



Celebrity, ageing and Jackie Chan: middle-aged Asian in transnational action

Chris Holmlund

To cite this article: Chris Holmlund (2010) Celebrity, ageing and Jackie Chan: middle-aged Asian in transnational action, *Celebrity Studies*, 1:1, 96-112, DOI: [10.1080/19392390903519107](https://doi.org/10.1080/19392390903519107)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19392390903519107>



Published online: 17 Mar 2010.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1517



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 3 View citing articles [↗](#)

Celebrity, ageing and Jackie Chan: middle-aged Asian in transnational action

Chris Holmlund*

University of Tennessee, USA

Assessing ageing is one of the key tasks confronting celebrity and star studies today. If film could reflect upon its own relation to death only from the 1950s on, in films such as *Sunset boulevard* (1950) and *Whatever happened to Baby Jane* (1962), where ‘the aging process of the first generation of stars exposed a glamour worn thin on screen’, today ‘the allure of the star’ is most definitely ‘inseparable from his or her heroism and ruin’ (Celeste 2005, *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 33, pp. 32, 29). Today, moreover, middle age increasingly matters. With 78 million people in the US aged 44–62, internet and print marketing, movies, television and more tout rejuvenation through Botox, steroids, plastic surgery and wardrobe/cosmetic make-overs. Hollywood stars and celebrities point us towards a brave new world where mature adulthood is seen primarily in chronological, biological and medical terms. It is no coincidence that photographs of healthy, wealthy stars grace each issue of *AARP Magazine*. Trainers, nips, tucks, lighting, make-up and digital retouching all help. Nor is it coincidence that roughly half are men – most white; a goodly number black. What, however, of middle-aged, Asian, male celebrities? Global mega-star Jackie Chan offers the perfect opportunity to explore ageing, race and masculinity in transnational action. Drawing upon Gina Marchetti’s analysis of Chan’s ‘flexible masculinity’ in the *Rush hour* trilogy (2009), I study the nine films released theatrically post-2000 featuring the middle-aged star. In conclusion, I speculate upon what the future will bring, remembering that we are all ‘aged by culture.’ Screen Actors Guild (SAG) statistics chillingly indicate just how few roles are available to actors (if especially to actresses) of all races after 40. Asians in particular are marginalised. Might other models of ageing be possible? How do film stars and celebrities impact upon conceptions and experiences of ageing today in our increasingly ‘mediagenic’ culture? Jackie Chan serves here as ‘special case’ and as ‘test case’.

Keywords: Jackie Chan; ageing; middle age; action film; masculinity

The puzzle of ageing

Assessing ageing is one of the key tasks confronting celebrity studies today. As Reni Celeste (2005, pp. 32, 29) argues, only from the 1950s onwards could film reflect upon its own relation to death, in films like *Sunset boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950) and *Whatever happened to Baby Jane?* (Robert Aldrich, 1962), where ‘the aging process of the first generation of stars exposed a glamour worn thin on screen’. Today in consequence, at least in the West, ‘the allure of the star’ is ‘inseparable from his or her heroism and ruin’ (my emphasis).

Now, moreover, middle age, not just old age, is associated with ‘ruin’. As Margaret Gullette (1998, p. 12) says, “aging” has become a quintessentially *midlife* problem

*Email: cholmlun@utk.edu

[original emphasis]'. With 78 million people aged 44–62 in the United States, categories such as 'boomers', 'third agers' and 'empty nesters' pepper the headlines. To cite but two examples: at the end of 2003 an *AARP Magazine* article trumpeted '60 is the new 30!' (Sherrill 2003, online).¹ A year later, *Variety* promised that changes were afoot in Hollywood, too: 'Biz's new credo: gray matters' (Wolf 2004, p. 95).

How individual men and women age obviously varies. But:

in most cases aging is . . . experienced and regarded as deformation, disintegration, and fragmentation rather than, more neutrally, as transformation. As older bodies become less reliable, what is whole is increasingly felt to reside within the individual. As a result, psychoanalyst Charlotte Herfray (1988) posits an inverse mirror stage of old age: where Lacan argued that in childhood the mirror image proffers a narcissistic ideal ego as model for the forming ego, Herfray maintains that in old age the mirror represents a narcissistic affront to, even an attack on, the adult ego. (Holmlund 2002, p. 145)

Old people may attempt to disguise their ageing but such masquerades are doomed, in the final analysis, to failure. Does middle age function differently? Can we transform our middle-aged bodies into youthful ones, exteriorising 'identity', if you will?

According to Brenda Weber (2009), make-over television slogans such as 'I'm me now!' suggest a shift from interior to exterior is in the works. Advertising, films, television shows and internet sites constantly show us middle-aged bodies that have been successfully rejuvenated – thanks to Botox, steroids, plastic surgery and wardrobe/cosmetic make-overs. At the same time, however, they reveal how frequently failures and slippages haunt the make-overs of celebrities. Especially, perhaps, where middle-aged women are concerned, our culture is ambivalent about physical restoration of youth to middle age, seeing such refurbishing and freshening as both necessary and impossible (Wearing 2007, p. 278).

To date, more studies focus upon ageing women than ageing men; yet men as well as women are targeted by the multi-million-dollar plastic surgery and cosmetic industries. The 'double standard of aging' explored in relation to women by Wearing is thus eroding. Nowadays, moreover, we learn to fear ageing already as teenagers:

Adolescence has . . . come to be the *psychological* threshold of socialisation into midlife aging. This is currently the age when the young . . . absorb the cult of youth for the first time, pick up the technologies of youthfulness, learn how to notice 'aging' in others and be disgusted by it, and thus lay the groundwork for fearing decline and watching for it not much later on in their own life course. (Gullette 1998, p. 12)

My goal here is not to pit identity in old age versus identity in midlife, nor to pit ageing men against ageing women. I prefer to view ageing as psychologically complex and historically determined. Our obsessive preoccupation in the West with middle age is, after all, not new. As Sander Gilman (1999, pp. 301, 295) reminds us, the first facelift was performed in 1901, and the idea that the ageing body is unaesthetic, unerotic and pathological dates back at least to the Enlightenment.

But how do film stars and celebrities impact upon the conceptions and experiences of ageing today in our increasingly 'mediagenic' culture (Rojek 2001, p. 16)? Middle-aged Hollywood stars and celebrities point us towards a brave new world where mature adulthood is seen primarily in chronological, biological and medical terms. It is no coincidence that photographs of healthy, wealthy stars grace each issue of *AARP Magazine*. Nor is it coincidence that roughly half are men. Most are white (among them Anthony Hopkins,

Jack Nicholson, Tony Curtis, Paul Newman, Richard Gere, Kevin Costner, Martin Sheen, Paul McCartney), but a goodly number are black (Bill Cosby, Danny Glover, George Foreman, Colin Powell, Morgan Freeman, Sidney Poitier). All serve as social types and role models, cheerfully exhibiting a positive, powerful middle age. Many, of course, have had a nip or tuck or two. Virtually all rely on trainers, wardrobe enhancements and cosmetic touch-ups.

But what of middle-aged, *Asian* male stars? Now 55, turning 56 in April 2010, global mega-star Jackie Chan offers the perfect opportunity to explore ageing, race and masculinity. Because action is – like horror – one of the film and television genres most watched by teens and 20-somethings, it offers a key opportunity to reflect upon how the genre presents ageing to younger viewers. The MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) rates most of Jackie Chan's Hong Kong and transnational movies 'PG-13' rather than 'R'. This means that his martial arts comedies reach younger audiences, at least in theatres, than the average blow-'em-up, cuss-'em-out action film does.

Wo shi shei (Who am I?, Benny Chan and Jackie Chan, 1998) begins to question Chan's identity in action. Out-grossing *Titanic* in some Asian territories (Major 1996, p. 18), earning \$22 million world-wide, the film features the then 44-year-old Chan as a crack Hong Kong commando who (no surprise – it's Jackie Chan) confronts bodily injury and (this was new) suffers amnesia. Although his wounds heal and he gradually recovers his skills, not until the film's end does Chan/Whoami finally learn who he really 'is'. Never does his name consist of anything but the three words he utters when found by an African tribal chief in the Sahara: 'Who am I?'. A key sequence comes before the impressive final stunt in Rotterdam. Tired of being chased and tortured for reasons he knows not, Whoami runs to the top of a Johannesburg fort and, arms stretched upwards, body bent backwards, screams his assigned name to the skies in frustration as the camera swoops around him in companionate bewilderment.

