

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

全球化趨勢下跨國文化產品融合之研究：電影再現體系符號  
分析

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# 行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫成果報告

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中文摘要

## 中英文摘要與關鍵詞 (keywords):

中文摘要：

關鍵詞：全球化、文化產業、影片研究、融合的文化產品

全球與地方的連結是媒介全球化現象中重要的一環，在影片產製方面這個現象格外受到矚目，也經常被視為文化霸權的進一步宰制。然而要確實瞭解它的影響，則我們必需要先認識這種連結究竟造就了什麼樣的影片。過去研究(Wang, 2001)發現，台灣賣座前五名的外片都有相當一致的跨文化特色；觀眾無需要太多的文化資本(cultural capital)便可欣賞、理解，然而其中顯現的價值觀卻頗符合學者描述的美國文化價值。這項發現令我們懷疑跨國產品在全球化過程當中是否確實已經逐漸淡化原先生產地的文化色彩？全球化所帶來的，確實不再是美國或任何一國的產品，而是徹底融合的成果嗎？

Pieterse(199)提醒我們，融合的條件(terms 與 conditions)可能決定融合的方式與方向。為推陳出新，好萊塢近年開始投資以其他族裔故事為背景的影片，因對象不同而產生的內涵的轉化，其與全球市場上成功與不成功的好萊塢影片特色的異同，都值得對照其在全球化脈絡下的意義，細細推敲。

本研究主要的目的，在瞭解原本以一個特定族群為對象的文化產品，在轉化成為一個以全球市場為目標的影片之後，展現何種特色與文化內涵？這種文化內涵與全球市場上最成功、與不成功的外片相比，有何不同？其對文化產業全球化論述的意涵又為何？研究方法將以焦點座談與文本分析為主。研究結果不但可以幫助我們瞭解產業全球化下文化產品的內涵，同時研究成果將為文化產業全球化、甚至文化本質提供重要的訊息。

## 英文摘要

Keywords: globalization, cultural industry, film study, hybridized cultural products

The global-local nexus as shown in the global film industries has been one of the most notable developments, and perhaps also one of the most thoroughly researched areas, in the study of global communication. Yet to answer the nagging question of the impact of this linkage on global cultural development, closer attention has to be paid to the product of such linkages. Earlier study (Wang, 2001) has found shared cross-cultural characteristics of Taiwan box office's top-five Hollywood films--characteristics that do not require much cultural capital to appreciate; however the values that were endorsed in them were quite typical of what researchers had described as American. These findings led us to suspect if globalization has brought about genuinely hybridized cultural products—products that no longer bear the marks of any particular culture?

Pieterse (1995) reminded us that the terms and conditions of hybridization could determine its outcome. In recent years Hollywood has presented global audiences with films based on ethnic folk stories or novels. In which ways the cultural content of these films differ from their original story and how different they are from other Hollywood blockbusters provide important information on the nature of cultural production in this age of the global-local nexus.

The major purpose of this study is to understand the cultural characteristics of films that were based on ethnic folklore or novels, and how different these characteristics are from the original story on which they were based, and the characteristics of other Hollywood films that were successful on the global market. Theoretical implications of the findings will also be explored. Focus group and text analysis will be the primary research method used in this study. The findings will not only help us understand the cultural characteristics of popular films in this era of global-local nexus, it will provide us with important information to further investigate their impact on the audience, even the nature of culture.

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前言  
研究目的  
文獻探討  
研究方法  
結果與討論（結論與建議）

（請見所附會議論文）

# *Titanic* and the Globalness of Hollywood Films

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## Abstract

Hollywood films have often been regarded as the embodiment of American cultural imperialism and the representation of cultural globalization. However as the industry transnationalizes there was the suspicion that Hollywood films were no longer “American” (Wasser, 1995, Hill, et al., 1994, Miller, 2000).

In an attempt to explore “universal formula” in Hollywood films, Wang (2001) found a set of underlying values and themes to be dominating Hollywood blockbusters, and they remained closely in line with what was seen as “American” (Swingewood, 1998). Yet the audiences may not identify these values as American. Phillips (2001), in a survey of global audience’s perception of Disney films, found varying degree of agreement to the question “Is Disney uniquely American”.

