, what is the fundamental difference or change? What does the relation or change indicate on intersectionality throughout different times?

(3). What do the Asian female images imply about U.S. history and ideology, power and dominance, culture and society? How is power inequality perpetuated through the media discourse? What impact do the Asian female images have on Asian women's self-identification and mainstream's cognition in the capitalist, patriarchal, multicultural American society?

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

Qualitative Content Analysis

This study is a qualitative content analysis to examine Asian female representation in recent fashion magazine advertising. The major emphasis of qualitative content analysis is to capture the meanings, emphases, and themes of messages and to understand the organization and process of how they are presented (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Compared with quantitative content analysis, a qualitative approach has comparative advantages in several aspects. First, although quantitative content analysis requires a considerable sample size that is generalizable, the qualitative approach offers a more focused analysis of texts and visuals for deeper understanding. This research is based on a small number of images rather than a large sample. Asian female models in U.S. mainstream society, especially in the "high fashion" industry, are still a marginal population. Both their number and their chances of appearance in quality fashion magazines are limited. Indeed, magazines such as *Vogue* contain at most one or two such advertisements—if any at all—in each issue. Furthermore, the current study examines such advertisements from the last three years (i.e., 2008 to 2010). The minimal time coverage limits the available advertisements to a relatively small number. For a study dedicated to a small and marginal population and its specificity in mainstream society, a qualitative method may be more effective in carrying out this task.

In addition to the sample size issue, the nature of quantitative research seems limited for this topic. Altheide (1996) argued that quantitative content analysis is "grounded in a tradition that equated 'true knowledge' with numbers and measurement"

(p. 5). Although quantitative research is a systematic analysis of message characteristics to "verify or confirm hypothesized relationships" (Altheide, 1996, p. 16), qualitative analysis is more of an in-depth interpretation of what the message characteristics may imply about culture, society, history, and ideology. Qualitative data analysis is not about coding and counting, although these activities can be useful in some stages of the analysis. For this study, it is more applicable to approach gender and race as two "dynamics," or dimensions that intersect and construct Asian women, rather than as two "variables" in the statistical sense. Furthermore, although statistical inferences based on significance, frequency, and percentage may demonstrate a general pattern and tendency, they may not be sufficient to account for how exactly gender and race intersect in each element of every single piece of advertising. In addition, considering the literature of intersectionality in both feminism and gender sociology, the majority of studies have been conducted through qualitative methods such as ethnography, case studies, and interviews. Those studies have justified that the qualitative approach is a powerful tool to examine gender issues and an applicable method for those fields. Thus, for the current study of media message analysis of gender and racial relations, it is a logical choice to opt for a qualitative content analysis.

Furthermore, the goal of qualitative content analysis is consistent with the foci of this research. According to Altheide (1996), the goal of qualitative content analysis is "to understand types, characteristics, and organizational aspects of the documents as social products, as well as what they claim to represent" (p. 42). The current study is multidisciplinary, which examines media contents using a feminist theory and is largely informed by sociology. This research aims to explore in depth what the intersectionality

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implies about Asian culture from a Western standpoint, as well as what it implies about U.S. history and society. In addition, this study attempts to explore how power, dominance, and inequality are perpetuated and legitimized through media representation. These areas of investigation can be better approached through a qualitative perspective, due to its potential to explore "latent meanings" and draw implications.

Visuals for Qualitative Content Analysis

This study examines Asian female representations in advertisements seen in *Vogue.* According to Altheide (1996), although most content analyses are oriented toward written text, more of our public information and popular culture involves visuals (p. 55). The current study examines Asian female representation through images for several reasons.

First, visuals are a powerful tool for representation. As early as 1977, Barthes has suggested the advantage of visuals: "pictures are more imperative than writing because they impose meaning 'at one stroke without analyzing or diluting meaning'" (p. 229). Visuals are especially helpful for representation studies. Danesi (2007) described the creation of representations as a "model-making" process of mental images. Among various forms of representation, pictures are undoubtedly the most direct and effective bridge, connecting visual images with mental images. Katic (2008) also claimed that visuals "provide an exceptional medium that may bring out nuances and contradictions that might not become evident in textual or oral discourses" (p. 65). As a result, a qualitative content analysis dedicated to visual images would offer a most direct and in-depth account for representation effects. For example, in their empirical work, Brandt and Carstens (2005) argued that "visuals are particularly powerful framing mechanisms"

(p. 237). They examined elements of female images in sports magazine pictures in an attempt to discover how sports magazines construct female figures through the "male gaze." Ultimately, visuals, or print images, have been shown to be a legitimate tool for a qualitative content analysis.

Indeed, visuals are especially suitable for studying advertising representation. Visuals are always the central focus of advertising photos. The majority of fashion advertisements contain no text at all or minimal text in the marginal position. In addition, images in advertising offer direct and concrete visual effects that can best demonstrate the advertising intention. They communicate with the audience through each element of the image—the background design, color choices, emotional appeals, figure constructions, body language, facial expressions, and so on. Therefore, images may provide powerful indications about what is meant by the advertisements.

In addition, visuals have the unique potential to convey latent messages. As Hall's (1980) inferential racism indicated, in many cases stereotypes of women of color are rather implicit, even without the awareness of the producers themselves. Although texts on women of color may try to avoid any explicit reference to gendered and racialized terminology, visuals on the other hand, may naturalize the stereotypes and pose women of color in a gendered and racialized way without awareness of the photographers. In this sense, visuals are more "honest" tools for bringing out those latent meanings. Also, they are more "reflexive" of the process that has produced them, including numerous decisions by photographers, photo editors, caption writers, magazine editors, and advertisers (Altheide, 1996, p. 56). Therefore, studying advertising photos is appropriate

for exploring meanings, latent messages, as well as drawing implications of mainstream society.

Research Design

Data Collection

The magazine examined was *Vogue* (U.S.A). This magazine was chosen for four reasons. First, fashion magazines, among all women's magazines, have the professionalism and authority to capture and represent the ideal female figure. In particular, *Vogue*—as the world's "Bible of fashion"—has become an indispensible fashion barometer in U.S. society for 119 years (founded in 1892). The magazine is best known for putting women and constructing femininity in the context of culture. In this sense, *Vogue* is uniquely positioned to represent women in the very socio-cultural conditions in which they belong. As a result, its representation of women of color has the best potential to reflect how the subject is socially and culturally constructed.

Second, *Vogue*'s models have been predominantly White, making it a good exemplar of a mainstream magazine whose values, philosophies, and editorial criteria have been deeply influenced by the mainstream ideology. Compared with those of other minorities such as Blacks and Hispanics, Asian female images have been particularly limited in *Vogue*. Therefore, every time the magazine does feature Asian female models, the representation and indication must have significance to business, culture and society.

Third, *Vogue* is not only a cultural arbiter and a gatekeeper of minority races' appearance, but also a pioneer of the fashion business. Throughout the past century, *Vogue*'s vision, scope of coverage, and potential readership have been considerably influenced and broadened by the trend of globalization. Historically, women of color

were rarely taken into consideration in fashion marketing strategies, or targeted as readers and consumers by the fashion business due to their limited number in mainstream society. However, the contemporary trend of economic and fashion globalization has transformed many fashion marketing strategies and redefined culture in a wider sense. A key transition for example, has been to feature women of various ethnicities in fashion advertising, which adds a sense of globalism to the brands, and further promotes global consumption. Asian women, therefore, are gradually obtaining attention in advertising campaigns of many key fashion brands. On the other hand, due to the nature of the mainstream magazine, *Vogue*'s larger inclusion of Asian women has been to large degree based on popular images of Asian women in the U.S. culture, and dominant images of the Asian female constructed throughout American history. Orientalism, as a powerful discourse and ideology that projects Asian women through the Western male's standpoint, fits into the fashion marketing strategies of representing the faraway and exotic Asian women and femininity. As a result, *Vogue*'s portrayals of Asian women are often gendered and racialized reflections that draw on the historical colonialism and American Orientalism in Asia. In this way, the influential *Vogue* has advanced and promoted "Asian femininity" to the larger fashion business.

Finally, the December 2010 issue of *Vogue* featured a two-page spread that contained a group of eight Asian women in a reinterpretation of a classic Cecil Beaton portrait from 1948. The photo caption stated that "a new crop of models from China, Japan and South Korea is redefining traditional concepts of beauty." Considering that American *Vogue* has never featured any Asian female model on its cover in over 40 years and has rarely featured Asian females within spreads inside the magazine, this

December 2010 spread has attracted significant public attention. Public debate arose in terms of whether this photo indicated a significant change in *Vogue*'s ideology, whether it reflected a change in mainstream perceptions of Asian women, and whether it challenged or continued to perpetuate power inequality in U.S. society. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine this particular magazine for recent Asian female representations.

The timeframe examined was between 2008 and 2010, in order to look at contemporary magazine advertising representations in the most recent years, a period for which no studies have yet been published on this subject. Qualifying advertisements were those that feature either a single Asian female model or both Asian and American female models, while the Asian female model is constructed in such a way that either falls into literary categories or creates new categories that add variations or changes. To confirm that the models are Asian or Asian American female, I looked up the models' basic information kept in the corresponding companies' records available for public view.