I take Whoami's vertiginous confusion about his identity here as emblematic of what Craig Reid (1994, p. 23) signalled would prove Chan's biggest challenge, i.e. to 'manage the unavoidable effects of aging'.² At age 44, who *was* he really? Who *is* he now, at age 55? Who *will* he be at age 60 or 70? Is it merely coincidental that Chan made the amnesia movie he had dreamt of for years just as the idea of 'midlife memory loss as a profound decline . . . became a dangerous and unavoidable theme' (Gullette 2004, p. 136)?

Given our current obsessions with mid-life and ageing, I find the timing telling. Chan's identity and star 'allure' were in jeopardy by the early 2000s, just after he had successfully crossed over to transnational and Hollywood productions via the dubbed re-release of *Hung fan ao* (Stanley Tong, 1995) as *Rumble in the Bronx* (1996, \$33 million US box office) and the phenomenal world-wide popularity of *Rush hour* (Brett Ratner, 1998, \$244 million) and *Shanghai noon* (Tom Dey, 2000, \$100 million).

Since 2001, especially, Chan's ageing has become a key – and contested – part of his appeal as a 'conflicted, fragmented, hybrid figure' (Marchetti 2001, p. 153). This essay focuses squarely upon the middle-aged, 46–54-year-old, Jackie Chan, studying his performances in nine of the films he has made since 2000 with US and global theatrical release. With each film I note Chan's and his character's ages (if the latter are given), look at older and younger characters, assess the stunt and fight sequences and survey the out-takes. As a way into the parasocial grid that surrounds the ageing Jackie Chan, I also provide box office data as an initial (obviously partial) indicator of audience response and gloss critical reactions.

I organise my observations in three parts. The first, 'Success with sequels', centres upon the three films that did best at the box office: *Rush hour 2* (Brett Ratner, 2001), *Rush*

hour 3 (Brett Ratner, 2007) and *Shanghai knights* (David Dobkin, 2003). I investigate why these three in particular were so popular and examine to what extent success is linked to perceptions of Chan as unchanging or as ageing. A second section, entitled ‘Safety last’ in honor of Chan’s hero, Harold Lloyd, tackles Chan’s sole Hong Kong/Asian co-production with transnational theatrical release, *Dai miu mai shing* (*Accidental spy*, Teddy Chen, 2001). Here, I seek to determine whether a different model of celebrity ageing is operative in his Asian films.³ A third section, ‘Hanging on to Hollywood’, again studies three films, one a Hong Kong/Hollywood co-production, *The medallion* (Gordon Chan, 2003), the other two Hollywood productions, *The tuxedo* (Kevin Donovan, 2002) and *Around the world in 80 days* (Frank Coraci, 2004). (*Around* also had German funding.) Significantly, each relies heavily on computer-generated imagery (CGI) effects, something Chan’s earlier films never did. Only *The tuxedo* was a financial success, but thanks to global, not domestic, box office. The conclusion speculates about Chan’s future in film and returns to the overarching question of how mid-life and ageing masculinity are modelled, viewed and lived in relation to male action stars in general and Jackie Chan in particular.

As one of the biggest global action stars, Chan’s identity and appeal are complex. In many ways, his case is *special*. With the handover of Hong Kong to China more than a decade ago, the ‘wicked situation’ of being ‘integrated into the world of Chinese nation-state and submitted to the ideological universe of the hegemonic west simultaneously’ that confronted Chan and other Hong Kong inhabitants and ex-patriots may have been transcended through a kind of ‘double negation’ (Lo 2001, pp. 478–479).⁴ None the less, as Gina Marchetti (2009) notes, a ‘swarm of contradictions involving his race, ethnicity, and masculinity within the context of the postmodern, Hollywood-produced, global action feature’ continue to accompany Chan onscreen. To these, she concludes, now add his ageing.

As an action star known and loved for his daredevil stunts, however, Jackie Chan also serves as *test* case. How do, how will, we view older bodies and ageing stars? Far more than other action heroes, Chan’s ‘brand’ guarantees authenticity: it really is him doing all these incredible things. For Kwai-Cheung Lo (1996, p. 119), as a result, Chan’s 1980s and 1990s Hong Kong productions make ‘pure action itself . . . the very thing that calls for identification’. Famous for what Reid (1994, pp. 34–35) dubbed ‘perpetual motion technique’ – ‘the maintenance of continuous body motion throughout the entire fight sequence to give the impression of nonstop action’ – surely we reflect upon Chan’s ageing when CGI effects replace stunt work. Because his characters are rarely granted love interests,⁵ moreover, we cannot displace fear of male mid-life failure onto the dread and conquest of women, as happened with the decidedly R-rated *Basic instinct* (Holmlund 1994).

What will happen to ‘pure action’, ‘perpetual motion’ and ‘authenticity’ as ageing is involved? As Chan grows older will his ‘flexible citizenship’ (Marchetti 2001, 2009) be ever more strained and constrained? Or will we allow him to turn ageing into art? The answers vary for Asian and North American audiences because ‘global media celebrities’ like Chan ‘reflect the more complicated discursive connections between the global, the national, and the local that operate now’ (Turner 2004, p. 105). I hope, however, that using Jackie Chan as both special case and test case we will move towards differing ways of understanding ageing, finding role models where star ‘allure’ is not irrevocably linked with ‘disintegration’ or ‘ruin’ (Celeste 2005, p. 29).

Success with sequels

Rush hour 2, *Rush hour 3* and *Shanghai knights* all testify to Chan’s box office clout in the 2000s. Produced and released in the United States by New Line, *Rush hour 2* is his biggest

success to date, netting \$350 million world-wide. Budgeted at \$68 million, with a novel premiere on United Airlines eight days ahead of its theatrical release, the film became the 'biggest martial arts themed film hit in motion picture history' (Corcoran 2002, p. 117). Global box office statistics are not available for New Line's *Rush hour 3*, but it garnered \$140 million in the United States alone. Produced by Jackie Chan Films, Spyglass, Touchstone, Roger Birnbaum and two other companies, distributed in the United States by Buena Vista, *Shanghai knights* is Chan's fifth biggest money-maker, earning \$88 million in theatrical release, \$60 million of this in the United States.

As sequels, *Rush hour 2*, *Rush hour 3* and *Shanghai knights* are concerned to develop known characters, just as many of Chan's Hong Kong hits did.⁶ That his characters are ageing (Chan was 43 when *Rush hour* was shot; 46 in *Rush hour 2*; 53 in *Rush hour 3*; 45 in *Shanghai noon*, 48 in *Shanghai knights*) might therefore have been a salient part of the narratives. But unlike the *Dirty Harry* and *Alien* franchises' insistence on the effects ageing has on Harry and Ripley, Chan's movies merely show his characters in positions of greater responsibility. In the second *Rush hour* film Lee/Chan is a Chief Inspector. In the third he has become the private bodyguard of his friend, now Ambassador, Han (Tzi Ma). (Han was a Consul in the first film.) In *Shanghai knights* Chon Wang/Chan has become a sheriff. One might therefore argue that the three films suggest alternative imaginings of 'mature adulthood', eschewing chronology and biology in favour of seeing 'role transitions . . . [in] reference to family position and associated responsibilities and activities' (Shweder 1998, p. xi).

