

East Goes West - Chinese Filmmakers in the United States

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“California Dreamin': King Hu's Revisionist West”

This paper considers legendary actor/screenwriter/choreographer/director/King Hu's contribution to transnational American studies. It does so via a consideration of a script for a film he did not live to make -- *The Battle Of Ono*. Building on a close reading of the script itself, King's personal writings and published essays, and interviews with those who had knowledge of the project, I will argue that King anticipated the work of “New Western Historians” by at least a decade in his revisionist view of the American West as a site of cultures in contact. I also hope to link *The Battle of Ono* with other aspects of King's legacy as a public historian, a social commentator, and a thoughtful critic of American culture. King's transnational career as well as his personal experience as an insider/outsider in many places, particularly in Hong Kong and Los Angeles, underpin his perspective on the American West. He was, to use Gloria Anzaldúa's terminology, a resident of “the borderlands” and his blended (mestizo) consciousness, evident at many points in his films and essays, was, I believe, particularly apparent in the final years of his life.