Specifically, the data collection process consisted of two stages. In the first stage, every issue of *Vogue* from 2008 to 2010 was reviewed and advertisements containing Asian female models were selected. According to *Vogue*'s usual practice, one or two such advertisements—if any—many occur in each issue. In the second stage, I re-conceptualized the categories and classified the advertisements. My categorization was on the one hand, based on the two literature categories: "dragon lady" and "lotus blossom." On the other hand, I also focused on variations, changes, and subversions, classifying the advertisements into a few groups that were similar to, or slightly varied from, or completely different from the literature categories. After collecting data, one or

two exemplary advertisements were selected from each category for more in-depth analysis that follows.

Data Analysis

Altheide (1996) argued that qualitative data analysis is "to understand the process and character of social life and to arrive at meaning and process" (p. 42). The goal of the analysis is "to see the process in the types and meanings of the documents under investigation" (p. 43). In analyzing the findings, I conducted a thorough examination of the advertisements selected to justify how each category stood as one type of representation of Asian female images in contemporary advertising. My analysis was especially concentrated on the exemplary advertisements selected from each category.

The analysis began with a truthful description of the advertising photos and their immediate contribution to the meaning and format of the advertisements. For each photo, I focused on each element on the Asian female model that might demonstrate the advertising intent, such as the clothing, the body styling, the dressing style, postures, facial expressions, along with the model's position in the photo, and interactions with other models (if any). Also, I examined the effect of the background (if any), the color selections, the overall design of the photo and how the visual effects might contribute to the audience's understanding of the Asian female model's gender and race.

My analysis then provided a holistic interpretation of what was latent and what was implied in the photos. I discussed how gender and race as two dimensions of oppression, simultaneously intersected to construct the Asian female. I examined how "Asian femininity" was constructed in each photo, and whether and how the Asia female model was portrayed in a manner that might legitimize gender hegemony and male

dominance. I also discussed whether and how the Asian female was constructed in a racialized way that drew from the Oriental discourse and historical Asian female stereotypes in American popular culture and society.

For each category, through a comparison and contrast of the two or three exemplary advertisements, I justified why these images were categorized as one outstanding type of image. In addition, I examined how each category selected, transferred, or altered popular Asian female images promoted by the entertainment media to reconstruct Asian women in contemporary advertising. Particularly, I focused on whether and how the dominant "dragon lady" and "lotus blossom" categories in the literature was re-presented or challenged. If changes were identified, I investigated what new elements were taken into consideration and whether they corresponded to or challenged the dominant images. Through the perpetuation or alteration of stereotypes, I drew implications of power and dominance, media hegemony, social cognition, and the American culture and society.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

Through a systematic search of 36 issues of *Vogue* from 2008 to 2010, this research identified a total of 41 qualifying advertisements. Table 4-1 summarizes the number of advertisements in each issue.

Based on quintessential characteristics of dominant Asian female images constructed by the entertainment media, particularly the well-known "dragon lady" and "lotus blossom" images, the selected advertisements were reexamined for similarities and differences compared to the two stereotypes. The findings show that on the one hand, these two iconic gendered and racialized images continue to exert considerable influence on contemporary advertising. On the other hand, many variations can be identified. Alterations and shifts of focus indicate more types of images than the traditional two. Furthermore, alternative images exist that represent Asian women as completely assimilated and "Americanized," suggesting they are no different from American models.

Based on the 41 advertisements, I generated five categories that capture common features of Asian female images. In the first category, the "lotus blossom" image has been preserved in contemporary fashion advertising as a different and unique version of beauty as opposed to the Western beauty type. To retain and represent the "lotus blossom" image, some advertisements feature a single Asian female as delicate and vulnerable, while others construct the Asian female along with the Asian cultural setting in the background to reinforce the alien origin of the "lotus blossom" image. In the second category, the "dragon lady" image has taken on two variations with different foci. The "deviant" Asian femininity has been deconstructed into two facets. One is the strong

woman image, which constructs Asian women through such deviant qualities as strong, hard, manipulative, and authoritative. The other is the focus on the Asian sexual appeal, which alludes to the historical "Oriental" female image with sensuality, sexual license, and mobility. The third category highlights a trend that combines the lotus-like and dragon-like images. Some advertisements attempt to integrate some of the most outstanding qualities of the two dominant images into a single figure. The most used strategy is to show the Asian model in a strong and severely dressed style, yet with a delicate, vulnerable, and innocent face. Asian women are reconstructed as a "dragon lady" in the body, but made less "deviant" by the "lotus blossom" face and more desirable for dominance and conquest. In the fourth category, some advertisements put special emphasis on the "Asian look," which features the Asian women's facial traits exclusively and portrays Asian women as exotic, mysterious, and all looking alike. Finally, in the fifth category, some advertisements feature Asian women as completely "Americanized." This type of image shows little difference from typical American models in terms of the dressing style, postures, or interactions. Asian women are portrayed as fully assimilated into the younger American generation.

Category 1: The Retained "Lotus Blossom" Image

The classic "lotus blossom" image is evident in the Hollywood movies *Sayonara* (1957) and *Flower Drum Song* (1961). The Japanese girl Katsumi in *Sayonara* was so loyal to her White partner that she committed suicide because she was not allowed to marry him. Mei Li in *Flower Drum Song* was also a traditional, submissive and vulnerable Chinese girl committed to her fiancé. Some typical characteristics of the "lotus blossom" image are mute, submissive, docile, and erotic. In contemporary fashion advertising, this image continues to influence Asian female representation. A review of

all issues of *Vogue* from the last three years has indicated two strategies that portray

the lotus-like image. One is to capture and centralize a single Asian female as delicate

and vulnerable. The Asian female figure attracts the most attention in the photo, and the

advertisement strives to represent the best of all her feminine qualities. The other is to

reinforce this "lotus blossom" image through a naturalized Asian cultural setting. By

using the combined effects of the background, the color selections, and the overall

design, the female model's Asian origin is emphasized and naturalized. Both the Asian

female and the Asian culture become something that sells. Examples of these two

strategies are included in Figures 4-1 and 4-2.

Figure 4-1 is an advertisement for Eileen Fisher® collections. The Asian female

model in the photo wears a notched collar, light grey, cotton long jacket; and pink

organic cotton scarf. Both textures are thin and soft. The long jacket looks big and loose

on the model, and slightly crinkled. All features of the clothing bring out the model's slim

figure and suggest vulnerability. The model is not wearing any kind of jewelry; the only

accessory she wears is the pink scarf, which stands in sharp contrast with the plain grey

long jacket. It seems that the model is intentionally constructed to be homely, modest,

simple and easily approachable. The incongruence of color contrasts with the dark

background and makes her visible and special. The model seems to be leaning against

an invisible table, as if having all her body weight dependent on the invisible support.

This posture seems modest and introverted, further implying her vulnerability.

The model wears sheer makeup that barely covers her original skin tone. Her full

lips draw the focus to her face, and the natural light pink of her lips perfectly matches

with her bright pink scarf. The color match indicates that the scarf is not a casual choice

seemingly incompatible with her jacket, but rather a careful design that matches her facial features. The model wears dark black eye shadow that is the same color of her hair. The eye shadow blurs into her bangs and makes her right eye almost invisible. The typical Asian black hair and the half-covered eye with black eye shadow clearly communicate a sense of mysteriousness. In particular, the "black zone" on the model's face stands in contrast with the pink lips and scarf and the light grey jacket. Such a visual shock and mysterious look have a good potential to draw viewers' gaze. Mulvey (1975) argued that the best potential of film is voyeurism; this potential can also be applied to print images. In this photo, the silent, vulnerable, and mysterious Asian figure stimulates viewers' desire to look into the Asian femininity. Viewers are invited to decipher and "demystify" the hidden "Oriental" beauty, in such a way as to possibly dominate and conquer the Asian woman, who is innocent, delicate, and easily approachable. In this sense, the model becomes a typical and stereotypical symbol of the "Oriental" female, exotic and inscrutable, silent and modest, delicate and vulnerable—complying with the early "lotus blossom" image. Although there is no explicit reference to men in the photo, the "lotus blossom" image has been historically constructed to deemphasize Asian women's agency and to legitimize their role as White males' rightful property. In this way, the advertisement constructs the Asian woman as a "feminine other," who possesses the mysterious and alien feminine appeal in the subordinated position to the White male.

By depicting the Asian woman as delicate, weak, and inviting protection, the gender hegemony of male dominance over female subordination is reinforced. As the Asian woman is portrayed as silent and mysterious, her Asian femininity invites

demystification by Western viewers. As with the gender hierarchy, the racial hierarchy is also reinforced and the power inequality between the West and Asia is subtly implied. The historical discourse of Orientalism and "Otherness" seems to still find its subtle expression in this photo. The long existing stereotype of the "Oriental fantasy" still exerts its influence nowadays, which constructs the Asian woman as a symbol of distinct and alien beauty style in silent welcoming of White male dominance. The advertisement ensures and perpetuates dominance over the Asian female, indicating the power inequality embedded in American society. In this way, the contemporary "lotus blossom" image of the Asian woman is both gendered and racialized in this fashion advertisement.

Figure 4-2 is an advertisement from the 2009 HP® Mini Vivienne Tam edition. The slogan on the top left reads "The computer is personal again" while the caption at the bottom right says "Say hello to computer couture. The limited-edition Vivienne Tam HP Mini is as comfortable in the boardroom as it is on the runway."

Unlike the Eileen Fisher® advertisement that places the Asian female model in the center of the photo with plain black background, this advertisement features a more complicated overall design with background settings, texts, the product, and the model. This photo attempts to create a visual effect of the Japanese culture and nature in which the Asian model belongs. The red shadowed circle in the center simulates the rising sun, and resembles the pattern on Japan's national flag. The background is set to be gradient pink, growing dark from the lower left to the upper right corner. A branch of a cherry blossom tree stretches out from the upper right corner and pinkish-white cherry blossoms slowly float and fall in the air to the left edge. The effect of light and shade,

the imaginary gentle breeze, and the background color create a beautiful and enchanting imagery of a Japanese cherry blossom garden, bathed in the soft rays of the morning sun.