In this study ethnographic focus group method was used to unveil the cultural horizons of *Titanic* reception and generate in-depth analyses of cultural values. *Titanic* was chosen for analyses as it not only topped the all-time global box office but the income it managed to generate on the non-American market also doubled that of the second on the list (<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/world/>).

Sessions of focus group discussion of Taiwan college students found that *Titanic* has allowed ample room for localizing, even individualizing the story. Respondents pointed out that heroic efforts to save the beloved, and the audacity to dream the impossible as demonstrated in *Titanic* pertained to American values and yet, audience could also identify some of the aforementioned elements in their own cultures. However, local films seldom showcase these values in such a spectacular fashion. It was the material base of the American cultural production that helped to represent and realize the American dream.

The research help us understand how audiences looked at cultural values underlying a global film product such as *Titanic*, a finding that has profound implications on our discussion of global media and global culture.

## ***Titanic* and the Globalness of Hollywood Films**

*Titanic*, a product of Paramount Pictures and Twentieth Century Fox, has probably broken more records than any other single film in the history of filmmaking. But for those who are concerned of the American domination of global cultural market, no others matter more than it being the film with the highest global box office income ever. The 2004 All Time Box Office record showed that *Titanic* has brought in \$1835 million (1) since its release in 1997, of which \$1234.2 million came from outside of US. This indicates that as much as 67.3 percent of the revenue was generated from the international market--way above the 50 percent average of Hollywood films over the past decade. In fact *Titanic* not only kept its record in the past seven years, it is leading the runner-up, *Lord: The Return of the King* (released 2003) by a staggering margin of \$482 million in terms of international popularity. Within days of showing, the film was breaking records in theater houses around the world. Even Chairman Jiang Ze-ming of China—a nation that has fought American imperialism for decades—openly recommended the film to his comrades of the Politburo. If no cultural industry is as global as Hollywood, then no film is as global as *Titanic*; it highlights the reality of cultural globalization, as well as the American domination of global cultural marketplace.

One question begs for answer given the above statistics: what is in *Titanic* that made it possible to cross national, cultural, ethnic, religious, gender and age boundaries and reach as many audiences as it did? In its attempt to capture a global audience, has it at the same time sacrificed its unique cultural attributes as an American product, as critics had suspected is happening to most of Hollywood blockbusters today? If so, the claims that Hollywood films Americanize and homogenize global culture will need to be re-examined; also in urgent need of reconceptualization would be the impact of transnational cultural products on global culture.

The major purpose of this study is to respond to the above questions through the eyes of Taiwan viewers and understand how the localized interpretations towards films and American cultural values re-write the cultural imperialism thesis.

### **Hollywood: From American to Global**

Throughout its history, Hollywood has been closely identified with things American. Despite criticism that Hollywood has situated itself to the left of American political mainstream, Hollywood films were often seen as the advocate of American lifestyle (Miller, 2000), and more frequently perhaps, that of American policies and values.



This is best illustrated in historic films of various wars—from *Bridge on the River Kwai*, *The Longest Day*, to *Airforce One* where enemies of different times were invariably portrayed as ruthless, cunning, and evil. In some cases, the impact was so real that viewers and governments were unwilling to treat Hollywood films as pure entertainment. In a statement issued by P'yongyang's Korean Central Broadcasting Station on December 19, 2002, before the showing of the *James Bond* series *Die Another Day* was released in South Korea, the action thriller was seen "...as a product of the United States' policy of belittling the Korean nation and its hostile policy toward the DPRK." Despite calls from the movie's distributor and producer to "separate fact from fiction," angry South Koreans across the nation went ahead with their protests in front of the 145 theaters screening the film.

This is not the first, nor the last incidence where foreign viewers have taken issue with the American Government for what was shown in Hollywood films. In as early as 1937, the depiction of a drunken Spanish Civil Guard in *The Devil is a Woman* had prompted the Spanish government to demand an apology from the State Department, not the offending company, Paramount (Shindler, 1979, p. 1). As Klein claimed (2003), "In the eyes of the world, Hollywood is America." It is through Hollywood films that they learned the American Way—for good or for bad. The Indian and cowboy genre described basic ideals of American manhood (Smith, 2003, p. 4), films on political leaders, e.g., the *Independence Day*, *The Man* and *Deep Impact* help shape the popular image of American presidents (Rollins and O'Connor, 2003), even Disney cartoons served as an indication of American prejudices and imperialist values (Wasko, 2001).