A buddy cop film set in Hong Kong, Los Angeles and Las Vegas, *Rush hour 2* addresses two diasporic populations thanks to what Marchetti (2001) calls the 'Asian black connection'. The film appeals to urban and ethnic audiences, young single men and families. Lee and Detective Carter (Chris Tucker) hunt down Triad gang lord Ricky Tan (John Lone) in Hong Kong, stumbling onto a counterfeiting scheme he and a crime boss (Alan King) have organised. *Rush hour 3* takes Lee and Carter from Los Angeles to Paris on the trail of a gang of assassins in league with a corrupt French diplomat (Max von Sydow). A buddy Western, *Shanghai knights* moves quickly from the Forbidden City where Chan's father is killed by an evil British aristocrat (Aidan Gillen), to Carson City where Chon Wang (Chan) is sheriff, to New York where Wang's partner Roy O'Bannon (Owen Wilson) lives. It then lingers in London as the two track down Chan's father's killer and foil a plot to overthrow the Chinese emperor and assassinate the British royal family.

Throughout *Rush hour 2* Jackie Chan looks younger because he is surrounded by older men such as Vegas tycoon Steven Reign (King), US Agent Sterling (Harris Yulin) and Hong Kong police captain Chin (Kenneth Tsang). That Lee/Chan romances and is romanced by a seductive double agent (Roselyn Sanchez) make him look younger and more virile as well.

In *Rush hour 3*, in contrast, Lee is designated as protector of the now 20-year-old Soo Yung (Zhang Jingchu).⁷ He also serves as older brother and protector for his villainous, childhood 'blood brother', Kenji (Hiroyuki Sanada). The presence of older actors such as Tzi Ma, Max von Sydow and Roman Polanski (as a sadistic French police chief) might have made Chan look younger. Recovering from a broken sternum, he looks tired and gaunt. His character has no love interest, whereas Tucker flirts with every woman he sees.

In *Shanghai knights*, Chon Wang similarly becomes a surrogate father for his younger sister, Chon Lin (Fann Wong). Like him, she is a consummate martial arts combatant. The two fight valiantly against Lord Rathbone (Gillen) and their evil younger brother (Donnie Yen), with Roy's help. A much older character, Queen Victoria (Gemma Jones), appears

towards the end as potential victim, then grateful monarch. Next to Wilson, especially, Chan looks thicker and older. Again, he has no romantic partner. The younger Roy gets all the girls, including Chon Lin.

In all three films, that Chan's American co-stars also fight dilutes Chan's claim to unparalleled authenticity based on daredevil stunt-work. In general, 'linguistic comedy replaces physical spectacle' (Mack 2008–2009, p. 43), and the out-takes – earlier guarantees of Chan's cheerful perseverance despite horrible falls and badly timed stunts – are geared primarily towards flubbed lines and childish pranks.

Chan's ageing is most apparent in changes in the ways the stunt and fight sequences are choreographed, edited and executed. Crucial to both *Rush hour 2* and *Shanghai knight's* box office success are numerous inventive fights, with Chan consulting on design and performing all his own stunts if, as required by Hollywood insurance standards, 'with the added compromise of always working with a safety wire' (Holben 2001, p. 43). Although the fights in *Rush hour 2* are 'hardly of vintage Chan length and endurance', they do 'play to Chan's strength for incorporating as many props as possible' (Koehler 2001, p. 17). As director, Ratner had promised to respect Chan's style, to 'shoot in continuity' so that each element obtained a 'maximum impact'. He knew that Chan works out his stunt and fight sequences 'based on what happens each moment. The way he hits one guy affects how he'll turn and hit the next guy, and the way they fall down affects how the rest of the scene goes' (Holben 2001, p. 43). Yet Ebert reported that Chan 'complained . . . [Ratner] didn't give him time to compose his usual elaborately choreographed stunts, . . . preferring shorter bursts of action' (2001, online).⁸

The film's overall pacing is none the less energetic, with the first big fight/chase sequence, for the most part perilously set on bamboo scaffolding, occurring roughly 10 minutes in and lasting more than four minutes. Some sequences (e.g. silencing Chan's then halting English by taping a grenade in his mouth) are inspired. As a result, although some reviewers mention Chan's age, everyone congratulates him on his agility, saying things such as 'Chan still has some extraordinary moves, sliding and ducking as if there's no such thing as gravity' (Koehler 2001, p. 17) and 'Jackie Chan is amazing as usual in the action sequences' (Ebert 2001, online).⁹

Rush hour 3, in contrast, offers fewer fights or stunts and makes greater use of green screens, editing and CGI effects. Chan is also more of a straight man. He does, however, really hang off the top of the Eiffel Tower in the 11-minute-long final sequence. He waited for an hour despite chilling 100+ miles-per-hour winds so that the shot could be finished. 'I can tell my grandchildren, 'This is your grandfather. This is me. That's not a double flying around the Eiffel Tower . . . Everybody else takes the elevator. I was outside the elevator' (Press kit 2007, p. 12).

Despite the final stunt, most reviewers consequently comment negatively about his ageing. The general consensus is that the fight sequences are 'workmanlike but . . . feel truncated' (Crust 2007, online). Koehler (2007, p. 19) applauds Chan's opening chase of Han's would-be assassin on Los Angeles freeway ramps and bridges, but Ebert says of the same sequence, 'it used to be we were amazed by the stunts. These days I find myself even more amazed that he can still run that far' (2007, online). The film did poorly in Hong Kong, earning only \$512,000 in the first five days (*Los Angeles Times* 2007, E3). Chan himself dislikes all three *Rush hour* films, complaining that 'the style of action was too Americanised', adding 'I still don't fully understand the humor' (Marchetti 2009).

He has not been similarly critical of *Shanghai knights* even though here, too, the fight and stunt sequences are elaborately staged and more heavily edited.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, Western critics notice Chan's age. *Sight and sound's* Edward Lawrenson (2003, p. 60)

snidely finds that ‘the most notable of [the] action sequences, an elegantly crafted fight involving strategically placed antique vases, plays on ideas of fragility that must have some pertinence for the 49-year-old actor’.

Writing for the *LA Times*, Manohla Dargis (2003, online) agreed: ‘Chan turns 49 this April . . . and though he still looks like a Renaissance master chiseled him out of marble, at least from the neck down, he has increasingly counted on clever props, stuntmen, and ingratiating shtick to deflect attention from his slowing body’.

Yet some sequences capture Jackie Chan’s love for movies as those in *Rush hour 2* and *3* do not. Kenneth Chan (2004, p. 93) argues that the film ‘is a marvel of Chan’s inventive remaking of Hollywood. His mimicry of the Hollywood legends produces a work of self-referentiality that can be seen as an allegory of [his] aspirations to become a Hollywood star and legend’. One sequence pays homage to Harold Lloyd’s *Safety last* and Chan’s own *Project A*. A five-minute-long, rapidly edited, chase/fight sequence with Chan battling five opponents through the London streets morphs into a re-enactment of the key Gene Kelly dance sequence in *Singin’ in the Rain* (Stanley Donen, Gene Kelly, 1952). Chan uses the umbrella not only as a prop but also as a weapon. Jumping, prancing, balancing on stacked crates, each kick, arm movement and facial moue are carefully timed to the music. Working in tandem with his stunt team, Chan harks back to his training in Chinese opera’s Four Arts and Five Skills. Concentration is on the actor’s performing body, its ‘various parts in motion, synchronised and coordinated in a harmonious manner’ (Sai-shing 2005, p. 28). Sets are minimal. Traditionally, a table and two chairs, often (as here, briefly) ladders, are used by the actors to showcase their acrobatic skills. In this sequence only a few moves – a balletic leap in the air, both legs arced upwards; a final toss of the umbrella then somersault off a neighbouring stall, legs outstretched, catching the umbrella again on the ground – look wire-assisted.

Thanks to this kind of perfectly punctuated stunt choreography, some of Chan’s Asian fans remain interested. He often returns to Hong Kong to work. He has even been known to incite Asian filmmakers against Hollywood’s hegemony. ‘Why do we need to ape their culture?’, he asked in India in 2005 (Marchetti 2009). With no regulations mandating insurance coverage, he has always undertaken riskier stunts there. Because he controls his own production companies and often produces his films together with other Asian and/or international companies, he can take as long as he wants or needs to shoot the action sequences. Might his recent Hong Kong films therefore provide an alternative vision of ageing?