The Asian female model is positioned to the left, standing in a graceful posture, facing upward to welcome the falling blossoms. The slim and delicate Asian figure is dressed in Vivienne Tam couture, an elegant deep V-neck, high-waist, long gown with pinkish-white patterns in the shape of blossoming peony flowers on a rosy-red ground. In her left arm she holds the product: the "peony clutch" HP® notebook, featuring peony-inspired patterns in the gleaming red shade. The design of the notebook matches perfectly with the model's dress and becomes an integral element of the cherry blossom garden.

The model is looking upward, far into the distance. Her face looks peaceful and detached, and her body is standing in a slightly welcoming posture, well immersed into the setting of the Japanese scenery. At the same time, the text on the photo clearly illustrates the marriage of fashion and technology, indicating the relation of the product to its setting—namely, the Asian culture and nature.

In this advertisement, the Asian model is constructed not only through personal styling, but also—and more importantly—through the combined effect of the background setting, the color selections, the texts, and the overall design. Every element of the photo is trying to convey the unique Asian femininity and every component in the setting is designed to bring out the best of the Asian model—tranquility, delicateness, and exotic beauty. This advertisement clearly indicates that "culture sells," especially faraway cultures in Asia that symbolize the "Other." As remarked in the literature of

Orientalism and Asian representation, the Orient has long been feminized and associated with Oriental women. Asian culture in advertising has been objectified and commodified along with the Asian female model to satisfy consumers' visual desire for the unique Asian femininity. Therefore, both the Asian model and the Asian culture at the background have become something that "sells", which fosters viewers' visual consumption of the product and encourages dominance over the delicate model and the feminized Asia. In this sense, the Asian woman in this photo is gendered and racialized as the model in Figure 4-1 is. She is portrayed as the "feminine other," who is delicate, desirable, and extremely feminine, while the cultural setting depicts somewhere remote and exotic, emphasizing the model's alien origin and adding to her Asian femininity. Similar to Figure 4-1, both her femininity and her "Otherness" are a silent invitation for demystification, protection, conquest, and dominance. This image legitimizes male dominance and gender hegemony, and constructs the Asian woman as a feminine object subordinated to male ascendency. Meanwhile, power inequality is implied as well. As in Figure 1, this advertisement seems to be a continuation of the "Oriental fantasy" for the Asian femininity and the feminized territory. The historical Oriental discourse embedded in American colonialism still influences Asian female representation in the contemporary trend of globalization.

Both Figures 4-1 and 4-2 demonstrate that the dominant "lotus blossom" image has been retained in contemporary fashion advertising in *Vogue*. This type of image constructs Asian women in a gendered and racialized manner. Asian women are portrayed as delicate, feminine, and the "Other," possessing the unique femininity from the faraway and mysterious Asia.

Category 2: Two Variations of the "Dragon Lady" Image

The typical "dragon lady" image features Asian women as exotic and inscrutable, cunning and insatiable, manipulative and licentious. In many mainstream American movies, Asian women are gendered and sexualized through a white heterosexual male's viewpoint to demonstrate the "Oriental" beauty, the Asian femininity, and an imagined sexual possibility. They are also racialized through the power differential between the West and the "Far East" that has long existed and influential due to the historical American colonialism in Asia. Asian women have been portrayed as not only the "feminine other," but also as being good at using their exotic charms to seduce White men for evil purposes. For example, Anna May Wong established this classic "dragon lady" image in two early films: *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931) and *Shanghai Express* (1932).

In contemporary fashion magazines, the "dragon lady" image has also survived. However, the current findings indicate that this image has been deconstructed into a few facets in *Vogue* advertising. For example, some advertisements feature Asian females as "strong women" and construct their Asian femininity through those "deviant" qualities such as hard, authoritative, and manipulative. Some other advertisements feature Asian women as sensual and appealing, emphasizing such "deviant" qualities as sexual license and mobility. These two variations indicate two aspects of the Asian femininity, which are considered here as two variations of the "dragon lady" image in contemporary fashion advertising.

The "Deviant" Strong Woman

Figure 4-3 depicts an advertisement from DKNY® collections. Typical of DKNY®'s advertising strategy, the photo features a group of women of diverse ethnicities. From

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how the models are dressed and how the Asian model is constructed, implications can be drawn on how the Asian female is gendered and racialized.

The eight models are dressed in different outfits yet bear similarities among each other. The models can be divided into two groups: the left four and the right four. The first and the fourth in each group resemble each other in many ways. Also, the third models in both groups are dressed in a similar manner, as are the second models in both groups. Thus, the counterpart of the Asian woman standing in the right group is a White woman in the left group dressed as a mirror image. Although the two models are supposed to resemble each other with only minor differences, a further examination suggests that some outstanding contrasts actually exist.

One of the differences lies in the outfit of the two models. At first look, they are wearing identical shoes, similar pants, and tops of similar colors. However, every element on the White model actually creates a sense of softness and femininity, whereas every element on the Asian model is heavy, hard, and gender neutral. For example, the White model wears a stone grey woolen jumpsuit outside her black sweater. The jumpsuit features easy fabric and a relaxed silhouette. The Asian model, on the other hand, wears a bluish grey, single-button closure, woolen tuxedo jacket that looks heavy and hard. In addition, the White model's jumpsuit has a self tie in the same texture while the Asian model's belt is made of golden metal. Furthermore, the White model is holding a purse under her right arm and wears a women's clear plastic watch with a round white dial on her left wrist. The Asian model carries no purse yet wears a stainless steel cuff watch, which seems much too bold and masculine for a female, with its metallic luster echoing the shiny metallic belt. In a word, the design of the White

model tries to convey her "orthodoxical" feminine beauty—"emphasized femininity" in Connell's term (1987, 1995) or "hegemonic femininity" in Schippers' term (2007). However, the styling of the Asian model strives to construct the Asian woman through those quality contents of man (Butler, 1990), such as the desire for power and authority. Since those qualities are enacted by a woman, they are not masculine in this case, but rather a different configuration of femininity as deviant and marginalized by the hegemonic femininity—the "pariah femininity" in Schippers' term (2007). In this way, the advertisement represents the Asian female through her unique dressing style and constructs her pariah femininity through "deviant" qualities—feminine, but strong, tough, and manipulative.

This deviant form of femininity adds to the model's position in the group. The strong and authoritative Asian woman is not placed in a major position (the third in the right group). Although she is not the person on the edge, she seems to be held back on the team in a subtle manner. Her counterpart, the third White model in the left group, stands with one shoulder behind and one shoulder in front of the models next to her—a common formation when a row of people are presented. However, the Asian model stands with both shoulders behind either of the models to her left and right. She is the only one on this team that has both shoulders behind others. Similar situations can be observed in other DKNY® advertisements selected in this category. In each photo, the Asian female is constructed as a "strong woman," yet is placed either in a marginal position or in the background.

In addition to her position, the Asian female's facial expression indicates more of her characteristics. She is the only model with her mouth half open, as if about to say

something. She is not looking at the camera directly, but looking somewhere else. Her face conveys a message that she is not completely focused on what she is doing right now. Unlike other models who look dedicated and serious, the Asian female seems to be thinking about something else or doubting something. Associated with her style of dress and position—perceived as a tough, strong Asian "dragon lady" standing in a marginalized position within a group of American women—what occupies her mind at this moment becomes an interesting question. Whatever answer different viewers may come up with, this facial expression adds a trace of cunningness to her "deviant" strong woman image.

This Asian image confirms one aspect of the traditional "dragon lady" stereotype as portrayed in early movies and plays. Asian women have been portrayed in the entertainment media as manipulative, power-thirsty, strong women who approach the White male-dominated American society with evil purposes through their power, plots, and exotic feminine charm, such as Fu Manchu's many "dragon lady" mistresses. However, such movies have also communicated a common theme and "lesson": Asians could never come to real power or subvert the power differential in U.S. society. In this DKNY® advertisement, a similar Asian female image is indicated. The Asian model is constructed as a deviant strong woman whose pariah femininity is subordinated and marginalized by the hegemonic femininity of American female models. This representation indicates how gender hegemony operates, and naturalizes the gender order through the subordination of pariah femininities to hegemonic femininity. Meanwhile, as all versions of femininities are constructed to legitimize male dominance, the Asian model is further objectified to the male gaze. Her pariah femininity

perpetuates the power inequality that legitimizes male dominance over the Asian female as the "feminine other" (Schippers, 2007). Furthermore, the Asian female's racial origin adds to her marginalization. She is portrayed as exotic and different and a misfit within the group. The "Oriental" discourse is reinterpreted, and the power differential between the White-dominated world and the faraway Asia is indicated through the marginalization of the Asian female and the subordination of the Asian femininity. In this advertisement, the Asian model's pariah femininity intersects with her Asian origin, through which gender hegemony, power inequality, and legitimized domination and subordination are implied.