This Americanness in Hollywood films, however, did not seem to have undercut its popularity on the international market. In fact Hollywood has since the very early days of its existence been established as an effective international business enterprise. In the realm of cultural production, there is perhaps nothing else that comes closer to being a "global" industry than Hollywood; as John Ford (Miller, 2000:15) described, "Hollywood is a place you cannot geographically define;" its presence is "felt everywhere" (Scott, 2004). It was estimated that worldwide, audiences were 100 times more likely to see a Hollywood film than a European film. Box office records showed that over half of the top ten films in 16 of the 17 cities surveyed in Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America were of American origin. In Canada and Australia, American films accounted for around 90 percent of the films on the top ten list (Olson, 1999). According to *Screen Digest*, Korea was the only country where the market share of national films managed to grow under the *Titanic* spell.

Furthermore, this market growth has continued to gather momentum, rather than leveling off. In 1986, total sales of American export of filmed entertainment was \$1071 million; in 2001, the figure rose to \$9304 million (current), an increase of nearly nine times in 15 years (Scott, 2004). Today the proliferation of satellite television channels and video rental shops has not intimidated local television program production, but has, on the contrary, brought about regional television in Latin America, the Greater China area and the Arab world (Wang, G., Ku, L.L., and Liu, C.C., 2000). Yet Hollywood's record stands unchallenged.

While Hollywood films continued to shine on the global market, significant changes have quietly taken place to the industry, as well as its products, as it began to globalize in the late 1980s. Increasingly international financing through pre-sale of distribution rights (Wasser, 1995), run-away production and growing share of the overseas box office revenues (Miller, 2000: 145-6, Aksoy and Robins, 1992; Storper, 1989) are drawing Hollywood filmmaking further away from talents and resources at home. As strategic investments, joint ventures, distribution agreements and the international division of cultural labor became common practices for the industry-- both as impetus and result of globalization, more and more mixing and hybridization were seen in almost all aspects of cultural production. The development led to concerns about the loss of cultural heritage and that Hollywood no longer addressed its nominal audiences (Miller, 2000): if a cultural product were a product of its culture, would its distinct cultural characteristics fade when it is globalized? As Wasser questioned, is Hollywood still America?

Today critics see Hollywood's death as a place and new life as a global institution (Foroohar, 2002, p. 51), and this change is best reflected in the characteristics that we now see in most blockbusters.

### **Universal Formula**

The American film industry has undergone several major changes since the early twentieth century, however after surveying how-to manuals, industry news, film critiques, and films themselves, Thompson found little difference between films from the "Classical" and those from the "New" Hollywood era. The principles for American moving-picture-making, according to Thompson (1999, p. 8-21), have remained to be: a chain of causes and effects that is easily comprehensible to the spectator; unity and clarity that demand that everything be motivated; and deadlines to provide forward impetus and temporal clarity while ensuring audiences' undivided attention.

What Thompson has found on the style of story-telling added an important dimension to our understanding of the appeal of Hollywood films to a global audience. Sepstrup (1990, p.85), in analyzing popular US television programs such as Dallas and The X-files, noted a “fiction programming strategy that is built on a cross-culturally common denominator with a much broader cultural approach,” something that Downumt (1993, p. 21) described as “universal programming.” Similarly, for a film to be globally successful it needs to come from a “universal” situation, following a “universal” formula. Wasko, for example, noted that action films have especially been profitable in international markets, thus the formula: “make it simple, and keep it moving (Wasko, 1994, p. 236).”

While “universal formula” may not entail too much emphasis on things American, the “Americanness” of Hollywood films may be further diluted as a result of the studio business practices. It is no secret that idea “borrowing,” imitation, and format re-adaptation has always been part of the cultural production strategies. Hollywood producers, as leaders of the business, have never ceased to “incorporate the exotic in its text” (Shome and Hegde, 2002: 184). Baz Luhrmann, director of *Moulin Rouge*, openly admitted that the idea of having high comedy and high tragedy breaking into song came from Indian films from Bombay. Chinese martial arts, on the other hand, have since long ago become part of movie-making in the Western world. If the ‘Hollywood’ label is the only element that remains American, one may quickly point out that four of its six majors are part of a non-American conglomerate (Wang, 2001). As Grainge (2001: 3www) observed, “...the effects of globalization are to weaken the cultural coherence of all individual nation-states, including the economically powerful ones the “imperialist powers” of a previous era

