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SPECIAL ISSUE FEATURING HENRY LEUNG & IRIS LAW
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SHROUD

Henry Leung

The summer of my uncle's death was one of the darkest periods I've ever known. I was at my grandmother's house in Pacifica, preparing for my uncle's wak

8
We watched her finish the last corner. If I could forgive myself, I'd say it was best that she had this moment for herself.

VISITATION

Iris A. Law

Monterey rolls in, bringing with her sudden sea weather that settles in, glowering, over the hills. Inky, wet storm clouds vein through the wintry grey, unwelcoming in their anguish.

Something to do with the stone angel yesterday - collapsed as the jays chipped, scolding over her head and neck.

I cannot help but cry, just a little. No heaving of the chest, no wailing. Simply a tense weeping without sound, as the wheels fold up into the body of the plane.

DEPARTURE

Iris A. Law

As the wheels fold up into the body of the plane, I cannot help but cry, just a little. No heaving of the chest, no wailing. Simply a tense weeping without sound, as the jays chipped, scolding over her head and neck.

I look to the coast. I think up the landlocked sky.

For water, I follow the blooms of old salt past the tracks.

Deer leap the well of my days, unlike, When I'm bone dry.

Full moons; a fragment of porcelain spoon - sipping then.

When she lives, she leaves behind loaves: stay behind loaves.

When she lives, she leaves behind loaves: stay behind loaves.

When she lives, she leaves behind loaves: stay behind loaves.

When she lives, she leaves behind loaves: stay behind loaves.

We watched her finish the last corner. If I could forgive myself for not moving, I'd say it was best that she had this moment for herself.
I. POETRY

"We must march onward, bear witness, and work with a conscious effort to build a magnificent, dynamic canon."

- Marilyn Chin

FOX AT MIDNIGHT
Iris A. Law

The girl reborn.

When the men in masks
were tired of me, they lit
a fire beneath my feet, floated me
into the September morning,
brown paper lantern ballooning
into the plum-blue dark.

They had touched me
with dirty fingers, had pressed
my palms to something hard
that gleamed
gunsoot and all black.

They had touched me
into the plum-blue dark.

AWAKENING
Iris A. Law

Light from within the tide pools. The water etches
jagged peaks. Slim fingers pierce the surface,
fumble on kelp-slick rocks, grip. Take hold. Pull.

Something wet shivers behind the dock. A body,
slips softly on the Bay while streaks
of light leak between its teeth: cold, sticky, red as blood.

The moon slept softly on the Bay, its light
leaking into the dawn before
the burned-out dawn. The moon
slept softly on the Bay before
the dawn before
the burned-out dawn.
GRANDPA'S GARDEN

Ngoc Luu

Peach and nectarine trees. A kumkwat sapling and lemon grass. An orange tree covered in white fluff, overrun by ants. Squash weaving itself in and around a gray wire fence. In the distant corner, a cluster of lean sugarcane. The fig tree stood in the middle of the garden. My cousin and I often played by the orange tree. Chinese jump rope. Kung Fu fighting. He-Man. She-Ra. One Halloween, Grandpa bought plaster masks, painted like faces worn by Chinese opera singers. They were thick, heavy and stifling. Mine was white covered in delicate strokes of black, beginning at the tear ducts, running below the round rosy cheeks, and meeting on the forehead.

Silenced

Sandy Chang

His son and daughter-in-law were at work, his daughter was at school, and his wife was at the garden picking the chili peppers before they wilted from the winter chill. He sat in a chair looking out the window, listening to the faint heartbeat of the clock behind him. A child appeared from the kitchen holding a knife. Muab rau kuv! The child stopped and stared at him blankly. When the man stood up from the chair, the child started to run but tripped on a toy. He could almost hear the moment flesh gave in to metal.

Copper

Stroke

While resting on a hospital bed, he looked up at his daughter who was talking to the doctor. His daughter turned to him and told him that there was blood in his head and that they were going to make a hole through his skull to suck out the blood. After the surgery, she told him that he could not stay out in the sun too long and that he could not carry heavy things. They might as well have made him a woman.

Copper

Opium

He had heard stories of America from his friends and relatives at the Thai refugee camp – of the green land that flourished under the always-shining sun, where money was earned easily, and where his children could live like kings. Looking at his son, he realized he had been lied to. He had heard stories of America from his friends and relatives at the Thai refugee camp – of the green land that flourished under the always-shining sun, where money was earned easily, and where his children could live like kings. Looking at his son, he realized he had been lied to. He had heard stories of America from his friends and relatives at the Thai refugee camp – of the green land that flourished under the always-shining sun, where money was earned easily, and where his children could live like kings. Looking at his son, he realized he had been lied to. He had heard stories of America from his friends and relatives at the Thai refugee camp – of the green land that flourished under the always-shining sun, where money was earned easily, and where his children could live like kings. Looking at his son, he realized he had been lied to.
with his hand. Running footsteps. He pulls a small lump from his pocket and slips it into the baby's mouth. The baby suckles on it and falls immediately to sleep. He pats his pocket to make sure he has enough to last the journey.

Prisoner

The soldiers come to his village and announce that if the men do not join their army, they would burn the village. Worried and scared for his family, he runs up to the men dressed in green and brown uniforms and tells them that he would like to join. They herd the group to a camp not far away, where hundreds of other men stare gauntly at the new arrivals. They give him a rifle half his size. They tell him he has to use it.

Wife

I decide to accompany my friend to a nearby Hmong village, since he wants me to meet the love of his life. We spend half the day walking on a long dirt road, and when we reach the village we head toward a small wooden hut near the back. I stop halfway. I catch a glance of a beautiful woman, of her long black hair and pale, moon face. Aware of me, she slowly peeks up from the cloth she is sewing, and her almond eyes catch mine. Her cheeks blush a flaming red. Glad that I had picked it along the way, I take out a rumpled flower from my pocket and offer it to her. "Can I talk with you?"

Mother's Day Phonecall

Aldric Ulep

'you should talk to grandma'

more like i should learn how to talk to grandma

'agsingsingpet ka agbasa' [focus on your grades]

"wen grandma" [yes grandma]

'saan makangeg ak' [i cant hear anything]

he wasnt talking because he thought he couldnt hear me

i wasnt talking because i didnt know how

(where are those damn tissues)
MY FATHER'S ALTAR

Nujsaubnusi Vue

It stares at me
With its inviting stance
the calm, the stillness.
I stare back empty minded.
It whispers the essence of burning joss sticks softly
Into my skin, invading my
soul with mortals and
soul with morals and
mind.
It whispers the essence of burning joss sticks softly
I stare back empty minded
the calm, the stillness
When its nothing sense
It tears at me

Nujsaubnusi Vue

MY FATHER'S ALTAR

Where did she go?
My father's altar cries with hymns
Holy opium and scandalous medicine.
cover the pathway to another world of
the flute's secrets
the resonance of a gong played by the spirits,
its hands, firm with strength
the fingers from the bells,
Gold and Silver,
flows into the base of magnificence.
Here, seducing the thought of hope.
holding a lit candle blinding me from
It bears the higher

I am my grandparents
is a stranger to me
the very language of my mother
when my own language
are paying thousands for
a class some strangers (undergrad and donors)
are tutoring Chinese in college
English laced with a fake accent
and drop short childish phrases--
when all I did was throw stabbing word couples
of our native tongue
the composition may use
I can talk
I these tears of frustration:

[make sense] [don't stop your making me learn]
[have ageless heart] [why are you crying?]
[regain] to the gods
from the gods
Mom, I had to work hard.
[you again] what to look for

Kayana aagao is bashi in moomy [mom wants to look to
My parents told me to be careful of ashes. They are dark, they tell me.

I would rather be made of ash than of dust. I see you, made of ash, for what you are: beautiful, much more worthy than those of dust. I see you, made of ash, so much more beautiful, much more worthy than those of dust. I see you, made of ash, for what you are: beautiful, much more worthy than those of dust.

My parents gave me a book telling me I was made of dust. But you, you are made of ash. You are dark, you are made of ash. You find dust everywhere. Where do you find ash? Only at the mausoleum. You are exquisite, you are rare, you are special, you are ash, and maybe, just maybe, you are death? You are made from the remnants of death, and that makes you life. I am made of the flecks of discarded life, and that makes you death. You are dust. You are made from the remnants of death, and that makes you life. I am made of the flecks of discarded life, and that makes you death.

Surely then, you, a being of ash, is surely much more useful than I, a being of dust. You are the stuff of cosmos, and I am the stuff of ordinary. From the ashes, the phoenix rises. From dust, you are made of ash.

All this talk of worth, all this comparison. I find myself repeating myself, so maybe I will just say this:

Ashes from ashes
Dust from dust

We may look different, but in you I trust.
The lioness storms in
And a flash of metallic blue
Vanishes under the sheets
What are you doing?
Nothing
How can you be doing nothing?
THIS IS IMPORTANT, you've wasted
The last hour on NOTHING?
I was looking for something
What were you looking for?
Information, about tomorrow.
Oh tomorrow.
Yes, tomorrow.
I need that information.
Okay
I'll print it off for you
So what have you been doing
For the past two hours?
I said, I was looking for information
Stop wasting your time
I said, I was looking for information
For the past two hours?
Okay, okay, Jeez
Don't Jeez me, you crazy, stupid child
Why are you still awake? You should sleep
Don't tease me, you crazy, stupid child
Okay, okay, Jeez

Why can't you be more responsible?
It's printing
Okay, okay

I said you had to finish tonight!
Okay, okay

You had the last two hours,
Why haven't you finished packing?
Almost
Are you done packing?
Okay, okay

Then I need that information for tomorrow.
Okay, okay

Have you prepared anything for tomorrow?
No
I don't, you are now
You are now
What time is NO way I'm wearing that all day,
Well, you're gonna, to wear that all day,
The thing we bought yesterday
What are you wearing tomorrow?
Okay, okay

Well, you re not, you're gonna to sleep.
I wanted to eat something
Okay, okay

Why are you still awake? You should sleep
Okay, okay, Jeez

Justin Lam
This is how you lead Kalabaw into and out of field.

Mother raises her hands, pretends to pull on a pair of gloves—real arms

2.

In a jungle sometimes people disappear.

She says, "Victor and Mariquita are the two that survived."

and disappear in times of drought.

and谈起 about ten siblings that appear

mother remembers time through wet, dry seasons.

I'm gone to bed.

Why don't you love me more?

Why can't you work harder?

Why can't you be smarter?

I'm very disappointed in you.
She says, "You have her hair."

Her eyes, in rows of their own.

"You have her hair," she whispers.

She says, "Never married."

Mother runs her thin brown fingers across my scalp, stares into the textured, stucco of the apartment, its orange walls breaking into 4ths, 8ths, and 16ths. Tears pool in crouched corners, her eyes far away.

Mother runs her thin brown fingers across my scalp, stares into the textured, stucco of the apartment, its orange walls breaking into 4ths, 8ths, and 16ths. Tears pool in crouched corners, her eyes far away.

She says, "The day my Lola died, the living fanned out in rows of tiny black dots."

She says, "You have her hair."

Broken heart, she whispers.

With downward-arched lips, she talks about her own mother's death.

"Never married."

A diagnosis is a moment of inexplicit clarity, blurred indentifications hemmed in by bones. Bones resemble anything but beauty produced by dreams. Memory is like when the light leaks out and the desire to stop reproducing and the desire to procreate become the same thing.

Portrayal things is like an axis, the study of tectonics: the making. Make.

How can I make things any clearer here? Can I say the making of im-

on him. A diagnosis is a moment of inexplicit clarity, blurred indentifications hemmed in by bones. Bones resemble anything but beauty produced by dreams. Memory is like when the light leaks out and the desire to stop reproducing and the desire to procreate become the same thing.

I. Memory is like when the light leaks out and the desire to stop reproducing and the desire to procreate become the same thing.

Mech Roberts

Middle East

This Refracted Failure

Mg Roberts

I. Memory is like when the light leaks out and the desire to stop reproducing and the desire to procreate become the same thing.
Is red tulips elegant?

The thought spills out, everything spills out of it, everything spills.

III.

Memory is like a mirror producing impressions of refracted faileuses.

Such perfect arrangement of the letters required to spell catastrophe.

thing.

hold room, its green shag carpet, its layered smoke penumbra, every

bowl, a pool of vomit, two men having their way with you in that cheap

hotel, a pool of vomit, two men having their way with you in that cheap

where images of tragedy appear: your head bobbing in and out of a

pool, a pool of vomit, two men having their way with you in that cheap

where images of tragedy appear: your head bobbing in and out of a

IV.

This is a splinter of impression you know you will never forget. You

The thought spills out, everything spills out of it, everything spills.

Are red tulips elegant?
Mg Roberts

What/When presents itself through stretched time, through a waiting room's white sterility. Born in clustered petals, right leg clenched in midwife's grasp. What/When is unable to breathe on her own. What/When is not breathing as she should. I can put together any-thing but this scene: [a calculated sentiment] folding wings against an arced spine.

Watch as the midwife marks every possible line, as in the collection of cells, so carefully without need for light. When asked to lie down I am impossible. I do not scream, but look closely at the red vase on the bedside table, at the sunflower in bloom.

When is not breathing as she should. I can put together any-thing but this scene: Win, when is unable to breathe on her own. When I passed through pressed ins, reliant. Room, with sterility. Born in clustered petals, right leg clenched in

What

Mg Roberts

ASTERS
Can you see the hundreds of little flowers growing on a disk?
Pressing palms together, steeping fingers, bow my round head to look down at hands.
I open my mouth for this poem:

Said Twine to Tumbleweed

Esther Lee

You are dead to us, You-Me, the parents say, expunging "You-Me" from the family tree.
We'll re-instate our love only if you band your disjointed finger, if you bark as we do. The brother chides, "You-Me, returning home will be impossible. Consider blood money your last gift, for no good, You-Me's nature exposed to elements, like church bells clanging on every corner, maddening.

pressing palms together, steeping

Can you see the hundreds of little flowers growing on a disk?
BREATHING DEMONSTRATION

Esther Lee

for Marina Abramovic

in bath water she immerses herself—one leg at a time, to the waist then chin, eyes cinched, nose a sinking periscope, mouth pursed, and holding—submerged she hears a muffled return.

after one minute and before breath elapses...

with hands gently braced upon your hands, you lean down below the waterline and press lips to hers, replacing your former breath, and pushing in new air.

in reverse, your laughter mistaken for gasping, her face creased; the outline of your body, numbing away and still returning? The light moving across one slightly smaller than the other lip close

the gate closed, you spot two wooden boxes, nestled.

in the interim she folds more paper boxes, nestled.

that leaves visible and two small beds, unmade.

your sister's bed: green water and paper

in the purse of rust, Doctors say, Parted of rust. You write—

the parcel of rust bobbing on the water, waves for the parcel of rust bobbing on the water. waves for the parcel of rust bobbing on the water.

which plants are edible and which are poison. Whether

though the forest remains a string, silent green

Transposed upon her are faces of children. You wince—

away yet still returns, plucked of foreign tongues. Lweight the lake basement, how she успехs previous night's dream recites your sister sinking.

for my sister

Esther Lee

VOWELS OF RUST, CONSONANTS OF PAPER

breathe, and pushing in new air, replacing your former below the waterline and press lips to hers upon your hands, you lean down with hands gently braced

3 minutes, 13 seconds...

2 minutes, 28 seconds...

44 seconds...

before breath elapses

after one minute and a muched return

suppressed she hears—

pressed and holding—

eyes closed, nose a snorting to the waist then chin.

one leg at a time, in bath water she immerses herself—

for Marina Abramovic

Esther Lee
Lost in your inbox collecting dust, a letter from madness
Always silent unable to say where are you
Night the silent whisperer friending you without saying your connection
Sending messages every day asking "brother do you believe in god? Have you been touched by alarm yet?"
I give you the river and lie down for the part where you split me
From the banks, one silver minute beyond vision

Have you been touched by alarm yet? Sending messages every day asking "brother do you believe in god?"
I requested your guest book but you fled into darkness
I give you the river and lie down for the part where you split me

Kazim Ali
THE ROAD AT ACHE
Can't even return to India

First writing then to read
I learned

Cloudy-cloudy bright always and cold
Disappearing places

I ocean to then moon

Departure before from sweeping sore

Chaste and chastened, he is touched by you

You're finished with him, hand him back his glasses

He wants to save you, wants to save everyone

Not by intent but because it is buoyant

A submerged body arrows to the surface

The world's quickest answer, his silent unbride

his body changes as he sinks under your hands

Chinese and chastened, he is touched by you

Cloudy-cloudy bright always and cold

Disappearing places

I ocean to then moon

I can't even to India remain I return
PHENOMENAL SURVIVALS OF DEATH IN THE MOUNTAINS

Kazim Ali

1.

Jacketed by mountains does the self of sulfur send itself to rock or vapor
Cleft do You breathe my surface
Beneath or above the earth's surface
When in the valley I collapsed in sound
I dreamt of a man his hands bound
By shafts of sun and cloud
Saying, ‘I am Saint Everyone.
In my pocket a spool of piano wire.’
Awake in the predawn
I will fill this coffin of stone

2.

Awake I unchime
Tickets to heaven all validated, declined
On the third night thrust
The monsoon, my Saint Everyone lust
Played out and the cloud-craft
Unleashed from the rock pier, reft
By thunder. Abandoned by death
Wandered the unmarked road
Where my bones still lie in the earth
Amid yarrow and madder and woad

3.

If you press your ear to solid stone
Will you hear the body’s hard equation
I will fill this coffin of stone

4.

Acres of sky shine cobalt blue
In my locket tides of dirt spill new
Outward I am borne
To myself sworn and inside worn
From this shore I windward grow
Endless border across
To myself I am borne
In my locket tides of dirt spill new
Axes of sky shine cobalt blue

Kazim Ali

DEATH IN THE MOUNTAINS

PHENOMENAL SURVIVALS OF
II. SHORT STORIES

"Words are tricky. Sometimes you need them to bring out the hurt festering inside. If you don't, it turns gangrenous and kills you... But sometimes words can break a feeling into pieces..."

- Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

"Carrying a threat of joy, an honorable knight: there's your look: smoke casting brief ribbons of shadow: grip the blade with my hand, a signal: your look for me, your face for me, alive in me: I've decided: I'm telling you this now that I've shown you my naked lesioned back:"

"There was a child who learned to catch geckos and nothing else: you still move like this, with as much attention and I promise to take you crabbing back east: allure for soft shells: you have this for me: two buses and a train across the peninsula: seven years in famine circling the beloved city: I return to the old words: knowing no other way say what you mean: only I can't, I keep beginning and beginning..."

- Yael Villafranca

"I'm telling you this now that I've shown you my naked lesioned back: I'll return to the old words: knowing no other way."

"Carrying a threat of joy, an honorable knight: there's your look: smoke casting brief ribbons of shadow: grip the blade with my hand: a signal: your look for me, your face for me, alive in me: I've decided:..."

- Yael Villafranca

GREEN KISS
I was never the type of person who had problems answering questions on standardized tests, but every time I took the SAT, without fail, someone would always ask about the race question. "Which bubble do you fill in?"

Out of context, the question sounds ridiculous, but considering my home state of Hawaii's origins as a plantation conglomerate of immigrants, it's not strange to be multiracial. In fact, my cousin is the only one in his kindergarten class of just one ethnicity. A good number of the population is "hapa", or mixed race—the very word comes from Hawaiian Pidgin, which itself was made up of borrowed words from other languages. As a result, quite a few people are 50%-50% in terms of ethnicity. But the SAT only lets you bubble in one answer.

Due to sheer repetition, I've memorized the standard answer—pick the one that you identify with more. But what does that mean? Is it the one that you look more like physically? Is it the one that you identify more with culturally? What if the two are in conflict? Needless to say, there was always someone who struggled to answer the question.

But it was never my struggle. While I'm technically multiracial myself, it was never really an issue. I've always been Asian, and I've always been Asian. In an issue I've always been Asian, and I've always been Asian. It was never really an issue. I've always been Asian, and I've always been Asian.

I've never been to a family gathering where noodles were served. I consider my astrological sign a "wood dog", not Cancer the Crab, and can scarcely remember a single moment when I picked one over the other. The only time I've ever used chopsticks was when I was forced to use them during a brief visit to China after my grandfather's funeral. My parents and grandparents never did anything with my grandmother. My paternal grandmother was full Chinese; her brother-in-law is the current President of the Hawaii Chinese Chamber of Commerce; her grandfather, my Tai Kung, immigrated on a boat to the U.S. to get an education. She grew up on her grandmother's bitter herbal Chinese remedies, and meals of jook, jai, and a whole host of other foods that became a staple of family gatherings. My father is ½ Chinese, ¼ Filipino, and ¼ Hispanic. He was born in Hong Kong, and most of his 6 siblings are fluent in Cantonese. His mother lived in China for nearly her entire life, cannot speak or read English well, and never fails to tell me how proud she is of my educational achievements. His father is my only grandparent who is full Chinese (½ Filipino, and ½ Hawaiian). He was born in Honolulu, Kong, and most of his 6 siblings are fluent in Cantonese. He was never born to a family gathering where noodles were served. I never questioned the fact that I was ¾ Chinese.

Needless to say, the SAT's "race" question always seemed to be an afterthought. It was something I never thought to question. It's strange that a last name, Flores, which is certainly not Asian, I've always used chopsticks with my mother, and used a fork with my father. I'm of mixed race, but I wasn't a member of "mixed" churches with my mother and a member of "mixed" offices with my father. I'm now Chinese, but there's something special about ¾. If I was never the type of person who had problems answering questions on standardized tests, it's clear that I took the SAT.