Another advertisement, displayed in Figure 4-4 (an advertisement from the MaxMara® collections), features a White female walking along as an Asian female follows her. Figure 4-4 is similar to Figure 4-3 in terms of how the Asian female is constructed. In this photo, the Asian model is also dressed as a strong woman, which stands in sharp contrast with the American model. The White model follows the typical Western beauty style in every aspect and her feminine beauty is self-explanatory. She wears a tight fitting, V-neck, long-sleeved, black cocktail dress, a pair of black leather gloves, and a pair of lace-up, below-ankle, black leather pump booties. She holds a yellowish brown flap-closure clutch in her left hand. The briefcase-styled clutch indicates her professionalism without losing her feminine appeal. Meanwhile, the Asian female is portrayed through "deviant" qualities—namely, hard, strong, and authoritative. She wears a classic Italian style greyish black woolen jacket, a pair of formal looking, Italian stretch pants, and a pair of black picado leather pumps. Over the jacket, similar to the Asian model in Figure 4-3, the model wears a huge and heavy yellowish tweed trench

coat. The coat is not buttoned, but completely open and almost covers the White model. The coat in this situation seems like a shield that the Asian model uses to protect the White woman. This photo, therefore, depicts a scene of a fast-walking White woman in the superior position and a "deviant" Asian woman following behind her, protecting her hegemonic femininity.

Similar to Figure 4-3, this Asian model's position adds to her dressing style. She also has her shoulder behind the White model, who seems to be intentionally keeping her back. Indeed, half of the Asian model's body is invisible. By placing the "deviant" strong Asian woman in the minor position and the orthodoxical, feminine White model in the major position, the subordination of pariah femininities to hegemonic femininity is reinforced. In addition, the Asian model has a similar facial expression to that of the Asian model in Figure 4-3. In this photo, the Asian model also wears heavy black eye shadow. The smoky eyes add an exotic feminine appeal and a sense of mysteriousness to the professionally dressed Asian model. Thus, the model is not only "protecting" the White woman's hegemonic femininity, but also demonstrating her distinct Asian femininity. Also similar to Figure 4-3, the Asian model is not facing the camera directly. The White model looks to the upper left with arrogance and confidence, while the Asian model peeks to the lower left as if watching out for someone or looking for something else. This cunningness adds to her style of dress and her deviant femininity. This advertisement again constructs the Asian woman's pariah femininity as marginalized and subordinated to the White woman's hegemonic femininity, through which gender hegemony and racial inequality are legitimated.

Figures 4-3 and 4-4 demonstrate a variation of the contemporary "dragon lady" image by emphasizing the "deviant" and strong woman qualities of the Asian female: strong, tough, cunning, manipulative, and authoritative. These qualities enacted by Asian women demonstrate their pariah femininity as subordinated and marginalized by the hegemonic femininity enacted by American women. The Asian pariah femininity is always portrayed to better safeguard the Western beauty ideal, to subordinate to the hegemonic femininity, and to express itself only in the minor position as the "feminine other." This representation of Asian femininity indicates the gender hegemony and power differential between hegemonic and multiple femininities. In addition, the Asian femininity perpetuates the gender order and male dominance, as well as objectifies Asian women through the male gaze. Meanwhile, the "deviant" strong woman characteristic does not diminish Asian women's unique feminine appeal. Although possessing such masculine qualities, Asian women are still feminine (only in a deviant manner), and their exotic and mysterious beauty type satisfies and continues the "Oriental fantasy." This type of image caters to White heterosexual males' desire for the "feminine other," and also legitimizes the Asian woman, culture, and territory as the forever "Other" in American society. Therefore, these two advertisements are typical exemplars of the "deviant" strong woman image of Asian women. Asian women are gendered and racialized through male dominance and gender hegemony, subordination of pariah femininities, the historical "Oriental" discourse, and power inequality.

Sexual Appeal

Another variation of the "dragon lady" image, different from the first type that features the strong woman image, portrays the sexual and sensual aspect of Asian women. For example, Figure 4-5 is an advertisement for Giuseppe Zanotti® shoes. It

features an Asian female model in a pair of 2008 black leather-strap sandals on wooden stiletto heels and a black dress.

In this advertisement, the model's dress and posture indicate typical sexual innuendo for fashion photography. The model is dressed in a black halter-bra dress. The fabric above the high waistline contains rayon that has a subtle shine, while the texture below the waist is made of grayish black satin that creates a smooth and polished shine in the soft and warm background lighting. The dress is very short and feels thin and delicate. It looks more like a piece of sexy lingerie, and the hem barely covers the model's hip. The model is posed in a seductive manner. She lies on her lower back and hip with two forearms supporting her upper body. Her thighs are raised straight upward, knees bent, and calves stretched at right angles. On her feet are black strap pump shoes that match her dress in color, material, and design. The thin ankle straps and stilettos create a perfect visual lengthening of her fine and slim legs, adding more tenderness and sensuality. The model wears sheer makeup, and her long black hair casually flows around her shoulders and back. Her face is turned toward the audience, and her eyes are looking into the camera as if searching for someone. Her lingerie-like dress, thin-heeled sandals, half-covered hip, and uncovered legs, along with her look and posture, all seem to suggest a silent invitation. The styling of the model seems to tell the story that the woman has just returned from a late-night party, almost washed and tired to change, and is about to get to bed in her cozy room. This image demonstrates the Asian model's sexual appeal and license—a "deviant" quality of "taking charge and not being compliant" (Schippers, 2007, p. 95). It also stimulates

viewers' sexual voyeurism to decipher the female body covered by the black dress and straps.

The photo also attempts to portray the "Asian-ness" of the model's sexual appeal. It features the model's legs as the signifier for sexual attraction. Despite her slim figure, the model is portrayed as sporty and sexy, alluding to many similar Asian female images in movies such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), in which the Asian female characters possess excellent Kung Fu skills, utmost mobility, and sexual license. Furthermore, the photo designs the background as a huge flowing red flag. Red as a signifier for the exotic Asia—particularly China—has long been adopted by many media genres. This advertising continues this "tradition" and employs the overwhelming red as the background setting to reinforce the model's Asian origin. The flowing flag also adds a sense of motion to the model's fine legs. Therefore, the photo suggests that the Asian model as many "dragon lady" images evident in movies, possesses good mobility, a perfect body, and a sexual appeal that satisfies White males' gaze.

Compared with the strong woman type of image that constructs Asian women's pariah femininity through their desire for power and authority, this type of image constructs the Asian pariah femininity through the Asian woman's desire for sensual pleasure and sexual license. This focus of the pariah femininity renders the Asian female to the subordinated position to male dominance. In addition, the desire for sexual license, non-compliance, and mobility makes Asian women "deviant" and marginalized in the gender hierarchy. In this advertisement, the Asian woman is gendered and sexualized through the objectification of her body, which caters to heterosexual White males' visual pleasure and ensures male dominance and hegemony

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over the subordinated and marginalized Asian femininity. Meanwhile, the Asian woman is racialized through the objectification of the cultural background (such as the flowing red flag) that adds to her "Otherness" and alien beauty style. The emphasis on her Asian origin, along with her dress and posture, alludes to the "Oriental fantasy" for the Asian "dragon lady" who possesses the "deviant" sexual license and ability, thereby creating an imagined sexual possibility in line with the power relations between the heterosexual White male and Asian female. Therefore, this type of image emphasizing the sexual appeal of the "dragon lady" is a gendered and racialized representation, as is the strong woman image. It signifies a reinterpretation of the Oriental discourse through Asian women's sexual availability, which legitimizes and encourages dominance and conquest by the heterosexual White male. This representation of the Asian pariah femininity is a central feature of gender hegemony, and indicates the historical power inequality embedded in American society since colonialism in Asia.

Figure 4-5, as well as Figures 4-3 and 4-4, demonstrates two variations of the "dragon lady" image in advertising. Figures 4-3 and 4-4 focus on the strong woman aspect of Asian women and construct the "deviant" Asian femininity through such qualities as strong, tough, manipulative, and authoritative. Figure 4-5 focuses on the sexual appeal and availability of Asian women and constructs the Asian femininity through their "deviant" desire for sensuality and sexual license. Both variations represent Asian women in a gendered and racialized manner. The two variations legitimize and ensure gender hegemony and male dominance, perpetuate the "feminine other," and indicate that the "Oriental" discourse embedded in American colonialism still has implications for power, dominance, and inequality in contemporary U.S. society.

Category 3: Combination of "Lotus Blossom" and "Dragon Lady"

In addition to the retained "lotus blossom" image and two variations of the "dragon lady" image in contemporary fashion advertising representations in *Vogue,* the findings also indicate a trend to integrate the two contradicting stereotypes as one. A few advertisements have grafted the typical fashion style of the "dragon lady" image onto the typical "lotus blossom" face of the Asian model. These advertisements create a more sophisticated image as characteristics of the Asian women in such advertisements are not uni-dimensional. They portray the Asian women as possessing both strength and delicacy; the Asian women have their own willpower, but are nonetheless easy to control. The combination of the "lotus blossom" and the "dragon lady" features some of the most outstanding qualities of both stereotypes, and attempts to reconcile them in a visual harmony. The Asian women are dressed in the "deviant" way to appear strong and tough, yet retain an innocent and delicate look in the face. This type of image can be observed in Figures 4-6 and 4-7.

Figure 4-6 is an advertisement for Ralph Lauren® collections. It features a young Asian girl standing in front of a horse and dressed in a style typical of Midwestern American cowboys. The model wears a huge, heavy alpaca wool trench coat with yellow and brown patchwork. Inside the coat is a plain grayish black denim vest, loosely tied by a thin gold metallic chain. Under the vest is a ruffled linen sweater. The brownish red rosette collar is turned over from the upper end of the vest. The model wears a pair of yellowish brown motocross pants and the photo to the left indicates the boots she wears: a pair of dark brown, polished suede, short plaid boots. Looking at the clothing alone, the photo portrays the figure as a typical Midwestern shepherd, and the outfit is especially suitable for long hours spent riding in the rock-covered, windy, dusty desert.