Safety last

Accidental spy exemplifies what Ding-Tzann Lii (1998, p. 134) finds is the ‘fusion or synthesis of different Asian cultures into one Asian Culture’ occurring in Chan’s Hong Kong films from the 1980s onwards. Set in Hong Kong, Korea and Turkey, costing Golden Harvest a record-breaking \$25 million, *Accidental spy* targets Asian diaspora audiences. Lead actresses Kim Min-Li and Vivian Tsu are Korean and Taiwanese. The chief villain (Wu Hsing-kuo) is Taiwanese. Hong Kong comedian Eric Tsang appears as an undercover CIA agent. Jackie Chan’s mysterious father (Joh Young Kwon) is Korean. A variety of languages and dialects – Korean, Cantonese, Mandarin, Turkish, French and English – are heard.

Because Chan now makes even his Hong Kong movies for two markets – one western, the other Asian – his Hong Kong films also betray Hollywood’s influence. An international spy film, *Accidental spy* relies on global locations in the best James Bond tradition.

Even the crew is international: most are from Hong Kong, but the security team and land crew are Turkish, the car stunt crew French. As *Cahiers du cinéma* (Benedict 2003, p. 34) comments, ‘Chan . . . is becoming ever more . . . the icon of a world citizen’.

As ‘Bei Yuen’ (‘Buck’ in the English-language release), Chan is both everyman and hero. An exercise equipment salesman, he finds himself foiling a robbery. Less mobile older figures make the 47-year-old Chan look younger. He rescues an elderly woman hostage. A CIA agent is dumpy and balding. Bei’s father is old and ailing. When his father is murdered, Bei flies to Turkey, where he becomes embroiled in international intrigue involving a deadly virus. For a time he romances a beautiful young opium addict (Vivian Hsu). By the film’s end, he is in a wheelchair with multiple broken bones, but he has retrieved the virus and handed it over to the older detective, who invites him to join the company if only he can ‘learn how to take a fall’.

Rumblings about Chan’s advancing age began appearing in the Asian press in the early 1990s. Hong Kong reviewers were lukewarm about *Accidental spy*, complaining that ‘there aren’t any stunts or insanity to speak of, and the comedy aspect is muted, too’ (Kozo 2001, online). Western reviewers noticed that ‘the fight scenes are more edited, from shorter clips’ and that ‘some of the high-platform stunts are bluescreened and edited, which hugely reduces their impact’ (Mapes 2002, online). A real bust for Jackie Chan buffs, there is no major stunt at film’s end, and the last sequence is obviously a *Speed*-influenced remake.

Crucially, however, the out-takes do show risky stunts gone wrong, with Chan dangling from a bridge and taking painful falls. Some fight scenes enlist props in the best Jackie Chan tradition. Trapped in an elevator in the bank robbery sequence, Bei uses freight crates and the female hostage to escape from two bad guys. Rapid edits and radical camera angles add to the excitement as Chan somersaults over the crates, punching, kicking and diving in non-stop motion.

Midway through, his fourth nude scene ever offers a terrific example of how in a Jackie Chan film ‘space is . . . defined by the mise-en-scene of the frame itself. Chan moves across tables, benches, and chairs, utilizing them as surfaces in addition to the more commonplace ground’ (Tateishi 1998, p. 82). The sequence begins as Bei is attacked by a gang of thugs in the Turkish baths. He enlists every object he encounters – a tub of water, soap suds, shampoo bottles, even the tiled floor – to escape to the roof. Quickly edited shots taken from varying distances show him running, then jumping onto the next roof. Again cornered, Bei ties three parasols together and sails down to the street, legs flailing in veracity guaranteeing long-shot. A large towel wrapped around his waist flaps in the breeze. Narrowly avoiding being run over, Bei rushes into the crowds at Istanbul’s spice market. Jumping over a display, he loses the towel. As the bystanders gawk and gasp, he keeps running, shielding his private parts from our view thanks to impeccable editing, ingenious stunt choreography, careful camera placement and athletic, emotive acting. After plopping into baskets of spices that colour his buttocks orange and green, he uses strings of hot peppers, baskets, brooms, hats, table tops, scarves, a newspaper and metal trays to mask his manhood while he fights his pursuers. He finally eludes his opponents by grabbing a sheet and disguising himself as a Muslim woman in purdah.

As the tagline of *Rumble in the Bronx* put it, ‘No fear! No stuntmen! No equal!’. Who needs wire-work or CGI when you can choreograph, act and edit a nude scene as a miracle of modesty? Unfortunately, DreamWorks, Sony and Disney didn’t agree. All shied away from this kind of breathtaking action when making *The tuxedo*, *The medallion* and *Around the world in 80 days*.

Hanging on to Hollywood

Digital effects will soon make it possible to ‘thwart’ death as ‘cloned’ cyber-actors stand in for dead stars. How much will we notice or care about this lack of authenticity, living as we now do in an ‘age of the pseudo-event, where the line between fact and fiction, reality and illusion’ is everywhere being erased (Rojek 2001, p. 18)? But can digital effects, cosmetic surgery and other make-overs compensate for ageing, especially in the case of a physical performer like Jackie Chan? In the past Chan infrequently relied on stunt doubles. Routinely, he used some wire-work. But the extensive CGI effects and wire-work that underpin *The tuxedo*, *The medallion* and *Rush hour 3* – and, to a lesser extent, *Around the world in 80 days* – constitute a radical departure from his stunt-based action ethos. In large part, moreover, this departure is attributable to Hollywood production decisions and western script traditions, as any fan who follows Chan’s Hong Kong releases knows. To others watching, familiar only with his Hollywood films and ‘greatest hit’ Hong Kong releases, it may well look as if he is now dependent upon editing and CGI effects to ‘action-ise’ his ageing body and (re)invigorate the celebrity he has achieved thanks to risk-taking, athletic acting.

Grossing \$105 million world-wide, the \$60-million *The tuxedo* earned more than *Shanghai knights* but performed poorly in the United States, there netting only \$50 million. With a price tag of \$41 million, *The medallion* ended in the red. Its global box office totalled \$34 million, most of it (\$22 million) from the United States. At \$110 million one of the most expensive movies ever produced without pre-arranged US distribution, *Around the world* was the biggest loser of all: it netted only \$64.5 million world-wide.¹¹

As is true of most of Chan’s films, none of these movies mentions his characters’ age (48 in *The tuxedo*, 49 in *The medallion*, 50 in *Around the world in 80 days*). Yet here his characters need technological or magical help to be powerful. A send-up of the James Bond spy franchise, *The tuxedo* has Chan playing cab driver James Tong. Tong is hired to chauffeur Clark Devlin (Jason Isaacs), an international secret agent with a remarkable high-tech weapons system built into a specially designed suit. When Devlin is injured by a bomb, Tong replaces him. Without Devlin’s tuxedo Tong/Chan is ‘really an ordinary man, literally’ (Li 2005, p. 60). In *The medallion* Chan is Hong Kong detective Eddie Yang. Eddie dies in the line of duty but is transformed into an immortal with superhuman powers thanks to an ancient medallion and a young boy with special powers. Paired with the mugging, younger, Lee Evans, ‘a fussbudget geek who can’t seem to decide if he’s the straight man or the comic relief’ (Glieberman 2003, online), Chan’s good nature is welcome; the buddies’ incessant homophobic banter is not. In *Around the world in 80 days* Chan figures as Passepartout/Lau Xing, Phileas Fogg’s (Steve Coogan) sidekick and helper as he attempts to travel around the world in record time.

That most of Chan’s fellow actors in *The tuxedo* and *The medallion* are years younger and in good shape makes Chan look older, although he is obviously very fit. Quite exceptionally, in both *The tuxedo* and *The medallion* he is permitted a love interest, played dismally in *The tuxedo* by Jennifer Love-Hewitt, played slightly more successfully in *The medallion* by Claire Forlani. Yet in neither film does he get the girl: the popularity he enjoys in Asia in romantic comedies such as *Boh lei chun* (*Gorgeous*, Vincent Kok 1999) does not transfer to the West.