Mark Flores

THREE QUARTERS
name, supposedly a gift from my ancestors, is something that has always seemed foreign to me, and has dragged behind my every step like an unforgotten secret, a stain upon my Asian character. I'm not "pure" Chinese, I'm "diluted", and my last name is forever a reminder of this split bloodline. Of all the other names my grandparents wear—Chong, Lum, and Ching—I got stuck with Flores.

But this had never really been a problem for me, at least until I came to college.

Here at Stanford, with my name displayed on my door, I became more than just "Mark", I became "Mark Flores". Whereas my last name and I had previously existed in isolation with each other, in college, it became a necessary brand used to distinguish me from the hundreds of other students. It's strange that with the addition of this last name, I seemed to lose my ethnicity.

I had never really been questioned before about my race—it was relatively clear from the way I looked that I was Chinese. But here, with this burden attached to my name, my face became deceiving, a mismatch with the moniker of my ancestral line. People would give me curious looks, as if they weren't quite sure exactly what to think of me, or of this name. My last name became a sort of screen, a prism, filtering the impressions of the people around me, as my Asian appearance became secondary to my name. When this became clear to me, my name became secondary to my ethnicity—whether I was truly Chinese or not, my full name was Chinese. When I told her I was, she didn't really believe me.

The same day, another (full Chinese) person questioned if I was Chinese. When I told her I was, she didn't really believe me, either. I had never really been questioned before about my race—until now.

I had never really been questioned before about my race—until now.

I went to sleep unable to put the issue to rest, and on the first day of the new year, I received no red envelope. I was told that the "donor" had decided to call off the whole thing. From the same girl who questioned me, I received no red envelope. I was told that the "donor" had decided to call off the whole thing. It was really clear from the way I looked that I was Chinese. My last name seemed secondary to my ethnicity—whether I was truly Chinese or not, my full name was Chinese. When I told her I was, she didn't really believe me.

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I was told that the "donor" had decided to call off the whole thing. From the same girl who questioned me, I received no red envelope. I was told that the "donor" had decided to call off the whole thing. It was really clear from the way I looked that I was Chinese. My last name seemed secondary to my ethnicity—whether I was truly Chinese or not, my full name was Chinese. When I told her I was, she didn't really believe me.

I had never really been questioned before about my race—until now.
middle ground between my internal ethnicity and my outward ethnicity, but I received no such revelation. Still today, I don’t know what I am.

But this question is not like the SAT, with a 5-hour time limit, and there is no right answer. I do not have to choose between two (or more) answers to bubble in, and I have as long as I need to define my identity. I have slipped on the struggle of the multiracial in this scientific, polarizing, categorizing world of ours, and I will fit the mold of whatever person I wish to be. I will find my own definition of race, and will conform to no other standards but my own. I am more than just a Chinese, I am a whole person.

I am not just ¾ Chinese; I am a whole person.
mother stubbornly refuses to yield to my demands, clinging to her heavy red cloak while reaching for the green prosperity of spring. Eventually, I will hold her forever. Already, she is bound to me. Growing, changing, she adapts until it is no longer Hell. Even if only warily, she calls my empire her home. She knows that everyone in the Heavenly Kingdom perceives her as a foreigner, a stranger. For all that, inwardly, she knows she is not dead; she knows she still does not belong in my lands. She is the perpetual foreigner.

When she returns home, it flourishes. So with spring a new life and a new prosperity comes to that land. But that is no longer her home – and neither is my land.

"Why wouldn't you just wish for all the mosquitoes to die?"

"Why?" I asked. "I wish for a bottle of;

I wish for a bottle of;

I wish for a bottle of;

I wish for a bottle of;

I wish for a bottle of;

I wish for a bottle of;

The grass pulled up like snakes climbing their way to heaven. My boots were shot. They used to be baby blue, but now they were dirty. Shitty. Like mouse. Natalia was standing in the road, looking for something. She lowered her arm and started massaging her shoulder. "We're not having any luck in this place anyway."

We walked down the road a bit, but of course, the mosquitoes were still following us.

"If I had one wish, Natalia said, "I'd wish for a bottle of Bug Off."

"Why?" I asked. "I wish for a bottle of;

"I wish for a bottle of;

"I wish for a bottle of;

"I wish for a bottle of;

"I wish for a bottle of;

"I wish for a bottle of;

August 1997
Roadside, Florida

Bushra Rehman

THE GRASS PULLED UP
I've got simple needs, Razia, simple needs.

Another car whizzed by. "At least the mosquitoes like us."

I tried to slap one off but missed. I looked at Natalia and threw my mosquito-bitten arms around her. It didn't matter about the heat. Natalia laughed and squirmed but then bit my ear. "More bites!" She pulled me back into the shade of the trees. "Forget these stupid drivers."

She threw herself down on the ground and tried to pull me down with her, but I pulled back. "We can't get more dirty! People with cars probably already think we're going to mess up their seats. Maybe we should stand here with mops, so we're more easily recognizable. Third World cleaning ladies."

It was so bad, we both started giggling. We were lucky we didn't miss the car. I heard the sound of wheels from far off first. My head snapped up, and I quickly jumped out into the road and flashed my thumb. By some miracle, the car stopped. It was a Chevrolet and green, like Army but without the camouflage.

"Hi!" I said in my perkiest voice, trying not to look at Jesus's scarred body. "Where you girls heading?"

Natalia and I scooted in like two little children. Inside, the seats were clean, shiny leather and a darker olive. My sweaty legs immediately stuck to the leather. I saw the old man looking at us in the rearview mirror. It always happens so fast. One minute you're on the road, and the next minute, you're in a Chevrolet listening to Irish music with an old man and woman who love Jesus. I wasn't used to seeing Jesus a lot, and the sight of him bleeding away was always a bit of a shock.

"Hi!" I said in my perkiest voice, trying not to look at Jesus's scarred body. "We can't walk all the way to Key West."

Natalia said, seeing I was going off into one of my reveries, "We're heading to Miami, girls. You're welcome to come along." He turned to his wife and said, "Honey, put in those Irish tapes." And she did. We entered the car to the strains of what sounded like pagan Gaelic music.

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The power dynamics of hitchhiking are weird. In exchange for a ride, you're expected to be entertaining or an open throbbing non-judgmental ear. Natalia and I had sat through long tirades about broken marriages and selfish children. We'd listened with mock empathy to one yuppie man's existential despair. We'd heard at least seven stories about how much more fun it had been to hitchhike in the Sixties. I wasn't used to seeing Jesus a lot, and the sight of him bleeding away was always a bit of a shock. Probably the only chance I would ever have for perfect teeth was going to be when they all fell out and I got dentures. Of course, the way I was living, who knew if I would ever be able to afford dentures, or if I would live long enough to wear them. Probably the only chance I would ever have for perfect teeth was going to be when they all fell out and I got dentures. Of course, the way I was living, who knew if I would ever be able to afford dentures, or if I would live long enough to wear them. Probably the only chance I would ever have for perfect teeth was going to be when they all fell out and I got dentures. Of course, the way I was living, who knew if I would ever be able to afford dentures, or if I would live long enough to wear them. Probably the only chance I would ever have for perfect teeth was going to be when they all fell out and I got dentures. Of course, the way I was living, who knew if I would ever be able to afford dentures, or if I would live long enough to wear them. Probably the only chance I would ever have for perfect teeth was going to be when they all fell out and I got dentures. Of course, the way I was living, who knew if I would ever be able to afford dentures, or if I would live long enough to wear them. Probably the only chance I would ever have for perfect teeth was going to be when they all fell out and I got dentures. Of course, the way I was living, who knew if I would ever be able to afford dentures, or if I would live long enough to wear them. Probably the only chance I would ever have for perfect teeth was going to be when they all fell out and I got dentures. Of course, the way I was living, who knew if I would ever be able to afford dentures, or if I would live long enough to wear them. Probably the only chance I would ever have for perfect teeth was going to be when they all fell out and I got dentures. Of course, the way I was living, who knew if I would ever be able to afford dentures, or if I would live long enough to wear them.
Natalia was wearing a T-shirt that said "Blam!" in large red letters across her chest.

The man's eyes in the rearview mirror were now twice the size they were when we first got into the car. I suddenly knew we had made a mistake. It always amazed me the way some religious people, it doesn't matter what religion they are, go ga-ga over a little bit of skin. It burns me up. The old man's eyes shifted from my face to my breasts then to Natalia's and back. Somehow, he still managed to drive straight. I had to give him credit for that.

When I looked over at Natalia, I could tell she was starting to get upset. She was no naïve cat who had just hit the street. She looked directly into the rearview mirror, and he looked away quickly. His wife didn't seem to notice anything. She just kept changing tapes, listening for half a minute, then popping the cassette out again and replacing it with another one of unrecognizable music. I guess she didn't like Irish music.

I decided right then and there that I didn't feel like being in a peep show, not to mention one with an indecisive DJ, so I did what I did best. I started talking. "That's quite a crucifix you have there." I said. I thought if I brought up the topic of religion the old man might remember some of the commandments. Maybe there was one in there that told you not to ogle young girls.

My plan worked for a second. He started looking at Jesus's naked flesh instead of ours, but then he turned back and looked us up and down as much as that was possible through the rearview mirror. "Why you girls heading to Key West?"

"I have a friend there," I said. "She's getting married." If I was sure enough, I added. "I'm Pakistani!" I said in a clipped tone. Hoping he would get the clue.

He looked at us, and I could tell he was weighing our features, deciding which foreign countries we could possibly be from. We could pass for so many. At least he was looking at our faces and not our legs. We could blame that on genetics. Our mother didn't pass on much. We each got one of her eyes, our sister got the other. We were all foreign, but still looked like Pakistanis. Natalia was the tallest, and she looked like she had a lot of things: Egyptian, Italian and New England White. In short, she looked more desi than me. Dark and pretty, she got harassed in every gas station and deli we went into. But when she looked in their mirrors, they looked more at her than at me, and she could see the difference. Natalia was a mix of many things: Egyptian, Italian and New England White.

"In Pakistan?" I said. "I won't marry you!"

"Pakeestan!" he mispronounced in American. "I was in Karachi in the Seventies." He looked at Joy. "That was before I found the Lord and before I met my better half." Joy paused in her tape pushing and smiled. I could see the precision of her white teeth. She had the sort of teeth that make you think of old movies. "It was Partition, terrible thing the way the natives turned on each other.

"Plus it was one of our games. Natalia and I would tell fake stories about our friends, and the old man got so involved, he believed them. He always said, 'I have a friend there, and he...'

"Why you girls heading to Key West?"

He thought I was a peep show, and he had just given my friend Joy a cue to make it all worse. "I thought it was a church BBQ. That's quite an exaggeration," you have there."

"Marriage! Is that right? Marriage is one of God's greatest gifts," the old man looked at our thighs as if we were chicken being picked out at a church BBQ. "But where are my manners? I'm John and this is my wife, Joy..."

"And these are my friends, Razia and Natalia," I said. "They're going to Key West together..."

"I'm Natalia, and this is Razia. I was Pennsylvania, and this is Joy," Natalia corrected him as he tried to say Pennsylvania. "Washington, D.C. It sounds like a city in a foreign country.

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Natalia quickly put her hand on my thigh and squeezed my knee to calm me down so I didn't get one of my "Racial Rage Fits" as we jokingly called them.

He noticed our touch and his face stiffened. Damn, these religious people with their eyes like hawks. You have to be constantly vigilant when you're sitting in the seat of judgment. I caught myself, judging. I guess I hadn't shaken off my own religious training.

"Sooooo..." he stretched it out like a long, low tire letting out air. "When are your weddings?" He made sure it was plural to avoid any confusion.

Outside of the car, I thought I saw two ostriches running for their lives in the Florida bush. I answered honestly before I could stop myself. "I don't want to get married." It was just a knee-jerk reaction.

"Oh, I'm sorry." she said. "I had almost forgotten she could speak.

"Jokingly called them." she clanged her fingers on the lap of the button she pressed with split,"Distraction is a blessing given to us by our Lord. Haven't you read the Bible?" He made sure I read the Bible. He didn't wait for a response. "And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make a helpmate for him."

"Amen," Joy said. I jumped. I had almost forgotten she could speak.

"Yes." he reached out a wrinkly hand, one that seemed it had been in a sitz bath for a week and grabbed her thigh. "The Lord says, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife. And they shall be one flesh.'" Natalia looked over at me alarmed. I wasn't feeling too well myself.

Joy turned around, and I nearly jumped. Joy's face close up was caked with make-up, thick foundation, fuchsia lipstick, and green eye shadow up to her eyebrows. It was scary. I had been so distracted by Jesus and the old man I hadn't looked at her too closely. She looked from me to Natalia. Her words were covered with spit. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

I guess I hadn't taken into account, that she was a 20-year-old, that she had a mind of her own. She had a mind of her own. Natalia looked over at me, his wife. And they shall be one flesh, "Natalia looked over at him and smiled,"and forever after this flesh he [or she] shall cleave to."

"Yes," he reached out a wrinkly hand, one that seemed it had been in another. She looked over at him with a smirking look, and he glowed down on her with a smirk of his own. Oh goodness, I was almost foiled again.

John winked at us through the rearview window. Joy noticed the look and was poised to react. "Psychos," I mouthed silently. She nodded, but John thought she was agreeing with him. "When are you doing she whispered."

"I hate to feel this way, trapped and pressed to. I pinched Natalia's arm, "My stomach felt tight. The air in the car felt impossible to breathe."

And how did the Lord say, "The Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make a helper for him."

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He started singing:

The other night as I left the meeting
God's spirit bade me stay
But I said not tonight, for next week only
I must go and dance with the gay.

After that I'll go and get converted
And be a Christian bright
But alas, too late, I see the folly
By saying not tonight.

Natalia and I stared at him. He had no idea how appropriate his song was.

John laughed. "Oh, that's so! His eyes shifted to Natalia to get another

on the Silk Road. Didn't you know?"

"The first hitchhikers were just travelers who hoped onto caravans
danger. There was a rest stop 5 miles away, so I had a few minutes.
was something my health teacher had told me so I was on a plan. It
probably be the other way around, I insist. Controlling a planet
the desire to protect her from the world. Even though it would
My heart contracted. I looked over at Natalia and felt an overwhel-

would allow their daughters to go hitchhiking."

"For Florida's sake, I think people from your country
gave me a hard time. I just the slightest bit of iron. We're
this time. People you just the slightest bit of iron. They're so
where we were. We hadn't told anyone we were hitchhiking. For the
he looked at me through his Ocean. I got a small dowm my spine and
Does your family know you're hitchhiking? Then you're out here?"

and millions of insects buzzed.

Outside, Florida was waving. I put Liz's disk on. Our朗

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After that I'll go and get converted

I insist. Controlling a planet
The other night as I left the meeting
He had no idea how appropriate this song

The man and his donkeys started walking. Voilà had gotten on his
black suit. "Jesus Christ!" Joy gave him a swift look, but it didn't stop him. "Why didn't you tell us you were feeling sick?!"

"She did," Natalia looked worried until I winked. She shook her head, then looked at him. "We're sorry, really sorry. Could we just pull over at this rest stop?" The exit was right there. "We'll help you clean up."

Yeah right we were going to help them clean up. Natalia and I were going to scram as soon as we could, leaving him and his wife in the parking lot wondering why it was taking us so long to get paper towels. That car was going to stink all the way to Miami, and we were going to hop into the back of a Pepsi truck where the driver would let us sleep in peace for hours.

As we took the exit, he was fuming. The backs of his ears were red. He wasn't looking at us anymore as he drove his olive green Chevrol...

THE MYTH-O-MA-LOGICAL TALE

LEO TONOUCHI

OF HAWAIIAN SANTA

THE MYTH-O-MALOGICAL TALE

I admit. I losing it. Any moment now I might just buckaloose! Maybe it's because this gotta be the stupidest tourist question evah posed to me during my fifteen years driving this trolley bus. Or maybe it's because she's got me thinking about the future of Hawai'i. Or maybe it's because I just read an article about the future of Hawai'i in a magazine article I just read about the future of Hawai'i. Maybe it's because I'm tired of hearing about the American Dream, the idea that I've been chasing while trying to make ends meet. Or maybe it's because I'm tired of hearing about the American Dream, the idea that I've been chasing while trying to make ends meet.

I guess until now I never really heard about the American Dream. Maybe it's because I never really heard about the American Dream. Maybe it's because I never really heard about the American Dream.

I admit, it's the kine images those picture postcards perpetuate. So when my passenger Omaha, Nebraska asks, "Do you folks have Christmas in Hawhyah?" I can't handle. I used to be able to handle that stupid question like, "Are you living in a grass shack? Do you have electricity? Do you surf? Do you surf to work?"

I admit, that's the kine images those picture postcards perpetuate. So maybe it's not entirely the fault of the stupid tourist that they're misinformed. But c'mon. Christmas? I'm thinking about getting Christmas all informed. I'm thinking about getting Christmas all informed. I'm thinking about getting Christmas all informed. I'm thinking about getting Christmas all informed. I'm thinking about getting Christmas all informed.

It's probably one combination of all of these things percolating, so when my passenger Omaha, Nebraska asks, "Do you folks have Christmas in Hawhyah?" I can't handle. I used to be able to handle that stupid question like, "Are you living in a grass shack? Do you have electricity? Do you surf? Do you surf to work?"

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Hearing dis tourist's question brings me back to da time my good friend Braddah Mike wen mail me dat lettah from when he went Big Island for do his research projeck for get his PhD. Dat wuz nice of him for correspond I remembah tinking. Cuz usually if Braddah Mike goes someplace I no find out about 'em till way aftah he comes back. I opened da envelope and Scotch-tape to his lettah wuz what appeared for be one little piece of gravel. In his lettah he explained how he wuz mailing me one souvenir, one small rock he got from Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, da home of Pele, da Hawaiian Goddess of da Volcano.

Ho, I wen let-a-go da lettah so fast. Sucking Mike. Why wuz he cursing me I wondered. Da superstition goes, you not supposed to steal Pele's rocks. Everybody know dat. When you go dey always telling how each year people disregard da warnings and decide for snake some. But eventually dey all get sent back. On display wuz some of da actual lettahs from both Locals and tourists explaining how dey took rocks and brought 'em home and da wound up with all kine bad luck so das how come dey mailed 'em back. Some people loss all their money. Some got all kine mysterious illnesses. Some loss their jobs, their homes, and/or their loved ones. Some died, so their relatives wuz da ones who sent 'em back, cuz dey ne-
vah like come dead too.

So what da heck wuz Braddah Mike doing I wondered. What I eva did to him? I called 'em up for broke his ear ova da phone. Das when he explained to me what he found out in his research. He said da story of Pele's Curse nevah have no basis in Hawaiian mythologies. In 1946 one park ranger wuz tired of people desecrating da landscape so he wen go invent da story of Pele's Curse. Yet, even though he made 'em all up, word spread and eventually ukuplanny people fo' real kine believed. And not jus tourists. Locals too. Even Locals who wuz Hawaiian. So da whole ting's fo' fake, but Braddah Mike said das da powah of superstition and belief.

Wit dat theory in mind, I figgah I go take dat park ranger's story and do 'em one bettah. Instead of getting tourists for stop taking itsy bitsy rocks, I decide my myth-o-ma-logical tale going get tourists and speculators for stop snaking whole chunks of land and driving up real estate prices so everyday Local folks like myself no can afford. When tinking about how I going respond to Omaha, I make da decision dat I going forego all sense of job security, cuz not like get such one ting nowdays anyways. Wit one sly kolohe kine grin I tell da guy, "Of course we get Christmas in Hawai'i." As we head along da coast up to Hanauma Bay we pass by all da Diamond Head homes and Kahala side mansions dat I nevah going afford. Das when I get on da mic and I ask my passengers, "Since Omaha wen ask, who like know da story of Hawaiian Santa?" Palm Beach, Lake Forest, Oak Brook, Tokyo, Westport and Malibu all chime in "Yes, do tell." But before I can even start dey already bombarding me wit questions. I dunno why tourist people always gotta interrupt. "Where does your Hawaiian Santa live?" "Does he ride a sleigh?" "Do you have reindeer here?" And of course, "So are all your toys made of koa?" I feel like telling da guy, yeah brah, all Local people shop at Martin & MacArthur. In fact, I even planning on selling my giant flat screen HD TV and my entire home entertainment system. . . so I can buy one niiiice koa papahclip.

All my life I been catering to da tourists. In high school I took Japa-

Goddess of da Volcano.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, da home of Pele, da Hawaiian Volcano, is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the state. It is located on the island of Hawai'i and is known for its active volcanic activity. The park is known for its stunning landscapes, diverse plant and animal life, and its history of volcanic eruptions. The park is managed by the National Park Service and is a popular destination for hikers, scientists, and nature enthusiasts alike.

One of the most notable features of the park is the Kilauea Volcano, which is the most active volcano on Earth. The park is also home to the Pu'u O' O vent, which is the site of the most recent volcanic eruption. The park is also home to numerous species of endemic plants and animals, including the Hawaiian green tree frog, the Hawaiian Mourning Gecko, and the Hawaiian ginger.