Similar to Figures 4-3 and 4-4, the advertisement employs "deviant" qualities to construct the Asian female as hard and strong. However, her femininity is made less deviant by how she looks in the face.

Her face stands in sharp contrast to her dressing style. Her hair is in a typical bob style with a neat and thick fringe covering her eyebrows. The shadow of the fringe reflects on her face and creates a dark zone around the eyes. She is looking straight forward, far into the distance, as if longing for something but not able to identify the target. Her eyes are full of puzzle and desire, and seem to be making a silent inquiry or longing for a solution from someone. She wears nude makeup, and her facial skin looks tender and delicate, which is incongruent with how she is dressed. Half of her head is "shielded" by the huge blizzard collar of her coat, a subtle invitation for protection. Her entire face is sending the message that she is an innocent, vulnerable, and delicate young girl who is in desperate need of direction and protection.

This photo combines the "dragon lady" and "lotus blossom" images as one and features the Asian female as tough and hard in appearance, but in fact needing protection and easy to control. The photo constructs the unique "Asian femininity" that is different from any pariah femininities in the literature. On the one hand, many of the strong woman qualities are preserved and reflected in the dressing style of the Asian female model. On the other hand, this Asian femininity is made not as deviant as the pariah femininities suggested in the literature. The Asian female is portrayed as delicate and truly feminine in the face. Unlike the pariah femininities enacted in Figure 3 and 4 that construct women as deviant and stigmatized due to their desire for authority, violence, or licentiousness, this model's Asian femininity constructs the woman as no

longer stigmatized, but desirable and conquerable through the "lotus blossom" look. By adding softness, desirability, and true femininity to the deviant "dragon lady" image, this combined Asian femininity legitimizes male ascendancy in gender hegemony, ensures and encourages male dominance over Asian females, and perpetuates the power relation between the subordinated female and the dominant male. Meanwhile, this image to a large degree reflects an idealized version of the long existing "fantasy" for Oriental women. While Asian women's deviant qualities such as desire for power and mobility add an exotic flavor to mainstream Western society, their vulnerability and silent welcoming for White males call for conquest, rescue, and protection. The "lotus blossom" and "dragon lady" images—albeit standing in contrast—are integrated into one single figure, and the "mismatch" of the face and the dressing style creates a good visual shock to trigger viewers' curiosity and desire. This combined image not only perpetuates power inequality, but also encourages it. It serves White heterosexual males' desire for the exotic Asian woman, who is dressed in a deviant style yet is easily available and controllable. The type of representation indicates a contemporary re-articulation of the historical discourse of Orientalism. The gender hegemony, White male dominance, and power differential between the West and Asia are not only legitimized, but also encouraged by this combination.

A similar image is observed in Figure 4-7, which is an advertisement for DKNY® collections. This photo features five female models: three in the front and two at the back—one Asian and one White. The design of the Asian model in this photo bears some similarities to the model in Figure 4-6. On the one hand, she is also dressed as a "deviant" strong woman. She wears a brownish black shawl-collar tuxedo jacket, a pair

of grey plaid cargo pants, a pair of brown lace-up leather booties, and a brownish red vintage crossbody leather bag with top zipper closure. Compared with the other models in this photo, who wear watches, bracelets, or brooches as decorations, she is the only one that has no accessory other than the simple bag. Furthermore, her bag is the simplest style among the five. While other models' bags have flap closures, the classic "D" logo, and shining zippers, her plain brown bag has no adornment at all that could add a feminine touch. In a word, the advertisement constructs the Asian female model through simplicity, strength, and authority. Her outfit, like that in Figure 4-3 and 4-4, indicates the pariah femininity of a strong Asian "dragon lady."

However, like Figure 4-6, the pariah femininity is made less "deviant" by the Asian model's face and posture. The model does not have the typical strong woman look on her face, but rather looks weak and innocent. Like the model in Figure 6, this model wears nude makeup that emphasizes her tender and delicate skin. She is gazing to the far left as if searching for someone and looks lost and puzzled. A similar puzzlement and innocence are evident in her eyes. Her eyebrows are somewhat frowning, and her eyes are looking into the remote distance with uncertainty, confusion, and some remaining hope. She wears a traditional ponytail; half of the hair in the ponytail casually droops down along her body to her elbow, which adds a trace of softness. Her slim figure seems much too delicate to handle the strong woman outfit. Her left leg is slightly bent and is kept back by the leg of the White model next to her. She stands at the very back of the team and has the dark corridor as the background, which makes her figure the least visible. Therefore, through the model's face and position, the advertisement tries to portray her as soft, weak, vulnerable, and marginal, which is incongruent with

her dressing style. The advertisement constructs her unique Asian femininity, which is not as "deviant" as the pariah femininity constructed in Figures 4-3 and 4-4, but is still a racialized gender role as subordinated to the hegemonic femininity demonstrated by White models.

Based on Figures 4-6 and 4-7, this particular type of Asian female image features a seemingly incompatible combination. The Asian female is portrayed as dressed in the typical "dragon lady" manner—strong, hard, and authoritative—while having the typical "lotus blossom" face—delicate, docile, and needing protection. This incongruence creates a special visual effect and constructs a unique "Asian femininity" that attracts males' gaze. This portrayal reinforces the two stereotypical images with multiple emphases. On the one hand, the Asian women retain their hard and strong "dragon lady" flavor and exotic beauty style. On the other hand, they are still delicate and vulnerable, puzzled and uncertain about their life and future, and in urgent need of rescue and protection. This type of image brings out a special Asian femininity, different from any pariah femininities in the literature. Asian women are constructed as both possessing some of the strong woman qualities, and less deviant and more desirable through their submission to and welcoming of male dominance. The Asian femininity not only legitimizes but also encourages White male dominance and gender hegemony. Meanwhile, it reflects the historical "Oriental fantasy" and implies an idealized Asian female image—strong women with exotic feminine beauty who are nonetheless easy to conquer and control. The Oriental discourse is reinterpreted in this type of image, and the power differential is perpetuated. The Asian femininity indicates how gender

intersects with the Asian race, which provides more culturally specific meanings to the intersection.

Category 4: The "Asian Look"

Three categories of contemporary Asian female images in fashion advertising have been discussed thus far—the retained "lotus blossom" image, two variations of the "dragon lady" image, and the combined image of the two stereotypes. All three categories construct Asian women through the dressing style, posture, overall body styling, and background setting to demonstrate the gendered and racialized Asian femininity. On the contrary, a fourth category focuses exclusively on the facial traits of the Asian female.

Figure 4-8 is an advertisement for L'Oreal®'s Feria hair color. It features three women of different ethnicities and hair colors. Whereas the two women on the left are following the typical Western beauty style, the model to the right is an Asian female who looks different in many aspects from the other two. Unlike in the advertisements for DKNY® and MaxMara® collections, the Asian model in this photo is placed closest to the focus and faces the camera directly. (As empirically observed, in L'Oreal®'s hair color advertisements, the position of models depends on the product being featured. In this photo, the Asian model is placed closest because the advertisement features the dark black shade of hair color. In another advertisement in *Vogue* with the same three models, the White model is placed closest instead to feature the light blond shade.) In this photo, the emphasis on the three models' facial close-ups, rather than positions of their bodies, makes the Asian female different from the beauty types that the other two models demonstrate.

The White model to the left is placed farthest from the focus, but compared with the other two, her image enjoys the most integrity. Her hair, face, necklace, and her pink dress are all clearly visible. In fact, her pink outfit to a large degree compensates for her position at the edge and adds brightness and visual pleasure to the entire photo. The model next to her has shimmering reddish brown hair that covers some of her neck. Her outfit is also visible; her red jacket matches her hair in visual harmony. In contrast, the Asian model's dark black hair flows over and almost completely covers her neck. Furthermore, her body below the hair flow is so blurred that it is very difficult to tell what exactly she is wearing. The navy blue may suggest a sweater or a jacket. However, as her outfit is half covered by the hair, the model's body seems to be deemphasized. Moreover, her hair flows in such a way that it completely covers her neck, like a huge black frame that encircles her face, disconnecting it from her body. This disconnection stands in contrast with the White models' integrity. In this way, the flowing hair makes the Asian model's face the key of her image, thus drawing viewers' attention to the model's facial traits.

As discussed in the literature, when advertisements feature close-ups of models' faces, Asian faces always bear some unique traits that indicate their race. The model in this photo is no exception. Like the Asian models in Figures 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4, this Asian female also wears heavy black eye shadow in the same shade of her hair. The eye shadow is applied in a way that tries to emphasize the eyes' length and the outside corners—a typical and stereotypical eye makeup used to portray the "dragon lady" image in the entertainment media. In addition to the eyes, this photo places more emphasis on her cheeks. The blush is applied in such a way that highlights her high

cheekbones, and the lighting is focused to make her cheekbones the most prominent feature of the face. The model holds a gentle and subtle smile that is different from the other two models, and her entire face indicates silence, uniqueness, and mysteriousness. Although her body is blurred by her hair, her face alone is fairly sufficient to categorize her as a typical Asian woman and hold her accountable for stereotypes. Her dark black eyes and hair, the eye shadow, the protruding cheekbones, and the modest smile reinforce the familiar "Asian look." There is no need to prove her characteristics further through dress or body styling. The facial close-up tells everything, and the eyes and cheeks become hallmarks to identify the Asian origin. Compared to Figures 4-3 and 4-4, which construct the Asian models through overall body styling that has stories to tell, this photo focuses on the typical and stereotypical Asian facial traits alone that imply Asian women's exoticness and mysteriousness.