In an attempt to explore the issue of “universal formula” in Hollywood blockbusters, Wang (2001) found a set of underlying themes and values to be dominating. Contrary to classical epics such as *Gone with the Wind*, a greater majority of globally popular films today seem to bear an “acultural” outlook. They tell a story that is set in a fantasy world; a world that defies identification either in time or in space. The most notable examples include the mega series: Spielberg’s *Jurassic Park*, Lucas’ *Star Wars*, and more recent production such as *Harry Potter* and *Fellowship of the Ring*. Enabled by cutting-edge digital technologies, they led their viewers into a forbidden land ruled by dinosaurs, witches and elms, or extraterrestrial creatures. If the appeal to fantasies alone is insufficient manifestation of globalness, the importance of ethnicity and social cultural heritage is further undermined as crises dominate the stories, appealing to the most fundamental need of all things living—survival. Great dangers drive the need for heroes who as go-getters, had

their heart set on resolving the crisis and save the innocent. Stories typically reach their climax near the end of the 120-minute show time when crises are resolved, justice won, and peace restored.

In appearance Hollywood blockbusters have left little room for “Americanness”--or any cultural features, for that matter, yet values and attitudes can find their way into least suspicious story structures. Thompson, in her analysis of storytelling in Hollywood films, noted the importance of motives---everything was driven by the motives of leading characters. Wang (2001) has also discovered that overall, agents dictated the development of stories in the films she studied. These films tended to celebrate the triumph of individual will, and place a heavy emphasis on individual freedom and autonomy, equality, self-confidence and persistence, a sense of accomplishment and mistrust of the system.

Titanic in most aspects coincides with the type of blockbusters described above. With financing from two major Hollywood studios, screenplay, directing, and acting by a team of primarily American filmmakers and actors/actresses, the film has a visible North American and European outlook. Although it is perhaps not the best example of *global* production, the unprecedented amount of investment--\$200 million, has made it almost impossible not to rely on the global market for profit.

The film has won wide acclaim for the visual experience it was able to create by using extensive computer special effects and very expensive production facilities--including a 775-foot exterior set, a 17 million-gallon pool to sink it in, and 5 million gallons of water to flood it with (Sterritt, 1997). The love story that used the mishap as a backdrop, in contrast, received much less attention; it may have helped to balance realism with romanticism, but the plot was described as a “pure, simple, non-complicated melodrama” that beats the forbidden love theme--the “most juvenile romantic tale of 1997”, a film critic wrote  
(<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/titanic-1082487/reviews.php>).

Despite the above, the film does carry many elements found in other Hollywood blockbusters. The fantastic visual effect brought to life the lovers’ narrow escape from the sinking cruise ship, providing tension and suspense at a scale that was matched by few action thrillers. The emphases on faith and courage to fight against class restrictions and pursuit for individual freedom and autonomy, and faith in love, and ultimately, willingness to sacrifice for it

([http://www.titanicmovie.com/present/mi\\_prodnote\\_1.html](http://www.titanicmovie.com/present/mi_prodnote_1.html)) are also familiar themes in blockbusters. For a film that had to, and did gloriously, succeed on the global market, can we say that it is no longer American? The answer, in a great part, lies in the audiences, especially international audiences.

### **Focus Group**

Taiwan may not be the largest of global markets, yet its market share of Hollywood films is nonetheless significant: ranked fourth in the Asia and Pacific region in 2001 (Scott, 2004, p. 54). In this study ethnographic focus group method was used to unveil the cultural horizons of *Titanic* reception and generate in-depth analyses of cultural values.

The participants of three focus groups watched the complete film *Titanic* in the classroom arranged by research assistants beforehand, and then the discussions were held. The focus group discussions were held in Chengchi University and Chungcheng University. Recruited participating students ranged from freshman to third year graduate student in different areas of study.

Participants talked about their prior individual *Titanic*-viewing experience and how they -- then mostly junior high school student -- felt obligated to go to theater and watch it the first time and then accompanied their peers to theater the second time, the third time, and even more. Back then, it became a cult in terms of watching the film, talking about the film, listening to the soundtrack and all other self-engaging behaviors surrounding the film *Titanic*. One participant shared the thought she had when she watched it the third time, 'I even rehearse my emotional reaction as I watch it; I tell myself, "I shall cry as the next episode comes up." I am simply too familiar with all the episodes and the story-line.'