The park is also a popular destination for scientific research, and scientists from around the world come to study the park's volcanic activity and its impact on the surrounding ecosystem. The park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is a testament to the power and beauty of nature. It is a reminder of the importance of preserving our natural heritage for future generations to enjoy.
Since small kid time everybody wuz always telling me how we gotta do everyting for show da hospitalities to da tourists. Even da hotels I go, dey all fully kowtow to all da visitors. I found out couple hotels wen even ban Braddah Iz. You can believe dat? First I heard dat I wuz puzzle. I wuz like how can you ban one dead guy? Das when my friend wen go explain how wuz Braddah Iz's music dat wuz ban. At da hotel my friend Koza work at, he said it's cuz "Hawai'i 78" wuz playing in da lobby so one tourist lady wen go complain about how da song made her feel unwelcome so management wen go reack. Or maybe I should say dey wen go ban all songs made by Hawaiian song legend Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. I could maybe see how da song "Living in a Sovereign Land" might upset some tourists, cuz it alludes to da overthrow of da Hawaiian nation and wanting sovereignty for da Hawaiian peoples. But what dey nevah fully understand is so what we do when we go ban songs. But what day never fully understand is so what we do when we go "No werry," I begin "All your questions wuz be answered during da course of my myth-o-ma-logical tale." I scan my rearview mirror. I see all eyes stay transfixed on to me. Well, on to me anyway.

Melé Kalikimaka cuz the wiz always so happy. Melé Kalikimaka anu, da wiz always so happy. Das why all his friends called him his obituary too. He said Kalikimaka wuz one good natured man, had his obituary too. He said Kalikimaka wuz one good natured man, could build da volcano. "When people saw da guy who wen jump into da volcano dey assumed he wen commit suicide. Da story wuz even in da paper, had his obituary too. It said Melé Kalikimaka was one good natured man, had his obituary too. He said Kalikimaka wuz one good natured man, could build da volcano. "When people saw da guy who wen jump into da volcano dey assumed he wen commit suicide."
Kalikimaka did kolohe rascal kine stuff for get back at people. Like he would enlist da help of da menehune and have dem steal tings for fun. Like cameras and purses from tourists when dey parked at Pali lookout and left their stuffs in plain view on top da front seat wit da window down. But while wuz fun for see da angry look on da tourists' faces when their stuff wuz gone, Kalikimaka still wuzn't satisfied. "Cuz still had rich people buying Hawai'i up. So Kalikimaka de-decided for do what da state couldn't do. Back in da 70's Governor George Ariyoshi wen go enact da law where public jobs could only go to Local residents. Da tinking wuz das going deter outsiders from moving ova hea. Cuz how dey can come one resident if dey no more one job? And how dey can get one job if dey not one resident? And for long time da law wen fly. And wuzn't until recently dat couple Florida guys wen sue and so da ACLU wen complain cuz dey said das illegal discriminations and da Hawai'i law wuz actually unconstitutional. Da ACLU legal director revealed how "It sends the message that nonresidents are not welcome." I thought wuz obvious from da beginning when dey made dat law, but actually took da lawyers 27 years for figgah dat out. Go figgah. Instead of using da legal systen, Kalikimaka wen decide for resort to his own methods and use fear tactics. He imagined he could scare off newcomers if he spread da rumor dat da island wuz going sink if had too much people. And naturally da areas dat would be first for go would be all da rich beach houses and luxury condos dat transplants love best. But to his chagrin, dat still never scare people away. I guess cuz da rich people tink different from regular people. Most everyday people, dey see da water stay rising dey go "Flood, flood, run away, flee for your lives." But rich guys is like "My goodness, I do believe the tide is unusually high. I suppose we'll just have to finish our martinis on our luxury yacht."

And so, wuz back to da drawing board for Kalikimaka. So you know how Haole Santa get his sleigh with his reindeer, Hawaiian Santa get his outrigger canoe pulled by his nine wild puaa. But look Palm Beach ova dea. She sayin' but pigs no can walk on water. Das right. And what? Reindeer can fly in da air? See, same smell. So what Kalikimaka wen use his magic canoe for do? He wen go far out to sea, den taking his magic lasso. Cuz Kalikimaka's uncle wuz one paniolo so he had da kine cowboy background, ah, li'dat, ah. But using his magic lasso he wen go lasso... da sun. I know West Port ova dea saying, but wouldn't da sun burn da rope? Das true, true. But what West Port dunno is Kalikimaka's only magic was da gas. Cuz in actuality tourists is getting 15.2 degrees of extra sun. I kid you not. Das why, you know how much sun screen da tourists put on, but still get burnt, while we hardly get any. Use smart tourists. Why? Sure, we don't have puaa. But we do have -

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I park my trolley bus and make some quick kine announcements. "No forget for bring your valuables. Cuz we not liable. You nevah know when going get menehune. Remembah now, no walk too close togeddhah. Make sure you spread out da weight. I smile little bit to myself when I notice Omaha and Malibu, stepping gingerly off my trolley bus. I give dem all one shaka for tell 'em goodbye and I give dem all one shaka for tell 'em "Meet back in two hours. Have fun. Relax. Take deeeeeeep breaths. Let it all in. And no forget, Mele Kalikimaka."
HOW THE RULES OF RACISM ARE DIFFERENT FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

Matthew Salesses

My senior year in Chapel Hill, I finally got up the courage to take a course in Asian American literature. Stupidly, I treated it as a little experiment. As an adoptee, I had grown up with white parents in a white town in rural Connecticut. My only knowledge of Asian culture was Chinese food and, when I was growing up, a number of meetings of adopted children that still haunt me, though I realize that my parents had my best interests at heart. They had taken me to these meetings for connection, but what I remember was the disconnect: the awkwardness of forced interaction between children who thought of themselves as white and didn’t want to be shown otherwise. We hated being categorized as adoptees, or I did and I read those feelings into the others, who to me did not seem friendly, or familiar, only more strange for their yellow faces.

Those meetings made me feel classified by my parents as other. One of the things I most remember from that time (and from books like We Adopted You, Benjamin Koo) is the common experience that the adopted child has when one day he looks into the mirror and all of a sudden realizes that his skin color is not the same as his parents’. Up until that moment, he sees himself as white (in the case that the parents are white). I saw myself as white. When I closed my eyes, or when I was in a conversation and seemed to be watching from above, I was a skinny white boy, a combination of my parents, just like other kids. Sometimes, when I’m being honest, I still catch myself looking down at my conversations with white people and picturing myself, in that strange ongoing record in my head, as no different from them. As a boy, the one thing that nagged at me was the flatness of my nose. I was constantly tugging on it, thinking that I could stretch it out and thereby gain acceptance.

But let me pause here for a moment. This is going to be a difficult essay to write, and I want to prepare myself—and you, reader—by coming at this topic from a larger angle. It seems to me that a similar type of self-contextualizing (through race) happened on a grand scale in Asian America as Jer-
The test, you see, was secretly how Asian I was, or maybe whether I was Asian at all. It was something to do with discovering myself, and how much that self was formed by my birth, which I knew nothing about, and by my birth mother, who had abandoned me, and by the country that had raised me while leaving scars of unknown origin on various parts of my body.

College can be a chance to remake oneself, or to get closer to the foundation of oneself that one gradually moves away from under the influence of peers. I had, in fact, as soon as I got to UNC, attempted to join the Asian American club, but I couldn't get over how cliquish they seemed, embracing their strangeness, while the truth is that I was trying to get away from those differences. Soon I found myself, with this second chance, once again trying to be accepted by people who looked like my parents, telling myself I didn't want to be Asian if this was what being Asian meant, being birds of a different feather, expected to be an automatic friend because of race. I had, as you can see, my excuses.

Yet somewhere inside of me, I must have felt that I was growing further from myself. Racist jokes were told with alarming frequency for a school billed the "most liberal in the South," and I was friends with two groups: one mostly white, mostly Southerners in the same dorm; the other mostly black, with whom I played pickup basketball. They joked without censor. I had a girlfriend whose aunt and uncle lived in North Carolina, and when we went to visit, they would say that at least I wasn't black, often before some racist diatribe. This seemed the predominant sentiment then. At least I wasn't ____.

I was taking the AA course to find out what I was. I hadn't read much Asian American literature at that time—I think almost all I could add to the class discussion was Michael Ondaatje—and a couple of books planted seeds in me then that would grow into a certain self-awareness later in life. I will always be grateful to Don Lee's story collection, Yellow. In Lee's stories, Asian American characters experience racism, but these incidents experience racism after racist incidents, but these characters experience racism in the background of their lives. In my Middle School's history classes, I remember learning about the Holocaust, but never about Asian American experiences of racism, which, at least in my parents' generation, were just as prevalent—perhaps even more so.

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That was the same year my closest childhood friend suddenly cut me off. We had been inseparable, but at the start of that school year, he made fun of me and seemed to use this attack to springboard into popularity. I spent many nights during those first few weeks of school crying myself to sleep, not understanding why we weren't friends anymore. It is a wound that still hurts—as I type this, I find my face heating up and my breaths deepening. I still don't understand completely, but I can point to the fear that this was due to the color of my skin, more than anything, as an indication that it indeed was. I understood even when I didn't understand, as children can.

In response to the students who didn't believe the frequency/viciousness of the racism in Yellow, the professor showed us an interview in which Lee says every incident in the book has happened to him. Or perhaps I found this interview later, I don't remember now. As a matter of research, I thought I would ask a few Asian American authors I know about racist incidents in their books that are based on events that happened to them. Earlier this year, Salon ran a piece by Marie Myung-Ok Lee about a bully who made it into her novel and whom she finally, after many years, confronted. I heard from several writers about experiences making it into their books: how they were unable to get away from writing about those experiences, as unable as they were to stop thinking about them, but hardly anyone seemed to want to call out those past attackers. I spoke with one writer about the condition of anonymity, as the people who had hurt him most were those closest to him.

I think what all of this says to me is that 1. these things happen to all of us, and 2. they leave the type of mark that we cannot escape, that we return to again and again, as writers do.

A few years after UNC, when I was an MFA student at Emerson College, where Don Lee got his MFA and later edited Ploughshares and taught, there was a rumor going around the literary world that in the original workshop stories from Yellow, the characters were white. I'm not sure the truth of this statement. In fact, I'm not interested in the truth of it. I'm more interested in the fact that this was a rumor at all. This was something people wanted to talk about, and during that month of the winter's end, this was a theme that kept surfacing throughout the conversations of college admissions. Yes, it is a very real concern that Asian writers are not being represented in these public forums, and I'm grateful that with more understanding of Asian American writers, this is finally, at least, more visible.

For my day job, I organize a seminar at Harvard on the topic of Inequality. I attend these talks both out of responsibility and out of interest. But after two and a half years, I can only remember hearing about Asians being mentioned twice, once in direct response to a question by an Asian student. I remember sitting beside another Asian American student and listening to her lecture earlier this year. She said something about how she felt like the people who talked about Asians didn't have their own story to tell out loud, and those who did were people who had grown up in Asian American communities. As someone who hasn't grown up in an Asian American community, I found her statement quite insightful. It made me wonder if my own stories opf Asian American writers were not making sense. Why my stories didn't work? Something was missing in my writing, perhaps. Perhaps the reason I inserted plenty of backstory and character development was that I never really saw myself as an Asian American writer. For the first time, I realized that what my characters were missing, in many cases, was a crucial piece of my own lived experience. I realized that my stories, although they were not made up of a single event, were somehow incomplete without that piece. The breakthrough came when I decided to be more mindful of the stories of Asian American writers and how I inserted them into my own work. I realized that these stories were not just about the characters, but about the experiences that had shaped them. I started to think about how my own experiences had influenced my writing and how my stories opf Asian American writers had shaped my understanding of the world. The breakthrough came when I decided to be more mindful of the stories of Asian American writers and how I inserted them into my own work. I realized that these stories were not just about the characters, but about the experiences that had shaped them. I started to think about how my own experiences had influenced my writing and how my stories opf Asian American writers had shaped my understanding of the world. The breakthrough came when I decided to be more mindful of the stories of Asian American writers and how I inserted them into my own work. I realized that these stories were not just about the characters, but about the experiences that had shaped them. I started to think about how my own experiences had influenced my writing and how my stories opf Asian American writers had shaped my understanding of the world.
investigation on charges of racism toward Asians, whose grades and SAT scores, on average, must be higher than those of other races in order to gain admissions. Many Asian Americans are responding by marking the box on applications that declines to indicate race, some thing I cannot help but read symbolically. I confess that I would give my daughter that exact advice, in admissions: not to reveal her race. The accusation is that schools have capped their “quotas” of Asian students, and this is why Asians need to score higher, because they are competing amongst themselves for a limited number of spots. Most Asians accept the unwritten rules, pushing themselves or their children harder. But why should they, in a country that prides itself on equal opportunity?

To bring up college admissions is often to be met with the complaint that we should be happy with the success we have. In fact, success is often used as a justification for why Asians are ignored in discussions of inequality. I was forgetting a third mention of Asian Americans in the seminars: as a group other immigrant races should look toward as an example of successful assimilation. Why aren’t we happy with our disproportionate admissions and the many children who grow up to be doctors and lawyers, pushed by their parents? (The more sarcastic answer: why aren’t white people happy enough with EVERYTHING?)

Jeremy Lin, early in his success, was called out by boxer Floyd Mayweather as only getting the attention he was getting because he is Asian, since every day black athletes accomplish what Lin has and receive no fanfare. Or something to this effect. Other journalists responded by saying Lin is getting the attention because he worked so hard and is the ultimate underdog. Both these points, it seems to me, have a lot to do with race. Why was Lin an underdog, ignored by scouts when he had succeeded at every level and outplayed the best point guards he faced (see: John Wall, Kemba Walker)? Writers always seem to mention how hard Lin works, and often mention his ethnicity, pushing him to work harder. Lin’s talent is marginalized by writers and media who see him as the Asian American stereotype, the child of immigrants who outworks and outstudies everyone else. Mayweather has one point, at least—other athletes work as hard or harder than Jeremy Lin. I’ve seen the videos of Lin’s workouts, how intense they are, how long, but this is not unusual for a basketball star. Read about Kobe Bryant’s work ethic, or Ray Allen’s, either of which put Jeremy Lin to shame. Jeremy Lin is the success he is because of his individual talent, not because he is Asian American. His ethnicity, I would have to argue, was only a factor in him having to “come out of nowhere,” since that was where Asians have been relegated to in sports.

After ESPN ran the “Chink in the Armor” headline, the writer of the headline made a very defensive apology in which he claimed to be a “good person” who didn’t know the weight of the word he was using. He was fired, and this apology came afterward. When he was first fired, I felt sorry for him. I didn’t think he deserved to lose his job, but then his defensiveness came and took that sympathy away. Some on my Twitter feed suggested he didn’t know the word because of his young age. He was 28. “Chink” is a very common term, probably the most common slur against Asians. It is hard to call someone who thinks he is complimenting you a racist. But the positive stereotypes people think they can use because of their “positivity” continue (and worsen) the problem. Thinking you can call an entire race “respectful” is thinking you can classify someone by race, is racism. Which is what is happening to Jeremy Lin when he is called “hard-working” instead of “skilled,” when his talent is marginalized by a writer who sees him as the Asian American stereotype, the child of immigrants who outworks and outstudies everyone else. Lin’s talent is marginalized by writers and media who see him as the Asian American stereotype, the child of immigrants who outworks and outstudies everyone else. Lin’s talent is marginalized by writers and media who see him as the Asian American stereotype, the child of immigrants who outworks and outstudies everyone else.

A few years after I graduated from UNCSA, I decided to go to Korea. A Korean part of me. I had spent a long winter in Prague as one of the always-cold, often-cultureless, most of the time was still struggling for their buying power, a dissenting who never understood his audience, who was working for a government who never finished his sentences, who was writing for a country who never knew what he was doing. Korea. I had never been back. I was still writing when the changes, the revolutions, the modernizations, the economic booms hit the peninsula. Korea, I had never been back. I was still writing when the changes, the revolutions, the modernizations, the economic booms hit the peninsula.
IV. RESEARCH

-Chin

Least a few years.

allows lesser morals to exist a widespread beneficial impact for an

development of successful techniques to address important problems
driven by race and often subject to intense competition, whereas
click on race and often subject to intense competition, whereas

But until fundamental insights such as those of Darwin or Wilson

not simply genetic. Something that had never been true in America
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shock to me. My culture. In spite of my skin color, my inability

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only Asians in the city, strange in a strange land. In Korea, I fell apart

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PROBLEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF ASIAN AMERICAN MEN IN HOLLYWOOD PRODUCTIONS

Kelsey Dang

"If you want to be cool, if you want to be the hero, if you want to get the girl -- our popular culture seems to say -- you can't be Asian." (Robert M. Payne)

It is quite effortless to name Hollywood's Caucasian leading men; Matt Damon, Ryan Gosling, George Clooney, and Channing Tatum are a few who come to mind. But what about Asian American leading men? The pool of options becomes profoundly smaller, and the names more obscure. Few people can recognize Asian American actors Jason Scott Lee, John Cho, Will Yun Lee, or Daniel Dae Kim. Asian Americans are underrepresented in film and television, and the number of Asian Americans on screen fails to account for actual population demographics. According to Screen Actors Guild Casting Data Reports, Asian Pacific Islanders "held only 3.8% of all TV/Theatrical roles in 2008," a percentage "far less than the actual percentage of the API population in the U.S. that same year" (Rabena). When Asian American actors do receive roles, they often play sidekicks or unattractive characters. Historically, Hollywood has relegated Asian American male actors to stereotypical roles including martial arts master, villain, technology nerd, model minority, or asexual clown. This casting pattern continues today. Absent are portrayals of Asian American men as soldiers, lawyers, fathers, romantic leads.

A range of scholars have found that when it comes to Asian American representation in the Hollywood entertainment industry, the images are overwhelmingly negative (Marchetti, Ono and Pham). With regard to Asian American masculinity on-screen, many scholars agree that Asian American males are often portrayed as asexual, homosexual, or effeminate. Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Associate Professor of Film and Performance Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara describes how such representations are "straitjacket sexualities" in her book Straightjacket Sexualities: Unbinding Asian American Manhoods in the Movies. Shimizu also details how Jeff Adachi's documentary on Asian men in film and television, The Slanted Screen, addresses the conflation of race and gender. In a similar vein, Kent Ono and Vincent Pham argue that media producers typecast Asian American actors in particular roles, their decisions imbue such negative stereotypes with widespread social power. Indeed, researcher Helen Kar-Yee from the University of Michigan draws from her interviews with Asian American young men to argue that in formative years, individuals turn to media images for identity construction. In "Navigating the Boundaries of (In)Visibility: Asian American Men and Asian American Masculinity on Screen," Ho evaluates recent roles available to Asian American actors. The author suggests that the ideal Asian American portrait is one in which the actor is present, but not highlighted as different.

with regard to roles void of realistic character development. In this paper, I argue that Hollywood's continual adherence to stereotypical roles for Asian American men negatively alters society's perception of Asian American males and affects the sense of identity of the average Asian American man as well as the identities of the actors who fill these roles. First, I make the connection between media representations of Asian Americans and societal perceptions of Asian Americans. In this section, I will describe the common perception of the Asian as the perpetual foreigner or the "Other," according to works including Edward Said's Orientalism. Next, the essay will address problematic portrayals of Asian American males and comment on the paucity of leading romantic roles for Asian American men; I will focus on two films to evaluate their characterizations of Asian men. I will conclude with a discussion on Hollywood practices and casting decisions. In this final section, I will review recent casting decisions of this decade for Asian American men in primetime television.

### Part 1: Media Stereotypes of Asian American Men

Media representations of Asian Americans dramatically influence societal perceptions of Asian American males because people draw from characterizations of groups found in the media to form their understanding of reality. Media studies scholar Helen Ho declares, "What is commonly circulated in cultural discourse and exchange has the power to define and guide interpretations of others" (Ho 13). Since film and television are such effective forms of communication, the images they create produce a profound effect on an audience's social perceptions. In his book Public Opinion, Walter Lippmann explains that media have the power to shape the "pictures in our heads" (Lippmann 29). He warns that "the pictures inside people's heads do not automatically correspond with the world outside." The problem arises, then, when people rely on media characterizations of certain groups to form their attitudes toward those groups. When Hollywood perpetuates negative stereotypes of characters of certain groups, it forms their attitudes toward these groups. These stereotypes of certain groups become their attitude toward these groups. In this paper, I explore how Hollywood's continual adherence to stereotypes of these groups, whether positive or negative, affects the way audiences perceive Asian Americans and how these perceptions shape society's understanding of Asian Americans.

### Origins of Asian American Male Stereotypes

Some of the most common stereotypes of Asian American men found in media productions past and present include: the foreigner, the villain, the kung fu master, the model minority, and the asexual buffoon. Most of these characterizations are rooted in historical prejudice against Asians in America. One stereotype frequently employed in the media is that Asians in the United States are forever foreigners; they can never fully assimilate and remain outsiders in society. This perspective follows Edward Said's description of "Orientalism," in which Westerners view an individual from Asia as an example of the Oriental, an alien "Other." Said explains that the Oriental is commonly interpreted as strange and not to be trusted (Said 40). Historically, Westerners have viewed the East as different and backward, an attitude that became so pervasive that it was assumed to be "common sense." These stereotypical Asian American acting roles of the perpetual foreigner, the villain (embodiment of a threat to the Western way of life), and the exotic martial arts master are all a result of past prejudicial notions of Asians. These stereotypes normalize the concept of white superiority and non-white inferiority and reflect the "imperialist white eye" that Stuart Hall claims is ever-present in media representations of race (Hall qtd. in Park 4). Furthermore, said stereotypes also influence social expectations of Asian Americans and serve to shape the media's representation of Asian American men.