Unlike the other three categories, this photo features the "Asian look" through emphasized facial traits exclusively. This type of image reinforces the typical and stereotypical Asian look and focuses on the exoticness and "Otherness" of the Asian women. This type of image can also be seen in the previously mentioned *Vogue* photo, which is depicted in Figure 4-9, for an article entitled "Asia Major." The photo features a group of eight Asian models in a reinterpretation of a Cecil Beaton portrait from 1948. The models are all dressed and styled in a similar manner and are all wearing heavy makeup that tries to unify their looks. Their makeup emphasizes those typical "Asian" facial traits that they have in common and covers individual differences. As a result, it becomes very difficult to distinguish these models from one another. The eight Asian women look very much alike, and the spread constructs them as such to label them as

"Asian women" altogether. Figure 4-10 is a close-up of two of the models' faces. This photo offers a detailed look of the models' makeup and their facial traits. The two models are styled identically and are posed as mirror images. They wear similar hairstyles, similar earrings, and makeup that emphasize their eyes, cheeks and lips in the same manner. Thus, it becomes difficult for American viewers to tell one from the other. This close-up further reinforces the typical "Asian look" as a label for all Asian women.

Figures 4-9 and 4-10 are similar to Figure 4-8 in that they emphasize the uniform Asian look exclusively. Figures 4-8, 4-9, and 4-10 thus represent a fourth category of Asian female images—the exotic and mysterious women with typical Asian facial traits as their unique appeal. Asian women are racialized through their uniform looks and the commonality in facial features. Their individual traits are deemphasized to portray them as looking alike, which caters to the gaze of viewers for their ease of categorization as a whole. The "Asian look" signifies a different version of femininity from the faraway "Orient." "Fantasy" for this alien appeal and desire for Asian women originated from remoteness of the territory, exoticism of the culture, and mysteriousness of the people. Thus, the uniform facial traits become hallmarks for Asian women's origin that labels them as the forever "Other" in U.S. society. In addition, this is also a gendered image of Asian women. The photos portray the Asian femininity as ready for demystification, dominance and conquest. The Asian models' black hair and eyes, accentuated eye makeup, and the subtle and suggestive smile all invite viewers to decipher their beauty which is so different from the White beauty ideals. In this sense, this look has good voyeuristic potential which depicts Asian women as an imagined possibility for the White

male, who wants to learn more about them, demystify them, and hold this Asian look in control. In this way, Asian women are gendered and racialized in this type of representation, which subjugates Asian women's facial traits and mysterious beauty style to male dominance, and meanwhile reinforces the stereotype that "Asians all look alike." This uniform "Asian look" constructs Asian women for the ease of viewers' categorization, renders Asian women to the subordinated position under male dominance, labels them as the "feminine other" in U.S. society, and suggests the power inequality between the United States and the faraway Asia.

Category 5: The "American Look"

The four categories of representations discussed thus far marginalize Asian women in a gendered and racialized manner. However, the findings also indicate a fifth category in which the portrayals of Asian women show little difference from American female models. When represented with a group of American models, these Asian female models no longer relate to viewers through any "Asian" appeal. Instead, they mix well into the team and appear fully assimilated and "Americanized."

Figures 4-11 and 4-12 are both advertisements for GAP® collections. Both feature a group of models of varying ethnicities, and each includes one Asian female model within the team. In Figure 4-11, the Asian model is second from the left and dressed in a visual symmetry with the model second from the right. The Asian model's figure obtains good focus in this photo and every element of her dress is fully visible in the team. There is no special emphasis on her face, body, or dressing style. Neither is there any focus on her Asian origin. The model is constructed no differently from the American models. Her makeup, facial expression, posture, and dress all comply with the Western beauty style, and no trace of "Asian-ness" can be identified. The photo portrays the

Asian model as young, energetic, sociable, and completely "Americanized." The photo

indicates the effort of the Asian model to assimilate into American society and

demonstrates the "successful" result. The model coming from a minority origin is

represented as successfully assimilated by the mainstream American ideology. The

dominant ideology is made natural and commonsensical with which the Asian model

willingly comply.

The same is true with the Asian model in Figure 4-12, which is also an

advertisement for GAP® collections that features a large group of female models of

diverse ethnicities. The Asian model is placed just right of center, and is dressed in a

similar fashion to the other models. Like the model in Figure 4-11, this model also

shows no difference from other models regarding makeup, dress, or styling. This photo,

as in Figure 4-11, constructs the Asian model as someone from the younger generation

of Americans who is the same as her peers in all aspects.

This type of image is completely different from the previously discussed

categories. This image seems to have broken away from the two dominant stereotypes

and no longer emphasizes the "Asian-ness" of Asian models. Instead, this image

represents Asian women as young, energetic, sociable, and casual. All these

characteristics fit well in the young American generation. The young Asian women are

portrayed as having assimilated well in this social group and getting along with their

American peers. These two advertisements demonstrate the power of the all-

encompassing American culture, commonly known as the "melting pot." The Asian

females in this scenario are deemphasized of their "Asian-ness" to be represented as

completely assimilated and "Americanized." In fact, this category of image suggests a

new trend of advertising Asian women by emphasizing their efforts of assimilation into American society. Different from the other four categories that represent Asian women as the "feminine other," this type portrays them as "willingly" subjecting themselves to the dominant ideology. This image clearly indicates the hegemonic effect of America ideology on minority races.

Table 4-1. Number of Qualifying Advertisements in *Vogue*, 2008-2010

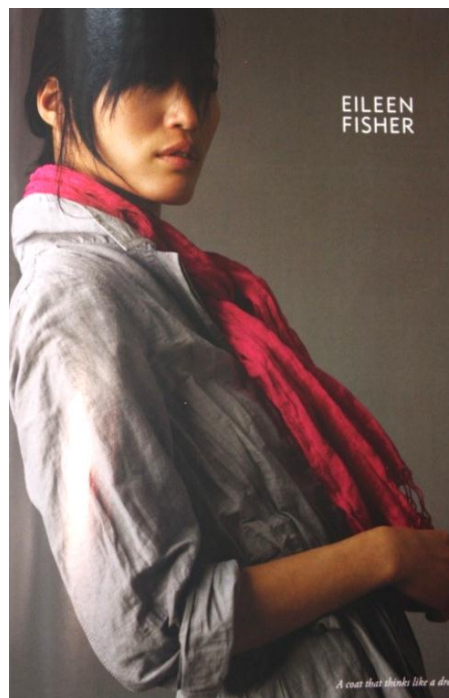| Year		2010		2009		2008
	JAN	0	JAN	0	JAN	1
	FEB	0	FEB	1	FEB	1
	MAR	1	MAR	6	MAR	1
	APR	2	APR	0	APR	1
	MAY	0	MAY	0	MAY	1
Month & Num.	JUN	0	JUN	0	JUN	0
	JUL	2	JUL	0	JUL	0
	AUG	0	AUG	0	AUG	2
	SEP	3	SEP	5	SEP	7
	OCT	1	OCT	1	OCT	2
	NOV	0	NOV	0	NOV	1
	DEC	2	DEC	0	DEC	0
Total: 41		11		13		17

Figure 4-1. Eileen Fisher® collections, in *Vogue*, March, 2010
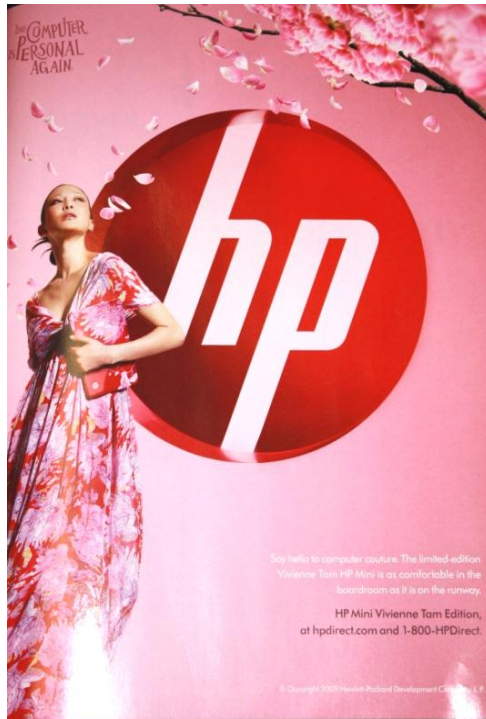
Figure 4-2. 2009 HP® Mini Vivienne Tam edition, in *Vogue*, March, 2009

Figure 4-3. DKNY® collections, in *Vogue*, October, 2009

Figure 4-4. MaxMara® collections, in *Vogue*, October, 2008

Figure 4-5. Giuseppe Zanotti® shoes, in *Vogue*, January, 2008

Figure 4-6. Ralph Lauren® collections, in *Vogue*, September, 2009

Figure 4-7. DKNY® collections, in *Vogue*, September, 2010

Figure 4-8. L'Oreal® Feria hair color, in *Vogue*, September, October, November, 2008

Figure 4-9. Theme photo for "Asia Major," in *Vogue*, December, 2010

Figure 4-10. Complementary photo for "Asia Major," in *Vogue*, December, 2010

Figure 4-11. GAP® collections, in *Vogue*, March, 2009

Figure 4-12. GAP® collections, in *Vogue*, March, 2009

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The findings indicate five types of contemporary Asian female images in *Vogue* advertising. It is evident that the two historical and stereotypical images of Asian women still influence contemporary fashion advertising. The first four categories of the current findings demonstrate close connections with the two iconic images in many ways, thereby speaking such questions as 1) why Asian women were represented in such stereotypical ways in media, 2) why such images were repeatedly replicated, 3) whose interest the images serve, 4) how such images take effect in advertising in particular, 5) and what impact such images have on Asian women, the Asian community, and mainstream society.

