
How Asians Are Represented in Hollywood Sitcoms

Diversity of any kind is something that should be celebrated whether it is about race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. However, even in the 21st century, Asian men and women are still often being neglected and overly stereotyped in Hollywood and especially in American sitcoms. The roles in which Asians are cast, depict dated characteristics. Stereotypical Asian roles narrowly lie at opposite ends of the spectrum from being nerds to being prostitutes.

The idea of Asians being inarticulate in English or not understanding the nuances of Western culture is popularly used for over-the-top comedic purposes. Behind the laughter brings the realization that Asian people still are not taken seriously but rather for others' entertainment because being put on a pedestal as the center of the joke makes us insecure about the way we are being presented. Asians are a big part of the newly diverse America and its culture but it doesn't show as evident of the lack of representation. By breaking down the way Asian characters are presented in the two popular early 2000's sitcoms *2 Broke Girls* and *Gilmore Girls*, the essay aims to analyze the ways in which Asians are, and have always been, depicted in Hollywood visually and linguistically. Furthermore this essay aims to see how far America has really come to accept and embrace Asian identity in its said culturally diverse country.

The paradigm of television is a very influential tool in the way that it informs how we perceive the world and shapes our knowledge on certain groups of people. When there are no or close to no portrayals of Asians on TV and the only portrayals are stereotypes being repeated over and over again, Asians are restricted to a handful of expectations being shown by the media that are not representative of their racial identity or culture. American sitcoms are examples of how Hollywood utilize Asians as a stepping stone to make up a show's punchlines rather than giving them a platform to expose their culture to educate the oblivious Western mass. Seen as a breakthrough series for its mainly women-led cast, *Gilmore Girls* was progressive for female representation but their take on Asians received mixed reactions. One of the main characters, Mrs Kim, took on characteristics that shine a negative light on the way Asian parents raise their children by showing a huge contrast with the main Western family when it comes to parental controls. She is also visually represented to stand out and look different on purpose with her conservative wardrobe that differs to the main mom character's more laid back and casual style.

In more recent times, the early 2010's sitcom *2 Broke Girls* saw the character Han Lee, a Korean-American diner owner, portraying the stereotypical characteristics Western media loves to recycle; from an immigrant's broken English to the idea of Asian men having low sexual appeal. Hollywood has had a long history when it comes to wrongly portraying Asians on screen

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and stereotypes aren't the only way they do it.

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