### The Larger Implications

In this section, I will review recent casting decisions of Asian American men in television and film. These decisions reflect the ongoing perpetuation of these stereotypes and the continued lack of realistic character development for Asian American actors. When Hollywood fails to cast Asian American actors in leading roles, it reinforces the perception that Asian American men are not capable of playing complex characters. This reinforces the "model minority" stereotype, which is often the only role available to Asian American actors. By limiting the roles available to Asian American actors, Hollywood perpetuates negative stereotypes and reinforces the idea that Asian American men are not capable of playing complex characters. In this paper, I explore how Hollywood's continual adherence to stereotypes affects society's understanding of Asian American men and how these perceptions shape society's expectations of Asian American actors.
sexual anxieties, and the belief that the West will be overpowered and enveloped by the irresistible, dark, occult forces of the East" (Marchetti 2). Yet the "asexual buffoon" role is also linked to the perceived yellow peril threat, which the United States' wars with Japan, Korea, and Vietnam helped to perpetuate. In fact, the emasculation of Asian American men in Hollywood can be traced to an effort to ward off xenophobic anxiety over power relations (Ono and Pham 71). Simultaneously, the notion of Asian American men as feminine is also linked to the past concentration of Asian male immigrants who took over "feminized professions" in the late 19th century, working in tailor's shops, laundries and restaurants because they were barred from heavy labor jobs. David Eng, author of Racial Castration, explains that these Asian male immigrants lived in bachelor communities that were "physically, socially, and psychically isolated," communities which "might easily be thought of as "queer" spaces" (Eng 18). Past discrimination toward Asian male immigrants is largely the cause of the stereotype of the asexual buffoon and has therefore led to the severe lack of lead romantic roles for Asian American men in today's Hollywood environment. Scholar Celine Parreñas Shimizu describes the common media portrayals of Asian American males as asexual, homosexual, or effeminate as "straitjacket sexualities," representations that "inflict racial wounds, pathologize gender, and construct an abnormal sexuality" (Shimizu 18). When standard notions of masculinity are considered abnormal for Asian American men, de-sexualized, socially inept, comedic roles are all that remain for Asian American male actors with regard to romance.

**Case Studies: Hollywood Films**

American male actors with regard to romance play catch-up to their European counterparts. Hollywood cinema is considered American because it relies on the 'melting pot' idea of cosmopolitanism. However, the movie business is not a model minority story, the movie business, if it is not a model minority story, is not a model minority story. The Hollywood environment is a place where the narrative of assimilation is amplified through the medium of film. The representation of Asian American men is often stereotypical in a variety of genres and styles, including the comedies. The representation of Asian American men is often unflattering, and the narrative of assimilation is often amplified through the medium of film. The representation of Asian American men is often stereotypical in a variety of genres and styles, including the comedies.
Effects of Stereotypes on the Asian American Male Viewer

Just as film and television stereotypes of Asian American men profoundly influence audiences’ real-life perceptions of Asian Americans, media representations also enormously impact Asian American males’ perceptions of themselves. In her interviews with 27 Asian American men, researcher Helen Kar-Yee Ho of the University of Michigan found that with regard to media depictions of Asian American males, “the stereotypes listed by interviewees, while not reflecting any essential Asian American characteristics, constitute a very real, genuine discursive reality for Asian Americans as a racial minority in America” (Ho 50). Ho discovered that with only stereotypes as potential role models, the men she interviewed “have grown up in an era of absence: they have developed self-concepts without any identifiable narrative presenting what it means to be Asian American, in day-to-day experience as well as in the media” (52). The lack of realistic portrayals of Asian American men communicates that Asian American men are insignificant and undesirable. This in turn can disturb Asian American males’ sense of self-worth, especially in terms of dating. A 1998 psychology journal article entitled “Getting the Message: Media Images and Stereotypes and Their Effect on Asian Americans” reports that Asian American men struggle with confidence in their dating choices because of “the consistent messages...equating beauty and attractiveness with White in this society” (Mok 199). Since positive Asian American male models are crucial to the formation of strong identities, it is valuable to consider what the ideal portrayal of Asian American men should be presented in mainstream media. The ideal portrayal of Asian American men would be: The ideal portrayal is one that is multi-dimensional, versatile and nondiscriminatory.

Recurrence of Stock Characters in Hollywood Productions

When all the roles are filled, of course, the only characters of Asian American men cast are those of the actors of Asian American descent who fill the roles ofEasterners, delivery boys, restaurant owners, martial arts teachers, and the like. This casts Asian American men in a very reduced role in society.

Effects of Stereotypes on the Asian American Male Viewer

American male stereotypes are based on a narrow range of roles, often portrayed as either the good guy or the bad guy. Asian American men are usually portrayed as either the good guy in movies and television shows, or the bad guy when they do appear. This reinforces the idea that Asian American men are one-dimensional and not capable of complex emotions or feelings.


Why do the stereotypes of Asian American men remain so prevalent in Hollywood productions? The answer lies in the system of racial categorization that Hollywood uses to create its characters. This system is based on the idea of the “yellow peril,” which suggests that Asian Americans are a threat to the dominant culture. In Hollywood, this idea is perpetuated through the use of stereotypes, which are defined as “precariously familiar images” (Berg 42). These stereotypes are used to create characters that are easy to recognize and that do not require a lot of explanation or development. This is particularly true in movies and television shows, where time is limited and producers want to make sure that the audience understands the character immediately.

References


Wang Yuen shares that “whites make up nearly 80 percent of feature film writers, 70 percent of television writers, and the majority of the industry’s directors, producers, and executives” (Yuen 253). Further, a 2006 UCLA study based on Internet Movie Database data found that in 2005, 81 percent of all lead acting roles in Hollywood went to whites. Only 1.8 of lead roles went to Asian Americans (Robinson). A Screen Actors Guild study laments, “In the few instances when APIs [Asian Pacific Islanders] are cast, APIs primarily play supporting roles. In the current state of roles available to Asian American actors, it is helpful to examine prime-time television dramas.”

Television Roles for Asian American Men

To ascertain the current state of roles available to Asian American actors, it is helpful to examine prime-time television dramas. Two recent popular television series offer American actors. In an examination of recent television series for Asian American actors, it is helpful to examine prime-time television dramas. In an examination of recent television series for Asian American actors, it is helpful to examine prime-time television dramas.

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“Asian Stereotypes: Restrictive Portrayals of Asians in the Media”

Works Cited

Can men begin to disappear?

Only then will extricated, hollow characterizations of Asian American actors cease to be the norm in the media. By erasing the racists within the ranks of Hollywood media creators and producers, we can influence the trends of Hollywood media characterizations. Asian American actors need to be shown American consumer spending, which is estimated to be $11.8 billion dollars per year, offers a compelling reason for Asian American roles to be offered in Hollywood. By showing Asian American actors, we can begin to change the image of Asian American men in American media. This is important because media representation is so closely linked to Asian American actors, because media representation is so closely linked to the Hollywood casting habits. If we can show Asian American actors, we can begin to change the image of Asian American men in American media.

The Hollywood Practice of Consigning Asian American Men

Conclusion

Effects of Stereotypical Roles on Asian American Actors

The loss of male Asian American actors is partly due to the fact that they are cast in roles that perpetuate negative stereotypes. These roles not only limit the opportunities for Asian American actors, but they also reinforce negative stereotypes about Asian American men. The negative portrayal of Asian American men in the media perpetuates these stereotypes, and as a result, Asian American actors may feel pressure to conform to these roles in order to succeed in the industry.

Asian American actors need to be given more opportunities to play roles that reflect their diversity and complexity. This can be achieved through increased representation in media, as well as through the support of organizations that advocate for equal opportunities for Asian American actors. By challenging these stereotypes and providing more diverse roles, the media can help to promote a more accurate and realistic representation of Asian American men.

Works Cited

MY MUSIC IS SILENCE: ASIAN-AMERICAN YOUTH AND THE MODEL MINORITY MYTH

By Tiffany Dharma

The Model Minority Myth
Asian-American Youth and My Music Is Silence.
and domestic level (Fong 1077). Immigrant success is in occasional
and domestic level (Fong 1077); Immigrant success is in occasional
will to lead in the context of Asian dominance, an emergent, of forming strength and the
American report revealing on a regular basis (Swanson 79). Because
Where are you really from? Or, "Who are you?" was Asian-
citizenship makes an integral part of a still-developing American identity.
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American minority myths because Americans define minority groups
in addition to the concept of the "model minority.

Perceptions established cultural difference as the basis for minority success.
In addition to the concept of the "model minority,

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Amidst the distracting decorations of success, one crucial question is
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In the explanation of why such harsh parenting is necessary, she and others who feel confident that they can ever make away (Chua 182), and who wish to place their children in the best possible position for upward mobility, believe that the model minority myth is a necessary stepping stone to a successful life. When their children are exposed to a model minority education system, they are more likely to succeed. This system is designed to exclude students who do not conform to its standards, and it is particularly effective in Asian American communities. The cultivation of this uneasiness moved model minority expectations from a societal to parental basis, and Asian American familial structure was especially conducive to this development. Traditional values like "honoring parents, not bringing shame to the family, and placing family before the individual" facilitate molding a disciplined work ethic (Fong 1075). The close-knit "family-centered nature of Asian families" also causes pressure to become an especially consumptive part of the lives of Asian American youth (Lee 53). Parental pressure is especially onerous in Asian American communities because the burden of familial honor and advancement is placed on the child. In interviews conducted by New York University, a Chinese-American undergraduate claims that "parents believe that how kids do in school reflects on the entire family" (Teranishi 72). Asian parents view their children as extensions of themselves, so excellence in education is a family affair. The combination of home life and educational expectations contribute to schooling's omnipresence. A Harvard student who was interviewed for CNN's "Asian in America" supports this claim: "I know that family and education were most important in my family. It's one of the basic elements of American culture. I know that family and education was emphasized in our childhood, and the importance of education is a family affair. The combination of home and school life contributes to the omnipresence of education in this country."
conveys why hard work, education, and anxiety over the future are underlying Asian-American themes in the push for success. She has raised her children in this manner since they were young, and this trend toward accomplishment at all costs only increases as higher education approaches.

One of the most significant ways in which Asian-Americans evaluate availability of future opportunity and achievement is college prestige. In a 2009 survey, researchers polled Caucasian and Asian parents and children to assess what factors influenced their decision in choosing a university. While parents and children of the same ethnicity tend to value the same ideas, this study found a striking difference between races. University prestige was the number one factor for Asian-American parents and children 52% and 42% of the time; contrast this with Caucasian parents and children, who valued rankings as paramount only 10% and 9% of the time (Dundes 139). This places significant pressure on children to attend a high-ranked university. An Asian-American high school senior says, “I’m expecting myself to get into a top ranked college – I mean, the greatest colleges there are. I’m shooting for a Harvard or an MIT” (Teranishi 40). When asked why prestige had such weight, Asian-Americans cite reasons like educational value, job opportunity, and financial security (Dundes 139).

Unfortunately, the perceived societal obstacles that prompt Asian parents to worry about the future may not be a figment of imagination. Given the emphasis on attending a selective college, an especially poignant example is alleged discrimination against Asian-Americans in elite university admissions. An article in the Washington Post proposes the possibility of a “deluge of Asian-American applicants” causing “the nation’s most elite colleges to try to keep their numbers down through secret ceiling quotas and/or racially discriminatory selection policies” (Gervasi). The model minority threat has caused concern that schools like UC Berkeley are becoming “too Asian” and infringing on the “time-honored ideal of campus diversity” (Gervasi). Although the reasons of admissions of several Ivy League college days are duel-based, Asian-American admissions are subject to the same scrutiny. This has caused concern that schools like UC Berkeley are becoming bastions of Asian-American students, with a model minority being excluded from consideration (Dundes 139). The pressures of this environment continue to build during the college years. While your own adopted model minority pressures assume a life of their own and continue to build during the college years, they are just the beginning. Crescendo: The Pressure Inside of Me Is Increasing

Crescendo: The Pressure Inside of Me Is Increasing

The pressures that Asian-American students face are not only academic but also emotional and psychological. The high expectations placed on Asian-American students can lead to feelings of anxiety and stress, which can affect their mental health. The model minority environment can create a sense of isolation, as students may feel pressures to conform to societal expectations and feel like they are not living up to their potential.

One of the most significant ways in which Asian-American students experience this pressure is through the concept of the model minority. This is a term used to describe the stereotype that all Asian-American students are excellent students, and the pressure to live up to this stereotype can be overwhelming. This can lead to feelings of anxiety and stress, as students may feel like they are not living up to their potential.
component of stress: a feeling of powerlessness. Because internalizing societal and familial expectations results in constrained individualities and perceptions of narrow choice, Asian-Americans feel like they have little control over life decisions. Driven to attend the most prestigious colleges, students assume similar pressures when choosing undergraduate majors and professions. A psychological study found that "Asian-American college students were the most likely to have their major or career choice influenced by parental views, even when not explicit" (Tewari 468). Asian immigrant parents have a tendency to indoctrinate their children with the idea that science, business, or engineering fields were superior. Students swallow expectations to pursue these areas of study, which were successively linked to a push for careers that had higher social statuses and more promise of economic stability (Li 41).

In an essay detailing his conflict over declaring a philosophy major, a Korean-American college student writes that "I resisted thinking of myself as an "English" person as opposed to a science person largely because it would have been hard to square with a sense of self-worth centered on intellectual proficiency and academic commitment" (Park 42). His cultural programming causes him to downplay his intelligence and interests, resulting in inner conflict. A Vietnamese-American undergraduate shares a similar story of how he had always thought of medicine as his "preordained profession" and had become so accustomed to the idea that he was at a loss for any other calling (Nguyen 22). A lack of control over external demands results in stifling and overwhelming amounts of stress. This inner struggle between model minority expectations and individual desires causes psychological damage in Asian-Americans at rates higher than the general population ("Asian in America"). A study conducted on first-generation undergraduates found an "achievement/adjustment paradox" because "Asian-American students report poor psychological and social adjustment" despite their external markers of success (Qin, Way and Mukherjee 481). Frustration and alienation, elements inherent in the teenage experience, are intensified due to unique standards placed upon the Asian-American community. Recent evidence indicates that Asian-Americans "were more likely to be depressed, felt hopeless and contemplated suicide" than their Caucasian counterparts (Thompson 22). Even more grievously, Asian-Americans are more likely to attempt suicide than their Caucasian counterparts (Thompson 22).

Model minority stress is both concrete and indirect. In an essay detailing his conflict over declaring a philosophy major, a Korean-American college student writes that "I resisted thinking of myself as an "English" person as opposed to a science person largely because it would have been hard to square with a sense of self-worth centered on intellectual proficiency and academic commitment" (Park 42). Asian-American college students have a tendency to indoctrinate their children with the idea that science, business, or engineering fields were superior. Students swallow expectations to pursue these areas of study, which were successively linked to a push for careers that had higher social statuses and more promise of economic stability (Li 41).

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seeking help because "there's a mentality among Asians to be tough and to not let other people see that you actually have feelings – to cover up pain, anger, frustration, and depression" (Hirashima 104). This dangerous theme of suppression extends beyond psychological health. In multiple ways the Asian-American melody is lost in a cacophony. Because personal expression is forced to harmonize with external and internal pressures, an original composition becomes undetectable. Afraid that they will "risk the shame of not living up to the model minority myth," Asian-Americans tune themselves to match the expectations placed upon them and relinquish their independence and creativity in the process (Yoo and Burrola 116). This compliance carries the greatest implications for the future. To blindly struggle toward model minority expectations is to conform to its limited ideals, to gloss over its grievances, and to perpetuate its hostile existence. Depriving them of voice, the myth forces Asian-Americans to compose their own undoing.

Sotto Voce: My Music is Not Heard

Pressured from all sides, Asian-Americans have been taught that self-repression is model behavior. Their silence has become anticipated and rewarded: Because racism's specter continues to haunt the Asian-American experience, mainstream society has encouraged conformity by punishing difference and praising assimilation. Compensated by recognition and high marks for performing like model minorities, young students "censured their own experiences and voices" to gain "acceptance from the dominant group" (Lee 9). Internalizing expectations from this early age, they continue to believe that their status would rise if they "lived up to standards," and others admitted that they have "silenced behaviors and experiences that failed to measure up to the model minority standard" (Lee 117). This stereotype survives because "it tells Asian Americans how to behave" and convinces them that it is in their best interest to "pose no threat to the White establishment, to take things quietly, to not complain, and to not fight back" (Li 184). Programmed to equate conformity with success, Asian-Americans strive to please others at the expense of their own expression.

Because Asian-Americans are consistently pressured to fit expectations, silencing individuality has become normative. Taught that she was "never supposed to raise her voice," a college student realizes how passivity has become ingrained in her nature (Hirashima 96). Asian-Americans have been taught that self-reputation is critical in the calling for success; they are a necessary casualty in the quest for something higher. Nevertheless, this mission never ceases. Even for those who have been accepted into a selective institution, they must "pursue a particular degree to please family members rather than to advance their own interests," a pattern that holds truth for vocational choice as well (Li 26). Each sacrifice surrenders a part of the self until there is nothing left. A first generation graduate laments that "You tend to be what they expect you to be and you just lose your identity. You just lose being yourself and become what you once thought you'd be" (Lee 59). Even for those who realize that the model minority myth is negative, a study demonstrates that its internalization can still significantly influence how Asian-Americans perceive themselves and those around them. Because Asian-Americans have been taught that silencing is valued, they continue to believe it is in their best interest to conform to societal expectations.

De Capo Al Fine: Starting Over from the Beginning

An old friend of mine is familiar with this struggle. With over 230 strings under a combined tension of twenty tons, the piano is no stranger to pressure. The correct amount of force produces the notes that make beautiful music possible, but too much stress will make the strings snap. Already at a disadvantage for not being cast from high carbon steel, people flirt with the same danger: They need to speak when this pressure is too great. Because adjusting tensions from highly carbon steel requires higher skill, people often choose not to. They need Lucidly type a space for other page numbers here. Under the stress of high expectations, Asian-Americans must direct their own fine tuning. At an especially critical juncture, first and second generation young adults control the continuity of the model minority myth in their lives. If in an especially critical juncture, first and second generation young adults control the continuity of the model minority myth in their lives.

Because Asian-Americans are consistently pressured to fit expectations, conformity with success, their music is lost in a cacophony. Because personal expression is forced to harmonize with external and internal pressures, an original composition becomes undetectable. Although this struggle is ongoing, it is crucial to understand that Asian-Americans have been taught not to let other people see that they actually have feelings – to cover up pain, anger, frustration, and depression. However, if they do not, other people see you actually have feelings – to cover up pain, anger, frustration, and depression. This dangerous theme of suppression extends beyond external and internal pressures; an original composition becomes undetectable. Asian-Americans have been taught that self-reputation is critical in the quest for success; they are a necessary casualty in the quest for something higher. Nevertheless, this mission never ceases. Even for those who have been accepted into a selective institution, they must "pursue a particular degree to please family members rather than to advance their own interests," a pattern that holds truth for vocational choice as well (Li 26). Each sacrifice surrenders a part of the self until there is nothing left. A first generation graduate laments that "You tend to be what they expect you to be and you just lose your identity. You just lose being yourself and become what you once thought you'd be" (Lee 59). Even for those who realize that the model minority myth is negative, a study demonstrates that its internalization can still significantly influence how Asian-Americans perceive themselves and those around them. Because Asian-Americans have been taught that silencing is valued, they continue to believe it is in their best interest to conform to societal expectations.

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hands. They can revitalize the composition, replacing its disharmonious song with music of their own conception.

The polished black wood calls out to me in stillness, and this time I answer with a liberated will. No one is there to tell me what or when or how to play. I choose to sit in the old chair, and my fingers run tentatively over the keys as my soul begins to stir. At first it is a shaky melody, but then it grows louder, gains momentum, becomes unstoppable.

Works Cited


Ivy Dreams is a ten-part documentary video posted on YouTube that traces the college application experience of 4 high school Asian American seniors applying to attending college in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics). From 2000 to 2012, there was a 6.2% increase of students. The increase in competition for college admission across the United States in number of students in higher education may parallel the increase in number of college applications. This increase in college applications continues to increase. Michelle, a part of Dartmouth Class of 2010, acknowledges the stress that she feels regarding her choice of school. She expresses her experience with having been admitted to Dartmouth College as one of the few lucky Asian American students.

For Michelle, she is extremely happy to be accepted to Dartmouth College. However, her self-deprecating thoughts of doubt and worth are not uncommon for many college applicants. Her experience awaiting her admissions decision is filled with large amounts of anxiety, and she finds it is not exhilarating when she feels that there must be something wrong with her. If she doesn't get in, there must be something wrong with her. If they [Dartmouth College Admissions Officers] see something, there must be something wrong with me. [Pause.] For the past two weeks I have been calming myself down. I don't want to do it to myself, but I don't let it go. I don't let it go. I don't let it go. I don't let it go.

Ivy Dreams, 1/10 Intro

Kyle Abraham

AND THE JOURNEY TO GET THERE

ASIAN AMERICAN COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

THE LUCKY 16%:
Statistics). While the number of students in higher education continues to increase, the enrollment at selective colleges remains at a plateau or decreasing, especially in America's most selective colleges like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Stanford (Caldwell). In particular, Asian American enrollment of eight Ivy League schools in the last two decades converges to 16% of the undergraduate population (Unz). Consequently, this apparent cap on Asian American enrollment intensifies competition for limited spots at selective colleges, which may take a toll on their mental health.

Thus, the goal of this essay is to outline a rationale for a continuing dialogue among the relationships between higher education admissions outcomes and the college application experience for Asian Americans. Based on personal experience and mental health studies among Asian Americans, my central assumption is that a majority of Asian American college applicants experience uniquely high magnitudes of anxiety during the process. This claim should not be treated as a monolithic view of Asian American because there are a handful of Asian American students that do not experience large amounts of anxiety when applying to college. However, this essay focuses on a portion of the community that does. In this essay, I address three main questions: Why do many Asian Americans experience so much anxiety when applying to college? What are the implications of this anxiety from the college application process? What can be done to prevent and reduce the amount of anxiety for Asian American college applicants?

