

East Goes West - Chinese Filmmakers in the United States

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“Problems of Cultural Translation: A Discussion of Tsui Hark’s *Knock-off*”

This paper examines film as a cultural translation created by a bilingual dialogue within the self in the form of self-translation which does not necessarily entail the prior existence of an original which is to be translated. It is argued here that this translation can exist in the composition of an original in which the encounter of two different cultures is brought forth forming a bilingual existence metaphorically. This self can assert itself as an intertextual presence in this original. Focusing on the directorial endeavor of writing into the Hollywood discourse, the author argues that self-translation implemented in the filmic production of Tsui Hark, especially this Hollywood production, demonstrates a self-imposed misrule of discourse which sets off a process of self-effacement. This can be seen especially in the self-translated Hong Kong on screen in this film. Instead of speaking diachronically and differently, the self is trapped in a symptomatic filmic articulation in the process of cultural translation which can be taken as a struggle for a right to signify as defined by Homi Bhabha despite of its colonial nuances. This trap, which thwarts the assimilation of the films into a bigger discourse, however, can explain the somewhat lukewarm reception of Tsui Hark.