In contrast, *Around the world* features many older actors, among them Fogg’s rival Lord Kelvin (Jim Broadbent), John Cleese as a grizzled sergeant, Kathy Bates as Queen

Victoria and Ian McNeice as Colonel Kitchener. Six years older than Chan, Arnold Schwarzenegger's cameo as a Turkish prince in bronze face is 'borderline grotesque' (*Hollywood Reporter* 2004, n. p.). By comparison, Chan does look younger, if middle-aged; but once again, he has only female sparring partners, no romantic partner.

Most importantly, all three films move away from street fights and stunts to the realm of pure effects. In all, moreover, 'the destruction of Chan's action aesthetic comes not only from the presence of digital effects, but also from the rapid editing and repeated step-printing necessary to hide the seams of those effects' (Mack 2008–2009, p. 45). Evil icing on the cake, the out-takes in *The tuxedo* and *The medallion* are dull. There are no death-defying stunts but, at most, short, non-perilous falls. *Around the world* ends with no out-takes at all, merely an insipid song, 'Everybody all over the world (join the celebration)'.

The tuxedo makes us wait 40 minutes for the first big fight sequence. Although Chan tried to help design the stunts so that they didn't look quite so much as if they were wire-assisted (Schneller 2002, p. 67), only his slide over a passing car while fighting recalls his smooth acrobatics of yester-year. Chan (2004, p. 64) found the green-screen work 'boring'. US reviewers railed against the digitisation of his action without commenting directly on his ageing. As Ebert (2003 online) puts it, 'Chan's character flip-flop[s] across the screen in computer-generated action which is exactly what we don't want in a Jackie Chan movie. The whole point is that he does his own stunts, and the audience knows it'.¹²

Cut and re-cut, shot and re-shot, written and rewritten (Klein 2003, p. 22), with choppy editing and stilted direction, *The medallion* stands out for its 'stuttering form' (Kleinhans 2009, p. 117). Chan complained because his responsibilities were diminished: 'I'm not even the stunt coordinator' (Gilchrist 2003, p. 6). Thanks to Sammo Hung's choreography and Chan's execution, the first part has a few good scenes. The second half tries to be *The matrix* (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999) or *Wo ho cang long* (*Crouching tiger, hidden dragon*, Ang Lee 2000), but fails miserably. The digitally enhanced Chan survives a fall from a 20-storey building and chases Snakehead at super-human speed (Mack 2008–2009, p. 44). Everyone notices Chan's age. *New York Daily News* (Bernard 2003, online) mentions his 'creaky joints'. Charity (2003, n. p.) comments, 'this is desperate stuff'. Hong Kong's *New Straits Times* (Super Jackie fails to blast off, 2003 online) finds that 'at 49 Jackie Chan may already be losing ground in his ferocious race against Time', yet underlines that 'he's still capable of physical fireworks that men half his age can't ignite'.¹³

With choreography by Chan, *Around the world in 80 days* offers half a dozen elaborate action sequences. Several draw upon Chan's love for movies. There is a Keystone cops chase and a salute to *City lights* (Charles Chaplin 1931). Unfortunately, many performances are weak. Laughs revolve uncomfortably around the infliction of pain on the silly Inspector (Ewen Bremner). The mix of styles does not really work. Critics are split on how successful *Around* is, but most agree that Chan's ageing has 'curtailed his ability to do the kinds of bone-crunching maneuvers he has attempted in the past' (Berardinelli 2004, online).

Is Jackie Chan now in real trouble? How much is Hollywood to blame for 'still [not knowing] what to do with Jackie Chan' (Olsen 2003, p. 56)? How strong is the danger that, fondly remembering his youthful audacity, we will all soon ask: 'didn't you used to be Jackie Chan?' (Lacey 2004, online). Are there, can there be, alternatives to Herfray's (1988) 'inverse mirror stage' of old age? What options might a 60- or 70-year-old Jackie Chan have in international or Asian film? And what influence might his global celebrity have on us, as he 'articulate[s] what it is to be a human being in contemporary society . . . complexly, variously' (Dyer 1986, p. 8)?

The art of ageing

Even as a child, Jackie Chan was fascinated by Hollywood. He wanted to be 'like John Wayne – a film person that people admire and respect' (Gray 1999, S-10). He admires Dustin Hoffman, Al Pacino, Robert de Niro, Jodie Foster and Danny DeVito (Tempest 1998, p. 39). All are now middle-aged; soon 70, Pacino is approaching old age. Chan compares himself not to these stars, however, but rather to the 63-year-old Sylvester Stallone, because Stallone also directs, acts, writes, is very physical and does a lot of his own action (Witterstaetter 1997, p. 58).

Listing his favourite movies as *City lights*, *The general* (Buster Keaton, 1926) and *Rocky* (John Avildsen, 1975), Chan's imitations of silent comedians and dancers such as Chaplin, Keaton, Lloyd, Kelly and Astaire have become legendary.¹⁴ Career box-office totals world-wide have climbed to well over \$1 billion. In 2002, Chan finally earned a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 2004, his were the first hand-prints on Hong Kong's imitative Star Avenue. Although he is not as popular in China as he used to be (in part because of controversial, paternalist remarks in 2009, such as 'we Chinese need to be controlled'), in transnational action films he is 'almost as good a mascot for the globalisation of contemporary cinema as Mickey Mouse' (Lacey, 2007, online). Outside the film industry, Chan rules a business universe that includes restaurants around Asia, a clothing line, action figures, lighting rental companies (Atkin 2001, pp. A 12, 14), golf clubs and ping-pong balls (Adkins *et al.* 2004, 24) and environmental products (Frater 2008, A1).

But what does the future hold in store? The fact that from 2003 to the present the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) continues to take 40 as the cut-off point for the statistics it publishes on male and female actors working in theatrical and television productions is ominous. Although the situation is much worse for women, the number of parts men over 40 get also drops significantly.¹⁵ As an Asian performer, moreover, Jackie Chan is in a double bind: SAG statistics here are bleaker still. While up somewhat from 2003, in 2009 Asians and Pacific Islanders garnered only 3.7% of all television and theatrical roles (Screen Actors Guild 2009, online). Of the many foreign stars who have made or make a living in action, only Schwarzenegger ever really managed to cross over to big-budget Hollywood films. To date, the right to age in action has been reserved for Anglo stars such as John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, Sean Connery and Harrison Ford. Significantly all, like Hoffman, Pacino and De Niro, also work in drama. None is a physical performer on a par with Chan or Stallone.

Stallone is, of course, back in action, both as director and star, triumphing in 2006 with *Rocky Balboa* (cost \$24 million, world-wide theatrical gross \$128 million), succeeding more modestly in 2008 with *Rambo* (cost \$50 million; US box-office gross \$43 million). His example may give Jackie Chan hope, although bombing at the box office, as Chan has done in *The medallion* and *Around the world in 80 days*, is threatening at any age. Yet big stars like Chan and Stallone do continue to be cast despite failure. Costing \$55 million, although it was not popular in China, *Forbidden kingdom* (Rob Minkoff, 2008) grossed almost that much (\$52 million) in the United States and earned additional monies in the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The animated extravaganza, *Kung fu panda* (Mark Osborne and John Stephenson, 2008), was a huge hit everywhere, including in China. With Chan voicing the part of Monkey and working together with Jack Black, Dustin Hoffman, Angelina Jolie and Lucy Liu, at a price tag of \$130 million it took in \$230 million in US theatres alone.

In transnational markets, therefore, children's films and television seem to offer Chan a lucrative future. He has always tried to ensure that his movies are child-friendly. His

television cartoon series, *Jackie Chan adventures*, was quite successful. Most of his charity work is focused upon children.¹⁶ In Asian productions, he will probably continue to appear in dramas as well as in action films, thrillers and comedies. There is Chinese taste to consider, however: set for the most part in Japan, *San suk si gin* (*Shinjuku incident*, Tung Shing Yee, 2009) was so violent that Yee decided not to release it in China. But because Chan's 'particular performance of masculinity' needs to be 'as "flexible" as possible and hitched to his own construction of a male hero less dependent on American connections', he will probably keep working in multiple markets (Marchetti 2009).