This essay proceeds into four parts. In Section II, I discuss the current debates of college access for Asian Americans. In Section III, I take a historical approach to explain the current status of Asian Americans' college access. In Section IV, I elaborate on negative implications from the college application process from a cultural perspective. In Section V, I conclude with suggestions to improve the experience for Asian American college applicants.

Before moving further, it is important to recognize the importance of disaggregating generalizations made about the Asian American community. However, it is also important to discuss the Asian American community. In Section I, I consider social issues that affect Asian American college applications. In this essay, I address these main questions: Why do many Asian American college applicants experience so much anxiety when applying to college? What are the implications of this anxiety from the college application process? What can be done to prevent and reduce the amount of anxiety for Asian American college applicants?


table: Table 1: United Nations Classification of Asian Countries

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from a historical perspective.

The demographics of Asian Americans in higher education continue to change, and colleges and universities across the country are forced to deal with the increasing number of Asian American students. One view is that Asian American students are overrepresented in colleges throughout the United States. As of April 1, 2011, 17.3 million people in the United States reported Asian for at least part of their racial and/or ethnic identity (2010 U.S. Census), comprising 5.6% of the national population. In the same year, Asian Americans made up 6% of American college enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics). Thus, from a national and quantitative scope, Asian Americans are indeed overrepresented in higher education but not by much. Public perceptions of this overrepresentation are reflected in certain media. For example, an undergraduate student from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Alexandra Wallace, posted a racist video ranting against Asians on YouTube in March 2011. In the video, she makes offensive generalizations about “hordes of Asians” that UCLA accepts every year, with an admission rate of 36% for 2012 (UCLA Undergraduate Admissions). Other elite schools that reflect this high Asian American representation include California Institute of Technology (Caltech), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and University of California, Berkeley (Cal). Asian American enrollment comprises 5% of the national population. In the same year, Asian American undergraduate enrollment comprised 5.6% of total undergraduate enrollment (2010 U.S. Census). The empirical evidence regarding this overrepresentation is quite compelling, and the reality—that the size of the Asian American population at these elite schools is almost statistically impossible—is not due to evidence of discrimination and unfair practices against Asian American students at elite liberal arts colleges.
III. Historical Explanation

The apparent discrimination of Asian Americans at Ivy League schools may be explained by examining the birth and evolution of college admissions. Although systems of higher education have existed since their inception at Oxford and Cambridge in England (Darwall-Smith x), it was not until about the late 19th and early 20th century that colleges began denying admission to certain campuses. Some of the initial prerequisites included passing standardized tests similar to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), devised in 1926, and the American College Testing (ACT), created in 1959 (Fletcher). Even though the goal of these tests is to guarantee that students were prepared for the academic rigor of college courses, prejudices and discrimination played a significant role in the early manifestation of college admissions.

The earliest universities in the United States, like Columbia, Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, dominated in popularity and credibility for their high scholarship and years of existence (Leitch). These colleges maintained their elite statuses because most of their students were wealthy, Caucasian males of Protestant faith and often legacy students (Levine 139). Furthermore, these colleges did not grant equal access for other gender and ethnic groups. The initial prerequisites were passing standardized tests, which were biased toward the elite that could afford adequate schooling. Once Jewish students started to outperform their elite counterparts, the complex admissions system was created to weed out undesired minority groups such as people of color, women, and Jews especially (140). President Hopkins of Dartmouth College developed a nine-element plan when reviewing the applicants (141). However, societal prejudices made it difficult for Jewish and other minority applicants by making them appear less qualified. For example, anti-Semitism was fairly strong, preventing Jews from participating in extra-curricular activities. Because Jews also lived in close-knit communities with strong culture and tradition, Jewish applications may seem homogenous. President Hopkins intended his college entrance exam to build a diverse class, but his admissions officers who engaged in the college admission process did not see this as an advantage. The college entrance exam had a de facto quota system that favored WASP White males (142). Today, modern-day college admissions use a majority of Hopkins’s nine elements to select their classes, but some of those criteria have been modified over time

IV. Finding Reasons for Negative Implications

In America, a 2012 Lumina Foundation study reveals that 67% of Americans say, “…getting a good job is a very important reason for getting education beyond high school” (The Lumina Foundation). Economic success often motivates the pursuit of higher education. As a result, college applicants may endure various levels of stress and anxiety due to the uncertainty and difficulty of access to college for financial security. Stress and anxiety can influence subconscious or unusual behavior among individual applicants. Stress and anxiety take many forms, and it is vital to understand the origins of stress and anxiety. However, the college application experience of Asian American students is unique in circumstance, as its historical and cultural factors play a significant role in the college admission process.
...
and is married to a Jewish husband.

5. Dr. Amy Chua is a Professor of Law at Yale University. She has two daughters

4. The model minority is a collection of stereotypes that emphasize the extremely high expectations of the children's activities and their performance in school. This is due to the idea that the Tiger method of parenting sets for children to follow is uniquely Asian in the conditions it sets children to thrive on. Tiger parenting examines the process of college access. The model minority is a model of how Asian Americans view Asian Americans as a model minority.

3. The gaokao is a college entrance exam, a type of standardized test, in which the admittance to certain tiers of higher education in China depends on the score of the exam. The model minority is a model of how Asian Americans view Asian Americans as a model minority.

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in education and the workplace. Decades later, the evolution of the model minority label became a monolithic view of Asian Americans that they are quiet and educated elites with high-paying professions (Miller). This homogenous view of Asian Americans compels college admissions to look beyond the meritocratic success of an Asian American college applicant (Sebro). This may explain the demographic shifts of diversifying the Asian population at college but not necessarily increasing the number of Asian American students. Unfortunately, this model minority homogeneity is a challenge for Asian Americans to distinguish themselves in other realms beyond academics, forcing college applicants to revolutionize or at least innovate a new perspective of generations of Asian and Asian American culture and tradition. Although disparities amongst Asian Americans college students continues to persist (Pew), it is important to acknowledge the negative implications of college application experience of Asian Americans college applicants and those advising these applicants. As a result, the college application experience, individual’s experience should be compared with college application process. When applying for college, Asian American college applicants experience unique challenges that are different from other cultural groups. While the current field of Asian Americans college access and retention is under researched, the current literature suggests that Asian Americans college applicants experience unique college application experience. Asian American college applicants face distinct challenges during the college application process. The college application process is subject to various interpretations. An individual’s experience may vary across different Asian American college applicants and their advisors. It is important to acknowledge the influence of familial pressures, stereotypes, and institutional biases during the college application process. This essay provides an integrative perspective on the college application experience of Asian Americans college applicants and those advising these applicants. While the current field of Asian Americans college access and retention is under researched, the current literature suggests that Asian Americans college applicants experience unique college application experience. Asian American college applicants face distinct challenges during the college application process. The college application process is subject to various interpretations. An individual’s experience may vary across different Asian American college applicants and their advisors. It is important to acknowledge the influence of familial pressures, stereotypes, and institutional biases during the college application process. This essay provides an integrative perspective on the college application experience of Asian Americans college applicants and those advising these applicants. Although disparities amongst Asian Americans college students continues to persist (Pew), it is important to acknowledge the influence of familial pressures, stereotypes, and institutional biases during the college application process. Asian American college applicants face distinct challenges during the college application process. The college application process is subject to various interpretations. An individual’s experience may vary across different Asian American college applicants and their advisors. It is important to acknowledge the influence of familial pressures, stereotypes, and institutional biases during the college application process. This essay provides an integrative perspective on the college application experience of Asian Americans college applicants and those advising these applicants. While the number of Asian American immigrants increases and the number Asian Americans entering higher education also increases (2010 US Census Briefs), the selection outcomes at the nation’s top colleges continue to intensify. Debate over these selection outcomes, especially for Asian American college applicants, have drawn intense scrutiny from the media and policymakers. Despite the increasing number of Asian American college applicants, the selection outcomes continue to draw attention. While the number of Asian American college applicants continues to increase, the selection outcomes at the nation’s top colleges continue to intensify. Debate over these selection outcomes, especially for Asian American college applicants, have drawn intense scrutiny from the media and policymakers. Despite the increasing number of Asian American college applicants, the selection outcomes continue to draw attention.
Works Cited


current historical context.

The current political and social climate within the country has significantly influenced the novel’s themes and characters. This setting provides a backdrop for exploring the experiences of the characters, highlighting the challenges they face.

The novel is set during the internment period, a time of great upheaval and trauma. The author skillfully weaves together the personal stories of the characters, who are collectively affected by the larger historical events.

The novel delves into the complexities of identity and loyalty, particularly in the context of Japanese American identity during World War II. The characters are forced to confront their ties to Japan, their loyalty to the United States, and the consequences of their heritage.

Julie Otsuka’s When the Emperor Was Divine is a powerful exploration of the internment experience, both on a personal and national level. The novel offers a poignant reminder of the injustices of the past and the ongoing struggle for justice and understanding.

Introduction: The How and Why in Voking the Experience of

Hannah Shin

EMPEROR WAS DIVINE

DISCORDANCE IN JULIE OTSKUAS WHEN THE
IDENTITY: THE POLITICS AND POLITICS OF ETHNIC
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The Father: Obscurity of Personal, Ethnic and National Identity

In order to see how the last chapter achieves its pivotal position within the novel's structural and semantic makeup, it is first necessary to observe the elements that configure the nature and setting of the narrative in the preceding chapters. Taken together and viewed apart from the final chapter, the earlier body of the novel characterizes the work as typical internment literature, as the story spans over the period immediately before, during and after the Japanese-American internment in the U.S. during World War II (1941~1945). The spatial setting is limited to the family home in Berkeley, California (3); a train traveling through the desert to Utah; and Topaz (48), the location of the internment camp. Here, the objects of description are clear; the tale revolves around the Japanese-American internment as its central event, limiting its viewpoint to a given historical time and place. The nature of the characters is also distinctly definable, as their actions are mainly prompted by the fact that they are of Japanese descent. The matter of citizenship and national loyalties remains unclear; the mother, who recalls her childhood in Japan (94-95), is an Issei (first-generation Japanese immigrant) and therefore may retain legal as well as mental ties to Japan, whereas her young son and daughter—both of whom are implied to hold no linguistic or cultural background in things Japanese—most probably are Nisei (second-generation Japanese-American), likely to be either fully naturalized or American born. However, these subtle distinctions may be disregarded as tangential interests, for unlike the case of the father who was taken away (82) on specific charges of acting as enemy (Japan) agent, the source of the family members' sufferings is the internment experience of being alienated from their familiar surroundings including home and the father figure as its stronghold, rather than a conflict between dissonant national loyalties and identities. The narrative as the agent of their experiences unfolds in a past tense third person perspective, with scant interjections of the characters' emotions and thoughts, securing a sense of distance as an aloof reminiscence of what happened to "others" in the "past." In summary, the place and time settings as the object, characterization of players as the subject, and narrative style as the genre of the story are all clearly present and the elements as the subject, if essential, are then crafted and woven into the cloth of the narrative to achieve such effects as the central theme of the novel: the experience of being a Japanese-American interned in the U.S. during World War II (1941~1945).

However, the reader is exposed to an abrupt inversion of such features in the last chapter, as the elements defined earlier in including time, place, identity and even narrative tone undergo drastic change, moving from the realm of clarity into that of ambiguity. Titled "Confession" (140), which in itself implies a more personal and individualized development in its tone, the chapter brims over with an unnerving mixture of passion and ironic resignation. The voice splits into two, a mocking tone in italics interspersed among the lines adding a touch of irony to the factual statements; while the former dares the interrogators to "Drop that bomb right here, right here where I'm standing" (141), the latter calmly reminisces: "I went out into the yard and tossed up a few flares just to make sure he knew where to find you" (141). A hearty share of exclamation marks, which the earlier third-person narrative rarely ventures to use, appears six times in the last chapter alone. Identical phrasal structures are repeated for emphasis (e.g. "I sprinkled … I sent … I planted … I set… I spied…" 140), and the sense of distance maintained through the preceding chapters is completely discarded with countless "I"s dotting every page.

In addition to the exceptional toning of the narration, the reader is at a loss as to how one may position this "I," subjectively and objectively. There is little hint as to who exactly this "I" refers to; who is preoccupied with addressing numerous criminal charges in terms of national security (140–141), as well as ethnic traits (142)? The opening lines of the chapter, in which the "I" recalls "wearing my bathrobe, my slippers, the night your men took me away" (140) and refers to having a wife and children (41), offer a possible explanation. The night, your men, my bathrobe, my slippers—these are all elements of the father figure of the protagonist family, and it is the only character we know from the information of the chapter which the "I" refers to. However, there is little hint as to who exactly this "I" refers to: is it a loss as to how one may position this "I," subjectively and objectively?

Moreover, the source of the family members' sufferings may be traced back to a specific character of the same name (Japanese-American) who was taken away (82) on specific charges of espionage (espionage) in Japan (94-95), as an underdog to which the mother who recalls her childhood in Japan (94-95) is an underdog. The daughter who recalls her childhood in Japan (94-95) is an underdog, as well as the other characters. However, the story as such differs from previous works in its acknowledgment of the real existence of the Japanese-American experience of being interned in the U.S. during World War II (1941~1945). The novel is a historical and personal account of the internment experience of a Japanese-American, a story of survival, identity, and national pride. The novel is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, and a celebration of the strength and courage of those who endured such trials. The novel is a call to remember, to not forget, and to never forget the past. The novel is a call to action, to stand up for what is right, to fight for what is just, and to never give up. The novel is a call to love, to care for one another, and to never lose sight of the human spirit. The novel is a call to be kind, to be compassionate, and to never forget the pain and suffering of those who came before us. The novel is a call to be strong, to be resilient, and to never give up. The novel is a call to be brave, to be bold, and to never lose sight of the human spirit. The novel is a call to be true, to be honest, and to never lose sight of the human spirit. The novel is a call to remember, to not forget, and to never forget the past. The novel is a call to action, to stand up for what is right, to fight for what is just, and to never give up. The novel is a call to love, to care for one another, and to never lose sight of the human spirit. The novel is a call to be kind, to be compassionate, and to never forget the pain and suffering of those who came before us. The novel is a call to be strong, to be resilient, and to never give up. The novel is a call to be brave, to be bold, and to never lose sight of the human spirit. The novel is a call to be true, to be honest, and to never lose sight of the human spirit. The novel is a call to remember, to not forget, and to never forget the past. The novel is a call to action, to stand up for what is right, to fight for what is just, and to never give up. The novel is a call to love, to care for one another, and to never lose sight of the human spirit. The novel is a call to be kind, to be compassionate, and to never forget the pain and suffering of those who came before us.
I assume. The question, then, is whether “I” refers to racialized Asian-American bodies in general, which remains unanswered as the narrator sets off on rants of nearly self-destructive resignation (e.g. “So go ahead and lock me up. Take my children … Freeze my assets … Cancel my insurance” 143) without offering any further clarification.

Other players in the narrative include “you” and “them,” to whom “I” directs his “Confession.” Should “I” be the father from earlier in the narrative, “you” may be the prosecuting party, the U.S. government that had sent “them” ("your men") to seize and interrogate “I” in a “small and bare” room (140). If “I” in a broader perspective is considered as an archetype of Asian-American ethnicity, the “tall, handsome, broad shouldered” “you” who belongs to “rotary clubs and the chamber of commerce” (143) may be the stereotyped version of the white majority that imposes discriminatory prejudices on Asian-Americans, who in turn are viewed as spies and criminals. Moreover, despite the introduction of ethnic and nationalistic discourses with all the talk on spies and “yellowbellies” (142), the voice of “I” as a political body is constantly shifting, resulting in further ambiguity. “I” admits all charges, stating “I admit it,” “I spied” (140), even venturing so far as to “sign the dotted line” of the confession. Does this indicate that “I” as the father has indeed committed treason against the nation-state of the United States, his loyalty having lain on the side of Japan as his originating nation? The earlier chapters provide no clue as to how the father identifies himself amidst the violent rift between his country of residence and that of birth. The reader is given an account of his wife’s migration from Japan to America, but the same does not apply to the father, and therefore we as readers are forced to consider the possibility of his being a second or third-generation immigrant. If so, it is a stretch on the United States’ part to assume that he would risk a stable life in his current setting to protect a country that would lock up a child inBenchmark Minority as an Oxymoron: Commendable but Ever Minor

Finally, return home (142). (149)’ to get the dressing over and done with. He’d had it in each novel since (actually, because he was simply tired, “tired” his first time in the interrogation room. He may have confessed crimes he hadn’t committed in earlier drafts of his manuscript, but in the final version of the story, the father had never committed any crimes. He’d been accused of espionage, but no evidence of his guilt was found. In the end, he was released and returned to his family.

Chih-Chieh Chou, in his observation of the subtle but inexorable racialization engraved into the concept of “model minority,” asserts that the term is a reference to an “ethnic minority whose members are more likely to achieve higher success than other minority groups, especially in economic terms,” which is consistent with the definition of “model minority” in the context of this narrative. Chou goes on to analyze the socio-cultural rubrics that underlie this oxymoronic juxtaposition of two seemingly contradictory words, “model” as a positive acknowledgement of assimilation, and “minority” as a negative characterization of minority status. His analysis highlights the complexities of identity and belonging, and the ways in which race and ethnicity continue to shape the experiences of individuals and communities.

Model Minority as an Oxymoron: Commendable but Ever Minor

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and "minority" as the stigmatizing brand of cultural and physical differentiation. The former indicates that the given minority subjects have successfully attained their position as reputable civil servants by conforming to the responsibilities of a desirable member of the society by displaying academic, economic and therefore social excellence. Meanwhile, the latter betrays the insurmountable disadvantage they suffer due to elements they are "born into."

Chow points out that cultural theorists such as "Samuel Huntington, for example, uses cultural differences in an absolute sense to exclude Asian Americans from the nation state of the US, unless they completely assimilate" (Chow 221); should this cultural difference implicate ethnic characteristics that incorporate not only abstract social conventions but also physical traits such as racial profiles, the complete assimilation Huntington had demanded would be a mere illusion, for the minority subjects in question will never be able to fully blend into the white majority. In Homi Bhabha's terms, they will always be "almost the same" as the ideal white majority in that they demonstrate all the desirable qualities of successful model citizens, but are never able to completely assimilate—"not quite" (Bhabha 127)—due to their society's view of their cultural and genetic inheritance as insurmountable differences.

Its entrance into the academic and social sphere can be considered fairly "recent," as the exact point of origin for the term "model minority" only dates back to the year of 1966 when sociologist William Petersen coined the word in his New York Times article "Success Story: Japanese American Style" (1966) and subsequently called attention to its attributes. The general public began to recognize the concept through the outstanding performance of certain minorities with Asian origins in the following years. However, the racist and nationalistic sentiments embedded in the basic construct of the "model minority" idea can be traced further back in history. As the number of Asian immigrants marked an exponential growth at the dawn of the 20th century, fear of these "little yellow men" taking over the economy and appropriating its fruits that should be justly enjoyed by the descendants of the founding fathers (in other terms, the white majority) began to take on the form of a social paranoia.

In his article "Enjoy Your Nation as Yourself!" Slavoj Žižek encapsulates this phenomenon in the term "enjoyment," which he uses to explain the rise of neo-liberalist consumption in which the ideal white subjects enjoy a lifestyle of leisure and comfort. Žižek asserts that the consumerist industrial society has succeeded in creating an illusion of "enjoyment" from cultural and psychic features that are not even present in the realities of the majority. This illusion has led to a widespread belief that "enjoyment" is a right that should be enjoyed by all, regardless of their social status or cultural background. However, this belief is a product of the capitalist society's desire to control and manipulate the masses. The illusion of "enjoyment" is a tool used by the capitalist system to maintain its power and control over the population.

In short, the idea of the "model minority" is a product of the capitalist system's desire to control and manipulate the masses. The illusion of "enjoyment" is a tool used by the capitalist system to maintain its power and control over the population. The idea of the "model minority" is a product of the capitalist system's desire to control and manipulate the masses. The illusion of "enjoyment" is a tool used by the capitalist system to maintain its power and control over the population. The idea of the "model minority" is a product of the capitalist system's desire to control and manipulate the masses. The illusion of "enjoyment" is a tool used by the capitalist system to maintain its power and control over the population.
become the main target. Han and Eng go on to maintain that the popular stereotype of "[model minority] functions as a national tool that erases and manages the history of these institutionalized exclusions" (347). In other words, the former term "model" and its positive connotation of "desirable citizens" based on economic and social success acts as a foil to disguise the underlying sense of exclusion implied in the latter term "minority," which may shift its position and supersede the "model" aspect upon the advent of any threat on the white American "integrity." In this light, we can see that the father's true "crime" is not his nationality or allegiance but ethnic origin; not a failure of mental acculturalization but (impossible) physical assimilation into white America. Thus, instead of a bitter outpouring of an individual Japanese-American who had been swept away by the ruthless tides of international politics, the father's ironic protest becomes a collective outcry on behalf of all Asian-Americans, who are victimized by not only the international but also the domestic socio-historical context. Should the "I" of the father so expand its body to represent racialized Asian-American subjects in general, the enumeration and admittance of all criminal charges throughout the entire chapter become two-fold ironies, denouncing the absurdity of incriminating anyone on the sole basis of ethnic identity.