As discussed in the literature review of ideology and consciousness, the Marxist (and neo-Marxist) understanding of ideology—despite disagreements in various philosophical aspects among branches of Marxism—underlies a set of ideas proposed by the dominant class to all members of the society through coercion on the one hand and hegemony on the other hand. Such ideas function in the action of conformity and in the cognition of consent (Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1970; Hall, 1980; Marcuse, 1955; Marx, 1939). The dominant ideology reifies power differentials among classes, races, and gender differences inherent in a society and is constantly promoted for the mass population to internalize as "common sense." In classical Marxist terms, the mass media are a "means of production" whose ownership is held by the ruling class in capitalist society. Therefore, they are a powerful tool for disseminating the dominant ideology. According to Curran, Gurevitch, and Woollacott (1982), media institutions are "locked into the power structure, and consequently are acting largely in tandem with the

dominant institutions in society." As a result, the media reproduce the viewpoints of dominant institutions "not as one among a number of alternative perspectives, but as the central and 'obvious' or 'natural' perspective" (Curran et al., 1982, p. 21). In this way, the media promote the dominant ideology along with the mainstream values, beliefs, norms, and mores on a mass scale through various channels—news, entertainment, advertising, and more.

As such, Asian female representation in the media has been influenced and framed by the historical ideology and dual power differential between the dominating male and the subordinating female, the superior American society and the inferior Asia. Consequently, Asian women have been continuously constructed in a way that legitimizes the dominant ideology, perpetuates the power structure, and rearticulates the Oriental discourse embedded in American colonialism in Asia. The types of images observed in this study clearly demonstrate this phenomenon. The retained "lotus blossom" image, two variations of the "dragon lady" image, the combination of the two stereotypes, and the emphasized "Asian look" are all gendered and racialized portrayals that subject Asian women within the dominant ideology to a stereotypical perspective. These representations render Asian women to multiple marginalization and dual oppressions in mainstream society, through which White and male dominance is made natural and commonsensical.

Furthermore, Gramsci's (1970) theory of hegemony emphasized the "struggle" between the ruling class and the subordinated population. He argued that the dominant ideology naturalized as common sense "is not something rigid and immobile, but is

continually transforming itself" (as cited by Hall, 1982, p. 73). Meanwhile, Fiske (1992) illustrated Gramsci's theory of hegemony as

> consent must be constantly won and rewon, for people's material social experience constantly reminds them of the disadvantages of subordination and thus poses a threat to the dominant class.…Hegemony posits a constant contradiction between ideology and the social experience of the subordinated that makes this interface into an inevitable site of ideological struggle. (p. 291)

This illustration explains why the dominant ideology has been reproduced over and over again in the media. For example, stereotypical representations of Asian women in the entertainment media have been replicated through various genres since Asian women's first appearance in American movies. As the findings of Asian American media scholars have demonstrated, throughout the past century the iconic "lotus blossom" and "dragon lady" images have been transferred from Hollywood movies, to Broadway theatre, to many types of television dramas and programs, and to magazine and television advertising. Asian female images have taken on few changes and have been replicated and reinforced almost every time the media featured Asian women. The contemporary *Vogue* advertising representations in this study further indicate little subversive change of the dominant stereotypes. This repetition and reinforcement of Asian female images serve to perpetuate the power inequality embedded in the mainstream ideology and American Orientalism that legitimize male dominance and marginalize the forever "Other."

In particular, advertising representation has special implications about how ideology is operated in the post-industrial capitalist society based on mass production and consumption. Critical theorist Raymond Williams (1980) calls advertising "the official art of capitalist society." Advertising is both sponsored by and supportive of

capitalism by encouraging and demanding all manners of consumption. While promoting consumption, it also transmits ideological principles of the capitalist, patriarchal, and White-dominated society. Indeed, in today's global capitalist culture, advertising campaigns have sought to diversify their cultural repertoire by including models of more ethnic groups. As a result, the contemporary capitalist culture is based not only on the traditional visual consumption of objectified female bodies, as grounded in Freud's and Alcan's psychoanalysis of the male gaze; but also on bodies of the minorities—especially the gendered and racialized foreign female bodies, which Marcuse (1955) claimed to be the benign form of non-normative sexual outlet in civil society. This explains why Asian women have been constructed in a gendered and racialized manner in advertising. It legitimizes male dominance over female, and draws on resurrected themes of colonialism and American Orientalism in the contemporary globalized multicultural context of U.S. society. In this way, the structural foundations of today's capitalist culture still feed on the objectification and colonization of the female "Other." Kim and Chung (2005) further claimed that advertising corporations have used "the visual consumption of women's bodies—and bodies of women of color in particular—to re-package and obscure the exploitative labor machinery that produces them" (p. 72).

In addition to the issues of why and how the dominant ideology of the contemporary capitalist, patriarchal, multicultural American society is disseminated through the mass media and especially buttressed by advertising through gendered and racialized representation of women of color, an ethical issue emerges related to the impact of such stereotypical representations on subject consciousness, personal

identification, and social cognition. The Marxist and neo-Marxist theories previously reviewed (Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1970; Hall, 1980; Marx, 1939) indicate that the permeation of the dominant ideology through the mass media shapes people's consciousness and contributes to their subjectivity within a certain ideology. On the one hand, individuals are led to perceive themselves through the mainstream perspective and willingly subject themselves to the dominant ideology. On the other hand, they engage in constant struggle originating from the discrepancy between their own experience as the subordinated and the mainstream social practices. In addition, media "victims" may seek to break away from the historical and ideological stereotypes and become free, autonomous agents. This multi-faceted impact has profound significance for the current study's discussion of how the gendered and racialized representation of Asian women has been internalized through cultivation and socialization, how it affects the mental health of the "victims," and what social change can be expected.

Gerbner (1969) examined media's hegemonic effect by introducing the "cultivation theory" as a part of the "cultural indicators" research strategy. The research examined the most stable and recurrent images in media content (e.g., violence, race and ethnicity, gender, occupation) for dominant patterns, messages, values and lessons. Gerbner's theory illustrates the cultivation of collective conscious in relation to such media outlets as television. Exposure to television, over time, subtly "cultivates" viewers' perceptions of reality, where two effects are noticeable: "mainstreaming," which refers to the convergence and commonality of outlooks among heavy viewers cultivated by television, and "resonance," which occurs when what is seen on television is similar to real-life experiences so that a "double dose" of the message is created that enhances

cultivation (Gerbner et al., 1980). Although contested, media scholars have argued that cultivation theory has wide application to a variety of media genres and explains media's impact on the audience. The mass population adopts the mainstream worldview through cultivation and socialization, accepting and naturalizing the mainstream understanding; while identifying themselves as fitting within mainstream society.

Such an impact is evident in how Asian women—as "victims" of media stereotypical representation—have been influenced by the mainstream representation. Many gendered and racialized stereotypes have actually been accepted and internalized by Asian women. They may identify themselves as fitting certain images, or may use certain stereotypes to judge their peers in the Asian community. The cultivation and hegemony of minds are further expanded to larger scales through Asian women's socialization. As Noelle-Neumann's (1974) theory of "spiral of silence" indicates, individuals' perception of where public opinion lies is enormously influenced by the media. Predictions about public opinion become fact as mass media's coverage of the majority opinion becomes the status quo, making the minority less likely to speak out. As a result, the minority population—out of fear for reprisal or isolation—is less likely to voice their opinions. On the other hand, the theory suggests that the silence may be overcome by the "vocal minority," who are highly educated or affluent and do not fear isolation. They are likely to speak out regardless of public opinion, thereby becoming a necessary factor of change. The theories of cultivation and spiral of silence demonstrate the enormous impact of the media on the audience and have implications for this study in examining how Asian women, as "victims" of stereotypical media representation, are

cultivated to accept the stereotypes. The theories also suggest a way "out" for Asian women to speak out as active change agents.

In terms of how Asian women have been mentally influenced by gendered and racialized media portrayals, Mok's (1998) study is dedicated to examining the impact of media stereotyping on Asian American's perception of themselves, their peers, and White Americans. Through an examination of media portrayals of Asian women and men as well as interviews with Asian American people, Mok found that many Asian Americans "almost overwhelmingly accept some form of stereotypes about Asian men and Asian women" (p. 196). This mental influence takes on three facets. First, stereotypical representation impacts Asian people's self-perception and identification. Many Asian women, accepting the mono-racial standard of beauty, report that they constantly engage in "a poignant, often agonizing struggle for identity" and painfully acknowledge that they could never look like "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" or "Barbie" (p. 196). Alternatively, they often have a sense of frustration that they have no representation of themselves on screen. Asian women are either presented as "lotus blossoms" and "dragon ladies," or are made to feel that they do not fit in elsewhere. Second, media representation impacts Asian people's perception of their peers in the Asian community. Many Asian Americans recognize that "it is often hard to have relationships with other Asian Americans because of the stereotypes held by one another" (p. 197). For example, Asian women influenced by media portrayals of the feminized Asian men, relate their belief of Asian men being less socially skilled or "fun" compared to White men, which leads them to choose the latter as dating partners. Third, media representation also impacts Asian Americans' view of White Americans.