Following paths blazed by other stars, he may make more of his talents as director, editor and choreographer. Now in his middle period of productivity, might he eventually develop his own version of what Edward Said (2006), following Theodor Adorno, terms 'late style', as 'a way of remembering time, whether it is missed or met or gone' wherein 'amusement . . . [is] a form of resistance' (Wood 2006, pp. xi, xiv)? After all, 'not since Buster Keaton has one individual so thoroughly mastered every facet of his craft, as actor, comedian, producer, director, writer, stuntman, choreographer' (Major 1996, p. 4). Chan has a keen sense of rhythm. For him, 'every punch, kick and step has one and only one . . . correct articulation' (Corsello 1996, p. 131). He also has a well-established track record of nurturing talent: he helped to found the Hong Kong Director's Guild, the Performing Artists Guild and the Society of Cinematographers.

One thing is sure: if Jackie Chan keeps performing, changes are necessarily in the works, because the amount of time his energy can be 'distributed throughout the entire frame' (Tateishi 1998, p. 83) is limited. Perhaps, like the already ageing Clint Eastwood in *Unforgiven* (Clint Eastwood, 1992) and *A perfect world* (Clint Eastwood, 1993), Jackie will move to the sidelines, turn his back on the audience and perform in three-quarters shadowed profile. Or perhaps his ageing will ensure that he ends up, like hero/role model Keaton in Beckett's *Film*, motionless in close-up, a quasi-mime with a stone face. I profoundly hope that 'Chan's increasing years and battered body' do not 'suggest an approaching sell-by date', as Leon Hunt (2004, p. 280) hints. After all, Chan has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to take on 'various roles as masks . . . [with] no authentic self . . . promised behind the persona' (Marchetti 2001, p. 156).

While some have termed *Forbidden kingdom* 'kung fu light' (Turan 2008, online), Jackie Chan's dual star turn as decrepit antiquarian Old Hop and drunken immortal Lu Yan suggests that he, for one, can embrace ageing. In the first sequence, he is almost unrecognizable thanks primarily to his keenly observed performance. Make-up also helps. Balding on top, tufts of white hair on the sides, with shaggy eyebrows, a wispy beard, wrinkles, creases and liver-spots, Old Hop speaks in raspy tones that are hard to decipher. From the way he moves head and hands in response to the sound of teenager Jason (Michael Angarano)'s bicycle being propped against the shop door, we know that, although his eyes are open, he is blind and that he has been counting his money by feel. With trembling fingers he hides his savings in a tin can, then painfully rises to greet the boy, limping from his back office into the storefront. A martial arts movie buff, Jason wants to know if Old Hop has any early Shaw Brothers DVDs with 'leopard style' fights. Old Hop teases him hoarsely: 'Leopard style!.. Fly on water!.. Crouching Tiger! Spanking Monkey!.. I know you . . . kick ass! . . . get the girls! . . . heh, heh, heh, heh, heh!'. The entire shtick, laughter included, is pitch perfect, and his trademark risk-taking is manifest soon afterwards, although Chan stays completely in (aged) character. Attacked by a gang of young thugs, Old Hop nevertheless clubs one down with the magic staff he fumbled into place earlier. Pushed against a wall, then shot, no lithe movement or little twitch betrays that Chan is actually middle-aged. We think him dead. But don't despair! In

Forbidden kingdom's coda, Old Hop is alive and winking as he is wheeled on a stretcher into an ambulance. 'I'm immortal!' he tells Jason. Drunken fu master Lu Yan has earlier used Jason as weapon and prop in a fight sequence, in the best Jackie Chan tradition.

The real question is whether we, as audience members, will be able to view Jackie Chan's ageing as one more masquerade, one that allows him to play new parts, to move on to other functions. There is no, can be no, simple answer. Stars and celebrities do not directly impact 'identity formation and forms of social interaction' (Rojek 2001, p. 16). None the less, the answers we author and authorise have implications for us all. How to combat, how to restructure, a culture that, as Randall Jarrell (cited in Gullette 2004, p. 29) describes in *A sad heart at the supermarket*, is 'essentially periodical: we believe that all that is deserves to perish and to have something else put in its place'?

Increasingly, age discrimination affects everyone, not just actors or celebrities. In the developed world, the decrease in 'the age of exit from gainful work' has been 'one of the most profound structural changes in the past 25 years' (Kohli and Reiss cited in Gullette 1998b, p. 80). Yet we also need to remember that how we approach ageing is historically conditioned and determined. According to Gullette (2004, pp. 28, 107, 102), the phrase 'midlife crisis' emerged only in the 1980s, while the very category 'middle age' appeared between 1880 and 1930. Before 1900, when infant mortality was lowered, the old seemed the healthiest part of the population because they had survived so much. '[Much of] what we [today] think of as aging is really bio-social damage: physical ills caused by smoking, inactivity, poor diet . . . or those caused or worsened . . . by unemployment, by poverty and environmental racism, by caretaker stress, and by lack of access to health care' (Gullette 2004). The impact of globalisation is changing things, but some in Asia still imagine ageing as a transition, marked by 'family positions and associated responsibilities and activities' (Shweder 1998, p. ix). The role of *sifu*, embodied by Chan in *Forbidden kingdom* as both Old Hop and Lu Yan, and voiced by Dustin Hoffman in *Kung fu panda*, is time-honoured. Already in 1996 it was a role Chan planned for himself '[when] my body tells me it cannot do it. Then I retire and . . . find some new talent, young children in America or China. I can train them, make them second Jackie Chan' (Major 1996, p. 4).

Might P. David Marshall (1997) be right that celebrity can be transformational? Following Chan, can we view ageing differently, with those of us who are older training those who are younger, while those who are younger care for older neighbours, family members and friends? Jackie Chan is focused upon teaching others to fight, safely. He collaborates with all the people around him to bring out the best in them. 'I think that keeps me young', he says. 'The secret is, never stop making movies!' (Strauss 2007, p. 7).

A 13-year-old friend of mine who is a diehard fan of Chan's Hollywood films agrees. He sees no change in the star he has loved for years: 'Jackie Chan is Jackie Chan', he told me. A hopeful sign? Stars do have the capacity to 'color vividly outside the lines' (Bruni 2009, online): witness the popularity of Ellen DeGeneres who, on 15 November 2009, struck a 'sapphic' blow for queer marriage when she and partner Portia de Rossi 'traded moony glances' and professed their love for each other 'in the secular chapel of Oprah Winfrey's daytime talk show'. Millions of television viewers watched. A comedian like Chan, DeGeneres, too, has a gift for soft-peddalling and rendering acceptable 'difficult' issues.

Although a special case, Jackie Chan also serves as test case. Our own futures, not just his celebrity, are at stake. We *all* need to make it possible to think, feel and act 'ageing' as something other than planned obsolescence. As Jackie Chan himself reminds us in *Project A*: 'Why so sad? We're not dead yet!'. We can still make a difference. As will Jackie Chan.