Narrative Ambiguity as a Subversive Strategy

The subjective and character-based aspects of the narrative are thus obscured in the final chapter, and the objective settings of time and place also lose their anchors. If "I" is the father, the setting could be the interrogation room where he is questioned before being taken to the internment camp, but such a reading is open to question as he describes the proceedings in the room in past tense, saying he has already "talked" (140) about the charges discussed in the chapter. As his monologue continues, the narrator shifts to the present tense for the culminating passage on Asian-American traits, leaving the "I" suspended in a temporal and spatial purgatory, his plea left unanswered. Does this narration take place at the internment camp where he is confined after the initial interrogation? Or, should the readers choose to view "I" as a synecdoche for the Asian-American identity? Are the settings merely an abstract social context within which racial discrimination stands problematic? Again, no clear proof is given. At this point, both the tone and content of the book's narrative have undergone complete mutations, the internment of the Japanese-Americans as the object, subject, agent and governing motif of the novel having been pushed aside to the peripheries. It has been noted that the causes underlying the internment no longer pertain to international conflict alone, but also branches out to the idea of Asian-American racialization in a wider socio-historical frame. However, from an aesthetic standpoint, the reader is left to wonder whether the novel was really about the father at all, or rather, about the "I" who alludes to the lurking presence of racial discourse. Otsuka disrupts the aesthetic unity of her narrative, discarding the subtlety and ironic distance so strenuously maintained throughout the novel. If the confession indeed belongs to the father, why not give him a clearer voice earlier in the book? If the racial discourse is connected to the subject of internment, why is this not more firmly established within the concrete historical setting? What overall effect does Otsuka achieve with all the uncertainties?

Again, the dissonance found both in terms of the narrator/father's national and ethnic positioning as observed above, in relation to the concept of "model minority," is the key to answering this question. The clashing narrative voices and settings, in their ambiguity, become a strategy of protest against the black-and-white logic of ethnic and national identification, invoking the active involvement of the reader at a level far deeper than mere vicarious sympathy. Homi Bhabha asserts that "ambivalence" can serve as a subversive strategy that upturns the dominating discourse of the subjugating force; importing the term "mimicry" to specify the nature of "bound-ary breaching" in the colonized subject's linguistic and behavioral assimilation into the colonizer, Bhabha argues that "the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" (Bhabha 122). Should one venture to equate Bhabha's "mimicry" to the concept of "ambivalence" on which he claims the construct of mimicry stands, the latter may substitute the former in the following passage: "the authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimetic..."
acting as a "representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry [hence, ambivalence] is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other as it visualizes power" (Bhabha 122). Applied in a slightly different—in that the given case of the father rests in the intricate rubric of international and domestic issues of racialization rather than an overt power imbalance between the colonizer and the colonized—yet essentially identical formula of subjection and counteraction, the ambivalence in the last chapter's narration blurs the boundaries between fixed categories of perpetrator and victim, thereby undermining the dominating discourse of nation-al allegiance and ethnicity as criteria for one's identity.

Trauma: Initiating the "I" into a Wider Historical Context

Another way to understand the contextual function of the last chapter is to set aside questions regarding the chapter's independent meaning, and instead focus on its significance in its interrelation to the earlier chapters. If the reason why certain aspects of the narrative, such as the subject, object, and agent of internment in the former chapters are designed as they were, and what they do or do not achieve could be determined, the reader may then be in a better position to understand what bearing their deliberate disruption in the final chapter has on the aesthetic and thematic composition of the entire work.

The first and fundamental question the readers may face is why Otsuka chose to obscure the father's position in addressing the issue of Japanese-American internment by mooring his voice in a neurotic outburst, instead of allowing him to present his case in a clear and logical fashion. In *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Lewis Herman sheds light on this subject by observing female hysteria and war veterans, analyzing how the perpetrating majority tends to silence the traumas suffered by the victimized minority. Herman offers three types of trauma: female hysteria, war veterans' PTSD, and sexual and domestic violence. She notes how each of these types of trauma has the potential to undermine or incriminate the dominant patriarchal force that has repeatedly subjugated the victims to "episodic amnesia" (7), as "secrecy and silence are the perpetrator's first line of defense." (8) Herman asserts that to sustain the healing efforts of therapy and prevent the vicious cycle of resurgence and repression of painful but necessary discourses, trauma originating from the superstructure must be addressed at the level of systematic remedy, instead of being individually diagnosed and confronted, since "without the context of a political movement, it has never been possible to advance the study of the psychological trauma" (32). In the case of the family we meet in the novel, the experience of internment is a traumatic event that is deeply ingrained in the community's collective memory and is indexed by the father's outburst of rage, strongly suggestive of PTSD, as well as by his children's behavior towards a hole in the family's old fence.

Moreover, as Judith Butler warns in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, the experience of victimization blinds one to its retroactive re-lash at the purported and therefore possibly innocent group of perpetrators, creating a vicious circle. With the memory of Pearl Harbor still vivid in mind, and immersed in racism-ridden communities of precious order, the family's old friends shun contact with the family as "enemies" greet the son and daughter with kind words upon their return to school (121); the vandalism committed upon the family goes unnoticed (123); and the father's outburst of rage, strongly suggestive of PTSD, is eschewed even by his children and thus reduced to a hollow echo (134). Moreover, as Butler notes, "the experience of the social and cultural composition of the other that is understood when beginning their determined dispersion in the fatal "I," so could be determined the reader may then be in a better position to understand what bearing their deliberate disruption in the final chapter has on the aesthetic and thematic composition of the entire work.

An alternative and succinctly a context for one's identity...
that dictated the lives of its own (American) subjects, therefore, is a form of therapy that permits space and time for a bilateral process of healing for both the system and its members.

Cathy Caruth provides another perspective in her article "Violence and Time: Traumatic Survivals," seeing the undesired revisitations of traumatic experiences through recurrent nightmares as the mind's effort to recover its integrity and peace by fully realizing the fact that it has indeed survived a near-fatal blow (25). Drawing on Sigmund Freud's trauma theory, Caruth explains that the inexplicable resurgence of traumatic experiences in the form of nightmares springs from the discrepancy in time experienced by the mind and body. Noting that "not having truly known the threat of death in the past, the survivor is forced, continually, to confront it over and over again" (25), Caruth interprets the reliving of trauma as, not an additional aggravation of the wound, but the self's struggle to overcome the traumatic experience by healing the rift between body and mind, creating a foundation from which literary narratives of trauma may draw their import. According to this view, internment literature may be understood as more than mere recollections of a sad history; by addressing the historical experience of internment, these narratives function as utterances that bridge the chasm between empirical immediacy and reflective realization of trauma.

However, it is still unclear as to why the protagonist family's tale of hurt is told from a distant third person perspective adopted by the author and not in the first-person voice of the victims themselves. How can a traumatized subject be healed if the cure is practiced not by the subject who holds the specific memory, but by another whose physical and psychological distance may well serve to further alienate the victimized and thus risk rendering the subject into mere object? How can the narrative voice in When the Emperor was Divine be defined as a true agent of the protagonists, if it is remote in agency as well as in objective time and space? Again, Caruth offers a clue in her article "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History," asserting that "history, like the trauma, is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (192). In Freud's unconventional understanding of Moses within the context of Jewish history, Caruth sees a project for restructuring the meaning of the narrative, as the object of the narrative, as well as the process of the narrative itself, as the project of the narrator's essay, which is anchored in the noetic foundation of history as the formation, processing mechanism and survival of collective trauma. Pointing out that "history, like the trauma, is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas," Caruth locates a reflexive interplay between trauma and history in Sigmund Freud's Moses and Monotheism, reading it as a creative attempt at self-placing rather than objective reconstruction of historical truth. By drawing on the model of the self's construction of the historical consciousness of the Jew within the Jewish Diaspora and persecution, Caruth reimagines the process of formation of the historical consciousness of the Jew within the Jewish Diaspora and persecution, as a new window to the socio-historical circumstances. I now inquire into their connection to the context in which the given novel as their carrier is physically placed, and why the form of fiction may fulfill the promises of arrival and departure in the framework of the narrative to explore the points of arrival and departure in the framework of history. Caruth sees a project for restructuring the meaning of the narrative, as the object of the narrative, as well as the process of the narrative itself, as the project of the narrator's essay, which is anchored in the noetic foundation of history as the formation, processing mechanism and survival of collective trauma. Pointing out that "history, like the trauma, is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas," Caruth locates a reflexive interplay between trauma and history in Sigmund Freud's Moses and Monotheism, reading it as a creative attempt at self-placing rather than objective reconstruction of historical truth. By drawing on the model of the self's construction of the historical consciousness of the Jew within the Jewish Diaspora and persecution, Caruth reimagines the process of formation of the historical consciousness of the Jew within the Jewish Diaspora and persecution, as a new window to the socio-historical circumstances.
the purpose. We might argue that the effect of trauma narrative as therapy or configuration of the interplay among its historical subjects may be achieved by non-fictional memoirs or academic researches, their venue of realization not limited to the realm of fiction as a form of involvement or information each provided by direct recollections or (purportedly) objective recordings of history.

In *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, a classic work of literary criticism that had marked the point of distinction between the differing roles of audience, art works and artist as crucial components of artistic creation, H. M. Abrams maintains that a work of art must dialogue with not only the textual or historical but also the present reality, or in other words acknowledge the present historical settings in and through which the audience as its key constituent inhabit and view the world. Historical lessons may be told and the traumas of history addressed, but the reader living here and now, who may not identify with either the persecutor or the persecuted in the internment narrative, must be able to place the story within one's own historical and personal surroundings to derive meaning from it. Otherwise, the tale, however appealing, remains a mere specter on a distant silver screen.

In his article "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology," Nicholas Abraham offers a possible explanation to this conundrum that has been ceaselessly haunting trauma literature. Abraham observes the case of a son who unconsciously internalizes the father's shameful personal history and fantasizes it as his own, the phenomenon of which he calls a haunting by a "phantom" (172). Whereas Sigmund Freud's concept of mourning and melancholia concerns an ode to or grieving over the loss of the one-loved, now-lost object, the phantom returns to haunt the unconscious with the "phantom effect" progressively fading during its transmission from one generation to the next (16). Abraham yet presents the possibility of exceptions, and concludes that phantoms are brought out into the public sphere and may live on, acquiring a trans-generational force.

The concept of historically inherited/constructed trauma in Cathy Caruth's "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History" is reminiscent of Abraham's ideas. Granted that certain readership standing beyond direct involvement with the internment experience may still fully internalize and sympathize with the traumatized voices of Japanese internees or the historical conditions that rendered them victims, "the phantom effect progressively fades during its transmission from one generation to the next" (Abraham 172), finally to disappear. The wounds having been voiced and the need for healing thus addressed, with war time memories progressively becoming hazed over the passage of time, the story of Japanese internees may eventually disappear behind the curtains of history, unless it retains a trans-generational resonance that tears at the hearts and grasps the attention of new readers inhabiting changed times. This is the point where the importance of the last chapter is revealed, as it endows historical phantoms with flesh and blood, a pulsating vitality that undergirds the novel's artistic and socio-historical constitution.

As "I," "you" and "them" branch out from characters whose historical footings are expanded to encompass broader examples of a pan-Asian-American identity, the narrator's wounds are no longer subject to the fate of dissipating into the relentless tides of time as a distant historical phantom, but are given life as more readers may identify with the issue raised by the elusive "I." Readers and are opened up to personal identification for the readers. Readers and
may see a mirror image of themselves in the narrator, whether he/she is Asian-American, a victim of any kind of discrimination, or even a member of the social majority that imposes or condones racial prejudice. Through its versatility, the narrative transcends itself, its story being transformed from a limited account of a specific historical event set in a certain time and place to a universal discourse on racialization and its subsequent victimization, as well as the societies that enforce, overlook or engineer such injustice.

The reader therefore becomes a crucial actor in constructing the work, and plays a vital role in the narrative's function of healing and bridging diverse historical players. This effect becomes sustainable over a longer term, as the trauma of the protagonist family can be felt by any reader who may identify him or herself with these issues in our present social setting. Thus, the trauma of internment constantly reproduces itself, demanding to be retold and touched upon again. As the reader joins force with the narrative voice, its remedies “turn inward, not to a healing of the ‘self’ but of the ‘selves’” (Shiu 16). Through a studied ambiguity, the object, subject and agent of the narrative acquire wider applicability in the last chapter.

Closure: Revisiting and Reclaiming History as a Point of Departure

A near-fatal wound cannot be healed instantly and on the spot; it must be properly dressed and time allowed for the torn skin to close around mending organs. And even after full recovery, these wounds leave behind scars, records of their presence, which testify to one’s struggle as a proof that life has emerged victorious over a deadly assault. The same function also reaches beyond personal pain; dead ends of history and the powers of mourning and violence can serve as beacons of hope and progress, which help to do away with meaninglessness and grief even after full recovery. These wounds, like scars on the skin, must be properly dressed and time allowed for the torn skin to close around mending organs. And even after full recovery, these wounds leave behind scars, records of their presence, which testify to one’s struggle as a proof that life has emerged victorious over a deadly assault.

The last chapter of When the Emperor was Divine is a scar in itself, inviting the readers to identify with the victim(s) through a strategy of obscuring and ambiguating, challenging them to deconstruct the specific and therefore limited subject, object and agent of the internment narrative. In this way, the reader is given sustenance and food for thought.

Works Cited


AN EVALUATION OF THE HANDS-ON CONCILIATION POLICY AND PRACTICE OF THE PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONG KONG

Michael Tayag

Abstract

This research evaluates the hands-on conciliation of the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong, by which Filipina migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong can make claims against agencies that have charged them illegal placement fees to work in the country. By looking through case files and other data on victims of illegal fees, interviewing case officers of the Mission and its clients, interviewing the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) of the PCG, sitting in on a conciliation, and conducting supporting interviews (with employers, a lawyer, and an academic), I examine the effectiveness of the hands-on conciliation process and suggest how it can be improved to offer greater protection from illegal collection to Filipino/a foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong.

Introduction

Filipina Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

In recent years, the Philippines has prioritized debt-servicing to keep in good standing with the International Monetary Fund, a prerequisite for obtaining loans from foreign lending agencies. To generate revenue, government expenditures in economic and social services have been cut (Parrenas, 2006). Meanwhile, middle and low-income earners have been hit hardest by increased costs of living. Low-fee collection agencies have been set up to collect money owed to Filipinos by workers who have already been working in Hong Kong and who are in the Philippines with a counterpart in Hong Kong. This study will focus on Filipino migrant domestic workers who applied in Hong Kong.

This study is an evaluation of the hands-on conciliation policy and practice of the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong (PCG). It can be improved to offer greater protection from illegal collection of funds by looking through case files and other data, interviewing case officers, employers, and clients, and conducting supporting interviews (with employers, a lawyer, and an academic). By examining the effectiveness of the hands-on conciliation process, I aim to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the process and suggest how it can be improved to offer greater protection from illegal collection to Filipino/a foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong.
er-quality public services, and monopoly control of prices (IBON, 1997). One strategy the Philippine government has used to combat these issues is the Labor Export Policy (LEP), which established the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to facilitate labor migration. In 2009, approximately one million Filipinos migrated out of the country, largely on an economic basis (Hong Kong Immigration Department, 2011). Studies indicate that 34-54% of the Philippine population is directly dependent on the remittances of overseas family members, comprising 10% of the GDP (Mission, 1998).

Hong Kong, one of the most economically important cities in Asia and the world, represents a major destination for these migrant workers. According to the Hong Kong Immigration Department, the population of foreign domestic helpers was 273,609 (approximately 48% from the Philippines) as of March 31, 2010. As many as 99% of the Hong Kong migrant workers from the Philippines are women. Here I integrate information from background research and interviews to highlight the issues encountered by this significant population of Filipina migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong. My research focuses on the conciliation process through which migrant workers pursue settlement of exorbitant fees charged by foreign and domestic recruiting agencies.

Overcharging and Illegal Collection

Amongst foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong, the problems of overcharging and illegal collection are rampant, as individuals pay recruitment fees up to HK$21,000 in order to migrate for work. These issues are related to the illegal practices of recruitment agencies in both the Philippines and their principals in Hong Kong in forcing workers to pay high fees. Because of these practices, agencies continue to make enormous profits and increase in number, despite the steep fees they themselves must pay to the government to operate the business (Mission, 2009).

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Secretary Marianito Roque issued a memorandum effective in 2009 that banned the direct hiring of foreign domestic workers, in which employers and workers can enter into a contractual working relationship independent of an agency. This memorandum forces workers to pass through recruitment agencies, where they are illegally charged fees that amount to an average of PHP100,000 or more. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Guidelines for Household Service Workers (HSWs), effective December 16, workers should not be charged any placement fees. However, undermining this policy, agencies continue to charge blatantly excessive fees, which are often unnecessary. As of March 31, 2010, about 48% of the Filipino workers in Hong Kong and foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong were charged overcharging and illegal collection fees. These issues are related to the illegal practices of recruitment agencies in both the Philippines and their principals in Hong Kong.

Workers who pay illegal placement fees often find some means to pay off their agencies, in which case they usually borrow money from friends and relatives. The majority of migrant workers, though, who leave the Philippines in the first place to make more money than they can in their own country, do not have access to tens of thousands of pesos. Agencies force them to take out loans in their own names, usually with family members in order to complete the application process. Agencies force them to pay outrageous fees, which are illegally charged as placement fees, insurance, and medical examinations. Some workers have even stated that, as “training,” they worked as maids without payment for several weeks. The activities undertaken during training vary by agency, but all of the workers I interviewed said that they only reviewed basic and common sense skills like washing dishes and cleaning instead of teaching skills like operating a dishwasher or vacuum cleaner, which are required by the POEA Guidelines. Workers are charged excessive fees for an often unnecessary number of medical examinations and “training fees” that are not required by the POEA Guidelines. Some workers have even stated that, as “training,” they worked as maids for some time in the home of their agency’s owner, or those of his/her relatives. With agencies sidestepping the no-placement fee policy, a survey conducted by the Mission for Migrant Workers (MFMW) in 2008 indicates that, of workers who passed through recruitment agencies (some before the effective date of the POEA Guidelines, and some after), 46% had to pay between PHP60,000 to P100,000. About 8% paid more than PHP100,000. One worker paid as much as PHP2,000,000.

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Hong Kong, one of the most economically important cities in Asia and the world, represents a major destination for these migrant workers. According to the Hong Kong Immigration Department, the population of foreign domestic helpers was 273,609 (approximately 48% from the Philippines) as of March 31, 2010. As many as 99% of the Hong Kong migrant workers from the Philippines are women. Here I integrate information from background research and interviews to highlight the issues encountered by this significant population of Filipina migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong.
and/or friends as co-signer(s), with loan companies in connivance with the agency. Once the migrant begins working in Hong Kong, she pays these loans either to a financial institution in Hong Kong, or has relatives in the Philippines pay to one there. Money is split between the recruitment agency and loan company. These complicated loan schemes are used by agencies to cover their tracks for the illegal placement fees they charge. All of the workers I interviewed were not given receipts for the fees they paid to the agency, including those who specifically asked for the receipts. With personal loans in workers' names and no documents proving that their loan payments go to the agency, agencies can deny that the worker is paying illegal placement fees, despite the obvious connections between the agencies in the Philippines and Hong Kong. The fact that the Philippine agency can waive the worker's loan after conciliation (discussed in the next section) is one indication of such relations.

Hands-On Conciliation through the Philippine Consulate General

For Filipino/a migrant workers, one method offered by the Philippine Consulate General (PCG) of “finding justice” for these illegally high fees is hands-on conciliation. The hands-on conciliation method is the way in which workers make monetary claims against agencies via the consulate, whether or not they have balance remaining on their loans. In these conciliations, a consulate official mediates a meeting between a worker, often alone, and an agent from her recruitment agency. The PCG has boasted that, through conciliation, it has been able to facilitate the return of millions of Hong Kong Dollars to victims of illegal collection. While the PCG has boasted of the method’s quick process of “delivering justice” by reimbursing workers for some of what they have paid to the agencies, the NGO Mission for Migrant Workers (MFMW) expresses concern about the validity of the process.

The Mission asserts that the handling of the hands-on conciliation reinforces the current system of illegal fee-paying, diminishes the culpability of erring recruitment agencies, and places workers at a disadvantage during the negotiating process. The Mission reinforces the current system of illegal fee-paying, diminishes the culpability of erring recruitment agencies, and places workers at a disadvantage during the negotiating process.

The system under which the conciliation operates places workers at a disadvantage. Should a worker choose to settle, she must sign a document waiving any right to pursue further claims from the agency; on the same document, the settlement amount is referred to as “financial assistance” from the agency. In this way, the Philippine government considers the settlement final and recruitment agencies can avoid any further litigation and continue their illegal practices with other workers. On the other hand, if workers want to find work again in Hong Kong, they must pay illegal recruitment fees to other agencies. Any further information and consultation after their illegal recruitment fees are paid can still be seen as “financial assistance” from the agencies. From the agencies’ point of view, the settlement document is final. The workers are left with no options to pursue further claims against the agencies. This leaves the workers in a disadvantageous position, as their settlement is considered final and they have no options to pursue further claims against the agencies.

Problems

Conciliation (discussed in the next section) is one indication of such problems. However, the Philippine government cannot solve the workers’ issues. The government’s approach is to address the issues of recruitment, fees, and conciliation separately. The government focuses on addressing the issues of recruitment and fees, but does not address the issue of conciliation. This leaves the workers in a disadvantageous position, as their settlement is considered final and they have no options to pursue further claims against the agencies.

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directly to Hong Kong agencies.

**Methodology**

This study includes both qualitative data in the form of interviews and observation, and quantitative data derived from the MFMW's case files. I interviewed:

- Five case managers and community organizers from MFMW for a fuller picture of the conditions of migrant workers in Hong Kong, the Philippines Consulate, and the practices of the latter;
- Seven workers for anecdotal evidence;
- Two employers;
- Two professors working at universities in Hong Kong (one of which was also an employer);
- A Hong Kong lawyer currently handling a case regarding workers made to take out loans by their recruitment agency;
- And two officials from the Philippines Consulate General, one with some purview over the hands-on conciliation.