### **Perceived characteristics of Hollywood films**

Several participants talked about *Titanic* being the typical American film – being formulaic. There are certain ingredients to the formula – romantic love, catastrophe, sex, patriotism, heroic deeds, and also the imposition of American values onto other countries.

*A certain percentage of romantic love plus certain percentage of action and confrontation, this would constitute a typical Hollywood film. (M2)*

Hollywood is considered as the business of dream-making. Heroism is also the must in Hollywood formula, but there is a degree of difference. One participant compared *Titanic* with *Pearl Harbor* and considered the latter far more Hollywood than *Titanic*; '*Pearl Harbor* plays up heroism to the extreme.' Heroic as the characters may appear to be, the characters are one-dimensional and the stories, dramatic as they can be, lack layers in terms of the complexity of the characters and the plots; 'episodes are powerful but characters are weak.' (JC)

In terms of the drama, it is believed that American films tend to simplify the confrontation between classes, genders, cultures and find the not-so-convincing way-out for the dramatic problem highlighted in the film. One participant pointed out that Russians are always set up as typical bad guys in the film as in the *Titanic*. At the beginning part of the *Titanic*, Jack is gambling with Russians who tried to take away everything Jack has.

One participant showed hesitation in attributing the recurring characteristics to formula,

*I guess hundreds of films are made in Hollywood each year and the ones that become the hit of box office are few among them. Formulaic? I didn't see enough Hollywood films to say that for sure. (F2)*

While others mentioned films such as *Pearl Harbor* and *Jurassic Park* as examples, the participant questioned if the so-called Hollywood films are really so homogeneous and a formula can be generated by deconstructing the notion of Hollywood.

Instead of focusing on the theme and the story, some participants felt that the characteristics of American films do not lie in the contents or the themes, but rather their production mode and effects. Some participants stressed that the abundance of funding American production is able to gather is impressive. By so doing, American filmmakers are able to present heroic images as they want. In terms of effects, American films are dramatic; spectacular visual effects are their characteristic. They also regarded Hollywood as the technique of promotion and the fashion of agenda-setting. People around the world may like to tell the same story but only those who are able to bring the story to you will gather the attention it needs.

Most of the participants considered American films the same as Hollywood films;

participants used these two terms interchangeably. One participant gave his definition, “American” means a specific spirit while “Hollywood” means a formula.’ (JK) This echoes the aforementioned answer to the question of what Hollywood really means. The formula Hollywood represents is not only present in the text, it is also present in the fashion of film packaging and distribution.

### **American, or Global?**

Even though most of the participants are familiar with the film, they have mixed feelings towards the film now, several years after its premiere in Taiwan. Asked what was seen as American in the film, several participants mentioned the captain of the cruise ship *Titanic* as the representation of American spirits,

*The captain is like the hero who went to frontier in early American history and showed the tenacity all the way through; he stayed with the ship till it's gone. (JM4)*

The idea of exploration is seen as deeply rooted in American spirits. Also, Jack, the major character in the film, is seen to represent Americanness,

*Risk-taking, audacious, and gambler-like. (JY)*

Individualism, liberty-seeking, love beyond class difference, to name just a few more characteristics of American culture highlighted by the participants.

However, one participant thought that *Titanic* is not that American when it comes to the treatment of the issue class in the film; most of the typical American films are blind to the class issue, unlike *Titanic*. In *Titanic*, the contrast between people of different social classes is highlighted all the way through, and the liberation from the oppression of class can be seen in the love between Jack and Rose and also what Rose has accomplished near the end.

Participants are not consistent in indicating distinctive American cultural essence; some are uncomfortable in dwelling upon this concept, ‘the so-called “American” may be a myth.’ (JV)

Most participants agreed upon that Americans filmmakers are good at capturing universal values and through a series of try and error, packaging the values in

spectacular visual experiences. Americans are good story-tellers, especially in a fancy fashion.

