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Racialization as Script: Narrative Permission and Differential Racial Time in *Interior Chinatown*

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Ren Haiyan is Professor in the Department of English at Hunan Normal University and Executive Deputy Director of the Humboldt Center for Transdisciplinary Studies, which she co-founded. She serves on the editorial board of *HiN - Alexander von Humboldt im Netz*. Her research interests encompass travel writing, critical theory, and Humboldtian studies. Her recent publications include *Robinson Crusoe on the Move: The Knowledge and Imagination of the Modern West* (FLTRP, 2023) and the edited volume *Montanhas e pescadores: Crítica cultural chinesa contemporânea* (Autêntica, 2024).

In *Interior Chinatown*, Charles Yu uses the screenplay form, role lists, and the conventions of the police procedural to expose racialization as a script that precedes the individual. Near the end of the novel, his reconstruction of the history of Chinese exclusion reveals the institutional foundations of this script while bringing into view the unequal temporalities produced by the U.S. racial order. Racialized groups may inhabit the same historical present, yet they inherit different relations to national memory, bear different burdens of recognition, and are granted unequal access to futurity. Through the novel, Yu challenges the power of any racial role to exhaust the person, defending instead the right to possess a history, sustain relationships, and imagine a future not predetermined by racial function.



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