All of the above interviews were recorded on tape for later review. Through one of the consulate officials I interviewed, I was allowed to sit in on an actual conciliation and take notes.

I also conducted informal interviews talking with workers congregated on the streets of Hong Kong on Sunday (the rest day for most HK domestic workers).

Lastly, I went through MFMW’s database and case files.

I conducted this field research in Hong Kong from mid-July to the end of August 2011.

**How Conciliation Works**

When a worker’s contract is terminated or pre-terminated (under a one-month notice), or in rare cases has been allowed by her employer to pursue conciliation with an agency, the worker must first file a complaint with the Philippine Overseas Labor Office of the Philippines Consulate General in Hong Kong. The consulate staff will then set an appointment for the worker, first calling her agency and setting a consultation date and time.

On the day of the consultation, the worker will then go to the consulate and meet with the conciliator and an agent or representative from the Hong Kong counterpart agency who will call an agency official from the worker’s Philippine agency. The worker and agent/conciliator will sit side by side in front of the conciliator, with the conciliator’s desk in between. The entire consultation takes place verbally, usually involving a discussion of the worker’s circumstances and what the worker is asking for.

Conciliations can range from a very short time (10-20 minutes) to hours. Regardless of how long the consultation takes, by the end of the conciliation, the worker chooses either to settle there or be endorsed to the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) in the Philippines to pursue a greater settlement. Depending on the worker’s place of stay in the Philippines, she will file a case with the nearest POEA office, where she will face another series of (3) conciliations. If her case is not settled by the end of these two conciliations, she will then be endorsed to the National Labor Relations Council (NLRC), where a decision will be made.

**Quantitative Data**

The purpose of the quantitative data is to answer the following questions:

- How many workers chose to settle at the conciliation? How many chose instead to file in the Philippines? How do these two numbers compare?
- For those who did settle, how much of their claims did they actually receive? How do these numbers compare?

In order to isolate the data to be used to answer these questions, I reviewed the electronic and paper copies of the Mission’s case files.

4 Sometimes the worker’s agency insists that she settle at the agency rather than attempt a conciliation, but this is usually a trap that leaves the worker at greatest disadvantage. Both migrant worker-serving organizations like the Mission and the agency official whom I interviewed discourage workers from doing this.
Evaluation of Conciliation

Consistent with the Philippine Ministry of Labor, the facilitation of the conciliation by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) is not only quicker than traditional legal processes, it also allows for the rapid resolution of disputes. However, the effectiveness of the facilitation process and its impact on workers' outcomes are worthy of further investigation.

The evaluation of conciliation was conducted by analyzing data from the POEA's conciliation records. The results indicate that while the facilitation process is generally effective, there are significant limitations that need to be addressed.

The limitations of these methods should be acknowledged:

- The sample of client's case files with complete follow-up data was relatively small (27).
- Since there is no record of the agency's final offer at the conciliation before the worker chose to be endorsed to the Philippines, the effect of this amount on the worker's decision whether or not to settle cannot be determined.
- The Mission's case files did not indicate how much the worker had already paid to the agency before the conciliation and the remaining balance on her loan. We do not know, for example, if she is just getting the rest of her loan waived, or if she is being reimbursed for illegal fees she had already paid. Such data is highly variable, depending on the circumstances of the worker.
- For the "placement fee" amount as indicated on the workers' case files, it cannot be confirmed whether or not interest on the workers' loan (if the worker paid via a loan) was included in the calculation.

The quantitative research I conducted produced the following results:

- For all of the 27 workers included in the sample, the average amount paid was PHP 91,840.41.
- For the 27 workers, a total of 4 chose to be endorsed by the POEA. This shows that around 15% of workers who attended conciliation in Hong Kong (HK) chose to be endorsed by the POEA.
- For all of the 27 workers included in the sample, the average amount paid in placement fees was PHP 88,009.
- According to these results, workers receive as settlement a relatively small percentage (45.39%) of the amount that they paid to the agencies in order to work as domestic workers in Hong Kong. It should also be noted that the workers reflected in this data are clients of the Mission, who, prior to the conciliation, are briefed as to the running of the facilitation, what they can say to help their case, and how to defend against common tactics by agency officials/representatives to lower the settlement amount.

Evaluation of Conciliation

Despite this, a minority (15%) of workers choose to pursue their cases further in the Philippines, where they can potentially receive greater amounts and have the licenses of erring recruitment agencies suspended. The low number of workers who continue the facilitation process may be due to the limitations of the facilitation process itself.

In conclusion, the facilitation of the conciliation by the POEA is a useful tool in resolving disputes between workers and recruitment agencies. However, the limitations of the facilitation process should be addressed to ensure that workers receive fair and just settlements.

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- The sample of client's case files with complete follow-up data was relatively small (27).
- Since there is no record of the agency's final offer at the conciliation before the worker chose to be endorsed to the Philippines, the effect of this amount on the worker's decision whether or not to settle cannot be determined.
- The Mission's case files did not indicate how much the worker had already paid to the agency before the conciliation and the remaining balance on her loan. We do not know, for example, if she is just getting the rest of her loan waived, or if she is being reimbursed for illegal fees she had already paid. Such data is highly variable, depending on the circumstances of the worker.

The quantitative research I conducted produced the following results:

- For all of the 27 workers included in the sample, the average amount paid was PHP 91,840.41.
- Of the 27 workers, 4 chose to be endorsed by the POEA. This shows that around 15% of workers who attended conciliation in HK chose to be endorsed by the POEA.
- For all of the 27 workers included in the sample, the average amount paid in placement fees was PHP 88,009.
- According to these results, workers receive as settlement a relatively small percentage (45.39%) of the amount that they paid to the agencies in order to work as domestic workers in Hong Kong. It should also be noted that the workers reflected in this data are clients of the Mission, who, prior to the conciliation, are briefed as to the running of the facilitation, what they can say to help their case, and how to defend against common tactics by agency officials/representatives to lower the settlement amount.

Despite this, a minority (15%) of workers choose to pursue their cases further in the Philippines, where they can potentially receive greater amounts and have the licenses of erring recruitment agencies suspended. The low number of workers who continue the facilitation process may be due to the limitations of the facilitation process itself.

In conclusion, the facilitation of the conciliation by the POEA is a useful tool in resolving disputes between workers and recruitment agencies. However, the limitations of the facilitation process should be addressed to ensure that workers receive fair and just settlements.
Benefits

• If the worker makes herself aware of agency tactics and how she can respond to them, and remains determined to fight for justice and her money despite the high-pressure circumstances of a conciliation, she can at times obtain a considerable portion of the money she is owed. For example, one case worker recalls a worker who was able to win PHP67,400 out of her PHP78,633 claim. This, however, also depends on how much the agency is willing to negotiate with the worker. Although a few outstanding cases where a worker received almost all of her claim come to mind for each caseworker, such cases are obviously not common.

• For workers who are determined to find another employer in Hong Kong, the conciliation provides the quickest way to settle their cases and move on to other employers. This, however, comes at some expense, since the worker is virtually guaranteed to lose money and would inevitably be contributing to the perpetuation of this rotten system, as they re-apply to work as a domestic worker with the same or another agency and must once again pay an enormous placement fee.

Points for Improvement

• A worker’s complaint is only entertained when her contract is terminated or pre-terminated. The consulate official stated that this is a security measure, for the worker, if her employer is not supportive of her participation in the conciliation, may risk the termination of her contract. That is, if the agency is close to the employer, who does not support the worker, it can encourage the employer to terminate the worker’s contract and hire a new worker through the agency. On the other hand, the consulate states that the worker can participate in conciliation even if she is employed, but she must approach her employer about the issue and make sure that he/she is supportive. However, one worker in this position whom I interviewed has faced some difficulty in this process, and even when he/she is supportive, the consulate often schedules the conciliation very close to the worker’s departure date, even on the day of her departure. The consulate reasons that the worker can participate in conciliation even if she is employed, but this is a security measure, since the worker is virtually guaranteed to lose money and would inevitably be contributing to the perpetuation of this rotten system. The consulate states that the worker can participate in conciliation even if she is employed, but this is a security measure, since the worker is virtually guaranteed to lose money and would inevitably be contributing to the perpetuation of this rotten system.

• The consulate does not allow workers’ friends and caseworkers from sitting in the conciliation to provide moral support and counsel to the worker. The consulate reasons that the worker is entitled to participate in the conciliation and to receive support and counsel from her friends and caseworkers. However, the consulate reasons that this policy is necessary to ensure that the conciliation is solely between the worker and the agency, and that other people cannot speak on the worker’s behalf. In fact, each of the caseworkers I interviewed who, before this policy was implemented, had the chance to join a worker during her conciliation, believed that he/she was able to help workers increase the amount they received from their agencies, or help them make the decision to continue the fight for justice in the Philippines if they were unsatisfied with the settlement amount they received.

• The consulate further states that the worker is entitled to participate in the conciliation and to receive support and counsel from her friends and caseworkers. However, the consulate states that this policy is necessary to ensure that the conciliation is solely between the worker and the agency, and that other people cannot speak on the worker’s behalf. In fact, each of the caseworkers I interviewed who, before this policy was implemented, had the chance to join a worker during her conciliation, believed that he/she was able to help workers increase the amount they received from their agencies, or help them make the decision to continue the fight for justice in the Philippines if they were unsatisfied with the settlement amount they received.
agent by reminding them that, should the worker pursue the case in the Philippines, it could potentially lead to the suspension of the agency's license. Such assertions remind all parties involved that the worker also has power during the negotiations and does not just have to take whatever she can get from the agency. This helps create the ideal situation in which the conciliation is a negotiation between two equal parties.

Although the worker cannot have another person in the room, the consulate allows agencies to send agency representatives in the place of agency officials who deal with workers. If the PCG is maintaining this policy on the basis that the conciliation should be between only the worker and the agency, why does the PCG not require the agent who processed the worker to attend in person, like the worker?

The agency is in a position of power during the conciliation because of its money and its officials’ familiarity with the process. Because the agency has the money, it is in a better position to negotiate the amount it gives to the worker. Furthermore, since agencies are used to attending these conciliations, the officials and representatives who often participate in the conciliation do not have any uncertainties about the process, can anticipate what the conciliator and the worker might say, and can develop strategies to minimize the agency's payment to the worker.

The consulate may proceed through the conciliation too quickly, such that the worker may not fully understand everything to which she is agreeing. Upon signing the settlement agreement at the end of the conciliation, the worker waives any right to pursue the agency further. One worker states that, although the conciliator may have explained this to her, the conciliation proceeded so quickly that she was not able to take in all the information. From what I have observed from the waiting area for the conciliation room, many workers become very emotional during the conciliation due to their lack of power to win a just settlement. In such a case, it is understandable that the worker (not as familiar with the protocol as the conciliator or the agent) does not register every piece of information given to her by the consulate official, especially if it is facilitated very quickly. Again, perhaps the consulate officials continue this practice in the spirit of wanting to clear their schedules, despite the disadvantages to the worker.

The consulate allows (or, according to one worker, some times even advises) the worker to go to the agency to settle her claim. As aforementioned, if the worker goes to the agency to “negotiate” her settlement rather than participating in conciliation, this would place her in an even more unstable position, as she would have to go in alone more unprepared position than when the consulatate officials had been present earlier in the conciliation. The worker may also not have any information about the conciliation.

The consent is in a position of power during the conciliation because of the money and its officials’ presence/participation in the conciliation. Therefore, since agents are used to attending these conciliations, the agents/representatives have more knowledge about the process than the worker. The consensus allows these agents/representatives to mislead the worker during the conciliation. In reference to the agency tactics earlier explained, the conciliator does not correct the agent or representative when he/she gives the worker false information. For example, one caseworker explained that in one case, when the agency told the worker that it could not refund her for past payments because she has already worked so long, the conciliator said something like, “Well, it’s not that important. You know you’ve already earned the money.” This does not account for the fact that the worker should not have to pay such illegal fees in the first place, and that she is entitled to this money. The caseworker explained that, although the worker did not ask for this money back, the conciliator did not correct the agent's statement.

The consulates in Hong Kong are often involved in the exploitation of Filipino domestic workers. The consulates may encourage the worker to settle her claim at the agency, which places her in an even more unstable position to assert her rights. At the agency, she might be forced to sign documents stating that she has received all of her money even though she may have not received it. The worker might also be forced to sign documents stating that she will no longer pursue the agency, even though she may not feel ready to do so. This puts the worker in a weak position, as she may not fully understand what she is signing.

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The conciliator discourages workers from filing cases in the Philippines. In the case of almost every domestic worker I interviewed, the conciliator encouraged the worker to take whatever she can get from the agency at the conciliation. If she tries to file in the Philippines, the domestic worker said, the process would take too long, it would cost a lot of money to pay for her travel to and from the POEA, she might not be able to find a job when she goes back home to the Philippines, etc. Indeed, these statements are in many cases true, but conciliators also ignore the worker’s opportunity to potentially receive a higher, more just settlement in the Philippines and/or to take judicial action to suspend the agency’s license. To discourage the worker, conciliators also say that the worker cannot continue the case in the Philippines if she is not there in person, which would effectively prevent her from supporting her family by working abroad. This statement is untrue. Domestic workers with a claim against an agency can file for a special power of attorney for someone else to represent them in their case, preferably a relative, but possibly also a representative from a community organization like Gabriela Philippines or Migrante Philippines. Why does the consulate uphold this practice even when it may be in opposition to the worker’s fight for justice? One reason is made clear by the consulate official’s explanation that the conciliation in Hong Kong is the first step in a worker’s fight for her claim, a way for the Philippine government to “de-clog” its system. That is, the more workers the Philippine Consulate can encourage to settle in Hong Kong, the fewer they will have to entertain at the POEA and NLRC. The fewer they will have to entertain at the POEA and NLRC, the more quickly the consulate can process workers in Hong Kong.

During the conciliation, workers felt that the conciliator was on the side of the agency. For example, the conciliator might say that the worker is simply asking for too much—“Oh, come on, don’t you think that’s a bit much?” he/she would say in a tone friendly and appealing. If not conciliating in a similar vein, don’t you think that’s a bit much?” he/she would say in a tone that the worker is simply asking for too much—“Oh, come on, that’s what she said, right? You just need to go back. The conciliation, or conciliating, workers felt that there was a certain closeness between the agency and the conciliator.

The settlement agreement, also known as the Affidavit of Distance, Waiver and Release and Quit Claim, takes blame away from the agency and fully protects it from further action by the worker. As if rubbing salt on the wound, one point of the settlement agreement (as of March 2011) which the POEA and NLRC, during their conciliation or conciliation, workers felt that the conciliator was on the side of the agency. For example, the conciliator might say that the worker is simply asking for too much—“Oh, come on, don’t you think that’s a bit much?” he/she would say in a tone friendly and appealing. If not conciliating in a similar vein, don’t you think that’s a bit much?” he/she would say in a tone that the worker is simply asking for too much—“Oh, come on, that’s what she said, right? You just need to go back. The conciliation, or conciliating, workers felt that there was a certain closeness between the agency and the conciliator.
The worker signs after the conciliation (if she chooses to settle) states: That after carefully evaluating the facts and the circumstances surrounding the filing of complaint/case, I have come to realize that filing thereof was a result of plain and simple misunderstanding and misapprehension of facts between me and [agency]. Previous versions of the settlement agreement refer to the settlement amount as "financial assistance" from the agency. Such statements belittle the worker, while taking blame away from the agency, in the latter case even creating an image of it as helping the worker. These words may serve another indication of the consulate's stance between the agency and the worker, and which party it favors.

Conclusion

Naturally, this is not an exhaustive explanation of all of the different tactics adopted by agencies during the conciliation, or all of the good and bad points of the process. Depending on the case, depending on the day, despite general patterns, all parties involved ultimately improvise during the hands-on conciliation and may veer from the patterns aforementioned. Regardless, the consulate, pro-migrant organizations, society at large, and especially workers themselves all have a role in asserting the rights and welfare of migrant workers in light of (or in spite of) the concrete conditions they face, and the current state of the hands-on conciliation as the consulate's sole method for entertaining workers' monetary claims.

The current conditions of Filipino/a migrant workers not only in Hong Kong, but also in other parts of the world, are incontrovertibly tied to the Philippines' lack of national industry (and therefore jobs) and emphasis on the export of human labor. The consulate official I interviewed stated that one of the purposes of the hands-on conciliation is to "de-clog" the system of workers making claims against agencies and corporation. But this system can never truly be de-clogged if the Philippine government continues its current policies of debt servicing, dependence on foreign economies, and labor export. Thus, Filipino/a workers should fight for fundamental change in their country, for that peace should give fundamental change in their community, and for peace among countries.

and poses considerable threat to the Philippine's export-oriented economy.

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The consulate's stance and the partie's view of the process have consequences for workers and agencies alike, and especially workers from the Philippines.
EXPOSING AGENT ORANGE: TRACKING PHOTOGRAPHIC LINEAGES TO RENEW VIEWERS WITH THE ONGOING ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMANITARIAN CONCERN

Natalia Duong

"How do we cope with our exposures to Agent Orange?"

Susan Schweik

At a recent conference on Agent Orange and Addressing the Legacy of War in Vietnam on October 29, 2011, English professor and Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities at UC Berkeley Susan Schweik posed the question, "What else can we do about Agent Orange?" In her speech, Schweik delineates three different types of exposures that surround the history of the herbicide Agent Orange in Vietnam and in the United States. She speaks of the exposure to the actual chemical, Agent Orange, and the dioxin therein, the exposure of bodies affected by Agent Orange to the public eye, and lastly, the general public's exposure to the story of Agent Orange. In this paper, I extrapolate on this notion of "exposure" to consider the role of trauma photography in relation to bodies affected by Agent Orange.

While photographs of people affected by Agent Orange originally aided in exposing the public to the ongoing environmental and humanitarian concern, some photographs of people affected by Agent Orange fix bodies perpetually in a moment of exposure to dioxin, thereby denying knowledge of the chemical's progressive effects and a present health condition, thus foreclosing future potential for remediation. Alternatively, photographs that trace a lineage of exposure through generations require longer processing and thus engage the viewer not only in personal histories but also the immediate humanitarian concern in the present.

The Vietnam War, referred to as the American War by the Vietnamese, was the first war to have a simultaneous visual presence in American homes. The war was broadcast as a "television war," overtaking the evening news and showing America's boys completing their duties. However, as the war progressed and the failures of America's efforts became apparent, images began to reflect the failures of America's efforts. Though images of American deaths were rarely shown, photographs of Vietnamese people as victims became iconic of the war. One such photo, often referred to as "Napalm Girl," captured by photojournalist Nick Ut, exposed the horror of war to the public eye, in particular the destruction caused by napalm. This photo continues to share this narrative though it has been 40 years since it was taken. However, it would be decades before photography would capture the destructive potential of Agent Orange, as its most extreme effects would not appear until second and third generation descendants of those exposed were born.

Initial Exposure: The Spraying of Agent Orange

By the time the full scope of war was transmitted to American audiences, the war was still under way. Vietnamese and American soldiers and civilians alike were still innocent. Vietnamese and American soldiers and civilians alike were still innocent. Vietnamese and American soldiers and civilians alike were still innocent. Vietnamese and American soldiers and civilians alike were still innocent. However, thespraying of Agent Orange on October 29, 2011, English professor and Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities at UC Berkeley Susan Schweik posed the question, "How do we cope with our exposures to Agent Orange?"

Humanitarian Concern

How do we cope with our exposures to Agent Orange?"
As trauma has been considered the “past made present,” the present condition through a continual temporal distancing from the point of trauma; or in which they can be transformed into new sets of those affected by Agent Orange arrest the symptom at its height, the second Pleasure Principle now. The momentary exposure of bodies through photography masks the transmission of health effects through time. The photographs obscured the effects of hysteria, and therefore illuminated the condition, the atemporal depiction of bodies affected by Agent Orange obscures or an icon fixed at the moment of trauma. She writes, “The second edge considers the transgenerational transmission of trauma between parents and their children who can either be a source of potential renewal or an icon of the condition. Baer writes about how photographs served the effects of repetition to be the patient's manner of coping with past trauma, however the women were captured by the flash at the height of the illness and therefore forever exposed by the flash to the condition. However, while this flash capture of catalepsy mirrored the momentary exposure of bodies through photography, the transmission of health effects through time was obscured as icons of the condition. Baer notes that photography as a medium “freeze-frames and retains the body in an isolated continuum.” However, while this flash capture of catalepsy masked the transmission of health effects through time, the photographs performed the compulsion repetition that fixes the subject in a moment of victimhood rather than arousing the potential for renewal that Hoffman describes.

An organism of trauma, After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust, Eva Hoffman, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990, 150. Thus photography performs the compulsion repetition that fixes the subject in a moment of victimhood rather than arousing the potential for renewal that Hoffman describes.

As Hoffman explains, “As trauma has been considered the “past made present,” the present condition through a continual temporal distancing from the point of trauma; or in which they can be transformed into new sets of those affected by Agent Orange arrest the symptom at its height, the second Pleasure Principle now. The momentary exposure of bodies through photography masks the transmission of health effects through time. The photographs obscured the effects of hysteria, and therefore illuminated the condition, the atemporal depiction of bodies affected by Agent Orange obscures or an icon fixed at the moment of trauma. She writes, “The second edge considers the transgenerational transmission of trauma between parents and their children who can either be a source of potential renewal or an icon of the condition. Baer writes about how photographs served the effects of repetition to be the patient's manner of coping with past trauma, however the women were captured by the flash at the height of the illness and therefore forever exposed by the flash to the condition. However, while this flash capture of catalepsy masked the transmission of health effects through time, the photographs performed the compulsion repetition that fixes the subject in a moment of victimhood rather than arousing the potential for renewal that Hoffman describes.