Notes

1. 'AARP' stands for American Association of Retired People, the foremost organisation advocating on behalf of older and retired people in the United States. *AARP Magazine* was called *Modern Maturity* before 2002.
2. Beginning in Malaysia, moving to the Sahara, then Johannesburg, and finally Rotterdam, *Who Am I?* addresses questions of citizenship (Marchetti, 2001). Kwai-Cheung Lo (1996) and Kenneth Chan (2004) make similar points about other films.
3. Because other Asian productions have gone straight-to-DVD in the United States I do not analyse them here. I also do not analyse *San suk si gin* (*Shinjuku incident*, Tung Shing Yee, 2009), although it has been played theatrically in select US cities.
4. Laikwan Pang (2007, p. 209) says Hong Kong is losing its local identity because it is now situated between the global and the national. Yet Hong Kong cinema may never have had a 'local' identity, split as it was between Cantonese and Mandarin-language film-making. None the less, argues Meghan Morris (2005, p. 10), today it is increasingly 'multi-glossic' in orientation.
5. In most of his Hong Kong films, Chan is a 'sexless loner' (Gallagher 2001, p. 17).
6. Some examples include *Jui kuen* (*Drunken master*, Wo-ping Yuen, 1979), *Jui kuen II* (*Drunken master II*, Chia-Liang Liu, 1994), '*A*' *gai wak* (*Project A*, Jackie Chan, 1983), '*A*' *gai wak juk jap* (*Project A II*, Jackie Chan, 1987), *Ging chat goo si* (*Jackie Chan's police story*, Jackie Chan, 1985), *Ging chaat goo si juk japp* (*Police story II*, Jackie Chan, 1988), *Ging chat goo si 3* (*Police story III*, Stanley Tong, 1992), *Ging chaat goo si 4* (*Police story IV*, a.k.a. *First strike*, Stanley Tong, 1996), *Long xiong hu di* (*Armour of God*, Jackie Chan, 1986) and *Fei ying gai wak* (*Armour of God II*, Jackie Chan, 1990).
7. In the first film Soo Yung (Julia Hsu) is a child. Like the majority of female characters in Chan's films, she is adept at martial arts.
8. See also Hunt, 2003, pp. 168–189.
9. O'Hehir (2001, p. 58) dislikes Tucker because he 'flirts with minstrel-show caricatures'. Ebert (2001, online) finds him misogynist, aggressive and obnoxious. *Rush hour 2*'s constant play with sexual and ethnic stereotypes offers neither critique nor reversal. The first major Hollywood film to be shot in Hong Kong, it consistently backs away from local concerns as well.
10. *Shanghai noon* joked about the Western. Because *Shanghai knights* takes place largely in London, it cannot parody Western conventions.
11. The relative anonymity of Steve Coogan in the United States led Walden to pay six-figure salaries for cameos by Arnold Schwarzenegger and Luke Wilson (Fleming and Dunkley 2004, p. 4).
12. Chan (2004, pp. 89–90) concentrates instead on the film's politics. He likes the undermining of the 'political seriousness of Bond as a cinematic figure of Cold War ideology' and the 'sexualizing of James Tong as a character', viewing the latter 'as a contribution to the filmic representation of Asian men as sexual beings'. He also argues that 'the tuxedo becomes a narrative device through which Jackie Chan, the kung fu star, can again demonstrate and authenticate to his audiences his daredevilry, hence making invisible the tuxedo: Chan does not require any special suit to perform the incredible stunts, to fight like a pro, and to sing and dance'.
13. Berardinelli (2003, online) agrees that Chan's 'action days are long behind him . . . [T]rying to keep him ducking, dodging, fighting, and scrapping is leading to diminishing result'.
14. In many of his Hong Kong movies, Chan recreates Keaton's stunts: *Ging chaat goo si 4* (*First strike*) echoes *The navigator* (1924); *Fei ying gai wak* (*Armour of God II*, a.k.a. *Operation condor*) and *Sing si lip yan* (*City hunter*, Stanley Tong 1993) recreate stunts from *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* (1928); '*A*' *gai wak juk jap* (*Project A II*) reformats another stunt from the same film, and taps *Cops* (1922) and *Convict 13* (1920), too; *Ging chat goo si 3* (*Police story 3*, a.k.a. *Supercop*) transforms two stunts from *The general* (1927); *Ging chat goo si* (*Police Story*) redoes *The cameraman* (1928); *Shuan long hui* (*Twin dragons*, Ringo Lam, Hark Tsui, 1992) plays with *The playhouse* (1921) (Corcoran 2002, p. 127).
15. Men over 40 get 43% of all male roles. This number is slightly higher (by 3%) than in 2006. Women over 40 get only 28% of all female roles. This number is unchanged since 2006 (Screen Actors Guild, 2009, online).
16. He founded the Asian-based Jackie Chan Foundation in 1988. The Foundation runs summer fitness camps and programmes for at-risk teens, a student film festival, a drama workshop for disabled children and sports tournaments. Chan has also supported the Asian Youth Orchestra, offered scholarships, given thousands of bicycles to orphanages in Korea and Taiwan and donated surgical

equipment to remote villages in mainland China (Gray 1999, p. S-10). Other charity efforts include donating \$1.5 million to fight the SARS epidemic in 2003, giving money to tsunami relief in 2004 and earthquake relief in 2008 and supporting the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Notes on contributor

Chris Holmlund is Professor and Chair of Cinema Studies at the University of Tennessee, where she also teaches Women's Studies and French. She is the author of *Impossible bodies* (Routledge, 2002), editor of *American cinema of the 1990s* (Rutgers University Press, 2008), co-editor (with Justin Wyatt) of *Contemporary American independent film: from the margins to the mainstream* (Routledge, 2005) and (with Cynthia Fuchs) of *Between the sheets, in the streets: queer, lesbian, gay documentary* (Minnesota University Press, 1997). She is currently working on *Stars in action* (BFI), *Female trouble* (Arsenal Pulp Press), *Being John Malkovich* (Edinburgh University Press) and *The ultimate Stallone reader: Sylvester Stallone as star, icon, auteur* (Wallflower).