However, some participants refuted the idea of pure American spirits, they thought the filmmaker captured the deep-down dream of people in the world and represented the global fantasy in *Titanic*,

*They are not just American, they are global. They live up to people's dreams, common imaginations. (JR)*

The participant JQ said it's hard to detect the level of Americanness in *Titanic*, the Hollywood film,

*But it'll be a lot easier if we're talking about Pearl Harbor or Die Another Day (James Bond series). There are a lot of talks on the issue – whether the perspectives presented in the films are American perspective or global one. When the film is about history, like Pearl Harbor, the interpretation of the history tells the perspective of the narration.(JQ)*

Some felt that it is extremely difficult to tell American(izing) from global(izing); American films distributed globally are Hollywood films, it seems to participants that there's no need to differentiate the two categories. Others challenged the dichotomy of globalness and Americanness,

*Being heroic is desirable, it is just natural for us to dream about becoming hero. It's universal, it's not unique to Americans. The differences lie at whether you're able to make it (in films) or not. So ultimately the problem boils down to the money, the resource, etc. (CH)*

Some participants insisted that American films are global innate -- since American films aim at global market at the very beginning, American films would definitely embody the essence understood by people worldwide; French films or films made in Taiwan would not put themselves in the same position as most American films do. By saying that, participants claimed that American films are not just for Americans; they are global in their blood.



Several values were named by participants when they were asked to distinguish the universal and the culture-specific in the film. *Fraternity* for one, is universal; participants identified the part that people help each other out when caught in a disaster situation. As some participants cited the same characters and plots as the evidence of Americanness, some participants looked at the same part and found universal values in it -- the *sense of responsibility* as shown by the captain and the men playing instruments when the cruise ship is sinking. They stayed on their job until they were swollen by waves. It's work ethics. And it is not just American, it's universal. However, interestingly one participant emphasized that Japanese are even more committed in this regard (or attitudes towards life and work), and it is highly visible in Japanese films and comic strips.

Another element of universality is that people try hard to survive all ordeals. But when the ship sank, scenes describing passengers 'getting ready' for death impressed many participants. As shown in the film, a mother was telling bedside stories to her child to comfort him, and an elderly couple lying in bed, holding hands. *'I really, really felt for this, it's so genuine.'* (JE) Love surpasses all hardships, even death. The film hailed not only romantic love of the young, but also lasting affection between the elderly couple; it is worthy of special adoration. It is also the attitudes that one carries when facing death, the gracefulness, and the dignity that participants pointed out when talking about universal values.

Besides romantic love and love surpassing all the barriers, the portrayal of certain characters, e.g., snobbishness of the noble represented by Ross' mother, successfully reminded audience the contrast between good and evil, passion and cruelty, etc. Though not many, some participants did mention the juxtaposition and contrast between different values as the universal understanding when looking into daily lives.

Some participants chose to look at the package of the film and found the universal dimension,

*'Westernization' itself is a globalizing movement. It is extremely difficult to tell Americanizing from globalizing. As other popular American movies, this one has all the needed ingredients to make the hit. The principle of becoming popular worldwide is universal itself. (X)*

## **Conclusion**

Sessions of focus group discussion of Taiwan college students have found little conclusive evidence to show that *Titanic* was global in its fullest sense. Most were able to find in it some evidence of Americanness--but also that of “unAmericanness” and globalness—in the way they understood these concepts. Others found American filmmakers to be best in producing global products, and questioned the need to make the distinction.

Conceptually globalization and Americanization are distinctly different (Beck, Sznajder, and Winter, 2003), yet from a viewer perspective, things cultural cannot be clear-cut. Tocqueville (1945; Olson, 1999; Beck, Sznajder, and Winter, 2003) and Parsons (Swingewood, 1998) found equality and individualism, including individual freedom and autonomy, self-confidence, and persistence, sense of accomplishment, and mistrust of the system typical of American values. By no coincidence, they were also found to be the values underlying most Hollywood blockbusters (Wang, 2001). Following this conclusion, Hollywood blockbusters might have changed their “packaging”—viewers nowadays see fewer Indians and cowboys nor historic epics such as *Gone with the Wind*, yet they remain the embodiment of American cultural values seated in universal situation.

However, few could deny that the same set of values also exist in other cultures, at varying degree of significance and importance, thus making the task of cultural labeling all the more difficult. It is not surprising to find that the percentage of respondents who saw Disney as “uniquely American” ranged from 84 to 6.7 in a 19-nation survey (Phillips, 2001, p. 44).

As Terry Ramsaye pointed out over half a century ago, “[t]he American motion picture born to serve a vast polyglottic patronage was born international in its own home market (1947, p. 8; Miller, 2001, p. 45). American filmmakers were best in producing films for the global market because America itself is culturally heterogeneous (Beck, Sznajder, and Winter, 2003, p. 261, Miller, 2001, p. 45). Globalization served to enhance what was already in place.