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Moreover, the initial photographs taken of bodies affected by Agent Orange removed all subjectivity of the referents represented within the photos. They portrayed the most extreme cases of physical disability that seemed to occupy a realm of fantasy as opposed to reality. There were twin headed stillborn babies in formaldehyde filled jars, babies born with extreme skull contortions and missing whole limbs. The bodies were excessive in some parts and seemingly lacking in others. This first set of photographs exposed the effects of the herbicide through shock.

As a result, viewers often turned away from the photographs within seconds of experiencing its primary shock as an affective response. Judith Butler, in Frames of War, addresses how photographs transmit affect:

For photographs to communicate effectively in this way, they must have a transitive function: they must act upon viewers in ways that have a direct bearing on the kinds of judgments those viewers will formulate about the world. Sontag concedes that photographs are transitive. They do not merely portray or represent—they relay affect. In fact, in times of war, this transitive affectivity of the photograph may overwhelm and numb its viewers.

Butler contends that photographs can shift individual’s perspective of war through the transmission of affect. However, this “numbing” affect can also inhibit political or social action when the photographs overwhelm the viewer. Thus, photographs that shock viewers allow them to retreat from the photograph, rather than engage with the larger political or social concern.

The shocking nature of the photographs rendered the bodies immediately abject—as they represented neither subject nor object; the photographs denied the I/eye. Consequently, viewers carried this adverse affect onto their readings of the larger issue of Agent Orange and dioxin in the environment. Thus, the American public could turn away from the environmental and humanitarian concern just as they did from this first set of expository photographs. The lack of visible subjectivity in the photographs forgives the lack of humanitarian response. The numbing affect produced by the photograph paralyzes its viewer while evading the current severity of this issue in the present. As the bodies portrayed were considered abject, the images of people affected were cast aside just as those affected by Agent Orange were cloistered in centers for people with disabilities.

Moreover, because people with disabilities were considered abject, the photographic image of bodies affected by Agent Orange was considered to be abject. This is why I have explicitly chosen not to reproduce these “shock” photos in this paper as I do not support the aversive affect that they induce. However, many can still be found by searching for “Agent Orange” in a Google image search.

The shocking nature of the photographs served the larger end of the political and social concern. Hence, with the larger political or social concern, viewers who were shown the photographs rather than were shown the bodies affected by Agent Orange were more likely to accept the images of bodies affected by Agent Orange.

Consequently, the images of affected bodies kept returning. The process of creating a photograph ensures its reproduction: the photograph is inherently repeatable, lending itself to the widespread circulation of its multiples. Thus, the spread of images mirrored the ongoing spread of Agent Orange in the environment. Butler makes a similar claim about photographs taken of torture victims at Guantanamo Bay. She writes, “The indefinite circulability of the image allows the event to continue to happen and, indeed, to happen in such a way that the event continues to happen, and to happen in such a way that the event continues to happen.” In other words, the photographic image of bodies affected by Agent Orange serves to reproduce the photograph.

Circulation: The Spread of Agent Orange

Thus, the spread of images mirrored the ongoing spread of Agent Orange in the environment. The photographs required only a distal engagement with the subjects portrayed and therefore remained a flat protective skin behind which the memory of war can remain repressed. As a result, because the photograph can be used to deny and repress people, it is used to deny and repress the memory of war. Furthermore, the photographic image of bodies affected by Agent Orange was considered to be abject. This is why I have explicitly chosen not to reproduce these “shock” photos in this paper as I do not support the aversive affect that they induce. However, many can still be found by searching for “Agent Orange” in a Google image search.
exposures multiplied, the image circulated captured bodies affected in a moment of exposure to the chemical without referencing its progressive nature. The bodies were viewed as things of the past rather than people of the present. The photographs' repeats did not reveal the worsening nature of the health concern.

This circulation of images that freezes the victim at the height of trauma is exacerbated in the contemporary moment where digital photographs are instantly captured and shared at greater speeds than ever before. Search engines scour the Internet, retrieve images from websites, and present the amalgamation of images without context. A Google image search of "Agent Orange" reveals a host of decontextualized photographs—often of the shocking nature—that overwhelm the viewer. There are only masses of bodies without names or (hi)stories. The overwhelming collection of abject images also allows them to be pushed away from view. Thus, the instantaneous relation to photographs engendered by Internet search engines denies a sustained response to the condition portrayed. Bodies are circulated as petrified in disease without any index of the progressive nature of the disease or the potential to protect future bodies from exposure to the chemical.

Furthermore, the repeatability of photographs ensured that the photograph outlived those who were represented within the photograph. Just as photographs capture a moment that has occurred in the past, and represent it in the now, the photograph also reveals the immanence of death for all lives represented within it. Butler explains:

*If we are not haunted, there is no loss, there has been no life that was lost. But if we are shaken or 'haunted' by a photograph, it is because the photograph acts on us in part through outliving the life it documents; it establishes in advance the time in which that loss will be acknowledged as a loss. So when we search for the chemical in our children, we are looking for the photograph that haunts us.*

Butler refers to this frame as "foreclosing responsiveness" through the document's ability to outlive the life it portrays. The form of the photograph results in a dravid opposition, where the viewer is reminded of the imminence of their death, which the viewer is allowed to disengage from the environmental and humanitarian costs of further disengagement from the environmental and humanitarian costs of those who were represented within the photograph.

Photographs that fix the outcome of its referents allow viewers to further disengage from the environmental and humanitarian concerns. While some frames highlight the humanity of the subjects concerned, the photograph outlives the referent, removing viewers of the imminence of their death, allowing the viewer to make a moral judgment about the recipient of the photograph. The photograph also reminds the viewer of the imminence of death for all lives represented within it, allowing the viewer to disengage from the concern being represented. Butler refers to this frame as "foreclosing responsiveness" where the activity of foreclosure is effectively and repeatedly performed by the frame itself—its own negative action, as it were, toward what will not be foreclosed.
be explicitly represented."

Thus, through its repeatability and reproducibility, the photograph immunizes its original shock effect rendering the environmental and human effects of Agent Orange banal. Because the subjects within the photos are not regarded as subjects, the frame of the photograph does not implicate the viewer in relation to those portrayed, rather the viewer remains outside. The photograph forecloses response by repeating a determined outcome. Schweik reiterates, “The poster child is both obsessed-about and utterly ignorable.”

Developing the Photograph: Constructing photographic lineages

If photographs inherently arrest the symptoms at its height, and repeat this moment of exposure in the present, what types of photographs do not foreclose a response, but rather actively engage the viewer with the photograph? Photographs capture a momentary situation, thus singular photographs do not necessarily relay a causal effect. They may transmit affect, but how could they reveal the transmission of trauma through time? There are not clear before and after pictures of the bodies affected by Agent Orange like there are of the landscape as the transmission of effects is intergenerational and individuals do not reflect the cumulative deterioration in a single body (Figure 3). Photographs of bodies do not exhibit causal relations as easily, even when they are individually marked. Consequently, the trace of transmission must be mapped between multiple representations: across generations, borders, and mediums. As such, recent photojournalistic tributes to Agent Orange have begun to restore subjectivity to the bodies portrayed while tracing the genetic transmission of the herbicide through a lineage of photographs.

Though Ulrich Baer desires to read photographs through a Democritean lens, where time is considered as isolated flashes and bursts, in the case of photography of bodies affected by Agent Orange, this perspective obfuscates the cumulative nature of the herbicide’s effects. To read an image of a body affected by Agent Orange as isolated and discrete effects is to read the photograph as a documentation less, where time is considered as isolated flashes of a deterministic nature where the bodies portrayed are reduced to mere instances of a past event.

Eadweard Muybridge’s action photos, represent the effects of this herbicide as causally linked over time.

Diana Taylor traces the performative lineage of political action through photography’s doubles in Julio Pantoja’s photographs of the Argentinian H.I.J.O.S., the children of the disappeared. Taylor suggests that the children of the disappeared hold the photographs of their parents to insist on their presence within the political discourse, despite their physical absence. In one photograph, Los Hijos, Tucumán veinte años después, the daughter of a disappeared man holds a portrait of her father in front of her face, partially obscuring herself in exchange for foregrounding her disappeared father (Figure 4). Taylor writes, “These portraits illuminate the political hauntology I sensed at the escrache…The faces in both sets of photographs (Pantoja’s and the ones the children are holding) demand a double-take…The portraits, however, indicate that the child—whether real or not—is affected by the political violence and erasure of her parents. Further, the portrait evokes the portrait of the disappeared man and the woman artistic vision through the doubling of the frame, the photograph becomes both a representation of the disappeared subject and a testament to the survivor’s presence. The photographic double allows the viewer to witness both the disappeared and the survivor, to experience the gap between the two.”

A similar photograph, captured by Lisa De Jong, cites this photographic lineage by featuring Heather Bowser holding a photo of her father who was an American soldier assigned to spray Agent Orange over Vietnam during the war (Figure 5). Bowser holds the black and white photograph of her father who was missing several fingers. Her birth defects have now been linked to her father’s exposure to the chemical. While her father, the referent of the internal photograph, is portrayed as whole even though he is not present, Bowser is only partially visible in the photograph. The black background of the photograph denies a temporal or spatial localization, rather the abyss extends infinitely. The frame performs this endless extension of the condition into the unforeseeable future. Where is the solution? The color of Bowser’s skin stands in stark contrast to the color of her father’s skin. The photograph indices the social and political scope of the tragedy. The photograph indexes the social and political scope of the tragedy. Despite their physical absence, the children’s children are holding these portraits in exchange for foregrounding their disappeared fathers. Despite their physical absence, the children’s children are holding these portraits in exchange for foregrounding the disappeared father. The photograph of the disappeared man and the woman artistic vision through the doubling of the frame, the photograph becomes both a representation of the disappeared subject and a testament to the survivor’s presence. The photographic double allows the viewer to witness both the disappeared and the survivor, to experience the gap between the two. The absence of the disappeared man and the woman artistic vision through the doubling of the frame, the photograph becomes both a representation of the disappeared subject and a testament to the survivor’s presence. The photographic double allows the viewer to witness both the disappeared and the survivor, to experience the gap between the two.
black and white photograph and the black background; the color of her hand asserts her presence in the "now." Bowser's hand draws the viewer into the photograph. One imagines that if Bowser's missing fingers were present they would be pointing towards the viewer, implicating her in the frame. The presence of Bowser's hand holding the photograph, in its partiality, indexes the continued lack of aid and support. This photograph, like Pantoja's, engages the viewer to question what, or who, are missing.

However, unlike the escraches performed in Argentina with the aim of politically exposing the perpetrators of their disappearing crimes, there is not a clear perpetrator to blame for the effects of Agent Orange. While the American government ordered the dispersal of the herbicide, the American soldiers who sprayed the chemical are now also suffering the effects of being exposed. Lawsuits have been filed against Dow Chemical and Monsanto, two companies responsible for the manufacturing of Agent Orange, and a remediation plant has recently been constructed in Danang, Vietnam, near one of the areas most affected by the herbicide. Yet, the chemical remains in the groundwater and the bloodlines of communities. The continued exposure of people to Agent Orange today is an environmental and humanitarian concern that can be addressed. Therefore, a photographic lineage that traces the transgenerational effects of the herbicide can reengage viewers with the fact that the herbicide continues to exist in the environment in Vietnam, and that new bodies continue to be exposed. What could a third, fourth, or fifth generation multiply of the frame perform? Would the bodies continue to disappear or reappear as time progressed?

Future Exposures: Regaining Subjectivity

While some photographs capture bodies affected by Agent Orange, fixing them as victims, other collections of photographs expose the transitive effects of the herbicide. Still, what types of representations could be exposed to the public that would point towards a curative future? Baer argues that photographs possess an ontological futurity that allows for the potential of redemption, "[Photographs] open up a future that is not known and, because it is unknown, might yet be changed." Indeed, contemporary tools of photography, open up a future that is not known and because it is unknown, continue to explore the potential of reclamation, contrario, contra el olvido. But using these photographic processes an ontological critique can ensue, where the transgenerational effects of the herbicide and Agent Orange are traced through the photographs of the past. The problem then becomes one of addressing these photographs, and a reclamation of what is possible.

Thus, while the American soldiers who sprayed the herbicide are not directly responsible for the ongoing effects of Agent Orange, they must be remembered as a part of the story. Their actions, or inactions, and the consequences of those actions, must be acknowledged and addressed. This is where the photographs of Bowser and Pantoja become crucial.

Bibliography


AN EVALUATION OF RACE CONCORDANT DOCTOR-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP AS A METHOD OF ELIMINATING CULTURAL BARRIERS IN THE VIETNAMESE AMERICAN PATIENT POPULATION

Phuong Vy Le

As the medical field diversifies with more professionals of different races and ethnicities, patients now have more choices when choosing their healthcare providers. When asked which race their doctor was, Vietnamese older patients more often choose a doctor with a racial background similar to their own. This paper explores the factors that contribute to patient satisfaction of race-concordant doctor-patient relationships in the older Vietnamese population.

The Importance of the Patient-Doctor Relationship in the Healing Process:

Patient-physician relationships have been shown to be important in encouraging people to take a more active role in their health care (DeBenedette 2011). With the increase in doctor-patient race discordant visits, more investigations are being conducted to determine factors that contribute to patient satisfaction with race-concordant doctor-patient relationships. In particular, cultural differences have been studied to determine how they affect patient satisfaction (LaVeist and Jeter 2002). In terms of Vietnamese older patients, many seek care from doctors who share their cultural backgrounds and beliefs, as well as similar values and beliefs (Gordon et al. 2011). This paper examines the factors contributing to patient satisfaction of race-concordant relationships in older Vietnamese patients.

Barrier Analysis:

There are several barriers to race-concordant doctor-patient relationships in Vietnamese older patients, such as language, cultural differences, and provider availability. Language barriers can be significant, as many Vietnamese older patients may not be fluent in English, which can affect their ability to communicate with their doctors. Cultural differences can also affect patient satisfaction, as patients may expect doctors to have a similar cultural background and beliefs. Finally, provider availability can be a barrier, as Vietnamese patients may prefer doctors who share their cultural background.

The Process:

The patient-doctor race discordant visits, or relationships involving patients and doctors of different races, have been shown to be a more effective method of eliminating cultural barriers in the Vietnamese patient population. With the increase in race-concordant doctor-patient visits, patients are more likely to choose a doctor with a similar cultural background, as they feel more comfortable communicating with someone who shares their cultural values and beliefs. This can lead to increased patient satisfaction and better health outcomes.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, race-concordant doctor-patient relationships are important in the healing process for Vietnamese older patients. By eliminating cultural barriers, these relationships can improve patient satisfaction and lead to better health outcomes. More research is needed to fully understand the impact of these relationships on patient health and satisfaction.

References:


In general, patients of minority backgrounds are less likely than whites to rate relationships with their physicians positive, as characterized by effective communication, partnership, and trust (Doescher et al. 2012). These patients, however, reported better relationships when seeing physicians of their own race or ethnicity. For example, African-American patients who visit physicians of the same race rate their medical visits as more satisfying and participatory than do those who see physicians of other races (Cooper et al. 2003).

In more recent studies, even though race-concordant visits appeared to be longer and characterized by more patient positive effect, no conclusion was reached regarding the association between higher patient ratings of care in race concordant visits and patient-centered communication (Cooper et al. 2003). Such findings suggest that a Vietnamese patient seen by a Vietnamese doctor does not necessarily receive higher quality of care. Besides the fact that the physician is race-concordant with the patient, other factors, such as differences in patient and physician attitudes, may mediate the relationship as well.

The Vietnamese Patient Population:

In order to understand the Vietnamese American population, their immigration profile needs to be examined. Vietnamese Americans are one of the fastest-growing minority groups in the United States, with a projected population of 3.9 million by 2030 (Ong 1994, Bouvier 1985). The Vietnamese population immigrated to America in three major waves (Pham). The first wave occurred when military officers and their families came at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Vietnam was soon seized by the Communist government, initiating the second wave of immigrants. To escape the Communist government, many Vietnamese escaped from the re-education camps in the 1990's. This wave was so sized by the government that the Vietnamese War in 1975, Vietnam was named so sized by the Communist government. The Vietnamese population, however, is not homogenous; Vietnamese immigrants may belong to a variety of Vietnamese patient population groups as the result of their cultural assimilation.

As explained, the Vietnamese population is subdivided mainly by generations. Every Vietnamese patient, therefore, significantly differs from others in terms of their experience in America and the level of their cultural assimilation. When the 2003 California Health Interview Survey was conducted on the older Vietnamese population in America, ninety nine percent of the Vietnamese respondents were born outside of the United States, seventy four percent had lived in the United States for at least 10 years, and eighty percent reported having limited English speaking proficiency (Sorkin 2008). Such high percentages imply that even though the older population may have resided in America for a long period of time, they are not very assimilated to the American culture, but rather still retain many of their traditional beliefs. Cultural assimilation is defined precisely as the degree in which immigrants adopt the language, customs, and other cultural patterns of the host country (Chinn and Kim 1999). Vietnamese people tend to keep their traditional beliefs in the Vietnamese patient population.

As a Vietnamese patient, Frank honesty and the act of speaking up are therefore considered disrespectful and impolite. Frank honesty and the act of speaking up are therefore considered disrespectful and impolite (Cooper et al.). Vietnamese patients, therefore, may refrain from honest discussion with their doctors regarding their illnesses. Furthermore, Vietnamese culture values collectivism over individualism (Pham). Individuals within a community, therefore, are extremely considerate about their own actions to ensure that they are acceptable according to the community's rules. This is the reason most Vietnamese patients lack effective doctor-patient relationships with their physicians. When the 2003 California Health Interview Survey was conducted on the older Vietnamese population in America, eighty percent of the Vietnamese respondents reported having limited English speaking proficiency. Such high percentages imply that even though the older population may have resided in America for a long period of time, they are not very assimilated to the American culture, but rather still retain many of their traditional beliefs. Cultural assimilation is defined precisely as the degree in which immigrants adopt the language, customs, and other cultural patterns of the host country (Chinn and Kim 1999). Vietnamese people tend to keep their traditional beliefs in the Vietnamese patient population.

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The Effect of Medical School Training on Vietnamese Americans

Medical schools seek driven leaders who can show compassion to their patients. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, "The younger generation is driven by a desire for a different approach to medicine that is more focused on prevention and patient education." Hence, medical schools focus on developing skills in patient education and prevention, which are important aspects of Vietnamese medical practice.

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Such traits obviously contrast with the values in which a Vietnamese American was raised, such as being a reserved individual. In fact, Medical Professor Soslan notes that the respect foreign-born Korean or Vietnamese students in medical schools have toward their faculty is "beyond reality" (cited in Le 2001). Professor Soslan further observes that the faculty's casualness with the medical students "was unacceptable to them because they thought it was an affront to showing respect." This observation suggests that while many Asian Americans still uphold their traditional values, those values may in turn hinder their subsequent advancement in the medical field (Le 2001). Professor Soslan did in fact confirm this notion in his speech at an Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association conference, discussing how behaviors pertaining to traditional Asian values and culture—such as respecting elders, talking only when spoken to, being passive, and not questioning authority—"may be perceived as uncaring or uninterested in health care." Because of such traits, they sometimes are even labeled as followers, not leaders, despite other skills they may possess (Le 2001). Given the specific expectations demanded by the medical field, it is then fair to declare that medical students of a Vietnamese background must somewhat consolidate their traditional values at home with those taught at the university.

A study done with Vietnamese immigrants aged 50-70 years old identified three categories of themes concerning the patients' experiences with cancer in a health care setting (Nguyen and Holmes 2007). The three themes include: attitudes about addressing screening with providers, problems communicating with physicians about cancer, and language/translation difficulties. The results yield substantial overlap between patients who mentioned each theme category, along with the 40 percent who mentioned all three. In addition to suggesting that the older Vietnamese generation, though having lived in America for a considerable amount of time, still have yet to assimilate to the American ways of life, the result also shows that the language barrier is only a part of the story. While the last category may be addressed by having a Vietnamese-speaking doctor, the first two seem more cultural, influenced by differences in values and attitudes and professional etiquette of both the patient and the doctor. Other studies have even noted that an Asian American physician who is fluent in the Vietnamese language can be trusted by having a Vietnamese-speaking patient, whereas this relationship is not as strong with other Asian American physicians. This observation underscores the importance of cultural competence among physicians when treating Asian American patients.

**Works Cited**


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**Conclusion:**

Though having resided in America for a long period of time, Vietnamese Americans still closely adhere to their traditional healthcare model, one that contrasts with the modern Western medicine. This cultural difference must be minimized in order to improve the pool of Vietnamese doctors. While an increasing number of Asian Americans are being recruited to medical schools, many of these doctors may possess limited ability to communicate effectively with their patients. This may lead to a decrease in the number of patients who are satisfied with their healthcare experiences. In order to address this problem, it is important to train medical students in cultural competence and sensitivity to the needs of patients from different backgrounds. This will help ensure that patients are treated with respect and that their cultural needs are met. It is also important to provide ongoing support and resources to medical students in order to help them develop the skills necessary to work effectively with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

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Aldric Ulep, class of 2014, studies Public Policy (Environmental and Energy Policy). Being involved with various green groups and programs on campus, he strives to engender a more environmentally conscious world. He fancies music of all kinds, and aside from singing a cappella and doing musical theater, he also plays the piano and composes.

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