References

- Adkins, G. *et al.*, 2004. Jackie Chan. 2004. *People*, 61 (25), 24.
- Atkin, H., 2001. Star power and smarts fuel thesp's toon, biz ventures. *Variety*, 3–9 December, A12, A14.
- Benedict, S., 2003. Rush hour 2. *Cahiers du cinéma*, 582, 34.
- Berardinelli, J., 2003. The medallion. Available from: <http://movie-reviews.colossus.net/movies/m/medallion.html> [Accessed 11 August 2004].
- Berardinelli, J., 2004. Around the world in 80 days. Available from: http://movie-reviews.colossus.net/movies/a/around_world.html [Accessed 2 August 2004].
- Bernard, J., 2003. Medallion fails, but don't pin it on Jackie. *New York Daily News*, 22 August. Available from: <http://www.nydailynews.com/08-22-2003/entertainment/movies/story> [Accessed 11 August 2004].
- Bruni, F., 2009. A sapphic victory, but pyrrhic. *New York Times*, 15 November. Available from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/weekinreview/15bruni> [Accessed 16 November 2009].
- Celeste, R., 2005. Screen idols: the tragedy of falling stars. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 33 (1), 29–38.
- Chan, K., 2004. Mimicry as failure: Jackie Chan in Hollywood. *Asian Cinema*, 15 (2), 84–97.
- Charity, T., 2003. The medallion. *Time Out*, 12 November, n. p.
- Corcoran, J., 2002. *The unauthorized Jackie Chan encyclopedia: from Project A to Shanghai noon and beyond*. Chicago and New York: Contemporary Books.
- Corsello, A., 1996. Chantastic! *GQ*, August, 128–133.
- Crust, K., 2007. Rush hour 3. *Los Angeles Times*, 10 August. Available from: <http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-et-rush10aug10,0,7337996,print.story> [Accessed 15 November 2008].
- Dargis, M., 2003. Shanghai knights. *Los Angeles Times*, 7 February. Available from: <http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-et-dargis7feb07,0,5310782.story> [Accessed 11 August 2004].
- Dyer, R., 1986. *Heavenly bodies: film stars and society*. London: BFI/Macmillan.
- Ebert, R., 2001. Rush hour 2. *Chicago Sun-Times*, 3 August. Available from: http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/2001/08/080304.html [Accessed 11 August 2004].
- Ebert, R., 2003. Shanghai knights. *Chicago Sun-Times*, 11 August. Available from: http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/2003/02/020704.html [Accessed 11 August 2004].
- Ebert, R., 2007. Rush hour 3. *Chicago Sun-Times*, 10 August. Available from: <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070809/REVIEWS/708090> [Accessed 15 November 2008].
- Fleming, M. and C., Dunkley. 2004. Costly journey. *Variety*, 28 June–11 July, Inside Movies, 4.
- Frater, P., 2008. Executive privilege: smaller scene concentrates power players. *Variety*, 10 March, A1, A6.
- Gallagher, M., 1997. Masculinity in transition: Jackie Chan's transcultural star text. *Velvet Light Trap*, 3, 23–41.
- Gilchrist, T., 2003. Look ma – strings! *Entertainment Today*, 22–28 August, 6.
- Gilman, S., 1999. *Making the body beautiful*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Glieberman, O., 2003. The medallion: the martial-arts star shows his age in an unmagical actioner. *Entertainment Weekly*, 5 September. Available from: [http://web4.infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/699/824/53635941w4/purl-rc1\)ITOF\)0...](http://web4.infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/699/824/53635941w4/purl-rc1)ITOF)0...) [Accessed 11 August 2004].
- Gray, B., 1999. Mr. nice guy. *Hollywood Reporter*, 30 November, S-10.
- Gullette, M., 1998. Midlife discourses in the twentieth-century United States: an essay on the sexuality, ideology, and politics of 'middle-ageism'. In: R.A. Shweder, ed. *Welcome to middle age! (and other cultural fictions)*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 3–44.
- Gullette, M., 2004. *Aged by culture*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Herfray, C., 1988. *La vieillesse: une interprétation psychanalytique*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, Epi.
- Holben, J., 2001. Feats of flexibility. *American Cinematographer*, August, 42–50.
- Hollywood Reporter, 2004. Around world in 80 days. *Hollywood Reporter*, 16 June, n. p.
- Holmlund, C., 1994. Cruisin' for a bruisin': Hollywood's deadly (lesbian) dolls. *Cinema Journal*, 34(1), 31–51.
- Holmlund, C., 2002. *Impossible bodies*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hunt, L., 2003. *Kung Fu cult masters*. London: Wallflower Press.
- Hunt, L., 2004. The Hong Kong/Hollywood connection: stardom and spectacle in transnational action cinema. In: Y. Tasker, ed. *Action and adventure cinema*. London and New York: Routledge, 260–283.
- Klein, A., 2003. Turning gold into lead. *L.A. City Beat*, 28 August–September, 22.
- Kleinhans, C., 2009. Becoming Hollywood? Hong Kong cinema in the new century. In: T.S. Kam, P.X. Feng, and G. Marchetti, eds. *Chinese connections: critical perspectives on film, identity and diaspora*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 109–121.
- Koehler, R., 2001. Rush hour 2. *Variety*, 383.10 (30 July), 17.
- Koehler, R., 2007. 3rd 'hour' provides a rush. *Variety*, 6 June, 19, 25.
- Kozo, 2001. The accidental spy. Available from: http://www.lovehkfilm.com/reviews/accidental_spy [Accessed 12 February 2005].
- Lacey, L., 2004. On the road to nowhere. *The Globe and Mail*, 16 June. Available from: [http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/movie/movie_reviews/20040616/...](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/movie/movie_reviews/20040616/) [Accessed 2 August 2004].
- Lawrenson, E., 2003. Shanghai knights. *Sight and Sound*, 13 (5), 60.
- Li, S.L., 2005. The myth continues; cinematic kung fu in modernity. In: M. Morris, S.L. Li, and S.C. Ching-kiu, eds. *Hong Kong connections*. Durham, NC, Hong Kong: Duke University Press, Hong Kong University Press, 49–61.
- Lii, D.-T., 1998. A colonized empire: reflections on the expansion of Hong Kong films in Asian countries. In: K.-H. Chen *et al.*, eds. *Trajectories*. London and New York: Routledge, 122–141.
- Lo, K.-C., 1996. Muscles and subjectivity: a short history of the masculine body in Hong Kong popular culture. *Camera Obscura*, 39, 105–125.
- Lo, K.-C., 2001. Double negations: Hong Kong cultural identity in Hollywood's transnational representation. *Cultural Studies*, 15 (3–4), 464–485.
- Los Angeles Times, 2007. Fans don't 'Rush' in Hong Kong. *Los Angeles Times*, 22 August, E3.
- Mack, J., 2008–2009. Crippled action: Jackie Chan and the incongruity of Hollywood and Hong Kong. *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 1.5, 33–49.
- Major, W., 1996. Chan-tastic! *Entertainment Today*, 23–29 February, 4, 18.
- Mapes, M., 2002. The accidental spy. Available from: http://www.moviehabit.com/reviews/acc_h102.shtml [Accessed 12 February 2005].
- Marchetti, G., 2001. Jackie Chan and the black connection. In: A. Villarejo and M. Tinkcom, eds. *Keyframes*. London: Routledge, 137–158.
- Marchetti, G., 2009. Flexible masculinities and the Rush hour franchise – the Asian body, the American male and global Hollywood. Manuscript.
- Marshall, P. D., 1997. *Celebrity and power: fame in contemporary culture*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Morris, M., 2005. Introduction – Hong Kong connections. In: M. Morris, S.L. Li, and S.C. Ching-kiu, eds. *Hong Kong connections*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1–18.
- New Straits Times–Management Times, 2003. Super Jackie fails to blast off. *New Straits Times–Management Times*. Available from: http://web4.infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/699-824-53635941w4/purl-rc1_ITOF_0... [Accessed 11 August 2004].
- O'Hehir, A., 2001. Rush hour 2. *Sight and Sound*, 10, 57–58.
- Olsen, M., 2003. The tuxedo. *Sight and Sound*, 13 (3), 56.

- Pang, L., 2007. Jackie Chan, tourism, and the performing agency. In: G. Marchetti and T.S. Kam, eds. *Hong Kong film, Hollywood and the new global cinema*. London and New York: Routledge, 206–218.
- Press kit for *Rush hour 3*, 2007. Available at the Margaret Herrick American Motion Pictures and Sciences Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- Reid, C., 1994. An evening with Jackie Chan. *Bright Lights*, 13, 18–25.
- Rojek, C., 2001. *Celebrity*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Said, E., 2006. *On late style: music and literature against the grain*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Sai-shing, Y., 2005. Moving body: the interactions between Chinese opera and action cinema. In: M. Morris, S.L. Li, and S.C. Ching-kiu, eds. *Hong Kong connections*. Durham and London: Duke University Press and Hong Kong University Press, 21–34.
- Schneller, M., 2002. Full mettle Jackie. *Premiere*, 9, 64–67.
- Screen Actors Guild, 2009. Latest casting data follows historical trends and continues to exclude people with disabilities. Available from: <http://www.sag.org/press-releases/october-23-2009/latest-casting-data-follows-historical-trends-and-continues-exclude-p> [Accessed 5 November 2009].
- Sherrill, M., 2003. Sixty is the new 30! *AARP Magazine*, November–December. Available from: <http://www.aarpmagazine.org/entertainment/Articles/a2003-10-14-hutton.html> [Accessed 16 October 2009].
- Shweder, R.A., 1998. Introduction. In: R.A. Shweder, ed. *Welcome to middle age! (and other cultural fictions)*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, ix–xvii.
- Strauss, B., 2007. ‘Rush’ to laughs. *Daily News*, 10 August, 6–7.
- Tateishi, R., 1998. Jackie Chan and the re-invention of tradition. *Asian Cinema*, 10 (1), 79–94.
- Taylor, C., 2001. *Rush hour 2*, 7 August. Available from: <http://www.salon.com> [Accessed 11 August 2004].
- Tempest, R., 1998. Rolling with the punches. *Los Angeles Times Calendar*, 27 December, 5, 38–41.
- Turan, K., 2008. Forbidden kingdom: despite pairing Jackie Chan and Jet Li, the kung fu film goes easy on the action. *Los Angeles Times*, 18 April. Available from: <http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-et-forbidden18apr18,0,3201322,print.story> [Accessed 8 June 2008].
- Turner, C., 2004. *Understanding celebrity*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Wearing, S., 2007. Subjects of rejuvenation. In: Y. Tasker and D. Negra, eds. *Interrogating post-feminism: gender and the politics of popular culture*. Durham, NC, London: Duke University Press, 277–310.
- Weber, B., 2009. *Makeover TV*. Durham, NC, London: Duke University Press.
- Witterstaetter, R., 1997. *Dying for action: the life and films of Jackie Chan*. New York: Warner Books.
- Wolf, M., 2004. Biz’s new credo: gray matters. *Variety*, 394 (7), 95.
- Wood, M., 2006. Introduction. In: E. Said, ed. *On late style*. New York: Pantheon, xi–xix.