Another explanation for the international viewers’ rejection of the dichotomy between American culture and global culture could be the fluidity of the conceptualization of culture,

*Culture is an assemblage of imaginings and meanings that may be consonant, disjunctive, overlapping, contentious, continuous or discontinuous. These assemblages may operate through a wide variety of*

*human social groupings and social practices. In contemporary culture these experiences of imagining and meaning-making are intensified through the proliferation of mass media images and information. (Lewis, 2002)*

Mass media have brought previously distant human cultural formations into greater proximity, and therefore redrawn the boundaries of cultural subjectivities and experiences. The proliferating cultural discourses ‘stimulate ever-increasing possibilities for new meanings and new non-meanings or communication gaps.’ (p. 16) National significance fade away under the spell of globalization; the question being frequently asked is whether or not a local culture, distinct from American culture, can exist at all. It is hard to tell whether the conflation of American culture with global culture results from the Americans’ homogenization of all cultures, but obviously international viewers do see the operation of the cultural assemblages through specific social practices. These practices are American in terms of its political economy – other than cultural appeals, the driving force behind successful Hollywood films is mainly its mode of production and promotion, and the globalness -- the successful operation of the formula worldwide – is what viewers have seen in *Titanic*.

The conflation of American culture with global culture when asked to characterize the cultural orientation of *Titanic* could be also resulted from the ignorance of cultures other than American culture. For international viewers who have little exposure to cultural products other than American ones, it poses great difficulty for viewers to tell the differences between American culture and other cultures. Regarding the dealing with the issue of class and gender in the film, there are few viewers who considered the film to be non-traditional American films. Based on the disputed perceptions, obviously international viewers have quite different takes on the Americanness. It could be that Americanness is itself an idea of incongruity. To sum it up, viewers reach consensus in identifying Americanness, and globalness also, in the mode of production and promotion of the film, but when it comes to the values, the perceptions and identification of American cultures vary. International viewers’ meaning-making does not lead to agreement regarding the distinctive Americanness in *Titanic*.

## Notes

1. According to Hollinger (Hy Hollinger. “Box office wrap: International,”[http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr/international/feature\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id2006](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr/international/feature_display.jsp?vnu_content_id2006), The Hollywood Reporter.com, 2004), *Titanic* had grossed

2.051 billion with “secondary runs”.

2. From “Home Lone in Europe”, *Economist*, March 22, 1997, p. 72.

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## 計畫成果自評：

本研究為進行比較，以深究各地觀眾對於全球化趨勢下跨國文化產品的解讀策略與認同樣態，計畫進行過程中，主持人分在台、港與法國（當初計畫並未申請移地或多國合作，純為計畫主持人為研究比較計，自行舉辦發展）舉辦焦點團體座談，請參與者就好萊塢全球化文化產品電影鐵達尼號（*Titanic*）發表觀影經驗與想法，又請其就觀賞其各自當地文化的電影作品（如華人觀眾對於「臥虎藏龍」一片）發表想法，欲從中探知觀眾對全球化、美國化、全球在地化、本地文化的定義、解讀，以進一步推知以電影此一文化產業/產品為例，當全球產業霸主好萊塢以內容選角在地化、行銷推動全球化的方式推銷其產品時，觀眾的眼中，所謂的好萊塢、美國文化（產物）、在地文化究竟是什麼意思？觀眾如何解讀？政治經濟學理論對文化產業/產物的全球化歷程與解釋誠真，但是從閱聽眾的角度解讀釋義，這部分的分析研究始終不足，或以為全球化力量極大，沛然莫之能禦，研究閱聽人一途與一題又受對「解讀民主」、「多義民主」之譏。重要的是要論全球化趨勢下跨國文化產品融合、行銷之後的影響，就應該深究閱聽人的解讀與釋義。研究論文提供初步認識

電影產製行銷是美國化、全球化，這詞彙已經不只是針對內容，電影在觀眾的心中就是產業，電影人所欲營造的想像容有文化差別，但希冀由影像材質傳遞的效果無二致，而這種效果純然受到資本影響，在這一點上，全球化、好萊塢、美國產業與產物仍然有其不變的影響力。