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Asians' friendship with White Americans is no easier due to the stereotypes. Mok's study has mental health implications for both Asian people and mental health professionals. Media stereotyping with gendered and racialized representations plays an important role in the identity formation of Asian Americans, and suggests that mental health professionals should sensitize themselves and assist media "victims" with their confidence, identify, and self-perception.

Despite the media's hegemonic effects, there is nonetheless hope for "victims" to speak out as change agents, as indicated in the spiral of silence. Parmar's (1987) study is significant in calling for Asian women's agency in breaking through the stereotypical image in contemporary society. Parmar acknowledges that the commonsensical ideas about Asian female sexuality and femininity are based within and determined by a naturalized and perpetuated racist patriarchal ideology. Thus, she offers guidance and directions for Asian women to re-identify themselves away from the commonly depicted racialized gender roles. Asian women have to place themselves in the role of subject and creatively engage in constructing their images based both on material and social conditions as well as on their visions and imaginations. They need to reconstitute their image in the media and rescue themselves (and their history) from the colonial interpretation, which has continued to dehumanize and belittle them. Only in this way can they recast themselves as active agents in the making of history. In order to be depicted authentically, Asian women must holistically weave the "strands and threads of past and present experiences and future hopes into a tapestry whose hues and patterns will reflect their complexities and contradictions" (p. 104). Parmar's study offers real-world directions for Asian women, bringing academic research out of the "ivory tower"

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and into society. Her suggestions provide great implications for Asian women's well-being in the United States.

The impact of gendered and racialized media representation on audience and society and the historical power inequality embedded in American ideology and Orientalism indicate a need to improve media literacy and cultural awareness in contemporary American society, which is supported by the capitalist culture and global consumption. Media literacy education provides people with a powerful tool to critically analyze media messages and is especially dedicated to negative dimensions of mass media and popular culture, including such issues as gender and racial stereotypes. Therefore, the gendered and racialized Asian female images prevalent in media since early in the previous century and discovered in this study have implications for media literacy educators and media practitioners seeking to promote a critical view of power inequity, oppressions on women of color, and minority cultures in the contemporary trend of globalization.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Research Summary

As Asian women in mainstream U.S. society have suffered oppressions from multiple dimensions, Asian women in U.S. media have been represented in a gendered and racialized manner. Two iconic Asian female images—namely, "lotus blossom" and "dragon lady"—have dominated the entertainment media since the 1920s and have been transferred to contemporary advertising. For example, print advertisements in fashion magazines, have been influenced by the two dominant images and constructed Asian women in a stereotypical manner. This study examined fashion advertisements in *Vogue* from 2008 to 2010 and has generated five categories of Asian female images.

The "lotus blossom" image has been retained in contemporary fashion advertising. It features the Asian woman as delicate, docile, and vulnerable with a unique Asian femininity. Some advertisements further reinforce this image by placing the Asian female model in the Asian cultural setting to emphasize her alien origin. This type of image is both gendered and racialized as it ensures the gender hegemony and encourages White male dominance over subordinated Asian femininity. Meanwhile, it portrays Asian women in a way that satisfies the long-existing "Oriental fantasy" and constructs Asian women as the "feminine other." By objectifying the Asian model along with the Asian culture, representing both as feminine, delicate, and conquerable, this type of image reifies the inequitable power relations between the United States and the feminized and faraway Asia.

The "dragon lady" image has been deconstructed into two variations. One of them focuses on the "strong woman" aspect of the deviant Asian femininity. This type of

image constructs Asian women through such deviant qualities as strong, hard, manipulative, and authoritative. This image also emphasizes Asian women's exotic look and makeup to create a sense of mysteriousness that adds to their alien-ness. Asian women in this category are always placed in a marginal position among American models who demonstrate hegemonic femininity. As such, Asian women, representing the gendered and racialized pariah femininity, are constructed as deviant and inferior, subordinated in the gender hierarchy and subordinated to hegemonic femininity and male dominance. The other variation features the sexual appeal of Asian women. This type of image also depicts Asian women through female deviant qualities such as sensual, seductive, and desiring sexual license and mobility. This construction of the Asian pariah femininity objectifies Asian women to the male gaze and dominance, and racializes Asian women through the emphasis on their unique Asian appeal that alludes to the "Oriental fantasy," in which Asian women (and the territory) are easily available for conquest, dominance, and exploitation by the heterosexual White male.

A third category is the combination of the "lotus blossom" and "dragon lady" images. This type of image integrates some outstanding qualities of both images and represents Asian women as strong and hard in the dressing style on the one hand, while weak and delicate in the face on the other. The Asian pariah femininity is made less "deviant" and more desirable by the feminine "lotus blossom" face. Asian women are gendered and racialized by depicting them as "strong women" who are still easy to control, feminine yet possessing an exotic beauty appeal. This image indicates an idealized "Oriental fantasy" that objectifies Asian women as the "feminine other" to the White male's gaze, legitimizes and encourages male dominance and female

subordination, and implies the historical power differential embedded in American ideology and Orientalism.

The fourth category, unlike the other three that represent overall body styling, features the "Asian look" by emphasizing Asian women's facial traits exclusively. This type of image features Asian women as exotic, mysterious, and all looking alike. Asian women are gendered through their feminine, mysterious look that satisfies male viewers' voyeurism and invites them to conquer and dominate the possessor of the face. They are also racialized through the emphasis on their uniform alien look, which creates a hallmark for Asian femininity for the ease of American viewers' recognition and categorization. This type of image constructs Asian women as the "feminine other" under multiple marginalization and subordination in the White and male-dominated U.S. society.

Finally, the fifth category has little to do with the two historical images. This type of image features Asian women as young, energetic, casual, and completely assimilated and "Americanized" into the younger generation of Americans. This category represents Asian women as no different from their American peers and indicates their effort to assimilate, by subjecting themselves to the dominant ideology. This image reflects the "melting pot" feature of American culture and the hegemonic effect of mainstream ideology.

These five categories to a great degree represent contemporary Asian female images in fashion advertising. The findings indicate that the dominant two stereotypes from the early entertainment media have cast considerable influence on contemporary fashion advertising. The five categories of representations reflect on how gender and

race intersect to construct the Asian femininity, and have profound implications for dominance and hegemony, power and inequality, culture and society. Contemporary advertising with Asian female images in fashion magazines such as *Vogue* has re-inscribed the gender and race hierarchies already present in the White male-dominated U.S. society. However, alternative portrayals also exist. These portrayals reflect new ideological trends in advertising the American cultural artifacts that promote the assimilation of Asian women. Stereotypical media representation has enormous impact on Asian women's consciousness and subjectivity, identity formation and self-perception, and mainstream cognition. This study also calls for Asian women to break away from gendered and racialized images as active change agents.

Limitations

The current study faces a few limitations. Theoretically speaking, the potential of intersectionality to account for Asian gender and race has not been fully tapped. The inner diversity and heterogeneity of the "Asian race" have always been overlooked. An intersectional study seems only workable when we take "Asian" as a homogenous and uniform race; however, in reality, it encompasses more than 30 ethnicities with distinct cultures and languages. Intersectionality originating from Western theoretical development inevitably takes "Asian" as one race at all that intersects with gender or class. Thus far, no research has sought to apply intersectionality into the specificity of a certain Asian ethnicity. In this paper, Asian is still perceived as being homogenous since distinguishing among 30 ethnicities is not feasible and makes little difference in understanding the commonality of gender-race intersectionality in media stereotyping of all Asian women in the United States. Nonetheless, future research is expected to include ethnographic work on how a specific Asian ethnicity predominantly reads and

understandings media contents and how this specific ethnicity intersects with gender (and class).

In terms of methodology, this study is a qualitative content analysis of images. A challenge exists in capturing the real meaning and essence of images (Altheide, 1986, p. 56), and drawing appropriate implications from what is visible and what is latent. Since the analysis is based on my personal interpretations, there is also challenge to fully comprehend the images regarding what they are meant to convey. In addition, the current study is based on advertisements in a single publication spanning three years. Future research should engage in a more holistic ethnographic content analysis that could help delineate patterns of advertising construction of Asian females (Altheide, 1996, p. 13). Meanwhile, the current subject can also be reexamined through a quantitative content analysis of a larger sample size over a longer timeframe.

In terms of the media content under study, this study focused on magazine advertising only. Television advertising and Internet advertising—another two highly influential channels of advertising—are not taken under examination. The few studies on television advertising referred to in the literature review were of quantitative focus; the literature is still lacking regarding how to conduct qualitative analysis on television advertising with a gender and race focus. In addition, the Internet as an emerging new media may add a lot to traditional advertising channels, making it well worth investigating in future. Future research should investigate more of the two channels of advertising, including content analysis, semiotic analysis, case study, or discourse analysis.

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Xueying Bai was born in Shenyang, China. She graduated from Shenyang NO. 2 Middle School in 2005 and attended college in Dalian University of Foreign Languages. She majored in Translation and Interpreting in the School of English Studies. She was enrolled to the Montclair State University, NY as an exchange student in 2007. She majored in Tourism and Hospitality during the program and interned as Operations at Walt Disney World, FL. She achieved her Bachelor of Arts degree in English Studies in 2009. She attended the University of Florida for master's degree in the fall of 2009, majoring in International Communications in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. She received her Master of Arts degree in Mass Communication in 2011.